

The Path¹

Will the seeker of God be content to be far?
 Nay, for he needeth no less than Union.
 The true seeker hath a sign on his face,
 A light shineth gleaming upon his forehead.
 Ever near is he, courteous, reverential,
 Resolute, forbearing before censure, true friend
 Honouring. His purpose all purposes transcendeth:
 Naught can prevent him, the steep he seeth as level.
 He hath no aim aside from his mark.
 Longing for family diverteth him not, nor blame.
 Fair his description, he needeth no other
 But this, most excellent, that he seeketh the Truth.
 Whoso is Its seeker, he maketh his quest
 Sole object of his eyes. Then strippeth he his soul
 Of all faults he can detect, and when stripped, robeth it
 In their opposites. God's slave at each time and place,
 His bounden debt of worship fulfilling,
 He addeth thereunto of his own free will,
 Until the Truth is his Hearing, Sight,
 Tongue and Utterance, and Hands and Feet.
 He dieth before his death to live in his Lord,
 Since after this death is the supreme migration.
 He calleth himself to account ere he be called,
 He herein most fitted to act for the Truth.
 The Truth's Being he seeth before his own,
 And after it, and wheresoever he turn.
 Alone God was, and with Him naught else.
 He is now as He was, lastly as firstly,
 Essentially One, with naught beside Himself,
 Inwardly Hidden, Outwardly Manifest,
 Without beginning, without end. Whate'er thou seest,
 Seest thou His Being. Absolute Oneness
 No "but" hath and no "except." How should God's Essence
 Be confined with a veil? No veil there but His Light.

The Wine²

Friends, if the truth of my state ye have understood,
 Here lies your path before you: follow in my footsteps,
 For by Heaven, here are no doubts, no vague imaginings:
 I know God, with a knowledge part secret, part proclaimed.
 I drank the cup of love, and then possessed it,

1 . *Dīwān*, p. 10.

2 . *Dīwān*, p. 35.

And it hath become my possession for all time.
 God reward him who lavished³ his Secret upon me,
 For bounty, true bounty, is to bestow the Secret.
 I hid the Truth on a time, and screened It well,
 And whoso keepeth God's Secret shall have his reward.
 Then when the Giver vouchsafed that I might proclaim It,
 He fitted me—how I know not—to purify⁴ souls,
 And girded upon me the sword of steadfastness,
 And truth and piety, and a Wine He gave me,
 Which all who drink must needs be always drinking,
 Even as a drunk man seeketh to be more drunk.
 Thus came I to pour It—nay, it is I that press It.
 Doth any other pour It in this age?
 Marvel not that I speak thus, for our Lord
 Himself hath said that He singleth out for Grace
 Whomso He will and giveth unsparingly.
*This is God's Grace: He giveth It whom He will.*⁵
 Surpassing Praise and Glory and Thanks be His!
 Lord, with the Spirit of the Beloved,⁶ Thy Spirit,
 With the Spirit of Holiness help me, *make easy my task.*⁷
Untie my tongue, Lord. Let one share my burden
 From Thy true helpers, and confound me not
 The Day of the Gathering.⁸ Lord, overwhelm with Thy Presence
 And greet with Peace, bless, magnify, extol,
 The Beloved's Spirit, in the Abode of the Secret.

Lailā⁹

Full near I came unto where dwelleth
 Lailā, when I heard her call.
 That voice, would I might ever hear it!
 She favoured me, and drew me to her,
 Took me in, into her precinct,
 With discourse intimate addressed me.
 She sat me by her, then came closer,
 Raised the cloak that hid her from me,
 Made me marvel to distraction,
 Bewildered me with all her beauty.

3. The Shaykh Al-Būzīdī.

4. *Tajrīd*, literally “abstraction,” “disentanglement”.

5. Qur'an, V, 54.

6. The Prophet.

7. This and the following quotations are from the prayer which Moses uttered on being told to go to Pharaoh. (Qur'an, XX, 25–35).

8. The Day of Judgement.

9. *Diwān*, p. 22. Lailā, a woman's name meaning “night”, here represents the Divine Essence.

She took me and amazed me,
And hid me in her inmost self,
Until I thought that she was I,
And my life she took as ransome.
She changed me and transfigured me,
And marked me with her special sign,
Pressed me to her, put me from her,
Named me as she is named.
Having slain and crumbled me,
She steeped the fragments in her blood.
Then, after my death, she raised me:
My star shines in her firmament.
Where is my life, and where my body,
Where my wilful soul? From her
The truth of these shone out to me,
Secrets that had been hidden from me.
Mine eyes have never seen but her:
To naught else can they testify.
All meanings in her are comprised.
Glory be to her Creator!

Thou that beauty wouldst describe,
Here is something of her brightness.
Take it from me. It is my art.
Think it not idle vanity.
My Heart lied not when it divulged
The secret of my meeting her.
If nearness unto her effaceth,
I still subsist in her subsistence.



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