

Qasida Adab al-Tariq
by Sheikh Abu Madyan al-Ghauth
Translated by *Vincent J. Cornell* in "The way of Abu Madyan"

What delight is there in life other than the companionship of the fuqara?
They are the sultans, lords, and princes.

So befriend them and learn the ways of their assemblies,
And keep your obligations, even if they ignore you.

Profit from (your) time and participate always with them,
And know that (Divine) satisfaction distinguishes one who is present.

Make silence obligatory unless you are questioned, then say:
'No knowledge have I', and conceal yourself with ignorance.

Regard not any fault, but that acknowledged within yourself
As a manifest, clearly apparent fault, though it be concealed.

Lower your head and seek forgiveness without (apparent) cause,
And stand at the feet of Justice, making excuses (in your own behalf).

If a fault appears in you, acknowledge it, and direct
Your pleas toward that within you which comes from you.

Say: 'Your slaves are more worthy (than ourselves) of your forgiveness,
So excuse us and be kind to us, oh fuqara!'

By giving preference to others they are exalted, for it is in their nature,
So do not fear that they will punish or harm you.

And in magnanimity toward the brothers be forever limitless,
Out of feeling or understanding, and avert your gaze if one of them stumbles.

Observe the shaykh attentively in his states, for perhaps
A trace of his approval will be seen upon you.

Display earnestness and be eager in his service;
Perhaps he will be pleased, but beware lest you see annoyance.

For in his satisfaction is that of the Creator and obedience toward Him,
He has granted you His good pleasure, so beware lest you forsake it!

(Know) that the Way of the Folk is (now) decadent,
And that the state of the one who preaches it today is as you see.

When shall I see (the true Folk of God), and how am I to have sight of them,
Or my ear hear news of them?

How can I or one like me dispute with them
Over spiritual experiences about which I am not familiar?

I love them, am courteous to them, and follow them
With my innermost soul- especially one person among them .

They are a folk noble in character; wherever they sit,
That place remains fragrant from their traces.

Sufism guides one quickly by means of their conduct;
A fitting harmony is theirs, delightful to my sight.

They are my loved ones, my family, who
Are among those who proudly hold up the Helms of Glory.

I am united with them still, brought together in God,
And through Him our transgressions are pardoned and forgiven.

So (may) blessings (be) upon the Chosen One, our Lord
Muhammad, the best of those who fulfill their vows.