

The Food of Paradise

...an ancient Sufi tale rendered anew for you...

written by Qa'id A. Jacobs_

Section One

The Food of Paradise in rhyme,
A story that transcends time.
Although it dates back to a period some would call medieval,
In *this* story there are no sieges, no plagues, no monarchs, no cathedrals.
This is a story about truth and what it means to search for such,
How truth is illusive and always seems to vanish once in our clutch.

Moyen was a family man with kids to work the acres he owned,
But something wasn't right, he felt, one day while coming home.
All day long his thoughts were fixed on the words of a smart man,
Words that made Moyen ask himself: "do I know who I really am?"
Though he tried and tried to think of something else,
The words of this traveling man had penetrated deep within Moyen's self.
At the dinner table Moyen's wife foresaw that something strange was to come,
His mental shadow even eclipsed the youthful shine of his daughters and sons.
"Dearest?" his wife inquired, "Daddy?" his babies chimed,
"Please reveal," they begged, "that which plagues your mind."
But nothing worked to bring forth his thoughts,
Like a mouse in a trap, his tongue was caught.
A sip of water did little to loosen his throat or quench his thirst,
Our friend Moyen was busy figuring out who would be the first.

First to be told that today was his last,
Being with family and friends would soon be in the past.
"Listen up," he finally revealed,
Everyone gave him their attention with zeal.
"What I am about to say to you all may come as a shock,
Like when you first learned about the deaths of Biggie and Tupac.
But rest assured that my perspective is wise and that I have learned,
I must make a decision that will cause pain worse than being burned."
The anticipation was trying everyone's patience and especially their fears,
"please continue," his wife urged, "your troubles are bringing us all to tears."

- Moyen stood up and stepped away from the table,
Avoiding the direct gaze of those who depended on him for life.
- He especially couldn't bear the eyes of his eternal promised love,

His most cherished and beautiful wife.
He knew that the words he was about to share,
Would be met with tear filled eyes and disappointed stares.
"This dinner," Moyen proclaimed, "is my last with you all,
I have no choice but to leave you and obey a higher call.
Just a few hours ago I had an intense conversation with a most wise, learned businessman.
He said the best way to live life and do the most for you all, was to follow a strict regimen.
Strict indeed for it dictates that I must abandon all for which I've worked so hard,
While keeping in mind that the end result will be full and replete one-ness with God."
Moyen's words concluded - saturated with the blindness of conviction,
All were shocked by the words, unsure whether they were fact or fiction.
But the matriarch wondered aloud, needing clarity,
She asked, "so you're about to abandon your family?"
"I don't expect you to understand since you did not hear the words of this wise man,"
he replied,
"If you leave us tonight don't expect to return without a fight – your wish will be denied."

Moyen's wife continued her appeal:
"Do you choose God who is imagined over your family which is real?
Were your original beliefs that shallow and absurd
That you would change your way after a stranger's word?
And the word of a stranger at that!
What happened to the spine that once ran down your back?
Philosophy is one thing – and quite beautiful as an art,
But what about the effect of breaking every one of your kids' hearts?
Tell me what he said... this master! Your new friend!"
Moyen began, but was quickly cut off again.
"And furthermore ..." she continued with a yelp,
"I'm not trying to raise these kids without any help."

Moyen's heavy sigh signaled to all that this was not going to end with smiles and hugs,
His wife was going crazy and his kids were starting to bug.
"This back and forth is a real bore,
I'm leaving you all to go serve the Lord.
It was a word indeed that moved me
And it was a word alone that began infinity.
Everything around us is a word entirely – I'm sure you realize,
Words are sounds and sounds vibrations when brought together they materialize.
Matter is nothing more than vibrating chunks of soul,
But matter is the thing that makes us all whole.
Without the rhythmic vibrations, each of us would be but wisps of air,
With no center or existence, we just wouldn't be there.
So yes, it *has* been a **word** that has opened my eyes,
The unfortunate truth is that I must leave you guys.
I am now an initiate: what is called a 'Seeker of Truth.'
By years I am an old man, in terms of knowledge: merely a youth!
I have to go, abandon all, and try to grow.
If you stop to think of it, the best reason is that God said so."
Moyen emptied his pockets of all worldly goods,
Raised his hand in abdication and headed for the woods.

"In the woods," the wise man told Moyen, "you will give birth,
to wisdom and understanding, known as 'Total Faith In Earth';
And all things created by the most high,
Mysteries and answers to feed your mind's eye.
Such enlightenment can only be obtained through contemplative solitude,
One which produces thoughts of thanks and sheer, pure, supreme gratitude.
For what have we at all, if not to give thanks
But our minds are consumed with struggle, angst, bills, and banks.
There are many before us who've lived the same lives,
However, unlike our generation, they've left much when they died:
Words, writings, sounds, and songs,
Many works have survived this long.
Some who lived had made it their goal
To study these works as complete and whole.
The result of these studies have been plain and clear:
It is only the word of God that man must fear.
For those who can't see this I have unbiased pity,
The word of God can't be heard over the noise of the city.
It's worth more than all the world's gold,
The word of God manifests as a murmur in your soul.
In order to perceive, you must first believe.
For the word of God is sweeter than the sweetest thing you can find,

Sweeter than the dessert called the Food of Paradise, amongst our kind.
The Food of Paradise: all children know it well,
When they see it, their stomachs growl and their eyes swell.
Even for adults, the joy and pleasure is no less,
There are none around that wouldn't say it's the best.
For the fools who disagree, they're automatically dimwits,
Even the clergy loved this food and they often smelled of it.
Crushed almonds, with aromatic clove shells,
The holy leaders simply rubbed it on themselves.
Soldiers carried it into battle fields - there it was more precious than a man's helmet,
The Food of Paradise was the remedy for more than one hundred different ailments.
Or so the story goes for this Food of Paradise,
With a taste so amazing you have to eat it twice.
But the word of God, son, it's this about which I'm talking,
You've already wasted so many years, it's best you start walking.
Head for the woods and live with faith in Mother Nature.
Be patient and believe, she'll deliver you to the creator.
Tests and challenges will obscure your path,
Just remember your purpose and follow through on the task.
When you have a question, you need only ask,
Or rest when tired and take a sun bath.
When you do find a truth, understand Understanding is its root.
True wisdom and enlightenment is yours by following this route."
And such were the words of this wise business man,
That convinced Moyen to give up his whole famalam.

Section Two

It took many days of walking to get away from home
Hidden in the thickest of woods, Moyen knew he was totally alone.
Seclusion was required – in these woods he would not be found,
No distraction anywhere at all, simply nature all around.
This simplicity astounded, full of beauty and power,
Moyen was amazed within his first few hours.
"If I listen long enough, the lyrics of the birds will become clear,
I will connect with the animals and understand every sound I hear.
As the leaves rustle, they tell the stories of the winds,
Of storms and of sailboats, of blowing away sins.
The cool moss underfoot feels soft to my feet,
Lucky to have it here it will provide comfort when I sleep.
Tree top canopy of leaves: a crochet loosely spun,
Interrupted by strong, life-giving bursts of the glorious sun.

"I know that if I believe, nature and sustenance will take communal flight."
With those thoughts in mind, Moyen comfortably passed the first night.
The next morning he woke to the songs of Blue Jays,
More sure than ever that he'd chosen the right way.
The one thing more significant than this profound reckoning,
Was the strength of his hunger that seemed to grow by the second.
If there was bone in his stomach, the hunger would have gnawed its way through,
The issue of hunger was paramount, there was something Moyen had to do.
Since he too was a creation of nature he knew [in it] he could survive,
There was food all around him: nuts, berries, plants, fruit, honey from a bee-hive.
But Moyen had trouble imagining himself taking honey from a bee,
Even after hours of scavenging, he ended up finding little to eat.

His hunger was now most serious, the sounds of the forest became annoying,
He tried to keep the perspective that, with his abilities, Nature was toying.
"But why would she play with me so?" Moyen couldn't figure out,
For how could his faith in nature help to end this hunger bout?
Just then he was disturbed by a strong and thorough sound,
Intense and powerful, so deep that it shook the ground.
It took only a moment for Moyen to recognize the sensation:
It was a caravan of merchants en route to their destination.
So numerous were they, that they traveled in packs,
Something like a mobile city, numbering 500 front to back.
There were so many that the earth rumbled when they passed,
And when they pass, they pass slowly to display the pomp and circumstance.
They made riches by bringing a variety of treasures from near and far:
Salt, myrrh, gems, furs, glasswork, toys, literature, cigars,
For the most modest merchant family, three whole sheep was dinner for 3,
Which goes to show the disgusting amounts and disregard for waste there would be.
One single bite from a full leg of mutton,
Then it's tossed aside as if it were nothing.
Glutton is a word to describe each one,
They thought only of advantage – and as for compassion?
They had none.
But merchants were followed by hundreds of people day after day,
The poor and the destitute who would actually survive off the merchants' throw-away.
It was quite a site: people wiping mud from decomposing chunks of flesh,
To you and I: pure refuse! But to them it was the best!
"And isn't it though?" Moyen's stomach thought aloud,
"These people didn't care, they fed themselves and they were proud."
His stomach became advisor so Moyen made a move,
To approach this caravan and appease his hunger for food.
As he took the first step, he was thrown to the ground by an invisible force,
Forced to lay still and watch the caravan pass: merchant by merchant, horse by horse.
As the dust settled Moyen rose to his feet – once again of his own accord,
He figured the unseen force of paralysis was the direct hand of the lord.
To scavenge is wrong, a true fall from grace. Never accept another's refuse.
Your soul will darken, your dreams will fade, it's clearly your temple you abuse.
Accepting this lesson as a gift from above, Moyen brushed himself clean,
Ignoring his hunger, he refocused himself on finding just what this life means.
Turned right around, and strolled back through the woods, by noon he was in them deep,
To his relief, surprise, and disbelief he discovered a cool river in which to soak his feet.

Water murmured by, having an effect on his toes up through his thighs.
A sound so soothing, in order to focus Moyen had to close his eyes.
With eyelids shut, during full concentration, the sound of silence made Moyen wonder,
This form of deep meditation calmed his soul, sparked his curiosity, and abated his hunger.
He couldn't focus long; perfection would take practice and he'd have to continually try,
Just then he became re-aware of his newly strong hunger that he could no longer deny.
"Okay! Okay! I really do understand!" Moyen screamed at the top of his lungs,
"I know that Nature provides for all in sync, I need food now! Please give me some!"
There was no heavenly booming sound in reply,
No magic cornucopia descended from the sky.
Standing up bitterly, his hope was beginning to wither,
Then Moyen spotted something floating down the river.

A mystery item, hard to see as it floated above the river floor,
An irresistible mystery, Moyen couldn't help but to retrieve and bring it ashore.
Soaking wet and thoroughly drenched from his neck through to his feet,

His heart went racing at the thought that this could be something to eat!
From the outside this package resembled neither bread nor meat nor rice,
It seemed something a million times better: the beloved Food of Paradise!
Wrapped in green leaf, preserved in olive oil,
A familiar leaf unmistakably grown in domestic soil.
"Everything about this treat seems to be the Food of Paradise that I know!"
The smell of the unwrapped goodie mocked his appetite and made his hunger grow.
Marinating in honey and soaked in milk condensed and sweetened,
Crushed almonds, shelled walnuts, tender roasted pecans.
Moyen devoured the treat without further precaution,
Reminiscing about stories from his youth,
Tales of Queens rubbing this on their body to carry the scent,
No adult would ever deny that the story was the truth.
The very last bite was as good as the very first,
Moyen drank from the fresh water river to quench his sudden thirst.
As he drank, Moyen thought for a bit, and wondered where this timely meal came from,
The Food of Paradise doesn't sprout from the Earth; unlike a fruit, it isn't nourished by the sun.
Just then Moyen was struck with a thought, "nature is so amazing!
It provides for all it's creatures, those big and those small, from treats for humans to grass for cows grazing!"

Moyen was well on his path, learning as he went,
Receiving gifts of knowledge undeniably heaven-sent.
However, Moyen just wasn't sure;
He knew there had to be more.
Someone must be aware of his presence in the forest, why else would the food have appeared?
"Perhaps it's a royal and divine individual!" They could help him and they might be near.
Moyen became inspired and began his trek up-river,
As he progressed the bush got thick and the trees got bigger.
He traveled all day along the river only stopping to rest when the sun went down.
Exhausted from walking he fell asleep, soon startled awake by a strange sound.
Moyen jumped up and looked around seeing nothing in the pitch dark that accompanied this nighttime,
He hoped that whatever thing was moving around in the tree tops, would prove to be gentle and kind.
After a bit, Moyen settled down and fell asleep once more,
His dreams peppered with thoughts of what tomorrow had in store.
Exactly what was in store for Moyen: he would soon enough find,
And learn that reality is often more creative than the human mind.

Section Three

When morning slowly developed, like a picture fading in,
The moisture from the air condensed as dew upon his skin.
Sunlight spilling through his eyelids evaporating the final bits of Moyen's dreams,
Bluer than blue above the greenest evergreen combined to create something serene.
Earth's beauty has no bounds, that Morning swallowed Moyen whole,
He tumbled onward in a womb-like void, absorbing Earth's role.
The need to take it all in was even greater than the need to blink,
Comprehending it all at tremendous speed he never knew he could think.
There seemed to be more to know than there was time in a moment, this mental influx weighed Moyen down,
The weight became heavy, then quickly oppressive, there was so much understanding he thought he might drown.
Just as all sense of left and right threatened to disappear,
Moyen calmed considerably and knew that the ground was near.
The ground was beneath, and clouds above in the sky,
Exactly as they had been since the beginning of time.

Sitting up, still reeling from such an extreme trip throughout his within,
Moyen's vision focused on a small and elderly man perched on a tree limb.

Startled at first, but then relieved by this site,
Such an old man was never cause to take flight.
This type of man – adept enough to balance his body weight on the arm of a tree,
Was a rare, although well known sort of man – there was no mistaking who he could be.
This elder, adorned with a long braided beard and a multi-colored patchwork robe,
Is known as a dervish – a symbol of wisdom and patience famous across the globe.
In a movement that deceived and defied both the eye and old age,
The dervish had descended the tree with a fluidity available only to sages.
Moyen perked up, steadied himself and sprang up to his toes.
Tradition dictated that dervishes answer any one question you pose.
It was therefore always a pleasure to have a dervish cross your way,
Although sometimes a challenge, for in response a riddle is what he might say.
Dervishes do nothing but study, otherwise practicing religious chants to increase their piety,
Roaming the land begging meals and shelter; providing free wisdom is how they repaid society.
The legends indicate that dervishes have supernatural powers,
Like levitation, psychokinesis, and meditation hour upon hour.
Rock hard discipline, unflagging devotion,
Flight above the clouds, council below the ocean.
This particular dervish was eccentric to say the least.
His brown skin and vocabulary suggested that he came from the east.

The dervish rolled right up to Moyen, staring him bluntly in the face:
“Greetings upon greetings I wish to you, weary traveler of mind and space.”
With one hand flourishing his patchwork, his feet shuffled furiously in place,
The movement was so ridiculously silly; Moyen had trouble keeping a straight face.
Seeing such an old man make such absurd movements Moyen couldn’t help but boisterously laugh,
The dervish himself seemed quite amused and asked, “so, what brings you across my path?”

“Well isn’t it really my path you’ve crossed, and besides, shouldn’t the first question asked be mine?
I mean, you are a dervish, and I a knowledge seeker, let’s honor that tradition for it’s as old as time.”

“Amazing how arrogant you are to be a blind man lost amongst these trees.
Your premature words risk gambling my help, as I am one who can see.”

“Ah sir dervish, you waste our time, now I have a question so you must reply.”
Insulted, yet bound by tradition, the dervish had no choice but to comply.

“You may ask your question though I’ve already given you advice.
You’re such a clot for not even knowing, I won’t mind giving it twice.”

“Well, since you have offered, here’s my query to you,
I can certainly benefit from your knowledge on my quest for the ultimate truth”

“The ultimate truth?! Pssht! You must be joking!”

“Hold your tongue until all my words have been spoken...!
This trek has been hard but spiritually rewarding none-the-less.
My survival has been based wholly on this river by which we rest.
Its waters alone didn’t only quench the thirst of my famine,
But everyday it delivers a meal more tasty than you could imagine.
The Food of Paradise itself from Nature’s stream, directly to me –
It’s just that the ultimate source of this treat remains a mystery.
So here’s where you come in, my good dervish, let’s not dally, no time to procrastinate,
The simple question I need you to answer is: from where does this food originate?”
The dervish meditated on Moyen’s words carefully before saying a thing,
Wary of the consequences that ultimate truth never fails to bring.

"I can tell you where your food comes from, that's no major feat;
Especially since it will bring you closer to the truth behind your treat.
Keep traveling upriver until the river widens and becomes strangely sedate.
In between the banks rests an island with a castle protected by 100 foot gates.
The bearer of your sustenance resides in this fortified palace,
As you swim to reach it – beware of sea creatures with malice!
You must be sharp for this structure was built with extreme protection,
Swim through the underground spring to get in and avoid detection.
To access this spring, swim in one straight line directly [to the castle] from the shore,
Once inside follow your ears, which will take you to what you've been questing for.
My final piece of advice is more like a warning, take heed and to your heart hold it near,
The ultimate truth is not always as expected, and may not be as clear as it appears."

"Thank you for the advice, though I could have done without the prattle.
I'm off to continue upriver to meet my destiny in this castle I must battle."
With no more to gain Moyen began upon his way without a further word of gratitude.
The dervish watched him walk away, disgustedly shook his head and complained of the young man's attitude.
Moyen couldn't care less although he gave thanks for his blessings.
God had supported him again in the form of the dervish's lessons.
What was it the old man had said about truth and appearances? Moyen hadn't retained any detail,
At that point it didn't even matter, the only thing on his mind was how he was going to prevail.
The castle posed a great challenge,
for swimming was not his best talent,
But surely confident he would win,
Moyen was going to find a way in.

Section Four

It was a day's journey that led Moyen to the site he now saw:
A majestic structure perched on an island with gates quite tall.
So tall that no mere man would truthfully say he could easily scale,
Nor bound or leap, neither flip nor fly, his attempt would surely fail.
Of all wise things said by the Dervish to Moyen he managed to retain very few;
One of them being that to gain entrance required swimming, this he certainly knew.
Some underwater passage was to lead him from out to within.
Moyen took a moment to steady himself, he thought about all the places he'd been.
Places to which he'd traveled in the past few days
Mental expanses he's crossed, nourished by the sun rays.
And of course the special package that regularly came down river,
Moyen wondered about the look of his benevolent caregiver;
Who could they be? They had to be gods or else high royalty.
At this point, Moyen was apprehensive and said "we shall see."
From above, the water really looked tranquil and calm,
Moyen tested the depth at the shore by sticking in his arm.
A few feet down he felt the bottom: silken it seemed,
After a running leap, Moyen plunged into the stream.
Water filled his ears, but didn't burn his eyes
His swimming was weak, the current kept pulling him aside.
The power of this current was startling; Moyen had never felt such force.
He jumped in again, tried his hardest, but he couldn't swim the course.
Moyen was mystified: the water was so calm when standing on the banks,
But once he got in he could barely keep from drowning with all his strength.

A few attempts at this left Moyen extremely tired,
He thought hard to figure out how to get to the other side.

Each time he got in the water, it sent him where he didn't want to go.
In order to analyze the phenomenon, Moyen took note of how the river flowed.
The flow of the water was the same at each occurrence
Moyen saw this as the key to mastering the river's currents.
He backtracked along the river going back the way he came.
It's funny he thought, how life's answers are sometimes so arcane.
Sometimes the answers are nearer than the lashes to our eye,
Sometimes the answers are so simple they require the demeanor of a child.
So much like a child and simple minded at that,
Moyen got in the river and just floated on his back.
The current began to support Moyen, "hmm" he thought, "this is cool."
The coolness quickly disappeared when he saw he was headed for a whirlpool!
Panic struck him hard, he thrashed and headed for the vortex,
Forget the Food of Paradise, at this rate, it was death he would see next.
Instead of relaxing and riding the wave, Moyen fought against the water's power,
Almost choked as it took him under for just a moment that seemed like hours.
The water became dark, he couldn't tell which way was up,
Moyen panicked and tried to swim, but underwater he was stuck!
Turned and tossed by the water and in its depths,
He couldn't hold his breath any longer and lost consciousness.

Somehow he survived,
His rough river dive.
He awoke strong and felt brave
But found himself inside a cave.
The place was dark: high ceiling echoes of dripping sounds.
Moyen rose to his feet sopping wet, slightly bruised, and looked around.
He could see how he got there: this cave had a beach, though it was underground.
The beauty of the site told Moyen for which he was looking had just been found.
What else could give an intruder such a hard time and a tough hassle,
Than a tall, majestic, and marvelous, divinely protected, royal castle?
Moyen knew he was underground and would have to make it all the way to the top.
He stood strategically contemplating just how as the echoes went: "drip, drop."
It was dark and he was lost – this solution was going to take some real mental poise,
However he was going to do it, Moyen would have to do it without making much noise.
In there, all sound was amplified and he didn't know if anyone was near,
Even the slightest sound was loud and anyone else was bound to hear.
"The drips are kinda loud," he thought. "I could take a step at the sound of each drop,"
But then he heard a captivating sound that brought his strategic contemplation to a stop.
It was the sound of joy: a light and harmonious melody.
Moyen had to strain to hear and determine what it could be.
It was faint but beautiful - Moyen followed its direction.
Careful with his steps - careful to avoid any detection.
Joyful laughter, plucked strings, dancing feet.
All supported by a gentle head-nodding beat.
These sounds floated through the cave like a warm, inviting breeze,
Moyen followed this flow and this way found the exit with relative ease.
There was a set of stone stairs carved from the cave floor
Looking up them he saw some light from a slightly open door.
The music came from here
That much was very clear.
Moyen climbed the steps
Crouching silently as he crept.

What Moyen saw while peeking through the door made him doubt his eyes:
Outside was a rooftop awash in sunlight necessarily atop a building so high.

So high in fact, that even through the crack Moyen could see clouds floating by.
All this impossibility along with the beauty of the music made him want to cry.
But there was no time for that – his procrastination was abated
He felt this had to be where The Food of Paradise is created.
For look at this place: marble floors at heavenly heights
Sweet scented breeze and life giving rays of sun light.
The roofless rooftop was so high up the weather didn't even matter
From inside Moyen could hear the playful sounds of idle chatter.
Worriless giggles from chubby cheeks
Hands without scars and manicured feet.
Down filled pillows encased in soft leather
Time full of leisure with friends spent together.
These were the sounds Moyen could hear from around the corner
He slowly emerged and hoped they'd be kind to him: a foreigner.
With such love in their voices, they had to be nice.
Besides, this was the source of The Food of Paradise!
Rounding the bend Moyen was not surprised to see
A group of attractive young people: men and women numbering three.
Accompanied by a string instrument musician strumming one chord over again,
They all looked up with faces full of surprise to see the newly revealed Moyen.
"What in the world?!"
"Who could this be?!"
"Let's be kind, we need only ask and then we'll see."

Voices full of frivolity, they clearly felt no threat and saw no danger.
They welcomed and smiled at Moyen even though he was a stranger.
"You must have traveled far, fair stranger, it's likely you need a rest,
Relax a bit you're welcome here, sit down, eat some fruit: it's fresh.
Take a sip of this wine, its bouquet is aromatic.
So rare to have a guest, visitors are so sporadic."
It seemed odd to Moyen that these majestics had not predicted his arrival,
It was these folks after all was said that were responsible for his survival.

"I'm no real stranger," Moyen offered up, "I've been enjoying your food all along,
It surprises me that you haven't expected I would search and that I would come ."

"Your talk of food is confusing, we don't know you or even your name.
Regardless of that you're welcome with us we wish you comfort just the same."

"How could you say you don't know who I am when it's you that has been the life giver?
My survival during these past days has been based upon the food you send down this river.
And no ordinary food, un uh, make no mistake!
This is the Food of Paradise with such a grate taste"

They listened to Moyen – and they really did want to understand,
But they just couldn't grasp the excited words from this strange man.

"Let's do this slowly by starting with your name
And then you can tell us from which land you came.
You've clearly come from far: your clothes are so tattered.
The journey must have been tough: your thoughts seem so scattered.
Relax, my friend, calm yourself, put up and rest your feet,
Don't forget to tell us your name so we can officially meet."

"If you insist, I will play your game: a charade!
And pretend that you don't know my name.

"I am a Seeker of Truth, most know me as Moyen
I quest for the answer [have come in peace] and you'll know me as a friend.
One day I was told by an accomplished businessman,
He said salvation lay in the opulence of God's hand,
That the bounty of life would be extended to me,
If acceptance of the power of nature was my only belief.
I was told to forget my family and relinquish material wealth
The goal being to cleanse and bolster my spiritual health.
A Seeker of Truth I've definitely been!
At every challenge I conquer and I win.
Of course your culinary contribution has been indispensable
It even helped even me to outwit a dervish who seemed insensible.
Temped with scavenging I refused refuse.
Me out of harmony with nature? One couldn't accuse!
I've meditated on peace and thereby found my own,
I've navigated these foreign woods: so different and far from home.
I managed to find an old dervish lurking in the trees
He wore a crazy outfit and spoke something of truth to me.
What was it again? I can't really recall.
Something about truth understanding the meaning of it all.
Or maybe it was how truth was elusive, or perhaps how hard to perceive
What was it he was saying? How truth may not be just what it seems?
Many of his words made no sense, though I'm sure his intentions were best.
He was a loopy old man, probably insane - you should have seen the way he was dressed!
I will give him this: he pointed me your way
After telling him of the wonderful food you sent me everyday.
He must've seen that I've been reaching for what life has in store,
Sent me in your direction saying I'd find what I was looking for.
Perhaps my success on this journey is borne of my powerful passion,
But I wouldn't have known the way if not for your generous daily ration.
This constant food: a beacon in the darkness of my spirituality,
I've come to **you** to acquire knowledge of super-natural reality.
In touch with the heavens – super-natural you must be!
What does God say? Is it a woman?! Does she talk of me?!
Or of my life and days to come?!
Don't hoard the blessings! Give me some!
The confused look on your faces would imply you know not of what I speak.
I've come this far, why hold back? Please deliver the truth I seek!"

One of the women that resided in this place
Cupped her two hands and held Moyen's face;
Wiped the sweat from his brow: it was the excitement of the moment,
It was this very excitement that she did not want to build or foment.

"Calm, calm, relax yourself mister Moyen.
Don't worry, you don't have to say it again.
Your words are confused – a bit mixed up.
You look to quench your thirst, but in an empty cup.
Now this may seem cruel, or cold as ice,
But we still don't know what you mean about The Food of Paradise.
We all love that treat as much as you
Throwing some into the river is not something we would do.
I'm sure you understand just what we're saying.
I wish you would relax and take advantage of the hospitality we're displaying.
Look here my friend, in the room behind that silk curtain

Is a bath in which you can rest your body – I’m sure it’s hurting.
Sit there, lay back, and let the warm fluid rise to your neck.
Our servants will attend you – it’s luxury you haven’t seen yet!
Come out relaxed and we’ll talk once more.
You’ll tell us of your past journeys plus the ones still in store.
For now just relax – you’re wound up all tight.
Drink our wine and eat our food – you’re welcome to stay the night.”

Clear to Moyen his words were not really believed,
He thought they might listen if the hospitality pressure was relieved.
Going against his better judgement, he took them up on the bath,
Only partially upset at such a pleasant diversion from his path.
The room with the tub demonstrated luxury in the extreme:
The marble, the crystal: this room was for more than just getting clean.
Moyen was amazed at how high climbed the ceilings,
He became excited by the sudden and warm luxurious feelings.
Excited by the warm bath covering his body – this was indeed new!
Soft music played while the servants allowed him to soak for a few.
4 servants approached, with brushes in gilded cases.
They each scrubbed some part of his body using aromatic abrasives.
This experience was so enjoyable Moyen was sad to see the end of his reprieve.
The servants lifted his spirits by drying his body with fresh mint leaves.
Feeling refreshed and much more composed,
Moyen left the bathroom to rejoin his hosts.
They clapped when he emerged, clearly in better shape.
“Now , dear friend Moyen, you have us a story to relate?”

“I do have a story you don’t seem to believe. I guess that will have to suffice.
But I just can’t get over this thing about the great Food of Paradise.
I know it came to me from here during each and every day –
I’ve seen someone throw it from the balcony when I was just a short distance away.
I retrieved it daily for it provided strength and focus
I just won’t believe it appeared through magic or hocus-pocus.
You can’t tell me that’s not the truth – I just won’t believe it...”

“Perhaps real truth is based on how you perceive it.
I now understand you and will deliver you your truth, though your good spirits I know will not last.
This Food of Paradise upon which you’ve survived is hardly divine but, is actually the refuse from our bath.
We bathe in warm goats milk, which is rich in emollients and full of protein.
Our servants exfoliate our dead skin with ground up nuts – we get really clean.
After the bath the servants use mint leaves to dry and refresh every crevice,
They do it right, we keep them tight, (it’s so hard to find good service).
They clean out the tub and bundle the waste in a banana leaf – all very meticulous.
Everyday we clean the mess is thrown over the edge of the balcony into the abyss.”

Silence gripped Moyen, his hand covered his mouth and his eyes drifted to the floor.
His gracious guests were saying he was the butt of a joke, which he found easy to abhor.
Even worse than an unfunny joke, Moyen learned he had been living off the sloth of others,
The words of the old dervish began to make sense as the ugliness of this truth became uncovered.

And that was the nature of the lesson Moyen had learned,
He came about it the hard way: through being spurned.
That made the lesson smart, like loosing a tooth,
It taught Moyen the real power of elemental truth.
The truth of the matter is that reality is conditional upon the state of your mind,
It also goes that a truth that pulls its punches is not very easy to find.

Truth will also demonstrate that those who live high above the ground don't always have morals to match,
And let's not ignore the rule telling us to absorb wisdom from elders at every moment we can catch.
Be humble and aware of yourself because truth will supercede
Don't confuse or misprioritize your lowly wants with your holy needs.
Travel the land if you can to find your way, discern your path.
But never forget to love and have heart, without them, you will not last.

~ F I N ~