

# GABRIEL'S WING

Arise in order that we may make the order of the sun's journey  
fresh  
That we may make the burnt out spirit of evening and morning  
fresh.

\*

The heart of a diamond can be cut by the leaf of a flower;  
A soft and gentle word has no effect on a stupid man!

—Bartari-Hari

*[Translated by D.J. Matthews]*

1

My epiphany of passion causes commotion in  
the precinct of the Divine Essence,  
Strikes terror in the pantheon of His  
Attributes.

The houri and the angel are captives of my  
imagination—  
My glance ruffles Your Manifestations.

My quest is the architect of the Mosque and  
the idol-house,  
Though my song causes tumult both in the  
Ka'bah and Somnath.

My sharp vision pierced through the core of  
existence;  
Confounded by my illusions at yet another time.

Oh what a rash deed that You did not leave  
me hidden:  
I was the only secret in the conscience of the  
universe!

*[Translated by the Editors]*

\*

All potent wine is emptied of Thy cask;  
Art Thou, indeed, a Cup-bearer, may I ask?  
Thou gavest me a drop from an ocean;  
Art Thou a miser in a Nourisher's mask?

*[Translated by Naim Siddiqui]*

2

If the stars have strayed—  
To whom do the heavens belong, You or Me?  
Why must I worry about the world—  
To whom does this world belong, You or Me?

If the Placeless Realm  
Offers no lively scenes of passion and  
longing,  
Whose fault is that, my Lord?—  
Does that realm belong to You or to me?

On the morning of eternity he dared to say  
'No',  
But how would I know why—  
Is he Your confidant, or is he mine?

Muhammad is Yours,  
Gabriel is Yours,  
The Qur'an is Yours—  
But this discourse,  
This exposition in melodious tunes,  
Is it Yours or is it mine?

Your world is illuminated  
By the radiance of the same star  
Whose loss was the fall of Adam, that  
creature of earth,  
Was it Yours or mine?

[Translated by Mustansir Mir]

3

Bright are Your tresses: brighten them even  
more:  
Ravish the senses and the mind, ravish the  
heart and the eyes.

Love concealed, and beauty too!  
Reveal Yourself to me, or reveal me to myself.

You are the limitless ocean and I am but a tiny  
rivulet—  
Either make Your peer or turn me limitless at  
least.

If I am a mother-of-pearl, the lustre of my  
pearl is in Your hands,  
But if I am a piece of brick, give me a  
diamond's sheen.

If I am not destined to sing at the advent of  
Spring,  
Make this half-enraptured breath a skylark of  
the Spring.

Why did You order me to quit the Garden of  
Eden?—

Now there is much to be done here—so just  
wait for me!

When the roll of my deeds is brought up on  
the Day of Reckoning,  
Be ashamed as You will shame me.

[Translated by the Editors]<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Based on partial translations by Annemarie Schimmel and Sayyad Fayyaz Mahmood in *Iqbal*:

\*

Make our hearts the seats of mercy and love,  
And make them in Thy thought for ever  
move;  
Give the invincible power of Ali the brave,  
To one whom gavest Thou poor means to live.

[Translated by Naim Siddiqui]

4

Whether or not it moves you,  
At least listen to my complaint—  
It is not redress this free spirit seeks.

This handful of dust,  
This fiercely blowing wind,  
And these vast, limitless heavens—  
Is the delight You take in creation  
A blessing or some wanton joke?

The tent of the rose could not withstand  
The wind blowing through the garden:  
Is this the spring season,  
And this the auspicious wind?

I am at fault, and in a foreign land,  
But the angels never could make habitable  
That wasteland of yours.

That stark wilderness,  
That insubstantial world of Yours  
Gratefully remembers my love of hardship.

An adventurous spirit is ill at ease  
In a garden where no hunter lies in ambush.

The station of love is beyond the reach of  
Your angels,  
Only those of dauntless courage are up to it.

\*

Give to the youth my sighs of dawn;  
Give wings to these eaglets again,  
This, dear Lord, is my only wish—  
That my insights should be shared by all!

[Translated by Mustansir Mir]

*Poet of Tomorrow* edited by Khawaja Abdur Rahim; and Naim Siddiqui in *Baal-i-Jibreel*.

5

What avails love when life is so ephemeral?  
What avails a mortal's love for the immortal?

Love that is snuffed out by death's passing  
blast

Love without the pain, the passion that  
consumes?

A flickering spark I am, aglow for a fleeting  
glance

Flow vain for a flickering spark to chase an  
eternal flame!

Grant me the bliss of eternal life, O Lord,  
And mine will be the ecstasy of eternal love.

Give me the pleasure of an everlasting pain  
An agony that lacerates my soul for ever.

*[Translated by Naim Siddiqui]*

6

My scattered dust charged with Love  
The shape of heart may take at last:  
O God, the grief that bowed me then  
May press me down as in the past!

The Maids of Eden by their charm  
May arouse my urge for song:  
The flame of Love that burns in me,  
May fire the zeal of Celestial Throng!

The pilgrim's mind can dwell at times  
On spots and stages left behind:  
My heed for spots and places crossed,  
From the Quest may turn my mind!

By the mighty force of Love  
I am turned to Boundless Deep:  
I fear that my self-regard,  
Me, for aye, on shore may keep!

My hectic search for aim and end,  
In life that smell and hue doth lack,  
May get renown like lover's tale,  
Who riding went on litter's track!

The rise of clay-born man hath smit  
The hosts of heaven with utter fright:  
They dread that this fallen star

To moon may wax with fuller light.

*[Translated by Syed Akbar Ali Shah]*

\*

Thy world the fish's and the winged thing's  
bower;

My world a crying of the sunrise hour;

In Thy world I am helpless and a slave;

In my world is Thy kingdom and Thy power.

7

Contrary runs our planet, the stars whirl fast,  
oh Saki!

In every atom's heartbeat a Doomsday blast,  
oh Saki!

Torn from God's congregation its dower of  
faith and reason,  
And godlessness in fatal allurements dressed,  
oh Saki!

For our inveterate sickness, our wavering  
heart, the cure—  
That same joy-dropping nectar as in the past,  
oh Saki.

Within Islam's cold temple no fire of longing  
stirs,  
For still your face is hidden, veiled and un-  
guessed, oh Saki.

Unchanged is Persia's garden: soil, stream,  
Tabriz, unchanged;  
And yet with no new Rumi is her land graced,  
oh Saki.

But of his barren acres Iqbal will not despair:  
A little rain, and harvests shall wave at last,  
oh Saki!

On me, a beggar, secrets of empire are  
bestowed;  
My songs are worth the treasures Parvez  
amassed, oh Saki.

*[Translated by V.G. Kiernan]*

\*

Due to Thy benevolence, I am not without  
merit,

However, I am not a slave to a Tughral or a  
Sanjar;

It is my nature to see the world as it is;

But, in no case, am I the Cup of any Jamshid!

[Translated by A. Anwar Beg]

8

Set out once more that cup, that wine, oh  
Saki—

Let my true place at last be mine, oh Saki!

Three centuries India's wine-shops have been  
closed,

And now for your largesse we pine, oh Saki;

My flask of poetry held the last few drops—  
Unlawful, says our crabb'd devine, oh Saki.

Truth's forest hides no lion-hearts now: men  
grovel

Before the priest, or the saint's shrine, oh Saki.

Who has borne off Love's valiant sword?

About

An empty scabbard Wisdom's hands twine,  
oh Saki.

Verse lights up life, while heart burns bright,  
but fades

For ever when those rays decline, oh Saki;

Bereave not of its moon my night; I see  
A full moon in your goblet shine, oh Saki!

[Translated by V.G. Kiernan]

\*

He is the essence of the Space as well as the  
Placeless Realm—

And Space is nothing but a figure of speech:  
How could Khizer tell, and what,  
If the fish were to ask, "Where is the water?"

[Translated by the Editors]

9

My Saki made me drink the wine  
Of *There is no god but He*:

From the illusive world of sense,  
This cup divine has set me free.

Now I find no charm or grace  
In song and ale, or harp and lute:  
To me appeal the tulips wild,  
The riverside and mountains mute.

My flagon small is blessing great,  
For the age athirst and dry:  
In the cells where mystics swell  
Big empty gourds are lying by.

In love a novice I am yet,  
Much good for you to keep apart,  
For my glance is restive more  
Than my wild and untam'd heart.

The dark unfathomed caves of sea,  
Hold gems of purest ray serene:  
The gems retain in midst of brine  
Their essence bright and clean.

Through the poet's quickening gaze  
The rose and tulip lovelier seem:  
No doubt, the minstrel's piercing glance  
Is nothing less than magic gleam.

[Translated by Syed Akbar Ali Shah]

\*

At times, Love is a wanderer who has no  
home,  
And at times it is Noshervan, the King of  
Kings:

At times it comes to the battlefield in full  
armor,

And at times naked and weaponless.

[Translated by the Editors]

10

Slow fire of longing—wealth beyond  
compare;  
I will not change my prayer-mat for Heaven's  
chair!

Ill fits this world of Your freemen, ill the next:  
Death's hard yoke frets them here, life's hard  
yoke there.

Close veils inflame the loiterer in Love's lane;  
Your long reluctance fans my passion's flare.

The hawk lives out his days in rocks and  
desert,

Tame nest-twig-carrying his proud claws  
forswear.

Was it book-lesson, or father's glance, that  
 taught  
 The son of Abraham what son should bear?  
 Bold hearts, firm souls, come pilgrim to my  
 tomb;  
 I taught poor dust to tower hill-high in air.  
 Truth has no need of me for tiring-maid;  
 To stain the tulip red is Nature's care.

[Translated by V.G. Kiernan]

\*

Love, sometimes, is the solitude of Nature;  
 It is, sometime, merrymaking and company-  
 seeking:  
 Sometime the legacy of the mosque and the  
 pulpit,  
 Sometime Lord Ali the Vanquisher of the  
 Khyber!

[Translated by the Editors]

11

Have You forgotten then my heart of old,  
 That college of Love, that whip that bright  
 eyes hold?  
 The school-bred demi-goddesses of this age  
 Lack the carved grace of the old pagan mold!  
 This is a strange world, neither cage nor nest,  
 With no calm nook in all its spacious fold.  
 The vine awaits Your bounteous rain: no  
 more  
 Is the Magian wine in Persia's taverns sold.  
 My comrades thought my song were of  
 Spring's kindling—  
 How should they know what in Love's notes  
 is told?  
 Out of my flesh and blood You made this  
 earth;  
 Its quenchless fever the martyr's crown of  
 gold.  
 My days supported by Your alms, I do not  
 Complain against my friends, or the times  
 scold.

[Translated by Victor Kiernan]

\*

Grant me the absorption of the souls of the  
 past,  
 And let me be of those *who never grieve*;  
 The riddles of reason I have solved, but now,  
 O Lord! Give me a life of ecstasy.

[Translated by Naim Siddiqui]

12

By dint of Spring the poppy-cup,  
 With vintage red is over-flown:  
 With her advent the hermit too  
 Temperance to the wind hath thrown.

When great and mighty force of Love  
 At some place its flag doth raise,  
 Beggars dressed in rags and sack  
 Become heirs true to King Parvez.

Antique the stars and old the dome  
 In which they roam about and move:  
 I long for new and virgin soil  
 Where my mettle I may prove.

The stir and roar of Judgement Day  
 Hath no dread for me at all:  
 Thine roving glance doth work on me  
 Like the Last Day's Trumpet Call.

Snatch not from me the blessing great  
 Of sighs heaved at early morn:  
 With a casual loving look  
 Weaken not thine fierce scorn.

My sad and broken heart disdains  
 The Spring and dower that she brings:  
 Too joyous the song of nightingale!  
 I feel more gloomy when it sings.

Unwise are those who tell and preach  
*Accord with times and the age.*  
 If the world befits you not,  
 A war against it you must wage.

[Translated by Syed Akbar Ali Shah]

\*

The subtle point that life would not end with  
 the death of the body  
 I learnt from Abul Hasan<sup>1</sup>:

<sup>1</sup> Abul Hasan Ash'ari.

The un, if it would hate its beam  
Will lose all its brilliance.

[Translated by Muhammad Munawwar Mirza]

13

Mine ill luck the same and same,  
O Lord, the coldness on Your part:  
No useful aim has been served,  
By skill in poetic art.

Where am I and where are You,  
Is the world a fact or naught?  
Does this world to me belong,  
Or is a wonder by You wrought?

The precious moments of my life,  
One by one have been snatched:  
But still the conflict racks my brain,  
If heart and head are ever matched.

A hawk forgetful of its breed,  
Upbrought and fed in midst of kites,  
Knows not the wont and ways of hawks,  
And cannot soar to mighty heights.

For song no tongue is set apart,  
No claim to tongues is laid by me:  
What matters is a dainty song,  
No matter what its language be.

*Faqr* and Kingship are akin,  
Though at odds may these appear:  
One wins the heart with single glance,  
The other rules with sword and spear.

Some have left the caravan train,  
And some on Ka'bah turn their back;  
For leaders of the Faithful Band,  
Winsome mode and manners lack.

[Translated by Syed Akbar Ali Shah]

\*

This reason of mine knows not good from  
evil;  
And tries to exceed the bounds that nature  
fixed;  
I know not what has happened to me of late,  
My reason and my heart are ever at war.

[Translated by Naim Siddiqui]

14

Methought my racing field lay under the  
skies,  
This plaything of water and clay, I regarded  
as my world;  
Thy unveiling broke the spell of searching  
glances,  
I mistook this blue vault for Heaven.  
The Sun, the Moon, the Stars, methought,  
would keep me company,  
Fatigued, they dropped out in the twists and  
turns of space:  
One leap by Love ended all the pother,  
I fondly imagined, the earth and sky were  
boundless.  
What I esteemed as the clarion call of the  
caravan,  
Was but the plaintive cry of a traveller, weary  
and forlorn.

[Translated by S.A. Rahman<sup>1</sup>]

\*

To be God is to have charge of land and sea;  
Being God is nothing but a headache!  
But being a servant of God? God forbid!  
That is no headache—it is a heartache!

[Translated by Mustansir Mir]

15

Reason is either luminous, or it seeks proofs;  
Proof-seeking reason is but an excess of  
wonder.

Thine alone is what I possess in this handful  
of dust;  
And to keep it safe is beyond my power, O  
Lord!

My songs of lament were all inspired by Thee;  
If they have reached the stars, it is no fault of  
mine.

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted in 'Chughtai and Iqbal' by Arif Rahman Chughtai in *Iqbal: Commemorative Volume* edited by Ali Sardar Jafri and K.S. Duggal

Art Thou pleased, O Lord, with man's  
imperfection?  
Why repeat a flawed attempt, and make his  
shame eternal?

The Western ways have tried to make me a  
renegade;  
But why are our mullahs a disgrace to  
Muslims?

Fools think man is a bondman of destiny;  
But man has still the power to break the  
bonds of fate.

Thou hast Thy pantheon, and I have mine, O  
Lord!  
Both have idols of dust; both have idols that  
die.

[Translated by Naim Siddiqui]

\*

This Adam—is he the sovereign of land and  
sea?  
What can I say about such an incompetent  
being!  
He is not able to see anything—himself, God,  
or the world!  
Is this the masterpiece of Your art?

[Translated by Mustansir Mir]

16

Lovely, oh Lord, this fleeting world; but why  
Must the frank heart, the quick brain, droop  
and sigh?

Though usury mingle somewhat with his  
godship,  
The white man is the world's arch-deity;

His asses graze in fields of rose and poppy:  
One wisp of hay to genius You deny;

His Church abounds with roasts and ruby  
wines:  
Sermons and saws are all Your mosques  
supply.

Your laws are just, but their expositors  
Bedevil the Koran, twist it awry;

Your paradise no-one has seen: in Europe  
No village but with paradise can view.

Long, long have my thoughts wandered  
about heaven;  
Now in the moon's blind caverns let them sty!

I, dowered by Nature with empyreal essence,  
Am dust—but not through dust does my way  
lie;

Nor East, nor west my home, nor Samarkand,  
Nor Ispahan nor Delhi; in ecstasy,

God-filled, I roam, speaking what truth I  
see—

No fool for priests, nor yet of this age's fry.

My folk berate me, the stranger does not love  
me:

Hemlock for sherbet I could never cry;

How could a weigher of truth see Mount  
Damawand  
And think a common refuse-heap as high?

In Nimrod's fire faith's silent witness, not  
Like mustard-seed in the grate, burned  
splutteringly—

Blood warm, gaze keen, right-following,  
wrong-forswearing,

In fetters free, prosperous in penury,

In fair of foul untamed and light of heart—  
Who can steal laughter from a flower's bright  
eye?

—Will no one hush this too proud thing Iqbal  
Whose tongue God's presence-chamber could  
not tie!

[Translated by V.G. Kiernan]

1<sup>1</sup>

*In November, 1933, His Majesty the Leader  
of the Faithful the now-martyred Nadir  
Shah Ghazi granted the author permission  
to visit the shrine of The sage Sana'i of*

<sup>1</sup> The numbering of poems in *Gabriel's Wing* starts again after 16. The only plausible explanation is that it marks a new section—while God was addressed in the previous section, the addressee here will be the humanity.

*Ghazna. These verses were written in commemoration of the event, in imitation of a famous panegyric by the poet—'We are coming after Sina'i and Attar.'*

All Nature's vastness cannot contain you, oh  
My madness: vain, those wanderings to and  
fro

In deserts! By selfhood only are the spells  
Of sense broken,— that power we did not  
know.

Rub your eyes, sluggard! Light is Nature's  
law,  
And not unknown to Ocean its waves flow.

Where reason and revelation war, faith errs  
To think the Mystic on his cross its foe,

For God's pure souls, in thralldom or on  
thrones,  
Have one safe shield, his scorn of this world's  
show.

But do not, Gabriel, envy my rapture: better  
For Heaven's dounce folk the prayer and the  
beads' neat row!

\*

I have seen many a wine-shop East and West;  
But here no Saki, there in the grape no glow.

In Iran no more, in Tartary no more,  
Those world-renouncers who could  
overthrow

Great kings; the Prophet's heir filches and  
sells

The blankets of the Prophet's kin. When to

The Lord I was denounced for crying  
Doomsday

Too soon, by that Archangel who must blow

Its trumpet, God made answer—*Is Doomsday  
far*

*When Makkah sleeps while China worships?—  
Though*

The bowl of faith finds none to pour, the  
beaker

Of modern thought brims with the wine of  
*No.*

Subdued by the dexterous fiddler's chords  
there murmurs  
In the lowest string the wail of Europe's  
woe—

Her waters that have bred the shark now  
breed  
The storm-wave that will smash its den  
below!

Slavery—exile from the love of beauty:  
Beauty—whatever free men reckon so;

Trust no slave's eyes, clear sight and liberty  
Go hand in hand. His own resolves bestow

The empire of To-day on him who fishes  
To-morrow's pearl up from Time's undertow.

The Frankish glassblowers' arts can make  
stone run:

My alchemy makes glass flint-hard. Pharaoh

Plotted and plots against me; but what harm?  
Heaven lifts my hand, like Moses', white as  
snow;

Earth's rubbish-heaps can never quell this  
spark

God struck to light whole deserts, His  
flambeau!

Love, self-beholding, self-sustaining, stands  
Un-awed at the gates of Caesar or Khosro;

If moon or Pleiades fall my prey, what  
wonder—

*Myself bound fast to the Prophet's saddle-bow!*

He—Guide, Last Envoy, Lord of All—lent  
brightness

Of Sinai to our dust; Love's eyes, not slow

To kindle, hail him Alpha and Omega,  
Chapter, and Word, and Book. I would not go

Pearl-diving there, for reverence of Sina'i;  
But in these tides a million pearls still grow.

[Translated by V.G. Kiernan]

2

Who is this composer of *ghazals*, who is  
burningly passionate and cheerful?



He makes the thoughts of the wise full of  
madness.

Although poverty also has royal  
characteristics,  
Kingship is only half complete without a  
kingdom.

Now in the cell of the Sufi, the same poverty  
has not remained—  
The poverty whose charter is written in the  
blood of the hearts of lions.

Ah circle of dervishes, see how the man of  
God is,  
In whose collar is the tumult of Judgement's  
Day—

—who is as bright as a flame by the heat of  
repetition of God's name;  
Who is quicker than the lightning by the  
swiftness of his thought.

Kingship gives rise to signs of madness—  
They are the scalpels of Allah, be they Taimur  
of Genghis.

Thus Iraq and Persia give me praise for my verse:  
This Indian infidels sheds blood without  
swords or spears.<sup>1</sup>

[Translated by D.J. Matthews]

3

The breath of Gabriel  
If God on me bestow,  
I may in words express  
What Love has made me know.

How can the stars foretell  
What future holds in store?  
They roam perplex'd and mean  
In skies that have no shore.

To fix one's mind and gaze  
On goal is life, in fact:  
To ego's death to lead  
The thoughts that mind distract.

How strange! The bliss of self  
Having bestowed on me,

<sup>1</sup> We have slightly altered Matthews' translated  
line to bring it closer to the original.

God mighty will that I  
Beside myself should be.

I neither like nor claim  
Plato's thought or Croesus' gold:  
Clean conscience, lofty gaze  
And zeal is all I hold.

By Holy Prophet's Ascent  
This truth to me was taught,  
Within the reach of man  
High heavens can be brought.

The Life perhaps is still  
Raw and incomplete:  
*Be and it becomes*  
E'er doth a voice repeat.

The West hath cast a spell  
On thine heart and mind:  
In Rumi's burning flame  
A cure for thyself find.

Through his bounty great  
My vision shines and glows,  
And mighty Oxus too  
In my pitcher flows.

[Translated by Syed Akbar Ali Shah]

4

Fabric of earth and wind and wave!  
Who is the secret, you or I,  
Brought into light? Or who the dark  
world of what hides yet, you or I?

Here in this night of grief and pain,  
trouble and toil, that men call life,

Who is the dawn, or who dawn's prayer  
cried from the minaret, you or I?

Who is the load that Time and Space  
bear on their shoulder? Who the prize

Run for with fiery feet by swift  
daybreak and sunset, you or I?

You are a pinch of dust and blind,  
I am a pinch of dust that feels;

Through the dry land, Existence, who  
flows like a streamlet, you or I?

[Translated by V.G. Kiernan]

5

(Written in London)

Thou art yet region-bound,  
Transcend the limits of space;  
Transcend the narrow climes  
Of the East and the West.

For selfless deeds of men  
Rewards are less mundane;  
Transcend the houris' glances,  
The pure, celestial wine.

Ravishing in its power  
Is beauty in the West;  
Thou bird of paradise,  
Resist this earthly trap.

With a mountain-cleaving assault,  
Bridging the East and West,  
Despise all defences,  
And become a sheathless sword.

Thy imam is unabsorbed,  
Thy prayer is uninspired,  
Forsake an imam like him,  
Forsake a prayer like this.

[Translated by Naim Siddiqui]

6

The free by dint of *faqr*  
Life's secrets can disclose:  
With Gabriel *faqr* is bound  
By ties of kinship close.

The scholar, mystic and  
The bard, by thinking wrong,  
Many a bark have sunk,  
That was sound and strong.

You need a burning glance  
That crows down lions bold:  
Only the sheep and goats  
Heave sighs deep and cold.

Love's physician scanned my face  
And thus he did bespeak,  
"You have no ailment, but  
Your zeal is faint and weak."

The soul that knows no stain  
Is something quite discreet:  
The glow and tint of blood  
Is wrought by bread and meat.

[Translated by Syed Akbar Ali Shah]

7

Hill and vale once more under the poppy's  
lamps are bright,  
In my heart the nightingale has set new songs  
alight;

Violet, violet, azure, azure, golden, golden,  
mantles—  
Flowers, or fairies of the desert, rank on rank  
in sight?

On the rosy-spray dawn's soft breeze has left  
a pearl of dew,  
Now the sunbeam turns this gem a yet more  
glittering white.

Town or woodland, which is sweeter, if for  
her unveiling  
Careless beauty love towns less than where  
green woods invite?

Delve into your soul and there seek our life's  
buried tracks;  
Will you not be mine? then be not mine, be  
your own right!

World of soul—the world of fire and ecstasy  
and longing;  
World of sense—the world of gain that fraud  
and cunning blight;

Treasure of the soul once won is never lost  
again:  
Treasure gold, a shadow—wealth soon comes  
and soon takes flight.

In the spirit's world I have not seen a white  
man's Raj,  
In that world I have not seen Hindu and  
Muslim fight.

Shame and shame that hermit's saying pouted  
on me—you forfeit  
Body and soul alike if once you cringe to  
another's might!

[Translated by V.G. Kiernan]

8

(Written in Kabul)

Muslims are born with a gift to charm, to persuade;  
Brave men—they are endowed with a noble courtesy.

Slaves of custom are all the schools of old;  
They teach the eaglet to grovel in the dust.  
These victims of the past have seen the dawn of hope,  
When I revealed to them the eagle's ways.

The man of God knows but two words of faith;  
The scholar has tomes of knowledge old and new.

About wine and women I know not how to write;  
Ask not a stone-breaker to work on glass.

O Iqbal! From where did you learn to be such a dervish:<sup>1</sup>  
Even among the kings there is talk about your contentment!

[Translated by Naim Siddiqui]

9

Through Love the song of Life  
Begets its rhythmic flow:  
From Love the shapes of clay  
Derive an endless glow.

Love makes its way to all  
The pores in human flesh,  
Like dewy wind of morn  
That makes the rose twig fresh.

If man denies his God,  
On kings he has to fawn:  
By trust in God, the kings  
To his door are drawn.

---

<sup>1</sup> The last two lines, "O Iqbal!... your contentment!" have been provided by the editors, since the translator had left them out.

Free heart lends kingly state,  
To belly death is due:  
Decide which of the two  
Is better in your view.

O Muslim, search your heart,  
Of mullah don't ask it,  
"The sacred House of God,  
The righteous why have quit?"

10

Of passion's glow your heart is blank,  
Your glances are not chaste and frank:  
To wonder at then there is naught  
That bold and dauntless you are not.

A longing strong for God's display,  
Is also hid in self-same clay:  
O heedless man, let this be known,  
Brains alone you do not own.

The eye whose light and luster rest  
On collyrium brought from West:  
Is full of art, conceit and show,  
It gets not wet at others' woe.

How can the priest and monk assess  
The height of craze that I possess?  
still sound the hems of robes they wear,  
Which have no rifts and know no tear.

How long the stars shall hold their sway  
On fate of man, sprung from clay?  
Either bereft of life I drop,  
Or the Wheel of Fate must stop.

Lightning I am and keep my eye  
On waste and hill that reach the sky:  
Heaps of straw and mounds of dust,  
Too low they are, avoid I must.

That godly man gets world's bequest,  
Who risks his life in ceaseless quest:  
That man no Faith can claim at all  
Who lives not up to Prophet's call.

[Translated by Syed Akbar Ali Shah]

11

A host of peril though you face,  
Yet your tongue with heart ally:  
From times antique and hoar

Qalandars on this mode rely.

Men congregate in numbers large  
In the mart where wine is sold,  
For polite and courteous seems  
The Head of Mart, the Magian Old.

Though the points by Razi touched  
May be subtle and profound,  
Yet against infirm belief  
No cure in them is ever found.

The disciple blind shed copious tears,  
Of sinful life he felt contrite.  
May God aid the shaykh as well  
To feel ashamed and do the right!

Man is bound still hand and foot  
In chains by this talisman old,  
For idols of the age of past  
Still men within their armpits hold.

Enough for me that I affirm  
With tongue alone my faith and creed:  
A thousand thanks for mullah's claim  
That he with heart avows, indeed.

As good as Muslim's true belief,  
If blessed with Love, unfaith is eke:  
Bereft of Love a Muslim true  
Is no better than Zindiq.

*[Translated by Syed Akbar Ali Shah]*

12

Rely on the witness of the phenomenal world  
To know whether you are on the mark or  
have gone astray:

Neither kingship nor poverty for a Muslim  
who lacks in faith,  
The one who has it is a king even if he be  
poor.

He depends on the sword if he lacks in faith:  
If he has faith he may need no weapons in the  
fight.

A Muslim without faith yields to what his  
fate ordains;  
With faith, he is destiny incarnate.

I revealed the secrets and rent the veil,  
But your blindness has no cure.

*[Translated by the Editors]*

13

*(Written in Cordoba)*

These Western nymphs  
A challenge to the eye and the heart,  
Are bold of glance,  
In a paradise of instant bliss.

Thy heart is a wavering ship,  
Tossed by beauty's assault  
These moons and stars that glisten,  
Are whirlpools in thy sea.

The warblings of the harp and lyre,  
Have wondrous powers—  
Powers that cannot be captured  
In the world of sound.

By teaching him the monastic wont and way,  
The Sufi has led astray the jurist of the town.<sup>1</sup>

The prostration that once  
Shook the earth's soul,  
Now leaves not a trace  
On the mosque's decadent walls.

I have not heard in the Arab world  
The thunderous call  
The call to prayer that pierced  
The hearts of hills in the past.

O Cordoba! Perhaps  
Some magic in thy air  
Has breathed into my song  
The buoyancy of youth.

*[Translated by Naim Siddiqui]*

14

A heart awake to man imparts  
Umar's brains and Hyder's manly parts:  
If watchful heart a man may hold,  
His dross is changed to sterling gold.

Beget a heart alive and sound,  
For, if it be in slumber bound,  
You cannot strike a deadly blow,

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<sup>1</sup> The two lines, "By teaching him...the jurist of the town," have been provided by the editors since the translator had left them out.

Nor even I can daring show.

If sense of smell be full and stunted,  
The musk-deer never can be hunted:  
If bereft of sense of smelling true,  
Surmise and guess can yield no clue.

My sighs no more I can withhold,  
When Muslims' sloth I do behold:  
If Muslims do not mend their way,  
Magians their luck might steal away.

These simple thralls of Yours, O Lord,  
From every house and door are barred:  
For kings, no less the acolytes,  
Are fraudulent and hypocrites.

The freedom that this age does grant  
Does ever freedom's essence want:  
Though freedom seems to outward sight,  
Yet is no less than prison tight.

O Lord of Yathrib! Cure provide  
For doubts that in my breast abide:  
My wisdom to the West is due,  
Girdled my faith like Brahman true.

[Translated by Syed Akbar Ali Shah]

15

in the coquetry and fierceness of the self there  
is no pride, there are no airs. Even if there  
are airs, then they are not without the  
pleasure of submission.

The eye of love is in search of the living heart;  
hunting for carrion does not befit up to the  
royal hawk.

In my song there is no charming and romantic  
grace, for the blast of the trumpet of Israfil is  
not meant to please the heart.

I will not ask for wine from the Frank, saki,  
for this is not the way of the pure-hearted  
profligates.

The rule of love has never been widespread in  
the world. The reason is this—that love is no  
time-server.

One continual anxiety—whether absent or  
present! If I tell it myself, my story is not  
long.

If you desire then read the *Persian Psalms*<sup>1</sup> in  
seclusion; the midnight lament is not bereft  
of secrets.

[Translated by D.J. Matthews]

16

A recreant captain, a battle-line thrown back,  
The arrow hanging target-less and slack!

Nowhere near you that shell which holds  
life's pearl;

I have dragged the waves and searched the  
ocean's track.

Plunge in your self, on idols dote no more,  
Pour our no more heart's blood for paint to  
deck

Their shrines. I unveil the courts of Love and  
Death:  
Death—life dishonoured; Love—death for  
honour's sake.

---

<sup>1</sup> We have changed the translator's 'Psalms of  
Persia' to the more widely known title of the book.

I gleaned in Rumi's company: one bold heart  
Is worth of learned heads the whole tame pack;

Once more that voice from Sinai's tree would cry  
*Fear not!* if some new Moses led the attack.

No glitter of Western science could dazzle my  
eyes

The dust of Medina stains, like collyrium,  
black.

*[Translated by V.G. Kiernan]*

17

*(Written in Europe)*

At London, winter wind, like sword, was  
biting though,

My wont to rise at early morn I didn't forego.

At times my heated talk to gathering pleasure  
lent;

My holding 'loof at times perplexed them all,  
I trow.

No hope for change is there, if workers rule  
the land,

For those who hew the rocks, like Parvez  
tricks do know.

Statecraft divorced from Faith to reign of  
terror leads,

Though it be a monarch's rule or Commoners'  
Show.

The streets of Rome remind of Delhi's  
glorious past,

The lesson same and charm are writ upon its  
brow.

18

The ancient fane in which we live  
Has heaps of thorns at every turn;  
Too hard to cross it safe and sound  
Without the aid of sighs that burn.

The tale of quarry shot by Love  
Is simple, brief and not too long:  
The victim feels the joy of prick  
And then the rest of saddle thong.

The sterling truth to Muslim taught,  
In feuds of different sects is lost;

How can you catch this truth again,  
With bias if your mind be fraught?

One is the outward form of faith,  
The other its spirit deep and true:  
He, who quaffs its spirits deep,  
Brings secrets hidden to his view.

O pilgrim wise, who tread the [ath,  
If passion strong for faith you lack,  
The bough of faith shall whither fast,  
Obscure and dim become the path.

Courage and valour are the signs  
By which the state of Love is known:  
Not every zeal is pert and rude,  
Nor daring by ev'ry person shown.

On the Day of Judgement too  
My frenzy will not let me rest:  
With Mighty God I shall contend  
Or rend to fragments my own vest.

*[Translated by Syed Akbar Ali Shah]*

19

The way to renounce is  
To conquer the earth and heaven;  
The way to renounce is not  
To starve oneself to death.

O cultists! I like not  
Your austere piety;  
Your piety is penury,  
Suffering and grief.

A nation that has lost  
Taimur's great heritage,  
Is unfit for piety,  
And is unfit to rule.

If the sweet cup-bearer  
Listens not to me, it is good;  
When I say, "no more,"  
That will only bring me more.

The Sufi and his peers  
Are all engrossed in a glimpse;  
They know not that concealment  
Is itself a vision.

Bondage is freedom  
With favours from on high,

And when favours are withheld,  
Even freedom is bondage.

The West is a treasure-house  
For the reason's quest;  
But for the heart it is  
A source of decay and death.

[Translated by Naim Siddiqui]

20

Though reason to the portal guide,  
Yet entry to it is denied.

Beg God to grant a lighted heart,  
For light and sight are things apart.

Though knowledge lends to mind a glow,  
No houris its Eden can ever show.

How strange that in the present time  
No one owns the joy sublime!

Some passions leave the mind intact,  
While others make it blind to fact.

The heart from unrest gets its life,  
What pity if it knows no strife!

You die because from God you flee,  
If living, linked with God shall be.

The pearls have all their covering cleft,  
Of urge to show you are bereft.

Show unto me, though I too cry,  
It is not tale of Moses and Sinai.

21

The self of man is ocean vast,  
And knows no depth or bound:  
If you take it for a stream,  
How can your mind be sound?

The magic of this whirling dome  
We can set at naught:  
Not of stone but of glass  
Its building has been wrought.

In Holy Trance in self we drown,  
And up we rise again;  
But how a worthless man can show  
So much might and main?

Your rank and state cannot be told  
By one who reads the stars:  
You are living dust, in sooth,  
Not ruled by Moon or Mars.

The maids of Ed'n and Gabriel eke  
In this world can be found,  
But, alas! You lack as yet  
Glances bold and zeal profound.

My craze has judged aright the bent  
Of times wherein I am born:  
Love be thanked for granting me  
The gown entire and untorn.

Spite of Nature's bounty great,  
Its guarding practice, mark!  
It grants the ruby reddish hue,  
But denies the heat of spark.

[Translated by Syed Akbar Ali Shah]

22

The morning breeze has whispered to me a  
secret,  
That those who know their selfhood, are  
equal to kings.

Selfhood is the essence of thy life and honour,  
Thou shalt rule with it, but without it be in  
disgrace.

Thou hast not led my way, O man of wisdom!  
But why, complain? Thou knowest not the  
way.

Fakirs who know the wont and way of kings  
Are as yet being trained in my literary circle.<sup>1</sup>

Thy monastic cult is a strait and narrow path,  
Which I like not, but thy freedom I respect.

This world of inferior prey is meant to  
sharpen thy claws,  
Thou art an eagle-hunter, but art a novice yet.

Whether thou art in the East or West, thy faith  
Is meaningless, unless thy heart affirms it.

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<sup>1</sup> Two lines, "Fakirs who know...my literary circle," have been provided by the editors since the translator had left them out.

23

Thy vision and thy hands are chained, earth-bound,  
 Is it thy nature's fault, or of the thought too high?  
 The schoolmen have strangled thy nascent soul,  
 And stifled the voice of passionate faith in thee.  
 Absorb thyself in selfhood, seek the path of God,  
 This is the only way for thee to find freedom.  
 Ask an unclad dervish what the heart doth say,  
 May God show thee thy place in the world of men.  
 If bare-headed, have a towering will,  
 The crown is not for thee, but for the eagle alone.  
 When thou lovest selfhood, thou lovest power, too;  
 Blame not the stars and fate for thy fall.  
 Monasteries and schools left me sad and dejected,  
 No life and no love; no vision and no knowledge.

*[Translated by Naim Siddiqui]*

24

The mind can give you naught,  
 But what with doubt is fraught:  
 One look of Saintly Guide  
 Can needful cure provide.  
 The goal that you presume  
 Is far and out of view:  
 What else can be this life  
 But zeal for endless strife?  
 Much worth the pearl begets,  
 For guard on self it sets:  
 What else in pearl is found  
 Except its sheen profound?

Though blood in veins may race,  
 To Life it lends no grace:  
 Only the glow of heart  
 To Life can zeal impart.

Wherefore, O Tulip Bride,  
 From me your charms you hide?  
 I am the breath of morn,  
 Your face I would adorn.

What Frankish dealers take  
 For counterfeit and fake,  
 Is true and real art—  
 Not valued in their Mart.

Though indigent I be,  
 I am of hand yet free:  
 What can the Flame bestow  
 Except its spark and glow?

25

The splendour of a monarch great  
 Is worthless for the free and bold:  
 Where lies the grandeur of a king,  
 Whose riches rest on borrowed gold?

You pin your faith on idols vain  
 And turn your back on Mighty God:  
 If this is not unbelief and sin,  
 What else is unbelief and fraud?

Luck favours the fool and the mean,  
 And exalts and lifts to the skies  
 Only those who are base and low  
 And know not how to patronize.

One look from the eyes of the Fair  
 Can make a conquest of the heart:  
 There is no charm in the fair sweet,  
 If it lacks this alluring art.

I am a target for the hate  
 Of the mighty rich and the great,  
 As I know the end of Caesars great  
 And know the freaks of luck or fate.

To be a person great and strong  
 Is the end and aim of all;  
 But that rank is not real and true  
 That is attained by the ego's fall.

My bold and simple mode of life  
 Has captured each and every heart;



Though my numbers are lame and dull  
And lay no claim to poet's art.

[Translated by Syed Akbar Ali Shah]

26

You are neither for the earth nor for the  
heaven:  
The world is for you, and not you for the  
world.

The sparks Reason and Heart are shed of the  
flame of Love:

That one to burn the straw, this one for  
burning the field of reeds.

This garden is for painful strains:  
Neither for enjoying the roses nor for making  
a nest.

How long, while your ship remains in Ravi,  
Nile and Euphrates?  
—When it is meant for the Ocean, which  
knows no bounds.

Once who were beacons to the brightest stars,  
Have long been awaiting a guide to show  
them the way now.

High ambition, winsome speech, a passionate  
soul—  
This is all the luggage for a leader of the  
Caravan.

It was a plain and simple truth but the  
imagination of the Persian mind  
Has confounded it with the poetic license.

I am saving a song for the Placeless Realm—  
A song that could shake even the trusty  
Gabriel.

27

O Prisoner of Space! You are not far from the  
Placeless Realm—  
That Audience Hall is not far away from your  
planet.

Grieve not, for a meadow that faces no threat  
from the Autumn,  
Is not far away from your nest.

The gist of all Gnostic knowledge is merely  
this:  
That life is an arrow spent and yet from the  
bow it is not too far!

Your station lies a little ahead of all the stars  
and Pleiades:  
Move on, for it is not a long way from the  
skies.

Lest he asks the guide to let him be!  
—It would be no surprise from a traveller  
who thinks too much.

[Translated by the Editors]

28

(Written in Europe)

My mind on me bestowed a thinker's gaze,  
From Love I learnt a toper's wont and ways.

No wine, no flask, no goblet goes around,  
Sweet looks to banquet lend its hue and  
sound.

Take not my rhymes for poet's art,  
I know the secrets of wine-seller's mart.

Behold the bud athirst for breath of Morn,  
It tells the story of my heart forlorn.

Know not, absence or presence if it be,  
I am the alien here, all others free.

My stay in West I may prolong a bit,  
My frenzy if this desert will admit.

The stage of mind by Iqbal soon was crost,  
But in the Vale of Love this sage was lost.

[Translated by Syed Akbar Ali Shah]

29

From the heavens comes an answer to our  
long cries at last:  
The heavens break their silence, the curtains  
rise at last!

Little of change love's fortunes inherit: born in  
anguish  
And fire, in fire and anguish its end it buys at  
last.

The destiny of nations I chart for you: at first  
The sword and spear; the zither's, the lute's  
soft sighs at last.

Outlandish are the customs that Europe's  
tavern knows!

It steeps men first in pleasure, the wine  
supplies at last.

Be it the awe of Nadir, be it the glory of a  
Tamerlane:

At last all exploits are drowned in a barrel of  
wine.<sup>1</sup>

The cloistered hour is over, the arena's hour  
begins;  
The lightning comes to asunder those cloudy  
skies at last!

It was too hard to withhold the flood of these  
truths,  
At last the Qalandar revealed the secrets of  
the Book.<sup>2</sup>

[Translated by M.D. Taseer]

30

All life is voyaging,  
all life in motion,  
Moon, stars, and creatures  
of air and ocean.

To you the champion,  
the lord of battle,  
Bright angels offer  
their swords' devotion—

But of that blindness,  
that caravan spirit!  
Of your own greatness  
you have no notion.

How long this bondage  
to darkness? Choose now:  
A prince's scepter, —  
a hermit's potion.

<sup>1</sup> Two lines, "Be it the awe of Nadir...a barrel of wine," have been provided by the editors. The translator had left them out.

<sup>2</sup> Two lines, "It was too hard...the secrets of the Book," have been provided by the editors. The translator had left them out.

I know our priesthood,  
how faint in action,  
In sermons pouring  
a languid lotion.

31

Every atom pants for glory: greed  
Of self-fruitation earth's whole creed!  
Life that thirsts for no flowering—death:  
Self-creation—a godlike deed;  
Through self the mustard-seed becomes  
A hill: without, the hill a seed.  
The stars wander and do not meet,  
To all things severance is decreed;  
Pale is the moon of night's last hour  
No whispered things of friendship speed.  
Own self is all the light you need;  
You are this world's sole truth, all else  
Illusion such as sorceries breed.  
—These desert thorns prick many a doubt:  
Do not complain if bare feet bleed.

—[Translated by V.G. Kiernan]

32

This wonder by some glance is wrought,  
Or Fortune's wheel has come full round:  
At last the Frankish charm has broke,  
The East by which in past was bound.

By the building of my nest,  
This secret hid was brought to view  
That for the bards that sing and chant  
The choice of nest is bolt from blue.

If slave to God, you grow divine,  
If slave to world a beggar mean:  
You are the master of your fate,  
So make the choice the two between.

Of selfhood heedless never be,  
Your gaze to self always confine:  
Who knows, you mat anon become  
The threshold of some sacred shrine.

O heir to creed *no god but He*,  
In you I see no sign or trace  
Of mighty deeds that terror strike,  
Your talk devoid of charm and grace.

Comment [MSU1]: *Pakistan Quarterly*,  
Karachi. April 1947

Your glances bold would strike the heart  
 With awe, though sheathed within the  
 breast:

Alas! a qalandar's fervent zeal  
 In you is dead and is at rest.

Of Sanctuary's secret hid  
 Iqbal perhaps is well aware:  
 His speech and song display alike  
 A confidential mode and air.

[Translated by Syed Akbar Ali Shah]

33

What should I ask the sages about my origin:  
 I am always wanting to know my goal.

Develop the self so that before every decree  
 God will ascertain from you: "What is your  
 wish?"

It is nothing to talk about if I transform base  
 selves into gold:  
 The passion of my voice is the only alchemy I  
 know!

O Comrade, I beheld the secrets of Destiny in  
 them—  
 What should I tell you of those lustrous eyes!  
 Only if that *majzub*<sup>1</sup> of the West were living in  
 these times,  
 Iqbal could have explained to him the 'I am.'

My heart bleeds from the song of the early  
 morning:  
 O Lord! What is the sin for which this is a  
 punishment?

[Translated by the Editors]<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Iqbal's note—Nietzsche, the famous self-absorbed  
 German philosopher who could not interpret his  
 inner experience correctly and was therefore  
 misled by his philosophical thoughts.

<sup>2</sup> The first four lines are based on a partial  
 translation by Annemarie Schimmel in 'The Ideal  
 of Prayer in the Thought of Iqbal,' included in *Iqbal:  
 the Poet of Tomorrow*, edited by Khawaja Adbur  
 Rahim.

34

When through the Love man conscious grows  
 Of respect self-awareness needs,  
 Though in chains, he learns at once  
 The regal mode and kingly deeds.

Like Rumi, Attar, Ghazzali and Razi,  
 One may be mystic great or wise,  
 But none can reach his goal and aim  
 Without the help of morning sighs.

No need for leaders sage and great  
 To lose all hope of Muslim true:  
 Though amiss this pilgrim be,  
 Yet can burn on fire like rue.

O Bird, that yearn to merge with God,<sup>3</sup>  
 You must keep this truth in sight,  
 To suffer death is nobler far  
 Than bread that clogs your upward flight.

A person poor and destitute,  
 Who walks in steps of God's Lion bold,  
 Is more exalt'd than monarchs great:  
 He spurns the worldly wealth and gold.

Men bold and firm uphold the truth  
 And let no fears assail their hearts:  
 No doubt, the mighty Lions of God  
 Know no tricks and know no arts.

35

Once more I feel the urge to wail  
 And weep at dead of night:  
 O traveller, stop a bit, perchance  
 I face some awful site.

Awhile in dark abyss of Fate  
 Dive and see beneath:  
 Out of this battlefield I come  
 Like sword out of the sheath.

This verse some man with witty mind  
 On niche of mosque did write:  
 These fools fell prostrate on the earth,  
 When it was time to fight."

O man, who at my misery scoff,  
 Follow the road you tread:

<sup>3</sup> Translator has made a gross error: Iqbal's phrase  
 simply means *the bird who flies to the Throne of God*.

When the cup to me was passed,  
The gathering all had fled.

Iqbal his glow to Muslims lent,  
Who in India dwell:  
An easy-going man he was  
And served the sluggards well.

To find Iqbal for years on end  
I did chafe and fret:  
By effort great that kingly hawk  
Has come within my net.

36

Devoid of passion's roar  
I can exist no more:  
What else can be this life  
But passion strong and strife?

My essence endlessly  
Impels my minstrelsy:  
Some may in throng be still,  
Who feels for others' ill.

Love's flame can still set fire  
To lodge and goods entire:  
If thirst be not aflame,  
Wherefore the saki blame?

Your judgment of the West  
On glamour must not rest:  
Its essence seems so bright  
By means of electric light.

The thoughts of world conquest  
Can never shape in breast,  
If blessed not be your gaze  
With world-wide wont and ways.

I, even in winter drear,  
Fell not in hunter's snare:  
My nest's branches bare  
Drew the hunter's stare.

Their plans shall end in smoke,  
Miscarry the destined stroke:  
This fact with truth is fraught,  
No fiction of my thought.

37

Nature before your mind present,  
Subdue this world of hue and scent.

Of selfhood you appear bereft,  
To find the thing lost go on quest.

The stars do shine in boundless space,  
Desire to get this lofty place.

Disrobed the houris of your mead,  
The rose and tulip darning need.

Of urge, though Nature not deplete,  
Yet where it fails you must complete.

38

Alas! The mullah and the priest,  
Conduct their sermons so  
That despite their efforts great,  
The hearts of listeners fail to glow.

O fellow stupid, get firm belief,  
For faith upon you can bestow  
Dervishhood of such lofty brand  
'Fore which the mighty monarchs bow.

Disunion's ache that I do feel  
A thousand hues and garbs can don:  
To rapture and surprise converts,  
Anon to sighs of early morn.

Secrets of love and passion strong  
Transcend the ken of earthy breed:  
This much alone I learnt that death  
Of heart disunion means indeed.

The Fair with His own Beauty drunk  
Is impelled to cast the Veil aside:  
The reasons of His remaining hid  
Within my own dim sight abide.

The rules that govern the Turn of Fate  
No one can ever understand,  
Else the heirs to Tamerlane  
Were brave like those of Turkish Land.

How have the beggars of the Shrine  
Brought Iqbal within their fold,  
Though monarchs great and princes strong  
A falcon white can't get in hold?

39

The magic old to life is brought  
By means of present science and thought:  
The path of life cannot be trod

Without the aid of Moses' Rod.

The mind is skilful in artful tasks,  
And can assume a hundred masks:  
Poor helpless Love that knows no guise  
Ain't mullah, hermit or too wise.

Forbid the rest of lodge and bed  
To those who road of Love do tread:  
Like travellers they always roam,  
Though they seem to stay at home.

Concern for journey's food and steed,  
Like burden great, retards your speed:  
Of this dead weight, if one be free,  
Like breeze can cross the mount and sea.

No wealth is owned by dervish free,  
At call of death he yields with glee:  
He has not either gold or land,  
Of him no one can tithe demand.

*[Translated by Syed Akbar Ali Shah]*

40

Other worlds exist beyond the stars—  
More tests of love are still to come.

This vast space does not lack life—  
Hundreds of other caravans are here.

Do not be content with the world of colour  
and Smell,  
Other gardens there are, other nests, too.

What is the worry if one nest is lost?  
There are other places to sigh and cry for!

You are an eagle, flight is your vocation:  
You have other skies stretching out before  
you.

Do not let mere day and night ensnare you,  
Other times and places belong to you.

Gone are the days when I was alone in  
company—  
Many here are my confidants now.

*[Translated by Mustansir Mir]*

41

*(Written in France)*

The West seeks to make life a perpetual feast;  
A wish in vain, in vain, in vain!

Aware of my state, my spiritual guide assures  
me,  
Thy ecstasy has reached the plenitude of its  
power.

Moses asked for a Divine glimpse, but I do  
not:  
The demand was right for him; but is  
forbidden for me.

The plaint of the men of God betrays a  
suppressed secret;  
But the ways of the men of God are not meant  
for all.

*Zikr* in the Sufis' circle was devoid of ecstasy,  
I remained unsatisfied, and so was everyone.

Love is thy goal, and mine, too, but both  
Are so far novices on the path of love.

Alas! Thou hast betrayed the secret of a fakir,  
Though a fakir has wealth more than a king of  
men.

*[Translated by Naim Siddiqui]*

42

If self with knowledge strong becomes,  
Gabriel it can envious make:  
If fortified with passion great,  
Like trump of Israfil can shake.

The scourge of present science and thought,  
To me, no doubt, is fully known,  
Like Abraham, the Friend of God,  
In its flame I have been thrown.

The caravan in quest of goal  
By charm of lodge is led astray,  
Though never can the ease of lodge  
Be same as joy to be on way.

If seeing eye you do not own,  
Among my listeners do not pause,  
For subtle points about the self,

Like sword, deep yawning wounds can  
cause.

Still to mind I can recall,

In Europe what I learnt by heart:

But can the veil of Reason match

With joy that Presence can import.

From caravan you are adrift,

And night has donned a mantle black:

For you my song that burns as flame,

Like a torch, can light the track.

The tale of the Holy Shrine, if told,

Is simple, strange and red in hue:

With Ismail the tale begins

Ends with Husain, the martyr true.

43

The schools bestow no grace of fancy fine,  
Cloisters impart no glow of Love Divine.

The goal that Travellers seek is far and wide,  
Alas! There is no chief to lead and guide.

No less than Khyber, the war of faith and  
land,

But warrior like Ali is not at hand.

Beyond the bounds of science for faithful  
thrall

Is bliss of love and sight of God withal.

The chief of tavern thinks that West has raised  
The house on shaking founnds, whose walls  
are glazed.

*[Translated by Syed Akbar Ali Shah]*

44

Events as yet folded in the scroll of Time  
Reflect in the mirror of my perception.

Neither the planets, nor the spinning skies—  
Only my bold song—can tell you your  
destiny.

Either my sighs are devoid of fire,  
Or else your straw and thorns as yet retain  
some sap;

Yet perchance my morning song  
May quicken the fire that your dust  
contains—

The dust that will break the spell of the  
passing time one day,  
Though it is entangled in the skein of Fate as  
yet.

*[Translated by the Editors]*

45

To Lover's glowing fire and flame  
The mystic order has no claim:  
They don't discourse or talk of aught  
Save wonders by their elders wrought.

Alas! The throne as well as the mat,  
Alike are full of guile and craft:  
Both royal hall and Holy Shrine  
Have lost their essence fine.

The scrolls of Sufis and mullah may  
Put them to shame on Judgment Day  
Before the Throne of Judge Supreme  
For being empty in extreme.

How can this world or next contain  
The man not bound to one domain?  
The East or West is not his home,  
Not tied to Syrian Land or Rome.

Intoxication due to nightly wine,  
No doubt, by now, is one decline,  
But saki's glance still pricks the heart,  
Like a swift and piercing dart.

My bitter notes with patience hark,  
That I utter in this park:  
Bear it in mind that passion too  
Oft can work like elixir true.

More dear and precious song replete  
With lightning's dazzling flash and heat  
Than coffers full of yellow gold  
That mighty kings and chiefs do hold.

*[Translated by Syed Akbar Ali Shah]*

46

Intuition in the West was clever in its power,  
But had not the plenitude for absolute abandon.

The quintessence of life is the force of faith  
supreme—  
It is a force denied to all our seats of learning.

The galaxies, the planets, the firmament, are all  
Waiting for man's rise, like a star in heaven.

Brains are bright and hearts are dark and eyes  
are bold,

Is this the sum and substance of what our age  
has gained?

The world is a haystack for the fire of the Muslim  
soul,

But if thou art eyeless, thou canst not find thy  
way.

To a multitude of men, reason is the guide,  
They know not that frenzy has a wisdom of  
its own.

The world entire is a legacy of the Man of Faith:<sup>1</sup>  
I say it on the authority of *We would not have  
created it.*

[Translated by Naim Siddiqui]

47

O manly heart, the goal you seek  
Is hard to gain like gem unique:  
Get firm resolve and freedom true,  
If aim of life you wish to woo.

Like Sanjar great and Tughral just  
To rule and conquer learn you must:  
Or like a qalandar true and bold  
The wont and way of monarch hold.

Farabi's thirst for lore beget,  
Or Rumi's fever great and fret:  
You need a thinker's lofty gaze,  
Or Moses' passion to amaze.

Learn the wolfish tricks and guile,  
Be like Franks in wit and wile:  
Else own the passion of God's Hand,  
Or strike the foes like Tartar band.

Act on Muslim law and rites,  
Or sit in fane like acolytes:  
Be it the Shrine or temple high,  
Ever like a drunkard cry.

---

<sup>1</sup> Two lines, "The world entire...*would not have  
created it,*" have been provided by the editors since  
the translator had left them out.

In whatsoever state you be,  
A fettered thrall or monarch free:  
No wonder ever can be wrought,  
With Love, if courage be not fraught.

48

A monarch's pomp and mighty arms  
Can never give such glee,  
As can be felt in presence of  
A qalandar bold and free.

The world is like an idol house,  
God's Friend, a person free:  
No doubt, this subtle point is hid  
In words, *No god but He.*

The world that you with effort make  
To you belongs alone:  
The world of brick and stone you see,  
You cannot call your own.

The clay-made man is still among  
The vagrants on the road,  
Though man beyond the moon and stars  
Can find his true abode.

This news I have received from those  
Who rule the sea and land,  
That Europe lies on course of flood  
'Gainst which no one can stand.

A world there is quite fresh and new  
In sighs at morn I have:  
Your portion seek within its tracts,  
Thus goal and aim achieve.

Count my gourd an immense gain,  
For pure and sparkling wine  
No more the seats of learning store  
Nor sells the Sacred Shrine.

[Translated by Syed Akbar Ali Shah]

49

On me no subtle brain though Nature spent,  
My dust hides strength to dare the high  
ascent—

That frantic dust whose eye outranges reason,  
Dust by whose madness Gabriel's rose is rent;

That will not creep about its garden gathering  
Straw for a nest—un-housed and yet content.

And Allah to this dust a gift of tears  
Whose brightness shames the constellations, lent.

50

By men whose eyes see far and wide new  
cities shall be founded:  
Not by old Kufa or Baghdad is my thought's  
vision bounded.

Rash youth, new-fangled learning, giddy  
pleasure, gaudy plume,—  
With these, while these still swarm, the  
Frankish wine-shop is surrounded.

Not with philosopher, nor with priest, my  
business; one lays waste  
The heart, and one sows discord to keep mind  
and soul confounded;

And for the Pharisee—far from this poor  
worm be disrespect!  
But how to enfranchise Man, is all the problem I  
have sounded.

The fleshpots of the wealthy are for sale about  
the world;  
Who bears love's toils and pangs earns wealth  
that God's hand has compounded.

I have laid bare such mysteries as the hermit  
learns, that thought,  
In cloister or in college, in true freedom may  
be grounded.

No fastings of Mahatmas will destroy the  
Brahmins' sway;  
Vainly, when Moses holds no rod, have all his  
words resounded!

*[Translated by V.G. Kiernan]*

51

To God the angels did complain  
'Gainst Iqbal and did say  
That rude and insolent is he,  
Nature he paints much gay.

Though born of mud and water, yet  
A god assumes to be:  
Not bound to any home or land,  
Of earthly ties is free.

To throngs of Heaven he has taught,  
Like man, to fret and pine.  
To clay-made man he fain would teach  
The wont and mode divine.

52

Over the tussle of heart and head  
Rumi has won and Rizi fled.

Still bowl of Jamshid is alive,  
Without guile kingship cannot thrive.

Both you and I aren't Muslims true,  
Though we say the prayers due.

I know the end of wrangle well  
Where mullahs at each other yell.

Turkish and Arabic both are sweet,  
For talk of Love all tongues are meet.

The breed of Azar idols make,  
But Friends of God these idols break.

You are alive and live for aye  
The rest is all a play with clay.

*[Translated by Syed Akbar Ali Shah]*

53

Arise! The bugle calls! It is time to leave!  
Woe be to the traveller who still awaits!

The confines of a monastery suit thee not—  
The times have changed, thou seest, and so hast  
thou.

Thorny is the path, O seeker of salvation!  
Whether thy heart is the slave or the master of  
reason.

The selfhood of one who bemoans all change,  
Is yet a prisoner of time, shackled by days and  
nights.

O songbird! Thy song is well rewarded when  
It infuses fire into the rose's bloom.

*[Translated by Naim Siddiqui]*

54

The Gnostic and the common throng  
New life have gained through my song:  
I have conferred relish fine



On them for Love's fiery wine.

Some Ajami near the Holy Shrine  
Did sadly sing this song and pine,  
"Alas! the robes by pilgrims worn  
To threads and pieces now are torn."

The place of Husain, the Martyr great  
Is fact, not bound to Space or Date,  
Though the Syrians and the Kufis may  
Often change their wont and way.

The gamblers who with you compete  
Are deft of band and they can cheat:  
Your fumbling shaky hands, I fear,  
May bring about your ruin so drear.

No wonder If the Muslims gain  
Their ancient glory once again—  
Sanjar's splendour pomp and state,  
The piety and *faqir* of mystics great.

The robe of art and lore I wear  
Is through Your special bounty there:  
You know my coarse and homely frame,  
To honour great I have no claim.

## 55

Through many a stage the crescent goes  
And then at last full moon it grows:  
Perfection no one can attain,  
Save by dint of strife and strain.

The bud that gets no share of light  
From the sun that shines so bright,  
And opens through its inner urge  
Is bereft of life's full surge.

If your gaze of sins be free,  
Then chaste and pure your heart shall be,  
For God the Mighty has decreed  
That heart shall follow and gaze shall lead.

The tulip red with heart afire  
In avenue could not thrive and spire,  
As this world of corn and wheat  
For tulip wild could not be meet.

Great wars by Aibak and Ghauri fought  
By the world are all forgot;  
But the lays of Khusrau still  
Our hearts with joy and pleasure fill.

## 56

In the maze of eve and morn,  
O man awake, do not be lost:  
Another world there yet exists  
That has no future or the past.

None knows that tumult's worth and price  
Which hidden lies in future's womb:  
The mosque, the school and tavern too  
Since long are silent like a tomb.

In tears shed at early morn  
Is found the gem unique and best,  
The gem, whose like is never held,  
By mother shell within its breast.

The Culture New is nothing else  
Save glamour false and show, indeed:  
If the face be fair and bright,  
Rouge vendors aid it does not need.

Much care and caution must he take,  
Who sets the music of a song:  
For oft the Voice Unseen inspires  
Such airs as jarring are and wrong.

## 57

The cloisters, once the rearing place  
Of daring men and royal breed,  
Alas! Now nothing else impart—  
To foxy ways they pay much heed.

The chiefs who lead the caravan train,  
Of that virtue quite are blank,  
Which is found in shepherd's task  
And leads to Moses' noble rank.

How can the birds with voices sweet  
The thrilling joy of song attain?  
Alas! The birds in hostile mead  
Cannot their breath for long sustain.

One type of rapture and surprise  
Is darkness deep and pitch complete;  
The other rapture and surprise  
With love and knowledge is replete.

My thoughts sublime that soar aloft,  
Like the flash of lightning, show the way;  
Lest travellers in the dark of night  
Should miss the track and go astray.

58

From Salman<sup>1</sup>, singer sweet,  
This subtle point I know:  
That world is wide enough  
For those who courage show.

A man can live without  
The light of science and art;  
But needs hawk's zeal for quest  
And tiger's reckless heart.

Desist from imitation  
Of peacock and nightingale:  
The one is only hue,  
The other chant and wail.

59

The crown, the throne, and mighty arms  
By *faqr* are wrought these wonders all:  
In short, it is the chief of chiefs  
And king of other kings withal.

By means of learning mind and brain,  
No doubt, become refined and pure:  
*Faqr* makes the heart and gaze of man  
From earthly filth and dross secure.

Scholar and sage knowledge makes,  
But Christ and Moses by *faqr* are wrought:  
To *faqr* the road is fully known,  
Of road the scholar knows not aught.

The state of seeing *faqr* bestows,  
But knowledge makes on new rely:  
Rapture in *faqr* is virtue great,  
Whereas in knowledge sin so high.

One God there is that knowledge owns  
To other God *faqr* lays a claim:  
*No god but He*, I do proclaim,  
No god but He, I do proclaim.

On the whetting stone of *faqr*,  
When sword of Self gets sharp and bright,  
A single stroke by warrior bold  
Can out an army big to flight.

<sup>1</sup> Iqbal's note—Salman [refers to] Masud Sa'ad Salman, the famous poet of the Ghaznavid era who was probably born in Lahore.

Within your clay, if there exist  
A heart alive and wide awake,  
The glass of sun and moon as well  
One look of yours forthwith can break.

60

In my craze that knows no bound,  
Of the Mosque I made the round:  
Thank God that outer vest of Shrine  
Still was left untorn and fine.

I wish good luck and pleasure great,  
To all, of faith who always prate  
But all the jurists of the town  
With one accord upon me frown.

Men, like Plato, still roam about  
Betwixt belief and utter doubt  
Men endowed with reason, aye,  
Ever on the heights do stay.

Unless the Book's each verse and part  
Be revealed unto your heart,  
Interpreters, though much profound,  
Its subtle points cannot expound

The joy that Frankish wine does give  
Lasts not for long nor always live,  
Though scum at bottom of its bowl  
Is always pure and never foul.

61

Knowledge and reason work in manner  
strange,  
In case of Love 'gainst heart and sight they  
range.

The end of Muslim folk I know full well,  
On theoretic points their preachers dwell.

Though bird of mead hovers my lodge around,  
Yet has no share of my melodious sound.

The Turks, I hear, between the lines can read,  
Who can this verse so odd convey with speed?

"You take the West for neighbour sweet and  
dear,  
Though Stars to land of yours are close and  
near."

[Translated by Syed Akbar Ali Shah]

\*

The rituals of the Sanctuary unsanctified!  
The Church commercialized.  
My torn apparel ought to be valued much,  
For madness has become rare these days!

[Translated by the Editors]

\*

O wave! Plunge headlong into the dark seas,  
And change thyself with many a twist and  
turn;  
Thou wast not born for the solace of the shore;  
Arise, untamed, and find a path for thyself.

\*

Am I bound by space, or beyond space?  
A world-observer or a world myself?  
Let Him remain happy in His Infinitude,  
But condescend to tell me where I am.

\*

Confused is the nature of my love for Thee,  
And more confused is my song in Thy praise;  
For I sometimes do relish fulfillment,  
At other times, a yearning in my heart.

\*

I was in the solitude of selfhood lost,  
And was, it seemed, unaware of the Presence;  
I lifted not my eyes to see my Friend,  
And, on the Day of Judgment, shamed myself.

[Translated by Naim Siddiqui]

\*

Faith, like Abraham, sits down in the fire;  
To have faith is to be drawn into God and to  
be oneself.  
Listen, you captive of modern civilization,  
To lack faith is worse than slavery!

[Translated by Mustansir Mir]

\*

Arabian fervour has within it the Persian  
melodies,  
The hidden purpose of the Sanctuary is to  
unify all nations.

Western thought is bereft of the idea of  
Oneness,  
Because the Western civilization has no  
Ka'bah.

[Translated by M. Munawwar Mirza]<sup>1</sup>

\*

A restless heart throbs in every atom;  
It has its abode, alone, in a multitude;  
Impaled upon the wheel of days and nights,  
It remains unchained by the tyranny of time.

[Translated by Naim Siddiqui]

\*

I wish someone saw how I play the flute—  
The breath is Indian, the tune Arabian!  
My vision has a taint of the Western style;  
I am a Ghaznavi by temper, but my fate is  
that of an Ayaz!

[Translated by Mustansir Mir]

\*

Thy vision is not lofty, ethereal,  
Thou dost not have the flight of a faith  
inspired;  
Thou mayest be of an eagle breed, no doubt,  
Thou dost not have those bold, piercing eyes.

\*

Neither the Muslim nor his power survives;  
The Sufi has outlived his radiant soul;  
Ask God for the heart and soul of men of the  
past,  
Become a fakir, first, to regain thy power.

\*

Distracted are thy eyes in myriad ways;  
Distracted is thy reason in many pursuits;  
Forsake not, O heart, thy morning sighs!  
Chanting His name, thou mayest save thy  
soul.

\*

Selfhood in the world of men is prophethood;  
Selfhood in solitude is godliness;

<sup>1</sup> A few words have been altered for brevity.

The earth, the heavens, the great empyrean,  
Are all within the range of selfhood's power.

\*

The beauty of mystic love is shaped in song;  
The majesty of mystic love is abandon;  
The peak of mystic love is Hyder's power;  
The decline of mystic love is Razi's word.

\*

Where is the moving spirit of my life?  
The thunder-bolt, the harvest of my life?  
His place is in the solitude of the heart,  
But I know not the place of the heart within.

\*

Thy bosom has breath; it does not have a  
heart;  
Thy breath has not the warmth and fire of life;  
Renounce the path of reason; it is a light  
That brightens thy way; it is not thy Final  
goal.

\*

I am not a pursuer, nor a traveller,  
I am not a goal, but a narrow track,  
I am not a harvest, but a thunder-bolt,  
Born to set fire to straw, buried in the dust.

\*

Pure in nature thou art, thy nature is light;  
Thou art the star in the firmament;  
Thou not an eagle of the King of Men,  
Thy preys are the nymphs and the angels  
bright.

*[Translated by Naim Siddiqui]*

\*

They no longer have that passionate love—  
Muslims are drained of blood.  
The rows are uneven, the hearts adrift, the  
prostration joyless—  
All this because the inner feeling is dead!

*[Translated by Mustansir Mir]*

\*

Dew-drops glisten on flowers that bloom in  
the spring;  
The breeze, the jasmine, and the rose have  
failed  
To raise the tumult of joy and liveliness,  
For flowers here lack the spark and fire of life.

\*

Conquer the world with the power of  
selfhood,  
And solve the riddle of the universe;  
Be intimate with thy shores, like the sea,  
But avoid the surf around the boundless deep.

*[Translated by Naim Siddiqui]*

\*

Reason makes the traveller sharp-sighted.  
What is reason? It is a lamp that lights up our  
path.  
The commotion raging inside the house—  
What does the traveller's lamp know of it!

*[Translated by Mustansir Mir]*

## A PRAYER

*(Written in the Mosque of Cordoba)*

My invocations are sincere and true,  
They form my ablutions and prayers due.

One glance of guide such joy and warmth can  
grant,  
On marge of stream can bloom the tulip plant.

One has no comrade on Love's journey long  
Save fervent zeal, and passion great and  
strong.

O God, at gates of rich I do not bow,  
You are my dwelling place and nesting  
bough.

Your Love in my breast burns like Doomsday  
morn,  
The cry, *He is God*, on my lips is born.

Your Love, makes me God, fret with pain and  
pine,

You are the only quest and aim of mine.

Without You town appears devoid of life,  
When present, same town appears astir with  
strife.

For wine of gnosis I request and ask,  
To get some dregs I break the cup and glass.

The mystics' gourds and commons' pitchers  
wait

For liquor of your Grace and Bounty great.

Against Your godhead I have a genuine  
plaint,

For You the Spaceless, while for me restraint.

Both verse and wisdom indicate the way  
Which longing face to face can not convey.

*[Translated by Syed Akbar Ali Shah]*

\*

The mystic's soul is like the morning breeze:  
It freshens and renews life's inner meaning;  
An illumined soul can be a shepherd's, who  
Could hear the Voice of God at God's  
command.

*[Translated by Naim Siddiqui]*

#### THE MOSQUE OF CORDOBA

*(Written in Spain, especially Cordoba)*

The succession of day and night  
Is the architect of events.

The succession of day and night  
Is the fountain-head of life and death.

The succession of day and night  
Is a two-tone silken twine,  
With which the Divine Essence  
Prepares Its apparel of Attributes.

The succession of day and night  
Is the reverberation of the symphony of  
Creation.

Through its modulations, the Infinite  
demonstrates

The parameters of possibilities.

The succession of day and night  
Is the touchstone of the universe;

Now sitting in judgement on you,  
Now setting a value on me.

But what if you are found wanting.

What if I am found wanting.

Death is your ultimate destiny.

Death is my ultimate destiny.

What else is the reality of your days  
and nights,

Besides a surge in the river of time,

Sans day, sans night.

Frail and evanescent, all miracles of  
ingenuity,

Transient, all temporal attainments;

Ephemeral, all worldly accomplishments.

Annihilation is the end of all  
beginnings.

Annihilation is the end of all ends.

Extinction, the fate of everything;

Hidden or manifest, old or new.

Yet in this very scenario

Indelible is the stamp of permanence

On the deeds of the good and godly.

Deeds of the godly radiate with Love,

The essence of life,

Which death is forbidden to touch.

Fast and free flows the tide of time,

But Love itself is a tide that stems all tides.

In the chronicle of Love there are times

Other than the past, the present and the  
future;

Times for which no names have yet  
been coined.

Love is the breath of Gabriel.

Love is the heart of Mustafa.

Love is the messenger of God.

Love is the Word of God.

Love is ecstasy lends luster to earthly  
forms.

Love is the heady wine,

Love is the grand goblet.

Love is the commander of marching troops.

Love is a wayfarer with many a way-side  
abode.

Love is the plectrum that brings

Music to the string of life.

Love is the light of life.

Love is the fire of life.

To Love, you owe your being,  
 O, Harem of Cordoba,  
 To Love, that is eternal;  
 Never waning, never fading.  
     Just the media these pigments, bricks  
     and stones;  
     This harp, these words and sounds, just  
     the media.  
     The miracle of art springs from the  
     lifeblood of the artist!  
 A droplet of the lifeblood  
 Transforms a piece of dead rock into a living  
 heart;  
 An impressive sound, into a song of  
 solicitude,  
 A refrain of rapture or a melody of mirth.  
     The aura you exude, illumines the  
     heart.  
     My plaint kindles the soul.  
     You draw the hearts to the Presence  
     Divine,  
     I inspire them to bloom and blossom.  
 No less exalted than the Exalted Throne,  
 Is the throne of the heart, the human breast!  
 Despite the limit of azure skies,  
 Ordained for this handful of dust.  
     Celestial beings, born of light,  
     Do have the privilege of supplication,  
     But unknown to them  
     Are the verve and warmth of  
     prostration.  
 An Indian infidel, perchance, am I;  
 But look at my fervour, my ardour.  
 'Blessings and peace upon the Prophet,' sings  
 my heart.  
 'Blessings and peace upon the Prophet,' echo  
 my lips.  
     My song is the song of aspiration.  
     My lute is the serenade of longing.  
     Every fibre of my being  
     Resonates with the refrains of *Allah hoo!*  
 Your beauty, your majesty,  
 Personify the graces of the man of faith.  
 You are beautiful and majestic.  
 He too is beautiful and majestic.  
     Your foundations are lasting,  
     Your columns countless,

Like the profusion of palms  
 In the plains of Syria.  
 Your arches, your terraces, shimmer with the  
 light  
 That once flashed in the valley of Aiman  
 Your soaring minaret, all aglow  
 In the resplendence of Gabriel's glory.  
     The Muslim is destined to last  
     As his *Azan* holds the key to the  
     mysteries  
     Of the perennial message of Abraham  
     and Moses.  
 His world knows no boundaries,  
 His horizon, no frontiers.  
 Tigris, Danube and Nile:  
 Billows of his oceanic expanse.  
     Fabulous, have been his times!  
     Fascinating, the accounts of his  
     achievements!  
     He it was, who bade the final adieu  
     To the outworn order.  
 A cup-bearer is he,  
 With the purest wine for the connoisseur;  
 A cavalier in the path of Love  
 With a sword of the finest steel.  
     A combatant, with *la ilah*  
     As his coat of mail.  
     Under the shadow of flashing  
     scimitars,  
     *La ilah* is his protection.  
 Your edifice unravels  
 The mystery of the faithful;  
 The fire of his fervent days,  
 The bliss of his tender nights.  
     Your grandeur calls to mind  
     The loftiness of his station,  
     The sweep of his vision,  
     His rapture, his ardour, his pride, his  
     humility.  
 The might of the man of faith  
 Is the might of the Almighty:  
 Dominant, creative, resourceful, consummate.  
     He is terrestrial with celestial aspect;  
     A being with the qualities of the  
     Creator.  
     His contented self has no demands  
     On this world or the other.

His desires are modest; his aims exalted;  
His manner charming; his ways winsome.  
    Soft in social exposure,  
    Tough in the line of pursuit.  
    But whether in fray or in social  
    gathering,  
    Ever chaste at heart, ever clean in  
    conduct.  
In the celestial order of the macrocosm,  
His immutable faith is the centre of the Divine  
Compass.  
All else: illusion, sorcery, fallacy.  
    He is the journey's end for reason,  
    He is the *raison d'etre* of Love.  
    An inspiration in the cosmic  
    communion.  
O, Mecca of art lovers,  
You are the majesty of the true tenet.  
You have elevated Andalusia  
To the eminence of the holy Harem.  
    Your equal in beauty,  
    If any under the skies,  
    Is the heart of the Muslim  
    And no one else.  
Ah, those men of truth,  
Those proud cavaliers of Arabia;  
Endowed with a sublime character,  
Imbued with candour and conviction.  
    Their reign gave the world an  
    unfamiliar concept;  
    That the authority of the brave and  
    spirited  
    Lay in modesty and simplicity,  
    Rather than pomp and regality.  
Their sagacity guided the East and the West.  
In the dark ages of Europe,  
It was the light of their vision  
That lit up the tracks.  
    A tribute to their blood it is,  
    That the Andalusians, even today,  
    Are effable and warm-hearted,  
    Ingenuous and bright of countenance.  
Even today in this land,  
Eyes like those of gazelles are a common  
sight.  
And darts shooting out of those eyes,  
Even today, are on target.

    Its breeze, even today,  
    Is laden with the fragrance of Yemen.  
    Its music, even today,  
    Carries strains of melodies from Hijaz.  
Stars look upon your precincts as a piece of  
heaven.  
But for centuries, alas!  
Your porticoes have not resonated  
With the call of the *muezzin*.  
    What distant valley, what way-side abode  
    Is holding back  
    That valiant caravan of rampant Love.  
Germany witnessed the upheaval of religious  
reforms  
That left no trace of the old perspective.  
    Infallibility of the church sage began to  
    ring false.  
    Reason, once more, unfurled its sails.  
France too went through its revolution  
That changed the entire orientation of  
Western life.  
    Followers of Rome,  
    Feeling antiquated worshipping the  
    ancientry,  
    Also rejuvenated themselves  
    With the relish of novelty.  
The same storm is raging today  
In the soul of the Muslim.  
A Divine secret it is,  
Not for the lips to utter.  
    Let us see what surfaces  
    From the depths of the deep.  
    Let us see what colour  
    The blue sky changes into.  
Clouds in the yonder valley  
Are drenched in roseate twilight.  
The parting sun has left behind  
Mounds and mounds of rubies, the best from  
Badakhshan.  
    Simple and doleful is the song  
    Of the peasant's daughter:  
    Tender feelings adrift in the tide of  
    youth.

O, the ever-flowing waters of Guadalquivir<sup>1</sup>,  
Someone on your banks  
Is seeing a vision of some other period of  
time.

Tomorrow is still in the womb of  
intention,  
But its dawn is flashing before my  
mind's eye.

Were I to lift the veil  
From the profile of my reflections,  
The West would be dazzled by its brilliance.  
Life without change is death.

The tumult and turmoil of revolution  
Keep the soul of a nation alive.

Keen, as a sword in the hands of Destiny  
Is the nation

That evaluates its actions at each step.

Incomplete are all creations  
Without the lifeblood of the creator.  
Soulless is the melody  
Without the lifeblood of the maestro.

[Translated by Saleem A. Gilani]

#### MU'TAMID'S LAMENT IN PRISON

*Mu'tamid was the king of Seville and an Arabic poet. He was defeated and imprisoned by a ruler of Spain. Mu'tamid's poems have been translated into English and published in the Wisdom of the East series.*

In my breast,  
A wail of grief,  
Without any spark or flash,  
Alone survives,  
Passionless, ineffectual.  
A free man is in prison today,  
Without a spear or a sword;  
Regret overwhelms me  
And also my strategy.  
My heart  
Is drawn by instinct to chains.  
Perhaps my sword was of the same steel.  
Once I had a two-edged sword—  
It turned into the chains that shackle me now.

<sup>1</sup> Note from Iqbal—"The well-known river of Cordoba, near which the Mosque is located."

How whimsical and indifferent  
Is the Author of fates.

[Translated by Mustansir Mir]

#### FIRST DATE TREE SEEDED BY ABDUL RAHMAN THE FIRST

*These verses from Abdul Rahman the First are quoted in Tarikh al Muqqari. The following Urdu poem is a liberal translation (the tree mentioned here was planted in Madinatut Zahra)*

You are the apple of my eye,  
My heart's delight:  
I am remote from my valley,  
To me you are the Burning Bush of Sinai!  
You are a houri of the Arabian Desert,  
Nursed by the Western breeze.  
I feel homesick in exile,  
You feel homesick in exile:  
Prosper in this strange land!  
May the morning dew quench your thirst!

The world presents a strange sight:  
The vision's mantle is torn apart—  
May valour struggle with the waves if it must,  
The other side of the river is not to be seen!  
Life owes itself to the heat of one's soul:  
Flame does not rise from dust.  
The Syrian evening's fallen star  
Shined brighter in the exile's dawn.  
There are no frontiers for the Man of Faith,  
He is at home everywhere.

[Translated by the Editors]

\*

That blood of pristine vigour is no more;  
That yearning heart's power is no more;  
Prayer, fasting, *hajj*, sacrifice survive,  
But in thee nature's old dower is no more.

[Translated by Naim Siddiqui]

#### SPAIN

(Written in Spain—on the way back)

Spain! You are the trustee of the Muslim  
blood:  
In my eyes you are sanctified like the Harem.



Prints of prostration lie hidden in your dust,  
Silent calls to prayers in your morning air.  
In your hills and vales were the tents of those,  
The tips of whose lances were bright like the stars.

Is more henna needed by your pretties?  
My lifeblood can give them some colour!  
How can a Muslim be put down by the straw  
and grass,  
Even if his flame has lost its heat and fire!  
My eyes watched Granada as well,  
But the traveller's content neither in journey  
nor in rest:  
I saw as well as showed, I spoke as well as  
listened,  
Neither seeing nor learning brings calm to the  
heart!

\*

The veiled secrets are becoming manifest—  
Bygone the days of *you cannot see Me*;  
Whosoever finds his self first,  
Is Mahdi himself, the Guide of the Last Age.

[Translated by the Editors]

#### TARIQ'S PRAYER

(In the Battlefield of Andalusia)

These warriors, victorious,  
These worshippers of Thine,  
Whom Thou hast granted the will  
To win power in Thy name;  
Who cleave rivers and woods in twain,  
Whose terror turns mountains into dust;  
They care not for the world;  
They care not for its pleasures;  
In their passion, in their zeal,  
In their love for Thee, O Lord,  
They aim at martyrdom,  
Not the rule of the earth.  
Thou hast united warring tribes,  
In thought, in deed, in prayer.  
The burning fire that life had sought  
For centuries, was found in them at last.

They think of death, not as life's end,  
But as the ennobling of the heart.

Awaken in them an iron will,  
And make their eye a sharpened sword.

[Translated by Naim Siddiqui]

\*

This revolution of time is eternal;  
Only you are real, the rest is nothing but tales  
and legends.  
No one has ever seen yesterday or tomorrow:  
Today is the only time that is yours!

[Translated by Mustansir Mir]

LENIN

(Before God)

All space and all that breathes bear witness;  
truth

It is indeed; Thou art, and dost remain.  
How could I know that God was or was not,  
Where Reason's reckonings shifted hour by  
hour?

The peerer at planets, the counter-up of  
plants,  
Heard nothing there of Nature's infinite  
music;

To-day I witnessing acknowledge realms  
That I once thought the mummery of the  
Church.

We, manacled in the chains of day and night!  
Thou, moulder of all time's atoms, builder of  
aeons!

Let me have leave to ask this question, one  
Not answered by the subtleties of the schools,  
That while I lived under the sky-tent's roof  
Like a thorn rankled in my heart, and made  
Such chaos in my soul of all its thoughts  
I could not keep my tumbling words in  
bounds.

Oh, of what mortal race art Thou the God?  
Those creatures formed of dust beneath these  
heavens?

Europe's pale cheeks are Asia's pantheon,  
And Europe's pantheon her glittering metals.  
A blaze of art and science lights the West

With darkness that no Fountain of Life  
 dispels;  
 In high-reared grace, in glory and in  
 grandeur,  
 The towering Bank out-tops the cathedral  
 roof;  
 What they call commerce is a game of dice  
 For one, profit, for millions swooping death.  
 There science, philosophy, scholarship,  
 government,  
 Preach man's equality and drink men's blood;  
 Naked debauch, and want, and  
 unemployment—  
 Are these mean triumphs of the Frankish arts!  
 Denied celestial grace a nation goes  
 No further than electricity or steam;  
 Death to the heart, machines stand sovereign,  
 Engines that crush all sense of human  
 kindness.  
 --Yet signs are counted here and there that  
 Fate,  
 The chess-player, has check-mated all their  
 cunning.  
 The Tavern shakes, its warped foundations  
 crack,  
 The Old Men of Europe sit there numb with  
 fear;  
 What twilight flush is left those faces now  
 Is paint and powder, or lent by flask and cup.  
 Omnipotent, righteous, Thou; but bitter the  
 hours,  
 Bitter the labourer's chained hours in Thy  
 world!  
 When shall this galley of gold's dominion  
 flounder?  
 Thy world Thy day of wrath, Lord, stands  
 and waits.

*[Translated by V.G. Kiernan]*

#### SONG OF THE ANGLES

As yet the Reason is unbridled, and Love is on  
 the road:  
 O Architect of Eternity! Your design is  
 incomplete.

Drunkards, jurists, princes and priests all sit  
 in ambush upon Your common folk:  
 The days in Your world haven't changed as  
 yet.  
 Your rich are too unmindful, Your poor too  
 content—  
 The slave as yet frets in the street, the master's  
 walls are still too high.  
 Learning, religion, science and art are all  
 means to fulfill lust:  
 The grace of Love—the redeemer—is not as  
 yet bestowed upon all.  
 The essence of Life is Love, the essence of  
 Love is the self;  
 Alas! This cutting sword as yet rests in the  
 sheath!

*[Translated by the Editors]*

#### GOD'S COMMAND

*(To His Angels)*

Rise, and from their slumber wake the poor  
 ones of My world!  
 Shake the walls and windows of the mansions  
 of the great!  
 Kindle with the fire of faith the slow blood of  
 the slaves!  
 Make the fearful sparrow bold to meet the  
 falcon's hate!  
 Close the hour approaches of the kingdom of  
 the poor—  
 Every imprint of the past find and annihilate!  
 Find the field whose harvest is no peasant's  
 daily bread—  
 Garner in the furnace every ripening ear of  
 wheat!  
 Banish from the house of God the mumbling  
 priest whose prayers  
 Like a veil creation from Created separate!  
 God by man's prostrations, by man's vows idols  
 cheated—  
 Quench at once My shrine and their fane the  
 sacred light!  
 Rear for me another temple, build its walls  
 with mud—

Wearied of their columned marbles, sickened  
 is My sight!  
 All their fine new world a workshop filled  
 with brittle glass—  
 Go! My poet of the East to madness dedicate.

[Translated by V.G. Kiernan]

\*

Theorizing is the infidelity of the self:  
 To be a Moses is the secret of the self;  
 Let me tell you the mystery of *faqr* as well as  
 power:  
 Guard your self while in poverty.

[Translated by the Editors]

ECSTASY

(Most of these verses were written in Palestine)

I could not go to my friends empty-  
 handed  
 From an orchard!

—Saadi

Life to passion and ecstasy—sunrise in the  
 desert:  
 Luminous brooks are flowing from the  
 fountain of the rising sun.  
 The veil of being is torn, Eternal Beauty  
 reveals itself:  
 The eye is dazzled but the soul is richly  
 endowed.  
 The heavy night-cloud has left behind it red  
 and blue cloudlets:  
 It has given a head-dress of various hues to  
 the Mount Idam to wear.  
 Air is clean of dust particles; leaves of date-  
 palms have been washed;  
 The sand around Kazimah is soft like velvet.  
 The remains of burnt-out fire are observable  
 here and a piece of tent-rope there:  
 Who knows how many caravans have passed  
 through this tract.  
 I heard the angel Gabriel saying to me: This  
 indeed is your station—  
 For those acquainted with the pleasure of  
 separation, this is the everlasting comfort.

To whom should I say that the wine of life is  
 poison to me:  
 I have new experiences while the universe is  
 decadent entire.  
 Is there not another Ghaznavi in the factory of  
 Life?—  
 The Somnaths of the People of the Harem  
 have been awaiting a blow for long.  
 The Arabian fervour and the Persian comfort  
 Have both lost the Arabian acuteness and the  
 Persian imagination.  
 The Caravan of Hijaz has not another Husain  
 amongst it—  
 Although the tresses of the Tigris and the  
 Euphrates are still as bright as ever.  
 Intellect, heart and vision, all must take their  
 first lessons from Love—  
 Religion and the religious law breed idols of  
 illusion if there is no Love.  
 The truthfulness of Abraham is but a form of  
 Love, and so is the patience of Husain—  
 And so are Badr and Hunayn in the battle of  
 existence.

The universe is a verse of God and you are the  
 meaning to be grasped at last;  
 Colour and scent are the caravans that set  
 forth to seek you.  
 The disciples in the schools are insipid and  
 purblind;  
 The esoteric of the monastery have low aims  
 with empty bowls;  
 I—whose *ghazal* reflects the flame that has  
 been lost,  
 All my life I pined after the type of men that  
 exists no more.  
 The zephyr nurtures thorn and straw,  
 While my breath nurtures passion in hearts;  
 My song thrives upon my lifeblood:  
 The strings of the instrument become alive  
 with the blood of the musician.  
 Give not occasion for conturbation to this  
 restless heart;  
 Bright are your tresses, brighten them even  
 more.

You are the Sacred Tablet, You are the Pen  
and the Book;  
This blue-colored dome is a bubble in the sea  
that you are.  
You are the lifeblood of the universe:  
You bestowed the illumination of a sun upon  
the particles of desert dust.  
The splendour of Sanjar and Selim: a mere  
hint of your majesty;  
The *faqir* of Junaid and Bayazid: your beauty  
unveiled.  
If my prayers are not led by my passion for  
you,  
My ovation as well as my prostrations would  
be nothing but veils upon my soul.  
A meaningful glance from you redeemed both  
of them:  
Reason—the seeker in separation; and Love—  
the restless one in Presence.  
The world has become dark since the sun has  
set down;  
Unveil your beauty to dawn upon this age.  
You are a witness on my life so far:  
I did not know that Knowledge is a tree that  
bears no fruit.  
The old battle was then revived in my  
conscience:  
Love, all Mustafa; Reason, all Abu Lahab.  
It persuaded me with art, it pulled me by  
force:  
Strange is Love at the beginning, strange in its  
perfection!  
Separation is greater than union in the state of  
ecstasy;  
For union is death to desire while separation  
brings the pleasure of longing.  
In the midst of the union I dared not cast a  
glance;  
Though my audacious eye was looking for a  
pretence.  
Separation is the warmth of hot-pursuit; it is  
at the heart of fond lamentation—  
It is why the wave is in search; it is why the  
pearl is precious.

*[Translated by the Editors]*

## THE MOTH AND THE FIREFLY

### THE MOTH

The firefly is so far removed  
From the status of the moth!  
Why is it so proud  
Of a fire that cannot burn?

### THE FIREFLY

God be thanked a hundred times, That I am  
not a moth—  
That I am no beggar  
Of alien fire!

*[Translated by Mustansir Mir]*

## TO JAVID

A nation's life is illumined by selfhood,  
Selfhood is the pathway to everlasting life.

This one thing that Adam is not without the  
Purpose—  
A manifold life, a manifold leisure!<sup>1</sup>

Earth-bound crows cannot aspire to the  
eagle's flights,  
But they corrupt the eagle's lofty, noble  
habits.

May God make thee a virtuous, blameless  
youth;  
Thou livest in an age deprived of decency.

Iqbal was not at ease in a monastery,  
For he is bright, and sprightly, and full of wit,

## MENDICANCY

A witty man in a tavern spoke with a tongue  
untamed:

"The ruler of our state is a beggar unashamed;  
How many go bare-headed to deck him with  
a crown?

How many go naked to supply his golden  
gown?

The blood of the poor turns into his red wine;  
And they starve so that he may in luxury  
dine.

<sup>1</sup> Two lines, "This one thing...a manifold leisure!" have been provided by the editors. The translator left them out.

The epicure's table is loaded with delights,  
 Stolen from the needy, stripped of all their  
 rights.  
 He is a beggar who begs money, be it large or  
 small,  
 Kings with royal pomp and pride, in fact, are  
 beggars all."

—Adapted from Anwari

[Translated by Naim Siddiqui]

#### HEAVEN AND THE PRIEST

Being present there, my impetuous tongue  
 To silence I could not resign  
 When an order from God of admission on  
 high  
 Came the way of that reverend divine;  
 I humbly addressed the Almighty: O Lord,  
 Excuse this presumption of mine,  
 But he'll never relish the virgins of heaven,  
 The garden's green borders, the wine!  
 For paradise isn't place for a preacher  
 To meddle and meddle and mangle,  
 And he, pious man—second nature to him  
 Is the need to dispute and to jangle;  
 His business has been to set folk by the ears  
 And get nations and sects in a tangle:  
 Up there in the sky is no Mosque and no  
 Church  
 And no Temple—with whom will he  
 wrangle?

[Translated by V.G. Kiernan]

#### CHURCH AND STATE

Monasticism was the church's base  
 Its austere living had no room for wealth.  
 The anchorite and the king have ever been  
 hostile;  
 One has humility; the other an exalted power.  
 Church and state were separated at last;  
 The revered priest was rendered powerless.  
 When church and state parted the ways for  
 ever,  
 It set in the rule of avarice and greed.  
 This split is a disaster both for country and  
 faith,  
 And shows the culture's blind lack of vision.

It is the miracle of a desert-dweller  
 To make the grace a mirror to power.<sup>1</sup>  
 Mankind's deliverance lies in the unity  
 Of those who rule the body and those who  
 rule the soul.

[Translated by Naim Siddiqui]

#### THE EARTH IS GOD'S

Who rears the seed in the darkness of the  
 earth?  
 Who lifts the cloud up from the ocean's  
 waves?  
 Who summoned from the West the fruitful  
 wind?  
 Whose soil is this? Or whose that light of the  
 sun?  
 Who filled the grain like pearls, the ripe corn's  
 ear?  
 Who taught the months by instruction to  
 revolve?  
 Landlord! This broad plough-land is not  
 thine, it is not thine;  
 Nor thy father's land; it is not thine, it is not  
 mine.

[Translated by Sir Abdul Qadir]

#### TO A YOUNG MAN

Thy sofas are from Europe, thy carpets from  
 Iran;  
 This slothful opulence evokes my sigh of pity.  
 In vain if thou possessest Khusroe's imperial  
 pomp,  
 If thou dost not possess prowess or  
 contentment.  
 Seek not thy joy or greatness in the glitter of  
 Western life,  
 For in contentment lies a Muslim's joy and  
 greatness.  
 When an eagle's spirit awakens in youthful  
 hearts,  
 It sees its luminous goal beyond the starry  
 heavens.

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<sup>1</sup> Two lines, "It is the miracle...to the power," have  
 been provided by the editors since the translator  
 had left them out.

Despair not, for despair is the decline of  
 knowledge and gnosis:  
 The Hope of a Believer is among the  
 confidants of God.<sup>1</sup>  
 Thy abode is not on the dome of a royal palace;  
 Thou art an eagle and shouldst live on the  
 rocks of mountains.

*[Translated by Naim Siddiqui]*

#### COUNSEL

An eagle full of years to a young hawk said—  
 Easy your royal wings through high heaven  
 spread:  
 To burn in the fire of our own veins is youth!  
 Strive, and in strife make honey of life's gall;  
 Maybe the blood of the pigeon you destroy,  
 My son, is not what makes your swooping  
 joy!

#### POPPY OF THE WILDERNESS

Oh blue sky-dome, oh world companionless!  
 Fear comes on me in this wide desolation.  
 Lost travellers, you and I; what destination  
 Is yours, bright poppy of the wilderness?  
 No prophet walks these hills, or we might  
 be  
 Twin Sinai-flames; you bloom on Heaven's  
 spray  
 For the same cause I tore myself away:  
 To unfold; to be our selves, our wills agree.  
 On the diver of Love's pearl-bank be God's  
 hand—  
 In every ocean-drop all ocean's deeps!  
 The whirlpool mourning for its lost wave  
 weeps,  
 Born of the sea and never to reach the land.  
 Man's hot blood makes earth's fevered  
 pulses race,  
 With stars and sun for audience. Oh cool  
 air  
 Of the desert! Let it be mine too to share  
 In silence and heart-glow, rapture and grace.

*[Translated by V.G. Kiernan]*

<sup>1</sup> Two lines, "Despair not...confidants of God,"  
 have been provided by the editors since the  
 translator had left them out.

\*

Iqbal recited once in a garden in Spring  
 A couplet cheerful and bright in tone and  
 spirit:  
 Unlike the rose, I need no breeze to blossom.,  
 My soul doth blossom with my ecstasy.

*[Translated by Naim Siddiqui]*

#### SAKINAMA

Spring's caravan has pitched its tent  
 At the foot of the mountain, making it  
 Look like the fabled garden of Iram  
 With a riot of flowers—iris, rose,  
 Narcissus, lily, eglantine,  
 And tulip in its martyr's gory shroud.  
 The landscape is all covered with  
 A multicoloured sheet, and colour flows  
 Even in the veins of stones like blood.  
 The breezes blow intoxicatingly  
 In a blue sky, so that the birds  
 Do not feel like remaining in their nests  
 And fly about. Look at that hill-stream. How  
 It halts and bends and glides and swings  
 around,  
 And then, collecting itself, surges up  
 And rushes on. Should it be stemmed, it  
 would  
 Cut open the hills' hearts and burst the rocks.  
 This hill-stream, my fair saki, has  
 A message to give us concerning life.  
 Attune me to this message and,  
 Come, let us celebrate the spring,  
 Which comes but once a year.  
 Give me that wine whose heat  
 Burns up the veils of hidden things,  
 Whose light illuminates life's mind,  
 Whose strength intoxicates the universe,  
 Whose effervescence was Creation's source.  
 Come lift the veil off mysteries,  
 And make a mere wagtail take eagles on.  
 The times have changed; so have their signs.  
 New is the music, and so are the instruments.  
 The magic of the West has been exposed,  
 And the magician stands aghast.  
 The politics of the ancient regime  
 Are in disgrace: world is tired of kings.

The age of capitalism has passed,  
 The juggler, having shown his tricks, has  
 gone.  
 The Chinese are awaking from their heavy  
 sleep.  
 Fresh springs are bubbling forth from  
 Himalayan heights.  
 Cut open is the heart of Sinai and Faran,  
 And Moses waits for a renewed theophany.  
 The Muslim, zealous though about God's  
 unity,  
 Still wears the Hindu's sacred thread around  
 his heart.  
 In culture, mysticism, canon law  
 And dialectical theology—  
 He worships idols of non-Arab make.  
 The truth has been lost in absurdities,  
 And in traditions is this *ummah* rooted still.  
 The preacher's sermon may beguile your  
 heart,  
 But there is no sincerity, no warmth in it.  
 It is a tangled skein of lexical complexities,  
 Sought to be solved by logical dexterity.  
 The Sufi, once foremost in serving God,  
 Unmatched in love and ardency of soul,  
 Has got lost in the maze of Ajam's ideas:  
 At half-way stations is this traveller stuck.  
 Gone out is the fire of love. O how sad!  
 The Muslim is a heap of ashes, nothing more.  
  
 O Saki, serve me that old wine again,  
 Let that old cup go round once more.  
 Lend me the wings of Love and make me fly.  
 Turn my dust to fireflies that flit about.  
 Free young men's minds from slavery,  
 And make them mentors of the old.  
 The *millat's* tree is green thanks to your sap:  
 You are its body's breath.  
 Give it the strength to vibrate and to throb;  
 Lend it the heart of Murtaza, the fervour of  
 Siddiq.  
 Drive that old arrow through its heart  
 Which will revive desire in it.  
 Blest be the stars of Your heavens; blest be  
 Those who spend their nights praying to You.  
 Endow the young with fervent souls;  
 Grant them my vision and my love.  
 I am a boat in a whirlpool, stuck in one place.

Rescue me and grant me mobility.  
 Tell me about the mysteries of life and death,  
 For Your eye spans the universe.  
 The sleeplessness of my tear-shedding eyes;  
 The restless yearnings hidden in my heart;  
 The prayerfulness of my cries at midnight;  
 My melting into tears in solitude and  
 company;  
 My aspirations, longings and desires;  
 My hopes and quests; my mind that mirrors  
 the times  
 (A field for thought's gazelles to roam);  
 My heart, which is a battlefield of life,  
 Where legions of doubt war with faith—  
 O Saki, these are all my wealth;  
 Possessing them, I am rich in my poverty.  
 Distribute all these riches in my caravan,  
 And let them come to some good use.  
  
 In constant motion is the sea of life.  
 All things display life's volatility.  
 It is life that puts bodies forth,  
 Just as a whiff of smoke becomes a flame.  
 Unpleasant to it is the company  
 Of matter, but it likes to see  
 Its striving to improve itself.  
 It is fixed, yet in motion, straining at  
 The leash to get free of the elements.  
 A unity imprisoned in diversity,  
 It is unique in every form and shape.  
 This world, this sex-dimensioned idol-house,  
 This Somnat is all of its fashioning.  
 It is not its way to repeat itself:  
 You are not I, I am not you.  
 With you and me and others it has formed  
 Assemblies, but is solitary in their midst.  
 It shines in lightning, in the stars,  
 In silver, gold and mercury.  
 Its is the wilderness, its are the trees,  
 Its are the roses, its are the thorns.  
 It pulverises mountains with its might,  
 And captures Gabriel and houris in its noose.  
 There is a silver-grey, brave falcon here,  
 Its talons covered with the blood of  
 partridges,  
 And over there, far from its nest,  
 A pigeon helplessly aflutter in a snare.

Stability is an illusion of eyes,  
 For every atom in the world pulsates with  
 change.  
 The caravan of life does not halt anywhere,  
 For every moment life renews itself.  
 Do you think life is great mystery?  
 No, it is only a desire to soar aloft.  
 It has seen many ups and downs,  
 But likes to travel rather than to reach the  
 goal;  
 For travelling is life's outfit: it  
 Is real, while rest is appearance, nothing  
 more.  
 Life loves to tie up knots and then unravel  
 them.  
 Its pleasure lies in throbbing and in fluttering.  
 When it found itself face to face with death,  
 It learned that it was hard to ward it off.  
 So it descended to this world,  
 Where retribution is the law,  
 And lay in wait for death.  
 Because of its love of duality,  
 It sorted all things out in pairs,  
 And then arose, host after host,  
 From mountains and from wilderness.  
 It was a branch from which flowers kept  
 Shedding and bursting forth afresh.  
 The ignorant think that life's impress is  
 Ephemeral, but it fades only to emerge anew.  
 Extremely fleet-footed,  
 It reaches its goal instantly.  
 From time's beginning to its end  
 Is but one moment's way for it.  
 Time, chain of days and nights, is nothing but  
 A name for breathing in and breathing out.  
 What is this whiff of air called breath?  
 A sword, and selfhood is that sword's sharp  
 edge.  
 What is the self? Life's inner mystery,  
 The universe's waking up.  
 The self, drunk with display, is also fond  
 Of solitude;—an ocean in a drop.  
 It shines in light and darkness both;  
 Displayed in individuals, yet free from them.  
 Behind it is eternity without  
 Beginning, and before it is  
 Eternity without an end;

It is unlimited both ways.  
 Swept on by the waves of time's stream,  
 And at the mercy of their buffeting,  
 It yet changes the course of its quest  
 constantly,  
 Renewing its way of looking at things.  
 For it huge rocks are light as air:  
 It smashes mountains into shifting sand.  
 Both its beginning and its end are journeying,  
 For constant motion is its being's law.  
 It is a ray of light in the moon and  
 A spark in stone. It dwells  
 In colours, but is colourless itself.  
 It has nothing to do with more or less,  
 With light and low, with fore and aft.  
 Since time's beginning it was struggling to  
 emerge,  
 And finally emerged in the dust that is man.  
 It is in your heart that the Self has its abode,  
 As the sky is reflected in the pupil of the eye.  
 To one who treasures his self, bread  
 Won at the cost of self-respect is gall.  
 He values only bread he gains with head held  
 high.  
 Abjure the pomp and might of a Mahmud;  
 Preserve your self, do not be an Ayaz.  
 Worth offering is only that prostration which  
 Makes all others forbidden acts.  
 This world, this riot of colours and of sounds,  
 Which is under the sway of death,  
 This idol-house of eye and ear,  
 In which to live is but to eat and drink,  
 Is nothing but the Self's initial stage.  
 O traveller, it is not your final goal.  
 The fire that is you has not come  
 Out of this heap of dust.  
 You have not come out of this world;  
 It has come out of you.  
 Smash up this mountainous blockade,  
 Go further on and break out of  
 This magic ring of time and space.  
 God's lion is the self;  
 Its quarry are both earth and sky.  
 There are a hundred worlds still to appear,  
 For Being's mind has not drained  
 Of its creative capabilities.



All latent worlds are waiting for releasing  
blows  
From your dynamic action and exuberant  
thought.

It is the purpose of the revolution of the  
spheres  
That your selfhood should be revealed to you.  
You are the conqueror of this world  
Of good and evil. How can I tell you  
The whole of your long history?  
Words are but a strait-jacket for reality:  
Reality is a mirror, and speech  
The coating that makes it opaque.  
Breath's candle is alight within my breast,  
But my power of utterance cries halt.  
*Should I fly even a hairbreadth too high,  
The blaze of glory would burn up my wings.*

*[Translated by M. Hadi Husain]*

#### TIME

What was, has faded: what is, is fading: but of  
these words few can tell the worth;  
Time still is gaping with expectation of what  
is nearest its hour of birth.  
New tidings slowly come drop by drop from  
my pitcher gurgling of time's new sights,  
As I count over the beads strung out on my  
threaded rosary of days and nights.  
With each man friendly, with each I vary, and  
have a new part at my command:  
To one the rider, to one the courser, to one the  
whiplash of reprimand.  
If in the circle you were not numbered, was it  
your own fault or mine?  
To humour no-one am I accustomed to keep  
untasted the midnight wine!  
No planet-gazer can ever see through my  
winding mazes; for when the eye  
That aims it sees by no lights from Heaven,  
the arrow wavers and glances by.  
That is no dawn at the Western skyline—it is  
a bloodbath, that ruddy glow!  
Await to-morrow; our yesterday and to-day  
are legends of long ago.  
From Nature's forces their reckless science  
has stripped the garments away, until

At last its own nesting-place is scorched by  
the restless lightning it cannot still:  
To them the trade-wind belongs, the sky-way,  
to them the ocean, to them the ship—  
It shall not serve them to calm the whirlpool  
by which their fate holds them in its grip!  
But now a new world is being born, while this  
old one sinks out of sight of men,  
This world the gamblers of Europe turned  
into nothing else than a gambling-den.  
That man will still keep his lantern burning,  
however tempests blow strong and cold,  
Whose soul is centred on high, whose temper  
the Lord has cast in the royal mould.

*[Translated by V.G. Kiernan]*

#### THE ANGELS BID FAREWELL TO ADAM

You have been given the restlessness of Day  
and Night,  
We know not whether you are made of clay  
or mercury;  
We hear you are created from clay,  
But in your nature is the glitter of Stars and  
Moon.  
Your sleep would be preferable over much  
wakefulness  
If you could behold your own beauty even in  
a dream!  
Your morning sighs are invaluable  
For they are the water to your ancient tree.  
Your melody unravels the secret of life  
For it is Nature that has attuned your organ.

*[Translated by the Editors]<sup>1</sup>*

#### ADAM IS RECEIVED BY THE SPIRIT OF THE EARTH

Open thy eyes and look above,  
Look at the streak of dawn;  
Look at the veiling of the vision;  
Look at the banishment unfair;  
Look at the battle of hope and fear.

<sup>1</sup> Based on a translation provided by S.A. Vahid in 'Iqbal and Western Poets' in *Iqbal Poet-Philosopher of the East* (1971), edited by Hafeez Malik.

Thine are the clouds, the rains, the skies,  
Thine are the winds, the storms,  
The woods, the mountains, the rivers are  
thine;  
The world of the angels was a void;  
Look at the peopled earth, which is thine.

Thou wilt rule it like a king;  
The stars will gaze in wonder;  
Thy vision will encompass the earth;  
Thy sighs will reach the heavens;  
Look at the power of thy pain and passion.

The spark in thee is a radiant sun;  
A new world lives in thee;  
Thou carest not for a borrowed heaven;  
Thy life-blood has it concealed;  
Look at the reward of anguish and toil.

Thy lyre has an eternal plaintive string,  
Panting with the passion of love;  
Thou guardest eternal secrets divine,  
And livest a life of obedient power;  
Look at the world as shaped by thy will.

\*

My nature is like the fresh breeze of morn:  
Gentle sometimes, at other times strong;  
I give a velvet mantle to flower petals,  
And to prickly thorns, the sharpness of the  
needle.

#### THE MENTOR AND THE DISCIPLE

THE INDIAN DISCIPLE  
Discerning eyes bleed in pain,  
For faith is ruined by knowledge in this age.

RUMI  
Fling it on the body, and knowledge  
becomes a serpent;  
Fling it on the heart, and it becomes a friend.

THE INDIAN DISCIPLE:  
Master of love; of God!  
I do remember thy noble words:  
'Wherefrom comes this Friendly voice—  
Thin, feeble, and dry as a reed?'  
The world today has an eternal sadness,  
With neither joy, nor love, nor certitude,

What doth it know about this mystery—  
Who is the friend, and what is the friend's  
voice?  
The sound of music is a dirge  
In the West's crumbling pageant.

RUMI  
Every ear is not attuned to the word of  
truth,  
As a fig suits not the palate of every bird.

THE INDIAN DISCIPLE  
I have mastered knowledge of both the East  
and the West,  
My soul suffers still in agony.

RUMI  
Quacks sicken you more;  
Come to us for a cure.

THE INDIAN DISCIPLE  
Thy glance of wisdom brightens my heart;  
Explain to me the order for *jihad*.

RUMI  
Break the image of God by the command of  
God,  
Break the friend's glass, with the friend's stone.

THE INDIAN DISCIPLE  
Oriental eyes are dazzled by the West;  
Western nymphs are fairer than those in  
Paradise.

RUMI  
Silver glisters white and new,  
But blackens the hands and clothes.

THE INDIAN DISCIPLE  
The warm-blooded youths in schools,  
Alas, are victims of Western magic!

RUMI  
When an unfledged bird begins its flight,  
It becomes a ready feline morsel.

THE INDIAN DISCIPLE  
How long this clash between church and  
state?  
Is the body superior to the soul?

RUMI

Coins may jingle at night,  
But gold waits for the morrow.

THE INDIAN DISCIPLE

Tell me about the secret of man,  
Tell how dust is a peer of the stars.

RUMI

His outside dies of an insect's bite,  
His inside roams the seven heavens.

THE INDIAN DISCIPLE

Dust with thy help has a luminous eye,  
Is man's purpose knowledge or vision?

RUMI

Man is perception; the rest is skin;  
Perception is the perception of God.

THE INDIAN DISCIPLE

The East lives on through your words!  
Of what disease nations die?

RUMI

Every nation that perished in the past,  
Perished for mistaking stone for incense.<sup>1</sup>

THE INDIAN DISCIPLE

Muslims have now lost their vigour and force;  
Wherefore are they so timid and tame?

RUMI

No nation meets its doom,  
Until it angers a man of God.<sup>2</sup>

THE INDIAN DISCIPLE

Though life is a mart without any lustre,  
What kind of bargain doth offer some gain?

RUMI

Sell cleverness and purchase wonder;  
Cleverness is doubt; wonder is perception.

<sup>1</sup> Four lines, "The East lives...for incense" are provided by the editors since the translator had left them out.

<sup>2</sup> Two lines, "No nation...a man of God" are from the editorial material in *What Should Then Be Done O People of the East* (1977) by B.A. Dar:

THE INDIAN DISCIPLE

My peers consort with kings in court,  
While I am a beggar, uncovered,  
bare-headed.

RUMI

To be the slave of a man with an illumined  
heart,  
Is better than to rule the ruler's of' the land.

THE INDIAN DISCIPLE

I am at a loss to know the puzzle  
Of free will and determination.

RUMI

Wings bring a hawk to Kings;  
Wings bring a crow to the grave.

THE INDIAN DISCIPLE

What is the aim of the Prophet's path—  
The rule of the earth, or a monastery?

RUMI

Prudence in our faith decrees war and  
power,  
In the faith of Jesus—a cave and mount.

THE INDIAN DISCIPLE

How to discipline the body?  
And how to awaken the heart?

RUMI

Be obedient, ride on the earth like a horse,  
Not like a corpse borne on shoulders.

THE INDIAN DISCIPLE

The secret of faith I do not know;  
How to believe in the Day of Judgement?

RUMI

Be the Judgement Day, and see the  
Judgement Day;  
This is the condition for seeing everything.

THE INDIAN DISCIPLE

*The selfhood soars up to the skies—  
It preys upon the sun and the moon—  
Deprived of the Presence, relying on existence,  
wearied:  
Impoverished by its own preys.*

RUMI

*Love alone is fit to be hunted,  
But who can ever ensnare it!*<sup>1</sup>

THE INDIAN DISCIPLE

Thou knowest the heart of the universe;  
Tell how a nation can be strong?

RUMI

If thou art a grain, it will be picked by birds,  
And if a blossom, it will be picked by  
urchins.  
Hide thy grain, and be the trap;  
Hide thy blossom, and be the grass.

THE INDIAN DISCIPLE

Thou callest me to seek the heart;  
To be a seeker of the heart, and to be in a  
conflict;  
My heart is in my breast,  
Like a mirror, it shows my powers.

RUMI

Thou sayest thou hast a heart  
The heart is not below, but in the empyrean,  
Thou thinkest thy heart is a heart,  
Forsaking the search for illumined hearts.

THE INDIAN DISCIPLE

My mind soars in ethereal flights,  
But I grovel in the dust;  
I have failed in the affairs of the world;  
Kicks and buffets are my lot;  
Why is material world beyond my reach?  
Why are the wise in faith, fools in the  
world?

RUMI

One who can scale the heights of heaven,  
Can tread the path of earth with ease.

THE INDIAN DISCIPLE

What is the secret of knowledge and  
wisdom?  
And how to be blessed with passion and  
pain?

---

<sup>1</sup> The italicised lines are provided by the editors;  
the translator had left them out.

RUMI

Knowledge and wisdom are born of honest  
living;  
Love and ecstasy are born of honest living.

THE INDIAN DISCIPLE

The world demands me to meet and mingle,  
But the song is born in solitude.

RUMI

Keep away from strangers, not from Him,  
Wrap thyself for winter, not for spring.

THE INDIAN DISCIPLE

India now has no light of vision or yearning;  
Men of illumined hearts have fallen on evil  
days.

RUMI

Imparting heat and light is the task of the  
brave;  
Cunning and shamelessness are the refuge  
of the mean.

\*

Thy body knows not the secrets of thy heart,  
And so thy sighs reach not the heights of  
heaven;  
God is disgusted with bodies without souls;  
The living God is the God of living souls.

*[Translated by Naim Siddiqui]*

#### GABRIEL AND IBLIS

GABRIEL

Old friend, how goes the world of colour  
and smell?

IBLIS

Burning and suffering, scars and pain,  
seeking and longing!

GABRIEL

They are all talking about you in the  
celestial spheres.  
Could your ripped garment still be  
mended?

IBLIS

Ah, Gabriel, you do not know this secret:  
 When my wine-jug broke it turned my head.  
 I can never walk this place again!  
 How quiet this region is! There are no  
 houses, no streets!  
 One whose despair warms the heart of the  
 universe  
 What suits him best, 'Give up hope' or *Don't  
 give up hope!*

GABRIEL

You gave up exalted positions when you  
 said "No."  
 The angels lost face with God—what a  
 disgrace that was!

IBLIS

With my boldness I make this handful of  
 dust rise up.  
 My mischief weaves the garment that reason  
 wears."  
 From the shore you watch the clash of good  
 and evil.  
 Which of us suffers the buffets of the  
 storms—you or I?  
 Both Khizr and Ilyas feel helpless:  
 The storms I have stirred up rage in oceans,  
 rivers, and streams.  
 If you are ever alone with God, ask Him:  
 Whose blood coloured the story of Adam?  
 I rankle in God's heart like a thorn. But what  
 about you?  
 All you do is chant 'He is God' over and  
 over!

*[Translated by Mustansir Mir]*

\*

The mentor exhorted his disciples once:  
 Listen to my words, in value greater than  
 gold:  
 The Western wine is poison for the people,  
 When the offspring knows neither pride nor  
 skill.

*[Translated by Naim Siddiqui]*

### THE PRAYER-CALL

One night among the planets  
 The Star of Morning said—  
 "Has ever star seen slumber  
 Desert Man's drowsy head?"  
 "Fate, being nimble-witted,"  
 Bright Mercury returned,  
 "Served well that pretty rebel—  
 Tame sleep was what he earned!"  
 "Have we," asked Venus, "nothing  
 To talk about besides?  
 Or what is it to us, where  
 That night-blind firefly hides?"  
 "A star," the Full Moon answered,  
 "Is man, of terrene ray:  
 You walk the night in splendour,  
 But so does he the day;  
 "Let him once learn the joy of  
 Outwatching night's brief span—  
 Higher than all the Pleiades  
 The unfathomed dust of Man!  
 Closed in that dust a radiance  
 Lies hidden, in whose clear light  
 Shall all the sky's fixed tenures  
 And orbits fade from sight."  
 —Suddenly rose the prayer-call,  
 And overwhelmed heaven's lake;  
 That summons at which even  
 Cold hearts of mountains quake.

### SESTET

Though I have little of rhetorician's art,  
 Maybe these words will sink into your heart:  
 A quenchless crying on God through the  
 boundless sky—  
 A dusty rosary, earth-bound litany—  
 So worship men self-knowing, drunk with  
 God;  
 So worship priest, dead stone, and mindless  
 clod.

### LOVE

The martyrs of Love are not Muslim nor  
 Paynim,  
 The manners of Love are not Arab nor Turk!  
 Some passion far other than Love was the  
 power

That taught Ghazni's high ruler to dote on his  
 slave.  
 When the spirit of Love has no place on the  
 throne,  
 All wisdom and learning vain tricks and  
 pretence!  
 Paying court to no king, by no king held in  
 awe,  
 Love is freedom and honor, whose scorn of  
 the world  
 Holds more than the magic that made  
 Alexander  
 His fabulous mirror—its magic makes man.

*[Translated by V.G. Kiernan]*

#### THE STAR'S MESSAGE

I fear not the darkness of the night;  
 My nature is bred in purity and light;  
 Wayfarer of the night! Be a lamp to thyself;  
 With thy passion's flame, make thy darkness  
 bright.

*[Translated by Naim Siddiqui]*

#### TO JAVID

*(On receiving his first letter in London)*

Build in love's empire your hearth and your  
 home;  
 Build Time anew, a new dawn, a new eve!  
 Your speech, if God give you the friendship of  
 Nature,  
 From the rose and tulip's long silence weave.  
 No gifts of the Franks' clever glass-bowers  
 ask!  
 From India's own clay mould your cup and  
 your flask.  
 My songs are the grapes on the spray of my  
 vine;  
 Distil from their clusters the poppy-red wine!  
 The way of the hermit, not fortune, is mine;  
 Sell not your soul! In a beggar's rags shine.

*[Translated by Javid Iqbal]*

#### PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

Wherefore this succession of day and night?  
 And what are the sun and the starry heavens?

Am I in my land or in banishment?  
 The vastness of this desert fills me with fright.  
 I know not the enigma of this life of mine;  
 I know not where to find one who knows.  
 Avicenna wonders where he came from;  
 And Rumi wonders where he should go.  
*With every wayfarer I pace a little;  
 I know not yet who my leader is<sup>1</sup>.*

#### A LETTER FROM EUROPE

We venture not beyond the shores—  
 Being to the senses confined.  
 But Rumi is an ocean,  
 Stormy, mysterious.  
 Iqbal! Thou, too, art moving  
 In that band of men—  
 That band of men of passion,  
 Of which Rumi is the guide.  
 Rumi, they say,  
 Is the guiding light for freedom;  
 Has he, indeed, a message,  
 For the age we live in?

#### REPLY<sup>2</sup>

"Eat not hay and corn like donkeys;  
 Eat of thy choice like the musk-deer;  
 He dies who eats hay and corn,  
 He who eats God's light, becomes the Quran."

*[Translated by Naim Siddiqui]*

#### AT NAPOLEON'S TOMB

Strange, strange the fates that govern  
 This world of stress and strain,  
 But in the fires of action  
 Fate's mysteries are made plain.  
 The sword of Alexander  
 Rose sun-like form that blaze  
 To make the peaks of Alwand  
 Run molten in its rays.  
 Action's loud storm called Timur's  
 All-conquering torrent down—  
 And what to such wild billows  
 Are fortune's smile or frown?

<sup>1</sup> The italicized lines are from Ghalib in Urdu.

<sup>2</sup> These lines are from Rumi in Persian.

The prayers of God's folk treading  
 The battlefield's red sod,  
 Forged in that flame of action  
 Become the voice of God!  
 But only a brief moment  
 Is granted to the brave—  
 One breath or two, whose wage is  
 The long nights of the grave.  
*Then silence at last the valley*  
*Of silence is our goal,*  
*Beneath this vault of heaven*  
*Let our deeds' echoes roll!*<sup>1</sup>

[Translated by V.G. Kiernan]

MUSSOLINI

What is the originality of thought and  
 action?—a taste for revolution.  
 What is the originality of thought and  
 action?—the age of youth for a nation.  
 Originality of thought and action creates  
 miracles of life:  
 It turns pebbles into ruby stones.  
 O Great Rome! Your conscience has changed  
 altogether:  
 Is this a dream I see or is this for real!  
 Your old have the gleam of life in their eyes;  
 The flame of desire warms up the hearts of  
 your young.  
 This warmth of love, this longing and this  
 self-expression:  
 Flowers cannot hide themselves in the season  
 of Spring.  
 Songs of passion fill your air now—  
 The instrument of your nature was awaiting  
 someone to play on it!  
 Whose benevolent eye has graced this miracle  
 upon you?  
 He whose vision is like the light of the Sun!

A QUESTION

A self-respecting tramp was saying to the  
 Almighty:  
 I dare not complain for my woes of poverty;

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<sup>1</sup> The italicised lines are from Hafiz of Shiraz in Persian.

But pray tell me if it is by Your permission  
 That the angels bestow riches upon the  
 worthless ones?

[Translated by the Editors]

TO THE PUNJAB PEASANT

What is this life of yours, tell me its mystery—  
 Trampled in dust is your ages-old history!  
 Deep in that dust has been smothered your  
 flame—  
 Wake, and hear dawn its high summons  
 proclaim!  
 Creatures of dust from the soil may draw  
 bread:  
 Not in that darkness is Life's river fed!  
 Base will his metal be held, who on earth  
 Puts not to trial his innermost worth!  
 Break all the idols of tribe and of caste,  
 Break the old customs that fetter men fast!  
 Here is true victory, here is faith's crown—  
 One creed and one world, division thrown  
 down!  
 Cast on the soil of your clay the heart's seed:  
 Promise of harvest to come, is that seed!

NADIR SHAH OF AFGHANISTAN

Laden with pearls departed from the  
 presence-hall of God  
 That cloud that makes the pulse of life stir in  
 the rose-bud's vein  
 And on its way saw Paradise, and trembled  
 with desire  
 That on such exquisite abode it might descend  
 in rain.  
 A voice sounded from Paradise: "They wait  
 for you afar,  
 Kabul and Ghazni and Herat, and their new-  
 springing grass;  
 Scatter the tear from Nadir's eye on the  
 poppy's burning scar,  
 That never more may be put out the poppy's  
 glowing fire!"

[Translated by Naim Siddiqui]

THE LAST TESTAMENT OF KHUSH-HAL  
KHAN KHATTAK<sup>1</sup>

Let the tribes be lost in the unity of the nation,  
So that the Afghans gain prestige!  
The youth to whom the stars are not out of  
bounds  
Are the ones I love indeed—  
In no way is this child of the mountains  
Inferior to the Mughal.  
May I tell you my secret, O Comrade:  
Khush-hal Khan would much like that his  
burial place  
Be far from the reaches of the dust blown by  
the Mughal cavalry,  
Carried by the mountain wind.

[Translated by the Editors]

THE TARTAR'S DREAM

Prayer-mat and priestly turban have turned  
footpad,  
With wanton boys' bold glances men are  
flattered;  
The Church's mantle and the creed in shreds,  
The robe of State and nation torn and tattered.  
I cling to faith but may its spark not soon  
Lie quenched under these rubbish-heaps  
thick-scattered!  
Bokhara's humble dust and Samarkand's  
The turbulent billows of many winds have  
battered.  
*A gem set in a ring of misery  
That circles me on every side, am I.*<sup>2</sup>  
Suddenly quivered the dust of Samarkand,  
And from an ancient tomb a light shone, pure  
As the first gleam of daybreak, and a voice  
Was heard:—"I am the spirit of Timur!

<sup>1</sup> Iqbal's note—Khush-hal Khan Khattak was a well-known patriotic poet of Pushto who forged a union of Afghan tribes of the Frontier to liberate Afghanistan from the Mughals. Only the Afridis among the tribes remained on his side till the last. About a hundred of his poems were published in translation from London in 1862.

<sup>2</sup> Iqbal's note—This couplet is anonymous. Nasiruddin Tusi quoted it, probably in *Sharah Isharat*.

Chains may hold fast the men of Tartary,  
But God's firm purposes no bonds endure  
Is this what life holds—that Turania's peoples  
All hope in one another must abjure?  
*Call in the soul of man a new fire to birth!  
Cry a new revolution over the earth!"*

[Translated by V.G. Kiernan]

WORLDS APART

When the heart is enlightened,  
It is blessed with an inward eye.  
The initiate has a different level  
Of space and time in each position.  
The mullah's and the crusader's azan,  
The same in words, are apart in spirit.  
The vulture and the eagle soar  
In the same air, but in worlds apart.

[Translated by Naim Siddiqui]

ABU AL 'ALA AL-MA'ARRI<sup>3</sup>

It is said that Ma'arri never ate meat;  
He lived on fruit and vegetables.  
A friend sent him a roasted partridge,  
To allure that clever gentleman into eating  
meat.  
When Ma'arri saw that elegant tray  
He, the author of *Ghufran*<sup>4</sup> and *Lazumat*<sup>5</sup> said,  
"O You helpless little bird, would you tell me  
your sin  
For which this punishment has been awarded  
to you?  
Alas, you did not become a falcon;  
Your eye did not perceive the directives of  
Nature.  
It is the eternal decree of the Judge sitting in  
Judgement on destinies—  
That weakness is a crime punishable by death.

[Translated by M. Munawwar Mirza]

<sup>3</sup> Iqbal's note-- Abu al 'Ala al-Ma'arri, a famous Arabic poet.

<sup>4</sup> Iqbal's note—*Risala tul Ghufran* is the title of a famous book by him.

<sup>5</sup> Iqbal's note—*Lazumat* is the collection of his panegyrics.



CINEMA

Cinema—or new fetish-fashioning,  
 Idol-making and mongering still?  
 Art, men called that olden voodoo—  
 Art, they call this mumbo-jumbo;  
 That—antiquity's poor religion:  
 This—modernity's pigeon-plucking;  
 That—earth's soil: this—soil of Hades;  
 Dust, their temple; ashes, ours.

TO THE PUNJAB PIRS

I stood by the Reformer's tomb: that dust  
 Whence here below an orient splendour  
 breaks,  
 Dust before whose least speck stars hang their  
 heads,  
 Dust shrouding that high knower of things  
 unknown  
 Who to Jehangir would not bend his neck,  
 Whose ardent breath fans every free heart's  
 ardour,  
 Whom Allah sent in season to keep watch  
 In India on the treasure-house of Islam.  
 I craved the saints' gift, other-worldliness  
 For my eyes saw, yet dimly. Answer came:  
 "Closed is the long roll of the saints; this Land  
 Of the Five Rivers stinks in good men's  
 nostrils.  
 God's people have no portion in that country  
 Where lordly tassel sprouts from monkish  
 cap;  
 That cap bred passionate faith, this tassel  
 breeds  
 Passion for playing pander to Government."

[Translated by V.G. Kiernan]

POLITICS

Ranks must be determined for this game;  
 Let you be the *firzine* and I the pawn by the  
 grace of the chess-player.  
 The pawn, indeed, is an insignificant token,  
 Even the *farzine* is not privy to the chess-  
 player's strategy.

[Translated by the Editors]

FAQR

There is a *faqr* that teaches the hunter to be a  
 prey;  
 There is another that opens the secrets of  
 mastery over the world.  
 There is a *faqr* that is the root of needfulness  
 and misery among nations;  
 There is another that turns mere dust into  
 elixir.

[Translated by the Editors]

THE SELF

Barter not thy selfhood for silver and gold;  
 Sell not a burning flame for a spark half-cold;  
 So says Firdowsi, the poet of vision and grace,  
 Who brought to the East the dawn of brighter  
 days:  
*Be not a churl for filthy lucre's sake,*  
*Count not thy coppers, whatever they may make.*

[Translated by Naim Siddiqui]

SEPARATION

The sun is weaving with golden thread  
 A mantle of light about earth's head;  
 Creation hushed in ecstasy,  
 As in the presence of the Most High.  
 What can these know—stream, hill, moon,  
 star—  
 Of separation's torturing scar?  
 Mine is this golden grief alone,  
 To this dust only is this grief known.

[Translated by V.G. Kiernan]

MONASTERY

Talking in signs and symbol is not for this age,  
 And I know not the art of artful sniggers;  
 No more are those who said: *Rise, in God's name!*  
 The ones alive are sweepers and grave-diggers.

[Translated by Naim Siddiqui]

SATAN'S PETITION

To the Lord of the universe the Devil said:—  
 A firebrand Adam grows, that pinch of dust  
 Meager-souled, plump of flesh, in fine clothes  
 trussed,

Brain ripe and subtle, heart not far from dead.  
 What the East's sacred law made men abjure,  
 The casuist of the West pronounces pure;  
 Knowest Thou not, the girls of Paradise see  
 And mourn their gardens turning wilderness?  
 For fiends its rulers serve the populace:  
 Beneath the heavens is no more need of me!

[Translated by V.G. Kiernan]

#### BLOOD

If blood is warm in the body, there is no fear  
 nor anxiety,  
 And the heart is free of tribulations.  
 The one who has received this bounty  
 Is neither greedy for wealth nor miserable in  
 poverty.

#### FLIGHT

The tree said to a bird of the desert one day:  
 "Creation is founded on the principle of injustice;  
 For the Creation could have been so much  
 more pleasant  
 If I had also been granted the gift of flight."  
 The bird gave him a good reply:  
 "Woe! You regard justice to be injustice;  
 He is not entitled to fly in this world,  
 Whoever is not free from earth-rootedness."

#### TO THE HEADMASTER

The headmaster is an architect  
 Whose material is the human soul.  
 A good advice has been left for you  
 By the sage Qa'ani:  
*Do not raise a wall against the Sun  
 If you wish the courtyard illuminated."*

#### THE PHILOSOPHER

He could fly high but he wasn't daring and  
 passionate,  
 The sage remained a stranger to the secret of  
 Love.  
 The vulture roamed around the air like an eagle,  
 But could not get acquainted with the taste of  
 a fresh prey.

[Translated by the Editors]

#### THE EAGLE

I have turned away from that place on earth  
 Where sustenance takes the form of grain and  
 water.  
 The solitude of the wilderness pleases me—  
 By nature I was always a hermit—  
 No spring breeze, no one plucking roses, no  
 nightingale,  
 And no sickness of the songs of love!  
 One must shun the garden-dwellers—  
 They have such seductive charms!  
 The wind of the desert is what gives  
 The stroke of the brave youth fighting in  
 battle its effect.  
 I am not hungry for pigeon or dove—  
 For renunciation is the mark of an eagle's life.  
 To swoop, withdraw and swoop again  
 Is only a pretext to keep up the heat of the  
 blood.  
 East and West -these belong to the world of  
 the pheasant,  
 The blue sky—vast, boundless—is mine!  
 I am the *dervish* of the kingdom of birds—  
 The eagle does not make nests.

[Translated by Mustansir Mir]

#### DISCIPLES IN REVOLT

Not a rushlight for us,—in our Master's  
 Fine windows electric lights blaze!  
 Town or village, the Muslim's a duffer—  
 To his *Brahmins* like idols he prays.  
 Not mere gifts—compound interest these  
 saints want,  
 In each hair-shirt a usurer's dressed,  
 Who inherits his seat of authority  
 Like a crow in the eagle's old nest.

[Translated by V.G. Kiernan]

#### THE LAST WILL OF HARUN RASHID

Harun said to his son when his hour came,  
 "You'll will also pass this way some day.  
 The Angel of Death is an unseen to the infidel,  
 But it is not hidden from a Muslim's eyes."

TO THE PSYCHOLOGIST

Transcend the intellect if you have courage to  
do so:  
There are islands hidden in the ocean of the  
self as yet.  
The secrets of this silent sea, however, do not  
yield  
Until you cut it with the blow of the Moses' rod.

*[Translated by the Editors]*

EUROPE

The Jewish money-lenders, whose cunning  
beats the lion's prowess,  
Have been waiting hopefully for long.  
Europe is ready to drop like a ripe fruit,  
Let's see in whose bag it goes.

*—Adapted from Nietzsche*

*[Translated by the Editors]*

FREEDOM OF THOUGHT

Falling down is the destiny of that bird  
Whose duality of nature renders him unable  
to fly.  
Not every heart is an abode to the trusty  
Gabriel,  
Nor can every thought ensnare the Paradise  
like a bird.  
The ecstasy of thought is dangerous in a nation  
Where the individuals observe no rule.

Though God-gifted intellect is the lamp of an  
age,  
The freedom of thought is a Satanic concept.

*[Translated by the Editors]*

THE LION AND THE MULE

THE LION

You are so different and unlike  
All the other dwellers of the wild and the  
desert!  
Who are your parents and ancestors?  
And what is your tribe?

THE MULE

Perhaps your highness does not know  
My uncle—my mother's brother:  
He gallops like the wind, and is  
The pride of the royal stable!

*—Adapted from German*

THE ANT AND THE EAGLE

THE ANT

I am so miserable and forlorn—  
Why is your station loftier than the skies?

THE EAGLE

You forage about in dusty paths;  
The nine heavens are as nothing to me!

*[Translated by Mustansir Mir]*