

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

WORDS OF WISDOM

by Jamiluddin Morris Zahuri

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Edited by Kara Fouladi

Illustrations by Jamiluddin Morris

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WORDS OF WISDOM

This is the fourth of what it is hoped will be a series of short booklets on the Sufi path. Effectively they will try, with Allah's help to form comments on the writings of the great mystics like Mevlana Rumi, Khawaja Muinuddin Hasan Chishti, Shah Wali Ullah, Attar, Abu Said, Bayazid Bistami, Hazrat Kharraqani and of course by my spiritual guide Hazrat Zahurul Hasan Sharib and many others.

In all cases the comments on the Masnevi are based on the well known English translation made over 80 years ago by R. A. Nicholson.

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Commentaries on some of the writings of the mystics

The Holy Prophet Muhammed

May Allah ever keep him in His mercy and Love

There is no God but God.

Hazrat Ali Murtaza Bin Abi Talib

Contentment (qanat) is that treasure which is never depleted.

Hazrat Ali is considered by many to be the head of the various Sufi orders. May his contentment enter in to our heart and mind and into the hearts of everyone who reads his words.

Khawaja Muinuddin Hasan Chishti

These are from the book 'The Meditations of Khawaja Muinuddin Hasan Chishti' by Zahurul Hassan Sharib. Published by Sharib Press 1994. The quotations are from the writings of Khawaja Saheb

*

The noise of the lover is before he sees his Beloved. Once he sees his Beloved he becomes calm and quiet, just as the rivers are boisterous before they join the ocean, but when they have joined the ocean, they are becalmed forever.

Most fully developed mystics do not exhibit bizarre behaviours generally. Those who are on the Way may however reach a stage where their behaviour becomes strange to others and the developed mystics tolerate this because they understand it is a stage necessary for that individual to pass through. Outwardly that stage may however also be confused with people whose mental stability is doubtful. The real mystic knows the difference but it may confuse others. There is a story about Bibi Rabiah. A man was in a state of confusion shouting that he was on fire. People discussed getting a

bucket of water to pour over him. Bibi Rabiah told them the beloved was making his place in the man's heart. Once that had happened he would become calm.

*

Blessed are those dervishes of this time who sit together and show each other mutual love and sincerity, for thus they acquire inner purity.

Keeping good company has been said to be the very essence of Sufism. It is taken to mean primarily the inner company of saints and Prophets. This can be achieved by reading or talking about the holy ones of the past respectfully so that the individual receives their blessings in their thoughts and feelings or visiting their shrines or graves. This being so it does not preclude also the actual physical sitting together of seekers (or in modern terms this may include communication through the internet etc.) To sit in this way has its own benefits. The company should be like minded in searching for truth and preferably the disciples of the same Sheykh. It maybe that those sitting together are engaged in Zikr or listening to Qwaali or it maybe they are engaged in talking about ordinary things or even watching a movie or playing some harmless game (without gambling). It maybe the conversation will be about spiritual themes or trying to resolve a particular moral issue. It is really the quality of the heart contact that is important. Cultivating good company in this sense aids purification. It can also be said that working together on some worthy project has great rewards spiritually. One has to learn skills of sharing labour and tolerating different view points. If each person is committed to ensuring the success of the project not only can good things be accomplished but each person acquires spiritual development.

'Bad indeed are those dervishes who do not meet each other and keep themselves aloof. This is a bad thing.'

The test of our spiritual development is social and not in some splendid isolation. Of course it is true there are times for an individual when isolation is of benefit but emerging from that into sympathetic society is important too. The result of excessive isolation may be spiritual pride. Somewhere Mevlana Rumi says that the spiritual traveller who is alone is gobbled up by Shaitan.

*

If you want to understand and appreciate the secrets and implications of mysticism you should close the door of comfort upon yourself and then sit cross legged being enamoured of love. If you have done this you will become a mystic indeed.

In effect this is prescription for a very deep and powerful meditation. First it requires one to sit completely still in the cross legged position. Completely still means just that. Most of the time we move in ways we are more or less unaware of. These movements bring short term comfort to us. A slight alteration of posture for example to ease some pain. Scratching, fidgeting, movements of the eyes, grinding teeth, coughing, etc, are just a few examples of small or bigger movements we constantly engage in. These are what is meant by 'comfort' so when Khawaja Saheb speaks of closing the door of comfort it is all these little movements he is referring to. To sit still means not to engage in these little movements. If the eyes are closed physically they can still be moving behind the eyelids but they should be made still.. The tongue inside the mouth must remain still too. Breathing in this posture must become minimal. The fact is that once we attempt to sit completely still all the different parts of the body start demanding their comforts. Pressure to move position or to

scratch an itch and so on increases moment by moment. This may happen to such an extent that it becomes very difficult indeed to remain still. For one doing this for the first time perhaps only a few seconds may be possible. As far as one's mental action goes it is focus on Love - that is the advice of Khawaja Saheb. Sitting still during the listening to Qwaali or when hearing poetry is particularly powerful.

*

The Day of Judgement is a certainty.

This is a short statement that to many may appear obvious but it is in fact immensely deep. Religious beliefs such as that of the Christians and the Muslims hold this to be true of course but as a matter of faith or belief. Khawaja Saheb asserts it as a matter of certainty. It is my view that Khawaja Saheb had in some sense experienced the Day of Judgement as a spiritual reality. In a way it has already happened but it has not yet reached this world in time.

Perhaps an analogy will help the mind to understand this. Light from a distant planet takes a very long time to reach our sight so much so that whatever happened to that star may have altered in some way, but to our sight it appears as it was a very long time ago. What I mean by this is that the Day of Judgement has already in some senses happened but it has not yet become a material reality so we may say that, just as in the case of the light of the star, the reality of it has not yet reached us.

Certainty or Yaqin is a dimension in which the spiritual realities go beyond the purely spiritual to become absolutely Real and that implies encompassing the physical too.

A seeker should ever and anon pursue faithfully and diligently his object.

It is also written that “search is never in vain”. In everyday life it so happens that something may get lost. We then diligently seek to find it. In fact that thing we think we have lost is a symbol and the seeker or at least his soul is in truth seeking for some spiritual goal in the unseen. Learning how to seek with due diligence is part of the training of a disciple. Ultimately the real seeking is for God.

Here is a true story of the disciple being trained in seeking. The guide was in bed ill and access to his study was denied him on account of the steep steps to it. He asked his disciple to go to his study and collect a magazine called, I think, Country Life - a specific volume from a certain month of maybe thirty years previously. The disciple discovered that there were magazines from floor to ceiling in the guide's study and initially despaired of ever finding that particular volume. He received some help from a daughter of the guide but it still seemed an impossible search, until - there it was! With great pleasure the disciple descended the stairs and announced proudly he had found the volume. The guide took the copy. Glanced at it and put it aside. He never looked at it again.

*

The enlightened person is one who is indifferent to both the worlds, this world and the world hereafter.

Frequently the orthodox religious persons will focus on the rewards or punishments of the next world or in other words after death. They are specified and spoken about in the holy Qur'an of course. Rewards or 'Sawab' are given for acts of piety such as praying. Sometimes the preachers will specify the amount of reward promised for specific acts.

In pursuit of these rewards or to avoid punishment people listening may modify their behaviour. It may indeed encourage detachment from concerns about this world and yes the rewards are real.

There is no doubt also that there is a function that the very orthodox play in ensuring the purity of the great holy city of Islam. The pious dwell internally in that city in the Unseen. They can not venture outside its great walls.

Nevertheless the enlightened ones, as Khawaja Saheb indicates, are not concerned with the next world and its rewards anymore than they are with this world and its materialistic values. Their concern is with the Creator of both. Hafiz the famous Iranian poet said *"The one whose heart is alive with love will not ever die"*.

According to Shah Wali Ullah of Delhi when the rewards of the good acts done in this life expire the soul sleeps until the Day of Judgement. The soul that has loved its Creator however receives a constant flow from that source and so does not sleep. Thus the great souls like Khawaja Saheb, Mevlana Rumi and Hazrat Abdul Qadir Al Jilani remain alive and active in the Unseen many centuries after their physical body is buried. Other persons, who were alive when those saints were, are now forgotten or have become a footnote in history books. Even the politically powerful monarchs and such like are just historical facts, and they have no continuing life unless they also had spiritual power.

*

If you sit on the praying carpet after the morning prayers and offer the prayers, just after sunrise you will be admitted to heaven. If there are seventy people with you, they will all find the gates of heaven open to them.

The offering of the formal ritual prayer of Islam after dawn is most important. At that time the minds of most people are sleepy and they drift but if you are awake and focussed on Allah and on obeying the holy Prophet then you may be admitted to the sacred and pure city of Islam. It is a great city in the unseen with stout walls of light. In that place everything is pure and made of light. The pious who inhabit that city are safe from the satanic influences. The one who sincerely offers all the prayers of Namaz enters by a great gate with dignity. The ones who only offer the morning prayers are given a less grand entrance but nevertheless they enter. The Holy Qur'an says: *'the prayer of the morning is heard'*.

*

It is not good to disclose the intoxication of love to the common people. Sobriety is this, that despite being engaged in the remembrance of Allah, whatever you may hear, you may distinguish understand it and know it.

Suppose that your work requires that you interview somebody for a job. If you are engaged in hearing the various voices that come to you from the unseen and thus are aware of the divinity nevertheless you can conduct the interview as if you were not aware of it and the conversation taking place you follow and take part in it in a coherent manner. This is a skill which may take some practice to master but is sobriety par excellence. Persons who have not reached sobriety cannot do this or they struggle with it. This may lead at times to bizarre behaviour from a social point of view even if it is understandable from a spiritual point of view.

Mevlana Jalaluddin Rumi

The Parrot Stories

There is a story in the Masnevi concerning the training of a parrot. In order to encourage a parrot to speak in a human language a mirror is placed in front of the parrot and behind the mirror is hidden the trainer. The parrot seeing what he takes to be the second parrot in the mirror hears and imitates that parrots speech. Of course the speech is really made by the trainer behind the mirror.

This story encapsulates the relationship between the disciple and the spiritual guide. The parrot assumes the speech comes from a parrot like himself but in reality it comes from the trainer. Just so the disciple sees the human form of his guide but in reality the guide only appears like himself. He is really the channel for the words of the trainer (God). The holy Qur'an speaks of the holy Prophet Muhammad as 'a man like yourselves'. Allah does not generally send angels to guide men but He sends men who 'walk on the earth' and eat and drink. They appear like ordinary men outwardly but their spiritual state is quite different.

*

There is another parrot story near the beginning of the Masnevi in which a parrot inadvertently spills his masters expensive rose perfume. From his masters blow the parrot becomes bald. He refuses to speak anymore. Eventually he sees a bald headed Sufi and suddenly regains speech so as to inquire if the Sufi had also spilled the oil. Thus he makes a false assumption that the Sufi is like himself. In the same way the lesson is that the Sufi trainee should not make the assumption that the guide is spiritually like himself even if he appears outwardly to be so.

There is a third parrot story. In this a man is about to take a business trip to India. He asks his relatives as to what gifts he should bring them. He then asks his caged parrot. The talking bird asks for the man to seek advice from the free parrots he may see there. He asks him to tell the parrots that he is caged and cannot be free. The man goes to India and asks the parrots there for advice to tell his own parrot. One of the parrots there is so distressed to hear the tale of woe from the caged parrot that he appears to fall down dead. The man is much distressed and regrets what he did. On return to his family he gives them their gifts. When his parrot asks what happened with the parrots there the man reluctantly tells him. The parrot on hearing this also falls down as if dead. The distressed man opens the cage to take him out and the parrot, who was feigning, flies up on to a tree branch now free. The man asks what secret message the free birds had given him. He is told that the parrots say that in order to gain his freedom he must feign to be dead.

It is common to see in movie plots that the hero reaches a low point rather like dying until he or she is resurrected to win the day.

This story relates to Fana. Fana means to annihilate oneself. There are different kinds of Fana such as the Fana fi Sheykh, the Fana fi Pir, Fana fi Ali, Fana fi Rasul, but the Fana that is usually meant is the Fana of Allah. What actually happens in this is that the entire creation is reflected in the mirror of the soul of the individual. It appears to the person that the whole of creation is within that person in one sense. In some ways the individual disappears and becomes one with creation. You could say that person has died to his or her self. The boundaries that normally allow a person to differentiate between themselves and that inward reality disappears. It must be noticed, however, that a small particle of the individual remains or they could not be aware of Fana. The way this is sometimes described in Sufi

literature is to compare it to a mountain of sugar within which there is still a single granule of vinegar. To all intents and purposes it is all sugar but if in theory one were to count out each particle one would eventually discover the single particle of vinegar. It is this that allows Baqa to be experienced.

In the case of the parrot in the story it learns from the parrots in India to simulate dying. This means dying to the self but not actual physical death. The seeker may experience a longing for death at some point. If the person interprets the death he or she longs for as something physical this is a great error and in Islam, as well as other religions, it is a sin. It is not the death of the body that is required but the death of the self or to put it another way the removal of the boundaries that differentiate a person from the reality of the universe.

The reasoning may go like this: 'if I were physically dead I would have no power over my body, not even the power to move a finger. I could do nothing to mend the mess my life is in. If instead of this I regard myself as dead and give whatever power my body has into the Hand of Allah then I do whatever He wills. In a sense I am then free of the mess of my life. I can do whatever Allah wills for me. For this to be so I must be totally sincere. Then my purpose in life becomes to discover what He wants from me. Failure and success in mundane matters are now unimportant since in dying to self I have already succeeded. Now I must wait to see if Allah accepts and forgives me.'

*

Someone asked “What is love?” I answered, “You will know when you become me”.

Love is uncalculated affection. For that reason it has been said to be an attribute of God and unreal in relation to man who is His slave. ‘He loves them’ is the entire sum, which of them is the subject of ‘they love Him’.

It is possible to understand from this that Love is divine and man’s loving God is nothing but a reflection of His love. To reflect God’s Love requires a mirror that has been completely cleaned thus the purpose of the mystic is to keep the mirror of his heart clean. This is generally attempted by Zikr or prayer or reading the holy Qur’an or by some other means. In truth for the disciple it is the guide who cleans the mirror.

Masnevi Volume 2. Introduction. Pp. 221. E. J.W. Gibb memorial

Hazrat Abdul Qadir Al-Jillani

“The wise lover unites with his Beloved. From this material realm, flying with spiritual wings he soars to the realm of attainment, for the devout walk to paradise while the wise fly to the realms close to their Lord.”

From ‘The Secret of Secrets’ by Hazrat Abdul Qadir Al-Jillani’ translated by Sheykh Tosun Bayram al Jerrahi Al-Halveti published by the Islamic Text Society 1992.

As far as I have been able to determine there are three distinct modes of individual travel in the heart. One is to walk, the second is to ‘hover’ and the third is full blown flight. One must not imagine the heart as a lump of flesh in the body. That is merely the root attaching the real heart to the body. The real heart is vast. It is said to be so vast that only it can accommodate the throne of Allah.

Of course there are other modes of travel based on transportation in this world, such as driving a vehicle, travelling by bus, or train or flying in a plane. Everything which exists in this world has its counterpart in the unseen. In the unseen world there are various types of roads from country lanes to great and very fast motorways. In some respects they are contrary to what appears in this world. Once I travelled by bus on the main road from Ajmer to Delhi, before modernisations it was a road in poor condition. I closed my eyes and saw we were inwardly travelling on a super fast three lane highway. On reaching England and travelling outwardly by a super fast motorway. I again closed my eyes and saw we were in the unseen world travelling on a dusty bumpy country lane.

To give an example of individual flight: once I was in conversation with a lady who had a great interest in and love for Prophet Isa (Lord Jesus). She told of a dream in which some monks descended to her and took her upwards to a sacred text. In that spiritual book she was shown that some of the writings had been lost or deleted whilst others remained intact. My interpretation is that she had been shown the Injil (Gospel) or the mother of the holy Bible. She had been given assisted flight to reach this.

Others tell of hovering over a landscape, not walking but floating above the ground. Others have spoken about actual flight and yet others of walking through a landscape. The most famous story of travel in Islam is the night journey of the holy Prophet Muhammed from Mecca to the sacred mosque in Jerusalem and then upward to closeness to Allah. 'Two bows lengths or even less'.

Even the imagination can fly in a sense so that if one imagines the moon suddenly it is as if you are there.

There is Sufi story told about Bibi Rabia of Basra that she travelled physically to reach the Kaaba. The Kaaba it is said went out to meet her.

The traveller is known in Islam as Salik. To travel on the mystic way to Allah is to find the way between every duality. Take for instance the dichotomy of free will or determinism. The truth can only be found between that duality not by adopting one approach or another. Mevlana Rumi in the Masnevi makes this clear in many places. Notably in the dialogue between the lion and the animals in book one of the Masnevi. He uses the marvellous technique of causing both protagonists to offer convincing argument and refutation. In the end one can only come to the conclusion that the Truth cannot be found in either nor in fact in some kind of merging of the two.

Or take the dichotomy of - 'Everything is God' or 'Everything comes from God' . Zahurman once said the difference between the two is 'wafer thin'. He meant that the spiritual path to truth is exactly between the two and it is a very fine line. One is reminded of crossing over the fires of hell to reach paradise spoken of in the holy Qur'an. The path across is as thin as a hair.

The avoidance of duality is required in the very thought processes of the mystic in relation any duality he encounter. We are taught from childhood to acquire the habit of duality. Intelligence has been said to be the ability to simultaneously keep both likeness and differentiation in the mind but the mystic has to travel between every kind of duality if they are to reach the Unity of God.

*

Remembrance in words is but a declaration that the heart has not forgotten Allah. The inward silent declaration is movement of the emotions. The remembrance of the heart is through feeling in oneself the manifestation of Allah's might and beauty. While the remembrance of the soul is through the enlightenment of the divine light generated by Allah's might and beauty.....

From 'The Secret of Secrets' by Hazrat Abdul Qadir Al-Jillani' translated by Sheykh Tosun Bayram al Jerrahi Al-Halveti published by the Islamic Text Society 1992. Pp 46.

If one practices verbal dhikr or remembrance of Allah by repetition of His name in Arabic then it is good, but by that means one may only go so far. It is like going in a vehicle towards the goal of reaching Allah. When one reaches that goal the vehicle is parked. Just as it might be if you go to someone's house. Once one has reached that house one does not take the vehicle inside. Of course it is foolish if one leaves the vehicle before reaching the destination.

The Arabic word has characteristics that, to my knowledge, are not in the name of God in other languages. The use of the Arabic name Allah is also common amongst Arabic speaking Christians. Once in a mosque in the UK someone people were having a discussion in English on religious matters. Sometimes the word Allah was used sometimes the word God. Some foolish person overheard this and told the group that in a mosque the word God should not be used!

The first part 'Al' is the definite article, 'The'. Its characteristic is sobriety and its root is the Word.

The second part 'La' refers the essence, its root is unity.

The third part 'h' refers to the spirit which has characteristics of movement and intoxication.

Sheikh Najm al Din al Kübra writes: *the ‘h’ in the divine name Allah is the very sound we make with every breath. The other letters in the Arabic spelling: **alif** and duplicated **lam** represents an intensified definite article (serving to emphasise the uniqueness of God).* The essential part of the divine name is therefore that “h” which automatically accompanies our every breath. All life depends on the constant utterance of that noble name.

(from the masters of Wisdom, s Hasan Sushud. Translation Muhtar Holland; Combe Spring Press, pp25.)

If reciting it vocally one should distinguish these elements, however Hazrat Abdul Qadir does not dwell on verbal Zikr but moves on to the silent remembrance. In my view the name of Allah is between the reciter and their own heart. Continued recitation causes the door of the heart to be opened and without continuing the external repetition one experiences the content of one’s heart. The entire content of the heart is within the knowledge of Allah. Nothing is forgotten by Him. Thus one experiences long forgotten places and faces and even names even more ‘realistically’ than when they were initially experienced albeit as an inner experience. To observe this requires the light of Allah. There are two ways to experience the light of Allah. One is that it shines on the content of the heart as described above, the other is that one experiences it directly. This second thing is rare. Zahurmian experienced both and described the second as light appearing from within, above, below and everywhere.

Hazrat Abdul Qadir Al Jilani refers to Allah’s might and beauty. These are the two manifestations of Allah that give rise to two different types of Sufi. One that is primarily concerned with Allah’s majesty and power the other with His Beauty and Love. In truth both are simply ways to reach the unity of Allah.

In chapter two of 'The Secret of Secrets' by Hazrat Abdul Qadir Al-Jillani' (translated by Sheykh Tosun Bayram al Jerrahi Al-Halveti published by the Islamic Text Society 1992. Pp 18.)

Hazrat Abdul Qadir describes the creation of the Holy Spirit and its descent to the lower realms to teach it to find its way back to find its previous intimacy with Allah. Passing through different levels of creation it became the Sultan Soul and the Moving soul until it reached the world of matter. It became known as "life - the human soul"

The purpose of the spirits coming to this lowest of created realms is that it should seek to return to its previous closeness whilst in its actual form of flesh and bone

This extracts enables us to understand the reverence paid to the corpses of prophets and saints by the Sufis and Dervishes. Thus when they approach the shrine of a saint, for example, they pray and show utmost reverence or even prostrate to show this. It is often criticised by those who have no knowledge of these things as 'Saint worship' which amounts to associating a person with Allah and which is not permitted.

There is no doubt that this reverence can be misunderstood by people who merely do it by copying others without real knowledge of what they are doing. It should be remembered however that they may indeed have that knowledge in their heart even if they are not conscious of it.

In truth however such respect is given by the wise to the Holy Spirit which has purified the body and thus has fulfilled its purpose. The material body that is buried has been granted the purity of Allah and is thus worthy of reverence and respect, for this reason. Some argue that the very ground they are buried in is affected by that purity. This

of course does not apply to just anyone but to those persons who in their lifetime purified themselves.

If such reverence from the devotee is prevented by one means or another such as at the shrine of the holy Prophet in Medina by the guards, then it is considered acceptable for the believer to stand and recite fatiha.

The following are extracts from Ghaus-ul-Azam Piran I Pir by Hazrat Zahurul Hassan Sharib asma Publications 4th edition 2011.

Sincerity means that one should not think of getting reward for the work.

In all the spiritual work one may undertake with a view to purification of the self sincerity is essential and central. If one undertakes repentance for example it means nothing unless the repentance is sincere. The evidence of the sincerity is found in changed behaviour and changed motivation. Repentance may not be accepted if it is not sincere.

There cannot be any light in the heart so long as the self does not sit like the dog of the companions of The Cave at the door of the Will of God.

In the holy Qur'an there is A description of some mystics who fall asleep but later wake unaware at first of how much time has passed. With them is a dog who sits at the door. The dog represents the self which must be tamed. The mystic changes the dog within themselves to be obedient. If the mystic requires the dog to fast it concurs, if the mystic wishes to feed it or dress it well then likewise the 'dog' concurs. One can say that the dog represents the self but also maybe the connection between the self and the body. There is a story of by Amir Khusro in which a man is much criticised for keeping his two

brothers in a cage and feeding them scraps whilst pampering a dog with good food and an expensive collar. Eventually it is revealed that the two caged brothers had tried again and again to rob and kill their brother but time and time again the dog had saved him. The brothers represent Nafs or the lower nature.

From Four Dervishes By AmirKhosro

The heart having faith does not know the words ‘why’ and ‘how’. It does not know what is ‘but’. Its motto is ‘yes’.

Ghaus-ul-Azam Piran I Pir by Hazrat Zahurul Hassan Sharib, Asma Publications 4th edition 2011.p 69

The words ‘how’ and ‘why’ in the case of spirituality are meaningless. They imply secondary causes. Allah is able bring about whatsoever He decrees. He is the only and immediate cause for everything. You’re get wet and you attribute it to rain but in Truth Allah made you wet and there was no other cause. At this point you say ‘but..... the liquid quality of the rain was responsible for my wetness’. That was merely the mechanism by which the state of physical wetness was brought about. That you arrived at a particular point when rain descended was entirely due to Allah. He was not merely the initiating origin of an effect. He was and is and always will be the only and immediate cause of every effect. When Prophet Ibrahim was told to sacrifice his son the knife had not the power to cut. Allah can if He wishes take away the power of a thing to cause a particular effect or indeed alter its quality as when prophet Ibrahim went in to the fire and did not burn.

However one should be cautious on reading this that one is not seduced by Shaitan to test God. Read the story in the Masnevi of the man who asked Hazrat Ali if he was conscious of Allah’s protection. Of course Hazrat Ali was, so the man asked him to test this protection by throwing himself from a high tower. Hazrat Ali replied that it was for God to test him not for him to test God.

Khawaja Hakim Sanai

Excerpt from The Walled Garden of Truth by Hakim Sanai, translated and abridged by D.L. Pendlebury Octagon Press. Pp. 13. BISBN 90086035 9. No date given.

*The pure man unites two in one. The lover unites three in one.
But I am frightened unless your ignorance and stupidity leave you
stranded on the bridge.*

The bridge this great poet and mystic speaks of is I think the path between mundane love and spiritual love. The one who loves a person may seem to be away from the path of the pure love of God but in fact if Allah allows it can also be the path to the love of Him. This bridge cannot be crossed by spiritual effort, by asceticisms or by any effort but only by Allah's blessing. This I think takes the form of Angel Gabriel but since the archangel can only be seen by prophets one cannot say for certain. The mundane love that places you on this bridge must be very complete and must pass beyond ordinary morality or virtue. In fact beyond good and evil. It must transcend fear of hell or desire for heaven. On the far side of this bridge is the pure direct presence of the true beloved. At this point the mundane love is left behind and virtually forgotten.

Hazrat Hakim Sanai is rightly afraid for the one who, due to lack of guidance or because that one lacks knowledge or for some other reason, finds themselves stuck halfway across the bridge. In that case the love will remain focussed on the person. The one who does this is prone to error and making mistakes and to suffering negative consequences in the world. It is therefore a difficult and dangerous path to Allah. The way of service is rather safer but probably much longer. Service to Allah includes the hearing of voices according to Shah Wali Ullah of Delhi. This is because in order to be hearing voices from the unseen one must negate oneself. When one has negated one's self then only God remains.

Good and evil have no meaning in the world of the Word: they are mere names coined in the world of 'me' and 'you'. In God's creation there is no such thing as absolute evil.

Some old religions taught and believed in two absolutes, light and dark; good and evil. These were seen as independent absolutes. We can learn from these belief systems the error in such a kind of thought.

Islam along with other religions rose above duality and espoused a firm belief in the unity of God. We are not here concerned with the formal beliefs of religion but how our very thought processes need to free themselves from the falsehood of duality in order to reach truth. So many Muslims and others confess to the unity of God formally but in their day to day thinking they actually espouse duality.

Control of thought is considered vital in spiritual development by the Sufis. If one takes unity as the goal of thought then one has structure against which to measure the random thoughts that enter the untrained mind. Thought is conditioned from childhood to be based on duality. The differentiation that a child learns between big and small, long and short, dark and light and so on is actually a function of the outer part of the brain which thrives on discriminating between finer and finer differences. The deep part of the brain is concerned with that which unites differences. In fact with unity. One definition of intelligence is that the intelligent person is capable of seeing differences and similarities at the same time.

Whenever thought finds itself in one side or another of any duality then the individual's thought is lost in duality and at that time is not on the path to unity. Mevlana Rumi for example gives the difference between free will and determinism in conversation between a lion,

representing free will, and ordinary animals, representing determinism. The dialogue lasts for some time and the arguments put forward by each are convincing. The implied solution is that neither one is true and that truth can only be found by going between the two opposites. This does not mean reconciling the two but by seeking the way between. We understand this to be what is called in Islam 'The straight way'.

Sura Rehman in the holy Qur'an refers to the sweet water and the salt water as meeting but neither being able to cross over the fine line between. In nature this phenomenon exists as something observable. In that respect it is a sign. The mind must seek that fine line between every duality. I remember Zahurman once discussing this with regard to the two much discussed concepts that 'Everything is from God' or 'Everything is God'. Following a brief discussion Zahurman concluded that there is a very fine line 'wafer thin' between the two. At the time I took it to mean the arguments between the two were finely balanced. Subsequently I realised that it was the 'wafer thin line' between was in fact the way to Truth.

The Buddhists speak of '*Neti Neti*' meaning not this and not this. To avoid in thought falling into one or the other side of duality it must seek the way between. That is the narrow path to truth. Zen Buddhists use koans to take the seeker out of duality - like asking 'What is the sound of one hand clapping?'

One technique with thoughts is that when two thoughts conflict that the person should turn mentally to the Unity of Divinity. The prophets always used this approach in that when they were pressed by unbelievers or hostile person such Pharaoh they always turned to Allah rather than relying on themselves.

We may quote here also from Mevlana Rumi:

Your calling God formless (transcending forms) or formed (immanent in forms) is vain without your liberation from form.

Whether God is 'formless' or 'formed,' He is with him that is all kernel and has gone forth from the husk.

The two poles involved in any duality are inevitably at odds with each other. Direct experience of the reality can only be had by not being involved in such dualities. Allah is One.

Hazrat Khawaja Abdul Qadir Al Jillani also quotes the following on page 61 of The Secret of Secrets:

One day someone asked Yahya ibn Mu'adh Al Razi "How did you come to know Allah?" He answered "By the union of opposites".

The union of opposites probably refers to that same substanceless way that was referred to by Zahurman. The line between two opposites is real yet has no substance. Like the place where salt water and sweet water meet. This is referred in Sura Rehman in the holy Qur'an. In the same Sura there is a reference to the weighing scales. It is necessary in weighing two things - one against the other, that there is a fulcrum or central point of balance however that central point of balance cannot be found as a substance. If you go to the physical point of balance seeking its exact physical whereabouts you cannot locate it yet if it did not exist how could you account for the ability of the scales to determine the relative weight of things. This as a sign that points us towards the reality of Allah, it is the union of opposite.

Hakim Sanai also writes:

*Those who love You weep in their laughter;
Those who know You laugh in their weeping.*

These lines describe an experience that many may have had. A moment when two conflicting emotions become experienced simultaneously.

Crying that proceeds from the heart is a wonderful tonic. It is to cleanse your heart of impurities not just the body as in the ritual bath or the cleansing of the body in preparation for prayer (wuddhu). It is referred to by some mystics as bathing in blood. The crying should arise from a source deep within you which I call a well. In all likelihood it is impossible for the crying person to control the tears. There may be no outward reason for the crying and it may be profuse and last for sometimes. It maybe like being cleaned by Allah or having your ritual cleaning completed by Him. It is a known Hal or state amongst the Sufis. It must be sincere.

Hafiz writes;

*Parted from your face, from the eye's corner a fountain was gushing,
In the flood of tears from my eye, a deluge of disasters was passing.*

From the Collected Ghazals of Hafiz: Zahuri and Moghadam. Volume one, Beacon Press Books and Media: 2017. Volume one. ghazal 85.

Hafiz is saying here, it seems to me, that in sincere crying from the heart many potential disasters are passing or we may say are being averted.

He also says elsewhere that when faced by many difficulties one should just get drunk. This does not refer to the use of alcohol to

hide from difficulties, but to the spiritual wine, one of whose characteristics is that, in spiritual drunkenness, one's thought processes cease. Since it is one's own thoughts that bring about the difficulties when the thoughts cease the problems stop drawing near.

Khawaja Ibn Arabi

From The Bezels of Wisdom by Ibn Arabi translation by R.W.J. Austin. Paulist Press. Pp 56.

....thus He says in the sacred tradition "I am his hearing and his sight" and not "his eye and his ear", in order to show the distinction between the two forms (the imperceptible and the perceptible).....

The tradition referred to by the great Ibn Arabi continues with line "I am his hand and his foot"

The distinction between seeing and hearing as functions of organs and the reference to the physical foot and hand is noted by him and well understood by Sufis. This Hadith is sometimes mistranslated as referring to eye and ear instead of seeing and hearing, or even to walking and holding instead foot and hand.

Both hand and the foot are capable of being vehicles for divinity to manifest itself on the physical plane. This cannot be understood except by those who have direct experience of it. As we understand it the first part refers to hearing and seeing only and not to the eye and ear as organs of perception.

Khawaja Hafiz Shirazi

From the Collected Ghazals of Hafiz: Zahuri and Moghadam. Volume one, Beacon Press Books and Media: 2017. Pp

*One whose heart is alive with love does not die ever,
It is written on the universal tablet that we live forever.*

Shah Walli Ullah of Delhi writes about events after death in this world. The one who has led a good life or has suffered without complaint has gained much credit, which they collect in the next world. He or she may be rich there and in comfortable conditions. Sooner or later that wealth is spent. At that point the person sleeps until the Day of Judgement. The one whose entire focus however is on the love of Allah, gets from his or her Beloved eternal life and spiritual wealth constantly renewed. Thus it is that the great lovers of Allah, like Khawaja Saheb, Mevlana Rumi, Hazrat Abdul Qadir Al Jilani and indeed Hafiz Saheb and many others remain active so many centuries after physical death.

The universal tablet refers to a mystical tablet of light on which destinies are written.

Yunus Emre

The Drop That Became the Sea. Translated from the Turkish by Kabir Helminski and Refik Algan. Published by Thresholds Books. 1989.

*If you have broken a single heart,
The prayers you make won't be accepted
The seventy two peoples of the world
Could not wash your hands and face,*

The breaking of hearts here must of course be differentiated from the breaking of hearts that in the Masnevi is asked for "I want a heart that is torn by severance that I may unfold the pain of love desire". Here the breaking of the heart of another must mean the deliberate causing of real distress to another. The seventy two peoples are of course the seventy two sects calling themselves Muslims but who have lost the way.

In the same book Yunus Emre says:

*Those who became complete
Didn't live this life in hypocrisy
Didn't learn the meaning (implication) of things
By reading commentaries*

*Reality is an ocean, the law is a ship
Many have never left the ship
Never jumped into the sea*

*They might have come to worship
But they stopped at rituals
They never entered the Inside
Those who think the four books
Were meant to be talked about
Those who have only read explanations
And never entered meaning (implication)
Are really in sin*

*Yunus means "true friend"
For one whose journey has begun
Until we transform our names
We haven't found the Way*

I have used the word 'implication' in brackets as an alternative to 'meaning' because I think this may indicate what Hazrat Emre is talking about in this poem. Implication has the meaning of what is referred to not just the literal meaning of the word. So for example the word 'apple' literally means a fruit but could be used to refer the temptation of Hazrat Adam in the phrase 'you are the apple of my eye'.

Hazrat Zahurmian would say there three levels to words. The first is their meaning or in other words their dictionary definition. He regarded this have having little or no value. The second was the sound of the words which had some value. The third was the ‘implication’ of words which was their real significance.

At the end of the poem Yunus Emre refers to himself as having an alternative name - ‘true friend’. The literal meaning of Yunus is ‘dove’ according to Wikipedia but here finding the inner name is part of spiritual growth. Transforming our external name to something else is part of spiritual development. Such a hidden name may indicate the name of that person with God. Mevlana Rumi tells us that the staff of Prophet Moses (Musa) was known to him as rod whereas it was known to Allah as ‘Dragon’.

We all have a name with God other than our given passport name. What these are can only really be known by God though they may be revealed sometimes to spiritually mature persons. There is a very important reason for not making them known to those who have not yet spiritually matured.

The name given to a non Muslim on conversion by the Sheykh is not necessarily their inner name.

Commentaries, like our own, are not sufficient, any more than external acts of worship are sufficient to enable a person to taste the reality of divinity. This does not imply, however, the necessity to abandon ritual prayer but simply implies that ritual prayer that lacks the essential element of reality may not be valid.. The holy Prophet himself talks of ‘presence’ being required to make the prayer valid. This could mean that one needs to be in a sober state but its inner meaning could be much deeper. It has been said that there is a danger of being satisfied with ritual prayer and thus not going into the deeper spiritual reality that exists.

Ritual prayer in Islam occurs five times a day but for the real lover of God there should be no time at which an awareness of God is absent. Hazrat Abu Said Abil Khair tells of a dying saint who is told by someone nearby that for sure the dying man was never away from the awareness of Allah. The reply came that he wanted to be so much in the Will of Allah that he remembered Him only when He wanted and forgot Him when He wanted.

Shah Wali Ullah of Delhi

From Lamha 49, pp 61: Sufism and the Islamic Tradition- The Lamahat and Sata'at of Shah Wali Ullah. Translated by G.N. Galbani, and edited by D.B. Fry. The Octagon Press. London. 1980.

From that day (the passing of Prophet Enoch) the predications of astronomy became null and void. I mean thereby that it's clear predication about everything became obsolete. Thus knowledge of important matters and of general utility measures in advance cannot be had. The astronomers cannot find any figures about them nor can he even think of them.

.....it is so because the suppression and the expansion of the causes is the business of the Divine Assembly. When a man concentrates upon it he comes to know of the execution which is to descend. Hence there is no need of knowing the rules of the stars and their movements.

Thereafter new sciences sprang up in the heart of Abraham, in the light of which he digressed from the stars and devoted himself to the divine assembly.....

People sometimes wonder about astronomy and astrology and whether a knowledge of the stars can enable a person to know about future events. Here Shah Wali Ullah explains that the science

of knowing about future events by means of the stars was long ago superseded by knowledge of events that may be unfolded by the divine assembly. What this means in practice is that the inner workings of the divine assembly is witnessed by the mystic, both visually and by hearing. For example if there were to be a political change of government in a particular country and that was decided upon by the divine assembly then that would be prefigured in the unseen. The various actors upon the political stage would appear to the mystic in their spiritual form and their place in a new pattern would be divinely established. Events would be divinely managed preceding this to bring about the new pattern. In this world it may appear that public opinion and voting etc bring about the change but in truth the change was decided upon by the divine assembly with angels bringing about the specific changes required in this world.

This adds a dimension to the story of Abraham (Ibrahim) in the holy Qur'an who first sees the stars and thinks they are worthy of worship and then sees that they set and thus not worthy worship. That is followed by his observation of the moon and then the sun. Until he realises that they too set. Finally he leaves all of these in favour of the worship of the Creator of them all.

Zahurmian told me a story about a king who heard of an astrologer who was famous for being able to predict accurately when a person would die. He summoned the man and asked him if it was true that he was always accurate in his forecasts. The astrologer said that it was so. The king asked him to predict when he, the king, would die. After doing some complicated calculations the astrologer gave him a date. The king was not happy since the date was not as far off as he hoped. He said again to the astrologer, "Are you sure you always get this right" he asked. The astrologer affirmed he was always correct. The king then

asked him to predict the date of his own death. The astrologer gave a date some distance away. The king said “Now I will prove you wrong, call in the executioner!”

Hazrat Abu Said Abi'l Khair

From Abu Said Abil Khair and his Rubaiyat. By Zahurul Hassan Sharib published by Sharib Press 1992. Translated by Zahurul Hassan Sharib.

*As long as I was a lion the leopard was my prey,
I overcame all that I thought I may;
But since I gave place to Your love in my heart,
A lame fox can drive me out of the forest, strange to say.*

Here the forest represents the world. The lion represent worldly power that had strength superior to the leopard who represents worldly power of a less strong type. The poet is saying as long as he had worldly power he could overcome less powerful persons but the one who has the true love of God in his heart and is no longer bending things or people to his will, finally leaves the forest of self driven out by the weakest and most feeble of creatures. To escape from the forest (or jungle) of self is the purpose of the mystic. The rule of the jungle is to eat or be eaten. The survival of the fittest is the way of the animals. The rule of the mystic is to love and be loved. Allah says in the holy Qur'an, “Those who Allah loves and who love Allah”. Mevlana says about this that “Those who Allah loves” is the whole sum and “which of them” is the subject of ‘they love Allah’.

*

*O my God, of my ignoble sins I am ashamed,
By my vain talk and bad actions I am defamed,
From Thy holy world, cast some grace upon my heart,
So debased thoughts, from my mind may be effaced.*

During the process of purification the mystic has to overcome negative or debased thoughts. Control of thought is one of the key qualities the mystic must acquire. There are various ways the mystic may do this. The holy Qur'an gives the suggestion that when a negative thought enters the mind one should seek its opposite and focus on that. So for example if the thought is of the nature of hatred one should focus on forgiveness or love; if the thought is one of greed one should focus on the thoughts of generosity; or if it a thought of anger one should focus on forgiveness or peace; or if the thought is one of pride one should turn one's attention to humility. To struggle with the original thought tends to increase its power.

Mevlana Rumi suggests the strategy of telling the thought to return to its Source and to tell Him you did not accept the thought.

I wrote a poem about self pity to exemplify this idea:

*Poor old Self-pity sought me out and said:
"By me to destruction many are led!"
"To the One Who sent you please return," I said,
"And say, by me you were well treated and fed,
But wherever gratitude and love have their bed,
Old Self-pity finds no space to lay his head."*

Zahuri

One may also recite many times 'I take refuge with Allah'. Another alternative is to recite a poem like the one quoted from Abu Said Abil Khair.

*

*Always hoisted it cannot be - the flag of pleasure,
Always the seed of joy cannot be sown in full measure,
All the things that are collected are to be left behind,
Only the day of departure matters, which is itself a treasure.*

There is tendency by those seeking, rightly, to ensure they are constantly engaged with positive thinking, to decry the occasions when positive thought eludes them. Sometimes they feel down for no particular reason. Zahurmian used to quote an English poet who wrote;

Absent thee from felicity awhile,

Sometimes it happens that joy and pleasure depart for a while. This should not be a cause of distress, sometimes the soul is engaged in some inner work and requires their absence. In fact the soul necessarily goes down into the persons lower nature with the intent of purifying some aspect of the Nafs. This is its important work. When it has done its work the consciousness may rise again by means of prayer or charity or Zikr or some other means or simply by Allah's Grace. When that happens "*the heart with pleasure fills and dances with the daffodils*" as Wordsworth the English poet says.

Sheykh Abul-Hasan of Kharaqan

From: The Soul and a loaf of Bread: Renditions by Vraje Abramian: HOHM PRESS. 2010.

*My Beloved said 'I'll give you everything,'
And I said, "Giving and taking is between strangers,
No more of that."*

Here the Sheykh refers to an experience known to advanced mystics. In the earlier years they receive many gifts from the Sheykh or the Pir of the order or indeed from Hazrat Ali, the holy Prophet or indeed Allah.

There is a story told about Abu Said Abil Khair in Zahurmian's book of translations of his Rubaiyat (pp40).

A certain person lived a long time with Abu Said. When that person was leaving for Baghdad he was asked what he would say to those living in Baghdadwhen they inquired about what benefits he had got.

Abu Said suggested he recite the following quatrain . . .

*Thou are such that from heaven a relic you do carry,
And also you carry the decoration of heaven and a season merry,
From China and Turkestan drawings and painting you carry,
In Iran from you they take prophecy for the future bleak or merry.*

So in that case the person had received the gift of decorations, Chinese drawings and paintings and the skill of prophecy. The relic referred to probably means the physical gift given to one who has visited heaven. In the case of Khawaja Saheb we know it was a pomegranate.

What can the gift of Chinese paintings refer to? The answer is clearly not the physical paintings in a material sense but that inwardly he could see in detail the paintings.

Gifts can be of different kinds - some are overtly religious or spiritual, others appear more mundane but nevertheless are actually spiritual since their origin is in the unseen. Amongst the latter might be the inner gifts of being a nurse or a cook or a driver. Those who get these gifts are referred to by Mevlana Rumi as ‘owners of excellences’ in the introduction of the Masnevi. The gift pertains to the unseen world but have their effect in this world too. Thus the nurse in the unseen may know nothing of practical nursing in this world but their heart is in tune with the essence of it and inwardly they help in the care of someone who is sick.

Mevlana Rumi talks of a person who may or may not have said the saving clause “Inshallah “ or ‘if Allah Wills’ but their heart was in tune with it and thus it was nevertheless implied.

Religious gifts may include for example Kaaba, or pilgrimage with or without physically performing it. One saint who was on pilgrimage to Kaaba met a Sheykh who told him if he walked seven times around that Sheykh he would receive reward of pilgrimage.

Miracles are another gift. In fact the one who is the guest at the table of a saint during the death anniversary (Urs) is shown a long list of gifts to choose from. The least of these is a miracle.

These then are just a couple of examples of gifts. There may however come a point when the mystic, who is aware of these gifts tries to pass beyond them to the Giver of gifts. Then his language becomes like that in the poem from Sheykh Abul Hasan quoted above.

Various arguments may be used such as that the gifts have the value of the Giver. The determined lover however sees them as diverting the lover from his real objective. If you have the Giver what is the need for what is given. One day when Zahurmian was visiting Southampton we were talking about the house we lived in and he said ‘What need do I have for the house when I have the owner of the house?’

Bayazid Bistami

his book Rahe-e-Tasawuuf (Asma Publications 2006 pp48).

Hazrat Nawob Gudri Shah Baba quotes Hazrat Bayazid Bistami as saying:

Keeping company with good people is better than having virtues and keeping company with the wicked is worse than having vices.

This is an important principle in mysticism. It of course can apply to the external company one keeps but I think it means more than that. The Sufis keep good company by mentioning respectfully the

Holy Prophets, the great saints and the sincere ones. In talking about them or quoting them or even in music like Qwaali praising them the individual is inviting their benign look or to put it modern way getting their spiritual 'vibe'. Thus social conversations become subtle prayers. The holy Qur'an mentions Allah as referring to "*those who mention Me in good company I will mention them in better company*".

*

Almighty God knows the hearts of His saints. There are a few who are unable to bear the burden of inner knowledge, hence He has kept them occupied with worship.

There can be no doubt that some souls for various reasons cannot bear the burden of inner knowledge. In that case they may continue with their worship perhaps by assiduously and faithfully following the guide or by ritual performances etc. The lack of the capacity to receive inner knowledge does not reduce their stature in the unseen. Shah Wali Ullah describes such persons as preeminent and highly revered by the saints in that they continue their practice without the obvious rewards.

Hazrat Fariduddin Attar

from the Conference of the Birds: Fariduddin Attar (translated by Arkham Darbandi and Dick Davies. Penguin Books 1984. Pp 222.

*Be nothing first, and then you will exist,
You cannot live while life and Self persist -
Till you reach Nothingness you cannot see
The life you long for in eternity.*

The goal sought by mystics is non existence. Whilst the individual exists then there must be two when the individual ceases to exist independently from Allah then there is only Allah.

Nuri baba told me a story about a donkey who went into a sea of salt. The salt consumed the donkey. All the while even a single hair of the donkey remained it could still be called donkey but when even the last hair had been consumed there was no more donkey. Only salt.

Süleyman Ata

from the masters of Wisdom , Hasan Sushud. Translation Muhtar Holland; Combe Spring Press pp 18.

*All is ripe; 'tis we who are raw,
All is wheat; 'tis we who are straw.*

This is apparently a reply from the Sheykhs of Turkestan to the Sufis of Iraq in response to an arcane question.

It emphasises that for the one following the Sufi path, when he reaches to one of the levels of heaven, be it the first or the forth or the ninth, or any other, finds that everyone he encounters is already there and already knows and lives what he has been struggling so hard to reach. A very excellent Wazifa is 'Everyone is better than me'. You will not reach these high places until you recognise the truth in this Wazifa. If your Nafs al Amara argues with you that you are better than some others at least take refuge in the Wazifa or maybe you can use the poem above. The Nafs that argues you are superior to this or that person is in fact blocking your path.

There is an old popular song that says "Hold my hand I am a stranger in paradise".

The various levels of heaven are not in the physical sky they are states of the heart and mind that transforms the experience of the surroundings. They are not however sensory distortions such as is experienced in the use of recreational drugs.

It is not even humility to think of everyone as 'better than me', it is a recognition of a spiritual truth. It seems self evident to the Nafs that some persons are less intelligent or less physically robust and so on but this is because they are relating to the manifestation in the world of that person whereas the soul of that person dwells with Allah and if one wishes to relate to the soul of that person rather than its manifestation in the world then one must recognise that the soul is better than one's own manifestation in the world.

At the end of the Urs of great saints like Khawaja Muinuddin Hasan Chishti or Mevlana Rumi the saint appears for a short period in this mundane world. He may temporarily inhabit any body and the alert mystic treats everyone low or high with great respect bearing in mind it may actually be the saint he is meeting or talking to. The saint may convey some message to the person who recognises him but the body he is temporarily inhabiting is unaware of it.

Some Poetry by Zahuri

Here is a poem about a short stay in Tbilisi, a city in Georgia, starting on their Christmas Day, however as always it has a much more universal theme

Steep hills and lovely views, but Tbilisi where is the heart of you?
Bright lights that seem to last forever, quaint cobbled streets too,
Fireworks that assault the ears and yet speak silently to the heart,
As for wine, they made an art of filling every shop and every cart.
Ancient churches filled with Jesus and Madonna in gold and blue,
A different kind of Christmas spent with love, spent with only you.

It's a gift of course, Mevlana - beatitude like this. How else could it be?
Your generosity abounds and surrounds this now so richly laden tree.
The love and patience of a saint fills the fresh, crisp, clear wintry air,
Such mercy and forgiveness, brings a reality that's beyond compare.
And lovers share their hopes and dreams, their fears, and yes longing,
It's as if to this ancient hidden city they have always been belonging.

Or maybe one should say it's a sign, an indication of things to come.
That beyond the doubt and the anguished soul-searching of some,
There lies a promise, divine in nature, of a salvation sure and firm,
(When at last our work and worship in this world reaches its full term),
That there is a golden city whose very streets echo love's sweet song,
Whose walls are strong and whose markets with lovers always throng.

And more, for yes there is always more, and will be till words run dry;
An infinite truth beyond time and space for which gold and blue sigh.
An eternal benevolence that forever feeds and fosters each true lover,
That, keeps those hearts awake, who do not sleep the sleep of forever.
There is your purpose my sister, my brother, seek it, take it, hold it, do,
It's the great gift, no it's more, it's when every I becomes one with You

Do not fear the end of this short worldly life, nor claim it before its due,
Do not think that, as it is now, so it will remain; have a much better view.
There is a love that is higher and greater and for you it's waiting patiently,
If words can't reach you and stir your heart, seek it in the spaces silently.
Beyond rhymes, imagery and echoes, a small still voice speaks so clearly,
It acknowledges your listening, silent, soul and gives you it's own identity.

There is a secret at the very centre of your soul, yes, call it a hidden treasure.
Visit there if you can and if you can't then it's existence at least you can infer.
Red rubies, blue lapis lazuli, white pearls, so many stones, not one of glass,
Gold whose lustre lights the sky, moonstones bathing lovers on green grass,
A trillion trillion diamonds sparkling in many millions of hues, waking the night.
The mystic walks the shore wanting more, the eternal ocean at last is in sight.

Do not linger too long here for as always there is more, a loving face awaits,
From that visage arises all the beauty that the beauty-struck one contemplates.
A familiar voice calls quietly on the wind, "Come love, come home my friend".
It draws the mystic's heart onward and on a further quest that lover it will send.
'Don't pretend You are not there, or should I say, here? You are driving me crazy!
Isn't it You that took this lump of mud and filled it with Your might and majesty?'

In the world of clay and clutter what cause for revelling in pomp and splendour,
We have work to do, things to make or to mend. O God help the poor struggler.
To the idle, time is the enemy one can't defeat; to the busy it's a constant friend.
Work is an angel that floats overhead; as with prayer and praise, you it will defend.
My dear don't imagine that lounging around or just seeking fun will be sufficient;
Nor that work alone will serve your turn. We have a purpose that is heaven sent.

Get on with daily tasks and practice patience, perseverance and persistence,
In the end you may celebrate with outward pleasure and with inward silence.
O Lord of all the Worlds can there be any reward for good other than good?
If doubt undermines our resolve for this or that, at least recall this we should.

Without Touching

Without touching you touched my heart, that's your subtle art,
Without looking your look penetrated deep and tore me apart,
Without speaking your words rose from the depths of my heart,
Without moving a muscle you made me from my self depart.

Without so much as a 'by your leave' you made me love you,
Without a pause for thought on love's path we travelled to -
Places unguessed at, spheres unheard of; but these you knew;
You opened so many unseen doors and ushered me through.
You gave me a simple bag but without any bottom I could see,
You laid gift, after gift, after gift inside seemingly endlessly,
You re-arranged heaven and many destinies just to suit me,
Many mouths 'thank God', but I have cause to say it sincerely.

When I paused for a moment's reflection on your generosity,
I began to wonder - all these gifts but the giver, what of He?
Fearful beyond description there came a loud angry sound,
But when my feet finally found solid ground, You I found.

Mevlana's Wedding Party

When we pray to God in company,
Something very worthy I can see,
Due respect for the rights of piety,
And love of the holy Prophet I see.

When my friends are dancing wildly
Much pleasure in them also I see,
When eyes shine so very brightly,
Is it reflections of that sun that I see?

When the musicians play so loudly,
And affection on their faces I see,

They rouse the spirit from dormancy,
And Love's purpose in all this I see.

For when departing from that party,
No more reserve or diffidence I see,
The affectionate hugs show a unity,
And in this the work of Mevlana I see.

The Passing of the Narcissus

Aristocratic overseer of winter's end, and spring's beginning,
Proud narcissus, like all power-holders, at last end up losing,
The golden crown, and with it, their very head and life is going,
Now only bright green spears stand guarding - nothing,

Just a forlorn stem; whilst all around idol-worshippers turn to see,
The rich red-brown rose leaves, already wine stained, so early.
Gathering energy, making preparation for summer's wild party;
Lipstick and blushers busy, fluffing up hair, ready for their entry.

Whilst in the lower orders like fast encroaching blue water,
Forget-me-nots, and various other blues and purples gather,
Invade they will, but such goings-on the roses greet with laughter,
Blues trumpeters, whose sad notes only send the bees into a lather.

Pale the sun is, yet, and cool the air; but children's laughter warms,
The ambience, and mother's voices regain their winter-lost charms.
Rich grass, such a gift! It glows; and shows that it not only calms
The impatience of lovers, to feel the summer at last in their arms.

For Nuri Baba

It's amazing how the days are passing, so slow or fast.

In isolation it appears, but really with your love at last.

Anticipation is in the air, like sunshine it is everywhere,

Its enough for now that love's longing makes all so fair.

Bodies seek to unite; but in truth it's the affair of the soul,

And hearts and minds; from passing life eternity they stole.

The silvery lake stole the golden sun from the blue sky,

The white swan swam on and did not pause to ask why.

The trees loaned the water their green, with no interest.

The heart of nature so quietly throbbed, all was at rest.

The best of mankind overcame at last the beast in man,

Divinity passed from anger: and the look of love began.

A look, that a wise man passed to a much younger one,

It opened so many doors inside and real life had begun.

The union that filled the mind the heart and the soul too,

Was the union that love itself had always been leading to.

Poetry or prose or words themselves must pass away,

They can only fail, if its that union they seek to portray.

The portrait of love; for me it is the very thought of you,

It surpasses what can be rendered by any brushes too.

We sit in an ordinary way and so I listen to what you say,

Your eyes smile - and it rises, the light of the eternal day.

From deep inside Yusuf's well, water flows into your eyes.

'Forever', is this very moment's wonder: and it's surprise.