

LECTIO DIVINA: A CALL FOR SALAH & POETIC BEING

MOMINA KHAN, PHD

ABSTRACT:

I reflect back on the ARTS Pre-Conference 2017 of the Canadian Society for Studies in Education. It was a day full of non-linear knowledge exchanges, conversations, creations, contemplation and arts-based activities. Collaborators dwelled in, engaged, and emerged together spiritually, poetically, and musically to rekindle their learning, coexistence and mystical understandings. I was in my fasting state with dry mouth, hungry stomach, and thirsty soul combined with contemplative sessions, plus my scholarly and poetic inspirations in the flesh. It was purely an epoch of unbridled spirit tenderly wrapped in creative and contemplative ways of being present in the moment, with the flawless beauty of a flute in the backdrop. I stood in a single corner of a square room. I began my *Lectio Divina*. I entered *Salah*. I reached contemplation through praying poetically.

BIO:

Momina Khan is a mother, poet, and researcher who recently received a PhD

in Education in 2018 from the University of Saskatchewan, Canada. In life and scholarship, as a mother and woman of color she engages in constructing counter stories through interweaving narrative and poetry. The narratives of her experiences from immigration to citizenship, from multiculturalism to eurocentrism, from parent involvement to parent engagement, and from a racialized mother to a researcher are narratives of gaps, silences, and exclusions shaped in the bumping places children and families experience in schools. She strives to re-conceptualize the dominant aspects of mandated curriculum by decentering the eurocentric perspective, knowledge and content. She challenges curriculum makers, educators and teachers that there are alternative perspectives of knowing worthy of inclusion. Her work & poetry invites and entices schools and educators to become leaders in eradicating barriers to racialized students' sense of self, sense of hybridity, sense of belonging, and sense of citizenship.



Figure 1: Before I bow: the prayer mat [Khan, digital photograph]

ARTS Pre-Conference CSSE 2017

May 2017 ARTS Pre-Conference at Ryerson University in the city of Toronto, Ontario, where my first ever footsteps were carved on Canadian soil. My steps and status as an immigrant to Canada inscribed a new chapter of life history written on pieces of myself and soul.

Nomadic bodies

bodies in philharmonic momentum
the scent of age upon pages as we
cross and write a cosmos of
complex mobilities and interconnections
in the throes of space, place, time
diaspora dallies into daily lives &
moments split-cell into senses of orientation
dinner for two: the home & the host
understanding and outlasting kingdom of ties
handcrafted filigree within & across
national & international borders
kinship ties, telephonic relations
home in the heart or in the heat
fractured families
geographically dispersed homes, habitats
sounds on the move in the sweet grass
morphing into momentous velvet images
nostalgic living
the fringes and frontiers of intersection
ideas, philosophies
relations, bonds
humanities, civilizations
histories & identities of I
self-understanding sleep
belonging is coming and going
beyond the boundaries
(dis)location, (re)location
exit there enter here
interweaving the lexicon of travel
dualistic (dis)positions, (re)positions
bifocality of daily rhythms and encounters

competing loyalties & realities
entanglement of local and global experiences
disrupting and unwrapping the familiar
re-doing the spine of being, belonging
dual citizenship dual nationality dual identity
traveling & transcending the topographical
borderlands of place and pace
sociocultural, historical, political
economical, communal, temporal
ontological, geographical
(inter)subjective and (inter)sectional
(inter)mediate and (inter)dependent
dimensions - *a new birth*

The preconference day brought back all those faded memories to the forefront, my youngest son's birth at Toronto East General Hospital away from our families, my husband's first job at Toronto Pearson Airport as a qualified doctor, my pushing of a four-seat second hand stroller filled with my four babies, my eldest daughter's first day at kindergarten without any knowledge of the English language, our frequent trips to Goodwill stores, our constant conversion of dollars into rupees, our shopping for discounted clothes and toys for the kids, the excitement on our kids' faces when swinging on the swings in public parks, our first apartment on the third floor of the Cosburn Avenue building, and many more.

ARTS... renovates
the illusion of memory
both past and present
overlapping the gap
tension & restoration
the
absolute difficult
befalls
the
absolute possible

ARTS-Day Rhythm: Ramadan Begins

An Arts Pre-conference day, full of conversation, creation, contemplation, non-linear knowledge exchanges and arts-based activities. The first formal fast, Ramadan's beginning. Ramadan, the most sacred month for Muslims in the Islamic religion. Muslims all around the world observe strict fasting from dawn to dusk for thirty days. Fasting in Islamic faith is a physically and spiritually uplifting experience of self-reflection, self-restraint, and self-purification in order to attain divine-consciousness. In my fasting state combined with contemplative sessions, plus my scholarly and poetic inspirations in the flesh, it was purely an epoch of unbridled spirit tenderly wrapped in creative ways of being present in the moment, with the flawless beauty of a flute in the backdrop.

As the elevator door opened, there was a kitchen right in front of my eyes at the heart of the space. I put my bag and laptop at one of the tables organized for the collaborators. The space began to feel full as more and more collaborators entered. The kitchen and food were at an arm's length distance. Everyone mingled and munched together. Some of them knew each other as reflected through their comfort level. I did not know any one: I was not a poet, I was not a scholar, I was not an expert, I was not white, I could not eat food, I could not shake hands, and I could not explain what I was feeling. A young female participant brought her hand forward and greeted me with a lovely smile. She also had an accent; my anxiousness began to turn into ease. I was sitting on a couch smiling and chatting through my eyes. They were eating, and I did not want to disturb them.

The euphoric sound of the flute called for reunion, direction, and duration. With every note that it hit, we journeyed to an unknown activity within a known space. The flute became everyone's reliable friend and finest guide physically for the day and spiritually for ever.

ARTS the collapse of the distinction
eternal love between flute and food
flute mutates into food
a mighty melody
whistling nutrition
for my soul
food morphs into flute
an immortal tune
crooning nourishment
for my body

it fills me
bit by bit
my hungered soul
my dry mouth
my vacuumed stomach
throughout the day
today
&
everyday
unfolding
silence
begins to sing
like a flute
in the air
and
hunger
begins to blaze
like food
on the flame

Favourite Quotation

We, as the conference collaborators, were asked to bring a favorite short quote or short poem as part of a Lectio Divina process together. Jalaluddin Rumi who was a 13th Century Sufi mystic and Persian poet is a great inspiration for me. In my *Urdu* school textbooks and among my family members who read his poetry aloud when making references, I grew up with him. I did not know why I picked particularly this quote; perhaps my vision and intention subconsciously mapped a series of intense concepts found within it.

“Observe the wonders as they occur around you. Don’t claim them. Feel the artistry moving through and be silent. Don’t grieve. Anything you lose comes round in another form.” (Rumi, n.d-a)

I observed the following tiers enclosed within this quote:

1. Observe the wonders

I see wonders in places, faces, people, symbols, things, thoughts, landscapes, and the universe. I keep wondering and pondering till I become part of that wonder. I align my curiosity to intense gazing.

*I reach poetry through the incidental and accidental "wander for wonders."
(Leggo, 2003, p.12)*

2. What occurs around you

I see everything breathing, moving, colliding and vibrating: the rhythms, actions, experiences, life, breaths, heartbeats, nature, water, bodies, sight, blood, day and night. I align my heartbeat with movements.

I reach poetry through motion, rhythm and location.

3. Don't claim them

I see the ugly game of dichotomous claim: the claim of knowing, beliefs, expertise, legitimacy, entitlement, authority, and supremacy. As poet Leonard Cohen (1993) advises, "Forget your perfect offering. There is a crack in everything. That's how the light gets through" (p. 373). What I know is not all, what others know could be a call. I commit to rise through enlightenment rather than sink into entitlement. I align my knowing with unlearning.

I reach poetry through imaginative and elevated thoughts.

4. Feel the artistry

I see and feel the artistry in metaphors. From a particle of dust to a star shining in the sky and in between is all abounding in metaphors. I align the sprinkled dust particles on the earth and the scattered stars in the heavens to "hear the melodies of [my] temperature" (Barba, 1995, p.162), the tunes of my eternal spirit and musicality of my internal silence. I align specks on earth with stars in heaven.

I reach poetry through divine and metaphorical understandings.

5. Moving through

I see a crack in everything as there is no such thing as walls of cement, and between those cracks, wonder, imagination, knowing, understanding and experience travel and leave traces of light in their wake. I align rupture with refill.

I reach poetry through transition and in-betweenness.

6. Be silent

I sit in silence to feel the eternal pull, gravity anchoring me to the ground further and farther to the core—more silence. I hear, see, touch, and feel silence and confront imposed compliance. I enter a liberating space where I move to action (Fels, 2002) to unmute my voice and to confirm my presence. I align loud silence with quiet noise.

I reach poetry through inner voice and wide-open words.

7. Don't grieve

I see gain and loss as natural and ordinary phenomena of our humanly life

experiences. As a result, the emotions of grief and happiness accompany us. Grieving upon losing something or someone from our life is an inevitable process, but our reactions and responses towards grieving play a central role in this venture. Sustained grieving can turn into suffering while contained grieving can turn into healing. "Pain is inevitable. Suffering is optional" (Murakami, n.d). I align my wound with nonlinear life and the "renewal that washed upon my soul" (Rajabali, 2017, p. 53).

I reach poetry through the broken and bandaged pieces of life.

8. Anything you lose comes round in another form

I see that giving, not receiving, is a reward. Giving is receiving. I lose myself in humility, I receive tranquility. I lose myself in care (for others), I receive self repair. I lose myself in prayer, I receive miracles.

I reach poetry through losing myself in the humming of birds and words.

People of Metaphor

We, the people of intuition not institutionalism
the people of metaphors not literalism
the people of conception not commercialism
the people of spirituality not secularism
the people of mother earth not capitalism
the people of magnificence not narcissism
the people of consecration not consumerism
the people of evolution not materialism
the people of sacredness not fundamentalism
the people of imagination not pragmatism
the people of soul-full-ness slit from isms

We, sans isms, sans time-frames, sans leakages
we, a bloc of hoping humans
texture becomes us
the cartographer's wrought
in flesh, bones and blood
muting & mapping & marrying
desires of the corporeal body
released from pollution
and dissected imitations
redemption
a mystical puzzle

to find the sojourning soul
filling the metrics of life
may be
60, 70, 80
or perhaps ninety
from end to end

five times a day
1,2,3,4,5 (×) 30 (×) 12

turning & returning & yearning
backward, forward
inward, outward
upward, downward
horizontally, vertically

falling	rising	dipping	dropping	moving	leaning
imagining	reciting	merging		bowing	kneeling
earthing		centering		grounding	

an interminable journey
trodden primrose path
towards mystery
searching for ichor

Lectio Divina: Process and Progress Together

As part of contemplative practice, collaborators were sent a three-page introduction to the *Lectio Divina* practice to read prior to the day of our assembly. I was hearing about *Lectio Divina* for the first time, and read the lines and links, words and keywords written in the introduction text carefully and contemplatively. I could understand and feel it clearly, and although I had heard about it for the first time, it was not my first encounter with it.

Lectio Divina is a contemplative path into reflection on a text—either Biblical or contemporary (Mesner, Bickel & Walsh, 2015, p. 20). It is “a form of devotional reading in which we allow God to ‘read’ us and respond to our deepest desire. . . . [it is] slow, deliberate, meditative reading in which we allow the words to penetrate our heart and question our spirit” (Nouwen, Christensen, & Laird as cited in Mesner et. al, 2015, p. 20). According to (Mesner et. al, 2015), “traditionally, the process involves reading (lectio), meditation (meditatio), prayer (oratio), and contemplation (contemplatio)” (p. 20).

The found poem below is extracted from (Mesner et. al, 2015, pp. 20-21) asserted stages of *Lectio Divina* and (Paintner’s, 2010, pp. 12-13) steps that are stated in brackets.

~~Reading 1: Lectio~~ (“settling and shimmering”) ~~We invite you to sit with the text in silence and to simply let it sink in.~~

~~Reading 2: Meditatio~~ (“savoring and stirring”) ~~What word/phrase or aspect of the image stands out to you? Try to let this word/phrase or aspect of the image simply emerge organically.~~

~~Reading 3: Oratio~~ (“slowing and stilling”) ~~What is particularly evocative or resonant to you in this text?~~

~~Reading 4: Contemplatio~~ (“summoning and serving”) ~~What is a call to action that you hear in this text?—~~

Lectio Divina has roots in both ancient Jewish Haggadah and Christian Benedictine traditions. It continues to evolve and to be applied in a wide range of spiritual traditions beyond the Judeo-Christian (Mesner et. al, 2015, p. 20). As a Muslim woman following and practicing the third mono theistic religion of the world, Islam, I extend *Lectio Divina* beyond the Judeo-Christian tradition by focusing on *Salah* (prayer five times a day). *Lectio Divina* involves specific and contemplative readings of text and scripture, however my verbal recitation of the Quranic text which I read with inner eye and reflect on while praying my *Salah*, is the way in which I practice *Lectio Divina*. Since the day I began incorporating it more and more into my *Salah* practices, my intent for *Salah*, recitation of verses, movements of prayer, contemplation, attentiveness, and spiritual connection to God took a new direction. I began not to focus on what and how I am praying, rather what prayer is doing to me and giving me. I begin to eliminate my sense of self right from the moment I enter *Salah*. I let the prayer seek and speak, conceive and receive, bond and respond to my intentions, utterances, movements, motions, and rhizomatic connections. It takes me to the aporetic space of silence where I become vigilant to listen to and engage with reverberations echoing what lies beyond and in-between *Salah* and the Creator. This led me to a new kind of careful hearing, peace, affirmation, animation, and the total removal of self from my physical body in order to feel my bonding and belonging to the eternal source. I began to pray poetically, and *Salah* became my own daily *Lectio Divina*. I interweave a Judeo-Christian-Muslim perspective on *Lectio Divina* which is encircled in the process, movements, manifestation and lifespan.

Lectio Divina: Judeo-Christian-Muslim

1. Lectio	<i>Niyyah</i>	Entering	whilst	Reading	<i>Child</i>
2. Meditatio	<i>Qiyam</i>	Centering	whilst	Pondering	<i>Youth</i>
3. Oratio	<i>Ruku</i>	Kneeling	whilst	Responding	<i>Adult</i>
4. Comtemplatio	<i>Sujood</i>	Feeling	whilst	Attending	<i>Elder</i>
5. Eximo	<i>Salaam</i>	Rising	whilst	Submitting	<i>Ageless</i>

sans Steps sans Self sans Whilst sans Source
 light & wind
 re (evolve)
 Eternity

Food for Thought, Flute for Soul

Noon. The flute whistles once again. Food for the stomach, and food for the soul, my *Zuhr* (noon) *Salah* began in a quiet corner on a hungry stomach. I stood in a single corner of a square room: therapeutic and thera-poetic space. I began my *Lectio Divina*. I entered *Salah*.

Salah is an Arabic word meaning, bowing, worship, prayer. *Salah* is the obligatory Muslim prayer, performed five times each day by Muslims. A “prayer is the highest form, the supreme act of creative imagination” (Corbin, 1969, p. 248) by unveiling of negligence from the soul to restore purification and enlightenment. Prayer is a “theophanic imagination” and poetic manifestation of light, “which determines a relationship between Creator and creature, imply the unity of their being (because it is impossible to conceive of any being extrinsic to absolute being)” (p. 246). Prayer is the divine epiphany manifesting a “theopathic union between divine Compassion and human passion” in which “divine solitude and human solitude: each delivers the other by joining itself to the other” (p.254).

when He shows himself to me, my whole being is vision¹
 when He speaks to me in secret, my whole being is hearing²
 when He guides me to a pathway, my whole being is movement
 when He whispers to me in silence, my whole being is prayer
 when He nudges into my spirit, my whole being is renewal

Creative imagination in the service of creative prayer through deep concentration

and manifestation of divine unity regulates movements for the celebration of prayer and behind all movements and manifestations is the perfect spirit, the spirit of repair, renewal and wisdom (Corbin, 1969; Khan, 1994).

Times Five a Day

who says my five is a number
I + IV no more
VI - I is none
boundless addition sudden deletion
flimsy abstraction curt subtraction
to be alive
to strive & thrive
the cure of the fall
to rise in a papered fall
love without death
the sun and the moon
visible gears invisible
invisible nears visible
it's a suave encounter
a carapace
of you and me
of soul breathing in earth
Allahu Akbar, God
in the seven seas
in the seven skies
in everything low & high
poetic, meditative, contemplative
religio-spiritual
it's a true call
a Prayer
my daily *lectio divina*
reciting with poetry
superior, sensorial, symmetry
listening to the melody of my soul
speaking to movement
body abounding
from dawn to dusk

dusk to twilight night
kiss and kneel
pry open the core
Creator and creature
capsule of self & soul
Five is infinity
five is *Fajar*, dawn
five is *Zuhr*, afternoon
five is *Asar*, evening
five is *Maghrib*, dusk
five is *Isha*, night

the eternal love between a celestial pair
sun and moon
makes me begin

\. *FAJAR - the dawn*

*Silent lullaby lay
warm in night's comprise
the moon is rebirthing
to bestow somewhere else
a sheen in the cosmos
veiled sky, serenity at its crux
faded stars: grey and blue
preparing to revel in a musical silence
a birthing sun
holding a pallet
the hue of realization
opaque mindfulness
ready to paint a paradise for the eyes
piercing the darkness
enlightening
soul hearing the melody that ears cannot
celestial tune to the earth of earths
quietude and stillness
night dew meant to cling to the soil
sweet vapours rise from the earth*

*glorious rise
restorative remembrance
of all truths
Prayer is superior than sleep*

I step on the prayer mat
I enter Fajar salah
Allahu Akbar
Standing
Kneeling
Kissing
the ground
*God's truth
is beauty*

٧. **ZUHR - the afternoon**

*the sun charioteers the day
radiant heat hastening
to give abundant light and love
amidst the verdant blinds
righting the rays
Ascending
movement, motion, moisture
voices and choices
the sound of weighty winds
a coterie of creatures
rhythm in the curve of trees
beauty in the bow of flowering petals
spinning wheels on the highway
thinking, feeling, feeding, doing
speaking, listening, trusting
busy mind, busy body*

I step on the prayer mat
I enter Zuhr salah
Allahu Akbar
Standing
Kneeling

Kissing
the ground
God's power
is immortal movement

Ϛ. **ASAR – the evening**

the sun sinks low
behind the bend of life
sculpted radiance in a divine setting
gold splashes everywhere
the commotion begins to repose
chirp metamorphoses into whisper
home is the beginning and end
fluttering of day's delight
winding down
the falling light
neither vivid nor dark
in the middle
of transitory time
in a state of losing
day, time, light
moments, movements
descending
time is limited
and so is our worldly stay

I step on the prayer mat

I enter Asar salah

Allahu Akbar

Standing

Kneeling

Kissing

the ground

God's glory

is absolute

ϛ. **MAGRIB – the dusk**

On the brink

*the sun sojourns into
night and fading light
luminosity growing dimmer
painting veins of indigo
sapien strokes of most blended colours
on the canvas of today
shuttering close
coming to rest
calm simplicity
a moment of change and chance
the gifts and guises of today*

I step on the prayer mat
I enter Maghrib salah
Allahu Akbar
Standing
Kneeling
Kissing
the ground
God's might
is eternal

◦. **ISHA – the night**
*the moon rolls in mirth
silvery & heavenly light
crooning a little symphony
to the squealing stars
in the dark
dripping in tranquility
listening to my heart
speaking to my mind
stroking my conscience
deeming my wonders
knowing my deepest yearnings
seeking my inner divine nature
permeating into my being
descending to the depth
of my innermost core*

*agony bequeaths depth
ecstasy endows height
I see the light*

I step on the prayer mat

I enter Isha salah

Allahu Akbar

Standing

Kneeling

Kissing

the ground

God's in me

and so it shall be

.....

I begin in prayer

I end in prayer

I am born

with & in

prayer

I will die

with & in

prayer

I see

a pattern

my day keeps

evolving

& revolving

with & in

a circle

and so too

does my salah

Allahu Akbar

I enter

&

re-enter



Figure 2: *Lectio Divina*: spiritual states of ascension [Khan, digital photograph]

Sacred Salah

Bismillah Ar-Rahman Ar-Raheem – بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

in the name of *Allah*
I begin in harmony
with *Divine Presence*
the most gracious
the most merciful
ruby rug oriented on a line with the *Qiblah*

holy house in the desert
standing in humility
in the direction
of the *Kaaba in Mecca*
reacquainting myself with
the earth beneath my feet
on the verge of
motion

rhythm

repetition

submission

I enter *Salah*

*The LECTIO

NIYYAH

raised hands

instruments of prayer
touching the soft of the ear
the foundation resides in the entry of my heart
intention is a tapered door on the holy house
in a state of personal divine service
I intend to pray without ceasing
the act of gazing, uttering, hearing
listening with my passionate ears
I reach concentration
Allahu Akbar

*The MEDITATIO

QIYAM

overlapped hands

lowering my eyes & head
overlapped hands on my chest
standing upright leaps in faith
as lips read & read
pondering upon, dissecting quietness
Centering
unveiling my consciousness
now entering peace
the words are with my eyes
feeling with my heart, my mind, my soul
Allahu Akbar

*The ORATIO

RUKU

Kneeling

grasping my knees
sincerity and humility to God
humility is in God
I bow down and complete submission
showing reverence solely to my Creator
real emancipation sits
in unconditional devotion
effusion of being
created being creative being
my dissociated self
from this world and the hereafter
only
God's word and God's presence
hearing Allah's word within my soul...
an intimate dialogue
you made me me so I could be me
I am grateful
when the heart is alight in trust
&
He surely responds
Allahu Akbar

*The CONTEMPLATIO

SUJOOD

I prostrate

hands and forehead deep into the earth of earths
I feel the highest degree of obedience and servitude
I place on the earth the loftiest part of my body
in the presence of the Omnipotent Authority
I feel You, I came to the world from the dust
&
I will again return to the soil
to be back with you
I belong to You
I am blessed

weeping inside out and outside in
lamentations are saving me from the clutches of sins
an utter wordless contemplation
in a divine mirror
seeing infinite in finite form
divine voice vibrating
unity of divinity-humanity
I feel His tender love and transforming embrace
I raise my head
Resurrection, the Day of Judgment
I will rise up from the 'dust of my tomb'³
and be summoned without end
Allahu Akbar
ascending descending transcending

*The EXIMO

SALAAM

I exit

I depart
in two/into parts
turning right
my right shoulder
first *Salam*
turning left
my left shoulder
second *Salam*
a mount of sanctity
peace & security
mercy & blessings
be upon you
salutation
the recording angels
my deed sheets
re-turning
to the thoroughfare of
being & body
transcending

Transcendence Manifesto

I intend yet my prayer *seeks*
 I begin yet my prayer *enters*
 I view yet my prayer *reads*
 I recite yet my prayer *speaks*
 I utter yet my prayer *reveals*
 I stand yet my prayer *ascends*
 I move yet my prayer *journeys*
 I bow yet my prayer *submits*
 I perform yet my prayer *fulfills*
 I feel yet my prayer *touches*
 I focus yet my prayer *deliberates*
 I realize yet my prayer *enlightens*
 I sense yet my prayer *meditates*
 I face yet my prayer *encounters*
 I cease yet my prayer *captures*
 I ground yet my prayer *heals*
 I finish yet my prayer *completes*
 I rise yet my prayer *transcends*
 I accomplish yet my prayer *conquers*

Prayer _____ re (occurrence) re (formation)
Creator's Creative Creation

What does contemplation mean?

Contemplation, neither a clever engagement nor a crystallized awareness, is “being present- in the moment” and an attentiveness and openness to what is “not yet known” (Walsh, Bickel, & Leggo, 2015, p.1). It is a “momentary glimpse into another world” where “the moon stays bright when it doesn’t avoid the night” (Rumi, n.d-b), such a “glimpse has the potential of rewriting the world” (Fels, 2002, p. 5). It is by solely living on the “edge of chaos” (Taylor & Saarinen, 1994, p. 9), where there is something more than what we experience with our senses.

Reborn
 deep down
 in the ocean
 I can't
 hear

see
touch
taste
smell
speak
at last
I can
breathe
evolving
no senses
writing
no words
sinking
no vibration
I see
a sea
of waves
within
I hear
a tear
of ace
within
in (fusing)
re (turning)
be (coming)
be (longing)
be (ing)
inter (being)
for (ever)
a (live)

I initiate and practice contemplation by distrusting what I already know and believe, by rejecting entitlement, by repressing quest for certitude, by actively stepping into the threatening and unfamiliar, by consciously seeking beauty in broken things, by recognizing haze in light, by finding light in chaos, by accepting messy moments, by feeling peace in clutter, by losing self to uncertainty, by deliberately giving up liberty, by spreading my being flat on the surface of lucid evidences. Finally, by evading my caged body, becoming a formless being, releasing the spiritual person from ready-made testimonies and allowing my flowing breath to fall into a choking beat, I reach “contemplative states of [super]consciousness that include a witnessing

aspect” (Walsh & Bai as cited in Guiney Yallop, 2016, p. 285). I witness collision, interconnectedness and interdependence of body, mind and soul by “suspend[ing] assumptions” and “purposefully delay[ing] conclusions” (Wiebe, 2016 as cited in Sameshima, Miyakawa, & Lockett, 2017, p.48). In witnessing the “collision of light and life” (Keshavaraz, 2006, p.112), I experience the mergence and emergence of the “infinite relational resonance” (Neilsen Glenn, 2010, p.6). I intuit the loss of my sense of rational self in the sea of divine love, I synch self and soul with relativity and feel recomposed. I begin to comprehend the melody of relativity of my body, mind, heart, soul, people, and the world in which I exist. I intend and begin to think rhythmically, pray mystically, and “live poetically” (Leggo, 2005). I engage in being an interbeing, and I exist with energy. The paroxysm of prayer, mysterious sign of recognition, “the beat and the pulse of the heart, the inhaling of the breath” (Khan, 1994, p.74), the exhaling of the words and verses, and the synergy and symbiosis of the creature and creator, drifts me toward “the perpetual and elusive process of [being], [interbeing] [and] becoming” (Gide, 1970, p. 197). This quality of self-awareness and heightened reflexivity expands and extends the boundaries of my being and interbeing to live well for existence and coexistence through “working towards the cessation of suffering for all beings” (Sameshima, et. al, 2017, p.49). My contemplative exercises of *Salah* move upwards and downwards and inwards and outwards; they run in lightness and darkness, and echo in silence and noise; they emanate an uncertain but peaceful awareness-mindfulness. In attuning to this seamless unity of the moment and movement of my spiritual flight, I become indifferent to earthly affairs through experiencing both the “unification of will and feeling, and unification of [divine] essence” (Corbin, 1969, p. 109).

Contemplation galvanizes a unification of epiphanic moment, theophanic imagination, divine response, mystical rhythm, and eternal benevolence. I had always searched for contemplation in quietness, stillness, shadow and shade and with a high attentiveness to run away from both inner and outer noises, but my repeated *Salah* practices taught me that contemplation is a melody of an action not peace. Contemplation is an act of being in a “state of perpetual ascension” (Corbin, 1969, p. 206) where ascending movement of renewed and recurrent creation never ceases. By juxtaposing my inner noise to outer roars, I hear the ultimate sound –

no vibration.

Notes

¹Sufi cited in Corbin, 1969, p. 251.

²Sufi cited in Corbin, 1969, p. 251.

³Corbin, 1969, p. 283.

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