

# The Text as Teacher



## RUMI'S MASNAVI WITH ALAN WILLIAMS

ONE-WEEK RESIDENTIAL  
11-19 JUNE 2016

CHISHOLME INSTITUTE  
ROBERTON, HAWICK  
SCOTTISH BORDERS  
TD9 7PH

£420 FULL BOARD  
FOR EIGHT NIGHTS

SHAYKH JALALODDIN SITTING WITH ADEPTS  
BRITISH LIBRARY MANUSCRIPT ADD. 27263  
MASNAVI-YE MOWLANA JALALAL-DIN RUMI  
TABRIZ/SAFAVID C. 1530

**T**his course starts from the premise that in the text of the *Masnavi* is the presence of the teacher. Attention to such a presence is crucially important for the reader to understand this long and profound text, written over 750 years ago in Persian. Reading it today in English requires just as much attentive application as Rumi's disciples would have had to dedicate to it – whether they were listening to their Master, Mevlana/Mowlānā, in person or studying it in private in the Mevlevi seminary.

Traditionally the *Masnavi* was an advanced course of study, for more mature students of the gnostic path. Now, in the contemporary, globalized context, it is all the more important to read the text with a fidelity such as is demanded by an autograph musical score – such a score that can be realised in performance only, by attending meticulously to the direction the author has included in the text.

*The presence of the teacher can be discerned from the first page, as the reader is welcomed and befriended: access between the imagination of the author and reader of the text is opened up, and the address remains entirely personal, simultaneously directed to the reader's 'you' and offered to the divine 'You'.*



### STRUCTURE OF A COURSE OF LEARNING AND LISTENING

The course, led by Alan Williams, will run as a one-week residential seminar. After an initial day of introduction and preparation, days 2-6 will comprise morning and afternoon study sessions while the evenings will be given over to more practical, experiential activities. The final day will be set aside for conclusions and reflections. The evening sessions will be varied and will centre on the theme of listening. They will include, among other things, listening to the results from the creative exercises, listening to music, and listening to the performed spoken word.

### SUMMARY

The course focuses on:

- Understanding the *Masnavi* as a teacher-text
- Understanding the *Masnavi* in 13th and 21st century context
- Seeing the *Masnavi* in relation to the perspective of unity
- Reclaiming Rumi and rescuing the *Masnavi* from antiquarian and sectarian obscurity

### COURSE FACILITATOR



Alan Williams is British Academy Research Professor and Professor of Iranian Studies and Comparative Religion at the University of Manchester.

His publications

include books and articles ranging from Zoroastrianism to Classical and Modern Persian literature, via Translation Studies and Comparative Literature. He is currently contracted to publish all six volumes of the *Masnavi* with I.B. Tauris of London.

### COURSE FEE

The course fee of £420 includes full board and eight nights accommodation beginning with supper on Saturday 11 June. A deposit of £60 is required to ensure your place on the course. This will be returned if your application is unsuccessful. Please also note that the remainder of the course fee needs to be paid in full, before arrival. We try to ensure that people are not excluded for financial reasons and so may be able to offer a reduced course fee to those who need it.

### APPLICATIONS

Applicants will be accepted on this course at the discretion of the Principal. No previous knowledge of the *Masnavi* will be presumed, but successful applicants will be asked to read a very minimal amount of introductory material beforehand. Places are limited, so early application is advised.

To apply, please write to:  
secretary@chisholme.org  
Tel +44 (0)1450 880 215

### ABOUT CHISHOLME

Located in the heart of the Scottish Borders, Chisholme is a place of great natural beauty, dedicated to the art of self discovery. The Chisholme Institute is a retreat centre and school for self knowledge, firmly rooted in the principle of unity that lies at the heart of all wisdom traditions. The poetry of Rumi and the writings of Ibn 'Arabi, among others, inform, guide and ground the retreats and courses offered at Chisholme.

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[www.chisholme.org](http://www.chisholme.org)