

An Analysis of Rationality in the Masnavi Mem and Zin Based on Rumi's Thought

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Article Info (٢٥١-٢٦٦)	ABSTRACT
Article type: Research Article Article history: Received: ٢٢/٠٨/٢٠٢٤ Accepted: ٢٩/٠١/٢٠٢٥ Keywords: intellect love Irfan Molvi house Mem and Zain	Intellect, as one of the most important powers of human cognition, has always been his guide and light in passing through the dark night of ignorance and superstition to the bright day of knowledge and happiness. But in the mystic tradition of Rumi and in the cases where the topic of love and its conflict is raised, the intellect is condemned and disfavored and hinders the movement and flight of the seeker, and traps the mystic in a limitation and a kind of dead end. He praises the goal of flight and ascension. According to the amount of reflection and manifestation of the category of intellect which is mentioned indirectly and sometimes indirectly in the poetry of Mam and Zain, it is possible to observe some divisions of the attributes of intellect. The present research deals with the intellect and its levels by using the descriptive-analytical method based on Rumi's intellectual paradigms and relying on the currents and textual propositions in the works of Mam and Zain's Masnavi. While examining the indications in the text, it has been tried to show that most of Khani's ideas in expressing the way of the levels of reason were based on the mystical school of Rumi. The results obtained from this research show that a great mystic like Rumi, who in his valuable and meaningful works, especially Masnavi and Ghazalyat of Shams, watered the soul and soul of the valley of mysticism, knowledge and love with the clear water of his mystical and romantic words. is, the author of Mam and Zain was not without this clear water, if by retaining the motifs of Rumi's intellectual paradigms, he was able to invite Mam or the seeker lover to stay away from the detail-oriented and expedient mind and It should not have a goal other than unity and uniformity, which is the ultimate goal of Rumi and all mystical schools.

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Introduction

In classical Islamic philosophy and mystical theology, the intellect (*'aql*) occupies a foundational yet contested position. While rationalist and Peripatetic traditions elevate reason as the supreme cognitive faculty guiding humanity away from ignorance, the mystical (*'irfānī*) tradition—epitomized by Jalal al-Din Muhammad Rumi (Mawlana)—repositions discursive reason when contrasted with Divine Love (*'ishq*). In Rumi's spiritual hierarchy, partial, utilitarian intellect (*'aql-i juz'ī*) is perceived as an impediment to spiritual flight, whereas the Universal Intellect (*'aql-i kullī*) and Faith-guided Intellect (*'aql-i īmānī*) serve as enlightened vessels leading toward transcendental unity (*wahdat*).

Ahmad Khani (1651–1707), a seminal figure in Kurdish classical literature, composed the celebrated romantic-mystical epic *Mem and Zin* (*Mem û Zîn*), drawing heavily upon Persian poetic models and Sufi allegories. While *Mem and Zin* is outwardly an allegorical romance rooted in folklore, it operates fundamentally as a profound spiritual journey (*sulūk*). This study investigates how Ahmad Khani constructs and critiques various strata of rationality within *Mem and Zin* through the conceptual lens of Rumi's mystical paradigms, demonstrating how the dialectic between Reason and Love shapes the protagonist's path toward spiritual annihilation (*fanā*) and divine union (*baqā*).

Method

This study applies a descriptive-analytical methodology rooted in intertextual and comparative literary analysis. The primary textual corpus consists of Ahmad Khani's *Mem and Zin* (2,655 couplets composed in the *hazaj* meter) alongside Rumi's *Masnavi-ye Ma'navi* and *Divan-e Shams*.

The analytical framework categorizes rationality into the specific hierarchical typologies defined within Rumi's epistemology and maps them onto textual episodes, archetypes, and allegorical symbols in Khani's narrative:

1. **Partial/Particular Intellect (*'Aql-i Juz'ī*):** Analyzing its limitations, susceptibility to doubt, and utilitarian orientation.

۲. **Universal Intellect ('Aql-i Kullī):** Investigating its association with the First Intellect ('Aql-i Awwal), the Muhammadan Light (*Nūr-i Muhammadī*), and transcendental perception.
۳. **Philosophical/Discursive Intellect ('Aql-i Bahthī/Falsafī):** Evaluating the critique of speculative syllogisms and dialectical doubt.
۴. **Faith-Guided Intellect ('Aql-i Īmānī):** Examining moral discipline, spiritual chastity, and obedience to divine revelation.
۵. **Acquired Intellect ('Aql-i Maksabī/Tahṣīlī):** Exploring ascetic labor, spiritual retreats (*chilla*), and trials endured by the spiritual seeker (*sālik*).

Results

Textual and thematic analysis demonstrates significant structural and philosophical convergence between Ahmad Khani's narrative and Rumi's mystical paradigms:

۱. **Subordination of Partial Reason to Intuitive Love:**
 - In *Mem and Zin*, Khani depicts Mem's inner transformation as a deliberate detachment from worldly calculation and particular reason ('*aql-i juz'ī*'). Mem addresses his heart rather than discursive intellect to navigate love, mirroring Rumi's premise that partial intellect operates solely within material causality and remains blind to suprarational divine mysteries.
۲. **The Universal Intellect and the Archetype of the Guide (Murshid):**
 - Aligning with Rumi's cosmogony, Khani traces creation to the First Intellect and the Muhammadan Light in his opening theological discourses.
 - Within the narrative allegory, as Mem transcends physical instincts and self-consciousness through suffering and imprisonment, he awakens to his true spiritual self (*naḥs-i nātiqa*). In this elevated state, Mem appears to Zin as an archetypal luminous guide (*pīr-i nūrānī*) and an embodiment of active intellect ('*aql-i fa'āl*'), leading the beloved toward divine illumination.

۳. **Rejection of Speculative Philosophy in Favor of Unitive Experience:**

- Khani explicitly critiques formalistic philosophers and dialecticians whose reliance on doubt and syllogism distances them from divine grace. Consistent with Rumi's teachings in the *Masnavi* and *Fihi Ma Fihi*, reason serves merely as a guide to bring the seeker to the threshold of the King; once arrived, discursive reason must be surrendered to spiritual intoxication and visionary gnosis (*kashf va shuhūd*).

۴. **The Function of Faith-Guided Intellect ('*Aql-i Īmānī*) and Moral Chastity:**

- Despite intense passion and opportunities for physical consummation during private encounters, Mem maintains absolute chastity and moral restraint. This behavior reflects the operation of '*aql-i īmānī*', which harmonizes spiritual passion with divine law (*sharī'a*), ensuring that earthly romance ('*ishq-i majāzī*') serves purely as a bridge to transcendent, Divine Love ('*ishq-i haqīqī*').

۵. **Acquired Spiritual Maturity ('*Aql-i Maksabī*) Through Asceticism:**

- Mem's spiritual evolution culminates through ascetic endurance, isolation, and prayer during his imprisonment. This transformative discipline purges material attachments and enables the seeker to achieve complete psychological equilibrium and unitive consciousness.

Conclusion

The study concludes that Ahmad Khani's *Mem and Zin* is deeply grounded in the mystical and epistemological framework of Jalal al-Din Rumi. Khani does not reject rationality indiscriminately; rather, his critique is strictly leveled against the reductionist, mundane, and overly speculative dimensions of partial reason ('*aql-i juz'ī*' and '*aql-i bahthī*'). When praising intellect, Khani refers to the Universal ('*aql-i kullī*') and Faith-guided ('*aql-i īmānī*') intellects, which illuminate the human soul and align with divine revelation. Ultimately, *Mem and Zin* serves as an allegorical journey wherein the soul transcends sensual and discursive limitations through



love, attaining ontological union (*wahdat*) with the Divine. Khani successfully synthesizes Rumi's metaphysical insights within Kurdish epic romance, demonstrating the enduring universality of classical Sufi thought across regional literary traditions.