The Seventeenth Gleam

Important notes concerning Islamic thought, belief, worldview, and action

**First note**

I addressed myself, saying, O heedless Said! Do not set your heart on what will abandon you when this world is destroyed. How can you set your heart on what will leave you when you die, on what will not accompany you on your journey to the intermediate world of the grave? How can you count on what will abandon you in one or two years, debiting your account with its sins, and on what forsakes you at the very moment you have obtained it?

If you are a sensible one, have no care for what perishes during the rev- olutions of the Hereafter, the continuously changing conditions of the intermediate world of the grave, or the world’s tumults and convulsions, or what will not be able to accompany you on your journey to eternity. Do not grieve at their decay and departure. Consider your own nature; among your subtle faculties there is one, which being pleased only with eternity and the Eternal, turns only to Him and lowers itself only before Him. If you gave it the whole world, it would not satisfy that inborn need. It is the king of your senses and faculties. Obey that king, which is obedient to the command of the All-Wise Originator, and find salvation.

**Second note**

I saw myself in a true dream telling people, “O human! It is a Qur’anic prin- ciple that you must not consider anything other than God Almighty as greater than you to the degree that you worship it. Nor must you consider yourself greater than anything and thus claim greatness before and domin- ion over it. For, just as all creatures are equally far from being the Object of Worship, they are also equal in being creatures.”

**Third note**

Know, O heedless Said! Under an illusion, you see the exceedingly tempo- rary world as undying and permanent. You look around and, believing the world to be stable and perpetual, think you are stable and perpetual. Therefore, only the world’s final destruction frightens you, as if you would live until that destruction. Come to your senses! For you and your own world are decaying every moment. Due to this illusion, you are like one who holds a mirror reflecting a mansion, a town, or a garden. The least move- ment or change of the mirror causes a tumult in that reflected image with which the person is so content. The fact that the originals of the reflected mansion, town, or garden are constant does not benefit you, for your share is only what the mirror reflects.

Your life is the mirror, and the support of your mirror is your life. So consider your mirror and how both it and the reflection can perish at any moment. Since this is the reality, do not burden your life, your own world, with what it cannot bear.

**Fourth note**

Know that the All-Wise Originator usually restores to life that which is of great value. That is, He does not let valuable things perish permanently through the changes of seasons, years, and centuries; rather, He continually returns them to life. When you look at the types of resurrection occurring daily, yearly, and every century, you see this established, regular practice of God.

Thus, based on this regular practice or law, we say: since sciences agree that humanity is the most perfect fruit of the Tree of Creation and has the greatest importance and value, and since each person is like a species of other living beings, then each person will be resurrected on Judgment Day with his or her exact identity and body, title and form.

…

**Fourteenth note**

This consists of four short remarks concerning Divine Oneness.

**The first remark**

O one who ascribes creativity to causes!

Imagine that you see a wonderful palace being built of different marvel- ous jewels. But some can be found only in China, others only in Spain, and others in Yemen, while others are found nowhere but in Siberia. If you see that suddenly these precious jewels have been easily procured and carried from the east, north, west, and south all on the same day that the palace is being built, would you doubt that the master builder who builds it is a mir- acle-working ruler who dominates the entire earth?

And so, each living being is a Divine palace. Particularly a human being is the most beautiful and wonderful of palaces. Some of the jewels of this palace called humanity are gathered from the World of Spirits, some from the World of Immaterial Representations or Ideal Forms and the Supreme Preserved Tablet, and others from the worlds of air, light, and ele- ments. Human needs are infinite, and human desires encompass the heav- ens and the earth.

And so, O human being! Since you are such a being, the One Who has made you can only be the One in relation to Whom the world and the Hereafter are just two dwellings for His creatures; the earth and the skies are each a page for His inscriptions, and He controls all time as though it were a single day. In this case, it is only He Who dominates the earth and the heavens and holds the reins of the world and the Hereafter, Who has the right to be worshipped by humans, and is the One in Whom humans must seek refuge, and to Whom they must turn as the only Savior.

**The second remark**

There are some foolish people who, because they do not recognize the sun, start to love it when they see its image in a mirror. They try to preserve the mirror with intense attachment to it so that the sun’s image in it may not be lost. But if they understand that the sun does not perish or disap- pear when the mirror does, they will direct their love only to the sun itself. The image in the mirror does not depend on the mirror for its perma- nence; rather, the mirror’s permanence depends on it. The permanence of the mirror’s “liveliness” and its shining (with the sun in it) are possible only through the permanence of the sun’s manifestation and the mirror’s facing the sun.

O human being! With your nature, identity, and heart you are like that mirror, and the love of permanence implanted in your nature is, in essence, not for the mirror. Rather, it is felt for the manifestation of the Everlasting One of Majesty, which is reflected in the mirror according to its capacity.

However, due to your foolishness, you direct the mirror to other objects. This being the case, say, “O Everlasting One, You are the Everlasting One!” That is to say, “Since You exist and are everlasting, those who are transient and mortal may do what they want to do with us; let them do it, for I do not mind whatever befalls us.”

**The third remark**

O human being! The All-Wise Originator has implanted within your nature a strange characteristic: Since the world cannot contain you, you fre- quently utter, as if in a suffocating dungeon, a sound of disgust. Yet some- thing as small as a mustard seed, a cell, a memory, or a minute of time so absorbs you that you are lost in it and are passionately attracted to it. Your mind and heart, which cannot be contained by the huge world, are con- tained by that smallest thing.

Also, the All-Originating One has equipped your nature with such fac- ulties that some of them would not be satisfied even if they could swallow the world. Some others cannot tolerate even a microscopic particle. Like the eye that is unable to bear the weight of a single hair while the head car- ries a heavy stone, these faculties cannot endure the weight of even a hair, that is, an insignificant state that arises from heedlessness and misguidance. They are sometimes even extinguished and die.

So be alert and careful, always act with caution and in fear of sinking. Do not drown in a morsel, a word, a grain, a glance, a beckoning, a kiss! Do not cause your faculties that are so extensive that they can contain the whole world to drown in such a thing. For there are some small things which can in one respect swallow many large things. See how the sky and its stars are contained in a piece of glass, and most of the pages of your life history and actions are inserted in your memory, which is as small as a mus- tard seed. Thus, there are minute things which in one respect contain and swallow larger ones.

**The fourth remark**

O one addicted to the world! Your private world, which you think to be very spacious, is a grave-like, narrow place. But since its “walls” are made of “glass,” with reflection it can expand as far as the eye can see. While being narrow like a grave, it appears to be as large as a town. It is as follows:

With respect to this worldly life’s material dimensions, the past, which is represented by the right wall of your private world, has finished and the future, which is represented by the left wall, does not exist. However, as your world’s two mirror-like walls face each other, they are reflected one within the other and come together at the point of your present time, mak- ing it difficult for you to distinguish between what is real and what is reflect- ed. The “line” of your present extends into your past and future and becomes a spacious area. So reality is lost in what is imaginary, and you suppose a non-existent world to be existent.

In the same way that a tiny dot at the end of a stick spun round at high speed appears to be a broad circle, despite actually being a tiny dot, your private world too appears to you to be spacious because of your heedlessness and delusions. If, moved by a calamity, you stir that narrow world, you will strike your head against a wall, which you supposed to be distant. You will suffer disappointment and lose sleep. Then you will see that your world, which you supposed to be spacious, is narrower than a grave, and more dif- ficult to move along than a decaying, narrow bridge. Your life passes more quickly than lightning, and it flows away faster than a river.

This being the nature of the worldly, animal life and corporeal exis- tence, be freed from animality, restrict your carnal appetites, and enter the level of the life of the heart and spirit! You will find a broader sphere of life than your imagined world and a realm of light. The key to that sphere and realm is to awaken the heart and spirit with the sacred pronouncement, *There is no deity but God*, which is the expression of Divine Oneness that uncovers the mysteries of knowledge of God and makes them work.