

How the smitten would assemble every morning at the door of the cell of Jesus, on whom be peace, craving to be healed through his prayer.

The table of the spiritual is the sanctuary of Jesus:
O sufferer, beware, beware!
Don't walk away from this door!
All around the people would gather—
the blind, the lame, the ragged and trembling—
At the door of the cell of Jesus in the morning,
that his holy breath might ease their suffering.

As soon as he finished his morning practice,
that man of good faith would walk out,
and would see the crowds of feeble, afflicted people
waiting at the door in hope and expectation.
He would say, "O you that are smitten,
What all of you present here long for is granted by God.
Listen, set off and go without pain or trouble
towards the forgiveness and kindness of God."
All, like tethered camels whose knees are suddenly unbound,
at his prayer would begin to run on their feet,
hastening gladly and joyously to their homes.

You have experienced many maladies in yourself,
and have gained health from these kings of religion.
How often has your limping been turned into a smooth stride,
how often has your soul been made void of grief and pain!
*O forgetful one, tie a string to your foot,
that you won't be lost to yourself!*
In your ingratitude and forgetfulness
you neglected to remember the honey that cured you.
And so, *that way became barred to you,
since the hearts of the "men of heart" were made sore by you.*

Quickly run after them and ask God's forgiveness;
weep like a cloud, so their rose-garden may open its blossoms to you,
and that the ripe fruits may burst and reveal themselves.
Pace round that same door: don't be less than a dog,
if you have become a fellow-servant with the dog of the Cave,

315 Because even dogs admonish dogs, saying,
*"Fix your heart on your first home.
Hold fast to the first door where you did eat bones,
and fulfill your obligation: don't leave that."*

They keep nipping at him, so that a sense of duty
he may go thither and be prospered by his first abode.
They bite him, saying, "You nasty dog, Go!
Don't become an enemy to your benefactor.
Be attached, like the door-ring, to that same door;
keep watch and be nimble and ready to spring.

320 Do not be the unfaithful type;
don't be recklessly disloyal.
Since fidelity is the medal of honor for dogs,
go and don't give the dogs a bad name."
If unfaithfulness has been a disgrace to dogs,
how do you still justify your unfaithfulness?
The high God has spoken of faithfulness:
He has said, "*Who is more faithful to a promise than I?*"
*Know that faithfulness with the slightest dismissal of God
is unfaithfulness: no one has precedence over God's rights.*

325 Your mother's right arose after that Generous One
had made her indebted for your embryo.
He bestowed on you a form within her body;
He gave ease to her during pregnancy and protected her.
You were a part of her until His providence
separated what had been joined together.

*And since then God has prepared thousands of ways and means,
for your mother to express her love to you.*

Therefore God's right is prior to the mother's:
whoever doesn't recognize that right is a donkey.

330 Don't ever forget that He created mother, breast, and milk,
and brought her together with the father!

O Lord, O You whose beneficence is eternal,
Yours is both that which I know and that which I don't know.
You did command, saying, "Remember God,
because My right shall never grow old.

Remember the kindness that I did to you that morn
by protecting you in the ship of Noah.
At that time I gave your father
protection from the flood and from its waves.
Water, like fire in nature, had covered the earth:
its waves were dashing against the highest mountain peaks.

*I protected you; I did not spurn you
in the bodies of the ancestors
of the ancestors of your ancestors.*

Now that you have come to the head,
how should I smite the sole of your foot?
How should I let My workshop go to waste?
How is it that you are becoming faithless
and falling into negative thoughts?
Is there any negligence and faithlessness in Me,
that you should come to Me with negative thoughts?

Be wary instead toward someone
you would cringe in front of--like yourself, for instance.
You've had many powerful friends and companions:
And if I ask you now, 'Where are they?'
you will say, 'They're not here anymore.'
Some good friends have gone up to the highest Heaven;
other wicked friends have gone deep into the earth.
You are as helpless as a man
in the middle of a burning caravan.
O brave friend, grab the sleeve of Him
who is neither "above" nor "below."
Neither does He ascend to Heaven, like Jesus,
nor go into the earth, like Qarun.

*He is with you in space and in spacelessness
when you leave house and job behind.
He brings forth purity from pollution;
He replaces your wrongs with good deeds.
When you persist in wrongs, He disciplines you,
to guide you from imperfection towards perfection.*

When you have neglected a part of your prayers in the Way,
you feel the burning pain of contraction.

350 That is the corrective act, meaning,
"Do not violate the ancient covenant
lest this contraction become a chain,
lest this which grips the heart shall become iron gripping the foot."
Your mental pain shall become perceptible and manifest to the senses.
And don't dismiss this warning as if it were nothing.
The contractions of sins affect the heart;
after death these contractions will become chains.
Whoever turns his back upon Our remembrance here,
We shall give him a contracted life and reward him with blindness."

355 When a thief is carrying off people's property,
he may notice a feeling of contraction, a tightening of the heart.
He might say, "I wonder what this contraction is?"
It is the contraction of the injured person
whom your wickedness caused to weep.
When he pays no regard to this contraction,
his callous perseverance fans the flames.
But, eventually, the contraction that grips the heart
turns into the grip of the policeman:
inevitably those ideas become sensible and display themselves.
The pangs have become a prison and a cross:
the pang of conscience is the root, and the root produces branches.
360 The root was hidden, but now it is revealed.
Consider inward contraction and expansion as the roots.
Recognize the evil root and dig it up,
so that harmful thorns may not take over the garden.
You have felt the contraction: seek a remedy for it,
because every effect grows from a cause.
*You have felt the expansion: so water your expansion,
and when the fruit appears, give it to your friends.*