MAWLÂNÂ JALÂL AL-DÎN RÛMÎ'S LEGACY IN THE INDIAN POETIC TRADITION WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO ALLAMA IQBAL

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ABSTRACT

Mawlânâ Rûmî, the greatest philosopher-poet of all times, comprehends the innate need to transcend all barriers that have divided the humanity in the contemporary world, and offers that soul stirring wine of love which is the only solace for the modern world that is riven by the starck naked materialism. His philosophy is enlightened with spiritual frenzy and creative genius that inspires the heart and elevates the mind. Nicholson considers the musings of Mawlânâ as unique panorama of universal existence enrolling itself through time and eternity and Arberry is of the opinion that Rûmî was the man who enriched humanity with a splendid and massive contribution to the literature and thought and whose greatness is as much acknowledged in the West as in the East.

The world in general and the literary and Sufistic tradition of Indian sub-continent in particular has accepted an enormous influence from the message of Mawlânâ Rûmî and the broad traces of such influence are unfolded in the writings of great Indian Sufi poets like Kabir, Nanak and the prominent followers of Radhaswami faith. But the greatest propounder of Rûmî's message in India was Allama Iqbal, whose Persian, English and Urdu poetry and prose are full with the traces of Rûmî's ideological and philosophical imprint. Needless to mention that Iqbal's stylistics is the complete echo of Jalâl al-Dîn Rûmî. It is very clear that the acceptance to the philosophical, poetic and Sufistic message of Iqbal is fairly widespread in Indian sub-continent. Therefore, to evaluate the traces of Mawlânâ Rûmî and the influence of his legacy in India it will be most relevant to study his impact on the poetic genre of India with special reference to Allama Iqbal. I propose to contribute to the seminar the paper entitled, "Jalâl al-Dîn Rûmî's Legacy in the Indian Poetic Tradition with Special Reference to Iqbal".

My attempt will be to bring out the ideological, philosophical and mystic similarities between Rûmî and Iqbal besides highlighting the commonalities in the style of the two legendary figures of the Muslim world.

I will also make an attempt to highlight the prominent studies made in India about Mawlânâ Rûmî besides referring to the bulk of literature that has been produced about Rûmî in the rest of the world.

Key Words: God, Rûmî, Iqbal, Love, Humanity, India, Bird, Freedom, Peer, Haq

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MEVLÂNA CELÂLEDDÎN-İ RÛMÎ'NİN HİNDİSTAN ŞİİR GELENEĞİ ÜZERİNDEKİ ETKİSİNİN ALLAME İKBAL ÖZELİNDE İNCELENMESİ

ÖZET

Tüm zamanların en büyük filozof-şairi Mevlâna Rûmî çağdaş dünyada insanlığı ayıran bütün engelleri aşma konusundaki doğuştan gelen ihtiyacı çok iyi anlamakta ve katıksız maddeciliğin param parça ettiği modern dünyadaki tek teselli olan ruhu canlandırıcı aşk şarabını sunmaktadır. Onun felsefesi, kalbi ilhamla dolduran ve zihni yücelten manevi coşkunluk ve yaratıcı deha ile aydınlanmıştır. Nicholson Mevlâna'nın düşüncelerini kendisini tarih boyunca ve ebediyen hissettiren evrensel varlığın eşsiz bir panoraması olarak görmekte, Arberry ise Rûmî'nin, edebiyat ve düşünceye yaptığı muhteşem ve büyük katkılarla insanlığı zenginleştiren, büyüklüğü Doğuda olduğu kadar Batıda da kabul edilen bir kişi olduğu düşüncesindedir.

Genelde dünya, özelde ise Hindistan alt kıtasının edebi ve sufi geleneği Mevlâna Rûmî'nin mesajlarından çok büyük ölçüde etkilenmiştir ve bu etkinin izleri büyük Hint sufi şairleri Kabir ve Nanak ve Radhaswami inancının önde gelen takipçilerinin yazılarında görülebilir. Fakat Rûmî'in mesajının Hindistan'daki en büyük savunucusu, Farsça, İngilizce ve Urduca şiir ve düzyazıları Rûmî'nin ideolojik ve felsefi etkileri dolu olan Allama İkbal'dir. İkbal'in üslubunun Celâleddîn Rûmî'nin tam bir yansıması olduğunu söylemeye bile gerek yoktur. İkbal'in felsefi, şiirsel ve sufi mesajlarının Hint alt kıtasında oldukça yaygın olduğu açıktır. Bu nedenle, Mevlâna Rûmî'nin izlerini ve onun Hindistan'daki mirasının etkisini değerlendirmek için, onun Hindistan şiiri üzerindeki etkisini Allame İkbal özelinde incelemek yararlı olacaktır. Sempozyuma "Mevlâna Celâleddîn-i Rûmî'nin Hindistan Şiir Geleneği üzerindeki Etkisinin Allame İkbal Özelinde İncelenmesi" başlıklı bildirimle katılmak istiyorum.

Biz bu bildiride, Rûmî ve İkbal arasındaki ideolojik, felsefi ve mistik benzerlikleri ortaya çıkarmak ayrıca Müslüman dünyasının bu iki efsanevi kişiliğinin üslubundaki ortak noktaları vurgulamaya çalışacağız.

Ayrıca, Hindistan'da Mevlâna üzerine yapılan önde gelen çalışmaları ortaya koymaya ve dünyanın diğer bölgelerinde Rûmî hakkında üretilen eserlerden bahsetmeye çalışacağız.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Allah, Rûmî, Iqbal, Aşk, Hindistan, Kuş, Özgürlük, Hak

The thirteenth century Persian poet-philosopher Mawlânâ Jalâl-al-Dîn Rûmî is one of the foremost spiritual geniuses of human history. With the passage of time, his perennial wisdom is yielding profound spiritual insights. His exceptional creativity is globally being acknowledged in our times and climes.

He is almost consensually accepted to be the greatest sufi or mystical poet the world has ever seen. He is a spiritual humanist of the highest order. A man far far ahead of his times, the contemporary relevance of whose spiritual achievements and poetic accomplishments can never be overemphasized. The entire poetic corpus of Rûmî is brimming with pantheistic proclivities, predilections and orientations. At his best Rûmî surpasses perhaps all Persian poets in the width and breadth of his imagination, the forcible rhythm of his words, depth of emotions and tenderness of feelings.

As a mystic poet, Rûmî provides a perfect example of that blending of mystical sentiment and amorous feelings characteristic of so much of Persian literature. In the depths of the philosophy of Rûmî the same vision of *Wahdat al-Wujud* is operating as was presented by Attar, Ibn Arabi and Sanai.

Attar was the soul and Sanai the two eyes of that soul,

I came only to follow Sanai and Attar.

Persian mystics often were men of outstanding sensitivity and employed poetry or poetical diction to express their thoughts and to move their fellow men. It was only natural for a school of thought which distrusted 'reason' and relied on the inspiration of the 'heart' to adopt the language of lyrics and to employ the symbolism of sensuous love. Thus Rûmî's philosophy is enlightened with spiritual frenzy and creative ecstasy inspiring the heart and elevating the mind.

The Traces of Mawlânâ Rûmî are found not only in Turkey but throughout the world. His poetic greatness and mystic sanctity is celebrated. Great orientalists have lavishly contributed books and articles to highlight the philanthropic message of Mawlânâ. Reputed scholars like R. A. Nicholson, A. J. Arberry and Badi-u-Zaman have toiled hard to translate, interpret, appreciate and even to propagate the message and muse of Mawlânâ Rûmî. Nicholson says, "The forms in which he clothes his religious philosophy had been fashioned before him by two great sufi poets, Sanai and Attar. Though he makes no secret of his debt to both of them, his flight takes a wider range, his materials are richer and more varied, and his method of handling the subject is so original that it may just be described as a new style¹.

Rûmî's spiritual and intellectual leadership of sufi culture as well as philosophy can be fathomed from his thematisation of love as the ultimate source of knowledge as against the time-honoured and classically acknowledged sources such as sense-experience and reason. Rûmî's alternative epistemological account anchored on love became a dominant theme of sufi poetry in centuries to come. The comparison between love and reason became a characterizing feature of post-Rûmî sufi epistemology. For Rûmî, metaphorically speaking, reason is represented by Satan and love exemplified by Adam. Reason is the instrument of Greek philosophy and love is the instrument of Sufism or spiritualism².

Rûmî's ecstatic utterances about love are mind-baffling. Love is essentially indefinable and unanalysable. It is a state of being, a state of feeling the ultimate splendour, a state of being in touch with the Supreme transcosmic and transcendental Beauty. Professor Khalifa Abdul Hakim while dwelling upon Rûmî's account of love says, "Love is indescribable and the attempt to define it is as baffling as to define life itself. Life as well as love, not in spite of, but on account of their immediacy cannot be defined". Love, according to Rûmî, is the greatest virtue. Perfect love is perfect freedom, causing the union of human will with the Divine will⁴.

S. A. H. Abidi, Mawlânâ Jalâl al-Dîn Rûmî, His Times and Relevance, in S. H. Qasimi, "The Mawlavi Rule", New Age, Delhi, 1997, p.217.

Paul Edwards, (eds), Encyclopedia of Philosophy, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1967, Vol. IV, pp.212–213.

Khalifa Abdul Hakim, The Metaphysics of Rûmî, The Institute of Islamic Culture, Lahore, 1959, p.138.

Asloob Ahmad Ansari, (eds), *Iqbal: Essays and Studies*, Ghalib Academy, New Delhi, 1978, p.38.

In pre-Rûmî era, the Sufis generally wallowed into negativistic and deterministic attitudes. The sufi intellectual climate fostered a mindset characterized by fatalism and total surrender. Rûmî most forcefully brought out the role of human struggle in making and unmaking of the world. He famously said that it is better to be pointlessly engaged than to be sitting idle and doing nothing. Iqbal reverberates the same by saying that an alert apostate in front of an idol is far superior to a Muslim who slumbers inside the Ka'abah.

According to Rûmî, Man's struggle for higher ideals and values is perennial. It is a genuine and meaningful struggle. It does not mean that man has to strike his head against fate. However, it is the very destiny of man to struggle against his destiny.⁵

The Mathnawî is regarded as "unique panorama of universal existence, enrolling itself through time and eternity. Arberry is of the opinion that Rûmî was the man who enriched humanity with a splendid and massive contribution to literature and thought. The contemporary world that is swamped by stark, naked materialism and torn apart by terror and intolerance is striving for the 700 years old soul stirring wine of love — the message of the Mawlânâ⁶.

The Mathnawî is regarded as the most accepted interpretation of the teachings of Islam. Abdur Rahman Jami (1414-1492) regards the Mathnawî as the Qur'an in the Pahalwi language.

The Mathnawî of the Mawlavî is, indeed, a Qur'ân in the Pahlavi (Persian)

How can I describe the sublimity of that great safe? Though not a Prophet, he has left a scripture

Ibid., p.11.

Ibid., p.43.

Mulla Hadi Asrar Sabzwari (1797–1863) who is an eminent philosopher poet also holds that *Mathnawî* is an exposition of the glorious Qur'ân.

Accordingly, Rûmî has formulated one of the most universalist versions of religion. His catholicism transcends all social, political, ideological, theological, philosophical, cultural, historical and geographical determinations; his pluralism appropriates them all. He appropriates the entire quire and furniture of the universe and yet he transcends it all. His negations and affirmations are cosmic as well as transcosmic. His vision is universal, his mission spiritual.

Traces of Mawlânâ Rûmî in India

It is encouraging to note that the whole Indian subcontinent with its great and rich heritage of Persian literature has cherished the Mawlânâ Rûmî and his works making oceans out of the nectar of *Mathnawî*. We can easily find the traces of Mawlânâ Rûmî in the writings and discourses of a great number of Indian Sufis who have immensely explained and elucidated the contents of *Mathnawî* in their table talks (*Malfuzat*). Sheikh Saharif al-Din Bu Ali Kalandar (d. 1324) is probably the first Indian Sufi who refers to *Mathnawî* of Mawlânâ Rûmî in his own work (*Mathnawî Gulu-Bulbul*). Khawaja Nasir al-Din Chirag Delhi (d. 1356) the *Khalifa* of Hazrat Khawaja Nizam al-Din Awliya (d. 1325), and a great Chisti saint of his time has widely drawn from the couplets of *Mathnawî*. Syed Muhammad Ashraf Jahangir Samnani (d. 1436) who during his extensive travels in the Muslim world happened to meet Hafiz Shirazi has produced interesting commentary on some parts of *Mathnawî*.

India has the privilege to have preserved the largest and most beautifully written and illustrated manuscripts of the *Mathnawî* in its museums and public libraries. It was in India that the great scholar Abdul Latif Abbasi Gujrati (d. 1638) edited the *Mathnawî* for the first time on the basis of more than 50 manuscripts. Numerous other scholars of repute have meticulously undertaken the researches about Mawlânâ Rûmî and *Mathnawî* to contribute in a better and more elaborate manner the exhaustive and convincing explanations of the *Mathnawî*. The *Mathnawî* consists of a number of such stories which are either from or about India. There is the story of a merchant who took a message for his parrot from the parrots of India. There is also the story of a man who seeing the angel of death, went to Solomon and requested him to send him to India to save his

life. Besides, many fables have been taken from *Kalila wa Dimna* that is the translation of Sanskrit work *Panch Tantra*. Beginning a story Rûmî says:

Seek the story from Kalila (and Dimna).

And search out the moral (contained) in the story 7 .

Rûmî has been obviously influenced by India, while on his part for seven centuries he inspired mystic movements in India directly or indirectly. As said earlier, India contributed the largest number of manuscripts, commentaries and printed editions of the *Mathnawî*⁸. Baba Lala, a great mystic of 17th century A.D. and the spiritual guide of Prince Dara Shikoh, has answered the queries of the later through the verses of *Mathnawî*.

The great founder of Radha Swami cult in India. Swami Maharaj has been immensely inspired by Shams Tabriz and Mawlânâ Rûmî. He quotes from the *Mathnawî* frequently in his discourses. Swami Maharaj directly derives inspiration from Rûmî while saying "If one has met a perfect Faqir, he has seen the Almighty God". Then he quotes Rûmî to strengthen his point:

If you accept someone to be your spiritual guide, you will find him an embodiment of God and the Prophet⁹.

Swami Ji corroborates his idea that "one cannot see the Supreme Being in a mosque or temple, but only in the perfect and true spiritual guide".

⁹ *Ibid.*, p.221.

⁷ Abidi, op. cit., p.218.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p.219.

The heart of saints is a veritable mosque, where all mankind can worship God.

Countless examples of Rûmî's influence on Indian mystic culture are available in the works and discourses of Sufis and saints, Hindu mystics and spiritual philosophers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy of Bengal (1772–1833) the founder of Brahmo Samaj (Theistic Church), Prince Dwarka Nath Thakur (1774–1846), his son Maharishi Devandra Nath Thakur (1818–1905), the father of Rabindra Nath Tagore, Swami Rama Tirtha a great mystic and poet monk of Punjab (1873–1906) and the great 20th century theosophist and thinker of India Dr. Bagawan Das who was a challenging propounder of the unity of all mankind and who concludes his book, *The Essential Unity of all Religions*, with the story of a blind man and the Elephant given in *Mathnawî* of Rûmî¹⁰.

Impact of Mawlânâ Rûmî on Iqbal

The greatest impact in India of Mawlânâ Jalâl al-Dîn Rûmî is found on the philosophy, poetry and ideology of Allama Iqbal — the greatest twentieth century Indo-Islamic poet-philosopher and a self-professed spiritual discipline of Rûmî. Iqbal himself admits:

See me, none Else you will find in Hindustan, like me - a progeny of Brahmans - more aware of the secrest of Rûmî and Shams Tabriz

He is to Rûmî what Dante was to Virgil. Rûmî is the spiritual guide to Iqbal in the transcosmic journey poetically enacted in *Javed Namah*, one of Iqbals celebrated Persian Masterpieces. In his poetic and philosophical Odyssey, he was always on the horns of a dilemma; hedged sometimes on the spiritual love-fire of Rûmî and tethered sometimes on the rationalist predilections of Imam Razi. Of all the sources of his inspiration, Rûmî's

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¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.225

impact was overwhelming. In one of his numerous tributes to Rûmî Iqbal declared himself to be the twentieth century Rûmî:

Like Rûmî I gave a clarion call from the ramparts of Ka'abah, From him I learnt the Secrets of self, He confronted the trial of the times gone by I confront the trial of ongoing times.

Iqbal was overwhelmingly impacted and inspired by the epistemological and metaphysical romanticism of Rûmî. For Iqbal also, love is a multifunctional instrument of appropriation, creation, evolution, exploration and interpretation.

To Iqbal, like Rûmî, love as a source of knowledge is identical with intuition and the knowledge appropriated through intuition is most authentic and beyond the shadow of doubt and infinitely superior to knowledge gathered through intellect. In his philosophical interpretation of human existence, Iqbal following Rûmî, accords special place to the fact of human freedom. Man's freedom or capacity for initiative is the only instrument of change and revolution in human history. Like many other philosophers and Sufis Iqbal has outlined the features of his 'Ideal Man' variously called 'Perfect Man' or 'Superman' or 'Super-Mind' or as Iqbal himself christens his 'Ideal Man' by the name of 'Mard-i-Mumin'.

However, it seems, in his conception of 'Ideal Man' Iqbal has been chiefly influenced by Rûmî whom he accepted and deemed his spiritual guide (*Murshid*). Iqbal has paid him highest tributes in his poetical compositions claiming that Rûmî revealed to him the mysteries of life and death. Iqbal's ideal that man like that of Rûmî's ideal man is capable of determining not only the course of history but also the operations of Allah. His hand is Allah's hand. He is overwhelming, operation-creating and problem-resolving. His ultimate depth is where God resides and operates. The rest of the world is illusory, fanciful and apparent or unreal.

Iqbal and Rûmî share many things amongst themselves despite their considerable differences. Both are in search of an 'Ideal Man'. In their poetical compositions, both have devoted utmost attention to the exploration of the features of the 'Ideal Man'. Both are vitalists, intuitionists and supra-rationalists. Both believe in human freedom. Both visualize endless possibilities for the spiritual evolution of man. Both think that old

forms are destroyed with a view to creating new ones and thus life is a perennial, ever-continuous and ongoing project. In view of the similarity of their views, Rûmî has exercised greatest influence on the over-all philosophical development of Iqbal.

Iqbal discovers that only with Rûmî is the material available for the reconstruction of nations and civilizations besides finding out the remedy of contemporary spiritual malaise, in his philosophy. In one of his discourses Iqbal says, "The present world needs a Rûmî who could illuminate the candle of Hope and rekindle the flames of Love".

He considers himself a tiny drop from the ocean that is Rûmî, a humble cavalryman of that marching force which is led by Rûmî. In all his poetry Iqbal reflects the giant that was Rûmî and same is vividly manifest in his philosophy.

Although Rûmîan ideology becomes more manifest in Iqbal after he started producing "Asrar-e-Khudi" yet he seems to have embraced Rûmî even during his studies on Ph. D thesis, The Evolution of Metaphysics in Iran.

"Asrar-e-Khudi" appeared in 1915 with three verses in its beginning from a famous Gazal of Rûmî in which the longing of seeing the "Perfect Man" is manifest. Iqbal clearly says that the incentive of writing "Asrar-e-Khudi" is the influence of "Murshid-i-Rum".

Thus Iqbal's untiring journey on the path of Love started under the guidance of Rûmî and the majesty of "Love" and "Self" was experienced by him with all its succour and ecstasy. He declared that:

The "Asrar-e-Khudi" is perfectly written under the influence of Rûmî not only in thought and content but also the style and rhetoric is that of Rûmî. Frequent parodies of Rûmî are sufficient proof for this.

Iqbal has started "Ramoz-i-Bay Khudi" too with one of Rûmî's verses.

"Ramoz-i-Bay Khudi" too possesses numerous parodies from Mathnawî. About the "Best Model" Iqbal has strictly followed Rûmî in the following verse:

In the beginning of "Payam-e-Mashriq" Iqbal pays homage to Rûmî, acknowledging that it was Rûmî who unfolded upon him the mysteries of Life and Death, in these words:

Lamenting the failure of philosophers like Ibn Sina and Farabi to the success of Rûmî and his philosophy of Love, Iqbal says that both of them traversed the deserts of cosmic realities but ended up at naught unlike Rûmî who bagged the "Gems of Essence":

and

Iqbal longs for getting lost in the ecstasy of love like Rûmî and desires to perish in the "Oceans of Fire" of Tabriz:

Iqbal considers Rûmî not only his ideal guide but the man whom all mysteries of cosmic world have been unfolded and the former cherishes to kindle the flame of his conscience with the spark of Rûmî's passion, Iqbal says:

Throughout his spiritual journey Iqbal is highly satiated by Rûmî's wisdom. In *Javed Nama*, Iqbal's deepest urge to embrace Rûmî and his great love and reverence for him appears to be in full bloom.

Addressing the new generation Iqbal, in *Javed Nama*, laments on the ignorance of the youth from the vision of Rûmî and advises them to cherish the guidance of Rûmî:

رقصِ تن ازحرف او آموختند مستحيثم اوازرقص جان بر دوختند

يس ڇهايد کرد

In the beginning of the *Mathnawî* Iqbal stresses that the Muslim Ummah can revive and survive only by the ideological guidance and spiritual succor provided by Rûmî. He says:

Iqbal begins Zaboor-e-Ajam, remembering Rûmî in these words:

Since Iqbal absorbed Rûmî most, he not only followed Rûmî's philosophy to a considerable extent, but also used Rûmîan Phraseology to convey his message. He even sought support from Rûmî's poetry in his prose discourses. We come across many phrases, symbols and quotations from the *Mathnawî* and *Ghazals* of Rûmî in the *Asrar-e-Khudi*. For example,

Iqbal:

Iqbal:

Rûmî:

Iqbal:

Iqbal occasionally used the same meters and rhymes as employed by Rûmî. The meter of his *Asrar* is the same as that of Rûmî's *Mathnawî*:

ای بار مقامر دل پیش آی و دمی کم زن زخمی که زنی برما مردانه و محکم زن Rûmî:

بانشهٔ درویشی در ساز و دمادم زن چول پخته شوی خود را بر سلطنت جم زن

Iqbal:

ساربان اشتران بین سربسر قطار مست میرمست وخواجه مست و پارمست اغیار مست

از دیر مغال آیم نی گردشِ صهبامست در منزل لا بودم از بادهٔ الا مست

Iqbal

Iqbal and Rûmî often speak in terms of *Sher* (Lion) and *Rubah* (Fox). Rûmî:

Iqbal:

Iqbal wished the man to behave like lions in the world after becoming submissive to God as the Fox is to the Lion.

GELİBOLU-KAHİRE-İSTANBUL ÜÇGENİNDE BİR MEVLEVÎ ŞEYHİ VE OĞULLARI

(Hüseyin Azmî Dede, Mehmed Bahaeddin Dede, Ahmed Celâleddîn Dede)

Gülgün YAZICI*

ÖZET

Gelibolu Mevlevîhânesi şeyhi Hüseyin Azmî Dede ile büyük oğlu Kahire Mevlevîhânesi şeyhi Muhammed Bahaeddin Dede ve küçük oğlu Galata Mevlevîhânesi son şeyhi Ahmed Celâleddîn Dede, tebliğimizin konusunu oluşturuyor.

Beş kuşaktır Gelibolu Mevlevîhânesi'nin şeyhliğini üstlenen bir aileye mensup olan Hüseyin Azmî Dede, babasının ölümüyle 9 yaşında şeyh olup 41 sene bu makamda kaldıktan sonra 24 sene de Kahire Mevlevîhânesi şeyhliğini yürütmüş, toplam 65 sene şeyh postunda oturmuştur. Bu uzun süre zarfında hem Gelibolu hem Kahire Mevlevîhânesi'ne büyük hizmetleri geçen Azmî Dede döneminde, her iki mevlevîhâne de kültür ve sanat açısından tarihinin en hareketli günlerini yaşamıştır. Derin musiki bilgisi sayesinde pek çok kişiye ayin meşk eden ve Mevlevî ayinlerinin bu bölgelerde yayılmasını sağlayan Azmî Dede, aynı zamanda alim ve şair bir şahsiyettir.

Hüseyin Azmî Dede'nin vefatı üzerine yerine büyük oğlu Mehmed Bahaeddin Dede geçmiş ve 1925 yılında tekkelerin kapatılmasına kadar mevlevîhânenin şeyhliğini sürdürmüştür.

Azmî Dede'nin küçük oğlu Ahmed Celâleddîn Dede ise Gelibolu Mevlevîhânesi'nde yetişmiş olmakla birlikte çilesini 17 yaşında babasıyla birlikte gittiği Kahire Mevlevîhânesi'nde tamamlamıştır. Babasının vefatı üzerine İstanbul'a dönerek münzevi bir hayat sürdürmekte iken önce Üsküdar, bir yıl sonra Galata Mevlevîhânesi şeyhliği ve mesnevîhânlığına getirilmiştir.

Mevlevî usul ve adabını en iyi şekilde bilip uygulayan Mevlevîler arasında zikr edilen Ahmed Celâleddîn Dede, üç dilde yazdığı şiirlerle 18.-19. yy. Mevlevîlik kültürü ve tarihi için çok önemli bir kaynaktır. Hem İsmail Dede Efendi'nin öğrencisi olan babasından, hem de Mustafa Nakşî Dede'nin öğrencisi olan Subhi Bey'den musiki dersleri almış, pek çok eser meşk ederek bir yandan bu eserlerin unutulup gitmesini önlemiş, bir yandan da çok sayıda musikişinas yetiştirmiştir.

Tebliğimizde Mevlevî kültürü içinde yoğrulmuş olan bir ailenin üç mensubunun Gelibolu, Kahire, Galata Mevlevîhâneleri ve dolayısıyla Türk şiiri, Türk musikisi ve Türk kültürüne

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