

## **THE LEADERSHIP OF LOVE IN RUMI, KRISHNAMURTI AND EMERSON**

**BABO, Sherzad**  
IRAK/IRAQ/ИРАК

The issue of leadership is one of the most significant problems of man in the course of history.

Who can lead the world? Who must guide the others? Does humanity need gurus or spiritual leaders? What are the characteristics of a good leader? Who can put an end to the chaos, and disorder in our relations, minds and worlds? Is there a different kind of leadership which is unequal to the typical leaders of the world? Is there a way to put an end to all wars throughout the world?

These questions are always crucial to mankind especially in the “brave” modern world of today where everything happens very fast. In the “brave new world” where technology is destroying the human relationships little by little, there are discussions on the “clash of civilizations” or “the remaking of the world order” on the division of the world into the advanced industrial capitalist west (First World) and the less developed countries (Third World), on the religious and secular governments and many other problems.

In order to change the clash of civilizations into the dialogue of civilizations, people of different countries with different ethnic, racial, political, cultural, social attitudes must come to something that is in common among all of them.

It is time for every individual to ask; isn't there a different approach to tackle the problems of mankind on the earth that belongs to everyone of us, and to solve them altogether immediately?!

One can find the answer to all of these questions in the teachings of Krishnamurti the great teacher, mystic, philosopher and poet of the twentieth century, Jalal Al-Din Rumi one of literature's greatest mystical poets of Persia of the thirteenth century and Ralph Waldo Emerson the great American writer, philosopher and poet of the nineteenth century.

According to Krishnamurti, Rumi and Emerson the only way to salvation is love. But what is love? There are a lot of definitions and attitudes toward love. But neither Rumi nor Krishnamurti give any definition of love, believing that love is inexpressible, unutterable, incommunicable, indefinable, unspeakable and untouchable.

In one of his poems in **Masnavi** Book 1:1, Rumi says:

Nevertheless I try to describe love

But whenever I reach the love itself I am unable to describe it.

(**Masnavi-Book 3:18**)

In his collection of pomes ( *Divane shames Tabrizi*) he emphasizes that only God knows the “manner of my love” as comes in the following lines:

God is the Saqi and the Wine

He knows what manner of love is mine.

(**The Life and Work of Jalal-au-din Rumi. London p.130**)

Emerson also calls Love the Nameless charm:

Who can analyze the nameless charm

Which glances from one and another face and form?

(**The Complete Works of R. W. Emerson p.170**)

Both Krishnamurti and Rumi consider love as the most important requirement for life in the universe that can come to the heart of an individual. Rumi says that love is beyond definition. It is inexpressible. Nobody can say what love is. He adds:

Do not ask me what love is? Don't ask anybody ask love itself what is love?

(**Masnavi-Book 3:12**)

Again in his great book of mysticism *Masnavi* he explains love as a treasure:

Through love bewilderment befalls the power of speech,

It no longer dares to utter what passes;

For if it sets forth an answer, it fears greatly

That its secret treasure may escape its lips.

Therefore it closes lips from saying good or bad,

So that its treasure may not escape.

(**Masnavi-Book 5:11**)

Like Rumi, Krishnamurti does not give any definition of love, but he makes the meaning of love more touchable and understandable by indicating the things which are not love. He says:

Love is not personal or impersonal; it is love, it has no frontiers, it has no class, race. A man who loves is revolutionary, he alone is revolutionary.

**(Krishnamurti's Talks Benares p.18)**

Krishnamurti's doctrine of love is exactly like Rumi's approach toward love. Both of them find the leadership of love as a solution to all the obstacles, barriers and problems of mankind on this planet.

Both of them reject the leadership of thought and philosophy, saying that every kind of thought is based on past time. Every process of thinking, cerebration and pondering is old. It is conditioned, therefore it can not solve the problems of present time. Krishnamurti asserts:

Thought cannot be free nor can it ever make itself free.

Thought is the result of experience, and experience is

Always conditioning.

**(Commentaries on Living p.180)**

Transcendentalism is an American movement which seems to be very important because of its homogeneity with mysticism. Emerson's transcendental approach toward love is under the impact of eastern cultures. Transcendentalism, like other Romantic movements and oriental mysticism, proposes that the essential nature of human beings is good. Society is to blame for the corruption of mankind. This view opposes the neoclassical idea that society is responsible for keeping human beings from giving in to their own brutish natures.

Oriental spirit is one of the major characteristics of romanticism. Emerson as a romantic poet believes in "Divine Knowledge" which is different from the traditional knowledge of the books:

...the lover ascends to the highest beauty, to the love and knowledge of the Divinity, by steps on this ladder of created souls.

**(The Complete Works of R.W.Emerson p.173)**

Rumi also prefers the priority of love over thought or what we call wisdom for facing the psychological problems of man kind as it is clear in the following verses:

The feet of the philosophers are wooden  
And the wooden feet are not stable.

(**Masnavi-Book 4:2**)

In his great book **Education and Significance of Life** Krishnamurti also disapproves the knowledge which lacks love:

The man who knows how to split the atom but  
Has no love in his heart becomes a monster.

(**Education and the Significance of Life p. 19**)

Like mysticism, transcendentalism is based on the belief that knowledge is not limited to experience and observation.

Rumi divides the leading knowledge of man into two categories; the knowledge of heart and the knowledge of body:

The knowledge of men of heart bears them up,  
The knowledge of men of body weighs them down.  
When 'tis knowledge of the heart, it is a friend;  
When knowledge of the body, it is a burden.

(**Masnavi-Book 1:14**)

Emerson's love is also beyond the knowledge, control, will and power of man:

What we love is not in your will, but above it. It is not you, but your radiance. It is that which you know not in yourself and can never know.

(**The Complete Works of R.W. Emerson p.172**)

Love and wisdom are in the same boat, according to these two mystics they are not separate from each other. They look at life as a whole as a perfect entity. They say if we see the things as they are, not as we wish them to be, then whatever we see is real, the truth itself is there. Rumi puts it in these lines:

Because our seeing is full of mistakes (causes and effects)  
Go and solve your seeing in the seeing of ultimate Truth (God)

(**Masnavi-Book 1: 15**)

Krishnamurti says the same thing in a beautiful song:

-----

Ah, love life in its fullness  
It knows no decay.

(**On Nature p. 76**)

From the above mentioned quotations one comes to this result: for understanding the depth of love, its meaning, the meaning of freedom, courage, honesty, truth, education, leadership and whatever it is, one must be free from the known, experience and every kind of conditioning. In such a situation with a perfect seeing without any interference of thought, prejudgments, judgments, condemnation, or confirmation every individual can be his own leader. The main question is this how an individual can reach this freedom?

Emerson speaks about transcendental meditation which is a technique of meditation in which a mantra is chanted in order to foster calm, creativity and spiritual well-being.

Both Rumi and Krishnamurti believe in meditation, but Rumi's way of meditation is somehow like Emerson's transcendental meditation while Krishnamurti's meditation is centered on the need for maximum self-awareness.

Regarding the issue of leadership there is a little difference between these great mystics. The Transcendentalists including Emerson believed that the doctrines and organized churches of orthodox Christianity interfered with the personal relationship between a person and God. They said that individuals should reject the authority of Christianity and gain knowledge of God through insight.

According to Krishnamurti every individual must be "a light" unto himself or herself. But Rumi believes that a man who has been enlightened by the truth can lead the society in a correct direction. Rumi in **Masnavi** says:

The people are kids except the man of God  
There is no wise man except one who is free from lust.

**(Masnavi-Book 4:11)**

Even this difference in attitudes is not so touchable because in the case of Rumi's leadership when the leader dies the followers will return to their darkness. Krishnamurti rejects this kind of leadership because he believes in such a case the followers have not seen the truth for themselves. They have not been enlightened. He believes that:

The leaders destroy the followers and the followers destroy the leaders.

**(Krishnamurti's Talks Benares p. 56)**

In Rumi's sample the spiritual leadership is a perfect man. As long as he lives he can lead the society into welfare, prosperity, success, happiness and fortune. But when he dies everything comes to an end, because truth can not be organized.

Krishnamurti disapproves every kind of leadership firmly and without any hesitation:

There is no need to go from teacher to teacher, from guru to guru, from leader to leader, for all things are conditioned in you, the beginning and the end.

**(Saying of J. Krishnamurti p. 83)**

Now the main question is that why two of these three great mystics who share the same attitudes (if one can call them attitudes) in most of the fields approves the leadership and the other one disapproves it?

One thinks that the confirmation of one and the denial of the other one are more or less like each other. To be enlightened is the most difficult task. Therefore out of this difficulty we have these two contradictory attitudes.

Rumi confirms leadership because it is so difficult for every individual in society to be enlightened. In such a case an enlightened person can lead those who are not enlightened.

In Krishnamurti's approach if the individuals have not been enlightened themselves they could not choose an enlightened leader:

When we choose a guru out of our confusion, that guru must also be confused, otherwise we wouldn't choose him. To understand yourself is essential. ....

.....

we want quick relief, a panacea, so we turn to a guru who will give us a satisfactory pill. We are searching not for truth but for comfort; and the man who gives us comfort, enslaves us.

**(Sayings of J. Krishnamurti P. 83)**

According to Transcendentalism, reality exists only in the world of spirit. What a person observes in the physical world are only appearances or transient reflections of the spirit. Rumi has mentioned the same attitudes in thirteenth century that the physical world is not real, but it seems to us as a real entity, meanwhile the existence of hereafter is real but it seems to us as something unreal.

In his work, Rumi tells us over and over that he is attempting to put into language the nature and significance of the invisible universe, a task he freely admits can only be achieved in part. In “The Story of Solomon and Hoopoe,” Rumi writes:

Do thou hear the name of everything from the knower? Hear the inmost meaning of the mystery of He that taught the names. With us, the name of every thing is its outward appearance, with the Creator, the name of every thing is its inward reality.

**(Masnavi Book 1: 10)**

The best explanation for Rumi’s popularity may simply be that he was a very wonderful poet-uniquely capable of transcending “outward appearances” and conjuring up the mystical “inward reality,” yet entirely realistic and modest about the limitations of his words.

Like Rumi and Krishnamurti, Emerson and his followers believed that human beings find truth within themselves, and so they emphasized self-reliance and individuality. They argued that to learn what is right, a person must ignore custom and social principles and rely on insight, as Krishnamurti says “You can be light unto yourself.”

The Emersonian Transcendentalism was highly under the impact of Eastern thought. In the beginning of his essay “love” he has mentioned the following verse from holy Koran:

I was as a gem concealed; me my burning ray.

**(The Complete Works of R.W. Emerson p.159)**

He has mentioned this verse to indicate the very origin of love that is God the perfect and ultimate beauty. The Islamic mystical doctrine in this regard indicates that love was unknown to mankind till Allah appeared with glory and brightness. Then love come to existence and sets the lover on fire.

In the beginning of his essay “Self-Reliance,” Emerson for indicating the importance of self-knowledge has quoted from Epilogue to Beaumont and Fletcher’s “Honest Man’s Fortune,” the following lines:

Man is his own star, and the soul that can  
Render an honest and a perfect man,  
Command all night, all influence, all fate,  
Nothing to him falls early or late.  
Our acts our angels are, or good or ill

Our fatal shadows that walks by us still.

**(Norton Anthology American Lit. vol.1 p. 1126)**

These three great thinkers develop the idea of action above the thought and theory. Both Rumi and Krishnamurti were men of action and they lived according to their own teachings. Emerson mostly adapted the ideas of others into his writings. American Transcendentalism under the leadership of Emerson is important because it is a mixture of Goethe, Plato, Confucius, Islamic culture, Sanskrit religion, and Buddhism. It is a bridge between East and West. At the beginning of his essay “Nature” he has quoted the following lines from Plotinus:

Nature is but an image or imitation of wisdom, the last thing of the soul; nature being a thing which does only do, but not know.

**(Norton Anthology American Lit. vol.1 p.1073)**

The main thing that you can find in the writings of all three is the message that you must be your own leader. Emerson at the end of his essay “Nature” says:

All that Adam had, all that Caesar could, you have and can do.... Build, therefore your own world

**(Norton Anthology American Lit. vol.1 p.1100)**

Krishnamurti emphasizing on the same attitudes over and over again throughout his teachings: “You can be light unto yourself.”

Rumi calls everybody to love regardless of their religion and differences in attitudes and believes:

Come, come, whatever you are, it doesn't matter  
Whether you are an infidel, an idolater or a fire-worshiper,  
Come, our convent is not a place of despair  
Come, even if you violated your swear  
A hundred times, come again

**(Masnavi Book 5: 7)**

To sum up our materials into a compact conclusion one thinks that all teachings of mysticism whether it is Indian, Islamic, or Christian can lead toward a more peaceful world. This kind of discussions and dialogues among different civilizations will broaden our understandings of each other and accepting of one another.



For every successful educational leadership program teachings of mysticism must be included in the syllabus of the curriculum. The best actual examples in this regard are Krishnamurti's schools in America, Europe and India.

The schools that reject every kind of authority whether it is religious, political, social, traditional and so on.

## REFERENCES

Baym, Nina, Ed. **The Norton Anthology of American Literature**. New York: W.W. Norton Company, Vol.1, 1998.

Chrystal, J. Ellen, Ed. **The Courage to Stand Alone**. New Delhi: Smriti Books. 2002.

Emerson, R. W. **The Complete Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson**. New York: Sully and Kleinteich. 1883.

Ellis, Charles Mayo. "An Essay on Transcendentalism". **The American Transcendentalists: Their Prose and Poetry**. New York: Doubleder & Co. Inc.,. 1957.

Iqbal, Afzal. **The life and work of Jalal-au-din Rumi**. London. Octagon Press. 1983.

Rumi, Jalal Al-Din. **Masnvi**. Tehran: Heidari Puplichers.1992.

Joshi, Mularam. **Emerson: The Poet**. New delhi: Mittal Publications. 1987.

Krishnamurti, J. **Beginning of Learning**. London: Penguin Books: 1978.

..... **Education and the Significance of Life**. New York: Harper SanFrancisco. 1981.

..... **The First and Last Freedom**. . New York: Harper San,Francisco. 1975.

..... **Freedom from the Known**. New York: HarperCollins.1969.

..... **The Impossible Question**. London: Penguin Books: 1978.

..... **Krishnamurti's Talks Benares**. New York: KAF. 1969.

..... **Love and Freedom**. (Ed.) Peter Michel. New Delhi: Jainendra Prakash. 1996.

..... **On Nature and the Environment**. London: Victor Gollancz LTD.1992.

Rumi, Jalal-au-din. **Masnvi**. ( Ed.) Rinold Nichelson. Tehran: Haydari Publication. 1992.

Wager, Willis. **American Literature a World View**. New York: New York University Press.1968.

Weeraperuma, Susunaga. **Saying of J. Krishnamurti**. New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass publishers. 2000.

Whinfield, E.,H. **Rumi:Works of the Great Philosopher, Poet and Mystic**. London: Grange Books. 2004.