

‘Alī Tājdīnī. Farhang-e nemād-hā va nešāne-hā dar andīše-ye Mowlānā. Tehrān, Sorūš, 1383/2004, xii + 888 p.

Franklin Lewis



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- 1 This reference work of “symbols and signs” in the poetry of Mowlānā Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī contains over three hundred entries of widely varying length, alphabetically arranged. It is preceded by an introduction (pp. 1-8), and followed by a brief bibliography of 36 sources (pp. 887-88). Though described as a “dictionary” (*farhang*), it is neither particularly exhaustive, nor completely systematic. The headwords consist of nouns and proper names, many of which can be conceptually grouped as pertaining to flora and fauna; mythical creatures and literary figures; social characters and types; prophets and historical figures; nature, natural phenomena and the elements of the physical world; geography and topography; time and the seasons; religious occasions and symbols; human features; manmade objects; abstract concepts, and so on. Entries typically consist of a brief definition of the headword and a sentence or more explaining metaphorical and symbolic usages, amply illustrated by quotations (predominantly from the *Maṭnavī*, but drawing occasionally upon the *Dīvān* or the prose sources of Rūmī and Šams Tabrīzī), usually given at enough length to establish context. In the absence of any index or system of cross-references, readers may find that the headwords are not always the most intuitive or satisfactory choices of rubric: the pairs *mağz/qešr* and *šūrat/ma'nī* lack their own entries, coming instead under the headword 'Pūst'; the word *qīyāmat* does not appear as a separate entry, but occurs as a subheading under the entry for 'Rūz' (pp. 483-4).
- 2 Rūmī has often been accused of presenting his teachings unsystematically, or in a dynamic and open-ended way that makes encapsulation and categorization difficult. This is neither the first nor the only work to attempt some systemization of Rūmī's thought (see, e.g., Karīm Zamānī's topical *Maṭnavī* commentary, *Mīnāgar-e 'ešq* [Tehrān,

Našr-e Ney, 1382/2003]), but approaching the task through symbols and metaphors seems methodologically promising, as it gives refreshing attention to the poet's language and its literary and symbolic dimensions, making for a sometimes helpful resource.

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Thèmes : 11.1.1. Littérature persane classique

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