**Who is Mevlana?**  
[Mevlana Celaddiin-i Rumi](http://mevlana.net/mevlana.html) is a 13th century***Muslim saint*** and [***Anatolian mystic***](http://mevlana.net/anatolian.html) known throughout the world for his exquisite [poems and words of wisdom](http://mevlana.net/works.html), which have been translated into many languages. ***Rumi***, as he is known in the west, is [***the best selling poet in USA***](http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,356133,00.html). The United Nations declared 2007[***The Year of Rumi***](http://portal.unesco.org/culture/en/ev.php-URL_ID=34694&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html) and celebrations were held world wide.

Mevlana was a Muslim, but not an orthodox type. His doctrine advocates unlimited tolerance, positive reasoning, goodness, charity and awareness through love. To him all religions were more or less truth. ***Mevlana looked with the same eye on Muslim, Jew and Christian alike.*** His peaceful and tolerant[teachings](http://mevlana.net/works.html) have appealed to men of all sects and creeds. In 1958, ***Pope John XXIII*** wrote a special message saying: *“In the name of the Catholic World, I bow with respect before the memory of Rumi.”*

Mevlana died on 17 December 1273 and was laid to rest beside his father in [Konya](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Konya), in present day [Turkey](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Turkey). A splendid shrine, the[***Mevlana Moseleum***](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mevlana_Museum) was erected over their remains, which is now a museum and place of pilgrimage. Every year on that day, at this magnificient 13th century mausoleum we celebrate [***Seb-i Arus***](http://mevlana.net/wedding_day.html), his *'Wedding Day',*together with thousands of people from all around the world.

**Whirling Dervishes**  
The 'dance' of the Whirling Dervishes is called [***Sema***](http://mevlana.net/sema.html) and is a part of the inspiration of Mevlana and has become part of [Turkish](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Turkey)custom, history, beliefs and culture.

[](http://mevlana.net/sema.html)

[Sema](http://mevlana.net/sema.html) represents a mystical journey of man's spiritual ascent through mind and love to "Perfect". Whirling towards the truth, his growth, through love, deserts his ego, finds the truth and arrive to the "Perfect". He returns from this spiritual journey as a man who reached maturity and greater perfection, so as to love and to be of service to the whole of creation, to all creatures without discrimination of believes, races, classes and nations.

**Mevlana's Works**    
In addition to his best-known book of verse, Masnawi, the first eighteen lines of which were written down personally and the rest dictated to his student, Chalabi Husameddin, he also wrote Divan-i Kebir; Fih-i Ma-Fi, Mecalis- i Seb’a and Mektubat.

* **Masnawi**  
  It contains 26 thousand couplets in six volumes, consisting of stories inspired by the Quran’s teachings about all that is created, as well as Hz. Mohammad’s words and their morals.
* **Divan-i Kebir**  
  Preceding Masnawi, it is a collection of poems recited by Hz. Mevlana over a wide span of time. It contains approximately 40 thousand couplets within twenty-one moderate-size divans, as well as one “Divan-i Rubai”
* **Fih-i Ma-Fih**  
  It connotes “What’s within is within” and contains Hz. Mevlana’s lectures. Mecalis-i Seb’a: As the meaning of the title “Seven Sermons” implies, it contains Hz. Mevlana’s seven lectures.
* **Mektubat**  
  It consists of the 147 letters Hz. Mevlana wrote to relatives, including his son Sultan Veled, and to friends, rulers, and officials of the State.

The daily language of the time was Turkish, the scientific language was Arabic, while Persian was the language of literature. For this reason Hz Mevlana’s books are all in Persian. They were all translated into Turkish at a later time.

In his books, Hz. Mevlana talks about how to be a wholesome human being: one who has inner peace and harmony, one who is both aware of and appreciates God’s blessings, one who takes a stand in the face of life’s hardships, one who is tolerant and loving.

An example of Hz. Mevlana’s advice to his son, Bahaddin Veled, to indicate his spiritual and worldy viewpoints is in the [next column](http://mevlana.net/works.html#top_right). More than seven hundred years have elapsed since the day of this advice and it still holds true for us all...

***Abstract of my life are these words: Raw I was, Cooked well, Burnt I got.***

Hz. Mevlana, who summed up life in the above words, passed away on 17 December 1273 following a brief time on his sickbed and reached out to his Allah and his beloved prophet. Mevlevi disciples call this night [***Seb-i Arus***](http://mevlana.net/wedding_day.html) (wedding night), the night of unity.

We would like to conclude our words with the following advice from Mevlana to those who aspire to the pursuit of truth, even today:

***There is a life in you, search that life,  
Search the secret jewel in the mountain of your body,  
Hey you, the passing away friend, look for with all your strength,  
Whatever you are looking for, look in yourself not around.***

Sema consists of seven parts:

* **Part One:** The dervish with his headdress (his ego's tombstone), his white skirt (his ego's shroud) is removing his black cloak spiritually born to the truth, he journeys and advances there. At the onset and each stop of the Sema, holding his arms crosswise he represent the number one, and testifies to God's unity. While whirling his arms are open, his right hand directed to the skies ready to receive God's beneficence, looking to his left hand turned toward the earth, he turn from right to left around the heart. This is his way of conveying God's spiritual gift to the people upon whom he looks with the eyes of God. Revolving around the heart, from right to left, he embraces all the mankind, all the creation with affection and love… It starts with an eulogy "Nat-I Serif" to the Prophet, who represents love, and all Prophets before him. To praise them is praising God, who created all of them.
* **Part Two** is a drum voice, symbolizing God order to the Creation: "Be."
* **Part Three** is an instrumental improvisation "taksim" with a reed "ney." It represents the first breath which gives life to everything. The Divine Breath.
* **Part Four** is the "dervishes" greetings to each other and their thrice repeated circular walk "Devr-i Veled," with the accompaniment of a music called "peshrev." It symbolize the salutation of soul to soul concealed by shapes and bodies.
* **Part Five** is the ***Sema*** (whirling). It consists of four salutes or "Selam"s. At the end of each as in the onset, the dervish testifies by his appearance to God's unity.
  + The **first salute** is man's birth to truth by feeling and mind. His complete conception of the existence of God as Creator and his state of creature.
  + The **second salute** expresses the rapture of man witnessing the splendor of creation, in front of God's greatness and omnipotence.
  + The **third salute** is the transformation of rapture into love and thereby the sacrifice of mind to love. It is a complete submission, it is annihilation of self with in the loved one, it is unity. This state of ecstasy is the highest grade in Buddhism, defined as "Nirvana" and in Islam "Fenafillah." However, the highest rank in Islam is the rank of the Prophet, he is called God's servant first and his messenger afterwards. The aim of Sema is not unbroken ecstasy and loss of conscious thought. At the termination of this salute, he approves again by his appearance, arms crosswise the Unity of God, consciously and feelingly.
  + The **forth salute:** Just as the Prophet ascends till the "Throne" and then returns to his task on earth, the whirling dervish reaching the state of "Fenafillah," return to his task in creation, to his state of subservience following the termination of his spiritual journey and his ascent. He is a servant of God, of his Books, of his Prophets and all his creation.
* **Part Six** Sema ends with a reading of the Quran and specially of the verse from sura Bakara 2, verse 115:

***Unto God belong the East and the West, and whither over ye turn, you are faced with Him.  
He is All-Embracing, All-Knowing.***

* **Part Seven** is a prayer for the repose of the souls of all Prophets and all believers.