

MUHAMMAD AND THE HUGE EATER

Husam demands that we begin Book V.

Ziya-Haqq, the radiance of truth,

Husamuddin,

master to the pure masters,

if my human throat were not so narrow,

I would praise you as you should be praised,

in some language other than this word-language,

but a domestic fowl is not a falcon.

We must mix the varnish we have

and brush it on.

I'm not talking to materialists. When I mention Husam,

I speak only to those who know spiritual secrets.

Praise is simply drawing back the curtains

to let his qualities in.

The sun,

of course, remains apart

from what I say.

What the sayer of praise is really praising is

himself, by saying implicitly,

“My eyes are clear.”

Likewise, someone who criticizes is criticizing

himself, saying implicitly, “I can't see very well

with my eyes so inflamed.”

Don't ever feel sorry for someone

who wants to be the sun, that other sun,

the one that makes rotten things fresh.

And don't ever envy someone

who wants to be this world.

Husam is the sun I mean.

He can't be understood with the mind, or said,

but we'll stumble and stagger trying to.

Just because you can't drink all that falls

doesn't mean you give up taking sips
of rainwater. If the nut
of the mystery can't be held,
at least let me touch the shell.

Husam, refresh my words, your words.
My words are only a husk to your knowing,
an earth atmosphere to your enormous spaces.

Practice: *Ya Nur/Ya Alim/Ya Haqq*

What I say is meant only to point to that, to you,
so that whoever ever hears these words will not grieve
that they never had a chance to look.

Your presence draws me out from vanity
and imagination and opinion.

Awe is the salve
that will heal our eyes.

And keen, constant listening.
Stay out in the open like a date palm
lifting its arms. Don't bore mouse holes
in the ground, arguing inside some
doctrinal labyrinth.

That intellectual warp and woof keeps you wrapped
in blindness. And four other characteristics
keep you from loving. The Qur'an calls them
four birds. Say Bismillah, "In the name of God,"
and chop the heads off those mischief-birds.

The rooster of lust, the peacock of wanting
to be famous, the crow of ownership, and the duck
of urgency, kill them and revive them
in another form, changed and harmless.

There is a duck inside you.
Her bill is never still, searching through dry
and wet alike, like the robber in an empty house
cramming objects in his sack, pearls, chickpeas,

anything. Always thinking, "There's no time!
I won't get another chance!"

A True Person is more calm and deliberate.
He or she doesn't worry about interruptions.

But that duck is so afraid of missing out
that it's lost all generosity, and frighteningly
expanded
its capacity to take in food.

Practice: *Ya Quddus, Ya Khafid, Ya Rafi*

A large group of unbelievers
once came to see Muhammad,
knowing he would feed them.

Muhammad told his friends,
"Divide these guests among you and tend to them.
Since you are all filled with me,
it will be as though I am the host."

Each friend of Muhammad chose a guest,
but there was one huge person left behind.
He sat in the entrance of the mosque
like thick dregs in a cup.

So Muhammad invited the man to his own household,
where the enormous son of a Ghuzz Turk ate everything,
the milk of seven goats and enough food
for eighteen people!

The others in the house were furious.
When the man went to bed, the maid slammed the door
behind him and chained it shut, out of meanness
and resentment. Around midnight, the man
felt several strong urges at once.

But the door! He works it,
puts a blade through the crack. Nothing.
The urgency increases. The room contracts.
He falls back into a confused sleep and dreams

of a desolate place, since he himself is
such a desolate place.

So, dreaming he's by himself,
he squeezes out a huge amount,
and another huge amount.

But he soon becomes conscious enough
to know that the covers he gathers around him
are full of shit. He shakes with spasms of the shame
that usually keeps men from doing such things.

He thinks, "My sleep is worse than my being awake.
The waking is just full of food.
My sleep is all *this*."

Now he's crying, bitterly embarrassed,
waiting for dawn and the noise of the door opening,
hoping that somehow he can get out
without anyone seeing him as he is.

Practice: *Ya Karim*

I'll shorten it. The door opens. He's saved.
Muhammad comes at dawn. He opens the door
and becomes invisible so the man won't feel ashamed,
so he can escape and wash himself
and not have to face the door-opener.

Someone completely absorbed in Allah like Muhammad
can do this. Muhammad had seen all that went on
in the night, but he held back from letting the man out,
until all happened as it needed to happen.

Many actions which seem cruel are from a deep friendship.
Many demolitions are actually renovations.

Later, a meddling servant
brought Muhammad the bedclothes.
"Look what your guest has done!"

Muhammad smiles, himself a mercy given to all beings,

“Bring me a bucket of water.”

Everyone jumps up, “No! Let us do this.
We live to serve you, and this is the kind of hand-work
we can do. Yours is the inner heart-work.”

“I know that, but this is an extraordinary occasion.”

A voice inside him is saying, “There is great wisdom
in washing these bedclothes. Wash them.”

Meanwhile, the man who soiled the covers and fled
is returning to Muhammad’s house. He has left behind
an amulet that he always carried.

He enters and sees the hands of God
washing his incredibly dirty linen.

He forgets the amulet. A great love suddenly enters him.
He tears his shirt open. He strikes his head
against the wall and the door. Blood
pours from his nose.

People come from other parts of the house.
He’s shrieking, “Stay away!”
He hits his head, “I have no understanding!”
He prostrates himself before Muhammad.

“You are the whole. I am a despicable, tiny,
meaningless piece. I can’t look at you.”
He’s quiet and quivering with remorse.
Muhammad bends over and holds him and caresses him
and opens his inner knowing.

Practice: *Allah, Allah, Allah HU*

The cloud weeps, and then the garden sprouts.
The baby cries, and the mother’s milk flows.

The nurse of creation has said, *Let them cry a lot.*

This rain-weeping and sun-burning twine together
to make us grow. Keep your intelligence white-hot
and your grief glistening, so your life will stay fresh.
Cry easily like a little child.

Let body needs dwindle and soul decisions increase.
Diminish what you give your physical self.
Your spiritual eye will begin to open.

When the body empties and stays empty,
God fills it with musk and mother-of-pearl.
That way a man gives his dung and gets purity.

Listen to the prophets, not to some adolescent boy.
The foundation and the walls of the spiritual life
are made of self-denials and disciplines.

Stay with friends who support you in these.
Talk with them about sacred texts,
and how you're doing, and how they're doing,
and keep your practices together.

Practice: *Ishk Allah Mahbood Allah*

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