

# A MESSAGE FROM THE EAST

## AUTHOR'S PREFACE

The impulse that brought forth *A Message from the East* was provided by the *West-Oestlicher Divan* of the German "Philosopher of Life," Goethe, about which Germany's Jewish poet, Heine, writes:

This is a bouquet of acknowledgment by the West to the East... The *Divan* bears witness to the fact that the West, disgusted with its weak and cold spirituality, seeks warmth from the East's breast.

What influences and circumstances led to the writing of the poems comprising the *Divan*—a title chosen by Goethe himself—which are among his best works, is a question for answering which it is necessary to give a brief account of the movement known in the history of German literature as the Oriental movement. It was originally my intention to discuss the said movement in some detail in this Preface, but, unfortunately, much of the material necessary for that purpose was unavailable in India. Paul Horn, the author of *A History of Persian Literature*, has in an article discussed the question of the extent to which Goethe was indebted to Persian poets, but I was unable to obtain, whether from any library in India or from Germany, the issue of the *Nord und Sud* in which the article was published. Consequently, I have been compelled to rely in writing this Preface partly on what I retain in my memory from my personal study in the past and partly on Mr. Charles Remy's brief, but very useful, monograph on the subject.

From early youth Goethe's versatile mind was attracted to Oriental ideas. While studying law at Strasbourg, he met that famous and venerable figure of German literature, Herder, the influence of whose companionship he acknowledges in his autobiography. Herder did not know Persian. Nevertheless, because of his preoccupation with morals, he was profoundly interested in Sa'di's writings, so much so that he translated parts of the *Gulistan* into German. The poetry of Khwajah Hafiz did not appeal to him very much. Drawing the attention of his contemporaries to Sa'di, he writes: "We have written a lot of poetry in the style of Hafiz. What we now need to do is to follow Sa'di." However, despite his interest in Persian literature, there is little trace of the influence of that literature either in his verse or in his prose writings. Similarly, Goethe's other contemporary, Schiller, who died before the advent of the Oriental movement, is free from Oriental influences, although it should not be overlooked that he borrowed the plot of his drama *Turandukht* [Turandot in German] from Maulana Nizami's story about the daughter of the King of the Fourth Realm (*Haft Paikar*), beginning with a verse which [translated into English] runs thus:

"He said that among Russian lands  
There was a city as fair as a bride."

In 1812, Von Hammer published a complete translation of the *Divan* of Hafiz, and it was this event that set on foot the Oriental movement in German literature. Goethe was sixty-five years old at that time—a time when the decline of the German nation had reached

its nadir in every respect. Goethe was not temperamentally attuned to an active part in his country's political movements. His restless and high-soaring spirit, tired of the conflicts then endemic in Europe, sought and found a haven for itself in the peace and tranquillity of the Oriental milieu. The music of Hafiz aroused in Goethe's imagination a mighty storm, which took a permanent shape in the *West-Oestlicher Divan*. Von Hammer's translation, however, was not merely a stimulus for Goethe; it was also the source of his extraordinary ideas. There are passages in the *Divan* which read like liberal translations of Hafiz's verses. There are also passages- in which his imagination, led on to some new path by a line of Hafiz, throws light on complex and profound problems of life. Goethe's well-known biographer, Bielschowsky, writes as follows:

In the songs of the nightingale of Shiraz Goethe perceived his own image. There were times when he experienced the hallucinatory feeling that his spirit had, in an earlier existence, perhaps inhabited the East in the body of Hafiz. There is in him the same earthly joy, the same heavenly love, the same simplicity, the same depth, the same warmth and fervour, the same catholicity, the same open-heartedness, the same freedom from restrictions and conventions; in short, in everything we find him a second Hafiz. Hafiz was a mouthpiece of the hidden and an interpreter of mysteries, and so is Goethe. Just as there is a world of meaning in the apparently simple words of Hafiz, hidden truths manifest themselves in Goethe's unstrained utterances. Both elicited admiration from rich and poor alike. Both influenced with their personalities great conquerors of their times (viz. Timur in the case of Hafiz, and Napoleon in that of Goethe,) and preserving their internal peace and composure, in times of general destruction and ravage, succeeded in going on with their singing.

Apart from Hafiz, Goethe is indebted for his ideas to Shaikh 'Attar, Sa'di, Firdausi, and Islamic literature in general. He has even written a few *ghazals* with rhymes and rhyme-adjuncts. He freely uses Persian metaphors and images in his verses (e.g. "gems of verse," "darts of eyelashes," "curled ringlets"). Indeed, in the ardour of his Persianism he does not refrain even from hinting at pederasty. The names of the different parts of the *Divan* are Persian, such as 'Mughanni-namah,' 'Sakinama,' 'Ishq-namah,' 'Timur-namah,' 'Hikmat-namah'. Notwithstanding all this, Goethe is not an imitator of any Persian poet; his poetic genius is completely independent. His singing in the tulip-fields of the East is purely a temporary phase. He never lets go of his Westernism, and his glance rests only on those Oriental truths which his Western temperament can assimilate. He took no interest whatsoever in Persian mysticism. Although he knew that in the East the verses of Hafiz were interpreted in mystical terms, he himself was dedicated only to the *ghazal* pure and simple and had no sympathy with the mystical interpretation of Hafiz. Rumi's philosophical verities and sapiential utterances appeared to him to be merely vague. It, however, seems that he did not study Rumi carefully; for it is impossible that a man who was an admirer of Spinoza (the Dutch philosopher who believed in the unity of being) and who wrote in support of Bruno (Italy's existential philosopher) should not have acknowledged Rumi, if he had known him well enough.

To sum up, Goethe tried through the *West-Oestlicher Divan* to instill the Persian spirit into German literature. Later poets, such as Platen, Rueckert and Bodenstedt, completed the Oriental movement initiated by the *Divan*. Platen learned Persian for his literary purposes. He composed *ghazals* and *ruba'iyat* in which he observed rhymes and rhyme-adjuncts and even the rules of Persian prosody. He even wrote a *qasidah* on Napoleon. Like Goethe, he freely uses Persian metaphors, such as "the rose-bride," "the musky ringlet" and

“tulip-faced,” and he is devoted to the *ghazal* pure and simple. Rueckert was well versed in Arabic, Persian and Sanskrit. He thought highly of Rumi’s philosophy and wrote most of his *ghazals* in imitation of Rumi. Since he was a scholar of Oriental languages, the sources of his Oriental poems were also more diversified. He gathered gems of wisdom from wherever he could lay hands on them, as, for example, from Nizami’s *Makhzan al-Asrar*, Jami’s *Baharistan*, Amir Khusrau’s *Kulliyat*, Sa’di’s *Gulistan*, and from *Manaqib al-‘Arifin*, ‘*Ayar Danish*, *Mantiq al-Tair* and *Haft Qulzum*. In fact, he embellishes his writings even with pre-Islamic traditions and stories of Persia. He has also beautifully narrated some events of Islamic history, such as the death of Mahmüd Ghaznavi, Mahmüd’s assault on Somnat, the deeds of Sultanah Radiyah. The most popular poet of the Oriental movement after Goethe is Bodenstedt, who published his poems under the pseudonym of Mirza Shafi’. It was a small collection which became so popular that it went through 140 editions within a short period. So perfectly did Bodenstedt assimilate the Persian spirit that for long people in Germany took his poems to be translations of Persian poems. He profited from Amir Mu’izzi and Anvari as well.

I have deliberately refrained from mentioning Goethe’s famous contemporary, Heine, in this connection. Although his collection of poems entitled *New Poems* bears marked traces of Persian influence and he has very skillfully narrated the story of Mahmud and Firdausi, yet, on the whole, he has no connection with the Oriental movement. In fact, he did not accord much value to German poetry of the Oriental movement outside Goethe’s *Divan*. However, even the heart of this independent-minded German poet could not escape the magic charm of Persia. Imagining himself to be a Persian poet exiled to Germany, he writes: “O Firdausi, O Jami, O Sa’di, your brother, confined in a dismal prison, pines for the roses of Shiraz.”

Also deserving mention among minor poets of the Oriental movement are Daumer,

the imitator of Hafiz, Hermann Stahl, Loeschke, Stieglitz, Lenthold and Von Shack. The last-mentioned enjoyed a high position in the world of learning. Two of his poems, ‘The Justice of Mahmüd Ghaznavi’ and ‘The Story of Harut and Marut,’ are well known and his poetry, on the whole, bears the impress of ‘Umar Khayyam’s influence. However, a complete history of the Oriental movement and a detailed comparison of German and Persian poets designed to assess the exact extent of Persian influence call for an extensive study, for which I have at my disposal neither the time nor the means. It may be that the brief sketch given here will enthuse someone younger than I am to undertake the necessary research.

I need not say much about *A Message from the East*, which has been written a hundred-odd years after the *West-Oestlicher Divan*. My readers will by themselves appreciate that the main purpose underlying it is to bring out moral, religious and social truths bearing on the inner development of individuals and nations. There is undoubtedly some resemblance between Germany as it was a hundred years ago and today’s East. The truth, however, is that the internal unrest of the world’s nations, which we cannot assess properly because of being ourselves affected by it, is the fore-runner of a great spiritual and cultural revolution. Europe’s Great War was a catastrophe which destroyed the old world order in almost every respect, and now out of the ashes of civilization and culture Nature is building up in the depths of life a new Adam and a new world for him to live in, of which we get a faint sketch in the writings of Einstein and Bergson. Europe has seen with its own eyes the horrible consequences of its intellectual, moral and economic objectives and has also heard from Signor Nitti (a former prime minister of Italy) the heart-rending story of the West’s decline. It is, however, a pity that Europe’s perspicacious, but conservative, statesmen have failed to make a proper assessment of that wonderful revolution which is now taking place in the human mind.

Regarded from a purely literary standpoint, the debilitation of the forces of life in Europe after the ordeal of the war is unfavourable to the development of a correct and mature literary ideal. Indeed, the fear is that the minds of the nations may be gripped by that slow-pulsed 'Ajamiyat which runs away from life's difficulties and which fails to distinguish between the emotions of the heart and the thoughts of the brain. However, America seems to be a healthy element in Western civilization, the reason for which perhaps is that it is free from the trammels of old traditions and that its collective intuition is receptive to new ideas and influences.

The East, and especially the Muslim East, has opened its eyes after a centuries-long slumber. But the nations of the East should realise that life can bring about no revolution in its surroundings until a revolution takes place in its inner depths and that no new world can take shape externally until it is formed in the minds of men. This ineluctable law, which has been stated by the Quran in the simple but eloquent words, "Verily, God does not change a nation until it changes itself" [xiii. 11] governs both the individual and the collective spheres of life; and it is the truth of this law that I have tried to keep in view in my Persian works.

In the present-day world, and especially in Eastern countries, every effort which aims at extending the outlook of individuals and nations beyond geographical boundaries and at reviving or generating in them a healthy and strong human character is worthy of respect. It is for this reason that I have dedicated these few pages to His Majesty the King of Afghanistan, who appears to be well aware of this fact, thanks to his natural intelligence and keen intellect, and who is specially keeping in view the education and training of the Afghans. May God help him in the fulfilment of this grand mission.

In the end, I must thank my friend, Chaudhry Muhammad Hussain, M. A., who arranged for publication the manuscripts of the poems presented here. Had he not taken the

trouble of doing this, the publication of this collection would have been delayed very much.

IQBAL

[Translated by M. Hadi Husain]

## DEDICATORY EPISTLE TO KING AMANULLAH KHAN OF AFGHANISTAN

Successful head of a great monarchy,  
Youthful in years, old in sagacity,  
Inspired practitioner of the royal art,  
Possessor of the wisdom of the heart,  
With a will as strong as your mountain walls,  
And constant circumspection that forestalls  
All risks, ambition as high as my thought,  
And organising power that has brought  
Together feuding tribes, you have untold  
Gifts made to you by kings—silver and gold,  
Rubies and jewels. O king, son of a king,  
Accept from me this humble offering.

Ever since I found out life's mystery,  
It is as if a fire blazed inside me.  
My song is a flame of that inner fire—  
A song of passion sung on wisdom's lyre.  
That Western sage, that bard of Germany,  
That ardent lover of things Pahlavi,  
Saluted the East with his great *Divan*,  
That tribute to the poets of Iran  
And veritable picture gallery  
Of vignettes, all in Persian imagery.  
To that salute this book is a reply,  
This gleam of moonlight in the Eastern sky.  
Without deluding myself, I will dare  
To tell you how the two of us compare.  
His was the vital spark of the young West;  
Mine has been wrung from the East's aged  
breast.

A flourishing spring garden gave him birth;  
I am a product of a long dead earth.  
He was a nightingale that filled with song  
An orchard; I am but a desert gong,  
A signal for the caravan to start.  
We both have delved into the inmost heart  
Of being; both of us are messages

Of life in the midst of death's ravages;  
Two daggers, morning-lustred, mirror-bright;  
He naked; I still sheathed, concealed from  
sight.

Two pearls, both precious, both unmatched,  
are we,

Both from the depths of an unfathomed sea.  
He burst out of the mother-of-pearl's womb,  
For he could rest no longer in that tomb.  
But I, who still am lying shell-enshrined,  
Have yet to be astir in the sea's mind.  
No one around me knows me properly:  
They go away with empty cups from my  
Wine-fount. I offer them a royal state,  
With Chosroe's throne for use as their  
footmat.

But they want fairy tales of love from me,  
The gaudy trappings of mere poesy.  
They are so purblind that they only see  
My outside, not the fervid soul in me.  
I have made Love my very being's law:  
In me can live together fire and straw  
The truths of statecraft and religion both  
God has revealed to me; so I am loth  
To turn to any other guide. From my  
Imagination do the flowers come by  
Their hues. Each line of verse that I compose  
Is a drop of my rich heart's blood that flows  
From my pen's point. Do not think poetry  
Is merely madness; if this madness be  
Complete, then wisdom is its name. Alas!  
Vouchsafed this gift, I am condemned to pass  
My days in exile in this joyless land,  
This India, where none can understand  
The things I sing of like a nightingale  
With not a tulip, not a rose to hail  
Its song—a nightingale singing alone  
In some deserted place, sad and forlorn.  
So mean is fortune that it favours fools.  
Woe to the gifted, who defy its rules!

You see, O king, the Muslims' sun dimmed by  
The darkling clouds that overhang the sky—  
The Arab in his desert gone astray;  
The way of godliness no more his way;  
The Egyptian in the whirlpool of the Nile;  
And the Turanian slow-pulsed and senile;  
The Turk a victim of the ancient feud

Of East and West, both covered with his  
blood;

No one left like that ardent soul, Salman;  
His creed of Love now alien to Iran,  
Which has lost all its fervour, all its zest,  
The old fire all cold ashes in its breast;  
The Indian Muslim unconcerned about  
All save his belly, sunk in listless doubt.  
The heroes have departed from the scene:  
All, all gone—Khalid, Umar, Saladin.

God has endowed you with a feeling heart,  
That bleeds to see the Muslims thus  
distraught.

Across this wilderness pass like a breeze  
Of spring; blow back Siddiq's and Umar's  
days.

This race of mountain-dwellers, the Afghans,  
The blood of lions flowing in their veins,  
Industrious, brave, intelligent and wise,  
With the look of the eagle in their eyes,  
Have not, alas, fulfilled their destiny:  
Their star has not yet risen in the sky.  
They dwell hemmed in by mountain  
fastnesses,

Shut off from all renascent influences.

O you, for whom no labour is too great,  
Spare no endeavour to ameliorate  
Your people, so that you may add your name  
To those of men who worked for Islam's  
fame.

Life is a struggle, not beseeching rights;  
And knowledge is the arms with which one  
fights.

God ranked it with the good things that  
abound

And said it must be grasped, wherever found.  
The one to whom the Quran was revealed,  
From whom no aspect of truth was concealed,  
Beheld the Essence itself with his eye;  
And yet "God, teach me still more" was his  
cry.

Knowledge of things is Adam's gift from God,  
The shining palm of Moses and his rod,  
The secret of the greatness of the West,  
The source of all that it has of the best.  
We would see, if our spirits had true zest,  
Nothing but diamonds in the roadside dust.

Knowledge and wealth make nations sound  
and strong,  
And thus enable them to get along.  
For knowledge cultivate your people's minds;  
For wealth exploit your mineral finds.  
Go, plunge a dagger into your land's bowels;  
Like Somnat's idol it is full of jewels.  
In it do rubies of Badakhshan lie;  
In its hills is the thunder of Sinai.

If you desire a firmly founded state,  
Then make of men a proper estimate.  
Many an Adam acts like an Iblis;  
Many an Iblis acts like an Idris,  
With false pretences that cheat simple folk,  
His tulip-heart a lamp that is all smoke;  
Deceitful, with a show of piety,  
His heart full of hate and hypocrisy.  
O king, be careful in assessing them,  
Not every stone that glitters is a gem.  
The sage of Rum, of blessed memory,  
Has thus summed up why nations live or die:  
"The end of no past nation has been good  
Which could not tell a stone from aloe-wood."

A king in Islam is God's servitor—  
A selfless Ali or a just Umar.  
Among your multifarious tasks of state  
Give yourself time to think and contemplate.  
The ambusher of self can never lose  
A quarry: quarries fall into his noose.  
In royal robes live like an anchorite:  
Eyes wide awake, but thought of God hugged  
tight.  
That soldier-king, the Emperor Murad,  
Whose lightning-spouting sword kept his foes  
awed,  
An Ardeshir with an Abu Dharr's soul,  
Played both a king's role and a hermit's role.  
His breast wore armour for his soldier's part,  
But in it dwelt a hairshirt-wearer's heart.  
All Muslim rulers who were truly great  
Led hermits' lives despite their royal state.  
Asceticism was their way of life;  
To cultivate it was their constant strife.  
They lived as Salman lived in Ctesiphon.  
A ruler he who did not care to don  
The robes of royalty and who abhorred  
All outfit save the Qur'an and the sword.

Armed with love of Muhammad, one  
commands  
Complete dominion over seas and lands.  
Ask God to grant you some small part  
Of that love for Muhammad which the heart  
Of Siddiq and of Ali bore, because  
The life of the Islamic people draws  
Its sustenance from it and it, in fact,  
Is that which keeps the universe intact.  
It was Muhammad whose epiphany  
Laid bare the essence of Reality.  
My soul has no peace but in love of him—  
A light in me that never can get dim.  
Arise and make the cup of Love go round,  
And in your hills make songs of Love  
resound.

*[Translated by M. Hadi Husain]*

## THE TULIP OF SINAI

### 1

All being is a martyr to His whim,  
All life is graven with the need of Him:  
Seest thou not the Sun, that flames the Sky  
Has left the scar of Worship on Dawn's rim?

### 2

My heart is bright with burning inwardly,  
Mine eye weeps blood, yet all the world does  
see;  
Let him still less Life's mystery attain  
Who says that Love is but insanity!

### 3

Love gives the garden the soft breeze of May,  
Love lights the star-buds in the meadow gay,  
The ray of passion plunges through the deep,  
Love gives the fishes sight to see the way.

### 4

Love reckoneth the price of eagles cheap,  
And giveth pheasants to the falcons' grip;  
Our hearts look carefully to their defence,  
But suddenly, out of ambush, Love doth leap.

5

'Tis Love that paints the tulip petals' hue,  
'Tis Love that stirs the spirit's bitter rue;  
If thou couldst cleave this carrion of clay,  
Thou shalt behold, within, Love's bloodshed  
too.

6

Not every soul of Love hath capital,  
Not every spirit respondeth to Love's call;  
The tulip flowereth with a branded breast,  
The ruby's heart hath not a spark at all.

7

A spent scent in the garden I suspire,  
I know not what I seek, what I require,  
But be my passion satisfied, or no,  
Yet here I burn, a martyr to desire.

8

The world is clay; our hearts its harvest be;  
Yet is this drop of blood its mystery;  
Surely our sight is double, or the world  
Of every man is in his heart to see.

*[Translated by A.J. Arberry]*

9

The nightingale said to the gardener at dawn:  
'Only the tree of sorrow can take root in this  
soil:  
The wild thorn reaches a ripe age,  
But the rose dies when it is still young'.

*[Translated by Mustansir Mir]*

10

This world of ours, where Loss is born with  
Gain,  
And Dissolution is with Being twain,  
Our heart will not endure it, soon or late:  
Make new the old, and build it up again !

*[Translated by A.J. Arberry]*

11

To the voice of love Adam is music;  
He reveals secrets, but he is a secret himself

God created the world, but Adam made it  
better—  
Adam, perhaps, is God's co-worker.

12

I do not seek the beginning or the end;  
I am full of mystery and seek the realm of  
mysteries.  
Even if the face of truth were unveiled,  
I would still seek the same 'perhaps' and  
'maybe'.

13

How long, my heart, will you be as foolish as  
the moth?  
How long will you be unlike a man's heart?  
just for once let your own fire consume you—  
How long will you fly round the fire of  
others?

14

Build, with your handful of dust,  
A body stronger than a rock fortress,  
and inside this body let there be a heart that  
feels sorrow —  
Like a stream flowing by a mountain.

*[Translated by Mustansir Mir]*

15

Of water and of clay a figure fine  
God wrought, a world than Eden more  
divine,  
And still the saki fashioned with his flame  
Another world out of this dust of mine.

*[Translated by A.J. Arberry]*

16

On the Day of Resurrection the Brahmin said  
to God:  
'The light of life was like a brilliant spark;  
But, if you don't mind, I will say this to you:  
The idol lasted longer than man'.

*[Translated by Mustansir Mir]*

17

Swift-paced thou hast departed, star of dawn!  
Perchance disgusted that we slumbered on:  
It was through ignorance I lost the way—  
Wakeful thou earnest, wakeful thou art gone.

18

The tavern were exempt of turbulence,  
No spark illumed our clay's indifference;  
Love had not been, nor all the alarm of Love,  
If heart possessed the mind's intelligence.

19

O new-fledged spirit proudly hovering!  
God made thee all delight upon the wing;  
'Tis fleshly passion checks our sluggard flight,  
While thou ecstatic unto Heaven dost spring.

[Translated by A.J. Arberry]

20

What joy comes with existence, dear Lord!  
The heart of every atom yearns for life:  
As the rose-bud cracks open the branch,  
It smiles with the love of life!

21

I have heard that in pre-existence the moth  
said:  
'Grant me just a moment's radiance in my life.  
You may scatter my ashes at dawn,  
But grant me one night of passion and fire'.

[Translated by Mustansir Mir]

22

Muslims ! I have a word within my heart  
More radiant than the soul of Gabriel:  
I keep it hidden from the Sons of Fire,  
It is a secret Abraham knew well.

23

O heart, my heart, unto His street thou'rt  
gone!  
O heart, my heart, thou leavest me alone;  
Each instant thou createst new desires:  
O heart, hast thou naught other to be done?

24

Thou reachest to the bosom of a star:  
Yet of thyself thou art all unaware:  
Grain-like, upon thyself open an eye,  
And thou shalt rise from earth a sapling fair.

25

How sweet a birdsong on the air was borne  
Within the leafy garden, at the dawn  
Give out whatever in thy heart thou hast—  
Carol or make lament, or sigh, or mourn!

26

If thou wilt take from me the lesson of life,  
I'll tell thee a close-guarded mystery:  
Having no soul in body, thou must die;  
Thou shalt not die, be there a soul in thee.

27

O hush your fable of the candle-sprite,  
The tale of its burning grates upon the ear:  
That moth alone I recognize as such  
That labours fiercely and blazes with good  
cheer.

28

The draught that makes thee stranger to  
thyself,  
Of that delightful juice I have no part;  
Then seek no other goods in my bazaar,  
For, like the rose, I have a bleeding heart.

29

Walk in my garden, and thou'lt find but loss,  
Except thy soul be martyred to the Quest;  
I shew what flows within the rose's veins,  
No magic scents and hues my Spring  
possessed.

30

Forth from this world of *how* and *wherefore*  
flee,  
This maelstrom of our *be* and *not-to-be!*  
Let selfhood be the tenant of thy flesh,  
And build, like Abraham, a sanctuary.

[Translated by A.J. Arberry]



31

I do not know the birds in the garden,  
On the branch where my nest is built I sing  
alone.  
If you are weak of heart, stay away from me,  
For my song drips blood.

*[Translated by Mustansir Mir]*

32

Dear Lord, what sweet commotion fills the  
world!  
Thou hast made all drunken—with a single  
bowl;  
Thou gavest glance communion with glance,  
But partest heart from heart, and soul from  
soul.

*[Translated by A.J. Arberry]*

33

Alexander gave Khizr some good advice:  
'Be part of the commotion of land and sea.  
You are watching this battle from the side of  
the field;  
Go and die in action, and then you will be  
truly immortal.

*[Translated by Mustansir Mir]*

34

Dust is the throne of Kay, the crown of Jam,  
Church, temple, dust the Shrine of Abraham;  
I do not know what essence is in me—  
I gaze beyond the skies, yet dust I am!

35

If there were set within thy hand of dust  
A heart, a hundred fragments of warm blood,  
And of spring's clouds if thou couldst learn to  
ween  
Tulips shall blossom from thy sorrow's flood.

36

Each breath new images are being cast,  
Not in one form finds Life stability;  
If thy to-day reflects thy yesterday,  
No vital spark within thy dust can be.

37

Whene'er the joy of music brings me forth  
The vast assembly rages with my fire,  
But when I would a little be alone  
Within my heart I lose the world entire.

38

Enquirest thou, what is this heart of thine?  
The heart was born, when fire consumed the  
brain:  
The joy of agitation formed the heart,  
And when this ceased, it turned to clay again.

39

"The eye cannot attain Him," said the mind:  
Yet Yearning's glance trembles in hope arid  
fear.  
It grows not old, the tale of Sinai,  
And every heart yet whispers Moses' prayer.

40

Cathedral, temple, mosque, or monastery,  
Naught hast thou made, this hand of dust  
apart:  
Only the heart can save from alien rule,  
And thou, O fool, thou hast not found a heart.

41

Not in these bowers have I bound my heart,  
But fare on free from this imprisonment:  
Awhile I tarried, like the breath of dawn,  
And, gave the roses fragrance as I went.

42

This youthful wine I poured into the cup,  
Revives the aged toper near to die,  
For, like the ancient Magians, this wine  
I borrowed from the Saki's languorous eye.

43

His wine hath made my sherd the Cup of Jam  
And hid the Ocean in the drop I am:  
My intellect had burnt an idol-house;  
Love made of it the Shrine of Abraham.

44

The mind is past's and present's prisoner  
And tends the idols of the eye and ear;  
It has an image hidden in its sleeve—  
The Brahman's son the girdle too shall wear.

45

In each man's head an intellect is set:  
My flesh, like others', is of clay and blood;  
But in this flesh there dwells a spaceless  
thought—  
I only have this secret understood.

*[Translated by A.J. Arberry]*

46

You went to Sinai, begging to have a view;  
Your soul is a stranger to itself.  
Set out in search of man;  
God Himself is searching for him.

*[Translated by Mustansir Mir]*

47

Speak this my message unto Gabriel:  
"My body was not made with light aglow;  
Yet see the fervour of us sons of earth,  
This joy-in-grief no Child of Light can know!"

48

Shall knowledge fall the Phoenix in the net?  
Be less assured: let doubt imprison thee.  
Wouldst work? Then let thy faith be more  
mature:  
One be thou seeking, One behold, One be!

49

Mind wove the veils that cover up Thy face,  
And ah! mine eyes thirst upon Thee to gaze.  
Thought with desire is all the while at war—  
What tumult in the poor heart Thou dost  
raise!

50

Thy heart quivereth at the thought of death.  
Pale as a lime in terror thou dost lie:  
Fear not; take thou a selfhood more mature,

Which grasping, after death thou shalt not  
die.

51

Why ask, what links my body and my soul?  
I fall not in the snare of How, How Long:  
Awhile my breath is choked, but when I rise  
Clear of the reed's embrace, I am a song.

52

Thus spake the wise preceptor unto me:  
"Thy every day the morrow's message is:  
Preserve thy heart from the unheeding fair—  
No footmark tread its sanctuary but His."

53

Why ask of Razi what the Book denotes?  
Behold, its best interpreter I am:  
Mind lights a flame, heart burns—thus  
comprehend  
The tale of Nimrod and of Abraham.

54

Whether I am, or not, I hold my peace—  
To say "I am" were self-idolatry:  
Who is the singer, then, and whose the song  
That cries "I am" within the heart of me?

55

Tell thou for me that poet of bright words:  
Thou tulip flame, what profit does it bring?  
Thou meltest not thyself with such a fire,  
No lightest up the night of sorrowing."

56

I do not know thy Ugly and thy Fair:  
Thou takest Gain and Loss to measure by.  
I am the loneliest in this company—  
I view the vast world with another eye.

57

Perchance, grave minister, thou knowest not  
Love too shall have its Judgment after death,  
But in that Hall nor Book nor Balance is,  
Nor sin, nor infidelity, nor faith.

58

The water-drop, when it is self-illumed,  
Amidst a hundred as one pearl shall be:  
Then at this feast of choristers so live  
To take their garden for an oratory.

59

Ye men of learning, I am in a maze,  
The mind this meaning cannot understand:  
How in a hand of Dust there beats a heart  
Wherein gazelles of Fancy rove the land.

*[Translated by A.J. Arberry]*

60

Don't arrange a party on the shore,  
For there the song of life is gentle and soft.  
Roll with the ocean and contend with its  
waves:  
Struggle and combat give eternal life.

61

My entire being is a meaning sealed,  
I cannot abide the looks of word-spinners.  
I cannot be called free -or pre-determined -  
Because I am living clay, and for ever  
changing!

*[Translated by Mustansir Mir]*

62

Speak not about the Purpose of this life:  
Thou hast not sight to see its blandishments.  
I have such joy in travelling the road,  
Except the stony way, no stage I sense.

*[Translated by A.J. Arberry]*

63

If you were merely to glance at a piece of  
rock,  
It would turn into a jewel if you so desired.  
Slave of gold, don't measure yourself by  
gold—  
It was your glance that turned it into gold.

*[Translated by Mustansir Mir]*

64

Stranger it was, nor faithfulness did know,  
Its gaze was restless, searching to and fro:  
When it beheld Him, from my breast it flew—  
I knew not that His hand had taught it so.

65

Speak not of Love, and of Love's wizardry:  
Whatever shape thou wilt, he doth descend:  
Within the breast he is a spark, no more,  
But on the tongue a tale without an end.

66

Sweet newborn bud, why art thou so forlorn?  
What seekest thou within this garden fair?  
For here is dew, a river, song at morn,  
Birds in the grass, red roses, summer air.

67

One day a withered rose thus spoke to me:  
"Our manifesting is a spark swift blown."  
My heart is anguished for the Artist's pain,  
The painting of His brush fadeth so soon!

*[Translated by A.J. Arberry]*

68

Our infinite world—of old  
Time's ocean swallows it up.  
Look once in thy heart, and behold  
Time's ocean sunk in a cup.

*[Translated by R.A. Nicholson]*

69

My talk is with the songsters of the glade;  
The tongue of tongueless rosebuds I was  
made;  
When I am dead, O cast my dust on air—  
Attending roses is my only trade.

70

This vale of roses, is it as it seems?  
What makes the tulip's fiery heart to glow?  
A sea of colours is the mead we view:  
How nightingales behold it, who can know?

71

I am a circling planet, Thou my sun,  
The light that bathes me by Thy glance is  
thrown:  
Far from Thy bosom I imperfect am,  
Thou art the Book, one chapter I alone.

72

Sweet is His image in my sight to stay,  
Sweeter His love, my life to steal away;  
It was a subtle teacher taught me this—  
Sweeter than lodging is the winding way.

73

A girdled infidel, this brain of mine,  
It worships idols of its own design;  
Regard my heart, weeping for Passion's  
grief—  
What is to thee my way, my Faith divine?

74

The free-paced fir His bondsman was before,  
Fire in the rose's cheek His wine did pour;  
Sun, moon and stars His sanctuary are,  
The heart of Adam, His unopened door.

75

A hundred worlds stretched star to farthest  
star.  
Where'er the mind soared, there the heavens  
are  
But when I looked within upon my self,  
I saw a margin infinitely far.

76

Set not the chain of Fate upon thy foot;  
There is a way beyond this rolling sphere;  
If thou believest not, rise up, and find  
Thy foot uplifted leapeth in the air.

77

My heart to its own spell is prisoner,  
The world is lightened by its radiance fair;  
Seek not my dawn and even in a sun  
That ere my rising shone a many year.

*[Translated by A.J. Arberry]*

78

Your plectrum fills the instrument of the soul  
with tunes.  
How can You be in the soul and outside it as  
well?  
Why should I worry? With You, I am aflame;  
without You I die.  
But my Unique One, how do You manage  
without me?

*[Translated by Mustansir Mir]*

79

The heaved breath is a beaker of His sea,  
He lips our reed, and plays our melody;  
We grow as grass by an eternal stream,  
His dew is in our vein and artery.

80

There is one pain that tortureth Thy breast:  
Thou madest this world of colours and of  
scents,  
Why does it pain Thee else my fearless love,  
Who didst create this mighty turbulence?

81

Whom seekest thou? What fever fills thy  
mind?  
'Tis He is patent—thou the veil behind:  
Search after Him, and but thyself thou'lt see,  
Search after self and naught but Him thou'lt  
find.

82

Leave childishness, and learn a better lore;  
Abandon race, if thee a Muslim bore;  
If of his colour, blood, and veins and skin  
The Arab boasts—an Arab he no more!

*[Translated by A.J. Arberry]*

83

We are not Afghans, Turks or Tartars:  
Offspring of the garden, we grew from the  
same bough.  
Distinctions of colour and scent are forbidden  
to us,  
For we are products of a new spring.

*[Translated by Mustansir Mir]*

84

There is a world concealed within my breast,  
Heart in my dust, by passion's grief possest,  
And of the Wine that first lit up the soul  
One drop within my pitcher yet doth rest.

*[Translated by A.J. Arberry]*

85

My heart! My heart! My heart!  
My ocean, my boat, my shore!  
Did you fall like dew on my dusty being,  
Or did you sprout like a bud out of my soil?

*[Translated by Mustansir Mir]*

86

What maketh Foul and Fair, how shall I say?  
Tongue trembleth, such a riddle to declare:  
Without the stem, thou seest rose and thorn;  
Within, nor rose nor thorn is patent there.

87

What man in secret is not sorrowful,  
He hath a body, but he hath no soul:  
Desirest thou a spirit? Then pursue  
The fire and fever that shall never cool.

88

O ask not what I am, or whence came I:  
'Tis self-involvement I am living by:  
Within this sea I am a restless wave,  
And when I am no more involved, I die.

89

With all Thy glory, Thou the veil dost wear.  
The passion of our gaze Thou canst not bear,  
Thou runnest in our blood like potent wine,  
But ah! how strange Thou comest, and too  
rare.

90

Hug not the rest-house; on the roadway run:  
Keep bright the vision, as the moon and sun;  
The goods of mind and Faith to others give,

But guard Love's sorrow that thy heart hath  
won.

91

Come, Love, thou heart's most secret  
whispering,  
Come, thou our sowing and our harvesting;  
These earthly spirits are too aged grown—  
Out of our clay another Adam bring!

92

Speech bringeth pain and grief— so best it  
were;  
This long lament to me is lovelier;  
The joy I have not Alexander knew—  
Better than Jamshid's realm a slow, sweet air.

93

I have no swift-paced steed to ride upon,  
I am no courtier of a monarch's son;  
This, friend, for me is happiness enough  
That, when I dug my heart—a ruby shone!

94

Wouldst thou the perfect life attain? Then  
learn  
On self alone to fix the opened eye;  
The world to swallow in a single draught;  
To break the spell it is encompassed by.

95

"A child of earth is Adam," thou dost say.  
"Bond to the world of being and decay";  
Yet Nature wrought a miracle indeed—  
The seas foundations on his fount to lay!

*[Translated by A.J. Arberry]*

96

To a fearless heart a lion is a sheep;  
To a timid heart a deer is a tiger.  
If you have no fear, the ocean is a desert;  
If you are fearful, there is a crocodile in every  
wave.

*[Translated by Mustansir Mir]*

97

Wine am I, or the bowl where it doth lie?  
Pearl, or the bosom it is treasured by?  
I scan my heart, and this is all I see:  
One thing my soul is, and another I.

98

Thou sayest, "Lo, our bird is in the snare,  
No more shall he stretch wings and fly in air";  
Yet grows the soul more salient through the  
flesh  
Our dagger's whetted by its scabbard there.

99

Declare: how in the heart is born desire,  
How in the dwelling burns the lantern's fire.  
Who sees with this our sight, and what he  
sees,  
And how the soul was lodged within our  
ware.

100

When I was dead, and walked in Paradise,  
This heaven I could clearly see;  
One doubt yet lingered in my baffled soul—  
Was it the world, that world of imagery?

[Translated by A.J. Arberry]

101

Our world, a piece of work not yet finished,  
Is hostage to the alteration of day and night;  
The file of fate will rub it smooth -  
This clay sculpture is still being made.

[Translated by Mustansir Mir]

102

Being so distant, heaven-circling sun,  
What manner to my vision dost thou come?  
Nigh to the earthy, from the earth so far!  
O vision dazzler, whither dost thou roam?

[Translated by A.J. Arberry]

103

Carve out your path with your own pick-axe;  
It is a torment to take the path of others.

If what you can do is unique,  
It will deserve a reward even if it is a sin.

[Translated by Mustansir Mir]

104

The roving heart likes not at borne to stay,  
To be contained in water, fire, and clay;  
Think not that in the body is repose,  
This rolling sea comes to no shore to play.

105

Why choosest thou to sit alone, apart?  
With Nature's beauty be at dalliance:  
God gave to thee an eye with vision clear  
Out of its lustre to create a glance.

[Translated by A.J. Arberry]

106

In the midst of water and earth I sat alone,  
And turned away from Plato and Farabi.  
I did not beg anyone else for sight—  
I saw the world with my eyes alone.

[Translated by Mustansir Mir]

107

The origins of selfhood no man knows,  
To dawn and eve no fellowship it owes.  
I heard this wisdom from the heavenly guide:  
Not older than its wave the Ocean flows."

108

Heart, in the rosebud view Life's mystery!  
Truth in contingent there unveiled is shewn;  
Although it springeth from the shadowed  
earth,  
Its gaze is fixed upon the radiant sun.

[Translated by A.J. Arberry]

109

His glory is seen in garden and jungle;  
The cup of the rose glows with His wine.  
There is no one whom He consigns to  
everlasting darkness  
From His mark a lamp is lit in every heart.

[Translated by Mustansir Mir]

110

In the narcissus bed a bud did rise,  
The dew of dawn washed slumber from its  
eyes.  
Self out of selflessness appeared, and so  
What it had sought, the world did realize.

111

The world, that findeth in itself no stay,  
Sought in the street of yearning for a way,  
From the embrace of non-existence fled,  
And last in Adam's heart for refuge lay.

*[Translated by A.J. Arberry]*

112

Think not I grieve to die:  
The riddle of body and soul I have read plain.  
What care though one world vanish from  
mine eye,  
When hundreds in my consciousness remain?

*[Translated by R.A. Nicholson]*

113

The Rose and I one problem have to tell;  
We both are seized by the assembly's spell;  
The petal's tongue was not made eloquent,  
But in his wounded breast a heart doth dwell.

114

The self-sown tulip's temper I know well,  
Within the stem the roses' scent I smell,  
The meadow songster loves me as a friend,  
The tone wherein he carols I can tell.

115

One song of yearning fills the world entire,  
This yearning strings the universal lyre;  
Whatever is, and was and is to be,  
I see one moment of all Time's desire.

116

My heart is all the yearning of unrest,  
Tumult and agitation fill my breast;  
What discourse, comrade, seekest thou of me?  
All I would say, is to my self addressed.

117

Survival is, unendingly to burn;  
Like fishes, we can naught but twist and turn;  
Seek not the shore, for in the shore's embrace  
One moment's twisting ends in death eterne.

118

And if the Brahman, preacher, biddeth us  
Bow down to idols, furrow not thy brow:  
Our God Himself who shaped an image fair,  
Bade Cherubim before an idol bow.

*[Translated by A.J. Arberry]*

119

The philosophers have broken a hundred  
idols,  
But they are still in the Somnat of 'was' and  
'is'.  
How can they ensnare the angels and God? -  
They have not yet tied Adam to their  
saddle-straps!

*[Translated by Mustansir Mir]*

120

Out of my hand of clay worlds spring like  
grain;  
Come, from my harvest capital obtain:  
Lo, thou hast missed the way unto the Friend;  
Then lose thyself awhile in my heart's plain.

121

A thousand years with Nature I did make  
Near comradeship, and did myself for sake;  
And all my history was summed in this—  
I fashioned, and I worshipped; and I brake.

122

I flew the broad plains of eternity,  
From chains of clay and water I was free;  
My worth is very precious in Thy sight,  
For in life's market Thou hast offered me.

*[Translated by A.J. Arberry]*

123

Inside me is such a play of ideas—what does  
this mean?  
Outside me are all these mysteries—what  
does this mean?  
Say, you who are wise and have a subtle  
mind:  
The body lies still, but the soul stirs -what  
does this mean?

*[Translated by Mustansir Mir]*

124

I boast, I am a beggar without need;  
I shake, I burn, I melt; I play my reed;  
My melody has set thee all ablaze:  
Mirrors I make, being Alexander's breed.

125

If thou well knowest all thy quality,  
Lay down thy dew, and build thereon the sea:  
How long this begging at the moon, my  
heart?  
Light up thy dark with thy own radiancy!

126

Why sorrowest thou? The heart lives not by  
breath,  
It is not chained to Being and to Death.  
Fear not to die, O thou of little sight—  
Though the breath stop, the heart continueth.

127

Heart, while thou sittest in the breast of me  
Better my rug, than sovereign dignity:  
Wilt thou be in my bosom after death?  
Lo, all my hopes and fears are fixed on thee.

*[Translated by A.J. Arberry]*

128

On my behalf tell the pure-hearted Sufis—  
Those seekers after God and possessors of the  
truth:  
I would humbly serve that resolute  
self-worshipper  
Who sees God in the light of his own *khudi*.'

*[Translated by Mustansir Mir]*

129

Narcissus-like unseeing do not creep  
Out of the mead, as scent the rosebud sweep:  
God gave to thee a more illumined eye—  
Pass not with waking brain, and heart asleep

130

After my likeness I an image made:  
I bound on God the fashion that I wore:  
Wherefore I cannot out of self depart—  
Whatever be my guise, self I adore.

131

Thus spake the new-sprung blossom to the  
dew:  
"We meadow children have no piercing eye:  
In this broad plain, that holds a hundred suns,  
What difference exists 'twixt low and high?"

132

Take earth, heaven's mysteries to understand,  
By finite space let spacelessness be spanned;  
Each atom flies toward the Friend's abode—  
Then mark the roadway by the shifting sand.

133

Thou only art in the Creator's "Be!"  
Thou only art the Sign that none may see:  
Then tread more fearlessly the road of life,  
The world's broad plain containeth only thee.

134

Earth is the dust upon my tavern door,  
Heaven one passing of my cup, no more;  
Long is the story of my passion's grief.  
The world is but the prelude of my lore.

*[Translated by A.J. Arberry]*

135

Alexander is gone, with his sword and  
banner,  
The revenue he collected, and his treasures  
from mines and oceans.



You must believe that nations are more  
lasting than kings:  
Don't you see that Iran survives, but not  
Jamshid?

*[Translated by Mustansir Mir]*

136

My breast was torn, and thou hast seized my  
heart,  
Yea, with my dearest prize thou didst depart;  
Whom gavest thou my passion's precious  
store?  
What hast thou done with my most cherished  
smart?

137

The world of colour and of fragrancy,  
Earth, sky, dimension, all are gone from me:  
Didst thou desert His tumult, O my heart  
Or hath He left thee to thy privacy?

138

I do not know the instrument or key,  
Yet well I recognize Life's melody;  
So sang I in the brambles, that the rose  
Asked of the thrush, "What caroller is he?"

139

In the great throng so rapturous I did play,  
I struck the spark of Life out of their clay,  
I lit the heart with the mind's radiance,  
And probed the mind against the heart's  
assay.

*[Translated by A.J. Arberry]*

140

'Ajam became young again through my  
songs;  
My frenzy raised the price of its wares.  
It was a crowd lost in the wilderness:  
The sound of my bell made it a caravan.

*[Translated by Mustansir Mir]*

141

The soul of Persia kindles at my song,  
The caravan moves on, my call is strong;  
Like Urfi I will lift a livelier lilt,  
For heavy is the load, the way sleeps long.

142

Out of my restless spirit the flames start,  
In the East's bosom I have stirred a heart,  
Its clay is set afire by my lament,  
Like lightning to its inmost soul I dart.

143

I am a wanderer like the breeze of morn,  
Roselike my heart is into fragments torn,  
My glance, which cannot see the evident,  
A martyr to the joy of sight is borne.

144

Cotton to cloth of gold the mind can bring.  
Stones turn to mirrors, by its polishing:  
The poet, with his magical melody,  
To honeyed potion doth convert Life's sting.

145

I have consumed the fruit of Passion's tree.  
And understood Life's inmost mystery;  
Lo, I have brought the message of the  
Spring—  
Beware the Gardener, Lord of archery!

146

My thought plucks flowers that in Eden grew  
To shape and fashion fancies rare and new,  
Then shakes my heart a leaf within my breast,  
A petal trembling 'neath the Summer dew.

147

Persia's a sea that never comes to shore,  
Wherein are pearls of diamantine hue,  
Yet I'll not sail my barque upon a sea  
Within whose waves is never a shark to view.

148

Say not, the world's affairs unstable be;  
Our every moment veils eternity:

Hold firmly to To-day: for yet remains  
To-morrow in the mind of Destiny.

149

Thou hast escaped the mastery of the West  
And yet to tomb and dome thou still dost  
pray:  
Thou art so well inured to servitude.  
Thou carv'st a master of the stony way!

150

How long Life's garment parted shred by  
shred?  
How long like ants make in the earth thy bed?  
Rise up on wings, and learn the falcon's way;  
Nor search forever in the straw for bread.

151

Nest amid roses and anemones,  
Learn from the thrush his plangent melodies;  
If impotence has made thee grey and old,  
From the world's youth a vital portion seize!

152

It was the soul the body's image hewed,  
The rose bloomed double, yearning to be  
shewn;  
The restless soul a thousand habits hath,  
And turns to flesh, when it is used to one.

153

I heard a voice proclaiming from the grave:  
"Beneath the dust life can be lived again,  
Breath be possessed; but he has no soul,  
Who lives to please the whim of other men."

154

This band of dust that scattereth into air  
Not long endureth; yet do not despair;  
When Nature fashioneth a living form.  
It need an age, to make perfection there.

155

It must be known, this world of scent and  
sheen;  
They must be plucked, the roses in the **dene**;  
Yet do not close thine eyes upon the self,

Within thy soul a thing is to be seen.

156

"I am, and God is not," thou sayest so:  
"Water and clay into the boundless go";  
Yet I have not resolved this mystery—  
Whether it is mine eye that sees, or no.

157

I have no roasted fowl on which to sup,  
No mirror-shining wine is in my cup,  
Upon green grasses grazes my gazelle,  
Yet fragrant musk filleth his heartblood up.

*[Translated by A.J. Arberry]*

158

My passion puts fire into the Muslim veins,  
And my restive tears drop from his eyes;  
But still he is not aware of the tumult in my  
soul -  
For he has not seen the world with my eyes.

*[Translated by Mustansir Mir]*

159

Words are too frail, abodelessness to bear.  
Look inwardly, and see this point is clear:  
The soul has such a seat within the flesh  
One cannot say, "It is not here, but there!"

160

Love plays with every heart a different role,  
Now as a stone, and now a crystal bowl:  
Love robbed thee of thy self and gave thee  
tears  
But brought me ever closer to my soul.

161

From clay and water thou art not yet free,  
Thou sayest thou art Afghan, Turkoman:  
First I am man, and have no other hue,  
Thereafter Indian, Turanian.

162

The love of speech first filled my heart with  
blood  
And set aflame the dust upon the road;

But when I oped my lips, to speak of love,  
Words veiled this secret in a thicker shroud.

163

At last from subtle reason he has fled;  
His self-willed heart knew passion, and it  
bled;  
What askest thou of Iqbal in the clouds?  
Our wise philosopher has lost his head.

*[Translated by A.J. Arberry]*

## REFLECTIONS

### THE FIRST ROSE

I do not find a single comrade in the garden  
yet:  
For springtime is approaching and I am an  
early rose.  
I look at myself in the mirror of the rivulet,  
Creating a companion through this self-  
deluding pose.  
The pen that Destiny employed in writing  
Being's scroll  
Inscribed a message on my leaves for  
everyone to read.  
My heart is with the past; my eye is on the  
present's roll.  
A prophet of the future, I proclaim the  
future's creed.  
I sprang up out of dust and I assumed a rose's  
robe;  
But am, in fact, the Pleiades that was lost in  
the blue globe.

### A PRAYER

O You who filled my glass with wine galore  
From Nature's own winestore,  
See to it that my glass is melted by  
This fire sent from Your sky.  
O let my spirited lament provide  
Love with its wealth of pride.  
Would that the dust of my Sinai became  
An all-consuming flame.  
When I die, let my ashes form a bed  
Where tulips will be bred,  
So that my Passion's wounds, revived, may  
shine

In tulips' hearts again.

### THE NEW MOON OF EID

New moon of Eid,  
You cannot manage to evade  
The eager view  
Of people waiting for a sight of you.  
A thousand glances have  
Conspired to weave  
A net to catch you in.  
Open your eyes  
To yourself. Do not grieve  
That you are a bare outline.  
Within you lies  
A real full moon.

*[Translated by M. Hadi Husain]*

## CONQUEST OF NATURE

### I. THE BIRTH OF ADAM

Love exclaimed, 'Now one has been born  
Who would roll his heart in blood!  
Beauty trembled when she realised  
That one with a penetrating look had been  
born!  
Nature was distraught because,  
From the dust of a world without will,  
One had been born who could  
Make and unmake himself,  
And watch over himself.  
From the heavens the news went out  
To eternity's sleeping-chamber:  
Beware, you who are veiled—  
One has been born who will tear away all  
veils!  
Desire, resting in the lap of life  
And forgetful of itself,  
Opened its eyes, and a new world was born.  
Life said, 'Through all my years  
I lay in the dust and convulsed,  
Until at last a door appeared  
In this ancient dome

### II. IBLIS'S REFUSAL

I am not such a foolish angel  
That I would bow to Adam!  
He is made of dust, but my element is fire.  
It is my ardour that heats the blood

In the veins of the universe:  
 I am in the raging storm  
 And the crashing thunder;  
 I am the bond that holds the atoms together,  
 And the law that rules the elements;  
 I burn and give form—  
 I am the alchemist's fire.  
 What I have myself made I break in pieces,  
 Only to create new forms from the old dust.  
 From my sea rises the wave  
 Of the heavens that know no rest—  
 The splendour and glory of my element  
 Fashions the world.  
 The stars owe their existence to You,  
 But they owe their motion to me:  
 I am the soul of the world,  
 The hidden life that is seen by none.  
 You give the soul to the body,  
 But I set that soul astir.  
 You rob on the highway by causing sloth,  
 I guide along the right path with burning  
 passion.  
 I did not beg paupers to bow down before  
 me:  
 I am mighty, but do not need a hell;  
 I am a judge, but do not need resurrection.  
 Adam—that creature of dust,  
 That short-sighted ignoramus—  
 Was born in your lap  
 But will grow old in my arms!

### III. THE SEDUCTION OF ADAM

A life of passion and longing  
 Is better than eternal quiet,  
 Even a dove that is caught in a trap,  
 But keeps flapping its wings,  
 Changes into an eagle.  
 You do no more than bow down in humility;  
 Rise like the tall cypress tree, you who are  
 slow to act!  
 The waters of *Kawthar* and *Tasnim*  
 Have robbed you of the joy of action.  
 Take wine from the jug,  
 Real wine clear as crystal, made from grapes.  
 'Good' and 'bad' are figments  
 Of the imagination of your Lord.  
 Take pleasure in action,  
 Step out and take what you desire.

Come, rise up, so that I may show you a new  
 kingdom!  
 Open your eyes and go about  
 Seeing the sights the world has to offer.  
 Now you are a drop of water worth nothing,  
 Become a luminous pearl!  
 Come down from the heavens,  
 And live in the ocean.  
 You are a flashing sword,  
 Strike terror into the world's soul;  
 Come out of the scabbard and show your  
 mettle.  
 Spread an eagle's wings  
 And spill the pheasants' blood.  
 For a falcon, living in the nest spells death.  
 You do not yet know this,  
 But with union comes the end of longing:  
 What is eternal life?  
 To burn-and keep on burning!

### IV. ADAM SPEAKS ON COMING OUT OF PARADISE

How good it is  
 To fill life with passion and longing;  
 In one breath to melt the heart  
 Of desert, mountain and wild;  
 To open the door of the cage  
 On to a spacious garden;  
 To take the path to the heavens,  
 And speak with the stars in confidence;  
 To cast-at times with secret longing,  
 But with a show of humility at times –  
 A knowing glance at the sanctum of His  
 Glory;  
 At times to see  
 Nothing but The One in throngs of tulips,  
 But at times to tell  
 The prickly thorn apart from the rose!  
 My whole being is a flame that burns for ever,  
 And is full of the pain of desire.  
 I would exchange certainty for doubt—  
 For I am dying to know and discover.

### V. THE MORN OF RESURRECTION

Adam in the presence of God  
 You, whose sun gives the star of life its  
 splendour,  
 With my heart you lit

The candle of the sightless world!  
My skills have poured an ocean into a strait,  
My pickaxe makes milk flow from the heart of  
stone.  
Venus is my captive, the moon worships me;  
My reason, which does great deeds,  
Subdues and controls the universe.  
I have gone down into the earth,  
And been up into the heavens,  
Both the atom and the radiant sun  
Are under the spell of my magic.  
Although his sorcery deluded me,  
Excuse my fault, forgive my sin:  
If his sorcery had not taken me in,  
The world could not have been subdued.  
Without the halter of humility,  
Pride could not be taken prisoner.  
To melt this stone statues with my hot sighs,  
I had to don his *zunnar*.  
Reason catches artful nature in a net  
And thus Ahriman, born of fire,  
Bows down before the creature of dust!

#### THE PERFUME OF THE FLOWER

In a bower of heaven's garden,  
A houri became anxious and said:  
'No one ever told us- about- the region  
On that side of the heavens.  
I do not understand  
About day and night., morning, and evening,  
And I am at my wits' end  
When they talk about birth and death.  
She became a waft of perfume  
And emerged from a flower-branch;  
Thus she set foot  
In the world of yesterday and tomorrow.  
She opened her eyes,  
Became a bud, and for a time smiled;  
She turned into a flower,  
Which soon withered and crumbled to the  
ground.  
The memory of that lovely maiden-  
Her feet unshackled-  
Is kept alive  
By that sigh of hers which is called perfume.

[Translated by Mustansir Mir]

#### THE SONG OF TIME

Sun and stars in my bosom I hold;  
By me, who am nothing, thou art ensouled.  
In light and in darkness, in city and wold,  
I am pain, I am balm, I am life manifold.  
Destroyer and Quickener from of old.  
Genghis, Taimur—specks of my dust they  
came,  
And Europe's turmoil is a spark of flame.  
Man and his world I fashion and frame,  
Blood of his heart my spring flowers claim.  
Hell fire and Paradise I, be it told.  
I rest still, I move—wondrous sight for thine  
eyes!  
In the glass of To-day see To-morrow arise,  
See a thousand fair worlds where my thought  
deep lies,  
See a thousand swift stars, a thousand blue  
skies!  
Man's garment am I, God I enfold;  
Fate is my spell, freewill is thy chant.  
O lover of Layla, thy frenzy I haunt;  
As the spirit pure, I transcend thy vaunt.  
Thou and I are each other's innermost want;  
Thou showest me forth, hid'st me too in thy  
mould.  
Thou my journey's end, thou my harvest-  
grain,  
The Assembly's flow and the music's strain.  
O wanderer, home to thy heart again!  
Behold in a cup the shoreless main!  
From thy lofty wave my ocean rolled.

[Translated by R.A. Nicholson]

#### SPRING

Arise, for in plain, hill and dale, spring clouds  
have pitched their tent.  
The nightingale sings jubilant  
Songs to a choir's accompaniment.  
Along the stream bank's whole extent  
Blend tulip's tint and rose's scent.  
Let your eye witness this event.  
Arise, for in plain, hill and dale spring clouds  
have pitched their tent.

Arise, for to the fields has come the flowers'  
caravan.

The breezes of spring blow again.  
The birds sing songs in unison.  
The spring-mad tulip's dress is torn.  
There is a new rose to adorn  
Beauty, and for love a new thorn.  
Arise, for to the fields has come the flowers'  
caravan.

The nightingales are carolling, the ring-doves  
coo aloud  
All warmed up is the garden's blood.  
O' you, in silence closeted,  
Break all commands of your sane head;  
Get drunk with mystic wine instead;  
Sing and go in rose-petals clad  
The nightingales are caroling, the ring-dove  
coo aloud

Abandon your retreat and into fields and  
pastures go.  
Sit by a brooklet's margin so  
That you may watch its waters flow.  
Spring's favourite, the narcissus, how  
The pride of beauty makes it glow.  
O plant a soft kiss on its brow,  
Abandon your retreat and into fields and  
pastures go.

O you, who cannot see the obvious, open  
your mind's eye.  
See tulips row on row, and see  
Their bodies on fire seemingly,  
But their hearts inwardly soothed by  
The dawn-dew's tearful ministry—  
Stars in a twilight-reddened sky.  
O you, who cannot see the obvious, open  
your mind's eye.

Sprouts from the garden's soil, the secret of  
Creation's heart  
The shadow-play of attribute;  
How essence brings itself to light;  
Life, as we all imagine it;  
And death, which is life's opposite;  
O all this is without a root.  
Sprouts from the garden's soil the secret of  
Creation's heart.

## ETERNAL LIFE

Do not imagine that the work of the Wine-  
maker is complete.  
With unknown quantities of undrunk wine  
the vine is still replete.  
The garden is a happy place, but you cannot  
survive as buds  
In it for long; the breeze will come and tear  
your being's robe to shreds.  
If you possess the faintest knowledge of life's  
awesome mystery,  
Then do not seek a heart entirely free from  
longing's agony.  
Be like a mountain, grave and lofty, with your  
native dignity,  
And not like straw. Beware, there is a wildfire  
raging savagely.

## REFLECTIONS OF THE STARS

I hear a star said to another star:  
"We are adrift on a sea with no shore.  
We were created with a wander-lust:  
Our caravan will not stop any more.  
"If we still are what we were long ago,  
Then what use is this shining on and on?  
We are all of us captives in Time's net.  
Lucky are they who have not yet been born.  
"No one can bear this heavy load for long.  
Far better were it never to have been.  
I do not like this azure space at all;  
That nether world presents a fairer scene.  
"How happy is man with his restless soul,  
So gaily riding on the steed of Time.  
Life is a garment tailor-made for him,  
Because he is a maker of new things."

## LIFE

Sad moaned the cloud of Spring,  
"This life's a long weeping."  
Cried the lightning, flashing and leaping,  
"'Tis a laugh on the wing."  
I do not know who took it to the garden,  
But the rose and the dew are now discussing it.

*[Translated by R.A. Nicholson]*<sup>1</sup>

A DIALOGUE BETWEEN KNOWLEDGE  
AND LOVE

KNOWLEDGE

My eyes have witnessed  
The secrets of the seven and the four,  
And with my lasso I have captured the  
world.  
I am an eye, and when I was opened I  
turned this way—  
Why should I bother about the other side of  
the heavens?  
A hundred songs flow from my instrument;  
I bring to market every secret I know.

LOVE

Because of the spell you have cast the sea is  
in flames,  
The air spews fire and is filled with poison.  
When you and I were friends, you were a  
light;  
But you broke with me, and your light  
became a fire.  
You were born in the innermost sanctum of  
the Divinity,  
But then fell into Satan's trap.  
Come—turn this earthly world into a  
garden,  
And make the old world young again.  
Come -take just a little of my heart's  
solicitude,  
And build, under the heavens, an  
everlasting paradise.  
We have been on intimate terms since the  
day of creation,  
And are the high and low notes of the same  
song.

*[Translated by Mustansir Mir]*

SONG OF THE STARS

Our nature is all the law we serve,  
From all but its own rapture free,

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<sup>1</sup> The last two lines are provided by the Editors  
since Nicholson didn't translate them.

And our long pathway's limitless curve  
The gage of our immortality—  
The heavens revolve at our desire; we watch  
and journey on.

This mansion of the sense, hall  
Of idols shaped by mortal seeing,  
Mêlée of being and not-being,  
Storm and surge of creation, all  
This realm of the hours swift-winged or slow,  
we watch and journey on.

Battlefields that war's flames have  
seared,  
Those lunacies of subtle wits,  
Thrones, diadems, and scaffolds reared  
For sovereigns on whom Fortune spits,  
All playthings of the ribald times, we watch  
and journey on.

The master from his seat deposed,  
The thrall set loose from slavery,  
The book of Tsar and Kaiser closed,  
Fierce Alexander's day gone by,  
Image and image-maker fled, we watch and  
journey on.

Man's dust so still, so turbulent,  
Dwarfish of stature, giant in toil,  
Now loud in roistering, merriment,  
Now carried shoulder-high, death's  
spoil,  
Lord of the world and branded slave, we  
watch and journey on.

Like a gazelle the snare has caught,  
Quivering in misery and pain,  
You pant in the tangled web of  
thought,  
Your mind plunges and gropes in vain;  
From our high citadel of the skies we watch  
and journey on.

What is the curtain called the  
Apparent?  
Whence do our light and darkness  
flow,  
Or eye and heart and reason grow?

What is this nature, restless, errant,  
This universe of Far and Near?— we watch  
and journey on.

Your vast to us is little room,  
Your year our moment. You who hold  
An ocean in your breast, yet whom  
One dewdrop flatters!—onward rolled  
In search of worlds and other worlds, we  
watch and journey on.

[Translated by V.G. Kiernan]

### THE MORNING BREEZE

Tripping over mountain-tops and skipping  
over seas,  
I come no one knows from where,  
And bring tidings of spring's coming,  
As it were,  
To the autumn-weary birds,  
Lining their nests with the silver  
Of white lilies.  
I roll on the grass and frolic  
With the tulip-branches,  
Coaxing smells and colours—flowers—out of  
them.  
Gently do I stroke the petals  
Of the tulip and the rose,  
Lest their stems should bend under my  
weight.  
When a poet breaks into song  
With the frenzy of love's sorrow,  
With his breath I join my own.

[Translated by M. Hadi Husain]

### THE FALCON'S ADVICE TO ITS YOUNGSTER

You know that in essence all falcons are one—  
A mere handful of feathers, but with the heart  
of a lion.  
Conduct yourself well and let your strategy  
be well considered;  
Be daring, maintain your dignity, and hunt  
big game.  
Do not mix with partridges, pheasants, and  
starlings—  
Unless you want them as prey.

What a lowly, fearful lot they are -  
They wipe their beaks clean with dusts!  
A falcon that copies the ways of his prey  
Becomes prey himself.  
Many a predator, descending to earth,  
Has perished on associating with grain-eaters.  
Guard yourself and live the life  
Of one of good cheer, brave, robust and  
rugged.  
Let the quail have his soft and delicate body;  
Grow a vein hard as a deer's horn.  
All the joy in the world  
Comes from hardship, toil, and fullness of  
breath.  
What fine advice it was that the eagle gave its  
son:  
A single drop of blood is better than the  
purest wine!  
Do not seek out company like the deer or  
sheep,  
But go into seclusion as your ancestors did.  
I remember the old falcons' advice:  
'Do not make your nest on the branch of a  
tree.'  
We do not make nests in a garden or a field—  
We have our own paradise in mountains and  
deserts.  
We regard picking up grain from the ground  
as an error,  
For God has given us the vastness of the skies.  
If a bird of noble stock scrapes his feet on the  
ground,  
He becomes more despicable than a house  
bird.  
The kingly falcon uses rocks like a carpet  
Walking on them sharpens his claws.  
You are one of the yellow-eyed of the desert,  
And, like the *simurgh*, are of noble nature;  
You are that noble youth who, on the day of  
battle,  
Plucks out the pupil of the tiger's eye.  
You fly with the majesty of angels,  
And in your veins is the blood of the *kafuri*  
falcon.  
Under this humpbacked, revolving sky  
Eat what you catch, whether it is soft or hard—  
Do not take food from the hand of another;  
Be good and take advice from the good.



[Translated by Mustansir Mir]

### THE BOOKWORM AND THE MOTH

I hear that in my library one night  
A bookworm spoke thus to a moth:  
"I have long lodged in Sina's tomes  
And have consumed much of Farabi's  
manuscript.  
But I have not learned anything  
About life's mystery,  
And am just as much in the dark  
About it as before."  
The half-burnt moth gave it a fine reply:  
"You will not find life's mystery  
Explained in books.  
However, here it is:  
What gives to life intensity  
Is ardency.  
It lends life wings  
With which to fly."

### VANITY

Said snow in cold superior syllables to the  
mountain stream:  
"O babbler, I am weary of your meaningless  
uproar.  
You talk so impudently and you walk so  
saucily,  
And ever bolder are your gait and glances  
than before.  
You are not fit to be a member of our family;  
So never claim to be a creature whom the  
mountain bore.  
You roam and roll and tumble like an urchin  
in the dust.  
Go to the felds and plains and let us hear of  
you no more."  
The stream replied, "O do not speak such  
hurtful words to me.  
Do not be so proud and, what is more, do not  
be a boor.  
I go because the mountain household is too  
high for me;  
But you be careful lest the sun should melt  
you to the core."

### THE TULIP

I am the flame  
which on  
Creation's dawn  
was kindled in love's heart  
before the nightingale and the moth came  
to play their sacrificial part.  
I am far bigger than the sun,  
and pour  
into each atom's core  
a potion of my light:  
I lend my spark to everyone,  
and it was I who made the heavens so bright.  
Residing like its life-breath in  
the garden's breast,  
in pristine rest,  
I was drawn up into its bosom by  
a tree-stem, delicate and thin,  
as sap that rises up towards the sky.  
It quenched my inner fire  
And, wanting to beguile  
me, it said, "Stay awhile,  
and don't go out into the day";  
but my heart's long-repressed desire  
could brook no more delay.  
I writhed and writhed within the tree,  
encaged,  
enraged,  
until the essence of my being found its way  
to summits of the ecstasy  
of self-display.  
With its pearls of the purest water dew  
bestrewed my way,  
as if to say,  
"O what a glorious birth!"  
The morning laughed its brightest hue:  
the breezes blew in hymeneal mirth.  
The nightingale heard from the rose  
that I had thrown  
away my own  
primordial consuming flame.  
It said, because this crowned its woes,  
"He paid a heavy price to thrive. For shame!"

I now stand by,  
my breast rent open to  
the sun's effulgence so  
that it may set ablaze  
again the fire of my  
prenatal days.

#### PHILOSOPHY AND POETRY

Bu Ali got lost  
In the dust  
Kicked up by  
Layla's dromedary.  
Rumi's hand  
Seized the curtain  
Of her litter.  
This one dived  
Deeper, deeper still,  
Till he came  
Upon the pearl  
He was after.  
But the other  
Got caught in  
A whirlpool like a piece of straw.  
If the truth  
Has no fervour,  
It is plain philosophy.  
If it has the proper fervour,  
It is poetry.

#### THE GLOW-WORM

A tiny atom found itself a living thing by  
chance.  
Aquiver with life's ardour it began a moth-  
like dance,  
And set aglow the night's expanse.  
A dormant sunbeam reawoke and shot up  
with a dash.  
The alchemy of life converted it to gold from  
trash  
Came vision to it in a flash.  
A restlessly aflutter moth was bold enough to  
dart  
Into the candle's flame, became one with its  
fiery heart,  
And ceased to be a thing apart.

A moon-faced starlet, living in its isolated  
bower,  
Came out of it in order to look closer at the  
lower  
Planet than from its high tower.

A gently beaming moonlet told itself that it  
would owe  
Its light no longer to the bounty of the sun,  
and so  
Wherever it likes it can go.

O glow-worm, your whole body is made of  
the stuff of light.  
A sequence of its intermittent flashes is your  
flight—  
Thus flit things in and out of sight.

You are a torch for birds that in the evening  
fly to rest;  
But what and whence this restless passion  
burning in your breast,  
Which keeps you in unceasing quest?

Like you we entered into this world by earth's  
dusty door.  
We saw and tossed about; we did not see, and  
tossed about the more.  
O never did we reach the shore.

I speak from ripe experience and true is what  
I say,  
Don't think of lost horizons and be steadfast  
on your way:  
Keep shining like this while you may.

#### REALITY

The eagle, who sees far, said to the swan,  
"My eyes see nothing but a bright mirage."  
That truthful bird replied, "You see, and I  
Know that you see, a watery expanse."  
From the sea's depth arose a fish's cry,  
"There is something in an unceasing dance."

#### SONG OF THE HIJAZI CAMEL-DRIVER

My fleet-footed dromedary,  
My doe of the Tartar country,  
O my riches, O my money,  
O my entire patrimony,  
O my fortune, O my plenty,

Quicken your pace just a little; journey's end  
is not far off.

O you bright and beautiful thing,  
You are lovely, you are charming,  
O you houri of my dreaming,  
You, the Layla of whom bards sing,  
You, the desert's sprightly offspring,  
Quicken your pace just a little; journey's end  
is not far off.

When the sun of noontide blazes,  
You dive into clear mirages;  
And in moonlit nights' bright reaches  
You flash as a comet flashes —  
With an eye that never closes,  
Quicken your pace just a little; journey's end  
is not far off.

Like the clouds a constant roamer;  
Sailless boat with sand for river;  
Born path-knower like a Khizr,  
Carrier who does not murmur,  
Darling of the camel-driver,  
Quicken your pace just a little; journey's end  
is not far off.

In your rein is stimulation;  
Travel is your inspiration;  
With a very scanty ration,  
You are night and day in motion,  
Never resting at one station,  
Quicken your pace just a little; journey's end  
is not far off.

If at dusk you are in Yaman,  
Then at dawn you are in Qaran.  
Rough sand of your native region  
Is to your feet soft like jasmine.  
O you fleet gazelle of Khotan,  
Quicken your pace just a little; journey's end  
is not far off.

Now the moon, her journey over,  
Goes into her sand hill shelter,  
Dawns a new day, so much brighter  
Than the moon for all her splendour.  
Blows the desert wind of summer,  
Quicken your pace just a little; journey's end  
is not far off.

Lively is the song that I sing;  
Lively, but full of foreboding —  
For the caravan a warning  
That the hour has struck for starting.  
Kisser of the Haram's paving,  
Quicken your pace just a little; journey's end  
is not far off.

#### THE RAINDROP AND THE SEA

I quote what someone else has said,  
But wish to make a new point with its aid.  
"A raindrop fell into the sea.  
And awed  
By its expanse, it thought:  
'By God,  
I am a mere nonentity  
Beside the sea.  
If it exists, then surely I do not.'"

There came out of the sea a sound,  
Loud and profound,  
As of a voice, and it declaimed  
"You do not have to be ashamed  
Of being small  
And feel so sad.

For all  
Your smallness, you have had  
Experiences which were great.  
You have watched dawn and evening  
alternate.  
You have seen orchard, plain and glade.  
Suspended on a blade  
Of grass or a cloud-flake,  
You have reflected the sun's rays.  
There have been days  
On which it fell to you to slake  
The thirst of desert shrubs. Again,  
There were days when you soothed the pain  
In the rent bosom of a rose.  
At times you slumbered in the vine  
To wake up as a potent liquid — wine.  
At other times abed  
In dust, you made mere mud.  
It was out of my waves that you arose.  
Born of me, you come back to me,  
Come back to be  
A part of me. Now rest  
In my broad breast,

And make my mirror gleam  
With one more beam  
Of light. Become a pearl and be  
Lodged in the depths of me—  
My moon, my star,  
As bright as those of the sky are.”

*[Translated by M. Hadi Husain]*

### A DIALOGUE BETWEEN GOD AND MAN

GOD

I made the whole world with the same  
water and clay,  
But you created Iran, Tartary, and Ethiopia.  
From the earth I brought forth pure iron,  
But you made from that iron sword, arrow,  
and gun.  
You made an axe for the tree in the garden,  
And a cage for the songbird.

MAN

You made the night, I made the lamp;  
You made the earthen bowl, I made the  
goblet.  
You made deserts, mountains and valleys;  
I made gardens, meadows and parks.  
I am one who makes a mirror out of stone,  
And turns poison into sweet, delicious drink.

*[Translated by Mustansir Mir]*

### SAKINAMA

*Written in Nishat Bagh, Kashmir*

O what a happy season this!  
O what a joyous time!  
The meadows are star-spangled with  
Fresh flowers in spring's prime.  
Like partridge-wings the ground is pied  
With variegated flowers.  
How bountiful the waterfall!  
What diamonds it showers!  
Of roses and of tulips what  
A riot meets the eye!  
The breezes frolicsomenely roll  
On miles of greenery.  
Have you seen mirrored in the stream  
The self-admiring bud?

What fascinating beauty and  
What unabashed self-pride!

O what a mellifluous song,  
In what a lovely tune,  
From some bird hidden in a tree,  
Singing as if alone!

The starling and the nightingale  
With song resuscitate  
The spirit in the body and  
Old longings in the spirit.

From high-perched nests up in the trees  
The songsters' warblings seem  
To cascade down and mingle with  
The babblings of the stream.

You would think God had graciously  
Sent down His Paradise  
And placed it at a mountain's foot  
For human ears and eyes.

To hear and see, in order to  
Spare man the long suspense  
And agony of waiting till  
He's ready to go hence.

What better things could I wish for  
In such a pleasure-garden  
Than wine, a book, a lute and ah!  
A fair companion?

My life, O moon-faced saki, for  
A single gracious boon:  
Awaken in me memories  
Of forebears long since gone.

Come pour into my empty glass  
The stuff which has no name,  
Which lights the soul up like a lamp  
And burns it like a flame.

I pray to you make tulips grow  
From my exhausted clay  
And build a paradise from dust  
Now mouldering away.

O don't you know that east and west,  
From Kashghar to Kashan,  
There is going up one grand song  
Replete with life's elan?

The peoples' eye has shed at last  
That purest of all tears  
Whose magic can compel the rose  
To grow on prickly pears.

But oh! this poor Kashmiri who,  
In slavery born and bred,  
Is busy carving idols from  
The tombstones of the dead.

His mind is blank and quite devoid  
Of any higher thought;  
So ignorant of his own self  
And by self-shame distraught!

His master goes clad in fine silk,  
All woven with his sweat;  
But tatters, patches, rags and shreds  
Are all his body's lot.

There is not in his eye the light  
Of vision that reveals,  
Nor does there in his bosom beat  
The living heart that feels.

Come pour a drop upon him of  
Your soul-enkindling wine,  
And from his smouldering ashes make  
A spark leap up and shine.

*[Translated by M. Hadi Husain]*

#### THE YOUNG FISH AND THE EAGLET

A sprightly young fish said to an eaglet:  
'This succession of waves that you see  
Is a single sea, and it contains  
Crocodiles that bellow more loudly than  
thunder clouds;  
Its chest is a storehouse  
Of hazards and dangers known and  
unknown.  
Its huge flood travels swiftly and covers the  
land;  
It has sparkling diamonds and lustrous  
pearls.  
One cannot escape its all-enveloping flood:  
Above our heads, under our feet -it is  
everywhere!  
Young and for ever coursing along!  
Revolutions of time have not added to it  
Or diminished it.'

The young fish spoke with passion and zest,  
Its face beamed as it spoke.  
The eaglet laughed. From the shore it rose  
Into the air, saying out loud:  
'I am an eagle, what have I to do with earth?;  
Sea or desert -everything is under our wings!'  
Leave the water,  
Befriend the vastness of space!  
Only an observant eye  
Will see the point of it.

*[Translated by Mustansir Mir]*

#### THE GLOW-WORM

I hear the glow-worm said to itself, "I  
Am not an insect that hurts with its sting.  
One can burn in one's own fire. So do not  
Regard me as a moth that has to fling  
Itself into a flame. If the night be  
Dark as deer's eyes, I light my path myself."

*[Translated by M. Hadi Husain]*

#### SOLITUDE

I went down to the sea,  
And said to the restless wave,  
'You are for ever searching-what is your  
trouble?  
Your bag contains a thousand glowing  
pearls-  
But do you, like me, have in your breast  
A pearl of a heart?'  
It writhed in pain and drew away from the  
shore-  
It did not say a word.  
I went up to the mountain and said,  
'How unfeeling you are!  
Have the sighs and screams of a soul in  
torment  
Ever reached your ears? If within your rocks  
There is only one diamond formed from a  
drop of blood,  
Then come for a moment  
And talk to a wretched man like me.  
It withdrew into itself and held its breath-  
It did not say a word.  
I travelled far, and asked the moon,  
'Your lot is to keep travelling,

Is it also your lot to reach a destination?  
 Your face sends out rays  
 That turn the world into a land of Jasmine.  
 But does the radiance of the scar on your face  
 Come from the glow of a heart or not?  
 It cast a jealous glance at the star—  
 It did not say a word.  
 I left the moon and the sun behind,  
 And reached the presence of God.  
 I said, 'Not one atom in Your world  
 Is intimate with me.  
 The world has no heart,  
 But I, though a handful of dust, am all heart.  
 It is a pleasant garden, but unworthy of my  
 song!"  
 A smile appeared on His lips  
 He did not say a word.

*[Translated by Mustansir Mir]*

#### DEW

"Come down," the voices said to me, "from  
 your remote celestial heights.  
 Recoil upon yourself and get embroiled with  
 stormy ocean-tides.  
 Ride where the billow rides,  
 And make new waves besides.  
 Arise as pearls whose sheen abides."  
 I did not buy the luxury of losing myself in  
 the sea;  
 I did not taste the wine which robs you of  
 your self-identity.  
 Another I refused to be:  
 Said goodbye to the sky  
 And chose the tulip's company.  
 The tulip said, "O what is all this tumult of  
 birdsong?  
 And why do all those morning songsters on  
 the treetops throng?  
 Why all this flitting up and down daylong?  
 And should the rose to thorns belong?  
 O is not this quite wrong?  
 "Who are you and who am I and why do we  
 thus consort?  
 And wherefore are my branches all these  
 singing birds' resort?  
 What is their singing's long and short?

And what is in the breezes heart?  
 What is this garden in which they disport?"  
 "It is," I said, "A battlefield of life's war  
 raging everywhere,  
 A unity of many, each one separately self-  
 aware.  
 To breathe is to sing songs of fire.  
 The soul? The inner being's self-exposure.  
 This is the secret of God's empire.  
 "I have descended from the skies and you  
 have grown up out of dust.  
 They both are forms of self-display, my fall  
 and your up thrust.  
 You writhed within a tree-stem first  
 Until your hundred veils were burst—  
 And then you reached your being's crest.  
 "The sap that rises in the world's veins is our  
 morning tears;  
 Our own illusion are those upper and these  
 lower spheres.  
 Part of our being are the stars,  
 Our kith and kin and our confreres:  
 They are our eyes and we the seers.  
 "Just like a needle in a damsel's garment is  
 the rose's thorn:  
 Close to the rose, its boon companion and  
 with it twin-born:  
 All thin and wan like one lovelorn,  
 Though in the dear one's bosom borne—  
 Another prank of the spring morn.  
 "Arise and re-engage your heart with  
 friendships of the early days;  
 And with the sun, the tulip of the sky,  
 exchange a knowing gaze.  
 Consort with those with seeing eyes;  
 Like me take to celestial ways—  
 Have you the will to soar the skies?"

#### LOVE

My thought, engaged in finding out the final  
 truth,  
 Went to the Ka'bah and the idol-temple both.  
 I wandered widely in inquiry's wilderness,  
 Collecting my skirts like the whirlwind's  
 flowing dress,

Bound for an unknown destination with no  
guide,  
On my imagination's shoulders borne astride,  
Demanding wine with just a broken cup in  
hand,  
Broadcasting like the dawn a net to catch the  
wind,  
Recoiling upon myself like waves in the sea,  
Roaming the desert in a whirlwind's agony,  
But suddenly Your love came and assailed my  
heart  
And with a mighty blow it cut the Gordian  
Knot.  
It taught me all that being and non-being  
mean;  
It changed my idol-temple to a holy shrine;  
And striking lightning fashion my self's  
granary,  
It taught my heart the joy of burning silently.  
All in a rapture I was carried off my feet;  
And I became a shadow, from myself discrete.  
The sublimating force of what You taught my  
heart  
Sent my dust soaring right up to Heaven's  
starry height.  
My being's storm-tossed ship at long last  
came to port,  
And into beauty's channel all my ugliness  
was poured.  
I have no tale to tell except the tale of love;  
I do not care if men approve or disapprove.  
Of learning's light I do not have the slightest  
need;  
And all I have to do is burn and melt and  
bleed.

#### LIVE DANGEROUSLY

Said one gazelle to another, "I will  
Take shelter in the Harem from now on;  
For there are hunters at large in the wild,  
And there is no peace here for a gazelle.  
From fear of hunters I want to be free.  
O how I long for some security."  
His friend replied, "Live dangerously, my  
Wise friend, if it is life you truly seek.  
Like a sword of fine mettle hurl yourself  
Upon the whetting-stone; stay sharp thereby.

For danger brings out what is best in you:  
It is the touchstone of all that is true."

#### THE WORLD OF ACTION

This world is a free tavern, and to all who  
come to it  
Wine is served in accordance with their  
bowl's capacity.  
The secret that has not yet been expressed in  
words  
Has been expressed here in wine's  
overbrimming character.  
Those who come here get drunk with action  
and not with mere words.  
Dregs at the bottom of life's cup is mere  
philosophy.  
We have endeavoured hard to make life take  
to action's path,  
And now its morning's sun is near the margin  
of the sky.  
O you who try to be consistent with your past  
mistakes,  
Whatever you regard as rest is here mobility.  
We who have come out to pursue the path of  
seeking have  
Converted knowledge into action and thus  
made it live.

*[Translated by M. Hadi Husain]*

#### LIFE

I asked a lofty sage what Life might be.  
"The wine whose bitterest cup is best," said  
he.  
Said I, "A vile worm rearing head from mire."  
Said he, "A salamander born of fire."  
"Its nature steeped in evil," I pursued.  
Said he, "'Tis just this evil makes it good."  
"It winds not to the goal, though it aspire."  
"The goal," said he, "lies hid in that desire."  
Said I, "Of earth it comes, to earth it goes."  
Said he, "The seed bursts earth, and is the  
rose."

*[Translated by R.A. Nicholson]*

THE WISDOM OF THE WEST

The story goes that in Iran  
 A worthy man,  
 Intelligent and wise,  
 Died, suffering great agonies,  
 Departing with a heart  
 Full of distress and smart,  
 He went up to God's throne  
 And said: "God I am one  
 Grieved at the way that I  
 Was made to die.  
 Your angel of Death is  
 Supposed to be a specialist,  
 And yet he has no expertise,  
 No knowledge of the new skills that exist  
 In the fine art of killing. He  
 Kills, but does it so clumsily.  
 The world is going rapidly ahead,  
 But his growth has stopped dead.  
 The west develops wonderful new skills  
 In this as in so many other fields.  
 Fine are the ways it kills,  
 And great are its skill's yields.  
 It has encompassed even thought with death.  
 Death is all its philosophies' life-breath  
 It is what all its sciences devise.  
 Its submarines are crocodiles,  
 With all their predatory wiles.  
 Its bombers rain destruction from the skies.  
 Its gases so obscure the sky  
 They blind the sun's world-seeing eye.  
 Its guns deal death so fast  
 The Angel of Death stands aghast,  
 Quite out of breath  
 In coping with this rate of death.  
 Dispatch this old fool to the West  
 To learn the art of killing fast—and best."

*[Translated by M. Hadi Husain]*

THE HOURI AND THE POET

THE HOURI

You are not attracted to wine,  
 And you do not look at me:  
 How surprising that you do not know  
 The art of mixing!  
 It is but a tune of quest, a flame of desire,

Your sigh, your song.  
 With your song you have made  
 Such a lovely world  
 That paradise itself appears to me  
 To be some conjurer's trick.

THE POET

You charm travellers' hearts with pointed  
 talk  
 Except that, in the pleasure it gives,  
 One cannot compare it with the sharp thorn.  
 What can I do, for by nature I am not  
 someone  
 Who can live for long in one place!  
 My heart is restless,  
 Like the west wind in a field of tulips.  
 The moment my eyes light upon a pretty  
 face,  
 My heart begins to long for one prettier still.  
 In the spark I seek a star, in the star a sun:  
 I have no wish for a destination,  
 For if I stop I die.  
 When I get up, having drunk  
 A cup of wine matured by one spring,  
 I begin to sing another verse,  
 And long for yet another spring.  
 I seek the end of what has no end –  
 With a restless eye, and hope in my heart.  
 The lover's heart dies in an eternal heaven –  
 In it no afflicted soul cries,  
 There is no sorrow, and no one to drive  
 sorrow away!

*[Translated by Mustansir Mir]*

LIFE AND ACTION

(IN REPLY TO A POEM OF HEINE)

"I have lived a long, long while," said a fallen  
 shore;  
 "What I am know as ill as I knew of yore."  
 Then swiftly advanced wave from the Sea  
 upshot;  
 "If I roll, I am," it said; "if I rest, I am not."

*[Translated by R.A. Nicholson]*

GOD'S COUNTRY

When Tariq burned his boats on Andalusia's  
 coast,



His men observed: "It was an unwise thing to do.

We are so far from home; how shall we now return ?

Foregoing means is wrong in the Divine Law's view."

He laughed and, putting his hand on his sword, declared:

"All lands are God's and they are all our homeland too."

[Translated by M. Hadi Husain]

### THE STREAM<sup>1</sup>

Behold the stream! How merrily it flows  
Right through the meadow, like the Milky Way!

'Twas sound asleep in the cradle of the clouds;

Opened its wondering eye in the lap of the mountains.

From the pebbles its graceful motion music strikes;

Its brows chaste and unsullied like the mirror!

Towards the shoreless ocean how merrily it flows;

Linked with itself, unlinked with all, it flows.

Around its track Spring fashioned a fairyland:  
Narcissus bloomed, and tulip, and jessamine.

The rose said temptingly: Stay with us here awhile;

The rose-bud laughed and pulled the helm of its skirt.

Unmindful of these green-robed beauty-vendors,

It cleft the desert and rent the breast of hill and dale.

Towards the shoreless ocean how merrily it flows;

Linked with itself, unlinked with all, it flows.

A hundred brooks from woods and meadows, from vales and gardens and villas cried:

"O thou with whom accords the earth's expanse!

Stricken with drought, we have fallen by the way;

Protect us from the pillage of the sandy waste!"

It opened its breast to the winds of the East and the West,

Clasping its weak and wailing fellow travelers.

Towards the shoreless ocean how merrily it flows;

With a hundred thousand matchless pearls it flows.

The surging river went over dam dyke,

Went over the narrow gorge of valley, hill and glen,

Made one, like a torrent, each hollow and eminence,

Went over the king's palace and rampart and field and orchard.

Passionate and fierce and sharp, restless and heart-inflaming.

Each time it arrived at the New and went beyond the Old.

Towards the shoreless ocean how merrily it flows;

Linked with itself, unlinked with all, it flows.

[Translated by Prof. Hamid Ahmad Khan]

### ALAMGIR'S LETTER

(To one of his sons who used to pray for the father's death)

Do you know that to punish and reward  
Has been from old the business of the Lord?  
He has heard many anguishing laments  
From this benighted planet's residents,  
But did a cry escape His lips? Oh no.

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<sup>1</sup> Iqbal's footnote: 'The Stream' is a free rendering of Goethe's celebrated poem, 'Mohamet's Gesang,' which was composed long before *West-Osetlicher Divan*. In it the German poet has exquisitely brought forth the Islamic concept of life. In fact, it formed part of the planned drama on Islam which he could not complete. The translation is meant only to show Goethe's point of view.

Like Shabbir He has seen streams of blood  
flow.  
While Jacob wept, He looked on unimpressed;  
And by Job's wailing He was not distressed.  
Do not think that you ever can ensnare  
That seasoned Hunter with your foolish  
prayer.

### PARADISE

This world of ours is full of a strange jugglery.  
Heaven does not have this kind of a revolving  
sky.  
Its Joseph is a stranger to imprisonment;  
And its Zuleikha's heart does not know how  
to cry.  
Its Abraham has not been cast into a fire.  
Its Moses does not have a live spark in his  
soul.  
Its barque has never had to cope with stormy  
winds,  
And never has been tossed about by seas that  
roll.  
There certainty has never been assailed by  
doubt.  
There union is not plagued by separation's  
fear.  
How can you have the joy of straying from  
the path,  
If the path that you have to tread is fixed and  
clear?  
Never live in a world devoid of joy and zest,  
Where God exists, but Beelzebub does not  
exist.

### KASHMIR

Repair to Kashmir's land and see  
Hills, meadows, pastures, wealds.  
See miles on miles of greenery  
And endless tulip-fields.  
Whiff after whiff spring breezes blow,  
And hosts of birds of spring—  
The thrush, the quail, the dove — all go  
From place to place and sing.  
To hide it from the jealous sky  
The earth veils its fair face  
Behind a complex tracery

Of shrubs that interlace.

The tulips burst forth from the earth;  
The waves leap up in streams.  
Look at the sparks the dust puts forth  
And the waves' silver seams.

Come bring your lute and strike its strings,  
And fill your cup with wine,  
And let there be gay gatherings  
To greet spring's caravan.

Look at that highborn Brahmin maid,  
Lily-limbed, tulip-faced,  
Look at her and feel yourself fade  
Into someone low-placed.

### LOVE

To Intellect, which, if it chose,  
Could set the universe aflame,  
Learns from Love to illuminate,  
Instead of burning up, its frame.

To Love it is that your soul owes  
Its heightened states' engenderment—  
From Rumi's ardent passion to  
Farabi's solemn wonderment.

I sing these joy-inspiring words—  
I sing them and dance with delight—  
Love is a balsam for the heart  
Despite its soul-tormenting might.

Not every subtle point can be  
Expressed in words. Consult a while  
Your own heart: maybe you will see  
My point made in the heart's own style.

### HUMANITY

Last night an infidel wine-vendor said to me:  
"Attend to the wise counsel I give and hold  
fast

To it. The custom of the drinkers of the past  
Was to go from the tavern drunk quite  
merrily,

But in their senses still. I do not ask that you  
Should not say your heart's say; but say it  
with all due

Respect and only drink what you can carry  
well.

As for God's role, O it is grand; but let me tell

You, dust that we are, striving is our quality:  
Do not sell for God's power your humanity."

[Translated by M. Hadi Husain]

### SLAVERY

Man let himself, dull thing, be wooed  
By his own kind to servitude,  
And cast the dearest pearl he had  
Before Jamshed and Kaikobad;  
Till so ingrained his cringings were,  
He grew more abject than a cur—  
Who ever saw at one dog's frown  
Another dog's meek head bow down?

[Translated by V.G. Kiernan]

### THE RIDDLE OF THE SWORD

Name that very keen contender  
Which draws luster just like water  
From a stone,  
But which, unlike Alexander,  
Does not owe it to a Khizr  
As a boon,  
And which, like a tear-washed vision,  
Purified by that ablution,  
Is a gleam,  
Neat and clean and clear and limpid,  
With its raiment quite unwetted  
In midstream.  
Its theme needs no longer statement  
Than a single line, if trenchant.

### DEMOCRACY

You seek the treasures of an alien philosophy  
From common, low-grade people, themselves  
poor of mind.  
Ants crawling on the ground cannot attain  
The heights of wisdom of a Solomon.  
Avoid the method of democracy;  
Become the bondman of someone of ripe  
intelligence;  
For a few hundred donkeys cannot have,  
combined,  
The brains of one man, of one *homo sapiens*.

### TO A MUSLIM MISSIONARY IN ENGLAND

Time has rekindled Nimrod's fire  
So that the mettle of Islam may once again be  
proved.  
Come, let us lift the veil from our heart's  
wound,  
For it is the sun's nakedness that makes it  
shine over the world.  
You have made many subtle points before the  
charmners of the West,  
And melted many idols' hearts with the heat  
of your arguments.  
Come, now give some news of the city of  
Sulayma to the people of Hijaz,  
And fling a spark into the dead, cold  
conscience of the people of Turan.  
O knower of *maqam*, strike the note of *iraq* and  
*khurasan*;  
Revive the singing of *ghazals* in the assemblies  
of the 'Ajamis.  
It is a long time since the Afghan's lute awaits  
the plectrum's strokes.  
What melodies have turned to blood, pent up  
within its breast.  
Why tell Love's story to a people given to  
lust?  
Why put the *surma* of wise Solomon into ants'  
eyes?

### GHANI KASHMIRI

That nightingale of poetry, Ghani,  
Who sang in Kashmir's paradisaal land,  
Used, while at home, to shut up all the doors,  
But leave them open while away from home.  
Somebody questioned him concerning this.  
"O charming bard," he said, "Why do you do  
This strange thing, which nobody  
understands  
The meaning of?" Ghani, who had no wealth  
Except his gift of poetry, replied:  
"What people see me doing is quite right.  
There is nothing of any value in my house  
Except myself. When I am in, the house  
Is to be guarded like a treasure-house.  
When I am out, it is an empty place,  
Which nobody would care to walk into."

LINES ADDRESSED TO MUSTAFA KAMAL  
PASHA

There was once an unlettered man,  
Thanks to whose wisdom we learned all  
About the mysteries  
Of human destiny.  
In origin we were  
Nothing but a faint spark.  
He looked at us, and we became  
A world-illuminating sun.  
The old man of the Harem wiped  
The imprint of Love from his heart,  
And we were humbled in the world  
In keeping with our sin's degree.  
It is the desert wind that suits  
Our natural make-up.  
The morning breeze's breath turned us  
Into buds with constricted hearts.  
O that tumultuous din of ours which once  
Used to shoot up above the sky,  
Reduced to treble and bass,  
Became a mere lament.  
How many quarries we once caught  
Without nets and tied to our saddlestraps!  
But now, with bows and arrows under  
armpits, we  
Ourselves became our quarries' prey.  
"Wherever you can find a way  
Race your horse thither, for  
We have been outdone many times  
On this maneuvering-ground."<sup>1</sup>

THE AEROPLANE

Perched on a rosebush branch  
One morning, a bird said  
To other birds:  
"The son of man has not been given wings,  
And so this poor fool is earthbound."  
I said to him: "O little bird,  
Who talk so airily,  
Do not mind if I speak the truth to you.  
We have made of the aeroplane our wings,  
And so have found a way to heaven.  
What a sky-soaring bird

Is this our aeroplane,  
With speedier wings than angels' wings,  
In flight a royal falcon and  
An eagle in sheer strength,  
With far-flung regions in its range!  
While in the sky, it thunders and it roars;  
But in its nest it is as quiet as a fish.  
Our wisdom has created Gabriels  
From common clay,  
And has made of the earth a proof of heaven."  
On hearing my speech that wise bird  
Looked at me in a knowing way.  
Then, scratching his wings with his beak,  
He said: "I do not marvel at your words;  
But tell me, O you, who can see  
The how and why of things,  
Whose magic holds sway over everything,  
Be it high, be it low,  
Have you done well your tasks on earth  
That you are meddling with the sky?"

LOVE

Let me expose to you who heard,  
And where,  
That heart-enkindling word  
Which is, and which is not, a mystery.  
Dew stole it from the sky,  
And dropped it in the rose's ear.  
The rose passed it on to the nightingale,  
Which sang it to the breezes as a wail.

CIVILIZATION

Man, who has brightened up his face  
With civilization's rouge,  
Displays the dark dust which is he  
As if it were a mirror.

He hides his iron fist  
Under a velvet glove.  
Charmed by the pen,  
He has laid off the sword.

This slave of lust once built  
An idol-temple of world peace,  
And danced around it to  
The music of the pipes of peace.

But when war tore the veil  
Off its pretence,

<sup>1</sup> The quotation is from the sixteenth century  
Mughal poet Naziri Nishapuri.

It stood exposed  
As man's blood-thirsty enemy.

## THE WINE REMAINING

(GHAZALS)

‡

When spring made of the garden  
A veritable concert hall,  
The nightingale's impassioned songs  
Made buds open their eyes.

Do not imagine that the clay we are  
Was fashioned when the world was made;  
For we are still a thought  
In Being's mind.

Do not preen yourself on your scholarship.  
It takes much more to drink with decorum.  
The city jurist, when he drank,  
Spilled his wine all over his dress.

All that spring did was that it put  
Together scattered leaves.  
It is our eye that lends  
Colour and brightness to the tulip.

This is the sign of one who has  
His eye fixed on his inner self:  
He speaks no more of present things  
And absent things.

One night a witty old man in the tavern made  
An apt remark. He said:  
"In every age there is an Abraham,  
And there is also Nimrod's fire."

What forms I shaped  
In life's workshop!  
What passing things have passed away!  
And what things that were there are now no  
more!

Speak gently to the idol-worshipper;  
For Love, that brooks no slight,  
Laid the foundations of an idol-house  
In Mahmud's heart itself.

In India life's anthem is  
Devoid of all effect;  
For even David's songs  
Cannot breathe life into the dead.

‡

Around my grave  
Stood in a ring  
A bevy of fair mourners,  
All comely, winsome, lily-white.

The caravan of roses and of tulips has  
Alighted in the garden.  
O wherefrom come  
So many things with bleeding hearts?

You seek good manners, learning, taste  
In the schoolroom.  
But no one buys wine from  
A glassware factory.

The teaching of the West's philosophers  
Increased my wisdom's fund.  
The company of seers lit up  
My being's very core.

Bring out the music which  
Is in your nature's make-up.  
O self-oblivious man,  
Cast out of your head others' tunes.

No one has realised  
That I too have some worth.  
I am a precious object fallen  
Into the hands of blind men.

‡

Our thought is constantly engaged  
In fashioning new gods.  
Released from one bond, it  
Entangles itself in another.

Come to the roof-top and remove  
Unhesitatingly Your face's veil.  
There is nobody in Your street  
More eager to see You than I.

I am so jealous of  
The seeing power of my eyes  
That I weave with my sight  
One more veil for Your face.

One look, one flitting smile,  
One shining tear—  
Other than these there is  
No pledge of love.

I am proud of my love, which with  
The grief of separation forged  
Another bond of pain  
Connecting You and me.

In order that your song, O bird of spring,  
May be more lively, take  
A little more fire from  
The sanctuary of my heart.

The harp of the Timurids broke:  
Its music is alive.  
It burst forth from  
Another instrument of Samarkand.

Custodian of the Harem,  
Do not admit Iqbal;  
For he has up his sleeve  
New idols every day.

‡

I have this odd complaint  
Against my seeing eyes:  
When You unveil Yourself,  
My sight acts as a veil.

From me, a creature of mere clay,  
Tell creatures of light this:  
Beware a pinch of dust  
Which is aware of its identity.

We sing and burn  
In spring's assembly hall.  
Our morning song  
Has set our wings aflame.

How can one who has lost himself  
Know where my songs come from?  
My world is not  
His world.

I fell in a nook of the garden,  
Bleeding like a tulip.  
A dart from someone's eyes  
Struck at my heart.

In living men's creed life  
Is a pursuit of hardships.  
I have not visited the Ka'bah. Why not?  
Because the journey is so safe.

Untold assemblies have been organised,  
Only to be dissolved,

In this small halting-place  
Illumined by the moon.

Arise and make a man  
Out of the dust you are.  
The time allowed to you  
Is only the duration of a spark.

Assuming you are not a man of lust,  
Let me give you a tip:  
Love gathers strength from plaints  
That go without effect.

My song has relit old fires  
In Persia, but Arabia  
Is still a stranger to  
My ardent lays.

‡

This is my way of finding in this company  
A confidant:  
I sing *ghazals* and through them I  
Convey the message of my Friend.

In that peculiar privacy  
Where speech acts as a veil  
I let my heart  
Speak in the language of the eyes.

In order to cleanse it  
And make it fit to see Your face,  
I wash my sight  
With tears.

Though my affairs are tied up in a knot,  
Just like a bud, I grow  
With a bud's eagerness  
To witness the sun's glory.

My being is a wave,  
Which fears no flood.  
Do not think that I seek a shore  
While swimming in the sea of life.

He is to me  
What sight is to the eye.  
Even at the farthest remove  
I always am with Him.

He painted on my eye's screen  
The picture of a world.  
It is as if I were  
Under a magic-maker's spell.

Its dome with its doors shut  
Cannot contain me.  
I am a thorn  
In the side of this ancient sky.

The joy of being on the wing  
Will not let me rest in my nest.  
One moment on a tree branch,  
The next I am on the stream's brink.

‡

Arise and waken notes  
Aslumber in the organ's keys.  
Teach singing birds  
Fresh tunes.

The path is like a tulip-bed  
With passers-bys' blood-drops.  
Who is the one whose proud might has  
Waylaid the caravan of humble Love?

Since You have opened to the garden  
Its sleepy eye,  
Give the narcissus time  
Sufficient for a glance.

To inmates of the inner sanctuary say  
This from me, tongueless as I am:  
"Words never uttered by you are  
On little children's lips."

O you who lengthen out your prayers  
In front of other men,  
When you bow your head on the ground,  
The unbelievers watching fume indignantly.

Although the intellect  
Rates Love not very high,  
I would not give a lover's anguished sigh  
For Jamshid's throne.

A Brahmin said to Ghaznavi:  
"Look at my magic powers;  
You who broke idols have become  
Yourself Ayaz's slave."

‡

Let me tell a secret to  
The servants of the king:  
You can make the whole world yours  
With a moving song.

Why pride yourself on your riches?  
In the city of the lovesick  
Mahmud's broken heart  
Is not worth Ayaz's smile.

His the pride of independence,  
His the wealth of poverty.  
One who, though poor, is no beggar  
Makes a king's heart quake in fear.

You ask me where I reside:  
In the heart's enchanted world,  
Where depressions are not so low  
And where heights are not so high.

Leave alone the path of reason.  
There are other ways to Him—  
Humbleness of heart,  
Chastity of eye.

Still imperfect on Your path,  
Immature through Your neglect,  
I have a soul half on fire,  
You have an eye but half open.

My prostrations have strewn roses  
On the idol-temple's path.  
Too great is my heart's devotion  
For mere two-prostration praying.

What pride, what humility  
Are there in a lovers' quarrel!  
Eyes pretending nonchalance,  
And heart ignoring the pretence.

‡

Come, for a saki with a rose-like face  
Is playing on a lute.  
The air of spring has made the garden look  
As if it were a painting from Arzhang.

The tulip-bride has used for henna  
The heart's blood of the spring.  
How greedily, how lustily,  
She hankers after colour!

The eye can grasp,  
With the aid of a hearty song,  
A meaning that is too big for  
The garment of mere words.

Look with the eyes of Love  
So that you find some trace of Him.

To reason's eye the world  
Is nothing but illusion and deceit.

From Love learn how to act,  
And then do what you like;  
For Love is the quintessence of  
Sagacity and sense.

Your final goal and mine  
Are higher than the heavens.  
The sun is but a milestone on  
The highway of our caravan.

You have surpassed yourself,  
O water-drop.  
It were a great shame to get to the sea,  
And then not come up as a pearl.

You do not know your worth.  
The shining ruby is  
A mere stone: it acquires  
Its preciousness from you.

‡

I never worshipped forms;  
I broke the idol house.  
I am a rushing flood,  
Which bursts all bounds.

About my being or non-being  
Thought was in doubt.  
But Love made manifest  
The fact that I exist.

I worship in the idol-house,  
And I pray in the Ka'bah,  
Around my neck the sacred thread,  
And in my hand the rosary.

I dare not waste the wealth of grief  
You have bestowed on me.  
So I stem in my eyes the tears  
That well up from my heart.

Wise in my words,  
I am mad in my deeds.  
Drunk with the wine of love for you,  
I am still fully sober.

‡

The breeze of spring makes of  
The garden a wine-tavern.  
It casts buds into jar-shapes,

And makes of flowers cups.

When love attains its climax, then  
No rivalry remains.  
In flitting round a candle moths  
Join hands with one another.

Life builds, but also burns;  
And what it burns it builds again.  
How ruthlessly it burns!  
How eagerly it builds!

An eagle in a cage,  
When he accepts food offered,  
Becomes so timid that he trembles  
On seeing shadows of quails' wings.

O gardener, tell Iqbal  
To be off from the garden,  
For this spellbinding singer  
Makes men forget the roses.

‡

Convey my salutation  
To that fire-eating Turk  
Who set aflame with one glance  
A cityful of longing.

The point of this will be seen by  
A sympathetic heart:  
I swore to drink no more,  
But did not break the jar of wine.

O nightingale, I warned you many times  
Against the rose's infidelity;  
But you persist in clinging to  
Its scentless skeleton.

The secret of life, if you want  
To know it, lies in restlessness.  
It would be shameful for a stream  
To go on resting in the sea.

O I am happy that to lovers  
You Have granted restless souls  
And that You have created no  
Cure for the malady of seeking.

"Do not seek union with Me,  
For I transcend all thought."  
By saying this You gave my tears  
A new excuse for flowing.



Create a furor in the garden,  
Storm it with your lament.  
Until breath gets choked in your breast  
Do not give up your wailing.

‡

You have made every thorn  
Prick us and know our tale.  
You took us to the wilderness  
Of madness, and let everybody know.

Our fault was we ate of a grain,  
And his that he refused to bow.  
You never pardoned that poor devil,  
Nor have You yet forgiven us.

A hundred worlds spring up like flowers  
From our imagination's soil.  
There is but one real world; and that too  
You have made of the blood of murdered  
wishes.

Like colour the reflection of Your beauty  
Shines through the glass.  
You have made of the goblet's wall  
A screen for Yourself, just like wine.

O, lay some new foundation, for  
We happen to like novelty.  
What is this giddy peep-show You have made  
Of yesterdays, to-morrows and to-days?

‡

Happy the man who burned with flames of  
wine  
His intellectual goods.  
He gained a new thing from the flames,  
Rich like the tulip's fiery hue.

Come you, too, give your face  
A vernal freshness with a cup of wine,  
For spring makes pious Sufis sell  
Their garments for that stuff.

I felt great pity for  
The jurist, when I heard  
The taverner refused to buy of him  
A legal ruling for a cup of wine.

Do not judge music by  
My ineffectual songs.  
A lightning flash of it can burn

An Alexander's whole domain.

O morning breeze, convey  
My greetings to the happy Weimar town.  
The light that radiated from it has  
Illumined many sages' minds.

‡

Fetch wine, for the heavens  
Have turned in our favour.  
Songs are germinating  
Like buds from the branches.

I drink in remembrance  
Of that holy person  
Who would not drink wine but  
With his boon companions.

May the tribe increase of  
That sagacious man who  
Said that the light of hope  
Is a torch on life's path.

What I sing is too high  
For my likely listeners.  
So I sing where no one  
Listens to my singing.

Verse is such a thing as  
Tests the buyer's judgment.  
I am glad that no one  
Buys my poetry.

From his pleasing verses  
It is clear that Iqbal,  
Teacher of philosophy,  
Turned to Love's vocation.

‡

I long for manly weapons—  
Bow, dagger, spear and sword.  
O, do not come with me,  
For mine is Shabbir's way.

Look at me gathering  
Straw for a nest,  
And look at me again,  
Wishing for fire to burn it off.

He said: "Keep your lips sealed.  
Let not My secret be betrayed."  
I said: "O no, I must  
Proclaim that You are great."

He said: "Ask for  
Whatever is your wish."

I said: "I wish to know  
The mystery of fate."

All that I know  
About my life is this:  
A dream forgotten, which I wish  
To have interpreted for me.

O where is that alluring glance  
That captivated my heart first?  
God bless you, I desire  
That arrow once again.

ÿ

Learn how to put a rosary  
Bead on the sacred thread,  
And if your eyes see double,  
Then learn how not to see.

Come forth like fragrance from  
The closet of the bud,  
Mix with the morning breeze,  
And thus learn how to blow.

If you have been created as  
A humble drop of dew,  
Arise and learn how to fall on  
A tulip's heart.

If you have been created as a thorn  
Adhering to a fresh-blown rose,  
Maintain the garden's honour:  
Learn how to prick.

If you are weeded by the gardener out  
Of your own flower-bed,  
Learn how to grow  
Afresh as grass.

So that you come out stronger and  
More bitter still,  
Remain in the wine cellar, and  
Be seasoned there.

How long will you remain  
Under another's wings?  
Learn how to fly  
With freedom in the garden air.

When I knocked at the tavern door,  
The tavern-keeper said:

"Go, light a fire in the Harem itself,  
And let it set your heart aflame."

ÿ

From your own dust elicit the fire  
That is not yet aflame.  
It is not worthwhile borrowing  
The radiance of others.

I would not give  
For Jamshid's realm  
Naziri's line:  
"One who has not been killed can never have  
been from our tribe."

That sorcerer, the intellect,  
Attacks you with a host;  
But do not be dismayed,  
For Love is not alone.

You do not know the *rah*,  
And you are ignorant of the *maqam*.  
There is no tune  
Which is not in Sulayma's lute.

I have my eyes so fixed on myself that,  
Although the beauty of my Friend  
Has conquered the whole world,  
I have no time to look at it.

Come, let us make an uproar in  
The city of the lovely.  
The madness of the lively does not seek  
A desert for a roaming ground.

Come, tell a tale about  
The hunting of the monsters of the sea.  
Do not say that your boat  
Is unused to the sea's ways.

O I admire the courage of  
A traveller who does not tread  
An easy path that does not pass  
Through deserts, over mountains, across  
streams.

Live in the company  
Of lively revellers.  
Shun the discipleship of one  
Who is not an uproarious man.

The acme of expression is  
Not to speak in bare, literal terms.

The speech of inmates of the inner circle is  
Always in symbols and in signs.

‡

A wave can well be severed from  
The bosom of the sea,  
And you can well enclose the boundless sea  
Within the channel of your private stream.

A cityful of hearts can well be made to bleed  
With a poignant song.  
A gardenful of flowers can well be pierced  
By a whiff of the morning breeze.

The mighty Gabriel can well be turned  
Into a hand-trained sparrow.  
His wings can well be tied up with  
A single near-singed hair.

O Alexander, kingship is  
More frail than Jamshid's cup.  
A whole worldful of mirrors can be smashed  
With but a single stone.

If you are stable in yourself,  
What harm can a destructive flood do you?  
For you can settle at its bottom as  
A pearl does at the bottom of the sea.

Ascetic that I am, too, proud  
To ask, my creed is this:  
That I had rather see my body break to bits  
Than seek a medicine to keep it whole.

‡

A hundred nights of wailing,  
A hundred mornings of travail,  
A hundred fire-emitting sighs.  
The product? One poignant verse.

Do you know how  
You can tell love from lust?  
The former is Farhad's pickaxe,  
The latter is Parvez's guile.

Tell those behind the inner curtain this:  
The handful of dust that is I  
Is dust that sees,  
Is dust that raises storms.

A pleasing song sung by  
An early morning bird  
Intoxicates me and enraptures me,

O saki, O musician.

From Samarkand, I fear,  
There may arise again  
The threat of a Hulaku or  
The terror of a Genghis Khan.

O singer, sing a *ghazal* or a couplet of  
The holy guide of Rum,  
So that my soul may be immersed  
In the fire of Tabriz.

‡

Let *surma* brighten once again  
Your magic-working eyes,  
And let my frenzied urge to sing  
About them be intensified.

Invent another pattern, and  
Create a new, maturer man.  
It does not suit a God  
To fashion dolls of clay.

The story of my heart is best untold,  
My anguish best concealed.  
But, O my confidants, what shall I do  
About the pleasure of complaining?

Where is the breast-inflaming sigh  
And where the heart-dissolving tear?  
Stones to hurl at the mirror of  
The knot-resolving intellect.

Assemble in the garden and the meadow,  
And play the lute,  
Drink wine, sing *ghazals*, and  
Unbutton your *qabas*.

It is daybreak. The caravan  
Has said its prayers and is all set to start.  
Perhaps you have not heard  
The starting-bell.

I do not bear with monarchs' airs,  
Nor do I seek their favours.  
O greed-deluded man,  
Look at a pauper's bravery.

‡

The intellect's deceitfulness  
Is worthy of remark:  
It is the leader of the caravan,  
Yet fond of highway robbery.

Do not seek guidance from  
That jack-of-all-trades, intellect.  
Apply to Love, for it is perfect in  
The only art it practises.

Although the West converses with the stars,  
Beware,  
There is in all it does  
A taint of sorcery.

What can I say concerning life  
And death? For in this ancient inn  
Life is slow death,  
And death life's final agony.

Pull up your horse sometimes  
At the graves of us martyrs;  
Our silence has  
Something to say.

Pitch your tent in the desert of Arabia again,  
For Persia is convivial company,  
Which has stale wine  
And breakable wine-cups.

No city shaykh, no poet, and  
No holy man, Iqbal  
Is but a roadside beggar, but  
He has a proud, contented heart.

‡

O I long for a sight  
Of that full moon.  
So I stand hand on heart,  
Eyes fixed on a house-top.

"My day," said Beauty, "knows  
No evening."  
"I burn eternally,"  
Said Love.

I am a prisoner of no yesterday,  
Of no tomorrow, no today,  
I have  
No station, high or low.

I am the wine of mystery  
In search of one to drink me up.  
So in the Magi's wine-house I  
Rotate like a wine-cup.

Do not pass unconcernedly  
By my distracted song,

For I am a celestial bird  
Charged with a message from the Friend.

I draw the curtain and  
Behind it speak.  
O I am a blood-shedding sword,  
But I keep myself sheathed.

‡

The sap in the tree of our life  
Comes from our thirst.  
To seek the spring of immortality  
Is to be unadventurous.

Whom shall I tell the story of my heart?  
And in what way?  
For sighs are ineffectual  
And looking is irreverence.

Chant your *ghazals*,  
But let the key be very low;  
For birdsong here  
Is still in undertones.

Men of Hijaz have robbed  
Our caravan of all its goods.  
But silence! For our friend  
Is from Arabia.

The tree of the Turks has borne fruit because  
It was struck by the lightning of the West.  
The advent of the Chosen One took place  
Because of Abu Lahabism.

Do not assess what I sing by  
The standards of Iran and Hindustan.  
It is a gem which is the product of  
Nocturnal tears.  
Come, I have brought  
From the vat of the guide of Rum  
The wine of poesy,  
Much younger than the wine of grapes.

‡

A true lover does not differentiate  
Between the Ka'bah and the idol-house.  
The one is the Beloved's privacy,  
The other His appearing publicly.

I am glad my grave has been built  
In the Harem's own street.  
With my eyelashes I will dig

A tunnel from the Ka'bah to the idol-house.

Better than any company  
In this world or the next  
Are a sagacious friend  
And two goblets of wine.

Here everyone has eyes  
And everyone a tongue.  
So in your company  
One story breeds another.

Who is He Who has launched  
A night-attack on hearts,  
Who like a Turk has plundered  
A hundred cities of desire?

Where I roam in my mad pursuit  
The angel Gabriel is but small game.  
Come, O my manly courage, cast  
A lasso upon God Himself.

Iqbal has in the pulpit blurted out  
A secret that was not to be revealed.  
Well, he had issued forth still raw  
From the wine-tavern's privacy.

ÿ

There is no waking up without You from  
Non-being's sleep,  
No being without You,  
No non-being with You.

Are our minds in the world,  
Or is the world within our minds?  
Keep your mouth shut; this knot  
Can never be resolved.

My friends' minds are disturbed  
By my distracted songs.  
My mind is restless owing to  
A song that never can be sung.

O zephyr, after all,  
What can dew's tiny sprinkling do?  
The fervour in the tulip's heart  
Cannot be assuaged.

Attach your heart to God,  
And seek no help from kings.  
Theirs is a threshold on which one  
Should never rub one's brow.

ÿ

This azure sky,  
All that is high, all that is low,  
For all its vastness, is  
Encompassed in the lover's heart.

If you desire to know the secret of eternity,  
Then open your eyes to yourself,  
For you are many, you are one,  
You are concealed and you are manifest.

O my afflicted heart,  
You now know what is love.  
You cannot rest within my breast  
And pour yourself out through my eyes.

Arise, for spring  
Has lit the flowers' lamps.  
Arise and spend some moments with  
The tulips of the wilderness.

Love's magic charms are numberless,  
And countless Beauty's ways.  
O we are infinite,  
Both You and I.

A hundred times were raised to heaven,  
A hundred times were buried in the earth  
The power and the pomp  
Of Khaqans and Faghfurs, of Daras and  
Jamshids.

Alone with myself, yet with Him. O what is  
this?  
Are we together or apart?  
What do you say, O intellect?  
What do you say, O Love?

ÿ

*Lines Addressed To A Sufi*

Neither have I nor you the wish  
To go to Layla's house.  
Neither have I nor you the heart  
To bear the desert heat.

I am a young wine-server and  
You keeper of an old wine-shop.  
The company is thirsty, yet  
Wine neither you have, nor have I.

We have pledged our hearts and our faith  
To 'Ajam's lovely ones.

The flame of love for Sulayma.  
Burns neither you nor me.

There was an empty shell  
That we picked up on the seashore.  
The precious pearl  
Have neither you nor I.

Do not talk any more about  
The Joseph we have lost.  
The warmth of a Zulaikha's heart  
Have neither you nor I.

It is best that we make do with a lamp  
That has our garment's skirt for shade.  
The power to face Sinai's lamp  
Have neither you nor I.

‡

I am a guidepost to  
The goal of heart's desire. Adhere to me.  
Mix with your dust  
A spark of my pure fire.

The tulip-bride  
Has come out of its boudoir.  
Come, let me fire your soul  
With passion-stimulating talk.

The tale of Farhad's grief  
And of Parvez's happiness  
Is told in every age  
In different ways.

Though born in India,  
I draw my inspiration from  
The hallowed dust  
Of Kabul and Bokhara and Tabriz

‡

In the world of our heart  
There are no phases of the moon.  
There is a revolution, but  
No morning and no evening.

Woe to the caravan  
Which, lacking enterprise,  
Looks for a road  
That is not dangerous.

Abandon reason and become embroiled  
In the waves of the sea of Love,  
In reason's little stream

There are no pearls.

Whatever is the object of  
The strivings of our thought  
Is in our eyes,  
But like our sight invisible.

‡

Our wailing is without effect,  
And fruitless are our cries.  
The gain from all this ardency?  
A heart whose songs are steeped in blood.

In fervent quest of Him the heart  
Created temple and Harem.  
We long for Him:  
He watches us with unconcern.

The veiled ones have unveiled themselves,  
While I have gone into my self's retreat.  
Look at my self-respecting love.  
Who is fond of display—say, they or I?

The singer at the tavern made  
A subtle point last night. He said:  
"The tasting of wine is a sin;  
The drinking of it none:"

Wayfarers' life consists  
In hurrying from place to place.  
The caravan of waves  
Has no road and no goal.

"Our goal is God."  
This saying of the guide of Rum  
Was like a flame flung at  
The straw that is my self.

‡

The fervent quality of verse  
Comes from the heart's ecstatic cry.  
This candle is alight  
Thanks to the heart, which is its moth.

A handful of mere dust,  
We had no gusto for lament.  
Our clamour is all due  
To the rotation of the heart's wine-cup.

This dark abode of dust,  
Which you have named the world,  
Is just a worn-out image from  
The idol-temple of the heart.

Sitting in his observatory,  
The star-gazing astronomer  
Is looking for the boundary  
Of the heart's wilderness.

Celestial beings are caught in  
The lasso of His glance.  
The Sufi is a victim of  
The depredations of the heart.

Mahmud of Ghazna, who  
Razed idol-houses to the ground,  
Himself became a votary  
Of the heart's idol-house.

One more insouciant than  
The Muslim I have never seen.  
He has a heart in his breast, yet  
He is a stranger to the heart.

‡

The majesty is snatched away  
From mountains and bestowed on leaves  
Of grass. A royal crown  
Is put on the head of a roadside beggar.

In Love's way who is who  
Is of little account.  
The white palm of a Moses is  
Conferred on a black man.

Sometimes kingship is not bestowed  
On the son of a king;  
Sometimes it is bestowed upon  
A prisoner in a well.

A wayside beggar may be turned into  
A conqueror and ruler of the world  
By having granted to his eyes  
The cutting power of a sword.

Love has been overthrown by reason, and  
The world is upside down.  
It may be that I shall  
Be given freedom to wail over this.

‡

You cannot fit into the Harem, nor  
Into the idol-house.  
But O how eagerly You come  
To those who seek You eagerly.

Set foot more boldly in  
The sanctum of Your lovers' hearts.  
You are the master of the house.  
Why do You come in stealthily?

You plunder the possessions of  
The Sayers of the rosary,  
And You make night-raids on the hearts  
Of wearers of the sacred thread.

Sometimes You raise a hundred hosts  
To shed the blood of friends,  
And sometimes come into the company  
Equipped with measure and with cups.

On the bush of a Moses You  
Hurl flames so ruthlessly,  
And to the candle of an orphan You  
Come gladly like a moth.

Come, quaff a cup of wine, Iqbal,  
From the wine-cellar of the self.  
You are back from the tavern of the West  
A stranger to yourself.

‡

The animation in the idol-temple of 'Ajam  
Does not match the great ardour of my heart,  
For with one glance Muhammad of Arabia  
Has conquered the Hijaz that is in me.

What shall I do? The wily intellect  
Has tied me up in knots.  
One glance, I pray. The motion of Your eye  
Perhaps will break its fiction's spell.

The magic tricks of reason do not touch  
The fervour of a living heart.  
Forsake the temple of philosophy,  
And come into the sanctum of my heart.

‡

Do not be like a mirror, which is taken up  
With others' beauty. Cast  
Away the thought  
Of others from your mind.

Acquire fire from the singing of  
The Harem birds, and burn away  
The nest that you have built  
In other people's tree.

In this world learn  
To unfurl your own wings,  
For you can never fly  
With others' wings.

I am an independent man  
And am so self-respecting too  
That you could kill me with a glass  
Of water that belonged to someone else.

O You, closer to my soul than all else,  
Yet hidden from my sight,  
Your separation from me is  
Dearer to me than union with all others.

‡

No lordship and no mastership  
Does the world of Love know.  
It is enough  
That it knows how to serve.

Not everyone who walks around an idol  
And ties the sacred thread around his neck  
Can claim to know the rules  
Of idol-worship and of unbelief.

There are a thousand Khybers here,  
A hundred kinds of dragons too.  
Not everyone who lives on barley bread  
Can know a Hyder's ways.

Better than Alexander in  
The eyes of the wise is a man,  
Be he a beggar, who knows what  
The end of Alexanderism is.

What is there in the blandishments  
Of fair-faced youth?  
Come, join the circle of an old man who  
Knows how to conquer hearts.

The West makes glass,  
And fashions jars and cups.  
I am surprised it thinks the glass itself  
To be "the fairy in the glass".

What can I say about a Muslim who  
Is not a Muslim in his ways,  
Save this that, though a scion of Abraham,  
He follows Azar's way of life.

Come into my abode of woes  
Just for a while and see

How well an ill-starred man  
Has mastered alchemy.

Come and join Iqbal's company,  
And share a drink or two with him.  
Although he does not shave his head,  
He knows qalandar's ways.

‡

There is no master who does not  
Adore Him like a slave.  
There is no slave who, if he were  
A master, would not bid for Him.

Although the preacher talks a lot  
Concerning Moses and Sinai,  
The mirror of his talk does not reflect  
The light of that theophany.

Our guide thinks it expedient  
To speak in metaphors;  
But otherwise he has nothing to do  
With fair-faced ones.

Attach your heart to Him and shun  
These wearers of patched clothes.  
Do not become the quarry of gazelles  
Which do not come from His own Tartary.

You want a melody of peace  
Played on my lute.  
How am I to extract from it a tone  
That is not in its strings?

My heart applied the *qashqa* to the brow,  
And took to Brahmins' ways;  
But did so in a manner which  
Did not befit its sacred thread.

Love speaks out in the company  
That it finds in the tavern.  
In idol-house and in Harem.  
It finds no confidant.

‡

Come, for the love-mad nightingale  
Is busy singing songs.  
The tulip-bride  
Is all bewitchery and grace.

O connoisseur of music, melody  
Comes forth from strings invisible,  
Not from the singer's throat,



Nor from the frets of lute or harp.

Whoever strikes the strings  
Of life's lute with a plectrum is,  
Take it from me,  
A man who knows the mysteries.

I have been given knowledge of  
What is behind veils in the world;  
But dare not open my mouth, for  
The heavens are so perverse.

Do not speak harshly, try  
The way of amity.  
That you and I are here together is  
A pure godsend.

What is the destination of  
This dark abode of dust?  
Whatever there is in it is  
Like shifting sand.

My body is a flower from  
A flower-bed in Kashmir's paradise.  
My heart is from the sanctum of Hijaz.  
My song is from Shiraz.

ÿ

We are mere dust, but planet-like  
We swiftly move,  
And seek the shore  
Of this blue sea.

We owe our being to  
A single flame of life;  
But, from the joy of selfhood, we  
Are split up as so many sparks.

O tell the creatures of light this:  
That by dint of the intellect  
We creatures of dust ride  
The stars.

In love we are  
Buds shaking in the morning breeze;  
But in the business of life we  
Are quite as hard as granite.

Like the narcissus we  
Have grown eyes in this garden.  
O lift the veil that hides Your face;  
We are all eyes for You.

ÿ

O may Arabia become a tulip-field,  
Thanks to my tears of blood.  
May Ajam, which has lost its fragrance, find  
A new spring in my breath.

Life is all restlessness,  
And restlessness eternal.  
May every atom of my dust  
Become a restless heart.

It does not stick to any path;  
It knows no halting-place.  
Such is my heart, my traveler.  
May God be with it always.

Beware of reason, which creates  
Mere images of hopelessness.  
It charms us with false instruments.  
May their strings snap.

You are a youth as yet half-baked,  
And my verse is all heat.  
O may the *ghazals* I sing prove  
Agreeable to you.

In my heart, if you enter it,  
You will find no desire but that  
The dew that is you may become  
A boundless sea.

May it not be your spirit's fate  
That it should find a moment's rest.  
O may the restlessness of life  
Be evidenced to you.

ÿ

Your seeing is all error,  
Your wisdom all defect.  
You never will get anywhere  
Except through revelation.

The path is blind.  
Dive into yourself, traveler.  
Fish never lose their way  
Deep in the sea.

A self-respecting man  
Does not go with his needs to kings.  
A mountain cannot stoop  
To be a leaf of grass.

Do not pass by my song,  
For in it you will find  
The secret of ascetic living and  
The treasured wealth of royalty.

My breath will do to you  
What morning breezes do to buds,  
If you know how delectable  
Are morning sighs.

O heavens, your eyes have still  
A pitiless, foreboding look.  
I fear that you intend to stage  
One more grim show.

‡

There is no breaker of wine-jars  
Not merrily drunk with Your wine.  
There is no sweet-tongued poet who  
Has not sucked rapture at Your ruby-tinted  
lips.

In Arab dress you are  
Most pleasing to the eyes,  
But there is no dress which  
Does not suit you.

Your lips are silent, but  
Your eyes are not.  
O there is not a thing that they  
Do not say to my bleeding heart.

I hold poetic gatherings  
Only to sing of You, for otherwise  
There is no gathering that I cannot  
Conjure up in my solitude.

O Muslim, learn again  
How to work miracles like Solomon.  
There is no Ahriman  
Who does not have an eye upon your ring.

‡

Although he does not wear  
A crown or diadem,  
The beggar in Your street  
Is no less than a king.

The young are sleeping, while  
The old are dead of heart.  
There is nobody in whose lot  
Are morning sighs.

Do not sit down on seeking's road  
On this pretext  
That in our age  
There is no one who knows the path.

How unconcerned you are  
About your time!  
Learn of a time incalculable  
In terms of months and years.

In this old inn  
You look for peace!  
It seems that you do not know of  
The struggle for existence.

What can the angel-scribes  
Record about our sins?  
For our lot in Your world  
Was nothing but spectatorship.

Come, let us catch hold of  
The skirt of Iqbal's robe,  
For he is not one of those men who go about  
In patched-up dresses at saints' shrines.

‡

My love in its abandon has  
A live flame in its arms.  
My sterile wisdom cannot raise  
A single spark.

Love's meekness, when complete,  
Is one with Beauty's pride.  
So in my desert Qais  
Is given Layla's name.

From India have I come with an urge  
To prostrate myself on your threshold—  
An urge which has  
Turned to blood in my brow.

Put into this old unbeliever's hand  
The sword of *la*,  
And then see how the tumult of  
My *Illa* rages in the world.

There ought to be a revolution for  
The heavens to bring again  
Out of time's womb my yesterdays  
In my tomorrow's guise.

The whole world benefits  
From Your abounding grace,

But You do not grant my Sinai  
Any theophany at all.

In veiled terms do I say to God,  
But to you, Prophet of God, openly,  
That He is all that is concealed from me,  
And you all that is manifest.

‡

O you have carved new images,  
Alas!  
You have not dug into your inner self,  
Alas!

You have been melted so  
By the heat of the West  
That you have dropped from your own eyes  
Just like a tear. Alas!

In a street where mere common dust  
Gains preciousness  
You did not prove that you were even worth  
An amorous half-glance. Alas!

I take it that you have read through  
The book of wisdom, but  
You have not understood  
The meaning of Love's narrative. Alas!

You went around the Ka'bah, and  
You went around the idol-house.  
But you did not engage  
Your vision with yourself. Alas!

*[Translated by M. Hadi Husain]*

## A PICTURE OF EUROPE

### A MESSAGE TO THE WEST

O morning breeze, convey this to the Western  
sage from me:  
With wings unfolded, Wisdom is a captive all  
the more.  
It tames the lightning, but Love lets it strike  
its very heart:  
In courage Love excels that clever sorcerer by  
far.  
The eye sees just the colour of the tulip and  
the rose;  
But far more obvious, could we see it, is the  
flower's core.

It is not strange that you have the Messiah's  
healing touch:

What is strange is your patient is the more sick  
for your cure.

Though you have gathered knowledge,  
you have thrown away the heart;  
With what a precious treasure you have  
thought it fit to part!

The courting of philosophy is a vain quest,  
indeed;

For in its school Love's lofty regimen is not  
decreed.

Such are its blandishments, it leads astray the  
pupil's heart:

There is no mischief its coquettish glances do  
not breed.

But its cold fire can never set the seeker's  
heart aflame:

It cannot give the heart Love's sweet pain,  
though it makes it bleed.

Though it has roamed the deserts, it has  
captured no gazelle;

Though it has searched the garden, it has not a  
rose for meed.

The wisest thing that we can do is to  
appeal to Love;

For our desires' fulfilment we should  
always kneel to Love.

Wisdom, since it set foot on life's labyrinthine  
way,

Has set the sea on fire and made the whole  
world go awry.

Its alchemy converted worthless grains of  
sand to gold;

But oh! it gave the wounded heart no love-  
balm to apply.

Alas! we were so foolish as to let it steal our  
wits:

It waylaid us, subjecting us to highway  
robbery.

It raised up much dust from the civilization of  
the West

To cast into that civilization's Holy Saviour's  
eye.

O how long can you go on sowing sparks  
and reaping flames,

And tying up your heart in knots which  
bear new-fangled names?

The self-absorbed and world-regarding  
wisdom are two things.

The nightingale and falcon have two different  
kinds of wings.

It is one thing to pick up stray grain lying on  
the ground;

Another to peck at gems in the Pleiades'  
earrings.

It is one thing to roam the garden like the  
morning breeze;

Another to delve in the rose's inmost  
ponderings.

It is one thing to let doubt and conjecture bog  
you down;

Another to look up and see celestial  
happenings.

Blest is the Wisdom which has both the  
worlds in its domain,

Which calls man's heart's fire as well as  
the angels' light its own.

We, since we issued forth out of the sacred  
shrine of Love,

Have burnished mirror-bright the very dust  
beneath our feet.

O look at our adventurousness in the game of  
life;

For we have robbed the wealth of both the  
worlds and boldly staked it.

We watch the day-and-night procession move  
before our eyes,

With our tents pitched right on the margin of  
a running streamlet.

Once in our heart, which launched a night-  
raid on this ancient fane,

There was a fire which we breathed into all  
things, dry or wet.

We were a flame; we flickered, broke  
down and became a spark:

And since then we burn fitfully, with  
yearnings vague and dark.

Love learned the greedy ways of earthly lust  
and burst all bounds:

It caught men in its toils as fish are caught by  
fishermen.

Preferring war to peace, it reared up armies  
everywhere,

Which plunged their swords into the hearts of  
their own kith and kin.

It gave the name of empire to its acts of  
banditry;

And heavy sat its yoke on those who lived in  
its domain.

Now, holding in its hand a goblet full of  
human blood,

It dances madly to the tune of flute and  
tambourine.

It is high time that we washed clean the  
tablet of our heart:

It is high time that with a clean slate we  
made a fresh start.

The royal crown has passed into the hands of  
highwaymen.

Hushed is the song of Darius; mute is  
Alexander's flute.

Farhad has changed his pickaxe for the  
sceptre of Parvez.

Gone are the joy of mastership, the toil of  
servitude.

Freed from his bondage, Joseph sits on  
Pharaoh's high throne:

The tales and wiles of Potiphar's wife cannot  
win her suit.

Old secrets that were veiled stand unveiled in  
the market-place:

No longer are they subjects of debate for the  
elite.

Unveil your eyes and you will see that in  
full view of you

Life is creating for itself a world  
completely new.

In this our ancient dust I find the pure gold of  
the soul:

Each atom of it is a star's eye with the power  
to see.

In every grain of sand lodged in the womb of  
mother earth

I see the promise of a many-branched fruit-  
laden tree.

I find the mountain as light as a tiny blade of  
grass,

And heavy as a mountain seems a blade of  
grass to me.  
A revolution too big for the universe's mind  
I see, I know not how: I see it just about to be.  
O happy he who sees the horseman, not  
the dust alone,  
Who in the throbbing of the strings sees  
music's essence drawn.

Life is, and as long as it lasts, will be a  
running stream:  
This old wine's youthful effervescence will  
always be new.  
What has been but should not have been will  
not be any more:  
What should have been but has not been will  
be— it must be so.  
Love is all eyes for Beauty's revelations yet to  
be:  
And Beauty, fond of self-display, must always  
be on view:  
Deep in the earth that I have watered with my  
blood-stained tears  
My teardrops will remain embedded, gems of  
a rich hue.  
"I see in the dark night a portent of the  
coming dawn.  
My candle has been put out, but to greet  
the rising sun."

#### THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

To the end that wars may cease on this old  
planet,  
The suffering peoples of the world have  
founded a new institution.  
So far as I see it amounts to this:  
A number of undertakers have formed a  
company to allot the graves.

*[Translated by R.A. Nicholson]*

#### SCHOPENHAUER AND NIETZSCHE

A bird flew from its nest and ranged about  
the garden;  
Its soft breast was pierced by a rose-thorn.  
It reviled the nature of Time's garden;  
It throbbed with its own pain and pain of  
others.

It thought the tulip was branded with the  
blood of innocents;  
In the closed bud it saw the guile of Spring.  
From the cries of burning woe a hoopoe's  
heart caught fire.  
The hoopoe with his beak drew forth the  
thorn from its body.  
Saying, "Get the profit out of loss:  
The rose has created pure gold by rending her  
breast.  
If thou art wounded, make the pain thy  
remedy.  
Accustom thyself to thorns, that thou mayst  
become entirely one with the garden.

*[Translated by R.A. Nicholson]*

#### PHILOSOPHY AND POLITICS

Philosopher with statesman weigh not thou:  
Those are sun-blinded, these are tearless eyes.  
One shapes a false argument for his truth,  
The other a block of logic for his lies.

*[Translated by R.A. Nicholson]*

#### AN ASSEMBLAGE IN THE OTHER WORLD

##### TOLSTOY

Ahriman's hirelings,  
Warriors of kings,  
Draw oppression's sword  
For a loaf of bread.  
Evil is their good,  
And the husk their food.  
Friends of others, these  
Are their own kin's foes.  
Country, church and crown  
Are narcotics grown  
By the masters to  
Buy their slaves' souls with.

##### KARL MARX

For all his wisdom, man is not yet self-  
aware,  
And capitalism has rendered man man's  
murderer.

##### HEGEL

Reality is double-faced.  
The orchard and the desert are

Two aspects of it that one sees.  
To know the whole truth one must taste  
Both grapes and bitter gourds.  
So fond is Nature of antitheses  
That it has set at war  
Employees and employers, slaves and lords.

TOLSTOY

The two-faced intellect with its philosophy  
Of egotism bids the worker suffer patiently.

MAZDAK

Iran's seed sprouts forth from the soil  
Of the empires of the Kaisers and the Czars.  
Death dances a new dance in kings' and rich  
men's palaces.  
For ages does an Abraham burn in a  
Nimrod's fire  
Before he can cast out old idols from  
The sanctuary of his Lord.  
Gone is the age of Parvez, wake up now,  
O victims of his tyranny.  
Wrest back from him  
The good things he deprived you of.

KOHKAN

Though outwardly so simple and so shy,  
My loved one is a tyrant, sly  
And full of mischief and deceit.  
She looks all amity,  
But is a fighter in reality.  
Like Christ's her tongue is sweet:  
Her heart is hard like that of Genghis Khan,  
That cruel man.  
My intellect has broken down:  
My madness will soon reach its crown;  
My vision has dissolved in tears.  
Appear to me: I pine for you.  
My pickaxe has laid low a hill  
At your command; but still  
The world appears  
To favour Parvez, as you do.  
From earth to sky all things seem running in  
a race.  
The caravan moves fast: make haste,  
increase your pace.

NIETZSCHE

The heart of the philosopher  
Bled at man's sinews laxity  
So his thought fashioned a new cast of man.  
He raised a fresh storm in the West—  
It was as if a lunatic  
Had crashed into a glassware factory.

EINSTEIN

Like Moses he sought a theophany  
Until his mind, in quest of light,  
Unveiled its mystery.  
A moment's flight from heaven's height  
To the observer's eye—  
Such is the unimaginable speed  
Of its fast-beating wings, indeed.  
Sequestered, it lies at the core  
Of black coal in a pit.  
When manifest in its full glory, it  
Burns up like straw a bush on Mount Sinai.  
Unchanging in this magic world of more  
Or less, of high and low,  
Of far and near, of to and fro,  
Its make-up has in it two sets  
Of qualities, engaged in mutual strife,  
Like brightness, darkness, soothing, burning,  
life  
And death, one of which sets begets  
The angels and the houris, while  
The other shows in Ahriman the vile.  
What can I say about this subtle-minded sage  
Except that from  
The race of Moses and of Aaron there has  
come  
A Zarathustra in our age?

BYRON

Flames would spring up,  
Just as rose and tulip do,  
From the garden's soil,  
If you poured a drop or two  
On it from his cup,  
Always on the boil.  
England's chilly climate  
Did not suit his spirit.  
His heart's message's great ardour

Set aflame love's messenger.  
What a fairyland of beauty  
Was created by his fancy!  
Seeing his epiphanies,  
Youth goes into ecstasies.  
But his genius, that high-soaring bird,  
Left its nest to fall into a snare,  
Which it preferred  
To soaring in the air.

[Translated by M. Hadi Husain]

### NIETZSCHE

If song thou crave, flee from him!  
Thunder roars in the reed of his pen.  
He plunged a lancet into Europe's heart;  
His hand is red with the blood of the Cross.  
He reared a pagoda on the ruins of the  
Temple:  
His heart is a true believer, but his brain an  
infidel.  
Burn thyself in the fire of that Nimrod,  
For the garden of Abraham is produced from  
fire.

[Translated by R.A. Nicholson]

### JALAL AND HEGEL

One night I was engaged in teasing out  
The knots of Hegel's philosophic thought,  
Which tore the veil of transient, finite things,  
Laying bare the infinite, the absolute,  
And whose conception's grand, imposing  
range  
Made the world shrink into a tiny mote.  
When I plunged into that tempestuous sea,  
My mind became just like a storm-tossed  
boat.  
But soon a spell lulled me to slumber and  
Shut out the finite and the infinite.  
My inner vision sharpened, I observed  
An old man whose face was a godly sight—  
The man whose spirit's glory, like the sun,  
Has made the sky of Rum and Syria bright;  
Whose flame in this benighted wilderness  
Shines like a path-illuminating light;

From whose words meanings grow  
spontaneously  
Like tulips riotously breaking out.  
"You sleep," said he. "Awake, awake. To ply  
A boat in a mirage is folly's height.  
You're bidding wisdom guide you on love's  
path!  
You're looking for the sun by candle-light!"

[Translated by M. Hadi Husain]

### PETÖFI

*(A young poet of Hungary who died in battle  
defending his country and no earthly memorial of  
whom exists, as his body could not be found)*

In this garden, for just one moment,  
You sang of the bride-like rose,  
You increased the sorrow of some hearts,  
And dispelled the sorrow of others.  
You painted the tulip's palm with your  
blood;  
And opened the bud's heart with your sighs  
at dawn.  
You are lost in your song -because your verse  
is your tomb:  
You did not return to earth because you were  
not of earth.

[Translated by Mustansir Mir]

### DIALOGUE BETWEEN AUGUSTE COMTE AND THE LABOURER

COMTE

All men are one another's limbs,  
The leaves and stems  
Of one big tree.  
If man's brain is the seat  
Of intellect and if his feet  
Trail on the ground,  
This is because they both are bound  
By Nature's ineluctable decree.  
One man commands, another works, both  
born  
To it. A Mahmud cannot do  
The work of an Ayaz.  
Do you not see it is because  
Work is divided between you

That life becomes a garden, with both rose  
and thorn?

THE LABOURER

Philosopher, you cheat me when you say  
That I can never break my way  
Out of this magic circle that you weave.  
You pass base brass for gold,  
And teach me to resign myself to fate.  
With my pickaxe I excavate  
    Long waterways, in which I hold  
    The very ocean prisoner, and retrieve  
    Milk and honey from Nature's stores.  
    Purveyor of strange subtleties,  
    You give poor Kohkan's prize, for all  
    his sores,  
    To the idle, rich and sly Parvez.  
Do not try passing wrong for right  
With your philosophy.  
You cannot dupe a Khizr's sight  
With a mirage's trickery.  
The capitalist, with nothing to do but  
Eat and sleep, is a burden on this  
    earth,  
Which thrives because of those who  
    work on it.  
Do you not know this idler is a thief  
    by birth?  
The crime that he exists you want  
    excused.  
With all your wisdom you have been  
    bemused.

HEGEL

His thought is fully rational  
And unrelated to the sensuous,  
Although his ideas  
Are decked out in the garb of brides.  
Do you know what kind of a bird  
Is his high-soaring thought?  
It is a hen which through excess of heat  
Conceives without a mate.

*[Translated by M. Hadi Husain]*

JALAL AND GOETHE

In paradise that perceptive German  
Happened upon the Master of the East.

Where is a poet of such stature!—  
Though not a prophet, he is possessed of  
    scripture!  
To the one who knew divine secrets  
He read about the pact of Iblis and the doctor.  
Rumi said, 'You who bring words to life,  
And hunt angels -and God—  
Your thought has made its home  
In the inner recesses of the heart,  
And created this old world anew.  
At one and the same time in the body's frame,  
You have seen the tranquillity and the  
    restlessness of the soul,  
You have been a witness to the birth of the  
    pearl in the shell.  
Not everyone knows the secret of love;  
Or is fit to reach these portals.  
'He who is blest, and a confidant, knows  
That cunning comes from Iblis and love from  
    Adam.'

*[Translated by Mustansir Mir]*

BERGSON'S MESSAGE

If thou wouldst read Life as an open book,  
Be not a spark divided from the brand.  
Being the familiar eye, the friendly look,  
Nor visit strange-like thy native land.  
O thou by vain imaginings befooled,  
Get thee a reason which the Heart hath  
    schooled!

*[Translated by R.A. Nicholson]*

THE WINE-SHOP OF THE WEST

I well recall the days  
That I spent in the Wine-Shop of the West.  
Its wine-bowls shine  
Like Alexander's looking-glass.  
Its saki's eyes are as  
Intoxicating as its wine,  
And every glance of theirs conveys  
A message to some drinker's breast.  
But O it has no Moses to  
Experience epiphanies,  
No Abraham to undergo  
Ordeals by fire.  
There Intellect with careless ease



Robs Love of its entire  
Possessions, and there is no heat  
In its air of a fervent sigh.  
No one is so intoxicated by  
Its wine as to sway on his feet.

DIALOGUE BETWEEN LENIN AND KAISER  
WILHELM

LENIN

It is long since in this old world poor man  
Is being ground like grain between  
millstones.  
He has been duped by Kaisers and by Czars,  
And has been caught in the snare of the  
Church.  
Have you not seen the hungry slave at last  
Tear to shreds his lord's garment, dyed red  
with  
His blood? Democracy's spark has burnt up  
The robes of the Church elders and the  
kings.

THE KAISER

Why blame idols for their winsome ways?  
It is in the Brahmin's nature to adore.  
He keeps fashioning new idols; for  
He gets bored stiff with the ones he has.  
Do not tell me of the highwaymen:  
His own robber is the traveler here.  
If you crown the common people, then  
You will find oppression is still there.  
Never does greed die out of men's hearts:  
In a furnace fire must always blaze.  
Power's sorceress has the same arts  
Irrespective of the part she plays.  
"Shirin's beauty never goes abegging:  
Khusroes or Farhads are never lacking."

*[Translated by M. Hadi Husain]*

PHILOSOPHERS

LOCKE

It was dawn that lit up the tulip's cup  
With a drink from the sun;  
For the tulip itself bore an empty cup  
When it joined the company of flowers.

KANT

By nature it had a taste  
For wine that is like crystal:  
It is from eternity's sleeping-chamber  
That it brings its shining, star-like cup.

BERGSON

It did not bring either wine  
Or a cup from eternity:  
The tulip gets its eternal passion  
From the scar in its own heart.

*[Translated by Mustansir Mir]*

POETS

BROWNING

There was nothing to fortify life's  
effervescent wine:  
I took some aqua vitae from Khizr and  
added it.

BYRON

Why should one be obliged to Khizr for his  
aqua's loan?  
I poured a little of my heart's blood into the  
wine-cup.

GHALIB

To make the wine still bitterer and my chest  
still more sore,  
I melted the glass itself and added it to my  
wine.

RUMI

How can dilutions be as good as the real  
stuff itself?  
I pressed wine out of grapes direct and filled  
my cup with it.

THE TAVERN OF THE WEST

Last night, while I was in the tavern of the  
West,  
I was delighted by a witty thing a drinker  
said.  
"This place is not a church," said he, "that you  
should find  
Here pretty girls and organ music and sweet  
songs.  
This is the tavern of the West, where wine

Has the effect of making things that are  
considered bad seem good,  
We have weighed good and evil on another  
kind of scales.  
The scales of the Jews and the Christians were  
askew.  
What is good in you will be bad, if you should  
break your fist.  
What is bad in you will be good, if you  
increase your might.  
If you look carefully, you will find life is all  
hypocrisy.  
Whoever follows the path of truth and  
sincerity,  
Just ceases to exist.  
Claims of truth and sincerity  
Are only covers for hypocrisy.  
Our master says that brass must have on it a  
silver plate.  
I have revealed to you the secret of success in  
life.  
Let no one know of it, if you care for success.

#### A WORD TO ENGLAND

An Easterner tasted once the wine in Europe's  
glass;  
No wonder if he broke old vows in reckless  
glee.  
The blood came surging up in the veins of his  
new-born thought:  
Predestination's bondsman he learned that  
Man is free.  
Let not thy soul be vexed with the drunkards'  
noise and rout!  
O saki, tell me fairly, who was't that broached  
this jar?  
The scent of the rose showed first the way  
into the garden;  
Else, how should the nightingale have known  
that roses are?

[Translated by R.A. Nicholson]

#### DIVISION BETWEEN THE CAPITALIST AND THE LABOURER

Mine is the din of the steel factory,  
And yours is the church organ's melody.  
Mine is the bush that pays the king a tax,

Yours Eden with its *Sidrah* and its *Tuba*.  
Strong liquor with a hangover is mine,  
For you drink comes from Adam and Eve's  
brewery.  
Duck, pheasant, pigeon are my birds: *huma*  
And *anqa* are your royal property.  
The earth and what is in its bowels are mine;  
From earth to heaven all is your territory.

#### THE LABOURER'S SONG

The hard work of the cotton-wearing labourer  
Provides the idle rich with their silk robes.  
The gem in the employer's ring is made up of  
my sweat.  
The rubies in his horse's reins are my child's  
tears.  
The Church is fat through sucking my blood  
like a leech.  
My arm's strength forms the sinews of the  
state.  
My morning tears make gardens of waste  
lands.  
My heart's blood glistens in the tulip and the  
rose.  
Come, time's harp is tense with new  
melodies.  
Come, pour out strong wine that will melt the  
very glass.  
Let us give a new order to the tavern and the  
taverner,  
And let us raze all ancient taverns to the  
ground.  
Let us avenge the tulip's blood on those who  
laid the garden waste.  
For rose and rosebud's gatherings let us  
establish a new style.  
How long shall we exist like moths that flit  
round candle flames?  
How long shall we exist forgetful of ourselves  
like this?

[Translated by M. Hadi Husain]

#### THE FREEDOM OF THE SEA

A duck said, 'The lanes of the sea are now  
free! –  
The edict from the court of Khizr says so!  
A crocodile said, 'Go anywhere you like,

But never forget to watch out for us!

[Translated by Mustansir Mir]

### TRIFLES

Ÿ

Agony in every atom of our being,  
Every breath of us a rising from the dead.  
To Sikandar lost amidst the Land of Darkness,  
"Hard is Death, but Life is harder," Khizr  
said.

[Translated by R.A. Nicholson]

Ÿ

The pearl is used to the ways of the sea.  
What can it know about the millstone that  
grind grain?

Ÿ

The reed-pen, being hollow, makes a noise;  
The pencil, being solid lead, makes none.

Ÿ

I am one who has walked around  
The Harem with an idol under my arms.  
I am one who has shouted Allah's name  
When idols were in front of me.

Ÿ

Of Life, O brother, I give thee a token to hold  
and keep;  
Sleep is a lighter death, and Death a heavier  
sleep.

[Translated by R.A. Nicholson]

Ÿ

If you do not possess  
The power to forgive,  
Go, get to grips with those  
Who have wronged you.  
Do not nurse hatred in your heart.  
O do not make your honey sour  
By mixing vinegar with it.

Ÿ

Do not speak to me of his sensitive, fine mind,  
Our poet's crystal breaks at a mere breath of  
wind.  
Of life's grim war how can he ever tell the  
tale,

My heart still wants  
That I should go on seeking, though I have set  
foot

On a path thinner than a hair.

[Translated by M. Hadi Husain]

Ÿ

Sweet is the time of Spring, the red Rose cried;  
Sweeter an hour here than an age outside;  
Before some lover plucks you for his cap,  
Sweetest to die in this green garden's lap.

[Translated by V.G. Kiernan]

Ÿ

The poet is child, youth and old man all in  
one

Distinctions of age are unknown to poetry.

Ÿ

Three things make your vision better:  
Greenery, running water and fair faces.  
Three things tend to make you fatter:  
Silk robes, good smells and a carefree heart.

[Translated by M. Hadi Husain]

When at the sight of a burst bubble he turns  
pale?

Ÿ

In this world either be a hill-stream, which  
Observes heights and depressions in its  
course,  
Or be a headlong flood, which just ignores  
Heights and depressions as it rushes on.

Ÿ

O you who plucked a rose,  
Do not complain about the thorn,  
For like the rose the thorn is born  
Of the spring breeze.

Ÿ

Do not apply a hair-dye to  
Your eyebrows and your beard,  
For you cannot get back your youth  
By stealing years from time.

ÿ

Love has no use for those who do not dare.  
To catch dead birds an eagle does not care.

ÿ

The poet's product is not saleable.  
The silver of a white rose will not buy you  
bread.

ÿ

How nice a thing it were  
If every traveller  
Who wants to travel far and fast  
Could go free from the trammels of the past.  
If blind conformity were good,  
The Prophet himself would  
Have gone the way  
Of Arabs in an earlier day.

*[Translated by M. Hadi Husain]*