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# RUMI

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JALĀL AL-DĪN RŪMĪ, COMMONLY KNOWN SIMPLY AS RUMI, IS ONE OF THE MOST INFLUENTIAL POETS IN HISTORY. A MUSLIM JURIST, SCHOLAR, AND SUFI MYSTIC, RUMI'S LIFE AND POETRY TRANSCENDS BORDERS AND LANGUAGES.

RUMI WAS BORN IN CENTRAL ASIA. WHEN HE WAS NINE, HIS FAMILY FLED THE MONGOL INVASIONS. THEY LIVED ON THE MOVE FOR THE NEXT TEN YEARS, WANDERING IN SEARCH OF A HOME.

THEY SETTLED IN KONYA IN CENTRAL ANATOLIA, THE CAPITAL OF THE TURKISH SELJUK EMPIRE. IN THIS COSMOPOLITAN CITY, GREEKS, PERSIANS, TURKS, JEWS, ARMENIANS, ARABS, AND CHRISTIANS MINGLED. RUMI FOLLOWED IN HIS FATHER'S FOOTSTEPS AS AN ISLAMIC JURIST, TEACHER, AND SUFI MYSTIC.

"Listen to the story told by the reed, of being separated..."

...Since I was cut from the reedbed, I have made this crying sound...

BUT HIS LIFE CHANGED FOREVER WHEN HE MET SHAMS AL-DĪN, A WANDERING HOLY MAN. SHAMS ENCOURAGED RUMI TO ABANDON SCHOLARSHIP AND TURN TO A PATH OF LOVE. RUMI'S CLOSE RELATIONSHIP WITH SHAMS, AND HIS HEARTBREAK WHEN HIS "BELOVED" DISAPPEARED, TRANSFORMED HIS POETRY.

...Anyone apart from someone he loves understands what I say..."

"You and I have to live...  
As if you and I have never heard...  
...of a you and an I."

RUMI TAUGHT THAT LOVE, DANCE, AND MUSIC WERE A PATH TO GOD. LEGEND CLAIMS THAT WHILE WALKING THROUGH A BAZAAR, THE RHYTHM OF THE GOLDSMITHS' HAMMERS ENTRANCED RUMI, AND HE WHIRLED FOR TWO HOURS IN A DANCE OF ECSTASY AND MEDITATION.

RUMI WROTE IN PERSIAN, GREEK, ARABIC, AND TURKISH. HE PREACHED ABOUT A UNIVERSAL LOVE THAT TRANSCENDED ETHNIC AND RELIGIOUS DIFFERENCES.

AFTER HIS DEATH, RUMI'S POETRY AND TEACHINGS WERE SPREAD AROUND THE WORLD BY HIS SONS AND DISCIPLES, WHO FOUNDED THE SUFI MEVLEVI ORDER, OFTEN CALLED "WHIRLING DERVISHES" FOR THEIR ECSTATIC SPINNING DANCE. RUMI'S POETRY HAS BEEN TRANSLATED INTO MANY LANGUAGES, AND HIS EPIC POEM, *MASNAVI*, HAS BEEN CALLED "THE QURAN IN PERSIAN."

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WORLD HISTORY PROJECT  
BIOGRAPHIES