

*Mathnawī-yi ma'nawī-yi jalāl al-dīn muḥammad balkhī*. With Corrections (*taṣḥīḥ*) and Introduction by Muḥammad 'Alī Muvahḥid (ed.), 2 vols., 1,831 pages plus an introduction of 160 pages. Tehrān: Hermes, 1396/2017.

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This is a corrected edition of the famous “Konya Manuscript” of the *Mathnawī*, completed in December 677/1278 by Muḥammad ibn 'Abdullāh Qunawī, five years after the death of Mawlana Rumi. Since the pioneering work of R. A. Nicholson, who was the first to establish the primacy of the Konya MS and to edit it (1925-1933), a number of Iranian scholars have produced editions based on the Konya MS. These editions differ, mainly, in regard to scholarly opinions about which words and verses added to the margins of the MS by later hands should be accepted as the authentic wording of Mawlana.<sup>1</sup>

Muvahḥid had been concerned about deficiencies in the Konya MS for several years prior. He stated that Mawlana was more concerned about meaning than form and strict standards for rhyme. Therefore, scribes erred in making “corrections” in his original words. In addition, scribes who came from a non-Persian background had deficits in knowledge of the language, culture, and contexts of the *Mathnawī*.

Subsequently, he chose the oldest MSS of the *Mathnawī* that were transcribed within thirty years of Mawlana's death. These consist of eleven MSS, four of all six books and seven of single books: *alif* (designated as “G” by Nicholson), 677 A.H., Books 1-6, Konya; *qū* (designated as “H” by Nicholson), 687, Books 1-6, Konya; *m*, 695 (rejected by Nicholson as a very early MS), Books 1-6, Istanbul; *qā* (designated as “K” by Nicholson), 668/768 (date disputed by Nicholson), Books 1-6, Cairo; *n* (designated as “N” by Nicholson), 680, Book 1; *j* (designated as “J” by Nicholson), 680, Book 4; *qm*, 701, Book 4; *w* (probably transcribed by Mawlana's son, Sulṭān Walad), n.d., Book 4; *ld* (probably transcribed by Sulṭān Walad), n.d., Book 5; and *wld* (Sulṭān Walad is written as the scribe), n.d., Book 6; and *h* (designated as “P” by Nicholson), 674, Book 6. Muvahḥid provides extensive information and analysis of each of the MSS. He believes that

<sup>1</sup> Among such scholars are Mahdī Azār Yazdī, Kāsīm Bargnaysī, 'Abd al-Karīm Soroush, Tawfiq Subḥānī, and Muḥammad Isti'lāmī. Due to the fact that Nicholson had already edited the *Mathnawī* up to about two thirds of Book 3 when he received a copy of the Konya MS, he included indices of corrections needed for the Persian texts of Books 1-3 to come into agreement with the Konya MS. A corrected edition of Nicholson's edition was made by Hassan Lahoutī, 1383 A.Hsh./2004 (and Nicholson's indices of corrections needed for the English translation of Books 1-3 were implemented on the Internet by Ibrahim Gamard in 2015, masnavi.net).

Nicholson was overly enamored of the 677 Konya MS and should have paid more attention to the 687 Konya MS, transcribed by Ḥasan ibn Ḥusayn al-Mawlawī, of which Nicholson had an incomplete copy (up to Book 5:338).

Following the method of Nicholson (begun nearly a century earlier), Muvahḥid collated the MSS and placed the variants (= corrections) in footnotes. The text remains as the Konya MS, little different from that of other editions of the same, except for the addition of about thirty couplets (regarding which, see below).

A number of prominent Iranian scholars have accepted Muvahḥid's corrected edition of the *Mathnawī* as the most authoritative of critical editions (that is, barring the discovery of other early MSS). Among such scholars are 'Abd al-Karīm Soroush, Tawfīq Subḥānī, and Naṣrullāh Pourjavādī.<sup>2</sup>

However, for most students of the *Mathnawī*, any of the other editions based on the Konya MS should suffice, because the corrections and additions in Muvahḥid's edition involve differences that are mostly of minor significance, with little impact on the *Mathnawī* couplets of deep meaning.

#### SOME EXAMPLES OF CORRECTIONS

The best examples of Muvahḥid's corrections are in Book 6, from the MS transcribed by Sulṭān Walad (*wld*) and from the 674 A.H. MS (*h*) of Book 6, since this the oldest known complete MS of the *Mathnawī*. As can be seen below, Nicholson was well aware that "corrections" had been incorporated in the 677 MS.

*alif* (G), 6:3 (Nich. 3)

*pīsh kash mi'āramat, ay ma'navī\* qism-i sādīs dar tamām-i mathnawī*

Nich.: (Now), O spiritual one, I bring to thee as an offering the Sixth Part to complete the *Mathnawī*.

*h*, in margin of *wld* (viewed by Muvahḥid as the original):

*pīsh kash pīsh-i riḍā'at mīkasham\* dar tamāmī mathnawī qism-i shasham*

Transl.: I bring forth an offering for your satisfaction (O Husām al-Dīn): the Sixth Part in completion of the *Mathnawī*.

<sup>2</sup>. *Guzārishī az taṣḥīḥ-i muḥammad 'alī muvaḥḥid az mathnavī*, 15 Mehr A.Hsh.1397/ 23 September 2018, iranintl.com.

COMMENT: This verse was also cited by Nicholson,<sup>3</sup> who stated that in P (*h*) the mispronounced Persian word for “sixth” (*shashum*) was corrected by using the equivalent Arabic word, *sādis*. He noted that many variants in the texts of the *Mathnawi* include different equivalent Persian and Arabic words.

*alif*, 6:76 (Nich. 76)

*dar jahān-i rūḥ har si muntazir \* gah zi’šūrat hārib u gah mustaqir*

Nich.: In the spiritual world all three are waiting (for the Divine command), sometimes fleeing from form and sometimes taking abode (in it).

*h* (viewed by Muvahḥid as the original):

*... sūy-i šūrat gah mukirr u gah mufirr*

Transl.: ... sometimes (going) to form for combat and sometimes for (taking) refuge.

COMMENT: This verse was also cited by Nicholson, who stated that in P (*h*) the words, “*mukirr* and *mufirr* are incorrectly used instead of *kārr* and *fārr* ...”<sup>4</sup>

*alif*, 6:149 (Nich. 149)

*chūn sir u māhīyat-i jān makhbar ast \* har ki ū āgāhtar bā jāntar ast*

Nich.: Since consciousness is the inmost nature and essence of the soul, the more aware one is the more spiritual is he.

*h* (viewed by Muvahḥid as the original):

*... har kudāmīn bā khabartar, jāntar ast*

Transl.: ... any of them (who is) possessed of more awareness is greater in spirit.

COMMENT: This verse was also cited by Nicholson, who stated that in P (*h*): “This, I think, is one of many instances in which rare or relatively uncommon expressions (*kudāmīn* and *jāntar*) have been replaced by normal usages.”<sup>5</sup> He also cited it as variant of “P” in his Persian text of Book 6.

*alif*, 6:1144 (Nich. 1117)

*goft vāpas vāpas ay khīra sarat \* bāz mīrav tā bi kus-i mādarat*

Nich.: “(Go) backward, backward,” said he, “O giddy-headed one”; “keep going back usque ad cunnum matris tuae!”

<sup>3</sup> *The Mathnawi of Jalalu’ddin Rumi, Containing the Text of the Fifth and Sixth Books*, vol. 5, 1933, 1971, Introduction, p. xiii). Nicholson also cited it as variant of “P” in his Persian text of Book 6.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, Introduction, p. xiii. He also cited it as variant of “P” in his Persian text of Book 6.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, Introduction, p. xiv. He also cited it as variant of “P” in his Persian text of Book 6.

*m* (viewed by Muvahhid as the original):

... *bāz mīrav tā bi farj-i mādarat*

Transl.: "... until (you return to) your mother's vagina!"

COMMENT: Perhaps this was changed because the Persian word, *kus* is more lewd and suitable for a curse than the Arabic word, *farj*.

#### ADDED COUPLETS

In the cases below, the first reference is to the MS sources of the added couplets and the second reference is to where these are located in Muvahhid's text. In the third reference (in parentheses), the symbol "+" means "after verse number xxx" -- in other words: the added couplet was placed after verse number xxx in Nicholson's Persian text. (This placement locations, together with the contexts, can be readily found using [masnavi.net](http://masnavi.net)).

*qū*, 1:84 (83+):

*mā'ida az āsman shod 'ā'ida \* chūn ki guft: anzil 'alaynā mā'ida*

Transl.: A Table appeared, arriving from heaven, when he (Jesus) said, "Send down to us a table (full of food)!"<sup>6</sup>

In margins of *qā* and *qū*; 1:252-53 (249+):

*kh'āja rūzī sūy-i khāna rafta būd \* dar dukān tūṭī nigahbānī namūd.*

*gurba'ī bar jast nāgah dar dukān \* bahr-i mūshī, tūṭiyak az bīm-i jān<sup>7</sup>*

Transl.: One day the master had gone to his home (while) the parrot kept watch in the shop. Suddenly a cat leaped forth inside the shop for the sake of (catching) a mouse (and) the little parrot (reacted) from fear of its life.

*m*, *qā*, *qū*, in margin of *n*; 1:1228 (1220+):

*tā biyābī bahr-i lashkar āb rā \* dar safar saqqā shavī aṣhāb rā<sup>8</sup>*

Transl.: So that you may find water for the army, you became the water-giver during the journey.

<sup>6</sup> A reference to *Qur'ān* 5:115. Nicholson cited a very similar verse as a variant in the Turkish Būlāq ("Bul.") edition of A.H. 1268/1852.

<sup>7</sup> Nicholson cited these verses as variants of the "L" MS (14th century CE).

<sup>8</sup> Nicholson cited this verse as a variants of "L" and "Bul."

wld, m, qā; 6:150-151 (149+):

*iqtizāy-i jān chū ay dil, āgahī'st \* har ke āgahtar buvad jān-ash qawī'st*  
*kh<sup>w</sup>ud jahān-i jān sarāsar āgahī'st \* har ke bijān ast, az dānish tahī'st*<sup>9</sup>

Transl.: Since the requirement of the spirit is being aware, O heart, whoever is more aware, his spirit is (more) strong. The world of spirit is, itself, entirely awareness; whoever is devoid of spirit is empty of knowledge.

In margin of *alif*; 6:347-49 (344+):

*duzd rā k'ān qaṭ' talkhī mīzihad \* dhauq-i duzdī rā chū zan dah mīdahad*  
*dah bi dādan dīdī az dast-i ḥazīn \* dah bi dādan z'īn burīd-i dast bīn*  
*ham chunān qallāb u khūnīy u lawand \* waqt-i talkhī 'īsh rā dah mīdahand*<sup>10</sup>

Transl.: Since bitterness results for the thief because of the amputation (of his hand), he curses the pleasure of thievery, like a woman (who curses with her hands). You have seen the giving of the gesture by the hand of affliction: (now) see the giving of the gesture because of the severing of the hand. Just as a coin-forgery, murderer, and libertine give (such a) gesture to pleasure (at) the bitter time (of punishment).

qū; 6:480 (471+):

*hast dar hamiyān-i man pānṣad diram \* gar kunī bā man chunīn luṭf u karam*

Transl.: In my purse there are five hundred (gold) coins; if you will do (this) for me, (my) kindness and generosity (will be) such as this.

qū; 6:494-95 (483+):

*dar javāb-ash guft ṣayād, ay 'ayyār \* nīst muṭlaq īn ki guftī, hūsh dār*  
*hast tanhā'ī bih az yārān-i bad \* nīk bā bad chūn nashīnad, bad shavad*<sup>11</sup>

Transl.: In reply to him the fowler said, "O cunning one, that which you said is not absolutely (right), (so) maintain silence! Solitude is better than (association with) malevolent friends; when the good man sits (together) with the wicked man, he becomes wicked."

qā, qū, m; 6:497 (485+):

<sup>9</sup> Nicholson cited these verses as variants of "Bul."

<sup>10</sup> Nicholson cited these verses as variants of "Bul." and added: "These verses which have been suppl. in marg. G by a later hand, are probably genuine."

<sup>11</sup> Nicholson cited these verses as variants of "A" (14th century CE) and "Bul."

*hūsh-i ū sūy-i ‘alaf bāshad chū khar \* bug’zar az vay tā namānī bī hunar<sup>12</sup>*

Transl.: His (only) understanding is (going) towards fodder, like a donkey; pass beyond him so that you may not remain devoid of knowledge and ability.

*qā, qū, m, in margin of wld; 6:499-502 (486+):*

*harche juz ān wajh bāshad, hālik ast \* mulk u mālik ‘aks-i ān yak mālik ast*

*garche sāya ‘aks-i shakhṣ ast ay pisar \* hīch az sāya natānī kh<sup>w</sup>urd bar*

*hīn zi sāya shakhṣ rā mīkun ṭalab \* dar musabbib rav, guzar kun az sabab*

*yār-i jismānī buvad rūy-ash ba marg \* ṣubḥat-ash shūm ast, bāyad kard tark<sup>13</sup>*

Transl.: Anything that is besides that Face is perishing;<sup>14</sup> kingdom and king are the reflection of that One King. Although the shadow is a person’s reflection. O son, you are unable to take any provision from the shadow. (If) you seek (something) from the shadow of a person, beware! Go to the (true) Causer (and) pass beyond the (worldly) cause. (Whoever) is the friend of a sensual (corporeal) person, his face is towards death; his companionship is disgraceful (and) one should abandon it.

*qā, qū, m, in margin of wld; 6:519-21 (502+):*

*rāh-i sunnat bā jamā’at bih buvad \* asb bā asbān yaqīn kh<sup>w</sup>ushtar ravad*

*līk har gumrāh rā hamrah madān \* ghāfilān-i khufta rā āgah madān*

*hamrahī rā jū k’az ū yābī madad \* ham-dil u ham-dard u jūyān-i aḥad<sup>15</sup>*

Transl.: The path of the Sunna together with the community is best; certainly, the horse goes along amiably together with (other) horses. But do not deem any lost one (as) a traveling companion; do not deem sleeping unconscious ones (as) aware. Seek a traveling companion from whom you find help: a cordial and sympathetic (companion) and a seeker of the One.

*qū; 6:527 (508+):*

*rāh-i dīn har gumrāhī kh<sup>w</sup>ud chūn ravad? \* ḥāzīmī bāyad ki mard-i rah buvad*

Transl., -- How can any lost one travel the road of religion (by) himself? A wise and prudent (companion) is needed who is a man of the road (of salvation).

*qū; 6:546-47 (525+):*

<sup>12</sup> Nicholson cited these verses as variants of “A”, “B”, (14th century CE), and “Bul.”

<sup>13</sup> Nicholson cited these verses as variants of “A” and “Bul.”

<sup>14</sup> A reference to *Qur’ān* 28:88.

<sup>15</sup> Nicholson cited these verses as variants of “A”, “B”, and “Bul.”

*dar miyān-i murgh u Sayād ay ‘ajab \* bas shakāl uftād u shud nazdik shab  
murgh rā chūn dīda bar gandum futād \* nafs-i ū bī-ṭāqat āmad dar gushād*

Transl.: In the midst of (the dispute between) the bird and fowler, O wonderful, much deceit occurred and it was nearly evening. When the bird’s sight fell on the wheat, his self (-control) became powerless (and) broke open.

*qū; 6:558-59 (535+):*

*pīsh az ān ki dāna bar tū fakh shavad \* garmiy-i ḥirṣ-i tū hamchūn yakh shavad  
āh u dard u nāla ān dam kār band \* ḥirṣ rā āvāra kun ay hūshmand*

Transl.: Prior to when the seed became the snare for you, the warmth of your greed became (solid) like ice. In that moment, (the desire to express) sighs and (shouts of) pain and wailing became obedient. Oppress (your) greed, O wise man.

*qū; 6:566 (541+):*

*pāsbānī būd dar yak kāravān \* ḥāris-i māl u qamāsh-i ān mihān*

Transl.: There was a watchman in a caravan, a guard of the wealth and merchandise of the great ones.

*qū; 6:569 (543+):*

*pāsbān dar hay hay u chūbak zadan \* garm gashta, ham kh<sup>w</sup>ud ū bud rāhzan!*

Transl. -- The watchman (was exclaiming), “Alas, alas!” and hitting (with his) stick. He became agitated, (for) he also was a highway robber!

*qū; 6:626 (599+):*

*muntazir bin’shasta kh<sup>w</sup>āb-ash dar rubūd \* ūftād u gasht bī-kh<sup>w</sup>ish u, ghanūd*

Transl.: (His) expectancy settled down (and) sleep seized him; he fell down and slept.

*qū; 6:1365 (1336+):*

*bāz andīshīd ū za’f-i va rā \* goft: agar musht-ash zanam, gardad fanā.*

Transl.: Again he thought about his (the other man’s) weak (condition). He said: “If I hit him (with my) fist, he will be dead.”