

## **Jāmī: extracts from the *Lawā'ih* ('The Gleams')**

### **Preface**

This is a treatise named *The Gleams* on the explanation of the gnostic sciences and the meanings. It has gleamed forth from the tablets of the secret hearts and spirits of the lords of gnosis and the masters of tasting and finding in appropriate expressions and lustrous allusions...

I am nothing, and much less than nothing –  
no work comes from nothing and less than nothing.

Whatever secret of Reality I speak,  
no share have I but the speaking.

In the world of poverty, signlessness is best;  
in the story of love, tonguelessness is best.

From him who has not tasted the secrets,  
speaking by way of translation is best.

Like the clear in intellect, I've pierced a few pearls  
to translate the sayings of the high in rank.

Might it be that from know-nothing me, the trusty  
will convey this gift to Hamadān's king?<sup>1</sup>

### **The First Gleam**

"God has not assigned to any man two hearts in his breast" [Q 33:4]. The Howless Presence, who has given you the blessing of being, has placed within you only one heart, that you may be one-faced and one-hearted in love, turning away from other than Him and turning toward Him – not that you should make one heart into a hundred pieces, each piece wandering after a [separate] goal.

O you have turned to the qibla of faithfulness  
why make the shell into the kernel's veil?  
It's not good for your heart to run after this and that –  
with one heart, one friend is enough for you.

### **The Second Gleam**

"Dispersion" (*tafriqa*) is that you scatter the heart by means of attachment to numerous things. "Gathering" (*jam'iyya*) is that you turn away from everything by witnessing the One. A group supposed that gatheredness lies in gathering the causes, and they stayed in endless dispersion. A

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<sup>1</sup> Hamadān can also be understood to mean "know-everything". It is unclear who is meant.

band knew for certain that gathering the causes is among the causes of dispersion and they emptied their hands of all.

O you whose heart has a thousand troubles from all!

Your heart will have trouble finding ease from all.

Since heart gains nothing but dispersion from each,

give your heart to the One and cut yourself off from them all!

As long as you dwell in dispersion and doubt,

the Folk of Gathering see you as the worst of men.

No, by God, no – you're not a man, you're a monkey,

but out of ignorance you don't see your own monkeyness.

O traveller, speak not on every topic!

Run only the road of reaching the Lord of lords.

The cause of dispersion is the world's causes –

don't try to gather the heart by gathering the causes!

O heart, how long searching for perfection in school?

How long perfecting the rules of philosophy and geometry?

Any thought other than God's remembrance is evil suggestion.

Have shame before God! How long this evil suggestion?

### **The Third Gleam**

The Real, glory be to Him and high indeed is He, is present everywhere, gazing in each state at the manifest and the nonmanifest of all. What a loss – that you have lifted your eyes from His countenance and look at others! You have left the path of contentment with Him and pursue another road.

She came at dawn – that heart-taker of fevered lovers.

She said “O heavy load on my thoughts!

“Shame on you! I look in your direction,

but you've turned your eyes toward the others!”

We've run in love's path all our life,

we've tried hard for union all our life.

A glimpse of Your image is better for the gaze

than the beauty of all the beauties all our life.

## **The Sixth Gleam**

... In the Mathnawi [Rumi writes]:

You are this very thought, brother,  
the rest of you is bones and fiber.  
If your thought is a rose, you're a rose-garden,  
but if it's a thorn, you're firewood.

So you must strive to conceal yourself from your own gaze. You must turn toward that Essence and occupy yourself with that Reality whose beauty's loci of disclosure are the degrees of the existents and whose perfection's mirrors are the level of the engendered things.

You must persevere in this relation such that it thoroughly mixes with your soul and such that your own being disappears from your gaze. If you turn toward self, you will have turned toward Him, and when you express self, you will have expressed Him. The bounded becomes the Unbounded, and "I am the Real" turns into "He is the Real".

If a rose passes into your heart, you're a rose  
if a restless nightingale, you're a nightingale.  
You're a part, and the Real is the whole. If for a time  
you take up thought of the whole, you'll be the whole.

From the mixture of soul and body, you are my goal.  
In dying and living, you are my goal.  
Long may you live, for I am leaving the midst!  
If I say "I" about me, you are my goal.

When will it be, when? – torn the dress of being,  
blazing the beauty of the unbounded Face,  
consumed the heart by the assaults of His light,  
drowned the soul by the attacks of yearning!

## **The Seventh Gleam**

You must exercise this eminent relation such that in every moment and in every state you will never be empty of this relation – whether in coming or going, eating or sleeping, hearing or speaking. In short, in all movement and rest you must be present with the moment, lest it pass in vain; or rather, you must be aware of the breath, lest it come out in heedlessness.

Form year to year though You don't show Your face,  
there's no worry my love for You will vanish.  
In every place, with every person, in every state, I have  
hope in my heart and Your image in my eye.

## The Twenty-first Gleam

The Unbounded (*muṭlaq*) is never without the bounded (*muqayyad*), and the bounded does not take form without the Unbounded. However, the bounded has need for the Unbounded, and the Unbounded is independent of the bounded. Hence requiring is from both sides, but need is from one side. This is like the movement of a hand, and the movement of a key in the hand.

O You in whose holy sanctum none has any place  
the world appears from You, but You do not appear.

We and You will never be separate,  
but we need You, and You don't need us.

Moreover, the Unbounded requires any of the bounded things by way of substitution. It does not require a specific bounded thing. But since the Unbounded has no substitute, the qibla of every bounded thing's need is He, none other.

Nearness to You can't be found through causes and occasions,  
it can't be found without the beginningless bounty.

Whoever it may be, a substitute can be taken.

You have no substitute, so Your substitute can't be found.

O You whose elevated Essence is neither substance nor accident,  
whose bounty and generosity are not motivated by purpose.

No matter who may not be there, You can replace him,  
but if someone does not have You, none can replace You.

The Unbounded's lack of need for the bounded is in respect of the Essence. Otherwise, it is impossible for there to be the manifestation of the names of Divinity and the realisation of the relations of Lordship without the bounded.

O You whose beauty has incited my yearning and seeking,  
Your soughtness is a branch of my seeking!

If not for the mirror of my loverness,  
the beauty of Your Belovedness would not have appeared.

No, rather the lover is the Real and the beloved He, the seeker is the Real and the sought He. He is the Sought and the Beloved in the station of Unity's gathering, and the seeker and the lover in the level of differentiation and manyness.

O You toward whom no one journeys but You,  
neither mosque nor monastery is empty of You!

I saw all the seekers and everything sought –  
all are You, with no one else in the midst.