

Divine Flashes, Fakhruddin ‘Iraqi (13th c. Sufi)

Prologue

Praise belongs to God Who made effulgent the face of
His Friend Muhammad with Beauty’s theophanies,
that it sparkled with light:

beholding therein the far reach of Perfection,
filling Him with Joy at the sight.

God began with him, loved him with an untainted love,
when Adam was not yet remembered nor
the Tablet yet traced by the Pen.

So in the warehouse of Existence he is the treasure,
the key to unlock Generosity’s sealed chest;

he is both the niche and goal of the ecstatic wanderer,
and the very ecstasy in his breast.

....

“Outwardly,” he says, “I am of Adam’s children,
yet in every way far above him in station.

I gaze at the glass which reveals my beauty
and see the universe but an image of that image.

In the paradise of theophany I am the Sun: marvel not
that every atom becomes a vehicle of my manifestation.

What are the Holy Spirits? the delegates of my secret;
and the shapes of men? the vessels of my bodily form.

World-encircling Ocean? a drop of my overflowing effusion;
purest Light? but a spark of my illumination.

No, I am Light: All things are seen in my unveiling
and from moment to moment my radiance is more manifest.

The Divine Names bear their fruit in me. Look:

I am the mirror of the shining Essence.

....

But now to our intent: a few words explaining the way-stations of Love.... How high is Love,
too high for us to circle the Kaaba of its Majesty on the strength of mere understanding, mere
words; too exalted for us to gaze upon its real beauty with eye unveiled and vision direct:

Removed is Love above man's aspiration,
above the tales of union and separation;
for that which transcends the imagination
escapes all metaphor and explication.

Love lies hid in Power's pavilion, unique in the perfection of unneedfulness. The very veils of its Essence are its Attributes - but these Attributes are enfolded in its Essence. Its Majesty yearns for its own Beauty - yet its Beauty is embodied in its Majesty. Without cease Love loves itself, pays no heed to other than itself.

Flash 1

“Lover” and “Beloved” are derived from “Love,” but Love upon Its mighty Throne is purified of all entification, in the sanctuary of Its Reality too holy to be touched by inwardness or outwardness. Thus, that It might manifest Its perfection (a perfection identical both with Its own Essence and Its own Attributes), It showed Itself to Itself in the looking-glass of “lover” and “Beloved.” It displayed Its own loveliness to Its own eyes, and became viewer and viewed; the names “lover” and “Beloved,” the attributes of seeker and Sought, then appeared. When Love revealed the Outward to the Inward, It made the lover’s fame; when It embellished the Inward with the Outward, It made known the Beloved’s name.

Other than that Essence
not one atom existed;
when It manifested Itself
these “others” came to life.
O Thou Whose Outward is “lover,”
Whose Inward is “Beloved”!
Who has ever seen
Sought become seeker?

By means of “Beloved,” Love became the mirror of “lover” that It might study Itself in that glass; by means of “lover,” It became the mirror of “Beloved” that It might behold therein Its Names and Attributes. To the eye of true Witness, no more than One is to be seen - but since this Onne Face show Itself in two mirrors, each mirror will display a different face.

But one face:
multiply the mirrors,
make It many.

No other shows its face
for each thing that exists
is the same as the One
come into manifestation.

Flash 6

The end of the affair: The lover sees the Beloved as his own mirror, and himself as the mirror of the Beloved.

....

Sometimes one is witness, the other is witnessed; sometimes the reverse. Sometimes one appears in the other's tints; sometimes one is perfumed with the other's fragrance.

....

Now Love tailors the lover in a cloak of radiance and perfection, adorning him with the accoutrements of exquisite grace: he looks at himself and sees only the color of the Beloved, sees himself all HIM.

....

Or again, Love drapes the Beloved in the robes of the lover, that the Beloved might climb down from the station of Majesty and Self-sufficiency and plead thus with His lover:

“I swear by My Right
I love you
so to love Me in return
is your responsibility.”

Sometimes the Beloved's quest grasps the skirt of the lover, saying, “Is not the desire of the pious drawn out endlessly, their desire to meet Me?” And sometimes the lover's desire raises its head from the neck of the Beloved's cloak and declares, “Verily I desire them more than they desire Me!” Sometimes the Beloved Himself becomes the lover's sight, that He might say, “I saw my Lord with the eye of the Lord. I asked ‘Who art Thou?’ and He answered ‘Thou.’” Sometimes the lover becomes the Beloved's voice and says, “Grant him protection till he hears the words of God.” [9:6]

In Love alone
can such wonders be.