

Beyond Windows



Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri





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Book Description

Beyond Windows offers moving and profound insights into the thoughts and murmurings of the eminent Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri, whose touching compassion and giving spirituality shines through every poem in this anthology of concinnity between the slave-self and the Eternal Lord.

The collection is a finely woven quilt of deep expression in which the yearning of the soul's quest to live (and die) in the aura and divine sheen of the Creator permeates every line and stanza, bringing the reader closer to that soul's striving for spiritual relevance and meaning.

These poems are a portal to an essentially private spiritual journey, beyond the windows of our ordinary, erroneous perceptions of the self – yet they bind us and take us along to this erudite sage's deep thirst for the Love, Mercy and Presence of our Inimitable and infinite Lord.

– From the Book's Foreword

About Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

Acknowledged as a master of self-knowledge and a spiritual philosopher, Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri's role as a teacher grew naturally out of his own quest for self-fulfillment.

He travelled extensively on a spiritual quest which led to his eventual rediscovery of the pure and original Islamic heritage of his birth, and the discovery of the truth that reconciles the past with the present, the East with the West, the worldly with the spiritual – a link between the ancient wisdom teachings and our present time.

A descendant of five generations of well-known and revered spiritual leaders, Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri has taught students throughout the world for over 30 years. A prolific author of more than thirty books relating to the universal principles of Islam, the Qur'an, and its core purpose of enlightenment, he is a gifted exponent of how the self relates to the soul, humankind's link with the Divine, and how consciousness can be groomed to reflect our higher nature.

The unifying scope of his perspective emphasizes practical, actionable knowledge that leads to self-transformation, and provides a natural bridge between seemingly different Eastern and Western approaches to spirituality, as well as offering a common ground of higher knowledge for various religions, sects and secular outlooks.

His Light is beyond sights
But within all time and space
And Beyond
His presence is His Distance
Enough, more than enough
Is His Light
The Ever Living Delight
This is none other than
Allah's Light upon Lights

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Foreword

Beyond Windows offers moving and profound insights into the thoughts and murmurings of the eminent Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri, whose touching compassion and giving spirituality shines through every poem in this anthology of concinnity between the slave–self and the Eternal Lord.

The collection is a finely woven quilt of deep expression in which the yearning of the soul's quest to live (and die) in the aura and divine sheen of the Creator permeates every line and stanza, bringing the reader closer to that soul's striving for spiritual relevance and meaning.

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The lines are crafted in eloquent language... 'oceans of shores'... 'where lovers are in permanent grace'... 'quarrelsome sparrows'... 'the swallows had left'... 'empty cups of emotions'... 'lost in the mists of today.'

There are a multitude of such images: the spiritual and the eloquent juxtaposed against the pedestrian and the mundane – moving evocations human dissidence and the misuse of power... 'when the unseasonal dust-storm' and the 'earth is surrogate mother'... and 'its womb, occupied...' These glimpses are 'far from being voyeuristic,' as critic and scholar, Stephen Laufer states on the jacket of another anthology of poems.

To me this work is an important discourse on the duality of being – flesh and spirit intertwined, created but for sole worship and undivided adulation of Almighty Allah. The poem 'Weep not, my son' is an enduring and poignant injunction to the inevitable consequences of life 'where the seer is seen and the seeker is sought.'

Moving stuff and the ingredient of profound Sufi evocation which is resident in every vein and vessel of Shaykh Fadhlalla's beautiful offering in the entire collection.

In the pieces titled, ‘India’, the poet again demonstrates his pedestrian concern with the common dilemma of a country and its people, which other scribes may dismiss as not being worthy of notice. ‘The Sands of Time’, the only clichéd titled in the anthology, is a sensitive investigation into change and movement, stitched to the past and future with the threads of Time. It is indeed lovely conjecture encased in astounding imagery which is not encoded but easily yields to human scrutiny.

The poet unobtrusively reminds us that submission, compassion and humility are the keys to the kingdoms of heaven; that the weight and value of all cultures of the world combined do not exceed, and are not more precious, than the life of one human being.

And so, this humble scribe – moved by the deep and yet untouchable wisdom, generosity compassion, and binding emotional quality and essence of Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri’s poetic evocation and humble supplication to the Lord of the Worlds – commits this anthology to the shelves of posterity for the service of humankind. May Almighty Allah’s *Noor* (Light) shine perpetually on Shaykh Fadhlalla’s beautiful life.

Don Matera

June 2009

Introduction

Poetry has traditionally been used by numerous spiritual masters to indicate the various aspects of the human journey to the inner sanctum and Light. In Islam and particularly Sufism, which is the heart of the *Deen*, we have a very rich tradition of poetic discourse, metaphorical guidelines and golden threads. In fact this means of communication has been used by most wisdom traditions, starting with normal reason and leading to beyond mind and intellect to heart and soul.

Arab and Persian Sufi masters and enlightened beings, as well as Indians, Turks and others, have excelled in revealing, through the medium of poetry, states and openings that are not possible to convey in prose. Rumi is only one of a cluster of stars which includes Attar, Ibn Arabi, Shabistari and others.

The reflections of poems in this book were written over a period of several years; they thus reflect different moods or states, illustrating what had moved me at the time. The golden thread throughout these verses is the One Source and Essence of Creation, and human striving to be in Unity with this Light.

I hope the reader will enjoy the message behind and within these lines, as I enjoyed the flow of inspiration in writing them.

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

South Africa, January 2008

Transitions

Wake up Call

The small island
awakens to the caress
of velvet soft breeze
ushering a new day
fresh and ageless
known but shy.

The ever changing sameness
contained in vast boundlessness
where the safety of shores is lost
and all reason vanishes
where only soaring spirits
wink at the island
as it awakens to the
sparkling rising sun
to remind the sleepy hearts
to respond and reflect upon
the eternal bond
of the One Caller
to wake up
and fly past all lands
and every ocean and island.

Lover's Abode

The unknown lovers have died
adrift in their dream boat
far from land, mountains and sand
arm in arm, sailing in hope
chased by the dancing clouds
on the ocean of no shores
no harbor or beach
no rocks or docks
no storms or wind
not even water or vapor.

The Ocean of Tranquility
is distant and beyond all stillness
so distant that measurements cease
on the far side of the sun
or further than the most distant galaxy
where there is no fear, discord, cry or hope.

The Ocean of Boundless Bliss
is where lovers are in permanent embrace
ever living in Grace
Unified at heart
with no identity or face.

Natural Willfulness

Quarrelsome sparrows
chasing, diving and rise again
in defense or offence
full of determination
subtle attractions
noisy and silent transactions
playfully fulfilling
self assertion.

protection determination
direction destination
attraction repulsion
deception presumption
compulsion assumption.

All of these
and other motives
perfectly governing
quarrelsome sparrows
who are only racing towards
a perfectly clear destination.

The same as
all other creation.

On time in No Time

Getting there in late summer
we were too late
the swallows had left
the lovers had parted
and the blue sea was agitating
the time had passed
and the season had changed
and empty cups of emotions
were bereft of illusory fulfillment
crying for a deaf beloved
with unconditional devotion.

Getting there too late
but earlier than yesterday
lost in the mists of today
complaining everyday
obsessed with searching
for the intimate nearness
the boundless joy of nowness
where all cups are full
overflowing with beingness
with or without lovers
before and after all summers
where time and no time
are now the same
as ever.

Order of Disorder

We try and be organized
civilized and compartmentalized
we name every insect and germ
and dissect bees and blossoms
resurrect dead leaders
reincarnate heroes as airports
or renamed boulevards
change codes and standards
hold meetings short and long
local or international
with emotions and democratic votes
arguments, suspicions and hypocrisies with notes.

Attempts to reduce anxieties and fear
all caught in our memory nests
a life buried under the debris of hazy past
yet we strive to be more secure
less obscure
or fall into a destructive detour
or a disastrous holiday
when the unseasonal dust storm
ravaged the beachfront
and the angry sea shattered comfort and ease
cancelling games and noise
days wiped out
long life short lived
a biography of confusion within illusion
deceptive mirrors
reflecting denials

pursuing mirages of life styles.

Wrapped in hard cash
with dead hearts
trying ceaselessly to organize
without knowledge or awareness
of the Eternal Thread of Divine Light
connecting in perfect order
what is known, unknown, accidents and pains.

Yet within the human space
lies the Eternal Presence
of the perfect moment
ever constant in its oneness
by divine grace and order
eternally.

Original Peace

Is permanent peace an illusion?

Is it ever attainable?

if not, then why the yearning?

Life on earth

began with agitation

and then sliced from eternity

divided and then again subdivided

whilst all in cosmos rotated

and surrogate mother earth

occupied, invaded, colonized

providing the seeds of birth and death

in cradles of sorrow and laughter

whilst anything that ever appears

will surely disappear

everything that is here

is on its way back there

will surely disappear

is on its way back there.

So how can there be permanence

in the battlefield of make-believe

where the quest for peace

is often the cause of conflict

whilst Eternal Peace

the first and all-Pervading Peace

is ever there smiling

in the illumined heart.

Reality of Illusions

Time
is the lens
through which you
read space
and what appears
from the web
of creational veils
layer upon layer
change after exchange
in perpetual flux
with an Illuminating Core
the Constant Source
invisible indivisible
permeating time and space
announcing
the Only Real which Creates
all illusions within time and space.

Actor's Shadow

You are the actor
and acted upon
among the audience
changing roles and costumes
sometimes with conviction
other times with distraction
always hoping for applause and confirmation
veiled by self deception.

Giving purpose and meaning
to the vacant hall
packed with confused people
nations and cultures
caught by Timeless Sparks
dancing through patterns and designs
labeled as individuals and shapes
with feelings and make-belief
and endless illusions or conclusions.

Yet the actor's soul is a Spark of Perfection
by grace of the One Light
leading actor and audience
to the Quest of the Source
from where all emanates
creating the illusion of separation
of actors
audience
and other shadows.

Father to Son

Don't weep my son
God's Will shall be done
and all your fears and sorrow
will vanish by tomorrow
and the moonless dark night
is a prelude to new insight
reflection and self awareness
and knowledge of Allah's Ever Presence
closeness without distance
where the seer is seen and the seeker is sought
and the Light within the heart
connects with all.

Thus lower your gaze
and sanction emotions
and shadowy worldly notions
using both head and heart
to side-step fleeting distractions
and other meanings and intentions
except the passion for Eternal Perfection
sometimes as a *faqir* with feelings
but always a *faqir* with boundless yearning
without fear of the future or sorrow for the past
knowing what appears will disappear at last
except for the Light behind lights
kindled in your heart
ever-Alive and ever-Bright.

India

India is always there
in every possible color,
shade or form, ancient and new.

Back bent with exhaustion and age
villages in parched deserts and polluted cities
where the masses slave away
whilst the few rich compete with destructive vulgarity.

India's dusty sunsets
resemble her dawns
where days melt into years
and countless seasons dry and wet
upon African earth and rocks
packed with Asian gods
and brand new film stars
melting ancient civilizations
with inept and corrupt politicians.

Life and death race each other
day and night meet each other
this world and the next embrace each other
absurd contrasts and conflicts live together
in the tired land of ochred tints
where time is eternal
witnessed by illumined sages
chanting with grace
sacredness
presence.

Beyond Windows *by* Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri
Transitions

Flow of Time

Shifting sand on a windy shore
traveling dunes
pushing upwards arid caving downwards
gusting blows
bending trees
followed by calm, ease and peace.

Then new footprints
hesitantly intrusive
on the wide front shore
birds, dogs, humans and crabs
meandering purposelessly
up and down and sideways.

The end of a day calling tomorrow
stitching its past and future
with the endless thread of time
obliterating traces on sand and sea
except the passionate quest
for True Love
coloring endless horizons
and shifting sand grains
along a windy shore
where time is on the move
yet deceptively still.

Roman House in Byblos

The stormy sea stops at the landing
of the old house in Byblos
of the ancient house
where each stone block exudes dramatic pasts
where Phoenicians traded
Greek and Persians battled
and modern scoundrels get ceremonial burials.

The imposing steps meet the precocious Mediterranean
one day calm as lead
next day claiming fisher men dead
and now February's storms of fury and dread.

The young Maronite girl next door is in grief
lamenting her heart away
then smearing her rose lips bright
competing with the gloss of sunset
walking hand in hand chasing waves
arm in arm with Mohsin the Muslim boy
who had escaped from ethnic wars
religious, cultural or vultural?

She is crying the separation of hearts
would the rocks know or record suffering?
when would the angels come with divine offering?
when would the sea dissolve the house
back to its sandy bosom?
was not love timeless in the house of divine light
well after the ancient house given up standing upright!

Beyond Windows *by* Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri
Transitions

Wedding Photo

Innocent eyes
puzzled and dazzled
to know reality
behind the flashing images
glued by photons and illusions.

Now comes the day of dubious union
framed within borrowed wedding gowns
where the bride tries to hide
from the distracted groom
vaguely preserving
a notion of the present.

As for the future
that belongs to albums not yet purchased
where everyone is looking
without seeing or hearing
crowded in vast space
void of life
but occupied by fear of freedom
a saga of a wasteland
whose ever-present supreme Author
bestows light and shades
for new snapshots and those already fading away.

Death of the Governor

The traffic was halted
Yemeni officials look serious and gloomy
whilst angels and the poor folk rejoiced
one less despot in the barren land
meanwhile the clan of the deceased
clamoring and squabbling over inheritance
while a biographer is completing his myth
the grave digger has seen it all before
with Quran recitation through paid lips or tape
whilst the real book remains unread
beautifully bound it rests
upon the coffin
ceremoniously revered and feared
transmitting hope and fear.

O man, what distracted you
from your generous Lord
who has given you life to know
who has given you knowledge to adore
who has made you from dust
returning back to him with or without trust
by mercy of light
whereas in this world
there are ample lessons to heed
just witness the deadly governors
despots, thugs and casino developers
and all earthly hypocritical mourners.

Gypsies of Andalusia

After a fierce midday sun
one late summer
the southerly winds brought the grey clouds
and then warm rain poured upon the island.

In a darkened room a baby and grandmother slept
whilst the widowed mother simply wept.

The holiday season was over
and most tourists had left garbage behind
and tired mountain villages
looked vaguely towards the horizon
with uncertainty and hope
whispering the laments of flamenco dancers
recalling lost lovers
and other myths
whilst local children played noisily on the road side
and waved at the last tourist bus
winding its way through the narrow cobbled road
in the heart of the Andalusian village
where the old mosque's half minaret
was now a home for grateful pigeons
where the ancient olive trees had been cut
now having curio value
and where the perfume of jasmine
had been replaced by gasoline fumes
and where the chant of Olé
has replaced the call for Allah
and where no one knows

why the discordant gypsy sounds
haunt all passers by.

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Translated By: Asadullah ad-Dhaakir Yate

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Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

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Professor Ali A. Allawi

In this wide-ranging conversation with Professor Ali Allawi, Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri talks about his life story and the spiritual journey that he embarked on and the path he has been on ever since.

Poetry, Aphorisms & Inspirational

101 Helpful Illusions

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

Everything in creation has a purpose relevant to ultimate spiritual Truth. This book highlights natural veils to be transcended by disciplined courage, wisdom and insight.

Beyond Windows

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

Offering moving and profound insights of compassion and spirituality through these anthologies of connections between slave self and Eternal Lord.

Bursts of Silence

Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

Inspired aphorisms provide keys to doors of inner knowledge, as well as antidotes to distraction and confusion.

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Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

A collection of aphorisms providing insights into consciousness and are pointers to spiritual awakening.

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Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

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Shaykh Fadhlalla Haeri

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Health Sciences in Early Islam is a pioneering study of Islamic medicine that opens up new chapters of knowledge in the history of the healing sciences. This two volume work covers the development of Islamic medicine between the 6th and 12th centuries A.D.