

MIRROR OF A SOUL

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Khaled Hazem Nusseibeh

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Dar Al-Nafaes
Pub. & Dis- Jordan



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طبع بدعم من وزارة الثقافة
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IN THE NAME OF

ALLAH

THE ALL-COMPASSIONATE ALL-MERCIFUL



MIRROR
OF A SOUL

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Khaled Nusseibeh

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الأراء الواردة في الكتاب لا تعبر بالضرورة عن رأي الجهة الداعمة



طبع بدعم من وزارة الثقافة
2008



DAR AL-NAFAES
Pub. & Dis- Jordan

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Introduction

Like his previously published five collections of poems, Khaled H.Nusseibeh's new collection of poems deals with a wide variety of themes and abstract ideas as is indicated by the titles of his poems e.g.: "June 5, 1967", "Discipline", "Conflict Theory", "Hidden Desires", "Pyramids", "Pitfall", "Equal Treatment", "The Cedar Tree", "Prometheus", "Prisoners of Palestine". The large variety of topics dealt with in this collection testifies to the poet's great erudition and his remarkable comprehensive interest in human affairs and universal issues.

To drive home his themes in the most effective manner, Nusseibeh employs all forms of poetic, aesthetic, rhetorical, and artistic techniques. For instance, in the first poem of the collection entitled "June 5,1967", the poet uses intertextuality and allusions to portray the enormity of the disastrous consequences of the June 5, 1967 war in the Arab world. The terrible defeat inflicted on the Arabs by Israel in this war is presented on a par with the sacking of Troy and other international disasters of great magnitude.

The poet's effective poetic representation of this dreadful disaster is considerably enhanced by his use of irony in these lines:

**Noble Egypt's air force was ferociously decimated
Its army routed and rendered in painful, profoundly
memorable retreat**

**Arab broadcasting mesmerized the misled multitudes
That victory was a hairbreadth away**

Irony is extensively used in a number of poems as a tool to express the poet's philosophical views and his strong feelings and emotions. In the poem entitled "Self-Love", we read:

**Or an artist drawing brilliantly a portrait
Detached from the subject by dint of self-love**

**Or a preacher sermonizing about God
While egoistically feeling a sense of inordinate pride**

But the most cutting irony in the whole collection is reserved for the poem "Prisoners of Palestine" in which the poet writes:

**Heavily does the burden lie on the conscience
Thousands of chained freedom seekers**

**Victims of unjust incarceration
The sin is to yearn to be free**

**Shackled by the sinister quest to enslave
To oppress, to withhold, to deprive of liberty's sweet
moment**

Parallelism used in the last two lines (to enslave, to oppress, to withhold) joins forces with irony to produce the desired effect on the reader. Other examples on the use of parallelism as a poetic device to produce greater effects can be found in other poems such as "Hidden Drives" and "Harmony and

Disharmony”. In the latter poem, we read:

**The foes, or those whose interests are not served, react
Driving a wedge, sowing discord, nurturing ill will**

Nusseibeh’s remarkable poetic talent expresses itself in the most pronounced manner in his capacity for vivid description. The two poems “Near Sunset” and “By the Swimming Pool” furnish two good examples of how the poet uses description to address our various senses and to create pictures in our minds which help us to see things fresh and new, or to feel them through our physical senses such as hearing, smelling, seeing, or the sense of touch.

On the thematic level, Nusseibeh’s poetry celebrates sublime human values and moral principles such as sacrifice in “Domestic Front”, hard work in “Land Fever”, obligation in “Awareness of Obligations” justice and altruism in “The Strive to be Compassionate” and freedom in “Hamster”.

Politics occupies a central position in Nusseibeh’s poetic world. In several poems, he deals with the plight of the Palestinians, especially in the poem entitled “An-Nakba” in which the poet heightens our awareness of the tragedy of the Palestinians by, ironically, comparing their Nakba with the Israelite Diaspora. The word “scattered” used in the sixth line of this poem brings to mind Milton’s Paradise Lost. This produces the impression that the Palestinian debacle in this poem is conceived as an “epic tale” which tells the tragic story of a whole nation.

10 Introduction

The political poem entitled “Rachel Corrie” takes the form of an elegy which movingly mourns the tragic killing of the American peace activist Rachel Corrie by the Israeli army. In this poem, the poet succeeds in touching and stirring us through his effective use of imagery, figures of speech, and his powerful description of the victim's tragic death.

The poet invests into the personality of Rachel Corrie sterling qualities and bestows upon her a spiritual aura so that she emerges as a sort of female Christ-figure who sacrifices herself for the sake of redeeming the misdeeds of her country, America. This image of Rachel Corrie may, I would suggest, particularly appeal to feminist readers of the poem.

One of the most impressive aspects of the poet's thematic concerns is his peculiar interest in dealing with modern or post-modern themes such as the concept of the “**other**”, **diversity, multi-culturalism, cultural relativity, and pluralism.**

Most of these themes occur in the poem which has the suggestive title “Conflict Theory”. One is tempted to suggest that this poem can be read as the poet's reply or response to Samuel Huntington's theory of The Clash of Civilizations. So much is implied by the central thought of the poem. While it emphasizes the diversity of humans and cultures, it also highlights the possibility of achieving harmony between humans. Furthermore, the poem urges acceptance of the “other” and calls for transcendence of ethnocentrism and all forms of conflict.

Nusseibeh's obvious humanistic vision and his universal outlook seem to be inspired by his religious orientation which is reflected in his frequent references to the Holy Qur'an and the Prophetic Tradition in several poems.

Given Nusseibeh's great poetic talent, his excellent command of the English language, his patriotism, and sense of nationalism (as is well manifested not only in the present collection of poems, but also in his previously published collections of poems). He can rightly be considered one of the most important Arab authors who write in English. It is through the efforts of such authors who are well versed in foreign languages that the Arabs will be able to find their own voice and to project their true image which has been enormously distorted and misrepresented, especially in the West. Thus, they will fulfill the dream expressed in two lines of verse by a Kuwaiti poet, quoted by Salma Jayyusi, the context of which relates to defining the responsibility of Arab intellectuals and writers for combating the campaign of misrepresentation of Arabs and their culture in Western media and literature:

When will we strive, my friend to be not as others

imagine us but as we wish ourselves to be ?

Dr. Nedal Al-Mousa

Former Dean of the Faculty of Arts
The Hashemite University- Jordan

June 5, 1967

Rarely in the annals of human history
Has a defeat so resounding, so painful been recorded

Shall it be compared in enormity to the Babylonian captivity?
Or the sinister occupation of Poland?

Or the tragic drama of the sacking of Troy?
Or Napoleon's brutal conquest of Egypt?

Events that have told the story of tutelage
And subjugation rooted in pure force

And these very days we memorialize the fall of Jerusalem
The Golan, the Sinai and the West Bank

A formidable triumph that left a trail of inordinate suffering
Another sordid chapter of occupation, dispersal and
oppression

Noble Egypt's Air Force was ferociously decimated
Its army routed and rendered in painful, profoundly
memorable retreat

Arab broadcasting mesmerized the misled multitudes
That victory was a hairbreadth away

But the deepest scar was Jerusalem's stunning fall
Powerfully mirroring a nation's state of prolonged though
remediable decline

Unable to reverse a continuing trend of defeats
Witness today's fall of Baghdad

And we implore with futility the victor's magnanimity
That Arabs and Muslims pray in the holy city's threatened
noble sanctuary

Or in the churches that toll a bell of grief
Lamenting separation, loss and suffering immense

But the venue of Muhammad's nocturnal heavenly journey is deeply carved
In the wounded consciousness of the Muslim *umma*

Awaiting a time of return, a moment to pray in peace
A time to mark a tide of mercy and justice

To replace the logic of unchecked might
Drawing the darkened map of an uncertain morrow

BY THE SWIMMING POOL

The time has passed sunset
In an idyllic and enchanting atmosphere

The warm wind blows gently
On a fine, tranquil summer evening

The centerpiece is a small-sized swimming pool
Containing turquoise sparkling water

Ripple effects are palpable
Water moving in attractive waves

Elegant mosaics adorn the pool's walls
And blue tiles cover its floor

Dusk prayer is held by the pool
Two friends glorifying God

A luxury stone covered building
Adjoins the riveting space

Rows of tall aspen trees form a perimeter
Their leaves reflecting the bright moon light

The deep dark sky is beautifully adorned
With multitudes of near and distant stars

The boisterous sounds of children are audible
Playing in the nearby public park

A full moon shines brilliantly
Seemingly close to mother earth

Luxury mansions and buildings are visible
Beyond the building's stone wall

Two lovely children are calmly seated
Receiving instruction in the Holy Qur'an

Abu Awni's place is truly splendid
A den in the city of brotherly (and sisterly) love

A Moment In Life

Do we choose to bid dear life farewell?
As though an embrace that is forcibly ended

A moment that truly ends all the moments
Of ephemeral and beguiling life

Moving in seemingly slow but actually
Stunning speed, as though

A full page that is folded
To be fastened to a heavy bundle of other papers

On which is written endless varieties of events
And names of unfamiliar persons and places

Interwoven in a cryptic or sensible drama
That drives the force of happenings forward

And does not, and cannot, bend backwards
To make cease the ineluctable motion of riveting life

Affectionately caressing the tender hands of newborn life
As if defying, yes overcoming, the seeming treachery of the
fast-moving moment

That yields and succumbs to higher purpose
Marshalling life's protagonists in a great story

Destined and Divinely writ
In a realm of unknowable wisdom and power

Yes, in the region of Divine Omnipotence
Subjecting all to undeniable theodicy

That He loves the fallible humans
Made by Him vicegerents in the illusory path of being and living

DISCIPLINE

It's what may produce miraculous achievement
Not the working of wonders, but sheer discipline

The ability for sustained effort
And walking an extra mile

Turning many stones to research more
To market more, to seize opportunities

To gather useful information
And build more elaborate databases

Life is oft unkind to minimal achievement
Engendered by underutilization of available resources

Rising to the challenge is to expend greater effort
To perform tasks with greater skill

High standards are attained by the hard-driven
Leading to better and better results

The decline of the East is engendered by deep malaise
Diminished innovation, lesser effort, extreme predestinarianis

An abandonment of the essentials of life
That animate the movement forward

THE CEDAR TREE

The great cedar tree bleeds profusely
By dint of iniquitous aggression and invasion

Can I compare you to an old and mighty mountain?
Covering the fertile terrain of an ancient land

The cedar tree manifestly and valiantly defends itself
Bloodying the hands of heartless aggressors

Razing buildings housing civilians to the ground
Wantonly killing and maiming innocent life

The destruction is of monumental proportion
A country and people determined to build and rebuild again
and again

The lesson is missed that there is inexorably an alternative to war
Respect for human dignity, human rights, territorial integrity

But the unvarnished and shameless exertion of force
Blinds both the perpetrators and victims

All must find their innermost soul
And convert hatred into an honest sense of justice

**That military occupation will only make the cedar tree
thornier Wounding those that callously wreak destruction on
the hamlets, cities, towns**

**May God protect the great land of Lebanon
And give it peace, tranquility and justice**

TO STRIVE TO BE COMPASSIONATE

Can the elements of conflict be overcome?
Through the determination to rectify misdeeds?

An honest will to recognize committing wrong
To strive to be benevolent, to compassionately give

To bring to professional life, to social reality
The deep altruism prevailing in familial living

But life is lamentably different from the archetype
Pursuit of self-interest, greedy quest for resources, selfish
undertaking

Is it the survival instinct divinely instilled in our natures?
That assures that life continues, thrives, flourishes?

The quest for provision ensuring satiation of needs
Sexuality providing for life's continuance

But desires and needs are two distinct things
The former without a ceiling, an upper limit

Oftentimes people misconstrue wishes as needs
In the process trampling on the weak, the disenfranchised,
the poor

And the wealthy render considerable service to community
Investment, toil, knowledge, that animates progress and
development

The quest for wealth ought to be entwined with the quest for justice
A society without deprivation, without discrimination, without
injustice

An ideal to be achieved through enlightened political action
Through a society that is better educated, that recognizes its
better interests

TRAGIC FLAW

A tragic flaw accompanies human nature
The propensity for claiming credit

And avoidance of assuming responsibility
For a task, an endeavor, a matter not well accomplished

Many in the annals of human history
Are the silent, dedicated soldiers

Accomplishing an immense amount
And unnoticed by their fellow men

Driven by their superiors to do more and better
Standards that sometimes exceed human capacity

Recognition is oftentimes welcome by our natures
A word that a difficult job was well done

A tribute to all the selfless human beings
Who toiled, sweated and shed blood that others live

HIDDEN DESIRES

There is much that is mysterious in words
Conveying diverse motivations and interests

The discourses of class conflict
And gender competition, and fratricidal strife

Expression may subtly conceal hidden desire
To gain wealth, procreate or seize another's domain

The human inclination to covet, to dominate, to control
Inexorably punctuating the human condition

Language is a tool of deep-seated instincts
Revolving around self-preservation and the quest for survival

Fear of the unknown, love of the benevolent
Of what saves from horrid eventuality

Words may manifest the intrinsic impulse for deification
Of false idols, or the Supreme Being

Without beginning or end
The Manifest, the Hidden, the Compassionate the Merciful

The will of God is manifest in the Qur'anic discourse
To lead people from misguidance to faith

**From corruption and oppression
To justice and happiness**

**From the injustice of religions
To the fairness of Islam**

BLAMING OTHERS

Human nature features the positive and negative
One of its failings- the inclination to blame others

Or not to accept responsibility for an undesirable outcome
Such as defeat in war, a broken family, a losing business

Noble Muhammad uttered sagacious words
The wise man is he who condemns himself and strives for the
time after death

And the foolhardy are those subjugated to the passions
And wish from God, through actionless wishful thinking

In a better human circumstance accountability prevails
When negative outcomes arise, those responsible accept blame

That inadequate action was taken, immoral deeds were committed
That there was a selfish approach to events important to
multitude

But even with enlightened human thinking, organization and action
The sinister impulses ought to be deterred

By fear of God, institutional oversight, human answerability, rule of law
Diminishing the negative outcomes of excessive
individualism

Free and enlightened debate erodes the force of personal whim
And the despotic tendency to impose unreasonable solutions

For there is a major difference between the interests of the powers
And those of society in its totality

Critical discourse puts to test feeble ideas
And immaturely crafted courses of action

Slogans are no substitute for well thought out programs
For reforming, restructuring and soundly directing an
inadequate condition

A JERUSALEMITE LADY IN THE GULF

Like a rose continually blossoming
Passage of time only nurturing its beauty

Audrey in her splendid youth a disquieted mind Ineluctably
enriched by life's forward movement

The grace of middle age and marked maturation
True mirth emanating from a genuine heart
Can she be likened to olive oil with a radiant glow?
Or the fabulous shine of the afternoon sun?

Life that has borne life, that has carried fruit
Defying aridity by nurturing true love

A white, striking cloud that moves on our horizon
Giving joy to all those who know her

Like a straight road attracting those with true sense
Those that appreciate and recognize an honest heart

Or like a lilac flower that transcends wilting
And challenges those that behold, but do not revere, beauty

A tribute to the graceful mother, wife and sister
A precious glowing candle in a steady wind

Land Fever

There is a fever gripping Jordan
Intensely active trading in real estate

Fortunes amassed with little effort
Speculation driving prices astonishingly upwards

Middlemen clamor for a land deal
Positioning for a lucrative commission

Struggling to avoid being sidestepped
When the sale is decisively concluded

Gulf money, expatriate remittances and investors from the region
Are together fueling the upward price spiral

Excitement overarches the real estate energy
It's almost an obsession, a blinding flicker of light

Futures, it is hoped, would be made by a few real estate deals
The yield of ordinary toil vastly outdone

But there is a value higher than instant fortunes
Belief in God, in human worth, in the importance of hard
work

Commerce oftentimes changes the order of society
Impoverishing, enriching, raising, causing social descent

Life is replete with opportunities
To be awaited, seized and invested

Jordan, alas, is a blessed land
Its earth being tilled for a better morrow

Near Sunset

The dimming orange sun slowly sinks
In the Western direction on a splendid late afternoon

Diverse birds are heard chirping
And ruffling the branches and green leaves of an orchard

Of numerous rows of hunter green citrus
And splendid looking palm and olive trees

A square-shaped scandent has a beige and stark white floor
Above which is an open roof covered with brownish branches
of palm

Flies abound in the Ghor depression
Ceaselessly and annoyingly flying about

Two men are seated at a white plastic table
Playing cards and relishing the sweet, fresh air

A blue mobile phone sits atop a plastic chair
Next to an empty cup of Turkish coffee

To the east are dignified sunlit mountains
Manifesting a light brown chromatic complexion

Cars are parked on a narrow and dusty road
Dividing the two sides of the fabulous orchard

Mirth abounds in the holiday atmosphere
A little girl smiles at her father and grandfather

Sounds of engines are audible though **distan**
Of well pumps for drawing water

Though warmer than the city weather
A chill may be felt in the fertile valley

AN ABILITY TO OVERCOME

Oftentimes it is strong need that produces action
Unsound assistance or intervention impeding achievement

A consciousness of desires, of instincts, of rights impelling action forward
Not to be stunted by misplaced compassion

Alas, a believer in human ability to overcome
And build the structures of positive life

To be nurtured with constructive engagement
An orientation of helping, without degrading condescension

As though the spark igniting progress
Inspiring and propitiating the will to accomplish

Inertia and inertness have objective causes
So often Man being the culprit

Not the stars, not an adversary, but an internal condition
Resistant to the impulses for reform, emancipation and
progress

And indeed, there exist those in the world that do not mean well
That wish for a nation, an individual, a religion, a class to
remain behind

**That a condition of inequality persists
And that emancipation remains a mirage, an illusion**

**Fortune oftentimes is not a nation's ally
Nor favorable opportunity an individual's companion**

**But sustained, rational and determined action has a dividend
In the changing landscape of the human condition**

**If God giveth without bounds to His servants
Surely, they would be unjust, oppressive**

An-NAKBA

The vicissitudes of life sometimes take a horrible turn
Witness the immensely dark cloud that is the Nakba

As though a violent, unfathomable storm bringing vast suffering
The dispersal and uprooting of a million souls

Scattered on the earth like the Israelite Diaspora
Painfully awaiting redemption of lost but unforgotten rights

Hamlets razed to the ground, orchards usurped, towns transfigure
A landscape of sustained living transformed, defiled, forcibly
seized

The immensely anguishing experience of a homeland lost
To the logic of superior arms, greater organization, more
sophistication

And yet, the story tells many an epic tale
Of brave Palestinian freedom fighters, valiant Arab Army
soldiers

Standing defiant in the face of a vastly intricate international scheme
To remake the reality of a nation's existence

Balfour's perfidious proclamation
Colonialism abetting a monumental project to change
Palestine's noble face

Of cities, orchards, sepulchers, mosques and churches
Arab Palestine was to be remade, renamed, reconfigured- alas,
forgotten by history's records

By dint of force, vigilance, superior planning and international support
Superpowers expiating for transgressions against the Jews

Sins for which Arabs bear no responsibility
The product of a sinister fascist European venture

1948, perhaps Palestine's most painful hour
A moment of alienation from land, abode and a historical
belonging

To be memorialized as a tragedy continuing to unfold
And capture into its great net the culpable and guiltless alike

EVIL CARICATURES

A heavy cloud of sorrow and pain
Envelopes the horizon of the human family

Brought on by ignoble and unnecessary caricature
Of the finest that has lived and walked the earth

What pains one most is the venue of occurrence
Countries that have shunned conflict, unleashed the wide
gates of philanthropy

And built societies rooted in the values of justice
The very values extolled by the wronged Prophet

The spirit of Muhammad's legacy is charity
And the nurturing of good will and peace

"Oh mankind: we have created you from male and female
And made you nations and tribes that you may know one another"

Freedom to speak is no excuse for malicious, blasphemous derision
For he emancipated all from the fetters of enslavement

Pronouncing the dignity of every man and woman
A merciful warner, and bearer of glad tidings

The seeds of conflict may have been sown
By the misguided impulse to mock, to calumniate

A man who resisted every aspect of evil and folly
Unflinchingly commanding good and forbidding evil

And painstakingly erecting the edifice of peace and faith
Anchoring human fraternity on a solid rock of truth and reason

Enjoining an ethos of humanism that shuns racism
Urging compassion to fellow humans, to animals, to the
environment

Alas, the cartoonists embarked on self-injuring misrepresentation
Reflecting a folly that blasphemes the noblest faith, the finest
human

Sent a mercy to all the worlds, to all the races
By the God of the East and West, the white and black, the
Aryan & Semite

Comedy and caricature can play a noble role
In a drama that prevents the tragic pathways of life

Demonization of the other is likewise a folly
For the majority of the protagonists are without blame

Waging opposition must give due regard to the sacreds and interests
Of both sides in an unfortunate, preventable dispute

AWARENESS OF OBLIGATIONS

Many a human conflict arises
From insufficient awareness of obligations

Hence, discontentment increases
That a person, an institution are delinquent in carrying out
their duties

Justice involves the interbraiding of rights and obligations
Oftentimes, rights are demanded, duties unrecognized

Society progresses when individuals out of free choice
Perform their duties- sacrificing what is valuable

Honoring the social covenant being an utmost priority
By citizens and rulers alike

A malaise sometimes visits the human condition
When essentials are not performed except through coercion

And threat of punitive action
In case commands are not obeyed

All are shepherds, and each is responsible for his flock
Responsibility rooted in a sense of duty, an obligation to society

Ultimate freedom is when surrender is made to God
Such not conflicting with obligations towards the present
world, towards society

TERRITORIES

One of many, many deep wounds
Embedded in a battered political psyche

Inflicted by many a diplomat, many a statement
Marshalling the art of the possible, the art of control- of
coercion

Language that sanctioned lesser territory
Excluding “the” from the totality of lands

Israel must withdraw from “territories” you know
Retaining huge portions at its will

Buttressed by massive military superiority
And the unflinching support of some world powers

By God- how overflowing are the forlorn shelves
Of international legitimacy unevenly applied

The Arabs and Muslims usually excluded from a respectable mainstream
Where the major powers prefer the contraveners to the victims

A world sadly dominated by the factor of force
And power to dictate favorable or unfavorable outcomes

Palestine bleeds profusely in the process
But affirming its right to resist the unfavorable odds

**Overwhelming a tiny, dispersed nation
Scattered in all corners of the globe**

**Inhabiting a massive village instead of a historical city or hamlet
Unstintingly yearning for a better, more equitable morrow**

HARMONY OR DISHARMONY

Truly, human relations are marred by shifting favor
Two persons, two nations, two classes diverging or coming
together

In an alliance of interests, or of strong empathy
Solidifying what was perhaps an unfriendly coexistence

The foes, or those whose interests are not served, react
Driving a wedge, sowing discord, nurturing ill will

By intrigue, false rumor, malicious insinuation
Replacing closeness, affinity with distance and aversion

O how complex and deeply nuanced is the human condition
Love oftentimes distanced, the force of hostility prevailing

But goodwill is so often as an unmovable and stout rock
Nurtured by a propensity for compassion and an inclination
to forgive

And also to understand and recognize difference
That the human condition is as diverse as the clouds in the sky

Or the infinitely varied shapes of pebbles on the shore
Or the inordinately diverse profiles of human psyches

But alas, commonality transcends vast difference
From dust we all are- a common origin, a single Creator

Who instilled in us uniform instincts, reason and passions
To be manifested in building a vastly varied set of human cultures

Punctuated by both harmony and discord, hatred and love
Yearning for the not so easily knowable bliss of heaven

Averse to all that pains us physically and emotionally
But insufficiently rational to subdue the unreasonable, the
pain-causing

If only the kernel of truth is apprehended, beheld by all
So that unison becomes an attainable condition

Male and female, black and white, rich and poor
Held together by a bond of faith, by a yearning for a paradisaal
morrow, by a familial connection

Discord is rooted in the sinister, the dark impulses of human nature
Forces that can be overcome by dint of knowledge, faith and
compassion

PRISONERS OF PALESTINE

Heavily does the burden lie on the conscience
Thousands of chained freedom seekers

Victims of unjust incarceration
The sin is to yearn to be free

Shackled by the sinister quest to enslave
To oppress, to withhold, to deprive of liberty's sweet moment

Imprisonment manifesting an evil disposition
To inflict suffering upon those profoundly victimized

By purposeful actions to expropriate land
To despoil orchards, to ever expand the tentacles of
colonization

But the voice of protest, if unheard, is quite audible
Although encircled with the thick walls of seclusion

Isolation that does not alter an essential reality
That the evil of occupation is not redeemed by force

And that many a time the quest for justice is a painful yearning
Entailing the affirmation of responsibility by the oppressor

And the victim transcending pains of grievance
So that coexistence becomes a symmetrical affair

For the tides of conflict have an unpredictable flow
And survival is anchored in the nurturing of good will

To be attained with more than lip service to peace
But in redemption of trampled upon rights

The gun, the bulldozer, the helicopter gunship shall not vanquish
The Arab prisoners' indomitable will to be free

SELF-LOVE

A manifestation of widespread frailty
The propensity for self-admiration

An orator speaking as though holding a mirror
Gazing at himself with intense admiration

Or an artist drawing brilliantly a portrait
Detached from the subject by dint of self-love

Or a preacher sermonizing about God
While egoistically feeling a sense of inordinate pride

Hubris that may be mitigated by striving to be modest
And adoration of the Creator of the self

Or charitable works for the sake of the Lord
And tolerating suffering selflessly

The appetitive self leads to great benefits
The striving to own, to procreate, to secure shelter for next of kin

Energy and effort devoted to the licit
Thereby constructively developing and nurturing life

TRUST IN GOD

A malaise in belief and action hovers over a society
Which divorces trust in God from positive action

A cigarette thrown on a floor with flammable substances
Or driving a car without fastening a seat belt

Or provoking an adversary without preparedness
So that when defeat occurs trust in God is invoked

God Almighty has embedded creation with causes and effects
Rules and laws that universally prevail

Alas, material sustenance cannot be effortlessly attained
Without toil, knowledge and organization

And paradise cannot be attained without deliberate choice and effort
A sound creed, worship and righteous conduct

And a person cannot become a scholar overnight
Without sustained effort spanning numerous years

Car accidents can be dramatically reduced
By entwining trust in God with observation of traffic regulations

Producing cars, TVs, computers cannot be achieved
By mere trust in the unseen divorced from the rules of life

**Progress is veritably an achievable circumstance
When it is vehicled by science, planning and organization**

**Indeed, God voluntarily intervenes in all phenomena
Manifesting Himself in invariant laws**

**He made humans His vicegerents
Bearing the trust which mountains refused to carry**

THE VEIL

A much maligned and misconstrued matter
The veil of a Muslim woman

Shrouding the parts of the body
Affirming the humanity, dignity of the female

That she should not be commodified
As though an object, a digit in the marketplace

Sexual instinct is a tremendous force
Attraction to be harnessed to build familial bonds

The veil augments the mystery, the attraction of woman
Like a precious gem to be licitly sought

The veil is not the essence of morality
But an aspect of modesty and ethical conduct

Fostering harmony between humans
Rooted in fidelity to the one betrothed

The veil is misconstrued as an instrument of oppression
Secluding woman from normal living

And reinforcing unfair male domination
Leading to a state of inequality

A perception that may be challenged
On grounds of reason, moral sense and revelation

BREACH OF TRUST

Sometimes in the condition of humans
A dark shadow overarchingly appears

Causing a malaise in human relations
And engendering an inexpressible sense of disillusionment

While also undermining the moral fabric
That keeps human relations sound and tightly knit

Sometimes, it is betraying the trust of a spouse
Or cheating in matters of money

Or violating the confidence placed
In a person of authority, or a subordinate person

It has been noticed since olden times
That fidelity is a prerequisite for a sound human condition

The affairs of enterprises, governments, families, farms, factories
Human institutions that are buttressed by moral rectitude

And undermined and weakened by betrayal of trust
Which erodes the sound functioning of any institution

In effect, present in our natures are the propensities for good and evil
Good may overcome, but evil is inextricably present

Satan tempts us to commit evil acts
And God Almighty commands good and forbids all that's evil

ANSWERABILITY

There exist symptoms of dictatorial inclinations
A shame to admit error, imperfect knowledge

As though an individual that transcends common humanity
Only the others are legitimately accountable

A profound tendency for secretiveness is another symptom
Sharing knowledge and information is regarded odious

As if open rational discussion is an insult to pride and dignity
Knowledge secretly held used for improper ends

Authority is a necessary concomitant of the human circumstance
Its absence a curse visiting society

Authority in the household, school, public spheres is positive
If undergirded by reason, tolerance and sound values

But authority is all too often abused
And detrimentally used by the powerful and the empowered

Abuse of power has a deep basis in social reality
Dictatorship manifesting itself in all social environments

All are shepherds
And all are responsible for their flocks

The wise words of the Prophet Muhammad
One who enjoined tolerance, justice and compassion

SOUND KNOWLEDGE

An uncertain idea occurs to the mind
Underpinned by suspicion and doubt

The doubtful idea gives birth to a group of ideas
A web of tenuous, inaccurate suppositions

Rational thinking and an honest heart
May function to deconstruct falsehood

And reliance on manifest proof
To put to test a set of propositions

It is inevitable to make assumptions
Which must be verified by empirical observation

Mistrust of people is oftentimes the product of the imagination
And the evil whisperings in the heart

To assume what is positive is an essential ingredient
In the arena of human relations

An orientation that prevents false accusation
And that militates against assuming the worst

The forces of the spirit, reason and a factual basis
Combine to make for better judgment

TRAGIC

A calamity visits a person, a family, a community
When economics and decadence enslave a girl

And chains are placed on a free individual
So that sale of body becomes a profession

She was endowed with intrinsic dignity and humanity
Abused and trampled upon for worldly gain and pleasure

The sacred feminine was created for nurturing offspring
And sharing licit love with a man

May God guide those who desecrate one of humanity's sacreds
The great family institution

The red light district sows and spreads corruption
Corrosive of the fabric of social living

Masquerading behind the guise of freedom
Sanctity is abused and placed on the altar of wicked Satan

A will to endure temptation is a sound alternative
To descent into self-destroying debasement

Economic solutions coupled with social and moral renewal
And a determination by the powerful to overcome the malaise

Repentance is the means to chart a new course
For a woman, a man, a society and a nation

That sets its priorities by defending what is sacred
To the human family at large

Cultural reality is a malleable condition
That may be modified to safeguard fundamental interests

THE UNFORTUNATE

The unfortunate sometimes befalls human relations
Suddenly tearing the threads of a long-standing relationship

At once ravaging what has been built over years
Of intimacy, closeness and mutual dependence

At a time of disagreement an immense amount is overlooked
Of vast contributions to a relationship

Time, effort, anguish, support
As though a flicker of light that disappears

And hostility all of a sudden replaces affinity
An unfair reassessment souring a human bond

Exaggerated reactions ought to be overcome by reason
And honest recognition of enduring favors

In the human circumstance, human action does a good deal
To undermine or improve relations

Between communities, states and individuals
Amenable to influence and modified conduct

Muhammad made licit one form of lying
That which brings closer together members of a single family

CONSPIRATORIAL SCHEME

A sinister inclination that stultifies positive thinking
Ascribing all events to conspiratorial scheme

Undermining a reasonable perception of nuanced phenomena
Endless varieties of variables, causes and effects, changing factors

Truly, in the arena of politics conspiracy and plotting do exist
Exercising influence on the ebb and flow, and outcome of
events

Those that plan can attain greater horizons
In terms of who gets what, where and when

Defining objectives and marshalling resources
With a view to reaching specified targets

But scheming oftentimes fails miserably
Actions being profoundly counterproductive

Wisdom often entails altering course when encountering setbacks
Testing new grounds, pursuing uncharted territories

Belief in God is compatible with apprehending complex reality
Observing more, unraveling more, expanding the frontiers of
knowledge

**Predestination does not necessitate a submissive mental posture
For Islam commands perceiving the signs in the souls and in
the vast horizons**

**In order to exercise positive influence
And contribute to the amazing edifice of civilization**

CONFLICT THEORY

Conflict theory may animate the thinking of protagonists
Gender against gender, class against class, race against race

A moral alternative is seeking symbiosis
The harmony of humans, social actors, races

War may be averted through the achievement of justice
And the cultivation of tolerant perception, accepting
difference

Human culture is anything but a monolith
Infinitely varied physical environments, linguistic features,
human choices

Clash isn't necessarily the road to attain aspirations
To preemptively attack perceived sources of threat

The cosmos is underpinned by vast harmony
The kernel of truth is that God created all

And faith in Him fosters accepting difference
Varied races, cultures, environments, languages, customs

Functionalist sociology is manifestly superior to conflict theory
The seeds of harmony to be nurtured by applying justice

And transcending the propensity for prejudice
That states that the 'other' is less worthy, inferior, undeserving

GLOATING

Supercilious perception of another
Beset by lesser fortune

An ailment, little wealth or lesser knowledge
Reasons to look down on a person

Gloating that is ill-advised
None has a water-proof tent over his head

It is wiser to sail the waters of life
Modestly perceiving self and others

Arrogance brings pain and anguish to people
In the cyclical trajectories of life

Lesser fortune is oftentimes surmountable
At God's behest, greater effort, more resoluteness

The disposition to know more, to better think
To more strongly believe that God changes people's condition

When they change what is in themselves
Engendering a betterment of a circumstance

DOMESTIC FRONT

Many a battle is won or lost
By dint of the cohesiveness of the domestic front

Harmony within a family
Or affinity between ruler and subjects

A wall of tightly knit building blocks
Each reinforcing the other

Whatever the extent of capabilities
Defeat may overwhelm with a weakened domestic front

Fair play and justice fortify the edifice
Strengthening the sense of belonging

And motivating people to offer sacrifice
In the defense of faith and homeland

The corruption of some in authority
Engenders general malaise

And downgrades society's performance levels
Or that of a family, institution, firm or state

GLORIFICATION

Adoration of the Glorious Lord
Pre-Eternal, Compassionate, Merciful

Creator of water, earth and fire
And humanity, angels and the jinn

Without worshipping Him life is bereft
Of value, purpose and direction

He possesses ninety-nine beautiful Names
Those who apprehend them enter Paradise

I lovingly and fearfully long for You
Yearning that has no limits

In the horizons, the oceans, the deserts
Are signs evidencing His greatness

In the forests, the mountains and the seas
Are manifestations of God's Glory

Happy is the soul that only worships God
One, indivisible, Omnipotent, All-Knowing

Creator of life at birth
And sustainer of all that lives

Living without being contingent or dependent
On anything in the vast cosmos

PYRAMIDS

Do the great pyramids epitomize an eternal moment
Gazing with ineffable grandeur at life?

Monuments lamentably consecrated to the transitory
Moment of transient power, prestige and authority

Carried stone by stone on the backs
Of the great ancient Egyptians

Containing the tombs of the old kings
Crushed by the ephemeral attribute of this world

Intensely yearning for life after this world
Buried with them the treasures amassed

Indeed, there is a life after the present one
All nations, all peoples, shall be mustered before the Great God

On a glorious Day of Reckoning
When an atom's weight of good or evil shall be beheld

A salute to the Nile's great civilization
Adorned by the eternal truth of the One God

BOUNDARIES

An indomitable force grips the planet
Transcending the demarcations of traditional life

A force that is radically attenuating
Boundaries of peoples and nation states

Global commerce made amazingly possible
By quantum leaps in technology and communication

Erstwhile vast distances are being diminished
By the plane, the rocket, the wondrous email

These unprecedented developments create a need
For mankind to find its soul

To return to God and the life of the spirit
To partake in a global venture armed with faith and ethics

PROMETHEUS

A sinister impulse is deeply rooted
In the deeper regions of the human past

A myth that pits Man against heaven
Praising human challenge to God

An unsettled relationship between humans
And the pantheon of Zeus and the gods

As if there actually are a multiplicity of deities
Or a man capable of overcoming God!

The fire of knowledge cannot be usurped
For God gives to Man what He wills

Irrespective of human connivance
Or temerity in combating God

The One Lord who wishes for us
To expand the frontiers of knowledge

And to do so in harmony with heaven
And to praise and adore Him

The myth of Prometheus is a fallen fable
Instilling the sinister, the pernicious, the evil

Praise is due not to an outcast human
But to those who lit the way

For acquiring wisdom and truth
And worshipping the transcendent, Perfect God

Fostering peace with heaven
And tranquility on earth

THE GOD WE CAN KNOW

Projection of human fallibility and limitation
Thereby conceiving of metaphysical reality

First principle, amorphous deity
Without life, hearing, vision

Attributes knowable by revelation
Harmonious with the proofs of reason

There is naught that establishes Divine transcendentalism
By negating the names and attributes of God

He is living, pre-eternal, seeing, hearing
With a hand unlike what is humanly known

The sound theological approach
Is to affirm what God stated in revelation

Without the pitfall of anthropomorphism
Or that of extreme transcendentalism

CONTRACT SOCIAL

The sages of the ancient world asserted
Justice is giving each and all their due

The elders are owed respect and honoring
The young, compassion, support and sacrifice

Should not a person seriously ask
What is it that he owes?

Becoming more deeply aware of a sense of obligation
Accompanied by a consciousness of rights

Philosophers of politics surmised
There was once a state of nature

And the sequel was a social contract
Men and women freely entering into a covenant

Affirming equality before the law
And securing a set of rights and obligations

Communal living is advantageous to all
Imagine living in isolation from society!

Social institutions safeguard sound living
Freedom, family, religious expression and just laws

AWE

There is an inclination shared by all
To be awed by the elements, by great phenomena

By great wealth and power
By aesthetic beauty, art, by splendid accomplishment

A sound approach is to give all their due
But also to avoid deification of the awesome

So that when he pondered: is this my lord?
And when it vanished he averred that God does not wither away

The contingent existence must produce in the mind
An awe of the One who neither dies nor declines

The stars, the planets, animals and humans
Are all subject to a veritable life cycle

So that when decline sets in
New forces emerge to maintain the great cycle

An awesome life force sustained by God
Over which humans have limited influence

But modernity has evidenced the unprecedented Human
exploration of the wider expanses

Of the oceans and seas, of the stars and planets
Animated by a fever to discover and conquer

Oftentimes oblivious of the higher purposes
In the earth and the heavens are signs

For those that reflect, that perceive, that build
The edifice of civilization

Which honors Man
And venerates God, Lord of the worlds

HAMSTER

A tiny white furry animal entered the home
Making an impression on all in the family

Possessing formidable frontal teeth
Capable of literally cutting an iron net

It lies dormant during the day
And is intensely energetic by night

Its eyes are red by daytime
And it is stunningly alert during the night

It feeds on lettuce and seeds
And needs only a small amount of water

It was placed in a large glass container
And a layer of soil was put inside it

The children avidly watch its movements
Alacrity and perseverance that are truly remarkable

The hamster appears animated by a strong drive
To escape confinement in the glass container

Freedom is a most valuable circumstance
For humans and animals alike

PITFALL

A major pitfall has marred the human venture
Humanly conceived metaphysics

Combined with affirming racial superiority
With a quest to subjugate “lesser peoples”

The vast configuration of human variety
Is reduced to the realm of the inferior “other”

Or a metaphysics that is naturalist
Rooting ethnic archetype in pagan conception of the beyond

A natural religion that deifies contingent matter
Territory, race, technology, cosmos

A striving to uniformize variety
Within narrowly conceived views of existence

Laws that are enacted in favor of a privileged group
Falsely claiming a universalism, a fair sense of globalism

Justice is the noble striving of the powerful
Basing power on equity for all

And not excluding the other gender
Or class, or ethnic group, or nation

FORBIDDEN TREE

Oh! At times the heart truly wonders
If only the impediment was tougher

And gratefulness flows from the self
To those that alerted to the forbidden tree

By God I am a believer in human freedom
Of thought, in politics, in economics, in worship

The sages warned of the false gods
Leading people terribly astray

And enjoined righteous conduct
And love, justice and compassion

None can ever banish the forbidden tree
From the saga of the human venture

Those that eat from it are of two kinds
Those that awaken to truth and repent

And those that hear the call
Heedless from a long distance away

We are to inexorably remember
That we are descendants of the Adam and Eve family tree

**Common ancestors for all of humanity
A man and woman who transgressed**

**Only to piously return to their Lord
And chart for all the course of redemption, of salvation**

POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

All have a political consciousness
Of varying degrees of depth and sophistication

Politics may be seen as
Influencing people, states to perform certain forms of conduct

And politics may be perceived
As the realm pertaining to who gets, what, where and when

One of the facets of political immaturity
Is to be heedless of true allies

Those that seek to advance one's interests
And forge relationships fostering mutual interests

A manifestation of political immaturity is to oppose
The interests of those that with goodwill desire one's better
interests

And make choices and take positions
That alienate potential or actual allies

Alliances have a moral and political aspect
At times grounded in ideological confluence

How much history is replete with unexpected alliances!
Witness the coming together of Bolshevism and liberal
democracies

**In a fateful battle against
The power of Nazi Germany**

**Islamically conceived, politics is guiding people
To worship the One God**

**And fulfilling their better interests
In the realm of worldly and afterlife existence**

**A relationship binding rulers and governed
Within a matrix of genuine equality**

EQUAL TREATMENT

Woefully present in our present circumstance
Is nepotism and favoritism

A bureaucracy treating citizens differently
Ethnic or tribal belonging determining the quality of service
rendered

Indeed, in all corners of the globe
Favoritism occurs with varying degrees of intensity

Unequal influence, economic and political
Defining the fundamental aspects of a system

Influence surely is oftentimes meritoriously acquired
Rooted in legitimacy, luck, sustained work, sophistication

Truly a sign of development and progress
Is bureaucracy that equally and fairly deals with citizens

The interests and demands of some are catered for
And those of others are ignored

Unless undergirded by the support of influential folk
Whose intervention magically accomplishes things

**Modern society, to succeed, must be equipped
With a rational, responsive (to all) bureaucracy**

**This is not an advocacy of equality in condition
But equality of opportunity under the law**

WE MISS YOU HISH

As though an inextricable warm presence
Defying the fact of death

The demise of a noble, kind man
With compassion in dealing with all

Hisham epitomized the finest of east and west
Character traits that leave an indelible influence

Invariably present on all occasions
Sharing with the folk their happiness and grief

Is it a sense of losing an important tooth
Or a vital part of a machine?

Modestly treating the elderly, the children
Offering copious amounts of love and compassion

Deflating causes of conflict between people
With a gentle smile sowing harmony's seeds

A stoic spirit that oftentimes endured greatly
Suffering with an enviable serenity

Inexorably looking forward with optimism
As though catching distant glimmering stars

And bringing them down to earth
Telling life's sad and happy tale

AGGRIEVED

With bewilderment the Arabs view
America's persistent, unflinching bias for Israel

As though a conflict seen in Manichean terms
Righteous folk against the evil sons of Ishmael

The tale indeed is incomplete
Ignoring an immense amount of facts

The incessant victimization of the Palestinians
Imprisonment, land expropriation, closures, racial discrimination

Truly, the victim is turned into the oppressor
Falsely depicted as the incorrigible villain

The sin is a yearning for freedom
And liberation from occupation and oppression

Too many have shed their blood in a saga
Of untold suffering, extreme pain

And presently, the dictum is not to recognize
A government produced by popular mechanism

The victims must renounce the right to self-defense
To dream of the redemption of trodden upon rights

Concession after concession must be made
Without guarantees of reciprocation

America's folly is unbalanced policy
Possibly paving the way for immense suffering and loss

An appeal is made to a sense of fairness
With deep roots in the American character

And also that interests are endangered
By an orientation that is profoundly slanted

Interests and moral imperatives are well served
By policies that honestly recognize the "others" rights

WEAVING A WEB

Is it a veritable vacuum or block?
Visiting the condition of a writer?

As though an uneasy feeling
That nothing worthwhile is expressible

An overarching aspect is a certain pessimism
A diminished propensity for creative articulation

An inarticulacy weaving a web
Around a mind insufficiently practiced

Shall I turn to the classics for inspiration?
Here an idea, there an idea

As though a futility amid intellectual abundance
To be overcome through greater will

Or volition that pursues half-baked ideas
Turning them into worthwhile notions

Or images of a vast environment
Or ideas that abound in a cosmic setting

Replete with facts and phenomena
Amenable to human gauging and apprehension

In an ephemeral life of infinite variety
Complexity, richness telling a vast amount

To minds and societies that wish to know
To understand, to extend the immense frontiers of knowledge

Just like chasing a rolling stone
Holding it, touching it, discovering it and loving it

MOUTHWATERING CHOCOLATE

One of life's truly immense pleasures
Eating and relishing a piece of chocolate

An unfailingly enjoyable experience
Satiating that is genuinely indescribable

The Arabs have a saying
There is an empty place in the stomach

That naught can fill
But a sweet dessert

Drooling occurs when beholding
An enticingly wrapped chocolate bar

An eating habit that accompanies one
From childhood to old age

The scientists of the body counsel
Too much is bad, and a small amount beneficial

To human health that is maintained
By moderately indulging in food and licit drink

Can I compare the experience
To a gentle stream of happiness?

An elevating sense of joy
Temporary, delicious and truly rewarding

DETECTING THE SWORD

But for the benevolence and mercy of God
Nuclear holocaust would have engulfed all

An age where two mighty empires
Faced each other with mortal threat

Stockpiles upon stockpiles
Of terrible weapons directed at humanity

Two superpowers armed to the teeth
Threatening mutually assured destruction

Large populations were held hostage
To a mindless, snowballing arms race

A monumental glacier swiftly melted
With the demise of the Soviet regime

Replaced by a new ideology, a new orientation
Substantially decreasing world instability

Sagacious statesmanship crafted solutions
To seemingly intractable problems

Specifying survival as of paramount importance
And making the necessary concessions and compromises

The art of the possible animated a process
That continues to be far from consummated

A world freed from the dark shadow of nuclear holocaust
An irrational, mindless option for all

Indeed, the yearning is for a world
Free from the hanging sword of horrible annihilation

A planet guarded by the logic of peace
And a collective commitment to global survival

RACHEL CORRIE

Perished by the terrible thistles of oppression
Wounds that killed but could not eliminate

The courageous stand of a great American
Using her flesh and blood to prevent home demolition

A faded yet brightly shining star
Or a brilliant moon on the grim horizon of humanity

One who believed in the justice of the Palestinian cause
Vastly outshining her country's ill-founded positions

Can I compare you to an indomitable plowshare?
Or a stark red rose that is perennially fragrant?

A sweet scent of the death of a noble lady
Revealing the follies of modern power

Used to buttress iniquitous occupation
And the oppression of an entire people

Recorded in the annals of the march for peace
Is the martyrdom of a courageous non-violent warrior

A young human who made the ultimate sacrifice
That her country's misdeeds be redeemed

Forever the children of Arabia and Palestine
Will with grief remember an incandescent candle in a terrible
storm

Of ill-will, injustice and power abused
To perpetuate a sordid chapter in human history

MENTAL OUTLOOK

Sometimes in the thinking of people
A false premise has a pervasive distorting effect

Perversion of a good deal of the truth
An epistemic vortex that is ill-founded

Facts are gaged and embedded in a mental outlook
Eclectically representing reality

Positivistic apprehension of phenomena
Is forward movement for the human mind

Closely entwined with revealed truth
Harmony between reason and revelation

The unicity of God is a certain truth
Ordering a vast system of ideas and facts

An epistemology that is all-embracing
Accommodating of every vehicle of attaining knowledge

DANGEROUS ILLUSION

A dangerous illusion exists
That culture has ultimate creative capability

That reality is ontologically produced
By the omnipotent force of language

A partially misguided paradigmatic orientation
That views discourse as the essence of reality

Metaphysics are in the process subsumed
Under the rubric of contingent thought

Reason is likewise materialized
And language rendered a purely physiological phenomenon

Toynbee posited an insightful idea
Humans must strive for a Divine view

Reason, the senses, feelings and intuition
Mediating between metaphysics and physis

God communicates infinite facts
Discernible through human empirical activity

A discourse fusing revelation with reason
Language molded by metaphysics and matter

REIFICATION

A source of puzzlement, a veritable mystery
How God's Word became existence

And He said to everything, be
And it was in obedience to His Will

But the mechanism of converting the Word
Into reality is beyond pure reason and empirical observation

Divine creation and recreation of the cosmos
Far surpassing the boundaries of human perception

Plato errantly spoke of the reification of archetypes
Amorphously discussing the essentially obscure

True, causes produce effects ad infinitum
But only within a narrow ontological reality

God is manifestly the cause of all existence
Challenging which is succumbing to unreason

LORD, HELP ME

It is evidently the case
The soul is an unchanging phenomenon

The hair gradually becomes gray
The skin slowly decays

But something inside remains the same
A companion of consciousness since early childhood

One savors it as an inextricable presence
Is it mind, matter or spirit, or all of them?

Human maturation engenders a higher consciousness
An awareness of the self and its Creator

Perception of physis and cosmos
Of a universal reality rooted in the Absolute

Self-love is an indomitable part of the self
Tempered by a yearning to glorify God

Engendering greater modesty, greater wisdom, greater feeling
Perceiving the self as a drop in an ocean

Or a tiny cloud in a vast horizon
Or an atom of sand in a vast desert

O Lord, free me from narcissistic impulse
And make me immersed in adoring your Glory

I am the transient moon shadow
A flickering candle that is fading away

The repository of a tiny amount of knowledge
Overwhelmed by the immensity of Divine knowledge

Yearning for the Mercy of God
To save me from my perennial companion

A soul whose secret I do not know
An unfathomable elixir

An unknowable reality
An ontological depth of nothingness and great existence