

PRAISING GOD

A Compilation of Articles from *The Mystic's Vision*)
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Praising God

Hardly anyone believes in the tyrannical God that the ancient Greeks invented and called Zeus, nor does hardly anyone believe in the tyrannical God the Jews invented and called Jahveh. Those who have actually *experienced* God within themselves have told us that the Divinity underlying all Reality is a Spirit—a Spirit that lives as the Consciousness of every sentient being. That Spirit is also the Creator of form: It periodically radiates from Itself a Light that easily transmutes into various forms, constituting all the individual beings and objects that fill the universe. That Divine Spirit is very different from what we used to think of as a “God.” It is not a being among beings but is rather the sole Existence that contains everything that exists. It is ubiquitous Consciousness, but It also has the Power to create innumerable worlds with Its expanding form-producing Light. In this way, in every instance, It is both the background and the foreground, both the absolute Existence and the divine Creative Energy, both Soul and body.

We are naturally reluctant to call this dual-faceted Spirit a “God” since It does not fit the old mold created by the Greeks or the Jews. But, since It is a unique and all-inclusive category unto Itself, we may call It whatever we like. We may call It “God,” we may call It “Brahman,” we may call It “Allah,” we may call It “the Void,” we may call It “the One,” or we may call It “our Father.” In fact, every imaginable word ultimately signifies that Divine Presence, as everything is contained in and constituted of It. Our God is very wonderful. He is the very epitome of Good. He fulfills the desires and inner longings of every soul, and as a loving Father leads his children home, He leads us to our blissful rest in Him. When souls come to know Him in themselves, their love awakes, and their happiness knows no

bounds. And then they sing His praise and experience His joy in their hearts. This is His wondrous gift for which we lift our voices in song to praise our God, our Father, the One who is alone the summit of all sweetness and joy!

Speaking of God

Since human language was first invented, its purpose has been to facilitate the description of things and events in a world of sense, that is to say, within a spatio-temporal environment. Language is structured, therefore, on the perceived relationship between a subject (the seer) and an object (the seen). That subject-object based language is inapplicable, however, when we attempt to speak of God, our spiritual Source. Man—whose individual soul is within and inclusive to God, and whose body is within and inclusive to God’s Creative Power—may not appropriately designate the Creator as ‘other’ since the two are essentially one, beyond the designation of either ‘subject’ or ‘object’. In this case, the subject *is* the object, and the object is the subject. And, for this reason, we humans have such great difficulty in thinking and speaking meaningfully about God.

In fact, it is that very subject-predicate-noun structure of language that precludes the possibility of meaningfully expressing the relationship of creature to Creator, of man to God. For, since God, the all-inclusive Spirit, is the substratum in which we ourselves are contained, He is never something ‘other’ to which we can relate as a subject to an objective noun. And though we may occasionally speak of God as an objective reality, in fact, the subject, “I,” and the object, “Thou,” are eternally one—even though, in the common usage of our subject/object-based language, that fact is seldom noted. Yet, despite this great inadequacy of language, we have no alternative but to speak of God however we may, as He is omnipresent and is invariably involved in every occurrence in the universe and beyond.

Human language is inappropriate for speaking of God for another reason as well, as our language requires gender-specific pronouns to represent sentient beings, and God, the source of all sentience, is neither male nor female, but contains, or rather is the source of, both genders. That all-inclusive One cannot therefore be realistically designated as either “He” or “She”. The alternate pronoun, “It,” is ordinarily reserved as a designate of inanimate things, and God, the source of all animate life, cannot be relegated to that narrow linguistic category either. Our language simply does not

accommodate the possibility of accurately referring to God. And so, we have no choice but to use whatever pronoun best appeals to us at the time, even while knowing that there is, in our language, no possible means of referring to [Him] that is truly appropriate.

And so, I ask you to please excuse my unavoidable linguistic blunders, while I do my best to tell what I know of [Him]: He is not known by the intellect, and He is not captured in our human words; He may be known only through love and the bestowal of His merciful Grace.

The Sole Object of Our Love

Everyone knows that the form is transient and impermanent, while the essence is unchanging and everlasting. We see this clearly as we note the inevitable changes in our own bodies and note as well, the constancy of our inner divinity as we age. And yet, it seems that in our popular culture we tend to value the individual over the universal essence of which the individual is but a form. We proudly announce our love for this or that particular person, though the truth is that who we are in love with is God, manifest in the form of a human being. It is only God's beauty that attracts us and fills us with love and longing. If we attribute that lovability to the individual person, we are soon disillusioned and disappointed, as the beauty and perfection of which we have become enamored sadly turns out to be marred by human imperfection and is subject to old age, death and dissolution. Therefore, we must acknowledge that it is God's eternal beauty that we have fallen in love with, for He alone is capable of inspiring our love and He alone is worthy of being the object of our love.

In our popular culture, we sing false and ludicrous love songs to this or that individual person; yet how quickly the song of 'I love you' turns into a song of 'goodbye!' Every individual person and every person's heart is subject to infidelity and change, while God, whose beauty and goodness inspires our love, remains always perfect and unchanged. So, we must not be fooled by appearances; the love that God's beauty has inspired in us cannot be satisfied with the possession of any of His transient human forms. For it is only in His eternal Being, unformed and unmanifest, that His beauty and His perfection remain forever, and it is only in His unformed and eternal

Being that He can be eternally possessed and loved. Then, let us continually sing aloud His praise, for He is in fact the beloved, the lover, and the love as well. Filling all, and beguiling all, He remains the one constant source and object of love in every heart.

God's Love

Love is born of God and may rest in nothing less than God.
 For we see that all *worldly* love is but one half of an inseparable pair,
 And we recall with gladness that God's love has no contrary;
 For He is the One in whom all opposites merge,
 The One whose love never wanes.

Search this earth and through all the galaxies, you'll find
 Nothing truly worthy of love but God. For all else is lovable
 Only to the degree that it is reflective of Him.
 Let not your love, therefore, settle on anything or anyone but Him.
 For He alone is the source of joy,
 The Giver of wisdom and satisfaction,
 The final destination of all the heart's desires,
 And the source and resting place of every wandering soul.

My Love Affair

I have enjoyed a life-long love affair with God. Though He is always within me and I am always within Him, I pretend to be separate from Him in order to carry on this relationship. One day soon I shall shed this separateness and shall once again live everywhere as all-pervading Spirit; but, for now, I'm confined to operating exclusively in conjunction with this tired aging body and brain. I know that it is He who gives me life and thought and movement, and without Him no I exists. And so, when at last He leaves this body, it is I who shall leave it as well; it is I who shall shed these bodily limitations, and the happy culmination of our love affair will result in the dissolution of our pretended relationship. Then, I and Thou shall melt into one inclusive awareness and no longer exist as two separate identities.

'Thou' art my beloved, my father, my master, my larger self. Within me, Thou art the voice of both the seeker and the sought. Yet neither I nor Thou is ultimately real; only the one awareness into which these two imaginations

must eventually dissolve is ultimately real. And yet, dear Father, how mysterious is this grand illusion in which an imaginary I seeks an imaginary Thou! How amazing is this love affair with all its yearning and desire that takes place wholly within one undivided awareness! Do you create this imaginary division within yourself only to enjoy the exciting drama of a loving relationship? Or does your only satisfaction come from bringing this imaginary I and Thou together at last in joyful union?

Help me to know Thy purposes, dear Father, and whatever is Thy will, may it bring Thee all possible joy and satisfaction. Let my will be the same as Thine, for Thy will alone is truly unfailing. I am grateful, dear Father, for all Thy many gifts and blessings throughout these many years, and I pray that all my errors and failures may eventually be corrected, and that I will at last be made whole and perfect in Thee. Till this earthly illusion of separation is fully cast away and I experience once again our inseparable unity, I remain Thy child, Thy lover, Thy servant.

Let All Voices Be Silenced

Let all voices be silenced, and do Thou only, Lord, speak to me in my soul. Let all the clamor of thoughts, stirred up in my restless mind, be stilled; and let my anxious heart find rest in surrender at Thy feet.

Do with me, Lord, as it pleases Thee to do, and let no care for my own well-being arise to trouble my heart; for Thy wisdom and Thy love shall always suffice to guide me day by day.

Dear God, bestower of Grace, lift up my mind to Thee—above all worldly thoughts and concerns, above all reservations and doubts, and let my heart pour forth loving praise in showers of golden song to Thee. Thy will hast always led me in times past through all my troubles, and why should I turn now to my own devices?

Let Thy joy fill my heart and my soul, and lift me, Lord, on wings of longing, buoyed by the breeze of Thy Grace, into Thy perfect stillness, into Thy fatherly embrace.

Let Me Be Thy Instrument

Teach me, Lord, to look with love upon Thee and all Thy doings; for Thy love is my only delight and my only good. Teach me, Lord, to correct my wayward mind whenever it falls from remembrance of Thy goodness and the presence of Thy omnipotent hand in all that occurs here on earth. Lift me into Thy Light, O Lord, for without Thy grace, I am but a burden on the earth. Teach me to become perfect in wisdom, perfect in knowledge, perfect in contentment, perfect in love.

Let me by Thy instrument, Lord, in spreading Thy perfect joy to Thy children in whatever measure is ordained by Thee. Father, remove from me all darkness of ignorance, and all self-serving motivations, that I may truly serve as an instrument of Thy truth and Thy grace on earth; and I shall give adoration to Thee in my heart, and sing Thy praise throughout all the days of my life.

What May I Give Thee, Lord?

What may I give Thee, O my Lord, who hast given to me so greatly of Thyself? What, indeed, do I have to give that is not already Thine? And who is this upstart ‘I’ who speaks of serving ‘Thee’, whom everyone knows art both the server and the served?

It is this very sense of ‘I’, this false ego that I offer, Father, as my gift to Thee. For there is nothing that is not Thine own: this body, mind and intellect, all belong to Thee and serve Thy purposes in reflecting Thy Wisdom and Thy Truth. It is only this mistaken sense of ‘I’, this ‘me and mine’, that stands like an interlocutor before Thee, obscuring the clarity of Thy inherent Light and the sweetness of Thy perfect Peace.

Then let this ‘I’ be always prostrate at Thy feet in adoration, silenced in surrender, awed and voiceless in anticipation of Thy touch. And let these eyes turn ever-upward unto Thee, though blinded by Thy brilliant Light, until, transparent as a polished pane of glass, this soul becomes the pure conduit of Thy Truth, Thy Will, Thy Love, Thy Self, who art the only ‘I’ that truly lives.

Meditation

What does it mean to remember God? It means to awaken in yourself the awareness of His presence within you and all around you. It is to transform the sense of selfhood into the sense of the universal Spirit, and to transform the vision of “others” into the vision of God’s multi-formed beauty.

He is the Source of all that exists, and He is your inner Guide and Teacher. He is the majesty and greatness of your own soul. Remember Him with every breath, and thus keep alive the flame of His unconditional Love in your heart.

Say to Him: “Father, do Thou guide my life and my every thought, for I have no other joy but Thee. Thou art the strength of my soul, my only confidant and source of guidance. When I have forgotten Thee, I have forgotten my very heart’s blood, and I have left aside the very fiber and backbone of my life.

“What I live for, Thou art. My only desire, Thou art. The sole fulfillment of all my dreams, the treasure for which my soul yearns, Thou art. O God of my soul, blood of my heart, let me not forget Thee for a single moment! O God of gods, grant me this boon that I may ever remember Thee who art my soul’s support and strength, and let me love Thee and praise Thee ever in my heart.”

How May I praise Thee, Father?

Thou art the ocean on which this wave rolls.
 Thou art the wind on which this leaf rides.
 Thou art the loam in which this plant grows.
 Thou art my Creator, my bone and my flesh.
 Thou art the Life that pulses in my blood.
 Great Father of the universe! Begetter of all!
 Thy blessing is on me, and my love looks to Thee.

I seek Thee to love Thee, but Thou art within me,
 Invisible to my eye or my mind. How amazing
 That Thou dost reach out in me to Thyself in Thee!
 It is Thy doing that divides Thy creature from Thyself,
 And it is Thou who dost embrace me as one in Thyself.
 Lord God, my kind Father and beloved Self,
 If I am to see, I will see with Thy sight.
 If I am to know, I will know by Thy gift.
 On Thee I depend, O my Fountain, my Source.
 Thou art my soul and my world, Thou the Breath of my breath.
 Do with me, Father, whatsoever Thou wilt.

How May I Praise Thee II

Though my soul yearns to flood the world with Thy praise, when I open my mouth to speak, there are no words to say. My heart leaps up to sing, but the sound is stillborn in bewildered silence. My arms lift up thousands of bouquets of multi-hued flowers to lay at Thy feet but fall helpless at the realization that these flowers already belong to Thee, are indeed Thy glory and Thy gift.

How then may I praise Thee, Lord, who art the singer, the praise, and the instigator of the desire to praise? What words are worthy to speak of Thee? What gift is not Thine own? What song is not Thy sound? O God, who dost fill my heart with the desire to praise Thee, let Thy song of love cascade from this heart which is also Thine own, and enchant the world with its joyful melody. Let all hearts be awakened to see Thy spreading Light. Let knowledge of Thee spring up like a clear spring of water to quench the thirst of every mind and satisfy every soul with certainty and peace.

O God Thou dost praise Thy own self in the countless hearts of countless creatures fountained forth from Thy own effulgent will. If it be Thy will, let this life which Thou has imagined into being become an instrument of Thy praise, whether in song or in silence. Let Thy Love, Thy Grace, Thy boundless Joy release itself and flow through this projected form of Thine to flood the world with Thy own Light and Thy own Song to lift all souls to Thee.

Born of His Light

Don't you know that we are born of His light—that every elementary particle of matter began as a photon of light?
 Every electron, every quark in the interior of every proton or neutron came into being and acquired its properties
 In the transformation of those high-energy photons of light
 Streaming out from the Creator's breath.
 This world and all worlds sparkling throughout the cosmos are made of the radiance of God's power,
 A dancing array of His light's many ephemeral forms.
 And we, evolved from His light, are endowed with the presence of His eternal Self, and live by His life,
 And love with His love and know with His wisdom.
 We are conscious by His marvelous all-pervading awareness.
 We see by His loving grace, and we sing His praise by His gift of song.

Then sing, ye God-born angels of light!
 Raise up your voices to Him whose fabric forms your being and appearance,
 Whose life-pulse fires your heart and breath.
 Remember Him whose goodness molded you, whose love enfolds you,
 Whose existence is the life-stream of your being, and whose out-flowing Bliss provides the everlasting joy of your soul.
 Until we wend our way back into His eternal light, sing forth His praise.

Song of Thanksgiving

Hari, my love, I wish to sing to Thee a song of Thanksgiving,
 Yet, O how I dread the futile search for meaningful words to offer Thee!
 My heart is full of thanks and praise for each breath that is granted me,
 But to speak reveals the lie of pretended two-ness that I must tell,
 For Thou art my breath, my voice, the Real; and I am but the image.
 I live by Thy uncommon Life, imaged in Thy dream of me;
 And yet my gratitude to Thee upwells, as an image in a mirror
 Might admire its own source, its real and original Face,
 Or as a dream character might call out praise to its dreaming Self.

Though we are one, not two, I'll speak as though we're separate and apart;
 For how else might I truly speak to Thee?

O Hari, Thou art alone, undiminished by the clatter and glitter
 Of a billion billion images, mere reflections in a house of mirrors,
 For Thou art alike the house, the mirrors, and the flitting images as well.
 This speaking too is like the barking of a dog in an empty field,
 For, though it may be heard, the silence of the cosmos remains unbroken.
 Yet I, this imagined form, am present—at least in appearance.
 And because I'm here, please let me speak to Thee in loving thanks.

O Hari look how wonderful is this story Thou dost tell!
 Look how beautiful is this body and the life ensouled.
 Though all too quickly it will turn to dust, this form is Thine
 And holds Thy greatness and Thy holy light and breath of life.
 Thou, this brightly glowing wakeful knowing.
 Thou, this deep and endlessly creative song of light and love,
 Bubbles up from Thy unfathomable depths
 Within the soul of me to greet each day with joyful thanks.

O Hari, from Thy eternal Goodness and unknowable Repose,
 Thou hast issued forth this universe of man and beast,
 With purpose known only to Thy own delight.
 And Thou hast given Thy own thoughts to guide us from within
 To bring us happily through adventures great and small,
 To our eventual end in Thy boundlessly blissful Self.
 O Hari, it is a most wonderful and admirable drama
 Thou hast produced, full of harrowing dilemmas,
 Frightful predicaments, and uproarious denouements!

Yet, in the end, we all awake to know one eternal Self.
 The Dreamer of this dream, our ever-undisturbed Reality.
 Always unperturbed, Thou art forever untouched by time,
 As the patient sky is ever untouched by the passing clouds.
 We are where we have always been in truth, never separated
 From our constantly unfolding, ever undivided Self,
 Where all the fervent lives o'erpassed, like dreams,
 Once left behind in waking, hastily retreat from view,
 Revealed as the flimsiest of transient illusions.

In waking, we are one in Thee, O Hari!
 And in Thee, *as* Thee, we have always been.
 Never imprisoned as we thought in separate forms,

Once reawakened from our dreams, we know our
 Ever undivided and eternal Identity as Thee.
 In blissful folds of snow-white radiant Eternity
 We rest as Thee in peaceful oneness and joy.
 But while I live in pretended separation from Thyself,
 Let me now offer my song of grateful thanks to Thee,
 Who art the Life that lives me, my secret pride and joy.
 For it is Thou who hast made Thyself as me.

Dear Father, all that Thou hast made is good,
 And all Thy beauteous forms sing praise and thanks to Thee.
 Then, let me uplift my voice in song as well,
 To glorify in praise my gracious Lord:
 O Hari, all praise be to Thee in Thy heavenly glory!
 All praise be to Thee in Thy universal pageantry of form!
 My head is bowed in loving thanks and worship,
 Knowing Thou art all and more than all.
 Thy grace to me is beyond what my voice can tell.
 I can but offer thanks, with hands held high, to Thee,
 My ever kind and gracious Lord.

Praise God

I'm here to sing the praise of God, and so I shall.
 And let no one think belief's the basis of my song,
 Or words I've read in high-flown works.
 The subject of my song is what I've seen,
 What He's revealed to my most meager sight
 In holy quiet night's retreat.

Though many have praised His creation —
 Its beauties, and its grandeur,
 I would praise Him in His unborn formless Essence,
 Where He lives unmoved, and happily serene.

Though He breathes forth the immense and tumultuous cosmos,
 Enjoying the drama of its unfolding activity,
 He remains clearly indivisible,
 And perfectly unmoved within Himself,

Continually aware that He alone exists.
There is no other; so, all's contained in Him.

Serene, yet keenly awake, He spreads
His outflowing radiance in every direction.
Delight, unbounded and uninterrupted,
Permeates Him and all that He proffers.
In one breath, He flashes forth the universal array,
And then withdraws it all again,
Only to breathe once more and fling the stars
And galaxies wheeling on their rounds again.

For creatures, it's an almost endless parade
Of eon upon eon, unfathomably deep in time's recess.
But for him, who knows no change or movement,
It's but a moment's breath.

And yet the greatest wonder is that every soul breathed forth
Is but a time-wrought image of Himself.
And each one, being His by virtue of its life in Him,
Is capable of finding at its core that One who fashioned it to life.

As a figure in a dream awakes to know he is the dreamer,
Each soul, when it awakes, discovers it is none but Him.
He appears as though in a house of many mirrors,
Fragmented into a million images, yet all are Him.
It's but a masquerade.

And when the soul awakes to know its deathless Self,
Beyond imagined dreams of personhood,
It knows that forever it has lived serene and blissful,
Just beyond the dream.

It learns that all the devilish battles and tortuous travails
Were but a thought-parade in which, for the briefest time,
It marched, all unawares, to finally break away,
And find its way to freedom from time's tumultuous play.

To find such freedom one must look within,
And, gaining clarity of mind, discover who one really is.

Who one really *is* is Him! For none exists but Him alone.
 It's true! He lives alone in high eternity.
 But He lives as well as you and me.

It's you and me who lives in that eternal sky,
 While playing out our destined roles below.
 Two selves, one vigilant while tossing out the stars,
 The other strutting on this stage of dreams,
 Oblivious to the other, her subtler Self and Source.

The all-encompassing, all-sustaining Self of all
 Is quite alone, and quite contained
 Without a drama to behold,
 Until He beams Himself in outward radiance
 As particles and galaxies and separate living things
 In bright array,
 To people all these worlds with beings
 Conscious of their knowing selves.
 His game: to lead them all within themselves
 In stage by stage to knowledge of the ways of things,
 And, finally, to awareness of that deeper Self
 Who flung them forth to journey home,
 To know the ultimate Truth that they are Him.

Awaking to that joyful knowledge,
 The spell of separation falls away
 Along with fear and worry, woes and cares.
 And, lifted up in mind and spirit,
 The knower lives in peace and joy beyond this world
 Alone, eternal, as all in all.
 He knows the universal design to be his own.
 He walks in freedom. His soul is blest.
 Praise God

In Praise of God

I

Let us now, for our own heart's joy, give praise to God. He is the Refuge of the troubled mind and the Bringer of peace to the troubled heart. As a cold drink of water to a thirsty man, so is the name of God to the wearied soul.

He is the cool Cave of the heart, wherein the soul finds quiet sanctuary from the darting demons of egotistical thought. He makes the passionate will to be stilled in silence and dispels all the incriminations of the wounded heart. O let us rest in that silent, bliss-filled Cave, hidden away from the clamor of the world, and drink from the fountain of the nectar of His name.

O my mind, scratch His name on the cave-wall of your heart, and never let your eyes be without the sight of His name. Sing His name softly in that heart-sanctuary, that your ears may never be without the sound. And give praise to Him who alone is worthy of praise; for all that is done is done by Him, and every gift that comes is a gift from His hand.

O my heart, praise Him with words, and praise Him in acts of love. No sin has ever touched so much as a hair on the head of one who is busied with the praise and remembrance of God. If you wish to do some good in this world, O my soul, never stray from His dwelling-place in the heart. For, as the moon sheds the light of the Sun only when its face is turned to the Sun, we also are bathed in and reflect His gentle Love only when we're turned in love to Him.

II

We gather to give praise to God, not that we might please Him with our devotion, nor to make a show to others of our holy ways. Why, then, should we find pleasure in singing His praise? Is it not out of a pure love that springs from God Himself and wells up to overflow within us? Is it not His own heart's Love that made us, and that fills our every fiber with a sweet desire? And is it not His inward flame of Love 'round which we, moth-like, dance, yearning to be extinguished in His unifying light?

He is the Love and He is the Light that draws us to Himself. From His gentle Light we have emerged, and to Him we shall return. May we learn, in this fragile life, to walk always in His Love, and to keenly sense in every moment His all-pervading Light. May we breathe His joy, and taste His sweetness, and shed His mercy on everyone we meet.

It is this for which we gather, for which we give Him praise. For, as the summer flowers blossom forth the exuberant joy and beauty of God on earth, so do our hearts blossom forth His Love in songs of praise; and mercifully shower on ourselves the sweet fragrance of delight.

III

Lord, when I look within me, I see Thy light and I know Thy peace, and I am guided by Thy sweet words of wisdom. And when I look about me, I see only Thee in all Thy splendorous forms. It has been said that man is like a bottle floating in the sea of God; water flows within and water flows without; everywhere there is only the vast ocean of God. Thus, Lord, I am immersed in Thy ocean of Consciousness and Light, and I know Thee both within and without.

But, O God, what of this “bottle,” this “me,” which separates the within from the without? What is this “I” that stands apart and speaks to Thee of within and without? O my Lord, even this body is Thine own! It is a form composed of Consciousness and Light, composed of Thyself; it is a shimmering mass of Energy projected from Thee, and can never be separate from Thee.

Who, then, is this “I” that speaks of “I and Thou,” and thus sets up a division between my soul and Thee? Truly, there is no one else but Thee; there is none but the one Life that is manifest as all this vast cosmos in all its variety of color and form. And, though I sometimes imagine I am far from Thee, and I seek Thee in the darkness and turbulence of my mind, truly I can never be separate from Thee.

Therefore, let me ever remember my oneness, my identity, with Thee. For the lover, the Beloved, and the love itself, all are one. And I know: “I am the Soul of all; I am the Light that illumines the world. I am as pure and vast as the infinite blue sky. I am the Self of all. I am the Self of all.”

IV

I know, my Lord, that, in essence, I am Thy own and ever one with Thee. Yet, so long as there is in me this errant and rebellious mind, let it learn to be ever-ready at Thy service—for Thy service is the service of my own eternal Self. How, then, may I serve my greater Self, my God? Only by letting Thee live through me. By loving what Thou lovest. By desiring what Thou desirest. By seeing with Thine eye of equal vision and loving all as Thou dost love and sustain all.

Let me, then, be perfect in love, O God, as Thou art perfect, that I may be fit to serve as Thy instrument. All of us are helplessly driven to action in this world by the forces of Nature; therefore, let all my actions be done in the

joyful remembrance of Thee, the divine Self who lives as me. And may the darkness of illusion be so dispelled in me that Thy light shines forth clearly in all I say or do.

Let me see no other in this world but the One whose dance of joy fills all this immense universe; let me offer my work as well as my heart's love to Thee in all Thy many forms. And, lastly, may my heart's good intent so move Thee that Thou dost consent to listen to my prayer, and lift up my mind to greater likeness with Thyselv, till I am merged and melted into Thee, and know first-hand my oneness with my Lord.

V

O my Lord, remove from me all confusion and dullness of mind and open my heart to the sweetness of Thy Love; for I have no other goal but Thee.

It is Thy most wondrous grace to me that, when I am sunk in the grayness of my own misery, Thou dost cast a sunbeam of Light into my heart to awaken in me Thy Love. O Lord, I have no other goal but Thee.

And so, I ask of Thee, O God, lift up my soul to Thee, that has so long been locked in a self-created dungeon of darkness and despair. Lift me into the clarity and freedom of Thy Light! For I have no other goal but Thee.

O Father, grant me this grace of Thine; light up my soul with the gladness of Thy joyful presence and fill my heart with song. For I have no other goal but Thee, O Lord.

Thy Love is the food I crave; increase in me Thy bounty and let me feast on Thy sweetness. For Thy grace of Love is my only treasure, my sole desire. I have no other goal but Thee, O Lord

Assuage, then, O God, the pain of darkness which I so often bear, and open my eyes and my heart to Thee. Reveal to me that Thou art all that appears before me, and that Thou art my very soul, my life, my light, my joy. Dear Lord, I have no other goal but Thee.

VI

Once, when this soul was meditating on her Lord, she became aware of the presence and nearness of God, and she earnestly entreated Him, saying, "Dear Lord, so many in this world of Thine suffer needlessly because of

their ignorance of Thee and do not know the joy of devotion to Thee. What may I say or do to open their eyes to Thy truth and Thy joy?" And the Lord replied to her:

"My child, give your love to all, but give sparingly of your words. I am within others also, and I shall reveal Myself to them in My time. Therefore, take no thought of others, how they might be shown the way to Me; for, if I would teach others through you, I will do so only after you have subdued yourself, so that I might shine freely from your eyes as a beacon for all. I am Love and am best taught by loving."

This soul, receiving that inner revelation, suddenly realized that her God was the Soul of her soul, the heart of her heart, and manifested through her as the joy of Love. And then and there she vowed her allegiance to the God of her heart, proclaiming:

Thou art Love, and I shall follow all Thy ways.
 I shall have no care, for Love cares only to love.
 I shall have no fear, for Love is fearless.
 Nor shall I frighten any, for Love comes sweetly and meek.
 I shall keep no violence within me, neither in thought nor in deed,
 For Love comes peacefully.
 I shall bear no shield or sword, for the defense of Love is love.
 I shall seek Thee in the eyes of men, for Love seeks Thee always.
 I shall keep silence before Thine enemies,
 And lift to them Thy countenance, for all are powerless before Thee.
 I shall keep Thee in my heart with precious care,
 Lest thy Light be extinguished by the winds.
 For without Thy Light, I am in darkness.
 I shall go free in the world with Thee—
 Free of all bondage to anything but Thee—
 For Thou art my God, the sole father of my being,
 The sweet breath of Love that lives in my heart,
 And I shall follow Thee, and live with Thee,
 And lean on Thee 'til the end of my days.

And, after pledging her life to God's Love, this soul felt such inner rapture that her heart was overcome with sweetness and light from within; and with great humility she asked, "How, O Lord, may I subdue my own selfish

desires so that Thy perfect Love may shine through me upon all Thy children?" And the Lord said to her:

Keep your mind on Me, and self shall be overcome. Your thoughts are with that which you love and lead you to the object of your desire. If you love the pleasures and favors of the world, your thoughts will be with the world, and you shall obtain your desire. But if you love Me, your thoughts will be with Me and you shall live as My beloved child, and I shall lead you to your end in Me.

And this soul was so filled with love and gratitude that she cried out, "O Lord, Thou art my joy and my sole desire!" And, so saying, she lifted up her mind to God, and kept it there in focused concentration, till all the wispy clouds of thought dissolved away, leaving her mind clear, free, and full of light. And then, from the stillness deep within this soul, came the heavenly desire to be merged in and one with God. "Dear God," she whispered, "let me be one with Thee—not that I might glory in Thy Love, but that I might speak out in Thy praise and to Thy glory, for the benefit of all Thy children!" And, in that very moment, the veil of separation fell away, and she exclaimed:

O my God, even this body is Thine own!
 Though I call to Thee and seek Thee amidst chaos,
 Even I, who seemed an unclean pitcher amidst Thy waters,
 Even I am Thine own.

Does a wave cease to be of the ocean?
 Do the mountains and the gulfs cease to be of the earth?
 Or does a pebble cease to be stone?
 How can I escape Thee?
 Thou art even That which thinks of escape!

Even now, I speak the word, "Thou," and create duality.
 I love and create hatred.
 I am in peace and am fashioning chaos.
 Standing on the peak, I necessitate the depths.

But now, weeping and laughing are gone.
 Night is become day.
 Music and silence are heard as one.

My ears are all the universe.

All motion has ceased.
 Everything continues.
 Life and death no longer stand apart.
 No I, no Thou;
 No now, or then.
 Unless I move, there is no stillness.

Nothing to lament, nothing to vanquish,
 Nothing to pride oneself on.
 All is accomplished in an instant.
 All may now be told without effort.
 Where is there a question?
 Where is the “temple?”
 Which the Imperishable, which the abode?

I am the pulse of the turtle.
 I am the clanging bells of joy.
 I bring the dust of blindness.
 I am the fire of song.
 I am in the clouds and in the gritty soil.
 In pools of clear water my image is found.
 I am the dust on the feet of the wretched,
 The toothless beggars of every land.
 I have given sweets that decay to those who crave them.
 I have given my wealth unto the poor and lonely.
 My hands are open; nothing is concealed.

All things move together of one accord.
 Assent is given throughout the universe to every falling grain.
 The Sun stirs the waters of my heart,
 And the vapor of my love flies to the four corners of the world.
 The moon stills me, and the cold darkness is my bed.

I have but breathed, and everything is rearranged,
 And set in order once again.
 A million worlds begin and end in every breath,
 And, in this breathing, all things are sustained.

Now, While There's Still Time

Now, while there's still time, call on God with a yearning heart!
 How swiftly passes this busy life of occupations and obligations.
 Too soon, the day is lost to inconsequential chores.
 Too soon the months, the years, are lost to scattered aims and fruitless schemes.
 Suddenly we awake one morning, and we're old and feeble, unable to make any effort at all.
 And who knows when the end will come?
 You may be certain it will come one day —
 Perhaps without warning, unannounced,
 Perhaps while you walk, or sleep, or play,
 Or in between the syllables of a word you start to say.
 And when it comes, will your heart leap up and cry,
 "O glorious day!"?
 Or will you beg for just a little time to set things right—the way you'd always hoped they'd be?
 O friend, make now your heart to be as you would have it then.
 O now, my friend, while there's still time, call on God with a yearning heart!
 Lead your soul to Him who is your true and everlasting home.
 He is your joy unlimited, your boundless satisfaction,
 Your Lord, your Goal, your Life, your Self.

Song of Praise

O God let me sing a song to Thee.
 I am just Thy foolish unworthy child, as Thou dost know,
 But I beg Thee, let me honor Thee with my song of praise.
 After all, I have no other reason for existing but to sing Thy praise.

O God Thou art so far beyond my vision that I do not know how to begin to praise Thee.
 Thou art hidden beyond this world of my daily experience,
 invisible to my eye.
 But Thou hast shown Thyself to me when I was young.
 I know Thy perfect aloneness, untouched by all that transpires here below.

I know Thy timeless face, Thy incomparable peace.
 Dear Lord, I can only stammer and write these miserably inadequate words;
 for no words are there to speak of Thee.
 All that flows from Thee bespeaks Thy bounty; but Thou art far greater than
 the sparkling sky, the star-filled cosmos.
 Thou art the emptiness from which all bounty flows.
 An emptiness that contains nothing yet gives being to everything.

As winds arise from air, as waves arise from the sea, as dreams arise from
 the quieted mind, so does the universe arise from Thee.
 Thou art the bearer of happiness, the stirrer of devotion,
 the inventor of thought, surprise, and awe.
 Thou art the redeemer of error, the mother of love.
 Thou art the beauty of a summer's day.
 O God, whatever *is* is done by Thee.

But why should I remind Thee of Thy works?
 It's Thou, above all works, whom I adore.
 I, who am Thy errant child, whose soul is birthed by Thee, and who longs to
 return to Thy womb, am nothing else but Thine.

Displayed into this world, I am Thy own substance, Thy own imagined
 form. And as I'm from Thee, so to Thee shall I return.
 No longer image shall I be, but transformed into Thee,
 not something other, but Thee entire.
 One glowing I, unending, perfect beauty, perfect bliss, and consciousness
 absolute.

None of these words, of course, come close to saying what Thou art; though
 I searched, I could not find words that tell Thee truly.
 Down here, we have no words to describe what Thou art,
 and so, once more, my praise falls short.
 But we both know Thy true condition; we both know Thy unspeakable place
 of being, and we both know it is of that I speak.

Dear Father of my life, my thought, my love, please accept my pitiful
 attempt to praise Thee.
 Fault me not for my lack of words that tell Thee.
 Only grant that I may always love Thee, till I am once again at home with
 Thee.

O dear God of gods hear my prayer! You know my heart, my heart's desire:
 I long to rise above this worldly self to bathe in Thy untroubled Life.
 I cannot do it, but only Thou canst bring me there to live in Thee.

O Lord, who art alone, sole Source and Master of the world,
 I beg Thee draw my mind and heart to Thee; let no other love distract me.
 Let no dreams or other goals detain me from my journey home to Thee.

Do You Wish To Know God?

Do you wish to know God?
 Then pray for His grace. But even that you cannot do,
 Until the magnet of His Love draws forth your heart's desire.

Do you wish to know God?
 That wish is God's own power alive within you, drawing you home;
 But you must set your wings for flight and soar to heights unknown before,
 Releasing all below.

A strong and focused mind will be the wings on which you'll climb to His
 domain,
 Where you may offer up your soul to Him and beg for entrance to His heart.

If you are steady in your goal, His heart will open wide,
 and draw you in to make you one with Him.
 And then you'll know that you and He were never set apart.
 You'll see the universe in you; in you, the universal Self.

Your calling lifts you toward Him, but He responds only in His time.
 He will leave you yearning for His love, your heart an abject song.
 For He tortures those who love Him with a longing unfulfilled,
 And lures us on with sweetness, withholding His embrace.

What pathetic fools He makes of us who bargain all for Him,
 Who fill our nights with lonely pleas that He might hear our song!
 Addicts of His mercy, we pray He'll bring us home,
 And fold us in His sweet embrace as a father does a son.

No doubt, His mercy keeps us there in longing for His touch.
 Our hearts grow sweet, our love expands, as we call aloud His name,
 And lift our minds and hearts to Him, desiring only Him.
 This barb of sorrow, this aching love, upholds us in His grace,
 And leads us upward, onward, till one day we shall see His face.

O, who will take me to my Lord? Who will give me wings?
 I grow older, Father, every day, and my mind is growing dim.
 My eyes are weak, my vision strains to penetrate the dark.
 My Lord, I have no other goal but Thee; have mercy on this soul!

Why We Were Born

The Jews are praising Thee, Lord.
 The Christians and Muslims are busy praising Thee as well.
 The Hindus and the Sikhs, the Platonists and the Taoists
 also sing Thy praise.
 The farmers tilling the land have no other goal but to give
 praise to Thee.

Even the men and women of science, who hope to ferret out
 Thy secrets,
 Are engaged unwittingly in praising Thee.
 For no one on this earth of Thine can find satisfaction
 In anything other than Thy praise.
 What other purpose might we have, O Lord?
 Why else were we born? Why else would we live
 But to joy in giving praise and glory to Thee?

Meditation

The great Sufi mystic and poet, Jalaluddin Rumi, said: “The religion of love
 is distinct from all others; the lovers of God have a religion and a faith all
 their own.”

What is this religion of love? It has no name. Neither does it have any
 nationality. It is beginningless, and without end.

It originates in God's own being within the heart and can only be mimicked in speech. It is the cry of the heart for God's mercy and grace. Yet even this heartfelt pain is His grace; for this yearning is but the drawing of His comfort and solace.

Love calls, and Love responds. In both instances, that Love is accompanied by tears. Yet, even this calling, though painful, is sweet; for it is *His* Love that burns in the heart. And when He responds, the heart's cup is filled with much more than it can hold. No eyes have seen this filling; no words have ever told of its taste. Yet, in countless hearts, throughout the universe, this religion lives, and supplies the world with Love.

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