



Mawlana Mulla Husayn Wa'iz-e Kashifi

# The Heart of Hearts of Rumi's Mathnawi

or *Lubb-e Lubab-e Mathnawi-ye Ma'nawi*

Edited in English by Wazir Dayers

Mawlana Mulla Husayn Wa‘iz-e Kashifi

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This book is dedicated to all students of mysticism and all lovers  
of Hazrat Mawlana Jalaluddin Rumi’s work, regardless of who  
they are and regardless of their race, creed or culture.

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**Note:** for the reader’s convenience, the Sources, Rivers and Rivulets and subheadings of the three Sources of the *Lubb-e Lubāb-e Mathnawī* have been numbered in grey between square brackets. The first number indicates the Source, the second number indicates the River within a Source and the third number indicates the Rivulet within the River.

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# Introduction to this Edition of the Lubb-e Lubāb-e Mathnawī

By Wazir Dayers

## Who was Mawlānā Mullā Ḥusayn Wā'iz-e Kāshifī?

Kamālū'ddīn Ḥusayn Wā'iz-e Kāshifī was born ca. 840 AH/1436-1437 CE in the city of Sabzewār, in the present-day province of Khurāsān<sup>1</sup> in north-eastern Iran. He came to be known as “Mawlānā<sup>2</sup> Wā'iz-e Kāshifī”<sup>3</sup> or simply “Mullā<sup>4</sup> Ḥusayn”.

Mawlānā Wā'iz-e Kāshifī stood out as a scholar in various areas of religious study, such as Quranic sciences, *‘Ilmu l-Ḥadīth* (the science of Prophetic Traditions), *Fiqh* (jurisprudence), *‘Ilmu’s-Sihr* (the science of sorcery<sup>5</sup>), mysticism, astrology and astronomy.

In addition, he was blessed with a beautiful voice and excelled in reciting the Qur’ān.

Simply and affectionately known as “Mullā Ḥusayn” among the people, he was a charismatic preacher. The gatherings at which he delivered his inspired sermons used to attract large crowds of eager listeners.

When he was a young scholar, he left Sabzewār for Neyshāpūr (also romanized<sup>6</sup> as “Nayshāpūr”, “Neyshābūr”, “Nīshāpūr”, “Nīshābūr” etc.). After a short stay there, he travelled to the holy city of Mashhad<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Khurāsān now is a province in north-eastern Iran, but in Mawlānā Mullā Ḥusayn Wā'iz-e Kāshifī's time, when it was known as “Greater Khurāsān”, it covered large parts of present-day Iran, Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan.

<sup>2</sup> *Mawlānā* is an honorific title that is used for the highest ranking Ṣūfī Masters and Saints (e.g. Ḥaẓrat Mawlānā Jalālū'ddīn Rūmī). In that case *Mawlānā* means “our Master”, “our Lord”, “our Patron” or – in more traditional Ṣūfī terms – “our Caring, Supporting and Protecting Holy Friend”. But the title *Mawlānā* is also given to scholars of great merit (e.g. Mawlānā Ḥusayn Wā'iz-e Kāshifī).

<sup>3</sup> In the preface to the *Lubb-e Lubāb-e Mathnawī* (see p. 26), Mawlānā Kāshifī states his name – in Arabicized form – as “Ḥusayn ibn ‘Alī al-Bayhaqī al-Wā'iz al-Kāshifī”. “Al-Bayhaqī” means “of Bayhaq” (“Bayhaq” being the old name of Sabzewār). “Kāshifī”, which translates as “Revealer” or “Uncoverer”, actually was his *takhalluṣ* or pen name. “Wā'iz” means “Preacher”, “Adviser” or “Teacher”, and also is one of the Prophet Muḥammad's epithets. Since Mawlānā Kāshifī was a professional preacher, “al-Wā'iz al-Kāshifī” or “Wā'iz-e Kāshifī” may be interpreted as “he who revealed hidden truths through his inspired preaching”.

<sup>4</sup> *Mullā* (often written as *mullah* in the West): because of the present political situation in countries like Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan, the title *mullā* (or *mullah*) has a derogatory connotation in our time, but in the past this was not so. *Mullā* means “religious teacher”, “learned master”, “someone well-versed in religion” or “religious leader or guardian of a community”. It is a corruption of the Arabic word *mawlā*, meaning “lord”, “master” or “patron”. *Mawlā* is often found with the Arabic possessive suffix *-nā*: *Mawlānā* (see the footnote on “Mawlānā”).

<sup>5</sup> For clarity's sake: this science does not involve the practice of sorcery or magic, but only its study. Sorcery, magic and other occult and superstitious practices are strictly forbidden in Islām.

<sup>6</sup> “romanization” = rendering words from a language written in a different writing system in the Latin alphabet.

<sup>7</sup> Neyshāpūr is one of the most famous cities of the modern Iranian Khurāsān province. The holy city of Mashhad is the province's capital. Mashhad's most famous shrine is that of the eighth Imām of the Twelver Shī'ī faith, Ḥaẓrat Imām ‘Alī ibn Mūsā ar-Riḍā (ca. 765-818 CE), who is popularly known as “Emām Reẓā” in Iran. His shrine is an important site of pilgrimage. He was not only the leader of a religious community, but also a highly perfected and accomplished mystic, who holds an important place in the *silṣila*-s (the chains of mystical succession and transmission) of various Ṣūfī Orders. The Ṣūfīs hold him in such high esteem that they have dubbed him *Sulṭānu l-Fuqarā'*, “the Sulṭān of those who strive to realize Spiritual Poverty (*Faqr*)”.



In Mashhad he experienced a vision, in which the Naqshbandī mystic and Šūfī Master Ḥaẓrat<sup>8</sup> Mawlānā Sa‘du‘ddīn Kashgharī (d. 1462 CE) appeared to him and summoned him to the city of Herāt<sup>9</sup>.

Complying with Ḥaẓrat Mawlānā Kashgharī’s command, he immediately left for Herāt, but much to his disappointment the Master had already passed away when he arrived there.

Nevertheless, Ḥaẓrat Mawlānā Kashgharī’s demise opened the way for him to come into contact with one of the greatest Šūfī Masters of his time, i.e. Ḥaẓrat Mawlānā Nūru‘ddīn ‘Abdu’r-Raḥmān Jāmī (1414-1492 CE)<sup>10</sup>. Ḥaẓrat Mawlānā Jāmī actually was Ḥaẓrat Mawlānā Kashgharī’s successor and initiated Wā‘iz-e Kāshifī into the Naqshbandī Šūfī Order.

Mawlānā Kāshifī arrived in Herāt in what is considered a golden era of the Timurid dynasty<sup>11</sup>, an era in which Islamic sciences, Sufism, the arts and literature flourished greatly.

His career as a man of true spirituality and learning reached its peak under the reign of the Timurid Sulṭān Ḥusayn Mīrzā Bāyqarā (1438-1506 CE), who ruled the Timurid Empire from its capital Herāt between 1469 and 1506 CE. In Herāt, Mawlānā Kāshifī devoted most of his time to preaching, the advanced research and practice of Sufism and the study of various Islamic sciences. It wasn’t long before he gained recognition and renown as an outstanding Šūfī writer and poet. He wrote a considerable number of books and treatises in Herāt. These are the most important works of this prolific author:

1. *Lubb-e Lubāb-e Mathnawī-ye Ma‘nawī*.
2. *Rawḍatu’sh-Shuhadā’*: “The Garden of the Martyrs” – this book contains elegies for Ḥaẓrat Imām Ḥusayn, his Family and Companions and their martyrdom at Karbalā in 680 CE.
3. *Akhlāq-e Muḥsinī*: “Morals of the Beneficent”.
4. *Asrār-e Qāsimī* – a treatise on magic and the occult sciences. See the footnote for *‘Ilmu’s-Siḥr*.
5. *Anwār-e Suhaylī*: “Lights of Canopus<sup>12</sup>” – an adaptation in prose of *Kalīla and Dimna*, a collection of animal fables, originally written in Sanskrit in India before the fifth century CE. Its main themes are wise leadership and the value of true friendship.
6. *Sab‘a-ye Kāshifiyya* – a work on astrology and astronomy.
7. *Tafsīr-e Ḥusaynī* – an exegetical commentary on the Qur’ān.

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<sup>8</sup> Ḥaẓrat (< Arabic *ḥaḍra*<sup>unn</sup>) is a title that expresses great reverence. It is often rendered as “His Holiness”, but its literal and original meaning is “Presence”.

<sup>9</sup> During the Middle Ages the city of Herāt became one of the greatest cities of Greater Khurāsān; it was known as “the Pearl of Khurāsān”.

<sup>10</sup> Apart from being a great mystic, Ḥaẓrat Mawlānā Jāmī also was the last of the great classical Persian poets. It was he who said about Ḥaẓrat Mawlānā Rūmī’s *Mathnawī*: “hast qur’ān dar zabān-e pahlawī” – “It is the Qur’ān in Persian.”

<sup>11</sup> The Timurids were a Persianate dynasty of Turco-Mongol origin, whose rule lasted from 1370 to 1526 CE. At the height of their power they ruled over a vast empire, which included the whole of Central Asia, modern-day Iran and Afghanistan, as well as large parts of modern-day Pakistan, North-India, Mesopotamia, Asia Minor and the Caucasus. It was founded in the 14<sup>th</sup> century CE by the fierce conqueror Tīmūr-e Lang (“Tīmūr the Lame”, better known in the West as *Tamerlane*). By the time Mawlānā Kāshifī arrived in Herāt, the original Timurid Empire had already shrunk considerably; nonetheless, science, the arts, literature and Sufism continued to thrive.

<sup>12</sup> A star, 650 light-years from Earth, in the constellation Carina. It is the second brightest star in the sky. Its Arabic name is *Suhayl*.

It is said that Mawlānā Kāshifī also made a journey to India and that he met a number of prominent Ṣūfī Masters there.

He died in Herāt ca. 910 AH/1504-1505 CE and was laid to rest in that city.

### What is the “Lubb-e Lubāb-e Mathnawī”?

Mawlānā Ḥusayn Wā‘iz-e Kāshifī wrote the *Lubb-e Lubāb-e Mathnawī* as an aid and benefit for Ṣūfī adepts who studied Sufism using Ḥaẓrat Mawlānā Jalālu’d-dīn Rūmī’s *Mathnawī*<sup>13</sup>.

There is no literal translation for the title *Lubb-e Lubāb-e Mathnawī*. Only interpretive translations are possible, e.g. “The Heart of Hearts of [Rūmī’s] Mathnawī” or “The Innermost Part/The Innermost Heart/The Essence of Essences/The Quintessence/The Purest Core/The Kernel of Kernels of the Mathnawī”.

Some further explanation about the Arabic words *lubb* and *lubāb* may help shed some light on the title:

The word *lubb* means “innermost heart”. In Early Sufism, man’s spiritual heart was perceived as having four aspects. The early Ṣūfī mystics Ḥaẓrat Abū’l-Ḥusayn an-Nūrī (840-907 CE) and Ḥaẓrat al-Ḥakīm at-Tirmidhī (d. ca. 905-910 CE) were the ones who gave each of these four aspects a specific name. Ḥaẓrat Abū’l-Ḥusayn an-Nūrī derived these names from the Qur’ān:

- *ṣadr* (“breast” or “outer heart”) is connected with *islām* or “unconditional surrender to God” – see Qur’ān 39:22<sup>14</sup>.
- *qalb* (“spiritual heart”) is the seat of *īmān* or “faith” – see Qur’ān 49:7<sup>15</sup> and 16:106<sup>16</sup>.
- *fu’ād* (“inner heart”) is connected with *ma’rifa* or “gnosis” – see Qur’ān 53:11<sup>17</sup> – and the level of Sainthood.
- *lubb* (“innermost heart”) is the seat of *tawḥīd* or “Divine Unity” – see Qur’ān 3:190<sup>18</sup> – and is connected to the stage of the Perfect Saint.

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<sup>13</sup> The primary meaning of the word *mathnawī* (often also romanized as *masnawī* or *masnavī*), is a poem consisting of an indefinite number of rhyming couplets, with the rhyme scheme aa/bb/cc etc. Ḥaẓrat Mawlānā Jalālu’d-dīn Rūmī’s *mathnawī* is so famous that when people mention “the Mathnawī”, it is obvious that they mean Ḥaẓrat Mawlānā Rūmī’s *Mathnawī*. Its full title is *Mathnawī-ye Ma’nawī*, which literally means “Real/Meaningful/Significant or Spiritual Couplets”, but it is best understood in an explanatory way as “Rhyming Couplets of Profound Spiritual Meaning”.

<sup>14</sup> “Is he whose *breast* [*ṣadr*] God has opened to Islām, so that he is in light from His Lord [received enlightenment from his Lord]? Woe then to those whose hearts are hardened against remembrance of God. Those are manifestly in error.”

<sup>15</sup> “And know that God’s Messenger is among you; should he obey you in many matters, you would surely fall into distress, but God has made you love the faith and has made it beautiful in your *hearts* [*qulūb*, the plural of *qalb*], and He has made unbelief, transgression and rebellion detestable to you; these are the followers of a right way.”

<sup>16</sup> “Whoever disbelieves in God [after having embraced belief], except for one who is forced [to renounce his religion] while his *heart* [*qalb*] is at rest with faith. But those who [willingly] open their breasts to disbelief, upon them is God’s wrath, and for them is a great punishment.”

<sup>17</sup> “The *heart* [*fu’ād*] did not lie about what it saw.”

<sup>18</sup> “Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the night and the day are signs for those of understanding” [in Arabic it says *li-ūlī’l-albāb*, which means “for those endowed with hearts”. *Albāb* is the plural of *lubb*].

The word *lubāb*, derived from the same Arabic verbal root as *lubb*, means “pure core” or “quintessence”.

### The Structure of the Lubb-e Lubāb-e Mathnawī

In his *Lubb-e Lubāb-e Mathnawī* Mawlānā Wā‘iz-e Kāshifī used an ingenious system to classify the verses of the *Mathnawī* by subject: he divided his book into three so-called “Sources”. Each “Source” was then subdivided into “Rivers”, and these “Rivers” in turn were subdivided into “Rivulets”. Mawlānā Kāshifī’s selection of verses from the *Mathnawī* is quite substantial, but with the help of the table of contents (see pp. 2-14) the reader will easily find verses that deal with a particular subject.

In terms of geography it may seem strange that rivers should flow from sources and rivulets from rivers. But in this case spiritual concepts are given precedence over geographical realities.

The three Sources correspond to the three stages of acquiring inner knowledge on the Ṣūfī Path: *‘Ilmu’l-Yaqīn* (“the Knowledge of Certainty”), *‘Aynu’l-Yaqīn* (“the Eye of Certainty”<sup>19</sup>) and *Ḥaqqu’l-Yaqīn* (“the Truth of Certainty”). These three stages are reflected in the way Ḥaẓrat Mawlānā Rūmī expounds mystical realities in his *Mathnawī*.

The first stage is called *‘Ilmu’l-Yaqīn* or “the Knowledge of Certainty”. In this stage, the *sālik* gains knowledge through theoretical learning. When Ḥaẓrat Mawlānā Rūmī speaks from this point of view, his words are said to be in accordance with the formal and outer precepts of religion, the *Sharī‘a*, which is usually defined as “the religious code of law derived from the Qur’ān and from the teachings and example of the Prophet Muḥammad”. However, since both the *Mathnawī* and the *Lubb-e Lubāb-e Mathnawī* deal with the inner or mystical aspect of religion and not with its outer or formal aspect, in this context, *Sharī‘a* should be understood as “Pathway to proper moral conduct”.

In a mystical sense, the word *Sharī‘a* also means “Pathway to Water” – in this case “Water” stands for *Ṭarīqa* or “Mystical Path”, which leads to the Divine Ocean of Oneness and Love. For a *sālik* or Ṣūfī wayfarer, this is the least important stage of his or her spiritual journey. It is a mere preparatory passage, where the *sālik* learns the self-discipline he or she will need in the stage of *Ṭarīqa*, the Inner or Mystical Path.

The *sālik* who attains to the second stage, *‘Aynu’l-Yaqīn* or “the Eye of Knowledge”, learns to acquire inner knowledge through contemplation and mystical vision. This stage corresponds to *Ṭarīqa*, the Mystical Path, the Path of inner development towards union with the Divine.

In the third and final stage, *Ḥaqqu’l-Yaqīn* or “the Truth of Certainty”, the Ultimate Truth is revealed to the *sālik*; in this stage, the *sālik* dies to himself/herself and becomes one with this Truth. This stage corresponds to *Ḥaqqīqa*, “Divine Truth”, “Supreme Truth” – the ultimate goal of the mystical Path.

These three stages take their names from Quranic verses: Qur’ān 102:5 for *‘Ilmu’l-Yaqīn* (“Not at all! If only you knew with the Knowledge of Certainty”); 102:7 for *‘Aynu’l-Yaqīn*

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<sup>19</sup> Ḥaẓrat Mawlānā Rūmī attached great importance to the development of inner sight as a means of acquiring an ever-increasing spiritual understanding and consciousness.

(“Then you will surely see it with the Eye of Certainty”) and 69:51 for *Ḥaqqu’l-Yaqīn* (“And verily, it is the Truth of Certainty”).

### **The Universal Message of Ḥaḡrat Mawlānā Rūmī**

When you read the *Mathnawī*, it very soon becomes obvious that these are the words of a man who lived in the Near and Middle East in the 13<sup>th</sup> century CE, in a predominantly Muslim culture. It cannot be denied that he expressed himself in the terminology of his religion and his era. And prior to his meeting with his legendary Master, Ḥaḡrat Shams-e Tabrīzī<sup>20</sup>, he had been a renowned Muslim theologian and jurist, just like his father<sup>21</sup> had been before him. It is also true that he remained deeply devoted to Islām, the Qur’ān and its Messenger until his last breath. Even so, it would be incorrect to describe Ḥaḡrat Mawlānā Rūmī and his message as “merely Islamic”. In his youth he travelled extensively and was exposed to various religious, spiritual, mystical and philosophical currents and traditions. All these influences would help shape Ḥaḡrat Mawlānā Rūmī’s mystical philosophy.

He was born in the village of Wakhsh<sup>22</sup> on 30<sup>th</sup> September 1207 CE. Wakhsh was part of the province of Greater Balkh<sup>23</sup>. Its central city – also called Balkh – was an influential place of learning in Greater Khurāsān, and one of its four main cities<sup>24</sup>. Balkh was a major centre of Perso-Islamic culture and Sufism, which had been thriving there for several centuries. But the golden age of Balkh would come to an end:

In 1219 CE young Jalālu’d-dīn was forced to flee with his family from the onrushing brutal Mongol hordes of Genghis Khan, who would invade and utterly destroy Balkh in 1220 CE. Travelling through Greater Khurāsān, he visited many cities that were still very much under the influence of the age-old Zoroastrian religion<sup>25</sup>. In Neyshāpūr, as an adolescent, Jalālu’d-dīn met the illustrious Persian Ṣūfī mystic, writer and poet Ḥaḡrat Shaykh Farīdu’d-dīn ‘Aṭṭār<sup>26</sup>, who blessed him and presented him with a copy of his *Asrār-Nāma* (“Book of Mysteries”<sup>27</sup>). In addition, he made the pilgrimage to Mecca and visited the city of Baghdad with its rich Ṣūfī tradition. In Damascus he was inspired by the old teachings of Christian Gnosticism and the mystical tradition of the Jewish religion. He was also influenced by Greek philosophy, particularly by Neo-Platonism.

After visiting various cities in Anatolia, he and his family settled permanently ca. 1229 CE in the Anatolian city of Konya (or *Qūniya*, as the Muslim peoples called it). Today’s Konya is a thoroughly Islamic city, but in Ḥaḡrat Mawlānā Rūmī’s time this ancient city also counted Jews and Christians among its population. Konya is the city where Ḥaḡrat Mawlānā Rūmī spent the second and most important part of his life, until his demise on 17<sup>th</sup> December 1273 CE.

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<sup>20</sup> This meeting occurred in the late autumn of 1244 CE, when Ḥaḡrat Mawlānā Rūmī was 37 years old.

<sup>21</sup> Bahā’u’d-dīn Walad (ca. 1152-1231 CE), who was eminent theologian and a jurist with a strong inclination towards mysticism.

<sup>22</sup> Wakhsh now is part of present-day Tajikistan.

<sup>23</sup> The province of Greater Balkh was located in the north of present-day Afghanistan and southern Tajikistan. Because he was born in this province, Persian-speaking lovers of Ḥaḡrat Mawlānā Rūmī usually prefer to call him “Balkhī” (meaning “of Balkh”) instead of “Rūmī” (meaning “of Rūm” – referring to the Seljuk Sultanate of Rūm in Anatolia, where Ḥaḡrat Mawlānā lived from ca. 1229 CE onwards).

<sup>24</sup> The other main cities of Greater Khurāsān were Merw, Neyshāpūr and Herāt.

<sup>25</sup> For a long time Balkh itself had been an important centre of Zoroastrianism and Buddhism.

<sup>26</sup> Ca. 1145/1146-1221 CE.

<sup>27</sup> A mystical narrative poem about Ṣūfī ideas.

When Ḥaẓrat Mawlānā Rūmī lived in Konya, he taught that “Muslims, Christians, Jews and Zoroastrians should be viewed with the same eye”. He saw all religions as manifestations of the One Same Divine Source and lovingly embraced them all. It is clear that he was someone who profoundly understood and lived by the Ṣūfī principle of the essential unity of all religions and the need for them to live together in harmony.

Ḥaẓrat Mawlānā Rūmī’s message is timeless and universal. In his *Mathnawī*, this is especially felt when he addresses esoteric subjects like mystical Love and the Ultimate Reality. Then his language takes on a tone that transcends the boundaries and conventions of formal religion. This makes these parts of the *Mathnawī* and his other works so appealing to Western spiritual seekers. These esoteric passages yield a glimpse of who the inner Mawlānā Rūmī really was. They reveal a mystic with an inner realization beyond measure, whose message is not just intended for the Islamic world, but for people of all creeds and nations.

### **The Lubb-e Lubāb-e Mathnawī: Not Just Any Persian Ṣūfī Book**

While in the West the *Lubb-e Lubāb-e Mathnawī* is virtually unknown, in Persian-speaking Ṣūfī circles it is almost as famous as the *Mathnawī* itself. With this in mind, it’s hardly surprising that I felt deeply honoured when Ḥaẓrat Pīr<sup>28</sup> Mawlānā Ṣāfi ‘Alī Shāh II<sup>29</sup> – himself an expert on interpreting the *Mathnawī* – entrusted me with the task of making the very first English version of the *Lubb-e Lubāb*. This was a great privilege indeed. With humility and gratitude I set about the awe-inspiring task assigned to me. I can only hope that the result will fulfil the expectations of the esteemed readers of my work.

### **For Whom is this English Edition of the Lubb-e Lubāb-e Mathnawī Intended?**

Mawlānā Wā‘iẓ-e Kāshifī compiled the *Lubb-e Lubāb-e Mathnawī* as a help for fellow Ṣūfis who studied Sufism using Ḥaẓrat Mawlānā Jalālu’d-dīn Rūmī’s *Mathnawī-ye Ma‘nawī*. Similarly, this English edition of the *Lubb-e Lubāb-e Mathnawī* is mainly intended as a help for students and practitioners of mysticism who wish to gain a deeper insight into Ḥaẓrat Mawlānā Rūmī’s *Mathnawī* in order to increase their inner understanding. It is a major advantage if you are already acquainted with Sufism and the *Mathnawī* and are under the guidance of an accomplished spiritual Master who is able to elucidate its verses.

Students and practitioners of mysticism will gain the most benefit from the *Lubb-e Lubāb* if they give it a permanent place in their lives and hearts, and don’t expect to understand all of it by reading it only once. Readers who thirst for its Wisdom will have to return to it many times – the *Lubb-e Lubāb* is a book that reveals its many layers of inner meaning bit by bit. As you travel the Inner Path, it can become an inspiring travelling companion who gives answers to questions when you need them, often disclosing deeper meanings when you least expect it. If you use the *Lubb-e Lubāb* in this way, it will certainly help expand your inner awareness.

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<sup>28</sup> *Pīr* is the Persian word for “Ṣūfī Master”. Its Arabic equivalent is *Shaykh*. The primary meaning of the Persian word *pīr* is “old” or “old person”. The primary meaning of the Arabic word *shaykh* is similar to the Persian word *pīr*: “old man” or “an elder”. The Persian Ṣūfis borrowed the Arabic title *Shaykh*, but used it in their own way: in the hierarchy of most Persian Ṣūfī orders, the title *Shaykh* is given to Masters of a lower rank than *Pīr*. It should be noted, though, that throughout his *Mathnawī*, Ḥaẓrat Mawlānā Jalālu’d-dīn Rūmī uses both *Shaykh* and *Pīr* indiscriminately to designate “Ṣūfī Master”, without difference in rank or realization.

<sup>29</sup> From 1994 until his untimely demise on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2015, Ḥaẓrat Pīr Mawlānā Ṣāfi ‘Alī Shāh II (b. 22<sup>nd</sup> April 1947) was the head of the Ne‘matollāhī Ṣāfi ‘Alīshāhī Ṣūfī Order, a traditional but very open-minded Iranian Ṣūfī Order.

## Why Use R.A. Nicholson's Translation of the Mathnawī?

Ḥaẓrat Pīr Mawlānā Ṣafī 'Alī Shāh II urged me to use and adapt verses from the *Mathnawī* translation by Reynold Alleyne Nicholson for editing the *Lubb-e Lubāb-e Mathnawī*. Reynold Alleyne Nicholson (1868-1945), Professor at Cambridge University, was a prominent English orientalist. His academic speciality was Islamic literature and Islamic mysticism. He is regarded as one of the greatest and most influential authorities on the work of Ḥaẓrat Mawlānā Jalālu'ddīn Rūmī. His English translation of Ḥaẓrat Mawlānā Rūmī's *Mathnawī-ye Ma'nawī* was published between 1925 and 1940 and is considered his magnum opus<sup>30</sup>.

Apart from other older translations of the *Mathnawī*<sup>31</sup>, there are more recent English translations, and no doubt some of them have great merit, but none of them cover all of the *Mathnawī*'s six books, with one exception: the translation by the Indian scholar Dr. M.G. Gupta, who died in 2010.

Gupta's translation is not a word-for-word literal translation like that done by Nicholson, but rather a paraphrase of each line followed by a short commentary in brackets (sometimes incorporating the views of Surat Shabd Yoga<sup>32</sup>). He seems not to have been aware of the work of Nicholson and other scholars regarding early manuscripts of the *Mathnawī*. Instead, Gupta translated from an "inflated" Persian edition containing several thousand extra lines that have been added to the *Mathnawī* over the centuries<sup>33</sup>. For all these reasons, using Dr. Gupta's translation to make an English edition of Mawlānā Kāshifī's *Lubb-e Lubāb-e Mathnawī* obviously wasn't the right thing to do.

So why then choose Professor Nicholson's translation?

Nicholson's translation is replete with archaic, obsolete and grandiloquent English. This can't be held against him, as the use of such language was customary and even expected in his day. But regardless of Nicholson's use of outdated language, there is something that sets him apart from all other translators of the *Mathnawī*: he always remained faithful to the literal words of Ḥaẓrat Mawlānā Rūmī. As a result, no other English translation of Ḥaẓrat Mawlānā Rūmī's *Mathnawī* comes closer to the Persian original than Nicholson's.

That's why I am convinced that of all the existing English translations of the *Mathnawī*, Nicholson's is the most suitable to serve as a basis for this first English edition of the *Lubb-e Lubāb-e Mathnawī*.

## My Working Method

Carefully trying not to alter the exact meaning of the words in any way, I have brought Professor Nicholson's antiquated verses up to date, to the best of my ability, and often with a sense of uncertainty – after all, Nicholson's translation is nothing less than a milestone in the history of the *Mathnawī* in the West. I did this while comparing Nicholson's text to the

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<sup>30</sup> Nicholson also produced the first critical Persian edition of the *Mathnawī*, which is very popular with Persian-speaking lovers of the works of Ḥaẓrat Mawlānā Rūmī.

<sup>31</sup> Such as the complete versified translation by James W. Redhouse (1881) and the abridged translation by E.H. Winfield (1898).

<sup>32</sup> Surat Shabd Yoga is a particular spiritual meditative practice. Its purpose is to realize the individual's True Self (Self-Realization), True Essence (Spirit-Realization) and True Divinity (God-Realization) while living in the human physical body.

<sup>33</sup> Most of this paragraph was copied from [http://www.dar-al-masnavi.org/about\\_masnavi.html](http://www.dar-al-masnavi.org/about_masnavi.html).

Persian original. Occasionally I consulted the complete French translation of the *Mathnawī* by the late French orientalist Eva de Vitray Meyerovitch (1909-1999).

The *Mathnawī* deals with profound and complex mystical issues, and yet Ḥaẓrat Mawlānā Rūmī articulated its verses in an often astoundingly simple Persian. Such linguistic simplicity is extremely hard, if not impossible, to reproduce in English, or indeed in any other language. That's why I have strived to use as many simple words and expressions as possible while updating Nicholson's verses.

In Nicholson's translation many implied words are in brackets. For legibility's sake I have removed these brackets. The only words in brackets that have been preserved are those that were added as a clarification by Nicholson.

**Note:** Each verse in the three Sources is preceded by two numbers, separated by a hyphen. The number before the hyphen indicates to which of the six Books of the *Mathnawī* a verse belongs, the number after the hyphen indicates the number of a verse in a particular Book.

### **Transcription<sup>34</sup> of Arabic and Persian Names and Words in the Lubb-e Lubāb**

Professor Nicholson's method of transcribing Arabic and Persian names and words in his translation of the *Mathnawī* is based on Arabic, and to native speakers of Persian his way of transcribing will probably seem a little odd.

There are several scientific methods to transcribe Arabic and Persian, which can differ considerably from each other<sup>35</sup>. But they all share these basic characteristics: methods for transcribing Arabic use *a*, *i* and *u* for short vowels and transcribe the letter *wāw* as "w". Methods for transcribing Persian on the other hand – which are largely based on Persian pronunciation – use *a*, *e* and *o* for short vowels and transcribe the letter *wāw* as "v" instead of "w"<sup>36</sup>. Some examples:

#### **Based on Arabic:**

- Wā'iz-i Kāshifī
- Mathnawī-yi Ma'nawī<sup>37</sup>
- Lubb-i Lubāb-i Mathnawī
- Muḥammad
- sālik
- darwīsh

#### **Based on Persian:**

- Vā'eẓ-e Kāshefī
- Masnavī-ye Ma'navī
- Lobb-e Lobāb-e Masnavī
- Moḥammad
- sālek
- darvīsh

<sup>34</sup> Also called "romanization", i.e. rendering words from a language written in a different writing system in the Latin alphabet.

<sup>35</sup> E.g. the letter *ghayn* might be transcribed as gh, gh, ġ, ĝ or ğ.

<sup>36</sup> Although there are exceptions: in the *Encyclopaedia Iranica* both "v" and "w" are used to transcribe the letter *wāw*, e.g. Wā'eẓ-e Kāshefī (in many transcription methods the letter *shīn* – i.e. the sound "sh" – is transcribed as š) and Vahši Bāfqī (a Persian poet from the Safavid era, who lived from 1532 to 1583 CE).

<sup>37</sup> The inverted apostrophe ' represents the Arabic guttural consonant 'ayn. In Arabic it is a sound produced from the back of the throat, but in Persian it is pronounced as a glottal stop (a short vocal stop at the beginning of a word, between two letters of a word or at the end of a word), especially in formal Persian.

Both approaches are perfectly valid and acceptable, and for the English version of the *Lubb-e Lubāb-e Mathnawī* I could have opted for a transcription method based on Persian. However, out of respect for Professor Nicholson I decided to follow his transcription method.

Like Nicholson, I have transcribed the Arabic emphatic consonants *ṣād*, *ḍād*, *ṭā'* and *ẓā'*<sup>38</sup> and the strongly aspirated Arabic consonant *ḥā'*<sup>39</sup> in the same way Nicholson did, using subscript dots to distinguish them from plain consonants<sup>40</sup>.

In his *Commentaries on Jalālu'ddīn Rūmī's Mathnawī*, Professor Nicholson added a final “h” to Arabic words that end in *tā' marbūṭa* (e.g. *'ibādah* instead of *'ibāda* – meaning “worship”). But since he didn't apply this rule in his translation of the *Mathnawī*, I too have omitted the final “h” from Arabic words that end in *tā' marbūṭa*<sup>41</sup>.

Nonetheless, there are a few minor differences: whereas Nicholson used to transcribe long vowels by placing accent marks over them (e.g. *Mawlānā Jalālu'ddīn Rūmī*), I have chosen to use macrons to indicate long vowels (e.g. *Mawlānā Jalālu'ddīn Rūmī*). This also includes the *alif maqṣūra* (e.g. *Mūsā*, i.e. the Arabic form of the name “Moses”).

No single transcription method<sup>42</sup> is perfect. Although I have tried to stay as close as possible to Nicholson's transcription method, my personal way of transcribing Persian reflects some influence of the transcription system used by the Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft<sup>43</sup>, more specifically with regard to the *izāfa*<sup>44</sup> (e.g. *Lubb-e Lubāb-e Mathnawī-ye Ma'nawī* instead of *Lubb-i Lubāb-i Mathnawī-yi Ma'nawī*) and the Arabic emphatic consonant *ḍād*. The letter *ḍād* has been transcribed as *ḏ* (e.g. *qāḏī*, i.e. “Muslim judge”, from the Arabic *qāḏī*).

A final difference is that, unlike Nicholson in his *Commentaries on the Mathnawī of Jalālu'ddīn Rūmī*, I have always assimilated the *lām* of the Arabic definite article *al* if the initial consonant of the following word is a so-called solar (*shamsī*) letter (e.g. *at-tawḥīd* instead of *al-tawḥīd* – meaning “the Divine Unity”).

### Footnotes in the Lubb-e Lubāb-e Mathnawī

This edition of the *Lubb-e Lubāb* contains a substantial number of footnotes. Many were written by Professor Nicholson, others were added by myself. Advanced students of the *Mathnawī* will probably find them superfluous, but I think they may be helpful and instructive for others. For the reader's convenience, certain footnotes have been repeated a number of times.

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<sup>38</sup> Apart from the letter *ḍād*, which is pronounced as “z” in Persian, all these Arabic emphatic consonants are pronounced as plain consonants in Persian.

<sup>39</sup> In Arabic, the strongly aspirated consonant *ḥā'* is pronounced as an “h” with friction at the back of the throat. In Persian it sounds like a plain “h”, though.

<sup>40</sup> Many contemporary transcription methods still use subscript dots to transcribe these emphatic consonants and the strongly aspirated consonant *ḥā'*.

<sup>41</sup> With only a few exceptions, like *ṣalāh* (“ritual prayer”).

<sup>42</sup> Or “transliteration method”, as some prefer.

<sup>43</sup> Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft (DMG): “The German Oriental Society”, a scholarly organization established in Leipzig in 1845.

<sup>44</sup> In Persian grammar, the *izāfa* is a suffix that links words to each other, as in *Lubb-e Lubāb*, “The Heart of Hearts”.



### Some Words of Thanks

My greatest gratitude goes to Ḥaẓrat Pīr Mawlānā Ṣafī ‘Alī Shāh II, Master of the Ne‘matollāhī<sup>45</sup> Ṣafī ‘Alīshāhī Ṣūfī Order, for his faith in my ability to make the very first English edition of the *Lubb-e Lubāb-e Mathnawī*. Sadly, he passed away on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2015 – may God’s Mercy be upon him.

With love I also extend my deepest and most sincere thanks to two of my fellow wayfarers on the Ṣūfī Path: Mahbub Dayers and Fraidoon Warasta. Their practical support and their intellectual feedback on my work – both critical and constructive – have been a great and most valuable help in editing the *Lubb-e Lubāb-e Mathnawī*. In addition, I express my wholehearted gratitude to Fraidoon<sup>46</sup>, who is the artist who made the inspiring painting of a contemplating Mawlānā Rūmī on the opening page of this book.

Wazir Dayers – June 2020

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<sup>45</sup> I have transcribed the first part of the name of this Ṣūfī Order as *Ne‘matollāhī*, i.e. based on Persian instead of Arabic, because “Ne‘matollahi” is part of the Order’s official name.

<sup>46</sup> You can find out more about this versatile artist and his work on his own website: <http://fraidoon.com>.

# Preface

By Mawlānā Mullā Ḥusayn Wā‘iz-e Kāshifī

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

This is the Heart of Hearts of the Mathnawī

After praising God, the One and Only Being, who bestows His abundance on all creatures, and after extolling him who is the loftiest of men in the universe and who is the most perfect among all creatures<sup>47</sup>, he who is the mirror of God’s essence and qualities (Qur’ān, 17:70<sup>48</sup>), he for whom God has said: “[O Muḥammad], if it had not been for you, I would not have created the heavenly spheres”, God honoured us by allowing us to make a selection from the Mathnawī.

Writing the Mathnawī essentially was the result of the Divine revelation and the blessing by the Source of Oneness, that became manifest in the heart of the Guide of the elect and the people of Divine revelation, the one who possesses holy and spiritual qualities, the one who receives the Light of the Divine heaven and the Secrets of the Treasures of the One, the King of the Enraptured Ones<sup>49</sup>, the Director of the wayfarers on the mystical path, the Language of the Time<sup>50</sup>, the Father of the Time<sup>51</sup>, the Graceful Splendour of the Country and the Faith, the Majesty of Truth and Certainty, Muḥammad, son of Muḥammad, son of Ḥusayn, Ḥaḏrat<sup>52</sup> Mawlawī<sup>53</sup> Rūmī of Balkh – may God sanctify his spirit<sup>54</sup>.

In this book one can find the secrets of the gardens of the reality of Ummu’l-Kitāb<sup>55</sup>, which have been manifested from the unseen World into the seen World.

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<sup>47</sup> I.e. the Prophet Muḥammad.

<sup>48</sup> “We have honoured the children of Adam, and provided them with rides on land and in the sea. We provided for them good provisions, and we gave them greater advantages than many of our creatures”.

<sup>49</sup> “Enraptured Ones”: *majdhūbūna*, the plural of *majdhūb*. *Majdhūb* means “one whom God has drawn close to Himself by Divine rapture or the force of Divine attraction (*jadhba*)”.

<sup>50</sup> The one who has been granted the ability to explain Divine Reality in a particular era, in words that are understandable to common people.

<sup>51</sup> Abū’l-Waqt: “Father of the Time” – a person whose contribution to the universal understanding of Divine Reality is not hindered by the passage of time, i.e. the influence of his work endures.

<sup>52</sup> Ḥaḏrat (< Arabic *ḥaḏra*<sup>um</sup>) is a title that expresses great reverence. It is often rendered as “His Holiness”, but its literal and original meaning is “Presence”.

<sup>53</sup> Iranians usually call Ḥaḏrat Mawlānā Rūmī “Mawlawī”, which is pronounced *Mōlavi* in Persian. The meaning of “Mawlawī” is “learned man” or “religious scholar”, but in this case it should be considered synonymous with “Mawlānā” (“our Master”, “our Lord”, “our Patron” or – in more traditional Ṣūfī terms – “our Caring, Supporting and Protecting Holy Friend”). Afghans know him as “Mawlānā-ye Balkhī” (“Mawlānā of Balkh”).

<sup>54</sup> When the name of a deceased Ṣūfī Master is mentioned, it is customary to add a benediction formula, like “may God sanctify his spirit”.

<sup>55</sup> In Arabic, *Ummu’l-Kitāb* means “the Mother of the Book”. This term usually refers to *Sūratu’l-Fātiḥa*, the Opening Sūra of the Qur’ān. However, *Ummu’l-Kitāb* equally means a heavenly prototype, the substance, essence or “blueprint” of all holy books, i.e. not only of the Qur’ān, but of the sacred scriptures of *all* religions. The *Ummu’l-Kitāb* is inscribed on the “Preserved Tablet” (*al-Lawḥu’l-Maḥfūẓ*). Ṣūfīs have also identified *Ummu’l-Kitāb* with the First Intellect (*al-‘Aqlu’l-Awwal*), which is the first manifestation of Divine Beauty. Since man’s true nature is Divine, this implies man’s possibility to attain to Divine Knowledge.

The gracious and supreme beauty and subtlety of the secrets that reveal the Divine Light could not have been disclosed without the blessing and the aid of God's Chosen Saints. Therefore we have implored the assistance and benediction of the Perfect Gnostics to help us unveil those secrets.

The reason why I have made this selection of the Mathnawī by Mawlānā Jalālu'ddīn is that some fellow travellers on the Path<sup>56</sup> have asked this faqīr<sup>57</sup>, Ḥusayn ibn 'Alī al-Bayhaqī al-Wā'iz al-Kāshifī, to write a book entitled *Lubb-e Lubāb-e Mathnawī*, ("The Heart of Hearts of the Mathnawī"), intended as an aid and a benefit to the spiritual development of beginners on the Ṣūfī Path.

With good resolves and with the aid of *istikhāra* (divination using the Qur'ān or another holy text<sup>58</sup>) and with the permission of the Saints, I started with this verse:

"The name of this book is the Heart of Hearts<sup>59</sup> of the Mathnawī"

The sālik must keep progressing along the Path of *Sharī'a*<sup>60</sup>, so that he may attain to the qualities of the initiates of *Ṭarīqa*<sup>61</sup>, and thus to the stages of those who have realized *Ḥaqīqa*<sup>62</sup>.

In order to further elucidate this mystical journey in a way that is relevant to sāliks, this book is divided into three parts ("Sources"), i.e.:

- Source I: The Stages of Sharī'a (the Sacred Law)
- Source II: The Treasure of the Secrets of Ṭarīqa (the Inner Path)
- Source III: The Light of Ḥaqīqa (Divine Reality)

Each Source is subdivided into "Rivers" and each "River" into "Rivulets". In every "Rivulet" each subject is elaborated and explained in depth.

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<sup>56</sup> A traveller or wayfarer on the Ṣūfī Path is called a *sālik*. The act of travelling the Ṣūfī Path is called *sulūk*.

<sup>57</sup> Faqīr: "one who is poor before God and in need of His mercy" – Qur'ān: "O mankind! You are the poor before God, while God is the Rich and Independent, free of all wants and needs, and Praiseworthy" (Qur'ān 35:15). Here, Mawlānā Kāshifī uses the term "faqīr" to express his humility.

<sup>58</sup> *Istikhāra* involves the following: one focuses on a question or a problem and asks for help and guidance, holding the Qur'ān or another holy book in one's hands. Then, one randomly opens the holy book, and if one's intentions are sincere, the book will show a verse or sentence that contains an answer to the question or the problem. People often ask mystics or religious clerics to do the *istikhāra* for them.

<sup>59</sup> In the Fārsī original Mawlānā Kāshifī uses the words *Lubb-e Lubāb*. Apart from "Heart of Hearts", *Lubb-e Lubāb* may also be rendered as "The Mystical Essence of Essences". A full and literal translation of the opening lines of the *Lubb-e Lubāb* would be: "The name of this [book] is The [Mystical] Heart of Hearts/The Mystical Essence of Essences of Inner Knowledge; it is a selection of a selection [of verses] from the Mathnawī". What the author really means is that this book contains the mystical core and mystical knowledge of Ḥaḏrat Mawlānā Rūmī's *Mathnawī*, a knowledge that surpasses all other forms of knowledge.

<sup>60</sup> Sharī'a: the term "Sharī'a" is usually defined as "the religious code of law derived from the Qur'ān and from the teachings and example of the Prophet Muḥammad". However, this book deals with the inner or mystical aspect of religion and not with its outer or formal aspect. This means that in the *Lubb-e Lubāb-e Mathnawī*, "Sharī'a" should be understood as "Pathway to proper moral conduct". In a mystical sense, the word *Sharī'a* also means "Pathway to Water" – in this case "Water" stands for *Ṭarīqa* or "Mystical Path", which leads to the Divine Ocean of Oneness and Love. For a *sālik*, this is the least important stage of his or her spiritual journey. It is a mere preparatory passage, where the sālik learns the self-discipline he or she will need in the stage of *Ṭarīqa*, the Inner or Mystical Path.

<sup>61</sup> Ṭarīqa: the mystical Path, the Path of inner development towards union with the Divine.

<sup>62</sup> Ḥaqīqa: "Divine Truth", "Supreme Reality" – the ultimate goal of the mystical Path.

I beseech those endowed with learning, knowledge and wisdom to consider this work with magnanimity, and in doing so, to ignore our shortcomings.

Poem:

“Greater people do not heed the faults of smaller people, and,  
in their greatness and mercifulness, accept their apologies.”

As God is at the beginning and the end of everything, guidance (*hidāya*) on the right path also comes from God.

Before going into the subjects of the three Sources, we would like to begin this book, as is customary, by praising God and His Prophet. We also express our desire that the set-up of this book will make it accessible for all.

Praise be to God, at the beginning and at the end.

# The First Source

## The Stages of Sharī‘a<sup>63</sup>

### The First River [1.1]

About Faith (Īmān), Testimony of Faith (Shahāda)  
and the Ways of Adoration and Devotion (‘Ibāda)

#### The First Rivulet [1.1.1]

**The true meaning of faith.**

**The two kinds of believing:**

**Believing by imitation and believing by examination.**

**There are two kinds of believing by examination:**

**By reasoning (istidlālī) and by visionary experience (shuhūdī).**

- 5-287      The essence of the faith is a mighty blessing and mightily delicious food, o you who are pleased to take nothing of the faith but its declaration<sup>64</sup>!
- 5-288      Although that Light is the food of the soul and the spiritual sight, the body too partakes of it, o son.
- 5-289      If the devilish body had not become fond of eating it, the Prophet would not have said, “The devil accepted Islām”<sup>65</sup>.
- 5-290      How should the devil become a Muslim<sup>66</sup> until he drinks of the sweet food by which the dead is made living?
- 5-291      The devil is passionately in love with the world, blind and deaf; but this love, no doubt, may be cut off by another love.

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<sup>63</sup> The term “Sharī‘a” is usually defined as “the religious code of law derived from the Qur’ān and from the teachings and example of the Prophet Muḥammad”. However, since both the *Mathnawī* and the *Lubb-e Lubāb-e Mathnawī* deal with the inner or mystical aspect of religion and not with its outer or formal aspect, in this context, *Sharī‘a* should be understood as “Pathway to proper moral conduct.” In a mystical sense, the word *Sharī‘a* also means “Pathway to Water” – in this case “Water” stands for *Ṭarīqa* or “Mystical Path”, which leads to the Divine Ocean of Oneness and Love. For a *sālik* or Sūfī wayfarer, this is the least important stage of his or her spiritual journey. It is a mere preparatory passage, where the *sālik* learns the self-discipline he or she will need in the stage of *Ṭarīqa*, the Inner or Mystical Path.

<sup>64</sup> The *shahāda* or testimony of faith (“I testify that there is only one God and I testify that Muḥammad is the Envoy of God”) is the first of the Five Pillars of Islām. Shī‘ī Muslims add the phrase “and I testify that ‘Alī is the Friend of God”.

<sup>65</sup> In a *ḥadīth* the Prophet Muḥammad has said: “Each one of you is accompanied by a *shayṭān* (“a satan”, meaning the lower self or *nafs*).” The people asked him: “What about you, o Messenger of God?”. To which he replied: “I also have one, but I have subdued it and made it surrender to God”. *Aḥādīth-e Mathnawī* p. 432; *Musnad-e Aḥmad*, Vol. 1, p. 257. In another *ḥadīth* Ḥaṣrat Muḥammad says: *aslama Shayṭānī*; its literal meaning is “My Satan has become a Muslim”, but its spiritual meaning is “my lower self has surrendered itself to God”.

<sup>66</sup> I.e. “How should your lower self surrender to God?”.

5-292 When he tastes the wine from the cellar of certainty, little by little it will take its lover there.

5-3355 The true believer is he whose belief makes the unbeliever regretful amidst the ebb and flow of fortune.

**Story:  
Bāyazīd and the infidel. [1.1.1].**

5-3356 There was a certain infidel<sup>67</sup> in the time of Bāyazīd<sup>68</sup>: a blessed Muslim said to him,

5-3357 “How would it be if you embraced Islām, so that you may obtain a hundred salvations and redemptions?”

5-3358 He replied, “If this faith of yours, o disciple, is the same as that which is held by Bāyazīd, the Shaykh<sup>69</sup> of the world,

5-3359 I cannot bear its glowing heat, which is too great for all the strivings of my soul to reach it.

5-3361 I hold the faith that his faith<sup>70</sup> is higher than all others: it is very beautiful, resplendent and glorious.

5-3363 Again, if indeed the faith which you would have me embrace is your faith, I have no inclination or desire for it.

5-3364 He who feels a hundred inclinations to believe – that inclination fades as soon as he sees you<sup>71</sup>.

5-3365 Because he sees a mere name and no meaning in it, like calling the desert<sup>72</sup> a safe place.

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<sup>67</sup> The word used in the Persian text is *gabr*, which originally meant “fire-worshipper” or “Zoroastrian”. By the time of Ḥaẓrat Mawlānā Rūmī, the term *gabr* was applied to anyone who didn’t adhere to Islām. Since *gabr* had such a pejorative connotation, in time followers of the Zoroastrian faith were given the respectable name *Zardushṭī*.

<sup>68</sup> The Persian Ṣūfī Master Ḥaẓrat Bāyazīd-e Bastāmī, also known as Ḥaẓrat Abū Yazīd Ṭayfūr al-Bisṭāmī (ca. 804-874 CE), is one of the key figures in the history of Sufism, in that he founded what came to be known as “the School of Intoxication” (*sukr*), which flourished in Greater Khurāsān, as opposed to the equally influential “School of Sobriety” (*saḥw*), which was founded in Baghdad by the Ṣūfī Master Ḥaẓrat Junayd al-Baghdādī (ca. 830-910 CE).

<sup>69</sup> Shaykh: “spiritual Director” (Nich.). Please note that when a footnote is followed by (Nich.), it means that it was written by Nicholson.

<sup>70</sup> Literally “that Faith of his”.

<sup>71</sup> I.e. the Muslims (Nich.).

<sup>72</sup> Arabic *maḥāza* = “desert” (Nich.).

### **Allegory. [1.1.1]**

- 5-3367 A certain muezzin had a very harsh voice: he calls the Muslims to prayer in the land of the infidels.
- 5-3368 They said to him several times, “Do not give the call to prayer, otherwise fighting and acts of hostility against us will continue.”
- 5-3369 He defied them, and then without showing any caution he gave the call to prayer in the land of the infidels.
- 5-3370 The Muslims feared a general insurrection; however, an infidel came up to them with a robe.
- 5-3372 Asking again and again, “Tell me, where is this muezzin, whose call and cry increases my pleasure?”
- 5-3373 “Eh, what pleasure was there from such a harsh voice?” He replied, “His voice penetrated into the church<sup>73</sup>.”
- 5-3374 I have an appealing and highly distinguished daughter: she desires to be a true believer.
- 5-3375 This passion would never leave her head, even though so many infidels were pressing her.
- 5-3378 I didn’t know a remedy for it until this muezzin chanted the *adhān* (call to prayer).
- 5-3379 Then my daughter said, “What is this awful noise? It irritates my ear.
- 5-3380 Never in all my life have I heard such a harsh voice in this Christian convent and church.”
- 5-3383 When she became sure of this, her face turned pale and her heart grew cold to Islām.
- 5-3384 I was delivered from anxiety and torment: last night I slept sound in a peaceful sleep.
- 5-3385 This was the pleasure that came to me from his voice: in gratitude I bring these gifts: where is the man?”
- 5-3389 “The faith of you Muslims is hypocrisy and falsehood: like that call to prayer, it waylays the seeker and prevents him from embracing Islām;
- 5-3390 But many regrets have come into my heart and soul from my admiration for the faith and sincerity of Bāyazīd.”

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<sup>73</sup> Apart from “church”, the Persian word *kanasht* can also mean “synagogue” or “fire temple”.

- 5-3398 He who received the faith entered into security; the infidelities of the rest became a matter on which there were two opinions.
- 5-3403 If the luminous sun of the Shaykh's faith should display itself from the Orient to the Shaykh's soul
- 5-3394 If a single drop of this faith enters into the ocean, the ocean will be submerged in his drop.
- 5-3397 A star of Divine illumination appeared in Muḥammad, so that the substance of the beliefs of Magian<sup>74</sup> and the denier of the Truth<sup>75</sup> passed away.

## The Second Rivulet [1.1.2]

### Testimony (shahāda) and its three kinds:

- 1: the testimony of ordinary people, which is based on imitation.**
- 2: the testimony of theologians, which is based on reasoning.**
- 3: the testimony of gnostics or mystics, which is based on visionary experience.**

### A sālik's testimony is manifest in his or her intention, words and deeds. [1.1.2]

- 5-174 In this court of the Judge who pronounces the Decree we are present for the purpose of living up to our claim to fulfil the covenant signified by the words "Am not I your Lord?" and "Yes"<sup>76</sup>.
- 5-175 For we said, "Yes" and since we are on trial our acts and words are the necessary witnesses and evidence of that assent.
- 5-176 Why do we remain silent in the court of the Judge? Did we not come here to bear testimony?

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<sup>74</sup> The Magians adhered to an ancient Persian religion associated with the worship and study of fire and celestial bodies like the sun and the stars. The Magian and the Zoroastrian religions are closely linked, but their exact relation seems to be a matter of some controversy.

<sup>75</sup> In Nicholson's translation it says "Jew" instead of "denier of the Truth". But this is wrong. The word which Ḥaẓrat Mawlānā Rūmī uses in the *Mathnawī* is *jahūd*, which is often confused with the word *Yahūd* ("Jews"). *Jahūd* is best translated as "deniers of the Truth". *Jahūd* is similar in meaning to the Arabic word *kāfir*, another word that is very often misinterpreted and misunderstood. It is usually translated as "infidel", "unbeliever", or "pagan". Yet in Arabic, *kāfir* literally means "one who covers the Truth", i.e. "someone who is spiritually ignorant and blind". As such, a *kāfir* can belong to any religious group or faith, including Islām. The same applies to the term *jahūd*.

<sup>76</sup> Qur'ān 7:172 – the Day of *Alast*: while all human souls already existed within God before creation, God asked them: "Am I not your Lord? (*a lastu bi-Rabbikum?*)", and they all answered "Yes! We testify!". Ṣūfī mystics have always endeavoured to inwardly remember the Day of *Alast*, in order to return to man's true inner state, which is the awareness of the soul's existence in the love of God, just as the love of God has always existed within the souls of mankind.



- 5-177           How long, o witness, will you remain under detention in the court of the Judge? Give your testimony soon.
- 5-179           But in your obstinacy you've sat down and closed both hand and mouth in this confinement.
- 5-180           Until you give that testimony, o witness, how will you escape from this court?
- 5-181           It can be done in a moment. Perform your duty and run away: do not make a short matter long, tedious and annoying to yourself.
- 5-182           In the way you want it, whether during a hundred years or in a moment, discharge yourself from this trust<sup>77</sup> and free yourself from it.
- 5-183           This ritual prayer, fasting, pilgrimage and holy war are the evidence of the inner belief.
- 5-184           The giving of alms and presents and the abandonment of envy are the evidence of one's secret thoughts.
- 5-236           Act and word are witnesses to the hidden mind: derive the inward state from these two.
- 5-246           What is this testimony? The making manifest of that which is hidden, whether by word or act or something else;
- 5-247           For its object is to make manifest the inner nature of the spiritual substance: the attributes of that substance are permanent, even though these accidents<sup>78</sup> such as acts and words are fleeting.
- 5-248           The mark of the gold on the touchstone does not remain, but the gold itself remains –well-renowned and undoubted.
- 5-249           Similarly, all this ritual prayer and holy war and fasting does not remain, but the spirit's good reputation is preserved for ever.
- 5-250           The spirit produced certain acts and words of this kind as proof: it rubbed its substance on the touchstone of the Divine command,
- 5-251           As though to say, "My belief is perfect: here is the witness!" Yes, but there is doubt regarding the witness.
- 5-252           Know that the truthfulness of the witnesses must be established: the means of establishing is a great sincerity: you are dependent on that.

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<sup>77</sup> In the Persian text the word *amānat* is used, which means "something that is given in trust".

<sup>78</sup> Here, "accident" (*'araḡ*, from the Arabic *'araḍ*) is used as a philosophical term, meaning "a nonessential attribute or characteristic of something".

- 5-253 In the case of the word-witness, it's keeping your word that is the test; in the case of the act-witness, it is keeping your solemn pledge to perform these acts.
- 5-254 The word-witness is rejected if it speaks falsely, and the act-witness is rejected if it is out of line.
- 5-255 You must have words and acts that are not self-contradictory, in order that you may be accepted immediately.
- 5-2218 Act, then, in such a way that the action itself, without your tongue uttering a word, will be equivalent to saying "I testify" and to making the most explicit declaration.
- 5-2219 So that your whole body, limb by limb, o son, will have said "I testify" as regards both good and bad.
- 5-2220 The servant's walking behind his master is a testimony equivalent to saying, "I am subject to authority and this man is my lord."
- 5-3316 All our movement action is really a continual profession of faith which bears witness to the Eternal Almighty One.
- 5-3317 The restless turning of the millstone is a profession of faith in the existence of the water brook.

### **The Third Rivulet [1.1.3]**

#### **Devotion or worship and its three stages:**

**Devotion of ordinary people: obedience to God's command.**

**Devotion of the elect on the mystical path:**

**Increasing of intention and will and cultivation of sincerity,**

**Devotion of "the elect of the elect" (*akhaṣṣu'l-khawāṣṣ*):**

**Serving God with love.**

- 3-2988 "I did not create the jinn and humankind except to worship Me<sup>79</sup>." Recite this text. The final purpose of the world is nothing but Divine worship.
- 5-2513 Restore your manliness by engaging in devotional works, that you may become like the hot sun in the sign of Aries<sup>80</sup>.
- 3-4584 Strive for your inner light to become radiant, so that your travelling in the path of devotion and service to God may be made easy.

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<sup>79</sup> Qur'ān 51:56.

<sup>80</sup> I.e. that your power to foster the spiritual growth of your disciples may be as great as that of the sun to make the plants blossom in spring (Nich.). In Islamic and pre-Islamic folklore, *jinn* (singular: *jinnī*) are supernatural creatures, who possess free will and can be good or evil in nature. Iblīs (Satan) was the chief of the Jinn; when God ordered him to bow down before Adam, he refused and fell from grace.

- 3-4585      You take children to school by force, because they are blind to the benefits of knowledge;
- 3-4586      But when the child becomes aware of the benefits, he runs to school: his soul expands with joy at going.
- 3-4587      A child goes to school in sour resentment because he has seen nothing of the rewards for his work;
- 3-4588      When he puts in his pocket a single *dāng*<sup>81</sup> earned by his handiwork, then he remains sleepless at night, like the thief.
- 3-4589      Strive for the rewards for obedience to God to arrive: then you will envy the obedient.
- 2-2769      Because everyone takes delight in some act of devotion, and consequently cannot bear to miss it even for a short while.

**Ordinary people pray at fixed times. The devotion of true lovers is not subject to fixed times and transcends time. [1.1.3]**

- 6-2669      The ritual prayer is five times daily, but the guide for lovers is the verse “they who are in prayer continually.”<sup>82</sup>
- 6-2670      The wine-headache that is in those heads is not relieved by five times nor by five hundred thousand.
- 6-2671      “Visit once a week” is not the ration for lovers; the soul of the sincere lovers has an intense craving to drink.
- 6-2672      “Visit once a week” is not the ration for those fishes, since they feel no spiritual joy without the Sea.
- 6-2673      In spite of the yearning of the fishes, the water of this Sea, which is a tremendous place, is but a single draft, too little to satisfy them.

**The humility of Saints before the Beloved during devotion. [1.1.3]**

- 2-337      Go, do not act basely, for even our fair deeds appear base in the sight of our beautiful Loved One.
- 2-338      You deemed your service worthy: in doing so you raised the banner of sin.
- 2-3319      All the people, then, are as his spiritual Teacher’s children: this fact is necessary for the Pīr to bear in mind when he gives them instruction.

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<sup>81</sup> A *dāng* is one sixth of a *drahm* (from the Arabic *dirham*, which in turn is derived from the Greek *drachmè*).

<sup>82</sup> Qur’ān 70:23, slightly altered (Nich.).

- 2-3401 At night he took him to a window and said, “Look at that fine debauchery and merry-making!
- 6-2070 The Sun of God has risen from the sign of the Ram: the material sun has gone, shamefaced, under the veil.
- 5-978 The roses do not remain; only the black thorns remain: it becomes pale and weak like a heap of straw.
- 2-1225 The day late, the ass lame, and the way long; the shop ruined and the business in disorder.
- 2-1263 The year has turned late; it is not sowing-time, and you have produced nothing except black shame and foul deeds.
- 2-3393 And ritual prayer and almsgiving and so forth, but he does not have a single atom of spiritual taste<sup>83</sup>.
- 2-3395 His devotions are good in form, but the spirit is not good: the walnuts are many, but they contain no kernel.
- 2-3394 He performs high acts and deeds of devotion, but he does not have one atom of spiritual delight.
- 2-3396 Spiritual taste is required, in order that devotions may yield fruit: a kernel is required, in order that the berry may produce a tree.
- 2-3397 How shall a berry without kernel become a sapling? The soulless form is nothing but fantasy.

## **The Second River [1.2]**

**Purification (Ṭahāra), Ritual Prayer (Fārsī: Namāz, Arabic: Ṣalāh),  
Fasting (Fārsī: Rūzeh, Arabic: Ṣawm), Giving Alms (Zakāh),  
Pilgrimage (Ḥajj) and Inner Holy War (Jihād)**

### **The First Rivulet [1.2.1]**

**Inner purification<sup>84</sup>.  
Freeing the mind from lust, greed  
and other negative characteristics.**

- 3-2092 Outer filthiness may be removed by some water; inner filthiness gradually increases.
- 3-2093 It cannot be washed away except by water of the eye (tears), once the inner filthiness has become manifest.

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<sup>83</sup> Spiritual taste: *dhawq*, meaning “direct experience of the Divine in a state of bliss”.

<sup>84</sup> Qur’ān 2:222.

- 3-2094 Since God has called the infidel “impure”, that impurity is not on his outer side.
- 3-2095 The infidel’s outer side is not defiled by this outer impurity; that impurity is in his temperament and religion.
- 3-2096 The smell of this outer impurity extends to a distance of twenty paces; but the smell of that inner impurity reaches from Rayy<sup>85</sup> to Damascus.
- 4-2385 Wash your senses for a while with the water of clear-sightedness: know that the garment-washing of the Şūfis is like this.
- 4-2386 When you have become purified, the spirit of the pure ones will tear off the veil and attach itself to you.

### **God’s Mercy is like an all-cleansing water. [1.2.1]**

- 5-199 The water rained down from heaven, that it might cleanse the impure of their defilement.
- 5-200 When the water<sup>86</sup> had done battle during ablution, had been made dirty and had become such that the senses rejected it,
- 5-201 God brought it back into the sea of Goodness, that the origin of the water might generously wash it clean.
- 5-202 Next year it came sweeping proudly along. “Hey, where have you been?” “In the sea of the pure,
- 5-204 Listen, come to me, o you polluted ones, for my nature has partaken of the nature of God.
- 5-205 I will accept all your foulness: I will bestow purity like that of the angel on the demon.
- 5-206 When I become defiled, I will return there: I will go to the Source of the source of purities.
- 5-207 There I will pull the filthy cloak from my head: He will give me a clean robe once more.
- 5-208 Such is His work, and my work is the same: *the Lord of all created beings* is the beautifier of the world.”
- 5-212 Or, porter-like, it takes on its head the ship that is helplessly tossing in the seas<sup>87</sup>.

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<sup>85</sup> Rayy: ancient Persian city to the southeast of Tehran. It was the regional capital in the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries CE.

<sup>86</sup> The water is a type of saintly water which, when it is soiled through contact with human sin, renews its purity by Union with God (Nich.).

- 5-217 Then from its interior it raises cries of lamentation, saying, “O God, I have given to others that which You gave me and I am left a beggar.
- 5-218 I poured the whole capital over pure and impure alike: O King who gives the capital, is there anymore more?<sup>88</sup>,”
- 5-219 God said to the cloud, “Bear the water to the delightful place; and you too, o sun, draw it up high.”
- 5-220 He makes it to go different ways, that He may bring it to the boundless sea.
- 5-221 Verily, what is meant by this water is the spirit of the Saints, which washes away your dark stains.

**The Second Rivulet [1.2.2]**  
**Devotion is the presence of the heart.**  
**Immersing oneself in the ocean of love**  
**and connecting to the Divine.**

**Poem:**

**“The aim of my devotion is to impart to you the secrets of separation.**  
**If I worshipped you absent-mindedly, my devotion would not be true<sup>89</sup>.”**  
**[1.2.2]**

**To him who visits the tavern in a state of spiritual poverty,**  
**both sobriety and intoxication are devotion. [1.2.2]**

- 3-2086 O clear-sighted Imām, to lead the ritual prayer you require a clear eye.”
- 3-2087 According to the religious Law it is objectionable, o worthy reader, to let a blind man perform the office of Imām.
- 3-2088 Even if he knows the Qur’ān by heart and is quick and learned in divinity, the clear-sighted man is superior, even if he is a fool.
- 3-2089 The blind man has no means of avoiding filth: the eye is the source of abstention and precaution.
- 3-2090 He does not see the dirt in passing by. May no true believer have blind eyes!
- 3-2091 The outwardly blind man is in outward material impurity; the inwardly blind man is in inward spiritual filthiness.

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<sup>87</sup> I.e. it uplifts those who are struggling with doubt and despair and bears them onward to salvation (Nich.).

<sup>88</sup> Qur’ān 50:30: “On the day that We will say to hell: Are you filled up? And it will say: Are there any more?”.

<sup>89</sup> These verses are taken from Ḥaẓrat Mawlānā Rūmī’s *Dīwān-e Shams-e Tabrīzī*.

- 3-2143 O Imām, the real meaning of the *tabkīr*<sup>90</sup> is this: “We have become a sacrifice, o God, before You.”
- 3-2144 At the moment of slaughtering the victim you say *Allāhu Akbar*: even say so when you slaughter the carnal soul (= *nafs*) which ought to be killed
- 3-2145 The body is like Ismā’īl (Ishmael)<sup>91</sup>, and the spirit like Ibrāhīm (Abraham): the spirit has pronounced the *tabkīr* over the noble body.
- 3-2146 By lusts and desires the body was merely killed, but by the words *Bismi’ Llāh* uttered in the ritual prayer it was sacrificed<sup>92</sup>.
- 3-2147 While praying they were drawn up in ranks before God, as at the Resurrection, and engaged in self-examination and prayers,
- 3-2148 Standing in God’s presence and shedding tears, like one who rises up on the Day of rising from the dead.
- 3-2149 On that Day God will say, “What have you produced for Me during this term of respite which I gave you<sup>93</sup>?”
- 3-2151 Where have you dimmed the brightness of your eye? Where have you dissolved your five senses?
- 3-2154 Even if hundreds of thousands of such sorrowful messages come from the Lord
- 3-2155 At the time of standing in prayer<sup>94</sup> these words return from God to the worshipper, and out of shame he is bent double while bowing down.
- 3-2156 Out of shame, he loses the power to remain standing, and out of abashment he recites a litany of glorification while his knees are bowed.
- 3-2157 Then comes the Divine command, “Lift up your head from bowing down and tell what you have to say in answer to God.”
- 3-2158 The shamefaced one lifts up his head from bowing down; then the man whose works are imperfect falls on his face.
- 3-2159 Again the Divine command comes to him, “Lift up your head from the prostration and give an account of your deeds.”
- 3-2161 Again He says, “Lift up your head and relate your deeds, for I will interrogate you about them, hair by hair.”

<sup>90</sup> *Tabkīr*: proclaiming the greatness of God by uttering the phrase *Allāhu Akbar* (meaning “God is the Greatest”, “God is Greater than anything man can imagine”).

<sup>91</sup> Whom Abraham was ordered to sacrifice. See Qur’ān 37:99 ff. (Nich.).

<sup>92</sup> When Muslims ritually slaughter an animal, it is customary to say *Bismi’ Llāh* (“in the Name of God”) and *Allāhu Akbar* (“God is the Greatest”).

<sup>93</sup> Qur’ān 36:65.

<sup>94</sup> This passage describes the real essence of the ritual prayer, which shall be made manifest at the Resurrection. Cf. verse 3-2174 (Nich.).

- 3-2162 He has no power to stand on his feet, since the words of awe addressed to him have burdened his soul;
- 3-2163 So he sits down because of that heavy burden. Then the Lord says to him, “Speak plainly!
- 3-2164 I gave you bounty: tell Me, how did you thank Me? I gave you capital: come, show Me the interest.”
- 3-2165 Then the worshipper turns his face to the right hand in the salutation<sup>95</sup> – towards the spirits of the Prophets and those of the noble Saints.
- 3-2166 Meaning to say, “O kings, grant intercession, for this vile one’s feet and mantle are stuck fast in the mud.”
- 3-2167 The Prophets say, “The day for remedy is past; the remedy and the strong tool for tilling the soil of good works were there.
- 3-2169 Then he turns his face to the left hand towards his family and kinsfolk: they say to him, “Be silent!
- 3-2170 Listen, answer for yourself to the Creator. Who are we? Lord, keep you hands off us<sup>96</sup>!”
- 3-2171 No help comes either from this side or from that: the soul of this desperate man is torn into a hundred pieces.
- 3-2172 The wretched person loses all hope; then he lifts up both hands in supplication,
- 3-2173 Crying, “O God, I have lost all hope: You are the First and the Last and the ultimate Destination<sup>97</sup> .
- 3-2174 See these abundant indications in the ritual prayer, in order that you may know these will certainly come to pass.
- 3-2175 From the ritual prayer, which is as the egg, make the chick hatch; do not peck like a bird without reverence or propriety.
- 1-381 Hear one of the sayings related from the Commander of Commanders (the Prophet): “No prayer is complete without ‘presence’ (concentration of the mind on God)<sup>98</sup>.”

<sup>95</sup> The blessing, “Peace be on you, and the mercy of God!”, with which the prayer-service ends. Sunnī Muslims conclude the ritual prayer by turning their face toward the right shoulder and then toward the left shoulder, each time saying a salutation (*taslīm*) to the angels that take note of your good (right shoulder) and evil (left shoulder) deeds.

<sup>96</sup> Qur’an 80:34-37.

<sup>97</sup> Qur’ān 57:3.

<sup>98</sup> Ḥadīth: “There is no (true) prayer without the Presence of Heart”. *Aḥādīth-e Mathnawī* p. 22.



- 4-2023 The five external and the five internal senses are lined up in ten ranks in the standing posture of the angels ranked for worship of God.
- 5-2048 The Prophet has said that acts of bowing down and prostration in ritual prayer are equivalent to knocking the door-ring of mystical attainment on the Divine Portal.
- 5-2049 When anyone continues to knock that door-ring, felicity peeps out for his sake.

### **The Third Rivulet [1.2.3]**

#### **Fasting.**

#### **Avoiding desire through inner strength.**

- 5-189 Fasting says implicitly, “He has abstained from what is lawful: know therefore that he has no connection with what is unlawful”;
- 5-193 He is a cat keeping the fast and feigning to be asleep at the time of fasting in order to seize his ignorant prey.
- 5-194 By this unrighteousness he makes a hundred groups of people suspicious, he causes the generous and abstinent to have a bad reputation
- 5-1730 Close your lips against food and drink: hasten towards the Heavenly table.
- 3-3747 If you have closed this bodily mouth, another mouth is opened, which becomes an eater of the morsels of spiritual mysteries.
- 5-1756 When a magnanimous guest will not eat some inferior food, the host brings better food.
- 5-1754 Practice expectation, o father, expectation, like a true man, for the sake of the dishes from above.

### **The Fourth Rivulet [1.2.4]**

#### **Giving alms.**

#### **Giving one’s heart and soul away to Beloved.**

- 6-3574 In the poor-tax<sup>99</sup> the overflow and increase of one’s gold is involved: in the ritual prayer<sup>100</sup> preservation from lewdness and iniquity is involved.
- 6-3575 The poor-tax is the keeper of your purse, the ritual prayer is the shepherd who saves you from the wolves.
- 4-1758 If riches is spent in charity, a hundred lives come into the heart as a substitute<sup>101</sup>.

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<sup>99</sup> *Zakāh*, the alms-giving to the poor, which is obligatory to Muslims. It is one of the Five Pillars of Islām.

<sup>100</sup> *Ṣalāh* (Arabic) or *namāz* (Persian), ritual prayer, also is one of the Five Pillars of Islām.

<sup>101</sup> Qur’ān 6:160.

- 4-2611 Who, really, can find bazaars like this where with a single rose you buy whole rose gardens;
- 4-2612 Where a hundred orchards are offered to you in exchange for one seed, a hundred mines in exchange for one grain<sup>102</sup>?
- 4-2613 *Kāna Li' Llāh* is the giving of that small grain, in order that *kāna' Llāh lahu*<sup>103</sup> may come into your hand;
- 4-2622 In God's name, in God's name, sell and buy at once! Give a drop, and take in return the Sea which is full of pearls.
- 4-2623 In God's name, in God's name, do not make any postponement, for these words<sup>104</sup> come from the Sea of Grace.
- 6-1972 For devotion consists in giving without cause: gambling one's self clean away (pure self-sacrifice) transcends every religion.
- 1-2236 It is fitting for the generous man to give money in this way, but verily the generosity of the lover is the surrender of his soul (life).
- 1-2237 If the leaves of this plane-tree drop off, the Creator will bestow the provision of leaflessness (spiritual poverty) on it.
- 1-2238 If because of your liberality no wealth remains in your hand, how should the bounty of God leave you destitute?
- 2-1271 Shut the lips and open the palm filled with gold: give up being a miser with the body, be generous.
- 2-1272 Generosity is the abandonment of lusts and pleasures; no one who is sunk in lust rises up again.

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<sup>102</sup> Here "one grain" means "a small thing of little or no value".

<sup>103</sup> The Prophet is reported to have said, *Man kāna li' Llāhi kāna' Llāhu lahu*, "Whoever belongs (devotes himself) to God, God shall belong to him." (Nich.) – meaning that will bestow His mercy upon him.

<sup>104</sup> Even though Mawlānā Rūmī doesn't say so explicitly in the Persian text, "These words" are "the words of Moses".

## **The Fifth Rivulet [1.2.5]**

### **Ḥajj (Pilgrimage)**

**There are two kinds:**

**1. Travelling to the house of God in Mecca.**

**2. Visiting the house of God, which is the heart of the true servant of God.**

### **Poem:**

**“O people who have performed Ḥajj, where are you?**

**The Beloved is near, come here.**

**You have visited that house a hundred times,**

**Come and visit this house, if only once (i.e. the heart).<sup>105</sup>” [1.2.5]**

- 4-15            The formal Pilgrimage consists in visiting the House of God, but only the Pilgrimage to the Lord of the House is worthy of a true man.
- 4-1138        The grandeur which the Ka‘ba gained at every moment – that grandeur came from the acts done in pure devotion by Ibrāhīm (Abraham).
- 4-1139        The excellence of that mosque<sup>106</sup> does not come from earth and stone, but from the absence of greed or hostility in its builder.
- 2-3108        Why then do they behave presumptuously at the door of this house, if they know who is within the house?
- 2-3109        Fools venerate the mosque and attempt to destroy those who have the heart in which God dwells.
- 2-3111        The mosque that is the inner consciousness of the Saints is the place of worship for all: God is there.
- 6-868        How should the form of the Perfect Man, which is splendid and sublime, ever be absent from the House of God?

### **Story:**

**How Ḥaẓrat Bāyazīd-e Bastāmī circumambulated a dervish, because, as the Ṣūfī saying goes: “The heart of the true believer is the House of God”. [1.2.5]**

- 2-2218        Bāyazīd, the Shaykh of the community of believers, was hurrying to Mecca for the greater pilgrimage (*hajj*) and the lesser (‘*umra*)<sup>107</sup>.
- 2-2219        In every city to which he went he would at first search for the venerable Saints.

<sup>105</sup> This is a part of Ghazal 648 of Ḥaẓrat Mawlānā Rūmī’s *Dīwān-e Shams-e Tabrīzī*.

<sup>106</sup> The actual meaning – although not written in so many words in Fārsī – is “the mosque built by the Prophets”.

<sup>107</sup> The Greater Pilgrimage or Ḥajj is the fifth pillar of Islām and an obligation that must be carried out by every able-bodied Muslim who can afford to do so, at least once in their lifetime. The Ḥajj is performed between the 8<sup>th</sup> to the 12<sup>th</sup> day of Dhū’l-Ḥijjah, the 12<sup>th</sup> month of the Islamic calendar. The ‘umra or lesser pilgrimage comprises the same rituals as the hajj, but can be taken at any time throughout the year.

- 2-2231 On his journey to the Ka‘ba Bāyazīd looked hard to find someone who was the Khidr<sup>108</sup> of his time.
- 2-2232 He watched an old man whose stature was bent like the new moon; he saw in him the majesty and lofty speech of holy men;
- 2-2237 Bāyazīd sat down before him and asked about his condition; he found him to be a dervish and also a family man.
- 2-2238 The old man said, “Where are you heading, o Bāyazīd? To what place do you wish to travel in a strange land?”
- 2-2239 Bāyazīd answered, “I depart for the Ka‘ba at daybreak.” “Eh,” cried the other, “what do you have as provisions for the road?”
- 2-2240 “I have two hundred silver dirhams,” he said; “look, they are tied fast in the corner of my cloak.”
- 2-2241 He said, “Walk around me seven times, and consider this to be better than the circumambulation of the Ka‘ba in the pilgrimage;
- 2-2242 And lay those dirhams before me, o generous one. Know that you have made the greater pilgrimage and that your desire has been fulfilled.
- 2-2243 That you have also performed the lesser pilgrimage and gained everlasting life; that you have become pure (*ṣāfī*) and hurried up the Hill of Purity (*Ṣafā*)<sup>109</sup>.
- 2-2244 By the truth of the Truth (God) whom your soul has seen, I swear that He has chosen me above His House.
- 2-2245 Even though the Ka‘ba is the House of His religious service, my form too, in which I was created, is the House of His inmost consciousness.
- 2-2246 God has never gone into the Ka‘ba since He made it, and no one but the Living God has ever gone into this House of mine<sup>110</sup>.

<sup>108</sup> Khidr (alternatively spelled Khaḍir or Khizr): the enigmatic “Green Man”, who acted as a spiritual guide for a number of Prophets and Saints who did not have a guide of flesh and blood, such as the Prophet Moses. Even though he is referred to in the Qur’ān (18:60-62), he is not mentioned by name. Sūfī tradition has it that Khidr also was the spiritual guide of the great Sūfī Master, gnostic and theoretician Ḥaḍrat Muḥyī’ddīn ibn ‘Arabī (1165-1240 CE).

<sup>109</sup> During the *hajj* or ‘*umra* pilgrims perform the *sa‘ī*, which is hurrying seven times between the small hills named Ṣafā and Marwa, re-enacting the Biblical and Quranic story of Hājar’s (the second wife of Ḥaḍrat Ibrāhīm/Abraham) desperate search for life-giving water and food. The Qur’ān says about Ṣafā and Marwa: “Look! Ṣafā and Marwa are among the Symbols of God. So if those who visit the House in the Season or at other times, should circumambulate them, there is no blame on them. And if anyone does good spontaneously, be sure that God is He Who recognizes and knows.” – Qur’ān 2:158.

<sup>110</sup> Ḥadīth qudsī (sacred ḥadīth): “Neither My earth nor My sky contain Me, only the heart of My devoted, truly believing and pure servant contains Me”. A well-known definition of a *ḥadīth qudsī* is this: “A sacred ḥadīth is, as to the meaning, from God the Almighty; as to the wording, it is from the Messenger of God. It is that which God the Almighty has communicated to His Prophet through revelation or in dream, and he has communicated it in his own words”. See *Iḥyā’ ‘Ulūm ad-Dīn*, Vol. 3, p.12; *‘Awārif al-Ma‘ārif*.

- 2-2247 When you have seen me, you have seen God: you have circled around the Ka‘ba of Sincerity<sup>111</sup>.
- 2-2248 To serve me is to obey and glorify God: be careful not to think that God is separate from me.
- 2-2249 Open your eyes well and look at me, that you may see the Light of God in man.”

**Everybody focuses on something<sup>112</sup>, but the true lover focuses on the Beloved, because wherever he looks, he sees the Beloved’s Face<sup>113</sup>. [1.2.5]**

- 6-1896 The Ka‘ba of Gabriel and the celestial spirits is a Lotus-tree<sup>114</sup>; the *qibla*<sup>115</sup> of the glutton<sup>116</sup> is the table-cloth, covered with dishes of food.
- 6-1897 The qibla of the Gnostic is the light of union with God; the qibla of the philosopher’s intellect is fantasy.
- 6-1898 The qibla of the ascetic is the Gracious God; the qibla of the flatterer is a purse of gold.
- 6-1899 The qibla of the spiritual is patience and long-suffering; the qibla of form-worshippers is the image of stone.
- 6-1900 The qibla of those who dwell in the interior is the Bounteous One; the qibla of those who worship the exterior is a woman’s face<sup>117</sup>.

### **The Sixth Rivulet [1.2.6]**

#### **Holy War (Jihād).**

**The lesser jihād = fighting enemies.**

**The greater jihād (i.e. the spiritual jihād) = fighting your *nafs*<sup>118</sup>.**

- 2-2473 O, happy he who wages a holy war of self-mortification, and puts restraint on the body and deals justly with it.
- 2-2474 And, in order that he may be delivered from the pain of the world, lays the pain of serving God on himself.

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<sup>111</sup> Ḥadīth: “He who has seen me, has seen God”. *Bukhārī*, Vol. 4, p. 135.

<sup>112</sup> Qur’ān 2:148.

<sup>113</sup> Qur’ān 2:115.

<sup>114</sup> Qur’ān 53:14.

<sup>115</sup> Qibla: the direction faced by Muslims during ritual prayer (i.e. the Ka‘ba in Mecca).

<sup>116</sup> Literally “slave of the belly”.

<sup>117</sup> When Ḥaẓrat Mawlānā Rūmī speaks about “woman” or “women” in the *Mathnawī*, it is only meant metaphorically, as it refers to the lower self or *nafs*.

<sup>118</sup> Qur’ān 29:69.

- 1-975 O master, work hard as long as you can in following the way of the Prophets and Saints!
- 1-977 I am an infidel if anyone has suffered loss a single moment while walking in the way of faith and obedience.
- 2-3170 Make your soul a shield and drop the sword<sup>119</sup>, o son: whoever is headless (selfless) saves his head from this King.

**Story:**  
**Ayyāzī's<sup>120</sup> return from the lesser jihād to the greater jihād. [1.2.6]**

- 5-3780 Ayyāzī said, “Ninety times I went to battle without armour<sup>121</sup>, hoping that perhaps I might be mortally wounded<sup>122</sup>.”
- 5-3781 Without armour I went to meet the arrows, in order that I might receive a deep-seated deadly arrow wound.
- 5-3783 No place in my body is without wounds: this body of mine is like a sieve from being pierced with arrows;
- 5-3784 But the arrows never once hit a vital spot: this is a matter of luck, not of bravery or cunning.
- 5-3785 When I saw that martyrdom was not the fate of my soul, I immediately went into religious seclusion<sup>123</sup>.
- 5-3786 I threw myself into the greater warfare<sup>124</sup> which consists in practising austerities and becoming thin.
- 5-3787 One day the sound of the drums of the holy warriors reached my ear; for the hard-fighting army was on the march.
- 5-3788 My fleshly soul<sup>125</sup> cried out to me from within: at daybreak I heard its voice with my sensory ear.
- 5-3789 Saying, “Get up! It is time to fight. Go, devote yourself to fighting in the holy war!”

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<sup>119</sup> I.e. “bear what God sends and do not resist” (Nich.).

<sup>120</sup> Ayyāzī: according to certain sources, Ayyāzī was a brave warrior who lived in the era of the Samanids, a Persian dynasty that ruled over Greater Khurāsān between 819 and 999 CE.

<sup>121</sup> Literally “with naked body”.

<sup>122</sup> In the hope of becoming a martyr.

<sup>123</sup> Again, it isn’t explicitly mentioned in Ḥaẓrat Mawlānā Rūmī’s Persian text, but nonetheless it is implied: “...and started a forty days’ fast”.

<sup>124</sup> Greater warfare: there are two forms of holy warfare or jihād: the lesser warfare or *al-jihādu ’l-aṣghar*, which means warfare against an enemy. *Al-jihādu ’l-akbar* on the other hand is the struggle against the *nafs* or lower self.

<sup>125</sup> I.e. the *nafs*.

- 5-3790 I answered, “O wicked deceitful soul, where does your desire to fight come from?”
- 5-3791 Tell the truth, o my soul! This is trickery. Why else would you fight? – the lustful soul is free from obedience to the Divine command.
- 5-3792 Unless you tell the truth, I will attack you, I will squeeze and torment you more painfully than before in starvation.”
- 5-3793 Immediately my soul, mutely eloquent, cunningly cried out from within me,
- 5-3794 ‘Here you are killing me daily, you are putting my vital spirit on the rack, like the spirits of infidels.
- 5-3795 No one is aware of my plight – how you are killing me by keeping me without sleep and food.
- 5-3796 In war I should escape from the body with one slash, and the people would see my manly bravery and self-sacrifice.’
- 5-3797 I replied, ‘O wretched soul, as a hypocrite you have lived and as a hypocrite you shall die: what a pitiful thing you are!
- 5-3798 In both worlds you have been a hypocrite, in both worlds you are such a worthless creature.’
- 5-3799 I vowed that I would never come out of seclusion, seeing that this body is alive,
- 5-3800 Because everything that this body does in seclusion it does with no regard to man or woman.
- 5-3802 This is the greater warfare, and that other is the lesser warfare: both are suitable work for men like Rustam<sup>126</sup> and Ḥaydar<sup>127</sup> (‘Alī).
- 5-3803 They are not suitable work for one whose reason and wits fly out of his body when a mouse’s tail moves

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<sup>126</sup> Rustam: a brave and strong hero in the *Shāhnāmah* (“The Book of Kings”), the Persian national epic, written by Abū’l-Qāsim Firdawsī of Ṭūs (ca. 935/940-1020/1026 CE).

<sup>127</sup> Ḥaydar: a name of Ḥaẓrat ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, nephew and foremost mystical successor to the Prophet. “Ḥaydar” means “Lion of God”, or “invincible warrior”, suggesting Ḥaẓrat Mawlā ‘Alī’s perfect and exceptional courage and strength. Often the word “Karrār” is added to Ḥaydar: *Ḥaydar-e Karrār*. “Karrār” literally means “repeater”. The implication is that when Ḥaẓrat Mawlā ‘Alī was pushed back in battle, he never stopped returning to it until it was won. In a spiritual sense this serves as an example for all Ṣūfī wayfarers or *sāliks*, whose battle is fought against their untrue ego or *nafs*. Certain Persian mystics have given an additional explanation for “Ḥaydar”: they say that *Hay* means “dragon”, and that *dar* is derived from the Persian verb *darīdan*, meaning “to tear up”, “to rip into pieces”. According to a traditional story, as a baby Ḥaẓrat ‘Alī tore a dragon to pieces from his cradle (the dragon being a symbol for the lower self – the *nafs*; the baby symbolizes purity and innocence). Therefore *Ḥaydar* might be translated as “Dragon Slayer”. According to another version of this Persian traditional story, Ḥaẓrat Mawlā ‘Alī gripped the dragon’s mouth and held it tightly shut, to prevent later mystical seekers from walking into it.

**The difficulty of fighting the greater jihād<sup>128</sup>, as  
compared to the lesser jihād, which is easier. [1.2.6]**

- 1-1373 O kings, we have killed the outer enemy, but within us there remains a worse enemy than he.
- 1-1374 To slay this enemy is not the work of reason and intelligence: the inner lion is not subdued by the hare.
- 1-1375 This carnal self (*nafs*) is Hell, and Hell is a dragon, the fire of which is not diminished by oceans of water.
- 1-1376 It would drink up the Seven Seas, and still the blazing of that consumer of all creatures would not become less.
- 1-1377 Stones and stony-hearted infidels enter it, miserable and shamefaced,
- 1-1378 But still it is not appeased by all this food, until from God this call comes to it –
- 1-1379 “Are you filled, are you filled?” It says, “Not yet; look: here is the fire, here is the glow, here is the burning!”
- 1-1380 It made a mouthful and swallowed a whole world, its belly crying aloud, “Is there any more<sup>129</sup>?”
- 1-1381 From the Placeless Realm<sup>130</sup> God sets His foot on it: then it subsides at the command “*Be, and it was*”<sup>131</sup>.
- 1-1382 Considering that this self of ours is a part of Hell, and all parts have the nature of the whole,
- 1-1383 To God alone belongs this foot (power) to kill it: who, indeed, but God should draw its bow (vanquish it)?
- 1-1387 We have returned from the lesser jihād, we are engaged along with the Prophet in the greater jihād<sup>132</sup>.
- 1-1388 I pray God to grant me strength, help and the right of boasting<sup>133</sup>, that I may uproot this mountain of *Qāf*<sup>134</sup> with a needle<sup>135</sup>.

<sup>128</sup> Ḥadīth: “Your greatest enemy is your *nafs*, enclosed between your two sides.” *Aḥādīth-e Mathnawī* p. 41. The meaning of “between your two sides” is between man’s two different aspects: his material or earthly aspect and his spiritual or heavenly aspect.

<sup>129</sup> Qur’ān 50:30.

<sup>130</sup> *Lā Makān*, literally meaning “no place”, or “spaceless space”, i.e. “the Placeless Realm”, the place of the deity, where there is no space and time, a state beyond our conception.

<sup>131</sup> Qur’ān 2:117, 16:40 and 36:82.

<sup>132</sup> After returning from a war, the Prophet once said: “We now return from the lesser warfare (*al-jihādu ’l-aṣghar*) to the greater warfare (*al-jihādu ’l-akbar*)”. His Companions asked, “O Prophet of God, what is the greater warfare?”. He replied: “The struggle against the *nafs*”. *Aḥādīth-e Mathnawī* p. 63; *Al-Jāmi‘ aṣ-Ṣaghīr*, Vol. 2, p. 85.

<sup>133</sup> I.e. the success which would entitle me to boast of having conquered my “self” (Nich.).



- 1-1389 Consider the lion who breaks the ranks of the enemy of little value: the true lion is he who breaks and conquers himself<sup>136</sup>.

## **The Third River [1.3]**

### **Qaḍā and Qadar, Jabr and Ikhtiyār. Divine Destiny and Divine Decree. Compulsion (fatalism) and Free Will.**

### **The First Rivulet [1.3.1]**

#### **Qaḍā<sup>137</sup> and Qadar.**

- 3-4177 Yet giving yourself up is the object of God's eternal purpose: o Muslim, you must seek to give yourself up.
- 1-910 Do not wrestle with Destiny, o fierce and furious one, if you do not wish Destiny to pick a quarrel with you also.
- 1-911 One must be dead in presence of the decree of God, so that no blow may come from *the Lord of the Daybreak*<sup>138</sup>."
- 1-953 Apart from the fate which was predestined in eternity and which came to pass, nothing from their scheming and doing happened to them<sup>139</sup>.
- 3-469 When the Decree shows its head from Heaven, all the intelligent become blind and deaf;
- 3-470 Fishes are cast out of the sea; the snare miserably catches the flying bird.
- 1-1232 When the Divine destiny comes, wisdom goes to sleep, the moon becomes black, the sun is stopped from shining.
- 5-2897 The Divine Destiny makes the rolling sphere of heaven lose its way; the Divine Destiny makes a hundred Mercuries<sup>140</sup> ignorant;
- 1-1194 When the Divine Destiny comes to pass, you see nothing but the outer appearance: you do not distinguish enemies from friends.

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<sup>134</sup> Qāf: mythical mountain or chain of mountains surrounding the earth, created from a single emerald. Mount Qāf is the abode of the 'Anqā, a mythical phoenix bird from Arabic story tradition, the *Sīmurgh* being its Persian equivalent. This mythical bird represents the Perfect Man, whose spirit dwells with God, even though his body is in the world.

<sup>135</sup> I.e. slowly and painfully (Nich.).

<sup>136</sup> Ḥadīth: "The true hero is he who can master his nafs when he is angry". *Aḥādīth-e Mathnawī* p. 66; *Bukhārī*, Vol. 4, p. 51.

<sup>137</sup> The Persian form of the Arabic word *qaḍā* is *qazā*.

<sup>138</sup> Qur'ān 113:1.

<sup>139</sup> Literally "showed its face to them."

<sup>140</sup> Those born under the planet Mercury are supposed to be clever and talented (Nich.).

- 1-1283 This air is mixed with the spirit of life, but when the Divine Destiny comes, it turns foul and stinking.
- 1-1255 This Divine Destiny is a cloud that covers the sun: in this way lions and dragons become as mice.
- 3-473 Unless you take refuge with the Decree, no clever trickery will let you escape from it.

### **Story:**

#### **The fool who wanted to change God's Qaḍā to escape death. [1.3.1]**

- 1-956 One morning a freeborn nobleman arrived and ran into Solomon's hall of justice.
- 1-957 His face pale with anguish and both lips blue. Then Solomon said, "Good sir, what is the matter?"
- 1-958 He replied, "Azrael<sup>141</sup> looked at me in such a way, so full of anger and hate."
- 1-959 "Come," the king said, "what favour do you desire now? Ask it!" "O protector of my life," he said, "command the wind
- 1-960 To take me from here to India. Maybe, when your slave has arrived there he will save his life."
- 1-961 Look! The people are fleeing from poverty: that's why they are a prey to covetousness and expectation.
- 1-962 The fear of poverty is like that man's terror: realize that covetousness and striving are like India in this tale.
- 1-963 Solomon commanded the wind to carry him quickly over the water to the furthest part of India.
- 1-964 The next day, at the time of audience and meeting, Solomon said to Azrael:
- 1-965 "Did you look with anger on that Muslim in order that he might wander in exile far from his home?"
- 1-966 Azrael said, "When did I look at him in anger? I saw him as I passed by, and looked at him in astonishment,
- 1-967 For God had commanded me, saying, 'Take his spirit to India today.'
- 1-968 In amazement I said to myself, 'Even if he had a hundred wings, it would be difficult for him to cover as far a distance as to India today.'"

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<sup>141</sup> Azrael or 'Azrā'il : the angel of death.

- 1-969 Judge all the affairs of this world in the same way and open your eye and see!
- 1-970 From whom shall we flee? From ourselves? O absurdity! From whom shall we take ourselves away? From God? O crime!
- 3-447 If all the atoms of the world devised tricks, they are nothing, nothing, against the Decree of Heaven.
- 3-448 How shall this earth flee from Heaven, how shall it conceal itself from it?

### **Conclusion. [1.3.1]**

- 3-449 Whatever may come from Heaven to the earth, the earth has no refuge nor remedy or hiding-place.
- 3-453 O you who are a part of this earth, do not raise your head in rebellion; when you see the Decree of God, do not withdraw from it disobediently.
- 2-1060 Rid yourself of this scheming of yours before the Beloved – even though your scheming is in fact devised by Him.
- 3-3075 When you forget your own devising, you will gain that happy fortune from your spiritual Guide.
- 3-3076 When you are forgetful of your self, you are remembered by God: when you have become a slave to Him, then you are set free.

### **Qadar. [1.3.1]**

- 2-1051 Only that matters which has existed before the body; leave behind you the things which have only recently come into being.
- 2-1052 That which matters belongs to the knower of God, for he is not squint-eyed: his eye is fixed upon the things that were sown first.
- 2-1053 That which was sown as wheat (good) or as barley (relatively evil) – day and night his eye is fastened on the place where it was sown.
- 2-1054 Night gave birth to nothing except that she was pregnant with: designs and plots are wind, empty wind.
- 2-1057 Even though in the meanwhile a hundred herbs grow and fade, finally that which God has sown will grow up.
- 2-1058 The cunning man sowed new seed over the first seed; but the second seed is passing away, and only the first is sound and enduring.
- 2-1059 The first seed is perfect and superior; the second seed is corrupt and rotten.

- 2-1061 That which God has raised and that alone is useful: what He has sown initially will finally grow.
- 2-1066 Hundreds of thousands of minds may conspire to lay a snare other than His snare;
- 2-1067 But they only find their snare more grievous to themselves, for how can straws show any power of resistance against the wind?
- 1-3160 The lion is not disgraced by the chain: we do not complain of God's destiny.
- 1-1259 If the Divine destiny assaults your life a hundred times, yet the Divine destiny gives you life and heals you.
- 1-2258 Relatives and strangers have come to flee from us in the same way as *Sāmīrī*<sup>142</sup> fled from men.
- 1-2260 The Arabs take pride in fighting and giving: amongst the Arabs you are like a fault in writing.

**The differences of opinion between groups  
are linked to their Qaḍā<sup>143</sup>. [1.3.1]**

- 3-2776 The good and evil qualities are in agreement with the good and evil souls: the letters that God has written are in agreement.
- 3-3051 The blessed one is surrounded by meadows and water brooks, while the unblessed one beside him is in torment.
- 3-3052 The latter remains in astonishment, saying, "Where does this man's delight come from?" and the other remains in astonishment, saying, "In whose prison is this man?"
- 3-3053 Listen, why are you parched? – for here are fountains. Listen, why are you pale? – for here are a hundred remedies.
- 3-3054 Listen, neighbour, come into the garden!" The unblessed man says, "O dear soul, I cannot come."

**The secret of qadar. [1.3.1]**

**Story. [1.3.1]**

- 3-3055 At dawn the Amīr<sup>144</sup> wanted to go to the hot bath: he shouted, "Ho, Sunqur, wake up!"

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<sup>142</sup> The golden calf was an idol made for the Israelites during Moses' absence as he went up Mount Sinai. The Qur'ān names the man who tempted the Israelites into worshiping the golden calf *as-Sāmīrī* which, according to Muslim scholars, means "the Samaritan" – Qur'ān 20:85.

<sup>143</sup> Qur'ān 32:30.

- 3-3056 Get from Altūn the basin, the napkin and the clay, that we may go to the hot bath, o you who are indispensable to me.”
- 3-3057 At that very moment Sunqur took up the basin and a fine napkin and set out with him – the two together.
- 3-3058 There was a mosque on the road, and the call to prayer came into Sunqur’s ear in public.
- 3-3059 Sunqur was very fond of the ritual prayer: he said, “O my Amīr, o kind master,
- 3-3060 Wait patiently for a while in at this shop, that I may perform the obligatory prayers and may recite the Sūra beginning with the words *lam yakun*<sup>145</sup>.
- 3-3061 When the Imām and the people had come out and finished the prayers and invocations,
- 3-3062 Sunqur remained there until the early morning: the Amīr waited for him for some time;
- 3-3063 Then he said, “O Sunqur, why don’t you come out?” He replied, “This artful One will not let me out.”
- 3-3067 The master said, “Why, there is no one left in the mosque. Who is keeping you there? Who has made you sit constrained?”
- 3-3068 Sunqur said, “He who has chained you outside of the mosque has chained me too inside.
- 3-3069 He who will not let you come in will not let me come out.
- 3-3070 He who will not let you set foot in this direction has chained the foot of his servant so that it cannot move in the opposite direction.”
- 3-3071 The sea does not let the fish out; the sea does not let the creatures of earth in.
- 3-3072 Water is the original home of the fish, and the coarse animal is of the earth: here cunning and scheming are of no avail.

### **The Second Rivulet [1.3.2]** **Jabr wa Ikhtiyār (determinism and free will).**

- 5-3018 The whole world acknowledges the reality of the power of choice: the proof is their commanding and forbidding each other – ‘Bring this and do not bring that!’

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<sup>144</sup> Amīr: “commander”, “lord”, “master”, “nobleman”, “prince”.

<sup>145</sup> Qur’ān 98.

- 5-3019 The determinist says that commanding and forbidding are meaningless and that there is no power of choice. This entire doctrine is untrue.
- 5-3009 In the eyes of reason, determinism (*jabr*) is more shameful than the doctrine of absolute free will (*qadar*), because the determinist denies his own inner sense<sup>146</sup>.
- 5-2967 We doubtlessly possess a certain power of choice: you cannot deny the unmistakable evidence of the inner sense.
- 5-2968 One never says ‘Come’ to a stone: how should anyone expect a piece of brick to possess any faithfulness?
- 5-2969 One never says to a human being, “Hey, fly!” or “Come, o blind man, and look at me!”
- 5-2973 Command and prohibition, anger, conferring honour and administering rebuke concern only him who possesses the power of choice, o pure-hearted one.
- 5-3024 The thought, “Tomorrow I will do this or I will do that,” is a proof of the power to choose, o worshipful one;
- 5-3026 The entire Qur’ān consists of commands, prohibitions and threats of punishment: whoever saw commands given to a marble rock?
- 5-3027 Does any wise or reasonable man do this? Does he show anger and hostility to bricks and stones? –
- 5-3004 The end result is this, that both the Devil and the angelic Spirit who present objects of desire to us exist in order that the power of choice might be realized.
- 5-3006 Teachers chastise schoolchildren: how should they administer that punishment to a black stone?
- 5-3031 How then should the Creator who is the Maker of stars and sky make commands and prohibitions like those of an ignorant person?

**Story:**  
**The gardener and free will. [1.3.2]**

- 5-3077 A certain man was climbing up a tree and was vigorously scattering the fruit, in the way thieves do.
- 5-3078 The owner of the orchard came along and said to him, ‘O rascal, where is your reverence for God? What are you doing?’

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<sup>146</sup> Ḥaẓrat Mawlānā Rūmī means that the concept of *jabr* (“fatalism” or “determinism”; literally *jabr* means “compulsion”) and acting according to this doctrine is no better than believing in *qadar* (“acting according to one’s free will”), as this would imply the denial of the power of one’s own senses, which work according to one’s own free will.

- 5-3079 He replied, ‘If a servant of God eats from God’s orchard the dates which God has bestowed upon him as a gift,
- 5-3080 Why do you vulgarly blame him? Stinginess at the table of the all-Rich Lord!’
- 5-3081 ‘O Aybak’, he said, ‘fetch that rope, that I may give my answer to *Bū’l-Hasan* (to this fine fellow),<sup>147</sup>
- 5-3082 Then at once he bound him tightly to the tree and thrashed him hard on the back and legs with a bludgeon.
- 5-3083 The thief cried, ‘Please, have more reverence for God! You are killing me miserably, while I am innocent.’
- 5-3084 He answered, “With God’s bludgeon this servant of His is firmly beating the back of another servant.
- 5-3085 It is God’s bludgeon, and the back and sides belong to Him: I am only the slave and instrument of His command.”
- 5-3086 The thief said, “O cunning villain, I renounce determinism: there is free will, there is free will, there is free will!”
- 5-3104 Since you are not ill, don’t bandage your head: you have free will, don’t laugh at your moustache<sup>148</sup>.
- 1-635 No matter what kind of act you are inclined to, you are clearly conscious of your power to perform it.
- 1-636 But in regard of every act for which you have no inclination and desire, you have become a determinist, saying, “This comes from God.”
- 5-3187 Abandon this determinism, which is very empty of good, in order that you may know what is the inmost secret of predestination.

**God is the Creator of all acts and man  
but performs those acts. [1.3.2]**

- 1-1496 O heart, give a parable for the sake of illustrating a difference, that you may know what distinguishes compulsion from free will.
- 1-1497 Take the case of a hand that is shaking from morbid or involuntary tremor and the case of a person whose hand you cause to shake by knocking it away from its place.

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<sup>147</sup> Ḥaẓrat Mawlānā Rūmī only uses the name *Bū’l-Hasan* (“a fine fellow”) because it rhymes with the last word of the first part of the verse, *rasan* (“rope”). No deeper meaning is implied.

<sup>148</sup> I.e. don’t make a fool of yourself (Nich.).

- 1-1498 Know that both these movements are created by God, but it is impossible to compare the latter with the former.
- 1-1499 You are sorry for having caused his hand to shake: why is the man afflicted with a morbid tremor not sorry?
- 1-1500 This is the intellectual quest. What is the use of such a quest, o ingenious one? That perhaps a man of weak understanding may find his way to that place and gain some idea of the truth.
- 1-1480 Consider both our action and the action of God. Regard our action as existent. This is manifest.
- 1-1481 If the actions of created beings are not obviously existent<sup>149</sup>, then do not say to anyone, “Why did you act like that?”
- 1-1482 The creative act of God brings our actions into existence: our actions are the effects of the creative act of God.
- 1-1483 A rational being perceives either the letter (the outer sign) or the inner purpose (the spirit): how should he comprehend two accidents<sup>150</sup> at once?
- 5-3087 God’s universal power of choice brought our individual powers of choice into existence: His power of choice is like a rider hidden beneath the dust which he raises.
- 5-3097 Similarly, God’s power over our acts of free will does not deprive any act of free will of that quality.
- 5-3098 Declare that God’s will is carried out completely, but without attributing compulsion (*jabr*) and responsibility for disobedience to His commands.
- 5-3099 Since you have said, ‘My unbelief stems from His will,’ know that it also stems from your own will;
- 5-3100 For without your will your unbelief does not exist at all: involuntary unbelief is a self-contradiction.
- 1-931 You have feet: why do you act as though you were lame? You have hands: why do you hide the fingers which you use to grasp?
- 1-932 When the master put a spade in the slave’s hand, his intention was made known to him without uttering a single word.
- 1-933 Hand and spade alike are God’s implicit signs; our ability to consider the purpose is His explicit declaration.

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<sup>149</sup> Literally “does not remain in the middle”.

<sup>150</sup> Here, “accident” is used as a philosophical term, meaning “a nonessential attribute or characteristic of something”.



- 1-934 When you take His signs to heart, you will devote your life to fulfilling that indication of His will.
- 1-935 He will give you many hints for the understanding of mysteries, He will remove the burden from you and give you spiritual authority.
- 1-936 Do you bear His burden? He will cause you to be carried on high. Do you receive His commands? He will make you receive His favour.
- 1-937 If you accept His command, you will become its spokesman; if you seek union with Him, you will become united.
- 1-938 Free will is the endeavour to thank God for His beneficence: your determinism is the denial of that beneficence.
- 1-939 Giving thanks for the power of acting freely increases your power; determinism takes the Divine gift of free will out of your hand.
- 1-940 Your determinism is like sleeping on the road: do not sleep! Do not sleep, until you see the gate and the threshold!
- 1-941 Beware! Do not sleep, o inconsiderate determinist, except underneath the fruit-laden tree,
- 1-942 So that at every moment the wind may shake the branches and shower spiritual delicacies and provision for the journey on the sleeper.
- 1-1068 Whoever, through heedlessness, remains without thanksgiving and patience (self-control), has no alternative but to follow in the heels of predestination (*jabr*).
- 1-1069 Anyone who pleads predestination as an excuse feigns illness, with the result that the feigned illness brings him to the grave.
- 1-1071 What is the meaning of *jabr*? To bind up a broken limb or tie off a severed vein.
- 1-1072 Since you have not broken your foot in this path, whom are you mocking? Why have you bandaged your foot?

### **Conclusion. [1.3.2]**

- 1-1463 The word “compulsion” (*jabr*) made me uncontrollably impatient for love’s sake, while it jails him who is not a lover in the prison of compulsion.
- 1-1464 This is union with God, and it is not compulsion: this is the shining splendour of the moon, this is not a cloud.
- 1-1465 And if this is compulsion, it is not the compulsion of the common folk: it is not the compulsion of the evil-commanding self-willed soul.

- 1-1466 O son, only they in whose hearts God has opened the sight of the spiritual eye, know the real meaning of compulsion.
- 1-1468 Their free will and compulsion are different from that of ordinary men: in oyster shells drops of rain are pearls.
- 1-1469 Outside of the shell it is a drop of water, small or great, but within the shell it is a small or big pearl.
- 1-1470 Those persons have the nature of the musk deer's gland: externally they are as blood, while within them is the fragrance of musk.
- 1-1471 Do not say, "This substance is blood on the outside: how could it become a musky perfume when it goes into the gland?"
- 1-1472 Do not say, "This copper was despicable on the outside: how could it assume nobility in the heart of the elixir?"
- 1-1473 While within you the matter of free will and compulsion was a mere fantasy, it became the light of Divine Majesty when it went into them.
- 1-1474 When bread is wrapped in the tablecloth it is a lifeless thing, but in the human body it becomes happiness of spirit.
- 1-1476 O you who read correctly, such is the power of the soul: what, then, must be the power of the Soul of the soul?
- 5-3105 Strive to gain freshness and spiritual grace from God's cup of love: then you will become without self and without free will.
- 1-1475 It does become transformed in the heart of the tablecloth: the animal soul transforms it with the water of *Salsabīl*<sup>151</sup>.
- 5-3106 Then all free choice will belong to that Wine; and your behaviour will be absolutely excusable, like that of a drunken man.
- 5-3107 Whatever you overcome will then be overcome by the Wine; whatever you sweep away will then be swept away by the Wine.
- 5-3108 The drunken man who has gulped wine from God's cup – how could his behaviour be anything but just and right?

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<sup>151</sup> A fountain in paradise; see Qur'ān 76:18.

## **The Fourth River [1.4]**

### **The Stages of Knowledge and Intellect**

#### **The First Rivulet [1.4.1]**

**The knowledge of Sharī‘a.**

**The knowledge of Ṭarīqa.**

**The knowledge of Ḥaqīqa.**

**i.e.**

**Formal knowledge: by learning at school  
and similar institutions.**

**Gnosis: by spiritual exercises.**

**‘Ilm-e Ladunnī: knowledge passed on directly  
by God to whomever He chooses<sup>152</sup>.**

**Poem by Ḥazrat Mawlā<sup>153</sup> ‘Alī:**

**“We are contented with the destiny that we have received from God  
We possess the gnosis, whereas the oblivious only have worldly  
possessions; matter is transitory, knowledge is immortal.” [1.4.1]**

- 1-1030 Knowledge is the seal of the kingdom of Solomon: the whole world is form,  
and knowledge is the spirit.
- 6-3881 Knowledge (‘ilm) is an ocean without bound or shore: the seeker of knowledge  
is like the diver in those seas.
- 6-3882 Even if he lives a thousand years, he will never become weary of seeking.
- 6-3883 For the Messenger of God has explained this by saying: “There are two greedy  
ones who are never satisfied<sup>154</sup>.”
- 6-3884 The two kinds of seekers mentioned here are the seeker of the present world,  
and the seeker of knowledge and its rewards.

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<sup>152</sup> Qur’ān 18:65.

<sup>153</sup> *Mawlā* means “Master”, “Lord”, or “Caring, Supporting and Protecting Friend”. It is a name of God, and is mentioned as such in the Qur’ān (see Qur’ān 2:286 and 47:11), but it is also an honorific title of the Prophet Muḥammad and of ‘Alī, the Prophet’s nephew, son-in-law and foremost mystical successor. *Mawlā* is also often found with the possessive suffix *-nā* as an honorific title for Sūfī Saints and Masters: *Mawlānā* (e.g. Mawlānā Jalālu’d-dīn Rūmī). *Mawlānā* means “Our Master, Lord and Caring, Supporting and Protecting Friend”. The word *Mawlā* is derived from the same Arabic verbal root as the word *walī* (plural *awliyā*). *Walī* is a name of God (*al-Walī*, “the Protecting Friend”), as well as the common Sūfī term to designate a Saint. *Walī* means “one who is close to God”, “a close Friend of God”, hence a Saint.

<sup>154</sup> Muṣṭafā (Muḥammad) said: “There are two greedy ones who will never be satisfied: the seeker of the present world and the seeker of knowledge.” (Nich.).

### Ḥadīth:

**“There are two greedy ones who will never be satisfied: the seeker of the present world and the seeker of knowledge”<sup>155</sup>. [1.4.1]**

- 6-3885 Now, when you fix your attention on this division, you will see that this knowledge must be different from the present world, o father.
- 6-3886 What, then, is different from the present world? The next world, the knowledge of which will take you away from here and be your guide to God.

### Story:

**The man in search of the Tree of Life did not know that it was the Tree of Knowledge. [1.4.1]**

### Ḥadīth:

**“The seeker of knowledge lives forever.” [1.4.1]**

- 2-3641 A learned man once told a story, saying: “In India there is a certain tree:
- 2-3642 whoever takes and eats of its fruit, will never grow old or die.”
- 2-3643 A king heard this tale from a truthful person: he became a lover of the tree and its fruit.
- 2-3644 He sent an expert envoy from the *Dīwān* (council) of culture to India in search of it.
- 2-3645 For many years his envoy wandered about India in search of the tree.
- 2-3646 He roamed from town to town for this purpose: no island, mountain or plain was left unvisited.
- 2-3647 Everyone whom he asked mocked him, saying, “Who would search after this, unless perhaps a madman under lock and key?”
- 2-3655 After he had suffered much fatigue in that foreign land, he finally became too exhausted to seek any longer.
- 2-3658 He decided to return to the king, shedding tears as he travelled the way back.
- 2-3659 There was a wise Shaykh, a noble *Quṭb*<sup>156</sup>, at the halting-place where the king’s confidant fell into despair.

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<sup>155</sup> Sources for this ḥadīth: *Aḥādīth-e Mathnawī* .p. 589, *Al-Jāmi‘ aṣ-Ṣaghīr*, Vol. 2, p.183 and *Al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya*, Vol. 2, p. 259.

<sup>156</sup> *Quṭb*: according to Ṣūfī thought, there is an invisible hierarchy of Saints. The highest spiritual authority is the *Quṭb* (“Axis”, “Pole”, “Pivot”) or *Ghawth*, (“Help”, “Succour” or “Refuge”). He is surrounded by three *Nuqabā’* (“Substitutes”), four *Awṭād* (“Pillars”), seven *Abrār* (“Pious Ones”), forty *Abdāl*, (“Substitutes”), three hundred *Akhyār* (“Good Ones”), and four thousand other hidden Saints. However, here *Quṭb* simply means “a great Saint”.

- 2-3660 The envoy said, “As I have no hope, I will go to him,” and set out on the road again from his threshold
- 2-3661 In order that his prayer and blessing may accompany me, since I have no hope of fulfilling my heart’s desire.”
- 2-3662 With tearful eyes he went to the Shaykh: he was raining tears, like a cloud.
- 2-3663 “O Shaykh”, he cried, “it is the time for mercy and pity; I am in despair: now is the time for kindness.”
- 2-3664 The Shaykh said, “Say plainly what is the cause of your despair: what is your goal? What do you have in mind?”
- 2-3665 He answered, “The emperor chose me out to seek a certain tree,
- 2-3666 For there is a tree, unique in all the quarters of the world: its fruit contains the substance of the Water of Life.
- 2-3667 I have sought it for years and seen no sign of it except the mockery and ridicule of these light-hearted men.”
- 2-3668 The Shaykh laughed and said to him, “O simpleton, this is the Tree of Knowledge in the wise –
- 2-3669 Very high, very great and very far-spreading: it is a Water of Life from the all-compassing Sea of God.
- 2-3670 You have sought for the form, you have gone astray: you cannot find it because you have abandoned reality.
- 2-3671 Sometimes it is named ‘tree’, sometimes ‘sun’; sometimes it is named ‘sea’, sometimes ‘cloud’

### **Acquiring knowledge for status and rank, and its adverse repercussions. [1.4.1]**

- 4-1436 The knowledge and skill required to reach the evil-natured man is to put a sword in the hand of a highwayman.
- 4-1437 It is better to put a sword in the hand of an intoxicated black man<sup>157</sup>, than that a worthless person should acquire knowledge.
- 4-1448 He does not know the way, yet he acts as a guide: his wicked spirit sets the world on fire.

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<sup>157</sup> This may sound offensive to our modern ears; however, one should bear in mind that in the cultural context in which Ḥaẓrat Mawlānā Rūmī lived and worked such expressions were common. What he actually means by “black man” – merely as a figure of speech – is “a dark and frightful thing”.

- 4-1434 Take the weapons out of the madman's hand, that Justness and Goodness may be satisfied with you.
- 4-1435 Since he has weapons and no understanding, shackle his hand; otherwise he will inflict a hundred injuries.
- 4-1441 How should a hundred lions inflict the same as high office inflicts upon the ignorant?
- 4-1442 His vice is hidden, but when he gained power, his snake, coming out from its hole, rushed swiftly along the plain.
- 4-1443 The entire plain is filled with snakes and scorpions when the ignorant man becomes a harshly ruling master.
- 4-1444 The worthless person who acquires wealth and office has become the seeker of his own disgrace.
- 4-1447 When authority falls into the hands of one who has lost the right way, he deems it to be a high position (*jāh*), but in reality he has fallen into a pit (*chāh*).
- 2-1398 When the pen of authority is in the hand of a traitor, unquestionably Manṣūr<sup>158</sup> is on a gibbet.
- 2-3204 The ingenious rascals of this time have put themselves above the ancients;
- 2-3205 The apt learners of cunning have burnt their hearts in study and have learned feints and tricks;
- 6-2369 Oh, how often have knowledge, keen wits and understandings become as deadly as the ghoul<sup>159</sup> or highwayman to the wayfarer!
- 6-4010 The common folk have learned this bird's language and have acquired prestige and authority by doing so.
- 6-4011 That speech is only the imitation of the bird's voice: the uninitiated man is ignorant of the inner state of the birds.
- 6-4012 Where is the Solomon who knows the birds' song? Even if he seizes the kingdom of Solomon, the demon is a stranger.

### **Conventional knowledge is only for this world. [1.4.1]**

- 2-2429 Knowledge is conventional and acquired (not real), when its owner complains because the listener is unwilling to listen to it

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<sup>158</sup> Ḥaṣrat Ḥusayn ibn Manṣūr al-Ḥallāj (ca. 858-922 CE): a Persian mystic, who was condemned for heresy and blasphemy, and who was put to death in Bagdad. He is best known for having exclaimed in ecstasy "Anā'l-Haqq!" – "I am the Truth!", i.e. God.

<sup>159</sup> Corpse-eating ghost in Islamic legends (Nich.).

- 2-2431 Since he seeks knowledge for the sake of the common and the noble, not in order to gain release from this world.
- 2-2436 Knowledge obtained by reasoning, which is soulless, is in love with (eager for) the outer appearance of buyers;
- 2-2437 But even though it is robust at the time of debate, it is dead and gone when it has no buyer.
- 2-2438 My buyer is God: He raises me up high, for God *has bought*<sup>160</sup>.
- 2-2440 Abandon these destitute customers: what can be bought with a handful of worthless clay?
- 2-2441 Do not eat clay, do not buy clay, do not seek clay, because the eater of clay is always pale-faced.
- 2-2442 Eat your heart in love of God<sup>161</sup>, that you may be young always, and that your face may be rosy with Divine illumination, like the *arghawān*<sup>162</sup>.
- 2-3265 Conventional knowledge is only for sale: when it finds a buyer, it glows with delight.
- 2-3266 The buyer of real knowledge<sup>163</sup> is God: its market is always full of splendour.

### **About people who do not put their knowledge to use<sup>164</sup>. [1.4.1]**

- 6-3902 O heart that inspired all others with ardour, inspire yourself with ardour and be ashamed of yourself!
- 6-3903 O tongue that was a mentor to all others, now it is your turn: why are you silent?
- 6-3907 When do you urge others, crying “Come on! Come on!”? In your own anguish you cry, “Alas, alas!” like women.
- 6-3910 For fifty years you have woven on the loom of your intelligence: now put on an undershirt of the fabric which you yourself have woven.
- 6-3911 The ears of your friends were delighted by your song: now hold out your hand and pull your own ear<sup>165</sup>.

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<sup>160</sup> Qur’ān 9:111.

<sup>161</sup> This expression means “attaining to Inner Light, Love and Wisdom”.

<sup>162</sup> Arghawān: the Judas tree, which has rosy-pink to purplish flowers. It is also known as the Love tree, because of the heart-like shape of its flowers.

<sup>163</sup> Literally “the knowledge that is verified (by mystical experience)” (Nich.).

<sup>164</sup> Qur’ān 2:44.

<sup>165</sup> Make yourself listen attentively (Nich.).

- 5-2485 Strive to become intoxicated and shining with light, in order that his light may be like the rhyme-letter to your discourse.
- 5-2488 When your knowledge is steeped in the light of faith, then the obstinate people<sup>166</sup> derive light from your knowledge.
- 5-2489 Whatever you say, too, will be luminous, for the sky never rains anything but pure water.
- 6-4664 How long will you follow the glittering phantom reflected by another? Strive to make this experience real for yourself,
- 6-4665 So that your words be caused by your own feelings, and your flight will be made with your own wings and feathers.
- 6-4666 The arrow captures its prey with alien feathers; consequently it gets no share of the bird's flesh;
- 6-4667 But the falcon brings its prey from the mountains themselves; consequently the king lets it eat partridge and starling.
- 6-4668 The speech that is not derived from Divine inspiration springs from self-will: it is like dust floating in the air among the specks in the rays of the sun.
- 5-2506 If you have the proof that you are a true Saint, put it into practice: by means of that practice make your wooden sword sharp as *Dhū'l-Faqār*<sup>167</sup>.
- 5-2502 You may have the sword *Dhū'l-Faqār* as a heritage from 'Alī, but do you have the powerful arm of the Lion of God<sup>168</sup>?
- 5-2501 When there is no manliness, of what use are daggers? When there is no heart (courage), the helmet is of no avail.
- 5-2507 The proof that prevents you from practicing saintly works causes you to incur the vengeance of the Divine Maker.
- 5-2509 You lecture to them all on trust in God, while you are slitting the vein of the gnat in the air<sup>169</sup>.

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<sup>166</sup> Qur'ān 19:97.

<sup>167</sup> *Dhū'l-Faqār* or, more commonly, *Dhū'l-Fiqār*, is the name of the formidable two-pointed sword of Ḥaẓrat Mawlā 'Alī. In plain Arabic the name *Dhū'l-Fiqār* simply means "having notches", but it may also be translated as "Backbone of All Swords". According to the Shī'ī Islamic tradition, Dhu'l-Fiqār was first sent to the Prophet Muḥammad by the Archangel Gabriel. Ḥaẓrat Muḥammad later passed it on to his chosen successor, Ḥaẓrat 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib. On this occasion, the cry: "There is no Hero or True Man but 'Alī, there is no sword but Dhū'l-Fiqār," was heard (*Lā Fatā illā 'Alī, lā sayfa illā Dhū'l-Fiqār*). These words proclaim the unsurpassed spiritual perfection and the supreme chivalry, bravery and humanity of Ḥaẓrat Mawlā 'Alī. One of the spiritual meanings of this sword is that it clearly separates falsehood from truth.

<sup>168</sup> Title of 'Alī (Nich.).

<sup>169</sup> Literally "by contribution on demand or by your gift". This verse is said to refer to Ṣūfīs who got *khānaqāhs* (gathering houses for dervishes) built for them in this way but were not qualified to act as spiritual guides (Nich.).



- 5-3193 O shameless man, instruction given to the worthless is like drawing a little design on a clod of earth.
- 5-3194 Instruct yourself in love of God and spiritual insight; for that is like a design engraved on a solid mass of stone.
- 5-3195 Your own self is the only pupil who is really faithful to you: all the others perish: where will you seek them, where?
- 5-3196 In order that you may make others erudite and eminent, you make yourself evil-natured and empty of true knowledge.
- 5-3197 But when your heart is united with that Eden of Reality, listen, keep speaking, and do not be not afraid of becoming empty.
- 5-3198 For this reason the Divine command, ‘*Speak!*’<sup>170</sup> came to the Prophet, saying, ‘O righteous one, it will not fail: this is an infinite ocean.’
- 5-3200 This discourse has no end, o father: leave this discourse and consider the end.

**Self-realization is the key to knowledge of all things.**

**Ḥadīth: “Whoever knows himself, knows his Lord.”<sup>171</sup> [1.4.1]**

- 3-2650 Saying, “I know what is permissible and impermissible.” You do not know whether you yourself are permissible or impermissible as an old woman<sup>172</sup>.
- 3-2651 You know this allowable thing and that unallowable thing, but are you allowable or unallowable? Consider this well!
- 3-2652 You do not know what the value of every article of merchandise is; if you do not know the value of yourself, it is foolishness.
- 3-2653 You have become acquainted with the fortunate and auspicious stars; you do not look to see whether you are fortunate or unwashed (spiritually foul and ill-favoured).
- 3-2654 This, this, is the soul of all sciences – that you should know who you will be on the Day of Judgement.
- 3-2655 You are acquainted with the fundamentals (*uṣūl*)<sup>173</sup> of the religion, but look at your own fundament (*aṣl*) and see if it is good.
- 3-3038 Oh, there are many learned scholars who have no profit from their knowledge: they are people who commit knowledge to memory, not people who love it.

<sup>170</sup> Qur’ān 112:1.

<sup>171</sup> *Aḥādīth-e Mathnawī* p. 471; *Sharḥ-e Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam* by Hussain Khwarazmi p. 87.

<sup>172</sup> “The religion of old women” is synonymous with ignorance and superstition (Nich.).

<sup>173</sup> Uṣūl-e Dīn = “the fundamentals of religion”, in this case Islām. These comprise: 1. Tawḥīd (the oneness of God), 2. Nubuwwa (Prophethood) and 3. Ma‘ād (Resurrection).

- 3-3039 From them the listener (but not the learned men themselves) perceives the scent of knowledge, even if the listener is a commoner.
- 3-2649 They know the special properties of every substance, but in elucidating their own substance (essence) they are as ignorant as an ass.
- 3-2648 They know a hundred thousand superfluous matters connected with the various sciences, but those unjust men do not know their own soul.
- 1-2834 Of all these various kinds of knowledge, on the day of death the best equipment and provision for the road is the knowledge of spiritual poverty.

### **Ṣūfīs prefer a pure heart to a head filled with formal knowledge. [1.4.1]**

- 5-557 The face of the tranquil soul<sup>174</sup> in the body suffers wounds inflicted by the fingernails of thought.
- 5-558 Know that evil thought is a poisonous nail: in the case of deep reflection it rends the face of the soul.
- 5-559 In order that the thinker may loosen the knot of difficulty, he has put a golden spade into manure<sup>175</sup>.
- 5-560 Suppose the knot is untied, o clever thinker: it is like a tight knot on an empty purse.
- 5-561 You have grown old while you occupied yourself with untying knots: suppose you untie a few more knots, what then?
- 5-562 The knot that is fastened tight on our throat is that you should know whether you are ill-fated or fortunate.
- 5-563 Solve this problem if you are a man: spend your breath (life) on this, if you have the breath (spirit) of Adam within you.
- 1-2475 That which you imagine to be the treasure – through that vein imagination you are losing the treasure.
- 1-2476 Know that illusions and opinions are like the state of cultivation: treasure is not to be found in cultivated places.
- 1-2477 In the state of cultivation there is existence and bitter conflict: the non-existent is ashamed of all existent things.

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<sup>174</sup> The soul at peace with God – Qur’ān 89:27 (Nich.).

<sup>175</sup> I.e. has applied his reason to the futilities of exoteric knowledge (Nich.).

- 5-564 Suppose you know the definitions of all substances and accidents<sup>176</sup>, how will you benefit from it? Know the true definition of yourself, for this is indispensable.
- 5-566 Your life has gone to waste in the consideration of logical predicate and subject: your life, devoid of spiritual insight, has gone in study of what has been received by hearsay.
- 5-567 Every proof that is without a spiritual result and effect is vain: consider the final result of yourself!
- 5-568 You have never perceived a Maker except by means of a made thing: you are content with a syllogism.
- 5-569 The philosopher multiplies links consisting of logical proofs; on the other hand, the elect (the mystic) is contrary to him in this respect.
- 5-570 The latter flees from the proof and from the veil between himself and God: he has sunk his head in his bosom for the sake of contemplating the Object of the proof.
- 3-1123 This company washed their hearts clean of the exoteric kinds of knowledge, because this knowledge does not know this Way.
- 3-1124 In order to tread this Way one needs a knowledge that is rooted in the Other World, since every branch is a guide to its root.
- 3-1126 Why, then, teach a man the knowledge of which he should purify his breast?
- 2-3174 Since these sciences bring you no blessing, make yourself a fool and leave bad luck behind.
- 2-3175 Like the angels, say, “*We have no knowledge, o God, except what You have taught us*<sup>177</sup>.”
- 2-3200 My foolishness is a very blessed foolishness, for my heart is well-furnished with spiritual graces and my soul is devout.”
- 2-3201 If you desire that misery may leave you, endeavour that wisdom may leave you —
- 2-3202 The wisdom which is born of human nature and fantasy, the wisdom which lacks the overflowing grace of the Light of the Glorious God.
- 2-3203 The wisdom of this world brings increase of supposition and doubt; the wisdom of the religion soars above the sky.

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<sup>176</sup> These are philosophical terms, as are the terms “predicate” and “subject” in verse 5-566. “Substance” is whatever is a natural kind of thing and exists in its own right. Examples are rocks, trees, animals, etc.

“Accidents” are nonessential attributes or characteristics of something.

<sup>177</sup> Qur’ān 2:30, slightly altered (Nich.).

- 6-2370 Most of those destined for paradise are simpletons<sup>178</sup>, so that they escape from the mischief of philosophy.
- 6-2371 Strip yourself of useless learning and vanity, in order that the Divine mercy may descend on you at every moment.
- 6-2372 Cleverness is the opposite of abasement and supplication: give up cleverness and befriend stupidity.
- 6-2374 The clever ones are content with an ingenious device; the simple ones have gone away from the artifice to rest in the Artificer.
- 6-2500 Abandon eminence, worldly energy and skill: what matters is service rendered to God and a good disposition.
- 6-2501 With this aim God brought us forth from non-existence: “*I did not create mankind except to serve Me*<sup>179</sup>.”
- 6-2502 What did Sāmirī, whose skill in making the golden calf caused him to be banished from God’s door, gain from knowing this?
- 6-2503 What did Qārūn<sup>180</sup> gain from his alchemy? See how the earth dragged him down to its abyss.

**All knowledge is reflected in a pure heart. [1.4.1]**

- 3-3856 No one who has found the way of vision in seclusion will seek power using the diverse kinds of knowledge.
- 3-3857 When he has become an intimate companion to the beauty of the Soul, he will have a disgust of traditional learning and knowledge.
- 6-1931 And even if you read a hundred volumes without a pause, you will not remember a single point of argument without the Divine decree;
- 6-1932 But if you serve God and do not read a single book, you will learn rare sciences from your own bosom.
- 6-1933 From his bosom, the hand of Moses spread a radiance that surpassed the moon in the sky.

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<sup>178</sup> This is a ḥadīth. Source: *Aḥādīth-e Mathnawī* p.338. *Al-Jāmi‘ aṣ-Ṣaghīr*, Vol. 1, p. 52.

<sup>179</sup> Qur’ān 51:56.

<sup>180</sup> Qārūn or Korah, who belonged to the people of Moses, symbolizes arrogance, self-conceit and avarice – Qur’ān 28:76-82.

**The gnostic drinks from the eternal inner water, while  
remaing dependent on transitory earthly water. [1.4.1]**

- 6-3596 How magnificent is the Canal which is the source of all things! It makes you independent of these other canals.
- 6-3597 With relish you drink from a hundred fountains: whenever any of those hundred yields less, your pleasure is diminished;
- 6-3598 But when the sublime Fountain gushes from within you, you no longer need to steal from the other fountains.
- 6-3600 When the supply of water comes to a fortress from outside, it is more than enough in times of peace;
- 6-3601 But when the enemy forms a ring around that fortress, in order that he may drown the garrison in blood,
- 6-3602 The hostile troops cut off the outside water, so that the defenders of the fortress may have no refuge from them.
- 6-3603 At that time a briny well inside the walls is better than a hundred sweet rivers outside.
- 6-4649 The flowers that grow from plants live but a moment; the flowers that grow from Reason are ever fresh.
- 6-4650 The flowers that bloom from earth become faded; the flowers that bloom from the heart – oh, what a joy!
- 6-4651 Know that all the delightful sciences known to us are only two or three bunches of flowers from that Garden.
- 6-4652 We are devoted to these two or three bunches of flowers because we have shut the Garden door on ourselves.

**The secret of ‘Ilm-e Ladunnī (the mystical knowledge  
of “the People of the Heart”, i.e Ahl-e Dil)<sup>181</sup>. [1.4.1]**

- 1-3446 The sciences of the mystics<sup>182</sup> lift them high; then sciences of sensual men<sup>183</sup> are burdens to them.
- 1-3447 When knowledge strikes on the heart (is acquired through mystical experience), it becomes a helper (*yārī*); when knowledge strikes on the body (is acquired through the senses), it becomes a burden (*bārī*).

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<sup>181</sup> Qur’ān 18:65.

<sup>182</sup> Literally “People of the Heart”, is an expression that is often used as a synonym for “Ṣūfī Masters”.

<sup>183</sup> Literally “the people of the body”.

- 1-3448 God has said, “*Like an ass laden with his books*”<sup>184</sup>: the knowledge that does not come from Himself is difficult to bear.
- 1-3449 The knowledge that does not immediately come from Himself does not last, it is like the esthetician’s paint.
- 1-3450 But when you carry this burden well, the burden will be removed and you will be given spiritual joy.
- 1-3451 Beware! Do not carry this burden of knowledge for the sake of selfish desire, but mortify yourself, so that you may ride on the smooth-paced steed of knowledge.
- 4-3314 How should one who depends on a teacher and who is a disciple of a book find, like Moses, light from his own bosom?
- 1-3460 Purify yourself from the attributes of self, that you may behold your own pure unblemished essence,
- 1-3461 And behold within your heart all the sciences of the Prophets, without book and without teacher and master.
- 1-3464 Without the two *Ṣaḥīḥs*<sup>185</sup> and traditions and traditionists<sup>186</sup>; no, they behold him in the place where they drink the Water of Life.
- 1-3466 And if you desire a parable of the hidden knowledge, tell the story of the Greeks<sup>187</sup> and the Chinese.

### Story: The Chinese and the Greeks. [1.4.1]

- 1-3467 The Chinese said, “We are the better artists”; the Greeks said, “The superiority in power and excellence belong to us.”

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<sup>184</sup> Qur’ān 62:5.

<sup>185</sup> The title *Ṣaḥīḥ* (“authentic”, “sound”) is given to two works, by Muḥammad ibn Ismā’īl al-Bukhārī (or “Bukhārī” for short – 810-870 CE) and Muslim ibn al-Ḥajjāj Neyshāpūrī (or “Muslim” for short – 821-875 CE), which contain well-authenticated traditions (*aḥādīth*) of the Prophet (Nich.).

<sup>186</sup> Those who have transmitted the traditions, i.e. the *ḥadīths* or sayings of the Prophet Muḥammad.

<sup>187</sup> The word used for “Greeks” in this verse is *Rūmīyān*, which literally means “Romans”. However, here “Romans” means the Greek-speaking inhabitants of the Seljuk Sultanate of *Rūm*. In Arabic, *Rūm* or *ar-Rūm* refers to the Byzantine or Eastern Roman Empire. Although the multi-ethnic Byzantine Empire became more and more grecianized in the centuries after the fall of the Western Roman Empire in 476 CE, they still viewed themselves as “true Romans”. The name *Rūm* was used by the Arabs, the Persians, the Seljuk Turks and the Muslim world in general. The Qur’ān even contains a Sūra called *Ar-Rūm* (i.e. “The Romans”, “The Roman Empire” or “The Byzantines” – Sūra 30). The name “Rūm” lived on in the Seljuk Sultanate of Rūm, which was a separate and very influential vassal state within the Great Seljuk Empire, which at the height of its power covered large parts of Anatolia, the Caucasus, the Middle East and Central Asia. In 1243 CE the Seljuk Turks were defeated by the Mongols and the Seljuk Sultanate of Rūm became a vassal state to them. It was in this Sultanate’s capital, Konya (or *Qūniya*, as the Muslim peoples called it), that Ḥaẓrat Mawlānā Rūmī spent the most important part of his life – hence the name “Rūmī” (meaning “of Rūm”).

- 1-3468 “I will put you to the test in this matter,” said the Sultān, “and see which of your claims shall prove to be true.”
- 1-3469 The Chinese and the Greek began to debate: the Greeks withdrew from the debate.
- 1-3470 Then the Chinese said, “Put a separate room at our disposal, and let there be one for you as well.”
- 1-3472 The Chinese requested the King to give them a hundred colours: the King opened his treasury to the Chinese.
- 1-3473 Every morning, with his generous consent, the colours were dispensed from the treasury to the Chinese.
- 1-3474 The Greeks said, “No tints and colours are suited for our work, nothing is needed except to remove the rust.”
- 1-3475 They shut the door and went on polishing: they became clear and pure like the sky.
- 1-3476 There is a way from many-colouredness to colourlessness: colour is like the clouds, and colourlessness is a moon.
- 1-3478 When the Chinese had finished their work, they were beating drums for joy.
- 1-3479 The King entered and saw the pictures there: seeing them utterly perplexed him.
- 1-3480 After that, he went to the Greeks: they removed the dividing curtain.
- 1-3481 The reflection of the Chinese pictures and works of art struck these walls, which had been made free of stains.
- 1-3482 All that he had seen in the Chinese room seemed more beautiful here: it made his eyes leap out of their sockets.
- 1-3483 The Greeks, o father, are the Ṣūfīs: they do not depend on study, books and erudition,
- 1-3484 But they have polished their hearts and purified them from greed, cupidity, avarice and hatred.
- 1-3485 That purity of the mirror unquestionably is the heart which receives countless images.
- 1-3486 That Moses (the perfect Saint) holds in his bosom the formless infinite form of the Unseen, reflected from the mirror of his heart.

- 1-3491 Every new image that falls on the heart forevermore appears in it without any imperfection.
- 1-3492 They who polish their hearts have escaped from mere scent and colour: they effortlessly behold Beauty at every moment.
- 1-3493 They have relinquished the form and outer shell of knowledge, they have raised the banner of the knowledge of certainty<sup>188</sup>.
- 1-3497 Even though they have abandoned grammar (*naḥw*) and jurisprudence (*fiqh*), instead, they have taken up mystical self-effacement (*maḥw*) and spiritual poverty (*faqr*).

### **Detachment of knowledge leads to gnosis and revelation in the heart. [1.4.1]**

- 1-2830 With the master-theologian the quick and diligent pupil reads scholastic theology.
- 1-2831 With the master-jurist the student of jurisprudence reads jurisprudence, not theology.
- 1-2832 Then the master who is a grammarian – the soul of his pupil becomes imbued by him with grammar.
- 1-2833 Again, the master who is absorbed in the Way of Sufism – because of him the soul of his pupil is absorbed in the Divine King.

### **The story of the grammarian and the boatman. [1.4.1]**

- 1-2835 A certain grammarian embarked a boat. That self-conceited person turned to the boatman.
- 1-2836 And said, “Have you ever studied grammar?” “No,” he replied. The other said, “Half your life has been meaningless.”
- 1-2837 The boatman became heartbroken with grief, but at the time he refrained from answering.
- 1-2838 The wind hurled the boat into a whirlpool: the boatman shouted to the grammarian,
- 1-2839 “Tell me, do you know how to swim?” “No,” he said, “O well-spoken, good-looking man!”
- 1-2840 “O grammarian”, he said, “your whole life has been meaningless, because the boat is sinking in these whirlpools.”

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<sup>188</sup> I.e. mystical intuition (Nich.).



- 1-2841 Know that here *maḥw* (self-effacement) is needed, not *naḥw* (grammar): if you are *maḥw* (dead to self), plunge into the sea without danger.
- 1-2842 The water of the sea places the dead one on his head (makes him float on the surface); but if he is alive, how shall he escape from the sea?
- 1-2843 Since you have died to the attributes of the flesh, the Sea of Divine Consciousness will place you on the crown on its head (will raise you to honour)
- 1-2844 But o you who have called the people asses, now you are left floundering on this ice, like an ass.
- 1-2846 We have stitched in (inserted) the story of the grammarian, that we might teach you the grammar (*naḥw*) of self-effacement (*maḥw*).
- 1-2847 In self-loss, o esteemed friend, you will find the jurisprudence of jurisprudence, the grammar of grammar, and the accidentence of accidentence<sup>189</sup>.
- 5-3233 In Love, which is glorious and dazzlingly bright, you will find intelligible things other than these intelligible things.
- 3-3831 My bonds are more grievous than your advice: your doctor, who taught you, was not acquainted with love.
- 3-3847 For lovers, the only teacher is the beauty of the Beloved, their only book, course and lesson is His face.

**Attaining to the spiritual goal by passing  
through the spiritual stages. [1.4.1]**

- 3-1400 The sum of the matter is this: when a man has attained to union, the go-between becomes worthless to him.
- 3-1401 Since you have reached the object of your search, o elegant one, the search for knowledge has now become evil.
- 3-1402 Since you have climbed to the roofs of Heaven, it would be futile to seek a ladder.
- 3-1403 After having attained to felicity, the way that leads to felicity is worthless except for the sake of helping and teaching others.
- 3-1404 The shining mirror, which has become clear and perfect – it would be foolish to apply a burnisher to it.

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<sup>189</sup> I.e. the cream and essence of these sciences (Nich.). Accidentence: the part of grammar that deals with inflection.

3-1405 Seated happily beside the Sultān and in favour with him – it would be disgraceful to seek letter and messenger.

**Story:**  
**The lover and the Beloved. [1.4.1]**

3-1406 A certain man, when his beloved lets him sit beside her, produced a letter and read it to her.

3-1407 In the letter were verses of praise and adulation, anguish and despair and many humble pleas.

3-1408 The beloved said, “If this is for my sake, reading this at the time of our meeting is to waste one’s life.

3-1409 I am here beside you, and you are reading a letter! This, at any rate, is not the mark of true lovers.”

3-1410 He replied, “You are present here, but I am not completely filled with pleasure.

4-2066 Indeed, these matters of hearsay are only a substitute for sight: they are not for him who is present, but for him who is absent.

4-2067 These matters of hearsay are hollow to anyone who has been lead to the attainment of sight.

4-2068 When you have sat down next to your beloved, after this send off the *dallālas* (the old women who act as go-between).

4-2069 When anyone has outgrown childhood and has become a man, the letter and the *dallāla* become annoying to him.

4-2070 He reads letters, but only for the purpose of teaching others; he utters words, but only for the purpose of making others understand.

4-2071 It is wrong to speak from hearsay in the presence of those who are endowed with vision, for it is a proof of our heedlessness and imperfection.

4-2072 In the presence of the seer silence is to your advantage: because of this, the formal injunction “*Remain silent*”<sup>190</sup> came from God.

4-1418 Know that beside the words breathed by the *Quṭb* of the Time<sup>191</sup> traditional knowledge is like performing the traditional ablution with sand where there is water available.

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<sup>190</sup> Qur’ān 7:204.

<sup>191</sup> The head of the saintly hierarchy (Nich.). See footnote on “*Quṭb*” – Fourth River, First Rivulet, verse 2-3659. There is a *Quṭb* or Supreme Saint for every era, who is called “*Quṭb of the Time*” (*Quṭbu ’z-Zamān*).

- 4-1419 Make yourself foolish (simple) and follow behind him: only by means of this foolishness will you obtain deliverance.
- 4-1420 Because of this, o father, the Sultān of Mankind (Muḥammad) has said, “Most of the people of Paradise are the naïve<sup>192</sup>.”
- 4-1421 Since cleverness is the arouser of pride and vanity in you, become a fool in order that your heart may remain sound –
- 4-1422 Not the fool who is bent double and abases himself in clowning, but the fool who is delirious, bewildered and lost in Him.

**The Second Rivulet [1.4.2]**  
**The stages of the intellect (reason).**  
**Universal Intellect and partial intellect.**

- 1-1109 Think, how many worlds are to be found within Reason! How wide is this ocean of Reason!
- 5-619 Without any doubt, intellects and hearts (spirits) are celestial, even though they live separated from the celestial light.
- 3-3570 The imagination falls into error and mistake; the intellect is engaged only in acts of true perception.
- 6-2971 Through reason you can recognize congener and non-congener: you should not run at once to outward forms.
- 6-2967 Get (learn) the distinction between evil and good from reason, not from the eye that speaks only of black and white.
- 6-2969 The eye that sees only its object of desire is the bird’s curse; reason, which sees the trap, is the bird’s means of liberation.
- 4-1261 The two eyes of the intellect are fixed on the end of things: it endures the pain of the thorn for the sake of that Rose.
- 4-1984 The carnal nature desires to take revenge on its opponent: the reason binds the flesh like an iron chain.
- 4-2301 Reason is the opposite of sensuality: o brave man, do not call (by the name of) Reason that which is attached to sensuality.
- 4-1947 The Prophet said, “Whoever is foolish is our enemy and a ghoulish who attacks the traveller from ambush.

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<sup>192</sup> Cited by Aṭ-Ṭabarī in his *Tafsīr* (verse 21:79) and Al-Mahdawī in *At-Taḥṣīl*, as quoted by Hamid Lahmar in *Al-Imām Mālik Mufasssiran*, Dār al-Fikr, Beirut, 1995 CE (p. 279).

- 4-1948      Whoever is intelligent is dear to our soul: his breeze and wind is our sweet basil.”
- 4-1949      If intelligence rebukes me, I am well-pleased, because it possesses something that has emerged from my activity of outpouring.
- 4-1950      Its rebuking is not useless, its hospitality is not without a table;
- 4-1951      But if the fool puts sweetmeat on my lip, its taste gives me a fever<sup>193</sup>.”
- 4-1954      Intelligence is the table, not bread and roast meat: the light of intelligence, o son, is the nourishment for the soul.
- 4-409        In addition to the understanding and soul that the ox and the ass have, Man has another intelligence and soul;
- 4-410        Again, in the owner of that Divine breath<sup>194</sup> there is a soul other than the human soul and intelligence.
- 5-3235      For from this individual intelligence you obtain the means of subsistence, while from that other universal intelligence you make the spheres of Heaven a carpet under your feet.
- 3-2528      The Intellect of intellect is your kernel, while your intellect is only the husk: the belly of animals is ever seeking husks.
- 3-2529      He who seeks the kernel loathes the husk intensely: to the virtuous (Saints) the kernel alone is lawful, lawful.
- 3-2530      When the intellect, which is the husk, offers a hundred evidences, how should the Universal Intellect take a step without having intuitive certainty?
- 3-2531      The intellect makes books entirely black with writing; the Intellect of intellect keeps the horizons (the whole universe) filled with light from the Moon of Reality.
- 3-1145      The particular (partial) intellect is sometimes dominant, sometimes overthrown; the Universal Intellect is safe from the calamities of Time.
- 4-1986      The reason that is allied to Faith is like a just police inspector: it is the guardian and magistrate of the city of the heart.
- 5-454        Exceptionally well the good-natured Prophet has said, “A single speck of intelligence is better for you than fasting and performing the ritual prayer<sup>195</sup>.”

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<sup>193</sup> Literally “I am in fever from that sweetmeat of his”.

<sup>194</sup> The Prophet or Saint.

<sup>195</sup> *Aḥādīth-e Mathnawī* p. 435.

- 5-455 Because your intelligence is the substance<sup>196</sup>, whereas these two things [fasting and ritual prayer] are accidents<sup>197</sup>, these two are made obligatory in order to fully complete the intelligence<sup>198</sup>.

### **The difference between the stages of the intellect<sup>199</sup>. [1.4.2]**

- 5-459 Know well that the levels of intelligences differ like the earth from the sky.
- 5-460 There is an intelligence like the orb of the sun; there is an intelligence inferior to the planet Venus and the meteor.
- 5-461 There is an intelligence like a tipsy (flickering) lamp; there is an intelligence like a star of fire.
- 5-2463 Oh, blessed is he whose reason is male, while his wicked fleshly soul is female<sup>200</sup> and helpless.
- 5-2461 Alas for him whose reason is female, while his wicked fleshly soul is male and ready to gratify its lust!
- 5-2462 Inevitably his reason is vanquished: his movement only leads to damnation.
- 4-1960 Intelligence consists of two intelligences; the former is the acquired one which you learn, like a boy at school,
- 4-1961 From book, teacher, reflection and committing to memory, from concepts, from excellent and virgin (previously unstudied) sciences.
- 4-1962 In this way your intelligence becomes superior to that of others; but by preserving (retaining in your mind) that knowledge you are heavily burdened.
- 4-1963 You, who are occupied in wandering and going about in search of knowledge, are a preserving (recording) tablet; the Preserved Tablet<sup>201</sup> is he who has passed beyond this.

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<sup>196</sup> Substance (*jawhar*): here, the word is used in the philosophical sense, i.e. “A being whose nature it is to exist in and for itself and not in another as in a subject.”

<sup>197</sup> Accident (‘*araḏ*’, from the Arabic ‘*araḏ*’) is also used as a philosophical term. It means “a nonessential attribute or characteristic of something”.

<sup>198</sup> I.e. they are not obligatory in the case of madmen or young boys.

<sup>199</sup> Qur’ān 43:32.

<sup>200</sup> The *naḥs*’s gender is female. This does not mean that “woman” or “the feminine” are “evil”. It is related to the four earthly elements which constitute material man: water, fire, wind and earth. Just like the earth produces food, woman can give birth to children in this world, and likewise the *naḥs* is able to produce a new *naḥs* over and over again. That is why linguistically, the gender of *naḥs* is female, since it can generate new life over and over again. Similarly, when Ḥaḏrat Mawlānā Rūmī speaks about “woman” in the *Mathnawī*, it is only meant metaphorically, as it refers to the productive quality of the *naḥs*.” [Adapted from the speech delivered by Ḥaḏrat Pīr Mawlānā Ṣāfi ‘Alī Shāh II on 20<sup>th</sup> August 2005 on the occasion of Ḥaḏrat Mawlā ‘Alī’s Birthday.]

<sup>201</sup> This alludes to *al-Lawḥu ‘l-Maḥfūz*, “the Preserved Tablet” (Qur’ān 85:22). *Al-Lawḥu ‘l-Maḥfūz* means the knowledge that is firmly protected. It is said to contain all that God has ever decreed and the archetypes of all there ever has been, all there is and all there ever will be.

- 4-1964 The other intelligence is the gift of God: its fountain is in the middle of the soul.
- 4-1965 When the water of God-given knowledge gushes out of the breast, it does not become foul-smelling, old or yellow (impure);
- 4-1966 And if its way of flowing out is clogged, what harm could it do? For it continually gushes out of the house of the heart.
- 4-1967 The acquired intelligence is like the water conduits which run into a house from the streets:
- 4-1968 If the house's waterway is blocked, it is without any supply of water. Seek the fountain within yourself!

### **The partial intellect is subject to the Universal Intellect. [1.4.2]**

- 1-2052 You have a partial reason hidden within you: now in this world seek one whose reason is perfect.
- 1-2053 Through his totality your part is made whole and perfect: Universal Reason is like a shackle on the neck of the flesh (= *nafs*, the false ego).
- 5-463 The partial intellect has given the Universal Intellect a bad name: worldly desire has deprived the worldly man of his desire (in the next world).
- 3-1558 Imagination and opinion are the poison of the partial (discursive<sup>202</sup>) reason, because its dwelling-place is in the darkness.
- 1-2329 Since your intellect is a shackle for mankind, it is not intellect: it is a snake and scorpion.
- 4-1258 Do not take the partial (individual) intellect as your vizier: make the Universal Intellect your vizier, o king.
- 4-1263 Even if you have intellect, seek the company and the advice of another intellect, o father.
- 4-1264 With two intellects you will be set free from many sufferings: you will plant your foot on the zenith of the heavens.

### **When two people's intellects are paired, they enhance and help each other. [1.4.2]**

- 4-2188 The intelligent man is he who has the lamp: he is the guide and leader of the caravan.

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<sup>202</sup> "Discursive reason" is also called "demonstrative reason" (*istidlālī*, i.e. relying on knowledge and proof obtained by deduction).

- 4-2189 That leader is one who follows his own light: that selfless traveller follows himself.
- 4-2191 The other, who is the half-intelligent, regards a fully intelligent person as his eye,
- 4-2192 And has clung to him as the blind man clings to guide, so that through him he has become seeing, active and illustrious.
- 4-2193 But as far as the ass is concerned, who did not have a smidgen of intelligence, who possessed no intelligence himself and abandoned the intelligent guide,
- 4-2194 Who knows next to nothing of the way and yet considers it beneath him to follow the guide,
- 4-2197 He possesses neither perfect intelligence, that he should breathe the breath of the living, nor a half-intelligence, that he should make himself dead.
- 4-2198 The half-intelligent one becomes wholly dead in devotion to the man of perfect intelligence, that he may ascend from his own low place to the lofty roof.
- 4-2200 He (the man devoid of intelligence) is not living, that he should breathe like a Jesus, nor is he dead, that he should become a channel for the life-giving breath of a Jesus<sup>203</sup>.
- 4-2199 If you do not have perfect intelligence, make yourself dead under the protection of an intelligent man whose words are living.
- 2-26 If the intellect is paired with another intellect, light increases and the way becomes clear;
- 2-27 But if the fleshly soul indulges in merrymaking with another fleshly soul, darkness increases, and the way becomes hidden.

### **Transformation of the partial intellect into love. [1.4.2]**

- 4-1295 The particular (individual) intellect is not the intellect capable of production: it is only the receiver and is in need of teaching.
- 4-1296 This intellect is capable of being taught and of understanding, but only the man who is Divinely inspired gives it the teaching which it requires.
- 4-1294 This astronomy and medicine is knowledge given by Divine inspiration to the Prophets: how could intellect and sense find a way to advance towards that which has neither space nor direction?

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<sup>203</sup> I.e. "he is not dead (through self-abandonment), so that he should be brought to (spiritual) life by the influence of a Saint." (Nich.).

- 4-1297 Certainly, in their beginning, all trades (crafts and professions) were derived from Divine inspiration, but the intellect added something to them.
- 4-1298 Consider whether this intellect of ours can learn any trade without a master.
- 4-1299 Even though the intellect was hair-splitting (subtle and ingenious) in trickery, no trade was ever mastered without a master.
- 4-1300 If knowledge of a trade were derived from this intellect, any trade would be mastered without a master.
- 5-4144 If the intellect could see the true way in this question<sup>204</sup>, Fakhr-e Rāzī<sup>205</sup> would be an expert in religious mysteries;
- 5-4145 But since he was an example of the saying that whoever has not tasted does not know, his intelligence and imaginations only increased his perplexity.
- 5-4147 In their quest of the real “I” these intellects fall into the abyss of incarnation (*ḥulūl* and *ittiḥād*<sup>206</sup>).
- 3-1146 Sell intellect and talent and buy bewilderment in God: let your journey take you to lowliness, o son, not to Bukhārā<sup>207</sup>!
- 5-3236 When you gamble away (sacrifice) your intelligence in love of the Lord<sup>208</sup>, He gives you *ten like it or seven hundred*<sup>209</sup>.
- 5-3237 When those women of Egypt gambled away (sacrificed) their intelligences, they hurried to the pavilion of Joseph’s love.
- 5-3238 Love which is the cupbearer of life took away their intelligence in one moment: they kept on drinking plenty of wisdom for the rest of their lives.
- 5-3239 The beauty of the Almighty<sup>210</sup> is the source of a hundred Josephs: o you who are less than a woman<sup>211</sup>, devote yourself to that beauty!

<sup>204</sup> The question in preceding verse is: “If you seek, how should that which you seek go in search of you?”

<sup>205</sup> Fakhrū’d-dīn of Rayy, a celebrated theologian and philosopher (d. 1209 CE) (Nich.).

<sup>206</sup> The heretical doctrine that the creature becomes one with the Creator. (Nich.) *Ḥulūl* is defined as “the infusion of God’s Essence in man”, “the Divine Indwelling in man” or “Divine incarnation in man”. *Ittiḥād* means “Divine unification” or “identification of the Divine and human natures”.

<sup>207</sup> Bukhārā used to be one of the largest centres of Islamic theology. Here it symbolizes “outer learning” and those vain and self-conceited ones who take pride in their acquired erudition, which is insignificant in comparison with true, Divinely inspired knowledge.

<sup>208</sup> The word for Lord used here is *Ṣamad*, a Divine name with more than one meaning: it means, amongst other things, “the Self-Sufficient”, “the Absolute”, “He Who is without needs but upon Whom all depends”, “He Who is Eternal without change”,...

<sup>209</sup> Qur’ān 6:160 and 2:261.

<sup>210</sup> The actual name of God used here is *Dhū’l-Jalāl*, meaning “the Lord of Majesty”.

<sup>211</sup> When Ḥaẓrat Mawlānā Rūmī speaks about “woman” or “women” in the *Mathnawī*, it is only meant metaphorically, as it refers to the lower self or *nafs*.



### **Allegory. [1.4.2]**

- 4-563 The gift of Bilqīs<sup>212</sup> was forty mules: their whole load consisted of bricks of gold.
- 4-564 When the envoy reached the open plain, belonging to Solomon, he saw that its carpet was entirely made of solid gold.
- 4-565 He rode on gold for the distance of forty stages of his journey, until gold had lost its value to him.
- 4-566 Many times they said, “Let us take the gold back to the treasury: what a useless quest we are pursuing!
- 4-567 A vast land of which the soil is pure gold – to bring gold there as a gift is foolish.”
- 4-568 O you who have brought intelligence to God as a gift, there intelligence is less valuable than the dust of the road.

## **The Fifth River [1.5]**

### **Khawf wa Rajā (Fear and Hope)**

### **The First Rivulet [1.5.1]**

#### **The sun of hope illuminates the darkness.**

- 2-2635 The Prophet has declared that God has said, ‘I created with the aim to do good,
- 2-2636 I created with the intention that My creatures might gain some profit from Me, and that they might smear their hands with My honey;
- 2-2637 Not with the purpose that I might gain some profit from them, and that I might tear off a coat from one who is naked.’
- 6-1267 No base metal coin is rejected by Him, for he does not buy with the aim to make a profit.
- 2-2632 He made the world for kindness’ sake: His sun caressed the specks of dust (in its beams).
- 6-2280 But nevertheless the sun of Divine favour has shone and has graciously come to the aid of those who despair.
- 6-2281 In His mercy, God has played a marvellous game of backgammon: He has changed the essence of ingratitude into a turning in repentance towards Him<sup>213</sup>.

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<sup>212</sup> Bilqīs: the queen of Sheba (or Sabā) – Qur’ān 27: 23-44.

- 6-2419 True believer and Christian, Jew and Zoroastrian and Magian – the faces of them all are turned towards the mighty Sultān.
- 6-2420 On the contrary, stone, earth, mountain and water have their invisible recourse to God.
- 6-2315 With His Merciful hand, He frees all from the bonds of servitude, whether they deserve it or not.
- 6-1846 Whenever weariness made him despair in his sincere supplication, from the presence of God he would hear the call “Come!”
- 6-4743 Although we are in the ditch and overwhelmed by this despair, let us go dancing together, since He has invited us.
- 6-4741 No hope comes to me from any direction, except that Divine Bounty that says to me, “Do not despair<sup>214</sup>!”
- 3-3107 Or are you unaware of the bounties of God, who is calling you to come to His side?
- 1-3252 No, do not despair: make yourself cheerful, call for help to Him who comes in answer to the call.
- 3-1866 You think well of Me and you justly hope that at each moment you may rise higher.
- 5-4094 Does he who insolently disobeys Your command have any other support except Your pardon?
- 5-4095 The heedlessness and irreverence of these sinners arise from the abundance of Your clemency, o You mine of pardon.”
- 5-4110 (Ayāz<sup>215</sup> said), “The forgivenesses of the whole world are but a mote – the reflection of your forgiveness, o you from whom comes every fortune.
- 5-4111 All forgiveness sings the praise of Your forgiveness: it is peerless. O people, beware of comparing it!

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<sup>213</sup> “Turning in repentance towards him”: the Arabic word for repentance is *tawba*, and is derived from the verb *tāba* (root: t-w-b), meaning “to turn towards”. One of God’s Beautiful Names, *at-Tawwāb*, is derived from the same root and means “He Who forgives those who turn to Him in repentance.”

<sup>214</sup> Qur’ān 12:87.

<sup>215</sup> There are a number of stories in the *Mathnawī* about the king Maḥmūd of Ghazna and his favourite slave, Ayāz, in which Ayāz symbolizes a Sūfī dervish Saint and the king symbolizes Almighty God. Ayāz was made the king’s vizier (or prime minister). In Islamic cultures, it was common for favourite slaves to be given positions of power and influence. “In the allegorical interpretation of this Story the King is God, Ayāz the Perfect Man who intercedes for sinners on the Day of Judgement, and the ‘ancient executioner’ the Angel of Divine punishment. (*malaku’l-‘adhab*).” (Nich.).

- 5-4206 Your grace said to our heart, “Go, o you who have become indebted to the buttermilk of My love.
- 5-4207 You have fallen, like a gnat, into My buttermilk: O gnat, you are not intoxicated, You are the wine itself.
- 5-4208 O gnat, the vultures become intoxicated by you, when you ride on the ocean of honey.
- 5-4215 Because of the urgency my head is reeling: oh, I am dead in the presence of that bounty.
- 5-4218 No one ever died in the presence of the Water of Life: compared with your water the Water of Life is mere dregs.
- 5-4220 But those who drink from the cup of death are living through His love: they have torn their hearts away from life and the Water of Life.
- 5-4221 When the water of Your love gave us its hand, the Water of Life became worthless in our eyes.

**The meaning of hope in the ḥadīth qudsī**  
***Inna sabaqat raḥmatī ghaḍabī –***  
**“Verily, My Mercy prevails over My wrath.”<sup>216</sup> [1.5.1]**

- 5-1772 In the Traditions of the Prophet it is related that on the Day of Resurrection every single body will be commanded to arise.
- 5-1773 The blast of the Trumpet is the command of the Holy God, namely, “O children of Adam, lift up your heads from the grave.”
- 5-1774 Then every one’s soul will return to its body, just as consciousness returns to the awakend body at dawn.
- 5-1796 When the sun of the Resurrection rises, both ugly and beautiful will leap up hastily from the grave.
- 5-1806 Then a scroll headed with black and crammed with crime and wickedness comes into the hand of such a servant of God;
- 5-1807 Containing not a single good deed or act of saving grace – nothing but wounds inflicted on the hearts of the saintly.
- 5-1810 When that odious man reads his scroll, he knows that he is virtually on the way to prison.
- 5-1814 Therefore, he sets out to the prison of Hell; for thorns have no means of escape from being burnt in the fire.

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<sup>216</sup> *Aḥādith-e Mathnawī*, p. 114; *Musnad-e Aḥmad*, Vol. 2, p. 24; *Muslim*, Vol. 8, p. 95.

- 5-1817 He drags his feet on every road, that perhaps he may escape fromt the pit of Hell.
- 5-1818 He stands expectantly, keeping silence and turning his face backward in a fervent hope,
- 5-1819 Pouring tears like autumn rain. A mere hope – what does he have but that?
- 5-1820 So at every moment he is looking back and turning his face to the Holy Court in heaven.
- 5-1821 Then in the realm of life comes the command from God – “Say to him, ‘O good-for-nothing without any merit,
- 5-1822 What are you expecting, o mine of mischief? Why are you looking back, o dumbfounded man?
- 5-1823 Your scroll is that which came into your hand, o offender against God and worshipper of the devil.
- 5-1826 You do not have any outward or inward act of piety to your credit, nor do you have an intention to perform one in your heart.
- 5-1827 No nightly prayers and vigils, no abstinence and fasting in the daytime.
- 5-1828 No holding the tongue to avoid hurting anyone, no looking forward and backward in sincerity.
- 5-1829 What is meant by looking forward? To think of your own death and last agony. What is meant by looking backward? To remember the passing of your friends.
- 5-1831 Since your scales were wrong and false, how should you require the scales of your retribution to be right<sup>217</sup>?
- 5-1832 Since you were a left foot (were going to the left) in fraud and dishonesty, how should the scroll come into your right hand?
- 5-1835 The servant of God answers: “I am a hundred, hundred, hundred times as much as that which You have declared.
- 5-1836 Verily, in Your forbearance You have thrown a veil over worse things than those mentioned; otherwise You might have divulged them, for with Your knowledge You know all my shameful deeds;
- 5-1837 But, outisde of my own deeds, beyond good and evil and religion and infidelity,

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<sup>217</sup> I.e. “how should you expect to receive full measure from God?” (Nich.).

- 5-1839 Beyond living righteously or behaving disobediently – I expectantly put my hope in Your pure loving-kindness.
- 5-1841 I turn my face back to that pure grace: I am not looking towards my own actions.
- 5-1842 I turn my face towards that hope, for You have given me existence from before existence.
- 5-1843 You gave me existence, free of cost, as a robe of honour: I have always relied upon that generosity.
- 5-1844 When he enumerates his sins and trespasses, the Pure Bounty begins to show generosity,
- 5-1845 Saying, “O angels, bring him back to Us, for his inner eye has always been turned towards hope.
- 5-1846 Like one who does not care about anything, We will set him free and cancel all his trespasses.
- 5-1848 We will kindle up a bountiful fire of grace, in order that no sin and fault, great or small, may last –
- 5-1850 We will set fire to the mortal frame of Man and make the thorns in it a spiritual garden of roses.
- 3-4384 I frighten the fearless through My knowledge; I take away the fear of the fearful through My clemency.
- 3-4385 I am a patcher: I put the patch in its proper place; I give drink to everyone in due measure.

## **The Second Rivulet [1.5.2]**

### **Fear.**

**As hope and fear come together, faith (īmān)  
is born in the heart of the beginning sālik.**

- 3-495 Know that it is a fulfilment of *Fear not*<sup>218</sup>, when God has given you the fear which causes you to refrain from sin: He will send the bread, since He has sent the tray to you<sup>219</sup>.
- 3-496 The fear is for the one who has no fear of God; the anguish is for the one who does not frequent the place where God is feared.
- 3-507 Rejoice in Him, do not rejoice in anything except Him: He is like the spring, and all other things are like the month of December.

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<sup>218</sup> Qur’ān 20:68.

<sup>219</sup> I.e. the tray (fear of God) is accompanied by the bread (security) (Nich.).

- 3-508 Everything other than He is the means of leading you gradually to perdition, even though it is your throne, kingdom and crown.
- 3-509 Rejoice in sorrow, for sorrow is the snare through which you attain to union with God: in this Way falling down in reality is rising upwards<sup>220</sup>.
- 3-2205 The fact is that the people of this world fear poverty, plunged as they are up to their necks in the briny water.
- 3-2206 If they would fear the Creator of poverty, treasures would be opened to them on the earth.
- 3-2207 Through fear of affliction they all are in the very essence of affliction: in their pursuit of material existence they have fallen into non-existence<sup>221</sup>.
- 3-2487 Even though God's clemency bestows many kindnesses, He exposes the sinner when he has exceeded the limit.
- 3-4381 The sinner's heart becomes afraid of Us, but in his fear there are a hundred hopes.
- 3-4382 I frighten the shameless man who has lost the right way: why should I frighten him who is afraid?
- 1-1430 When someone is afraid, they make him feel secure; they soothe his fearful heart.
- 1-1429 *Do not fear*<sup>222</sup> is the hospitality offered to those who fear: that is proper sustenance for one who is afraid.
- 1-1431 How should you say "*Fear not*" to one who has no fear? Why give lessons to him? He needs no lessons.
- 1-1432 He ('Umar<sup>223</sup>) made that disturbed mind cheerful and made his desolate heart happy.
- 2-3039 You have not heard from God the comforting words *Fear not*: why, then, have you considered yourself safe and happy?
- 3-494 There is no fear of sea, waves or foam, since you have heard the Divine utterance "*Do not be afraid*"<sup>224</sup>.

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<sup>220</sup> I.e. through lowliness and self-abasement (Nich.).

<sup>221</sup> I.e. privation of real existence (Nich.).

<sup>222</sup> Qur'ān 41:30.

<sup>223</sup> Ḥaẓrat 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (ca. 581/584-644 CE), the second caliph or successor to the Prophet Muḥammad in Sunnī Islām.

<sup>224</sup> Qur'ān 20:77.

**The mystic (‘ārif = gnostic) transcends these  
two inner states (hope and fear). [1.5.2]**

- 5-4065 The ascetic feels anxiety concerning his mortal end: he considers what will be his predicament on the Day of Reckoning;
- 5-4066 But the Gnostics, having become conscious of their beginning<sup>225</sup>, are free from anxiety and care for the ultimate conditions.
- 1-3616 This hope and fear are behind the veil that separates the seen from the unseen, so that they may be nurtured behind the veil.
- 5-4067 Previously the Gnostic had the same fear and hope as the ascetic, but his knowledge of the past devoured both those feelings.
- 5-4069 He is a gnostic and has been delivered from fear and dread: the sword of God has cut lamentation in two.
- 5-4070 Earlier he had feelings of fear and hope from God: the fear has passed away and the hope has come into clear view.

**The Sixth River [1.6]**

**‘Adl and Zulm  
(Sincerity or Justice and  
Tyranny or Injustice)**

**The First Rivulet [1.6.1]**

**‘Adl (Sincere Justice)**

**The inner potential power that is directed by the  
intellect, helps to free oneself from the nafs.**

**Poem:**

**“The intellect is the master of the workshop of the heart,  
and prevents it from being in the service of the workshop  
of clay (i.e. matters of the material world).” [1.6.1]**

- 6-2596 What is justice? To put a thing in its right place. What is injustice? To put it in its wrong place.
- 4-729 He knew that the just man is free from fear of attack and secure in his heart.
- 4-730 Justice is the guardian of pleasures; not men who shake their rattles on the roofs at night.

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<sup>225</sup> I.e. having attained to knowledge of their eternally pre-ordained destiny (Nich.).

- 5-1089 What is justice? Giving water to trees. What is injustice? To give water to thorns.
- 5-1090 Justice consists in bestowing a bounty in its proper place, not on every root that will absorb water.
- 5-1092 Bestow the bounty of God on the spirit and reason, not on the carnal nature full of disease and complications<sup>226</sup>.
- 5-1093 Make your body bear the conflict of worldly cares: do not lay your anxiety on the heart and spirit.
- 5-1094 The burden is laid on the head of Jesus<sup>227</sup>, while the ass<sup>228</sup> is frolicking in the meadow.
- 5-1095 It is not right to put eyewash in the ear: it is not right to demand the work of the heart from the body.
- 5-1096 If you are a devotee of the heart, go, despise the world, do not suffer its humiliating insult; and if you are a devotee of the body, do not eat sugar but taste poison.
- 5-1097 Poison is beneficial to the body, and sugar harmful: it is better that the body should be deprived of supplies.

**‘Adl (Sincere Justice) enables you to help others better. [1.6.1]**

- 1-2354 God Most High is just, and how should the just behave tyrannically to the dispirited (poor and weak)?
- 1-2820 The nature of kings becomes implanted in their subjects: the green sky makes the earth verdant.
- 1-2821 Consider the king as a reservoir with pipes in every direction, and water running from all the pipes like hoppers in a mill.
- 1-2822 When the water in all the pipes is from a pure reservoir, every single one gives sweet water, pleasant to taste.
- 1-2823 But if the water in the reservoir is brackish and dirty, every pipe brings the same into view.
- 1-2829 For whatever science the master is renowned, the souls of his pupils become endowed with the same.
- 2-1933 Brave and holy men are a help in the world when the lamentation of the oppressed reaches them.

<sup>226</sup> Literally “dysentery and knots” (tumours) (Nich.).

<sup>227</sup> The spirit (Nich.). The traditional epithet given to Jesus (‘Īsā) in Islām is *Rūḥu ‘Llāh*, “Spirit of God”.

<sup>228</sup> The body (Nich.).



- 2-1934 From everywhere they hear the cry of the oppressed and run in that direction, like the mercy of God.
- 2-1935 Those buttresses for the breaches of the world, those physicians for hidden diseases,
- 2-1936 are pure love, justice and mercy; just like God, they are flawless and incorruptible.
- 3-2435 Only he who cuts off the head of his lower self learns how to distinguish the oppressor from the oppressed.
- 3-2434 How should one who is subject, like a straw, to the wind of sensuality know the oppressor from the oppressed?
- 3-2436 Likewise, the oppressor, which is the fleshly soul within us that is moved by frenzy, is the enemy of the oppressed.

## **The Second Rivulet [1.6.2] Injustice and its Dark Consequences.**

### **Ḥadīth: “Oppression (Zulm) will be darkness (Zulumāt) on the Day of Resurrection”<sup>229</sup>. [1.6.2]**

- 1-1309 The injustice of evil-doers became a dark pit for them: all the wise have said this.
- 1-1310 The more unjust one is, the more frightful is his pit: Divine Justice has ordained worse punishment for worse sin.
- 1-1311 O you who are digging a pit for others, driven by injustice, you are making a snare for yourself.
- 1-1312 Do not weave a cocoon around yourself, like the silkworm. You are digging a pit for yourself to fall in: dig with moderation (not too deep).
- 1-1313 Do not assume that the weak have no defending guardian: recite from the Qur’ān the words *When the help of God shall come*<sup>230</sup>.
- 1-1314 If you are an elephant and your enemy has fled from you, then look: the retribution came to you, *birds in flocks*<sup>231</sup>.
- 6-1890 The present world is the Creator’s penitentiary: since you have chosen to incur punishment, suffer punishment!

<sup>229</sup> *Aḥādīth-e Mathnawī* p. 61; *Muslim*, Vol. 8, p. 18.

<sup>230</sup> Qur’ān 110:1.

<sup>231</sup> Qur’ān 105:3.

- 4-228            You thought that I am as a lamb without shepherd, you thought that I have no one who watches over me.
- 4-232            How am I less than a lamb, less than a kid, that there should not be a keeper behind me?
- 4-233            I have a Keeper who is worthy of holding dominion: He knows the wind that blows on me.
- 1-1315           If any poor man on the earth begs for mercy, a loud uproar arises among the Heavenly Hordes.
- 1-1316           If you bite him with your teeth and make him bleed, toothache will attack you – what will you do then?
- 3-2453           Wrong is covered from sight in the inmost thoughts of the soul: the wrongdoer exposes it to men.
- 3-2455           Even here, then, your hands and feet, in doing harm, bear witness to your conscience.
- 3-2456           Since your evil conscience becomes as an overseer to you and says, “Speak! Do not keep back your belief,”
- 3-2457           And, especially at times of anger and quarrelling, makes manifest your secret thought, hair by hair;
- 3-2458           Since wrong and injustice become your overseer and say, “Reveal me, o hands and feet,”
- 3-2462           O you who most recklessly<sup>232</sup> embarked on a course of injustice and malice, your true nature is evident: this display of it is unnecessary.
- 5-1091           What is injustice? To bestow it in an improper place that can only be a source of calamity.
- 3-2437           A dog always attacks the poor; it inflicts wounds upon the poor as much as it can.

**The Third Rivulet [1.6.3]**  
**Mukāfāt (retribution) or the law of nature (cause and effect)<sup>233</sup>.**

**“As you sow, so shall you reap.” [1.6.3]**

- 1-214            Although the wall casts a long shadow, yet in the end the shadow turns back again towards it.

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<sup>232</sup> Literally “with ten hands” (Nich.).

<sup>233</sup> Qur’ān, 99:7-8.

- 1-215            This world is the mountain, and our action the shout: the echo of the shouts comes back to us.
- 4-165            When you have done evil, be afraid, do not be lighthearted, since the evil is seed, and God will cause it to grow.
- 4-166            He covers it for a while, so that sorrow and shame for having committed that evil may come to you.
- 4-170            He covers the sin many times in order to manifest His grace; then again, He punishes the sinner in order to manifest His justice,
- 4-171            So that both these attributes may be displayed, and the former may be hope-inspiring and the latter deterrent.
- 4-2458           When have you done wrong and when have you committed evil, without having seen its proper effect?
- 4-2459           When have you sent a single good deed up to Heaven and have you seen a good and corresponding effect following it<sup>234</sup>?
- 1-1319           O, you see many wrongs in others, but what you see is a reflection of your own nature!
- 1-1320           All that you are in your hypocrisy, iniquity and insolence was reflected in them.
- 1-1321           You are the evildoer, and you are striking blows at yourself: you curse yourself at that moment.
- 1-1322           You do not see clearly the evil in yourself, otherwise you would hate yourself with all your soul.
- 1-1324           When you reach the bottom of your own nature, then you will know that that vileness came from yourself.
- 1-1329           You held a blue glass before your eye: for that reason the world seemed to be blue to you.
- 1-1330           Unless you are blind, know that this blueness comes from yourself: speak ill of yourself, do not speak ill of others anymore.
- 5-3999           Whoever seeks to commit adultery with other people's wives, know that he is a pimp to his own wife;
- 5-4000           For that adultery is retributed with the same, since retribution for an evil act is an act similar to it<sup>235</sup>.

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<sup>234</sup> The Turkish commentator translates: "When have you sent a breath (breathed a prayer) to Heaven and have you seen in consequence a (Divine) benefit like unto it?" (Nich.).

- 5-3997 Out of the pride of power I tried to conquer the concubine of another: that injustice rebounded on me and I fell into the pit which I had dug.
- 5-3998 I knocked at the door of another person's house: consequently he knocked at the door of my house.
- 6-1570 Do you not know that if you dig a pit for me you will at last let yourself fall into the same pit?
- 5-4008 God has given us knowledge about retribution: He has said, "*If you repeat it (the offence), We shall repeat it (the punishment).*"<sup>236</sup>

### **Self-examination. [1.6.3]**

- 4-2460 If you are observant and vigilant, you will see the response to your action at every moment.
- 4-2461 When you are observant and grasp the rope of awareness, you do not need the coming of the Resurrection (to reveal the ultimate effects).
- 4-2462 He who truly knows the meaning of a sign does not need any further explanation of it.
- 4-2463 This calamity happens to you because of your stupidity in not understanding the subtle hints and indications.
- 4-215 God has called Himself *Baṣīr* (All-Seeing), in order that His seeing would dissuade you from committing sins at every moment.
- 4-216 God has called Himself *Samī'* (All-Hearing), in order that you would close your lips and not use bad language.
- 4-217 God has called Himself *'Alīm* (All-Knowing), in order that fear would hold you back from contemplating bad deeds.
- 4-2467 Listen, be watchful if you wish to have a pure heart, for out of your every action something will be born to you.
- 4-2468 And if you have a greater aspiration than this, and if you have a greater ambition than this, it goes beyond the spiritual rank of the observant.

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<sup>235</sup> Qur'ān 42:38.

<sup>236</sup> Qur'ān 17:8.

# The Seventh River [1.7]

## Ḥaṣhr (the Gathering on the Day of Resurrection)

### The First Rivulet [1.7.1]

#### The return of all things to the other world.

- 1-2726 O you who have not escaped from this fleeting caravanserai (the material world), how would you know the meaning of “self-extinction”, mystical “intoxication” and “expansion”?
- 1-2724 The bird whose dwelling-place is the briny water, how should it know where to find in it the clear and sweet water?
- 1-2725 O you whose abode is in the briny spring, how should you know the Shaṭṭ<sup>237</sup> and the Jayhūn<sup>238</sup> and the Euphrates?
- 1-2770 When the images (phenomena) which are in these hot baths (the world) are viewed from outside the undressing room of self-abandonment, they seem like clothes.
- 1-2771 As long as you are outside, you only see the clothes (phenomena): put off your clothes and enter the bath of reality, o kindred spirit,
- 1-2772 Because, with your clothes, there is no way of getting inside: the body is unconscious of the soul, the clothes are unaware of the body.

### Allegory:

#### The denial of the other world by the ignorant. [1.7.1]

- 3-56 A sky very lofty and full of light, sun and moonbeams and a hundred stars.
- 3-58 Its marvels are beyond description: why are you suffering in this darkness?
- 3-59 Why do you drink blood on the gibbet of this narrow place (the womb), incarcerated and surrounded by filth and pain?” –
- 3-60 Because of its present state, the embryo would be unbelieving, and would turn away from this message and become an unbeliever.
- 3-61 Saying, “This is absurd, a deceit and delusion,” because the judgement of the blind has no imagination.
- 3-63 Just as in this world the *Abdāl*<sup>239</sup> speak of that other world to the common folk

<sup>237</sup> Shaṭṭ: the *Shaṭṭ al-‘Arab* (“River of the Arabs”) or *Arwand Rūd* (“Arwand River”, in Persian) is the river that is formed by the confluence of the Tigris and Euphrates in Southern Iraq. Its mouth is in the Persian Gulf.

<sup>238</sup> The *Jayhūn* River is in fact the *Āmū Daryā* or *Oxus River*, the longest river in Central Asia. It more or less constitutes the border between Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan and between Tajikistan and Afghanistan.

<sup>239</sup> *Abdāl*: see footnote on “Quṭb” – First Source, Fourth River, First Rivulet, verse 2-3659.

- 3-64            Saying, “This world is an boundless dark and narrow pit; outside is a world without scent or colour”:
- 3-65            None of their words entered the ear of a single one of them, for this sensual desire is a huge and formidable barrier.
- 1-3180          Move a little, like the embryo, in order that the senses which see the Light may be given to you
- 1-3181          And then you are outside of this womb-like world: you got from earth into a wide space.
- 1-3182          Know that the saying, “*God’s earth is spacious*<sup>240</sup>,” refers to that vast region which the Prophets have entered.
- 1-3183          The heart is not oppressed by that spacious expanse: there the fresh boughs of the palm tree do not become dry.

### **The Second Rivulet [1.7.2]**

#### **The showing of the deeds on the Day of Judgement.**

- 1-2917          Therefore the Resurrection is the day of the supreme inspection: inspection is desired only by Him who is glorious and splendid.
- 1-2918          To anyone who is like a deceitful Hindu<sup>241</sup>, the day of inspection is the time of exposure.
- 1-2919          Since he does not have a face like the sun, he desires nothing but night to cover him like a veil.
- 1-2920          Since his thorn does not have a single rose leaf, Spring is the enemy of his conscience,
- 1-2921          While to one who is roses and lilies from head to foot Spring is welcome as a pair of bright eyes.
- 1-2922          The unspiritual thorn wishes for autumn, for autumn, in order that it may contend as a rival with the rose-garden,
- 1-2923          And that autumn may hide the beauty of the rose and the shame of the thorn, so that you may not see the colour of that and the colour of this.
- 1-2928          As long as the blossom shines like a coat of mail, how should the fruits display their knobs?

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<sup>240</sup> Qur’ān 39:10.

<sup>241</sup> Literally “a Hindu who does bad trade”, i.e. a reprobate whose dealings with God result in his perdition (Nich.). In Fārsī, the word *hindū* can also mean “a dark-coloured person”. So, by no means does Ḥaẓrat Mawlānā Rūmī intend to denigrate the Hindu religion, or indeed any religion. Whenever he uses the names of religions and ethnicities, it is merely meant as a figure of speech.

- 1-2929 When the blossom is shed, the fruit ripens: when the body is shattered, the spirit lifts up its head.
- 1-3515 All the spirits that have passed over to the next life are waiting to see in what state that proud spirit shall be born.
- 1-3516 The Ethiopians (the damned spirits) say, “It belongs to us”; the Anatolians (the blessed spirits) say, “No, it is beautiful.”
- 1-3518 If it is an Ethiopian (a damned spirit), the Ethiopians carry it off; and if it is an Anatolian (a blessed spirit), the Anatolians lead it away.
- 1-3524 Who will still pay homage to both Turk and Hindu *On the Day when faces shall become white or black*<sup>242</sup>?

**Story:**  
**Luqmān-e Ḥakīm (“Luqmān”<sup>243</sup> the Wise)**  
**and the proof of the Day of Judgement. [1.7.2]**

- 1-3584 In the eyes of his master, Luqmān was despicable because of his body (outward aspect), compared to the other slaves.
- 1-3586 Among the slaves Luqmān was despised like a parasite; he was full of spiritual ideas, dark-skinned as night.
- 1-3585 The master used to send the slaves to the garden, that fruit might be brought to him for his pleasure.
- 1-3587 Those slaves, being impelled by greed, ate the whole of the fruit with pleasure.
- 1-3588 And told their master that Luqmān had eaten it, whereupon the master became bitter and sorely displeased with Luqmān.
- 1-3589 When Luqmān inquired about and learned the cause of this, he opened his lips to reproach his master.
- 1-3590 “O sir”, Luqmān said, “an unfaithful servant is not approved in the sight of God.
- 1-3591 Put us all to the test, o noble sir: give us our fill of hot water to drink,
- 1-3592 and afterwards make us run into a great plain, you on horseback and we on foot.

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<sup>242</sup> Qur’ān 3:106.

<sup>243</sup> Ḥaẓrat Luqmān was a very wise and holy man who is mentioned in the Qur’ān, in the Sūra that is named after him (Sūra Luqmān, the 31<sup>st</sup> Sūra). He is believed to have been a Nubian, i.e. a black man. This is clear proof that Ḥaẓrat Mawlānā Rūmī has no problem whatsoever with race.

- 1-3593 Then see the evil-doer, see the things that are done by Him who reveals mysteries!”
- 1-3594 The master gave the servants hot water to drink, and they drank it in fear of him.
- 1-3595 Afterwards he drove them into the plains, and they ran amidst the cornfields.
- 1-3596 From distress they began to vomit: the hot water was bringing up the fruit from within them.
- 1-3597 When Luqmān began to vomit from his belly, only the pure water came up from within him.
- 1-3598 If Luqmān’s wisdom can make this clear, then what must be the wisdom of the Lord of existence!
- 1-3599 *On the day when all hidden thoughts shall be searched out*<sup>244</sup>, something hidden and undesired will appear from you.
- 1-3600 *When they shall be given hot water to drink*<sup>245</sup>, all the veils will be torn off from that which is despised.
- 1-3601 The fire of Hell is made the torment of the infidels because fire is the proper test for stones.
- 1-3602 How often, how often, have we spoken gently to our stony hearts, and they would not accept the counsel!
- 1-3603 For a bad wound the vein requires a severe remedy: the teeth of the dog are suitable for the donkey’s head.

### **The Third Rivulet [1.7.3]**

#### **The philosophy of death, and death as a means of transformation.**

- 5-789 Since the day you came into existence, you were fire or air or earth.
- 5-790 If you had remained in that condition, how should you have reached this present height?
- 5-791 The Transmuter did not leave you in your first state of existence: He established a better state of existence than the former one.
- 5-796 You have gained these successive lives from successive deaths: why have you turned your face away from dying in Him?

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<sup>244</sup> Qur’ān, 86:9.

<sup>245</sup> Qur’ān 10:4.



- 5-797        What loss did you suffer from those deaths, that you have clung to this earthly life with such tenacity, o rat?
- 5-798        Since your second life is better than your first, seek to die to the world, and worship the Transmuter.
- 5-799        O insolent man, you have experienced a hundred thousand resurrections at every moment from the beginning of your existence until now:
- 5-800        From inanimateness you unconsciously moved towards vegetal growth, and from vegetal growth towards animal life and tribulation.
- 5-801        Again, you moved towards reason and proper discernments; then again, towards what lies outside of these five senses and six directions.
- 5-802        These footprints reach as far as the shore of the Ocean; then the footprints disappear in the Ocean.
- 5-805        These Oceanic stages have no visible beacon: these resting-places have neither sign nor name.
- 5-807        You have seen that this life was already implicitly present in previous deaths: why, then, are you so attached to the life of the body?

### **Story. [1.7.3]**

- 5-1760       A certain man was saying, “The world would be delightful, were it not for the intervention of death.”
- 5-1761       The other said, “If there were no death, the tangled world would not be worth a straw.
- 5-1762       It would be like a stack heaped up in the field, neglected and left unthreshed.
- 5-1763       You have taken death to be what is really life: you have sown your seed in a barren soil.
- 5-1764       The false reason, indeed, sees the opposite of the truth: it sees life as death, o man of weak judgement.”
- 5-1766       No one who has died is filled with grief because of death; his grief is caused by having too little provision for the life hereafter;
- 5-1767       Otherwise he would not grieve, for he has come from a dungeon<sup>246</sup> into the open country amidst fortune, pleasure and delight.
- 5-1770       “It is the seat of truth,<sup>247</sup> and there God is beside him: he is delivered from this water and earth of the fire-temple<sup>248</sup>.

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<sup>246</sup> Literally “from a pit”.

### The meaning of the ḥadīth:

**“When a pious person dies, he or she regrets not being able to do yet more good deeds by living longer, and when a bad person dies, he or she regrets not having done any good deeds.”<sup>249</sup> [1.7.3]**

- 6-1450 That commander of mankind<sup>250</sup> has rightly said that no one who has passed away from this world
- 6-1451 feels sorrow, regret and disappointment because of death; no, but he feels a hundred regrets for having missed the opportunity,
- 6-1452 Saying to himself, “Why did I not make death my goal – death, which is the store-house of every fortune and every provision –
- 6-1453 And why, through seeing double, did I waste my life pursuing those phantoms that vanished at the hour of death?
- 6-1454 The grief of the dead is not because of death; it is because (so they say) “we dwelled on the outer forms.”
- 5-600 Consequently the present life has come first, in order that you may appreciate the realm of *Alast*<sup>251</sup>.
- 5-601 When you are delivered from this place and go to that place, you will give thanks to God in the sugar-shop of everlastingness.
- 5-602 You will say, ‘There in the world below I was sifting dust, I was fleeing from this pure world.
- 5-603 Alas, if only I had died earlier, so that my time of being tormented in the mud might have been less!’
- 5-606 In reality everyone who dies wishes that the departure to this destination had been earlier:
- 5-607 If he is wicked, in order that his wickedness might have been less; and if he is devout, in order that he might have come home sooner.

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<sup>247</sup> Qur’ān 54:55.

<sup>248</sup> I.e. from the material World where men are consumed with afflictions (Nich.).

<sup>249</sup> *Aḥādīth-e Mathnawī* p. 440, *Al-Jāmi‘ aṣ-Ṣaghīr*, Vol. 2, p. 147.

<sup>250</sup> The Prophet (Nich.).

<sup>251</sup> Qur’ān 7:172 – the Day of *Alast*: while all human souls already existed within God before creation, God asked them: “Am I not your Lord? (*a lastu bi-Rabbikum?*)”, and they all answered “Yes! We testify!”. Ṣūfī mystics have always endeavoured to inwardly remember the Day of *Alast*, in order to return to man’s true inner state, which is the awareness of the soul’s existence in the love of God, just as the love of God has always existed within the souls of mankind.

## One of the meanings of death is that it manifests the Truth. [1.7.3]

### Allegory. [1.7.3]

- 4-3001 Moses said, “O Lord of the Reckoning, You created the form: how did You destroy it again?”
- 4-3002 You have made the form, male and female, that gives joy to the spirit; and then You destroy it: why?”
- 4-3003 God said, “I know that this question of yours does not stem from disbelief, heedlessness and idle fancy;
- 4-3004 Otherwise I would have corrected and chastised you: I would have afflicted you because of this question.
- 4-3005 But I know that you wish to discover in My actions the wisdom and hidden meaning of the continuity of existence<sup>252</sup>.
- 4-3006 That you may make the lowly familiar with them and in doing so make every raw (ignorant) person to become cooked<sup>253</sup>.
- 4-3015 Then God spoke to him, saying, “O you who possess the most excellent understanding, since you have asked the question, come, hear the answer.
- 4-3016 O Moses, sow some seed in the earth, that you yourself may find the answer to this question.”
- 4-3017 When Moses had sown and the grain seed was fully grown and its ears had become beautiful and symmetrical;
- 4-3018 He took the sickle and was cutting the crop, when a voice from the Unseen reached his ear,
- 4-3019 Crying, “Why do you sow and tend grain seed and cut it when it has become perfect?”
- 4-3020 He replied, “O Lord, I destroy and lay it low because straw is here and also grain.
- 4-3021 The grain is not suitable to be stored in the straw-barn; likewise, the straw is unfit for putting in the grain barn.
- 4-3022 It is not wise to mix these two: wisdom makes it necessary to separate them while winnowing.”

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<sup>252</sup> I.e. the constant renewal of existence through death and rebirth, the coming and going of being and things.

<sup>253</sup> This verse is reminiscent of a famous verse from Ḥaẓrat Mawlānā Rūmī’s *Dīwān-e Shams-e Tabrīzī*, in which he summarized his life as follows: “The result of my life in brief is: I was unripe, I became ripe, I was burnt” (*Dīwān-e Shams-e Tabrīzī*, Ghazal 1768, line 18521).

- 4-3023 God said, “From whom did you gain this knowledge, which enabled you to construct a threshing floor?”
- 4-3024 He replied, “You, o God, gave me discernment.” God said, “Then how should I not have discernment?”
- 4-3025 Amongst the created beings are pure spirits; there are also dark and muddy spirits.
- 4-3026 These shells are not the same: in one of them is the pearl and in another the worthless bead.
- 4-3027 It is necessary to make manifest the difference between this good and evil, just as it is necessary to distinguish the wheat from the straw.
- 4-3028 The creation of these creatures of the world is for the purpose of manifestation, in order that the treasure of Divine providences may not remain hidden<sup>254</sup>.

### **The Fourth Rivulet [1.7.4]**

#### **The everlastingness of the soul and the transitoriness of the body.**

- 1-3267 The body is boasting of its beauty and attractiveness, while the spirit, having concealed its glory, feathers and plumes,
- 1-3268 says to it, “O dunghill, who are you? Through my beams you have come to life for a day or two.
- 1-3269 Your coquetry and prideful airs are not contained in the world (go beyond all bounds), but wait until I spring up and escape from you!
- 1-3265 The plants say, “We are green of ourselves, we are merry and smiling (blooming) and we are tall by nature.”
- 1-3266 The season of summer says to them, “O peoples, look at yourselves as I leave!”
- 3-4224 Your stature is normally unchangeable, but your shadow is now short, then long.
- 3-1611 To the spirit the knowledge of the Unity of God is sweeter than care for the body: it has a hand and a foot different from those which are visible<sup>255</sup>.
- 3-1612 In dreams you may see the spiritual hand and foot and their connection with the spiritual body: consider that vision a reality, do not consider it imaginary.
- 3-1613 Even without the material body you have a spiritual body: therefore do not fear the departure of the soul from the body.

<sup>254</sup> Ḥadīth Qudsī: “I was a hidden treasure and desired to be known, so I created mankind, in order that I might be known”. *Aḥādīth-e Mathnawī* p. 120; *Al-Lu’lu’ al-Marṣū’* p. 61.

<sup>255</sup> I.e. “it has a hidden hand and foot”.

- 1-712 Without question, in this body the spirit that lacks reality is as a wooden sword in the sheath.
- 3-1729 This world is a dream – do not cling to false opinions; if in dream a hand is lost, no harm will come to you.
- 3-1730 If in a dream a pruning saw has cut off your head, not only will your head still be in its place but also will your life be prolonged.
- 3-1733 The Prophet said of this world, which is unchanging in appearance, that it is the sleeper’s dream<sup>256</sup>.
- 3-1738 If the potter breaks a pot, he himself will restore it to a perfect state when he wishes.

**The story of the Prophet ‘Uzayr’s ass<sup>257</sup>. [1.7.4]**

- 3-1763 “Hey, ‘Uzayr, look at your ass which has rotted and crumbled into pieces at your side.
- 3-1764 We will gather its parts in your presence – its head, tail, ears and legs.”
- 3-1765 There is no visible hand, and yet He is putting the parts together and giving a wholeness to the scattered pieces.
- 3-1768 “Open your eyes and behold the resurrection clearly, that no doubt may remain in you concerning the Day of Judgement,
- 3-1769 And that you may fully witness My power to unite, so that at the time of death you wilt not tremble with anxiety,
- 3-1770 Even as during sleep you feel secure from (have no fear of) the passing of all the bodily senses:
- 3-1771 When you are asleep you do not fear for your senses, even though they become scattered and ruined.”
- 3-1877 Since He gives light without any lamp — if your lamp is gone, why are you lamenting?

**The treasure of the soul is hidden in the ruins of the body.  
By experiencing voluntary death (Fārsī: marg-e ikhtiyārī,  
Arabic: al-mawtu’l-irādī) you reach that treasure. [1.7.4]**

- 4-2532 No, but you will begin to desire death as the sucking baby desires milk, not because of the pain that holds you in its grip.

<sup>256</sup> *Aḥādīth-e Mathnawī* p. 282; *Iḥyā’ ‘Ulūm ad-Dīn*, Vol. 3, p. 148.

<sup>257</sup> Qur’ān 2:259. ‘Uzayr is usually identified with the Biblical Prophet Ezra.

- 4-2533 You will be seeking death, but because of painful infirmity; no, you will see the treasure of the ruin of the house (of the body).
- 4-2540 Demolish the house, for a hundred thousand houses may be made from the cornelian<sup>258</sup> of this Yemen.
- 4-2541 The treasure lies beneath the house, and there is no help for it: do not be afraid of destroying the house and do not stand still<sup>259</sup>.
- 4-2542 For from one treasure in hand it is possible to build a thousand houses without suffering toil and pain.
- 4-2543 In the end this house will fall into ruin of itself and the treasure beneath it will certainly be uncovered;
- 4-2544 But the treasure will not be yours, since the spirit receives that Divine gift as wages for destroying the house.
- 4-2545 When it has not done that work, its wages are nothing: there is nothing for Man hereafter but the reward for that which he accomplished here<sup>260</sup>.
- 4-2546 After that, you will gnaw your hand in remorse, saying, "Alas, a moon like this was concealed under the cloud.
- 4-2547 I did not do the good which they told me to do: the treasure and the house are gone, and my hand is empty."
- 4-2562 I saw beautiful pictures and paintings in the house: I was without self-control in my love of the house.
- 4-2563 I was unaware of any hidden treasure; otherwise, the axe would have been as the pomander in my hand<sup>261</sup>.
- 4-2564 Ah, if I had given the axe its due, I would now be free from grief.

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<sup>258</sup> A pale to deep red or reddish-brown variety of clear chalcedony (a microcrystalline, translucent variety of quartz) used in jewelry.

<sup>259</sup> In Ḥaẓrat Mawlānā Rūmī's parlance, "destroying and ruining the body" means to transform the sensual desires, which are derived from the nafs, i.e. ego.

<sup>260</sup> Qur'ān 53:39-41.

<sup>261</sup> I.e. "I should have taken delight in holding and wielding the axe (of self-mortification)." (Nich.). Pomander: A mixture of aromatic substances enclosed in a bag or box as a protection against odour or infection.

### **The Fifth Rivulet [1.7.5]**

**In the afterlife you shall reap what you have sown in this life.**

**Ḥadīth: “The way people have lived determines the way they die and the way they will be resurrected<sup>262</sup>.”**

- 2-963 At the time of the Resurrection every accident has a particular form, and the form of every accident<sup>263</sup> has a way of appearing before God.
- 2-977 Where do those accidents come from? From ideas. And where do these ideas come from? From thoughts.
- 2-978 This world is one thought, emanating from the Universal Intellect: the Intellect is like a king, and the ideas are his envoys.
- 2-979 The first world is the world of trial; the second world is the world of reward for this and that.
- 2-1419 You need to rise from the dead in the same manner of acting and form that prevails in your nature.
- 2-1418 The decision as to what you are belongs to the disposition which is predominant: when the gold is more than the copper, the mixture is gold.
- 1-1687 On the day of Resurrection the skills and dispositions will return to their rightful owner, like articles of property.
- 1-1690 Like carrier pigeons, they bring useful things to know from other cities to their own city.
- 1-2013 He made the earth so that it filled his grave: he vivified his seed under the earth.
- 1-2014 These trees are like the buried ones: they have lifted up their hands from the earth.
- 1-2019 Although He put them to death in winter, He revived them by means of spring and gave them leaves.
- 5-3971 This new springtime after the fall of the leaves is a proof of the existence of Resurrection.
- 5-3972 In spring the secrets are revealed: whatever this Earth has eaten is exposed to view.
- 5-3973 It shoots up from her mouth and lips in order that she may bring to light her hidden mind and way.

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<sup>262</sup> Qur’ān 78: 18. *Aḥādīth-e Mathnawī*, p. 81; *Muslim*, Vol. 8, p. 130.

<sup>263</sup> Here, “accident” (*‘araḏ*, from the Arabic *‘araḍ*) is used a philosophical term, meaning “a nonessential attribute or characteristic of something”.

**Sleeping, or being dead, and being awake, or being  
alive, can be compared with each other. [1.7.5]**

- 5-1780 Dawn is the little Resurrection: o seeker of refuge with God, judge from it what the greater Resurrection will be like.
- 5-1781 Even as the soul flies towards the clay of its body, the scroll of every one's good and evil actions will fly into the left hand or the right<sup>264</sup>.
- 5-1782 Into his hand will be put the scroll (register) of avarice and generosity, impiety and piety, and all the good or evil dispositions<sup>265</sup> that he had formed yesterday<sup>266</sup>.
- 5-1783 At dawn when he wakes from slumber, that good and evil will come back to him.
- 5-1784 If he has disciplined his moral nature, the same purified nature will present itself to him when he awakes;
- 5-1785 And if yesterday he was ignorant, wicked and misguided, he will find his left hand black as a letter of mourning<sup>267</sup>;
- 5-1786 But if yesterday he was morally clean, pious and religious, he will gain the precious pearl when he awakes.
- 5-1787 Our sleep and waking are two witnesses which attest the significance of death and Resurrection to us.
- 5-1788 The lesser Resurrection has revealed the greater Resurrection; the lesser death has shed light on the greater death.
- 5-1789 But in the present life this scroll of our good and evil actions is an illusion, hidden from our sight, even though it will be seen very clearly at the greater Resurrection.
- 5-1790 Here this illusion is hidden, only the traces are visible; but there God will produce actual forms from this illusion.
- 5-1791 See the idea of a house in the architect, hidden in his mind like a seed in a piece of earth.
- 5-1793 Every idea that makes its abode in the mind will become a visible form on the Day of Resurrection.

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<sup>264</sup> Qur'ān 84:7-13.

<sup>265</sup> I.e. habits of mind, attitudes, and character attributes.

<sup>266</sup> I.e. in this world (Nich.).

<sup>267</sup> I.e. the black list of his actions on earth will be placed in his left hand, since he is one of the damned (Nich.).



5-1794 Like the architect's idea conceived in his thought; like the plant produced in the earth that takes the seed.

**It is God's will that no deceased person let us  
know anything from the other world. [1.7.5]**

- 6-3524 The Khwāja<sup>268</sup> said, “O excellent bailiff, I have heard what you said, point by point,
- 6-3525 But I was not commanded to answer, and I dared not open my lips without being directed.
- 6-3526 Now that we have become acquainted with the conditions and degrees of the spiritual world, a seal has been laid upon our lips,
- 6-3527 in order that the mysteries of the Unseen would not be divulged, thus destroying the life and livelihood of mortals,
- 6-3528 and in order that the veil of forgetfulness would not be entirely torn and the meat in the pot of tribulation would not be left half-raw.
- 6-3529 we are all ear, although the material form of the ear has become deaf: we are all speech, but our lips are silent.
- 6-3530 We now see the result of everything that we gave during our life in the world: the material world is the veil, and the spiritual world is the vision.
- 6-3531 The day of sowing is the day of concealment and scattering seed in a piece of earth.
- 6-3532 The season of reaping and the time of wielding the sickle is the day of reward and manifestation.
- 2-940 On the day of death this sense-perception of yours will vanish: do you have the spiritual light that should be the companion of your heart?
- 2-941 When dust shall fill these eyes in the tomb, do you have that which will make the grave bright?
- 2-942 At the time when your hands and feet shall be torn to shreds, do you have wings and feathers that your spirit may fly upwards?

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<sup>268</sup> *Khwāja* (< Fārsī *khwājeh*, more or less pronounced *khōjé*) is an honorific title given to people of distinction. In Sufism, particularly in the Indian subcontinent, it takes on the meaning of “Master”, e.g. Ḥaẓrat Khwāja Mu‘īnu’d-dīn Chishtī, the great Ṣūfī Saint of Ajmēr, Rājasthān, India. But also outside the Indian subcontinent Ṣūfī Masters have borne this title. A few examples: the prominent Persian Ṣūfī mystic and prolific author Ḥaẓrat Khwāja ‘Abdullāh Anṣārī of Herāt (1006-1088 CE) and the influential Turkic Ṣūfī Master Ḥaẓrat Khwāja Aḥmad Yasawī (1093-1066 CE), who lived and worked in Kazākhstān. It is also worth mentioning that between the 12<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries CE the Naqshbandī Ṣūfī Order was known as *Tarīqat-e Khwājagān*, i.e. “the Way of the Masters” (*Khwājagān* is the plural of *Khwāja*). The Naqshbandī Ṣūfī Order took its present name from the illustrious Master Ḥaẓrat Khwāja Bahā’u’d-dīn Shāh Naqshband of Bukhārā (1318–1389 CE).

- 2-943 When this animal soul is no more, it befits you to replace it with the everlasting spirit.

**The Sixth Rivulet [1.7.6]**  
**True lovers see death as a liberation.**

**Before he died, Ḥaṣrat Mawlā ‘Alī said:  
“By the Lord of the Ka‘ba, I am liberated<sup>269</sup>.” [1.7.6]**

- 3-3934 Let the bodily form go: who am I in reality? Is not the bodily figure of little importance when I am everlasting?
- 3-3935 Since by the grace of God the Divine spirit was breathed into me<sup>270</sup>, I am the breath of God which is kept apart from the windpipe of the body.
- 1-3967 Desire for death became the badge of the sincere, for this word (declaration) was made a test for the deniers of the Truth<sup>271</sup>.

**How God tested the deniers of the Truth by  
challenging them to invoke death<sup>272</sup>. [1.7.6]**

- 3-3937 Since God said, ‘Desire death, O you who are sincere,’ I am sincere: I will lavish my soul upon this (I will sacrifice my life for this purpose).”
- 3-3951 Death and migration from this earthly abode has become as sweet to me as leaving the cage and flying is sweet to the captive bird —
- 3-3952 The cage that is in the very midst of the garden, so that the bird sees the rose-beds and the trees,
- 3-3953 While outside, around the cage, a multitude of birds is sweetly chanting tales of liberty:
- 3-3954 When it sees that verdant place, neither desire for food remains to the bird in the cage, nor patience and rest,

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<sup>269</sup> Literally, Ḥaṣrat Mawlā ‘Alī is reported to have said: “*Fuztu wa Rabbi ‘l-Ka ‘ba*” – “By the Lord of the Ka‘ba, I have triumphed”, implying that his triumph liberated him. He uttered these words after having been mortally wounded with a poisoned sword (see *Aḥādīth-e Mathnawī* p. 124 – *Tafṣīr-e Abū ‘l-Futūḥ*, Vol. 5, p. 318).

<sup>270</sup> Literally, “I was (the object of the verse of the Qur’ān in which God says) ‘*I breathed*’.” (Nich.) - Qur’ān 15:29.

<sup>271</sup> In Nicholson’s translation it says “Jews” instead of “deniers of Truth”. But this is wrong. The word which Ḥaṣrat Mawlānā Rūmī uses in the *Mathnawī* is *jahūdān*, the plural or *jahūd*, which is often confused with the word *Yahūd* (“Jews”). *Jahūd* or *jahūdān* is best translated as “deniers of the Truth”. *Jahūd* is similar in meaning to the Arabic word *kāfir*, another word that is very often misinterpreted and misunderstood. It is usually translated as “infidel”, “unbeliever”, or “pagan”. Yet in Arabic, *kāfir* literally means “one who covers the Truth”, i.e. “someone who is spiritually ignorant and blind”. As such, a *kāfir* can belong to any religious group or faith, including Islām. The same applies to the term *jahūd*.

<sup>272</sup> Qur’ān 62:6.

- 3-3955 But it puts out its head through every hole, that perhaps it may tear off this  
fetter from its leg.
- 3-3956 Since its heart and soul are already outside like this, how will it be when you  
open the cage?
- 1-1346 Likewise, the spirits confined in water and clay, when they escape from their  
prisons of clay glad at heart,
- 1-1347 Begin to dance in the air of Divine Love and become flawless like the full  
moon's orb.
- 3-4100 O friends, I am not one of those (without experience), that idle fancies should  
make me halt on the Way.
- 3-4102 I am done with pomp and ostentation. ‘Say, come’<sup>273</sup>: He (the Beloved) said to  
my soul, ‘Come’.”
- 1-3933 To me the berry of dying has become sweet: the words “*no, they are living*”<sup>274</sup>  
have come from God for my sake.
- 1-3934 Kill me, my trusted friends, kill me, despicable as I am, for in my being killed  
is my everlasting life<sup>275</sup>.
- 1-3936 If my staying in this world did not separate me from God, He would not have  
said, ‘*Verily, we are returning to Him.*’<sup>276</sup>,”
- 1-3937 The returning one is he who comes back to his native city, and, fleeing from  
the revolution of Time, approaches the Unity.
- 1-3943 This body has no value in my view: without my body I am the noble-spirited,  
the son of the noble.
- 1-3944 Dagger and sword have become my sweet basil: my death has become my  
banquet and narcissus garden.”
- 3-4186 The existence of the animal originated from the death of the plant: therefore the  
command “*kill me, o trustworthy friends*” is right.
- 3-4187 Since there is such a victory for us after the checkmate of death, the words  
“*verily, in my being killed there is a life*” are true.

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<sup>273</sup> Qur’ān 3:61 and 6:151.

<sup>274</sup> Qur’ān 2:154.

<sup>275</sup> This verse and the quotes between brackets in the verses 3-4186 and 3-4187 are taken from the *Dīwān* (collection of poems) of Ḥaẓrat Ḥusayn ibn Manṣūr al-Ḥallāj, the famous Ṣūfī martyr (ca. 858-922 CE).

<sup>276</sup> Qur’ān, 2:156.

**The story of Sayyidu'sh-Shuhadā (“The Chief of Martyrs”)  
Ḥamza<sup>277</sup>, who passionately sought after “the elixir  
of death” in order to gain eternal life. [1.7.6]**

- 3-3419 Whenever Ḥamza went into the battle-field at the end of his life, he would enter the fray like one intoxicated, without a coat of mail.
- 3-3420 Advancing with open breast and naked body, he would throw himself into the sword-bearing ranks.
- 3-3421 The people asked him, saying, “O uncle of the Prophet, o Lion who breaks the ranks of the adversaries, o prince of the champions<sup>278</sup>,
- 3-3424 When you were young and strongly-knit<sup>279</sup>, you did not go into the battle line without a coat of mail.
- 3-3425 Now that you have become old, infirm and bent, you are knocking at the doors of recklessness,
- 3-3426 And with sword and spear, like one who fears nothing, you are grappling, struggling and straining yourself.
- 3-3429 Ḥamza said, “When I was young, I used to consider farewell to this world as death.
- 3-3430 How should anyone go to death eagerly? How should he come naked (unarmed) to meet the dragon?
- 3-3431 But now, through the Light of Muḥammad, I am not subject to this transitory world.
- 3-3432 Beyond the realm of the senses, I see the camp of the Divine King filled with the army of the Light of God.
- 3-3433 Tent on tent and tent-rope on tent-rope. Thanks be to Him who awakened me from slumber!”
- 3-3434 The one in whose eyes death is destruction – he clings to the Divine command, “*Do not cast yourselves into destruction*”<sup>280</sup>;
- 3-3435 And the one to whom death is the opening of the gate – for him in the Divine Allocution (the Qur’ān) there is the command, “*Race with each other in hastening*”<sup>281</sup>.

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<sup>277</sup> Even though Ḥamza ibn ‘Abdi’l-Muṭallib was one of the Prophet’s uncles, they were of about the same age and grew up together. A fierce and brave warrior, he was a respected member of the Quraysh tribe. He died in the Battle of Uhūd in 625 CE. After his heroic but brutal death Ḥaẓrat Muḥammad called him “the Chief of Martyrs”.

<sup>278</sup> Literally “stallions” (Nich.).

<sup>279</sup> Literally “strung tight” (Nich.).

<sup>280</sup> Qur’ān 2:195.

**The meaning of the ḥadīth:  
“If anyone wants to meet God with love,  
God too will meet him with love.”<sup>282</sup> [1.7.6]**

- 3-3439 Everyone’s death reflects his own qualities, my son: to the enemy of God an enemy, and to the friend of God a friend.
- 3-3440 In the eyes of the Turk the mirror has a light colour; similarly, in the eyes of the Ethiopian the mirror is dark as an Ethiopian.
- 3-3438 Whoever considers death to be beautiful like Joseph gives up his soul in exchange for it; whoever considers it to be like the wolf turns back from the path of right guidance.
- 3-3441 Your fear of death in fleeing from it is really your fear of yourself.<sup>283</sup> Take heed, o dear soul!
- 3-3442 It is your own ugly face, not the countenance of death: your spirit is like a tree, and death is like the leaf.
- 3-3443 It has grown from you, whether it is good or evil: every hidden thought of yours, good or bad, is born from within yourself.

**The story of Bilāl al-Ḥabashī<sup>284</sup>, who embraced death with joy. [1.7.6]**

- 3-3517 When weakness made Bilāl grow thin as the new moon, the colour of death fell on his face.
- 3-3518 His wife saw him in this state and cried, “O sorrow!” Then Bilāl said to her, “No, no! Say, ‘O joy!’
- 3-3519 Until now living has caused me pain and suffering: how should you know how delightful death is, and what it is in reality?”
- 3-3527 Bilāl’s wife said to him, “This is the separation, o man of fine qualities.” “No, no,” he said, “It is the union, the union with God.”
- 3-3228 The wife said, “Tonight you will go to a strange country, you will become absent from your family and relatives.”
- 3-3529 “No, no,” he replied; “on the contrary, tonight in reality my spirit is coming home from a strange country.”

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<sup>281</sup> Qur’ān 57:21.

<sup>282</sup> Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazzālī, *Ihyā’ ‘Ulūm ad-Dīn*, Vol. 5, Second edition, Abnā’ Sharīf Al-Anṣārī Publishing Company, Al-Maktaba Al-‘Aṣrīya, Beirut, Lebanon, 1417 AH/1996 CE.

<sup>283</sup> Literally “that which you fear from death in flight – you are (really) fearing that from yourself.” (Nich.).

<sup>284</sup> “Bilāl the Ethiopian”, a freed slave, who became the first muezzin.

- 3-3530 She said, “Where shall we see your face?” He answered, “In God’s chosen circle.”
- 3-3531 His chosen circle is close to you, if you look upward, not downward.
- 3-3533 “Alas,” she said, “this house has been ruined.” “Look at the moon,” he said. “do not look at the cloud.
- 3-3534 He has ruined it in order that He may make it more flourishing: my relatives were numerous and the house was too small.
- 3-3536 I was a beggar in this dungeon-like house; now I have become a king: a palace is needed for a king.”
- 3-3537 Truly, palaces are the place for spiritual kings to dwell in; for him who is spiritually dead a grave is a sufficient house and dwelling.
- 3-3538 To the Prophets this world seemed narrow: like kings, they went into the world of spacelessness<sup>285</sup>.

**To Prophets and Saints death is the  
gateway to the City of Eternity. [1.7.6]**

- 5-1713 Bodily death is not bitter to them, since they go from a dungeon and prison into a garden.
- 3-1727 And that, if the mortar of the Sky (Fortune) should pound them small a hundred times in this muddy place (the material world),
- 3-1728 Yet, since they had seen the origin of this bodily composition, they were not afraid of the derivatives (which belong to the domain) of imagination.
- 5-1714 They have been delivered from the world of torment: no one weeps for the loss of what amounts to nothing, nothing.
- 5-1721 The soul, freed from the turmoil of the body, is soaring on the wings of the heart (spirit) without bodily feet (means of movement).
- 5-1722 Like the prisoner in a dungeon who falls asleep at night and dreams of a rose-garden,
- 5-1723 and says, “O God, do not bring me back to my body, but leave me alone so that I may walk as a prince<sup>286</sup> in this garden.”
- 5-1724 God says to him, “Your prayer is granted: do not go back” – and God knows the right course best.

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<sup>285</sup> *Lā Makān*, literally meaning “no place”, or “spaceless space”, i.e. “the Placeless Realm”, the place of the deity, where there is no space and time, a state beyond our conception.

<sup>286</sup> Literally “advance and retreat (on the battle-field)” (Nich.).

- 5-1725 Consider how delightful such a dream is! Without having seen death, the dreamer goes into Paradise.
- 5-1736 People will say, “Poor so-and-so is dead,” but you will say, “I am living, o you heedless ones!
- 5-1737 Even though my body, like other bodies, is laid to rest, the Eight Paradises have blossomed in my heart.”
- 5-1738 When the spirit is lying at rest amidst roses and eglantines, what does it matter if the body is buried in that dung?
- 5-1739 What should the spirit that has been laid asleep in this way know of the body, or care whether the body is in a rose-garden or an ash-pit?
- 5-1740 For in the bright celestial world the spirit is crying, “*O, if only my people knew!*”<sup>287</sup>,
- 4-442 Those persons, then, who have passed from the world are not non-existent, but they are immersed in the Divine Attributes.
- 4-443 All their attributes are absorbed in the Attributes of God, just like the star is left without trace in the presence of the sun.
- 4-444 If you demand a citation from the Qur’ān, o stubborn one, recite *all of them shall be brought into Our presence*<sup>288</sup>.
- 4-445 The person denoted by the word *muḥḍarūn* (those brought into the presence) is not non-existent (*ma’dūm*). Consider this well, that you may gain some knowledge of the everlasting life (*baqā*) of the spirits.
- 3-3571 Every state of heaviness (sloth) and indolence, indeed, is derived from the body; the spirit is always flying because of its lightness (subtlety).

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<sup>287</sup> Qur’ān 36:26.

<sup>288</sup> Qur’ān 36:32 and 36:53.

**The Seventh Rivulet [1.7.7]  
Voluntary death<sup>289</sup> and the meaning of  
the ḥadīth: “Die before you die.”<sup>290</sup>,**

**Poem by Sanā’ī of Ghazna<sup>291</sup>:**

**“If you yearn for eternal life, then, o friend, die before you die, for  
Idrīs<sup>292</sup> attained Paradise before us by dying in this manner.” [1.7.7]**

- 4-2272 To die before death is to be safe, o young man: this was the command of Muṣṭafā<sup>293</sup> (Muḥammad) to us.
- 4-2273 He said, “Die, all of you, before death comes; otherwise you will die with the certainty of suffering greatly afterwards.
- 4-3108 The king says, “The wind is fierce and my lamp is dying out (is an imperfect one): I will light another lamp from it.
- 4-3110 Like the Gnostic who, for the sake of gaining freedom from care, has lit the candle of the heart (spirit) from this defective lamp of the body,
- 4-3111 In order that, if one day this bodily lamp should suddenly die, he may place the candle of the spirit before his eye.
- 6-3837 The mystery of “Die before death” is that the prizes come after dying (and not before).
- 6-3838 Apart from dying, no other skill is of use to God, o cunning schemer.
- 6-3839 One Divine favour is better than a hundred kinds of personal effort: these may bring about a hundred kinds of harm.
- 6-3840 And the Divine favour depends on dying: the trustworthy ones have put this doctrine to the test.
- 6-3841 No, not even the mystic’s death is possible without the Divine favour: listen, listen, do not tarry anywhere without the Divine favour!
- 6-723 You have suffered much agony, but you are still in the veil, because dying to self was the fundamental principle, and you have not fulfilled it.

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<sup>289</sup> Voluntary death = *fanā’ fi’Llāh* (“annihilation in God”) or *faqr* (“spiritual poverty”).

<sup>290</sup> *Aḥādīth-e Mathnawī*, p. 370; also see Qur’ān 6:122.

<sup>291</sup> “Sage of Ghazna”: the Persian Ṣūfī poet Ḥakīm Sanā’ī of Ghazna (d. ca.1131 CE). He was the first poet to write a major *mathnawī*, entitled *Ḥadīqatu’l-Ḥaqīqa wa Sharī’atu’l-Ṭarīqa* (“The Walled Garden of Truth and the Law of the Path”). This work also was an inspiration to Ḥaṣrat Mawlānā Rūmī.

<sup>292</sup> Idrīs: a Prophet who is usually identified with the Biblical Prophet Enoch.

<sup>293</sup> *Al-Muṣṭafā* is an epithet of the Prophet meaning “the Chosen One”, with the implication that Ḥaṣrat Muḥammad was chosen by God because of his purity – *ṣafā* in Arabic. *Muṣṭafā* and *ṣafā* are both derived from the Arabic verbal root, ṣ-f-w, meaning “to be pure”, “to purify” etc.



- 6-724 Your agony is not finished until you die: you cannot reach the roof without completing the ladder.
- 6-725 When two rungs out of a hundred are deficient, the aspirer will be forbidden to set foot on the roof.
- 6-726 When the rope lacks one yard out of a hundred, how should the water go from the well into the bucket?
- 6-730 Since you have not died, your agony has been prolonged: be extinguished in the dawn, o candle of Tirāz<sup>294</sup>!
- 6-731 Know that the Sun of the world is hidden until our stars have become hidden.
- 6-738 O you who possess sincerity, if you want that Reality unveiled, choose death and tear off the veil –
- 6-739 Not such a death that you will go into a grave, but a death consisting of spiritual transformation, so that you will go into a Light.
- 6-740 When a man grows up, his childhood dies; when he becomes a light-skinned Greek, he washes out the darkish colour of the Ethiopian.
- 6-741 When earth becomes gold, its earthly aspect does not remain; when sorrow becomes joy, the thorn of sorrowfulness does not remain.
- 6-820 Listen, how is this made known to you? By means of the spiritual resurrection. Seek to experience that resurrection: do not dispute about that resurrection.
- 6-821 The necessary condition to experience the Day of Resurrection is to die first, for the word *ba'th* (resurrection) means “to raise to life from the dead.”
- 1-264 Because of this the whole world has gone astray: hardly anyone is aware of God's *Abdāl* (Substitutes)<sup>295</sup>.
- 6-822 Consequently all the world has taken the wrong way, for they are afraid of non-existence, even though in reality it is the refuge in which they find salvation.
- 6-823 How shall we seek true knowledge? By renouncing our false knowledge. How shall we seek true peace? By renouncing peace with our carnal selves.
- 6-824 How shall we seek real existence? By renouncing illusory existence. How shall we seek the apple of Truth? By renouncing the hand of self-assertion and self-interest.

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<sup>294</sup> I.e. “o beautiful one” (Nich.).

<sup>295</sup> See footnote on “*Quṭb*” - Fourth River, First Rivulet, verse 2-3659. Even though the term *Abdāl* usually denotes a lesser degree of Saint in the hidden hierarchy of Saints, here it means the Saints who are next in rank to the *Quṭb*, who is at the pinnacle of this hierarchy. To understand this verse [1-264], it is helpful to know the preceding one [1-263]: “Do measure the actions of holy men by (the analogy of) yourself, even though *shēr* (lion) and *shīr* (milk) are written in the same way (شیر).”

- 6-825 O best Helper, only You can make the eye – that sees the non-existent – see that which is really existent.
- 6-826 The eye that was produced from non-existence saw the Essence of real Being as wholly non-existent;

**The resurrection, the renewal or transformation  
and the impermanence of beings<sup>296</sup>. [1.7.7]**

- 6-827 But, if your two eyes are transformed and illumined, this well-ordered world becomes the scene of the Last Judgement<sup>297</sup>.
- 6-761 In the whole world, both men and women are continually in agony and dying.
- 1-1144 Every moment the world is renewed, and we are unaware of its being renewed while it remains the same in appearance.
- 1-1145 Like the stream, life is continually renewed, even though in the body it takes on the appearance of everlastingness.
- 1-1147 If you whirl a piece of burning wood rapidly, it appears to the eye as a very long line of fire.
- 1-1148 The swift motion produced by the action of God presents this length of duration (Time) as a phenomenon arising from the rapidity of God's action<sup>298</sup>.
- 1-1142 Every instant, then, you are dying and returning: Muṣṭafā declared that this world only lasts for a single moment<sup>299</sup>.
- 1-2110 At every moment the call, "*Am not I your Lord?*"<sup>300</sup> comes from Him and substance and accidents<sup>301</sup> become existent.
- 1-2111 If they do not answer "*Yes*", then their coming from non-existence into existence still is equivalent to "*Yes*".
- 1-2222 From the Unseen soul and spirit come into human existence, like running water.

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<sup>296</sup> Qur'ān 15:50.

<sup>297</sup> I.e. "what is universally and eternally true."

<sup>298</sup> I.e. "This impression of continuity arises from the rapidity of God's action."

<sup>299</sup> Ḥadīth: *Aḥādith-e Mathnawī* p. 56; *Al-Lu'lu'u'l-Marṣū'* p. 36.

<sup>300</sup> Qur'ān 7:172 – the Day of *Alast*: while all human souls already existed within God before creation, God asked them: "Am I not your Lord? (*a lastu bi-Rabbikum?*)", and they all answered "Yes! We testify!". Ṣūfī mystics have always endeavoured to inwardly remember the Day of *Alast*, in order to return to man's true inner state, which is the awareness of the soul's existence in the love of God, just as the love of God has always existed within the souls of mankind.

<sup>301</sup> Here, "accident" is used as a philosophical term, meaning "a nonessential attribute or characteristic of something".

- 5-3641 Even if a hundred thousand “states”<sup>302</sup> came here and went back to the Unseen, o trusted friend.
- 5-3642 Each day’s “state” is not like that of the day before: they are passing as a river that has no obstacle in its course.
- 5-3543 Each day’s joy is of a different kind, each day’s thought makes a different impression.

**“Every day God embarks on a new task” - this means:  
Each time God is manifested in a different form<sup>303</sup> and  
the meaning of time according to the Ṣūfīs. [1.7.7]**

- 1-133 The Ṣūfī is the son of the present time<sup>304</sup>, o friend: it is not the rule of the Way to say ‘Tomorrow.’
- 1-134 Are you not indeed a Ṣūfī, then? That which you hold in your hand is reduced to nothing by postponing the payment.”
- 6-2719 Listen, come, o soul of my soul, o you are the soul of a hundred worlds<sup>305</sup>, gladly take the opportunity of seizing the cash of this present moment.
- 6-2720 Do not stealthily remove your moonlike face from the night travellers, do not withdraw yourself from this riverbed, o flowing water.
- 6-2722 When you see that verdure is fresh<sup>306</sup> on the river’s brim, then you can know even from a distance that water is there.
- 6-2725 But the freshness of every beautiful rose garden is clear evidence of the rain that was hidden from view.
- 6-2721 But flow in order that the river bank may laugh (may be made to blossom), by the running water, and that jasmines may raise their heads on each brim of the river.

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<sup>302</sup> “states”: *ḥāl*, plural *aḥwāl* or *ḥālāt* – a *ḥāl* is a temporary mystical state, as opposed to *maqām* (plural *maqāmāt*), usually rendered as “station”, a lasting level of mystical attainment. A *maqām* is realized through one’s own efforts on the Path, while a *ḥāl* is a grace bestowed by God.

<sup>303</sup> Cf. Qur’ān 55:29. This is one of the quotes of the Ṣūfī mystic Ḥaḏrat Shaykh Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī (d. 996 CE), mentioned in Ḥaḏrat Shaykh Fakhru’d-Dīn ‘Irāqī’s *Lama’āt* (“Divine Flashes”) and in his *Kullīyyāt* (“Complete Works”), p. 382. Ḥaḏrat Shaykh Fakhru’d-Dīn ‘Irāqī was a Ṣūfī mystic and writer who died in 1289 CE.

<sup>304</sup> “Son of the present time” (*ibnu’l-waqt*): a true Ṣūfī lives in the Eternal Now and is concerned with neither past nor future.

<sup>305</sup> Or, “o you who are a hundred worlds to me.” (Nich.).

<sup>306</sup> Literally, “intoxicated” or “drunk” (Nich.).

## **The Eighth Rivulet [1.7.8] Hell and Paradise.**

### **The four kinds of Paradise:**

- 1: the Paradise of the nafs, which is full of pleasure, is promised by the Sharī'a as a reward to those who do good<sup>307</sup>.**
- 2: the Paradise which is inherited by following the Path of the Prophet Muḥammad and of the Saints<sup>308</sup>.**
- 3: the spiritual Paradise, which is the heart where the Divine manifests Itself<sup>309</sup>.**
- 4: the Paradise of the Highest Spiritual Delight, which is the Paradise where the soul beholds the beauty of God.**

**Whether one attains Paradise depends on how great one's love of God is; Hell equally has levels; the level one reaches also depends on how great one's wickedness is. [1.7.8]**

- 4-472            God said that the wall of Paradise is not lifeless and ugly like other walls;
- 4-473            Like the door and wall of the body, it is endowed with intelligence: the house (Paradise) is living since it belongs to the King of kings.
- 4-474            Tree, fruit and clear water take part in conversation and discourse with the inhabitant of Paradise.
- 4-475            Because Paradise has not been built with the builder's materials; no, but it has been built with good deeds and intentions.
- 4-477            This edifice resembles its foundation which is full of defect, and that edifice resembles its foundation, which is knowledge and action.
- 4-478            Throne, palace, crown and robes engage in conversation with the inhabitant of Paradise.
- 4-482            The life of the everlasting Abode (Paradise) exists in the heart: it does not come on my tongue, so why should I try to describe it?

### **The metaphorical picture of the palaces of Paradise. [1.7.8]**

- 5-1741           If the spirit shall not live without this body, then for whom shall Heaven be the palace of everlasting Abode?

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<sup>307</sup> Qur'ān 41:31. Mystics don't care for the pleasures that the Sharī'a promises. To them, there can be no Paradise without the nearness to or the union with the Beloved. In their view, the Paradise of pleasure that is promised by the Sharī'a, is no better than remaining in the stage of the unpurified and tyrannical *nafs* (*an-nafsu 'l-ammāra* or *nafs-e ammāra*).

<sup>308</sup> Qur'ān 23:10-11.

<sup>309</sup> Qur'ān 89:29-30.

- 5-1742 If your spirit shall not live without the body, for whom is the blessing promised in the words *in Heaven is your provision*<sup>310</sup>?
- 5-1743 If you are delivered from this provision of coarse scraps, you will fall to eating dainty and noble food.
- 5-1744 Even if you are eating a hundred pounds' weight of His food, you will depart pure and light as a *parī*<sup>311</sup>.
- 5-1745 For they will not make you a prisoner of (incapacitated by) wind and dysentery and crucify you with belly cramps.
- 5-1748 Ride like a ship on such a spiritual ocean by eating the Food of God and the easily digested (delicious) nutriment.
- 4-2517 Perhaps, by the effect of the river of honey<sup>312</sup>, this poison of hatred may be turned into honey in my body;
- 4-2518 Or by the reflection of the river of that pure milk, my captive intelligence may be nourished for a moment;
- 4-2519 Or perhaps, by the reflection of those rivers of wine, I may be intoxicated and catch a scent of the delight of obedience to the Divine command;
- 4-2520 Or perhaps, by the favour of those rivers of water, my barren devastated body may be refreshed –
- 4-2521 Some verdure may appear on my barren soil, my thorn thicket may become the Garden of everlasting Abode;
- 4-2522 Perhaps, by the reflection of Paradise and the four rivers, with God's help, my spirit may become a seeker of the Friend.

### **The four rivers in Paradise<sup>313</sup>. [1.7.8]**

- 5-1628 The Throne is the mine (source) of justice and equity: beneath it are four rivers filled with forgiveness:
- 5-1629 Everlasting rivers of milk, honey, wine and running water.
- 5-1630 Then from the Throne they flow into Paradise; some little thing (offshoot) appears in this world too,
- 5-1631 Although here those four rivers are defiled – by what? By the poison of mortality and indigestion.

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<sup>310</sup> Qur'ān 51:22.

<sup>311</sup> *Parī*: in Persian mythology, a beautiful and benevolent supernatural being or fairy.

<sup>312</sup> Qur'ān 47:15.

<sup>313</sup> Qur'ān 47:15.

- 5-1632 From each of those four rivers a draft has been poured on the dark Earth and a temptation has been offered,
- 5-1633 In order that these vile wretches may seek its source; but these worthless people are content with this draft.
- 5-1634 God has given milk and nourishment for babies: He has made the breast of every wife a fountain of milk.
- 5-1635 He has given wine to drive away grief and care: of the grape He has made a fountain to inspire courage.
- 5-1636 He has given honey as a remedy for the sick body: He has made the inner part of the bee a fountain of honey.
- 5-1637 He gave water to both high and low for cleanliness and for drinking.
- 5-1638 The purpose is that you may follow the track from these offshoots towards their origins; but you are content with this offshoot, o trifler.

**Man creates Hell and Paradise by his or her own character, by sowing and reaping. [1.7.8]**

**Poem by Ḥakīm Sanā'ī Ghaznawī<sup>314</sup>:  
“Your actions are the seed of Hell and Paradise,  
and you can sow this seed in yourself.” [1.7.8]**

- 3-3457 When a man has sown a prostration or a bowing<sup>315</sup> in prayer, in the Other World his prostration becomes Paradise.
- 3-3460 When altruism and almsgiving have sprung up from your hand, the act of this generous hand becomes date-palms and fresh herbage in the World Hereafter.
- 3-3461 The water (semen), namely your renunciation, became a river of water in Paradise; your love and affection for God is a river of milk in Paradise.
- 3-3462 Delight in devotion became a river of honey; see your spiritual intoxication and longing as a river of wine.
- 3-3464 Since these causes obeyed your command, the four rivers of Paradise likewise showed obedience to you.

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<sup>314</sup> Ḥakīm Sanā'ī of Ghazna (ca. 1050-1131 CE) was one of the great Persian Ṣūfī poets. He was the first poet to write a major *mathnawī*, entitled *Ḥadīqatu'l-Ḥaqīqa* (“The Garden of Reality”). This work also was an inspiration to Ḥaẓrat Mawlānā Rūmī.

<sup>315</sup> Two positions in the Islamic ritual prayer: the position of *rukū'* (“bowing down”) is established by bending over, putting one's hands on one's knees, and remaining in that position until one attains inner calmness. The position of *sujūd* (“prostration”) is established by bowing down until one's forehead, nose, the palms of both hands, both knees, and the tips of the toes touch the floor. *Sujūd* is considered the supreme symbol of humility, surrender and unconditional love of God. See also verse 5-2048 in the Second Rivulet of the First River.

- 3-3465 You make them flow in whatever direction you wish: you cause them to be of the same quality (disposition) in the Next World as they were in this world.
- 3-3468 That praiseworthy quality obeyed your command in this world: likewise in the Next World those rivers flow at your command.
- 3-3470 Since these qualities obey your command here, so your reward is at your command there.
- 3-3469 Those trees of Paradise obey you, because those trees are made fruitful by your good qualities.

### **Hell is but the reflection of bad deeds. [1.7.8]**

- 3-3471 When blows from your hand struck the victim of injustice, they became a tree in Hell: the *Zaqqūm*<sup>316</sup> grew from them.
- 3-3472 When in anger you threw fire into people's hearts, you became the source of Hellfire.
- 3-3473 Since your fire was burning mankind in this world, that which was born of it was setting fire to men in Hell.
- 3-3474 Your fire of anger attacks the people here: the fire that sprang from it assaults the people there.
- 3-3475 Your words resembling snakes and scorpions have become snakes and scorpions and are seizing your tail (assailing you from behind).
- 3-3476 You kept the friends of God waiting: therefore you will be kept waiting at the Resurrection<sup>317</sup>.
- 3-3477 Your promise, "Tomorrow" and "the day after tomorrow", has become your waiting on the Day of Gathering<sup>318</sup>: alas for you!
- 3-3480 Your anger is the seed of Hellfire: take heed, extinguish this Hell of yours, for this is a trap.
- 3-3481 This fire cannot be extinguished except by the Light: "your light has put out our fire<sup>319</sup>, we are the grateful."
- 3-3482 If you lack the Light and carry out an act of kindness, it is evil: your fire of anger is still alive and is still lurking in the smouldering cinders.

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<sup>316</sup> *Zaqqūm*: a tree that grows in hell according to Muslim belief. See Qur'ān 37:62 and 44:43-44.

<sup>317</sup> Literally "the wait at the Resurrection has become your (destined) associate" (Nich.).

<sup>318</sup> Day of Gathering (*Yawmu 'l-Ḥaṣhr*): Judgement Day.

<sup>319</sup> According to a Tradition (*Ḥadīth*), on the Day of Judgement Hell will say to the true believer, while he is crossing the Bridge *Sirāt*, "Cross (in safety), for your light has put out my fire." (Nich.). *Aḥādīth-e Mathnawī*, p. 182; *Al-Jāmi' aṣ-Ṣaghīr*, Vol. 11, p. 132.

- 3-3483 Beware! That kindness is nothing but ostentation and masking the truth: nothing will extinguish the fire of anger except the Light of Religion.
- 3-3484 Do not be secure until you behold the Light of Religion, for one day the hidden fire will become manifest.

**The fire of desire and lust and the light of  
Faith (īmān) are incompatible. [1.7.8]**

- 6-3928 The Fire of Hell torments only the husks: the Fire has nothing to do with any kernel;
- 6-3929 And if a fire should dart its flames at the kernel, know that it is in order to cook it, not to burn it.
- 1-3604 *The bad women for the bad men*<sup>320</sup> is wisdom: the ugly is the mate and fitting consort for the ugly.
- 2-83 Those of the Fire attract those of the Fire, those of the Light seek those of the Light.
- 1-640 As the infidels were of the same nature as *Sijjīn* (Hell), they were well-disposed to the prison (*sijn*) of this world.

**The true lover is not attached to thoughts of Hell and Paradise.  
Love chases Hell and Paradise away. [1.7.8]**

**Poem:**

**“With my heart’s fire I shall set Paradise on fire,  
and with my tears I shall extinguish Hell.” [1.7.8]**

- 6-4607 The source of its heat lies beyond the realm of space<sup>321</sup>: the seven Hells are but a smoke rising from the sparks of its fire.
- 6-4608 For this reason, o sincere man, Hell is weakened and extinguished by the fire of Love.
- 6-4609 It says to the believer, “Pass speedily, o respected one, or else my fire will be destroyed by your flames.”
- 6-4612 Paradise too says to him, “Pass like the wind, otherwise all that I possess will become unsaleable;
- 6-4613 For you are the owner of the whole stack, while I am but a gleaner: I am but an idol, while you are all the provinces of China<sup>322</sup>.

<sup>320</sup> In Persian literature, “China” symbolizes any place where art and beauty flourish. “*But-e Chīn*” (“The idol from China”) is an expression used for the manifestation of Divine Beauty.

<sup>321</sup> *Lā Makān*, literally meaning “no place”, or “spaceless space”, i.e. “the Placeless Realm”, the place of the deity, where there is no space and time, a state beyond our conception.



6-4614      Both Hell and Paradise tremble in fear of the believer: neither the one nor the other feels safe from him.

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<sup>322</sup> I.e. the origin and home of idols (images of Buddha painted by Chinese artists) (Nich.).

# The Second Source

## The Secrets of the Inner Path – Ṭarīqa

### The First River [2.1]

**The necessary qualities a sālik (seeker, traveller on the Ṣūfī Path) needs at the beginning of his journey. If he lacks these qualities, he is unable to progress.**

#### The First Rivulet [2.1.1]

**Awakening from the slumber of heedlessness (ghafla), contemplating the moment, being aware of the value of the Divine Breath (nafahāt-e ilāhī) and being conscious of this blessing, which will lead the sālik to the Divine Light. [2.1.1]**

**Ḥadīth: “Verily, during the days of your time, your Lord has certain breathings: apply yourselves to receive them”<sup>323</sup>**

Cited in the *Mathnawī* after verse 1950 of Book I.

- 1-1951      The Prophet said, “In these days the breaths of God prevail:
- 1-1952      Keep ear and mind attentive to these spiritual influences, catch up such breaths.”
- 1-1953      The Divine breath came, looked at you, and departed: it gave life to whom it wanted, and left.
- 1-1954      Another breath arrived. Be alert, that you may not miss this one too, o my friend.
- 2-1203      It is like the breath of the Merciful God which, without mouth, comes to Muḥammad from Yemen<sup>324</sup>.
- 2-1947      Find a remedy for your masculine self-importance, so that you may become a real man, and that a hundred kinds of beautiful-faced youths may appear<sup>325</sup>.

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<sup>323</sup> The implication of this ḥadīth is that *sāliks* should work as hard and as much as they can on the Inner Path, so that they might become able of receiving the Breaths of Mercy, which constantly emanate from the Divine Being. When they accomplish this, they will literally become inspired by God’s Breaths, and their inner light and spiritual knowledge will increase.

<sup>324</sup> Ḥadīth: “Verily, I feel the Breath of the Merciful (God) from the direction of Yemen.” – *Aḥādīth-e Mathnawī* p. 250.

<sup>325</sup> These words have spiritual meaning only and therefore should not be read or interpreted in a worldly sense.

- 1-1899 These words, which come from Universal Reason, are the scent of those flowers, cypresses and hyacinths.
- 1-1900 Did you ever smell the scent of a rose where there was none? Did you ever see the foaming of wine where there was none?
- 1-1901 The scent is your guide and leads you on your way: it will bring you to Paradise and Kawthar<sup>326</sup>.
- 1-404 That this mind, eye and ear might be delivered from the Flood of wakefulness and consciousness!
- 1-441 Whoever has no scent is without a nose; the scent referred to is that scent which is religious.

**The human body resembles a guest house in which the unseen guests are received with honour and respect. The guests come and go, and do not come back. But new guests will come in the future. [2.1.1]**

- 5-3644 This body, o youth, is a guest house: every morning a new guest comes running into it.
- 5-3646 Whatever comes into your heart from the invisible world is your guest: treat it well!
- 5-3676 Every day, too, at every moment a different thought comes, like an honoured guest, into your bosom.
- 5-3677 O dear soul, regard thought as a person, since every person derives his worth from thought and spirit.
- 5-3693 Whenever the thought of sorrow comes into your heart again, meet it with smiles and laughter.
- 5-3688 So that it may speak gratefully of you to the Lord of the heart when it reunites with the Moon.
- 1-2190 God gave me a life. He alone knows the value of its every single day.
- 3-124 Your life is like a purse of gold: day and night are like him who counts the gold coins (the money changer).
- 3-125 Time counts and gives the gold without stopping, until the purse is empty and the eclipse (death) comes.
- 3-126 If you take something away from a mountain and do not replace what you have taken, the mountain will be demolished by that deed<sup>327</sup>.

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<sup>326</sup> In Arabic, *Kawthar* literally means “abundance”. It is also the name of a fountain, pond, basin or river in Paradise. It is mentioned in the Qur’ān in the Sūra called *Sūratu ’l-Kawthar* (Sūra 108).

- 3-127 Therefore, for every breath of yours, put an equivalent in its place, so that by acting in accordance with the words *and fall down in worship and draw closer*<sup>328</sup> you may reach your goal.
- 4-2148 Tremble in fear of losing the delightful moment: conceal it like a treasure, do not divulge it.

**Life is valuable and precious.**

**It is particularly the realisation of the power of youth and health in life, that will help man to achieve his spiritual goals. [2.1.1]**

- 2-1215 O, blessed is he who deems his early days an opportunity to be seized, and pays his debt –
- 2-1216 In the days when he has the power, when he has health, strength of heart and vigour,
- 2-1217 And when that season of youth, like a garden green and fresh, brings vegetables and fruit to ripeness without limitation.
- 2-1220 Before the days of old age arrive and bind your neck with *a halter of palm-fibres*<sup>329</sup>;
- 2-1221 before the soil becomes nitrous (barren), crumbling, and poor – never did good herbage grow from nitrous soil.
- 5-968 Old age makes the face that used to have a moon-like splendour become wrinkled like the back of the Libyan lizard.
- 5-970 And in old age, the tall proud figure, piercing the ranks like a spear-point, is bent double like a bow.
- 5-973 These truly are marks of pain and decay: every one of them is a messenger of death.
- 5-974 But if his physician is the Light of God, he will suffer no loss or crushing blow from old age and fever.
- 5-976 If he dies, his bones are drowned in spiritual savour<sup>330</sup>; his every atom is floating in the beams of the light of love-desire.
- 5-977 And he who does not have that Water (i.e. Light) is an orchard without fruit, which is reduced to ruin by autumn.

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<sup>327</sup> Literally “by that giving”.

<sup>328</sup> Qur’ān 96:19.

<sup>329</sup> Qur’ān 111:5.

<sup>330</sup> Spiritual savour (*dhawq*): experiencing the Divine in a state of bliss.

- 5-978 The roses do not last; only the black thorns remain: it becomes pale and weak like a heap of straw.
- 2-1225 The day late, the ass lame, and the way long; the shop ruined and the business in disorder.
- 2-1268 While this jewelled lamp is not yet extinguished, look: you trim its wick and supply it with oil immediately.
- 2-1270 Listen to my warning that the body is a strong restraint: put off the old, if you desire newness.

### **Regrets for days in life gone by. [2.1.1]**

- 2-1265 Listen and listen again, o wayfarer! It is late, life's sun has gone towards the pit (is about to set).
- 2-1263 The year has turned late; it is not sowing-time, and you have produced nothing except black shame and foul deeds.
- 6-1720 The Tailor, who is Worldly Vanity, takes away the satin of your life, bit by bit, with his scissors, which are the months.
- 2-1266 During these one or two brief days when you have some strength, be quick, flap your wings generously<sup>331</sup>.
- 2-1269 Beware! Do not say "Tomorrow – for many tomorrows have passed. Let not the days of sowing pass by altogether."
- 3-3298 When the power to act freely is gone, the work becomes unsalable (worthless). Take heed so that Doom does not seize your capital.
- 3-3299 The power of free action is your profit-yielding capital. Listen, be aware of the moment of power and observe it well!
- 5-1037 Magicians quickly measure moonbeams in the presence of the merchant and receive gold as profit.
- 5-1038 When they make money by artful tricks of this kind, the money is gone from the purchaser's hand, but there is no linen to be seen<sup>332</sup>.
- 5-1039 This world is a sorcerer, and we are the merchants who buy the measured moonbeams from it.
- 5-1040 Magician-like, it hastily measures out by the ell<sup>333</sup> five hundred ells of linen from the light of the moonbeams,

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<sup>331</sup> I.e. exert yourself unsparingly in doing good works (Nich.).

<sup>332</sup> This verse is not in the original *Lubb-e Lubāb-e Mathnawī*. It has been added for clarity's sake.

<sup>333</sup> A linear measure equal to 45 inches (114 centimetres).

5-1041 Yet, when it takes the money, which is your life, o slave, the money is gone, there is no linen, and your purse is empty.

### **The story of the clay-eater. [2.1.1]**

4-625 A certain clay-eater went to a grocer to buy a quantity of fine hard sugar-loaf.

4-626 Now, at the grocer's, who was a crafty vigilant<sup>334</sup> man, there was clay instead of the balance-weight.

4-627 He said, "If you want to buy sugar, my balance-weight is clay<sup>335</sup>."

4-628 The customer said, "I need sugar urgently: let the balance-weight be whatever you wish."

4-633 "If you have no proper weight and your weight is of clay, this is better and better: clay is the fruit desired by my heart."

4-635 Then, for the other scale, he broke the equivalent amount of sugar with his hand.

4-634 The grocer placed the clay, because it was easy to reach, in one scale of the balance instead of the proper weight.

4-636 Since he had no pickaxe, he took a long time and let the customer sit waiting.

4-637 While his face was turned towards the sugar, the clay-eater, unable to restrain himself, began secretly to steal the clay from him,

4-638 terribly frightened, as the grocer might suddenly look at him in order to put his honesty to the test

4-639 The grocer saw it, but kept himself busy, saying, "Come, steal more, o pale-faced one!

4-640 If you are a thief and take some of my clay, go on doing so, for you are eating out of your own side.

4-641 You are afraid of me, but only because you are a stupid ass: I am afraid you will eat less (too little).

4-643 When you see the amount of sugar which you have bought, then you will know who was foolish and careless."

3-129 Otherwise at the end you will leave incomplete, your spiritual affairs harmed and you bread unbaked.

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<sup>334</sup> Literally "of two minds", i.e. while attending to his business, he observed what his customer was doing (Nich.).

<sup>335</sup> I.e. "wait until I have rectified the balance." (Nich.).

3-128 Do not strive so much to complete your worldly affairs: do not strive in any affair that is not religious.

6-541 O watchman, use your rattle before the caravan is ruined by the robbers.

**The story of a guardian crying for help after a burglary when the thieves had already gone: [2.1.1]**

**“I had the means to prevent it, but I did not know how, what a pity. Now that I have found out, it is too late to do anything” – ‘Aṭṭār<sup>336</sup> [2.1.1]**

6-542 A certain watchman fell asleep. The robbers carried off the goods and hid the various items under a piece of earth.

6-543 When it was day, the caravaneers woke up: they saw that livestock, money and camels were gone.

6-544 Then they said to him, “O watchman, tell us what has happened. Where are this livestock and these goods?”

6-545 He replied, “The robbers came unexpectedly, and hastily carried off the livestock right before my very eyes.”

6-546 The party of merchants said to him, “O man weak as a sandhill, what were you doing, then? Who are you, o coward?”

6-547 “I was only one’, he said, “and they were a band, armed and brave and formidable.”

6-548 The spokesman of the merchants said, “If you had no hope of overcoming them in battle, why didn’t you shout, ‘Gentlemen, get up from your beds’?”

6-549 He replied, “At that moment they produced knives and swords, crying, ‘Silence! Or we will kill you ruthlessly.’

6-550 So I shut my mouth in terror; now I can scream and call for help and utter cries of distress.

6-551 At that time my breath was stopped from breathing a word: at this time I will scream as much as you please.”

6-552 After the Devil who exposes sinners to disgrace has carried off your life, it is foolish to cry “I seek refuge with God”<sup>337</sup> and to recite the Fātiḥa<sup>338</sup>;

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<sup>336</sup> Ḥaẓrat Shaykh Farīdu’d-dīn ‘Aṭṭār (ca. 1145-1221 CE): one of the most prominent Persian Ṣūfī mystics and authors.

<sup>337</sup> A recitation of the Qur’ān usually starts with the words “I seek refuge with God from Satan the Accursed”.

<sup>338</sup> The Opening Sūra of the Qur’ān.

- 6-553 But even though it is foolish to moan now, heedlessness certainly is even more foolish than that late supplication.
- 6-554 So keep on sobbing like this, even foolishly, crying, “Look upon the lowly sinners, o Almighty One!

**The above-mentioned quotations are about people  
who are ruled by time and circumstance.  
There are other people, i.e. Saints, who are able to transcend  
time and circumstance and have control over them. [2.1.1]**

- 3-1426 Likewise the Ṣūfī is “the son of the time”<sup>339</sup>, but the pure one (*ṣāfi*) is unconcerned with “time” and “state”.
- 1-1438 There are many Ṣūfīs who enjoy *ḥāl*, but few of them have attained to *maqām*<sup>340</sup>.
- 3-1434 The pure one (*ṣāfi*) is plunged in the Light of the Glorious God; he is not the son of anyone, he is free from “times” and “states”<sup>341</sup>.
- 3-1427 “States” depend on his decision and judgement; they are brought to life by his Messiah-like breath.
- 3-1420 He is the lord of states of feeling, and does not depend on any state: month and year are slaves of that Moon.
- 3-1421 When he summons the “state”, it answers his call; when he so wishes, he makes bodies become spirits.
- 3-1423 The perfect Saint’s hand is the Elixir<sup>342</sup> that transmutes the “state”: if he moves his hand, the copper becomes intoxicated with him.
- 3-1425 He who depends on the “state” is still a human being, like the moon, at one moment he is made greater by the “state”, at another moment he is on the decrease.
- 3-1422 One who is stopped on the way is not at the journey’s end; he will be seated, waiting and seeking the “state”.
- 3-1151 The man who transcends space and in whom the Light of God is present – what does he care about the past, the future or the present<sup>343</sup>?

<sup>339</sup> *Ibnu ’l-Waqt* = “Son of the Time or Moment” is a Ṣūfī term, implying that a true Ṣūfī is concerned with neither past nor future, but lives in the Eternal Moment, the Eternal Now, which transcends all limitations.

<sup>340</sup> *Ḥāl* and *maqām*: *ḥāl* (plural *aḥwāl* or *ḥālāt*) is a temporary state of mystical attainment, whereas *maqām* (plural *maqāmāt*), meaning “station”, is an enduring state of mystical accomplishment. *Maqāmāt* are realized by one’s own efforts, whereas *aḥwāl* are graces bestowed by God.

<sup>341</sup> “times” and “states”: temporary and impermanent states (*ḥāl*, plural *aḥwāl* or *ḥālāt*).

<sup>342</sup> In the original text the term *kīmīyā* is used, meaning “alchemy”.

<sup>343</sup> I.e. someone who has attained the station (*maqām*) of non-existence or *lā makān*. *Lā makān* literally means “no space”, i.e. “the Placeless Realm”, the place of the deity, where there is no space and time, a state beyond



- 3-1152 His past or future exists only in relation to you: both are one thing, and you think they are two.
- 3-1435 Plunged in the Light which is uncreated: the description *He neither begets nor is He begotten*<sup>344</sup> belongs to God alone.
- 3-1436 Go, seek a love like this, if you are spiritually alive; otherwise you are a slave to the changing “time”.
- 3-2074 All changes have arisen from time: he who is freed from the hours is freed from change.
- 3-2075 When you escape from the hours for an hour, relation<sup>345</sup> does not remain: you become familiar with that which is without relation.
- 3-2076 The hours are not acquainted with hourlessness (timelessness), because for him who is conscious of time there is no way to it except bewilderment.
- 3-2937 To us a hundred years are the same as a single hour, for long and short time have become detached from us.
- 3-2938 That length and shortness is in bodies alone: where is that long and short in the soul?
- 3-2939 The three hundred and nine years of the Men of the Cave<sup>346</sup> seemed to them one day that passed without grief and woe;
- 3-2940 And it seemed only one day to them when their spirits came back from non-existence into their bodies.
- 3-2941 When there is no day, night, month and year, how could there be fullness, old age and weariness?
- 3-2942 Since there is selflessness for us in the rose garden of non-existence, there is intoxication for us, caused by the goblet of Divine grace.

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our conception. In this “Placeless Realm”, there is no difference between past, present and future; they are all one and the same.

<sup>344</sup> Qur’ān 112:3.

<sup>345</sup> Literally “how” (Nich.).

<sup>346</sup> The Seven Sleepers (Nich.). This story is related in the 18<sup>th</sup> Sūra of the Qur’ān, *Sūratu’l-Kahf*, “The Sūra of the Cave”.

## The Second Rivulet [2.1.2]

### Tawba (repentance, remorse)

**When ordinary (‘awāmm) people have tawba, they repent their bad deeds. When the elect (khawāṣṣ) have tawba, they feel remorseful about their ego (nafs). They attain awakening. [2.1.2]**

**Ḥadīth: “He who repents of a sin and turns back to God is like him who has committed no sin.”**

- 6-431 Repent like a man, turn your head towards the right Way, for *whoever has done an atom’s weight of good or evil shall see it*<sup>347</sup>.
- 6-432 Do not become the victim of the trickeries of the carnal soul, for the Divine Sun will not hide a single atom.
- 4-2504 In the direction of the West a door of repentance is open to mankind until Resurrection<sup>348</sup>.
- 4-2506 Through the mercy of God, Paradise has eight doors: one of those eight is the door of repentance, o son.
- 4-2507 All the others are sometimes open, sometimes closed; but the door of repentance is always open.
- 4-2505 Until the sun lifts up its head (rises) from the West, that door is open: do not turn your face away from it.
- 4-2508 Come, seize the opportunity: the door is open: carry your luggage towards it at once, in spite of the envious Devil.
- 4-324 Learn from your Father; for after having sinned Adam came down willingly to the dwelling-place below<sup>349</sup>.
- 4-325 When he saw the Knower of secrets, he stood up on his feet to ask forgiveness.
- 4-327 He only said, ‘O Lord, verily we have wronged ourselves,’<sup>350</sup> when he saw the angelic life-guards in front and behind.

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<sup>347</sup> Qur’ān 99:7.

<sup>348</sup> *Aḥādīth-e Mathnawī* p. 393.

<sup>349</sup> I.e. abased himself (Nich.). “The dwelling-place below”: in the Persian text, the word *pāygāh* is used, which usually means “base” or “degree”. However, here the word *pāygāh* denotes a place which literally is located below, i.e. the earth; it is the place where Adam descended to when God expelled him from Paradise after his fall from Grace. Paradise should be interpreted as a state of spiritual felicity, freedom and absolute peace. Cf. Qur’ān 2:36: “Then Satan made them slip from it (Paradise), and drove them out from the state (of felicity) in which they had been; and We said: “Get down, all of you, as enemies to one another. On earth will be a dwelling-place for you and a means of livelihood for some time”.

4-347 Those who are the elect children of Adam sighingly confess, '*verily we have wronged ourselves.*'

4-2503 Listen, from now on do not act in this way, but be careful, for through God's bounty the door of repentance is open.

**Man's essence is pure. Evil is caused by external factors. That is why humans are inclined to feel remorse for sins or errors committed. [2.1.2]**

4-3413 The borrowed (temporary) evil causes him in whom it appears to confess and desire to repent.

4-3414 Like Adam, whose error was temporary: inevitably he immediately showed penitence.

4-3415 Since the sin of Iblīs<sup>351</sup> was original, there was no way to precious penitence for him.

5-769 Iblīs said, "Grant me respite until the Day of Resurrection." If only he had said, "We repent, o our Lord."

5-768 Like Iblīs, the crow implored the holy and incomparable God for bodily life until Resurrection.

5-770 Life without repentance is total agony of spirit: to be absent from God is present (instant) death.

5-771 Life and death – both these are sweet with the presence of God: without God the Water of Life is fire.

5-2221 If you have blackened the scroll (record) of your life, repent of the deeds you did formerly.

5-2222 Although your life has almost passed, this present moment is its root: water it with repentance if it lacks moisture.

5-2223 Give the Living Water to the root of your life, in order that the tree of your life may become verdant.

5-2224 Through this Water all past sins are made good: through this Water last year's poison is made sweet as sugar.

1-2206 O you who wants to repent of a past state, say, when will you repent of this repentance?

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<sup>350</sup> Qur'ān 7:23.

<sup>351</sup> Iblīs: a name of the Devil. This name is probably derived from the Arabic verb *ablasa*, meaning "he despaired (of God's Mercy)".

- 2-1651 Nor is it granted to every heart to fall down in prayer: not every mercenary is allotted the wages of Divine mercy.
- 2-1643 But the power of asking forgiveness, also, is not in our hands: the savour of repentance is not the dessert of every drunkard.
- 2-1653 For true repentance, it is imperative that there be a glow of inner feeling and a flood of tears: such lightning and clouds are the indispensable condition for repentance.
- 2-1654 It is imperative that there be fire and water (rain) for the fruit: clouds and lightning are necessary for this accomplishment.
- 2-1655 Until there is the lightning of the heart and the rain clouds of the two eyes, how shall the fire of Divine menace and wrath be pacified?
- 2-1656 How shall the herbage grow, the herbage of the delight of union with God? How shall the fountains of clear water gush forth?
- 2-2009 Repent, and empty yourself of what you have drunk: and if your wound is old and unhealed, go cauterize it.
- 4-321 Why do you defiantly bring forward dark pretences before those who see the truth plainly?
- 4-322 To us, all the deceit and dissimulations that you have in your heart are manifest and clear as day.
- 4-323 If we, in kindness to our servant, cover it up, why do you carry shamelessness beyond the limit?

### **Allegory:**

**Even though God is Generous and covers the sins committed by His servants, each person should be held accountable for his own deeds. [2.1.2]**

- 2-3364 In the time of Shu‘ayb<sup>352</sup> a certain man was saying, “God has seen many of my faults”.
- 2-3365 How many sins and trespasses has He seen me commit! And still, in His kindness God does not punish me.
- 2-3366 In an unseen, mysterious way God Most High answered clearly into the ear of Shu‘ayb.

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<sup>352</sup> Shu‘ayb: the Arabic name of the Biblical Jethro, father-in-law of Moses. In the Islamic tradition, he is the thirteenth Prophet after Adam. Adam (Ḥaẓrat Ādam) is considered the first human being who possessed Divine Knowledge. God appointed him to guide his fellow human beings to the Divine Goal, and that’s why Ḥaẓrat Ādam is regarded as the first Prophet.

- 2-3367        Saying, “Tell him, You have said, ‘How many sins have I committed! And still God in His kindness has not punished me for my trespasses.’
- 2-3368        You say the opposite of the truth, o fool, o you who have abandoned the road and have taken to the wilderness!
- 2-3369        How often, how often do I chastise you, and you remain unaware! You are lying (bound) in chains from head to foot.
- 2-3370        Your rust, layer upon layer, o black pot, has marred the face of your heart.
- 2-3371        Layers of rust have accumulated upon your heart, so that it has become blind to the spiritual mysteries.”
- 2-3372        If that smoke would beat upon a new pot, the traces of it would show, even if it were only as much as a barley-corn,
- 2-3373        Because everything is made manifest by its opposite: upon a white object the black becomes distinctly visible;
- 2-3374        But when the pot has been blackened, who then after this will at once perceive the effect of the smoke upon it?
- 2-3378        But when he persists in sin and makes a practice of evil, and puts dust in the eye of meditation,
- 2-3379        He thinks of penitence no more: that sin becomes so sweet to his heart that in the end he comes to be without the Faith (he turns infidel).
- 2-3380        That repenting and crying “O Lord!” have departed from him: five layers of rust have set on the mirror of his heart.
- 2-1647        Through the supplication and firm belief of that Friend (Abraham)<sup>353</sup> the thing that was hard and impossible became possible.
- 2-3392        One sign of My punishing him is this, that he has pious acts of fasting and supplication to his credit.
- 2-3393        And ritual prayer and almsgiving etcetera, but he has not one atom of spiritual savour.
- 2-3395        His devotions are good in form, but the spirit is not good: there are plenty of walnuts, but they do not have a kernel.”
- 2-3394        He performs high acts and deeds of devotion, but he has not one atom of spiritual relish.

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<sup>353</sup> In the Islamic tradition, the epithet given to the Prophet Abraham (Ḥaẓrat Ibrāhīm) is *Khalīlu’Llāh*, “Friend of God”.

2-3396 Spiritual savour is required, in order that devotions may yield fruit: a kernel is required, in order that the berry may produce a tree.

2-3397 How shall a berry without kernel become a sapling? The soulless form is nothing but fantasy.

**Breach of promise and breach of repentance  
may cause God to bring about misery. [2.1.2]**

5-2591 To violate a pact and break vows of repentance becomes the cause of damnation in the end.

5-2592 The violation of vows of repentance by the “Fellows of the Sabbath”<sup>354</sup> became the cause of their metamorphosis, destruction and abomination.

5-2593 Therefore God turned those people into apes, since they rebelliously broke their covenant with God.

5-2594 In this community there has never been metamorphosis of the body, but there is metamorphosis of the spirit, o man endowed with perception.

5-2598 The “Fellows of the Sabbath” suffered outward metamorphosis, in order that the people might outwardly see their shameful fall.

5-2599 By breaking vows of repentance a hundred thousand others have become hogs and asses inwardly.

4-3383 Like the intelligent man who, from faulty understanding, keeps committing sin and continually breaks his vow of penitence.

4-3384 Because of his indecisiveness that breaker of vows of penitence becomes the laughing-stock of Iblīs in the world.

4-3385 He constantly comes down on his head, like a lame horse, for his load is heavy and the road is full of stones<sup>355</sup>.

4-3386 By breaking his vows of penitence, this unfortunate man continually receives blows on his head from the Unseen.

4-3387 Then again he repents with infirm resolution: the Devil (= *nafs*) scornfully spits and shatters his penitence.

6-345 The repentance they show is like that of the moth: soon forgetfulness draws them back again to the same work.

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<sup>354</sup> “Fellows of the Sabbath” = the Jews. With these words Ḥaẓrat Mawlānā Rūmī does not condemn the Jewish race or religion. The sole meaning of “Fellows of the Sabbath” is “people who have strayed from the Truth and have no penitence”.

<sup>355</sup> Meaning: “The Path of Love is an arduous and stony road”.

- 6-346 Like the moth, such a person thinks the fire that he sees from a distance to be light, and packs off<sup>356</sup> (sets out) towards it.
- 6-347 As soon as he comes to the fire, it burns his wings, and he flees; and then again he falls, like greedy children in a hurry, and spills the salt<sup>357</sup>.
- 6-348 Once more, thinking and hoping to profit, he quickly dashes himself on the fire of that candle.
- 6-349 Once more he is scorched and shrinks; then again the greed of his heart makes him forgetful and intoxicated.
- 6-352 Then again his repentance and moaning go out of his memory, since God has made the wiles of the liars feeble.
- 6-355 Since there was no seed of sincerity sown by him, God has caused him to forget that resolution.
- 6-356 Even though he strikes the match of his heart, the Hand of God always extinguishes the spark.

**Allegory:**  
**A person caught in Satan's hand abides in  
darkness and has no knowledge of himself. [2.1.2]**

- 6-357 A righteous man heard a sound of footsteps in his house during the night: he took the firelighter to light a candle.
- 6-358 At that same moment the thief came and sat down beside him, and whenever the tinder caught fire he put it out.
- 6-359 Laying the tip of his finger on the place, in order that the fiery spark might vanish.
- 6-361 The Khwāja<sup>358</sup> said, “This tinder was moist: because of its wetness the spark dies at once.”
- 6-360 The Khwāja thought it was dying of itself: he didn't see that the thief was extinguishing it.

<sup>356</sup> Literally “binds the load (on the beast of burden)” (Nich.).

<sup>357</sup> I.e. he relapses into his old ways and spoils his good resolutions (Nich.).

<sup>358</sup> *Khwāja* (< Fārsī *khwājah*, more or less pronounced *khōjē*) is an honorific title given to people of distinction. In Sufism, particularly in the Indian subcontinent, it takes on the meaning of “Master”, e.g. Ḥaẓrat Khwāja Mu‘īnu’d-dīn Chishtī, the great Ṣūfī Saint of Ajmēr, Rājasthān, India. But also outside the Indian subcontinent Ṣūfī Masters have borne this title. A few examples: the prominent Persian Ṣūfī mystic and prolific author Ḥaẓrat Khwāja ‘Abdullāh Anṣārī of Herāt (1006-1088 CE) and the influential Turkic Ṣūfī Master Ḥaẓrat Khwāja Aḥmad Yasawī (1093-1066 CE), who lived and worked in Kazākhstān. It is also worth mentioning that between the 12<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries CE the Naqshbandī Ṣūfī Order was known as *Ṭarīqat-e Khwājagān*, i.e. “the Way of the Masters” (*Khwājagān* is the plural of *Khwāja*). The Naqshbandī Ṣūfī Order took its present name from the illustrious Master Ḥaẓrat Khwāja Bahā’u’d-dīn Shāh Naqshband of Bukhārā (1318–1389 CE).

6-362 As there was great murk and darkness in front of him, he didn't see a fire-extinguisher beside him.

6-363 So the infidel's eye, because of its dimness, does not see a similar fire-extinguisher in his heart.

**One of the qualities of a wise person (sālik) is that he is not led astray by promises of the Devil and that he will not allow anything to delay the time of repentance (tawba). [2.1.2]**

3-4326 When you are sincerely determined to be religious, the Devil in your nature cries out at you,

3-4327 "Do not go in that direction! Think again, o misguided one; for you will become captive to distress and poverty.

3-4328 You will become destitute, you will be cut off from friends, you will be despised, you will feel sorry."

3-4329 The fear of the outcry of that accursed Devil will make you flee away from certain truth into error,

3-4330 Saying, "Ho, tomorrow is mine and after tomorrow: I will run in the Way of religion, I have plenty of time."

3-4331 Then again you see Death killing your neighbours on left and right, so that the cry of lamentation is raised.

3-4332 Now, out of fear of losing your life, you resolve to be religious: for a while, you make yourself a true man;

3-4333 So you put on the armour of knowledge and wisdom, saying, "I will not shrink from any danger."

3-4334 Again he the Devil deceitfully cries out at you – "Be afraid and turn away from the sword of poverty!"

3-4335 Once more you flee from the Way of Light and cast off that armour of knowledge and virtue.

3-4336 For many years, you are a slave to him because of a cry: you have laid down the blanket (have laid down to rest) in such darkness as this!

3-4337 Dread of the cry of the devils has bound the people and taken hold of their throats,

3-4338 Until their souls have become as hopeless of the Light as the spirits of the infidels who dwell in the tombs.



3-4339        Such is the terror of the cry of that accursed one: how great must be the dread of the Divine cry!

3-4343        The cry of the devils is the driver of the damned; the cry of the Lord is the guardian of the blessed Saints.

### **Allegory:**

**The situation of the heedless in this world resembles that of children who spend their whole lives playing. Later, however, they will come to regret it.**

#### **[2.1.2]**

6-454        At playtime the little child takes off his coat and shoes: suddenly the thief carries them off.

6-455        He is so intensely absorbed in play that his cap and shirt are forgotten.

6-456        Night falls, and his playing become helpless (impossible): he is unwilling to go home.

6-457        Have not you heard the verse *the present life is but a play*<sup>359</sup>? You have squandered (given to the wind) your goods and have become afraid.

6-458        Look for your clothes before the night comes: do not waste the day in idle talk.

6-460        Half of life is lost in desire for a charming friend<sup>360</sup>; the other half of life is lost in anxieties caused by enemies.

6-461        That desire has carried off our cloak, this anxiety has carried off our cap, while we have become absorbed in play, like a little child.

6-462        Look, the night-time of death is near. Leave this play: you have played enough, do not return to it.

6-463        Listen, mount the steed of repentance, overtake the thief, and recover your clothes from him.

6-464        The steed of repentance is a marvellous steed: in one moment it runs from below up to Heaven.

6-465        But always keep the steed safe from him who secretly stole your coat.

6-466        In order to prevent him from stealing your steed also, keep watch over this steed of yours incessantly.”

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<sup>359</sup> Qur’ān 6:32 and 29:64.

<sup>360</sup> Literally “one who captivates the heart” (Nich.).

- 6-3622 Both the ass and he who caught the ass are stuck in the mud here: here (in this world) they are forgetful of God and there (in the next world) they are sunk in woe –
- 6-3623 All except those who turn away from that deception and emerge from the autumn of sensuality into the springtime of Divine grace,
- 6-3624 and who repent, for God is ready to accept repentance, and cling to His command, for a gracious Commander is He!
- 6-3625 When, moved by sorrow, they raise a pitiful cry, the highest Heaven trembles at the moaning of the sinners.
- 6-3626 It trembles even as a mother for her child: it takes them by the hand and draws them upward,
- 6-3627 saying, “O you whom God has redeemed from delusion, behold the gardens of Divine grace and behold the forgiving Lord!”.

### The Third Rivulet [2.1.3]

#### **Associating with devout people.**

**After the stage of repentance (tawba), nothing is sweeter or more delightful to a sālik than to associate with the wise and the pure. [2.1.3]**

- 2-2163 Whoever wishes to sit with God, let him sit in the presence of the Saints.
- 2-2164 If you are broken off (divided) from the presence of the Saints, you are in perdition, because you are a part without the whole.
- 2-2214 When you become far from the presence of the Saints, you have in reality become far from God.
- 2-2576 O heart, go where they are bright<sup>361</sup> towards you and are as a coat of mail to you against afflictions.
- 2-2578 Make your abode within their souls: o radiant full-moon, make your home in the sky!
- 4-1976 Whoever is sitting with friends is amidst a flower-garden even though he is in a bath furnace.
- 4-1977 Whoever in the world sits with an enemy, he is in a bath-furnace even though he is in a flower garden.

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<sup>361</sup> Literally unveiled and sincere (Nich.).

- 2-121 Straighten your limbs with the help of the righteous. O you who wants to become straight, do not turn not your head away from that threshold where the righteous dwell.
- 2-122 Balance makes balance correct; balance also makes balance defective<sup>362</sup>.
- 2-123 Whoever weighs the same (adopts the same standard) as the unrighteous becomes deficient, and his understanding becomes dazed.
- 2-124 Go, *be hard on the infidels*<sup>363</sup>, sprinkle dust on (renounce) fondness for strangers,
- 2-125 Be as a sword upon the heads of strangers: come, do not play foxy tricks, be a lion,
- 2-126 In order that the friends of God, moved by righteous jealousy, may not part with you, because those thorns (the wicked) are the enemies of this rose (the friend of God).
- 2-127 Set fire to the wolves as to rue-seed<sup>364</sup>, because those wolves are the enemies of Joseph.
- 3-639 That you lick the dust and the wall of the pure (elect) is better for you than the vulgar and their vines and rose gardens.
- 3-640 That you become a slave to a man with an enlightened heart is better for you than that you should walk upon the crown of the head of kings<sup>365</sup>.
- 3-641 From the kings of earth you will get nothing but the empty noise of a drum, o traveller of many roads.
- 1-726 O, give your heart food from conversation with one who is in accord with it; go, seek spiritual advancement from one who is advanced.
- 1-2686 If you gain access to that King, you will become a king: how long will you pursue every kind of misfortune?
- 1-721 The laughing pomegranate makes the garden laughing (joyful and blooming): companionship with holy men makes you one of the holy men.
- 1-722 Even though you are rock or marble, you will become a jewel where you reach the man of heart (the Saint).
- 1-723 Plant the love of the holy ones within your spirit; do not give your heart to anything but to the love of those whose hearts are glad.

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<sup>362</sup> I.e. a true standard corrects a false one, and a false standard corrupts a true one.

<sup>363</sup> Qur'ān 9:73.

<sup>364</sup> Rue-seed is burnt as a charm against the evil eye (Nich.).

<sup>365</sup> I.e. than that you should be a favourite of kings (Nich.).

- 1-725           The heart draws you near to the men of heart (the Saints); the body leads you into the prison of water and earth.
- 1-763           All parts and fragments are turned towards the eternal whole: nightingales play the game of love with the rose.
- 1-724           Do not go to the neighbourhood of despair: there are hopes. Do not go in the direction of darkness: there are suns.
- 2-1341          O, happy is the ugly whom the beautiful one has befriended; alas for the one with a rosy countenance who has become autumn's consort!
- 1-1535          O, happy is the man who was freed from himself and united with the existence of a living one!
- 1-1536          Alas for the living one who consorted with the dead! He became dead, and life fled from him.
- 2-1342          When life is bestowed on lifeless bread, the bread becomes living and is turned into the substance of that life.
- 2-1343          Dark bundles of wood become the companions of fire: the darkness departed, and all was turned into light.
- 1-1531          When the torrent reached the sea, it became the sea; when the seed reached the corn land, it became the crop of corn.
- 1-1534          When the powdered stone of antimony<sup>366</sup> went into the eyes, it turned into sight and became a scout (one who observes the enemy from some viewpoint).
- 1-1532          When the bread was connected to the animal (man), the dead bread came to life and was endowed with knowledge.
- 1-1474          When bread is wrapped in the tablecloth it is a lifeless thing (so-called), but in the human body it becomes the glad spirit of life.
- 1-1533          When the wax and firewood were devoted to the fire, their dark essence became filled with light.
- 2-2150          The gist of the matter is this: be the friend of the whole community of Šūfis<sup>367</sup>: like the idol-maker, carve a friend out of the stone.
- 2-2151          Because the mass and multitude of a caravan will break the backs and spears of the highwaymen<sup>368</sup>.

<sup>366</sup> Antimony: a metal used to make eyeliner, which protects the eye from the sun, dust etc.

<sup>367</sup> "of Šūfis" is not in the original Persian text, but it is implied.

<sup>368</sup> A seeker of God must not rely solely on his or her own strength, but should consider all Šūfis as friends and brothers and sisters, without whose help he or she cannot overcome the many dangers and temptations that beset travellers on the Way [Adapted from R.A. Nicholson's *Commentaries on the Mathnawí of Jalálu'ddin Rúmí*, Cambridge University Press, 1940].

- 5-1063 If you desire spiritual poverty, that depends on companionship with a Shaykh: neither your tongue nor your hand is useful.
- 5-1064 The soul receives knowledge from the soul, not from a of book, nor from spoken words.
- 5-1065 If the mysteries of spiritual poverty are in the traveller's heart, the traveller does not yet possess knowledge of the mystery.
- 5-1066 Let him wait until the expansion (illumination) of his heart shall make it full of the Light: then God said, "*Did We not expand...?*"<sup>369</sup>
- 5-1067 For We have given the expansion (illumination) to you within your breast, We have put the expansion into your breast."
- 5-1070 O lake, you have a channel to the Sea: be ashamed to seek water from the pool.
- 5-1072 Contemplate the expansion of the heart within yourself, so that the reproach *Do you not see?*<sup>370</sup> does not come.

### **Homogeneity. [2.1.3]**

#### **Birds of a feather flock together.**

#### **The devout seeks the company of good people.**

#### **The wrongdoer seeks the company of his own kind. [2.1.3]**

- 6-2900 Each of the atoms which exist in this earth and heaven is like amber (a magnet) for its congener.
- 1-640 Since the infidels were congeners of *Sijjīn* (Hell), they favoured the prison (*sijn*) of this world.
- 1-641 Since the Prophets were congeners of *'Ilīyyīn* (Heaven), they went to the *'Ilīyyīn* of spirit and heart.
- 1-889 Every kind of delight certainly is to be found in its own kind: observe that the delight of the part is in its whole.
- 2-81 In this world everything attracts something: the hot draws the hot to itself and the cold the cold.
- 6-2901 The belly attracts bread to its resting-place; the heat of the liver attracts water.
- 2-83 Those of the Fire attract those of the Fire, those of the Light seek those of the Light.

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<sup>369</sup> Qur'ān 94:1.

<sup>370</sup> Qur'ān 51:21.

- 2-82 The worthless sort attracts the worthless; the lasting (those of lasting value) are rejoiced by the lasting.
- 2-272 *The good women are for the good men*<sup>371</sup>; there also are the words *the bad men are for the bad women*. Take heed!
- 2-280 Look at the trays in front of druggists – each kind is put beside its own kind,
- 2-281 Things of each sort are mixed with things of the same sort, and a certain beauty is produced by this homogeneity.
- 2-2055 What carries away (enraptures) worthless folk? Worthlessness. What pleases futile folk? Futility.
- 2-2056 Because every kind is carried away (enraptured) by its own kind: how should the ox turn its face towards the fierce lion?
- 2-2057 How should the wolf bear love for Joseph, unless, perhaps, through cunning, in order to devour him?
- 3-4402 Every particle of the universe desires its mate, just like amber and the straw stalks.

### **Allegory. [2.1.3]**

- 2-2095 Jālīnūs<sup>372</sup> said to his companions, “Let one of you give me such and such medicine.”
- 2-2096 Then that person said to him, “O master of many sciences, this medicine is used as a cure for madness.
- 2-2097 How far is this from what you understand! Say no more about it.” He replied, “A madman turned his face to me,
- 2-2098 Looked me pleasantly in the face for a while, made little eyes at me, and plucked my sleeve.
- 2-2099 Had there not been congeniality with him in me, how would that unfortunate man have turned his face towards me?
- 2-2100 Had he not seen one of his own kind in me, how would he have approached? How would he have thrown himself upon (attached himself to) one of another kind?”
- 2-2101 When two persons come into contact with each other, without doubt there is something in common between them.

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<sup>371</sup> Qur’ān 24:26.

<sup>372</sup> Jālīnūs = Galen, the famous Greek physician (ca.129/131-ca. 200/216 CE), whose medical system remained dominant throughout the East and Europe for more than 1500 years.

- 2-2102 How would a bird fly except with its own kind? The society of the uncongenial is the grave and the tomb.
- 3-3252 The reflection of the man of light is entirely resplendent; the reflection of the man of darkness is entirely like a bath stove (ash heap).
- 3-3253 The reflection of the servant of God is entirely luminous; the reflection of the stranger to God is entirely blindness.
- 3-3254 Know everyone's reflection: see it plainly, o my soul. Then at all times sit beside the congener whom you desire.
- 3-4401 Because of that predestination all the particles of the world are paired as mates and are in love with their own mate.
- 4-280 Recite the words, *the bad women are for the bad men*: recognize both the front and the back (the profound meaning) of this saying.
- 4-2656 Congener flies to congener with a hundred wings and tears all bounds apart in the strong desire for him who is congenial.

**The story of a child that got into a dangerous situation by a water spout and of its mother turning to Ḥaẓrat Mawlā<sup>373</sup> 'Alī, crying for help: [2.1.3]**

- 4-2657 A woman came to Murtaẓā 'Alī<sup>374</sup> and said, "My child has fallen into the gutter.
- 4-2658 If I call it, it will not come to my hands (to me); and if I leave it, I am afraid it will fall to the ground.
- 4-2659 It is not sensible, that it would understand, like us, if I say, 'Come to me and escape from the danger.'
- 4-2660 Moreover, it does not understand signs made by the hand; or if it would understand, it will not listen: this too is bad (useless).
- 4-2661 I have shown it the milk and the nipple many times, but it always turns its eyes and face away from me.

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<sup>373</sup> *Mawlā* means "Master", "Lord", or "Caring, Supporting and Protecting Friend". It is a name of God, and is mentioned as such in the Qur'ān (see Qur'ān 2:286 and 47:11), but it is also an honorific title of the Prophet Muḥammad and of 'Alī, the Prophet's nephew, son-in-law and foremost mystical successor. *Mawlā* is also often found with the possessive suffix *-nā* as an honorific title for Sūfī Saints and Masters: *Mawlānā* (e.g. Mawlānā Jalālu'ddīn Rūmī). *Mawlānā* means "Our Master, Lord and Caring, Supporting and Protecting Friend". The word *Mawlā* is derived from the same Arabic verbal root as the word *walī* (plural *awliyā*). *Walī* is a name of God (*al-Walī*, "the Protecting Friend"), as well as the common Sūfī term to designate a Saint. *Walī* means "one who is close to God", "a close Friend of God", hence a Saint.

<sup>374</sup> The name *Murtaẓā*, from the Arabic *Murtaḍā*, means "Chosen One", but more particularly "Chosen because God is pleased with him".

- 4-2662 For God's sake – since you, o noble ones, are those who give succour in this world and the other world –
- 4-2663 Quickly apply the remedy, for my heart is trembling from fear that I would be torn painfully from the fruit of my heart.”
- 4-2664 ‘Alī said, “Take another child up to the roof, in order that the boy may see his congener.”
- 4-2665 And come swiftly from the gutter to his congener: congener is always in love with congener.”
- 4-2666 The woman did so, and when the child saw its congener, it turned its face towards it with delight
- 4-2667 And came from the ridge of the gutter to the roof: know that a congener attracts every congener.
- 4-2668 The child came crawling along to the other child: it was saved from falling to the ground below.
- 4-2669 The Prophets are human in order that humankind might be saved from the gutter, through its homogeneity with the Prophets.
- 4-2670 Therefore the Prophet called himself *a man like you*<sup>375</sup>, that you might come to your congener and might not become lost;
- 4-2671 For homogeneity is a wondrous attractor: wherever there is a seeker, his congener is attracting him.
- 6-1176 Miracles are not the cause of religious faith; it is the scent of homogeneity that attracts qualities of the same kind to itself.
- 6-1177 Miracles are wrought for the purpose of subjugating the enemy: the scent of homogeneity is only for the winning of hearts.
- 4-2672 Jesus and Idrīs<sup>376</sup> ascended to heaven, since they were homogeneous with the angels.
- 4-2673 Again, Hārūt and Mārūt<sup>377</sup> were homogeneous with the body: therefore they descended from above.
- 4-2697 Since the Prophets are homogeneous with spirit and angel, they drew angels from heaven.

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<sup>375</sup> Qur’ān 18:110.

<sup>376</sup> Idrīs: usually identified with the Biblical Prophet Enoch. He is the Prophet who precedes Noah (ḤaẓratNūḥ).

<sup>377</sup> In Islamic mythology, there are many speculations and interpretations about Hārūt and Mārūt, but the most common one is that they were two angels in Babylon who unintentionally became masters of evil. They are mentioned in the Qur’ān (2:102-103).



- 4-2702 Again, the spirits that are homogeneous with the Prophets are moving gradually towards them, like shadows.
- 4-2703 Because such a spirit's intelligence prevailing; and doubtlessly the intelligence is homogeneous in nature with the angel;
- 4-2704 While in the enemy of God the carnal soul's (*nafs*) lustfulness predominates: the carnal soul is homogeneous with the lowest of the low and goes towards it.
- 4-2705 The Egyptian was a congener of the damned Pharaoh; the Israelite was a congener of Moses, the Kalīm<sup>378</sup>.
- 4-2706 Hāmān<sup>379</sup> was more congenial to the Pharaoh than anyone else: the Pharaoh chose him out and brought him to the high seat in the palace.
- 4-2717 If you are inclined towards Hāmān, you have the nature of Hāmān; and if you are inclined towards Moses, you are a glorifier of God.
- 4-2718 And if you are inclined and impelled towards both, you are carnal soul and reason, both mingled together.
- 4-2719 Both these are at war: take heed, take heed, and try to make the spiritual realities prevail over the sensuous forms.

**Homogeneity is internal, not external. Birds of a feather flock together for inner reasons. [2.1.3]**

- 6-2952 "It is certain that congeniality is spiritual in origin and is not derived from water and clay (the outer form)."
- 6-2953 Take heed, do not become a worshipper of form and do not say this. Do not seek to discover the secret of congeniality in the outer form.
- 6-2954 Form resembles the mineral and the stone: a lifeless thing has no knowledge of congeniality.
- 6-2971 By reason you can recognize congener and non-congener: you should not run to outer forms at once.
- 6-2972 My being your congener bears no relation to your outer form: Jesus, in the form of man, in reality was homogeneous with the angels.

**The story of 'Abdu'l-Ghawth, who lived with parīs<sup>380</sup> for many years: [2.1.3]**

<sup>378</sup> In the Muslim tradition, *Kalīmu 'Llāh*, "he who spoke with God", is the epithet of the Prophet Moses.

<sup>379</sup> Hāmān: the chief minister of the Pharaoh in the time of Moses.

<sup>380</sup> *Parī*: in Persian mythology, a beautiful and benevolent supernatural being or fairy.

- 6-2974 ‘Abdu’l-Ghawth<sup>381</sup> was a congener of the *parī*: for nine years he was flying invisibly, like a *parī*.
- 6-2975 His wife had children from another husband, and ‘Abdu’l-Ghawth’s orphans used to talk of his death,
- 6-2976 Saying, “A wolf or a highwayman must have attacked him, or perhaps he fell into a pit or an ambush.”
- 6-2977 All his children were passionately absorbed in worldly occupations: they never said (thought) that they had a father who might be alive.
- 6-2978 After nine years he came back for a short time: he appeared and then disappeared again.
- 6-2979 He was the guest of his children for one month, and after that nobody saw any more of him.
- 6-2980 Inner homogeneity with the *parīs* carried him off, just as a spear thrust robs the spirit of the body.
- 6-2992 What is real homogeneity? A kind of insight that allows people to enter into the minds and feelings of one another.
- 6-2993 When God endows you with the same insight which He has hidden in another person, you become his congener.
- 6-2994 What draws a body (person) in any direction? Insight. How could the conscious attract the unconscious?
- 6-2997 When He implants in you the qualities of Gabriel, you will seek the way up in the air, like a young bird,
- 6-2998 Gazing expectantly, your eye fixed upon the air, estranged from the earth and enamoured of heaven.
- 6-2999 When He implants the ass-like qualities in you, you will fly to the stable, even if you have a hundred wings (means).
- 6-2981 Since one who is destined for Paradise is inwardly homogeneous with Paradise, homogeneity causes him also to become a worshipper of God.
- 6-2982 Did the Prophet not say, “Know that generosity and virtue<sup>382</sup> are drooping branches of the trees in Paradise and have been let down into this world?”<sup>383</sup>

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<sup>381</sup> ‘Abdu’l-Ghawth is a fictional character, invented by Ḥaẓrat Mawlānā Rūmī. He does not occur in any other writings. However, ‘Abdu’l-Ghawth’s story bears a strong resemblance to a tale about one the Companions of the Prophet Muḥammad, Abū Ruqayya ibn Aws Tamīm ad-Dārī. This Tamīm was stripped of all his possessions by *parīs* (or *jinn*, i.e. spirits, good or bad in nature); he was forced to live in utter poverty for a long time, before he finally was able to return to his family.

<sup>382</sup> Literally a praiseworthy quality or action (Nich.).

- 6-2983 Declare all loves to be homogeneous with Divine Love; deem all wraths to be homogeneous with Divine Wrath.
- 6-2985 The congeniality (spiritual affinity) in Idrīs was derived from the stars: for eight years he accompanied Saturn.
- 6-2986 He was Saturn's companion in the East and in the West; he was his partner in conversation and familiar with his characteristics.
- 6-2987 When he arrived on earth after his absence from the body, he was always giving lessons in astronomy on the earth.
- 6-2988 The stars gladly ranged themselves in ranks before him: the stars attended his lectures.
- 6-2990 The attraction exerted by homogeneity (spiritual affinity) drew the stars down to the earth and caused them to speak plainly before him.
- 1-2894 If you are going on the Pilgrimage, seek a pilgrim as your companion, whether he is a Hindu, a Turk or an Arab.
- 1-2895 Do not look at his figure and colour, look at his purpose and intention.
- 1-2896 If he is black, he still is in unison with you: call him white, for spiritually his complexion is the same as yours.
- 1-1205 To speak the same language is a kinship and affinity: when a man is with those in whom he cannot confide, he is like a prisoner in chains.
- 1-1206 O, many are the Indians and Turks who speak the same language; o, many are the Turks who are as strangers to each other.
- 1-1207 Therefore the language of mutual understanding is different indeed: to be one in heart is better than to be one in language (speak the same language).
- 2-1089 The heart eats a particular food from every single companion; the heart acquires a particular excellence from every single piece of knowledge.
- 2-1091 You eat (receive) something from meeting with anyone, and you carry away something from meeting with a companion.
- 2-1092 When a planet comes into conjunction with another planet, they will assuredly produce the effect appropriate to both of them,
- 2-1093 As for example the human being is born from the union of man and woman, and as sparks arise from stone and iron coming together;

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<sup>383</sup> This ḥadīth (saying of the Prophet) is mentioned in *Aḥādīth-e Mathnawī* on p. 183.

- 2-1094 And as from the joining together of earth with rains fruits, greenery and sweet herbs are produced;
- 2-1095 And as from the joining together of plants and verdant spots with man, joy of heart, being free of pain or sorrow and happiness are produced;
- 2-1096 And as from the joining together of happiness with our souls our goodness and beneficence are born.
- 2-80 The Beautiful attracts the beautiful to itself: know this for sure. So recite the words *the good women are for the good men*.

## The Fourth Rivulet [2.1.4]

### Seeking the company of mystics and experiencing their influence.

- 3-1442 For this seeking is a blessed work; this search is a killer of obstacles on the Way to God.
- 3-1443 This search is the key to the things that you seek; this search is your army and the victory of your banners.
- 3-1444 This search is like the rooster crowing and proclaiming that the dawn is near.
- 3-1446 Whomever you see engaged in search, o son, become his friend and cast your head before him<sup>384</sup>,
- 3-1447 For by being the neighbour of the seekers you yourself will become a seeker, and from the shadows (protection) of the conquerors you yourself will become a conqueror.
- 3-1448 If an ant has endeavoured to attain the rank of Solomon, do not look on its quest with contempt.
- 3-1449 Everything that you have of wealth and skill in a handicraft or profession – was it not at first a quest and a thought?
- 3-2302 Come, seek them, for search is the pillar (foundation) of fortune: every success consists in (depends on) fixing the heart upon the object of desire.
- 3-2303 Unconcerned with all the business of the world, keep saying with all your soul *kū, kū*<sup>385</sup>, like a dove
- 3-4781 If the shadow (protection) of God is over the head of the servant of God, the seeker at last will be a finder.

<sup>384</sup> I.e. devote yourself to him (Nich.).

<sup>385</sup> Literally: where? where? (Nich.).

- 3-4782 The Prophet said that when you knock on a door, in the end a head will appear from that door<sup>386</sup>.
- 3-4783 When you sit waiting for someone on the road, in the end you will see also his face.
- 3-4784 When, every day, you keep digging the earth from a pit, in the end you will reach the pure water.
- 4-724 Listen, come swiftly, o seeker of felicity, for now is the time for manifestations of spiritual grace and the opening of the door.
- 4-725 O you who are not a seeker, come also, that you may gain the gift of seeking felicity from this faithful Friend.

**The story of Ḥaẓrat Ibrāhīm-e Adham<sup>387</sup>, who abandoned his kingdom and his wealth and thus attained to the Truth. [2.1.4]**

- 4-726 Quickly smash into pieces the kingdom of this world, like Ibrāhīm, son of Adham, that like him you may gain the kingdom of everlasting life.
- 4-727 At night that king was asleep on his throne, while on the roof of the palace the guards were on duty<sup>388</sup>.
- 4-829 Reclining on a throne, that man of good name at night heard a noise of tramping and shrill cries from the roof.
- 4-830 He heard loud footsteps on the roof of the palace, and said to himself, “Who dares to do this?”
- 4-831 He shouted, at the palace window, “Who is it? This is not a man, it may well be a genie.”
- 4-832 Wondrous people put their heads down from the roof, saying, “We go round on a nightly search.”
- 4-833 “Eh, what are you looking for?” “Camels,” they replied. He said, “Take heed! Whoever looked for a camel on a roof?”
- 4-834 Then they said to him, “How are you seeking to meet with God on a throne of state?”
- 4-835 That was all. No one saw him again: he vanished like a genie from the sight of man.

<sup>386</sup> *Aḥādīth-e Mathnawī* p. 342. Cf. the New Testament: “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.” (Matthew 7:7).

<sup>387</sup> Ḥaẓrat Ibrāhīm-e Adham (died 777 CE) was a prince or king in Balkh, in the east of Greater Khurāsān. He renounced his position and wealth and became a renowned Ṣūfī Saint.

<sup>388</sup> Literally: were engaged in holding and seizing (Nich.).

- 4-836 His reality (real self) was hidden, although he was in people's presence: how could the people see anything but the beard and robe of the dervish?
- 4-837 When he disappeared from his own and the people's eyes, he became renowned in the world, like the 'Anqā<sup>389</sup>.
- 4-838 Whenever the soul of any spiritual bird has come to Mount Qāf<sup>390</sup>, all the world boasts and brags about it.
- 5-2047 To everyone who suffers a tribulation a treasure is revealed: everyone who makes an earnest endeavour comes into a fortune.
- 5-2048 The Prophet has said that genuflection and prostration in ritual prayer are equivalent to knocking on the Divine door of mystical attainment<sup>391</sup>.
- 5-2049 When anyone continues to knock on that door, felicity peeps out for his sake.

### Story:

#### **The treasure that we are looking for is hidden in our house (i.e. what you are looking for is to be found in yourself). [2.1.4]**

- 6-4206 There once was a man who inherited money and estates: he squandered all and was left destitute and miserable.
- 6-4207 Inherited wealth indeed does not remain faithful to its new owner, since it was parted against its will from the deceased one.
- 6-4208 Just because the heir got it easily, he does not know its value; for he never made haste to work, toil and earn it.
- 6-4210 His ready money went and his furniture and houses went: he was left alone like owls in the deserts.
- 6-4211 He cried, "O Lord, You gave me provision: the provision is gone: either give me some provision or send death."
- 6-4212 When he became empty, he began to call unto God: he started the lament of "O Lord!" and "O Lord, protect me!"
- 6-4240 He dreamed that he heard a Voice from heaven saying, "Your fortune will be found in Cairo
- 6-4241 Go to Cairo: there your affair will be set right. God has accepted your humble plea: He is the only beacon of hope.
- 6-4242 In such and such a spot is a great treasure: you must go to Cairo to seek it.

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<sup>389</sup> Anqā: a phoenix-like bird from Arabic story tradition. Its main characteristic is its elusiveness: as soon as you try to catch it, it's gone. Its Persian equivalent is the *Sīmurgh*.

<sup>390</sup> Qāf: mythical mountain or chain of mountains surrounding the earth, created from a single emerald.

<sup>391</sup> I.e. prayer is the means of attaining to union with God (Nich.).

- 6-4244 When he left Baghdad and came to Cairo, his courage was restored<sup>392</sup> when he saw Cairo,
- 6-4247 But he had no money left for great or small expenses; and he was about to go and beg from the common people.
- 6-4250 “At nightfall,” he said to himself, “I will slip out very quietly, in order that I may beg in the dark without feeling ashamed.”
- 6-4252 With this in mind he went out into the street, and with these thoughts in his head he wandered to and fro.
- 6-4255 Suddenly the night patrol seized him and, unable to restrain his anger<sup>393</sup>, beat him with fist and truncheon.
- 6-4256 As it happened, the people of the city had suffered losses in those dark nights from the plundering of night thieves.
- 6-4258 So much so that the *Khalīfa*<sup>394</sup> said, “Cut off the hand of anyone who roams about by night, even if he is a relative of mine.”
- 6-4265 The night patrol saw him in the street at such a time and gave him a thorough beating and countless blows.
- 6-4266 Shrieks and cries for mercy arose from the poor wretch: “Don’t strike! Let me tell the truth about it all!”
- 6-4267 He replied, “Look now, I will give you time: speak, that I may learn how you came out into the streets by night.
- 6-4268 You do not belong to this place, you are a stranger and unknown to me: tell me what you are really plotting here.
- 6-4272 After taking many oaths he replied, “I am not a burglar or pickpocket.
- 6-4273 I am no thief and criminal: I am a stranger in Cairo, I belong to Baghdad.”
- 6-4274 He related the story of his dream and the treasure of gold, and under the influence of his truthfulness the man’s heart expanded like a flower.
- 6-4275 From the treasure seeker’s oaths (objections) he recognized the truth: in him both the burning and the rue-seed<sup>395</sup> were plainly visible.

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<sup>392</sup> Literally: his back became warm (Nich.).

<sup>393</sup> Literally: yellow bile (Nich.).

<sup>394</sup> “*Khalīfa*” literally means “one who replaces someone else who left or died”. The English word “caliph” is derived from “*Khalīfa*”. In the Sunnī Muslim tradition, “*Khalīfa*” denotes “a successor to the Prophet Muḥammad”; this is not the case in the Shī‘ī Muslim tradition – Shī‘ī Muslims call the successors to the Prophet “Imām”. In Sūfī Orders, “*khalīfa*” is a title given to one who may represent his Master abroad or in his absence. *Khalīfa* then means “deputy” or “deputized teacher and representative”. In certain orders however, *khalīfa* means “successor to a Sūfī Saint or Master”.

- 6-4312 The night patrol said, “You are not a thief and you are not a villain: you are a good man, but you are foolish and silly.
- 6-4313 You make such a long journey, relying on a fantasy and mere dream: your intelligence does not have the least spark<sup>396</sup> of brightness.
- 6-4314 I have dreamed many times, continuously, that there is a hidden treasure in Baghdad,
- 6-4315 Buried in such and such a quarter and such and such a street” – the name, in fact, was that of the street where this sorrowful man lived.
- 6-4317 “I have often dreamed myself that there is a treasure in the dwelling-place in Baghdad.
- 6-4318 I never left my home because of this fantasy, but in pursuit of a single dream you come here without considering the fatigue.
- 6-4322 The treasure seeker said to himself, “The treasure is in my house: then why am I poverty-stricken and lamenting there?
- 6-4323 While living above the treasure, I have almost died of beggary because I am heedless and blind<sup>397</sup>.”
- 6-4324 This good news intoxicated him with joy: his sorrow vanished, and without opening his lips he chanted a hundred thousand praises to God.
- 6-4336 He returned from Cairo to Baghdad, prostrating himself, bowing in prayer and giving praise and thanks to God.
- 6-4385 When he came home, he discovered the treasure: by Divine grace his fortune was restored.

### **You cannot seek the Beloved unless you are in love. [2.1.4]**

- 6-1962 Burning the rose and occupying yourself with the thorn is of no use to you if you have work to do.
- 6-1964 This specialty needs a man with a brave heart like you: do you, who have a brave heart, search for this treasure?
- 6-1966 How could Reason go down the road of despair? It is Love that runs on its head in that direction.
- 6-1967 Love is reckless, not Reason: Reason seeks that from which it may get some profit.

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<sup>395</sup> I.e. both his inner sincerity and his veracity. Rue-seed is burnt as a charm against the evil eye (Nich.).

<sup>396</sup> Literally “a *tasū* (a very small weight).”(Nich.).

<sup>397</sup> Literally “in the veil” (Nich.).



- 1-150 When a thorn penetrates anyone's foot, he sets his foot upon his knee.
- 1-151 And keeps searching for its head with the point of a needle, and if he does not find it, he keeps moistening the spot with his lip.
- 1-152 A thorn in the foot is so hard to find: how then is it with a thorn in the heart? Answer that!
- 1-153 If every mean fellow had seen the thorn in the heart, when would sorrows gain the upper hand over anyone?
- 5-1727 If you are a true believer, come now, enter the ranks of battle, for a feast has been prepared for you in Heaven.
- 5-1728 In the hope of journeying upwards, arise and take your stand before the *mihrāb*<sup>398</sup>, to pray and weep like a candle, o young man!
- 5-1729 Let your tears fall like rain, and burn and search ardently all night long, like the candle shortened by the flame.
- 5-1734 For this search is God's pledge deposited within you, because every seeker deserves to find something that he seeks.
- 3-1437 Do not look at your ugly or beautiful form; look at Love and the object of your search.
- 3-1438 Do not consider the fact that you are despicable or weak; look upon your aspiration, o noble one.
- 5-1104 And if you do not have a foot (means), then set yourself in motion that you may see every great and small.
- 5-1105 Even though *Zalīkhā*<sup>399</sup> shut the doors on every side, Joseph was able to return to safety by setting himself in motion.
- 5-1107 Although the world has no visible breach (means of exit), one still must run to and fro recklessly, like Joseph,
- 5-1108 In order that the lock may open and the doorway become clear, and the region of non-spatiality<sup>400</sup> become your dwelling-place.

<sup>398</sup> I.e. the niche in the wall of a mosque showing the direction of Mecca (Nich.).

<sup>399</sup> *Zalīkhā* is the Persian form of the Arabic name *Zulaykha*. The story of *Yūsuf* (Joseph) and *Zulaykha* is told in the *Qur'ān* (*Sūra Yūsuf* – the 12<sup>th</sup> *Sūra* – verses 31-34), even though *Zulaykha*'s name is not explicitly mentioned. Their story has been retold many times. The most famous version is the one written by the great Persian *Šūfī* poet and mystic *Ḥaẓrat Mawlānā Nūru'ddīn 'Adbu'r-Raḥmān Jāmī* (1414-1492 CE), in his *Haft Awrang* ("Seven Thrones").

<sup>400</sup> Non-spatiality: *lā makān*, literally "no space", i.e. "the Placeless Realm", the place of the deity, where there is no space and time, a state beyond our conception.

- 3-1439 In whatever state you may be, keep searching; o you who have a dry lip, always seek the water,
- 3-1440 For that dry lip of yours is evidence that it will reach the source in the end.
- 3-1441 Dryness of lip is a message from the water to say that this agitation (anxious search) will certainly bring you to the water<sup>401</sup>.
- 1-1817 The drowning man suffers an agony of soul and clutches at every straw.
- 1-1818 For fear of losing his life, he flings around both hand and foot to see whether anyone will take his hand (help him) in danger.
- 1-1819 The Friend loves the agitation: it is better to struggle vainly than to lie still.

### **It is the One Sought for (Maṭlūb) who attracts the seeker (ṭālib). [2.1.4]**

- 1-1739 The hearts of heart-ravishers are captivated by those who have lost their hearts to them: all loved ones are the prey of their lovers.
- 1-1738 The fowler becomes a prey to the birds in order that all of a sudden he may make them his prey.
- 1-1741 If the thirsty seek water from the world, water too seeks the thirsty in the world.
- 1-1742 Since He is your lover, be silent: as He is pulling your ear, be all ear.
- 1-1822 Keep on scraping and scratching like this (exerting yourself to the utmost): do not remain unoccupied for a single moment until your last breath.

### **The search holds a hidden pain, containing a message from the Beloved. [2.1.4]**

- 3-189 One night a certain man was crying “Allāh!” until his lips grew sweet with praise of Him.
- 3-190 The Devil said, “Please tell me, o talkative one, where is the answer “Here I am”<sup>402</sup> to all this “Allāh”?
- 3-191 Not a single response comes from the Throne: how long will you cry ‘Allāh’ with grim face?”

<sup>401</sup> Or “bring you to us (to me)” (Nich.).

<sup>402</sup> This refers to a prayer called *talbiya*, which is constantly repeated by Muslims, as they set out to perform the *Hajj* or ritual pilgrimage to Mecca: “*Labbayka, Allāhumma, Labbayk! Labbayka, la sharīka Laka, Labbayk! Inna ’l-ḥamda wa ’n-ni’ mata Lakawa ’l-Mulk! Lā sharīka Lak!*”. This means: “Here I am, o God, Here I am [literally “with You, o God”; the implication is: “Here I am at Your service!”]! Here I am, You are without equal, here I am! Verily, to You all praise is due, to You belongs all Beneficence, Yours is the Dominion! You are without equal!”.

- 3-192 His heart broke and he laid his head down to sleep: in a dream he saw *Khaḍir*<sup>403</sup> amidst the verdure.
- 3-193 Khaḍir said, “Listen, you have ceased to praise and invoke God: why are you remorseful about your invocation and remembrance of Him?”
- 3-194 He said, “Since no ‘Here I am’ is coming to me in response, I fear that I may be a doomed one who is driven away from the Door.”
- 3-195 Khaḍir said, “God said, ‘Your ‘Allāh’ is My ‘Here I am, and your supplication, grief and ardour are My messenger to you.
- 3-196 Your tricks and attempts to find a means to reach Me were in reality My drawing you towards Me, and released your feet from the bonds of worldliness.
- 3-197 Your fear and love are the noose to catch My favour: beneath your every ‘O Lord’ is many a ‘Here am I’ from Me.”
- 3-198 The soul of the fool is far from this prayer, because he is not permitted to cry “O Lord.”
- 3-199 His mouth and heart are locked, so that he may not moan unto God at the time of tribulation.
- 3-4398 The thirsty man is moaning, “O delicious water!!” The water moans too, saying, “Where is the water drinker?”
- 3-4399 This thirst in our souls is the attraction exerted by the Water: we belong to It, and It belongs to us.
- 3-978 Whether one moves slowly or quickly, he who is a seeker will be a finder.
- 3-979 Always devote yourself to seeking with both hands (with all your might), for search is an excellent guide on the way.
- 3-980 Even though you are lame, limping, bent in figure and ill-mannered, always creep towards Him and keep searching for Him.

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<sup>403</sup> Khaḍir: another name for Khidr, the enigmatic “Green Man”, who acted as a spiritual guide for a number of Prophets and Saints who did not have a guide of flesh and blood, such as the Prophet Moses and the famous Ṣūfī Master, gnostic and theoretician Ḥaẓrat Muḥyī’d-dīn ibn ‘Arabī (1165-1240 CE).

## The Second River [2.2]

The help of the Pīr resembles a strong rope  
that the true murīd can hold on to<sup>404</sup>.

### The First Rivulet [2.2.1]

The meaning and qualities of a true Pīr and  
the way a murīd should behave towards the Pīr.

- 3-1790 Who is a “Shaykh”? An old man (*pīr*)<sup>405</sup>, that is to say, a white-haired one. Do you understand the meaning of this “white hair”, o hopeless one?
- 3-1793 That “black hair” is the attribute of sensual men; that “hair” is not the hair of the beard or the hair of the head.
- 3-1792 When his self-existence has ceased, he is “old” (*pīr*), whether his hair is black or grizzled.
- 3-1791 The black hair is his self-existence: he is not “old” until not a single hair of his self-existence remains.
- 3-1795 If the Ṣūfī has been delivered from only a part of the attributes of sensual men, he is not a Shaykh; he is a grey (middle-aged) one, o son.
- 3-1797 But if his hair is white and he is still with himself (self-existent), he is not a Pīr and is not the elect of God;
- 3-1798 And if a single hair tip of his sensual attributes survives, he is not heavenly: he belongs to the material world.
- 4-2161 O, there are many black bearded ones who are old in wisdom; o, there are many white bearded ones with a heart black as pitch.
- 4-2163 O son, the really old one is the old in understanding: it is not whiteness of the hair in the beard and on the head.
- 4-2164 How would any old man be older than Iblīs? When he lacks understanding, he is good-for-nothing.
- 4-2165 Suppose he is a child: what does it matter if he has the life-giving breath of Jesus and is purified of vain glory and vain desire?

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<sup>404</sup> Qur’ān 3:103

<sup>405</sup> *Pīr* is the Persian word for “Ṣūfī Master”. Its Arabic equivalent is *Shaykh*. The primary meaning of the Persian word *pīr* is “old” or “old person”. The primary meaning of the Arabic word *shaykh* is similar to the Persian word *pīr*: “old man” or “an elder”. It should be noted that throughout his *Mathnawī*, Ḥaṣrat Mawlānā Jalālu’d-dīn Rūmī uses both *Shaykh* and *Pīr* indiscriminately to designate “Ṣūfī Master”, without difference in rank or realization.

- 5-2484 The enlightened Shaykh acquaints his disciples with the Way; moreover, he causes the light of faith to accompany his words.
- 1-2939 The Pīr is like summer, and other people are like the autumn month; other people are like night, and the Pīr is the moon.
- 1-2940 I have bestowed on my young Fortune (Ḥusāmu'ddīn<sup>406</sup>) the name of Pīr (old), because he is made old by the Truth, not made old by Time.
- 1-2938 Write down what pertains to the Pīr (Guide) who knows the Way: – Choose the Pīr and regard him as the essence of the Way.
- 6-4121 May no other than the Pīr be your master and commander! – not the Pīr (old man) of the rolling sky<sup>407</sup>, but the Pīr of right guidance<sup>408</sup>.
- 5-2485 Strive to become intoxicated and enlightened, in order that his light may be like the rhyme letter<sup>409</sup> to your speech.
- 2-493 There are great differences between the true knower and the blind imitator, for the former is like David, while the other is but an echo.
- 1-314 The face of the one is turned towards the Beloved, while the face of the other is just his own face (he is facing himself).
- 1-315 Look long on the face of everyone, keep watch attentively: it is possible that by serving Ṣūfīs you will come to know the face of the true Saint.
- 1-316 Since there are many devils who have the face of Adam, it is not good to give your hand to every hand.

**The imitators of the Ṣūfīs, who deceive others and abuse the name of Sufism, even though they know nothing about the Path of the Ṣūfī. [2.2.1]**

- 1-2584 O, many are those who are sweet as sugar, but poison is concealed in the sugar.
- 5-1329 Its external appearance resembles other appearances, but the disc (round cake) of bread is very far from being the disc of the moon.
- 5-3806 The false Ṣūfī is only the figure of a Ṣūfī: he has no soul (life); accordingly, the true Ṣūfīs get a bad name from Ṣūfīs such as these.
- 1-2274: He has stolen many expressions used by dervishes, in order that he himself might be considered to be a holy person.

<sup>406</sup> Ḥusāmu'ddīn Chelebī (died ca. 1284-1285 CE) was Ḥaḏrat Mawlānā Rūmī's most advanced disciple and companion. He was the one who asked Ḥaḏrat Mawlānā Rūmī to put his teachings down in writing. This request was the beginning of Ḥaḏrat Mawlānā Rūmī's *Mathnawī*. Ḥusāmu'ddīn diligently wrote down all his Master's words, as he uttered them in as state of Divine inspiration.

<sup>407</sup> I.e. "Father Time" or "Fortune" (Nich.).

<sup>408</sup> I.e. the spiritual director (Nich.).

<sup>409</sup> I.e. be inseparable from (Nich.).

- 1-2275 In his talk he needlessly finds fault with Bāyazīd<sup>410</sup>, although Yazīd<sup>411</sup> would be ashamed of his existence.

### **How can anyone guide others if he or she has not walked the Path? [2.2.1]**

- 5-1423 O, there are many ignorant hypocrites who have seen nothing of the Way of the holy men except the woollen mantle (*ṣūf*<sup>412</sup>).
- 4-1448 He does not know the way, yet he acts as a guide: his wicked spirit sets the whole world on fire.
- 4-1648 Hypocrisy is like lightning, and in its gleam the travellers cannot see the way.
- 4-1697 Do not act thus as a guide out of greed for amassing wealth and power: follow behind, in order that the Candle (the true guide) may go in front of you.
- 4-1698 The Candle, like the moon, clearly shows the traveller's destination, whether it leads to the grain of spiritual welfare or to the snare of spiritual ruin.
- 4-1699 Whether you want it or not, as long as you are with the Lantern the form of falcon and the form of crow become visible to you.
- 4-1700 Otherwise, beware, for these crows have lit the lantern of deception: they have learned the cry of the white falcons.
- 4-1701 A man may learn the cry of the hoopoe, but where is the mystery of the hoopoe and the message from Sabā<sup>413</sup>?
- 4-1702 Know the difference between the natural cry and the artificial one, know the difference between the crown of kings and the crown (crest) of hoopoes.

<sup>410</sup> The Persian Ṣūfī Master Ḥaḏrat Bāyazīd-e Bastāmī, also known as Ḥaḏrat Abū Yazīd Ṭayfūr al-Bisṭāmī (ca. 804-874 CE), is one of the key figures in the history of Sufism, in that he founded what came to be known as “the School of Intoxication (*sukr*)”, which flourished in Greater Khurāsān, as opposed to the equally influential “School of Sobriety (*saḥw*)”, which was founded in Baghdad by the Ṣūfī Master Ḥaḏrat Junayd al-Baghḏādī (ca. 830-910 AD).

<sup>411</sup> Yazīd (ca. 645-683 CE): son of and successor to the first Umayyad caliph, Mu‘āwīya ibn Abī Sufyān (602-680 CE). He was responsible for the martyrdom of Ḥaḏrat Ḥusayn, son of Ḥaḏrat ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, in 680 CE, an event that marked the final split between Sunnī and Shī‘ī Muslims. But the true Ṣūfī wayfarer (*sālik*) transcends the outer and conventional forms of religion. He isn’t bound to any religion, school of thought or a set of beliefs. His religion is the religion of Love, which surpasses all forms. Even so, mystical lovers may use a specific form of religion to come closer to Divine Love. But when they reach Love and become absorbed in it, they are one, and they experience all as one. As Ḥaḏrat Mawlānā Rūmī states: “What is the means of ascension to Heaven? This not-being. Not-being is the creed and religion of the lovers.” Mathnawī 6-233.

<sup>412</sup> Most orientalist and Ṣūfī Masters agree that the words “ṣūfī” and “ṭaṣawwuf” are derived from the Arabic word *ṣūf*, meaning “wool”. The early Ṣūfis had a tendency towards asceticism and may have taken to wearing simple, coarse woollen garments, following the example of contemporary Christian monks and ascetics, who abounded in the Near East.

<sup>413</sup> Sabā = Sheba – an ancient kingdom in south-western Arabia, mentioned in the Bible and the Qur’ān, in the story of the Prophet Salomon/Ḥaḏrat Sulaymān and the Queen of Sheba/Sabā.

- 4-1703 The shameless have attached the speech of dervishes and the deep sayings of Gnostics to their tongues.
- 1-319 The vile man will steal the language of dervishes, so that he may cast a spell of fascination and deceit on one who is simple.
- 1-320 The work of holy men is as light and heat; the work of vile men is trickery and shamelessness.
- 6-2548 Who boast far and wide<sup>414</sup> of being Shaykhs and make it appear that they have attained to the rank of Bāyazīd.
- 6-2549 And, claiming to have travelled away from themselves and have become united with God, open an assembly for disciples in the house of pretence.
- 1-2276 He does not possess a morsel of bread and food of Heaven: God did not throw a single bone to him.
- 1-2277 He has proclaimed, “I have laid out the dishes, I am the Deputy of God, I am the son of the spiritual Khalīfa<sup>415</sup>.”
- 1-2278 Welcome to the feast, o simple-hearted ones, tormented by hunger, that from my bounteous table you may eat your fill – of nothing.
- 4-1449 When one who is as a child in the Way of spiritual poverty takes on the role of an Elder (Director of souls, Pīr), those who follow him are seized by the ghoul of adversity.
- 4-1450 “Come,” he says, “for I will show you the moon”; yet that impure one never saw the moon.
- 4-1451 How will you show the moon when during all your life you have not seen even the reflection of the moon in the water, o half-baked fool?
- 6-1282 How long will you steal the words of the men of God that you may sell them and receive applause from the crowd?
- 6-1285 When the call to get up and leave has come, all arts of disputation vanish.
- 2-2584 You take flattery, sweet words and blandishment and putting them like gold in your bosom.
- 6-1286 The world of silence comes into view. Stop talking! Alas for him who is not familiar with inner silence!

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<sup>414</sup> Literally “let fall into the world (spread abroad) the boast” (Nich.).

<sup>415</sup> “Khalīfa” literally means “one who replaces someone else who left or died”, hence the English word “caliph”. In the Sunnī tradition, “Khalīfa” denotes “a successor to the Prophet Muḥammad”; this is not the case in the Shī‘ī tradition – Shī‘ī Muslims call the successors to the Prophet “Imām”. In Sūfī Orders, “khalīfa” is a title given to one who may represent his Master abroad or in his absence. *Khalīfa* then means “deputy” or “deputized teacher and representative”. In certain orders however, *khalīfa* means “successor to a Sūfī Saint or Master”.

- 5-1424 O, there are many impudent fellows who, with little practice in the religious life, have learned nothing but talk and brag from the spiritual kings.
- 5-1425 Each one of them, holding a rod in their hands, says, “I am Moses”, and all of them breathe upon foolish people, saying, “I am Jesus.”
- 5-1429 Having heard a form of words, you have become its interpreter, even though you do not know the meaning of your words – like parrots.

**Allegory:**  
**The parrot and the mirror. [2.2.1]**

- 5-1430 A parrot sees its reflection (image) facing it in the mirror.
- 5-1431 The teacher is concealed behind the mirror: that sweet-tongued well-instructed man is talking.
- 5-1432 The little parrot thinks that these words uttered in low tones are spoken by the parrot in the mirror.
- 5-1433 Therefore it learns human speech from one of its own kind, being unaware of the cunning of that old wolf.
- 5-1434 He is teaching it behind the mirror; otherwise it would not talk, for it does not learn except from his congeners.
- 5-1435 In reality, it learned to talk from that accomplished man, but it does not know his meaning and mystery.
- 5-1437 Similarly, the disciple full of egoism sees himself in the mirror of the Shaykh’s body.
- 5-1438 How should he see Universal Reason behind the mirror at the time of speech and discourse?
- 5-1439 He supposes that a man is speaking; and the other (Universal Reason) is a mystery of which he has no knowledge.
- 5-1440 He learns the words, but he cannot know the eternal mystery, for he is a parrot, not a close companion.
- 5-1441 Likewise, people learn the song of birds, for this speech (of birds) is an affair of the mouth and the throat:
- 5-1442 But all are without knowledge of the birds’ meaning, except an exalted Solomon who possesses considerable insight.
- 5-1443 Many learned the language of true dervishes and with it brought splendour to the pulpit and the assembly-place.



- 5-1444 Either nothing was given to them except formal expressions, or eventually the Divine mercy came and revealed the right way.

**Story:**  
**The fools pretending to be wise<sup>416</sup>. [2.2.1]**

- 5-1445 During a *chillah*<sup>417</sup> (forty days' mystical seclusion), a certain man dreamed that he saw a pregnant bitch on the road.
- 5-1446 Suddenly, he heard the cry of puppies: the puppies were in the womb, invisible.
- 5-1447 The yelps astonished him greatly: he wondered how the puppies called out in the womb.
- 5-1448 Puppies howling in the womb – “has anyone,” he thought, “ever seen this in the world?”
- 5-1449 When he sprang up from his dream and came to himself, his bewilderment increased at every moment.
- 5-1450 During the *chillah* none should untie the knot except the Presence<sup>418</sup> of God, full of Greatness and Majesty is He.
- 5-1451 He said, “O Lord, because of this difficulty and idle talk I am deprived of remembrance (*dhikr*)<sup>419</sup> of You during the *chillah*.”
- 5-1452 Loosen my wings that I may soar and enter the garden of remembrance and the apple-orchard of gnosis.”
- 5-1453 At once there came a mysterious voice<sup>420</sup> in reply to him saying, “Know that it is a sign of the idle talk of the ignorant,
- 5-1454 Who, being blindfolded, have begun to speak in vain, without having emerged from the veil and curtain.”
- 5-1455 The yelp of the dog in the womb is useless: in such a case he is neither a hunter of animals nor a keeper of watch by night.

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<sup>416</sup> Qur’ān 46:32.

<sup>417</sup> Chillah: pronounced as something in between *chillé* and *chellé* in Persian (with the stress on the first syllable); the word is derived from *chihil* (more or less pronounced as *chehel*, with the stress on the second syllable), the Persian word for “forty”.

<sup>418</sup> Literally “Portal” (Nich.).

<sup>419</sup> *Dhikr* or *dhikru’Llāh* means “remembrance of God” or “restoring the memory of God”, by repeating various sacred phrases and names of God, either silently or aloud. *Dhikr* is practised individually as well as collectively, and is the most fundamental practice of Sufism. Practising *dhikr* restores man’s memory and consciousness of his True Being, his essential unity with the Divine. “*Dhikr*” is not limited to one or more practices: literally anything that brings about this mystical consciousness may be called “*dhikr*”.

<sup>420</sup> Literally “the voice of the *hātīf*” (Nich.). In classical Ṣūfī parlance, the *hātīf* is “the inner caller” or “inner speaker”.

- 5-1456 He has not seen the wolf, so as to stop him; he has not seen the robber, so as to repel him.
- 5-1459 Without having seen the Moon, he gives indications: in doing so he misleads the ignorant countryman.
- 5-1460 He gives the purchaser a hundred indications describing the Moon which he has never seen, for the sake of gaining power.

### **How knowledge and devotion cause arrogance and turn into a veil. [2.2.1]**

#### **Allegory. [2.2.1]**

- 3-721 A certain jackal went into the dyeing vat, stayed in the vat for a while,
- 3-722 And then came out, his skin having become multi-coloured, saying, ‘I have become the peacock of ‘Illyyīn<sup>421</sup>.’
- 3-724 He saw himself green, red, ginger and yellow, so he presented himself merrily to the jackals.
- 3-725 They all said, “O little jackal, what is the matter, that your head is so full of with joy?
- 3-726 Because of rejoicing you have turned away from us with disdain: where does this arrogance of yours come from?”
- 3-727 One of the jackals went to him and said, “O so-and-so, have you acted deceitfully or have you really become one of those whose hearts rejoice in God<sup>422</sup>?
- 3-728 You have acted deceitfully so that you may jump on to the pulpit and by your idle talk give these people the feeling of regret<sup>423</sup>.
- 3-729 You have striven much, but you have not felt any spiritual ardour; therefore your deceit has demonstrated your impudence.”
- 3-730 Spiritual ardour belongs to the Saints and Prophets; on the other hand, impudence is the refuge of every impostor.
- 3-766 Likewise the multi-coloured jackal came secretly and tapped on the lobe of the rebuker’s ear.
- 3-767 “Please look at me and at my colour; truly the idolater possesses no idol like me.

<sup>421</sup> A place in the Seventh Heaven (Nich.).

<sup>422</sup> I.e. “are you a hypocrite seeking to pose as a Saint?” (Nich.).

<sup>423</sup> I.e. cause them to envy your felicity (Nich.).

- 3-768 Like the flower garden I have become many-hued and lovely: bow in homage to me, do not withdraw from me in aversion.
- 3-769 Behold my glory, splendour, sheen, radiance and colour! Call me the Pride of the World and the Pillar of the Religion!
- 3-770 I have become the place of manifestation of the Divine Grace, I have become the tablet on which the Divine Majesty is unfolded.
- 3-771 O jackals, take heed, do not call me a jackal: how should a jackal have so much beauty?"
- 3-772 Those jackals came to him in large numbers, like moths around the candle.
- 3-773 "Say then, what shall we call you, o precious creature<sup>424</sup>?" He replied, "A peacock brilliant as Jupiter."
- 3-774 Then they said to him, "The spiritual peacocks show themselves with the Beloved in the Rose garden:
- 3-775 Do you display yourself like that?" "No," he said: "not having gone into the desert, how should I tread the valley of Minā<sup>425</sup>?"
- 3-776 "Do you utter the cry of peacocks?" "No," he said. "Then, Master Bū'l-'Alā<sup>426</sup>, you are not a peacock.
- 3-777 The peacock's garment of honour comes from Heaven: how will you reach it by means of colours and pretences?"
- 3-784 If you appear in the direction of the peacocks, you are incapable of their display and you will be put to shame.
- 3-786 Your foulness and disgrace were exposed, you did fall headlong from your height.
- 3-787 When you saw the touchstone, you became black, like false coin: the lion-like figure vanished, and the dog was revealed.
- 3-788 O foul mangy dog, do not clothe yourself in the lion's skin through greed and insolence.
- 4-1774 In the battlefield of this world there are wise ones who distinguish the smell: do not idly imitate the ecstatic cries of the truly enraptured in your presumption.

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<sup>424</sup> The word used in the Persian text is *jawhar*, which can mean "a jewel" as well as "substance" or "essence" (in a philosophical sense).

<sup>425</sup> The valley of Minā is the place where pilgrims to Mecca symbolically stone three pillars representing the Devil on the last day of the Hajj.

<sup>426</sup> A name signifying "Father of sublimity" (Nich.).

- 2-3454 Be a vassal since you are not a lord: do not steer the boat yourself, since you are not the boatman.
- 2-3455 Since you are not perfect in spiritual tradesmanship, do not set up a shop by yourself. Be pliable to the hand, in order that you may become leavened like dough.
- 2-3456 Listen to the Divine command, “Remain silent<sup>427</sup>,” be mute; since you have not become the tongue (mouthpiece) of God, be an ear.
- 5-903 But that one whose hypocrisy pleases you, he is only your Saint, he is not the elect of God.
- 5-904 Whoever lives in accordance with your disposition and nature seems to be a Saint and a Prophet to your carnal nature.
- 2-23 Go, seek the friend of God at once: when you have done so, God is your friend.

**Allegory:  
Following an unaccomplished Pīr leads  
one astray and causes despair. [2.2.1]**

- 6-129 One day an inquirer said to a preacher, “O you who are the pulpit’s most eminent speaker,
- 6-130 I have a question to ask. Answer my question in this assembly place, o possessor of the marrow of wisdom.
- 6-131 A bird has settled on the city wall: which is better – its head or its tail?”
- 6-132 He replied, “If its face is to the town and its tail to the country, know that its face is better than its tail;
- 6-133 But if its tail is towards the town and its face to the country, be the dust on that tail and spring away from its face.”
- 3-517 Do not go to the country: the country makes a fool of a man, it makes the intellect void of light and splendour<sup>428</sup>.
- 3-522 What is “the country”? The Shaykh that has not been united with God, but has become addicted to conformity and argument.
- 4-3375 Use the dust of every elect one as eyewash: it will both burn the eye and do it good.

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<sup>427</sup> Qur’ān 7:240.

<sup>428</sup> In Ḥaḏrat Mawlānā Rūmī’s time, “the country” symbolized ignorance and all that was crude and uncivilized, whereas “the city” was a symbol for knowledge, civilization and sophistication.

- 6-126 Every metal that sets its face towards (aspires to evolve into) the plant (the vegetative state) – life grows from the tree of its fortune.
- 6-127 Every plant that turns its face towards the animal spirit drinks, like Khiḍr, from the Fountain of Life.
- 6-128 Once more, when the animal spirit turns its face towards the Divine Beloved, it lays down its baggage and passes into the life without end.
- 2-1317 No mirror ever became iron again; no bread ever became the wheat in the stack.
- 2-1318 No full-grown grape ever became a young grape; no mature fruit ever became unripe fruit.
- 2-1319 Become mature and be far from the possibility of change for the worse: go, become the Light, like Burhān-e Muḥaqqiq<sup>429</sup>.
- 2-1320 When you have escaped from self, you have become wholly the proof<sup>430</sup> of God: when the slave in you has become nothing, you have become the King.

### **How being put to the test reveals the true nature of things. [2.2.1]**

- 3-682 There are hundreds of thousands of trials, o father, for anyone who says, “I am the commander of the Gate.”
- 3-683 If the common people do not recognize him by putting him to the test, then the followers of the Way will demand the sign of his truthfulness from him.
- 3-686 If every vicious person were not put to the test, every weakling would be a Rustam<sup>431</sup> in combat.
- 6-2069 The light of the holy men has taken hold of the East and the West: the heavens have prostrated themselves in wonder.
- 6-2070 The Sun of God has risen from the sign of the Ram: the material sun has gone, shamefaced, under the veil.
- 1-1930 Listen, for the Saints are the Isrāfīls<sup>432</sup> of the present time: from them comes life and freshness to the dead.

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<sup>429</sup> Ḥaẓrat Shaykh Sayyid Burhānu’d-dīn al-Muḥaqqiq at-Tirmidhī (d. ca. 1245 CE) was an eminent Ṣūfī Master. Ḥaẓrat Mawlānā Rūmī studied and practised Sufism under his guidance for nine years, prior to his meeting with Ḥaẓrat Shams-e Tabrīzī in 1244 CE.

<sup>430</sup> Proof: in the Persian text, Ḥaẓrat Mawlānā Rūmī uses the Arabic word for “proof”, i.e. *burhān*; in doing so, he pays homage to Ḥaẓrat Shaykh Burhānu’d-dīn al-Muḥaqqiq, who is mentioned in the preceding verse.

<sup>431</sup> In the *Shāhnāmah*, “The Book of Kings”, the national epic of Iran, which was written in the 10<sup>th</sup> century CE by the poet Firdawsī, Rustam is a heroic figure who distinguished himself in combat.

<sup>432</sup> Isrāfīl is the Arabic name for the angel Raphael, who will herald Judgment Day by blowing his trumpet. According to the Qur’ān and the Ḥadīths, the first blow of Isrāfīl’s trumpet will destroy everything, the second one will bring the dead back to life (Qur’ān 39:68).

- 1-1931 Their voice enlivens the dead souls in the body's grave in their shrouds.
- 1-1932 He who is thus awakened says, "This voice is different from all other voices: to quicken the dead is the work of the voice of God.
- 1-1933 We had died and were entirely decayed: the call of God came: we all arose."
- 1-1936 Absolutely, indeed, the voice is from the King (God), even though it comes from the throat of God's servant.

**The meaning of the name 'Abdullāh (i.e. "true servant of God")  
is possessing Divine qualities and characteristics. [2.2.1]**

- 1-2267 Since he had no light in himself, how should others obtain light from him by associating with him?
- 1-2268 He is like the half blind healer of eyes: what should he put in people's eyes except wool<sup>433</sup>?
- 2-1567 The Shaykh who has become one who sees by the light of God has obtained knowledge about the end and the beginning.
- 2-1479 Such a one enters within the heart like a fantasy: the mystery of the real state is unveiled to him.
- 2-1482 How should it be hard for him who walks on the spheres to walk on the earth?
- 3-79 O son, the Saints are God's children: both in their absence and presence He is well aware of what happens to them.
- 3-3333 The watchers of the Sun of Reality are the Saints: in the flesh they are acquainted with the Divine mysteries.
- 3-3353 Or the friend of God (the Saint), who has assumed the nature of God and has become luminous and has received the Absolute Radiance.
- 3-3364 He has died to self and become living through the Lord: that is why the mysteries of God are on his lips.
- 2-1478 In the spiritual world the chosen servants of God, the Knower of things unseen, are the spies on hearts.
- 1-1669 The Saints possess power derived from God: they turn the speeding arrow from its course.
- 6-1287 Polish your breast (heart) for a day or two: make that mirror<sup>434</sup> your book of meditation.

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<sup>433</sup> Here, Ḥaẓrat Mawlānā Rūmī uses a play on two Persian words, i.e. *chashm* ("eye") and *pashm* ("wool").

## The value and greatness of Saints can only be perceived with the inner eye. [2.2.1]

- 1-263 Do not measure the actions of holy men by comparing them to yourself, though *shēr* (lion) and *shīr* (milk) are similar in writing.<sup>435</sup>
- 1-264 That is why the whole world has gone astray: hardly anyone has knowledge of God's *Abdāl* (Substitutes)<sup>436</sup>.
- 1-265 They claimed to be equals of the Prophets; they supposed the Saints to be like themselves.
- 1-266 "Look;" they said, "we are men, they are men; both we and they are bounded by sleep and food."
- 1-267 In their blindness they did not perceive that there is an infinite difference between them.
- 1-268 Both species of *zanbūr*<sup>437</sup> ate and drank from the same place, but from that one (the hornet) came a sting, and from this other (the bee) honey.
- 1-269 Both species of deer ate grass and drank water: from this one came dung, and from that one pure musk.
- 1-270 Both reeds drank from the same water source, but this one is empty and that one full of sugar.
- 1-271 Consider hundreds of thousands of such likenesses and observe that the distance between the two is as great as a seventy years' journey.
- 1-272 This one eats, and discharges filth; that one eats, and entirely becomes the light of God.
- 1-273 This one eats, and nothing is born from him but avarice and envy; that one eats, and nothing but love of the One (God) is born from him.
- 1-275 If both resemble each other in appearance, it may well be so: bitter water and sweet water have the same clearness.

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<sup>434</sup> I.e. the illumined heart (Nich.) "Polishing the heart" or "polishing the mirror of the heart" is a common Sūfī expression to describe *dhikr*, remembrance of God. In a particular ḥadīth the Prophet Muḥammad says: "There is a polish for everything that takes away rust; and the polish for the heart is remembrance of God" (Bukhārī).

<sup>435</sup> In written Persian these two words are indistinguishable from each other.

<sup>436</sup> The Saints next in rank to the *Quṭb*, who is the head of the spiritual hierarchy (Nich.). Even though the term *Abdāl* usually denotes a lesser degree of Saint in the hidden hierarchy of Saints, here it means the Saints who are next in rank to the *Quṭb*, who is at the pinnacle of this hierarchy. Another possible meaning of *Abdāl* in this context is "sāliks who have been fully spiritually transformed and purified and who have attained a high spiritual rank".

<sup>437</sup> The general meaning of the word *zanbūr* is "bee" or "wasp", but it may also denote other stinging flying insects, such as the hornet (*zanbūr-e surkh*) and the honeybee (*zanbūr-e 'asal*). It's likely that Ḥaẓrat Mawlānā Rūmī means the Oriental hornet (*Vespa orientalis*), which has a reddish-brown appearance (*surkh* = red).

- 1-276           Who knows the difference except a man endowed with spiritual taste<sup>438</sup>? Find him: he knows the sweet water from the brine.
- 5-1323           Muḥammad is made of flesh and skin; and yet he is unique, even though every body is made of the same material as his.
- 5-1324           It has flesh, it has skin and bone; but does this ordinary composition have the same qualities as his?
- 5-1325           No; for in that composition (of Muḥammad) there appeared miracles which vanquished all other bodily compositions.
- 1-278           The magicians in the time of Moses lifted up a rod like this in their hands for argument's sake
- 1-279           But there is a vast difference between this rod and that rod; there is a great way from this action (magic) to that action (miracle).
- 1-280           This action is followed by the curse of God, while that action receives the mercy (blessing) of God in payment.
- 3-3515           In the bazaar, the people go about their business all alike, but one is joyous and another sorrowful.
- 3-3513           The colour of leaves appears the same to the eye, but every single fruit is of a different sort.
- 3-3511           Although the serpent's egg resembles the sparrow's egg outwardly, there is a great distance<sup>439</sup> between them.
- 3-3512           Again, although the seed of the quince<sup>440</sup> resembles the seed of the apple, recognize the differences, o dear one.
- 3-2297           You are in a hole<sup>441</sup> here, o so-and-so, because you have regarded them as flesh, not as spirit.
- 2-3113           They were going to make war on the Prophets: they saw the body (of the Prophet), they supposed he was a man.
- 3-2298           You have come to ruin<sup>442</sup>, o foolish man, because like the common people you regarded these persons as human beings.

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<sup>438</sup> I.e. one who possesses *dhawq*, "spiritual taste", meaning that he obtains knowledge through direct mystical experience.

<sup>439</sup> Literally "a far way".

<sup>440</sup> A western Asian shrub or tree (*Cydonia oblonga*) having white flowers and hard apple-like fruit.

<sup>441</sup> Literally "the ass is lying down," i.e. "you cannot make any progress in this matter." (Nich.).

<sup>442</sup> Literally "the affair is ruined" (Nich.).



3-2299 You have regarded them in the same way as the accursed Iblīs regarded Adam: he said, “I am made of fire, while Adam is made of earth.”

3-2300 Bandage your Satanic eye for one moment: how long, I ask you, will you regard the outer form? How long, how long?

**The true Saints are hidden from man’s eyes  
Some Saints are only recognized by other Saints. [2.2.1]**

**Ḥadīth qudsī<sup>443</sup>:**

**“My Saints are under My domes and no one knows them except Me”<sup>444</sup>.**

3-3104 Another group of Saints moves to and fro in utter secrecy: how should they become well-known to the people of the external world?

3-3105 They possess all this spiritual dominion, and yet no one’s eye falls upon their sovereignty for one moment.

2-168 The Pīrs are they whose spirits were in the Sea of Divine Bounty before this world existed.

2-169 Before the creation of this body they passed many lifetimes; before the sowing they took up (harvested) the wheat.

2-174 Before the creation of the heavens they have seen Saturn, before the existence of seeds they have seen the bread.

2-182 In the heart of the grape they have seen the wine; in absolute *fanā*<sup>445</sup> they have seen the true nature of all things.

2-180 Before the creation of grapes it has drunk wines and shown the fervours of intoxication.

2-175 Without brain and mind they were full of thought, without army and battle they gained victory.

2-183 The sky is draining drafts from their circling cup, their bounty clothes the sun in cloth of gold.

3-3598 And in this Sea are artful fish, who turn snakes into fishes by magic –

3-3599 The fish of the deepest depth of the Sea of Divine Majesty: the Sea has taught them lawful magic;

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<sup>443</sup> A well-known definition of a *ḥadīth qudsī* or *sacred ḥadīth* is this: “A sacred ḥadīth is, as to the meaning, from God the Almighty; as to the wording, it is from the Messenger of God. It is that which God the Almighty has communicated to His Prophet through revelation or in dream, and he has communicated it in his own words”.

<sup>444</sup> *Aḥādīth-e Mathnawī* p. 181.

<sup>445</sup> *Fanā* means to die to your limited self and *baqā* means to resurge and abide in the Divine Being.

- 3-3600        Therefore, through their brightness the thing that was absurd became a fact: the ill-starred one went there and his luck changed for the better.
- 2-3112        God never put any generation to shame until the heart of the man of God was grieved.
- 3-2814        The wrath of the spiritual kings has overthrown hundreds of thousands of cities, o you wicked ones who have lost the way.
- 3-2816        The wrath of holy men makes the clouds dry; the wrath of saintly hearts has laid worlds waste.
- 3-3601        Even if I spoke on this topic until the Resurrection, a hundred Resurrections would pass, and this speech would still be incomplete.

**The hidden Saints are like a treasure that lies hidden in the ruins. [2.2.1]**

- 2-2153        (You may despair of finding the true friend of God; but) since there exists a treasure in the world, do not grieve: do not think that a ruined place is empty of treasure.
- 2-2154        Go to every dervish at random, and when you find the mark of the true Saint, frequent him assiduously.
- 2-2155        As the inward-seeing eye was not granted to you, think always that the treasure may be in everybody.
- 5-3449        Do not look at the ragged cloak only, for they have put black on the outside of the gold<sup>446</sup>.
- 5-3450        Because of the evil eye the dervish becomes apparently cast out, and that spiritual ruby is tarnished with smoke on the outside.
- 5-3451        When are treasures and jewels exposed to view in the rooms of a house? Treasures are always hidden in ruins.
- 5-3452        Since Adam's treasure was buried in a ruin, his clay became a bandage over the eye of the accursed (Iblīs<sup>447</sup>).
- 5-3453        Iblīs looked upon the clay with the utmost contempt, but the spirit of Adam was saying, "My clay is a barrier to you."
- 1-3962        As long as you consider the holy Prophets and Saints as men, know that that view is an inheritance from Iblīs.

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<sup>446</sup> I.e. the black woollen cloak worn by the dervish conceals his spiritual worth like the black pigment with which gold is disguised (Nich.).

<sup>447</sup> Iblīs: a name of the Devil. This name is probably derived from the Arabic verb *ablasa*, meaning "he despaired (of God's Mercy)".

- 1-3963 If you are not the child of Iblīs, o obstinate one, then how has the inheritance of that vicious dog come to you?
- 1-3964 “I am not a vicious dog, I am the Lion of God, a worshipper of God: the lion of God is he who has escaped from outer form.
- 1-3965 The lion of this world seeks a prey and provision; the lion of the Lord seeks freedom and death.
- 2-2348 To the eye that is open and is as a guide, every dervish cloak enwraps a Moses.
- 2-2347 If your eye of intuitive certainty is open, see a spiritual commander under every stone.

### **All Saints are one. [2.2.1]**

- 1-678 If ten lamps are present in one place, each differs in form from another:
- 1-679 It is impossible to distinguish without any doubt the light of each, when you turn your face towards their light.
- 1-680 If you count a hundred apples or a hundred quinces, they do not remain a hundred but become one, when you crush them together.
- 1-681 In spiritual matters there is no division and there are no numbers; in spiritual matters there is no separation and there are no individuals.
- 2-186 The Sun, which is the souls, became separated (broken into rays) in the windows, which are bodies.
- 2-187 When you gaze at the Sun’s disk, it is itself one, but he who is veiled by his perception of the bodies is in some doubt.
- 2-188 Separation (plurality) is in the animal spirit; the human spirit is one essence.
- 2-189 Since *God sprinkled His light upon them (mankind)*<sup>448</sup>, they are essentially one: in reality His light never becomes separated.
- 1-682 Sweet is the oneness of the Friend with His friends: catch and cling to the foot of spirit. Form is headstrong<sup>449</sup>.
- 1-3086 Every Prophet and every Saint has his own way of religious doctrine and practice, but it leads to God: all the ways are really one.
- 4-408 The Faithful are numerous, but the Faith is one: their bodies are numerous, but their soul is one.

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<sup>448</sup> *Aḥādīth-e Mathnawī* p. 33.

<sup>449</sup> I.e. opposed to spiritual unity (Nich.).

- 4-411 The animal soul does not possess oneness: do not seek this oneness from the airy (vital) spirit.
- 4-412 If this one eats bread, that one is not filled; and if this one bears a load, that one does not become burdened;
- 4-413 No, but this one rejoices at the death of that one, and dies of envy when he sees that one's prosperity.
- 4-414 The souls of wolves and dogs are separate, every one, the souls of the Lions of God are united.
- 4-415 I have spoken of their souls in the plural, for that single soul is a hundred in relation to the body,
- 4-416 Just as the single light of the sun in heaven is a hundred in relation to the house courts on which it shines,
- 4-417 But when you remove the wall, all the lights falling on them are one.
- 4-418 When the bodily houses remain without foundation, the Faithful remain one soul.

### **The Quṭb – the Highest Saint<sup>450</sup>. [2.2.1]**

- 5-2339 The Quṭb is like the lion, and it is his business to hunt: all the rest, namely, these people of the world, eat his leavings.
- 5-2341 When he is weakened, the people remain unfed, for all food provided for the throat comes from the hand of reason<sup>451</sup>,
- 5-2342 Since the ecstasies (spiritual experiences) of the people are only his leavings. Keep this in mind, if your heart desires the spiritual prey.
- 5-2343 He is like the reason, and the people are like the members of the body: the management of the body depends on the reason.
- 1-2507 The foolish thought him to be lonely and weak: how could he who has become the King's companion be weak?
- 5-2344 The weakness of the Quṭb is bodily, not spiritual: the weakness lies in the ship (Ark), not in Noah.

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<sup>450</sup> According to Sūfī literature, *Quṭb* ("Pole", "Axis", "Pivot") refers to the spiritually most perfect human being (*al-Insānu'l-Kāmil* or *Insān-e Kāmil*), who is thought to be the universal leader of all Saints, to mediate between the Divine and the human and whose presence is deemed necessary for the existence of the world. The *Quṭb* is the head of a hierarchy of hidden Saints, known as *Ghawth*, *Awtād*, *Nuqabā'*, *Abdāl*, etc., who vary in number and authority.

<sup>451</sup> I.e. as the discursive reason is the source of material livelihood, so all spiritual food comes from the *Quṭb*, who is the organ of Universal Reason (Nich.).

## The meaning of “Qutb”. [2.2.1]

- 5-2345 The *Qutb* is he who turns around himself, while the celestial spheres revolve around him.
- 5-3601 The one figure of him (the Prophet) is seated in this earthly world, while his other figure is in heaven, like the moon.
- 5-3602 This mouth of him is speaking on subtle points of religion to those sitting beside him, while the other mouth is conversing with God and is intimate with Him.
- 5-3603 His outward ear hears these external words, while his spiritual ear is listening to the mysteries of the Creative Word *Be*<sup>452</sup>.
- 5-3604 His outward eye perceives human forms and features, while his inward eye is dazzled in the glory of *the eye did not stray*<sup>453</sup>.
- 5-3605 His outward feet stand evenly in the row of worshippers in the mosque, while his spiritual feet are engaged in circumambulation<sup>454</sup> above the sky.
- 5-3606 Consider his every part and judge it in the same way: this bodily part is within Time, while that spiritual part is beyond Time.
- 5-3607 This which is in Time lasts until death, while the other is the associate of everlastingness and eternity.
- 5-3608 One of his names is “owner of the two empires”; one description of him is “Imām of the two *qiblas*”<sup>455</sup>.
- 5-3609 The religious seclusion and the forty days’ fast are no longer required for him: no cloud overclouds him anymore.
- 5-3610 His solitary cell<sup>456</sup> is resplendent as the sun’s orb: how should the alien night throw a veil over it?
- 5-3611 Sickness and abstinence are gone, the crisis has come to an end: his infidelity has become faith, and disbelief is no more.
- 5-3612 Like the letter *alif*, he has taken the foremost place because of his uprightness (rectitude)<sup>457</sup>.

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<sup>452</sup> Qur’ān 3:47 and 36:82.

<sup>453</sup> Qur’ān 53:17.

<sup>454</sup> In analogy to the circumambulation of pilgrims around the Ka’ba in Mecca (*tawāf*).

<sup>455</sup> The first *qibla* (direction of prayer) established by the Prophet Muḥammad was towards Jerusalem. The Jews kept rejecting Ḥaḏrat Muḥammad as Emissary of God. It is recorded that during a communal prayer, the Prophet suddenly changed his direction from Jerusalem to the Ka’ba in Mecca. This event came to be known as *ṣalātu’l-qiblatayn*, “the prayer with two directions”, and hence Ḥaḏrat Muḥammad was named *Imāmu’l-Qiblatayn*, “Imām of the two qiblas”. In this case “Imām” means “leader of the congregational prayer” and nothing more.

<sup>456</sup> I.e. his heart (Nich.).

<sup>457</sup> *Alif*, the first letter of the Arabic alphabet, has the form of a straight perpendicular line (Nich.).

- 5-3615 It put on a robe of the King's qualities: it flew up from the pit to the palace of majesty.
- 2-818 He is the *Mahdī* (the God-guided one) and the *Hādī* (the Guide), o seeker of the right way: he is both hidden from you and seated in front of you<sup>458</sup> before your face.
- 2-819 He is as the Light of Muḥammad, and Universal Reason is his Gabriel; the Saint who is lesser than he is his lamp (and receives illumination from him).
- 2-820 That Saint who is lesser than his lamp is our lamp niche<sup>459</sup>: the Light has gradations in degree,
- 2-821 Because the Light of God has seven hundred veils: regard the veils of the Light as so many layers.
- 2-823 Because of their weakness, the eyes of those in the last (lowest) rank cannot endure the light in front of them.

**The levels of sanctity according to Sufism and the status of the Pīr, who is the shadow of God. [2.2.1]**

- 1-423 The shadow of God is that servant of God who is dead to this world and living through God.
- 1-424 Take hold of his skirt with utmost swiftness and without distrust, that you may be saved in the skirt (end) of the last days of the world.
- 2-1984 If you do not wish to lose your head, be lowly as a foot: be under the protection of the Quṭb who possesses wisdom.
- 2-1987 In reality, you are he: seek yourself in his "he" (personality). Say coo, coo<sup>460</sup>: become a dove that flies towards him.
- 6-3784 The shadow (protection) of the spiritual Guide is better than praising God by one's self: a single feeling of contentment is better than a hundred meals and trays of food.
- 6-3785 A seeing eye is better than three hundred blind men's staffs: the eye knows (can distinguish) pearls from pebbles.
- 5-1160 Do not let your heart stealthily slip away from the spirit-bestowing heart-ravisher, for he will mount you on the back of *Raksh*<sup>461</sup>.

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<sup>458</sup> Literally "in front of your face".

<sup>459</sup> Qur'ān 24:35.

<sup>460</sup> *Kūkū*, the cry of the dove, also means "where? Where?"(Nich.).

<sup>461</sup> The name of Rustam's horse (Nich.).

- 5-1161 Do not let your head stealthily slip away from the crown-giving one whose head is exalted, for he will untie a hundred knots from the foot of your heart.
- 1-425 The shadow mentioned in the words *How He (God) extended the shadow*<sup>462</sup> is the form of the Saints, which is the guide to the light of the Divine Sun.
- 1-426 Do not go in this valley without this guide; like Khalīl<sup>463</sup> (Abraham), say, “*I do not love the ones that set*”<sup>464</sup>.
- 1-2975 The hand of the Pīr is not withdrawn from the absent (those who are not under his authority): his hand is nothing but the grasp of God.
- 1-2976 Since they give such a robe of honour to the absent, what must they give their disciples?: undoubtedly the present are better than the absent.
- 1-2977 Since they hand out spiritual food to the absent, just imagine what bounties they must lay before one who is present.
- 1-2966 Every one took refuge in some act of devotion and discovered some means of salvation for themselves.
- 1-2967 Go, you, take refuge in the shadow of the Sage, that you may escape from the Enemy that opposes you in secret.
- 1-2968 Of all acts of devotion this is the best for you: with it you will outrank every one that has surpassed the rest.
- 1-2961 Come into the shadow (protection) of the Sage who cannot be led astray from the Way by any self-proclaimed spiritual teacher.
- 1-2962 His shadow on the earth is like Mount Qāf, his spirit is like the Sīmurgh<sup>465</sup> that circles (soars) up high.
- 1-2963 If I should enumerate his qualities until the Resurrection, do not expect them to have a conclusion and an end.
- 1-2941 He is so old that he has no beginning: there is no rival to such a unique Pearl.
- 1-2964 The Divine Sun has veiled Itself in Man: understand this Mystery, and God knows best what is right.

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<sup>462</sup> Qur’ān 25:45.

<sup>463</sup> *Khalīlu’Llāh*, “the Friend of God”, is the traditional Islamic epithet of the Prophet Abraham (Ḥaẓrat Ibrāhīm).

<sup>464</sup> “The ones that set”: i.e. stars – Qur’ān 6:76.

<sup>465</sup> Qāf: mythical mountain or chain of mountains surrounding the earth, created from a single emerald. Mount Qāf is the dwelling place of the ‘*Anqā*, a mythical phoenix-like bird from Arabic story tradition, the *Sīmurgh* being its Persian equivalent. This mythical bird represents the Perfect Man, whose spirit abides with God, even though his body is in the world.

## The Second Rivulet [2.2.2]

### The proper spiritual conduct or etiquette (adab, plural: ādāb) of the sālik towards his Pīr.

- 1-78 Let us implore God to help us find self-control: one who lacks self-control is deprived of the grace of the Lord.
- 1-79 The undisciplined man does not mistreat himself alone, but he sets the whole world on fire.
- 1-89 Moreover, any amount of gloom and sorrow that comes over you is the result of disrespect and insolence.
- 1-92 Because of disrespect the sun was eclipsed, and insolence caused an ‘Azāzil<sup>466</sup> to be turned back from the door.
- 1-91 Through discipline<sup>467</sup> this Heaven has been filled with light, and through discipline the angels became sinless<sup>468</sup> and pure.
- 1-1488 Satan said *Because You have misled me*<sup>469</sup>; the vile Devil concealed his own doing.
- 1-1489 Adam said *We have wronged ourselves*<sup>470</sup>: unlike us, he was not heedless of the action of God.
- 1-1490 Out of respect he concealed the action of God in (regard to) the sin: by casting the sin upon himself he ate fruit (was blessed).
- 1-1491 After his repentance, He (God) said to him, “O Adam, did not I create that sin and those tribulations in you?”
- 1-1492 Was it not My decree and predestination? How did you hide that at the time of excusing yourself?”
- 1-1493 Adam said, “I was afraid, so I did not let respect go (did not fail to observe due respect).” God said, “I too have observed it towards you.”
- 1-1494 Whoever brings reverence gets reverence in return: whoever brings sugar eats almond-cake.

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<sup>466</sup> The name of Iblīs before his fall (Nich.).

<sup>467</sup> In the Persian text the word *adab* is used, the Sūfī term for moral etiquette. Practising *adab* requires discipline and therefore it is justified to translate *adab* as “discipline” here.

<sup>468</sup> The word *ma’šūm* can be translated in many ways: “blameless”, “innocent”, “sinless”, “immaculate”... Shī‘ī Muslims also apply this term to the Prophet Muḥammad, his daughter Fāṭima, his nephew and son-in-law ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, who married Ḥaḏrat Fāṭima, and the Shī‘ī successors to Ḥaḏrat Muḥammad and Ḥaḏrat ‘Alī – the Shī‘ī Imāms. In this context, the term *ma’šūm* takes on the meaning of “infallible”.

<sup>469</sup> Qur’ān 15:39.

<sup>470</sup> Qur’ān 7:23.



3-4018 Those who fled from correction dishonoured<sup>471</sup> both their own manhood and true men.

1-90 Anyone who behaves irreverently in the path of the Friend is a highwayman who robs men, and he is no man.

### **Showing courtesy towards the Saints is indispensable for murīds<sup>472</sup>. [2.2.2]**

2-3218 Keep watch over your hearts, o unsuccessful ones, in the presence of the majesty of the men of the heart (Saints).

2-3219 To men of body (worldly people), respect is shown outwardly, for God veils what is hidden from them.

2-3220 To the men of heart (Saints), respect is shown inwardly, because their hearts have insight into the secret thoughts.

2-3221 You are the opposite: for the sake of worldly position you come with reverence before them who are blind to spiritual things, and sit on the low plane of earth<sup>473</sup>;

2-3222 But you behave disrespectfully towards the seers; because of this you have become fuel for the fire of lust.

2-3223 Since you do not have spiritual understanding and the light of Divine guidance, continue to polish (cleanse and brighten) your face for the sake of the blind!

2-1740 To speak irreverently to one of God's elect causes the heart (spirit) to perish and keeps the page (record) black.

1-812 He twisted his mouth and called the name of Aḥmad (Muḥammad) in a mocking way: his mouth remained twisted.

1-813 He came back, saying, "Pardon me, o Muḥammad, o you to whom belong the Divine gifts of esoteric knowledge.

1-814 In my foolishness I ridiculed you, but I myself became the object of ridicule, and deservedly so."

### **Everything in love is adab (meticulous observance of the spiritual etiquette of Sufism). [2.2.2]**

3-3677 These comparisons made by imperfect men concerning the action of the Lord are like the emotion of love, they do not stem from disrespect.

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<sup>471</sup> Literally "spilt the water of" (Nich.).

<sup>472</sup> Murīd: a Ṣūfī disciple, who is committed to a Ṣūfī Master. In Arabic, *murīd* means "desirous" or "desiring". In the context of Sufism, a *murīd* is someone who desires the knowledge of knowing God and loving God. A Ṣūfī disciple is also often referred to as *sālik* – "wayfarer", "traveller on the Inner Path".

<sup>473</sup> In the Persian text the word *pāyghāh* is used, which usually means "base" or "degree".

- 3-3678 The lover's heart pounds without reverence, he lays himself on the scale of the King's balance<sup>474</sup>.
- 3-3679 No one is more irreverent than he who lives in the world (i.e. outwardly); no one is more reverent than he who keeps it a secret (i.e. inwardly).
- 3-3681 Outwardly, the lover looks irreverent, for his claim of love involves equality with the beloved;
- 3-3682 But when you regard the inward aspect, where is the claim? He and his claim are annihilated in the presence of the Sultān.

### **The Saints too can assess the sālik's inner state and heal it. [2.2.2]**

- 4-1794 These physicians of the body have knowledge of medicine: they know more about your disease than you do,
- 4-1795 So that they gain knowledge about the state of your health from the urine-bottle, even though you yourself cannot know your illness by the same means,
- 4-1796 And from your pulse, complexion and breath alike they diagnose every kind of disease in you.
- 4-1797 How, then, should the divine physicians in the world not diagnose disease in you without the use of speech?
- 4-1798 From your pulse, your eyes and your complexion alike they immediately discern a hundred spiritual illnesses in you.
- 4-1799 Truly, only newly-taught physicians have need of external signs.
- 4-1800 The perfect (the divine physicians) will hear your name from afar and quickly penetrate into the deepest ground of your being and existence;
- 4-1801 No, they will have seen you many years before your birth – you together with all the circumstances connected with you.
- 4-1777 The heart resembles a great house: the house of the heart has neighbours hidden from view:
- 4-1778 Through the window slit and crevices in the walls they observe the hidden thoughts –
- 4-1780 Recite from the Qur'ān the verse which declares that the Devil and his tribe secretly get scent of (become acquainted with) the inward state of humankind<sup>475</sup>.

<sup>474</sup> I.e. he places himself on the same level as the King (Nich.).

<sup>475</sup> Qur'ān 7:26.

- 4-1781 In a way unknown to humankind, because it is not of this perceptible world or one of these semblances (phenomenal objects).
- 4-1784 Since the devils, in spite of their coarseness, are acquainted with our inmost soul, thought and belief
- 4-1787 Why, then, should the illuminated spirits in the world be unaware of our hidden state?
- 4-1793 Be ashamed and do not speak idle words, do not torment yourself in vain, for there are many spies observing you beyond the range of the body.
- 4-1851 His guide is “the Guarded Tablet”<sup>476</sup>. From what is it guarded? It is guarded from error.
- 4-1852 The inspiration of God is not like astrology, geomancy<sup>477</sup> or dreams – and God knows best what is right.
- 4-1853 The Ṣūfīs, in explaining their doctrine, call the Divine inspiration the inspiration of the heart, in order to hide its real nature from the common people.
- 4-1854 Take it to be the inspiration of the heart, for the heart is the place where He is seen: how should there be error when the heart is aware of Him?
- 4-1855 O true believer, you have gained sight by the light of God: you have become safe from error and heedlessness.
- 6-2642 The forehead of the Friend is a Preserved Tablet: to him (his friend) it reveals plainly the secret of the two worlds.
- 6-2641 When he sits beside his Friend, a hundred thousand tablets of mystery are made known to the friend.

### **You must listen to the Pīr’s words with your inner ear. [2.2.2]**

- 1-566 Put cotton-wool in the ear of the low (physical) sense, take off the bandage of that sense from your eyes!
- 1-567 The ear of the head is the cotton-wool of the ear of the conscience: until the former becomes deaf, that inward ear is deaf.
- 2-1943 Remove the cotton of evil suggestion from your ear, that the cries from heaven may come into your ear.
- 3-1291 Let your mind go, and then be mindful! Close your ear and then listen!

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<sup>476</sup> “the Preserved Tablet”: see Qur’ān 85:22. *Al-Lawḥu ’l-Maḥfūz* means the knowledge that is firmly protected. It is said to contain all Divine decrees and the archetypes of all that ever was, is and will be.

<sup>477</sup> Divination by means of lines and figures or by geographic features.

- 1-1459 If the mind of your spirit is not in a state of perplexity, do not stuff this cotton-wool into your spiritual ear,
- 1-1460 So that you may understand those riddles of His, so that you may apprehend both the secret sign and the open.
- 1-1461 Then the spiritual ear becomes the place where *wahī* (inspiration) enters. What is *wahī*? A speech hidden from sense-perception.
- 1-1462 The spiritual ear and eye are different from this sense-perception, the ear of discursive reason and the ear of opinion are devoid of this inspiration.
- 1-2718 Go to the Sultān<sup>478</sup> and see all this display of splendour and majesty! See the senses of those for whom God has prepared gardens beneath which rivers flow<sup>479</sup>!
- 1-2719 Our senses and perceptions, such as they are, are but a single drop in those rivers.
- 1-2762 Senile and short-sighted minds bring a hundred evil fantasies into their thoughts.
- 6-1594 Direct yourself<sup>480</sup> towards silence: when you seek the marks of the Way, do not make yourself a mark for attention.
- 6-1592 When you come into a company of friends, sit silent: do not make yourself the bezel in that ring.
- 2-315 Listen attentively to these sayings, o squint-eyed one: apply the eyewash through the ear.
- 3-1305 Do not speak, so that you may hear from the Speakers that which was not uttered or explained.
- 3-1306 Do not speak, so that you may hear from the Sun that which was not written down in a book or said in a speech.
- 3-1307 Do not speak, so that the Spirit may speak for you: stop swimming in the Ark of Noah!
- 3-1304 Indeed, what cause is there for the terms<sup>481</sup> wakefulness and sleep? Do not speak, for God knows best what is right.
- 4-3294 Unite yourself – union is a Divine mercy – that I may be able to tell you that which is.

<sup>478</sup> In this verse, “Sultān” refers to the worldly Sultān of Baghdad. It has no mystical connotation.

<sup>479</sup> Qur’ān 9:89.

<sup>480</sup> Literally “convey your baggage” (Nich.).

<sup>481</sup> Literally “the limitation of (denoted by the terms) wakefulness and sleep”, i.e. these terms are only analogical (Nich.).

2-316 Holy words, then, do not abide in blind hearts, but go to the Light where they came from,

2-317 While the deceitful spell of the Devil goes into crooked (perverse) hearts as a crooked shoe on to a crooked foot.

**Only a pure heart can understand the true  
words of God and His Saints. [2.2.2]**

5-1531 Even though the adviser has a hundred advices, counsel requires a receptive ear.

5-1532 You counsel him (the heedless man) with a hundred graces, and he turns away from your counsel.

5-1533 A single person who obstinately refuses to listen<sup>482</sup> will baffle a hundred eloquent speakers.

6-1656 If anyone possesses the gift of eloquence, listening to him brings it out: the teacher's enthusiasm and energy are derived from the boy whom he teaches.

6-1659 If there were no ears to receive the message from the Unseen, no announcer (Prophet) would have brought a Revelation from Heaven;

6-1660 And if there were no eyes to see the works of God, neither would the sky have revolved nor would the earth have smiled (been bright with verdure).

5-1143 What relation is there between these people and the Divine message<sup>483</sup>? Who can hope for spiritual life from a soulless thing?

5-1144 If you bring them a message concerning a woman or gold, they will all lay their money and lives<sup>484</sup> before you in entire devotion –

5-1145 The message, 'A sweetheart in such-and-such a place invites you to come to her: she is in love with you, she knows you.'

5-1146 But if you bring them the honey-like message of God, 'Come to God, o you who have a good covenant with Him;

5-1147 Go from the world of death towards the eternal provision: since everlastingness is possible, do not be perishable –

5-1148 They will seek to shed your blood and take your life, but not in zeal for religion and spiritual and moral excellence.

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<sup>482</sup> Literally "who does not listen out of obstinacy and revulsion" (Nich.).

<sup>483</sup> Literally "where do his people come from and where does his message come from?" (Nich.)

<sup>484</sup> Literally "head" (Nich.).

- 5-1149 No, but because they stick to house and goods<sup>485</sup> it is bitter (hateful) to them to hear this explanation given by the Prophets.
- 5-1155 If a royal falcon comes from the road and brings a hundred messages from the King to these owls,
- 5-1156 With a full account of the imperial city, the orchards and the rivers – then a hundred enemies will jeer at him,
- 5-1157 Saying, ‘What has the falcon brought? An old story. He is weaving words of vanity and idle brag.’
- 5-1158 It is they who are old and rotten for all eternity; otherwise they would know that that breath of prophetic inspiration makes the old new.
- 5-1159 It gives life to the old dead (spirits): it gives the crown of reason and the light of faith.
- 5-1162 Whom shall I tell? Where in the village<sup>486</sup> is there anyone who leads a spiritual life? Where is anyone who runs towards the Water of Life?
- 1-2379 When the hearer has become thirsty and craving, the preacher becomes eloquent, even if he is as good as dead.
- 1-2380 When the hearer is fresh and not tired (not bored), the dumb and mute will find a hundred tongues to speak all the same.
- 1-2381 When a stranger comes in at my door, the women of the harem hide themselves in the veil,
- 1-2382 But if a harmless relative should come in, those covered ones will lift up their face-veils.
- 1-2383 Everything that is made beautiful, fair and lovely is made so for the eye of him that sees.

### **The secrets of the Path are not to be disclosed. [2.2.2]**

- 1-176 The Prophet said that anyone who hides this innermost thought will soon attain to the object of his desire<sup>487</sup>.
- 1-177 When seeds are hidden in the earth, their inner secret becomes the verdure of the garden.
- 1-178 If gold and silver were not hidden, how would they get nourishment (grow and ripen) in the mine?

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<sup>485</sup> I.e. “the world and worldly possessions” (Nich.).

<sup>486</sup> I.e. “in the World” (Nich.).

<sup>487</sup> *Aḥādīth-e Mathnawī* p. 14.

- 1-3426 Listen to the words of the Sage (Ḥakīm), who lived in seclusion<sup>488</sup>, “Lay your head in the same place where you have drunk the wine.”
- 3-21 The secrets of the Divine Majesty are drunk by the ear of that one who, like the lily, has a hundred tongues and is dumb.
- 3-3387 To learn the secret of the Unseen is only fitting for him who can seal his lips and refrain from speech.
- 1-14 This reason is entrusted only to him who is without reason: the tongue has no other customer than the ear.
- 2-194 When will He who is envied by Light allow me to tell that which is obligatory<sup>489</sup> and ought to be told?
- 5-2238 For on the gnostic’s lips is a lock, while his heart is full of mysteries: his lips are silent, although his heart is filled with voices.
- 5-2239 Gnostics who have drunk of the cup of God, have known the mysteries and kept them hidden.
- 5-2240 Whoever has been taught the mysteries of the Divine action, his lips are sealed and closed.
- 5-2055 With him who aspires high the secrets of the soul are better guarded from low and worldly people than the ruby in the mine.
- 6-2037 When you see someone you can trust, tell him the mystery of the Soul: if you see the rose, sing loud like nightingales.
- 6-2038 But when you see someone who resembles a water-skin full of deceit and falsehood, shut your lips and make yourself like a (dry-lipped) jar.
- 2-1500 How wondrous is it that you should hide your secret from the evil one. The wondrous thing is that you should hide the secret from yourself.
- 2-1501 Hide your work from your own eyes, that your work may be safe from the evil eye.
- 3-20 So that you will not tell the King’s secret to anyone nor pour out sugar before flies.
- 3-3388 Only the waterfowl is suited for the sea. Understand this – and God has the best knowledge of the right course.

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<sup>488</sup> Literally “the Sage of a *pardah*” (*Pardah*, literally meaning “veil”, “curtain”, is the practice of preventing men from seeing women). The Persian Ṣūfī poet and mystic Ḥakīm Sanā’ī of Ghazna (ca. 1050-1131 CE) is meant. He was the first poet to write a major *mathnawī*, entitled *Ḥadīqatu’l-Ḥaqīqa wa Sharī’atu’t-Ṭarīqa* (“The Walled Garden of Truth and the Law of the Path”). This work also was an inspiration to Ḥaṣrat Mawlānā Rūmī.

<sup>489</sup> Obligatory = *fard*, the Arabic term for what is obligatory in religion.

### **The murīd's patience and surrender to the Pīr's commands. [2.2.2]**

- 1-2969 When the Pīr has accepted you, take heed, surrender yourself to him: like Moses, go under the authority of Khidr.
- 1-2970 Bear patiently whatever is done by a Khidr who is without hypocrisy, in order that Khidr may not say, "*Go away, here we part company*"<sup>490</sup>.
- 1-2971 Even if he smashes a hole in the boat, do not speak a word; even if he kills a child, do not tear your hair.
- 1-2972 God has declared that his the Pīr's hand is as His own, since he gave out the words *the Hand of God is above their hands*<sup>491</sup>.
- 1-2973 The Hand of God causes the child to die and then brings it to life. What kind of life? He makes it an everlasting spirit.
- 6-4122 The worshipper of darkness seeks the light immediately as soon as he becomes subject to the authority of the Pīr.
- 6-4123 What is required is self-surrender, not long toil: it is useless to rush about in error.
- 1-2979 When you have chosen your Pīr, do not faint-hearted, do not be weak as water and crumbly as earth.
- 1-2980 If every blow angers you, how then will you become a clear mirror without being polished?

### **The story of the impatient ones. [2.2.2]**

- 1-2981 Hear from the narrator this story about the way and custom of the people of Qazwīn<sup>492</sup>.
- 1-2982 They tattoo themselves in blue with the point of a needle on their bodies, hands and shoulders, in order to protect themselves from injury.
- 1-2983 A certain man of Qazwīn went to a barber and said, "Tattoo me and do it charmingly (artistically)."
- 1-2984 "O brave sir," he said, "what figure shall I tattoo?" He answered, "Prick in the figure of a furious lion.
- 1-2985 Leo is my ascendant: tattoo the form of a lion. Exert yourself, prick in plenty of the blue dye."

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<sup>490</sup> Qur'ān 18:78.

<sup>491</sup> Qur'ān 48:10. This verse is frequently recited when a Ṣūfī seeker receives formal initiation from a Shaykh or Pīr. During the formal Ṣūfī initiation ceremony called *bay'at*, the aspirant places his or her hands in the Master's and pledges allegiance to him.

<sup>492</sup> A province and city in the North of Persia.



- 1-2986 “Where shall I tattoo?” he asked. He said, “Prick the design of the beauty<sup>493</sup> on my shoulder-blade.”
- 1-2987 As soon as he began to stick in the needle, the pain of it settled in the shoulder,
- 1-2988 And the hero began to moan – “O illustrious one, you have killed me: what figure are you tattooing?”
- 1-2989 “Why,” he said, “you asked me do a lion.” “What limb of the lion did you begin with?” asked the other.
- 1-2990 “I have begun at the tail,” he said. “O my dear friend<sup>494</sup>,” he cried, “leave the tail out!
- 1-2991 My breath is stopped by the lion’s tail and rump: his rump has tightly closed (choked) my windpipe.
- 1-2992 Let the lion be without a tail, o lion-maker, for my heart is faint from the blows of the prong (the tattooer’s needle).”
- 1-2993 He (that person) started to prick in the blue on another part of the man’s shoulder without fear, without favour, without mercy.
- 1-2994 He yelled – “Which of his members is this?” “This is his ear, my good man,” the barber replied.
- 1-2995 “O wise physician,” he said, “let him have no ears; leave the ears out and get it over and done with.”
- 1-2996 The barber began to insert his needle in another part: once more the man of Qazwīn began to lament,
- 1-2997 Saying, “What is the member you are pricking in now on this third spot?” He replied, “This is the lion’s belly, my dear sir.”
- 1-2998 “Let the lion have no belly,” he said: “what need is there for a belly for a picture that is already satiated?<sup>495</sup>”
- 1-2999 The barber became distressed and utterly bewildered: for a long time he stood with his fingers in his teeth;
- 1-3000 Then the master flung the needle to the ground and said, “Has this happened to anyone in the world?
- 1-3001 Whoever saw a lion without tail, head and belly? God Himself did not create a lion like this.”

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<sup>493</sup> Literally “idol” (Nich.).

<sup>494</sup> Literally “O my two eyes” (Nich.).

<sup>495</sup> I.e. “it has already imbibed as much of the blue dye as I can bear” (Nich.).

- 1-3002 O brother, endure the pain of the lancet, that you may escape from the poison of your depraved self (*nafs*),
- 1-3003 For sky, sun and moon bow in worship to the people who have escaped from self-existence.
- 4-3348 Go therefore, be silent in submission beneath the shadow of the command of the Shaykh and Master;
- 4-3349 Otherwise, even though you are willing and capable, boasting about your perfection will deform you.
- 4-3350 You will be deprived even of your good disposition, if you rebel against the Master of the mystery who is endowed with knowledge.
- 4-3351 Do you still have patience in shoemaking; for if you are impatient, you will become a rag-stitcher.
- 4-3352 If the stitchers of old clothes had patience and forbearance, all of them too would become stitchers of new garments by acquiring knowledge.

### **The story of Ḥaẓrat Luqmān, the patient one. [2.2.2]**

- 3-1842 Luqmān<sup>496</sup> went to David, the pure of heart, and saw that he was making rings of iron,
- 3-1843 And that the exalted King was casting all the steel rings into each other.
- 3-1844 He had not seen the armourer's<sup>497</sup> workmanship before, so he remained in astonishment and his curiosity increased –
- 3-1845 “What can this be? I will ask him what he is making with the interlaced rings.”
- 3-1846 Again he said to himself, “Patience is better: patience is the quickest guide to the object of one's quest.”
- 3-1847 When you ask no question, the sooner will the secret be disclosed to you: the bird, patience, flies faster than all others;
- 3-1848 And if you ask, the more slowly will your goal be achieved: what is easy will be made difficult by your impatience.
- 3-1849 When Luqmān kept silent, the work of making rings was finished right away by David's craftsmanship.

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<sup>496</sup> Ḥaẓrat Luqmān was a very wise and holy man who is mentioned in the Qur'ān, in the Sūra that is named after him (Sūra Luqmān, the 31<sup>st</sup> Sūra). He is believed to have been a Nubian.

<sup>497</sup> Literally “maker of coats of mail” (Nich.).

- 3-1850 Then he made a coat of mail and put it on in the presence of the noble and patient Luqmān.
- 3-1851 “This”, he said, “is an excellent garment, o young man, for warding off blows on the battlefield and in war.”
- 3-1852 Luqmān said, “Patience too has a good effect<sup>498</sup>, for it is the protection and defence against pain everywhere.”
- 5-2570 Hurriedness and haste are the Devil’s ruse; patience and deliberation are God’s grace<sup>499</sup>.
- 3-3500 This earth and the heavenly spheres were brought into existence by God with deliberation in a period of six days;
- 3-3501 Furthermore, He was able – “*Be, and it is*”<sup>500</sup> – to bring forth a hundred earths and heavens from non-existence.
- 3-3502 Little by little, until the age of forty, that Sovereign makes human being a complete man,
- 3-3503 Although He was able to set flying (raise up) fifty persons from non-existence in a single moment.
- 3-3506 The purpose of this deliberation is to teach you that you must seek God slowly and relentlessly.
- 6-1212 Let the cooking-pot boil gradually, as a skilful cook does: the stew boiled in a mad hurry is of no use.
- 6-1213 Was not God able to create heaven in one moment by the word “*Be*”? Without any doubt He was.
- 6-1214 Why, o you who desire to be taught<sup>501</sup>, did He extend the time for it to six days, every day being as long as a thousand years<sup>502</sup>?
- 6-1215 Why is the creation of a child completed in nine months? Because gradualness is a characteristic of the action of that King.
- 6-1216 Why did the creation of Adam last forty mornings? Because God was adding perfections to that clay little by little<sup>503</sup>.
- 6-1217 Not like you, o foolish one, who has rushed forward just now: you are a child, and you consider yourself a Shaykh<sup>504</sup>.

<sup>498</sup> Literally “of good breath” (Nich.)

<sup>499</sup> *Aḥādīth-e Mathnawī* p. 317.

<sup>500</sup> Qur’ān 2:117.

<sup>501</sup> In the Persian text, the word *mustafīd* is used, which means “beneficiary”, “he who benefits (from teaching)”.

<sup>502</sup> Qur’ān 7:54 and 22:47.

<sup>503</sup> *Aḥādīth-e Mathnawī* p. 545.

- 4-1994 The foundation of an army is unquestionably the chief in command: a people without a chief is a body without a head.
- 4-1995 That you are spiritually dead and worn out – all this is because you have abandoned the chief.
- 4-1996 Because of laziness, avarice and egoism you are drawing your head back (behaving in a headstrong way) and making yourself the head.
- 4-1997 You are like the beast that flees from the burden: it takes its head (goes its own way) into the mountains.
- 4-1998 Its master is running after it, crying, “O thoughtless one, on every side there is a wolf on the prowl for an ass.
- 4-1999 If you disappear from my sight now, the mighty wolf will approach you from every direction.
- 4-2000 He will chew your bones like sugar, so that you will never see life again.
- 4-2002 Beware! Do not flee from my control and from the heaviness of the burden, for I am your rational soul.”

**Surrendering to the Saints on the Path is  
the first sign of spiritual maturity. [2.2.2]**

- 2-1252 If you wish to remove the evil from the fire, aim the water of Divine mercy at the heart of the fire.
- 2-1253 The true believer is the fountain of that water of mercy: the pure spirit of the well-doer is the Water of Life.
- 2-1254 That is why your fleshly soul (*nafs*) flees from him, because you are of fire, while he is the water of the stream.
- 2-1255 The reason why fire flees from water is that its fire (flame and heat) is destroyed by water.
- 2-1256 Your sense and thought are entirely of fire: the sense and thought of the Shaykh (spiritual guide) are the Beautiful Light.
- 2-1257 When the water of his Light trickles on the fire, *chakchak* (a gnashing sound) rises from the fire, and it leaps up in fury.
- 2-1258 When it makes the sound *chakchak*, say to it, “Death and misery to you,” in order that this hell, which is your fleshly soul, may become cold (quenched).

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<sup>504</sup> In Arabic, the literal meaning of *Shaykh* is “old man” or “an elder” (as opposed to “a child”).

- 2-1259 So that it may not burn your rose garden, so that it may not burn your justice and well-doing.
- 2-1260 After that, anything that you sow will yield fruit or flowers; it will yield anemones, wild roses and thyme.
- 1-2491 If you turn away your head from the holy servants of the Almighty, know that they are disgusted by your existence.
- 1-2492 They possess the amber: when they show it, they make the straw of your existence frenzied with desire for it.
- 2-31 The friend is a mirror for the soul in sorrow: do not breathe on the face of the mirror, o my soul!
- 2-32 You must swallow (suppress) your breath at every moment, for fear that it should cover its face because of your breath.
- 2-95 The mirror of iron is only for husks (external forms): the mirror that shows the aspect of the heart is of great value.
- 2-96 The soul's mirror is nothing but the face of the friend, the face of that friend who is of the spiritual land.
- 2-28 The friend is your eye, o hunter: keep him pure from sticks and straws.
- 2-2687 How should I make the beautiful ugly? I am not the Lord. I am only a mirror for the beautiful and the ugly.
- 2-2688 The Hindu<sup>505</sup> burnt a mirror in annoyance, saying, 'This mirror causes a man to look black-faced.'
- 2-2689 God has made me an informer and truth-teller, that I may tell where the ugly one is and where the beautiful.

**The true murīd never criticizes the work of his Pīr,  
as the will of a true Pīr is the will of God. [2.2.2]**

- 1-225 He who receives inspiration and answer to his prayer from God, whatever he himself may command is the essence of what is right.
- 1-224 As for the boy whose throat was cut by Khaḍīr, common people do not understand the mystery of it<sup>506</sup>.
- 1-226 If one who bestows spiritual life should kill, it is allowable: he is the Divine vicegerent, and his hand is the hand of God.

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<sup>505</sup> In Fārsī, the word *hindū* can also mean "a dark-coloured person". So, by no means does Ḥaẓrat Mawlānā Rūmī intend to denigrate the Hindu religion, or indeed any religion. Whenever he uses the names of religions and ethnicities, it is merely meant as a figure of speech.

<sup>506</sup> This verse refers to the story about Moses and Khidr in Qur'ān 18:60-82.

- 1-227        Like Ismā‘īl (Ishmael), lay your head before him; gladly and laughingly give up your life and soul before his dagger,
- 1-228        In order that your soul may remain laughing until eternity, like the pure soul of Aḥmad (Muḥammad) with the One (God).
- 1-229        Lovers empty the cup of joy at the moment when the beautiful ones kill them with their own hand<sup>507</sup>.
- 5-106        There are many acts of hostility which are really friendship, many acts of destruction which are really restoration<sup>508</sup>.
- 1-242        One who is killed by such a king, is led by him to fortune and to the best and most honourable state.
- 1-245        He takes half a life and gives a hundred lives in exchange: he gives that which your imagination cannot conceive.
- 1-307        The spiritual King ruined the house for the sake of the golden treasure, and with that same treasure rebuilds it better than before.
- 1-308        The spiritual King cut off the water and cleansed the riverbed, then caused drinking water to flow in the riverbed;
- 1-309        The spiritual King pierced the skin and drew out the iron point (of the arrow or spear) – then fresh skin grew over the wound.
- 1-3882       Since His hand binds what is broken, it follows that His breaking is assuredly mending.
- 1-3885       He who knows how to sew together knows how to tear apart; whatever He sells, He buys something better in exchange.
- 1-3886       He lays the house in ruins, upside down; then in one moment He makes it more habitable than it was before.
- 1-3887       If He severs one head from the body, He immediately raises up hundreds of thousands of heads for the beheaded person.
- 1-3884       Therefore He alone has the right to break, for He alone can mend what has been broken.

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<sup>507</sup> In this verse, “killing” means the process of spiritual transformation of the ego (*nafs*) in order to raise it to higher level of purity.

<sup>508</sup> Literally “architecture” (Nich.).

## Everything a Pīr says is the Truth and truly is beyond all doubt. [2.2.2]

### Allegory. [2.2.2]

- 2-1878 A wise man was riding along on horseback at the moment when a snake was entering the mouth of a sleeping man.
- 2-1879 The rider saw that, and hurried to scare the snake away, but he got no chance to do so.
- 2-1880 Since he had an abundant supply of intelligence, he struck the sleeper several powerful strokes with a mace.
- 2-1881 The strokes of the hard mace made him flee from the rider to beneath a tree.
- 2-1882 There were many rotten apples which had fallen from the tree: he said, “Eat from these, o you who are in the grip of pain!”
- 2-1883 He gave the man so many apples to eat that they were falling out of his mouth again.
- 2-1884 He was crying, “O Amīr<sup>509</sup>, why have you attacked me? What have I done to you?”
- 2-1885 If you have a deep-rooted and mortal feud<sup>510</sup> with me, strike with your sword and shed my blood at once.
- 2-1886 Ill-fated was the hour when I came into your sight: oh, happy is he who never saw your face!
- 2-1889 At every moment he uttered a new curse, while the rider kept beating him and saying, “Run in this desert.”
- 2-1890 Blows of the mace, and the rider swift as the wind! So he kept on running and now and again fell on his face.
- 2-1893 All the things he had eaten, bad or good, came out of him: along with what he had eaten the snake shot out of him.
- 2-1894 When he saw the snake outside of him, he fell on his knees (prostrated himself) before that beneficent man.
- 2-1895 As soon as he saw the horror of that black, ugly, big snake, those sufferings left him.
- 2-1896 “Truly,” he said, “you are the Gabriel of Divine mercy, or you are God, for you are the lord of bounty.

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<sup>509</sup> Amīr: “commander”, “lord”, “master”, “nobleman”, “prince”.

<sup>510</sup> Literally “if you have a quarrel with my soul (life) from the beginning” (Nich.).

- 2-1897 Oh, blessed is the hour that you saw me: I was dead, you have given me new life.
- 2-1898 You were seeking me like mothers who search their children; I was fleeing from you like asses.
- 2-1901 Oh, happy is he who catches sight of your face or suddenly finds himself near your abode.
- 2-1902 O you whom the pure spirit has praised, how many foolish and idle words have I spoken to you!
- 2-1930 The hostility of the wise is like this: their poison is gladness to the soul.
- 5-1163 You flee from Love because of a single humiliation: what do you know of Love except the name?
- 5-1164 Love has a hundred coquettish prides and disdainful arrogances: Love is gained<sup>511</sup> by means of a hundred flatteries.
- 2-2585 For you the scolding and blows of the spiritual kings would be better than the praise of the unrighteous<sup>512</sup>.
- 3-1873 If he burns your vineyard, He will give you grapes; in the midst of mourning He will make you rejoice.
- 1-2042 This breath of the *Abdāl* (Saints) is from that spiritual spring: from it there grows a green garden in heart and soul.
- 1-2043 In him who is fortunate their breaths produce the same effect as that of the spring rain on the tree.
- 1-2046 The Prophet said, "Take heed, my friends! Do not cover your bodies from the cold of spring<sup>513</sup>,"
- 1-2047 For it does to your spirits the same thing that spring does to the trees;
- 1-2048 But flee from the cold of autumn, for it does what autumn did to the garden and the vines."
- 1-2049 The storytellers<sup>514</sup> have referred to the outer meaning of this saying, and have contented themselves with that same outer form.

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<sup>511</sup> Literally "comes to hand" (Nich.).

<sup>512</sup> Literally "them who have lost the way" (Nich.).

<sup>513</sup> This is a ḥadīth.

<sup>514</sup> The word used in the Persian text is the Arabic word *rāwī*, which means "one who transmits old tales or poetry".



- 1-2051 In the sight of God that “autumn” is the flesh (*nafs*) and its desires: reason and soul are the essence of spring and everlasting life.
- 1-2054 Therefore, according to the right interpretation, the meaning is this, that the holy breaths are like spring and the life of leaf and vine.
- 1-2055 Do not cover your body from the sayings of the Saints, whether soft or rough, for they are the support of your religion.
- 1-2056 Whether the Saint speaks hot or cold, receive his words with joy: in doing so you will escape from the hot and cold of Nature and from Hellfire.
- 1-2057 His “hot” and “cold” is life’s new season of spring, the source of sincerity, faith and service.

### **All a Pīr’s actions are signs of the Truth. [2.2.2]**

- 1-815 When God wishes to rend the veil of anyone (expose him to shame), He makes him inclined to speaking evil of holy men.
- 1-816 When God wishes to hide the blame of anyone, he (that person) does not breathe a word of blame against the blameworthy.
- 2-3477 Do not find fault with the Servant of God: do not suspect the King of being a thief.
- 2-3351 Sins are made sinful by the disapproval of Pīrs; mysteries<sup>515</sup> are made mysterious by their envy<sup>516</sup>.

### **Whoever misjudges a true Master, in fact misjudges himself. [2.2.2]**

#### **Story. [2.2.2]**

- 2-3303 A certain man brought charges against a Shaykh, saying, “He is wicked and not on the path of righteousness;
- 2-3304 He is a wine drinker, a hypocrite and a scoundrel: how could he be able to help his disciples?”
- 2-3305 One of the disciples said to him, “Show respect: it is no light matter to think of the great in that way.
- 2-3307 Do not slander the people of God like that! This is merely your own imagination. Turn over a new leaf.

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<sup>515</sup> Literally “hidden things”.

<sup>516</sup> Meaning: through the powers of Pīrs and Saints mysteries can be turned into sins and sins can be transformed into mysteries.

- 2-3308      What you say is not true: and even if it were, o earthly fowl, what harm comes to the Red Sea from a carcass?
- 2-3309      The Shaykh is not less than the required two jarfuls or the small tank<sup>517</sup>, so that a single drop of impurity would be able to disqualify him for religious purposes.
- 2-3347      You notice defects on the face of the moon: you are picking thorns in a Paradise.
- 2-3349      You are covering a sun with some soil<sup>518</sup>: you seek flaws in a perfect full moon.
- 2-3399      He said: “I saw him at a gathering<sup>519</sup>: he is utterly devoid of devotion and spirituality<sup>520</sup>.”<sup>521</sup>
- 2-3400      And if you do not believe it, get up tonight and go, that you may plainly see your Shaykh’s depravity.
- 2-3401      At night he took him to a window and said, “Look at this debauchery and merrymaking!
- 2-3404      The disciple saw a full glass in the Shaykh’s hand. “O Shaykh,” he said, “is there vice even in you?”
- 2-3412      The Shaykh said, “Indeed this is not a cup, nor is this wine. Hey, unbeliever, come down and look at it!”
- 2-3414      After that, the Pīr said to his disciple, “Go, seek wine for me, o noble sir;
- 2-3415      For I have a pain; I am reduced to necessity: because of the pain, I have passed beyond starvation<sup>522</sup>.
- 2-3416      In dire need any carcass is clean (lawful to eat) – may curses fall like dust<sup>523</sup> on the head of him who denies it!”

<sup>517</sup> This verse refers to certain regulations in *fiqh* or Muslim jurisprudence. There are four Sunnī schools of Islamic jurisprudence: the Ḥanbalī, Ḥanafī, Shāfi‘ī and Malikī schools. In his commentaries on the Mathnawī Nicholson writes: “According to Shāfi‘īte law, stagnant water used for ritual purification is regarded as undefilable when it amounts to what would fill two large jars (*qullatān*). [...] The Ḥanafites must perform their ablutions “with running water, or from a tank or pool at least ten cubits, in breadth and the same in depth”. Here, the metaphor implies that spirituality as pure as that of the Shaykh cannot be injured by any outward act of sin on his part.”

<sup>518</sup> Literally “some clay”.

<sup>519</sup> The implication is: “at a gathering among merry-makers, with much drink and debauchery”.

<sup>520</sup> Literally “he is naked in devotion and poor [in spirituality]” – “devotion”: in the Persian text the word *taqwā* is used. *Taqwā* is often translated as “piety” or “fear of God”, but in reality, it denotes an inner attitude of devotion to God and seeking the pleasure of God, not out of fear, nor out of desire for the rewards of Paradise, but merely out of selfless love.

<sup>521</sup> Verses 2-3399 and ff. are taken from a story in the *Mathnawī* entitled “How a stranger spoke evil of the Shaykh and how the Shaykh’s disciple answered him”. In this story, a spiritually ignorant and blind man accuses a Sūfī Master of depravity.

<sup>522</sup> Literally “the condition of one whose stomach is empty.”(Nich.). See Qur’ān 16:115.

- 2-3417 The disciple went around the wine-cellar, tasting of every jar on the Shaykh's behalf.
- 2-3418 In all the wine-cellars that he visited he found no wine: the jars of wine had become full of honey.
- 2-3419 He said, "O drunkards, what is this? What is the matter? I find no wine in any jar."
- 2-3420 All the drunkards came to the Shaykh, weeping and beating their heads with their hands.
- 2-3421 They said, "You came into the tavern, o most exalted Shaykh, and by your coming all the wines have turned to honey.
- 2-3422 You have changed the wine and purified it from filth: change our souls also and purify them from defilement!"
- 2-3429 Beware and beware! Stop envying the spiritual kings, otherwise you will become a devil in the world.
- 2-3430 For if he drinks poison, it turns to honey; but if you eat honey, it is poison to you;
- 2-3431 For he has been changed, and his action has been changed: he has become the Grace of God, and every fire in him has been turned into Light.

**A beginner on the Path should not blindly  
imitate the Master's work. [2.2.2]**

- 1-1603 It does not harm the spiritual man (Saint) even if he should drink deadly poison for all to see,
- 1-1604 Because he has attained to spiritual health and has been set free from abstinence, while the poor seeker of God is still in the state of fever.
- 1-1606 A Nimrod<sup>524</sup> is in you: do not go into the fire. If you wish to go in, first become Abraham!
- 1-1607 When you are neither a swimmer nor a seaman, do not hurl yourself into the sea from a feeling of self-conceit.
- 1-1609 If a perfect man (Saint) takes earth, it becomes gold; if an imperfect one has carried away gold, it becomes ashes.

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<sup>523</sup> Literally "may the dust of execration be" (Nich.).

<sup>524</sup> Nimrod (*Namrūd* in Arabic): according to biblical sources, Nimrod was the sixth son of Kush, grand-son of Ham and great-grandson of Noah, and the founder of Babylon and Nineveh. He stands for evil, while Abraham stands for righteousness.

- 1-1610 Since the righteous man is accepted by God, his hand in all things is the hand of God.
- 1-1611 The hand of the imperfect man is the hand of Devil and demon, because he is in the trap of deceit and guile.
- 1-1613 Whatever an ill man takes becomes illness, but if a perfect man takes infidelity, it becomes religion.
- 1-1621 To the perfect man every mouthful of food and every saying is lawful. You are not perfect: do not eat, be mute.
- 1-1579 In the sight of God his wrongdoing is better than obedience; compared to his infidelity all faiths are worthless.
- 1-1580 At every moment he has his own particular ascension to God: God lays a hundred particular crowns upon his crown.
- 1-1581 His form is on earth and his spirit in “no-place”<sup>525</sup>, a “no-place” beyond the imagination of travellers on the Mystical Path.
- 1-1612 If ignorance comes to the perfect man, it becomes knowledge, but the knowledge that goes into the imperfect man becomes ignorance.
- 5-2705 As regards him, the eating of bread and honey and the drinking of milk is better than the forty days’ seclusion<sup>526</sup> and the three days’ fast of a hundred dervishes.

### **The murīd should never put a Master to the test. [2.2.2]**

- 4-374 If a novice has put the Shaykh who is the spiritual leader and guide to the test, he is an ass.
- 4-375 If you put him to the test in the way of religion, *you* will be tried by tribulation, o man without faith.
- 4-380 Know that putting him to the test is like exercising authority over him: do not seek to exercise authority over such a spiritual king.

### **Allegory. [2.2.2]**

- 4-353 One day an obstinate man, who was ignorant of the reverence due to God, said to Murtaẓā (‘Alī),
- 4-354 On the top of a very high terrace or palace, “Are you conscious of God’s protection, o intelligent man?”

<sup>525</sup> No-place: *lā makān*, literally “no space”, i.e. “the Placeless Realm”, the place of the deity, where there is no space and time, a state beyond our conception.

<sup>526</sup> Specific Sūfī retreat or seclusion (*khalwa*) of forty days, known as *chillah* (approximately pronounced *chelleh*, with the stress on the first syllable) in Persian and *arba‘īn* in Arabic.

- 4-355 “Yes,” he replied, “From the time of infancy and conception<sup>527</sup> He is the Protector and the Self-sufficient for preserving my existence.”
- 4-356 He said: “Come, throw yourself down from the roof, put all your confidence in the protection of God,
- 4-357 So that your sure faith and your steadfast conviction may become clear to me.”
- 4-358 Then the Prince<sup>528</sup> said to him, “Be silent, go, so that this boldness might not lead your soul to perdition.”
- 4-360 How should a servant of God have the stomach<sup>529</sup> to put Him to the test in vain, o mad fool?
- 4-359 How is it right for a servant of God to hazard<sup>530</sup> an experiment with God by putting Him to the test?
- 4-361 That right belongs to God alone, who brings forward a test for His servants at every moment,
- 4-362 In order that He may show us plainly to ourselves and reveal our secret beliefs.
- 4-366 How can you put Him to the test who raised the vault of heaven?
- 4-381 By what right should the pictures (phenomenal forms) exercise authority over such an Artist in order to test Him?
- 4-367 O you who have not known good and evil, first put yourself to the test, and then others.
- 4-368 When you have put yourself to the test, o such-and-such, you will feel no need to put others to the test.

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<sup>527</sup> Literally “semen” (Nich.).

<sup>528</sup> “Prince or Commander of the Faithful” or *Amīru ’l-Mu’minīn*.

<sup>529</sup> Literally “gall-bladder” (Nich.).

<sup>530</sup> Literally “bring forward” (Nich.).

## **The Third River [2.3]**

**The Pīr's guidance of the murīd on the Path.**

### **The First Rivulet [2.3.1]**

**The different stages of the mystical journey  
(sayr wa sulūk) towards the ultimate Goal.**

**As-sayr ilā' Llāh ("the Journey towards God"): renouncing the negative aspects of the nafs and drawing nearer to the World of the Heart and Divine qualities.**

**As-sayr fī' Llāh ("the Journey within God"): drawing nearer to the World of the Spirit as one acquires Divine qualities through the Heart.**

**As-sayr ma'a' Llāh ("the Journey with God"): the state of fanā' fī' Llāh ("annihilation of the limited self in God").**

**As-sayr bi' Llāh mina' Llāh ("the Journey from God by His Power"): returning to the world and the people in order to give them spiritual guidance after having attained the ultimate stage of baqā ("everlasting subsistence in God"), which follows the stage of fanā.**

- 3-534 For by travelling the moon becomes splendid, like Kay Khusraw<sup>531</sup>: how should it become an emperor (*Khusraw*) without travelling?
- 3-535 By travelling the pawn becomes a noble queen, and by travelling Joseph gained a hundred objects of desire.
- 4-2208 Love of their native land and home keeps a tight grip on their souls: their indolence and ignorance will affect them.

### **Returning to the house of the body. [2.3.1]**

- 4-2211 Move on from the literal expression, "love of country"; do not stop at its outer sense, for your real country is the Other Side, o soul: it is not on this side<sup>532</sup>
- 4-2212 If you long for your country, cross to the other bank of the stream: do not misread this true Ḥadīth<sup>533</sup>.
- 2-3776 In your body you are an animal, and in your spirit you are of the angels, so that you may walk on the earth and also in the sky;
- 3-4584 Strive that your inner light may become radiant, so that your travelling on the path of devotion and service to God may be made easy.

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<sup>531</sup> Kay Khusraw was the name of four Seljuk sultāns who ruled the Anatolian Sultanate of Rūm between 1192 and 1282 CE.

<sup>532</sup> Or, "your real country is the Other Side: the spirit is not on this side." (Nich.).

<sup>533</sup> The Prophet said, "Love of one's country is part of the Faith." (Nich.).

- 3-1616 In the same way as staying at home is easy for us, travelling is easy for another kind of people.
- 3-1618 Everyone has been made for some particular work, and the desire for that work has been put into his heart.
- 3-1619 How should hand and foot be made to move without desire? How should sticks and straws be removed from their place without any water or wind?
- 3-1620 If you see that your desire is towards Heaven, unfold the wings of empire, like the *Humā*<sup>534</sup>,
- 3-1621 But if you see that your desire is towards the earth, keep lamenting, do not stop moaning.
- 6-134 A bird flies to its nest using its wings: the wings of Man are aspiration, o people.
- 3-1970 I will fly with wings and feathers for years: what are years? For thousands of years.
- 3-1971 “I will travel,” meaning, “Is it not worth that arduous journey? Do not consider the love for the Beloved to be less than the love for bread (worldly goods).”

**The ordinary journey through this world should  
be a stepping-stone to the mystical journey. [2.3.1]**

- 2-2221 God has said, “Wherever you go in your travels, you must first search a holy man.”
- 2-2222 Go and seek a treasure, for worldly profit and loss come second: regard them as the branch, not as the root.
- 2-2223 Whoever sows is in search of wheat; the straw comes to him indeed, but only in the second place.
- 2-2225 When it is the season of pilgrimage, go in search of the Ka‘ba; when you have gone with that purpose, Mecca also will be seen.
- 2-2226 In the *Mi‘rāj* (Ascension of the Prophet) the quest was to see the Beloved; it was but secondarily that the Highest Heaven and the angels were also shown.

**Story:**

- 2-2227 One day a disciple built a new house; the Pīr<sup>535</sup> came and saw his house.

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<sup>534</sup> The lammergeier (great bearded vulture). According to popular belief, the falling of its shadow on anyone was a sign that he would become king (Nich.).

<sup>535</sup> Ṣūfī Master or Mentor and Guide on the Path (*Murshid* or *Shaykh*).

- 2-2228 The Shaykh said to his new disciple – he put to the test him who has good thoughts –
- 2-2229 “Why have you made a window, o friend?” He said, “In order that light may come in through it.”
- 2-2230 The Shaykh said, “That is only the branch (secondary object); your desire must be this, that through this window you may hear the call to prayer.”
- 2-2484 This world is the Desert of the Israelites, and you are Moses, and we remain in the Desert in tribulation because of our sin.
- 2-2485 We are wayfaring for years, and at the end we are still held captive in the first stage of the journey.
- 2-2486 If the heart of Moses were pleased with us, the way through the Desert and its farthest border would be shown to us.

**The mystical journey is fulfilled in two stages: fleeing from the nafs and drawing closer to the Beloved. [2.3.1]**

- 3-1976 Do not see these feet that walk on the earth, for assuredly the lover of God walks on his heart;
- 3-1977 And the heart that is intoxicated with the Sweetheart<sup>536</sup>, what should it know of road and stage or of short and long distance?
- 3-1978 That “long” and “short” are attributes of the body: the journey of spirits is another kind of journey.
- 1-570 Our speech and action are the outer journey: the inner journey is above the sky.
- 3-1980 The journey of the spirit is not conditioned by Time and Space: our body learned from the spirit how to travel.
- 1-571 Physical sense saw only dryness, because it was born of dryness (earth): the Jesus of the spirit set foot on the sea.
- 1-572 The journey of the dry body took place on dry land, but the journey of the spirit took place in the heart of the sea.
- 1-573 Since your life has passed while travelling on land, now mountain, now river, now desert,
- 1-574 Where will you find the Water of Life? Where will you cleave the waves of the Sea?

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<sup>536</sup> Literally “he who cherishes the heart” (Nich.).



- 1-575 The waves of earth are our imagination, understanding and thought; the waves of water are mystical self-effacement, intoxication and death (*fanā*).
- 4-533 The heart (spirit) travels to the Ka‘ba at every moment, and through Divine bounty the body takes on the nature of the heart.
- 4-534 This longness and shortness are proper to the body: where God is, what is “long” and “short”?
- 4-535 When God has transformed the body, He makes its journey without league or mile<sup>537</sup>.
- 4-536 There are a hundred hopes at this present time. Step forward like a true lover, o young man, and give up idle disputation.
- 3-4582 All go along this Way in the chains of fear and tribulation, except the Saints.
- 5-2180 The mystic’s progress is an ascension to the throne of the Divine King at every moment; the ascetic’s<sup>538</sup> progress is one day’s journey every month.
- 5-2181 Even though for the ascetic one day is of great value, yet how should his one day be equal to *fifty thousand years*<sup>539</sup>?
- 5-2182 The length of every day in the life of the adept<sup>540</sup> is fifty thousand of the years of the world.
- 5-2183 Intellects are excluded<sup>541</sup> from this mystery: if the heart<sup>542</sup> of Imagination bursts, let it burst!
- 4-555 The steed of not-being (self-annihilation) became a worthy Burāq<sup>543</sup>: it brings you to real existence, if you are non-existent (self-annihilated).
- 4-558 With no hands and no feet, go to Eternity in the same way as that in which the spirits rushed from non-existence.
- 4-1105 Circle heaven without wings and feathers, like the sun, like the full moon and like the new moon.
- 4-1106 You will move like the spirit, and there will be no foot; you will eat a hundred delicacies, and no one will chew a morsel.

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<sup>537</sup> I.e. it doesn’t matter how long the journey will be.

<sup>538</sup> Ḥaḏrat Yaḥyā ibn Mu‘ādhār-Rāzī (830-871 CE), a Ṣūfī who taught in Central Asia, said: “The ascetic travels, but the mystic flies” [Adapted from Nicholson’s *Commentaries on the Mathnawī of Jalālu’d-dīn Rūmī*].

<sup>539</sup> Qur’ān 70:4.

<sup>540</sup> Literally “the man of (spiritual) efficiency” (Nich.).

<sup>541</sup> Literally “are outside of the door of” (Nich.).

<sup>542</sup> Literally “gall-bladder” (Nich.).

<sup>543</sup> In Islamic tradition, a creature said to have transported the Prophet Muḥammad to heaven. Described as “a white animal, half-mule, half-donkey, with wings on its sides”, *Burāq* was originally introduced into the story of Ḥaḏrat Muḥammad’s night journey (*isrā’*) from Mecca to Jerusalem and back, thus explaining how the journey between the cities could have been completed in a single night.

- 4-1107        Neither will pain, the infernal sea monster, dash against your ship, nor will the ugliness of death appear in you.

### **The Second Rivulet [2.3.2]**

**In order to avoid the perils and pitfalls on the Path, the mystical journey must be undertaken under the guidance of a Master.**

- 4-1429        Abandon ostentation on this Path: do not move unless your spiritual guide moves.
- 4-1430        Anyone who moves without the head (guide) is no more than a tail (base and contemptible); his movement is like the movement of a scorpion.
- 4-1431        Going crookedly, night-blind, ugly and venomous – his role is the wounding of the pure bodies of the unworldly.
- 4-1432        Beat the head of him whose inmost spirit is like this, and whose permanent nature and disposition is like this.
- 4-1433        In fact it is good for him to beat this head of his, so that his weak soul<sup>544</sup> may be delivered from that unfortunate body.
- 6-4073        How can you go without being counselled by a wise Shaykh, since you do not have a discerning heart?
- 6-4074        Alas for to the unfledged bird that flies up to the zenith and falls into danger!
- 6-4078        See a whole world ensnared by desire and by wounds (harmful things) that look like remedies (beneficial things).
- 6-4093        He is deadly poison, even though in appearance he is honey and milk. Beware, do not go on your way except in the company of a wise spiritual teacher.
- 6-4094        All selfish pleasures are a deceit and fraud: around the lightning flash is a wall of darkness.
- 6-4095        The lightning is but a brief gleam, false and fleeting, surrounded by darkness; and your way is long.
- 6-4096        By its light you can neither read a letter nor ride to your destination.
- 6-4099        Now you fall on a mountain, now into a river; now you wander in this direction, now in that.
- 4-537        Even though you are closing your eyelids, you are asleep in the ship and travelling in safety.

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<sup>544</sup> Literally “small fragments of soul” (Nich.).

- 4-538 Because of this the Prophet said, “I am as the Ark in the Flood of Time.
- 4-539 I and my Companions are as the Ark of Noah: whoever clings to us will gain spiritual graces<sup>545</sup>.”
- 4-540 When you are with the Shaykh you are far removed from evil: day and night you are a traveller and in a ship.
- 4-541 You are under the protection of a life-giving spirit: you are asleep in the ship, you are going on the way.
- 4-542 Do not break with the Prophet of your time<sup>546</sup>: do not rely on your own skill and desire<sup>547</sup>.
- 4-543 Even though you are a lion, you are self-conceited, in error and contemptible when you go on the way without a guide.
- 4-544 Beware! Do not fly but with the wings of the Shaykh, that you may see (receive) the help of the armies of the Shaykh.
- 4-552 If you stand in the rank of those who make the spiritual ascension, not-being (self-annihilation) will lift you up, like Burāq.
- 4-553 It is not like the ascension of a piece of earth (of an earthly being) to the moon; no, but like the ascension of a cane to sugar.
- 4-554 It is not like the ascension of a vapour to the sky; no, but like the ascension of an embryo to rationality.
- 5-2556 In the world there are invisible ladders, leading step by step up to the summit of heaven.
- 5-2557 There is a different ladder for every category, there is a different heaven for every traveller’s way.
- 6-4125 The Pīr is the ladder to Heaven: who or what makes the arrow fly? The bow.
- 6-4124 From now on I will not seek the way to the Ether (the highest celestial sphere): I will seek the Pīr, I will seek the Pīr, the Pīr, the Pīr!

### **Allegory. [2.3.2]**

- 6-4126 Was it not Abraham who made the crude Nimrod try to fly to heaven by means of a vulture?

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<sup>545</sup> *Aḥādīth-e Mathnawī* p. 354.

<sup>546</sup> I.e. the Ṣūfī Masters who are the spiritual heirs and representatives of the Prophet.

<sup>547</sup> Even though in the Fārsī text the word *gām* is used, meaning “footstep”, in this context it is more appropriate to read it as *kām*, meaning “desire”.

- 6-4127 Driven by selfish desire, he often went upward; but no vulture can fly to heaven.
- 6-4128 Abraham said to him, “O traveller, I will be your vulture: this is more appropriate for you.
- 6-4129 When you make a ladder of me to go up, you will ascend to heaven without flying” –
- 6-4130 As the heart (spirit), without provisions or riding-camel, travels swift as lightning to west and east.
- 6-4137 Get up, o you who are like Nimrod, and seek wings from holy persons: you will not get any ladder from these vultures.
- 6-4138 The vulture is partial intellect<sup>548</sup>, o poor-spirited one: its wings are connected with the eating of carrion;
- 6-4139 But the intellect of the *Abdāl* (exalted Saints) is like the wings of Gabriel: it soars, mile by mile, up to the shade of the Lotus Tree in Paradise<sup>549</sup>.
- 6-4140 It says, “I am a royal falcon, I am beautiful and beneficent, I have nothing to do with carrion: I am not a vulture.
- 6-4141 Abandon the vulture, for I will be your helper: one wing of mine is better for you than a hundred vultures.”
- 6-4142 How long will you gallop blindly? For learning a trade and business one needs a master.
- 1-2943 Choose a Pīr, for without a Pīr this journey is exceedingly full of pain, fear and danger.
- 1-2944 Without a Guide you are bewildered even on a road you have travelled many times before:
- 1-2945 Do not, then, travel alone on a Way that you have not seen at all, do not turn your head away from the Guide.
- 1-2974 If by rare exception anyone went this Path alone (without a Pīr), he arrived at his goal through the help and favour of the hearts of the Pīrs.
- 3-588 If anybody goes on the Way without a Guide, every two days’ journey becomes one of a hundred years.

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<sup>548</sup> Proceeding to a conclusion through reason rather than intuition.

<sup>549</sup> Qur’ān 53:10-18. Lote Tree in Paradise (*Sidratu’l-Muntahā*): this tree marks the end of the Seventh Heaven, the boundary where no created being can pass. However, the Prophet Muḥammad was allowed to travel to it with Gabriel during his Celestial Journey (*Mi’rāj wa Isrā*). Unlike Gabriel, Ḥaḏrat Muḥammad was allowed to travel beyond this boundary. Here – in as spiritual sense – Ḥaḏrat Muḥammad stands for the Love that transcends the level of intellect, in this case symbolically represented by Gabriel.

- 3-589           Whoever speeds towards the Ka‘ba without a Guide becomes contemptible, like these bewildered men.
- 3-590           Whoever takes up a trade or profession without a teacher becomes a laughing-stock in town and country.
- 6-4100          O seeker of worldly status, you will never find the Guide; and if you find him, you will turn your face away from him.
- 6-4115          Any blind man who scornfully turns away from a Messiah will be left without guidance, like the deniers of the Truth<sup>550</sup>.
- 6-4117          Jesus says to him, “O blind man, cling to me with both hands: I have a precious eye-lotion.

**Travelling in the company of advanced fellow  
wayfarers makes the journey lighter. [2.3.2]**

**Ḥadīth: “Choose your travelling companion before you depart”<sup>551</sup>.**

- 6-1591          The Friend is the support and refuge on the Way; if you consider well, you will see that the Friend *is* the Way.
- 6-498           Be a firm friend, that you may find countless friends; for without friends you will be left helpless.
- 6-499           The Devil is a wolf, and you are like Joseph: do not let go of Jacob’s skirt, o excellent one.
- 6-500           Generally the wolf seizes his prey at the moment when a year-old sheep strays alone by itself from the flock.
- 6-503           But not the fellow-traveller who is an enemy to Reason and seeks an opportunity to carry off your clothes.
- 6-505           Nor one who has the fearful heart of a camel and, when he feels afraid, tells you to turn back on the road!
- 6-506           By his lack of courage, like that of a camel, he frightens his companion: know that such a fellow-traveller is an enemy, not a friend.

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<sup>550</sup> In Nicholson’s translation it says “Jews” instead of “deniers of the Truth”. But this is wrong. The word which Ḥaẓrat Mawlānā Rūmī uses in the Mathnawī is *jahūd(āneh)*, which is derived from the word *jahūd*. The word *jahūd* is often confused with the word *Yahūd* (“Jews”). *Jahūd* is best translated as “deniers of the Truth”. *Jahūd* is similar in meaning to the Arabic word *kāfir*, another word that is very often misinterpreted and misunderstood. It is usually rendered as “infidel”, “unbeliever”, or “pagan”. Yet in Arabic, *kāfir* literally means “one who covers the Truth”, i.e. “someone who is spiritually ignorant and blind”. As such, a *kāfir* can belong to any religious group or faith, including Islām. The same applies to the term *jahūd*.

<sup>551</sup> *Aḥādith-e Mathnawī* p. 573.

- 6-508 The road of religion is full of trouble and misfortune because it is not the road for anyone whose nature is effeminate<sup>552</sup>.
- 3-4034 Beware! Do not ask sensualist dandies to fight; do not ask peacocks to engage in the hunt and the chase.
- 3-4035 The carnal nature is a peacock: it tempts you and talks idly, that it may remove you from your spiritual position.
- 6-510 What is the Path? Full of footprints. What is the companion? The ladder by which it ascends<sup>553</sup>.
- 6-512 He who cheerfully goes along on a journey – if he goes with companions he advances a hundred times faster.
- 6-517 There is no doubt that he who cheerfully goes alone into the custom house<sup>554</sup> will go more cheerfully if he is with companions.
- 6-519 How could houses and storehouses be constructed without the help of walls?
- 6-520 How shall the roof remain suspended in the air, if each wall is separated from the others?
- 6-521 How shall the writing come on the surface of the paper without the help of ink and pen?
- 6-3009 Since the earth of the grave is ennobled and made fortunate by the nearness of the pure body,
- 6-3010 Do you too, then, say, “First the neighbour, then the house<sup>555</sup>”: if you have a heart, go, seek a sweetheart.

### **The Third Rivulet [2.3.3] Prudence on the Path<sup>556</sup>.**

- 3-268 The Prophet has said, “Prudence is (consists in) thinking evil”<sup>557</sup>: know that for every footstep there is a snare, o fool!
- 3-216 On every side a ghou! is calling you – “Listen, o brother, if you wish to find the way, come here.

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<sup>552</sup> This verse does not denigrate homosexuals. What is really meant by “anyone whose nature is effeminate” is “anyone who is weak-willed and lacks inner strength and resolve”. Ḥaḏrat Mawlānā Rūmī’s message is a universal message of Divine Love, a Love that reaches out to and embraces *all* people, irrespective of creed, race, social status, gender, sexual orientation or any other distinction. If certain verses in the *Mathnawī* make it appear any different, this is solely due to the restrictions imposed by the religious laws, cultural and social conventions, values and perceptions of Ḥaḏrat Mawlānā Rūmī’s era.

<sup>553</sup> I.e. the road trodden by Prophets and Saints and true believers (Commentary Nicholson).

<sup>554</sup> Where toll was paid by travellers (Nich.).

<sup>555</sup> I.e. before buying a house, make sure that you will have good neighbours (Nich.).

<sup>556</sup> Qur’ān 23:97.

<sup>557</sup> *Aḥādīth-e Mathnawī* p. 254.

- 3-217 I will show you the way, I will be your kind fellow-traveller, I am the guide for you on this intricate path.”
- 3-218 The ghoul is not the guide, and she does not know the way. O Joseph, do not go to that wolflike one!
- 3-213 None escaped from this ambush without some patience and prudence: to prudence, indeed, patience is the foot and hand.
- 3-2201 What is prudence? To think of the world as evil. In this world the prudent man will expect to see a sudden calamity at every moment.
- 3-2202 It is as when a lion has suddenly come up, seized a man and dragged him into the jungle.
- 3-2203 At the moment of that carrying off, what will he think of? Consider this, and think of the same thing, o you who are well-versed in Religion.
- 3-2204 The lion, Destiny, is dragging our souls, which are preoccupied with worldly business and trade, into the jungles of death.
- 3-2564 Every worthless fellow pretends to be a David; everyone who lacks discernment attaches himself to him.
- 3-2566 He does not distinguish fact from fiction: he is misguided. Come, run from him, even if he is spiritual in appearance.
- 3-2567 What has grown in reality and what has been tied on artificially is all one to him: even though he may claim to possess intuitive certainty, in reality he is in great doubt.
- 3-2568 If such a person is absolutely keen-witted, still, when he does not have this power of discernment, he is a fool.
- 3-2569 Listen, run away from him as the deer from the lion: do not hasten boldly towards him, o wise man!
- 3-276 If you have eyes, do not walk blindly; and if you do not have eyes, take a staff in your hand.
- 3-277 When you do not have the staff of prudence and judgement, make the seer’s eye your leader.
- 3-279 Step in the same way as a blind man steps, in order that your foot may escape from the pit and the dog.
- 3-280 The blind man plants his foot tremblingly, with fear and precaution, so that he may not fall into derangement<sup>558</sup>.

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<sup>558</sup> I.e. may not be upset (Nich.).

- 3-267 Prudence is this, that you think of the world as evil, so that you may escape evil and become free of it.
- 3-219 Prudence is this, that you are not deluded by the fat things, sweets and snares of the World<sup>559</sup>.
- 3-230 Prudence is this, that when worldly people invite you, you should not say, "They are in love with me and fond of me."
- 3-231 Know that their invitation is like the birdcall which the bird-catcher utters hidden in his ambush.
- 3-233 The birds think he is one of their kind: they gather around, and he strips off their skins –
- 3-234 Except, no doubt, the bird to which God has given prudence, so that it may not be fooled by that bait and enticement<sup>560</sup>.
- 3-2842 What is prudence? Precaution in the case of two different plans: of the two you will take that one which is far from craziness.
- 3-2843 One person may say, "On this road there is no water for seven days, and there is foot-scorching sand."
- 3-2844 Another may say, "This is false: walk on, for you will find a flowing fountain every night."
- 3-2845 It is prudence that you take water with you, so that you may be saved from dread and be on the right side.
- 3-2846 If there is water on the road, spill this water which you have taken with you; and if there is none, alas for the obstinate man!

### **Story. [2.3.3]**

- 6-467 A certain man had a ram which he was leading along behind him: a thief carried off the ram, having cut its halter.
- 6-468 As soon as the owner noticed, he began to run to the left and to the right, that he might find out where the stolen ram was.
- 6-469 Next to a well he saw the thief crying, "Alas! Woe is me!"
- 6-470 "O master," he said, "why are you lamenting?" He replied, "My purse full of gold has fallen into the well.

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<sup>559</sup> Literally "this caravanserai" (Nich.).

<sup>560</sup> Literally "feigned affection" (Nich.).



- 6-471 If you can go in and fetch it out, I will gladly give you a fifth of the money.
- 6-472 You will receive the fifth part of a hundred dīnārs<sup>561</sup> in your hand.” The owner of the ram said to himself, “Why, this is the price of ten rams.
- 6-473 If one door is shut ten doors are opened: if a ram is gone, God gives a camel in compensation.”
- 6-474 He took off his clothes and went into the well: at once the thief carried away his clothes too.
- 6-476 The Devil is a mischievous thief: like a phantom, he appears in a different shape at every moment.
- 2-2274 If she tells you to pray and fast – the fleshly soul (*nafs*) is a great plotter; she will come up with some plot against you.
- 6-477 No one but God knows his cunning: take refuge with God and escape from that impostor.

### **The Fourth Rivulet [2.3.4]**

**Jadhba (Divine attraction, the force of attraction of God’s Love).**

**How God attracts His chosen servants, enabling them to strive in the Path and accomplish goals with little or no effort.**

**Ḥadīth: “A single occurrence of jadhba equals all the good deeds of both worlds”<sup>562</sup>.**

- 6-3869 One atom of the protection of Divine favour is better than a thousand efforts of the devout worshipper.
- 6-1071 The Divine attraction holds a hundred discourses with the effects and apparent causes<sup>563</sup>, without uttering a word or moving a lip.
- 6-1068 You yourself know what words a sun, in the sign of Aries, speaks to the plants and the date palms.
- 6-1069 You yourself, too, know what the clear water is saying to the sweet herbs and the sapling.

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<sup>561</sup> A coin; *dīnār* is derived from the Late Greek *denarion*, which in turn was derived from the Latin word *denarius*.

<sup>562</sup> *Aḥādīth-e Mathnawī* p. 374.

<sup>563</sup> “First Cause” and “apparent cause(s)”: “The First Cause” is God, who is called *Musabbibu’l-Asbāb*, “the Causer of Causes”. His existence is absolute and necessary (*Wājibu’l-Wujūd*), i.e. He exists independently through Himself and His existence is necessary for the existence of all other things. When He wishes to make something happen He uses some of His own creations as mediators or “apparent causes” or “secondary causes”. Apparent causes are capable of causing future events in some way. However, apparent causes always remain subordinate to the First Cause. Therefore seekers of God must never let themselves be blinded and misled by apparent causes, since their seeming power and relative existence invariably stem from God, the First Cause and Causer of all Causes.

- 6-1074 If reason should ask how the goal<sup>564</sup> may be reached, say, “In a way that you do not know, and so farewell!”
- 1-878 The mother is always in search of her child: the fundamentals seek the derivatives<sup>565</sup>.
- 1-879 If water is imprisoned in a tank, the wind sucks it up, as the wind belongs to the original source:
- 1-880 It sets it free, it wafts it away to its source, little by little, so that you do not see its wafting;
- 1-882 The perfumes of our good words rise up even to Him, ascending from us to a place that God knows.
- 1-887 Let us speak Persian<sup>566</sup>: the meaning is that this attraction by which God draws the soul towards Himself comes from the same place where the taste<sup>567</sup> came from.
- 6-3360 What is the attracting power, hidden in the most hidden, that shines out in this world from its source in the other world?
- 3-4597 Whether he is like this or like that, if he is a seeker of God, God’s attraction is drawing him towards God.

### **The grace of God’s force of attraction (jadhba)<sup>568</sup>. [2.3.4]**

- 4-1321 Every one is moving towards the One Who Draws: the true drawing is not like the false drawing.
- 4-1323 You are a blind camel, and if your restraint became visible to the senses, then this world would no longer remain the abode of heedlessness (delusion).
- 4-2004 The Almighty did not call you an ass. He called you a horse: the Arabs say *ta’āl* (“come”) to the Arabian horse.
- 4-2005 Muṣṭafā<sup>569</sup> (Muḥammad) was God’s stable overseer for the beasts, which are the sinful carnal souls (*nafs*).
- 4-2006 Moved by loving-kindness, God said “Say ‘come’ (*ta’āl*)<sup>570</sup>, so that I may train you<sup>571</sup>: I am the trainer.”

<sup>564</sup> An allusion to Qur’ān 7:139 (Nich.).

<sup>565</sup> I.e. “the source seeks its offshoot.”

<sup>566</sup> The five preceding verses are in Arabic (Nich.).

<sup>567</sup> Taste (*dhawq*): the direct “tasting” of God’s Being in a state of mystical bliss.

<sup>568</sup> Qur’ān 10:25.

<sup>569</sup> *Al-Muṣṭafā* is an epithet of the Prophet meaning “Chosen One”, with the implication that Ḥaẓrat Muḥammad was chosen by God because of his purity – *ṣafā* in Arabic. *Muṣṭafā* and *ṣafā* are derived from the same Arabic verbal root, *ṣ-f-y* or *ṣ-f-w*, meaning “to be pure”.

<sup>570</sup> Qur’ān 3:61.

- 4-2011 The Lord said, ‘Say, *Come*, say, *Come*, o beasts that have shied away from discipline.
- 4-2025 Do not belittle the Divine Word *ta‘ālaw (Come)*: this Word is an extremely great elixir.
- 4-2026 If copper (an ignoble person) turns away from your saying (this Word) in disgust, then by no means withhold the elixir from him.
- 4-2028 O slave of God, say, *Come*, say, *Come*: pay attention, for verily *God invites to the Abode of Peace*<sup>572</sup>.
- 5-1669 Listen, renounce suspicion and error: make your head a foot (to hasten towards Him) since He has summoned you to come.
- 5-1670 His ‘Come’ will exalt you; it will intoxicate you and give you spiritual brides and couches<sup>573</sup>.

**The sālik keeps progressing along the Path,  
whether he receives this grace or not. [2.3.4]**

- 6-1477 God’s pulling is, indeed, the original source; but, O fellow-servant, work hard, do not be dependent on that pulling;
- 6-1478 For to renounce exertion is like an act of disdain: how should disdain be fitting for a devoted lover of God?
- 6-1479 O youth, think neither of acceptance nor refusal: always consider the Divine command and prohibition.
- 6-1480 Then suddenly the bird, namely, the Divine attraction, will fly from its nest towards you: put out the candle as soon as you see the dawn.
- 3-981 Now by speech, then by silence and then by smelling, catch the scent of the King everywhere.
- 1-2211 A search and a quest beyond all search and quest: I do not know how to describe it; if you can, tell!
- 5-2044 If you are a man, dig earth from this earthen body, like a well digger, that you may reach some water;
- 5-2045 And if God’s inspiration comes to you, the running water will bubble up from the earth without having dug a well.

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<sup>571</sup> I.e. God ordered the Prophet to request the carnal souls to come that he (the Prophet) might train them (Nich.). [In this case “training” implies “inner discipline”, “inner training” (*riyāzat*)]

<sup>572</sup> Qur’ān 10:25.

<sup>573</sup> Couches: refers to Qur’ān 56:10-38 and Qur’ān 88:8-16, which describe the Garden of Paradise. In these Sūras the word “couches” occurs in the verses 56:15, in 56:34, and also in 88:13.

## **The Fourth River [2.4]**

**Riyāḍā<sup>574</sup> wa mujāhada (spiritual practices and spiritual effort or struggle).**

**In this stage, the dervish renounces many things, such as the material world, lust and greed, the company of ill-natured people, saying hurtful things, sleeping unnecessarily long hours, immoderate eating, a life of excessive luxury, imitating others, pride, craving for worldly fame, status and reputation<sup>575</sup>.**

**Ḥadīth: “This world is a prison for the true believer”<sup>576</sup>.**

**In this stage, the dervish strives for good and effective deeds, purification of the heart, solitary retreat and seclusion (khalwa), acquiring gnosis, inner and outer awakening, taking in spiritual food, dedication, effort and atience on the Path, knowledge, a state of spiritual indigence towards the Beloved and inconspicuousness.**

### **The First Rivulet [2.4.1]**

- 1-525      This world, indeed, is the prison of your souls: oh, go in that direction, for there lies your open country.
- 1-982      This world is the prison, and we are the prisoners: dig a hole in the prison and let yourself out!
- 6-3471     This world is a rotten walnut: o faithful man, do not put it to the test, but look at it from a distance.
- 6-3475     Since the Prophet’s eye was always fixed on the end, seeing the world with that eye made him call it a carcass.
- 1-3431     God said, “This world is a play and pastime<sup>577</sup>, and you are children”; and God speaks truth.
- 1-3432     If you have not given up playing, you are a child: without purity of spirit, how will you be fully intelligent like an adult?
- 1-3430     All men are children except he who is God-intoxicated; no one is grown-up except he who is freed from sensual desire.

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<sup>574</sup> “*Riyāḍāt*” in Persian.

<sup>575</sup> Qur’ān 57:20.

<sup>576</sup> This is a ḥadīth – see *Aḥādīth-e Mathnawī* p. 48.

<sup>577</sup> Qur’ān 29:64.

- 2-2598 Or like children who set up a shop as a game, but it is of no use to them except as a pastime.
- 2-2599 Night falls, and the child who acted as shopkeeper comes home hungry: the other children are gone, and he is left alone.
- 2-2600 This world is a playground, and death is the night: you return with an empty purse, tired out.

### **Story. [2.4.1]**

- 4-3085 A certain king had a young son, endowed with excellence both inwardly and outwardly.
- 4-3086 He dreamed that his son suddenly died: for the king the pure pleasure of the world was changed into pain.
- 4-3088 The king became so full of sorrow and grief that sighs could not find a way out of him.
- 4-3089 He was about to die, his body became slow and apathetic; but his life had been left for him to complete: the king woke up.
- 4-3100 The king pondered, saying, "This sorrow, indeed, is past, but my soul has become fearful of being afflicted by one of the same kind;
- 4-3101 And if such a thorn enters my foot (if such disaster happens to me) that the rose disappears (that my son dies), I should have a keepsake of him.
- 4-3113 The king said to himself, "It is necessary, then, to seek a bride for him, that this marriage may yield offspring.
- 4-3115 And that if the form of the falcon leaves this world, its inner meaning may live on in his son.
- 4-3138 The king prevailed and gave a good-natured girl, belonging to the family of a righteous man, in marriage to his son.
- 4-3139 She truly was of unrivalled loveliness: her face was brighter than the sun in the morning.
- 4-3140 Such was the girl's beauty; and her qualities were such that no description could capture their excellence.
- 4-3145 By Divine destiny a decrepit old witch, who was in love with the handsome and generous prince –
- 4-3146 An old woman of Kābul – bewitched him with a sorcery that would be envied by the magicians of Babylon itself.

- 4-3147 The prince fell in love with the ugly hag, so that he abandoned his bride and the wedding.
- 4-3150 For a whole year the prince was captivated: the sole of the hag's shoe was the place where he planted his kisses.
- 4-3151 Being with the hag consumed him, until through wasting away only half a soul<sup>578</sup> was left in him.
- 4-3152 Others were deeply grieved because of his weakness, while he was unconscious of himself as a result of the intoxicating effect of the sorcery.
- 4-3153 This world has become as a prison to the king, while this son of his was laughing at their tears.
- 4-3154 The king became exceedingly desperate in the struggle<sup>579</sup> to save his son: day and night he offered sacrifice and gave alms, but to no avail,
- 4-3155 For whatever remedy the father applied, the son's love for the old hag would always increase.
- 4-3159 He prayed like this until, because of the "O Lord! O Lord!" and other such lamentations, a master magician approached him from the road.
- 4-3160 From a faraway place he had heard the news that that boy had been captivated by an old woman.
- 4-3165 The king said to him, "This boy has lost his wits." The magician said, "Look, I have come as a powerful remedy.
- 4-3166 None of these sorcerers is equal to the old woman except me, the wise one, who has arrived from a distant shore.
- 4-3167 Truly, by command of the Creator, I, like the hand of Moses, will utterly destroy her sorcery.
- 4-3169 I have come to undo her sorcery, so that the prince may not remain pale-faced.
- 4-3170 Go to the graveyard at the hour of the meal taken before dawn: beside the wall is a whitened tomb.
- 4-3171 Dig up that place in the direction of the qibla<sup>580</sup>, that you may see the power and the working of God."
- 4-3172 This story is very long, and you, o reader are weary: I will tell the cream of it, I leave out what is superfluous.

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<sup>578</sup> This can also be rendered as "half a life", as the Persian word *jān* means both "soul" and "life".

<sup>579</sup> Literally "victory and checkmate", a metaphor derived from the game of chess.

<sup>580</sup> I.e. towards Mecca.

- 4-3173 The magician untied the heavy knots<sup>581</sup>: then, he gave to the king's son a way to escape from the affliction.
- 4-3174 The boy came to himself and ran towards the throne of the king with a hundred sorrows.
- 4-3175 He prostrated himself and beat his chin on the earth: the boy held in his arms a sword and a shroud<sup>582</sup>.
- 4-3176 The king ordered the city to be decorated, and the citizens and the despairing disappointed bride rejoiced.
- 4-3177 The whole world came to life once more and was filled with radiance: the people said, "Oh, what a marvellous difference between that day of sorrow and today!"
- 4-3179 The old witch died of anguish and grief and gave up her hideous face and foul nature to Mālik<sup>583</sup>.
- 4-3180 The prince was left bewildered: he said to himself, "How did she rob me of understanding and insight?"
- 4-3181 He saw a newly wedded bride, beautiful as the moon, who eclipsed the beauty of all the other fair ones.
- 4-3185 After a year the king said to him jokingly in conversation, "O son, think of that old friend of yours."
- 4-3187 "Go away!" he said; "I have found the abode of joy, I am freed from the pit of the abode of delusion."

### **The conclusion of the story. [2.4.1]**

- 4-3189 O brother, know that you are the prince born again in the old world.
- 4-3190 The witch of Kābul is this World which made men captive to colour and perfume.
- 4-3193 The Prophet called this world of yours an enchantress because through her spells she put mankind in the pit<sup>584</sup>.
- 3194 Beware! The stinking hag has hot (powerful) spells: her hot breath has made kings captive.
- 4-3195 She is *the witches who blow on knots*<sup>585</sup> within your chest: she maintains the knots of sorcery.

<sup>581</sup> I.e. he broke the spells (Nich.).

<sup>582</sup> As a token that he acknowledged his sin and was ready to pay the penalty.

<sup>583</sup> Mālik, one of God's Angels, is the Keeper of Hell. See Qur'ān 43:77.

<sup>584</sup> This refers to a ḥadīth – see *Aḥādīth-e Mathnawī* p. 408.

- 6-318 The World is a stinking hag, even though she makes herself look like a young bride by means of her great power of enticement.
- 6-319 Listen! Do not be deceived by her rouge, do not taste her sherbet which is mixed with poison!
- 6-321 The World's bait is visible, but its trap is hidden: at first sight its favours seem sweet to you.
- 4-3196 The sorceress, who is the World, is a mighty cunning woman: common people do not have the power to undo her sorcery;
- 4-3197 And if men's understandings could loosen her knot, why would God have sent the Prophets?
- 4-3198 Listen, seek one whose breath is pure, a loosener of knots, one who knows the mystery of *God does whatever He pleases*<sup>586</sup>.
- 4-3199 The World has imprisoned you in her net, like a fish: the prince remained there one year, and you sixty.
- 4-3202 The World's breathing has made these knots tight: seek, then, the breathing of the Unique Creator,
- 4-3203 In order that "*I breathed of My spirit into him*"<sup>587</sup> may free you from this sorcery and say to you, "Come higher!"
- 4-3210 Hard is the separation from this transitory abode: know, then, that the separation from that permanent abode is even harder.
- 4-3211 Since it is hard for you to be separated from the form, how hard must it be to be parted from its Maker!
- 4-3212 O you, who do not have the patience to do without the vile world, how, o friend, do you have the patience to do without God?
- 4-3213 Since you do not have the patience to do without this black water, how do you have the patience to do without God's pure fountain?
- 4-3215 If you see the beauty of the Loving One for one moment and cast your soul and existence into the fire of love.
- 4-3217 Like the prince, you will reach your Beloved; then you will draw the thorn of self out of your foot.

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<sup>585</sup> Qur'ān 113:4. In the time when the Qur'ān was revealed, the Arabs believed that sorcerers or witches could cause harm to others by blowing on knots while uttering evil spells and incantations.

<sup>586</sup> Qur'ān 3:40.

<sup>587</sup> Qur'ān 15:29 and 38:71-72.



- 4-3218 Strive for selflessness, find your true self as soon as possible — and God knows best which course is right.

### **Powerlessness on a spiritual level<sup>588</sup>. [2.4.1]**

- 3-3280 Power is not suitable for everyone: self-abasement is the best stock-in-trade for the devout.”
- 3-3281 For this reason poverty is everlasting glory, since the hand that cannot reach the objects of desire is left with devotion to God<sup>589</sup> and nothing else.
- 3-3282 Riches and the rich are spurned by God because power relinquishes acts of self-denial.
- 3-3283 Self-abasement and poverty are a security for a man against the suffering of the covetous and anxious fleshly soul (*nafs*).
- 3-3297 All debauched drunkards become devout, ascetic and invokers of God when they are in prison.
- 3-3260 Whatever becomes lost to you by Divine destiny, know for sure that it has saved you from affliction.
- 3-3265 For that God-sent suffering keeps off great sufferings, and that loss prevents huge losses.

### **Allegory. [2.4.1]**

#### **Poem:**

**“While passing through this world you will meet many pick-pockets”.  
 “Happy are those who have nothing in their pockets”  
 (i.e. who are not attached to anything). [2.4.1]**

- 5-2361 There was a water carrier<sup>590</sup> who owned an ass that had been bent double like a hoop by affliction.
- 5-2362 Its back was chafed in a hundred places by the heavy load: it passionately desired the day of its death.
- 5-2364 The Master of the royal stable saw it and took pity – for the man knew the owner of the ass –
- 5-2365 So he greeted him and asked him what had happened, saying, “Why is this ass bent double like a *dāl*?”<sup>591</sup>

<sup>588</sup> Qur’ān 96:6 and 7.

<sup>589</sup> “Devotion to God”: in the Persian text the word *taqwā* is used. *Taqwā* is often translated as “piety” or “fear of God”, but in reality, it denotes an inner attitude of devotion to God and seeking the pleasure of God, not out of fear, nor out of desire for the rewards of Paradise, but merely out of selfless love.

<sup>590</sup> Apparently he, or rather his ass, carried firewood too (Nich.).

- 5-2366 He replied, “Because of my poverty and destitution this dumb animal<sup>592</sup> does not even get straw.”
- 5-2367 “Hand him over to me,” the other said, “for a few days, that in the King’s stable he may grow strong.”
- 5-2369 All around him the ass saw Arab horses, well-fed, fat, handsome and glossy<sup>593</sup>;
- 5-2370 He saw the ground swept clean under their feet and sprinkled with water: the straw coming at the proper time, and the barley at the hour when it was expected.
- 5-2371 He saw the horses currycombed and rubbed down. Then he lifted up his muzzle, crying, “O glorious Lord,
- 5-2372 Am not I Your creature? I grant that I am an ass, but why am I wretched, with sores on my back, and thin?
- 5-2373 At night, I always wish to die because of the pain in my back and the pangs of hunger in my belly.
- 5-2374 These horses are so happy and prosperous: why am I singled out for torment and tribulation?”
- 5-2375 Suddenly came the rumour of war: it was the time for the Arab horses to be saddled and brought into action.
- 5-2376 They were wounded by arrows by the enemy: the barbs entered them on every side.
- 5-2377 When the Arab horses returned from the campaign, they all fell down and lay on their backs in the stable.
- 5-2378 Their legs were tightly bandaged with strips of canvas: the farriers were standing in a row,
- 5-2379 Piercing their bodies with the scalpel in order to extract the barbs from their wounds.
- 5-2380 The ass saw all that, and said, “O God, I am satisfied with poverty and health.
- 5-2381 I do not desire that plentiful food and those hideous wounds.” Everyone who desires spiritual health abandons the world.
- 5-2357 I give thanks to the Friend (God) in good and bad times, because the Divine destiny holds worse than the present ill.

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<sup>591</sup> The Arabic letter dāl (ﺩ).

<sup>592</sup> Literally “this one whose mouth is closed” (Nich.).

<sup>593</sup> Literally, “new” (Nich.).

- 5-2358 Since He is the Dispenser of portions, complaint is an act of infidelity. Patience is necessary: patience is the key to the gift (bounteous reward).
- 5-2360 As long as He gives me buttermilk I will not desire honey, for every pleasure is connected to a pain.”

**The world and what is in it, is transitory.  
Wise is he who is not attached to worldly things. [2.4.1]**

**Poem by Ḥaẓrat Mawlānā ‘Abdu’r-Raḥmān Jāmī (1414-1492 CE):**

**“Death separates us from everything. Happy is he who is separated  
from the material world (*dunyā*) before dying” [2.4.1]**

- 1-1369 Take heed! Do not rejoice in a kingdom that is passed on from one to another. O you who are chained to the vicissitude of fortune, do not act as though you were free!
- 1-1370 But those for whom a kingdom beyond vicissitude is prepared, for them the drums (of sovereignty) are beaten beyond the Seven Planets.
- 1-1371 Beyond alternation (regular recurrence) are the everlasting kings: their spirits are perpetually circling with the Cupbearer<sup>594</sup>.
- 3-2239 Since you have not been granted true servitude to the Beloved<sup>595</sup>, from where did the wish for kingship arise in you?
- 4-660 Abandon all that, even if it is the kingdom of Sabā<sup>596</sup>, for beyond this water and earth there are many kingdoms.
- 4-661 That which you have called a throne is really a fetter: you consider it the seat of honour, but in reality you have remained at the door.
- 4-662 If you do not have sovereignty over your own beard, how will you exercise sovereignty over good and evil?
- 4-663 Without you wishing it, your beard grows white: be ashamed of your beard, o you whose hopes are perverse.
- 4-671 If as a tribute you pile up gold as though it were sand, in the end it will be left behind you as an inheritance.

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<sup>594</sup> Cupbearer or *Sāqī*: he who pours out the mystical Divine Wine. In order to receive this Wine, the adept must empty himself from his nafs or ego, i.e. he has to become empty as a wine cup. In Sufism, the *Sāqī* often is a symbol for one’s Master (*Shaykh* or *Pīr*).

<sup>595</sup> Literally, “has not given its hand (yielded itself) to you” (Nich.).

<sup>596</sup> Sabā = Sheba.

- 4-672 Sovereignty and gold will not accompany your spirit on its journey: give your gold away, get eye-salve for your sight,
- 4-673 In order that you may see that this world is a narrow well, and that, like Joseph, you may grasp that rope.
- 5-3926 Suppose the monarch's empire is the empire of the West and the East: since it will not last, consider it as fleeting as a lightning-flash.
- 5-3927 O you whose heart is slumbering (heedless), know that the kingdom that does not endure until eternity is but a dream.
- 3-3697 Everything that rejoices you in the world – think of the time when you will part from it.
- 3-3698 Many people have been gladdened by what made you glad: in the end it escaped from him and became as wind.
- 3-3699 It will escape from you too: do not set your heart upon it. Escape from it yourself before it escapes from you.

**To the wise, the transitory nature of worldly  
things holds a valuable lesson. [2.4.1]**

“Since much good comes from foresightedness, riches is the  
servant of poverty(non-attachment)” – Nizāmī Ganjawi<sup>597</sup>

- 4-1594 In this realm of existence and corruption, o master, existence is the deception and corruption is the warning.
- 4-1595 Existence says, “Come, I am full of delight,” and its corruption says, “Go, I am nothing.”
- 4-1596 O you who bite your lip in admiration of the beauty of spring, consider the coldness and paleness of autumn.
- 4-1597 In the daytime you found the face of the sun beautiful: remember its death when it sets.
- 4-1598 You saw the full moon on this lovely firmament<sup>598</sup>: also notice its anguish (caused by the loss of visibility) during its waning.
- 4-1599 A boy became the lord of the people because of his beauty: the following day he became feeble-minded and exposed to the scorn of the people.
- 4-1600 If the body of those in the fresh bloom of youth<sup>599</sup> has captured you, then see a body bleached like a cotton plantation after it has grown old.

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<sup>597</sup> Nizāmī Ganjawi: a 12<sup>th</sup> century Persian poet.

<sup>598</sup> Literally, the quadrangular tent (of the sky) (Nich.).

<sup>599</sup> Literally, silver-bodied ones (Nich.).

- 4-1605 See how in the end the soul-like intoxicating narcissus-eye (of the Beloved) grows dim and how water trickles from it.
- 4-1604 Many fingers that were envied by master-craftsmen because of their skill and dexterity in the end have become trembling.
- 4-1607 The acute, far-seeing, artful genius – see how it finally has become dim-witted as an old ass.
- 4-1609 Observe the World’s existence, how at first it is pleasing and joyous; and observe its shamefulness and corruption in the end;
- 4-1610 For it clearly showed the snare: it plucked out the fool’s moustache in your presence<sup>600</sup>.
- 4-1611 Do not say, then, “The World deceived me by its trickery; otherwise, my reason would have fled from its snare.”
- 4-1612 Come now, see how the golden collar and shoulder-belt have become shackles and chains.
- 4-1613 Consider every particle of the World to be like this: consider both its beginning and its end.
- 4-1614 The more anyone considers the end (*ākhir*) the more blessed he is; the more anyone considers the stable (*ākhur*)<sup>601</sup> the more banned he is
- 4-1615 Consider everyone’s face as the glorious moon: when the beginning has been seen, also see the end,
- 6-316 Even if all the pleasures of this world are very delightful when viewed from a distance before they are actually put to the test.
- 6-317 Seen from a distance they appear as refreshing water, but when you approach them they are a mirage.
- 6-243 The wealth and riches and silks of this travellers’ halt are a chain on the light-footed spirit.
- 5-4127 Listen, o Pharaoh, renounce Egypt: there are a hundred Egypts within the Egypt of the Spirit.
- 5-4126 If you want to rid yourself of this filthy tattered cloak, you will drown the bodily Nile in the Nile of the soul.

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<sup>600</sup> I.e. “It has revealed its reality”.

<sup>601</sup> In Persian, *ākhur* means “stable”, but it may also mean “refuse”, “filth”, “waste grass of stables”. Here, *ākhir* (meaning “last”, “the end” in Arabic) and *ākhur* are used as a pun.

**Someone who chooses the way of the dervishes is saved  
from the deceitfulness of the world and the nafs. [2.4.1]**

- 5-1951 Riches are like a snake, and power is a dragon: the shadow (protection and guidance) of holy men is the emerald which is fatal to both of them.
- 5-1952 At the sight of that emerald the snake's eye jumps out of its head: the snake is blinded and the traveller is delivered from death.
- 4-3122 This righteous man is himself a king, he is free, he is not the prisoner of lust and gluttony.
- 4-3123 The people have given those prisoners the title of "king" in an opposite way, just as *Kāfūr* (Camphor) is the name of that black man<sup>602</sup>.
- 4-3125 They have described the prisoner of lust, anger and ambition by the name of *Mīr* or *Ṣadr-e Ajall* (most honourable prince).
- 4-3127 They call high-placed (*Ṣadr*) him whose soul is placed low in the entrance hall<sup>603</sup>, that is to say, worldly power and riches.
- 6-323 The names "princehood", "vizierate" and "kingship" are enticing, but hidden beneath them is death, pain and giving up the ghost<sup>604</sup>.
- 6-324 Be a servant of God and walk on the earth like a horse under the rider, not like a corpse which is carried on the necks of the bearers.
- 6-328 Do not lay your burden on anyone, lay it on yourself: do not seek eminence, it is best to be poor<sup>605</sup>.
- 2-3462 Since Iblīs had become accustomed to being leader, he looked down on Adam with disbelief (and denial).
- 2-3466 When leadership has become a bosom friend to your brain<sup>606</sup>, anyone who breaks (thwarts) you becomes as an old enemy.

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<sup>602</sup> Abū'l-Misk Kāfūr (b. 905 CE) was a former Ethiopian slave who ruled Egypt from 946 to 968 CE.

<sup>603</sup> In the Persian text, Ḥaẓrat Mawlānā Rūmī uses the expression *ṣaff-e ni'āl*, which literally means "the row of the slippers". It refers to the last row of sitting people, the row which is closest to the place where one takes off one's shoes or slippers before entering, like at the entrance to a mosque or at a formal assembly of Ṣūfis. It is a symbolic description of "a low, worthless and insignificant place".

<sup>604</sup> Literally "giving up the soul" or "giving up life" (*jān*).

<sup>605</sup> Poor: in the Persian text "darwīsh" – one of the definitions of *darwīsh* is "one who is poor in God".

<sup>606</sup> I.e. haunts your brain (Nich.).

**The meaning of the saying:**  
**“All that keeps you from loving God, is the material world. But to the wise man, the material world is merely a means, not an end”. [2.4.1]**

- 1-983           What is this world? To be forgetful of God; it is not merchandise, silver and weighing scales and women.
- 1-984           As to the wealth that you carry for religion’s sake, “How good is righteous wealth for the righteous man!” as the Prophet recited<sup>607</sup>.
- 1-985           Water in the boat is the ruin of the boat, but water underneath the boat is a support.
- 1-986           Since Solomon cast the desire for wealth and possessions out from his heart, he did not call himself anything else but “poor”.
- 1-3718          Wealth is seed, do not sow it in any salty ground: do not put a sword in the hand of every highwayman.

**Allegory. [2.4.1]**

- 4-238           The lust of this world is like the bath stove by which the bath, piety<sup>608</sup>, is made luminous;
- 4-239           But the pious man’s<sup>609</sup> portion from this stove is nothing but purity, because he is in the hot bath and in cleanliness.
- 4-240           The rich resemble those who carry dung for the bath-keeper’s fire making.
- 4-241           God has planted greed in them, in order that the bath may be hot and well-provided.
- 4-242           Abandon this stove and enter the hot bath: know that abandonment of the stove is the very essence of that bath.
- 4-244           The (characteristic) sign of whoever has entered the bath is visible on his beautiful face.
- 4-245           The signs of the stokers are visible too – in their dress, in the smoke and dust (which blacken them).
- 4-249           Your greed is like fire in the material world: its every flaming tongue has opened a hundred mouths (to swallow filthy profit).

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<sup>607</sup> *Aḥādīth-e Mathnawī* p. 49.

<sup>608</sup> “Piety”: in the Persian text the word *taqwā* is used. *Taqwā* is often translated as “piety” or “fear of God”, but in reality, it denotes an inner attitude of devotion to God and seeking the pleasure of God, not out of fear, nor out of desire for the rewards of Paradise, but merely out of selfless love.

<sup>609</sup> “Pious man” or *muttaqī*: “someone who practices *taqwā*”. See the previous footnote and Qur’ān 2:2.

- 4-250 In the eyes of Reason, this gold is filthy as dung, even though, like dung, it is the cause of the blazing of the fire.

**Renouncing the material world through the  
power of love and the longing for God. [2.4.1]**

- 3-1293 This world is like the tree, O noble ones: we are like the half-ripened fruit on it.
- 3-1294 The unripe fruits cling fast to the branch, because during their immaturity they are unfit to be taken to the palace.
- 3-1295 When they have ripened and become sweet – after that, biting their lips<sup>610</sup>, they cling but feebly to the branches.
- 3-1296 When the mouth has been sweetened by that bliss, the kingdom of the world becomes cold (unpleasing) to man.
- 3-1297 To take a tight hold and to attach one's self strongly to the world is a sign of unripeness: as long as you are an embryo, your task consists of drinking blood.

**Allegory. [2.4.1]**

- 1-2113 The Yearning Pillar<sup>611</sup> was complaining of its separation from the Prophet, just as rational beings might do.
- 1-2114 The Prophet said, "O pillar, what do you want?" It said, "My soul has turned into blood because of being separated from you.
- 1-2115 I was your support: now you have run away from me: you have made a place to lean against on the pulpit."
- 1-2116 "Do you desire," he said, "to be made a date palm, so that the people of the East and the West shall gather fruit from you?
- 1-2117 Or that God should make you a cypress in the other world, so that you will remain everlastingly fresh and flourishing?"
- 1-2118 It replied, "I desire that of which the life endures forever." Listen, o heedless one! Do not be less than a piece of wood!
- 1-2120 So that you may know that everyone whom God has called to Himself remains detached from all the work of this world.
- 1-2121 Whoever obtains his work and business from God, gains admission there and abandons worldly work.

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<sup>610</sup> I.e. in remorse for having clung so tightly to the tree (Nich.).

<sup>611</sup> The "Yearning Pillar" or "Moaning Pillar (*ustun-e ḥannāna*) was a wooden pillar in the time of the Prophet Muḥammad. He used to lean against it while preaching.



- 6-4421 Worldly dominion is lawful only to those who indulge the body: we (lovers) are devoted to the everlasting kingdom of Love.
- 6-4422 He (the prince) is in Love's employ: do not deprive him of his employment, do not let him be employed in anything but loving you.
- 6-4423 The high position (business) that veils me from seeing your face is the very essence of being disgracefully dismissed, even though it is called 'high position.

**The Second Rivulet [2.4.2]**  
**Renouncing the perils and pitfalls of the nafs and of passion,**  
**and the meaning of the ḥadīth: “Your greatest enemy is**  
**your nafs, enclosed between your two sides”<sup>612</sup>.**

- 1-772 The idol of your self (*nafs*) is the mother of all idols, because the material idol is only a snake, while the spiritual idol is a dragon.
- 1-773 The self is like iron and a flintstone, while the material idol is like the sparks: those sparks are extinguished by water.
- 1-774 But how should the stone and iron be appeased by water? How should a man, who has these two, be secure?
- 1-778 It is easy to break an idol, very easy; to regard the self as easy to subdue is foolishness, foolishness.
- 2-15 Adam took one step in sensual pleasure: separation from his high place in Paradise became a collar on the neck of his fleshly soul (*nafs*).
- 2-16 The angels fled from him as from a devil: how many tears did he shed for the sake of a single loaf of bread<sup>613</sup>!
- 1-3004 Sun and cloud obey the command of anyone in whose body the unbelieving self has died.
- 2-474 Beware! Do not wish your curish (fleshly) soul alive, for it has been the enemy of your soul for a long time.
- 2-475 Dust be on the head of the bones that prevents this cur from hunting the soul!
- 4-1916 You are like Pharaoh, who had left Moses alone and was taking off the heads of the people's babies;
- 4-1917 The enemy (Moses) was in the house of that blind-hearted man, while outside he was cutting the necks of the children.

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<sup>612</sup> *Aḥādīth-e Mathnawī* p. 41. The meaning of “between your two sides” is between man's two different aspects: his material or earthly aspect and his spiritual or heavenly aspect. It does not refer to the human body.

<sup>613</sup> I.e. the forbidden fruit.

- 4-1918      You too are bad to others outside, while you have become compliant to the grievous self (carnal soul, *nafs*) within.
- 4-1919      It is your enemy indeed, yet you are giving it candy, while outside you are accusing everyone.

### **Allegory. [2.4.2]**

- 2-776      A certain man killed his mother in anger, with blows of a dagger and also with blows of his fist.
- 2-777      Someone said to him, “Out of your evil nature you have not borne in mind what is due to motherhood.
- 2-778      Hey, tell me why you killed your mother. What did she do? Please, tell me, o foul villain<sup>614</sup>!”
- 2-779      He said, “She did a deed that is a disgrace to her; I killed her because the earth (her grave) covers her (hides her shame).”
- 2-780      The other said, “O honoured sir, kill the one who was her partner in guilt.” “Then,” he replied, “I should kill a man every day.
- 2-781      I killed her, I was saved from shedding the blood of a great number of people: it is better that I cut her throat than the throats of so many people.”
- 2-782      That ill-natured mother, whose wickedness is everywhere, is your fleshly soul.
- 2-783      Come, kill it, because that vile creature makes you attack an esteemed one at every moment.
- 2-784      Because of it, this beautiful world is narrow (distressful) to you, for its sake you are at war with God and man.
- 2-785      If you have killed the fleshly soul, you are delivered from the necessity of excusing yourself: nobody in the world remains your enemy.
- 4-1913      Do not then, no matter what grief comes over you, resentfully accuse anyone: turn towards yourself.
- 6-4856      Doubtlessly your wicked carnal soul is a voracious wolf: why do you lay the blame on every fellow companion?
- 6-4857      In its misguidedness, the corrupt, unbelieving, conscienceless carnal soul is like a cap which conceals the diseased condition of a hundred baldheads.

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<sup>614</sup> Literally: O man of evil disposition (Nich.).

- 6-4858 For this reason, o poor servant of God, I always say, “Do not remove the chain from the neck of the mongrel dog.”
- 6-4859 Even if this mongrel has become a teacher, it is still a mongrel: be one whose carnal soul is humbled, for it is evil-natured.
- 3-375 It is a triangular thorn: however you may place it, it will pierce, and how will you escape from its stab?
- 6-4862 The entire Qur’ān is a description of the depravity of carnal souls: look into the Holy Book! Where is your eye?
- 3-4066 Listen to this good advice in the Traditions of the Prophet – “Your worst enemy is between your two sides.”
- 3-4067 Do not listen to the pompous talk of the enemy<sup>615</sup>, but flee, for she<sup>616</sup> (the carnal soul, *nafs*) is obstinately arguing and quarrelling like Iblīs.
- 3-4068 For the sake of this world and for argument’s sake she has made the everlasting torment seem easy (of little meaning) to you.
- 3-4069 Is it any wonder then, if she makes death seem easy? By using her magic she does a hundred times more than this.
- 3-4071 It makes ugly things beautiful by means of cunning trickery; it makes beautiful things ugly by means of false opinion.
- 3-4072 The work of magic is this, that it breathes incantations and at every breath (moment) transforms realities.
- 3-4074 Such a magician is latent within you: truly, there is a concealed magic in temptation,
- 3-4075 But in the world in which these magic arts exist, there are magicians who defeat sorcery.
- 3-4076 In the plain where this fresh (virulent) poison grew, there has also grown the antidote, o son.
- 2-1063 Do not cling to the thievish fleshly soul and her work: whatever is not God’s work is nothing, nothing.

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<sup>615</sup> The fleshly soul (Nich.).

<sup>616</sup> The carnal soul or *nafs*’s gender is female. This does not mean that “woman” or “the feminine” are “evil”. It is related to the four earthly elements which constitute material man: water, fire, wind and earth. Just like the earth produces food, woman can give birth to children in this world, and likewise the *nafs* is able to produce a new *nafs* over and over again. That is why linguistically, the gender of *nafs* is female, since it can generate new life over and over again. Similarly, when Ḥaṣrat Mawlānā Rūmī speaks about “woman” in the *Mathnawī*, it is only meant metaphorically, as it refers to the productive quality of the *nafs*.” [Adapted from the speech delivered on the occasion of Mawlā ‘Alī’s Birthday by Ḥaṣrat Pīr Mawlānā Ṣafī ‘Alī Shāh II, Master of the Ne‘matollāhī Ṣafī ‘Alīshāhī Ṣūfī Order, in Rotterdam, the Netherlands, on 20<sup>th</sup> August 2005.]

- 2-1062      Whatever you sow, sow for His sake, since you are the Beloved's captive, o lover.
- 2-1850      Forsaking Jesus, you have nurtured the ass: inevitably, like the ass, you are outside of the veil.
- 2-1852      You listen to the moaning of the ass, and pity comes over you; then you do know that the ass commands you to behave like an ass<sup>617</sup>.
- 2-1853      Have pity on Jesus and have no pity on the ass: do not make the carnal nature lord over your intellect.
- 2-1855      For years you have been the ass's slave. It is enough, for the ass's slave is behind even the ass.
- 1-2951      Seize the neck of your ass (the flesh) and lead him towards the Way, towards the good keepers and knowers of the Way.
- 1-2952      Beware! Do not let your ass go, and do not remove your hand from him, because his love is for the place where green herbs abound.
- 1-2953      If you carelessly leave him free for one moment, he will go many miles in the direction of the herbage.
- 1-2954      The ass is an enemy to the Way, he is madly in love with fodder: oh, how many of his attendants has he brought to ruin!
- 1-2955      If you do not know the Way, do the opposite of whatever the ass desires: that, surely, will be the right Way.
- 2-2273      If you take advice from your fleshly soul, whatever she may say, do the opposite.
- 2-2278      I have seen wondrous things arising from the deceitfulness of the fleshly soul, for by her magic she takes away the faculties of discernment.
- 2-2280      If your life is prolonged<sup>618</sup> even for a hundred years, she will lay a new pretext before you every day.
- 2-2276      If you cannot cope with her and her stubborn rebelliousness, go to a friend and keep him company.

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<sup>617</sup> I.e. "foolish".

<sup>618</sup> Literally: grant a respite (Nich.).

**Being freed from the snares and pitfalls of the nafs  
by a wise Pīr who is a spiritual healer. [2.4.2]**

- 2-2528      Nothing will slay the fleshly soul except the shadow (protection) of the Pīr: grip tightly the skirt of that slayer of the flesh.
- 2-2529      When you grip it tightly, that is done with God's help: whatever strength comes into you is the effect of His drawing you towards Him.
- 3-2547      The intellect, chasing spiritual truth, prevails over your doggish fleshly soul only when the Shaykh is its helper.
- 3-2550      when he (the dragon) approaches the Saint who is close to God, his tongue, a hundred ells<sup>619</sup> long, is shortened.
- 3-2551      He has a hundred tongues, and each of them has a hundred languages: his deceit and cunning cannot be described.
- 3-2553      He deceives all in the city except the king: he cannot ambush the wise king.
- 3-2554      The fleshly soul has glorification of God on its tongue, and the Qur'ān in its right hand; but in its sleeve she has dagger and sword.
- 3-2555      Do not believe her Qur'ān and hypocritical ostentation, do not make yourself its confidant and comrade;
- 3-2556      For it will take you to the tank to perform the ritual ablution, and will throw you to its bottom.
- 3-2560      The common folk of the city do not know the deceit of the fleshly soul and of the body: she (the fleshly soul) is not subdued except by Divine inspiration in the heart.
- 3-2561      Everyone who is her congener becomes her friend, except, to be sure, the David who is your Shaykh;
- 3-2562      For he has been transformed, and anyone whom God has seated in the abode of the heart, he (that person) no longer remains the body's congener.
- 3-2563      All the other people are made ill by that which lies in ambush within them: it is certain that illness associates with illness.
- 3-2693      As you are sick from the *samūm*<sup>620</sup> of the carnal soul; whatever you may take, you are the instrument for infecting it with disease.
- 3-2698      Remove the disease: when the disease is eradicated, every old tale will become new to you.

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<sup>619</sup> Any of several historical units of measure corresponding roughly to the length of the arm.

<sup>620</sup> A very hot, poisonous wind, blowing from the desert.

- 3-2700 We are the spiritual physicians, the disciples of God: the Red Sea saw us *and parted*<sup>621</sup>.
- 3-2701 Those natural physicians are different, for they look into the heart by measuring a pulse.
- 3-2702 We look gladly into the heart without intermediary, for through clairvoyance we see from a high place.
- 3-2703 Those others are physicians of food and fruit: by them the animal soul is made strong.
- 3-2704 We are physicians of deeds and words: the ray of the light of Divine Majesty is our inspirer.
- 3-2707 To those other physicians a sample of urine is evidence, whereas this evidence of ours is the inspiration of the Almighty.
- 3-2708 We do not desire payment from anyone: our payment comes from a Holy Place.
- 3-2709 Listen, come here for the incurable disease! We, one by one, are a medicine for those who are spiritually ill.”
- 3-2732 Become devoted to these physicians with all your soul, that you may be filled with musk and ambergris<sup>622</sup>.

### **The nafs and Satan are in fact one and the same<sup>623</sup>. [2.4.2]**

- 3-4053 The fleshly soul and the Devil have both essentially always been the same person; but they have manifested themselves in two forms,
- 3-4054 Like the angel and the intellect, which were really one, but became two forms for the sake of God’s wise purposes.
- 3-4055 You have such an enemy as this in your inner being: she is the preventer of the intellect, and the adversary of the spirit and of religion.
- 3-4056 At one moment she dashes forward like the lizard; then again in flight she darts away into a hole.
- 3-4057 Just now she has many holes in the human heart, and from every hole she is sticking out her head.

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<sup>621</sup> Qur’ān 26:63.

<sup>622</sup> A waxy greyish substance formed in the intestines of sperm whales and found floating at sea or washed ashore. It is added to perfumes.

<sup>623</sup> Qur’ān 35:6.

- 3-4063 If the fleshly soul had not ambushed you from within, how would the highwaymen have any power to lay a hand upon you?
- 3-4065 Because of that inner accomplice you have become thievish and depraved, so that the way is open for the external accomplice to subjugate you.
- 5-668 I will continue to flee as long as blood runs through my veins<sup>624</sup>, but how should it be easy to escape from one's self?
- 5-669 He who runs away from another finds rest when he has been separated from him (the pursuer).
- 5-670 I, who am my own adversary, it is I who am running away from myself: getting up and leaving is my never-ending task.
- 5-671 He whose adversary is his own shadow is not safe either in India or Khutan<sup>625</sup>.
- 3-2848 That enemy who took vengeance on your father<sup>626</sup> and dragged him from 'Illiyyīn<sup>627</sup> to prison.
- 3-2847 O children of the Viceregent<sup>628</sup> (Adam), act justly: act with prudence for the sake of the Day of Meeting (Judgement).
- 3-2850 How often did he deceitfully seize him in combat, so that he may wrestle with him, and throw him to the ground in disgrace<sup>629</sup>!
- 3-2851 This is what he has done to that heroic champion (Adam): do not regard him with contempt, o you others!
- 3-2856 Beware of his malice, o clay-worshippers: strike his head with the sword of *lāḥawl*<sup>630</sup>!
- 3-2857 For he sees you from ambush, so that you do not see him. Be careful!
- 3-2858 The fowler scatters grain incessantly: the grain is visible, but the deceit is hidden.
- 3-2859 Wherever you see the grain, beware, in order that the trap does not restrain your wings and feathers,

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<sup>624</sup> Or "my nerves are vibrating" (Nich.).

<sup>625</sup> *Khutan* or *Khotan* is a city of Eastern Turkeṣtān, now also known as Xinjiang, an autonomous region in northwestern China.

<sup>626</sup> I.e. Adam.

<sup>627</sup> "The register of the righteous" or a place in the seventh heaven where that record is kept (Nich.).

<sup>628</sup> The word used in the Persian text is *khalīfā*, which in Arabic means "deputy" or "steward".

<sup>629</sup> Literally "pale-faced" (Nich.).

<sup>630</sup> See Book 2, p. 232, note 2 (Nich.). This refers to the saying of the Prophet Muḥammad *Lā ḥawla wa lā quwwata illā bi'llāh*, "There is neither might nor any power except with God" – meaning that only God has the power to bring about transformation.

- 3-2860 Because the bird that relinquishes the grain (bait), eats grain from the spacious field of Reality, which is without trickery.
- 3-2861 With that grain it is satisfied, and escapes the trap: no trap restrains its wings and feathers.
- 6-378 This world is a trap, and desire is its bait: flee from the traps, quickly turn your face towards God.
- 6-4658 Pull the snare to pieces, burn the bait, open new doors in this bodily house!
- 1-374 O God, there are hundreds of thousands of snares and baits, and we are as greedy foodless birds.
- 1-375 From moment to moment we are caught in a new snare, even though we become, each one, like a falcon or a Sīmurgh<sup>631</sup>.
- 1-376 You deliver us at every moment, and once more we are heading for a snare, o You who are without need!
- 1-377 We are putting corn in this barn, and then we are losing the corn that has been amassed.
- 1-378 Why, after all, do not we consider with intelligent mind that this damage to the corn comes from the deceitfulness of the mouse?
- 1-379 Since the mouse has made a hole in our barn, and our barn has been ravaged by its artful trickery.
- 1-380 O soul, in the first place ward off the mischief of the mouse, and then show zeal in amassing the corn.
- 1-382 If there is no thievish mouse in our barn, where is the corn of forty years' works of devotion?
- 1-387 Even if there are thousands of snares at our feet, when You are with us there is no trouble.

### **The trap of lustful passion (shahwa). [2.4.2]**

- 5-942 The accursed Iblīs said to (God), the Dispenser of justice, “I want a powerful snare for this prey.”
- 5-952 God brought and placed wine and harp in front of him: he smiled faintly at it and was half-pleased.

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<sup>631</sup> Sīmurgh: mythical, phoenix-like bird in ancient Iranian mythology. The renowned 12<sup>th</sup> century Sūfī Master and author Ḥaẓrat Shaykh Farīdu'd-Dīn 'Aṭṭār used it in his famous book “The Conference of the Birds”. In this book the *Sīmurgh* symbolically represents man's Divine potential, which can be realized by completing the mystical journey.



- 5-943 God showed to him gold and silver and herds of horses, saying, “By means of these you can seduce mankind.”
- 5-945 Then God offered to that fallen one gold and jewels from His plentiful mines,
- 5-946 Saying, “Take this other snare, o accursed one.” He replied, “Give more than this, o most excellent Helper.”
- 5-947 Then He gave him oily and sweet foods, costly sherbets and many silken robes.
- 5-948 Iblīs said, “O Lord, I want more help than this, to bind them with a *cord of palm-fibre*<sup>632</sup>.”
- 5-949 In order that Your intoxicated devotees, who are fierce and courageous, may bravely break free from those bonds,
- 5-950 And that by this snare and these cords of sensuality Your holy man may be separated from the unmanly (cowards),
- 5-951 I want another snare, o Sovereign of the throne – a mighty cunning<sup>633</sup> snare that abases men.”
- 5-953 Iblīs sent a message to the eternal Predestination of perdition<sup>634</sup>, saying, “Raise dust from the bottom of the sea of temptation<sup>635</sup>.”
- 5-956 When God showed Iblīs the beauty of women that dominated the reason and self-restraint of men,
- 5-957 Then he joyfully snapped his fingers and began to dance, crying, “Give me these as quickly as possible: I have obtained what I desired.”
- 5-958 When he saw those languishing eyes which make the reason and understanding restless,
- 5-959 And the loveliness of that enchanting cheek<sup>636</sup> on which this heart of man burns like rue-seed on the fire<sup>637</sup>.
- 5-1365 Lustful desire makes the heart deaf and blind, so that an ass seems like Joseph, fire like light.
- 5-1369 Sensual desire makes foul things seem fair: among the afflictions of the Way there is none like lust, none worse.

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<sup>632</sup> Qur’ān 111:5.

<sup>633</sup> Literally “inventive in deceit” (Nich.).

<sup>634</sup> I.e. to the Divine Name *al-Muḍill* (“He Who leads astray whom He chooses.” – see Qur’ān 39:37)

<sup>635</sup> I.e. “Make a dry path through the sea, so that the wicked may be tempted and destroyed like Pharaoh and his people” (Nich.).

<sup>636</sup> Literally “the cheek of those heart-captivating ones” (Nich.).

<sup>637</sup> Rue-seed is burnt as a charm against the evil eye (Nich.).

- 5-1370 It has disgraced a hundred thousand good names, it has stupefied a hundred thousand clever men.
- 5-1371 Since it made an ass seem like Joseph of Egypt, how will that denier of the Truth<sup>638</sup> cause a Joseph to appear?
- 5-1372 Its spell made dung seem honey to you: will it, in truth, make the time of battle seem honey<sup>639</sup> to you?
- 4-3612 Know that every sensual desire is like wine and *bang*<sup>640</sup>: it is a veil over the intelligence, and so the rational man is stupefied.
- 4-3613 The intoxication of the intelligence is not caused by wine alone: any sensual thing closes the spiritual eye and ear.
- 4-3614 Iblīs was far removed from wine-drinking: he was drunk with pride and unbelief.
- 4-3615 The drunken man is he who sees that which is not: what is really a piece of copper or iron appears to be gold to him.
- 3-820 Know, again, that this intoxication of lust in the earthly world does not mean much compared to the intoxication of the angels.
- 3-821 The intoxication of the angel makes the intoxication of the human being insignificant: how should the angel show any inclination to lust?
- 3-822 Until you have drunk sweet water, briny water is sweet, sweet as the light in the eye.
- 5-2446 As long as your fleshly soul is intoxicated with the dessert and date-wine of sensuality, know that your spirit has not seen the cluster of grapes belonging to the Unseen World.
- 5-2448 Since the bird<sup>641</sup> is frequenting a briny water, it has not seen (found) help for its thirst in the sweet water.
- 1-3815 In God's sight the slave of lust is worse than servants and slaves brought into servitude.

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<sup>638</sup> In Nicholson's translation it says "Jew" instead of "denier of the Truth". But this is wrong. The word which Ḥaṣrat Mawlānā Rūmī uses in the *Mathnawī* is *jahūd*, which is often confused with the word *Yahūd* ("Jews"). *Jahūd* is best translated as "denier(s) of the Truth". *Jahūd* is similar in meaning to the Arabic word *kāfir*, another word that is very often misinterpreted and misunderstood. It is usually rendered as "infidel", "unbeliever", or "pagan". Yet in Arabic, *kāfir* literally means "one who covers the Truth", i.e. "someone who is spiritually ignorant and blind". As such, a *kāfir* can belong to any religious group or faith, including Islām. The same applies to the term *jahūd*.

<sup>639</sup> I.e. the battle of passion with passion (Nich.).

<sup>640</sup> An intoxicating potion made from hemp leaves.

<sup>641</sup> I.e. the worldly man (Nich.).

- 1-3817 The slave of lust has no means of release at all except through the grace of God and His special favour.
- 1-3818 He has fallen into a pit that has no bottom, and that is his own sin: it is not Divine compulsion and injustice.
- 1-3819 He has thrown himself into such a pit that I find no rope capable of reaching its bottom.
- 3-2133 The people are distracted by these idols (objects of desire), and afterwards they repent of the lust which they have indulged.
- 3-2134 Because he (such a one) has indulged his lust with a phantom and has remained further away from the Reality than he was before.
- 3-2135 Your desire for a phantom is like a wing, so that by means of that wing he (the seeker) may ascend to the Reality.
- 3-2136 When you have indulged a lust, your wings drop off; you become lame, and that phantom flees from you.
- 3-2137 Preserve the wing and do not indulge such lust, in order that the wing of desire may carry you to Paradise.
- 3-4064 Because of the exacting accomplice, who is Lust, the heart is captive to greed, cupidity and disaster.
- 5-1373 Lust arises from eating and drinking: diminish your food, or marry and in this way flee from wickedness.
- 5-1375 Marriage, then, is like the exorcism, “There is neither might nor any power except with God,”<sup>642</sup> in order that the Devil may not lead you into temptation.
- 5-1376 Since you are fond of eating and drinking, ask a woman in marriage at once; otherwise the cat comes and carries off the fat sheep’s tail<sup>643</sup>.
- 4-818 This world, which is associated with lust, is an idol-temple: it is a nest (abode) for the Prophets and the infidels alike.
- 4-814 My deepest nature<sup>644</sup> is a breaker of idols, like Abraham, the Friend of God, and all the Prophets.
- 4-815 “O slave, if I enter the idol-temple, the idol, not I, will prostrate itself in adoration.”

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<sup>642</sup> This refers to the saying of the Prophet Muḥammad *Lā ḥawla wa lā quwwata illā bi’Llāh*, “There is neither might nor any power except with God” – meaning that only God has the power to bring about transformation.

<sup>643</sup> I.e. the Devil takes away your righteousness (Nich.).

<sup>644</sup> Literally “the root of my root” (Nich.).

- 4-816 Both Aḥmad (Muḥammad) and Bū Jahl<sup>645</sup> went into the idol-temple; but there is a great difference between the one going into it and the other.
- 4-817 This one (Muḥammad) enters, the idols lay down their heads before him; that one (Bū Jahl) enters and lays down his head before the idols, like the peoples of old.
- 4-819 But lust is the slave of holy men: gold does not burn in the fire, because it is sterling coin from the mine.
- 4-820 The infidels are alloy, while the holy men are as pure gold: both these classes of persons are within this crucible.
- 4-821 When the alloy came into the crucible, it became black at once; when the gold came in, its goldenness was made manifest.
- 4-1656 Although the fleshly soul (*nafs*) is shrewd and astute, her *qibla* (goal) is this world, therefore regard her as dead.
- 4-1654 The fleshly soul is not bound by any covenant; for that reason she ought to be killed: she is base, and base is the spot to which her desires are directed.
- 2-3472 Kill the snake of lust at the beginning; otherwise, you see, your snake becomes a dragon.

### Story. [2.4.2]

- 3-977 A snake-catcher went to the mountains to catch a snake by means of incantations.
- 3-996 There he saw a huge dead dragon, the sight of which filled his heart with fear.
- 3-1003 The snake-catcher took up that snake and came to Baghdad in order to cause astonishment.
- 3-1005 Saying, “I have brought a dead dragon: I have suffered agonies<sup>646</sup> while I was hunting it.”
- 3-1006 He thought it was dead, but it was living, and he did not see it very well<sup>647</sup>.
- 3-1007 It was frozen by frosts and snow: it was alive, but it looked as if it were dead.
- 3-1008 The world is frozen: its name is *jamād* (inanimate): *jāmid* means “frozen”, o master.

<sup>645</sup> *Bū Jahl* is an abbreviated form of *Abū Jahl*: ‘Amr ibn Hishām, an uncle of the Prophet, was a Meccan leader who ferociously opposed Islām. He disliked Ḥaḥrat Muḥammad and publicly humiliated him. He had once been known as *Abū ‘l-Ḥakam* – “Father of Wisdom”, but because of his hostility towards Ḥaḥrat Muḥammad, he became known as *Abū Jahl* – “Father of Ignorance”.

<sup>646</sup> Literally “I have consumed livers” (Nich.).

<sup>647</sup> I.e. his view was superficial (Nich.).

- 3-1009 Wait until the sun of the Resurrection shall become visible, that you may see the movement of the world's body.
- 3-1010 When the rod of Moses became a snake in this world, the intellect received information about motionless (inanimate) beings.
- 3-1011 Since God made a man out of your piece of earth, you should recognize the real nature of the entire sum of the particles of earth:
- 3-1012 That from this standpoint they are dead and from that standpoint they are living; that they are silent here and speaking over there.
- 3-1013 When He sends them towards us from that place, the rod becomes a dragon to us.
- 3-1014 The mountains too make a song like that of David, and the substance of iron is as wax in the hand.
- 3-1015 The wind becomes a bearer for Solomon, the sea becomes capable of understanding words regarding Moses<sup>648</sup>.
- 3-1016 The moon becomes able to see the sign in obedience to Aḥmad (Muḥammad)<sup>649</sup>, the fire becomes wild-roses for Abraham<sup>650</sup>.
- 3-1017 The earth swallows Qārūn (Korah)<sup>651</sup> like a snake; the Moaning Pillar<sup>652</sup> becomes righteous.
- 3-1018 The stone greets Aḥmad (Muḥammad); the mountain sends a message to Yaḥyā (John the Baptist)<sup>653</sup>.
- 3-1019 They all say, "We have hearing and sight and are happy, even though with you, the uninitiated, we are mute."
- 3-1020 Since you are inclined to inanimateness (worldliness), how shall you become familiar with the spiritual life of inanimate beings?
- 3-1021 Go from inanimateness into the world of spirits; listen to the loud noise of the particles of the world.
- 3-1022 The glorification of God by inanimate beings will become clear to you; the doubts suggested by false interpretations will not carry you away from the truth.

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<sup>648</sup> Qur'ān 26, 63-66.

<sup>649</sup> Alluding to the splitting of the moon, a miracle said to have been performed by Muhammad (Nich.).

<sup>650</sup> The fire into which Abraham was cast by order of Nimrod (Nich.).

<sup>651</sup> Qārūn (Biblical: Korah): leader of a rebellion against Moses in the desert.

<sup>652</sup> *Mathnawī*, Book I, verses 2113 ff. (Nich.). The "Moaning Pillar" or "Yearning Pillar" (*ustun-e ḥannāna*) was a wooden pillar in the time of the Prophet Muḥammad. He used to lean against it while preaching.

<sup>653</sup> When Ḥaẓrat Yaḥyā was fleeing from the Jews, a mountain offered to conceal him in its interior (Nich.).

- 3-1023 Since your soul does not have the lamps needed for seeing, you have made interpretations,
- 3-1024 Saying, “How should visible glorification of God be the intended meaning? The claim to see that glorification is a misguided fantasy.
- 3-1029 This discourse has no end. The snake-catcher brought the snake along with a hundred pains.
- 3-1031 The man set up a show on the bank of the Tigris, and a hubbub arose in the city of Baghdad,
- 3-1032 “A snake-catcher has brought a dragon: he has captured a marvellous rare beast.”
- 3-1033 Hundreds of thousands of simpletons<sup>654</sup> gathered, who had become a prey to him as he to it in his folly.
- 3-1039 And saw that the dragon, which had been frozen by intense cold, was underneath a hundred kinds of coarse woollen cloths and blankets.
- 3-1040 He had bound it with thick ropes: that careful keeper had taken great precaution for it.
- 3-1041 During the delay of expectation and coming together, the sun of ‘Irāq shone upon the snake.
- 3-1042 The sun of the hot country warmed it; the cold humours went out of its limbs.
- 3-1043 It had been dead, and it came back to life: from astonishment at feeling the sun’s heat the dragon began to uncoil itself.
- 3-1044 By the stirring of the dead serpent the people’s amazement was multiplied a hundred thousand times.
- 3-1045 With amazement they started shrieking and all together fled from its movement.
- 3-1046 It set about bursting the bonds, and at that loud outcry of the people the bonds on every side went crack, crack.
- 3-1047 It burst the bonds and glided out from beneath – a hideous dragon roaring like a lion.
- 3-1048 Many people were killed in the turmoil: a hundred heaps were made of those who fell and were killed.

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<sup>654</sup> Literally “those whose beards are immature” (Nich.).

- 3-1049 The snake-catcher became paralyzed with fear on the spot, crying, “What have I brought from the mountains and the desert?”
- 3-1050 The blind sheep awakened the wolf: unknowingly it went towards its ‘Azrā‘īl (the Angel of death).
- 3-1051 The dragon made one mouthful of that dolt: blood-drinking (bloodshed) is easy for Ḥajjāj<sup>655</sup>.
- 3-1053 The dragon is your sensual soul: how is it dead? It is only frozen by grief and lack of means.
- 3-1057 Keep the dragon in the snow of separation (from its desires); beware, do not carry it into the sun of ‘Irāq.
- 3-1058 As long as that dragon of yours remains frozen, you are at ease; you are a mouthful for it, when it gains release.
- 3-1059 Mortify it and become safe from spiritual death; have no mercy: it is not one of them that deserve favours.
- 3-1064 Do you hope, without using violence, to keep it bound in tranquillity and faithfulness?
- 3-1065 How should this wish be fulfilled for any worthless one? It requires a Moses to kill the dragon.
- 3-2504 Kill your fleshly soul and make the world spiritually alive; she (your fleshly soul) has killed her master: make her your slave.
- 3-2548 The fleshly soul is a dragon with hundredfold strength and cunning: the face of the Shaykh is the emerald that plucks out her eye<sup>656</sup>.
- 6-3492 In a blind man’s way, grasp *the rope of Allāh*<sup>657</sup>: do not cling to anything but the Divine commandments and prohibitions.
- 6-3493 What is *the rope of Allāh*? To renounce desire, for this desire was a roaring wind of destruction to the people of ‘Ād<sup>658</sup>.

### **The nafs as the major source of vice and reprehensible qualities. [2.4.2]**

- 1-1079 As long as desire is fresh, faith is not fresh, for it is this desire that closes that gate to you.

<sup>655</sup> Al-Ḥajjāj ibnYūsuf (661-714 CE): an Arabic army commander, who was known for his cruelty.

<sup>656</sup> The emerald was supposed to have the power of blinding snakes (Nich.).

<sup>657</sup> Qur’ān 3:103.

<sup>658</sup> Qur’ān 11:50-60 and 69:6. The ‘Ād were an ancient Arab tribe. According to the Qur’ān, the Prophet Hūd was sent to them. They did not heed his warnings and so God destroyed the town of the ‘Ād with a furious wind.

- 1-1101 The wind in men is vanity and desire; when you have abandoned vanity, then it is time for the message from Him (*Hū*, God).
- 6-3494 It is because of desire that people sit in jail, it is because of desire that the trapped bird's wings are tied.
- 6-3495 It is because of desire that the fish is cooked in a hot pan, it is because of desire that shame (bashfulness) is gone from the modest.
- 6-3496 The anger of the police magistrate is a fiery spark from desire; crucifixion and the awfulness of the gallows are the consequence of desire.
- 6-3497 You have seen the magistrate who carries out the punishment of bodies on the earth: now, see also the magistrate who executes judgements against the soul.
- 6-3501 When, out of fear of God, you have relinquished desire, the cup from God's *Tasnīm*<sup>659</sup> will arrive.
- 2-2743 Whoever has rid his nature of vain desire has thereby made his spiritual eye familiar with the secret.
- 3-1831 But when piety<sup>660</sup> has chained the hands of desire, God loosens the hands of the intellect.
- 6-3651 Oh, let not vain desire waylay you, or you will fall into everlasting misery.
- 1-3694 Do you not know who your enemies are? Those made of fire<sup>661</sup> are enemies to the existence of those made of earth<sup>662</sup>.
- 1-3697 To continue<sup>663</sup>, this fire is the fire of lust, which contains the root of sin and error.
- 1-3698 The external fire may be quenched by some water, but the fire of lust brings you to Hell.
- 1-3699 The fire of lust is not appeased with water, because it has the insatiable nature of Hell in inflicting torment.
- 1-3701 What kills this fire? The Light of God. Make the light of Abraham your teacher.
- 1-3702 That this body of yours, which resembles wood fagots, may be delivered from the fire of the Nimrod-like<sup>664</sup> flesh (*nafs*).

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<sup>659</sup> A fountain in Paradise (Nich.). See Qur'ān 83:27.

<sup>660</sup> "Piety": in the Persian text the word *taqwā* is used. *Taqwā* is often translated as "piety" or "fear of God", but in reality, it denotes an inner attitude of devotion to God and seeking the pleasure of God, not out of fear, nor out of desire for the rewards of Paradise, but merely out of selfless love.

<sup>661</sup> The devils (Nich.).

<sup>662</sup> Mankind (Nich.).

<sup>663</sup> Literally "after that" (Nich.).



- 1-3703 Fiery lust is not diminished by indulging it: it is inevitably diminished by not giving in to it.
- 1-3704 As long as you keep laying fagots on a fire, how will the fire be extinguished by a carrier of fagots?
- 1-3705 When you stop putting fagots on it, the fire dies out, because fear<sup>665</sup> of God carries, as it were, water to the fire.
- 4-2475 God has given to you the polishing instrument, Reason, in order that by using it the leaf (surface) of the heart may be made shining.
- 4-2476 You, o prayerless man, have put the polisher (Reason) in bonds and have freed the two hands of sensuality.
- 4-2477 If bonds are put on sensuality, the hand of the polisher (Reason) will be untied.
- 4-2480 So have you done until now: now do it not. You have made the water turbid: do not make it more so.
- 4-2481 Do not stir it up (soil it): let this water become clear, and then see the moon and stars circling in it.
- 4-2482 For man is like the water of the river: when it becomes turbid, you cannot see its bottom.
- 4-2484 The spirit of a man resembles air: when it (air) is mixed with dust, it veils the sky,
- 4-2485 And prevents the eye from seeing the sun; but when its dust is gone, it becomes pure and undefiled.

### **The Third Rivulet [2.4.3]**

#### **Shunning the company of ill-natured persons and the benefits of solitude and seclusion.**

- 1-645 Turn your face to the wall, sit alone, and choose to be secluded even from your own existence.
- 1-1299 Everyone who is wise chose the bottom of the well to live in, because spiritual joys can only be attained in solitude.

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<sup>664</sup> Nimrod (*Namrūd* in Arabic): according to biblical sources, Nimrod was the sixth son of Kush, grand-son of Ham and great-grandson of Noah, and the founder of Babylon and Nineveh. He stands for evil, while Abraham stands for righteousness.

<sup>665</sup> “Fear of God”: in the Persian text the word *taqwā* is used. *Taqwā* is often translated as “piety” or “fear of God”, but in reality, it denotes an inner attitude of devotion to God and seeking the pleasure of God, not out of fear, nor out of desire for the rewards of Paradise, but merely out of selfless love.

- 1-1300 The darkness of the well is better than the dark shades of the world: he who followed at the heels of the world never saved his head.
- 1-1849 The body is like a cage: the body became a thorn to the soul during the deceptive chattering of those who come in and go out.
- 2-25 One must seclude one's self from strangers, but not from the friend: the fur-coat is for winter, not for spring.
- 2-251 Most people are man-eaters: put no trust in their saying, "Peace be upon you".
- 2-252 The hearts of all are the Devil's house: do not accept (listen to) the idle chatter of devilish men.
- 5-2634 I swear by the Truth of the Holy Essence of Allāh, the Self-Sufficient (*aṣ-Ṣamad*)<sup>666</sup>, that a malicious snake is better than a malicious friend.
- 5-2635 The malicious snake takes a soul (life) from the man it has bitten; the malicious friend leads him into the everlasting Fire.
- 5-2635 The evil snake takes a soul (life) from the man it has bitten; the evil friend leads him into the everlasting Fire.

### **Story. [2.4.2]**

- 3-2570 Jesus, son of Mary, fled to a mountain: you would say that a lion wished to shed his blood.
- 3-2571 A certain man ran after him and said, "Are you all right? No one is chasing you: why do you flee, like a bird?"
- 3-2572 But he (Jesus) still kept running with haste, so quickly that because of his haste he did not answer him.
- 3-2573 He kept following Jesus for the distance of one or two fields, and then invoked Jesus with the utmost earnestness,
- 3-2574 Saying, "For the sake of pleasing God, stop one moment, for I have a problem concerning your flight.
- 3-2575 From whom are you fleeing in this direction, o noble one? No lion or enemy is chasing you, and there is no fear or danger."
- 3-2576 He said, "I am fleeing from the fool. Go away! I am saving myself. Do not hinder me!"

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<sup>666</sup> The divine attribute *aṣ-Ṣamad* is hard to translate in one word. It means, amongst other things, "the Self-Sufficient", "the Absolute", "He Who is without needs but upon Whom all depends", "He Who is Eternal without change"...

- 3-2577 “Why,” said he, “are you not the Messiah by whom the blind and the deaf are restored to sight and hearing?”
- 3-2578 He said, “Yes.” The other said, “Are you not the King in whom abide the spells of the Unseen World? –
- 3-2579 So that when you chant those spells over a dead man, he springs up, rejoicing like a lion that has caught its prey.”
- 3-2580 He said, “Yes, I am he.” The other said, “Do you not make living birds out of clay, o beautiful one<sup>667</sup>?”
- 3-2581 He said, “Yes.” The other said, “Then, o pure Spirit, you do whatever you wish: whom do you fear?”
- 3-2583 Jesus said, “By the holy Essence of God, the Maker of the body and the Creator of the soul in eternity;
- 3-2585 I swear that the spells and the Most Great Name<sup>668</sup> which I pronounced over the deaf and the blind had good effects.
- 3-2587 I pronounced them over the corpse: it came to life. I pronounced them over something that was not<sup>669</sup>: it became something<sup>670</sup>.
- 3-2588 I pronounced them lovingly over the heart of the fool hundreds of thousands of times, and it was no cure for his folly.
- 3-2589 He became hard as rock and did not change from that disposition: he became sand from which no produce grows.”
- 3-2590 The other said, “What is the reason why the Name of God was effective there<sup>671</sup>, while it had no good effect here<sup>672</sup>?”
- 3-2591 That physical illness is disease too, and so is this folly: why did the Name of God not become a cure for this, since it cured that?”
- 3-2592 Jesus said, “The disease of folly is the result of the wrath of God; physical disease and blindness are not the result of Divine wrath: they are a means of testing.”
- 3-2593 Testing is a disease that brings Divine mercy with it; folly is a disease that brings Divine rejection.

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<sup>667</sup> Qur’ān 3:49.

<sup>668</sup> “The Greatest Name” or *Ism-e A‘zam*: the hidden Name of God, which permeates all creation, and which is ceaselessly uttered by every creature and even by the smallest particles in creation.

<sup>669</sup> *Lā shay*, literally “no thing”.

<sup>670</sup> *Shay*, literally “a thing”.

<sup>671</sup> I.e. “in those cases which have been mentioned” (Nich.).

<sup>672</sup> I.e. “in the case of the fool” (Nich.).

- 3-2595 Flee from the foolish, since even Jesus fled from them: how much blood has been shed by companionship with fools!
- 3-2596 The air steals away (absorbs) water little by little: so too does the fool steal away religion from you.
- 3-2597 He steals away your heat and gives you cold, like one who puts a stone under your behind.
- 3-2598 The flight of Jesus was not caused by fear, for he is safe from the mischief done by fools: it was for the purpose of teaching others.
- 5-716 Treasures are deposited in a ruin so that they may escape the greed of those who dwell in places of cultivation.
- 5-717 If you cannot not tear out your feathers, go, adopt a life of solitude, that you may not be entirely squandered (consumed) by that one and this one;
- 5-718 For you are both the morsel of food and the eater of the morsel: you are the devourer and the devoured. Understand this, o dear soul!

### **Allegory. [2.4.2]**

- 5-719 A little bird was hunting a worm: a cat found its opportunity and seized it.
- 5-720 The bird was a devourer and a thing devoured, and being engrossed in its hunting was unaware of another hunter.
- 5-721 Although the thief is engaged in hunting valuable objects, yet the prefect of police is on his track with the thief's enemies
- 5-723 He is so absorbed in his passion for gain that he pays no attention to his seekers and pursuers.
- 5-747 Who said, 'A man is with him whom he loves': the heart is not separated from its object of desire.
- 5-749 O you who consider the weak as weak (and at your mercy), know this, that there is a hand above your hand, o young man.
- 5-750 You are weak yourself and you consider others as weak. Oh, wonderful! You are both the prey and the hunter in its pursuit.
- 5-402 Most of your life is gone and the day is late; yet you are still pursuing people.
- 5-403 Go on catching one and releasing another from the trap and pursuing another, like mean people;
- 5-404 Then again release this one and seek the other! Here's a game of careless children!

- 5-405 Night comes, and nothing is caught in your trap: the trap is nothing but a headache (affliction) and shackle to you.
- 5-406 Therefore in reality you were catching yourself with the trap, for you are imprisoned and deprived of your desire.
- 5-408 Pursuit of the common people is like hunting pig: the fatigue is infinite, and it is unlawful to eat a morsel of it.
- 5-409 That which is worth pursuing is Love alone; but how should He be contained in anyone's trap?
- 5-410 Yet perhaps you may come and be made His prey, you may cast the trap aside, and go into His trap.
- 5-411 Love is saying very softly into my ear, "To be a prey is better than to be a hunter.
- 5-412 Make yourself My fool and be a deluded one: renounce the high position of the sun, become a speck of dust!
- 5-413 Become a dweller at My door and be homeless: do not pretend to be a candle, be a moth,
- 5-414 That you may see (taste) the savour of Life and contemplate the sovereignty hidden in servitude."
- 1-1868 As much as you can, become a slave, do not be a monarch. Suffer blows: become like the ball, do not be the bat.

### **The meaning of aloneness. [2.4.2]**

- 6-443 Since I shall be left alone at the last, it is not proper for me to become friendly with every man and woman.
- 6-444 I shall turn my face to the grave at the last: it is better that I should make friends with the One (God).
- 6-447 We shall turn our faces to the earth from which we have arisen: why then have we fixed our hearts on creatures that lack all constancy (permanence)?
- 6-449 During many years the body of Man had companionship and intimacy with the elements.
- 6-450 His spirit, indeed, is from the world of souls and intelligences, but the spirit has abandoned its origins.
- 6-451 From the pure souls and intelligences a letter comes to the spirit, saying, 'O faithless one,

- 6-452            You have found some miserable five-day friends and have turned your face away from your former friends.’
- 6-453            Although the children are happy in their play, yet at nightfall they are dragged off and taken home.
- 6-1420           Keep company with Him who created human nature and nurtured the nature of the Prophets.
- 6-1424           If an oaf shows sympathy towards you, yet in the end he will inflict blows upon you because of his oafishness.
- 6-1431           Do not listen to the friendliness of the sweet-spoken ignorant man, for it is like old poison.
- 6-2225           Know every Saint to be a Noah and captain of the Ark; know that companionship with these worldly people is the Flood.
- 6-2226           Do not flee from lions and fierce dragons, but beware of friends and kinsmen.
- 6-2227           They waste your time when you are face to face with them, and your recollections of them devour the time of your absence from them.
- 6-2950           Oh, alas, alas for the sorrow caused by a mean friend! O sirs, seek a good companion.
- 6-2951           Reason bitterly complains of the vicious carnal soul: they are as disharmonious as an ugly nose on a beautiful face.
- 6-2471           If a wolf catches a Saint, it is better than that the Saint should be caught by the wicked carnal soul,
- 6-2472           Because, even though the wolf uses great violence, yet it does not have the same knowledge, craft and cunning.

### **The Fourth Rivulet [2.4.4]**

#### **Avoiding slander and the benefit of keeping silence.**

**Ḥadīths: “Keeping silence leads to liberation (of the nafs)”<sup>673</sup> and: “The sign of a virtuous person is that he abandons useless things”<sup>674</sup>.**

- 3-2725           Patience and silence attract the Divine mercy, while seeking this sign is a sign of insight.
- 3-2726           Accept the Divine command, “*Be silent*,”<sup>675</sup> so that the reward of “*Be silent*” may come to your soul from the Beloved.

<sup>673</sup> *Aḥādīth-e Mathnawī* p. 588.

<sup>674</sup> Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā’ ‘Ulūm ad-Dīn*, Vol. 3, p. 147.

- 3-2728      Sell your superfluous speech, buy sacrifice of life, sacrifice of position and sacrifice of gold.
- 4-860        Except, maybe, the bird that was without spirit or wings, or was dumb and deaf, like a fish, from the beginning.
- 4-861        No, I have spoken wrongly, for if the deaf one lays his head before the inspiration of the Divine Majesty, it will give him the power of hearing.
- 5-1175       These words, while they stay in the breast, are an earning consisting of spiritual kernels: in silence the spiritual kernel grows a hundredfold<sup>676</sup>.
- 5-1176       When the word comes on the tongue, the kernel is spent: refrain from spending, in order that the magnificent kernel may remain with you.
- 5-1177       The man who speaks little has strong thoughts: when the husk, namely speech, becomes excessive, the kernel goes.
- 5-1178       When the peel is too thick, the kernel is thin: the peel becomes thin when the kernel becomes perfect and magnificent.
- 5-2149       How long have you been uttering poetry and prose and proclaiming mysteries! O master, try the experiment and, for one day, be dumb!
- 5-3190       O you who really are more silent than Night<sup>677</sup>, how long will you search someone who will buy your words?
- 5-3191       Your hearers nod their heads in approval in your presence: you waste your time in trying to attract them with passionate desire.
- 1-1623       When the suckling baby is born, at first it keeps silence for a while, it is all ear.
- 1-1624       For a while it must close its lips and refrain from speech, until it learns to speak.
- 1-1626       He who is deaf by nature, he who has no ear at the beginning, is dumb: how should he burst into speech?
- 1-1627       Since, in order to speak, one must first hear, come to speech by the way of hearing.
- 1-1628       Enter the houses by their doors<sup>678</sup>, and seek the ends in their causes.

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<sup>675</sup> Qur'ān 7:204.

<sup>676</sup> Qur'ān 73:20.

<sup>677</sup> I.e. what you say has no spiritual value (Nich.).

<sup>678</sup> Qur'ān 2:189.

**Man's attitude is hidden under his tongue<sup>679</sup>  
i.e. your words reveal your personality. [2.4.4]**

- 2-845      Man is concealed under his tongue: this tongue is the curtain over the gate of the soul.
- 2-846      When a gust of wind has rolled up the curtain, the secret of the interior of the house is disclosed to us,
- 2-847      And we see whether in that house there are pearls or grains of wheat, a treasure of gold or whether all is snakes and scorpions;
- 2-848      Or whether a treasure is there and a serpent beside it, since a treasure of gold is not without someone to keep watch.
- 1-1097     Know that these words are as the skin, and the meaning is as the kernel; these words are as the form, and the meaning is like the spirit.
- 1-1098     The skin hides the defect of the bad kernel; it also jealously hides the secrets of the good kernel.
- 1-1593     This tongue is like stone and is also fire-like, and that which springs from the tongue is like fire.
- 1-1596     Unjust are those who close their eyes and set a whole world ablaze through vain words.
- 1-1597     A single word lays a whole world waste, turns dead foxes into lions.
- 1-1658     Know that a word which suddenly shot from the tongue is like an arrow shot from the bow.
- 1-1659     O son, that arrow does not turn back on its way: you must dam a torrent at the source.
- 1-1699     O tongue, you are a great damage to me, but since you are speaking, what should I say to you?
- 1-1700     O tongue, you are both the fire and the stack: how long will you throw this fire upon this stack?
- 1-1702     O tongue, you are a treasure without end. O tongue, you are also a disease without remedy.

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<sup>679</sup> *Aḥādīth-e Mathnawī* p. 180.



**Keeping silence is not required for those whose  
tongue is a source of Divine knowledge<sup>680</sup>. [2.4.4]**

“O Messenger, announce that which has been revealed  
to you from your Lord” – Qur’ān 5:67

- 1-1626 He who is deaf by nature, he who has no ear at the beginning, is dumb: how should he burst into speech?
- 6-1597 If you utter two true words, o such-and-such, the dark (false) speech will begin to flow in their trail.
- 6-1599 Beware, do not begin to speak those right words, for words quickly draw other words after them.
- 6-1600 Once you have opened your mouth, they are not in your control: the dark (falsehood) flows on the heels of the pure (truth).
- 6-1601 Only he who is preserved from error in the way of Divine inspiration may open his mouth: it is permissible, since he is entirely pure.
- 6-1602 For a Prophet does not speak from out of his own desire<sup>681</sup>: how should his desire issue from him who is preserved by God<sup>682</sup>?
- 5-3205 How long will you set up a show on the public road? Your feet are sore<sup>683</sup> (from travel), and no desire of yours has been fulfilled.
- 6-2638 Flow of speech from the heart is a sign of intimate friendship; obstruction of speech arises from lack of intimacy.
- 6-2639 The heart that has seen the sweetheart, how should it remain bitter? When a nightingale has seen the rose, how should it remain silent?

**The Fifth Rivulet [2.4.5]  
Moderation in sleeping, the secret of the  
night and vigilance of the true lovers.**

- 1-3691 In the evil-coloured night there is much good: the Water of Life is the mate of darkness.
- 1-3690 In the dark night seek that shining Day: put in front (follow) the Reason that consumes darkness.
- 6-2307 ‘O Gracious One who deposits the treasure of Mercy and all the delicious experiences in the lonesome (fearful) Night!

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<sup>680</sup> Qur’ān 5:67 and 18:27.

<sup>681</sup> Qur’ān 53:3.

<sup>682</sup> Literally “an innocent of God” (*ma ‘šūm-e Khudā*).

<sup>683</sup> Literally “you have wounded your foot” (Nich.).

- 6-2310 Moses believed that which he saw to be fire, but in reality it was light: we regarded Night as a Negro<sup>684</sup>, but in reality it was a houri<sup>685</sup>.
- 6-621 Abandon sleep tonight, o father: for one night roam the quarter of the sleepless.
- 6-622 See these lovers who have become frenzied and have been killed, like moths, through their union with the Beloved.
- 1-3172 God, exalted is He, will say to the people at the gathering for Judgement, “Where is your gift for the Day of Resurrection?”
- 1-3173 *You have come to Us and alone* without provision, just in the same appearance as *We created you*<sup>686</sup>.
- 1-3174 Listen, what have you brought as an offering – a gift on homecoming for the Day when you rise from the dead?
- 1-3175 Or did you not have any hope of returning? Did the promise of meeting Me today seem vain to you?”
- 1-3176 Do you, o reader, disbelieve in the promise of being His guest? Then you will get only dust and ashes from the kitchen of His bounty.
- 1-3177 And if you are not disbelieving, how do you set foot in the Court of the Friend with such empty hands?
- 1-3178 Abstain a little from sleep and food: bring the gift for your meeting with Him.
- 1-3179 Become one who sleeps little *like those who were slumbering but a small part of the night*; in the hours of dawn be of *those who were asking forgiveness of God*<sup>687</sup>.
- 4-1456 Listen, *stand up in prayer during the night*<sup>688</sup>, for you are a candle, o prince: at night a candle stands up and burns.
- 1-3692 How is it possible to lift up the head from slumber, while you are sowing a hundred seeds of laziness?
- 1-3693 Dead (heavy) slumber and dead (unlawful) food became friends<sup>689</sup>: the merchant fell asleep and the night-thief got to work.

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<sup>684</sup> The word “Negro” (*zangī*) may sound offensive to our modern ears; however, we should bear in mind that in the cultural context in which Ḥaẓrat Mawlānā Rūmī lived and worked such expressions were common. What he actually means by “negro” – merely as a figure of speech – is “a dark and frightful thing”.

<sup>685</sup> Hourī (from the Arabic *ḥūr*): usually rendered as “voluptuous, alluring maidens of Paradise”, but its true meaning is “pure companions, most beautiful of eye” – neither explicitly male nor female (see Qur’ān 44:54).

<sup>686</sup> Qur’ān 6:94.

<sup>687</sup> Qur’ān 51:17-18.

<sup>688</sup> Qur’ān 73:2.

<sup>689</sup> I.e. spiritual lethargy is closely allied with sin (Nich.).

- 4-2237 The hare's sleep (heedlessness) with the dog in pursuit is a sin: how indeed is sleep dwelling in the eye of him who has fear?
- 3-1193 When the shepherd has gone to sleep, the wolf becomes unafraid: when he sleeps, his effort ceases.
- 3-1194 But the animal whose shepherd is God – how can the wolf have any hope or find a way to get there?
- 4-3236 You are sleepy, but sleep on the Way<sup>690</sup> anyhow: for God's sake, for God's sake, sleep on the Way of God.
- 4-3237 That perhaps a Traveller on the Way may attach himself to you and tear you from the fantasies of slumber.
- 4-3239 Whether the sleeper's thought is double or triple, still it is an error on error on error.
- 4-3235 The far sight and boasting of the sleeper is of no avail; it is nothing but a fantasy: keep far away from it.

### **Wakefulness of the heart. [2.4.5]**

- 1-409 Whoever is awake to the material world is all the more asleep to the spiritual world; his wakefulness is worse than his sleep.
- 1-410 When our soul is not awake to God, wakefulness is like closing our doors to Divine influences.
- 3-1222 Oh, there are many whose eyes are awake and whose hearts are asleep: what, in truth, should be seen by the eyes of creatures of water and clay?
- 3-1114 With us, you need to be a waking sleeper, so that in the state of wakefulness you may dream dreams.
- 2-39 Sleep, when it is accompanied by wisdom, is spiritual wakefulness; but alas for the awake man who consorts with the ignorant!
- 3-1223 But he who keeps his heart awake – even though the eyes<sup>691</sup> of his head may sleep, his heart will open a hundred eyes.
- 3-1224 If you are not one of those who have an illumined heart<sup>692</sup>, be awake (keep vigil), be a seeker of the illumined heart, and always struggle with your fleshly soul.

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<sup>690</sup> I.e. “do not abandon the Way and sleep elsewhere.” (Nich.).

<sup>691</sup> In the first part of the verse the word used for “eye” is the Persian word *chashm*, which usually refers to the physical eye, whereas in the second part the Arabic word *baṣar* is used; *baṣar* implies the notions of “vision” and “inner understanding”. It is derived from the same root as the Divine name *al-Baṣīr*, “the All-Seeing”.

<sup>692</sup> *Ahl-e Dil*, literally “People of the Heart”, is an expression that is often used as a synonym for “Sūfī Masters”.

- 3-1225 But if your heart has been awakened, sleep sound: your spiritual eye is not absent from the seven heavens and the six directions.
- 2-3549 The Prophet said, “My eyes sleep, but my heart is not asleep to the Lord of created beings<sup>693</sup>.”
- 3-1226 The Prophet said, “My eye slumbers, but when does my heart slumber in drowsiness?”
- 2-3547 At times my state resembles sleep: a misguided person may think it is sleep.
- 2-3548 Know that my eyes are asleep, but my heart is awake: know that my seemingly inactive form is really in action.
- 2-3550 Your eyes are awake, and your heart is sunk in slumber; my eyes are asleep, but my heart is in contemplation of the opening of the door of Divine Grace.
- 2-3551 My heart has five senses (other than the physical): both the external and the spiritual worlds are the stage for the senses of the heart.
- 3-1227 The King is awake: what does it matter if the guardsman is asleep? May my soul be sacrificed to the sleepers whose hearts are seeing!
- 3-1221 For pleasure’s sake he had closed the two eyes of his head, but all Heaven and Earth were under his gaze.
- 3-1228 The description of the heart’s wakefulness, o spiritual man, would not be contained in thousands of rhymed couplets<sup>694</sup>.

### **The Sixth Rivulet [2.4.6]**

#### **Moderation in eating and the secret of spiritual food.**

- 1-1639 If you make this bag empty of bread, you will make it full of glorious jewels.
- 1-1640 Wean the baby, your soul, from the Devil’s milk, and after that make it keep company with the Angel.
- 1-1641 While you are dark, weary, depressed and gloomy, know that you are sucking from the same breast as the accursed Devil.
- 3-3748 If you cut off your body from the Devil’s milk, you will enjoy much delight
- 1-2871 The feather of your thought has become mud-stained and heavy because you are a clay-eater: clay has become as bread to you.

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<sup>693</sup> *Aḥādīth-e Mathnawī* p. 240.

<sup>694</sup> This refers to the poetical genre *mathnawī*, which is a poem consisting of an indefinite number of rhyming couplets, with the rhyme scheme aa/bb/cc etc.

- 1-2872 Bread and meat are originally clay: eat little of it, that you may not remain in the earth, like clay.
- 1-2873 When you become hungry, you become a dog: you become fierce, ill-tempered and ill-natured.
- 1-2874 When you have eaten your fill, you have become a carcass: you have become devoid of understanding and without feet (inert), like a wall.
- 1-2875 So at one time you are a carcass and at another time a dog: how will you run well in the road of the lions (follow the Saints)?
- 1-2876 Know that your only means of hunting is the dog (the animal soul): throw bones to the dog only now and then,
- 1-2877 Because when the dog has eaten its fill, it becomes rebellious: how should it run to the cheerful chase and hunt?
- 4-3621 The carnal soul is a follower of Pharaoh: beware, do not satisfy it, so that it might not remember its ancient infidelity.
- 6-4726 An empty belly never bragged of Divinity, for it has no fagots to feed its fire.
- 6-4727 An empty belly is the Devil's prison, because anxiety for bread prevents him from plotting and deceiving.
- 6-4728 Know that a belly full of food is the Devil's market, where the Devil's merchants shout loudly.
- 4-3624 Even if it weeps and wails most piteously, it will never become a true believer. Be careful!
- 4-3622 Without the glowing heat of the fire (of mortification) the carnal soul will never become good: listen, do not beat the iron until it has become like live coals.
- 4-3623 Without hunger the body makes no movement towards God: it is cold iron that you are beating. Know this for sure!
- 5-150 The Devil frightens you, saying, "Listen and listen again! You will be sorry for this and will be saddened.
- 5-151 If you waste away your body as a result of these idle whims, you will become very sorry and anxious.
- 5-152 Eat this, it is hot and good for your health<sup>695</sup>; and drink that for your benefit and as a cure.

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<sup>695</sup> Literally "a remedy for the temperament" (Nich.).

- 5-153 With the intention of acting on the principle that since your body is your riding-animal<sup>696</sup>, giving it that to which it is accustomed is best for it.
- 5-154 Beware, do not change your habit, otherwise mischief will ensue and a hundred diseases will be produced in brain and heart.
- 5-155 Such menaces does the vile Devil use, and he chants a hundred spells over the people.
- 5-156 He makes himself out to be a Galen<sup>697</sup> for skill in medicine, in order to deceive your diseased soul.
- 5-165 The Devil has a hundred spells of cunning and deceit, which would entrap<sup>698</sup> anyone, even if he is strong and wily as a great serpent.
- 5-166 The Devil will bind him, even if he is swift and elusive as running water; he will make a mock of him, even if he is the most learned man of the time.
- 5-167 Therefore befriend your intelligence with the intelligence of a friend: recite the words *their affairs are carried on by taking counsel with each other*<sup>699</sup>, and practise it.
- 5-293 O you whose belly is greedy, turn away from the world like this: the only method is change of food.
- 5-294 O you whose heart is sick, turn to the remedy: the whole diet consists of changing your disposition.
- 5-2829 If there were no hunger, a hundred other afflictions would raise their heads in you as a result of indigestion.
- 5-2831 The affliction of hunger is purer than all other afflictions, especially since in hunger there are a hundred benefits and merits.
- 5-2830 Truly the affliction of hunger is better than those diseases, both in respect of its subtlety and lightness and its effect on devotional work.
- 5-2832 Indeed hunger is the king of medicines: listen, cherish hunger in your heart<sup>700</sup>, do not regard it with such contempt.
- 5-2833 Everything unsweet is made sweet by hunger: without hunger all sweet things are unacceptable.

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<sup>696</sup> And therefore (as the Prophet said) to be treated kindly (Nich.).

<sup>697</sup> Galen (*Jālīnūs* in Arabic and Persian): the famous Greek physician (ca.129/131-ca. 200/216 CE), whose medical system remained dominant throughout the East and Europe for more than 1500 years.

<sup>698</sup> Literally “put into the basket”, a metaphor derived from the custom of snake-catchers (Nich.).

<sup>699</sup> Qur’ān 42:38.

<sup>700</sup> Literally “put hunger in your soul” (Nich.).

- 5-2838 Hunger is bestowed as a gift on God's elect alone, that through hunger they may become mighty lions.
- 5-2839 How should hunger be bestowed on every beggarly oaf? Since the fodder is not scarce they set it before him.
- 5-2844 You are consumed with grief because of your craving for bread: you have closed the eye of self-denial and trust in God.
- 5-2845 You are not one of the honoured favourites of God that you should be kept without (deprived of) walnuts and raisins<sup>701</sup>.
- 5-2846 Hunger is the daily bread of the souls of God's elect: how could it be in the reach of a beggarly fool like you?
- 5-2847 Be at ease: you are not one of those, so that you should remain without bread in this kitchen.
- 5-2848 There are always bowls on bowls and loaves on loaves for these vulgar belly-gods.
- 6-4704 When the World squeezes our throats tightly<sup>702</sup>, how do we wish that our gullets and mouths had eaten only earth!
- 6-4705 This mouth, indeed, has always been an eater of earth; but an earth that has been coloured.
- 6-4706 This roast-meat, this wine and this sugar are merely coloured and painted earth, o son.
- 6-4707 When you have eaten or drunk them and they have become flesh and skin, He gives them the colour of flesh, but they are still the earth of His street.
- 6-4708 It is from a bit of earth that He stitches the body of clay, and then makes the whole fabric a bit of earth again.
- 4-1601 O you who have seen rich foods, get up and see their residue in the latrine.
- 4-1602 Say to the filth, "Where is that beauty of yours – the fine taste and sweet scent which you had in the dish?"
- 4-1603 It replies, "That beauty was the bait: it was its trap: since you have fallen prey to it, the bait has become hidden."
- 6-4710 So you may know that all these colours and pictures are entirely a mask and deceit and that they are borrowed (ephemeral).

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<sup>701</sup> I.e. "you are as an ignorant child, and childish things are suitable for you." (Nich.).

<sup>702</sup> I.e. when death is drawing near (Nich.).

- 6-4711 The only lasting colour is *the dye of Allāh*<sup>703</sup>: know that all the rest are tied on superficially like a bell.
- 4-2554 This cloak, your body, is always being torn, and you are patching it by this eating and drinking of yours.
- 4-2553 What is patch sewing? The drinking of water and the eating of bread: you are applying these patches to the heavy cloak.
- 4-2550 You are sewing patches in the shop, while under this shop of yours two treasure mines are buried.
- 4-2555 O you who are the descendant of the fortunate King<sup>704</sup>, come to yourself, be ashamed of this patch sewing.

**Food that is consumed with a good intention is transformed into inner light and purity. [2.4.6]**

- 2-3568 When morsels of food become (changed into) pearls within you, do not hold back: eat as much as you can.”
- 2-3571 When pure lawful food turns into impurity in your stomach, put a lock on your gullet and hide the key.
- 2-3572 But anyone in whom morsels of food become the light of spiritual glory, let him eat whatever he wants, it is lawful to him.
- 1-1642 The mouthful that made light and perfection increase is obtained from lawful earnings.
- 1-1643 The oil that comes and extinguishes our lamp – when it extinguishes a lamp, call it water.
- 1-1644 From the lawful morsel knowledge and wisdom are born; from the lawful morsel come love and tenderness.
- 1-1645 When you see envy and trickery arise from a morsel, and when ignorance and heedlessness are born of it, know that it is unlawful.
- 1-1646 Will you sow wheat and will it produce barley? Have you seen a mare give birth to an ass’s foal?
- 1-1647 The morsel is seed, and thoughts are its fruit; the morsel is the sea, and thoughts are its pearls.
- 1-1648 From the lawful morsel in the mouth is born the inclination to serve God and the resolution to go to the other world.

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<sup>703</sup> Qur’ān 2:138.

<sup>704</sup> Adam, whom God created in His own image (Nich.).



**Paying much attention to the body while forgetting  
that the soul can cause disharmony in life. [2.4.6]**

- 5-144 When the body is in leaf, because of that by day and night the branch, which is the soul, is shedding its leaves and is in autumn.
- 5-145 The leafage (flourishing state) of the body is the leaflessness (unprovidedness) of the soul. Be quick! You must let the body dwindle and the soul increase.
- 5-146 *Lend to God*<sup>705</sup>, give a loan of this leafage of the body, that in exchange a garden may grow in your heart.
- 5-147 Give a loan, diminish the food of your body, that the vision of what the eye has not seen may appear.
- 2-265 As long as you are giving your body greasy and sweet food, you will not see fatness in your spiritual essence.
- 2-266 If the body is set in the midst of musk, yet on the day of death its stench will become manifest.
- 2-267 Do not put musk on your body, rub it on your heart. What is musk? The holy name of the Glorious God.
- 4-1955 Man has no food but the light: the soul does not obtain nourishment from anything else.
- 4-1956 Little by little cut yourself off from these material foods – for these are the nourishment of an ass, not that of a free (noble) man –
- 4-1957 So that you may become capable of absorbing the original nourishment and may eat usually the delicate morsels of the light.
- 4-1958 It is from the reflection of the light that the bread has become bread; it is from the overflowing grace of the soul that the soul has become soul.
- 4-1959 When you eat once of the light-food, you will pour earth over the material bread and oven.
- 2-1078 What profit is there in sugar for the ox and the ass? Every soul has a different food.
- 2-1079 But if that food is not according to its real nature, then admonition is the proper correction for it.
- 2-1080 As in the case of one who from disease has become fond of eating clay – so much so that he may suppose clay to be indeed his natural food.

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<sup>705</sup> Qur'ān 73:20.

- 2-1081 In reality he has forgotten his original food and has taken<sup>706</sup> to the food of disease.
- 5-2476 Break your belly's habit of eating straw and barley: begin to eat the sweet basil and the rose.
- 5-2475 Accustom your belly to the sweet basil and the rose, that you may gain the wisdom and spiritual food of the Prophets
- 5-2477 The bodily belly leads to the straw barn; the spiritual belly leads to the sweet basil.
- 5-2478 Whoever feeds on straw and barley becomes a sacrifice (*qurbān*); whoever feeds on the Light of God becomes the *Qur'ān*.
- 2-1083 Man's original food is the Light of God: animal food is improper for him.
- 2-1084 But, as a result of disease, his mind has fallen into the delusion that he should eat of this water and clay day and night.
- 2-1085 He is pale-faced, weak-footed, faint-hearted – where is the food of *by the Heaven full of starry paths*<sup>707</sup>?
- 2-1086 That is the food of the chosen ones of the Divine sovereignty; it is eaten without throat or instrument.
- 2-1088 God said concerning the martyrs, *they are alive with their Lord receiving sustenance*<sup>708</sup>. For that food there was neither mouth nor dish.
- 3-42 When the soul's throat is emptied of thinking of the body, then its allotted sustenance becomes Majestical.
- 3-1285 You, like seeds, are a slave to the milk of earth: seek to wean yourself with spiritual food<sup>709</sup>.
- 3-47 And, even though she blocks its way to her nipple, may the way to a hundred gardens of delight open up for it?
- 3-48 Because the nipple has become a barrier to that feeble baby, separating it from thousands of pleasures, dishes of food and loaves of bread.
- 3-49 Our life, then, depends on weaning. Strive to wean yourself little by little. This discourse is now complete.

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<sup>706</sup> Literally “has turned his face” (Nich.).

<sup>707</sup> Qur'ān 51:7.

<sup>708</sup> Qur'ān 3:169.

<sup>709</sup> Literally “the food of hearts” (Nich.).

- 3-1286 Drink the word of Wisdom, for it has become a hidden (veiled) Light, o you who are unable to receive the unveiled Light,
- 3-1287 So that you may become able, o Soul, to receive the Light, and that you may behold without veils that which now is hidden,
- 3-1288 And traverse the sky like a star; no, that you may journey without limitations, without any sky.
- 3-3745 O slave to your lusts, you have understood bread, not wisdom, what is meant in the words that God has spoken to you – *Eat of His sustenance*<sup>710</sup>.
- 3-3756 Since they were seeing profit in that toil, each one was snatching the load from the other.
- 3-3747 When you have closed this bodily mouth, another mouth is opened, which becomes an eater of the morsels of spiritual mysteries.
- 4-3609 Bodily eating and drinking is the obstacle to spiritual eating and drinking: the spirit is like a tradesman, while the body is like a highwayman.
- 4-3610 The candle of the tradesman only shines when the highwayman is consumed like firewood.

**The true sālīk does not feed his nafs and eats  
from the Divine table (mā'ida<sup>711</sup>). [2.4.6]**

- 5-3469 To be a seeker of God, and then indulge in pleasure and drinking? To drink the Devil's wine, and then be half-intelligent?
- 5-3489 Keep the enemy on the Way to God in abject submission: do not place a pulpit for the robber, but keep him on the gibbet.
- 5-3490 Consider the amputation of the robber's hand desirable: if you are unable to cut his hand off, bind it.
- 5-3491 Unless you bind his hand, he will bind yours; unless you break his leg, he will break yours.
- 5-3492 You give the enemy wine and sugar-cane – for what reason? Tell him to laugh venomously and eat earth.
- 5-3470 Even without wine your intelligence is so shabby that other intelligences must be added to yours.
- 5-3480 The ascetic said, "How, then, do you have the intelligence, how do you have the necessary understanding to drink wine, o enemy of knowledge?"

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<sup>710</sup> Qur'ān 67:15.

<sup>711</sup> Mā'ida: refers to *Sūratu'l-Mā'ida* ("The Table" or "The Table Spread"), the 5<sup>th</sup> Sūra of the Qur'ān.

- 5-3485 The wine for the lovers of God is their heart's blood: their eyes are fixed on the Way and on Destination.
- 5-3588 The Prophets abandoned<sup>712</sup> this delight because they were steeped in the Divine delight.
- 5-3589 Since their soul had experienced that delight, these delights seemed mere play to them
- 5-3590 When anyone has been united with a living object of adoration<sup>713</sup>, how should he embrace a dead one?
- 5-299 If Gabriel pays no attention to the carcass, yet how should he have less strength than the vulture?
- 5-295 O you who are kept in pawn to food, you will escape if you allow yourself to be weaned.
- 5-297 Feed on the Light, be like the eye, be in accord with the Angels, o best of mankind.
- 5-298 Like the Angel, make the glorification of God your food, that like the Angels you may be delivered from suffering.
- 3-6 The power of Gabriel did not come from the kitchen; it came from beholding the Creator of existence.
- 3-4 This lamp, the sun, which is bright – it is not made bright by means of wick, cotton and oil.
- 3-5 The vault of heaven, which is so enduring, is not supported by any tent-rope or pillar.
- 3-7 Likewise, know the power of the *Abdāl*<sup>714</sup> of God to be derived from God, not from foods and from trays of food.
- 3-8 Their bodies too have been moulded from the Light, so that they have transcended the Spirit and the Angel.
- 5-300 What a magnificent table is spread in the world! But it is quite hidden from the eyes of the vile.
- 5-2706 He eats Light, do not say he eats bread: he sows anemones even though he appears to feed on them.

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<sup>712</sup> Literally “went away from” (Nich.).

<sup>713</sup> Literally “a living idol”.

<sup>714</sup> The Perfect Saints (Nich.).

- 5-2707 Like the flame that consumes the oil wax in a candle, his eating and drinking increases the light for the whole.
- 5-2708 God has said, “*Do not be immoderate*<sup>715</sup>,” with regard to the eating of bread; He did not say, “Be satisfied,” with regard to the eating of Light.
- 2-3423 If the whole world is filled to the brim with blood, how should the servant of God drink anything but what is lawful (*ḥalāl*)?
- 5-301 Even if the world should become a delightful orchard, still the part of the mouse and the snake would consist of earth.

### **The Seventh Rivulet [2.4.7]**

#### **Refraining from an overluxurious way of life and willingness to endure the sorrows and pain of life lovingly and patiently.**

- 3-1854 God created hundreds of thousands of elixirs, but Man has not seen an elixir like patience.
- 3-1853 God has joined *ṣabr* (patience) with *ḥaqq* (the real and permanent): o reader, recite attentively the end of the Sūra *Wa 'l- 'Aṣr*<sup>716</sup>.
- 2-3145 To practise patience is the soul of your glorifications: have patience, for that is the true glorification.
- 2-3146 No glorification has such a high degree as patience; have patience: patience is the key to relief from pain.
- 6-1411 When you see anyone wearing fine clothes, know that he has gained them by patience and work.
- 6-1412 If you have seen anyone naked and destitute, that is a testimony of his lack of patience.
- 2-601 The Prophet said, “God has not given faith to anyone in whose nature there is no patience<sup>717</sup>.”
- 2-1276 You are Joseph full of beauty, and this world is as the pit, and the rope to pull you up is patience with submission to the command of God.
- 2-1277 O Joseph, the rope has come: put your two hands around it. Do not neglect the rope, for it is late.
- 2-1278 Praise be to God, that this rope has been dangled, and that grace and mercy have been blended together.

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<sup>715</sup> Qur’ān 7:31.

<sup>716</sup> Qur’ān 103:3: “Except the ones who have believed, and done deeds of righteousness, and enjoin each other to the Truth, and enjoin each other to patience.”

<sup>717</sup> *Aḥādīth-e Mathnawī* p. 174.

- 2-3149 What should you know of the sweet savour of patience, o you of brittle heart – especially, of patience for the sake of that Beauty of Chigil<sup>718</sup>?

**The secret of patience. [2.4.7]**

- 2-3074 O you who cannot refrain yourself from this vile world, how can you refrain yourself from *Him who spread the earth out like a carpet*<sup>719</sup>?
- 2-3075 O you who cannot refrain yourself from delight and luxury, how can you refrain yourself from the Bountiful God?
- 2-3076 O you who cannot refrain yourself from anything pure or foul, how can you refrain yourself from Him who created this?

**For the sālik, practicing patience during adversity, suffering and difficulties breeds purity and maturity. [2.4.7]**

- 3-4008 I marvel at the seeker of purity who at the time of polishing shrinks from being handled roughly.
- 4-2469 Then, you are dark-bodied like iron, make a practice of polishing, polishing, polishing.
- 1-3459 Like polished iron, lose the rusty colour; become like a mirror without rust in your spiritual self-discipline.
- 4-2470 That your heart may become a mirror full of images, with a lovely silvery form reflected in it on every side.
- 4-2471 Although the iron was dark and devoid of light, polishing cleaned away the darkness from it.
- 4-2472 The iron saw (suffered) the polishing and made its face beautiful, so that images could be seen in it.
- 3-4011 That harshness is not directed against you, o son; no, against the evil qualities within you.
- 3-4012 The blows of the stick with which a man beats a rug are not inflicted on the rug, but on the dust in the rug.
- 3-4013 If that vindictive man lashes the horse, he does not direct the blows at the horse, but at its stumbling.
- 3-4014 So that it may be delivered from the vice of stumbling and may move well: you imprison must in the vat in order that it may become wine.

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<sup>718</sup> An ancient Turkic tribe known for the beauty of its members. Here, it symbolizes the Divine Beloved.

<sup>719</sup> “And We have spread the earth out like a carpet, and how well have We spread it out!” – Qur’ān 51:48.

- 3-4017 If your mother says to you, “May you die!” she wishes the death of your evil nature and the death of wrongdoing.
- 2-2963 God Most High lays heat, cold, grief and pain on our body, o brave man<sup>720</sup>
- 2-2964 Fear, hunger, damage to wealth and body – all in order that the soul’s coin might be seen and used<sup>721</sup>.
- 2-2261 Pain is a treasure, for there are mercies in it: the kernel becomes fresh when you scrape off the peel.
- 3-2344 Just as the delicious savour of the cry *Am I not your Lord?*<sup>722</sup> is in the heart of every true believer until the Resurrection,
- 3-2345 So that they do not rebel against tribulation or shrink from obeying the commands and prohibitions of God.
- 1-1777 His unsweetness is sweet in my soul: may my soul be sacrificed to the Beloved who grieves my heart!
- 1-1779 I make the dust of sorrow a salve for my eye, that the two seas of my eyes may be filled with pearls.
- 6-4913 And make patience a ladder to climb upwards<sup>723</sup>: patience is the key to success.

### **Patience leads to sincerity. [2.4.7]**

- 2-3147 Patience is like the bridge *Şirāt*<sup>724</sup>, with Paradise on the other side: with every beautiful boy there is an ugly tutor.
- 2-3148 As long as you flee from the tutor, there is no meeting with the boy, because the handsome boy does not part from the tutor.
- 6-1408 The patience shown by the moon to the dark night keeps it illumined: the patience shown by the rose to the thorn keeps it fragrant.
- 6-1407 Yet the bad companion<sup>725</sup> is good for you because of the patience which you must show in overcoming its desires; for the exercise of patience expands the heart with spiritual peace.
- 6-1410 The patience shown by all the Prophets to the unbelievers made them elect of God and lords of the planetary conjunction<sup>726</sup>.

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<sup>720</sup> Literally “lion-man” (Nich.).

<sup>721</sup> Qur’ān 2:155.

<sup>722</sup> Qur’ān 7:172.

<sup>723</sup> Literally “towards the ascending steps” (Nich.).

<sup>724</sup> *Aş-Şirāt*: “The path”. In Muslim tradition, the bridge to Paradise. *Aş-Şirāt* is narrower than a spider’s thread and sharper than a sword. Only the good pass swiftly over it. Also called Bridge of *Jahannam* or *Jahīm* (“Hell”).

<sup>725</sup> I.e. the body (Nich.).

- 6-2040 Patiently endure the punishments inflicted by the ignorant man: speak gently to him and dissemble towards him with the reason that is divinely inspired.
- 6-2041 Patience shown to the unworthy is the means of polishing (purifying) the worthy: wherever a heart exists, patience purifies it.
- 4-80 Whatever is loathed is a lover and friend when it becomes your guide towards your beloved.
- 1-1748 Although the object of your desire has a taste of sugar, is not absence of any object of desire in you the object of the Beloved's desire?

### **Suffering for love's sake brings ease and relief to the sālik. [2.4.7]**

- 1-1566 Oh, Your cruelty is better than felicity, and Your vengeance dearer than life.
- 1-1565 Oh, the evil You do in anger and quarrel is more delightful than music and the sound of the harp.
- 1-1569 I complain, and yet I fear that He may believe me and make His cruelty less out of kindness.
- 3-4499 Since to be vanquished is the mark of the true believers; yet in the true believer's defeat there is goodness.
- 4-343 O pearl, do not beat your head in grief for having been broken, for through being broken you will become radiant light.
- 4-342 But, even though the pearls are broken into small fragments, they become a lotion for the sore eye of the spirit.

### **Story. [2.4.7]**

- 4-81 A certain preacher, whenever he mounted the pulpit, would begin to pray for the highway robbers (who plunder and maltreat the righteous).
- 4-82 He would lift up his hand, crying, "O Lord, let mercy fall upon evil men, corrupters and insolent transgressors.
- 4-84 He would not pray for the pure; he would only pray for the wicked.
- 4-85 They said to him, "This is unheard of<sup>727</sup>: it is no generosity to pray for the unrighteous."
- 4-86 He replied, "I have seen (experienced) goodness from these people: for this reason I have chosen to pray for them.

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<sup>726</sup> I.e. mighty and victorious spiritual emperors (Nich.).

<sup>727</sup> Literally "this is unknown".



- 4-88 Whenever I turned my face towards this world, I suffered blows and beating from them,
- 4-89 And took refuge from the blows in the Other World: the wolves always brought me back into the right Way.
- 4-90 Since they were the means of my spiritual wellbeing, it is fitting for me to pray for them, o intelligent one.”

**For every pain comes a remedy and  
after darkness comes light. [2.4.7]**

- 6-4830 Life depends on dying to self and on suffering tribulation: the Water of Life<sup>728</sup> is in the Land of Darkness.
- 2-2264 Spring is latent in autumn, and autumn is fulfilled in Spring: do not flee from it.
- 2-2265 Be a fellow-traveller with grief, agree with desolation, seek long-lastingness in life in your death to self.
- 3-3752 The sugar of joy of the Hereafter is the fruit of the garden of sorrow in this life: the sensual joy is the wound and the spiritual sorrow is the ointment.
- 3-3753 When you see spiritual sorrow, embrace it with passionate love: look on Damascus from the top of Rubwa<sup>729</sup>.
- 3-3754 As the wise man sees the wine in the grape, the lover of God sees the thing (entity) in the non-existent.
- 3-3755 The day before yesterday the porters were quarrelling and crying, “Don’t you lift it, let me lift this load and carry it off like a lion!”
- 3-3756 Since they saw profit in that toil, each one snatched the load from the other.
- 3-3757 What comparison is there, between God’s reward and the reward given by that worthless creature? The former gives you a treasure as your reward, and the latter a silver coin.
- 3-4149 At every moment my new Fortune<sup>730</sup> whispers into my ear, ‘I will make you sorrowful, but do not be not sorrowful because of this.
- 3-4150 I will make you sorrowful and weeping, so that I may hide you from the eyes of the wicked.

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<sup>728</sup> Legend has it that Khizr discovered the Source of Life in the Darkness and became immortal after having drunk from it.

<sup>729</sup> A proverb meaning here: “View things from the standpoint of reality” (Nich.).

<sup>730</sup> I.e. the Beloved (Nich.).

- 3-4151 I will cause your temper to be soured with sorrows, in order that the evil eye may be averted from your face.
- 4-2340 In appearance I am ruining your work, but in reality I am turning a thorn into a rose-garden.

**Allegory:  
Life consists of oppositions.  
(Relativity) [2.4.7]**

- 4-2341 A certain man came and was cleaving the soil: a fool cried out and could not control himself.
- 4-2342 Saying, ‘Why are you ruining this soil and cleaving and scattering it?’
- 4-2343 ‘O fool,’ he said, ‘go away, do not interfere with me<sup>731</sup>: recognize the difference between cultivation and devastation.
- 4-2344 How should this soil become a rose-garden or cornfield until this soil becomes ugly and ruined?
- 4-2345 How should it become orchards, crops, leaves and fruit until its structured order has been turned upside down?’
- 4-2348 When a tailor cuts the cloth for a garment piece by piece, will anyone strike that expert tailor,
- 4-2349 Saying, ‘Why have you torn this choice satin? What can I do with a torn garment?’
- 4-2350 Whenever the builders repair an old building, do they not first ruin the old one?
- 4-2353 Until you crush wheat in the mill, how will our table be garnished with it?
- 4-102 The hide is afflicted by the medicine (tan-liquor), but it becomes sweet like Ṭā’if<sup>732</sup> leather.
- 4-104 Know that Man is an untanned hide, made hideous and gross by fluids.
- 4-105 Give him<sup>733</sup> bitter and harsh discipline and much rubbing (tribulation), that he may become pure, lovely and very strong;
- 4-106 But if you cannot mortify yourself, be content, o cunning one, if God gives you tribulation without choice on your part,

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<sup>731</sup> Literally “do not advance against me” (Nich.).

<sup>732</sup> Ṭā’if is a city in the Mecca province of present-day Saudi Arabia, which used to be known for its fine leather products.

<sup>733</sup> I.e. the carnal nature (Nich.)

- 4-107 For affliction sent by the Friend is the means of your purification: His knowledge is above your cunning.
- 4-108 The affliction becomes sweet to the sufferer when he sees happiness: the medicine becomes sweet to the sick man when he sees health.
- 4-109 He sees victory for himself in the very essence of checkmate; therefore he says, “Kill me, o trustworthy friends!”<sup>734</sup>
- 1-3163 If in that period the new moon is bent double, does she not in the end become the full moon in the sky?
- 1-3165 They threw a grain of wheat under earth, then from its earth they raised up ears of corn;
- 1-3166 Once more they crushed it with the mill: its value increased and it became soul-invigorating bread;
- 1-3167 Again they crushed the bread under their teeth: it became as that which *rejoices the sowers*<sup>735</sup> after the sowing.
- 3-3396 Therefore be a buyer of spiritual self-discipline with all your soul: you will save your soul when you have given up your body to the service of God.
- 5-1668 In His cruelty reside secret kindnesses: to surrender the soul for His sake increases the life of the soul.
- 3-3397 And if the self-discipline comes to you without free choice on your part, bow your head in resignation and give thanks, o successful one.
- 3-3398 Since God has given you that self-discipline, give thanks: you have not done it; He has drawn you to it by the command, “Be!”<sup>736</sup>

### Story. [2.4.7]

- 3-3399 That woman used to bear a son every year, but he never lived more than six months;
- 3-3400 He would die either in three or four months. The woman lamented, crying, “Alas, O God,
- 3-3401 For nine months I have the burden of pregnancy, and for three months I have joy: my happiness is more fleeting<sup>737</sup> than the rainbow.”
- 3-3403 In this way twenty children of hers went into the grave: a destroying fire fell swiftly upon their lives,

<sup>734</sup> The first hemistich of an Arabic verse by Ḥaẓrat Ḥusayn ibn Manṣūr al-Ḥallāj (Nich.).

<sup>735</sup> Qur’ān 48:29.

<sup>736</sup> Qur’ān 3:47.

<sup>737</sup> Literally “departing more quickly” (Nich.).

- 3-3404 Until, one night, she was shown the vision of an everlasting garden, verdant, delightful, and unlimited.
- 3-3405 I have called the Unconditioned Bounty a garden, since it is the source of all bounties and the assembly of all gardens;
- 3-3406 Otherwise, it is that which no eye has seen: how is it proper to speak of a garden? Yet the term “garden” may be applied to it: God has called the Light of the Unseen “a lamp”.
- 3-3407 It is not a comparison, it is a parable of it, which is used in order that he who is bewildered may get a scent of the reality.
- 3-3408 In short, the woman saw that Bounty and became intoxicated: at that revelation the weak creature fell into an ecstasy<sup>738</sup>.
- 3-3409 She saw her name written on a palace: she, who was a true believer, knew that the palace belonged to her.
- 3-3410 After that, they said to her, “This Bounty is for him who has risen up with constant sincerity<sup>739</sup> in self-devotion.
- 3-3411 You must have done much service to God, that you may partake of this meal<sup>740</sup>;
- 3-3412 Therefore, since you neglected to take refuge with God, God gave you those afflictions instead.”
- 3-3413 “O Lord,” she cried, “give me such afflictions for a hundred years and more! Shed my blood!”
- 2-3239 Sharp-sightedness becomes the means of awakening (stimulating) every sense, so that perception of the spiritual becomes familiar to all the senses.
- 2-2730 He said, “Nothing but the truth will save you: justice is calling you to speak the truth.
- 2-2735 The troubled heart is not comforted by lying words: water and oil kindle no light.
- 2-2736 Only in truthful speech is there comfort for the heart: truths are the bait that entraps the heart<sup>741</sup>.
- 2-2737 Sick? Surely, and ill-savoured<sup>742</sup> is the heart that cannot distinguish the taste of this and that.

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<sup>738</sup> Literally “outcry (consisting) of this complaint” (Nich.).

<sup>739</sup> Literally “has not risen up except sincerity” (Nich.).

<sup>740</sup> Literally “morning-meal” (Nich.).

<sup>741</sup> Literally “the grain of the snare of the heart” (Nich.).

- 2-2738 When the heart becomes whole (is healed) of pain and disease, it will recognize the flavour of falsehood and truth.

### **The pain of love. [2.4.7]**

- 3-4009 Love is like a lawsuit; to suffer harsh treatment is like evidence: when you have no evidence, the lawsuit is lost.
- 3-4010 Do not be aggrieved when this Judge demands your evidence: kiss the snake in order that you may gain the treasure.
- 3-510 Sorrow is a treasure, and your pain is as the mine, but how should this saying catch hold of (make an impression on) children?
- 2-2575 Those lovers that are within the house (and close to Him) are like moths to the candle of the face of the Friend.
- 2-1375 O blamer of lovers, may you be safe! O seeker of safety, you are infirm<sup>743</sup>.
- 2-1376 My soul is a furnace: it is happy with the fire: it is enough for the furnace that it is the fire's house.

### **The story of Ḥaẓrat Dhū'n-Nūn al-Miṣrī. [2.4.7]**

- 2-1386 It so happened to Dhū'n-Nūn the Egyptian<sup>744</sup> that a new agitation and madness was born within him.
- 2-1387 His agitation became so great that salt (bitterness) from it reached all hearts, up to above the heavenly sphere.
- 2-1389 The people could not endure his madness: his fire was carrying off their beards<sup>745</sup>.
- 2-1390 When that fire fell on the beards of the common folk, they bound him and put him in a prison.
- 2-1391 It is impossible to pull back this rein, even if the common folk are distressed by this way<sup>746</sup>.
- 2-1392 These spiritual kings have seen themselves in danger of their lives from the common folk; for this mass is blind, and the kings have no visible mark.

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<sup>742</sup> Literally "ill-mouthed" (Nich.).

<sup>743</sup> Literally "having weak stays or handles" (Nich.).

<sup>744</sup> *Al-Miṣrī* means "the Egyptian"; Ḥaẓrat Dhū'n-Nūn al-Miṣrī (796-859 CE) was one of the most prominent early Sūfī mystics. In his teachings, he placed great emphasis on the attainment of gnosis (*ma'rifa*).

<sup>745</sup> I.e. in his ecstasy he had no regard for their formal religion (Nich.).

<sup>746</sup> I.e. the way of mystical transport and ecstasy (Nich.).

- 2-1393 When authority is in the hands of debauched drunkards, a Dhū'n-Nūn is inevitably in prison.
- 2-1430 The friends went to the prison to inquire about the story of Dhū'n-Nūn, and expressed their opinion about it,
- 2-1431 Saying, "Perhaps he does this on purpose, or there is some deep wisdom in it: he is an exemplar<sup>747</sup> and a shining light<sup>748</sup> in this religion.
- 2-1432 Far, far be it from his sea-like (profound) intelligence that madness should drive him to foolishness!
- 2-1433 God forbid, in view of the perfection of his spiritual attainments, that the cloud of sickness should cover his moon!
- 2-1434 He has gone into the house and taken refuge from the wickedness of the common folk: he has become mad because of the infamy of the sane.
- 2-1435 Feeling the disgrace of the dull body-serving intellect, he has gone and become mad on purpose.
- 2-1447 When those persons arrived near him, he shouted, "Hey, who are you? Be careful!"
- 2-1448 They said respectfully, "We are some of your friends: we have come here in devotion to ask after you.
- 2-1449 How are you, o Sea of numerous intelligences? What defamation of your intelligence is this alleged madness?
- 2-1454 We are loving and true and with wounded (bleeding) hearts: in the two worlds we have fixed our hearts on you alone."
- 2-1456 He jumped up and let fly stones and sticks; the whole party fled from fear of blows.
- 2-1457 He laughed loudly and tossed his head in scorn. "Look," he said, "at the vain windstorm<sup>749</sup> of these friends!
- 2-1458 See the friends! Where is the sign of true friends? To true friends pain is as dear as life.
- 2-1459 How should a friend turn away from the pain inflicted by his friend? Pain is the kernel, and friendship is only as its husk.
- 2-1461 A friend is like gold, tribulation is like the fire: the pure gold is glad in the heart of fire."

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<sup>747</sup> Literally "one to whom all turn" (Nich.).

<sup>748</sup> Literally "a sign or evidence" (Nich.).

<sup>749</sup> Literally "the wind of the beard" (Nich.).

### **The story of Ḥaẓrat Luqmān<sup>750</sup>. [2.4.7]**

- 2-1462 Was it not the case that this happened to Luqmān, who was a pure (unselfish) slave, and was brisk in service day and night?
- 2-1463 His master preferred him to all others in the work of service and deemed him better than his own sons.
- 2-1510 Whatever food they brought to Luqmān's master, he would send someone to Luqmān after receiving it,
- 2-1511 That Luqmān might put his hand to (partake of) it, so that the master might eat Luqmān's leavings.
- 2-1512 He would eat his remnants and be enraptured<sup>751</sup>: any food that Luqmān did not taste, the master would throw away.
- 2-1514 They had brought a melon as a present. "Go," he said, "call my son here, Luqmān."
- 2-1515 When he cut it and gave him a slice, he ate it as if it were sugar and honey.
- 2-1516 Because of the pleasure with which he ate it, he gave him a second slice, and went on until he had been given seventeen slices.
- 2-1517 One slice remained. He said, "I will eat this myself, so that I may see what a sweet melon this is."
- 2-1519 As soon as the master ate it, its sourness kindled a fire which blistered his tongue and burnt his throat.
- 2-1520 He became beside himself for a while because of its sourness; after that he said to him, "O you who are soul and world,
- 2-1521 How did you make all this poison an antidote? How did you deem this cruelty to be kindness?
- 2-1523 Why did you not slyly present a request, saying, 'I have an excuse for refusing to eat: be patient for a while'."
- 2-1524 Luqmān said, "I have eaten so much from your munificent hand that I am bent double with shame.
- 2-1525 I was ashamed not to eat one bitter thing from your hand, o you who possess knowledge.

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<sup>750</sup> Ḥaẓrat Luqmān was a very wise and holy man who is mentioned in the Qur'ān, in the Sūra that is named after him (Sūra Luqmān, the 31<sup>st</sup> Sūra). He is believed to have been a Nubian.

<sup>751</sup> Literally "he would raise (a feeling of) enthusiasm" (Nich.).

- 2-1526 Since all parts of me have grown from your bounty and are plunged in your bait and snare –
- 2-1527 If I cry out and complain because of one bitter thing, may the dust of a hundred roads be on all parts of me!
- 2-1529 By love bitter things become sweet; by love pieces of copper become golden;
- 2-1530 By love dregs become clear; by love pains become healing;
- 2-1531 By love the dead is made living; by love the king is made a slave.
- 2-2574 Wherever the candle of tribulation has been lighted, hundreds of thousands of loving souls are burnt.
- 2-2575 Those lovers who are within the house (and close to Him) are as moths to the candle of the face of the Friend.

**The true lover also accepts the pain of love. [2.4.7]**

- 3-3349 These acts of spiritual self-discipline of dervishes – what are they for? The reason is that the tribulation imposed on the body is in effect the everlasting life of souls.
- 3-3350 Unless a mystic traveller gains the everlasting life of his spiritual self, how should he make his body a sick and perishing thing?
- 3-3351 How should he move his hand to acts of altruism and devotional work unless he sees the salvation of his soul in exchange for what is given by him?
- 3-3355 Until a child sees that the apple is there, it will not give the stinking onion up from its hand.
- 3-3356 All these market folk, for the sake of this worldly object, are seated on the benches in the shops in the hope of receiving compensation:
- 3-3357 They offer a hundred fine articles of merchandise, and within their hearts they are intent on compensations.
- 6-1638 Whatever blow may come to you from Heaven, always expect to receive a gift of honour after it.
- 6-1640 The whole world is not worth more than a gnat's wing; but for one slap there is an infinite reward.



## The pain of love is followed by healing and liberation. [2.4.7]

- 3-4466 By their failures to achieve success the lovers are made aware of their Lord<sup>752</sup>.
- 3-4467 Unsuccessfulness is the guide to Paradise; listen, o good-natured man nature, to the tradition, “Paradise is surrounded by hardships<sup>753</sup>”.
- 4-92 God says, “After all, grief and pain have made you imploring humbly and righteous.
- 3-4152 Are you not really a hunter and seeker of Me? No, you are My servant, who prostrates himself before My command.
- 3-4153 You are thinking of devices with which you might reach Me: both in being separated from Me and in seeking Me you are helpless.
- 3-4154 Your anguish is seeking a means to reach Me: yesterday evening I heard your heavy sighs.
- 3-4155 I am even able to give you access to and show you the way of passage without this waiting,
- 3-4156 That you may be delivered from this whirlpool of Time and may set your foot on the treasure of Union with Me;
- 3-4157 But the sweetness and delights of the resting-place are in proportion to the pain of the journey.
- 3-4158 Only then will you enjoy your native town and your kinsfolk when you suffer the pains and tribulations of exile.”
- 6-1642 Since the Prophets suffered those blows on the nape of the neck, they have lifted their heads high as a result of that affliction.
- 4-100 For this reason the sufferings and humiliations of the Prophets are greater than those of all the other creatures in the world.
- 6-2043 The wrongful unbelief of Noah’s people and the patience of Noah were instrumental in polishing the mirror of Noah’s spirit.
- 3-3365 The death of the body<sup>754</sup> in spiritual self-discipline is life: the sufferings of the body are the cause of everlastingness for the spirit.

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<sup>752</sup> The word used for “Lord” is *Mawlā*. *Mawlā* means “Master”, “Lord”, or “Caring, Supporting and Protecting Friend”. It is a name of God, and is mentioned as such in the Qur’ān (see Qur’ān 2:286 and 47:11), but it is also an honorific title of the Prophet Muḥammad and of Ḥaḥrat ‘Alī, the Prophet’s nephew, son-in-law and foremost mystical successor. *Mawlā* is also often found with the possessive suffix *-nā* as an honorific title for Ṣūfī Saints and Masters: *Mawlānā* (e.g. *Mawlānā Jalālu’d-dīn Rūmī*). *Mawlānā* means “Our Master, Lord and Caring, Supporting and Protecting Friend”. The word *Mawlā* is derived from the same Arabic verbal root as the word *walī* (plural *awliyā*). *Walī* is a name of God (*al-Walī*, “the Protecting Friend”), as well as the common Ṣūfī term to designate a Saint. *Walī* means “one who is close to God”, “a close Friend of God”, hence a Saint.

<sup>753</sup> *Aḥādīth-e Mathnawī* p.203.

- 1-2298 Know that every pain is a piece of Death: expel that part of Death from you, if you have a way to do so.
- 1-2299 When you cannot flee from the part of Death, know that the whole of it will be poured on your head.
- 1-2300 If the part of Death has become sweet to you, know that God will make the whole sweet.
- 1-2301 Pains come from Death as his messengers: do not turn away your face from his messenger, o foolish one!
- 1-2302 Whoever lives sweetly (pleasantly) dies bitterly (painfully): whoever serves his body does not save his soul.

### **The Eighth Rivulet [2.4.8]** **Renouncing imitation and blindly aping others.**

- 2-484 Since imitation is the ruination of every good quality: imitation is but a straw, even if it is a mighty mountain.
- 2-493 There are great differences between the true knower and the blind imitator, for the former is like David, while the latter is but an echo.
- 2-494 The source of the former's words is a glow of feeling, whereas the imitator is one who learns old things by rote.
- 2-497 Both infidel and true believer say "God," but there is quite a difference between the two.
- 2-498 The beggar says "God" for the sake of bread; the devout man says "God" from his very soul.
- 2-499 If the beggar distinguished God (as He really is) from his own saying (the name of God), neither less nor more would remain before his eye<sup>755</sup>.
- 2-500 For years that bread-seeker says "God"; like the ass, he carries the Qur'ān for the sake of being fed with straw.
- 2-501 If the word on his lips had shone in his heart, his body would have been shattered to atoms.
- 2-1481 He who has become acquainted with the secrets of *Hū* (God), what is the secret (inmost consciousness) of created beings to him?

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<sup>754</sup> The implied meaning is "the transformation of the self".

<sup>755</sup> I.e. he would lose all consciousness of self-interest (Nich.).

- 2-1482 He who walks is on the heavenly spheres, how should it be hard for him to walk on the earth?
- 2-2326 Although your intellect is flying upward, the bird of your conventional notions<sup>756</sup> is feeding below.
- 2-2327 Conventional knowledge is the downfall of our souls; it is a borrowed thing, but we rest at ease in the belief that it is ours.
- 2-491 The imitator is like a professional mourner in his words: that wicked man has no motive but covetousness.
- 2-492 The professional mourner utters burning words of grief, but where is the glow of heartfelt sorrow and the rent skirt?
- 2-563 Blind imitation of them has brought me to ruin: two hundred curses be on that imitation.

**The muqallid (the blind imitator) and the muḥaqqiq  
(one who actively seeks the Truth). [2.4.8]**

- 4-2169 He who has escaped from the *pardah*<sup>757</sup> of blind imitation sees that which really is by the light of God.
- 4-2170 Without proof and without explanation the pure Light cleaves the object's skin and enters into the core.
- 4-2171 To one who only sees the appearance, what is the difference between the false and genuine coin? How should he know what is in the date-basket?
- 4-2172 Oh, there is much gold made black with smoke, that it may be saved from falling into the hands of every envious thief.
- 4-2173 Oh, there is much copper gilded with gold, that the counterfeiter may sell it to those of small understanding.
- 4-2174 We, who see the inward reality of the whole world, see the heart and do not look at the outward form.
- 4-2175 The qāẓīs<sup>758</sup> who are concerned with the outward form (the letter of the law) give judgement according to outward appearances.
- 4-2176 When the suspected person has uttered the testimony of the Faith and has shown some formal sign of true belief, at once the qāẓīs declare him a true believer.

<sup>756</sup> The word used for "conventional notions" is *taqlīd*, which means "to follow or imitate blindly without questioning".

<sup>757</sup> In the lands of India the actual translation of the word *pardah* is "screen" or "veil". It is the practice of preventing men from seeing women. Here it means "seclusion" (Nich.).

<sup>758</sup> Judges in Muslim communities (Arabic *qāḍī*, Persian *qāẓī*).

- 4-2177 There are many hypocrites who have taken refuge in this outward form and have shed the blood of a hundred true believers in secret.
- 4-2178 Strive to become ripe in intelligence and religion, that you may become, like the Universal Intelligence, a seer of the inward reality.
- 5-2470 The imitator brings forward a hundred proofs in his explanation, but he speaks to them from logical reasoning, not from immediate experience.
- 5-2471 He is impregnated with musk, but he is not musk: he has the scent of musk, but he is only dung.
- 5-2472 In order that a piece of dung may become musk, o disciple<sup>759</sup>, one must graze for years in the spiritual garden.
- 5-2473 One must not eat straw and barley, like asses: graze on *arghawān*<sup>760</sup>, like the musk-deer in Khutan<sup>761</sup>.
- 5-2475 Accustom your belly to the sweet basil and the rose, that you may gain the wisdom and spiritual food of the Prophets.
- 5-2476 Break your belly of its habit of eating straw and barley: begin to eat the sweet basil and the rose.
- 5-2478 Whoever feeds on straw and barley becomes a sacrifice (*qurbān*); whoever feeds on the Light of God becomes the *Qur'ān*.
- 5-2480 The imitator brings a hundred proofs and explanations on to his tongue, but he has no soul.
- 5-2482 He boldly directs people in the Way to salvation, even though he is more quivering (weak) in soul than a blade of straw.
- 5-2490 Become like the sky, become like the cloud and shed rain: the drain pipe rains too, but it is not at work productively<sup>762</sup>.
- 5-2491 The water in the drain pipe is borrowed; the water in the cloud and in the sea is original.
- 5-2492 Your thought and reflection resemble the drain pipe; inspiration and revelation are like the cloud and the sky.
- 5-2493 The rainwater produces a many-coloured garden; the drain pipe causes your neighbour to quarrel with you.

<sup>759</sup> The word used in the original text is *murīd*, which is the common term for a Ṣūfī disciple. It literally means “one who is willing” or “one who is longing”.

<sup>760</sup> The flowers of the Judas tree (Nich.).

<sup>761</sup> *Khutan* or *Khotan* is a city of Eastern Turkeṣtān, also known as the north-western Xinjiang province of China.

<sup>762</sup> I.e. the drain pipe has nothing to do but discharge the rain-water which passes through it (Nich.).

### **The difference between muqallid and muḥaqqiq. [2.4.8]**

- 1-2125        Hundreds of thousands of conformists and legalists<sup>763</sup> are cast into the abyss (of destruction) by a single tinge of doubt.
- 1-2126        For their conformity and their drawing evidence from logical proofs and all their wings and wing-feathers (every means which they use in order to arrive at the truth) depend on opinion.
- 1-2127        The vile Devil raises doubt in their minds: all these blind ones fall in headlong.
- 1-2128        The leg of the logicians is of wood: a wooden leg is very weak.
- 5-4144        If the intellect could discern the true way in this question, Fakhr-e Rāzī<sup>764</sup> would be an adept in religious mysteries.
- 1-2135        If God did not bestow mercy and grace upon you, the wood of your logical deduction would break.
- 1-2136        What is this staff? Logical reasoning and demonstration. Who gave the blind that staff? The All-Seeing and Almighty One.
- 1-2137        Since the staff has become a weapon of quarrel and attack, break that staff into pieces, o blind man!
- 1-2138        He gave you the staff that you might approach Him: with that staff, in your anger, you struck even at Him.
- 1-2140        Take hold of the skirt of the One who gave you the staff: consider what dreadful things Adam suffered because of his disobedience.
- 1-2133        If, with the help of a staff, the blind have seen their way, yet only under the protection of other people are they clear-sighted.
- 5-1274        The first time by way of imitation (*taqlīd*) and pretense, because he sees the people laughing.
- 5-1275        The deaf man laughs then like them, without knowing the inner state of those who laugh.
- 5-1276        Afterwards he inquires what the laughter was about, and then, having heard, he laughs a second time.
- 5-1277        That is why the mere imitator of a Shaykh, too, resembles the deaf man with regard to the feeling of joy that is in his head.

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<sup>763</sup> Literally “followers of signs (external evidences)” (Nich.).

<sup>764</sup> Fakhr-e Rāzī (or Fakhru’ddīn ar-Rāzī, 1149-1209 CE) was a well-known Persian theologian and philosopher, who relied heavily on rationalism. He was nicknamed *Imāmu’l-mushakkikīn*, “Leader of the Doubters”.

- 5-1289 The imitator is like a sick child, although he may have subtle argumentation and logical proofs at his disposal.

**The Ninth Rivulet [2.4.9]**  
**Renouncing pride and cherishing indigence towards**  
**the Beloved opens the gate to Divine grace<sup>765</sup>.**

- 3-3204 It was Mary's want and pain that made a baby like Jesus begin to speak in the cradle<sup>766</sup>.
- 3-3208 Whatever grew has grown for the sake of the needy, in order that a seeker may find the thing he sought.
- 3-3209 If God Most High has created the heavens, He has created them in order to take away needs.
- 3-3210 Wherever a pain is, there the cure goes; wherever a poverty is, there the provision goes.
- 3-3212 Do not seek the water, but become thirsty, so that the water may gush forth from above and below.
- 3-3213 Until the tender-throated baby is born, how should the milk for it begin to flow from the mother's breast?
- 2-1953 God created the child, i.e. your needs, in order that it might moan and that milk might then be produced for it.
- 2-1954 He said, "*Call upon God!*"<sup>767</sup>. Do not stop lamenting, so that the milk of His loving kindnesses may flow.
- 1-822 If you desire tears, have mercy on one who sheds tears; if you desire mercy, show mercy to the weak.
- 5-1601 He whom You wish to strike with sorrow – You close the way to lamentation to his heart,
- 5-1602 So that affliction may come over him without there being anything to repel it, when there is no intercessor in the form of humble supplication;
- 5-1603 And on the other hand You lead the soul of him whom You wish to redeem from affliction to humble supplication.
- 2-373 "When I make anyone weep, My mercy is aroused: that wailer drinks of (enjoys) My bounty.

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<sup>765</sup> Qur'ān 27:62 and 2:186.

<sup>766</sup> Qur'ān 19:30.

<sup>767</sup> Qur'ān 17:110.

- 2-374 If I do not wish to give, then indeed I do not show him the desired gift, but when I have closed (contracted)<sup>768</sup> his heart with grief, I open (expand) it with joy.
- 2-375 My mercy depends on that happy weeping: when he weeps, waves rise from the sea of My mercy.”

### Story. [2.4.9]

- 2-376 There was a Shaykh who was continually in debt because of the generosity which that illustrious one had in his nature.
- 2-377 He used to make myriads of debts by borrowing from the great, and spend all the money on the poor (dervishes)<sup>769</sup> of the world.
- 2-388 When the Shaykh’s life reached its end and he saw the signs of death in his bodily existence,
- 2-389 The creditors were seated together around him, while the Shaykh was gently melting on himself (going out), like a candle.
- 2-391 “Look at these evil-thinking men,” said the Shaykh. “Does God not have four hundred gold dīnārs?”
- 2-392 A boy outside shouted “*Ḥalwā!*<sup>770</sup>” and bragged of the excellence of the *ḥalwā* in the hope of getting some *dangs*<sup>771</sup>.
- 2-393 The Shaykh directed the *khādim*<sup>772</sup> with a nod of his head to go and buy the whole of the *ḥalwā*,
- 2-394 Saying to himself, “so that the creditors, when they eat the *ḥalwā*, for a short while may not look bitterly on me.”
- 2-395 The *khādim* immediately went out through the doorway to buy the entire *ḥalwā* with gold.
- 2-399 He made a sign to the creditors as though to say, “Look, this gift of sweetmeat is a present to you: eat this gladly, it is lawful food.”
- 2-400 When the tray was emptied, the boy took it and said, “Give me the gold, o Wise One.”

<sup>768</sup> Even though they are not literally mentioned in the original Persian text, these words refer to the Ṣūfī terms *qabẓ* (< Arabic *qabḍ*), meaning “contraction of the heart, and *bast*, meaning “expansion of the heart”.

<sup>769</sup> In the Persian text the word *faqīr* is used, which means the same as *darwīsh*, i.e. “one who is poor before God and in need of His mercy”.

<sup>770</sup> The word *ḥalwā* is used to describe many distinct types of sweet confection, across the Near and Middle East, Central Asia, South Asia and the Balkans.

<sup>771</sup> The *dang* is the sixth part of a *dirham* (Nich.).

<sup>772</sup> A private secretary or other close attendant.

- 2-401 The Shaykh said, “From where shall I get the money? I am in debt and going towards non-existence.”
- 2-402 The boy in his grief dashed the tray on the ground; he raised his voice in lamentation, weeping and moaning.
- 2-403 The boy was weeping with loud sobs because of the swindle, and crying, “I wish that both my legs had been broken before I came here!
- 2-404 I wish that I had loitered around the bath-stove and had not passed by the door of this *khānaqāh*<sup>773</sup>!
- 2-411 The boy wept until afternoon prayers; the Shaykh closed his eyes and did not look at him.
- 2-426 When it was time for afternoon prayers, a servant came with a tray in his hand from one like Hātim<sup>774</sup>,
- 2-428 There were four hundred dīnārs, and in the corner of the tray another half dīnār in a piece of paper.
- 2-429 The servant came forward and honoured the Shaykh, and laid the tray before the peerless Shaykh.
- 2-431 Immediately cries of sorrow and lamentation arose from all – “O head of the Shaykhs and spiritual kings, what was the meaning of this?
- 2-440 The secret of this matter was that I implored God: consequently He showed me the right way,
- 2-441 And said, ‘Even though that dīnār is little, yet the payment of it depends on the boy’s outcry.
- 2-442 As long as the *ḥalwā*-eating boy does not weep, the sea of My mercy is not aroused.”
- 2-444 If you wish that the robe of honour which you desire should come to you, then make the child (pupil) of your eye weep over your body.
- 5-134 Until the cloud weeps, how should the garden smile? Until the baby cries, how should the milk begin to flow?
- 5-135 The one-day-old baby knows the way: (its instinct says), “I will cry, that the kind nurse may come.”

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<sup>773</sup> A *khānaqāh* or *khāniqāh* (pronounced *khāneghā* in Fārsī) is a sacred place where Ṣūfis meet and hold their gatherings under the guidance of a Shaykh or Pīr.

<sup>774</sup> Hātim aṭ-Ṭā’ī was a Christian poet and a contemporary of the Prophet Muḥammad. He was known for his exceptional charity, hospitality and generosity.



- 5-136 Do you not know that the Nurse of all nurses gives no milk freely without your crying?
- 5-137 He (God) has said, “Let them weep much.” Give ear, that the bounty of the Creator may pour out the milk.
- 2-1952 The wet-nurse and mother seek a pretext for giving relief: she waits to see when her child will begin to weep.
- 2-1951 Lamentation and weeping are a mighty capital (resource); the Universal Mercy is the mightiest wet-nurse to comfort and cherish.
- 6-839 The capital required for the market of this world is gold; in the next world the capital is love and two eyes wet with tears.
- 6-840 Whoever went to market without any capital, his life passed and he speedily returned in disappointment.
- 6-879 If *you* want a customer from whom you will obtain gold, how should there be a better customer than God, o my heart?
- 6-881 He receives the melting ice of this mortal body, and gives a kingdom beyond our imagination.
- 6-883 He receives sighs full of melancholy and vaporous gloom<sup>775</sup>, and gives a hundred lucrative dignities for every sigh.
- 6-882 He receives a few tear-drops, and gives a *Kawthar*<sup>776</sup> so delicious that sugar is jealous of its sweetness.
- 6-885 Listen, sell your old rags in this bustling incomparable market, and receive the real and genuine kingdom in exchange.
- 5-1617 Since humble supplication is so valuable to God – and where else is lamentation rewarded as it is there? –
- 5-1618 O, take hope! Now gird your loins tight<sup>777</sup>! Get up, o weeper, and laugh continually,
- 5-1619 For the glorious King considers tears as equal in merit to the blood of the martyr.

### **The love for God renders the garden of the heart green and fresh. [2.4.9]**

- 6-1579 This heart of mine is an orchard, and my eye is like the cloud: when the cloud weeps the orchard laughs joyously and happily.

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<sup>775</sup> Literally “smoke” (Nich.).

<sup>776</sup> A river, fountain, cistern or pond in Paradise; *kawthar* literally means “abundance” in Arabic – see Qur’ān 108:1-3.

<sup>777</sup> I.e. “Prepare yourself for action!”.

- 2-480 The branch is made green and fresh by the weeping cloud, for the same reason that the candle is made brighter by its weeping.
- 6-1581 You have read in God's command the words *and weep much*<sup>778</sup>: why have you remained grinning like a roast sheep's head?
- 2-479 O eye, you lament for others: sit down a while and weep for yourself!
- 6-1582 You will be the light of the house, like the candle, if you shed showers of tears like the candle.
- 1-1637 Prepare a dessert of heart-fire (burning grief) and eye-water (tears): the garden is made blooming by clouds and sun.
- 6-1584 You have experienced the pleasure of laughing, o impudent laughter: now experience the pleasure of weeping and recognize that it is a mine of sugar.
- 6-1586 Tears conceal laughters: seek treasure amidst ruins, o simple (sincere) man.
- 6-1587 Pleasure is concealed in pains: the track has been lost, the Water of Life has been taken away into the Land of Darkness.
- 6-2346 Make yourself harmonious, in agreement and balanced<sup>779</sup>: let your bread be baked well with burning tears.
- 1-1633 Because Adam escaped from reproof by means of tears: moist tears are the breath (speech) of the penitent.
- 1-1634 For weeping's sake Adam came down to the earth, that he might be weeping, moaning and sorrowful.
- 1-818 Oh, happy the eye that is weeping for His sake! Oh, fortunate the heart that is seared for His sake!
- 1-1636 If you are from the back of Adam and from his loins, be constant in seeking forgiveness in his company.
- 1-823 The king turned his face to the fire, saying, "O fierce-tempered one, where is your world-consuming nature?"
- 1-824 Why are you not burning? What has become of your particularity? Or has your intention changed because of our fortune<sup>780</sup>?
- 4-1614 The more anyone regards the end (*ākhir*) the more blessed he is; the more anyone regards the stable (*ākhur*) the more cursed he is.

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<sup>778</sup> Qur'ān 9:82.

<sup>779</sup> I.e. in full accordance with the Divine will (Nich.).

<sup>780</sup> I.e. because Fate has ordained it so (Nich.).

### **Story. [2.4.9]**

- 2-445 A companion in the work (of religion) said to an ascetic, “Weep little, so that no harm will come to your eye.”
- 2-446 The ascetic said, “In this case there are only two alternatives: the eye will see, or it will not see the Divine Beauty.
- 2-447 If it sees the Light of God, what is there to grieve about? How little are two eyes to him who is united with God!
- 2-448 And if it shall not see God, let it go! Let such a miserable eye become blind!”

### **Shedding tears for God purifies the heart. [2.4.9]**

- 5-618 Sincere weeping touches the souls of all, so that it makes even the sky and heaven weep
- 5-476 The weeping of Joseph’s brothers is a trick, for their hearts are full of envy and vice.

### **Story. [2.4.9]**

- 5-477 The dog was dying, and the Arab was sobbing, shedding tears, and crying, “Oh, sorrow!”
- 5-478 A beggar passed by and asked, “What is this sobbing? Whom do you mourn and lament?”
- 5-479 He replied, “I had a dog of excellent character. Look, he is dying on the road.
- 5-481 The beggar asked, “What is wrong with him? Has he been wounded?” The Arab replied, “Ravenous hunger<sup>781</sup> has made him so pitiful.”
- 5-483 Afterwards he said to him, “O noble chief, what is this full leather bag in your hand?”
- 5-484 He replied, “My bread and provision and food left over from last night, which I am taking along with me to feed my body.”
- 5-485 “Why don’t you give some bread and provision to the dog?” he asked. He replied, “I do not have that much love and generosity.
- 5-486 Bread cannot be obtained by a traveller on the road without money, but water from the eyes costs nothing.”
- 5-487 The beggar said, “Earth be on your head, o water-skin full of wind! For in your opinion a crust of bread is better than tears.”

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<sup>781</sup> Literally “canine hunger” (Nich.).

- 5-488 Tears are originally blood and have been turned into water by grief: idle tears<sup>782</sup> do not have the value of earth.
- 1-1638 What do you know of the taste of water of the eyes? You are a lover of bread, like the blind beggars.
- Not every tear can contain love for God<sup>783</sup>. [2.4.9]**
- 5-1265 A certain man asked a *mufti*<sup>784</sup> in private, “If anyone weeps lamentably during the ritual prayer,
- 5-1266 I wonder, will his prayer be rendered void, or will his prayer be lawful and perfect?”
- 5-1267 He replied, “Why is it called ‘the water of the eye’? You should consider what the eye saw before it started weeping.
- 5-1269 If the supplicant has seen the Other World, his lamentation makes his prayer luminous,
- 5-1270 But if that weeping was caused by bodily pain or by mourning for the dead, the thread is snapped and the spindle too is broken”<sup>785</sup>.

### Story:

#### The difference between the tears of the Pīr and those of a murīd. [2.4.9]

- 5-1271 A disciple<sup>786</sup> came into the presence of the Pīr: the Pīr was weeping and lamenting.
- 5-1272 When the disciple saw the Shaykh weeping, he began to weep: the tears ran from his eyes.
- 5-1298 For, like the deaf man, he regarded the Shaykh’s weeping in the way of an imitator<sup>787</sup> and was unaware of the cause.
- 5-1299 When he had wept a long while, he paid his respects and left: the Shaykh’s favourite disciple came quickly after him,
- 5-1300 And said, “O you who are weeping like a senseless cloud in harmony with the weeping of the Shaykh endowed with insight,

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<sup>782</sup> I.e. his tears (Nich.).

<sup>783</sup> Qur’ān, 35:12.

<sup>784</sup> *Mufti*: an Islamic scholar who interprets and expounds Islamic law (*Sharī’a*) and issues *fatāwā* (= *fatwā*-s) – i.e. religious opinions and advices, which generally are not-binding but authoritative.

<sup>785</sup> I.e. the prayer is void (Nich.).

<sup>786</sup> The word used in the original text is *murīd*, which is the common term for a Ṣūfī disciple. It literally means “one who is willing” or “one who is longing”.

<sup>787</sup> I.e. a *muqallid*, “one who blindly follows and imitates but is void of true insight and knowledge”.

- 5-1301 For God's sake, for God's sake, for God's sake, o loyal disciple, even though you seek spiritual profit in your imitation,
- 5-1302 Be careful not to say, 'I saw that spiritual king weeping, and I wept like him'; for that is denial (of his exalted state)."
- 5-1303 A weeping full of ignorance, imitation and mere opinion is not like the weeping of that trusted one.
- 5-1304 Do not judge one weeping by comparing<sup>788</sup> it to another weeping: it is a long way from this weeping to that weeping.
- 5-1306 Beyond reason there are a hundred stages: do not think that the intellect is acquainted with that caravan.
- 5-1307 His weeping is neither from sorrow nor from joy: only the spirit knows the weeping of him who is the fountain of beauties.
- 5-1308 His weeping, his laughter – both are of the Other World<sup>789</sup> and transcend all that the intellect can conceive<sup>790</sup>.
- 5-1309 His tears are like his eye: how should the sightless eye become a seeing eye<sup>791</sup>?
- 5-1330 The Shaykh's weeping, his laughter, and his speech are not from him: they are the pure nature of *Hū* (God).

### **The softness of the heart causes the pure tears to flow. [2.4.9]**

- 5-490 I am the devoted slave of him who will not sell his existence<sup>792</sup> except to that bounteous and magnanimous Sovereign,
- 5-491 So that when he weeps, heaven begins to weep, and when he moans in supplication, the celestial sphere begins to cry, "O Lord!"
- 5-492 I am the devoted slave of that high-aspiring<sup>793</sup> copper which humbles itself<sup>794</sup> before nothing but the Elixir<sup>795</sup>.
- 5-493 In prayer, lift up a broken hand: the loving kindness of God flies towards the broken.
- 6-2337 Give greenery and vegetation from this bountiful pasture to the tears of Your sightless slave;

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<sup>788</sup> Literally "by analogy of".

<sup>789</sup> Literally "of that side" (Nich.).

<sup>790</sup> Literally "are exempt from that which is the conception of the intellect." (Nich.).

<sup>791</sup> I.e. how should the spiritually blind man become a mystic seer? (Nich.).

<sup>792</sup> I.e. himself (Nich.).

<sup>793</sup> Literally "cherishing lofty aspiration" (Nich.).

<sup>794</sup> Literally "offers brokenness (repentance)" (Nich.).

<sup>795</sup> Literally "alchemy" (*kīmīyā*).

- 6-2338 And if I leave no tears in my eyes, give me tears flowing abundantly from an eye like the two streaming eyes of the Prophet.
- 6-2339 Since he, with all that high fortune, majesty and excellence, sought tears from the bounty of God.
- 6-2340 How should not I, a poor empty-handed lick-platter, spin fine webs of blood-stained tears?
- 6-2341 Since an eye like that of the Prophet is in love with tears, it is fitting that my tears be like a hundred great rivers.”
- 6-2342 A single drop of those tears is better than these two hundred great rivers, for by that single drop mankind and the Jinn<sup>796</sup> were saved.
- 1-1714 Oh, alas! If only my tears were an ocean, that they might be scattered as an offering to the beautiful charmer!
- 1-1774 I wail because wailings are pleasing to Him: from the two worlds He wants wailing and grief.
- 1-1569 I complain, and yet I fear that He would believe me and out of kindness make His cruelty less.
- 1-1780 The tears which people shed for His sake are pearls – and people think they are tears.
- 5-474 Renounce power and adopt piteous supplication: the Divine mercy comes towards piteous supplication, o dervish<sup>797</sup>.

### **The sālik draws closer to the Divine through indigence towards the Beloved. [2.4.9]**

- 1-1908 Do not give yourself airs and behave like a beauty in the presence of Joseph: offer nothing but the supplication and sighs of Jacob.
- 1-1904 You who are not a Joseph, be a Jacob: be familiar, like him, with weeping and deep sorrow.
- 1-1905 Listen to this counsel from the Sage of Ghazna<sup>798</sup>, that you may feel freshness in your old body.

<sup>796</sup> In Islām and pre-Islamic folklore, *Jinn* (singular: *jinnī*) are supernatural creatures, who possess free will and can be good or evil in nature. Iblīs (Satan) was the chief of the Jinn; when God ordered him to bow down before Adam, he refused and fell from grace.

<sup>797</sup> In the Persian original, the word *faqīr* is used, which means the same as *darwīsh*: “one who is poor before God and in need of His mercy”.

<sup>798</sup> “Sage of Ghazna”: the Persian Ṣūfī poet Ḥakīm Sanā’ī of Ghazna (d. ca.1131 CE). He was the first poet to write a major *mathnawī*, entitled *Ḥadīqatu’l-Ḥaqīqa wa Sharī’atu’t-Ṭarīqa* (“The Walled Garden of Truth and the Law of the Path”). This work also was an inspiration to Ḥaḏrat Mawlānā Rūmī.

- 1-1906 “Contempt needs a face like the rose; if you do not have such a face, do not indulge in<sup>799</sup> ill-temper.
- 1-1907 Contempt in an unpleasant face is ugly, eye-ache in an unseeing eye is painful.”
- 5-543 Oh, there are many contempts that become a sin and cause the servant to fall from favour with<sup>800</sup> the King (God).
- 5-544 To show contempt is sweeter than sugar; but do not chew it, for it holds a hundred dangers.
- 5-545 The place of safety is the way of indigence (lowliness): abandon contempt and be satisfied with that way.
- 5-546 Oh, many contemptuous ones flapped their wings and plumes, but in the end it became a curse to those arrogant persons.
- 5-547 If the sweetness of contempt uplifts you for a moment, yet its latent fear and dread consume you.
- 5-548 While this indigence (lowliness), even though it makes you lean, will make your breast (heart) like the radiant full moon.
- 1-629 The more wakeful anyone is, the more full of suffering he is; the more he is aware of God, the paler his face is.
- 6-4304 Oh, do not sigh heavily from weariness: seek passion, seek passion, passion, passion!
- 1-1257 Oh, happy is he who clung to righteousness, he who let his own strength go and took to supplication!
- 1-1577 When he moans bitterly, without thanksgiving or complaint, an uproar arises in the Seven Spheres of Heaven.
- 1-1578 At every moment there come to him from God a hundred messages, a hundred messengers: from him one cry of “O my Lord!” and from God a hundred cries of “*Labbayka*” (“Here I am”)<sup>801</sup>.
- 3-4469 That is why the sincere believers have become humbled before Him; but where indeed is their humility compared with the humility of those who love Him?

<sup>799</sup> Literally “do not roam around” (Nich.).

<sup>800</sup> Literally “from the eye of” (Nich.).

<sup>801</sup> This refers to a prayer called *talbiya*, which is constantly repeated by Muslims, as they set out to perform the *Hajj* or ritual pilgrimage to Mecca: “*Labbayka, Allāhumma, Labbayk! Labbayka, la sharīka Laka, Labbayk! Inna 'l-ḥamda wa 'n-ni'mata Laka wa 'l-Mulk! Lā sharīka Lak!*”. This means: “Here I am, o God, Here I am [literally “with You, o God”; the implication is: “Here I am *at Your service!*”]! Here I am, You are without equal, here I am! Verily, to You all praise is due, to You belongs all Beneficence, Yours is the Dominion! You are without equal!”.

- 3-4470 The intelligent humble themselves before Him out of necessity; the lovers humble themselves with hundredfold free will.
- 3-4471 The intelligent are bondslaves to Him; the lovers are like sugar and candy to Him<sup>802</sup>.
- 3-4499 Since to be vanquished is the mark of the true believers; yet in the true believer's defeat there is goodness.
- 3-4500 If you crush some musk or ambergris<sup>803</sup>, you will fill a whole world with a scent of sweet herbs.
- 4-342 But, even though the pearls are broken into small fragments, they become a lotion for the sore eye of the spirit.
- 4-343 O pearl, do not beat your head in grief for having been broken, for through being broken you will become radiant light.

### **Story. [2.4.9]**

- 2-2771 A certain man was going into the mosque when the people were coming out of it.
- 2-2772 He began to ask one of them, saying, "What troubles the congregation that they are coming out of the mosque so soon?"
- 2-2773 Someone said to him, "The Prophet has prayed with the congregation and finished his prayers.
- 2-2775 He cried, "Ah!" and smoke came out from his burning sigh: his sigh gave out the smell of blood from his heart.
- 2-2776 One of the congregation said, "Give me this sigh, and my prayers are yours."
- 2-2777 He answered, "I give the sigh and accept the prayers." The other took that sigh with a hundred yearnings towards God.
- 2-2778 At night, while he was asleep, a Voice said to him, "You have bought the Water of Life and salvation.
- 2-2779 In honour of this choice and this acquisition the prayers of all the people have been accepted."
- 2-2782 And that regret, lamentation and sorrowful yearning would have been more valuable than two hundred remembrances<sup>804</sup> and prayers.

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<sup>802</sup> I.e. they show sweetness and delight in resigning themselves to His will.

<sup>803</sup> A waxy greyish substance formed in the intestines of sperm whales and found floating at sea or washed ashore. It is used in perfumery.



## How God answers His servants' prayers. [2.4.9]

- 4-1169 The celebrated Sībawayh<sup>805</sup> said that the meaning of the name *Allāh* is that His worshippers take refuge with Him for all their needs.
- 4-1170 He said, “We have turned to You for help in our needs, have sought them and found them with You<sup>806</sup>,”
- 4-1171 At the time of affliction hundreds of thousands of intelligent persons are all crying for help before that unique Judge.
- 4-1173 If the intelligent had not experienced God’s beneficence more than a thousand times, how should they have turned to Him?
- 4-1174 No, all the fish in the waves of the sea, all the birds high up in the sky,
- 4-1176 No, earth and wind (air) and water and every spark of fire obtain subsistence from Him both in December (winter) and spring.
- 4-1177 Heaven incessantly pleads with Him – “Do not forsake me, o God, for a single moment!”
- 4-1179 And earth says, “Preserve me, o You who have made me ride on the water.”
- 4-1180 All have filled their purses from Him and have learned from Him to satisfy the needs of others.
- 4-1182 Come, ask of Him, not of any other than Him: seek water in the sea, do not seek it in the dry river-bed.
- 3-2304 Consider this well, o you who are veiled by worldliness, that God has tied invocation<sup>807</sup> to “*I will answer*”<sup>808</sup>.
- 4-91 The servant of God complains to Him of pain and grief: he makes a hundred complaints of his pain.
- 4-92 God says, “After all, grief and pain have made you humbly imploring and righteous.”

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<sup>804</sup> Remembrance: *dhikr* or *dhikru’Llāh* means “remembrance of God” or “restoring the memory of God”, by repeating various sacred phrases and names of God, either silently or aloud. Dhikr is practised individually as well as collectively, and is the most fundamental practice of Sufism. Practising dhikr restores man’s memory and consciousness of his True Being, his essential unity with the Divine. “Dhikr” is not limited to one or more practices: literally anything that brings about this mystical consciousness may be called “dhikr”.

<sup>805</sup> Sībawayh (*Sībūyeh* in Persian): a famous linguist and grammarian (d. ca. 797 CE).

<sup>806</sup> I.e. we have sought and obtained from You the satisfaction of our needs.

<sup>807</sup> Invocation or *du’ā’*: in Arabic *du’ā’* means “invocation”, “supplication” or “calling” – the act of remembering God and calling upon Him.

<sup>808</sup> Qur’ān 40:60.

- 4-94 In reality every enemy of yours is your medicine: he is an elixir<sup>809</sup>, beneficial and one who seeks to win your heart<sup>810</sup>.
- 4-95 For you flee away from him into solitude and would gladly implore the help of God's grace.
- 6-2344 O my brother, do not cease to invoke God: what is it to you whether He accepts or rejects your prayer?

**Why God doesn't always answer His servants' prayers immediately.  
Hadīth: "God loves those who are constant in their prayers". [2.4.9]**

- 6-4217 Oh, how many sincere worshippers moan in prayer, so that the smoke of their sincerity rises up to Heaven.
- 6-4218 And from the lamentation of the sinful the perfume of the censer<sup>811</sup> floats up beyond this lofty roof!
- 6-4219 Then the angels implore God piteously, saying, "O You who answers every prayer and o You whose protection is invoked.
- 6-4220 A faithful servant of Yours is supplicating humbly: he knows no one but You to rely on.
- 6-4221 You bestow Your bounty even on strangers: every ardent wisher obtains his desire from You."
- 6-4222 God says, "It is not that he is despicable to Me; no, the very postponement of the bounty is for the sake of helping him.
- 6-4223 Need caused him to turn towards Me from his former state of forgetfulness: it dragged him by the hair into My presence<sup>812</sup>.
- 6-4224 If I satisfy this need, he will go back and again become absorbed in idle play.
- 6-4225 Even though he is now crying with all his soul, "O You whose protection is invoked," let him continue to moan with broken heart and wounded breast!
- 6-4226 It pleases Me to hear his piteous voice and his cries of "O Lord" and his secret prayer.
- 6-4228 Parrots and nightingales are put into cages because they give pleasure by their sweet song;
- 6-4229 But how should crows and owls be caged? This has never been recorded in a story.

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<sup>809</sup> In the Persian text the word *kīmīyā* ("alchemy") is used.

<sup>810</sup> I.e. he is really acting as your true friend and well-wisher (Nich.).

<sup>811</sup> I.e. the remorseful heart glowing with love and longing (Nich.).

<sup>812</sup> Literally "street, "quarter" (Nich.).

**Allegory:**  
**God loves those who weep and plead during their prayers. [2.4.9]**

- 6-4230      When two persons, one of them a decrepit old man and the other a fair-chinned youth, come to a baker who is an admirer of handsome boys,
- 6-4231      And both ask for bread, he will at once fetch the unleavened bread and ask the old man to take it;
- 6-4232      But why should he immediately give bread to the other, whose figure and cheeks (countenance) please him? No, he will delay him<sup>813</sup>.
- 6-4233      And say to him, “Sit down a little while, it will do you no harm; for the new bread is baking in the house”:
- 6-4234      And when, after the work of baking is finished, the hot bread is brought to the youth, and the baker will say to him, “Sit down, for *halwā* (a sweet delicacy) is coming.”
- 6-4235      In this same way he always detains him and secretly seeks to make him his prey,
- 6-4236      Saying, “I have some important business with you: wait a moment, o beauty of the world!”
- 6-4237      Know for sure that this is the reason why the true believers suffer disappointment whether in seeking good or in avoiding evil.
- 1-1748      Even though the object of your desire has the taste of sugar, is not absence of any object of desire in you the object of the Beloved’s desire?
- 3-4809      God says, “Do not ask yourself whether you are on a tree or in a pit: look at Me, for I am the Key of the Way.”

**God answers the true lovers without prayer and supplication. [2.4.9]**

- 3-2305      Whoever’s heart is purified of defectiveness, his invocation will go to the Lord of Majesty<sup>814</sup>.
- 3-2219      In reality, that unconscious invocation is different: that invocation is not from the speaker, it is spoken by the Divine Judge.
- 3-2220      God makes that invocation, since the speaker is annihilated (*fanā*): the invocation and the answer to it are both from God.

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<sup>813</sup> I.e. he will make him wait.

<sup>814</sup> *Dhū’l-Jalāl*, which literally means “the Possessor of Majesty”.

- 3-204 The call of the griefless is from a frozen heart<sup>815</sup>, the call of the grieving one is from rapture
- 3-203 Grief is better than the empire of the world, so that you may call unto God in secret.
- 3-2371 Since you are spiritually dead, with what face have you turned<sup>816</sup> your face towards the heavens?"
- 5-2243 For the prayer of a Shaykh is not like every prayer: he is one who has achieved annihilation and his words are the words of God.
- 5-2244 Since God asks and begs of Himself, how then, should He refuse to grant His own prayer?

**The Tenth Rivulet [2.4.10]**  
**Renouncing reputation, fame and glory and**  
**striving for anonymity and self-effacingness.**

**Hadīth: “Pursuing fame and renown leads to disaster and misfortune, striving for anonymity brings well-being, ease and tranquillity<sup>817</sup>”.**

- 1-1545 That you should make yourself ill, extremely wretched, in order that you may be let out of the cage of reputation.”
- 1-1546 Worldly reputation is a strong chain: how is this less than a chain of iron in the mystical Way?
- 1-3240 God has made reputation to be like a hundred maunds<sup>818</sup> weight of iron: oh, many are bound by the unseen chain!
- 1-3247 The chain is hidden, but it is worse than iron: the iron chain is split by the axe.
- 1-3248 The iron chain can be removed: no one knows how to cure the invisible chain.
- 1-1833 If you are a grain, the little birds will peck you up; if you are a bud, the children will pluck you off.
- 1-1834 Hide the grain (bait), become wholly a snare; hide the bud, become the grass on the roof.
- 1-1835 Anyone who offers his beauty for auction, a hundred evil fates set out towards him and overtake him.
- 1-1837 Enemies tear him to pieces out of jealousy; even friends take his lifetime away.

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<sup>815</sup> Literally “congealment”.

<sup>816</sup> I.e. “how have you dared to turn?” (Nich.).

<sup>817</sup> *Aḥādīth-e Mathnawī* p. 75.

<sup>818</sup> A unit of weight varying in different countries of Asia from 11.2 to 37.4 kilograms (24.8 to 82.6 pounds).

- 1-1850      This one says to him, “I will be your confidant,” and that one says, “No, I am your partner.”
- 1-1852      That one says to him, “Both worlds are yours, all our souls are your soul’s parasites.”
- 1-1853      When he sees the people intoxicated with desire for him, his arrogance makes him lose self-control.
- 1-1855      The world’s flattery and hypocrisy are a sweet morsel: eat less of it (do not eat it), for it is a morsel full of fire.
- 1-1856      Its fire is hidden and its taste is manifest: its smoke becomes visible in the end.
- 1-1857      Do not say, “How should I swallow that praise? He is speaking out of desire for reward: I am on his track and see quite well what he is after.”
- 1-1858      If the one who praises you should ridicule you in public, your heart would burn for many days because of those scorches of abusive language.
- 6-290      An animal is made fat, but only by fodder; man is fattened by honour and eminence.
- 6-291      Man is fattened through his ear; an animal is fattened through its gullet and by eating and drinking.
- 1-1867      Pharaoh was made what he was by abundance of praises: be lowly of spirit through meekness, do not be a dominator.
- 2-256      Beware! Do not listen to the flatteries of the bad friend: spot the snare, do not walk securely on the earth.
- 2-258      He gives you vain words, he says to you, “O my soul and beloved,” that he may strip the skin off his beloved, like a butcher.
- 2-259      He gives vain words that he may strip off your skin: woe to him who tastes opium from the mouth of enemies.
- 4-2743      You take pride in the fact that men, out of fear and servitude, have become your flatterers for a few days.
- 4-2744      When men bow in adoration to anyone, in reality they are cramming poison into his soul.
- 3-2240      In your desire that they should say to you “Bravo!” you have tied a bowstring on the neck of your soul.

**Praise or disapproval do not affect the inner  
state of a true dervish or sālik. [2.4.10]**

**Poem:**

**“People will sacrifice themselves for you if they see you  
do a good deed. But if you tend to act unkindly towards  
them, they will turn venomous towards you”. [2.4.10]**

- 2-24           He who has fixed his gaze on seclusion (and made it his goal), after all it is from the friend of God that he has learned that lesson.
- 1-1865       Since it does not last perceptibly, it lasts imperceptibly: recognize every opposite by means of its opposite.
- 1-1870       The group of people who used to flatter you deceitfully, will call you a devil when they see you.
- 1-1871       When they see you at their doors, they all will cry, “A dead man has risen from his grave.”
- 1-1872       You will be like the beardless youth whom they address as “Lord” so that they may make him infamous by this hypocrisy.
- 1-1873       As soon as he has grown a beard in infamy, the Devil is ashamed to search for him.
- 1-1877       Once they clung to your skirt: when you became like this they all fled.
- 5-3201       I am not jealous that your pupils stand listening in your presence: in reality they are mocking you, they are not lovers.
- 5-3202       See your true lovers behind the veil of Divine Bounty, crying aloud for you continually.
- 5-3203       Be the lover of those unseen lovers: do not cherish<sup>819</sup> the lovers who last no longer than five days;
- 5-3204       For they have devoured you through a great deceit and attraction (exerted upon you), and during many years you have never seen a grain of profit from them.
- 5-3206       When you enjoy good health all of them are your friends and comrades, but when you suffer pain and sorrow, where is any familiar friend but God?
- 5-3207       When you have eye-ache or toothache, will anyone take your hand to help except Him who comes at the cry of distress?

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<sup>819</sup> Literally “carve, hew into shape”; hence “make an idol of” (Nich.).

- 5-3208      Therefore always remember that sickness and pain: take a lesson from it, like Ayāz<sup>820</sup> from that sheepskin jacket.
- 3-1132      If you are not famous in the world, yet you are not inferior<sup>821</sup>: God knows His servants best.
- 3-1133      A treasure of gold is hidden, for safety's sake, in a desolate spot that is not well-known.
- 3-1134      How should they deposit the treasure in a well-known place? Because of this it is said<sup>822</sup>, "Joy is hidden beneath sorrow."

**When a sālik is rejected by people, it does not affect him,  
secure in the knowledge that the Beloved loves him. [2.4.10]**

- 5-1521      If you really understood the injustice shown towards you by the people in the world, it is a hidden treasure of gold.
- 5-1522      The people are made to be so evil-natured towards you, in order that your face may inevitably be turned to the Other World.
- 5-1523      Know this for sure that in the end all of them will become adversaries, enemies and rebels.
- 5-1524      You will be left in the tomb, lamenting and beseeching the One, and crying, "*Do not leave me alone here!*"<sup>823</sup>
- 2-251      Most people are man-eaters: put no trust in their saying, "Peace be with you."
- 3-3358      O man of the true Religion, you will not hear a single salām (blessing) that is not intended to pluck your sleeve (and demand something of you).
- 3-3359      I have never heard a disinterested salām from high or low, o brother – and I give the salām to you<sup>824</sup>.

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<sup>820</sup> There are a number of stories in the Mathnawī about the king Maḥmūd of Ghazna (971-1030 CE) and his favourite slave, Ayāz. In these stories Ayāz symbolizes a Sūfī dervish Saint and the king symbolizes Almighty God. Ayāz was made the king's vizier (or prime minister). In Islamic cultures, it was common for favourite slaves to be given positions of power and influence. "In the allegorical interpretation of this Story the King is God, Ayāz the Spiritually Perfect Man who intercedes for sinners on the Day of Judgment and the 'ancient executioner' the Angel of Divine punishment. (*malaku'l-'adhab*).” (Nich.).

<sup>821</sup> I.e. you are none the worse for that (Nich.).

<sup>822</sup> Literally, "it (the proverb) came" (Nich.).

<sup>823</sup> Qur'ān 21:89.

<sup>824</sup> I.e. peace be with you (Nich.).

## **The Fifth River [2.5]**

### **Renouncing bad qualities and bad character and striving for good and Divine qualities**

#### **The First Rivulet [2.5.1]**

##### **Good character and virtuous behaviour<sup>825</sup>.**

- 2-810 In the world of search and seeking (trial and probation) I have not seen a merit of greater value than a good disposition<sup>826</sup>.
- 2-816 Whoever has a good disposition is saved; whoever is of frail heart<sup>827</sup> is broken.
- 2-1017 It is said in the *Ḥadīth* (Traditions of the Prophet): “Avoid the verdure that grows on a dunghill<sup>828</sup>”.
- 2-1018 Know, then, that a fair and pleasing appearance with bad qualities within is not worth a cent;
- 2-1019 And even though the appearance is despicable and unpleasing, yet when that person’s disposition is good, die at his feet!
- 2-3459 When an evil disposition becomes strengthened by habit, you are angered by anyone who hampers you.
- 2-3460 After you have become an eater of clay, anyone who prevents you from eating clay is your enemy.
- 2-3467 When anyone contradicts your disposition (habit of mind), many feelings of hatred against him arise in you.
- 2-3469 Unless the evil disposition has become strongly implanted, how should the fire-temple of passion blaze up by being opposed?
- 2-3470 He may show some feigned courtesy to the opponent, he may make a place for himself in his heart<sup>829</sup>.
- 3-43 Know that the necessary condition for obtaining this sustenance is the transformation of the sensual nature, for the death of evil men arises from their evil nature.
- 3-44 When it has become natural to a human being to eat clay, he grows pale, ill-complexioned, sickly and miserable;

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<sup>825</sup> Qur’ān 68:4 – “and indeed, you are of a great moral character”.

<sup>826</sup> Ḥadīth: “A good character is a gift that God bestows on people”. *Aḥādīth-e Mathnawī* p. 178.

<sup>827</sup> Literally “glass-hearted”, i.e. weak and vicious (Nich.).

<sup>828</sup> *Aḥādīth-e Mathnawī* p. 160. In Nicholson’s translation this is rendered as: “Know that glorification of God out of hypocrisy is like the verdure growing on a dunghill”.

<sup>829</sup> I.e. he may seek to win his favour by flattering him (Nich.).



3-45 But when his ugly nature has been transformed, the ugliness leaves his face, and he shines like a candle.

### Story. [2.5.1]

- 6-1780 An ascetic<sup>830</sup> asked an old priest, “Reverend Sir, is it you who is the oldest, or your beard<sup>831</sup>?”
- 6-1781 He replied, “No; I was born before it: I have seen much of the world without a beard.”
- 6-1782 The gnostic said, “Your beard has turned white, it has changed, but your evil disposition has not become good.”
- 6-1783 Your beard was born after you and yet it has outdone you: you are so dry (vain and useless) because of your passion for *tharīd*<sup>832</sup>.
- 6-1784 You still have the same complexion with which you were born: you have not taken one step forward.
- 6-1788 Like the people of Moses in the heat of the desert, you have remained forty years in the same place, o foolish man.
- 6-1789 Daily you march rapidly until nightfall and find yourself still in the first stage of your journey.
- 2-1226 The roots of bad habit firmly set, and the power to tear them up decreased.

### Story. [2.5.1]

- 2-1227 As (for example) that harsh sweet talker<sup>833</sup> planted a thornbush in the middle of the road
- 2-1228 The wayfarers reproached him and repeatedly told him to dig it up: he did not dig it up.
- 2-1229 At every moment the thornbush was growing bigger: the people’s feet were streaming with<sup>834</sup> blood from its pricks.

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<sup>830</sup> Ḥaẓrat Mawlānā Rūmī uses the word ‘*ārīfī*’ (“a gnostic”). Yet, according to Ḥaẓrat Pīr Mawlānā Ṣafī ‘Alī Shāh II, who is an authority on interpreting the *Mathnawī*, in this passage ‘*ārīfī*’ should be understood as “an ascetic”.

<sup>831</sup> Ḥaẓrat Mawlānā Rūmī uses the word *kashīsh* (“priest”) to make it rhyme with *rīsh* (“beard”); no deeper meaning is implied.

<sup>832</sup> Bread soaked in gravy (Nich.).

<sup>833</sup> The implication is: “Someone who speaks in a nice, flattering and courteous way, but in fact says harsh and unfair things to others.” The juxtaposition of the opposites “harsh” and “sweet talker” is an example of the eloquent sarcasm that is sometimes found in Ḥaẓrat Mawlānā Rūmī’s poetic use of the Persian language.

<sup>834</sup> Literally; “full of” (Nich.).

- 2-1230 The people's clothes were being rent by the thorns: the feet of the poor were being wounded pitifully.
- 2-1231 When the Governor said to him with earnestness, "Dig this up," he replied, "Yes, I will dig it up some day."
- 2-1232 For a long while he promised to dig it up tomorrow and tomorrow: meanwhile his thornbush became robust.
- 2-1235 You who say "Tomorrow," be aware of this, that with every day that time is coming and going,
- 2-1236 That evil tree is growing younger, while this digger is growing old and is becoming a great deal poorer.
- 2-1237 The thornbush is growing stronger and higher; its digger is aging and wasting away.
- 2-1238 Every day and every moment the thornbush is green and fresh; every day its digger is more sickly and withered.
- 2-1239 It is growing younger, you older: be quick and do not waste your time!
- 2-1240 Know that every single bad habit of yours is a thornbush: many times, after all, have its thorns pierced your foot.
- 2-1241 Many times you have been wounded by your own evil habits – you have no sense, you are very senseless.
- 2-1244 Either take up the axe and strike like a man – like 'Alī, destroy this gate of Khaybar<sup>835</sup> –
- 2-1245 Or unite these thorns with the rosebush: unite the light of the Friend (God) with the sensual fire,
- 2-1246 In order that His light may extinguish your fire, and that union with Him may turn your thorns into roses.

### **The Second Rivulet [2.5.2]** **Sincerity (ṣidq).**

- 6-4276 The heart is comforted by true words, just like a thirsty man is comforted by water –
- 2-3239 Sharp-sightedness becomes the means of awakening (stimulating) every sense, so that perception of the spiritual becomes familiar to all the senses.
- 2-2730 "Nothing but the truth will save you: justice is calling you to speak the truth.

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<sup>835</sup> A reference to Ḥaẓrat 'Alī's famous victory over the rebellious fortress of Khaybar in Arabia in 629 CE.

- 2-2735 The troubled heart is not comforted by lying words: water and oil kindle no light.
- 2-2736 Only in truthful speech is there comfort for the heart: truths are the bait that entraps the heart<sup>836</sup>.
- 2-2737 Sick? Surely, and ill-savoured<sup>837</sup> is the heart that cannot distinguish the taste of this and that.
- 2-2738 When the heart becomes whole (is healed) of pain and disease, it will recognize the flavour of falsehood and truth.
- 4-3030 Your true substance is concealed in falsehood, like the taste of butter in the taste of buttermilk.
- 4-3032 During many years this buttermilk, which is the body, is visible and manifest, while the butter, which is the soul, is perishing and is annihilated within it.
- 6-4713 And the colour of doubt and the colour of ingratitude and hypocrisy will endure forever in the disobedient and rebellious soul<sup>838</sup>.
- 6-4712 The colour of sincerity and the colour of piety and intuitive faith will endure in the devout worshippers for evermore.

### **Story. [2.5.2]**

- 3-732 A person, who was held in low esteem because of his poverty, used to grease his moustache every morning
- 3-733 And go among the rich, saying, "I have eaten some well-greased food at the dinner party."
- 3-734 He would merrily put his hand on his moustache as a sign, meaning, "Look at my moustache!"
- 3-735 For this is the witness to the truth of my words, and this is the token of my eating greasy and delicious food."
- 3-736 His belly would say in soundless (mute) response, "May God destroy the plots of the liars!"
- 3-737 Your boasting has set me on fire: may that greasy moustache of yours be torn out!
- 3-738 Were it not for your foul boasting, o beggar, some generous man would have taken<sup>839</sup> pity on me.

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<sup>836</sup> Literally "the grain of the snare of the heart" (Nich.).

<sup>837</sup> Literally "ill-mouthed" (Nich.).

<sup>838</sup> Literally "rebellious soul".

- 3-740 God has said, “Do not move ear or tail crookedly<sup>840</sup>: *their truthfulness will benefit the truthful*<sup>841</sup>”.
- 3-742 Or if you do not tell your fault, at least refrain from idle talk: do not kill yourself by ostentation and trickery.
- 3-752 Bring forward (practise) honesty, or else be silent, and then see pity and enjoy it.
- 3-748 Because of his pretension, the boastful hypocrite desires to be (reputed) rich, but his belly loathes his moustache.
- 3-749 Crying, “Show that which he is hiding! He has consumed me with anguish: o God, expose him!”
- 3-753 His belly became the adversary of his moustache and secretly resorted to<sup>842</sup> prayer.
- 3-755 The belly’s prayer was answered: the fieriness of need put out a flag<sup>843</sup>.
- 3-758 When the belly committed itself to God, the cat came and carried off the skin of that sheep’s tail.
- 3-759 They ran after the cat, but it fled. The child of the boaster, for fear of being scolded, changed<sup>844</sup> colour (turned pale).
- 3-760 The little child came into the midst of the company and took away the prestige of the boastful man.
- 3-761 It said, “The sheep’s tail with which you greased your lips and moustaches every morning –
- 3-762 The cat came and suddenly snatched it away: I ran hard, but the effort was useless.”
- 3-763 Those who were present laughed from astonishment and their feelings of pity were stirred up again.
- 3-764 They invited him to eat and kept him full-fed, they sowed the seed of pity in his soil.
- 3-765 When he had tasted honesty from the noble, he became devoted to honesty without arrogance (humbly).

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<sup>839</sup> Literally “would have let fall” (Nich.).

<sup>840</sup> Meaning “Do not act untruthfully”.

<sup>841</sup> Qur’ān 5:119.

<sup>842</sup> Literally “took hold of” (Nich.).

<sup>843</sup> I.e. the fervour of the prayer produced a manifest effect (Nich.).

<sup>844</sup> Literally “shed” (Nich.).

### **Sincerity stems from renouncing desire. [2.5.2]**

- 2-2742 The people are drunk with greed and desire: that is why they accept your deceit.
- 2-2743 Whoever has rid his nature of vain desire has in doing so made his spiritual eye familiar with the secret.

### **Story. [2.5.2]**

- 2-2744 They installed a qāzī<sup>845</sup>, and meanwhile he wept. The deputy said, ‘O qāzī, what are you weeping for?’
- 2-2745 This is not the time for you to weep and lament: it is the time for you to rejoice and receive felicitations.’
- 2-2746 ‘Ah,’ he said, ‘how shall a man without insight pronounce judgement – an ignorant man decide between two who know?’
- 2-2747 Those two adversaries are acquainted with their own case: what should the poor qāzī know of those two entanglements?
- 2-2748 He is ignorant and unaware of their real state: how should he proceed to give judgement concerning their lives and property?’
- 2-2749 The deputy said, ‘The defendants know the truth of their case and nevertheless they are unsound (prejudiced); you do not know the facts, but you are the guiding light<sup>846</sup> of the whole religious community.
- 2-2750 Because you have no prejudice to interfere with your discernment, and that freedom from prejudice is light to the eyes;
- 2-2751 While those two who know are blinded by their self-interest; prejudice has put their knowledge in the grave.
- 2-2752 Uprightness makes ignorance wise; prejudice makes knowledge perverse and unjust.
- 1-334 When self-interest appears, virtue becomes hidden: a hundred veils rise from the heart to the eye.
- 1-335 When the qāzī lets bribery take hold of his heart, how should he know the wrongdoer from the wretched wronged ones?
- 2-2753 As long as you accept no bribe, you are seeing; when you act greedily, you are blind and enslaved.

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<sup>845</sup> Judge in Muslim communities (Arabic *qāḍī*, Persian *qāzī*).

<sup>846</sup> Literally “candle”.

- 2-2754 I have turned my nature away from vain desire: I have not eaten delicious morsels.
- 2-2755 My heart, which tastes and distinguishes, has become bright like a clear mirror: it really knows truth from falsehood.

**Meeting one's commitments is the sign of sincerity<sup>847</sup>. [2.5.2]**

“O you who believe, fulfill all your contracts (obligations)<sup>848</sup>!”

- 5-1004 He who poured a drop of water on the earth of faithfulness, how should the prey, fortune, be able to flee from him?
- 5-1165 Since Love is loyal, it purchases (desires) him who is loyal: it does not look at a disloyal friend.
- 5-1166 Man resembles a tree, and the root is the covenant with God: the root must be cherished with all one's might.
- 5-1167 A corrupt (infirm) covenant is a rotten root and is cut off (deprived) of food and grace.
- 5-1168 Although the branches and leaves of the date-palm are green, greenness is no benefit if the root is corrupted;
- 5-1169 And if it the branch has no green leaves, while it has a good root, in the end a hundred leaves will stretch out their hands.
- 5-1181 When you have acted loyally in keeping your covenant with God, God will graciously keep His covenant with you.
- 5-1182 You have shut your eyes to keeping faith with God, you have not listened to the words *Remember Me, I will remember you*<sup>849</sup>.
- 5-1183 Give ear, listen to the words *Keep My covenant*, in order that the words *I will keep your covenant*<sup>850</sup> may come from the Friend.
- 5-1192 The company of the loyal is given superiority over all other sorts of men.
- 5-1193 Seas and mountains are made subjects to them; the four elements are also their slaves.
- 5-1194 This (miraculous power) is only a favour (conferred on them) for a sign, so that the disbelievers may see it plainly.

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<sup>847</sup> Qur'ān 33:7-8 and 5:1.

<sup>848</sup> Qur'ān 5:1.

<sup>849</sup> Qur'ān 2:152.

<sup>850</sup> Qur'ān 2:40.

- 5-1195 Those hidden graces of theirs, which are not perceived by the senses and which are beyond description –
- 5-1196 Those are the real matter: those endure forever, they are neither cut off nor reclaimed.
- 5-1173 I you dislike being jealous like Iblīs, come away from the door of pretension and go to the portal of loyalty.
- 5-1174 If you have no loyalty, at least do not talk presumptuously, for words are for the most part self-assertion – “we” and “I”.
- 2-2842 Do not, indeed, go (incline) towards the courtesy of the faithless, for it is a ruined bridge: take heed of my warning.
- 2-2132 Do not believe him, even if he takes an oath: the man whose speech is false will break his oath.
- 2-2133 Since, without the oath, his word was a lie, do not be ensnared<sup>851</sup> by his deceit and oath.
- 2-2134 His fleshly soul is in command, and his intellect is captive; even supposing that he has sworn on a hundred thousand Qur’āns,
- 2-2135 Yet, since without taking an oath he will break his pact – if he takes an oath, he will break that too;
- 2-2136 Because the fleshly soul becomes all the more infuriated by your binding it with a heavy oath.
- 2-2139 Wash your hands (give up hope) of his obeying the Divine command, “*Fulfil your obligations*”<sup>852</sup>; do not say to him, “*Keep your oaths*”<sup>853</sup>.
- 2-2873 Since the wicked man does not keep faith in matters of religion, he will break his oath at any time.
- 2-2874 The righteous have no need of taking oath, because they have two clear (discerning) eyes.
- 2-2875 Breach of pacts and covenants is the result of stupidity; keeping of oaths and faithfulness to one’s word is the practice of him who is devoted to<sup>854</sup> God.

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<sup>851</sup> Literally “do not fall into buttermilk” (Nich.).

<sup>852</sup> Qur’ān 5:1.

<sup>853</sup> Qur’ān 5:89.

<sup>854</sup> In the Persian text the word *taqī* is used, i.e. someone who practises *taqwā*. *Taqwā* is often translated as “piety” or “fear of God”, but in reality, it denotes an inner attitude of devotion to God and seeking the pleasure of God, not out of fear, nor out of desire for the rewards of Paradise, but merely out of selfless love.

### The Third Rivulet [2.5.3]

#### Generosity (jūd).

“And they give them preference over themselves, even though poverty became their lot<sup>855</sup>.”

- 2-895 The Prophet said, “Whoever knows for sure his recompense on the day of Resurrection –
- 2-896 That this reward will be multiplied tenfold – at every moment a different act of generosity will issue from Him<sup>856</sup>.”
- 2-897 All generosity arises from seeing compensations; therefore seeing the compensation is opposed to fearing (and shrinking from the act of generosity).
- 2-898 Miserliness consists in not seeing compensations: the prospect of pearls keeps the diver glad.
- 2-900 Generosity, then, comes from the eye, not from the hand: it is seeing that matters; none but the seer is saved.
- 2-894 On the river-bank, only he who is blind to the stream of water is stingy with it.
- 2-1273 This generosity is a branch of the cypress of Paradise: woe to him who lets such a branch go from his hand!
- 2-1272 Generosity is the abandonment of lusts and pleasures; no one who is sunken in lust rises up again.
- 2-1274 This abandonment of sensuality is *the firmest handle*<sup>857</sup>: this branch draws the spirit up to Heaven.
- 2-1275 So act in such a way that the branch of generosity, o righteous man<sup>858</sup>, drawing you up, may carry you to its origin.
- 6-3572 So that Muṣṭafā (Muḥammad), the King of prosperity, has said, “O possessors of wealth, it pays to be generous<sup>859</sup>.”
- 6-3573 Riches were never diminished by alms-giving: in reality, acts of charity are an excellent means of attaching wealth to one’s self.
- 4-1201 The beneficent died, but their acts of beneficence remained: oh, blessed is he who rode this steed<sup>860</sup>!
- 4-1203 The Prophet said, “Blessed is he who departed from this world and left good deeds behind him.”

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<sup>855</sup> Qur’ān 59:9.

<sup>856</sup> *Aḥādīth-e Mathnawī* p. 180.

<sup>857</sup> Qur’ān 2:256.

<sup>858</sup> Literally “o man of good religion” (Nich.).

<sup>859</sup> *Aḥādīth-e Mathnawī* p. 582.

<sup>860</sup> I.e. practised beneficence (Nich.).



- 4-1204 The beneficent man died, but his beneficence did not die: to God, religion (piety) and beneficence are not of little value.
- 3-863 The invitation of the deceiver enticed them. O righteous man, beware of the deceit of the Devil!
- 1-2223 The Prophet said, “For admonishment’s sake two angels are always proclaiming merrily,<sup>861</sup>
- 1-2224 Saying, ‘O God, keep the squanderers fully satisfied, give hundred thousand-fold recompense for every dirham that they spend.
- 1-2225 O God, do not give the niggards in this world anything but loss upon loss!’

### **Being generous without expecting a reward. [2.5.3]**

- 1-2236 If you give bread for God’s sake, you will be given bread in return; if you give your life for God’s sake, you will be given life in return.
- 1-2226 Oh, there are many acts of niggardliness that are better than wastefulness: do not give what belongs to God except by the command of God,
- 1-2227 That you may gain infinite treasure in return, and that you may not be numbered among the infidels.
- 5-192 He is a fowler if he scatters grain not out of mercy and generosity but in order to catch (the birds).
- 3-864 Listen to the cry of the poor<sup>862</sup> and needy, so that your ear does not receive (with approval) the cry of a cunning rogue.
- 3-865 Even if the beggars (dervishes) are covetous and depraved, yet seek the man of heart (the spiritual man) amongst the gluttons.
- 3-866 At the bottom of the sea there are pearls mingled with pebbles: glories are to be found amidst shames.

### **Story. [2.5.3]**

- 1-3707 A fire broke out in the time of ‘Umar<sup>863</sup>: it was devouring stones as though they were dry wood.
- 1-3709 Half the city caught fire from the flames: water was afraid of it (the fire) and was amazed.

<sup>861</sup> *Aḥādīth-e Mathnawī* p. 99.

<sup>862</sup> In the Persian text the word *darwīshān*, which is synonymous with *faqīr* (plural *fuqarā*) i.e. “those who are poor before God and in need of His mercy”.

<sup>863</sup> Ḥaẓrat ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (ca. 581-644 CE), the second caliph or successor to Ḥaẓrat Muḥammad in Sunnī Islām.

- 1-3710 Some intelligent persons were throwing water-skins and vinegar on the fire,
- 1-3711 But out of spite (obstinacy) the fire was increasing: help was coming to it from One who is infinite<sup>864</sup>.
- 1-3712 The people came to ‘Umar in haste, saying, “Our fire will not be quenched at all by water.”
- 1-3713 He said, “That fire is one of God’s signs: it is a flame from the fire of your wickedness.
- 1-3714 Abandon water and deal out bread (in charity), abandon avarice if you are my people (followers).”
- 1-3715 The people said to him, “We have opened our doors, we have been bountiful and devoted to generosity.”
- 1-3716 He replied, “You have given bread because of rule and out of habit, you have not opened your hands for the sake of God –
- 1-3717 Only for glory, for ostentation and for pride, not because of fear, piety<sup>865</sup> and supplication.”
- 1-3720 Everyone shows favour to his own people: the fool (who shows favour to the foolish) thinks he has really done good and religious work.
- 1-2235 It is fitting for the generous man to give money in this way, but verily, the generosity of the lover is the surrender of his soul (life).

### **The Fourth Rivulet [2.5.4]** **Gratitude (shukr).**

- 3-2677 The Prophets said, “In your hearts is an illness which produces a canker that leads you away from true understanding,
- 3-2678 And which turns the benefit entirely into disease: how should food become a source of strength in the sick?
- 3-2684 You must remove that illness swiftly, for with that illness sugar will seem filth.
- 3-2896 Showing gratitude is the soul of the bounty, and the bounty is like the husk, because showing gratitude brings you to the abode of the Beloved.

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<sup>864</sup> Or “from (the realm of) infinity.” (Nich.).

<sup>865</sup> “Piety”: in the Persian text the word *taqwā* is used. *Taqwā* is often translated as “piety” or “fear of God”, but in reality, it denotes an inner attitude of devotion to God and seeking the pleasure of God, not out of fear, nor out of desire for the rewards of Paradise, but merely out of selfless love.

- 3-2897      Bounty produces heedlessness, and gratitude alertness: hunt after bounty with the snare of gratitude to the King.
- 5-2315      If the tip of every hair of mine should gain a tongue (power to speak), yet the thanks due to You are inexpressible.
- 1-1525      Giving thanks to God is a collar on every neck (everyone's duty); it is not giving thanks to dispute and make one's face look sour.
- 1-1526      If giving thanks is only to look sour, then there is no giving thanks like vinegar.
- 3-2895      Giving thanks for the bounty is sweeter than the bounty itself: how should he who is addicted to giving thanks go towards (direct his attention to) the bounty<sup>866</sup>?
- 3-2899      You will eat your fill of the food and dessert of God, so that hunger and begging will leave you.

### **Being thankful in all circumstances, in both sorrow and joy. [2.5.4]**

- 3-2870      Many times you have fallen into the snare of greed and given up your throat to be cut;
- 3-2871      Again He who graciously inclines hearts to repentance has set you free, has accepted your repentance and made you glad.
- 3-2882      In giving thanks for the bounty shown in setting you free, it is fitting for you to commemorate the bounty of God.
- 3-2883      How often in sorrows and in tribulation have you cried, "O God, deliver me from the snare,
- 3-2884      That I may serve You in a similar way, practise beneficence and throw dust in the eyes of the Devil!"

### **Allegory. [2.5.4]**

- 3-2885      In winter the bones of the dog are drawn together: the blows of the frost make him so small
- 3-2886      That he says, "Having such a little body, I must build a house of stone.
- 3-2887      When summer comes, I will build a house of stone against the cold with my paws."
- 3-2888      But when summer comes, his bones expand from the relief (which he feels), and his skin grows sleek,

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<sup>866</sup> I.e. he turns towards the Benefactor instead of occupying himself with the benefit (Nich.).

- 3-2889 And, when he sees himself thick-bodied, he says, “In what house should I find room, o noble sir?”
- 3-2892 At the time of pain the bones of your greed shrink together and diminish in size,
- 3-2893 And you say penitently, “I will build a house: it will be a resting-place (refuge) for me in winter”;
- 3-2894 But when the pain is gone and your greed has grown thick-bodied, the desire for the house leaves you, just as in the case of the dog.

### **Being thankful to God as well as to people. [2.5.4]**

#### **Hadīth:**

**“He who is not thankful to people will not be able to be thankful to God<sup>867</sup>”.**

- 6-3252 He said, “When a servant of God gains the Divine favour so that he shows hospitality to a fortunate man,
- 6-3253 Gives up his own wealth for his sake and sacrifices his own dignity for the sake of conferring dignity on him,
- 6-3254 Gratitude to the benefactor is certainly the same as gratitude to God, since it was the Divine favour that caused him to show beneficence<sup>868</sup>.
- 6-3256 Always give thanks to God for His bounties, and always give thanks and praise to the Khāwja<sup>869</sup> (your benefactor) too.
- 6-3257 Even though a mother’s tenderness is derived from God, yet it is a sacred duty and a worthy task to serve her.
- 6-3258 For this reason God has said, “*Bless him (the Prophet)*<sup>870</sup>,” for Muḥammad was one to whom the attributes of Divine Providence were given.
- 1-443 Give thanks to God and be a servant to those who give thanks: be in their presence as one who is dead, be steadfast.
- 3-2671 From the viewpoint of reason it is necessary to give thanks to the Benefactor; otherwise the door of everlasting wrath will be opened.
- 5-997 The excellence and knowledge disappear from the ungrateful man, so that he does not see a trace of them ever again.
- 5-1000 Except the thankful and faithful who are attended by fortune<sup>871</sup>.

<sup>867</sup> *Aḥādīth-e Mathnawī* p. 576.

<sup>868</sup> Literally “associated him with beneficence” (Nich.).

<sup>869</sup> *Khawja* (< Fārsī *khawjeh*, more or less pronounced *khōjé*) is an honorific title given to people of distinction.

<sup>870</sup> Qur’ān 33:56.

<sup>871</sup> Literally “behind whom is fortune” (Nich.).

- 5-1001 How should the past fortune bestow strength on its possessors? It is the future fortune that bestows a special virtue.
- 2-3288 At every moment, in the rose-garden of giving thanks to God, it will produce a hundred sweet songs, like the nightingale.

### **The ungrateful. [2.5.4]**

- 1-946 Because ingratitude is wickedness and disgrace and brings the ingrate to the bottom of Hell-fire.
- 3-286 But those bad-natured ones gave no thanks for that bounty: in fidelity they were less than dogs.
- 3-287 When a piece of bread comes to a dog from the door, he will gird up his loins at the door.
- 3-288 He will become the watcher and guardian of the door, even though he has to endure violence and hard treatment.
- 3-310 Your ingratitude and forgetfulness did not call to mind your former drinking of honey.
- 3-314 Pace around that same door: do not be less than a dog, if you have become associated as a fellow-servant with the dog of the Cave<sup>872</sup>.
- 3-290 And again, if a strange dog comes by day or night to a quarter of the town, the dogs there will teach him a lesson at once.
- 3-291 Saying, "Get back to the place that is your first lodging: obligation for that kindness is the heart's pledge (which it must redeem)."
- 3-292 They will bite him, saying, "Get back to your place, do not leave the obligation for that kindness unpaid anymore."
- 3-316 Hold fast to the first door where you ate bones, and fulfil your obligation: do not leave that debt unpaid."
- 3-318 They bite him, saying, "O disobedient dog, go away! Do not become an enemy to your benefactor."
- 3-315 Because even dogs admonish dogs, saying, "Fix your heart on your first home.
- 3-319 Be attached, like the door-ring, to that same door; keep watch, be nimble and ready to spring.

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<sup>872</sup> The story of "The Companions of the Cave" is told in the Qur'ān in the 18<sup>th</sup> Sūra (*Sūratu 'l-Kahf*, "Sūra of the Cave"), verses 9-27. The dog of the Companions of the Cave occurs in verse 18.

- 3-320 Do not be the image of our breaking faith, do not recklessly make our disloyalty notorious.
- 3-321 Since fidelity is the sign by which the dogs are known, go away and do not bring disgrace and infamy on the dogs.”
- 3-322 Since unfaithfulness has always been a disgrace even to dogs, how should you consider it right to show unfaithfulness?

**The Fifth Rivulet [2.5.5]**  
**Contentment (riḍā).**  
**True sāliks and gnostics are content**  
**with whatever happens to them.**

- 3-1879 Those Saints who perform invocation<sup>873</sup> are in reality different from these travellers: sometimes they sew and sometimes they tear.
- 3-1880 I know another class of Saints whose mouths are closed to invocation<sup>874</sup>.
- 3-1881 Because of the contentment (quietism) that is subservient to (possessed by) those noble ones, it has become unlawful for them to seek to avert Destiny.
- 3-1882 In submitting to Destiny they experience a peculiar delight: it would be an act of infidelity for them to crave release.

**Story. [2.5.5]**

- 3-1884 Buhlūl<sup>875</sup> said to a certain dervish, “How are you, o dervish? Tell me.”
- 3-1885 He said, “How should that one be, according to whose desire the work of the world goes on? –
- 3-1886 According to whose desire the torrents and rivers flow, and the stars move in such way as He wants;
- 3-1888 He sends condolence wherever He wants; He bestows congratulation wherever He wants.
- 3-1889 The travellers on the Way go according to His pleasure; they who have lost the Way have fallen into His snare.
- 3-1891 Buhlūl said, “O King, you have spoken the truth: it is like this: this is manifest in your spiritual radiance and glorious appearance.

<sup>873</sup> Arabic *du‘ā*: “invocation”, “supplication”.

<sup>874</sup> Ḥadīth: “Those who acquire Divine Knowledge keep silent” (close their mouths, i.e. they do not divulge Divine Mysteries). *Aḥādīth-e Mathnawī* p. 489.

<sup>875</sup> “Buhlūl (or Bahlūl) the Madman” (*Buhlūl-e Majnūn* or *Bahlūl-e Majnūn*): a wise mystic who feigned madness. He is supposed to have lived in the 9<sup>th</sup> century CE. The name *Buhlūl* or *Bahlūl* means “fool” or “clown”.

- 3-1892      You are this and a hundred times as much, o truthful one; but explain this mystery and explain it very well.
- 3-1894      Explain it in your words in such a way that the understanding of the common people may profit from it.”
- 3-1898      The dervish said, “This at least is evident to the common people, that the world is subject to the command of God.
- 3-1899      No leaf drops from a tree without the predestination and ordainment of the Ruler of Fortune.
- 3-1901      The inclination and desire which is Man’s bridle – its movement is subject to the command of the Self-Sufficient One.
- 3-1905      Hear this much, however: since all action in the universe only comes to pass by the command of the Maker,
- 3-1906      When the predestination of God becomes the pleasure of His servant, the servant becomes a willing slave to His decree.
- 3-1909      Wherever the Eternal Command takes its course, living and dying are one to him.
- 3-1910      He lives for God’s sake, not for riches; he dies for God’s sake, not from fear and pain.
- 3-1911      His faith is held for the sake of doing His will, not for the sake of Paradise and its trees and streams.
- 3-1912      His abandonment of infidelity is also for God’s sake, not for fear of going into the Fire.
- 3-1914      He laughs at the moment when he sees the Divine pleasure: to him Destiny is even as sugared sweetmeat.”
- 3-1915      The servant of God whose disposition and character are like this – does not the world move according to his command and decree?
- 3-1916      Then why should he implore and cry in prayer, “O God, avert this destiny”?
- 3-1919      Why, then, should he invoke God, unless perhaps he sees the pleasure of the Divine Judge in such invocation?
- 5-1172      Whenever a man’s temperament and constitution are feeble, he does not wish anyone to be sound of body.
- 4-2679      Because every miserable wretch whose harvest has been burnt does not want that anyone else’s candle should be lighted.

### **Envy and its dangerous consequences. [2.5.5]**

- 1-435            When you practise deceit and envy against one who is without envy, black stains arise in your heart from that envy.
- 1-429            And if on the way envy seizes you by the throat, it belongs to (is characteristic of) Iblīs to go beyond bounds in envy.
- 1-431            In the Way there is no harder passage than this. Oh, fortunate he who does not have envy as travel companion!
- 2-804            You are envious, saying, “I am inferior to so-and-so: he (by his superior position) is increasing my inferiority in fortune.
- 2-805            But indeed envy is another defect and fault; no, it is worse than all inferiorities.
- 2-806            That Devil (Satan), through the shame and disgrace of inferiority to Adam, cast himself into a hundred damnations<sup>876</sup>.
- 2-807            Because of envy, he wished to be at the top. At the top, indeed! No, he wished to be a blood-shedder.
- 2-808            Abū Jahl<sup>877</sup> was put to shame by Muḥammad, and because of envy raised himself to the top.
- 2-809            His name was Abū’l-Ḥakam, and he became Abū Jahl: oh many worthy ones have become unworthy because of envy.
- 2-1405           Josephs are hidden because of the jealousy of the ugly, for because of enemies the beautiful live in the fire of tribulation.
- 2-1406           Josephs are in the pit through the deceit of their brothers, who give Joseph to the wolves out of envy.
- 2-1407           What happened to Joseph of Egypt because of envy? This envy is a big wolf in disguise.
- 2-1408           Inevitably, kind Jacob always had fear and dread for Joseph because of this wolf.
- 2-1409           The outward (visible) wolf, indeed, did not prowl about (approach) Joseph; but this envy has actually surpassed wolves (in malice).

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<sup>876</sup> Literally “deprivation (of spiritual blessings)” (Nich.).

<sup>877</sup> Abū Jahl: ‘Amr ibn Hishām, an uncle of the Prophet, was a Meccan leader who ferociously opposed Islām. He disliked Ḥaẓrat Muḥammad and publicly humiliated him. He had once been known as *Abū’l-Ḥakam* – “Father of Wisdom”, but because of his hostility towards Ḥaẓrat Muḥammad, he became known as *Abū Jahl* – “Father of Ignorance”.



- 2-1412 Because on the Day of Gathering the envious will without doubt be raised from the dead and brought together to Judgement in the shape of wolves.
- 5-1201 How do the common folk burn with envy for the fleeting happiness of riches and pleasures of the body!
- 5-1202 See the kings, how they lead armies to battle and slay their own kinsmen because of envy.
- 5-1210 If the Law had not cast a gracious spell on them, everyone would have torn the body of his rival to pieces.
- 5-1216 If, then, there is all this jealousy, disagreement and injustice with regard to this foul faithless carcass<sup>878</sup>.
- 5-1217 How, then, must it be when genies<sup>879</sup> and men become envious with regard to that fortune and felicity (hereafter)?
- 5-1218 Truly those devils are envious of old: never for a moment do they cease from<sup>880</sup> waylaying;
- 5-1219 And the sons of Adam who have sown the seed of disobedience – they too have become devils out of enviousness.
- 5-1180 Whoever disobeys God becomes a devil, for he becomes envious of the fortune of the righteous.
- 5-1224 And if anyone has saved his soul and become eminent in religion, those two jealous parties keep lamenting.
- 5-1225 Both gnash their teeth in envy at anyone to whom the spiritual Teacher has given wisdom.
- 5-1171 When you see that the loyal have profited, you become envious because of it, like a devil.
- 4-2680 Listen, acquire some degree of perfection, in order that you too may not be afflicted by the perfection of others.
- 1-436 Become (like) dust under the feet of the men of God; throw dust on the head of envy, like we do.
- 1-432 This body, you must know, is the house of envy, for the household is tainted with envy.

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<sup>878</sup> I.e. the World (Nich.).

<sup>879</sup> In Islām and pre-Islamic folklore, *Jinn* (singular: *jinnī*) are supernatural creatures, who possess free will and can be good or evil in nature. Iblīs (Satan) was the chief of the Jinn; when God ordered him to bow down before Adam, he refused and fell from grace.

<sup>880</sup> Literally “are they devoid of” (Nich.).

- 1-434 The text *Purify My house, you two*<sup>881</sup>, is the explanation of such purity: the purified heart is a treasure of Divine light, even though its talisman is of earth.
- 4-2681 Beg of God the removal of this envy, that God may free you from the body,
- 4-2682 And give you an inward occupation, from which you will not become separated (so as to turn your attention) outwards.

### **The Sixth Rivulet [2.5.6] Contentment (qanā‘a) and avarice (ḥirṣ).**

#### **Ḥadīth:**

**Saying: “The contented person receives honour and glory, the covetous person’s life is full of difficulties”.**

**Ḥadīth: “Contentment is an unfailing treasure”<sup>882</sup>.**

- 1-2321 The Prophet said, “What is contentment? A treasure.” You cannot distinguish the gain from the pain.
- 1-2322 This contentment is the soul’s treasure: do not boast of possessing it, o you who are grief and pain to my soul.
- 5-2395 Since the Prophet has said that contentment is a treasure, how should the hidden treasure be gained by everyone?
- 1-2320 When have you illumined your soul by contentment? Of contentment you have learned only the name.
- 1-19 O son, break your chains and be free! How long will you be a slave to<sup>883</sup> silver and gold?
- 1-20 If you pour the sea into a pitcher, how much will it contain? One day’s portion.
- 1-21 The pitcher, the eye of the covetous, never becomes full: the oyster-shell is not filled with pearls until it is contented.
- 1-140 Ask your wish, but ask with moderation: a blade of straw will not support the mountain.
- 1-141 If the Sun, which illumines this world, should come a little nearer, all will be burned.
- 1-2374 Have patience with poverty and abandon this disgust, because in poverty there is the light of the Lord of Majesty<sup>884</sup>.

<sup>881</sup> Qur’ān 2:125; “you two” refers to Ḥaẓrat Ibrāhīm (Abraham) and his son Ismā‘īl (Ishmael).

<sup>882</sup> *Aḥādīth-e Mathnawī* p.104.

<sup>883</sup> Literally “in the bonds of” (Nich.).

<sup>884</sup> *Dhū’l-Jalāl*, which literally means “the Possessor of Majesty”.

- 1-2375 Do not look sour<sup>885</sup>, and you will see thousands of souls plunged, through contentment, in an ocean of honey.
- 1-2302 Whoever lives sweetly (without Love) dies bitterly (painfully): whoever serves his body does not save his soul.
- 1-2303 Sheep are driven from the plains (to the town): the fatter they are, the quicker they are killed.
- 1-2390 If I filled the world with hidden pearls of wisdom, what good would it do to me, since they are not your portion (since you are unfit to receive them)?
- 2-454 Do not burden your heart with thoughts of livelihood; livelihood will not fail: be constant in attending the Divine Court.
- 5-1409 The wise man gets happiness from the present life, not sorrow, while the ignorant are left in disappointment and regret.
- 5-1410 When the trap-cord of sensuality falls on their throats, it becomes unlawful (forbidden) to them all to eat the grain.
- 5-1413 Again, the knowing and prudent birds have shut themselves out<sup>886</sup> from the grain;
- 5-1414 For the grain in the trap is poisonous food: blind is the bird that desires the grain in the trap.
- 5-1412 Only the heedless bird will eat grain from the trap, as these common folk do in the trap of the present world.
- 5-1407 Eat less of the grain, do not patch the body so much with food: after having recited *eat*, recite also *do not be excessive*<sup>887</sup>,
- 5-1408 So that you may eat the grain and yet not fall into the trap. Knowledge and contentment have this effect. And now farewell<sup>888</sup>.

### **Disappointment results from greed. [2.5.6]**

- 5-1468 Greed has blinded you and will deprive you of blessedness: the Devil will make you accursed like himself.
- 3-595 O son, every greedy person is deprived of spiritual blessings: do not run like the greedy, walk more slowly.

<sup>885</sup> Literally “do not sell vinegar” (Nich.).

<sup>886</sup> Literally “have made for themselves a dry bandage” (Nich.).

<sup>887</sup> Qur’ān 7:31.

<sup>888</sup> In the original text the expression *wa’s-salām* is used, which may also mean “and let it be done with that”, “and let that be the end of the matter”.

- 5-2398 No one was ever deprived of spiritual life by contentment; no one was ever made a spiritual king by covetousness.
- 5-2823 Greed makes one blind, foolish and ignorant: to fools it makes death seem easy.
- 2-1547 Failing because of covetousness is to see the end; it is to laugh at your own heart and intellect.
- 5-2821 At any rate I shall be delivered from this torment of hunger: if this is life, I am better off dead.
- 4-249 Your greed is like fire in the material world: its every flaming tongue has opened a hundred mouths (to swallow filthy profits).
- 3-2629 The blind man is Greed: he sees other people's faults, hair by hair, and tells them from street to street,
- 3-2630 But his blind eyes do not perceive one mote of his own faults, even though he is a fault-finder.
- 3-512 O blind asses, in this direction there are snares; in this direction there are bloodsheds hidden in ambush.
- 2-584 The man dazed by greed may hear a hundred stories, but not a single point comes into the ear of greed.
- 1-333 Anger and lust make a man squint-eyed, they change the spirit (so that it leaves) from uprightness.
- 5-764 Snap this cord, which is greed and envy: remember the words *on her neck a cord of palm-fibres.*<sup>889</sup>

### **Covetousness as a veil before the heart's inner eye. [2.5.6]**

- 2-569 If you wish eye, understanding and hearing to be pure, tear the veils of selfish desire to pieces.
- 2-579 Whoever has such desire becomes a stammerer (morally confused); if desire is present, how should the spiritual eye and the heart become bright?
- 2-580 The imagination of power and wealth before his eye is just as a hair in the eye,
- 2-581 Except, of course, in the case of the intoxicated Saint who is filled with God: even if you give him treasures (vast riches), he is free;
- 2-582 For when anyone enjoys vision of God, this world becomes carrion in his eyes.

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<sup>889</sup> Qur'ān 111:5.

- 2-572 If desire were to appear in the mirror, that mirror would be like us with regard to hypocrisy.
- 2-573 If the balance had desire for riches, how would the balance give a true description of the case?
- 3-1693 Oh, how many birds flying in search of grain had their gullets cut by their own gullet (greediness)!
- 3-1694 Oh, how many birds that, through their belly (appetite) and pangs of hunger, were made captive in a cage!
- 3-1695 Oh, how many fish that, because of their gullet's greed, were cut by a hook in water hard to reach!
- 3-1697 Oh, how many learned and honest judges who were disgraced<sup>890</sup> by greed and bribery!
- 3-1696 Oh, how many chaste women and men hidden behind a curtain were brought to open shame by the misfortune of lust and gluttony!

**Story:**  
**Covetous people forfeit the grace of the Saints<sup>891</sup>. [2.5.6]**

- 3-421 Hear how many admonitions, hot and cold (kindly and severe), God addressed to the Companions of the Prophet,
- 3-422 Because, in a year of distress (famine), at the sound of the drum<sup>892</sup> they quitted the Friday congregation without tarrying, thus rendering it void,
- 3-423 "For fear" so they said "others should buy cheap and get the advantage over us with regard to the imported goods."
- 3-424 The Prophet was left alone in prayer with two or three poor men firm in their faith and full of supplication.
- 3-425 God said, "How did the drum, the pastime and a trading affair separate you from a man of God?"
- 3-427 Because of the wheat, you have sowed the seed of vanity and abandoned the Messenger of God.
- 3-428 Companionship with him is better than pastime and riches: look and see whom you have abandoned, rub an eye!

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<sup>890</sup> Literally "made pallid" (Nich.).

<sup>891</sup> Qur'ān 62:11.

<sup>892</sup> Announcing the approach of a caravan with merchandise (Nich.).

- 3-429 Verily, did this not become certain to your greed, that I am the Provider and the Best of Providers?<sup>893</sup>
- 3-431 For the sake of wheat you have become separated from Him who has sent the wheat from Heaven.
- 3-419 Whatever would set you apart from the Friend, do not listen to it, for it holds loss, loss.
- 3-420 Even if the gain is a hundred hundredfold, do not accept it: do not, for the sake of the gold, break with the Treasurer, o dervish!
- 3-3731 If there were no night, because of covetousness all people would consume themselves by the agitation (of pursuit).
- 3-3733 Night appears, like a treasure of mercy, that they may be delivered from their greed for a short while.
- 4-1116 The people of the world are like demons, and desire is the chain dragging them to shop and crops.
- 4-1118 It drags them to earning and hunting; it drags them to the mine and the seas.
- 4-1119 It drags them to good and evil: God has said, "*On her neck a cord of palm-fibre*"<sup>894</sup>.
- 5-47 That gullet of hers is never idle for a moment: it listens to nothing but the Divine ordinance except the command "*Eat!*"<sup>895</sup>
- 5-48 It is like the looter who digs up (ravages) the house and very quickly fills his bag.
- 5-52 He does not have such confidence in his Sovereign as to believe that no enemy will be able to come forward against him.
- 5-53 But the true believer, from his confidence in the Divine Life<sup>896</sup>, conducts his raid<sup>897</sup> with ease and leisure.
- 5-54 He has no fear of missing his chance, nor fear of the enemy, for he recognizes the King's dominion over the enemy.
- 5-57 Consequently he does not hurry and is calm: he has no fear of missing his appointed portion.

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<sup>893</sup> Qur'ān 34:39.

<sup>894</sup> Qur'ān 111:5.

<sup>895</sup> Qur'ān 7:31.

<sup>896</sup> I.e. the living in God (Nich.).

<sup>897</sup> I.e. takes his allotted portion of worldly goods (Nich.).

### **Allegory. [2.5.6]**

- 6-806 The ant trembles for a grain of wheat because it is blind to the delightful threshing-floors.
- 6-807 It drags a grain along greedily and fearfully, for it does not see such a noble stack of winnowed wheat as is there.
- 6-808 The owner of the threshing-floor says to the ant, “Hey, you who in your blindness consider nothing something,
- 6-809 Have you considered that alone as belonging to My threshing-floors, so that you are devoted<sup>898</sup> with all your soul to that single grain?”
- 6-810 O you who in appearance are insignificant as a mote, look at Saturn; you are a lame ant: go, look at Solomon.

### **Cupidity among the elderly. [2.5.6]**

- 6-1228 May even deniers of the Truth<sup>899</sup> have no such greed in their old age! Oh, how miserable is he to whom God has given this greed!
- 6-1229 A dog’s teeth fall out when it grows old: it leaves people alone and takes to eating dung;
- 6-1230 But look at these sixty years old dogs! Their dog-teeth get sharper at every moment.
- 6-1231 The hairs fall from the fur of an old dog: but see these old human dogs dressed in satin!
- 1-2305 You were young once, and then you were more contented: now you have become a seeker of gold, but at first you were gold indeed (precious and perfect).
- 1-2306 You were a fruitful vine: how have you become unsaleable (worthless)? How have you become rotten when your fruit is ripening?
- 1-2307 Your fruit ought to become sweeter and not move further backwards like rope-makers<sup>900</sup>.

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<sup>898</sup> Literally “wrapped up” (Nich.).

<sup>899</sup> In Nicholson’s translation it says “Jews” instead of “deniers of the Truth”. But this is wrong. The word which Ḥaẓrat Mawlānā Rūmī uses in this verse is *jahūdān*, the plural of the word *jahūd*. *Jahūd* is often confused with the word *Yahūd* (“Jews”). *Jahūd(ān)* is best translated as “deniers of the Truth”. *Jahūd* is similar in meaning to the Arabic word *kāfir*, another word that is very often misinterpreted and misunderstood. It is usually rendered as “infidel”, “unbeliever”, or “pagan”. Yet in Arabic, *kāfir* literally means “one who covers the Truth”, i.e. “someone who is spiritually ignorant and blind”. As such, a *kāfir* can belong to any religious group or faith, including Islām. The same applies to the term *jahūd*.

<sup>900</sup> I.e. deteriorate.

- 6-1232 See how their passionate desire and greed for women and gold, like the offspring of dogs, continuously increases!
- 6-1233 Such a life as this, which is Hell's stock-in-trade, is a shambles for the butchers (executioners) of the Divine Wrath.
- 1-22 He alone whose garment is rent by a mighty love is purified of covetousness and all fault.
- 1-1600 If you wish to utter words like sugar, refrain from sensual desire and do not eat this sweetmeat (the desires of the flesh).
- 1-1601 Self-control is the thing desired by the intelligent; sweetmeat is what children long for.
- 1-1602 Whoever practises self-control ascends to Heaven, whoever eats sweetmeat falls further behind.

### **Allegory. [2.5.6]**

- 5-626 Desires are like sleeping dogs: good and evil are hidden in them.
- 5-627 When there is no power of action, this troop of desires are asleep and silent like fagots smouldering in the fire,
- 5-628 Until a carcass comes into view, the blast of the trumpet of greed strikes on (suddenly rouses) the dogs.
- 5-629 When the carcass of a donkey appears<sup>901</sup> in the street, a hundred sleeping dogs are awakened by it.
- 5-630 The greedy desires that had gone into hiding within the Unseen rush out and show themselves<sup>902</sup>.
- 5-631 Every hair<sup>903</sup> on every dog becomes like a tooth<sup>904</sup>, even though they wag their tails fawningly in order to obtain the object of their desire.
- 5-634 In this body of ours a hundred dogs like these are sleeping: when they have no prey in sight, they are hidden.
- 5-637 The appetite of the sick man is dormant: his thoughts are going (are turned) towards health.
- 5-638 When he sees bread, apples and water-melons, his relish and his fear of harming himself come into conflict.

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<sup>901</sup> Literally "when a donkey becomes a carcass" (Nich.).

<sup>902</sup> Literally "put forth the head from the bosom of the shirt" (Nich.).

<sup>903</sup> Literally "hair by hair" (Nich.).

<sup>904</sup> I.e. stands on end with anger and fury against rivals (Nich.).



### **The negative effects of greed. [2.5.6]**

- 4-1122 Your greed for evil-doing is like fire: the live coal (the evil deed) is made pleasing by the fire's pleasing hue.
- 4-1123 The blackness of the coal is hidden in the fire: when the fire is gone, the blackness becomes visible.
- 4-1124 By your greed the black coal is made alive: when the greed is gone, that vicious coal remains.
- 4-1129 Out of vain desire, the reflection (distorting influence) of the ghou, which is greed, made the trap look like a delicious berry, even though in reality it was unripe.
- 4-1130 Seek greed (seek to be eager) in the practice of religion and in good works: they are still beautiful, even when the greed (eagerness) does not remain.
- 4-1131 Good works are beautiful in themselves, not through the reflection of any other thing: if the glow of greed is gone, the glow of good remains;
- 4-1132 But when the glow of greed is gone from worldly work, of the red-hot coal only the black ashes are left.

### **Love and greed. [2.5.6]**

- 3-1955 Greed for Your love is glorious and great; greed for the love of anyone but You is shameful and corrupt.
- 3-1956 The lust and the greed of the manly is advancement in the spiritual Way, while that of the effeminate<sup>905</sup> is disgrace and irreligion.
- 3-1958 The one greed belongs to the perfection of manliness, while the other greed is a cause of disgrace and disgust.
- 3-1960 By God, do not tarry in anything (any spiritual position) that you have gained, but crave more like one who suffers from oedema<sup>906</sup> and is never saturated with water.

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<sup>905</sup> This verse does not denigrate homosexuals. What is really meant by "anyone whose nature is effeminate" is "anyone who is weak-willed and lacks inner strength and resolve". Ḥaṣrat Mawlānā Rūmī's message is a universal message of Divine Love, a Love that reaches out to and embraces *all* people, irrespective of creed, race, social status, gender, sexual orientation or any other distinction. If certain verses in the *Mathnawī* make it appear any different, this is solely due to the restrictions imposed by the religious laws, cultural and social conventions, values and perceptions of Ḥaṣrat Mawlānā Rūmī's era.

<sup>906</sup> Oedema, formerly known as dropsy or hydropsy, an illness in which watery fluid collects in the body.

## The Seventh Rivulet [2.5.7]

### Absolute trust in God (tawakkul).

“And whoever puts his trust in God, then He is sufficient for him<sup>907</sup>.”

- 1-916            No work is better than absolute trust in God: what, indeed, is dearer to God than surrender?
- 1-923            As long as the child could neither grasp (exert strength) nor run, it had nothing to ride on but its father's neck;
- 1-924            When it became a busybody and plied hand and foot (exerted itself), it fell into trouble and wretchedness<sup>908</sup>.
- 1-925            Because of their faithfulness, the spirits of created beings, before the creation of hand and foot, were flying in the realm of purity;
- 1-926            When they were constrained by the Divine command, *Fall down*<sup>909</sup>, they became imprisoned in anger, covetousness and contentment.
- 1-2296           All these griefs that are within our breasts arise from the vapour and dust of our existence and wind (vain desire)
- 1-2297           These uprooting griefs are like a scythe to us: to think that this is such-and-such or that that is such-and-such is a temptation of the Devil to us<sup>910</sup>.
- 1-2257           The poorest of the poor feel shame at our poverty: day is turned into night (darkened) by our anxiety about our daily portion of food.
- 1-2291           In this world thousands of animals are living happily, without up and down (anxiety).
- 1-2293           The nightingale is singing praise to God and saying, ‘I rely on You for my daily bread<sup>911</sup>, o You who answers prayer.’
- 1-2292           The dove on the tree is uttering thanks to God, even though its food for the night is not yet ready.
- 1-2294           The falcon has made the king's hand his joy (the place in which it takes delight), and has given up hope of (has become indifferent to) all carrion.
- 1-2295           Similarly you may take every animal from the gnat to the elephant: they all have become God's family (dependent on Him for their nourishment), and what an excellent nourisher God is!

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<sup>907</sup> Qur'ān 65:3.

<sup>908</sup> The words rendered by “wretchedness” are *kūr ū kabūd*, “blind and blue” (Nich.).

<sup>909</sup> Qur'ān 2:36.

<sup>910</sup> I.e. “we ought not to complain of our fate but put our trust in God” (Nich.).

<sup>911</sup> Literally “sustenance” (*rizq*).

- 1-927 We are the family of the Lord and craving for milk like infants: the Prophet has said, ‘The people are God’s family<sup>912</sup>.’
- 1-928 He who gives rain from heaven is also able, from His mercy, to give us bread.”
- 5-1492 If you have sown seed just now (recently), as I suppose, in a soil which you thought would be suitable for producing crops –
- 5-1493 When the seed does not grow during two or three years, what else can you do but put your hand to your head in supplication and prayer?
- 5-1494 You will beat your hand on your head in the presence of God: your hand and head will bear witness to His giving sustenance;
- 5-1495 So that you may know that He is the Source of the source of all sustenance, and that the seeker of sustenance may seek only Him.
- 5-1496 Seek sustenance from Him, do not seek it from Zayd and ‘Amr<sup>913</sup>: seek intoxication from Him, do not seek it from *bang*<sup>914</sup> and wine.
- 5-1497 Desire wealth from Him, not from treasure and possessions: desire help from Him, not from paternal and maternal uncles.
- 5-1498 In the end you will be left without all these things: listen, on whom will you call then?
- 5-1499 Call on Him now, and leave all the rest, that you may inherit the kingdom of the world.
- 5-1504 Take heed and say, “Look, my fortune<sup>915</sup> is triumphant: that which would have happened tomorrow (at the Last Judgment) has happened today”.

**Worrying about sustenance is incompatible with tawakkul. [2.5.7]**

“Indeed, it is God who is the Provider, the Firm Possessor of Strength<sup>916</sup>”.

- 2-3087 O you who are dead with anxiety because your hands are empty of bread, what is this fear, since He is forgiving and merciful?
- 5-2391 The Provider gives their daily bread to all: He lays before each one the portion allotted to him.
- 5-2392 The Divine provision comes to everyone who seeks to show patience: the trouble of making efforts arises from your lack of patience.

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<sup>912</sup> *Aḥādīth-e Mathnawī* p. 103.

<sup>913</sup> Zayd and ‘Amr are Arabic fictitious or generic names, used for anonymous persons, like “John Doe” in English.

<sup>914</sup> An intoxicating potion made from hemp leaves.

<sup>915</sup> Literally “my day”.

<sup>916</sup> Qur’ān 51:58.

5-2400 Just as you are pitifully in love with of the daily bread, so the daily bread is in love with its consumer<sup>917</sup>.

### **Story. [2.5.7]**

5-2401 A certain ascetic had heard the saying of Muṣṭafā (Muḥammad) that the daily bread<sup>918</sup> surely comes from God to the soul.

5-2402 And that, whether you want it or not, your daily bread comes running to you because it is so fond of you.

5-2403 By way of trial that man went into the desert and immediately laid down near a mountain,

5-2404 Saying, 'I will see whether the daily bread will come to me: my goal is that my belief in the daily bread may become firm.'

5-2405 A caravan lost its way and marched towards the mountain: the travellers saw him who was making the trial lying there.

5-2406 One said to another, 'How is this man destitute here in the wilderness, far from road and town?

5-2407 Oh, I wonder, is he dead or alive? Evidently he has no fear of wolves or enemies.'

5-2408 They came on and touched him with their hands: that venerable man deliberately said nothing.

5-2409 He did not stir, he did not even move his head or open his eyes, because he was making a trial.

5-2410 Then they said, 'This poor disappointed man has had a stroke caused by starvation.'

5-2411 They fetched bread and also food in a kettle, that they might pour it into his mouth and down his throat.

5-2412 Upon that, the man purposely clenched his teeth, in order to see (test) the truth of that promise.

5-2413 They felt pity for him and said, 'This man is starving and perishing with hunger and he is at the point of death';

5-2414 So they brought a knife and hastily made a rift in his closed teeth.

5-2415 They poured soup into his mouth and forced into it fragments of bread.

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<sup>917</sup> I.e. "it is seeking you: there is no need for you to seek it." (Nich.).

<sup>918</sup> Literally "sustenance" (*rizq*).

- 5-2416 He said to himself, ‘O my heart, even though you remain silent, you know the secret and show a great disdain.’
- 5-2417 His heart replied, ‘I know the secret and am purposely behaving like this: God is the provider for my soul and body.’
- 5-2418 How should there be a trial more perfect than this? The daily bread comes with joy to those who have patience.”

### **Allegory. [2.5.7]**

- 5-2855 In the world there is a green island where a sweet-mouthed cow lives alone.
- 5-2856 She feeds on the whole field till nightfall, so that she grows stout, big and choice.
- 5-2857 During the night she becomes thin as a hair from anxiety, because she thinks, “What shall I eat tomorrow?”
- 5-2858 At daybreak the field becomes green: the green blades and grain have grown up to a man’s middle.
- 5-2859 The cow falls to ravenously: until night she feeds on that vegetation and devours it entirely.
- 5-2860 Again she becomes stout, fat and bulky: her body is filled with fat and strength.
- 5-2861 Then again at night she is stricken by panic and falls into a fever of anxiety, so that from fear of seeking vainly for fodder she becomes lean,
- 5-2862 Thinking, “What shall I eat tomorrow at meal-time?” This is what that cow does for many years.
- 5-2863 She never thinks, “All these years I have been eating from this meadow and this pasture;
- 5-2864 My fodder has never failed even for a day: what, then, is this fear and anguish and heart-burning of mine?”
- 5-2865 No; when night falls that stout cow becomes lean again, thinking, “Alas, the fodder is gone.”
- 5-2866 The cow is the carnal soul (*nafs*), and the field is this world, where she (the carnal soul) is made lean by fear for her daily bread,
- 5-2867 Thinking, “I wonder what I shall eat in the future: where shall I seek food for tomorrow?”

5-2668 You have eaten for years, and food has never failed: leave the future and look at the past.

5-2669 Bring to mind the food and delicacies you have eaten already: do not think of what is to come, and do not be miserable.

### **Forgetfulness (ghafla)<sup>919</sup>. [2.5.7]**

1-2066 Forgetfulness, o beloved, is the pillar (prop) of this world: spiritual intelligence is a disaster to this world.

1-2067 Intelligence belongs to that other world, and when it prevails, this world is overthrown.

1-2064 If man were to remain in that fire of grief, much ruin and loss would happen.

1-2065 This world would at once become desolate: all selfish desires would emerge from men.

1-2068 Intelligence is the sun and greed the ice; intelligence is the water and this world is dirt.

1-2069 A little trickle of intelligence is coming from the Other World, so that greed and envy may not roar too loudly in this world.

1-2070 If the trickle from the Unseen should become greater, in this world neither virtue nor vice will be left.

4-2609 It is true that heedlessness is a manifestation of Divine Wisdom and Bounty, in order that his capital may not suddenly fly out of his hand.

4-2610 But not heedlessness so great that it becomes an incurable illness and a poison to the soul and intellect of one who is sick.

1-914 Listen to the meaning of ‘the earner (worker) is the beloved of God’: by trusting in God do not become neglectful as to the ways and means.

1-947 If you put trust in God, put trust in Him with regard to your work: sow the seed, then rely on the Almighty.

1-955 O illustrious one, do not regard work as a mere name! O cunning one, do not think that exertion is merely a vain illusion!

2-735 How does earning a livelihood prevent the discovery of treasure? Do not withdraw from work: that treasure, indeed, is following behind the work.

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<sup>919</sup> *Ghafla* or “forgetfulness (of God)” is the opposite of *dhikr*, “remembrance (of God)”.

### **Worldliness is a sign of forgetfulness. [2.5.7]**

- 2-2592 You have learned a trade to earn a livelihood for the body: now apply yourself to a religious (spiritual) trade.
- 2-2593 In this world you have become clothed and rich: when you come out from there, how will you do it?
- 2-2594 Learn such a trade that hereafter the earning of God's forgiveness may come to you as a revenue
- 2-2595 The Other World is a city full of trafficking and earning: do not think that the earnings here (in this world) are sufficient.
- 2-2596 God Most High has said that beside those (the Next World's) earnings these earnings in the (present) world are but children's play –
- 2-2601 The earnings of religion are love and inner rapture – capacity to receive the Light of God, o you obstinate one!
- 2-2602 This vile fleshly soul wants you to earn that which passes away: how long you earn what is vile? Let it go! Enough!
- 2-263 Do not make your home in other men's land: do your own work, don't do the work of a stranger.
- 2-264 Who is the stranger? Your earthen body, for the sake of which is all your sorrow.

### **The Cause of Causes. [2.5.7]**

- 5-1543 God has established a customary law, causes and means for the sake of those who seek Him under this blue veil of heaven.
- 5-1544 Most events come to pass according to the customary law, but sometimes the Divine Power breaks the law.
- 5-1546 If honour does not reach us without a mediating cause, yet the Divine Power is not remote from the removal of the cause<sup>920</sup>.
- 5-1547 O you who are caught by the cause, do not fly outside of causality; but at the same time do not suppose the removal of the Causer<sup>921</sup>.
- 5-1548 The Causer brings whatever He wants into existence: the Absolute Power tears up (destroys) the causes;

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<sup>920</sup> I.e. can remove the cause and act without it (Nich.).

<sup>921</sup> I.e. "do not suppose that where there is no cause there is no exercise of Divine Power" (Nich.).

- 5-1549 But, for the most part, He lets the execution of His will follow the course of causality, in order that a seeker may be able to pursue the object of his desire.
- 5-1550 When there is no cause, what way should the seeker follow? Therefore he must have a visible cause in the way that he is following.

### **The mystic transcends the causes. [2.5.7]**

- 5-1699 There are also servants of Yours who rend (shatter the illusion of) causes, o Almighty One.”
- 5-1700 Their eye pierces through the cause: by the grace of the Lord, it has passed beyond all veils.
- 5-1701 It has obtained the eyewash of Unity from the oculist of ecstasy and has been delivered from illness and weakness.
- 5-1551 These causes are veils on the eyes, for not every eye is worthy of contemplating His work.
- 5-1552 An eye that can penetrate the cause is needed to eradicate these veils from root and bottom,
- 5-1553 So that it may see the Causer in the world of non-spatiality<sup>922</sup> and consider efforts, earnings and shops as mere nonsense.
- 5-1554 Everything good or evil comes from the Causer: causes and means, o father, are nothing.
- 5-1708 How should the perception of the mystic seer be veiled by these apparent causes<sup>923</sup>, which are a veil to catch the fool?
- 5-1709 When the eye is quite perfect, it sees the root (origin); when a man is squint-eyed, it sees the branch (derivative).
- 3-2517 The Prophets came in order to cut the cords of apparent causes: they flung their miracles at Saturn (in the Seventh Heaven).
- 3-2518 Without cause means they split the sea; without sowing they found heaps of corn.

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<sup>922</sup> Non-spatiality: *lā makān*, literally “no space”, i.e. “the Placeless Realm”, the place of the deity, where there is no space and time, a state beyond our conception.

<sup>923</sup> “First Cause” and “apparent cause(s)”: “The First Cause” is God, who is called *Musabbibu’l-Asbāb*, “the Causer of Causes”. His existence is absolute and necessary (*Wājibu’l-Wujūd*), i.e. He exists independently through Himself and His existence is necessary for the existence of all other things. When He wishes to make something happen He uses some of His own creations as mediators or “apparent causes” or “secondary causes”. Apparent causes are capable of causing future events in some way. However, apparent causes always remain subordinate to the First Cause. Therefore seekers of God must never let themselves be blinded and misled by apparent causes, since their seeming power and relative existence invariably stem from God, the First Cause and Causer of all Causes.



- 3-2520 The whole of the Qur’ān consists in (is concerned with) the cutting off of apparent causes: its theme is the glory of the poor (Prophet or Saint) and the destruction of those like Abū Lahab<sup>924</sup>.
- 3-2521 A swift<sup>925</sup> drops two or three pebbles and shatters the mighty army of Abyssinia<sup>926</sup>:
- 3-2523 God said, “Inflict a blow with the tail of the killed cow on the murdered man, in order that at the same moment he may come to life again in the winding-sheet<sup>927</sup>.”
- 3-2525 In the same way, from the beginning of the Qur’ān to the end, it is wholly concerned with the abandonment of apparent causes and means. And now farewell (to this subject)<sup>928</sup>.
- 3-2526 The explanation of its mystery is not given by the meddlesome intellect: do service to God, in order that it may become clear to you.
- 3-3153 As you have observed apparent causes since your childhood, through ignorance you have stuck to the apparent cause.
- 3-3154 Being occupied with causes makes you forgetful of the Causer: that is why you are inclined towards these veils.
- 3-3155 When all apparent causes are gone, you will beat your head and cry many times, “O our Lord! O our Lord!”
- 3-2516 Above the apparent causes there are other causes: do not look at the apparent cause: let your gaze fall on that First Cause<sup>929</sup>.
- 1-844 And those causes which guide the Prophets on their way are higher than these external causes.
- 1-845 That spiritual cause makes this external cause active; sometimes, again, it makes it fruitless and ineffective.

<sup>924</sup> An uncle of the Prophet and an enemy of Islām; he was given the nickname “Abū Lahab”, meaning “Father of the Flame”, as his cheeks were always red or inflamed. He died ca. 624 CE.

<sup>925</sup> In Persian, it says *murgh-e abābīl*, which is a swallow-like bird. It also refers to Qur’ān 105:3, where *ṭayr abābīl* is translated as “flocks of birds”.

<sup>926</sup> In 570 CE, called “the Year of the Elephant” by the Arabs, the ruler of Abyssinia marched on Mecca with a large army, which included elephants. It is said that the Prophet Muḥammad was born in this year.

<sup>927</sup> Cf. Qur’ān 2:67 ff.

<sup>928</sup> In the original text the expression *wa ’s-salām* is used, which may also mean “and let it be done with that”, “and let that be the end of the matter”.

<sup>929</sup> “First Cause” and “apparent cause(s)”: “The First Cause” is God, who is called *Musabbibu ’l-Asbāb*, “the Causer of Causes”. His existence is absolute and necessary (*Wājibu ’l-Wujūd*), i.e. He exists independently through Himself and His existence is necessary for the existence of all other things. When He wishes to make something happen He uses some of His own creations as mediators or “apparent causes” or “secondary causes”. Apparent causes are capable of causing future events in some way. However, apparent causes always remain subordinate to the First Cause. Therefore seekers of God must never let themselves be blinded and misled by apparent causes, since their seeming power and relative existence invariably stem from God, the First Cause and Causer of all Causes.

1-846 Ordinary minds are familiar with the external cause, but the Prophets are familiar with the spiritual causes.

**To the mystic, the One is the Cause of Causes.  
He only beseeches the One for help. [2.5.7]**

6-3389 To seek guidance from candle and wick when the perfect Sun is present,

6-3390 To seek light from candle and lamp when the smoothly-rolling Sun is present,

6-3391 Doubtlessly it is irreverence on our part, it is ingratitude and an act of self-will.

**Allegory. [2.5.7]**

6-3400 That is like Joseph's asking help of a fellow-prisoner, a needy abject groundling<sup>930</sup>.

6-3401 He implored his help and said, "When you come out of prison, your affairs will prosper<sup>931</sup> with the king.

6-3402 Mention me before the throne of that mighty prince, that he may redeem (release) me also from this prison."

6-3403 But how should a prisoner in captivity<sup>932</sup> give release to another imprisoned man?

6-3404 All the people of this world are prisoners waiting in expectation of death in the abode that is passing away;

6-3405 Except, surely, in the rare case of one who is unique (*fardānī*), one whose body is in the prison of this world and whose soul is like Saturn (in the Seventh Heaven).

6-3406 Therefore, in retribution for having regarded him (the fellow-prisoner) as a helper, Joseph was left in prison *for several years*<sup>933</sup>.

6-3408 As a result of the sin which came from that man of good qualities (Joseph), he was left in prison for several years by the Divine Judge,

6-3409 Who said, "What failure was shown by the Sun of justice that you should fall, like a bat, into the blackness of night?

6-3410 Listen, what failure was shown by the sea and the cloud that you should seek help from the sand and the mirage?

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<sup>930</sup> Literally "akin to the *sa'dān*", a prickly shrub on which camels browse" (Nich.).

<sup>931</sup> Literally "will be set on a sound footing" (Nich.).

<sup>932</sup> Literally "in the state of being made a prey" (Nich.).

<sup>933</sup> Qur'ān 12:42.

- 6-3411 If the common people are bats by nature and are unreal (unspiritual), you, at least, o Joseph, have the eye of the falcon.

**Story:**  
**Moses and trust in God. [2.5.7]**

- 4-2921 God spoke to Moses by inspiration of the heart, saying, “O chosen one, I love you.”
- 4-2922 Moses said, “O Bountiful One, tell me what special quality in me is the cause of that, in order that I may increase it.”
- 4-2923 God said, “You are like a child in the presence of its mother: when she chastises it, it still holds her tight.
- 4-2924 It does not even know that there is anyone in the world except her: it is both afflicted with headache (sorrow) by her and intoxicated with joy by her.
- 4-2925 If its mother gives it a slap, still it comes to its mother and clings to her.
- 4-2926 It does not seek help from anyone but her: she is all its evil and its good.
- 4-2927 Your heart, likewise, in good or bad situations never turns from Me to other places.
- 4-2928 In your view all besides Me are as stones and clods of earth, whether they be boys, youths or old men.”

**Story. [2.5.7]**

- 4-2933 A King was angry with a close friend and was about to reduce him to smoke and dust<sup>934</sup>.
- 4-2935 No one had the courage to utter a word, nor did any mediator dare to mediate,
- 4-2936 Except one amongst the courtiers named ‘Imādu’l-Mulk<sup>935</sup>, who was privileged as a mediator, like Muṣṭafā (Muḥammad).
- 4-2937 He sprang up and at once prostrated himself: the King immediately took the sword of vengeance from his hand,
- 4-2938 And said, “If he is the very Devil, I forgive him; and if he has done a satanic deed, I cover it up.
- 4-2939 Since you<sup>936</sup> have intervened, I am satisfied, even if the culprit has committed a hundred acts of harm.

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<sup>934</sup> Literally “raise smoke and dust from him” (Nich.).

<sup>935</sup> A name meaning “Pillar of the Realm”.

- 4-2950 And the close friend who had been delivered from the stroke of calamity was offended with this mediator and drew back from his former loyalty.
- 4-2952 He became estranged from his mediator; in astonishment at this the people began to talk,
- 4-2953 Saying, “If he is not mad, how did he cut off friendly relations with the person who saved his life?”
- 4-2954 The mediator saved him from beheading at that moment: the culprit ought to have become the dust of the mediator’s shoe.
- 4-2956 Then a certain conciliator reproached him, saying, “Why are you acting so unjustly towards a loyal friend?”
- 4-2959 He replied, “Life is freely given for the King’s sake: why should he come as a mediator between us?”
- 4-2960 At that moment I was in the state described by the words – “I am with God in a state in which no chosen Prophet is my equal<sup>937</sup>.”
- 4-2961 I desire no mercy but the blows of the King; I desire no refuge except that King.
- 4-2962 I have annihilated all besides the King because I have devoted myself to the King.
- 4-2963 If the King beheads me in his wrath, He will bestow on me sixty other lives<sup>938</sup>.
- 4-2964 It is my business to hazard and lose my head and to be selfless; it is the business of my sovereign King to give me a new head.”
- 4-2965 Honour to the head that is severed by the King’s hand! Shame on the head that submits itself to another!
- 4-2974 “I am the Khalīl (Abraham)<sup>939</sup> of the present time<sup>940</sup>, and he is the Gabriel: I do not want him as a guide to deliver me from calamity.
- 4-2975 He did not learn respectfulness as he might from the noble Gabriel, who asked the Friend of God (Abraham) what his wish was,

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<sup>936</sup> Literally “your foot” (Nich.).

<sup>937</sup> This is a well-known *ḥadīth* of the Prophet (Nich.). *Aḥādīth-e Mathnawī* p. 152.

<sup>938</sup> This refers to a *ḥadīth*: “When someone loves Me, I annihilate his existence, and thus I Myself become his blood money” – *Aḥādīth-e Mathnawī* p. 404. Note: “blood money” (*diyya*) = compensation paid to the relatives of a murdered person.

<sup>939</sup> *Khalīlu’Llāh*, “the Friend of God”, is the traditional epithet of the Prophet Abraham (Ḥaẓrat Ibrāhīm).

<sup>940</sup> I.e. “in the present case” (Nich.).

- 4-2976      Saying, ‘Do you have a wish – that I may help you to obtain it; otherwise, I will flee and leave speedily.’
- 4-2977      Abraham said, ‘No; go out of the way! After direct vision the intermediary is only an inconvenience<sup>941</sup>.’

**He who is attached to worldly things, is far removed from the Cause of Causes. [2.5.7]**

- 2-3784      The noise of thunder gives the thirsty man a headache, when he does not know that the thunder brings on the rain-clouds of felicity.
- 2-3785      His eye remains fixed on the running stream, unaware of the delicious taste of the Water of Heaven.
- 2-3786      He has directed the horse of his attention towards apparent causes: consequently he remains cut off from the Causer<sup>942</sup>.
- 2-3787      But one who sees the Causer plainly – how should he set his mind on the apparent causes in the world?

**Story. [2.5.7]**

- 2-3788      In the middle of the desert lived an ascetic, absorbed in devotion like the people of ‘Abbādān<sup>943</sup>.
- 2-3789      The pilgrims from different countries arrived there: their eye fell on the parched ascetic.
- 2-3790      The dwelling-place of the ascetic was dry, but he was moist in temperament: in the *samūm*<sup>944</sup> of the desert he had a remedy for this moistness.
- 2-3791      The pilgrims were amazed at his solitariness and his well-being in the midst of calamitous circumstances.
- 2-3792      He stood on the sand, engaged in ritual prayer – sand so hot it would make the water in a pot boil.

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<sup>941</sup> *Aḥādīth-e Mathnawī* p. 404.

<sup>942</sup> “First Cause” and “apparent cause(s)”: “The First Cause” is God, who is called *Musabbibu’l-Asbāb*, “the Causer of Causes”. His existence is absolute and necessary (*Wājibu’l-Wujūd*), i.e. He exists independently through Himself and His existence is necessary for the existence of all other things. When He wishes to make something happen He uses some of His own creations as mediators or “apparent causes” or “secondary causes”. Apparent causes are capable of causing future events in some way. However, apparent causes always remain subordinate to the First Cause. Therefore seekers of God must never let themselves be blinded and misled by apparent causes, since their seeming power and relative existence invariably stem from God, the First Cause and Causer of all Causes.

<sup>943</sup> The use of ‘*Abbāsīya*’ for ‘*Abbādānīya*’ is justified by the fact that ‘*Abbādān*’ was originally named ‘*Abbād*’ (Nich.).

<sup>944</sup> A very hot; sand-laden and suffocating desert wind. *Samūm* is derived from the same Arabic verbal root as *sumūm*, which means “poison”.

- 2-3793 You would have said he was standing enraptured amongst herbs and flowers, or mounted on *Burāq* or *Duldul*<sup>945</sup>;
- 2-3794 Or that his feet were on silk and brodered cloths; or that to him the *samūm* was more pleasant than the zephyr (gentle breeze).
- 2-3795 The pilgrims stood waiting, while he remained standing in prayer, sunk in long meditation.
- 2-3796 When the dervish came back to himself from this state of absorption in God, one of that company, a man spiritually alive and of enlightened mind,
- 2-3797 Saw that water was trickling from his hands and face, and that his clothes were wet from the traces of ablution;
- 2-3798 So he asked him, “Where do you get water?” He lifted his hand, indicating that it came from heaven.
- 2-3799 The pilgrim said, “Does it come whenever you want, without any well and without any *rope of palm-fibre*<sup>946</sup>?”
- 2-3800 Solve our problem, o Sultān of the Religion, in order that your spiritual experience may give us certain faith.
- 2-3801 Reveal to us one of your mysteries, that we may cut the cords of infidelity<sup>947</sup> from our waists.”
- 2-3802 The ascetic turned his eyes to heaven, saying, “O God, answer the prayer of the pilgrims!
- 2-3803 I am accustomed to seek daily bread from above: You have opened to me the door from above,
- 2-3804 O You who from non-spatiality<sup>948</sup> have made space visible, and have made manifest the fact that *in heaven is your sustenance*<sup>949</sup>.”
- 2-3805 In the midst of this prayer a beautiful cloud suddenly appeared, like a water-bearing elephant,
- 2-3806 And began to pour down rain, like water from a water-skin: the rain-water settled in the ditch and in the caves.

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<sup>945</sup> Burāq: the animal ridden by the Prophet when he ascended to Heaven. Duldul: a mule belonging to the Prophet (Nich.).

<sup>946</sup> Qur’ān 111:5.

<sup>947</sup> “cords of infidelity”: in the Persian text it says *zunnār*, which another name for the *kushtī*, the ritual cord worn by Zoroastrians. *Zunnār* also refers to the cords worn around the waist by Christian monks. In Ḥaẓrat Mawlānā Rūmī’s time these cords were considered as the sign of infidelity. In Šūfī symbolism, however, the word *zunnār* symbolizes the readiness to serve others.

<sup>948</sup> Non-spatiality: *lā makān*, literally “no space”, i.e. “the Placeless Realm”, the place of the deity, where there is no space and time, a state beyond our conception.

<sup>949</sup> Qur’ān 51:22.

- 2-3807 The cloud kept raining tears, like a water-skin, and the pilgrims all opened their water-skins.
- 2-3808 As a result of those marvellous events, one group among them cut the cords of unbelief from their waists<sup>950</sup>.
- 2-3809 The certainty (faith) of another group was increasing because of this miracle – God knows best how to guide in the right Way.
- 2-3810 Another group was unreceptive, sour and unripe, eternally imperfect ones. Here ends the discourse.

**The Eighth Rivulet [2.5.8]**  
**Honour (‘izza), humility and modesty (tawāḍu‘), baseness (dhilla)**  
**and false pride, vanity and arrogance (takabbur).**

**Ḥadīth: “If someone is humble for the sake of God,  
 God will raise him to a higher inner degree<sup>951</sup>.”**

- 4-2747 Know that pride is a killing poison: that fool was intoxicated by the poisonous wine.
- 4-2748 When an unhappy wretch drinks the poisonous wine, he nods his head in delight for one moment.
- 4-2749 After one moment the poison falls on his soul<sup>952</sup>: the poison exercises complete power<sup>953</sup> over his soul.
- 4-2751 When one king gains the upper hand (prevails) over another king, he kills him or locks him up in a dungeon;
- 4-2752 But if he finds a fallen wounded man, the king will make a plaster for him and bestow gifts on him.
- 4-2753 If that pride is not poison, then why did he kill the vanquished king, even though he had not committed any crime or offence?
- 4-2754 And why did he treat this other helpless man so kindly, even though he had not performed any service? From these two actions you may recognize the poisonous nature of pride.
- 4-2755 No highwayman ever attacked a beggar: does a wolf ever bite a dead wolf?

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<sup>950</sup> I.e. that group attained to the realm of certainty and non-doubtfulness.

<sup>951</sup> Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā’ ‘Ulūm ad-Dīn*, Vol. 3, p. 437.

<sup>952</sup> I.e. “affects his spirit”.

<sup>953</sup> Literally “giving and taking” (Nich.).

- 4-2756 Khiḏr made a breach in the boat<sup>954</sup> in order that the boat might be saved from the wicked.
- 4-2757 Since the broken (repentant) one will be saved, be broken (repentant). Safety lies in spiritual poverty: enter into spiritual poverty<sup>955</sup>.
- 1-2318 Pride is ugly, and in beggars all the more ugly: it is like wet clothes after a cold snowy day<sup>956</sup>.
- 4-2760 Eminence is naphtha and fire, o misguided one: o brother, why are you going into the fire?
- 4-2761 How should anything that is on the same level as the earth become a target for arrows? Think!
- 4-2762 But if it raises its head from the earth, then, like targets, it will suffer blows that cannot be cured.
- 4-2763 This egoism is the ladder climbed by the creatures of God: they must fall from this ladder in the end.
- 4-2764 The higher anyone goes, the more foolish he is, for his bones will be broken more severely.
- 4-2765 This is (constitutes) the derivatives of the subject, and its fundamental principles are that to exalt one's self is to claim partnership with God.
- 5-524 The Arabs called a restive (high-spirited) horse a "devil" (*shayṭān*): they did not give that name to the beast of burden that stayed quietly in the pasture.
- 5-525 In lexicology "devilry" (*shayṭanat*) is synonymous with "rebelliousness"<sup>957</sup>: this quality deserves to be cursed.
- 5-519 He who is in power really claims Divinity: how should one who pursues partnership with God be saved?
- 5-533 Divinity is the mantle of the Lord of Majesty: it becomes a plague to anyone who puts it on.
- 5-534 The crown of sovereignty belongs to God, to us belongs the belt of servanthood: woe to him who oversteps his own limit!
- 1-3008 What is the meaning of exalting and glorifying God? To consider yourself despicable and worthless as dust.

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<sup>954</sup> Qur'ān 18:71.

<sup>955</sup> Spiritual poverty (*faqr*) implies inner detachment from worldly matters.

<sup>956</sup> Literally "the day cold and snow – and then the clothes wet!" (Nich.).

<sup>957</sup> Literally "raising the neck", "holding the head high" (Nich.).



- 3-454 Since you have heard “*We created you from dust*”<sup>958</sup>, know that God has required you to be humble and submissive as dust: do not turn your face away from Him.
- 1-1911 How should a rock be covered with verdure by the Spring? Become earth, that you may grow flowers of many colours.
- 1-1912 Years you have been a heart-breaking rock: once, for the sake of experiment, be earth!
- 3-455 God said, “See how I have sown a seed in the earth: you are dust of the earth, and I have raised it up high.
- 3-458 The wheat went beneath the earth from above; afterwards it became ears of corn and sprang up quickly.
- 3-461 Since it came down from Heaven because of humility, it became part of the living and valiant man.
- 3-462 That is why that inanimate matter (rain and sunlight) was turned into human qualities and soared joyously above the highest heaven.
- 2-1939 Wherever there is a pain, there the remedy goes: wherever there is a lowland, there the water runs.
- 2-1940 If you want the water of mercy, go, become lowly, and then drink the wine of mercy and become drunk.

### **The difference between being drunk with love and drunk with pride. [2.5.8]**

- 5-1920 Because self-existence<sup>959</sup> produces severe intoxication: it removes intelligence from the head and reverence from the heart.
- 5-1922 By this self-existence an ‘Azāzīl<sup>960</sup> was made to be Iblīs, saying, “Why should Adam become lord over me?”
- 5-1923 I too am noble and nobly-born: I am capable of receiving and ready to receive a hundred excellences.
- 5-1924 In excellence I am inferior to none, that I should stand before my enemy to serve him.
- 5-1927 The fire of pride and jealousy was flaming in the soul of the fool (Iblīs), because he was born of fire<sup>961</sup>: “the son is endowed with the inner nature of his father<sup>962</sup>.”

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<sup>958</sup> Qur’ān 22:5.

<sup>959</sup> I.e. egoism and worldly pride (Nich.).

<sup>960</sup> ‘Azāzīl was the name of Iblīs before he refused to prostrate himself before Adam, as God commanded. The name Iblīs is probably derived from the Arabic verb *ablasa*, meaning “he despaired (of God’s mercy)”.

- 5-1941      What is this arrogance? It consists in being forgetful of the essential principle and being frozen (insensible) – like the forgetfulness of ice to the sun.
- 5-1942      When the ice becomes conscious of the sun, the ice does not last: it becomes soft and warm and moves on rapidly.
- 5-1960      The Absolute Worker is a worker in non-existence: what but non-existence is the workshop (working material) of the Maker of existence?
- 5-1961      Does one write anything on what is already written over, or plant a sapling in a place that is already planted?
- 5-1962      No; he seeks a sheet of paper that has not been written on and sows the seed in a place that has not been sown.
- 5-1963      O brother, be an unsown place; be a white paper untouched by writing,
- 5-1964      That you may be ennobled by *Nūn. Wa'l-Qalam*<sup>963</sup>, and that the Gracious One may sow seed within you.
- 1-3606      If you wish light, make yourself ready to receive light; if you wish to be far from God, become self-conceited and remote.

### **Self-conceit and arrogance stem from the ego (*nafs*). [2.5.8]**

- 1-3214      There is no worse disease in your soul, o haughty soul, than the conceit of perfection.
- 1-3215      Much blood must flow from your heart and eye, that self-complacency may go out of you.
- 1-3216      The fault of Iblīs lay in thinking “*I am better* (than Adam)<sup>964</sup>”, and this disease is in the soul of every human creature.
- 1-3212      Whoever has seen and recognized his own deficiency has ridden hastily<sup>965</sup> (made rapid progress) in perfecting himself.
- 1-3213      The reason why he (anyone) is not flying towards the Lord of Majesty is that he supposes himself to be perfect.
- 1-3290      You have laughed at Iblīs and the devils because you have considered yourself as a good man.

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<sup>961</sup> Qur’ān 55:15.

<sup>962</sup> *Aḥādīth-e Mathnawī* p. 406.

<sup>963</sup> Nūn: the Arabic letter “n” at the beginning of *Sūratu’l-Qalam*, “The Sūra of the Pen” (the 68<sup>th</sup> Sūra). This letter may denote *Nūr* (“Light”); “By the Pen”: Qur’ān 68:1. “The Pen” may denote Universal Reason (Nich.).

<sup>964</sup> Qur’ān 7:12.

<sup>965</sup> Literally “has galloped with two horses” (Nich.).

- 1-3292 On the counter of the shop everything (every gilded coin) that looks like gold is smiling, because the touchstone is out of sight.
- 1-3305 You are a favourite of God, but within your due bounds. For God's sake, for God's sake, do not set foot beyond those bounds.
- 5-535 Your peacock feathers are a great temptation to you, because you need to have partnership with God and All-holiness<sup>966</sup>.

### **Story. [2.5.8]**

- 5-536 A peacock was tearing out its feathers in the open country, where a Sage had gone for a walk.
- 5-537 He said, "O peacock, why are you tearing out such fine feathers remorselessly from the root?
- 5-538 Why indeed does your heart allow that you should tear off these gorgeous garments and let them fall in the mud?
- 5-539 Those who memorize the Qur'ān place every feather of yours, because it is prized and admired, within the folding of<sup>967</sup> the Holy Book.
- 5-540 In order to stir the beneficial air your feathers are used as fans<sup>968</sup>.
- 5-541 What ingratitude and what recklessness is this! Do you not know who is their Painter?
- 5-553 Do not tear out your feathers<sup>969</sup>, for it cannot be mended: do not rend your face in grief, o beautiful one.
- 5-613 When the peacock heard this counsel, it looked at the Sage and, after that, began to lament and weep.
- 5-641 When the peacock had finished weeping, it said, "Go away, for you are enthralled by colour and perfume<sup>970</sup>.
- 5-642 Do you not see that because of these feathers a hundred afflictions approach me on every side?
- 5-643 Oh, many pitiful fowls always lay a trap for me everywhere for the sake of these feathers.
- 5-644 How many archers, for the sake of my plumage, shoot arrows<sup>971</sup> at me when I am in the air!

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<sup>966</sup> I.e. the pride of power necessarily involves the claim to possess the attributes of Divine majesty (Nich.).

<sup>967</sup> I.e. inside of (Nich.).

<sup>968</sup> Literally "they make a fan of your feathers" (Nich.).

<sup>969</sup> I.e. your spiritual qualities and graces (Nich.).

<sup>970</sup> I.e. outward appearances (Nich.).

- 5-645 Since I do not have strength and self-control to preserve me from this destiny, this affliction and these tribulations,
- 5-646 It is better that I should be ugly and hideous, that I may be safe amidst these mountains and deserts.
- 5-647 The feathers are the weapons of my pride, o brave youth: pride brings a hundred afflictions on the proud.
- 5-648 Talents destroy the spiritually ignorant man, for in his pursuit of the bait he does not see the trap.
- 5-650 When there is no safeguarding of one's self and piety<sup>972</sup>, beware, keep the instrument of sin far from you: renounce free-will.
- 5-651 Those feathers are the object of my display (pride) and free-will: I will tear out the feathers, for they are after my head<sup>973</sup>.
- 1-2317 How long will you utter pompous and artificial phrases? Look at your own acts and feelings and be ashamed!
- 1-2316 Do not talk nonsense in your presumption and pretension: go away, do not speak from pride and arrogance.

**Criticizing others' faults and forgetting  
one's own arises from self-conceit. [2.5.8]**

- 1-3892 Go, be fearful and do not criticize the wicked: know your own powerlessness before the snare of the Divine decree.
- 1-3893 One day Adam looked with contempt and scorn on Iblīs who is damned.
- 1-3894 He behaved with self-conceit and became self-approving: he laughed at the plight of the accursed Iblīs.
- 1-3895 The jealousy of God cried out against him – “O chosen one, you know nothing about the hidden mysteries (of His providence).
- 1-3896 If He should turn the fur inside out<sup>974</sup>, He would tear up even the firmest mountain of faith from root and bottom;
- 1-3897 At that moment He would rend the veil of (put to shame) a hundred Adams and bring to light a hundred Devils newly converted to Islām.”

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<sup>971</sup> Literally “draw arrows (from their quivers in order to shoot)” (Nich.).

<sup>972</sup> “Piety”: in the Persian text the word *taqwā* is used. *Taqwā* is often translated as “piety” or “fear of God”, but in reality, it denotes an inner attitude of devotion to God and seeking the pleasure of God, not out of fear, nor out of desire for the rewards of Paradise, but merely out of selfless love.

<sup>973</sup> I.e. they endanger my life (Nich.).

<sup>974</sup> I.e. “if God were to manifest His wrath instead of His mercy or His mercy instead of His wrath” (Nich.).

- 1-3898 Adam said, “I repent of this way of looking; I will not think so disrespectfully again.”
- 2-3034 Oh, happy the soul that saw its own fault, and if anyone told (found) a fault, wished eagerly to take that fault upon itself<sup>975</sup>!
- 2-3036 Since you have ten sores on your head, you must apply the plaster to yourself.
- 2-3037 Finding fault with the sore in yourself is the right remedy for him who is at fault; when he has become broken (repentant), then it is the proper occasion for obeying the Prophet’s injunction, “Have pity”<sup>976</sup>.
- 2-1944 Purify your two eyes from the hair of defect, that you may see the garden and cypress park of the Unseen World.
- 2-3026 You have often mocked those visitors to the Mosque; but when you consider carefully, you yourself have been one of them<sup>977</sup>.

### Story. [2.5.8]

- 2-3027 Four Hindus<sup>978</sup> went into a mosque: they bowed their heads and prostrated themselves in worship.
- 2-3028 Each one performed the *tabbīr*<sup>979</sup> following a *niya*<sup>980</sup>, and began to pray with lowliness<sup>981</sup> and repentance.<sup>982</sup>
- 2-3029 When the muezzin came, one of them remarked<sup>983</sup> – “O muezzin, have you given the call to prayers? Is it time?”

<sup>975</sup> This refers to a ḥadīth – see *Aḥādīth-e Mathnawī* p. 349.

<sup>976</sup> This is the beginning of a ḥadīth: “Have pity on three kinds of people in particular: the rich man who has become poor, the honoured one who has been humiliated and the scholar who is surrounded by fools”. See *Aḥādīth-e Mathnawī* p. 443.

<sup>977</sup> I.e. one of those who visited a mosque for their own glory and not for the glory of God.

<sup>978</sup> In Fārsī, the word *hindū* can also mean “a dark-coloured person”. So, by no means does Ḥaẓrat Mawlānā Rūmī intend to denigrate the Hindu religion, or indeed any religion. Whenever he uses the names of religions and ethnicities, it is merely meant as a figure of speech.

<sup>979</sup> At the beginning of the ritual prayer, called *ṣalāh* (Arabic) or *namāz* (Persian) Muslims utter the *tabbīr*, i.e. the words *Allāhu Akbar* (“God is the Greatest”), and raise their hands with the *tabbīr* until their thumbs are alongside their earlobes. In this way they shut out all worldly matters and focus entirely on worshipping God.

<sup>980</sup> The word *niya* means “intention” or “declaration of intent”. Before starting ritual prayer, the Muslim mentally expresses his intention to worship God, standing with respect and full attention. The *niya* is also required while performing the ritual ablution (Arabic: *wuḍū’* or *ghusl*; Persian *ābdast*), which precedes the ritual prayer. The concept of *niya* or “intention” is very important in Muslim culture in general. Muslims make a habit of stating their intention to God every time they undertake something important; if someone intends to do a good deed but his actions are cut short due to no fault of his own, then he remains blameless, as though he had succeeded. The intention is considered more important than the act itself or its result – the intention belongs to man, the outcome belongs to God. There is a well-known ḥadīth which says: “Verily, actions are judged according to their intentions”.

<sup>981</sup> Literally “in indigence”.

<sup>982</sup> Literally “in pain”.

<sup>983</sup> Literally “an utterance escaped” (Nich.).

- 2-3030 The second Hindu said on the spur of the moment<sup>984</sup>, “Hey, you have spoken, and so your prayer is invalid.”
- 2-3031 The third one said to the second, “O uncle, why do you criticize him? Tell yourself how to behave.”
- 2-3032 The fourth said, “Praise be to God that I have not fallen into the pit of error, like those three persons.”
- 2-3033 In this way the prayers of all four were spoiled; and the fault-finders went astray more (than he who made the original mistake).
- 2-882 These people of the world take no heed of themselves, o father: consequently they blame one another.
- 2-883 O idolater (dualist), if I do not see my own face (reality), I see your face and you see mine.
- 2-884 He who sees his own face (reality) – his light is greater than the light of the creatures of God.
- 2-885 Even if he dies, his sight is everlasting, because his sight is the sight of the Creator.
- 2-902 He has always been one who speaks ill of himself and seeks to blame himself; he has always been good (kind) to all and bad (unkind) to himself.”

**The true artfulness lies in the willingness to see  
the positive aspects of things as well. [2.5.8]**

- 1-1995 The fault is in him who sees nothing but fault; how should the Pure Spirit of the Invisible see fault?
- 1-1996 Fault arises only in relation to the ignorant creature, not in relation to the Lord of favour (clemency).
- 1-1997 Infidelity, too, is wisdom in relation to the Creator, but when you attribute it to us, infidelity is a harmful thing.
- 1-1998 And if there is one fault together with a hundred advantages (excellences), it resembles the woody stalk in the sugarcane.
- 1-1999 Both sugar and stalk alike are put into the scales, because both are sweet like body and soul.
- 1-2000 Not in vain, therefore, the great mystics said this: “The body of the holy ones (the Saints) is essentially pure as their spirit.”

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<sup>984</sup> Literally “from the need (which he felt of expressing his feelings.”(Nich.).

- 3-3574 In reality God is the creator of effects, but followers of the husk (formalists) see nothing but the apparent cause.
- 3-3575 The kernel (intellect) that is not separated from the husks cannot escape from doctor and disease<sup>985</sup>;
- 3-3576 But when a son of man is born twice, he plants his foot on the head<sup>986</sup> of all causes<sup>987</sup>.
- 4-74 If you wish that he should be like sugar, then look at him with the eye of lovers.

### **Story. [2.5.8]**

- 4-75 Do not look at that Beautiful One with your own eye: see the Sought with the eye of seekers.
- 1-407 The Khalīfa said to Laylā: “Are you the one for whom Majnūn<sup>988</sup> was distracted and led astray?”
- 1-408 You are not superior to other beauties.” “Be silent,” she replied, “since you are not Majnūn.”
- 4-76 Close your own eye to that Sweet-eyed One: borrow an eye from His lovers.
- 4-77 No, borrow eye and sight from Him, and then look at His face with His eye.

### **In reality ugliness does not exist, since God created all things perfect<sup>989</sup>. [2.5.8]**

- 4-65 That is why there is no absolute evil in the world: evil is relative. Know this truth also.
- 4-66 In the realm of Time there is no poison or sugar that is not a foot (support) to one and a fetter (injury) to another –
- 4-67 To one a foot, to another a fetter; to one a poison and to another sweet and wholesome like sugar.
- 4-68 Snake-poison is life to the snake, but it is death to man.

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<sup>985</sup> I.e. it needs a doctor to cure its disease (Nich.).

<sup>986</sup> Literally “the line which parts the hair on the crown of the head” (Nich.).

<sup>987</sup> According to the Sūfīs, Jesus has said: “Man will not enter the Divine Realm unless he is spiritually reborn.” See *Aḥādīth-e Mathnawī* p. 318. This saying is similar to what is written in the Gospel of Matthew: “And he said: “I say to you, unless you change and become like little children, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven.” (Matthew 18:3).

<sup>988</sup> This refers to the classical love story of “Laylā and Majnūn”, also known as “Laylā and the Madman”, as *majnūn* means “possessed (by a *jinnī*, a spirit)” or “mad” in Arabic. Majnūn was so desperately in love with and possessed by Laylā’s beauty that he lost his senses. In Sūfī literature, Laylā symbolizes the Supreme Beauty of the Divine Beloved. The Persian form of the name *Laylā* is *Laylī*.

<sup>989</sup> In reality the absolute evil does not exist, since God has created all things perfect and beautiful.

- 4-69 The sea is as a garden to the water-creatures; to the creatures of earth it is death and a painful brand.
- 4-70 Count in the same way, o man of experience, instances of this relativity from a single individual to a thousand.
- 4-71 Zayd<sup>990</sup>, in regard to that particular one, may be a devil, but in regard to another person he may be a beneficent sultān.
- 4-73 Zayd is one person – to that one he is as a shield, while to this other one he is wholly pain and loss.
- 5-3295 Venom also is the snake’s food and provision, but its venom is anguish and death to others.
- 5-3296 The form of every blessing and affliction is a Hell to this one, a Paradise to that one.
- 6-29 Everyone, then, has his separate customer in this bazaar of *He does what He pleases*<sup>991</sup>.
- 6-30 The dessert provided by the thornbush is food (fuel) for the fire; the scent of the rose is food for the intoxicated brain.
- 6-31 If filth is disgraceful in our opinion, yet it is sugar and sweetmeat to the pig and the dog.

**The relativity of worldly things.  
All things are known by their opposites. [2.5.8]**

- 6-2615 For the jealousy of God has produced a veil of concealment and has mingled the low and the high together.
- 6-2597 Nothing that God created is vain, whether it is anger, forbearance, sincere counsel or deceit.
- 6-2599 The usefulness and harm of each depend on the place (occasion): for this reason knowledge is necessary and useful.
- 2-2927 Know the truth to be this, that all these different persons are not in the right; nor is this herd entirely astray,
- 2-2928 Because nothing false is shown without the True: the fool bought (desired) false coin in the hope of its being gold.

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<sup>990</sup> Names like Zayd and ‘Amr are Arabic fictitious or generic names, used for anonymous persons, like “John Doe” in English.

<sup>991</sup> Qur’ān 3:26.



- 2-2929 If there were no current (genuine) coin in the world, how would it be possible to issue false coins?
- 2-2933 Do not say, then, that all these utterances are false: the false (pretenders) are a snare to the heart on the ground of (because they give) hope of truth.
- 2-2934 Do not say, then, that all this is fantasy and error: without truth fantasy does not exist in the world.
- 2-2942 He that says, “All are true”—it is folly on his part; and he who says, “All are false”—he is damned.
- 2-2939 If there were no faulty things in the world, all fools would be shrewd merchants.
- 2-2940 Then it would be very easy to know the value of goods: when there is no defect, what is the difference between the incompetent and the competent appraiser?
- 2-2941 And if everything is faulty, knowledge is of no advantage: since everything here is common wood, aloeswood is not to be found.

### **The Ninth Rivulet [2.5.9]**

#### **Gentleness and forbearance (ḥilm) and anger (ghaḍab).**

- 4-113 A sober-minded man said to Jesus, “What is the hardest to bear of all things in existence?”
- 4-114 He replied, “O my dear soul, the hardest is God’s anger, which makes Hell tremble like ourselves.”
- 4-115 He said, “How can you protect yourself against this anger of God?” Jesus said, “By immediately abandoning your own anger.”
- 4-116 Therefore, as the enforcer of the law became this anger’s mine (source), his ugly anger surpassed even that of a wild beast.
- 4-117 What hope is there for him of Divine mercy, unless perhaps that graceless man should relinquish that vile quality?
- 2-273 Do not bear malice: they who are led astray by malice, their graves are placed next to the malicious.
- 2-274 The origin of malice is Hell, and your malice is a part of that whole and is the enemy of your religion.
- 2-275 Since you are a part of Hell, beware! The part gravitates towards its whole.

### Story. [2.5.9]

- 6-3281 One sheep fled from God's *Kalīm*<sup>992</sup>: the feet of Moses were blistered from following it and his shoes fell off.
- 6-3282 He continued searching after it until nightfall, and meanwhile the flock had vanished from his sight.
- 6-3283 The lost sheep was weakened and exhausted by fatigue: then God's *Kalīm* shook the dust off it,
- 6-3284 And stroked its back and head with his hand, fondling it lovingly like a mother.
- 6-3285 Not even half a speck of irritation and anger, nothing but love, pity and tears!
- 6-3286 He said to the sheep, "I grant that you had no pity on me, but why did your nature show such cruelty to itself?"
- 6-3287 At that moment God said to the angels, "So-and-so is suitable for Prophethood."
- 6-3289 And that without his having been a shepherd and having undergone that trial, God did not bestow on him the leadership of the world<sup>993</sup>.
- 6-3291 In order that the Prophets' dignity<sup>994</sup> and patience should be manifested, God made them shepherds before investing them with Prophethood.
- 6-3292 Every prince who performs the task of shepherding mankind in such a way that he obeys the Commandments of God
- 6-3293 And in tending them with foresight and understanding shows a forbearance like that of Moses,
- 6-3294 Inevitably God will bestow on him a spiritual shepherd's task exalted above the sphere of the moon,
- 6-3295 Even as He raised the Prophets from the herding of sheep and gave them the task of tending the righteous.
- 1-3347 When a self-conceited person has seen anyone commit a sin, there appears a fire from Hell in him.
- 1-3348 He calls that hellish pride defence of the Religion: he does not see the soul of arrogance in himself.

<sup>992</sup> In the Muslim tradition, *Kalīmu 'Llāh*, "he who spoke with God" is the epithet of the Prophet Moses (Ḥaẓrat Mūsā).

<sup>993</sup> Hadīth: "All those who have been chosen as Prophets by the Lord have been shepherds to their people". See *Aḥādīth-e Mathnawī* p. 578.

<sup>994</sup> Here, "dignity" implies "calmness", "modesty" and "constancy".

- 1-3349 Defence of the Religion has a different character, for from that religious fire a whole world is green (verdant and flourishing).

### **The wrath of the Perfect Man<sup>995</sup>. [2.5.9]**

- 1-3799 Anger is king over kings, and to me it is a slave: I have bound even anger under the bridle.
- 1-3800 A sword of my forbearance has struck the neck of my anger; the anger of God has come on me like mercy.
- 1-3794 I am not a straw, I am a mountain of forbearance, patience and justice: how should the fierce wind carry off the mountain?"
- 1-3825 "Since I am free, how should anger bind me? Nothing is here but Divine qualities. Come in!

### **The Tenth Rivulet [2.5.10] Sincerity (ikhlās)<sup>996</sup>.**

- 2-2900 If you closely examine the work of them who follow falsehood, you will see that it stinks, layer upon layer, like an onion –
- 2-2901 Every single one of these efforts weaker than another, while, in the case of the sincere, every effort is more excellent than the other.
- 3-4591 The former loves God for the sake of some apparent cause, while the other does indeed have a pure disinterested love.
- 3-4592 The former loves the Wet-Nurse, only for the sake of the milk, while the other has given his heart for the sake of the Veiled One.
- 3-4593 The child (the blind follower) has no knowledge of Her beauty: he has no desire for Her in his heart except for milk,
- 3-4594 While the other is, truly, the lover of the Wet-Nurse: he is disinterested, single-minded in passionate love.
- 3-4595 That is why he who loves God because of hope and fear, studiously reads the book of blind imitation, without the interference of logic and reason.
- 3-4596 While he who loves God for God's sake – where is he? For he is separated from all self-interests and apparent causes.

<sup>995</sup> In a ḥadīth qudsī, God says: "Verily, My mercy precedes My wrath".

<sup>996</sup> Qur'ān 18: 110.

### Story. [2.5.10]

- 1-3721 Learn how to act sincerely<sup>997</sup> from ‘Alī: know that the Lion of God (‘Alī) was purified from all deceit.
- 1-3722 In fighting against the infidels he got the upper hand of (vanquished) a certain heroic warrior<sup>998</sup>, quickly drew a sword and made haste to slay him.
- 1-3723 He spat in the face of ‘Alī, the pride of every Prophet and every Saint;
- 1-3724 He spat on the countenance before which the face of the moon prostrates itself in the place of worship.
- 1-3725 ‘Alī at once threw his sword away and stopped fighting him<sup>999</sup>.
- 1-3726 The heroic warrior was astounded by this act and by his showing forgiveness and mercy without reason (occasion).
- 1-3727 He said, “You lifted your sharp sword against me: why have you flung it aside and spared me?”
- 1-3787 He said, “I am wielding the sword for God’s sake, I am the servant of God, I am not under the command of the body.
- 1-3788 I am the Lion of God, I am not the lion of passion: my deed bears witness to my religion.
- 1-3802 Since the thought of something other than God has intervened, it is fitting that I should sheathe my sword.
- 1-3976 When you spat in my face, my fleshly self (*nafs*) was aroused and my good nature was spoiled.
- 1-3977 Half of my fighting came to be for God’s sake, and half for idle passion: in God’s affair partnership<sup>1000</sup> is not allowable.
- 1-3980 The infidel heard this, and a light appeared in his heart, so that he cut a girdle<sup>1001</sup>.
- 1-3981 He said, “I was sowing the seed of injustice: I imagined you to be different than you are.
- 1-3985 I am the slave of the great wave of that Sea of Light which makes a pearl like this visible.

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<sup>997</sup> I.e. to act for God’s sake alone, without any regard to self-interest (Nich.).

<sup>998</sup> Literally “champion”.

<sup>999</sup> Literally “relaxed (his efforts) in fighting him”.

<sup>1000</sup> I.e. to associate the worship and service of God with any other object (Nich.).

<sup>1001</sup> I.e. the sacred thread (*kushtī*) which Zoroastrians wear on their waists (Nich.).

- 1-3986 Offer me the declaration of the Muslim Faith<sup>1002</sup>, for I consider you as the exalted one of the time.
- 1-3987 Almost fifty persons of his relatives and tribe lovingly turned their faces towards the Religion.
- 1-3988 With the sword of clemency ‘Alī saved the throats of so many people from the sword.
- 1-3989 The sword of clemency is sharper than the sword of iron; no, it yields more victories than a hundred armies.

### **Hypocrisy (riyā)<sup>1003</sup>. [2.5.10]**

- 4-1564 The body is like a letter: look into it and see whether it is worthy of the King; then take it to Him.
- 4-1565 Go into a corner, open the letter, read it, see whether its words are fit for kings.
- 4-1566 If it is not fit, tear it in pieces and write another letter and correct the fault<sup>1004</sup>.
- 4-1568 How hard and difficult is it to open the letter! It is a task for men, not for children playing with knucklebones<sup>1005</sup>.
- 4-1569 We have all become satisfied with reading the table of contents, because we are steeped in greed and vain desire.
- 4-1570 The table of contents is a snare for the common people, that they may think the text of the scroll is like that table.
- 4-1571 Open the title-page, do not turn your neck away from these words – and God knows best which course is right.
- 4-1572 That title is like a declaration made by the tongue: examine the text of the scroll, namely, the bosom (your inner self),
- 4-1573 And see whether it is in agreement with your declaration, in order that your actions may not be hypocritical.

### **Story. [2.5.10]**

- 4-1578 A certain theologian<sup>1006</sup> had collected some old rags and wound them in his turban,

<sup>1002</sup> The *Shahāda*, which consists of the words “I testify that there is no deity but God and I testify that Muḥammad is the Messenger of God”. Shī‘ī Muslims add the phrase “and I testify that ‘Alī is the Friend of God”.

<sup>1003</sup> Qur’ān 4:142.

<sup>1004</sup> Literally “remedy (the fault)”.

<sup>1005</sup> Literally “children of the knucklebone” (Nich.).

<sup>1006</sup> A *faqīh*, one who is well-versed in *fiqh*, Islamic jurisprudence.

- 4-1579 In order that it might become big and look dignified when he came into the assembly in the *Ḥaṭīm*<sup>1007</sup>.
- 4-1580 He had clipped the rags from various garments and outwardly embellished the turban with them.
- 4-1581 The exterior of the turban was like a robe of Paradise, but it was shameful and ugly within, like the hypocrite.
- 4-1582 Shreds of *dalq* (dervish-cloak), cotton and fur were buried inside that turban.
- 4-1583 He had turned his face towards the madrasa<sup>1008</sup> at dawn<sup>1009</sup>, that by means of this false dignity he might gain material blessings.
- 4-1584 A clothes-robber stood waiting on the dark road to practise his craft.
- 4-1585 He snatched the turban from his head, and then started to run in order that he might settle the business.
- 4-1586 Then the theologian shouted at him, saying, “O son, undo the turban first, then take it away with you.
- 4-1587 Even as you are flying with four wings very rapidly, undo the gift which you are taking away with the same speed.
- 4-1588 Undo it and rub (feel) with your hand, then take it if you like: I have made it allowable<sup>1010</sup>.”
- 4-1589 When he who was fleeing undid it, a hundred thousand rags fell on the road.
- 4-1591 He dashed the rag on the ground, saying, “O worthless man, by this fraud you have put me out of business (deprived me of profit).”
- 4-1574 When you are carrying a very heavy sack, you must not fail to look into it<sup>1011</sup>.
- 4-1575 To see what of sour and sweet you have in the sack. If it is worth bringing along, bring it;
- 4-1576 Otherwise, empty your sack of the stones in it, and save yourself from this fruitless toil and disgrace.
- 4-1577 Put in the sack only that which must be brought to righteous sultāns and kings.

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<sup>1007</sup> The name *Ḥaṭīm* is properly given to a semi-circular wall adjoining the north and west corners of the Ka‘ba. Here it denotes the space between the wall and the Ka‘ba (Nich.).

<sup>1008</sup> *Madrasa* means “a place of learning”.

<sup>1009</sup> Literally “(at the time of) the morning-drink” (Nich.).

<sup>1010</sup> In the Persian text the word *ḥalāl* is used, which is the Islamic legal term for what is allowable.

<sup>1011</sup> Literally “no less is necessary than that you should look into it” (Nich.).

- 1-2700 Produce some evidence other than talk and show, so that the beautiful King may take pity,
- 1-2701 For the evidence that consisted of talk and show has always been invalidated before the Supreme Judge.
- 1-2702 He requires truth (veracity) as witness to the indigent man's state, so that his inner light shall shine out and proclaim his indigence without any words of his."
- 2-1313 For the *mukhlis* (sincere worshipper) is in danger of the snare until he becomes entirely purified of self,
- 2-1314 Because he is still on the Way, and the highwaymen are innumerable: only he escapes who is protected by God.
- 2-1316 But when the *mukhlis* has become *mukhlas*<sup>1012</sup>, he is delivered: he has reached the place of safety and has won the victory.

## The Sixth River [2.6]

**The qualities which enable a sālik to come closer to the Way of God.**

### The First Rivulet [2.6.1]

**Samā' (spiritual musical audition) is the sālik's spiritual food, enabling him to experience the Divine<sup>1013</sup>.**

**Poem by Ḥaẓrat Shaykh Sa'du'ddīn al-Ḥamawī<sup>1014</sup>:  
 "During samā'<sup>1015</sup>, the heart is filled with the Beloved's fragrance  
 and the soul is transported to the Garden of Divine Secrets.  
 These melodies are like a horse that carries your spirit  
 to the world of your Beloved."**

- 4-735 But the true believers say that the influences of Paradise made every unpleasant sound beautiful.
- 4-736 We all have been parts of Adam, we have heard those melodies in Paradise.

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<sup>1012</sup> The *mukhlis* is he who worships devotedly, but regards his devotion as his own, while the *mukhlas*, whom God has purified of self, attributes all his actions to God (Nich.). *Mukhlas* refers to the sālik who has become free of all worldly attachments.

<sup>1013</sup> Qur'ān 39:17-18: "So give good news to My servants; those who listen to the word, then follow the best of it; those are the ones whom God has guided, and those are the ones who are endowed with of understanding."

<sup>1014</sup> Ḥaẓrat Shaykh Sa'du'ddīn Muḥammad ibn al-Mu'ayyad al-Ḥamawī (ca. 1191-1252 CE) was a Persian mystic who was widely acclaimed by his contemporaries.

<sup>1015</sup> *Samā'* (from the Arabic "to listen" or "to hear"): ritual gathering where Ṣūfīs listen to mystical singing and music. The aim of *samā'* is to reach a heightened state of consciousness, which draws them closer to the Divine Beloved and eventually unites them with Him. In scientific literature *samā'* is usually translated as "spiritual audition" or "mystical audition".

- 4-737 Although the water and earth of our bodies have made us doubt, something of those melodies comes back to our memory.
- 4-732 For the shrill noise of the *surñā*<sup>1016</sup> and the menace of the drum somewhat resemble that universal trumpet.
- 1-1920 The sensual ear does hear those melodies, for the sensual ear is defiled by vice.
- 4-733 That is why the wise have said that we received these harmonies from the revolution of the celestial sphere,
- 4-734 And that this melody which people sing with *tanbūr*<sup>1017</sup> and throat is the sound of the revolutions of the sphere;
- 4-742 Therefore *samā*<sup>1018</sup> is the food of lovers of God, since it contains the vision of inner unity and peace.
- 4-743 From hearing sounds and songs the inner visions derive a great strength; in fact they take shape (become forms) in the inner being.
- 4-744 The fire of love is made sharp (inflamed) by melodies, just as the fire (ardour) of the man who dropped walnuts into the water<sup>1019</sup>:

### **Allegory. [2.6.1]**

- 4-745 The water was in a deep place: the thirsty man went up the tree and scattered the walnuts one by one.
- 4-746 The walnuts were falling from the walnut-tree into the water: its sound reached him, and he saw the bubbles.
- 4-747 A sensible person said to him, “Leave it alone, o young man: truly, the loss of the walnuts will bring thirst (regret) to you.
- 4-748 The more the fruit falls into the water – since the water is below at a great distance from you,
- 4-749 The river-water will have carried the fruit far away before you will have managed to come down from the top of the tree.”
- 4-750 He replied, “My purpose in this scattering is not to come to possess the walnuts: look more keenly, do not stop at this superficial view.

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<sup>1016</sup> *Surñā*: a hobo-like double-reed wind instrument.

<sup>1017</sup> *Tanbūr* or *ṭunbūr*: a Persian long-necked lute.

<sup>1018</sup> During *Samā*‘, Ṣūfī dervishes often experience various states of mystical ecstasy; more advanced Ṣūfis often enter into a state of perfect inner peace.

<sup>1019</sup> This verse and the following verses are taken from a story about a thirsty man who dropped walnuts into water in order that he might enjoy the sound of it, as though it were sweet music. “Thirsty” should be understood in a spiritual sense, i.e. thirsty for the Divine.



- 4-751 My purpose is that the sound of the water should reach my ears; also, that I should see these bubbles on the surface of the water.”
- 4-752 What, indeed, is the thirsty man’s business in the world? To circle forever around the base of the tank.
- 1-1919 The Prophets also have spiritual melodies within, from where there comes priceless life to them who seek God.
- 3-33 “The truly noble is he who gives to himself the Water of Life that remains forever”
- 1-2763 Not every one is able to hear rightly: the fig is not a morsel for every little bird.

### **The ney (reed flute) or the narrator of Divine love. [2.6.1]**

- 1-1 Listen to the reed how it tells a tale, complaining of separation –<sup>1020</sup>
- 1-2 Saying, “Ever since I was cut from the reed-bed, my lament has caused man and woman to moan.
- 1-3 I want a bosom torn by severance, that I may unfold the pain of love-desire to him.
- 1-4 Everyone who is left far from his source longs for the time when he was united with it.
- 1-5 In every company I uttered my wailing notes, I consorted with the unhappy and with them who rejoice.
- 1-6 Everyone became my friend following his own opinion; none sought my inner secrets.
- 1-7 My secret is not far from my complaint, but ear and eye lack the light (to understand it).
- 1-8 The body is not veiled from the soul, nor the soul from the body, yet none is allowed to see the soul.
- 1-9 This sound of the reed is fire, it is not wind: whoever does not have this fire, may he be annihilated!
- 1-10 It is the fire of Love that is in the reed, it is the fervour of Love that is in the wine.
- 1-13 The reed tells of the Way full of blood and relates stories of the passion of Majnūn<sup>1021</sup>.

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<sup>1020</sup> Ḥaẓrat Shaykh Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī, a renowned Ṣūfī Master (d. 996 CE), said about this verse: “The true believer is like a reed when his voice becomes beautiful”. Source: *Aḥādīth-e Mathnawī* p. 592.

- 1-11 The reed is the companion of everyone who has been parted from a friend: its strains pierced our hearts<sup>1022</sup>.
- 1-12 Who ever saw a poison and antidote like the reed? Who ever saw a confidant and a longing lover like the reed?
- 1-29 When the rose is gone and the garden has faded, you will hear the nightingale's story no more.
- 1-28 But whoever is parted from one who speaks his language becomes dumb, even though he has a hundred songs.
- 1-27 Were I joined to the lip of one in harmony with me, I too, like the reed, would tell all that may be told;
- 6-2002 We have two vocal mouths, like the reed: one mouth is hidden in its lips.
- 6-2003 One mouth is wailing at you: it lets many shrill notes fall in the air;
- 6-2006 If the reed did not converse with<sup>1023</sup> his lip, the reed would not fill the world with music sweet as sugar.
- 6-659 These two – the minstrel<sup>1024</sup> and the wine – are partners: this one quickly leads to that, and that one to this.
- 6-660 They who languish for drunkenness feed on the song of the minstrel: the minstrels bring them to the Tavern<sup>1025</sup>.
- 6-645 The minstrel led them to intoxication; then again, the intoxicated one drank intoxication from the song of the minstrel.
- 6-646 The mystic fetches God's Wine to drink because of the spiritual minstrel, while the sensual man drinks the bodily wine from the sensual minstrel<sup>1026</sup>.
- 6-644 The spiritual minstrel is the bosom-friend of those intoxicated with God: he is the dessert, food and strength of the drunken.

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<sup>1021</sup> This refers to the classical love story of "Laylā and Majnūn", also known as "Laylā and the Madman", as *majnūn* means "possessed (by a *jinnī*, a spirit)" or "mad" in Arabic. Majnūn was so desperately in love with and possessed by Laylā's beauty that he lost his senses. In Sūfī literature, Laylā symbolizes the Supreme Beauty of the Divine Beloved. The Persian form of the name *Laylā* is *Laylī*.

<sup>1022</sup> Literally "rent our veils" (Nich.).

<sup>1023</sup> I.e. "if the reed was not joined to the lip".

<sup>1024</sup> The minstrel (*mutrib*): a Sūfī minstrel who performs music and/or sings mystical poetry during the practice of *Samā'*. The ecstasy Sūfīs often experience during *Samā'* is often referred to as "drunkenness", caused by "Wine", i.e. the overwhelming force of Love. The Sūfī Master who presides over the *Samā'* usually is considered the one who pours the Wine.

<sup>1025</sup> In Sūfī terminology, "the Tavern" symbolizes the heart of the Perfect Sūfī, the Master who has realized Union with God.

<sup>1026</sup> Qur'ān 76:21: "and their Lord will give them a purifying drink."

## The Second Rivulet [2.6.2] Dhikr (remembrance of God)<sup>1027</sup>.

“And remember your Lord when you forget it<sup>1028</sup>.”

- 6-1476 Remembrance (of God) brings thought into movement: make remembrance the sun for this frozen thought.
- 6-1475 We have said so much: think of the rest, or if thought is frozen (unable to move), practice remembrance of God<sup>1029</sup>.
- 4-435 It is just like the naked man who jumps into the water, so that in the water he might escape from the sting of the hornets:
- 4-436 The hornets circle above him, and when he puts out his head they do not spare him.
- 4-437 The water is remembrance (*dhikr*) of God, and the hornet is the memory, during this time, of such-and-such a woman or such-and-such a man.
- 4-438 Swallow (hold) your breath in the water of recollection and be brave<sup>1030</sup>, that you may be freed from the old thought and temptation.
- 5-470 Concoct a deceit that you may be delivered from your own deceit; concoct a deceit that you may become detached from the body<sup>1031</sup>.
- 3-186 Remembrance of God is pure: when purity has come, impurity packs and leaves.
- 3-187 Opposites flee from opposites: night flees when the light of dawn breaks.
- 3-188 When the pure (holy) Name comes into the mouth, neither impurity nor any sorrow remains.

## Story. [2.6.2]

- 6-4021 Zalīkhā<sup>1032</sup> had applied the name of everything to Joseph, from rue-seed to aloes-wood.

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<sup>1027</sup> *Dhikr* or *dhikru 'Llāh* means “remembrance of God” or “restoring the memory of God”, by repeating various sacred phrases and names of God, either silently or aloud. Dhikr is practised individually as well as collectively, and is the most fundamental practice of Sufism. Practising dhikr restores man’s memory and consciousness of his True Being, his essential unity with the Divine. “Dhikr” is not limited to one or more practices: literally anything that brings about this mystical consciousness may be called “dhikr”.

<sup>1028</sup> Qur’ān 18:24.

<sup>1029</sup> As explained earlier, *dhikr* or *dhikru 'Llāh* – remembrance of God – can be practised in many ways and can take on any form. However, in this case *dhikr* only means “remembrance of God by incessantly repeating one or more of His names”.

<sup>1030</sup> Literally “be patient”.

<sup>1031</sup> In the Persian text it says *az jasad*, which means “from the body”, this may also be read as *az ḥasad*, meaning “from envy”.

<sup>1032</sup> Zalīkhā is the Persian form of the Arabic name Zulaykha. The story of Yūsuf (Joseph) and Zulaykha is told in the Qur’ān (Sūra Yūsuf – the 12<sup>th</sup> Sūra – verses 31-34), even though Zulaykha’s name is not explicitly

- 6-4022 She hid his name in all other names and made their inner meaning known to none but her confidants.
- 6-4024 And if she said, “Look, the moon has risen”; or if she said, “The willow-branch is green with new leaves”;
- 6-4025 Or if she said, “The leaves are quivering mightily”, or if she said, “The rue-seed is burning merrily”;
- 6-4026 Or if she said, “The rose has told her secret to the nightingale”, or if she said, “The king has disclosed his passion for Shahnāz<sup>1033</sup>”;
- 6-4028 Or if she said, “The water carrier has brought the water”; or if she said, “The sun has risen”;
- 6-4030 Or if she said, “The loaves of bread have no salt (taste)”; or if she said, “The heavenly sphere is going round in the opposite direction”;
- 6-4029 Or if she said, “Last night they cooked a potful of food” or “The vegetables are cooked to perfection<sup>1034</sup>”;
- 6-4031 Or if she said, “My head aches”; or if she said, “My headache is better” –
- 6-4033 If she piled up a hundred thousand names, her meaning and intention was always Joseph.
- 6-4035 Her thirst would be quenched by his name: the name of Joseph was a sherbet to her soul<sup>1035</sup>;
- 6-4036 And if she was in pain, her pain would immediately be turned into profit by that exalted name.
- 6-4037 In cold weather it was a fur to her. This, this is what the Beloved’s name can do when one is in love.
- 6-4038 The common people are always pronouncing the Holy Name, but it does not do this work for them since they are not endowed with true love.
- 6-4039 The miracle<sup>1036</sup> which Jesus had worked by pronouncing the Name of *Hū* (God) was manifested to her through his name (Joseph).

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mentioned. Their story has been retold many times. The most famous version is the one written by the great Persian Ṣūfī poet and mystic Ḥaẓrat Mawlānā Nūru’d-dīn ‘Adbu’r-Raḥmān Jāmī (1414-1492 CE), in his *Haft Awrang* (“Seven Thrones”).

<sup>1033</sup> Literally “has told the secret of Shahnāz.”. The name Shahnāz means “the king’s delight.” (Nich.).

<sup>1034</sup> Literally “have been made uniform by cooking.”(Nich.).

<sup>1035</sup> Literally “an inward sherbet” (Nich.).

<sup>1036</sup> I.e. bringing the dead to life (Nich.).

- 6-4040 When the soul has been united with God, to speak of God is to speak of the soul, and to speak of the soul is to speak of God.
- 6-4041 She was empty of self and filled with love for her friend (Joseph), and (as the proverb says), “A pot<sup>1037</sup> drips what is in it.”

**The Third Rivulet [2.6.3]**  
**Contemplative thought and reflection (tafakkur).**  
 “Indeed in that are signs for a people who reflect<sup>1038</sup>.”

- 1-2870 When you knock on the door of Reality, it will be opened to you: beat the wing of thought, in order that you may be made a king-falcon.
- 2-3207 The right thought is that which opens a way: the right way is that on which a spiritual king advances.
- 1-710 Go, pursue Reality, o worshipper of form, since Reality is the wing on form’s body.
- 1-1136 Know that form springs from Reality like the lion from the jungle, or like voice and speech from thought.
- 1-1137 This speech and voice arose from thought; you do not know where the sea of thought is,
- 1-1138 But since you have seen that the waves of speech are full of subtle grace, you know that their sea also is noble.
- 1-1140 The form was born of the Word and died again, the wave drew itself back into the sea.
- 6-71 When it (the Mathnawī) is made singular and stripped of words, sounds and breaths, it leaves all that behind and becomes the spiritual Ocean.
- 6-72 The speaker of the word, the hearer of the word and the words themselves – all three become spirit in the end.
- 6-73 The bread-giver, the bread-receiver and the wholesome bread become singular (stripped) of their forms and are turned into earth,
- 6-74 But their realities, in the three categories mentioned above, are both distinguished from each other in these grades and are lasting
- 6-75 In appearance they have become earth, in reality they have not; if anyone says that they have, say to him, “No, they have not.”

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<sup>1037</sup> Literally “from the pot” (Nich.).

<sup>1038</sup> Qur’ān 13:3.

- 1-1141 The form came forth from Formlessness and returned to it, for *Verily, to Him we shall return*<sup>1039</sup>.
- 3-579 When you have broken and destroyed your own form, you have learned to break the form of everything.
- 3-580 After that, you will break every form: like Ḥaydar<sup>1040</sup> (‘Alī), you will uproot the gate of Khaybar.
- 1-1018 How long will you care about form? After all, o form-worshipper, has your Reality-lacking soul not yet escaped from form?
- 1-711 Seek the company of the followers of Reality, that you may both win the gift and be generous (in giving yourself up to God).
- 1-3330 What is the form in the presence of (in comparison with) Reality? Very feeble. It is the reality of the sky that keeps it upside down (like a cup turned upside down).
- 1-3331 Judge by the analogy of the celestial wheel: where does its motion come from? From Reason, which directs it.
- 1-3332 The motion of this shield-like body comes from the veiled spirit, o son.
- 1-3454 What is born from attribute and name? Imagination; and that imagination shows the way to union with Him.
- 2-720 Reality is that which seizes (enraptures) you and makes you independent of form.
- 2-721 Reality is not that which makes blind and deaf and causes a man to be more in love with form.
- 2-578 I will tell you a story: listen to it attentively, that you may know that selfish desire is a plug in the ear.
- 5-4064 Do not endure all this anguish for the sake of mere forms: grasp the reality without suffering headache because of a form.
- 6-4399 The form (appearance) of the fire is beneath the kettle; the reality of the fire is in the soul of the kettle.

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<sup>1039</sup> Qur’ān 2:156.

<sup>1040</sup> Ḥaydar: a name of Ḥaẓrat ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, nephew and successor to the Prophet. Ḥaydar means “Lion of God”, or “invincible warrior”, suggesting Ḥaẓrat Mawlā ‘Alī’s perfect and exceptional courage and strength. Certain Persian mystics have given an additional explanation of Ḥaydar: they say that *Hay* means “dragon”, and that *dar* is derived from the Persian verb *darīdan*, meaning “to tear up”, “to rip into pieces”. According to a traditional story, as a baby Ḥaẓrat ‘Alī tore a dragon to pieces from his cradle (the dragon being a symbol for the lower self – the *nafs*). Therefore *Ḥaydar* might be translated as “Dragon Slayer”. According to another version of this Persian traditional story, Ḥaẓrat Mawlā ‘Alī gripped the dragon’s mouth and held it tightly shut, to prevent later mystical seekers from walking into it. Khaybar: a rebellious fortress in Arabia vanquished by Ḥaẓrat ‘Alī in 629 CE.

6-4400 Its form is outside and its reality inside: the real nature of the soul's Beloved is (in the soul) like blood in the veins.

**Outer form or appearance and inner quintessential  
core or inner quintessential meaning. [2.6.3]**

6-4747 Form is the shadow, reality is the sun: the shadowless light is only to be found in the ruin<sup>1041</sup>.

1-2624 If the spiritual explanation were sufficient, the creation of the world would have been vain and idle.

1-2640 And as for him who perceived the inner meaning in the outward form, the form is both near to the meaning and far away from it.

1-2641 As to indication, they (the meaning and the form) are like the sap and the tree; but when you turn to the essence<sup>1042</sup>, they are very far removed from each other.

1-2769 The picture's smiling appearance is for your sake, in order that by means of that picture you may rightly understand the reality.

6-650 Bodies are like pots with the lids on: look and see what is in each pot.

6-651 The pot of that body is filled with the Water of Life; the pot of this body is filled with the poison of death.

6-652 If you keep your eye fixed on the contents, you are a (spiritual) king; but if you merely see its vessel, you are misguided.

1-1019 If a human being were a man on the basis of mere form, Aḥmad (Muḥammad) and Bū Jahl<sup>1043</sup> would be just the same.

1-1020 The painting on the wall is like Adam: see from the pictured form what is missing in it.

1-1021 The soul is missing in that resplendent form: go, seek that rarely found jewel!

**Without their inner quintessential core or meaning,  
outer forms or appearances are transitory. [2.6.3]**

4-2878 The unbeliever's argument is just this, that he says, "I see no dwelling-place except this external world".

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<sup>1041</sup> I.e. when material forms are eliminated (Nich.).

<sup>1042</sup> Literally *māhiya*, "quiddity", "what it really is".

<sup>1043</sup> *Bū Jahl* is an abbreviated form of *Abū Jahl*: 'Amr ibn Hishām, an uncle of the Prophet, was a Meccan leader who ferociously opposed Islām. He disliked Ḥaḏrat Muḥammad and publicly humiliated him. He had once been known as *Abū 'l-Ḥakam* – "Father of Wisdom", but because of his hostility to Ḥaḏrat Muḥammad, he came to be known as *Abū Jahl* – "Father of Ignorance".

- 4-2879 He never thinks that in every place any external thing gives information of hidden wise purposes.
- 4-2880 The usefulness of every external object is, indeed, internal: it is latent, like the beneficial quality in medicines.
- 4-2881 Does any painter paint a beautiful picture<sup>1044</sup> for the sake of the picture itself, without hope of conferring benefit?
- 4-2884 Does any potter make a pot in haste for the sake of the pot itself and not in hope of the water?
- 4-2885 Does any bowl-maker make a finished bowl for the sake of the bowl itself and not for the sake of the food?
- 4-2886 Does any calligrapher write artistically for the sake of the writing itself and not for the sake of the reading?
- 4-2887 The external form is for the sake of the unseen form; and that took shape for the sake of another unseen form.
- 4-2888 Count up these consequences to the third, fourth, or tenth in proportion to your insight.
- 4-2892 The first is for the sake of the second, like climbing the steps of a ladder;
- 4-2893 And consider the second to be for the sake of the third, and so on up to the end, in order that you may arrive, step by step, at the roof.
- 5-1331 Since the foolish considered only the external appearances, and since the subtleties (inner aspects) were very much hidden from them,
- 5-1332 Necessarily they were hindered from reaching the real object; for the subtlety escaped them when the object presented itself.
- 6-3728 All the infinite ways of life and all the crafts are the shadow (reflection) of the form of thoughts.
- 6-3729 For example, when happy people are standing on the edge of a roof, observe the shadow of each one on the ground<sup>1045</sup>.
- 6-3730 The form of thought is on the mighty<sup>1046</sup> roof of the spirit, while the action resulting from it appears, like a shadow, on the pillars (bodily limbs).

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<sup>1044</sup> Literally “the beauty of the picture” (Nich.).

<sup>1045</sup> This bears a very strong resemblance to Plato’s Theory of Forms (or Ideas). Sufism has been influenced by the Wisdom of the Ancient Greeks, but that doesn’t necessarily mean that Ḥaḏrat Mawlānā Rūmī simply adopted Plato’s Theory; it’s much more likely that these two great Sages obtained Wisdom from the same timeless and universal Source and consequently arrived at the same insights.

<sup>1046</sup> Literally “strengthened”.



- 6-3720 The formless working of God sows the seed of a form (idea), from where a body grows up endowed with senses and a rational faculty,
- 6-3721 So that the form (idea), whatever it is, according to its own nature brings the body into a state of good or evil<sup>1047</sup>.
- 6-3722 If it is a form (idea) of beneficence, the body becomes thankful; if it is a form of delay, the body becomes patient;
- 6-3723 If it is a form of mercy, the body becomes flourishing; if it is a form of injury, the body becomes full of moans;
- 6-3724 If it is the form of a city, the body travels to it; if it is the form of an arrow, the body takes a shield in defence;
- 6-3725 If it is the form of beautiful ones, the body indulges in enjoyment; if it is a form of the unseen world, the body practises spiritual seclusion (*khalwa*).
- 6-3740 Know that the form of the walls and roof of every dwelling-place is a shadow (reflection) of the thought of the architect,
- 6-3742 Assuredly the Absolute Agent is formless: form is as a tool in His hand.
- 6-3743 Sometimes the Formless One graciously shows His face to the forms from the concealment (veil) of non-existence,
- 6-3744 So that every form may thereby be filled again with some perfection, beauty and power.
- 6-3745 When, again, the Formless One has hidden His face, they come to beg in the realm of colour and perfume.

**All forms are dependent on the Formless One and the true  
sālik must transcend all forms and appearances. [2.6.3]**

- 6-3746 If one form seeks perfection from another form, it is the very essence of error.
- 6-3747 Why, then, o worthless man, do you submit your need to another needy creature?
- 6-3748 Since all forms are slaves to God, do not say or think that form is applicable to God: do not seek Him by *tashbīh* (the comparison of God to created things).
- 6-3750 And if you derive no advantage (comfort) except from form, the form that is born within you involuntarily<sup>1048</sup> is the best.

<sup>1047</sup> Ḥadīth: “Actions are only by intention, and every man shall only have what he intended”. Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā’ ‘Ulūm ad-Dīn*, Vol. 2, p. 338.

<sup>1048</sup> Literally “without you”, i.e. without conscious thought or imagination on your part (Nich.).

- 6-3751 Suppose it is the form of a city to which you are going: you are drawn to it by a formless feeling of pleasure, o dependent one<sup>1049</sup>.
- 6-3754 Therefore in reality you go to the formless world, even though you are unaware that that is the object of your journey.
- 6-3753 Suppose it is the form of a friend to whom you would go: you are going for the sake of enjoying his companionship.
- 6-3752 Therefore you are really going to that which has no location<sup>1050</sup>, for pleasure is something different from place and time.
- 6-3755 In reality, then, God is worshipped by all, since all way-faring is for the sake of the pleasure (of which He is the source).
- 6-3756 But some have set their face towards the tail<sup>1051</sup> and have lost the Head, although the Head is the principal<sup>1052</sup>;
- 6-3757 But nevertheless, by means of the tail, that Head bestows the bounty proper to Headship on those who are lost and erring.
- 6-3758 That one obtains the bounty from the Head, this one from the tail; another group (of mystics) has lost both foot and head.
- 6-3759 Since all has been lost, they have gained all: by dwindling away (to nothingness) they have rushed towards the Whole.

### **Words that contain the quintessential meaning of a subject. [2.6.3]**

- 6-653 Know that words resemble this body and that their inner meaning resembles the soul.
- 6-654 The bodily eye always sees the body; the spiritual eye sees the artful (elusive) soul.
- 2-3013 The expression always fails to reach the meaning, which is why the Prophet said, “(Whoever knows God), his tongue falters<sup>1053</sup>.”
- 2-3292 The word is like the nest, and the meaning is the bird: the body is the river-bed, and the spirit is the rolling water.
- 2-3297 The husks on the surface of this rolling water have rushed along from the fruits of the Invisible Garden.

<sup>1049</sup> Literally “O rhyme-letter” (Nich.).

<sup>1050</sup> No location: *lā makān*, literally “no space”, i.e. “the Placeless Realm”, the place of the deity, where there is no space and time, a state beyond our conception.

<sup>1051</sup> I.e. phenomenal form (Nich.).

<sup>1052</sup> In the Persian text the word *aṣl* is used, which primarily means “origin” or “root”.

<sup>1053</sup> *Aḥādīth-e Mathnawī* p. 489.

- 2-3298 Seek the kernels of the husks (not on the water, but) in the Garden, because the water comes from the Garden into the river-bed.
- 1-296 The letters are the vessel: the meaning is (contained) in it like water; but the sea of the meaning is with God – *with Him is the Ummu 'l-Kitāb*<sup>1054</sup>.
- 2-3622 O brother, the story is like a measure: the real meaning in it resembles grain (in the measure).
- 2-3623 The intelligent man will take the grain of meaning: he will not pay any attention to the measure: even if it is removed altogether.
- 2-3624 Listen to what passes between the rose and the nightingale, even though in that case there is no obvious speech.
- 2-3625 Listen also to what passes between the moth and the candle, and pick out the meaning, o worshipful one<sup>1055</sup>.
- 2-3626 Even though there is no speech, there is the inmost soul of speech. Come, fly upward, do not fly low, like the owl.
- 2-3627 The chess-player said, “This is the house of the rook<sup>1056</sup>”. “How”, he said (the literalist), “did the house come into its hands?”
- 2-3628 Did it buy the house, or inherit it?” – happy is he who rushed towards the real meaning!
- 4-1285 Move on from the outer form and rise beyond the name: flee from title and from name and enter into reality.

### Story. [2.6.3]

- 5-354 A certain Ṣūfī tore his *jubba*<sup>1057</sup> in distress: after it had been torn, relief (*faraj*) came to him.
- 5-355 He gave the name *farajī*<sup>1058</sup> to that torn garment: from that man, who was a confidant of God, this title became well-known.

<sup>1054</sup> Qur’ān 13:39. In Arabic, *Ummu 'l-Kitāb* means “the Mother of the Book”. This term usually refers to *Sūratu 'l-Fātiḥa*, the Opening Sūra of the Qur’ān. However, *Ummu 'l-Kitāb* equally means a heavenly prototype, the substance, essence or “blueprint” of all holy books, i.e. not only of the Qur’ān, but of the sacred scriptures of all religions. The *Ummu 'l-Kitāb* is inscribed on the “Preserved Tablet” (*al-Lawḥu 'l-Maḥfūz*). Ṣūfīs mystics have also identified *Ummu 'l-Kitāb* with the First Intellect (*al-'Aqlu 'l-Awwal*), which is the first manifestation of Divine Beauty. Since man’s true nature is Divine, this implies man’s possibility to attain to Divine Knowledge.

<sup>1055</sup> Literally “o idol” (Nich.).

<sup>1056</sup> The castle at chess.

<sup>1057</sup> A long outer garment, open in front, with wide sleeves.

<sup>1058</sup> One who obtains relief (*faraj*).

- 5-356 This title became well-known; but only the Ṣūfī Shaykh grasped its pure essence: in the nature of the common people the mere letter, which is the dregs, remained.
- 5-357 Similarly, with every name, the Shaykh has kept the pure essence and left the mere name behind, like dregs.
- 5-358 Whoever is a clay-eater (corporealist<sup>1059</sup>) took the dregs, but the Ṣūfī went impatiently towards the pure essence.
- 5-359 He said to himself, “The dregs necessarily have a pure essence: with the help of this indication the heart advances to purity.”
- 5-363 The true Ṣūfī is he who has become a seeker of purity: it is not by wearing the garment of wool, patching it<sup>1060</sup> and committing sodomy.
- 5-365 To wear colours (coloured garments) with the desire<sup>1061</sup> of attaining to that purity and good name is good (commendable), but
- 5-366 Only if, with its desire, you go on until you attain to its essential principle; not like those who worship numerous worldly fancies.
- 6-84 The Holy Transcendent One who makes the apple-orchard hides them (the apples) in a mist of words.
- 6-85 From this mist of sound, words and talk arises such a screen that nothing of the apple is perceived except its scent.
- 6-86 At least draw (inhale) this scent in greater quantity with the nostrils of your intelligence, that taking you by the ear it may lead you towards your origin.
- 6-87 Preserve the scent and beware of nasal secretions: protect your body from the cold wind (breath) and being of the common people,
- 6-88 For fear that its effect would stop up your nose: ah, their air is colder than winter.
- 1-3453 How will you be freed from selfish desires without the cup of *Hū* (Him<sup>1062</sup>), o you who have become content with no more of *Hū* than the name of *Hū*?
- 1-3456 Have you ever seen a name without the reality (denoted by the name)? Or have you plucked a rose from the letters r-o-s-e<sup>1063</sup>?

<sup>1059</sup> One who denies the reality of spiritual existences; a materialist.

<sup>1060</sup> I.e. by merely showing off the outer attributes of a Ṣūfī without actually practising Sufism.

<sup>1061</sup> Literally “with the fancy of”.

<sup>1062</sup> In Arabic, *hu* is the shortened form of the third person masculine singular personal pronoun *huwa* (“he”), and is used as a suffix, e.g. *ra’aytu-hu* (meaning “I saw him”). In Sufism however, the name or sound *Hū* represents the Divine Essence, and as such *Hū* is neither male nor female.

<sup>1063</sup> In Persian the word for “rose” is *gul*, and is written with the letters *gāf* and *lām*.

- 1-3457 You have pronounced the name: go, seek the thing named. Know that the moon is high above, not in the water of the stream.
- 1-1729 What are words that you should think of them? What are words? Thorns in the hedge of the vineyard.
- 1-1730 I will throw word, sound and speech into confusion, so that I may converse with you without these three.
- 1-3092 O God, reveal to the soul that place where speech grows without letters,
- 1-3093 So that the pure soul may make of its head a foot (fly headlong) towards the far-stretching expanse of non-existence.
- 1-3409 The *Abdāl* (exalted Saints) have certain mystical expressions which the doctrines of external religion do not know.
- 1-3458 If you want to pass beyond name and letter, oh, purify yourself wholly of self.
- 2-159 The Ṣūfī's book does not consist of ink and letters: it is nothing but a heart white as snow.
- 2-160 The scholar's provision consists of pen-marks (written letters and words). What is the Ṣūfī's provision? Footprints.
- 3-1173 Since the knee<sup>1064</sup> is the Ṣūfī's school, the two knees are magic for solving a problem.

**The Fourth Rivulet [2.6.4]  
Transcending the stage of Doubt (shakk wa taraddud)  
and reaching the realm of Certainty (yaqīn).**

- 3-4124 Spiritual vision is immediately born of certainty, just as imagination is born of opinion.
- 3-4117 And in you, o contemptible man, there is this wonderful opinion that does not fly to the garden of certainty.
- 3-4118 O son, every opinion is thirsting for certainty and ambitiously flapping its wings (in search of it).
- 3-4119 When it attains to knowledge, then the wing becomes a foot<sup>1065</sup>, and its knowledge begins to scent certainty,
- 3-4120 For in the tested Way knowledge is inferior to certainty, but above opinion.

<sup>1064</sup> Referring to the posture of Ṣūfīs whilst engaged in meditation (Nich.).

<sup>1065</sup> I.e. the aspiration becomes a basis for further progress (Nich.).

- 3-4121 Know that knowledge is a seeker of certainty, and certainty is a seeker of vision and intuition.
- 3-4122 Seek this difference between knowledge and intuitive certainty now, in the Sūra which begins with *alhākum* (“[the pursuit of worldly things] diverts you” for after the word *kallā* (“By no means”) and after the words *law ta ‘lamūna* (“if only you had knowledge [of certainty]<sup>1066</sup>”).
- 3-4123 Knowledge leads to vision, o knowing one: if knowledge became intuitive certainty, they would see Hell.
- 3-1510 Knowledge has two wings, opinion one wing: opinion is defective and curtailed in flight.
- 3-1511 The one-winged bird soon falls headlong; then again it flies up some two paces or a little more.
- 3-1512 The bird, opinion, falling and rising, goes on with one wing in hope of reaching the nest.
- 3-1513 But when he has been delivered from opinion, Knowledge shows its face to him: that one-winged bird becomes two-winged and spreads its wings.
- 3-1514 After that, it walks upright and straight, not falling flat on its face or feeling ill.
- 3-1515 It flies upward with two wings, like Gabriel, without opinion, without uncertainty and without idle talk.

**Speculative uncertainty and illusory conjecture  
(*ẓann wa wahm*) as obstacles on the Path. [2.6.4]**

- 3-1558 Imagination and opinion are the downfall of particular (discursive) reason, because its dwelling-place is in the darkness.
- 5-2659 A hundred thousand awe-inspiring and formidable ships have been shattered to pieces<sup>1067</sup> in the sea of imagination.
- 5-2662 Since your own imagination keeps you giddy-headed, why should you revolve around the imagination of another<sup>1068</sup>?
- 3-1559 If there is a path half an ell wide on the ground, a man will walk safely without delusive imagination.
- 3-1560 But if you walk on the top of a high wall, you will stagger<sup>1069</sup>, even if it is two ells wide.

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<sup>1066</sup> Qur’an 102:1-5.

<sup>1067</sup> Literally “have become plank (torn apart from) plank (Nich.).

<sup>1068</sup> I.e. first heal yourself before attending to others (Nich.).

<sup>1069</sup> Literally become crooked (Nich.).

- 3-4027 The infidel<sup>1070</sup> has fear in his heart, for, judging from opinion, he lives in doubt regarding the Other World.
- 3-4028 He is walking along the road, but he does not know any halting place: one who has a blind heart walks timidly.
- 3-4029 When the traveller does not know the way, how does he go? He goes with many hesitations, while his heart is full of blood (anguish).
- 3-4030 If anyone says to him, “Hey! This is not the way”<sup>1071</sup>, he will halt there and stand still in terror.
- 3-4031 But if the traveller’s wise heart knows the way, how should every hey and ho go into his ear?
- 3-4032 Therefore do not travel with these camel-hearted (cowardly) ones, for at the time of distress and danger they are the ones who sink.

### **Certainty as the guideline towards Salvation. [2.6.4]**

- 3-2348 Anyone who has dreamed of the Day of *Alast*<sup>1072</sup> is intoxicated in the path of devotional works, intoxicated:
- 3-2349 Like an intoxicated (frenzied) camel, he is bearing this heavy sack without weakening, without questioning and without fatigue.
- 3-2353 But he who has not dreamed such a dream in *Alast* does not become a servant and seeker of God in this world;
- 3-2354 Or if he does become one, he is always changing and shifting<sup>1073</sup> in indecisiveness: he gives thanks to God for one moment and utters complaints for a year.
- 3-2355 He steps forward and backwards in the Way of the Religion with a hundred hesitations and without any certainty.
- 3-490 This wavering is a steep cliff on the Way to God: oh, blessed is he whose feet are loosened (from its bonds).
- 3-488 This wavering is a prison and jail that will not let the soul go in any direction.

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<sup>1070</sup> Literally *gabr*, which originally meant “fire-worshipper”. By the time of Ḥaḏrat Mawlānā Rūmī, the term *gabr* was applied to anyone who didn’t adhere to Islām. Since *gabr* had such a pejorative connotation, in time followers of the Zoroastrian faith were given the respectable name *Zardushī*.

<sup>1071</sup> Literally the way is not in this direction (Nich.).

<sup>1072</sup> Qur’ān 7:172 – the Day of *Alast*: while all human souls already existed within God before creation, God asked them: “Am I not your Lord? (*a lastu bi-Rabbikum?*)”, and they all answered “Yes! We testify!”. Sūfī mystics have always endeavoured to inwardly remember the Day of *Alast*, in order to return to man’s true inner state, which is the awareness of the soul’s existence in the love of God, just as the love of God has always existed within the souls of mankind.

<sup>1073</sup> Literally “he is in a hundred minds” (Nich.).

- 3-489 This motive draws you in one direction, and that motive in another, each motive saying, “I am the right way”.
- 3-1516 If all the world should say to him, “You are on the Way of God and are following the right religion,”
- 3-1517 He will not be made hotter<sup>1074</sup> by their words: his lonely soul will not associate with them;
- 3-1518 And if they all should say to him, “You are straying: you think you are a mountain, and in reality you are a blade of straw,”
- 3-1519 He will not fall into opinion (doubt) because of their taunts, he will not be grieved by their departure (estrangement from him).
- 3-1520 No, if seas and mountains should gain speech and say to him, “You are wedded to perdition,”
- 3-1521 Not the least bit will he fall into fantasy or sickness because of the taunts of the scoffers.

### **The world of fantasy (khayāl) as a veil. [2.6.4]**

- 1-70 In the spirit fantasy is as nothing, yet see a world based on a fantasy!
- 1-71 Their peace and their war are based on a fantasy, and their pride and their shame spring from a fantasy.
- 5-320 Inspired by a fantasy, one person is filled with desire for magnificence and turns his face towards the mines of precious ore in the mountains;
- 5-321 And, inspired by a fantasy, another turns his face with bitter toil towards the sea for the sake of pearls;
- 5-322 And another goes into a church to perform religious exercises, while another applies himself to sowing in his greed for profit.
- 5-2648 The world of imagination and the phantom of hope and fear are a great obstacle to the traveller (on the mystical Path).
- 5-2649 The pictures (illusions) of this picture-making fantasy were harmful even to one like Khalīl (Abraham), who was firm as a mountain.
- 5-2650 The noble Abraham said, “*This is my Lord*”<sup>1075</sup>, when he fell into the world (fell into the grip) of imagination.

<sup>1074</sup> I.e. more fervent in his Faith (Nich.).

<sup>1075</sup> See Qur’ān 6:76.



- 5-2651 The person who bored the pearl of interpretation<sup>1076</sup>, interpreted the mention of *the star*<sup>1077</sup> in this way.
- 2-594 Man obtains fatness from (thrives on) fantasy, if his fantasies are beautiful.
- 5-2654 Understandings strong as mountains have been submerged in the seas of imagination and the whirlpools of fantasy.
- 2-595 And if his fantasies show anything unpleasant he melts away like wax is melted by a fire.
- 2-598 Patience is sweetened by beautiful fantasy, since in that case the fantasies of relief from pain have come to the mind.
- 2-1029 By one thought that comes into the mind a hundred worlds are overthrown in a single moment.
- 2-1032 See the endless number of people who, moved by one thought, have gone over the earth like a flood;
- 2-1034 So, when you see that every craft in the world arises and subsists from a thought.
- 2-277 O brother, you are that same thought of yours; as for the rest of you, you are only bone and fibre.
- 2-278 If your thought is a rose, you are a rose-garden; and if it is a thorn, you are fuel for the bath-stove.
- 2-3559 All creatures are subjugated to thought; that is why they have weary hearts and are full of sorrow.
- 3-837 All eyes and ears have been closed, except for them who have escaped from themselves.

**Division between groups of people arises  
from the negative power of illusion. [2.6.4]**

- 5-2656 By this fantasy, which infests the road of Faith<sup>1078</sup> like a highwayman, the followers of the true Religion have become split into seventy-two sects.
- 5-325 The observer sees that the ways of action in the external world are different since they arise from the various inner fantasies.
- 5-327 Unless those fantasies are not in harmony with each other, how did the ways of action become externally different?

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<sup>1076</sup> I.e. gave a profound and convincing interpretation (Nich.).

<sup>1077</sup> The star (*kawkab*) is mentioned in Qur'ān 6:76: "When the night covered him over, He saw a star: He said: "This is my Lord". But when it set, He said: "I do not love things that set".

<sup>1078</sup> Literally "the way of certainty" (*rāh-e yaqīn*).

- 5-329 They are like people trying to find the direction of the Ka‘ba and each turning in a certain direction which they imagine is the *qibla* (direction of prayer).
- 5-328 Since the *qibla* (the true object) of the soul has been hidden, every one has turned his face to a different direction<sup>1079</sup>.
- 5-330 When at dawn the Ka‘ba appears, it is revealed who has lost the right way.
- 5-350 Everyone else has turned his face in some direction, but the holy ones have turned towards that which transcends direction.
- 5-351 Every other pigeon flies on some course, but this pigeon (spiritual person) flies in a region where there is no region.
- 5-2657 The man of sure faith is delivered from imagination and fantasy: he does not call a hair of the eyebrow the new moon<sup>1080</sup>.
- 1-72 But those fantasies which ensnare the Saints are the reflection of the beautiful ones<sup>1081</sup> of the garden of God.
- 3-1095 I will confound all their deceits, and I will reduce to little that which they increase.
- 3-1096 Let them fetch water, and I will make it fire; let them get honey and sweets and I will make them bitter.
- 3-1097 Let them join in a bond of love, and I will destroy it; I will do that which they cannot imagine.
- 3-967 Hand is above hand: how far is this (series)? Up to God, for *to Him is the final goal*<sup>1082</sup>.
- 3-968 For that Omnipotence is a sea without bottom or shore: all the seas together are but as a torrent compared to it.
- 3-969 If human deceits and schemes are a dragon, yet they all are nothing (*lā*) next to (*there is no god*) except *Allāh* (*illā’Llāhu*).
- 1-3445 Come, recognize that your imagination, reflection, sense-perception and apprehension are like the reed-cane on which children ride.
- 1-3437 They all are riding on a reed-cane (hobby-horse), saying, “This is our Burāq<sup>1083</sup> or mule that walks like Duldul<sup>1084</sup>”.

<sup>1079</sup> Literally “to a different side”.

<sup>1080</sup> This verse refers to the story of Ḥaḏrat ‘Umar and the new moon – see *Mathnawī*, Book II, verse 111 ff.

<sup>1081</sup> Literally “the moon-faced ones” (Nich.).

<sup>1082</sup> Qur’ān 53:42.

<sup>1083</sup> The animal ridden by the Prophet when he ascended to Heaven (Nich.).

<sup>1084</sup> A mule belonging to the Prophet (Nich.).

- 1-3439 Wait until the day when those who are carried high by God shall pass, galloping, beyond the nine layers of Heaven!
- 1-3440 “*The spirit and the angels shall ascend to Him*”<sup>1085</sup>: at the ascension of the spirit Heaven shall tremble.
- 1-3441 Like children, you all are riding on your skirts: you have taken hold of the hem of your skirt to serve as a horse.
- 1-3442 From God came the words, “*Verily, assumption does not avail against the Truth at all*”<sup>1086</sup>: when did the steed of assumption run (mount) to the Heavens?

### **The Fifth Rivulet [2.6.5] The Perfect Man as the manifestation of the Divine<sup>1087</sup>.**

- 6-3138 Adam is the astrolabe of the attributes of Divine Sublimity: the nature of Adam is the theatre<sup>1088</sup> for His revelations.
- 6-2151 Since in eternity it was the will and decree of God, the Forgiver, to reveal and manifest Himself,
- 6-2152 This involves opposition, for nothing<sup>1089</sup> can be shown without an opposite; and there was no opposite to that incomparable King.
- 6-2153 Therefore He made a viceroy, one having a heart<sup>1090</sup>, in order that he might be a mirror for His sovereignty;
- 6-2154 So he endowed him with infinite purity (spiritual light), and then set up an opposite against him in the form of darkness.
- 6-3172 Know that the world of created beings is like pure and limpid water in which the attributes of the Almighty are shining.
- 6-3173 Their knowledge, their justice and their clemency are like a star of heaven reflected in running water.
- 6-3174 Kings are the theatre for the manifestation of God’s kingship; the Wise are the mirrors for God’s wisdom.

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<sup>1085</sup> Qur’ān 70:4.

<sup>1086</sup> Qur’ān 10:36 and 53:28.

<sup>1087</sup> It is appropriate to mention a famous ḥadīthqudsī from the *Aḥādīth-e Mathnawī* here: “And My servant continues drawing nearer to Me through supererogatory acts of worship until I love him; and when I love him, I become the ear with which he hears, the eye with which he sees, the hand with which he grasps, and the foot with which he walks”. See *Aḥādīth-e Mathnawī* p. 89.

<sup>1088</sup> The word used in the Persian text is *mazhar*, which literally means “place where something is made manifest”.

<sup>1089</sup> Literally “no opposite”.

<sup>1090</sup> Literally “a breast” (Nich.).

- 6-3181 The beautiful are the mirror of His beauty: love for them is the reflection of the desire of which He is the real object.
- 6-3182 This cheek and mole go back to their Source: how should a phantom stay in the water forever?
- 6-3183 The whole sum of pictured forms (phenomena) is mere reflection in the water of the river: when you rub your eye, you will perceive that all of them are really He.
- 6-3190 This resembles the other reflections; but in reality it is not a reflection, it is the appearance of God in the likeness of a reflection.
- 6-3193 How should the *qibla* (object of worship), namely, the Divine Unity, be two? How should earth be worshipped by the angels<sup>1091</sup>?
- 6-3197 The Khwāja<sup>1092</sup> is the God-man of whom God said *You did not throw when you threw*<sup>1093</sup>: to see him is to see the Creator.
- 6-3198 To serve him is to serve God: to see this window<sup>1094</sup> is to see the Daylight<sup>1095</sup>.
- 6-3218 Listen, let your inner eye and your heart pass beyond (transcend) the bodily clay! This is One *Qibla* (object of worship): do not see two *qiblas*.
- 6-3215 Do not say ‘two’, do not know ‘two’, and do not call ‘two’: consider the slave to be effaced in his master.

### **Man’s outer aspect and his inner essence. [2.6.5]**

- 5-3341 Oh, blessed is he who has recognized his real essence and built for himself a palace in everlasting security.
- 5-3340 We have come to know that we are not this body: beyond the body we are living through God.”
- 5-3342 A child cries for walnuts and raisins; those are very trifling things in the view of a reasonable man.

<sup>1091</sup> I.e. in worshipping Adam the angels really worshipped God (Nich.).

<sup>1092</sup> *Khwāja* (< Fārsī *khwājah*, more or less pronounced *khōjē*) is an honorific title given to people of distinction. In Sufism, particularly in the Indian subcontinent, it takes on the meaning of “Master”, e.g. Ḥaẓrat Khwāja Mu‘īnu’d-dīn Chishtī, the great Ṣūfī Saint of Ajmēr, Rājasthān, India. But also outside the Indian subcontinent Ṣūfī Masters have borne this title. A few examples: the prominent Persian Ṣūfī mystic and prolific author Ḥaẓrat Khwāja ‘Abdullāh Anṣārī of Herāt (1006-1088 CE) and the influential Turkic Ṣūfī Master Ḥaẓrat Khwāja Aḥmad Yasawī (1093-1066 CE), who lived and worked in Kazākhstān. It is also worth mentioning that between the 12<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries CE the Naqshbandī Ṣūfī Order was known as *Ṭarīqat-e Khwājagān*, i.e. “the Way of the Masters” (*Khwājagān* is the plural of *Khwāja*). The Naqshbandī Ṣūfī Order took its present name from the illustrious Master Ḥaẓrat Khwāja Bahā’u’d-dīn Shāh Naqshband of Bukhārā (1318–1389 CE).

<sup>1093</sup> Qur’ān 8:17.

<sup>1094</sup> I.e. the Perfect Man (Nich.).

<sup>1095</sup> I.e. the Light of God (Nich.).

- 5-3343 So in the spirit's<sup>1096</sup> view the body is like walnuts and raisins, but how should one who is a child in spiritual matters attain to the knowledge possessed by spiritual men?
- 5-3344 Whoever is veiled from God in reality is a child: the man is he who is beyond all doubt.
- 5-3345 If having a beard and testicles is sufficient to be a man, every he-goat has a beard and plenty of hair.
- 5-3348 Listen, choose travelling on the Way of righteousness as your vocation and abandon your beard: abandon this egoism and troubled thought,
- 5-3349 That you may become like the scent of the rose to God's lovers and may be their leader and guide to the Rose-garden.
- 5-3350 What is the scent of the rose? The breath (voice) of reason and intelligence which is a sweet guide on the way to the Everlasting Kingdom.

### **Allegory. [2.6.5]**

- 4-1007 Because the earth has the external form of dust, while inwardly it has the qualities of bright light.
- 4-1008 Its outer appearance has come into conflict with its inner reality<sup>1097</sup>: its inward is like a jewel and its outward like a common stone.
- 4-1009 Its outward says, "We are this, and no more"; its inward says, "Look well before and behind!"
- 4-1010 Its outward is denying and says that the inward is nothing; its inward says, "We will show you the truth: wait and see!"
- 4-1013 For even though outwardly the earth is nothing but sorrow and tears, within it there are hundreds of thousands of laughters.
- 4-1024 Your outer form is wailing because of the darkness; your inner spirit is like roses within roses.
- 4-823 Our body is our veil in the world: we are like a sea hidden beneath this straw.
- 4-827 What is straw that it should cover the face of the water? What is clay that is should cover the sun?
- 4-824 O fool, do not consider the king of the true Religion as clay; for the accursed Iblīs held this view of Adam.

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<sup>1096</sup> The word used in the Persian text is *dil*, which may mean "spirit" as well as "heart".

<sup>1097</sup> Literally: "has come to be at war with its inner reality".

- 4-825 How is it possible to daub the sun with a handful of earth? Please, tell me that!
- 4-826 Even though you pour earth and a hundred ashes over its light, it will come up above them.
- 3-4255 If, outwardly, the *parī*<sup>1098</sup> is hidden, yet Man is a hundred times more hidden than the *parīs*.
- 3-4256 In the view of the intelligent, Man is indeed a hundred times more hidden than the *parī* who is hidden.
- 6-4584 O you who are a thousand Gabriels in the form of man, o you who are many Messiahs inside the ass of Jesus.
- 6-4586 You are the spaceless<sup>1099</sup> Object of worship in space: the devils have their shop destroyed by you,
- 6-4587 For they say, “How should I be a servant to this clay? How should I give a mere form a title signifying my obedience (adoration)?”
- 6-4588 He is not the form in which he appears: rub your eye well, that you may see the radiance of the light of Divine glory in him!
- 2-1353 When Man receives light from God, he is worshipped by the angels because of his being chosen by God.

**The meaning of the ḥadīth qudsī: “Verily, God created man in His own image<sup>1100</sup>”. [2.6.5]**

- 6-3139 Whatever appears in him (Adam) is the reflection of Him, just as the moon is reflected in the water of the river.
- 6-3236 If you have seen buds or trees reflected in this River<sup>1101</sup>, do not suppose that they are a phantom (illusion) like those of any ordinary river;
- 6-3237 For by means of the very reflection of these images God is made real to you and sells you the fruit of reality.
- 6-3238 By means of this Water the eye is freed from seeing double: it sees the reflection, and the basket is filled with fruit.
- 6-3239 Therefore in reality this Water is an orchard, not water: do not, then, like Bilqīs<sup>1102</sup>, strip yourself from fear of being splashed by the waves.

<sup>1098</sup> *Parī*: in Persian mythology, a beautiful and benevolent supernatural being or fairy.

<sup>1099</sup> This refers to “non-spatiality” or *lā makān*, literally “no space”, i.e. “the Placeless Realm”, the place of the deity, where there is no space and time, a state beyond our conception.

<sup>1100</sup> *Aḥādīth-e Mathnawī* p. 365. Cf. Genesis 1:26: “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness”.

<sup>1101</sup> I.e. the Perfect Man (Nich.).

<sup>1102</sup> See Qur’ān 27:23-44. Bilqīs is the name of the queen of Sheba (*Sabā*).

- 6-3242 Do not apply this same principle to all rivers; in this River see the Moon itself, and do not call it a mere reflection.
- 6-3243 This is the Water of Khiḏr<sup>1103</sup>, not the water drunk by plant-eating animals and beasts of prey: everything that appears in it is Real.
- 6-3244 From the bottom of this River the Moon cries, “I am the Moon, I am not a reflection: I converse and travel with the River.
- 6-3246 Do not assume this River to be like other rivers: know that this ray of the moon-faced Beauty is the Moon itself.
- 1-2862 It was a hidden treasure<sup>1104</sup>: because of its fullness it burst forth and made the earth more shining than the heavens.
- 1-2863 It was a hidden treasure: because of its fullness it rose up and made the earth like a sulṭān robed in satin.
- 6-4580 He is a Sun hidden in an atom: suddenly that atom opens its mouth and reveals the Sun.
- 6-4581 The heavens and the earth crumble to atoms before that Sun when he springs up from ambush.
- 4-519 And from the pure starlike souls help is continually coming to the stars of heaven.
- 4-520 The outer aspect of those stars is our ruler, but our inner essence has become the ruler of the sky.
- 4-521 Therefore in form you are the microcosm, therefore in reality you are the macrocosm.
- 4-522 Externally the branch<sup>1105</sup> is the origin of the fruit; intrinsically the branch came into existence for the sake of the fruit.
- 4-523 If there had not been desire and hope for fruit, why should the gardener have planted the root of the tree?
- 4-524 Therefore in reality the tree was born of the fruit, even if in appearance the fruit was produced by the tree.
- 4-526 For this reason that master of all kinds of knowledge has uttered the allegorical saying, “We are the last and the first<sup>1106</sup>”.

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<sup>1103</sup> Khiḏr (or alternatively spelled Khaḏir or Khiḏr), the enigmatic “Green Man”, who acted as a spiritual guide for a number of Prophets and Saints who did not have a guide of flesh and blood, such as the Prophet Moses and the great Ṣūfī Master and theoretician Ḥaḏrat Muḥyī’ddīn ibn ‘Arabī (1165-1240 CE).

<sup>1104</sup> This is a reference to the famous ḥadīth qudsī: “I was a hidden treasure and I desired [loved] to be known; so I created creation [mankind], in order that I might be known”.

<sup>1105</sup> Literally “the outer aspect (which consists) of the branch.”(Nich.).

- 4-527 That is to say, “If in appearance I am born of Adam, in reality I am the forefather of every forefather.
- 4-529 Therefore in reality the Father (Adam) was born of me, therefore in reality the tree was born of the fruit<sup>1107</sup>.”
- 4-530 The thought (idea), which comes first, is last to be made real, in particular the thought that is eternal.
- 3-1129 Although the fruit comes last into being, it is the first, because it was the goal.

### **The meaning of macrocosm and microcosm and self-realization. [2.6.5]**

#### **Saying of Ḥaẓrat Mawlā ‘Alī:**

**“O Man, compared to the universe you seem small,  
yet within yourself you contain the macrocosm”. [2.6.5]**

- 5-3576 O you to whom reason, foresight<sup>1108</sup> and intelligence are slaves, why do you sell yourself so cheaply?
- 5-3578 You seek knowledge from books – alas, how ridiculous! You seek pleasure from *ḥalwā* (sweetmeats) – alas, how ridiculous!
- 5-3565 Wine derives its original substance from your gentle kindness; the kindness of water regrets its lack of your gentle kindness.
- 5-3567 Every wine is the slave of your lovely figure and pretty cheek: all the intoxicated ones are envious of you.
- 5-3568 You have no need of rosy wine: abandon its rosiness<sup>1109</sup>, you yourself are its rosiness.
- 5-3569 O you whose Venus-like countenance is bright as the morning sun, o you of whose colour all rosinesses are beggars.
- 5-3570 The wine that is bubbling invisibly in the jar bubbles in this way out of longing for your face.
- 5-3571 O you who are the whole sea, what will you do with dew? And o you who are the whole of existence, why are you seeking non-existence?
- 5-3572 O radiant Moon, what will you do with the dust, o you beside whose face the moon is pale?

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<sup>1106</sup> This a well-known ḥadīth. See *Aḥādīth-e Mathnawī* p. 232.

<sup>1107</sup> Cf. the Gospel of John 5:58, where Jesus says: “Before Abraham was born, I am.”

<sup>1108</sup> Literally “deliberations”.

<sup>1109</sup> Literally “rouge” (Nich.)



- 5-3574 The crown of *We have honoured the sons of Adam*<sup>1110</sup> adorns your head<sup>1111</sup>; the collar of *We have given to you*<sup>1112</sup> hangs on your chest.
- 5-3573 You are lovely and beautiful and the mine (source) of every loveliness: why indeed should you make yourself indebted to wine?
- 6-139 Did this heaven ever hear the words *We have honoured*<sup>1113</sup> which this sorrowful Man heard from God?
- 6-140 Did anyone offer his beauty, reason, eloquence<sup>1114</sup> and fond affection to earth and sky?
- 6-1005 Read in the Sūra beginning with *Wa 't-Tīn* ("By the fig") the words, *We created Man in the best of forms*<sup>1115</sup>, for the soul, o friend, is a precious pearl.
- 6-1007 If I reveal the value of this inaccessible pearl<sup>1116</sup>, I shall be consumed, and the hearer too will be consumed.
- 4-803 O you who have devoted yourself to fighting with others, you have not known (discriminated) others from yourself.
- 4-804 You stop at every form that you encounter, saying, "I am this." By God, you are not that form.
- 4-805 If you are left alone by people for a single moment, you remain plunged up to the throat in grief and anxiety.
- 4-806 How are you this form? You are the Unique One, for in reality you are lovely, beautiful and intoxicated with yourself.
- 4-807 You are your own bird, your own prey, and your own snare; you are your own seat of honour, your own floor, and your own roof.
- 6-811 You are not this body: you are the spiritual Eye. If you have seen the soul, you are delivered from the body.
- 6-812 Man essentially is Eye: the rest of him is mere flesh and skin: whatever his eye has seen, he is that thing.
- 4-809 If you are born of Adam, sit like him and see all his descendants in yourself.
- 4-810 What is in the jar that is not also in the river? What is in the house that is not also in the city?

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<sup>1110</sup> Qur'ān 17:70.

<sup>1111</sup> Literally "is on top of your head".

<sup>1112</sup> Qur'ān 108:1.

<sup>1113</sup> Qur'ān 17:70.

<sup>1114</sup> Literally "expressions (of speech)", "phrases" (Nich.).

<sup>1115</sup> Qur'ān 95:4.

<sup>1116</sup> Literally "If I speak of the value of this inaccessible pearl".

- 4-811 This world is the jar, and the heart (spirit) is like the river; this world is the chamber, and the heart is the wonderful city.

**Man as microcosm and as sole representative  
of Divine qualities on earth. [2.6.5]**

**Poem: [2.6.5]**

**“You who are the transcription of God’s Scripture<sup>1117</sup>  
You are the mirror of the Divine Beauty  
There is nothing outside yourself, o Man  
Seek whatever you desire within yourself.”**

***Dīwān-e Shams-e Tabrīzī*, quatrain 1761**

- 5-1073 There is a basket full of loaves on the crown of your head, and you are begging a crust of bread from door to door.
- 5-1074 Attend to your own head, abandon giddy-headedness; go, knock at the door of your heart: why are you knocking at every door?
- 5-1075 While you are up to the knee in the river-water, you are heedless of yourself and are seeking water from this one and that one.
- 5-1079 He (such a one) is mad with thirst for the water, and the water is before his face: he is in the water and unconscious of the running water.
- 5-1080 Like the pearl in the sea, he says, “Where is the sea?” and that shell-like fantasy is his wall<sup>1118</sup>.
- 3-2934 The Heart-ravisher and Desired One is present with us; amidst the generosity<sup>1119</sup> of His mercy our souls are giving thanks.
- 3-2935 In our hearts is an anemone-field and a rose-garden: there is no way for old age and decay to enter;
- 3-2936 We are ever fresh, young, gracious, vigorous, sweet, laughing and charming.
- 3-1000 Wretched Man does not know himself: he has come from a high state and has fallen into lowliness.
- 3-1001 Man has sold himself cheaply: he was satin, he has sewn himself on (become attached) to a tattered cloak.

<sup>1117</sup> Literally: “You who are the copy of the Divine Letter”. This famous quatrain has been attributed to the Persian Šūfī Master Ḥaẓrat Shaykh Majdu’d-dīn Baghdādī (d. 1219 CE), but Badi’uzzaman Forouzanfar (1904-1970 CE), the prominent Iranian scholar of Persian literature and expert on the works on Ḥaẓrat Mawlānā Rūmī, claimed it to be part of the latter’s *Dīwān-e Shams-e Tabrīzī*.

<sup>1118</sup> I.e. “it obstructs his vision” (Nich.).

<sup>1119</sup> Literally “scattering about”.

- 5-319 Everyone is infatuated with some fantasy and digs in corners in mad desire for a buried treasure.
- 5-336 Similarly, every kind of people in the world are fluttering like moths around a candle<sup>1120</sup>.
- 5-337 They attach themselves to a fire and circle around their own candle.
- 4-3241 The sleeper dreams of the hurtful pangs of thirst, while the water is *closer to him than his jugular vein*<sup>1121</sup>.

### **Allegory. [2.6.5]**

- 4-3242 Even as for example that ascetic was laughing in a year of drought, while all others were crying.
- 4-3243 So they said to him, “What is there to laugh about, when the drought has uprooted (destroyed) the true believers?”
- 4-3249 The ascetic replied, “In your eyes this is a drought, but to me<sup>1122</sup> this earth is like Paradise.
- 4-3250 In every desert and everywhere I see ears of corn in abundance, reaching up to the waist;
- 4-3251 I see the wilderness full of ears of corn tossed in waves by the east-wind, so that it is greener than the leek.
- 4-3253 You are friends of Pharaoh, who is the body, o base people: that is why the Nile seems to be blood to you.
- 4-3254 Quickly, become friends of Moses, who is the intellect, in order that the blood may not remain and you may see the river-water.
- 4-3265 I see the world to be full of bounty – the waters constantly gushing from the springs.”
- 2-3552 Do not look at me from the standpoint of your weakness: to you it is night, to me that same night is morning.
- 2-3553 To you it is prison, to me that prison is like a garden: to me the most absolute state of occupation with the world has become a state of spiritual freedom.
- 2-3554 Your feet are in the mud; to me the mud has become roses. You have mourning; I have feasting and drums.

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<sup>1120</sup> I.e. an object of desire (Nich.).

<sup>1121</sup> Qur’ān 50:16.

<sup>1122</sup> Literally “before my eye”.

4-3269 I am not telling one mystery out of thousands, because every ear is filled with a doubt.

4-3270 To Conjecture<sup>1123</sup> this saying of mine is only a joyful announcement concerning the future, but Reason says, “What is there to announce? It is my cash in hand (actual and present experience).”

### Story. [2.6.5]

4-3271 The case is like that of the sons of ‘Uzayr<sup>1124</sup>, who went into the passageway, asking news about their father’s circumstances.

4-3272 They had grown old, while their father had been made young. Then suddenly their father met them.

4-3273 So they asked him, saying, “O traveller, we wonder if you have news of our ‘Uzayr;

4-3274 Because someone told us that today that man of great authority would arrive from abroad after we had given up hope of seeing him.”

4-3275 “Yes”, he replied, “he will arrive after me”. That one (the son of ‘Uzayr) rejoiced when he heard the good news.

4-3276 Crying, “Joy to you, o bringer of good news!” But the other son recognized him and fell unconscious to the ground.

4-3277 Saying, “What cause is there for good news, o scatterbrain, when we have fallen into the mine (the very midst) of sugar?”

4-3278 To Conjecture it is merely good news, whereas in the view of Reason it is ready cash (actuality), because the eye of Conjecture is veiled and does not find the object it seeks.

4-3279 It is pain to the infidels and glad news to the faithful, but in the eye of the seer it is immediate experience.

4-3280 As the lover is intoxicated at the moment of immediacy<sup>1125</sup>, he is necessarily superior to infidelity and faith<sup>1126</sup>.

### Story. [2.6.5]

6-2714 A certain Khwāja<sup>1127</sup>, accustomed to scatter pieces of silver, said to a Šūfī, “O you for whose feet my soul is a carpet,

<sup>1123</sup> The word used in the Persian text, *wahm*, primarily means “illusion”.

<sup>1124</sup> Qur’ān 2:259. ‘Uzayr is usually identified with the Biblical Prophet Ezra.

<sup>1125</sup> In the Persian text it literally says “at the time of ready money” (*dam-e naqd*).

<sup>1126</sup> Another possible translation of this verse would be: “He (the true believer, the Wise Man) transcends both belief and unbelief”.

<sup>1127</sup> *Khwāja* (<Fārsī *khwājah*, more or less pronounced *khōjē*) is an honorific title given to people of distinction.

- 6-2715 Would you like one dirham today, my king, or three hundred dirhams at breakfast-time tomorrow?”
- 6-2716 He replied, “I am more pleased with having half a dirham yesterday than with the promise of this one dirham today and a hundred dirhams tomorrow.”
- 6-2717 “A slap given in cash immediately is better than a donation paid on credit later: look, I put the nape of my neck before you: give me the cash!
- 6-2718 Especially as the slap is from Your hand, for both the nape and the slap inflicted on it are intoxicated (enraptured) with You.

### **The Sixth Rivulet [2.6.6] The Divine world of the heart.**

#### **Ḥadīth qudsī:**

**“Neither My heavens nor My earth can encompass Me, but the purified heart of My loving and devoted servant encompasses Me<sup>1128</sup>”.**

- 1-1479 If the heart should open the lid of the purse containing this mystery, the soul would rush in rapture towards the highest heaven.
- 1-2652 In comparison with the wide range of that pure soul (Adam), the expanse of the seven heavens became narrow.
- 1-2653 The Prophet said that God has said, “I am not contained in the jar of “high” and “low” (spatial dimensions);
- 1-2654 I am not contained in earth or heaven or even in the highest reaches of heaven – know this for certain, o noble one;
- 1-2655 But I am contained in the true believer’s heart: oh, how wonderful! If you seek Me, search in those hearts”.
- 1-2658 Truly, the magnitude of the Highest Heavens<sup>1129</sup> is very great, but what is form when reality has arrived?
- 3-514 You must set foot on the desert plain of the heart (spirit), because in the desert plain of the body’s clay there is no opening for spiritual progress.
- 3-515 The heart is the abode of security, o friends; it has fountains and rose-gardens within rose-gardens.

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<sup>1128</sup> *Aḥādīth-e Mathnawī* p. 113.

<sup>1129</sup> In the Persian text the word ‘*arsh*’ is used, meaning “Throne (of God)”.

### Story. [2.6.6]

- 4-1358 In the orchard a certain Ṣūfī laid his face on his knee<sup>1130</sup> in the Ṣūfī way for the sake of mystical revelation;
- 4-1359 Then he sank deep down into himself. An impertinent man was annoyed by his apparent slumber.
- 4-1360 “Why”, he said, “do you sleep? No, look at the vines, see these trees, signs<sup>1131</sup> of Divine mercy and green plants.
- 4-1361 Listen to the command of God, for He has said, “*Look*”<sup>1132</sup>: turn your face towards these signs of Divine mercy”.
- 4-1362 He replied, “O vain man, its signs are within the heart: that which is outside of it are but the signs of the signs”.
- 4-1365 The real orchards and fruits are within the heart: the reflection of their beauty falls on this water and earth (the external world).
- 4-1363 The real orchards and verdure are in the very essence of the soul: their reflection on that which is on the outside is like the reflection in running water.
- 4-1366 If it were not the reflection of that delightful cypress<sup>1133</sup>, then God would not have called it the abode of deception<sup>1134</sup>.
- 4-1367 This deception consists in this: i.e. this phantom (the external world) derives its existence from the reflection of the heart and spirit of the holy men.
- 4-1368 All the deceived ones come to gaze on this reflection in the belief that this is the place of Paradise.
- 4-1369 They flee from the origins of the orchards; they are making merry<sup>1135</sup> over a phantom.
- 3-1283 But when you receive life from God, o dependent one<sup>1136</sup>, then you will become independent of the mud and will rise up.
- 3-1284 When the sucking baby is separated from its wet-nurse, it becomes an eater of morsels and abandons her.

<sup>1130</sup> A posture adopted by Ṣūfis for contemplation or meditation.

<sup>1131</sup> The word used for “signs” in the Persian text is *āthār* (the plural of *athar*); it is not to be confused with *āyāt* (singular: *āya*), which also means “signs”, and more particularly “signs of God”. *Āyāt* or “signs of God” is also the name given to the verses of the Qur’ān.

<sup>1132</sup> Qur’ān 30:50.

<sup>1133</sup> The heart of the Saint (Nich.).

<sup>1134</sup> Qur’ān 3:185.

<sup>1135</sup> Literally “they are making those jests (frolics)” (Nich.).

<sup>1136</sup> Literally “rhyme-letter” (Nich.).

- 3-2243 O heart, you will be looked upon with favour by God at the moment when, like a part, you go towards your Whole.
- 3-1138 The cornerless corner of the heart is a King's highway: the radiance that is neither of the East nor of the West is derived from a Moon<sup>1137</sup>.
- 3-1641 It has come down in the Traditions (*aḥādīth*) of the Prophet that the heart is like a feather in a desert, the captive of a violent wind<sup>1138</sup>.
- 3-1642 The wind drives the feather recklessly in every direction, now left, now right, in a hundred different ways.
- 3-1644 At every time the heart has a different resolution: that resolution is not derived from it, but from a certain place.
- 3-2061 How should the mystery of left and right be hidden from the heart that is in the state of bewilderment with God?
- 6-3069 Know that the holy men's bodies are the lamp-niche and their hearts the glass: this lamp illumines the Highest Heaven<sup>1139</sup> and the Celestial Spheres.
- 6-3068 A lamp-niche and a lamp-glass<sup>1140</sup> have become the dwelling-place of the Light by which Mount Qāf<sup>1141</sup> and Mount Sinai are torn to pieces.
- 2-840 This discourse needs much illustration and explanation, but I fear that the delusive opinion of the common people might stumble (and fall into error).

### **The heart as a Divine mirror<sup>1142</sup>. [2.6.6]**

- 3-2244 God says, "Our eye is turned toward the heart; it is not turned toward the external form, which is but water and earth."
- 3-2245 You say, "I too have a heart"; but the heart is above the Highest Heaven<sup>1143</sup>, it is not below.
- 3-2246 Certainly there is water in the dark earth too, but it is not proper for you to wash your hands with this water.
- 3-2247 Because, even though it is water, it is overcome by the earth. Do not, then, say of your heart, "This too is a heart."

<sup>1137</sup> Qur'ān 24:35: "...a blessed olive tree, neither of the East nor of the West,...".

<sup>1138</sup> *Aḥādīth-e Mathnawī* p. 280.

<sup>1139</sup> In the Persian text the word '*arsh*' is used, meaning "Throne (of God)".

<sup>1140</sup> See Qur'ān 24:35.

<sup>1141</sup> Qāf: mythical mountain or chain of mountains surrounding the earth, created from a single emerald. Mount Qāf is the abode of the '*Anqā*', a mythical phoenix-like bird from Arabic story tradition, the *Šimurgh* being its Persian equivalent. This mythical bird represents the Perfect Man, whose spirit dwells with God, even though his body is in the world. For clarity's sake: in this verse the word *Qāf* does not refer to Sūra Qāf (the 50<sup>th</sup> Sūra of the Qur'ān).

<sup>1142</sup> Qur'ān 50:37.

<sup>1143</sup> In the Persian text the word '*arsh*' is used, meaning "Throne (of God)".

- 3-2248 The heart that is higher than the Heavens, is the heart of the Saint or the Prophet.
- 3-2249 That heart has become cleansed of earth and has been purified; it has reached its full growth and has been made complete.
- 3-2250 It has abandoned earth and has come to the Sea; it has escaped from the prison of earth and has become of the Sea.
- 3-2251 But our water has remained imprisoned in earth. Listen, o Sea of Mercy, draw us out of the clay!
- 3-2252 The Sea says, “I draw you into myself, but you are vainly pretending to be sweet water.
- 3-2253 Your vain pretence is keeping you deprived of fortune: abandon that idle fantasy and enter into me.”
- 3-2261 You scornfully refused help, saying, “I am the owner of a purified heart: I have no need of anyone else, I am united with God.”
- 3-2262 That is as though the water in the earth should scornfully refuse, saying, “I am the water, and why should I seek help?”
- 3-2263 You imagined that this polluted heart was the pure heart; consequently you turned your heart away from those who possess purified hearts<sup>1144</sup>.
- 3-2264 Do you indeed think it possible that this heart which is in love with milk and honey should be that pure heart?
- 3-2265 The deliciousness of milk and honey is the reflection of the pure heart: from that heart the sweetness of every sweet thing is derived.
- 3-2266 That is why the heart is the substance<sup>1145</sup>, and the world is the accident<sup>1146</sup>: how should the heart’s shadow (reflection) be the object of the heart’s desire?
- 3-2267 Is that pure heart the heart that is in love with riches and power, or is it submissive, to this black earth and water (the body)?
- 3-2269 The heart is nothing but the Sea of Light: is the heart the place for vision of God – and then blind?

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<sup>1144</sup> “those who possess purified hearts” or *Ahl-e Dil*: this term literally means “People of the Heart” and often denotes “Sūfī Masters”.

<sup>1145</sup> Substance (*jawhar*): here, the word is used as a philosophical term. It means. “A being whose nature it is to exist in and for itself and not in another as in a subject.”

<sup>1146</sup> Accident (‘*araḏ*’, from the Arabic ‘*araḏ*’) is also used as a philosophical term. It means : “a nonessential attribute or characteristic of something”.



- 3-2270 The heart is not contained in hundreds of thousands noble or common ones; it is in a single one: which is he? Which?
- 2-839 Again, these partial (individual) hearts are as the body in relation to the heart of the man of heart (the Perfect Saint), which is the original source<sup>1147</sup>.
- 3-2271 Leave what is only a fragment of the heart and seek the perfect heart, in order that by means of it that fragment may become as a mountain.
- 5-871 Since you have imagined your heart to be the Heart<sup>1148</sup>, you have abandoned the search after those who possess the Heart –
- 5-872 If seven hundred heavens like these Seven Heavens should enter into this Heart, they would be lost and hidden from view.
- 5-874 The owner of the Heart becomes a six-faced mirror: through him God looks upon all the six directions.
- 5-875 Whoever has this dwelling-place in the world of six directions, God does not look upon him except through the mediation of the owner of the Heart.
- 5-876 If God rejects anyone, He does it for his sake; and if God accepts anyone, it is also on His authority.
- 5-881 O rich man, if you bring a hundred sacks of gold, God will say, “Bring the Heart<sup>1149</sup>, o you who bend yourself in devotion.
- 5-882 If the Heart is pleased with you, I am pleased; and if it is averse to you, I am averse.
- 5-883 I do not look at you, I look at the Heart: bring it, o soul, as a gift to My door!
- 5-884 In the same way as it is in relation to you, so am I: Paradise is under the feet of mothers<sup>1150</sup>.”
- 5-885 The Heart is the mother and father and origin of all creatures: oh, blessed is the one who knows the Heart from the skin.
- 5-869 The Prophet said, “God does not look at your outer form: therefore seek the owner of the Heart<sup>1151</sup> as you devise plans.
- 5-870 God says, “I look at you through the owner of the Heart, not because of the external marks of prostration in prayer and the giving away of gold in charities.”

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<sup>1147</sup> Literally “mine”, “quarry”.

<sup>1148</sup> I.e. the fully transformed and realized Spiritual Heart.

<sup>1149</sup> I.e. “win the heart of the Saint and approach Me through him” (Nich.).

<sup>1150</sup> I.e. admission to Paradise depends on piety shown towards one’s mother (Nich.). *Aḥādīth-e Mathnawī* p.446.

<sup>1151</sup> I.e. the Perfect Man, the Saint united with God (Nich.).

- 5-886 You will say, “Look, I have brought a heart to You”: God will say to you, “Qutū<sup>1152</sup> is full of these hearts.
- 5-887 Bring the Heart that is the *Quṭb* (Pole) of the world and the soul of the soul of the soul of the soul of Adam.”
- 5-902 Seek the owner of the Heart, if you are not without soul: become a congener of Heart, if you are not an adversary of the spiritual Sulṭān.
- 3-2272 The Perfect Heart encompasses the entire existence and scatters gold in beneficence and bounty.
- 3-2273 It chooses to lavish blessings derived from the Blessedness of God upon the people of the world.
- 3-2274 Whoever’s skirt<sup>1153</sup> is right and ready, the generosity<sup>1154</sup> of the heart comes to that person.
- 3-2275 Your skirt to catch that generosity is supplication and presence with God: beware, do not put the stone of iniquity in your skirt,
- 3-2276 In order that your skirt may not be torn by those stones and that you may distinguish the superior coin of truth from the colours of falsehood.
- 3-2277 You have filled your skirt with stones of iniquity from this world, and also with stones of silver and gold, as children do.
- 3-2278 Since that fantasy of silver and gold yielded no real gold, the skirt of your sincerity was rent and your sorrow increased.

### **The heart is where Divine manifestations take place. [2.6.6]**

- 2-2063 The mirror of the heart must be clear, in order that in it you may distinguish the ugly form from the beautiful.
- 2-72 When the mirror of your heart becomes clear and pure, you will see images which are outside of the world of water and earth.
- 1-3486 That Moses (the Perfect Saint) holds in his bosom the formless infinite form of the Unseen reflected from the mirror of his heart.
- 1-3487 Even though that form is not contained in Heaven, nor in its Highest Sphere, nor in the sphere of the stars, nor in the earth which rests on the Fish<sup>1155</sup>,

<sup>1152</sup> Perhaps identical with Qūchū, the capital of the Uighūr Turks of Turfān (Nich.).

<sup>1153</sup> Skirt (*dāman*): the part of a garment (not necessarily a skirt) that fell from the waist. In these verses, “skirt” obviously has symbolic meaning: it stands for man’s inner capacity to grasp and contain spiritual ideas and realities. *Dāman* also symbolizes the spiritual state of inner neediness and thirst for Divine Grace, a state that is essential for *sāliks*, as this neediness will make them receive more and more Divine Grace.

<sup>1154</sup> Literally “the scattering (of precious gifts)”.

<sup>1155</sup> According to a popular Persian myth, the earth globe rests on the horns of bull, which itself rests on a fish.

- 1-3488 Because all those are limited and numbered – yet it is contained in the heart: know that the mirror of the heart is boundless.
- 6-3071 That is why the Seal of the Prophets<sup>1156</sup> has related the saying of the Everlasting and Eternal Lord –
- 6-3072 “I am not contained in the Heavens, in the void or in the exalted intelligences and souls:
- 6-3073 But I am contained, as a guest, in the true believer’s heart, without qualification, definition or description.
- 6-3074 In order that by the mediation of that heart all above and below may win sovereignties<sup>1157</sup> and fortune from Me.
- 6-3075 Without such a mirror neither Earth nor Time could bear the vision of My beauty.
- 3-2402 The window of my soul is opened, and from the purity of the Unseen World the Book of God comes to me without intermediary.
- 3-2404 The house that is without a window is Hell: to make a window, o servant of God, is the foundation of the true Religion.
- 3-2405 Do not strike the axe on every thicket: oh, come and strike the axe in carving out a window.

### **The heart’s window. [2.6.6]**

- 6-3091 The light of Joseph’s face, when he was passing by, used to fall on the latticed windows<sup>1158</sup> of every house<sup>1159</sup>,
- 6-3092 And people within the house would say, “Joseph is taking a walk in this quarter and passing by”;
- 6-3093 For they would see the radiance on the wall, and then the owners would understand why.
- 6-3094 The house that has its window in that direction is ennobled by Joseph’s leisurely walking.
- 6-3095 Listen, open a window towards Joseph<sup>1160</sup> and begin to delight yourself by looking at him through the hole<sup>1161</sup> in the wall.

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<sup>1156</sup> In Islām, Ḥaẓrat Muḥammad is considered as *Khatm-e Rusul*, “the Seal of the Prophets and Messengers”, i.e. the last Prophet sent by God to deliver His Message to mankind. All great spiritual Teachers and Reformers who came after Ḥaẓrat Muḥammad were and are his heirs.

<sup>1157</sup> I.e. “spiritual kingship”.

<sup>1158</sup> Oriental window with a screen of interwoven lattices.

<sup>1159</sup> Literally “on every palace”.

- 6-3096 The task of love is to make that window in the heart, for the breast is illumined by the beauty of the Beloved.
- 2-3129 The house, namely, the heart that remains unlighted by the beams of the sun of Divine Majesty
- 2-3130 Is narrow and dark as the souls of the deniers of the Truth<sup>1162</sup>, being destitute of spiritual savour<sup>1163</sup> of the loving King.
- 6-3097 Therefore gaze incessantly on the face of the Beloved! This is in your power<sup>1164</sup>. Listen, o father!
- 6-3100 When you have become beautiful you will attain to the Beautiful One who delivers the spirit from being without companions.

### **The Seventh Rivulet [2.6.7] The world of the human spirit.**

- 2-3326 Spiritual life is nothing but knowledge in the time of trial: the more knowledge one has, the more spiritual capacity one has.
- 2-3327 Our spirit is greater than the spirit of animals. Why? Because it has more knowledge.
- 2-3328 That is why the spirit of the angels is greater than our spirit, for it is exempt from (transcends) the common sense<sup>1165</sup>;
- 2-3329 And the spirit of mystic masters is greater than that of the angels. Do not be bewildered on this subject anymore.
- 3-2534 The value of bag and purse is derived from the gold: without the gold, bag and purse are docked<sup>1166</sup>.
- 3-2535 Just as the worth of the body is derived from the soul, so the worth of the soul is derived from the radiance of the Soul of souls.

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<sup>1160</sup> I.e. “open your hearts to God” (Nich.).

<sup>1161</sup> Literally “crevice”.

<sup>1162</sup> In Nicholson’s translation it says “the Jews”. But this is wrong. In Fārsī, the word for “Jews” is *Yahūd*, and the word for “Jew” or “Jewish” is either *Yahūdī*, *Mūsawī* or *Kalīmī*. Yet the word which Ḥaẓrat Mawlānā Rūmī uses in the *Mathnawī* is *jahūd*, which is often confused with the word *Yahūd* (“Jews”). *Jahūd* is best translated as “deniers of the Truth”. *Jahūd* is similar in meaning to the Arabic word *kāfir*, another word that is very often misinterpreted and misunderstood. It is usually rendered as “infidel”, “unbeliever”, or “pagan”. Yet in Arabic, *kāfir* literally means “one who covers the Truth”, i.e. “someone who is spiritually ignorant and blind”. As such, a *kāfir* can belong to any religious group or faith, including Islām. The same applies to the term *jahūd*.

<sup>1163</sup> Spiritual savour (*dhawq*): experiencing the Divine in a state of bliss.

<sup>1164</sup> Literally “this is in your hand”.

<sup>1165</sup> Here, “common sense” (*ḥiss-e mushtarak*) means the faculty of common or unifying sense, which allows us to bring together our perceptions derived from both internal and external senses.

<sup>1166</sup> I.e. deprived of worth (Nich.).

- 1-3273 As the beam of the spirit falls on the body, so do the beams of the *Abdāl* (the exalted Saints) fall on my soul.
- 3-2536 If the soul were now alive without that radiance, would God ever have called the infidels “*dead*”<sup>1167</sup>?
- 3-3274 It is not worthy of your benevolent kindness, o generous one, to deny me this object of desire.
- 1-3907 When You will not admit him to Your presence – even supposing he has saved his soul, consider as dead the soul that would live without You.
- 6-148 What is soul? Soul is conscious of good and evil, rejoicing because of kindness, weeping because of injury.
- 6-149 Since consciousness is the inmost nature and essence of the soul, the more aware one is, the more spiritual one is.
- 6-150 Awareness is the effect of the spirit: anyone who has this in abundance is a man of God.
- 6-151 Since there are consciousnesses beyond the bodily nature, in the spiritual domain the sensual souls are like inanimate matter.

### **Allegory. [2.6.7]**

- 6-3306 A bird is flying in the atmosphere of the Unseen: its shadow falls on a piece of earth.
- 6-3307 The body is the shadow of the shadow of the shadow of the heart: how is the body worthy of the exalted rank of the heart?
- 6-3308 A man lies asleep: his spirit is shining in Heaven, like the sun, while his body is in bed.
- 6-3309 His spirit is hidden in the Void, like the fringe (sewn inside a garment): his body is tossing and turning under the blanket.
- 6-3310 Since the spirit, being *from the command of my Lord*<sup>1168</sup>, is invisible, every likeness that I may utter denies the truth of it.
- 1-2008 “Below” and “above”, “before” and “behind”, are attributes of the body: the essence of the bright soul is without direction (not limited by attachment to a place).
- 1-1502 The quest of the soul is on another level: the wine of the soul has another nature (has a different consistency).

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<sup>1167</sup> See Qur’ān 39:30.

<sup>1168</sup> Qur’ān 17:85.

- 1-2007 If you imagine you have a “before” and “behind”, you are tied to the body and deprived of soul.

### **The difference between the animal soul and the human soul. [2.6.7]**

- 4-425 At night a lamp is placed in every house, in order that by its light the occupants may be delivered from darkness.
- 4-426 That lamp is like this body, its light like the animal soul; it requires a wick and this and that.
- 4-427 That lamp with six wicks, namely, these senses<sup>1169</sup>, is based entirely upon sleep and food.
- 4-428 Without food and sleep it would not live half a moment; nor would it even live with food and sleep.
- 4-429 Without wick and oil it does not last, and with wick and oil it is also faithless (transient).
- 4-430 Since its light, being related to apparent causes<sup>1170</sup>, is seeking death: how should it live when bright day is the death of it?
- 4-431 Likewise all the human senses are impermanent, because they are nothing in the presence of the Day of Resurrection.
- 4-453 The animal soul is kept alive by food; however good or bad its state may be, it dies all the same.
- 4-454 If this lamp dies and is extinguished, yet how should the neighbour’s house become dark?
- 4-455 Since without this lamp the light still remains in that house, it follows that the lamp of sense-perception is different in every house.
- 4-456 This is a parable of the animal soul, not a parable of the divine soul.
- 4-457 Again, when the moon is born from the Hindu<sup>1171</sup>, Night, a light falls on every window.

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<sup>1169</sup> Apparently “the common sense” (*hiss-e mushtarak*), which receives the perceptions conveyed by the five bodily senses, is itself reckoned here as a sixth bodily sense (Nich.).

<sup>1170</sup> “First Cause” and “apparent cause(s)”: “The First Cause” is God, who is called *Musabbibu’l-Asbāb*, “the Causer of Causes”. His existence is absolute and necessary (*Wājibu’l-Wujūd*), i.e. He exists independently through Himself and His existence is necessary for the existence of all other things. When He wishes to make something happen He uses some of His own creations as mediators or “apparent causes” or “secondary causes”. Apparent causes are capable of causing future events in some way. However, apparent causes always remain subordinate to the First Cause. Therefore seekers of God must never let themselves be blinded and misled by apparent causes, since their seeming power and relative existence invariably stem from God, the First Cause and Causer of all Cause.

- 4-458 Count the light of those hundred houses as one, for the light of this house does not remain in existence without the light of the other<sup>1172</sup>.
- 4-459 As long as the sun is shining on the horizon, its light is a guest in every house;
- 4-460 Again, when the Sun of the soul sets, the light in all the houses disappears.
- 3-3189 The colour is changed; but the pure soul is free from colour, from the four elements and dust.
- 6-4582 How can a soul like this be confined in the body? Listen, o body, wash your hands of this soul!
- 6-1406 Know that this unjust body is like a coat of mail: it serves neither for winter nor summer<sup>1173</sup>.

**About the spirit, which is like a bird,  
and is caught in the body's cage. [2.6.7]**

- 6-4443 O wrong-thinking perversely-acting body, you who have held a hundred thousand free men captive.
- 2-772 Just like the sensual man who pampers his body and suspects someone else of a bitter hatred against him,
- 2-773 Saying, "This one is a foe, and that one is envious and an enemy", even though in reality his envier and enemy is his own body.
- 6-1404 Even though the body is like a mother in fostering the spirit, yet it is more hostile to you than a hundred enemies.
- 2-1211 It is impossible to perform the prostration on the Water of Life, until I am delivered from this earthly body.
- 5-842 O Man, you are in torment because of this body: the bird, your spirit, is imprisoned with one of another kind.
- 5-843 The spirit is a falcon, and the bodily properties are crows: it has (receives) painful brands<sup>1174</sup> from the crows and owls.
- 5-838 Whoever is left in the company of his opposite, the wise have considered that punishment terrible as death.

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<sup>1171</sup> In Fārsī, *Hindū* can also mean "a dark-coloured person". Here it is used as a symbol for the darkness of the night. So, by no means does Ḥaẓrat Mawlānā Rūmī intend to denigrate the Hindu religion, or indeed any religion. Whenever he uses the names of religions and ethnicities, it is merely meant as a figure of speech.

<sup>1172</sup> I.e. when the moon sinks, *all* the houses are left in darkness (Nich.).

<sup>1173</sup> I.e. it is like a useless garment (Nich.).

<sup>1174</sup> I.e. it suffers great anguish (Nich.).

- 5-3543 Oh, blessed is he who has sacrificed his body for the sake of that for which it is worthwhile to sacrifice oneself.
- 3-3417 The core of every fruit is better than its peel: consider the body to be the peel, and its friend (the spirit) to be the core.
- 3-3191 They who know the soul are free from numbers (multiplicity): they are sunk in the Sea that is without quality or quantity.
- 3-3192 Become spirit and know spirit by means of spirit: become the friend of vision (clairvoyant), not the child of deductive reasoning.
- 6-152 The first spirit is the theatre<sup>1175</sup> of the Divine court<sup>1176</sup>; the Spirit of the spirit is verily the theatre of God Himself<sup>1177</sup>.

### **The Greatest or Supreme Spirit (ar-rūḥu'l-a'zam), the Universal or First Intellect ('aqlu'l-kull<sup>1178</sup>) or the Soul of Souls. [2.6.7]**

- 6-153 The angels were entirely reason and spirit until there came a new Spirit<sup>1179</sup> of which they were the body<sup>1180</sup>.
- 6-154 When, by happy chance, they attached themselves to that Spirit, they became subservient to that Spirit<sup>1181</sup>, as the body is subservient to the spirit dwelling in it.
- 1-1541 If the bird that is a prisoner in a cage does not try to escape, it is out of ignorance.
- 1-1542 The spirits which have escaped from their cages are the Prophets, those worthy guides.
- 1-2000 Not without good reason, therefore, the great mystics have said: "The bodies of the holy ones (the Saints) are essentially pure as their spirits".
- 1-2001 Their speech, soul and form, all this is absolute spirit without external trace.
- 1-712 Indisputably, in this body the spirit devoid of reality is like a wooden sword in the sheath:

<sup>1175</sup> In the Persian text the word *mazhar* is used, which literally means "place where something is made manifest".

<sup>1176</sup> I.e. the unrepentant soul belongs to the phenomenal world (Nich.).

<sup>1177</sup> I.e. the soul of the Perfect Man is the mirror.

<sup>1178</sup> Apart from "the Universal or First Intellect", '*Aqlu'l-Kull* can also mean "the Supreme Spirit", "the Divine Throne ('*Arsh*)", "the Divine Essence of Man" and what is known in Sufism as "the Light of Muḥammad" (*an-Nūru'l-Muḥammadī*). According to Sūfī thought, "the Light of Muḥammad" existed before creation: "the Light of Muḥammad" was the Primal Light in pre-existence. All Prophets and Saints – regardless of the religion they belong to – derive their Light from this Pre-eternal Light.

<sup>1179</sup> The spirit of Adam (Nich.)

<sup>1180</sup> I.e. to which they were subordinate (Nich.).

<sup>1181</sup> Referring to the worship of Adam by the angels (Nich.).



- 1-713 While it remains in the sheath, it is apparently valuable, but when it has been drawn it is a tool only fit for burning.
- 1-714 Do not take a wooden sword into the battle! First see whether your sword is a real one, in order that your plight may not be wretched.
- 1-715 If it is made of wood, go, seek another; and if it is hard as a diamant, march forward joyously.
- 1-716 The sword of reality is in the arsenal of the Saints: to see and associate with them is as precious as the Elixir<sup>1182</sup> for you.

### **The relation between spirit, soul and body. [2.6.7]**

- 5-3423 The spirit<sup>1183</sup> cannot function without the body; your body is frozen (inanimate) and cold (inert) without the spirit.
- 5-3422 The Divine Wisdom has bound these opposites together: O butcher, this fleshy thigh-bone goes along with the neck<sup>1184</sup>.
- 5-3424 Your body is visible, while your spirit is hidden from view: the business of the world is conducted by means of them both.
- 5-3425 If you throw earth at someone's head, it will not be broken; if you throw water at his head, it will not be broken.
- 5-3426 If you wish to break his head, you bring the earth and the water into contact with each other (and make a lump of clay).
- 5-3427 When you have broken your head<sup>1185</sup>, its water (the spirit) returns to its source, and earth returns to earth on the day of separation.
- 5-3428 The providential purpose that God had – namely, humble supplication or obstinacy<sup>1186</sup> – was fulfilled by means of the marriage of body and spirit.
- 5-3429 Then (afterwards) there are other marriages that no ear has heard and no eye has seen.
- 6-2936 (The Divine command) *get down*<sup>1187</sup> cast the spirit into the body, that the pearl of Aden<sup>1188</sup> might be hidden in clay.

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<sup>1182</sup> In the original text the term *kīmīyā* is used, meaning “alchemy”.

<sup>1183</sup> Generally speaking, “spirit” (*rūḥ*, an Arabic word) and “soul” (*jān*, a Persian word) are quite similar in meaning. But when Ḥaṣrat Mawlānā Rūmī speaks of “the spirit” (*rūḥ*), he means that level of the spirit which is the supreme degree of mystical consciousness.

<sup>1184</sup> A proverb alluding to the Persian butcher's habit of giving his customers a cut partly from the thigh and partly from the neck (Nich.).

<sup>1185</sup> I.e. when you die (Nich.).

<sup>1186</sup> I.e. the manifestation of Faith or infidelity (Nich.).

<sup>1187</sup> Qur'ān 2:38.

<sup>1188</sup> I.e. something of the utmost value.

- 5-3579 You are the sea of knowledge hidden in a dewdrop; you are the universe hidden in a body three ells long.
- 5-3582 You are the unconditional spirit imprisoned in conditionality, you are the sun imprisoned in the descending knot<sup>1189</sup>: what a pity!
- 4-1876 At first, man is a slave to sleep and food; in the end he is higher than the angels.
- 4-1874 The fire that first shoots out from the impact of the iron, puts its foot forward very feebly.
- 4-1875 Cotton is its wet-nurse at first, but in the end it carries its flames up to the ether.
- 4-1879 Even though the fire too is connected with the body, is it not derived from the spirit and the spiritual?
- 4-1880 The body has no share in that glory: the body is as a drop of water in comparison with the sea of the spirit.
- 4-1881 The days of the body are increased by the spirit: see what becomes of the body when the spirit leaves it.
- 4-1882 The range of your body is an ell or two, no more: your spirit is a maker of swift flights to heaven.
- 4-1883 In the spirit's imagination, o prince, it is but half a step to Baghdad and Samarqand.
- 4-1884 The fat (white) of your eye is two dirhams in weight: the light of its spirit reaches to the lofty region of the sky.
- 4-1885 The light sees in dream without this eye: without this light what would the eye be but ruined?
- 4-1887 Such is the magnificence of the animal spirit: go further, see the human spirit.
- 4-1888 Pass beyond Man and logical disputation unto the shore of the sea of the spirit of Gabriel.
- 4-1889 After that, the spirit of Aḥmad (Muḥammad) will bite your lip (kiss you lovingly), and Gabriel will creep back in fear of you<sup>1190</sup>.

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<sup>1189</sup> I.e. eclipsed (Nich.).

<sup>1190</sup> This verse alludes to the night of the Ascension (*mi'rāj*) of the Prophet Muḥammad to the Highest Heaven. During this Night of Ascension, Ḥaẓrat Muḥammad reached the *Sidratu 'l-Muntahā* (a Lote tree in Heaven which symbolizes the level of reason and intellect), together with the archangel Gabriel. When they had passed all veils of light and darkness, Gabriel said to Ḥaẓrat Muḥammad: "O Muḥammad, from here proceed alone, for if I take any step further, I will be burned". Here – in as spiritual sense – Ḥaẓrat Muḥammad stands for the Love that transcends the level of intellect, in this case symbolically represented by Gabriel. See *Aḥādīth-e Mathnawī* p. 423.

**The Eighth Rivulet [2.6.8]**  
**Sufism (ṭaṣawwuf) or spiritual poverty (faqr).**  
**The spiritual journey towards the Divine.**

- 1-3150        Such is the custom of kings: you will have heard of this, if you remember.
- 1-3151        The paladins<sup>1191</sup> stand on their left hand, because the heart (the seat of bravery) is fixed on the left side of the body.
- 1-3152        On the right hand are the chancellor and the secretaries, because the science of writing and book-keeping belongs (in practice) to this hand.
- 1-3153        They gave the Ṣūfīs the place in front of them<sup>1192</sup>, for they (the Ṣūfīs) are a mirror for the soul, and better than a mirror,
- 1-3154        Since they have polished their breasts (hearts) in remembrance of God and meditation, that the heart's mirror may receive the virgin (original) image.
- 1-3146        He whose clear breast has become empty of any image (impression) has become a mirror for the impression of the Invisible.
- 1-3261        Even though the iron has become red, it is not red by nature: its redness is a ray borrowed from something that strikes fire<sup>1193</sup>.
- 5-4187        The Ṣūfīs pure as the light of the sun, who for a long time had fallen into the world of earth and filth,
- 5-4188        Have now come back stainless and undefiled, as the sunlight to the lofty orb of the sun.
- 2-532        Only after long waiting does the Ṣūfī gain his desire (the satisfaction of his appetite) from Fortune: for that reason the Ṣūfī is a great eater<sup>1194</sup>;
- 2-533        Except, to be sure, the Ṣūfī who has eaten his fill of the Light of God: he is free from the shame of beggary;
- 2-534        But of these Ṣūfīs there are only a few among thousands; the rest are living in under the protection of his (the perfect Ṣūfī's spiritual) empire.
- 1-2754        The dervish who wants bread is a land-fish: he has the form of a fish, but he is fleeing from the sea.
- 1-2755        He is a domestic bird, not the Sīmurgh<sup>1195</sup> of the air: he swallows sweet morsels of food, he does not eat from God.

<sup>1191</sup> Literally "brave champions", "brave heroes" (*pahlawānān*).

<sup>1192</sup> Literally "in front of their face".

<sup>1193</sup> I.e. something that causes fire.

<sup>1194</sup> An allusion to the many fake Ṣūfīs who have existed in all times.

<sup>1195</sup> Sīmurgh: mythical, phoenix-like bird in ancient Iranian mythology. The renowned 12<sup>th</sup> century Ṣūfī Master and author Ḥaẓrat Shaykh Farīdu'd-Dīn 'Aṭṭār used it in his famous book "The Conference of the Birds". In this

- 1-2756 He loves God for the sake of gain: his soul is not in love with God's excellence and beauty.
- 1-2753 He wants a morsel of food, he does not want God: do not set dishes before a lifeless picture!

**The true dervish is indigent towards God alone. [2.6.8]**

- 1-2352 The work of spiritual poverty (dervishhood)<sup>1196</sup> is beyond your understanding: do not look on dervishes with contempt.
- 1-2353 Because dervishes are beyond property and wealth: they possess an abundant portion from the Lord of Majesty.
- 6-1471 Since the highest stage is non-existence, the dervishes have surpassed all others.
- 3-989 The wars of mankind are for the sake of Beauty; the foliage without foliage is the sign of the Ṭūbā tree<sup>1197</sup>.
- 3-990 The angers of mankind are for the sake of Peace; restlessness is always the snare for Rest.
- 4-2055 The provision of leaflessness (spiritual poverty) is the sign of being a Gnostic; the yellowness of gold is the cause of the money-changer's ruddiness of face (cheerful face).
- 3-1117 The more perfect he is in worldly knowledge, the more backward he is in reality and the more forward in appearance.
- 3-1078 In the sight of the people he is contemptible, wretched and a laughing-stock: in God's sight he is loved, sought and approved.
- 3-1118 He (God) has said, "*Verily, to Him we are returning*"<sup>1198</sup>; and the return is in the same way as a herd turns back and goes home.
- 3-1119 When the herd has turned back after going down to the water, the goat that was the leader now falls behind (becomes the last).
- 3-1121 How did this company (the Prophets and Saints) become lame, give up glory and buy disgrace in vain?

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book the *Sīmurgh* symbolically represents man's Divine potential, which can be realized by fulfilling the mystical journey.

<sup>1196</sup> In the Persian text the word *darwīshī* is used, i.e. "the work, attitude and way of life of a *darwīsh* (one who is poor before God)".

<sup>1197</sup> Ṭūbā: a tree in Paradise. Its name means "Blessedness" or "Goodness". See Qur'ān 13:29.

<sup>1198</sup> Qur'ān 2:156.

- 3-1122 This company goes on the pilgrimage to Reality with broken legs, because there is a secret way from difficulty to relief.
- 3-1127 Therefore do not seek to be in front: be lame on this side, and be the leader at the moment of return.
- 3-1128 O clever one, be according to the Prophet's saying, "*We are the last and the first*": the fresh fruit comes before the tree.

### **Allegory. [2.6.8]**

- 6-1374 Since that non-existence is in agreement with your desire, why do you avoid this nonentity and non-existence?
- 6-1382 Having heard what I have said concerning your misunderstandings, o dear friend, hear also the words of 'Aṭṭār on the same subject.
- 6-1383 He, God have mercy upon him, has told it: he has strung together<sup>1199</sup> the tale of King Maḥmūd, the Ghāzī<sup>1200</sup> –
- 6-1384 How, amongst the booty of his campaign in India, there was a boy who was brought into the presence of the sovereign.
- 6-1385 Afterwards he made him his vicegerent, seated him on the throne and preferred him above the rest of the army and called him "son".
- 6-1388 He cried and shed tears in burning grief. The King said to him, "O you whose day (fortune) is triumphant,
- 6-1389 Why should you cry? Has your fortune become disagreeable to you? You are above kings, you are the familiar companion of the Emperor.
- 6-1390 You are seated on this throne, while the viziers and soldiers stand in rows before your throne, like the stars and the moon".
- 6-1391 The boy said, "The cause of my bitter crying is that in that faraway city and country my mother
- 6-1392 Was always threatening me with you, saying, "May I see you in the hands of the lion, Maḥmūd!"
- 6-1393 Then my father would quarrel with my mother and answer, "What anger and torment is this that you would inflict on him?
- 6-1394 Can you not find any other curse lighter than this deadly curse?"

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<sup>1199</sup> Literally "has bored (the pearls of) the tale" (Nich.).

<sup>1200</sup> I.e. champion of Islām against the infidels (Nich.).

- 6-1396 I used to be upset<sup>1201</sup> by the talk of both: a great fear and pain would come into my heart,
- 6-1397 Thinking, “Oh, wonderful! What a hellish person Maḥmūd must be, since the disaster and affliction he causes have become proverbial!”
- 6-1398 I used to tremble in fear of you, being ignorant of your gracious treatment and high regard.
- 6-1399 Where is my mother, that she might see me now seated on the throne, o King of the world?”
- 6-1400 Spiritual poverty is your Maḥmūd, o man without wealth: your sensual nature is always making you afraid of it.
- 6-1401 If you come to know the mercifulness of this noble Maḥmūd, you will cry joyously, “May the end be praised<sup>1202</sup>”!
- 6-1402 Poverty is your Maḥmūd, o faint hearted one: do not listen to this mother, namely, your misguiding nature.
- 6-1403 When you become a prey to poverty, you will certainly shed tears of delight, like the Hindu boy, on the Day of Judgement.
- 6-1446 Listen, o fellow-servant, go and, like the Hindu boy, do not be afraid of the Maḥmūd of non-existence.
- 6-1447 Be aware of the existence in which you are now: that fantasy of yours<sup>1203</sup> is nothing and you yourself are nothing.
- 6-1448 One nothing has fallen in love with another nothing: has any nothing ever ambushed and attacked any other nothing?

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<sup>1201</sup> Literally “perplexed”, “bewildered” (*ḥayrān*).

<sup>1202</sup> *Maḥmūd* means “praised” “or praised one”.

<sup>1203</sup> I.e. the illusion of your existence (Nich.).

# The Third Source

## The Light of Truth – Ḥaqīqa

### The First River [3.1]

#### The Power of the Qualities of ‘Ishq (Love)

#### The First Rivulet [3.1.1]

#### How the hidden light of Love manifests itself.

- 1-23 Hail<sup>1204</sup>, o Love that brings us benefit – you who are the physician of all our illnesses,
- 1-24 The remedy of our pride and conceit, our Plato and our Galen<sup>1205</sup>!
- 1-25 Through Love the earthly body soared to the skies: the mountain began to dance and became nimble.
- 1-26 Love inspired Mount Sinai, o lover, so that Sinai was made drunken and *Moses fell down unconscious*<sup>1206</sup>.
- 1-1793 In the verdant garden of Love, which is endless, there are many fruits besides sorrow and joy.
- 1-1794 Love is higher than these two states of feeling: without spring and without autumn it is ever green en fresh.
- 3-4719 Love is a stranger to both worlds: in it are seventy-two madresses<sup>1207</sup>.
- 3-4720 It is extremely hidden, and only its bewilderment is perceptible: the soul of the spiritual Sultāns is pining for it.
- 3-4721 Its religion is other than that of the seventy-two sects: beside it the throne of kings is but a splint-bandage.
- 3-4722 At the time of the *samā*<sup>1208</sup> Love’s minstrel plays this melody: “Servitude is chains and lordship is headache”.

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<sup>1204</sup> Literally “Be happy!”.

<sup>1205</sup> Galen (*Jālīnūs* in Arabic and Persian): the famous Greek physician (ca.129/131-ca. 200/216 CE), whose medical system remained dominant throughout the East and Europe for more than 1,500 years.

<sup>1206</sup> Qur’ān 7:143.

<sup>1207</sup> In Sufism “spiritual madness” transcends the mental faculties.

<sup>1208</sup> *Samā* ‘ (from the Arabic “to listen” or “to hear”): ritual gathering where Ṣūfīs listen to mystical singing and music. The aim of *samā* ‘ is to reach a heightened state of consciousness, which draws them closer to the Divine

- 3-4723 Then what is Love? The Sea of Not-Being. There the foot of the intellect is shattered<sup>1209</sup>.
- 3-4751 Why is Love murderous at first, so that he who is an outsider runs away?
- 5-588 Love is that flame which, when it blazes up, consumes everything else but the Beloved.
- 5-589 The lover drives home the sword<sup>1210</sup> of *No*<sup>1211</sup> in order to kill all other than God: after that consider what remains after *No*.
- 5-590 Only *but God* remains<sup>1212</sup>: all the rest is gone. Salutations<sup>1213</sup>, o mighty Love, destroyer of attributing partners to the Beloved<sup>1214</sup>!
- 5-591 Truly, He is the First and the Last: consider giving partners to God only as something that arises from the eye that sees double.
- 5-2184 In the sight of Love, fear is not worth more than a single hair: in the law of Love, all other things are offered as a sacrifice.
- 5-2193 How should those fearful ones overtake<sup>1215</sup> Love? – for Love’s passion makes heaven its carpet –

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Beloved and eventually unites them with Him. In scientific literature *samāʿ* is usually translated as “spiritual audition” or “mystical audition”.

<sup>1209</sup> I.e. the intellect is unable to swim in that Sea (Nich.).

<sup>1210</sup> I.e. “strikes at all other than God with the sword of *No*”.

<sup>1211</sup> I.e. the word *lā*, which means “no”. This word is the beginning of the Arabic phrase *Lā ilāha illā ʿLlāh* – “There is no deity but God”, “Nothing is worthy of worship but God”, or – in the view of the Ṣūfī mystics – “Nothing exists but God” or “There is no Reality but God”. The phrase *Lā ilāha illā ʿLlāh* is known as *Kalimatu ʿt-Tawḥīd* (“the Word of Divine Unity”). It consists of two parts: a negation or *naḥī* – *Lā ilāha* (“there is no deity”, “nothing exists”, “there is no reality”), followed by an affirmation or *ithbāt* – *illā ʿLlāh* (“but God”). The phrase *Lā ilāha illā ʿLlāh* is of fundamental importance to the Ṣūfī practice of *zīkr* (< Arabic *dhikr*), i.e. “Remembrance (of God)”. “Drawing the sword of *no*” may be interpreted as a reference to this practice of Divine remembrance.

<sup>1212</sup> “Except God” = *illā ʿLlāh*, i.e. “but God”.

<sup>1213</sup> Literally “Be Happy!”.

<sup>1214</sup> In Islām, “attributing partners to God” or *shirk* is considered an abominable sin. It leads to the deification and worship of things or beings other than God, and therefore is contrary to the fundamental Islamic concept of monotheism or *Tawḥīd*, i.e. that God is One, Unique and Absolute. Ṣūfī mystics teach that there is no reality but God, that only He truly exists, and that He is Present in all things and beings. This implies that God can also be worshipped in all created things and beings. But that isn’t necessarily *shirk* to Ṣūfī mystics: as long as believers worship God in created things and beings, and not the created things and beings themselves, it is not *shirk*. What Ṣūfī mystics do reject as *shirk* or “attributing partners to God” is man’s worship of and servitude to his own untrue ego or *nafs*, and the worship of illusory concepts of the Divine Being. These concepts are mere figments of man’s own imagination, and consequently, they are false idols. In the early stages of the mystical Path, Ṣūfī wayfarers or *sāliks* usually need to revere something they can grasp with their hearts and minds in order to be able to make progress, e.g. most *sāliks* lovingly worship their Pīr, who inwardly is one with the Divine. Some *sāliks* may perceive their Pīrs’ true Inner Being and may inwardly become one with him. This phase will make it possible for them to break through to the highest level of worship, i.e. *Khudā-parastī* (“God-worship”), *Tawḥīd* (“Divine Unity”) or *Haqq-parastī* (“Truth-worship”). Yet most *sāliks*’ perception of their Pīr will remain a mere projection of their own imagination, and therefore a false idol. At some point though, all true *sāliks* inevitably will have to smash their false idols on the rock of Divine Truth – a Truth that is beyond all concepts and limitations, a Truth that transcends all duality (*Haqq*).

<sup>1215</sup> Literally “reach the dust of” (Nich.).



- 5-3276 The Elder (*Pīr*, *Şūfī* Master) is your love, not someone with a white beard. It is he (Love) who gives a helping hand to thousands who are in despair.
- 5-3230 The only muzzle for evil whisperings<sup>1216</sup> of doubt is Love; if not, when has anyone ever stopped such temptation?
- 5-3241 Eloquence is dumbfounded by Love: it lacks the courage to engage in dispute.
- 5-2731 Love is not contained in speech and hearing: Love is an ocean whose depth is invisible.
- 5-2732 The drops of the sea cannot be numbered: the Seven Seas are petty in comparison with that Ocean.
- 5-2735 Love makes the sea boil like a kettle; Love crumbles the mountain like sand;
- 5-2736 Love splits the sky into a hundred splits; Love recklessly causes the earth to tremble.
- 5-2737 The pure Love was united with Muḥammad: for Love's sake God said to him, "Had it not been for you"<sup>1217</sup>.
- 5-2738 Since he alone was the ultimate goal in Love, God singled him out from the other Prophets<sup>1218</sup>,
- 5-2739 Saying, "Had it not been for pure Love's sake, how should I have brought the heavens into existence?"<sup>1219</sup>,
- 5-2740 I have raised up the lofty celestial sphere, that you may learn the sublimity of Love.
- 5-2742 I have made the earth lowly, that you may gain some notion of the lowliness of lovers.
- 5-2743 We have given greenness and freshness to the earth, that you may become acquainted with the spiritual transformation of the dervish<sup>1220</sup>.

<sup>1216</sup> This is a reference to Qur'ān 114:4: "the evil of the whisperer (the devil who whispers evil in the hearts of men) who withdraws (from his whispering in someone's when God is mentioned or remembered)". In Sufism, "the devil" is a symbol for the untrue ego or *nafs*.

<sup>1217</sup> This refers to a famous *ḥadīth qudsī* or *sacred ḥadīth*: "Had it not been for you [o Muḥammad], I would not have created the celestial spheres", i.e. God only created the celestial spheres for man in his most perfect form, the Spiritually Perfect Man (*Insān-e Kāmil*). See *Aḥādīth-e Mathnawī* p. 484. A well-known definition of a *ḥadīth qudsī* is this: "A sacred ḥadīth is, as to the meaning, from God the Almighty; as to the wording, it is from the Messenger of God. It is that which God the Almighty has communicated to His Prophet through revelation or in dream, and he has communicated it in his own words".

<sup>1218</sup> In traditional Islām, this would mean that Ḥaṣrat Muḥammad is higher than all other Prophets, but from a mystical point of view it is interpreted differently: all Prophets and Sages are one and each one of them represents all others. In verse 6-1106 of his *Mathnawī* Ḥaṣrat Mawlānā Rūmī says: "The name of Aḥmad (i.e. Muḥammad) is the name of *all* Prophets: when the hundred comes (is counted), ninety is with us as well."

<sup>1219</sup> This refers to the *ḥadīth qudsī* mentioned in verse 5-2737. See *Aḥādīth-e Mathnawī* p. 484.

- 5-2744 These firm-set mountains describe (represent) to you the state of lovers in steadfastness.
- 5-3854 Know that the wheeling heavens are turned by waves of Love: were it not for Love, the world would be frozen (inanimate)<sup>1221</sup>.
- 5-3855 How would an inorganic thing disappear (by change) into a plant? How would vegetative things sacrifice themselves to become endowed with spirit?

### **Love's force of attraction. [3.1.1]**

- 5-3932 And if a rational person does not see the various aspects of Love, yet the auspicious moon of Love does not wane.
- 5-3933 Joseph's beauty was not seen by the eyes of his brothers, but when did it ever disappear from the heart of Jacob?
- 5-3934 The physical eye of Moses saw the staff as wood: the eye of the Invisible<sup>1222</sup> saw a viper in it and a cause for terror.
- 6-623 Look at this ship of God's creatures and see how it is sunk in Love: you would say that Love's throat has become a dragon (to swallow it) –
- 6-624 An invisible heart-ravishing dragon: it is a magnet<sup>1223</sup> to draw towards itself the reason that is firm like a mountain.
- 6-625 Every perfumer whose reason became acquainted with Him (Love) dropped the trays containing drugs and perfumes into the water of the river<sup>1224</sup>.
- 6-626 Go, for you will not emerge from this river of Love until eternity: in truth *none is comparable or equal to Him*<sup>1225</sup>.
- 5-2191 Love has five hundred wings, and every wing extends from above the highest heaven to beneath the earth.
- 5-2189 If I should continue to describe Love, a hundred Resurrections would pass, and my description would still be incomplete;
- 5-2190 For there is a limit to the date of the Resurrection, but what limit can there be where the Divine attributes are concerned?

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<sup>1220</sup> In the Persian text the word *faqīr* is used, which means the same as *darwīsh*: “one who is poor before God and in need of His mercy”.

<sup>1221</sup> “The movement which is the existence of the universe is the movement of Love.” From the *Commentary on Ibn ‘Arabī’s Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam* by Hussain Khwarizmi, p 741.

<sup>1222</sup> I.e. the inward eye (Nich.).

<sup>1223</sup> Literally “the attractor of straw” i.e. amber (Nich.).

<sup>1224</sup> This verse alludes to Ḥaẓrat Shaykh Farīdu’d-dīn ‘Aṭṭār (“the Druggist and Perfumer”) of Nīshāpūr (Nich.).

<sup>1225</sup> Qur’an 112:4.

- 1-112        Whatever I say to describe and explain Love, when I come to Love itself I am ashamed of my explanation of it.
- 1-114        While the pen was writing hastily, it split on itself as soon as it came to Love.
- 1-113        Although the commentary of the tongue makes all clear, yet tongueless love is clearer.
- 6-5         Love has nothing to do with the five senses and the six directions: its goal is only to experience the attraction exerted by the Beloved.
- 1-115        In expounding Love, the intellect lay down helplessly like an ass in the mud: it was Love alone that uttered the explanation of love and loverhood.
- 1-116        The proof of the sun is the sun itself: if you require the proof, do not you're your face away from it!

### **The Second Rivulet [3.1.2]** **The qualities and stages of true lovers.**

- 1-2800       Nothing in the world is without object (disinterested) in its movement (activity) except the bodies and the souls of God's lovers.
- 1-2801       The lovers of the Whole are not those who love the part (material<sup>1226</sup>): he who longed for the part (material) failed to attain the Whole.
- 1-2880       Whatever the man in love with God says, the scent of Love is springing from his mouth into the abode of Love.
- 1-2881       If he talks formal theology, it all turns to spiritual poverty: the scent of poverty comes from the man of sweet and fascinating discourse.
- 1-2882       And if he talks infidelity, it has the scent of the true religion, and if he talks doubtfully, his doubt turns to certainty.
- 1-109        Being in love is made manifest by soreness of heart: there is no sickness like heart-sickness.
- 1-110        The lover's illness is different from all other diseases: love is the astrolabe<sup>1227</sup> of the mysteries of God.
- 1-111        Whether it be earthly love or heavenly love, in the end it leads us there.
- 3-3021       Lovers have nothing to do with existence: lovers have the interest without having the capital.

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<sup>1226</sup> I.e. the material world as opposed to the spiritual world.

<sup>1227</sup> A medieval instrument, now replaced by the sextant, which was once used to determine the altitude of the sun or other celestial bodies.

- 3-3022 They have no wings, and yet they fly around the world; they have no hands, and yet they carry off the ball from the polo-field.
- 3-3024 Lovers have pitched their tents in non-existence: they are of one colour (quality) and one essence, like non-existence.
- 5-586 For His lovers He alone is all their joy and sorrow; He alone is their wages and payment for service.
- 5-587 If there is any sight (object of regard for them) except the Beloved, it is not love: it is an idle passion.
- 5-1866 To anyone who finds life in love, anything but devoted service would seem infidelity.

### **Story. [3.1.2]**

- 5-2712 God had offered to the Shaykh all the treasures of the earth down to the seventh degree;
- 5-2713 But the Shaykh said, “O Creator, I am a lover: if I seek nothing but You, I am impious.
- 5-2714 If I should bring into view the Eight Paradises, or if I should serve You out of fear of Hell,
- 5-2715 Then I am only a believer seeking salvation, for both these motives are concerned with the body.”
- 5-2716 A hundred bodies are not worth a bean<sup>1228</sup> in the eyes of the lover who has been nourished by God’s love;
- 5-2718 To be in love with God’s love and then desire a wage! To be a trusted Gabriel and then a thief!
- 5-2719 In the eyes of that wretched<sup>1229</sup> lover<sup>1230</sup> of Laylā<sup>1231</sup> the kingdom of the world was worthless as a speck of dust.
- 5-2720 Earth and gold were alike in his eyes. What of gold? Even his life had no value for him.
- 5-2721 Lions and wolves and wild beasts were acquainted with him and gathered around him like family members,
- 5-2722 Knowing that this man had become entirely purified of his animal nature and filled with love, and that his flesh and fat were poisonous to them.

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<sup>1228</sup> A leguminous plant resembling *Cassia fistula* (Golden Shower Tree) (Nich.).

<sup>1229</sup> Literally “blind and blue” (Nich.).

<sup>1230</sup> I.e. Mājnun. This name literally means “possessed (by a *jinnī*, a spirit)”.

<sup>1231</sup> The Persian form of the name *Laylā* is *Laylī*.

- 5-2724 The wild beast dare not devour the flesh of the lover: Love is known both to the good and the evil;
- 5-2725 And if the wild beast devours him even in a metaphorical way<sup>1232</sup>, the lover's flesh will become poison and kill him.
- 5-2726 Everything except love is devoured by Love: to the beak of Love the two worlds are but a single grain.
- 5-2729 The servant of God desires to be freed from Destiny; the lover of God desires to be free never again<sup>1233</sup>.
- 5-2730 The servant is always seeking a robe of honour and wages; all the lover's robe of honour is his vision of the Beloved.
- 5-2761 As long as you are in the veil of the father of mankind (Adam)<sup>1234</sup>, do not look on the lovers of God in a disparaging way.
- 5-2767 Abandon this defamation; listen, accept my counsel: look at the lovers of God with the eye of love.
- 5-2192 The fearful ascetic runs on foot; the lovers of God fly more quickly than the lightning and the wind.
- 6-910 The lovers of God have fallen into a fierce torrent: they have set their hearts on (have resigned themselves to) the decree of Love.
- 6-911 They are like the millstone turning, day and night, in continual revolution and moaning incessantly.
- 6-592 Arise, o lover, show passionate agitation: there is noise of water and you are thirsty, and then you fall asleep!

### Story. [3.1.2]

- 6-593 In bygone days there was a lover, one who kept his covenant in his time.
- 6-594 For years he had been captivated (checkmated) by arduously seeking the favour of his fair one<sup>1235</sup> and was checkmated<sup>1236</sup> by his Emperor.
- 6-595 In the end the seeker is a finder, for from patience joy is born.

<sup>1232</sup> In Arabic and Persian the metaphorical expression "to devour a person's flesh" means to backbite and speak evil of him (Nich.).

<sup>1233</sup> Literally "until eternity".

<sup>1234</sup> I.e. in the bond of the flesh (Nich.).

<sup>1235</sup> Literally "moons" (Nich.).

<sup>1236</sup> The Persian word for "captivated (checkmated)", *māt*, may also mean "keen on", "doting on" or even "amorous of" in this ambiguous verse. The expression "checkmated by his Emperor" means "being annihilated by and in the Divine Emperor," (*fanā' fī- 'Llāh*).

- 6-596 One day his friend said, “Come tonight, for I have cooked a bean stew for you.
- 6-597 Sit in such-and-such a room until midnight, that at midnight I may become unsought<sup>1237</sup>.”
- 6-598 The man offered sacrifice and distributed loaves, since the moon of good fortune had appeared to him from beneath the dust of ill-fortune.
- 6-599 At night the passionate lover seated himself in the room in hope of the meeting promised by that loyal friend<sup>1238</sup>.
- 6-600 Just after midnight his friend, the charmer of his heart, arrived punctually like those who keep their promise.
- 6-601 She found her lover lying asleep; next, she tore off a little piece of the lover’s sleeve,
- 6-602 And put some walnuts in his lap, saying, “You are a child: take these and play a game of dice.”
- 6-603 When at dawn the lover sprang up from sleep, he saw the torn sleeve and the walnuts.
- 6-604 He said, “Our king is entirely truth and loyalty: the disgrace that befalls us is from ourselves alone.”
- 6-605 O sleepless heart, we (true lovers) are secure from this: we, like guardsmen, are beating our clubs on the roof.
- 6-615 O You who by Your magic has spell-bound the soul’s sleep, o hard-hearted Beloved that You are in the world.
- 6-612 Love and reputation, o brother, are not in accordance: do not stand at the door of reputation, o lover.
- 6-2675 Love craves to drink and seeks him who craves to drink: Love and the lover are at each other’s heels, like Day and Night.
- 6-4046 He is both the lover’s day and daily bread, He is both the lover’s heart and heart-burning.
- 6-2679 In the heart of the Beloved the lover is all: Wāmiq is always in the heart of ‘Adhrā<sup>1239</sup>.
- 6-2680 In the lover’s heart is nothing but the Beloved: there is nothing to separate and divide them.

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<sup>1237</sup> Literally “without seeking”.

<sup>1238</sup> Literally “that friend of the Cave” (Nich.).

<sup>1239</sup> A famous couple of lovers in Arabic and Persian literature.

### **The Third Rivulet [3.1.3]** **The lover's annihilation in love.**

- 1-1751      Oh, the life of lovers consists in death: you will not win the Beloved's heart except in losing your own.
- 1-1750      We gained the price and the blood-price: we hastened to gamble our soul away.
- 1-1757      I am drowned in a love so deep that the first loves and the last are drowned in it.
- 1-1745      He who is drowned in God wishes to be more drowned, while his soul is tossed up and down like the waves of the sea.
- 1-30        The Beloved is all and the lover but a veil; the Beloved is living and the lover a dead thing.
- 1-31        When Love doesn't care about him, he is left like a bird without wings. Alas for him then!
- 1-32        How should I be aware of anything before me or behind me when the light of my Beloved is not before me and behind me?
- 6-613      The time has come for me to become naked, to quit the bodily form and become wholly soul.
- 6-614      Come, o Enemy of shame and anxious thought, for I have rent the veil of shame and bashfulness.
- 6-616      Listen, grip the throat of patience and strangle it, in order that Love's heart may be made happy, o noble horseman!
- 6-617      How should His heart be made happy until I burn? Oh, my heart is His home and dwelling-place.
- 6-618      If You will burn Your house, burn it! Who is he who will say, "It's not allowed"?
- 6-619      Burn this house well and thoroughly, o furious Lion! The lover's house is better so.
- 6-620      From now on I will make this burning my *qibla*<sup>1240</sup>(aim), for I am like the candle: I am made bright by burning.
- 6-902      Love is the Subduer of all, and I am subdued by Love: by Love's bitterness<sup>1241</sup> I have been made sweet as sugar.

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<sup>1240</sup> In this verse *qibla* means "aim", but its general meaning is: the direction faced by Muslims during ritual prayer (i.e. the Ka'ba in Mecca).

- 3-4127 Since my mouth ate of His sweetmeat, I have become clear-eyed and able to see Him.
- 3-4135 And they shot arrows at my heart, robbing me of my senses and making me fall in love with giving thanks and chewing sugar.
- 6-903 O fierce Wind, before You I am but a straw: how can I know where I shall fall?
- 6-969 Being a lover<sup>1242</sup>, repentance or even the possibility of patience – this, o dear soul, is entirely absurd.
- 6-970 Repentance is a worm, while Love is like a dragon: repentance is an attribute of Man, while that other is an attribute of God.
- 6-4003 Even without anger, at the time when it is well-pleased, Love is always accustomed to kill recklessly.
- 6-4004 This is its habit at the moment when it is contented: how shall I describe what it does when it is angered?
- 6-4005 But may the soul's pasture be the ransom for Love's lion who is killed by this Love and his scimitar<sup>1243</sup>!
- 6-4006 It is a killing better than a thousand lives: all sovereignties are mortally in love with this servitude.
- 6-4059 My religion is to be kept alive by Love: life derived from this animal soul and head is a disgrace to me.
- 6-4058 How long will the anguish of separation from her be killing me? Cut off my head, in order that Love may give me a new head.
- 6-4060 The sword of Love sweeps the dust away from the lover's soul, because the sword wipes sins out<sup>1244</sup>.
- 6-4061 When the bodily dust is gone, my moon shines: my soul's moon finds a clear sky.
- 6-4062 For ages, o adored one, I have been beating the drum of love for you to the tune of "Verily, my life arises from my death"<sup>1245</sup>.

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<sup>1241</sup> Literally "saltiness"; but there is also an allusion to the ordinary meaning of *shūr*, "tumultuous agitation". (Nich.).

<sup>1242</sup> I.e. accompanied by (Nich.).

<sup>1243</sup> A curved oriental sword with the edge on the convex side.

<sup>1244</sup> Ḥadīth: *Aḥādīth-e Mathnawī* p. 591.

<sup>1245</sup> This is a famous saying of the Sūfī martyr Ḥaẓrat Ḥusayn ibn Maṣṣūr al-Ḥallāj (d. 922 CE). *Selections from the Works of Ḥallāj*, Qasem Mirakhori, p. 253.



## The Fourth Rivulet [3.1.4] Metaphorical love and True Love<sup>1246</sup> and the meaning of metaphorical love as a stepping-stone to True Love.

**“In the beginning heroes give wooden swords to their sons,  
In order to learn how to fight and later become a true hero,  
Who will be able to wield a *Dhū’l-Faqār*<sup>1247</sup> (a real sword)”.**

– Sanā’ī Ghaznawī<sup>1248</sup> –

- 1-219 Choose the love of that Living One who is everlasting, who gives you to drink of the wine that increases life.
- 1-220 Choose the love of Him from whose love all the Prophets gained power and glory.
- 1-217 Because love of the dead is not enduring, because the dead one is never coming back to us;
- 1-218 But at every moment love of the living is fresher than a bud in the spirit and in the sight.
- 1-3686 Everything except love of the most beautiful God, even though outwardly it may be pleasant like eating sugar, in reality is agony of the soul.
- 1-3687 What is agony of soul? To advance towards death and not grasp the Water of Life.
- 1-205 Those loves which are for the sake of a colour (outward beauty) are not love: in the end they are a disgrace.
- 2-702 Give up this belief<sup>1249</sup>. The outward form or the lady’s face is not the object of loves felt for what is endowed with form.

<sup>1246</sup> “Metaphorical love” (*Ishq-e majāzī*) is the love between parents, children and other relatives and friends. It also relates to the love or passion for art and culture, for plants and animals or for music. All these forms of love follow fluctuating patterns. From time to time they may increase, and from time to time they may decrease, but they may also vanish altogether. This is because the power of this love is not constant and is transient in nature. It may even turn into its opposite: hate. And yet all these metaphorical forms of love may lead to “True Love”: True Love (*Ishq-e Haqīqī*) is not transient in nature, it has no opposite and it never decreases. It is Divine Love or Love for God. [Adapted from the speech delivered on the occasion of Ḥaẓrat Mawlā ‘Alī’s birthday on 5<sup>th</sup> August 2006 by Ḥaẓrat Pīr Mawlānā Ṣafī ‘Alī Shāh II, Master of the Ne’matollāhī Ṣafī ‘Alīshāhī Ṣūfī Order].

<sup>1247</sup> *Dhū’l-Faqār* or, more commonly, *Dhū’l-Fiqr*, is the name of the formidable two-pointed sword of Ḥaẓrat Mawlā ‘Alī. In plain Arabic the name *Dhū’l-Fiqr* simply means “having notches”, but it may also be translated as “Backbone of All Swords”. According to the Shī’ī Islamic tradition, Dhu’l-Fiqr was first sent to the Prophet Muḥammad by the Archangel Gabriel. Ḥaẓrat Muḥammad later passed it on to his chosen successor, Ḥaẓrat ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib. On this occasion, the cry: “There is no Hero or True Man but ‘Alī, there is no sword but Dhū’l-Fiqr,” was heard (*Lā Fatā illā ‘Alī, lā sayfa illā Dhū’l-Fiqr*). These words proclaim the unsurpassed spiritual perfection and the supreme chivalry, bravery and humanity of Ḥaẓrat Mawlā ‘Alī. One of the spiritual meanings of this sword is that it clearly separates falsehood from truth.

<sup>1248</sup> Ḥakīm Sanā’ī of Ghazna (= Ḥakīm Ghaznawī, ca. 1050-1131 CE) was one of the great Persian Ṣūfī poets. He was the first poet to write a major *mathnawī*, entitled *Ḥadīqatu’l-Ḥaqq wa Sharī’atu’t-Ṭarīqa* (“The Walled Garden of Truth and the Law of the Path”). This work also was an inspiration to Ḥaẓrat Mawlānā Rūmī.

- 2-703 That which is the object of love is not the form, whether it be love for the things of this world or the other world.
- 2-704 That which you have come to love for its form – why have you abandoned it after its soul has fled?
- 2-705 Its form is still there: what then is the cause of this satiation (disgust)? O lover, ask yourself who your beloved really is.
- 2-708 The sunbeam shone on the wall: the wall received a borrowed splendour.
- 2-709 Why set your heart on a lump of earth, o simple man? Seek out the source which shines perpetually.
- 2-712 Beauty in humankind is like gilding; if not, how did your sweetheart become as ugly as an old ass?
- 2-713 She was like an angel, she became like a demon, for that loveliness in her was a borrowed (transient) thing.
- 5-981 The favourite of love for whom the world wept – the world now is rejecting him from itself: what is his crime?
- 5-982 “The crime is that he put on a borrowed adornment and pretended that these robes were his own property.
- 5-983 We take them back, in order that he may know for sure that the stack is Ours and the fair ones are only gleaners;
- 5-986 They, the light of the Sun, turn back again, like the stars, from these bodily walls.
- 5-987 When the Sunbeam has gone home, every wall is left dark and black.
- 6-971 Love is one of the attributes of God, who needs nothing: love for anything other than Him is unreal,
- 6-972 Because anything other than Him is but a gilded beauty: its outside is shining light, but it is like dark smoke within.
- 6-973 When the light goes and the smoke becomes visible, at that moment the unreal love is withered away<sup>1250</sup>.
- 6-974 That beauty returns to its source; the body is left – foul-smelling, shameful, and ugly.

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<sup>1249</sup> I.e. the belief in phenomena (Nich.).

<sup>1250</sup> I.e. in worse disgrace (Nich.).

- 6-975 The moonlight is returning to the moon: its reflection goes off the black (dark) wall.
- 6-976 And then, when the water and clay of the wall are left without that beauty, the wall, being moonless, becomes hideous as a devil.
- 6-977 When the gold flies from the surface of the base coin, that gold returns to its original mine and settles there;
- 6-978 Then the shamefully exposed copper is left looking black like smoke, and its lover is left looking blacker<sup>1251</sup> than it.
- 6-979 But the love of those who have spiritual insight is fixed on the gold-mine; necessarily it grows greater every day,
- 6-980 Because the mine has no partner in goldenness. Salutations, o Gold-mine of Reality, You about whom there is no doubt!
- 6-981 If anyone lets a base coin become a sharer with the Mine in his affection, the gold goes back to the Mine which is beyond locality<sup>1252</sup>,
- 6-982 And then the lover and his beloved are left to die in agony: the fish is left writhing, the water is gone from the whirlpool.
- 5-3231 Become a lover, seek a fair sweetheart, hunt a waterfowl from river to river.
- 6-983 The Divine Love is the Sun of perfection: the Divine Word<sup>1253</sup> is its light, the creatures are as shadows.

**Story:**  
**How the Beloved manifests Himself in other creatures. [3.1.4]**

- 5-3286 In their ignorance the fools said to Majnūn<sup>1254</sup>, “The beauty of Laylā is not so very great, it is of little account.
- 5-3287 There are thousands of moon-like sweethearts<sup>1255</sup> more beautiful than her in our city.”
- 5-3288 He replied, “The outward form is a pitcher, and beauty is the wine: God is giving me wine from her form.

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<sup>1251</sup> I.e. is extinguished (Nich.).

<sup>1252</sup> “Beyond locality” = “Non-spatiality”: *lā makān*, literally “no space”, i.e. “the Placeless Realm”, the place of the deity, where there is no space and time, a state beyond our conception.

<sup>1253</sup> Literally “command” (Nich.).

<sup>1254</sup> This refers to the classical love story of “Laylā and Majnūn”, also known as “Laylā and the Madman”, as *majnūn* means “possessed (by a *jinnī*, a spirit)” or “mad” in Arabic. Majnūn was so desperately in love with and possessed by Laylā’s beauty that he lost his senses. In Šūfī literature, Laylā symbolizes the Supreme Beauty of the Divine Beloved. In Fārsī she is called *Laylī*.

<sup>1255</sup> Literally “heart-captivating ones” (Nich.).

- 5-3289 He gave you vinegar from her pitcher, for fear that love of her should pull you by the ears.”
- 5-3290 The hand of God, the Almighty and Glorious, gives poison or honey to everyone from the same pitcher.
- 5-3291 You see the pitcher, but the wine does not show itself<sup>1256</sup> to the wrong eye.
- 5-3292 Spiritual experience is like *the women who restrict their glances*<sup>1257</sup>: it shows no sign but to its possessor.
- 5-3293 That wine is like *the women who restrict their glances*, while these vessels<sup>1258</sup> screening it from view are *like the tents*<sup>1259</sup>.
- 5-3300 The form of Joseph was like a beautiful cup: from it his father drank a hundred enrapturing wines.
- 5-3301 Again, to his brothers the draft they took from it was poisoned water which increased anger and hatred in them.
- 5-3302 Again, to Zalīkhā<sup>1260</sup> the draft she took from it was sweet as sugar: she was drinking a different opiate from the hand of Love.
- 5-3303 The nourishment that came from Joseph to that beautiful one was different from that which came to Jacob.
- 5-3304 There are various sherbets, but the pitcher is one, so that no doubt may remain in you about the wine of the Unseen.
- 5-3305 The wine belongs to the Unseen, the pitcher to this world: the pitcher is visible, the wine in it is well-hidden;
- 5-3306 Well-hidden from the eyes of the uninitiated, but manifest and evident to the adept.
- 2-1021 How long will you play at loving the shape of the jug? Leave the shape of the jug; go, seek the water.
- 2-1022 You have seen its outward from, you are unaware of the reality; pick out a pearl from the shell, if you are wise.

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<sup>1256</sup> Literally “its face” (Nich.).

<sup>1257</sup> Literally “*the women who restrain their eyes (to looking at their husbands)*” (Nich.). See Qur’ān 55:56.

<sup>1258</sup> Literally “veils” (*ḥijāb*).

<sup>1259</sup> See Qur’ān 55:72.

<sup>1260</sup> I.e. Zalīkhā’s love for Joseph was sensual, while Jacob’s love was spiritual (Nich.). Zalīkhā is the Persian form of the Arabic name Zulaykha. The story of Yūsuf (Joseph) and Zulaykha is told in the Qur’ān (Sūra Yūsuf – the 12<sup>th</sup> Sūra – verses 31-34), even though Zulaykha’s name is not explicitly mentioned. Their story has been retold many times. The most famous version is the one written by the great Persian Sūfī poet and mystic Ḥaẓrat Mawlānā Nūru’d-dīn ‘Adbu’r-Raḥmān Jāmī (1414-1492 CE), in his *Haft Awrang* (“Seven Thrones”).

- 2-1023 These shells of bodies in the world, although they all are living by grace of the Sea of Soul –
- 2-1024 Yet there is not a pearl in every shell: open your eyes and look into the heart of each one,
- 2-1025 And pick out what that one holds and what this one holds, because that costly pearl is seldom found.
- 3-547 Make an effort in hope of the Living One who does not become lifeless after a day or two!
- 2-715 Go, recite the words *to whomever We grant long life, We cause him to decline*<sup>1261</sup>. Seek the heart (spirit), do not set your heart on bones;
- 2-716 For that beauty of the heart is the lasting beauty: its lips give to drink of the Water of Life.
- 2-1020 Know that the outward form passes away, but the world of reality remains for ever.
- 2-714 Little by little God takes away that beauty: little by little the sapling withers.
- 3-552 That friendship was a radiance on their wall: the sign of the Sun went back towards the Sun.
- 3-553 On whatever thing that radiance may fall, you fall in love with it, o brave man.
- 3-554 On whatever thing in existence you bestow your love<sup>1262</sup>, that thing is gilded with Divine qualities.
- 3-555 When the goldenness has gone to its original source and only the copper remains, your nature is overfed and begins to part from (discard) it<sup>1263</sup>.
- 3-556 Withdraw your foot from that which is gilded by His qualities, do not call the base alloy beautiful out of ignorance;
- 3-557 For in base coin the beauty is borrowed: beneath the beauty the substance is devoid of beauty.
- 3-558 The gold is going from the face of the false coin into the mine where it came from: do you too go towards the Mine to which it is going.
- 3-560 From now on take the water that comes from Heaven, since you have not found faithfulness in the drainpipe.
- 3-1418 The real Beloved is the one who is unique, who is your beginning and end.

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<sup>1261</sup> Qur'ān 36:68.

<sup>1262</sup> Literally “is present” or “is found”.

<sup>1263</sup> Literally “begins to divorce it”.

- 4-3223 The Light of that Countenance will deliver you from the fire: listen, do not be satisfied with borrowed light.
- 4-3224 This borrowed light causes the eye to see what is transient: it causes body, mind and spirit to be scabby (diseased).
- 4-3226 The eye and spirit that only see the transient continually fall on their faces wherever they go.
- 5-988 That which made you bewildered at the sight of the faces of the beautiful ones is the Light of the Sun, reflected from the three-coloured glass<sup>1264</sup>.
- 5-989 The glasses of various colours cause that Light to seem coloured like this to us.
- 5-990 When the many-coloured glasses are no more, then the colourless Light perplexes you.
- 5-991 Make it your habit to see the Light without the glass, so that there may not be blindness in you when the glass is shattered.

### **The true lover sees the Beloved's face everywhere. [3.1.4]**

- 6-3637 Like the chamber of Zalīkhā which she made full of pictures, in order that Joseph should look at her, willingly or unwillingly.
- 6-3638 Since Joseph would not look at her, she cunningly filled the room with portraits of herself,
- 6-3639 So that, wherever the fair-cheeked youth looked, he might see her face without having the power to choose.
- 6-3640 The peerless God has made all the six directions a place for the manifestation of His signs to the clear-sighted,
- 6-3641 In order that, whatever animal or plant they look at, they may feed on the meadows of Divine Beauty.
- 6-3642 That is why he said to the company of mystics, "*Wherever you turn, there is the Face of God*"<sup>1265</sup>.
- 6-3643 If you are thirsty and drink some water from a cup, you behold God within the water."
- 6-3644 He who is not a lover of God sees his own image in the water, o man of insight;

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<sup>1264</sup> I.e. things seen from the view-point of self-existence, the world of multiplicity.

<sup>1265</sup> Qur'ān 2:115.

- 6-3645 But since the lover's image has disappeared in the Beloved, whom now should he behold in the water? Tell me that!
- 6-3646 Through the working of the Jealous One, the mystics behold the beauty of God in the faces of the houris<sup>1266</sup>, like the moon reflected in water.
- 6-3647 His jealousy is directed against a lover and sincere adorer; His jealousy is not directed against a devil and beast;
- 6-3648 But if the devil becomes a lover of God, he has carried off the palm<sup>1267</sup>: he has become a Gabriel and his devilish nature is dead.
- 6-3649 The meaning of "the devil became a true believer"<sup>1268</sup> is made manifest on the occasion when by God's grace a Yazīd<sup>1269</sup> becomes a Bāyazīd<sup>1270</sup>.

### **The Fifth Rivulet [3.1.5]** **The detachment of the true lover.**

- 6-4604 No one can run the Path of Love with two feet: no one can play the game of Love with one head;
- 6-4605 Yet everyone has two feet and one head: the body with thousands of feet and heads is a rarity.
- 6-4606 Because of this all other battles are fought in vain, while the battle of Love grows hotter at every moment.
- 6-232 There is no way (admittance) for anyone into the hall of audience of Divine Majesty until he becomes annihilated<sup>1271</sup>.

<sup>1266</sup> Houris (< Arabic *ḥūr*): usually rendered as "voluptuous, alluring maidens of Paradise", but the true meaning of *houris* is "pure companions, most beautiful of eye" – neither explicitly male nor female (See Qur'ān 44:54).

<sup>1267</sup> Literally "the ball", a metaphor derived from the game of polo (Nich.).

<sup>1268</sup> This refers to the *ḥadīth*: "My devil has become Muslim", which really means "My *nafs* ("lower self", "ego") has surrendered to God".

<sup>1269</sup> Yazīd (ca. 645-683 CE): son of and successor to the first Umayyad caliph, Mu'āwīya ibn Abī Sufyān (602-680 CE). He was responsible for the martyrdom of Ḥaḏrat Ḥusayn, son of 'Ḥaḏrat Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, in 680 CE, an event that marked the final split between Sunnī and Shī'ī Muslims. But the true Ṣūfī wayfarer (*sālik*) transcends the outer and conventional forms of religion. He isn't bound to any religion, school of thought or a set of beliefs. His religion is the religion of Love, which surpasses all forms. Even so, mystical lovers may use a specific form of religion to come closer to Divine Love. But when they reach Love and become absorbed in it, they are one, and they experience all as one. As Ḥaḏrat Mawlānā Rūmī states: "What is the means of ascension to Heaven? This not-being. Not-being is the creed and religion of the lovers." Mathnawī 6-233.

<sup>1270</sup> The Persian Ṣūfī Master Ḥaḏrat Bāyazīd-e Bastāmī, also known as Ḥaḏrat Abū Yazīd Ṭayfūr al-Bisṭāmī (ca. 804-874 CE), is one of the key figures in the history of Sufism, in that he founded what came to be known as "the School of Intoxication (*sukr*)", which flourished in Greater Khurāsān, as opposed to the equally influential "School of Sobriety (*saḥw*)", which was founded in Baghdad by the Ṣūfī Master Ḥaḏrat Junayd al-Baghdādī (ca. 830-910 CE).

<sup>1271</sup> "annihilated" = *fanā*, i.e. the annihilation of the false ego (*nafs*) in the Divine Being. It is followed by *baqā*, resurging and abiding in the Divine Being.

**Allegory:  
Reason and Love. [3.1.5]**

- 4-1534 Majnūn's desire is speeding towards the presence of the beloved Laylā; the she-camel's desire is hurrying back to her foal.
- 4-1535 If Majnūn forgot himself for one moment, the she-camel would turn and go back.
- 4-1536 Since his body was full of love and passion, he had no resource but to become beside himself.
- 4-1537 Reason was ever heedful: passion for Laylā carried his reason away.
- 4-1538 But the she-camel was very heedful and alert: whenever she saw her toggle slack
- 4-1539 She would immediately understand that he had become heedless and dazed, and would turn her face back to the foal without delay.
- 4-1540 When he came to himself again, he would see on the spot that she had gone back many *parasangs*<sup>1272</sup>.
- 4-1541 In these conditions Majnūn remained going back and forth for years on a three days' journey.
- 4-1542 He said, "O camel, since we both are lovers, therefore we two, who are opposites, are unsuitable to travel together.
- 4-1543 Your affection and toggle (inclination) do not agree with me: I must part from your companionship.
- 4-1544 These two fellow-travellers (reason and flesh) are highwaymen ambushing each other: the soul that does not come down off the body is lost.
- 4-1545 Because of its separation from the highest Heaven, the soul is in great want; because of its passion for the thorn-shrub of sensual pleasure, the body is like a she-camel.
- 4-1546 The soul unfolds its wings to fly upwards; the body has stuck its claws in the earth.
- 4-1547 "As long as you are with me, o you who are hopelessly in love with your home<sup>1273</sup>, my spirit will remain far from Laylā.
- 4-1550 The way is near (not far), but I have tarried very late: I have become sick of this riding, sick, sick."

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<sup>1272</sup>A *parasang* (*farasang* in Fārsī) is an ancient Persian unit of distance equal to ca. 3.5 miles or 5.6 km.

<sup>1273</sup>Literally "dead for your home" (Nich.).



- 4-1551 Majnūn threw himself headlong from the camel. He said, “I am consumed with grief: how long, how long?”
- 4-1553 He flung himself down so violently that the body of the brave man was broken.
- 4-1554 When he flung himself to the ground like this, at that moment also by Divine destiny his leg<sup>1274</sup> broke.
- 4-1555 He tied up his leg and said, “I will become a ball, I will go rolling along in the curve of His bat.”
- 4-1557 How should love for the Lord be inferior to love for Laylā? To become a ball for His sake is more worthy.
- 4-1558 Become a ball, turn on the side which is sincerity, and go rolling, rolling in the curve of the bat of Love.
- 6-3420 Know that the way of spiritual pleasure is from within, not from without: know that it is folly to seek such pleasure in palaces and castles.
- 6-3422 The palace (body) is nothing: ruin your body! The treasure lies in the ruin, o my prince.
- 6-3423 Don’t you see that at the wine-feast the drunkard becomes happy only when he becomes ruined (senseless)?
- 6-3424 Although the bodily house is full of pictures, demolish it: seek the treasure, and with the treasure repair the house well.

### **Annihilation in the Beloved. [3.1.5]**

#### **Story:**

- 5-1242 A certain lover in the presence of his beloved was recounting his services and works
- 5-1243 Saying, “For your sake I did such-and-such, in this war I suffered wounds from arrows and spears.
- 5-1244 Wealth is gone, strength is gone and fame is gone: because of my love for you I have been struck by many misfortunes.
- 5-1245 No dawn found me asleep or laughing; no evening found me with capital and means.”
- 5-1246 What he had tasted of bitters and dregs he was recounting to her in detail, point by point.

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<sup>1274</sup> In verses 4-1554 and 4-1555 “leg” symbolizes reason.

- 5-1247 Nor for the sake of reproach; no, he was giving a hundred testimonies of the trueness of his love.
- 5-1248 For men of reason a single indication is enough, but how should the thirst (longing) of lovers be removed by that?
- 5-1251 There was a fire in him: he did not know what it was, but because of its heat he was weeping like a candle.
- 5-1252 The Beloved said, “You have done all this, yet open your ear wide and listen well;
- 5-1253 For you have not done what is the root of the root of love and loyalty: what you have done is only the branches.”
- 5-1254 The lover said to her, “Tell me, what is the root?” She said, “Its root is to die and be nothing.
- 5-1255 You have done everything else, but you have not died, you are living. Listen, die, if you are a self-sacrificing friend!”
- 5-1256 Instantly he laid himself at full length on the ground and gave up the ghost: like the rose, he played away his head (life), laughing and rejoicing.
- 5-1262 The light of the sun heard the call *return*<sup>1275</sup> and came back in haste to his source.
- 5-1263 No disgrace remained with it from the ash-pits, no colour remained with it from the rose-gardens.
- 5-1264 The light of the eye and the seer of the light returned to their source: the desert and plain were left passionately longing for it.

### **The Sixth Rivulet [3.1.6]**

#### **The lover’s unification with the Beloved and the colourless Divine colour of Love<sup>1276</sup>.**

- 6-940 The spiritual Water of Life has returned to our river-bed, our King has returned to our street.
- 6-941 Fortune is strutting, proudly trailing its skirt and beating the drums as a signal to break vows of repentance.
- 6-900 O you with whom my body and all my veins are filled – how should there be room in them for repentance?

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<sup>1275</sup> Qur’ān 89:28.

<sup>1276</sup> Qur’ān 2:138: “We take our colour from God, and who is better than God at colouring? And we are His worshippers.”

- 3-4660 The reflections that are seeking the Light are reduced to nothing when His Light appears.
- 3-2408 “I am absorbed in the Light, like the sun; I cannot distinguish myself from the Light<sup>1277</sup> .

**Story:**  
**Laylā and Majnūn. [3.1.6]**

- 5-1999 Grieving over a long separation from Laylā suddenly caused a sickness in Majnūn’s body.
- 5-2000 Heated by the flame of longing his blood boiled up, so that the symptoms of diptheric angina<sup>1278</sup> appeared in the mad lover.
- 5-2001 Then the physician came to treat him and said, “There is no resource but to bleed him.
- 5-2002 Bleeding is necessary in order to remove the blood.” So someone skilled in bleeding went there,
- 5-2003 Bandaged his arm and took the lancet to perform the operation; but straightaway the passionate lover cried out,
- 5-2004 “Take your fee and leave the bleeding! If I die, let my old body go to the grave!”
- 5-2005 “Why,” he said, “why are you afraid of this, when you have no fear of the lion of the jungle?
- 5-2015 Majnūn said, “I do not fear the lancet: my endurance is greater than the mountain formed of rock.
- 5-2016 I am a vagabond: my body is not at ease without blows; I am a lover: I am always in close touch with blows.
- 5-2017 But my whole being is full of Laylā: this shell is filled with the qualities of that Pearl.
- 5-2018 I am afraid, o bleeder, that if you let my blood, you should suddenly inflict a wound on Laylā with your lancet.
- 5-2019 The man of reason whose heart is enlightened knows that there is no difference between Laylā and me.”

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<sup>1277</sup> The speaker is David (Nich.).

<sup>1278</sup> A severe and potentially lethal infection of the throat and larynx.

**Story:**  
**The annihilation of the lover in the Beloved. [3.1.6]**

- 5-2020 At the time of the morning-drink a beloved said to her lover as a test, “O such-and-such son of such-and-such,
- 5-2021 I wonder, do you love me or yourself more? Tell the truth, o man of sorrows.”
- 5-2022 He replied, “I have become so annihilated in you that I am full of you from head to foot.
- 5-2023 There is nothing left of my existence in me but my name: in my being there is nothing but you, o you whose wishes are fulfilled.
- 5-2024 In this way<sup>1279</sup> I have become annihilated, like vinegar, in you, who are an ocean of honey.”
- 5-2025 As the stone that is entirely turned into pure ruby: it is filled with the qualities of the sun.
- 5-2026 That stony nature does not remain in it: back and front, it is filled with sunniness.
- 5-2027 Afterwards, if it is love itself, that self-love is love of the sun, o young man;
- 5-2028 And if it loves the sun with all its soul, it is undoubtedly love of itself.
- 5-2029 Whether the pure ruby loves itself or whether it loves the sun,
- 5-2030 There is really no difference between these two loves: both sides (aspects) are nothing but the radiance of the sunrise.
- 5-2031 Until the stone has become a ruby, it is an enemy to itself, because it is not a single “I”: two “I’s” are there.
- 5-2034 Therefore it is not fitting that the stone should say “I”, for it is wholly darkness and in the state of death.
- 5-2035 A Pharaoh<sup>1280</sup> said “I am God” and was debased; a Maṣṣūr (Ḥallāj<sup>1281</sup>) said “I am God” and was saved.
- 5-2036 The former “I” is followed by God’s curse and the latter “I” by God’s mercy, o loving man;

<sup>1279</sup> Literally “from that cause”.

<sup>1280</sup> The Pharaoh is a symbol for the arrogance and self-conceit of the tyrannical ego or *nafs-e ammāra*.

<sup>1281</sup> Ḥaṣrat Ḥusayn ibn Maṣṣūr al-Ḥallāj (ca. 858-922 CE): a Persian mystic, who was condemned for heresy and blasphemy, and was put to death in Baghdad. He is best known for having exclaimed in ecstasy “Anā’l-Ḥaqq!” – “I am the Truth”, i.e. God.

- 5-2037 For that one (Pharaoh) was a black stone, this one (Ḥallāj) a cornelian; that one was an enemy to the Light, and this one passionately in love with it.
- 5-2038 This “I”, o presumptuous meddler, was “He” (God) in the inmost consciousness, through oneness with the Light, not through belief in the doctrine of incarnation<sup>1282</sup>.
- 5-2039 Work hard, so that your stony nature may be diminished, and that your stone may become shining with the qualities of the ruby.
- 5-2040 Have patience in enduring self-mortification<sup>1283</sup> and affliction; continually see everlasting life (*baqā*) in dying to self (*fanā*)<sup>1284</sup>.
- 5-2041 Then your stoniness will become less at every moment, the nature of the ruby will be strengthened in you.
- 5-2042 The qualities of self-existence will leave your body, the qualities of intoxication (ecstasy) will increase in your head (your spiritual centre).

## The Second River [3.2]

### The stages of the inner vision and inner witnessing (*mushāhada*), i.e. perceiving the true nature of things.

### The First Rivulet [3.2.1]

#### The stage of witnessing light in the *sālik*’s heart.

- 1-1396 Whoever has a soul that is purified of sensual desires will at once behold the Presence and the Holy Porch<sup>1285</sup>.
- 1-1394 O brother, how will you see his palace, when hair has grown in the eye of the heart<sup>1286?</sup>
- 1-1395 Purify your heart’s eye of hair and defect, and then hope to see this palace.
- 1-1397 When Muḥammad was purified of the fire and smoke of human passions, wherever he turned his face, was the Face of God.

<sup>1282</sup> Incarnation: the heretical doctrine of *ḥulūl* or incarnation of God in a human body. Al-Ḥallāj was charged with this heresy. Ḥaẓrat Mawlānā Rūmī however, refuted the allegations of heresy and blasphemy against the great martyred mystic.

<sup>1283</sup> Literally “holy war” (*jihad*); what is meant is the holy war against the *nafs* or lower self.

<sup>1284</sup> *Fanā* means to die to your limited self and *baqā* means to resurge and abide in the Divine Being.

<sup>1285</sup> “The Presence and the Holy Porch” should be understood as “the Presence of the Divine King in the Porch of Divine Love”. This refers to the state of *qurb* or “nearness to the Divine Presence”. See also Qur’ān 54:54-55: “Verily, those who possess devotion\* will dwell among gardens and rivers (i.e. in Paradise), in a seat of sincerity in the Presence of an Omnipotent King.” \* “those who possess devotion” (*al-muttaqūna*) means “those who possess *taqwā*.” *Taqwā* is often translated as “piety” or “fear of God”, but in reality, it denotes an inner attitude of devotion to God and seeking the pleasure of God, not out of fear, nor out of desire for the rewards of Paradise, but merely out of selfless love.

<sup>1286</sup> I.e. when the eye is covered.

- 1-1399      Everyone in whose breast the gate is opened will see the sun shining from every city.
- 1-1400      God is manifest amongst others as the moon amidst the stars.
- 3-4680      The unfamiliar (unprivileged) soul does not see the face of the Beloved: only the soul that has its origin in His dwelling-place can see it.
- 1-1406      Man is eye, and all the rest is worthless skin: the sight of that eye consists in seeing the Beloved.
- 1-1407      When the eye does not see the Beloved, it is better blind; a beloved who is not everlasting is better far away and out of sight.
- 1-1401      Lay two finger-ends on your two eyes, and will you see anything of the world? Act justly (confess that you will see nothing).
- 1-1402      If you do not see this world, yet it is not non-existent: the fault only lies in the finger of your evil self.
- 1-1403      Come, lift the finger from your eye, and then see whatever you wish.

### **The unveiling of the Divine mysteries to the *sālik*. [3.2.1]**

- 4-2901      But those insights that are not frozen (dense and dull) are nothing if they do not pierce and rend the veil.
- 4-2904      When the barrier in front and the barrier behind are removed, the eye penetrates and reads the tablet of the Unseen.
- 4-2905      When someone like him looks back at the origin of existence, the past circumstances and beginning of existence unfold themselves before him –
- 4-2907      When he looks forward he plainly sees that which will be (all that will happen) until the Last Assembly<sup>1287</sup>.
- 4-2908      Therefore he looks back at the root of the root (the primal origin), and he clearly sees forward to the Day of Decision.
- 4-2909      Everyone, according to the measure of his spiritual enlightenment, sees the unseen things in proportion to the polishing of the heart's mirror<sup>1288</sup>.
- 4-2910      The more he polishes, the more visible does the form of unseen things become to him.

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<sup>1287</sup> *Maḥshar*, “the (Last) Gathering” = Judgment Day.

<sup>1288</sup> “Polishing the heart” or “polishing the mirror of the heart” is a common Ṣūfī expression to describe *dhikr*, (approximately pronounced “zīkr” or “zēkr” in Persian) remembrance of God.

- 4-3311 The foresight of the intellect extends only to the grave, while that of the spiritual man lasts until the blast of the trumpet of Resurrection.
- 4-3312 This intellect does not pass beyond the grave and the earth, and this intellectual foot does not tread the arena of marvels.
- 4-3315 From this scholarly study and this intellect comes nothing but dizziness; therefore leave this study and adopt expectation instead.
- 2-2309 The eye is made seeing by meeting with God: how should God become the confident of every fool?
- 6-1464 Dissolve the whole of this body of yours in vision: go into sight, go into sight, into sight!
- 6-1922 And that when both his senses had passed through the veil, his vision and speech from God would then be ceaseless.
- 2-3139 Whoever has seen God belongs to God: whoever has seen that Sea<sup>1289</sup>, is that fish.
- 1-1121 How will you see the colours red, green and brown, unless you have first seen the light?
- 1-1122 But since your mind was lost (absorbed) in seeing the colours, those colours became a veil which prevented you from contemplating the light.
- 1-1123 Since at night those colours were hidden, you understood that your ability to see colour was derived from the light.

### **The effect of inner light in the outer World. [3.2.1]**

- 1-1124 It is impossible to see colour without the external light, even when the colour is an inner fantasy.
- 1-1125 This outer light is derived from the sun and from Suḥā<sup>1290</sup>, while the inner light comes from the reflection of the beams of Divine Sublimity.
- 1-1126 The light which gives light to the eye is in truth the light of the heart: the light of the eye is produced by the light of hearts.
- 1-1127 Again, the light which gives light to the heart is the Light of God, which is pure and separate from the light of intellect and sense.
- 3-4605 So we abandoned it, for he is engaged in pursuit and searching, that before death he may see the face of his beloved,

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<sup>1289</sup> When “the Sea” or “the Ocean” are mentioned in the *Mathnawī*, they refer to the Divine Essence. That is why they are written with capital letters.

<sup>1290</sup> A small star (Nich.)

- 3-4606 In order that he may escape from death and obtain salvation, because the sight of the beloved is the Water of Life.
- 3-4607 Anyone whose sight does not ward off death is not the beloved, for he has neither fruit nor leaf.
- 4-506 And he who can see that Light – how should the explanation of his state be a task within the reach of Bū Sinā's<sup>1291</sup> capabilities?

### **Seeing and hearing inwardly. [3.2.1]**

- 2-858 The ear is a go-between, while the eye is capable of union (immediate vision); the eye has direct experience of reality while the ear has only words (doctrine).
- 2-857 Whenever an answer comes to the heart through the ear, the eye says, "Hear it from me; do not pay attention to the answer given through the ear!"
- 2-859 In the ear's hearing there is a transformation of qualities; in the eyes' seeing there is a transformation of essence.
- 5-3906 Description is a picture drawn for the eye of intelligence: know that the sensible form belongs to the eye, not to the ear.
- 4-333 Lifetimes are needed – so rarely and occasionally does it happen – for the seeing man to fall into the pit by destiny.
- 4-334 As regards the blind man, this destiny in reality is his companion on the way; for it is his nature and disposition to fall.
- 4-337 Therefore to you, o man of vision, two clear eyes are as a hundred mothers and a hundred fathers;
- 4-338 Especially the eye of the heart (the spiritual eye), which is seventy-fold and of which the two sensible eyes are only the gleaners.
- 4-512 If I say that between the tongue and the eye that is free from doubt there is a hundred thousand years' journey, it is little in comparison with the reality.
- 5-3907 A certain man asked an eloquent person, "What are truth and falsehood, o man of articulate discourse?"
- 5-3908 He took hold of his ear and said, "This is false: the eye is true and possesses certainty."
- 5-3920 Strive that the imagination may pass from your ear into your eye, and that what has until now been unreal may become real.

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<sup>1291</sup> Bū Sinā, Abū 'Alī ibn Sinā = Avicenna (ca. 980-1037 CE), the great Persian physician, philosopher and scholar. Here Avicenna represents the highest flight of philosophical speculation.



- 5-3921 After that, your ear will become of the same natures as your eye: the two ears, gross as wool, will become of pure substance and subtle,
- 5-3922 No, your whole body will become like a mirror: it will become all eye and pure spiritual substance<sup>1292</sup>.
- 5-3923 The ear arouses a fantasy, and that fantasy is the go-between that leads to union with Beauty.
- 5-3924 Strive that this fantasy may increase, so that the go-between may become a guide for Majnūn<sup>1293</sup>.
- 2-861 There is no intuitive (actual) certainty<sup>1294</sup> until you burn; if you desire this certainty, sit down in the fire.

## The Second Rivulet [3.2.2]

### The contraction and expansion of the heart (qabḍ<sup>1295</sup> and baṣṭ).

- 3-2777 The eye and the heart are between two fingers like a pen in the hand of the writer, o Ḥusayn.
- 3-2778 These are the fingers of Grace and Wrath, and between them the pen, the heart, is in a state of distress<sup>1296</sup> or ease<sup>1297</sup>, caused by these fingers.
- 3-2779 O pen, if you do not duly glorify God, consider between whose two fingers you are.
- 3-2780 All your will and movement are controlled by this finger: your head (point) is on the cross-roads of the assembly-place<sup>1298</sup>.
- 3-2781 These letters symbolising your diverse states are written by Him: your forming a purpose and changing it entirely stems from His forming a purpose and changing it.
- 3-2782 There is no way but supplication and self-abasement: not every pen is conscious of this subjection to Divine control.
- 3-3734 When a feeling of spiritual contraction comes over you, o traveller, it is for your good: do not become burning with grief in your heart,

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<sup>1292</sup> Literally, “the pure substance of the breast (heart)” (Nich.).

<sup>1293</sup> I.e. may bring the lover (*Majnūn*) to the Beloved (*Laylā*) (Nich.).

<sup>1294</sup> In the original text it says ‘*Aynu ’l-Yaqīn*, which literally means “the Eye of Certainty”. Its spiritual meaning is contemplating and experiencing True Knowledge. In Sūfī lore it is preceded by ‘*Ilmu ’l-Yaqīn* (“theoretical knowledge of Certainty”) and is followed by ‘*Ḥaqqu ’l-Yaqīn* (“realizing True Knowledge and becoming one with it”).

<sup>1295</sup> The Persian form of the Arabic *qabḍ* is *qabḏ*.

<sup>1296</sup> “Distress” = *qabḍ* or contraction of the heart.

<sup>1297</sup> “Ease” = *baṣṭ* or expansion of the heart.

<sup>1298</sup> I.e. “you must follow either the road of Divine Mercy or the road of Divine Wrath to meet the ultimate destiny in the ‘assembly-place’ on the Day of Judgment.” (Nich.).

- 3-3735 For in that state of expansion and delight you are spending: the expenditure of enthusiasm requires an income of painful preparation to balance it.
- 3-3736 If it were always the season of summer, the blazing heat of the sun would scorch the garden
- 3-3737 And burn up from root and bottom the soil in which its plants grow, so that the old (withered) ones would never again become fresh.
- 3-3738 If December<sup>1299</sup> is sour-faced, yet it is kind; summer is laughing, but nevertheless it is burning (destroying).
- 3-3739 When spiritual contraction comes, see expansion in it: be fresh (cheerful) and do not let wrinkles fall on your brow.
- 3-3762 Sorrow is a mirror in front of the struggler, for in this opposite appears the face of the other opposite.
- 5-3678 If the thought of sorrow waylays (spoils) joy, yet it makes preparations for joy.
- 5-3680 It scatters the yellow leaves from the branch of the heart, in order that incessant green leaves may grow.
- 5-3683 No matter what sorrow may cause to be shed from the heart or may take away from it, it will certainly bring better in exchange.
- 3-3763 After the one opposite, which is pain, the other opposite, that is, gladness and triumph, shows its face.
- 3-3764 Observe these two qualities (contraction and expansion) in the fingers of your hand: surely after the closing of the fist comes the opening.
- 3-3765 If the fingers be always closed or entirely (invariably) open, he (their owner) is like an afflicted person.
- 6-1847 This Divine Maker is He who abases<sup>1300</sup> and exalts<sup>1301</sup>; without these two attributes no work is accomplished.
- 6-1848 Consider the lowness of the earth and the loftiness of the sky: without these two attributes the revolution of the celestial spheres is impossible, o such-and-such.
- 6-1849 The lowness and loftiness of this earth are of another kind: for one half of the year it is barren and for the other half it is green and fresh.

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<sup>1299</sup> In the original text, the tenth month of the Zoroastrian calendar is mentioned, i.e. *Day*. This month corresponds with the month December.

<sup>1300</sup> This refers to the Divine attribute *al-Khāfiḍ*, “the Abaser”.

<sup>1301</sup> This refers to the Divine attribute *ar-Rāfiʿ*, “the Exalter”, “He Who uplifts”.

- 6-1850 The lowness and loftiness of the time of grief are of another kind: one half day and the other half night.
- 6-1851 The lowness and loftiness of our mixed bodily temperament are now health and then sickness that causes us to cry out in pain.
- 6-1852 Know that all the changing conditions of the world are like this – famine and drought and peace and war – which arise from Divine ordeal.
- 6-1853 By means of these two wings this world is kept up like a bird in the air; by means of these two all souls are the residences of fear and hope.

### **The Third Rivulet [3.2.3]**

**The stage of intoxication by Love (mystical drunkenness – sukr),  
which leads the sālik to spiritual bewilderment (ḥayra)  
and spiritual insanity (junūn).**

- 5-390 When the Cup-bearer of *Alast*<sup>1302</sup> poured a draft upon this saline worthless earth,
- 5-391 The earth seethed, and we are the result of that seething. O God, pour another draft, for we are very effortless (unaspiring).
- 1-1809 The light of dawn has shone out, and from Your light we are drinking the morning-drink with the wine of Your Maṣṣūr<sup>1303</sup>.
- 1-1810 Since Your gift keeps me in this state (enraptured), what other wine should bring me rapture?
- 1-1811 Fermenting wine is a beggar imploring our ferment; the rotating Heavenly Spheres are beggars imploring our consciousness.
- 1-1812 Wine became intoxicated with us, not we with it; the body came into being from us, not we from it.
- 2-2571 Whether we are cunning (sane) or mad, we are intoxicated with the Cupbearer and the cup.
- 2-2572 In submission we lay our heads on His written order and command: we give our sweet lives in pawn to Him.
- 6-2140 I am not half-raw (imperfect) in fulfilling the Divine order and command, that I should take into consideration any thought of defamation by the public.

<sup>1302</sup> Qur’ān 7:172 – the Day of *Alast*: while all human souls already existed within God before creation, God asked them: “Am I not your Lord? (*a lastu bi-Rabbikum?*)”, and they all answered “Yes! We testify!” Sūfī mystics have always endeavoured to inwardly remember the Day of *Alast*, in order to return to man’s true inner state, which is the awareness of the soul’s existence in the love of God, just as the love of God has always existed within the souls of mankind.

<sup>1303</sup> I.e. Ḥaẓrat Ḥallāj, who said “*Ana ‘l-Haqq*” (Nich.).

- 3-688 How will he who is intoxicated with God be restored to his senses by (the soft breath of) the west-wind<sup>1304</sup>? The God-intoxicated man will not come to himself at the blast of the trumpet of Resurrection.
- 4-2097 Especially consider the effect of the spiritual wine which comes from the jar of *Balā*<sup>1305</sup> – not the wine that intoxicates for only one night;
- 4-2098 But that wine from which, by drinking it at dessert and while migrating from place to place, the Men of the Cave (the Seven Sleepers)<sup>1306</sup> lost their reason for three hundred and nine years.
- 4-2099 The women of Egypt drank one cup of that wine and cut their hands to pieces<sup>1307</sup>.
- 4-2100 The magicians of Pharaoh had the same intoxication as Moses: they considered the gallows to be their beloved<sup>1308</sup>.
- 4-2101 Ja‘fār-e Ṭayyār<sup>1309</sup> was drunken with that wine: therefore, being beside himself, he was pawning (sacrificing) his feet and hands for God’s sake
- 3-824 So that you may imagine what intoxications come over the angels and the spirits purified by the Divine Splendour,
- 3-825 Who, after smelling it only once, have set their hearts on that wine and have broken the jar of this world’s wine.
- 3-4744 When He increases the wine of His help, the power of the wine bursts the flask.
- 3-823 But a single drop of the wines of Heaven causes the soul to be snatched away from the wine and cupbearers of this world.
- 5-3595 The cup that purifies is for those intoxicated with God; this briny water is for these blind birds.
- 4-2691 Listen, be not deceived, o heart, by every intoxication: Jesus is intoxicated with God, the ass is intoxicated with barley.
- 3-710 O man without wisdom, do not be a drunkard of the sort that feels sorry when he comes back to his wits;

<sup>1304</sup> I.e. if he were truly “intoxicated” he would not come to his senses on such a slight provocation (Nich.).

<sup>1305</sup> *Balā*, “Yes”, refers to the Primal Covenant on the Day of *Alast* (Qur’ān 7:171) (Nich.).

<sup>1306</sup> This story is related in the 18<sup>th</sup> Sūra of the Qur’ān, *Sūratu ‘l-Kahf*, “The Sūra of the Cave”. This story is also known in Christianity.

<sup>1307</sup> Qur’ān 12:31.

<sup>1308</sup> Qur’ān 7:117-122.

<sup>1309</sup> Ja‘fār ibn Abī Ṭalīb, cousin of the Prophet Muḥammad and brother of Ḥaḏrat ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭalīb, fell in battle against the Greeks in 8 AH/629 CE. It is said that when the enemy cut off his hands and feet, God gave him wings in order that he might fly to Paradise. This is why he is known as *aṭ-Ṭayyār* (“the Flier”).

- 3-711 No, be one of those drunkards who, while drinking the wine of Divine Love, make mature strong intellects suffer regret<sup>1310</sup>.
- 3-671 He who eats carrion, that is to say, drinks date-wine – the religious Law numbers him among<sup>1311</sup> those who are excused.
- 3-672 The drunkard and eater of *bang*<sup>1312</sup> is not allowed to divorce or trade; he is like a child: he is excused and free<sup>1313</sup>.
- 3-673 The intoxication that arises from the scent of the unique King – a hundred vats of wine never brought about that intoxication in head and brain.
- 3-674 Then how should the obligation to keep the Law be applicable to the God-intoxicated man? The horse is fallen out of use and has become unable to move<sup>1314</sup>.
- 3-670 I am sane and maddened by God: remember this, and since I am in such a state of selflessness, consider me excusable.

### **Divine Madness (Junūn-e Ilāhī). [3.2.3]**

- 2-1381 Once more I have become mad, o Physician! Once more I have become frenzied, o Beloved!
- 2-1382 The links of Your chain have many forms: every single link causes a different madness.
- 2-1383 The gift of every link consists in different forms: therefore I have a different madness at every moment.
- 2-1384 So “Madness has different forms” – this has become a proverb; it is especially true regarding the chain of this most glorious prince.
- 2-1385 Such a madness has broken the bonds of my reason to such a degree that all madmen would rebuke me.
- 6-1979 No one is madder than the lover, yet Reason is blind and deaf to his melancholy.
- 2-1386 It so happened to Dhū’n-Nūn<sup>1315</sup>, the Egyptian, that a new agitation and madness was born within him.

<sup>1310</sup> I.e. they regret that they are not similarly “intoxicated” (Nich.).

<sup>1311</sup> Literally “drew him to the side of” (Nich.).

<sup>1312</sup> Also known as “bhang”, a mildly intoxicating preparation of the leaves and flowering tops of uncultivated hemp.

<sup>1313</sup> I.e. the usual restrictions of the religious Law do not apply to him.

<sup>1314</sup> Literally “has become without hand or foot” (Nich.).

<sup>1315</sup> Ḥaẓrat Dhū’n-Nūn al-Miṣrī (the name *al-Miṣrī* means “the Egyptian”, 796-857 CE) was one of the most prominent mystics of Early Sufism.

- 2-1387 His agitation became so great that salt (bitterness) from it was reaching all hearts up to above the sky.
- 2-1389 The people could not endure his madness; his fire was carrying off their beards<sup>1316</sup>.
- 2-1390 When that fire fell on the beards of the common people, they bound him and put him in a prison.
- 6-1980 Because this is no common madness: in these cases medicine cannot give right guidance.
- 6-1981 If frenzy of this kind overtakes a physician, he will wash out (obliterate) the book of medicine with tears of blood.
- 5-1888 Beyond doubt, o worshipped one<sup>1317</sup>, I must become mad for three days at the beginning of every month<sup>1318</sup>.
- 5-1889 Listen, today is the first of the three days: it is the day of triumph (*pīrūz*), not the day of the turquoise (*pīrūzah*)<sup>1319</sup>.
- 5-1890 For every heart that is in love with the King, it is always the beginning of the month.
- 5-1894 It is not just one madness I have amidst the sorrows of love, but it is madness upon madness upon madness.
- 3-1394 In a mystical intoxication like his, the observance of due respect to the letter of the Qur’ān will not be there at all; or if it is, it is a wonder.
- 5-1892 Since my elephant has dreamed of Hindūstān<sup>1320</sup>, abandon hope of receiving the tax<sup>1321</sup>: the village is ruined.
- 5-1908 If a single mote of reason and consciousness is left in me, then what is this melancholy, madness and distracted speech?
- 5-1909 Since my brain is empty of reason and consciousness, how then am I at fault in these mad ravings?
- 5-1910 No; the fault is his, for he robbed me of my reason: in his presence the reason of all rational beings is dead.
- 5-1911 O you who causes the reason to wander and the understanding to go astray, intelligences have no beacon of hope but you.

<sup>1316</sup> I.e. in his ecstasy he had no regard for their formal religion. (Nich.).

<sup>1317</sup> Literally “idol” (*ṣanam*).

<sup>1318</sup> Referring to the old belief that madness was influenced by the moon (Nich.).

<sup>1319</sup> I.e. spiritual bliss, not worldly fortune (Nich.).

<sup>1320</sup> I.e. “my spirit has had a vision of its original home” (Nich.).

<sup>1321</sup> I.e. “of hearing the tale” (Nich.).

- 5-1913 Is my madness for love of you approved? Say “yes”, and God will reward you.
- 5-1914 Whether he speaks Arabic or Persian, where are the ear and mind by means of which you should be able to understand it?
- 5-1915 His wine is not suitable for every mind, his ring is not subject to every ear<sup>1322</sup>.
- 5-1916 Once again I have become mad: go, go, my dear soul, quickly fetch a chain;
- 5-1917 But if you bring any except the chain of my beloved’s curl – even if you bring two hundred chains, I will burst them all.
- 6-573 I am in love with the art of madness, I am glutted with wisdom and discerning insight.
- 6-574 When the veil of shame is torn to pieces, I will publicly divulge the mystery: how much more of this self-restraint<sup>1323</sup>, excruciating pain and trembling?
- 6-610 Listen, put that fetter on my leg, for I have torn the chain of rational consideration to pieces.
- 6-611 Even if you bring two hundred fetters, I will snap them all except the curls of my favourable Beauty.
- 6-607 O rebuker, how long will you continue to give this invitation to join in the business of the world? From now on stop giving advice to a madman.
- 6-608 I will not listen to deceitful talk of separation from the Beloved: I have experienced it: how long shall I experience it?
- 6-609 In this Way everything except insanity and madness causes of remoteness and alienation from Him.

### **Partial intellect (or “ego-mind”) as an obstacle on the Path. [3.2.3]**

- 4-1402 He who is blessed and familiar with spiritual mysteries knows that craftiness belongs to Iblīs<sup>1324</sup>, while love belongs to Adam.
- 4-1403 Craftiness is like swimming in the seas: the swimmer is not saved: he is drowned at the end of the day.
- 4-1404 Abandon swimming, let pride and hostility go: this is not a Jayhūn<sup>1325</sup> (Oxus) or a lesser river, it is an Ocean;

<sup>1322</sup> I.e. the capacity for hearing his words may be compared to an ear-ring which not every ear is worthy to possess.

<sup>1323</sup> In the Persian text the word *ṣabr* is used, meaning “patience” or “endurance”.

<sup>1324</sup> Iblīs: a name of the Devil. This name is probably derived from the Arabic verb *ablasa*, meaning “he despaired (of God’s Mercy)”.

- 4-1405        Moreover, it is the deep Ocean without refuge: it sweeps away the seven seas like straw.
- 4-1406        Love is as a ship for the elect: it rarely results in calamity; for the most part it is deliverance.
- 4-1407        Sell craftiness and buy bewilderment: craftiness is opinion, while bewilderment is immediate vision.
- 2-2337        I have tried the intellectual mind often enough; from now on I shall seek shelter in spiritual madness.
- 2-2329        Always run away from whatever you consider profitable to your lower self: drink poison and spill the water of life.
- 2-2330        Taunt<sup>1326</sup> anyone who praises you: lend both interest and capital to the destitute.
- 2-2331        Let safety go, and dwell in the place of fear (danger): leave reputation behind and be disgraced and notorious<sup>1327</sup>.

### Story. [3.2.3]

- 2-2338        A certain man was saying, “I want someone of intelligence, that I may consult him about a difficulty”.
- 2-2339        One said to him, “In our city there is nobody of intelligence except that man who appears to be mad.
- 2-2340        Look, there is one named so-and-so: mounted on a cane, he rides it as a cockhorse amongst the children.
- 2-2342        His glory has become the rational soul of the Cherubim; he has become hidden in this feigned madness.”
- 2-2350        No one can recognize him by means of wisdom when he has feigned to be mad.
- 2-2384        The seeker of counsel approached him (the Saint who was feigning madness), saying, “O father who has become like a child, tell me a secret.”

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<sup>1325</sup> The *Jayhūn* River is in fact the *Āmū Daryā* or *Oxus River*, the longest river in Central Asia. It more or less constitutes the border between Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan and between Tajikistan and Afghanistan.

<sup>1326</sup> Literally “Give a bad name to”.

<sup>1327</sup> Literally “be manifestly notorious or infamous”. This refers to a particular current in Sufism, namely the *Malāmatīyya*. *Malāmatī* Sūfis (“the People of Blame”) are people who willingly and ostentatiously transgress all social, moral and religious conventions and boundaries, and thus incur the blame (*malāma*) of society. *Malāmatī* Sūfis are critical of these conventions and boundaries and consider them as obstacles on the Inner Path. Name and fame are but a hindrance to them. That’s why they feign impiety and sometimes even insanity. Inwardly however, they are utterly devoted to the quest for the Divine. Being rejected by society helps them to become detached from worldliness, turn inward and draw closer to God.



- 2-2385 He answered, “Go away from this door-ring, for this door is not open. Turn back: today is not the day for secrets.”
- 2-2400 The seeker said, “O you mounted on the cane, please, ride your horse this way for one moment.”
- 2-2401 He rode towards him, crying, “Listen, say as quickly as you can what you want, for my horse is very restive and fierce-tempered.
- 2-2402 Be quick, that he might not kick you: explain clearly what you are asking about.”
- 2-2418 The other said, “O king, with such intelligence and erudition as you have, what feigning is this? What way of acting is this? O, how wondrous!”
- 2-2419 You transcend the Universal Intellect in your power to elucidate. You are a sun: how are you hidden in madness?”
- 2-2420 He replied, “These rascals are proposing to make me qāḍī<sup>1328</sup> in this their city.
- 2-2421 I raised objections, but they said to me, ‘No, there is no one as learned and accomplished as you.
- 2-2422 As long as you exist, it is unlawful and wicked that anyone inferior to you should quote Prophetic Traditions as qāḍī<sup>1329</sup>.
- 2-2424 Because of this necessity I became unsettled and mad in appearance, but inwardly I am just the same as I was.
- 2-2425 My intelligence is the hidden treasure, and I am the ruin covering it; if I show the treasure<sup>1330</sup>, then I am mad indeed.
- 2-2426 The true madman is he who has not gone mad, he who has seen the night-patrol and has not gone home.
- 2-2428 I am a mine of sugar, I am a plantation of sugar-canes: it is growing from me, and at the same time I am eating of it.’
- 4-1408 Sacrifice your intellect the presence of Muṣṭafā (Muḥammad<sup>1331</sup>); say, “ḥasbīya’Llāh – God is sufficient for me.”
- 4-1424 Sacrifice your intellect in love for the Friend: anyhow, all intellects come from where He is.

<sup>1328</sup> A Muslim judge who settles religious cases according to the *Sharī‘a*, the Islamic law. The Persian form of *qāḍī* is *qāẓī*.

<sup>1329</sup> I.e. “holding the office of qāḍī”.

<sup>1330</sup> The treasure is *ma‘rifa* or gnosis (Nich.).

<sup>1331</sup> In this verse Ḥaẓrat Muḥammad symbolizes Love.

- 4-1426 If, out of bewilderment, your intellect goes out of this head of yours, every tip<sup>1332</sup> of your hair will become a new head and intellect.
- 6-2140 I am not so imperfect<sup>1333</sup> in fulfilling the Divine order and command, that I should take notice of any slandering thought of the commoners.
- 3-668 Saying, “I have no consciousness even of myself: in my heart there is no room for anything but God.
- 3-669 I cannot remember what I ate yesterday: this heart of mine takes delight in nothing except bewilderment.”
- 1-130 How should I – while no vein of mine is conscious – describe that Friend who is peerless?
- 3-3869 He had seen a hidden rose-garden: the raiding assault of Love had cut him off himself.
- 3-3870 You, frozen in spirit, are not worthy of this inspiring breath of love: even though you are a reed (cane), you are not associated with sugar.
- 3-3871 The luggage of intellect is with you, and you still have your wits, for you are unaware of *armies which you did not see*<sup>1334</sup>.
- 3-1987 I became amazed, so that even amazement itself became amazed: the waves of bewilderment passed over the head of my understanding.
- 3-1116 A mystical bewilderment is needed to sweep such thought away: bewilderment devours all thought (*fikr*)<sup>1335</sup> and remembrance (*dhikr*)<sup>1336</sup>.

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<sup>1332</sup> Literally “every head of your hair”.

<sup>1333</sup> Literally “half-raw”.

<sup>1334</sup> Qur’ān 9:26.

<sup>1335</sup> *Fikr* literally means “thought”, but in the context of Sūfī practices it denotes “contemplation” or “reflection”. *Fikr* can be practised as a separate exercise.

<sup>1336</sup> *Dhikr*—approximately pronounced “zīkr” or “zēkr” in Persian – means “remembrance of God” or “restoring the memory of God”, by repeating various sacred phrases and names of God, either silently or aloud. *Dhikr* is practised individually as well as collectively, and is the most fundamental practice of Sufism. Practising *dhikr* restores man’s memory and consciousness of his True Being, his essential unity with the Divine. “Dhikr” is not limited to one or more practices: literally anything that brings about this mystical consciousness may be called “dhikr”.

**Story:**  
**When spiritual bewilderment hinders the power of thinking. [3.2.3]**

- 3-1376 A certain man, whose hair had two colours<sup>1337</sup>, came in haste to a barber<sup>1338</sup> of great renown.
- 3-1377 He said, “Remove the whiteness from my beard, for I have chosen a new bride, o young man.”
- 3-1378 He cut off his beard and laid all of it before him, and said, “You pick out the white hairs, for as it happens I have something important to attend to<sup>1339</sup>.”
- 3-1379 That “pick them out” is dialectic<sup>1340</sup>, for religious emotion does not care for these things (hair-splitting disputes).

**Allegory<sup>1341</sup>. [3.2.3]**

- 3-1380 A certain man slapped Zayd<sup>1342</sup> on the neck; Zayd at once rushed at him to give him a good beating.
- 3-1381 The attacker said, “I will ask you a question, so answer me first and then strike me.
- 3-1382 I struck the nape of your neck, and there was the sound of a slap: at this point I have a question to ask you regarding this:
- 3-1383 Was this sound caused by my hand or by the nape of your neck, o pride of the noble?”
- 3-1384 Zayd said, “The pain I suffer prevents me from occupying myself with reflection and contemplation.
- 3-1385 You, who are without pain, consider this; he who feels the pain has no such thoughts. Pay attention!”
- 1-628 Note, then, this principle, o you who are looking for the principle; everyone who suffers pain has caught its scent.

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<sup>1337</sup> I.e. black and white (Nich.).

<sup>1338</sup> Literally “mirror-holder” (Nich.).

<sup>1339</sup> Literally “an important matter (work) has happened to me.”

<sup>1340</sup> Literally “in this question and that answer”, i.e. the method of the scholastic theologians (Nich.).

<sup>1341</sup> In order to understand the following verses it might be helpful to know that they are part of a story entitled: “A parable illustrating the fact that mystical bewilderment prevents investigation and consideration”.

<sup>1342</sup> Zayd is an Arabic fictitious or generic name, used for anonymous persons, like “John Doe” in English.

**The Fourth Rivulet [3.2.4]**  
**The stage of God's nearness (Qurb).**  
**Going beyond time and space, ego and senses.**

- 3-4514 To be close to God is not to go up and down: to be close to God is to escape from the prison of existence.
- 3-4516 The laboratory and treasure of God is non-existence. You are deluded by existence: how should you know what non-existence is?
- 3-4512 The Prophet said, "My ascension<sup>1343</sup> is not to be considered superior to the ascension of Yūnus (Jonah).
- 3-4513 Mine was up to heaven, and his was down below (in the belly of the fish), because closeness to God is beyond calculation."

**The meaning of the Quranic verse 50:16:**  
**"And We are closer to him than his jugular vein." [3.2.4]**

- 4-3678 Since the intellect is with you, overseeing the body, and even though your perception is unable to grasp it,
- 4-3679 Yet its perception, o such-and-such, is not unable to understand your rest and movement when it tries<sup>1344</sup>.
- 4-3681 Someone pays no heed to his intellect and embarks on<sup>1345</sup> evil; afterwards his intellect rebukes him.
- 4-3683 If it had not been present (attentive) and had been heedless, how should it have slapped you in rebuke?
- 4-3685 That is why you and your intellect are like the astrolabe<sup>1346</sup>: by means of this you may know the nearness of the Sun of existence.
- 4-3686 Your intellect is indescribably near to you: it is neither to the left nor to the right, nor behind nor in front.
- 4-3687 How then should not the King be indescribably near? For intellectual search cannot find the way to Him.

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<sup>1343</sup> The celestial ascension made by the Prophet Muḥammad, called *Mi'rāj* ("Ascension"). During this ascension he was taken to the Highest Heaven and the Presence of God.

<sup>1344</sup> Literally "at the trial" (Nich.).

<sup>1345</sup> Literally "comes into touch with, "cleaves to" (Nich.).

<sup>1346</sup> A medieval instrument, now replaced by the sextant, which was once used to determine the altitude of the sun or other celestial bodies.

- 4-3691 The light of the eye and pupil, by what other way than the six directions does it come into your eye?
- 4-3692 The world of creation has diverse quarters and directions, but know that the world of the Divine Command<sup>1347</sup> and Divine Attributes is without (beyond) direction.
- 4-3693 Know, o beloved, that the world of the Command is without direction: necessarily the Commander is even more without direction.
- 4-3694 The intellect has always been without direction, and the Knower of the elucidation<sup>1348</sup> is more intelligent than intellect and more spiritual even than spirit<sup>1349</sup>.
- 6-2353 That which is real is nearer to the jugular vein<sup>1350</sup>: you have shot the arrow of thought far away.
- 6-2354 O you who have provided yourself with bows and arrows, the prey is near and you have shot far.
- 6-2355 The farther one shoots, the farther away and more separated he is from a treasure like this.
- 3-705 There are various kinds of nearness, o father: the sun strikes both on the mountains and on the gold in the mine.

### **Love as a means to draw nearer to God. [3.2.4]**

- 5-1685 He is like Āzar<sup>1351</sup> in craftsmanship, and I am the idol made by Him: whatever instrument He may make of me, I become that.
- 5-1686 If He makes me a cup, I become a cup; and if He makes me a dagger, I become a dagger.
- 5-1687 If He makes me a fountain, I give water; and if He makes me fire, I give heat.
- 5-1688 If He makes rain of me, I give a stack of wheat; and if He makes an arrow of me, I dart into the body.
- 5-1689 If He makes me a snake (*mārī*), I emit venom; and if He makes me a friend (*yārī*), I render service with kindness.
- 5-1690 I am as a pen between His two fingers: I am not a waverer<sup>1352</sup> in the ranks of obedience to Him<sup>1353</sup>.

<sup>1347</sup> I.e. the supersensible world of the Creative Word, *Kun*, “Be!” (Nich.).

<sup>1348</sup> God (Nich.).

<sup>1349</sup> Literally “more soulful even than the soul.”

<sup>1350</sup> Qur’ān 50:16.

<sup>1351</sup> The father of Ḥaṣrat Ibrāhīm/Abraham – see Qur’ān 6:74.

<sup>1352</sup> Literally, “between and between” (Nich.).

1-394 One who does not see the hand while it is writing thinks that the movement of writing proceeds from the pen itself.

### **Allegory. [3.2.4]**

- 4-3721 A little ant saw a pen writing on a paper, and told this mystery to another ant,
- 4-3722 Saying, “That pen made wonderful pictures like sweet basil and beds of lilies and roses.”
- 4-3723 The other ant said, “That artist is the finger, and this pen is actually no more than the instrument<sup>1354</sup> and the sign.”
- 4-3724 A third ant said, “It is the work of the arm, by whose strength the slender finger drew it.”
- 4-3725 In this way the argument was carried upward until a chief of the ants, who was endowed with a little insight and wisdom,
- 4-3726 Said, “Do not consider this skill as proceeding from the material form, which becomes unconscious in sleep and death.
- 4-3727 Form is like a garment or a staff: bodily figures do not move except by means of intellect and spirit.”
- 4-3728 The wise ant was unaware that without the controlling influence of God the intellect and heart (mind) would be inert<sup>1355</sup>.
- 4-3729 If He withdraw His favour from it for a single moment, the astute intellect will commit many follies.
- 1-2463 Is it not true that my heart (spirit) and body are under His control, so that at one moment He makes me a kernel, at another moment a rind?
- 1-2464 When He commands me to be a cornfield, I become green; when He commands me to be ugly, I become yellow.
- 1-2466 Before the blows of the bat of His decree; “*Be, and it is*”<sup>1356</sup>, we are running like balls in Space and beyond<sup>1357</sup>
- 6-3332 The pictures (phenomenal forms), whether they are unconscious or conscious of it, are always present in the hand of the Painter.

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<sup>1353</sup> Hadīth: “Man’s heart is between two of God’s fingers; He turns it as He wants.” *Aḥādīth-e Mathnawī* p. 33.

<sup>1354</sup> Literally “derived”, “sprung from”.

<sup>1355</sup> Literally “inanimate”.

<sup>1356</sup> Qur’ān 3:47, 2:117, 6:73, 16:40, 19:35 and 36:82.

<sup>1357</sup> Literally “in space and non-space” (Nich.). “Non-space” = *lā makān*, i.e. “the Placeless Realm”, the place of the deity, where there is no space and time, a state beyond our conception.

- 6-3333 Moment by moment that traceless One writes down<sup>1358</sup> what He wants on the page of their thought and then obliterates it.
- 6-3334 He puts anger there and takes resignation away: He puts stinginess there and takes generosity away.
- 6-3336 The potter works at the pot to shape it: how should the pot become broad by itself?
- 6-3338 The garment, while being made, is in the hands of a tailor: how else should it sew and cut by itself?
- 6-3339 The water-skin is with the water-carrier, o high-aspiring seeker<sup>1359</sup>: how else should it become full or empty by itself?
- 2-1306 God said, “*You did not throw when you threw*”<sup>1360</sup>: the action of God has precedence over our actions.
- 1-616 If we let an arrow fly, that action is not our doing: we are only the bow, and the shooter of the arrow is God.
- 1-1514 In this tangled and complex world, who are we? What other thing is there but He who is single like *alif*<sup>1361</sup>? Nothing, nothing.
- 2-1300 This world, like straws in the hand (sway) of the wind, which is the unseen world, has taken on helplessness as its only resource<sup>1362</sup>,
- 2-1301 Then makes it high, then low; then makes it sound and whole, then broken;
- 2-1302 Then carries it to the right, then to the left; then makes it roses, then thorns.
- 2-1310 We are the hunted prey: to whom belongs such a fearful snare? We are the ball for the blows of the polo-bat – and where is the Batsman?
- 2-1311 He tears, He sews: where is this Tailor? He blows, He burns: where is this Fire-kindler<sup>1363</sup>?
- 2-1303 See how the Hand is hidden, while the pen is writing; the horse galloping, while the Rider is invisible.

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<sup>1358</sup> Literally “sets down”.

<sup>1359</sup> The word used in the Persian text is *muntahī*. In this context *muntahī* can be explained as “a seeker who keeps striving for ever higher stages on the mystical Path, so that one day he or she may reach its Supreme Goal (*Intihā*, literally “the End”), i.e. the ultimate mystical realization.”

<sup>1360</sup> Qur’ān 8:17.

<sup>1361</sup> The Arabic letter *alif* is written as a perpendicular line: ʾ. It symbolizes God’s absolute Oneness, and that He only is with us in respect of His attributes, which are reflected in our unreal existence [adapted from Nicholson’s *Commentaries on the Mathnawī of Jalālu’d-dīn Rūmī*].

<sup>1362</sup> Literally “trade” or “practice” (Nich.).

<sup>1363</sup> Literally “one who throws petrol”.

- 2-1304 See the arrow flying, while the Bow is invisible; the individual souls manifest, and the Soul of souls hidden.
- 4-153 Therefore in the mind of everyone possessing knowledge this is certain, that with everything that moves there is a mover.
- 4-154 If you do not see him visibly, understand him by means of the manifestation of the effect.
- 4-155 The body is moved by the soul: you do not see the soul; but from the movement of the body know the soul to be its mover.

**When the sālik is annihilated in God, his or her  
actions and words equally become Divine. [3.2.4]**

- 1-599 We are as the flute, and the music in us is from You; we are as the mountain, and the echo in us is from You.
- 1-600 We are as pieces of chess engrossed in victory and defeat: our victory and defeat are from You, o You whose qualities are resplendent with beauty!
- 1-601 Who are we, o You soul of our souls, that we should continue to exist beside You?
- 1-603 We are all lions, but lions on a banner: because of the wind they are rushing onward from moment to moment.
- 1-604 Their onward rush is visible, and the wind is unseen: may that which is unseen not become absent from us!
- 1-602 We and our existences are really non-existences: You are the Absolute Being who manifests the perishable (causes phenomena to appear).
- 1-605 The wind that moves us and our being are given by You: our whole existence comes from You bringing us into being.
- 1-611 Before the painter and the brush the picture is helpless and bound like a child in the womb.
- 1-612 Before Omnipotence all the people of the Divine court of audience (the world) are as helpless as the embroiderer's fabric before the needle.
- 1-613 Now He makes the picture of the Devil on it, then that of Adam; now He makes the picture of joy, then of grief.
- 1-1510 If we come to ignorance, that is His prison, and if we come to knowledge, that is His palace<sup>1364</sup>;

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<sup>1364</sup> In the Persian text the word *īwān* is used, which means a vaulted hall or space, walled on three sides, with one end entirely open.



- 1-1511 And if we come to sleep, we are His intoxicated ones; and if we come to wakefulness, we are in His hands;
- 1-1512 And if we weep, we are a cloud laden with the bounty given by Him; and if we laugh, at that time we are His lightning;
- 1-1513 And if we come to anger and war, it is the reflection of His Might; and if we come to peace and forgiveness, it is the reflection of His Love.
- 4-398 Such a non-existent one who has become selfless<sup>1365</sup> (lost his “self” in *fanā*) is the best of beings, and the greatest one among them.
- 4-399 His own attributes have become annihilated (*fanā*) in the Divine attributes, but in reality he has gained everlasting life (*baqā*) by dying to himself.
- 4-400 All spirits are under his sway; all bodies too are under his control.
- 4-401 He who is overpowered (overwhelmed) by Our grace is not under any compulsion; no, he is one who freely chooses devotion to Us.
- 1-1937 God has said to the Saint, “I am your tongue and eye; I am your senses and I am your contentment and your anger”<sup>1366</sup>.
- 1-1938 Go, for you are he of whom God said, “Through Me he hears and through Me he sees”<sup>1367</sup>; you are the Divine consciousness itself: how could you possibly say: “You are the possessor of the Divine attributes”?
- 4-402 In reality the end of free-will is that his free-will should be lost here.

### Story. [3.2.4]

- 4-2102 That venerable dervish<sup>1368</sup>, Bāyazīd<sup>1369</sup>, came to his disciples saying: “In reality I am God”.

<sup>1365</sup> Literally “has gone from himself”.

<sup>1366</sup> This refers to a ḥadīth: “And My servant continues drawing nearer to Me through supererogatory acts of worship until I love him; and when I love him, I become the ear with which he hears, the eye with which he sees, the hand with which he grasps, and the foot with which he walks”. See *Aḥādīth-e Mathnawī* p. 89.

<sup>1367</sup> This is a ḥadīth *qudsī* (a well-known definition of a ḥadīth *qudsī* is this: “A sacred ḥadīth is, as to the meaning, from God the Almighty; as to the wording, it is from the Messenger of God. It is that which God the Almighty has communicated to His Prophet through revelation or in dream, and he has communicated it in his own words”): “Through Me he hears, through Me he sees, and through Me he understands”.

<sup>1368</sup> In the Persian text the word *faqīr* is used, which means the same as *darwīsh*: “one who is poor before God and in need of His mercy”. Since in this verse the term *faqīr* is applied to a fully accomplished Ṣūfī Master as Ḥaẓrat Bāyazīd-e Baṣṭāmī, it means “someone who has wholly realized spiritual poverty (*faqr*)”.

<sup>1369</sup> The Persian Ṣūfī Master Ḥaẓrat Bāyazīd-e Baṣṭāmī, also known as Ḥaẓrat Abū Yazīd Ṭayfūr al-Biṣṭāmī (ca. 804-874 CE), is one of the key figures in the history of Sufism, in that he founded what came to be known as “the School of Intoxication” (*sukr*), which flourished in Greater Khurāsān, as opposed to the equally influential “School of Sobriety” (*saḥw*), which was founded in Baghdad by the Ṣūfī Master Ḥaẓrat Junayd al-Baghdādī (ca. 830-910 AD).

- 4-2103 That master of the mystical sciences said in manifest intoxication, “Listen, there is no god but I, so worship me”.
- 4-2104 When the ecstasy had passed, they said to him at dawn, “You said such-and-such, and this is not proper piety”.
- 4-2105 He said, “This time, if I make a scandal, come immediately and dash knives into me.
- 4-2106 God transcends the body, and I am with the body: you must kill me when I say a thing like this”.
- 4-2107 When that spiritually liberated man gave the injunction, each disciple kept a knife ready.
- 4-2108 Again Bāyazīd became intoxicated by that powerful flagon: those injunctions vanished from his mind.
- 4-2109 Love came: his reason became crazed. The dawn came: his candle became helpless.
- 4-2110 Reason is like the officer of the law; when the sultān arrives, the helpless officer creeps into a corner.
- 4-2111 Reason is the shadow of God; God is the sun: what power does the shadow have to resist His sun?
- 4-2112 When a genie prevails over (gains possession of) a man, the attributes of humanity disappear from the man.
- 4-2113 Whatever he says, in reality a *parī*<sup>1370</sup> will have said it: the one who belongs to this side will have spoken from the control of the one who belongs to the other side.
- 4-2115 The possessed man’s “he” (personality) is gone: he has in fact become the *parī*: the Turk, without receiving Divine inspiration, has become a speaker of Arabic<sup>1371</sup>.
- 4-2116 When he comes to himself, he does not know a word of Arabic. Since a *parī* has the essence and quality,
- 4-2117 Then how, tell me, should the Lord of *parī* and man be inferior to the *parī*?

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<sup>1370</sup> *Parī*: in Persian mythology, a beautiful and benevolent supernatural being or fairy.

<sup>1371</sup> This verse is about inner transformation, when the “I” is absorbed in Divinity. “*Parī*” stands for someone who is inspired by Divine Revelation (*Waḥī-ye Dil*, literally “Inspiration of the Heart”), i.e. who has penetrated the Divine Realm. “*Turk*” represents someone who has not reached that level. Arabic is considered the language of higher levels of consciousness, i.e. of Divine Inspiration. Thus someone who’s “I” is transformed into a *parī*, is like a Turk who can speak Arabic (i.e. “Divine Language”). It should be borne in mind that the use of ethnic and linguistic distinctions in the *Mathnawī* is purely symbolical and should never be interpreted differently.

- 4-2114 Since a *parī* has this influence and power, how much more powerful indeed must be the Creator of that *parī*!
- 4-2118 If a drunken fellow<sup>1372</sup> has drunk the blood of a fierce lion, you will say that the wine did it, not he;
- 4-2119 And if he makes words of old (pure) gold<sup>1373</sup>, you will say that the wine has spoken those words.
- 4-2120 A wine has this power to arouse disturbance and commotion: does the Light of God not have that virtue and power
- 4-2121 To make you entirely empty of self, so that you should be laid low and He should make the World exalted within you?
- 4-2122 Even though the *Qur'ān* is dictated from the lips of the Prophet – if anyone says God did not speak it, he is a denier<sup>1374</sup>.
- 4-2123 When the *humā*<sup>1375</sup> of selflessness took wing and soared, Bāyazīd began to repeat those words.
- 4-2124 The flood of bewilderment swept away his reason: he spoke more strongly than he had spoken at first,
- 4-2125 Saying, “Within my mantle there is nothing but God: how long will you seek on the earth and in heaven?”
- 4-2126 All the disciples became frenzied and dashed their knives at his holy body.
- 4-2128 Everyone who plunged a dagger into the Shaykh was reversely making a gash in his own body.
- 4-2129 There was no mark of a wound on the body of the possessor of mystical knowledge, while the disciples were wounded and drowned in blood.
- 4-2130 Whoever aimed a blow at his throat saw his own throat cut, and died miserably;
- 4-2131 And whoever inflicted a blow on his breast, his own breast was torn apart, and he became dead forever;
- 4-2132 And he who was acquainted with that spiritual emperor of high fortune, with a heart (courage) that did not consent to strike a heavy blow,

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<sup>1372</sup> With the implication “having the courage given by drink”.

<sup>1373</sup> I.e. “if he speaks with perfect eloquence” (Nich.).

<sup>1374</sup> In the original text the word *kāfir* is used, which usually is translated as “infidel”, “unbeliever” or “pagan”; however, its literal meaning is “one who covers the Truth”.

<sup>1375</sup> In the Ṣūfī tradition, the *humā* is a mythical bird of paradise. Even though catching the *humā* itself is considered impossible, anyone who catches a glimpse or sees even a shadow of it will be happy for the rest of his or her life.

- 4-2133 Half-knowledge tied his hand, so that he saved his life and only wounded himself.
- 4-2134 Day broke, and the disciples were thinned: wails of lamentation arose from their houses.
- 4-2135 Thousands of men and women came to him (Bāyazīd), saying, “O you in whose single shirt the two worlds are contained,
- 4-2136 If this body of yours were a human body, it would have been destroyed, like a human body, by the daggers”.
- 4-2137 A self-existent one encountered a selfless one in combat: the self-existent one drove a thorn into his own eye (hurt himself).
- 4-2138 O you who stab the selfless ones with the sword, you are stabbing your own body with it. Beware!
- 4-2139 For the selfless one has been annihilated in God and is safe: he is dwelling in safety forever.
- 4-2140 His form has been annihilated and he has become a mirror: there is nothing but the form (image) of the face of another.
- 4-2141 If you spit at it, you spit at your own face; and if you strike at the mirror, you strike at yourself;
- 4-2142 And if you see an ugly face in that mirror, it is you; and if you see Jesus and Mary, it is you.
- 4-2143 He is neither this nor that: he is simple (pure and free from attributes of self): he has placed your image before you.
- 4-2144 When the speech reached this point, it closed its lips; when the pen reached this point, it broke to pieces.
- 4-2145 Close your lips, o my soul: even though eloquence is at your command, do not breathe a word – and God knows best what is right.

### **The Fifth Rivulet [3.2.5]** **The stage of unification (wuṣṣla or wiṣāl) with God.**

- 4-760 There is a union beyond description or analogy between the Lord of Man and the spirit of Man.
- 4-761 But I said *nās* (Man or Mankind), not *nasnās*<sup>1376</sup>, *nās* is none but the spirit that knows the Divine spirit.

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<sup>1376</sup> A fabulous monster which is described as “resembling the half of a human body” (Nich.).

- 4-762 *Nās* is Man, and where is Manhood? You have never seen the head (spiritual principle) of Man: you are a tail.
- 4-763 You have recited the words “*You did not throw when you threw*”<sup>1377</sup>, but you are a mere body: you have remained in division.
- 5-793 Consider all change as derived from the Transformer, leave (ignore) the intermediaries, for by considering the intermediaries you will become far removed from their Origin.
- 5-794 Wherever the intermediaries increase, union with the Origin is removed: in the same way that the intermediaries are less, the delight of attaining to union is greater.
- 2-3313 Those who have attained to union with God need nothing except the eye of the spirit and the lamp of intuitive faith: they have no care for indications to guide them or with a road to travel by.
- 5-877 Without him God does not bestow bounty on anyone. I have told only one small part of the sublimity of the possessor of union with God.
- 5-878 God lays His gift on the palm of his hand, and from his palm gives it to those who are the objects of His Mercy.
- 5-879 The unitedness of the Universal Sea of Bounty with his palm is without attribute, without condition and perfect.
- 5-880 A unitedness that cannot be contained in words – to speak of it would be a vain task, so farewell<sup>1378</sup>.

**The Beloved seeks the lover (for unification – *wuṣṣa* or *wiṣāl*). [3.2.5]**

**“We were yearning for unification with the Beloved, while the Beloved was yearning even more for unification with us.”**

**– *Hāfiẓ* –**

- 1-221 Do not say, “We have no access to that King”. Dealings with the generous are not difficult.
- 3-4393 In reality, no lover seeks union without his loved one seeking him;
- 3-4394 But the love of lovers makes the body thin as a bowstring, while the love of loved ones makes it gracious and strong.
- 3-4395 When the lightning of love for the beloved has shot into *this* heart, know that there is love in *that* heart.

<sup>1377</sup> Qur’ān 8:17.

<sup>1378</sup> In the original text the expression *wa’s-salām* is used, which may also mean “and let it be done with that”, “and let that be the end of the matter”.

- 3-4396 When love for God has been doubled in your heart, without any doubt God has love for you.
- 3-4397 No sound of clapping comes from one hand of yours without the other hand.
- 3-4603 The desire of loved ones is hidden and veiled; the desire of the lover is accompanied by a hundred drums and trumpets.
- 3-3799 It is better to be slain and dead before you, o Moon, than to be the king of the living in another place.
- 3-3800 I have put it to the test more than a thousand times: I do not consider my life sweet without you.
- 5-4117 It is sweet to die in hope of union with You; the bitterness of separation from You is worse than<sup>1379</sup> fire.
- 3-4682 He said, “O soul that has fled from tribulation, We have opened the door to union with Us: welcome!
- 3-4683 O you whose selflessness and intoxication are caused by Our Self, o you whose being is incessantly derived from Our Being,
- 3-4684 Now, without lip, I tell you the old mysteries again: listen!
- 3-4686 At this moment open the ear of earlessness for the sake of hearing the mystery of *God does whatever He pleases*<sup>1380</sup>.

### **The tasting of unification with the Beloved. [3.2.5]**

#### **Poem:**

**“I am drunk and you can’t ask me what the wine of love tastes like.  
Taste it yourself, so you too may know what it tastes like.” [3.2.5]**

- 6-1095 O lovers, from the old World new fortune has arrived that makes all things new<sup>1381</sup>.
- 6-1096 From the World that is seeking a remedy for those who have no remedy: hundreds of thousands of wonders of the present world are contained in it.
- 6-1097 O people, since the relief has come; be glad, O people: the distress is removed.
- 5-2525 The Khusraw (who is the lover) of the spiritual Shīrīn<sup>1382</sup> has beaten the drum of sovereignty; consequently sugar has become cheap in the city.

<sup>1379</sup> Literally “is above” (Nich.).

<sup>1380</sup> Qur’ān 3:40.

<sup>1381</sup> I.e. the World of Reality (Nich.).

<sup>1382</sup> “Khusraw and Shīrīn” is a famous Persian love story. The name *Shīrīn* means “Sweet”.

- 5-2526 The Josephs of the unseen world are marching: they are bringing bales of candy and sugar.
- 5-2527 The faces of the camels of Egypt are turned towards us: listen, o parrots, to the sound of the camel-bell.
- 5-2528 Tomorrow our city will be filled with sugar; sugar is cheap today: tomorrow it will be cheaper.
- 5-2529 O confectioners, wallow in sugar, like the parrot, despite the bilious<sup>1383</sup> ones.
- 5-2530 Pound the sugar-cane: this is the only work of importance; lavish your souls on him: this is the only Beloved.
- 5-2531 Now not a single sour one is left in our city, since Shīrīn has seated the Khusraws on the throne of Love.
- 5-2532 It is dessert on dessert and wine on wine! Ho, go up on the minaret and proclaim that all are welcome to the feast.
- 5-2533 The nine years old vinegar is becoming sweet; the stone and marble are becoming ruby-like and golden.
- 5-2534 The sun in heaven is clapping his hands: the motes are dancing like lovers.
- 5-2535 All eyes are intoxicated with the orchard abounding in greenery, where the blossoms are budding on the boughs.
- 5-2536 The eye of blessedness works absolute magic: the spirit is made victorious (*manṣūr*<sup>1384</sup>), crying “I am God.”
- 6-944 From drinking the ruby wine of the life-increasing Soul we are ruby within ruby within ruby.
- 6-945 Once more the assembly-place has become flourishing and heart-illuminating: arise and burn rue-seed to keep off the evil eye<sup>1385</sup>.
- 6-950 The scent of a beloved Soul is coming towards my soul; the scent of my loving Friend is coming to me”.
- 6-946 The cries of the joyous drunken lovers are coming to me: o Beloved, I want it to continue like this for all time.

<sup>1383</sup> “Bilious” means “suffering from gastric distress caused by a disorder of the liver or gallbladder”. In this verse however, “bilious ones” means “embittered, bad-tempered people”.

<sup>1384</sup> This verse alludes to Ḥaẓrat Ḥusayn ibn Manṣūr al-Ḥallāj (ca. 858-922 CE), the Persian mystic who was condemned for heresy and blasphemy and was put to death in Baghdad. He is best known for having exclaimed in ecstasy “Anā’l-Ḥaqq!” – “I am the Truth”, i.e. God.

<sup>1385</sup> Burning rue-seed is a tradition in Persian culture; it is believed to ward off evil energies.

### **The way to unification with the Beloved. [3.2.5]**

- 2-1179 After all, the soul is joined to the body, but does the soul resemble the body in any way?
- 2-1180 The sparkle of the eye's light is paired with the fat<sup>1386</sup>; the light of the heart is hidden in a drop of blood;
- 2-1181 Joy is located in the kidneys, grief in the liver; intellect, bright as a candle, inside the brain in the head.
- 2-1182 These connections are not without a how and a why, but as to knowledge of the why our minds are helpless.
- 4-3695 No created being is unconnected with Him: that connection, o uncle, is indescribable.
- 4-3696 Because in the spirit there is no separating and uniting, while our thought cannot think except in terms of separating and uniting.
- 4-3697 Pursue that which is without separation and union with the help of a spiritual guide: but the pursuit will not quench your thirst.
- 4-3698 Yet pursue incessantly, if you are far from the Source, that the vein of true manhood in you may help you attain your desire.
- 4-3699 How should the intellect find the way to this connection? The intellect is bound to separation and union.
- 4-3700 That is why Muṣṭafā (Muḥammad) forbade us, saying, "Do not try to investigate the Essence of God"<sup>1387</sup>.
- 4-3701 As regards the One whose Essence is an object of thought<sup>1388</sup>, in reality the thinker's speculation does not concern the Essence.
- 4-3702 It is only his false opinion, because on the way to God there are a hundred thousand veils.
- 4-3703 Everyone is naturally attached to some veil and judges that in reality it is the identity ('*ayn*) of Him.
- 4-3704 Therefore the Prophet banished this false judgement from the thinker, for fear that he erroneously might conceive a false imagination.

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<sup>1386</sup> I.e. the white of the eye (Nich.).

<sup>1387</sup> Ḥadīth: "Reflection the creation and do not reflect on the Essence of God." *Aḥādīth-e Mathnawī* p. 418.

<sup>1388</sup> Literally "concerning whose Essence there is an act of thought" (Nich.).



### **The lower self (nafs) as the obstacle. [3.2.5]**

- 5-777 The good life is to nourish the soul in nearness to God; the crow's life is for the sake of eating dung.
- 6-1756 The cruelty of Time (Fortune) and every affliction that exists are lighter than farness from God and forgetfulness of Him.
- 6-1757 Because the afflictions will pass, but the forgetfulness will not. Only he who is aware possesses happiness.
- 6-2786 Who am I in relation to this<sup>1389</sup>? Come, o my King, make my ruling star auspicious and wheel towards me<sup>1390</sup>.
- 6-2787 Illumine my spirit with moonbeams, for my soul is blackened (eclipsed) by contact with the Dragon's Tail<sup>1391</sup>.
- 6-2893 Do not let Your night-companion be banished from Your presence in the day-time, do not inflict farness (separation) on the soul that has experienced nearness (union).
- 6-2894 Absence from You is a grievous and tormenting death, especially the absence that comes after enjoyment of Your favour.

### **Story. [3.2.5]**

- 6-1758 A certain woman said to her husband, "Hey, you who have finished with<sup>1392</sup> generosity once and for all,
- 6-1759 Why don't you take care of me? How long shall I remain in this place<sup>1393</sup> of misery?"
- 6-1760 The husband replied, "I am doing my best<sup>1394</sup> to earn money; even though I am destitute, I am moving hand and foot.
- 6-1761 O beloved<sup>1395</sup>, it is my duty to provide you with money and clothes: you get both these from me and they are not insufficient".
- 6-1762 The wife showed him the sleeve of her shirt: the shirt was very coarse and dirty.

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<sup>1389</sup> I.e. "I am helpless before the Divine destiny, which brings good or evil fortune to everyone" (Nich.).

<sup>1390</sup> I.e. "let Your favour descend upon me" (Nich.).

<sup>1391</sup> One of the two places where the moon's apparent path intersects the ecliptic (Nich.).

<sup>1392</sup> Literally "folded up" (Nich.).

<sup>1393</sup> Literally "pasture" (Nich.).

<sup>1394</sup> Literally "using (every) means" (Nich.).

<sup>1395</sup> Literally "o (my) idol" (Nich.).

- 6-1763 “It is so rough”, she said, “it wounds my body: does anyone get a garment of this kind for anyone?”
- 6-1764 He said, “O wife, I will ask you one question. I am a poor man: this is all I know how to do<sup>1396</sup> .
- 6-1765 This shirt is rough, coarse and disagreeable, but think well, o anxious wife!”
- 6-1766 Is this shirt rougher and nastier, or divorce? Is this shirt more odious to you, or separation?”
- 6-1767 Even so, o Khwāja<sup>1397</sup> who are scolding because of affliction, poverty, distress and tribulations,
- 6-1768 No doubt this renunciation of sensuality gives bitter pain, but it is better than being far from God.
- 6-1769 If fighting<sup>1398</sup> against the flesh and fasting<sup>1399</sup> are hard and rough, yet these are better than being far from Him who inflicts tribulation.
- 6-1770 How should pain last for a single moment when the Giver of favours says to you, “How are you, o my sick one?”
- 6-1771 And even if He does not say it, because you lack the understanding and knowledge needed for it, yet your inward feeling of supplication is equivalent to His inquiring after you.
- 6-1772 Those beautiful ones who are spiritual physicians turn towards the sick to inquire after them.

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<sup>1396</sup> I.e. in the way of providing for you (Nich.).

<sup>1397</sup> *Khwāja* (< Fārsī *khwājah*, more or less pronounced *khōjē*) is an honorific title given to people of distinction. In Sufism, particularly in the Indian subcontinent, it takes on the meaning of “Master”, e.g. Ḥaẓrat Khwāja Mu‘īnu’d-dīn Chishtī, the great Ṣūfī Saint of Ajmēr, Rājasthān, India. But also outside the Indian subcontinent Ṣūfī Masters have borne this title. A few examples: the prominent Persian Ṣūfī mystic and prolific author Ḥaẓrat Khwāja ‘Abdullāh Anṣārī of Herāt (1006-1088 CE) and the influential Turkic Ṣūfī Master Ḥaẓrat Khwāja Aḥmad Yasawī (1093-1066 CE), who lived and worked in Kazākhstān. It is also worth mentioning that between the 12<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries CE the Naqshbandī Ṣūfī Order was known as *Tarīqat-e Khwājagān*, i.e. “the Way of the Masters” (*Khwājagān* is the plural of *Khwāja*). The Naqshbandī Ṣūfī Order took its present name from the illustrious Master Ḥaẓrat Khwāja Bahā’u’d-dīn Shāh Naqshband of Bukhārā (1318-1389 CE).

<sup>1398</sup> In the Persian text the word *jihād* is used.

<sup>1399</sup> In the Persian text the word *ṣawm* is used, which means “fasting”, particularly during the month of Ramaḍān. It is one of the five Pillars of Islām.

## **The lover's yearning for union with the Beloved. [3.2.5]**

### **Poem:**

**“O Friend, I have looked for You everywhere  
I have asked everyone about You  
I have sought You, while You were in my heart  
I feel ashamed for having searched a trace of You” [3.2.5]**

- 1-1775      How should I not wail bitterly because of His deceit, since I am not in the circle of those intoxicated with Him?
- 1-1776      How should I not mourn, like night, without His day and without the favour of His day-illuminating countenance?
- 1-1777      His unsweetness is sweet in my soul; may my soul be sacrificed to the Beloved who grieves my heart!
- 1-1778      I am in love with my grief and pain for the sake of pleasing my peerless King.
- 6-4161      There was a great fortitude<sup>1400</sup> in my breast, but now it is no more: Love has set fire to the dwelling-place of fortitude.
- 6-4162      My fortitude died on the night when Love was born: it has passed away – long live those who are present!
- 6-4163      O you who tells me of a stern rebuke from the King and terrible punishments<sup>1401</sup>, I have passed beyond all that: do not beat a piece of cold iron!<sup>1402</sup>
- 6-4164      I am rushing headlong: hey, let go my feet! Where in all limbs is there any understanding?
- 6-4165      I am like a camel: I carry my load as long as I can, but when I fall down exhausted, I am glad to be killed.
- 6-4168      Now I will plant my banner in the open plain: let my fate be either to lose my head or to behold the face of my adored one!
- 6-4169      The throat that is not worthy of that wine – it is best that it should be cut by blows of the sword<sup>1403</sup>;
- 6-4170      The eye that does not rejoice in abundance by union with her<sup>1404</sup> – such an eye is best white with disease and blind;

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<sup>1400</sup> Literally “patience” (*ṣabr*).

<sup>1401</sup> Literally “events”, “calamities” (Nich.).

<sup>1402</sup> In Fārsī this expression means “don’t try something in vain”.

<sup>1403</sup> Literally “by the sword and conflict” (Nich.).

- 6-4171      The ear that is not worthy of hearing her secret – tear it off, for it is no good on the head;
- 6-4172      The hand in which there is not the required amount to win her favour – it is best that it should be chopped off by the butcher’s knife;
- 6-4173      The foot by whose walk the soul is not led into<sup>1405</sup> her narcissus-plot –
- 6-4174      Such a foot is best in iron chains, for such a foot is ultimately the cause of headache (affliction).
- 1-1801      O you who are a new soul to the old world, hear the cry that comes from my body which is without soul and heart.
- 1-1802      Leave the tale of the Rose! For God’s sake continue the tale of the Nightingale that is separated from the Rose!
- 1-2414      You talk of bitter separation from me: do whatever you want, but not this.
- 1-3902      There is nothing more bitter than separation from You: without Your protection there is nothing but perplexity.
- 5-4115      A hundred thousand bitter sixtyfold deaths cannot be compared to separation from Your face.
- 5-4113      Have mercy on him that beheld Your face: how shall he endure the bitter separation from You?
- 3-2933      Oppressed in heart and weary is only he who is in prison through separation from the Friend.
- 3-3690      Through separation these soils are nitrous (barren), and water becomes yellow, stinking and dark.
- 3-3693      The quick-witted intellect, through separation from its friends, becomes like an archer whose bow is broken.
- 3-3694      Through separation Hell has become so burning; through separation the old man has become so trembling.
- 3-3695      If I should speak of separation, which is like sparks of fire, until Resurrection, it would be only one part out of a hundred thousand.
- 3-3696      Therefore do not breathe a word in trying to describe its burning: say only “Lord, save me! Lord, save me!”

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<sup>1404</sup> From verse 6-4170 to verse 6-4173 “her” represents the Divine Presence.

<sup>1405</sup> Literally “joined to” (Nich.)

## The Third River [3.3]

### The final stages of sulūk (the Spiritual Journey)

### The First Rivulet [3.3.1]

#### Realization of Reality through Divine manifestations in life<sup>1406</sup>.

- 3-3634 Know that the mercy of the Unconditioned God<sup>1407</sup> is like this, o father; nothing but its effect comes into the imagination (is conceivable to us).
- 3-3635 The effects and fruit of His mercy are manifest, but how should anyone except Him know its quiddity<sup>1408</sup>?
- 3-3636 No one knows the quiddities of the attributes of Divine Perfection except through their effects and by means of comparison.
- 3-3641 Therefore, if you say “I know”, it is not far from the truth”; and if you say, “I do not know”, it is not a lie and a falsehood.
- 3-3642 If someone says to you, “Do you know Noah, the Messenger of God and the Light of the spirit?” –
- 3-3643 And if you reply, “How should not I know him? For that spiritual Moon is more celebrated than the sun and moon:
- 3-3645 Recite his name explicitly in the *Qur’ān* and clearly tell his story as it has come down from the past”
- 3-3647 And if you reply, “How should I know Noah? Only one like him can know him, o young man.
- 3-3648 I am a lame ant. How should I know the elephant? How should a gnat know *Isrāfil*<sup>1409</sup>?”
- 3-3649 This saying (answer) is also true in regard to the fact that you do not know him in his quiddity, o so-and-so.
- 3-3650 To be unable to perceive the quiddity, uncle, is the condition of common men: do not say it absolutely,

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<sup>1406</sup> Qur’ān 3:190: “Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the night and the day are signs for those of understanding”.

<sup>1407</sup> Literally “without like” (*bī chun*), i.e. beyond words, ineffable, indescribable, indefinable.

<sup>1408</sup> Quiddity (*māhiya*) is a philosophical term. “Quiddity” is the “whatness” of a thing, its “what it is”, i.e. the essential nature of a thing.

<sup>1409</sup> *Isrāfil* is the Arabic name of the angel Raphael, who will herald Judgment Day by blowing his trumpet. According to the Qur’ān and the Ḥadīths, the first blow of *Isrāfil*’s trumpet will destroy everything, the second one will bring the dead back to life (Qur’ān 39:68).

- 3-3651 Since quiddities and their inmost secret are clearly visible to the eyes of the Perfect.
- 2-43 But the Sun of Divine knowledge is motionless: its place of rising is nothing but the soul and the intellect.
- 6-2090 The Gnostic is the soul of religion and the soul of piety<sup>1410</sup>: gnosis is the result of past asceticism;
- 6-2091 Asceticism is the labour of sowing; gnosis is the growth of the seed.
- 3-3781 There is no calamity worse than ignorance: you are with your Friend and do not know how to play the game of love.
- 3-3782 You consider your Friend a stranger: to a joy you have given the name of a grief.
- 4-1869 Consider the skies and the earth to be an apple that appeared from the tree of Divine Power.
- 4-1870 You are like a worm in the middle of the apple and know nothing of the tree and the gardener.
- 4-1871 The other worm<sup>1411</sup> too is in the apple, but its soul is outside, holding the banner high.
- 4-1872 The worm's movement splits the apple in two: the apple cannot endure that shock.
- 4-1873 Its movement has rent all veils: its form is that of a worm, but its reality is a dragon.
- 5-1907 The Gnostics (mystics) possess an eye-salve: seek it, in order that this eye which now resembles a river may become an ocean.
- 6-4403 O sincere man, a single atom of the light of mystic knowledge within you is better than a hundred announcers.

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<sup>1410</sup> "Piety": in the Persian text the word *taqwā* is used. *Taqwā* is often translated as "piety" or "fear of God", but in reality, it denotes an inner attitude of devotion to God and seeking the pleasure of God, not out of fear, nor out of desire for the rewards of Paradise, but merely out of selfless love. Such an attitude brings about "awareness through the heart".

<sup>1411</sup> I.e. the Prophet or Saint (Nich.).

### Realization of God's Essence. [3.3.1]

#### Poem:

**“The intellect is bewildered and dumbfounded and lacks the ability to ask about the reality of His Essence” [3.3.1]**

#### **The inability of the human intellect to comprehend God's Essence. [3.3.1]**

- 1-2725 O you who dwells in the briny spring, how should you know the Shatt<sup>1412</sup>, the Jayhūn<sup>1413</sup> and the Euphrates?
- 2-1450 How should the smoke of the bath-stove reach the Sun? How should the ‘Anqā<sup>1414</sup> be crushed by the crow?
- 3-3718 Verily, there is no evidence for a sun except the light of the majestic sun.
- 3-3719 What is the shadow that it should be abased before Him?
- 5-1313 When the Eternal comes, the temporal is made futile: what, then, should the temporal know of Eternity?
- 3-3720 This majesty which I have attributed to Him as an evidence<sup>1415</sup> declares the truth: all perceptions are behind Him, He surpasses them.
- 3-3721 All perceptions are mounted on lame asses; He is mounted on the wind that flies like an arrow.
- 3-3722 If He flees, none of them finds the dust of<sup>1416</sup> the King; and if they flee, He bars the way in front of them.
- 3-3723 All the perceptions are restless; it is the time for battle<sup>1417</sup>, not the time for the festive cup.
- 1-2757 If he imagines that he is in love with the Essence of God, imagining the Divine names and attributes is not the Essence.
- 1-2758 Imagination is born of qualities and limitation: God is not begotten, He is *lam yūlad*<sup>1418</sup>.

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<sup>1412</sup> *Shatt*: the *Shatt al-‘Arab* (“River of the Arabs”) or *Arwand Rūd* (“Arwand River”) is the river that is formed by the confluence of the Tigris and Euphrates in Southern Iraq. Its mouth is in the Persian Gulf.

<sup>1413</sup> The *Jayhūn* River is in fact the *Āmū Daryā* or *Oxus River*, the longest river in Central Asia. It more or less constitutes the border between Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan and between Tajikistan and Afghanistan.

<sup>1414</sup> ‘*Anqā*: a mythical phoenix bird from Arabic story tradition, the *Simurgh* being its Persian equivalent. This mythical bird represents the Perfect Man, whose spirit dwells with God, even though his body is in the world.

<sup>1415</sup> I.e. His transcendence of all external evidence.

<sup>1416</sup> I.e. overtakes (Nich.).

<sup>1417</sup> I.e. for strenuously pursuing the spiritual quest (Nich.).

1-3641 Since the unseen, the absent and the veil are better, close your mouth: it is better for us to be silent.

**How to understand that God's Essence has  
never been revealed to anyone. [3.3.1]**

**Quatrain:**

**“O, none but You exists in both worlds  
Both reason and imagination are inadequate to know You  
Even though there are countless signs of Your existence,  
the greatest sign is that no trace of You can be seen” [3.3.1]**

**God's countless qualities cannot be explained by reason<sup>1419</sup>. [3.3.1]**

- 2-1715 Our King (God) has given permission, saying, “*Remember Allāh*”<sup>1420</sup>: He saw us in the fire and gave us light.
- 2-1716 He has said, “Although I far transcend<sup>1421</sup> your remembrance of Me, and although the pictorial images of human speech are not suitable to Me,
- 2-1717 Yet he who is intoxicated with pictorial imagination and fantasy will never grasp My essence without the help of likeness.”
- 2-1718 Bodily remembrance<sup>1422</sup> is an imperfect fantasy: the Kingly attributes are far removed<sup>1423</sup> from those forms of speech,
- 2-1719 If anyone says of a king, “He is not a weaver”, what praise is this? That person is surely spiritually unaware.

**Allegory. [3.3.1]**

- 2-1720 Moses saw a shepherd on the way, who was saying, “O God who chooses whom You want,
- 2-1721 Where are You, that I may become Your servant, sew Your shoes and comb Your head?
- 2-1722 That I may wash Your clothes, kill Your lice and bring milk to You, o worshipful One;

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<sup>1418</sup> Qur’ān 112:3.

<sup>1419</sup> Ḥadīth: “I fail in my efforts to praise You (as You should be praised); only You know how to praise Yourself”. Ḥadīth: “When man attains to realization, he is be dumb (unable to speak)”. *Aḥādīth-e Mathnawī* p. 12.

<sup>1420</sup> Qur’ān 3:41, 4:103 and 62:10.

<sup>1421</sup> Literally “I am exempt from” (Nich.).

<sup>1422</sup> I.e. praise and prayer uttered by the tongue (Nich.).

<sup>1423</sup> I.e. “are purer than” (*khālīṣ*).



- 2-1723 That I may kiss Your little hand and rub Your little foot, and when bedtime comes I may sweep Your little room,
- 2-1724 O You to whom I would give all my goats as a sacrifice, o You in remembrance of whom are my cries of ay and ah!”
- 2-1725 In Moses’ mind, the shepherd was speaking absurd words in this way. Moses said, “Man, to whom are you talking?”
- 2-1726 He answered, “To that One who created us; by whom this earth and sky were made visible.”
- 2-1727 “Listen!”, said Moses, “You have become very backsliding (depraved): indeed you have not become a believer, you have become an infidel.
- 2-1728 What babble is this? What blasphemy and raving? Stuff some cotton into your mouth!
- 2-1729 The stench of your blasphemy has made the whole world stinking: your blasphemy has turned the silk robe of religion into rags.
- 2-1730 Shoes and socks are fitting for you, but how are such things right for One who is a Sun?
- 2-1731 If you do not stop your throat from uttering these words, a fire will come and burn up the people.
- 2-1736 Only he who is growing up drinks milk: only he who has need of feet puts on shoes.
- 2-1745 The words *He did not beget, He was not begotten*<sup>1424</sup> are appropriate to Him: He is the Creator of begetter and begotten.
- 2-1740 To speak irreverently to one chosen of God causes the heart (spirit) to perish and keeps the page (record) black.
- 2-1748 The shepherd said, “O Moses, you have closed my mouth and you have burned my soul with repentance.”
- 2-1749 He rent his garment and heaved a sigh, and hastily turned his head towards the desert and went his way.
- 2-1750 A revelation came to Moses from God – “You have separated My servant from Me.
- 2-1751 Did you come as a Prophet to unite, or did you come to divide?

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<sup>1424</sup> Qur’ān 112:3.

- 2-1753 I have bestowed on everyone a special way of acting: I have given to everyone a peculiar form of expression.
- 2-1755 I am independent of all purity and impurity, of all slothfulness and hastiness in worshipping Me.
- 2-1756 I did not ordain Divine worship that I might make any profit; but on the contrary, that I might do a kindness to My servants.
- 2-1759 I look at the tongue and the speech; I look at the inward spirit and the state of feeling.
- 2-1761 Because the heart is the substance<sup>1425</sup>, speech is only the accident<sup>1426</sup>; so the accident is subordinate, the substance is the real object.
- 2-1762 How much more of these phrases, conceptions and metaphors? I want burning, burning: become a friend of that burning!
- 2-1763 Light up a fire of love in your soul, burn thoughts and expression entirely away!
- 2-1764 O Moses, they who know the conventions are of one kind, they whose souls and spirits burn are of another kind.”
- 2-1765 To lovers there is a burning which consumes them at every moment: tax and tithe<sup>1427</sup> are not imposed on a ruined village.
- 2-1766 If he the lover speaks faultily, do not call him faulty; and if were bathed in blood, do not wash those who are martyrs.
- 2-1767 For martyrs, blood is better than water: this fault committed by him is better than a hundred right actions of another<sup>1428</sup>.
- 2-1770 The religion of Love is apart from all religions: for lovers, the only religion and creed is – God.
- 2-1772 After that, God hid in the inmost heart of Moses mysteries which cannot be spoken.
- 2-1775 If I should unfold his tale after this, it is foolishness in me, because the explanation of this is beyond our understanding;

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<sup>1425</sup> Substance (*jawhar*): here, the word is used as a philosophical term, i.e. “A being whose nature it is to exist in and for itself and not in another as in a subject.”

<sup>1426</sup> “Accident” (*‘araḏ*, from the Arabic *‘araḏ*) is also used as a philosophical term, meaning “a nonessential attribute or characteristic of something”.

<sup>1427</sup> A tithe is the tenth of one’s income, paid as a tax.

<sup>1428</sup> Islamic custom dictates that the body of a dead person should be washed before it is buried. However, this does not apply to martyrs –innocent persons who have been killed – their blood-stained bodies must not be washed before they are buried.

- 2-1776 And if I should speak about it, it would root up men's minds; and if I should write about it, it would shatter many pens.
- 2-1777 When Moses heard these reproaches from God, he ran into the desert in quest of the shepherd.
- 2-1783 At last Moses overtook and saw him; the giver of glad news said, "Permission has come from God.
- 2-1784 Do not seek any rules or method of worship; say whatever your distressful heart desires.
- 2-1785 Your blasphemy is the true religion, and your religion is the light of the soul: you are saved, and through you a whole world is redeemed<sup>1429</sup>.
- 2-1786 O you who made secure by *God does whatever He pleases*<sup>1430</sup>, go, loosen your tongue without worrying about what you say."
- 2-1787 He said, "O Moses, I have passed beyond that: I am now bathed in my heart's blood.
- 2-1788 I have passed beyond the Lote-tree of the utmost boundary<sup>1431</sup>, I have gone a hundred thousand years' journey on the other side.
- 2-1789 You lashed out, and my horse shied, made a bound, and passed beyond the sky.
- 2-1791 Now my state is beyond telling: this which I am telling is not my real state."
- 2-1790 May the Divine Nature<sup>1432</sup> be intimate with my human nature<sup>1433</sup> – blessings be on your hand and on your arm!
- 2-1794 Pay good attention! Whether you praise God or thank Him, know that it is the same as the unseemly words of that shepherd.
- 2-1795 Even though your praise is better in comparison with that, yet in relation to God it too is maimed (feeble).
- 3-1081 The explanation of the attributes of God, like God Himself, has no limit. Take heed, close your mouth and turn over a new leaf.

### **Everybody speaks of That One from his or her own perspective. [3.3.1]**

- 2-3321 Before the infinite all that is finite is nothing: everything except the Face of God is perishable<sup>1434</sup>.

<sup>1429</sup> Literally "in salvation" (*dar amān*).

<sup>1430</sup> Qur'ān 3:40.

<sup>1431</sup> Qur'ān 53:14. The Lote-tree (called *Sidratu'l-Muntahā*) marks the end of the Seventh Heaven.

<sup>1432</sup> *Lāhūt* or *Ālam-e Lāhūt*: classical Sūfī term for "the Realm of Divinity".

<sup>1433</sup> *Nāsūt* or *Ālam-e Nāsūt*: classical Sūfī term for "the Realm of Humanity".

- 3-1391 When the Attributes of the Eternal have shone out, then the mantle of temporality is burned.
- 2-3107 All that you may think of is liable to perish; he who does not come into thought is God.
- 2-2923 This equally applies to knowledge of God (*ma'rifa*, “gnosis”, “mystical knowledge”). Everyone describes the Unseen Object of description in a different way.
- 2-2924 The philosopher explains it in another way: a scholastic theologian invalidates this statement;
- 2-2925 And someone else jeers at both of them, while another hypocritically tires himself to death (trying to prove that he has real knowledge of God).
- 2-2926 Each one of them gives these indications of the Way, in order to make people believe that they belong to that Village<sup>1435</sup>.
- 2-3679 Move on from the name and look at the attributes, in order that the attributes may show you the way to the essence.
- 2-3680 The discord of mankind is caused by names: peace follows when they move on to the reality denoted by the name.

**Story:**  
**The different languages and the same essence. [3.3.1]**

- 2-3681 A certain man gave a dirham to four persons: one of them (a Persian) said, “I will spend this on *angūr*<sup>1436</sup>.”
- 2-3682 The second one was an Arab: he said, “No, I want *‘inab*, not *angūr*, o rascal!”
- 2-3683 The third was a Turk: and he said, “This money is mine: I don’t want *‘inab*, I want *uzum*.”
- 2-3684 The fourth, a Greek, “Stop this talk: I want *istāfil*.”
- 2-3685 These people began fighting with each other, because they were unaware of the hidden meaning of the names.
- 2-3686 In their folly they punched each other with their fists: they were full of ignorance and empty of knowledge.

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<sup>1434</sup> Qur’ān 28:88.

<sup>1435</sup> I.e. that they belong to the spiritual land and are familiar with Divine mysteries (from Nicholson’s *Commentaries on the Mathnawī of Jalālu’d-dīn Rūmī*).

<sup>1436</sup> *Angūr* is the Persian word for “grape”, *‘inab* the Arabic word, *uzum* the Turkish word [cf. Modern Turkish *üzüm*] and *istāfil* the Greek word [cf. Ancient Greek *stafylè*, and Modern Greek *stafili*].

- 2-3687 If an esoteric master had been there, a reverend man, knowing several languages, he would have restored the peace between them;
- 2-3688 And then he would have said, “With this one dirham I will give all of you what you wish.
- 2-3689 When without deceit you surrender your hearts to me, this dirham will do all this for you.
- 2-3692 Therefore be mute, *remain silent*<sup>1437</sup>, that I may be your tongue in speech and talk.”
- 3-2125 Know that every praise goes (belongs) to the Light of God and is only lent to created forms and persons.
- 1-2212 Words and feelings beyond all feelings and words—he had become drowned in the beauty of the Lord of Majesty
- 1-2213 Drowned, not in such way that there should be any deliverance for him, or that any one should know him except the Divine Ocean.

### **The Second Rivulet [3.3.2]** **Annihilation in the Beloved (fanā, merging with the Beloved).**

#### **Poem:**

#### **“Merge with the Beloved, that is unification Avoid duality, that is perfection” [3.3.2]**

- 1-2199 “This wailing of yours is also one of the signs of your self-consciousness.
- 1-2200 The way of him who has transcended<sup>1438</sup> self-consciousness is another way, because self-consciousness is another sin.
- 1-2205 O you whose knowledge is without knowledge, your repentance is worse than your sin.
- 1-2210 At that time such a bewilderment arose within him that it made him leave earth and heaven –
- 1-2211 A seeking and searching beyond all seeking and search<sup>1439</sup>: I do not know how to describe it; if you know, tell!

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<sup>1437</sup> Qur’ān 7:204.

<sup>1438</sup> Literally “has passed away from”, i.e. has experienced *fanā* (annihilation of the limited self).

<sup>1439</sup> This verse depicts the end of the mystic’s quest, i.e. *fanā* (from Nicholson’s *Commentaries on the Mathnawī of Jalālu’d-dīn Rūmī*).

### **Allegory: Fat in milk. [3.3.2]**

- 3-3669 The speaker said, “There is no dervish in the world; and if there is a dervish, that dervish is in reality non-existent.”
- 3-3670 He exists in respect of the survival of his essence, but his attributes have become non-existent in the attributes of God.
- 3-3671 Like the flame of a candle in the presence of the sun, in reality he is non-existent, even though he is formally existent<sup>1440</sup>.
- 3-3672 The flame’s essence is existent, so that, if you put cotton on it, it will be consumed by the sparks;
- 3-3673 But in reality it is non-existent: it gives you no light: the sun will have annihilated it.
- 3-3674 When you have thrown an ounce of vinegar into two hundred maund<sup>1441</sup> of sugar, and it has become dissolved in it,
- 3-3675 The flavour of the vinegar, when you taste the sugar, is non-existent, although the ounce exists as a surplus when you weigh.
- 3-3676 In the presence of a lion a deer becomes senseless: its existence becomes a mere veil for the lion’s existence.

### **Complete annihilation in the Beloved (fanā-ye fanā) (beyond the power of reason). [3.3.2]**

- 5-672 When, through spiritual poverty, someone is graced by *fanā* (self-annihilation), he becomes shadowless like Muḥammad<sup>1442</sup>.
- 5-673 *Fanā* graced The Prophet who said “Poverty is my pride<sup>1443</sup>”: he became shadowless like the flame of a candle.

<sup>1440</sup> Literally “in (formal) calculation”.

<sup>1441</sup> A unit of weight in different Asian countries.

<sup>1442</sup> According to Islamic lore, the Prophet Muḥammad didn’t cast a shadow on the ground whenever he was seen walking in the sunlight or moonlight, or sitting in candlelight. This isn’t mere mythology: in Sūfī mysticism, Ḥaẓrat Muḥammad is perceived as the Embodiment of Light (*Nūr-e Mujassam*). This Light is Pre-Eternal Light (*Nūr-e Azal*). It existed before creation and becomes fully manifest in the Spiritually Perfect Man (*Insān-e Kāmil*), like the Prophet Muḥammad, and Prophets and Saints like him, to whatever religion, era or culture they may belong. All Prophets and Saints are one; they all embody the same Light. How should Light cast a shadow?

<sup>1443</sup> Or, *Fanā* graced (him who attained to the state denoted by the Prophet’s saying) “Poverty is my pride” (Nich.). *Al-faqrū fakhrī* or “Poverty is my pride” is a well-known *ḥadīth* (see *Aḥādīth-e Mathnawī*, p. 104). *Faqr and Fanā* (“Spiritual Poverty and Annihilation in God”) is the last and highest stage (*maqām*) of realization on the Sūfī Path. This is symbolically represented by the Seventh Valley of Ḥaẓrat Shaykh Farīdu’d-dīn ‘Aṭṭār’s “The Conference of the Birds”; this valley is called “the Valley of *Faqr* and *Fanā*”.

- 5-674 When the candle<sup>1444</sup> has become entirely flame from head to foot, the shadow hath no passage (way of approach) around it.
- 5-675 The wax (candle) fled from itself and from the shadow into the radiance<sup>1445</sup> for the sake of Him who moulded the candle.
- 5-676 He said, “I moulded you for the sake of *fanā* (self-annihilation).” It replied, “That is why I took refuge in *fanā*.”
- 5-677 This is the necessary everlasting radiance, not the radiance of the perishable accidental candle.
- 5-679 Evidently, in dispelling the darkness, the external (material) flame is maintained by a wax candle;
- 5-680 But the candle, which is the body, is opposed to the wax candle, because the more the body dwindles, the more the light of the soul is increased.
- 5-681 This is the everlasting radiance, and that bodily candle is perishable: the candle of the soul has a Divine flame.
- 5-678 When the candle is wholly annihilated in the fire of Divine illumination, you will not see any trace of the candle or rays of its light.
- 5-682 Since in reality this tongue of fire was light, it could not become<sup>1446</sup> a perishable shadow.
- 5-683 The cloud’s shadow falls on the earth: the shadow never keeps company with the moon.
- 5-684 Selflessness is cloudlessness, o kind-hearted one: in the state of selflessness you will be like the orb of the moon.
- 5-685 Again, when a cloud comes, driven along, the light goes: of the moon there remains only a fantasy.
- 5-687 The moon is made to appear as a phantasm by clouds and dust: the cloud, which is the body, has caused us to conceive imaginations.
- 5-689 The Moon is independent of clouds and dust: the Moon has Its orbit high in the spiritual sky.
- 5-690 The cloud<sup>1447</sup> is our mortal enemy and adversary because it hides the Moon from our eyes.

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<sup>1444</sup> I.e. the lover of God (Nich.).

<sup>1445</sup> I.e. the Light of God (Nich.).

<sup>1446</sup> Literally “was far from it to become”.

<sup>1447</sup> I.e. “selfish attachments”.

- 5-699 My feathers are like the cloud, they are a veil and are coarse: only by the reflection of God's grace are they made graceful.
- 5-700 I will pluck my feathers and their beauty from the Way to God, that I may see the Moon's beauty by the Moon's own light.
- 5-703 Unless the intermediary is a cloud<sup>1448</sup> who becomes annihilated in the Way to God in order that it may not be a veil over the face of the Moon.
- 5-704 In the aspect of *lā* (self-negation) such a cloud displays the Moon's form, like the bodies of the Prophets and Saints.
- 5-705 Such a cloud is not veil-tying; it is in reality veil-tearing and beneficial.
- 5-706 It is as when, on a bright morning, drops of rain were falling even though there was no cloud above in the sky.
- 5-707 That water-skin was a miracle of the Prophet<sup>1449</sup>: through self-effacement the cloud which filled it had become of the same colour as the sky.
- 5-708 The cloud was there, but the cloud-nature had gone from it: the body of the lover of God becomes like this by means of renunciation.
- 5-709 It is body, but bodiliness has vanished from it: it has been transformed, colour and perfume have gone from it.
- 4-1055 The Friend has taken them, like a dead bird, that by means of them He may hunt down their congeners.
- 4-1056 The dead bird is compelled (deprived of free-will) in respect of being united or separated: you have read the *ḥadīth*, "The heart of the believer lies between two fingers of the Merciful God."<sup>1450</sup>
- 4-1057 Everyone who has fallen prey to His dead bird will see, when he sees the truth, that he has fallen prey to the King.
- 4-1058 Whoever turned his head away from this dead bird never gained<sup>1451</sup> the hand of the Hunter.
- 4-1059 It the dead bird says, "Do not consider my being a carcass: see the King's love shown in preserving me.
- 4-1060 I am not a carcass: the King has killed me<sup>1452</sup>: my appearance has become like that of the dead.

<sup>1448</sup> I.e. a perfect man (Nich.).

<sup>1449</sup> See Book III, verses 3130 ff. (Nich.).

<sup>1450</sup> *Aḥādīth-e Mathnawī* p. 33.

<sup>1451</sup> Literally "never found the hand of the Hunter".

<sup>1452</sup> I.e. "I have become annihilated in the Divine Being".



- 4-1061 I used to move by means of wings and feathers: now my movement comes from the hand of the Divine Judge.
- 4-1062 My perishable movement has vanished from my skin<sup>1453</sup>: now my movement is everlasting, since it comes from Him.
- 4-1064 Beware! If you are spiritually alive, do not consider me dead; if you are a devoted slave of God, consider me as being in the hand of the King.
- 4-1065 Jesus, by his grace, brought the dead back to life: I am in the hand of the Creator of Jesus.
- 4-1066 How should I remain dead in the grasp of God? Likewise, do not think this to be possible in the case of the hand of “Jesus”<sup>1454</sup>.
- 4-1067 I am “Jesus”; but whoever has been brought back to life by my breath will live (remain) forever.
- 4-2615 When the *hū*<sup>1455</sup> that is perishable has surrendered itself to Him, it becomes everlasting and never dies<sup>1456</sup>.
- 4-2616 It is like a drop of water which is afraid of wind (air) and earth; for these two cause it to perish (*fanā*).
- 4-2617 When it has jumped (thrown itself) into the sea, which was its source, it is delivered from the heat of the sun and from wind and earth.
- 4-2618 Its outward form has disappeared in the sea, but its essence is intact<sup>1457</sup>, steadfast and sound.
- 1-3052 *Everything is perishable*<sup>1458</sup> except His face; unless you are in his face (essence), do not seek to exist.
- 1-3053 When anyone has died to himself<sup>1459</sup> in My face (essence), the words *everything is perishable* do not apply to him.

<sup>1453</sup> I.e. “from my body”.

<sup>1454</sup> Here “Jesus” exemplifies the Saint who is united with God.

<sup>1455</sup> In Arabic, *hu* is the shortened form of the third person masculine singular personal pronoun *huwa* (“he”), and is used as a suffix, e.g. *ra’aytu-hu* (meaning “I saw him”). In Sufism however, the name or sound *Hū* represents the Divine Essence, and as such *Hū* is neither male nor female. It is considered the primeval sound which pervades all of creation and which is exclaimed by all beings and things in creation. In this verse “the *hū* that is perishable” refers to the worshipper’s *hū*, i.e. his identity. If he wants to reach Eternal Subsistence in God (*baqā*), the worshipper’s *hū* must be annihilated (*fanā*) in God’s everlasting *Hū*, God’s “Identity” (*Huwiyya*).

<sup>1456</sup> In order to be able to understand this verse it is necessary to know the previous verses: [4-2612] Where a hundred orchards are offered to you in exchange for one seed, a hundred mines in exchange for one grain? [4-2613] “*Kāna li’Llāh* is the giving of that goat, in order that *kāna’Llāh lahu*\*\* may come into your hand;” [4-2614] “For this weak unstable *hū* (personality) was brought into being by the steadfast (permanent) *hū* of the Lord.” \* Here “one grain” means “a small thing of little or no value”. \*\* The Prophet is reported to have said, *Man kāna li’Llāhi kāna’Llāhu lahu*, “Whoever belongs (devotes himself) to God, God shall belong to him.” (Nich.) – meaning that will bestow His mercy upon him.

<sup>1457</sup> Literally “innocent”.

<sup>1458</sup> Qur’ān 28:88.

- 1-3054 Because he is in *except*<sup>1460</sup>, he has transcended *no*<sup>1461</sup>: whoever is in *except* has not perished.
- 6-233 What is the means of ascension to Heaven? This not-being. Not-being is the creed and religion of the lovers of God.
- 6-1467 Since the foundation of the workshop is non-existence which is void, traceless and empty.
- 6-1468 And since all master-craftsmen seek non-existence and a place of breakage<sup>1462</sup> in order to exhibit their skill.
- 6-1470 Wherever this non-existence is greater, the more manifest is the work and workshop of God in that place.
- 6-1466 Since you have heard the description of the sea of non-existence, continually endeavour to stand (depend) on this sea.
- 1-3201 What is the mirror of Being? Non-being. Bring non-being as your gift, if you are not a fool.
- 1-3156 The beautiful face is in love with the mirror: such a face is a polisher of the soul and a kindler of the *devotion*<sup>1463</sup> to God in (men's) hearts<sup>1464</sup>.

### Story. [3.3.2]

- 1-3157 The loving friend came from the ends of the earth and became the guest of Joseph the truthful.
- 1-3170 After Joseph had told him his story, he (Joseph) said, “Now, o so-and-so, what traveller's gift have you brought for me?”
- 1-3171 To come empty-handed to the door of friends is like going to the mill without wheat.
- 1-3193 “How many gifts,” he said, “did I seek for you! Nowhere did I see any worthy gift<sup>1465</sup>.”
- 1-3194 How should I bring a grain of gold to the mine? How should I bring a drop of water to the Sea of ‘Ummān<sup>1466</sup>?

<sup>1459</sup> I.e. has experienced *fanā*.

<sup>1460</sup> I.e. *illā*, from *lā ilāha illā 'Llāh*, “there is no deity *except* God”, “no reality exists *except* God”.

<sup>1461</sup> I.e. *lā*, from *lā ilāha illā 'Llāh*, “these is *no* deity *except* God”, “*no* reality exists *except* God”.

<sup>1462</sup> Here “breakage” implies humiliating and abasing oneself before God, as exemplified by the prostration during ritual prayer.

<sup>1463</sup> “Devotion to God”: in the original text the word *taqwā* is used. *Taqwā* is often translated as “piety” or “fear of God”, but in reality, it denotes an inner attitude of devotion to God and seeking the pleasure of God, not out of fear, nor out of desire for the rewards of Paradise, but merely out of selfless love.

<sup>1464</sup> Qur’ān 22:32.

<sup>1465</sup> Literally “No (worthy) gift came into sight”.

- 1-3195 I shall only bring cumin to Kirmān<sup>1467</sup>, if I bring my heart and soul as a gift to you.
- 1-3196 There is no seed that is not in this barn, except your beauty, which has no equal.
- 1-3197 I thought it would be fitting to bring you a mirror like the inward light of a pure breast.
- 1-3200 He drew the mirror from under his arm: the beautiful one occupies himself with the mirror<sup>1468</sup>.
- 1-3155 Whoever is born beautiful from the loins of Creation, a mirror must be placed before him.
- 1-3202 Being can be seen only in not-being: the rich bestow (exhibit) generosity on the poor.
- 1-2750 Beggars, then, are the mirror of God's bounty, and they who are with God are united with the Absolute Bounty;
- 1-2751 And everyone except those types of beggar is truly a dead man: he is not at this door (the Divine Court), he is lifeless as a picture embroidered on a curtain.
- 2-1173 Since my genus is not the genus of my King, my ego has perished (*fanā*) for the sake of His ego.
- 2-1174 Since my ego perished, He remained alone: I roll at the feet of His horse, like dust.
- 2-1175 The individual soul (self) became dust, and the only signs of it are the mark of His feet on its dust<sup>1469</sup>.
- 2-1176 Become dust at His feet for the sake of this mark, in order that you may become the crown on the head of the exalted.
- 2-1373 If in the presence of kings there is danger to life, yet those who aspire cannot refrain from being in His presence.
- 2-1374 Since the King is sweeter than sugar, it is better that life should go as a sacrifice to that sweetness.

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<sup>1466</sup> I. e. *Baḥr-e 'Ummān*, the southernmost part of the Persian Gulf.

<sup>1467</sup> For Persians, the expression "carrying cumin to Kirmān" has the same meaning as the phrase "carrying coals to Newcastle", i.e. a foolhardy or pointless action.

<sup>1468</sup> I.e. "the beautiful one and the mirror go together".

<sup>1469</sup> In Persian, the expression "to become someone's foot's dust" suggests humility.

### **Eternal life (baqā) arises from annihilation (fanā). [3.3.2]**

“And do not think of those who have been killed in the way of God as dead. Rather, they are alive with their Lord, receiving sustenance<sup>1470</sup>.”

- 3-3910 Oh, the cold lover, wearing in the felt garment of shame, who from fear of losing his life is fleeing from the Beloved!
- 1-2218 It is appropriate for us to gamble away (sacrifice) hundreds of thousands of souls (lives) in order to gain such delight and joy.
- 1-2221 O Sun of Reality, spread spiritual life all around, bring newness to this old world!
- 3-3911 O you, who are a disgrace even to cowards, see hundreds of thousands of souls clapping their hands and rushing towards the sword of His love!
- 5-551 Become dead, that the Lord who brings out the living<sup>1471</sup> may bring out a spiritually living one from this dead one.
- 4-2766 Unless you have died and have become living through Him, you are an enemy seeking to reign in partnership with Him.
- 4-2767 When you have become living through Him, that which you have become is in reality He: it is absolute Unity; then how can it be partnership?
- 1-921 Since our eyesight (foresight) is much impaired, go, let your own sight perish (*fanā*) in the sight of the Friend (God).
- 1-922 His sight for ours – what an excellent recompense! In His sight you will find the whole object of your desire.
- 3-3912 You have seen the river: spill your jug in the river: how should the water flee from the river?
- 3-3913 When the water in the jug goes into the river-water, it disappears in it, and it becomes the river.
- 3-3914 The lover's attributes have been effaced, and his essence remains: after this, he does not dwindle or become ill-favoured.
- 3-3919 Like the moth, the lover considered the fiery sparks to be the light: foolishly he fell in and was cut off from (deprived of) life.”
- 3-3920 But the candle of Love is not like the external candle: it is radiance in radiance in radiance.

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<sup>1470</sup> Qur'ān 3:169.

<sup>1471</sup> Qur'ān 6:95 and 30:19.

3-3921 It is the opposite of the fiery candles: it seems to be fire, while in reality it is all sweetness.

### **The contradiction between words and deeds. [3.3.2]**

3-3996 Before the battle, the image of good and evil is faint (makes no deep impression) in a man's heart;

3-3997 But when he goes into battle, then to that person the matter becomes sorrowful.

3-3998 Since you are not a lion, beware, do not step forward, for that doom is a wolf, and your soul is the sheep;

3-3999 But if you are one of the *Abdāl* (Saints) and your sheep has become a lion, then come with confidence, for your death has been vanquished.

3-4000 Who are the *Abdāl*? They who become transformed, they whose wine is turned into vinegar by Divine transformation.

3-4621 You are a lover of God, and God is such that when He comes, not a single hair of you remains.

3-4622 At that look of His a hundred like you perish away: it seems to me, good sir, that you are in love with self-annihilation.

3-4623 You are a shadow and are in love with the sun: the sun comes, the shadow is swiftly reduced to nothing.

### **Allegory. [3.3.2]**

3-4624 The gnat came from the garden and the grass, and the gnat began to demand justice from Solomon.

3-4625 Saying, "O Solomon, you deal out justice to the devils, the children of men and the Jinn<sup>1472</sup>."

3-4627 Give justice to us, for we are very miserable: we are deprived of the orchard and the rose-garden.

3-4628 You solve the problems of every weakling: in reality the gnat is the proverbial example of weakness.

3-4629 We are celebrated for weakness and frailty<sup>1473</sup>: you are celebrated for kindness and care for the lowly.

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<sup>1472</sup> In Islamic and pre-Islamic folklore, *jinn* (singular: *jinnī*) are supernatural creatures, who possess free will and can be good or evil in nature. Iblīs (Satan) was the chief of the Jinn; when God ordered him to bow down before Adam, he refused and fell from grace.

<sup>1473</sup> Literally "broken-wingedness" (Nich.).

- 3-4631 Do justice, relieve us from this sorrow, take our hand to help us, o you whose hand is the hand of God.”
- 3-4632 Then Solomon said, “O seeker of equity, tell me, against whom are you demanding justice and equity?”
- 3-4644 The gnat said, “My appeal is against the hand (light) of the Wind, for it opened the two hands of oppression against us.
- 3-4645 Through this oppression we are in dire straits: with closed lips we drink blood (suffer torment) from him.”
- 3-4646 Then Solomon said, “O you with the pretty voice, it is proper for you to listen with all your soul to the command of God.
- 3-4647 God has said to me, “Beware, o Judge! Do not hear one party<sup>1474</sup> without the other party.”
- 3-4648 Until both parties are present<sup>1475</sup>, the truth does not come to light before the judge.
- 3-4650 I dare not turn away my face from the Divine command. Go, bring your adversary before me.”
- 3-4651 The gnat said, “Your words are reasonable<sup>1476</sup> and sound. My adversary is the Wind, and he is under your jurisdiction.”
- 3-4652 The King shouted, “O East-Wind, the gnat complains about your injustice: come!”
- 3-4654 When the Wind heard the summons, it came very rapidly: the gnat at once flew away.
- 3-4655 Then Solomon said, “O gnat, where are you going? Stop, that I may pass judgement on you both.”
- 3-4656 The gnat answered, “O King, its being is the cause of my death: truly, this day of mine is blackened by its smoke.
- 3-4657 Since it has come, where shall I find rest? For he squeezes the vital breath out of my body.”
- 3-4658 Such is the seeker of the Court of God: when God comes, the seeker is reduced to nothing<sup>1477</sup>.

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<sup>1474</sup> I.e. a party engaged in a lawsuit.

<sup>1475</sup> Literally “come into the presence”.

<sup>1476</sup> Literally “is a proof”.

<sup>1477</sup> Literally “becomes *no* (*lā*)”.

- 3-4659 Although union with God is immortality on immortality, yet at first that immortality (*baqā*) consists in dying to self (*fanā*).
- 3-4661 How should reason remain when He bids it to go?<sup>1478</sup> *Everything is perishable except His face*<sup>1479</sup>.
- 3-4662 Before His face the existent and the non-existent perish: existence in non-existence is truly a marvellous thing!
- 3-4663 In this place of Presence all minds are lost beyond control; when the pen reaches this point, it breaks.

### Poem:

**“He broke my wine jar and threw away the wine,  
I yelled at him that this was a great loss to me  
To restore me to happiness, he then compensated  
my loss with hundreds honey jars”<sup>1480</sup> [3.3.2]**

- 3-3833 You, do not threaten me with being killed, for I thirst grievously for my own blood.”
- 1-242 When one is slain by a king like this, the king leads him to fortune and to the best (most honourable) estate<sup>1481</sup>.
- 1-245 He takes half a life and gives a hundred lives in exchange: he gives that which you cannot even begin to imagine.
- 3-3834 For lovers, there is a dying at every moment: verily, the dying of lovers is not of one sort.
- 3-3835 The lover has two hundred souls (lives)<sup>1482</sup>, coming from the Soul of Guidance, and he sacrifices those two hundred souls (lives) at every instant<sup>1483</sup>.
- 3-3836 For each soul (life) he receives ten as its price: read from the *Qur’ān* “ten times the like of it”<sup>1484</sup>.
- 3-3837 If the One with the friendly face sheds my blood, dancing in triumph I will strew (lavish) my soul (life) on Him.
- 3-3839 “Kill me, kill me, o trusty friends! For in my being killed is my life<sup>1485</sup>.”

<sup>1478</sup> Literally “when He gives (it its) head, i.e. dismisses (it)” (Nich.).

<sup>1479</sup> Qur’ān 28:88.

<sup>1480</sup> *Dīwān-e Shams-e Tabrīzī*, Ode 971.

<sup>1481</sup> Ḥadīth Qudsī: “Whoever loves Me, that person I kill, and whomever I kill, I owe that person blood-money.”

*Aḥādīth-e Mathnawī* p. 404.

<sup>1482</sup> The Persian word *jān* can mean both “soul” and “life”.

<sup>1483</sup> Verses 3-3834 and 3-3835 refer to the manifold variety of “states” experienced by the mystic and his successively “passing away” (*fanā*) from these until he attains to union with God (Nich.).

<sup>1484</sup> Qur’ān 6:160.

- 3-3901 I died to the inorganic state and became endowed with growth, and then I died to vegetable growth and attained to the animal state.
- 3-3902 I died from animality and became Adam (man): why, then, should I fear? When have I become less by dying?
- 3-3903 At the next move I shall die to man, that I may soar and lift up my head amongst angels;
- 3-3905 Once more I shall be sacrificed and die to the angel: I shall become that which is beyond imagination.
- 3-3904 And I must escape<sup>1486</sup> even from the state of the angel: *everything is perishable except His Face*<sup>1487</sup>.
- 3-3906 Then I shall become non-existence: non-existence says to me, in tones loud as an organ, *Verily, unto Him shall we return*<sup>1488</sup>.
- 3-3907 Know death to be that what the community of believers are agreed upon, namely, that the Water of Life is hidden in the Land of Darkness.
- 3-3908 Grow from this river-bank, like the water-lily, greedy and craving for death as he who suffers from oedema<sup>1489</sup>.
- 3-3909 The water is death to him, and yet he seeks the water and drinks it – and God knows best what is right.

**The Third Rivulet [3.3.3]  
The Unicity of God – Tawḥīd,  
or the final stage, when the sālik  
sees nothing but the Beloved.**

- 1-3009 What is the meaning of learning the knowledge of Divine Unity (*Tawḥīd*)? To consume yourself in the presence of the One.
- 1-3005 Since his heart has learned to light the candle of spiritual knowledge and love, the sun cannot burn him.
- 1-3010 If you wish to shine like day, burn up your night-like self-existence.
- 1-3011 Melt away your existence, as copper melts away in the Elixir<sup>1490</sup>, in the being of Him who fosters and sustains existence.

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<sup>1485</sup> This is a quotation. The author of the verse is the famous Ḥallāj (Nich.).

<sup>1486</sup> Literally “leap out of the river” (Nich.).

<sup>1487</sup> Qur’ān 28:88.

<sup>1488</sup> Qur’ān 2:156. Verses 3-3901 to 3-3906 seem analogous to Darwin’s evolution theory. Yet many scholars who study Persian mystical literature don’t believe that these verses are about Darwinian evolution. In their opinion they describe man’s spiritual evolution through various stages.

<sup>1489</sup> Oedema, formerly known as dropsy or hydropsy, an illness in which watery fluid collects in the body.



- 1-3055 Whoever utters “I” and “we” at the door of the Divine Court, is turned back from the door and is continuing in *no*<sup>1491</sup> (nonentity).

### Story. [3.3.3]

- 1-3056 A certain man came and knocked at a friend’s door: his beloved asked him, “Who are you, o trusty one?”
- 1-3057 He answered, “I”. The beloved said, “Go away, it is not the time for you to come in: at a table like this there is no place for the raw.”
- 1-3058 Except the fire of absence and separation, who will cook the raw one? Who will deliver him from hypocrisy?
- 1-3059 The wretched man went away, travelled for a year, separated from his beloved, and was burned with sparks of fire.
- 1-3060 That burned one was cooked: then he returned and again paced to and fro beside the house of his playing companion.
- 1-3061 He knocked at the door with a hundred fears and respects, for fear that any disrespectful word might escape from his lips.
- 1-3062 His beloved called to him, “Who is at the door?” He answered, “It is you who is at the door, o charmer of hearts.”
- 1-3063 “Now,” said the friend beloved, “since you are I, come in, o myself: there is no room in the house for two I’s.
- 1-3064 The double end of thread is not for the needle: since you are single (alone), come into this needle.”
- 1-3078 The thread has become single. Now do not fall into error if you see that the letters *Kāf* and *Nūn* are two<sup>1492</sup>.
- 1-3080 That is why the noose must be double in the world of forms, even though those two letters are single in effect.
- 6-3707 Do not be intoxicated with these cups, which are phenomenal forms, for fear that you should become a carver of idols and an idolater.

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<sup>1490</sup> In the original text the term *kīmīyā* is used, meaning “alchemy”.

<sup>1491</sup> I.e. the word *lā*, which means “no”. This word is the beginning of the Arabic phrase *Lā ilāha illā ‘Llāh* – “There is no deity but God”, “Nothing is worthy of worship but God”, or – in the view of the Šūfī mystics – “Nothing exists but God” or “There is no Reality but God”. The phrase *Lā ilāha illā ‘Llāh* is known as *Kalimatu ‘t-Tawhīd* (“the Word of Divine Unity”). It consists of two parts: a negation or *naḥī* – *Lā ilāha* (“there is no deity”, “nothing exists”, “there is no reality”), followed by an affirmation or *ithbāt* – *illā ‘Llāh* (“but God”). The phrase *Lā ilāha illā ‘Llāh* is of fundamental importance to the Šūfī practice of *zikr* (< Arabic *dhikr*), i.e. “Remembrance (of God)”. “Drawing the sword of *no*” may be interpreted as a reference to this practice of Divine remembrance.

<sup>1492</sup> The letters *Kāf* and *Nūn*, when united make up the Creative Word *KuN*, “Be” (Nich.).

- 6-3708 Abandon the cups, namely, the phenomenal forms: do not tarry! There is wine in the cup, but it is not derived from the cup.
- 6-3709 Open your mouth wide to the Giver of the wine: when the wine comes, the cup will not be lacking.
- 6-3712 Form is brought into existence by the Formless, just as smoke is produced by a fire.
- 6-3714 But Formlessness throws you into absolute bewilderment: from non-instrumentality<sup>1493</sup> a hundred kinds of instruments are born.
- 6-2683 That of which I speak is not the sort of oneness that reason understands: the understanding of this oneness depends on a man's dying to himself;
- 6-2684 And if it were possible to perceive this oneness by means of reason, then why should battle against the lower self (*nafs*) have become a duty?
- 6-2685 Why, with such infinite mercy as He has, would the King of intellect say unnecessarily "Kill yourself",<sup>1494?</sup>

### Existence and non-existence. [3.3.3]

- 5-1026 God has caused the non-existent to appear existent and magnificent; He has caused the existent to appear in the form of non-existence.
- 5-1027 He has hidden the Sea and made the foam visible; He has hidden the Wind and shown the dust to you.
- 5-1030 You see the foam moving in every direction: without the Sea the foam has no turning-place<sup>1495</sup>.
- 3-1271 Day and night there is the movement of foam-flecks from the Sea; you see the foam, but not the Sea. How wondrous!
- 5-1034 Consequently we were bewildered by error, since Reality was hidden and Fantasy visible.
- 2-3323 These fleeting things have become a veil over that Face<sup>1496</sup>, like a lantern hidden under a bowl.

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<sup>1493</sup> In this verse "instrument" refers to power and "non-instrumentality" to powerlessness". When a Sūfī wayfarer or *sālik* has reached the stage of *Fanā* (annihilation in God), he/she abandons his/her own will for the sake of his/her Beloved. In this stage God takes over the *sālik*'s own will. Whatever the *sālik* does after this is in reality an act of God; this process is called "non-instrumentality".

<sup>1494</sup> I.e. "practise self-mortification, die to self" (Nich.).

<sup>1495</sup> I.e. no power of turning one way or another (Nich.).

<sup>1496</sup> To be able to understand this, it is necessary to know the two preceding verses: [2-3321 "Before the infinite all that is finite is nothing: *everything is perishable except the Face of God*\*". [2-3322] "Infidelity and faith do not exist where the Shaykh is, because he is the kernel, while these two are only colour and husk." \* Qur'ān 28:88.

- 2-1280 This phenomenal world of non-existence has become like real existence, while the world of real existence has become very hidden.
- 2-1282 This, which is busy in appearance, in reality is idle and superficial, like a husk; and that which is hidden is its core and origin.
- 1-417 The bird is flying on high, and its shadow is speeding on the earth, flying like a bird:
- 1-418 Some fool begins to chase the shadow, running after it so far that he becomes powerless (exhausted).
- 1-419 Not knowing that it is the reflection of the bird in the air, not knowing where the origin of the shadow is.
- 1-2807 He was left far from the object of his desire – his labour lost, his toil useless, his foot wounded,
- 1-2808 Like the hunter who catches a shadow – how should the shadow become his property?
- 1-2809 The man grasped tightly the shadow of a bird, while the bird on the branch of the tree has fallen into amazement,
- 1-2810 Thinking, “I wonder who this crack-brained fellow is laughing at? Here’s folly for you, here’s a rotten cause<sup>1497</sup>!”

### **Existence (this world) as a veil before the light of Truth. [3.3.3]**

- 6-1019 In the same way as He caused the light to flow from the fountain of your eye with liberality<sup>1498</sup> and without abating<sup>1499</sup>;
- 6-1020 It has no source of supply either in the fat (the white of the eye) or in the coating (retina); but the Beloved made these a veil for Himself when He brought light into existence.
- 6-1021 The attracting<sup>1500</sup> air in the cavity of the ear understands that which is spoken, whether it is true or false.
- 6-1022 What is that air within that little bone, that air which receives the words and sounds uttered by the story-teller?
- 6-1023 The bone and the air are only a veil: in the two worlds there is none except God.

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<sup>1497</sup> I.e. a cause that cannot lead to any good result (Nich.).

<sup>1498</sup> Literally “without stinginess”.

<sup>1499</sup> Here it is helpful to know the preceding verse: [6-1018] “For God has made that rock as shield (veil) for Himself and opened a way for the blue crystalline water”.

<sup>1500</sup> I.e. drawing the spoken words to itself (Nich.).

### **The secret of the lover's unification with the Beloved and the transformation of human qualities into Divine attributes. [3.3.3]**

- 6-2096 When a man's "I" is denied and eliminated from existence, then what remains? Consider, o denier.
- 1-3124 Noah said, "O you headstrong ones, I am not I: I am dead to the animal soul, I am living through the Soul of souls.
- 1-3125 Since I am dead to the senses of the father of mankind (human sense-perceptions), God has become my hearing, perception and sight.
- 1-3126 Since I am not I, this breath of mine is His: if anyone breathes a word in the presence of this breath he is a denier<sup>1501</sup>."
- 6-1192 How is the "how" (contingent being) that has been freed from "how-ness" (conditionedness) and has attained to the abounding life<sup>1502</sup> of "how-lessness"?
- 6-1193 He has become a dispenser of "how-ness" in the world of non-spatiality<sup>1503</sup>: all "how's" are gathered around his table, like dogs.
- 6-1194 He gives (throws) to them a bone from the table of "how-lessness". You, who are in a state of uncleanness, be silent: do not recite this Sūra of the Qur'ān.
- 6-1195 Until you wash yourself entirely clean of "how-ness", do not put your hand on this Holy Book, o youth.
- 1-1765 Anyone whose prayer-niche is turned to mystical revelation, consider his going back to traditional faith as shameful.
- 3-344 O brave friend, take hold of the skirt of Him who is free from "above" and "below".
- 3-346 He is with you in space and in the spaceless world when you leave house and shop behind.
- 1-2686 If you gain access to that King, you will become a king: how long will you go after every kind of misfortune?

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<sup>1501</sup> In the original text the word *kāfir* is used, which usually is translated as "infidel", "unbeliever" or "pagan"; however, the literal meaning of *kāfir* is "one who covers the Truth".

<sup>1502</sup> Literally "the place abounding with life" (Nich.).

<sup>1503</sup> Non-spatiality: *lā makān*, literally "no space", i.e. "the Placeless Realm", the place of the deity, where there is no space and time, a state beyond our conception.

**Unification with the Beloved does not mean becoming the Beloved,  
but rather losing one's ego and seeing the Beloved everywhere. [3.3.3]**

- 6-1855      And that ultimately the vat of single-colouredness of our Jesus<sup>1504</sup> may destroy the value of the vat containing a hundred dyes<sup>1505</sup>.
- 2-1346      When the mystic falls into the vat, and you say to him, “Get up”, he says in rapture, “I am the vat: do not blame me.”
- 2-1347      That “I am the vat” is the same as saying “I am God”: he has the colour of the fire, even though he is iron.
- 2-1348      The colour of the iron is annihilated in the colour of the fire: the iron boasts of its fieriness, even though actually it is like someone who keeps silence.
- 2-1349      When it has become like gold of the mine in redness, then without tongue its boast is “I am the fire”.
- 2-1350      It has become glorified by the colour and nature of the fire: it says, “I am the fire, I am the fire.
- 2-1351      I am the fire; if you have doubt and suspicion, try it, put your hand on me.
- 2-1355      What fire? What iron? Close your lips: do not laugh at the beard of him who makes comparisons<sup>1506</sup>.
- 6-3212      The Khwāja<sup>1507</sup> is annihilated: do not call him existent, o bold-eyed (impudent) man! How should the clod of earth remain dry in a River like this?
- 4-1827      For Muḥammad said, “The scent of God is coming to me from Yemen, wafted on the hand of the zephyr<sup>1508</sup>”.
- 4-1828      The scent of Rāmīn is coming from the soul of Wīs<sup>1509</sup>; the scent of God, too, is coming from Uways<sup>1510</sup>.

<sup>1504</sup> I.e. the spiritual world of Unity and Reality

<sup>1505</sup> I.e. the world of plurality (Nich.).

<sup>1506</sup> I.e. do not mock the comparison by suggesting that it corresponds with reality (Nich.).

<sup>1507</sup> *Khwāja* (< Fārsī *khwājah*, more or less pronounced *khōjé*) is an honorific title given to people of distinction. In Sufism, particularly in the Indian subcontinent, it takes on the meaning of “Master”, e.g. Ḥaḏrat Khwāja Mu‘īnu’d-dīn Chishtī, the great Ṣūfī Saint of Ajmēr, Rājasthān, India. But also outside the Indian subcontinent Ṣūfī Masters have borne this title. A few examples: the prominent Persian Ṣūfī mystic and prolific author Ḥaḏrat Khwāja ‘Abdullāh Anṣārī of Herāt (1006-1088 CE) and the influential Turkic Ṣūfī Master Ḥaḏrat Khwāja Aḥmad Yasawī (1093-1066 CE), who lived and worked in Kazākhstān. It is also worth mentioning that between the 12<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries CE the Naqshbandī Ṣūfī Order was known as *Ṭarīqat-e Khwājagān*, i.e. “the Way of the Masters” (*Khwājagān* is the plural of *Khwāja*). The Naqshbandī Ṣūfī Order took its present name from the illustrious Master Ḥaḏrat Khwāja Bahā’u’d-dīn Shāh Naqshband of Bukhārā (1318–1389 CE).

<sup>1508</sup> Zephyr (*ṣabā*): literally “the west wind”; a mild and gentle breeze.

<sup>1509</sup> The love of Rāmīn for Wīs, the wife of King Mūbad of Merw, is the subject of an early Persian romance (Nich.).

<sup>1510</sup> Ḥaḏrat Uways al-Qarnī or al-Qaranī (d. 667 CE) was a mystic, martyr and philosopher who lived in Yemen, during the lifetime of the Prophet Muḥammad. Even though they never met personally, Ḥaḏrat Uways al-Qarnī converted to Islām. He had a strong inner bond of profound spiritual understanding and love with Ḥaḏrat

- 4-1830 Since Uways had died to himself, the earthly Uways had become heavenly.
- 4-1831 The myrobalan<sup>1511</sup> conserved in sugar – its bitter taste is not retained anymore.
- 4-1832 Similarly, the spiritual myrobalan that is freed from egoism has only the appearance of myrobalan, but not the flavour.
- 6-1856 For that world of Unity is like a salt-mine: whatever has gone there has become free from coloration (dyeing with various colours).
- 6-1857 Look at the earth: it makes many-coloured (diverse) humankind to be all of one colour in their graves.
- 6-1858 This is the salt-mine for visible (material) bodies, but in reality the salt-mine for ideal (supersensible) things is different.
- 6-1859 The salt-mine for ideal things is ideal (spiritual and real): it remains new<sup>1512</sup> from eternity to eternity<sup>1513</sup>.
- 6-1860 This earthly newness has oldness as its opposite, but that newness (belonging to the world of Reality) is without opposite, equal or number.

### **Transcending duality and drawing nearer to unification and union with the Beloved. [3.3.3]**

- 5-4081 Come into the river of reality, dash the pitcher of phenomenal form against the stone, set fire to mere scent and colour.
- 5-4082 If you are not one of the highwaymen on the Way of the Religion, do not be addicted, like women<sup>1514</sup>, to colour and scent.
- 3-1418 The true Beloved is the one who is unique, who is your beginning and end.
- 1-498 Until you pass beyond the difference between poison and sugar, how will you catch a scent of unity and oneness?
- 1-683 Make stubborn form waste away with suffering, that under it you may see (discover) unity, like a buried treasure.

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Muḥammad – a bond that was mutual. It is said that they “communicated heart to heart”, in an unseen way. Every Sūfī order has a chain of transmission of mystical power (*Baraka*) and succession of Masters. These chains are called *silsila*-s. When in a certain *silsila* transmission from one Master to another happens in an unseen way, without physical contact between the two, and transcending the boundaries of time and space, it is called an “Uwaysī transmission”, after Ḥaẓrat Uways al-Qarnī. Also see *Aḥādīth-e Mathnawī*, p. 250.

<sup>1511</sup> A kind of oriental fruit.

<sup>1512</sup> Literally “is in the state of newness” (Nich.).

<sup>1513</sup> Two different words for “eternity” are used here: *azal* and *abad* respectively. The difference between the two is that *azal* has no beginning and that *abad* has a beginning but no ending.

<sup>1514</sup> When Ḥaẓrat Mawlānā Rūmī speaks about “woman” or “women” in certain parts of the *Mathnawī*, it is only meant metaphorically, as it refers to the qualities of the lower self or *nafs*. Generally speaking, Sūfīs see women as the manifestation of Divine Beauty.

- 6-2028 Go to the Sea of whose fish you are born: how have you fallen, like rubbish, into the beard<sup>1515</sup>?
- 6-2029 You are not rubbish – may it be far from you! You are envied by the pearl: you have the first and foremost right to dwell amidst the waves and the sea.
- 6-2030 It is the Sea of Unity: there is no companion or consort: its pearls and fishes are not different from its waves.

**Although God may be witnessed in countless manifestations,  
His Essence always remains one. [3.3.3]**

### Poem:

**“When a face is reflected by hundreds of mirrors, the face always  
remains the same, even though the mirrors are manifold.” [3.3.3]**

- 6-1606 Since all these rivers flow from a single Sea, then why is this river honey and that river poison in the mouth?
- 6-1605 Since the whole of Creation has come from a single Hand, why has this one come sober and that one intoxicated?
- 6-1607 Since all lights are derived from the everlasting Sun, why did the true dawn and the false dawn<sup>1516</sup> rise?
- 6-1608 Since the blackness of every person’s eye is derived from a single eyewash, why did true sight and squinting come into being?
- 6-1610 Since God has called the Way “My Way”, why is this way a trusty guardian and that way a highwayman?
- 6-1612 Whoever saw a Unity with so many thousand numbers, or a hundred thousand movements proceeding from the essence of Rest?
- 6-1617 All this conditionality<sup>1517</sup> is tossing like foam on the surface of the unconditioned Sea.
- 6-1622 Opposites and likes, in number as the leaves of the orchard, are but a flake of foam on the Sea that has no like<sup>1518</sup> or opposite.

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<sup>1515</sup> In order to be able to understand this verse it is useful to know the previous one: [6-2027] “That which the bushy-bearded man never saw in his own house is immediately clear to him who has but a few hairs on his chin”.

<sup>1516</sup> The difference between “true dawn” and “false dawn” is this: when you have not yet reached the ability to distinguish true from false, you are liable to mistake the dim light that appears some time before the true sunrise for the actual dawn, which is bright. The false dawn’s dim light is deceptive. This is why in Persian the inability to distinguish the “true dawn” from the “false dawn” is called *hawā-ye mīsh wa gurg*, i.e. “not seeing the difference between a sheep and a wolf”.

<sup>1517</sup> Literally “all this ‘how’ and ‘of what sort’”? (Nich.).

- 6-1623 See that the victory and defeat of the Sea<sup>1519</sup> are unconditioned: how, then, should there be room for conditionality in the essence of the Sea?
- 6-1624 Your soul is the least of its playthings; yet how can the quality and description of the soul be ascertained?
- 6-1625 Such a Sea, then, of which every drop's intellect and soul are more familiar<sup>1520</sup> than the body –
- 6-1626 How should it be contained in the narrow room of quantity and quality? There even Universal Reason is one of the ignorant.
- 6-1630 Here the resplendent sun pays homage to the speck of dust, like a servant.
- 6-1631 There the lion lays his head in submission before the deer; here the falcon lays (droops) its wings before the partridge.
- 2-1356 Do not set foot in the Sea<sup>1521</sup>, do not speak of It: on the shore of the Sea keep silence, biting your lips in amazement.
- 2-1358 May my soul and mind be a sacrifice to the Sea: this Sea has paid the blood-price of mind and soul.
- 2-1359 I will march in It as long as my feet move; when I have no feet anymore<sup>1522</sup>, I plunge into It, like ducks.
- 6-4063 My soul has boasted that it is a water-bird: why should it lament the storm of affliction?
- 6-4064 What does the duck care about shipwreck? Its feet in the water are ship enough.
- 6-4065 My soul and body are kept alive by this boast: how then should I refrain from this boast?
- 6-4067 Even if you behead me a hundred times, I am like a candle: I will burn brightly (still).
- 2-1361 O you whose body is soiled, visit<sup>1523</sup> the water tank: outside of the water tank; how shall a man be cleansed?
- 2-1362 The pure one who has been banished from the water tank also becomes far removed from his purity.

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<sup>1518</sup> I.e. something resembling it.

<sup>1519</sup> I.e. the opposite attributes of God (Nich.).

<sup>1520</sup> Literally “greater upstarts”, i.e. more uninitiated and uninformed. The ignorance of the intellect and spirit concerning the Essence of God is more profound than the ignorance of the body concerning themselves (Nich.).

<sup>1521</sup> I.e. leave the Sea of Divine Unity untouched and unprofaned by your comparisons (Nich.).

<sup>1522</sup> Literally “when feet do not remain”.

<sup>1523</sup> Literally “move around in”.



### **The mystic is immersed in the ocean of God's Essence and has reached oneness (waḥda). [3.3.3]**

- 2-2812 The man who is veiled from the Essence sees the Divine action as proceeding from the Attributes: he who has lost the Essence is confined to the Attributes<sup>1524</sup>.
- 2-2813 Since those who are united with God are absorbed in the Essence, o son, how should they see His Attributes?
- 2-2814 When your head is at the bottom of the river, how will your eye fall on the colour of the water?
- 2-2816 The devotion of the common folk is sin for the elect; know that the state of union of the common folk is a veil for the elect<sup>1525</sup>.
- 3-1256 If you keep looking at the glass of the lantern, you will be lost, because from the glass arise the numbers of (the plurality) of the finite body.
- 3-1257 But if you keep your gaze fixed on the Light, you will be delivered from duality and the numbers (plurality) of the finite body.
- 3-1258 The different notions on the kernel of Existence come from different point of views, that's why there is theoretically discord between the believers, the unbelievers<sup>1526</sup> and the deniers of the Truth<sup>1527</sup>.

### **Allegory: Different words but the same goal. [3.3.3]**

- 3-1259 The elephant was in a dark house: some Indians had brought it for exhibition.
- 3-1260 In order to see it, many people were going, everyone, into that darkness.
- 3-1261 As seeing it with the eye was impossible, each one was feeling in the dark with the palm of his hand.

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<sup>1524</sup> Literally "is in the Attributes".

<sup>1525</sup> I.e. in their case it would be a state of separation from God (Nich.).

<sup>1526</sup> The word used in the Persian text is *gabr*, which originally meant "fire-worshipper" or "Zoroastrian". By the time of Ḥaẓrat Mawlānā Rūmī, the term *gabr* was applied to anyone who didn't adhere to Islām. Since *gabr* had such a pejorative connotation, in time followers of the Zoroastrian faith were given the respectable name *Zardushṭī*. Therefore *Gabr* can be translated as "unbelievers".

<sup>1527</sup> In Nicholson's translation it says "Jews" instead of "deniers of the Truth". But this is wrong. The word Ḥaẓrat Mawlānā Rūmī uses in the *Mathnawī* is *jahūd*, which is often confused with the word *Yahūd* ("Jews"). *Jahūd* is best translated as "deniers of the Truth". *Jahūd* is similar in meaning to the Arabic word *kāfir*, another word that is very often misinterpreted and misunderstood. It is usually translated as "infidel", "unbeliever", or "pagan". Yet in Arabic, *kāfir* literally means "one who covers the Truth", i.e. "someone who is spiritually ignorant and blind". As such, a *kāfir* can belong to any religious group or faith, including Islām. The same applies to the term *jahūd*.

- 3-1264 Since another handled its leg, he said, “I found the elephant’s shape to be like a pillar”.
- 3-1265 Another laid his hand on its back: he said, “Truly, this elephant was like a throne”.
- 3-1262 The hand of one fell on its trunk: he said, “This creature is like a water-pipe”.
- 3-1263 The hand of another touched its ear: to him it appeared to be like a fan.
- 3-1266 Similarly, whenever anyone heard a description of the elephant, he only understood it as the part that he had touched.
- 3-1267 Because of the diverse places of view, their statements differed: one man entitled it “*dāl*”, another “*alif*”<sup>1528</sup>.
- 3-1268 If there had been a candle in each one’s hand, the difference would have disappeared from their words.
- 3-1269 The eye of sense-perception is only like the palm of the hand: the palm does not have power to reach the whole of it (the elephant).
- 3-1270 The eye of the Sea<sup>1529</sup> is one thing, and the foam<sup>1530</sup> another: leave the foam and look with the eye of the Sea.

### **The eternity of God’s Essence<sup>1531</sup> and the meaning of the Divine colour which is without colour. [3.3.3]**

- 6-59 Colourlessness is the origin of colours, peaces are the origins of war.
- 1-2467 Since colourlessness (pure Unity) became the captive of colour (manifestation in the phenomenal world), a Moses came into conflict with a Moses.
- 1-2468 When you attain to the colourlessness which you originally possessed, Moses and Pharaoh are at peace with each other.
- 2-1345 *The dye (i.e. religion) of Allāh*<sup>1532</sup> is the dyeing-vat of *Hū* (the Absolute God): in it all multi-coloured things become of one colour.
- 6-3214 The only real Creator seeks and prevails over all, so that He may utterly destroy all unreal existences.
- 6-3234 But if you get two eyes that can recognize God, you will see that the entire expanse of both worlds is full of the Beloved.

<sup>1528</sup> I.e. crooked like the letter *ḍ* or straight like the letter *ḏ* (Nich.)

<sup>1529</sup> I.e. the eye of Reality (Nich.).

<sup>1530</sup> I.e. phenomena (Nich.).

<sup>1531</sup> Qur’ān 28:88.

<sup>1532</sup> Qur’ān 2:138.

- 6-2146 It is far beyond all conceptions and imaginations, it is the Light of light of light of light of light of light of light.
- 6-2097 If you have an eye, open it and look! After “no”<sup>1533</sup>, why, what else remains?
- 6-2266 He said, “*There is no god*”, and He said, “*but God*”: *not any god* became *but God*, and Unity blossomed (was revealed).
- 3-35 If the noble are thousands (seemingly), there is no more than one in reality: it is not like the fantasies of him who thinks in terms of numbers.
- 6-2032 In the Sea there is no partnership<sup>1534</sup> or perplexity; but what can I say to him who sees double? Nothing, nothing.
- 5-1709 When the eye is quite perfect, it sees the root (origin); when a man is squint-eyed, it sees the branch (derivative).
- 6-2033 Since we are the companions of those who see double, o idolater, it is necessary to speak like him who attributes a partner to God (*shirk*).
- 6-2034 That Unity is beyond description and condition: nothing comes into the arena (domain) of speech except duality.
- 6-2035 Either, like the double-seeing man, drink in (absorb and be satisfied with) this duality, or close your mouth and be very silent;
- 6-2036 Or do both in turn, now silence, now speech: in the company of the uninitiated beat the drum like him who sees double, and peace be with you.
- 6-819 This duality is characteristic of the eye that sees double; but in reality the first is the last and the last is the first.
- 1-3923 Everything except Allāh is vain: verily the grace of Allāh is a cloud pouring abundantly and continually.
- 6-2186 Listen, o boastful speaker, it is the hour for mumbling: if you speak clearly to the people, it is a shameful exposure.
- 1-3136 My power is broken (fails me) on reaching this point: how can I explain this mystery?

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<sup>1533</sup> I.e. the word *lā*, which means “no”. This word is the beginning of the Arabic phrase *Lā ilāha illā ‘Llāh* – “There is no deity but God”, “Nothing is worthy of worship but God”, or – in the view of the Ṣūfī mystics – “Nothing exists but God” or “There is no Reality but God”. The phrase *Lā ilāha illā ‘Llāh* is known as *Kalimatu ‘t-Tawhīd* (“the Word of Divine Unity”). It consists of two parts: a negation or *naḥī* – *Lā ilāha* (“there is no deity”, “nothing exists”, “there is no reality”), followed by an affirmation or *ithbāt* – *illā ‘Llāh* (“but God”). The phrase *Lā ilāha illā ‘Llāh* is of fundamental importance to the Ṣūfī practice of *zikr* (< Arabic *dhikr*), i.e. “Remembrance (of God)”. “Drawing the sword of *no*” may be interpreted as a reference to this practice of Divine remembrance.

<sup>1534</sup> Partnership = *shirk*. See the footnote for verse 5-590 in the First Rivulet of the First River of the Third Source.

- 1-3138 Lay the whole of your “we” and “I” before Him: the kingdom is His kingdom: give the kingdom to Him.
- 1-3921 Apart from You alone, everything that is sweet or unsweet is man-destroying<sup>1535</sup> and is the essence of fire.
- 6-2236 You have seen the fire that burns every dry sapling; now see the fire of the Soul by which fantasy is burnt.
- 6-2237 Neither for fantasy nor for reality is there any protection against a fire like this which blazed up from the soul.

### **Where the meaning (Essence) transcends the words. [3.3.3]**

- 3-4730 Beware, beware! Be careful not to utter a breath! First spring up and seek a trusted friend.
- 3-4731 You are a lover and are intoxicated, and your tongue is loosened! – God! God! You are like the camel on the water-spout<sup>1536</sup>!
- 3-4732 When the tongue tells of His mystery and coquetry, Heaven chants the prayer, “O you who are beautiful in covering!”
- 3-4733 What covering can there be? The fire is in the wool and cotton: while you are covering it up, it is all the more manifest.
- 3-4734 When I try to hide His Love’s secret, He lifts up His head, like a banner, saying, “Look, here am I!”
- 5-2141 Had it not been for the trouble caused by one who is unfamiliar with what I mean to say, I would have spoken a few words concerning loyalty.
- 3-1292 No, I will not tell it, because you still are unripe: you are in your springtime, you have not seen the month of Tamūz<sup>1537</sup>.
- 3-4193 I am speaking bitter words to you, in order that I may wash you clean of all bitterness.
- 3-4195 When, from having endured bitterness (self-mortification), your heart is filled with blood like the grape, then you will escape from all bitterness.
- 1-3820 I will make an end. If this discourse goes further, not only hearts but rocks will bleed<sup>1538</sup>.

<sup>1535</sup> Literally “man-burning” (Nich.).

<sup>1536</sup> I.e. on the brink of danger.

<sup>1537</sup> *Tamūz* or *Tammūz* is a summer month of 29 days. It was adopted from the Babylonian/Assyrian calendar, in which the month was named after one of the main Babylonian Gods, *Tammūz*. Gregorian equivalent: June/July.

<sup>1538</sup> Literally “what of the liver? For the hard rock will become blood” (Nich.).

- 1-3821 If these hearts<sup>1539</sup> have not bled, it is not because of their hardness, it is because of bewilderment, preoccupation and misfortune.
- 1-3822 They will bleed one day when blood is of no use to them: bleed at a time when your blood is not rejected.
- 5-2142 But since a world (multitude of people) seeks to raise doubt and difficulty, we will let the discourse run beyond the skin<sup>1540</sup>.
- 5-2143 If you break your material self, you will become a kernel and will hear the tale of an elegant kernel<sup>1541</sup>.
- 5-2144 The voices of walnuts are in their skins (shells): where, indeed, is any voice in the kernel and the oil?
- 5-2145 The kernel has a voice, but one that is not suited to the bodily ear: its voice is hidden in the ear of ecstasy<sup>1542</sup>.
- 5-2148 Be without lip and without ear for a while, and then, like the lip, be the companion of honey.
- 1-568 Become without sense, without ear and without thought, that you may hear the call of God to the soul, "*Return!*"<sup>1543</sup>
- 6-697 In keeping silence our inward speaking of Him is only made more evident, since the desire for manifestation becomes stronger by suppressing it.
- 6-696 Reason says, "If I keep silence, I fear that the Sun will rend the veil and display Himself from another place.
- 6-699 To utter words about Him is to shut the window through which He reveals Himself: by merely speaking of Him you conceal Him.
- 6-700 Sing, like nightingales, in the presence of the Rose, in order that you may divert them<sup>1544</sup> from the scent of the Rose.
- 1-3090 The rational spirit (the Logos) comes to the mouth for the purpose of teaching: otherwise it would not come, for truly that speech a separate channel.
- 1-1758 I have told it briefly, I have not explained it at length, otherwise both your perceptions and my tongue would be consumed.

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<sup>1539</sup> Literally "livers" (Nich.). In Persian culture, the liver is considered as the seat of strong emotions, especially of courage, but also of compassion.

<sup>1540</sup> I.e. "we will not discuss the subject, because words are mere symbols which cannot be understood by non-mystics except in a superficial sense" (Nich.).

<sup>1541</sup> I.e. "you will receive spiritual communications" (Nich.).

<sup>1542</sup> Literally "drinking", i.e. mystical perception (Nich.).

<sup>1543</sup> Qur'ān 89:28.

<sup>1544</sup> The lovers of God (Nich.).

- 1-1762 In order that this subject may not come to every ear, I am telling only one out of a hundred esoteric mysteries.
- 1-579 Lay on the beast a burden in proportion to its force, lay on the weak a task in proportion to their strength.
- 1-580 The bait for every bird is according to the bird's size (capacity): how should a fig be the food (lure) for every bird?
- 1-581 If you give a baby bread instead of milk, take it for granted that the poor baby will die of the bread;
- 1-582 Yet afterwards, when it grows teeth, that baby will ask for bread of itself.
- 1-583 When an unfledged bird begins to fly, it becomes a mouthful for any rapacious cat;
- 1-584 But when it grows wings, it will fly of itself without trouble and without whistling (prompting), good or bad.
- 4-2577 Since my task happens to be with a child, I must use the language suitable for a child<sup>1545</sup>.
- 4-2061 From within a hundred sweet-breathing silent ones put their hands on their lips, meaning, "It's enough".
- 4-2062 Silence is the sea, and speech is like the river. The sea seeks you: do not seek the river.
- 4-2063 Do not turn your head away from the indications given by the sea: conclude the subject – and God knows best which course is right.

### **The epilogue of this Book. [3.3.3]**

- 6-4620 These topics may be discussed up to this point, but all that comes after this must be kept hidden;
- 6-4621 And if you would tell it and make a hundred thousand efforts, it is fruitless work, for it will never become clear.
- 6-4622 As far as the sea, it is a journey on horseback<sup>1546</sup>: after this you need a wooden horse.
- 6-4623 The wooden horse is no good on the dry land: it only carries those who travel on the sea.

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<sup>1545</sup> Literally "loosen the tongue" (Nich.).

<sup>1546</sup> Literally "a journey of horse and saddle" (Nich.).

- 6-4624 The wooden horse is this mystical silence: its silence gives instruction to the people of the sea.
- 6-4625 In reality, every such silent one who annoys you is uttering shrieks of love in that Direction.
- 6-4626 You say, "I wonder why he is silent"; he says to himself, "How strange! Where is his ear?"
- 6-4627 I am deafened by the shrieks, yet he is unaware of them." The apparently sharp-eared are in fact deaf to this mystical conversation.
- 6-4628 For example, someone cries aloud in his dream and utters a hundred thousand discussions and communications,
- 6-4629 While this other, sitting beside him, is unaware of it: in reality it is he who is asleep and deaf to all that turmoil and tumult.
- 6-4630 And he whose wooden horse is shattered and sunk in the water of the sea, in reality he is the fish.
- 6-4631 He is neither silent nor speaking: he is a marvel: there is no name to describe his state.
- 6-4632 He does not belong to these two categories, and yet in reality that prodigy is both: to explain this would overstep the boundaries of due respect.
- 3-970 Now that my exposition has reached this point, it lays down its head and expires; and God knows best how to guide in the right Way.

### **Epilogue by Mawlānā Ḥusayn Wā'iz-e Kāshifī**

- 1- Thanks be to God for granting me the ability to pick the pure and spiritual fruits in the garden of this paradise (i.e. the Mathnawī) with tenderness, gentleness, gracefulness and love

I placed them in a bowl for the sāliks, from whom I had learnt so much

These words are the essence of essences of the Mathnawī,  
which is like food for the spirit of true lovers

- 5-The Mathnawī is a treasure that words cannot grasp  
and contains infinite realities

Words fail to praise him who divulged this treasure

He (Ḥaẓrat Mawlānā Rūmī) was able to disclose it,

and the way in which this sublime and noble one did so,  
is full of beauty and splendour

My words also fail to exalt that spiritual monarch (Ḥaẓrat Mawlānā Rūmī),  
just as dark dust is unable to praise the moon

Yet his eyes could see that Light,  
and his ears could hear His praise

10-Those who are obscured by illusion and doubt  
cannot say anything about mystical Certainty

Since he (Ḥaẓrat Mawlānā Rūmī) was immersed into non-existence,  
the signs of existence would also dissolve into him

His Mathnawī is like a pearl that  
transcends all thoughts and words

If one single pearl can fascinate us that much, then  
what would happen if we saw a big wave from that Ocean?

The Mathnawī is but a cup, drawn from that jar of  
spiritual wine, to enrapture men by its fragrance

15-If someone can get so bemused by its fragrance alone, then  
what would happen if he drank from this jar of spiritual wine?

The Mathnawī is like a fathomless ocean,  
incomprehensible to the minds of those who dive in it

We have chosen but a few fine and beautiful pearls  
from that exalted ocean

Intended for those who do not know the way to that ocean and  
are satisfied with the ocean's fragrance that these pearls emit

And if someone has not received a jug of this spiritual wine,  
then these words should satisfy his need

20-Working on this fruit from the unseen world (*ghayb*) was  
completed on a Saturday, at the end of the month of Ramaḍān

In the year 875 AH (1455 CE) the magic



of this treasure ascended upwards

The Mathnawī was made manifest once more  
for the sultān<sup>1547</sup> who possesses Divine qualities

The celestial sun of generosity and greatness,  
the majesty of elevated spiritual rank

The pearl of the ocean of knowledge and wisdom  
The lord with a pure heart and the qualities of a true Ṣūfī

25-His mind is so perfect and pure  
and the secret of beauty has been revealed in his heart

The amulet of the word's soul adorns his world  
The poet Khusraw<sup>1548</sup> is his servant

The protector of the land, the glory of the faith  
The gem of the ring of happiness and riches

The noble Āṣif<sup>1549</sup> of this time  
who offers the righteous of his court protection and safety

Even though he was a king, he chose the way of the dervishes  
and by doing so he surpassed all other kings

30-His high ambition and aspiration caused such a blessing  
(i.e. the Mathnawī) to be born from the unseen world

The Mathnawī unlocked the door to the treasure,  
and showered and scattered gold and silver on all friends

Listen! Step forward with the hand of spiritual indigence and sincerity,  
so that this riches may make you rich

We arranged an invitation to a spiritual feast

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<sup>1547</sup> The Timurid Sultān Ḥusayn Bāyqarā (1438-1506), who ruled over Greater Khurāsān from Herāt.

<sup>1548</sup> The poet Nāṣir: Mawlānā Wā'iz-e Kāshifī probably means the Persian Ismā'īlī religious poet Nāṣir-e Khusraw, who was born in Qubādyān, a village near the province of Balkh (1004-1077 CE, some say 1004-1073 CE, or 1004-1088 CE).

<sup>1549</sup> Ḥaẓrat Āṣif ibn Barkhiya was the saintly vizier of the Prophet Sulaymān (Solomon), who possessed great spiritual powers (*karāmāt*). It is said that he could produce the Throne of the Queen Bilqīs, from thousands of miles away in the blink of the eye before his King. Ḥaẓrat Sulaymān is reported to have appointed his vizier Āṣif as his successor.

and prepared the table for the lovers

The door is open to all, come in, come in  
Set aside all your bashfulness and come in

35-In their favour, the others said:  
“O Lord, send down a table<sup>1550</sup> from heaven!”

When this spiritual table is spread for you,  
you must not remain unfed

Someone who doesn't take anything from this spiritual table  
will endure great hardships in the desert

This table is like a gift of God  
Not taking anything from it is sheer ignorance and negligence

We have spread a table so full of grace  
He who does not take anything from it, will suffer loss

40-O Kāshifī, how much longer all this bluff, all these lies?  
Real lies never hold any light

You claim to have the inner state of the dervishes and  
to possess knowledge about healing while you are ill yourself

You know nothing about them, apart from their words and sounds, you fool!  
Do not say you know anything

You want to make it seem as though you have a common language with those  
who taste the pain of love  
Try to be one of heart with them, so that you may be freed

A common language implies that one must  
also be one of heart with others  
and your useless knowledge is tantamount to ignorance

45-You know hundreds of words, but what of their meaning, their essence?  
Knowing the meaning of a beautiful word is a good and noble thing indeed

If your good words are not followed by good deeds, then be silent!

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<sup>1550</sup> Mā'ida: refers to Sūratu'l-Mā'ida (“The Table” or “The Table Spread”), the 5<sup>th</sup> Sūra of the Qur'ān, and in particular it refers to verse 114.

Idle chit-chat without deeds is of no significance

Mere babbling will be of no avail to you, so leap into action,  
so that the taste of *'ilm-e ladunnī*<sup>1551</sup> may arise

Words are like sowing seeds, deeds make them come up and grow  
Harvesting them is eternal knowledge (*'ilm-e azāl*)

You have sown them, make sure they become green,  
so that you may harvest eternal life

50-To nourish these seedlings, use the water purveyed by the Friend  
So keep waiting for that water near this garden

O Lord, from the rain of Your goodness and generosity,  
grant me a drop on my dry farmland

So that it may become green and lush  
through Your greatness and generosity,  
and I may take a small share of the harvest

I have planted a few green trees from the Mathnawī  
in a spiritual garden

May God keep it eternally verdant and fresh until the Day of Resurrection  
May God keep the fruits of this garden safe from theft

55-O Lord, strike with blindness until the Day of Judgment  
those who choose not to see beyond the outer skin of this Book<sup>1552</sup>

O Lord of both worlds, through this flowing water (Mathnawī),  
pour out Your grace on the lovers

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<sup>1551</sup> Qur'ān 18:65 – a special kind of Inner Knowledge and Wisdom, derived from the Presence of God and bestowed on His chosen servants.

<sup>1552</sup> “This Book”: the Lubb-e Lubāb-e Mathnawī.

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## About the Editor

Wazir Dayers was born to Dutch-speaking Belgian parents on 9<sup>th</sup> November 1967 in Belgium's capital, Brussels. He first came into contact with Sufism at the age of 18. It affected him so profoundly that Sufism soon became the focus of his life. It made him decide to enrol at the University of Leuven (KU Leuven), Belgium, to read Arabic and Islamic Studies<sup>1553</sup>.

While still a student, he set out to seek a Sufi Master and become a *sālik*, a wayfarer on the Sufi Path. Over the years he has received initiation and guidance from Masters of several Sufi Orders.

Wazir Dayers now lives in Antwerp, where he works as a translator and devotes himself to the practice and the study of Sufism.

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<sup>1553</sup> Which included courses in Persian language and Persian classical literature.