

On Apr 21, 2022, at 6:10 AM, Coleman Barks <maypopbooks@gmail.com> wrote:

Ibrahim and Rawan,

are scholars of the purest ray,

thorough and impeccable,

precise and generous. This book that they have put together, THE QUATRAINS OF RUMI,

should be on the shelves of anyone who loves Rumi and what Rumi loves. Their scholarly apparatus is masterful and complete. Their Notes are layered and mystical. They understand from the inside out Rumi's central ecstatic insight: that just to be in a body and conscious is cause for rapture. Their understanding of Rumi's poetry is experiential. The authority they bring to this text is whole and gorgeous. They feel the music of the language and they communicate that subtlety with consummate skill.

I am not a scholar, but I can recognize the beauty and the gift of these two scholars. I have nothing but gratitude and amazement in the presence of such majesty.

You can read about their wide and varied schooling in the Note "About the Translators" on p. 707. Now, I have talked myself into buying another copy of this book from the publisher, Sufi Dari Books in San Rafael, CA. I shall be referring to the Notes, the Manual of Terms, and the Concordance for years to come. And, in addition, there is a beautiful photograph of the green dome above Rumi's tomb on the front cover and a picture of the two scholars inside, next to the grave on the inside of the tomb building, the most sacred spot in Konya. I hope these two scholars receive all the awards and attention they deserve. The blurbs from Arberry, Franklin Lewis, and William Chittick would seem to indicate that word of this book is spreading quickly.

Coleman Barks, The Essential Rumi.

My reply:

April 24, 2022

Prof. Coleman Barks,

Thank you very much for your kind words of praise of *The Quatrains of Rumi*, which I received on April 21, 2022. Yesterday, I spoke to Rawan Farhadi and told him about your letter and today I spoke to his daughter, who is caring for him in her home—about eighty miles away from where I live here in California. She asked me to forward your letter to her so she can share it with him, since per disabilities at the age of 92, he no longer uses a computer.

You have previously praised our quatrains translations in your book, *Soul Fury*, in which you wrote: “Their scholarship is magnificent, comprehensive, and deeply intuitive. We are greatly indebted to them. Anyone who loves Rumi and Shams should own a copy.” Thank you for that.

You also acknowledged our distinction between “versions” and “translations” when you wrote: “These short free verse poems are versions of Rumi’s rubaiyat, done from Gamard and Farhadi’s translations.” In this regard, you wrote: “Ibrahim Gamard, Rawan Farhadi, William Chittick, and Franklin Lewis disapprove of making versions. I understand the objection. What I do is a homemade, amateurish, loose, many-stranded thing, without much attention to historical context, nor much literal faithfulness to the original.” However, I do not think there would have been such disapproval if your reinterpretations had been designated as “versions” instead of “translations” on the covers and title pages—as was the case of your 1980 book, *Night and Sleep: Rumi* which was subtitled, “Versions by Coleman Barks and Robert Bly” and of your 1984 book, *Open Secret* which was subtitled, “Versions of Rumi.”

I was pleasantly surprised to see in *Soul Fury* that you took an interest in some of our notes that explained what Rumi was saying through particular words and expressions. An example is your version and explanation of F-127, which (in this case) was mostly harmonious with ours:

“A riddle: What is it that gives form such great joy,
and without which all appearances grow dull, drained of pleasure?
In one moment that something slips away.
In the next, out of nowhere, it comes back and knocks form to pieces. Answer: Your face.” (*Soul Fury*, p. 57)
“There is a subtle wordplay here in Persian that cannot be duplicated in English. Gamard and Farhadi tell us that the word for ‘form’ and ‘appearance’ can also mean ‘face,’ so that hidden in every line of the poem is the irresistible answer. I put the answer in a last line, but if I understand the scholars correctly, the answer does not appear in the poem in Farsi. It is just always there, concealed as nuance, in the language. Nor does the word ‘riddle’ appear in the original. It is implied.” (p. 226)

This you based on our translation and explanatory notes:

“What is it from which there is enjoyment in (its) appearance?
And what is it, without which appearance (seems) dulled?
In one moment, that something becomes hidden from form,
And (in) another moment, out of No-Place, it smashes against form.”

1. lines one and two: This quatrain takes the form of a riddle, the answer of which is the sublime and irresistible beauty of the beloved's face. The word 'şūrat' occurs in all four lines with the meaning of 'form' and 'appearance', but it also means 'face'. When the beloved's face is seen, everything visible is delightful.

2. lines three and four: refer to the recollected image of the beloved—especially the face, that appears and disappears in the mind of the lover. When it appears, all other forms are 'knocked away'. (*The Quatrains of Rumi*, p. 137).

Ibrahim Gamard
Fakir-ül-Mevlevi

REF - <http://dar-al-masnavi.org/pdf/barks.on.gamard&farhadi.pdf>

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