O shameless man, instruction given to the worthless is like drawing a little design on a clod of earth.

Instruct yourself in love of God and spiritual insight; for that is like a design engraved on a solid mass of stone.

Your own self is the only pupil who is really faithful to you: all the others perish: where will you seek them, where?

In order that you may make others erudite and eminent, you make yourself evil-natured and empty of true knowledge.

But when your heart is united with that Eden of Reality, listen, keep speaking, and do not be not afraid of becoming empty.

For this reason the Divine command, ‘Speak!’ came to the Prophet, saying, ‘O righteous one, it will not fail: this is an infinite ocean.’

This discourse has no end, o father: leave this discourse and consider the end.

**Self-realization is the key to knowledge of all things.**

*Ḥadīth: “Whoever knows himself, knows his Lord.”* [1.4.1]

Saying, “I know what is permissible and impermissible.” You do not know whether you yourself are permissible or impermissible as an old woman.

You know this allowable thing and that unallowable thing, but are you allowable or unallowable? Consider this well!

You do not know what the value of every article of merchandise is; if you do not know the value of yourself, it is foolishness.

You have become acquainted with the fortunate and auspicious stars; you do not look to see whether you are fortunate or unwashed (spiritually foul and ill-favoured).

This, this, is the soul of all sciences – that you should know who you will be on the Day of Judgement.

You are acquainted with the fundamentals (uṣūl) of the religion, but look at your own fundament (aṣl) and see if it is good.

Oh, there are many learned scholars who have no profit from their knowledge: they are people who commit knowledge to memory, not people who love it.

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1 Qur’ān 112:1.
2 *Ahādīth-e Mathnawī* p. 471; *Sharḥ-e Fussūṣ al-Hikam* by Hussain Khwarazmi p. 87.
3 “The religion of old women” is synonymous with ignorance and superstition (Nich.).
4 Uṣūl-e Din = “the fundamentals of religion”, in this case Islam. These comprise: 1. Tawḥīd (the oneness of God), 2. Nubuwwa (Prophethood) and 3. Ma‘ād (Resurrection).
From them the listener (but not the learned men themselves) perceives the scent of knowledge, even if the listener is a commoner.

They know the special properties of every substance, but in elucidating their own substance (essence) they are as ignorant as an ass.

They know a hundred thousand superfluous matters connected with the various sciences, but those unjust men do not know their own soul.

Of all these various kinds of knowledge, on the day of death the best equipment and provision for the road is the knowledge of spiritual poverty.

Şūfīs prefer a pure heart to a head filled with formal knowledge. [1.4.1]

The face of the tranquil soul in the body suffers wounds inflicted by the fingernails of thought.

Know that evil thought is a poisonous nail: in the case of deep reflection it rends the face of the soul.

In order that the thinker may loosen the knot of difficulty, he has put a golden spade into manure.

Suppose the knot is untied, o clever thinker: it is like a tight knot on an empty purse.

You have grown old while you occupied yourself with untying knots: suppose you untie a few more knots, what then?

The knot that is fastened tight on our throat is that you should know whether you are ill-fated or fortunate.

Solve this problem if you are a man: spend your breath (life) on this, if you have the breath (spirit) of Adam within you.

That which you imagine to be the treasure – through that vein imagination you are losing the treasure.

Know that illusions and opinions are like the state of cultivation: treasure is not to be found in cultivated places.

In the state of cultivation there is existence and bitter conflict: the non-existent is ashamed of all existent things.

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5 The soul at peace with God – Qur’ān 89:27 (Nich.).
6 I.e. has applied his reason to the futilities of exoteric knowledge (Nich.).
Suppose you know the definitions of all substances and accidents, how will you benefit from it? Know the true definition of yourself, for this is indispensable.

Your life has gone to waste in the consideration of logical predicate and subject: your life, devoid of spiritual insight, has gone in study of what has been received by hearsay.

Every proof that is without a spiritual result and effect is vain: consider the final result of yourself!

You have never perceived a Maker except by means of a made thing: you are content with a syllogism.

The philosopher multiplies links consisting of logical proofs; on the other hand, the elect (the mystic) is contrary to him in this respect.

The latter flees from the proof and from the veil between himself and God: he has sunk his head in his bosom for the sake of contemplating the Object of the proof.

This company washed their hearts clean of the exoteric kinds of knowledge, because this knowledge does not know this Way.

In order to tread this Way one needs a knowledge that is rooted in the Other World, since every branch is a guide to its root.

Why, then, teach a man the knowledge of which he should purify his breast?

Since these sciences bring you no blessing, make yourself a fool and leave bad luck behind.

Like the angels, say, “We have no knowledge, o God, except what You have taught us.”

My foolishness is a very blessed foolishness, for my heart is well-furnished with spiritual graces and my soul is devout.”

If you desire that misery may leave you, endeavour that wisdom may leave you –

The wisdom which is born of human nature and fantasy, the wisdom which lacks the overflowing grace of the Light of the Glorious God.

The wisdom of this world brings increase of supposition and doubt; the wisdom of the religion soars above the sky.

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3 These are philosophical terms, as are the terms “predicate” and “subject” in verse 5-566. “Substance” is whatever is a natural kind of thing and exists in its own right. Examples are rocks, trees, animals, etc. “Accidents” are nonessential attributes or characteristics of something.

8 Qur’an 2:30, slightly altered (Nich.).
Most of those destined for paradise are simpletons\(^9\), so that they escape from the mischief of philosophy.

Strip yourself of useless learning and vanity, in order that the Divine mercy may descend on you at every moment.

Cleverness is the opposite of abasement and supplication: give up cleverness and befriend stupidity.

The clever ones are content with an ingenious device; the simple ones have gone away from the artifice to rest in the Artificer.

Abandon eminence, worldly energy and skill: what matters is service rendered to God and a good disposition.

With this aim God brought us forth from non-existence: “I did not create mankind except to serve Me\(^{10}\)”.

What did Sāmirī, whose skill in making the golden calf caused him to be banished from God’s door, gain from knowing this?

What did Qārūn\(^11\) gain from his alchemy? See how the earth dragged him down to its abyss.

**All knowledge is reflected in a pure heart.** [1.4.1]

No one who has found the way of vision in seclusion will seek power using the diverse kinds of knowledge.

When he has become an intimate companion to the beauty of the Soul, he will have a disgust of traditional learning and knowledge.

And even if you read a hundred volumes without a pause, you will not remember a single point of argument without the Divine decree;

But if you serve God and do not read a single book, you will learn rare sciences from your own bosom.

From his bosom, the hand of Moses spread a radiance that surpassed the moon in the sky.

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\(^{10}\) Qur’ān 51:56.

\(^{11}\) Qārūn or Korah, who belonged to the people of Moses, symbolizes arrogance, self-conceit and avarice – Qur’ān 28:76-82.
The gnostic drinks from the eternal inner water, while remaining dependent on transitory earthly water. [1.4.1]

6-3596 How magnificent is the Canal which is the source of all things! It makes you independent of these other canals.

6-3597 With relish you drink from a hundred fountains: whenever any of those hundred yields less, your pleasure is diminished;

6-3598 But when the sublime Fountain gushes from within you, you no longer need to steal from the other fountains.

6-3600 When the supply of water comes to a fortress from outside, it is more than enough in times of peace;

6-3601 But when the enemy forms a ring around that fortress, in order that he may drown the garrison in blood,

6-3602 The hostile troops cut off the outside water, so that the defenders of the fortress may have no refuge from them.

6-3603 At that time a briny well inside the walls is better than a hundred sweet rivers outside.

6-4649 The flowers that grow from plants live but a moment; the flowers that grow from Reason are ever fresh.

6-4650 The flowers that bloom from earth become faded; the flowers that bloom from the heart – oh, what a joy!

6-4651 Know that all the delightful sciences known to us are only two or three bunches of flowers from that Garden.

6-4652 We are devoted to these two or three bunches of flowers because we have shut the Garden door on ourselves.

The secret of ‘Ilm-e Ladunnī (the mystical knowledge of “the People of the Heart”, i.e Ahl-e Dil) [1.4.1]

1-3446 The sciences of the mystics lift them high; then sciences of sensual men are burdens to them.

1-3447 When knowledge strikes on the heart (is acquired through mystical experience), it becomes a helper (yārī); when knowledge strikes on the body (is acquired through the senses), it becomes a burden (bārī).

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13 Literally “People of the Heart”, is an expression that is often used as a synonym for “Ṣūfī Masters”.
14 Literally “the people of the body”.
God has said, “Like an ass laden with his books”\(^ {15}\): the knowledge that does not come from Himself is difficult to bear.

The knowledge that does not immediately come from Himself does not last, it is like the esthetician’s paint.

But when you carry this burden well, the burden will be removed and you will be given spiritual joy.

Beware! Do not carry this burden of knowledge for the sake of selfish desire, but mortify yourself, so that you may ride on the smooth-paced steed of knowledge.

How should one who depends on a teacher and who is a disciple of a book find, like Moses, light from his own bosom?

Purify yourself from the attributes of self, that you may behold your own pure unblemished essence,

And behold within your heart all the sciences of the Prophets, without book and without teacher and master.

Without the two \( \text{Ṣaḥīḥs} \)\(^ {16}\) and traditions and traditionists\(^ {17}\); no, they behold him in the place where they drink the Water of Life.

And if you desire a parable of the hidden knowledge, tell the story of the Greeks\(^ {18}\) and the Chinese.

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\(^ {15}\) Qur‘ān 62:5.

\(^ {16}\) The title \( \text{Ṣaḥīḥ} \) (“authentic”, “sound”) is given to two works, by Muḥammad ibn Ismā‘īl al-Bukhārī (or “Bukhārī” for short – 810-870 CE) and Muslim ibn al-Ḥajjāj Neyshāpūrī (or “Muslim” for short – 821-875 CE), which contain well-authenticated traditions (\( \text{aḥādīth} \)) of the Prophet (Nich.).

\(^ {17}\) Those who have transmitted the traditions, i.e. the \( \text{ḥadīths} \) or sayings of the Prophet Muhammad.

\(^ {18}\) The word used for “Greeks” in this verse is \( \text{Rūmīyān} \), which literally means “Romans”. However, here “Romans” means the Greek-speaking inhabitants of the Seljuk Sultanate of Rūm. In Arabic, \( \text{Rūm or ar-Rūm} \) refers to the Byzantine or Eastern Roman Empire. Although the multi-ethnic Byzantine Empire became more and more grecianized in the centuries after the fall of the Western Roman Empire in 476 CE, they still viewed themselves as “true Romans”. The name \( \text{Rūm} \) was used by the Arabs, the Persians, the Seljuk Turks and the Muslim world in general. The Qur‘ān even contains a Sūra called \( \text{Ar-Rūm} \) (i.e. “The Romans”, “The Roman Empire” or “The Byzantines” – Sūra 30). The name “Rūm” lived on in the Seljuk Sultanate of Rūm, which was a separate and very influential vassal state within the Great Seljuk Empire, which at the height of its power covered large parts of Anatolia, the Caucasus, the Middle East and Central Asia. In 1243 CE the Seljuk Turks were defeated by the Mongols and the Seljuk Sultanate of Rūm became a vassal state to them. It was in this Sultanate’s capital, Konya (or \( \text{Qūniya} \), as the Muslim peoples called it), that Ḥaẓrat Mawlānā Rūmī spent the most important part of his life – hence the name “Rūmī” (meaning “of Rūm”).