

96. *It's you*

A Muslim student came to see me. He had read one of the issues of *Cahier sur L'oraison*, and wanted to meet me. At the end of our conversation he told me, with exquisite courtesy, that he wanted to leave a Muslim legend with me in remembrance of his visit, and as a sign of his gratitude. And he added, "I'm sure you will like it very much."

Actually, I like this legend so much, that my entire letter to you today will consist in acquainting you with it.

One night a lover, filled with audacity and the spirit of conquest, knocked at the door of his beloved. She asked, "Who's there?" He answered, "It's I." She refused to open and said harshly, "Go away!"

With wild rage, the young man went off swearing that he would forget her, and that in fact he had already forgotten her. He traveled over the wide expanse of the world. But he could not forget. And love brought him back irresistibly to his beloved's door. There was the same dialogue as before. However, this time, when she sent him away, she added a mysterious little sentence: "You have still not said the only word that would permit me to open to you."

Indignant, baffled and crushed, the young man went off again. This time he didn't go off to seek forgetfulness in journeys to distant lands. He went down into solitary gorges, to spend long hours in meditation. Gradually, his anger and passion gave way to wisdom. His love gained in depth what it had lost in violence. After many years, it led our lover back again, this time timid, humble, and more ardent than ever, towards his beloved. He knocked discreetly at her door. "Who is there?" In a low tone of voice he answered, "It's YOU." And immediately the door was thrown open.

My Muslim visitor made no comments on his legend. Indeed, what need was there for that? It is as clear as a running stream. To engage in mental prayer is to knock at the door behind which the great life of God is ablaze, resplendent with light, love and joy. When the person who knocks is stripped of self, and has surrendered all the room in his soul to the Lord, he can say in all truth: "It's You." Then the door opens to the long-desired union with God.