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Mirza Ghalib's masnavi "Surma-i binish" as tatabbu (following) to the Mevlana Rumi's introduction to Masnavi

Natalia Prigarina | Russia

THE prominent Indian scholar Shamsur Rahman Faruqi wrote: "Indians consider themselves not only expert Persian researchers, scholars and lexicographers. They have also critical sense, and are major poets in their own right. They regard competent Indians as having equal rights with the Iranians to take creative licence with the Persian language."[1] Another scholar speaking about Mirza Ghalib (1797-1869), the great Indian poet, mentions that in the nineteenth century "there is no other poet like Ghalib and Ghalib stands apart from all poets".[2] Ghalib really stood apart from all poets of his time. Being famous as a poet of Urdu, Ghalib wrote 10 times more in Persian, and he was really proud of this poetry.

The tradition of Persian literature has never been interrupted in India since the eleventh century. In Ghalib's time the practice of writing poetry in Persian was still alive and appreciated in *musha'ira's*, poetic gatherings, and *darbars*, though in 1835 Persian as an official language was substituted by Hindustani.

Ghalib was an unsurpassed connoisseur of Persian classic (10–15 centuries) and post classical (16–18 centuries) poetry which was, so to say, 'dissolved' in his every line. Ghalib's Persian Kulliyyat includes 11 Masnavis of different length.[3] Though they were written at different times, placed together as present-

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[1] Shamsur Rahman Faruqi. Unprivileged Power: The Strange Case of Persian (and Urdu) in Nineteenth-Century India. – The Annual of Urdu Studies, November 13, 1998. Editor Muhammad Umar Memon, Associate Editor: G.A.Shaussee. Center for South Asia University of Wiskonsin – Madison, p.20.

[2] Ahmed Ali: The problem of style and technique in Ghalib. *Five Essays. Pakistan American Culture Center, Karachi, 1970, p. 2.*

[3] Kulliyyat-i Farsi-yi Mirza Ghalib. Nashir: Muhammad Ali Shaikh. Lahore, 1965, pp. 95-206.

ed in the Kulliyyat, they form a certain unity of context most of all due to the personality of the poetic narrator. This can be compared to Rumi's *Masnavi-ye Ma'navi*, which was also created over a long period of time and was generally characterized by the lack of unity of subject.[4] However R. Nicholson felt that there was "an underlying order and integration, although he never, in fact, showed what it was".[5]

Ghalib's Masnaviyat opens by a rather small poem entitled *Surma-i binish (The Remedy for Eyesight)* consisting of 50 bayts.[6] Its imagery and style are inspired by the Rumi's Introduction to the *Masnavi-i Ma'navi,* usually referred to as *Nay-nama.*

According to Erkan Türkmen, the first 18 lines of Rumi's Introduction serve as a kind of a layout for the rest of *Mathnavi-ye Ma'navi.*[7] *Surma-i binish* is to a certain extent opposed to at least 8 of the rest of 10 Masnavis.[8] Discussing the mystical concept, and, as we shall see, a kind of mystic experience, it stays apart from his most remarkable Masnavis to which the praise of Reason – "The only Lamp in the darkness of night" – is peculiar.[9] At the same time being created in the 19th century by the acknowledged master and expert of poetic convention and religious traditions it is of paramount interest for the history of literature and thought of the Subcontinent.

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[4] "The book is not built according to a system; it lacks architectural structure; the verses lead one into the other, and the most heterogeneous thoughts are woven together by word associations and loose thread of stories". Annemarie Schimmel. The Triumphal Sun. A Study of the Works of Jalaloddin Rumi. State University of New York Press, 1993, p. 35.

[5] S. Weightman. Structure of the Mathnawi.// Rumi's Thoughts. Edited by Seyed G. Safavi. Institute of Islamic Studies Affiliated to Islamic Centre of England. 2003, p.9. Modern study asserts that there exist different levels of organisation of the text, and "each book similarly organises the discourses into a highly rational and intricate structure which reveals the rationale of each book". Ibid., Chapter one.The Structure and Methodology of Mathnawi, p. 10..

[6] Kulliyyat-i Farsi-yi Mirza Ghalib, pp. 95-97.

[7] Dr. Erkan Türkmen. The Essence of Rumi's Masnevi. Including his Life and Works.Seljuk University, Konya, Turkey. 1992 Chapter IV. The first eighteen Verses of Rumi's Masnevi. Pp. 63-73.

[8] The two Masnavis are dedicated to Eid celebration and are written according the request of the Court (Darbar) traditions.

[9] "It does not require any deep thinking to understand and recognize the conventional treatment of mysticism at Ghalib's hands. His poetry on such occasions, falls short of the usual heights of its intellectual level and shrinks down into hackneyd symbols and poor expressions. His first masnawi *Surma-i Binish* may be taken as an example". Waris Kirmani. Evaluation of Ghalib's Persian Poetry.The Aligarh Muslim University Press, Aligarh (India), 1972, p. 76.

This assertion asks for a more careful comparative study of these two works. The "Nay-nama" contains 34 lines[10] (sometimes 35),[11] which split into two discourses: the laments of nay (reed, flute) and the voice of a poetic narrator.[12] The first line:

بشنو این نی چون شکایت می کند
از جداییها حکایت می کند

"Listen to the reed how it tells a tale, complaining of separations –",[13] belongs to the poetic narrator, the next 7 lines are obviously articulated by the nay, which laments about the pains of separation from Friend. Being parted from the reedbed, it makes people "moan" (bayt 2) ; it is eager to find a suffering heart so that to obtain a confidant (bayt 3) ; it seeks to return to its roots (*asl*) (bayt 4), at the same time it feels akin to both the unhappy and those who are in good mood (bayt 5).

An important place in nay's lamentations belongs to the concept of secret (*sirr*): it is concealed in the nay's moans, but it is difficult to comprehend. First of all, it is *within* nay, *not far* from his *plaint.* But to distinguish it is as impossible as to see *soul* inside *body* (bayts 6 - 7). After that the poetic narrator's discourse takes place. The following clause deals with the description of nay's qualities (baits 9-14) ; the explanation of the ardour of the flute's cry is that inside this reed is not air (*bād*) but fire (*ātash*). It also gives a hint to the power of Love. The poetic narrator speaks about the meaning of Path and Love, and explains the importance and necessity of being ripe spiritually as a condition of becoming aware of the secrets of Unity. This is the crucial point of the Introduction (the famous 18-th bayt). Students of Rumi's thought and poetry would find in this part the quintessence of Masnavi according to their goal, as Rumi put it in above mentioned bayt 6.

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[10] Masnavi-ye ma'navi. Bar asās-e noskhe-ye Qunie. Be tashîh va pishgoftār-e 'Abd al-Karim Sorūsh. Tihran, 1377. P.6

[11] Reynold Nicholson. The Masnavi of Jalaluddin Rumi.Vol.2.London. Messrs. Luzak & Co, 1926. Pp.5-6.

[12] About interaction of the voices of narrator and *nay* see: Papan-Matin, Firoozeh. The Crisis of Identity in Rumi's *Tale of the Reed.*Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East. 23:1&2 (2003).P.248.

[13] Here and henceforth all quotations from the Nay-nama are cited as Nicholson's translation.

هر کسی از ظن خود شد یار من
از درون من نجست اسرار من

"Every one became my friend from his own opinion; none sought out my secrets from within me".

As for the last 16 bayts, they are sometimes interpreted as a didactical part of Nay-nama,[14] in the meantime I'd like to call it rather doctrinal, because it explains the steps on the Path. To move along the Path means to obtain freedom from mundane temptations, to be content with small mercies (*qanāat*), to amalgamate with the ocean and become a jewel, to "purge of covetousness and all defect" by the force of Love. Since the secret was inside, or within nay, and people's "ear and eye lack the light (whereby it should be apprehended) ", it leads to a kind of Lover's dumbness, despite his intention to proclaim the secret of Love.[15]

After that the power of Love is described, and the situation of Union (the urge to join the lips of the Beloved) would allow the Lover to tell "all that may be told" *like the reed*, and to overcome his dumbness (bayt 28). But the heart of Lover who is separated from his Friend is an obstacle to happiness, because it is closed to the light of love, like a mirror covered by rust. The cleaning of heart from grievances and sorrow might change the situation, transforming separation into Union.

To reiterate, the structure of Nay-nama consists of three parts: introduction, longing for Love, and steps to weather the Way; and some of its important concepts are fire in the reed (e. g. the Lover's soul), impossibility to express Lover's feelings as a kind of dumbness, secret (*sirr, asrār*). What is remarkable, the Nay-nama is permeated with the appeals to friend and confidant (*sīna, juft, harīf, mahram, damsāz, hamrāh*). The important notion is cleanness of heart, lack of which at the moment makes the Union impossible.

Now let us dwell on Mirza Ghalib's masnavi *Surma-i binish*. It is obvious from different details that Ghalib's masnavi is a *tatabbu'* – following to the Rumi's

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[14] Cf. Papan-Matin. Op.cit. P. 248.

[15] Compare to Zarrinkub's line dedicated to the impossibility of expression without intermediary help: "In that way I expressed the secret of nay without tongue // for who'll become the mouthpiece of nay's secret?"

گفتم اینک سر نی را بی زبان
تا که گردد سر نی را ترجمان

Zerrînkûb, "Bā Mevlānā-yı Rûm", Sırr-ı Ney, s.63.

بشنو این نی چون شکایت می کند
از جداییها حکایت می کند

Nay-nama; an epigraph to *Surma-i binish* has two opening lines of Nay-nama:

It has the same bahr (meter) as Rumi's Masnavi (ramal-i musaddas-i makhzūf), and begins with the bait: Man na-yam kaz khud hikāyat mīkunam // Az dam-i mardī rivāyat mīkunam – "I'm the reed speaking about myself // I set out in writing all about one Man". (The first line may be read as: "I'm not [that one] who tells stories about himself".)

Mystical masnavi often contains a record of a conversation between the Sufi master and a disciple.[16] In Nay-nama the presence of a spiritual master is implicit – some scholars believe that the Introduction depicts the sufferings of the author being separated from Shams; Shams was considered to be his Master.[17] Masnavi *Surma-i binish* plainly represents a conversation of the spiritual leader with his disciples.

Annemarie Schimmel would testify that the "Rumi's work had its largest influence in the Indo-Pakistan Subkontinent".[18] It is true not only for the mediaeval India, but for the modern one as well. The last champion of the Persian poetry on Subcontinent was the poet of the East 'Allama Muhammad Iqbal (1877-1938). He was the greatest admirer of Rumi, and regarded him as his spiritual leader. At the same time he gave a new life to Rumi's popularity in his country. A. Schimmel wrote: "However the ingenious interpretation of Rumi by Iqbal was unsurpassed".[19] Ghalib's poetry played an intermediary role between mediaeval and modern thinking. Following to the Rumi's Nay-nama as a paragon, he introduces his own personal attitude to the pattern and as if slightly travesties the pathos of murid-murshid's relations and some other Rumi's concepts, motifs and ideas.

In Muslim circles of India in the first half of the19th century, the custom of Pir – Murid was kept with all piety. The Master, or Pir, could be of lower rank than his

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[16] While speaking about Ghalib's masnavis S.F.Mahmood notices: "The mathnavi is a narrative poem, but it can be used for telling moralistic tales, for discussing deep mystical problems, for even writing reviews on books..." Sayyid Fayyaz Mahmud. Ghalib. A Critical Introduction. Publication of Majlis-i-Yadgar-i-Ghalib, No. XVI. University of the Punjab. Lahore. s/a, p. 344.

[17] Annemarie Schimmel. As Through a Veil: Mystical Poetry in Islam. N.Y.: Columbia University Press, 1982, p.89; see:Papan-Matin, p.252, Notes10 and 15.

[18] Annemarie Schimmel.Mystical Dimensions of Islam. TheUniversity of North Carolina Press. Chapel Hill, 1975, p.327.

[19] Annemarie. The Triumphal Sun, p. 387.

murid as far as the social status was concerned; however, in the murid's eyes, the pir's spiritual authority was always indisputable. In Ghalib's time the entire intellectual elite of Delhi, including the last Emperor Bahadur-Shah Zafar, followed this rule.

For Mirza Ghalib, the year 1847 was one of the most difficult periods of his life.[20] Ghalib was accused of gambling and imprisoned for three months. After release from the jail Mirza Ghalib, who didn't have his own house, took up residence, along with his wife and household servants, in the house of Nasireddin Kale Miyan Saheb (Kale Shah). As fate would have it, Kale Shah, who had given refuge to Ghalib's family, turned out to be the Pir or Spiritual guide, of Bahadur Shah Zafar himself. Kale Miyan made use of his spiritual authority, due to which Bahadur Shah invited the great poet to court.[21] Later on in 1850, Ghalib obtained there a post of a historiographer of the Mughal Dynasty, and thus improved his financial state. In 1854, he became Bahadur Shah's ustad as a poet, instead of Zauq who passed away. Probably in acknowledgement of these changes in his life, Ghalib, who would never claim anybody his Shaikh or spiritual leader except of late poets like Zuhuri, would announce himself the disciple of Bahadur-Shah in Masnavi *Surma-i binish.* Ghalib's connection with the Mughal court lasted until the Mutiny (1857-59). After the Mutiny, Bahadur-Shah was exiled to Burma (Myanma).

Surma-i binish combines the features of masnavi as a conversation of *pir* with *murids* and those of panegyric or eulogy to Bahadur Shah.[22]

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[20] More detailed see: Rulf Russel and Khurshidul Islam. Ghalib 1797-1869. Volume I: Life and Letters. London, George Allen and Unwin LTD, 1969, pp. 66-70; Natalia Prigarina. Mirza Ghalib: A Creative Biography. Translated from the Russian by M. Osamma Faruqi. OUP, second impression 2001, "Prison Elegy", pp. 234-253.

[21] It was not an easy task, becouse there have been old tensions between the poet and the Emperor due to many reasons. Among them there was a "wrong choice" of Ghalib, who declared his sympathy towards prince Salim, another candidate for the throne. "When Ghalib made his first approaches (to the Mughal Court. – *N.P.*) in 1834 Akbar-Shah II was King, and his son Zafar the heir-apparent. But Ghalib knew that the King was anxious to get another son, Salim, recognized as his successor, and was negotiating with the British to this end. Ghalib calculated that his own interests lay in the same direction, for Zafar had already made Zauq, a rival poet of Ghalib's, his ustad; and in an ode to Akbar Shah he therefore went out of his way to sing the praises of Salim as well". Ralf Russel and Khurshidul Islam. Ghalib. Life and Letters, pp. 63-64.

[22] Waris Kirmani remarks about the merits of *Surma-i Binish*: "Written in imitation of the great masnawi of the Mawlawi, it is devoted exclusively to the-mystical and saintly qualities of Bahadur Shah Zafar. The poem is shallow and unpleasing and harps on the spiritual qualities that the King never possessed. He is depicted as instructing his disciples the method of divine love through the dead symbols...". Waris Kirmani. Evaluation of Ghalib's Persian Poetry, p.76.

The composition of this masnavi reflects the composition of Nay-nama; it also has parts of introduction, exposition of the Sufi doctrine, and its interpretation. From the beginning, Ustad (Master) is presented as "Man of Path", that is, *'ārif*. Those who want to learn the "Secret of Existence" from him have to cling to his lap, and to recognize him as Guide (*rāhbar*). And the poet himself, under the influence of his mercifulness, will make his pen moan like a flute. The moan of the flute is 'going by the way of people's breath', and it knows the harmony and the *secret*. And if the poet devotes himself to the melodies of Truth he has to be empty of himself (*az khud tāhī)* like the reed, or flute. The Master's teaching is associated implicitly with playing the flute. When he plays, the flute becomes similiar to the sprout "which brings the fruit of Shibli",[23] and as far as Shibli speaks from mimbar, Ustad speaks from the throne. Shah and darvesh are the same and not contrasted as usual, and shah practices self-restriction like Ibrahim Adham.[24] When the Master sees his disciples, he starts speaking about *'irfān* (bayts 25-27). He begins his sermon by the parable of meeting with Friend. If one seeks a meeting with the Friend first of all he has to prepare his house for it, says he. He must *clean* it and throw away rubbish, and put on some clean garments.[25] When he sees him/her, he has to rush towards the Beloved. The Loving person loses himself, and only the Beloved remains; the shadows go away, only the Sun remains. Only Beloved remains, and neither soul nor body remain, and neither longing for meeting, nor grievance of separation are left. The soul *cleans* itself from all dirty and dark, *a drop becomes Ocean* (bayts 29-40). After this the Master explains the meaning of the secret. The secret is: to keep the honor of the Shari'at. To weep (*ruftan*) the dwelling and throw the rubbish means negation of all, which is "apart from It". So from here onwards, the consequent steps are interpreted (bayts 45-47):

> Lover going towards his Friend"//The meaning is – deleting his own traces.
> When a free quickly moving Wayfarer //Reaches this place, his travel is over.

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[23] A famous Sufi of Baghdad, d.in 945-6

[24] A famous Sufi of Khorasan, d. in 904.

[25] Home (*khāna*) as a symbol of heart in which the Deity could dwell is mentioned, for example, in the dictionary of Sufi terms "Mir'at al-ushshaq", published by Eugeniy Bertel's; the dictionary entry *khāna* contains the following bayt as an example: "Go and sweep the home of heart // Make ready the place and dwelling for the Beloved". *(Birau tu khāna-i dil rāfurū rūb // muhayyā kun maqām –u jā-yi mahbūb).*Bertel's E. Sufizm i sufiyskaya literatura. Moscow, 1965, p. 147.

There is nobody after God but God //This is the secret of Eternity (*baqā*) after Perishability (*fanā*).

The Masnavi is concluded by three following baits (48-50):

Ghalib, dont speak much about the secret you told, //Dont smash the Cup of the world by stone. (e. g. don't divulge the secret of Love).

The secret of Unity (*rāz-i vahdat*) doesn't endure wording: // It's impossible to find words for the letter of Truth.

Let the poem finish by the prayer about Shah// Let Padshah be there until the God exists!

The style and the main motifs of the poem in general reflect the Rumi's Introduction as well as some fundamental ideas of *Masnavi-i Ma'navi*. Mirza Ghalib develops such motifs of Nay-nama like nay and its melodies, like beloved Friend, like self-rejection, spiritual Guide, secret of Unity etc., and presents a poem full of allusions to his great predecessor but still original. Ghalib's *Surma-i binish* discusses the subtleties of Unity (Wahdat). This subject can be compared to the main motto of the whole of Rumi's Masnavi which following Rumi could be referred to as "The shop of Unity" [M 6: 1528] or as Janis Eshots puts it "The Shop of Oneness".[26]

Here we would touch the problem which essentially arises from the commentary of Furuzanfar to the first line of Masnavi. It concerns the notion of the inner state of nay. Foruzanfar's commentary is the following: "The first line gives a hint to the Hadis-i Nabavi: «the believer is similar to a pipe. Its sound is not good until it is hollow»".[27]

As far as this statement seems disputable for Nay-nama, it is very important for Ghalib's poem. In Nay-nama, the hint to hollowness of the reed could be considered only implicitly in the bayt 9 about *fire* (and *not air or wind*) inside the reed (which is not exactly hollowness). This gives Firuzeh Papan-Matin a reason for the following judgment: "the fire of love <... > fills the *hollow* reed with new meaning" (italics mine. – *N. P.)*.[28]

But in Nay-nama Rumi says nothing about the *hollowness* of nay. As for Masnavi in general, the idea of perfection of the soul is connected with the con-

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[26] See: Annemarie Schimmel. Mystical Dimentions of Islam, p.316; Janis Eshots. Why is the "Mathnawi" called "the Shop of Oneness": Reflections of Rumi's Methodology. // Rumi's Thoughts. Edited by Seyed G. Safavi., pp. 71-84.

[27] Badi' az-Zamān Furūzanfar. Sharh-i Mathnawi-yi Sharif, Tehran, 2001, Vol. I, p. 6.

[28] Papan-Matin, p. 250.

cept of inner purity. Rumi defines the main goal of ascetic behavior as the struggle with one's lower ego (*khudi, khwīsi*), rejection and self-abnegation.[29] As a first step on the way towards the state of Perfect Lover is to get rid of the low self (*nafs-i 'ammara*) that is referred to as *az khud rastan* [M 3:837] and *kh^{w}īsh ra safī kardan* [M 1:3460], to be free, to save oneself from his lower ego; to make oneself's ego clean, that is, to wipe out those traits which conceal the Real Ego of a person (*zāt-i pāk-i sāf-i khud*).

In his masnavi Ghalib uses the expression az khud tāhī būdan (syn. az khud khāli būdan) explicitly when speaking about nay: bar navā-yi rāz-i haqq gar dil nihī //bāyadat chun nay zi khud būdan tahī ("If you give your heart to the melody of the secret of Truth // you have to be hollow of yourself like nay"). If we look for the same expression in Rumi's Masnavi, we shall find one line containing phrase az khud tahī shudan in [M 6:3338].[30] To be exact, the unique mentioning of the motif az khud tahī shudan (to be hollow of one's self) related to nay can be found in Divan-i Shams, ghazal 3001.[31]

The motif of the total hollowness of a personality (*khud*)[32] is found mostly in later poetry.[33] In his masnavi Ghalib expressed the idea that only the flute (that is, Poet) which is absolutely hollow (*az khud tāhī)* may transmit the voice of Truth, and in that way to avoid dumbness. It means the absolute annihilation of human self in the presence of the Beloved Friend, which is described in Ghalib's Masnavi. If Rumi bears in mind deliverance of the low ego – *nafs-i 'ammara* – so that to make the first step to reveal the Real Ego in human soul,

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[29] See Chapter "Approach to God" in:William Chittick. The Sufi Path of Love. The Spiritual Teaching of Rumi. State University of New York Press, 1983.

[30] *"Mashk bā saqqā buvad ay, muntahī //var na chun shavad pur yā tahī"*

[31] The first line of the ghazal is: ای نای بس خوش است کز اسرار آگهی ; and the mentioned motif is in the following bayt: از خود تهی شدی وز اسرار پر شدی
زیرا ز خود پرست وز انکار آگهی . Dorj 3 helps to find some instances when hollownes is attributed to nay, they are also belong to the later poets: Jami, Vahshi Bafqi, Mulla Muhsin Feiz Kashani, Saib Tabrizi, Hazin.

[32] To become hollow from self is not equal in the late poetry to achieve the state of immediate plentitude of the Union.

[33] The motif "to be hollow from self" is tracked with the help of Dorj 3; the absolute frequency of its use belongs to the poets of so called 'Sabk-i Hindi: Bedil (20 entries), Saib Tabrizi (9), Vaez Qazvini, Vahshi Bafqi, Hazin, Mulla Faiz-i Kashani. We counted only the examples using this phrase in the meaning of full denial of one's ego. Since Ghalib experienced the influence of Bedil in his early works, one can say that he used the motif in Bedil's sense. One of the most popular objects of comparison for hollownes is *hubab* (surface blowhole).

1412 Ghalib's metaphor of the cleaned house is more radical – it anticipates full annihilation of Lover in the Beloved, full loss of self, and eternal life after *fanā*. If to believe that "murid" rendered the sermon of his "pir" listening to him attentively, all these events were performed on the stage of *shari'at*, that is on the first stage of the Sufi Path,[34] (and not at the end of it).[35]

In the first decade of the 20th century Muhammad Iqbal gave these old symbols a new content. He poeticized the individuality and personality of the Perfect Self, and gave life to the concept of *khudi*, a human being full of life and creative energy; following this path Iqbal regards himself as the murid and disciple of Rumi.

Rumi and Bayazid: Hagiographical moments in the Masnavī-yi Masnavī Annabel Keeler

The subject of this paper is that shaykh-i 'ālam (shaykh of the world), sulṭān u quṭb al-'ārifīn (sultan and 'pole' of mystics), that jamāl-i mihtarī (beauty of spiritual majesty), and shīr-i farīd (peerless lion), namely Abū Yazīd al-Bisṭāmī, (more popularly known as 'Bāyazīd', or in the Turkish speaking world as Beyazīt), and his place in Mawlana Rumi's Masnavī-yi ma'navī.[36] The honorary titles I have mentioned here are only some of those which Mawlana has lavished upon the 9th century mystic of Basṭām. For example, he also describes him as 'a nimbly rising

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[34] See, for example, about traditional succession of stages *(maqāmat)* and states (*ahwāl*) of Sufi Path: Abu-l-Mufākhir Yaḥyā Bākharzi. Aurād al-aḥbāb va fuṣūṣ al-ādāb. Jeld-i duvvum "Fuṣūṣ al-ādāb". Ba kūshish-i Iraj Afshār. Tihran, 1345. pp.40-41, 50-54; about shari'at and its importance for the Path see:Shaikh Mahmud Shabistari. Gulshan-i rāz. Majmū'a-yi āṯār, ba ihtimam-i doktor Ṣamad Muvahḥid.Tiḥran, 1365, p.81, lines 346-357.

[35] Otherwise it alludes to the anecdote of Ghalib's green years, when he was engaged by his relative to prepare a fair copy of the list of saints of the order, and omitted every alternate name. 'And were are the rest?' the relative asked Mirza. "'To list these names is as good as erecting a ladder to the heavens', replied Mirza, 'but you see, if a person has a strong aspiration to reach the roof of the heavens, he can as well climb the ladder by exerting himself a bit more and setting his feet on altrnate rungs of the ladder'". N. Prigarina. Mirza Ghalib, p. 66.

[36] All references will be to R.A. Nicholson's edition of the *Masnavī-yi Maṯnavī* of Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī, published as *The Mathnawī*, ed. with translation and commentary Reynold Alleyn Nicholson, 8 vols. London, Gibb Memorial Trust, 1925-40. Translations of the verses will either be taken from Nicholson's translation with some minor amendments, or they will be my own. The honorary titles mentioned above may be found in: *Masnavī*, II, 927; III, 1702; IV, 1817; and V, 3393.

traverser of heaven' (falakpaymā-yi chust chust khīz),[37] the one in whose shirt are contained the two worlds (du 'ālam darj-i dar yak pīrhan),[38] whose guide is the guarded tablet (lawḥ maḥfūẓ),[39] and whose faith (īmān) is such that were a drop of it to enter the ocean, the ocean would be drowned in that drop:

qaṭrāī zi īmānsh dar baḥr ar ravad * baḥr andar qaṭra'ash gharqa shavad[40]

Given the nature of these epithets, it may come as no surprise to find that Rumi devotes more lines of his *Masnavī* to Bāyazīd than to any other mystic of preceding centuries. But before looking more closely at some of these citations, I should briefly say something about Bāyazīd and his impact on Sufism and Sufi literature.[41]

We have little factual information about Bāyazīd's life. It is generally accepted that he lived in the 3rd/9th century with the date of his death variously being given as 234/848 and 261/875.[42] Bāyazīd left no written works, but a

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[37] *Masnavī*, IV, 1818.

[38] *Masnavī*, IV, 2135.

[39] *Masnavī*, IV, 1851.

[40] *Masnavī*, V, 3394.

[41] Secondary sources on Bāyazīd include: M. Abdur Rabb, *The Life, Thought and Historical Importance of Abū Yazīd Bisṭāmī*, Academy for Pakistani Affairs, Dacca, 1971; A.J. Arberry, 'Bistamiana, *BSOAS*, 25/1 (1962), pp. 28-37; idem, *Revelation and Reason in Islam*, London, 1957; idem, 'A Bisṭāmī Legend', *JRAS*, (1938), pp. 89-91; R.C. Zaehner, 'Abū Yazīd of Bisṭām: a Turning Point in Islamic Mysticism', *Indo-Iranian Journal*, (1957), pp. 286-301; idem, *Hindu and Muslim Mysticism*, London, 1960; R.A. Nicholson, 'An Early Arabic Version of the Mi'rāj of Abū Yazīd al-Bisṭāmī', *Islamica* 2 (1926), pp. 402-15; H. Ritter, 'Die Aussprüche des Bāyezīd Bisṭāmī' in F. Meier, ed. *Westöstliche Abhandlungen: Rudolf Tschudi*, Wiesbaden: Otto Harassovitz, 1954, pp. 231-43; Roger Deladrière, 'Abū Yazīd al-Bisṭāmī et son Enseignement Spirituel', *Arabica*, XIV (1967), pp. 76-89; Carl Ernst, 'The Man without Attributes" Ibn 'Arabī's Interpretation of Abū Yazīd al-Bisṭāmī' *Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi Society*, XIII, (1993), pp.1-18; Pierre Lory, 'Le Mi'rāj d'Abū Yazīd Basṭāmī', in M.A. Amir-Moezzi, ed., *Le Voyage Initiatique en Terre* d'Islam, Paris/Louvain: Peters, 1996, pp. 223-237; M.R. Shafī'ī Kadkanī, *Daftar-i Rawshanā'ī*, 3rd reprint, Tehran: Kitābkhāna-yi Millī-yi Īrān, 1385, translator's introduction; 'Abd al-Rafī' Ḥaqīqat, *Sulṭān al-'ārifīn Bāyazīd-i Basṭāmī*, Tehran 1366; Annabel Keeler, 'Bāyazīd-i Bisṭāmī', in Maḥmud Reza Isfandyar, ed. *Āshināyān-i Rah-i 'ishq*, Tehran, Iran University Press, 2006, pp. 35-74; , Fāṭima Lārjavardī, 'Bāyazīd-i Bisṭāmī, *The Great Islamic Encyclopedia (Dāyarat-al-ma'ārif-i bozorg-Islāmī*, I, 313-321; Gerhard Böwering, 'Besṭāmī, Bāyazīd', *Encyclopedia Iranica*, vol. IV, pp. 183-6; 'Abbās Zaryāb Khū'ī, 'Bāyazīd-i Basṭāmī' *Dānishnāma*, ed. Ḥadād 'Ādil, vol. I, pp. 176-184; N. Pourjavady, 'Ḥallāj va Bāyazīd-i Basṭāmī az naẓar-i Mullā Ṣadrā' *'Irfān u Ishrāq*, Tehran Iran University Press, 1380, pp. 263-92.

[42] The former date is given by Abū'l-Faḍl Muḥammad b. 'Alī Sahlajī (or Sahlagī) in his *Kitāb al-nūr min kalimāt Abī Ṭayfūr*, in *Shataḥāt al-ṣūfiyya*, ed. 'A AR Badawī, Cairo 1949, p. 63, and the latter in the *Ṭabaqāt al-ṣūfiyya* of Abū 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī, ed. J. Pedersen, Leiden: brill, 1960, p. 93.

1414 large number of sayings attributed to him and stories about his life were preserved in the oral tradition, mainly by his disciples. As far as we know, these began to be written down, often with some kind of chain of transmission (*isnād*), or at least with one name as the source for each report, during the course of the 5th/11th century, in such works as the *Kitāb al-luma'* of Sarrāj and the *Kitāb al-nūr min kalimāt Abī Ṭayfūr* of Sahlajī, the latter being the most abundant source of material on Bāyazīd.[43] I shall not enter into a discussion of the question of the authenticity here, other than to say that these early works, along with the collected sayings of Abu'l-Ḥasan Kharaqānī, the *Nūr al-'ulūm*,[44] probably represent the most reliable sources for Bāyazīd, though, given the fact that they were compiled some two centuries after his death, it is unlikely that these works would be devoid of spurious material.[45] With the passage of time, this corpus of traditions about Bāyazīd became elaborated and considerably augmented, as can already be seen in the chapter on Bāyazīd in Farīd al-Dīn 'Aṭṭār's biography of the saints, the *Tadhkirat al-awliyā'* - I shall be discussing this kind of elaboration later. 'Aṭṭār's work became one of, if not the main repository in Persian of information on early mystics for later Sufi authors, including Mawlānā Rumi.[46]

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[43] The *Kitāb al-Luma' fī'l-taṣawwuf* of Abū Naṣr al-Sarrāj (d.378/998), (ed. R.A. Nicholson, Gibb Memorial Series, London: Luzac and Leiden, 1914), contains a number of reports about Bāyazid as well as some views of Bāyazīd attributed to Junayd. The *Kitāb al-nūr* (referenced in the previous footnote) constitutes the largest known collection of saying attributed to Bāyazīd and stories about him. The *Kitāb al-nūr* has been translated into Persian by M.R Shafī'ī Kadkanī, under the title *Daftar-i rawshanā'ī* (see note 6 above), and into French by Abdelwahab Meddeb as *Les Dits de Bistami*, Paris: Fayard, 1989.

[44] The collected sayings of Abu'l-Ḥasan Kharaqānī, assembled under the title *Nūr al-'ulūm*, are published in M. Mīnuwī, *Aḥwāl u aqwāl-i Shaykh Abū'l-Ḥasan Kharaqānī*, Tehran, 1359/1980. They have been translated into French by Christiane Tortel as *Paroles d'un soufi: Abû'l-Ḥasan Kharaqânî (960-1033)*, Paris, Éditions du Seuil, 1998.

[45] Other sources from around this period are: the *Ḥilyat al-awliyā'* of Abū Nu'aym al-Iṣfahānī, 10 vols. Cairo, Maktabat al-Khānjī and Maṭba'at al-sa'ādat, 1932-8; ed. Muṣṭafā 'Abd al-Qādir 'Aṭā', 11 vols with index. Beirut, Dār al-kutub al-'ilmiyya, 1997; the *Ṭabaqāt al-ṣūfiyya* of Sulamī.

[46] Farīd al-Dīn 'Aṭṭār, *Tadhkirat al-awliyā'*, ed. Muḥammad Istī'lāmī, sixth reprint, Tehran, Intishārāt-i Zawwār, 1346sh/1967-8. Partial translation by Arthur J. Arberry in *Muslim Saints and Mystics: Extracts from Attār's Tadhkirat al-auliyā'*, Persian Heritage Series. Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1966. Another important source from this period is the *Sharḥ-i shaṭḥiyyāt* of Rūzbihān Baqlī, ed. Henri Corbin, Tehran, 1966. A later source on Bāyazīd, said to have been composed in the 8th/14th century, is the *Dastūr al-jumhūr fī manāqib Sulṭān al-'ārifīn Abī Yazīd Tayfūr*, of Aḥmad b. Ḥusayn b. Shaykh Kharaqānī.

There can be little doubt that Bāyazīd was a charismatic figure during his lifetime; but he soon became, and was to remain one of the most charismatic presences in the history of Islamic mysticism and mystical philosophy. The charisma and influence of Bāyazīd was probably both renewed and strengthened in Khurasani mysticism through the spiritual connection between Abu'l-Ḥasan and Bāyazīd, which is celebrated in the fourth book of Rumi's *Masnavī*.[47]

But the impact of Bāyazīd's spiritual influence was to reach far beyond the immediate realm of Khurasani love mysticism. For one of the interesting phenomena surrounding the person of Bāyazīd is that he became a model, or what we might almost call a 'spiritual rallying point' for mystics and sages of very different persuasions. Thus in Sufi literature we find him sometimes identified as the 'Master of School of Intoxication (*ṣaḥw*), in contradistinction to Junayd, the 'Master of Sobriety' (*saḥw*).[48] At other times he is linked to Ḥallāj on account of his ecstatic utterances (*shaṭḥiyāt*) – Bāyazīd's '*Ṣubḥānī*' ('Glory to me!) often being cited alongside Ḥallāj's '*Anā'l-Ḥaqq*' ('I am the Absolute Truth or God'). Then again, we find Bāyazīd venerated by Ibn 'Arabī as an exemplar in the Way of Blame (*malāmatiyya*) – which is praise indeed from him;[49] while in a dream or vision recounted by Shihāb al-Dīn Yaḥyā Suhrawardī, Aristotle names Bāyazīd alongside Sahl al-Tustarī as being among the few true philosophers and sages.[50] In fact, there is hardly a work of Islamic mysticism that does not contain references to Bāyazīd, just as there is scarcely a work that does not include citations of Junayd or Ḥallāj – though among the more cautious Sufis there were sometimes reservations about mentioning the latter by name.

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[47] *Masnavī*, IV, 1802-1855. The link between Bāyazīd and Abu'l-Ḥasan is also recounted in 'Aṭṭār's *Tadhkirat* and this may well have been Rumi's source.

[48] As has been assumed from the discussion of the schools of intoxication and sobriety by 'Alī b. 'Uthmān Jullābī Hujwīrī in his *Kashf al-maḥjūb*, ed. V. Zhukovski, Leningrad, 1926, pp 228-30; translated by R.A. Nicholson as *Kashf al-maḥjūb: the Oldest Persian Treatise on Sufism*, London, Gibb Memorial Trust, 1911, pp. 184-9. For a discussion of the attribution of intoxication to Bāyazīd to and of sobriety to Junayd see Terry Graham, 'Abū Sa'īd ibn Abī'l-Khayr and the School of Khurāsān', in L. Lewisohn, ed., *Classical Persian Sufism*, pp. 107ff; Javid Mojaddedi, *The Biographical Tradition in Sufism*, London, Curzon, 2001), pp. 133-4.

[49] Ibn 'Arabī designates Bāyazīd as one of Malāmatiyya in his *Futūḥāt Makkiyya*, Cairo, 1911, III, 36. According to William Chittick (*Sufi path of Knoweldge*, SUNY, 1989, p. 314) Ibn 'Arabī describes the *malāmatiyya* as 'perfect gnostics'.

[50] Shihāb al-Dīn Yaḥyā Suhrawardī, *Kitāb al-talwīḥāt*, ed. H. Corbin, Opera Metaphysica et Mystica, Istanbul, 1945, vol. 1, p. 74.

However, I would suggest that there is an interesting difference in the way that these mystics are cited in the works of Sufism – I am not speaking about influence here, but in the way these three (Junayd, Ḥallāj and Bāyazīd) are directly or indirectly cited. With Junayd, we find that it is most often his sayings that are quoted, either to encapsulate or explain some aspect of mystical doctrine. With Ḥallāj, we sometimes come across quotations from his poetry, but most often it is his '*Anā'l-Ḥaqq*' that is referred to, and this latter is used either to furnish an illustration of when the mystic is in a state of annihilation from self (*fanā'*), so that God speaks through him, or to provide the warning that Ḥallāj's martyrdom was a result of his saying what should not have been said at all, or at least, should not have been said in the presence of the uninitiated. Ḥallāj also becomes a model or archetype of the person who makes the ultimate sacrifice for the love of God. What is different about citations of Bāyazīd, however, is that they comprise, on the one hand, a wide variety of sayings – not just his '*Ṣubḥānī*', but also his '*hal min mazīd?*', representing his insatiable longing for God;[51] his finding himself to have the *zunnār* or polytheists' girdle around his waist; [52] his saying that he has doffed his *nafs* as a snake sloughs off its skin,[53] and his divorcing the world three times,[54] to name but a few. These sayings have become almost emblematic in Sufism; they are motifs and metaphors that are visited and revisited in Sufi literature. On the other hand, citations of Bāyazīd also include a great number of anecdotes, depicting Bāyazīd in a wide variety of situations and at different times in his life and stages in his spiritual journey.

We find this same diversity in citations of Bāyazīd in Mawlānā Rumi's *Masnavī*, which brings me now to the main topic of my paper. In looking at the way that Bāyazīd is featured in the *Masnavī-yi ma'navī*, I shall begin by saying something about the extent to which Bāyazīd appears in this work, and the different ways in which he is cited, briefly considering reasons for Rumi's veneration of

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[51] Cited by Abū Nu'aym al-Iṣfahānī in his *Ḥilyat al-awliyā'*, X, 40. We find Rumi referring to the 'hal min mazīd' saying, which Bāyazīd apparently appropriated from Sura 50 vs. 30 in the Qur'an, not only in the *Masnavi*, but also on numerous occasions in the *Dīvān-i Shams*.

[52] Cited in Sahlagī, *Kitāb al-nūr*, p.74, Qushayrī, *Al-Risāla al-Qushayriyya fī 'ilm al-taṣawwuf*, Cairo, Dār al-kutub al-ḥadītha, 1966, p. 265, and in 'Aṭṭār's *Tadhkirat*, p. 165.

[53] *Kitāb al-Nūr*, p. 151.

[54] Cited in *Ḥilyat al-awliyā'*, X, 36 and in the *Kitāb al-Nūr*, pp. 67, 95 and 99.

Bāyazīd. I shall then look more closely at the way Rumi presents two anecdotes in the *Masnavī*, observing the context in which he has placed them, showing how he has developed the material that he has drawn from the different sources, seeing how this throws new light upon the stories, and considering ways in which the image of Bāyazīd presented in the *Masnavī* is in harmony with the some of the predominant teachings of Rumi in this work. Lastly I shall consider what implications Rumi's dynamic retelling of these stories has for our understanding of Sufi hagiography.

Altogether there are in the region of 300 lines (that is, 150 *bayts*) devoted to Bāyazīd in the *Masnavī*, and these include: some that mention his name, some that are direct quotations of sayings attributed to him, some that are obvious allusions to sayings attributed to him, and five anecdotes about him.[55] Rumi's love and reverence for Bāyazīd is interestingly at variance with the ambivalent, often critical view of him presented in the *Maqālāt* of Shams-i Tabrīz.[56] While the reasons for Shams' apparent disapproval of Bāyazīd are not clear, it is possible to surmise some of the reasons for the great love and respect that Rumi shows for him in his *Masnavī*. To begin with, Bāyazīd epitomised the way of love and intoxication which is so central to Mawlana's teachings. But Bāyazīd was also known as an uncompromising mystic, a figure of immense spiritual power yet humility, and one who had become freed of his own attributes and who could therefore become a model of the perfected mystic. There is also the fact that Bāyazīd, like Rumi, was a lover of paradox as a mode of spiritual expression.[57]

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[55] One or two of the sayings attributed to Bāyazād by Rumi have elsewhere been cited from other mystics. For example, in Book 5, the title preceding line 1683, there is a saying attributed to Bāyazīd, that actually appears to derive from the commentary of Sahl al-Tustarī, quoted from Abū Bakr al-Sijzī under Qur'ān, 15:3. Another example will be discussed below. I have not included in this number lines which contain more tentative allusions to sayings of Bāyazīd suggested in Nicholson's commentary on the *Masnavī*.

[56] See, for example, *Maqālāt-i Shams-i Tabrīz*, ed. Moḥammad 'Alī Movahhed, Tehran, 1369, pp. 94-5, 106, 117, 229-30, 275 and 369. Some of these sayings may be found translated in William Chittick, *Me and Rumi*, Louisville, Kentucky: Fons Vitae, 2004, e.g., 2.80, 2.207 and 3.24.

[57] I am using the term paradox here in its current conventional sense as a 'seemingly absurd or self-contradictory statement which ...may prove to be true' (Oxford Dictionary of English), and not specifically to denote the ecstatic utterances (*shaṭaḥāt* or *shaṭḥīyāt*). In applying the term 'paradoxe' to define the *shaṭḥīyāt* in his introduction to Rūzbihān Baqlī's *Sharḥ-i shaṭḥīyāt* Henri Corbin has reverted to an archaic usage of the term paradox, deriving the meaning *para* (outside) *doxa* (belief), hence 'apparently blasphous' or heretical. See Rūzbihān Baqlī, *Sharḥ-i Shaṭḥīyāt*, ed. Henri Corbin, Tehran, 1966, editor's introduction, pp. 7-14. Statements of Bāyazīd, such as when he heard a man say 'I wonder how a

1418 Other reasons will become evident through the material I shall be examining here, though it should be added that the reasons for Rumi's appropriation of Bāyazīd as a spiritual model par excellence would merit further study.

Given the extent of material relating to Bāyazīd in the *Masnavī*, I have chosen in this paper to leave aside individual sayings of Bāyazīd, and to confine myself to the anecdotes, which in themselves provide much food for thought. Altogether there are five stories of varying length about Bāyazīd in the *Masnavī*. The first is the story of Bāyazīd's encounter with a dervish on the way to the Ḥājj. This is to be found in Book 2 and takes up 34 *bayt*s.[58] The second anecdote about Bāyazīd in the *Masnavī* occurs in Book 3; it is only four *bayt*s long and relates how Bāyazīd attempted to discipline his lower self by refraining from drinking water for one year.[59] The third anecdote is the longest and occurs in Book 4. It relates Bāyazīd's prediction of the coming of Abu'l-Ḥasan Kharaqānī, and the spiritual link between the two mystics.[60] It is in two instalments: Bāyazīd's prediction, which followed by its coming true and the advent of Abu'l-Ḥasan, which occurs after a lengthy interlude of seventy verses or so. Altogether it takes up some 50 *bayt*s.[61] This is an important anecdote in that it gives Rumi an opportunity to illustrate the spiritual power of certain mystics, both their understand-

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man can know God and disobey Him' and responded, 'I wonder how a man can know God and worship Him'; or when he was asked 'How did you attain what you attained?' and answered, 'By nothing', are what I would describe as paradoxes; they may indeed have been *shaṭḥīyāt* but would not be susceptible to accusations of heresy in the same way that '*Subḥān-ī*' would be. For a discussion of the different translations and definitions of *shaṭḥ* see Carl Ernst, *Words of ecstacy in* Sufism, NewYork: Albany, 1985, pp. 133ff. Paradox in Rumi has been discussed by Fatimeh Keshavarz in her *Reading Mystical Lyric: the case of Jalāl al-DīnRūmī*, Columbia: University of North Carolina Press, 1998; Leili Anvar-Chenderoff, 'Du paradoxe à l'Unité: l'œuvre lyrique de Jalâl-al-dîn Rûmî' unpublished doctoral dissertation, Sorbonne Nouvelle, Université de Paris III, 1997; and more recently by Muḥammad Isa Waley, in his paper 'In Search of Inner Meaning: Paradox and Oxymoron in the Divan poetry of Rumi', presented at the 'Wondrous Words' Conference, London September 2007.

[58] *Masnavī*, II, 2218-2252.

[59] *Masnavī*, III, 1699-1701.

[60] Since Rumi has four couplets which mention Uways Qaranī in the midst of this story, it is possible that he was implying that the connection was an example what we now refer to as an 'Uwaysī' spiritual link between the two mystics, that is, one which occurs over great distances and periods of time through the *ālam al-arwāḥ* (world of spirits). However, Rumi does not use the term Uwaysī, but simply makes a comparison between the Prophet's receiving the scent of Uways from Yemen and Bāyazīd's being able to perceive the scent of Abu'l-Ḥasan. '

[61] *Masnavī*, IV, 1802-55 and 1925-34.

ing of unseen things that are beyond the realm of space and time, and also the charismatic influence of great shaykhs that continues on after their death.[62] The fourth anecdote, again a long one, comes soon afterwards in Book 4, and relates Bāyazīd's disciples' lack of understanding towards his ecstatic utterances, and a miraculous incident that occurs as a result. This story takes up some 43 *bayt*s.[63] The fifth anecdote, related in Book 5, tells the story of a Zoroastrian who, when asked if he will become a Muslim, states that if that faith is the same as held by Bāyazīd, he would not be able to bear it, whereas if it is the faith of the person who is speaking to him, he has no desire for it anyway. This provides an opportunity for Rumi to describe the model of true faith, and upbraid his listeners for falling short of it, which is why no one is attracted to it. This anecdote is related in two instalments with an intervening story, and takes up in all 29 *bayt*s.[64]

Looking overall at these five anecdotes, it is interesting to note that they depict Bāyazīd in various different roles: firstly that of a *murīd*, a spiritual aspirant seeking and deriving knowledge from spiritual masters (this will become clear in the discussion below) ; secondly he is seen in the process of *riyāḍat,* rigorously disciplining his lower self – in this case, depriving it of water; thirdly and fourthly we have two miraculous incidents revealing his power as a spiritual master and his transcendent knowledge, and lastly, in the story of the Zoroastrian, we can see how Bāyazīd is viewed from the standpoint of a non-Muslim, in other words, here we can see the outreach of Muslim/Sufi spirituality to the other communities – something which must have been a concern to Mawlana in the cosmopolitan society of Anatolia of his period.

Of these five anecdotes, I shall examine two in detail, beginning with the first that was outlined above, namely the story of Bāyazīd's encounter with a dervish on his way to make the pilgrimage. In the earliest sources (Sahlajī's *Kitāb al-nūr* and 'Aṭṭār's *Tadhkirat al-awliyā*'), the story runs like this:

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[62] Jawid Mojaddedi, in a recent paper presented at the the 'Wondrous Words' Conference, London September 2007, entitled 'Mawlana and his Predecessors' notes that in this anecdote much more attention is paid to Bāyazīd's prediction of the coming of Abu'l-Ḥasan that to Abu'l-Ḥasan's receiving guidance from him, and this, Mojaddedi suggests, is because Rumi wishes to emphasize through this anecdote Bāyazīd's ability to receive divine inspiration.

[63] *Masnavī*, IV, 2102-2153.

[64] *Masnavī*, V, 3356-3363.

Bāyazīd has set out on the journey to make the pilgrimage to Mecca. On the way, he encounters a dervish, who asks him where he is going. Bāyazīd replies that he is on his way to the Ḥājj, whereupon the dervish asks him, 'How much money do you have as your provision for the journey?' and Bāyazīd replies, '200 dirhams'. The dervish then tells him, 'Give the money to me, circumambulate me seven times and let that be your Hajj'. Bāyazīd does just this.[65]

Now this same story appears in the *Maqālāt* of Shams-i Tabrīz, but with a few interesting additions.[66] Shams informs us to begin with that Bāyazīd's custom was that whenever he entered a city he would first go and visit the shaykhs, and then carry out his other business. Shams further relates that this incident took place in Basra, when Bāyazīd went to the service of a dervish – hence in Shams' version this is not a chance encounter. Then the story continues more or less as in the other versions. However, it ends with the dervish giving a form of spiritual explanation for what he had commanded Bāyazīd to do. He says, 'That is God's house and this heart of mine is God's house. But by that God who is the Lord of that house and the Lord of this house, from the moment they built that house, He's never gone inside, and from the moment they built this house He's never left.'

These details that appear in Shams' version of the story are incorporated into Rumi's narration of the anecdote – perhaps his source was Shams' version, or perhaps they were drawing the story from a common source in the oral tradition which differed from 'Aṭṭār's version. In fact we can say that the beginning which Shams (or the other unknown source) had added provided Rumi with just the pretext he needed to introduce the story; for the immediate context of the anecdote is Rumi's recommendation that we should seek the company of, and be close to spiritual people, those whom he often describes as kings:

> sāya-yi shāhān ṭalab har dam shitāb * tā shavi z'ān sāya bihtar z'āftāb
> Hasten every moment to seek [to be in] the shadow of kings
> That you might through that shadow become brighter than the sun.[67]

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[65] The story may be found in Sahlajī's *Kitāb al-nūr*, p. 128, and in 'Aṭṭār's *Tadhkira al-awliyā'*, pp. 55-6.

[66] *Maqālāt*, p. 264, translated by Chittick in *Me and Rumi*, 2. 203. Interestingly this is one of the few uncritical accounts of Bāyazīd in the *Maqālāt*.

[67] *Masnavī*, II, 2216. The Persian would translate more literally as 'better than the sun'.

Thus, Rumi tells us, whatever we do, wherever we go, it should be with the intention of seeking out one of those kings, and we should not find ourselves unaware of a potential Khiḍr. So, of course, Bāyazīd is here the model; he was on his way to Mecca in order to make the 'Umra and Hajj. And as was his custom, he sought out the 'dear' or 'precious' ones:

ū bi-har shahrī kih raftī az nakhust * mar 'azīzān-rā bikardī bāz just[68]

And to emphasize the earnestness with which Bāyazīd carried out the quest, Rumi adds another couplet along the same lines, informing us that he would look to see who in that town was 'supported by the pillars of spiritual vision':

gird mī-gashtī kih andar shahr kīst * kū bar arkān-i baṣīrat muttakīst[69]

There follows a brief interlude in which Rumi, now directly addressing his audience, emphasizes the importance of finding a 'man' (*mard*), that is to say a *javānmard*, a person of spiritual courage on the Sufi way.[70] In fact, he points out that this is something that God has told us to do:

guft Ḥaqq: andar safar har jā ravī * bāyad awwal ṭālib-i mardī shavī
God has said, 'Wherever you go on your travels
You must first of all seek out a 'man'[71]
and again, emphasizing that we should find one who is a 'man' he urges:
mard mījū, mard mījū, mardumī
Seek a man, seek a man who is truly a human being![72]

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[68] *Masnavī*, II, 2219.

[69] *Masnavī*, II, 2220.

[70] A term derived from the teachings of the 'School of Blame', and the word *javānmardī* is a Persian equivalent to *futuwwa*, which would both translate literally as 'youngmanliness'. I have elsewhere argued that the words *mard* and *mardī* are often used synonymously with *javānmard* and *javānmardī* respectively, and not as equivalent to another technical term, *muruwwa* manliness. See A Keeler, *Sufi Hermeneutics: the Qur'an Commentary of Rashīd al-Dīn Maybudī*, pp. 168–72 and 181, n. 133.

[71] *Masnavī*, II, 2222.

[72] *Masnavī*, II, 2224.

Perhaps ironically in the context of the story, in order to explain that we should look for the kernel of the matter, not the husk, the wheat and not the chaff, Rumi advises us that we should make the intention of performing the Hajj, thereby, we shall end up seeing Mecca.

Resuming the story after these exhortations to his audience, Rumi tells us that Bāyazīd was searching a great deal in order that he might find the Khiḍr of his age, until he saw a *pīr*, in stature like the new moon, (that is, bent over with age, but luminous), and he saw that this *pīr* had both spiritual radiance and spoke as the 'men' do:

dīd pīrī bā qadī hamchūn hilāl * dīd dar vay farr u guftār-i rijāl[73]

Moreover this shaykh, though blind, had the ability to see the other world:

dīda nābīnā u dil chūn āftāb
hamchu pīlī dīda Hindustān ba-khwāb
While his eyes were sightless, his heart was [illumined] like the sun
He was like an elephant who had seen India in his dream.[74]

The metaphor of the elephant dreaming of India here suggests the principle of the *ney* longing for its homeland, and the metaphor also provides Rumi with the occasion for an observation regarding those who only dream when asleep, and those who dream in the waking state: one who is awake and dreams fair dreams is a mystic or true knower of God (*'ārif*) ; we should smear our eyes with his dust. It is only at this point (after 19 couplets) that we come to the dialogue between the dervish and Bāyazīd, which in itself is more or less straightforward, except that Rumi has the dervish point out, with a nice play on words, that by making his Hajj in this way, Bāyazīd will not only have accomplished the rites of the pilgrimage, but also attained eternal life and purified his soul:

'Umra kardī, 'umr-i bāqī yāftī * ṣāf gashtī bar Ṣafā bishtāftī[75]

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[73] *Masnavī*, II, 2232.
[74] *Masnavī*, II, 2233.
[75] *Masnavī*, II, 2243.

The subsequent oath made by the dervish is even stronger in Rumi's than in Shams' version of the anecdote, so that he swears by God that 'God has chosen him (the dervish) above His holy house':

ḥaqq-i ān Ḥaqqī kih jānat dīda ast * kih marā bar bayt-i khwad bigzīda ast[76]

Then, however, perhaps in order that he might not appear to belittle the Ka'ba, Rumi has the dervish add a comment which allows him (Rumi) to employ the 'that house and this house' play on words that had been used by Shams:

Ka'ba har chandī kih khāna'ī birr-i ūst * khilqat-i man nīz khāna'ī sirr-i ūst[77]

Though the Ka'ba is the house of His piety,
My created being is the house of His Secret[78]

Rumi also adds the dervish's claim that is given in Shams' version of story, with some minor variations:

tā bikard ān Ka'ba-rā dar way naraft * v'andarīn khāna bi-juz ān Ḥayy naraft

Since He made that Ka'ba He's not entered it
But into this house none has entered save the Ever-Living [God][79]

The subtle differences between Rumi's and Shams' versions are firstly, that Rumi suggests that God built or 'made' the Ka'ba – and note, Rumi speaks directly of the Ka'ba; secondly, instead of saying that God has never left the house of his heart, Rumi has the dervish say that nothing other than God has been inside it, which is somewhat stronger. Rumi also develops his explanation of this idea, perhaps in an apologetic sort of way, so that the dervish adds: 'By seeing me you have seen God, and you have circumambulated the true Ka'ba (or Ka'ba of truth or sincerity).

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[76] *Masnavī*, II, 2244.

[77] The *a'ī* of *khāna'ī* being elided to form a single long consonant to comply with the metre.

[78] *Masnavī*, II, 2245.

[79] *Masnavī*, II, 2246.

1424 chūn marā dīdī Khudā-rā dīda'ī * gird-i Ka'ba'ī ṣidq bar gardīda'ī[80]

In this way, Rumi is able to introduce his teaching that God is reflected in the perfected saint. Thus, to serve him is to serve God, though he adds the caveat that Bāyazīd should not consider him to be separate from God.

khidmat-i man ṭā'at u ḥamd-i Khudāst * tā napindārī kih Ḥaqq az man judāst

To serve me is to obey and praise God -
Lest you think that God is separate from me.[81]

To emphasize this point, Rumi expresses the same idea again, but in a milder way

chashm-i nīkū bāz kun, dar man nigar * tā bibīnī nūr-i Ḥaqq andar bashar

Open your eyes and look carefully
That you might see the light of God in a human being.[82]

Finally Rumi shows Bāyazīd's response to the dervish, and we may note in the third hemistich, the allusion to Bāyazīd's '*hal min mazīd*':

Bāyazīd ān nuqtahā-rā hūsh dāsht * hamchu zarrīn ḥalqa-ash dar gūsh dāsht
āmad az vay Bāyazīd andar mazīd * muntahī, dar muntahā ākhar rasīd
Bāyazīd noted these things wisely

Held on to obedience to [that dervish] as if it were gold
He left him in a state of [spiritual] increase
Already an adept, he eventually attained the end of the way.[83]

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[80] *Masnavī*, II, 2247. See above note 42, regarding the word *Ka'ba'ī*.

[81] *Masnavī*, II, 2248.

[82] *Masnavī*, II, 2249.

[83] *Masnavī*, II, 2250-51.

Thus, in this short episode of the *Masnavī*, Rumi has expanded and elaborated what was quite a simple, albeit potentially shocking, story. In this elaboration he has been able to introduce several teachings that he wished to emphasize, namely: the importance of seeking out spiritual masters; going for the wheat instead of the chaff; the idea of the man of spiritual perfection being a mirror or a theophany of God; and the importance of adhering to the guidance of the *pīr*. At the same time Rumi has, even more than Shams had done before him, attempted to make the dervish's apparently unorthodox and antinomian command seem spiritually logical.

The second anecdote narrated by Rumi in the *Masnavī* that I want to look at here also has an apologetic aspect to it. But more than being the subject of a simple elaboration, this story undergoes a much more dramatic evolution in its telling.

In an earlier version, as it is told in 'Aṭṭār's *Tadhkirat al-awliyā'*, the story runs as follows:

> One day, when Bāyazīd was in seclusion, his disciples heard him utter the words 'Glory be to me! How great is my dignity!' When he came to himself again they told him what he had said. He told them that if he should ever say such words again they should cut him into pieces, giving each of them a knife with which to carry out the command. It happened that he did say those words a second time. Accordingly, the disciples went to kill him, but they found that the whole room was filled with Bāyazīd, and as they struck with their knives it was just as if their knives were going into water. Then Bāyazīd's form became very small, as small as a sparrow, and he was sitting in the prayer-niche. His companions entered the room and explained what had happened. He told them, 'The person whom you see now is Bāyazīd; that was not Bāyazīd.'[84]

This anecdote, which appears in Book 4 of the *Masnavi*, is broadly framed by a story relating how the Prophet appointed a young man of the Hudhayl tribe to be the leader of the army, and how a number of older soldiers objected to his appoint-

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[84] 'Aṭṭār, *Tadhkirat al-waliyā'*, p. 166. 'Aṭṭār appears to attribute this story to Sahlajī. However, while the short narrative that precedes the anecdote may be found in the *Kitāb al-nūr* the anecdote itself is absent from it. In the introduction to his translation of the *Kitāb al-nūr*, M.R.S. Kadkanī states that 'Aṭṭār probably had a more extensive text of Sahlajī's work than is currently available to us.

ment because they did not understand the Prophet's divinely-inspired knowledge. This leads Rumi to speak about the forbearance (*ḥilm*) of 'this group' (*īn gurūh*) by which he evidently means here not merely prophets but all men of spirituality. Rumi observes that such forbearance will render the vigilant person foolish (*bīdār-rā ablah kard*), and the quick-witted person with a hundred eyes loses his way, and he then interestingly compares this forbearance to a powerful intoxicating wine:

> ḥilmishān hamchū sharāb-i khūb-i naghz * naghz naghzak bar ravad bālā-yi maghz
> Their forbearance is like a choice fine wine
> Subtly and gradually it goes to your head[85]

This, in turn, leads him to a lengthy discussion of the effects of wine, beginning with earthly wine which makes a young man topple over as he walks, like an old man, and then turning to the spiritual wine, which is drunk from the cask of *balā*, a reference to the Covenant of *alast*, which therefore suggests that this spiritual wine is the wine of love.[86] Rumi then proceeds to give different examples of people who have been drunk with that wine: the sleepers in the cave, the women of Egypt cutting their hands at the sight of Joseph and so on. This is the lengthy lead in to the story of Bāyazīd.

Rumi makes the story more dramatic than its original in a number of ways: firstly, this is not a matter of the disciples overhearing Bāyazīd saying these apparently blasphemous words when he was in seclusion; Rumi has him *proclaiming* to his disciples that he is God. Moreover, Rumi draws on several of Bāyazīd's ecstatic utterances to make the poetic narrative more interesting:

> bā murīdān ān faqīr-i muḥtasham * Bāyazīd āmad kih: nak Yazdān manam
> guft mastāna 'iyān ān dhū funūn * lā ilāha ill' anā hā fa'budūn
> That venerable one of spiritual poverty, Bāyazīd,
> Came [to his disciples] saying 'See now, I am God!'

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[85] *Masnavī*, IV, 2093-5.

[86] In love mysticism, the Covenant of Alast is understood as the pre-eternal covenant of love. On the Covenant of Alast in Sufism see N. Pourjavady, *Du Mujaddid*, Tehran: Iran University Press, 2002, Chapter Two; and in love mysticism see my *Sufi Hermeneutics*, pp. 140-4.

In a drunken manner that master of [mystic] sciences said quite plainly
'Hey! There is no God but me so worship me'.[87]

Having related the disciples' expression of disapproval - 'This is not right and proper' *īn nīst salāḥ* - Rumi makes sure to show that Bāyazīd knows his correct doctrine:

Ḥaqq munazzah az tan u man bā tanam * chūn chunīn gūyam bibāyad kushtanam

God transcends the body, and I have a body,
When I say such things I should be killed.[88]

He also underlines Bāyazīd's freedom from self by stating:

chūn waṣīyat kard ān āzādmard * har murīdī kārdī āmāda kard

When that [spiritually] liberated man gave this injunction,
Each disciple made ready a knife.[89]

Rumi then continues with the story, with some interesting elaborations. Keeping to the metaphor of intoxication, he tells us that Bāyazīd became drunk again from the potent flagon (*sughrāq-i zift*), so that all those injunctions vanished from his mind. And now Rumi introduces some other metaphors: the sweetmeat came - that is, the divine secrets, and his intellect became bewildered, the dawn arrived and his candle became of no use:

nuql āmad, 'aql-i ū āvāra shud * ṣubḥ āmad, sham'-i ū bīchāra shud[90]

These, of course, are metaphors which Rumi uses to distinguish between the partial and universal intellect, and in this vein he goes on to say:

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[87] *Masnavī*, IV, 2102-3.
[88] *Masnavī*, IV, 2106.
[89] *Masnavī*, IV, 2107.
[90] *Masnavī*, IV, 2108-9.

1428 'aql sāya-yi Ḥaqq buvad Ḥaqq āftāb * sāya-rā bā āftāb-i ū chih tāb?

Reason is the shadow of God, while God is the sun,
What power does the shadow have with His sun?[91]

There then follow several explanatory lines, apologetic, perhaps, explaining that when a genie takes possession of a person it is no longer that person who is speaking, and Rumi again gives the example of a man who shows 'Dutch courage', and then turns from the effects of earthly wine to the light of God, which has the power to empty a person completely of self, so that God (or the light of God) makes the exalted speech (in your place):

bāda'ī-rā mībuvad īn sharr u shūr * nūr-i Ḥaqq-rā nīst ān farhang u zūr?
kih tu-ra az tū ba-kull khālī kunad * tu shavī past, ū sukhan 'ālī kunad

If wine is thus able to stir up trouble
Does not the light of God have such virtue and power?
For it can empty you completely of your self
So that you are laid low and He speaks the exalted words[92]

And it is significant here that Rumi even gives the person of the Prophet with regard to the revelation of the Qur'ān as an example:

garchih Qur'ān az lab-i payghambarast
harkih gūyad Ḥaqq naguft ū kāfirast

Although the Qur'an issues from the lips of the Prophet
If anyone should say it is not the word of God, he is an unbeliever.[93]

So now we come to the climax of the story, and the dramatic way in which Rumi has developed it. Rumi has Bāyazīd say, not the same words again, but yet

[91] *Masnavi*, IV, 2111.
[92] *Masnavī*, IV, 2120-1.
[93] *Masnavī*, IV, 2123.

another ecstatic utterance (*shaṭḥ*): 'There is no one in this mantle save God' (*nīst andar jubba-am illā Khudā*).[94] As compared with the way story is told by 'Aṭṭār, Rumi's version of climax of the story involves a dramatic twist: as the disciples strike him with their knives, their knives become miraculously turned around towards themselves, so that rather than inflicting a wound upon Bāyazīd, each disciple who strikes at him inflicts a wound on himself. As a result, while there was not a single wound on 'that master of [mystic] sciences (*dhū funūn*) ', the disciples became 'wounded and drowned in blood (*gharqāb-i khūn*) '. Whoever aimed at Bāyazīd's throat, cut his own throat, and whoever aimed at his breast, stabbed himself in the breast. Only those who held back from striking heavy blows due to their 'half-knowledge (*nīm-dānish*) of that 'spiritual emperor' (*ṣāḥib qarān*), were merely wounded rather than slain. So it was that when day broke, the numbers of the disciples was decimated, and wails of lamentation arose from the house. At this point Rumi adds another dramatic elaboration, conveying at the same time Bāyazīd's immense following, and the miraculous nature of what had happened:

pīsh-i ū āmad hizārān mard-u zan * k'ay du 'ālam darj dar yik pīrhan
īn tan-i tu gar tan-i mardum budī * chūn tan-i mardum zi zanjar gum shudī

Thousands of men and women came before him,
Saying, 'Oh you, in whose shirt are contained the two worlds,
'If your body had been a human body,
It would have been destroyed by those daggers, like a human body.[95]

However, the surprising twist in the story which Rumi has added to this anecdote about Bāyazīd is not of course simply to add drama to the narrative; it allows Rumi to introduce one of his favourite themes, namely that the selfless person becomes like a mirror:

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[94] Though this saying is attributed by Rumi, and after him his son Sulṭān Walad, to Bāyazīd, others from Ibn Munawwar onwards attributed the saying to Abū Sa'īd b. Abi'l-Khayr, while still other sources attributed the saying to Ḥallāj, and Rumi himself is said to have attributed the saying elsewhere to Junayd. On the attribution of this saying to Abū Sa'īd al-Kharrāz in an earlier source see, N. Pourjavady, 'Du dastīna-yi kuhan dar taṣawwuf', *Ma'ārif*, vol. 20, no. 3 (March 2004), pp. 36-8.

[95] *Masnavī*, IV, 2135-6.

1430 naqsh-i ū fāni u ū shud ā'īna
ghayr-i naqsh-i rūy-i ghayr, ānjā'ī na

His form has passed away and he has become a mirror,
Nothing is there save the image of the face of the other.[96]

So, if you see an ugly face it is you; and if you see a Jesus or Mary, it is you, for:

ū na īn ast u na ān, ū sāda ast * naqsh-i tū dar pīsh-i tū binhāda ast

He is neither this nor that, he is simple [pure and free of attributes of self],
He has placed your image before you.[97]

This observation had been preceded by a warning, directing the whole lesson to Rumi's audience:

ay zada bar bīkhwadān tu dhū'l-faqār * bar tan-ikhwad mīzanī ān hūsh dār

O you who strike at selfless ones with your sword of unbelief
Beware! You are stabbing your own body with it.

And it is with other such warnings that he brings the story to a close, except that

as a postscript he adds an admonition in a different vein, namely that anyone who is drunken with the wine [of love] is, as it were, standing on the edge of a roof; he should either sit down (in other words, not reveal his state) or he should come down off the roof. One should keep these precious moments concealed like treasure:

har zamānī kih shudī tū kāmrān * ān dam-i khūsh-rā kinār-i bām dān
bar zamān-i khūsh harāsān bāsh tū * hamchu ganjash khufya kun na fāsh tū

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[96] *Masnavī*, IV, 2140

[97] *Masnavī*, IV, 2143.

Every moment, when you attain your spiritual desire[98]
Think of that delightful moment as [being poised] at the edge of the roof.
Be fearful [of losing] that sweet moment,
Conceal it like treasure, do not divulge it.[99]

This postscript provides an interesting caveat to what has gone before. Implied is the sort of comment on the fate of Ḥallāj that was alluded to above, namely that he divulged what should not have been divulged. But Rumi's admonition that we should be fearful of losing the sweet moment, may also bear the implication that we should not simply conceal that 'moment' from others, but from our outer selves, at the risk of being divested of it - this being a *malāmatī* doctrine.

Conclusion

It is perhaps no surprise to find Rumi featuring so prominently the mystic who was such an inspirational figure in, and who had almost come to epitomise, the way of love and intoxication in the mysticism of Khurasan - this was, after all, the mystical tradition that Rumi had imbibed through his teachers, and that became the life-blood of his poetry.[100] However, Bāyazīd's role in the *Masnavī* goes far beyond that of being simply a proponent of love and intoxication, for Rumi shows him to be a model par excellence of the *murīd*, the aspirant rigorously disciplining his *nafs*, the spiritual master and realised mystic who has access to divinely inspired knowledge of the unseen, the perfected mystic who has been freed from his attributes becoming as a mirror to the world, and the consummate exemplar of what faith should be.

These images of Bāyazīd are mainly portrayed, as we have seen, through Rumi's narration of a series of anecdotes. Though Rumi has drawn these anecdotes from earlier sources, he has refashioned them, transforming them in a

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[98] Nicholson has 'enjoy (union with the beloved)

[99] *Masnavī*, IV, 2147-8.

[100] On Rumi's connection to the mystical school of Khurasan see N. Pourjavady, ' Mawlavī va taṣawwuf-i Khurāsān' in ibid., *Nasīm-i uns*, Tehran, Intishārāt-i Asātīr, 1384, pp. 105-21.

1432 manner that exemplifies and endorses essential teachings of his poem, sheds new light on the stories and brings this great mystic to life in our imagination. In the two anecdotes examined above it can be seen that key to this process of transformation, and to the integration of the anecdotes into the *Masnavī*, is firstly, the context in which they are placed, that is to say the discussion that precedes and leads into the stories. In the case of the first anecdote examined above, it is the importance of seeking out 'men' of the spiritual way, and in the case of the second, it is the intoxicating 'wine' of forbearance (*ḥilm*) - which Rumi has clearly identified with '*ishq* - and the effects of that intoxication. Also key to this transformation is Rumi's expansion and elaboration of the anecdotes, which, in the second anecdote, involved considerable creative and poetic licence, producing a dramatic twist to the climax of the original version of the story.

But what significance does this imaginative and elaborate retelling of traditional stories of Bāyazīd have for our understanding of Sufi hagiography? Surely it is an indication that such anecdotes in the writings of Sufis are intended to provide not 'factual information' but illuminative examples from which everyone, and particularly aspirants on the spiritual path, can learn.[101] The stories of mystics can, like the stories of prophets, become paradigms through which Sufis have great scope to expound their doctrines. They can act as a *tadhkirat* to use the word 'Aṭṭār chose for his work, a means of reminding us not only of the mystics themselves, but of the path they have followed to the One. However 'anecdotal' or legendary stories about mystics such as Bāyazīd may have become, there is behind them, or somewhere at the root of them, the spiritual presence, charisma and influence of those mystics, which has given rise to a whole host of traditions about them among Sufis who have venerated them over the centuries. The telling and retelling of these sayings and stories in a variety of forms, serves to perpetuate the spiritual influence of those great mystics.

[101] This matter has also been discussed by Javid Mojaddedi in his 'Mawlana and his predecessors'.