

Epistemic Value of Emotions

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Introduction

Since time immemorial emotions have proven to be a challenging aspect in describing and analyzing human life. Some have reduced emotions to a destructive obstacle in the way of truth, while others see them as an unparalleled route to acquiring insight. Though this debate in its various forms has a long history in mysticism,¹ nevertheless its newfound prominence in modern theology has revealed fresh aspects.

The new emphasis on the importance of emotions was in essence a reaction by religious intellectuals to criticisms made against theology in the age of Enlightenment. In searching for a way to unmediated knowledge unattached to rational activity, these devout intellectuals found the inner path of emotions as naturally the most effective way. According to this view, religion is to be handed over to emotions so as to free it from metaphysical claims and scientific beliefs and thus safeguard it against the Kantian critique of metaphysics. It was on this basis that religiosity was increasingly intertwined with the emotions, resulting in the recognition of “religious experience” as an epistemic source, which quickly gained currency and became a decisive branch of modern theology.

Friedrich Schleiermacher describes religious experience as a “*feeling of absolute and comprehensive dependence on a source or power that is distinct from the world.*” This emphasis on the intimate and sentimental nature of religious experience and its attachment to an entity distinct from the world was developed further in various forms by later standard-bearers of the tradition of religious experience.² As a result, attentions shifted to the inquiry into emotions with distinctive and unusual characteristics that set them apart from ordinary life—such characteristics as being attached to a particular object, transcending time-space limitations, conveying a sense of objectivity or reality, evoking a sense of blessedness, feeling a sacred phenomenon, being paradoxical and ineffable, etc.³

Due to the similarity and affinity between the products of the tradition of religious experience and the teachings of Muslim mystics, many of the intellectual principles and

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¹ See W.T. Stace, *Irfan wa Falsafih (Mysticism and Philosophy)*, Translated by Baha' al-Din Khurramshahi, Tehran: Surush, 1384 (A.H.S.), pp. 80 onward. A.H.S. is the Solar Islamic Calendar.

² See, for instance, R. Otto, *Mafhum-e Amr-e Qudsi (The Idea of the Holy)*, Translated by Humayun Himmati, Tehran: Naqsh-e Jahan, 1380 (A.H.S.), pp. 57 onward.

³ M. Peterson et al., *'Aql wa I'tiqad-e Dini (Reason and Religious Belief: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion)*, Translated by Ahmad Naraqi and Ibrahim Sultani, Tehran: Tarh No, 1376 (A.H.S.), p. 53.

conclusions of these two disciplines concur, for in the reports of Muslim mystics the search for emotions with the abovementioned characteristics also figures prominently. This is evident in the case of Rumi—as one of the most distinguished standard-bearers of the tradition of Islamic mysticism—concerning whom there is consensus that at certain moments in his life he was overwhelmed by a distinct and unusual experience that fit the characteristics mentioned above, *Divan Shams* being the account of such experiences. The large part of his time, of course, he spent in a state of *sahw* (sobriety), deprived of those scarce and short-lived moments of ecstasy. Even if we concede that such moments did leave a decisive impression on Rumi's life as a whole and that he benefitted from them in the sober periods between these ecstatic intervals, it would make no difference. For in any case, we accept that some moments of his life were more genuine and profound than the remainder of his time, which he spent preparing himself to experience those ecstatic moments anew.

It is at this sensitive juncture that the main question of this inquiry arises. I seek to answer this question: when speaking of his spiritual experience, does Rumi intend a feeling akin to those considered under the topic of spiritual experience in the philosophy of religion or does he have in mind a drastically different reality that is to be understood in an altogether different context. Put more simply, was Rumi influenced by isolated and periodic feelings that followed a profound experience distinct from his ordinary life that dramatically altered his life, or were his feelings of spiritual ecstasy on the same plane as his ordinary life, in which case, their epistemic value derived, not from their inherent worth, but from Rumi's peculiar perception, inner preparedness, and unique status. My intention is not to demonstrate that Rumi did not undergo spiritual experience as defined in philosophy of religion but that his experiences were not such as to alter his life and make him a different person. In the latter scenario, it was Rumi who, by virtue of his inner preparedness and diligence, purified his spiritual experience.

To support these difficult claims, it is necessary to examine how Rumi viewed the epistemic nature of human feelings. To this end, we may pursue various approaches. The approach that I take up here is to analyze and reflect on the writings of Baha' al-Din Muhammad ibn Husayn Khatibi Balkhi (more commonly known as Baha' Walad) in this respect and their influence on Rumi's epistemic system. Baha' Walad was more than a father to Rumi, in which capacity he did weigh on Rumi's thought.⁴ Rumi would often read his father's *Ma'arif*, keeping it at his side throughout almost his entire life.⁵ In this light, studying Baha Walad's influence on Rumi is a key to understanding the latter's thoughts. But

⁴ See Abd al-Husayn Zarrin-kub, *Pillih-Pillih ta Mulaqat-e Khuda*, Tehran: Ilmi, 1370 (A.H.S.), p. 68.

⁵ See Mahbub Asad Siraj, *Mawlana-ye Balkhi wa Pidarash*, Kabul, 1340 (A.H.S.); Baha' al-Din Muhammad ibn Husayn Khatibi Balkhi, *Ma'arif*, Revised by Badi' al-Zaman Furuzanfar, Tehran: Tahuri, 1352 (A.H.S.), p. ya-dal.

that which is of prime importance in this study is that Baha' Walad's work is not merely a product of his rambling hypotheses. It, rather, expresses sincere thoughts with which he was preoccupied throughout his life, and it is for this reason that his work is of singular importance in understanding Rumi's thoughts concerning the epistemology of human feelings.

There have obviously been studies into the similarities between Rumi's literature and his father's.⁶ What distinguishes this article is that I hope to go beyond the apparent similarities—whether verbal or otherwise—that simply show the father's influence on the son; I intend to shed light on the ambiguous and obscure passages of Rumi by invoking Baha' Walad, who for certain reasons was decidedly more straightforward than his son.

Expanding on the Question

Considering the question posed above, it should be clear that this article is concerned with the role of emotions as seen by Baha' Walad and Rumi. We should make a preliminary note that emotions are shunned in philosophic and theological literature—just as sense-perception is condemned in mystical literature—as destructive influences to be avoided in perceiving the world and conceiving our judgments. Though in these traditions certain exceptions are allowed, nevertheless it would be correct to say that these positions have been generally misunderstood. Based on this misunderstood concept, emotions are held to be fundamentally unacceptable to reason, the way of the heart being antithetical to ratiocination.

In order to clarify how Baha' Walad—and consequently Rumi—disagreed with this popular conception, we must examine the *Ma'arif* and the *Mathnawi* to demonstrate two points: first, that emotions constitute, in the view of these two mystics, an authentic and palpable source for gaining insight and are thus epistemically valuable, and second, that (and this is the logical development of the previous point) emotions are not opposed to reason or will (as was claimed in the classification of human faculties in ancient psychology) and are not fleeting states impressed upon the mind while devoid of any objectivity.

A germane starting point in this regard may be to dwell on the concept of “taste,” to which Baha' Walad frequently refers. In ancient literature, “taste” conveyed a variety of meanings, such as pleasure, portion or allotment, feeling, perception, and impression.⁷ It is commonly maintained that Baha' Walad employed “taste” in the first of the above-mentioned senses, that is, the pleasure and joy in sensuous perceptions.⁸ Although, this is true of a number of instances where this term is used,⁹ nevertheless it seems more likely on reflection

⁶ See Balkhi, *Ma'arif*, pp. ya-dal – kaf-ta and Siraj, *Mawlana-ye Balkhi wa Pidarash*.

⁷ See Navid Bazargan, “Idrak-e Zharf-e Lazzat wa Tahsil-e Kamal-e Mazih-ha,” *The Journal of the College of Literature and Humanities*, University of Tehran, fall issue, 1379 (A.H.S.), p.211.

⁸ See F. Meier, *Baha' Walad: Zindigi wa Irfan-e Uu (Bahā'-e Walad: Grundzüge seines Lebens und seiner Mystik)*, Translated by Maryam Mushrif, Tehran: Markaz-e Nashr-e Danishgahi, 1382 (A.H.S.), p.240.

⁹ Balkhi, *Ma'arif*, vol.1, pp.282 and 191.

that in using this term so frequently he has in mind the sense of perception and impression, which carries an epistemic significance, rather than the material pleasure in the physical senses.¹⁰ In other words, “taste” is, on the one hand, a sensible phenomenon grasped by sense-perception; yet, on the other hand, it bears an insight and spiritual significance that follows and transcends sense-perception.

It is for this reason that Baha’ Walad seeks to appreciate the taste of phenomena, not merely in the pleasure derived from them, but through arduous reflection: “in the various secrets, enlightenments, and meanings that he has provided you in those journeys and recreations, you should strive to obtain the *taste*.”¹¹ Obviously, sense-perception does not require striving, and hence “taste” in this context signifies a meaning beyond the pleasure in perceiving sensuous phenomena. The human being is certainly impressed by the phenomena he encounters in the world, and this impression results in the formation of a particular feeling. This particular feeling, however, is suggestive of a hidden truth, revealing a peculiar characteristic of the nature of that hidden truth. “Taste” is on the one hand a passive receptivity impressed upon the human mind by a sensory experience, but on the other hand, it signifies human activity in the effort to discover an objective truth. It is these two aspects (receptivity and activity) that are simultaneously present in the concept of taste. Of course, there are instances where Baha’ Walad uses taste in reference to one of these two aspects independently.¹² These instances are in fact responsible for the common misunderstanding of equating taste with sensuous pleasure. But once we consider that sense-perception does not require striving or insight, we realize that it is the aspect of activity inherent in the feelings that Baha’ Walad is concerned with.

The above explanation should suffice to show that in Baha’ Walad’s view, feelings and emotions have an epistemic aspect, which enables the subject experiencing them to grasp truths by looking through these emotions. As to what these truths are and how credible the knowledge informed by our feelings is we will treat these questions later, but first we must answer a key question: are emotions fleeting impressions that have no reality beyond our mind and if so, how can they serve to reveal truths about objective reality?

When we describe a scenery or experience as joyous, are we in fact projecting our internal feeling unto the objective truth? An ancient demonstration of this question is the famous debate between Chuang Tzu (Zhuangzi) and Hui Tzu (Huizi), which ends with this statement by the former: “I know [the happiness of the fish] by standing here on the bridge

¹⁰ Rumi too employs “taste” to indicate perception:

Were taste not unreasonable/why then would there be a need for miracles. (Jalal al-Din Muhammad Mawlawi, *Mathnawi Ma’nawi*, Edited by Baha al-Din Khurramshahi, Tehran: Dustan, 1373 (A.H.S.), vol. 1, line 2143).

¹¹ Balkhi, *Ma’arif*, vol. 1, p. 191.

¹² Balkhi, *Ma’arif*, vol. 1, pp. 383, 191, and 110.

over the Hao.”¹³ It is, of course, not my intention to resolve such disputes; I only mean to show that Baha’ Walad and Rumi both maintain that emotions have a dual nature: they are neither exclusively subjective nor exclusively objective.

The most concise and effective argument in this regard may be our characterizing as ill one who projects—more than what is commonly allowed as normal—one’s feelings onto the world and other human beings. The fact that we are able to determine such cases of mental illness and psychosis requires that there must be certain criteria. That we judge some feelings as inappropriate proves that we are able to realize their being unwarranted by the circumstances.¹⁴ Thus, emotions are not confined to the mind. To express this in phenomenological terms, we may say that emotions are intentional and directed toward the objectivity of things.¹⁵ But on the other hand, it would be wrong to contend that emotions are merely passive impressions effected by external objects in regard to which the human being has no influence.

This is the duality posited by Baha’ Walad and Rumi. It is false to think that human emotions are independent of meanings, perceptions, beliefs, and actions. As expressed by the two mystics, everything in the world has a taste, the perception of which is the function of the subject as conditioned by his beliefs and conceptions of the world and his inner preparedness. “All the tastes in foods and drinks and coitus are rooted in belief, which you will notice if you pay heed. The pleasure of coitus is increased by the imagination and perception of the object of lust, and certain tastes diminish due to one’s lack of interest in them. Thus strengthen your belief and certitude that you may savor tastes.”¹⁶ “One who plants garlics and onions and is preoccupied with them will no longer discern the taste of oranges and lemons. He who sows the seed of worldly taste in his heart will never relish the taste of religion.”¹⁷ “Grant me such passion for Your Beauty as exceeds that which You granted Zulaykha (Potiphar’s wife) in her love for Joseph’s beauty, which was due to her perception of beauty, for Joseph’s brothers also viewed his beauty but were not overwhelmed [as she was].”¹⁸ Joseph’s brothers lacked the necessary perception.

The latter passage from Baha’ Walad offers an appropriate point at which we may turn to Rumi’s own work. There is a line in the *Mathnawi* that reflects more plainly the idea

¹³ Babak Ahmadi, *Kitab-e Tardid*, Tehran: Nashr-e Markaz, 1374 (A.H.S.), p. 1.

¹⁴ See J. Macquarie, *Falsafih-e Wujudi (Existentialism)*, Translated by Muhammad Sa’id Hana’i Kashani, Tehran: Hirmis, 1377 (A.H.S.), p. 159.

¹⁵ Verneaux, Roger. *Daramadi bar Padidar shinasī wa Falsafihayi Hast Budan (Histoire de la Philosophie Contemporaine)*, Translated by Yahya Mahdawi, Tehran: Khwarazmi, 1372 (A.H.S.). It is a chosen parts for translation into Persian from: Roger Verneaux, *Histoire de la Philosophie Contemporaine*. 11ed. Paris: Beauchesne et ses fils, 1960, and Jean Wahl, *Les Philosophies de L’Existence*, 2e ed. Paris 1959.

¹⁶ Balkhi, *Ma’arif*, vol. 1, pp. 318–319.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 250.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

expressed in the latter passage from Baha' Walad:

That which Jacob saw in Joseph's countenance was exclusive to him [Jacob] / when
did it occur to his brothers?¹⁹

As explained above, these instances—which one encounters often in reading the works of these two mystics²⁰—articulate the reciprocal relation between the human being's emotions and external objects and show how his beliefs and perceptions of a phenomenon reveals hidden aspects of its existence. Zulaykha perceives Joseph's beauty while his brothers fail to notice it. Of course, this is not to say that Joseph lacked beauty and that it was Zulaykha's perception that created it. Rather, her belief and position vis-à-vis Joseph allowed her to be impressed and fascinated by his beauty, thus revealing it.

It is at this point that another key term surfaces in the mystical corpus of Rumi: *preparedness*. Due to her love, Zulaykha was prepared to perceive Joseph's beauty, whereas his brothers were so engrossed in the ugliness of their envy that they were unprepared to perceive their brother's beauty. As such, *preparedness* is the necessary requirement for perceiving the taste of things:

(When) God emanates that light unto the hearts / the fortunate hold up their skirts.
He who has no skirt of love / is deprived of being granted light.²¹

This concept is thus expressed by Baha' Walad: "God has made it His habit in this world and the Next that should one lack moisture and life, one would not be eligible for comfort and light. That is, the skirt in which comfort settles is perception and life. Should you rend this skirt, how would you obtain comfort and wherein would you place it?" In this passage preparedness for obtaining light is compared to a skirt and the moisture within a seed. This implies that in every phenomenon and incident in this world there is a moisture, resembling the moisture in a seed, which if recognized can display the full potential of water in nurturing growth. Water is inherently capable of nurturing growth, but this is not manifest unless it

¹⁹ Mawlawi, *Mathnawi*, 3:3030.

²⁰ One other passage from Baha' Walad in which this theme is presented is this: "The worthy are granted to savor that address and pristine wine as they would not defile it. This is analogous to the Nile, which for the children of Israel was water, for the Egyptians blood" (Balkhi, *Ma'arif*, vol. 1, p. 37). To the same effect, Rumi writes,

He who reads it as fantasy is himself fantasy / he who perceives it as ready money is truly a man.
It is the River of Nile that appeared to the Egyptian as blood / but to the tribe of Moses, it was not blood but water" (Mawlawi, *Mathnawi*, 4:32–33).

²¹ Mawlawi, *Mathnawi*, 1:760–761.

is placed inside a seed. In the same vein, Joseph is inherently beautiful, but it is Zulaykha's preparedness that manifests it.

When the human being is prepared for **sensory perception**, it is then that he will understand **its** direction in the cosmos, savor its taste, and grasp it. Rumi elaborates on these concepts by focusing on the relationship between Jacob and Joseph. Jacob's insistence on smelling Joseph's garment ultimately leads to the curing of his eyes—an allusion to Jacob's preparedness for perceiving Joseph.

Scent is the guide and leader for you / taking you to the eternity of *kawthar*.²²

You cannot be Joseph so be Jacob / like him weep and wail.²³

He who took the garment made haste / he did not grasp the scent of Joseph's garment.

But he who was a hundred leagues away / as he was Jacob, he could smell the scent.²⁴

The concept of *preparedness* is clearly visible in the above-quoted lines. We must in the manner of Jacob be infused with grief for Joseph so as to smell his scent and ultimately understand him. *Scent*, which is the equivalent of *taste* in Baha' Walad's work, is a vague and indirect symbol of the truth. This gives rise to a crucial question: how can personal emotions, in their fundamentally relative nature, mirror the truth, function as a source of knowledge, and lead the human being to a truth beyond themselves? How may we determine whether or not our emotions are informing us of genuine tastes and perceptions?²⁵ Can taste distinguish between good and bad? Would we be justified in striving for a cause based on our emotions? Though we may not find a definite answer to these questions in the *Ma'arif*, the search for these questions leads us to another key concept: the *friendly perspective*.

Baha' Walad is strongly convinced that if we bring ourselves into harmony with the taste hidden in phenomena and the melody produced by events, if we interact with them in sincerity and with faith, we will never be led astray:

He who harbors a strong friendship with someone or something will find more taste and life, but he who has less friendship has less of them. Friendship is the perspective of virtue when it endures. He whom you love is as a land for [cultivating] the sapling of the perspective of friendship. You may plant it through love wherever you wish, whether it [the object of love] be a sparrow, a cat, a food,

²² *Ibid.*, 1:1904.

²³ *Ibid.*, 1:1907.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 3:3036–3037.

²⁵ It is important to note that these questions are of consequence to any school of thought dealing with human emotions, not just to the works of Baha' Walad and Rumi. And it would be impossible to address all these questions in this article. **Thus, I content myself with treating these two questions.**

or an **old wretch**. Impurity is purified by friendship.²⁶

Thus, Baha' Walad conceives of friendship and love as a certain type of perception and thought concerning phenomena; he offers a delicate characterization of friendship: "Friendship is the perspective of virtue when it endures." It is by way of friendship that the human being can succeed in maintaining a harmonious relationship with phenomena—swallows, cats, food, etc.—and thus grasp their taste. In this sense, one may substitute friendship by such expressive terms as *sympathy* and *harmony*. The human being should be friendly with and sympathetic toward phenomena in the world, harmonizing with them.

As such, friendship is a particular mode of thought regarding the world that reveals the hidden intention in one's emotions. Logical modes of thought, by contrast, are not only incapable of this revelation but tend to ruin it²⁷: "*Hows* and *whys* dishevel the order of taste, for when unaware of how a stew has been made, it is tastier."²⁸ Reasoning undermines the internal harmony in things. Again Rumi concurs:

Were taste not unreasonable/why then would there be a need for miracles?
That which is reasonable, reason devours/without the display of miracles, without
ebb and flow.
Behold this virgin path unreasonable/behold it in the heart of the fortunate
acceptable.²⁹

The last line reflects Baha' Walad's statement: This path is unacceptable to reason but acceptable to the heart of the fortunate. The fortunate are those who have acquired preparedness and who engage the world with a friendly mentality.

²⁶ Balkhi, *Ma'arif*, vol. 1, p. 310.

²⁷ It is for this reason that Baha' Walad occasionally praises the naïve, for though weak in argumentation and reasoning, they are better disposed to friendship.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 406.

²⁹ Mawlawi, *Mathnawi*, 1:2143–2145. Based on the explanation offered, miracles are incapable of abruptly transforming those who fail to cherish a friendly view of the world. For this reason, it is unlikely that Rumi's intention would be that miracles could make something acceptable to the "unfortunate." For, elsewhere he says,

Miracles beget not faith/It is the scent of affinity that attracts traits.
Miracles are for the purpose of enraging the enemy/The scent of affinity seeks to woo hearts.
(Mawlawi, *Mathnawi*, 6:1176–1177)

Furthermore, Rumi considers the effectuality of miracles to be contingent on taste. That is, to be swayed by miracles, one still needs the preparedness mentioned above:

In the heart of any people with a taste of God/the countenance and voice of the Prophet are miracles.
(Mawlawi, *Mathnawi*, 2:3598)

It is in the framework of this perspective that we may realize why Baha' Walad and Rumi disagree with most Muslim mystics in that they do not consider disengagement from the emotions to be necessary for attaining to perfection. They affirm that such disengagement is incidental, unpredictable, and usually impossible, and so it would put religion in a precarious or even impossible position should it be based on such disengagement. Rather than disowning emotions, they endorse them as a singular and direct path to achieving harmony with the world. In this regard, it would be helpful to point to Ricoeur's description of emotions as an *atmosphere*: "Atmosphere is that which surrounds us and which we breathe. This means that it is through our emotions that we breathe and assimilate this world, in which we live, move, and exist."³⁰ Walad and Rumi are also of the opinion that our intimate relationship with the world brings to light such truths as would be impossible to grasp by way of sense-perception or rational reasoning.

The world abounds with phenomena that hold within them a distinct taste and diffuse a distinct scent. The human being must strive and exert himself so as to discern these tastes and scents. This exertion, of course, is extremely arduous and perplexing, plagued by numerous doubts and obscured by many impurities. Baha' Walad and Rumi both maintain that ultimately all tastes and scents are suggestive of the quintessence of existence, God. Beyond the knowledge of everything else, they seek to know Him:

At times by speech, at times by silence, at times / by smelling, grasp from every
direction the scent of the King.³¹

Where there is a pleasing scent, catch the scent / of that secret, as you are
acquainted with that realm.³²

They believe that God deliberately infused the world with scents and tastes and that this tortuous search wrought with confusion will reach fruition:

The Beloved prefers this confusion / vain exertion is yet better than sleepiness.³³
In this path, scratch and scrape / Till your last breath remain not idle for a single
breath.³⁴

These verses underline the importance of exertion in achieving preparedness and that

³⁰ Macquarie, *Falsafih-e Wujudi (Existentialism)*, p. 157.

³¹ Mawlawi, *Mathnawi*, 3:981.

³² *Ibid.*, 3:986.

³³ *Ibid.*, 1:1819.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 1:1822.

to embark on this path one need not wait for certainty. We must, in the manner of Jacob——overwhelmed with grief and passion——seek the scents, tastes, and melodies of this world. Should one decry these attractions and scents and content oneself with but a mere recognition of their pleasure instead of taking any step in the right direction, the light of knowledge will not dawn in one's soul. To use Rumi's description, these are the dejected theoreticians with a dull understanding:

The dull in perception does not see beyond this / Without journey, his reason is as the plant in the earth.

Whether you call the plant or whether you do not / its feet are by the soil hampered. Should it shake its head due to the motion of the wind——pay heed / do not be misled by its head-shaking.³⁵

But as for those perceptions that are not dejected / there is no veil save the wayfarer, the render.³⁶

From the perspective under discussion in this article, resignation from emotional concerns and pursuing an aloof attitude in respect to what transpires without and within oneself is deemed irrelevant in acquiring spiritual understanding. The religious feeling can take shape and be sharpened only in the context of one's relation to the surrounding world. Without intending to show the coherence of these claims with ideas articulated by existentialist philosophers, let it suffice to cite Jaspers: "Resigning oneself from obligation [such as may be the case with a Sufi] is not tantamount to transcending oneself; rather, it is the failure in turning into oneself."³⁷ In this light, what Baha' Walad and Rumi aspire to is to transcend these emotions, not to neglect them.

Naturally, based on the spiritual thought arising from such a perspective, spiritual insight cannot be gained by unexpected experiences isolated from the rest of one's life. Rather, the human being must in the normal course of his life equip himself, through austere exertion, with the preparedness to comprehend. It is only after acquiring this special perspective and engaging in much reflection that one may discover the gem of knowledge. One cannot hope to discover such knowledge fortuitously.

Conclusion

We have discovered how human emotions are portrayed in the mystical corpus of Baha'

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 4:2895–2897.

³⁶ *Render*, meaning one who rends, not the verb of this spelling.

³⁷ T. R. Miles, *Tajribih-e Dini (Religious Experience)*, Translated by Jabir Akbari, Tehran: Daftar-e Pazuhish wa Nashr-e Suhravardi, 1380 (A.H.S.), p. 196.

Walad and Rumi as possessing epistemic significance, pointing to truths beyond themselves. But to understand this, one ought to have savored the tastes in phenomena. This starts at the level of sense-perception and, depending on the individual's preparedness, perspective on existence, and degree of effort, may advance till the unveiling of ultimate knowledge. One motivated to traverse this path does not await clear proofs that provide indisputable certainty but rather listens for the melodies of existence and replies to them. Knowledge acquired through this perspective is the result of a continual activity, a journey in seeking the tastes and scents pervading the world of existence; it is not a product of reasoned planning:

To purge the pure [folk] of dregs / how long must our minds endure pain.³⁸

Thus knowledge cannot be acquired abruptly and without preparation; it evolves in the process of the spiritual wayfarer's search. It is this perpetual struggle that generates such bewilderment as serves, not only as the fountainhead of knowledge, but also as the foundation of religiosity:

At times it appears such, at times the opposite / as the work of religion is but bewilderment.³⁹

³⁸ Mawlawi, *Mathnawi*, 2:2955.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 1:312.