

Original article

UDC 821

doi: 10.17223/19986645/89/13

Answers to five questions posed by Shakarim from Molavi's worldview

Gulbahyt Kudaibergenova¹

¹ *Al-Farabi Kazakh National University, Almaty, Republic of Kazakhstan,
gulbahyt2017@gmail.com*

Abstract. This article is written in a comparative literature context in addressing questions by Shakarim (1858–1931), the mystic poet of Kazakh nation, as he forwarded on anthropology and self-knowledge, and answering them from Molavi's viewpoint. The article studies and compares the philosophical worldviews in Molavi's and Shakarim's poems. Although the two poets lived in two different ages and a period of six centuries parts them and their views on anthropology and self-knowledge. Both Molavi and Shakarim attributed to allegory in expressing their self-knowledge subjects and in some occasions, scientific and social issues. There are many similarities between the thoughts and philosophical view in perceiving the world expressed by Molavi and Shakarim on "man" and "self-knowledge". As an example, both poets expressed the concept "self" by using various metaphors. In addition, they attributed to allegories and similes in times to explain the topic.

Keywords: Molana, Shakarim, mysticism, love, death, Perfect Human [Insan-e-Kamel], self-knowledge

For citation: Kudaibergenova, G. (2024) Answers to five questions posed by Shakarim from Molavi's worldview. *Vestnik Tomskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta. Filologiya – Tomsk State University Journal of Philology*. 89. pp. 245–255. (In Russian). doi: 10.17223/19986645/89/13

Introduction

Molavi Jalaleddin Rumi is not only famous among Farsi-speaking countries, his name has found fame around the world as well. The secret of Molavi's fame lies in his universal worldview: reading his works is inspiring for any nation; Molavi's view of the world does not rotate exclusively around a certain nation, rather, it covers the whole universe. Molavi's Mathnavi Manavi is like an encyclopedia one can search in order to find views addressing the religious, theological, mystic, psychological, social, ethical, pedagogical, literary and historical topics; Rumi studied some issues in scientific and philosophical terms as well.

Master Mohammad Taghi Jafari, one of the famous Iranian researchers who studied Molavi's philosophy and worldview for many years, divided Molavi's thought territory into five branches:

1. The territory of storytelling: According to Master Jafari, Molana shows highest excellent mental capacity in his skills of telling tales and stories, allegories, metaphor and simile. He presents the anthropology and theology topics in a way that can be easily understood by common people.

2. The territory of Molavi's scholarly views: Master Jafari notes that Molavi considered hundreds of scholarly research topics and even adopted very interesting innovations.

3. The territory of philosophical worldview: Master Jafari emphasizes on the subject that the epistemological personality of Molavi can never be captivated and constrained in the template of "*Isms*" axiomatic school-creation. The existing universe appeared to Molana as a reality, he does not introduce arguments on the finiteness of the universe; nonetheless, he does believe that whatever the universe is it is still a tiny dust before the greatness of Truth.

4. The territory of Molana's epistemological territory: Master Jafari says that Molavi, in the same way that he recognizes the existing universal system, sees the factors and shapes of knowledge infinite and beyond being limited to the common frameworks of our time and ordinary scholars.

5. The mystic territory of Molana: Master Jafari describes the mystic territory of Molavi as extraordinarily interesting and says that Molana neither negated any dimensions, talents and urges of human being, nor undermined any reality of the objective world. Molana sees and accepts the entirety of the being, ranging from the particles of the physical world to the whole nature and universe as a reality attached to the superior origin, and recognizes a confirmation from elements of thoughts and memories to the holy spirit and absolute wisdom. In this way, in his mystical approach, Molana takes a position opposite to the negative mysticism and proceeds in it [1. P. 28–46].

By studying the views of Master Jafari, I conclude that, from a scholastic viewpoint, Molavi had a specific perspective in his expression of universe which followed none of his precedent scholars. In addition, to explain his viewpoints, Molana did not make attribution to the complicated terms which might have proved difficult for an ordinary man to understand. Perhaps, it might be a reason so many of his contemporary mystic poets and those after him were inspired by his view of the universe and created their works under the influence of those by Molavi. In addition, by reading and contemplating on Molavi's works, especially Mathnavi Manavi, any person can find the specific subject he/she wants. In describing Molavi, Nicholson states that Jalaleddin's words are secretive, encrypted, hinting, confusing, constraining, and, most often, complicated. In addition, in his "The Mystics of Islam" and on the relationship of man and God, Nicholson says that we learn science and hypothesis from Qazali; and, emotions, faith and personal religious experiences from Jalaleddin [2. P. 97].

Research methodology and approach

The present article attempts to discuss and study a search in finding answers to the question set forth by Shakarim, a Kazakh poet, from Molavi's perspective.

Shakarim's questions address anthropology; that is, the purpose of creation of man, his being and character. Shakarim posed those questions by having it published at *Aikap* journal to be answered by the scholars and academicians of his era. Shakarim asked them to give reasons by seeking religious sources and stressed on the condition that answers be based on logic and reason. To his date, several Kazakh scholars and philosophers provided brief answers to those questions.

According to Gharifullah Esim, a Kazakh philosopher and researcher of Shakarim's views and life, Shakarim does know the answers to those questions by heart; though, his goal is to drive people to contemplate on the anthropology and self-consciousness more and benefit from it, and each person is urged to give his own answers. The answer is not the main issue, it is rather the search in self-consciousness issues, and this seeking is particularly a mandate for the seeker not to provide respond to Shakarim [3. P. 50–55].

I also referred to Molavi's Mathnavi Manavi in my search for those answers. As said before, Mathnavi is like an encyclopedia. In my search of the specific stanzas that address my subject, I used "Sea to Sea", the Mathnavi's Poem Elaboration (Kashfol Abyat Mathnavi). In addition, I went through the theories and the argument discussions and accounts of Molavi scholars such as Nicholson, Badiol Zaman Forouzanfar, Abdolhossein Zaririnkoob, Mohammad Taghi Jafari, and Karim Zamani. In addition to these, a summary of biography and Shakarim's school of thoughts are provided in the appendix. Furthermore, I am presenting Farsi translations of Shakarim's poems as an example.

Shakarim is one of the significant poets of Kazakh nation who lived at the end of the 19th century and the first years of the 20th century. He was fluent in Arabic, Farsi, and Turkish. He was interested in the Iranian classic literature and referred to Hafez as his guru and master. Shakarim translated a number of Hafez's poems into Kazakh. He translated the saga "Leily & Majnun" in Kazakh as well.

Shakarim's inclination to religion and his view of the world is closer to the Sufis' and mysticism; he wrote his philosophy based on his perception of God, and named it "Discipline of Conscience". Man and moral issues are in the core of his philosophy and literary attention. In addition, he contemplates about the subjects of existence, the issue of death, the existence of God and the secrets of universe and says:

How is my religion, what is my soul?
After the death, is not it ominous?" [4. P. 68].

Shakarim does not make distinction among men based on their religion and belief; rather, in his view, the main core of all religions is but one, and it is reaching the Truth by "pure heart". In this process, he says that it is not important which path man takes to achieve truth, it is rather important for man to seek his creator. He notes that "being faithful" is being in the path of righteousness and honesty and filling heart with love of God. Thus, Shakarim's religion is a kind of a romanticist religion.

In mystic literature, the concept of love is associated with various descriptions. The mystics attribute the mystery of Truth to Love. Molavi sees love beyond description and says:

*Love cannot contain in talks
Love is a sea its depth not to be seen;
The drops in sea are beyond counts
The seven seas are small before that Sea [5. P. 2731–2732].*

In Shakarim's view, divine love calls for self-sacrifice and having a pure heart. In his opinion, "pure heart" is the most important concept of symbolism as shown both in Shakarim's works and in his philosophic assertion. Pure heart is the most essential condition in the path of reaching God; that is, "pure heart" means killing the ego.

If an individual has the authority and faculty to control his evil ego, his heart will be pure and clear from greed, envy, jealousy, love of money and rank, pride and snob, entitlement and indulgence, then it will be filled with love and it is only in this rank that one discovers the secrets of universe. In Molavi's words:

*He whose garment is rent by a love
Ipurged of covetousness and all defect [6. P. 2012].*

Discussion and results

Shakarim's questions and answers to them:

1. For what purpose God, the Almighty, has created man?

In verse -Aych- 30 Sureh Baqarah in Qur'an, on creating man, it is said:

And (remember) when your Lord said to the angels: "Verily, I am going to place on the earth a vicegerent (Caliph)", they said: "Will you place therein those who will make mischief and shed blood, and we glorify you with praises and sanctify – you"? he said: "Surely I know what you do not know.

In his Mathnavi Manavi, Molavi describes human creation as follows:

*Thus, the Lord (Caliph) made a Victory, one having a heart
To the end that he might be a mirror for His sovereignty
Thus, He endowed him with infinite purity
And then, set up against him a contrary of darkness [7. P. 2153–2154].*

Molavi considers Quran Karim and stresses on man's rank in being chosen as Caliph (lord) on earth. Thus, in his view, the first purpose of creating man was to serve as the Divine Caliph on earth. Second, God has bestowed man certain attributes of His endless attributes and manifests His kind gifts into man's heart. Therefore, man's duties shall exhibit the attributes of the Almighty God, like an astrolabe which shows the direction. Third, the goal of creating man was to worship and his servitude to God. On the matter of worshiping and praying God,

Quran in verse 1, Surreh Al Jumuah says: “Whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth ‘constantly’ glorifies Allah-the King, the Most Holy, the Almighty, the All-Wise” / يُسَبِّحُ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ الْمَلِكِ الْقُدُّوسِ الْعَزِيزِ الْحَكِيمِ [8. P. 63:1].

Therefore, before analyzing the natural and spiritual entity of man, Molavi first explains about the creation of man and the materialistic world. In Molavi’s view, the main mission in this world is to take a path or road through which man recognizes himself and finds his “self-the-I”. Finding or discovering the self, “I” leads to the recognition of the mankind. That is, man finds and knows the Truth (God) by knowing himself; thus, the purpose of the main creation is for man to know: perceive God.

Molavi continues by explaining human attributes. Due to being the Caliph on Earth, the development of man becomes evident in two – materialistic and heavenly – dimensions. That is, man is spiritual in one aspect and physical in the other dimension. Both angel and beast are inside human characteristics since God created man from dust of the earth and water and then breathed His holy spirit as the breath of life into man’s nostrils. Thus, those two dimensions of human existence were present from the day of creation. Due to its bi-dimensional aspect, man is distinguished from other creatures as other creatures have only one dimension. Therefore, man can go higher than angels; on the other hand, if he falls under the servitude of his ego and desires, he can sink lower than beasts.

By studying Shakarim’s works, we observe that he, too, sees a human being as having two dimensions. In this part, Shakarim’s view is in agreement with the views expressed by Molavi. Shakarim divides the human existence into “good and ignorant”. “Good” means faithful and “ignorant” means a non-believer. In addition, Shakarim says of course man is created superior than all other creatures and every creature – except Iblis (Satan) – bowed before man. Later, however, a group of men failed in overcoming their “ego-self” and descended into ignorance, and Shakarim sees their ignorance a consequence of their “ego-self”. On the other hand, a good human can control his “ego-self”. A good person is an individual who has pure intention and has nothing to do with deceit. An ignorant man is a hypocrite and a double-faced creature. [4. P. 48].

2. What is valuable for man in this world?

Addressing this question from Molavi’s point of view will give this answer:

*Everything except love is devoured by Love;
To the beak of Love the two worlds are a single grain
Does a grain ever devour the bird?
Does the manger ever feed on the horse?* [5. P. 2726–2727].

In Molavi’s philosophy Love occupies the highest rank. In his view, Love is the only path that ascends man to Truth (God). Any being in the universe will be devoured by Love. That is, Molavi compares Love with other senses of the mankind, particularly with Mind. According to him, man’s mind can fly only a limited height, but Love can fly to eternity and has an infinite space to ascend. He believes

the rank of Love is the highest among all other attributes. In addition, Molavi reminds the eternity, stability, constancy and durability of knowledge of Love, and claims the importance of his own awareness of this cognition as well. Since Love is an attribute of God, it is therefore an endless and infinite quality that never comes to an end. In addition, Molavi notes that Love cannot be defined either. Any talks and description given about Love фкy“about” Love, not Love itself.

Man’s Love has several stages; the highest of them is Love of God. By summoning the mystic Love, Molavi does not reject the earthly love either. In his view, the physical and material love is the first labor in reaching the actual Love. Molavi sees many obstacles in the way of Love; however, by overcoming all those obstacles, man’s heart gains the potentials, equipment and openness to perceive and see God.

By studying Shakarim’s works, we see, in his view, conscience as the most valuable property. In his words, conscience is the product of fairness, justice and kindness. Therefore, there is conscience in any person; that is, any individual does possess good attributes, which keeps his heart from rust. [9. P. 50].

It appears Shakarim’s conscience is the very concept of Love as Shakarim takes conscience as a cognition and special passion that joins man to God. In addition, by having conscience, man reaches perfection. Now, if we take the moment and passions of a seeker or a mystic man in Sufism, the moment beings with contemplation and meditation in approaching which then changes into Love (Muhabbat). In the seeker’s view, Muhabbat is very important and significant. Dr. Sadjadi in his *Introduction to the Fundamentals of Mysticism and Sufism* book writes: Mesbahol Hedayeh (Dawn of Guidance) is “The foundation of any excellent moment is Muhabbat”, the moment of joy and binding also comes from Muhabat [10. P. 35, 40]. So, Shakarim’s conscience reaches to Love.

Thus, conscience is only a matter of a human being. Conscience is the mirror of the soul and measures the qualities of the humankind. Conscience is the inner voice of a human being that keeps him from committing evil acts. Conscience in fact is the criterion of personal morality that does not allow one to go beyond the authorized conduct. If a person passes that line, his inner self grows sad, regretful and feels pain. Therefore, the essential goal of both Molavi and Shakarim is reaching human perfection, and they offer their own theories to achieve that level. In Molavi’s view, it is Love; for Shakarim, it is conscience. Though, the basis and foundations of both Love and conscious is one.

3. Is it peace or torment for man after he dies?

There is a well-known Sufi and mystical term which says: “Die before dying”, which Molavi takes as the core and essence in addressing the concept of Death.

*Die, Die in this Love
As you will find Soul when you die in this Love.
Die, Die and fear not of this death,
As you will take the skies when you ascend from this mud.
Die, die and cut this bind of Ego
As this ego is a chain and you are captives [11. P. 159].*

In Molavi's terms, the concept of death is the perishing of ego. Man must first know the characteristics of ego. The properties of ego are problematic in all issues and could not be easily surpassed. Molavi gives many similes for describing the ego, terms such as thief, witch, magpie, crocodile, dog, and dragon. If man resists and fights back his ego, and experiences that kind of death, i.e., selflessness and not being in his life, he is reborn and he can feel the beautiful sensation of childhood and Love once again.

The death of the ego-self is not forgotten in Shakarim's works either, and he studied ego-self from different dimensions as Molavi did. He sometimes describes the ego-self as a "Beautiful Lady". The ego-self is like a Beautiful Lady that makes man lose his awareness and drives him to follow her blindfolded. However, the Beautiful Lady, no matter how elegant and pleasant in appearance, conceals many flaws in her inner self.

*By the objective eye, self is deceiving
Like a beautiful lady, she is praised by people.
Look at her with the eyes of your soul,
You will then find the entirety of that lady [4. P. 72].*

In the first and second lines of the poem, Shakarim describes the ego-self as a trick and sharp sword, and the third and fourth lines could be interpreted in two ways:

(1) They convey a secondary meaning. In Sufi's understanding, there is the term "dead-go". The seeker and mystic man (gnostic) passes through a difficult path for the apprehension of Truth and becoming a Full Man. The essential condition in this path is fighting with the ego or self. The seeker must control the ego or self that commits evil and beastly acts, and shows greed and lust. A seeker who can control his ego-self is called "ego-dead". In these lines, Shakarim means this ego-dead concept; that is, he says, we wish for having a dead-ego, meaning "kill our ego".

(2) A person who has no knowledge, power and capability to fight his ego-self, becomes its captive; his human dignity and value perishes, and he falls into the same level as beast. These people are counted as dead; so, why should we sink to that level, we can strengthen our faith and stand before our ego-self.

As we can see, both poems give the same definition in describing the ego-self.

Talking about Death, Molavi starts his argument with the term *جَمِيعُ الدُّنْيَا* *muḥṣarūn*, which is a part of Verse 32, Surreh Yas: "All creatures are present before us" [12. P. 174]. Molavi warns people that man's soul is to appear before God to be judged and if man's deeds and intentions have been good, he will be gifted by the divine rewards; if he has done sins and evil, he will deserve divine punishment. Thus, he chooses divine torment for him.

Answering the question of torment and reward, Shakarim returns to the concept of conscience and says:

*My dear, our spirit is eternal
Conscience is the savings of the two worlds [4. P. 163].*

Like Molavi, Shakarim expresses the eternity of soul; that is, death does not touch the soul, but he notes the appearance of the soul in "Place of Trial" and stresses on the necessity of conscience in both this world and the other world. Shakarim's conscience means good deeds in this world and heaven in the after-world. Reward after death means the bestowment of the Almighty God.

4. Who is the best of man?

The best human being means a perfect man, according to Shahid Motahari. The implication of Perfect Man in mystic literature was first introduced by the famous mystic man, philosopher Mohieddin Arabi Indoles Taei, in the 15th century. Mohieddin Arabi is the father of Islamic mysticism; that is, all mystic men who appeared among the Islamic nation, including the Farsi-speaking Iranian mystic men are followers of the Mohieddin School. Molavi, too, is one of the students of the Mohiuddin's school. His expression is: "A perfect full human is the jewel in the ring of creation universe" [13. P. 20]. This expression led to the prevalence of the term Full Human in the mystical literature. Molavi described Full Human in different aspects: clearance in vision; enthusiasm to discover the secrets of the concealed world; the unifier of the mankind; the holder of a clear, pure and big heart; the medium of divine gift; his body in nature and his soul in supernatural world, etc. [11. P. 210]. However; among all those attributes of Full Human, Molavi recognized self-awareness and conscience as an important factor; that is, knowing the self, or, better, perceiving the self and conscience, which serve as knowing God, is the most valuable, necessary and essential attributes of Full Human.

*One day a base fellow said to a dervish:
"You are unknown to anyone here".
He replied: "If the ordinary does not know me,
I know very well who I am" [7. P. 4331-433].*

So, mirror in Molavi's thought is a heart; that is, he described human's heart-soul as a mirror, a heart which is plain, with no evil intention, no hatred, no greed, no desires, and no regret, a heart as pure and shiny as a mirror. When the mirror of heart is cleared and purified from the rust of desire and lust, it can then reflect the figures and secretes of the concealed world, and man can see them.

In the works of the Kazah poet too, self-awareness and conscience are reflected. In his poem "I Put a Mirror in Front of Me", Shakarim uses the metaphor to express his view:

I looked at the mirror to recognize myself, and I saw my ears were deaf, my eyes were unable to see the truth, my sense of smell could not feel the odor, and my common sense is perished. No residue is remained from honesty, and my heart has turned black. O' man, never imagine it is only I who is like that. Look at me and see yourself. If for finding greatness all are to go through a sieve to find the (*bigger soul*) there will remain neither a scientist nor an ignorant, all will pass through that sieve [4. P. 132].

The poet uses this allegory to say man's knowledge of the self passes through the path of self-cognition and the metaphor of mirror to explain this. It means, first, man must take a look at himself, know his self, apprehend who he is, why he is living, how he can continue this life in a righteous and clean way, notice the obstacles that lead the committer to perish, distinguish between truth and false, and know others through knowing himself. In addition, for him, the riddle of mirror means a reflector to see the heart, even wisdom and honesty; and, ultimately, the poet recommends making the heart transparent and practicing honesty.

In mystical literature, mirror plays a specific role and has been introduced as the fullest code in self-awareness. There are some examples of this in the following paragraphs.

(1) Two mirrors facing each other create infinite images. It is the manifestation of God in man and the universe, absolute and infinite. That is, God and man are two mirrors; one of them manifests in infinity and the other can receive the infinity. That is, the manifestation of God is endless, and human heart, too, is like a mirror susceptible to receiving infinity.

(2) Mirror finds meaning when one turns to see it; man by going to see the "truth" and truth "faces" him to recognize the man, anything has one or more attributes by which it will be meant, explained and perceived: hand by gripping, foot by walking, water with washing, fire by burning and causing burns, and mirror by being turned to it. It is the human heart which is the mirror of truth, and it receives meaning only through seeing in the truth, there will be no attribute or use without this. The best and fullest use of the lover and the loved is in their giving meaning to each other, and their attribute is seeing each other. The lover defines the loved one, and the loved one defines the lover. Being in love is an attribute of being a lover. For this reason, the value of the world is being able to see the loved one, and it is possible to see the true Love. [14. P. 5, 11, 15].

5. Does man becomes better or worse as time passes?

Answering this question needs a thorough study of this subject and addressing this topic by taking a one-sided view is a mistake. There have always been good persons and bad persons. Molavi expresses good vs. bad persons and their contradiction towards each other fairly well in these stanzas:

*Since in eternity it was the will
And the decree of the God, the Forgiver,
To reveal and manifest Himself
Nothing can be shown without a contrary
And there was no contrary
To that incomparable King [7. P. 2151–2152].*

Based on Molavi's poems, one can conclude, everything can be known by its antagonist. If everything was good, we had no device to imagine the value of goodness and if there was no evil, we would have no understanding of the difference between good and evil. Both good and evil have always existed and will always stay.

Conclusion

Based on this comparative study, I arrive at the following conclusions.

(1) The concept “Man” is very extensive. A human being is born with extraordinary and superior capabilities and faculties and does possess a much higher rank and place than other creatures. Man undertook an important and also difficult task. That is, man shall maintain the “great name” given to him and live in the way his “name” demands. He shall not forget his important mission and does that mission in a worthy way.

(2) Both poets, Molavi and Shakarim, observed the mankind in all aspects, and both are able to answer questions about the human being. The interesting point is that, when we read their works, we notice man is introduced by many characteristics, and the poets described him in both physical and spiritual dimensions. They mostly speak like psychologists; it seems they reached this level of knowledge through knowing their own “self”.

(3) The works of Molavi and Shakarim not only include the literary tradition, school and philosophy of their predecessors, they also present them in other shades and tones, and improve them to serve as a foundation and essence in developing religious and philosophical thoughts as well. Thus, in developing the human and social content, attention to the common sense and reasoning is highly valuable; and it is not by accident that what they left behind does not merely attract those who are engaged in studying or practicing Islamic mysticism and philosophy, as the works of the two poets are appealing for all classes of readers who intent to find answers to the questions they have particularly on the concept of man.

(4) By comparing the two poets’ thoughts, we see that both Molavi and Shakarim share many similarities in their view of the world and philosophy about man and self-conscious knowledge. As an example, both poets described the concept of the ego-self by using many similes and allegories, and sometimes they used metaphors for explaining the subject.

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Information about the author:

G. Kudaibergenova, PhD, senior lecturer, Al-Farabi Kazakh National University (Almaty, Republic of Kazakhstan). E-mail: gulbahyt2017@gmail.com

The author declares no conflicts of interests.

Информация об авторе:

Кудайбергенова Г.К. – PhD, ст. преподаватель кафедры Ближнего Востока и Южной Азии факультета востоковедения КазНУ им. Аль-Фараби (Алматы, Казахстан). E-mail: gulbahyt2017@gmail.com

Автор заявляет об отсутствии конфликта интересов.

*The article was submitted 13.12.2022;
approved after reviewing 28.04.2023; accepted for publication 27.05.2024.*

*Статья поступила в редакцию 13.12.2022;
одобрена после рецензирования 28.04.2023; принята к публикации 27.05.2024.*