

## 1. أَلْفَاتِحَة Al-Fatiha: Opening Instruction

Cui dono lepidum novum libellum . . . ?

πάντες ἄνθρωποι τοῦ εἰδέναι ὀρέγονται φύσει.

**O**PEN, BOOK, open to the reader — *wide!*  
and let the peace lodged longing in each heart  
be burning in these pages ranged, and guide  
all yearning for the universe to start.  
As god creates us through the Word to know,  
be known! let faith emblazed these pages hint;  
cessation of all disconnections show;  
and friendly pure and fleshy passions, print.

LET ALL COMPANIONS, “gay” and “straight,” rich, poor,  
whatever race, male and female, young, old  
(let those alone especially) adore  
the god who only with one’s love is told.  
Inflate! ignite, Each Page, with your turning;  
inflame the god within who brings all burning!

**Al-Fatiha** (The Opening) is the name of the opening surah (chapter) in the Holy Qur’an. Used in daily devotions, its place in Muslim practice can be compared with Christians’ Lord’s Prayer, The [1979] Book of Common Prayer, p364. The EPIGRAPH is from the first of the *Carmina* by Catullus: To whom do I send this fresh, elegant little book . . . ? **E2**: the opening of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*: All humans by their nature want to know. **Yearning**: a Hadith-i Qudsi (Makatib-i Abdu’l-Baha, vol 2, Cairo, 1330, 2-55) has God saying, “I was a hidden treasure and I yearned to be known. Then I created creatures in order to be known by them.” The sonnet also alludes to John 1:1: “In the beginning was the **Word**, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” But words are not the Word; Rumi → «The Sun» wrote that God wants not fine phrases but rather “**burning**” — a contrast with Buddhism’s nirvana, which means, in effect, “no burning.” In *Fihi maffi*, Baldock, p49, Rumi wrote, “Words are useful because they stimulate you and set you searching, but what you are searching for cannot be attained through words” → «The Sun». **Cessation of all disconnections**: In *Sacred Sexuality*, 1992, p197, Georg Feuerstein writes of experiencing “reality not as a conglomerate of spatial solids but as an infinite web of energy that manifests the miracle of our familiar space-time world.” **God**: → § Introduction ¶5, → «Content». **Open** means candid, beginning, inviting, accessible. **Instruction** means direction, lesson. **Pure and fleshy passions**: See Oxford theologian Graham Ward, *Cities of God*, 2000/2001, p151: “If the Church is to speak in and to the present *Zeitgeist*, then it must recover its deliberations of desire and articulate again its theology of eros.” **Δ** This first of 154 sonnets is paired with the last.