

THE BIG IDEAS

A Jihad Warrior

The inner battle.

Candy

Or self-control.

Growth

Rejoice in yours!

Patience

Is joy.

Boiling Scum

Boil it all away.

Making Mirrors

Polish yourself!!

Envy

The hardest pass.

Burn!

Set your rubbish on fire!

If

Don't lodge there.

Sword of Reality

The saint's protection.

Two Wings to Fly

Relax. Evolve. Flow. & Fly.

Spare No Effort

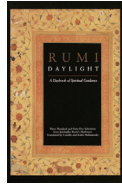
It's late.

Step into the Fire

Cook yourself in truth.

Live!

What's your letter say?



Rumi: Daylight

A Daybook of Spiritual Guidance

BY CAMILLE ADAMS HELMINSKI · SHAMBHALA © 1999 · 208 PAGES

“He is a letter to everyone. You open it. It says, ‘Live!’”

~ Rumi from *Rumi: Daylight*

[Mevlana Rumi](#): The great Islamic Persian poet and mystic.

If you've ever heard of Sufism or the Whirling Dervishes, then you've probably been exposed, at least in part, to some of Rumi's teachings. Born in modern day Afghanistan in the 13th century, he was one of the greatest Sufi philosophers and was the inspiration for Sema, the “universal movement” practiced by the Whirling Dervishes.

If you haven't had the chance to enjoy some of Rumi's incredibly beautiful poetry before, you're in for a treat. :)

Rumi lived his life in Konya, Turkey, which was, at the time, the capital of the dominant Western Seljuk Empire. Rumi was a Professor of Religion at Konya University and was respected as an incredibly mystical and spiritual man; in fact, he was known as the “*spokesman for the religion of love in the language of the heart.*”

Rumi's poetry has been captured in a number of different collections. In all, one is exposed to the manner in which Rumi demonstrates the unbridled joy that comes from living life fully, while urging us always to put aside our fears and take the risk required to do so.

Although Coleman Barks' translation (*The Essential Rumi*) may be the most popular translation of Rumi's poetry, I fell in love with Camille Adams Helminski's translation ([Rumi Daylight: A Daybook of Spiritual Guidance](#)) on a trip through the Middle East that included a visit to Rumi's tomb in Konya, Turkey. I have no doubt you'll love the light and beautiful collection of Rumi's poems she chose to translate in this edition.

For now, let's enjoy some of my favorite Big Ideas, shall we?

A JIHAD WARRIOR

“The lion who breaks the enemy's ranks is a minor hero compared to the lion who overcomes himself.”

Rumi might be called the world's ultimate jihad warrior.

But, only if we take a moment to appreciate the true, deeply spiritual nature of the concept of *jihad*—a concept distorted in modern times by both extreme Islam groups and Western views.

The root of *jihad* means “to strive” or “to exert oneself” and has two manifestations: one internal and one external. It's interesting to note that the struggle to achieve perfection of the self has been called the greater struggle or greater “holy war” (*al-jihad al-akbar*) in contrast to the lesser struggle (*al-jihad al-asghar*), which is against injustice and oppressors in this world.

With that, let's enjoy some of his beautiful and powerful thoughts that guide us in the “greater holy war” to achieve perfection of the self.

“Let's ask God to help us
to self-control for one who
lacks it, lacks his grace.”

~ Rumi

CANDY OR SELF-CONTROL?

“The intelligent want self-control; children want candy.”

I don't know about you, but I'd like the candy AND the self-control. :)

Seriously. (Well, actually I *was* being serious. :).

Self-mastery.

All the wise teachers profess its power.

[Nietzsche](#) (see Notes on [Thus Spoke Zarathustra](#)) likes to say: “*He who cannot command himself should obey. And many can command themselves, but much is still lacking before they can obey themselves.*”

“There is no worse sickness for the soul, o you who are proud, than this pretense of perfection.”

~ Rumi

And Leonardo da Vinci tells us: “*One can have no smaller or greater mastery than mastery of oneself.*”

And, as we saw, another way Rumi says it: “The lion who breaks the enemy's ranks is a minor hero compared to the lion who overcomes himself.”

How about *you*?

How's your self-mastery?

Can you command yourself? And then obey?

What's one thing that, if started doing it consistently, would have the greatest positive impact on your life?

And, how about something that you *are* doing that you know you need to *stop* doing?!?

Here's to the pursuit of self-control (and the candy that comes as a result)!

GROWTH

“No mirror ever became iron again;

No bread ever became wheat;

No ripened grape ever became sour fruit.

Mature yourself and be secure from a change for the worse.

Become the light.”

What a beautiful way to help us remember to appreciate each step we take in the self-actualizing process.

Remember that once you've evolved to a new stage of development, you simply cannot go back to the levels you were previously at!

Rejoice in that fact and appreciate your growth.

Become the light.

And remember to have:

*"Don't bother just to
be better than your
contemporaries or
predecessors. Try to be
better than yourself."*

~ William Faulkner

PATIENCE

"Patience is the key to joy."

Ahhhh... patience.

This is a virtue I am developing.

Patiently, of course. :)

I have this thought from [Epictetus](#) (see Notes on [The Enchiridion](#)) on my whiteboard whenever I used to feel my patience wane: *"If you tell me that you desire a fig, I answer that there must be time. Let it first blossom, then bear fruit, then ripen."*

How's *your* patience?

Remember, it's the key to joy.

BOILING SCUM

"This discipline and rough treatment are a furnace to extract the silver from the dross. This testing purifies the gold by boiling the scum away."

Yet another of Rumi's thoughts on the value of challenges: "It is God's kindness to terrify you in order to lead you to safety."

How can we possibly grow without challenge and a bit of discomfort?

Do you run away from every obstacle? And/or complain about every challenge?

Next time you find yourself in a challenging situation, step back. Take a deep breath.

And remember Rumi's beautiful words: "This discipline and rough treatment are a furnace to extract the silver from the dross. This testing purifies the gold by boiling the scum away."

Not sold yet on the idea of embracing the reality of challenges as necessary for our evolution and perfection?

How about another metaphor? :)

MAKING MIRRORS

"If you are irritated by every rub, how will you be polished?"

I love that.

You want to shine like a polished mirror?

Then learn to dig the "rubs" of life—those times that challenge us and push and polish us to become our highest, purest selves.

Yah? Sweet.

Oh!

And don't forget: "Burdens are the foundations of ease and bitter things the forerunners of pleasure."

ENVY

"On the way there is no harder pass than this: fortunate is he who does not carry envy as a companion."

And Rumi adds: "Indeed envy is a defect; worse than any other."

*"You think the shadow is
the substance."*

~ Rumi

"A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds, adored by little statesmen and philosophers and divines. With consistency a great soul has simply nothing to do. He may as well concern himself with his shadow on the wall..."

~ Ralph Waldo Emerson

Are you spending time comparing yourself to others?

Why?

You're here to express your highest self.

Get to work on that and quit worrying about what other people are up to!

BURN!

"I am burning. If anyone lacks tinder, let him set his rubbish ablaze with my fire."

Wow.

Amazing.

Are *you* burning?

Can your mere presence help people burn through their "rubbish" and become ablaze with a love of life!?!?

May we be the light—and the flame—that sets the world on fire.

IF

"...one cannot lodge in 'if.'"

That's genius.

Do you often say: "*If this happens then I'll...*"

Or: "*If that happens then I'll...*"

Um...

As Rumi so eloquently tells us: "One cannot lodge in 'if.'"

And, to quote the Greek goddess Nike: "*Just do it!*" :)

SWORD OF REALITY

"The sword of reality is the saint's protection."

Many ways to reflect on that gem.

On one hand, it makes me think of Aldous Huxley brilliant comment: "*Facts do not cease to exist simply because they are ignored.*"

It also reminds me of [Robert Fritz](#)' thoughts in [The Path of Least Resistance](#) (see Notes) where he outlines the need to be honest about where we're at in our lives in the process of holding the tension between our desired outcome and our current reality.

He stresses the fact that if we don't have the courage to be honest about our current reality, it's *impossible* (yes, impossible) to create our ideal.

It also makes me think about the deeper "reality" of our existence.

As Einstein says: "*Reality is merely an illusion, albeit a very persistent one.*"

Our belief that our deepest selves can ever die, that we are separate from one another and all other life is, as Einstein so eloquently says, an illusion.

The sword of reality protects the enlightened saint from these illusions.

*"Conventional opinion is the
ruin of our souls."*

~ Rumi

TWO WINGS TO FLY

"God turns you from one feeling to another and teaches by means of opposites, so that you will have two wings to fly, not one."

Wow. I just *love* that!

That's worth a re-read: "God turns you from one feeling to another and teaches by means of opposites, so that you will have two wings to fly, not one."

Ever notice how we can bounce back and forth from one idea to its opposite? Equally convinced one was the right path/truth for us at the time?

Emerson shares some amazing wisdom on this as well.

In his brilliant essay *Self-Reliance* (which I've read *dozens* of times and have available for free in the members' section), he says:

"A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds, adored by little statesmen and philosophers and divines. With consistency a great soul has simply nothing to do. He may as well concern himself with his shadow on the wall. Speak what you think now in hard words, and to-morrow speak what to-morrow thinks in hard words again, though it contradict every thing you said today. - 'Ah, so you shall be sure to be misunderstood.'—Is it so bad, then, to be misunderstood? Pythagoras was misunderstood, and Socrates, and Jesus, and Luther, and Copernicus, and Galileo, and Newton, and every pure and wise spirit that ever took flesh. To be great is to be misunderstood."

So, don't beat yourself up when you find yourself exploring different perspectives.

Remember that God turns us from one feeling to another so that we may have two wings to fly and not one...

As you experience the often disorienting sensation that comes with clarifying your values, why not imagine the creation of your beautiful wings that'll lift your consciousness higher and higher?!?

And, as we develop our sense of flight, may we remember:

SPARE NO EFFORT

"Travelers, it is late. Life's sun is going to set. During these brief days that you have strength, be quick and spare no effort of your wings."

That is so incredibly beautiful.

Are you stepping up and showing up fully in this precious hero's journey of yours?!?

How can you more fully give yourself to the world?

My friend, I repeat Rumi's wisdom: "During these brief days that you have strength, be quick and spare no effort of your wings."

STEP INTO THE FIRE

"If your knowledge of fire has been turned to certainty by words alone, then seek to be cooked by the fire itself. Don't abide in borrowed certainty. There is no real certainty until you burn; if you wish for this, sit down in the fire."

"Borrowed certainty"—whether it's from our family or friends or church or country—is never a very good place to dwell...

We must discover our own truth.

*"My friend, the sufi is the
friend of the present
moment. To say 'tomorrow'
is not our way."*

~ Rumi

As the [Buddha](#) (see Notes on [The Dhammapada](#)) says: “Do not believe in anything simply because you have heard it. Do not believe in anything simply because it is spoken and rumored by many. Do not believe in anything simply because it is found written in your religious books. Do not believe anything merely on the authority of your teachers and elders. Do not believe in traditions because they have been handed down for many generations. But after observation and analysis, when you find that anything agrees with reason and is conducive to the good and benefit of one and all, then accept it and live up to it.”

Amen.

Time to get cookin’ in the truth, eh?!?

I’ll save a seat for you in the fire!! :)

LIVE!

“He is a letter to everyone. You open it. It says, ‘Live!’”

As Gandhi once said: “*My life is my message.*”

So... What is the message of *your* life?

What does *your* “letter” say to the world?

Mine?

“Live!!!!”



Brian Johnson,
Chief Philosopher

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you’ll probably like...

[Ralph Waldo Emerson](#)

[Seven Spiritual Laws of Success](#)

[The Dhammapada](#)

[The Bhagavad Gita](#)

[Thus Spoke Zarathustra](#)

About the Author of “Rumi: Daylight”

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Camille Adams Helminski is cofounder and codirector of the Threshold Society in Aptos, California, an educational foundation in the Mevlevi tradition based on the teachings of Rumi. She was the first woman to translate a substantial portion of the *Qur’an* into English, in her book *The Light of Dawn*. Among her other translations are *Mevlevi Wird: The Prayers Recited Daily by Mevlevi Dervishes*, *Rumi Daylight* and *Jewels of Remembrance* (with Kabir Helminski), and *Awakened Dreams and Mevlevi Ayins* (with Refik Algan). She holds an honorary doctorate in Arabic from the University of Damascus and the World Union of Writers (Paris). (from [Shambhala.com](#))

About the Author of This Note

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Brian Johnson loves helping people optimize their lives as he studies, embodies and teaches the fundamentals of optimal living—integrating ancient wisdom + modern science + common sense + virtue + mastery + fun. Learn more and optimize your life at [brianjohnson.me](#).