

**Hajji Bayram – poems**

**(translated by Henry Bayman and Stephen Hirtenstein)**

1.

If you wish to know yourself<sup>1</sup>

Look for the Soul within your soul<sup>2</sup>

Abandon your soul and find Him

Know yourself, just know yourself.

Whoever knows His Actions

also knows His Attributes

There he perceives His Essence<sup>3</sup>

Know yourself, just know yourself.

What is seen is your Attribute

The one who sees it is your Essence

What else do you need to know?

Know yourself, just know yourself.

Whoever arrives at bewilderment

Is plunged into divine light

And finds the Unity of the Essence

Know yourself, just know yourself.

**Bayram** knew his own Essence

There he found the Knower

The finder became himself

Know yourself, just know yourself.

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<sup>1</sup> Referring to the hadith: “he who knows himself knows his Lord” (*man ‘arafa nafsahu ‘arafa rabbahu*).

<sup>2</sup> Compare with Yunus Emre’s line: “*Bir ben vardır bende, benden içeri*” (There is an I inside me, more inner than myself).

<sup>3</sup> This alludes to the three degrees of affirming Unity: *tawhīd al-af‘āl* (actions), *tawhīd al-şifāt* (attributes) and *tawhīd al-dhāt* (essence).

2.

My Lord created a city  
 between the two worlds.  
 If you look, you'll see His Face  
 at the outskirts of that town<sup>4</sup>.

Of a sudden I went to that town  
 and saw it being built.  
 I too was built together with it,  
 between stone and clay<sup>5</sup>.

Arrows are shot from that city  
 they come and pierce my breast.  
 The words of the knowers are for sale  
 in that town's marketplace<sup>6</sup>.

Apprentices carve stones  
 and present them to the master.  
 They invoke the Lord's name  
 at every chip of that stone.

What they call "city" is the Heart:  
 it is not ignorant, neither does it know.  
 The blood of lovers flows freely  
 on the outskirts of that city.

The real knowers understand these words;  
 the ignorant don't know and chide.

**Hajji Bayram** himself sounds  
 the call to prayer from that town's minaret<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> The 'city' is the (spiritual) heart (see below). The Face of God is seen at the very edge of theophanic experience.

<sup>5</sup> Clay or earth is the substance of the human body. Stone, the unformed potential of the self, is its inner content.

<sup>6</sup> 'Knowers' here means knowers of reality, gnostics (*'ārif*), whose words come at a price for the seeker.

<sup>7</sup> He has attained his goal and become himself a guide for others.

3.

What has happened to this heart of mine, to this heart of mine?

It is filled with Your worry and sadness.

My heart has burned, my heart has burned

And has found its cure in that burning.

It burned for the Truth, it burned for the Truth

Was painted all through in the color of love;

It found in itself, it found in itself

How nicely my heart has found its desire.

“Poverty is my pride”, “poverty is my pride” —

Did not the Pride of the Universe<sup>8</sup> (Muhammed) say?

Know your poverty, know your poverty,

My Heart found what it found in annihilation.

The greatest love, the greatest love

The Greatest Throne has fallen to me.<sup>9</sup>

House of the Beloved, House of the Beloved –

Why should it be strange that my heart has become [that]?

**O Bayram, O Bayram**, now is the time;

Now is the time to feast with the Friend.

Praise and twofold praise, praise and twofold praise<sup>10</sup>

My heart has been celebrating its feast with the Beloved.

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<sup>8</sup> Referring to the Prophet Muhammad, who said “*al-faqr fakhrī*” (poverty is my pride).

<sup>9</sup> Literally, “... has happened to me”, in the sense of “I have been blessed with...” According to a well-known hadith, “The heart of the person of faith is the throne of the All-Compassionate”. Ibn ‘Arabi describes the heart as “the Throne upon which the All-Compassionate is seated”, and “the House of His Names” (*Fut.I.667*). Cf. Sa’di’s lines: “I sit on the throne of the heart, that is the style of my poverty!”

<sup>10</sup> The two words used here for praise, *hamd* and *senā* (Arabic *thanā*’), have particular resonance: *thanā*’ means a doubled or twofold praise, i.e. the praise given by the one who praises AND the praise received by the one who is praised. Ibn ‘Arabi speaks of *hamd al-hamd*, the praise of praise itself, which lies beyond the twofold praise. Here Bayram is alluding to the nature of praise as a relationship between two parties who are really one – this is the ‘feasting’.

4.

My aim is not of this world  
 except only “none but He”<sup>11</sup>  
 There is no cure for my suffering  
 except only “none but He”

Neither houris nor servants,  
 nor heavenly palace nor Ridwan<sup>12</sup>  
 These things are not the king of my heart  
 except only “none but He”

Of the weaving<sup>13</sup> of His imagination  
 This world is but a particle  
 Looking from that mote, we see  
 Nothing, only “none but He”

**Bayram**, if you understand  
 the reality in this world  
 this secret’s secret none can grasp  
 except only “none but He”

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<sup>11</sup> The original has “... *illā Hū*”, implying “*lā ilāha illā Hū*” (there is no god but He).

<sup>12</sup> The archangel who acts as gatekeeper to Paradise.

<sup>13</sup> Turkish *nakş* (Arabic *naqsh*), literally ‘engraving’, ‘colouring’ or ‘tracing’.

5.

Nobody can draw it

The bowstring of fortune is tough

Don't be enamored of its trouble

Some day it'll end in "Alas!"

It plays along and deceives

Due to its sleight of hand

How can so much mischief

Come together in one place?

Once it turns your face away

It doesn't tarry an instant

It makes feet of so many heads

Then turns around and makes heads of feet

It is transient and disloyal

Do not believe a word it says

Sometimes it makes the poor wealthy

Sometimes it makes the wealthy poor.

All scholars are enchanted

By the meaning of this,

Those who rule the world from end to end

Cannot fathom this mystery

He is One in Unity,

Where the distinction of Diversity?

Khidr<sup>14</sup> did not attain this secret

Nor did he inform Moses of it.

**Hajji Bayram**, poor in spirit,<sup>15</sup>

Don't be enamored of this world

It is a great workhouse –

Don't take on its infatuation.

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<sup>14</sup> Literally, 'the Green one', the patron of all those who go directly to God, and the esoteric teacher of Moses according to the Islamic tradition.

<sup>15</sup> Turkish *miskin* (Arabic *miskīn*), which means one who possesses nothing, who is poor. The Prophet used to pray: "O God, make me to live *miskīn*, make me to die *miskīn*, and gather me among the congregation of the *miskīns*."