

## Forty Rules of Love

Traveling with my mother for either tourism or medical treatment are some of the loveliest moments of my life. Recently we travelled to Dubai for her knee replacement, ten years after her first surgery in Houston. We had to repeat the knee replacement because the unfortunate American doctor chose the wrong joint. The operation was supposed to take place in London, but because of some errors in the tests, we had to cancel the operation. After a nice little vacation together, we've decided to do the surgery in Dubai. Until now, however, that surgery hasn't happened, so I will postpone writing about that experience until all of its elements are completed.

What attracts me most about those trips is the extra time to read and contemplate. At one of Dubai's bookshops, my eye fell on *The Forty Rules of Love*, a novel about Jalaluddin Rumi by the talented Turkish writer Elif Shafak. My motivation to purchase the book was based not only on my interest in Sufi thought with all of its beauty and deviation, but also by the fact that it is banned in Kuwait. It is actually quite funny how books are banned here for unknown reasons, whereas they are readily available throughout the Gulf region and even on the Internet. This blind censorship will not stop anyone from reading a book they love. It would be much better and more beneficial if efforts were focused on banning smoking instead.

Going back to our book here, the writer enters with the boldness of the twenty first century into the world of thirteenth century Sufism. In her novel *The Forty Rules of Love*, Elif Shafak intertwines the life of the Sufi poet Jalaluddin Rumi and his relationship with Shams Al Din Tabrizi, a Sufi coming from Persia in search of the monk from Turkish Anatolia. Together they invented an unorthodox form of