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# The Poetry of Ibn al-Rūmī

by

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A thesis submitted for the degree  
of Doctor of Philosophy  
to the University of Glasgow.

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## The Poetry of Ibn al-Rùmî

For my Mother Faṭimah,

My wife Hamīdah

And my sons:

Abdulmuttalib, Muhammad, Abdullah.

## **Acknowledgement**

I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisor Professor John N. Mattock who has given me throughout my years of research friendly guidance and unfailing encouragement. He carefully read my material and made many suggestions.

I am also grateful to Dr. James E. Montgomery for his thorough reading of my work and for his insights and strict criticisms.

## ABSTRACT

Early Arab writers have little to say about Ibn al-Rùmī and his poetry. His life and his poetry are, indeed, different from early Arabic poets and poetry in general. Those who have written on Ibn al-Rùmī have covered neither the whole of his life nor the whole of his works. There are, consequently, in my opinion, many aspects of his life and poetry which need to be studied.

I have approached Ibn al-Rùmī's life through his poetry and have used this as my primary source, attempting to see the relevance of his poetry to his life and hopefully, the relevance of his life to his poetry.

I have not devoted a separate chapter to the period during which Ibn al-Rùmī lived and wrote; I have attempted to study this period through Ibn al-Rùmī's poetry and life.

This thesis consists of an Abstract, a short introductory notice, three chapters and a brief summation. My main concern has been to

translate the poetry into English and to assist it to speak in its own voice, adding notes and comments only when strictly necessary.

In the first chapter (one) Ibn al-Rùmī's ancestry, education and emotionally fraught life are studied, as well as his relationship with Caliphs and princes, his intellectual and physical malaise, his effeminacy and the milieu in which he lived.

In chapter two; I study Istiqṣā' before Ibn al-Rùmī and his poetry, Tashkhis, his quotations from al-Qur'ān and from the Jahli and 'Abbāsid poetry. His relationship with the other poets of his period and the role played by the realm of the senses in his *Dīwān*,

Chapter three is a study of the genres: panegyrics, lampoons, elegies and love poetry.

The work ends with a short summary of the principal findings of this study of Ibn al-Rùmī through his poetry.

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## INTRODUCTORY NOTICE

1. Ibn al-Rùmī's full name was 'Alī Ibn al-'Abbās Ibn Jùrayj. His father died when he was still a child and so he was unable to dedicate a lament to him as he did to most of the other members of his family when they died in the course of his life.
2. His education began at the Qur'ān school whence he progressed to the Mosques where the 'ulama' would deliver their lectures. He next studied at the Dār al-Hikma, then the largest library in existence.
3. His poetic career began at an early age.
4. He seems not to have got on well with the other poets of his age or with many of his patrons whom he was quick to attack when their largesse came to a halt.
5. Most of his life was spent in Baghdād.
6. He was a member of the Shi'at 'Alī and was also influenced by the Mu'tazilah, an influence which he was reluctant to acknowledge.
7. Ibn al-Rùmī seems never to have been blessed with material wealth and financial well-being.
8. His Dīwān is a veritable social register of his times. Many personalities, some known, some not, turn up in his poems.
9. His poetry is a mirror of his life and period. His Dīwān contains many poems written in response to historical events: the attack of the Zanj on al-Basrah, the Yaḥyā Ibn 'Umar against al-Musta'in.

10. Most of his lampoons are obscene, contrasting with the works of those poets who found an outlet for obscenity in their Ghazal poems.

11. Istiḡṣā' and Tashkīṣ are two rhetorical figures which feature prominently in his poetry.

12. His work also contains quotations from the Qur'ān, from Jāhilī verse and even from other 'Abbasid poems.

# CHAPTER ONE

## His Life

The early Arab biographers and writers on literary history have little to say about Ibn al-Rùmī compared with such poets as al-Buḥturi and Abū Tammām who enjoyed a similar reputation in poetry. He is a poet who reflects the life of Baghdad in his poetry, which he addressed to Amirs and Wazirs, but never - for reasons that will be discussed later - to the Caliph.

His full name was 'Ali Ibn al 'Abbās Ibn Jurajj (sometimes Jurjis or Jurjis), and he was a mawla of 'Ubayd Allāh Ibn Ja'far al-Manṣur.<sup>1</sup>

Those writers who mention Ibn al-Rùmī agree that he was born in 221/835 in Baghdad.<sup>2</sup> He was not of Arab descent, as his name implies and it may be said that this is apparent in his poetry also.

He himself speaks of his ancestry :

البسيط

أبائي الروم توفيل وتوفيلس ولم يلدني ربي ولا شبت<sup>3</sup> 15

15 " My ancestors were Rùm, Tùfil and Tùfilus; Rabi

---

<sup>1</sup> Abū al- 'Abbās Ibn Khallikān, Wafāyāt al-A'yān, Cairo, n.d., 3, 44

<sup>2</sup> Abū al-'Abbās Ibn Khalikān, Wafāyāt al-A'yān, 3, 44

<sup>3</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī , Dīwān, Beirut, 1991, 1, 471

did not beget me nor did Shabath ”<sup>1</sup>

He also speaks of his mother’s origins :

المنسرح

وكيف أغضي على الدنية والفرس      13      خنولي والروم هم أعمامي<sup>2</sup>

13. “How can I submit tamely to disgrace seeing that the Persians are my maternal uncles and the Rùm my parental uncles ”<sup>3</sup>

In these two lines he makes clear his descent on both sides. It was for this reason that he was known as Ibn al-Rùmī. Most writers accept this, with one or two claiming that he was given this name because of his good looks when a youth. al-‘Aqqād rejects this notion, saying that it is an absurdity, derived simply from these writers’ failure to read the whole of Ibn al-Rùmī’s *Diwān* and the works of the early writers who mention him.<sup>4</sup>

### ***His Education***

Perhaps because of his father’s ambitions for him to attain office, he was sent to Qur’an School.

---

<sup>1</sup> Rhurun Guest, *Life and works of Ibn er-Rùmî*, London, 1944, 72

<sup>2</sup> ‘Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, , *Dīwān*. 6, 113

<sup>3</sup> Rhurun Guest, *Life and works of Ibn er-Rùmî*, 72

<sup>4</sup> ‘Abbās al-‘Aqqād, *Ibn al- Rùmī*, Beirut, 1983, 72.

He quickly learnt to read and write and to memorise the Qur'an, but his father died without seeing his ambitions realised, which in fact, they never were.<sup>1</sup> Ibn al-Rùmī never managed to rise above the level at which he eulogized Amirs and Wazirs for their patronage, and, at times, he was reduced to writing similar praise of members of the professional classes, asking for a loaf of bread, a sack of flour or something similar.

Ibn al-Rùmī's education progressed from the Qur'an School, in the usual way, to the Mosque, where he would sit and listen to the teaching of the 'ulama, either from their own works or from those of others. Among those he heard are:

(1) Abū al-'Abbàs Tha'lab,<sup>2</sup>

(2) Muḥammad Ibn Habīb,<sup>3</sup>

(3) Qutayba Ibn Sa'id al-Thaqafi<sup>4</sup>

His early education enabled Ibn al-Rùmī to engage later in independent study in Dār al-Hikmah, the greatest library of that time. He was influenced by almost all of the fields of learning that he

---

<sup>1</sup> Shawqī Dayf, al-'Aṣr al-'Abbāsī, Cairo, 1973, 2, 293

<sup>2</sup> Well-known for grammar and syntax

<sup>3</sup> A famous narrator of Ḥadīth and genealogist

<sup>4</sup> A famous narrator of Ḥadīth

encountered there: Philosophy, Astronomy, Adab-literature, poetry and logic, particularly by the last, which features in many of his qasidahs.<sup>1</sup>

### ***His Family***

Those writers who mention Ibn al-Rùmī's family agree that he lost them all, one by one. None, however, has established the chronological order of these calamities.

#### **His Father**

His father, al-'Abbàs, died when Ibn al-Rùmī was still a child, and, in consequence, made little impression on him - much less, at any rate, than his mother. In his *Dīwān* there are only a few references to his father, and those are indirect, speaking principally about his lineage:

الطويل

وكم من أب لي ماجد وإبن ماجد له شرف يربى على الشرف المربى<sup>2</sup> 46

---

<sup>1</sup> *Ilīyā al-Hāwī*, Ibn al-Rùmī, Beirut, 1980, 327

<sup>2</sup> *'Alī Ibn al-Rùmī*, *Dīwān*, 1, 213

46. How many glorious ancestors have I, themselves of glorious fathers, who were noble to the highest degree.

المنسرح

شاد لي السور بعد توطئة الأس أب قال انت للشرف<sup>1</sup> 28

28. My wall was constructed for me, after the laying of the foundations, by a father who said: "You are destined for nobility.

الكامل

أنا من علمت مكانه وابن الذي مازال فيكم يستعان فيحمد<sup>2</sup> 7

7. I am the one whose position you know well, and the son of he one whose help is still asked among you, and is praised.

In fact, we may doubt if he refers to his actual father at all in these lines. The mention of his pre-fathers is made in order to demonstrate that he could versify father as well as any native-born Arab poet.

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<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, , Dīwān, 4, 207

<sup>2</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 2, 254

The lines that we have so far quoted are typical of those produced by Arab poets of his period in commonplace Madh. They are verses rather than poetry. Many of the lines that he wrote in this genre fall into separate hemistichs, or have at least a significant pause at the end of the first hemistich, e.g. :

الكامل

1 مولا هم و غذي نعمتهم والروم حين تتصني 1

أصلي

I am their slave ,and their favour is my sustenance;  
when you trace my ancestry I am greck by origin.

He displays, in such lines, no very exceptional poetic talent.

### His Mother

His mother was named Ḥasnah bint ‘Abdullāh al-Sajarī.<sup>2</sup> She died when Ibn al-Rūmī was already middle-aged.

He composed a long elegy for her, which begins :

الطويل

<sup>1</sup> ‘Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, , Dīwān, 5, 145

<sup>2</sup> Khalīl Mardam, Ibn al-Rūmī, Beirut, 1988, 11

أفيسا دما إن الرزايا لها قيم **1**

فليس كثيرا أن تجودا لها بدم<sup>1</sup>

\* \* \*

أقول وقد قالوا أتبكي كفاقد رضاعا **11**

وأين الكهل من راضع الحلم

هي ألام يا للناس جرعت تكلها ومن يبكي أما لم تدم قط لاينم **12**

1. (O eyes) pour out blood. Losses have value. It is not much to ask that you should be generous to her with your blood.

\* \* \*

11. I say as they have said "Do you weep like one who has lost his suckling". Who can but give? How can we compare the middle age of a man with that of one who sucks the teat.

12. She was a mother, O people, I have been made to swallow her loss. But he who weeps for a blameless mother will never be rebuked.

Ibn al-Rūmī's use of the plural **الحلم** instead of the dual (or singular) is presumably the result of the exigencies of the metre.

<sup>1</sup> 'Alī Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 6, 64

The frequent use of unconnected hemistichs in this gasidah , in which the sense does not continue from one shatr to the next, may be taken as producing the effect of someone sobbing rhythmically. An example is :

هِيَ الأُم يَا لِلنَّاسِ جَرَعَتْ تَكْلَهَا      وَمَنْ يَبْكِي أَمَا لَمْ تَدَمْ قَطْ لَا يَنْدَمُ      12

### His brother

His brother's name was Muḥammad. We know only that he was older than Ibn al-Rùmī , that he predeceased him but outlived his mother, and that he was a katib to 'Ubayd Allāh Ibn 'Abd Allāh Ibn al-Ṭāhir.

There are a number of elegies to his brother in the Dīwān, there are also other gasidahs that contain mention of him:

الطويل

1      وَتَسْلِينِي الأَيَّامَ لَا أَنْ لَوْعَتِي      وَلَا حَزَنِي كَالشَّيْءِ يَنْسَى فَيَعْرَبُ<sup>1</sup>

2      وَلَكِنْ كَفَانِي مَسْلِيًا وَمَعْرِيًا      أَنْ المَدَى بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَكَ يَقْرَبُ

---

<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 1, 153, 154

1. Time is causing me to forget you, not because my grief and sadness are like something that can be forgotten and but aside.

2. But because it is sufficient consolation that the distance between us is getting less.

He also speaks of his brother in poems composed when the latter was still alive:

الوافر

أبا اسحاق لاتغضب فأرضى بعفوك دون مأمول الثواب<sup>1</sup> 1

\* \* \*

على أن الفتى لم يجن ذنبا إليك ولم يجز سنن الصواب 4

\* \* \*

تجاوز عن أخي وشقيق نفسي فجنبي مذ عتبت عليه ناب 9

1. O Abū Ishāq, do not be angry; for I will be content with your forgiveness, without any reward but would have been hoped for,

\* \* \*

---

<sup>1</sup> 'Alī Ibn al-Rūmī, , Dīwān, 1, 381, 382

4. Considering that the man has not committed a sin against you and has not departed from the paths of righteousness.

\* \* \*

9. Forgive my brother, my very dear brother, for I have been sleepless since you rebuked him.

### His son

His family appears to have comprised a wife and three children.

Tragedy first struck with the death of his middle son, Muḥammad, who died of a hemorrhage. The aqṣidah in which Ibn al-Rūmī elegises him is generally considered the finest elegy in Arabic literature.<sup>1</sup> I shall discuss this qasidah and the analyses that have been made of it later:

الطويل

1 بكاوكما يشفى وان كان لا يجدى فجودا فقد أودى نظيركما عندى<sup>2</sup>

\* \* \*

4 توخى حمام الموت أوسط صبيتي فله كيف اختار واسطة العقد

---

<sup>1</sup> ṭīyā al-Hāwī, Ibn al-Rūmī , 243-246. See also Aḥmad Khālid, Ibn al-Rūmī , Tunisia, 1985, 141-144

<sup>2</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī , Dīwān, 2, 145

1. Your (his eyes) weeping is solace, even if it is useless; be generous, for he who was your equal has perished.

\* \* \*

4. Death has chosen my middle child. For God's sake how could he choose the best stone of the necklace?

It would seem that his elegy for his middle son drained him of creativity in further grief; when his eldest son, Hibat Allāh died, he was unable to produce an elegy that in any way matched the earlier one.

الكامل

إبني إنك والعزاء معا بالامس لف عليكما كفن<sup>1</sup> 8

\* \* \*

أولادنا أنتم لنا فتن 19  
وتفارقون فأنتم محن

8. O my son yesterday you and consolation were both wrapped in a winding sheet.

\* \* \*

19. O our children, you are our infatuation. But when you leave us you become our affliction.

---

<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 6, 258, 259

al-'Aqqād says about this qasidah that it was closer to sobbing than to weeping.

Ibn al-Rùmī also elegised his youngest son, without mentioning his name:

الطويل

- |                             |   |   |
|-----------------------------|---|---|
| حماء الكرى هم سرى فتأوبا    | فبات يراعي النجم حتى تصوبا <sup>1</sup> | 1 |
| أعيني جودا لي فقد جدت للثرى | بأكثر مما تمنعان وأطيبا                 | 2 |
| بنى الذي اهديته أمس للثرى   | فله ما أقوى قناتي وأصلبا                | 3 |

1. A care that travelled by night prevented him from sleeping and kept returning so he spent the night looking at the stars until they disappeared.

2. O my eyes, be generous with your abundant tears for me, because I have been generous to the earth with something greater than what you are denying me.

3. It was my son whom I gave as a gift to the earth yesterday. God knows how strong and still I kept my back.

Shortly after Ibn al-Rùmī had suffered the loss of all the children, he

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<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, *Dīwān*, 1, 263

was further afflicted by the death of his wife.<sup>1</sup>

### ***Why the early Arab biographies omit Ibn al-Rùmī***

"I found that most of the earlier biographies that discussed Ibn al-Rùmī's life and work do not go deeply into his circumstances; they are not comprehensive and they do not arrange systematically what they have found. And how can a writer write in detail about him when all that has come down to us does not serve even to quench a part of one's thirst or to satisfy a part of one's need."<sup>2</sup>

He tries, he says, to be fair in his comparison of Ibn al-Rùmī with other Arab poets.

The man who suffered as much as Ibn al-Rùmī, does not exist, and the poet who suffered as much as he does not exist. Contemptuous of its great men or less inclined to honour its heroes?

al-Mazini's comments on the lack of material of Ibn al-Rùmī's life are certainly true but what he says concerning the attitude of all Arabs to their great figures, particularly literary pilgrims, is disputable. If it were so, al-Mutanabbī, al-Ma'arrī, Abū Nuwās, Bashshār and others would not have received the attention that they did from the early biographers.<sup>3</sup> al-'Aqqād believes that Ibn al-Rùmī was a well-known

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<sup>1</sup> 'Abd al-Ḥamid Jīdah, *al-Hijā 'Inda Ibn al-Rùmī*, Beirut, 1974, 55

<sup>2</sup> Ibrāhīm al-Māzinī, *Ibn al-Rùmī*, Beirut, 1987, 15

<sup>3</sup> 'Abbās al-'Aqqād, *Ibn al-Rùmī*, 50

figure during his lifetime and that his poetry was learnt and enjoyed by all classes. He adds that although Caliphs are known to have been familiar with his work, they never instructed him to attend their courts. Muḥammad Sallām, on the other hand, thinks that his fame was more on account of his gloomy temper and of the bad luck that dogged him and seemed to be passed on by him to others.<sup>1</sup>

'Atawī says that the literary criteria of the early Arab critics and biographers could not be applied to the work of Ibn al-Rùmī and that it was consequently impossible to provide any professional study of his poetry until comparatively late.<sup>2</sup> The principal reason however, for the neglect of Ibn al-Rùmī is the fact that he was a Shi'i and so opposed to the 'Abbasid Caliphs.

For this reason, people were afraid to write seriously about him, and even to be friends with him. All the writers who speak of his being a Shi'i, cite in evidence, the Jīmiyyah and the Nūniyyah.

Muḥammad Sallām divides the writers into two classes, those who think he was a Shi'ite by conviction and those who believe that he was passionately attached to Ahl al-Bayt, as were many people at that time. Muḥammad Sallām argues for Ibn al-Rùmī belonging to the second category; Shi'ism then was a rallying cry for those disaffected with the

---

<sup>1</sup> Muḥammad Sallām, *Dirāsāt fi al-adab-al-'Arabī*, al-Isxandaria, n.d., 313

<sup>2</sup> Fawzī 'Aṭawī, *Ibn al-Rùmī*, Beirut, 1989, 5

ruling 'Abbasids. He found a warm welcome from the Shi'i leaders, because he glorified them, and they in turn lavished gifts on him.<sup>1</sup>

Jiddah approaches the matter in criticism of al-'Aqqād's view. He says that al-'Aqqād is relying on inadequate evidence in using only the Jimiyyah to prove that Ibn al-Rùmī was a Shi'i. He likewise criticises Guest for using only the Nūniyyah for the same purpose. Jiddah does not believe that Ibn al-Rùmī was a Shi'i on the grounds that :

1. His father was a Mawla and so ought to have been a supporter of the pro-Mawali 'Abbasid faction.
2. When al-Musta'in fled from Samārrā to hide in Baghdad and to gather support against al-Mu'tazz.

Ibn al-Rùmī stood by him, thus indicating that he was not particularly fanatical for the Shi'i cause.

Jiddah then comes to the conclusion that Ibn al-Rùmī belongs to muḥammad Sallām's secret category, that is those who are sentimentally attached to the 'Alids and that this was the reason for his composing the two relevant qasidahs.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Muḥammad Sallām, *Dirāsāt fi al-adab-al'Arabī*, 315, 316

<sup>2</sup> 'Abd al-Ḥamid Jiddah *al-Hijā 'Inda Ibn al-Rùmī*, 59, 60

However, it is very difficult to accept that Ibn al-Rùmī was not a Shi'ite in lines of panegyric such as this, from the Nūniyyah in praise of Yaḥyā Ibn 'Umar .

الرمل

فاصبروا يهلكهم الله لكم	مثل ما أهلك أدواء اليمن <sup>1</sup>	36
* * *		
قرب النصر فلا تستبطنوا	قرب النصر يقينا غير ظن	39
ومن التقصير صوني مهجتي	فعل من أضحى إلى الدنيا ركن	40
لا دمي يسفك في نصرتمكم	لا ولا عرضي فيكم يمتهن	41
غير أنني بادل نفسي وإن	حقن الله دمي في من حقن	42
ليت أنني عرض من دونكم	ذاك أو درع يقيكم أو مجن	43
أتلقي بجيبي من رمى	وينحري وبيصري من طعن	44
* * *		
شهد الله وميل خالص	صدق الظاهر منه ما بطن	49
بموالاة لكم صداقة	سلكت مسلك روح في بدن	50
فهي لي مادمت حيا ملبس	ومتى ما مت كانت لي كفن	51

36. Be patient. God will destroy them for you, just as  
He destroyed the Kings of the Yemen.

<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Diwān, 6, 272-273

\* \* \*

39. Victory is at hand - do not be slow; Victory is surely at hand not merely imaginary.

40. It is dereliction of duty for me to keep my head safe, like those who have succumbed to much attachment to this world.

41. My blood is not shed for your aid, no and my honour is not tested for you.

42. Nevertheless, I offer myself in exchange, even if God disposes my blood as a worthy sacrifice.

43. I wish I were a target instead of you, either that or a coat mail or a shield to protect you.

44. I confront the archer with my forehead and the throater/pikeman with my throat and breast.

\* \* \*

49. God bears witness and sincere sympathy of which the apparent gives evidence to the hidden.

50. To a true support for you, which works like a spirit in a body.

51. This will be my attire for as long as I live and when I die, it will be my shroud.

It is too difficult to believe, particularly in view of these last three lines, that Ibn al-Rùmī was not a Shi'ī.

His warlike feelings on behalf of the Shi'ah are displayed in many of his qasidahs, even if he did not actively take part in these campaigns.

الطويل

أكل أوان للنبي محمد قتل زكى بالدماء مضر ج <sup>1</sup>	3
* * *	
أفى الحق أن يمساوا خماسا وأنتم يكاد أخوكم بطنه يتبعج	7 8
* * *	
وليدهم يادى الطوى ووليدكم من الريف ريان العظام خدلج	80
* * *	
يببب اذا الصهباء روت مشاشه يساوره عالج من الروم أعلج	89
فيطعنه فى سبة السوء طعنة يقوم لها من تحته وهو أفحج	90
لذاك بنى العباس يصبر مثلكم ويصبر للموت الكمى المدجج	91
* * *	
لعل قلوبا قد أطلتم غليلها ستظفر منكم بالشفاء فتتلج	111

3. Is there to be in every age a pure descendent of the Prophet Muḥammad murdered and stained with blood.

\* \* \*

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<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 2, 23-30

78. Is it right that they should go hungry while your  
(the 'Abbāsids) brother almost burst with gluttony.

\* \* \*

80. Their child is empty bellied whereas your child has  
soft bones and a plump body from easy living.

\* \* \*

89. He spends the night, when the wine has soaked  
mind, talking with a coarse Byzantine infidel.

90. Who gives him such a thrust in his dishonorable  
ways that he gets up from under him bandy legged  
because of it.

91. It is for this that the like of you, O Banu I-'Abbas,  
display endurance while the brave armoured warrior  
displays endurance in the face of death.

\* \* \*

111. Perhaps hearts, in which you have for a long time  
fostered hatred, will obtain a cure from you and be  
restored to health.

Concerning the reasons for Ibn al-Rùmī's lamenting Muḥammad  
Ibn 'Abdullāh Ibn al-Ṭāhir who had murdered Yaḥya al-'Aqqād says that  
Ibn al-Rùmī was never particularly strong in either his enmity or his  
partnership for anybody, and adds that the Ṭāhiri's had always

protected in return for this, Ibn al-Rùmī lamented their deaths and praised them. al-'Aqqād says that all the Tāhirids were Shi'ite at heart, demonstrating this by the feeble support given by Sulayman Ibn 'Abdullāh al-Ṭāhir to the 'Abbasids against Ḥasan Ibn Zayd

البيسط

- 1 نبتت خيل ابن زيد أ قبلت حيناً تريدنا لتحسينا الامرينا<sup>1</sup>
- 2 يا قوم إن كانت الانباء صادقة فالويل لى ولجميع الطاهريين
- 3 أما أنا فاذا اصطفت كتائبنا أكون من بينهم رأس الموالينا
- 4 فالعذر عند رسول الله منبسط اذا احتسبت دماء الفاطميين

1. I was told that the calvary of Ibn Zayd had approached on an occasion, making for us, in order to make us endure the two kinds (defeat and death).

2. O people, if the prophets are truthful, woe is me and are all the Tāhirids.

3. As for me, when our squadrons are drawn up, I shall be the head of the allies among them.

4. My excuse is clear to the Apostle of God, since I would not spill the blood of the descendants of Fātimah.

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<sup>1</sup> Taken from 'Abbās al-'Aqqād, Ibn al-Rùmī, 184, who gives no further reference

This seems a very plausible mask for his lamenting Muḥammad Ibn ‘Abdullāh Ibn al-Ṭāhir and his praising others of the āhirids. Other authorities believe that this is also the reason why he did not praise most of the ‘Abbasid Caliphs: the few that he did praise were notably indulgent to ‘Alī’s descendants, for example al-Mu’tamid and al-Muntaṣir, who was like his father al-Mutawakkil, in his persecutions of them.<sup>1</sup>

***The reasons why Ibn al-Rùmī did not compose Madih on the Caliphs and the Leaders of the Turks***

We have seen that one reason for Ibn al-Rùmī’s unwillingness to compose poems eulogising the ‘Abbasids, and indeed for his not coming to Court to solicit favours from them, was his distaste for those who persecuted the Alids.

Another possible reason for his behaviour is that he was very superstitious and travelling away from Baghdad - from his home even - made him extremely anxious. He did infact travel on a number of occasions to other cities, hoping to improve the quality of his life. Once arrived, however, he invariably found that his destination was no better than the one he had just left. He would return home in great disappointment. On Baghdad, for instance, he writes :

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<sup>1</sup> Nāzik Sabā Yārid, *Kull mā qāla-hu Ibn al-Rùmī fi al hijā*, London, 1988, 12

الطويل

لقد أنكرتني بعلمك وأهلها بل الأرض بل بغداد صاحبة التبل<sup>1</sup> **64**

64. Ba'labakk and its people have rejected me, may  
the rest of the world even Baghdad is a place of exile.

On travel he writes:

الطويل

أذاقتني الأسفار ماكره الغنى الى وأغراني برفض المطالب<sup>2</sup> **8**

فأصبحت في الاثراء أزهد زاهد **9**

وإن كنت في الاثراء أرغب راغب

8. Travelling made me taste that which made riches  
distasteful to me; it made wish to refuse any more to  
seek out what I desired.

9. I would have become the leader of those who  
abstain from wealth, even if I had been greediest  
person for it.

After his experiences of travelling, and because of his  
superstitions he kept to Baghdad, refusing to travel again, making his  
excuses to the princes and ministers who invited him; he would send

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<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 5, 186

<sup>2</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 1, 220

his poetry to them and request them to send any gifts for him to Baghdad.

He writes:

الطويل

ولما دعاني للمثوبة سيد يرى المدح عارا قبل بذل الماثوب<sup>1</sup> 12

\* \* \*

فقدمت رجلا رغبة في رغبة وأخرت رجلا رهبة للمعاطب 14

\* \* \*

لقيت من البر التباريح بعد ما 19

لقيت من البحر ابيضاض الذوائب

\* \* \*

أبى أن يغيث الارض حتى إذا ارتمت 23

برحلى اتاها بالغيوث السواكب

\* \* \*

لتعويق سيرى أو دحوض مطيتى واخضاب مزور عن المجد ناكب 25

\* \* \*

ولم لا ولو ألقيت فيه وصخرة لو أقيت منه القعر أول رأسب 49

\* \* \*

فأيسر اشفاقى من الماء أننى أمر به فى الكوز مر المجانب 51

وأخشى الردى منه على كل شارب فكيف بأمنيه على نفس راكب 52

<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 1, 220-228

أظل إذا هزته ريح ولأأت له الشمس أمواجاً طوال الغوارب 53

كأنى أرى فيهن فرسان بهمة يليحون نحوى بالسيوف القواطب 54

\* \* \*

ألا ماجد الأخلاق حر فعاله 86

تباري عطاياها عطايا السحائب

\* \* \*

يسير نحوى عرفه فيزورنى هنيئاً ولم أركب صعاب المراكب 88

\* \* \*

أعزب عنك الراى فى أن تثيبنى مقيماً مصوناً عن عناء المطالب 112

12. When a prince invited me for reward - a prince who thought that it was shameful to accept praise before lavishing recompense.

\* \* \*

14. I would take one step forward, in desire for gifts and I would take one step back in fear of dangers.

\* \* \*

19. I encountered misfortunes on land, after having had my hair turn white at sea.

\* \* \*

23. The sea refused to water the earth until, when I was starting my journey, it poured a great torrent upon it.

\* \* \*

25. In order to delay my journey or to make my camel slip, and to make rich the one who turns aside from glory.

\* \* \*

49. And why not? when if a stone and I were thrown into the sea I should hit the bottom first.

\* \* \*

51. The easiest way of soothing my fear of water is that I should pass by it in a jar like a hydrophobic.

52. I fear that everyone who drinks from it will die; How can I trust it with the life of someone who sails in it?

53. When the sun shines on it and a wind moves it in long billowing waves.

54. I seem to see among them brave horsemen brandishing their sharp swords against me.

\* \* \*

86. O you who are noble of qualities, who are liberal of deeds, whose gifts compete with the gifts of the clouds.

\* \* \*

88. Who dispatches his favours so that they visit me  
at ease at home, without having to endure the  
hardships of travel.

\* \* \*

112. Will you seem to lack judgment if you reward me,  
safe at home, far from the worry of having to seek this.

The sentiments expressed by Ibn al-Rùmī in this gasidah certainly appear to indicate a morbid fear of water on his part, and perhaps of travel itself.

His principal reason for refraining from praise of the Turkish leaders may well have been that his mother was Persian. The influence exerted by Persians early on in the 'Abbasid period was subordinated to that exerted by Turks at precisely the time of al-Mutawakkil's accession.

Jidah says:

Ibn al-Rùmī had Persian links on his mother's side, and it may have been them that influenced him, causing him to support and eulogize the Persians, while opposing and lampooning the Turks, as he did in particular during the struggle between al-Musta'in and al-Mu'tazz, supported by these two factors respectively.<sup>1</sup> Another reason for his pro-Persian bias is likely to have been the superiority of the Persians in

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<sup>1</sup> 'Abd al-Ḥamid Jīdah, *al-Hijā' 'ind Ibn al-Rùmī*, 53

Arabic literary production, for example Muḥammad and Sulaymān Ibn 'Abdullāh of the Ṭāhirid family.

As al-'Aqqād says:-

The caliphs used to compose Ghazal and songs as did also Amirs and Wazirs, whether Persian or Arab.<sup>1</sup>

The Persians then were more susceptible to Ibn al-Rùmī's praise than the Turks, since the latter, being soldiers, understood little of literature and were not as culturally sophisticated as the former.

Shawqī Ḍayf remarks that Ibn al-Rùmī did not praise the Turkish leaders, because he felt that they would not understand his poetry and consequently not reward him.<sup>2</sup>

### ***Temperament***

The books written about Ibn al-Rùmī have a good deal to say about his temperament. This is taken from his own poetry and the anecdotes told about him by his contemporaries and recorded in the biographies. Khalil Mardam gives two sources for his description of Ibn al-Rùmī, as:-

"a nervous person, dominated by melancholy, which if exaggerated, turned him into a different person. He was liable to talking to himself,

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<sup>1</sup> 'Abbās al-'Aqqād, Ibn al-Rùmī, 38

<sup>2</sup> Shawqī Ḍayf, al-'Aṣr al-'Abbasī, 2, 301

subject to illness, hypochondriac, lecherous, greedy for pleasure, susceptible for beauty, addicted to wine, greedy for food".<sup>1</sup>

Jurj 'Abdu Ma'tuq has produced the same analysis as Khalil Mardam:

He was a highly sensitive, nervous, indecisive and superstitious person, who easily became angry, but was easily reconciled and indulgent towards people who propitiated him.<sup>2</sup>

Most writers suggest that his temperament was formed by the calamities that he had suffered throughout his life. Others point to his odd physique as one of the reasons for his unstable temperament.

al-'Aqqād says:-

"His head was small and he was pale and sometimes quite drained of any colour, his face was earnest and there appeared in it both sternness and behaviour. He was thin and clearly nervous, taller rather than shorter, thick-bearded and bald, having gone grey and then bald at an early age".<sup>3</sup>

al-'Aqqād's picture of Ibn al-Rùmī, was drawn from his poetry, and it suggests to him a sickly disposition. This appears to be a reasonable inference. However Jurj 'Abdu Ma'tuq gives a fuller picture, which is also taken from personal descriptions in his poetry, where he describes

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<sup>1</sup> Khalīl Mardam, Ibn al-Rùmī, 13

<sup>2</sup> Jurj 'Abd Ma'tuq, Ibn al Rùmī Beirut, 1984,9

<sup>3</sup> 'Abbās al-'Aqqād, Ibn al-Rùmī, 93

himself as fair skinned, with a handsome face and fine black hair and a square brow.

This is clearly a contradiction in the two accounts. On the whole, one is inclined to follow al-'Aqqād, for although Ma'tuq claims to have based his description on a reading of Ibn al-Rùmī's poetry he adduces no quotation to support it.

However, Ma'tuq also quotes him as, saying that there were many anecdotes told about him, in particular about his premature baldness and grey hair, which he hated and felt ashamed of, to the extent that he would cover it with a turban. It seems most probable that Ma'tuq indeed takes his descriptions from Ibn al-Rùmī's poetry but has omitted to provide references for these. al-'Aqqād's descriptions then have to be accepted.<sup>1</sup>

For example,

1. al-'Aqqād's description of Ibn al-Rùmī's early greyness is taken from lines.

الخفيف

83 اذ تنقصتني بصعلكة الرأس سفاها فأنممت غير ذميمة<sup>2</sup>

84 ما تعديت أن وصفت خشاشا لودعيا كالحية المشهومة

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<sup>1</sup> 'Abbās al-'Aqqād, Ibn al-Rùmī, 93-102

<sup>2</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 6, 119

83. When you make fun of me, foolishly, because of my baldness, and you abuse me for what is not to be ashamed,

84. you are quite right but (don't forget) describing an intelligent, crafty man, like a snake would be the same.

That is to say that the snake which is held up as an example of intelligence has a small head without hair.

## 2. Ibn al-Rùmī's paleness.

الكامل

4 وبمشرق صافى الأديم فيه اتلاق من صفيح يمان<sup>1</sup>

4. And with shining, pure skin, in which is brightness (like that of Yemeni blade).

## 3. Ibn al-Rùmī's stature

الكامل

7 وأرى قوامى لجج فى تقويسه ولقد يلج اللين فى تعطيفه<sup>2</sup>

7. I see that my frame has persisted in being bowed;  
Softness tends to persist in being easily bent

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<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 6, 275

<sup>2</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 4, 226

## 4. His Beard :

البيسط

14 ولم أزل سبط الأخلاق واسعها وإن غدوت امرءاً فى لحيتى كئث<sup>1</sup>

14. I am still generous and liberal person, even if I have become a man with a full beard.

## 5. His baldness :

الطويل

3 عزمتم على لبس العمامة حيلة لتستر ما جرن على من الصلغ<sup>2</sup>

3. I resolved to wear the turban as a ruse to conceal the baldness which had come to me.

'Aṭawī suggests that past ideals that he had been eager to realise and the unfortunate reality that surrounded him may have been reasons for the mental and bodily disturbances that assailed him and made his views, his demeanour and his behaviour very odd.

The early biographies do not say a great deal about Ibn al-Rūmī, but they do include a large number of Comic anecdotes in which he figures. Being unanimously regarded as a laughing stock was perhaps one of the most difficult burdens that he had to bear. He was also induced to believe that he was a source of ill-fortune, both for himself and for

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<sup>1</sup> 'Alī Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 1, 471

<sup>2</sup> 'Alī Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 4, 105

anyone who consorted with him. This superstition still lingers, al-Māzinī says "When I wrote some articles about Ibn al-Rùmī twenty years ago, my leg was broken in a very unusual manner. Also, when al-Shaykh al-Sharif completed his commentary on the first part of Ibn al-Rùmī's *Dīwān* he was pensioned off. The book-seller who published the work broke his leg, as well. So, when I write again about Ibn al-Rùmī, I hope I will not lose my head".<sup>1</sup>

Kāmil Sa'fān says something similar "People say that al-'Aqqād was imprisoned because of ill-fortune brought by Ibn al-Rùmī, and that Ḥusayn Naṣṣār was dismissed from *Akādimiyyat al Funūn* because he worked on the manuscripts of Ibn al-Rùmī."<sup>2</sup>

al-Māzinī and Sa'fān did not seriously believe themselves in the ill-fortune associated with Ibn al-Rùmī, but said such things to illustrate popular belief. They felt strongly that he had been despicably treated both when alive and after his death.

al-Māzinī says "People had no mercy on his weakness or pity for it. They continually laughed at him and mocked him. Some made fun of him and found fault with his walk; others nearly claimed that he was impotent and taunted him of being effeminate; others enviously criticised his poetry, in order to provoke him, while actually wishing that

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<sup>1</sup> Ibrāhīm al-Māzinī, *Ibn al-Rùmī*, 59-60

<sup>2</sup> Kāmil Sa'fān, *Qirā'ah fi, Dīwān Ibn al-Rùmī*, Cairo, 1986, 17

they could compete with him".<sup>1</sup> The only source for our knowledge of Ibn al-Rùmī's misfortunes is his documentation of them in his *Dīwān*.

One of the persecutions that he suffered was at the hands of al-Akhfash. The latter would frequently arrange for someone to knock on Ibn al-Rùmī's door and to reply, when asked who it was, "I am bitter the son of colocynth or similar sinister names. Ibn al-Rùmī in consequence used to restrict himself and his family to the house, for fear that some danger might arise if they went outside.

Ibn al-Rùmī responded to this persecution by writing poems of invective against al-Akhfash. The latter pretended not to be concerned about this and actually used to teach his students some of these poems.<sup>2</sup>

al-'Aqqād tells us that al-Zubaydī gives us an example of the poems that he was taught by al-Akhfash.<sup>3</sup>

المنسرح

قولا لنحوينا أبي حسن إن حسامي متى ضربت مضى<sup>4</sup> 1

\* \* \*

لا يأممني السفية بادرتي فأبني عارض لمن عرضا 19

<sup>1</sup> Ibrāhīm al-Māzinī, *Ibn al-Rùmī*, 43, 44

<sup>2</sup> Abū al-Ḥasan Ibn Rashīq, *al-'umdaḥ*, Beirut, 1972, 2, 168

<sup>3</sup> 'Abbbās al-'Aqqād, *Ibn al-Rùmī*, 178

<sup>4</sup> 'Alī Ibn al-Rùmī, *Dīwān*, 4, 55, 56

20 عندى له السوط إن تلوم فى السير وعندى اللجام إن ركضا

1. Tell our grammarian Abū Ḥasan that my sword is sharp and cuts when I strike.

\* \* \*

19. The foolish man will not be safe from the edge of my sword, because I attack those who attack me.

20. I have a whip for him if he goes too slow, and I have a bridle if he goes too fast.

However, al-Akhfash could not reply to Ibn al-Rūmī's lampoons on him and sent him a gift begging him to desist. Ibn al-Rūmī wrote a panegyric on him:

الخفيف

1 ذكر الأخفش القديم فقلنا إن للأخفش الحديث لفضلا<sup>1</sup>

\* \* \*

5 بدأ النحو ناشأ فغذاه أحدث الأخفشين فانقاد رسلا

\* \* \*

14 هو بحر من البحور فراث ليس ملحا وليس حاشاه ضحلا

1. The older al-Akhfash has been honourably mentioned, and I say that the younger al-Akhfash also possesses virtues.

\* \* \*

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<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 5, 107, 108

5. Grammar had just began to grow, and the younger al-Akfaḥ nourished so that it flowed gently.

\* \* \*

14. He is a sea of fresh water; he is not salty and he is far from being shallow.

Returning to al-Māzinī's remark concerning Ibn al-Rūmī's method of walking and the jokes that people made about it, we find that Ibn al-Rūmī himself acknowledged that his gait was abnormal.

الخفيف

3 إن لي مشية أغربل فيها أمانا أن أساقط الأسقاطا<sup>1</sup>

3. I have a gait like someone using a sieve. It is the only way that I can be sure of not falling down.

There are only a few poems in Ibn al-Rūmī's *Dīwān* referring to those who claimed that he was effeminate:

مجزوء الخفيف

1 عاقب الله كل من قال إني مخنث<sup>2</sup>

2 بمببتي مع أمه ليلة لاتنث

3 لو رأى ثم ويحه أرضها كيف تحرث

4 وهى من حر فيشتى تتلظى وتلهث

<sup>1</sup> 'Alī Ibn al-Rūmī, *Dīwān*, 4, 81

<sup>2</sup> 'Alī Ibn al-Rūmī, *Dīwān*, 1, 477

## 5 لدرى هل مذكر فوقها أم مؤنث

1. May God punish everyone who says that I am effeminate
2. By my sleeping with his mother for one night - not for three.
3. If he were to see - watched man! - how her field is ploughed.
4. While she blazed and panted at the heat of my glans.
5. He would know whether it was a man or a woman who covered her.

These allegations of effeminism were not only made in mockery. He asked for the hand of the daughter of al Naḍir al Junayd, whereupon the latter's brother, Abū Mundhir, advised him not to consent, on the grounds that Ibn al-Rùmī was effeminate.

Ibn al-Rùmī responded:

الطويل

1 أبا منذر بالله إلا صدقتى علام ولم خنتني يا أبا النضر<sup>1</sup>

2 أنمت لقائي حرمة لك نكتها فلم أشفها أم قلت ماقلت بالحرز

\* \* \*

6 ولو مس ثوبى ثوب أمك مسة لأولدها خمسين مثلك فى شهر

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<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 3, 161

7 فآية آياتى وأى أدلة تدل على التخنيث يابن أبى عمرو

\* \* \*

11 فان كنت فى ريب ولم تر آية تبين ما قد ليس الشك من أمرى

12 فجرب على إحدى بناتك فحلتى متى شئت فالتجريب أتلج للصدر

13 فلو لقيتني بكرهن لقاءة لما نسيت أيرى إلى آخر الدهر

1. O' Abù Mundhir, brother of al-Naḍir, will you not, by God, tell me truly, just why you have called me effeminate.

2. Has a woman of your family whom I have fucked complained of my performance, since I have not satisfied her, or have you said what you said as a guess.

6. If my clothes were to touch your mother's clothes just once, they would make her give birth to fifty like you in one month.

7. O' Ibn Abi 'Amr what indications have you seen in me to indicate that I am effeminate?

11. If you are in any doubt, and you have seen no indication that will clear up your doubts about me,

12. You may try out my virility on one of your daughters, whenever you like, trial is the best way of reassuring you.

13. If a virgin daughter of yours were to encounter me just once, she would not forget my penis until the end of time.

People accused him of effeminacy, because of his walk which he described in the following verse :

الخفيف

3 إن لي مشية أغربل فيها حادرا أن أساقط الأسقاطا<sup>1</sup>

3. I have a gait like someone using a sieve. It is the only way that I can be sure of not falling down.

This caused al-Māzinī to remark on Ibn al-Rūmī's method of walking.

Consequently, he mentions the male genitals a great deal in his poetry e.g.:

مجزوء الرجز

1 الزب زب للنساء يمقنه ويخفنه<sup>2</sup>

\* \* \*

3 أعظمه فدعونه ربا وإن صحفنه

4 لو يستطعن أكلنه من شهوة ورشفنه

<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 4, 81

<sup>2</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 4, 263

1.The penis is penis for women, who desire it and fear it.

\* \* \*

3.They make it large / esteem it highly, and they call it a plentiful water supply ; although they spell it back to front ( i. e. أير )

4. If they could they would eat it or suck it , because of their great desire for it.

Again , addressing Ibn al-Khabbāzah :

الرجز

1 وفيشة ترضي أكف الرازه<sup>1</sup>

2 فطحاء تشفي لاعج الحزازه

\* \* \*

9 أولجتها في كعتب الخبازه

1. There is a glans , which would satisfy the hands of the master builder,

2. A broad headed one, which would cure the agony of heart-ache.

\* \* \*

9. Which I have inserted into the wide arms of al-Khabbazah.

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<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān,3,238-239

***Sexual relations with both men and women (married and unmarried).***

المتقارب

- 1 هجاني حفيص ولم أهجه ولكنه رجل عربدا<sup>1</sup>
- 2 غدا ظالما جاحدا نعمتي وما كان حقي أن أجحدا
- 3 ألم تك كفي مشطا له وأيرى لزوجته مرودا؟
- 4 أحك بفيشته كينها وأكل جار أستها الأرمدا

1. Hufays has lampooned me, although I have not lampooned him but he is a disagreeable man.

2. He has wrongly denied my kindness to him, and I did not deserve to have it denied.

3. Has not my hand been a comb for him (i.e.: hit him around the head) and my penis a Kohl stick for his wife?

4. I rubbed her clitoris with its head and I applied kohl to the sore eyebrow of her arse.

Of an unmarried woman, he says:-

الوافر

- 1 بدت لي عادة لم تبد إلا توهما هناك البدر بدرا<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 2, 232

<sup>2</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 3, 60-61

- 2 تماشى الغنج من خفين صيغا وفاقا للمنى شكلا وقد
- 3 فقلت لها بكم هذان قالت بحملهما على كتفيك شهرا
- 4 فقلت وفيهما قدماك؟ قالت نعم فنخرت عشرا ثم عشرا
- 5 فقالت ما تركت لملتقانا؟ فقلت النيك قالت طاب جهرا
- 6 فملت بها إلى رحلى فكانت الذمطية بطنا وظهرا

1. A young girl appeared to me, who had only to appear for the full moon to imagine that she was the full moon,.

2. She walked flirtatiously wearing slippers that were fashioned as any woman would desire, in their shape and their value.

3. I said to her "How much do these cost?" She said "The price of bearing them on your shoulders for a month".

4. So I said "Is that with you in them?" She said "Yes" So I made lustful and appreciative noises time and time again.

5. She said, "What will you do when we meet (if you act like this now)? I said "fuck" She said "It is good to hear you say that aloud!"

6. So I led her to my saddle, and she was the most delightful mount from both front and back.

And of boys, he says:

الرجز

رب غلام وجهه لايفضحه<sup>1</sup> 1

\* \* \*

بت به ليل التمام أنكحه 4

أبركه طورا وطورا أبطحه 5

وتارة على القفا أسطحه 6

أسوه من أدوائه وأجرحه 7

بفبشة مملوءة تستسلحه 8

1. Many a boy, whose face did not disgrace him,

\* \* \*

4. Have I passed the night of the full moon bugging

5. Sometimes I make him kneel down,

Sometimes I lay him on his front

6. Sometimes I lay him on his back

7. Both curing him of his illness and wounding him.

8. With a full glans that pierces him like a weapon.

### ***Ibn al-Rùmī's Pride as a Poet***

A man asked Ibn al-Rùmī, "How do you come to have a great reputation in poetry when you are not an Arab? I think that you are either an Arab or an impostor in poetry. Ibn al-Rùmī said, "You are an

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<sup>1</sup> 'Alī Ibn al-Rùmī, *Dīwān*, 2, 89

imposter, since you have an Arab genealogy and you have no talent for poetry.

المجتث

إياك يابن بويب أن يستثار بويب<sup>1</sup> 7

\* \* \*

قد تحسن الروم شعرا ما أحسنته العريب 11

7. O Ibn Buwayb, take care lest Buwayb becomes overexcited.

\* \* \*

11. Greeks can produce poetry that is just as good as that of the little Arabs.

Ibn al-Rùmī also says of two detractors of his poetry, Abū Ḥasan al-Zayyādī and Miḥriz al-Kātib:

البسيط

عابوا قريضي وما عابوا بمعرفة 7

ولن ترى الشمس أبصار الخفافيش<sup>2</sup>

7. They have decried my poetry but they have not done so knowledgeably, the eyes of both of them could not see the sun.

<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, *Dīwān*, 1, 207

<sup>2</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, *Dīwān*, 3, 344

To Muḥammad Ibn al Ṭāhir he says:-

الوافر

أتيتك شاعرا فهجوت شعري وكانت هفوة منى وغلطه<sup>1</sup> 1

لقد أذكرتنى مثلا قديما جزاء مقبل الوجعاء شرطه 2

1. I came to you as a poet and you lampooned my poetry : this was a mistake on my part.

2. You have reminded me of an old proverb : the reward of the arse-licker is a fart.

### ***Daily life in Baghdad in Ibn al-Rūmī's poetry***

#### 1. The upper class

The upper class consisted of only one family in any given period. Firstly, the tāhirids occupied this position, they were later supplemented by the Banu Wahhab.

#### 2. The middle class:

There were merchants, secretaries who worked for the ruling family and commanders of the police.

Ibn al-Rūmī says:-

الخبيف

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<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 4, 65

42 أترانى دون الألى بلغوا الآمال من شرطة و من كتاب<sup>1</sup>

43 وتجار مثل البهائم فازوا بالمنى فى النفوس والأحاب

42. Do you think that I am lower than those policemen and Secretaries who have attained their ambitions.

43. And merchants like beasts who have achieved their desires for themselves and their lovers.

### 3. The lower classes

These formed the majority of the population and were mostly poor.

الطويل

1 أيلتمس الناس الغنى فيصيبهم والتمس القوت الطفيف فيلتوى<sup>2</sup>

1. Do people ask for wealth and it comes to them, while I ask for a little food and cannot get it?

Aḥmad Khālīd claims that: Ibn al-Rūmī was not one of the poor who complained of simple deprivation; he complained of unfairness, since he could not obtain everything that he desired - and his desires were unbounded.

However, Ibn al-Rūmī himself says of his situation, having asked Abū Sahl al-Nawbakhtī for some clothes for the winter.

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<sup>1</sup> 'Alī Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 1, 318

<sup>2</sup> 'Alī Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 6, 343

الرجز

إنك إن ماطلتني المواعدا <sup>1</sup>	99
وأضرم الصيف الأجاج الصاخدا	100
جاء الكساء عند ذاك باردا	101
بردا على برد الشتاء زائدا	102

99. If you delay giving me what you have promised,

100. And the boiling summer begins;

101. The clothes when they arrive will be cold,

102. Adding to the cold of winter.

And again, when asking Abù Ja'far al-Nawbakhtī for clothes:

الطويل

أبا جعفر لازلت معطى وواهبيا ومكسب أموال رغباب وكاسبيا <sup>2</sup>	1
طلبت كساء منك إذ أنت عامل	2
على قرية النعمان تعطي الرغائب	
فأوسعتني منعا إخالك نادما عليه وفي تمحيصه الآن راغبيا	3

1. Abù Ja'far, you are continually receiving and giving, lavishing ample wealth and gaining it .

2. I ask you for clothes, since you are a governor of the village of al-Nu'man fulfilling his wishes.

<sup>1</sup> 'Alī Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 2, 171

<sup>2</sup> 'Alī Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 1, 143

3. You have frequently refused them, which I hope you don't regret and for which you would now like to hear an excuse.

It seems likely that such verses represented the situation in which Ibn al-Rùmī found himself, as do the following verse.

الخفيف

2 وارتكاب الديون إياي في ظلك يهجوك باللسان الفصيح<sup>1</sup>

2. Allowing me to get into debt which under your patronage is something that lampoons you with a fluent tongue.

And the following on his income.

الخفيف

140 لى فى درهمين فى كل شهر من فنام ما يطرد الحوجاء<sup>2</sup>

140. I have two dirhams per month from various people; this serves to keep poverty at bay.

### Ibn al-Rùmī's Circles of Acquaintances in his *Dīwān*

#### 1. Friends and acquaintances

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<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, *Dīwān*, 2, 48

<sup>2</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, *Dīwān*, 1, 68

Those who had a close relationship with him either for an unspecified length of time. Many of them gave him money or gifts, but he often broke with them, when they no longer continued their gifts.

## 2. People whom he met casually in the street

Sometimes there were people who provoked his dislike, as for instance, men with long beards.

الخفيف

1 إن تطل لحية عليك وتعرض فالمخالي معروفة للحمير<sup>1</sup>

\* \* \*

3 لو غدا حكمها إلي لطارت في مهب الرياح كل مطير

\* \* \*

9 لحية أهملت فسالت وفاضت فإليها تشير كف المشير

1. If you have a long, flowing beard, even donkeys wear nose-bags.

\* \* \*

3. If the decision were left to me, it would fly in all directions blown by the wind.

\* \* \*

9. A beard that is neglected and flows luxuriantly, so that everyone points at it.

Again:

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<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 3, 32, 33

السريع

- 1 ولحية يحملها مائق مثل الشرايين إذا شرعا<sup>1</sup>
- 2 تقوده الريح بها صاغرا قودا عنيفا يتعب الأذعا
- 3 فإن عدا والريح فى وجهه لم ينبعث فى وجهه أصبعا
- 4 لو غاص فى البحر بها غوصة صاد بها حيتانه أجمعا

1. A beard borne by a fool, like sails when they are loosened.

2. The wind led him helplessly along by it, violently, wearying his head.

3. If he tries to progress against the wind, he cannot move a finger length forward against it.

4. If he dives into the sea with it, he catches with it all the fish that are in the sea.

Ibn al-Rùmī loved beauty and felt that ugliness was a presage of some ill fortune. Consequently, he reacted aggressively towards things and people who gave him this impression:

السريع

- 1 قصرت أخادعه وغارقذاله فكأنه متربص أن يصفعا<sup>2</sup>
- 2 وكأنما صفعت قفاه مرة وأحس ثانية لها فتجمعا

<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 4, 192

<sup>2</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 1, 12

1. His neck veins are shortened and the back of his head is lowered as though he were afraid of being struck.
2. It is as though he had been struck once and fears a second blow so that he cringes.

### The Natural World and Material Culture

Again about an ugly beast that he was riding.

المتقارب

- |                                   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| ركبت فصاحوا الصلاة الصلاة         | 1 |
| من بين كهل و من أمرد <sup>1</sup> |   |
| كانهم أبصروا آية                  | 2 |
| جلاها النبيون في مشهد             |   |
| * * *                             |   |
| كذا يعجب الناس من كل ما           | 4 |
| يكون إذا كان لم يعهد              |   |

1. I rode along and they cried out, "Prayer, prayer", both middle aged and clean-shaven men.

2. It was as though they had seen a miracle that the prophets had revealed in a shrine.

\* \* \*

4. Thus people marvel at anything, if they have never known it before.

About trees he says:

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<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 2, 256

الطويل

- 1 أيا شجرا بين الرسيس فعائل منحتك دمي صادقا غير كاذب<sup>1</sup>
- 2 نديت ولم تورق و لست بمثمر فكن عرضا مستهدفا للنوائب
- 3 فما فيك من ظل لغل ظهيرة وما فيك من جدوى لجان وحطب
- 4 و فيك على حرمانك الخير كله من الشوك ما لا وكن فيه لآتب
- 5 وأحسب ذاك الشوك لاشك بينه أفاع فلا أسقيت صوب السحائب

1. O trees between al-Rusays and 'Āqil I truly give you my blood
2. You are moist but with no leaves or fruit so intervene and be the target of the calamities
3. You have no shade for the afternoon's heat and you are no use to the gardener or the wood cutter
4. Although you look all goodness, you have thorns on which there are no nest for birds to return to.
5. I think that there are doubtless snakes among the thorns, so may you not be watered by the pouring of the clouds.

About clothes he says

الطويل

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<sup>1</sup> 'Alī Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 1, 333

- 1 يسألني فرخ الزنا فيما عمتي أمن سقم أم زينة للأوانس؟<sup>1</sup>
- 2 فقلت له لامن سقام لبستها ولا زينة للعاهرات النجائس
- 3 ولكنني مذ كنت طفلا وبافعا ومقتبلا أغرى بلبس القلانس
- 4 ولاأشتهي لبس الدراريع والقبأ

ولاذك مما أرتضي في الملابس

- 5 وأنت امرؤ ترضى بها وبليستها وقلبك مشغوف بحب البرانس

1. A bastard asked me why, I wear a turban. Was it because I was ill, or was it to attract young women?
2. I answered him I do not wear it because of illness, nor to attract dirty whores.
3. But because ever since I was an infant, a child and an adolescent, I have loved to wear a hat galansuwah
4. I do not wish to wear a shift slit in the forepart dari'ah or an over garment gabā for these are things that I do not enjoy wearing.
5. But you love wearing them and your heart is captivated by burnouses.

And he says:-

الوافر

- 6 وما للملمس الصوفى معنى إذا طاب ارتداء واتزار<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'ALI Ibn al- Rùmī, Dīwān, 3, 249-250

<sup>2</sup> 'ALI Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwā, 3, 199

\* \* \*

وكيف تدافعوني عن كساء وحبكم شعاري و الدثار 1 2

6. The touch of wool has no meaning for me, since I enjoy wearing a rida' and an izār.

\* \* \*

12. How can you keep me from clothes, when my love for you is my war-cry and my clothing

الرمل

1 طلع الرقى فى شاشية وعليه سيفه والمنطقه<sup>1</sup>

1. Al-Raqī appeared in his shashiyyah, wearing his sword and his girdle.

الخفيف

1 ورياض تخايل الأرض فيها خيلاء الفتاة فى الأبراد<sup>2</sup>

1. Gardens in which the earth preens itself, as a young girl preens herself in a burd

المنسرح

2 كسا عراء الربا طيالسسه خضرا وبالعبرى رداها<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 4, 312

<sup>2</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 2, 195

<sup>3</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 1, 112 Also see 1, 87, 208, 390

2. It (March) dressed the nakedness of the hills in green shawls and it enfolded them in a ride.

### Food

It seems that Ibn al-Rùmī was greedy as far as both his sexual and his comestible requirements were concerned. In his poetry, he even speaks enthusiastically of bread, which was far from being a luxury item of food:-

#### البيسط

- 1 ما أنسى لأنسى خبازا مررت به يدحوا الرقاقة وشك اللحم بالبصر<sup>1</sup>
- 2 ما بين رؤيتها في كفه كرة وبين رؤيتها قوراء كالقمر
- 3 الا بمقدار ما تتداح دائرة في صفحة الماء يرمى فيه بالحجر

1. Whatever I forget, I shall not forget a baker whom I passed, rolling out the loaves as fast as the eye could see.

2. One moment they seemed like a ball in his hand and the next moment they were spread out like full moons.

3. A moment that was no greater than that of a circle extending itself in water when a stone is thrown into it.

#### الكامل

<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 3, 197, 198

1 وسميطة صفراء دينارية ثمنا و لونا زفها لك جزور<sup>1</sup>

2 عظمت فكادت أن تكون إوزة ونوت فكاد إهابها يتقطر

\* \* \*

6 ظللنا نقشر جلدها عن لحمها وكان تبرا عن لجين يقشر

7 وتقدمتها قبل ذلك ثرائد مثل الرياض بمثلهن يصدر

\* \* \*

9 وأنت قطائف بعد ذلك لطائف ترضى اللهاء بها ويرضى الحنجر

1. A yellow fowl a golden dinar in colour and value brought by a young lad,
2. So big that it was almost a goose and so heavy that its skin would almost split.

\* \* \*

6. We proceeded to peel off its skin from its flesh, and it was as though gold was picked away from silver.
7. Before it came dishes of Thārīd like meadows preceded by others like them.

\* \* \*

9. And after it came delicate sweetmeats which pleased the palate and the throat.

And he says:

<sup>1</sup> 'Alī Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 3, 56

## اليسيط

- 1 ومستقر على كرسية تعب روحى الفداء له من منصب نصب<sup>1</sup>
- 2 رأيته سحرا يلقى زلابية فى رقة القشر والتجويف كالقصب
- 3 كأنما زوته المغلى حين بدا كالكيمياء التى قالوا ولم تصب
- 4 يلقى العجين لجينا من أنامله فيستحيل شبابيكاً من الذهب

1. A weary man settled in his chair - I wish I could sacrifice myself for him to keep him from his tiring labour.

2. I saw at dawn, frying a zalābiyyat, with a thin crust and its interior (hollow) like a reel.

3. When his oil begins to bubble, it seems like alchemy, in which people believe but never experience,

4. The dough drops in like silver from two fingers and changes into a network of gold.

## Fruit

## السريع

- 1 للموز إحسان بلا ذنوب ليس بمعدود ولا محسوب<sup>2</sup>
- 2 يكاد من موقعه المحبوب يدفعه البلع الى القلوب

<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 1, 412. See also 3, 79-80, 5, 77, 383, 384, 386

<sup>2</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 1, 215

1. The banana is without sin and has good qualities that cannot be counted or reckoned up.

2. A swallow pushes into men's hearts from its beloved places.

And he says

الرجز

- |                                 |    |
|---------------------------------|----|
| ورازقى مخطف الخصور <sup>1</sup> | 1  |
| كأنه مخازن البلور               | 2  |
| * *                             |    |
| لم يبق منه وهج الحرور           | 5  |
| الاضياء فى ظروف نور             | 6  |
| لو أنه ببقى على الدهور          | 7  |
| قرط أذان النساء الحور           | 8  |
| * *                             |    |
| باكرته والطير فى الوكور         | 14 |
| وعذر اللذات فى البكور           | 15 |
| بفتية من ولد المنصور            | 16 |
| أملأ للعين من البذور            | 17 |
| * *                             |    |
| وكل ما نقضى من الأمور           | 35 |
| تعلو عن يومنا المنظور           | 36 |

<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 386-88

## 37 ومتمعة من متع الغرور

1. Trim-waisted Rāziqī grapes

2. Seem like treasures of crystal.

\* \* \*

5. The blazing heat has left nothing of them

6. Except light in containers of light.

7. If they lasted for ever

8. They would adorn the ears of beautiful women.

\* \* \*

14. I came to them when the birds were still in their  
nests

15. The purest of pleasure is to be heard in the  
morning.

16. In the company of fellows of the family of al-  
Manşur

17. Who were brighter to the eye than full moons.

\* \* \*

35. All the affairs that we pursue

36. Are but a distraction from the expected last day.

37. And one of the enjoyments of delusion.

īliyā al- Ḥāwī includes these verses in his chapter on descriptive poetry (Wasf) and claims that, as always in his Wasf, Ibn al-Rūmī pursues his initial logical position to extravagant lengths.

It seems to me, however, both in this Urjūzah and in the others descriptive of food and drink, that Ibn al-Rūmī combines artistic perception with an actual longing for the food itself. He grades everything that he describes, women as well as food and drink. He was perpetually poor and could never supply his family with an adequate quantity of certain foods. When invited to a banquet by an upper class patron, he feels a deep sense of inferiority. This sense permeates his food and drink descriptions.

īliyā al-Hāwī also claims that Ibn al-Rūmī is an existentialist, on the basis of the legal line already quoted (see verse 37 above). He asserts that there is a serious, silent element in this wasf, which, when exercising it closely, reviews inner turmoil and questioning, like that of Abū al 'Alā and other existentialists, who see the skull through the face, the bone through the flesh and death through life.

While conceding that Ibn al-Rūmī, had a deep interest in philosophy and logic, so as to become a figure almost unique in Arabic poetry, I cannot accept that he was an existentialist, he is after all, a Muslim, and this is quite incompatible with existentialism.

The great extent to which his poetry is based on experience, like that of most other Arab poets, also precludes this, as does his own personal tragedy, the loss of kindred and family, the fact that he saw and experienced death at all points in his life, even while drinking and seeking enjoyment.

الكامل

1 يا لائمى فى الراح غير مقصر لازال رأيك سينافى الراح<sup>1</sup>

2 فأقل ما فى ترك متلك شربها توفيرها و طهارة الأقداح

\* \* \*

4 أربحتنى منها نصيبك محسنا فربحت خيرا منك فى الأرباح

1. O you who criticise me so vigorously concerning wine, may your opinion of wine continue to be bad.

2. The smallest benefit from your not drinking, wine is that there is plenty of wine available for us and that the glasses are clean.

\* \* \*

4. You have kindly given me your share so that I profited more than you from it.

And he says

الكامل

1 ومدامة أغنت عن المصباح يلقى المساء اناؤها بصباح<sup>2</sup>

\* \* \*

10 خدها ولا تخسر لذيق مذاقها وتسيمها يا طالب الأرباح

11 بكرا ترد على الكبير شيا به فتراه بين صبابة ومراح

12 حسناء تكسو من محاسنها الفتى فتراه أحمر أزهر المصباح

<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 2, 63

<sup>2</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 2, 81, 82

13. من كرمة تهب المكارم للفتى فتراه بين شجاعة وسماح

\* \* \*

15. تالله ما أدرى لأية علة يدعونها فى الراح باسم الراح

16. الريحها ولروحها تحت الحشى أم لأرتياح نديمها المرتاح؟

1. Wine that makes the oil-lamp unnecessary, whose container turns evening into morning.

\* \* \*

10. Take it and do not waste the pleasures of its taste and scent, o seeker of benefits.

11. A virgin, which restores youth to the old, so that he appears both passionate and cheerful.

12. A beautiful maiden, in whose beauties a man is clothed, so that he seems to be red, the brightest lamp (in the room).

13. From a vine that gives a man its noble qualities, so that he appears both brave and generous.

\* \* \*

15. By God, I do not know why they call al-Rah al-Rah.

16. Is it because of its scent and its sensation in the belly, or because of the repose that it induces in the relaxed drinker?

Ibn al-Rūmī's poetry was sometimes recited at the Caliph's majlis

al-Muktafi is reported, on hearing these four lines:

الرجز

- 1 إذا أخذت حبه ودبسه<sup>1</sup>
- 2 ثم أخذت ضربه ومرسه
- 3 ثم أطلت في الأناء حبسه
- 4 شربت منه البابلي نفسه

1. When you take the grapes and the juice (of the vine)
2. Then you beat it and macerate it.
3. Then keep it for a long time
4. You will drink Babylonian wine itself.

to have said

"How luxurious he is! He urges us to drink the wine of Dinshab today".

Ibn al-Rùmī was so fond of wine that he sought fatwas legitimizing the drinking of alcohol. For this reason, he was unpopular with the 'Ulamā'.

He believed, or pretended to believe, that different Madhahib had different views on the illegitimacy of wine.

الطويل

- 1 أهل العراقى النبيذ وشربه وقال الحرامان المدامة والسكر<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Abū al-Ḥasan al-Mas'ūdī, Murūj al-Dhahab, Beirut, 1983, 4, 200

<sup>2</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 3, 82

2 وقال الحجازى الشرابان واحد فطلت لنا بين اختلافهما الخمر

3 سأخذ من قوليهما طرفيهما وأشربها لافارق الوازر الوزر

1. The Iraqi (the Ḥanafi) permits the drinking of nabidh and says: what is forbidden is khamr and intoxication.

2. The Hijazi ( the Maliki) says that the two drinks are the same, so khamr is permitted to us.

3. I shall take the extremes of what either says and drink it; may the sinner never be parted from his sin.

#### Flowers

Ibn al-Rūmī's favourite flower is the narcissus.

#### الخفيف

1 وأحسن ما في الوجوه العيون وأشبهه شيء بها النرجس<sup>1</sup>

1. The most beautiful feature of the face is the eyes, the thing that more resembles them is the narcissus.

and he says :

#### مجزوء الكامل

1 أبصرت باقة نرجس فى كف من أهواه غضه<sup>2</sup>

2 فكانها قصب الزمرد أنبتت ذهباً وفضه

<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 3, 321

<sup>2</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 4, 63

1. I saw a fresh nosegay of narcissus in my love's hand;
2. Like a stalk of emerald which grew gold and silver.

Ibn al-Rùmī also compares the narcissus and the rose:-

الخفيف

1 لا ترى نرجسا يشبه الورد إذا ما أردت فكرا ولحظا<sup>1</sup>

2 ومن الورد ما يشبه بالنرجس علما بأن في ذلك حضا

1. You never find a narcissus compared with a rose when you require thought and coquettish glances.
2. But some roses are compared the narcissus although roses are lucky if this happens.

His preference for the narcissus leads him to satirise the rose

البسيط

1 وقائل لم هجوت الورد معتمدا؟ فقلت من بغضه عندي ومن سخطه<sup>2</sup>

2 يا ماذح الورد لا ينفك عن غلظه الست تبصره في كف ملتقطه

1. Somebody asked me why did you determine to satirise the rose. I answered him because of my hatred for and my displeasure with it.

<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 4, 100

<sup>2</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 4, 93

2. O you who praise the rose, persisting in your error,  
have you not seen it in the hand of the one who  
picked it up?

These lines caused Ibn al Mu'tazz to answer Ibn al-Rùmī as follows:

البسيط

يا هاجى الورد لاحييت من رجل غلظت و المرء قد يؤتى على غلظه<sup>1</sup> 1

هل تنبت الأرض شيئا من أزهارها 2

إذا تجلت يحاكى الورد فى نمطه

أبهى وأبهج من ورد له أرج كأنما المسك منورا على وسطه 3

1. O you who satirise the rose, may you not be  
blessed, you are mistaken and a man may be attacked  
for his mistakes.

2. Does the earth produce any flowers which when in  
bloom can compare with the rose in form.

3. Is there anything brighter and shining than a  
scented rose, as though its centre were spiked with  
musk

Among other flowers that Ibn al-Rùmī mentions are the  
pomegranate, the red anemone, the hyacinth, the lavender and the  
jasmine.

---

<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 4, 93

## Money

## السريع

1 لم أر شيئاً صادقاً نفعه للمرء كالدرهم والسيف<sup>1</sup>

1. I hold nothing to be more truly useful to a man than the dirham and the sword.

## الطويل

1 أتانى عن جاريتك أن قد قطعته وفى لؤمك المشهور ما شئت من عذر<sup>2</sup>

2 فهب ذلك الدينار صاحب طالعى من الأنجم السيارة السبعة الزهر

1. I have heard that you have stopped your allowance to me. Your well-known meanness provides your excuse for it.

2. Suppose that *dīnār* were the auspice of my horoscope from the sevenbright planets.

## Musical Instruments

Among the other accompaniments of pleasure are musical instruments:

(Talking of a female slave 'Awwāḍah, the property of Durayrah):

## الخفيف

<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, *Dīwān*, 4, 224

<sup>2</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, *Dīwān*, 3, 186

14 نزهة الطرف شفعتها نزهة السمع اذا ناغمت لك العيدانا<sup>1</sup>

15 ذات وجه كأنما قيل كن فردا بديعا بلا نظير فكانا

14. Pleasure of seeing accompanied by pleasure of hearing, when she plays the lute for you.

15. She has a face which seems to have been told :  
"Be unique and marvellous, without equal, and it was.

السريع

10 لو اسندت ميتا الى نحرها أو عودها تاب من الضجعة<sup>2</sup>

11 غنت فلم تحوج الى زامر هل تحوج الشمس الى شمعه

10. If you were to prop a dead man against her throat or her lute, he would return from the grave.

11. She sang, and had no need of a piper. Does the sun need a candle?

About Shaṭṭaf

السريع

2 ضرابة بالطبل ضرابة تجيب بالتطيل تطيلا<sup>3</sup>

2. "Beating the drum and farting, she answers one kind of drumming with another.

<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 6, 217

<sup>2</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 4, 137. See also 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 1, 348; 2, 309; 3, 27, 231, 242.; 4, 52, 37

<sup>3</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 5, 166

To 'Umar al-Qaḥṭābi

البسيط

هل كنت تطرب الا من تشاكله ولو أعانك صوت الدف والوتر<sup>1</sup> 3

3. Have you ever enchanted with your singing anyone except those like you, even with the help of the tambourine and the lute?

الخفيف

و قيان كأنها أمهات عاطفات على بنيتها حواني<sup>2</sup> 92

\* \* \*

كل طفل يدعى بأسماء شتى بين عود و مزهر وكران 96

92. There are singing girls like mothers, loving and affectionate to their sons;

\* \* \*

96. Each child is called by different names: 'ūd, Mizhar and Kirān.

Festivals

Ibn al-Rūmī is cynical about Ramaḍān

الوافر

<sup>1</sup> 'Alī Ibn al-Rūmī, *Dīwān*, 3, 132

<sup>2</sup> 'Alī Ibn al-Rūmī, *Dīwān*, 6, 243

- 1 إذا برکت فی صوم لقوم دعوت لهم بتطويل العذاب<sup>1</sup>
- 2 وما التبریک فی شهر طویل بطاویل یومه یوم الحساب
- 3 فلیت اللیل کما فیہ شهرا و مر نهاره مر السحاب
- 4 فلا أهلا بمانع کل خیر و أهلا بالطعام و بالشراب

1. When you bless a fast for people you pray that their torture may be prolonged.

2. Why bless a long month, a day of which lasts as long as the Day of Judgment?

3. I wish that the night might extend to the length of the month, and that its day might pass as quickly as the clouds!

4. No welcome is that which prevents all that is good! Welcome to food and drink.

الکامل

1 فطر توسط یومه الأسبوعا

واقفت فیہ من السعود طلوعا<sup>2</sup>

1. The day of the 'īd al-Fitr came in the middle of the week, on which you coincided with an auspicious star.

المنسرح

<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 1, 208

<sup>2</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 4, 128. See also 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 1, 34; 2, 181, 182, 188, 197

1 عيدان أضحى و مهرجان ما ضم متليهما أوان<sup>1</sup>

1. There are two festivals 'īd al-Adhā and Mahrajān, the likes of which are never celebrated on the same day.

البيسط

3 ما طابق الله نيروز الأمير به الا لالتقاء فيه كل سراء<sup>2</sup>

3 God matched the Amir's Nairuz with it only so that all happiness might come to him.

### **Conclusion**

In summary, it appears from the preceding survey that we can draw the following conclusions :

1. Ibn al-Rùmī was born, lived and died in Baghdad.
2. He was a hypochondriac, afraid of both sea and desert; this resulted in him passing his life in Baghdad, except for a few short journeys.
3. Socially he belonged to the lower classes.
4. He was proud to be of Byzantine origin.
5. He witnessed the death of both parents, family and relatives.
6. He was a renowned 'Jonah', both when alive and dead
7. He did not find favour at court, like Abū Tammām and al-Buḥturi.

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<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 6, 195. See also 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 3, 228; 6, 197

<sup>2</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 1, 53

8. He was a follower of Mu'tazili thought, even though he was at pains to conceal this.

9. The poetry discussed in this chapter was generally considered easy to read, even though it contains some difficult lines.

10 Much of his poetry is somewhat pedestrian, as can be seen from some of the examples quoted in this chapter.

## CHAPTER TWO

## The differences between Ibn al-Rùmī's poetry and other Arabic poetry

Ibn al-Rùmī's poetry differs in a number of ways from other Arabic poetry.

### Istiqsā'

a) General Sense

To reach the maximum in everything.<sup>1</sup>

b) In literary-critical terminology

To deal with all aspects of a concept (in a poem)

### Istiqsā' before Ibn al-Rùmī

The use of Istiqsā' before Ibn al-Rùmī seems to have been spontaneous and unselfconscious

For example, in Jāhilī poetry, Imru' al-Qays uses Istiqsā'

(a) in his description of a long night.

الطويل

44 و ليل كموج البحر أرخى سدوله على بأنواع الهموم ليبتلى<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Muḥammad Ibn Manẓūr, Lisān al- 'Arab, Beirut, n.d., 107.

<sup>2</sup> Imru' al-Qays al-Kindī, Dīwān, Beirut, n.d, 48, 49.

- 45 فقلت له لما تمطى بصلبه و أردف أعجازا و ناء بكلكل  
 46 ألا أيها الليل الطويل ألا انجلي بصبح وما الأصباح منك بامتلى  
 47 فيالك من ليل كأن نجومه بأمراس كتان الى صم جندل

"44. Off night like a sea swarming has dropped its curtains over me, thick with multifarious cares, to try me,

45. And I said to the night, when it stretched its lazy loins followed by its fat buttocks, and heaved off its heavy breast,

46. 'Well now, you tedious night, won't you clear yourself off, and let dawn shine? yet dawn, when it comes, is no way better than you.

47. Oh, what a night of a night you are! It's as though the stars were tied to the Mount of Yadhbul with infinite hempen ropes; by stout flax cables to craggy slabs of granite."<sup>1</sup>

(b) in his description of a horse's speed.

الطويل

- 52 و قد أعتدى و الطير فى وكناتها بمنجرد قيد الأوابد هيكل<sup>2</sup>  
 53 مكر مفر مقبل مدبر معا كجلمود صخر حطه السيل من عل  
 54 كميت يزل اللبد عن حال مثنه كما زلت الصفواء بالمتنزل

<sup>1</sup> A. J. Arberry, The Seven Odes, London, n.d., 64

<sup>2</sup> Imru' al-Qays al-Kindī , Dīwān, 51-56

على الذئب جياش كأن اهتزامه ادا جاش فيه حميه على مرجل	55
مسح اذا ما السابحات على الونى اثرن الغبار بالكديد المركل	56
يزل الغلام الخف عن صهواته ويلوى بأثواب العنيف المركل	57
درير كخدروف الوليدأمره تتابع كفيه بخيط موصل	58
له ايطلا ظبي و ساقا نعامة و ارشاء سرحان و تقريب تنقل	59
ضليع ادا استدبرته سد فرجه بضاف فويق الأرض ليس بأعزل	60
كأن سراته لدى البيت قائما مداك عروس أو صلابة حنظل	61
كأن دماء الهاديات بنحره عصارة حناء بشيب مرجل	62

52. Often I've been off with the morn, the birds yet  
asleep in their nests,

53. My horse short-haired, outstripping the wild game,  
huge-bodied, charging, fleet-fleeing, head-foremost,  
headlong, all together the match of a rugged boulder  
hurled from on high by the torrent,

54. A gay bay, sliding the saddle-felt from his back's  
thwart just as a smooth pebble slides of the rain  
cascading,

55. Fiery he is, for all his leanness, and when his  
ardour boils in him, how he roars--a bubbling  
cauldren isn't in it!

56. Sweetly he flows, when the mares floundering  
wearily kicked up the dust where their hooves drag in  
the trampled track;

57. The lightweight lad slips landward from his smooth back, he flings off the burnous of the hard, heavy rider;

58. Very swift he is, like the toy spinner a boy will whirl plying it with his nimble hands by the knotted thread.

59. His flanks are the flanks of a fawn, his legs like an ostrich's; the springy trot of the wolf he has, the fox's gallop;

60. Sturdy his body - look from behind, and he bars his legs' gap with a full tail, not askew, reaching almost to the ground;

61. His back, as he stands beside the tent, seems the pounding-slab of a bride's perfumes, or the smooth stone a colocynth's broken on;

62. The blood of the herd's leaders spatters his thrusting neck like expressed tincture of henna reddening combed white locks.<sup>1</sup>

al-Khansà also uses Istiḡṣà' in her elegies, for her brother Ṣakhr, for example:

البسيط

يقول صخر مقيم ثم في جدث لدى الضريح صريح بين أحجار<sup>2</sup> 5

<sup>1</sup> A. J. Arberry. The Seven odes, 64, 65.

<sup>2</sup> Tamāḍur al-Khansā', Dīwān, Beirut, n.d., 58

- 6 فأذهب فلا يبعدنك الله من رجل تراك ضيم و طلاب بأوتار
- 7 قد كنت تحمل قلبا غير متهضم مركبا في نصاب غير خوار
- 8 مثل السنان تضيء الليل صورته مر المريرة حر وابن أحرار

"5. Saying Sakhr is dwelling there in the tomb, struck to the ground beside the grave, between the certain stones.

6. Depart then, and may God not keep you far (from him) being a man who eschewed injustice, and ever sought after blood wit.

7. You used to carry a heart that brooked no wrong, compounded in a nature that was never cowardly,

8. Like the spear-point whose (bright) shape lights up the night, (a man) bitter in resolution, free and the son of the free-man."<sup>1</sup>

In the Umayyad period, al-Farazdaq uses Istiqsà' when discussing his thoughts his divorce.

الوافر

- 1 ندمت ندامة الكسعي لما غدت منى مطلقه نوار<sup>2</sup>
- 2 وكانت جنتي فخرجت منها كادم حين لج به الضرار
- 3 و كنت كفاقيء عينييه عمدا فأصبح ما يضيء له النهار

<sup>1</sup> A. J. Arberry, Arabic Poetry, Cambridge, 1963, 39

<sup>2</sup> Hammām al-Farazdaq, Dīwān, Beirut, n.d., 1, 294

"1. I feel repentance like al Kusa'i"

Now that Nawar has been divorced by me.

2. She was my Paradise which I have lost,

Like Adam when the Lord's command he crossed.

3. I am one who wilfully puts out his eyes,

then dark to him the shining day doth rise."<sup>1</sup>

### Istiqsā' in Ibn al-Rūmī's poetry

Ibn al-Rūmī employs Istiqsā' very extensively in his Dīwān. This, in fact has the effect of lengthening many of his poems and his Dīwān is reputedly the largest in early Arabic literature.

Ibn Rashiḳ says that Ibn al-Rūmī clings tenaciously to every concept that he employs and examines it from every possible angle until he has killed it and knows that no one else can use it after him.<sup>2</sup>

### Istiqsā' in Ibn al-Rūmī's short qaṣīdahs

Istiqsā' is used in his thorough pursuit of (a) Hijā' in his lampooning of the intellect of the Mahju.

الوافر

ألم تر أننى قبل الأماجى أقدم فى أوائلها النسبىيا<sup>3</sup> 1

<sup>1</sup> Reynold A. Nicholson, A Literary of the Arabs, Cambridge, 1930, 244

<sup>2</sup> Abū al-Ḥasan Ibn Rashīq, al-'Umdah, 2, 238

<sup>3</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 1, 380, 381

- 2 لتحرق في المسامع ثم يتلو هجائي محرقا يكوى القلوبا
- 3 كصاعقة أنت في اثر غيث وضحك البيض تتبعه نحيبا
- 4 عجبت لمن تمرس بي اغترارا أتاح لنفسه سهما مصيبا
- 5 سأرهق من تعرض لي صعودا وأكوى من مياسيمي الجنوبا

"1. Do you not see that I introduce my invective poems with love poetry?

2. So that they burn in the ears; then follows my hijà that burns and brands the hearts:

3. Like a bolt of lightning that after that comes after a shower, or the laughter of white ones that are followed by wailing.

4. I am surprised at him who, in his delusion, contends with me, exposes himself to an arrow that hits the mark.

5. I shall constrain him who thwarts me to a hard ascent and I shall "brand his sides" with my branding irons".<sup>1</sup>

(b) Ghazal

الطويل

- 1 أعانقها و النفس بعد مشوقة اليها وهل بعد العناق تدانى<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Translation by G J Kpan Geder, "gensin in Collision : Nasib and Hijā", J Arabic Lit, XXII, 1990, 17

<sup>2</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 6, 222

- 2 فألثم فاها كي تموت حزازتي فيشتد ما ألقى من الهيمان  
 3 وما كان مقدار الذي بي من الجوى ليشفيه ما ترشف الشفتان  
 4 كان فؤادي ليس يشفى غليله سوى ان يرى الروحين يمتزجان

. "1. She is in my embrace but my soul desires her still.

Is there a closeness beyond embrace.

2. I kiss her mouth that my fever might end, but my mad thirst only grows.

3. The lovesickness in me is not of the kind healed by kisses.

4. Nothing, it seems, can cure my heart's thirst except to see our souls mingle"<sup>1</sup>

Istiḡṣā' in Ibn al-Rūmī's long qaṣidahs:

A good example is his qaṣidah on the attack of al-Basrah by the

Zanj.

الخفيف

14 دخلوها كأنهم قطع الليل إذ راح مدلهم الظلام<sup>2</sup>

\* \* \*

17 أي هول رأوا بهم أي هول حق منه تشيب رأس الغلام

18 إذ رموهم بنارهم من يمين و شمال و خلفهم و أمام

<sup>1</sup> 'Abbasid Belles-Lettres, ed. by Julia Ashtiany and others, Cambridge, 1990, p. 217

Translation by A Hamori, "Love Poetry (Ghazal)", in 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, *Dīwān*.

<sup>2</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, *Dīwān*, 6, 131-133

- 19 كم أغصوا من شارب بشراب كم أغصوا من طاعم بطعام؟
- 20 كم ضنين بنفسه رام منجى فتلقوا جبينه بالحسام؟
- 21 كم أخ قد رأى أخاه صريعا ترب الخد بين صرعى كرام؟
- 22 كم أب قد رأى عزيز بنيه وهو يعلى بصارم صمام؟
- 23 كم مفدى فى أهله أسلموه حين لم يحمه هنالك حامى؟
- 24 كم رضيع هناك قد فطموه بشبا السيف قبل حين الفطام؟
- 25 كم فتاة بخاتم الله بكر فضحوها جهرا بغير اكتتام؟
- 26 كم فتاة مصونة قد سبوا بارزا وجهها بغير لثام؟
- 27 صبجوههم فكابد القوم منهم طول يوم كأنه الف عام
- \* \* \*
- 29 من رآهن فى المساق سيايا داميات الوجوه للأقدام
- 30 من رآهن فى المقاسم وسط الزنج يقسمن بينهم بالسهام
- 31 من رآهن يتخذن إما بعد ملك الإماء والخدام
- 32 ما تذكرت ما أتى الزنج إلا أضرم القلب أيما اضرام

“14. They entered her as though they were portions of night when it has become shrouded in darkness.

\* \* \*

17. What terror they (the inhabitants) beheld by reason of them (the Zanj). What terror, fit to turn hoary the head of youth!

18. When they assailed them with their fire from right and left, from behind them and before,

19. How many a toper they choked with an (unexpected) draught!

How many a feaster they choked with  
(unpalatable) dish!

20. How many a man niggardly with his sould sought a  
way of escape, and they met his brow with the sword!

21. How many a brother beheld his brother felled to  
the ground, dusty of cheek, amongst (many) nobles  
(so) fallen!

22. How many a father beheld the dearest of his sons  
hoisted aloft on a trenchant blade!

23. How many a one most precious to his kinsmen  
they betrayed, since there was not one there to protect  
him!

24. How many a suckling child they weaned with the  
edge of the sword before the time of weaning!

25. How many a young virgin with the seal of God  
(upon her) they violated openly without concealment!

26. How many a chaste maiden they carried into  
captivity, her face displayed without a veil!

27. They came upon them in the morning, and the  
people endured their cruelty through the length of a  
day that was as if a thousand years.

\* \* \*

29. Who beheld them ( the women) captives driven  
(like beast), bleeding from head to foot?

30. Who beheld them in the partitioning between the Zanj, being divided amongst them by lost?

31. Who beheld them being taken as bonds women, after themselves possessing bondswomen and servants.

32. I never recall what was perpetrated by Zanj without it kindles what a conflagration in my heart".<sup>1</sup>

### **The reasons for Istiqsā' in Ibn al-Rūmī's poetry**

1. al-'Aqqād claims that his Greek ancestry inclines him to follow a train of thought to its logical conclusion.<sup>2</sup> Muhammad Abd al-Ghani, however, disputes this.<sup>3</sup>

2. Since he found that he was generally misunderstood in his daily life, he assumed that people would also fail to understand his poetry, unless he explained his point exhaustively.<sup>4</sup>

3. People were jealous of his poetic ability and would continually refer disparagingly to his non-Arab origin and his status a maula, in order to

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<sup>1</sup> A J Arberry, Arabic Poetry, 62-67

<sup>2</sup> From the introduction written by 'Abbās al-'Aqqād in 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān which is selected by Kāmīl Kīlānī, Cairo, 1924, 1.

<sup>3</sup> Muḥammad 'Abd al-Ghanī, Ibn al-Rūmī, Cairo, 1960, 42

<sup>4</sup> Ṭāhā Ḥusayn, Ḥadīth al shī'ir wa al-Nathir, Cairo, 1957, 134

compensate for this. His use of Istiqsā' was therefore a symptom of his need to affirm his superiority in poetry.

4. He composed particularly long qasidah as a tribute to the mamduhin, who delighted in the frequent and lengthy references to themselves.<sup>1</sup>

5. He had a natural inclination towards philosophy and logic ( see 1 above), which he liked to deploy in his poetry.

### **The Effect of Istiqsā' on Ibn al-Rùmī's poetry**

1. Istiqsā' makes most of his long qasidahs very clearly to artistic.<sup>2</sup>

2. Istiqsā' causes him to use unusual rhyme words in his poetry.<sup>3</sup>

3. His anxiety to push his images to the limit is pursued at the expense of the employment of Bayan.<sup>4</sup>

4. Because of the exhaustive treatment the nature of his images, these require no detailed explanation.<sup>5</sup>

5. Istiqsā' is responsible for a certain repetition of themes and expression in his poetry.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 'Abbās al-'Aqqād, Ibn al-Rùmī, 272

<sup>2</sup> Fawzī 'Aṭawī, Ibn al-Rùmī, 87.

<sup>3</sup> Muḥammad 'Abd al-Halīm, al Istiqsā' fī-shi'r Ibn al-Rùmī, Cairo, 1992, 73

<sup>4</sup> Fawzī 'Aṭawī, Ibn al-Rùmī, 19

<sup>5</sup> Muḥammad 'Abd al-Ḥalīm, al Istiqsā' fī-shi'r Ibn al-Rùmī, 72

<sup>6</sup> Muḥammad 'Abd al-Halīm, al Istiqsā' fī-shi'r Ibn al-Rùmī, 69-72

6. As a result of the conceptual unity generated by Ibn al-Rūmī's fondness for Istiḡsā', his qasidah tend to reveal greater coherence than earlier qasidahs. Consider for example the following lines by Zuhayr :

الطويل

سئمت تكاليف الحياة و من يعيش ثمانين حولاً لا أباً لك يسأم<sup>1</sup> 47

\* \* \*

و أعلم ما فى اليوم و الأمس قبله و لكننى عن علم ما فى غد عم 49

رأيت المنايا خبط عشواء من تصبب تمته و من تخطى يعمر فيهرم 48

\* \* \*

و من لا يصانع فى أمور كثيرة يضرس بأنياب و يوطأ بمنسم 50

\* \* \*

و من يجعل المعروف من دون عرضه يفره و من لا يتقى الشتم يشتم 52

و من يك ذا فضل و يبخل بفضله على قومه يستغنى عنه و يذمم 51

\* \* \*

و من يوف لا يذمم و من يهد قلبه الى مطمئن البر لا يتجمجم 56

"47. I have grown weary of the troubles of life, and he who lives eighty years will, mayest thou have no father if thou doubt, grow weary.

\* \* \*

<sup>1</sup> Zuhayr Ibn Abī Salmā, Dīwān, Cairo, 1964, 29-31

49. And I know what has happened today and yesterday, before it, but verily, of the knowledge of what will happen tomorrow, I am ignorant.

48. I see death is like the blundering of a blind camel; him whom he meets he kills and he whom he misses, lives and will become cold."

\* \* \*

50. And he who does not act with kindness in many affairs will be torn by teeth and trampled under foot.

\* \* \*

52. And he, who makes benevolent acts intervene before honour, increases his honour; and he, who does not avoid abuse, will be abused."

51. He who is possessed of plenty, and is miserly with his great wealth towards his people, will be dispensed with, and abused.

\* \* \*

56. He who keeps his word, will not be reviled, and he whose heart is guided to self-satisfying benevolence will not stammer".<sup>1</sup>

These lines are only loosely connected with one another. This order could be altered, without any great damage to the sense for

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<sup>1</sup> F E Johnson, Seven Poems, London, 1894, 83-85.

example : 47, 49, 48, 50, 52, 51, 56. This order given here is equally meaningful as that given in the *Dīwān* version.

*Istiqṣā'* as a structural principle is not evident in Umayyad poetry, for example

الرمـل

- 1 لبيت هنداً أنجزت ما تعد وشففت أنفسنا مما نجد<sup>1</sup>
- 2 و استبدت مرة واحدة إنما العاجر من لا يستبد
- 3 زعموها سألت جاراتها و تعرت ذات يوم تبترد
- 4 أكما ينعتننى تبصرننى عمركن الله أم لا يقتصد
- 5 فتضاحكن و قد قلن لها حسن فى كل عين من تود
- 6 حسد حملنه من أجلها و قدبما كان فى الناس الحسد
- 7 غادة يفتر عن أشنبها حين تجلوه أقاح أو برد

"1. Would that Hind had fulfilled to us her promise,  
and healed our souls their sufferings.

2. Would that she had acted independently for once it  
is the weakling who does not act independently

3. They asserted that she asked our lady-neighbours,  
when she stripped herself one day to bathe,

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<sup>1</sup> 'Umar Ibn Abī Rabī'ah, *Dīwān*, Beirut, n.d, 101

4. Do you see me to be as he describes me - in God's name answer truly! - or does he not observe moderation?

5. That they laughed together, saying to her Fair in every eye is the one you love.

6. (So they spoke) out of an envy with which they were charged because of her; and of old envy has existed amongst man.

7. A young maiden (is she) who , when she discloses her cool lips, there is revealed from them (teeth white as) Camomile-blossoms or hailstones”<sup>1</sup>

The ‘Abbasid qasidah also does not reveal Istiḡṣā on a scale similar to that found in Ibn al-Rūmī’s Dīwān.

البسيط

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| السيف أصدق أنباء من الكتب                | 1 |
| في حده الحد بين الجد واللعب <sup>2</sup> |   |
| بيض الصفائح لاسود الصفائف                | 2 |
| في متونها جلاء الشك والريب               |   |
| والعلم في شهب الأرماع لامعة              | 3 |
| بين الخميسين لا في السبعة الشهب          |   |
| أين الرواية بل أين النجوم وما            | 4 |
| صاغوه من زخرف فيها ومن كذب               |   |
| تخرصا و أحاديثا ملففة                    | 5 |
| ليست ينبع اذا عدت و لا غرب               |   |

<sup>1</sup> A. J. Arberry, Arabic Poetry, 41

<sup>2</sup> Hābīb Abū Tammām, Dīwān, Cairo, 1957, 1, 45-48

"1. The sword is truer in tidings than (any) writings: in its edge is the boundary between earnestness and sport.

2. (Swords) white as to their blades, not (books) black as to their pages - in their broad sides (texts) lies the removing of doubt and uncertainties;

3. And knowledge (resides) in the flames of the lances flashing between the two massed armies, not in the seven luminaries.

4. Where (now) is the recital (of the astrologers), indeed where are the stars, and the embroidery and that lie they fashioned concerning them?

5. (Mere) forgery and concocted stories, not to be reckoned either (firm-rooted) mountain tree or (even river-fringing: willow ".<sup>1</sup>

The principal difference between the poets of the Jāhilī, Umayyad and early 'Abbasid period and Ibn al-Rūmī is the scale to which the desire for coherence is pursued. None of them follow a sustained train of thought in the way that Ibn al-Rūmī does.

الخفيف

عاقني أن أطيل أنك تستغرق عرض الثناء مجدا و طوله<sup>2</sup> 22

<sup>1</sup> A J Arberry, Arabic Poetry, 50

<sup>2</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 5, 224

- وارتياعى فى كل يوم من الأزعاج عن منزل أحب نزوله 23  
 فيه عافانى الأله من الشكو و فك البلاء عنى كبوله 24  
 بعد جهد حملت منه ضروريا ليس أتقالهن بالمحموله 25  
 و مصاب بشقة الروح منى ضمن الجسم سقمه و نحوله 26  
 بأخى بل بوالدى بل بنفسى لبت نفسى من قبله مثكوله 27

"22. I am prevented from being lengthy because your eminence takes in the length and breadth of praise - is infinite,

23. And because of my fear of being turned out of a house where I love to dwell,

24. Where God Most High, cured me of malady and affliction cast off its fetters

25. After I had endured all kinds of trouble the burdens of which were more than I could bear

26. And a bereavement a fragment of myself which ensured illness and leanness to my body,

27. That my brother, nay my father, no my very self, would that I had been mourned myself before he went."<sup>1</sup>

الخفيف

2 أين تلك القصور و الدور فيها 43

أين ذلك البنيان ذو الأحكام؟

<sup>1</sup> Rhuvon Guest, Life and works of Ibn er-Rùmî, 95

<sup>2</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmî, Dīwān, 6, 134

بدلت تلكم القصور تلالا من رماد و من تراب ركام	44
سلط البثق و الحريق عليها فتداعت أركانها بأنهدام	45
وخلت من حولها فهي قفر لا ترى العين بين تلك الأكام	46
غير أيد و أرجل باننات نبنت بينهن أفلاق هام	47
و وجوه قد رملتها دماء بأبى تلكم الجوه الدوامى	48
وطنت بالهوان و الذل قسرا بعد طول التيجيل و الأعظام	49
فتراها تسفى الرياح عليها جاريات بهبوة و قتام	50
خاشعات كأنها باكيات باديات الشغور لا لايتسام	51

"43. Where are those palaces and mansions that were there? Where is that well built edifice?

44. Those palaces have been changed into rubbish-mounds of ashes and heaped dust;

45. Bugs and fire have been given authority over them, and their columns have crumbled down in utter destruction,

46. They have become empty of those that dwelt in them, and they are desolate, the eye descries nothing amongst those mounds

47. But hands and feet parted (from their bodies), flung aside amidst them skulls split asunder

48. And faces smeared with blood - may my father be a ransom for those bloody faces! -

49. Trampled down perforce in contempt and humiliation , after they were so long magnified and revered.

50. So you may see them, the winds blowing upon them, scattering over them as they pass dark dust,

51. Lowly and humbled, as if they were weeping, displaying their teeth - but not a smile!"<sup>1</sup>

### **Tashkhīs**

Tashkhīs is "A creative characteristic the potency of which derives sometimes from the extent of consciousness and sometimes from subtlety of consciousness".<sup>2</sup> Tashkhīs, which may be translated as "personification" is endowing inanimate objects with human attributes, so that they appear to speak, listen, see and discuss just like human beings.

### **Tashkhīs in Ibn al-Rūmī's poetry**

Literary historians have remarked on the extent to which Ibn al-Rūmī uses Tashkhīs in his poetry.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> A J Arberry, Arabic Poetry, 66-69

<sup>2</sup> 'Abbās al-'Aqqād, Ibn al-Rūmī, 255

<sup>3</sup> 'Abbās al-'Aqqād, Ibn al-Rūmī, 258. See also Fawzī 'Aṭawī, Ibn al-Rūmī, 89.

## الخفيف

- 4 فر منك الغزال يا لابس الشيب فرار الغزال من صياده<sup>1</sup>
- 5 و إذا اصطادك الشيب فطاربت غزالا فلست بالمصطاده
- 6 لست عند الطراد من قانصيه أنت عند الطراد من طراده

"4. The gazelle flies from you, oh one who has put on old age, as a gazelle flies from its hunter.

5. When greyness has taken you and you chase a gazelle you will not capture it.

6. At the chase you will not make it your quarry, rather at the chase you will be one of its quarries."<sup>2</sup>

This example of Tashkhīs is, of course, quite common in Arabic poetry in general :

37 شيب المهرجان لهوك فيه فغدا من غطارف الشبان<sup>3</sup>

38 و كذاك النيروز رد عليه بك شرخ الشباب ذى الريعان

\* \* \*

40 عمرا برهة على دين كسرى وهما الآن بعده مسلمان

41 لم يكونا ليرضيا غير دين يرتضيه الأمير فى الأديان

\* \* \*

44 و أحباك حب مولى شكور فهما وامقان بل عاشقان

<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 2, 215, 216.

<sup>2</sup> Rhurun Guest, Life and works of Ibn er-Rùmī, 103.

<sup>3</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 6, 240.

37. Your enjoyment of the autumn festival has brought youth to the festival, so that it has become a noble youth.

38. And through you the spring festival also takes on the abundant bloom of youth.

\* \* \*

40. They were for a time celebrated in Kisra's faith, and now that he has gone, they are Muslims.

41. They were intended only to conform to the one faith chosen by the ruler.

\* \* \*

44. And they love you as a grateful slave loves his master. They are fond of you, nay, they are passionately devoted.

In this poem, Ibn al-Rūmī gives the two festivals the human characteristics of age, of religion and of love.

### ***Ibn al-Rūmī's quotations from the Qur'an***

الطويل

1 يقولون ما لا يفعلون مسبة من الله مسبوبة بها الشعراء<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, *Dīwān*, 1, 52

2 و ما ذاك فيهم وحده بل زيادة يقولون ما لا يفعل الأمراء

1. Poets claim to do what they do not do, and this brings God's curse upon them.

2. And this is not the only thing; they also claim that rulers do what they not do.

The first line contains quotation form Surah (al-Shu 'arā),26

224 والشعراء يتبعهم الغاؤون

225 ألم تر أنهم في كل واد يهيمون

226 وأنهم يقولون ما لا يفعلون

"224. And the poets - It is those straying in Evil, Who follow them

225. Seest thou not that they wander distracted in very valley

226. And that they say what they practice not?"<sup>1</sup>

الواقف

10 أنا النار التي بالخلق تغذى و توقد بالحجارة و الحديد<sup>2</sup>

11 إذا نضجت جلود القوم فيها أعيد لهم سوى تلك الجلود

12 . يقال: هل امتلأت؟ و كل خلق بها فتقول: لا هل من مزيد؟

13 إذا عطشوا سقيتهم صديدا فويل القوم من شرب الصديد

<sup>1</sup> Surat al-Shu'arā', 26, al-Qur'an Translation and Commentary by A. Yusuf 'Alī,

WASH USA, 1983, 973

<sup>2</sup> 'Alī Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 2, 237

10. I am the fire that is fed by creation/mankind and that burns with stone and iron.

11. When people's skins are burnt in it, they get other skins in place of their burnt skins.

12. God asks "Are you full up? When all creation is in it , and it answers: "No, are there anymore?"

13. When they are thirsty I give them pus to drink; woe to the people who must drink pus!

Ibn al-Rûmî picks the ideas from al Quran. Line 10 cites Surat al-Baqarah, 2

فأن لم تفعلوا و لن تفعلوا فانتقوا النار التي

24 وقودها الناس و الحجارة أعدت للكافرين

"24. But if ye cannot - and of a surely ye cannot -

Then fear the fire whose fuel is men and stones - which is prepared for those who reject faith."

And line 10 cites also Surat al-Tahreem, 66.

يا أيها الذين ءامنوا قوا أنفسكم و أهليكم نارا

وقودها الناس والحجارة عليها ملائكة غلاظ شداد

6 لا يعصون الله ما أمرهم يفعلون ما يؤمرون

"6. O ye who believe! Save yourselves and your families from a fire whose fuel is Men and Stones over which Are (appointed) angels Stern (and) Severe, who

flinch not (from Executing) the commands they receive from God, But do (precisely) what they are commanded."

Line (11) cites Surat al-Nisa', 4.

إن الذين كفروا بآياتنا سوف نصليهم نارا كلما نضجت جلودهم  
بدلناهم جلودا غيرها ليذوقوا العذاب إن الله كان عزيزا

### 56 حكيمًا

"56. Those who reject our Signs, we shall soon cast into the fire; As often as their skins are roasted through, we shall change them for fresh skins, that they may taste the penalty for God is exalted in power, wise."

Line 12 cites surah Qaf, 50.

يوم نقول لجهنم هل امتلأت و تقول هل من مزيد " 30

"30. One day we will ask Hell", Art thou filled to the full? It will say "Are there anymore (to come)?"

Line 13 cites Surah Ibrahim

"من ورأته جهنم و يسقى من ماء صديد " 16

"16. In front of such a one is hell, and he is given, for drink, boiling fetid water."

الخفيف

10 قد سبتنا و انما كان قوم يوم لا يستون لا تأتيهم<sup>1</sup>

"10. We have kept the Sabbath. But there was a people to whom when they had no Sabath, {the fish} did not come".

This line cites Surat al-A'raf, 7

وسئلهم عن القرية التي كانت حاضرت البحر أذ يعدون في السبت

إذ تأتيهم حيثانهم ويوم سبتهم شرعا و يوم لا يستون

لاتأتيهم كذلك نبلوهم بما كانوا يفسقون 165

"163. Ask them concerning the town standing close by the sea. Behold! they transgressed in the matter of the Sabbath. Their fish did come to them, openly holding up their heads,

But on the day they had no Sabbath, they came not!

Thus did we make a trial of them, for they were given to transgression"

الطويل

1 وعانقه زفت لنا من قري كوئي تلقب أم الدهر أو بنته الكبرى<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 5, 300

<sup>2</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 1, 51

## 2 رأت نار إبراهيم أيام أوقدت

وحازت من الأوصاف أوصافها الحسنی

1. A perfumed wine brought to us from the villages of Kùthà named "Umm al Dahr (the mother of time) or al-Bint al Kubra (Time's eldest daughter)..
2. She - the wine saw Ibrahim's fire in the days when it was ignited and it obtained from all possible properties its own beautiful properties.

Line 2 alludes to Surat al-Anbiya, 21

69 قلنا يا نار كوني بردا و سلاما على إبراهيم "

"69. We said O Fire! Be thou cool, and (a means of) safety for Abraham"

الكامل

7 وتعيد نشوتها المشيب إلى الصباء فكان عيسى جاء بالإحياء<sup>1</sup>

7. The dizziness caused by it [wine] restores old age to youth; it is as though 'Isa had brought people to life.

This line echoes Sura al-'Imran, 3

ورسولا إلى بنى إسرائيل أنى قد جئناكم بآية من ربكم أنى أخلق

لكم من الطين كهيئة الطير فانفخ فيه فيكون طيرا بادن الله

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<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 1, 122

وأبري الأكمه و الأبرص و أحي الموتى بأذن الله وأنينكم  
بما تأكلون و ما تدخرون في بيوتكم إن في ذلك

49 لآية لكم إن كنتم مؤمنين

"49. And (appoint him) an apostle to the Children of Israel (with this message) I have come to you with a sign from your Lord, in that I make for you out of clay, as it were, the figure of a bird, and breathe into it and it becomes a bird by God's leave; And I heal those born blind, and the lepers, and I quicken the dead, by God's leave; And I declare to you What ye eat, and what ye store in your houses, Surely therein is a sign for you if ye did believe;"

Ibn al-Rùmī also cites many other verses from the Qur'an.<sup>1</sup>

### ***Colloquial usages and foreign words in Ibn al-Rùmī's***

#### ***poetry***

Although Ibn al-Rùmī was a hāfīz and was well educated, citing the Quran and early poetry frequently he nevertheless also employs colloquialisms and foreign words.

#### 1. Colloquialisms

البسيط

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<sup>1</sup> See 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, *Dīwān*, 1, 259; 425-2, 223, 239-4.

23 حالا فحالا كذا النسوان قاطبة نواكث دينهن الدهر أديان<sup>1</sup>

23. Women change their moods and mix one thing with another; they are unscrupulous, and they adopt any religion that suits them, at any time.

The standard forms of Niswan ( نسوان ) are Nisā ( نساء ) and Niswah (نسوة).

السريع

1 ويلك يا قد البرستوجه ما أنت و الله بمغنوجه<sup>2</sup>

1. O you with the appearance of a barsatujàh, I swear by God that you are not one with whom one would want to flirt.

Barsatujah is a Persian word which signifies a kind of fish found in the Indian Ocean.

السريع

16 خراجه للفسق دخالة تعجبها الدخلة و الخرجه<sup>3</sup>

16. She immorally causes entry and exit; she enjoys the ins and outs.

<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 6, 175

<sup>2</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 2, 12

<sup>3</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 2, 33.

Kharràjah and dakhkhàlah are colloquialisms. The standard forms would be mukhrijah and mudkhilah

الخفيف

1 يلعب الدستبند فردا و أن كان له شاغل عن الدستبند<sup>1</sup>

1. He is performing the Dastaband alone, even though he has something to distract him from the Dastaband.

The dastaband is a Persian dance in which people join hands: dast=hand, band = tie.

الكامل

29 كلا و إن جلب أو سكبجا و أذكر بنفشا يخلف الهليجا<sup>2</sup>

29. Even if he brings peas - Jalbana - or brings boiled meat or mentions the violet Binfasha - which comes after fruit - Halij.

Sakbaja - to bring - Sikbaj - it is a Persian word which means meat boiled in vinegar.

Binfasha, is a Persian word coming from بنفشه meaning بنفسج violet, and Halija is for Halilaj, a myrobalan.

<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 2, 132

<sup>2</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 2, 9.

الخفيف

22 جمحت جمحة فما زلت منها و من الصيرفي في شبروز<sup>1</sup>

22. She has become ungovernable, so you continue to watch her closely, just as you would watch a money-changer on a dark day.

Shabruzi is Persian a combination of two words Shab = dark and Ruzi = day.

الكامل

15 حياك بالشاهسفرم مضحى و الجلسان و نفحة الكاس<sup>2</sup>

15. He greeted you at noon with sweet herbs and the scent of the drinking cup.

Shahsfaramm is a Persian word meaning sweet basil.

Jullasan is a Persian word meaning either Rose or Basil.

### **Ibn al-Rùmī's quotations from other poets:**

#### 1. Quotations from Pre-Islamic poetry

الوافر

1 أبا أسحاق لا تغضب فأرضى بعفوك دون مأمول الثواب<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 3, 242

<sup>2</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 3, 294

<sup>3</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 1, 381

2 أعيدك أن يقول لك المرجى رضيت من الغنيمة بالأياب

1. O Abù Ishaq do not be angry ; I wish to be content with your forgiveness, without hoping for any reward.

2. I beg you not to allow the hopeful man to say to you I am content with return alone as my booty.

Ibn al-Rùmī quotes رضيت من الغنيمة بالأياب from Imru' al-

Qays.

الوافر

9 و قد طوفت فى الأفاق حتى رضيت من الغنيمة بالأياب<sup>1</sup>

9. I travelled much in many countries, until I was content with return alone as my booty.

الطويل

8 (لقد أذكرتتى لأمرىء القيس قوله فأئك (لم يغلبك مثل مغلب<sup>2</sup>)

8. You remind me of Imraulqais's verse:- No defeat is worse than to be defeated by one who has been defeated.

Ibn al-Rùmī quotes from Imraulqais: ( يغلبك مثل مغلب )

الطويل

<sup>1</sup> Imru' al-Qays al-Kindī, Dīwān, 73.

<sup>2</sup> 'Alī Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 1, 173

14 و أنك لم يفخر عليك كفاخر ضعيف و لم يغلبك مثل مغلب<sup>1</sup>

14. No triumphing is worse than triumphising over you of a weak man; and no defeat is worse than to be defeated by one who has been defeated.

Ibn al-Rùmî sometimes quotes a complete line:

الطويل

122 و لم يكن فى العرف صاف

مهناً و ذو كدر و العرف شتى المشارب<sup>2</sup>

123 إذا لم يقل أعلى النوابيع رتبة لمقول غسان الملوك الأشايب

124 ( على لعمر و نعمة بعد نعمة لوالده ليست بذات عقارب )

125 و ما عقرب أدهى من البين أنه له لسعة بين الحشا و الترائب

126 و من أجل ما راعى من البين قوله (كلينى لهم يا أميمة ناصب

122. If benevolence did not include both clear and wholesome drinking and muddy drinking - and benevolence has many different watering holes,

123. Then the greatest of Nàbighas would not have said to the spokesman of the white-haired King Ghassan.

124. I owe one kindness after another to 'Amr and to his father, kindnesses with no strings in their tails.

<sup>1</sup> Imru' al-Qays al-Kindî, Dīwān, 66.

<sup>2</sup> 'Ali Ibn al- Rùmî, Dīwān, 1,229-230

125. The scorpion is not more painful than separation,  
which has a sting that strikes you between your  
bowels and your chest.

126. It was because of the separation that he suffered  
that he said:

'Leave Me, Umaymah, to painful grief,

Ibn al-Rùmî quotes one whole line (124) from al-Nàbighah's  
qasidah

الطويل

4 على لعمر و نعمة بعد نعمة لوالده ليست بذات عقارب<sup>1</sup>

4. I owe one kindness after another to 'Amr and to his  
father, kindnesses with no strings in their tails.

And he also quotes: كليني لهم يا أميمة ناصب from the same

qasidah (line 1)

الطويل

1 كليني لهم يا أميمة ناصب و ليل أقاسيه بطيء الكواكب<sup>2</sup>

1. O'Umayma, leave me to violent grief to a night of  
suffering with slow-moving stars.

He quotes all another half line from al-Nàbighah :

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<sup>1</sup> al-Nàbighah al-Dhubyanī, Dīwān, n.d., Beirut, 9

<sup>2</sup> al-Nàbighah al-Dhubyanī, Dīwān, 9

الطويل

153 و لم يمش قيد الشبر ألا و فوقه (عصائب طير تهتدى بعصائب)<sup>1</sup>

153. He does not walk a span without there being above him flock of birds directing other flocks.

Ibn al-Rùmî quotes this half line from:

الطويل

10 إذا ما غزوا بالجيش حلق فوقهم عصائب طير تهتدى بعصائب<sup>2</sup>

10. When they invade with their army flocks of birds directed by other flocks circle above it.

Ibn al-Rùmî also quotes from al-A'shà:

السريع

13 كالطود لا ينطح لكنه يوهى رؤسا شأنها النطح<sup>3</sup>

13. He is like a mountain that cannot ram anything, but which breaks heads trained to ramming.

al-A'shà says:

السريع

49 كناطح صخرة يوما ليوهنها فلم يضرها و أوهى قرنه الوعل<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmî, Dīwān, 1, 232

<sup>2</sup> al-Nābighah al-Dhubyanī, Dīwān, 10

<sup>3</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmî, Dīwān, 2, 62.

<sup>4</sup> Maymūn al-A'shā, Dīwān, Beirut, n.d. 148.

49. He is like one who rams a rock in order to break it; however he cannot harm it, and the antelope damages his horn.

From al-Mutalammis Ibn al-Rùmī quotes:

الطويل

12 لذي الحلم قبل اليوم ما تفرع العصا وقد قالها من قبلي المثلث<sup>1</sup>

12." Before today, there was no knocking with a stick for the reasonable man" Al-Mutalammis said this before me.

الطويل

1 لذي الحلم قبل اليوم ما تفرع العصا

وما عام الأنسان ألا ليعلم<sup>2</sup>

Before today the reasonable man did not require knocking with a stick. Men were taught only in order to learn.

( 2 ). Borrowing from Umayyad poetry Ibn al-Rùmī says:

البيسط

5 فأن تعجب قوم قلت ممتلا : قول الفرزدق فيما أدت السير<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 3, 319

<sup>2</sup> From, 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 3, 319

<sup>3</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 3, 110

6 أيعجب الناس أن أضحكت سيدهم ( خليفة الله يستسقى به المطر

5. If a group of people is surprised, I shall say, imitating what al-Farazdaq said on the authority of the biographers.

6. Are people surprised that I have made their lord, the Khalifah of Allah may he be watered by the rain, laugh?

البيسط

291 أيعجب الناس أن أضحكت خيرهم خليفة الله يستسقى به المطر<sup>1</sup>

291. Are people surprised that I have made the best of them, the Khalifah of Allah, may he be watered by the rain, laugh?

البيسط

205 لا يجهن حلِيم أننى رجل من كان أخطل جهل كنت جحافاً<sup>2</sup>

205. Let the civilized man know that I am a man; whoever is the Akhṭal of boorishness I shall be Jahhāf .

الطويل

1 الاسائل الجحاف هل هو ثائر يقتلى أصيبت من سليم و عامر<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Hammām al-Farazdaq, Dīwān, 1, 290

<sup>2</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 4, 251

<sup>3</sup> Ghīyāth al-Akhṭal, Dīwān, 1979, Beirut, 2, 528

1. Have you not asked al- Jaḥḥāf if he will avenge the members of Salim and 'Amir who were killed?

al- Akḥṭal and al- Jaḥḥāf met at a majlis of 'Abd al-Malik, and al- Akḥṭal reminded al- Jaḥḥāf that his tribe (Taghlib) had killed a number of al- Jaḥḥāf's tribes ( Salīm and 'Amir) al- Jaḥḥāf left in anger and proceeded to keep a lookout for Taghlib, 'of whom he killed a large number .

This provoked al-Akḥṭal's line:

الطويل

61 لقد أوقع الجحاف بالبشر وقعة ألى الله منها المشتكى والمعول<sup>1</sup>

61.al- Jaḥḥāf has caused the death of my people. To God must those who complain and lament about this turn.

3. From 'Abbasid poetry Ibn al-Rùmī cites:

الطويل

- 1 أيارب وجه فى التراب عتيق و يارب حس فى التراب رقيق<sup>2</sup>
- 2 و يارب حزم فى التراب ونجدة و يارب رأى فى التراب زنيق
- 3 الا كل حى هالك و ابن هالك و ذو نسب فى الهالكين عريق
- 4 ( فقل للغريب اليوم أنك راحل ألى منزل دانى المحل سحيق

<sup>1</sup> Ghīyāth al-Akḥṭal, Dīwān, 1, 32

<sup>2</sup> 'Alī Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 4, 332-333

- 5 و ما تعدم الدنيا الدنية أهلها شواظ حريق أو دخان حريق
- 6 يجرع فيها مالك فقد هالك فيشجى فريق منهم بفريق
- 7 فلا تحسب الدنيا إذا ما سكنتها قرارا فما دنياك غير طريق

1. Many a noble old face is in the grave; and many a delicate beauty is in the grave too.
2. Many a resolution and effort are in the grave; and many a sound judgement is in the grave.
3. Every living thing will perish and is the offspring of some perishable thing; the man of lineage is noble only among those who perish.
4. Say to the stranger today: 'You will travel to a dwelling that is both new at hand and far away.
5. This base world will not despoil its people of the blaze or the smoke of fire.
6. In it the possessor is forced to swallow the loss of a perishable possession and one group of people is saddened by [the loss of] another group.
7. Do not think that this world, when you take up residence in it, is stable; your world is only a road [that leads elsewhere].

The first four lines are from Abù Nuwàs

- 1 أيارب وجه فى التراب عتيق ويارب حسن فى التراب رقيق<sup>1</sup>
- 2 ويارب حزم فى التراب و نجدة ويارب رأى فى التراب وثيق
- 3 أرى كل حى هالكا وأبن هالك وذا نسب فى الهالكين عريق
- 4 فقل لقريب الدار أنك طاعن ألى منزل نائى المحل سحيق

1. Many a noble old face is in the grave; and many a delicate beauty is in the grave too.

2. Many a resolution and effort are in the grave; and many asound judgement is in the grave.

3. I see that every living thing will perish and is the offspring of some

perishable thing the man of lineage isnoble only among those who perish.

4. Say to your neighbour that you will travel on to a dwelling that is a great distance away.

There are a few differences between these lines of Abù Nuwàs and the way Ibn al-Rùmî quotes them in his poem : Ibn al-Rùmî reads a-lā for arā , qaribi l-dār for al-gharībi l-yawma, ṣaʿīn for rāḥil and nāʿi l-maḥalli for dani l-mahalli. These suggest that Ibn al-Rùmî was quoting Abù Nuwàs from memory.

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<sup>1</sup> al-Ḥasān Abù Nuwās, *Dīwān*, Cairo, 1953, 621.

Ibn al-Rùmī takes four lines of Di'bil al-Khuzā'ī and introduces them separately into a longer qasidah of his own, filling out the scenario sketched in Di'bil's poem.

This is the literary device known as mu'aradah

الكامل

- |  |    |
|--|----|
| أسر المؤمن خالد و ضيوفه أسر الكمي هفا خلال الماقت <sup>1</sup> | 1  |
| بعثوا عليه بنبيهم و بناتهم من بين ناتفة و آخر سامط             | 2  |
| يتنازعون كأنهم قد أوثقوا خاقان أو هزموا كتائب ناعط             | 3. |
| أكلوه فأنترعت به أسنانهم و تهشمت أفاؤهم بالحائط                | 4  |

1. Khàlid and his guests captured the Muezzin [the cock] just as they would a hero - which flapped its wings while they wrung his neck.
2. They sent against him their sons and their daughters, some to pluck him and some to scald and roast him,
3. Snorting at one another as though they had shackled Khaqan or routed the squadrons of Na'it.
4. They ate him, and their teeth were pulled out by him and their backs were broken against the wall.

Ibn al-Rùmī says:

<sup>1</sup> From 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, *Dīwān*, 4, 86, 87.

الكامل

3 ظلوا و قد أسروا المؤمن بينهم وكأنما هزموا كتائب ناعط<sup>1</sup>

4 و خلوا بشلو ذبيحهم فرأيتهم من ناتف ريشا و آخر مارط

\* \* \*

19 أكلوه فانتثرت به أسنانهم و تهشمت أقفانهم بالحائط

\* \* \*

29 أكلوا مؤذنتهم فأضحوا كلهم قد عوجلوا بعقاب رب ساخط

3. Having captured the Muezzin between them - It was as though they had routed the squadrons of Na'it. -

4. They were left with the spoils of their slaughter and I saw some of them plucking feathers and others pulling.

\* \* \*

19. They ate him and their teeth were pulled out by him, and their backs were broken against the wall.

\* \* \*

29. They ate their Muezzin, and in the morning they were all treated to the punishment of an angry lord.

Ibn al-Rùmî uses lines of Di 'bil elsewhere to similar effect.<sup>2</sup>

Ibn al-Rùmî adapts a line of Abù Tammâm for his own purposes:

الخفيف

<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmî, Dīwān, 4, 87, 88.

<sup>2</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmî, Dīwān, 1, 471-473

28 وإذا المجد كان عوني على المرء تقاضيته بترك التقاضى<sup>1</sup>

28. When self-esteem helps me against a man, I exact payment from him by not exacting payment.

Ibn al-Rùmî says

الكامل

145 و كنت مجدك بأقتضائك حاجتى و كفى به متقاضيا و وكيلاً<sup>2</sup>

145. I have entrusted your self-esteem with repaying what you owe me and I am sure that it will act as it should in repaying.

(4) Contemporary Poets:

Ibn al-Musib says that Ibn al-Rùmî recited to him four lines of 'Ubayd Allàh Ibn 'Abdullàh Ibn Ṭàhir and then six lines of his own in which he used 'Ubayd Allàh's lines:

الوافر

1 نذيرى من عسى و لعل نفسى و من أختيهما حتى وسوفاً<sup>3</sup>

2 فكم عللن قبلى من قرون ألى أن شافها الحدثن شوقا

3 و لم نر قط أغدر من زمان و لا بندوره فى الغدر أوفى

4 فأن قدمت خوفا جر أمنا و أن قدمت أمنا جر خوفا

<sup>1</sup> Habīb Abū Tammām, Dīwān, 2, 316

<sup>2</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 5, 160

<sup>3</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 4, 219

1. It is myself that warns me against 'asa and la'alla (perhaps) and against their sisters hatta (until) and sawfa (will).
2. To how many centuries before me have they made their excuses until the present time shows them for what they were.
3. We have never seen a more treacherous time or one the treacherous vows of which are more readily fulfilled.
4. For when you presuppose dreadfulness, it brings security, and when you presuppose security, it brings dreadfulness.

Ibn al-Rùmî uses this as follows:

الوافر

- 1 عسى و لعل طيبنا حياتى و صاحبتيهما حتى و سوف<sup>1</sup>
  - 2 تبشرنى بروح الله بشرى تشوف عن القلوب الهم شوفا
  - 3 و لولا أنها لى مستراح ظللت محالفا حزنا و خوفا
  - 4 و ذاف لى القنوط لذيد عيش بمر الصاب و الذيفان ذوفا
- \* \* \*
- 6 أرى الشيطان يوعدى شرورا و وعد الله بالخيرات أوفى

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<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmî, *Dīwān*, 4, 219

1. 'asa and la'alla are two sweetnesses of my life; and with them are hatta and sawfa.

2. They bring me goodness through the mercy of Allah goodness that takes away grief from men's hearts.

3. If this were not a relief for me, I should still be an associate of grief and fear.

4. Despair has tainted the sweetness of my life with the bitterness of colocynth and poison.

\* \* \*

6. I see Satan threatening me with evil, but Allah's promise of good is more reliable.

There were many poets in Ibn al-Rùmî's period but none of them had much influence on his poetry.

( 1 ).al Ḥusayn Ibn al Ḍaḥḥāk

Ibn al-Rùmî admired and transmitted the poetry of al-Ḥusayn Ibn al-Ḍaḥḥāk but the latter seems to have had little effect on his own poetry, even though he quotes some of it. They never met; Ibn al-Rùmî was only 29 years old at the time of al-Ḥusayn's death.

Di' bil al-Khuzā'ī

Ibn al-Rùmî was still young when Di'bil attained fame, and he admired and quoted two qasidah of his. One has already been mentioned. The other quotation runs:

## المتقارب

- 1 أتيت ابن عمرو فصادفته مريض الخلائق ملتاثها<sup>1</sup>.
- 2 فضلت جيادى على بابه تروث وتأكل أرواتها
- 3 غوارث تشكو إلى ربها أطال السبيعى أعراتها

1. I came to Ibn 'Amir and found him mentally sick and confused;

2. And my horses proceeded to drop their dung and to eat it at his door;

3. Famished, they complain to their Lord - al-Sabi 'i has prolonged their hunger.

Ibn al-Rùmī starts his qasdiah with these three lines. Then he proceeds

## المتقارب

- 4 فأقبلت أذعو على نفسه بأن يقسم الموت ميراثها<sup>2</sup>
- 5 و قد قيل ما قولة قالها؟ فقلت لهم روثه راتها
- \* \* \*
- 7 و أما القوافى فقلبتا و اخرجت للعبد أرفاتها
- \* \* \*
- 11 فكم حطمت حطم الشعر فيه ثم وكم عيثة عاثا

<sup>1</sup> 'Alī Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 1, 471

<sup>2</sup> 'Alī Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 1, 471, 472

4. I proceeded to curse him - asking that death would divided up their legacy among them.

5. They asked : What did he say? and I said to them, 'Shit that he has produced.

\* \* \*

7. I have searched through poetry and have extracted from it its filth for the slave (Ibn 'Amir)

\* \* \*

11. How much destruction and how much harm has poetry done to him there?

When Di'bil died, Ibn al-Rùmī was still only twenty five.

al-Buḥṭri (Abū 'Ubadah al-Walid b. 'Ubayd al-Ṭāī).<sup>1</sup>

Ibn al-Rùmī met al-Buḥṭri at the house of 'Uthman al-Najim, a common friend and they became friends for a while. However, since al-Buḥṭuri was constantly boasting about his close relationship with the Caliph and the Emirs, al-'Alà Ibn Sa'id asked Ibn al Rùmī to lampoon at- Buḥṭuri , which he did.<sup>2</sup>

البسيط

البحترى ذنوب الوجه تعرفه و ما رأينا ذنوب الوجه ذا أدب<sup>3</sup> 9

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<sup>1</sup> 'Abbās al-Aqqād, Ibn al-Rùmī, 209

<sup>2</sup> 'Abbās al- 'Aqqād, Ibn al-Rùmī, 209

<sup>3</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 1, 301-303

\* \* \*

14 لهفى على الف موسى فى طويلته إذا ادعى أنه من سادة العرب

\* \* \*

16 الحظ أعمى و لولا ذاك لم تره للبحترى بلا عقل و لا حسب

\* \* \*

28 عبد يغير على الموتى فيسلبهم حر الكلام بجيش غير ذى لجب

\* \* \*

30 شعر يغير عليه باسلا بطلا و ينشد الناس آياه على رقب

31 يقول مستمعوه الجاهلون به أحسنت يا أشعر الحضار و الغيب

9. al-Buhturi has a face with a long tail which you recognize; I have never found those whose faces have long tails to possess any culture.

\* \* \*

14. I should feel sorry for a thousand razors working on his long beard, since he claims to descend from the chiefs of the Arabs.

\* \* \*

16. Luck is blind. If it were not, you would not see it accruing to al-Buhturi, who has neither intellect nor lineage.

\* \* \*

28. A slave who stirs up envy against the dead and so despoils them of what they say as free men with an army that makes no noise.

\* \* \*

30. Poetry against which he stirs up envy as a gallant hero, and then recites it to people without shame.

\* \* \*

31. Those who listen to him, without knowing who he is, say: "Well done! O greatest poet of those dead or alive!".

When he heard this long qasidah, al Buḥturi sent Ibn al-Rùmī a present, at the same time warning him that this did not give him immunity from his anger. He was afraid of Ibn al-Rùmī's ability to lampoon his victims.

### ***The relationship between Ibn al-Rùmī and other poets***

Ibn al-Rùmī mentions more than twenty-six poets in his Dīwān. He mentions four of them throughout his works.

- a) Khàlid al-Qaḥṭubi
- b) 'Ubayd Allāh Ibn 'Abdullāh b. Ṭàhir
- c) Abū Ḥafṣ al Warrāq
- d) Abū Bakr al Ḥuraythi

Khàlid al Qaḥṭbi<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Khàlid al-Qaḥṭubi: A poet at Ibn al-Rùmī's period

Ibn al-Rùmī lampoons him in more than ninety poems. Here is one example:

البيط

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1 | لله خالد الطائي من رجل كم شبهة من عويص الفقه جلاها <sup>1</sup> |
| 2 | أبصرت زوجته يوما بحضرته و قد علت دون سقف البيت رجلاها           |
| 3 | فقلت: هلا توارت عنك محسنة فقال تخشى عقاب الله مولاها            |
| 4 | لو أنها كاشفتني بالزناء أئمت أذ تتقيني بما لا تتقى اللاها       |

1. How excellent a man is al Tâî. How many obscurities of Fiqh has he made clear!

2. I saw his wife one day, in his presence, with her legs raised up until they almost touched the ceiling of the room.

3. I said would she not do better to hide herself from you?

He said : she is afraid of the punishment of God, her master.

4. Because she would be sinning if she concealed her adultery from me, since she would then fear me more than she feared God.

---

<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 1, 120

'Ubayd Allàh Ibn Abd Allah<sup>1</sup>

Ibn al-Rùmî praises and complains of him in more than forty seven poems.

الطويل

1 بنفسي أمير انصف الناس كلهم سواى فانى لست فى ذلك أنصف<sup>2</sup>

2 أتى المطل و التسوييف دون ثوابه و عهدى به قبل المديح يسلف

\* \* \*

4 و ماخلت أنى أستريت سماءه و يربيع غيرى من جناها و يخرف

1. May my soul be the ransom of a prince who is just to everyone except to me; in this I suffer injustice.

2. Procrastination and delay here interfered with his rewarding me, although my compact/agreement with him is that he would pay before being praised.

\* \* \*

4. I did not suppose that I should have to wait for the rain of his gifts, seeing that others are given regular spring and autumn pasturage.

Also he says

الطويل

<sup>1</sup> A prince, poet and chief of Baghdad's police in Ibn al-Rùmī's time.

<sup>2</sup> 'Alī Ibn al-Rùmī, *Dīwān*, 4, 258

- 1 شهدت متى أستغنيبت عنك بأننى غنى عن الماء الذى أنا جارع<sup>1</sup>  
 11 فكيف الغنى عن بمعروفه الغنى و عن بكفيه الغيوث الروابع  
 12 مديحى و أن نزهته لك مبذل و خدى و أن صعرته لك ضارع

\* \* \*

- 16 و ما كنت أخشى أن تخيب ذريعتى لذيك إذا خابت لذيك الذرائع  
 17 فلا أكن المحروم منك نصيبه بلا أسوة أنى لذلك جازع

\* \* \*

- 27 وعش أبدا في غبطة وسلامة  
 وأمن إذا راعت سواك الروائع  
 28 فأنت لنا واد خصيب جنابه و أنت لنا طود من العز فارع

10. I swear that if ever I can do without you, I shall be able to do without the water which I drink.

11. For how could anyone do without him through whose gifts comes wealth, and from him in whose hands are the abundant spring rains?

12. Even if I hold my praise aloof, it is lavish to you, and even if I turn my face away, it remains submissive to you.

\* \* \*

16. I have never feared that my means would fail because of you, even if other people's means have done so.

<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 4, 142-143

17. Let me not be the only one whose portion in you is cut off; I am most anxious about this.

\* \* \*

27. Live forever in happiness, health and safety, even if terrors terrify others.

28. You are to us a valley with fertile slopes; you are to us a lofty mountain of nobility.

Abù Ḥafṣ al-Warrāq<sup>1</sup>

Ibn al-Rùmī lampoons him in more than thirty four poems.

المجنت

- |                   |                               |   |
|-------------------|-------------------------------|---|
| أباحفبص رويدا     | أمرك من بعض ميرى <sup>2</sup> | 1 |
| ما ساقك الله نحوى | فيما أظن لخيرى                | 2 |
| يا زوج تلك التي   | زوجها البرية غيرى             | 3 |
| أ أنت تشتم عرضى   | و أنت فى طول أيرى             | 4 |

1. O Abù Ḥufayṣ, gently. I cannot do without you. (I need you to provide some of my earnings - by lampooning you).

2. I think God has not sent you towards me for my advantage.

---

<sup>1</sup> Abù Ḥafṣ al-Warrāq : A poet at Ibn al-Rùmī's period.

<sup>2</sup> 'Alī Ibn al-Rùmī, *Dīwān*, 3, 72.

3. O husband of one whom is the wife of all mankind  
but me.

4. Do you insult my honour, when you are only as tall  
as my penis.

al-Ḥuraythi: Abū Bakr Aḥmad<sup>1</sup>

Ibn al-Rūmī lampoons him in more than fifteen poems.

المنسرح

لنا صديق كلا صديق غث على أنه سمين<sup>2</sup> 1

من أقيح الناس لا أحاشى من كائن منهم ومن يكون 2

إذا بدأ وجهه لقوم لانت بأجفانها العيون 3

\* \* \*

معتزلى مسر كفر بيدي ظهورا لها بطون 7

1. We have a friend who is not in fact a friend, he  
looks lean although he is fat.

2. He is one of the worst persons in the world, without  
excepting any that has lived or will live.

3. When people see his face, their eyes retreat behind  
their eyelids.

\* \* \*

<sup>1</sup> al-Ḥuraythi, A poet from al Mu'tazilah at Ibn al-Rūmī's period.

<sup>2</sup> 'Alī Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 6, 236

7' He is a Mu'tazili who conceals his unbelief. He shows only their front, not their back.

'Ali Ibn Yaḥya Ibn Abū Maṣṣūr<sup>1</sup>

Ibn al-Rūmī praises and complains of him in more than twenty seven poems.

الكامل

- |                              |                                  |    |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|----|
| إلى آل يحيى جاوزت بي مطيتي   | أقصى أرض بعدهن أقصى <sup>2</sup> | 9  |
| و لما تناهى بي مصيري إليهم   | أنخت قلوصى فى مكان قلاص          | 10 |
| إلى معشر لا يطرق الضيف مثلهم | سماحة أخلاق و رحب عراض           | 11 |
| * * *                        |                                  |    |
| تيممت منهم بالمديح ممدحا     | يطاوع فيه القول حين يعاصى        | 19 |
| * * *                        |                                  |    |
| جواد ينادى الهاربين عطاؤه    | ألى أين منى؟ لات حين مناص        | 21 |

9. To the tribe of Yahya has my beast crossed the furthest reaches of a land, after which lie more,
10. And when my journey finally brought me to them I made my she camel knee down in the kneeling place
11. To a people to the like of whom the guest will never come by night - because of their generosity and extensive dwellings.

<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn Yaḥyā. A Persian poet and writer who was a friend of al-Mutawakkil and the other Caliphs after him until al-Mu'tamid.

<sup>2</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 4, 7, 8.

\* \* \*

19. I made for one of them in order to praise him, about of whom my tongue is obedient even when it wants to disobey me.

\* \* \*

21. Generous, whose gifts call out to those who run from him. Where are you running to from me? It is too late to escape.

Ibn al-Rùmî says :

الطويل

1 أباحسن طال المطال و لم يكن غريمك ممطولا و أنى لصابر<sup>1</sup>

\* \* \*

4 فيا ليت شعري و الحوادث جمّة متى تتجز الوعد الذى أنا ناظر

\* \* \*

9 ليهنىء رجالا لاتزال تجودهم سحائب من كلتا يدك مواطر

\* \* \*

11 منحتهم مالا و جاها كلاهما لهم منه حظ يملأ الكف وافر

\* \* \*

14 و غادرتى خلف العناية ضائعا و لله ماذا يا ابن يحي تغادر؟

\* \* \*

35 سيسألنى الأقوم عما أثبتتى به فيماذا أنت أياى أمر

<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmî, Dīwān, 3, 200-202.

36 أ أخبرهم بالحق وهي شكية أم الأفك فالأسلام عن ذلك زاجر

1. Oh Abù Ḥasan, ('Ali Ibn Yaḥya is meant) a long time has passed, but nothing of your debt has been paid, even though I am patient.

\* \* \*

4. I wish I knew, in the midst of life's vicissitudes, when you will fulfil your promise, which I am waiting for.

\* \* \*

9. Happy are those men to whom rain clouds from both your hands are continually generous.

\* \* \*

11. You have given them wealth and position; they have received of both an abundant portion that fills the hand.

\* \* \*

14. You have left me lost, beyond your care. O Ibn Yaḥya for God's sake , [do you know] what [a great person] you are leaving?

\* \* \*

35. People will ask me: What did he give you? So what answer would you like me to give?

36. Shall I tell them the truth? Is it a complaint or shall I tell a lie? If so Islam forbids telling lies.

Ibrahim Ibn al Mudabbir<sup>1</sup>

Ibn al-Rùmī praises him and lampoons him in more than twenty poems.

الكامل

- |  |    |
|--|----|
| ما أستشرفت منك العيون ضئيلا لكن عظيما في الصدور جليلا <sup>2</sup> | 1  |
| أقبلت في خلع الولاية طالعا و الناس حولك يوفضون قبيلنا              | 2  |
| فكانك البدر المنير مكللا من طالعات سعوده اكليلنا                   | 3  |
| * * *  |    |
| لاحق منك بأن يهنا معشر رزقوك حظا في الحظوظ جزيلا                   | 9  |
| أنصفتهم و أقمت عدلك فيهم ميزان قسط لايميل مميلا                    | 10 |
| فهدت عيونهم و أفرخ روعهم وأقام منهم من أراد رحيلنا                 | 11 |

1. Men's eyes do not perceive you as insignificant, but as great and glorious in their hearts.

2. You advance in your robes of state, like a heavenly body and the people round you lay carpets before your feet as you advance.

3. Indeed you are like a bright full moon crowned with a crown of newly risen stars that are fortunate because of it.

\* \* \*

<sup>1</sup> Ibrahim Ibn al Mudabbir, A minister, writer and poet at Ibn al-Rùmī's period.

<sup>2</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, *Dīwān*, 5, 152

9. People who have you with them have more right than you to be congratulated because of their great good fortune.

10. You have treated them fairly, and you have established your justice among them as an impartial balance that does not incline arbitrarily.

11. Their eyes have become calm, their fear has left them and those who intended to leave have remained.

Ibn al-Rùmī also says :

الوافر

- 1 رددت على مدحى بعد مطل وقد دنست ملبسه الجديداً<sup>1</sup>
- 2 و قلت امدح به من شئت غيرى و من ذا يقبل المدح الرديداً؟
- 3 و لاسيما و قد أعمقت فيه مخازيك اللواتى لن تبيدا
- 4 و ما للحى فى أكفان موت لبوس بعد ما أمتلأت صديدا

1. You have returned me my praises after keeping them for a long time and having sullied their new clothes,

2. You said, 'Praise anyone you like with them except me.' But who will accept second-hand praises.

3. Especially since you have steeped them in your shameful stains which will never disappear.

---

<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 2, 127.

4. A live man does not wear the shrouds of death after they are full of corruption.

### ***The Five Senses in Ibn al-Rùmī's poetry***

Ibn al-Rùmī employs all five senses when creating his images. He is particularly fond of colour images and metaphors suggesting colour, eg. 'shyness' for red, and 'brightness' for white. The following are examples of pictures involving each of the five senses:

#### Sight

##### الخفيف

بنيت كرم تديرها ذات كرم موقد النحر مثمر الأعناب<sup>1</sup> 60

\* \* \*

فوق لبات غادة تترك الخالي من كل صبوة وهو صاب 62

\* \* \*

تحمل الكأس والحلى فتبدو فتنة الناظرين والشراب 66

60. A wine ( daughter of a vine ) is handed to us by an open-handed girl whose throat is covered by a necklace of gold [blazing on the throat like ripe grapes].

\* \* \*

---

<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, *Dīwān*, 1, 319-320.

62. On the breast of a pretty girl, who leaves  
passionate the man who is drained of all passion.

\* \* \*

66. She bears both cup and jewels in such a way as to  
appear a temptation to those who watch and those  
who drink.

Ibn al-Rùmî wrote these two lines on an apple

المنسرح

1 أرسلنى عاشق بحاجته فجننت بين الرجاء والوجل<sup>1</sup>

2 لاتخجلنى بالرد حسبك ما ترى بخدى من حمرة الخجل

1. A lover sent me word of his desire, so I came in  
both hope and fear.

2. Don't shame me by rebuking me; suffice it that you  
see the red flame of shame on my cheek.

Sound

الخفيف

14 تتغنى كأنها لا تغنى من سكون الأوصال وهى تجيد<sup>2</sup>

\* \* \*

16 من هدؤ وليس فيه انقطاع وشجو وما به تبلي

<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmî, Dīwān, 5, 82.

<sup>2</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmî, Dīwān, 2, 266, 267.

- 17 مد فى شأو صوتها نفس كاف كأنفاس عاشقيا مديد
- 18 وأرق الدلال والغنج منه وبراه الشجا فكاد يبيد
- 19 فتراه يموت طورا ويحيا مستلدا بسيطه والنشيد

14. She sang beautifully but seemed, because of the stiffness of her limbs not to sing.

\* \* \*

16. She sang softly without taking breath, and she sang with emotion with that in which there was no foolishness.

17. Her voice was pitched in long breath, enough to assemble the sighs of her lovers.

18. Coquetry and coyness attenuated it, and emotion rendered it almost inaudible.

19. You found it now dying, now living, pleasurable in both its complexity and its range.

In these last three lines, Ibn al-Rùmī changes the sensory medium of the picture from the language of the ear to the language of the eye.

Taste

الخفيف

73 ومزاج الشراب ان حاولوا المزج رضاب ياطيب ذلك الرضاب<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, *Dīwān*, 1, 320.

73. When drinkers want to mix their wine they mix it with saliva - Oh, how sweet that saliva is!.

### Touch

#### البيسط

3 يا حبذا ليل أيلول اذا بردت فيه مضاجعنا والريح سجواء<sup>1</sup>

4 وجمش القر فيه الجلد فائتلفت من الضجيعين أحشاء فأحشاء

3. How good are the nights of Aylùl [september], when our beds are cool and the wind becomes calm.

4. And the cold then makes the hair stand up on the skin, so that the bellies of bed-fellows are closely entwined.

### Scent

#### البيسط

1 حيثك عنا شمال طاف طائفها بجنة فجرت روحا وريحانا<sup>2</sup>

1. May a north wind greet you from me-a wind that circles round Paradise and brings ease and the scent of sweet basil.

### Combined Senses

<sup>1</sup> 'Alī Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 1, 29.

<sup>2</sup> 'Alī Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 6, 209.

## 1. sight and sound

## البيسط

- 1 حيثك عنا شمال طاف طائفها بجنة فجرت روحا وريحانا<sup>1</sup>
- 2 هبت سحيرا فناجى الغصن صاحبه موسوسا وتنادى الطير اعلانا
- 3 ورق تغنى على خضر مهدلة تسمو بها و تشم الأرض أحيانا

1. May a north wind greet you from me - a wind that circles round Paradise and brings ease and the scent of sweet basil.

2. May it blow at dawn, so that each branch whispers at its companion and the birds call loudly to one another.

3. Ash-grey doves sing upon green dangling branches, on which they rise sometimes and sometimes touch the earth.

Ibn al-Rūmī on occasions combines the three senses of sight, taste and smell.

## الكامل

- 3 صفراء تنتحل الزجاجة لونها فيخال ذوب التبر حشو أديمها<sup>2</sup>
- 4 ريحانة لنديمها درياقة لسليمها تشفى سقام سقيمها

<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 6, 209.

<sup>2</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 6, 5.

3. A yellow wine the colour of which the bottle assumed and you would think that the contents of its skin were molten gold.

4. Sweet basil for its drinker, an antidote for those bitten by it, curing those who are sick because of it.

### Sight, Sound and Smell

#### البيسط

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| ابوسليمان لاترضى طريقته لا فى الغناء ولا تعليم صبيان <sup>1</sup> | 1 |
| * * *   |   |
| وان تغنى فسلح جاء منبتقا فى لون خلقته فى سلح سكران                | 3 |
| له اذا جاوب الطنبور محتفلا صوت بمصر وضرب فى خراسان                | 4 |
| عواء كلب على أوتار مندفة فى قبح قرد وفى استكبار هامان             | 5 |
| وتحسب العين فكيه اذا اختلفا عندالتنغم فكى بغل طحان                | 6 |

1. Abù Sulayman's methods are not acceptable, either in singing or in instructing children

\* \* \*

3. When he sings it is like a drunk man's excrement pouring forth, the same colour as his force.

4. When he joyfully answers the drum [tunbur] each sound goes in different directions; his is in Egypt and the drum's in Khurasan.

---

<sup>1</sup> 'Alī Ibn al-Rūmī, *Dīwān*, 6, 288.

5. The howling of a dog accompanying the string of a teasing bow, ugly as an ape and proud as Haman.

6. To the eye, his jaws seem, when they part as he sings, to be the jaws of a miller's mule.

al-'Aqqād says concerning the rhyme word of the last line that Ibn al- Rumī dose not introduce the miller just for the sake of the rhyme but because the image would not be complete without it, because of the associations it conveys.<sup>1</sup>

#### Smell, Sight, Taste and Touch

الكامل

1 وسميطة صفراء دينارية ثمنا ولونا زفها لك جزور<sup>2</sup>

2 عظمت فكادت أن تكون اوزة ونوت فكاد اهابها يتفطر

\* \* \*

6 ظلنا نقشر جلدها عن لحمها وكان تبرا عن لجين يقشر

7 وتقدمتها قبل ذاك ثرائد مثل الرياض بمثلهن يصدر

\* \* \*

9 وأنت قطائف بعد ذاك لطائف ترضى اللهاة بها ويرضى الحنجر

1. A yellow fowl with a golden colour and golden price brought by a young lad,

<sup>1</sup> 'Abbās al-'Aqqād, Ibn al-Rūmī, 120.

<sup>2</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 3, 56

2. So big that it is almost a goose and so heavy its skin almost splits.

\* \* \*

6. We proceeded to peel off its skin from its flesh and it was as though gold was picked away from silver.

7. Proceeded by Tarides like goodness proceeded by others.

\* \* \*

9. And after it came delicate sweetmeats which pleased the palate and the throat.

The role of Perfection

Physical perfection

المنسرح

1 لا شيء إلا وفيه أحسنه فالعين منه إليه تنتقل<sup>1</sup>

2 فؤائد العين فيه طارفة كأنما أخرياتها الأول

1. There is nothing of which the best does not appear in him, so that the eye moves only from him to him again.

2. The eye's enjoyment of him is always fresh, as though its last look at him were its first.

Sensual Perfection

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<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 5, 148

الطويل

- أعانقها والنفس بعد مشوقة إليها وهل بعد العناق تدان<sup>1</sup> 1
- فالثم فاها كي تموت حزازتي فيشتد ما القى من الهيمان 2
- وما كان مقدار الذى بى من الجوى ليشفيه ما ترشف الشفتان 3
- كأن فؤادى ليس يشفى غليله سوى أن يرى الروحين يمتزجان 4

“1.She is in my embrace but my soul desires her still.

Is there a closeness beyond embrace?

2.I kiss her mouth that my fever might end, but my  
mad thirst only grows.

3.The lovesickness in me is not of the kind healed by kisses.

4.Nothing it seems, can cure my heart's thirst except to see  
our souls mingle.<sup>2</sup>”

Ibn al-Rùmī frequently produces images that combine different kinds of sensory details.

## Conclusions

(1) *Istiqsā'* before Ibn al-Rùmī was largely spontaneous.

(2) Ibn al-Rùmī employs *Istiqsā'* very extensively in his poetry, with the result that many of his qaṣīdahs are too long.

<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, *Dīwān*, 6, 222

<sup>2</sup> Ashtiany, *The Cambridge History of Arabic Literature, 'Abbasid*, 217.

- (3) His use of Tashkhīs exemplary.
- (4) He avails himself of allusions to the Quran and to, Umayyad and Early 'Abbasid poetry in his Dīwān.
- (5) His relationship with other poets of his period was not always good, he tended to use lampoon.as extortion.
- (6) His language is more colloquial and a less elevated style and vocabulary than other contemporary poets.

## **CHAPTER Three**

## The Exordium of Arabic poetry

The early Islamic poets tended to make their exordia (the first one or two lines) jazil and baligh because they believed that;

1. The poetry is locked , the exordium is its key;
2. The virtue of the contents of the exordium is to be judged by the first impression on the hearer;
3. Because of the critics judgement as to the superiority of the Jāhilī qasidah early Islamic poets made this their model, whether or not this way entirely germane to their own purposes.

Many poets such as, Bashshār, Abū Tammam and al- Buḥturi like these critics, believed that the atlāl theme was the only suitable opening / exordium for the qasidah,

Although, on the other hand, Muslim Ibn al-Walid, Abū Nuwās and Ibn al-Rūmī include a few qasidahs in their poetry which contains the atlāl motif, the majority of poems began quite differently.

In some cases, they even made fun of the atlāl motif, e.g. Muslim says

البيسط

1 شغلي عن الدار أبكيها وأرثيها إذا خلت من حبيب لي مغانيها<sup>1</sup>

2 دع الروامس تسفى كلما درجت ترابها ودع الأمطار تبليها

---

<sup>1</sup> Muslim Ibn al-Walīd, *Dīwān*, Cairo 1970, 216

3 إن كان فيها الذي أهوى أقيمت بها وإن عداها فمالي لا أعاديها

1. I am too busy to weep and elegeise the traces now that my lover no longer has her dwelling there at any time.

2. let the winds raise the dust on them whenever they blow and let the rains efface them.

3. If my lover is staying there, I will stay there too, if she has moved on why should I not move on too?

We may compare this with Abū Nuwās, lines

الرمل

1 قل لمن يبكي على رسم درس واقفا ما ضر لو كان جلس<sup>1</sup>

2 أترك الربع وسلمي جانبا واصطبيح كرخيه مثل القيس

1. Ask the one who is weeping standing at the traces that have been effaced, what harm would there be in his sitting down.

2. Leave Salma and the dwelling aside and drink a morning draught of wine of karkh, gleaming like a glowing coal.

And he says

الطويل

1 أيا باكي الأطلال غيرها البلى بكيت بعين لايجف لها غرب<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> al-Ḥasan Abū Nuwās, Dīwān, 134

<sup>2</sup> al-Ḥasan Abū Nuwās, Dīwān, 10

2 أتتعت دارا قد عفت وتغيرت فإني لما سالمت من أمرها حرب

1. O' you who are weeping, over the ruins which have been changed by the effects of time may you weep with an eye whom flow and does not dry up.

2. Do you describe a dwelling place that has been altered and effaced? I am hostile to whatever you are content to describe it as.

الخفيف

1 دع لبالك رسومه وطلوله ولحاد ركابه وحموله<sup>1</sup>

2 ولغاو سفاهه وصباه وللاه سماعه وشموله

1. Leave to the weeper his ruins and his traces and leave his camels and his litters to the one who drives them along singing.

2. And leave to the seducer both his foolishness and youthful folly and leave to the frivolous man his songs and his wine.

الخفيف

1 ظل دمع هريق في الأطلال بعد إقوائها من الحلال<sup>2</sup>

\* \* \*

<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 5, 223

<sup>2</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 5, 235

3 أي حق لها فيرعاه راع من نوال لأهلها ووصل

4 فانصرفا عن الوقوف عليها إنها من مواقف الضلال

1. The tears of an outpouring over the site of the camp  
after it has empty of its dwellers

\* \* \*

3. What right has it, by giving gifts and assistance to  
its people, to have someone to look after it?

4. So leave off standing by it, it is one of the stopping-  
places of error..

### ***Ibn al-Rùmī's new type of exordium***

Ibn al-Rùmī prefaces many of his poems with a new kind of  
exordium

1. Praise of God

الخفيف

1 أحمد الله حمد شاكر نعمى قابل شكر ربه غير أب<sup>1</sup>

1. I praise God, like one who gives thank for a favour,  
glad, -not refusing -to praise his lord

الخفيف

1 أحمد الله نية وثناء غدوة بل عشية بل مساء<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 1, 314

<sup>2</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 1, 35

1. I praise God quite sincerely, in the morning, but also in the night and in the evening.

الخفيف

1 أحمد الله مبدئاً ومعيداً حمد من لم يزل إليه منيباً<sup>1</sup>

1. I praise God over and over again, one who returns to God again and again.

الطويل

1 سأحمد - بعد الله في كل مشهد أبا حسن أعنى على بن أحمد<sup>2</sup>

1. I should praise, after God in every shrine, Abū Hasān, I mean 'Ali Ibn Aḥmad.

الخفيف

1 نحمد الله حين من وأبقى بعدما كاد كوكب الأرض يرمي<sup>3</sup>

1. We praise God when he bestows and gives life, after the star of the earth was almost overthrown.  
2. Ibn al-Rūmī starts with gardens, flowers and fruits

الخفيف

<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 1, 250

<sup>2</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 2, 194

<sup>3</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 4, 286

1 رياض تخايل الأرض فيها خيلا الفتاة في الأبراد<sup>1</sup>

1. Gardens in which the earth preens itself, as a young girl preens herself in abrād.

الخفيف

1 غرد الطير في الرياض وناحا وشكا العشق والغرام وباحا<sup>2</sup>

1. Birds sing, weep, complain of love and passion and converse in the garden.

مجزوء الكامل

1 أبصرت باقة نرجس في كف من أهواه غضه<sup>3</sup>

1. I saw a fresh nosegay of narcissus in my love's hand.

المتقارب

1 وأحسن ما في الوجوه العيون وأشبه شيء بها النرجس<sup>4</sup>

1. Eyes are the most beautiful in face and the narcissus is more like them than anything else.

الخفيف

<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 2, 195

<sup>2</sup> 'Ailī bn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 2, 95

<sup>3</sup> ' Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 4, 63.

<sup>4</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 3, 321

1 لا ترى نرجسا يشبه الورد إذا ما أردت فكرا ولحظا<sup>1</sup>

1. You never find a narcissus compared with roses when you require thought and looking.

3. Ibn-al Rùmī also begins several of his exordia with the Mahrajàn

الوافر

1 أحب المهرجان لأن فيه سرور للملوك ذوي السناء<sup>2</sup>

1. I like the Mahrajàn-autumn festival because brilliant kings feel happy because of it.

4. Ibn al-Rùmī weeps for youth

البيسط

1 نكي الشباب لحاجات النساء ولي فيه مآرب أخرى سوف أبكيها<sup>3</sup>

1. I weep for my youth because of women's need and I have in it other requirements for me that I weep for also.

البيسط

1 أمسى الشباب رداء مستليا ولن يدوم على العصرين ما اعتقبا<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'Alī Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 4, 100.

<sup>2</sup> 'Alī Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 1, 30.

<sup>3</sup> 'Alī Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 6, 381.

<sup>4</sup> 'Alī Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 1, 390.

1. Youth is slipping off you like a cloak, and nothing will last as long as day and night alternate with each other.

الخفيف

1 شاب راسي ولات حين مشيب وعجيب الزمان غير عجيب<sup>1</sup>

"1. My head is grey though it is not time for growing grey. The wonders of time are not strange i.e., one can not be surprised at what time does."<sup>2</sup>

### ***The Revivification of Poetry in the 'Abbasid Period***

There are various features of 'Abbasid poetry which are largely absent from earlier poetry. In the particular case of Ibn al-Rūmī one can mention three broad areas of intellectual and emotional endeavour which distinguish his versifying; philosophy, asceticism and logic. These are not, of course, wholly independent of developments within society and trends within scientific progress. Zuhd<sup>3</sup> is a reaction to mujun, and vice versa, while philosophy and logic owe their popularity

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<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, *Dīwān*, 1, 125.

<sup>2</sup> Rhurun Guest, *Life and Work of Ibn er Rūmī*, 82.

<sup>3</sup> For the early development of the Zuhdiyyat, see A. Hamori, "Ascetic Poetry (Zuhdiyyat)" in J. Ashtiany et al., 'Abbasid Belies-Lettres : The Cambridge History of Arabic Literature, Cambridge 1990, 265-269.

to the translation movement and the amassing of books in the Bayt al-Hikmah.

### Philosophical Poetry

By this I mean what the poets assimilate from the human experience and how they use it in their poetry, the best known example of this is Abù al-'Alà al-Ma'rri. Take this poem for example:

الوافر

- |  |    |
|--|----|
| نفوس للقيامة تشرئب وغي في البطالة ملتتب <sup>1</sup> | 1  |
| تأبى أن تجئ الخبر يوما وأنت ليوم غفران تتب           | 2  |
| فلا يغرك بشر من صديق فان ضميره احن وخب               | 3  |
| وان الناس طفل أو كبير يشب على الغواية أو يسب         | 4  |
| تحب حياتك الدنيا سفاها و ماجادت عليك بما تحب         | 5  |
| وإنك منذ كون النفس عنسا لتوضع في الضلالة أو تخب      | 6  |
| وإن طال الرقاد من البرايا فإن الراقدين لهم مهب       | 7  |
| * * *  |    |
| وما يحميك عز أن تسبى ولو أن الظلام عليك سب           | 11 |
| * * *  |    |
| ولم يدفع ردى سقراط لفظ و لا بقراط حامي عنه طب        | 15 |

"1. Souls stretching out their necks towards the resurrection and error standing upright in folly!

<sup>1</sup> Abù al-'Alā' al-Ma'arri, al-Luzūmiyyāt, Cairo, 1891, 1, 88-89.

2. You refuse obstinately ever to do a good action,  
and (yet) you make ready for the day of forgiveness!

3. Be not deluded by a smile from a friend, for his  
thoughts are (all) hatred and guile.

4. And men, whether children or aged (the latter) grow  
grey in error or (the former) grow up (in it).

5. You foolishly love your worldly life, but it never  
bestowed on you what you desired.

6. Ever since your carnal soul become lusty as a  
young camel, you amble and shamble along in error.

7. Though the sleep of mortals shall be long, for the  
sleepers there must surely be an awakening.

\* \* \*

11. Neither shall any power protect you from being  
carried into captivity not though the darkness be a veil  
over you.

\* \* \*

15. Eloquence did not ward off death from Socrates,  
neither did any medicine protect Hippocrates against  
it.”<sup>1</sup>

Ibn al-Rùmī says:

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<sup>1</sup> A.Y. Arberry, *Arabic Poetry*, 112-115.

## الوافر

- عدوك من صديقك مستفاد فلا تستكثرن من الصحاب<sup>1</sup> 1
- فإن الداء أكثر ما تراه يحول من الطعام أو الشراب 2
- إذا انقلب الصديق غدا عدوا مبينا والأمور إلى انقلاب 3
- ولو كان الكثير يطيّب كانت مصاحبة الكثير من الصواب 4
- ولكن قل ما استكثرت إلا سقطت على ذناب في ثياب 5
- فدع عنك الكثير فكم كثير يعاف وكم قليل مستطاب 6
- وما الجج الملاح بمرويات وتلقى الرى في النطف العذاب 7

1. Your enemy gets information about you from your friend, so -for this reason- don't have too many friends,
2. Because usually you see illness occurring from food or drink.
3. When the friend turns away, then he has become a clear enemy and every thing is on the point of turning (for the worse)
4. If the majority were good, then it is fitting to be one of their companions.
5. But how rarely have you had many friends without falling in with wolves in (lambs) clothing.
6. So leave excess on one side; how often has excess been found to be despicable, and how often has paucity been approved.

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<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī Dīwān, 1, 246-247.

7. The briny oceans cannot quench the thirst, that is to be found in sweet -tasting drops.

الواقف

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| رأيت الدهر يرفع كل وغد و يخفض كل ذى شيم شريفة <sup>1</sup> | 1 |
| كمثل البحر يغرق فيه حى و لا ينفك تطفو فيه جيفة             | 2 |
| أو الميزان يخفض كل واف و يرفع كل ذى زنة خفيفة              | 3 |
| كذلك ذأبه فينا وإنما على ما كان فى حصن منيفة               | 4 |
| بناها أولونا فاعتصمنا بها و بأنفس فينا عفيفة               | 5 |
| إذا ما جهله أربى علينا حملناه بالباب حصيفة                 | 6 |
| وندرأ بؤسه بالصبر حتى نفرجه بأذهان لطيفة                   | 7 |
| إلى أن يرحم الله المرجى لكل شديدة منه عفيفة                | 8 |

1. I have seen time advance every scoundrel and put down every man of honourable character.

2. Just as every living thing downs in the sea while a corpse continues to float on it.

3. or like the scales which do not tip in favour of every full measure but do tip in favour of every light weight.

4. Such is his way with us, but we, no matter how long he continues, are in lofty fortresses

<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī ,Dīwān,4, 231.

See also Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 2, 160.3, 132.4, 212.5, 196.6, 31, 189.

5. Which were built by our forefather so we could protect ourselves there and in pure souls.

6. If his barbaric conduct increases despite us, then we will bear it with intelligent minds.

7. And we will protect ourselves repulse his tyranny with patience until we drive it away with subtle reasoning.

8. Until God in whom is placed all hope against his (*i.e.* Times) calamities shows pity to his pure (worshipper)

### Zuhdiyyàt (ascetic poetry)

Zuhd as a reaction against the shamelessness of Mujun and Lahù appears in the Abbasid period.

Zuhd is best characterised by the early 'Abbasid poet Abù al-'Atāhiyyah

He says

الوافر

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| إلهي لا تعذبني فإني مقر بالذي قد كان مني <sup>1</sup> | 1 |
| ومالي حيلة إلا رجائي وعفوك إن عفوت وحسن ظني           | 2 |
| فكم من زلة لي في البرايا وأنت علي ذو فضل ومن          | 3 |
| إذا فكرت في قدمي عليها عضضت أناملتي وقرعت سني         | 4 |

<sup>1</sup> Ismā'ī Abù al-'Atāhiyyah, Dīwān, Beirut, n.d., 263.

- 5      يظن الناس بي خيرا وإني لشر الناس إن لم تعف عني  
 6      أجن بزهره الدنيا جنونا وأقطع طول عمري بالتمني  
 7      ولو اني صدقت الزهد فيها قلبت لأهلها ظهر المجن

1. My God don't chastise me because I agree with all what I have done.
2. I have no other contrivance but my hope of your forgiveness, if you will forgive me and my suspicions are correct.
3. How often have I slipped into error, though you are gracious and bounteous to me.
4. When I contemplate my regret for (having committed) them, I bite my fingers and gnash my teeth.
5. I am possessed by the splendour of the world and pass the whole of my life in desire.
6. If I were really Zàhid then I would have turned the back of the shield to its people.
7. People think that I am a good person, but I am the worst of creation if you do not forgive me.

Ibn al-Rùmī himself composed Zuhd poetry, an indication that he was torn in two different directions- whether follow to Mujùn and Lahù, or to be a good Muslim.

Ibn al-Rùmī says

## الهزج

1 إلى الزهاد في الدنيا جنان الخلد تستاق<sup>1</sup>

2 عبيد من خطاياهم إلى الرحمان أباق

\* \* \*

4 وزافت لهم الدنيا وعاقبتهم فما انعاقوا

5 عليهم حين تلقاهم سكينات وإطراق

\* \* \*

9 بضجون إلى الله ودمع العين مهراق

\* \* \*

15 وخفناك وقد تعفو وقلب المرء خفاق

1. The gardens of Eternity long for those who are Zuhhàd in this world-

2. Worshippers who flee from their sins to the compassionate one

\* \* \*

4. This world shows its attractions to them and tries to hinder them but they are not hindered.

5. When it encounters them, they must be tranquil, with downcast eyes.

\* \* \*

9. They clamour to God while their tears stream forth.

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<sup>1</sup> 'Alī Ibn al-Rūmī, *Dīwān*, 4, 238-284.

15. We fear you, though you may forgive us, the heart  
of man is tremulous.

And he says

VE

مجزوء الكامل

نبل الردى يقصدن قصدك فاحد قبل الموت حدك <sup>1</sup>	1
قد عد قبلك من رأيت ولست تثبت ان يعذك	2
فدع البطالة والغواية جانبا وعليك رشك	3
فكأنني بك قد نعتت وقد بكى الباكون فقدك	4
وتركت منزلك المشيد معطلا وسكنت لحدك	5
وخلوت في بيت البلى وخلا بك الملكان وحدك	6
وسلاك أهلك كلهم ونسوا على الأيام عهدك	7
يتمتعون بما جمعت ولا يرون عليه حمدك	8
متمهدون وأنت تحت الرمس يرعى الدود جلدك	9
قد سلموك إلى الضريح ووسدوا بالتراب خدك	10

1. The arrows of Doom are aimed at you, so set limits  
on yourself before death.

2. There has been counted, before you, those whom  
you saw (die), and it will not be long before they count  
you also.

<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 5, 59, 60-see also 1,394.2, 51, 86, 186.4, 122.

3. So leave foolishness and error aside- you must guide yourself aright.
4. In your case, it seems to me that your death has already been announced and that the mourners have already bemoaned your loss.
5. That you have left your well-constructed dwelling empty and have taken up residence in your grave.
6. That you are alone in the Abode of decay and the two Angels are all alone with you.
7. That all your people have been consoled for you and they have forgotten ever having known after some days.
8. Enjoying what you have amassed and seeing no need to praise you for it.
9. Comfortable, while you are under the ground, and the worms eat your flesh.
10. They have consigned you to the grave and have cushioned your cheek with earth.

### **Ibn al-Rùmī's Use of Logic**

Ibn al-Rùmī makes frequent use of logic in his poetry -al-Istiqsā'- and he is the best poet in this field for example he says:-

الطويل

- 31 لما توذن الدنيا به من صروفها يكون بكاء الطفل ساعة يولد<sup>1</sup>
- 32 وإلا فما يبكيه منها وإنها لأفسح مما كان فيه وأرغد
- 33 إذا ابصر الدنيا استهل كأنه بما سوف يلقى من أذاها يهدد
- 34 وللنفس أحوال تظل كأنها تشاهد فيها كل غيب سيشهد

31. Because of the world's heralding of its vicissitudes, the child starts crying the moment he is delivered.

32. If not then why is he crying, because the world is more spacious luxurious than where he was.

33. As soon as he sees the world, he cries out, as if scared of the pains he will suffer there.

34. The soul has many conditions in which it seems to see what will happen to it in the future.

### Weeping the youth

Ibn al-Rūmī.says:

السريع

- 1 لا تلح من يبكي شبيبته إلا إذا لم يبكيها بدم<sup>2</sup>
- 2 عيب الشبيبة غول سكرتها مقدار ما فيها من النعم
- 3 لسنا نراها حق رؤيتها إلا زمان الشيب و الهرم
- 4 كالشمس لا تبدو فضيلتها حتى تغشى الأرض بالظلم

<sup>1</sup> 'Alī Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 2, 113.

<sup>2</sup> 'Alī Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 6, 102, 103.

5 ولرب شيء لا يبينه وجدانه إلا مع العدم

"1.You should not blame a man who weeps his youth unless because he does not weep for it with blood.

2.The worst of youth is the ache that comes after its intoxication, a pain as intense as are its delights,

3.We can never see it clearly as it is until we have become old and worn out,

4.Just as the virtue of the sun does not appear until the earth is beset with darkness.

5.May a thing is not manifested by its existence until it has ceased to be".<sup>1</sup>

An additional example of creating self-contained gasidahs from earlier topics and motifs is well exemplified in the following short piece which should, perhaps, be classed as a sort of epigram <sup>2</sup>, a characteristic of much of Ibn al-Rùmî's shorter verse. Indeed, in Ibn al-Rùmî's longer poems it would not be injudicious to say that his ruminations on such concerns as lost youth, while actuated by a desire to elicit the mamduh's sympathy (thereby opening his purse-Strings), often attain the status of self contained entities which could easily be extirpated from the rest of the gasidah and allowed to stand as

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<sup>1</sup> Rhurun Guest, Life and Work of Ibn er Rùmî, 68.

<sup>2</sup> . See Rhurun Guest,. Life and Work of Ibn er Rùmî,68, ("Short Poems and Aphorisms") and G. Schoeler, "Ibn al-Rùmî's Poem on Poetry" JAL 26 Part 1, (February 1996).

independent pieces. This is a trend which is, in general, typical of Àbbasid poetry which strove for a greater unity and more effective cohesion, tending to avoid the excessive length of Ibn al-Rùmī's qasidahs.

There was no mention of grave images, of wine or of tribal factionalism. The lampoon was also strongly disapproved -witness al-Ḥutayyàh's punishment at the hands of 'Ūmar Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb for his lampoon of al-Zibriqān Ibn Badr as he says

الكامل

1 دع المكارم لا ترحل لبغيتها وأعد فأنت الطاعم الكاسي

1. Leave noble deeds alone! Do not travel in search for them, but sit at home as you will be fed and clothed (like a woman) there.<sup>1</sup>

With the establishment of the Umayyad Caliphate and its desire to use poetry as propaganda, Arabic verse enjoyed a resurgence. Urbanisation in many areas and lands of the Àbbasid Empire, together with the use of Arabic as an artistic medium by non-Arabs, led to the wholesale regeneration of Arabic Poetry.

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<sup>1</sup>See the narrative of this escapade in Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣfahāni, al-Aghāni, Cairo, 1969, 2, 596-607.

### ***The 'Aims' of Poetry (al-Aghrād al-Shi'riyyah)***

The 'aims' of Jāhili Poetry were panegyric (madh), elegy (rithā'), love poetry (ghazal), lampoon (Hijā') and self-glorifying poetry (fakhr).<sup>1</sup> When Islam appeared a new poetic intention was born to adapt poetry to the strictures of Islam and to defend the faith, consequently.

#### **Panegyric**

The majority of Àbbasid poetry is panegyric in form, which did not experience as much regeneration when compared with other Àbbasid genres because the poets largely followed the method of the Jāhili panegyrics although they did bring about a number of formal changes.

Shawqi Ḍayf says

The Àbbasid poets followed the pre-Islamic exordium - in panegyric poetry- because they felt that this exordium dealt with every feature, good and bad, in the human predicament and not because they wanted to prove any relationship with their ancestors.<sup>2</sup>

In Jāhili panegyric poetry one finds nobility, bravery, pride and chivalry all of which are mentioned also in Islamic, Umayyad and

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<sup>1</sup> I have deliberately excluded description (wasf) from these 'aims' : the 'aim' of much pre-Islamic wasf is subjective, being concerned with the poet and not the object described.

<sup>2</sup> Shawqī Ḍayf. *al-'Aṣr al-'Abbāsī*, 2, 206.

Àbbasid poetry besides specific Islamic characteristics like Godliness, fear of God and justice.

Indications that the caliphs, princes and patrons of whatever social standing, were much concerned with their religious reputation.

Ibn al-Rùmī's Panegyrics

Most of Ibn al-Rùmī's poetry is panegyrical because his poetry was the only way for him to feed himself and his family.

It is not easy to say that any long gasidah by Ibn al-Rùmī can be characterised as having only one intention (gharad) because each long gasidah contains more than one intention. For example many of his panegyrical gasidahs contain ghazal, rebuke, description and gnostic wisdom, thereby rendering it difficult to class them under one intention. When I say for example that this is a panegyrical asqidah, it is only because this is how Ibn al-Rùmī mention it.

His panegyrical exordia follow two different pathways

One resembles the traditional, pre-Islamic exordium, the other is more in keeping with the Abbasid regenerated exordium.

Nazik Sāba Yarid says that Ibn al Rùmī does keep himself to the pre-Islamic exordia by starting with Nasib but sometimes in place of that he starts with bemoaning lost youth.<sup>1</sup>

Ibn al-Rùmī says

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<sup>1</sup> Nāzik Sāba Yārid, Ibn al-Rùmī, 48.

## الطويل

1 أئين ضلوعي جمرة تتوقد على ما مضى أم حسرة تتجدد<sup>1</sup>

1. Is there a blazing coal between my ribs, for what is now past, or it is a sigh (constantly) renewed.

Or he can begin with argumentation

## المجث

1 قالوا إنتبذ قلت مهلا عندي نبيذ كثير<sup>2</sup>

2 ما عاش لي ابن سعيد فإن شاني كبير

1. My companions said: Go and buy us some wine I said-hold on! I have a lot of wine,

2. For as long as Ibn Sa'id is alive and with me, then my standing is great.

Or by describing a journey by river

## الوافر

1 ذكرتك حين ألفت بي عصاها النوى يوما بنهر أبي الخصيب<sup>3</sup>

1. When one day a far off destination made me settle by the river of Abū al-Khasib.

Or he can begin directly

<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 2, 111.

<sup>2</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 3, 76.

<sup>3</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 1, 376.

الخفيف

1 أيها القاسم القسيم رواء والذي ضم وده الأهواء<sup>1</sup>

1.O Qàsim, with the beautiful face, you whose love  
comprises (all) desires.

Ibn al-Rùmī 's panegyric qasidah can-sometimes be very long.

Three hundred and thirty seven lines

الخفيف

1 . ظل دمع هريق بالأطلال بعد أقواتها من الحلال<sup>2</sup>

1.Tears were shed and spilled on the traces after they  
had become empty of their inhabitants.

And sometimes become very short two lines:

الطويل

1 ولا عيب في أخلاقه غير أنه أخو عزمات في الندى محلات<sup>3</sup>

1.He has no faults in his character, except that he  
makes empty promises of generosity.

Ibn al-Rùmī directs his praises towards three classes of people:

1. The Caliphs

Ibn al-Rùmī was contemporary with nine caliphs

1. al-Mu'tasim (r.218 AH - 227 AH)

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<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 1, 57.

<sup>2</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 5, 235-252.

<sup>3</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 1, 458.

2. al-Wàthiq (r.227 AH - 232 AH)
3. al-Mutawakkil (r.232 AH - 247 AH)
4. al-Muntaşir (r.247 AH - 248 AH)
5. al-Musta'īn (r.248 AH - 252 AH)
6. al-Mu'tazz (r.252 AH - 255 AH)
7. al-Muhtadī (r.255 AH - 256 AH)
8. al-Mu'tamid (r.256 AH - 279 AH)
9. al-Mu'taḍid (r.279 AH - 289 AH)

But he only praises four of them

1. al-Musta'in.
2. al-Mu'taḍid.
3. al-Muhtadī.
4. al-Mu'tamid.

Their caliphates coincide with Ibn al Rumi's maturity

1. al-Musta'īn

Ibn al-Rùmī praises him with one stanza

مجزوء الكامل

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| صبرا أمير المؤمنين فالله يجزي الصابرينا <sup>1</sup> | 1 |
| كنا نهني بالخلافة قبلك المتعمينا                     | 2 |
| حتى إذا صارت إليك هديت هدي الراشدين                  | 3 |

\* \* \*

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<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 6, 209, 210.

فاصبر لها لازل عونك من رضيت به معينا 6

هي محنة للمتقين وفتنة للمترفينا 7

1. Amir al-Mu'minin be patient, God requites those who are patient .

2. Before we would congratulate those who enjoyed the Caliphate.

3. Until when you became Caliph, you guided (it) in the path of the Ràshidùn (Rightly Guided Caliphs).

\* \* \*

6. Be patient for it; those whom you approve as helpers will not cease to be your aides.

7. It is the trial of the God-fearing and the seduction of those devoted to luxury.

## 2. al-Muhtadī

Ibn al-Rùmī praises him with two lines :

السريع

قل للإمام المهدي كاسمه وللشبيه السر بالجهرا<sup>1</sup> 1

أنصفت بعض من بعضهم فانصف الناس من الدهر 2

1. Say to the Imām who is rightlyguided, like his name, and who is the same in secret and public.

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<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 3, 115.

2. You have established the right of some people against others, so establish the right of the people against time.

### 3. al-Mu'tamid

Ibn al-Rùmī praises him with two poems<sup>1</sup>

المنسرح

عيدان: أضحى ومهرجان ما ضم متايهما أو ان <sup>2</sup>	1
أعيد نسك وعيد لهو تجاورا أبداع الزمان	2
* * *	
فالله يبقى الامام حتى يرى لمتايهما اقتران	4
معتمد لم يزل عميدا ينطق عن فضله البيان	5
فى كل أرض وكل قوم يثنى بألائه لسان	6

1. There are two festivals- 'Id al-Adhā and Mahrajān, the like of which are never celebrated on the same day.

2. Is not one a festival of denial, the other a festival of joy?

They have been neighbours, How wondrous a time

\* \* \*

<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 5, 15. 6, 195

<sup>2</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 6, 195

4. May God keep the Imàm so that he may (once more) witness a conjoining of their likes (on the same day)
5. Mu'tamid has not ceased to be a pillar-even eloquence speaks of his generosity.
6. In every land and among every race tongues speak in praise of his kindnesses.

#### 4. al-Mu'taḍid

Ibn al-Rùmī praises him with twenty six poems.<sup>1</sup>

#### الخفيف

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| زعم الناس أن للسعد نجما واحدا لايزيد أو نجمين <sup>2</sup> | 1 |
| قلت مهلا ستلتقى الشمس والبدر فكم يطلعان من سعدين           | 2 |
| ستلقى الإمام عما قليل بنت مولاه سيد المغربين               | 3 |
| وسيعطى الإمام منها سعودا كلها للإمام قرّة عين              | 4 |

1. People claim that there is only one star of good fortune-no more- or that there are two.

<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 1, 50, 56, 396

2, 137, 174, 175, 182, 188, 198, 274, 287, 289

3, 69, 79, 226, 266, 269

4, 113, 224, 276

5, 22, 106

6, 12, 22, 207, 209

<sup>2</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 6, 209.

2. I said "steady on! The sun and the full moon will meet, and then how many pairs (of offspring) will come from two felicitous stars.

3. Shortly, the daughter of his client, the lord of the two Maghribs, will meet the Imàn.

4. And the Imàn will be given blessings from her, all of them a delight for the Imàn.

## 2. Dynasties

Ibn al-Rùmī praises:

1. The Tàhirids

2. The family of Wahb

This poem is praise of these dynasties will be exemplified in one poem devoted to each.

### 1. TÀHIRIDS

"The Tàhirid family, semi-independent vassals of the khalif, had established a hereditary right to govern Baghdad and some adjacent territory, as well as to rule over the provinces of Khuràsàn and other dependencies of the califate in the east.

One of the family, Muḥammad Ibn 'Abdallāh Ibn 'Iṭàhir, had been appointed governor of Baghdad by his brother the viceroy of Khuràsàn when Ibn er-Rùmī was 16 years of age, and on the death of his overlord in 248 A H kept this office, but was promoted to holding direct from the caliph ..... Ibn er-Rùmī would naturally have taken the first opportunity of endeavouring to obtain his support. He courted him, but

appears to have failed to gain his favour ..... Muḥammad Ibn 'Abdallāh may have abstained from rewarding Ibn al-Rùmī because he was not satisfied with his panegyric or simply because he was stingy .....

Never the less when Muḥammad died towards the end of 253 Ibn al-Rùmī mourned him in two elegies ....

..... Muḥammad Ibn'Abdallāh Ibn Ṭāhir, was succeeded by his brother 'Ubaidallāh Ibn'Abdallāh, who had been his lieutenant, and of all the Ṭāhirids was the most distinguished for culture and literary achievement.....Born at about the same time as Ibn er-Rùmī , he survived him for several years. Ibn er-Rùmī's Dīwān contains more poetry addressed to him than to any other person, except one or two .....when 'Ubaidallāh first became governor the signs of the decay of the Ṭāhirid kingdom had hardly become obvious although its weakness had been growing for some time one of the first manifest reverses of the Ṭāhirids was the loss of the province of Tabaristān to the 'Aliyid El Ḥasan Ibn Zaid after a series of wars which were concluded by 255 A.H.

In that year Sulaimān Ibn 'Abdallāh, who had been expelled from Ṭabaristān where he had been the Ṭāhirid governor was appointed governor of Baghdad in the place of his brother 'Ubaidallāh Ibn 'Abdallah.....Ibn er-Rùmī appears on the side of 'Ubaidallāh.

At any rate, when Sulaiman was governor Ibn er-Rùmī tried to win his favour, It does not appear how long Sulaimān Ibn 'Abdallah remained governor of Baghdad but by 259 A.H. he had been replaced

by 'Ubaidallàh Ibn 'Abdallàh,... 'Ubaidallàh remained in office till 262 A.H.when he was replaced by his nephew, Muḥammad Ibn Ṭàhir.... 'Ubaidallàh became governor in....266, but had given up the post in 271 A.H. ”<sup>1</sup>

Ibn al-Rùmī praises 'Abdullàh Ibn 'Ubaid Allah al-Ṭàhir with this qasidah which he begins with a lament for lost youth.

### الطويل

- |  |    |
|--|----|
| بدا الشيب في رأسي فجلى عمايتي          | 1  |
| كما كشفت ريح غماما تطخطخا <sup>2</sup> |    |
| ولا بد للصبح الجلي إذا بدت             | 2  |
| تباشيره أن يسليخ الليل مسلخا           |    |
| وأضحت قناة الظهر قوس منتها             | 3  |
| وقد كان معدولا وإن عشت فخخا            |    |
| وأحدث نقصان القوي بين ناظري            | 4  |
| وسمعي وبين الشخص والصوت برزخا          |    |
| وكنت إذا فوقت للشخص لمحتي              | 5  |
| طوت دونه سهبا من الأرض سربخا           |    |
| وكنت يناديني المنادي بعفوه             | 6  |
| فيغثال سمعي دون مدعاة فرسخا            |    |
| فحالت صروف الدهر تنسخ جدتي             | 7  |
| وما أملت من قبل إلا لتسخا              |    |
| وأصبحت عما للفتاة موقرا                | 8  |
| وقد كنت أيام الشباب لها أخوا           |    |
| وما عجب أن كان ذلك فإنه                | 9  |
| إذا المرء أشوته الحوادث شيخا           |    |
| بلى عجب أنى جزعت ولم أكن               | 10 |
| جزوعا إذا ما عضه الدهر اخخا            |    |

“1. Grey hair has appeared in my head to remove the blindness of my heart, as a wind clears away clouds that have assembled,

<sup>1</sup> Rhurun Guest, Life and works of Ibn er-Rùmī, 10-14.

<sup>2</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 2, 100-101.

2. For surely when the welcome signs of broad dawn  
are seen it will (soon) dispel the night;

3 & 4. My back is bent, the failure of my powers bars  
my vision and my hearing,

5. Time was my sight would cross a wide expanse of  
desert to its aim.

6. And my hearing cover a league to take in a  
moderate shout,

7. But now vicissitudes have blotted out my  
youthfulness which disappears protracted,

8. So that I have become a revered uncle to a maiden  
to whom once I have been a brother.

9. In this there is nothing strange, for as events buffet  
a man they make him old,

10. But what is strange is that it should disturb me , I  
am not one to be moved or to exclaim when fate  
afflicts him".<sup>1</sup>

After ten lines Ibn al-Rùmī comes to his main point and starts  
his praise:

عزلك فاذكره ولاتنس مدحة لأبلج يحكي سنة البدر أبلخا<sup>2</sup> **11**

<sup>1</sup>Rhurun Guest, Life and works of Ibn er-Rūmi, 61

<sup>2</sup> 'Alī Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 2, 101, 102.

- له سيمياء بين عيني مبارك 12
- إذا ما اجتلاها روع ذى الروع أفرخا
- صريخ لو استصرخته يابن ظاهر على الدهر إذ أخنى عليك لأصرخا 13
- من المصعبين الدين تفرعوا شماریخ أطواد من المجد شمخا 14
- أناس متى ساءلت نافس حظهم بأيامهم فى الجود و البأس بخبغا 15
- إذا ما المساعى أجريت حلباتها 16
- بدوا غررا فى أوجه السبق شدخا
- بهم جعل المجد التلید مصدرا وليس بانسى سواهم مؤرخا 17
- تعد وأسرف فى مديح ابن ظاهر فلست على الإسراف فيه موبخا 18
- أبو أحمد ليث البلاد و غيئها إذا حطمة لم تبق فى العظم منقخا 19
- فتى لم يزل فى رأس علياء دونها بمرقبة باض الأنوق وفرخا 20
- إذا راح فى ريانثاه حسبته هنالك بالمسك الذكى مضمخا 21
- ينبخ المطي الراغبون بيباه 22
- ولو لم ينبخوه إذن لتتوخا
- تظل متى صافحت أسرار كفه 23
- تمس عيوننا من ندهن نضخا
- إذا وعد اهترت الأرض نضرة 24
- وأنبت منها كل ما كان أسبخا
- وإن أوعد ارتجت فإن تم سخطه 25
- تهاوت جبال الأرض فى الأرض سوخا
- ولست تلاقى عالما ذا براعة بأبرع منه فى العلوم وأرسخا 26
- ولم تر نارا أوقدت مثل ناره لدى الحرب أشوى للأعادى و أطبخا 27
- كفى زمنا أدى الأمير و أهله به وبهم إن حاول البذخ ميذخا 28
- هو الطرف أجرته الملوك ومسحت قديما له وجهها أغر مشمرخا 29

إذا هو قادم المصعبين فاعتدوا جحاجة تهدى غطاريف شرخا	30
فأية دار للعدا شاء جاسها وأية أرض للعدا شاء دوخا	31
به أيد الله الخلافة بعدما وهى كل وهى ركنها فتفسخا	32
هو الطاهر ابن الطاهرين الألى مضوا	33
ولم يلبسوا عرضا مذالا مطيخا	
و مستنحى مدحا كمدبجه بعدما تمكن إخلاصي له فتمخخا	34
فقلت له عنى إليك فلن أرى هواك لمتلى فى رمادك منفخا	35

- "11. Take comfort then and think of that, do not forget to praise a man, whose face is brilliant as the moon,
12. Who has between his eyes a sacred sign which dissipates the fear of one alarmed who sees it,
13. A succourer to whom should you appeal, Ibn Tàhir for aid against time when it brings misfortune he would give you help.
14. One of the line of Muṣ'ab who stands higher than summits of greatness,
15. People of whom men loath to give them their due readily commend the generosity and valour.
16. Conspicuous when the race of enterprise is run
17. By them the tale of eminence is headed and by no other will be concluded.
18. Pass every bound in praise of Ibn Tàhir and exceed, you will not be reproached for excess concerning him.

19. Oh Abû Ahmad, lion of the land, its rain when a year of dearth has left no marrow in the bone,

20. Who dwells forever in a mountain at a level higher than the eyrie where the griffin lays its eggs and brings forth its young!

21. When he goes in the odour of his good repute it seems as if he was perfumed with fragrant musk.

22. At his door his suitors make their camels kneel and if did they not, the camels would stop there by themselves.

23. When you take him by the hand you will touch gushing springs of liberality.

24. At his promise the earth is moved towards him and salt regions produce herbage,

25. At a threat of his it quakes and if his displeasure is full, mountains will fall in turn and sink into the ground.

26. You will not meet a learned man of note more erudite in the various branches of science or sounder,

27. Nor will you see a fire like his in war, so deadly and consuming to his enemies.

28. He is the horse that kings have made run in the race and long have found victorious.

29. If an age wants a boast it is boast enough to have produced him.

30. When he is the head of the sons of Mus'ab and they are captains of valiant youths,

31. Whatever land of the enemy he wishes he will tread, whatever land of the enemy he wishes he will subdue.

32. He is the Tàhir (pure) descendant of those Tàhirs who have gone before without any of them having worn honour impugned or sullied.

33. By him God strengthened the khalifate when its support had grown exceedingly weak and perished.

34. To one who seeks praise from me like the praise I have given him since my affection has been established and become the marrow of my bones.

35. I say, Away, I shall never see in your ash any spark that one like me can fan into flame"<sup>1</sup>

#### Wahb's family

"This family belonged originally to Wàsit. They had been in government employment since Umayyad times and could boast of continuous service for more than a century and a half.

The members of the family whom Ibn er-Rùmī mentions in his poems are Sulaimàn Ibn Wahb, his three sons, Aḥmad, Wahb and 'Ubaidallàh, and the two sons of 'Ubaidallàh, El Ḥasan and El Qàsım. Sulaiman Ibn

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<sup>1</sup> Rhurun Guest, Life and works of Ibn er-Rùmī , 61, 62.

Wahb the head of the family in the middle of the 3rd century, began employment as a scribe of Mamùn at the age of 14. He held various offices and was vizier to El-Muhtadi also to El Mu'tamid for a short period

Sulaiman's son, Aḥmad, was a poet and author, he held some high positions in the government service and died in 285. His son, Wahb was in the government service before 260 and appears to have been still living in about 280. Sulaiman's other son, 'Ubaidallàh Ibn Sulaiman, had important government employment early.

'Ubaidallàh's son, El Ḥasan, was given charge of several government offices, but his father made him appoint deputies to some of them by whom he was virtually superseded. He was learned and had written a commentary on Euclid. He died in 284.

His other son, El Qàsım was in the service of the government probably from the time that 'Ubaidallàh becomes Wazir...

Ibn er-Rùmī addresses several poems to the family of Wahb...

'Ubaidallàh's young son El Qàsım was Ibn er-Rùmī's principal patron.

Ibn er-Rùmī addressed more poetry to him than to any one else.

At one period Ibn er-Rùmī was high in El Qàsım's favour, but ultimately he becomes estranged from him. And it is on record that El Qàsım treated Ibn er-Rùmī with rudeness in the autumn of 278 when the family had been back in authority for only a few months."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Rhurun Guest, Life and works of Ibn er-Rùmī , 33-35.

Ibn al-Rùmī praises al-Qàsim:

الخفيف

أيها القاسم القسيم رواء والذي ضم وده الأهواء<sup>1</sup> 1

والذي ساد غير مستكر السؤدد في الناس، واعتلى كيف شاء 2

\* \* \*

لم يزل يجعل المساء صباحا كلما بدل الصباح مساء 4

\* \* \*

قال رأس الووس لما رآه وصف البدر نفسه لاختفاء 7

1. O al-Qàsim with the beautiful face, you whose love comprises (all) desires.

2. Who has become a leader without his leadership proving objectionable to the people and has become exalted at will.

\* \* \*

4. He never ceases to turn evening into morning, when morning is turned into evening

\* \* \*

7. The head of all heads said when he saw him, "The full moon has described itself-there's no doubt !"

With the words: قمر بدر ضياء و سنا

which poets tend to use more often for women not for men.

<sup>1</sup> 'Alī Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 1, 57.

- 12 فغدا يوسع الرعية عدلا غير أنني لقيت منه اعتداء<sup>1</sup>
- 13 أجميل بك اضطرأحي وقد قدمت في رأيك الجميل رجاء
- 14 ولى الطائر السعيد الذي كان بريدا بدولة زهراء

12. His justness has encompassed all his subject, but I have met with hostilities from him.

13. Is it pleasant that you cast me aside when I have already had hopes of your pleasant opinion (of me).

14. And when the bird of good omen, which heralded a beautiful kingdom, (had appeared ) to me.

In verse 12 Ibn al-Rùmī uses the word عدلا drawing on a stock of ethico-religious vocabulary to please al-Qàsım and to remind him of his debt, whereupon the poet can start to criticize him because of his failure in this respect.

- 16 ثم ادنيتني فزادك يمني من أمير مؤيد إثناء<sup>2</sup>
- 17 وتناولتني ببر فبرتك يد الله ثرة بيضاء
- 18 وكذا كلما نويت لمولاك مزيدا أوتيته والهناء

16. And then you brought me closer, so may this increase your felicity from a helping emir (*i.e.* God),

<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 1, 58.

<sup>2</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 1, 58.

17. And (if) you treated me with decency and propriety, so may the hand of God, wealthy and pure, do the same for you.

18. And similarly, whenever you intend to give more to your client, may you be given it ,together with comfort!

In these last three lines Ibn al-Rùmī ,prays for al-Qàsim to get grace, good faith and whatever he is generous with himself..

19 انا مولاك أنت أعتقت رقي بعدما خفت حالة نكراء<sup>1</sup>

20 فعلام انصراف وجهك عني وتتاسيك حاجتي الغاء

21 كان ياتيني الرسول فيهدى لي سرورا ويكبت الأعداء

22 فقطعت الرسول عني ضنا باتخاذية مفخرا وبهاء

\* \* \*

30 أنا عار من كل شيء سوى فضلك لازلت كسوة وغطاء

31 ولقائي إياك ماء الحياتين فلا تقطن عني اللقاء

32 سمني الخسف اقبل الخسف بشكر ولا تسمني الجفاء

19. I am your slave - you set me free when I had been fearing misfortune

20. So why do you turn your face from me and why do you forget my needs (thereby) rendering them null and void.

---

<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 1, 58, 59.

21. The messenger used to come to me and bring me joys as gifts, humbling my enemies.

22. But you stopped the messenger from coming to me, preventing me from using him as a source of pride and happiness,

\* \* \*

30. I am naked and have nothing apart from your generosity. Do not cease to be my clothing and covering.

31. Treat me unjustly, I will be pleased but do not turn away from me.

32. Treat me unjustly, I shall accept unjustness with thanks but do not treat me with harshness.

In the last few lines quoted here Ibn al-Rùmī abandons all traces of nobility as he allows himself to say anything and promises to do anything for financial betterment.

In the remainder of this qasidah, Ibn al-Rùmī describes the mailis over which al-Qàsim presided which he used to attend, listening to and appreciating the music and dancing. He also describes the gardens of al-Qàsim's residence, comparing its lush and fertile beauty with al-Qàsim's beauty and generosity. Ibn al-Rùmī closes his qasidah with a resumption of direct eulogy addressed to al-Qàsim.

3. Ministers, princes and members of the professional classes.

(a) Ministers:

Ibn al-Rùmī devotes eulogies to the following ministers:

1. Abù al-'Abbàs Ibn Thawàba <sup>1</sup>
2. Sa'īd Ibn Mukhlid <sup>2</sup>
3. Ismà'īl Ibn Bulbul. <sup>3</sup>
4. Ibràhim Ibn al Mudabbir <sup>4</sup>

In the following qasidah Ibn al-Rùmī begins with a direct apostrophe of an unnamed individual who is most likely to be Ibn Thawàbah.

1. Ibn Thawàbah:-

الطويل

دع اللوم إن اللوم عون النوائب ولا تتجاوز فيه حد المعاتب <sup>5</sup> 1

فما كل من حط الرجال بمخفق ولا كل من شد الرجال بكاسب 2

<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 1, 155, 219. 2, 92, 103. 3, 117. 4, 212

<sup>2</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 1, 135. 2, 111. 3, 16. 4, 67.

<sup>3</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 1, 88, 202, 267, 284, 288, 418, 468.

2, 37, 47, 48, 61, 65, 128, 275, 307.

3, 38, 179, 270.

.....4, 109, 177, 179, 226, 274.

.....5, 16, 30, 174, 175, 252, 312.

6, 14, 26, 80, 147, 152, 173, 198, 237, 257, 303, 356.

<sup>4</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 1, 88, 273. 2, 45, 90, 309. 3, 243, 205, 183. 5, 152. 6, 314.

<sup>5</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 219, 220

- 3 وفي السعي كيس والنفوس نفائس وليس بكيس بيعها بالرغائب
- 4 ومازال مأمول البقاء مفضلا على الملك والأرباح دون الحرائب
- 5 حضضت على حطبي لنارى فلا تدع لك الخير تحديري شرور المحاطب
- 6 وأذكرت إشفائي وليس بمانعي طلابي ان أبغى طلاب المكاسب
- 7 ومن يلق مالاقيت في كل مجتئى من الشوك يزهد في الثمار الأطايب
- 8 أذاقتنى الأسفار ماكره الغنى إلي وأغراني برفض المطالب
- 9 فأصبحت في الإثراء أزهد زاهد
- وإن كنت في الإثراء أرغب راغب
- 10 حريصا جباننا اشتهى ثم أنتهى بلحظى جناب الزرق لحظ المراقب
- 11 ومن راح ذا حرص وجبن فإنه فقير أتاه الفقر من كل جانب

"1. Do not blame, for that only adds to my misfortunes; nothing beyond a mild reproach is called for.

2. Not every one who stays in one place is a failure, nor is every one who travels successful.

3-4. Activity may be sensible, but only when one's life is not endangered by it.

5. You have spurred me on to put more wood on my fire; you should have warned me against the dangers too.

6. You have ignored my fears.

7. He who finds such thorns as I have found is not so eager to pluck the fruit.

8. Travels have made me averse from seeking riches.

9. Now I am more abstemious than anyone from wealth. even though I desire it more than anyone.

10-11. I am greedy and cowards; I desire and hold back;  
which makes me a poor man.”<sup>1</sup>

After these eleven lines Ibn al-Rūmī introduces a reference to Ibn Thawābah, making it clear that he is the addressee.

12 و لما دعاني للمثوبة سيد يرى المدح عارا قبل بذل المثاب<sup>2</sup>

“12. When a leading man invited me to be rewarded by him, a man who disdains praise before he has rewarded.”<sup>3</sup>

After this line he begins to describe his terrors of travel by the

land

لقيت من البر التباريح بعدما لقيت من البحر إبيضاض الدوائب <sup>4</sup>	19
سقيت على ري به الف مطرة شغفت لبغضيتها بحب المجادب	20
ولم أسقها بل ساقها لمكيدتي تحامق دهر جد بي كالملاعب	21
إلى الله أشكو سخف دهري فإنه يعابثني مذ كنت غير مطالب	22
أبي أن يغيت الأرض حتى إذا ارتمت	23
برحلي أتاها بالغيوث السواكب	
سقى الأرض من أجلى فاضحت مزلة تمايل صاحبها تمايل شارب	24
لتعويق سيرتي أو دحوض مطيتي وإخصاب مزور عن المجد ناكب	25

<sup>1</sup> Greet Jan van Gelder, *The Terrific Traveller, Ibn al-Rūmī's Anti-Raḥīl*. University of Groningen, n.d., p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, *Dīwān*, 1, 220.

<sup>3</sup> Greet Jan van Gelder, *The Terrific Traveller, Ibn al-Rūmī's Anti-Raḥīl*, p. 2

<sup>4</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, *Dīwān*, 1, 220, 221.

\* \* \*

وما زال ضاحي البر يضرب أهله بسوطي عذاب جامد بعد ذائب 33

فإن فاته قطر وتلج فإنه رهين بساف تارة أو بحاصب 34

فذاك بلاء البر عندي شاتيا وكم لي من صيف به ذى مثالب 35

\* \* \*

فدع عنك ذكر البر إنني رأيتك لمن خاف هول البحر شر المهاوب 38

كلا نزليه صيفه وشتاؤه خلاف لما أهواه غير مصائب 39

لهات مميت تحت بيضاء سخنة وري مقيت تحت أسحم صائب 40

\* \* \*

إلى أن وقاني الله محذور شره بعزته والله أغلب غالب 45

فأفلت من ذوبانه وأسوده وحرابه إفلات أتوب تائب 46

وأما بلاء البحر عندي فإنه طواني على روع من الروح واقب 47

ولو ثاب عقلي لم أدع ذكر بعضه ولكنه من هوله غير تائب 48

ولم لا ولو القيت فيه وضخرة لوأفيت منه القعر أول راسب 49

ولم اتعلم قط من ذى سباحة سوى الغوص والمضغوف غير مغالب 50

فأيسر إشفاقي من الماء أنني أمر به في الكوز مر المجانب 51

واخشى الردى منه على كل شارب فكيف بأمنيه على نفس راكب 52

"19. On land I have experienced hardships, after I had experienced at sea a whitening of my locks.

20. A thousand hateful showers have drenched me, even though I had drunk my fill, to the point that I come to love dry desert.

21. I did not bring them; they were brought to entrap me by the pretended stupidity of a fare that playfully made me suffer.

22. I complain to God about my stupid fate, since it has played with me ever since I was born, although I did not wish it to do so

23. Ironically, it began pouring with rain only the moment I set out.

24. It drenched the earth on my behalf, turning it into a muddy and slippery place, in which a sober man totters like a drunk.

25. In order to impede my journey or make my mount slip, or to fertilize a useless piece of land.

\* \* \*

33. Thus the land scourges the traveller with two painful whips, a liquid and solid one;

34. Or if not by means of rain or snow, then with dust or hail.

35. So much for winter; summer is no better.

\* \* \*

38. But speak no more of land, the worst refuge for him who fears the terrors of the sea.

39. summer or winter, both utterly undesirable;

40. Deadly thirst under a white-hot sun, or fatal  
drenching under a black cloud.

\* \* \*

45. Until The Almighty saves me in the end,

46. And I escape from wolves, lions and robbers, the  
most repentant soul on earth.

47-48. As for a sea voyage, I would tell you of its  
terrors if I were not out of my wits, on account of its  
horror.

49. For if you threw me into the sea together with a  
rock, I would be the first to hit the bottom.

50. I cannot swim, only dive.

51. I am only a little afraid when walking past a jug of  
water, with averted face.

52. When someone drinks I fear that he will die; how  
could I feel safe in a boat!"<sup>1</sup>

Ibn al-Rùmī uses eighty-six lines to describe his travels, speaking only  
indirectly about Ibn Thawàbah, then he comes to the real point:

كمثل أبي العباس إن نواله نوال الحيا يسعى إلى كل طالب<sup>2</sup> 87

<sup>1</sup> Greet Jan van Gelder, *The Terrified Traveller, Ibn al-Rùmī's Anti-Raḥīl*, 2, 3.

<sup>2</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, *Dīwān*, 1, 226, 234.

- 88 يسير نحوي عرفه فيزورني هنيئا ولم اركب صعاب المراكب
- 89 يسير إلى ممتاحه فيجوده ويكفي أذا الإمحال زم الركائب
- 90 ومن يك مثلا للحيا في علوه يكن مثله في جوده بالمواهب
- \* \* \*
- 98 فقل لأبي العباس لقيت وجهه وحسبك منى تلك دعوة صاحب
- 99 أما حق حامى عرض مثلك أن يرى له الرشد والترفيه أوجب واجب
- 100 امن بعد مالم ترع للمال حرمة وأسلمته للجود غير مجاذب
- 101 فأعطيت ذا سلم وحرب ووصلة وذنب عطايا أدركت كل هارب
- 102 ولم تشخص العافين لكن أنتهم لهاك جليبات لأكرم جالب
- 103 علما بأن الطعن فيه مشقة وأن امر الريح ربح الجلائب
- \* \* \*
- 112 أيعزب عنك الرأي في أن تثبني مقيما مصونا عن عناء المطالب
- \* \* \*
- 115 أيدهب هذا عنك يا ابن محمد وأنت معاد في الأمور الحوازب؟
- 116 لك بالرأي والجود اللذان كلاهما
- زعيم بكشف المطبقات الكوارب
- 117 ومازالت ذا ضوء ونوء لمجدب وحيران حتى قيل بعض الكواكب
- 118 تغيب وتهدى عند جذب وحيرة بمحتفل ثر وأزهر ثاقب
- \* \* \*
- 133 ألم ترني أتعبت فكري محككا لك الشعر كي لا أبتلى بالمتاعب
- 134 نحلنك حليا من مديح كأنه هوى كل صب من عناق الحبايب
- 135 أنيقا حقيقا أن تكون حقاقه من الدر لا بل من ثدي الكواعب
- \* \* \*
- 141 وما قلت إلا الحق فيك ولم تزل على منهج من سنه المجد لاحب

\* \* \*

أثيني ورفهني وأجزل مئوبتي وثابر على إدار بري وواظب 155

لئأئيني جدواك وهي سليمة من العيب ما فيها اعتلال لعائب 156

87. Someone like Abù al-'Abbàs, whose favour hastens towards every seeker, like rain.

88. He sends his favour on a visit to me, while I do not have to make a difficult journey.

89. It travels to him who asks him, saving a poor man the trouble of travelling.

90. He who is high like the rain is like wise generous with gifts.

\* \* \*

98. Say to Abù al-'Abbàs (may you meet him face to face)[-and this should suffice you as a friend's prayer-]

99. Is it not right for someone like you to consider giving support [as] a duty?

100. You appear not to respect wealth.

101. And have given freely both to peaceful and war like people.

102. Not making anyone travel to you, on the contrary, your gifts came to them.

103. Since you knew that travelling is full of difficulties.

\* \* \*

112. The right judgement will surely not desert you to  
reward me (root ThWB) while I stay safely at home.

\* \* \*

115. This will surely not have escaped you, Ibn  
Muhammad, since you are a refuge in difficult time.

116. You are judicious and generous, guaranteed to  
dispel distress.

117. You are a light and rain for the barren and the  
lost [note the chiasmus]; one would say: a star!

118. You give rain and guidance like cloud and star.

\* \* \*

133. I myself, have tired my thoughts to make well  
wrought poetry for you in order not to tire myself [by  
travelling to you].

134. I have adorned you with panegyric [like a  
beautiful necklace] to be coveted as lovers long to  
embrace their beloved!

135. graceful; Its beads (?) like pearls, or breasts of  
beautiful girls.

\* \* \*

141. [If I should say these things] I would have said  
nothing but the truth about you; you would still be  
walking the clear path of glory.

\* \* \*

155. Reward me (root ThWB), ease my life, give me rich reward (again ThWB), apply yourself to bestowing your favours upon me.

156. So that your gifts reach me safely in good order."<sup>1</sup>

The notes about this gasidah

1. From the first line to the last line Ibn al-Rùmî speaks about himself more than he speaks about Ibn Thàwabà.

Critics have different opinions about this gasidah<sup>2</sup>; is it just a jest from Ibn al-Rùmî to Ibn Thàwabà, to make an excuse not to visit him? Or is it the case that Ibn al-Rùmî suffers like an invalid from travelling both by land and by water.

Guest says "The effect of Ibn al-Rùmî's defence of Ibn Thàwabà was an invitation from him to visit him at Sàmarrà, as can be seen from a long poem in which Ibn er Rùmî excuses himself from going, either by land or by water, setting out as a reason doubtless partly in joke."<sup>3</sup>

And Van Gelder says

"..... But others seem to be nearer the mark, to my mind ..... by way of jest."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Greet Jan van Gelder, *The Terrified Traveller, Ibn al-Rùmî's Anti-Raḥīl*, p. 4-7.

<sup>2</sup> Greet Jan van Gelder, *The Terrified Traveller, Ibn al-Rùmî's Anti-Raḥīl*, p. .9.

<sup>3</sup> Rhurun Guest, *Life and work of Ibn er Rùmî*, 16.

<sup>4</sup> Greet Jan van Gelder, *The Terrified Traveller, Ibn al-Rùmî's Anti Raḥīl*, 9.

I however disagree with those who say that Ibn al-Rùmī composed this gasidah has an excuse or as a joke because Ibn al-Rùmī spent most of his life in Baghdad making just a few journeys and hated to visit any one who was ready to give him wealth but who was not in Baghdad.

2. Ibn al-Rùmī knew that if he went to Sàmarrà he would be better rewarded by the caliph court but he preferred to send his gasidah to them rather than to go himself.

3. He was a sick person in both body and soul.

Another poem in praise of Ibn Thàwabà is:-

البيسط

لازلت غوثا إذا ناداك ملهوف بحيث أنت ومن والاك مكنوف<sup>1</sup> 1

تالله ما ضاع معروف نفحت به نحوي ولا بار مدح فيك مرصوف 2

\* \* \*

وجهت نحوي معروفا تعاطمني إلا لقدرك إن الحق مكشوف 17

والعود أحمد قول قد جرى مثلا وعرف مثلك بالعودات موصوف 18

فأجره لي إن النفس قد الفت آثار كفيك والمعروف مألوف 19

1. You have always been helpful when one in distress calls on you, since you and those who are near you are protected.

<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 4, 212, 213.

2. By God, no good deed which you have diffused towards me has gone astray, nor has any praise directed to you proved futile and worthless.

\* \* \*

"17. You sent me a present which would have been great to me but for your position-truth must be disclosed.

18. To repeat is more commendable is a saying that has become a proverb and a present from one like you has the quality of repetition.

19. I am accustomed to the effects of your hands and what is well known is familiar".<sup>1</sup>

## 2. Sa'īd Ibn Mukhlid

In this qasidah, the poet begins with the lament for lost youth

### الطويل

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| أبين ضلوعي جمره تتوقد على ماضى أم حسرة تتجدد <sup>2</sup> | 1 |
| خليلي ما بعد الشباب رزية يجم لها ماء الشؤون ويعتد         | 2 |
| فلا تلحيا إن فاض دمع لفقده فقل له بحر من الدمع يثمد       | 3 |
| ولا تعجبا للجد بيكي فرما تظفر عن عين من الماء جلمد        | 4 |
| شباب الفتى مجلوده وعزازه فكيف وأنى بعده يتجلد             | 5 |

<sup>1</sup> Rhurun Guest, Life and works of Ibn er Rūmī, 81, 82.

<sup>2</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 2, 111, 112.

وقد الشباب الموت يوجد طعمه	6
صراح وطعم الموت بالموت يفقد	
رزئت شبابي عوده بعد بدءة وهن الرزايا بادئات وعود	7
سلبت سواد العارضين وقبله بياضهما المحمود إذا أنا أمرد	8
وبدلت من ذلك البياض وحسنيه بياضا ذميما لايزال يسود	9
لشتان ما بين البياضين معجب أنيق ومشنوء إلى العين أنكد	10
تضاحك في أفنان رأسي ولحييتي واقبح ضحاكين شيب وأرد	11
وكننت جلاء للعيون من القذى فقد جعلت تقذي بشيبي وترقد	12
هي الأعين النجل التي كنت تشنكي مواقعها في القلب والرأس أسود	13
فمالك تأسى الآن لما رأيتها وقد جعلت مرمى سواك تعمد؟	14
تشكى إذا ما أقصدتك سهامها وتأسى إذا نكبن عنك وتكمد	15
كذلك تلك النبل من وقعت به ومن صرفت عنه من القوم مقصد	16
إذا عدلت عنا وجدنا عدولها كموقعها في القلب بل هو أجهد	17
تتكب عنا مرة فكانما منكبها عنا إلينا مسدد	18

1. Is there a blazing coal between my ribs, for what is now past, or is it a sigh (constantly) renewed.
2. My friends, after the loss of youth there is no other calamity on account of which the water of the tear-ducts is collected and prepared.
3. So do not blame me if my tears flow for its loss: how little would an ocean of tears (shed and) exhausted for it be!
4. Nor wonder at a strong man weeping: a rock at times may split and yield a spring.

5. A man's youth is his courage and his strength, when it is gone, how can he still be firm.
6. The loss of youth is death tasted in full, whereas in death the taste of death is lost.
7. My youth was taken from me bit by bit and they are calamities which begin and recur.
8. The blackness of my cheeks has been stripped away from me as was their whiteness when I was a lad.
9. And for that whiteness fair I got instead a wretched white continually blackened.
10. How different were those different kinds of white, one pleasing and one ugly and odious to the sight.
11. This (white hair) smiles and laughs on my head and my beard- the ugliest smile is that of a toothless grey (beard)
12. The sight of me would once clear eyes of dust and now they ache to see me and are sore.
13. These are the wide-eyes of which you would complain when they rained (like blows) on your heart, when your head was black.
14. How is then your sorrow when you see that they have turned away to shoot at others.

15. You used to suffer when their arrows struck you,  
now you complain because they pass you by.

16. Thus are those shafts, those upon whom they fall  
and those from whom they turn alike are smitten.

17. They go aside and then we find their swerving is  
like their striking on the heart, indeed, more wounding.

18. At times they are averted from us and it is as if  
they, when averted, are directed at us.

After this long introduction Ibn al-Rùmī commences the eulogy:

63 على أن فى المامول من فضل صاعد عزاء جميلا بل شبابا يجدد<sup>1</sup>

\* \* \*

74 هو الرجل المشروك فى جل ماله ولكنه بالخير والحمد مفرد

\* \* \*

100 كان أباه يوم سماه صاعدا رأى كيف يرقى فى المعالي ويصعد

\* \* \*

110 فلما تولى الأمر نكر منكر وعرف معروف وأصلح مفسد

111 وأصبح شمل الناس وهو مؤلف وعهدي بشمل الناس وهو مبدد

63. Yet what is to be expected from Sà'īd's generosity  
is seemly consolation-indeed youth renewed.

\* \* \*

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<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 2, 115-117

74. He is the man who shares most of his wealth but  
he is unique in goodness and praise.

\* \* \*

100. It seems that his father knew when he named  
him Sà'īd how he would rise and ascend the heights.

\* \* \*

110. And when he assumed command, all that was  
reprehensible was itself reprehended, all that was  
corrupt was made whole.

111. The people became united and joined, though I  
had known the people to be united in disarray.

#### 4 Other Professional classes

(i) The men of learning (Udabà')

(a). al-Mubarrad<sup>1</sup>

(b). al-Akhfash al-Şaghīr.<sup>2</sup>

(c). Ibn al-Barà'<sup>3</sup>

(d). al-Murthaḏī.<sup>4</sup>

(e). Abū Şahl Ibn Nawbakht<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 'Alī Ibn al-Rùmī, *Dīwān*, 2, 256.

<sup>2</sup> 'Alī Ibn al-Rùmī, *Dīwān*, 5, 107.

<sup>3</sup> 'Alī Ibn al-Rùmī, *Dīwān*, 1, 84.

<sup>4</sup> 'Alī Ibn al-Rùmī, *Dīwān*, 1, 86, 247, 449. 2, 15, 221, 255, 292. 3, 16, 128. 4, 232.

<sup>5</sup> 'Alī Ibn al-Rùmī, *Dīwān*, 1, 140, 145, 314. 2, 137. 4, 45, 46, 53, 124, 309. 5, 79,  
81, 139, 169, 208. 6, 33, 45.

(ii) Singers

(iii) Wealthy men.

(iv) Secretaries.

(l) (a) al-Mùbarrad: One poem in praise of al-Mubarrad must suffice for category four.

al-Mùbarrad:-

الرمـل

طرقت أسماء والركب هجود والمطايا جنح الأزوار قود<sup>1</sup> 1

\* \* \*

ثم قالت وأحست عجبي من سراها حيث لا تسرى الأسود 3

لا تعجب من سرانا فالسرى عادة الأقمار والناس هجود 4

عجبي من بذلها ما بدلت وسراها وهي مشماس خرود 5

\* \* \*

فأعتقنا والحشا وفق الحشا ونبا عن صدرها صدر ودود 10

ولعهدي قبل هاتيك بها وهي زوراء عن الوصل حيود 11

1. Asmā came at night when the riders were sleeping and the riding-beasts inclined their chests and their long necks.

\* \* \*

<sup>1</sup> 'Alī Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 2, 256, 257.

3. And she said, when she perceived my surprise at her nocturnal journey at a time when lions do not even venture abroad.

4. Do not be surprised by my nocturnal visit, such visits are the custom of the full moon when people are asleep.

5. I was surprised at her giving me that which she did and at her nocturnal visit for she is a chaste and demure maiden.

\* \* \*

10. We embraced one another, one stomach next to the other, and a loving chest pressed unsteadily on her chest.

11. And yet before that I had known her to turn away from and shun the congress of lovers.

After sixteen lines he begins his praise of al-Mùbarrad.

أثناء ابن يزيد بيتنا أم نسيم بثه روض مجود<sup>1</sup> 17

\* \* \*

لا كنعمي ابن زيد إنها أبدا حيث يلاقها الوجود 21

ما جد لم يستتب قط يدا وهو إن أبديت بالشكر رصود 22

\* \* \*

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<sup>1</sup> 'Alī Ibn al-Rūmī, *Dīwān*, 2, 257, 260.

- شاهد أنك بحر زاهر لك من نفسك مد بل مدود 56  
\* \* \*
- غير أن البحر ملح آسن ولأنت المشرب العذب البرود 58  
\* \* \*
- فأعزني سببا يوردني بحرك الغمر أعانتك السعود 64
- وهو أن تنهض لي في حاجتي نهضة يكوى بها الجار الحسود 65  
\* \* \*
- لي مديح قلته في سيد لم تزل تهدي له الشعر الوفود 69  
\* \* \*
- لي في مدحي فيه أمل وبلاغ وله فيه خلود 79

17. Is it the praise of Ibn Yazîd which has come between us or is it a gentle breeze wafting from a luxuriant meadow.

\* \* \*

21. No, it is not like the beneficence of Ibn Yazîd, which is eternal and unchanging whenever encounters it.

22. He is a glorious (man) who has never asked for a favour back, on the look-out if you should be the first to give thanks.

\* \* \*

56. I testify that you are a swollen sea which is fed by a torrent-no torrents- from your very own self.

\* \* \*

58. But the ocean is salty and brackish, while you are  
cold, sweet platable (eater).

\* \* \*

64. So give me a reason for drinking from your  
bottomless sea, may good fortune aid you!

65. Namely, to raise me up with regard to my needs,  
whereby the envious neighbour will be painfully  
cauterized.

\* \* \*

69. Mine is praise which I have uttered for a lord to  
whom delegations have not ceased to give poetry to  
as gifts.

\* \* \*

79. In praising him I have hopes and aims; in it he  
finds eternity.

##### 5. Aristocracy

Abù Ja'far Aḥmad Ibn Muḥammad al-Ṭāī

Ibn al-Rūmī praised him when he was a ruler of al-Kūfah.

البيسط

طاف الخيال وعن ذكراك ما طافا فكان أكرم طيف طارق ضافاً<sup>1</sup>

1

\* \* \*

---

<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 4, 238, 239.

15 وافاتك والليل قد ألقى مراسيه خيال من ليس بالوافي ولو وافي

\* \* \*

19 يا حسن ليل وإصباح جمعتهما والليل ملق على الآفاق أكنافا

\* \* \*

28 يا سائل بالغبواني من صبايته سائل بهن فقد صادفت وصافا

29 هن اللواتي إذا لاقيتهن ضحى لاقيت صدا وإشراقا وإخطافا

1. The phantasm flitted- but it did not flit because I remembered you (*i.e.* because I had forgotten you so as to have to remember you) and it was the most generous phantasm which a nocturnal visit and alighted

\* \* \*

15. The phantasm of the one who is never true to his word even though he comes to you , came to you when night had cast its mooring ropes.

\* \* \*

19. O beautiful night and morning joined as one, when night had wrapped the horizon in its wings.

\* \* \*

28. O you who ask me about passion for chaste women, ask about them for you have for you have come to one who is accustomed to describe them.

29. They are those who when you meet them in the morning, you meet with rejection, hostility and curt silence.

(ishrāq here means literally “to cause someone to choke on his spittle”).

Before Ibn al-Rùmī begins his eulogy, he devotes a further forty-eight lines to a relationship with a woman whom he does not name. Thus he, in this *qasidah*, uses the traditional *takhallus* from exordium to panegyric, even though he has expanded it to great length.<sup>1</sup>

البسيط

دع من قوافيك ما يكفيك إن لها في مدح أحمد إعناقا وإجافا<sup>2</sup> 49

\* \* \*

أضحى أبو جعفر الطائي منتجعا ومستجارا لمن زجى ومن خافا 51

\* \* \*

كأنه والعفاه الطائفين به بنية الله والحجاج طوافا 59

\* \* \*

أمسى أبا منزل والوجود خادمه والأرض دارا له والناس أضيافا 74

\* \* \*

ووقعة منه في الأعراب قد جعلت أوطانهم إسوة الأحقاف أحقافا 124

\* \* \*

ظلوا قتيلا ومصفودا وذا هرب 126

تقضى بإدراكه الطير التي اعتافا

<sup>1</sup> Abū al-Ḥasan Ibn Rashīq, *al-Umdah*, 1, 239.

<sup>2</sup> ‘Alī Ibn al-Rùmī, *Dīwān*, 4, 241-246.

49. Leave aside your rhymes- they must satisfy you: they must now hurry and hasten to praise Aḥmad (l'inaq and ijàf are terms denoting the speed of a horse or a camel. It is quite likely that Ibn al-Rùmî is here alluding to the traditional takhallus with its Wasf section).

\* \* \*

51. Abù Ja'far al-Tàî has become a destination and a protector those who hope (for reward) and those who are afraid.

\* \* \*

59. He and the petitioners who throng around him are like the building of God when the pilgrims walk around it.

\* \* \*

74. He has become the lord of a dwelling and the generous have become his servants, the earth has become his abode and the people (his) guests.

\* \* \*

124. (There was) a raid against the Bedouins which made of their territories desert wastes, just like the Ahqâf (of the 'Àd).

(A reference to the destruction of the people of 'Àd in Sùrah 46).

\* \* \*

126. Some were killed, some shackled, some fled.

The birds which hovered (in the sky) had decreed that  
he would overtake them.

Ibn al-Rùmî's objectives in praising some patron or other were not always purely financial. He quite often looked to receive gifts in natura, such as clothes, wine, fish, even a sack of wheat.<sup>1</sup>

الخفيف

ليس ينجيك من ملامة قرب غير آلائك الحسان الجسم <sup>2</sup>	3
فتعوذ بحنطة الكشك منها عائدا بالجميل عود الكرام	4
قسما يا بن صالح بن علي وابن عيسى بن جعفر القمقام	5
إن عهدي إذا تنكر عهد لجديد وإن حيي لنامي	6
* * *	
غير مستصغر قليل عطاياك ولا مكبر كبير اللئام	10

3.. Nothing can save you from the reproach of one  
near save your fine, weighty gifts.

4. So seek protection in wheat from the stall, returning  
a fine favour as noble men do.

5. An oath, O Ibn Sàlih Ibn'Ali and Ibn'isà Ibn.Ja'far  
the mighty.

<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmî, Dīwān, 1, 143. 2, 255. 3, 199. 2, 211.

<sup>2</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmî, Dīwān, 6, 79.

6. That my oath - if you reject my oath-is still recent  
and that my love increases.

\* \* \*

10. I do not look down on your little gifts and I do not  
overestimate great gifts of base men.

When Ibn al-Rùmī was at his wit's end, he said

الطويل

1 أذو آلة فاستخدموني لآلتى بقوتى وإلا فارزقوني مع الزمنى<sup>1</sup>

1. Am I not the possessor of a gift? then treat me in  
accordance with my gift. Otherwise sustain me as you  
do the crippled!

In other words, pay me for my poetry as I am a poet.

Otherwise, treat me with generosity as you do the  
disabled.

### Conclusion

Ibn al-Rùmī's extant *Dīwān* is largely devoted to panegyric. Of these poems it can, in general, be said that the poet devotes too much poetic space to his introductions, which can be extremely prolix; that he made no secrets about trading his compositions for financial gain, even for such items as fish, wine or clothes; that immediately upon the cessation of such gifts, he would resort to upbraiding and criticism and

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<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, *Dīwān*, 6, 93.

in the end would merely lampoon them; that the poetic quality of his panegyric is variable, with some much superior to others.

### *Ibn al-Rùmī's Lampoons*

Like the rest of his verse, Ibn al-Rùmī's lampoons can occasionally be very long. Take for example the urjūzah of one hundred and forty lines:

الرجز

1 قل لابن بوران ولا تأثم<sup>1</sup>

2 يا عربيا أعجميا وافهم

1. Say to Ibn Būrān and do not hold back:
2. "O non-Arab Arab, understand.

On the other hand, these invectives can be very short - even one verse in length, as when he lampoons someone called Ramaḍān.

الوافر

1 رأيتك تدعى رمضان دعوى وأنت نظير يوم الشك فيه<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, *Dīwān*, 6, 104.

<sup>2</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, *Dīwān*, 6, 379.

1. I see that you claim and allege that you are “Ramaḍàn”, when you are in fact like the day of uncertainty (as to when Ramaḍàn actually begins).

In the matter of his protracted invectives, Ibn al-Rùmī is different from most earlier poets, in that these invectives are in gasîdah from: Ibn Rashîq says:-

“Short lampoons are preferable and it is better to avoid obscenity. However, Jarir who said to his children you praise do not make the panegyric long but if you lampoon do the opposite, Only ‘Ali Ibn al-‘Abbàs Ibn al-Rùmī followed his example.”<sup>1</sup>

Ibn al-Rùmī sometimes begins his lampoons with Nasīb

الوافر

الم تر أنني قبل الأهاجي أقدم في أوائلها النسبياً<sup>2</sup> 1

1. Have you not noticed that I, before the Hijà, introduce a Nasīb into the beginnings (of a poem)

al-Mutanabbî, however, is of the belief that panegyrics should, by and large, begin with Nasīb.

Shaghil, women of Salàma Ibn Sa’id, are also abused and so is Kunaiza in four coarse poems. Muḥibb , the mistress of one Aḥmad Ibn Sa’id is handled very rudely. Fahm who sang in the presence of ‘îsa

<sup>1</sup> Abù al-Ḥasan Ibn Rashîq, al-‘Umdah, 2, 172.

<sup>2</sup> ‘Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 1, 380.

Ibn Hārūn is mocked and also Nuzha, a singer contrasted unfavourably with Duraira.

الطويل

1 إذا كان مدح فالنسيب المقدم أكل فصيح قال شعرا مثم<sup>1</sup>

1. When it is a panegyric, the Nasīb should be the introduction. Has not every eloquent (author) uttered love poetry?.

Ibn al-Rūmī's first foray into the field of poetic composition was a lampoon which he composed at the Qur'ān school:

المتقارب

1 أجعفر حزت جميع العيوب فما فيك من خلة تمدح<sup>2</sup>

1. O Ja'far, you have been given all faults, so that you have no praiseworthy characteristic.

In light of such beginnings, it came as no surprise that Ibn al-Rūmī attained fame as an invective poet.

According to al-'Aqqād, "The third century produced the two most famous lampoon poets.... Ibn al-Rūmī and Dī'bil al-Khuzā'ī.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Abū al-Ṭayyib al-Mutanabbī, *Dīwān*, Beirut, 1980, 302.

<sup>2</sup> 'Alī Ibn al-Rūmī, *Dīwān*, 2, 91. See also 1, 442.

<sup>3</sup> 'Abbās al-'Aqqād, *Ibn al-Rūmī*, 191.

Ibn al-Rùmî's Hijā' poetry is second only to the panegyric within his Dīwān, with regard to both length and number.<sup>1</sup>

Many people fell victim of Ibn al-Rùmî in his Dīwān:

. Ibn-al-Rùmî and the singers (male and female)

Ibn al-Rùmî makes mention of some 25 singing - girls qiyān most of whom he attacks, satirising their voices;' their ugly faces and unattractive bodies; their skills and abilities;

Guest says "There were some women for whom Ibn al-Rùmî had a dislike Shunṭaf "The low women Karra'a" is a constant object of brutal ridicule, she was a vile singer Kunuz and a singer called Shaghil, women of Salama Ibn Sa'id, are also abused and so is Kunaiza in four coarse poem. Muḥibb, the mistress of one Aḥmad Ibn Sa'id is handled very rudely. fahm who sang in the presence of 'isa Ibn Harun is mocked and also Nuzha, a singer contrasted unfavourably with Duraira."<sup>2</sup>

Shunṭaf

Ibn al-Rùmî lampoons her with twenty poems.

المنسرح

1 شنطف يا عوذة السماوات والأرض وشمس النهار والقمر<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Nāzik Sabā Yārid, Ibn al-Rùmî, Beirut, 1969, 85.

<sup>2</sup> Rhurun Guest, Life and Works of Ibn er Rùmî, 45.

<sup>3</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmî, Dīwān, 3, 88.

2 إن كان إبليس خالقا بشرا فأنت عندي من ذلك البشر

3 صورك المارد اللعين فأعطتك يدها مقابح الصور

1. Shunṭaf, you charm of the heavens and the earth,  
O sun in the day and moon (at night).

2. If Iblīs ever created human beings, then you, in my  
opinion, are one of them.

3. The accused, rebellions one (*i.e.* the devil) formed  
you and his hands gave you the ugliest form.

#### الخفيف

1 زلقت رجل شنطف في خراها فاستغاثت بصفعة في قفاها<sup>1</sup>

2 ثلّطت في ندينا فاستحققت أن يكافي بصفعة أذعاها

3 قحبة كلبة نخور صبور حين تلقى طعن الأيور كلاها

4 سقطة ملطة شروخ ربوخ شنطف صدق الذي سماها

1. Shunṭaf's foot slipped in her own faeces and she  
sought the help of a slap on her neck.

2. She wets herself during our meetings, so it is meet  
that the veins in her neck be rewarded with a slap!

3. A whore, a bitch, she snores and is patient when  
her kidneys receive the spear-thrusts of penises.

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<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, *Dīwān*, 1, 96.

4. Vile, dishonourable, with a hole for a vagina, one who faints on orgasm: the one who named her Shuntuf has proved to be correct.

### Kunayzah

Ibn al-Rùmī lampoons her with four poems.

Ibn al-Rùmī concentrates his lampoon, on her professional qualifications (her voice and her ability) and not on her physical attributes as he did with Shunṭaf.

#### البيسط

- |                                       |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| شاهدت في بعض ما شهدت مسمعة            | 1 |
| كانما يومها يومان في يوم <sup>1</sup> |   |
| تظل تلقى على من ضم مجلسها             | 2 |
| قولا ثقيلًا على الأسماع كاللوم        |   |
| لها غناء يثيب الله سامعه              | 3 |
| ضعفى ثواب صلاة الليل والصوم           |   |
| ظللت أشرب بالأرطال لا طربا            | 4 |
| عليه بل طلبا للسكر والنوم             |   |

1. One of the things which I have seen with my own eyes is a singing-girl, whose day seems to be two days rolled into one.

2. She does not stop throwing at the ears of those whom her majlis includes heavy words, like reproaches.

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<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 5, 301.

3. God will surely reward him who listens to her song double the rewards accrued by night prayers and fasting.

4. I did not stop drinking gallons (lit. ratls), not through rejoicing at it but in an attempt to get drunk and fall asleep.

### Durayrah

Ibn al-Rùmî devoted two panegyrics to her, at the request of his friend Ibn Bishr al-Murthadi.

Guest says:

"A slave girl skilled in music whom they bought, Ibn Bishr al-Murthadi fell in love with her and asked Ibn er-Rùmî to describe her"<sup>1</sup>

For some reason unbeknownst to us, Ibn al-Rùmî also decided to lampoon her.

السريع

ويبك يا قد البر ستوجه ما أنت والله بمغنوجة<sup>2</sup> 1

\* \* \*

وأنت إن غنيت مثلوجة وأنت إن حدثت مفلوجة 6

\* \* \*

<sup>1</sup> Rhurun Guest, *Life and Works of Ibn er Rùmî*, 63.

<sup>2</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmî, *Dīwān*, 2, 12, 13.

أمن ممسوخ الله مسروقة أم من مسوخ اله منتوجه؟	10
كاس الندلمى ماتغنيتهم بالصباب والعلقم ممزوجة	11
فبالقنانى أنت محذوفة وبالصوانى أنت مشجوجة	12
إليك يا من فمها قرية وطيزها المهتوك فلوجة	13

1. A curse upon you, you who have the appearance of a fish, by God, you are not one to be flirted with!

\* \* \* \* \*

6. If you sing, you are stupid and cold, if you talk, you are paralysed.

\* \* \* \* \*

10. Have you been stolen from those metamorphosed by God?

11. The boon-companions beaker is mixed with dragon's blood and colocynth, for as long as you sing to them.

12. So that you are pelted with bottles and your head is wounded with plates.

13. Take yourself away, you whose mouth is water-skin and whose uncovered arse is an open pasture (or, one which is repeatedly and often split asunder).

#### Nuzhah

Ibn al-Rùmī's lampoon of her centers on a comparison of her ugly voice with Durayrah's voice which he found to be pleasing, despite his subsequent attack on her.

He says

مجزوء الوافر

- 1 دريرة تجلب الطربا ونزهة تجلب الكربا<sup>1</sup>
- 2 تغني هذه فيظل عنك الحزن قد عزبا
- 3 وتعوي هذه فتطيل منك الحزن والوصبا
- 4 أقول لجامع لهما لقد أحضرتنا عجبا

1. Durayrah brings happiness and Nuzha brings sadness.
2. While the former sings, sadness strays far and long from you.
3. While the latter howls, she makes you feel sadness and illness for a long time.
4. I say to him who has brought the two together: "you have provided us with something amazing".

Ibn al-Rùmī also lampoons (male) singers:-

المنسرح

- 1 ومسمع لاعدمت فرقته فإنها نعمة من النعم<sup>2</sup>
- 2 يطول يومي إذا قرنت به كأنني صائم ولم أصم

\* \* \*

<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 1, 176.

<sup>2</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 6, 8-10.

يفتح فاه من الجهاد كما يفتح فاه لأعظم اللقم 4

\* \* \*

كانني طول ماأشاهده أشرب كأسى ممزوجة بدم 7

\* \* \*

يفزع الصبية الصغار به إذا بكى بعضهم ولم ينم 23

1. There was a (male) singer- may I never not be separated from him, for that is one of the true blessings.

2. My day lasts forever ; when I am tied to him, it is as if I were fasting though I was not fasting.

\* \* \*

4. He opens his mouth in a yawn, through sleepiness, just as he opens his mouth for the biggest portion.

\* \* \*

7. It is as if, for as long as I watch him, I were quaffing my cup mixed with blood

\* \* \*

23. Small children are frightened (by the mention of him) when one of them cries and will not sleep.

#### Literati and Poets

Ibn al-Rùmī attacks nearly forty members of this group men such as al-Buḥturi, al-Mubarrad, al-Akhfash al-Ṣaghir, al-Faḍl Ibn Salamah, Abū 'Alī Ibn Abi Qurrah and Khālīd al-Qaḥṭubi.

al-Mubarrad:

Ibn al-Rùmī lampoons him with :-

اليسيط

- 1 ود المبرد أن اله بدله من كل جارحة في جسمه دبرا<sup>1</sup>
- 2 فاعطه يا اله الناس منيته ولا تبق له سمعا ولا بصرا
- 3 لكي يقضي أوطارا مذممة من كل عرد ترى في راسه عجرا
- 4 بل لو يكون له ضعفا جوارحه من الفقاح لما قضى بها وطرا
- 5 هيهات ثم غليل لا شفاء له أو يجعل الكل منه فقحة وحرا

1. al-Mubarrad wished that God give him an anus in exchange for every part of his body.

2. So grant his wish, O God of the people, but do not allow him to have eyes or ears.

3. So that he can slake his reprehensible desires with every hard penis, on the glans of which you can see lumps.

4. Indeed, if he were to have twice the number of limbs (and exchange them for) many anuses, he would not slake one single desire thereby.

5. How impossible then is this burning thirst which can not be quenched, unless his whole body were to be made of anus and vagina.

al-Akhfash:

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<sup>1</sup> 'Alī Ibn al-Rùmī, *Dīwān*, 3, 30.

It was customary with Ibn al-Rùmī to lampoon anyone who was in the habit of giving him gifts and who then stopped doing so. With al-Akhfash, the reverse is true- Ibn al-Rùmī began by lampooning him for his behaviour and then they became friends when al-Akhfash had sent Ibn al-Rùmī gifts, thereby ensuring his praise.<sup>1</sup>

Ibn al-Rùmī says :-

المتقارب

ابا حسن إنتى سائل فاعدد جوابا ولا تدهش <sup>2</sup>	4
اليس أبوك بني آدم فأنى طمست ولم تتفش	5
ولم جئت أسود ذا حلقة ولم تأت كالحية الأرقش	6
لقد غش فيك أب غافل فم دهمة فيك لم تغش	7
اب ذو فراش ولكنه لأى البرية لم يفرش	8
أما والقريض وأسواقه ونجشك فيه مع النجش	9
ودعواك عرفان نقاده بفضل النقى على الأئمش	10
لئن جئت ذا بشر حالك لقد جئت ذا نسب ابرش	11
وما واحد جاء من امه بأعجب من ناقد أخفش	12
* * *	
أسيود جاءت به قرده سويداء غاوية المفرش	30
انتتنا به فى سواد أستها وأذناه فى صفرة المشمش	31

<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 3, 334, 4, 55, 5, 107, 6, 370.

<sup>2</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 5, 107.

4. Abù Ḥasan, I am asking a question, so prepare an answer and do not be dumbfounded.

5. Is your father not the sons of Adam (*i.e.* all of mankind)? Then why are you thin and not fat?

6. Why then did you turn out to be as black as sin and did not turn out like the speckled snake?

7. An inadvertent father was deceived concerning you, so which blackness has not been deceived concerning you?

8. A father who had a bed, but for whom was this bed not spread out?

9. By poetry and its fairs, by your fraudulent trade in poetry,

10. And by your claim to the knowledge of its critics by preferring the immaculate to the sullied.

11. If you did turn out to have a black skin, you would (at least) have turned out to have a dubious ancestry.

12. But no-one has come from his mother more miraculously than Akhflash, the weak critic.

\* \* \*

30. A little black boy produced by a little black monkey, seducing people into her bed.

31. She brought him to us from her black anus, though his ears are pale like an apricot.

## al-Faḍl Ibn Salamah

## الخفيف

- 1 لو تلتفت في كساء الكسائي وتلبست فروة الفراء<sup>1</sup>
- 2 وتخللت بالخليل وأضحى سيويه لديك رهن سباء
- 3 وتكونت من سواد أبي الأسود شخصا يكنى أبا السواد
- 4 لأبي الله أن يعذك أهل العلم إلا من جملة الأغبياء

1. If you were to clothe yourself in al-Kisā'ī's clothes and were to dress in al-Farrā's furs.

2. If you were to clip them together with al-Khalīl's clips and Sībawayhī were to become under your sway as a prisoner.

3. And if you were to become, having assumed the form of Abū al-Aswad, a person called Abū al-Sawdā'.

4. Then God would still refuse to allow the intelligentsia to consider you anything but of the species of dolts.

## Abū 'Alī Ibn Abī Qurrah'

## البيسط

- 1 قل للأمير أدام الله دولته وزاده في علو القدر والصيت<sup>2</sup>
- 2 ماذا يقول أمرؤ قال الاله له من اجتبيت لتجديد المواقيت

<sup>1</sup> 'Alī Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 1, 87, 88.

<sup>2</sup> 'Alī Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 1, 440, 441.

\* \* \*

4 أترتضى لحقوقي رعي ذى عور وقد جعلتك رجما للعفاريت؟

\* \* \*

8 ألم يكن قدر حقى أن توفيه إلا أعيور لايهدي لتوقيت؟

\* \* \*

10 ماذا يكون جواب المرء حينئذ؟ أعاذك الله من لؤم وتبكييت

11 طهر ثيابك ممن لا يؤهله عند العطاس ذور التقوى لتشميت

12 طهر ثيابك ممن لا ثياب له -من ذنبه- غير أطمار مهاريت

\* \* \*

15 أبا على وظلما ماكنيت بها لقد ضللت بأتياء سباريت

16 كيف النجاة وقد أوغلت معتسفا ولست بين فيافيها بخريت

17 أقبلت أعور عوارا تحاربنى

وما العواوير أكفاء المصالييت

1. Ask the Emir whose kingdom God has allowed to continue and to whom he has given more power and a better reputation.

2. "What does a man whom God has asked "Whom have you chosen to renew the (fixed) times?" say?.

\* \* \*

4. Are you pleased with viewing my rights as a man blinded in one eye would, when I have made you into a star for the Ifreets (to stone)?

\* \* \*

8. Was it not the due of my rights that you should repay them (properly) not as a mean one eyed man who cannot find his way to an appointment?

\* \* \*

10. What then would be the answer of that man? May God preserve you from ignominy and censure!

11. Keep your garments pure of those whom pious men do not think it appropriate to bless when they sneeze!

12. Keep your garments pure of those who have no garments, because of their sins, except rags and tatters.

\* \* \*

15. Abù'Ali-unjustly were you given this Kunyah!-you have gone astray in bare featureless deserts.

16. How can you be saved when you are far-away with no-one to guide you and you have no experience (in crossing) the wide deserts?

17. You advanced towards me, to fight me, with one eye blinded with dust-but one-eyed men are not the equal of brave heroes!.

(This translation works on the assumption that 'awāwīr is a variant of 'ūr, the plural of a'war).

Khàlid al-Qaḥṭbi

## المتقارب

- 1 أخالد: أخطأت وجه الصواب ولم تأت أيري من باب<sup>1</sup>
- 2 خرقت فجمشته بالهزاء وأنسيت كثرة خطابه
- 3 فلو كنت غازلته بالنسيب أصبحت أنجح طلابه
- 4 كبنتك حين تأتت له فاضحت رئيسة أصحابه
- 5 عدمتك شيخا أبا حنكة يحاول أمرا فيعيا به
- 6 وتطلبه عادة كاعب فتحكم من أمر أسيايه

"1. Khàlid you have been altogether wrong.

You did not try to win my love in the right way.

2. It was stupid of you to count it with banter.

You did not remember how many others were seeking it.

3. Had you approached it with compliment,

You would have been one of its most successful suitors,

4. Like your daughter when she engaged to have it.

And became the chief of those who enjoy it.

5. Fie on you, an elder of experience.

Trying for a thing and failing to obtain it.

6. While a tender novice of a girl

---

<sup>1</sup> 'Alī Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 1, 362.

When she wants it contrives to take the proper course.”<sup>1</sup>

al-Buḥturi

السريع

1 ما تجزع الشاة إذا شحطت من ألم الذبح ولا السلخ<sup>2</sup>

2 ولا من التفصيل منكوسة ولا من الشى ولا الطبخ

3 لكنها تجزع من خلة تقدح في الأحشاء بالمرخ

4 تشفق أن يكتب في جلدها شعرك ياذا القرن والكشخ

1. When slaughtered, sheep are not afraid of the pain of ritual killing or of being skinned.
2. Or of being jointed, on their back (on the butcher's slab), or of being grilled or cooked.
3. But it is afraid of a quality which strikes fire in its innards(?).
4. It is ashamed that your poetry should be written on its hide, you billy-goat!

### Ibn al-Rùmī's Political Lampoons

#### Against the Caliphs

<sup>1</sup> Rhurun Guest, Life and works, of Ibn er Rùmī, 66.

<sup>2</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 2, 97, 98.

Ibn al-Rùmī took the side of Abū al-Ḥusayn Yaḥyā Ibn 'Umar against al-Mutawakkil and al-Musta'in when Yaḥyā led a revolt against them. On the occasion of the killing of Abū al-Ḥusayn by Muḥammad Ibn 'Abd Allāh Ibn Ṭāhir, upon the command of al-Musta'in, Ibn al-Rùmī recited the following:

الطويل

- 1 أمامك فانظر أي نهجيك تتهج؟ طريقان شتى: مستقيم وأعوج<sup>1</sup>  
\* \* \*
- 3 أكل أوان للنبي محمد قتل زكي بالدماء مخرج  
\* \* \*
- 6 بنى المصطفى: كم يأكل الناس شلوكم؟ لبلواكم عما قليل مفرج  
\* \* \*
- 10 أبعد المكنى بالحسين شهيدكم تضيء مصابيح السماء فتسرج؟  
\* \* \*
- 53 أجنوا بنى العباس من شنانكم  
وأوكوا على ما فى العباب وأشرجوا
- 54 وخلوا ولاة السوء منكم وغيهم فأحر بهم أن يفرقوا حيث لججوا  
\* \* \*
- 58 غررتم إذا صدقتم أن حالة تدوم لكم، والدهر لوان أخرج  
\* \* \*
- 78 أفي الحق أن يمسوا خماسا وأنتم يكاد أخوكم بطنه يتبجع؟

<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 2, 23-30. See also, 6, 270.

- تمشون مختالين فى حجراتكم ثقال الخطا أكفالكم تترجرج 79
- وليدهم بادي الطوى ووليديكم من الريف ريان العظام خدلج 80
- \* \* \*
- بيبيت إذا الصبهاء روت مشاشه يساوره عالج من الروم أعلج 89
- فيطعنه فى سبة السوء طعنة يقوم لها من تحته وهو أفحج 90
- لذاك بنى العباس يصبر مثلكم ويصبر للموت الكمى المدجج 91
- \* \* \* \* \*
- أبى الله إلا أن يطيبوا وتخبثوا 94
- وأن يسبقوا بالصالحات وتفلجوا
- \* \* \*
- لعمري لقد أغرى القلوب ابن طاهر 97
- بيغضانكم مادامت الريح تنأج
- \* \* \*
- وإنى على الاسلام منكم لخائف بوائق شتى بأبها الآن مرتج 108
- \* \* \*
- لعل قلوبا قد أطلتم غليلها ستظفر منكم بالشفاء فتتلج 111

1. Before you there lie two different paths-one straight, the other crooked-think, which path shall you follow?

\* \* \*

3. Is there to be, in every age, a pure descendant of the prophet Muḥammad, murdered and stained with blood.

\* \* \*

6. O Banù al-Muṣṭafà, how often do people eat your limbs! Your trial will shortly end in relief!

\* \* \*

10. Do the stars still light up and illumate the skies after (the death) of your martyr, the one named al-Ḥusayn.

\* \* \*

53. O children of al-'Abbas hide your hate and keep your anger in your heart,

54. And leave your bad rulers with their injustice it is more proper for them to drown when they are at sea.

\* \* \*

58. You were beguiled when you believed that ( this was) a situation which would last for you, when time has two colours.

\* \* \*

78. Is it that they should become lean and emaciated while your brother's stomach almost bursts with satiety?

79. You walk haughtily through your apartments, heavy-footed, your shoulders aquiver.

80. Their offspring has an empty belly while your offspring have soft and tender bones and plump bodies, from easy living.

\* \* \*

89. He spends the night, when the wine has soaked his mind, talking with a foreign Byzantine ass.

90. Who pokes and thrusts at him in his wicked way so violently that he gets up bandy-legged from under him.

91. It is for this that the like of you, O Banùl-'Abbàs display endurance, while the brave armoured warrior displays endurance in the face of death.

\* \* \*

94. God has ordained that they should be good, you bad, that they should be pre-eminent in their good deeds and that you should be overcome.

\* \* \*

97. Upon my life Ibn Ṭàhir has made the people's hearts hate you for as long as the wind makes voices.

\* \* \*

108. Despite Islam, I fear, from you, many deluges the door of which is now closed.

\* \* \*

111. Perhaps hearts, in which you have for a long time fostered hatred, will obtain a cure from you and be restored to health.

Against al-Mu'tazz

## البسيط

- 26 دع الخلافة يا معتز من كتب فليس يكسوك منها الله ما سلبا<sup>1</sup>
- 27 أترتجى لبسها من بعد خلعكها هيهات هيهات فات الضرع ما حلبا
- 28 تالله ما كان يرضاك المليك لها
- 29 قبل احتقابك ما اصبحت محتقبا  
حتى أذلك عنها ثم أبدلها كفوا رضيا لذات الله منتجبا
- 30 فكيف يرضاك بعد الوبقات لها
- لا، كيف؟ لا، كيف إلا المين والكذبا؟
- \* \* \*
- 39 يا من جنى لأبيه القتل ثم غدا حربا لثائره صدقت من ثلثا
- 40 يا أولياء عهود الشر هونكم من غالب الله فى سلطانه غلبا
- 41 لقد جزيتم أباكم حين كرمكم بالعهد أسوأ ما يجزى البنون أبا

26. O Mu'tazz, give up the caliphate even though it is at hand, for God will not clothe you in something which he has stripped (you off).

27. Do you hope to don it once you have doffed ?It is impossible and absurd! Milk can not return to the udder when it has been milked

<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 1, 392, 393.

28. By God, He who posses it was not pleased with you before you perpetrated that which you have perpetrated.

29. So that he has humbled and deprived you of it, and bestowed it upon a chosen one, (your) peer, pleasing into God's very self.

30. How can he be pleased with you after the atrocities (you have inflicted) on it? How? How? Except as a lie and a falsehood?

\* \* \*

39. You who assassinated your father, then nourished a war against his avenger, you proved those who upbraided (you) to be true.

40. O' Crown princes of evil, take your time:

he who tries to conquer God is conquered.

41. You have repaid your father, when he honoured you, with a bond which was the worst a son has ever requited his father with.

Against the rulers of Baghdad

The Ṭāhiridis

Ibn al-Rūmī mostly praises them but sometimes he became their opponent .

الطويل

1 إذا حسنت أخلاق قوم فيئسما خلفتم به أسلافكم آل طاهر<sup>1</sup>

2 جنوا لكم أن تمدحوا وجنيتم لموتاكم أن يشتموا في المقابر

1. Though some peoples' offspring are good, how badly, O family of Tāhir, have you succeeded your ancestors.

2. Their bequest to you was that you should be praised, whereas your bequest to the dead among you is that they should be reviled in their graves.

And he says

السريع

1 رمت نداكم يا بني طاهر فرمت مخ الذر في عسرته<sup>2</sup>

2 أملت من رقد سليمانكم ما أمل المعتز من نصرته

1. I sought your generosity, O Bani Tāhir, but it was so difficult (to obtain) that I may as well have sought the marrow of the bones of ants.

2. My hope for gifts from your Sulaymān was like al-Mu'tazz's hope for his support.

Banū Wahb

السريع

<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 3, 80.

See also 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 2, 299. 3, 94, 5, 34, 233, 234.

<sup>2</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 1, 458.

- 1 يا آل وهب شهدت ضرطة سارت بها الأمثال في وهب<sup>1</sup>
- \* \* \*
- 3 قد كنتم من قبل إرسالها أحدثت في الشرق والغرب
- 4 فالآن حقا أطلقت فيكم بكل ثلب ألسن الثلب
- 5 لو كنتم تعفون أستاذكم ما يتم منها عاب
- 6 لكنكم تحشونها دهركم فكلكم متسع الثقب

1. O Family of Wahb, a fart, which has become proverbial for Wahb, is now common knowledge.

\* \* \*

3. Before it was let loose, you were spoken of, both east and west.

4. But now, truly, impudent tongues have expressed every impudence.

5. If you had been blameless with regard to your arses, they would not have loaded you with reproaches.

6. But you stuff them all the time, so that all of you have wide arseholes.

الطويل

- 5 تسميتم فينا ملوكا وأنتم عبيد لما تحوي بطون المزاول<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 1, 402.

<sup>2</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 2, 265, see also 2, 225.

\* \* \*

- 8 متى- آل وهب- يرتجى الري حائم إذا كنتم ملاك سبل الموارد؟
- 9 لقد نذتمونا من مشارب جمّة وغرفتم في غمرها كل جاحد
- 10 وأحييتم دين الصليب وقمتم بتشبيد أعمار وهدم مساجد
- 11 وإبطال ما كان الخليفة جعفر تخيره زيا لكل معاند

\* \* \*

- 13 فكل الذى أظهرتم من فعالكم دليل على تصديق خبيث الموالد

\* \* \*

- 15 كسبتم يسارا واكتسبتم ببخلكم شنارا عليكم باقيا غير باند
- 16 فإن هي زالت عنكم فزوالها يجدد إنعاما على كل ماجد
- 17 ولو أن وهبا كان أعدى أكفكم على البخل من جود أسته بالأوابد
- 18 لظلت على العافين أسمح بالندى

من الهاطلات البارقات الرواعد

5. You have been named as kings over us, though you are slaves to what the hampers contain.

\* \* \*

8. When, O family of Wahb, can the thirsty man hope to slake his thirst when you are the custodians of the paths to the watering-holes?.

9. You have turned us away from abundant ponds, though you have drowned every ingrate in their depths.

10. You have revived the religion of the cross and you have undertaken the erection of buildings and the destruction of mosques.

11. As well as the annulment of that which the caliph Ja'far chose as clothing for every rebel.

\*       \*       \*

13. All the actions which you have brought to light are a sign of the truth of the abomination of your birth.

\*       \*       \*

15. You gained an easy (life of wealth) but you have also acquired, through your parsimony, a bad name which will persist and never cease.

16. If you were to lose it, then loss of it would renew generosity to every honourable (man)

17. And even if Wahb infected your hands for eternity with parsimony from the beneficence of his arse.

18. Then your hands would continue to be more liberal and generous to petitioners than pouring rain, heralded by thunder and lightning.

### **Social lampoon**

This type of lampoon was intended to criticise contemporary society. Several characteristics are highlighted: (1) Parsimony Bukhl; (2) Rancour Hiqd; (3) Social climbing.; (4) Injustice Zulm.

As we have seen from several other poems, Ibn al-Rùmī attacks parsimony. This is directed largely against individuals.

Parsimony:

المتقارب

- 1 يقتر عيسى على نفسه وليس بيباق ولا خالد<sup>1</sup>  
 2 فلو يستطيع لتقتيره تنفس من منخر واحد  
 3 عذرناه أيام إعدامه فما عذر ذى بخل واجد؟  
 4 رضيت لتفريق أمواله - يدي وارث ليس بالحامد

"1. 'Isā is mean unto himself, though he is neither lasting nor eternal.

2. He is so sparing that if he could, he would breathe through only one nostril.

3. We excused him when he had nothing, but what excuse has a miser who has all.

4. I am glad that some heir will scatter his wealth and not be grateful to him (for amassing it)".<sup>2</sup>

And he says

الطويل

<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, *Dīwān*, 2, 160.

<sup>2</sup> Rhurun Guest. *Life and work of Ibn er Rùmī, Dīwān*, p, 98.

- 1 إذا غمر المال البخيل وجدته يزيد به يبسا وإن ظن يربط<sup>1</sup>
- 2 وليس عجيبا ذلك منه فإنه إذا غمر الماء الحجارة تصلب

1. When the miser drowns in money, you will find him even drier (than before) though he might be thought to be moist.

2. This is hardly surprising, for when stones are drenched in water they remain hard.

Rancour

Ibn al-Rūmī lampoons it thus:-

البسيط

- 1 يامادح الحقد محتالا له شبها لقد سلكت إليه مسلكا وعتا<sup>2</sup>
- 2 لن يقلب العيب زينا من يزينه حتى يرد كبيرا عاتيا حدثا
- \* \* \*
- 4 يادافن الحقد في ضعفي جوانحه ساء الدفين الذى أمست له جدنا
- 5 الحقد داء دوى لا دواء له يري الصدور إذا ما جمره حرثا
- 6 فاستشف منه بصفح أو معاتبة فإنما يبرأ المصدور ما نفتا
- 7 واجعل طلابك للأوثار ما عظمت
- ولا تكن لصغير الأمر مكثرنا
- 8 والعفو أقرب للتقوى وإن جرم من مجرم جرح الاكباد أو فرنا
- 9 يكفيك في العفو أن الله قرظه وحيا إلى خير من صلى ومن بعثا

<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 141, 142.

<sup>2</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 1, 463, 464, 465. See also, 3, 33.

- 10 شهدت أنك لو أذنبت ساءك أن تلقى أخاك حقودا صدره شرثا
- 11 إذن وسرك أن ينسى الذنوب معا وأن تصادف منه جانبا دمثا
- 12 فكيف تمدح أمرا كنت تكرهه فكر ،هديت، تميز كل ما اغتلتا
- 13 وليس يخفى من الأشياء أقربها إلى السداد إذا ما باحث بحثا
- \* \* \*
- 20 ولا أزين عيبي كي أسوغه نفسي ولا أنطق البهتان والرفثا

1. You who praise rancour, trying to find something to compare it with, you have embarked upon a muddy and turbid course.

2. The one who wants to change wrong to right by trying to make it right will never do it unless he can make a young man into an old man.

\* \* \*

4. You who bury rancour in your breast, how bad is that which is buried with your breast for its grave!

5. Rancour is a bad illness which cannot be cured; it burns the breast when its coals are stirred.

6. So cure yourself with forgiveness or with blame: spitting heals the man with a sore chest.

7. Seek revenge when this is important but do not fuss over insignificant affairs.

8. Forgiveness is nearer to godliness even if a criminal wound or harts your liver.

9. It is enough for you to know that God has praised forgiveness, in the Revelation to the best of those who have prayed and who were sent.

10. Believe that if you have done wrong, it will be bad for you to meet your brother (full of) rancour, his breast excoriated.

11. Then it will please you if he forgets about your wrongs altogether and if you find him to be meek and compliant.

12. So how can you praise something which you dislike. Think, may God guide you, (you know how) to analyse that which is confused.

13. Those things which are closest to good conduct cannot remain hidden, when someone searches for them.

\* \* \*

20. I am not trying to make my wrong right so that I can make it more digestible to myself, nor am I uttering unseemly lies.

Ibn al-Rùmī, criticizes society for allowing a mean person to become great.

الخفيف

- 2 طار قوم بخفة الوزن حتى لحقوا رفعة بقاب العقاب<sup>1</sup>
- 3 ورسا الراجحون من جلة الناس رسو الجبال ذات الهضاب
- 4 ولما ذاك للنم بفخر لا، ولا ذاك للكرام بعاب
- \* \* \*
- 6 فليطر معشر ويعلو فإني لا أراهم إلا بأسفل قاب
- \* \* \*
- 10 ورجال تغلبوا بزمان أنا فيه وفيهم ذو اغتراب
- 11 غلبوني به على كل حظ غير حظ يفوت كل اغتصاب
- \* \* \*
- 4 2 أتراني دون الأولى بلغوا الأمال من شرطة ومن كتاب؟
- 4 3 وتجار مثل البهائم فازوا بالمنى فى النفوس والأحاب
- \* \* \*
- 4 6 غير مغنين بالسيوف ولا الأقالم فى موطن غناء ذباب

2. Some people have flown, because of their light weight [intellectually/socially] until they have reached the utmost height of the eagle.

3. Whereas the best amongst all people have remained, anchored/moored, just as the lofty mountains are anchored/moored.

4. And this is no boast of the mean, no, nor is it a shame to the noble.

\* \* \*

---

<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 1, 314-322.

6. So let them fly and gain height, for I see them only  
at the very lowest level.

\* \* \*

10. And men have succeeded in an age to which and  
to them- I am alien.

11. They have defeated me in it for every piece of  
good fortune, except for that good fortune the rises  
above those that can be seized by force.

\* \* \*

42. Do you think that I am lower than those policemen  
and secretaries who have attained their ambition.

43. And merchants like beasts who have achieved  
their desires for themselves and their lovers?

\* \* \*

46. They do not fight with the sword or with the pen, in  
a land full of the songs of flies.

Ibn al-Rùmī lampoons envy

مجزوء الوافر

1 ليكنك حاسدا حسده وما تصلى به كبه<sup>1</sup>

2 فلو أسعرته نارا لكانت دون ما يجده

\* \* \*

---

<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, *Dīwān*, 2, 187, 188.

4 يبيت إذا تذكرني وحمى خبير ترده

5 ويرمد حين يبصرني فدام بعينه رمده

1. Leave the envier to his envy and to what heals his liver.

2. If you were to burn him with fire, it would be less than what he suffers already.

\* \* \*

4. When he remembers me, he spends the night suffering the fever of Khaybar.

5. When he looks at me, he become sore-eyed, May this soreness remain in his eye!

Ibn al-Rùmī is always against injustice

الخفيف

1 لانتقام المظلوم أرى على الظالم من ظلمه على المظلوم<sup>1</sup>

2 صاحب الظلم إذا تأملت كالراتع فى المرتع الوبيل الوخيم

3 يجتلى أمره فيعلم أن قد باع ليل الكرى بليل السليم

4 فهو من لوم نفسه حين يخلو فى غرام وفى عذاب أليم

\* \* \*

6 لو تجافى الخصيم عنه وأغضى لكفاه بنفسه من خصيم

1. The revenge of the wronged against his wronger is greater than his wrong-doing against the wronged.

<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 6, 22.

2. The unjust person -if you think about it - is like the man who grazes in unhealthy pasture.

3. What he has done becomes clear to him and he knows that he has bought a night of pain for a night of sleep.

4. When he is alone, he suffers anguish and torture from his self-blame.

\* \* \*

6. If his adversary disregards him and overlooks what he has done, he himself is a sufficient adversary.

### Religious Lampoons

Ibn al-Rùmī lampoons Ramaḍān because Ramaḍān keeps him from food and drink,

الكامل

شهر الصيام مبارك لكنما جعلت لنا بركاته في طوله<sup>1</sup> 1

\* \* \*

إني ليعجبنى تمام هلاله وأسر بعد تمامه بنحوه 4

شهر يصد المرء عن مشروبه مما يحل له ومن مأكوله 5

لا أستثيب على قبول صيامه حسبى تصرمه ثواب قبوله 6

---

<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, *Dīwān*, 5, 222.

1. Ramaḍān is a blessed month but it is blessed only because it is long.

\* \* \*

4. I really enjoy its full moon and I am pleased after its full moon by its waning.

5. A month which keeps a maḥ away from his permitted drink and food.

6. I do not want a reward for my fasting. It is enough for me to have it finished.

الوافر

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| إذا بركت في صوم لقوم دعوت لهم بتطويل العذاب <sup>1</sup> | 1 |
| وما التبريك في شهر طويل يطاول يومه يوم الحساب            | 2 |
| فليت الليل فيه كان شهرا ومر نهاره مر السحاب              | 3 |
| فلا أهلا بمانع كل خير وأهلا بالطعام وبالشراب             | 4 |

1. When you bless a fast for people you pray that their torture maybe prolonged.

2. Why bless a long month, a day of which lasts as long as the day of judgement?

3. I wish that the night might extend to the month, and that its day might pass as quickly as the clouds!

---

<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 1, 208.

4. No welcome to that which prevents all that is good  
Welcome to food and drink.

And he says

البسيط

- 1 شهر القيام وإن عظمت حرمة شهر طويل ثقيل الظل والحركة<sup>1</sup>
- 2 يمشى الهوينا وأما حين يطلبنا فلا السليك يدانيه ولا السلكه
- 3 كأنه طالب ثار على فرس أجد في إثر مطلوب على رمكه
- 4 أذمه غير وقت فيه أحمده منذ العشاء إلى أن تسقع الديكه
- 5 وكيف أحمد أوقاتا مزممة بين الدؤوب وبين الجوع مشتركة
- 6 يا صدق من قال : أيام مباركة

إن كان يكنى عن اسم الطول بالبركه

\* \* \*

- 8 شهر كان وقوعى فيه من قلقى وسوء حالى وقوع الحوت فى الشبكه
- 9 لو كان مولى وكنا كالعبيد له لكان مولى بخيلا سيء الملكه

1. Even though I consider Ramaḍān very holy, is still a long month, which passes slowly.
2. It goes slowly, but when it seeks us out, neither al-Sulaik nor al-Sulaikah can rival it (for speed).
3. It is as though it were someone seeking revenge on a fast stallion, on the track of a quarry on a mare.
4. I revile it, except for one time, which I acclaim, for the night prayer until the cock crows at dawn.

<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 5, 30, 31.

5. How could I acclaim times that should be reviled,  
shared between continuous prayer and hunger.

6. He who calls it 'Blessed days' speaks truth,  
provided that blessing is understood to mean  
(longest)!

\* \* \*

8. A month that when I find myself caught in it, I am so  
disturbed and anxious that I feel like a fish caught in a  
net.

9. If it were a lord and we were like its slaves it would  
be a miserly and bad lord.

Ibn al-Rùmī also attacks those who attribute corporeal attributes  
to God, an attribution anathema to the Mu'tazilah:

مجزوء الكامل

1 أيها القائل بالجسم لأن الأير جسم<sup>1</sup>

2 اتق الله ففي قو لك عدوان وإثم

3 أهويت الأير حتى قلت إن الله جرم؟

4 ضل حلم لك أضحي يعبد الأير وعلم

1. You who discourse on "the body"(i.e. of God),  
because the penis is a body.

---

<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 6, 136.

2. Be afraid of God because your talk contains hostility and sin.
3. Do you love the penis so much that you maintain that God is body?
4. Your self control and your mind have gone astray and have begun to worship your penis.

#### Attacks on cities and city-life

Ibn al-Rùmī inveighs against Sāmarrā (Surra-man Rā for Raā).

المتقارب

1 ألا إن مدحا غدا حلية على سر من را وسكانها<sup>1</sup>

2 لأضيع من ذهب ضببت عجوزا به فلعج أسنانها

3 بلاد أناس ترى كلبها يعاف خلائق إنسانها

1. Praise which has become an ornamentation of Surra man Rā and its dwellers
2. Is worth less than gold with which old woman has plugged the gaps in her teeth
3. A town filled with people, where the dog, as you can see, despises the manners of the people.

He also vents his spite against al-Kūfah:-

---

<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, *Dīwān*, 6, 230, 231.

الهيرج

وأهل الكوفة الرذلة أدنى الأردل الأدنى <sup>1</sup>	5
أناس كلهم فرد وسواتهم مثى	6
فلا دانيهم يجنى ولانائهم يدنى	7
فأضلاع بنى الدنيا على بغضهم تحنى	8
مجاهيل معازيل إلى اليسرى عن اليمنى	9
على غير تقى الله غدت أبياتهم تبنى	10
ويقرى ضيفهم فيها ملاكها بعده مزنى	11
فسمناهم كعجفاهم وأنى لهم السمنى؟	12
* * *	
تأملناهم قدما بعين لم تكن وسنى	18
فلم يقصر لهم قرن ولا طال لهم مبنى	19
إذا عدت مخازيهم فما تحصى ولا تفنى	20
فلا عاقاهم الله ولا أغنى ولا أقتى	21

5. The people of al-Kūfah the low are the lowest of the lowest of the low (Lit. The people of al-Kūfah the despicable are the lowest of the lowest and most despicable).<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'Alī Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 1, 90, 91.

<sup>2</sup> An allusion to the Qur'ān: see Sūrat Hūd (27), v.11, Sūrat al-Shu'arā' (26), v. 111.

6. Though everyone there is an individual, their sins are double (or all of them are unique and their pudenda are two fold).<sup>1</sup>

7. You cannot pluck the fruit of the lowest branches and you cannot lower the highest branches (*i.e.* there is no good or benefit to be obtained from any of them).

8. The hearts (Lit. The ribs) of the whole of mankind are full of hatred for them

9. Nobodies, marginalised (from society), travelling towards the left instead of the right<sup>2</sup>

10. Their households are not founded on fear of God:

11. Their guest in al-Kūfah is entertained first with sodomy and then with adultery (*i.e.* he sleeps first with the husband, then with the wife).

12. So the fat ones are like the lean ones: how, after all, can they grow fat?

\* \* \*

18. We have regarded them from of old with an eye which does not sleep.

---

<sup>1</sup> This line is possibly a double-entendre; Ibn al-Rūmī uses language appropriate to both the Mu'tazilī discourse and to the physiological invective of Hijā'.

<sup>2</sup> A reference to a notion commonly encountered in the Qur'ān: see, for example, Sūrat al-kahf (18), v. 18, Sūrat al-Saba' (34), v. 15, Sūrat Qāf (50), v. 17.

19. They are not short of cuckolds(Lit. horns), and none of their buildings are tall.

20. When their abominations are reckoned, they can never be counted or numbered.

21. May God not keep them in good health! May he

neither enrich them nor increase them! <sup>1</sup>

Ibn al-Rùmī also casts his jaded eye on people suffering from bodily defects and lampoons them accordingly:

1. A man with a long nose

مجزوء الكامل

15. قولا لدبس شر من يطأ التراب ويلمس<sup>2</sup>

16. تبالدهر أنت فيه مقدم ومراس

\* \* \*

27. وإذا جلست أذى خشامك من يضم المجلس

\* \* \*

30. فالأنف منك لعظمه أبدا لرأسك يعكس

31. حتى يظن الناس أنك في التراب تفرس

\* \* \*

33. إن كان أنفك هكذا فالفيل عندك أفتس

<sup>1</sup> The second hemistich is a reference to the Qur'ân: Sûrat al-Najm (53), v. 48, where Allāh is the one who aghnā wa-aqnā.

<sup>2</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 3, 278, 279.

يامن له في وجهه أزع عليه مكس 34

\* \* \*

قيل: السلام عليكما فتجيب أنت ويخرس 37

15. Say to Dabas who is the worst man walking on the earth.

16. Damnation on an age in which you are appointed a leader and a chief!

\* \* \*

27. When you sit down, your big nose injures all those present in the majlis.

\* \* \*

30. Your nose is so big that it always drags your head down.

31. So that people think that you are a horse looking at the ground.

\* \* \*

33. If your nose is like this, then the elephant, compared to you, is flat-nosed.

34. You on whose face a vault has been erected, fashioned like a church.

\* \* \*

37. When someone wishes you both, "Peace be upon you!" you answer, but it (your nose) stays dumb.

2. An attack on a man with a long face

مخلع البسيط

- 6 وجهك يا عمرو فيه طول وفي وجوه الكلاب طول<sup>1</sup>
- 7 فأين منك الحياء قل لي ياكلب والكلب لايقول
- \* \* \*
- 9 مقابح الكلب فيك طرا يزول عنها ولا تزول
- 10 وفيه أشياء صالحات حماكها الله والرسول
- \* \* \*
- 12 والكلب واف وفيك غدر ففبك عن قدره سفول
- 13 وقد يحامى عن المواشى وما تحامى وما تصول
- 14 وأنت من أهل بيت سوء قصتهم قصة تطول
- 15 وجوههم للورى عطات لكن أقاءهم طبول
- \* \* \*
- 20 وجه طويل يسيل فوه أحسن منه حر بيول
- 21 بل فيك سرب وطول خطم ولم تزل هكذا النغول

6. O.'Amr you have a long face and all dogs have long faces.

7. So where is your shame? Answer me, you dog, but dogs never talk.

\* \* \*

9. You have all the ugly traits of the dog. But while it can get rid of them, you never do.

---

<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 5, 187, 188.

10. And it has some good traits-may God and the Prophet keep them from you.

\* \* \*

12. The dog is loyal but you are perfidious, therefore you are beneath even the dog.

13. The dog protects cattle but you, protect and assail no one.

14. You are from a bad people whose story is very long,

15. Their faces are sermons for the people, but the napes of their necks are drums (waiting to be beaten).

\* \* \*

20. A long face with a mouth full of saliva -an urinating vagina is prettier than it!

21. You have a wound and a long muzzle-that's the way bastards always are.

3. Ibn al-Rùmī attacks a man with halitosis:-

الطويل

1 تنفس في وجهي فكدت أموت وأعرض عني ساعة فحييت<sup>1</sup>

2 واننتي حتى ظننت بانني وحقكما يا صاحبي خريت

3 فإن لم أكن فنتشت حقا غلاتي لأغسل عنها سلحها فعميت

<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 1, 448. see also 5, 136, 2, 243.

1. He breathed in my face and I almost died, but then he turned away from me for a while and I revived.
2. The stench he made me smell was so bad that I thought, my friends I swear, that I had relieved my bowels.
3. If truly I had not examined my own clothes to clean the filth from them, I would have gone blind.

#### 4. A blind man

##### الخفيف

1 كيف يرجو الحياء منه صديق ومكان الحياء منه خراب<sup>1</sup>

1. How can a friend expect modesty of him, when the seat of modesty (*i.e.* his eyes) is ruined.

In another lampoon, Ibn al-Rùmī somewhat offensively attacks blind people in general. It is not a particularly good piece of poetry:

##### المتقارب

1 مجالسة العمى تعدى العمى فلا تشهدن لهم مشهدا<sup>2</sup>

2 فإن أنت شاهدتهم مرة فكن منهم الأبعد الأبعدا

3 بحيث تفوت إشارتهم وإلا فإنك منهم غدا

\* \* \*

<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 1, 408.

<sup>2</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 2, 202.

- 5 فيعمون من شئت في ساعة ولم يحتسب قط أن يرمدا  
 6 الارب عين دنت منهم فمدوا لها ليلها سرمدا  
 7 وأضحت ترى كل ما حولها -لظلمتها- جيلا أسودا

1. Keeping company with the blind leads to blindness, so do not keep company with them at all.

2. Even if you have kept company with them once-and no more- then get as far away from them as possible.

3. So that their gestures will pass (you) by. Otherwise, tomorrow you will become one of them.

\* \* \*

5. They can turn anyone you want blind in an instant, even though he never expected to have sore-eyes.

6. Many's the eye which has come close to them. They have reached out for it constantly throughout the night.

7. And the next morning it sees everything around it, because of their wrong-doing, as a black mountain.

Such is his craze for lampooning at this period that Ibn al-Rūmī even lampoons himself for his untiring indulgence in this art-form:

الخفيف

1 قيل لي : لم نمت كل البرايا وهجوت الأنام هجوا قبيحا؟<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, *Dīwān*, 2, 96 see also 4, 63.

2 قلت: هب أننى كذبت عليهم

فأروني من يستحق المديحا؟

1. I was asked ,” Why do you criticize all mankind and lampoon them with ugly invective?”

2. I replied ,” Suppose that I have lied about them. Let them show me someone who merits praise!”

What’s more, Ibn al-Rūmī even lampoons himself.

المنسرح

1 من كان يبكى الشباب من جزع فلست أبكى عليه من جزع<sup>1</sup>

2 لأن وجهى بقیح صورته مازال لى كالمشيب والصلع

3 أشب ما كنت قط أهرم ما كنت فسبحان خالق البدع

\* \* \*

5 شغفت بالخرد الحسان وما يصلح وجهى إلا لذى ورع

6 كى يعبد الله فى الفلاة ولا يشهد فيه مشاهد الجمع

1. If anyone has ever wept with grief for his youth, I do not weep with grief for my youth,

2. Because I have always had my face, with its ugly appearances such as its grey-hair and baldness.

3. My nonnage was my dotage-Praise be the Creator of Marvels!

\* \* \*

<sup>1</sup> Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 4, 111, 112.

5. My heart was pierced with love for chaste virgins,  
even though my face was only of use to the pious  
man.

6. That he might worship God alone in the desert and  
not attend crowded places.

## **THE ELEGY**

### **Ibn al-Rùmī 's Elegiac Poetry**

Ibn al- Rùmī composed very little elegiac poetry, This is somewhat unusual in view of the size of his *Dīwān* and in the light of the disasters which struck him in his lifetime. These elegiac poems are sometimes too long, like the long *qasidah* (204 lines) in which he laments the death of his mother:

الطويل

1 أفيضا دما إن الرزايا لها قيم فليس كثيرا أن تجودا لها بدم<sup>1</sup>

"1. Let blood flow forth (oh eyes) each calamity has each own value, thus it is not too much to ask both of you to weep tears of blood for this calamity".<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, *Dīwān*, 6, 64-74.

<sup>2</sup> Pieter Smoor, *Elegies and other poems on death by Ibn al-Rùmī*, n.p., 1995, 16.

At other times, they can be too short as with his elegy for Sayyār Ibn Makram.

الطويل

1 فإن يك سيار بن مكرم انقضى فإنك ماء الورد إن ذهب الورد<sup>1</sup>

2 مضى وبنوه وانفردت بفضله والى إذا ما جمعت واحد فرد

1. Though Sayyār ibn Makram has passed away, you (i.e. his son) are the rose-water, even though the rose has perished.

2. He and his sons have gone and you alone have their excellent kindness: when we count to a thousand, we still have only one number.

All of Ibn al-Rùmī's elegies go straight to the point and eschew the use of the *nasib*.

#### Elegies For His Relatives

These poems reveal most clearly his emotional responses, more than any other poems in his *Dīwān*

#### His Aunt

All that we know about her is that she died before his mother and that he devoted an elegy to her:<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, *Dīwān*, 2, 302.

<sup>2</sup> 'Abbās al-'Aqqād, *Ibn al-Rùmī*, 75.

الطويل

1 ألا ليست الدنيا بدار فلاح بعينيك صرعاها مساء صباح<sup>1</sup>

\* \* \*

3 ارانى وأمى بعد فقدان أختها وإن كنت فى رفه بها و صلاح

4 كفرخ قطة الدو بان جناحها فبات إلى حصن بغير جناح

1. This world is not an abode of prosperity. Your eyes are filled with its victims, morning and evening.

\* \* \*

3. I see that my mother and I, after the loss of her sister, even though we two live in ease and well being,

4. Are like the young of the desert sand-grouse when its mother has flown away from it so that it comes to a fortress, but with no mother.

We can see from line three that his aunt died before his mother.

His mother

She was of Persian birth and was called Ḥasna. To her Ibn al-Rūmī devoted an elegy, the longest elegy which he composed.

الطويل

1 أفيضا دما إن الرزايا لها قيم فليس كثيرا أن تجودا لها بدم<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 2, 69- also see 3, 215.

<sup>2</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 6, 64-67.

- 2 ولا تستريحا من بكاء إلى كرى فلا حمد مالم تسعداني على السأم  
\* \* \*
- 19 خليلي هذا قبر أمي فورعا من العذل عني واجعلا جابتي نعم  
20 فما ذرفت عيني على رسم منزل ولا عكفت نفسي هناك على صنم  
21 خليلي رقا لي أعينا لأخاكما نشدتكما من ترعيان من الحرم  
\* \* \*
- 28 غدا الدهر لي خصما وفي محكما فكيف بخصم ضالع وهو الحكم؟  
29 يجور فأشكو جوره وهو دائبا يرى جوره عدلا إذا الجور منه عم  
30 عذيري من دهر غشوم لأهله يرى أنه إذ عم بالغشم ما غشم  
31 غدا يقسم الأسواء قسم سوية وما عدل من سوى وسواء ما قسم  
32 تعم ببلواه يد منه سلطة يصول بها فظ إذا اقتدر اهتضم  
33 وليست من الأيدي الحميد بلاؤها يد قسمت سوءا وإن سوت القسم  
34 آمال عروشي ثم ثنى بهدمها وكم من عروش قد أمال وقد هدم  
35 وأصبح يهدى لي الأسى متصلا فمن سوقة أردى ومن ملك قصم  
36 وإني وإن أهدى أساه لساخط عليه ولكن هل من الدهر منتقم؟  
37 هو الدهر إما عابط ذا شبيبة بأحدى المنايا أو مميت أبا هروم  
\* \* \*
- 45 الاكل حي ما خلا الله ميت وإن زعم التأميل ذو الإفك ما زعم  
46 يروح ويغدو الشيء بيني فر بما جنى وهيه الباني وإن أغفل انهدم  
\* \* \*
- 58 ألا كم أذل الدهر من متعزز وكم زم من أنف حمى وكم خطم  
\* \* \*
- 65 وكم صال بالأملك وسط جنودها  
وأخنى على أهل النبوات والحكم

وكم نعمة أذوى وكم غبطة طوى وكم سند أهوى وكم عروة فصم 66

وكم هد من طود منيف عانه وكم قض من قصر منيف وكم وكم 67

"1. Let blood flow forth (oh eyes) , each calamity has its own value, thus it is not too much to ask both of you to weep tears of blood for this calamity.

2. Do not cease your weeping in order to sleep, for there is no praise possible until both of you help me bewail the dreadful loss which has befallen me

\* \* \*

19. Oh my two friends! This is the grave of my mother, keep your criticisms of me for another day, and take care that your answer to my request is "Yes"!

20. For my eye did not overflow because a girlfriend has gone on a journey, leaving only her traces behind, and my soul does not devote itself to the beauty of an idol.

21. Oh my two friends! Pity me, help your brother (Seil. Ibn al-Rûmî is of course the brother).

\* \* \*

28. The Dahr became simultaneously both an "opponent" against me and a judge above me but can I preserve myself against an opponent who acts unjustly but is also judge?

29. He is unjust. Thus I complain about unjustness, but as usual he considers his injustice to be justice.....and that during a period in which his injustice is universal.

30. I offer an apology for a deceitful Dahr deceiving his own (i.e. Dahr's) contemporaries. When his deceit was universal he did not consider himself to be deceitful.

31. He came and divided misfortune into perfectly equal portions but where lies the justice in a person who divides equally but distributes that which is condemned?

32. His harsh hand dominates everything with misfortune: a brute who attacks with the hand in a violent way: whenever he is able he commits an injustice.

33. A hand that distributes misfortune does not belong to the hands that men have put to the test and praise, even if it makes the portions equal.

34. He -Dah- had my primitive venires sag, and even worse, destroyed!

35. He came to bring me comfort by pleading that he was free from sin but he had citizens killed and kings cut off.

36. Although he gave comfort,. I am angry with him .  
But is the Dahr something on which one can take  
revenge?

37 That is the way the of Dahr : either he inflicts the  
fate of death on someone in the bloom of youth or he  
allows a brother to die of old age.

\* \* \*

45. Each living creature expect for Allāh shall die,  
even though there are lying souls who will pretend  
that there is still hope for immortality.

46. In the evening and the morning the thing in the  
process of being erected is further built, but perhaps  
the builder makes a mistake with respect to the  
building's weakness ... if that is not attended to the  
building will collapse.

\* \* \*

58. How many indeed (kam) of the proud has the fate  
of time brought low, how often has it bridled and  
curbed an ambitious nose which was made to bite its  
bit.

\* \* \*

65. How many kings it (scilifate) attacked in the midst  
of their soldiers and how many of those who own  
prophethood and wisdom ... ahlil-nubùwti wal-hikam.

66. How many a good thing has (the fate of time) wilted!

How many a good fortune has it rolled up. How many a support has it ruined and how many a handle has it broken.

67. How many a mountain with its overtowering peaks has it crushed! How many a palace strongly built has it overthrown ! How many, oh, how many!"<sup>1</sup>

Remarks on the first sixty-seven verses of this poem:

1. Ibn al-Rùmī was middle-aged when his mother died . See verse 11

11 أقول وقد قالوا أتبكي كفاقد رضاعا

وأين الكهل من راضع الحلم

11. I said, when they said " Do you weep like one who has lost his wet-nurse?", " How can we compare a mature man with one who suckles the teat?"

The point is that his behaviour is more in keeping with a child than with that of a mature man:

2. His brother was still alive at this time

أفاسى وصنوى كل شديدة تبرح بالجلد الصبور وبالبرم 18

<sup>1</sup> Pieter Smoor , Elegies and other poems on death by Ibn al-Rùmī, 16-25.

18. My brother and I suffer every hardship because of it, hardships which wear away the strong and the sturdy, patient man.

3. Ibn al-Rùmī blames al-Dahr and enlarges upon its power in lines (22-25) and from (30-37) and (46, 58, 65, 66, 67).

4. Ibn al-Rùmī quotes the first shatr in line (45) from Labid who says:

الا كل حي ما خلا الله باطل

"Indeed, each thing, Allah only exempted is vain"<sup>1</sup>

After 135 lines devoted to al-Dahr and its power, Ibn al-Rùmī returns to his mother.

أحاملتى أصبحت حملا لحفرة إذا حملت يوما فليس لها قتم <sup>2</sup>	135
أحاملتى أستحمل الله روحة إلى تلكم البروح الزكية والنسم	136
أمرضعتى استرضع الغيث درة لرمسك بل أستغزر الدمع ما سجم	137
* * *	
ولو نظرت عيناك يأم نظرة إلى ما توارى عنك منى واكتتم	153
فقسست بما ألقاه ما قد لقيته شهدت بحق أن داهيتى أطم	154
وكم بين مكروه يحس وقوعه وأخر معدوم الإطاقة واللمم	155
يحس البلى ميت الحياة ولم يكن يحس البلى ميت الممات إذا أرم	156
* * *	

<sup>1</sup> Pieter Smoor , Elegies and other poems on death by Ibn al-Rùmī, 23.

<sup>2</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 6, 71-74.

- وأظلمت الدنيا وبأخ ضياؤها 176  
 نهارا وشمس الصحو حيرى على القمم
- وأجذبت الأرض التي كنت روضة عليها وأبدت مكلحا بعد مبيتهم 177
- ومادت لك الأجيال حتى كأنما شواهقها كان بمحياك تدعم 178
- وأصبح بيكيك السحاب مجاوردا فأرزم إرزام العجول وما رذم 179
- وناحت عليك الريح عبري وأصبحت لدن عدمت رياك تجرى فلا تشم 180
- وقامت عليك الجن والأنس مأتما 181  
 تبيكى صلاة الليل والخمص والهضم
- \* \* \*
- وأما السموات العلا فتباشرت بروحك لما ضمها ذلك المضم 186
- وما كنت إلا كوكبا كان بيننا فبان وأمسى بين أشكاله نجم 187
- رأى المسكن العلوي أولى بمثله فودعنا جادت معاهده الرهم 188
- \* \* \*
- فلا تعدمي أنس المحل فطالما عكفت وأنست المحاريب فى الظلم 202
- كست قبرك الغر المباكير حلة مفوقة من صنعة الوبل والديم 203
- لها أرج بعد الرقاد كأنما يحدث عما فيك من طيب الشيم 204

135. Oh you who carried me! now you are carried to a grave, and you who if carried once dust never rises again.

136. Oh you who carried me ! I will ask God to carry a refreshment for you as you are a sinless person.

137. Oh you who suckled me! I will ask the rain to water your graves if not I will ask the tears to be plentiful.

\* \* \*

"153. O Mother, if your eyes could just once look at that part of me that is buried and hidden from you.

154. If only you could but once measure what you have experience against what I am now experiencing, then you could, with truth , have testified that my unhappiness was the heaviest.

155. How great is the gulf between something awful that one feels is going to happen and something else that one can neither bear nor accept.

156. The living dead feel the waste, but those who are dead amongst the dead feel no waste when they run away with everything.

\* \* \*

176. The world became dark and ,in the day time, her shine faded, while the sun of the awakening wavered on the peaks.

177. The earth, in which you were a garden, became barren and displayed a grimace after a laugh.

178. The mountains bent towards you as if their peaks were leaning against your face.

179. In the morning the clouds came up and wept for you, attempting to surpass everything with their generosity of spirit, after which they groaned with the groan of the hasty (came), but did not flow over.

180. Full of tears the wind lamented you, and, as soon as it missed your scent, it began to run because it could no longer smell it.

181. The Jinns and the humans organized a ceremony : they let the Night , Hunger and the Spirit of Emaciation all lament.

\* \* \*

186. "As far as the highest heavens are concerned together they were delighted with your spirit. when that embrace embraced it (the spirit).

187. You were only a planet kawkab that was among us, then it departed and among its equals it became a star (najam).

188. It (the star) considered the highest place of residence more suitable for something like itself, therefore, it left us. May rain bring life to its place of residence that was, of old, well-known!

\* \* \*

202. May you not miss the intimacy of this place, because for a long time, you have been devoted to, and familiar with, the darkness of prayer niches.

203. Let it be, that the radiant spring rains cover your grave with a white striped mantle, the cloth of which is a web of rain and mist.

204. A mantle which, on walking, has a wonderful aroma, as if revealing the good qualities that your posses".<sup>1</sup>

Remarks on the remainder of the qasidah

1. The tone of lines 135, 136 and 137 is plangent.
2. In line 148 he becomes very sad as he wants to sacrifice himself instead of his mother.
3. Even though Ibn al-Rùm elegizes his mother with his longest elegy he still promises her in line 150 to devote to her other laments, he apparently did not.
4. In lines 181, 198, 199 and 202 Ibn al-Rùmī describes his mother as a good and God-fearing person.

The number of poets who elegized their mothers is not great: Ibn al-Rùmī forms something of an exception.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Pieter Smoor , *Elegies and other poems on death by Ibn al-Rùmī*, 31-36.

<sup>2</sup> Shawqī Ḍayf, *al-Rithā'*, Cairo, 1955, 24.

His Brother

Ibn al-Rùmī elegizes him with two poems, each poem being two lines in length:

الطويل

1 وتسليني الأيام لا أن لوعتي ولا حزني كالشيء ينسى فيعزب<sup>1</sup>

2 ولكن كفاني مسليا ومعزيا بأن المدى بيني وبينك يقرب

1. The days cause me to forget you, not because my grief and sadness are things which can be forgotten and dispelled

2. But because I derive sufficient consolation and solace from the fact that the distance between me and you is getting less.

His second Son (Muḥammad)

Although this was the first child which Ibn al-Rùmī lost, he lavishes only one lament on him:

الطويل

1 بكاؤكما يشفي وإن كان لايجدى فجودا فقد أودى نظيركما عندي<sup>2</sup>

2 بني الذي أهدته كفاى للثرى فيا عزة المهدي ويا حسرة المهدي

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<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 1, 153-154

<sup>2</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 2, 145.

- 3 ألا قاتل الله المنايا ورميها
- من القوم حبات القلوب على عمد
- 4 توخى حمام الموت أوسط صبيتي فله كيف اختار واسطة العقد
- 5 على حين شمت الخير من لمحاته وأنست من أفعاله آية الرشد
- \* \* \*
- 8 لقد قل بين المهدي واللحد لبثه فلم ينس عهد المهدي إذ ضم في اللحد
- \* \* \*
- 10 ألح عليه النزف حتى أحاله إلى صفرة الجادي عن حمرة الورد
- 11 وظل على الأيدي تساقط نفسه ويذوى كما يذوى القضيب من الرند
- \* \* \*
- 14 بودى أني كنت قدمت قبله وإن المنايا دونه صمدت صمدى
- 15 ولكن ربي شاء غير مشيئتي وللرب إمضاء المشيئة لا العبد
- 16 وما سرني أن بعته بثوابه ولو أنه التخليد في جنة الخلد
- \* \* \*
- 18 وإني وإن متعت بابني بعده لذاكره ماخنت النبي في نجد
- 19 وأولادنا مثل الجوارح أيها فقدناه كان الفاجع البين الفقد
- 20 لكل مكان لا يسد اختلاله مكان أخيه في جزوع ولا جلد
- 21 هل العين بعد السمع تكفي مكانه
- أم السمع بعد العين يهدي كما تهدي
- \* \* \*
- 26 أعيني جودا لي فقد جدت للثرى بأنفس مما تسألان من الرند
- \* \* \*
- 28 عذرتكما لو تشغلان عن البكا بنوم وما نوم الشجي أخى الجهد؟
- \* \* \*

محمد ما شىء توهم سلوة لقلبي الا زاد قلبي من الوجد	34
أرى أخويك الباقيين فإنما يكونان للأحزان أورى من الزند	35
إذا لعبا فى ملعب لك لذعا فوادی بمثل النار عن غير ما قصد	36
فما فيهما لى سلوة بل حزازة يهيجانها دونى وأشقى بها وحدى	37
وأنت وإن أفردت فى دار وحشة فإنى بدار الأتس فى وحشه الفرد	38
* * *	
عليك سلام الله منى تحية ومن كل غيث صادق البرق والرعد	41

"1. Though it is vain your weeping giving some ease;  
be lavish then, my eyes, for one is lost as dear as you  
to me.

2. My son whom my hands to the earth consigned,  
noble the offering, miserable the giver.

3. Out on the fates how cruelly they shoot expressly at  
the very centre of the heart!

4. Stern death has singled out my midmost boy, oh  
why the central jewel of necklace choose?

5. Just when his promise let me auger well, and in his  
actions signs of virtue mark.

\* \* \*

8. Little he tarried twixt the cradle and the grave, its  
rocking he had not forgot when he was tombed.

\* \* \*

10. Bleeding persisted with him till it turned him  
saffron from the colour of the rose.

11. For all that could be done he drooped and  
withered as a sprig of myrtle withers.

\* \* \*

14. I would have prayed to have been sent before,  
that death had sought me out instead of him.

15. Only my lord willed otherwise the master has his  
will and not the slave.

16. I'd not have changed him gladly for God's  
recompense, even perpetual life in paradise.

\* \* \*

18. Though I am blessed with two more sons besides,  
I will think of him so long as camels groan in Najd.

19. Children are like our powers, one we lose troubles  
us always and is sorely missed.

20. Each has a place no other one can fill for any  
man, if he be weak or firm.

21. Where, hearing goes, can the sight take its place?  
or if the eye, can the ear guide as well?

\* \* \*

26. Oh, eyes of mine help me, to earth I have granted  
treasure more precious than I ask of you.

\* \* \*

28. If sleep kept you from weeping, I'd excuse you, but  
what sleep is there for one over whelmed with grief?

\* \* \*

34. Muḥammad, there is nothing deemed relief that  
does not give me yet another stab.

35. I view your brothers who are left and they kindle  
my sorrow quicker than much,

36. For when they play some childish game of yours  
they see my heart not purposely, with fire.

37. I have no consolation from them then, the pain  
they stir I suffer by myself.

38. Whilst you are lonely in a desolate land, in one of  
cheer I dwell a solitary.

\* \* \*

41. My greeting is, the peace of God be yours rain  
from clouds with lightning flash and thunder.”<sup>1</sup>

#### Remarks on the poem

1. Line 34 reveals that his son was named Muhammad.
2. He was his second child (line 4).
3. The child was between four or five years of age (lines 8, 11). Line 36 implies that his young son was old enough to play games, which suggests that his age should be set as between 2 to 3 years old.

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<sup>1</sup> Rhurun Guest, Life and Works of Ibn er Rūmī, 67, 68.

4. Ibn al-Rùmī and Bashshār, were the earliest poets who used the image of red roses growing in a garden to capture the beauty of their dead sons and the speed of their demise and departure.

16 وكان كريحان العروس بقاؤه ذوى بعد إشراق الغصون وطيب<sup>1</sup>

16. He lasted as long as a bride's sweet basil, which has wilted soon after budding on the branch and spreading its perfume.

Compare this with lines 10-11 of Ibn al-Rùmī's poem:

5 الح عليه الترف حتى أحاله إلى صفة الجادى عن حمرة الورد

6 وظل على الأيدى تساقط نفسه ويدوى كما يدوى القضيبي من الورد

5. His son bled to death (line 10).

6. He compares his sons to the five senses, none of which can take the place of the other (lines 19-21).

7. His reference to the longing of the she-camel bereft of her young (line 18) declares that he still loves his son and suggests that Ibn al-Rùmī was not impervious to his surroundings.

8. The poem ends with istisqa'al-matar, the wish that rain will fall on his son's grave (line 41). This is a traditional feature of the marthiya, one which Ibn al-Rùmī also uses to close his elegy for his mother (line 203).

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<sup>1</sup> Bashshār Ibn Burd, *Dīwān* Beirut, 1993, 115.

-His eldest son-His name was Hibat Allāh, Ibn al-Rūmī: dedicates this  
one qasidah to him

الكامل

- أبني إنك والعزاء معا بالأمس لف عليكما كفن<sup>1</sup> 8  
\* \* \*
- أبني إن أحزن عليك فلي في أن فقدتك ساعة حزن 10  
\* \* \*
- بل لا إخال شجاك تعدمه روح ألم بها ولا بدن 12
- تالله لا تتفك لي شجنا يمضي الزمان وأنت لي شجن 13
- والآن حين طعنت عن وطني سمح المقام وطاب لي الظعن 14
- ما أصبحت دنياي لي وطنا بل حيث دارك عندي الوطن 15
- ما في النهار وقد فقدتك من أنس ولا في الليل لي سكن 16
- يا حسرتا فارقتني فننا غضا ولم يثمر لي الفن 17  
\* \* \*
- أولادنا أنتم لنا فتن وتفارقون فأنتم محن 19  
\* \* \*
- يا عاذلي في مثل نائبي تلقى دموع العين تمتهن 21
- فدع الملام فإبني رجل عدل على العبرات مؤتمن 22
- أنفقت دمعني في مواضعه لا الوكس يلحقني ولا الغين 23
- أبكاني إبني إذ فجعت به لم تبكني الأطلال والدمن 24
- وعكفت بالقبر المحيط به فاعذر فلا صنم ولا وثن 25

<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 6, 258, 259.

8. O my son yesterday you and consolation were both wrapped in a winding sheet.

\* \* \*

10. O my son, if I grieve for you, I have a right to grieve, at any rate for a short time at having lost you.

\* \* \*

12. I cannot imagine that such a soul and body could be deserted by your sorrow which used to inhabit them.

13. By God, you will not cease to be a source of grief to me, time will pass and you will remain a grief to me.

14. And now, when you have travelled away from my land, staying here has become unattractive and leaving has become attractive.

15. This world has become no home to me; rather, where you abode is my homeland.

16. Since I have lost you, I have had no society by day and no dwelling by night.

17. What a pity that you should have left me as a fresh shoot, before bearing fruit for me.

\* \* \*

19. O, our children, you are our infatuation but when you leave us you become our affliction.

\* \* \*

“21. “Oh my censurer in this calamity: You say the tears in my eye are suffering from exploitation.

22. But leave off with your criticism. For I am a man who is just and reliable when it comes to weeping.

23. I have only spent my tears on deserving occasions, and no unnecessary loss or fraud has come upon me.

24. My son made me lament, when he hurt me with such pain, but the atlāl and the other remains diman did not allow me to lament.

25. I remained dedicated to the grave which encircled his body, so excuse me, for there is no need of a stone or wooden idol here.”<sup>1</sup>

#### Remarks

1. The tone of lamentation and grief in this qasidah is not quite so stringent as in his qasidah for his middle son.
2. In line (17) he says that his son died when he was still a child.
3. In lines (24 - 25) Ibn al -Rùmī rejects the emotional demands of the traditional encampments and remains (atlāl and diman), conventionally considered to provoke a response of nostalgia and loss in the auditor, when compared with his dedication to his son’s grave and his grief at

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<sup>1</sup> Pieter Smoor, *Elies and other poems on death by Ibn al-Rùmī* p, 14, 15.

his loss. Poetically, two conventions are involved, the *atlâl* derived from the traditional three part *gasidah*, and the mention of the deceased's grave (part of the *Istisqā' al-matar*). Ibn al-Rùmī asserts the incompatibility of the facile emotionality of the *gasidah* and the heart-felt despondency of the *marthiyah*.

His youngest son

This stanza does not seem to be dedicated to his eldest son but rather to that son who remained unnamed in his poetry:<sup>1</sup>

الطويل

1 حماه الكرى هم سرى فتأوبا فبات يراعي النجم حتى تصوبا<sup>2</sup>

2 أعيني جودا لي فقد جدت للثرى بأكثر مما تمنعان وأطيبا

3 بنى الذي أهديته أمس للثرى فله ما أقوى قناتي وأصلبا

1. A care that travelled by night prevented him from sleeping and kept returning so he spent the night looking at the stars until they disappeared.

2. O my eyes be generous with your abundant tears for me, because I have been generous to the earth with something greater and sweeter than that which you deny me.

<sup>1</sup> 'Abbās al-'Aqqād, Ibn al-Rùmī, 80. See also 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, *Dīwān*, 1, 263.

<sup>2</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, *Dīwān*, 1, 263.

3. It was my son whom I gave as a gift to the earth  
yesterday. God knows how strong and straight I keep  
my back.

#### Remarks

1. Ibn al -Rùmī uses the same themes in all three poems for his sons

Line (2) in his middle qasidah.

Line (8) in his eldest son's qasidah.

Line (3) in his youngest son's qit'ah.

2. The brevity of this poem may reflect Ibn al-Rùmī's having become  
inured to the blows of fate, or it may reflect a spontaneous, improvised  
outburst.

#### His wife

Ibn al-Rùmī devotes four poems to his dead wife.<sup>1</sup>

#### الطويل

1 أعيني جوداً بالدموع لفقدها فما بعدها دخر من الدمع مدخور<sup>2</sup>

2 نصيبكما منها الذي فات فابكيا

فأما نصيب القلب منها فموفور

<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 1, 57, 112. 3, 222. 5, 309.

<sup>2</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 3, 222.

1. O my eyes be generous at the loss of her with tears  
for there is no reason for you to keep your tears after  
her.

2. Your share in her is that which has gone, so weep!  
My heart's share in her, however, is still considerable.

#### Remarks

Ibn al Rùmī's injunction to his eyes to be generous is a traditionally favoured theme which he employs often in his laments. Line 1 in the qasidah for his middle son; line 2 in the git'ah for his youngest son; line 1 in his qasidah bewailing the death of his mother and line 1 in the present git'ah.

This injunction is a Jāhili tradition. al-Khansà, for example, employs it in twenty-seven poems.<sup>1</sup>

Elegies for deceased or grieving patrons.

Ibn al-Rùmī elegizes some of those whom he used to praise, such as Muḥammad Ibn 'Abd Allāh al Ṭāhir (one qasidah), Sayyār Ibn Makram (one stanza) and he consoles al-Qasim on his son's death with one qasidah.

Ibn al-Rùmī elegizes Muḥammad Ibn al-Ṭāhir

البيسط

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<sup>1</sup> Tamāḍur al-Khansā', *Dīwān*, 7, 14, 16, 30, 35, 40, 45, 51, 58, 61, 63, 65, 67, 68, 75, 78, 86, 89, 103, 105, 109, 110, 113, 117, 134, 136.

- 1 إن المنية لا تبقى على أحد ولا تهاب أبا عز ولا حشدا<sup>1</sup>
- 2 هذا الأمير أنته وهو في كنف كالليل من عدد ما شئت أو عدد
- \* \* \*
- 17 لا تبعدن أبا العباس من ملك وإن نأيت وإن أصبحت في البعد
- \* \* \*
- 20 مامت بل مات أهل الأرض كلهم
- إذ بنت منهم وكنت الروح في الجسد
- 21 فأنت أولى وإن أصبحت في جدث بأن تعزى بأهل الوعث والجدد
- \* \* \*
- 25 سويت في الحزن بين العالمين كما سويت بينهم في العيشة الرغد
- 26 بثنت شجوك فيهم إذ فقدت كما بثنت رفدك فيهم غير مفتقد
- 27 عدلا حياة وموت منك لو وزنا هذا بذاك لم ينقص ولم يزد
- \* \* \*
- 30 عجبت للأرض لم ترجف جوانبها وللجبال الرواسي كيف لم تمد
- 31 عجبت للشمس لم تكسف لمهلكه وهو الضياء الذي لولاه لم تقد

1. Death does not allow anyone to survive and does not respect the great man or the multitude.

2. This the Emir to whom it has come while he was under the protection (of an army) like the night, as well armed and numerous as you will find.

\* \* \*

<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 2, 152, 153 see also, 2, 302, 398. 5, 146. 1, 434.

17. O Abù al-'Abbās, do not go far as a king, even if  
you are distant and far away!

\* \* \*

20. It was not you who died but all of the inhabitants  
of the earth, since you have left them, you who were  
the soul in their body.

21. Even though you are in the grave, you deserve to  
be lamented by all people, whether they live in the  
mountains or the plains.

\* \* \*

25. You have lavished grief equally among the worlds  
just as you lavished luxury and well-being among  
them.

26. You spread longing for you among them, when  
you were lost, just as you spread your liberality among  
them, when you were not lost

27. If they were weighed, your death and your life  
would be equal, neither would outweigh the other.

\* \* \*

30. I am surprised that the corners of the earth are not  
split asunder and the mountains anchored thereto are  
not convulsed.

31. I am surprised that the sun has not become dark because of his death as he was the light without which it could not illuminate.

Female singer

Ibn al-Rùmī mourns a female singer called Bùstan with one

qasidah:-

المنسرح

- 58 بستان لهفي لحسن وجهك والإحسان صاراً معاً إلى العفر<sup>1</sup>
- 59 بستان أضحى الفؤاد في وله يا نزهة السمع منه والبصر
- 60 بستان مامتك لامرئ عوض من البساتين لا ولا البشر
- 61 بستان أسقيت من مدامعنا لا من سوارى الغيوث والمطر
- 62 بل حق سقياك أن تكون من الصهباء صهباء حمص أو جدر
- \* \* \*
- 67 ما كل لهو أراه بعدكم عندي سوى سخرة من السخر
- \* \* \*
- 86 كل ذنوب الزمان مغتفر وذنبيه فيك غير مغتفر
- 87 تبطل العود عند فقدكم وازجر اللهو أي مزجرز

58. Bustàn, alas for the beauty of your face and your skill which have both turned to dust.

59. Bustàn, my heart has become filled with grief, O you whom it used to delight in leaving and seeing.

<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 3, 21.

60. Bustàn, man will not find a substitute for you either as a garden or as a human.

61. Bustàn, you have been watered by our tears and not by the clouds or the rain of morning (lit, the clouds which travel through the night).

62. But it is fitting that you be watered by wine, by the wine of Hams or of Jader.

\* \* \*

67. I find that every pleasure after you is, in my opinion, ridiculous foolery.

\* \* \*

86. All the sins of time can be forgiven, but the sin which it committed upon you cannot be forgiven.

87. Upon the loss of you, the (strings of the ) lute have been cut and pleasure has been totally scared away.

Ibn al-Rùmī devotes an elegy to al- Baṣrah when this town was attacked by the Zanj.

الخفيف

1 ذاذ عن مقلتي لذيد المنام شغلها عنه بالدموع السجام<sup>1</sup>

2 أي نوم من بعد ما حل بالبصرة من تكلم الهنات العظام؟

3 أي نوم من بعد ما انتهك الزنج جهارا محارم الإسلام؟

---

<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 6, 131-136.

\* \* \*

- لهف نفسي عليك أيتها البصرة لهفا كمثل لهب الضرام 8
- لهف نفسي عليك يامعدن الخيرات لهفا يعضني إبهامي 9
- لهف نفسي يا قبة الإسلام لهفا يطول منه غرامي 10
- لهف نفسي عليك يا فرضة البلدان لهفا يبقى على الأعوام 11
- لهف نفسي لجمعك المتقاني لهف نفسي لعزك المستضام 12
- بينما أهلها بأحسن حال إذ رماهم عبيدهم باصطلام 13

\* \* \*

- صبحوهم فكابد القوم منهم طول يوم كأنه ألف عام 27

\* \* \*

- ما تذكرت ما أتى الزنج إلا أضرم القلب أيما إضرار 32
- ما تذكرت ما أتى الزنج إلا أوجعتني مرارة الإرغام 33

\* \* \*

- عرجا صاحبي بالبصرة الزهراء تعريج مدنف ذي سقام 39
- فأسألاها ولا جواب لديها لسؤال ومن لها بالكلام 40
- أين ضوضاء ذلك الخلق فيها أين أسواقها نوات الرخام؟ 41

\* \* \*

- بل ألما بساحة المسجد الجامع إن كنتما ذوي إمام 52
- فأسألاه ولا جواب لديه أين عباده الطوال القيام؟ 53
- أين عماره الألى عمروه دهرهم في تلاوة و صيام 54

\* \* \*

- أي عذر لنا وأي جواب حين ندعى على رؤوس الأنام 60
- يا عبادي أما غضبتم لوجهي ذي الجلال العظيم و الإكرام 61

"1. Sweet sleep has been barred from my eyes by their preoccupation with copious tears.

2. What sleep (is possible) after the great misfortunes that have befallen Basrah?

3. What sleep ( is possible) after the Zanj have violated openly the sacred places of Islam?

\* \* \*

8. My soul cries alas for thee, O Basrah, with a sight like the blaze of a conflagration;

9. My soul cries alas for thee, O mine of excellencies, with a sight that makes me to bite my thumb;

10. My soul cries alas for thee, O tabernacle of Islam, with a sight whence my anguish is prolonged.

11. My soul cries alas for thee, O anchorage of the lands with a sigh that shall continue for long years.

12. My soul cries alas for thy concourse that has perished; my soul cries alas for thy grievously injured glory.

13. Even whilst her inhabitants were enjoying the fairest circumstances, their slaves assailed them with (sudden) destruction.

\* \* \*

27. They came upon them in the morning, and the people endured their cruelty through the length of a day that was as if a thousand years.

\* \* \*

32. I never recall what was perpetrated by the Zanj without it kindles what a conflagration in my heart;

33. I never recall what was perpetrated by the Zanj without I am anguished by the bitterness of humiliation.

\* \* \*

39. Turn aside, my two comrades, at Basrah the brilliant, as one wasted with sickness turns aside;

40. And enquire of her-but answer is not to be found in her to any question, and who is there to speak for her?

41. Where is the clamour of them that dwelt in her?  
Where are her jostling markets?

\* \* \*

52. Rather, (my comrades), repair to the congregational mosque, if you be manapt to tarry,

53. And enquire of it-but answer is not to be found in it- Where are its worshippers, who stood long in prayer?

54. Where are its throngers who used to throng it,  
passing all their time in recitation and fasting?

\* \* \*

60. What excuse shall we have to offer, what  
response to give, when we are summoned over the  
heads of mankind?

61. "O My servants, were you not angry on my behalf,  
on behalf of me, the majestic the splendid?"<sup>1</sup>

#### Remarks

1. Ibn al-Rùmī is a one of the earliest poets to compose an elegy on a town.<sup>2</sup>

2. Ibn al-Rùmī mentions the destruction of the Zanj in lines 13, 32, 33.

3. Ibn al-Rùmī mentions how the Zanj killed children, women and the elderly and how they destroyed al-Baṣrah: lines 22, 24, 35, 47, 48, 49.

He then reproaches the Muslims, reminding them that God will demand of them a reason for not having helped the people of al-Baṣrah (60, 61, 62). The razing of al-Baṣrah by the Zanj is referred to in lines 41-46, by which Ibn al-Rùmī hopes to incite the Muslims to take up arms against the Zanj.

4. A feature common to Ibn al-Rùmī's elegies is his repetition of words for regret, grief and despondent ejaculation: See for example: lines 26-

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<sup>1</sup> A. J. Arberry, Arabic poetry, p, 63-70.

<sup>2</sup> Shāwqī Ḍayf, al-Rithā', 47.

30 of the qasidah for his middle son, lines 8-12, 19-26, 29-31, 34-37 of his lament for al-Baṣrah.

5. The majority of his marāthī are composed in the Tawil metre.

6. He devotes one lament to each of his losses, rarely dedicating more than one to each occasion.

## THE GHAZAL

The ghazal occupies a minor place in Ibn al-Rūmī's Dīwān when compared with his panegyric and invective poetry. There are two basic types of ghazal in his poetry. The one occurs within the introductions to his long qasidahs (the Nasib), as, for example, in the qasidah which begins with :

المنسرح

1 راجع من بعد سلوة ذكره وواصل الطيبى بعدما هجره<sup>1</sup>

1. He returned to remembering her after he had found solace and he became reunited to the gazelle after he had abandoned her.

Ibn al-Rūmī devotes 62 lines to this Nasib before he reaches the gharaḍ of the qasidah.

The other type occurs in a self-contained poem which is not polythematic (ghazal proper).

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<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, Dīwān, 3, 39.

الخفيف

1 يا خليلي تيمتني وحيد ففؤادي بها معنى عميد<sup>1</sup>

1. O my two companions, Waḥid has enslaved me  
and my heart suffers great pain because of her.

Ibn al-Rùmī dedicates his ghazal poetry to both men and women. Consider the following poem addressed to Sulaymān Ibn al-Hasan Ibn Mukhlid, an interesting example of mujun, in its combination of ghazal and Hijā' and its general withering criticisms.

مجزوء الرمل

1 يا سليمان ظماء قطعت عنك السواقي<sup>2</sup>

2 شخت فأذن بفراق وتجهز لانطلاق

3 بنت عنى بطلاق وطلاق وطلاق

\* \* \*

6 نحن قوم ما لدينا للمولى من خلاق

7 ناكل اللحم ونرمى بكراديس العراق

8 ما علينا بعد شرب الخمر من طرح الزقاق

\* \* \*

19 كم سقاني فوك من ريقك بالكأس الدهاق

20 ربما التفت إلى الصبح لنا ساق و ساق

<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, *Dīwān*, 2, 265.

<sup>2</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, *Dīwān*, 4, 313.

\* \* \*

2 2 ذهب نضرة خديك وما شىء بياق

\* \* \*

41 قد أكلناك لذيذا طيبا حلوا المذاق

42 ولفظناك كريها غير مكروه الفراق

1. O Sulayman who is still thirsty, for you have been cut off from the streams.

2. You are an old man, so be sure of parting and ready yourself for departure

3. You have been removed from me by divorce, divorce, divorce.

\* \* \*

6. We are a people among whom there is no share of happiness for him who has been spurned.

7. We eat the meat and throw away the fibrous, sinewy meat on the bones.

8. We do throw the jug away after we have drunk its wine.

\* \* \*

19. How many beakers, brimming over, of your saliva did your mouth give me to drink!

20. And often by the morning our legs had become entwined, one with the other.

\* \* \*

22. The beauty of your cheeks has gone , nothing lasts for ever.

\* \* \*

41. We ate you when you were delicious, pleasant and sweet to taste.

42. And we tossed you aside when you were hateful , abandoning someone like you does not incur disapproval.

The following poem is dedicated to a female called Maẓlūmah

السريع

- |  |    |
|--|----|
| يا غصنا من لؤلؤ رطب فيه سرور العين والقلب <sup>1</sup> | 1  |
| أحسن بي يوم أرائكم وما على المحسن من عتب               | 2  |
| لكنه اعقبني حسرة فدمعتي سكب على سكب                    | 3  |
| مظلوم ما أنت بمظلومة في حكم أهل الشرق والغرب           | 4  |
| بل إنما المظلوم عبد لكم أصبح مقتولا بلا ذنب            | 5  |
| غصبتة جهرا على قلبه لا تبث ما عشت من الغضب             | 6  |
| مابال من عاداك في راحة وما لمن والاك في كرب؟           | 7  |
| سالمت أهل الحرب طوبى لهم لكن أهل السلم في حرب          | 8  |
| أصبحت من ودى بلا كلفة كالروح بين الجنب والجنب          | 9  |
| أعانى الله على غلتي بشربة من ريقك العذب                | 10 |
| يا حب مظلومة لا تتكشف وأزدد فما لى منك من حسب          | 11 |

<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 1, 268, 269.

مظلوم قد أنهبت أرواحنا وكلنا راضون بالنيب	12
ضربك في صوتك لا خارج عن حده والصوت في الضرب	13
كانما وقعها في الحشا وقع الحيا في الزمن الحذب	14
فقت المغنين كما فاقنا كواكب الدنيا بنو وهب	15
حسننا وإحسانا قد استجمعا كلاهما ذو مطلب صعب	16

"1. Oh, spray of fresh pearls gladdening to the eye and heart.

2. The day that showed you unto me was kind, and it is not right to cavil at a benefactor,

3. Still it did bring me a pang later , so that now my tears pour in showers.

4. Victim, it is not you who are the victim in the eyes of the people of the east and west,

5. Rather the victim is a slave of yours, doomed to die without having committed any crime,

6. Whose heart you have robbed him of openly. So long as you live, may you never cease to do so such robbery!

7. How is it those hostile to you are at ease, while those friendly are in distress?

8. You have made peace with those at war with you, happy are they, but those at peace with you are at war.

9. Without an effort you have become to my spirit as it were another spirit lodged between its sides.

10. May God help me to endure my raging thirst by means of a draught of the sweet nectar of your mouth.

11. Love of the victim, do not pass away, but grow stronger, of you I shall never have enough!

12. Victim, you have made our hearts your booty and we are content at being plundered.

13. Your playing does not pass its measure with your singing nor does your voice go beyond your music.

14. The impression of both on the inner sense is that of rain in time of draught.

15. You surpass other singer as much as the Bani Wahab, those stars of the world,

16. Surpass all in grace and graciousness combined, having each in a degree by itself impossible to equal.”<sup>1</sup>

About another female called Waḥīd Ibn al-Rūmī says

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<sup>1</sup> Rhurun Guest, *Life and Works of Ibn er Rūmī*, 65.

## بحر الخفيف

- يا خليلي تيممتي وحيد ففؤادى بها معنى عميد<sup>1</sup> 1
- غادة زادها من الغصن فد ومن الضبي مقلتان وجيد 2
- وزاها من فرعها ومن الخد ذلك السواد والتوريد 3
- \* \* \*
- وغرير بحسناها قال صفها قلت أمران هين وشديد 9
- يسهل القول إنها أحسن الأشياء طرا ويعسر التحديد 10
- شمس دجن كلا المنيرين من شمس وبدر من نورها يستفيد 11
- تتجلى للناظرين إليها فشقى بحسناها وسعيد 12
- ظبية تسكن القلوب وترعاها وقمرية لها تغريد 13
- \* \* \*
- وحسان عرضن لي قلت مهلا عن وحيد فحقها التوحيد 31
- حسنها فى العيون حسن وحيد فلها فى القلوب حب وحيد 32
- ونصبح بلومنى فى هواها ضل عنه التوفيق والتسيد 33
- \* \* \*
- خلقت فتنة غناء وحسنا مالها فيهما جميعا نديد 37
- فهي نعمى يميد منها كبير وهي بلوى يشيب منها وليد 38

1. O my two companions, Wahid has enslaved me  
and my heart suffers great pain because of her.

2. A maiden who has been adorned by the shape of  
the branch and the eyes and neck of the gazelle.

<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rùmī, Dīwān, 2, 265-267.

3. Her hair and her cheek, with their blackness and rouge, cause her to blossom

\* \* \*

9. Someone who did not know her beauty said 'describe her' and I replied , ' she is both easy and difficult to describe'

10. It is easy to say "she is the most beautiful one of all" but difficult to set limits.

11. She is the sun on a cloudy day and both luminaries, the sun and the full moon, derive their light from her.

12. When she is uncovered and appears to those who look on her, one man is wretched because of her beauty, another is happy.

13. She is a gazelle who lives in and grazes on men's hearts and a cooing dove.

\* \* \*

31. Beautiful women have showed themselves to me and I have said "Gently does it! (I shall never turn ) from Wahid, for she deserves the tawhid".

32. Her beauty in the eyes of men is the only beauty, (love) for her in the hearts of men is the only love.

33. A close friend and adviser reproaches me for (my) love for her; he has strayed far from success and right guidance.

\* \* \*

37. She was created to be a seduction in her singing and her beauty, in both of which she is without equal.

38. She is a blessing at which the mature man feels giddy and a tribulation from which the young man grows old.

#### Remarks on the Ghazal.

1. Ibn al-Rūmī composes ghazal devoted to both men and women.
2. A large proportion of his ghazal is to be found in the nasibs of his qasidahs.
3. Occasionally, his ghazal, both male -and female- oriented, is unseemly and indecorous.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, *Dīwān*, 1, 406. 3, 60. 4, 135. 5, 316, 170. 6, 298, 191, 188, 16.

4. The objects of his love poetry, both male and female, generally remain unnamed and unidentified.<sup>1</sup>

#### His death

Ibn Khallikān says that Ibn al-Rūmī died in (283-284 or 276 A.H.).<sup>2</sup> He was not sure about the exact date of Ibn al-Rūmī's death but al-'Aqqād gave an exact date based on his examination of these three dates

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<sup>1</sup> 'Ali Ibn al-Rūmī, *Dīwān*, 1, 95, 139, 168, 363, 386, 387, 389, 413, 414, 416, . 2, 5, 69, 91, 162, 230, 239.

3. 15, 91, 92, 102, 105, 124, 158, 180, 189, 194, 203, 205, 213, 247, 269.

4. 15, 47, 98, 104, 124, 131, 220, 222, 263, 294.

5. 7, 23, 31, 58, 82, 120, 130, 148, 228, 299, 303.

6. 162, 163, 164, 166, 167, 168, 193, 222, 226, 231, 256, 287, 345, 379.

<sup>2</sup> Abū al-'Abbās Ibn Khallikān, *Wafāyāt al A'yān*, 3, 361.

He chose 283 A.H. as the most likely.<sup>1</sup>

The cause of death was apparently poison: Ibn al-Rùmī was given some poisoned food by al-Qāsim the Governor of Baghdad and died as a result of eating it.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 'Abbās al-'Aqqād, *Ibn al-Rùmī*, 224.

<sup>2</sup> Abū al-'Abbās Ibn Khallikān, *Wafāyāt al A'yān*, 3, 361

## SUMMATION

1. The early 'Arab biographers and writers on literary history have little to say about Ibn al-Rùmī.
2. Because of his poverty, and avarice, Ibn al-Rùmī composed panegyrics for any little thing, no matter how trifling.
3. His life was full of suffering.
4. He allowed his superstitions to determine his life.
5. His Dīwān is the biggest Dīwān of all early 'Arab poets.
6. No-one, either ancient or modern, has composed a commentary on his Dīwān although there do exist two different modern editions.
7. The majority of his long qasidahs begin with a Nasīb or another introduction.
8. He composed pieces in all the major genres, and in most of the metres.
9. The majority of his poetry is either panegyric or invective.
10. His poetry is generally directed at a specific individual.
11. Istiḡṣā' and Tashkhīṣ feature prominently in his compositional style.
12. He quotes from both the Qur'ān and from Jāhīlī poetry in some qasidahs.
13. The rhyme - word often reveals the poetic technique known as luzūm mā lam yulzam, later to be perfected by al-Ma'ārrī.

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