

BAHĀ' ALLĀH'S AL-QASĪDA AL-WARQĀ' IYYA: AN ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Some years ago, I penned an 'informal response' to Juan Cole's paper on 'Babism and Naqshbandi Sufism in Iraq', which dealt with Mirza Husayn 'Ali Baha' Allah's ode entitled Al-qasida al-warqa'iyya. I mentioned there that I had prepared a rough translation of both the qasida and Baha' Allah's contemporary commentary on it, and that I would forward this for distribution 'in the very near future'. In the event, that future became very distant as other commitments prevented me from completing the task of typing the text of my translation and, as a result, it has not not been made available until now.

I have, however, recently had the opportunity to return to this long-deferred task and am at last able to present readers of the Bulletin with the result. Ideally, I should like to have added a commentary of some kind to the bare translation of the ode and Baha' Allah's own notes on it, but I have decided against this for a number of reasons. Foremost among these is my nervousness about commenting on what is really a very tentative personal rendering of a difficult text for which there are no native commentaries and concerning which there is, indeed, no interpretative tradition. Nor am I so confident of my own expertise in the field of Sufi poetry (especially in Arabic) as to take the risk of compounding possible mistakes in my translation by further suggestions based on my own misinterpretations. The poem requires considerable further study before serious commentary becomes a real possibility.

For the present translation, I have used the text printed in Āthār-i qalam-i a^{clā} vol.3, which I have cross-checked with the variant text in Ma'ida-yi asmani vol.4. I have preferred the former text largely because I have generally found the latter compilation to be textually unreliable in the extreme; nevertheless, the accuracy of the text remains to be determined. As will be readily apparent, I have not attempted to make this in any sense a 'poetic' rendering, preferring to retain a literal style at this stage of interpretation.

Denis MacEoin

In Praise of the Beloved, Hidden, not Revealed
The Dove Ode Concerning the Essence of a Holy Spirit

He is the Exalted, the All-Glorious

They have enraptured me, rays of light from a face
at whose revelation all suns have hidden themselves.

As if rays of the sun had appeared from the radiance of her beauty,
appeared in all the worlds and dazzled them.

The musk of the Cloud of Unknowing (al-^Camā) was stirred up by her joy,
the Spirit of Exaltation was raised on high by her exaltedness.

The Trumpet of Resurrection gave forth a blast as she blew into it,
her perfume caused the shadow of the clouds (1) to move away (2).

5 The Sinai of Eternity was made manifest through her shining,
by her glory the light (3) of splendour was revealed.

To the West of her, the sun of manifestation appeared (4),
to the East, the Moon of Moons was made new once more.

From her tresses, the perfume of the left was breathed forth,
from her glances, the eye of beauty was consoled (5).

The face of guidance was shown the way by the light of her face
and the soul of the Speaker (Moses) was purified by the fire of her countenance (6).

At the arrow (7) of her eyelashes (8), the heart of hearts has turned about,
through the noose (9) of her tresses, the head of existence has been stretched out.

10 The ends of creation are the spots whereon her feet have trod,
the throne of the Cloud of Unknowing is the land whereon she walks.

Every eye that has wept in longing for union with her has fulfilled its pledge (10),
every fire that has burned in sympathy with my separation has fulfilled its pledge.

I have spread out a carpet widely for her feet to walk upon
over my heart -- this is my first desire (11).

I have sought the presence of union in every face,
I have written the letters of nearness in every piece of earth (12).

And if I have hastened to union with the light of her,
I have been stoned with the stones of separation after my being near.

15 And if I have raised my hands, stretching them forth towards union with her,
she has answered me with a sword, and that shall be the reward of them that love me. (13)

My sole concern is to cling firmly unto a strong cord.
while her (text reads 'his') aim is only to sever my connection.

I said unto her 'may my spirit be thy sacrifice and my state that of meeting thee; have mercy on me and do not expose my degradation (14).

On my part an excess of love, on yours reunion,
it continues thus eternally from the pre-existent time(15).

By (16) the mystery of manifestation, all created things have appeared,
from her manifestation and in the origin my resurrection has come to pass.

- 20 By the grief of Husayn, the sphere of existence (17) has borne much
for the sake of her grief, in the universe of my pattern.

For thou art the hope of my heart and the beloved of my inner being,
the possessor of my spirit and my light and my heart's core.

I have attained unto union after separation,
he has granted me the spirit of fellowship after my grief.

From my burning the fire of ardour has been ignited, (18)
and from my moaning the light of witness was confirmed (19).

The Ocean of Unknowing (bahr al-^camā) has dried up from the heat of my thirst
and the river of majesty shall never quench even a part of my yearning.

- 25 In every land every act of revenge I have witnessed,
behold all tell forth concerning the blood that pours from my eyes.

Compared with my tears, the ocean is but a drop,
compared with my burning, the fire of Moses is a mere torch.

At my grief, the sea of joy froze
and at my cares the eye of anxiety flowed with tears.

My glory has fainted away, my illumination has swooned,
my light has been extinguished by the delusion (20) of whoever shows malice to me (21)

My bones have turned to dust, my body has decayed (22),
my heart has burnt up through the heat of my burning.

- 30 Desire for you has made me as smoke, love for you has worn me away,
separation from you has melted me, union with you is my yearning (23).

The sky has almost split open (24) from the secret of my sadness,
and the earth of the heart (has almost) torn asunder (25) from the woe of my breast.

The tears of my eyes tell the tale of the fire in my heart,
the yellow of my face shows the flame (26) in my inner being.

I lament (27) every night of the malice (28) of him that censures me (29)
I offer up supplications (30) every day because of the absence (31) of assistance
for me.

I have reached the furthest limit of degradation (32), a station
in the mention of which all tongues are afflicted with stammering (33).

- 35 The maiden of the palaces has put on out of sadness for my secret
a black robe in every chamber.

She has come, filled with sadness, into every heart,
she has grasped with a firm grip all that was spread open.'

She called upon me from behind me, saying 'be silent'³⁴
and hold your tongue from speaking all that you have told forth.³⁵

How many Husayns like you have sought after me,
how many ^CAlis resembling you have been amongst my lovers.

How many lovers above you have loved me,
how many devoted ones like unto you have belonged to the circle of my devotees.

40 Each one has cried out³⁶ at every moment and never attained
for an instant to the light of union with me or to a glimpse of me.

From my horizon, the sun of manifestation is like a star,
from my place of appearance, the expanse of light is like a flash;

From the light of my secret, the secret of existence is like an ant,³⁷
from the fire of my love, the fire of conflagration is like a torch.

From my nature³⁸ the nature³⁹ of God has come nigh,⁴⁰
from the palm of my hand the palm⁴¹ of glory was drawn near.⁴²

The command of the affair has come from the command of my outer appearance,
the justice of the decree has come from the justice of my wisdom.

45 The wave of the sea has held back from the wave of my inner reality,
the holy spirit has been stirred up by the light of my joy.

At my glance⁴³ the Moses of eternity swooned away,⁴⁴
and at a flash from me the Sinai of the mountains was levelled to the ground.⁴⁵

At the spreading abroad of my cause, the Spirit of souls was raised to new life,
at the breath of my spirit, the decayed bones⁴⁶ were set in motion.⁴⁷

The soul of the command circled around her house,
the spirit of the House rose up from the light of my countenance.

The kingdom of the highest forms of knowledge is concealed within the letter ba',⁴⁸
and the ba' of "the manifest in the mystery" fell swooning at my point.⁴⁹

50 All guidance has appeared from the dawning of my command
and all exaltation has been sent in my sending.⁵⁰

From my bounty all birds have sung as with one melody,
and from my singing the thin melody has become reverberating.

You have prescribed a law from out of your own false imaginings,
you have drunk from another law than mine through love of others than me.

You have brought attributes, you have come with a connection,
you have coveted names, regardless of my ways.⁵¹

You have employed for description a soul and its relation to my self,
this is nothing but limitation, and limitation is the greatest of sins.

55 You have in your vain imaginings hoped for union with me -- this can never be;
for it there is a condition -- if you are faithful to it, you shall be rewarded:

it is to quaff the woes of fate from every cup
and to sprinkle streams of blood from sorrow out of the blood of your heart;⁵²

to sever all hope of ever reaching any comfort
and to restrain satisfaction from the desiring of all needs;

to shed your blood in the faith of passion and love
and to burn your heart⁵³ in love from the first moment of offering allegiance to me
to remain awake⁵⁴ during the nights from the reproaches⁵⁵ of every reproacher,⁵⁶
and from uninterrupted scorn every day.

60 In my religion (sunnatī), the poison⁵⁷ of destruction⁵⁸ is sweet to drink,
in my community (millatī), the sorrow of fate is like compassion.⁵⁹

Either fail to meet the demands of love or obey what has passed forth --
thus has the command flowed out in the decree of my law (sunnatī).

And I called to her inwardly, saying 'O my beloved,
final aim of my hopes and the purpose of my inner being,

Here am I present before your power,
here am I hoping for what you have enumerated.⁶⁰

Here am I desiring all that you love,
here am I resting on what you have decreed.⁶²

65 Here is my breast hoping for the spears of your authority,
here is my body longing for the swords of wrath.

Your fire is my light and your anger is my desire,⁶³
your oppression is my comfort and your decree is my longing.⁶⁴

Behold the tears of my eyes, how they have flowed,
witness the innermost portion of my heart, how it has melted away.

I have cast the spears of exhaustion every day,
I have been slain by the sword of rejection every night.

I have read the book of unbelief in every page,
and I have attained to the slandering of all men at every moment.

70 I have been cursed by the curse of infidelity (al-shirk) at every instant,
I have been pierced by the spear of banishment at all times.

It was as if the woe of fate was descending upon my soul⁶⁵
or as if the swords of wrath were made sharp for my neck.⁶⁵

72 The grief of Jacob⁶⁶ and the suffering of Joseph,⁶⁷
the pain of Job,⁶⁸ and Abraham's fire.

The regret of Adam and the separation of Jonah⁶⁹
and the outcry of David and the lamentation of Noah.⁷⁰

The separation of Eve⁷¹ and the burning of Mary,
the tribulation of Isaiah and the suffering of Zechariah--⁷²

75 From the sprinkling of my sadness, there befell them all what befell them,
from the overflowing of my grief, there appeared every affliction.

Behold my journeying in the lands without a companion,
witness my association in the desert⁷³ with wild beasts.

From the opening⁷⁴ of my eye, the eye of heaven shed tears,⁷⁵
from the cleaving⁷⁶ of my heart, the cleaving of the earth met together.⁷⁷

From the spirit of my grief, the spirit of eternity was severed
and from the light of my suffering, the throne of exaltation fell in ruins.⁷⁸

The red of existence (al-wujūd) was reddened by the blood of my heart,
the branch of contemplation (al-shuhūd) grew⁷⁹ from the tears of my eye.

80 The bitterness of tribulation in the path of your love is sweetness
and the honey of eternity with other than you is bitterness.⁸⁰

On my neck the impression of iron⁸¹ is visible,⁸²
and on my leg the trace of the chain⁸³ remains.⁸⁴

Not a day passed but that I burned therein
for the allusion of a poem or the explication of a proclamation.

My spirit departed and my heart melted,
my inner reality boiled with the intensity of my tribulation.

From the elevation of my inmost self, there befell me what befell me:
would that my nature had never been raised up.

85 Thus tribulation circled me on all sides,
thus fate⁸⁵ destroyed⁸⁶ me at every moment.

I ascended to the utmost height of singleness all alone,
I attained to the essence of meeting within my inner being.

I beheld your description in the description of my eye,
sharp⁸⁷ from your eye at every glance.

If you are (talking of) limitation, limitation is manifested by you,
if you are (talking of) description, description has appeared from you.

From my dark melancholy, the darkness of nights is confirmed,
from my inner being, the light of day is made clear.

90 What does it matter if I am cast down at this moment?
I have attained to the exalted light on the day of my being raised up again.

I have associated with the holy one from the light of his familiarity,
I have emigrated with al-Tā' (bi' l-tā') in the covenant of my exile.

I have believed in the light from the light of my inner essence,
I have ascended in the spirit in the secret of my inner being.

I call on thee, O spirit of life, to cause to pass
from the self what remains in it⁸⁹ of a remainder.

And, O spirit of unknowing, descend from the Throne
and take possession of a fate to the degree of my abasement.

95 I cry out, O my heart, for you to go forth
and take possession of glory in the lands of humiliation.

O my patience, be patient in all that you have witnessed
in the good-pleasure of your Beloved in hardship and ease.'

In the spirit she called to me and said, 'be patient
for I have known all that you have demonstrated.

Cast aside what you know, to which you have
adhered, for polytheism is with me like divine oneness.

The most glorious splendour of Sinai is to me mere rubbish
and the most brilliant effulgence of light is to me but shadow.

- 100 The verses of your description are true, but only for boys;
the traces of your account are reliable, but only for my subjects.

I have always been in a state of holiness,
I have limitlessly been in a state of enjoyment.

How many a just one has been for me a tyrant,
how many a learned one has been for me an ignoramus.

How many an eternal one has been for me merely transient,
how many a knower has not understood even a word.

How many a worshipper has been for me a rebel,
how many a devotee has never bent his knee to me.

- 105 The psalms⁹⁰ of the heavens are firm in the existence of my self,
the pages⁹¹ of glory have descended from my page.

From an atom of mine the sun of the universe was gathered into a sphere,
from a drop of mine the ocean of existence was spread forth.⁹²

All the songs of the people of creation have appeared
to me like the chirping of ants or the buzzing of a bee.

All minds have been enraptured⁹³ by the attraction of my mystery,
all souls have come to life⁹⁴ through the song of my spirit.

All gods⁹⁵ have become divine through a sprinkling of my command,
and all lords⁹⁶ have become lords through an overflowing of my decree.

- 110 The land of the spirit has walked towards me at but a command,
the Throne of Sinai has been the place of my oppression.

At my light, the star of manifestation has shone forth,
at my spirit, the sun of gladness has gleamed.

The fullnesses of signs are the shinings of my arrival,
the locations of tokens are the places of my holiness.

The essences of thoughts are the realities of my thought,
the ornaments of lights are the indications of my wisdom.

From the kāf of my command⁹⁷ the decree of all things has been passed,
and from the bounty of my mystery all new creations have appeared.

- 115 You turned aside from my face, imagining you had turned towards it,
and you poured forth the water of assertion in the religion of delusion.

You did not speak the truth, through the light of the unseen, in what you fashioned
in yourself, and thus you missed that which I fashioned.⁹⁸

Take hold of the cord of the command outwardly,
become familiar with the face of light in the inmost mystery.

Burn the veils of nearness away from you, that no allusions may remain,
behold the beauty of holiness within thee with no covering.

Be still, for the powers of the Throne have been disturbed,
be patient, for the eyes of the unseen have wept.

120 Meaning beyond knowledge is in you a veil
that brilliant reason is powerless to penetrate.

Enjoy close fellowship with the mystery of holiness in your inmost heart
and do not spread it about if you are trustworthy.

If you should remove the covering from the face of what you have beheld,
all assistance will vanish in an instant.

Thus has the command flowed forth from the Throne of glory,
thus has the decree flowed forth from the secret of power.

Blessed be they that attain for the beauty of their faithfulness,
blessed be they that have arrived in a new faith.

125 Blessed be the lovers in the shedding of their blood,
blessed be they that hold firmly to the cord of my affection.

Blessed be they that are sincere for having hastened
from all directions under the shadow of my lordship.'

NOTES

1. A reference to His words: 'a day whereon God shall come in the shadows of the clouds.' (No Quranic text corresponds exactly to this; it seems to be intended as a reference to 2:210. D.M.)
2. A reference to the moving of the mountains, shifting like clouds, as He has said: 'You shall see the mountains, thinking them to be solid, yet they shall move like clouds' (Qur'an 27:88). These are all signs of the Resurrection and of what shall come to pass in it.
3. Illumination (rawshanī).
4. The rising of the sun in the West.
5. That is, was illumined. From the perfumed breaths of her hair, the perfume of joy and splendour and the musk of bounty and glory are wafted and stirred from the left hand of the paradise of God's ipseity (huwiyya) that has been spread out on the right hand of the garden of His eternity (samadiyya), that perchance the dead bones of the essences of contingent beings (jawhariyyāt-e momkenāt) may be endowed with eternal and everlasting life and may find pride in existence through their heart-attracting fragrances and their heart-assuring perfumes. Likewise, on beholding the vision of her, the eye of true Beauty, of which the sun of the heaven of existence is the lowest symbol, was illumined, became bright, and was filled with light. Exalted be God, her Creator, above what you mention of Him.
6. When Moses divested and sanctified the foot of the divine soul, which had been placed in the temple of humanity, of the sandals of contingent imaginings, and manifested the hand of divine power from the pocket of grandeur in the cloak of nobility, he came unto the holy, the excellent and blessed valley of the heart that is the site of the throne of eternal effulgence and the seat of the telling forth of the glory of the Lord. And when he arrived in that land of Sinai which was spread out from the right hand of the place of light, he perceived and inhaled the sweet fragrance of the spirit from the dawning-place of eternity and beheld the lights of the everlasting Lord from all directions, beyond all sense of direction. From the warmth of the fragrance of divine love and the flames of longing desire out of the fire of unity, the light of ipseity was lit within the lamp of his heart, after the veils covering the glass of selfhood (aniyya) had been removed. From the wine of union with the countenance

that has no match and the pure draught of the eternal Lord, he attained unto the valley of eternal inebriation, after the stations of opposition had been erased. From the longing desire for meeting with Him, he became aware of the city of the delight of eternity, and he entered the city while its inhabitants were unaware and came nigh unto the fire of God, the Ancient, and became illumined with the light of God, the Almighty. Even as he said to his family: 'Remain here, for I have beheld a fire' (Qur'an 20:10). And when he perceived the face of guidance unto the uncreated bounties from the tree neither of the East nor of the West (see Qur'an 24:35), he turned from the ephemeral face of unreality unto the everlasting face of eternity and discovered the hidden and wondrous face of guidance in the kindled fire concealed within the hearts of the unseen. Thus it is that he said: 'or I shall find at the fire some guidance' (Qur'an 20:10). Likewise comprehend the intention of the blessed verse in which He says: 'who made a fire for you out of the green tree' (Qur'an 36:80). Would that a hearing ear might be found that but a drop out of the depths of the ocean of fire or out of this sea that is brimming with sparks might be mentioned. Yet it is best that this pearl remain hidden in the shell in the shell of the ocean of ipseity and continue to be treasured up in the repositories of mystery in order that those that are not worthy may be shut out and those that are of the select may put on the garb of pilgrimage to the Ka^Cba of glory and enter the sacred precincts of beauty. How fortunate, then, is he that burns down the cage of the body with the fire of love and becomes intimate with the spirit itself that he may attain unto the exalted mercy of contentment and be sustained by the elevated bounty of glory. All that has been mentioned concerning the stages of guidance and the stations of purification of the self in the station of Moses (upon our Prophet and upon him be peace) has for its purpose the appearance of these effulgences in the outward world. Othwise, that holy one has ever been guided by the guidance of God and shall ever be so guided. May, the sun of guidance has risen from him and the moon of bounty has appeared from him and the fire of ipseity has been kindled from the fire of his being and the light of eternity has been illumined from the radiance of his brow. The very words of that holy one will remove those doubts, spoken at the time when Pharaoh asked him concerning the man he had slain: 'Indeed, I did (that deed) and am of those who have arred. And I fled from you since I feared you. But God has endowed me with wisdom and made me one of His messengers' (Qur'an 26: 20-21). The page is filled, otherwise the subject is one that can never be exhausted and there remains much to say.

7. They call sahm 'an arrow', that is, for the arrow of the lashes of the most exalted Beloved the shining and purified hearts have turned, and they have sought to come unto her.
8. Shafr/shufr means 'eyelashes'. (Technically, the term refers to the rim on which the lashes grow. D.M.)
9. Wahq/wahaq is from al-wahāq and means 'lassoo'. For the noose of her tresses, the head of the divine, hidden, universal existence (wojūd-e ghaybī-ye kollī-ye elāhī) sought to stretch itself forth in order to enter the noose. May the heart be deprived that attains not to that arrow (see 8 above) and may the head be destroyed that comes not within that noose. Praised be He from our description of Him, exalted be He above that which you affirm of Him.
10. That is, that the holy and exalted eyes that are hidden secretly in the worlds of the unseen and the visible eyes in the world of existence, at whatever place and whatever time they have wept and shed tears, have done so for the separation of this servant from the sight of the light of the beauty of that Beloved. This may be understood from the outward form of the poem. But its inner meaning is known to none but God, and we know of it less than a single letter. Likewise, comprehend the meaning of the second line that pleasure and yearning and attraction and distraction and love and rapture may come into existence within the world of your being, that perchance you may attain to the Lote-Tree of the extremity and the most distant Mosque of your self, which are

submission to the decree and the command of God. Verily, thy Lord the Exalted is, in truth, a witness over you and a protector over us in justice.

11. Maniyyatī, meaning 'desire'. That is, I have spread out a carpet over all lands, from the most distant regions, the lands of the heart (fu'ād) and beyond it unto infinity, which is concealed behind the veils of the unseen, down to the lowest land of existence, that perchance her foot may be placed upon the heart (qalb), which is the location of the hidden mysteries. This is among the highest yearnings of the divine and holy hearts.
12. Turba, meaning 'dust'.
13. Whatever is contrary to the usages of the people is because of conformity to the conventions of poetry.
14. That is, whatever has been permitted me of the stages of utterance and rhetoric (al-bayān wa'l-ma^cānī) and all that I have known of the conditions of names and attributes and all that God has given to me in the worlds of the unseen and the visible, I shall sacrifice that I may meet you but once and behold you but once. I ask forgiveness of you, O my God, at this moment, for what I have presented to you, but, by your glory, O my God, if I may not be thus, I hope that I may be thus through your power, for naught else shall satisfy me or set my heart at rest, even though you give me all that are in the heavens and the earth. Wherefore, I beseech you, O my God, by him that witnessed in your path that which none but he ever witnessed, to send down upon your servant some of the signs of your most great love and the tokens of your most glorious loving-kindness, that my soul may be contented in what you desire. You are powerful over all things.
15. If 'pre-existent' is to be taken as an adjective, it does not correspond (with 'time') (this refers to the ungrammatical form of the original: fī zamān al-qadīma. D.M.); but it flowed out thus and it is true, no doubt is there in it.
16. wa -- the wa of oath-taking.
17. Since the sphere of the lower world relates to the earth (al-ard -- fem. D.M.), the tā indicating the feminine subject is joined to the verb 'borne' (ahmala).
18. 'Conflagration' (wuqūd) can mean 'fuel', even as He says: 'its (the fire's) fuel is men and stones' (Qur'an 2:24), but it can also mean 'burning' or 'ardour'.
19. tadhawwat means 'confirmation' (more precisely, 'was confirmed. D.M.).
20. gharr means 'delusion' (ghorūr) (possibly 'foolish pride', which is closer to the Persian sense. D.M.).
21. mushammitī means 'one who shows malice'. Most of the atoms of created beings. By God, eye has not seen, ear has not heard, nor has anyone counted or known how vain delusions have descended like a pouring rain out of the heaven of men's ignorance. O people of the earth, turn not aside from him in whose heart there is nothing but an effulgence of the lights of the moon of unknowing (al-^camā). Fear God and do not oppose him. If you do not love him, do not, at least, show him hate. If the love of God should exist, the absence of anything will not matter. We praise God for having rendered us independent of their love and their mention. He is God, powerful in all things.
22. ablā means 'worn out' and 'threadbare' (kohne wa khalaq).
23. maniyyatī -- 'desire'.
24. Reference to the blessed verse 'the heavens are ready to split asunder from above' (Qur'an 42:5).

25. '... and the earth to cleave apart'. (This seems intended as a continuation of the verse just quoted, but it is, in fact, a continuation of the similar verse in 19:90. D.M.)
26. zafir -- 'flame' (sho^cle). (Zafir actually means 'moaning'. D.M.)
27. 'Complaining' and 'lamenting'.
28. shamt -- 'malice' (shamātat).
29. mu^cadhhdhil -- 'censurer'.
30. alahhu -- 'offering up of supplications' (ilhāh).
31. faqd -- 'absence' (foqdān).
32. al-dhill from al-dhillā (disgrace).
33. 'Blunt of tongue', that is, 'stammering', 'with a speech defect'.
34. Meaning 'keep silence'.
35. 'Tale'.
36. Meaning to cry and wail and lament out of love and grief.
37. Reference to the verse: 'And he said: remain here. I perceive a fire, perhaps I can bring you from it a brand' (Qur'an 20:10). (The Quranic text reads: 'And he said to his family....'; cf. note 6 above. D.M.)
38. (Reference to) the verse: '... the natural disposition (fitra) according to which God created men' (Qur'an 30:30).
39. (fitr) -- short form of fitra.
40. Reference to the blessed verse 'Make correct the faith as a true believer (hanif)'. (This quotation reads اقم الدين حنيفاً, whereas the Quranic text to which it is, presumably, a reference reads واقم وجهك للدين حنيفاً 'set your face to the faith as a hanif' (Qur'an 30:30), the sentence preceding that quoted in note 38 above. D.M.)
41. (Reference to) the verse 'white, without any injury' (Qur'an 20:22). (Identical in 27:12 and 28:32. D.M.)
42. Reference to the verse: 'draw your hand into your pocket'. (This quotation reads فاضم يدك في جيبك, whereas the Quranic text to which it seems to be a reference reads فاضم يدك الى جناحك, 'draw your hand close to your side' (Qur'an 20:22), the sentence preceding that quoted in the last note. The form of the verb used in the text of the qaṣīda for 'draw near' does not correspond to that from which the imperative in this quotation is derived. D.M.)
43. Reference to the verse: 'and look towards the mountain' (Qur'an 7:143). (Slightly misquoted; this reads فانظروا الى الجبل, whereas the original reads ولكن انظروا الى الجبل, 'but look towards the mountain'. D.M.)
44. (Reference to the words) 'and Moses fell down, swooning' (Qur'an 7:143).
45. 'The mountains were levelled'. (This is possibly a reference to Qur'an 69:14. D.M.)
46. (Reference to the words) 'he gives life to the bones, although they are decayed' (Qur'an 36:78).
47. That is, they moved from joy and the gift of spirit.

48. Existence appeared through the bā', and the worshipper and the worshipped were distinguished by the dot. (Refer to) the tradition 'all that is in the Qur'an is in the ḥamd formula etc.' (This is a reference to a tradition generally ascribed to ^cAli, of which there are numerous variants. In most texts, it reads: 'All that is in the Qur'an is in the formula bismi 'llāh al-rahmān al-rahīm (in the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate), and all that is in this formula is in the words bismi 'llāh, and all that is in the bismi 'llāh is in the word bism, and all that is in the bism is in the letter bā' (ب), and all that is in the bā' is in the dot beneath it. I am the dot beneath the bā').
49. The meaning of the point (nuqṭa) is 'it is neither numbered nor calculated' and 'it is neither limited nor does it pass away', inasmuch as the Promised One (ṭal'at-e maw'ūd) and the Universal Word and the Divine Temple named the most mighty Throne (which is the place of descent and enthronement for the hidden reality) by this exalted Name and this elevated Attribute (i.e. Rahā' ?). This is specific to that Temple and He is a sufficient witness unto Himself.
50. Meaning descent and going down.
51. mahajja -- meaning path and disposition.
52. muhja -- means 'heart', 'heartblood', and 'spirit'.
53. al-ḥashā -- 'the heart'. (Lit. 'bowels', 'intestines'. D.M.)
54. 'Being awake'.
55. 'Striking and biting'. (Lit. 'burning'. D.M.)
56. The reference is to the scorpions among men.
57. samm -- 'poison'.
58. al-radā -- 'destruction'.
59. shafaqa -- from 'compassion' and 'kindness'.
60. That which has been enumerated of wrath and power.
61. Wishing for.
62. Meaning 'you have made a decree concerning'.
63. That is, 'wish'.
64. That is, 'wish'.
65. jīd -- 'neck'.
66. (Reference to) the verse: 'and his (Jacob's) eyes became white through grief' (Qur'an 12:84).
67. (Reference to) the verse: 'And two youths entered the prison with him (Joseph) and he said, "Lord, the prison is dearer to me than what they bid me to..." etc.' (This is a serious confusion of two Quranic verses: 'He (Joseph) said: "Lord, the prison is dearer to me than what they (the women of the city) bid me to; unless you turn aside from me their plotting, I shall be youthful with them and be of the ignorant"' (12:33) and 'And two youths entered the prison with him (Joseph). One of the two said: "I saw myself (in a dream) pressing wine from grapes...."' (12:36). Apart from the clear mix-up of the two verses, the grammar is confused, since fatyān (two youths) cannot be the subject of either qāla (he said) or yad'ūnānī (they bid me). D.M.)

68. (Reference to the words): 'Lord, verily harm has touched me (Job)' (Qur'an 21: 83). (The original text does not have the word 'Lord', but reads: 'he called on his Lord: "verily...."'. D.M.)
69. (Reference to the words) 'And Dhū 'l-Nūn (Jonah) when he went away angry and imagined that we had no power over him... etc.' (Qur'an 21:84). (The original is slightly different, reading wa Dhā 'l-Nūn for wa Dhū 'l-Nūn. D.M.)
70. Noah and David wailed and lamented a great deal. The tale of Noah is well known; as for the matter of David and his crying out, it is clear from the Psalms how much vexation he endured and to what extent he was afflicted by it.
71. In her being separated from Adam for forty days or more, as is mentioned in the traditions of the past.
72. (Reference to the words): 'And we rescued him from the great affliction'. (There is, in fact, no Quranic text corresponding to these words, although 21:76 and 37:76 (both referring to Noah) and 37:115 (referring to Moses and Aaron) are obviously the combined inspiration for this supposed quotation. D.M.)
73. al-^Carā -- they thus call 'the desert'.
74. Reference to the blessed verse: 'And we opened the gates of heaven' (Qur'an 54:11). (The original text does not have wa ('and') at the beginning. D.M.)
75. (Reference to the words) 'with water poured down' (Qur'an 54:11). (The continuation of the verse quoted in the previous note. D.M.)
76. (Reference to the words) 'And we cleaved the earth with springs' (Qur'an 54:12).
77. (Reference to the words) 'and the water met according to a command that had been decreed' (Qur'an 54:12). (The continuation of the verse quoted in the previous note; the form talaqqa used in the text does not correspond to that in the Qur'an and does not have the same meaning. D.M.)
78. tahaddat -- (equals) in^Cadamat. ('Disappeared'; the form tahadda does not, in fact, have this meaning: the seventh form inhadda seems to be intended, although it strictly means 'to be demolished'. D.M.)
79. tanaffat -- to grow and flourish.
80. mirra -- bitterness.
81. An allusion to chains.
82. That is, is clear and manifest.
83. al-wathīq -- 'chain'.
84. That is, is still there.
85. Decrees.
86. That is, ruined.
87. (Reference to the words) 'we have today made thy **sight sharp**'. (This seems intended as a reference to Qur'an 50:22: 'and we have removed from thee thy covering and thy sight today is sharp'. D.M.)
88. That is, has been manifested.
89. In it (fihī -- masc.) is better, although it is contrary to the way of the people because of nafs. ('Self' -- a feminine word. D.M.)

90. From 'the Psalms', the name of the book (of David: cited in the Qur'an alongside the Torah of Moses, the Gospel of Jesus, and the Qur'an of Muhammad. D.M.).
91. Suhuf -- plural of sahīfa (page).
92. (Note apparently to this word). That is, was confirmed.
93. From 'love' and 'desire'.
94. From 'hayāt'.
95. (al-ulūh), that is āliha ('gods').
96. (al-rubūb), that is arbāb ('lords').
97. The meaning is 'the world of command' (as opposed to 'the world of creation'; kāf refers to the first letter of the word kun, 'be'. D.M.)
98. In other words, the sign of effulgence which was from the effulgences of the lights of the morn of unknowing and the appearances of the dawn of the sun of holiness and glory, which arose and was manifested from the sun of existence and the moon of the Desired One and the Worshipped Point conferred and bestowed everlasting and eternal life through the drops of the water of divine existence and sprinklings of the undying pure and limpid waters upon the realities of contingent beings and the essences of created things and all the atoms of existent entities and remembrances, and clothed and garbed them in eternal robes and exalted shirts and everlasting, imperishable garments. Yet, with such a mighty sign and most great gift and inextinguishable lights and imperishable bounty, we did not become straight, nor with this solid fashioning, this certain grace, this ancient glory, and this everlasting bounty, did we become upright; rather, we remained deprived of the holy breaths of the Holy Spirit and the sweet breezes of the light of union, to such an extent that, if a thousand Davids of existence were to sing the songs of the Psalms and the melodies of gladness in fresh and wondrous tones over the mouldered bones of men, they would never move nor stir, for the capacity to receive the descent of divine mercy from the heaven of power has been taken away from men and all have been imprisoned through selfish desire in the cage of the body and have become unconscious and have been so stricken by the thunder of ignorance that they will never again recover consciousness and will never attain to the station of union and nearness, which is their primary purpose. Alas and alack that we were not guided by the essence of guidance and did not follow the ancient reality. We neither attained to the Sinai of nearness to Him nor did we turn aside from the manifestations of His rejection; we did not seek comfort with the attractions of His holy spirit, nor did we let ourselves be guided by the lights of His joy. Among His consolations is the sacrifice of one's soul, with which we did not pride ourselves, and the putting on of the robe of steadfastness, to which we did not attain. Yea, we are seated in the heart of the ocean of existence, and yet wait for a taste of water, and we dwell in the shadows of the sun of eternity and ask for a lamp. This is the state of this servant and of all men and all that are in the world. And if a fire should be kindled within a tree, not having taken light therefrom, we make efforts to extinguish it. Blessed be he that clotheth himself with the robe of justice in this struggle. If you should be described by this attribute, you shall have attained to the most glorious bounty. This is that yellow and hidden thread through whose movement all that are in the world of existence are set in motion and through whose stillness all that are in the lands of the Worshipped One are still. Therefore, the breasts must be made clear and purified from corrupt and idle fancies, vile and worthless delusions, that the wondrous face of justice may rise up from behind the Mount of Qāf, whereupon we may comprehend the powers of eternal delights and the attractions of divine yearning from the cooing of the dove of eternity and the melodies of the spirits of glory, and

find rest and comfort upon the highest reaches of love. This is the most exalted of all aims, but its station is the lowest. Moreover, we must turn aside in all circumstances from them that turn aside from the truth and at no time consider it permissible to associate or sit with them. I swear by God that foul souls melt away goodly souls just as fire burns dry wood and heat melts snow. Be not with those that turn their hearts from the remembrance of God. Verily, what has been mentioned in explanation of this verse is out of compassion for the eyes of those that turn aside and is a mercy to the vision of those in whose hearts is hatred, that they may not interpret or explain it according to their own desires. These verses were written in the days of exile in the lands of remoteness in the country of Anatolia (Rūm) and not one of the ulema or the learned (fudalā') of those lands objected to them or attacked them. But of these ferocious people, I believe that, after their interpretation, they will oppose it and walk after their own imaginations in the paths of delusion, vanity, error, and blindness. And God is the final destination, whether one be thankful or ungrateful, hastening to Him or fleeing from Him. Now that the seal of the vessel of musk has been opened, whosoever has a sense of smell shall perceive it, and whosoever is afflicted with a rheum shall remain deprived. And if all should be afflicted with a rheum, no fault lies with the perfume of eternity and no stain rests upon the pure musk. Praised be Thou, O my God; I call on Thee at this moment when there have descended upon me tokens of Thy sadness which, were they to flow out upon all existence, both the seen and the unseen would become as naught, in such wise that the spirit might almost be separated in its distress. By Thy glory and the mystery of Thine eternity, should I breathe them forth, the hearts of men would be burned in their inmost essences and the heavens would be split asunder with all that is in them, and the earth would be destroyed with all that is on it. Alas, alas, wherefore the breath of faithfulness shall not run over from the garden of majesty nor the perfume of eternity blow from the city of glory, nor shall the dove of Unknowing sing upon the leaves of the red tree, nor shall the bird of majesty warble within the exalted kingdom. By the glory of him whom Thou hast glorified and whom Thou hast made the manifestation of Thy divinity and the source of Thy lordship (the Bab or Subh-e Azal?), I have forgotten all mention and all that Thou hast taught me before this of the wonders of Thy knowledge and the fullness of the signs of Thy wisdom. Nay, I am a thing forgotten, forgotten quite, as if I were not visible within the earth of this world, By the life of ^CAli and the existence of Muhammad, by a pure Spirit and the mercy of a Merciful One, by the attraction of Mahmud and the love of Ahmad, by the mystery of a Beloved One and the joy of a Pure One, I do not desire to be in this world for a moment. To this, God bears witness behind me.

Translated
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