

Advice To the Heedless Youth

Students' translation of a poem by Shaykh Muhammad al-Yaqoubi

O the one who continues in the disobedience of God
And turns away from guidance and admonitions
You plunge into the sea of passion recklessly
And run in lust after (worldly love of) women
You loosened the reins of your defiant nafs
So it raced in the course of haram obstinately.

Did you stand in the darkness of the night beseeching Allah,
abandoning sleep seeking His pleasure?
5. Did you hope for a light from the clouds of devotion?
Did you taste of the love of Allah in sleeplessness (nights)?
Did you stretch out the hand of hope to implore?
Were you shedding tears profusely?

What harvest did you reap from the years
That that pass by, but remorse in life?
For how long will you amuse yourself and play heedlessly?
Have you not heard of a day of return (to God)?
Don't ever think that the strength of youth is reliable
For old age will call, be it after a long time.

10. Weakness marches on, sending from its army
white hairs coming forward one by one.
Look at your head, how, after shining with light
it turned into ashes from the fire of hair turning grey.
And look at your back that is bent, while
before you used to strut along like a peacock
And when the furrows of time attack, don't hope
to live forever – for the branch of your lifespan is shaking.
Lifetime span passes like a spinning wheel,
It deceives the one who lends himself to deceptions.

15. Death cuts off the dream of every adventurer
and sets in mourning in the time of enjoyment.
Youth is not a guarantor of life,
for time is the trigger of death.
How many a rash went to excesses and wronged himself,
(because he) built his life on (mere dreams and) wishes?!

So lend your ear to the caller of death before it arrives
Wake up, and prepare provision for the grave
Turn away from the dunya and its luxuries
and devote your heart to (prepare for) the Day of Reckoning

20. And fill your time with the remembrance of Allah,
Turning away from other than Him, to obtain his goodwill.
Fill your heart with the love of Allah
if you want a firm support on the Day of Return.
Prostrate to Him spreading dust over your head and seeking forgiveness,
Thereby you will increase in honour and find guidance
Repent from your sins and call upon Him with humility.
Then you will find in that prayer supplies and equipment.
When you're in seclusion entreat Him through the means
Until you become the one who is called from the heavens
Now I have given advice, without holding back,
For perhaps he who gives advice seeks it.
