Select poems of

*Imam AlShafi’ee*

Translation by Ammar AlShukry

www.IamAmmar.com

Copyright © 2010 All rights reserved
Let the Days

Let the days do as they please
And be optimistic when destiny decrees
Do not despair due to the events of nights past
For the events of this world were not meant to last

And be a man who, in the face of fear is strong
With loyalty and forbearance adorned
And if your mistakes are many amongst the folk
And you wish to have for those mistakes a cloak

Then conceal them with generosity as hence
Every fault is covered as –is said- by benevolence
And do not show weakness to an enemy
For dispersion of foes is a calamity
Generosity cannot be hoped from the miserly
For no water exists in the Fire for the thirsty
And your rizq will not decrease though late it may arrive
And it will not increase though one may slave and strive

No sadness lasts forever, nor any felicity
Nor any state of poverty or one of luxury
If you are the owner of a heart that is content
Then you and the owner of the world are equivalent

And for him upon whose horizon death descends,
No earth can offer him protection, nor any sky defend
The earth of Allah is certainly vast and infinite
But if decree descends, then all the sky constricts

Let the days betray every once in a while
For there is no medicine that will protect from death

Revealing of secrets

If a man spreads his secret with his own tongue
Then he is a fool, if blame to others he attests
If his own breast is too narrow to conceal his own secret,
The breast of another is even more compressed
الدعاء

أظهرا بالدعاء وتزديده
لها أمد، وللأمد، انقضاء

Du’a

Do you belittle Du’a and discount it
While not knowing what the prayer accomplishes
The arrows of the night do not miss their target
But they have a delay, and the delay then finishes

فرقة الأحبة

يعيشها بعد أودانه
رمى به بعد أحبابه

***

Separation from loved ones

Such sadness for a youth who lives
A moment beyond his friends and heart
The life of a youth, if in his hand
He would cast after his beloved depart
If two issues confound you
And you are unsure of which is wrong or right
Then go against your passions for verily desires
Lead the soul to that which is not upright

A lion dies in the wilderness of hunger
While the sheep is ravaged by canines
And a slave may sleep on sheets of silk
While a nobleman on dust reclines
داوالسفاءة باللحلم

فاكره أن أكون له مجيبا
يخاطبني السفيه بكل قبح
كعود زاده الإحرق طيبا
يزيد سفاهه فازيد حلما

Treat foolishness with patience

The fools speak to me with all vulgarity
So I hate to respond likewise in turn
They increase in their evil, so I increase in my patience
Like an incense that becomes more fragrant when burned

معاملة اللثيم

قل بما شئت في مسبة عرضي
فسكوتي عن اللثيم جواب
ما أنا عادم الجواب ولكن
ما ضر الأسد أن تجيب الكلاب

Dealing with the Wicked

Say what you wish in attacking my honor
My silence to the wicked, is sufficient a sound
It is not that I am lacking a reply but
The lion is not in need of responding to hounds
A call to travel

There is no rest in residence for a person of culture and intellect, so travel and leave where you’re residing! Travel! You will find a replacement for what you have left. And strive! The sweetness of life is in striving!

I’ve seen that water stagnates if still becomes pure if it runs, but not if it doesn’t flow
If the lion doesn’t leave his den he cannot hunt, and the arrow will not strike without leaving its bow

If the sun stood still in its heavenly course then people, Arab and non-Arab, it would bore
Gold dust is as the earth where commonly found, and in its land, oud is but another wood in store

If one travels, he becomes sought out
If one travels, he is honored like gold.
الضريح

Traveling through the land

I will travel the lands their length and width
Seeking my goals or dying a stranger here
If my soul departs than Allah is its origin
And if I am to live than return is near

سأضرب في طول البلاد وعرضها
إن سلمت كان الرجوع قريبا
فإن تلفت نفسي فلله درها
أنال مرادي أو أموت غريبا

The deceit of stargazers

Inform the stargazers on behalf of me
That I disbelieve in what the stars decree
Knowing that what was and what will be
Is the decree of the Protector absolutely

كافر بالذي قضته الكواكب
خبرا عني المنجم أنى
قضاء من المهيمين واجب
كفر بالذي قضته الكواكب
علما أن ما يكون وما كان
آداب التعلم

فإن رسوب العلم في نقراته
تجرع ذل الجهل طول حياته
فمن لم يذق مر التعلم ساعة
فكبر عليه أربعا لوفاته
إذا لم يكونا لا اعتبار لذاته ولذات الفتى- والله- بالعلم والتقى

Manners of Learning

Be patient with the bitterness of an aloof teacher
For the embedding of knowledge is when he repels
And whoever never tastes the bitterness of learning
Swallows the humiliation of ignorance as long as he dwells

And whoever misses learning whilst young and in bloom
Then make takbir on him four times due to his demise
For that youth, by Allah! If not for knowledge and piety
There is no regard to of what else his character’s comprised
The exemplary companion

I love from my brothers every indifferent
Person ready to overlook my missteps
Who agrees with me in all my desire
And protects me in my life and death

So who is up for this? I wish to find him
I would divide with him what I have of good deeds
I examined my brothers and found the trustworthy
few though the brothers were many indeed.

When silence is golden

If a fool speaks to you than don’t respond
For silence for him is a response best
If you speak to him you relieve his burden
And if ignored he dies of constricted chest
The reliever of difficulties

An event may cause a youth difficulty
And in Allah is from it a way out
It became more severe so when its rings entangled me
It was relieved and I thought that would not come about

When silence is golden

You’re silent though attacked” They said,
I replied “Responding is the key to every dread”
Silence towards a fool is dignified
And a means to an honor fortified
Do you not see the silent lion is still feared
While barking dogs are forever jeered?
Words to an enemy

Some men wish for my death, and if I die
I would not be alone in traversing that path
The death of my precursors was not adverse
Nor is the life of those after me going to last

Perhaps the one who supplicates for my demise
Will himself pass away while I am still alive

Do not despair

If you are of those who are skillful in acquiring sins
And fear a day of recompense and threat
The Mighty has given you forgiveness
And has granted you more blessings yet

Despair not from your Lords blessings from within
Your mother’s womb as a fetus and a child indeed,
If He had wished that you reach the hellfire eternally
He would not have inspired your heart to Tawheed
Worries of tomorrow

If I awake with the essentials for my day
Then don’t worry me, May you be blessed!
Don’t invoke the concerns of tomorrow to me
For tomorrow too will have a new sustenance!

I surrender my will if Allah desires an affair
I leave what I aspire for what He desires

If it not..If not..

If it not for that poetry from scholars was disparaged
I would have been more skilled in verse than Labeed
And more courageous in conflict then every lion
And the family of Muhallab and Bani Yazeed
And if it were not fear of my Lord, the Beneficient
I would consider all mankind my slaves indeed
فوائد السفر
تغري عن الأوطان في طلب العلا
وسافر في السفر خمس فوائد
تفرج هم، واكتساب معيشة
علم وآداب، وصحبة ماجد

Benefits of travel
Journey from your country seeking elevation
And travel for in travel are gains in five matters;
Removal of stress, and earning of livelihood
Knowledge, culture, and a companion of stature

جنان الخلد
يا من يعانق دنيا لا بقاء لها
هلا تركت لذي الدنيا معانقة
إِن كنت تبغي جنان الخلد تسكنها
فينبغي لك ألا تأمن النارا

Eternal Gardens
Oh You who embraces a Dunya that’s fleeting!
Journeying after this world every morning and night
Why don’t you release yourself of that wordly embrace
So that you can embrace the virgins of paradise
If you seek the eternal gardens to abide in
Then never feel secure from the fire outright!
الوحدة خير من جليس السوء

إذا لم أجد خلا تقية فوحدتي
وأجلس وحدي للعبادة آمنا
أقر لعيني من جميس أحذره
وأحذره وجمس وحدي لمعبادة
أقر لاعنى من غوى أعاؤره
وأشهى من غوى أعاؤره

Solitude is better

If I don’t find a pious friend than solitude
Is better for me than befriending a wretch
To sit alone to worship in security
Is cooler to my eyes than a friend I suspect

الدهر يومان

الدهر يومان : ذا آمن وذا خطر
وأخير عيشان: ذا صفو وذا كدر
وتسقى بأشقى قاعه الدير
وأنت ترى البحر تعلو فوقه جيف
وليس يكسف إلا الشمس والقمر
وفي السماء نجوم لا عداد لها

Time is two days

There are two types of days: of security and of fear
And two types of living: in ease and affliction
Do you not see the ocean is ridden by corpses
While pearls reside in its recesses hidden
And the sky is adorned by countless stars
But only the sun and moon are eclipsed from vision
What’s in a garment?

Upon me are garments that if all were sold
For a pence the pence would exceed
But they adorn a self that if compared
with those of all others would be greater indeed.

The swords blade is not harmed by a homely sheath
if sharp, in every direction, it cleaves and scatters
So if the days have worn out my countenance
How many a sword rests in a sheath that’s battered
البحث عن صديق

صديق ليس ينفع يوم بؤس
ولا الإخوان إلا للتأس
أخي ثقة فألياني
عبرت الدهر ملتسمًا بجهدي
كان أناها ليسوا بناس

Quest for a friend

A friend who does not benefit on a day of difficulty,
Is closer to an enemy if compared
The friend does not remain, during all times,
Nor does the brother, except to console here and there

I searched the days, with all my strengths
for a brother to trust, but my search for naught,
The lands and those who live them were barren,
As though its people were people but not.
العلم مغمس كل فخر فافترخ
واعترف بأن العلم ليس يناله
في حالتته عارية أو مكتسي
فاعترف له طيب الرقاد وعباس
كنت أنت الرئيس وفخر ذاك المجمس

***

Knowledge is the source

Knowledge is the source where every pride is instilled
So beware of missing out on that source to acquire
And know that knowledge is not achieved by those
Whose concerns revolve around food and attire

The friend of knowledge is he who stays concerned
With it, whether naked or clad, endowed or deprived
So allot yourself for it a healthy portion and
give up the enticement of rest and strive

For one day it may be that you attend a gathering
And you be its leader, and its source of pride
ناورالله لا يهدى لعاص
فأرشدني إلى ترك المعاصي
أخبرني بأن العلم نور
ونور الله لا يهدى لعاص
شكوت إلى وكيع سوء حفظي
وأحب الصالحين وإنني لست منهم
أحب الصالحين ونأبهم شفاعة
وأكره من تجارته المعاصي

Light of Allah
I complained to Wakee’ of my poor memory
Leaving sins is what he guided me to address
He informed me that knowledge is a light and
Allah’s light is not gifted to those who transgress

Love of the righteous
I love the righteous though I am not of them
Lest that I receive through them intercession
And I despise those whose transactions are sins
Although we are similar in profession
On Advice:

Seek me while alone if you wish to advise me
And spare me from public recommendations
For public admonitions are a kind
of criticism that is not of my persuasion
So if you disobey me and defy my words
Don’t be surprised if you meet the same equation

Business with faults

A person, if he is wise and pious
Is busied from others faults by his own blame
Just as the sickly person is distracted
From the pain of all others by his own pain
Who to give your opinion

And do not give your opinion to one who does not need it
For you are not praiseworthy nor will the opinion be heeded

Sincere love

You disobey the Lord while proclaiming His Love
That is impossible, never performed before!
If your love was sincere you would obey Him
Verily the lover is obedient to whom he adores
Every day He precedes you with blessings
From Him, yet appreciating that you ignore