

Directions

For

Seekers

By His Eminence, the Treasurer of the Shari'a and the Ocean of Divine Secrets

Shaykh

Muhammad Al-Yaqoubi

This poem is a gift from Shaykh Muhammad Al-Yaqoubi to his friends and students on the occasion of Eid. He cast the original Arabic the night before the day of *Arafah*, during his flight from Johannesburg to Cairo; and finished writing it in English in Damascus, on 24 Dhul Hijja, 1431 H.

O my disciple, upright seeker!
Distract not yourself by others on board,
Never turn to other than Allah The Creator,
He is Your Cherisher and Your Lord.
So journey rapidly to Him with diligence;
The night is dark and unforeseen.
Be steadfast and follow the guide,
So doors will open for you as a reward!

O struggling servant, righteous, repentant!
Leave not of the world in your heart any trace:
Pledge yourself to obey the Compassionate,
Seeking in all your endeavour His Face!
As only the servants who humbly concede
Their feats for Him eventually succeed.
So be enchained by love not fear,
To fly through the way and win this race!

O servant who witnessed The One with none,
While his being was entirely gone:
Confirm to the world His Divine Qualities,
And rid yourself of all your vanities!
God cannot be identified,
Cannot be conceived of nor be defined.
Look for His Signs within yourself,
And in the horizons detect and find.
Do not delve into the quest for His Essence,
And order your mind to halt and shun.
Proofs of the Divine Power are shone,
To mankind every morn at the rise of the sun!

To my pure lover and devout invoker:
Strive and persist with acts of obedience-
The Merciful is to your earnest efforts,
Evermore Thankful in abundance!
Keep up your invocations flowing
Never consider them adequate or enough.
As He created you and your deeds,
So let on Him be your firm reliance!

You who, out of ignorance, is lured
To claim to have reached immortality:
Cry in fear and cling to humility,
Efface yourself and know your reality!
Throw your claim to fame behind
Refine your heart and clear your mind,
If you on the Way ever hope to find
Eternal joy and avoid fatality!

To the traveller, dreaming of high ranks,
Pretending he wants Him yet he lacks
The core of belief and instead
He looks around for a miraculous act!
Fancying he could fly; or even have
The gold of the world brought in sacks,
Looking for Aladdin's lamp to bring
The king of jinn at once intact:
The marvelous wonder is being upright
Throughout one's life from birth to death,
Exactly as you've been commanded
By Allah, in every breath!
So be ashamed of a wicked wish
And renew your Sufi contract

Unconscious and unmindful of
Being a slave of lustful whim,
Your enemy resides within your skin;
So let your war 'gainst you be grim.
Be vigilant of the deceit of the self
And what it may embellish or limn.
Free yourself of your free will
And yield to His Will, then safely swim

Purge your heart of lingering love,
And attachment to other than Him.
Your excuse of leaning towards
Your choice before Him is shamefully slim.
So let Him lead the rein of your life
While in joy you sing His hymn;
Before you're rejected or even be torn
For your misdeeds limb from limb.
Wishful thinking makes the traveller's
Road in noonday utterly dim.

I once had the honor of being
In the service of a great Saint ⁽¹⁾
And I beheld miracles following him
With no impure trace or taint-
Rather, they were obvious signs
Of his remarkable self-restraint!
His aspiration in both worlds
Was above everyone's with no pride.
He was silent with few words
Yet he could make mountains slide.
He was raised to the highest ranks,
Because he never had any complaint!

To the spoiled servant, the insouciant
Demanding from Him immediate entrance,
Affirming that you're consciously truthful;
Proud of your fake works and vague states:
Do you depend on Allah for deliverance-
Or on your untrue state of heart?
Surely being truthful is a Grace
But to see it emerging from you is a hindrance.
Hence, do not be stopped on your trip
By "I" and "my" lest you be torn apart!

O dear companion! Never head for
The territory of a heedless sinner;
Always stand at the threshold of
The Truthful and the Righteous winner!
Attaining stations of this Way
Is done through the hearts of illustrious Gnostics.
Travelling without a guide makes you
An easy prey for the predator's dinner!

Your book is the Shaykh; in him everything
You want or need is fully included.
To be quenched, you must accompany him
In full submission, not be eluded
So listen to what the Shaykh dictates,
As he breathes into your heart:
Knowledge, wisdom and light will pour,
To make your heart a piece of art!

The legacy of the Prophet through
A sacred chain in him concluded.
With all the traps of the self and the Satan,
The risk is high if you secluded.
Without the company of the Champions,
Reaching Allah is precluded.
Going astray is a probable result
If you on your own chose to depart!

To the yearning servant! Are you after
The Truth or trying to solve a riddle,
Forecasting the future to have secrets divulged,
Which blocked your advancement in the middle?
You must be courageous to defy these desires
Be first and best; don't play second fiddle;
Grow up and leave these wishes behind
As jewels are not to be mined by a novice-
You know not the difference in a crevice
Between rocks and gems; you only twiddle!

Persist in the quest for Truth alone
And never lean towards any looming illusion.
Treading in the land of the earthly dominion,
My dear confidant is but an intrusion.
Everything other than Allah the Majestic
Is like a mirage; they're not even rivals.
You run after them, you get not a thing-
Find Him to find all; this is my conclusion!

O vanishing Servant delighted in ecstasy,
Dwelling in the zone of annihilation
To other than The Master: you have to wake up,
And swiftly feel your own sensation.
Look carefully! You are you, a contingent being;
You could never be He; no union is allowed.
He is He: Allah, The Eternal, The Unique-
By heart is witnessed by reason is found.
Stay back and uphold this essential contrast;
To remove from your mind and your heart this cloud.
The top Sufi masters clearly distinguished
And warned in this field of the slightest deviation.

In the start of the voyage you are a newborn
The end of the trip brings resuscitation.
"Thee" in the Opening chapter ⁽²⁾ removed
From our eyes all veils and curtains.
Reflect on the Divine Command in "Be" ⁽³⁾
There is in it no doubt a secret concealed.
In the verse "You did not throw when you threw" ⁽⁴⁾
The gist of all statements is sealed!

O yearning lover, celebrating his passion
For the beauties of the Eternal Heaven:
You are in love with damsels, fountains
Flowers and the splendid palaces,
Silk and cashmere, pearls and perfume
And all the luxury and grandeur-
To the Friends of Allah, the Garden is but
A moment in His Beatific Presence!

If your goal is closeness to the Near
Prostrate yourself to have His contentment!
Worship Him As though you saw Him
In this world without presentment-
The Reward for your *ihsaan*⁽⁵⁾ is His
To eventually see Him in Paradise;
Gaze then in ecstasy at the Great
And thank Him for the blissful prize!

O servant, seeking only His Face
With no inclination to a single pleasure:
Behold! You are called by His Grace
Invited and ushered to the Divine Treasure!
He favoured you; He admitted you in
Before you repented ⁽⁶⁾ at your leisure ,
You're now predestined to receive from Him
Knowledge and wisdom beyond measure!

(1) In this line, I am referring to the Pole of the awliya of his time, the Proof of Islam, the great Gnostic, namely, my father and my Master, Sayyid Shaykh Ibrahim Al-Yaqoubi, may Allah sanctify his soul.

(2) In the first chapter in the Holy Qur'an, "Thee" is in verse 5. "Thee do we worship."

(3) Referring to the Divine command "Be and it is" e.g. verse 82 chapter 36 "Yasin."

(4) Verse 17 chapter 8; "Ye did not throw when ye threw; it is Allah indeed who threw."

(5) Verse 60 chapter 55; "Is there any reward for ihsaan except ihsaan itself!"

(6) Verse 118 chapter 9; "He accepted their repentance so that they repent."