

# JALAL AL-DIN RUMI

b. September 30, 1207

d. December 17, 1273

## SUFI MYSTIC/POET

*“Only from the heart can you touch the sky.”*

**In 1244, Jalal al-Din Rumi met a man who changed his life. Shams of Tabriz was an older Sufi master who became Rumi’s spiritual mentor and constant companion.**

Jalal al-Din Rumi was a poet, theologian and Sufi mystic. He founded the Order of the Whirling Dervishes, a branch of the Sufi tradition that practices a gyrating dance ritual representing the revolving stages of life.

Rumi was born in the Persian province of Balkh, now part of Afghanistan. Rumi’s father was an author, a religious scholar and a leader in the Sufi movement—the mystical dimension of Islam.

When Rumi was 12, his father moved the family to escape the impending invasion of Mongol armies, eventually setting in Konya, Anatolia, at the westernmost tip of Asia where Turkey is today.

In 1231, after his father died, Rumi began teaching, meditating and helping the poor. He amassed hundreds of disciples who attended his lectures and sermons.

Rumi was married and had one son. After his wife’s death, he remarried and fathered two more children. In 1244, Rumi met a man who changed his life. Shams of Tabriz was an older Sufi master who became Rumi’s spiritual mentor and constant companion. After Shams died, Rumi grieved for years. He began expressing his love and bereavement in poetry, music and dance.

Rumi had two other male companions, but none would replace his beloved Shams. One of Rumi’s major poetic works is named in honor of his master, “The Works of Shams of Tabriz.” Rumi’s best-known work is “Spiritual Couplets,” a six-volume poem often referred to as the greatest work of mystical poetry.

In “Rumi: The Book of Love Poems of Ecstasy and Longing” (2003), Rumi expresses his perception of true love. “Lovers don’t finally meet somewhere. They’re in each other all along.”

Rumi died surrounded by his family and disciples. His tomb is one of the most revered pilgrimage sites in Islam and is a spiritual center of Turkey.



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