

# AN INTRODUCTION OF THE MS AVAILABLE AT THE MEVLANA MUSEUM, KONYA, TURKEY.

Prof. Dr. Erkan Turkmen

In my previous article (Maulana Ahmad Husain Kanpuri and Indian Commentries on Rumi's Masnevi) published in the Islam and Modern Age,

Journal No. XXXV, February 2005, I had drawn attention of scholars to Masnevi's most authentic MS available at the Mevlana Museum Konya, Turkey (reg. No.50). A facsimile of the same has been made available in three different sizes by the Ministry of Cultural Affairs, Turkey, 1993 (ISBN No. 975171452-4). This time, I shall like to throw more light upon the MS as it can be essential source for the scholars:

When Masnevi traveled from Konya (Central Anatolia) to Iran, Afghanistan and India, many changes were made in the verses of the work by scholars and scribes, which have to be taken into consideration before any further research is planned. These changes can be divided into three groups: 1- Usage of defective MSS 2- Failure to comprehend the mystic meanings of the terminology 3- Changes introduced under the impact of the local traditions and beliefs.

## **1- Usage of defective MSS:**

The earliest scholars who began to search for an accurate MS were Abdalbaki Gölpınarlı from Turkey (1), Nicholson from England (2) and Feruzanfer (3) from Iran. Nicholson, most probably due to the Second World War, could not visit Turkey to see any MS personally. Luckily, the MSS he received by post were not very different from the MS of the Masnevi of Museum, yet not perfect. Abdalbaki studied it, but made no critical edition or clarified the variants in details, although he made full use of the MS while rendering his translation into Turkish.

Nicholson did not go into essential references of the Koranic verses and relative Hadis relating to the Islamic Sufism (Tasawwuf) that form the fundamental frame of Rumi's Masnevi.

MS of Mevlana Museum has 325 folios, each 49 x 32 cm. Rough English of the colophon is:

“The illumination of it (the MS) has been made by humble Abdullah al-Hindi”

(The above lines are in the rubric)

“This book of Masnevi, which is a guidance to the path; thanks to God and peace be upon Prophet Muhammad, has been completed by the hands of humble slave (of God) and who needs His mercy Muhammad bin Abdullah al- Konavi and disciple of (Sultan) Weled(Rumi's son). This manuscript has been copied from the original MS that had been corrected by the sheikh and the author (Mevlana Jelal al-Din Rumi) and his *kehalife* (Husam al- Din Chelebi) during some meetings. May God disclose his (Rumi's) secrets on Muslims continuously.

Completed in the sacred month of Rajab 670 (October 1278) when God has more mercy on the readers who look at it (the MS) and they may pray for the scribe”.

The very first verse of the MS is:

بشنو این نی چون شکایت می کند از جداها حکایت می کند

And it is quoted by Eflaki Dede (author of the *Manaqib al Arafin*)(4) a decade after the death of Rumi exactly the same way. It was changed later as:

بشنو از نی چون حکایت می کند از جداها شکایت می کند

Accurate translation will be “Listen to this Nay (Rumi himself) while it is complaining and telling the story of separation (from its Origin = God). Here “The story of separation” is better than just “complaining”. In the second line we see “*der nefirem*” and not, “*az nefirem*”. Here again “*der nefirim*” suits the first line “*een nay*”, and is more emphatic as it means “in the presence of the nay (Rumi himself)”. As a matter of fact, the Nay of the eighteen verses is Rumi’s own spiritual state, misunderstood by the fanatic groups in Konya. His Masnevi being non dimensional interpretation of the Koran was not understood by the common people (*avam*). This is why they tried to kill his spiritual master Shams, whose teachings and interpretation of the Koran were alien to them. Sufi’s Sema (transcendental dance) accompanied with music was shamanistic performance, and for them it did not seem to fit the Islamic way of life. Many fanatic Muslim scholars tried to hide such mystic elements by changing the meaning of the Masnevi. They also do the similar thing with the interpretation of the Koran.

There is another old manuscript available at the Yusuf Agha Library, Konya (Reg.No.5547). This MS was previously dedicated to the Shrine of Rumi’s mother (Madder-i Mevlana Musuem) at Karaman. It has variants in the margin that belong to Husameddin Chelebi (shortened as ‘Husam’) and to Sultan Weled (shortened as ‘Weled’). This makes the MS first critical edition of the Masnevi. It also throws light on the Sufi terms used in the work with the meanings as understood those days. For example the fourth line is:

هر کسی کو دور ما ند از اصل خویش باز جوید روزگار وصل خویش

(He who falls away from his origin, seeks for an opportunity to join it again)

To explain the right meaning of the word “Origin”, “Hubul al watan min al iman = Love of country is a part of belief (Words of Prophet Muhammed)” has been given in the margin, which refers to the original land (vicinity) of God (i.e. the reed land) where man was once fresh and ever green like the reed of the flute by being watered with divine love and light. Now, separation from that land has made man (the flute) lonely and

deserted. The spirit (breath of God) yearns for the Blower as the Koran says, "...I breathed into man my breath" (the Koran XV/28, 29). This breath (trust) man carries within him (Koran 33/ 72); and when he discovers the breath (trust of God) in him, he begins to look for God and feels like fish out of water. But he whose holes are blocked, like the imperforated reed of the Nay with worldly desires and strong ego, does not feel breath of God in him; and thus has no feelings of separation.

The Yusuf Agha MS supports the above explanation by giving meanings of the terms *Mabi* (fish) and *Nistan* (the reed land) in the margin as: "*juẓ mabi* = *ashiq nist*" (not in love) and "*hubul watan*=love of country".

Again, we learn through the Yusuf Agha MS that the Hadis of Muhammad, "Believers (Muslims) are each other's mirrors" has been referred to by Husam as:

پیش چشمت داشتی شیشه کبود ز آن سبب عالم کبودت می نمود

(You have placed blue piece of glass in front of your eyes, and because of that you see the world blue).

But Weled gives the verse as:

جام روزن ساختی شیشه کبود نور خورشید کبودت می نمود

(You have placed blue glass on your window; therefore, the light of the sun looks blue to you).

Both sound alright but Husam's suggestion seems to be more logical.

Here is another example: The verse found in the story of 'A Parrot and the Grocer' is as follows:

می نمود آن مرغ را هر گون شکفت تا که باشد کاندرا آید او بگفت

(He showed all sorts of strange objects to the bird, so that he may begin to speak). (Nicholson Edition).

While the MM gives “*Her gun shegoff*”(all sorts of strange objects) and in the margin “*Sad gun neboft*(hundreds of hidden objects) but Y.A. has only “*Sad gun shegoff*= hundreds of strange objects ...” which sounds more suitable.

In some cases, Nicholson Edition (MI/1247) differs a lot:

چون ملك انوار حق در وی بیافت در سجود و در خدمت شتافت

When the angel found God’s light in him (Adam), he prostrated himself before him and hurried to be in his service.

The Yusuf Agha has:

چون ملائک نور حق دیدند ز او جمله افتادند و در سجده برو

When the angels found God’s light in him, they all fell down and prostrated themselves before him, face down.

I think the second form sounds better, because it suits the statement of the Koran.

Sometime we come across verses missing in Nicholson’s edition. For instance, there are four verses missing after the verse No. II / 3325 and one of them, being interesting, has been given below:

حوض با دریا اگر پهلو زند خویش را از بیخ هستی بر کند

If a water pool begins to struggle with a sea, it uproots its own being.

In the above line by *the sea* God’s lover (*Awliya* = a saint) or God Himself is meant.

2- Commentaries that fail to grasp the mystic depth of the terminology of the Masnevi:

Examples above show that Masnevi cannot be understood without grasping the mystic terminology of the Koran. At first glance, many terms used by Rumi may seem to suit Hinduism, Buddhism, Greek Philosophy and others but they all agree with the mystic dimension of the Koran and *tasawwuf* (Islamic mysticism) 'Nay' or *Bansari* may remind us of Lord Krishna's magical charm, but according to Rumi it is human body with breath of God in it.

Masnevi is truly an indirect interpretation of the Koran as said by Molla Abdurrahman Jami, although Mr. Nicholson does not seem to agree with him.

To grasp the real meaning of the Koran or Masnevi we have to pass from the *akl-i juz* (individual wisdom) to the *akl-i kul* (universal wisdom) and thence to the divine wisdom ('the ocean of divine wisdom' as named by Rumi). When we reach the divine wisdom, which is pure and above all negative feelings, we begin to love every creature, and religions fall behind as Rumi says:

ملت عشق از همه ملت جداست عاشقانرا ملت و مذهب خداست

Nation of love is different from all other nations; their religion and belief is only God.

Some Indian commentaries try to show Rumi as fatalist (5). This is against the teachings of the Koran and the teachings of Rumi, who was against the Jaberiyah (the fatalist). Rumi suggests action and vitality as it is said in the Koran, 'Wa inna leysalil insana illa mas'a= Man is man to the extent he struggles and labours' which is certainly better than: 'Cogito ergo sum= I am thinking, so I am'. So, the addition of the verse in the Indian MS as 'Fikre ma der kar-e ma azare mast= Pondering over our deeds is only a self torture' is against the Koranic teaching and, therefore, against Rumi's philosophy. Rumi in contradiction to the above verse says this:

گر توکل می کنی در کار کن کسب کن پس تکیه بر جبار کن

خواجه چون بیلی بدست بنده داد بی زبان معلوم شد او را مراد

(M I / 947-948)

If you trust in God, then work hard; keep on working and put your faith in Jabbar (the over powering Lord); if a master puts a spade in your hands, without any words his purpose is clear (here spade means two hands given by God).

More additions in Masnevi began to appear after Ibrahim Gulshani (16<sup>th</sup> century scholar) in the Iranian and Indian MSS. Some scholars raised the number of the first eighteen verses to 22. Others transferred some verses from the sixth volume, and some invented them. For example:

آنچه می گوید اندر این دو باب گر بگویم من جهان گردد خراب

If I say what this (the flute) is saying about the two worlds; this world will be devastated.

سر نهانست اندر زیر و بم فاش گر گویم جهان بر هم ز نم

Secret is hidden in the highness and lowness of the sound; if I disclose it, I may devastate the world (6). Naturally, if new words and verses are added to the Masnevi, the commentaries will also be misleading.

3- Some commentaries indulge into superfluous details that make them insipid and boring. As shown above, they also depart from the Koran and Hadis that are the main source of the Masnevi and plunge into Greek and Hindu philosophies. Such commentators could look up at the Koran first and then bring in examples from other religious books or philosophies.

In India, Masnevi never lost its impact on the Indian mystic poets even until Muhammed Iqbal; and the commentaries provided source of unlimited

love of God that carried them beyond the boundaries of physical barriers to eternal knowledge of God (*Ilm-i ledun*). Even Asadullah Khan Ghalib, who is supposed to be as secular as Shakespeare, wrote replica to Rumi's First Eighteen Verses under the title "Surme-yi Binish = The Eyeliner of Vision" in which he tries to give the main idea of the Masnevi.

The Indian commentaries had three major purposes. Some tried to solve subtle mystic terminology for the students of Persian language in India because after the Turkish rulers such as Karakhanids, Seljuks, Ghaznevids, Khuwarezmis, Shemsies and Baburies used Persian as their official language. It was not possible to obtain any degree in India without learning Persian like Latin in Europe. To this end, many commentaries aimed at teaching Persian, and what could be better than to teach Masnevi that gave a universal message to all the religions available in India. However, some commentaries had higher aim of teaching *Tassawuf* (Islamic Myticism) by means of Rumi's ideas and stories much familiar to an Indian mysticism. Other commentaries were written to teach Koranic verses and the *Hadis* (Sayings of Prophet Muhammad). According to the belief of the commentator the explanation would lead to *Hama Ust*= everything or being is God or *Hama az Ust* = everything is from God. Rumi did not believe in *Hama Ust* because this universe and creation is only a small part of the Whole as he explains in the story of the elephant in the darkness.

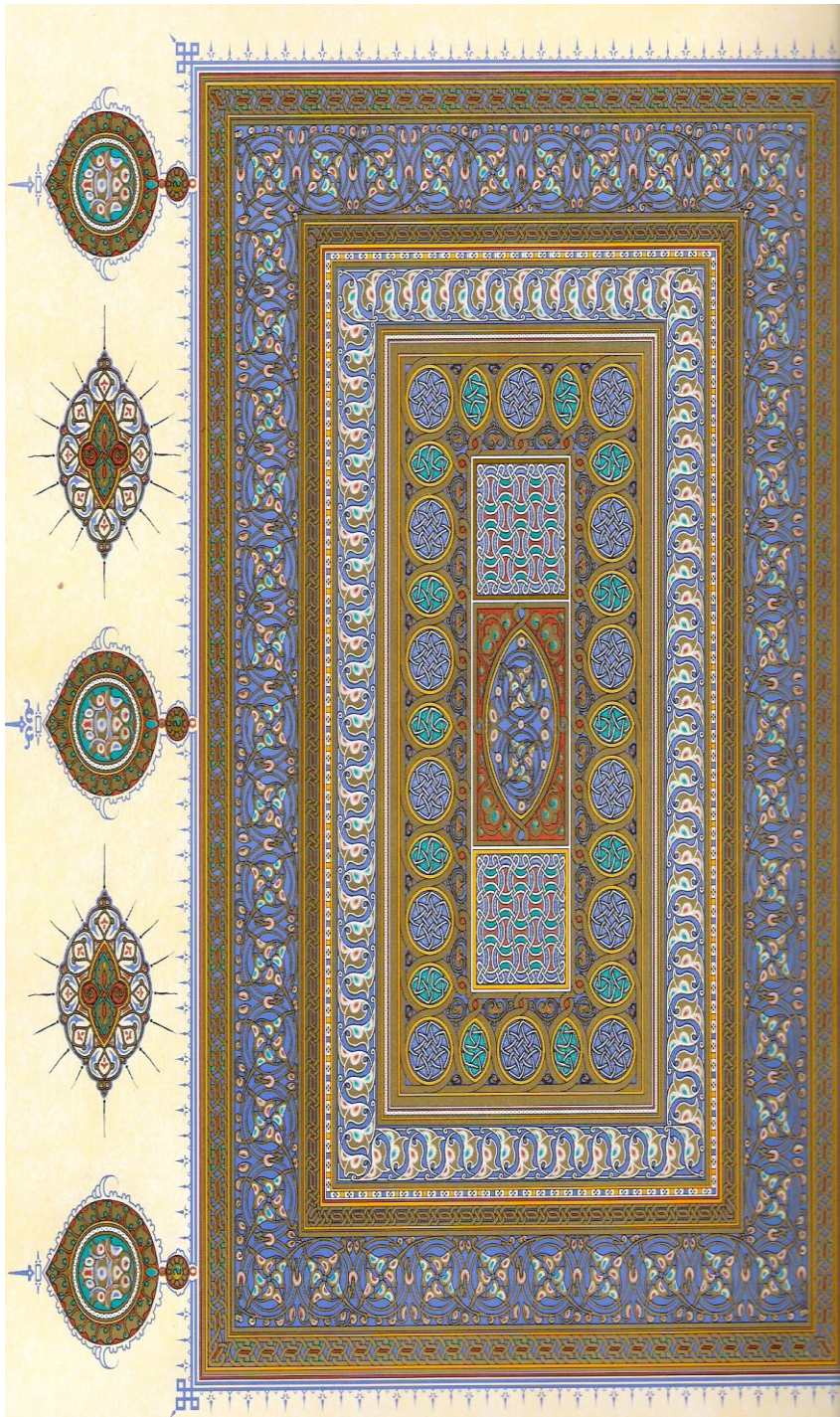
As a result, it will be safer to use the facsimile of Mevlana Museum MS, and for mystic terms and the explanations of Yusuf Agha MS.

**Note:** Another remarkable point about the Mevlana Museum MS is that it had been illuminated by an Indian artist Abdullah al-Hindi. We do not know any thing about the gentlemen's life. However, it can be guessed that there some Indian scholars and disciples of Rumi in Konya, who might had come from Afghanistan with Rumi's father. There are stories about elephants, tigers, parrots and other Indian elements in Rumi's Masnevi.

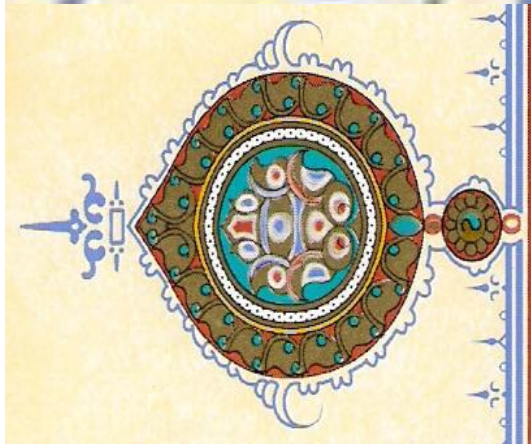
The drawings and illuminations have purely Indian taste. There is a Jin Jan motif drawn in the centre of the flower.



- 1- Abdlbaki Glpınarlı, *Mesnevi Tercmesi ve Őerhi*, İnkılap Aka Kitabevi  
İstanbul, 1981.
- 2- R.A. Nicholson, *The Mathnevi of Jellalu'ddin Rumi*, Luzac and Co., London.
- 3- Bedi'uzaman Feruzanfer, *Sherb-i Masnevi-yi Sherif*, Tehran 1373 and Kerim  
Zamani, *Sherb-i Jami Mesneviyi Manavi*, Istisharat-i Itla'at, Tehran 1374.
- 4- Ahmet Eflaki, Tahsin Yazıcı, *Manak al-Arifin*, Trk Tarih Kurumu,  
Ankara, 1959.
- 5- For details see Erkan Trkmen, *Maulana Ahmad Huseain Kanpuri and  
Indian Commentaries on Rumi's Masnevi*, Islam and Modern Age, Vol. XXXV  
February 2005 and *The Essence of Rumi's Masnevi*, Ministry  
of Culture, Ankara Turkey.
- 6- Movlana Nazir Sahib, *Muftah al-Ulum*, Sheykh Ghulam Ali and Sons,  
Lahore.



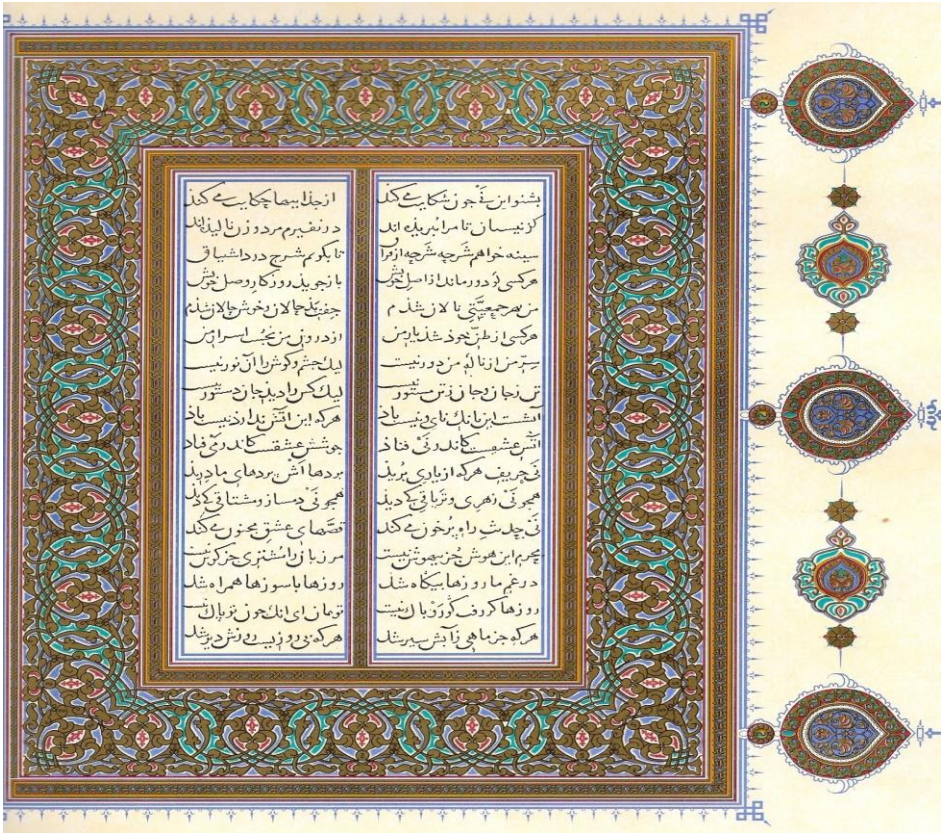
The carpet design with meaningful figures.



Attached side flowers with Jin Jan in their centres. Representing the idea that everything is known by its opposite.



The divine eye with eyelashes.



First page of the MS.

بشنو این سخن شکایت کند  
کز نیشان تا مرا بریده اند  
سینه خواهم شرحه شرحه از فرا  
هر کسی دود و ماند از اصل خوش  
من مهر جمعیتی نالان شدم  
هر کسی از طن خود شد یار من  
سیر من از ناله من دور نیست  
تس زجان و جان ز تن مستور  
انشت این بانگ نای نیست  
اتس عشقست کاند رنی فنا  
نی چریف هر که از یاری برید  
همجوی زهری و تریاقی که دید  
نی چلدت راه پر خون کند  
محرم این هوش جز بهوش نیست  
در غم ما روزها بیگانه شد  
روزها گرفت کور زبان نیست  
هر که جزاها نماند

از جدا یها چکایت کند  
در نفیرم مردوزن نالیده اند  
تا بگویم شرح درد اشیاق  
باز جوید روزگار وصل خوش  
جفت بد جان خوش جان شدم  
از درون من نجس اسرار من  
لیک چشم و گوش را از نور نیست  
لیک کس را دید جان دستور  
هر که این آتش نذر نیست باذ  
جوشش عشقست کاند رمی فاد  
برده های آتش برده های ما درید  
همجوی دمساز و مشتاقی که دید  
قصهای عشق مجنون کند  
مرزبان را مشتری جز گرفت  
روزها با سوزها همراه شد  
تومان ای آنک چون تو پان  
هر که جزاها نماند

Another view of the first page of the MS

# مشده

<p>یا بکورستان رجای سه میکن          لُف کوزک از خیال دیووش          توهمی آموزم که چُست ایست          ناکذ امین سوی باشد آن بر اش          سیر اورا چون شناسی راست کو          در بچوشد در حضورش از دم          از ضمیر چون سهیل اندر من          زانک از دل جانب دل روزنه</p>	<p>کوخالی آیدت در شب فرا          او بگرداند ز تو در حال رو          ز امر ما در پس من انکه چون کنم          غالب از وی گردد از ختم <sup>کس</sup> اند          چیله رادانسته باشد آن هام          تا بر ایم صبر مفتاح <sup>بوسه</sup> الفرج          من بدانم کوفرستان از من          در دل من آن سخن زان مینه</p>
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## مقدّمی بکتاب التذیبه علی ابن ابی الحداد

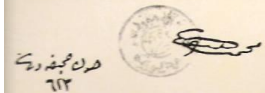
تم الكتاب المشوي الصادرى لا الصراط السوى والمجد لله  
 على انامه والصلوة والسلام على محمد نبيه خيرة رسله وخير انابه  
 على بيد الجليل الضعيف الفقير المحتاج الى رحمه ربه محمد بن عبد الله  
 القنوي الولدى وكان استنساخه من النسخه الاصلية المقررة  
 المصححة المهدية المنقحة على حضرة الشيخ مولفه وحضور  
 خليفته وحلفه في مجالس عده قدس الله سره العزير وادام  
 نعمة بقاء وجودها على المسلمين امن يارب العالمين هـ  
 يوم الاثنين من شهر الله الاصم رجب سنة سبع وسبعين وستمائة  
 ورحم الله من قرأ وطالع ونظر فيه وانتفع ودعا كاتبه وواقفه جليل

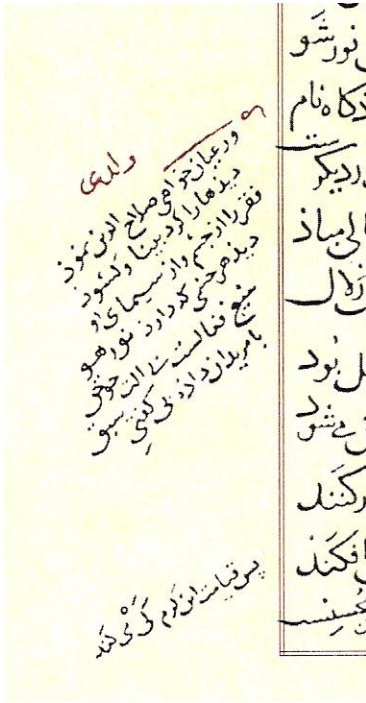


Another view of the last page.

<p>ه نیا ساینده از کج صحر و شا          حوز بخند پرده سر کا اصله          لیک بری از صدق کد کد بخش          هست پنداد رفیقش نشان          هست پنداد جوفن رو با و شا          دیک شهربنی ز سکاچ خورم          و رنگو بی دامنش اندر سلف          لب بندد ز خوشی درون</p>	<p>کا ریزدان رانی بیند عام          نه کان که هر زبان برده لک          کر بیان نظو کاذب نیز هست          بوی صدق و بوی کد کد کد          بانک چیزان و شیعا مان لپور          از خارا تا بق بدانند نیز نقش          لطف دانه سرد را دچین ز پوز          لطف اکو این مکوشینه بود</p>	<p>کا رابنان باجو بزانه کند          تا باندنم چنان از کشف داز          ے نیوسند صورت صد آفتاب          هست پنداز استوم کولن          از مشام فاسد خود کن کله          حوز بخند تو بدانی چه اباس          و ف بخن بدن بدیل شکسته          و رنگو بی در سخن چنانش</p>	<p>کا هلی را کرده اندایشان سنل          همین ز چند کا هلی کو پید باز          پرده کوچک جویک شرحه کباب          آن نسیمی که بیبا بی از چمن          کردندانی با دروا از ده دله          با زبان همچون سرد بکست راست          دست بردیک بوی چوزن خشی          و آن دکرفا ربکویز دامنش</p>
<h2>م د ه</h2>			
<p>زنی سخی از کس          تو خجالی بیلی سود پر دیکر          کربد وان کفه با نند مادرت          آن خجالی زشت داهم مادرت          الله و تو هم زان سوی پاش          کفن من خامش نشینم پیش او          منطقی بیرون از نشتادی عم</p>	<p>با کورستان بجای سهمین          لطف کوزک آن خجالی دبروش          تو همی آموزیم که چست ایست          تا کز امین سوی باشل آن بوش          سیرا و اچون شناسایست کو          در جوشد در جوش اولم          از ضمیر چون شهیل اندر توش          زانک از دل جانب دل و زنه</p>	<p>کر خیالی آیدت در شب فرا          او بگرداند ز تو در حال رو          زاسر ما در پس زانکه چون کنم          غالباً زوی کرد زار ختم اند          چیله را دانسته باشل آن هام          تا بوایم صبر مفتاح الفرج          من بلانم کورستان آن من          در دل من آن سخن زان بسمه</p>	<p>با سیر          آنجا نلک کف ما در چینه را          دل توی دار و بکن جمله بود          جمله آفرانند اندر کدر خم          دبر و سردم را مطلق آن یک          کف اگر از مکر نایب در کلام          صبر را سلم کنم سوی درج</p>
<p><b>صحة و بقاء بالذم محمد بن عبد الله الهادي</b></p>			
<p>تم الكتاب المشهور الفادي لا القضاة السوي والجزئي          على اتمامه والصلوة والسلام على محمد بن عبد الله خيرته وسلمه وخير انابه          على نبينا لهبل الضعيف الفقير المحتاج الالوجه ربه محمد بن عبد الله          القنوي الولدي وكان استنساخه من الشيخ الاصله المقتدر          المصحح المحدث المنجبه على حضرة الشيخ مؤلفه وحضوري          حليفته وحليفه في مجالس غيره قدس الله سره الهم زورادام          نفعه بقاء وجوده على المسلمين امن يارب العالمين ه          يوم الاثنين من شهر الله الاصح رجب سنة سبع وسبع وستاب          ورحم الله من قرأه وطالع ونظره واقف دواعيا كانه واقف باير</p>			
<p>٦٧٧</p>			

ی سوسن هرگز دوست  
 بود من نکر کن نفوس  
 ملحق که خداست  
 جهان ز کز گداست  
 ن او ز مکر از در کلام





The verses added by Sultan Weled in the margin and signed as “Weledi”.

INFORMATION:

