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## Contemplation of the Light of Silence (*ṣamt*) as the Star of Negation (*salb*) rises

In the Name of God,  
the Compassionate, the Merciful

The Real made me contemplate the light of silence as the star of negation<sup>1</sup> rose, and He made me speechless. [However], there did not remain a single place in the whole universe where my word was not inscribed, nor was there any writing which did not come from my substance<sup>2</sup> and my dictation.

Then He said to me, “Silence is your essential reality.”

“Silence is nothing other than you, although it does not belong to you.”

“If you made ‘the silent’<sup>3</sup> your object of worship, you would be following those who worshipped the calf<sup>4</sup> and you would be amongst the worshippers of the sun and the moon.<sup>5</sup> But if ‘the silent’ is not the object of your worship, then you are Mine and not its [servant].”

Then He said to me, “I created you with speech which is the essential reality of your silence, so that, although you speak, you are silent.”

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“Through you I speak, through you I give, through you I take, through you I expand,<sup>6</sup> through you I contract, through you I see, through you I give existence and through you I am known.”

“For you I speak, for you I give, for you I take, for you I expand and for you I contract, for you I am visible, for you I am given existence and for you I am made known.”

Then He said to me, “You are the place of My seeing and you are My attribute.<sup>7</sup> So do not speak except when I look at you. I look at you constantly, so address the people continuously but do not speak.”

“My silence is the exterior of your existence and your being.”

“If I had remained silent, *you* would not exist; if *you* had spoken, I would not have been known. Speak, then, so that I may be known.”

Then He said to me, “The *alif* is silent<sup>8</sup> whilst the letters speak. The *alif* articulates the letters, but the letters do not articulate the *alif*.<sup>9</sup> The letters are regulated by the *alif* and the *alif* accompanies them always, without their realizing.”

“The letters are Moses<sup>10</sup> and the *alif* is the staff.”<sup>11</sup>

Then He said to me, “Your existence is in silence and your non-existence in articulation.”

“Whoever is silent is not silent; rather, whoever is not silent is silent.”

“Whether you speak or are silent you are speaking,<sup>12</sup> and even if you spoke for evermore through all eternity, you would remain in silence.”

“If you remain silent, everything will be guided by you and if you speak, everything will go astray through you. Rise beyond and you will discover.”



## Contemplation 5

### Notes

- 1 “Silence (*samt*) is a negative attribute.” (IS)
- 2 *Mādda*, “matter”, is from the same root as *midād*, “ink”.
- 3 “The silent” (*al-ṣāmit*) is that which is not endowed with speech. This is an allusion to the idols and their inability to reply.
- 4 An allusion to the people of Moses who worshipped the golden calf when Moses hurried away to meet his Lord. “The people of Moses made from their trinkets, in his absence, the image of a calf which lowed.” (Q.7: 148)
- 5 In alchemical symbolism, the sun corresponds to gold and the moon to silver. The people of the sun and the moon are, in this sense, those whose objects of worship are gold and silver, that is, transient accidents and everything that is not God. (IS)
- 6 “Through you I expand” is omitted from the Manisa manuscript but is included in MSS. B and J.
- 7 That is “My sight”, one of the seven attributes of the divinity. See Contemplation 9, n. 29.
- 8 “This means that the *alif* is not one of the articulated or voiced letters.” (IS) See Contemplation 3, n. 29.
- 9 The *alif* is implicitly present in all the letters, since the letters, when they are pronounced, are a discontinuous flow of air, whilst the *alif* is a continuous flow, without any determined limit. One could say that by articulating the *alif* (the flow of expired air) at the points of articulation, thereby segmenting it, the various letters are manifested. (IS) See Contemplation 11, n. 1.
- 10 That is, the letters are articulated. Moses represents the articulation of speech, since in the Quran he is called *kalīm Allāh*, “the one who speaks with God”. See Q. 4: 164; also Exodus 34: 5.
- 11 That is, the *alif* is not pronounced. According to Ibn ‘Arabī, the staff symbolizes silence because it is “silent”. In spite of its silence, the Divine Miracle was manifested in the staff of Moses. Similarly, the sign/verse (*āya*) is in the *alif*, not in the letters, since only God can produce an effect. (IS) See Q. 2: 60.
- 12 “Due to the manifestation of the meanings which arise from you.” (IS)