

THE MASTERS OF BEING

RUMI

**THE WOUND THROUGH
WHICH LOVE ENTERS**

*Rumi, the Dissolution of Separation,
and the Return to the Beloved*



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PROLOGUE

THE MAN WHO DISAPPEARED INTO LOVE

There are people who enter our lives and become part of the life we are already living.

Then there are those whose arrival makes that life impossible to continue.

They do not always disrupt us through betrayal or cruelty. Sometimes they disrupt us through recognition. They see beneath the identity we have constructed, beyond our accomplishments and defenses, into a place we have barely admitted exists. Their presence awakens something too large for the person we have been.

Jalal al-Din Rumi became such a person for generations who encountered his teachings. Before he became the poet whose words would cross religions, languages, and centuries, someone else became that person for him.

His name was Shams of Tabriz.

When Shams entered Rumi's life, Rumi was already accomplished: a respected Islamic scholar, jurist, preacher, and spiritual teacher. He possessed learning, authority, and a public following. By the standards of his world, he had arrived.

Then he met a wandering mystic who seems to have regarded arrival as another form of sleep.

WHEN KNOWLEDGE CATCHES FIRE

Something in Rumi opened. Something else could not survive. The scholar became a poet. The teacher became a lover. The man who had spoken about God began writing as though the distance between the seeker and the Divine had caught fire.

This is why Rumi cannot be understood merely as a supplier of beautiful sentences. The poems are the visible ash of an interior burning. Their beauty is not decoration placed around an idea. It is what remained after an identity passed through fire.

We encounter him now in fragments: a luminous line beneath a photograph, a sentence offered at a wedding, a thought detached from its origin. Yet behind the fragment stands a disciplined scholar of Islam, formed by scripture, prayer, law, and years of study, then overtaken by an encounter that made his established language insufficient.

The poems did not make Rumi a mystic. They reveal what happened when the mystic could no longer remain contained inside the scholar.

His life confronts us with a difficult possibility: we may become successful within an identity that remains too small for us. We may master the language of truth without surrendering to its consequences. We may accumulate knowledge about the fire while remaining carefully outside its heat.

Then life sends someone, or something, that asks us to burn.

THE WOUND OF SEPARATION

Rumi's great poem, the Masnavi, begins with the cry of a reed flute torn from the reed bed. Its music is born from separation.

The reed does not merely sing beautifully. It laments the source from which it has been cut. Its hollow body becomes an instrument precisely because something has been removed from it. Breath enters the emptiness, and the wound becomes song.

Human longing is the voice of a being who has forgotten, but not entirely forgotten, where it belongs. We often interpret longing as evidence that something is missing from our lives. Rumi asks us to consider a deeper possibility: perhaps longing is also evidence that something within us remembers.

We would not ache for belonging if we possessed no intuition of home.

Anyone who has sung seriously knows something of this mystery. The sound may seem to come from the body, but at certain moments it arrives through the body. Technique matters. Breath matters. Discipline matters. Yet the deepest note carries a quality no technique can fabricate: the sense that the singer is being sung.

I learned this before I had language for it. In music, there were moments when preparation carried me to the threshold, but could not cross it for me. The voice opened only when control softened enough for something more honest to move through. The note was mine, yet it did not feel possessed. It felt received.

The audience can hear the song. Only the singer knows what had to become hollow for the song to exist.

WHAT LOVE REMOVES

Loss has taught me that love does not always preserve the form through which it first arrived. People leave. Families change. Trust fractures. Titles fall away. The future we had rehearsed disappears, and the mind calls the disappearance abandonment.

I have known the instinct to bury pain deeply enough that movement could continue. Build the next thing. Lead the next room. Carry what others need carried. But grief does not vanish because responsibility remains. It waits beneath the competence. Eventually love asks us to stop performing strength long enough to feel what the loss actually opened.

Rumi does not romanticize every wound or ask us to call every betrayal sacred. Pain can deform as easily as it can deepen. Suffering alone does not make us wise. A wound becomes an opening only when something larger than resentment is permitted to move through it.

Shams eventually disappeared from Rumi's life. The historical truth remains uncertain. He may have been murdered, perhaps by people close to Rumi; he may have left after the intensity surrounding their bond became unbearable. What matters spiritually is not uncertainty's solution, but what Rumi did with the absence.

He searched outward. Then the search turned inward. The beloved he had experienced through one human presence became recognizable as a life that could no longer be confined to that presence.

This is one of love's severest teachings. The person may awaken the door, but the door cannot remain dependent upon the person standing beside it.

What first appears as the loss of the beloved may become the end of our belief that love can be possessed.

THE RETURN TO THE BELOVED

Rumi's path does not move away from human love. It moves through human love until the boundary between sacred and ordinary begins to dissolve. The Beloved is encountered in friendship, longing, grief, music, silence, prayer, and the stranger standing before us. Love becomes less a feeling we own than a reality in which we participate.

The ego asks: Will I be chosen? Will I be kept? Will this person remain in the form I need? Love asks a more dangerous question: What in me must disappear so that I can meet life without turning the beloved into a possession?

The wound through which love enters is not simply the injury another person caused. It is the opening created when separation can no longer persuade us that we are alone. It is the place where the defended self becomes porous enough for a larger belonging to be remembered.

Like the reed, we do not deny that we were cut from the garden. We allow a greater breath to enter the opening. What emerged as anguish may become music. What began as separation may become the instrument through which belonging is remembered.

The wound alone does not make the music. The breath does.

Rumi stands at that threshold, turning, listening, burning - inviting us not merely to admire the language of love, but to disappear into what the language has been trying to name.

WE RETURN CARRYING IT.

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