A Review of Words, Expressions, and Compounds Coined by Mawlana in Diwan-e Shams-e Tabrizi

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Abstract

Mawlana Jalal ad-Din Muhammad Balkhi, commonly known as Rumi, is one of the brightest stars of Persian literature who reveals the divine secrets in the language of angels. He has been playing the reed-flute of love for consecutive centuries, thus soothing the amorous and impatient souls. One of the more enduring mysteries of Rumi’s works is the special language he has used in his lyric poems. It is as if he has handpicked words and poured his ideas into them. The limitless universe of Rumi’s lofty thought and imagination has led him toward introducing novel compounds and phrases which make his Diwan stand out.

Love is the quintessence of Rumi’s lyric poems which he has found as a result of mystical experiences with almighty, Shams-e Tabrizi, and The Beloved. For expressing the scale of his love, Rumi has broken the cumbersome language rules and structures, thus coining new words in a passionate manner, which indicates the freshness of his lofty ideas. In this research we have strived to absorb a gleam of Diwan-e Shams, as closeness and familiarity with lyric poems of that diwan can brighten the entire world. In sum, here we have strived as best as we could to provide a quick overview from various aspects of Rumi’s lexicon in his poems as well as the words, expressions and compounds coined by him.

Keywords: Rumi, lyric poems, idiomatic phrases and compounds, function words.
Mawlana Jalal ad-Din Muhammad Balkhi, commonly known as Rumi, is a major Persian poet whose poetry relates to this mundane world and beyond it, as well as all humans regardless of the color of their skin, their race, and their religion. His lyric poems are replete with passion of life, and his poems and his words have not lost their freshness overtime. Lyric poems of Diwan-e Shams are amorous poems which liberate the reader from the prison of physical dimensions immersing him in an endless ocean of sublime ideas which have their root in Islamic mysticism. Love and Mystical Drunkenness are the quintessence of Rumi’s words.

Dear, my words are insipid while heard sober,  
Bless me with a goblet or two while asking for words from me.  
Poem 2835

Diwan-e Shams is Rumi’s grandest work, and a large portion of it has been composed under the state of passion and mystical drunkenness. Being cryptic is one of its main attributes which is due to various reasons. Having a look at citations from some of the greatest figures of contemporary Persian literature about the mysteries of Rumi’s poetic language, can further acquaint us with its various aspects. “Rumi has always been inevitable from using symbolic and cryptic language for expressing himself and this has led him to using imageries which are specific to him. Discovering the secrets within objects and phenomena is a characteristic of Sabk-i Hindi, and poets composing in this style can succeed in expressing themselves by profuse deliberation about minute and grand phenomena in the world. Rumi has used this technique more than any of his predecessors, and thus has gathered one of the widest lexicons while expressing the most colorful imagery through language” (Sorami, 2005: 110).

Rumi considers his words to be of a divine source which can neither be contained in ideas nor in utterances; and he admits that these divine inspirations occur to him spontaneously. With regard to the power of imagination, imagery, and scale of word coinage, Diwan-e Shams is one of the richest sources in Persian poetry. “His imagery is beautiful and artistic. Furthermore, the style of language and figures of speech employed by Rumi in his lyric poems and also the enchanting music of his poems are so unique that they are distinct from all other poets, as Samuel Taylor Coleridge has pointed out in Biographia Literaria. This distinction from the more conventional styles of poetry has given Rumi’s poems an outstanding quality and he truly deserves to be regarded as a poet with a style of his own—a unique and novel style which cannot be expressed through often-used words and phrases”  (Yousefi, 1994: 211).

Large use of repetition as a literary device, especially in the rhymes, gives a special tone to the lyric poems of Rumi and makes them stand out. If we consider the issue of lexical variety in Rumi’s language in his lyric poems, we will find further distinctions. The lyric poems of Rumi are different from others in terms of their imagery, lexical variety, meter, rhyme, and even some syntactical features. It is due to these facts that the gist of his words and poems, the states he has experienced, and his poems as a container of those states and experiences are dramatically distinct from what others have felt and considered (Yousefi, 1994: 229).

Overwhelmed by emotions, and sometimes in the state of trance, Rumi has expressed the delicacies within him; while doing so, he has sometimes complained about the cumbersome rules of rhyme and meter in Persian poetry, and dismissing them entirely, he has only thought of his beloved, thus escaping from the trap of words. “Unlike many of his predecessors who limited themselves to a set of formal words to choose from, Rumi has strived to use the language in its dynamic form. Indeed, countless thoughts and senses that occurred to him and diverse moments and states of mind he went through
demanded more vibrant and broader words than what the conventional language could allow. Rumi’s interest in the vernacular of the masses and the colloquial language has made his poems distinct and his lexicon broad” (Shafiei Kadkani, 2009: 21).

In the following, examples and evidences of Rumi’s coinages, their variety, and their structure are going to be addressed as Rumi was an innovative poet in terms of employing special words and expressions of his own invention, and he has introduced iconoclastic innovations within the field of inflectional and derivational compounds. “Rumi’s vast and highflying imagination and his desperate need for expressing it made him go beyond using the conventional language and lexicon, as they did not lend themselves effectively to Rumi’s ideas. He remarkably increased the freshness and dexterity of the Persian poetry by introducing novel words and compounds to it” (Pournamdarian, 2009: 218).

In addition, Rumi is also an innovative poet in terms of his imagery, and has found new and exclusive similarities between the realms of emotion and logic; some of such imageries are simple while others are of a more complex structure, which indicates the vastness of Rumi’s imagination and his passionate style.

“Similarities are unexpected in Rumi’s poems; despite the usual structure of similes, they seem strange and novel in terms of the semantic distance between the two sides of simile” (Pournamdarian, 2009: 227).

The stable of letters:
I shall leave this stable of letters and head for the pasture,
I am not a tethered beast, so why should I linger?
(Diwan-e Shams-e Tabrizi, 1736: 641)

The Moses of your love told me to become intangible,
How should I not flee everyone? How should I not fear Zimri?
(921: 248)

Moreover, Rumi has done a remarkable job in terms of animation and characterization, and this has led to new words and compounds in many cases.

In any case, the words and phrases used in Diwan-e Shams are worthy of exploration and discussion from various facets, and not all of them can be addressed here. In this paper, the authors strive to delve into merely a limited portion of the vast lexicon of Diwan-e Shams, and it is hoped that the results will satisfy the lovers of Rumi.

It is worth noting that coinages in Diwan-e Shams are not confined to merely nouns, and Rumi’s coinages cover the morphology and inflection of verbs and adjectives too. Iconoclastic innovations with regard to compounds in Diwan-e Shams are so broad that only mentioning the entire compounds demands an independent work—compounds like “prolific Joseph” and “laughing garden” or “Abraham-like” and “drunken-like” which are not heard of in Persian poetry until Rumi’s time.

As you can see, Rumi’s astute mind and his fluid imagination have created unique themes and imagery out of almost every object and material around him.

Discussion:
Some of the unconventional words present in the poems of Rumi belong to his regional dialect which signifies his attachment to Sabk-i Khorasani despite the fact that he lived in the heyday of Sabk-i Iraqi. Certain other unconventional words, however, pertain to semantic levels, new imagery networks, and unique personal verbal innovations of the poet. Then there are times that Rumi resorts to profuse alliteration, repetition of words, and intentional repetition of certain consonants in each other’s proximity so as to enrich the music of his poems, which give an exclusive spirit to his lyric poems. For conveying the frenzy which is making his already passionate soul more impatient, Rumi resorts to letters and words. In this midst, rhetorical devices such as paradox, alliteration, repetition, contrast, homophony, etc. have been particularly used in his Diwan. Moreover, all linguistic units such as verb, noun, and adjective clusters play a role in creating the final lyrical music and contributing to the beauty of the poem when perceived by the ear” (Abbas Zadeh, 92: 93).

Another remarkable point is the use of Persian “k” suffixes (for humility, belittlement, endearment, and pity) in a special way in Diwan-e Shams. For instance using the Persian “k” affix for belittling together with the comparative adjective “more” which is innovative. Given the limitations, only examples of words, expressions, and compounds coined by Rumi in Diwan-e Shams are going to be mentioned in the following.

A) This part contains the compounds of Rumi’s coinage. It is essential to note that these words have derivational and/or synthetic structures. Some words fall into the category of derivational adjectives, while others are derivational nouns or compound adjectives.

1- Nazok khou→nazok(delicate, narrow) + khou (attribute, quality)

Be silent because that beauty, and that delicate [nazok khou] moon,
Is going to cover her head as we are the discoverers of mysteries
(Diwan-e Shams, Poem 1748: 645)

2- Bi Jegar→bi (without) + jegar (literal: liver, figurative: heart)
Bereft of pain, grief, and hardship; incapable, enervated, and empty of courage (Nouri, 1386: 107)

Bravest of hearts [ba jegaraan] drink the toast of their victory for you,
But in the ambushade of the rogues you are heartless [bi jegar]
(Diwan-e Shams, 2872: 1069)

Ba jegar is the antonym of Bi jegar. It is a derivational adjective which is made plural by the affix “aan”. Cases of pluralizing adjectives are abundant in Diwan-e Shams.

3- Keen daar→keen (animosity) + daar (that who has or owns):
Enemy, hostile

Love is raining down on me once more from every corner,
Cutting loose my hostile and untamed [keendaar]camel once more
(Diwan-e Shams, 2064: 766)

Here, camel is a metaphorical representation of body and flesh which behave like a hostile and untamed camel jumping up and down. This verse is referring to the state of “Bast” in Sufism terminology.

4- Jaame dar →jaame (attire) + dar (that who tears apart):

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It refers to the blooming of a flower, in which it appears to be tearing apart its attire; it can further imply impatience and restlessness.

*Flowers are tearing their attires apart [jaamedar] because of you,* and narcissus flowers seem like drunken eyes just for you,

*All the stalks and tree branches are fresh too, all because of you my endless garden.*

Note: “Aabast” means pregnant, fresh (Nouri, 1386: 87)
Moreover, “endless garden” is among Rumi’s favorite and often-used compounds.

5- **Bargh andaaz** → **bargh** (gleam, light) + **andaaz** (that which casts or gives):
Shining, gleaming (Nouri, 1386: 104)

*I will cry for mercy because of each lost lover,*
*Try to find him beside the gleaming [bargh andaaz] sun*
(Diwan-e Shams, 1221: 456)

6- **Bahr farsaa** → **bahr** (sea, ocean) + **farsaa** (destroyer, that which causes gradual decay)

*That gigantic whale, that destroyer [bahr farsaa] of the seas shall delve the water,*
*And drag you in a sudden to the deep by the hand of wrath as Korah was.*
(Diwan-e Shams, 1855: 688)

To keep it short, a handful of similar compounds in Diwan-e Shams are listed below:

- **Zendeh kon** → **zendeh** (alive) + **kon** (that which does something): reviver
- **Eshkam khaar** → **eshakm** (stomach) + **khaar** (eater): seeker of laziness and comfort
- **Baten roshan** → **baten** (inside and nature) + **roshnan** (bright ones): those with a bright inside
- **Eshgh hemmat** → **eshgh** (love) + **hemmat** (orientation, intention): one in service of love
- **Aab khah** → **aab** (water) + **khaah** (demander): thirsty
- **Bakhil kaf** → **bakhil** (stringency) + **kaf** (palm, hand): thrifty and stringent
- **Selsele bandandeh** → **selseleh** (chain) + **badanadeh** (one who ties): one who is chained due to insanity
- **Etebaar amiz** → **etabaar** (value) + **amiz** (with): with value and worth
- **Bad darooni** → **bad** (bad) + **darooni** (inside): having a bad or evil nature
- **Aahan sefat** → **ahaan** (metal) + **sefat** (attribute): like metal
- **Baba konan** → **baba** (father, dad) + **konan** (repeatedly saying or doing something): Calling out to the dad repeatedly.
- **Bala joo** → **bala** (up, high) + **joo** (seeker): one who desires moving upwards, ambitious

B) Compound words using “tar”, an Arabic suffix for making comparative adjectives, used with nouns and pronouns:

More often than not Rumi goes beyond the conventions of language and grammatical rules by coining new compound words comprising a noun or a pronoun plus “tar”:

In lyric poem 2797 on page 1042 of Diwan-e Shams, all rhymes end in the aforesaid comparative adjective-maker affix while being nouns and pronouns:

*Man tari* → **man** (me) + **tari** (you are more)
Golshan tari ➔ golshan + (garden) tari (you are more)
Soosan tari ➔ soosan (madonna lily) + tari (you are more)
Ahoo tari ➔ ahoo (deer) + tari (you are more)
Tosan tari ➔ tosan (fast horse) + tari (you are more)
Joshan tari ➔ joshan (armor) + tari (you are more)

A few other examples:
Darmaan tar ➔ Darmaan (cure, remedy) + tar (more)
Jaan tar ➔ Jaan (soul, life, what is held dear) + tar (more)

Love is dear [jaan], your love more so [jaan tari].
Favors are remedies [darmaan], if received from you, even more so [darmaan tari]
(Diwan-e Shams, 1159: 433)

This lyric poem goes on to use rhymes such as “imaan tari”, “asaan tari”, “mehman tari”, “sman tari”, “kaan tari”, “tarsan tari”, etc.

Other instances: “ansoo tari” (1086), “aan tari” (1791), “jooyan tari” (1539), “bi choon tari” (1854) etc.

C) Derivational words using the suffix “istan” in a wholly innovative way:

Seeb istan ➔ seeb (apple) + istan (place of): place of apples, a garden that bears apples
Abele istan ➔ abele (small pox) + istan (place of): a land struck or wasted by small pox
(1921)

Setam istan ➔ setam (cruelty) + istan (place of): a place full of cruelty
Nader istan ➔ nader (that which is scarce) + istan (place of): a land teeming with rare phenomena, a land which is unique in its own right
Tarab istan ➔ tarab (joy, merriment) + istan (place of): a land full of joy and meriment
(1615)

Zaafar istan ➔ zaafar (saffron, red like saffron (not to be confused with zafar which means victory)) + istan (place of): the saffron-colored land or place
(1947)

Adam istan ➔ adam (nothingness) + istan (place of): the land of nothingness, the world of the dead
(2032)

“tarabistan” and “shekaristan” used in a verse:

O eternal land of merriment [tarabistan], O single land of sweetness [shekaristan],
You are merriment added to merriment, you are sweetness added to sweetness
(Diwan-e Shams, 2462: 913)
“Khaaristan” → khaar (thorn) + istan (place of): a place laden with thorns, desert, an altogether unpleasant land in which one is bound to suffer

Quit singing and fly toward the garden if you are a nightingale,
It is only seldom that nightingales spend time in the desert [khaaristan]
(Diwan-e Shams, 2437: 903)

D) Verbs made of a fake infinitive, often by adding “idan” (doing) to the relevant present tense Persian verb root:

“Saazidan” → saaz (make, create) + idan (doing): doing, creating

To be away from ill-wishers (and their ominous eyes),
Lovers have built [saazidan] their homes underground as in the city of Rey
(Diwan-e Shams, 2922: 1088)

“Bebandidan” → beband (tighten, tie, close) + idan (doing): tightening, closing

I swear to God that sweetness learned how to smile from you,
I swear to God that mountains acquired courage and strength from you
(Note that “acquiring courage” is a translation of “tightening clothes and getting ready to start a serious task” in Persian)

“Shemoridan” → shemor (count) + idan (doing): counting

Sleeping atop the house of thought, the garden of my loving heart
Resumed counting stars one by one again
(Diwan-e Shams, 898: 448)

More examples with idan (doing)
Becharidan (1198): grazing
Pazidan: cooking
Mazidan: tasting
Bekhazidan (1198): slithering, sliding, crawling
Ouidan: howling
Zanjidan: crying or moaning
Bafidan: weaving, forging
Bashidan: existing, being present
Ghonjidan: showing coquetry
Ghandidan: showing sweetness
Gijidan: the state of being dizzy
Bazidan: playing
Afroozidan: setting on fire,
Soozidan: burning
Angizidan: provoking
Shakibidan: showing patience
Shkiftan: showing or feeling perplexity or woner
Bandidan: closing, shutting
Zandidan: becoming great
Nagridan: not crying
Bar avaridan: raising up, fulfilling

It should be noted that examples such as “bashideh”, “nazideh”, “bekhrdieh”, “bafideh”, “lafideh” (lyric poem 162) have been used as participles.

E) Cases of employing the Persian “k” suffix for belittlement, humility, pity, or endearment. Different types of the “k” affix accompany different nouns and superlative adjectives; a few instances are listed below:
“adbarak”, “eghbalak”

You were whirling and asking the Evening Star to look at you, Saying that you were drunk (in its Sufi sense) and free from negligible bad and good luck [adbarak and eghbalak]
(Diwan-e Shams, 1316: 491)

Par o balak, Khosh halak, Faalak, Shalak, Salak, Zarak, Maalak

“khod binak”: selfish and little

We humans are like dung pellets and are in search of gems,
Break the pellet, and discover the gem inside; you little unruly arrogant man [khod binak]
(Diwan-e Shams, 1317: 491)

Other instances:
Serginak, Nahalinak, Kabtarak, Kinak (all from the same previous poem); Zardak, Sardak, Khordak, Kardak, Gardak, Fardak, Mardak, Nardak, Nabardak, Vardak, Fesordak, Dardak (493: 1319), Gooshak (2463), Andakak (2462), Khonbdak (2245), Kajdomak (3089), Choobak, Ghablak, Gerantarak, etc.

E) Adverbs created by adding the “aaneh” affix to proper nouns or adjectival noun:

“mostasghianeh”: in a manner similar to a Saqi
Countless burning hearts and souls,
Are holding pitchers like a Saqi [mostasghianeh] calling “water, water!”
(Diwan-e Shams, 308: 120)

To keep it short, merely a dozen examples are listed below:

Khalilaneh, Bakhilaneh, Karimanek, Khialaneh, Khodayaneh, Shirgiraneh, Kharforooshaneh, Delbaraneh, Gorizaneh, Khamoooshaneh, Khamoshaneh, Moflesaneh, Moghbelaneh, Gholamanek, Mostghfaraneh, Mohandesaneh, Etc.
F) Making various categories of words plural bad adding “aan”, a Persian pluralizing suffix: 
Nistaan (those who do not exist), Hastaan (those who exist)

Little by little, from this world of existence and nonexistence, 
Dead and buried ones have departed and living ones are arriving 
(Diwan-e Shams, 819: 302)

“Khasan”: the scum, the vile

As long as you are gaining trivial amounts from the scum and the vile, 
You are thinking of nothing but catamites and bread, you carefree man 
(Diwan-e Shams, 400: 1079)

“Che danamha”: expressions of resigning and bewilderment in face of adversity or complications 
Often there are times that one doesn’t know what to say or do 
But I do not know that my reticent nature dragged me to deep and gave me a taste of opium (in its connotative Sufi sense) 
(Diwan-e Shams, 1855: 688)

Sbaha (53), Khalghan (80), Yousefan (2854), Namousian (2944), Hamleh gaan (2945, Zeshtan (3060), 
Ouha (3033), Sarnegoonan (2919), Khamaan (3152), Nazokaan (3152), Andohan (2441)

F) Creating novel compound adjectives is another innovation of Rumi in Diwan-e Shams. The beauty of such adjectives lies in their unique imagery which is typical of Rumi’s style; for example: 
Khaarkhou ➔ khaar (thorn) + khou (attribute, quality): one who is stinging and unfriendly like a thorn

You shall lead the suffering good-for-nothing to a paradise-like garden, 
While giving the snobbish and stinging beauty suffering 
(Diwan-e Shams, 294: 1094)

Khaak rou (2940) ➔ khak (dirt) + rou (face): disheveled, ruffled, consumed by grief
Rou keshan (2866) ➔ rou (face) + keshan (while hiding): while hiding one’s face (a behavior that the beloved often exhibits in classical Persian literature for showing dissatisfaction)
Douzakh asham (3058) ➔ douzakh (hell) + asham (drink): infernal, hellish
Sabok dast (3082) ➔ sabok (light, nimble) + dast (hand): quick and light-handed
Khosh pooz (3074) ➔ khosh (good, pleasant) + pooz (muzzle): an animal, or even human, with a well-formed muzzle or face

And other derivative adjectives of Rumi’s own coinage:

Soodnak (3029): profitable
Sagsareh (2439): doggish
Shismaak (3172): ???
Namaksaar (3100): ???
G) Using the Arabic plural maker suffix “aat” with nouns and adjectives is another example of Rumi’s innovations:

- Ghalbaat (2467): cases of overwhelming
- Ghomashaat (2877): goods in general, materials, fabric
- Naderaat (3075): rarities
- Ghobaraat (1321): dust

Come to me as you are a rarity in these times,
You are a brother, father, mother, and a beloved
(Diwan-e Shams, 3075: 1148)

H) Using different verb forms in different tenses which in some cases go beyond the conventions of grammar:

- Laafi: one who boasts a lot or is famous for doing so
  You unaware of the wine of the soul, how much shall you boast of your arts?
  Leave it for a second to the hell; leave that trap of sustenance and bread
  (Diwan-e Shams, 2441: 905)

Negative imperative verb for sleeping: “bemakhabaan” (2891)

- Barmi (2878), Shekafdi (2845), Bar miniai (3134), Pajooland (3186), Zardandi (3053), Dardandi (3053), Balaghan (2967), Bemakhan (840), Jonban, jobandan (83), Etc.

Moreover, certain words and idiomatic expressions in Diwan-e Shams complicate it for the reader to comprehend the meaning of verses. Words such as Ghoosareh, Maskal, Ayas, Moghresi, Tian, Josk and so on belong to different regional dialects, and in the semantic system of Persian, are considered to be among the more obsolete words and less used in other Diwans. Addressing these words require an independent effort.

Conclusion
Rumi is considered to be an iconoclast poet within the realm of Persian language and literature. He fights the backward attitudes by introducing novel ideas. Studying Diwan-e Shams, the collection of Rumi’s lyric poems, will reveal his superiority over other poets and their works; and all this is because Rumi is a truly iconoclast poet in Persian language and poetry. This is evident both in terms of employing obsolete lexicon items and expressions of Rumi’s own coinage and in terms of using imagery techniques which lend themselves to an artistic imagery, as it is evident in Rumi’s diwan.

Rumi’s iconoclastic innovations have on the one hand contributed to the richness of the lexicon, and on the other hand, reinforced the music of his poems. His emphasis on repetition and alliteration is one of the most iconic and endearing properties of his poems, just as his emphasis on anthropomorphism, simile, and homophony bring about beautiful imagery.

Moreover, Rumi’s interest in syntactical structures and lexicon, and his modification of word have resulted in unique and novel forms. In addition, his use of colloquial words and the vernacular of the masses has given a distinguished taste to his style while broadening his lexicon.

By creating new compound Rumi has given a better dexterity and freshness to the language of Persian poetry; these compounds are of derivational and inflectional types. Rumi’s ever-working and dynamic
mind has helped him to escape the trap of ordinary words and create more vibrant words. One should also note that, aside from enriching the language, going beyond the boundaries of the formal language has sometimes resulted in ambiguity and confusion on readers’ part; most of these cases of ambiguity stem from the archaic lexical or syntactical structures, and also from regional or stylistic variations used by Rumi.

It goes without saying that exploring the words and expressions coined by Rumi requires more dedicated works and a deeper scrutiny. What is easy to acknowledge is that Rumi’s mind holds a treasure of language-related understandings, which he has successfully employed for expressing what he had in heart; and as he was speaking with authentic enthusiasm, his audience too shall inevitably feel the same way.
References