

Tâhir al-Mawlavî's Method of Comment and His Commentary on The First Eighteen Couplets of The Mathnawi

Tâhirü'l-Mevlevî'nin Şerh Usulü ve Mesnevî'nin İlk On Sekiz Beytine
Yapmış Olduğu Şerh

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Öz

Mevlânâ'nın başyapıt eseri Mesnevî, İslam medeniyetinin önemli kültür hazinelerinden biridir. Kaleme alındığı zaman diliminden günümüze kadar ilgiyle takip edilen bu eser üzerine birçok şerh çalışması yapılmıştır. Bu şerhler arasında, Osmanlı'nın son dönemleri ile Cumhuriyetin ilk çeyrek asrına tanıklık eden Tâhirü'l-Mevlevî'nin Mesnevî Şerhi de yer almaktadır. Tâhirü'l-Mevlevî'nin Mesnevî Şerhi, onun Fatih Camii'nde başlayıp, Süleymaniye ve Lâleli Camii'lerinde devam ettirdiği Mesnevî derslerinin yazıya dökülen ve daha sonra kitaplaştırılmış şeklidir. Günümüzde en çok tercih edilen ve okunan şerhler arasında gösterilmektedir. Bu çalışmada, son Mesnevî şârihlerinden Tâhirü'l-Mevlevî'nin şerh usulü ve Mesnevî'nin ilk on sekiz beytine yaptığı şerh konu edinilmiştir. Giriş kısmında geleneksel dönemden modern döneme Mesnevî şerhleri içerisinde öne çıkan şerhlere temas edilmiştir. Çalışmanın devamında ise Tâhirü'l-Mevlevî'nin Mesnevî'yi şerh etme gerekçesine yer verildikten sonra şerhin yazım süreci hakkında bilgi verilmiş, şerhin dil ve şekil özellikleri, üslubu, usul ve düzeni, kaynakları, muhteva hususiyetleri, yazma ve matbu nüshaları ele alınmıştır. Araştırmanın kalan bölümünde ise Tâhirü'l-Mevlevî'nin Mesnevî'nin ilk on sekiz beytine getirmiş olduğu yorum tetkik edilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Tasavvuf, Mevlânâ, Mesnevî, Mesnevî Şerh Geleneği, On Sekiz Beyit, Tâhirü'l-Mevlevî.*

Abstract

Mathnawi, the masterpiece of Mawlāna, is one of the important cultural treasures of Islamic civilization. Many commentaries have been made on this work, which has been followed with interest from the time it was written to the present day. Among these commentaries is Tâhir al-Mawlavî's Mathnawi Commentary, which witnessed the last periods of the Ottoman Empire and the first quarter century of the Republic. Tâhir al-Mawlavî's Commentary on Mathnawi is the written form of his "Mesnevî Dersleri (Mathnawi Lessons)" which he started in Fâtih Mosque and continued in Suleymâniye and Lâleli Mosques, and then translated into a book. It is among the most preferred and read commentaries today by Turkish speakers. In this study, the commentary method of Tâhir al-Mawlavî, one of the last Mathnawi commentators, and his commentary on the first eighteen couplets of Mathnawi are discussed. In the introduction part, the commentaries that stand out among the Mathnawi commentaries from the traditional period to the modern period have been touched upon. In the continuation of the study, after the justification of Tâhir al-Mawlavî's commentary on Mathnawi is given, information about the writing process of the commentary is given. In addition, the language and form features of the commentary, its style, method and order, sources, content features, written and

printed copies are discussed. In the remaining part of the research, Tāhir al-Mawlavī's interpretation of the first eighteen couplets of Mathnawi has been examined.

Keywords: *Şūfism, Mawlāna, Mathnawi, Mathnawi Commentary Tradition, First Eighteen Couplet, Tāhir al-Mawlavī.*

Extended Summary

Undoubtedly, the greatest work of Mawlānā is *Mathnawi*. The *Mathnawi* was translated into world languages and formed the basis for independent commentary activities in various cultural basins. In the Anatolian geography, Musliḥuddīn Muṣṭafā Surūrī, Şem'ī Efendi, Sheikh Ismā'īl Rusūhī Ankaravī, Sarı 'Abdullah Efendi, Ismā'īl Ḥakkı Bursevī, 'Abidin Pasha, Tāhir al-Mawlavī, Aḥmed 'Avni Konuk, Abdūlbāki Gölpinarlı are the famous commentators of *Mathnawi*.

In the 20th century, among the commentaries made on *Mathnawi*, Tāhir al-Mawlavī's (d. 1951) "*Mathnawi Commentary*", A. Avni Konuk's (d. 1938) "*Mathnawi Sheriff Commentary*", Kenan Rifā'ī's (d. 1950) "*Mathnawi Commentary*" and Abdūlbāki Gölpinarlı's (d. 1982) "*Mathnawi and Commentary*" can be mentioned. These commentaries are also the products of the *Mathnawi* commentary tradition of the modern period, that is, the Republican period.

This study, informs about Tāhir al-Mawlavī's commentary on *Mathnawi* and his commentary on the first eighteen couplets is examined. Tāhir al-Mawlavī was one of the last Mathnawihāns (Reading *Mathnawi*) and *Mathnawi* commentators of the Ottoman Empire. Tāhir al-Mawlavī (born 1877-died 1951) was a versatile personality who lived in the last periods of the Ottoman Empire and the founding years of the Republic and was a thinker who managed to produce comprehensive works despite the negative social and political. Tāhir al-Mawlavī's greatest ambition is to translate and annotate Mawlānā's unique work, *Mathnawi*.

Tāhir al-Mawlavī both gave the meaning of the couplets in *Mathnawi* and explained the difficult to understand couplets during the *Mathnawi* lessons in Fātih Mosque. He wrote down what he was going to say before the lesson, and the commentary on *Mathnawi* came into being as a result of the clearing of what was written by Tāhir al-Mawlavī with some additions. Perhaps the most important feature of Tāhir al-Mawlavī's commentary on *Mathnawi* is that he has assimilated the previous *Mathnawi* annotation tradition and annotated the *Mathnawi* with an understandable language and style in accordance with the spirit of the time. Tāhir al-Mawlavī, who did not

live to comment the whole *Mathnawi*, reached the 1148th couplet of the 5th volume of the *Mathnawi*, in other words, the 17309th couplet of the *Mathnawi*.

Tāhir al-Mawlavī's library, which also contains the commentary on *Mathnawi*, was transferred to his student Fethi Sezāi Türkmen after his death. The works preserved by the Türkmen family were donated to the Suleymāniye Library by Fethi Sezai Türkmen's wife in 1980. The copies in the Suleymāniye Library, Fethi Sezai Türkmen Collection are respectively "69, 68, 109, 108, 107, 106, 105, 104, 103, 99, 102, 101, 100, 98, 97, 96, 95, 15, 14, 19, 17" and 16 and It is recorded in a scattered structure as. The copy in the Mawlāna Museum Specialized Library consists of eleven notebooks. These notebooks are recorded between 9057 and 9067 archive numbers. A part of Tāhir al-Mawlavī's commentary was published in the form of uniforms when he was alive. The most complete edition of the commentary today was realized in ten volumes by Shamil Publishing House. Tāhir al-Mawlavī's *Mathnawi Commentary* is among the commentaries that are read with interest today.

The sources that Tāhir al-Mawlavī mostly refers to while commenting on Mesnevi are the *Qur'ān* and hadiths. However, while creating his commentary, he also benefited from sources in the fields of Şūfism, fiqh, kalam, Islamic history, philosophy, logic, morality, language and literature.

The most important feature of Tāhir al-Mawlavī's *Mathnawi Commentary* is that its language is fluent and simple. The commentary is at a level that the public can understand. Tāhir al-Mawlavī tried to express even the most ambiguous subjects with an understandable language and style. Due to this feature of the commentary, we can say that it is among the most widely read commentaries today. In the commentary, firstly, the translation of the couplet is given, and then what it means is emphasized. Tāhir al-Mawlavī, focusing on the question of what is meant to be expressed with the couplets in the *Mathnawi*, explained the *Mathnawi* in a plain language.

Tāhir al-Mawlavī had competently conveyed the tradition of *Mathnawi* commentary in his commentary on *Mathnawi*. It is seen that Tāhir al-Mawlavī touched on many issues of Şūfi thought and explains the concepts of Şūfism in his *Mathnawi Commentary*. Tāhir al-Mawlavī tried to explain *Mathnawi* by associating it with many Şūfi classics, depending on the tradition he maintained. One of the features that distinguishes Tāhir al-Mawlavī's *Mathnawi Commentary* from other commentaries is the simplicity of its language. Another aspect of Tāhir al-Mawlavī's *Mathnawi Commentary* that differs from other commentaries is that it frequently references Islamic history. His knowledge of Islamic history is also reflected in his commentary.

Introduction

One of the most important cultural treasures of Islamic civilization is *Mathnawi*, in which Mawlānā Jalāl al-dīn Rūmī (d. 672/1273) expressed mystical wisdom in a unique style. This work, which is known with names such as "*Mathnawi-i Ma'nevī*" and "*Mathnawi-i Sherif*" out of respect, has received great favor for centuries since the time it was written. The copies, publications, translations and annotations of *Mathnawi* show us that it was a work that attracted attention in every period and read by all segments of it. Tāhir al-Mawlavī was one of the people who benefited from Mawlānā's spiritual climate and conveyed the *Mathnawi-i Sherif* with annotation to us. Before revealing Tāhir al-Mawlavī's place in the *Mathnawi* commentary tradition, it would be appropriate to mention the commentaries on *Mathnawi* from past to present and the prominent features of these commentaries.

With the Republic, the tradition of annotation was subjected to a compulsory distinction between classical and contemporary.¹ The fact that *Mathnawi* is a work of great interest has enabled it to be explained couplet by verse and this has become a tradition over time. During the commentary of the *Mathnawi*, besides the issues of mysticism, very wide areas such as religion, morality, literature, and history are entered into the *Mathnawi* annotation and the views and interpretations of these fields are expressed. While *Mathnawi* commentary activities were performed in dervish lodges at first, they were performed in mosques and private conversation (sohba) places later on. The vast majority of the works that have been passed down to us as "*Mathnawi Commentary*" consist of the written form of these activities.²

No work in the type of classical *Mathnawi* commentary before the 15th century has been found. However, the works of Mawlānā's son Sulṭān Walad³ (d. 712/1312) named *Ibtidānāme*, *Rababnāme* and *Intihānāme* are works that can be evaluated as annotations of *Mathnawi* in terms of meaning.⁴ In the meantime, Ahmed Rūmī's (d. 725/1325) *Daqaik al-haqaiq wa raqaiq al-taraiq* is seen as the first Persian commentary.⁵ The first example of the classical

¹ Ömür Ceylan, *Böyle Buyurdu Süfi* (Istanbul: Kapı Publications, 2005), 238.

² Mehmet Demirci, "Mesnevî Şerhleri ve Şârihleri Hakkında Birkaç Not", *Proceedings of the Second International Symposium on Mawlānā, Mathnawi and Mawlawikhānes (Mawlavī Lodges)* (Manisa: Celal Bayar University, 2010), 39.

³ See: Hülya Küçük and Ibrahim W. Gamard, Sultan Walad In The Footsteps of Rumi and Shams, ed. Ibrahim W. Gamard (Louisville: Fons Vitae, 2022) 1-368.

⁴ Semih Ceyhan, *İsmail Ankaravî ve Mesnevî Şerhi* (PhD Thesis, Uludağ University, Social Sciences Institute, 2005), 3.

⁵ Ceyhan, *İsmail Ankaravî ve Mesnevî Şerhi*, 4.

commentary method is the commentary of Kemāleddīn Hārizmī (d. 840/1436) named *Jawahir al-asrar wa zawahir al-anwar*. In this context, Hārizmī is considered to be the pioneer of the classical *Mathnawi* commentary tradition. The commentary of Hārizmī was written in Persian and covers the first three volumes of *Mathnawi*.⁶ One of the prominent commentaries in the 15th century belongs to Shaykh al-Islām Mollā Fanārī (d. 834/1441). Written in Arabic, this commentary consists of the commentary of *Mathnawi*'s preamble.⁷ Being the first commentary written in Anatolia is one of the things that makes it important. In addition, it is possible to accept Mollā Fanārī as the pioneer of the Ottoman *Mathnawi* commentary tradition.

In the 16th century, Musliḥuddīn Muṣṭafā Surūrī's *Mathnawi Commentary* (*Şerh-i Mesnevî*) and Şem'î Efendi's (d. 1011/1602 [?]) *Mathnawi Commentary* (*Şerh-i Mesnevî*) are the prominent *Mathnawi* commentaries. Surūrī's commentary has the characteristics of being the first full annotation in Persian in the Anatolian field,⁸ while Şem'î Efendi's commentary has the characteristics of being the first full annotation in Turkish.⁹

Among the commentaries written in the 17th century, 'Abd al-Macīd Sivāsī's (d. 1049/1639) "*Mathnawi Commentary*", Sheikh Ismā'īl Rusūkhī's (d. 1041/1631) "*Mathnawi Commentary*" and Sarı 'Abdullah Efendi's (d. 1071/1660) "*Şerhu'l-Mathnawi*" stand out.

Among the prominent *Mathnawi* commentaries written in the 18th century, the *Mathnawi* commentary of Ismā'īl Ḥakkı Bursevī (d. 1137/1725) can be mentioned. This commentary is the commentary of the part up to the 748th couplet of *Mathnawi*.¹⁰

In the 19th century, the *Mathnawi* commentary of Sheikh Murād Bukḥārī (d. 1848) as a concise commentary and the *Mathnawi* commentary of 'Ābidīn Pasha (d. 1907) are among the prominent commentaries. Bukḥārī managed to explain the entire *Mathnawi* in a short and concise way. 'Abidin

⁶ Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı, *Mevlânâ'dan Sonra Mevlevîlik*, (Istanbul: İnkılâp Publications, 2018), 139.

⁷ Mustafa Aşkar, "Molla Fenarî'nin (ö. 834/1431) 'Şerhu Dîbaceti'l-Mesnevî' Adlı Risâlesi ve Tahlilî", *Tasavvuf İlmî ve Akademik Araştırma Dergisi* 6/14 (2005): 83-102.

⁸ İsmail Güleç, "Musliḥuddin Mustafa Sürûrî", *Turkish Religious Foundation Encyclopedia of Islam* (Istanbul: TDV Publications, 2010), 38: 171.

⁹ Şeyda Öztürk, "Şem'î", *Turkish Religious Foundation Encyclopedia of Islam* (Istanbul: TDV Publications, 2010), 38: 504.

¹⁰ The commentary was prepared and published by Ismail Güleç. See: Ismā'īl Ḥakkı Bursevī, *Mesnevî Şerhi (Rûhu'l-Mesnevî)*, Fifth Edition (Istanbul: İnsan Publications, 2017).

Pasha's commentary named "*Translate and Sherh Mathnawi Sheriff*" covers the first volume of *Mathnawi*.¹¹

In the 20th century, among the commentaries made on *Mathnawi*, Tāhir al-Mawlavī's (d. 1951) "*Mathnawi Commentary*", A. Avni Konuk's (d. 1938) "*Mathnawi Sheriff Commentary*", Kenan Rifāi's (d. 1950) "*Mathnawi Commentary*" and Abdülbāki Gölpınarlı's (d. 1982) "*Mathnawi and Commentary*" can be mentioned. These commentaries are also the products of the *Mathnawi* commentary tradition of the modern period, that is, the Republican period.

1. The Commentary Method of Tāhir al-Mawlavī

One of the representatives of the *Mathnawi* commentary tradition in the 20th century was Tāhir al-Mawlavī. Perhaps the most important feature of Tāhir al-Mawlavī's commentary on *Mathnawi* is that he has assimilated the previous *Mathnawi* annotation tradition and annotated the *Mathnawi* with an understandable language and style in accordance with the spirit of the time.

1.1. Tāhir al-Mawlavī's Reason for Commenting on *Mathnawi*

Tāhir al-Mawlavī thinks that the language of the Anqaravī commentary, which has an important place among the *Mathnawi* commentaries, could not find a response in the eyes of the modern people, and that the commentary could not be adequately understood by them. Tāhir al-Mawlavī, who is of the opinion that the recent *Mathnawi* translations do not satisfy the reader, wanted to translate and annotate the *Mathnawi* in a plain and fluent language and style that can be understood by the wide public. In our opinion, another factor in Tāhir al-Mawlavī's annotation of *Mathnawi* is his admiration for Mawlanā and *Mathnawi* since his childhood. The fact that he devoted his life to the service of *Mathnawi* can also be shown as another reason for commenting on *Mathnawi*.

1.2. Writing Process of Tāhir al-Mawlavī's *Mathnawi* Commentary

In order to explain the writing process of the commentary, it would be appropriate to explain the *Mathnawi* lessons of Tāhir al-Mawlavī in Fātiḥ Mosque as an introduction. Because the writing process of the aforementioned commentary started with the *Mathnawi* memorandums. Tāhir al-Mawlavī both gave the meaning of the couplets in *Mathnawi* and explained the couplets that are difficult to understand during the *Mathnawi*

¹¹ For information on the form and content characteristics of 'Ābidīn Pasha's commentary, see. İsa Çelik, *Abidin Paşa'nın Mesnevî Şerhi ve Tasavvufî Düşünceleri* (Istanbul: Vefa Publications, 2007).

lessons in Fātih Mosque. He wrote down what he was going to say before the lesson, and the commentary on *Mathnawi* came into being as a result of the clearing of these writings with some additions by him.

After the death of Meĥmed Es'ad Dede, the *Mathnawi* memorandums performed in public at the Fātih Mosque were continued by Qaraĥiřārlı Aĥmed Efendi and Tāhir al-Mawlavī continued this duty following the death of Aĥmed Efendi.¹² Tāhir al-Mawlavī started *Mathnawi* readings in Fātih Mosque on 20 August 1923, upon the suggestion and insistence of 'Alī Riđā Efendi, a close friend of Qaraĥiřārlı Aĥmed Efendi, and with the encouragement of his close circle.¹³

He continued his *Mathnawi* lessons, which he gave once a week, first on Monday and then on Tuesday, after the afternoon prayer, until December 7, 1925. This duty, which he continued for about 28 months, was interrupted by his arrest and being transferred to Ankara to be tried in the Independence Courts.¹⁴

Tāhir al-Mawlavī returned to Istanbul after being acquitted by the Independence Court but could not continue his *Mathnawi* lessons. He expresses the following regarding this process: "Even though I was acquitted by the court on February 3, 1926 and came to Istanbul on February 16, 1926, I did not find it necessary to teach in the mosque anymore. I decided to abandon it for a while."¹⁵ We are of the opinion that the reason behind the statements "I did not see the need" was the oppressive attitude especially in the field of religion and mysticism in the early periods of the Republic of Turkey.

After a break of about twenty-three years, *Mathnawi* classes started again on May 29, 1948. An announcement was made in the newspaper with an advertisement titled "*Mathnawi Lessons in Suleymāniye*" and the following statements were included. "The *Mathnawi* course, which was donated to be taught in the Suleymāniye Mosque by a person named Kubad Sergeant in Hijri 1080, continued until 1210 Hijri and was abolished. This lesson was given to Tāhir Olgun today. The lesson will start after the noon prayer on

¹² Tāhir al-Mawlavī, *Mesnevî-i Şerif Takrîrâtı*, Mawlāna Museum Specialized Library, Archive Number: 9057, Vol: 1, Notebook Number: 1, pp. 1-2.

¹³ Tāhir al-Mawlavī, *Mesnevî Takrîrleri*, Mawlāna Museum Specialized Library, Archive Number: 9061, Vol: 2, Notebook Number: 1, p. 2.

¹⁴ Tāhir al-Mawlavī, *Matbuat Ālemindeki Hayatım*, (Istanbul: Büyüyen Ay Publisher, 187.

¹⁵ Tāhir al-Mawlavī, *Mesnevî-i Şerif Takrîrâtı*, Mawlāna Museum Specialized Library, Archive Number: 9057, Vol: 1, Notebook Number: 1, p. 1.

Saturday, May 29, 1948, and the recital will be continued on the same day and time every week."

Despite his advanced age and health problems, Tāhir al-Mawlavī spent a lot of time completing the commentary on the *Mathnawi*, but he did not live to complete the commentary. It has reached the 1148th couplet of the 5th volume of the *Mathnawi*, in other words, the 17309th couplet of the *Mathnawi*. Es'ad Ekicigil says that Tāhir al-Mawlavī's greatest desire in recent times is to complete his commentary on *Mathnawi*.¹⁶ The missing part of the commentary was completed by Şefik Can, a student of Tāhir al-Mawlavī.

Tāhir al-Mawlavī, who taught *Mathnawi* in Fātih, Suleymāniye and Lāleli Mosques, decided to publish his *Mathnawi* notes in book form upon the proposal of Es'ad Ekicigil, the owner of the *İslām Yolu* magazine, and his notes were named "*Mesnevî Dersleri (Mathnawi Lessons)*" as an appendix to the Islamic Way as of February 11, 1949. It was started to be published in the form of uniforms, once every fifteen days. The commentary on *Mathnawi*, which Tāhir al-Mawlavī corrected while he was alive, was published in 117 parts. Ekicigil reported that the 118th section was sent to him to be corrected, but due to his death, he returned without the correction of the form.¹⁷

1.3. Written and Printed Copies of Tāhir al-Mawlavī's *Mathnawi* Commentary

Manuscript copies of Tāhir al-Mawlavī's commentary on *Mathnawi* are available in Suleymāniye Library and Konya Museum Directorate Mawlāna Museum Specialization Library. It should be noted that the copies of the authors in the Suleymāniye Library are in a dispersed form, with different names and numbers.

The manuscript copy of Tāhir al-Mawlavī's *Mathnawi* translation and commentary is in the Fethi Sezāi Türkmen Collection of the Suleymāniye Library. Since the writing process of the commentary started with the notes taken by Tāhir al-Mawlavī while he was teaching *Mathnawi* in Fātih Mosque, these manuscripts consist of more than one notebook in the form of drafts and present a scattered structure. In the first parts of the *Mathnawi* commentary,

¹⁶ Tāhir al-Mawlavī, *Eserler, Notlar, Vefatına Söylenen Şiirler, Kasideler* (Tāhir al-Mawlavī, Works, Notes, Poems Said to His Death, Odes), Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Cemalettin Server Revnakoğlu Arşivi, No. 193, Es'ad Ekicigil's "Our Great Loss".

¹⁷ Tāhir al-Mawlavī, *Eserler, Notlar, Vefatına Söylenen Şiirler, Kasideler* (Tāhir al-Mawlavī, Works, Notes, Poems Said to His Death, Odes), Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Cemalettin Server Revnakoğlu Archive, No. 193, Es'ad Ekicigil's "Our Great Loss".

it is seen that while the notebooks were named "*Fatih Camiinde Mesnevî-i Şerif Takrîrâtı (Mathnawi Sherif Readings in Fâtih Mosque)*", later names such as "*Mesnevî-i Şerif Takrîrâtı (Mathnawi Sherif Readings)*", "*Mesnevî Takrirleri (Mathnawi Readings)*", "*Mesnevî Dersleri (Mathnawi Lessons)*" were used.

Tâhir al-Mawlavî's library, which also contains the commentary on *Mathnawi*, was transferred to his student Fethi Sezâi Türkmen after his death. The works preserved by the Türkmen family were donated to the Suleymâniye Library by Fethi Sezâi Türkmen's wife in 1980. The copies in the Suleymâniye Library, Fethi Sezâi Türkmen Collection are respectively "69, 68, 109, 108, 107, 106, 105, 104, 103, 99, 102, 101, 100, 98, 97, 96, 95, 15, 14, 19, 17" and 16 and It is recorded in a scattered structure as. The copy in the Mawlâna Museum Specialized Library consists of eleven notebooks. These notebooks are recorded between 9057 and 9067 archive numbers.

After being published in a total of 113 forms, Tâhir al-Mawlavî's commentary on *Mathnawi* took the form of a book by being bound under the name of "*Mesnevî Dersleri (Mathnawi Lessons)*". The commentary, which covers the entire first volume of the *Mathnawi* and a part of the second volume, was published by Işıl Printing House in the form of five books under the name of "*Mesnevî Dersleri (Mathnawi Lessons)*" while Tâhir al-Mawlavî was alive. Es'ad Ekicigil, the owner of the Islâm Yolu Newspaper, was the editor of the newspaper.

After Tâhir al-Mawlavî's death, the publication of the commentary was suspended for a while. Fethi Sezai Türkmen complemented this unfinished process and ensured that the annotation was published in Aḥmed Sait Printing House in 14 volumes between 1963-1975 under the name of "*Mathnawi Commentary (Şerh-i Mesnevî)*". The missing couplets of the *Mathnawi* in the commentary were translated and annotated by Şefik Can, a student of Tâhir al-Mawlavî. This work of Şefik Can was published in 4 volumes between 1982-1985. The present complete edition of the commentary was made by Shamil Publications. It was published in 10 volumes with the title "*Mathnawi Commentary*", with the translation and annotation of Şefik Can added.

1.4. Language and Form Features of Commentary

Tâhir al-Mawlavî's commentary on *Mathnawi* was written in accordance with the language of the century in which he lived. The addressee group of Tâhir al-Mawlavî is the Mawlawi dervishes, the students who attend the *Mathnawi* lessons and the mosque community, that is, the public.

Therefore, it can be stated that he used a language suitable for the level of the addressee group in the writing of the *Mathnawi* commentary.

The most important feature of Tāhir al-Mawlavī's *Mathnawi* Commentary is that its language is at a level that the public can understand. Tāhir al-Mawlavī tried to express even the most ambiguous subjects with an understandable language and style. Due to this feature of the commentary, we can say that it is among the most widely read commentaries today.

1.5. Style of Commentary

The frequent references to verses and hadiths in Tāhir al-Mawlavī's commentary on *Mathnawi* enrich his narrative. Another richness of the commentary is the occasional mention of the intellectual and social characteristics of the period. It is seen that Tāhir al-Mawlavī gave place to various anecdotes while starting the explanation in the commentary. Tāhir al-Mawlavī, in his commentary, shares about the lives of Sufi masters whose names are mentioned in *Mathnawi*. It is possible to find examples from his own life in Tāhir al-Mawlavī's commentary.

1.6. Commentaries' Procedure and Order

One of the names who continued the tradition of *Mathnawi* commentary is Tāhir al-Mawlavī, who himself tried to stay true to the classical commentary tradition and commented on *Mathnawi*. Tāhir al-Mawlavī first includes the text in his *Mathnawi* Commentary. After presenting the Persian text of the couplets in *Mathnawi*, he moves on to the translation and commentary. While annotating a couplet, firstly the couplet was written in parentheses, then the translation of the couplet was included in quotation marks, and then the couplet was interpreted with the expression.

Tāhir al-Mawlavī did not include much grammar and dictionary information in his commentary, as in other commentaries. When we look at Tāhir al-Mawlavī's commentary in general, it is seen that language analysis is not included. The issue of making explanations about language and grammar in the commentary, which is seen in the traditional commentaries, is not included in the commentary method of Tāhir al-Mawlavī. He emphasizes the meaning of the couplet without making use of the words or grammatical analysis, and he usually comments on the couplet with explanations that begin with the expression "that is".

While Tāhir al-Mawlavī was content with giving only the meaning of some couplets in his commentary, he attempted to explain some couplets in

a brief way, and he explained some couplets in detail. It is seen that he gave preliminary information in some places about the subject contained in the couplet before he commented on a couplet in *Mathnawi*. The fact that he gives an explanation about that subject before the couplet comes up creates awareness for the reader. However, this method is not a method that Tāhir al-Mawlavī uses very often, and he usually makes his explanations about the couplet at the bottom of the couplets. Tāhir al-Mawlavī sometimes provides a summary and sometimes detailed information in his commentary on the mystical concepts and subjects that Mawlānā has come into contact with in *Mathnawi*.

Tāhir al-Mawlavī, who is a witty personality, has revealed a pleasing expression by including anecdotes from time to time in his *Mathnawi Commentary*. In this way, he wanted to make it easier for the reader to adopt his thoughts.

1.7. A Short Note on the Content of the Commentary

In Tāhir al-Mawlavī's commentary, it is seen that general topics are included in addition to religious, moral and mystical thought. The topics that he covered a lot in his commentary were; existence, creation and unity of existence, human, mind, spirit, heart and soul, which expresses the spiritual and mental dimension of man, perfect human being, velī, qutb, sage, ricālullāh, mysticism, sect, sūfi, sayr u sulūk, sheikh/murshid, disciple/devotee, struggle, riyāzet, seclusion, dhikr, sama', worship, prayer, prayer, tawba (repentance), zuhd, contentment, tawakkul, taqwa, sincerity, patience, gratitude, khawf and reja, ablution and bast, ecstasy / tawacud , šekr and sahv, fanā and equanimity, love, morality, envy, arrogance and ugliness, greed-compassion, hypocrisy, lie, morality and good manners. As it can be understood, Tāhir al-Mawlavī touches on many Şūfi terms and issues in his commentary. In the commentary, some subjects were emphasized and detailed information was given, while some subjects were explained concisely.

1.8. Commentary Resources

While commenting on *Mathnawi*, Tāhir al-Mawlavī also benefited from sources in the fields of Şūfism, fiqh, kalām, Islamic history, philosophy, logic, morality, language and literature, especially the *Qur'ān* and hadith, while commenting on *Mathnawi*. It can be said that Tāhir al-Mawlavī commented on *Mathnawi* within the Islamic cultural catchment. Tāhir al-Mawlavī's multifaceted personality and especially his knowledge and experience in the

field of literature and Islamic history enrich the sources of the *Mathnawi* Commentary. In his commentary, he made use of Islamic literature to support his views by making references and quotations from works on fields such as tafsir, hadith, mysticism, Islamic history, history of the prophets, language and literature. In this respect, his commentary has both a scientific purpose and an aim of guidance. While Tāhir al-Mawlavī mentions only the name of the author in some places, in some places he mentions the name of the work together with the author or only the name of the work. This method he followed also means introducing many works in the field of religious sciences to the reader. Among the sources that Tāhir al-Mawlavī used in his commentary, Šūfi works stand out. He enriched his narrative by quoting from the works mentioned among the early Šūfi classics.

2. Analysis of Tāhir al-Mawlavī's Commentary on the First Eighteen Couplets of Mathnawi

This section, focuses on how Tāhir al-Mawlavī interpreted the first eighteen couplets. The method adopted in this section is; first, the Persian text of *Mathnawi* will be given, then the Turkish translation of Tāhir al-Mawlavī will be given, and then his comments on the aforementioned couplets will be evaluated.

2.1. Commentary on the 1st Couplet

بشنو از نی چون حکایت می کند

از جدایی ها شکایت می کند

[*Şu neyin nasıl şikâyet etmekte olduğunu dinle. Onun nevâsı ayrılık hikâyesidir.*]

(Listen to how that "nāy" is complaining. Nāy's voice is the story of separation.)

Tāhir al-Mawlavī focused on the concept of "Bishnev". He reminded us that the main thing in Šūfism is not to say, but to listen. He argued that those who think "I will go to school yesterday and become a master today"¹⁸ cannot learn because they do not listen. It focuses on the effects of listening on learning.

He thought that with the order "Listen to what", in fact, Mawlānā

¹⁸ "Dün mektebe vardı, bugün üstad olayım der." Tāhir al-Mawlavī, *Mathnawi Commentary (Mesnevî Şerhi)*, (Istanbul: Shamil Publisher, 2017), 1/49.

encouraged readers and listeners to sama'. Because sama' is listening to a beautiful voice, getting excited and falling into ecstasy. Tāhir al-Mawlavī did not enter into discussions about whether sama' is ḥalāl or ḥarām. He recommended a book for those who want to get detailed information on this subject.

Another issue that Tāhir al-Mawlavī focused on is what is meant by "ney". In his explanation, he refers to his teacher, Meḥmed Es'ad Dede, and says that the meaning of "nāy (ney)" is "perfect human (al-Insān al-Kāmil)". The ney was cut from the reed it grows and fell apart, holes were made in its chest with fire, metal rings were attached to its head and lower part, and it became dry and yellow because it was deprived of the place it was cut. It is completely empty inside. However, it is filled with the breath of the ney player (neyzen). He did not make a sound when he's on his own. Such is the perfect human being. He was brought to this world from the realm of Ā'yān al-sābite, his heart was burned by the fire of separation, and he purified his heart from the desires of the soul. He is a person who has left himself to the power and order of Allāh, and who has no other duty but to be an intermediary in Allāh's will. It is natural for human beings to have affection for their to your original homeland and to weep and moan with longing for it and to complain.¹⁹

2.2. Commentary on the 2nd Couplet

کز نیستان تا مرا بپریده اند

در نفیرم مرد و زن نالیده اند

[*Beni kamışlıktan kestiklerinden beri feryadımdan erkek ve kadın müteessir olmakta ve inlemektedir.*]

(Saying, "Ever since I was parted from the reed-bed, my lament, has caused man and woman to moan.)

While explaining this couplet, Tāhir al-Mawlavī first told the story of what: The nāy is cut from the reed. It is dried enough and the two ends are cut according to the size. Seven holes are made in his chest. They wear a bashpāre on the head and bottom. Nāy is ready. Most people are more or less affected by the sound of the nāy. Here, the effective words that come out of the heart of the perfect human (al-Insān al-Kāmil) being leave the listeners under their influence. No matter who they are, those who listen will be

¹⁹ Tāhir al-Mawlavī, *Mathnawī Commentary (Mesnevî Şerhi)*, 1/49-53.

affected according to their abilities.²⁰

2.3. Commentary on the 3rd Couplet

سینه خواهم شرحه شرحه از فراق

تا بگویم شرح درد اشتیاق

[*İŧtiyak derdini ŧerhede bilmem iin ayrılık acılarıyla ŧerha ŧerha olmuş bir kalb isterim.*]

(*I want a bosom torn by severance, that I may unfold the pain of love-desire.*)

According to Tāhir al-Mawlavī, it is necessary to be a troubled person in order to be a partner in trouble. People look for a friend to tell their troubles to when they are sad. If the friend he finds understands what the speaker is saying, he will console the person who tells him about his problem. It is useless to speak of hunger for a man who is full, and thirst for a man who is full of water. Because those who do not suffer from hunger and thirst will not understand the situation of a hungry and thirsty person. Tāhir al-Mawlavī supports this thought with the following words he quoted from Sheikh Sādī:

298

“The cisterns and pools built in the desert should be asked to the people of the caravan who have lost their way in the desert. How do you know the value of water when you are on the edge of the Euphrates?”²¹

After giving all these examples, Tāhir al-Mawlavī completes the commentary of this couplet by adding that the friends of Allah are looking for people whose hearts are burned with the fire of love.

2.4. Commentary on the 4th Couplet

هر کسی کاو دور ماند از اصل خویش

باز جوید روزگار وصل خویش

[*Aslından, vatanından uzaklaşmış olan kimse, orada geçirmiş olduğu zamanı tekrar arar.*]

(*Every one who is left far from his source wishes back the time when he was united with it.*)

Tāhir al-Mawlavī says that it is a necessity of nature for a person to

²⁰ Tāhir al-Mawlavī, *Mathnawi Commentary*, 1/53-54.

²¹ Tāhir al-Mawlavī, *Mathnawi Commentary*, 1/54.

search for the place where he was born, grew up and spent good days. A high spirit and a sensitive heart also burn with longing for their original homeland.²²

2.5. Commentary on the 5th Couplet

من به هر جمعیتی نالان شدم

جفت بد حالان و خوش حالان شدم

[*Ben her cemiyette, her meclisde inledim, durdum. Bedhâl (kötü huylu) olanlarla da hoşhâl (iyi huylu) olanlarla da düşüp kalktım.*]

(*In every company I uttered my grieving cry; I consorted with the unhappy and with them that rejoice.*)

According to Tâhir al-Mawlavî, as indicated in this couplet, the private individuals who left their original homeland, gradually progressed and attained the levels of evanescence (fenâ') and permanence (bekâ), and then were given the task of guiding the people, met with all kinds of people. Because the friends of Allâh are in charge of awakening those who are heedless and saving those who are the work of their souls. For this reason, they meet with wicked people as well as righteous people. The fact that Allâh's saints are among the wicked from time to time is to protect them from Allâh's punishment.²³

2.6. Commentary on the 6th Couplet

هر کسی از ظن خود شد یار من

از درون من نجست اسرار من

[*Herkes kendi anlayışına göre benim yârim oldu. İçimdeki esrârı araştırmadı.*]

(*Everyone has become my lover according to their own understanding. He did not investigate the mystery in me.*)

Some people are content with looking at the outward appearance of something, they do not see the need to learn and understand the secret and truth. The people of *mana*, on the other hand, try to understand the meaning rather than the form.²⁴ According to Tâhir al-Mawlavî, the sound of nây heard

²² Tâhir al-Mawlavî, *Mathnawi Commentary*, 1/55.

²³ Tâhir al-Mawlavî, *Mathnawi Commentary*, 1/56-57.

²⁴ Tâhir al-Mawlavî, *Mathnawi Commentary*, 1/58.

evokes different meanings in ordinary people and wise people. While ordinary people enjoy various tunes, sages can derive much deeper meanings.²⁵

2.7. Commentary on the 7th Couplet

سر من از ناله ی من دور نیست

لیک چشم و گوش را آن نور نیست

[*Benim sırrım, feryâdımдан uzak değildir. Lâkin her gözde onu görecek nûr, her kulakta onu işitecek kudret yoktur.*]

(*My secret is not far from my cry. But in every eye, there is no light to see it, and in every ear, there is no power to hear it.*)

While explaining these couplets, Tāhir al-Mawlavī talked about the connection between the nāy and nāy player. The nāy is nothing but a means to the nāy player that makes it sing. Whatever maqam and tune the nāy player wants to play, the sound that comes out of the nāy is that maqam and tune. In order to understand this, one must have a musical ear. The words of a perfect walī -those who remind Allāh when seen- are not alien to the secrets in his heart. The words uttered from the tongues of the saints of Allāh, based on the saying "Every vessel leaks what is in it", are also wise words.²⁶

2.8. Commentary on the 8th Couplet

تن ز جان و جان ز تن مستور نیست

لیک کس را دید جان دستور نیست

[*Beden ruhdan, ruh bedenden gizli değildir. Lakin herkesin, ruhu görmesine ruhsat yoktur.*]

(*The body is not hidden from the soul, the soul is not hidden from the body. But not everyone is allowed to see the spirit.*)

Tāhir al-Mawlavī reminded us that we have very little knowledge about the soul by quoting verses from the *Qur'ân*. The fact that the nature of the soul is not fully explained may be due to the lack of ability to comprehend knowledge and truth in those who ask.²⁷

²⁵ Tāhir al-Mawlavī, *Mathnawī Commentary*, 1/58-59.

²⁶ Tāhir al-Mawlavī, *Mathnawī Commentary*, 1/59.

²⁷ Tāhir al-Mawlavī, *Mathnawī Commentary*, 1/61.

2.9. Commentary on the 9th Couplet

آتش است این بانگ نای و نیست باد

هر که این آتش ندارد نیست باد

[*Şu neyin sesi ateştir, hava değildir. Her kimde bu ateş yoksa, o kimse yok olsun.*]

(*The sound of that nāy is fire, not air. Whoever does not have this fire, let that person perish.*)

Tāhir al-Mawlavī stated that what causes the sound of the nāy is not the air blown into it, but the fire of love in the person who blows it. Likewise, the friends of Allāh do not speak out of their own whims and whims. It is the divine love in their hearts that makes them sing. Tāhir al-Mawlavī quoted the saying "The dude recognizes the dude's voice". If a person wants to understand the words and actions of the parents, he must carry a piece of the fire of love in them. In this context, He stated that Mawlāna's statement "Let those who do not have the fire of love perish" is an acceptable prayer for the people of the path. Because he thinks that those who do not have a share of divine love do not have a share in this path. Tāhir al-Mawlavī also cited the following saying: "Allāh's treasure is in non-existence. How can anyone who is deceived by his illusory existence know what it is?" While pointing out that things are created out of nothingness, this saying teaches that one should not fall into the illusion of self and existence. Perfect people do not aim to exist, but to incinerate their own existence in the face of the real existence of Almighty God.²⁸

2.10. Commentary on the 10th Couplet

آتش عشق است کاندر نی فتاد

جوشش عشق است کاندر می فتاد

[*Neydeki ateş ile meydeki kabarış, hep aşk eseridir.*]

(*The fire in the nāy and the swell in the wine are always works of love.*)

According to Tāhir al-Mawlavī, the word love, which means ivy in Arabic, surrounds the lover's heart just like a vine wrapped around a tree. Although it is pronounced as "Ishk", he preferred this word to be pronounced

²⁸ Tāhir al-Mawlavī, *Mathnawi Commentary*, 1/61-62.

with love pronunciation. The reason for this is that since it is a meaning that fills the heart, its pronunciation must also fill the mouth. Tāhir al-Mawlavī quoted Ibn al-'Arabī here and stated that love means an intense state of affection and was mentioned in the *Qur'ān* as such.²⁹

Tāhir al-Mawlavī is also quoted from Ibn al-'Arabī: When blood was taken from Zuleyha, who was in love with Prophet Yūsuf, the blood spilled around wrote Yūsuf's name. It is also reported that when Hallāj al-Mansūr hands and feet were cut off, the word of Allāh was read from the blood spilled. In this context, Tāhir al-Mawlavī explained love as the state of affection invading the person and enveloping the whole self.³⁰

Tāhir al-Mawlavī begins his commentary on the hadith, which is accepted as a hadith al-qudsi in Sufi gatherings, meaning "I was a hidden treasure, I wanted to loved be known so I created the people/creation". In this respect, love first emerged from Allāh Almighty. The whole world came into being as the fruit of this love. According to him, every being, whether conscious or not, carries this love within himself to the extent of his own aptitude. For example, even the song of a nightingale in the garden or the braying of a donkey is a manifestation of their love in their own language. On the other hand, Tāhir al-Mawlavī argues that even a wise man or a drunkard expresses the same love, albeit in different manifestations.³¹

In this context, in a couplet he wrote, he states that love has an indescribable meaning and that it affects every being as much as its own disposition and ability. The feeling of love itself is one and only, while lovers can manifest in different ways.

2.11. Commentary on the 11th Couplet

نی حریف هر که از یاری برید

پرده هایش پرده های ما درید

[*Ney, yârinden ayrılmış olanın arkadaşıdır. Onun makam perdeleri, bizim nurânî ve zulmânî perdelerimizi, yani vuslata mani perdelerimizi yırtmıştır.*]

(*Nāy is the friend of the one who broke up with his lover. His maqam veils have torn our luminous and cruel veils, that is, our veils that prevent meeting with Allāh.*)

²⁹ Tāhir al-Mawlavī, *Mathnawi Commentary*, 1/63.

³⁰ Tāhir al-Mawlavī, *Mathnawi Commentary*, 1/63.

³¹ Tāhir al-Mawlavī, *Mathnawi Commentary*, 1/62.

According to Tāhir al-Mawlavī, the nāy's being a friend and a friend can be understood in two ways in this couplet. Its apparent meaning is as follows: Tāhir al-Mawlavī thinks that everyone with a good taste and good nature will enjoy music. A musical tune relaxes and comforts people in their sad moments. As a musical instrument, the nāy also relaxes people and reminds us of the moment of the contract between people and God Almighty during creation. Again, in a poem he gave here, he tells the story of God Almighty's address to the souls in the "elest" assembly, as giving them a wine (divine love) and the spirits getting drunk with this devotion. The souls have become so intoxicated with this delicacy that it is no longer possible for any drink in the world to give them this pleasure. Here, as an instrument with various pitches, the nāy reminds people of these moments that they contemplate before they are born. On the occasion of this remembrance, the curtains of nāy will be instrumental in opening the curtains in the eyes of the heart. The figurative meaning of the couplet can be understood as follows: What is meant by nāy is a perfect person (al-insān al-kāmil). These people guide those who have lost their way and are separated from Allah, cure their troubles and invite them to return to their original homeland. Their guidance and wise words help those who listen to keep the veil off their eyes, thereby getting them out of their state of heedlessness.³²

2.12. Commentary on the 12th Couplet

همچو نى زهرى و ترياقى كه ديد

همچو نى دمساز و مشتاقى كه ديد

[*Ney gibi hem zehir, hem panzehir; hem demsâz hem müştâk bir şeyi kim görmüştür.*]

(*Like Nāy, both poison and antidote; Who has seen something that is both confidant and very eager?*)

Tāhir al-Mawlavī mentioned that the nāy can be both a poison and an antidote depending on the potential of the listeners or their spiritual and moral states. When a passionate person listens to what he wants to satisfy his bodily desires, nāy is like poison for him, increasing his lustful desires even more. On the contrary, nāy is an antidote for someone who tries to see and hear a verse from Allāh Almighty in everything he listens to. Nāy is a friend to these people and desires those who will listen to him. Because the wisdom and benefit in the nāy will emerge not by hanging it on a wall in a sheath, but by blowing it and listening.

³² Tāhir al-Mawlavī, *Mathnawi Commentary*, 1/64.

Tāhir al-Mawlavī supports this truth with two verses: The first is "Muhammad is the Messenger of Allāh. Those who are with him are harsh against the unbelievers and merciful among themselves."³³ The second is the verse "O Prophet, fight the unbelievers and hypocrites and be tough on them".³⁴ Since they are the heirs of the Prophet, the friends of Allāh are also very tolerant towards believers and brothers, while treating unbelievers and disbelievers severely.³⁵

Tāhir al-Mawlavī talked about the harms of being soft instead of hard to us and giving treats and benevolence in the opposite case. He stated that the treatment of a person who knows the value of goodness will be valued, and a favor done to someone who does not deserve it will cause him to become more spoiled. In this direction, it emphasizes that the person should shape his behavior according to the aptitude and spiritual rank of the addressee.³⁶

Here are the friends of Allāh, poison for those who have despaired of themselves; They are an antidote for people who listen to advice even if they are sinful. The friends of Allāh are merciful to them, engage in conversation and include them in their ranks.

2.13. Commentary on the 13th Couplet

نی حدیث راه پر خون می کند

قصه های عشق مجنون می کند

[*Ney, kanlı bir yoldan bahseder, Mecnunane aşkları hikâye eder.*]

(*The nāy tells of the Way full of blood and recounts stories of the passion of Majnun.*)

Tāhir al-Mawlavī here reminded us of the couplet in the introduction of the *Mathnawi*, which states that the nāy complains about separation. Nāy experienced many difficulties in this process, such as being cut off from the reed and making a hole on it. Likewise, travelers of divine love are in a similar situation. Nāy here symbolizes the perfect human being. The perfect human being encounters many tests coming him on his journey to meet Allāh Almighty. Riyadha, mujahada and the sayr and sulūk (spiritual journey) itself is a difficult process that not everyone can afford. First of all, Şūfism itself is

³³ al-Fatih, 48/29.

³⁴ al-Tawba, 9/73.

³⁵ Tāhir al-Mawlavī, *Mathnawi Commentary*, 1/65-66.

³⁶ Tāhir al-Mawlavī, *Mathnawi Commentary*, 1/66.

sacrificing one's life. With the phrase "Die before you die", which is quoted as a hadith, it is recommended that a perfect person surrender his will and elderness in this journey and kill his egoistic existence.³⁷

Allāh says in the *Qur'ān*, "Allāh has bought the believers' property and souls in exchange for Paradise"³⁸ and states that he is a customer for their souls. Just like the reed flute, the friends of Allāh endure some pain and sacrifice their lives in order to attain divine love. In the continuation of his explanations, Tāhir al-Mawlavī talks about the difficulties of the journey to other people and advises to be like them by telling the stories of the saints of Allāh.

2.14. Commentary on the 14th Couplet

محرم این هوش جز بی هوش نیست

مر زبان را مشتری جز گوش نیست

[*Dile kulaktan başka müşteri olmadığı gibi, maneviyatı idrak etmeye de bîhûş olandan başka mahrem yoktur.*]

(*Just as there is no customer other than the tongue and ear, there is no private person other than the stupefied to comprehend spirituality.*)

Based on this couplet, Tāhir al-Mawlavī stated that the human mind is divided into two as "aql-ı meāsh" and "aql-ı me'ād". "Aql-ı meāsh" is the mind that is busy with worldly and worldly affairs. On the other hand, "aql-ı me'ād" is the mind that tends towards the hereafter and the real homeland.

In this verse, Mawlāna stated that the owners of "aql-ı meāsh" cannot grasp the wisdom and subtleties that "aql-ı me'ād" can understand. Tāhir al-Mawlavī also attributes "aql-ı me'ād" to people who are isolated from "aql-ı meash". However, being isolated from "aql-ı meāsh" does not mean losing one's mind. They got this name because they were fascinated by divine love. To exemplify this situation, Mawlāna acted from the language and ear relationship. Although there are many organs in the human body, only the ear can hear the words coming out of the tongue. It is only those who have "aql-ı me'ād" who are customers to divine truths like this.³⁹

³⁷ Tāhir al-Mawlavī, *Mathnawī Commentary*, 1/67.

³⁸ al-Tawba, 9/111.

³⁹ Tāhir al-Mawlavī, *Mathnawī Commentary*, 1/68.

2.15. Commentary on the 15th Couplet

در غم ما روزها بی گاه شد

روزها با سوزها همراه شد

[*Gamlı geçen günlerimiz uzadı ve sona ermesi gecikti. O günler, mahrumiyetten ve ayrılıktan hasıl olan ateşlerle arkadaş oldu. Ateşlerle, yanmalarla geçti.*]

(*In our woe the days have become untimely: our days travel hand in hand with burning griefs.*)

In the verse, Mawlāna spoke as "we" while expressing that the state of spiritual distress that man is in is prolonged and that it never ends. Tāhir al-Mawlavī said that this situation is called "uslūb-u hakīm" in literature. Accordingly, the person acts in order to warn another, but expresses the word he will say through himself. As a matter of fact, the speech of Habīb al-Neccār mentioned in Surah al-Yāsin in the *Qur'ān* is an example of this. While Habīb al-Neccār was addressing the people of Antakya, "Why will I not serve the One who created me?"⁴⁰ asks a question. Here, his aim is to invite his interlocutors to worship Allāh and remind them of this. By attributing the aforementioned warning to himself, he wants to draw the attention of the addressee more. According to Tāhir al-Mawlavī, while Mawlāna talks about himself in this couplet, he actually reveals the states of other people.⁴¹

2.16. Commentary on the 16th Couplet

روزها گر رفت گو رو پاک نیست

تو بمان ای آن که چون تو پاک نیست

[*Günler geçip gittiye varsın, geçsin. Ey pak ve mübarek olan insan-ı kâmil; hemen sen var ol!*]

(*If our days are gone, let them go! It is no matter. Do you remain, for none is holy as you are!*)

According to Tāhir al-Mawlavī, this couplet was written to console those who wasted a part of their life and were sad because they could not enjoy the pleasure of ingenuity. Tāhir al-Mawlavī explains the message

⁴⁰ Yāsin, 36/22.

⁴¹ Tāhir al-Mawlavī, *Mathnawi Commentary*, 1/69

Mawlānā wanted to give as follows: If many days of life have passed, what has happened is done, what is done is over. There's no use regretting the past. The situation it is in should be taken into account. By holding the hand of a perfect sheikh, one should be under his spiritual education. Tāhir al-Mawlavī thinks that it is necessary not to fall into despair by looking at the past and to strive for the present time and the future.⁴²

2.17. Commentary on the 17th Couplet

هر که جز ماهی ز آبش سیر شد

هر که ب بروزی است روزش دیر شد

[*Balıktan başkası onun suyuna kandı. Nasibsiz olanın da rızkı gecikti.*]

(*Whoever is not a fish becomes sated with His water; whoever is without daily bread finds the day long.*)

While explaining this couplet, Tāhir al-Mawlavī begins by saying that the spiritual manifestations (tajalli) of Allāh are unlimited. He divides people into three parts in the face of the manifestations of Allah. Those in the first part are the perfect and perfect ones of the ummah. No matter how much they achieve the manifestations of Allah, they endure and always want these manifestations to increase. In this regard, Tāhir al-Mawlavī, who shows Muḥammad as an example, although the Prophet had seventy or one hundred degrees of progress in a day, he said, "My Allāh! Do increase my amazement towards you".⁴³ They say that on the way of love, there is no "be full up to water" or "ending his fever". No matter how many Divine manifestations they attain, they always demand more. The second group of people who are blessed with the manifestations of Allāh are those who are content with a little manifestation. These people say, "If I had one more sip of the wine of love, I would perish". The third group of people are those who are deprived of divine manifestation.⁴⁴

⁴² Tāhir al-Mawlavī, *Mathnawi Commentary*, 1/70.

⁴³ It is debatable whether this word is hadith or not. Ibn 'Arabi quotes it as a hadith. See: Muhyiddin İbn Arabi, *Fütûhât-ı Mekkiyye*, trans. Ekrem Demirli, (Istanbul: Litera Publishing, 2007), 2/325.

⁴⁴ Tāhir al-Mawlavī, *Mathnawi Commentary*, 1/71-73.

2.18. Commentary on the 18th Couplet

درنیابد حال پخته هیچ خام

پس سخن کوتاه باید و السلم

[*Ham ervâh olanlar, pişkin ve yetişkin zevâtın halinden anlamazlar. O halde sözü kısa kesmek gerektir, vesselâm.*]

(None that is raw understands the state of the ripe: therefore my words must be brief. Farewell!)

According to Tāhir al-Mawlavī, even a simple art cannot be understood by those who have not served that art. In order to understand the language of that art, it is necessary to engage and serve the art. *Mathnawi* is also subtle wit of the şūfī profession. For the purpose of understanding *Mathnawi*, it is necessary to follow the path of Şūfism and to navigate this path.⁴⁵

Conclusion

Tāhir al-Mawlavī was one of the last Mathnawi-khans and *Mathnawi* commentators of the Ottoman Empire. Undoubtedly, one of his greatest services to the Mawlavī order is his commentary on *Mathnawi*. His commentary is among the most used and read commentaries today due to the simplicity and style of its language.

In our study, Tāhir al-Mawlavī's commentary method and the first eighteen couplets are emphasized. Tāhir al-Mawlavī first includes the text in his *Mathnawi* Commentary. After presenting the Persian text of the couplets in *Mathnawi*, he moves on to the translation and commentary. When we look at Tāhir al-Mawlavī's commentary in general, it is seen that language analysis is not included. He has explained some couplets in a brief way and some couplets in detail.

Tāhir al-Mawlavī did not break new ground in the *Mathnawi* Commentary tradition and tended to preserve the tradition that came before him. In this respect, we can say that he carefully followed the tradition of *Mathnawi* Commentary before him, especially Sheikh Ismā'īl Rusūkhī Anqaravī's commentary. Tāhir al-Mawlavī tried to explain *Mathnawi* by associating it with many Şūfī classics, depending on the tradition he maintained. One of the features that distinguishes Tāhir al-Mawlavī's Mathnawi Commentary from other commentaries is the simplicity of its

⁴⁵ Tāhir al-Mawlavī, *Mathnawi Commentary*, 1/73.

language. Another aspect of Tāhir al-Mawlavī's *Mathnawi Commentary* that differs from other commentaries is that it frequently references Islamic history. His knowledge of Islamic history is also reflected in his commentary.

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