

MYSTERIES OF THE SELFLESSNESS

Strive, and find yourself in selflessness; this is the easy path, may God know better.¹

Rumi

Dedication to the Muslim Community

Question me not when I speak of Love. If I may not have tasted this wine, someone else must have.

Urfi of Shiraz

You, who were made by God to be the Seal
Of all the peoples dwelling upon earth,
That all beginnings might in you find end;
Whose saints were prophet-like, whose
 wounded hearts
Wove into unity the souls of men;
Why are you fallen now so far astray
From Makkah's holy Ka'ba, all bemused
By the strange beauty of the Christian's way?
The very skies are but a gathering
Of your street's dust, yourselves the cynosure
Of all men's eyes; whither in restless haste
Do you now hurry like a storm-tossed wave,
What new diversion seeking? No, but learn
The mystery of ardour from the moth
And make your lodgement in the burning
 flame;
Lay love's foundation-stone in your own soul,
And to the Prophet pledge anew your troth.
My mind was weary of Christian company,
When suddenly your beauty stood unveiled.
My fellow-minstrel sang the epiphany
Of alien loveliness, the lovelorn theme

¹ Arberry omitted the quotations from Rumi and Urfi. They have been translated separately for the present edition.

Of stresses and soft cheeks, and rubbed his
 brow
Against the saki's door, rehearsed the chant
Of Magian wenches. I would martyr be
To your brow's scimitar, am fain to rest
Like dust upon your street. Too proud am I
To mouth base panegyrics, or to bow
My stubborn head to every tyrant's court.
Trained up to fashion mirrors out of words,
I need not Alexander's magic glass.
My neck endures not men's magic glass.
My neck endures not men's munificence;
Where roses bloom, I gather close the skirt
Of my soul's bud. Hard as the dagger's steel
I labour in this life, my lustre win
From the tough granite. Though I am a sea,
Not restless is my billow; in my hand
I hold no whirlpool bowl. A painted veil
Am I, no blossom's perfume-scattering,
No prey to every billowing breeze that blows.
I am glowing coal within Life's fire,
And wrap me in my embers for a cloak.
And now my soul comes suppliant to your
 door
Bringing a gift of ardour passionate.
A mighty water out of heaven's deep
Momently trickles 'er my burning breast,
The which I channel narrower than a brook
That I may fling it in your garden's dish.
Because you are beloved by him I love
I fold you to me closely as my heart.
Since love first made the breast an instrument
Of fierce lamenting, by its flame my heart
Was molten to a mirror; like a rose
I pluck my breast apart, that I may hang
This mirror in your sight. Gaze you therein

4 *Collected Poetical Works of Iqbal*

On your own beauty, and you shall become
A captive fettered in your tress' chain.
I chant again the tale of long ago,
To bid your bosom's old wounds bleed anew.
So for a people no more intimate
With its own soul I supplicated God,
That He might grant to them a firm-knit life.
In the mid-swath of night, when all the
world
Was hushed in slumber, I made loud lament;
My spirit robbed of patience and response,
Unto the Living and Omnipotent God
I made my litany; my yearning heart
Surged, till its blood streamed from my
weeping eyes.
"How long, O lord, how long the tulip-glow,
The begging of cool dewdrops from the
dawn?
Lo, like a candle wrestling with the night
O'er my own self I pour my flooding tears."
I spent myself, that there might be more light,
More loveliness, more joy for other men.
Not for one moment takes my ardent breast
Repose from burning; Friday does not shame
My restless week of unremitting toil.
Wasted is now my spirit's envelop;
My glowing sigh is sullied all with dust.
When God created me at Time's first dawn
A lamentation quivered on the strings
Of my melodious lute, and in that note
Loves's secrets stood revealed, the ransom-
price
Of the long sadness of the tale of Love;
Which music even to sapless straw imparts
The ardency of fire, and on dull clay
Bestows the daring of the reckless moth.
Love, like the tulip, has one brand at heart,
And on its bosom wears a singly rose;
And so my solitary rose I pin
Upon your turban, and cry havoc loud
Against your drunken slumber, hoping yet
Tulips may blossom from your earth anew
Breathing the fragrance of the breeze of
Spring.

*Prelude: Of the bond between individual
and community*

The link that binds the individual
To the Society a mercy is;
His truest self in the community
Alone achieves fulfilment. Wherefore be
So far as in thee lies in close rapport
With thy Society, and lustre bring
To the wide intercourse of free-born men.
Keep for thy talisman these words he spoke
That was the best of mortals: "Satan holds
His furthest distance where men congregate."
The individual a mirror holds
To the community, and they to him;
He is a jewel threaded on their cord,
A star that in their constellation shines;
And the Society is organized
As by comprising many such as he.
When in the Congregation he is list
'Tis like a drop which, seeking to expand,
Becomes an ocean. It is strong and rich
In ancient ways, a mirror to the Past
As to the Future, and the link between
What is to come, and what has gone before,
As is Eternity. The joy of growth
Swells in his heart from the community,
That watches and controls his every deed;
To them he owes his body and his soul,
Alike his outward and his hidden parts.
His thoughts are vocal on the People's
tongue,
And on the pathway that his forbears laid
He learns to run. His immaturity
Is warmed to ripeness by their friendship's
flame,
Till he becomes one with the Commonwealth.
His singleness in multiplicity
Is firm and stable, and itself supplies
A unity to their innumerate swarm.
The word that sits outside its proper verse
Shatters the jewel of the thought concealed
Within its pocket; when the verdant leaf
Falls from the stem, its thread of hope for
Spring
Is snapped asunder. He who has not drunk
The water of the People's sacred well,
The flames of minstrelsy within his lute

Grow cold, and die. The individual,
Alone, is heedless of high purposes;
His strength is apt to dissipate itself;
The People only make him intimate
With discipline, teach him to be as soft
And tractable as is the gentle breeze,
Set him in earth like a well-rooted oak,
Close-fetter him, to make him truly free.
When he is prisoner to the chain of Law
His deer, by nature wild and uncontrolled,
Yields in captivity the precious musk.

Thou, who hast not known self from
selflessness,
Therefore hast lost thyself in vain surmise,
Within thy dust there is an element
Of Light, whose single shaft illuminates
Thy whole perception; all thy joy derives
From its enjoyment, all thy sorrow springs
From its distress; its constant change and turn
Keep thee in vital being. It is one
And, being one, brooks no duality;
Grace to its glow I am myself, thou thou.
Preserving self, staking and making self,
Nourishing pride in meek humility,
It is a flame that sets a fire alight,
A spark that overshoots the blazing torch.
Its nature is to be both free and bond;
Itself a part, it has the potency
To seize the whole. I have beheld its wont
Is strife incessant, and have called its name
Selfhood, and Life. Whenever it comes forth
From its seclusion, and discreetly steps
Into the riot of phenomena
Its heart is impressed with the stamp of "he",
"I" is dissolved, converting into "thou".
Compulsion cuts the freedom of its choice,
Making it rich in love. While pride of self
Pulls its own way, humility is not born;
Pull pride together, and humility
Comes into being. self negates itself
In the community, that it maybe
No more a petal, but a rosary.
"These subtleties are like a steely sword:
If they defeat thy wit, quick, flee away!"²

*That the community is made up of the
mingling of individuals, and owes the
perfecting of its education to prophethood*

Upon what manner man is bound to man:
That tale's a thread, the end whereof is lost
Beyond unraveling. We can descry
The individual within the Mass,
And we can pluck him as a flower is plucked
Out of the garden. All his nature is
Entranced with individuality,
Yet only in Society he finds
Security and preservation. On
The road of life, the furnace of life's fire,
That roaring battlefield, sets him aflame.
Men grow habituated each to each,
Like jewels threaded on a single cord;
Succors each other in the war of life
In mutual bond, like workmen bent upon
A common task. Through such polarity
The constellations congregate, each star
In several attraction keeping each
Poised firmly and unshaken. Caravans
May pitch their tents on mountain or on hill,
Broad meadow, fringe of desert, sandy
mound.
Yet slack and lifeless hangs the warp and
woof
Of the Group's labour, unresolved the bud
Of its deep meditation, still unplayed
The flickering levin of its instrument,
Its music hushed within its muted strings,
Unsmitten by the pounding of the quest,
The plectrum of desire; disordered still
Its new-born concourse, and so thin its wine
As to be blotted up with cotton flock;
New-sprung the verdure of its soil, and cold
The blood in its vine's veins; a habitat
Of demons and of fairy sprites its thoughts,
So that it leaps in terror from the shapes
Conjured by its own surmise; shrunk the
scope
Of its crude life, its narrow thoughts confined
Beneath the rim of its constricting roof;
Fear for its life the meagre stock-in-trade
Of its constituent elements; its heart
Trembling before the whistle of the wind;

² The quotation is from Rumi.

Its spirit shies away from arduous toil,
Little disposed to pluck at Nature's skirt,
But whatsoever springs of its own self
Or falls from heaven, that it gathers up.
Till God discovers a man pure of heart
In His good time, who in a single word
A volume shall rehearse; a minstrel he
Whose piercing music gives new life to dust.
Through him the unsubstantial atom glows
Radiant with life, the meanest merchandise
Takes on new worth. Out of his single breath
Two hundred bodies quicken; with one glass
He livens an assembly. His bright glance
Slays, but forthwith his single uttered word
Bestows new life, that so Duality
Expiring, Unity may come to birth.
His thread, whose end is knotted to the skies,
Weaves all together life's dis severed parts.
Revealing a new vista to the gaze,
He can convert broad desert and bare vale
Into a garden. At his fiery breath
A people leap like rue upon a fire
In sudden tumult, in their heart one spark
Caught from his kindling, and their sullen
clay
Breaks instantly aflame. Where'er he treads
The earth receiving vision, every mote
May wink the eye at Moses' Sinai.
The naked understanding he adorns,
With wealth abundant fills its indigence,
Fans with his skirts its embers, purifies
Its gold of every particle of dross.
He strikes the shackles from the fettered
slave,
Redeems him from his masters, and declares,
"No other's slave thou art, nor any less
Than those mute idols." So unto one goal
Drawing each on, he circumscribes the feet
Of all within the circle of one Law,
Reschools them in God's wondrous Unity,
And teaches them the habit and the use
Of self-surrender to the Will Divine.

The pillars of Islam

First pillar: the Unity of God

The Mind, astray in this determinate world,
First found the pathway to this distant goal

By faith in God the One; what other home
Should bring the hapless wanderer to rest?
Upon what other shore should Reason's
barque
Touch haven? All men intimate with truth
The secrets of the Godhead have by heart,
Which is implicit in the sacred words
He comes unto the Merciful, a slave.
In action let faith's potency be tried,
That it may guide thee to thy secret powers:
From it derive religion, wisdom, law,
Unfailing vigour, power, authority.
Its splendour doth amaze the learned mind,
But giveth unto lovers force to act;
The lowly in its shadow reacheth high,
And worthless earth becomes like alchemy
Precious beyond compute. Its mighty force
Chooseth the slave, whereof it doth create
Another species; sprightlier he treads
Upon the path of truth, and in his veins
The blood burns hotter than the lightning's
shaft.
Fear dies, and doubt; toil is new vitalized;
The vision sees the inner mystery
Of all creation. When in servanthood
To God man's foot is established, beggary's
bowl
Becomes the magic cup that Jamshid bore.
*There is no god but God: this is the soul
And body of our Pure Community,
The pitch that keeps our instrument in tune,
The very substance of our mysteries,
The knotted thread that bids our scattered
thoughts.*
And when these words, being uttered on the
lips,
Reach to the heart, they do augment the
power
Of life itself; graven upon the rock,
They wake a heart therein; but if the heart
Burns not with the remembrance of that faith
It doth convert to clay. When we inflamed
The hearts within us with the passionate glow
Of this belief, we set ablaze the barn
Of all contingency with but a sigh.
This is the lustre glittering in the hearts
Of men, those steely mirrors liquefied

By Faith's consuming flame, whose torch is
 like
 A tulip in our veins, and so we bear
 No other mark of glory but its brand.
 Through this true Faith black man becomes as
 red,
 Kinsman to Omar, aye, and Abu Dharr.
 The heart's a lodge to self and the Not-self,
 And passion quickens when the cup is shared;
 When several hearts put on a single hue
 That is community, which Sinai
 Grows radiant in one epiphany.
 Peoples must have one thought, and in their
 minds
 Pursue a single purpose; to one draw
 Their temperaments respond, one testing-
 stone
 Discriminates their hideous from their fair.
 Unless the instrument of thought possess
 The fire of truth, it is impossible
 Its range can be so wide. We Muslims are,
 Children of Abraham, which fact is proved
 (If proof thou seekest) by *Your father he*.
 Though nations' destinies their lands control,
 Though nations build their edifice on race,
 Thinkest thou the community is based
 Upon the Country? Shall so much regard
 Be blindly paid to water, air and earth?
 It is dull ignorance to put one's boast
 In lineage; that judgment rests upon
 The body, and the body perishes.
 Other are the foundations that support
 Islam's Community; they lie concealed
 Within our hearts. We, who are present now,
 Have bound our hearts to Him who is unseen,
 And therefore are delivered from the chains
 Of earthly things. The cord that links this folk
 Is like the thread which keeps the stars in
 place,
 And, as the sight itself, invisible.
 Well-pointed arrows of one quiver are we,
 One showing, one beholding, one in thought;
 One is our goal and purpose, one the form,
 The fashion, and the measure of our dream.
 Thanks to His blessings, we are brothers all
 Sharing one speech, one spirit and one heart.

*That despair, grief and fear are the mother of
 abominations, destroying life; and that belief in the
 Unity of God puts an end to those foul diseases*

The amputation of desire condemns
 To Death; Life rests secure on the behest
Do not despair. Desire continuing
 The substance is of hope, while hopelessness
 Poisons the very blood of life. Despair
 Presses thee down, a tombstone on thy heart,
 And, though thou be as high as Alond's
 mount,
 It casts thee down; impotence is the slave
 Of its poor favours, unambition hangs
 Upon its skirts. Despair lulls life asleep,
 And proves the langour of its element;
 The spirit's eye is blinded by the smear
 Of its collyrium, and brightest day
 Transformed to pitchy night; life's faculties
 Die at its breath, Life's springs are all dried
 up.
 Despair and Sorrow sleep beneath one quilt;
 Grief, like a lancet, pierces the soul's vein.
 O thou who art a prisoner of care,
 Learn from the Prophet's message, *Do not
 grieve!*
 This lesson fortified with trusty faith
 The heart of Abu Bakr, and with the cup
 Of blessed certitude rejoiced his soul.
 The Muslim, well content with God's good
 grace,
 Is like a star, and goes upon his way
 Smiling. If thou acknowledgest a God,
 Shake free from sorrow, and deliver thee
 From vain imaging of Fortune's turns.
 Life more abundant strength of faith bestows.
No fear shall be upon them: let this be
 Constantly on thy lips. When Moses strides
 Before the Pharaoh, steadfast is his heart
 As he remembereth *Thou shalt not fear*.
 Fear, save of God, is the dire enemy
 Of Works, the highwayman that plundereth
 Life's caravan. Purpose most resolute.
 When fear attends, thinks upon what may be,
 And lofty zeal to circumspection yields.
 Or let its seed be sown within thy soil,
 Life remains stunted of its full display.
 Feeble its nature is, and well accords.

With heart a-tremble and with palsied hand.
Fear robs the foot of strength to rove abroad,
And filches from the brain the power of
thought.

Thy enemy, observing thee afraid,
Will pluck thee from thy bower like a bloom;
Stronger will be the impact of his swords,
His very glance transfix thee like a knife.
Fear is a chain that fetters close our feet,
A hundred torrents roaring in our sea.
And if thy melody not freely soars,
Fear has relaxed the tension of thy strings;
Then twist the pegs that keep thy lute in tune,
And hear its music mount into the skies
In unrestrained and passionate lament.
Fear is a spy sent from the clime of Death,
Its spirit dark and chill as Death's own heart;
Its eye wreaks havoc in the realm of Life,
Its ear's a thief of Life's intelligence.
Whatever evil lurks within thy heart
Thou canst be certain that its origin
Is fear: fraud, cunning, malice, lies – all these
Flourish on terror, who is wrapped about
With falsehood and hypocrisy for veil,
And fondles foul sedition at her breast.
And since it is least strong when zeal is high,
It is most happy in disunion.
Who understands the Prophet's clue aright
Sees infidelity concealed in fear.

Conversation of the arrow and the sword

How truthfully the well-notched arrow spoke
Unto the sword in heat of battleide:
"What magic lustre glitters in thy steel
Like fairy dancers in the Caucasus?
Thou, who canst boast in thy long ancestry
Of Ali's trusty weapon, *Dhul-Faqar*;
Who hast beheld the might of Khalid's arm,
Sprinkled red sunset on the head of night –
Thine is the fire of God's omnipotence,
And neath thy shadow Paradise awaits.
Whether I wing in air, or lie encased
Within the quiver, wheresoe'er I be
I am all fire. When from the bow I speed
Towards a human breast, right well I see
Into its depth, and if it do not hold
A heart unflawed, unvisited by thoughts
Of terror or despair, swiftly my point

Plucks it asunder, and I spread it o'er
With surging gore for shift. But if that breast
Serenely throb with a believer's heart
And glow reflective to an inward light,
My soul is turned to water by its flame,
My shafts fall soft as the innocuous dew."

Emperor Alamgir and the tiger

Shah Alamgir, that high and mighty king,
Pride and renown of Gurgan Timur's line,
In whom Islam attained a loftier fame
And wider honour graced the Prophet's Law,
He the last arrow to our quiver left
In the affray of Faith with Unbelief;
When that the impious seed of heresy,
By Akbar nourished, sprang and sprouted
fresh
In Dara's soul, the candle of the heart
Was dimmed in every breast, no more secure
Against corruption our community
Continued; then God chose from India
That humble-minded warrior, Alamgir,
Religion to revive, faith to renew.
The lightning of his sword set all ablaze
The harvest of impiety; faith's torch
Once more its radiance o'er our counsels
shed.
Many the tales misguided spirits told,
Blind to the breadth of his percipient mind;
He was a moth that ever beat its wings
About the candle-flame of Unity,
An Abraham in India's idol-house.
In all the line of kings he stands alone;
His tomb is witness to his saintliness.

One day that ornament of crown and throne,
That lord of battle, saint and emperor,
Set forth into the jungle with the dawn
Attended by one faithful follower;
Exultant in the joyous breath of morn,
Birds sang their hymns to God on every tree.
The conscient king became absorbed in
prayer,
Striking his tent from this contingent world
To pitch it in the realm of truth sublime.
A tiger at that instant from the plain
Suddenly sprang; heaven trembled at his roar;
Scenting afar the presence of a man,

He leaped on Alamgir, and smote his loins.
The king, unviewing, drew his dagger forth
And rent the belly of the furious beast;
His heart admitting not a thought of fear,
He stretched the tiger prostrate at his feet,
Then sped again impatiently to God
Mounting prayer's ladder to his heavenly
throne.

A heart so humble and at once so proud
No other lodge but the believer's breast
Possesses; for the servitor of Truth
Is naught before his Master, but stand firm
Against Untruth, and positive indeed.
Thou too, O ignorant man, take such a heart
Into thy hold; let it a litter be
Wherein immortal Beauty may be borne.
Stake self, to win self back; spread out the
snare
Of supplication, glory to entrap;
Let Love set fire to pale Anxiety;
Be thou God's fox, to learn the tiger's trade
The fear of God faith's only preface is,
All other fear is secret disbelief.

Second pillar: Apostleship

Abraham, friend of God, *loved not the things
That set;* and lo, his footprint was a guide
To all successive prophets. He, the sign
And witness to the everlasting Lord,
Yearned in his heart for a *Community,*
And from his sleepless eyes the flood of tears
Unceasing flowed until the message came,
Cleanse thou My House. Then for our sake *he
made*
A desert populous, and founded there
A temple whither pilgrims might process.
And when the stem of *turn thou unto us*
Burst into bud, the tillage of our Spring
Took visible shape; God fashioned forth our
form
And through Apostleship breathed in our
flesh
The soul of life. We were a word unvoiced
Within this world, that by Apostleship
Became a measured verse; and that same
grace
Both shaped our being, gave us Faith and
Law,

Converted our vast myriads into one,
And joined our fractions in a mighty whole
Inseparable, indivisible.
He, who is pleased to *guide whomso he will,*
Made of Apostleship a magic ring
To draw around us; the community
A circle is, whose great circumference
Centers on Makkah's valley; and by force
And virtue of that same relationship
Stands our community unshakable,
Tidings of mercy to the world entire.
Out of that sea we surge, nor break apart
Like scattering waves; its people, closely
fenced
Within the ramparts of that holy soil,
Roar loud as jungle lions. If thou look
To prove the truth that lies within my words,
Gazing with Abu Bakr's voracious eyes,
The Prophet, power and strength of soul and
heart,
Becometh more beloved than God Himself.
His book is reinforcement to the hearts
Of all believers; through his wisdom flows
The lifeblood of the whole community;
To yield his garment's hem is death – the rose
So withers at the blast of Autumn's wind.
His was the breath that gave the people life;
His sun shone glory on their risen dawn.
In God the individual, in him
Lives the community, in his sun's rays
Resplendent ever; his Apostleship
Brought concord to our purpose and our goal.
A common aim shared by the multitude
Is unity which when it is mature,
Forms the community; the many live
Only by virtue of the single bond.
The Muslim's unity from natural faith
Derives, and this the Prophet taught to us,
So that we lit a lantern on Truth's way.
This pearl was fished from his unfathomed
sea,
And of his bounty we are one in soul.
Let not this unity go from our hands,
And we endure to all eternity.
God set the seal of holy Law on us,
As in our Prophet all Apostleship
Is sealed. The concourse of unending days
Is radiant in our lustre; he was Seal

To all Apotles, to all People we.
 The service of Truth's winebearer is left
 With us; he gave to us his final glass.
No Prophet after me is of God's grace,
 And veil the modest beauty of the Faith
 Muhammad brought to men. The people's
 strength
 All rest in this, that still the secret guards
 Of how the Faith's Community is one.
 Almighty God has shattered every shape
 Carved by imposture, and for evermore
 Stitched up the sacred volume of Islam.
 The Muslim keeps his heart from all but God
 And shouts abroad, *No people after me.*

*That the purpose of Muhammad's mission was to
 found Freedom, Equality and Brotherhood among
 all mankind*

Throughout the world man worshipped
 tyrant man,
 Despised, neglected, insignificant;
 Caesar and Chosroes, highwaymen
 enthroned,
 Fettered and chained their subjects, hand and
 foot.
 High Priest and Pope, Sultan and Prince—for
 one
 Poor prey a hundred huntsmen took the field;
 The sceptred monarch and the surpliced
 priest
 Each claimed his tribute from the wasted
 fields;
 The bishop, eager for this abject game,
 Bartered God's pardon with the penitent.
 The Brahman from his garden raped his
 blooms,
 The Magian fed his harvest to the fire.
 Serfdom debased man's nature; while his reed
 Throbbled with therenody of his heart's blood.
 Until one faithful reassigned their rights
 To those whose rights they were, the
 Khaqan's throne
 Delivering into his subjects' hand;
 Fanned their dead embers into flame anew;
 Raised up Farhad, poor hewer of the rocks.
 To Parwiz' royal height; brought dignity
 To honest toil, and robbed the taskmasters
 Of tyrant overlordship. By his might

He shattered every ancient privilege,
 And built new walls to fortify mankind.
 He breathed fresh life in Adam's weary
 bones,
 Redeemed the slave from bondage, set him
 free.
 His birth was mortal to the ancient world,
 Death to the temples of idolatry.
 Freedom was born out of his holy heart;
 His vineyard flowed with that delightful
 wine.
 The world's new age, its hundred lamps
 ablaze,
 Opened its eyes upon his living breast.
 He drew on Being's page the new design,
 Brought into life a race of conquerors,
 A people deaf to every voice but God's,
 A moth devoted to Muhammad's flame;
 The fire of God was glowing in the brilliance
 Of the Sun's sanctuary. His fervour flushed
 Creation all with joy; new Ka'bahs rose
 Where China's temples once with idols stood.
 And in the order of his chivalry
 They were *most noble who feared God the best.*
Believers all are brothers in his heart,
 Freedom the sum and substance of his flesh.
 Impatient with discriminations all,
 His soul was pregnant with Equality.
 Therefore his sons stand up erect and free
 As the tall cypresses, the ancient pledge
 In him renewing, *Yea, thou art our Lord.*
 Prostration unto God had marked his brow;
 The Moon and stars bow down to kiss his
 feet.

*The Story of Bu Ubaid and Jaban, in illustration of
 Muslim Brotherhood*

A certain general of kind Yazdajerd
 Became a Muslim's captive in the wars;
 A Guebre he was, inured to every trick
 Of fortune, crafty, cunning, full of guile.
 He kept his captor ignorant of his rank
 Nor told him who he was, or what his name,
 But said, "I beg that you will spare my life
 And grant to me the quarter Muslims gain."
 The Muslim sheathed his sword. "To shed thy
 blood,"
 He cried, "were impious and forbidden sin."

When Kaveh's banner had rent to shreds,
 The fire of Sasan's sons turned all to dust,
 It was disclosed the captive Jaban was,
 Supreme commander of the Persian host.
 Then was his fraud reported, and his blood
 Petitioned of the Arab general;
 But Bu Ubaid, famed leader of the ranks
 From far Hijaz, who needed not the aid
 Of armies to assist his bold resolve
 In battletide, thus answered their request.
 "Friend, we are Muslims, strings upon one
 lute
 And of one concord. Ali's voice attunes
 With Abu Dharr's, although the throat be that
 Of Qanbar or Bilal. Each one of us
 Is trustee to the whole community
 And one with it, in malice or in truce.
 As the community is the sure base
 On which the individual rests secure,
 So is its covenant his sacred bond.
 Though Jaban was a foeman to Islam,
 A Muslim granted him immunity;
 His blood, O followers of the best of men,
 May not be spilled by any Muslim sword."

*The story of Sultan Murad and the architect, in
 illustration of Muslim Equality*

An architect there was, that in Khojand
 Was born, a famous craftsman of his kind,
 Worthy to be an offspring of Farhad.
 Sultan Murad commanded him to build
 A mosque, the which pleased not his majesty,
 So that he waxed right furious at his faults.
 The baleful fire flared in the ruler's eyes;
 Drawing his dagger, he cut off the hand
 Of that poor wretch, so that the spurting
 blood
 Gushed from his forearm. In such hapless
 plight
 He came before the *qazi*, and retold
 The tyrants's felony, that had destroyed
 The cunning hand which shaped the granite
 rock.
 "O thou whose words a message are of
 Truth,"
 He cried, "whose toil it is to keep alive
 Muhammad's Law, I am no ear-bored slave
 Patient to wear the ring of monarchs' might.

Determine my appeal by the Quran!"
 The upright *cadi* bit his lips in ire
 And summoned to his court the unjust king
 Who, hearing the Quran invoked, turned pale
 With awe, and came like any criminal
 Before the judge, his eyes cast down in shame,
 Is cheeks as crimson as the tulip's glow.
 On one side stood the appellant, and on one
 The high exalted emperor, who spoke.
 "I am ashamed of this that I have wrought
 And make confession of my grievous crime."
 "In retribution" quoth the judge, "is life,
 And by that law life finds stability.
 The Muslim slave no less is than free men,
 Nor is the emperor's blood of richer hue
 Than the poor builder's." Listening to these
 words
 Of Holy Writ, Murad shook off his sleeve
 And bared his hand. The plaintiff thereupon
 No Longer could keep silence. "God commands
 Justice and kindness," recited he.
 For God's sake and Muhammad's, he
 declared,
 "I do forgive him." Note the majesty
 Of the Apostle's Law, and how an ant
 Triumphantly outfought a Solomon!
 Before the tribunal of the Quran
 Master and slave are one, the mat of reeds
 Coequal with the throne of rich brocade.

*Concerning Muslim Freedom, and the secret of the
 Tragedy of Kerbala*

Whoever maketh compact with the One
 That is, hath been delivered from the yoke
 Of every idol. Unto love belongs
 The true believer, and Love unto him.
 Love maketh all things possible to us
 Reason is ruthless; Love is even more,
 Purer, and nimbler, and more unafraid.
 Lost in the maze of cause and of effect
 Is Reason; Love strikes boldly in the field
 Of Action. Crafty Reason sets a snare;
 Love overthrows the prey with strong right
 arm.
 Reason is rich in fear and doubt; but Love
 Has firm resolve, faith indissoluble.
 Reason constructs, to make a wilderness;
 Love lays wide waste, to build all up anew.

Reason is cheap, and plentiful as air;
 Love is most scarce to find, and of great price.
 Reason stands firm upon phenomena,
 But Love is naked of material robes.
 Reason says, "Thrust thyself into the fore;"
 Love answers "Try thy heart, and prove
 thyself."
 Reason by acquisition is informed
 Of other; Love is born of inward grace
 And makes account with self. Reason
 declares,
 "Be happy and be prosperous"; Love replies,
 "Become a servant, that thou mayest be free."
 Freedom brings full contentment to Love's
 soul,
 Freedom, the driver of Love's riding-beast.
 Hast thou not heard what things in time of
 war
 Love wrought with lustful Reason? I would
 speak
 Of that great leader of all men who love
 Truly the Lord, that upright cypress-tree
 Of the Apostle's garden, Ali's son,
 Whose father led the sacrificial feast
 That he might prove *a mighty offering*;
 And for that prince of the best race of men
 The Last of the Apostles gave his back
 To ride upon, *a camel passing fair*.
 Crimsoned his blood the cheek of jealous
 Love
 (Which theme adorns my verse in beauty
 bold)
 Who is sublime in our community
 As *Say, the Lord is God* exalts the Book.
 Moses and Pharaoh, Shabbir and Yazid –
 From Life spring these conflicting potencies;
 Truth lives in Shabbir's strength; Untruth is
 that
 Fierce, final anguish of regretful death.
 And when the Caliphate first snapped its
 thread
 From the Quran, in Freedom's throat was
 poured
 A fatal poison, like a rain-charged cloud
 The effulgence of the best of peoples rose
 Out of the West, to spill on Kerbala,
 And in that soil, that desert was before,
 Sowed, as he died, a field of tulip-blood.

There, till the Resurrection, tyranny
 Was evermore cut off; a garden fair
 Immortalizes where his lifeblood surged.
 For Truth alone his blood dripped to the dust,
 Wherefore he has become the edifice
 Of faith in God's pure Unity. Indeed
 Had his ambition been for earthly rule,
 Not so provisioned would he have set forth
 On his last journey, having enemies
 Innumerable as the desert sands,
 Equal his friends in number to God's Name.
 The mystery that was epitomized
 In Abraham and Ishmael through his life
 And death stood forth at last in full revealed.
 Firm as a mountain-chain was his resolve,
 Impetuous, unwavering to its goal
 The Sword is for the glory of the Faith
 And is unsheathed but to defend the Law.
 The Muslim, servant unto God alone
 Before no Pharaoh casteth down his head.
 His blood interpreted these mysteries,
 And waked our slumbering community.
 He drew the sword *There is none other god*
 And shed the blood of them that served the
 lie;
 Inscribing in the wilderness *save God*
 He wrote for all to read the exordium
 Of our salvation. From Husain we learned
 The riddle of the Book, and at his flame
 Kindled our torches. Vanished now from ken
 Damascus might, the splendour of Baghdad,
 Granada's majesty, all lost to mind;
 Yet still the strings he smote within our soul
 Vibrate, still ever new our faith abides
 In his *Allahu Akbar*, Gentle breeze,
 Thou messenger of them that are afar,
 Bear these my tears to lave his holy dust.

*That since the Muhammadan Community
 is founded upon belief in one god and
 apostleship, therefore it is not bounded by
 space*

Our Essence is not bound to any Place;
 The vigour of our wine is not contained
 In any bowl, Chinese and Indian
 Alike the sherd that constitutes our jar,

Turkish and Syrian alike the clay
 Forming our body; neither is our heart
 Of India, or Syria, or Rum,
 Nor any fatherland do we profess
 Except Islam. When pure-descended Ka'ab
 Brought to the Prophet for an offering
 His famed *Banat Su'ad*, whereon he strung
 The night-illuming jewels of his praise,
 And there addressed him as an unsheathed
 sword
Of India, it did not please his heart
 (Being sublimer than high heaven's sphere)
 To be attributed to any clime;
 And so the Prophet answered, "Rather say
A Sword of God, if Truth thou worshippest,
 No other pathway travel but of Truth."
 Full well he knew the mystery of Part
 And Whole, the very dust beneath his feet
 Being the magical collyrium
 Laid on the eyes of all God's messengers;
 And so he spoke to his community,
 "Of all this world of yours, I love alone
Obedient hearts, sweet perfumes, women chaste."
 If the perception of realities
 Guideth thy steps, the subtlety confined
 In that word *yours* will not be hid from thee.
 Indeed, that lantern of all beings' night
 Dwelt in the world, but was not of the world;
 His splendour, that consumed the adoring
 breasts
 Of holy angels, shone while *Adam yet*
Was clay and water. Of what land he was
 I know not; this much only I do know,
 He is our comrade. These base elements
 He reckoned for our world, himself our guest.
 We, who have lost the souls within our
 breasts,
 Have therefore lost ourselves in this mean
 dust.
 Thou art a Muslim, do not bind thy heart.
 To any clime, nor lose thyself within
 This world dimensionate. The Muslim true
 Is not contained in any land on earth;
 Syria and Rum are lost within his heart
 Grasp thou the heart, and in its vast expanse
 Lose this mirage of water and of clay.

Our Master, fleeing from his fatherland,
 Resolved the knot of Muslim nationhood.
 His wisdom founded one community—
 The world its parish—on the sacred charge
 To civilize; that Ruler of our faith
 Of his abundant bounty gave the earth
 Entire to be the confines of our mosque.
 He, whom god eulogized in the Quran
 And promised He would *save his soul alive*,
 Struck hapless awe into his enemies
 So that they trembled at his majesty.
 Why fled he, then, from his ancestral home?
 Supposeth thou he ran before his foes?
 The chroniclers, ill understanding what
 The Flight portends, have hid the truth from
 us.
 Flight is the law that rules the Muslim's life,
 And is a cause of his stability;
 Its meaning is to leap from shallowness,
 To quit the dew, the ocean to subdue.
 Transgress the bloom; the garden is thy goal;
 The loss of less more vastly gain adorns.
 The sun's great glory is in ranging free;
 The skies' arena lies beneath his feet.
 Be not a streamlet, seeking wealth from rain;
 Be boundless; quest no limit in the world.
 The frowning sea was once a simple plain,
 Played being shore, and liquefied of shame.
 Have thou the will to master everything,
 That thou mayest win dominion over all;
 Plunge like a fish, and populate the sea;
 Shake off the chains of too constricted space.
 He who has burst from all dimension's bonds
 Ranges through all directions, like the sky.
 The rose's scent by parting from the rose
 Leaps far abroad, and through the garden's
 breadth
 Disseminates itself. Thou, who hast snatched
 One corner of the meadow for thine own,
 Like the poor nightingale art satisfied
 To serenade one rose. Be like the breeze;
 Cast off the burden of complacency
 From thy broad shoulders; in thy wide
 embrace
 Gather the garden. Be thou wary; lo,
 These times are full of treachery, the way
 Beset by brigands; wayfarer, beware!

*That the country is not the foundation of
the community*

Now brotherhood has been so cut to shreds
That in the stead of the community
The Country has been given pride of place
In men's allegiance and constructive work;
The Country is the darling of their hearts,
And wide humanity is whittled down
Into dismembered tribes. Men thought to find
Paradise in that *miserable abode*
Of ruin where they made the peoples dwell.
This tree has banished heaven from the world
And borne for fruit the bitterness of war;
Humanity is but a legend, man
Become a stranger to his fellow-man.
The spirit has departed from the flesh,
Only the seven disjointed limbs remain;
Vanished is humankind, there but abide
The disunited nations. Politics
Dethroned religion, this tree first struck root
Within a Western garden, and the tale
Of Christianity was all rolled up,
The radiance of the Church's lantern dimmed;
Pope powerless and baffled, from his hand
The counters scattered; Jesus' followers
Spurning the Church; debased the coinage
Of the True Cross's Law. When atheism
Fist rent religion's garment, there arrived
That Satan's messenger, the Florentine
Who worshipped falsehood, whose collyrium
Shattered the sight of men. He wrote a scroll
For Princes, and so scattered in our clay
The seed of conflict; his fell genius
Decamped to darkness, and his sword like
pen
Struck Truth asunder. Carving images
Like Azar was his trade; his fertile mind
Conceived a new design; his novel faith
Proclaimed the State the only worship;
His thoughts the ignoble turned to praise-
worthy.
So, when the feet of this adorable
He kissed, the touchstone that he introduced
To test the truth was Gain. His doctrine
caused
Falsehood to flourish; plotting stratagems
Became an art. A sad and sorry end

Attended the regime which he devised,
That caltrop which he scattered on the road
Of advancing days. Dark night he wrapped
About the peoples' eyes; deception called,
In his vocabulary, expediency.

*That the Muhammadan Community is
also unbounded in time, since the survival
of this noble community has been divinely
promised*

In Spring thou hast heard the clamorous
nightingale,
And watched the resurrection of the flowers;
The buds arrayed like brides; from the dark
earth
A veritable city of stars arise;
The meadow bathed in the soft tear of dawn
That slumbered to the river's lullaby.
A bud bursts into blossom on the branch;
The breeze new-risen takes it to her breast;
A bloom lies bleeding in the gatherer's hand
And like a perfume from the mead departs.
The ring-dove builds his nest; the nightingale
Takes wing; the dew drops softly, and the
scent
Is sped. What though these mortal tulips die,
They lessen not the splendour of the spring:
For all the loss, its treasure still abides
Abundant, still the thronging blossoms smile.
The season of the rose endures beyond
The fragile eglantine time, yea, it outlives
The rose's self, the cypress, and the fir;
The jewel-nourishing mine bears jewels yet,
Unminished by the shattering of one gem.
Dawn is departed from the East, and night
Gone from the West: their too-brief-historied
up
Visits no more the wine-vault of the days;
Yet, though the draught be drunk, the wine
remains
Eternal as the morrow that awaits
When all our yesterdays are drowned in
death.
So individuals, as they depart,
Are fallen pages from the calendar
Of peoples more enduring: though the friend

Is on journey, the companionship
 Still stays; the individual is gone
 Abroad, unstirring the community.
 Other each essence is, the qualities
 Other; they differ both in how each lives
 And how they die. The individual
 Arises from a handful of mere clay,
 The nation owes its birth to one brave heart;
 The individual has for his span
 Sixty or seventy years, a century
 Is for the nation as single breath.
 The individual is kept alive
 By the concomitance of soul and flesh,
 The nation lives by guarding ancient laws;
 Death comes upon the individual
 When dries life's river and the nation dies
 When it forsakes the purpose of its life.
 Though the community must pass away
 Like any individual when Fate,
 Issues the fiat none may disobey,
 Islam's Community is divine
 Undying marvel, having origin
 In that great compact, *Yea, Thou art our Lord.*
 This people is indifferent to Fate,
 Immovable in *Lo, We have sent down*
Remembrance, Which abides while there is yet
 One to remember, whose continuance
 Persists with it. When God revealed the
 words
They seek God's light to extinguish, this bright
 lamp
 Was never troubled it might flicker out.
 'Tis a community that worships God
 In perfect faith, a people well-beloved
 By every man who has a conscient heart.
 God drew this trusty blade out of the sheath
 Of Abraham's desires, that by its edge
 Sincerity might live, and all untruth
 Consume before the lightning of its stroke.
 We, who are proof of God's high Unity
 And guardians of the Wisdom and the Book,
 Encountered heaven's malice long ago,
 The unsuspected menace of the hordes
 Of savage Tartary, loosed on our heads
 To prove its terror. Not the Judgment Day
 Shall match the staring horror of those
 swords,

The thunder of those legions armed with
 death.
 Confusion sore confounded in the breast
 Of that disaster slept; its yesterday
 Gave birth to no glad morrow. Muslim might
 Quivered in dust and blood; Baghdad beheld
 Such scenes as Rome ne'er witnessed in her
 throes.
 Now ask, if so thou wilt, what new design
 Purposing Fate, malignant as of old,
 Proposed this holocaust; whose garden
 sprang
 Out of the Tartar fire? Whose turban wears
 The rose transmuted from those lambent
 flames?
 Because our nature is of Abraham
 And our relationship to God the same
 As that great patriarch's: out of the fire's
 depths
 Anew we blossom, every Nimrod's blaze
 Convert to roses. When the burning brands
 Of Time's great revolution ring our mead,
 Then Spring returns. The mighty power of
 Rome,
 Conqueror and ruler of the world entire,
 Sank into small account; the golden glass
 Of the Sassanians was drowned in blood;
 Broken the brilliant genius of Greece;
 Egypt too failed in the great test of Time,
 Her bones lie buried 'neath the Pyramids.
 Yet still the voice of the muezzin rings
 Throughout the earth, still the Community
 Of World – Islam -- maintains its ancient
 forms.
 Love is the universal law of life,
 Mingling the fragmentary elements
 Of a disordered world. Through our hearts'
 glow
 Love lives, irradiated by the spark
There is no god but God. Though, like a bud,
 Our hearts are prisoned by oppressive care,
 If we should die, the garden too will die.

*That the organization of the community is
only possible though law, and that the law
of the Muhammadan Community is the
Quran*

When a community forsakes its Law
Its parts are severed, like the scattered dust.
The being of the Muslim rests alone
On Law which is in truth the inner core
Of the Apostle's faith. A rose is born
When its component petals are conjoined
By Law; and roses, being likewise bound
By Law together, fashion a bouquet.
As sound controlled creates a melody
So, when control is absent, dissonance
Results. The breath we draw within our throat
Is but a wave of air which, in the reed
Being constricted, blows a tuneful note.
Knowest thou what thy Law is, wherein lies
Beneath yon spheres the secret of thy power?
It is the living Book, that wise Quran
Whose wisdom is eternal, uncreate.
The secrets of the fashioning of life
Are therein written; instability
Is firmly established by its potency.
Undoubted and *unchanging* are its words,
Its verses to interpretation not
Beholden; in its strength the raw desire
Acquires maturity, the bowl fears not
To dash against the rock. It casts away
The shackling chains, and leads the free man
forth
But brings the exultant captor unto woe.
The final message to all humankind
Was borne by him elect of God to be
A mercy unto every living thing;
By this the worthless unto worth attains,
The prostrate slave lifts up his head on high.
Having by heart this message, highwaymen
Turned guides upon the road, and by this
book
Were qualified high masters of the rolls;
Rude desert-farers through one lantern's glow
A hundred revelations to their brain
In every science won. So he, *whose load*
The mountain's massive shoulders could not bear,
Clove by his might the power of the spheres.

See how the capital of all our hopes
Is lodged securely in our children's breasts!
The weary wanderer in the wilderness
Unwatered, eyes aflame in the hot sun,
His camel nimbler than the agile deer,
Its breath as fire, when he would look to sleep
Casting him down beneath some shady palm,
Then with the dawn awake, the caravan
Clanged to departure, ever journeying
Through the wide prairies, unfamiliar
With roof and door, stranger to fixed
abodes—
When his wild heart responded vibrantly
To the Quran's warm glow, its restless waves
Sank to the calm of a sequestered pearl.
Reading the lesson of its verses clear
He who had come a slave went forth from
God
A master. Now upon his instrument
New melodies imperial were heard;
Jamshid's high throne he trampled underfoot;
Cities sprang up out of the dust he trod,
A hundred bowers blossomed from his rose.

O thou, whose faith by custom is enslaved,
Imprisoned by the charms of heathendom,
Thou who hast *torn thy heritage to shreds*
Treading the highway to a hateful goal,
If thou wouldst live the Muslim life anew
This cannot be, except by the Quran
Thou livest. See the Sufi in his garb
Of mystic minstrelsy, his heart inflamed
By the fierce fervour of Iraqi's verse!
Little do his wild ecstasies accord
With the austere Quran; the dervish cap
And mat of reeds replace the crown and
throne;
His boasted poverty rich tribute takes
Secured on many a hermitage endowed.
The preacher, with his wealth of anecdote
And wordy legend, little has to tell
If truth, for all his fine grandiloquence;
Khatib and Dailami are on his lips,
In every week Tradition he delights,
The little met with, and the insecure.
It is thy duty to recite the Book,
And therein find the purpose thou dost seek.

*That in times of decadence strict
conformity is better than free speculation*

The present age has many tumults hid
Beneath its head; its restless temperament
Swarms with disorders. The society
Of ancient nations in these modern times
Is in confusion; sapless hangs life's bough.
The glamour and the glitter of our days
Have made us strangers to our very selves,
And robbed our instrument of melody;
Filched from our heart its pristine fire, and
dimmed
Within our breast the radiance and the flame
There is no god but God. Whene'er decay
Destroys the balanced temperament of life,
Then the community may look to find
Stability in strict conformity.
Go thou thy fathers' road, for therein lies
Tranquility; conformity connotes
The holding fast of the community.
In time of Autumn, thou who lackest leaf
Alike and fruit, break never from the tree,
Hoping that spring may come. Since thou hast
lost
The sea, be prudent, lest a greater loss
Befall thee; the more carefully preserve
Thy own thin rivulet; for it my hap
Some mountain torrent shall replenish thee
And thou once more be tossed upon the
breast
Of the redeeming tempest. If thy flesh
Is yet possessed of a discerning eye,
Take warning from the Israelitish case;
Consider well their variable fate,
Now hot, now cold; regard the obduracy,
The hardness of their spare and tenuous soul.
Sluggishly flows the blood within their veins,
Their furrowed brow sore smitten on the
stones
Of porticoes a hundred. Though heaven's grip
Hath pressed and squeezed their grape, the
memory
Of Moses and of Aaron liveth yet;
And though their ardent song hath lost its
flame,
Still palpitates the breath within their breast.
For when the fabric of their nationhood

Was rent asunder, still they laboured on
To keep the highroad of their forefathers.
O thou whose ancient concourse is dispersed,
Within whose breast the lamp of life is out,
Grave on thy heart the truth of Unity,
And in conformity essay to mend
The ruin of thy fortune. In the time
Of decadence, to seek to exercise
The speculative judgment of the mind
Completes the people's havoc finally;
Salvation lieth less in following
The blinkered pedant's dictum, being found
Humble imitation of the past.
Caprice corrupted not thy fathers' brain;
The labour of the pious was unsoiled
By interested motive, finer far
The thread of thought their meditation wove,
Closer to the Prophet's way conformed
Their self-denial. Jaafar's raptured view
And Razi's patient delving are no more;
Departed is the glory that adorned
The Arab nation; narrow shrunk for us
The defile of the Faith, whose mysteries
Every impostor boasteth to possess.
Thou, who art stranger to the secret truths
Of Faith, if thou art wise, accord thyself
With one sound Law; for I have heard it said
By those who take and know the pulse of Life,
Thy contrariety severs Life's veins.
The Muslim lives by following one Law;
The body of our Faith's community
Throbs vital to the Word of the Quran.
All earth we are; that is our conscient heart;
Hold firm to its protection, since it is
The Cord of God. Upon its sacred thread
Gem-like be safely strung, or otherwise
Be scattered, as the dust upon the wind.

*That maturity of communal life derives
from following the divine law*

Seek thou no other meaning in the Law,
Nor look save light to find within the gem;
God was the jeweller who fashioned forth
This jewel, diamantine through and through.
Law is the only knowledge of the Truth,
Love the sole basis of the Prophet's code;
The individual through Law attains

A faith maturer, and more fair adorned.
 The rule of Law secures an ordered life
 To all the nation, which established rule
 Condition is of its continuance.
 Power is patent in its knowledge, this
 The sign of Moses' staff and potent hand;
 So I declare the secret of Islam
 Is Law, in which all things begin and end.
 Since thou art called to be a guardian
 Of the Faith's wisdom, I will tell to thee
 A subtle truth of the perspicuous Law.
 If any Muslim be engaged upon
 A meritorious act, and causelessly
 Therein be challenged, forthwith it becomes
 His sacred duty to discharge the same;
 Power is deemed the very spring of Life.
 Upon the day of battle, if the foe
 Supposing truce is imminent neglects
 His army's marshalling, and casually
 Confronts his fortune, breaking down the
 wall
 And citadel of his defence; until
 His order is restored, to march against
 His unarmed country is prohibited.
 Knowest thou then the mystery of this
 Divine commandment? Life not living is
 Except we live in danger. Law requires
 That when to war thou comest, thou shalt
 blaze
 A fiery torch, and split the throat of rock.
 Law tries the power of the strong right arm;
 Confronting thee with Alond's massive
 height,
 It bids thee pound into collyrium
 That craggy mount, and with the ardent
 breath
 Drawn from thy throat its flint to liquefy.
 The lean and feeble sheep is scarce a prey
 Worthy the tiger's claw; or if the hawk
 Consorts with sparrows, meaner-spirited
 Than its poor victims it shall soon become.
 The Lawgiver, to whom all fair and foul
 Was fully known, this recipe of power
 For thee prescribed. By toil the nerves are
 steeled,
 And thou art raised to eminence in the world;
 Or be thou wounded, this will make thee
 strong,

Yea, and mature as a firm mountain-chain.
 Full life's religion is Muhammad's faith,
 His code the commentary on life's law;
 Be though earth-lowly, it shall lift thee up
 High as the heavens, and will fashion thee
 Harmonious to God's summons. The rough
 rock
 Is polished to a mirror by this faith,
 And this unrests the steel's corroding heart.

 Now when the Prophet's watchword passed
 from ken
 His people held no more the secret key
 To their continuance. That lusty sprout
 Tall and firm-rooted (Muslim of the wastes
 Mounted on camel, who in Batha's vale
 Took his first steps) that by the desert warmth
 Was nourished up, now fanned by Persia's
 breeze
 Is so diminished, that it hath become
 Thin as a reed. He who was wont to slay
 Tigers like sheep now winces at the ant
 Trampled unwittingly; he who in joy,
Allahu Akbar crying, turned the rock
 To running water, trembles at the note
 Of amorous nightingales; he whose high will
 Reckoned the mountain trifling as a straw
 Commits himself entire to abject trust;
 He whose firm blow once broke his foemen's
 neck,
 His heart is wounded by his own breast's
 beat;
 He whose bold tread a hundred tumults
 limned
 Now cowers in retirement from the world;
 He whose command none dared to disobey,
 Before whose door great Alexander stood
 A suppliant, and Darius begged his bread,
 His ardour is attuned to mean content,
 His boast the proffered bowl of mendicants.
 Shaykh Ahmad, Sayyid lofty as the spheres,
 From whose keen brain the sun's self
 borrowed light
 (The roses that bedeck his holy grave
No other god but God breathe from his dust)
 Thus spoke to a disciple: "O though life
 Of thy dear father, it behoves us all
 That we beware of Persia's fantasies;

Though Persia's thoughts the heavens have
surpassed
They equally transgress the boundaries
Set by the Prophet's Faith." Brother, give ear
To his sage counsel, and attentively
Receive the rede of a protagonist
Of our community; take these wise words
To fortify thy heart; conform thyself
With Arab ways, to be a Muslim true.

*That a good communal character derives
from discipline according to the manners
of the Prophet*

A mendicant like Fate inexorable
Battered upon our door incessantly;
Enraged, I broke a stave upon his head,
And all the harvest of his beggary
Spilled from his hand. In youth's beginning
days
The reason thinks not upon right and wrong.
My father, by my temper much distressed,
Grew very pale; the tulips of his cheeks
Withered; an anguished sigh sprang from his
lip
A star gleamed in his eye, brief glittering
Upon his lashes, and then slowly fell.
And as a bird that in the time of Fall
Trembles within his nest when dawn blows
chill,
So in my flesh shivered my heedless soul;
The Layla of my patience now no more
Rode peacefully the litter of my heart.
And then my father spoke: "Upon that morn
The people of the Best of Messengers
Are gathered up before the Lord of All,
Warriors of his Pure Community
And guardians of his Wisdom's loveliness,
Martyrs who proved the Faith – all these like
stars
Shall shine within that peopled firmament;
Ascetics too, and they that loved their God
With anguished hearts, and scholars erudite,
And shamefast rebels against God's
commands.
Then in the midst of that great company
This suffering beggar's cries shall mount on
high.

O thou condemned to tread an arduous road
Unmounted, footsore, what am I to say
When this the Prophet asks me: 'God to thee
Committed a young Muslim, and he won
No portion of instruction from my school;
What, was this labour too, too hard for thee,
So that that heap of clay became not man?"
So gentle was my noble sire's reproof
That I was torn by shame and hope and fear:
"Reflect a little, son, and bring to mind
The last great gathering of the Prophet's fold;
Look once again on my white hairs, and see
How now I tremble between fear and hope;
Do not thy father this foul injury,
O put him not to shame before his Lord!"

Thou art a bud burst from Muhammad's
branch;
Break into bloom before the genial breeze
Of his warm Spring; win thee the scent and
hue
Of that sweet season; strive to gain for thee
Some fragment of his character sublime.
Well said great Rumi, guide in whose shrunk
drop
An ocean of deep wisdom slumbereth:
"Snap not the thread of thy brief days from
him
Who was the Seal of Prophets; little trust
In thy poor craft and faltering footsteps
place."
The nature of the Muslim through and
through
Is loving kindness; with both hand and
tongue
He strives to be a mercy in the world,
As he whose fingers split the moon in twain
Embraces in his mercy all mankind.
Noble was he, in every attribute;
Thou art no member of our company
If from his station thou departest far.
Bird of our garden, one in song and tongue
With us, if thou dost own a melody
Carol it not alone, nor let it soar
But on a branch that in our garden grows.
Whatever thing has capital of life
Dies in an uncongenial element
Art thou a nightingale? Fly in the mead,

And with thy fellow-minstrels mediate
 Thy song. Art thou an eagle? Do not live
 At ocean's bottom; in the solitude
 Of the unpeopled desert make thy home.
 Art thou a star? Shine in thy firmament,
 Nor set thy foot beyond thy proper bounds.

If thou wilt take a drop of April shower
 And nurture it within the garden's close
 Till, like the dew of the abounding Spring,
 A rosebud takes it to its near embrace,
 Then, in the rays of heaven-glittering dawn
 Whose magic knots the blossoms on the
 branch,

Thou shalt draw out the lucent element
 Within its substance, all the ecstasy
 Of leaping in its trembling particles.
 What is thy jewel? But a watery wave;
 What is thy effort? Naught save a mirage.
 Hurl it to ocean, that it may become
 A jewel gleaming like a tremulous star.
 The April raindrop, banished from the sea,
 Dies on the cornstalk with the morning dew.
 The pure clay of the Muslim is a gem;
 Its lustre and its radiance derive
 Out of the Prophet's ocean. Come thou, then,
 Brief April shower, come into his breast,
 And issue from his mighty sea, a pearl!
 Outshine the sun upon this shadowy world,
 And glow forever in immortal light.

*That the life of the community requires a
 visible focus, and that the focus of the
 Islamic community is Makkah's sacred
 house*

Now I will loose for thee the knotted cord
 That is Life's riddle, and reveal to thee
 Life's mysteries; its trade, from self to leap
 Swift as a phantom, nimbly to escape
 From the constriction of Dimension's grasp.
 Then how comes Life into this world of late
 And soon? How does its instant time give
 birth

To yesterdays and morrows? Look upon
 Thyself, if thou possesseth eyes to see;
 Fool, art thou aught but constantly aleap?
 So, to display its glow invisible

Life's torch contrived a curtain of its smoke,
 And that its motion might be seen at peace,
 Its wave was in the gem immobilized.
 Life's furnace drew its breath, forthwith
 became
 A tulip, and burst blooming from the branch.
 Thy thought is immature, lame, slow to rise,
 If thou suppose the mortal flower itself
 The fleeting colour. Life is not a bird
 A-building nests; 'tis but a wing of hue
 And wholly flight; imprisoned in the cage,
 Yet ever free; lamenteth as it sings;
 Washeth each moment from its wing the will
 To fly, yet ever seeks new stratagems
 Itself devising; bindeth knot on knot
 Its own affairs, yet with consummate ease
 Resolveth all its problems. Swift-paced Life
 Stands rooted in the mire, that it may feel
 Pulsing a doubled joy to walk abroad.
 Anthems unheard lie dormant in its flame;
 To-morrow, yesterday, the children are
 Of its to-day. Each moment it creates
 Fresh difficulties, passing freely through;
 Thus, instantly its task is ever new.
 Though like a sent it is all will to leap,
 When in the breast it maketh its abode
 It is a breath. Upon itself it spins
 Its threads, becomes a skein, and knots itself.
 The seed, that holdeth knotted in its grain
 The leaf and fruit, in good time openeth
 Its eyes upon itself, and is a tree;
 Creating out of water and of clay
 A garment it revealeth hand and foot,
 Eye, yea, and heart. Life chooseth to confine
 Itself within the body's solitude,
 And Life createth mighty companies.

Such is the law that governeth the birth
 Of nations, life gathereth on a point
 Of focus which, related to the ring,
 Is as the spirit hidden in the flesh,
 The track of the circumference concealed
 Within the centre. Peoples win their bond
 And order from a focus, and that same
 Perpetuates the nation's sum of days.
 The Sacred House at once our secret is
 And guardian of our secret, our heart's fire
 And instrument whereon our passion plays.

We are a breath nurtured within its breast;
 The body we, and it the precious soul.
 Our garden glitters joyous in its dew,
 Our fields are watered from its holy well.
 Its dancing motes give lustre to the sun
 Plunging into its firmament profound.
 We are the proof that justifies its claim,
 Attestors witnessing for Abraham.
 This made our voices loud upon the earth,
 Stitched up with Time our Pre-eternity;
 In circumambulation of its shrine
 Our pure community draws common breath,
 Dawn's sun engaged; by its arithmetic
 The many count as one, and in that tie
 Of oneness thy self-mastery waxes strong.
 Thou livest by a sanctuary's bond
 And shalt endure, so long as though shalt go
 About the shrine thereof. Upon this earth
 By congregation lives a people's soul,
 And congregation is the mystery
 Of Makkah's power. Take heed once again,
 Enlightened Muslim, by the tragic fate
 Of Moses' people, who, when they gave up
 Their focus from their grasp, the thread was
 snapped
 That bound their congregation each to each.
 That nation, nurtured up upon the breast
 Of God's apostles, and whereof the part
 Was privy to the secrets of the whole,
 Suddenly smitten by the hand of Time
 Poured out its lifeblood in slow agony.
 The tendrils of its vine are withered now,
 Nor even any willow weeping grows
 More from its soil; exile has robbed its tongue
 Of common speech; both nest and birdsong
 gone;
 The candle out; dead the lamenting moth –
 My poor dust trembles at the history.
 O thou, sore wounded by the sword of Fate,
 Prisoner of confusion, doubt, dismay,
 Wrap thee in pilgrim robes; unshroud the
 dawn
 Of night's dark dust. Plunge, as thy forebears
 did,
 Into prostration; lose thyself, until
 Thou art entire prostration. Long ago
 The Muslim fashioned meek humility,
 And thence developed a world-shaking pride;

Upon God's path the thorn-points pierced his
 feet;
 He wore a rose-bower in his turban's fold.

*That true solidarity consists in adopting a
 fixed communal objective, and that the
 objective of the Muhammadan community
 is the preservation and propagation of
 Unitarianism*

And now I will impart to thee the tongue
 Of all things that have being; in this speech
 The letters and articulated sounds
 Are life's activities. When life is bound
 In firm attachment to an aim professed
 The opening verse rises spontaneously;
 And if that purpose serves us for a goad,
 Swift as the tempest gallopeth our steed.
 The goal avowed is the true mystery
 Of life's continuance, that focuses
 The restless flow of its mercurial powers.
 When life is conscious of a purposed aim,
 All means material yield to its control;
 It makes its self the follower of that goal,
 For its sole sake collects, selects, rejects.
 The helmsman shoreward bound resolves to
 sail
 The flooding main; the destination far
 Determines the selection of the paths.
 The moth's heart bears the brand of the
 delight
 Of burning, for which joy it flutters still
 About the candle. If the madman Qais
 Was wanderer in the wilderness, his aim
 Was the high litter wherein Layla rode.
 Now be our Layla but familiar
 With cities, never shall we lift our tread
 To span the desert. In the enterprise
 The purpose lies as hidden as the soul
 Within the body, and from this alone
 Each labour takes its quality and size.
 The blood that circulates in our veins
 The nimbler moveth, having the desire
 To reach a goal; life's self consumes itself
 In that bright flame, aglow with tulip-fire.
 The Goal is as a plectrum, that awakes
 The hidden music in the instrument

Of high ambition, an attractive point
 Whereunto moves all centripetal force;
 This stirs a people's hands and feet to move
 In vital unison, one vision clear
 Bestowing on a hundred several sights.
 Be the mad lover of the loveliness
 Of noble purpose; flutter like a moth
 About this ardent lamp. Sweet was the air
 Qum's music-maker sang, the silken strings
 Sweeping responsive to his pulsing thought:
 "While yet the traveller bends to pluck the
 thorn
 That pricks his foot, the litter vanishes."
 If thou art heedless but for one brief breath,
 A hundred leagues thou strayest from thy
 stage.

This ancient creature, that men call the world,
 Out of the mingling of the elements
 Derived its body; a hundred reed-beds sowed
 That one lament might burgeon; bathed in
 blood
 A hundred meads, to yield one tulip-bloom.
 Many the shapes it fetched and cast and broke
 To grave upon Life's tablet thy design;
 Many laments it sowed in the soul's tilth
 Till sprang the music of one call to prayer
 Awhile it battled sternly with the free,
 And had much traffic with false lords, at last
 To strew the seed of faith in the heart's soil
 And on the tongue to cry *There is one God.*
No other god but God – this is the point
 On which the world concentrically turns,
 This the conclusion of the world's affairs.
 From this the sphere derives its strength to
 wheel,
 The sun its constancy and brilliance,
 The sea her gems, created of its glow,
 That set the ocean's billows quivering.
 This is the breeze that fans the earth to bloom,
 This rapturous glow a few poor feathers
 flames
 Into the nightingale; and this same fire
 Runs like a torch along the vineyard's veins
 And glitters crimson in the dusty bowl.
 In Being's instrument its melodies
 Life hidden; O musician, Being's lute
 Seeketh for thee; within thy body flow

A hundred songs, as freely in thy veins
 The lifeblood pulses; rise, and smite the
 strings!
Allahu Akbar! This the secret holds
 Of thy existence; wherefore let it be
 Thy purpose to preserve and propagate
No other god. If thou a Muslim art,
 Till all the world proclaims the Name of God
 Thou canst not rest one moment. Knowest
 thou not
 The verse in Holy Scripture, calling thee
 To be a *people just, God's witnesses?*
 Thou art the glow and glory of the days,
 And made to testify to all mankind;
 To all who comprehend the weight of words
 Make general proclamation, and impart
 The learned gospel of God's Messenger.
 Unlettered was He, *innocent of guile*
The words he uttered, that elucidate
 The mystery *He did not go astray.*
 Yet, when he held the pulse of living things,
 The secrets of Life's constitution he
 Forthwith revealed, and cleansed of ancient
 blight
 The garment of the tulips of this mead.
 Life here below is bound up with his Faith
 Nor can survive, save guarded by his Law.
 Having his Book beneath thy arm, stride out
 With greater boldness to the battlefield
 Of works; for human thought, idolatrous
 And idol-fashioning, is all the time
 In quest of some new image; in these days
 It follows once again old Azar's trade,
 And man creates an ever novel god
 Whose joy is shedding blood, whose hallowed
 name
 Is Colour, Fatherland, Blood-Brotherhood.
 Humanity is slaughtered like a sheep
 Before this worthless idol. Thou, whose lips
 Have touched the sacred bowl of Abraham,
 Whose blood is ardent with his holy wine,
 Against this falsehood, garmented as truth,
 Lift now the blade *there is not aught but God*
 And smite! The days are shrouded all in mirk;
 Display thy light, and let *the thing in thee*
Perfected shine o'er all humanity.
 I tremble for thy shame, when on the Day
 Of Reckoning that Glory of all time

Shall question thee: "Thou tookest from my
lips
The word of Truth, and wherefore hast thou
failed
To pass my message on to other men?"

*That the expansion of communal life
depends upon controlling the forces of
world order*

Thou, who hast made with the Invisible
Thy covenant, and burst forth like a flood
From the shore's bondage, as a sapling rise
Out of this garden's soil; attach thy heart
To the Unseen, yet ever with the seen
Wage conflict, since this being visible
Interprets that unviewed, and prelude is
To the o'er mastery of hidden powers.
All otherness is only to subdue,
Its breast a target for the well-winged shaft;
God's fiat *Be!* made other manifest
So that thy arrows might be sharp to pierce
The steely anvil. Truly it requires
A tightly knotted cord, to whet and prove
The wit of the resolver. Art thou a bud?
Interpret in thyself the flowery mead;
Art thou a dewdrop? Dominate the sun!
If thou art equal to the bold emprise,
Melt thou this snow-lion with one torrid
breath!
Whoever hath subdued the things perceived
Can of one atom reconstruct a world,
And he whose shaft would pierce the angel's
breast
First fastens Adam to his saddle-bow;
He first resolves the knot phenomena
And, mastering Being, proves his lofty power.
Mountain and wilderness, river and plain,
All land and sea – these are the scholar's slate
On which the man of vision learns to read.
O thou who slumberest, by dull opiates
drugged,
And namest mean this world material,
Rise up, and open thy besotted eyes!
Call thou not mean thy world by Law
compelled;
Its purpose is to enlarge the Muslim's soul,
To challenge his potentialities;

The body it assaults with fortune's sword
That thou mayest see if there be blood within;
Dash thou thy breast against its jagged rock
Until it pierce thy flesh, and prove thy bone.
God counts this world the portion of good
men,
Commits its splendour to believers' eyes;
It is a road the caravan must pass,
A touchstone the believer's gold to assay;
Seize thou this world, that it may not seize
thee

And in its pitcher swallow thee like wine.
The stallion of thy thought is parrot-swift,
Striding the whole wide heavens in a bound;
Urged ever onwards by the needs of life,
Raised up to rove the skies, though
earthbound still;
That, having won the mastery of the powers
Of this world-order, thou mayest
consummate
The perfecting of thy ingenious crafts.
Man is the deputy of God on earth,
And o'er the elements his rule is fixed;
On earth thy narrowness receiveth breadth,
Thy toil takes on fair shape. Ride thou the
wind;
Put bridle on that swift-paced dromedary.
Dabble thy fingers in the mountain's blood;
Draw up the lustrous waters of the pearl
From ocean's bottom; in this single field
A hundred worlds are hidden, countless suns
Veiled in these dancing motes. This glittering
ray
Shall bring to vision the invisible,
Disclose uncomprehended mysteries.
Take splendour from the world-inflaming
sun,
The arch-illuminating levin from the storm;
All stars and planets dwelling in the sky,
Those lords to whom the ancient peoples
prayed,
All those, my master, wait upon thy word
And are obedient servants to thy will.
In prudence plan the quest, to make it sure,
Then master every spirit, all the world.
Open thine eyes, and into all things gaze;
Behold the rapture veiled within the wine.

The weak, endowed with knowledge of the power
 Of natural things, takes tribute from the strong.
 The outward form of Being is not bare
 Of inward meaning; this old instrument
 Still keeps its pitch, still lightning in its song
 If played with cunning, self against the strings
 For plectrum striking. Thou, whom God designed
 Saying, *Behold!* Why travellest thou this way
 Like blind men? Lo, thy self-enkindled drop
 Being intimate with mysteries, is like wine
 Within the tendril, dew upon the rose;
 Let flow into the ocean, it becomes
 A pearl, its substance glittering as a star.
 Fan not the rose's petals like the breeze,
 But punge into the meaning of the bower;
 Whoso hath spun about phenomena
 The knotted noose, hath mastered for his mount
 The lightning and the heat. He makes the word
 Wing like a bird in flight, the instrument
 Sing of itself without the plectrum's touch.
 Thy ass is lame, because the way of life
 Was arduous, and thou too ignorant
 Of life's hard combat; while already now
 Thy fellow-travellers have reached the goal,
 Borne from her litter Layla, the divine
 And lovely Truth; like Qais thou wanderest
 Distracted in the desert, weary, sore.
 Yet Adam's glory was that he possessed
 The *knowledge of the names*, and being wise
 In natural ken, was thereby fortified.

That the perfection of communal life is attained when the community, like the individual, discovers the sensation of self; and that the propagation and perfecting of this sensation can be realized through guarding the communal traditions

O thou of gaze intent, hast thou not seen
 An infant, unacquainted with its self,
 So unaware of what is far, what near
 That it aspires to rein the very moon?

To all a stranger, mother-worshipping,
 Drunken with weeping and with milk and sleep,
 His ear cannot distinguish *la* from *mi*,
 His music's the mere jangling of a chain.
 Simple and virgin are his thoughts as yet,
 Pure as a pearl his speech; to search and search
 His meditation's sum, as on his lips
 Spring ever Why and When and How and Where;
 Receptive to all images his mind,
 His occupation other to pursue,
 Other to see. Let any take his eyes
 Creeping behind his back, and how distressed
 His little soul becomes! So immature
 His thoughts are yet that like the new-sprung hawk
 Flutters its wings, to try the world's wide air;
 He lets them slip, to hunt and seize their prey,
 Then calls them home again unto himself.
 Lit by the pyrotechnics of the mind
 The rocket of his fancy fills the sky
 With coruscating embers. At the last
 His eye prehensile lights upon himself;
 His little hand clutched to his breast, he cries
 "I!" So his memory maketh him aware
 Of his own self, and keeps secure the bond
 Linking to-morrow with his yesterday;
 Upon this golden thread his days are strung
 Like jewels on a necklace, one by one.
 Though, every breath, ever diminishes,
 Ever augments his flesh, "I am the same
 As I have ever been," his heart declares.
 This newborn "I" the inception is of life,
 This the true song of life's awaking lute.

Like to a child is a community
 Newborn, an infant in its mother's arms;
 All unaware of self; a jewel stained
 By the road's dust; unbound to its to-day
 Is its to-morrow, fettered not its feet
 By the successive links of night and day.
 It is the pupil lodged in Being's eye,
 Other beholding, lost unto itself;
 A hundred knots are in its cord to loose
 Ere it can reach the end of selfhood's thread
 But when with energy it falls upon

The world's great labours, stable then
 becomes
 This new-won consciousness; it raises up
 A thousand images, and casts them down;
 So it createth its own history.
 Yet, when the individual has snapped
 The bond that joins his days, as when a comb
 Sheddeth its teeth, so his perception is.
 The record of the past illuminates
 The conscience of a people; memory
 Of past achievements makes it self-aware;
 But if that memory fades, and is forgot,
 The folk again is lost in nothingness.
 Know, then, 'tis the connecting thread of days
 That stitches up thy life's loose manuscript;
 This selfsame thread sews us a shirt to wear,
 Its needle the remembrance of old yarns.
 What thing is history, O self-unaware?
 A fable? Or a legendary tale?
 Nay, 'tis the thing that maketh thee aware
 Of thy true self, alert unto the task,
 A seasoned traveller; this is the source
 Of the soul's ardour, this the nerves that knit
 The body of the whole community.
 This whets thee like a dagger on its sheath,
 To dash thee in the face of all the world.
 Ah, how delightful is this instrument
 And how inspiring, that within its strings
 Imprisons those departed memories!
 See the extinguished splendour blaze anew!
 Behold all yesterdays in the embrace
 Of its to-day! Its candle is a star
 To light the peoples' fortunes, and illumine
 To-night and yesternight in equal shine.
 The skilful vision that beholds the past
 Can recreate before thy wondering gaze
 The past anew; wine of a hundred years
 That bowl contains, an ancient drunkenness
 Flames in its juice; a cunning fowler it
 To snare the bird that from our garden flew.
 Preserve this history, and so abide
 Unshaken, vital with departed breaths.
 Fix in firm bond to-day with yesterday;
 Make life a bird accustomed to the hand.
 Draw to thy hand the thread of all the days,
 Else thou art blind-by-day, night-
 worshipping.
 Thy present thrusts its head up from the past,

And from thy present shall thy future stem.
 If thou desirest everlasting life,
 Break not the thread between the past and
 now
 And the far future. What is life? A wave
 Of consciousness of continuity,
 A gurgling wine that flames the revellers.

*That the continuance of the species derives
 from motherhood, and that the
 preservation and honouring of
 motherhood is the foundation of Islam*

The instrument of man sings melodies
 When struck by woman's plectrum; his soul's
 pride
 Swells of her deference. The woman clothes
 The nakedness of man; the loveliness
 Of the beloved a garment weaves for love.
 The love of God is nourished at her breast,
 A lovely air struck from her silent hand;
 And he in whom all beings make their boast
 Declared he loved three things – *sweet
 perfume, prayer,
 And womankind.* What Muslim reckons her
 A servant, nothing more, no part has won
 Of the Book's wisdom. If thou lookest well,
 Motherhood is a mercy, being linked
 By close affinity to prophethood,
 And her compassion is the prophet's own.
 For mothers shape the way that men shall go;
 Maturer, by the grace of Motherhood,
 The character of nations is, the lines
 That score that brow determine our estate.
 If thou art learned to attain the truth
 Behind the form, our word community
 Hath, in the Persian, many subtleties.
 He, for whose sake God said *Let there be life,
 Declared that Paradise lies at the feet
 Of mothers.* In the honouring of the womb
 The life communal is alone secured,
 Else is life raw and brutish. Motherhood
 Quickens the pace of life, the mysteries
 Of life revealing; tortuously twists
 The current of our stream, so that it flows
 Bubbling and whirling on its rapid course.
 Take any peasant woman, ignorant,

Squat-figured, fat, uncomely, unrefined,
 Unlettered, dim of vision, simple, dumb;
 The pangs of motherhood have torn her heart,
 Dark, tragic rings have underscored her eyes;
 If from her bosom the community
 Receive one Muslim zealous for the Faith,
 God's faithful servant, all the pains she bore
 Have fortified our being, and our dawn
 Glows radiant in the lustre of her dusk.
 Now take the slender figure, bosomless,
 Close-cosseted, a riot in her glance,
 Her thoughts resplendent with the Western
 light;
 In outward guise a woman, inwardly
 No woman she; she hath destroyed the bonds
 That hold our pure community secure;
 Her sacred charms are all unloosed and
 spilled;
 Bold-eyed her freedom is, provocative,
 And wholly ignorant of modesty;
 Her learning is inadequate to bear
 The charge of motherhood, and on the dusk
 And evening of her days not one star shines;
 Better it were this rose had never grown
 Within our garden, better were her brand
 Washed from the skirt of the community.

Stars without number whispering *No god
 But God*, ungleaming in the dark of time
 And not yet risen from nonentity,
 Still wait without the bounded territories
 Of quality and quantity, being hid
 Within the shadows of our patent life,
 These our epiphanies still unbeheld;
 Dew not descended on the rose's bloom,
 Buds not yet torn by the lascivious breeze.
 This garden of potentialities,
 These unseen tulips blossom from the bower
 Of fertile Motherhood. A people's wealth
 Rests not, my prudent friend, in linen fine
 Or treasured hoards of silver and of gold;
 Its riches are its sons, clean-limbed and strong
 Of body, supple-brained, hard-labouring,
 Healthy and nimble to high enterprise.
 Mothers preserve the clue of Brotherhood,
 The strength of Scripture and Community.

*That the Lady Fatima is the perfect
 pattern of Muslim womanhood*

Mary is hallowed in one line alone,
 That she bore Jesus; Fatima in three.
 For that she was the sweet delight of him
 Who came a mercy to all living things,
 Leader of former as of latter saints,
 Who breathed new spirit into this dead world
 And brought to birth the age of a New Law.
 His lady she, whose regal diadem
 God's words adorn *Hath there come any time*,
 The chosen one, resolver of all knots
 And hard perplexities, the Lion of God,
 An emperor whose palace was a hut,
 Accoutred with one sword, one coat of mail.
 And she his mother, upon whom revolves
 Love's compasses, the leader of Love's train,
 That single candle in the corridor
 Of sanctity resplendent, guardian
 Of the integrity of that best race
 Of all God's peoples; who, that the fierce
 flame
 Of war and hatred might extinguished be,
 Trod underfoot the crown and royal ring.
 His mother too, the lord of all earth's saints
 And strong right arm of every freeborn man,
 Husain, the passion in the song of life,
 Teacher of freedom to God's chosen few.
 The character, the essential purity
 Of holy children from their mothers come.
 She was the harvest of the well-sown field
 Of self-surrender, to all mothers she
 The perfect pattern, Fatima the chaste.
 Her heart so grieved, because one came in
 need,
 She stripped her cloak and sold it to a Jew;
 Though creatures all, of light alike and fire,
 Obeyed her bidding, yet she sank her will
 In her good consort's pleasure. Fortitude
 And meekness were her schooling; while her
 lips
 Chanted the Book, she ground the homely
 mill.
 No pillow needed she to catch her tears,
 But wept contrition's offering of pearls
 Upon the skirt of prayer; which Gabriel
 stooped

To gather, as they glistened in the dust,
 And rained like dew upon the Throne of God.
 God's Law a fetter locks about my feet
 To guard secure the Prophet's high behest,
 Else had I surely gone about her tomb
 And fallen prostrate, worshipping her dust.

Address to the veiled ladies of Islam

O thou, whose mantle is the covering
 That guards our honour, whose effulgence
 Our candle's capital, whose nature pure
 To us a mercy, our religion's strength,
 Foundation of our true community!
 Our children's lips, being suckled at thy
 breast,
 From thee first learn to lisp *No god but God*.
 Thy love it is, that shapes our little ways,
 Thy love that moulds our thoughts, our
 words, our deeds.
 Our lightning-flash, that slumbered in thy
 cloud,
 Glitters upon the mountain, sweeps the plain.
 O guardian of the blessings of God's Law,
 Thou from whose breath the Faith of God
 draws fire,
 Coxcomb and crafty is the present age,
 Its caravan a highwayman, well armed
 To seize and spoil Faith's riches; blind its
 brain,
 That knoweth naught of God; ignoble they
 Who are the captives of its twisted chains;
 Bold is its eye, and reckless; swift to snatch
 The talons of its lashes; its poor prey
 Calls itself free, its victim vaunts it lives!
 Thine is the hand that keepeth fresh and
 green
 The young tree of our Commonwealth, as
 thou
 Guardest inviolate the capital
 Of our Community. Fret not thyself
 To calculate the profit and the loss,
 Being content to tread the well-worn path
 Our fathers went before. Be wary of
 Time's depredations, and to thy broad breast
 Gather thy children close; these meadow-
 chicks,
 Unfledged as yet co fly, have fallen far

From their warm nest. High, high the
 cravings are
 That wrestle with thy soul; be conscious still
 And ever of thy model, Fatima,
 So that thy branch may bear a new Husain,
 Our garden blossom with the Golden Age.

*Summary of the purport of the poem in
 exegesis of the Surah of Pure Faith*

"Say: He is God, One"

I dreamed one night I looked upon Siddiq
 And plucked a rose that blossomed at his feet
 -
 He, that *most generous was of all mankind*
 Unto our Master, he that stood the first
 Like Moses on the Sinai of our Faith,
 Whose zeal was as a cloud that showered rain
 Upon the tilth of our community,
 Second to own Islam, to share the Cave,
 Badr, and the Tomb. "O chosen of Love's
 choice,"
 I cried to him, "whose love is the first line
 In the collected poetry of Love,
 Whose hand established on a firmer base
 A remedy for our immediate woes."
 "How long", said he, "wilt thou be prisoner
 To base desire? Get lustre, and new light
 To light thee, from the Surah of Pure Faith."
 This one breath, winding in a hundred
 breasts,
 Is but one secret of the Unity;
 Get thee its colour, to be like to it,
 Reflective to its beauty in the world.
 He, who bestowed this Muslim name on thee,
 Drew thee to Oneness from Duality;
 'Tis thou thyself hast called thee Afghan, Turk
 -
 Ah, thou remainest as thou ever wert!
 Deliver now the named from all the names;
 Have done with cups; ally thee to the jar!
 Thou hast become a scandal to thy name,
 A leaf that fell untimely from thy tree;
 Attune thee unto Oneness; be thou gone
 From Twoness; nor dissect thy Unity.
 Thou who art servant unto One, if thou

Art thou, how long wilt thou to school of
Two?

Lo, thou hast shut thy door upon thyself;
Take to thy heart that which thy lips imbibed.
A hundred nations thou hast raised from one,
On thy own fort made treacherous assault.
Be one; make visible thy Unity;
Let action turn the unseen into seen;
Activity augments the joy of faith,
But faith is dead that issues not in deeds.

"God, the Self-Subsistent"

If thou hast bound thy faithful heart on *God*
The Self-subsistent, thou hast overlept
The rim of things material. No slave
To things material God's servant is;
Life is no turning of a water-wheel.
If thou be Muslim, be not suppliant
Of other's succour; be the embodiment
Of good to all the world. Make not complaint
Of scurvy fortune to the fortunate,
Nor from thy sleeve reach out a beggar's
hand.

Like Ali, be content with barley-bread;
Break Marhab's neck, and capture Khyber's
fort.

Why bear the favour of the bountiful,
Why feel the lancet of their nay and yea?
Take not the sustenance from mean, base
hands;

Thou art a Joseph; count thyself not cheap.
And if thou be an ant, and lackest wings
And feathers, go not unto Solomon
To plead thy want. The road is arduous;
Go light-accounted, if thou wouldst attain;
Unfettered live thy days, unfettered die.

Count o'er the rosary of *Take thou less*
Of this world's goods, and thou shalt riches win
In *living free*. So far as in thee lies
Become that Stone of the philosophers,
Not the base dross; a benefactor be,
Not a petitioner for others' alms.
Thou knowest well bu Ali's eminence,
Accept from me this draught, drawn from his
cup –

"Trample Kai-Kaus' throne beneath thy foot;
Yield up thy life, but not thy self-respect!"
The tavern door stands open of itself

To those whose bowls are empty, whose
needs none.

Harun Rashid, that captain of the Faith
Whose blade to Nicephor of Byzance proved
A deadly potion, unto Malik spoke
Upon this fashion: "Master of my folk,
The dust before whose door illuminates
My people's brow, melodious nightingale
Carolling mid the roses of good words,
I am desirous to be taught by thee
The secrets of those words. How long art thou
Content in Yemen to conceal the glow
Of thy bright rubies? Rise, and pitch thy tent
Here, in the homestead of the Caliphate.
How fair the brightness of the shining day,
The captivating beauty of Iraq!
The Fount of Khizer gushes from its vines,
Its earth is healing for the wounds of Christ."
"I am the Prophet's servant," Malik said,
"And only him I love, with all my heart.
Bound to his saddle-bow, I will not quit
His holy sanctuary. By the kiss
Of Yathrib's dust I live; my night to me
Is fairer than Iraq's pellucid day.
Love says, 'Obey my ordinance; sign not
The articles of service even to kings.'
Thou wouldst become my master, overlord
Of this freed slave of God, that I should wait
Upon thy door to teach thee, and no more
Serve the community, being bound to thee.
Be it thy wish some portion to attain
Of godly knowledge, in my circle sit
And study with the rest. Indifference
To worldly needs engenders fine disdain,
And holy pride takes many splendid shapes."

Godly indifference is to put on
The hue of God, and from thy robe to wash
The dye of otherness. But thou hast learned
The rote of others, taking that for store,
An alien rouge to beautify thy face;
In those insignia thou takest pride,
Until I know not if thou be thyself
Or art another. Fanned by foreign blasts
Thy soil is fallen silent, and no more
Fertile in fragrant roses and sweet herbs.
Desolate not thy tilth with thy own hand;
Make it not beg for rain from alien clouds.

Thy mind is prisoner to others' thoughts,
 Another's music throbs within thy throat,
 Thy very speech is borrowed, and thy heart
 Dilates with aspirations not thine own.
 The song thy ring-doves sing, the leafy gowns
 That deck thy cypresses, are meanly begged;
 Thou takest wine from others in a bowl
 Itself from others taken upon loan.
 If he, whose glance contains the mystery
Erred not the sight – if he should come again
 Unto his people, he whose candle-flame
 Knows its own moth, who can distinguish
 well
 His own from strangers standing at the gate,
 Our master would declare, *Thou art not mine*.
 Woe, woe, alas for us upon that day!

How long wilt thou content thyself to live
 The life of stars, that in the risen morn
 Lose all their being? Thou hast been deceived
 By the false dawn, packed up thy goods and
 gone
 From the broad firmament. Thou art the sun;
 Look on thy self a little; purchase not
 Some shreds of radiance from others' stars!
 Thou hast engraved thy heart with alien
 shapes,
 Gambled the alchemy and gained the dross;
 How long this glittering with others' shine?
 Shake off heavy fumes for foreign grapes!
 How long this fluttering about the flame
 Of party lanterns? If thou hast a heart
 Within thy breast, with thine own ardour
 burn!
 Be like the gaze, wrapped round in thy own
 veils;
 Rise on the wing, but ever wheel back home;
 Bubble-like bar thy little privacy
 Against the intruder, if thou wouldst be wise.
 No man to individuality
 Ever attained, save that he knew himself,
 No nation came to nationhood, except
 It spurned to suit the whim of other men.
 Then of our Prophet's message be apprised,
 And have thou done with other lords but
 God.

"He begat not, neither was He begotten"

Loftier than hue and blood thy people are,
 And greater worth one Negro of the Faith
 Than are a hundred redskin infidels.
 A single drop of water Qanbar took
 For his ablutions is more precious far
 Than all the blood of Caesar. Take no count
 Of father, mother, uncle; call thy self
 An offspring of Islam, as Salman did.
 See, my brave comrade, in the honeyed cells
 That constitute the hive a subtle truth;
 One drop from a red tulip is distilled,
 One from a blue narcissus; none proclaims,
 "I am of jasmine, of lily!"
 So our community the beehive is
 Of Abraham whose honey is our Faith.
 If thou hast made of our community
 Lineage a part essential, thou hast rent
 The fabric of true Brotherhood; thy roots
 Have struck not in our soil, thy way of
 thought
 Runs counter to our Muslim rectitude.

Ibn-i-Mas'ud, that lantern bright of Love,
 Body and spirit blazing in Love's flame,
 Being distressed upon a brother's death
 Dissolved in tears, a mirror liquefied,
 Nor any term to his lamentings saw
 But in his grief; as of her child bereaved
 A mother weeps, so uncontrollably
 He sobbed: "Ah, scholar of humility,
 Alas, my comrade in the schools of prayer!
 My tall young cypress, fellow traveller
 Upon the pathway of the Prophet's love!
 O grief, that he is now denied the courts
 Of God's Apostle, while mine eyes are bright
 With gazing fondly on the Prophet's face!

The bond of Turk and Arab is not ours,
 The link that binds us is no fetter's chain
 Of ancient lineage; our hearts are bound
 To the beloved Prophet of Hijaz,
 And to each other are we joined through him.
 Our common thread is simple loyalty
 To him alone; the rapture of his wine
 Alone our eyes entrances; from what time
 This glad intoxication with his love.
 Raced in our blood, the old is set ablaze

In new creation. As the blood that flows
 Within a people's veins, so is his love
 Sole substance of our solidarity.
 Love dwells within the spirit, lineage
 The flesh inhabits; stronger far than race
 And common ancestry is Love's firm cord.
 True loverhood must overleap the bounds
 Of lineage, transcend Arabia
 And Persia. Love's community is like
 The light of God; whatever being we
 Possess, from its existence is derived.
 "None seeketh when or where God's light
 was born;
 What need of warp and woof, God's robe to
 spin?"
 Who suffereth his foot to wear the chains
 Of clime and ancestry, is unaware
 How *He begat not, neither was begot.*

"And there is not any equal unto Him"

What is the Muslim, that hath closed his eyes
 Against the world? This heart attached to
 God,
 What is its nature? On a mountain-top
 A tulip blowing, that hath never seen
 The trailing border of the gatherer's skirt;
 The flame is kindled in his ardent breast
 From the first breaths of dawn; heaven suffers
 not
 To loose him from her bosom, deeming him
 A star suspended; the uprising sun
 Touches his lips with dawn's first ray, the
 dew
 Bathes from his waking eyes the dust of sleep.
 Firm must the bond be tied with *There is none*
 If thou wouldst an unequalled people be.
 He who is Essence One, unpartnered is;
 His servant too no partner can endure;
 And whoso in the Highest of the High
 Believeth, cannot suffer any peer
 In his high jealousy. Wrapt round his breast
 The robe of *Do not grieve*, borne on his brow
 The crown *Ye are the highest*, he transports
 On his broad back the burden of both worlds,
 Protects both land and sea in his embrace;
 His ear attentive to the thunder's roar,

His shoulders bared to take the lightning's
 scourge,
 Against the false he is a sword, a shield
 Before the truth; evil and good are proved
 Upon the touchstone of his ordinance
 And prohibition. Knotted in his coils
 A hundred conflagrations lurk; life's self
 Derives perfection from his essence pure.
 Through the broad spaces of this clamorous
 world
 No music sounds but his triumphant song,
 His loud *Allahu Akbar*. Great is he
 On justice, clemency, benevolence;
 Noble his temper, even in chastisement.
 At festival his lyre delights the mind;
 Steel melts before his ardour in the fight.
 Where roses blossom, with the nightingale's
 His sweet song mingles; in the wilderness
 No falcon is more swift upon the prey.
 His heart untroubled scorns to take repose
 Beneath the heavens; in the spreading skies
 He makes his dwellings, as on soaring wing
 He rises far beyond yon ancient hoop
 That spans our firmament, to whet his beak
 Against the gleaning stars.
 Thou, with thy frail
 Unspread pinion, tentative to fly,
 Art like some chrysalis, that in the dust
 Still slumbers on; rejecting the Quran,
 How meanly thou hast sunk, base caviller
 Protesting of the turn of Fortune's wheel!
 Yet, lying abject as the scattered dew,
 Thou hast within thy grip a living Book;
 How long shall earth content thee for thy
 home?
 Life up thy baggage; hurl it to the skies!

*The author's memorial to him who is a
 mercy to all living beings*

O thou, whose manifesting was the youth
 Of strenuous life, whose bright epiphany
 Told the interpretation of life's dreams,
 Earth attained honour, having held thy court,
 And heaven glory, having kissed thy roof.
 Thy face illumines the six-directioned world;
 Turk, Tajik, Arab—all thy servants are.
 Whatever things have being, find in thee

True exaltation, and thy poverty
Is their abundant riches. In this world
Thou litst the lamp of life, as thou didst teach
God's servitors a godly mastery.
Without thee, whatsoever form indwelt
This habitat of water and of clay
Was put to shame in utter bankruptcy;
Till, when thy breath drew fire from the cold
dust
And Adam made of earth's dead particles,
Each atom caught the skirts of sun and moon,
Suddenly conscious of its inward strength.
Since first my gaze alighted on thy face
Dearer than father and dear mother thou
Art grown to me. Thy love hath lit a flame
Within my heart; ah, let it work at ease.
For all my spirit is consumed in me,
And my sole chattel is a reed-like sigh,
The lantern flickering in my ruined house.
It is not possible not to declare
This hidden grief; it is not possible
To veil the wine in the translucent cup.
But now the Muslim is estranged a new
Unto the Prophet's secret; now once more
God's sanctuary is an idols' shrine;
Manat and Lat, Hubal and Uzza – each
Carries an idol to his bosom clasped;
Our shaykh – no Brahman is so infidel,
Seeking his Somnath stands within his head.
Arabia deserted, he is gone
With all his being's baggage, slumberous
To drowse in Persia's wine-vault. Persia's
sleet
Has set his limbs a-shiver; his thin wine
Rune colder than his tears. As timorous
Of death as any infidel, his breast
Is hollow, empty of a living heart.
I bore him lifeless from the doctors' hands
And brought him to the Prophet's presence;
dead
He was; I told him of the Fount of Life,
I spoke with him upon a mystery
O the Quran, a tale of the Beloved
Of Najd; I brought to him a perfume sweet
Pressed from the roses of Arabia.
The Candle of my music lit the throng;
I taught the people life's enigma; still

He cried against me, "These are Europe's
spells
He weaves to bind us with, the psaltery
Of Europe that he strikes into our ears."
O thou, that to Busiri gavest a Cloak
And to my fingers yielded Salma's lute,
Grant now to him, whose thoughts are so
astray
That he can no more recognize his own,
Perception of the truth, and joy therein.
Be lusterless the mirror of my heart,
Or be my words by aught but the Quran
Informed, O thou whose splendour is the
dawn
Of every age and time, whose vision sees
All that is in men's breasts, rend now the veil
Of my thought's shame; sweep clean the
avenue
Of my offending thorns; choke in my breast
The narrow breath of life; thy people guard
Against the mischief of my wickedness;
Nurse not to verdure my untimely seed,
Grant me no portion of spring's fecund
showers,
Wither the vintage in my swelling grapes
And scatter poison in my sparkling wine;
Disgrace me on the Day of Reckoning,
Too abject to embrace thy holy feet.
But if I ever threaded on my chain
The pearl of the Quran's sweet mysteries,
I to the Muslims I have spoken true,
O thou whose bounty raises the obscure
Unto significance, one prayer from thee
Is ample guerdon for my word's desert;
Plead thou to God my cause, and let my love
Be locked in the embrace of godly deeds.
Thou hast accorded me a contrite soul,
A part of holy learning; establish me
More firm in action, and my April shower
Convert to pearls of great and glittering price.
Since first I cast the baggage of my soul
In this world's caravanserai, one more
Desire I ever nourished, like my heart
Dwelling within my breast, mine intimate
From life's dawn; since first I learned thy
name
From my sire's lips, the flame of that desire

Kindled and glowed in me. My roll of days
 As heaven lengthens, in life's lottery
 Marking me loser, ever lustier grows
 The youth of my desire; this ancient wine
 Gains greater body with the passing years.
 This yearning is gem beneath my dust,
 A single star illumining my night.
 Awhile with rosy checks did I consort,
 Played love with twisted tresses, tasted wines
 With lustrous brows, the lamp of godly peace
 Rudely extinguished; lightnings danced about
 My harvest; my heart's store of merchandise
 By highwaymen was plundered. Yet this
 draught
 Was spilled not from the goblet of my soul,
 This gold refined not scattered from my skirt.
 My reason diabolical resolved
 To wear the Magian girdle; its impress
 Stamped o'er my spirit's furrows. Many years
 I was doubt's prisoner, inseparable
 From my too arid brain. I had not read
 One letter of true knowledge, and abode
 Still in philosophy's conjecture-land;
 My darkness was a stranger to the light
 Of God, my dusk knew not the glow of dawn.
 And yet this yearning slumbered in my heart,
 Close-shrouded as the pearl within the shell;
 But lastly from the goblet of mine eye
 It slowly trickled, and within my mind
 Created melodies. And now my soul

Is emptied of all memories but thee;
 I will be bold to speak of my desire,
 If thou wilt give me leave. My life hath been
 Unfurnished in good works, and therefore I
 Might not aspire to worthiness of this,
 Which to reveal I am too much ashamed;
 Yet thy compassion maketh me more bold.
 The honey of thy mercy comforteth
 The whole round world; and this my yearning
 is,
 That I be granted in Hijaz to die!
 A Muslim, stranger to all else but God –
 How long shall he the heathen girdle wear
 And keep the temple? O the bitter shame
 If, when his earthly days are at an end,
 A pagan shrine receives his mortal bones.
 If from thy door my scattered parts arise,
 Woe to this day, that morrow how sublime!
 O happy city that thy dwelling was,
 Thrice-blessed earth wherein thou dost
 repose!
 "My friend's abode, the city of my king –
 True patriotism, the lover's creed."
 Give to my star an even-wakeful eye,
 And in the shadow of the wall a place
 To slumber, that my spirit's quicksilver
 Be stilled; that I may say unto the skies,
 "Behold me, tranquil; ye who looked upon
 My first beginning, witness now my close."

[Translated by A.J. Arberry]