

## Week 3: The Quatrains of Awḥad al-dīn Kirmānī

### 1) Repentance and the world

Trust them  
    to advertise the world:  
        “a wondrous place!”  
but follow  
    the way of the wise;  
        don’t listen.  
Travellers all  
    we come  
        we go—  
Take what you need  
    and depart, before they  
        rob you blind.<sup>1</sup>

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My good sir  
    playing the chess  
        of passions  
Ordering your lusty knights  
    zig-zag  
        helter-skelter...  
Look:  
    the pawn of destiny  
        creeps up a space.  
How easily  
    you have been  
        checkmated.<sup>2</sup>

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Sometimes  
    my heart fails  
        my harvest is burnt  
Sometimes  
    I close my breath  
        tear open my robe  
Oh Lord  
    lead everyone  
        each to his goal  
And perhaps  
    it may happen I  
        shall be among them.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> P. 25

<sup>2</sup> p.53

<sup>3</sup> p. 41

## 2) The Sufi Path

Untie  
    yourself  
        from the world  
Put on  
    the robe  
        of a monk  
But remember;  
    if you are satisfied  
        with just the robe  
The cloth wears out  
    grows old and rips  
        and exposes your soul.<sup>4</sup>

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If his love has traced  
    no cracks  
        in your heart  
You are dust—  
    lower  
        than dust  
Don't be a dead-heart—  
    hold out for  
        eternal life.  
Where the heart lives  
    there's no fear  
        of death.<sup>5</sup>

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If you could  
    gain entry to the  
        heart's Kaaba  
You would become  
    as pure as that  
        house in Mecca.  
Unhinge yourself  
    from yourself for but  
        one breath:  
that would be better than  
    a lifetime spent  
        beside the Kaaba.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> p.55

<sup>5</sup> p.47

<sup>6</sup> p.69

### 3) The Lover and the Beloved

Your love cannot find  
    a better house  
        than my heart  
your candle will never see  
    a wilder moth  
        than I.  
Intellect the diver  
    searched the sea  
        of Being  
and found no better pearl  
    than you  
        in any oyster.<sup>7</sup>

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Walk in truth  
    in the path  
        of love;  
Without the pain of speech  
    you will become  
        a speaker.  
When you are worthy  
    of love's  
        indwelling  
Then you will be  
    Beloved, Lover,  
        Love.<sup>8</sup>

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Dawn again  
    and the thought of you  
        opens me...  
Then in every breath  
    your vision indwells  
        my spirit  
The odour of decay  
    will never reach  
        my soul  
As long as your perfume  
    is the wound  
        of my senses.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> p.107

<sup>8</sup> p.105

<sup>9</sup> p.119

#### 4) Union and the Dance

Sincerity!  
    from everyone  
            in Love's World  
especially  
    in the presence  
            of the beloved.  
When the sun  
    lifts above  
            Love's dawn  
The atoms  
    of the air  
            will dance.<sup>10</sup>

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You glide about  
    you pirouette  
            you flap your arms  
the whirling dervishes on tour:  
    what a cloud of dust!  
            You call this *dance*?  
No – true dance  
    is to jump out of your soul  
            and drown your heart  
And to rise  
    above both  
            heaven and earth.<sup>11</sup>

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All your existence  
    comes from another's  
            being  
All your inebriation  
    flows from another's  
            drunkenness.  
Go and wrap yourself  
    in the robe of  
            meditation  
for your flesh  
    is the robe  
            of the Other.<sup>12</sup>

All translations from Bernd Weischer and Peter Lamborn-Wilson, *Heart's Witness: The Sufi Quatrains of Awḥaddīn Kirmānī*. Imperial Iranian Academy of Philosophy, Tehran, 1978.

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<sup>10</sup> p.153

<sup>11</sup> p.155

<sup>12</sup> p.159