

A NOVEL OF REALITY



THE REPUBLIC OF RUMI

Khurram Ali Shafique

it never happened in history
can it happen now?

It so happened one day that the Sultan of Turkey came to Rumi and said, "I banish myself in penance for the sins committed against humanity by the brute force. I leave my kingdom to you."

Another Sufi would have declined the offer but Rumi was a man in his own league. He rose up to the challenge and a challenge it was. Since the beginning of civilization the mystics had separated themselves from the affairs of the world and in return the kings had permitted them to defy temporal power in the curtailed solitude of the monastery. Spirit and matter had stayed separate but now that duality came to an abrupt end.

One of the first things Rumi did after taking up the office was a whirlwind tour of the country for imparting to the masses an understanding of religion. With the help of parables, poetry, flute and some whirling dance he soon raised the plebeians to levels of spiritual elevation where they all could vote on matters of religious interpretation. Common consensus became the source of authority in such things. The clergymen became very upset and demanded that since they had always represented religion it was their right to rule in the absence of the king. Rumi announced a date on which the entire adult population of Turkey was to choose between him and the clergy. He won an overwhelming majority of votes and the clergymen had no option but to leave. Their parting words were, "Democracy is against Islam."

Of course, these were the best of the times and also the worst of the times. The crusades had long ended but the European mind was unwilling to bury the dispute. In the Muslim world itself the barbarians were playing havoc—they had started with Afghanistan and did not seem to be stopping even after taking the last caliph of Baghdad alive and then beating him to death. Further towards the East, the Hindus and the Muslims had engaged in several armed conflicts over the last sixty years and their animosity didn't seem to be coming down. Bringing peace to the world was the next thing Rumi set himself up against. Without much use of force he was able to send barbarians back to their homes, appease the bloody mind of Europe, settle the longstanding dispute over the Holy Land and create trust between the Hindus and the Muslims. Information

on how he managed to do such things is unfortunately lost but it is related in some manuscripts that his peace conferences used to open with a pantomime show of his famous 'grape fable': four men who cannot understand each other's languages are fighting over the choice of fruit they should buy with the coin they have found together; a language expert arrives on the scene, takes the coin and puts grapes in front of the fighting men who then realize that they were, in fact, all fighting for the same choice but naming it in different languages.

Slavery was intolerable to Rumi but no source of energy other than human muscle was available in those days. To solve this problem he issued a universal invitation to scientists urging them to replace the classical Greek model with inductive methods and come up with an alternate source of energy that should end the need for human slaves. In good time a scientist came from the Northern parts of an island beyond the mainland Europe and demonstrated the working of a device that could harness the power of steam to do physical labor. Rumi appealed to the world to use this device and set all slaves to freedom. The age-old institution of slavery vanished in no time.

For some time everyone was happy. People from around the world thronged to the court of Rumi and listened to his words of wisdom. Hindus, Zoroastrians, Christians, Jews, pagans and agnostics came for spiritual guidance and returned with a better understanding of the Path their own diverse beliefs.

There was no further trouble until reports started coming that the steam-device was creating much trouble in many societies. Trees were being chopped down mercilessly to feed the fire, skies in some cities were blackened with clouds of smoke and many people were building up large businesses with the intention of throwing the smalltime competitors out of the market. Rumi addressed the world and explained to them that in gratitude to God who had given them the power to master the forces of nature they should voluntarily master the greed in their hearts. Not all the wealth in the world could be sufficient for a heart unless it learns to be content on its own. Yes, you have the freedom to produce as much as your creative faculties desire but will you also find the time to create something in the depths of your own soul? "Whoever devours grass ends up under the butcher's knife," he said to the world. "Whoever feeds on the light of God becomes the Word of God."

Unfortunately, it never happened in history. Can it happen in the future? Can it happen now? How?

Some possible answers to these questions may be hidden in the writings of Dr. Sir Muhammad Iqbal who died in Lahore a year before the beginning of the Second World War.

The Republic of Rumi

A Novel of Reality

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To the Glory of Human Being

1. The Second Coming

Inspired by the genius of my master Rumi
I am about to reopen the sealed book of secret lore.
His soul is the flaming furnace,
I am but as the spark that gleams for a moment.

This is how Dr. Sir Muhammad Iqbal (1877—1938) introduces *Secrets and Mysteries*, the first book in the authorized canon of his works. Not only in this book but throughout his canon he emphasizes that he should not be taken lightly; that he is delivering a message and if properly understood, this message can be of immense importance to the destiny of the humankind.

In our own times, such messages are not accepted just because are being told to accept them.¹ However, the texts of Iqbal reveal their worth in a very strange manner—a manner very rare in the higher literature of the world. *They fulfill themselves.*

It is in the nature of these texts that they do not require you to have faith in them—in fact in some ways, if not all, they discourage it. They require only one precondition, something automatically granted to all literary texts in our times, i.e., that they should first be decoded according to the parameters specified in themselves and judged only afterwards. Iqbal is regarded as one of the greatest poets of the twentieth century and yet this approach has never been applied to his works completely.

The purpose of the present writing is not a statement of my findings but a demonstration of certain principles. Only those who read the chapters in the correct order may be able to see what it wants to show them.

¹ In fact if we were to accept the spiritual revelation of another person as a binding truth for us then in the words of Iqbal himself it would be a negation of an important principle of Islam—and in some sense of the entire modern civilization. The principle is that there will be no more prophets.

In the end you may agree with me that the writings of Iqbal are bound together by this irony: he was the greatest living poet of two languages but the secret he wanted to tell was something which has no name in any language of the world.

2. ‘Who is Rumi’?

The first character who appears in the narrative is Rumi and hence we must begin by finding out more about him in the text.

Since Rumi is a character in the narrative we must determine his characteristics from the text itself. Bringing historical details from other books will be irrelevant to the aim of the present study.²

Rumi is the true protagonist when the cannon is taken in its entirety—he is mentioned in all ten books. His name appears beneath these verses quoted from him on the frontispiece of the first book:

But yester-eve a lamp in hand
The Shaykh did all the city span,
Sick of mere ghosts he sought a man,
But could find none in all the land.

“I Rustam or a Hyder seek
I’m sick of snails, am sick,” he said,
“There’s none,” said I. He shook his head,
“There’s none like them, but still I seek.”

These lines are from the historical Rumi but their occurrence here is cryptic. They seem to suggest that a search once carried out in Rumi’s lifetime is about to begin again. Yet, what is being sought will *not* be found. Then why is the author taking the trouble?

The relevance of this quotation becomes clearer when Rumi is introduced as the mentor who transmuted the earth of Iqbal into gold. Whatever is going to be said here has been inspired by Rumi

² This is by no means the only way to approach the writings of Iqbal but it is the only way to test the proposition that these tests are self-subsistent in some ways. Later, one may revisit them in any other manner—in fact in the last seventy years they *have* been visited in almost every manner except this one.

but the message will be filtered because Iqbal is a wave who will not merge with the ocean of Rumi but rest in it to become a pearl. This relationship is precise and in line with the theme of this part of the book which is about *sustaining* the self.

Next is a dream sequence where Rumi—*the master who wrote the Quran in Persian*—commands Iqbal: “Proclaim the secrets of the old wine seller, create a new style for your song, say *Arise!* and by that word quicken the living.” Rumi provides Iqbal the means to achieve what he had been wanting to do for the sake of humanity—“Many a night I wept for the sake of humanity that I might tear the veil from Life’s mysteries and extract the secret of Life’s constitution from the laboratory of phenomena,” he says but it was Rumi who, through Love, chiseled him from an unfinished statue into a man.

Whether this is a factual account or not is beyond the scope of the present approach. What is important here is whether the poem itself is presenting the dream as a metaphor of wishful thinking, in which case the character of Rumi will become less integrated with the contents of the poem; or whether the dream sequence is to be taken as an actual dream in the world of this narrative in which case Rumi will become the approver and instigator of the narrative itself. It will help us to remember that one of the parameters the poet imposes in this prelude is:

Poetizing is not the aim of this *mathnavi*.
Idol-worshipping, idol-casting is not its aim...
O Reader, do not indulge in the criticism of the wine-cup,
But consider attentively the taste of the wine.

These self-reflective lines suggest that whatever is said in *Secrets and Mysteries* is intended to be taken at face value and no poetical fantasies are involved here. Hence the dream sequence is also a factual report of a dream. We should doubt this only if we *imply* that the poet himself does not want us to take him seriously and the statement is either conceit or apology—either he wants us to regard him as more than a poet or he is trying to prevent us from judging him too harshly.

The text does not support such implications but they may arise out of our general mistrust of the human race or our experiences

with other poets, etc. Also, up to this point we do not know how careful is this particular poet in his choice of expressions—does he use them very precisely or is he inclined otherwise?

Fortunately, we have a biographical evidence which can help us determine the poet's intention in this case. This comes from a Sufi magazine published in India on August 1, 1913. The writer, a close friend of Iqbal and a grand master of a famous Sufi establishment in Delhi, wrote:

Dr. Sheikh Muhammad Iqbal dreamed that Rumi was commanding him to write a *mathnavi* [long didactic poem]. Iqbal replied, "That genre reached its perfection with you." Rumi said, "No, you should write too." Iqbal stated respectfully, "You command that the self must be extinguished but I understand the self is something to be sustained." Rumi replied, "My intended meaning is also the same as what you have understood."

He found himself reciting the following verses as he woke up and then he started writing them down...³

The verses printed with this note were the opening lines of a rudimentary first draft of 'Secrets of the Self', the first part of *Secrets and Mysteries*.

Whether this friend of Iqbal was telling us the truth or not is, once again, outside the scope of our present approach. However, the fact that this report was printed with Iqbal's approval is a corroboration of our assumption that in the narrative of the poem the dream sequence is presented as a dream and not as a wishful fantasy.

The dream sequence in the narrative is followed by a description of the influence of Rumi on the poet, who was an unfinished statue but Love chiseled him to become a man and hence "I have seen the movement of the sinews of the sky and the blood coursing in the veins of the moon." In the approach we have adopted for the present study we cannot take it simply as a eulogy of Rumi—nor use it as a means to judge the admiration of Iqbal for

³ *Tauhid* [Unity], an Urdu magazine published from Meeruth, India, August 1, 1913. Included in Rahim Bakhsh Shaheen (1975): *Auraq-i-Gumgashta*.

Rumi in Iqbal's real life. What concerns us presently is only the narrative of the poem and in that narrative the character who is called Rumi becomes the instigator and approver of the entire book. He is more than a muse—he has not only inspired the poet but also chiseled him and turned him into a man in the first place.

The next meeting with Rumi takes place at the beginning of *Javidnama*, the fifth book in the canon and also the *magnum opus*. This time the poet is singing a *ghazal* of Rumi on the river bank at twilight. Since the *ghazal* is the same from which the memorable motto of 'Secrets of the Self' was taken its repetition here reminds us of *Secrets and Mysteries*. This time it is not a dream anymore. The master appears in person to lead the disciple across the universe in search of immortality.

After this epic journey we get so used to seeing Iqbal and Rumi together that the next two meetings do not even require a backdrop—Iqbal does not tell us whether the interview in 'Master and Disciple' in *Gabriel's Wing* and the prelude of *What Should Now Be Done?* occurred in dream or real, heaven or earth, but now we are not bothered to ask. Instead, we pay attention directly to what Rumi is saying.

The last appearance is very cryptic. Rumi commands Iqbal to reveal the secrets of politics and government because now the nations of the East are rising up to get political freedom. At the same time he says: "You should not tell the secrets of lions to jackals, for even if the wolves take away our Joseph it is better than his getting sold to the unworthy."

What is perplexing here is that Rumi is telling Iqbal to reveal the secrets of politics and government but in such a way that only the worthy should be able to grasp it—*Even if the wolves take away our Joseph it is better than his getting sold to the unworthy.*

It is known that Joseph was thrown in a well by his jealous brothers and lay hidden there for a while. Allusions to hidden things in Gnostic literature are generally taken as references to esoteric knowledge. This usage is hardly justified here when the subject is politics and government—no Gnostic would compare these things with Joseph hidden in the well. *Then who is Joseph?*

3. Joseph

If we scan the authorized cannon of Iqbal, we find that with a few exceptions where the name is evidently used as a general metaphor for beauty, the poet is speaking of something concrete but at the same time he is speaking of many species of it. He speaks of *many* Josephs. For instance, he says that the kings are asses because they are looking out for Joseph from palace roofs while he is hidden in the well; and again, “the treasures can be seized if one Joseph comes out of the Pharaoh’s prison.”

These Josephs can be distinguished from each other. For instance, it seems that Joseph of the West has already come out of prison and replaced the Pharaoh on the throne—“Freed from his bondage, Joseph sits on Pharaoh’s high throne: the lies and traps of Potiphar’s Wife have been washed from the slate” as it appears in an address to the intellectuals of the West. Regarding the East, an angel tells the spirit of the Hindu philosopher Vishvamitra that “rubies come forth from the stones of the road, its Josephs are issuing out of the well.” Describing the perfection of the paradise as uninteresting for a heart who yearns to struggle, Iqbal says that Joseph there is estranged to imprisonment and there the heart of the Potiphar’s Wife does not know how to cry.

Out of all these Josephs there is one to which Iqbal refers specifically as “my Joseph”:

I am a song indifferent to the plectrum:
I am the voice of the poet of tomorrow.
My own age does not know the secrets;
My Joseph is not for this market.

Incidentally this reference precedes all others since it appears soon after the beginning of the prelude in *Secrets and Mysteries*. Here Iqbal’s Joseph becomes the main thing which is to be found from

his writings but which will certainly not be found during Iqbal's own lifetime. It is this same Joseph which becomes "our Joseph" in the last appearance of Rumi and it seems to be the Joseph of all the Sufis as well—in *A Message from the East* a ghazal is sub-titled 'Written to one of the Sufis.' The fifth couplet reads:

Do not talk any more about
The Joseph we have lost.
The warmth of a Zulaykha's heart⁴
Have neither you nor I.

Of particular interest are those references where Iqbal mentions himself as the keeper of a secret about Joseph's whereabouts. In those instances he always speaks of himself as getting tired of guarding it and only too willing to impart more hints for breaking the code which will lead to it: "I lifted the veil from the hidden Joseph so that I may move the penniless to make the purchase."

It is only in this wider context of all other references that Rumi's last appearance which we discussed above makes proper sense. On one hand he is asking Iqbal to reveal the mores of government and politics but on the other hand he is telling Iqbal, who seems to have become too willing to give away the secret of Joseph, to be more careful—*Even if the wolves take away our Joseph it is better than his getting sold to the unworthy.*

In order to find out who is this Joseph one must unravel the secret code that protected this secret for seventy years.

⁴ Zulaykha is the first name of Potiphar's Wife in the Sufi literature.

4. The secret code

At the very beginning of the first book, we are told a few things about it.

Firstly, that it is a restatement of the secret lore of the Sufis which is being written down on specific instruction from Rumi.

Secondly, the mysterious nature of the message is twofold: the poet has gained a clear knowledge of life as it exists in itself as well as the future possibilities of the human race—“My dust is brighter than Jamshid’s cup: it knows things that are yet unborn in the world”—Jamshid’s cup being a well-known mythical device in which all existing things, but only the existing things, could be seen.

Thirdly, the meaning of this text will not be understood in the poet’s own lifetime and the contemporaries do not possess the means required for bringing out the hidden meanings. Yet, he is not anxious that his meaning should be revealed soon—“*I am a song indifferent to the plectrum; I am the voice of the poet of tomorrow.*” However, the hidden meanings of the text will become so clear one day as if the poet had come back from his grave to explain everything: “Many a poet was born after his death, opened our eyes when his own were closed, and journeyed forth again from nothingness, like roses blossoming over the earth of his grave.”

Last, but not the least, he insists that although this is a poem—a *mathnavi*—yet poeticizing is not its aim.

It does not concern us here whether these tall claims are correct or not about the real man behind this golden mask—that is beyond the scope of the present approach. The textual test of the canon of Iqbal’s writings will be to apply the parameters set in the prelude and then see whether or not the texts lead us to a secret to which could fit perfectly with these words of Rumi: *Even if the*

wolves take away our Joseph it is better than his getting sold to the unworthy.

For this, we must enter the cannon.

5. Enter the garden

Iqbal frequently uses the analogy of architecture while discussing the achievements of other poets and artists. This analogy will be very useful for a walk through his own works and we can also see whether what he says about one of his favorite poets is also true about him in any way: “The imagination of Urfi constructed a palace for which one could sacrifice the wonder-houses of Avicenna and Farabi.”

Each book of Iqbal may be compared to a monumentally constructed enclave inside a garden which is the cannon itself. In this case the whole can be expected to be more than the sum of its parts. In order to understand any poem from a book it is to be considered as a part of the design while the overall purpose of the book—the layout of the garden itself—determines the function of this part as well. Likewise the various books—enclaves—do not remain isolated but may lead into one another and may be seen as integrated in ways which are for us to discover.

The challenge, as far as the present trail is concerned, is to find out the secret hidden here, the secret which Rumi called “our Joseph.” Yet, this should be done without employing a very advanced knowledge of poetic devices, since the poem claims that it is not aimed at poeticizing and forbids the reader to indulge in exercises of that sort. Nor should the decoding rest on a good deal of previous knowledge about Rumi, Islam, philosophy or anything of the real world since those tools were available to the poet’s contemporaries and the poet specifically says that contemporaries are not in possession of the means for decoding his text.

On these terms, the quest may begin.

Crisis

6. Non-contradiction

Rumi is mentioned again. Iqbal, who is like a moon in the dark night of life, is in turn like dust in devotion to the Muslim nation which “harvested a hundred poets like Rumi and Attar.”

This places Rumi in relation to other spiritual hierarchies in the narrative. Iqbal is a wave, Rumi an ocean and yet that ocean itself is like a tiny flower in the fields of the Muslim nation. Then what should be the immensity of the man who is the *founder* of that nation, the Prophet Muhammad—who is mentioned a little later.

The acute symmetry between analogies helps you understand paradigms and patterns even without tackling with the deeper layers of the text. From this you get your first guiding principle for unraveling the secrets of this garden. This principle is, *integrate*.

The first part of the book is about the self—the system of the universe originates in the self and the continuation of the life of all individuals depends on strengthening the self, says the first heading. It is followed by the statement:

The form of existence is an effect of the self,
Whatsoever you see is a secret of the self.

“When the self awoke to consciousness, it revealed the universe of Thought. A hundred words are hidden in its essence: self-affirmation brings *not-self* to light. By the self the seed of opposition is sown in the world: It imagines itself to be other than itself.” Such are the secrets of the self.

Is he talking about the theory of evolution? Does he mean a struggle for existence and the survival of the fittest? Such external references are not allowed in the garden and you will be disqualified from the trail if you compare the lines of this book with anything except with other parts of the text itself.

Even there, a big contradiction occurs before you progress very far. You have understood that *the continuation of the life of*

all individuals depends on strengthening the self but how will you reconcile this with the second proposition which states that “the life of the self comes from forming ideals and bringing them to birth.” You know that when you form an ideal you begin to *yearn*. Is not yearning a sign of feeling *incomplete*? Does it not lead to *love*, which is the ultimate negation of the self? Indeed, this contradiction is amplified at the beginning of the third chapter: *Self is strengthened by love*.

How is it possible that the self, which is the mother of strife itself—which creates the non-self so that it could test its own strength through strife—should be strengthened, not through war, but *by love*?

7. Love

“Love fears neither sword nor dagger,” says the third chapter. “Love is the Fountain of Life, love is the flashing sword of Death. The hardest rocks are shivered by Love's glance: Love of God at last becomes wholly God.” *This is love?*

It is. By this kind of love the self is made more lasting, more living, more burning, more glowing. “From Love proceeds the radiance of its being and the development of its unknown possibilities. Its nature gathers fire from love—love instructs the self to illumine the world.”

An illustration of this love is Prophet Muhammad. “There is a beloved hidden within your heart: I will show him to you, if you have eyes to see. In the Muslim's heart is the home of Muhammad—all our glory is from his name. Eternity is less than a moment of his time and receives increase from his essence.”

Here, unexpectedly, you find a clue of Joseph. Time. One of the remaining two clues—the kings and the Sufis—appears in the very next line which tells you that the Prophet slept on a mat of rushes but “the crown of Chosroes was under his people's feet.”

Already you can sense that you are getting closer to the secret. You only need to resolve contradictions and the riddle will solve itself. However, contradictions seem to be the very fabric of this text. Even the eulogy of the Prophet is a combination of powerful contrasts: “He chose the nightly solitude of Mount Hira and founded a state and laws and government. He passed many a night with sleepless eyes so that his followers might sleep on the throne of Persia. In the hour of battle, iron was melted by the flash of his sword; in the hour of prayer, tears fell like rain from his eye. When he prayed for Divine help, his sword answered *Amen* and extirpated the race of kings.”

Extirpated the race of kings? It seems that this text is not going to favor the kings. *The crown of Chosroes was under the feet of the followers of the Prophet and his sword extirpated the race of kings.* “He instituted new laws in the world, he brought the empires of antiquity to an end. With the key of religion he opened the door of this world.”

With the key of religion he opened the door of this world seems to be reminiscent of *eternity is less than a moment of his time and receives increase from his essence.* You begin to see the connection.

Time is the common rule that holds together all diverse realities in life—love, war, religion, trade, good, bad, evil, and virtue are all held together by time which cuts across them all alike. In the case of the Prophet, *eternity is less than a moment of his time and receives increase from his essence.* Therefore he cannot be restricted by contradictions, which resolve themselves in his presence—*in his sight high and low were one, he sat with his slave at one table.*

Then why his sword *extirpated the race of kings?* You make a mental note of this question as you move on to find out where do the Sufis fit in this scheme of things.

They are the guardians of the principle of love, as you are told in the very next chapter.

8. Arbiter

“When the self is strengthened by love it gains dominion over the outward and inward forces of the universe,” says the next sub-heading and this point is illustrated by a story.

It is said that the disciple of a certain Sufi was walking through the marketplace when a governor’s entourage passed that way. The Sufi’s disciple, who was too preoccupied with thoughts about his master, failed to get out of the governor’s way and thus received the wrath of the governor’s staff. He complained to his master, who, enraged at this outrage, wrote to the king, “Your governor has broken my servant’s head. He has cast burning coals on his own life. Arrest this wicked governor, or else I will bestow thy kingdom on another.” The king trembled in every limb upon receiving this letter from a God-intoxicated dervish. He arrested the governor and sent Khusro, the greatest musician of the age and himself a Sufi, as his ambassador to the Sufi master. Upon hearing the sweet music of Khusro the Sufi master melted and “one strain of poetry bought the grace of a kingdom that was firm as a mountain.”

Here in this story you find not only a Sufi saint but also a king—two out of the three clue of Joseph. But is this possible? Can a Sufi overthrow a king without an army? Could it be that the king was too naïve? Such questions will lead you nowhere. This is not a textbook of history—the book claims to be only a mathnavi—a long poem—whose purpose is not poeticizing.

The purpose is merely to make a point, and the point is precisely this: “When the self is made strong by love, its power rules the whole world,” the text tells you. “Its hand becomes God’s hand, the moon is split by its fingers. It is the arbitrator in all the quarrels of the world and its command is obeyed by the kings.”

As you read these lines you begin to understand something about the Joseph of Rumi and Iqbal. It is a secret shared by all

Sufis—“*Do not talk any more about the Joseph we have lost, the warmth of a Zulaykha’s heart have neither you nor I*”—as you already know. But now you also understand something more.

This Joseph is closely related to Love, which is the principle guarded by the Sufis. This Joseph is also related to that power of love which enables the love-strengthened self to become *the arbitrator in all the quarrels of the world*. What is preventing him from coming out?

You know the answer. *The unworthy.*

9. The sheep's doctrine

The next chapter is a fable about lions and sheep in which you do not see any reference to kings, Sufis or timing. You let it pass and move on to the next sub-heading. It makes you stop and think.

“Plato, whose thought has deeply influenced the Sufism and literature of Islam, followed the sheep's doctrine, and that we must be on our guard against his theories,” says the heading. Could this be the reason why Joseph cannot come out of his hiding? Something may have gone wrong with Sufism itself, and in that case the wrongs of Sufism seem to be connected with Plato—he *followed the sheep's doctrine*. But what is the sheep's doctrine? You turn back to the fable.

It is said that there was a certain habitat where sheep prospered because there were no great predators until a clan of lions came there and started preying upon the sheep. To get rid of this menace an elderly sheep proclaimed itself to be a prophet sent by God upon the lions and taught them the virtues of self-negation. “Slay your self, and you will have honor,” it said to the lions. “Though trodden underfoot, the grass grows up time after time and washes the sleep of death from its eye again and again. Forget your self, if you are wise! Close your eyes, close your ears, close your lips that your thought may reach the lofty sky!” The lions lost their vigor and their craving for action. Bodily strength diminished while spiritual fear increased; spiritual fear robbed them of courage. Lack of courage produced a hundred diseases—poverty, pusillanimity, low mindedness. The wakeful tiger was lulled to slumber by the sheep's charm and he called his decline Moral Culture.

Is this what went wrong with Sufism? “*Bodily strength diminished while spiritual fear increased; spiritual fear robbed them of courage.*”

The pieces seem to be fitting together already. *“Do not talk any more about the Joseph we have lost, the warmth of a Zulaykha’s heart have neither you nor I.”*

10. Plato

“Plato, the prime ascetic and sage was one of that ancient flock of sheep,” says the text. But this is not how you know Plato from your own readings outside this cannon. That is besides the point—for the purpose of decoding this text you must treat Plato as a character in the narrative and see what purpose he serves here.

Plato seems to be an important character. “He was so fascinated by the invisible that he made hand, eye, and ear of no account,” says the text. *Close your eyes, close your ears, close your lips that your thought may reach the lofty sky*, the sheep had said to the lion in the fable. But Iqbal himself seems to believe in God, angels, Satan and the unseen. Is there a contradiction here?

Then you remember what was said about the Prophet in this book—*Eternity is less than a moment of his time and receives increase from his essence*. In this narrative the unseen is not propounded as an Idea. It is a phenomenon witnessed by Prophet Muhammad—*all our glory is from his name*. He is mentioned as a historical character in the narrative and in him the seen and the unseen converged into a unity—*Eternity is less than a moment of his time and receives increase from his essence*. The essential stance of this narrative towards the unseen is different from that of a philosopher escaping from the world of phenomena.

“To die,” said Plato, “is the secret of Life: The candle is glorified by being put out.” *Slay your self, and you will have honor*, the sheep had told the lion. “Plato is a sheep in man’s clothing,” says the text. “The soul of the Sufi bows to his authority.”

Is the Sufi, then, the lion? *When the self is strengthened by love it gains dominion over the outward and inward forces of the universe*. A letter from the Sufi should make kings tremble in every limb. Through him the love-strengthened self should become *the arbitrator in all the quarrels of the world*. “Plato disbelieved in the

material universe and became the creator of invisible Ideas,” says the text. Is that what went wrong with Sufism—the power of love to strengthen the self degenerated into mysticism?

“Sweet is the world of phenomena to the living spirit, dear is the world of Ideas to the dead spirit,” the text goes on. The grave of movement, the pleasure of walking daintily, the quiver, the flutter, the breath and the desire to grow all belong to the world of phenomena. The world of Ideas is devoid of these—“its gazelles have no grave of movement, its partridges are denied the pleasure of walking daintily, its dewdrops are unable to quiver, its birds have no breath in their breasts, its seed does not desire to grow, its moths do not know how to flutter.”

Footnotes are rare in this cannon but here is one highlighting the validity of Aristotle’s criticism on Plato’s theory of Ideas. Iqbal seems to believe that Plato’s theory cannot be reconciled with the propositions of his pupil Aristotle and one cannot choose both of them at the same time. But what is the theory of Aristotle? Even that is not important here, nor is it mentioned.

The important point follows in the very next chapter. It tells you why this garden was built.

11. Purpose

“Desire is love’s message to beauty,” says the chapter on the true nature of poetry. “Life is the hunter and desire the snare. Whatsoever is good and fair and beautiful is our guide in the wilderness of seeking. It is in the poet’s breast that beauty unveils—by the poet’s look the fair is made fairer, through his enchantments Nature is more beloved and a hundred new worlds are concealed in his heart. There was no note of joy or grief before tulips blossomed in his brain.”

The poet is Khizr, the legendary guide who knew the secret path to the Fountain of Life and who lived forever. All things that exist are made more living by the tears of the poet.

The function of the poet is to evoke desire so that Life itself may realize its hidden potentials—that the poet may lead us into Life's Paradise and that Life's bow may become a full circle. “Caravans march at the sound of his bell and follow the voice of his pipe. His witchery makes Life develop itself and become self-questioning and impatient.”

This, however, is not always true. “Woe to a people that resigns itself to death and whose poet turns away from the joy of living,” says the architect of this garden. When a poet turns away from the joy of living and resigns himself to death then “his mirror shows beauty as ugliness, his honey leaves a hundred stings in the heart, his kiss robs the rose of freshness, he takes away from the nightingale's heart the joy of flying”—it is the world of ideas devoid of phenomena, *its gazelles have no grave of movement, its partridges are denied the pleasure of walking daintily, its dewdrops are unable to quiver, its birds have no breath in their breasts, its seed does not desire to grow, its moths do not know how to flutter*. “His melodies steal firmness from your heart, his magic persuades thee that death is life.”

Love, the Sufi's cherished principle which can strengthen the self so that it could be *the arbitrator in all the quarrels of the world and its command is obeyed by the kings*, is put to shame by the wailing of a people who resigns to death. "Your illness has paled the cheek of love," says the text. "The sickness of your heart has turned him heartsick and your feebleness has made him feeble"—*Do not talk any more about the Joseph we have lost, the warmth of a Zulaykha's heart have neither you nor I*. In a literature which escapes from the world of phenomena, "Love is a drunkard begging at tavern doors stealing glimpses of beauty from lattices, unhappy, melancholy, injured, kicked well-nigh to death by the warder. On his lips a store of complaints against Heaven. Flattery and spite are the mettle of his mirror, helplessness his comrade of old."

"Oh, if you have the coin of poetry in your purse, rub it on the touchstone of Life," the chapter begins to wind up and you remember what Iqbal said about this text—*Poetizing is not the aim of this mathnavi. Idol-worshipping, idol-casting is not its aim*. Now you understand what *is* its aim. "Clear-seeing thought shows the way to action, as the lightning-flash precedes the thunder." *His witchery makes Life develop itself and become self-questioning and impatient*.

You are beginning to see the path that will lead you to the secret you are seeking—*clear-seeing thought shows the way to action*. This garden is a charm and its *witchery makes Life develop itself and become self-questioning and impatient*.

12. Vicegerency

“The education of the self has three stages: obedience, self-control, and divine vicegerency,” says the next chapter and since you have already learnt much about Sufis you hope to find something about the kings now. *Divine vicegerency* is where kings, at least the righteous ones, are most likely to be found. So you skip straight to this part and scan the text to find out the secret of the kings—if the principle of the Sufi is love then what is the principle of the king?

Strangely, you find nothing about kings in *divine vicegerency*. Not even a single line.

Then you remember what you were told about Prophet Muhammad. His sword *extirpated the race of kings*.

13. Hyder

The next chapter makes you stop. It is about the “secret meanings” of the name of Ali—or Hyder, who was mentioned in the cryptic verses of Rumi at the frontispiece of the book itself. *I Rustum or a Hyder seek.*

Ali, also known as Hyder, was given the title Bu Turab by the Prophet. It meant the master of clay. “The dark clay, whose name is the body, our reason is ever bemoaning its iniquity,” says Iqbal. “On account of it our sky-reaching thought plods over the earth; it makes our eyes blind and our ears deaf. Ali, the Lion of God, subdued the body's clay and transmuted this dark earth to gold. Whosoever in the world becomes a *Bu Turab*—a master over his clay—turns back the sun from the west; whosoever saddles tightly the steed of the body sits like the bezel on the seal of sovereignty: here the might of Khyber is under his feet”—an allusion to the stronghold of the enemies which was destroyed by Ali—“and hereafter his hand will distribute the water of Kauthar”—an allusion to a sacred stream in the Paradise. “Through self-knowledge, he acts as God's Hand and in virtue of being God's Hand he reigns over all. His person is the gate of the city of the sciences: Arabia, China, and Greece are subject to him. If you would drink clear wine from your own grapes then you must wield authority over your own clay.”

You remember the cryptic lines of Rumi's verses quoted at the beginning.

*But yester-eve a lamp in hand
The Shaykh did all the city span,
Sick of mere ghosts he sought a man,
But could find none in all the land.*

*“I Rustum or a Hyder seek
I’m sick of snails, am sick,” he said,
“There’s none,” said I. He shook his head,
“There’s none like them, but still I seek.”*

Now you know what it was that the Shaykh was looking for—the search that was carried out in the days of Rumi and which reopens with this book. *Sick of mere ghosts he sought a man*—“To become clay is the creed of a moth,” says the present chapter. “Be a conqueror of clay; that alone is worthy of a human being.” But in the Shaykh could not succeed in finding such a man—*but could find none in all the land*. Why now? Why again? *“I Rustum or a Hyder seek. I’m sick of snails, am sick,” he said*—“The pith of Life is contained in action,” says the present chapter. “To delight in creation is the law of Life. Arise and create a new world!”

“There’s none,” said I. He shook his head, “There’s none like them, but still I seek.”

14. Diamond

The Sufi appears again. This time it is a story about a well-known saint who lived in Lahore nearly a thousand years ago—“He was a lover, and withal, a courier of Love: the secrets of Love shone forth from his brow.” In his nature love had allied beauty with majesty.

A youth from Central Asia came to the saint and complained that he was hammed in by the foes. “I am as a glass in the midst of stones.” The saint replied, “When the stone thought itself to be glass, it became glass and got into the way of breaking. How long wilt thou regard thyself as water and clay? Create from thy clay a flaming Sinai!”—once again you see contradictions unified here with a transcending principle—“Why complain of enemies? To the seed of humanity in you the enemy is as a rain-cloud: he awakens its potentialities. When you make yourself strong with self you may destroy the world at your pleasure. Abide in self, like Joseph and advance from captivity to empire.”

Here is the Sufis’ Joseph again. It is related with strengthening oneself with the principle of the self—abide in self and advance from captivity to empire—but only in order to *destroy the world at your pleasure?* You find it hard to believe that the Sufis’ Joseph would want to destroy the world.

Destroy the world how—with the principle of *love?* Somehow the principle of love seems to be taking a backseat as the narratives progresses to relate the story of a diamond which was attacked by a thirsty bird who mistook it for a drop of water and only got hurt. “I am not a dew drop,” said the diamond proudly. “I give no drink, I do not live for the sake of others.” The bird found a dewdrop elsewhere in the garden and swallowed it. At the end of this story the poet asks *you*: “Are you a drop of water or a gem?”

15. Brahmin

The next is a dialogue between a certain Shaykh and a Brahmin. You cannot ignore it because the Shaykh in this case seems to be quite a Sufi.

The Brahmin had a large knowledge of philosophy but was well-disposed to the seekers after God and when his philosophy failed to answer his questions he went to visit the Shaykh. There, the Brahmin laid the seal of silence on his lips and lent his ear to the Sage's discourse. "O wanderer in the lofty sky! Pledge yourself to be true, for a little, to the earth," said the Shaykh in an apparent contradiction to what should be expected from a Sufi. However, you know where he is coming from—*Sweet is the world of phenomena to the living spirit, dear is the world of Ideas to the dead spirit*

This Shaykh is no missionary hunting for easy conversions. "I do not bid you to abandon your idols," he says to the Brahmin. "Are you an unbeliever? Then be worthy of the badge of unbelief! O inheritor of ancient culture, turn not your back on the path your fathers trod. If a people's life is derived from unity, unbelief too is source of unity. You who are not even a perfect infidel are unfit to worship at the shrine of the spirit. We are both far astray from the road of devotion: you are far from Azar—the sculptor father of the idol-breaking prophet Abraham—and I am far from Abraham."

It rings a bell. *Do not talk any more about the Joseph we have lost, the warmth of a Zulaykha's heart have neither you nor I.* Could it be possible that the Joseph of Rumi did not belong only to the Sufis but was something of a secret which was to be shared by the Brahmin as well? Here again, the question of timing is mentioned again and you know that timing is an important factor in the secret you are looking for.

"Our Majnun has not yet fallen into melancholy for his Layla's sake"—you know that Majnun and Layla are the legendary

prototypes of lovers in the East—“He has not become perfect in the madness of love,” says the Shaykh. “When the lamp of self expires what is the use of heaven surveying imagination?” *Do not talk any more about the Joseph we have lost, the warmth of a Zulaykha’s heart have neither you nor I*, you think. But the secret of Iqbal and Rumi seems to be something rooted in the very nature of their religion—Islam. How could it crop up behind the veil of a conversation in which a Shaykh is telling a Brahmin to *be worthy of the badge of unbelief* and turn not his back on the path of his infidel forefathers.

You do not know how it could be possible but you get a very general sense that it *may* be possible.

16. War

“The purpose of the Muslim's life is to exalt the word of Allah, and *jihad*—holy war—if it be prompted by land-hunger, is unlawful in the religion of Islam,” says the next chapter.

A king devotedly went to a Sufi and asked him to pray for his victory in an impending war of conquest. At the same time a poor disciple also arrived and offered a coin to his master, the Sufi. The Sufi advised his disciple to give that coin to the king. “This money ought to be given to our Sultan, who is a beggar wearing the raiment of a king. Our Emperor is the most penniless of mankind. His eye is fixed on the table of strangers, the fire of his hunger has consumed a whole world. His sword is followed by famine and plague, his building lays wide land waste and the folk are crying out because of his indigence. His empty-handedness causes him to plunder the weak. His power is an enemy to all: humankind are the caravan and he the brigand. In his self-delusion and ignorance he calls pillage by the name of empire. Both his own troops and those of the enemy are cloven in twain by the sword of his hunger. The beggar's hunger consumes his own soul but the Sultan's hunger destroys state and religion.”

The moral of the story is, “Whoso shall draw the sword for anything except Allah, his sword is sheathed in his own breast.”

You think you understand Iqbal's position on the issue of kingship—*the beggar's hunger consumes his own soul but the Sultan's hunger destroys state and religion*. The king wages war—*in his self-delusion and ignorance he calls pillage by the name of empire*. War is bad—*both his own troops and those of the enemy are cloven in twain*. And yet, something does not fit in this picture.

By excepting the wars fought in the name of Allah, the poet is accepting a very wide sanction—*whoso shall draw the sword for anything except Allah, his sword is sheathed in his own breast*. This is the very notion which has been abused most often in

history. Is the poet sanctioning some forms of war, especially wars of religion and conversion? But his Shaykh did not seem keen on converting the Brahmin in the previous story—*I do not bid you to abandon your idols*. Then why does not the poet make a clear statement that was in an evil which should be surpassed in all forms? What would Rumi say about wars waged in the name of God?

With this jarring question in your mind you move on, reluctantly, to the next chapter. These are some precepts written for the Indian Muslims by ‘Old Man of the Desert’, and one of these should stop you in your tracks. It says:

Dear friend, your understanding is at fault.

17. Fire

Dear friend, your understanding is at fault.
Since I am acquainted with the harmony of Life,
I will tell you what is the secret of Life:
To sink into yourself like the pearl,
Then to emerge from your inward solitude
To collect sparks beneath the ashes,
And become a flame and dazzle men's eyes.

The meaning of this statement is illustrated through a story, incidentally about Rumi.

It is said that Rumi started as a teacher of religion and metaphysics until the mystic Shams Tabriz came to his college and interrupted his lecture by asking harshly, “What is this noise?” Rumi reprimanded him by saying that it is something he would not understand. On this the Sufi looked at the heap of books lying nearby and emanated a fire which burnt them. When Rumi protested at the loss of books, Shams restored them from the ashes and handed them back saying, “This is what you cannot understand.” This was the beginning of Rumi’s journey on the Sufi path of Love.

Here, Iqbal tells only the first part of the story—up to the point where the books are burnt. You can hardly help asking why he has stopped halfway through the story but you cannot ask that question—not here, not until you have found Joseph. Bringing any outside knowledge will violate the first agreement of entering this garden and disqualify you from the chase. Remember, *My own age does not know the secrets?*

Iqbal goes on to say, “You have drawn your substance from the snow of philosophy, the cloud of your thought sheds nothing but hailstones. Kindle a fire in your rubble, foster a flame in your earth.”

He is clearly asking you to burn the books. Slowly, you realize that *you have already done that.*

Reaction

18. Old Man of the Desert

You want to sit down and reflect a little. Things are connecting now and those connections are making sense

When you agreed to follow the parameters set down in the prelude you stopped employing external knowledge in your understanding of this book.

The self-fulfilling character of this cannon starts becoming clearer. What it wants of you is to come out of *the cloud of your thought* and retire into the recesses of your self; even without agreeing with the author particularly on this principle you fulfilled this condition.

Only the worthy should reach Joseph. Among the conditions of worthiness two are repeatedly mentioned as a pair of opposites. Snow of philosophy as compared to sinking within yourself like a pearl.

Snow of philosophy is discouraged but it cannot mean that thinking is not good—after all, the poem is making you strain your cognitive muscle. Besides, if the poet was banishing knowledge from his domain then why would he write a number of books and bury his secret where it could not be reached without *reading*. He cannot be against knowledge in principle. On the other hand it is only by leaving the existing knowledge outside the walls of this garden have you been able to come this far on the trail where patterns are falling in place.

Now you know that the garden is a trap. Joseph is almost certainly here but the trap has not been set for him. It has been set for *you*.

This garden is a sort of virtual reality—you are interacting with it and *it is interacting with you*. Answers to the questions which have jarringly appeared before you will be found in this garden but *you will have to discover them yourself*. Step by step, the enclaves of this garden will test your clear-seeing thought, your instinct for self-questioning and make you impatient by yielding their secrets one by one. *The rule is integration.*

Who is this ‘Old Man of the Desert’ through whose precepts The Poet has made you realize the nature of his garden? The full name is given as Mir Nijat Naqshband, also known as the Desert Guide.

You have discovered that many things in this garden are to be taken literally. You see that Mir is an honorific in Persian, which could mean a king or a lord. Nijat means deliverance. Naqshband literally means a maker or an architect. Now you know who is the Desert Guide.

Lord Deliverance, the Architect, *also known as* the Desert Guide, could be none other than the architect of this garden. The Poet himself.

He had to hide behind an imaginary persona for offering these ‘Precepts’, which revealed a major secret of the garden—its interactive nature—and it seems that The Poet does not want to reveal his secrets directly. ‘Lord Deliverance the Image-Maker’ seems very apt but why the ‘Desert Guide’?

He does not tell you. Perhaps you will discover it by yourself at some point, since it seems to be a general rule of this garden that you find things on your own.

19. Time

'Time is sword' is the title of the next chapter. *Time*. The third clue.

"Time is a cutting sword"—this quotation is taken from a great Muslim saint. Then the text goes on to say that once this sword was in the hands of the Muslim nation but now it is not.

Time is not on their side. Could this be one of the reasons the secret had to be buried where it could stay hidden until the right *time*?

"How shall I say what is the secret of this sword!" the poet says about Time. "In its flashing edge there is life and its owner is exalted above hope and fear. Moses held this sword in his hand, therefore he wrought more than man may contrive. He clove the Red Sea asunder and made its waters like dry earth. The arm of Ali—Hyder—the conqueror of Khyber drew its strength from this same sword." *I Rustum or a Hyder seek*, you remember the motto of the poem. Was this one of the secrets of Hyder—his arm *drew its strength from this same sword*. How?

"By imagining Time as a line you have sown the seed of darkness in the clay," says the poet and you connect this with the secret meanings of the other title of Hyder—Bu Turab, or the master of clay. *The dark clay, whose name is the body, our reason is ever bemoaning its iniquity. On account of it our sky-reaching thought plods over the earth; it makes our eyes blind and our ears deaf*. "O you who are enthralled by Yesterday and Tomorrow, behold another world in your own heart," says the present chapter.

What is this other world? You ask. Then you remember what you read in the other chapter. *Ali, the Lion of God, subdued the body's clay and transmuted this dark earth to gold. Whosoever in the world becomes a Bu Turab—a master over his clay—turns back the sun from the west; whosoever saddles tightly the steed of the body sits like the bezel on the seal of sovereignty: here the*

might of Khyber is under his feet. It integrates perfectly with what you are being told in the present chapter, *the arm of Ali—Hyder—the conqueror of Khyber drew its strength from this same sword.* The sword is time: *in its flashing edge there is life and its owner is exalted above hope and fear.*

To imagine time as nothing more than a sequence of day and night, and the failure to perceive any other form of time, is a failure to perceive one of the greatest mysteries of God. “Knowing not the origin of Time, you are ignorant of everlasting Life,” says the poet—and *hereafter his hand will distribute the water of Kauthar*—“The cause of Time is not the revolution of the sun: Time is everlasting but the sun does not last for ever. Time is joy and sorrow, festival and fast. Time is the secret of moonbeams and sunlight”—*I Rustum or a Hyder seek; I’m sick of snails, am sick, he said.*

“How long will you be a thrall of night and day?” asks the poet and you know where he is coming from. *Through self-knowledge, he acts as God's Hand and in virtue of being God's Hand he reigns over all.* “Learn the mystery of Time from the words *I have a time with God*”—the poet is alluding to a tradition in which the Prophet stated that he has a time with God to which no angel is privy—“Phenomena arise from the march of Time, life is one of Time's mysteries.” *His person is the gate of the city of the sciences: Arabia, China, and Greece are subject to him.* “You were born the conscience of Truth and you have become a lie—by extending Time like Space and distinguishing Yesterday from Tomorrow, you have fled like a scent from you own garden”—*if you would drink clear wine from your own grapes then you must wield authority over your own clay*—“You have made your prison with your own hand.”

Slowly, you realize that wielding authority over your own clay extends in the dimension of time as well. It is not sufficient to rise above the limitations of material needs but it is also important to break the spell created by a linear perception of time. How?

“Our Time, which has neither beginning nor end, blossoms from the flower-bed of our mind,” says the poet. “To know its root quickens the living with new life: its being is more splendid than the dawn. Life is of Time, and Time is of Life: *Do not vilify Time!* was the command of the Prophet”

The answer has come but it is not what you expected. It is not even from The Poet himself. He has just quoted a tradition of Prophet Muhammad, which says:

“Do not vilify time; for God says, *I am Time.*”

20. Silent tunes

“Now I will tell you a point of wisdom as brilliant as a pearl, that you should realize the difference between a slave and a free man,” says the poet. “A slave is lost in the magic of days and nights but Time, with all its expansion, is lost in the heart of a free man!”—*Through self-knowledge, he acts as God's Hand and in virtue of being God's Hand he reigns over all.*

“To a slave, Nature is a meaningless word and there is nothing rare in the impressions of his soul,” the difference is elaborated. “Owing to his heaviness and laziness his abode is always the same and the cries of his morn and eve are always the same. But the attempt of a free man creates new things every moment and his string continuously produces new tunes—his nature is not obliged to any sort of repetition because his path is not like the circle caused by compasses”—*Sick of mere ghosts he sought a man but could find none in all the land,* you remember the subject of the great quest.

“The courage of a free man gives instructions to his fate; the past and the future are dissolved in his present, and all the delayed plans are observed by his quick action,” says the poet before reiterating the fact that the secret is still locked somewhere else though you are getting close to it. “These words of mine are beyond sound, beyond discussion, for their meaning can't be understood easily. In fact, a living meaning dies out when expressed in words. Your very breaths extinguish its fire.” Then how will he convey the secret to you in a garden of poetry where his only tools are words?

“Nevertheless, the point of Absence and Presence is in the depth of our heart,” he goes on. “The mystery of Time and its motion is in the depth of our heart. The musical instrument of Time has its own silent tunes. Oh, dive deep into your heart that you may realize the secret of Time.” *Dear friend, your*

understanding is at fault, he had said. *Since I am acquainted with the harmony of Life, I will tell you what is the secret of Life: to sink into yourself like the pearl, then to emerge from your inward solitude to collect sparks beneath the ashes and become a flame and dazzle men's eyes.* Is that why he made you burn your books before you could even realize what you were doing? Can he give you an experience of the mystery of time and its motions in the depth of your heart? *How?*

He does not answer this question. At least not directly, for he moves on to a prayer and it forms the last chapter of the first part. There is no mention of the kings, the Sufi or time in it. But it mentions something else. Something even more relevant to you.

“I beg of Your grace a sympathizing friend,” The Poet prays to God. “One who is adept in the mysteries of my nature, a friend endowed with madness and wisdom, one that knows not the phantom of vain things so that I may confide my lament to his soul”—is this a reference to the secret he has buried in the garden?—“And see again my face in his heart. His image I will mould of mine own clay, I will be to him both idol and worshipper.”

You realize that he is speaking about *you*. You are becoming *adept in the mysteries* of the poet's nature because you sank into your *self* like a pearl.

However, this hope vanishes and goes up in smoke as soon as you enter the second part. Right there on the frontispiece, Rumi is saying to you:

Strive, and find yourself in selflessness:
This is the easy path, may God know better.

21. Selflessness

You thought that the secret can be gained through strengthening the self. Now Rumi tells you that the easy path is to discover yourself in *selflessness*. However, there is a connection.

Just as the individual is an ego so is a nation. By extinguishing your ego into the superior ego of the nation do you find the higher meaning of life. This sounds like a clue. Something about him Joseph is related not only to an individual but also to a nation—*reveal the secrets of government and politics*, Rumi had said to The Poet while asking him to be careful about the secret.

Merging into the superior ego of a group could bring out the lowest common denominator of all its members. That is to be avoided, and the poet uses the cutting sword of Time to dispel the cobwebs of custom and convention for taking you straight to the core of the national ego: the mission statement.

Only a group of like-minded people can avoid stooping to its lowest common denominator and instead create some kind of synergy where the whole could be greater than the sum of its parts. Like-mindedness requires a mission statement and it is provided here through the formula which codifies the Muslim faith. “There is no god except God;”—*non-contradiction*—“and Muhammad is His Messenger”—*Eternity is less than a moment of his time and receives increase from his essence*.

You cannot help asking, Why the Muslim nation? If finding the secret does not require conversion—*I do not bid you to abandon your idols*, the Shaykh had said to the Brahmin—then why cannot it be any nation, or still better, no specific nation but only the principle of like-mindedness?

However, you know that in this garden things are not placed where it is expedient to put them but rather where each thing belongs naturally.

22. Unity

There are two principles on which the Muslim nation is founded. The first is unity—*There is no god except God.*

“Despair, grief and fear are the mother of abominations and they destroy life,” is one of the headings in ‘The Mysteries of Selflessness.’ It says, “Belief in the Unity of God puts an end to those foul diseases.”

The point is illustrated with the story of a king who was offering prayers in his camp when a tiger came that way and attacked him. The king, rather than disrupting his prayers, simply took out his dagger and smote the beast. The moral of the story is that the fear of God is the only preface of faith whereas in all other fear there is the seed of contradiction and disbelief.

“Fear is a spy sent from the clime of Death, Its spirit dark and chill as Death’s own heart,” says the poet as he gives examples from history that every righteous hero received the instruction, *Do not fear* at the beginning of his course—this is what the Prophet said to his companion Siddique and this is what God told Moses before sending him to confront the Pharaoh. “Fear’s eye wreaks havoc in the realm of Life, its ear is a thief of Life’s intelligence. Whatever evil lurks within your heart you can be certain that its origin is fear. Fraud, cunning, malice, lies—all these flourish on terror, who is wrapped about with falsehood and hypocrisy for veil and fondles foul sedition at her breast. Since it is least strong when zeal is high, it is most happy in disunion.”

All this is fair and correct but one thing has started bothering you now. The story of the king slaying a tiger without even looking in that direction seems too far-fetched. Did it happen in history?

However you remember that you are not here to test the narrative against external evidence but only to break the code.

In that, however, there is a problem. In the first part of the book the kings were denounced and held in contempt—they

trembled in every limb upon receiving threat from the Sufi and they were called beggars whose hunger plays havoc on earth. Now, in this second part, a king has been quoted as a good example. Why?

23. Mission statement

Yet, this was not the last time the kings were praised in this second part of the book.

The second principle in the foundation of the Muslim nation is the ministry of Muhammad—and *Muhammad is His Messenger*. From this principle The Poet derives a mission statement. “The purpose of Muhammad’s mission was to found Freedom, Equality and Brotherhood for all humankind,” he says.

You may question if that is true. Freedom, equality and brotherhood were evidently the slogans upheld during the French Revolution of the 18th Century. Has the poet not lifted them from a book on French history and transposed them for the glorification of his nation’s past? However, such arguments would be in violation of the parameters set for decoding these texts and just a while ago you had been warned again.

After illustrating the concept of equality with the example of a story where the word of a common soldier became binding on the entire Muslim army—“Each one of us is trustee to the whole community and one with it in malice or in truce”—the poet explains equality with a story in which the king features again.

This time it is a king who found fault in the work of a mason who had been assigned to build a mosque and amputated the poor fellow’s hand in a fit of rage. He was summoned by the judge when the mason filed suite and he obeyed in pursuance of the principle of equality. The verdict went against him and the judge ordered his hand to be cut off in retribution—“the emperor’s blood is not of a richer hue than the mason’s.” However, the plaintiff retracted when the emperor shook off his sleeve and bared his hand—“God commands justice and kindliness,” he recited from the Quran and for God’s sake and the Prophet’s, he declared, “I forgive.”

Now you see a literary symmetry in the two parts of *Secrets and Mysteries*. That fakirs should rise up to confront the kings is one of the 'Secrets of the Self'; that kings should submit themselves to the knife of justice is among the 'Mysteries of Selflessness.'

24. Freedom

The golden image of Muslim kings as paragons of piety and justice is shattered beyond redemption in the very next story.

Illustrating the concept of freedom as the third implication of Muhammad's ministry, the poet mentions the tragedy of Karbala. It happened after a caliph nominated his son as the heir. The son, upon coming to throne, demanded allegiance from prominent members of the community and these included Husain (also called Shabbir), the grandson of the Prophet through Prophet's daughter Fatima—who was married to Ali, the Hyder, and hence Husain was a son of the same Ali the secret meanings of whose title Bu Turab you already know.

You see a symmetrical contrast with the story in the first part where a Sufi sent his message to the king and the king trembled in every limb. Here, the first hereditary king of Muslim history is demanding allegiance from a man of God and the outcome is the exact reverse. "Have you not heard what things Love wrought with lustful Reason in time of war?"—Reason builds in order to destroy while Love destroys in order to reconstruct, The Poet comes to the point. "I would speak of that great leader of all true lovers of God, that upright cypress-tree of the Prophet's garden, Ali's son." He then relates that Husain drew the sword of *No god* and inscribed in the wilderness, *Except God*.

This incident took place at Karbala in the Syrian desert where Husain was martyred along with his friends and family—"Moses and Pharaoh, Shabbir and Yazid (the king who martyred Husain)," says The Poet. "From Life spring these conflicting potencies. Truth lives in Shabbir's strength; untruth is that fierce, final anguish of regretful death."

Husain's sacrifice took away legitimacy from hereditary kingship, at least in principle, for the rest of the Muslim history—"tyranny was extirpated for all time to come." You remember what

was said earlier about the Prophet himself—“When he prayed for Divine help, his sword answered ‘Amen’ *and extirpated the race of kings.*”

25. Transcendence

Time is mentioned again. You are told that the Muslim community is neither bounded by space *nor by time*.

“Since the Mohammedan Community is founded upon belief in one god and prophethood, therefore it is not bounded by space” says the next heading—the principle of territorial nationalism is thus denounced. You skip it in order to reach the passage about time. “The Mohammedan Community is also *unbounded in time*, since the survival of this noble community has been divinely promised,” says another heading in the text. How?

In spring you heard the clamorous nightingale and watched the resurrection of the flowers, says the text and you see a familiar pattern—*resurrection*. You remember that you were told to burn your books in order to find your self, and then extinguish your self into a higher cause only in order to rediscover it. *Resurrection* seems to be a recurring pattern in the scheme of things in this garden.

Here, the pattern is applied to the history of nation—“What though these mortal tulips die, they lessen not the splendor of the spring: for all the loss, its treasure still abides abundant, still the thronging blossoms smile. The season of the rose outlives the rose’s self, the cypress, and the fir. So individuals, as they depart, are fallen pages from the calendar of peoples more enduring: the individual arises from a handful of mere clay, the nation owes its birth to one brave heart.” The life of an individual spans sixty or seventy years while a century is as single breath for the nation. Just as an individual lives through the concomitance of soul and flesh, the nation lives by guarding ancient principles—the mission statement which brings together the like-minded people into the common fold.

A nation dies when it forsakes the purpose of its life. “Islam’s Community is divine undying marvel, having origin in that great

compact, *Yea, Thou art our Lord*”—according to the Quran this is how the souls responded to God’s question on the eve of creation, *Am I not your Lord?*—“This people is indifferent to Fate, immovable in *Lo, We have sent down this Remembrance*”—this is how the Quran defines itself at one of the places. The point of this chapter as well as the next is that since nations die when the purpose of their existence diminishes in the dust of history the Muslim nation will live forever because the purpose of its existence is the Quran—the divine codification of its constituting principles—and God Himself has promised that the Quran will last forever. *Lo, We have sent down this Remembrance and We shall guard it.*

26. Tradition

The next reference to time is most problematic. “In times of decadence strict conformity is better than free speculation.”

You know that this part of the book was first published in 1918. From the text it is evident that the East was going through a period of decadence at that time—but did it pass? What if the decadence *has* passed. Would it not require a little more knowledge of history to interpret these texts correctly?

That will be a violation of the parameters—no external references. *You have drawn your substance from the snow of philosophy, the cloud of your thought sheds nothing but hailstones.* Slowly, you begin to realize something as you stand at this point inside the garden of The Poet, having made the way from the front entrance in accordance with the instructions.

This text is not referring to 1918. It is referring to you *in your present time.*

The *times of decadence* here apply to the state of your self at this short distance from the main entrance of the Garden. You have not come a long way from the corroding world outside which you shunned only a few chapters ago when you started the first book. “The present age has many tumults hid beneath its head”—you know that this is not only true of 1918 but also true of all times in the sense that the external influences oppress the upcoming ego of the individual and the noises outside the self make it difficult for your inner voice to be heard by you—“The glamour and the glitter of our days have made us strangers to our very selves, robbed our instrument of melody, filched from our heart its pristine fire and dimmed within our breast the radiance and the flame *There is no god except God.*” You remember the advice the poet offered you a while ago—*You have drawn your substance from the snow of philosophy, the cloud of your thought sheds nothing but hailstones.*

“Whenever decay destroys the balanced temperament of life then the community may look to find stability in strict conformity,” says the poet. Why the entire community?

Community, too, like an individual is an ego. You remember the example of resurrection in the world of nature—flowers sprout in spring and die in autumn only to sprout again in the next season. “In time of Autumn, you who lack leaf alike and fruit, break never from the tree but hope that spring may come. If your flesh is yet possessed of a discerning eye, take warning from the case of the Israelites.”—is he asking the Muslims to take example from a nation other than themselves?—“Consider well their variable fate, now hot, now cold. Though heaven’s grip has pressed and squeezed their grape, the memory of Moses and of Aaron lives yet—and though their ardent song has lost its flame, breath still palpitates within their breast. For when the fabric of their nationhood was rent asunder they still labored on to keep the highroad of their forefathers.”

What is there in the highroad of the forefathers which will be lost if you set out to innovate in a time of decadence? You know the answer. *Internal freedom.*

Products of decadence will be the perspective of slaves—whether slaves to political subjugation by the others or slaves to thoughts borrowed from outside your own conscience. Slaves cannot transcend time—*A slave is lost in the magic of days and nights but Time, with all its expansion, is lost in the heart of a free man.*

27. World order

You expect to find something about kings under the heading “the expansion of communal life depends upon controlling the forces of world order.” It says nothing about kings.

The poet has just explained that the maturity of communal character derives from following the divine law while its beauty derives from adopting the manners of the Prophet. The visible focus of the Muslim Community is Ka‘aba—the sanctuary founded by Abraham at Makkah—while true solidarity of the Muslim Community consists in adopting its objective of the preservation and propagation of Unitarianism. *The expansion of communal life depends upon controlling the forces of world order*, but the emphasis here is on the unity between spirit and matter—non-contradiction—“You who have made your covenant with the Invisible and freed yourself like a flood from the shore’s bondage, rise as a sapling out of this garden’s soil,” the poet invokes upon the Muslim Community. Weirdly, you realize that the invocation equally applies to any reader of the text—*you who have made your covenant with the Invisible and freed yourself* is something you have done to some extent since you entered in this garden.

The poet then explains that attaching your heart with the Unseen in no way negates the wisdom of solving the riddles of the seen—the same principles apply to both the worlds. You realize that in a way, it is also true about the experience in this garden. There are no abstract principles here except those which you discover on your own—through integrating the surface meaning of various parts of the text. “Truly it requires a tightly knotted cord, to whet and prove the wit of the resolver”—you think of the complex secret code which you are trying to unlock in this garden—“Whoever has subdued the things perceived can of one atom reconstruct a world. Mountain and wilderness, river and plain, all land and sea—these are the scholar’s slate on which the person

with a vision learns to read”—hence the analogy of a garden for this cannon of poetry, you think.

“O you who name this material world mean, you are drugged by dull opiates”—he is clearly alluding to the attitude of self-righteous otherworldliness which looks down upon the world of phenomena—“Rise up, and open your besotted eyes!”—*Sweet is the world of phenomena to the living spirit, dear is the world of Ideas to the dead spirit.* “God counts this world the portion of good men, commits its splendor to believers’ eyes. It is a road the caravan must pass, a touchstone the believer’s gold to assay. Seize this world so that it may not seize you.” *Seize this world? How?*

“The human being is the deputy of God on earth, and his rule is fixed over the elements. Ride the wind, dabble your fingers in the mountain’s blood, draw up the lustrous waters of the pearl from ocean’s bottom—a hundred worlds are hidden in this single field, countless suns veiled in these dancing motes. Stars and planets dwelling in the sky to whom the ancient peoples prayed now wait upon your word, o master; they are obedient servants to your will”—surely this is about supremacy over the forces of Nature through reconciling with the potentials of your self—“The outward form of Being is not bare of inward meaning.”

There is no mention of other nations except in one context—“Your fellow-travelers have reached the goal and borne Layla, the divine and lovely truth, from her litter. You still wander distracted in the desert, weary and sore like Qais—the Majnun.” Other nations are not rivals but *fellow-travelers?*

Then you understand that in an ideal world there is no need for conflict—*Whoever has subdued the things perceived can of one atom reconstruct a world.*

28. Fatima

“The perfection of communal life is attained when the community, like the individual, discovers the sensation of self,” says the poet.

You know that this view of group dynamics is closely related to synergy which seems to be the subject of this part of the book—“and the propagation and perfecting of the communal self can be realized through guarding the traditions.” Who guards these traditions?

The answer is unexpected. It is neither the kings nor the Sufis but *women*.

“The continuance of the species depends on motherhood and the preservation and honoring of motherhood is the foundation of Islam,” says the poet and then he suggests that the role model for Muslim women is Fatima, the daughter of Prophet Muhammad. “Fortitude and meekness were her schooling,” says the poet. “While her lips chanted the Quran, she ground the homely mill. No pillow needed she to catch her tears but wept contrition’s offering of pearls upon the skirt of prayer, which Gabriel stooped to gather as they glistened in the dust and rained like dew upon the Throne of God.

“The Divine Law locks a fetter about my feet to guard secure the Prophet’s highest behest,” the poet alludes to the sanction against worshipping tombs. “Or else I had surely gone about tomb and fallen prostrate, worshipping her dust.”

You have heard about Fatima before. She was the mother of Husain—the martyr through whom *tyranny was extirpated for all time to come*.

“High, high the cravings are that wrestle within your soul,” the poet addressed the ladies of his nation. “Be conscious still and keep your eye on Fatima as a role model so that your branch may bear a new Husain and our garden blossom with the Golden Age.”

29. Short history

The last reference to a king in this book is the most problematic. It occurs in a dream sequence where the poet is visited by Abu Bakr Siddique—the companion of the Prophet to whom the Prophet said, *Fear not*, and who later succeeded as the first caliph.

Siddique offers a commentary on four verses from the Quran. While commenting on the verse *God is Self-subsistent* he mentions that a later caliph vanquished the armies of a Christian king and then offered a high post at his court to a great Muslim teacher. The teacher refused, saying that he is a free servant of God and would not move away from the holy sanctuary of the Prophet: “Love says, Obey my ordinance and sign not the articles of service even to kings.”

Firstly, the glorification of a victory over the Christian king—“Harun Rashid, that captain of the Faith whose blade to Nicephor of Byzantium proved a deadly potion”—seems out of joint with the spirit of some previous chapters, for instance where other nations of the world were seen as fellow-travelers rather than enemies.

If you accept the premise that the Byzantine was an aggressor and this caliph fought a defensive war then this becomes a case of the exception mentioned in ‘Secrets of the Self’—*holy war if it be prompted by land-hunger is unlawful in the religion of Islam*. This becomes a case where a holy war is apparently *not* prompted by land-hunger and is therefore a lawful action.

Now this story becomes the symmetrical opposite of the other story where a king had come to a Sufi and asked him to pray for his victory in a war of conquest. There the Sufi declared that the king was a beggar whose hunger was playing havoc in the land. Here, a king who is *not* moved by land-hunger asks a God-intoxicated teacher to accept an office at his court. The teacher still refuses. *Why?*

There seems to be only one explanation. The discrepancy in the otherwise symmetrical pair of stories seems to be pointing at a dichotomy in the Muslim community of the past. The ruler and the free servant of God seem to represent two opposite poles—one upholding the sword arm and the other upholding Love. The principle of Love is symbolically represented here in the teacher's desire to stay close to the sanctuary of the Prophet and hence to the source of religion. The king and the Sufi seem to be poles apart.

Could this be the real reason why they are both connected with Joseph? Will he resolve the conflict? Is it even worth the trouble to resolve such a conflict?

Such thoughts are cut short when Siddique says, "*You* are Joseph. Do not sell yourself cheap."

Is it said to The Poet or to you? It seems that it applies to both. You realize that this is not the Joseph you are looking for. This is just a general reference in the sense of being something that should not be sold cheap. You already know that attribute of all Josephs.

30. Quran

The last chapter of ‘Mysteries of Selflessness’ is an invocation to the Prophet in which the poet asks to be buried under the shade of the walls of the Prophet’s tomb when his hour comes—and you recall the great teacher who did not wish to move away from the Prophet’s tomb.

“This desire kept burning even when awhile in my youth I consorted with rosy cheeks, played love with twisted tresses and tasted wine with lustrous brows”—you may have never suspected that such adventures could have occurred in the biography of this poet—“This desire didn’t fade out when my diabolical reason resolved to wear the infidel’s robe and made me the doubt’s prisoner, inseparable from my too arid brain”—and now you realize that he was only speaking from the wisdom of experience when he told you that *You have drawn your substance from the snow of philosophy, the cloud of your thought sheds nothing but hailstones.*

However, it is something else that surprises you most—something that may cause you to reevaluate the role of Rumi in this narrative! This is something the poet had said even before expressing his desire to be buried in the shade of the Prophet’s tomb.

“Our Shaykh is more infidel than a Brahmin for he carries his idols in his head,” said the poet to the Prophet. “He cries against me that my thoughts are Europe’s spell and my music is coming of Europe’s lute. *You gave your cloak to the poet Busayri, and you have given me this lute*”—but you thought that the command to write this book came from Rumi, didn’t it?

“You see all that is in men’s breasts,” the poet goes on. “If my words are informed by anything but the Quran and if my heart is without luster”—*if my words are informed by anything but the Quran* appears to be a preposterous claim, especially when

expressed in front of the Prophet himself—“then expose me and guard your people against the mischief of my wickedness. Choke the breath of my life in my breast, do not grant fertility to my barren field with the spring shower, and wither the vintage in my swelling grapes. Disgrace me on the Day of Judgment by stopping me to kiss your feet.”

Why would The Poet invoke upon him a curse which by his own standard is worse than everlasting damnation? *You see all that is in men's breasts*—then why does the poet need to make any statement about his book in front of the Prophet? There is only answer. He is not informing the Prophet. He is making the entire humanity a witness upon him and making the Prophet a witness upon them having heard him. *Why?*

Even more surprising is the certitude with which he is making his very unusual claims—“However, *if* I have threaded the pearls of the Quran's sweet mysteries on my thread and spoken the truth to the Muslims, then pray to God that my love be reconciled with action.”—*what kind of action*, you wonder. Then you understand that the *action* of the poet is to complete this garden according to the perfection which it needs to fulfill its function—“I have been accorded a contrite soul and a part of the Holy learning, may I be established more firm in action and my drops converted to pearls of great value and glitter.”

Still this is no justification for making a claim such as the one this poet has made before the Prophet—*if my words are informed by anything but the Quran*. No matter how carefully you interpret the Quran you can never be sure that nothing has crept in your words which is not akin to the Quran itself. How can the words of a human being be not informed by *anything but the Quran* if the Quran is regarded as the word of God? The Poet is claiming nothing less than having re-written the Quran in poetry.

This rings a bell. Right at the beginning of the narrative you were told that someone else wrote the Quran in a similar manner. Someone wrote the Quran in Persian. Who was he?

There appeared the Master, formed in the mould of Truth, who wrote the Quran in Persian—this is how The Poet had introduced Rumi in the dream sequence and then Rumi had commanded him, “Take a draught of love's pure wine, strike the chords of your heart and rouse a tumultuous strain”—*if my heart is without luster*, The

Poet utters such words with confidence before the Prophet only because he knows that his heart *cannot* be without luster; if he doubts this he would be doubting his master Rumi who offered him *a draught of love's pure wine*. Command supersedes courtesy. The Poet *has* to be sure that his words are not informed by anything but the Quran because any doubt in this regard would imply a complain against his master Rumi who commanded him to write these words in the first place.

The Poet makes two wishes in this invocation to the Prophet. Only the second wish—to be buried in the shade of the Prophet's tomb—is his own. The first wish—to be condemned if his words are informed by anything other than the Quran but his love to be reconciled with action if he has threaded the pearls of the Quran's sweet mysteries on his thread—is not something he is wishing for his own sake alone. He is making this wish on behalf of his mentor as well.

Rumi wrote the Quran in Persian. He commanded The Poet to write it again, this time in three languages—the authorized cannon of The Poet contains books in Persian, Urdu and English.

Why in three languages? You ask as you close the first book.

Reversal

31. Goethe

The second book is *A Message from the East*.

“The impulse that brought forth *A Message from the East* was provided by the *West-Oestlicher Divan* of the German Philosopher of Life, Goethe,” writes Iqbal in the Preface, which abounds with references to Sufism but in a manner that you did not expect. The poet is tracing the influence of the Sufi literature on the mind of Europe—Goethe’s *Divan* itself was inspired by such influences and circumstances.

“The movement known in the history of German literature as the Oriental movement was set on foot in 1812, when Von Hammer published a complete translation of the *Divan* of Hafiz,” the Preface tells you before listing the influences of Hafiz, Attar, Nizami, Saadi, Jami and of course, Rumi, on German poets of the previous century. “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*.”

“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.

Hafiz was a mouthpiece of the hidden and an interpreter of mysteries, and so is Goethe.

“Notwithstanding all this, Goethe is not an imitator of any Persian poet. 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.”

Why Goethe? Why is his *Divan* chosen to be the reference point for this second book?

“I need not say much about *A Message from the East*, which has been written a hundred-odd years after the *West-Oestlicher Divan*”—Germany’s Jewish poet Heine had called Goethe’s *Divan* *a bouquet of acknowledgment by the West to the East*; is Iqbal’s *Message* a return of compliments?—“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”—*inner development?*

“There is undoubtedly some resemblance between Germany as it was a hundred years ago and today’s East”—the book was first published in 1923, you remember—“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 forerunner of a great spiritual and cultural revolution”—*spiritual* revolution? Is that why both kings and the Sufis keep reappearing?

“Europe’s Great War was a catastrophe which destroyed the old world order in almost every respect”—is that good or bad?—“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.”

What happened to the new Adam since then? Did he come into being as predicted here? And a new world for him to live in—does that still exist or has it gone up in smoke since then? You know that you need not ask such questions.

Once again, this passage is not about 1923—just as the times of decadence were not only 1918. Once again, this passage refers to the state of your self at this point in the Garden.

You burnt the books when you entered here and since then you have been doing nothing except integrating things within your own cognitive consciousness—*And now out of the ashes of civilization and culture Nature is building up in the depths of life a new Adam.*

Having come this far from the main entrance, standing in the second enclave of the Garden, *you are the new Adam.*

32. King of Afghanistan

You do not have to go very far from the first clue. The book is dedicated to a king—the King of Afghanistan.

The Sufis and the kings were the two irreconcilable poles of the Muslim society as you saw in the previous enclave. Then why is Iqbal the Sufi poet offering his book to a king?

“The East, and especially the Muslim East, has opened its eyes after a centuries-long slumber,” he says in the Preface. “But the nations of the East should realize 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 the people”—*kindle a fire in your rubble, foster a flame in your earth*—“it is the truth of this law that I have tried to keep in view in my Persian works”—indeed you that very well. The King of Afghanistan, according to this preface, seems to be “well aware of the fact” that “extending the outlook of individuals and nations beyond geographical boundaries and reviving a healthy and strong human character” is a need of the time and that is why this book is being dedicated to His Majesty.

The dedicatory itself is a reminder of the hidden meanings of the text: “Ever since I found out life’s mystery it is as if a fire blazed inside me”—*I have seen the movement of the sinews of the sky and the blood coursing in the veins of the moon*, you remember. Comparing himself with Goethe he laments that among his own companions no one is prepared to look for the deeper meanings of his texts: “No one around me knows me properly. They go away with empty cups from my wine-fount. I offer them a royal state, with Chosroes’ throne for use as their foot mat”—*the treasures can be seized if one Joseph comes out of the Pharaoh’s prison*—“But they want fairy tales of love from me, the gaudy trappings of mere poesy”—*poetizing is not the aim of this mathnavi*—“They are so purblind that they only see my outside,

not the fervid soul in me”—*my own age does not know the secrets; my Joseph is not for this market*—“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.”

The truths of statecraft and religion both? But how? The king and the Sufi are irreconcilable. Maybe not anymore. “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.”

His address to the king is bold—“Your ambition as high as my thought” is more of self-indulgence than a fitting tribute to a king. In this respect at least Iqbal seems to be less of an Eastern poet and more of a Sufi. “A king in Islam is God’s servitor,” he assumes the position of the King’s mentor and offers some ready advice. “In royal robes live like an anchorite: eyes wide awake, but thought of God hugged tight. All Muslim rulers who were truly great led hermits’ lives despite their royal state”—then why did true lovers of the Prophet refuse to accept offices at their courts?—“Ask God to grant you some small part of that love for Muhammad which the heart of Siddique and of Ali bore”—*I Rustum or a Hyder seek*.

Surely he is talking about reconciliation as he delivers the message of Rumi even to this king:

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.”

However, it is difficult to understand why he would try to reconcile the principles of love and war when such a thing was never done in history—not even by Rumi himself. You know the answer.

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.

33. Tulip of Sinai

On the first impression the enclave of *A Message from the East* appears refreshing with its variety of short poems, quatrains and ghazals as compared to the monotone of mathnavi in the previous book.

However, the structure is not without its own riddles. Only the section 'Leftover Wine' is subtitled *ghazals*. 'Tulip of Sinai' has no such indicator although you can tell that it consists of quatrains—four-lined independent poems. However, while the *ghazals* are not numbered the items in 'Tulip of Sinai' are numbered and they count up to 163. By now you have understood that this poet never insults the intelligence of his readers—nothing in the design of this garden is redundant.

Could it be that the quatrains in this section are a *sequence*? That should be the obvious conclusion except that quatrains by definition are self-contained units of meanings.

You look again at the Preface. "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 *decline of Europe*. 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."

What wonderful revolution is now taking place in the human mind?—*Nature is building up in the depths of life a new Adam*. What will this new Adam require?

What is it that this Garden has been compelling you to do? Shake off your mental habits and see things for what they are. Then integrate them.

Looking again at 'Tulip of Sinai' you begin to see things for what they are. The 163 segments are nowhere called quatrains and

in fact the poet has included some which are, strictly speaking, not even quatrains although they contain four lines. Why are you calling them quatrains?—*Dear friend, your understanding is at fault.*

It is difficult to let go of preconceived notions but you manage to do that. A new pattern begins to emerge. The four-lined segments develop in progression to elaborate a single theme. The theme is Love—*Reason builds in order to destroy while Love destroys in order to reconstruct.* The key to understanding the hidden patterns of these four-lined segments is to *integrate* them and this key is cryptically given in the very first segment:

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

34. Creation Story

The second part is titled 'Reflections' and it contains short poems. The third poem catches your attention—it is called 'The Conquest of Nature' and it gives Iqbal's version of the Creation Story. Since you are the *new* Adam you cannot be oblivious to how the old Adam is perceived in this garden.

'The Birth of Adam' segment in the poem forestalls much of the attributes of a human self which you have discovered in the previous book. It is interesting to notice that the poet perceives them as inherent in the creation of Adam—evolution of some sort may only bring them to the surface but all the spiritual potentials had to be there in the beginning for the greater cannot issue from the smaller.

'Devil's Refusal' brings his perspective in his own words about why he refused to bow before Adam when God commanded all the angels to do so. "I am not such a foolish angel that I would bow to Adam—he is made of dust, but my element is fire. The stars owe their existence to You"—he dares challenge God—"but they owe their motion to me: You mislead into slothful behavior but I guide along the right path with burning passion. I am mighty without hell and my judgment does not await resurrection. Adam, that short-sighted ignoramus creature of dust was born in your lap but will grow old in my arms."

His temptation of Adam is complicated—he is simply calling Adam to fulfill his potentials! "A life of passion and longing is better than eternal quiet. Now you are a drop of water worth nothing, become a luminous pearl—come down from the heavens and live in the ocean. You do not yet know this but with union comes the end of longing—what is eternal life but to burn and keep on burning!"

As 'Adam Speaks On Coming Out Of Paradise' he praises the world of action and accepts the highest intellectual challenge of

discovering unity in diversity and the other way round—“How good it is to fill life with passion and longing; in one breath to melt the heart of desert, mountain and wild”—*Sweet is the world of phenomena to the living spirit, dear is the world of Ideas to the dead spirit.*

You find something strange about the last part, ‘The Morn Of Resurrection’—Adam in the presence of God. “You, whose sun gives the star of life its splendor, with my heart you lit the candle of the sightless world”—and you notice that this is equally true of your function in this garden since your interaction is infusing the written words of these books with your life—“My skills have poured an ocean into a strait, my pickaxe makes milk flow from the heart of stone”—the reference is to Farhad, a legendary lover who used his pickaxe to cut through rocks once to allow a stream of milk from mountain pastures to the pools of his beloved Shirin and then again to unravel a mountain that blocked the passage to the palace of Chosroes Perviz, hoping to win the hand of Shirin whom Chosroes wanted for himself.

You see the irony. You are Farhad in this garden as you are milking the stones of these words for sweet meanings and removing the rocks to clear the passage to the secret vault. Farhad was deceived by Chosroes in the end and he had to die on his own pickaxe. How will *you* fare in this garden?

“Venus is my captive, the moon worships me,” Adam stands resurrected before God. You recall what the poet said to you in the previous book—*Stars and planets dwelling in the sky to whom the ancient peoples prayed now wait upon your word.*

“Although his sorcery deluded me”—Adam mentions Devil to God—“Excuse my fault, forgive my sin: the world could not have been subdued otherwise, for pride could not be taken prisoner without the halter of humility. Reason catches artful nature in a net and thus Ahriman, born of fire, bows down before the creature of dust!”

As you stand in the shade of the forbidden tree of this Creation Story your consciousness is stirred by the mysterious breeze of the fuzzy feeling that it is this resurrected Adam with whom you can relate most directly at this point.

35. Reflections

In the rest of the 'Reflections' you look for familiar clues: Rumi, kings, Sufi, time and the hidden secret.

Rumi reappears in 'Philosophy and Poetry'—"Avicenna (the paragon of Muslim philosophy) got lost in the dust kicked up by the dromedary of Layla"—*divine and lovely truth*—while Rumi's hand seized the curtain of her litter. If the truth has no fervor it is plain philosophy but if it has proper fervor it is poetry."

Rumi is mentioned again in 'Love'—"To Love it is that your soul owes its heightened states' engenderment from Rumi's ardent passion to Farabi's solemn wonderment"—Farabi being the predecessor of Avicenna this second poems seems to reveal the deeper meaning of philosophy by discovering the origin of true wisdom in love—"Not every subtle point can be expressed in words. Consult a while your own heart and you may see my point made in the heart's own style." *Is he addressing you in your quest for his secret?*

Kings are not to be seen in this section. The God-fearing tiger slayer makes only a brief comeback but we find him on the verge of handing over his empire to his eager successor. In the 'Song of the Star' you find a hint about what has happened to the world:

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.

Will there be no kings in the new world which Nature is creating for a new Adam?—but the book is still dedicated to the King of Afghanistan.

However, in the Muslim world you find a new kind of leader—Mustafa Kemal Pasha, the founder of a democracy. Affectionately, the poet reminds him of the Prophet Muhammad—“Thanks to whose wisdom we learned all about the mysteries of human destiny.”

The poet blames the decadence of the old Muslim world on the diminishing of the life impulse among its leaders—“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.” Already, you realize the irony of the new leadership. It is compelled to cross swords with the ‘old man of the Harem’ who represents the heart of the Muslim nation itself—and who has, regretfully, wiped the imprint of Love from his own heart.

If the kings are gone—despite the dedication to the King of Afghanistan, which now looks appears problematic—what about war in any case? You find a condoning reference to Tariq, the Muslim conqueror who burnt his boats upon landing on the shore of Spain, which was still the land of the enemy. When his companions reproached him and asked what would happen in case of retreat, “he smiled, placed his hand on the handle of his sword and said, *Every land is our land for it is the land of our God.*”

However, you realize that Tariq too belongs to the *past*. The very last poem in ‘Reflections’ itself presents a bold contrast: “Charmed by the pen, the human being seems to have laid off the sword. Having built an idol-temple of world peace this slave of lust danced around it to the music of the pipes but when war tore the veil off its pretence, he stood exposed as blood-thirsty and quarrelsome.” Is this an all-out condemnation of war or a statement on the futility of peace efforts? Or none of these—or both?

You find answer to such questions in a poem which you may have skipped on the first reading. It is deceptively titled ‘The World of Action’ but on second thought you understand what it means—*Sweet is the world of phenomena to the living spirit, dear is the world of Ideas to the dead spirit.*

“This is a free tavern, and to all who come to it wine is served in accordance with their bowl’s capacity”—is he talking about the world out there or his Garden itself?—“The secret that has not yet been expressed in words has been expressed here in wine’s over brimming character”—could he mean *his* secret?—“Those who

come here get drunk with action and not with mere words. Philosophy is mere dregs at the bottom of life's cup and you who try to be consistent with your past mistakes, whatever you regard as rest is here mobility"—*You have drawn your substance from the snow of philosophy*—"We who have come out to pursue the path of seeking have converted knowledge into action and thus made it live."—*If the truth has no fervor it is plain philosophy but if it has proper fervor it is poetry*, he had said with reference to Rumi. How could he not follow the same principle in constructing his own garden?

His garden is built on the same principles as the world of nature—*We who have come out to pursue the path of seeking have converted knowledge into action and thus made it live*. Who are we? He and Rumi. You had already discovered the interactive nature of the Garden which is now reiterated for you—*Those who come here get drunk with action and not with mere words*. The Garden does not insist upon any hard truths; instead, it offers you contradictions and dichotomies and leaves it up to you how you resolve the conflict between two realities which seem equally true in their own right. You do that according to your capacity—*This is a free tavern, and to all who come to it wine is served in accordance with their bowl's capacity*. You can increase your capacity by dissociating yourself with previous knowledge and discovering the powers of cognition latent in your ego—do not look for dregs at the bottom of life's cup and be not persistent with your past mistakes.

Why does he call his garden the world of phenomena? You remember that in his very first book he had set out to reform the literature of the Sufis, which, according to him had deteriorated under the influence of Plato—*Close your eyes, close your ears, close your lips that your thought may reach the lofty sky!*

This poet was not content with preaching against the sheep's doctrine. He aimed at constructing a Garden whose very existence will defy the ideology he is trying to denounce—not only his words will defy the sheep's doctrine but also the living experience of each visitor will become a witness on his side.

"However, *if I have threaded the pearls of the Quran's sweet mysteries on my thread and spoken the truth to the Muslims*"—he

has asked the Prophet—“then pray to God that my love be reconciled with action.”

You think you now understand what he meant.

36. Whirling dervish

Where have all the Sufis gone? Monasteries and dervishes which thronged the previous enclave are nowhere to be seen here.

The reason is obvious. They have become invisible but their principle—Love—pervades through *everything* now. As you look again you see that this enclave of the Garden is filled with the air of spring but every blossom here is thriving with desire—the hidden life of Nature is now revealed. The age of decadence has passed and you are reminded time and again to give up conformity to the past but rather interpret the whole of past in every moment of the present—“If blind conformity were good, the Prophet himself would have gone the way of Arabs in an earlier day” is the last aphorism on which the book ends itself.

Journey through the various topics of ‘Reflection’ is like the dance of a whirling dervish whose magic is splitting open the core of all things as he passes upon them—“I sing these intoxicating words and dance with delight” says the poet—and you watch while a sagacious conqueror smiles and reveals his secret thoughts, the dewdrops and the flower discuss mysteries of life and the stars become eloquent with the music of the spheres. Time itself addresses you out of the blue and although there is little in the ‘Song of Time’ that you didn’t know from the *mathnavi* already, the intense form of a short poem is much more profound and it evokes stronger reaction, for instance, when Time says to you: says to you: “If you look at me I am nothing. If you look at yourself I am your life.”

The ecstasy is carried over into the *ghazals*—‘The Leftover Wine.’ “Do not imagine that our clay was fashioned when the world was made, for we are still a thought in Being’s mind”—he clearly seems to be addressing you—“All that spring did was that it put together scattered leaves but it is our eye that lends color and brightness to the tulip”—you had figured out this much about the

nature of his Garden but he is beckoning you to test the same rule on the world outside once you return there—“You seek good manners, learning and taste in the schoolroom but no one buys wine from a glassware factory! Bring out the music which is in your nature’s make-up. O self-oblivious man, cast out of your head others’ tunes.”

References to Rumi occur again: “O singer, sing verses from the holy guide Rumi so that my soul may be immersed in the fire of Tabriz”—*kindle a fire in your rubble, foster a flame in your earth*—“Do not assess what I sing by the standards of Iran and Hindustan; come, I have brought from the vat of master Rumi the wine of poetry much younger than the wine of grapes”—*Inspired by the genius of my master Rumi, I am about to reopen the sealed book of secret lore; I have seen the movement of the sinews of the sky*. “Our goal is God—this saying of my master Rumi was like a flame flung at the straw that is my self”—Wayfarers’ life consists in hurrying from place to place since the caravan of waves has no road and no goal.

A peculiar aspect of this ecstasy is revealed in those outbursts where he invokes upon people from different religions to see a common truth—“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’aba—around my neck the Brahmin’s thread and in my hand the rosary.”—*I do not bid you to abandon your idols*, the Shaykh had said to the Brahmin but the poet seems to be taking it a bit too far—“I am glad my grave has been built in Ka’aba’s own street since now I will dig with my eyelashes a tunnel from here to the idol-house”—where is he going with all this? You wonder. “A true lover does not differentiate between the Ka’aba and the idol-house, for one is the Beloved’s privacy and the other His appearing publicly.”

You begin to see the point in these outburst: non-contradiction—“Your Beauty shines through the glass like the color of reflection,” he addresses God. “Just like wine, you too have veiled yourself with a goblet’s wall.”

This is no altruism. These observations have not resulted from a willing suspension of belief. Rather, they are the fruits of a penetrating intellect: “Learn how to put a rosary bead on the

Brahmin's thread and if your eyes see double then learn how not to see."

37. Potiphar's Wife

Ecstasy comes to an abrupt ending when you reach on these lines:

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

This is the only *ghazal* in the entire section which has a sub-title and hence the sub-title cannot be ignored. It reads: "Addressed to a Sufi." Evidently he is talking about his secret. Moreover, the Sufi whom he is addressing also *knows* this secret—it seems that he is about to mention it casually when Iqbal has to chide him.

You have already gathered that the disclosure of the secret is connected with right timing and suitable conditions. This *ghazal* reads like a shopping list of such conditions.

"Neither have I nor you the wish to go to Layla's house," says Iqbal to the Sufi. "Neither have I nor you the heart to bear the desert heat"—Layla is the symbol of *divine and lovely truth*. It is hard to believe that not only the fellow Sufi but also Iqbal himself should lack the heart to go there. Then you remember, *Avicenna got lost in the dust kicked up by the dromedary of Layla while Rumi's hand seized the curtain of her litter*.

"I am a young wine-server and you keeper of an old tavern"—you know that wine is a metaphor for Gnostic knowledge; apparently Iqbal is addressing an older Sufi—"The company is thirsty, yet wine neither you have nor I"—Iqbal cannot serve his wine to this company without mixing it with the spirits of his secret, but the time for that has not come.

"We have pledged our hearts and our faith to Persia's lovely ones"—you know that this is a metaphor for the theories of Plato—

“The flame of love for Sulayma burns neither you nor me”—Is that why the wine cannot be served?

“There was an empty shell that we picked up on the seashore. The precious pearl have neither you nor I”—*I will come to rest in the sea of my master Rumi, that I may make the glistening pearl mine own.* What happened to that?

“Do not talk any more about the Joseph we have lost,” he comes to the point. “The warmth of a Zulaykha’s heart have neither you nor I.” You know that Zulaykha is the first name of Potiphar’s Wife in the Sufi literature but here you begin to realize that in some way Iqbal identifies himself with her. In fact he identifies all Sufis with her.

This is unexpected. Zulaykha tried to seduce Joseph in vain and accused him falsely when she got exposed. She bragged about her guilt in front of others and might have had a hand in sending the innocent fellow to the prison. Is this the warmth of heart Iqbal is wishing for?

Then you understand that he is not referring to Zulaykha’s behavior *before* Joseph went to the prison but her behavior *after* the summons for release were issued.

While in prison, Joseph interpreted a crucial dream of the Pharaoh who then ordered him to be set free. Joseph refused to come out until Zulaykha was asked about the truth of the case and she, out of her own free will and for no obvious gains, declared the truth—the innocence of Joseph and her own guilt—although it could have brought upon her the highest penalty.

The Sufi will have to be a witness, just like Zulaykha, and run the same risk when *this* Joseph comes out. *The warmth of a Zulaykha’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”—Iqbal makes a suggestion for the time being—“the power to face the Burning Bush have neither you nor I.”

38. Joseph of the West

The fourth part is the 'Images of Europe.' The first poem tells you that Joseph of the West has come out of his prison.

The poem is a 'Message' to the Western intellectual. The message is conveyed—very characteristically—through the morning breeze. "Reason becomes more entangled the more it attempts to fly," the message begins. "The eye sees just the color of the tulip and the rose but far more obvious is that which is veiled in the flower if only we could see. Though you have gathered knowledge, you have thrown away the heart; with what a precious treasure you have thought it fit to part!"

On what ground does Iqbal take such liberties with the 'fellow-travelers' and what makes him think that they would listen—or that they should listen? The answer is Goethe.

You understand why Goethe was picked up as a reference point for this book. The German poet's *Divan* was called by Heine *a bouquet of acknowledgment by the West to the East*, "a witness to the fact that the West, disgusted with its weak and cold spirituality, seeks warmth from the East's breast."

This is the warmth from the East's breast—"The self-absorbed and world-regarding reasons are two different things. It is one thing to roam the garden like the morning breeze and quite another to delve in the rose's inmost ponderings. It is one thing to let doubt and conjecture bog you down and another to look up and see celestial phenomena. Blessed is the reason which has both the worlds in its domain, which calls the fire of the human heart as well as the angels' light its own."

He then describes the backdrop against which the Joseph of the West came to the throne. "Since we issued forth out of the sacred shrine of Love we have burnished mirror-bright the very dust beneath our feet"—he is obviously regarding the greatest achievements of science as acts of love. Now you know that the Western scientists are

the *fellow-travelers* mentioned in the previous book: *Your fellow-travelers have reached the goal and borne Layla, the divine and lovely truth, from her litter.*

“But look how openly we have gambled away the world and the hereafter which we had won in the secrecy of Love,” he tells the Western intellectual that reason’s alchemy transmuted grains of sand to gold but it raised up much dust from the civilization of the West to cast into the Christ’s eye.

“Our hearts which launched a night-raid on this ancient fane there was once a fire which we breathed into all things dry or wet. But then love turned to the greedy ways of lust, burst all bounds and started preying upon men”—is he referring to colonialism?—“Preferring war to peace, it reared up armies everywhere and they 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.”

This is an unexpected references to kings. They are not regional kings or local conquerors but imperialists of modern history. Here the poet is complaining that the advancement of science which should have helped the human mind to outgrow the culture of greed and insecurity were instead used for creating weapons that could enslave the old world rather than creating a new world order—*Ride the wind, dabble your fingers in the mountain’s blood, draw up the lustrous waters of the pearl from ocean’s bottom*, he had urged his fellow Muslims in the previous book but also asked them to remember that *the outward form of Being is not bare of inward meaning.*

“Now, holding in its hand a goblet full of human blood, it dances madly to the tune of flute and tambourine,”—is he talking about Western imperialism or the principle behind it, which is reason gone greedy and love degenerated into lust. It may be the reason why he has mentioned America rather so approvingly in the Preface of his book: “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”—it has never been an imperial power, at least not in the strictly technical sense?—“and that its collective intuition is receptive to new ideas and influences.”

His address to the Western intellectual strikes a similar tune. “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.”

Kings are mentioned again but this time the general impression you had gathered from this book is articulated into a clear expression—the kings are gone. “The royal crown has been taken away, hushed is the song of Darius and mute is Alexander’s flute. Farhad has changed his pickaxe for the scepter of Perviz”—you know this story already except that in this new world the king has failed to deceive the stone-cutter—“Gone are the joy of mastership, the toil of servitude. *Freed from his bondage, Joseph sits on Pharaoh’s high throne: the fables and traps of Potiphar’s Wife have been washed from the slate.*”

Exactly which of the incidents recounted here is compared with Joseph’s sitting on Pharaoh’s high throne? Overthrow of monarchies, democracy in the West, wars of imperialism against the East, advancement of science or the decline of Christianity? The poem does not answer this question but goes on to say, “Old secrets that were veiled stand unveiled in the market-place: no longer are they subjects of debate for the elite.”

You know what he means. The secret of Zulaykha’s guilt was an open secret among the women of the elite because she herself used to brag about it in that company although she would deny it in the public. *Old secrets that were veiled stand unveiled in the market-place: no longer are they subjects of debate for the elite.*

So, this is what happened in the West when Joseph came out. Things previously restricted to the elite became accessible to anyone who cared to pay the price? What kind of things are meant here—science or government? The next lines answer this question in a very cryptic manner.

“Unveil your eyes and you will see that in full view of you, Life is creating for itself a world completely new. I see, I know not how I see it but just about me I see a revolution too big for the universe’s mind. 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.”

What should have been but has not been? You wonder and then you remember Goethe. *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.

The advancement of science brought opportunities for the humanity to come closer and this is *what should have happened*. Empathy between cultures just the way Goethe could feel the pulse of a dead Persian poet without losing his own identity—he *never lets go of his Westernism, and his glance rests only on those Oriental truths which his Western temperament can assimilate*.

The discovery of the hidden treasure-troves of nature should have given more freedom to the human self for actualizing itself: *Hafiz was a mouthpiece of the hidden and an interpreter of mysteries, and so is Goethe*.

The newly revealed powers of nature should have been used for creating a new world order from the scratch—a world in which greed and hunger should become outdated things. Such a world should have been created first in the depths of powerful souls and then interpreted in the reality outside. This is what should have happened, *but then love turned to the greedy ways of lust, burst all bounds and started preying upon men*.

Preferring war to peace, it reared up armies everywhere and they 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.

“Deep in the earth that I have watered with my blood-stained tears, my teardrops will remain embedded, gems of a rich hue”—which earth? India?

No, he means this very Garden. His teardrops will remain embedded here—and with them his secret. How long, you wonder.

Perhaps forever. But maybe not—“I see in the dark night a portent of the coming dawn. My candle has been put out, but only to greet the rising sun.”

How can he be so sure unless the sun is already around the corner. Or right here. Where is the sun, or rather, *who* is the sun?

Then you remember that you are the new Adam. You also have to be the rising sun, since you are the only new arrival in this garden, aren't you?

39. Mind of Europe

Other poems in the 'Images of Europe' revisit the culture of the West from the perspective of Rumi.

You go back to the Preface for understanding this perspective. There, Iqbal wrote, "Regarded from a purely literary standpoint, the debilitation of the forces of life in Europe after the ordeal of the war is unfavorable to the development of a correct and mature literary ideal"—in historical time he is speaking about the First World War but in the world of the narrative itself the *ordeal* is explained to you through the painful upheaval described in 'Message,' the poem you have just finished. "Indeed, the fear is that the minds of the nations may be gripped by that slow-pulsed Persianism which runs away from life's difficulties and which fails to distinguish between the sentiments of the heart and the reflections of the mind." *Slow-paced Persianism?*

You were beginning to think that this Garden was all about preferring heart over mind, love over reason—*Reason builds in order to destroy while Love destroys in order to reconstruct*. Now the architect jolts you up by warning you against sentiments of the heart and inviting you to the reflections of the mind. Moreover, he warns the *West* against such an attitude. Why would he do so?

Self is strengthened by love, you remember his definition. Love in this form is a powerful emotion, the elixir which transmutes dust into a proper self. Sentiment is neither Love nor emotion but very often it is a parody of Love. To replace pure thought with sentiment is the doctrine of the sheep—"Close your eyes, close your ears, close your lips that your thought may reach the lofty sky!"

Einstein and Bergson are the two modern thinkers in whose writings Iqbal finds a faint sketch of the new world being crated by Nature itself for a new Adam. "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!” he says about Einstein.

The ‘Message of Bergson’ is interpreted as “Get yourself a reason which the heart has schooled.” In a dialogue with Locke and Kant he presents the view that comes closest to Iqbal’s own—“The tulip did not bring either wine or a cup from eternity: it gets its eternal passion from the scar in its own heart.”

In this book you find the criticism of Rumi on the system of Hegel, who stands out as a symbol of a modern thinker taking himself so seriously that his otherwise sensible theories become detached from the realm of phenomena.

“One night I was engaged in teasing out the knots of Hegel’s philosophic thought, whose conception’s grand, imposing range made the world shrink into a tiny mote when I plunged into that tempestuous sea and my mind became just like a storm-tossed boat,” says Iqbal. “Soon a spell lulled me to slumber, my inner vision sharpened and I observed an old man whose face was a godly sight”—you can recognize this Godly man as Rumi from the title of the poem itself—“‘You sleep,’ said he. ‘Awake, awake. You ply a boat in a mirage and it is folly’s height. You’re bidding wisdom guide you on love’s path and looking for the sun by candle-light.’”

Rumi’s opinion on Goethe is quite the reverse of his censure of Hegel. In the paradise Goethe approaches Rumi to recite *Faust*. After listening to Goethe’s masterpiece, Rumi says: “Your thought has made its home in the inner recesses of the heart and created this old world anew. ‘He who is blest, and a confidant, knows that cunning comes from the Devil and love from Adam.’”

In a rather very cosmopolitan gathering of poets in the other world you find Browning, Byron, Ghalib and Rumi together. “There was nothing to fortify life’s effervescent wine, so I took Water of Life from Khizr and added it,” says Browning while alluding to the legendary guide who knows the secret of eternal life.

Byron adds, equally characteristically of himself, “Why should one be obliged to Khizr for water’s loan? I poured a little of my heart’s blood into the wine-cup.”

Ghalib recites a couplet of his own which means, “To make the wine still bitterer and my chest still more sore, I melted the glass itself and added it to my wine.”

Rumi says to all this, “How can dilutions be as good as the real stuff itself? I pressed wine out of grapes direct and filled my cup with it.”—*Open your eyes, ears and lips!*

40. 'Glory'

The Call of the Marching Bell is the third book in the cannon. It is a biography of the poet's mind.

You must figure out when he started building his code because any clues from before that period could be misleading but unfortunately the book does not mention the visitation of Rumi in any dream and its division into three sections—up to 1905, 1905—1908 and since 1908—does not help in that direction either.

Yet it is very unlikely that Iqbal should not have mentioned his major breakthrough in a biography of his mind. You can look for some hidden clue about Rumi's visitation buried in such a way that it can only be found by those who are looking for it.

The only way to go about it is by taking a tour of the whole enclave to see if you can read that invisible signboard which tells you where to resume your hunt for the secret code.

The Preface is written by a close friend. You are told that the poet was born in Sialkot but is now living in Lahore. Literally, his name means 'glory' and it seemed that Iqbal used to like puns on it in the earlier days. He studied philosophy in India, England and Germany and even taught that subject for a while. At one point he was about to give up poetry when a close friend—the writer of this Preface—and a teacher convinced him that his poetic gifts could be put to very good uses.

The first poem is 'Himalaya.' You imagine as if this garden of poetry is built on an elevation and the poet was standing at the bottom of the hill, looking upwards to the top, where—unknown to him at that time—his garden would be built one day. He didn't see the small hill but visualized Himalaya and attributed to that highest mountain the traits his unconscious mind would have liked to see in the garden of his poetry if it could be built one day.

"O Himalaya, O fortress of the clime of India!" He began his address, "The sky bows down to kiss your forehead. Age does not

show in you and you are forever young amid the passing time. There was but one Burning Bush for Moses but you are Manifestation entire for an eye that could see!”

On the cliffs he observed clouds and thunder while in the valleys and jungles he observed the greener side of nature—“O Himalaya, Nature has carved you as a playground for the elements”—he himself would one day construct a playground where he could demonstrate to his visitors *the movement of the sinews of the universe and blood coursing through the veins of the moon.*

You start in the footsteps of the poet—his early poems leading you back step by step towards the garden.

In my youth I consorted with rosy cheeks, you remember the poet had said. In these early poems you find some references to amorous feelings but such feelings are very often universalized—“O beautiful rose, perhaps you have no heart?” could be equally true of a real rose as well as a difficult woman. Early poems also corroborate his claim that the desire to be buried in the shade of the walls of the Prophet’s tomb never left his heart even in those days. One of the early poems is titled after Bilal, a freed slave who suffered torture at the hands of the enemies of the Prophet but never swerved from the path of Divine Love. There, the poet says, “Happy were the days when Yathrib was the station of the Prophet and he could be seen by all.”

Nature seems to be a favorite subject and in the beginning the poet was curious about everything—he wanted to know what secrets lay buried in the silence of the rose just as much as he wished to hear the music of the spheres or converse with the birds. “Manners of speech are deceptive,” he said. “Otherwise song is the perfume of the nightingale and perfume is the song of the rose; then why should this multiplicity cause strife when a common silence of eternity resides in every creation?”

You understand a building block of the poet’s mind. Things are created in pairs of opposites but they are created on the same principle. In duality there is conflict and you are hampered by it as long as you keep looking at objects. Duality diminishes when you recognize the principle. Conflict comes to an end.

Self-extinction? No. If you lose your *self* then who will be there to recognize the principle in the first self? Principles do not

reveal themselves. They have to be recognized—the principle of integration was not written on any wall in this garden but you had to recognize it by yourself.

With this kind of a vision he naturally wanted to be a citizen of the world—“May the humankind be my nationality and the world be my country.” In that he idealized the sun, which spread its light without discrimination—“High and low are equal in your sight. I also want to see things that way so that my eyes may weep for the pain of the other and my heart may rise above discrimination of nationalities and customs.”

Joseph was first mentioned in this context. Addressing his compatriots he said, “What good is it if you saw Joseph in the well! O ignorant soul, you confined that which was beyond definitions.” *Could this be a clue?* But this poem occurs in a part where the poet seems to be formulating his questions rather than arriving at resolutions.

He sought to reinterpret the national life of his country according to his universal ideals—“Our India is better than the whole world; we are its nightingales and this our garden. Greece, Egypt and Rome have all vanished from the world but our foundations have proven more lasting.” He invited the Brahmin to join him construct a new shrine, which should be dedicated to the creed of love. “Religion does not aim at making us strangers to each other,” he used to say.

Love was the emotion which pervaded through everything he approached but he sustained the curiosity of a genuine seeker with an open mind. Preconceived notions never bogged him down—no wonder that they are the biggest taboo in his Garden even now. To a critic who accused him of having such contradictions that they turn him into some sort of enigma, he replied: “I also want to see Iqbal and I weep because I am separated from him. Even Iqbal himself is not aware of Iqbal and I am not saying this in jest, by God I am not!”

Death was as much a subject of his curiosity as was life—sometimes it would seem as if he did not differentiate between the two. “The same universal law governs all these effects: the journey of the perfume from the garden and that of the gardener from the world.” Typically, he seemed to be raising questions about death with a mind unhampered by the need for arriving at instant

solutions. “Is paradise a garden, an eternal holiday or is it the unveiled face of the Eternal Beauty?” He addressed the dead in the graveyard. “O tell us the secret hidden behind the revolving skies—take out the sting of curiosity we have about death.”

One thing was evident from these questions, however. It seemed as if he were sure that he would find the answers.

41. Sicily

A little before the exact middle of the book is a poem in two stanzas. It stands apart from the rest because it is the only poem in this book to carry numbers on its stanzas.

Why is the poem ‘The Incurable Lover’ the only one here to have numbered stanzas—and only two stanzas?

You notice that firstly, they are two different voices. The first is the voice of the critics who blame the poet for being a bundle of contradictions—he likes good company and yet he is a loner; he likes women and yet he is indifferent by nature; he is a scholar and yet he likes to transcend reason; he is devoted to religion and yet his behavior is not very orthodox.

Unlike the previous poem where Iqbal brushed aside such accusations by saying, *Even Iqbal himself is not aware of Iqbal*, he comes up with definite answers in the second stanza—which is numbered ‘2’. Here, he resolves his contradictions by demonstrating a principle of unity—the handful of dust which is his physical existence has erupted through love to become a vast expanse which is capable of assimilating the opposites; his heart is like a cut diamond, which, despite being a single gem is capable of reflecting a different color on each side.

This reveals the larger pattern of the book. The first stanza closes the preceding poems which aimed at formulating questions while the following poems in the rest of the book will supplicate answers. In the first half you observed multiplicity in creation but hereafter you shall see the principle of non-contradiction.

Life is the first problem revisited after this resolution—“Take the secret of immortality from Khizr himself,” says the poet in the very next poem. “Everything is kept alive by unfulfilled quest.”

Death comes next, but now the poet approaches it in a manner you may not have expected of him. “Do not speak to me of the paradise and hereafter,” he says. “I do not deny heaven but the

sense of life commands a youthful heart to accept no faith except instant gratification.” You cannot say that he is denying the life hereafter—*I do not deny heaven*. Then what is he up to?

Joseph is mentioned soon afterwards. In a poem addressed to the same friend who later wrote the Preface of this book, the poet says: “Let us reveal the power of the alchemy of Love by transmuting the stone of today into a mirror of tomorrow—by showing a reflection of the Joseph we have lost, let us make the blood of our companions warmer than the heart of Zulaykha.”

The analogy is unmistakable. He is inviting his friend to join a literary mission, and this friend is also the founding editor of the journal in which these poems were being published at that time. At this early stage he does not say that his Joseph is not for this market. On an optimistic note, he thinks that he could quickly create the warmth of the Zulaykha’s heart.

So that his Joseph could come out? Perhaps not, because he still mentions that the most they can do is to turn the stone of today into *a mirror of tomorrow*.

Has Rumi already visited him? The opening lines of this poem say, “Come, darkness has spread on the horizon.” This is the opposite of the first line of ‘Secrets of the Self’ which mentions daybreak—“When the world-illuminating sun rushed upon night like a brigand.” Iqbal is too fond of mathematical symmetries to leave such discrepancy in an important clue.

This poem cannot be a marker of Rumi’s visitation. This is the beginning of a dark night of the soul—“*Come, darkness has spread on the horizon*”—and it is *this* night upon which the *world-illuminating sun* will rush like a brigand after Rumi’s visit in a dream.

The very next poem refers to kings. Iqbal is traveling by sea at night when his ship passes the island of Sicily. He describes this island as “the tomb of the civilization of Hijaz (Arabia), the place which was once the station of those desert-dwellers who caused the courts of the Emperors to shake as if struck by earth-quakes, whose lightning-flashing swords annihilated the old world order, whose voice resurrected a dead world and freed the human being from the chains of superstition.”

These poems are before the visitation of Rumi, so Iqbal could not have created his code as yet. That means that these poems may

not tell you anything about his secret but it also means that they may be telling you *too much* about it.

Since he had not created the code he did not know how to *hide* his secret.

42. 'March 1907'

Halfway up this walk, at a spot where you catch the first glimpse of the outer structure of the Garden again, you find a strange poem. It is a *ghazal* but the poet has given it a heading—the only item to be included first under the general heading of *ghazals* and then to have another heading of its own.

The heading is unusual. It is just a date, March 1907.

“It is now the age of openness,” the poem begins. “Now Beauty will be revealed to all and the secret concealed by silence will come out. Bygone are the days, O Saki, when wine was taken secretly; the whole world will now be a tavern and everyone will be drinking.”

Secret concealed by silence reminds you of Zulaykha's guilt but the rest of the imagery relates to the Day of Judgment: Muslims are not supposed to drink alcohol in this life but pure wine is promised to them in the hereafter; these lines again invoke the imagery of resurrection—I do not deny heaven but the sense of life commands a youthful heart to accept no faith except instant gratification. Likewise, the souls will be resurrected to see the Divine Beauty unhindered by veils.

Is he talking about the hereafter? Is this an announcement of an apocalypse—the hour has arrived and the world will be no more?

“Those who wandered in madness will return to the dwellings, bare feet like before but new thorns to bleed them”—he seems to be referring to the Sufis but their return to the dwellings and picking up new thorns to bleed their feet could only mean a reconciliation of monastery with the court, which never happened in history. It seems unlikely that it should happen even in the future—you understand too well the inherent conflict between the principles of Love and War.

The rest of the poem seems to contradict even the apocalyptic beginning, since it refers unmistakably to the present world. It predicts a revival of Islam—"The lion which leapt out of the desert and overthrew the Great Roman Empire will be awakened once again, so I have heard from the angels." He has heard it *from the angels?*

Here he seems all set to give away his secret without reservations—"The Saki mentioned me to my fellows at the tavern and the tavern's sage remarked, 'He has a big mouth, he will be disgraced.'"—*My own age does not know the secrets; My Joseph is not for this market.*

"O peoples of the West! Your civilization will commit suicide on its own dagger, for any nest built on a weak branch cannot be durable"—*Love turned to the greedy ways of lust, burst all bounds and started preying upon men; he is sounding death-knell to colonialism. By your civilization he means Western colonialism and not the countries of the West in general; 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.*

"O Sigh! That which was One you showed us as a thousand; if this is what you do then what will be your credibility?"—*I also want to see things that way so that my eyes may weep for the pain of the other and my heart may rise above discrimination of nationalities and customs.*

"Lovers of God are many and they roam around in jungles; I will be slave to someone who loves the slaves of God. I will take out my tired caravan in the darkness of the night and my sigh will shed sparks to light the way, my breath will exhale fire"—Has Rumi visited him by now? But the lines still paint the picture of a dark night and there is no mention of the *world-illuminating sun* rushing upon night like a brigand.

"Do not ask of Iqbal, he is yet in the same state; he must be sitting somewhere still, still waiting with anxiety"—waiting for what? Could this mean, by any chance, that he is waiting for you to discover his secret?

You remember the feeling you experienced near the forbidden tree in the previous enclave. You, the new Adam, had realized at that point that your experiences in this garden correspond most directly to Adam *resurrected*.

Here, in this poem, you find all the imagery of resurrection yoked together rather violently with the world of phenomena. Heaven is not denied but the sense of life seems eager to create something new, something unimaginable and definitely unheard of. *From the ashes of culture and civilization?*

Almost certainly in this outburst of ecstasy he has given away the secret without waiting for Rumi's command. The clues fit exactly. The kings are not going to last—the lion which leapt out of the desert to overthrow the Great Roman Empire is about to be awakened again and the news has come from the angels themselves. The hidden secrets will be revealed—*the treasures can be seized if one Joseph comes out of the Pharaoh's prison.*

You realize the irony. Even in revealing the entire secret he has not been able to convey anything to you. That is why he was helpless until Rumi showed him the way—*Many a night I wept for the sake of humanity that I might tear the veil from Life's mysteries.* Yet he was an unfinished statue until Rumi, through Love, chiseled him into a man.

He had to build his secret code not only because he wanted to protect his secret from the unworthy. The code is also the means of making you worthy of the secret itself.

43. Burial of the kings

You are approaching the Garden again but now you notice that the poems are focusing increasingly on Islam. References to other cultures still abound—there is an all-out praise of Rama, for instance. Yet the imagery is turning heavily Islamic. Why?

His journey started with a desire to make the humanity his nationality and the world his country. He described his heart as a many-sided diamond capable of reflecting a different color on each side and it seems unlikely that this heart should lose its diamond character just when the quest is picking up maturity.

“We remain in this world as long as you exist, O Yathrib!” He addresses the city where the Prophet is buried, and you remember that his greatest wish always remained to be buried under the shade of the Prophet’s tomb—*this desire kept burning*.

Such a man should not stand over the graves of kings and nostalgically remember the glory of the crowned heads but Iqbal does that. ‘Graveyard of the Kings’ is an elegy which reflects on the rise and fall of the kings with mellow empathy. “Our hearts are not without memories of a bygone age,” he says in the conclusion. “This nation is not the one to forget its kings. These dilapidated tombs are but an excuse for weeping so that our eyes may see better with the light of tears”—see better, *how?*—“The Majesty of this nation is a thing of the past but the Beauty of this nation is yet to be manifested in the future.”

It brings you back to ‘March 1907’. *Now Beauty will be revealed to all and the secret concealed by silence will come out*.

Standing there on the tomb of the kings, the poet is performing a death rite that will properly close the chapter of absolute monarchy in the history of his nation.

He is remembering only the good things about the dead because that is how you perform funeral but he is not waking them up to rise from their slumber and come back to rule the world. He

is not shedding tears for their sake alone—*these dilapidated tombs are but an excuse for weeping so that our eyes may see better with the light of tears.*

You weep most bitterly when you know that someone is not going to return. Tears shed in the graveyard of the kings should open your eyes and make them see that the age of Majesty is gone. *This is the age of openness.* Beauty will be revealed to all and Love shall rule.

44. Mother

“China, Arabia and India are ours all alike; We are Muslims and we belong to the whole world,” Iqbal formulates his national anthem and you know where he is coming from—*May the humankind be my nationality and the world be my country.* “Iqbal’s anthem is *the call of the marching bell*: our caravan is afoot once again.”

He seems to understand that the humanitarian ideal is always universal in poetry and philosophy but in order to become effective and workable it has to start with a critical mass of likeminded people—“Civilization has replaced old idols with new ones and the greatest of these is the nation-state,” he says in the very next poem. “O Mohammedan! Rise up to demolish this new idol. It creates rivalry among nations, it turns trade into imperialism, it degenerates politics into exploitation and it ravishes the house of the weak. It divides humanity into factions and strikes at the roots of the Muslim concept of a nation”—*the purpose of Muhammad’s mission was to found Freedom, Equality and Brotherhood for all humankind*, you remember how he described the mission statement of the Muslim nation in ‘Mysteries of Selflessness.’

How would it be different from imperialism of the Muslim kings in the past or the colonialism of the Western nations in the present? This question becomes increasingly complicated as you learn through the next poems that the Muslims are being defeated all over the world. Whatever worldly power remained in their hands is fast slipping away and even their lives are not safe. On a trip to the heaven, Iqbal is presented before the Prophet and the only offering he can present to his master is a drop of tear, “In which the honor of your followers is reflected since it contains the blood of the martyrs of Tripoli.”

He is less careful with God and goes hysterical in his ‘Complaint’ where he questions the Divine Wisdom in depriving

the Muslims of all temporal power. Other nations also have good guys and bad guys, he complains to God. “However, Your blessings are reserved only for them and the lightning always strikes the poor Muslims. You have become the laughingstock of Unbelief, do You realize that?”

The candle at the poet’s house rebukes him for this outcry. “I burn because it is the inner calling of my conscience,” she says. “But you are immolating yourself so that you may look attractive to the moths!” However, as the poet tells you, his Love was “subversive, headstrong and clever” and hence his cry pierced through the skies. Yet, “the only one who understood the substance of my complaint was Rizwan”—the angel who waits at the gates of heaven—“for he recognized me as human being, the one who was banished from paradise.”

God Himself answers at last. He does not sound very disapproving but points out in very clear terms that there are no Chosen Peoples—“Infidels get rewarded when they follow the path We unfolded for you.” The only distinction of the Muslims is that they are the trustees of the message revealed through Muhammad, which message must last forever—“Your skirt is clean of the dust of earth-rooted-ness, for you are a Joseph to whom every land is a homeland.”

The Muslim nation as such cannot vanish from the earth—*The survival of this noble community has been divinely promised*, as you heard Iqbal state later in ‘Mysteries of Selflessness’. However, the present Muslims must take lesson from history and see that God is capable of picking up people even from idol-houses and investing them with the honor of serving His cause.

“With the power of Love you should lift every underdog from dust,” is God’s advice to the Muslims. “Spread light in the world with the name of Muhammad. Reason is your shield and love is your sword, O my dervish!”

Iqbal’s ‘Prayer’ follows this censure after a few other poems. “Lord, fill the Muslim’s heart with a desire so fervent that it should set the heart aflame and stir the soul,” he prays solemnly. “Give piercing vision to those deprived of sight, and show to others what I have seen.”

A little ahead of this, more than halfway through the book is ‘In Memoriam of the Late Mother.’

It is as if the architect has built a simple serene tomb for his dead mother in this enclave. You stand here and you see flashbacks of the poet's childhood. Also his tremendous grief at the death of his mother. Then his conclusion: life and death are both created by Nature. Out of these, life is so dear to her that she has kept it in the instinct of every organism to seek its own survival. Such a Nature cannot grant death the absolute victory over life. Surely there is resurrection.

Resurrection?—*I do not deny heaven.* But will he retract from his demand for *instant gratification* in the face of the grave necessity of waiting till the next life before he could meet his mother again?

It seems that he does so—“Your picture makes me weep bitterly,” he addresses his dead mother. “O, it negates my profound philosophy.” Pain defeats the cold logic of brute reason and takes the poet back into the age when he could not even speak properly. He steps down from the pulpit of seasoned wisdom and becomes a child once again in the lap of his mother—“Laughing without pretence, free of all concerns, we are returned once again to our paradise lost.”

The tomb of his mother is a reality check, lest the flights of fancy take him too far from the world of phenomena. His dear mother rests here and cannot be woken up except by the will of God—“May the sky shed dew drops on your grave; may this abode be guarded by fresh sprouts of green forever,” the last lines read like inscription on a tombstone.

He is burying his dead mother but it seems as if the earthly part of him, which was born of her, is going to rest here too. For, it so happens that the very next poem is what you were looking for since you came to this enclave.

It is called ‘A Ray of the Sun’ and it begins with the world-illuminating sun rushing upon the night like a brigand. The poet gets refashioned—this time the mighty hands of Rumi chiseling him through Love to mature his unfinished statue into a man.

The poem does not name Rumi but you cannot be mistaken. “A ray of the sun was wandering across the sky in the morning when I was engrossed in a desire to see things,” it begins. The poet asked the ray why it was quivering with anxiety and whether it was

a quantum of lightning with which the sky would strike down entire nations.

“I am the message of awakening from the *world-illuminating sun*,” it replied. “I will become collyrium in the eyes of humanity to show them that which the *night* kept hidden.”

You are back into the garden itself. The tomb of the poet’s mother was in fact on the marker between the garden and the extended track of the poet’s private journey.

45. Shakespeare

At the very next step you find the grave of Urfi, a Persian poet. Instead of shedding any tears—unlike what he did in the graveyard of the kings—Iqbal directly asks the dead poet for a word of advice. Contemporaries are not lending him an ear, he complains—*My own age does not know the secrets*, as he would say later—and the dead poet replies through one of his couplets.

“Stop bickering,” he says. “Raise your voice higher if the audience is inattentive; quicken the beat of your song if the camel is overloaded”—Become the *voice of the poet of the future?*

Is that how Iqbal interpreted Urfi’s message?—raise your voice higher enough to reach some other audience who are living in some other time?

If Rumi is the mentor then Urfi is a likeminded colleague. Iqbal says in the poem itself, “The imagination of Urfi constructed a palace for which one could sacrifice the wonder-houses of Avicenna and Farabi”—is it not how Iqbal would like to see his own garden, which he is now beginning to plan?—“Urfi wrote such a voice on thin air of Love that it does not fail to touch the hearts after all these ages.”

Next, ‘In Reply to a Letter,’ he announces that he will not wait upon any prince for worldly gains since he is now seeking the company of Khizr, the knower of primordial secrets who had drunk from the Fountain of Life. References occur to other beacons of guidance—Nanak, the founder of Sikhism; Moses, the prophet of revolution; Bilal, the African slave of the Prophet Muhammad. Abu Ubaidah, the general who demonstrated the principle of Muslim brotherhood in ‘Mysteries of Selflessness,’ reappears with a reminder that the fruits of Islam are not to be sought in the past alone, but also to be expected in the future—hence countering the modern skepticism towards the Unseen.

You reach upon a meadow surrounded by these guideposts on all sides. It is ruled by 'The Flower Princess.' In previous references to female presence you may have found the poet restless, a pensive mood lurking between the lines even if ever he declared that he had arrived at some destination in his love. This meadow is different.

One day the dew was saying to the bud—the poem begins—"I stayed awhile in the Paradise but the effect of your garden is so intoxicating that the very sight in my wonderstruck eye is carrying paradise in its lap. I have heard that a princess is the ruler over this garden, whose very footprints could turn a desert green. Please take me to her sometime. Oh, you can hide me like perfume in your skirt and carry me along!"

To this, the bud replied, "Our ruler is a princess who can make stones shine like gems with a mere kick of her feet. However, your nature is given to falling down and her status is high, hence you cannot accompany us to her court. Yet, you can reach her by becoming a tear in the eye of someone who has suffered, for our princess turns the abundant tears of sufferers into pearls by looking at them." You are to figure out for yourself who is the dew, the bud and the Flower Princess, but the principle stated here is obvious: resignation brings fruit.

The last guidepost is a voice coming from the sky. It is the evening star. It is declaring that dawn itself bows down before the night on which the Prophet Muhammad journeyed to heavens and came back. Will Iqbal's own narrative take you to an odyssey across the skies at some point?—you wonder.

Next is a serene monument dedicated to Shakespeare. Outside stands a solitary 'Flower'. That's unusual, because flowers usually grow more than one on any plant. Then you know why there is only flower.

This is the dewdrop. Flower Princess must have come here and left her footprint. The dewdrop fell on it and became a flower—the private tribulations of the poet's heart and his agony at not being able to tell you the secret he wanted to share with you since 'March 1907' have all transmuted into this solitary flower. You hear a voice telling it—the voice of the Flower Princess perhaps, "O Flower! Mend your torn garment before you worry about the nightingale's bleeding heart. Detach yourself from the domain of

color and perfume if you wish to remain untouched by the Autumn.”

You are the nightingale. The poet detaching himself from the temporal world, so that this garden may still be green when you come here from the future. His Joseph was for your market.

You step inside the canopy of ‘Shakespeare’ Monument. It is a compact poem of seven couplets but you begin to see things not printed on the page.

You had wondered why Iqbal wrote his cannon in three languages. Here, you see that the cannon represents four languages. Since every word is informed by the Quran, Arabic is represented through the very principles on which the garden is built. Persian represents the cultural heritage of the Muslim civilization while Urdu, the latest entrant to this stream, witnesses the anti-classical character of faith itself.

English, the language of the new world, represents the near future. Future is important not only because Iqbal himself is the voice of the poet of future but also because *you* have come from there. A monument honoring the greatest poet of that language was a fitting spot where Iqbal should break away from his own world and hide for ever.

The biography of the poet’s mind ends under the canopy of this monument. From this time forth, all expressions will be for the sole purpose of helping you discover his secret. *Make thee another self, for love of me, that beauty may live in thine or thee*—you hear, but Iqbal didn’t say it.

You hear another voice, soft as if coming from your heart. It says that in this world a mirror is created for everything so that each creation should see itself. The quiet of the evening is a mirror to the evening song, and the chamber of the cup is a mirror to the beauty of the wine. Beauty mirrors Truth, and the heart mirrors Beauty. “O Shakespeare!” The voice gets louder, “The beauty of your verse mirrors the human heart. Life finds perfection in your sky-soaring thought—was your luminous nature the goal of existence itself?”

You wish you could know what *he* saw in the mirror of Shakespeare’s verse. “When the eye wished to see you, and looked, it saw the sun hidden in its own brilliance,” the voice continues to address the English poet. “You were hidden from the eyes of the

world, but with your own eyes you saw the world exposed and bare. Nature guards its secrets so jealously, it will never again create one who knows so many secrets.”

The voice was Iqbal’s. You know it by the graceful courtesy he has shown in leaving the presiding chair for the Bard on the very eve of his own ministry as a prophet of Nature’s secrets. His gesture has declared the English poet a counterpart of Rumi in another tradition.

The poem has ended, nothing else is written on paper. You are wondering why could he not try again—as he once did unsuccessfully in ‘March 1907’—to tell you more clearly about his secret in simpler, clearer words rather than putting on an antic disposition.

You hear another voice, this time coming from your most generous thoughts and explaining the problem of delay:

Sir, in my heart there was a kind of fighting that would not let me sleep—*the voice sounds familiar*. Let us know, our indiscretion sometimes serves us well, when our deep plots do pall; and that should learn us there’s a divinity that shapes our ends, rough-hew them how we will. There is a special providence in the fall of the sparrow. If it be now, it’s not to come; if it be not to come, it will be now; if it be not now, yet it will come—the readiness is all.

He knew you will come but he also knew that it will be long after since he is dead—Since no man owes of aught he leaves, what is it to leave betimes? Let be. The interim is mine, and a man’s life no more than to say ‘One’.

The works of Shakespeare and Iqbal have an affinity with Time—*you think*. You get to know all three better by looking within yourself. Also, all three outlast marble and gilded monument.

So, till the Judgment that yourself arise—*the voice comes again*—You live in this, and dwell in lovers’ eyes. *It has given the garden over to you*.

I cannot live to hear the news from Future, but I do prophesy the election lights on you. You have my dying voice. So tell yourself, with the occurents, more and less, which have solicited—*the voice breaks*.

It could not tell you what has been solicited for you. You have to find out for your self. So, this is what Iqbal saw when his heart

looked into Shakespeare's mighty verse? Premonitions about own death, your arrival and all his love for you—you think.

Then you think again. The words are not Iqbal's. The voice has come from your *generous* thoughts. Now, you realize that just now you have seen a reflection of *your* heart.

The rest is silence, and you have been hearing it all along.

Tentpole

46. Khizr

You move on. Soon, you find Iqbal standing by a river at night.

“Suddenly, I see that Khizr—the world-traveler in whose old age there is the color of youth, just like the dawn—is saying to me, ‘O seeker of the Secret of Creation! The destiny of the world reveals itself when one sees with the inner eye.’”

You remember that Iqbal had restrained from seeking positions at the princely courts for the very reason that he sought the company of this guide. Now, there he is—standing before Iqbal. Yet, you know that Iqbal is not relating his biography anymore. The purpose of this poem, ‘Khizr of the Way’ is to tell *you* something. Perhaps, it could even be a test.

Iqbal asks Khizr why he always wanders in the desert—and you remember that you have asked yourself why Iqbal chose the nickname the ‘Old Man of the Desert’ for screening himself while he revealed the first secret about his garden. You understand that he has now asked this question to Khizr, so that you could hear the answer from the knower of primordial secrets himself.

He also asks Khizr about the secrets of Life, kings, the conflict between labor and capital, and the plight of the Muslim World. *Kings* are definitely related to your trail, but could other things also be related?—you wonder.

One who is possessed by the madness of Love keeps seeking new wildernesses, Khizr begins to answer—and you

understand, 'Old Man of the Desert' simply meant that the speaker has been possessed the madness of Love and seeks new wildernesses.

In a population you are chained to the mundane activities of livelihood, Khizr goes on. Life is a glass that becomes more unbreakable as it is passed around. O unaware one, *this is the secret of everlasting life—Khizr himself acquired an everlasting life, you remember.*

Life is more than calculation of profit and loss, he says. It is revealed through its capability of acquisition although it is contained in a body of dust—*is not acquisition related to the calculation of profit and loss? You wonder. "This is the Hour of Judgment, O unaware one!" says Khizr. "Bring forth a feat now, if you have it on your scroll!"*

Then he turns to the secret of the kings—Iqbal chose *him* to tell *you* the ultimate secret of your first important clue so you may hear it from the most authentic source!

"Whenever the kings enter a population they devastate it," Khizr quotes from the Quran and then explains that it is in the very nature of imperialism that it should keep people in a perpetual state of self-denial. Any institution born out of kingship is inherently compelled to act as a sedative even if it were sugar-coated. It cannot be any other way—and now you understand why the principle of kingship remained irreconcilable to the poetry of Iqbal although he was sometimes accommodative to some individual rulers.

Khizr then presents an irony in the plight of the Muslim World itself. "Do not tell me about the clash between the Turks and the Arabs, for I know it all," he says—and you recall the tension between Mustafa Kemal and the Old Man

of the Sanctuary. He then goes on to describe how the Arabs have sided with the European powers against the Ottoman Turks, and you see the irony. The Ottoman Empire was also an *empire*. Now their pride is eating dust, but also the unity of the Muslim nation is shattered and the blood of the Muslims is being spilled like water.

“However,” Khizr begins to wind up. “You are anxious because you do not know the *secret*”—the secret of what? Could it be the one you are looking for?

Unexpectedly, he delivers a message from Rumi. The message is direct, clear and terse. It cannot be mistaken:

Rumi says, in the reconstruction of every structure,
Do you not know that the previous edifice has to be
demolished first?

Resurrection! You are familiar with this pattern. Burn the books and find your self. Lose your self and rediscover it.

However, this time it is not about the annihilation and resurrection of some books or an individual. It is about the entire Muslim World.

“Love was obliged to raise a complaint, and so it did,” Khizr continues. “Now hold back and watch the effect. You saw the river rising majestically to the crest, now watch how the pulsating wave forms a chain”—Is he sounding death-knell on Europe or does he mean something else?

“The dream which Islam saw of universal freedom”—*the purpose of Muhammad’s mission*—“O Muslim, today you will see that dream interpreted,” Khizr declares.

It is still night, you realize. The Muslim day is counted from evening to evening, so Khizr has only till the next sunset for his promise to be fulfilled. What is going to happen by then?

“Phoenix needs its own ashes in order to regenerate,” he continues. “You will see this age-beaten world be born again after its death” – before the next sunset?

“O, open you eyes and see a faint picture of the coming era in the mirror of my speech. There is still another time-tested plague in the sleeve of the Sky—watch how strategies fail in the face of destiny.” This is problematic.

The entire point of the narrative up till now has been to show you what you can achieve by yourself. Now Khizr is introducing predestination. There seems to be a contradiction.

“You are Muslim,” says Khizr to Iqbal. “Let desire spring eternal in your breast and let the words of God, *My promise is never broken*, stay before your eyes at all time.”

One promise have heard presently was that the age-beaten world would rise up from the dead. However, that promise was made by Khizr, and not by God. Or is Khizr trying to tell you that the message was intended by God as well?

You cannot know, for the Guide is gone. The next poem is ‘The Dawn of Islam,’ and it begins with a voice addressing Iqbal. The voice could still be Khizr’s but it is not specified.

“You should know that the morning will be bright if the stars begin to dim before it,” the voice says. “The sun has appeared on the horizon. Time of deep slumber has passed.”

“Lifeblood is coursing again in the dead veins of the East,” the voice says. “Avicenna and Farabi cannot understand how.”

The phoenix has risen from ashes. The promise has been fulfilled. It is the same day, but a new morning.

47. Phoenix

“The Muslim became Muslimized by the tempest of the West,” the voice continues. “Roughness of the river feeds the pearl”—the analogy sounds obscure. Roughness of the river feeding the pearl is being presented as the underlying principle behind the Muslim becoming Muslimized. But who has ever heard of any connection between the roughness of the river and the growth of the pearls in it? Is the poet getting carried away, or are you missing out on something, you wonder.

“The Divine Grace is about to bestow on the Believer once again the magnificence of the Turk, the intellect of the Indian and the speech of the Arab”—you notice the emphasis on principles rather than personifications, since it is not the Turk, the Indian or the Arab who are the main issue here but magnificence, intellect and speech commonly attributed to them.

Principles do not exist on their own, you think. They have to exist *through* someone and the distinction between a principle and the person in whom it is witnessed is only theoretical. The intellect of an Indian, for instance, cannot be extracted from her or him the way a chemical is extracted from a substance and packed in a bottle to be dispatched. These analogies are as cryptic as Khizr’s predictions.

“O nightingale!” The voice is now addressing Iqbal. “If some drowsiness from the sleep is still left in the flower buds, then *raise your voice higher if the audience is inattentive*”—Iqbal is

reminded of what he heard from Urfi on his grave; could it be that this voice is coming from Urfi again?

“Agitate in the courtyard of the garden, in the nest and in the branches of the trees, for a quicksilver-destiny cannot be separated from mercury” —at least the voice accepts it as a general rule that principles cannot be separated from their subjects. Then did it make an exception before?

“Why should an eye that can look at purity be bothered to see the armour of the horse when it can see the warrior’s valour itself!” Says the voice.

Now you understand what has happened. The analogies do not make sense because if you look at them from the perspective of the earthly life. But this is not the same world as it was. *You will see this age-beaten world be born again after its death*, Khizr had said. This is the resurrected world.

Resurrection means that things will be born again. However, it also means that they will be born inward-out. Soul, which in the previous world could not have been perceived except through the body which it occupied now becomes more tangible than the body itself.

In the world born again, the principles are tangible and can be experienced independent of the bodies which were inseparable from them before. Magnificence, intellect, speech and valor are not abstractions anymore. They are as tangible here as were the Turks, Indians, Arabs and the warriors in the previous parts of the Garden.

Previously, you had to discern a hidden principle by looking at its working in the nature—you could see the apple falling from a tree anytime but you had to use your imagination to figure out what law was working behind it. Now, you will

be seeing the principle directly and will have to figure out the possible applications of that principle by yourself. It is as if the law of gravity becomes apparent to you by itself but unless you use your imagination, you cannot know that it can work to make the fruit fall from the tree.

You now understand that the previous analogy was not obscure either: *The Muslim became Muslimized by the tempest of the West. The roughness of the river feeds the pearl.* In the new world you will get to know principles before you know their application—do not think anymore in terms of *underlying* principles, readjust yourself to cope with *overlying* principles!

“Light the lamp of desire in the conscience of tulip,” the voice asks Iqbal, and this time you know that it can be taken literally. “Turn each and every particle in the Garden into a witness on the search.”

Iqbal does not rise up. He says nothing. You realize that the voice had not asked him to *say* anything. He has only been told what he is supposed to do but he will wait for his turn for doing it.

“Tears of the Muslims are working like the drops that lodge in the hearts of oysters,” —perhaps the voice is referring to the agonies suffered before this resurrection—“Pearls will be formed again in Abraham’s river. It is now the refastening of the People of Illumination” —the Muslim nation—“fruits and leafs are about to be seen again on this Mohammedan branch of the tree.”

“The morning breeze creates its companion for the road out of the perfume of the rose: our debonair has also stolen away the hearts of Tabriz and Kabul”—the heart of Tabriz obviously means Sufism because Rumi’s mentor came from

that city and the heart of Kabul means kingdom because Iqbal dedicated a book to the King of Afghanistan, but who is this debonair?

“Grieve not over what the Ottomans had to undergo, for it takes the blood a thousand stars to see one daybreak” — Khizr had this tone when earlier he delivered the message of Rumi.

You remember the clash between the Ottoman imperialists and the Arabs, who had sided with the Allied forces. Then you remember Mustafa Kemal, the founder of a modern democracy in the Muslim world, who was mentioned in *A Message from the East*. Now it seems that he not only managed to defend his country through a definitive victory over the Allied enemies but he also restrained himself from prolonging a war once his defense was secured. Accepting the cessation of the Arabs, he created a manageable republic out of the ashes of the Ottoman Empire—a pioneer in denouncing imperialism from the platform of any historic empire itself.

You make the connection. The destruction of an old world, which was only mentioned in the Preface of *A Message from the East*, was the larger picture. The annihilation of the Muslim world, which you witnessed as if from the inside, was a detail. Iqbal could not have given you an insider’s view without bringing you inside the corner where he belongs—the Muslim world.

Without an insider’s view you could only have had information but no observation, nor any first hand experience. Now you are taking everything from the inside.

“To see the world is far more difficult than ruling over it, since the awakening of the inner eye requires a heartrending

exertion—narcissus weeps over its blindness for a thousand years before one seer is borne by the garden.” The reference is to Mustafa Kemal, but you cannot tell whether the voice is praising him for being a seer already or warning him that it will not be an easy task to become one.

“O nightingale!” The voice addresses Iqbal. “Sing, so that your melody may arise the valor of the falcon in the delicate body of the dove”—you notice that the voice has again separated a single principle of the falcon from the entire set of its habits.

“You have been carrying the secret of life in your breast, say it now”—does it mean *the* secret, you wonder—“State the love and passion of life to the Muslims.”

Iqbal now gets up and delivers his address. “You are the hand and the voice of Everlasting God, O negligent one! Acquire certainty, for you have given away to doubt”—*the snow of philosophy, you recall, kindle a fire in your rubble?* You feel as if you understand him better than the rest of the assembly.

“The destination of the Muslim lies beyond even the skies,” he continues. “Stars should be the stardust of the caravan that you are—space is temporal, creation is mortal but you have the eternity to yourself since you are the last revelation of the Divine Truth.

“Your heart blood is all the henna the tulip needs, for by the virtue of your connection to Abraham you are an architect to the world. Your nature is trusted with the possibilities of life, you are like the touchstone of the unmanifest essence of the world”—he is turning principles into concrete realities, carefully choosing his words to construct an inward-out world.

“You are the gift which prophet-hood took from the temporal world to Eternity” —this rephrasing of the Muslim belief in the finality of their prophet matches the subtlety of the morning breeze turning the perfume of the rose into its companion for the road.

“It is evident from the story of the People of Illumination—the Muslim nation—that you are the defender of all the Asian nations. Read again the lesson of truthfulness, of justice, of courage—and you will be chosen to lead the world.” The references are unmistakably to Siddique, Farooq and Hyder, the pioneering caliphs who were introduced to you in much detail in the first book. Here, it is only their principles that are mentioned.

You are now suspecting something. There is only one possible explanation that can fully explain everything that has happened up to this point, but if that assumption is true then it will redefine who you are. Is it possible that you could miss such a major indication to who *you* really are?

“The decree of Nature as well as the hidden meaning of being a Muslim is nothing but universal brotherhood and abundance of Love,” says Iqbal.

This is all the confirmation you needed. You remember the affinity you felt with Adam resurrected at the end of the Creation Story. How, things he stated before God sounded so relevant to your experiences here. Now you understand why you felt that way.

Just a while ago you heard Khizr say, it *is* the Hour of Judgment. Then you didn’t know that he was referring to the same catastrophe that had brought down the old world and created you from the ashes of culture and civilization.

You, the new Adam, are therefore *the resurrected Adam*.

48. Principles overlay

Adam resurrected on the Day of Judgment, addressing God, was an analogy to your function in this garden. “*Although his sorcery deluded me, excuse my fault, forgive my sin,*”—you know that the sorcery of Devil is to make you see all contradictions as absolute dichotomies while the rule of non-contradiction is the discovery of a unifying principle between dichotomies and thus becoming a witness to Oneness.

You could not have practiced this if you had not accepted the challenge of the narrative, which was to look out for dichotomies and highlight contradictions—“*the world could not have been subdued otherwise.*” Otherwise you may have agreed with the principle at face value but not been able to discover its truth through your own action—“*for pride could not be taken prisoner without the halter of humility.*”

This is the new world Nature was building up in the depths of life for a new Adam—for you.

“Break the idols of race and blood to merge yourself with the nation and let there be no more Turks, Iranians, Afghans,” Iqbal is addressing the assembly. “For, how long will you remain in the company of domesticated birds when you have the strength of the wild falcon in your wings!”—again, a particular *principle* of the falcon extracted like an essence and packaged for free distribution in this assembly?

“The resolution of a true Muslim in this world of doubts is like the monks’ candle in the darkness of a desert night”—

the monks' candle? What about the reawakening of the *lion which leapt out of the desert and overthrew the Great Roman Empire?*—is he a monk too!

“That which extirpated the tyranny of Caesar and Chosroes, *what was it?*” —It was—“The strength of Hyder, the poverty of Abu Dhar and the truthfulness of Salman the Persian” —*principles!*

Even in his ‘March 1907’ poem he meant *principles*, not eventualities, but only the esoteric company could have grasped this subtlety. Hence, *the tavern’s sage remarked, ‘He has a big mouth, he will be disgraced.’* The rest of the world needed to see this resurrection and have an actual experience of the inward-out world where principles could be overlying and hence easily discernible—*Now Beauty will be revealed to all and the secret concealed by silence will come out.*

The lion “reawakened” will also be a lion *resurrected*—inward out. In other words it will be the principles of a lion separable from the entity itself. Hyder, Abu Dhar and Salman belong to history but their luminous principles cannot die—*There’s none like them, but still I seek*, the Shaykh had said in the verses of Rumi.

“Slaves of centuries are peeking through chink in the door, how charmingly the free ones of the nation have taken off again”—other slave nations are looking, not at the heroes but at the *principle* of their speed.

“Permanence in life comes from resolute faith in this world—see how the Turk has sustained longer even than the German! This amber of dust”—he means the human being—“grows the wings of the Holy Spirit.” Again, a certain *principle* of the Holy Spirit.

“Neither swords nor schemes can free you from bondage but chains get cut when a taste for certainty is acquired in the heart,” he seems to be shifting to another subject, one of more practical import.

“Who can judge the strength of a true believer’s arms when a look from him is enough to change *destinies!*”—Watch how strategies fail in the face of destiny, Khizr had said to the Poet. The theme is appearing so frequently now, as if a revelation of some secret about destiny is in the air.

“Sainthood, kingdom, command over natural resources, *what are all these?* Mere commentaries on a single article of faith!”—non-contradiction is the method through which you tap on temporal as well as spiritual powers, and this method itself is a witness on Oneness.

“However, an eye that could see like Abraham does not come easily, for greed creates idols in the heart without your knowing it.” You know where he is coming from: *then love turned to the greedy ways of lust*, you remember—“Distinction of high and low is the source of corruption in humanity. Beware, O powerful ones, the penalties of Nature are harsh!” *High and low are equal in your sight*—he had said to the sun long ago—*I also want to see things that way.*

“The reality is ultimately the same, whether something is made of earth or made of light. The blood of the sun will come out if we were to incise the heart of an atom”—*then why should this multiplicity cause strife when a common silence of eternity resides in every creation.*

He takes the point a little further now. “Firm certainty, resolute action and universal love. In the holy war of life, these are the swords for those who dare. What else could a

daring one require except a lofty spirit, pure character, warmth of heart, penetrating vision and a restless soul!"

You think of the opposite poles of history: war and love, kingdom and Sufism. Those were irreconcilable as long as appearances were inseparable from principles. In a world where principles themselves could be crystallized, will it not become possible to reconcile the two opposites back into the principle from which they originally emanated? That principle is life itself.

Principles are becoming so concrete that steel may look outdated in front of them. It is very unlikely that he should think that the days of armed conflicts are over already—even debonair Kemal had to make some good use of guns before he could pick up the perfume of the rose.

"Those who had leapt with the splendor of a falcon, turned out to be lacking in wings as well as feathers!"—the Allied had been unceasingly buffeting the Ottomans but became the easiest to be put down once the Turks changed their own perspective on things; who can judge the strength of a true believer's arms when *a look* from him is enough to change destinies!

"The stars of evening waded their way through the blood of the twilight and came out on the horizon. Those scrambling underwater received watery graves, while those who used to receive buffeting from the waves came out as pearls"—pearls are formed at the bottom of the lagoon and hence the scramblers underwater should have become pearls, but things are happening in reverse.

"Those who took pride in alchemy have turned into the dust of the road"—*Avicenna got lost in the dust?*—"Those who

offered prostrations on bare earth have become the makers of elixir.”

He is not talking about Rumi, to whom making elixir was a small thing even before the narrative started. The point here is to *prove* that things are reversing. Iqbal has now taken off to give the most startling proof that can be offered from within the structure of the narrative itself. If someone who first appeared in this garden as an outsider should now come out as the real protagonist of the entire narrative, if you could see how the real function of this character stayed unnoticed although this was the only character who remained with you throughout the narrative.

“Our slow-paced messenger brought the message of life. Those who had the lightning itself for their informant have come out to be unaware” — *who is the slow-paced messenger?*

A slow-paced messenger arrives late. The character who entered this narrative later than all others is also the one who has brought *real life* to this garden.

It is also the protagonist of the narrative. It is *you*.

49. Spiritual democracy

Whatever else it may be, 'The Dawn of Islam' is also an open-air parliament house. The presiding guests today are Mustafa Kemal and you.

This is a parliament of spiritual democracy. You have been given a place here without being asked your creed—your success in passing through the maize of dichotomies in order to arrive here is what makes you worthy of its membership.

"Islam earned a bad name due to the short-sightedness of the Old Man of the Sanctuary, but how far-sighted the young Turks have come out to be!" Iqbal offers a compliment to Mustafa Kemal and you become uneasily reminded of the strain in the young leader's relationship with the diseased heart of the Muslim world itself.

"Planets, that revolve in the sky, were saying to the earth: the creatures of dust turned out to be more alive, more lasting and more luminous! Those who have faith, live in the world like the sun—set here, rise there; set there, rise here. Conviction in individuals is all the capital needed for building a nation—this is the force which shapes the destiny of a nation."

He pauses for a beat. Then he says, "*You* are the mystery of creation, be revealed to yourself"—perhaps he is addressing you now?—"Become a confidante to the self, an interpreter of God.

“Greed has disrupted the unity of the human race. Become an illustration of brotherhood, a spokesperson for Love.

“They call themselves Indians, Asians, Afghans and Turks. Why become so dependent on shores!—take a big leap to become shore less.

“Your feathers are heavy with the dust of race and distinctions. O Bird of the Sanctuary, shake your wings before you start to fly.

“Immerse in the self, O negligent one! Self is the secret of life, transcend the spell of time and become eternal.

“Be like steel in the struggle of life. Become silk and velvet in the bed-chamber of Love.

“Pass like a river in full spate through the rugged land. Become a melodiously singing stream if a garden should come your way.

“There is no limit to your knowledge and love. In the instrument of Nature, no other song is more than you” —the Nature is represented by this garden in the narrative and you are the protagonist of the narrative itself.

Now he brings forth the mission statement of this spiritual democracy. “Humanity is still a fallen victim before imperialism—what a pity that human beings should prey upon each other. The glitter of the present civilization confounds the sight but this artistry is a display of fake jewels.

“The science in which the sages of the West used to take pride is a bloodthirsty sword in the ruthless claws of greed.

No talisman of reason can bring permanence to a culture that is based on exploitation.

“Deeds turn life into paradise as well as hell—the human being is made of dust and by nature is neither light nor fire.”

“Untie the knot of the bud and fill the nightingale with an inspiration to agitate, for you are the draught of spring to this garden” —he is now addressing you, it seems. You have brought spring to *this* garden because things are opening up with each knot that you untie! —“The spark of love has risen again from the heart of Asia—the land is teeming with green-uniformed Turks!”

The last knot you have opened has brought forth the Turks of Mustafa Kemal, all clad in green—like a host of trees in this garden. Wine extracted from the verses of Hafiz is being brought for being served to the gathering. You know that it is the same liquor which Goethe took for experiencing the hallucinatory feelings of having inhabited a different culture in a different lifetime, and picking up those truths from it which his own temperament could assimilate without letting go of his own background. This is the official drink in Iqbal’s parliament.

However, before you could even take a sip, Iqbal turns to you and says something which makes you forget even the wine of Hafiz.

“Come, a caravan has arrived at the well where Joseph was hidden,” Iqbal says to you. “Someone is there to buy the poor soul.”

50. Temple of a new David

As you follow the poet away from the parliament, you try to figure out many things in your mind. *The fables and traps of Potiphar's Wife have been washed from the slate*—the words reverberate in your memory as you realize that the poet has suddenly eliminated the fables and traps from his narrative. You had already noticed that the new world looked inward-out. Now you remember that things start happening in *reverse* when Joseph comes out.

The next book in the cannon is *Persian Psalms*, and it is like the temple of a new David—serene in its seamless arithmetical symmetry and deceptively simplistic from the outside. You browse through it quickly to locate Joseph.

The kings are asses because they are looking out for Joseph from palace roofs while he is hidden in the well—is he still in the hideout? Of course, he is. Iqbal only said that a caravan had come to the well, and someone was there to buy the poor soul.

Then the irony hits you. The caravan consisted of you, Mustafa Kemal and his men in their green uniforms. The buyer was *you*.

If only you could find the well! “Perhaps a caravan is passing through this desert,” says the second reference in this book. “After a long time I hear the song of the camel-driver. *The treasures can be seized if one Joseph comes out of the Pharaoh's prison.*”

Song of the camel-driver? Urfi had told him that if the camels are overloaded then he should quicken the beat of his song to drive them faster. He is listening to his own song after a long time because *you* are going through this narrative, reading his poetry—hence, singing his song.

Treasures can be seized *if* one Joseph comes out—of course! It merely confirms something you *knew* since the moment things started reversing themselves. Since you were not used to the world of *overlying* principles, it took you this long to know *what* you knew.

Joseph has been with you since then. Just as the *lion which leapt out of the desert* was not going to be an actual beast, Joseph was not going to be a person. But it is more than a principle, because principles are what protect it and lead you to it.

Joseph is something else. You are thinking him, you are feeling him, you are breathing him—in fact if you stop thinking right now, it will be he who will still be with you even when your thoughts have left you.

That is what the old sage at the tavern meant when he said about Iqbal in 'March 1907'—*He has a big mouth, he will be disgraced*. This is because the brotherhood of the tavern knew that Joseph cannot be discussed. It cannot be told. It cannot be conveyed through language. Not because it is forbidden to do so. Simply because it is not *possible*.

Among the brotherhood of the tavern—the Sufis—it must have been customary to discover Joseph through the personal guidance of the tavern's sage—the grand master. The Saki—some young inmate—therefore should have found it to be a startling news that Iqbal had decided to

disclose the secret to everyone—“*Bygone are the days, O Saki, when wine was taken secretly; the whole world will now be a tavern and everyone will be drinking,*” he had said to the Saki. The old sage of the tavern was obviously more skeptical than the young inexperienced Saki, and there declared that it was not possible.

Iqbal wanted the secret to reach *you*, but he knew that he could not live till your times to be your guide in person. He therefore did something ingenuous—he created a garden that could work on its own, like an interactive classroom. Hence you found Joseph.

Why *you*? You wonder, but then you remember something. *My dust is brighter than Jamshid’s cup*—he had said—*it knows things that are yet unborn in the world.* Can you look into the future with the powers of Joseph?

You realize that it is possible. In an inward-out world the future may not be hidden behind the present but *the other way round*. Principles, Joseph, future—all seem to have it in common that in the previous times they used to be hidden but now they are not. Only you need to learn how to see them.

“At times a straw becomes the screen of my eye, though at times I have seen both the worlds with just a look,” says the guideline ‘To the Reader’ printed at the very front of the book. He cannot be telling you so that you may get to know him better, since his personal side is hiding forever by the Shakespeare Monument. The purpose of putting these lines here can only be to warn you that you should not take

anything in this book as an absolute truth. Why not—if *he has eliminated fables and charms from this garden?*

“The Valley of Love is a long way away, and yet, at times, the journey of a hundred years is covered in a sigh”—the next lines seem to explain that. During a long journey, the same thing may appear different from what it seemed when you reach ahead and look back. Each perspective is to be expected for that stage only and must be transcended when you reach another stage, or else you will end up with a skewed vision!

“Persist in your search, and do not let go of the hem of hope—there is a treasure that, at times, you will find by the way.” *Overlying principles!* Treasures are supposed to be hidden away but in an inward-out world they will be found lying on the road—except that travelers may pass by without looking because they don’t expect such a thing to be lying by the way.

You know that this book is definitely about the powers of Joseph. *The treasures can be seized if one Joseph comes out of the Pharaoh’s prison*—Joseph has come out and now you are setting out to seize the treasures, except that they may not be where you should most expect them to be. They are hard to find *only* because finding them is far more easier than you could ever imagine.

The book is divided into four parts. The first part has a motto prominently written inside it:

Passing over outdoor matters, I have spoken of inside
matters;
With what bold abandon I have said things that had been
left unsaid!

Unsaid so far?—the hidden powers of Joseph. Not to be hidden anymore, but revealed with *bold abandon* in the next pages.

51. 'Prayer'

The first item in this part is a 'Prayer', which contains seven couplets. Each couplet contains a wish, and the first one is particularly striking:

O Lord! Grant me a conscious heart in my breast, give me
an eye that could *see* the effect of wine in the wine
itself.

An eye for principles. Of course, this is what you are looking for. However, the next wish is rather disappointing in comparison:

This slave who did not live on anyone else's breath be
granted a sigh that comes not from another breast.

Someone who is capable to begin the prayer with a remarkably refined desire is not expected to sound so full of himself in the very next breath—but then, *At times a straw becomes the screen of my eye, though at times I have seen both the worlds with just a look.*

Even in the third wish, the speaker hasn't learnt humility as such:

I am a torrent. Do not set me dribbling in a rivulet, but
give me to run around in valleys and spreading hills.

The fourth wish, however, is different:

Now if you have made me boundless like an ocean, grant
me the tranquility of pearl as well the tumult of
waves.

You notice a progression. The person who had a sublime desire in the beginning got trapped by conceit and seems to be learning resignation now.

However, you also recognize something else. Resignation is usually taken to be a submissive behavior. Passivity. However, in this garden it seems to be different—the Flower Princess resented those whose nature was given to falling down, and resignation was proposed as an *opposite* to excessive humility. Likewise, here the speaker desires the tranquility of a pearl without letting go of the tumult of the wave—which keeps striving to move from inner impulse—and is an ocean in oneself.

In the fifth wish the speaker is back to the old tricks of conceit, it seems:

You have set my falcon to hunt down the leopard, now
give it a high will and sharper claws.

The sixth wish on the falcon theme:

I have now set out to hunt a bird sitting atop Your Holy
Sanctuary. Give me an arrow that could do the job
without spilling blood.

It would be sacrilege to shed blood in the Sanctuary and hence the speaker is asking for an arrow that could kill without being sped—but why not just spare the poor bird?

The last wish is bloodless, but rather too simple:

Illuminate my lifeless clay with the light of the song of
David. Grant the rising spirit of sparks to every
particle of mine.

The songs of David were *Psalms*. You are reading *Persian Psalms*, and already standing in the temple of a *new* David. Why does the

'Prayer' ends in an emphasis on the *old* David when everything else in the new world is inward-out?

Because each wish is a key which will open the door to a higher stage of the self. At the highest level one must remember the Divine Revelation.

The answer has come from nowhere. It may have come from Joseph.

52. Journey

The 'Prayer' is followed by fifty-six poems—untitled but numbered. Just like the four-lined poems in *A Message from the East*, this should also be read in a sequence, you think.

Now you see that the entire section is addressed to God, but you see a contradiction. At times the Poet addresses God as if He has unveiled Himself, and yet at times he complains that God is still veiled behind screens. You saw this pattern of contradictions somewhere not long ago—where?

In the 'Prayer' itself. There, you noticed a very luminous beginning diving down and up again to form a conflict-ridden pattern, which ended on a simplistic note.

The poems in this part must represent those seven stages that need to be transcended with the help of each key provided in the 'Prayer.' With the Poet's penchant for accurate symmetries you can be almost sure that he has given eight poems to each stage of the self—eight poems into seven stages totals up to fifty-six. Hence, you divide the first part into seven segments of eight poems each—Poems 1–8; Poems 9–16; Poems 17–24; Poems 25–32; Poems 33–40; Poems 41–48; Poems 49–56.

"Love reached at Your doorstep through whatever way it took—how proud of its seeking, since the path has taken it towards You!" This is what Poem 1 says, and you recognize that it is referring to *your* Love.

Joseph is the paragon of beauty in Sufi literature and his attraction cannot be defied by *anyone*—brothers become jealous, Potiphar buys him off the market at high price, Zulaykha goes crazy and even her skeptical friends lose their minds when they catch a glimpse of Joseph. *So did you.*

You came here looking for Joseph although you didn't even know who he was—or *what* he was. You had just caught a glimpse of him through obscure references in the cannon, and you were willing to try breaking one of the most ingenious codes ever created in human history, one that defied hundreds of thousands of scholars, teachers, analysts and critics for a hundred years. *You even burnt your books!*

The friends of Zulaykha, when they saw Joseph, cut their fingers and didn't know what they were doing—they were so mystified. Likewise, you burnt your books unknowingly.

Poem 8, the last in first segment according to your division, describes your thinking before you met the Desert Guide—“Spread Your Grace on Unbelief and Belief alike, unveil Your Full Moon for all to see.” You thought that the unworthy and the worthy could reach Joseph all alike since the Garden could be traversed just by applying a systematic logic.

That logic was to *see* an invisible principle—*non-contradiction*—amid the visible appearances in the Garden. This corresponds to the first wish of the ‘Prayer’: *O Lord! Grant me a conscious heart in my breast, give me an eye that could see the effect of wine in the wine itself.*

You made this wish, but you didn't use these words—or any words. You would have known the words if your conscious

mind had made this wish, but it was rather made by your *conscious heart*.

Poems 9 to 16—the second segment—represents the second stage in your journey. It was the stage when you were being led by the Desert Guide. Realizing that the Garden was interactive, you became aware that you were not a passive reader but an active element here. Hence Poem 9 opens, “Why my voice is passionate, bold and mellow is because I have an ember in my dust and the morning breeze is blowing sprightly.” You recognize that the Garden was secondary and you were in fact headed straight for the Secret itself—this is signified in Poem 16: “You consider that I am perhaps here for the House, but am circling the Houses because I have business with the Lord of the House Himself.”

This is the part of the ‘Prayer’ which sounded egoistical to you—the second wish: *This slave who did not live on anyone else’s breath be granted a sigh that comes not from another breast.*

Poems 17–24 correspond to the third stage of your journey, which started with the guiding figure of Goethe. Here, you realized that you were the new Adam, whom Nature itself was creating from the ashes of the previous world. “The rider goes by with a glance at us who sit the way; O, hold me, for I am now beyond myself.”

This third stage in journey ended on Shakespeare Monument where you recognized that the Poet had prophesied election lights on you but you were to seek for yourself what has been solicited for you. “O Saki! Give me a drink that should spring tulips in my conscience—blow the April gust on my handful of dust,” says Poem 24, which is the last in your third segment.

The third wish of the 'Prayer' corresponds to this stage: *I am a torrent. Do not set me dribbling in a rivolet, but give me to run around in valleys and spreading hills.*

The guide who could facilitate your third wish was Khizr, who watched over you as you elevated yourself to preside over the parliament of spiritual democracy, and moved on to reach the temple of a new David.

This is where you stand now. In the thick of the fourth stage of your journey. Poems 25–32, which form the fourth segment according to your division, will mirror the reflection of your heart as it is now and here.

53. Conscious heart

Eight poems to tell you the state of your heart as it is at this stage—
but why eight?

“At times I have seen both the worlds with just a look,” you remember the note in ‘To the Reader of the *Psalms* Book.’ *Two world* with just *one* look—you should divide the eight poems by *two*?

You get four pairs: Poems 25, 26; Poems 27, 28; Poems 29, 30; Poems 31, 32.

Four pairs of *two* poems—four *dichotomies*? It seems so. They bring forth four layers of reality, four different planes on which you see the state of *your* heart.

At the lowest plane is the dichotomy between Poems 25 and 26. The first says, “I come to you having washed my heart of every image that the eyes imprint; I come to you with an empty mind and beg you to cast the coin of meaning in it.” This is how you are having Joseph right now—as something you have in you but which you may not see, may not name, may not even explain. Thus emptying your mind from all previously held notions about *things*, you are now trying to find meaning of what this new thing, Joseph, really is.

Yet, the next poem—26—says, “My unrestrained heart is illuminated by Belief, and yet it goes after the manners of the unbelievers—it bows down in the Sanctuary and yet serves idols.” You understand that the very desire of seeking a

meaning of Joseph which you could explain to others, is like serving idols—words which contains meaning—when you have the meaning itself with you. This is how your heart is reflected on the lowest plane.

The next two poems reflect your heart on a slightly higher plane. “Why on the doomsday You seek an ecstatic song from the poet? You are a riot Yourself, why seek another riot!”—the Poet can address this to God if he looks above himself but he may say the same words to you with a different meaning if he looks beneath and sees *you*—you are seeking words from him that will help you explain Joseph while you have the real Joseph in you now.

Yet, despite having such a strong urge you are also at peace—and this is other side of the picture is presented in the next poem: “Neither in my thought a strife between belief and unbelief, nor in my grief-sustaining soul a desire for Paradise”—Paradise is an exteriorization of the rewards which the soul has gathered within itself through right action in a previous world, the Poet seems to be suggesting. Your reward would be words that could help you explain Joseph, but you are willing to live without them since the meaning itself is with you.

The third plane of your heart is reflected in next two poems. “Sweet-singing bird as well as the falcon who preys upon it are both from You—the rights and wrongs of Life are both from You,” says Poem 29. You have understood that all dichotomies in the Garden are informed by the common purpose of guiding you in your journey, and yet—as Poem 39 puts it—“Better than much piety is a single step on the path of the Beloved.” You understand that everything in this Garden is informed by the same purpose, but that does not make you stop at any point. You still want to move on.

The fourth plane of your heart is reflected in the next two poems. "See how He rides sprightly in the world of my heart—see how he kills, burns and creates!" Says Poem 31, elevating your perspective to the fourth plane of your heart.

Poem 32 makes you aware of the downside even from this exalted point of view: "The world is still a necessity for me on the road of high desire, as my heart is still engaged in caravan, belongings and destination."

You know that you will hear this last statement once again before you move on the next stage of your journey. The first poem in every set of eight—according to your division—is a signifier that marks the beginning of a new stage in your journey. Hence, Poem 25, which was the first in the present set, signified your arrival at this stage—*I come to you having washed my heart of every image that the eyes imprint*. This is how you understood your position in the Garden when you met Khizr.

Poem 32, which is the last in the present set, is a signifier which will reappear before you when you have accomplished the present stage.

Something will happen, soon, which will remind you in the clearest possible terms, *the world is still a necessity for me on the road of high desire*. Then a new guide will also appear and point towards the next station.

54. Signifiers

The remaining poems of the first part give you a preview of your remaining journey till the end of the narrative.

There are seven stages of the self, and you have come to the fourth. Three more to go. Likewise, there are three remaining sets of eight poems—according to your division.

Poems 33–40 describe what you will feel within yourself at the fifth stage of your self. “Winter is over—songs have come to life among the branches again,” says Poem 33 and you see the connection with the previous signifier.

You know that the present stage of your self will end upon an awareness, *the world is still a necessity for me on the road of high desire*—but will you say it at a time when the world has come to an end in such a way that not even one voice can be heard among the trees? Then the songs will start again—the world reborn?—and that will be a signifier to let you know that you have arrived at the beginning of the fifth stage in your journey.

You will keep passing through that stage until you reach a position, “From Your light arise the black and the white—the river, the mountain, the desert, the forest, the moon and the sun,” for this is what is said in Poem 40, which signifies the end of your fifth stage.

Poems 41–48 signify the sixth stage of your soul. “Give me the heart whose rapture is from a draught of its own wine;

take away this heart, which is self-effaced and given to fancying others," says Poem 41—but why would you like a change of heart at such an advanced stage in your journey?

This signifier is strange indeed, but this is how you will enter the sixth stage and you will have passed through it when your position becomes, "Give my heart no time to agitate—add a curl or two to your tress!" Does this signifier in Poem 48 refer to the old heart which you wanted to give away or did you get a new one and even that is not functioning properly?

Poems 49–56 are the last segment, according to your division. They signify the last stage of your journey. "Embattled with the age—or the world—my soul is like a river weeping among the mountains" is how Poem 49 begins and this is how you will enter the seventh stage of your journey.

Poem 56 is the last poem in this part. It gives you the signifier which will mark the end of your journey in this garden.

Ironically, it says: "O Lord of the Sun and the Moon! Look at my scattered dust too—every particle is agitating, look at this wilderness."

You know what could be meant by your *scattered dust*. Death scatters the dust of a human being. The end of the seventh stage in your journey through this Garden is signified by death.

Your death.

55. Existence

“You are a branch of the Sidrah tree, do not become the thorns and thistles of the garden,” says the motto of the second part of *Persian Psalms*. “If you have denied His existence, do not deny your own.”

The first idea connects with the shocking revelation of the seventh signifier. Your death was mentioned there, and this one also talks about an ending—thorns and thistles of a garden end up decaying on the garden floor once the Autumns arrives. You may have a second chance though, since you are a branch of the Sidrah tree—as the motto suggests.

Sidrah is the end marker of the created world. It is a tree that is supposed to be standing at the very doorstep of the Divine Essence from where all creation started. You remember the Creation Story—how God commanded the angels to bow down before Adam, and they all obeyed the command except the Devil, who refused on the plea that Adam was created from dust. Sidrah itself may have been the scene of that happening.

The next line is more problematic. *If you have denied His existence*—why should the poet assume that you have done such a thing without knowing you?

It is difficult to imagine that he would suddenly try to sound universal now by making an exception for some visitors who not believe in God and still come to this Garden. Up to now he has not made such exception but rather carried on in such

a way that your function in the narrative fulfilled itself without getting into any argument about your formal denomination.

There is another reason why you cannot assume that the Poet is specifically addressing atheism here. He is telling you that you *are* a branch of the Sidrah tree, and that would make no sense if he were making readjustments for a possible atheism in the role of the protagonist.

Keeping it in mind that the central premise of this entire motto is that you *are* a branch of the Sidrah tree, it seems that the Poet is simply trying to remind you about a previous passage in the narrative. It is the Creation Story. He is reminding you of the scenes where Adam appeared at the very doorstep of the Divine Essence and the angels were asked to bow down before him.

It seems that there will come a point in this second part of the book where the possibility of your denying the existence of God will appear in a very concrete way. At that point you must remember not to deny yourself.

You do not understand *why* the Poet would like to present a situation where the denial of the existence of God becomes as much logical as accepting his existence—or perhaps the denial becomes even more logical! You can only find out by decoding this second part of *Persian Psalms*, which has begun to sound cryptic even before it has started.

Next is an untitled prefatory poem of four couplets:

Both worlds may be seen in the wine-pitcher I have—
where is the eye to view the sights I see?

Here comes another man, possessed, who shouts in the
city—two hundred commotions arise from the
obsession I have.

Do not worry, ignorant one, at the approaching darkness
of nights—for the scar of my forehead sparkles like
stars.

You take me as your companion, but I am afraid that you
are not up to the tumult and uproar I have raised.

You remember that in the first part, you were presented four levels
on which you could understand your heart. Since this prefatory
poem has four couplets, it means that this part will tell you about
each of those planes.

The first part described the seven stages of your self, and the
prefatory 'Prayer' contained seven couplets—that is why
you divided the fifty-six poems of the first part by seven.

The second part must contain a description of the four levels
at which existence of anything, such as your heart, can be
understood. This makes sense, except for one little hitch.

The total number of poems in this part is seventy-five, and
that number is not divisible by four!

You look again at the first couplet of the key: *Both worlds may
be seen in the wine-pitcher I have*. The wine-pitcher is this
prefatory poem, the wine are the seventy-five poems of the
second part itself—and *both worlds* can be seen in *the wine-
pitcher* itself?

Both worlds means the seen and the unseen—and, of course,
a poem that contains the *unseen* must have a couplet that
cannot be seen—the fifth couplet is invisible!

If you wish to see the unseen world, then you must be
willing to assume an invisible couplet present in this poem

as well, otherwise your eye is incapable of adjusting itself to the unseen—*where is the eye to view the sights I see?*

If you assume five couplets in the prefatory poem—adding its *invisible* couplet—then the seventy-five poems can be divided by the total number of couplets in this poem. 75 divided by 5 makes 15—five segments of fifteen poems each. These segments, according to your division, will be Poems 1 to 15, Poems 16 to 30, Poems 31 to 45, Poems 46 to 60 and Poems 61 to 75.

This leads you a conclusion. There are not four planes of existence, but five in this Garden. The last plane was not relevant to your introspection of your heart. *Why?*

Because the fifth plane must be the one which exists outside the heart. Hence, it was *invisible* as long as you were seeing from the perspective attained in the previous part where you looked within.

It became visible only when you looked at the second part in its *own* totality. You will discover this last plane of existence after you have grasped the first four.

56. Déjà vu

“Rise up! The hour is here that Adam shall appear—the stars bow to this handful of dust,” says Poem 1 of the first segment of the second part, according to your division.

You recognize that this is the perspective of the Garden at *your* arrival. This is what the inmates must have said to each other as you stepped into the first enclave, looking for Joseph.

Now you see that the five segments of poems may not be simultaneous planes of existence that overlay each other. They seem more like markers which you will pass by as you travel in this Garden—or you may have passed by them without noticing.

You look at the last poem in this segment. This is what you are told in Poem 15: “Greed is still acting its play of imperialism—what new turbulence hides behind this embroidered screen?”

It reminds you of something you heard in this Garden before. *Humanity is still a fallen victim before imperialism*—the Poet had said in his mission statement for the spiritual democracy while you listened amid celebrations held in your honour at the parliament house—*the glitter of the present civilization confounds the sight but this artistry is a display of fake jewels.*

You recognize a pattern. Everything in the Garden died and had to rise up again before you could hear this statement. The five planes of existence are also five zones of the Garden, and each will have to die before the next could rise up before your eyes. The Garden will die and rise again five times before its end.

You are now in the second zone—hence the first poem of the second segment according to your division should inform you about its nature. That is Poem 16, and it says: “Although the Angel dwells beyond the talisman of the skies, yet his eyes rest on this handful of dust.”

With this you become aware of what the present zone of the Garden, where you are now standing, is all about. It now makes more sense that principles should have become *visible* here. They had to be.

You are standing in the realm of angels.

57. Where angels dare

The first zone of the Garden, which died with the Great War—while Khizr, you and the Poet watched over its annihilation—was the realm of Adam.

The second world, which rose like a phoenix from its ashes, represented the realm of angels in the Garden. Angels exercise the principles that run the world, and hence they are invisible like principles themselves—but invisible only to the realm of Adam.

When you stepped into the realm of the angels then principles starting becoming visible and hence you were looking at an inward-out world. This is where you stand now, in the temple of a new David—the name is significant, for angels have also been the carriers of messages from above to the human world.

This is your opportunity to take a look at this realm from the inside. You will do so by going through all fifteen poems in this segment.

Why fifteen?—Each segment in the first part, which was a journey of your self, was divisible by four since it looked into your heart from four planes of existence.

By that method, the present part should be divisible by seven, since there are seven stages of experience. For that, there should have been fourteen poems, and not fifteen.

Yet, fifteen there should be if fourteen poems were to give you a description of the realm at seven levels of introspection while the fifteenth poem summed up a mission statement for the next realm—just as the fifteenth poem in the first segment pointed to the mission statement of spiritual democracy.

You look at the poems in this manner, and you see that indeed the present segment offers you seven layers of introspection into the Angelic domain from the inside.

The lowest level of understanding is that *although the Angel dwells beyond the talisman of the skies, yet his eyes rest on this handful of dust*—just as stated in Poem 16, which is the first in the present segment. The next poem introduces the implication of this observation: “Where is Arabia, to revive the old night-revelry? Where is Persia, to revive the stream of Love?”—a devotion to the Unseen Reality will bring you deeper into the heart of this realm.

Poems 18 and 19 elevate your introspection to the second level:

“Rise like the morning breeze and learn to blow again, learn to attract the rose and the tulip, learn to descend into the heart of the bud!” Thus Poem 18 restates a principle you heard soon after entering this realm—*the morning breeze creates its companion for the road out of the perfume of the rose*, you were told in the parliament of spiritual democracy.

Poem 19 states the implication of this principle—the action of the morning breeze: “O little flower fast asleep, rise like a seeing narcissus! Rise, for our bower has gone wasted by the onslaught of grief! Rise by the song of the songbird, rise by the muezzin’s call to prayer, rise by the burning sighs of the

fiery ones! From deep slumber, from deep slumber, from deep slumber, rise! Rise from deep slumber!”

You recognize that *deep slumber* is repeated four times in the refrain, thus addressing each of the four planes of heart.

The third level of introspection is reached in Poems 20–21. The first observes, “Our world is dusty clay trampled upon the way—I do not think that the spent breath can return.” You recognize this as an intuitive level, for intuition involves connectivity with other realms beyond the existing ones. In Adam’s World it should bring a perspective that is Angelic, but in the Angelic Realm it should bring a perspective that is human.

The implication of this human principle from a purely angelic perspective is given in the next poem, which says: “Again one must gaze on the past and the future—Ho! Rise up, for one must think anew.” You notice that this is the *human* perspective for the Angelic realm.

You are jolted up suddenly by the next poem. “My mind awhile was gone about to pace the heavens—high on the back of the moon and fast in the galaxy’s embrace,” says Poem 22 as if expressing your present state of mind—lost in the introspection of a higher realm from within its soul!

This is the principle of the fourth level, and it is presented in Poem 22. The next poem suggests its implication: “A song brought apocalypse on me and nobody knows it yet—the gathering is only aware of the low and high keys of the melody.”

This is how the Angelic realm appears at the fourth level of introspection—if you look at this realm from within, then *you* are the gathering who is only aware of the low and high

keys of the melody. Standing here in the heart of this realm, you understand that this inward-out world has inexhaustible possibilities but you have just started grasping its principles.

This fourth level seems most closely related to your present perspective. No wonder—you remember that you are at the fourth stage in the journey of your self. This is the highest level accessible to you at the present moment, and hence the fourth key of the 'Prayer':

*Now if you have made me boundless like an ocean, grant
me the tranquility of pearl as well as the tumult of
waves.*

You have become boundless like an ocean because you have access to seven stages in the development of your self and also enabled to introspect your heart at four different planes at each stage. Also, you have access to four—or perhaps five!—planes of existence and enabled to introspect each plane from *within* at seven levels of introspection.

You cannot even count how many perspectives are possible through a cross-combination of these various perspectives. *Now if you have made me boundless like an ocean* does not sound like exaggeration at all!

Tumult of waves is an analogy for the human nature and the tranquility of pearl is the mode of angelic existence. You having lived the realm of angels from *within* should be able to sustain your access to both the human nature as well as the angelic nature—as if living as part human, part angel, and boundless like an ocean for having access to both modes. *Grant me the tranquility of pearl as well as the tumult of waves.*

What about the remaining three sets of poems in this part—the three higher levels. You guess, at present you can only

try to *understand* what those poems are saying but if you were to revisit the Angelic realm after having gone through the advanced stages of your journey then you will *know* what these mean.

For instance, the fifth level of introspection is represented by Poems 24 and 25. The first reveals a higher principle, “The wine in my tavern is the legacy of no Jamshid—it is the pressing of my heart, sparkling in the glass of the East.” Even now you can see that this zone of the garden could not have been bequeathed by the kings you met in the narratives because the kings died *before this zone came into being*. You are sure that a newer perspective on this understanding could be arrived if your self has reached a higher state.

Implication of this principle is presented in the next poem: “I am a tulip of the desert, take me back from the garden—take me back to the winds of deserts, mountains and wildernesses.” The angelic realm seems to be suggesting that you are missing out on something while you are in the Garden—but what could it be? It seems to imply that you should leave this narrative and get back to your real world, but *why?*

You will know that only when you reach a higher stage of the self to match this perspective. You hope it will not be too late by then to leave the narrative!

Poems 26 and 27 state what the angelic realm seems to be offering you if you could reach a sixth level for introspecting it from within. The principle is: “I uttered a new word but it reached no one—the vision bled its heart out but not a glance could take the view.” In the Angelic zone you have heard many new words, beginning with the inward-out view of the reborn Garden but they have sure reached *you!*

The Angelic zone seems to be telling you something else about itself through this statement, and you cannot know it at present. The implication, presented in Poem 27, is: “Lover is not the one who laments but the one who carries both worlds in hands” —*how?* You can answer the question now, but will a better answer be possible if you were to try again from an advanced stage of the self?

Poems 28 and 29 reach the seventh level of introspection of this zone: “The heart of the songbirds in this Garden keeps changing ever—it is one when on the branch, and another when in the nest.”

The true implication of this principles is an eye-opener: “We are separated from God, He is looking for us—like us, He is also in love and has desire” —*God?*

You know that it is customary to say that God loves the people just as they love Him—in fact He may love them more. Yet, this restatement of this common saying sounds weird due to its analogies.

Weird it sounds, but you know that this is the highest perspective available from within the Angelic zone—you can grasp its full meaning only when you have passed all seven stages of the self.

Poem 30 is the last in this segment according to your division. “The lord has made lustrous ruby from the blood of the hireling, the peasants’ fields are desolate from the tyranny of the landlord—Revolt! Revolt! O, Revolt!”

You notice that the command, *revolt!* is repeated three times in the refrain, as if to make it formally binding on you. Are you supposed to stand up in revolt right now?

You know better. It is the last poem in this segment, and hence the end marker that will appear after the end of the Angelic zone in the Garden. Then you will be given this as a mission statement, and revolt will become obligatory.

However, by then you will not be in the Angelic zone anymore.

58. Markers

Three segments of fifteen poems each remain in the second part of *Persian Psalms*, according to your division. They are markers of three more zones that you will traverse in the Garden before you reach the end—possibly *your* end too, according to the prophecy about the particles of your scattered dust agitating somewhere in the future of this narrative.

The first zone of the Garden was Adam's world. The second, rising from its ashes, is the realm of angels. What will the third zone be like?

The third zone is presented in Poems 31 to 45. The first of these says: "Although I know that coming out unveiled will happen one day, but do not think that the soul will stop writhing."

Coming out unveiled refers to a direct vision of the Divine Essence, but *do not think that the soul will stop writhing*. The next zone will be the zone of the soul!

Poem 45 contains the marker that will appear after the zone of the soul has also ended. "The luster of a handful of dust one day shall outshine the creatures of light—earth shall be transformed into heaven through the star of our destiny." This will be given to you as a mission statement before you enter the fourth zone.

Poems 46–60 present the fourth zone. “I did not delve deeper into the religious law than this, that the one who refutes Love is an infidel and heretic.”

The fourth zone will be the zone of Love?—but you thought that the entire Garden was the realm of Love. *You will know better when you enter the fourth zone, as you can see.*

The end marker of the zone of Love will appear before you after the zone is dead. This is given in Poem 60:

After a long time I hear the song of the camel-driver. The treasures can be seized if one Joseph comes out of the Pharaoh’s prison.

You have heard it before, but you will hear it again when this is given to you as the mission after the zone of Love has died too.

59. Civilization

Poems 61—75 present the last zone. It is the fifth level, which was inaccessible from within the heart itself. It lies beyond the world of Adam, angels, soul and Love.

“Poor fool, you hope to win Europe’s sympathy?” says Poem 61—“The falcon does not grieve about the bird that’s in its clutch.” *What sense should you make out of this?*

You should expect that the zone lying beyond the realms of Adam, angels, soul and Love should be something out of this world—at least a level above the first four zones. Yet the only reference you find in the first couplet of Poem 61 is *Europe!* Even that is a dismal and critical view.

It seems that Europe, having gained supremacy over almost the entire world is incapable of showing moral mercy. *Supremacy over almost the entire world*—you hear another voice from a distant enclave in the Garden—*Greece, Egypt and Rome have all vanished from the world.*

World civilizations, of course! It seems logical that after you have transcended the four planes created by Nature, you should reach a domain which is created by you—the human being. Civilization is the last plane of existence in creation.

It is a human construct. Yet, it cannot come into existence without a grip on the same principles that work in the world of Nature—if a single house cannot stand on its foundations unless the mason has made it in accordance with the laws

that govern the forces of Nature, then how can a civilization exist unless it gains supremacy over the same?

Yet, a civilization has to be more than a conformation to the other four planes. It also has to be a *reversal* of those planes in some ways. In the earlier planes there can be principles but no values, laws but no exceptions, ethics but no morality, since the forces of Nature are merely concerned with the Nature itself. Values, exception-making and morality are human constructs. They are the things that the humans bring to this world—the gifts they offer to Life as purely human contribution.

Poor fool, you hope to win Europe's sympathy?—not all the qualities of falcon but only its ruthless instinct for indiscriminate hunting is mentioned in Poem 61. You know where that is coming from: Humanity is still a fallen victim before imperialism—what a pity that human beings should prey upon each other. No talisman of reason can bring permanence to a culture that is based on exploitation.

Now you know that the last zone in the Garden will be civilization—but what will happen afterwards? Will this zone also die like all others?

You turn to Poem 65 to see the answer—to discover the end marker that will appear before you when the last zone of the Garden has died too.

What you find there is shocking. The Poet says: "I bow down before myself. The temple and the Ka'bah are no more—*this one is missing in Arabia, that one in other lands.*"

60. Sidrah Tree

Technically, it is impossible that the Poet could bow down before *himself*—one can claim to be a god and ask *others* to bow down before him or her but no manner of twisting or bending could make it possible for one to bow down before oneself.

Hence, the Poet cannot be stating a physical act but only an intention—his intention to bow down before himself. *Why?*

“The temple and the Ka’bah are no more”—that too is not in keeping with the Poet’s views, since he believes that Ka’bah is indestructible. It is not likely that he means it metaphorically, since he is not referring to the spirit of the Ka’bah—for instance, he does not mean that the Muslims have forgotten the ideals that Ka’bah stands for, or the Hindus have forgotten the path of their ancestors. He Poet is specifically referring to the Ka’bah that stands *in Arabia*, and the temples that stand in *other lands*—they are no more.

One possibility can explain this catastrophe without contradicting the other principles of the Garden. This place, where the Poet is now standing, exists in some other Time and Space. Such a place was mentioned to you, not very long ago—the end marker of the created world, a tree at the very doorstep of the Divine Essence from where all creation started—*“You are a branch of the Sidrah tree, do not become the thorns and thistles of the garden”*—you remember the motto.

Transcending all five planes of creation, the Poet has reached the end marker from where the human life originated—this is where Adam first appeared before the angels.

The second part of the motto said, *“If you have denied His existence, do not deny your own,”* and it matches the Poet’s bowing down before himself. But why would he deny the existence of God?

The answer is obvious. He transcended all planes of creation and reached the Sidrah tree—the very doorstep of the Divine Essence. This is where he should see God, but what does he see instead? *The temple and the Ka’bah are no more*—and God is not in view either!

Denying the existence of God at this stage is not an act of volition—it is merely an involuntary logical conclusion produced by reason. However, the hazard of this conclusion is obvious.

Do not become the thorns and thistles of the garden, you remember the warning. If you deny the existence of the Almighty then you give up the transcendent basis of the fundamental principle of non-contradiction. Also, you give up the logical possibility of *your* revival after death—*If you have denied His existence, do not deny your own* is thus a logical impossibility, as you can see now. It is a riddle and a charade.

You recognize that the motto is not intended to provide a solution but only to create a theoretical deadlock that cannot be opened easily—hence the seventh key, you remember. The seventh couplet of the ‘Prayer’, the last key in the bunch:

Illuminate my lifeless clay with the light of the song of
David. Grant the rising spirit of sparks to every
particle of mine.

At the highest level one must remember the Divine Revelation. The Divine Revelation used to be conveyed to the prophets through angels, you know—and the angels bowed down before Adam. Hence the Poet bows down before himself as a final act of submission to God's command. It is a thanksgiving as well as a gesture of humility—the human being is joining the angels who bowed down before Adam at the eve of creation.

Illuminate my lifeless clay—the clay was lifeless until God bestowed upon it the gift of life. Hence, the prayer that the Poet's lifeless clay be illuminated—with the light of the song of David. Of course, the old David—despite all his elevation, the Poet must remember his humility before the chosen prophets of God.

It is also an act of courtesy, which is all about readjusting one's notion of respect to an unprecedented situation—if love is exception-making, then courtesy is the first lesson in the manners of love.

What about God?—does a pilgrim never get to see the Ultimate Reality even at the last stage of the journey?

You know better. This is just the realm of the angels while the Poet is human—and so are you. For him, and for you, there are three more planes of existence to traverse. *The world is still a necessity for me on the road of high desire—you remember the fourth signifier.*

You have passed the fourth stage. You know that the fifth stage is waiting—*as my heart is still engaged in caravan, belongings and destination.*

Second Reversal

61. Shabistry

“I have imparted insight to the pupil of your eye and created a new world in your self,” begins the ‘New Garden of Mystery’, the third part of *Persian Psalms*—“all the East is asleep, hidden from the eyes of the stars. I have created morning by the melody of life.”

You are at the fifth stage in your journey, but which zone of the Garden is it? The angelic realm should have died when the Poet traversed it to reach the Sidrah tree. Yet, the end-marker has not appeared—you have not been asked to *revolt* yet.

All the East is asleep—purgatory, of some sort! Between the death of the Adam’s world and the appearance of the angel’s realm, you passed an entire stage somewhere between the two worlds. That was purgatory—a short break to prepare you for the realm of principles, spiritual democracy and the angels.

You are in a purgatory again—this time, between the angelic realm and the realm of the soul. Its duration should be shorter, since you are becoming adept at readjustments.

“I am expressing my ideas in a different form,” says the Poet. “I am writing in reply to the book of Sheikh Mahmud Shabistry”—a Sufi writer of five hundred years ago, who hailed from Tabriz, the city of Rumi’s mentor—“That wise man of Tabriz witnessed before his eyes calamities that resulted from the invasion of Genghis Khan. I saw a revolution of another type, the appearance of a new sun”— *the European imperialism?*

“Behind my curtain lie concealed several destinies, and several resurrections take birth at my hand”—*you know that he is not exaggerating*—“My eye is riveted on immortal life. I saw your clay stranger to life, hence I breathed into your body of my own soul. First I tasted the fruit of the self myself, then I decided to share it with the people of the East”— *you know where he is coming from.*

“If Gabriel were to go through this book”—*the ‘New Garden of Mystery’*—“the Archangel would cast aside his illumination like dust and pray to God, ‘I no longer desire unveiled Epiphany’”—*you were longing for such a thing just a while ago*—“Give me the

pride and submissiveness of a human being! Give unto me the burning and consuming of a human heart!”

You know *why* this book could have such effect on Gabriel. He is the Archangel—the highest in the angelic realm—and this book is about to reveal the secrets of the realm above that.

62. ‘Travel into yourself’

The book itself contains nine questions, and their answers. You recognize that the first seven are aimed at readjusting each stage of the self to the new realm.

The last two address a dichotomy arising out of the final experience in this realm.

Questions are important, the answers are not—since the answers should reappear as you journey forward, shouldn’t they?

The questions, on the other hand, are supposed to prepare the mindset that will carry you through the realm of the soul. *“First of all I am perplexed about my thought”*—states the first question, and you recognize the paradox of your present experience, where you are required on one hand to transcend your thought and on the other hand to use cognitive skills in order to do so—*“Why is it sometimes needed, sometimes shunned?”*

“What is this ocean whose shore is knowledge?”—the second question makes you aware that Joseph is still with you. Knowledge about him is just the shore while he is the ocean itself—*“What is that pearl which is found in its depth?”*

“What is the union of the contingent and the necessary?”—the third question seems to be related to the conception of God and the meaning of prayer—*“What are near and far, more and less?”*

“How did the eternal and temporal separate, that one became the world, and the other God?”—the fourth question is bold, but it makes you aware that Joseph is not only about a union but also deals with some sort of power over destiny—*“If the knower and known are the one pure essence, what are the aspirations of this handful of earth?”*

You recognize that you know the answer of the fourth question, but you don’t know what it is that you *know*. The fourth stage of your journey was in fact all about witnessing many signs of the connection between the world and God—and the sublime

unity between the knower and the known. This is how you experienced Joseph at that stage. Hence you know the answer but a higher experience will probably help you become more aware of it. What could be that higher experience? A journey through the realm of the soul, or the fifth stage of the self?—or perhaps both.

“*What am I?*”—is the fifth question, and you can see how it is most immediately connected to the point where you stand at the beginning of the fifth stage of your journey. Since the previous stage culminated on the extraordinary courtesy of a human bowing down before himself, the next logical query should be exactly this: “*Tell me what ‘I’ means. What is the meaning of ‘travel into yourself’?*”

Travel into yourself! Of course, if the next zone is the realm of the soul then you will be traveling into your self as you travel into it. “The self is the amulet for the protection of the universe,” says the answer to the fifth question, and this may be a guideline for the present stage. “The first ray of its essence is Life”—Life awakens from its sweet dream and its inside, which is one, becomes many.

“Neither Life develops without our expansion, nor do we expand without its development”—the inner core of Life is a boundless ocean while the individuals are its manifestation—“Life is fire and individual selves are life its flames; like stars they are stationary as well as moving. The internal ardor of Life keeps it in perpetual movement as if it were at war with itself”—and you can see that the primary conflict in this narrative has been *within* yourself.

“The world gets order through this strife of the self”—just as the Garden became systematic through the conflict within you. “A handful of dust becomes translucent through strife”—just as you have become the knower of the hidden secrets of the Garden. “The body is a veil for the self, which rises like a sun in our innermost hearts and illumines our dust.”

Now you know the fifth stage of your journey. It will be to discover the secrets of *your* self—a journey into the heart of the protagonist of the narrative so that you may witness what lies within it. “I have informed you about the relation of body and soul. Now travel into yourself and see what ‘I’ is. To travel into your *self* is to give birth to yourself without parents—to catch Pleiades from the edge of the roof, to hold eternity with a single stroke of

anguish, to see without the rays of the sun—but it is difficult to unravel this secret, since it is all about *seeing* and not about *describing*—hence the need for this Garden. The secret of the self seems akin to Joseph who also can only be experienced and not described.

The self is manifest from the verse of the Quran which says, *We proposed*—“What kind of aspiration this handful of dust has that its flight is beyond the limitations of time and space. It is in prison and yet free—it is the lasso, the prey, and the hunter”—and this is equally true of your role as the protagonist of this narrative. “Don't be negligent, you are its trustee”—the Poet warns you—“What folly that you do not look within your self!”

The sixth question reads like a riddle. “*What is that part which is greater than its whole?*”—of course that part is the self, as you know, but an implication of this question at some later stage will be—“*What is the way to find that part?*” Before very long, you will confront the challenge of finding a self greater than its whole, and it will be *your* self—the Poet could not be referring to the Divine Ego as *that part which is greater than its whole*. Will this discovery take place while you are still traveling into yourself?

“*Of what sort is this traveler who is the wayfarer?*”—the seventh question seems to proceed from the stream of your conscience—“*Of whom shall I say that this one is a Universal Human Being?*” Ironically, this question must correspond to the seventh stage of your self—will *you* be the one about whom it could be said: *this one is a Universal Human Being?* Universality implies that this person should be a walking universe—a microcosm that reflects the macrocosm of creation. A God-human—as was claimed by the Sufi Mansur Hallaj, whose contemporaries crucified him for blasphemy and heresy.

“*What point does the claim, ‘I am the Creative Truth’ imply?*”—this was the ecstatic cry of Hallaj, and regarded as heresy and blasphemy by some who had him executed on that ground—“*Do you think that this mystery was mere nonsense?*”

Why should you need to know this?—unless, of course, if you may be faced with the possibility of making such an outcry yourself. You recognize the extent of challenges—perhaps hazards—that lie in the realms you are now going to traverse.

“Who was it that at last became familiar with the secret of Oneness?”—says the ninth question, and you can tell that *you* are going to be this person at the end of your journey—*“Who is the wise one that is a Gnostic?”*

“The Living God is not without a taste for beauty,” says the lyrical *ghazal* at the end of the questionnaire. “My heart burns on the loneliness of God. In order, therefore, to maintain intact His Ego-Society I sow in my dust the seed of selfhood and keep a constant vigil over my ‘I’”.

We are separated from God, He is looking for us—like us, He is also in love and has desire, you remember. You know that this is the highest perspective available from within the Angelic zone—you must be nearing the next zone, the realm of the soul.

“You are a sword, come out of your sheath,” says the ‘Epilogue’. “Remove the veil from your potentialities. Take hold of the moon, the sun and the stars—illumine your night by the light of faith, take your white hand out of the armpit”—obviously referring to a miracle of Moses whereby the prophet’s hand would glow with luminosity—“He who has opened his eyes on the heart has sown a spark and reaped a fire. Have a spark from my innermost heart, for my heart is as fiery as Rumi’s”—you are reminded again that the Garden was built on Rumi’s orders.

“Otherwise get fire from the new Culture of the West, adorn your exterior and bring death on your soul!”—the Poet had never sounded so bitterly sarcastic before. Why now?

63. Museum of bondage and freedom

The world-illuminating moon said to God, “My light illuminates the night of this earthly abode, which is distorted by the scars of servitude and whose Adam is entrapped in the net like a fish—he has done away with God and worships man. A world unaware of the light of the soul is not worthy of the sun and the moon, so cast it away into the space blue and sever the ties that bind me to this planet.”

This is how the last part of *Persian Psalms* begins. It is titled ‘The Book of Bondage’ and it stands like a little museum of bondage and freedom in the Garden of Poetry. The museum is given a corner of perpetual night and the weary moon grudges the moonbeams which shed light on the scorpion-infested marshes that lie on the way—“A brackish land, all thorns from the poison of scorpions, whose ants hunt scorpions and sting dragons, whose gale is a fire from hell and gives a fair wind to the Devil’s ship.”

As you pass by this horrible swamp to approach the Museum, you see a pointer directing towards the swamp. It reads: *Living a hundred lives in such a dreadful wilderness is better than a single moment’s slavery.*

“Songs devoid of the fire of life storm the wall like a flood. The notes of a slave are as insipid as his nature”—this is the theme of the first enclave. “Grief is of two kinds,” says the Poet. “One kind is such that it consumes you and the other kind consumes all other grief—and it is this second kind that is our companion and turns the heart into a boundless ocean. Since bondage is an ignorance of the secret of life, its song is empty of the second kind of grief—its notes may conform to the rules of music but such bewailing suites only a widow.” *Sweet is the world of phenomena to the living spirit, dear is the world of Ideas to the dead spirit.*

In music there is a stage where speech develops without words, says the Poet. Then he quotes from Rumi—one whose threshold his thought prostrates:

Meaning is that which transports you aloft
And makes you independent of the apparent form;
Meaning is not that which makes you deaf and blind
And makes one enamoured of mere form all the more.

Similar is the case of painting—the next enclave displays the masterpieces of slave artists. A monk entrapped in the snare of carnal lust, a beloved with a bird in a cage, a king sitting before a dervish, a highlander with a bundle of wood on shoulders, a beautiful maiden on her way to the temple, a hermit sitting in the solitude of his cell, a puny old man crushed under the burden of old age in whose hands the flame of life has gone out, a musician lost in a strange and alien song, a nightingale bewailed and a youth torn by the arrows of beloved's glance, a child on the neck of his aged grandfather—"From the pen flows nothing but discourses of death," comments the Poet. "Everywhere there is the story and spell of death."

He blames it on the slavish following of the natural sciences by the arts—"It is wrong to seek beauty outside one's self, because what ought to be is not before us," he says. When a painter submits before Nature, he depicts Nature but loses thereby his own self. His today is devoid of reflections of tomorrow"—*by extending Time like Space and distinguishing Yesterday from Tomorrow, you have fled like a scent from you own garden*—"Life is nothing without the capacity for new creations, but not everybody knows this secret.

"The artist who adds to Nature reveals before our eyes his inner secret. Although his ocean does not stand in need of anything, yet our rivulets do contribute to it"—*just as your presence is contributing to the garden of this poet*—"He transforms the old values of life and his art establishes the true standard of beauty—his houri is more charming than the houri of paradise. He creates a new universe and gives a new life to the heart.

Otherwise get fire from the new Culture of the West, adorn your exterior and bring death on your soul—you remember the Poet's bitterness and you recognize that it stemmed from the fact that the West was using the power of scientific knowledge for the perpetuation of political slavery in foreign lands—Newness is a heresy in the religion of the slaves, says the Poet. "New things increase their doubts and misgivings while their hearts are pleased with everything old and decayed—they always look to the past and are blind to the future. If this is skill then it is the death of ambition."

Religion of the slaves is the last display in this museum. *Religion and love are separated in bondage*, is the thematic introduction of this enclave. "A slave underestimates both religion and wisdom. In order to keep his body alive, he gives away his soul. He offers lip service to God but the centre of his attention is the power of the ruler—power that is nothing but ever-increasing falsehood and nothing but falsehood can come out of it. A ruler is an idol who is your god only as long as you prostrate before it and vanishes as soon as you stand up before it." The slave of such a puppet cannot have breadth of vision in his talk and his religion is as narrow as his world—"Life is a heavy burden on his shoulders, he nourishes death in his own bosom and with his breath is extinguished many a fire. In reality he becomes a denier of tomorrow"—*Knowing not the origin of Time, you are ignorant of everlasting Life*—"The fetters are not on feet, but on the heart and the soul."

The lord has made lustrous ruby from the blood of the hireling—the words are not written on this page but someone is reading them for you from elsewhere—*the peasants' fields are desolate from the tyranny of the landlord*.

You know what it means. It is the end marker of the Angelic zone and you have been given a new agenda. It is nothing less than *Revolt! Revolt! O, Revolt!*

64. Taj Mahal

You now stand in front of Taj Mahal, which appears like the secret of a loving heart exposed in the moonlight. Its marble, perforated by the eyelashes of the lovers, ripples faster than flowing waters and a moment spent here is more stable than eternity. *Just cast a glance on that pure jewel*, says the signboard.

“Love of free individuals is pure and charming like a paradise,” says the Poet. “It produces songs from brick and stone. It is the criterion of beauty—it unveils beauty and sanctifies it too.” *Desire is love’s message to beauty.*

“Their aspirations soar beyond the sky and transcend the world of quantity, since what they see cannot be expressed in words”—you recognize that the Poet has demonstrated the same aspirations in the construction of this garden as well—“As what they see cannot be expressed in words.” *Phenomena arise from the march of Time, life is one of Time’s mysteries.*

“They whisk away veil from their hearts—through love, passions are elevated and the worthless gain value”—*O you who are enthralled by Yesterday and Tomorrow, behold another world in your own heart*—“Life without Love is lamentation, since its whole affair becomes corrupt and unstable. Love polishes one’s common sense and imparts the quality of mirror to the stone.” *Whatsoever is good and fair and beautiful is our guide in the wilderness of seeking.*

“Love transforms an enlightened heart into the Burning Bush and bestows upon the artists the glowing hand of Moses. All possibilities and existences are nothing beside Love—all the world is bitter and it alone is sweet honey.” *The cause of Time is not the revolution of the sun: Time is everlasting but the sun does not last for ever.*

“The vigor of our thought is due to the fire of Love, whose task it is to create and to infuse the soul”—*Time is joy and sorrow, festival and fast.*

“Love suffices men, animals, and insects—*love alone suffices the two worlds!* Beauty without power is magic, beauty with power is prophecy”—*Our Time, which has neither beginning nor end, blossoms from the flower-bed of our mind*—“Love combined both in its manifestations and thus created a world out of a world.”

Life is of Time, and Time is of Life—you recall as you gaze at the serenity of Taj Mahal in the Garden. Only, at the very next step you witness another artifact, which is in one aspect even more astonishing than the Taj.

There are only six dimensions in the world—north, east, south, west, up and down. All other dimensions are various degrees between these six coordinates. However, immediately after Taj Mahal in the Garden of Poetry you find a gigantic planetarium standing on the strength of a perfect symmetry between its *seven* dimensions.

It is called *Javidnama*, or the Book of Eternity.

65. Planetarium

Javidnama is the *magnum opus* in this cannon. It consists of three prologues, seven chapters and an epilogue—and you can recognize at once that each chapter must be related to one of the seven stages of the self as described in *Persian Psalms*.

What about the four unnumbered chapters?—you recognize that *Persian Psalms* was also distributed into four parts but what is perhaps more relevant here is the division of each stage of the self into four planes in the first part of *Persian Psalms*. The four loose chapters of *Javidnama*—three prologues and an epilogue—may represent a deeper analysis of one stage of the self. *Whose self, and which stage?*

The Poet's private story ended at the Shakespeare Monument, you remember. The four loose chapters must be an illustration of your self at the present stage of your journey—*or a clue about how you should go about your new agenda.*

O Lord! The human being is ever craving for company in this seven-colored world—*seven*, you notice as the 'Invocation' begins, which is the first preliminary piece in *Javidnama*. Let this world descend from my sight—says the Poet—the way sun and moon descend beneath the horizon and a day may appear that does not belong to the passing time. *Revolt! Revolt! O, Revolt!*—you remember your agenda.

Your revolt is not going to be a mere reaction against a powerful foe, nor will it be an uprising in the ordinary sense. *The lord has made lustrous ruby from the blood of the hireling*, but if you replace the lord by taking over his position of power then you become the next lord and the hireling's fate remains unchanged—*the peasants' fields are desolate from the tyranny of the landlord*, but the fields will remain desolate as long as tyranny exists. It will matter little who is the landlord, or even if there is no landlord

because then some new institution will spring up to wear the shoes of tyranny.

O Lord! Your face is my faith and my Quran, so let me see it—says the Poet—Light up the darkness of my heart with your light like a moon. *Your agenda is to change the world order, which is more difficult than just disturbing the order of things a little—you need to strike deeper. How much deeper?*

O Lord! Make me immortal and grant me the strength to tread upon the path that you have laid open before me—says the Poet—Make my book easy for the youth to understand, for I am going to tell of another world.

You need to create another world, and the Planetarium in the Garden is the gateway.

66. Song of the angels

'Prologue in Heaven' is the second preliminary piece.

The Divine Life created this world out of a taste for absence and presence—says the Poet. The sky was lit up with a thousand lamps when the stars and the planets were given the gift of movement but the earth was dark and desolate. The sky taunted it for being dependent on the sun and the moon for light, and the earth complained to the Creator.

A voice from across the skies replied to the complaint—*just as a voice would later reply to the Poet's 'Complaint'*, you recognize. "O Trustee, as yet unaware of the trust!" The voice addressed the earth, and you know that it is referring to the potential of clay to adopt the form of a human being—"Grieve not, and look within your heart. It is not the light you see spread in all quarters, which brightens the days of the tumult of life—dawn's light comes from a spotted sun but the light of the soul is unsullied by the dust of time."

Light of the *soul*? Of course, it is the same Creation Story that you have heard before in *A Message from the East* but here it is retold with an emphasis on the soul, since that is the aspect of the present realm.

"The soul's light is upon a journey that has no set paths," the voice continues and you know that this particular retelling of the Creation Story is to inform you about the realm of the soul. "The soul's light roves farther than the rays of sun and moon. You have given up hope but the soul's light is manifesting still from your dust"—the voice tells the earth—"The human reason assaults the world but the human love makes assault on the Infinite—the thought of the human being knows the way without any guide and the human sight is more wakeful than Gabriel." Here is an apt answer to the first question raised in the 'New Garden of

Mystery’—*first of all I am perplexed about my thought, why is it sometimes needed, sometimes shunned?*

“The human being is raised from the earth and yet in flight is like an angel—heaven is but an ancient inn upon its way. It pricks into the very depth of the heavens like the point of a needle into silk—it washes the stains from the skirt of Being and the world is blank and blind until a human being looks at it”—*What is the ocean whose shore is knowledge? What is that pearl which is found in its depth?* You remember the second question from the ‘New Garden of Mystery’ and now you recognize something about Joseph.

Joseph is still with you and will remain forever—you may graduate to a higher stage of the self, or die and be born in another realm, but Joseph found is not to be lost. It remains with you even when you have got nothing left from your previous possessions, even when your thoughts and knowledge are no more.

“Though the human being offers fewer hymns to the Lord than the angels do, and sheds much blood, yet it is as a spur in the flanks of doom. Its sight becomes keen through observing phenomena so that it sees the Essence within the Qualities”—*the principle of non-contradiction led you on into the Garden—*“Whoever falls in love with the beauty of the Essence is the master of all creation.”

This retold parable is followed by ‘The Song of the Angels’, which sounds familiar to you: *“The luster of a handful of dust one day shall outshine the creatures of light—earth shall be transformed into heaven through the star of our destiny.”*

You recognize it as Poem 45 from the second part of *Persian Psalms*, but that is impossible. These lines were supposed to be your next mission statement—the one you should get *after* the Realm of the Soul has died, but that realm has hardly even started yet.

Then you recognize it as *déjà vu in reverse*. This song was first sung by the angels on the eve of creation. Standing in the Temple of a New David you heard it again—like a bygone melody caught between the layers of Time in eternity and replayed to you in that very ethereal corner of the Garden.

Now you have journeyed to a point from where you can witness the moment when this song was offered by the angels for the first time. *A hymn dedicated to the human being.*

The angels offer hymns to God—the heavenly voice has mentioned it again just now—so the offering of a hymn to the human being by the angels would be tantamount to the angels worshipping Adam. *Of course, the prostration on the eve of creation.*

This is the moment of Creation and you are witnessing it first hand in the Planetarium. You have traveled back into your self. *Winter is over—songs have come to life among the branches again,* you remember the signifier of the fifth stage of your journey.

You know that you have come out of the purgatory. The fifth stage, a new life, and a new challenge—*Revolt! Revolt! O, Revolt!*

67. Lonely evening

‘Prologue on Earth’ is the last preliminary piece.

The Poet is singing a song by the riverbank on an evening—you have seen this kind of setting before. It was by a river that the Poet met Khizr and the first realm was annihilated to bring forth the second. Only, that was night and this is evening—when the colors of daybreak merge with twilight, says the Poet. *A moment when time becomes irrelevant?*

You pay attention to the song he is singing. It is from Rumi, and you have heard it before. It goes:

*But yester-eve a lamp in hand
The Shaykh did all the city span,
Sick of mere ghosts he sought a man,
But could find none in all the land.*

These lines opened the cannon—they were your induction into the Garden. Now you recognize that they are, indeed, related to your present agenda—*Revolt!*

*“I Rustum or a Hyder seek
I’m sick of snails, am sick,” he said,
“There’s none,” said I. He shook his head,
“There’s none like them, but still I seek.”*

This time, Rumi appears in person—not in a dream, unlike on the previous occasion. He begins by addressing the question of immortality—the Poet had asked for it in the ‘Invocation’ too, and you remember that the secret of everlasting life was one of the questions he put before Khizr.

Life demands witnesses on its being—Rumi explains. *Even God gathered all the souls on the day of creation, and asked them, ‘Am I not your Lord?’*

One should seek three witnesses on one's existence—says Rumi. The witness is you, yourself, and the second is the consciousness of the other—to behold oneself through another. *You have had both of these in the Garden.*

The third witness is the light of God—says Rumi. If you can sustain yourself in the presence of God, then you can count yourself amongst the immortals—on the eve of Ascension, the Prophet journeyed across the heavens and didn't stop until he reached so close to God that even the angel Gabriel had to be left out of the final meeting of the Prophet and his Creator. Not only the limits of space but also those of time were surpassed—just a fraction of a second had passed on Earth when the Prophet returned from his long trip. *Dawn itself bows down before the night on which the Prophet Muhammad journeyed to heavens and came back,* you remember the voice you had heard in the enclave of *The Call of the Marching Bell.*

“It was by way of birth, my friend, that you came into this dimensioned world”—says Rumi to the Poet—“by birth it is possible also to escape and loosen all fetters from oneself, but such a birth is not of clay and water—as one knows if one has a conscious heart.” *You have a conscious heart, and you know what kind of birth is being mentioned here.*

“The first birth is compulsory, the second is by choice”—Rumi continue—“The first is hidden in veils and the second is manifest. The first happens with weeping and the second with laughter, for the first is a seeking and the second a finding. The first is to live and travel among creation and the second is utterly outside all dimensions. The first is in need of day and night but the day and the night are just the vehicle of the second”—you remember that Time was an important clue while you were looking for Joseph and its importance has been increasing now that you have found Joseph. “Whenever a watchful soul is born in a body, this ancient inn trembles to its foundations”—Rumi is referring to the world, and you recall some of the things you heard in the parliament of spiritual democracy.

Rumi illustrates his point with a quotation from his own verses: “The human being is but sight, the rest is mere skin—true sight signifies seeing the Beloved. Dissolve your body into sight,

and go to gazing, go to gazing, go to gaze!" *Revolt! Revolt! O, Revolt!*

"My soul was convulsed by the words of Rumi," says the Poet. "Every atom of my body trembled like quicksilver. Suddenly I saw the heaven immersed in a single cloud of light between the West and the East"—*the cloud belonged neither to the West, nor to the East, and the symbolic universality of this expression is not lost on you*—"Out of that cloud of light an angel descended."

An angel in the Realm of the Soul? Let it be—this angel is Zurvan, as the Poet tells you—*Zurvan, the Spirit of Time and Space, conducts the Pilgrim on the journey to the Supernal World, reads the subheading.*

68. Zurvan

Zurvan had two faces—as the Poet tells you. One face was like fire and the other resembled smoke. One was illuminated like a star and the other dark as night. One of his eyes was wakeful and the other asleep—you recognize the pattern of the manifest and the unmanifest. *Time and Space is not entirely manifest, since parts of it are unmanifest, and they are the dark side of Zurvan.*

His wings were very colorful—says the Poet. They were made lively with red, yellow, green, silver, blue and azure. His temperament was like a flight of imagination—in one breath he traveled between the heavens and the earth, and every moment experienced a new desire, soaring in a new atmosphere—*for, as you recognize, Time and Space are boundless and dynamic.*

“I am Zurvan and I command the world,” said the angel. “I am hidden from the sight as well as manifest”—*If you look at me I am nothing. If you look at yourself I am your life*, you had heard the Time say in *A Message from the East*—“Every plan is subject to my whim, voiced and voiceless all alike are my prey. Through me the bud swells upon the branch and the bird bewails in the nest—through my flight the seed becomes a stalk and through my effluence every parting turns to union”—*is it with his sanction that the lord has made lustrous ruby from the blood of the hireling?*—“I pronounce both reproach and exhortation—I render athirst so that I may offer wine. I am life, I am death, I am resurrection—I am the Judgment, Hell, Heaven and Houri”—*then what is he going to do about the fact that the peasants’ fields are desolate from the tyranny of the landlord?*

“The human being and the angel are both in bondage to me,” says Zurvan. “This temporal world is my own child—I am every rose that you pluck from the branch, I am the matrix of every thing that you see”—*Revolt!*

You recognize the true magnitude of the revolt you are supposed to carry out. It is not an uprising against a mere tyrant or a landlord. You are being called upon to revolt against the powers of Zurvan, and he himself is inviting you to do so. It is part of his purpose in life but it is the only reason of your existence—*Whoever falls in love with the beauty of the Essence is the master of all creation*, the heavenly voice had said about you at the dawn of life. Is it possible to break the spell of Zurvan—*and how?*

“Only a hero who has in his heart *I have a time with God* can break my talisman over time and space”—*Learn the mystery of Time*, you remember how the Poet had alluded to the tradition according to which the Prophet stated that he had a time with God to which no angel is privy—“If you wish that you should not be my captive anymore, recite from the depths of your soul *I have a time with God*,” concludes the formidable Zurvan.

As if by magic, the entire Garden begins to change—“I know not what was in his glance,” says the Poet. “It snatched away from my sight this ancient world—either my sight opened on another world or this same world took on another form. I died in the universe of color and scent and was born in a world without tumult and clamor.”

Welcome to this side of the world of dimensions—the music of the spheres informs you as you tune into it. You know that this is the Realm of the Soul.

69. Moon

The first chapter of *Javidnama* is titled 'The Sphere of the Moon' and it begins with the Poet's spiritual odyssey under the guidance of Rumi. Of course, he remembers to address your apprehensions before commencing on his own flight.

This universe belongs to God, he says. Therefore, we should look at it with love and affection. Nothing is alien to the human soul, since the human soul has a divine spark in it—you remember the Arab general who had burnt his boats and gleefully commented that every land was theirs since it was a land of their God. It sounded crude in the world of Adam, or the physical world, but now you know where it came from, since the Realm of the Soul gives you an opportunity to free your perception from the dichotomy of love and war.

"The world is just a display of idols of eye and ear, where every tomorrow dies as a yesterday," says the Poet. "Plunge into the desert of the Quest with the zeal of Abraham the idol-breaker, and when you have traveled through all planes of existence, seek from God another seven heavens—a hundred other times and spaces." *Revolt, Revolt, O Revolt?*

That is for you to sort out. "That which was once above me appeared below when I had tramped through the vastness of space," the Poet begins to narrate his spiritual odyssey. "My shadow flung above my head, increasingly getting nearer until the mountains of the Moon became visible."

"Cleanse yourself of all doubts," Rumi said to the Poet. "Get used to the manners and ways of the spheres." Then he led the Poet into a dark valley where they found a cave illumined by a light which had no shadow—*Divine Illumination? You wonder.*

The light was coming from the contemplation of a Hindu sage who was sat there under a tree. He opened his eyes when Rumi introduced the Poet to him—a fellow Indian!

The sage, whose name was Vishvamitra—a universal friend, in Sanskrit—began conversing. “Yesterday I saw an angel on the summit of Qashmarud”—apparently a name he had given to a summit on the Moon—“Joy distilled out of his glance as he gazed solely towards our planet. Then he said that it was the hour of the East’s arising—the East has a new sun shining in its breast. *Rubies come forth from the stones of the road as its Josephs are issuing out of the well.*”

You are familiar with this line—it was among the references that set you off on your trail for Joseph, who is now with you. “I have seen a resurrection happening in its bloom, and the mountains of the East trembling and quaking”—the angel told Vishvamitra—“It is packing up to at last forswear idolatry forever. Happy is the people whose soul has fluttered and that has created itself anew out of its own clay, for the hour when the eyes a nation awake is the dawn of festival for the angels of the Divine Throne.”

You know that your Joseph is different from the Joseph of the West but now you recognize that it is also different from the Josephs of the East—it is the Joseph of Rumi and Iqbal, and now it is yours too. You may understand it better through the nine sayings of wisdom offered by Vishvamitra to the Poet—*nine* sayings, of course!

You remember the nine questions of ‘The New Garden of Mystery’ about which you were sure that the answers will recur again somewhere in this Realm. Here they are.

First of all I am perplexed about my thought, why is it sometimes needed and sometimes shunned—was the first question. The first aphorism of Vishvamitra answers this: “The world is not a veil over the Divine Essence, for an image in the water is no barrier to plunging in.”

The second question was: *What is this ocean whose shore is knowledge? What is that pearl which we found in its depth?* Vishvamitra’s second aphorism is: “It is a delight to be born into another world, so that another youth may thereby be attained.” You can see the connection—knowledge is not a thing but an act and it affects your existence. To know another world is nothing if through that knowledge you cannot be reborn into that world—the purpose of this Garden would have been lost if you were told about its

secrets rather than finding them out for yourself, for in the act of finding them you are also creating and living.

The third question was, *What is the union of the contingent and the necessary? What are near and far, more and less?* The corresponding aphorism is: “God is beyond death, as He is the very essence of life—hence, God does not know what is happening when His servant dies, and we who are birds who cannot fly, know more of the science of death than God.” The aphorism does not answer the question but it gives a perspective on it—the perspective of the Realm of the Soul.

The fourth question was: *How did the eternal and temporal separate, that one became the world, and the other God?*—the question had sounded bold and precarious—*If the knower and known are the one pure essence, what are the aspirations of this handful of earth?*

Vishvamitra’s aphorism is: “Time? It is a sweet mingled with poison, a general compassion mingled with vengeance”—the question may have regarded God and creation, but that subject is hardly dissociated from the mystery of Time, as you know so well by now—“You see neither city nor plain free of its vengeance. Its compassion is that you may say, *It has passed.*”

The fifth question, you remember, regarded the present stage in your journey: *What am I? Tell me, what ‘I’ means. What is the meaning of ‘travel into yourself’?*”

“Unbelief is death”—says Vishvamitra—“It is not befitting for a hero to wage a holy war on the dead. The believer is living, and at war with oneself. Therefore, a believer falls upon oneself like a leopard on a deer”—and you recall the fifth wish from the ‘Prayer’: *You have set my falcon to hunt down the leopard, now give it a high will and sharper claws!*

You recognize yourself as the hunting ground where the great game mentioned in that wish is going to take place. *You* are the leopard and the falcon that will hunt you down is someone very close to you. It is Joseph.

Joseph will shatter your perception of reality—which is almost the same thing as killing the self whom you recognize as *your-self*. The *revolt* you have waged is, for the main part, against your self. It is also a desire for a transformation—a new perception of reality will mean rebirth into another realm of reality so that you may face

the world like a new person, like a dagger drawn from the scabbard of destiny—*Revolt! Revolt! O, Revolt!*

The sixth question had sounded like a riddle: *What is that part which is greater than its whole? What is the way to find that part?* Vishvamitra's aphorism is equally cryptic: "The infidel with a wakeful heart praying to an idol is better than a true believer asleep in the Sanctuary." You remember that the sixth wish of the 'Prayer' also refers to the Sanctuary—why is the metaphor of Ka'aba recurring with reference to the sixth stage of your journey? You will find out.

The seventh question is related to the last stage of your journey: *Of what sort is this traveler who is the wayfarer? Of whom shall I say that this one is a Universal Human Being?* Vishvamitra's aphorism is: "Blind is the eye that sees sin and error, for the sun does not find darkness wherever it looks."

You know that you will die at the end of the narrative—could the reference to night be related to that tragedy?

The last two questions regarded the issues arising at the end of the journey: *What does the claim, 'I am the Creative Truth' imply? Do you think that this mystery was mere nonsense?* You remember foreseeing the hazard that you may arrive at a point where you may face the possibility of making the same claim. Vishvamitra's eight aphorism, if that may be related to this question at all, is: "A human being is brought to shame when dragged in mud but a seed makes itself a tree by dropping into the mud—from mud it receives twisting and turning that it may capture the rays of the sun." *Who is the tree, and where is the mud?* You wonder.

The last question was: *Who was it that at last became familiar with the secret of Unity? Who is the wise man that is a Gnostic?* Vishvamitra's last aphorism is: "I asked the rose, 'Tell me how do you take color and scent from the wind and the dust?' The rose replied, 'O ignorant sage! How do you hear a sound from the silent lighting? The soul is in our body through attraction to the environment—your attraction is manifest, and ours is hidden.'"

You can see the connection of this metaphor with Joseph—he is with you though you can neither define him nor explain through language. Like the rose, you are taking color and scent from the wind and the dust—are you, gradually, becoming familiar with the secret of Unity?

Vishvamisra went silent after dropping his nine aphorisms, and the illumination faded away from the cave—perhaps now to dwell in the inner conscience of the sage. Rumi and the Poet moved on to another valley where suddenly there appeared a beautiful apparition—a houri or an angel.

“This silver portrait of beauty was born in God’s mind,” Rumi told the Poet. “She ranks with Gabriel and her name is Sarosh.” She is the primordial muse who inspired Rumi and whom the Poet also listens intently now—and so do you.

Her song is sweet and serene, but the message is nevertheless quite clear:

I fear that you are rowing the barque in a mirage:
Born within a veil, you die within a veil.

The message is for you. The Realm of the Soul is also the heart of the imaginal world—it is the Realm of Dream, since all dreams rise from the inner recesses of the soul. You are not in the real world right now but in the world of dream.

A new Adam you may be, but you were resurrected in this Garden and not in the reality outside. Born in a dream, you will die within a dream—the dream of the Poet, but also yours at this moment.

Good thing is that Joseph is an expert in interpreting dreams.

70. Comparative religion

“Stride faster on the road to Yarghamid that you may see that which must be seen,” Rumi says to the Poet, referring to a valley on the Moon, whom the angels also call the Valley of *Tawasin*—or cryptic tablets. “Engraved upon a wall of moonstone, behold the four *tasins* of prophethood.”

Four prophets are mentioned here, and you can see the significance of that number. The Divine Revelation addresses most specifically the four higher stages of the self, since the first three are basic and accessible without much ado. The *tasin* of Buddha, for this matter, corresponds most directly to the fourth stage of your journey, when you witnessed the birth of the Angelic Realm after the destruction of the old world.

“Transcend the unseen, for this doubt and surmise are nothing,” is the message of Buddha. “To be in the world and to escape from the world—*that* is something.”

To this call is responding a coquettish dancing girl with her repentance. “*Give my heart no time to agitate—add a curl or two to your tress!*”

You recognize this poem—Poem 48 from the first part of *Persian Psalms*. This is what *you* will say when you transcend the sixth stage of your journey. In what way will that stage be similar to this repentant coquettish woman?

The second *tasin* belongs to Zarathustra, and his message should correspond most directly to your present stage. However, on that tablet you find Ahriman—the Persian representation of the Devil—trying to dissuade Zarathustra from going out to change the world. He praises the prophet’s discoveries in the realm of Truth and implores on him: “Now rise, and take rest in the nest of Unity—abandon company and sit in retirement.”

This could be a natural choice for you as well—you have understood that your major revolt is against yourself and your

agenda is to transform yourself in order to transform the world, but then why bother transforming the world at all? “By associating with nobodies, a somebody becomes a nobody” as Ahriman is pointing out on this tablet.

You may better be guided by the reply of Zarathustra. “Darkness is the shore of the Ocean of Light, and no torrent like me was ever born in the heart of this ocean. My breast is swarming with restless waves—what should the torrent do but devastate the shore? The colorless picture, which no man has ever seen, can only be painted with the blood of Ahriman.” *Revolt!*

Zarathustra’s reply reminds you again of the fifth wish of the ‘Prayer’—*You have set my falcon to hunt down the leopard, now give it a high will and sharper claws.*

The *tasin* of Christ correspond to something you may experience at the next stage. It contains the dream of Leo Tolstoy, the Russian reformer. In this dream he witnesses the Valley of Seven Deaths—and you can see that seven deaths could mean the death of the self at each of its stages, or in other words a total annihilation of the self.

A frightfully furious stream of mercury ran gushing across the middle, and the betrayer of Christ was caught up to his waist in that stream, desperately shouting for help. On the bank was a slim and crafty woman, whose name was Afrangine—literally a word play on *Afrang*, the Persian word for Europe. “She had taught idolatry to bishops,” says the Poet. Just then, a powerful wave struck the damned traitor and he gave out a horrible scream. Afrangine taunted him by saying, “Now, do you regret what you did to our Lord?”

The hapless man’s anguish increased as he cried in pain, “O Deceitful Enchantress! Look at your crime, which is worse than mine. It is due to you that the followers of the Christ have done to his soul what I only did to his body!”

Just as references to the Sanctuary keep cropping up with regards to the next stage of your journey, so you find here a reference to Christ himself, who central and sanctified in the tradition of another world religion. The metaphors connect.

The last *tasin* belongs to Prophet Muhammad. Here, you see his archenemy praying before idols in the Sanctuary—as they were kept there before the Prophet removed them from the House of

God. The archenemy is complaining to the idols that Muhammad is popularizing a faith that perpetuates equality and teaches respect for the individual. Slaves are rising up against their masters due to these teachings, and the youth are refusing to show blind obedience to the customs of the past—*Revolt, Revolt, O Revolt?*

Belief in an un-dimensioned God is beyond the comprehension of this infidel enemy, as he says to the idols, “Do not go away from this abode, or if leave you must then stay in our hearts!”

Is this the type of enemy you will face at the last stage of your journey?—you know that it very well may be.

71. Mercury

“This is the station of the saints,” Rumi said to the Poet when they landed on Mercury.

The sound of the call to prayer was in the air, and soon they found the nineteenth century reformer Jamaluddin Afghani leading his Turkish disciple Saeed Halim Pasha in a prayer. “The East never gave birth to two better sons, who unraveled the knots of our problems,” said Rumi as they joined the prayer behind Afghani.

Afghanis was reciting the Surah—chapter—‘The Star’ from the Quran. “At his recital every mystery was revealed and the Heavenly Archetype appeared unveiled,” says the Poet, and you remember the relationship of this narrative with the Quran. *If I have threaded the pearls of the Quran’s sweet mysteries on my thread and spoken the truth to the Muslims—the Poet had asked the Prophet—then pray to God that my love be reconciled with action.*

Rumi introduced the Poet to the reformers by the nickname Zindah-Rud, or the Living Stream—a nickname retained through the rest of *Javidnama*.

“In the heart of a people that once shattered the world, I have seen a conflict between religion and country,” said the Poet to Afghani, and you are reminded of his radical position against nation-state—nationalism is tolerable only as a passing phase in the overall growth of humanity but completely unacceptable as a permanent element in the constitution of history. *They call themselves Indians, Asians, Afghans and Turks. Why become so dependent on shores!*

Afghani seemed to condone this view. “What is religion?” He raised the question only to answer it himself. “To rise up from the face of the dust so that the pure soul may become self-aware”—and that is how your Joseph is different from those of the East as well as the West, you recognize—“A blade of grass is of the earth, and

yet it rises above the earth,” said Afghani. “Alas, if the pure soul should end up in the dust!”—*Revolt!*

Your skirt is clean of the dust of earth-rooted-ness, for you are a Joseph to whom every land is a homeland, God had said to the Muslim nation in the ‘Answer’ to the Poet’s complain.

“Mustafa Kemal, who sang of a great renewal, said the old image must be cleansed and polished,” the reformer Pasha joined the conversation and you remember the moment when you and Mustafa Kemal preside together over the parliament of spiritual democracy. It seems that Kemal has moved in some other direction since then—“The vitality of the Ka’aba cannot be refurbished if a new idol from Europe enters the Sanctuary,” said Pasha. You remember the strain between the Debonair and Old Man of the Sanctuary—what has the Debonair done since then?

“Turkey is melting like wax in the flame of the world as we know it,” said Pasha—apparently Kemal has started imitating the West too much. “Originality is at the roots of all creation, and never by imitation shall life be reformed. Examine your own conscience, and the Quran—a hundred new worlds lie within its lines, one of which suffices for the present age, so seize it if your heart grasps the truth”—*Revolt?*

“Nobody knows where the Quran’s world lies,” commented the Living Stream—the Poet.

“It is a world still lost in our hearts,” said Afghani. “It is a world that still waits for the call of *Rise!*—a world without distinctions of blood and color, where evening shines brighter than morning in the West. A world purged of sultan and slave, boundless as a believer’s heart—a glorious world, which had its seed cast into the soul of Farooq by a single holy look”—Farooq was a companion of the Prophet and later succeeded as the second righteous caliph—“An eternal world, but one whose events are always new, ever new the fruit of its master principles.”

Is this Garden itself one such world?—*my love be reconciled with action*, was the Poet’s prayer and his action was to create a world in his imagination that could be a role model for reality?

What Afghani was saying is also true of the Garden—“Within, it is not afflicted with change, but outward change is occurring every moment”—the outward change is occurring through your

interaction with the Garden while it remains unchanging within—
“See, that world is inside you!”

Afghani listed four master principles of the world of the Quran. Firstly, the human being is the vicegerent of God. Secondly, the only government worth obeying is the government of God, and not terrestrial tyrannies. Thirdly, all land belongs to God, and the wealthy are nothing but trustees of God who are obliged to use it for the welfare of the others. Fourthly, knowledge is a virtue—
“Science without love is a demonic thing, science together with love is a thing divine.”

“The religion of God has been put to shame before unbelief because the mullah is a trader in infidelity,” said Pasha—*Islam earned a bad name due to the short-sightedness of the Old Man of the Sanctuary*—“We see our dew-drop as an ocean but he sees our ocean as a dew-drop. I have seen the trusty Gabriel himself cry out at the superfluous graces of that Quran-vendor. His heart doesn’t know what lies beyond the sky and he treats the discourses of the Quran as sacred fables—seminary and mullah before the secrets of the Book are as one blind from birth before the sunlight. The infidel’s religion is the plotting and planning of holy war and the mullah’s religion is to create mischief in the name of God.”

“I have seen the blind conformity and short-sightedness of the Muslims,” said Afghani. “My soul trembles as I fear for the day when the Quran shall be taken away from them and its fire shall be kindled in quite other hearts”—*there are no chosen people, God had told the Poet in His ‘Answer’*.

Rumi, moved to the core by Afghani’s speech, asked the Living Stream to recite a poem and set all being afire. His response was a poem from *Persian Psalms*:

You say that these roses and tulips belong here,
But no, they are wayfarers just like the breeze.
Where is the new truth that we seek and do not find?—
Mosque, school and tavern are barren all alike.
Learn a word from your self, and burn in that word,
For the fire of Moses is not to be found in this convent.

72. Venus

“Between the moon and the light of the sun there hang how many veils of atmosphere!” says the Poet as he and Rumi progress from Mercury to Venus.

It may be a subtle manner of suggesting that they crossed the region of the sun on their way—the sun could not appear as a proper station in this spiritual odyssey, since the king of planets symbolically represents divinity in literature and that station is reserved for the end where symbolism itself should be given up for a direct vision of the Divine Essence.

The heat from the blaze of this intimacy with the sun was, however, “the awakening of the soul in my body,” says the Poet—for when the soul heads towards a world to which there are no limits and boundaries it becomes carefree. Death and resurrection then become merely excuses for adding to its splendor.

Rumi, well aware of the states of the Poet’s soul, said, “Do you desire another world? Take it! Love is cunning, and we are counters in its hand. Look ahead—we are in the land of Venus.”

Ahead of them was a valley, leveled and smooth, and the place was packed with many gods of the ancient peoples from diverse lands such as Egypt, Yemen, Arab and Iraq—gods of separation, union, and related to one another through inter-marriages. All had suffered the blow of Abraham and feared the name of God.

Mardukh, one of these gods, mentioned to his companions that the humanity had turned their face on God. It fled from religion and was now giving a new life to the ancient gods in the name of social sciences—“The human being rendered that blue sky but found no God. What is there in the hearts of the people except thoughts like waves up-surg-ing and fleeing? The soul now takes repose in the sensible—O, the past age is about to return! Long live the European orientalist, for he has drawn us forth from our tombs! Ancient gods, our day has arrived.”

The song of Mardukh has four stanzas—just as Afghani’s speech emphasized four master principles of the world of Quran. You notice that each stanza of Mardukh’s song is a denial of one of those master principles.

Rumi now sang a song—incidentally Poem 21 from the second part of *Persian Psalms*—and the ancient gods fell prostrate as if the blow of Abraham had struck them again. *Again one must gaze on the past and the future*—you remember hearing this poem first in the Temple of a New David—*Ho! Rise up, for one must think anew.*

This is the blow one must need in order to strike down the false idols of old in the new age?—neither a scepter nor a sword, but a higher perspective is what will win the day at this hour, you recognize. *Reason is your shield and love is your sword, O my dervish!*—God had said to his servants in the ‘Answer’.

The poem used here by Rumi is the third level of introspection in the Angelic Realm, you recall—the human perspective from within the heart of the Angelic Realm. Of course, a very high test of existence, for it requires you to be part human and part angel at the same time.

“Rise up, boy,” Rumi said to the Poet and led him to a deep emerald sea beyond an ice-clad mountain. The ocean was utterly motionless and the lack of movement had made its water transparent up to the bottom.

“This is the place of such rebellious souls who lived by the rule of their power and denied the existence of the unseen,” Rumi told the Poet—and the significance cannot be lost on you. Tyrants who sustain themselves by devouring the egos of other people end up with false idols of the past—to live through forced subjugation of others is to live a second-hand life. Just as false idols have no existence save in the superstition of their adherents, so the tyrants deny their own existence when they choose to live a second-hand life.

The lord has made lustrous ruby from the blood of the hireling—thereby losing the chance of turning his own heart into an everlasting ruby, as you can see. *The peasants’ fields are desolate from the tyranny of the landlord*—then what hope for a tulip of Sinai to grow in the fields of the landlord’s soul!

Unbelief is death—Vishvamitra’s fifth aphorism had stated for you—*It is not befitting for a hero to wage a holy war on the dead.* It makes sense that your revolt should have been a simple uprising against some degenerate bully, and now you can see that some most pompous tyrants were in fact nothing more than pervert bullies.

“Two of them are here,” Rumi told the Poet. “One from the East and the other from the West. Moses struck one while the other fell victim to the vengeance of a *dervish*”—the first is the Pharaoh and the second is Lord Kitchener, once a supreme commander of the British imperialist armies—“They both died by drowning thirsty in the sea, for indeed the death of a tyrant is one of the signs of God.”

Like Moses, Rumi opened the heart of the ocean and the water parted. At the bottom was a valley that had no color or physical feature, but was merely darkness layered upon darkness. Rumi recited Surah Taha—a chapter of the Quran that calls upon the listeners to remember the exploits of Moses.

Suddenly, the darkness was lit up as if by a full moon and now the Poet saw two worried and dejected men running around between barren and lifeless mountains on the ocean floor.

They looked at Rumi and then at each other. “I wonder where did this light come from, at last?” said one of them. This was Pharaoh. Rumi told him that this light came from the same source as the light that shone from the right hand of Moses.

“Alas! I could not recognize the Truth at that time,” Pharaoh could not hold back a sigh of grief. He lamented that the thieves of Europe were digging the graves of his dynasty and the mummies were put on display in the museums. “Look at them with your inward eyes and learn the reality of tyranny,” he said. “The kings rule by creating dissensions among their subjects and countries cannot prosper under them”—*Whenever the kings enter a population they devastate it*, you remember the discourse of Khizr on this subject.

“If only I could find Moses again and borrow a heart that could recognize the Truth!” Said Pharaoh.

“Government without the light of the soul is imperfect and imperial power without the illumined hand of Moses is a sin. Kingship gains strength through the weakness of the subjects and

its roots are firm through the deprivation of the deprived. The crown rests on taxing the helpless, and therefore even if the one who wears it was strong like a rock, he soon becomes weak like glass”—*the worldly power of a tyrant is inversely proportional to the growth of his soul*—“Armies, prisons, chains are associated with robbers and a true ruler needs not such apparatus.”

Kitchener tried to defend the position of the Western tomb raiders by pointing out that they were seekers of knowledge who were opening up the pyramids to learn about the past. To this, the Pharaoh retorted, “You opened our graves in search of wisdom but what did you expect to find in the grave of Mahdi?”

It was generally believed that when Lord Kitchener conquered Sudan he opened up the grave of Mahdi Sudanese, a dervish freedom fighter, and threw away the bones into a river. Now the very mention of the name of the dervish electrified the water and his spirit came there from Paradise.

“O Kitchener!” Said the spirit, “Look at my vengeance if you can see! You were refused a grave except in the bottom of brackish waters”—Kitchener himself was killed in the Great War when his ship was torpedoed by the Germans.

Mahdi’s soul was perturbed and he called upon the Arab and African rulers to unite in their struggle for freedom. “O camel driver! Our friends have already arrived at the city of the Prophet, and we are still on the way. Is there not a song that could urge our camel to run faster?”

Of course, the song of Iqbal—Urfi had advised the Poet to *quicken the pace of your song if the camel is overloaded.*

73. Mars

“Behold, this world is Mars!” said Rumi as they landed on the next planet. “It is habitable, just like ours.”

In front of them was a broad meadow with a tall observatory. “The Martians are skilled in many arts like the Europeans and excel us in mundane as well as spiritual sciences. Their dominion over time and space is greater due to their superior knowledge of astronomy. The hearts of the earth-dwellers are bound to water and clay but in this world the body is in bondage to heart”—*an inside-out world?*

Of course, the realm of the soul. “In our world, existence is a duality—soul and body, invisible and visible, bird and the cage. For the Martians, however, there is just a unity of thought”—*non-contradiction?*

Their death is also unique. “The one for whom the day of separation has arrived becomes livelier from the flame of separation and announces his or her death a few days ahead. Their soul is not habitual to the body since it does not receive its nourishment from there—death is to draw in the body and flee from the world into one’s self. This discourse is too high for your thought because your soul is dominated by your body.”

The Poet wandered there on the advice of Rumi, and was soon greeted by an astronomer who came out of the observatory. His beard white as snow, keen of eye like a European scientist, his raiment like the robes of a Christian monk, the tall frame of his body standing erect despite his advanced age—this is how the Poet describes the Martian astronomer. “A prisoner of dimensions comes here without the aid of a machine!” He remarked in Persian, much to the surprise of the Poet—is this a dream or a trick of magic, he wondered. *Dream?* Of course, the realm of the soul is also the realm of dreams.

The astronomer continued, “In the days of Muhammad, there used to be a Martian of pure soul, who observed your world with his insightful eyes and set out to travel the confines of the humans until he alighted in the desert of Hejaz and wrote down all that he saw in East and West, his picture more colourful than the Garden of Paradise. I too have investigated the metals of the earth and journeyed through its lands and seas.”

Rumi introduced the Poet once again as Zindah Rud and asked the astronomer to be their guide for while. “These are the environs of Marghadin of Barkhiya—Barkhiya being the name of our ancestor. Farzmarz the tempter came up to him once in Paradise and said, ‘How can you be content here, having been dominated by God for ages! There is a world infinitely superior to heaven, loftier than all other worlds and more sublime than sublimity. I have never seen a freer world—God Himself does not know of it. Its ordering is not manipulated by God, it has no Book, no Prophet, no Gabriel, no prayers and worship’—the temptation has a contemporary ring in it, for this description could match a secular or a communist society alike.

Barkhiya replied, ‘Be off, Sorcerer! Set your own image on that world!’” *Is Barkhiya superior to the human being?* You wonder. That cannot be—not in *this* Garden!—yet the astronomer goes on to say, “God entrusted to us another world, since our ancestor did not succumb to the guile of Farzmarz. So enter this kingdom of God, behold its laws and customs.” *Kingdom of God?* This is a great contradiction to the entire premise of this Garden that the kingdom of God must be earned through hard work—a perfect world can be created, but it requires effort.

Contradictions don’t exist. Only one premise could justify the existence of this Martian world without contradicting the high ranking of the human beings in Creation. *You are Barkhia.*

The city of Marghdeen is a magnificent place with tall buildings—*the Poet takes a tour, and you recognize the world of your future.* Its people are beautiful, selfless and simple and they speak a language that sounds melodious to the ears. They are not after material goods, rather they are the guardians of knowledge and derive wealth from their sound judgment. The sole purpose of knowledge and skill in that world is to help improve the life—*that*

which went wrong in Europe after their Enlightenment will not go wrong here.

This is world of your Joseph—currency is unknown, and temperaments are not to be governed by machines that blacken the sky with their smoke. The farmers are hardworking and contented, since there are no landlords to plunder their harvest, and the tillers of the land enjoy the entire fruit of their labor. Learning and wisdom don't flourish on deceit and hence there is neither army, nor law keepers are needed, because there is no crime in Marghdeen. The marketplace is free from the noisy shouts and heartrending cries of the beggars. "In this world there is no beggar," says the astronomer. "Nor anyone is poor; no slave, no master – no ruler and thus none dominated."

Surprisingly, it is the Poet who questions this perspective. Being born a beggar or a destitute, to be ruled or suppressed, is all by the decree of God, he says. Destiny cannot be improved by reasoning. *Is he playing the Devil's advocate for the sake of getting you an answer from the astronomer?*

"If you are suffering at the hands of destiny, it is not unfair to ask God for a new one. He has no shortage of destinies for you," replies the astronomer. As the fourth planet, Mars corresponds to the fourth stage in your journey, and the secret of destiny was the lesson you learnt at that stage. "Change yourself and your destiny will change with you. If you are dust, you shall be scattered by the wind. But if you become solid as a rock, you can break the glass. To you, faith means conformity to others while your imagination remains confined because you do not conform to yourself. Shame on the faith that serves like an addiction to opium!" *Now if you have made me boundless like an ocean, grant me the tranquility of pearl as well the tumult of waves*, you recall the fourth couplet of the 'Prayer'—"The world will shape itself according to your perception of it. The heavens and the earth too will adjust."

Nature is building up in the depths of life a new Adam and a new world for him to live in, you recall. The new Adam is you, Barkhiya, and this is your world in the depths of life. Thanks to Joseph.

74. Jupiter

Jupiter is an incomplete planet orbited by several fast paced moons in this planetarium. “The moons lit up the skies at midnight and imparted light as if it were day,” says the Poet. The stars in the sky appeared so close that he nearly lost his senses out of fear—near, far, late and early all got muddled up.

You recognize that the fifth planet must correspond with the fifth stage of your journey—*You have set my falcon to hunt down the leopard, now give it a high will and sharper claws.* Will you see the leopard here?

The first to appear are three holy spirits draped in red shawls, their faces radiating and their hearts basking in the pleasure of that first day of Creation when God asked all souls, *Am I not your Lord?* And all replied, *Indeed, you are!* They are the mystic Hallaj, the greatest Urdu poet Ghalib and the Persian heretic Qurrat al-Ain Tahira. The Poet tells you that they were offered Paradise but chose eternal voyage instead—*could this be any clue to a high will and sharper claws?*

Their voices have brought about an uproar, says Rumi. “They provide permanence to the soul because they have derived passion from the heart of this universe.”

“A free spirit who knows good and evil cannot be contained in Paradise,” says Hallaj. “The mullah’s Paradise is wine, houris and page boys but the Paradise of a free spirit is eternal voyaging”—*journey into your self?*—“The mullah waits for the splitting of the tomb and the trumpet’s blast but the tumult-arousing Love is itself the Dawn of Resurrection. Knowledge seeks hope against the fear of Creation’s grandeur by looking at the past and the present but Lovers are troubled neither by hope nor fear—since Love is immersed in the beauty of Creation and cries, ‘Look upon what is coming!’” *And so does Joseph.* The first thing you got after

meeting Joseph was a roadmap of your journey, and since then you have been looking upon what is coming.

“Knowledge is governed by the law of limitations and thrives on constraint and resignation,” Hallaj goes on. “Love is free, proud and intolerant and boldly investigates the whole of Being”—*just as you are investigating the Garden in its totality, endeavoring to reach beyond its ends*. Mere knowledge about this narrative would have constrained you to the confines of words but experiencing it as its protagonist is giving you transcendence *through* them. “Our love is held back from complaining although it weeps in ecstasy”—if Hallaj is speaking for his company then you are obviously included in it—“Our constrained heart is not truly constrained for the arrow it has suffered was not shot by any houri’s glance.” *Constrained heart?* Your heart is constrained as compared to the Martian’s hearts but it is not truly constrained, since you Barkhiya—“Our fire augments out of separation and therefore separation is congenial to our *soul*.”

This is the realm of the *soul*, and now you have the perspective of Hallaj from the fifth stage of your journey: Life without heartaches is no true life and hence one must live restlessly. Such living is the destiny of the self, and through this destiny the self is built up. A mote through infinite yearning becomes the envy of the sun, in its breast the nine spheres cannot be contained”—this is what the Poet claimed about himself at the beginning of the narrative, and promised a similar reward for you. Now you are getting there. “Yearning transforms momentary beings into mortals through its interaction with the world of phenomena.” *Sweet is the world of phenomena to the living spirit, dear is the world of Ideas to the dead spirit*.

Hallaj is the same Sufi who was executed for saying, “I am the Creative Truth.” The Poet wants to know the meaning of this utterance, which was also discussed in the New Garden of Mystery.

He saw a people who claimed to believe in God but did not believe in themselves, Hallaj now explains. “The sound of the last trumpet was in my breast when I saw a people hastening to their tombs”—the imagery of annihilation and resurrection has by now become so familiar to you—“I kindled in myself the fire of life and spoke to the dead of the mysteries of life.” *By declaring himself to be God?*—“The whole world has been founded on selfhood,” says

Hallaj. “You know my secret, now see my crime: you too have done the same thing in seeking to resurrect the dead—beware!”

The warning is for you. You are guilty of the same crime as Hallaj and the Poet.

This Garden was a dead narrative until you sought to resurrect it. You *are* the Creative Truth. That is what is meant by a high will and sharper claws so that your falcon may hunt down the leopard.

A leopard is inestimably more fearsome than a falcon—but if you are the Creative Truth itself then who could be more fearsome than you?

75. Devil

“A new world comes into being from the sin of a frenzied servant of God,” says Tahira—and she is speaking not only about Hallaj and the Poet but also about you. The Garden you have resurrected from the tomb of dry pages is a new world inasmuch as it partakes from your reality.

“Wherever there is a new world there too is the Mercy Unto All Worlds,” says Ghalib—referring to Prophet Muhammad by a title given to him by God. You recall that the centrality of the Prophet in the scheme of this garden was established early enough in the narrative, and now you know why.

“His essence is neither Arab nor non-Arab, he is a human being, yet more ancient than human being,” Hallaj states it more bluntly. *His sword extirpated the race of kings—you recall—the purpose of Muhammad’s mission was to found Freedom, Equality and Brotherhood for all humankind.* “Behold him by making his rule binding on yourself, living in the world like him so that you may be accepted by all. Then behold yourself—that is the same as beholding him. His Path is a secret of his secrets.”

God is the Creative Truth, and so are you. Yet He is One, and none else can be associated with Him—and still the essence of the Prophet is *neither Arab nor non-Arab, he is a human being, yet more ancient than human being.*

You must be coming close to the culmination of the fifth stage of your journey, since a multiplicity of good is emanating from the Divine Light—“From Your light arise the black and the white,” said the signifier and you only need to witness a block spot. A block spot emanating from the Divine Light?

“Speak little of that Lord of the Separated Ones,” says Hallaj in answer to the Poet’s question about the Devil—*of course, the block spot but does he too emanate from the Divine Light?* “Forever thirsty and holding a cup in his hand filled with his own

blood, he knows being and not-being while we are ignorant,” Hallaj goes on. “His infidelity revealed to us the mystery of fall springing out of the delight of rising and joy of waxing originating from the pain of waning. Love is to burn in his fire”—*burn in the fire of Satan?*—“Burning is no burning except by his fire. We are not privy to his secrets because he is more ancient in love and service to God. Tear off the skirt of blind conformity that you may learn God’s Unity from him.”

Hallaj is obviously capable of sounding as blasphemous in his views on Devil as in his utterance about God and himself, but his words take a new interpretation after he leaves with Ghalib and Tahira and the next character appears on the scene. It is the Devil himself—think of him, and he is there (although the same could be true about God, you realize).

Suddenly, the world appeared dark and the darkness spread far and wide—says the Poet. A blaze then appeared and out of it came the Devil. He was an aged man dressed in deep black attire, surrounded by convoluted smoke and was passion from head to toe. He was of grave temperament and spoke very little—says the Poet. He could see a soul in the body—*is that why you also need to have a vision that could see the effect in the wine?* He was intoxicated but he was also a scholar, a philosopher, a mystic and an ascetic.

“My soul quivered for his agony,” says the Poet. As if responding to that gesture of the soul, the Devil turns to the Poet and, with eyes half-closed, he says, “Who else has so gloried in action? Even on the Sabbath I am rarely at rest! I have neither angels nor worshippers bowing down before me and my revelation needs no prophets”—*I am mighty without hell and my judgment does not await resurrection*, you recall how he had addressed God in ‘The Conquest of Nature’—*Adam, that short-sighted ignoramus creature of dust was born in your lap but will grow old in my arms.* “The human being achieved free-will out of predestination,” he now says. “I displayed my own hideousness to give you the joy of leaving or choosing. Deliver me now from my fire, o human being, and undo the knot of my toil. You who have fallen into my noose, live a stranger to me if you pity me. Disregard my sting and my honey out of your self-respect”—*since you are Barkhiya?*—“There cannot be hunters if the target is too smart.”

You thought that the leopard you have to hunt down is yourself, but now you see more. The leopard is that aspect of your self that responds to the Devil—hunting down the leopard will not be possible without a final confrontation with the Devil. *When and where?*

You don't know yet, but the mystery of the Realm of the Soul is that the leopard itself is urging you to become Barkhiya. A high will and sharp claws you already have.

You are now ready to move on as soon as you see the signifier that ends the present stage of your journey. "The rage of dissociation grants order to life," the Devil goes on. "Alas, separation is so intoxicating! I cannot talk of unity because if I unite, neither He remains nor I!"

This is what you were looking for, of course. *From Your light arise the black and the white—the river, the mountain, the desert, the forest, the moon and the sun.*

The word 'union' renewed the burning agony in the Devil's heart, says the Poet. He rolled and tossed in his own smoke for sometime and eventually was lost in it.

"Lord of Right and Wrong," the Devil's lament rose out of his fumes. "I have been corrupted by Adam's company—not once did he shake his head at my command. I beg to be spared from such a willing slave. Remember my faithful service to You in the past! I deserve a truly seasoned rival with a penetrating look, one who will truly deny me and wring my neck—a living human being, God, who lives truth! In defeat, perhaps, I will find pleasure."

In other words, the Devil wants you. *You have set my falcon to hunt down the leopard, now give it a high will and sharper claws,* you relate with the fifth wish as you move on to the next stage.

Lowest Point

76. India

Give me the heart whose rapture is from a draught of its own wine; take away this heart, which is self-effaced and given to fancying others.

You are in the sixth stage of your journey but you still cannot make sense of this signifier. Then you realize that you have passed the fifth planet and now approaching the sixth—obviously, the sixth planet will demonstrate to you the meaning of the sixth signifier.

“Do you see that that world, which wears a girdle?” Rumi asks the Poet as they approach the ringed Saturn. “The girdle was actually stolen from the tail of a comet.”

The sixth planet is a slow-moving world. It is described as the lodging place of spirits doomed without a chance of resurrection, whom even the hell refuses to burn. You notice the contrast with the souls on the previous planet, who refused Paradise.

“Here live two ancient demons who slew a people’s soul for personal gains,” says Rumi. The demons are Jaffar of Bengal and Sadiq of Deccan, two eighteenth century Indian nobles whose defection helped the British sow the seeds of colonialism. You are reminded of Lord Kitchener, the representative of that colonialism, whom you saw doomed on Venus.

“Shame to mankind, religion and country,” Rumi describes the traitors. “A nation ruined by their handiwork—a nation that brought freedom to other nations thus lost its own sovereignty and faith.” This is apparently a reference to Islam, but strangely enough, Rumi goes on to mention India in the same breath as if Islam and India were inherently linked—“India, a land dear to every sensitive soul, a land whose manifestations lit up the world, now grovels amid dust and blood.”

Rumi’s speech suggests an inherent unity between Islam and India without explaining that unity. On your own you can only see India as a country that is not Muslim for most part—in fact it is the stronghold of Hinduism. *What is the point you are missing?*

Since this is the first riddle presented at this stage of your journey by none lesser than Rumi himself, you can be sure that the meaning of the sixth signifier will become clear once you solve this riddle—but *where should you look?*

There is an ocean of blood, overridden by storms inside and out. Winged snakes with black heads and silver hair are roaming around in its air, waves leap forward like leopards and the sharks lie dead on the shores, having killed by fear—while the shores too are bombarded by rocks.

Amid this terrifying ocean is a boat that carries two naked men with pale faces and disheveled hair—*Jafar and Sadiq, you guess.*

Of course, this ocean is the symmetrical complement to the one on Venus. On that planet, the tyrant Pharaoh and the imperialist Kitchener were doomed with false idols of the past, and here you find traitors who sold their egos to the colonialists represented by Kitchener—but *is there also an idol here?*

You find the Spirit of India appearing on the sky. She is a beautiful houri bedecked with emblems of Primordial Beauty but doomed to chains and fetters. Rumi comments that her lament is heartrending—*why has Rumi become so much interested in India?*

“The light of the soul is quenched in the lamp of India,” says the houri, and you recall that this is the Realm of the Soul—you have entered the sixth stage of your journey but you are still in the same realm.

“Indians are indifferent to the repute of their country,” the houri keeps lamenting. “They are manikins unaware of the secrets of the self, so that their plectrum rarely plucks at their own instrument”—*emphasis on the self is familiar to you, but could it explain the sixth signifier?*—“The Indians set their eyes on the past and seek warmth for their hearts from an extinguished fire. Because of them I am bound hand and foot. They have made a prison of ancient customs by estranging themselves from their selfhood, so that humanity is pained by their existence and the new age is outraged by their values”—*It is now the age of openness, you recall ‘March 1907’, Now Beauty will be revealed to all.*

The Spirit of India must also know what an angel told Vishvamitra, i.e., the impending freedom of the East is not far. Then why her speech reveals no trace of such awareness? “Cursed be the poverty that robs you of the resources and blessed be the

poverty that bestows true command,” she says and you now recognize that her agony is not because she doesn’t know the angel’s prediction, but precisely because she *knows* it. For it is possible that a people receive freedom from foreign masters and still be subjected to their own habits of slavery in their hearts—*what would happen in that case!*

It seems that the houri is tormented by this very possibility—“Beware of constraint and of the habit of patience! Constraint is poison to the constrainer as well as the constrained, since oppression becomes a pleasure for both.”

The new age is an age of abundance only if one is willing to discover the means of prosperity in the secrets of one’s self, but a false interpretation of customs has cultivated among Indians a habit of conformity with the external forces and leaves little taste for discovering new facets of life in one’s own heart.

“Ah, would that my people knew!” Laments the houri. “When shall India’s night give place to a dawn? Jaffar died, but his spirit lives on in new bodies one after another, now conspiring with the Christians, now befriending the Hindus. Driven solely by the motive of profiteering, it is an ape hiding in the robes of Hyder”—*someone seeking a Rustum or a Hyder in India may end up with a Jaffar or a Sadiq instead?*

“The customs and wont of the world have changed with its physical appearance. Idols of the ancient past are now replaced with the idol of country—outwardly anguished for faith and inwardly an infidel.”

Here is the idol in the making, then. India herself! This primordially beautiful houri is lamenting at the prospect of her becoming an idol once India wins freedom.

Rumi’s recent speech seems less coherent now. India had no fear of being turned into an idol until Jaffar and Sadiq sold their souls to the British. A new worldview was then introduced here, and it was based on what went wrong in the West when their Joseph came out—*then love turned to the greedy ways of lust*. Now that the Josephs of the East are also about to be released from their prisons, the Spirit of India is horrified at the prospect of her being reduced to an idol whose servants would do in her name what they have learnt from the West to be the true meaning of patriotism—

Preferring war to peace, it reared up armies everywhere and they plunged their swords into the hearts of their own kith and kin.

“Jaffar in whatever form it may appear is a murderer of the nation, for this ancient believer is an infidel.”

You will find the link between Islam and the Spirit of India if you discover something about Jaffar that is alien to both at the same time—“It may smile and smile but remains a villain, for a snake is still a snake even it be smiling. His nation is demeaned by his very existence, for his treachery divides the people’s unity. God save me from the spirit of Jaffar! Save me from the Jaffars of the present time!”

One of the passengers in the boat raises a cry—perhaps it is Jaffar, the senior traitor himself. “Alas for the unkindness of Being and Not-Being, for neither will accept us,” he says. “We passed through the worlds of East and West to reach the gates of Hell but it would not lend a single spark to burn us.

“We journeyed beyond nine heavens to seek the Sudden Death, but it said, ‘The soul is a secret among my secrets, since it is my task to preserve the soul and destroy the body. Though the wicked soul is utterly worthless, I would have nothing to do with you who want me to destroy your souls’—*why would Jaffar and Sadiq want their souls destroyed?*

Of course, their agony is coming from their very souls. This formidable Ocean of Blood is a mirror to their souls—that is why they are here, and that is why they want their souls destroyed.

“The traitor’s soul shall not find rest in Death, for Death cannot perform such a task. Swift winds! O Ocean of Blood, O Earth, O Blue Sky, O Stars, O Shining Moon, O Sun!”—the traitor is addressing the seen and the unseen—“O Pen, O Preserved Tablet, O Book! O White Idols, O Lords of the West, who rule the world without war and violence! This world without beginning has no end, where is a master who would take a traitor’s soul?”

The message is obvious—*the form of existence is an effect of the self, whatsoever you see is a secret of the self*, as you were told upon entering the Garden. Those who live not by themselves but choose to have a second-hand existence have to suffer in an ocean of darkness and tranquility if they are the oppressors or in an ocean of thunder and blood if they had embraced oppression with willing acceptance.

Second-handers turn their objects of adoration into idols—whether those objects of adoration are the European nation-states worshipped by patriots in the West, or India and the Orient worshipped by those who have learnt their patriotism from the Western masters.

Give me the heart whose rapture is from a draught of its own wine—the motto of the sixth stage now makes sense to you—take away this heart, which is self-effaced and given to fancying others.

The alternate to the nation-state will come from Islam—the purpose of Muhammad's mission was to found Freedom, Equality and Brotherhood for all humankind. Hence Rumi's speech wasn't incoherent when he yoked together the images of Islam and India in a single breath. However, it would sound rather strange if the implication of that speech was that the entire India should embrace Islam!

“I do not bid you to abandon your idols”—you remember what the Shaykh had said to the Brahmin—“O inheritor of ancient culture, turn not your back on the path your fathers trod. You who are not even a perfect infidel are unfit to worship at the shrine of the spirit.”

At that time it did not occur to you that the “spirit” could be the Spirit of India, and the shrine could be the same new shrine, which the Poet had once wanted to construct with the help of the Brahmin. *Religion does not aim at making us strangers to each other*—you remember, and then you recall the earliest mention of Joseph in the Poet's discourse, long before he was even visited by Rumi. “What good is it if you saw Joseph in the well! O ignorant soul, you confined that which was beyond definitions.”

You have found Joseph without defining him, and hence you should be able to grasp something implied in the meaning of Islam but not very obvious up to this point. A vision that does not confine religion to any straits narrower than the expanse of the Truth itself, a vision befitting the serenity of Joseph whom you have found but not still cannot define—a hidden meaning of Islam itself?

I have now set out to hunt a bird sitting atop Your Holy Sanctuary—you recall the sixth wish in the ‘Prayer’ you offered in the Temple of the New David—Give me an arrow that could do the job without spilling blood.

77. Joseph's home

“No Gabriel, no Paradise, no houri, no God—only a handful of dust consumed by a yearning soul!”

This is the agonizing cry on the lips of a man stationed at the frontiers of this world—where the Poet arrived after his eyes “had beheld a hundred worlds, each with a different moon and a different Pleiades, a different manner and mode of existence.” Time in each world flowed like running water, here slowly and there swiftly—“Our year was a month in one world, and a moment in another. The plenty of one world was the scarcity of another, our reason too clever for one, mean and abased for another.”

The madman on the frontiers was none other than the German thinker Nietzsche. “His place is between these two worlds,” Rumi explained. This thinker had revealed the secrets of the Western civilization and was treated like a madman. Hallaj was crucified by the clergy but this modern mystic forfeited his life to the physicians who killed him with sedatives. *God is dead*, he declared, and instead he sought the Superman. “What he was seeking was the station of the I-am,” says Rumi. “That station transcends reason and philosophy. Revelation embraced him, yet he knew it not—just as the fruit is the farthest from the roots of the tree. If only he had lived in the days of Ahmed Sirhindi!”—this is a reference to a Sufi who lived in India some three hundred years ago.

“Stride onwards,” says Rumi. “For now you are close to the station where speech sprouts without spoken words.” *The way you found Joseph*. Has he brought you to his own home?—you wonder.

“I stepped beyond and set my foot on the world that has no dimensions,” says the Poet as he follows Rumi towards the Paradise. “The light of my perception dimmed before it, and my words died in awe of meaning”—is that how speech learns to sprout without spoken words?

“To speak of the soul with the tongue of water and clay is like trying to fly high in a cage!” The spoken word is the cage and speech cannot fly high enough to speak of the secrets of this station unless it breaks the cage—“Regard a little while the world of the heart and win a clear vision by the light of the self.”

Of course, this station is compatible with the world of the heart—since your heart is also a world without dimensions and it is at rest while also in motion at the same time. You remember ‘The Incurigible Lover’ in the enclave of *The Call of the Marching Bell*, where the Poet’s heart was presented as a principle of unity among his seemingly contradictory traits—a cut diamond, which, despite being a single gem is capable of reflecting a different color on each side.

You are also aware that when you found Joseph he could fit neither in your mind nor in your words but only in your heart—you found him by accepting an experience that cannot be approximated into words at once.

The world now appearing in this Planetarium seems very much to be the native land of Joseph, and Nietzsche came only halfway to it—*was he also looking for Joseph?*

“In that universe was another world, and God had given birth to it in some other manner,” says the Poet. “It was changing every moment without decay, and it could not be perceived but could be seen”—Vision has become superior to perception at this station. *How?* You know that seeing something is of little value until you understand it, but since this world cannot be perceived, it may not be understood either. Then why should you bother to *see* it?

The reason most directly related to you is Joseph. If this is the very home of Joseph, then he will become more familiar to you if you see this world.

“It is light, and presence, and life,” the Poet describes the new world. “Tulips repose amidst the mountains and rivers meander in the gardens. Crimson, white and blue buds blossom with the breath of the angels. Silver waters, ambergris air, palaces with domes emerald, tents of ruby with golden ropes, and beauties with countenances radiant as mirrors”—*but if this world cannot be described in words then how come the Poet is describing it?*

Of course he is not describing anything. He is merely producing analogies that will serve their purpose when you relate

them with your familiarity with Joseph. They have no other purpose.

“Prisoner of analogies!” Rumi says to the Poet, “Transcend the credibility of the senses. Fair and foul deeds derive out of the Divine Manifestation a hell or a heaven”—*experience, not words is the key*—“These colorful palaces are built of deeds and not of bricks and stones. What you call Kauthar, page boy and houri are but manifestations of this dominion of ecstasy and joy.”

And hereafter his hand will distribute the water of Kauthar—you recall how the Poet had explained the meaning of Hyder’s title “Bu Turab” in the enclave of *Secrets and Mysteries*. “Through self-knowledge, he acts as God's Hand and in virtue of being God's Hand he reigns over all”—he had said—“His person is the gate of the city of the sciences: Arabia, China, and Greece are subject to him.” *And India too?* Now you wonder if the link between Islam and India is deeper than what you may have suspected.

“Seeing is all the life here and nothing else,” says Rumi. “Nothing but the bliss of seeing, nothing but speaking to the Beloved”—*seeing God and speaking to Him?*

It seems so. *It is now the age of openness, now Beauty will be revealed to all and the secret concealed by silence will come out*—that is how the Poet had tried to drop his earliest hints about Joseph. While forecasting how the world would be after his Joseph had come out, he had based his description on Joseph’s original homeland. *The other world.*

“This is the mansion of Sharfunisa,” Rumi says to the Poet while pointing at an edifice of pure ruby whose portico was thronged by the houris.

She was a noble maiden from Punjab who kept a sword by her side while reading the Quran and ordered the two to be placed on her grave when she died. “The word of truth, and the power to protect it, these indeed are blessings,” Rumi says to the Poet and it sounds reminiscent of the polarity of power and love.

Both the sword and the Quran were taken away from Sharfunisa’s tomb when Punjab slipped out of the Muslim power, and the remembrance makes the Poet nostalgic—he is, after all, from Punjab where his ancestors had arrived from Kashmir.

78. Kauthar

“I gathered a handful of straw to set fire to myself,” sang a voice on the banks of Kauthar. “The rose presumes that I would build a nest in the garden.” This was Ghani of Kashmir, a Persian poet of the seventeenth century and known to be an egoistic Sufi.

“Do not give your heart to what has passed and observe what is now coming, my son,” said Rumi to the Poet. The implication is fantastic—Ghani has just repeated lines he said in his lifetime, and like all good Sufis he had originally referred to the temporal world as a garden about which he shouldn’t care much.

From Rumi’s comment you may derive that the Paradise too is such a garden about which Ghani cannot care much. Then what does he really care for, if anything?

“The poverty of the eloquent poet Tahir Ghani is *ghani* inwardly as well as outwardly,” Rumi makes a pun on the name *Ghani*, which literally means rich or satiated. Of course, the only thing he really cares for is his enlightened self.

“He is drunk with eternal wine and chanting a melody in the presence of a Sayyid whose hand is the architect of the destiny of nations,” says Rumi as he refers to Sayyid Ali Hamadani, a Sufi descendant of the Prophet, whose influence turned Kashmir into a little Persia—“He gave science, crafts, education and religion.”

Sharfunisa and Sayyid Ali Hamadani may represent in some way the spirits of Punjab and Kashmir—respectively the present and original homelands of the Poet, but the role of Sufism as a formative influence in the lives of nations has now become too obvious.

Those who wandered in madness will return to the dwellings, you recall the Poet’s prediction from ‘March 1907’. Sufism, which is also connected with your Joseph, seems to be inherently related with the hidden purpose of the sixth stage of your journey, which will be revealed through the link between Islam and India.

The Poet's interview with Sayyid Ali Hamadani covers the functions of the Devil, the nature of evil, and the destiny of Kashmir—a valley of predominantly Muslim population sold by the British to a Hindu dynasty. His questions provoked Ghani to sing another song: "O morning breeze! Speak a world from me to the League of Nations if you should pass over Geneva. Say, they sold farmer, field, river and garden—they sold a people, and at what a low price!"

On these purely political matters, Sayyid Ali Hamadani's observations consist of a subtle mystery of seemingly esoteric nature. "The body must be melted so that the precious pearl of the soul could be distinguished from the clay," he says. "You lose a part of your body if you cut it off but your soul returns to you if it is intoxicated with the true vision and you give it away—its substance resembles nothing else, since it is constrained and yet free. It dies in your body if guarded too well but it can illuminate the society if you scatter it."

The Poet gave many indications about diminishing the polarity of kingship and Sufism into the unitary concept of a spiritual democracy in the new age, but you may not have suspected that even the Sufis of the past would share his vision. Yet, in the Paradise itself you find this medieval architect of spirituality teaching you that the spiritual is the political.

"To give away the soul is to surrender it to God," says the Sayyid. "It means melting the mountain with the soul's flame"—you recall what another Sufi had told a young man about strengthening the self in the first enclave of the Garden. "To be intoxicated with vision means discovering one's self," adds the Sayyid.

Strange! A conventional interpretation would inverse the meaning—to scatter the soul would mean to lose your self in ecstasy arising from your self, and to behold the vision would mean to give your self away to God. Here, a high authority on Sufism is telling you that it has to be the other way round—the Realm of the Soul, you realize. Things are revealing their inner secrets, which are turning out to be the opposite of how they are perceived from the outside.

"Not to discover one's self is not to exist," says the Sufi. "Self is realized through self-discovery—whosoever is capable of seeing

oneself and nothing else has drawn forth treasures from the prison of his self.”

Treasures are not kept in a prison, you think—but of course, this is an oversimplification of something you already know. What is drawn from the prison of the self is Joseph, *and the treasures are seized afterwards*.

“One intoxicated with vision, who beholds oneself, is indifferent to suffering and cares little about life and death,” says the Sufi. “The walls of one’s prison then tremble before one’s self and one’s axe shivers the granite rock to claim its share of the universe”—is this a treatise on the soul or a political program for the oppressed people of Kashmir?

You know the answer. The spiritual is the political, and this is the secret revealed in the Realm of the Soul. That it is coming from a medieval Sufi seems to suggest that this is how the genuine Sufis had always understood it although the application of their principles may have been moderated by the epochs of history.

The discourse becomes even more political and contemporary with the next question of the Poet, and Ghani goes to the extent of mentioning the Nehru father and son, who were leading the freedom movement of India against the British colonialists—“Those scions of Brahmins, with yearning hearts, whose glowing cheeks put the red tulip to shame—keen of eye, mature and strenuous in action. Their very glance puts Europe into commotion”—*Who can judge the strength of a true believer’s arms when a look from him is enough to change destinies!*

You recall the lines from ‘The Dawn of Islam’ but could they be applied scions of Brahmins?—*why not?* In ‘The Answer’ to the Poet’s ‘Complain’ God had made it clear that there were no chosen people, and whoever will follow the Path will get rewarded according to their worth.

In this case they seem to be the Nehru politicians. Could it be that the angel was also referring to these father and son when he mentioned to Vishvamisra that the impending freedom of India has drawn nearer? Perhaps, yes.

There is another possibility, though. It could also be that the Spirit of India was lamenting because the Nehru politicians were mainly following the political model of the West. Great freedom fighters they were—*keen of eye, mature and strenuous in action*—

just like Mustafa Kemal, but just like him they too may be unaware of what went wrong with the Joseph of the West.

Could it be their Joseph that is about to be released from the prison in the East? Perhaps, yes. You only need to discover what happens if two Josephs of different nature are released from the prison at the same time in the same dominion—*do they fight with each other?*

Perhaps they do, but yours is all about Primordial Love. He is the one Joseph truly capable of ending dichotomies and reducing polarities to the non-contradicting Oneness of the universe. You still haven't discovered the link between Islam and India, but now you know that if such a link exists then it is deeply connected with one of the mysteries of your Joseph.

“Is reason your lamp? Set it on the path to glow,” you notice that the Poet is reciting his farewell ghazal to the saint, but he might as well be addressing your predilection—“Or is love your cup? Quaff it with the confidante. I pour forth from my eyes the bloody gouts of my heart—my ruby is the best, pick it up and set it in your ring!”

His ruby is the treasures buried in his Garden, and you are picking it up very carefully. The ring, as you know, is the emblem of temporal power. You have every reason to suspect now that your journey is leading you not only to wisdom, but also to power.

Ironically, Paradise is the place where you have come to the realization that power and wisdom are interrelated. May be, this realization *is* Paradise!

79. Beauty and death

“My lament provoked supreme ardor among the houris in palaces and pavilions,” says the Poet. “They put forth their heads from tents and peeped out from chambers to gaze at me. I transposed the pain and sorrow of the terrestrial globe to every heart in eternal Paradise.”

He must have been too busy witnessing this effect, for he failed to notice a newcomer until Rumi pointed out. “O magician of Indian descent!” Rumi smiled at the Poet, “Behold now the Indian minstrel whose name is Bhartari Hari. The grace of his gaze converts the dew to pearls and he is a broider of subtleties.”

Bhartari was a Hindu king who left his kingdom to pursue the art of poetry and indulge in spiritual exaltation—in the seventh century, according to some traditions.

“I have seen great upheaval among the Indians,” the Poet said to Bhartari Hari. “It is time you revealed the secret of God in clear words.”

“These frail idols are but of stone and brick,” Bhartari began recounting his *ashlokas*. “There is One more lofty, and He is far from temple and church”—one could wonder if this is a denunciation of the Hindu faith, but you know better. The ideas are not coming from the Poet but from a Hindu sage himself, and they are not in response to a question about religion but a question about political life.

I do not bid you to abandon your idols, but the hazard of making a new idol unwarranted by their own tradition must be avoided too. The secret of Oneness, buried in the heart of India, need to come out now because it alone can save them from creating and worshipping the new idol of nationalism, which will take them astray from the songs of their ancestors.

“It is better to open your eyes and step outside the circle of your thoughts,” Rumi said to the Poet after Bhartari had finished

his *ashlokas*. “You have passed by the company of dervishes, now also look at the palace of kings. Three sovereigns of the East are assembled here—majesties of Persia, Afghanistan and Deccan.”

Nearby stood a palace who reflected glory gave vision to angels—quite understandable, if the palace was made of noble deeds. Its walls and gate were of turquoise deeper than the whole sky and soared beyond quantity and quality, thus reducing thought to mean impotence—*reason and speech are insignificant in Joseph’s home*.

Roses, cypresses, jasmines and the flowering boughs were as delicate as a picture painted by the hand of spring, while petals and leaves were perpetually changing colors out of the joy of growth. The breeze turned gold into scarlet in a blink of the eye—*such analogies do not describe that place but merely remind you that imagination cannot draw an outline*.

Pearl-scattering fountains were on every side and birds born of Paradise were singing clamant songs—*you wouldn’t know what those birds looked like*. Within that lofty palace was a chamber more radiant than the sun—*whereas the sun itself is a bit too bright for the human vision*. The roof, walls and columns of that chamber were of red agate, the floor of jasper enclosed in carnation while houris with golden girdles stood in ranks to the right and the left of that lodge—*visions derived from the Divine Manifestation by noble deeds!*

In the midst were thrones of gold on which were seated stately sovereigns—majesties of Persia, Afghanistan and Deccan.

Rumi, that mirror of perfect refinement introduces the Poet with utmost affection—to *the kings?* But of course, this is a station where the polarity of the monastery and the court doesn’t hold anymore. Here the emblem of Sufi wisdom stands in the court of royal majesty without disturbing any equilibrium.

The first to welcome the Poet was King Nadir of Persia, an eighteenth century ruler who knew the secret of national unity. “On your lips our Persian speech beseems so well”—he thus approved the Poet who had ventured to write verses in a second language. “We are your confidantes, reveal what you know of Persia.”

“After ages she opened her eyes on herself but then fell into the snare of slavish imitation of Europe,” says the Poet. Then he goes on to describe his contemporary Persia’s fascination with its

territorial identity and its yearning for a nationalism based on the principle of the Persian race—“slain by the charm of bold and elegant idols.”

The spirit of a classical Persian poet and a preacher of Ismailism, Nasir-i-Khusrau Alavi then appears and sings his ghazal. “Know, that the sword as well as the pen are without virtue to the faithless, for steel and reed have no worth without faith”—*Neither swords nor schemes can free you from bondage, you remember from the parliament of spiritual democracy. Chains get cut when a taste for certainty is acquired in the heart.*

“Faith is precious to the wise and contemptible to the ignorant, for before the ignorant it is like jasmine before a cow,” says the spirit of Nasir before disappearing again—did he make this cameo visitation to remind *you* of your sixth stage?

In finding the link between Islam and India you must define religion in the light of your own experience—you first need to see it in the mirror of Joseph.

The second king was Ahmed Shah Abdali, the pioneer of Afghan nationhood, who came a generation after Nadir. He asked about his own folks—and you are reminded of the later king of the same country addressed in *A Message from the East*.

“While other nations are forging unity, the brotherhood of the Afghans is lost to fighting among themselves,” says the Poet. “From them the whole East derives life, their ten-year-old can lead armies and yet ignorantly they have broken themselves from their own.” He then quotes from a seventeenth century Afghan poet who warred against the Mughals—“If an Afghan should find a camel richly caparisoned and loaded with pearls, his mean spirit is only delighted with the camel-bell among all the load of pearls.”

“Desire and courage spring from the heart,” says Abdali. “The Afghan nation is the heart of Asia. The whole Asia is corrupt if the heart is corrupt. The whole Asia is dilated if the heart is dilated. The body is free only as long as the heart is free, otherwise it is a straw whom the wind may carry anywhere”—*heart!* You remember that Joseph’s home is the dominion of the heart, and it is no coincidence that Abdali is offering you a monologue on the principles of the heart as reflected in politics.

“The heart is also subject to laws, just like body,” Abdali goes on. “The heart dies with hatred and lives with faith. Faith derives

its power from Oneness, and when Oneness becomes visible it becomes a nation!”

Here, then is an alternate principle to the idolatrous patriotism in the new age—national unity derived not from the principle of race or motherland but from the law of non-contradiction that binds the universe.

“The power of the West comes from science and technology,” says Abdali—*science and technology are the discovery of non-contradiction in the physical world, you recognize*. “Wisdom derives not from the fashion of clothes, and the turban is no impediment to science and technology, which comes with brains and not with European clothes! On this road only keen sight is required, and not this or that kind of hat. A nimble intellect and a perceptive mind is all you need, for anyone who burns the midnight oil will find the track of science and technology.”

The emphasis on science and technology has another purpose here, as you can see. All three kings belong to three successive generations of the eighteenth century, the very age that witnessed the birth of Enlightenment in Europe—or the age of openness, in the words of the Poet. Or, from your perspective, the age when Joseph of the West was released from its prison.

Yet, those were also the worst of the times because with that Enlightenment came the birth of new patriotism that sowed the seeds of dissension—*then love turned to the greedy ways of lust*.

Abdali is also addressing you, because the purpose of your Joseph is to set right the wrongs that came in the wake of Enlightenment.

“Nobody can fix the bounds of the realm of meaning,” says Abdali—*is he referring to your experience of Joseph?* “Meaning cannot be attained without incessant effort but the Turks have become intoxicated with the honey poison they quaffed from the hand of Europe, and have departed from themselves”—why should the Afghan King go out of his way to mention the Turks? Of course, he is reminding you of the companion who seated next to you in the parliament of spiritual democracy. Mustafa Kemal is not named, but you get the point.

“Do you know what European culture is?” The Poet dares ask King Abdali. “Paradises of color, dazzling shows to burn our

abodes, an exterior captivating enough to hide a weak heart—no one knows what destiny lies in store for the East.”

The Poet has just described the alternate world offered by Farzmurz and you, at least, know that the destiny of the East depends on you, since you are Barkhia.

Abdali mentions Reza Shah Pahlavi and Nadir Shah, the contemporary rulers of Persia and Afghanistan—it seems that Amanullah, to whom *A Message from the East* was addressed, has been deposed since then and Nadir has succeeded him. Destiny of the East depends on the unbending resolve of these kings, says Abdali—you may not agree with him but he is giving the true perspective of an Afghan King.

“The Europeans can have their magic tricks,” Abdali concludes. “It is high infidelity to rely on other than oneself.”

It all fits together—you can see. Secrets of the self, the perfect world of Barkhia, the Joseph of Iqbal and Rumi all unify to create a compact source of power. You cannot name it as yet but you know what that power is. You wish that your arrow may do the job without the necessity of being shot.

The third king is Sultan Tipu of Deccan, who came a generation after Abdali and became the last impediment in the way of European colonialism. He could not be overcome until the British purchased the loyalty of his trusted minister, a man you have already met.

The defector was none other than Mir Sadiq, one of the two men condemned in the Ocean of Blood on Saturn.

“Leader of the martyrs of love, the glory of kingdoms” is how Rumi describes Tipu. “Love is a mystery he chose to reveal in the open plain, if you only know how he gave his life!”—*Tipu died in battle, you know.*

So will you?—the narrative is going to end in your death, if your understanding of the last end marker is correct. Could it be that the purpose of this Martyr-King in the Planetarium is to give you premonitions of your own end?

“The Indians are standing up against the British rule,” the Poet delivers the good news to the Martyr-King, who then asks about Deccan, where the Poet recently delivered a series of lectures on *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam.*

“I scattered my tears in Deccan,” says the Poet—obviously alluding to the lectures. “Tulips are growing from the soil of that garden and I have beheld a new commotion in the soul of the river Cauvery.”

“You have been endowed with heart-illuminating words,” says the Martyr-King. “I was in the presence of the Prophet—the Lord of All, without whom no path can be traversed—and though none may dare to speak where the only occupation of the spirit is to behold, I was afire with the ardor of your verses and some of your thoughts came on my tongue. The Prophet asked me, ‘Whose is this verse which you recited? In it pulses the true vibration of life’. O Living Stream, now with the same ardor convey from me a few words to the Cauvery, who is also a living stream just like you—sweeter sounds melody interwoven with melody.”

The river Cauvery flows by the tomb of Tipu in his native land, but could his message be also for you? As you listen to him you realize that every word can be sent by you to a river in this Garden once you have left—*or get killed?*

“You whose music is the very fire of life, do you know from whom this message comes?”—says Tipu to Cauvery. “It is from the one whose empire you reflected in your mirror, whose contriving turned deserts into Paradise”—*these pages were a desert until your contriving extracted this Paradise where you are now standing*—“The one whose image was wrought with own blood, and with whose blood your waves surge still! The one whose words were all action, the one person awake whilst the East slept!”

The parallel between you and Tipu is uncanny, and the mysteries of death he is about to reveal may be related to your function in the narrative. *You too will die.*

“Do not enter the inn of existence if you have to burn out like a spark, but if you come out of non-existence then wander in search of a stack to burn—if you have a flame like the sun, then step forth into the vastness of the sky, set fire to mountain and bird, garden and desert, and even the fishes in the depths of the sea!”—*is he telling you that you should not die?*

“Live like a falcon and die like one if you have a breast worthy of an arrow,” Tipu goes on. “Do not ask of God for length of days, for immortality is in the breadth of life. The law, the creed and the

custom of life is nothing but that it is better to live for a day but live like a lion than be alive for a hundred years but live like sheep!” You remember the sheep’s doctrine: *Close your eyes, close your ears, close your lips that your thought may reach the lofty sky.*

Tipu is not speaking about death or life but rather what one should do regardless of life and death. “Life is strengthened by cheerful resignation, while death is a fantasy,” he says. “The servant of God is a lion and death is a prey, it is but one of many stations. The universal human being swoops upon death even as a falcon swoops upon a dove”—*and your falcon has been set to hunt down a leopard!* You had assumed that the leopard was the devil, but what if it is death instead? How are you supposed to hunt down death, no matter how high your will and how sharp your claws?

You also remember that there was some premonition about your becoming a universal human being at the end of this journey. Is that also connected with your final battle with death in this narrative? Will you get killed in order to become an immortal universal human being!

“The slave dies every moment, since the fear of death makes life itself a forbidden thing, but death itself bestows a new life on God’s free servant, who is concerned about the self but not about death,” says Tipu—and you are reminded of the Martians who announce their death a couple of days ahead and then cheerfully retract into their selves.

“Death is no more than an instant to one who is free, so transcend that death which befriends the grave, for that kind of end befits brute beasts. A true believer asks of God for another kind of death, one that raises up the self from the dust, one that is a station on the path of Love—it is the final testimony to the Oneness of God.” *Die by the principles you lived by?*

“In whatever form it may come, death is sweet to a believer,” says the Martyr-King. “Yet it is a different thing to die like Husain”—*Truth lives in Shabbir’s strength; untruth is that fierce, final anguish of regretful death,* you recall from the chapter ‘Freedom’ in the second enclave—“Bloodshed is the warfare of worldly kings but the warfare of a believer is to follow in the footsteps of the Prophet—a flight to the Beloved, quitting the world to get closer to Him.”

The ancient polarity of the court and the monastery is resolved in the concluding lines of the Marty-King: “The Prophet who proclaimed to the people the word of Love called warfare the ‘monasticism of Islam.’ Who would know it better than a martyr, who has bought this subtlety with own blood!”

All controversies end in the face of death. The narrative has gone out of its way to explain this to you.

80. Desire

Houris had gathered outside the royal palace. They thronged around the Poet as he came out with Rumi.

“Living Stream, O Living Stream!” They shouted. “O Living Stream, O master of ardor and ecstasy! Sit down among us for a while, O sit down among us!”

You remember ‘The Incurable Lover’ where the Poet’s critics had accused him of being a bundle of contradictions—he liked good company and yet he was a loner; he liked women and yet he was indifferent by nature; he was a scholar and yet he liked to transcend reason; he was devoted to religion and yet his behavior was not very orthodox.

If the Paradise is supposed to be a reflection of one’s higher self, as Rumi had pointed out earlier, then the Paradise as you see it in this Planetarium is indeed a merger of the lofty contradictions in the Poet’s personality—banquet and solitude, amorous desires and egoistic indifference, scholarship and ecstasy, religion and free inquiry.

However, just as the Poet had argued in his earlier poem, these are no contradictions—the handful of dust which is his physical existence has erupted through love to become capable of assimilating the opposites.

This is the other world, the original home of Joseph and the dominion of the heart—and the Poet’s heart was like a cut diamond, he had said, which could reflect a different color on each side.

The beauties crowding around him are those colors? Does each one of them stand for some intricate idea he flirted with, some impossible poem he tried to write or some beautiful woman he could not win?

As an ‘Incurable Lover’ he had claimed that his movement from one beauty to another was in fact a quest for the totality of

beauty that was distributed in various objects in the world. True to that claim, he is now willing to bypass these beauties as he stands on the doorstep of the Divine Beauty.

“Traveler who knows the secrets of the way fears the lodging-place more than the robber,” says the Poet to the houris—*Of what sort is this traveler who is the wayfarer?* You recall the seventh question of the New Garden of Mystery as you realize that this is the seventh station in the Planetarium.

“Love reposes neither in separation nor in union—it reposes not without the Eternal Beauty,” the Poet goes on. “Paying homage to idols is the beginning but freedom from them all is the end”—*the houris are being compared to idols*—“Love stops at nothing and is ever on the move, a wayfarer in space and the dimensionless realm”—*Love is the wayfarer?*—“Like the swift wave our creed is also to abandon the halting-place and be always on the move.”

“Your values are like those of Time,” say the houris. “At least don’t grudge us one sweet song!”

“You have not reached the human being, so why do you seek God?” The Poet sings his song, “You have fled from your self, why do you seek a friend?”

Is he addressing the houris or you?—or both! He has just been compared with Time, and you know that God is Time. Is the Poet the universal human being, then?

“Vision is enhanced through the company of those who have a conscious heart,” he continues the song. “Why do you seek collyrium from the short-sighted? We are people of ecstasy, and our miracle is world-vision—seek vision from us, why do you seek the philosopher’s stone?”

The last one was almost certainly meant for you—you will become the universal human being not through a miracle but only by developing a certain perspective on things. The vision!

81. Divine Presence

“I allowed my soul to drift in the ocean of light and was engrossed in looking at God in His Infinite Beauty present in ever changing glories,” says the Poet.

He had to venture alone to this last point in his journey—even Rumi left him alone. You know that he has been here before.

This must be the Sidrah Tree, where the Poet came once before when he transcended the Realm of the Angels. He witnessed nothing—not even God. That is when he bowed down before himself.

It is different now. “I became lost in the secrets of creation and life appeared to me like a harp, each string an instrument in itself and each note more piercing than the other,” he says. He is witnessing existence in its totality—the Divine Manifestation.

“We are all one family of fire and light—the human being, the planets, Gabriel and houri,” he says. “A mirror was placed in front of my soul and my sense of wonder was mingled with my faith. There I saw the past and the future standing together before a present morning”—Time in its totality? Time experienced outside the passing moments of human life.

“God was before me with all His mysteries and looking at Himself through my eyes!”—Life demands witness on itself, Rumi had told him. Even God desired to have witness on Himself! “To see Him is to wax ever without waning and to rise from the body’s tomb—servant and Master lying in wait on one another, each impatiently yearning to behold the other.” *Like us, He is also in love and has desire!*

“Life, wherever it may be, is a restless search”—*even the Divine Life?*—“Whether I am looking for Him or He is looking for me is a riddle that remains unresolved!”

Love makes him bold, and he poses a question in the Divine Presence. “O Creator! Does this world suite you where humans are

preyed upon by the profiteers, tyrants, mullahs and false saints? Indeed, a world of miseries doesn't suite a creator like you, O Lord! It is a stain upon your name!"

"The pen of destiny wrote whatever We chose from the good and the bad," the Voice of Beauty answered. "Do you know the meaning of life? To live means to create through Our power. To create is to search for the beloved."

Of course, the choice of Barkhia. To create is to search for the beloved, whether you create a new life, a new poem, a new artifact, a new world—or a new nation!

"What is a nation, you who declare *no god except God*?" Asks the Voice of Beauty. "To be a nation is to be one in vision with thousands of eyes. The proof and claim of a people of God are always One"—is this what your Joseph is about to do? To form a group of likeminded people and bring forth a new nation?

"Oneness of vision converts the motes to the sun," the Voice of Beauty goes on. "Be one of vision, that God may be seen unveiled"—*It is now the age of openness, now Beauty will be revealed to all?*

"Do not underestimate the oneness of vision, which is a true epiphany of unity," the Voice of Beauty continues. "A nation acquires power when it is intoxicated by this unity. It does not need a body, since its spirit exists through association"—*Each one of us is trustee to the whole community*, you recall from the second enclave.

Is that the link between Islam and India? *Those who wandered in madness will return to the dwellings*—the Poet must have meant the Sufis, but had he also envisioned a nation-building task for himself—*or for you?* A new nation arising out of the Indian sub-continent, a nation based on the values of non-contradiction! Is that why Rumi has become so much interested in India?

"Create unity of thought and action, so that you may possess authority in the world," says the Voice of Beauty.

"Pray tell me why I am in the bonds of destiny," asks the Poet. "Why are You immortal while I die?"

"You have been in the world of dimensions," the Voice of Beauty tells him. "Anyone contained in dimensions, dies within them"—you remember the Martians. Their hearts are not contained

in their bodies but the other way round, and hence they are acquainted neither sorrow nor do they fear death.

“Advance your self if you seek life,” the Voice of Beauty continues. “Drown the world’s dimensions in your self, and then you shall behold who I am and who you are, how you died in the world and how you lived!”

The Poet then asks to be shown the destiny of his planet—“I have seen the revolution of Russia and Germany, the tumult in the Muslim World and the contriving of West and East. Present me their destinies too!”

“Suddenly I saw the earth and its sky downed in a light of crimson dawn and the epiphanies that broke in my soul fell me drunk like Moses,” says the Poet.

You remember how the third realm was previewed in the Temple of a New David. *Although I know that coming out unveiled will happen one day, but do not think that the soul will stop writhing.* Now you know what that meant.

The scarlet horizon is the pure wine poured by the Saki on the Poet’s heart—and yours. It is transmutation, since you are now ready for the next realm, and for a much higher challenge.

The Realm of the Soul is dying in the Garden. Did the Poet see something more that cannot be conveyed in words? You know that everything in this dominion transcends words.

“That light lifted the veil from the face of all secrets and snatched the power of speech from my tongue”—hence nothing here is at it is described. These are mere pointers to lead you to a first hand experience at some later stage in the course of your own journey.

Out of the deep heart of the inscrutable world breaks forth an ardent and flaming melody. It is the epiphany of the Divine Majesty:

Pass by the East, nor be enamored of the West,
For all this ancient and new is worthless.

That signet-ring which you gambled away to the satans
Should not be pledged even to trusty Gabriel!

What is the signet-ring? Self—or free will, or the possibility to choose like Barkhia—or the power to create new worlds? In fact, all are the same.

Life, that ornament of society, guards itself;
You who are of the caravan, travel alone, yet go with all!

You have come forth brighter than the all-illuminating sun,
So live in such a way that you may radiate every mote.

Radiating every mote is yet another reminder of the nation-building aspect which has suddenly become so imperatively connected with your Joseph.

Alexander, Darius, Qubad and Khusrau have departed—
Fallen like a blade of grass in the path of the wind.

The kings are dead, and *the treasures can be seized if one Joseph comes out of the Pharaoh's prison.*

So slender is your cup that the tavern has been put to
shame!
Seize a tumbler, and drink wisely, and so be gone!

82. Javid

“The book has come to an end but I still have something to say that cannot be said,” the Poet begins the epilogue of *Javidnama*. “The effort of saying it makes it more complicated as the words and sounds blur it. Grasp it from my eyes and from my passion.”

The epilogue is titled ‘To Javid—a word with the new generation.’ Javid being the name of his son, he must have chosen it with many possible puns in his mind. Literally, it means permanent or everlasting. Most commonly it is used in the context of receiving a permanent place in heaven through the grace of God.

This is the name he has now bestowed upon you as well, equating you with his own child. “To say *there is no god except Allah* means that you should never lower yourself before anyone or anything in this world,” he says. “One who doesn’t believe in oneself is an infidel, worse than one who doesn’t believe in God.”

You remember Hallaj, who saw a people who claimed to believe in God but didn’t believe in themselves. Is this the mission statement you are being given for the next realm?

“Look at the evils of the world around you and protect yourself from them”—*the vision, you recall*—“Our teachers give all the wrong messages to our youth, since they take away the natural flare from the soul.”

He is making sense to you at a very personal level, as if you are related to him as closely as his own child. “Take it from me that all knowledge is useless until it is connected with your life, because the purpose of knowledge is nothing but to show you the splendors of yourself!”

Is that why he didn’t deliver his message directly but built the Garden where you could discover the splendor of yourself?—“Religion starts with courtesy and attains its perfection through love. Do not slander anyone, for the Muslims and non-Muslims all belong to the same God.”

We are all one family of fire and light—the human being, the planets, Gabriel and houri. That is how he described his vision of the Divine Beauty. His concept of nation-building is now beginning to become clearer to you.

“Beware of the dignity of the human being and remember that your humanity lies in showing respect to other humans”— *you know where he is coming from*—“One who loves God should be kind to everyone, just as God Himself is merciful to people of all religions.”

In his Planetarium you saw people from all religions roaming around in heaven—no one was judged on the basis of their formal religion but only according to the worth of their actions.

“Do not serve your body at the cost of your soul, and learn to take pride in poverty even if you become a wealthy noble”—*in the Paradise you have seen three kings taking pride in poverty.*

“Try to find a true guide and if you fail to do so, follow Rumi just as I took him for my guide”—you recall where it all started from. *Inspired by the genius of my master Rumi, I am about to reopen the sealed book of secret lore,* he claimed at the beginning.

“People have learnt to dance like dervishes but they haven’t learnt the dance of the soul, which moves the order of universe, but the soul cannot dance until you shake off fear and expectation from everyone except God”—*to live means to create through Our power,* the Voice of Beauty had proclaimed—“Stay away from grief because grief indicates a weakness of faith and turns youth into old age.”

“O my child! If only your soul could learn to dance, then that is the secret of the religion of Muhammad that I am disclosing to you, as I lie praying for you in my grave.”

He has stopped, and you are reminded of the fact that he is now dead for many years. You are right here in the heart of his Garden, just outside the Planetarium that lies in the exact middle, and works just as efficiently as the first day.

However, it is up to you to finish the task that started with your entering the Garden. Discover your real self, and let its effect be felt around you like ripples emanating from a charged particle. Let those effects be the seeds of a new nation, a new world—the world of Barkhia, since you are Barkhia.

The luster of a handful of dust one day shall outshine the creatures of light, the end marker of the third realm has appeared, as you see that this was the mission explained to you in the Poet's address just now—*earth shall be transformed into heaven through the star of our destiny*, the angels had sung on your behalf on the eve of Creation.

You will be entirely within your senses in dreaming of a world free of strife, tyranny and affliction. A world where people don't fight to eliminate each other, but strive to eradicate hunger, disease and scarcity. Not a stateless mass of humanity pined upon an equality of stomach but a commonwealth rooted in the equality of soul. Nations will be there, and they should be, but the rise of a nation will be the rise of all, and the gain of one will be the gain of all.

Providence foretold this, and the earth has awaited it. You will be within your jurisdiction in desiring it because this is not utopia, it is something you lived in your soul. You have a right, because you are Barkhia. *Give me the heart whose rapture is from a draught of its own wine*—you remember the motto of the present stage of your journey.

God has no chosen peoples, you remember. To Him belong the East and the West. His face you will see wherever you turn and His signs you will witness within your self and without. Those who seek will find Him, and those who do not may still be found—*The pen of destiny wrote whatever We chose from the good and the bad*, the Voice of Beauty had told the Poet.

83. Gabriel's Wing

Gabriel's Wing is the sixth book in the cannon.

Just beneath the title you find this inscription: "Come, let's make the order of the Sun's journey fresh—that we may make the burnt out breaths of evening and morning fresh."

Such lines hardly sound bombastic after that trip through the Planetarium. However, a riddle is presented at the very next step. It is the translation of an ashloka from Bhartari Hari, the Sanskrit poet whom the Poet met in Paradise:

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

You hope that the second line is not referring to you, and you get the point. This book is not the dummies' guide to changing the world.

The first line is problematic, however. The heart of a diamond *cannot* be cut by the leaf of flower, you know. The Poet may have meant that a soft and gentle word affecting a stupid person is even more difficult, but offering a simile so untrue is uncharacteristic of him.

The line makes more sense when you read it like a question. *The heart of a diamond can be cut by the leaf of a flower?—* Answer, No. Likewise—*A soft and gentle word has no effect on a stupid man!*

Then why isn't there a question mark at the end—"?"? It cannot be an oversight, since there is only this ashloka and the name of Bhartari Hari on the entire page. Such a prominent frontispiece can hardly suffer an oversight.

Does it matter? Either of the two readings would yield the same message, and now you recall where you are. This is the Realm of Love. *Reason builds in order to destroy while Love*

destroys in order to reconstruct, you recall. Love takes off as soon as it receives a call from the Beloved, while Reason sits down to solve the subtleties of the message.

It is possible in the Realm of Love to read something in various ways. As long as the conclusion is the same, you need not worry about which reading is the correct one. *Love destroys in order to reconstruct*. This enclave is *Gabriel's Wing*. The Archangel bringing messages from God to humanity has been the supreme go-between for the Divine Love, and love letters are to be read without red pencils.

You remember the marker of the fourth zone. *I did not delve deeper into the religious law than this, that the one who refutes Love is an infidel and heretic*.

Of course, each zone teaches you a different mode of perception. In the first zone, the human world, you disregarded dualities through the principle of non-contradiction. In the second zone, the Angelic Realm, you saw things inside-out—principles coming before their applications. In the third zone, the Realm of the Soul, you saw potentials—things as they ought to be and as they may be.

In the fourth zone, you will learn the reverse of what you learnt in the first. Having learnt non-contradiction, you will now perceive dichotomies as the other side of Oneness. The Divine Essence is One but Divine Qualities are many.

You recognize the Realm of Love as the zone of the Garden where the Divine Qualities are crystallized for recognition.

84. Genesis

Gabriel's Wing is divided into two halves, each starting with the Islamic formula, *In the name of Allah, the Merciful Lord of Mercy*.

The first half is divided into two sections of numbered poems, a few scattered quatrains but no key poem to reveal the code.

You start looking for clues, and find one in Poem 15 of the second sequence:

Read *Persian Psalms* in seclusion, if you are of cultivated
taste

The midnight lament is not bereft of secrets.

Why read in seclusion?—because then you read silently, and can do some math on the numbered poems. Configuration is the secret of that book, and hence you should decode the first two sections of this one in a like manner.

However, there are only sixteen poems and therefore you cannot apply the formula of the other book, where the poems were divided by seven to yield the seven stages of your journey. Then each stage was further subdivided into four levels—*but of course, that is the key*. Four, not seven!

You divide these sixteen poems by four, and you get four sets of equal strength. This section will demonstrate only one stage of the journey, i.e., the present stage. The segments reflect the Love, soul, angelic and human perspectives respectively.

You are concerned with the perspective of Love, since that is the zone you are standing in. That perspective is found in the first segment—Poems 1 to 4—and on the first reading, it seems related to Adam's readjustment with the Fall.

“My epiphany of passion causes commotion in the precinct of the Divine Essence and strikes terror in the pantheon of Qualities”—the opening is an obvious allusion to the birth of

Adam, who agitates against the Fall in the very next poem: “If the stars have strayed, to whom does the sky belong—You or Me? Why must I worry about the world, to whom does this world belong—You or Me?”

You, as Barkhia can relate to it. On the second reading, you take this segment as a continuation of the previous book. The Fall is also the Poet’s descent from the doorstep of the Divine Essence—which was found at the very end of the spiritual odyssey in the Planetarium.

He has been sent back, and with him, you. Why? So the Realm of Love may be explored, and the Divine Qualities revealed. Hence *terror in the pantheon of Qualities*—it seems that the World of Nature mirrors the Realm of Qualities, and has no other purpose. Therefore it must reshuffle when humanity discovers a new perspective on the Divine Qualities. The Poet—and the human soul—however cannot help agitate at the cost it must pay for this victory. The cost is a separation from the Divine Oneness and imprisonment in the world of polarities and dimensions.

You look for any clues about India and an undiscovered link with Islam. You find only one reference to India, and you find it in Poem 8—which belongs to the segment that represents the perspective of the Soul.

In this poem, while asking the Saki to inspire him, the Poet also says, “Three centuries India’s wine-shops have been closed, it is time that your largesse be for all, O Saki!”

This is the other side of the same thing that you heard in ‘March 1907’: *Bygone are the days, O Saki, when wine was taken secretly; the whole world will now be a tavern and everyone will be drinking.*

At that time you had only recognized that the wine referred to the secret concealed by the Sufis, and the time for its free distribution was now at hand. You did not know that something to the contrary happened in India three hundred years ago—something bad, it seems.

You wonder about what had happened, and how bad was it. The poem, or this entire section, tells you nothing about it.

85. Qualities

The total number of poems in the second sequence is sixty-one. It is a prime number, and hence it cannot be divided.

The first poem is unusual. It has a long prefatory note in prose, unlike any other poem so far. “By the grace of the Martyr-Caliph Nadir Shah—may God bless his soul—the author visited the holy tomb of the sage Sanai of Ghazna”—the sage preceded Rumi in the tradition of wisdom poetry, and the king was mentioned by Abdali in Paradise as a living hope for the East. Now he too has been killed, but not without having invited the Poet to Afghanistan first—and a king’s invitation to visit a Sufi’s tomb serves as a symbolic merger of court and monastery in the person of the invitee, the Poet.

“These few stray reflections in imitation of a eulogy by Sanai were written to commemorate that gracious occasion: *We come after Sanai and Attar.*” The italicized line is a quotation, but the “we” may refer to Rumi and the Poet, two followers of Sanai and Attar. You notice the polarity—a pair of finishers coming after a pair of pioneers. Since Nature conceals and poets reveal, the pioneers by concealing the secrets of Sufism symbolize the natural order, while the finisher symbolize the function of poetic genius in that tradition by revealing what was concealed.

The poem itself consists of six segments separated by dividers. *Six!* Of course, you should minus this poem from the sixty-one, and divide the remaining sixty by six.

Six perfect sets of ten poems each—or seven sets, if you treat the long segmented first poem as a set by itself. The seven sets correspond to the seven aspects of your journey—or the seven stations in the Planetarium—and bring a different perspective on the Realm of Love.

The one that directly corresponds to the present stage of your journey should be the sixth set—Poems 42 to 51. They also bring

the perspective of Saturnine wisdom on the Realm of Love, since the sixth sphere in the Planetarium belonged to Saturn. There, the Saturnine wisdom demonstrated the interdependence of nations and individuals on each other. In the Realm of Love, it informs that a lesson can be learnt from history.

The five pairs of poems included in the sixth segment according to your division provide analyses of that lesson from the five points of view that pervade through all inquiries in the Garden: human, angel, soul, love and civilization.

“Selfhood strengthened by Knowledge is the envy of Gabriel, selfhood strengthened by Love is the trumpet of Raphael,” says Poem 42 as it brings out the human point of view on the Saturnine wisdom in the Realm of Love. Gabriel brings God’s message to humanity, so he would most envy a person who discovers that message in her or his own heart—this is possible when selfhood is strengthened by knowledge. Such a revelation can overturn the world, as if Raphael’s trumpet had brought the Doomsday, but that requires the informed self to be strengthened by Love—*love destroys in order to reconstruct*.

This is paired with Poem 43, which is an inquiry into preparedness for this task: “Is freshness of thought to be found anywhere in colleges? Is a taste for mysteries to be found anywhere in monasteries?” The answer is not given.

Poems 44 and 45 analyze the lesson from an angelic point of view: humanity is destined to find Gabriel’s Pride and Raphael’s Trumpet. “A event unborn is reflected in the mirror of my intellect,” says the Poet in Poem 44. “This dust will transcend the limitations of Nature one day, although it is entangled in the skein of Fate.” It reminds you of the Song of Angels from the Planetarium: *The luster of a handful of dust!*

Once again, the pairing poem delves into the issue of preparedness, but this time an answer is provided. “The Sufi orders have lost ardor, and all that remain are fables about unbelievable miracles!” *My own age does not know the secrets?*—but it seems that with his acclaimed insight into the future, the Poet also saw you coming.

Poems 46 and 47 analyze the lesson from the soul point of view. It is the point where things reveal their essential potential, you remember. “Although the madness of the Europeans was also

bold, its ardor did not tear any robe,” says Poem 46. If you equate the tearing of one’s own robe with freedom from constraints on one’s higher nature, then the Poet is explaining why Joseph of the West could not create that perfect world which you, as Barkhia, are destined to beget.

By contrast, the pairing poem tells you what is required: “The goal you seek is not easily achieved—non-contradiction and freedom, O Courageous Soul!”

Poems 48 and 49 offer an analysis from the Love point of view. “Neither the throne and the scepter, nor men and armies can match that which is to be found in the court of a Gnostic,” says Poem 48. The quality reflected in Gnosis is the opposite of what Joseph of the West revealed to the world, as you see in Poem 49, which completes the pair: “Nature did not make my thought very bold, but my dust is endowed with the power to fly!”

This quality in the Poet may help your Joseph, found through him, to be free of the bug due to which *love turned to the greedy ways of lust* in the previous experiment.

Poems 50 and 51 form the last pair in this segment. This is an analysis from the civilization point of view. “Visionaries will found new worlds,” says the Poet in Poem 50. “I am not looking towards Kufa and Baghdad”—*centers of Muslim culture in the medieval past*. You know that he is looking towards the future, and towards you.

Poem 51 pairs this analysis with a revelation: “Angels complained about Iqbal to God, that he is impudent and beautifies the Nature!” *To live means to create through Our power*, the Voice of Beauty had informed the Poet, and he has exercised that license very well in creating the present zone of his Garden, which is nothing less than an attempt to improve upon Nature in its multiple states of being.

Standing close to the end, you now arrive at the segment comprising of the last ten poems in this sequence. The last station in the Planetarium concluded the Poet’s journey in the Divine Presence. Poems 52—61 bring the perspective of that culminating stage to the Realm of Love. “No more rounds to go, the game is over,” says Poem 52. “Razi has lost, and Rumi has won.”

Who is Razi?—you look up other references to him in this enclave, and you find that he was the highpoint in the exegesis of

the Quran—unlike Rumi, who commanded the Poet to empower you to discover the mysteries of the Book through experiential learning. Nature itself lies bare before you now, and the Divine Qualities manifest. Rumi has won.

“The marching bell tolls, get up because the caravan is on the move! Woe be to the wayfarer who still awaits a call!” says the pairing poem. “Your temperament is different, and so are your times—the monastic order is unsuitable for you.”

You are surprised. The monastic order represents Sufism, and your Joseph is all about that. If that order is obsolete, and unsuitable to your temperament as well, then what order will suite you?

You recall Rumi’s cryptic hint about an undiscovered link between Islam and a particular country.

86. Free association

How should you approach the twenty-two quatrains that float between the two parts of the enclave. They are neither numbered nor titled.

A quatrain is the best symbolic representation of the principle of duality: four lines, or two couplets form two pairs of two lines each—duality within duality, just as female and male have male and female sides each in themselves.

There are twenty-two quatrains—you could not help counting them—and no amount of sub-dividing fits them into the familiar numerology of the Garden. You decide to relax, and to enjoy them.

Nature yields meaning through free association too, and the landscape you see is like a tulip field—quatrains were associated with the ‘Tulip of Sinai’ in an earlier enclave.

“The Sanctuary has picked up agnostic ways, and the Church has become a businessman,” says the first tulip. “My torn garment is a rarity in this age when madmen are not sighted anymore.”

You wander lonely as a cloud that floats high over vales and hills, when all at once a tulip stops you in your tracks. “Your thought is not celestial,” it says. “You cannot soar above dimensions—although you are a falcon by origin, yet you lack that boldness in your eyes.”

Are these tulips telling you something, or are they telling you?—you look for all the ones that are addressing you directly, and there are quite a few of such. “You are alive but you have no heart,” says one. “Your breath doesn’t warm up the world—move on from reason, for this light on the path is not the destination by itself.”

Reason?—have you become unwittingly trapped by it? “Sight has accepted the limitations of scent and color,” says another tulip. “Intellect has been lost to the four dimensions!”

You recognize the irony. You entered this zone, knowing that this is the Realm of Love, and yet you had to indulge in polarities, dichotomies and dualities—you had no other way, since the Realm of Love cannot be transcended without gaining familiarity with the worlds of Nature, history and cognition.

That is your dilemma—and a little red flower reminds you of who you really are. “Your essence is luminous, therefore you are pure, and you are the light of the eyes of the skies,” it says. “Angels and houris are easy game for you, because you are a falcon of the Lord of All Creations!” You mark the symbol associated with you lately, *the falcon*.

“The dewdrop bathes the flower every morning,” says a tulip on the other side of the field. “There is grass, there are leaves, and there is the morning breeze. Yet, no tumult can be roused in these fields, for the tulip here is incapable of heartache.”

You are one with Nature and yet different—“Take the world by the storm of your selfhood,” suggests another little one. “Discern the secret of existence. Like the sea, be acquainted with the shore and yet pull yourself away from its surf!”

This is perhaps the best advice you could get at this point. Indeed this jocund company has brought some wealth to you, for oft when on your couch you may lie in vacant or in pensive mood, they will flash upon your inward eye, which is the bliss of solitude—“The *I-am* is in the seclusion of the self,” as a tulip reminds you already.

Then your heart may with pleasure fill, and then even your soul may dance—“Reason leads the wayfarer, for what is it but the lamp by the road,” the last one calls out just as you are leaving. “How would a lamp by the road know what tumults rise inside the house!”

87. Mosque of Cordoba

You pass from abstract and ethereal into concrete and substantial. ‘The Mosque of Cordoba’ towers above all other pieces in the second half. It is the Grand Poem—a compact, Gothic structure of eight stanzas with equal number of lines.

It is preceded only by a ‘Prayer’—offered in the courtyard of the Mosque itself. “My prayer as well as my ablution is to enrich my songs with my heart blood”—the Moors glorified God by erecting a beautiful building in stone, and the Poet has built an edifice of verse to parallel the qualities of their architecture.

They remind you that the Divine Qualities are manifested in the human world not only through Nature, but also through history. They also appear as history—“The succession of day and night is the architect of events,” says the first line of the Grand Poem.

The structure of the poem itself is the key. Eight stanzas of eight couplets each—since a couplet consists of two lines, you may as well pair every two stanzas, and get four sets. Each sets consists of two stanzas, and thus the Grand Poem becomes a projection of the principle of a quatrain on a humungous scale!

It is also an exact parallel of the first sequence of numbered poems, and the four perspectives reflected in those poems are also represented here—love, soul, angelic and human.

The first and the second stanzas relate to the perspective of the Realm of Love, which also corresponds with the Divine Qualities. This brings out the basic polarity of this Realm: Time versus Love.

Many polarities found among the Divine Qualities are introduced at the very onset of the first stanza: life and death, day and night, self and other, old and new, hidden and revealed—and, of course, the Divine Essence versus the Divine Qualities themselves. The unity holding together all polarities is Time—it destroys all creation, and “Yet there is the stamp of permanence on images perfected by the godly,” as the second stanza informs you.

You learnt something about the power of the human being in the face of Time in each zone, and in the Realm of Love you learn that images perfected by a *godly* person last in the face of Time—like a mirror reflecting Divine Qualities. Because, “Deeds of the godly radiate with Love, the essence of life, which death is forbidden to touch.”

Here you understand the longer now of history, and how you have become a part of it. “Although fast and free flows the current of Time, yet Love itself is a tide and stems the other tide—in the chronicle of Love there are ages outside the serial time, for which no names have yet been coined.”

Such as the age of Barkhia—you recognize. In the Garden you have found yourself not only in the thick of the moments long bygone but also engaged with times yet to come. The mysteries emanating from your Love of Joseph are revealed to you as you stand by the first pair of stanzas in the courtyard of the Grand Poem.

Since the other pairs relates less intensely to the present zone of the Garden, you decide to move on—you still have a long way one more stage in your journey to finish.

However, something stops you before you go very far. It is the ninth poem, an Ode to the Prophet, titled ‘Ecstasy’. *Why is it placed so far?* An ode to the Prophet is usually placed immediately after the opening prayer or hymn, and the Poet of the Garden is not someone who would deliberately digress from that practice.

This compels you to a second reading, and then you realize that the Grand Poem is in fact conceptually integrated with eight surrounding poems—the ‘Prayer’ preceding it, and all seven dramatic monologues that follow it up to the ‘Ecstasy’. Hence, all poems before the Ode to the Prophet form one heavenly prologue, a dialogue with God.

The first seven poems bring the perspective of each stage of your journey on the Realm of Love, and correspond to the seven spheres of the Planetarium just like the second sequence of numbered poems. Including the last two, however, they also correspond to the nine queries of ‘The New Garden of Mystery’.

You move to the sixth, since that should demonstrate the perspective of your present stage on the Realm of Love. It is ‘The Prayer of Tariq—in the battlefield of Andalusia.’

Tariq was the first Moorish invader of Spain, who burnt his boats upon landing on the Spanish coasts—as you saw briefly in a previous enclave. “These warriors, your servants ripe with mystery on whom you have bestowed a taste for the world, they split deserts and rivers with their kicks and mountains hide themselves by their awe,” says the conqueror. “Strange is the taste of true awareness, which makes one indifferent to the world and the rewards of hereafter—the goal and objective of a believer is martyrdom, and neither the booty nor dominion! The tulip has long awaited in the garden to get a robe from the Arab blood!”

The poem poses a problem by glorifying warfare at the very heart of the Realm of Love—but you also notice how motifs of Nature are interwoven with forces of history in this apparently simple dramatic monologue. A nation also has a self just like an individual, and what should be expected of someone standing atop a world civilization whose mission statement includes an alignment with the multiple levels of existence!

“You unified the desert-dwellers in mind, in vision and in the morning prayer!” Tariq draws closer towards the conclusion, “That passion, which Life itself sought for many centuries, it found at last in these very hearts, which regard death as the opening of another gate and not an end of all!”—*What is the way to find that part?* You remember the sixth question of the New Garden of Mystery, *What is that part which is greater than its whole?*—“Revive in the heart of a true believer the lightning that flashed with the cry, *No Fear!* Let ideals soar high in breasts and the vision of the Muslim turn into a sword.”

He used sword as an outward extension of inner resolve, but the civilization that begat the Mosque of Cordoba and much else besides could not have been born unless a vision had matched that sword in sharpness and strength. *Your temperament is different, and so are your times,* so you may use nerves as alternative to steel. However, the principles that govern the forces of history remain the same for you as well as him, although the creation of values and techniques differ through other variables.

88. Palestine

You behold a desert cooled by the last night's rain and illuminated by the first rays of the Sun. The Poet is looking at the tracks left behind by those who have gone ahead of him to the Prophet's city, which is not very far from here. Just then, he hears the voice of Gabriel asking him to go no further.

This is how 'Ecstasy', the ode to the Prophet, opens. Most of the verses were written when the Poet was traveling through Palestine, and a prefatory quotation from classical Persian suggests that he considered it unbecoming of him to return empty-handed from an entire garden and bring nothing for friends.

The poem has five stanzas—you recognize them as human, angelic, soul, love and civilization perspective on your interaction with the Realm of Love at the present stage in your journey.

You should directly move to the fourth stanza, since that would correspond most directly with your present status but something just before that catches your sight.

"Give my heart no time to agitate—add a curl or two to your tress!" The signifier that is supposed to end the present stage of your journey is right here as the last couplet of the third stanza.

This is the fourth time the couplet has been repeated, and you see how many multiple polarities converge in this last rendition.

It was first addressed to God in the Temple of a New David, and then by a repentant woman to Buddha, who was the first apostle in the Valley of Prophets. It was then addressed to God again, in the present enclave, and now to the last apostle—two offerings to God compared with two offerings to prophets.

This time it has been recited by a male devotee, and yet the couplet itself is inherently female in its characteristic, since a female recited it in the Realm of the Soul where things reveal their essential value. Hence, the Poet is equating himself here with the

repentant woman and in thus bringing out his female side, he himself represents the sexual polarity in a single existence.

It also formulates the first request made by the Poet in the poem, and the very next stanza is the fourth one, which you were originally looking for.

“You are the Tablet as well as the Pen, and your life is the Book itself! The bubble-colored dome is in fact a bubble in your ocean!”—what else could be the perspective of Love on the Prophet when you are standing in the Realm of Love itself? Nothing except that such mystifying polarities as the Tablet and the Pen, and the Divine Word and the human life should find a transcendent unity through the mysteries of the Prophet, since he is all of these and yet he is more than these.

“Life in the world of water and earth is from you, and you bestowed the radiance of a sun upon the grain of sand!” The world of Nature is the world of polarities—beginning with the duality of water and clay—and the advent of the Prophet set off that discovery of the laws of nature that eventually led to the harnessing of the powers inherent in atoms and electrons. *No god except God* reduces everything else into mere creation and subjects it to the scrutiny of non-contradiction.

“The magnificence of Sanjar and Salim”—two Muslim kings—“a mere hint at your majesty! The poverty of Junaid and Bayazid”—two Sufi saints—“your beauty itself unveiled!” The dichotomy of court and monastery, even when it pervaded through the earlier parts of the Garden, was reduced to a unity through principles inherent in the mission of the Prophet: *the purpose of Muhammad’s mission was to found Freedom, Equality and Brotherhood for all humankind.*

“My standing before God, as well as my bowing to Him are barriers between me and Him if your passion doesn’t lead my prayer!”—the Poet’s prayer (as well as his ablution!) is the quality of his verse, but there is also a message for you in these lines—“A meaningful glance from you redeemed them both: Reason, the seeker in isolation! Love, the restless one in presence!” Your Joseph was to be empowered if you strengthened your selfhood with Love. This is where you do that.

There is a beloved hidden within your heart—the Poet said when first explaining the concept of Love—*I will show him to you,*

if you have eyes to see. Now he has done that, strengthening your selfhood with Love.

“The world is utterly dark since the sun has set down!” The Poet makes his second request to the Prophet. “Refresh this age by revealing your beauty to all!” The highest level to be achieved in the Qualitative perspective on Nature is to seek the manifestation of the Lord of All Creation in the order of things.

89. Napoleon's Mausoleum

You know how to approach the remaining poems of the enclave.
Pair them.

You get twenty-five pairs. You divide them into sets of five, since there were five pairs in each set of the second sequence of numbered poems. The result is amazing.

If you consider the Mosque of Cordoba Complex and the Palestinian Desert as two sets, then you have five more—and the total is seven. An exact parallel of the second sequence, where each set demonstrated the perspective of the Realm of Love on a stage of your journey.

So does this half, you realize. The Mosque of Cordoba poems were the wisdom of Moon from the perspective of the Realm of Love—higher poetry carrying philosophy and religion in its wake in search of the Unseen.

The Palestinian Desert was the wisdom of Mercury from the Realm of Love—there are new worlds in the Quran, and you find them best through Prophet Muhammad who is the Quran incarnate.

The next five pairs interpret the wisdoms of Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn and the Divine Presence from the perspective of the Divine Qualities resplendent in the Realm of Love.

You start looking for any clues about the secret link between Islam and India, to solve the riddle presented by Rumi to you at the beginning of the present stage of your journey.

However, there comes a bunch of poems you can hardly ignore—not surprisingly, they are the set corresponding to the wisdom of Mars, or in other words, the wisdom of Barkhia.

The very first poem of this set is titled 'Time.' Time itself addresses you to deliver an important message: "A new world is being born, and this old one is dying—the world the players of Europe turned into a gambling-den!"

This is paired with ‘Angels Bid Farewell to Adam in Paradise’—which Adam is it? Perhaps the older one, and you are reminded of him because you are about to become the founder of a new world yourself.

The second pair carries on to reveal the principles on which you will found *your* world. The first part of the pair reminds you of Adam’s vision—‘The Spirit of Earth Receives Adam’ while the second, in contrast, presents a dialogue between the Poet and Rumi about the founding principles of the future world—twelve pairs of questions and answers, you observe. The last pair touches upon the question of India.

“The world demands me to meet and mingle,” says the Poet. “But the song is born in solitude!” Rumi’s answer to this in his own words is, “Keep away from strangers, not from friend—wrap yourself for winter, not for spring.”

The other side of the same question, which makes things more difficult is this: “India now neither light of vision, nor yearning—those who have a conscious heart are despised in this land.” This reminds you of the tears of the Spirit of India, but Rumi’s answer is cryptic. “Imparting heat and light is the task of the brave,” he says. “Cunning and shamelessness are the refuge of the mean.”

Your Joseph will impart heat and light, you gather—but will you be despised for that, and is Rumi asking you to suffer with dignity?

At the end of this set, you are addressed again as Javid—this time ‘On receiving in London the first letter written in Javid’s hand.’ Did you know that the Poet was in London, and did you write send him a letter?—or maybe this is a metaphor for your coming of age.

The message itself seems to suggest something like this. “Find your place in the Realm of Love!”—it says. The poem that pairs with it, ‘Philosophy and Religion,’ tells you how to do that: “Avicenna wonders where he has come from, and Rumi wonders where should he go,” and you need not wonder whom you should follow!

The next pair surprises you—you were looking for clues about Islam and India, and this one is about neither. Yet, you cannot ignore it for that very reason!

“A Letter from Europe” is the title, and while you remember that the Poet was last sighted in Europe, this letter could not have been written by him, since it addresses him. Someone has asked him whether Rumi has left a message for the present age too—and this question is being sent to Rumi through the Poet.

The answer comes in the words of Rumi himself: “Eat not hay and corn like donkeys, eat of your choice like the musk-deer. *Whoever devours grass ends up under the butcher’s knife, whoever feeds on the light of God becomes the Word of God.*”

Rumi is interested in Europe as well?—you look at the other poem in the pair, and there you behold something you didn’t expect to see in the Garden.

In front of you is the Mausoleum of Napoleon Bonaparte. It is made of six couplets—a compact structure, short and sturdy like the Little Corporal himself. “Strange, strange the fates that govern this world of stress and strain,” sings a voice as you step closer—“But in the fires of action, fate’s mysteries are made plain.”

You remember Lord Kitchener freezing in the chilled bottoms of an ocean on Venus for crimes much lesser than the Corsican General’s, who usurped a republic and then unleashed the most unrelenting wave of world conquest known by the days of the Poet. Yet, this beautiful monument not only commemorating him but all the likes of him?—“The sword of Alexander rose sun-like from that blaze to make the peaks of Alwand run molten in its rays,” the voice keeps coming. “Action’s loud storm called Tamerlane’s all-conquering torrent down—and what to such wild billows are fortune’s smile or frown?”

The Realm of Love is also the Realm of Qualities—you remember. Napoleon, Alexander and Tamerlane here are crystallized form of one Divine Quality, and it is something you have been looking for just now. Raphael’s trumpet.

Passing a judgment is one thing, but first you need to understand that thing which you are going to judge—and in this case it is something that can best be compared with phenomena of Nature—something working on a scale larger than humanly possible and without motives completely explicable in terms of human ambition.

Such phenomenal figures lift the world out of one groove, and place it in another. The credit for a new start may not even go to

them, and it may rest with the inherent courage of even the most ordinary human being to start all over again after every earthquake, holocaust or world conqueror.

Raphael's trumpet is a dangerous thing. "Forged in that flame of action in the battlefield's red sod," the voice presents the other side of the coin—"The '*God is Great*' of God's servants becomes the voice of God!"

Is that a good thing?—but the voice of the Mausoleum seems to be coming from somewhere beyond good and evil, indifferent to joy and sorrow, devoid of mercy and compassion: "A brief moment, and nothing more, is granted to the brave—One breath or two, whose wage is the long nights of the grave."

In the Realm of Love you are learning to see each Quality as it is, and the Quality reflected in Napoleon's Mausoleum is power gained through the fire of action. Its limitations are also defined here only in terms of the natural law:

"Then silence at last, the valley of silence is our goal," this last couplet is from Hafiz of Shiraz. *"Beneath this vault of heaven, let our deeds' echoes roll!"*

Hafiz reminds you of the parliament of spiritual democracy. Islam and India can be clues that reveal the real extent of Joseph's purpose. They cannot be the boundaries themselves.

90. Mujaddid

The sixth cluster of poems corresponds to the present stage of your journey—the sixth stage.

The first pair in the cluster comprises of ‘Cinema’ and ‘To the Heirs of Sufi Establishments in Punjab’—the Indian province where the Poet was born, you remember.

“The same old fetish-fashioning and idol-making—is it cinema, or the industry of idol-makers?” The Poet comments in the first poem. “Art, men called that olden voodoo! Art, they call this mumbo-jumbo! That was antiquity's religion, this the commerce of the present civilization! That was earth's soil, this the soil of Hades. Dust, their temple. Ashes, ours!” *Why object to the highest art form descended from Shakespeare himself?*

You remember that the wisdom of Saturn forewarned about the hazard of losing one's selfhood. This poem makes sense if the movie industry is seen as a trade in alter-egos, and the trade itself is guided by the instincts of making profit rather than a judgment of what is good or bad for strengthening the self.

The pairing poem is addressed to the descendants of the Sufi establishments in Punjab. It opens with the Poet's visit to the tomb of Mujaddid Alf-i-Sani, a Sufi master of India who appeared some three hundred years ago—*three centuries India's wine-shops have been closed*, you recall.

Of course, the Poet is counting Mujaddid as the last of those Sufis who could truly transform base self into gold. He did not bow before Jehangir, the Mughal Emperor of his day, and his ardent breath fans every free heart's ardour—“He guarded the national treasure in India, and God forewarned him in time.”

National treasure?—of course, he means Joseph. “Closed is the long roll of the saints,” comes a voice from Mujaddid's tomb. “Visionary souls have given up on Punjab, since a Gnostic cannot make home in a country where lordly tassel sprouts from the Sufi's

cap! That cap bred passionate faith, this tassel breeds passion for playing pander to Government.”

The enormity of the situation now becomes evident. Monarchy ended in India with the advent of the new civilization, but the Sufis didn't bring out their Joseph. Instead, they sold their souls to the new order, and sold it at a cheap price.

Shakespeare and Rumi versus cinema and the heirs of Sufism in Punjab make matching pairs! The two in the second pair are the most direct descendants of the highest masters of their respective civilizations but have equally betrayed the vision of those masters!

The principles of the new order are defined in the next pair of poems—'Politics' and 'Poverty'. Politics is like a game of chess where the player alone is aware of the next move while all others on board are mere pawns—the colonial powers of the West, who rule India, must be the chess players and the Indian politicians mere pawns in their hand. The heirs of Sufism in Punjab, you realize, have become subservient to those pawns!

Poverty is of two kinds—poverty of heart brings destitution even where physical existence amasses wealth. Poverty as a self-aware independence from others is richness of heart that reveals the secrets of ruling the world.

The hidden scope of life in India, or the heart of India, is revealed in the next pair of poems—just as the Planetarium revealed the heart of the universe. 'Self' and 'Separation' are the two focal points here.

“Do not give away your self for gold and silver, since the flame is not bartered for one of its sparks!” Nature shows that flame begets spark, parents beget child, and so on. The science of economic shows that wealth is produced by human activity. Then it is the self who begets wealth, since all human activity is an effect of the self. Hence by retaining your selfhood you may also beget what you wish—one cannot grow smaller than one's wealth.

Separation is like the activation code for the productive functions of the self—the world of Nature basks in the bliss of union with its source, and hence it is incapable of perceiving the taste of separation. “I am worthy of this grief,” says the Poet on behalf of humankind. “This dust knows the phenomenon of separation from the inside.”

The fourth pair crystallizes the dichotomy that has replaced the older one of the king and the Sufi in India—‘Monastery’ and ‘The Devil’s Petition.’

“Subtleties do not suite this age, nor have I mastered the rhetorical art,” says the Poet in the first poem—*this is the age of openness*, you remember. However, the hope of Beauty being revealed to all has diminished—“Those who could say, *Rise in the name of God* are no more, and those who remain in monasteries are either caretakers of tombs or grave-diggers!” The kings are dead, but alas, so are the Sufis.

At the other end of the pole, the kings are replaced by creatures who are neither human nor true blood of the devil—“What was held impure in the sacred law of the East has been pronounced pure by the casuist of the West,” the Devil says to God. You know that he is referring to the highest self-contradiction of all, the acceptance of a dichotomy between spirit and matter. The kings had to work around it because the sacred law stood in their way as a reminder of non-contradiction. The politicians of the new age removed even that last obstacle, giving a universal acceptance to the duality of matter and spirit as a foundation-stone of the modern science and society.

“Politics is now run by devils of the people, by the people and for the people”—the Devil sums up his petition before God—“I need not remain beneath the heavens anymore!”

Tables have turned against you and Joseph. If you had thought that the end of kings will automatically bring about the rule of the Sufi then history has proven you wrong.

In the new age, kings are replaced by devils elected with the full support of the people. Sufis are dead.

You can say only one thing, and you say it now. *Give my heart no time to agitate*, you say. *Add a curl or two to Your tress!*

That, by the way, was the signifier that marked the end of the sixth stage.

Climax

91. Falcon

This is the last stage of your journey, but you are still standing in the Realm of Love, the fourth zone of the Garden.

Then, all of a sudden, Joseph starts speaking to you.

“I turned away from that world where sustenance takes the form of grain and water,” *the poem ‘Falcon’ is obviously his monologue to you.* “The solitude of the wilderness pleases me—by nature I was always a hermit. No spring breeze, no one plucking roses, no nightingale, and no sickness of the songs of love!”—*you know because you have been to his home.*

“One must shun the garden-dwellers,” he continues. “They have such seductive charms! The wind of the desert is what gives the stroke of the brave youth its effect in the battle”—he has addressed the last stage of your journey. *Embattled with the age, my soul is like a river weeping among the mountains,* you remember the signifier from the Temple of a New David.

“I am not hungry for pigeon or dove, for renunciation is the mark of a falcon’s life—to swoop, withdraw and swoop again is only a pretext to keep up the heat of the blood.” One who feeds soul on first hand experience rather than received information is a falcon—*you are a falcon of the Lord of All Creations,* a tulip had said to you in the floating garden of free association.

Joseph is *your* falcon. He catches fresh prey for you—a piece of reality with its heart still beating, all yours so that the soul may have food that isn’t stale.

The pigeon and dove are the information and views that naturally arise out of experience, but there is no such thing as finality in that direction, so be prepared to move on from opinions to better opinions with each new experience—*Swoop, withdraw and swoop again!*

“This East, this West, the world of the pheasant!”—*is he not Joseph of the East?* No—“The blue sky, vast and boundless, is mine!”

Of course, the hidden link between Islam and India has got less to do with Joseph and more with Rumi's disciple himself. *The Poet is that link*—the only way he may show you the skill of developing fresh perspectives on actual civilizations is by letting you inside his own corner, just as he did in the first zone!

"I am an ascetic among birds, for the falcon does not make nests," says Joseph, and then he says no more.

This is the seventh segment of poems in the Realm of Love, and hence it obviously refers to the present stage of your journey. 'Falcon' was the third poem—the first in the pair that brings the angelic perspective.

The other poem in the pair is 'Disciples in Revolt'. The heirs of the Sufi establishments are extorting money from their devotees, it seems: "They have merely inherited the office of guidance, like crows usurping the falcons' nests."

On your way out of the enclave, you overhear a conversation between an ant and the falcon—*your* falcon, Joseph. "I am so miserable and forlorn," the ant has just asked him. "Why is your station loftier than the skies?" He replies, "You forage about in dusty paths. I am not even daunted by the nine heavens."

This is the last poem, but it stops you from leaving. You know what Joseph is talking about. You recognize the nine heavens. They are not ahead of you, but behind you.

You turn around, and now you see the enclave backward. You can see the seven segments of titled poems, the Grand Poem still visible near the farthest end. Beyond lies the thin red belt of tulips, and beyond that the first two sections of numbered poems.

These are the nine heavens—seven concrete blocks and two lawns of abstraction beautifully divided by tiny meteors of tulips! You had counted them from the other end, *but what if they were to be counted from this side?*

That seems more appropriate, because then the seven concrete blocks will correspond to the seven stations of the Planetarium, leaving the two lawns of abstraction to answer the eighth and ninth queries of the New Garden. Yet, that will be the undoing of all cognitive labor carried out by you in this enclave. Are you prepared for that? *Swoop, withdraw and swoop again!*

Undaunted, you start counting backwards. 'Ecstasy' now becomes the sixth poem, and hence informed by the wisdom of

Saturn instead of Mercury. It is a statement of one's relationship with one's society!

Its five stanzas correspond to the planes of reality in descending order—the reverse of your previous configuration. Hence the second stanza, and not the fourth, now becomes relevant to the Realm of Love: “Whom should I tell that life to me is a poisoned wine! I have new experiences in an old world!”

It is the true Saturnine perspective on the Realm of Love, and it goes on to mention the idol-houses of illusion created by the peoples of Islam, and the loss of vision and imagination in their religion and philosophy—“There is not even a single Husain in the Caravan of Islam, although the tresses of Tigris and Euphrates are still as attractive”—*Husain is the principle of freedom*, you remember.

“Love is the first mentor of intellect, heart and vision: faith and religious law breed illusions when there is no Love”—*I did not delve deeper into the religious law than this!*—“The truthfulness of Abraham is a form of Love, so is the patience of Husain, and so are Badr and Hunayn on the battleground of Existence.”

Badr and Hunayn were battles fought by the Prophet—*In the hour of battle, iron was melted by the flash of his sword*, you remember. *In the hour of prayer, tears fell like rain from his eye.*

This seems to be the true reading of the Poem, but you cannot discount the fact that it was your previous configuration that carried you through the sixth stage of your journey with success. You see the paradox that reigns in the Realm of Love. *Everything can be read twice!*

This zone is built in such a way that one reading is correct from the perspective of the sixth stage of journey, while another may be applied once you have reached the higher stage. Both are correct depending on where you are standing.

Nature is not an entirely external reality because you are a part of it as much as it is a part of you. However, in choosing your perspective on it you must remember where *you* stand. Your perspective may change the external reality if you align it with *your* reality first. Your reality changes as you move in your journey.

92. Scent of the Rose

You face a problem. It is the seventh segment—‘The Mosque of Cordoba’ and associated poems.

In all they are nine poems, the first seven corresponding to the stages of your journey and all nine corresponding to the questions of The New Garden.

That cannot be. The segment itself stands for the seventh stage of your journey in the revised counting. Therefore, it should be divided into five segments, not seven.

You have recognized a pattern in this Garden. Seven is the number for looking within, and five is the number for looking outside.

There are seven degrees of introspection, but only five of inspection—a journey into yourself may have seven stages, but a journey through the Garden may only have five.

However, when you analyze a single stage of your journey, then it means that you are taking that stage out of the movement. Then it becomes an external reality—how else can you analyze something? As an externalized reality, each stage can only be analyzed according to the five levels of existence.

That is where the present segment doesn’t fit. As a stage of your journey, it should be divisible by the levels of existence—five or four. But it contains nine poems. That doesn’t make sense and, ironically, the segment corresponds to the present stage of your journey.

The Seventh Stage. Of course, that is the key. When you first visited these poems, you were not looking at them as a representation of a zone of the Garden. Then you were in the sixth stage of your journey, and at that stage this segment of poems represented the Realm of Love.

Now, at the seventh stage, the Realm of Love itself has become a stage of your journey—the last stage. What does that mean?

Strive, and find yourself in selflessness, you remember Rumi. This is the easy path, may God know better.

The seventh stage begins with losing your self in the Divine Qualities. *Of what sort is this traveler who is the wayfarer?*—you remember the seventh question from the New Garden. The traveler who is the wayfarer is of the same sort as the road itself! The Realm of Love could not demand anything less than that you become extinct in it—*Love destroys in order to reconstruct.*

“In my breast a wail of grief alone survives,” states the poem that becomes seventh when counted backward. “Without any spark or flash, passionless, ineffectual.” It is ‘Mu’tamid’s Lament In Prison’—he was the king of Seville and an Arabic poet, who was defeated and imprisoned by a ruler of Spain.

“A free man is in prison today without a spear or a sword,” the poem goes on. “Regret overwhelms me, and also my strategy. My heart is drawn by instinct to chains—perhaps my sword was of the same steel!” *Was your self not strong enough to survive in the face of Nature?*

“Once I had a two-edged sword, but it turned into the chains that shackle me now,” says the poem, and you recognize the *two-edged* sword as you self, which you seem to have lost now. “How whimsical and indifferent is the Creator of Destinies!” The second part of the ninth question from the New Garden adopts a cynical flavour now: *Of whom shall I say that this one is a Universal Human Being!*

Cynicism is lost when you look at the next poem—as if from a window in Mu’tamid’s cell, you find yourself looking at the Mosque of Cordoba, which as if by magic pulls you into its courtyard. This time, you configure the stanzas in the descending order of the first four planes of reality, and it is the last two out of the eight that represent the Realm of Love—which is now the same thing as the last stage of your journey.

“Stars look upon your precincts as a piece of heaven, but alas! Your air has not resounded with a call for prayer for many centuries,” is how the seventh stanza begins, and you cannot help comparing it with Mu’tamid’s plight—and your own. A deposed

king in prison, and a beautiful mosque devoid of worshippers. In the verdict of history it may be just retribution, for the king may have become unfit to rule, and the Muslims of Spain must have become too weak when they were expelled. In the eyes of Love, however, it is neither fair nor foul, it is just a sad thing. “What distant valley, what way-side abode is holding back the valiant caravan of rampant Love!”

Caravan of Love? Of course, it means *you*. In being nothing else in the Realm of Love, you have become Love itself. The Germans saw Reformation, the French saw the bloody Revolution, and the Roman-born Italian nation too has refurbished with a revival—whether the Poet is referring to the Renaissance or the Fascist jingoism of Mussolini, you cannot be sure. “The same storm is raging today in the soul of the Muslim,” says the Poet. “A Divine secret it is, not for the lips to utter. Let us see what surfaces from the depths of the deep. Let us see what colour the blue sky changes into!”

The scene changes to the exterior of the Mosque in the next stanza—if the seventh contained the whole of the past in a moment of the present, then the eighth is resonant with the voice of the Poet of the Future.

The sun is setting against River Guadalquivir and the air is resonant with the evensong of a peasant girl. There stands the Poet, reminiscing about what he saw at the end of the Planetarium. “O flowing waters of Guadalquivir!” Says the male voice against the backdrop of the female’s melody, “Someone on your banks is dreaming of some other time—destiny still conceals the world to come but its dawn is flashing before my eyes.”

The horizon of earth drenched in blood, as he saw it in the Planetarium—is that what is flashing before his eyes? “The West would not be able to contain my voice if I were to lift the veil from the profile of my reflections,” is all he says to the waters of Guadalquivir right now.

“Life without change is death,” he carries on. “The tumult and turmoil of revolution keep the soul of a nation alive. Keen, as a sword in the hands of Destiny is the nation that evaluates its actions at each step.” You recall the eighth question of the New Garden: *What point does the claim, ‘I am the Creative Truth’ imply?*—you have an answer now, in as much as you have become

a part of the Garden itself. *Do you think that this mystery was mere nonsense?*—you remember how Hallaj had explained it in the Planetarium: he had seen a people who claimed to believe in God but did not believe in themselves. “The sound of the last trumpet was in my breast when I saw a people hastening to their tombs”—you compare his words with the trumpet of Raphael which your selfhood has now become, and the sorry state of India as you witnessed it at the end of the previous stage of your journey.

“Incomplete are all creations without the lifeblood of the creator,” the Poet concludes. “Soulless is the melody without the lifeblood of the maestro.”

You know that in the Garden, now, you are as the scent in a rose.

93. White Man's Burden

You pass through the floating gardens of tulips again, and now everything seems to have a second meaning.

“Reason leads the wayfarer, for what is it but the lamp by the road,” the little red flower says to you again. “How would a lamp by the road know what tumults rise inside the house!” *Of course, you know something more about the Realm of Love after having become nothing but the realm itself.*

“Sight has accepted the limitations of scent and color”—you remember how that voice had made you aware of being faced with an impossible situation in the world of Nature—“Intellect has been lost to the four dimensions!” You have soared above those limitations now in as much as you have become nothing but a part of the Garden itself.

The great lawn of abstraction with its sixty-one poems becomes the eighth segment in backward counting—*What point does the claim, ‘I am the Creative Truth’ imply?* The eighth question will get answered again, from yet another perspective.

The seventh segment within the lawn itself is the six-part Poem if counted backwards. “All Nature’s vastness cannot contain you,” says the first part. “O my madness, you had overestimated the expanse of the desert.” The world is not enough for the human microcosm, which tends to overflow even the boundaries of macrocosm itself. This quest of the ancient civilizations arrived at a turning point with the advent of Prophet Muhammad—a universal human being the mysteries of whose life illumine the road to the inner recesses of Creation.

You are now concerned about the ninth segment, which should answer the last question of the New Garden—*Who was it that at last became familiar with the secret of Oneness?*

“Lovely, oh Lord, this fleeting world but why must the pure and talented be downtrodden?” Says Poem 16, the first of the four

that represent the Realm of Love in backward counting. “Though the white man’s power is in part from usury, he is nevertheless the arch-deity in the eyes of the world!”

This is a rather bleak note. You were expecting a pronouncement of your final victory—a declaration that you were now familiar with the secret of Oneness at last! After all, you *have* become conscious of the luminous reason favored in Poem 15, and have broken the spell of the azure sky mentioned in Poem 14—then what is lacking?

Poem 13, the last of the set corresponding to your present state, leaves you on a dismal note. “The same indifference on your part to my old misfortune!”—the Poet is addressing God—“All my perfection in this melodious craft was of no avail to me!”

94. Declaration of war

The Rod of Moses is the next enclave. A notice near the entrance compels you to stop and think.

A DECLARATION OF WAR AGAINST THE PRESENT AGE

A free temper is not given to a static life:
Like the morning breeze, imbibe a wish to blow!
A thousand founts may spring from stones on your path:
Immerse in your self, and strike a Moses' blow!

God says, *I am Time*. You recognize that ages, epochs and civilizations spring out of people's *interaction with Time*. They are human constructs.

A war has been declared against the present age, and it is *on your behalf*, since you are the protagonist. This war, however, will be fought with a different type of arsenal. *Firm certainty, resolute action and universal love*—you recall the swords that were displayed in that parliament of spiritual democracy. Universal love?—the significance of that phrase dawns upon you as you recognize yourself as an embodiment of the Realm of Love, and nothing else on your part.

You are being asked to imbibe a wish to blow, just like the morning breeze—and you know what that means. *The morning breeze creates its companion for the road out of the perfume of the rose*, you remember. It does not get entangled with the thorns, nor does it take away anything from the Garden, except by way of taking something that is increased by the very act of being taken by the morning breeze. Its gain is a gain of all. Its wealth is self-made.

Immerse in your self—you are being reminded. You have no self, except something which has become one with the Realm of

Love itself. Find your *self* in that *selflessness*, you interpret Rumi's message in the light of this new precept.

What about the Moses' blow? That is what the enclave will provide you—*the Rod of Moses*. He parted the Red Sea with a blow of his staff, and then again he struck a stone with the same staff to bring out several founts.

Illuminate my lifeless clay with the light of the song of David, you remember the seventh wish of the 'Prayer' you offered in the Temple of a New David, and now you remember that David was also the prophet who eventually founded an empire in the Promised Land—through him was attained the culmination of the odyssey that started with Moses' blow.

Grant the rising spirit of sparks to every particle of mine, the second part of that wish makes more sense now that you identify every particle of yours as a part of the Realm of Love itself.

This is the beginning of the fifth zone, then. You can recognize the marker hidden in these prefatory lines. *After a long time I hear the song of the camel-driver*—you recall—*the treasures can be seized if one Joseph comes out of the Pharaoh's prison*.

However, you notice an anomaly. The enclave is divided into five sections, instead of seven. It is the Realm of Civilization, and as an isolated piece of external reality it should not be sub-divided into five stations—only an isolated stage of your journey can be sub-divided into five parts, whereas an isolated level of the Garden has always been divided into seven parts.

A possible explanation arises, but that will change not only the way you are looking at your self, but also the way you had understood the Realm of Civilization. In fact, it will change the way you understand the human civilization itself.

Before you apply a far-flung explanation, you decide to take a closer look at the enclave, just in case you are missing out on something. It is dedicated to the ruler of Bhopal, a princely state in India. "There was none to whom could be related the tale of what this age has done to Asia, and what is yet to come," says the Poet as he offers the enclave to the Nawab of Bhopal. "Accept from me this entire yield of the spring!"

An address to the reader and a prefatory poem follow the dedicatory epistle, while the book itself is divided into five

segments: Islam and the Muslim, Education, Woman, Literature and the Arts, and Politics of East and West—*five planes of reality*.

In the end there is a sequence of twenty numbered poems, which are captioned ‘Reflections of Mihrab Gul Afghan’—very obviously another pseudonym of the Poet, this time with the literal meaning of ‘The Flower Niche Afghan’. You cannot help noticing that the very name itself is resplendent with the polarity of female-male symbolism.

You cannot make seven sections in this enclave. In order to do that, you will have to count all the prefatory poems as the first section, and the ‘Reflections’ as the last. That is not how things have worked in the Garden so far. In the Realm of the Soul, *Javidnama* was divided into seven chapters while the prefatory poems and the epilogue stood outside that division. Likewise, in the Realm of Love also this division was clearly indicated by a floating field of tulips that served as a visible separator between the seven degrees and the two questions.

There is only one possible explanation to the scheme of things in this enclave, and now you accept it.

There is no Realm of Civilization. The fifth zone is in fact the seventh stage of your journey itself. At that stage, you immersed into the Realm of Love when you found a corresponding segment divided into seven parts instead of five.

In doing that, you became internalized in the Realm of Love. An externalization of that same self, which you lost there, will yield five planes of existence that constitute the Realm of Civilization—the human civilization, you now recognize, is nothing but the thought of a powerful soul.

The treasures can be seized if one Joseph comes out of the Pharaoh’s prison.

95. International Relations

The fifth section of the enclave corresponds to the present zone of the Garden. You find that it has thirty-five poems.

Of all five sections in the book, this is the only one where the total number of poems is divisible by seven—yet another indication that the fifth zone of the Garden is the same as the seventh stage of your journey.

You divide the thirty-five poems into seven segments of five poems each, and then skip to the last segment, which must correspond with the last stage of your journey.

‘The Psychology of Bondage’ is the first of these, and hence it must present the human perspective on the situation. “The causes that make the nations sick are so subtle that speech is not sufficient to describe them”—thankfully, Joseph doesn’t depend on words for communication!—“the leaders of exoteric and esoteric aspects of religion among slaves can only see the fox’s doctrine in the creed of the lions!” The doctrine of the fox may not be very different from that of the sheep—*Close your eyes, close your ears, close your lips that your thought may reach the lofty sky!* “The office of Moses becomes a curse for the nation if it is secretly enamored by the power of the Pharaoh!”

Moses and Pharaoh, Shabbir and Yazid, from Life spring these conflicting potencies—you remember. Husain represents the principle of freedom inherent in a belief in the Oneness of God. So is Moses. *Reason builds in order to destroy while Love destroys in order to reconstruct*, and slave mentality is chained to reason. Its building power becomes subservient to the agents of destruction.

The second poem, ‘Slaves’ Prayer’ brings the angelic perspective on this mentality. It relates an anecdote where a Turkish delegation of the Red Crescent came to Lahore and was surprised to find that the leaders of prayers prostrated for long durations. “That simple soul, a free man fighting for the truth,

could not have known what is a slave's prayer," the Poet comments. Slaves have nothing else to do, since their existence is devoid of the spirit of action—*Sweet is the world of phenomena to the living spirit, dear is the world of Ideas to the dead spirit*, you remember. "May God grant the leaders of prayers in India the prostration that will bring life to the nation!"

The third poem, 'To the Palestinian Arab' brings the perspective of the Soul. "I know that you carry that fire whose ardor still burns in the heart of the times," the Poet says to the Palestinian Arab. "Your cure is to be found neither in Geneva, nor in London, for the jugular vein of Europe is the grip of the Jews. I have heard that freedom for nations lies in nurturing their selfhood and in the spirit of growth."

You relate this with the Poet's inaugural address in parliament of spiritual democracy—*Neither swords nor schemes can free you from bondage but chains get cut when a taste for certainty is acquired in the heart*. You remember that it was a change in perspective that revived the Turks.

Ironically, it was the trachery of the Arabs—Palestinians included—that drove the Turks to the edge of their graves. The Turks survived—*those who used to receive buffeting from the waves came out as pearls*. Since peals are symbols of selfhood developed through self-reliance in isolation, the Turks must also have survived by *nurturing their selfhood and in the spirit of growth*—and the Poet is offering the same cure to the Palestinian Arab. The previous poem, where the Turk delegate is presented in person, serves as an advertisement of the results of the proposed cure.

The fourth poem, 'East and West' brings the perspective of Love—and, characteristically, it epitomizes a polarity. It has four lines, which state: "Bondage and slavish imitation is the cause of sickness and democracy there!"—you remember his outrage against the double standards of the colonial powers, who practised democracy at home but enslaved the weaker nations abroad. Their democracies were developing the cult of worshipping the newest idol, nationalism. "Neither the East nor the West is free of it," he says. "Poverty of vision and heart is common everywhere!"

Enrichment of vision and heart is what you found at the last stage in the Realm of Love—is that why you are called upon to become the founder of a new civilization?

The last poem brings the perspective of civilization itself. It is aptly called ‘The Psychology of Power’, and sub-titled ‘Reforms’.

“My captor is being kind only to be cruel, and my fresh songs have come to no avail,” says the Poet. “Now he drops withered flowers in our cage, as though to reconcile his jailbirds to their jail.”

You recognize this last piece is the marker of the fifth zone—*Poor fool, you hope to win Europe’s sympathy? You remember the lines you heard in the Temple of a New David. The falcon does not grieve about the bird that’s in its clutch!*

You had noticed even before that the imagery of falcon here was different from how it appears when it is mentioned differently from how it is mentioned when it refers to Joseph. The Psychology of Bondage’ and ‘The Psychology of Power’ complement each other—indeed, the mentality described in the first would happily greet the eyewash being offered in the other. Bondage and Power then become a vicious cycle from which there is no breaking free—an unholy alliance of the tyrant and the traitor.

The way out are the poems that stands outside this cycle—‘Reflections of Mihrab Gul Afghan’. “The purposes of Nature are furthered by someone from a desert or a mountain,” says Mihrab Gul. You know that he is talking about you, since you are the Realm of Love in yourself.

96. Mission

What Should Then Be Done, O Nations of the East?—that’s the title of the next enclave.

‘To the Reader’ is for you. “I raise a new army from the Realm of Love,” says the Poet. “For the Sanctuary faces the threat of a mutiny by the reason.” Obviously, you are the army he has raised.

“My master Rumi, the visionary leader of the caravan of love and ecstasy, whose heart is illumined by the Quran has once again brought me into ecstasy with his flute-playing,” reads the ‘Prologue’.

“Souls have become aware of the secrets and the East has awoken from its deep slumber,” Rumi says to the Poet. “Yet no one, O Knower of the Secrets of the West, has experienced the fire of the West better than you! Since you have drunk from my tavern, your vision is unclouded by the past but your age is enamoured by the other-than-God and has become ignorant of the mysteries of the Soul. You should not tell the secrets of lions to jackals, for *even if the wolves take away our Joseph it is better than his getting sold to the unworthy.*”

Here it is, at last. The clue that set you off on the trail of Joseph in the first place. Now, since you have been with Joseph for such a while, you do recognize who is the unworthy—or rather *what* is it.

To sell Joseph to the unworthy is to give him a false name, an incomplete definition, or an inaccurate explanation. Words, expressions and approximations unworthy of the totality of Joseph are unworthy buyers of the subtlety that he stands for.

Wolves can do him no harm, since he is not of flesh and blood, but a wrong description of him could create evil in the hearts. Rumi warns against this hazard—*is he warning the Poet, or you?*—“People of the world lack imagination and sound judgment—they are weavers of mat who know nothing about

velvet! Reveal once again the significance of religion and politics, and tell the Truthful what you understand by these.”

Why should the Truthful worry about politics? Because, of course, *It is now the age of openness—those who wandered in madness will return to the dwellings!*

The revolution foreseen in ‘March 1907’ is going to take place now, and you are to be its harbinger. Rumi himself is asking the Poet to hold back nothing from you—you are the “Truthful” mentioned in this command. Then he adds, with reference to a metaphor you know very well: “Even the robe of piety is a burden on a truly pious soul, and hence like the morning breeze, you should carry nothing except the scent of the rose.”

The rest of the enclave is divided into twelve chapters. Since Rumi’s prescription was for a straightforward disclosure *to the Truthful ones*, the Poet has placed the seven stages of your journey and the five zones of the Garden in a linear order one after the other—hence the twelve chapters.

The seventh chapter, which demonstrate the perspective of the present stage of your journey on the Realm of Civilization, is titled ‘On the Secrets of Religious Law’. The perspective of the previous zone was to delve no deeper into the religious law than to find the supremacy of Love, but what perspective does your journey bring on the Realm of Civilization now?

“O lofty soul, what is Sufism but to see the Religious Law in the recesses of Life’s heart itself,” says the Poet. “Look into the depth of your own heart if you wish to see the essence of religion clearly, because faith is reduced to compulsion when there is no vision. Such is not religion but a veil between you and God”—*You have drawn your substance from the snow of philosophy, kindle a fire in your rubble!*

“Reveal to the world the essence of religion,” he assigns you the mission. “No one should depend on another human being! This is the sum and substance of the Religious Law, but the jurists and theologians have spun such long tales that the faithful have failed to grasp this point. Prove by action that you are the bearer of Truth, or else you will never be able to set right the problems of the peoples!”

The twelfth chapter begins with a prefatory note in prose: “On the night April 3, 1936, while I was staying at Dar al-Iqbal, Bhopal,

I saw in a dream Sayyid Ahmad Khan, who advised me to place before the Holy Prophet the state of my health.”

The appearance mentioned here was a nineteenth century Muslim reformer of India, and a descendant of the Prophet. *Why are you being informed?* You wonder. The rest of the chapter is the Poet’s invocation to the Prophet. “O helper of helpless people, free this nation from the fear of death!” Says the Poet, and then relates the state of his own health.

You learn that he has been in a bad shape lately. “No longer am I able to nourish song in my breast and open a hundred buds with a single breath,” he says. “My song has broken in my throat, the flame no longer comes out of my breast, my words have lost their fervour and I have ceased to enjoy my morning recitation of the Quran”—he is relating this to the Prophet, *but why is he letting you know as well?*

The medicines are no longer agreeing with his weak constitution—partially due to some fault of his own: “Their bitter taste and smell are unbearable, and I cry like a child at the very sight of them!” *He has a childlike side*—“I deceive myself by sugar-coating them, and the physician laughs at me in his sleeve.”

He then asks the Prophet to cure him with a miracle, as it has been said about some other poets that they got cured after offering odes at the tomb of the Prophet. However, you are reading something else in these lines, as you understand why you have been made privy to this.

“I am a believer,” he says to the Prophet. “I do not deny myself! Test me on the touchstone, and you will not find me brittle. My life may not have been rich in deeds but I possess a tiny thing called heart, which I keep hidden from the eyes of the world because it bears the marks of your horse’s hoof. Call this slave of yours into your presence—my soul, afflicted with separation, cries within me: O my lament! Ah me! Ah me!”

The Poet is going to die soon. You know that he has made you privy on this invocation to prepare for you for what you must be facing in the final parts of this narrative. You, the protagonist, will have to fight alone.

97. Little Afghanistan

On the outer end of this enclave is a little corner called ‘Traveler’. A notice informs you that it is ‘An Account of A Brief Visit to Afghanistan in October 1933’—*a flashback?*

It must be the journey during which the Poet visited the tomb of Sanai, as mentioned in *Gabriel’s Wing*. However, you notice another significance of this little corner.

In the first zone of the Garden, the Poet addressed King Amanullah of Afghanistan in a dedicatory epistle to *A Message from the East*. That king was later replaced by King Nadir Shah, as you heard from Ahmad Shah Abdali in the Paradise. This corner, lying in the last zone of the Garden, compliments the dedicatory epistle in the previous zone, for here it is a king of Afghanistan who addresses the Poet.

“I received a message from the late King Nadir of Afghanistan, who used to melt himself in prayer like Abu Dhar but shattered rocks with his blow in the fight. The message, which infused a new spirit in me, ran: ‘I burn with the fire of your melody! Happy is a nation that knows your intent. We know well your heartache and we know that the East is illumined by you although you are like a lightning in the lap of the cloud’”—in the dedicatory epistle to the previous king, the Poet had complained that he is hidden in the conscience of his age and there are no ears eager to hear his melody. This second king of the same country serves as a benchmark of how far the Poet has come in terms of having an effect—“Shine a while on our mountains,” says the message of King Nadir. “How long will you remain bound in chains! You are a Moses, take to the path of Sinai.”

‘The Traveler’ is a little Afghanistan in the Garden itself. It is marked by five high points. The tomb of Emperor Babur in Kabul, the tombs of Sultan Mahmud and the Sage Sanai in Ghazna, the

robe of the Prophet kept in Qandahar and the tomb of King Ahmad Shah, whom you have met in Paradise.

You recognize these are five levels of reality, and you know that the fifth of these brings the perspective of the present zone of the Garden on your journey. “The dome of the grave of that king from whose self a nation arose, is the Sanctuary in the eyes of the heaven,” says the Poet and you mark the words, *from whose self a nation arose*. He is giving you a reflection of yourself as you will stand at the end of your journey. “I know your high station,” says the pioneer of Afghan nationhood to the Poet. “This earth and sky have grown old, the Moon has lost sight since the Sun became indifferent to it. The world needs a commotion now, so that the bygone scent and hue should return”—*this is meant for you!*

“A believer acts like Raphael, whose trumpet shatters everything old”—*selfhood strengthened by love*, you recognize the metaphor in the brief speech of King Ahmad. “Reveal the secrets to the song of King Nadir—disclose what is in your mind to King Zahir.”

King Zahir is the name of King Nadir’s successor but you begin to suspect something else when the Poet starts addressing him—“ O you on whom the robe of kingship fits well, Ahmad Shah’s throne has acquired new glory through you!”

This address, which comes at the end of the Little Afghanistan, is the second of its kind. A first address was made at the very beginning, just after King Nadir’s Message, and its subject were the people of Frontier—a province in Poet’s own country lying on the borders of Afghanistan.

Three kings of Afghanistan form a pattern—the first was addressed by the Poet with deference, the second addressed the Poet as a friend, and the third is being addresses again by the Poet but this time the Poet is expecting deference from him.

You recognize the symbolic value of the names of these Kings—Amanullah, Nadir and Zahir. The first means the Peace of God, the second Rare, and the third Apparent. The Poet’s address to him is the last item in Little Afghanistan, but it also becomes the seventh high point if the two addresses are added to the five stations.

King Zahir literally means King Apparent, and now you recognize it as the other side of Javid. That is the name of the

Poet's son, but symbolically represents you as an heir to the wisdom of the Garden.

King Zahir—literally meaning the King Apparent—symbolically represents you as an heir to the wealth and power of the Garden.

“What is it that ought to be but is not?” you listen to the Poet's address. “There are a hundred worlds still in the Quran”—you remember Jamaluddin Afghani elaborating on this aspect in the sphere of Mercury. “The Natural Science is not European in origin. Its root is the zest for invention, and if you see well, it owes its existence to the Muslims—it is a pearl fallen from our hands. Win back this fairy but get away from the secular civilization.”

You remember Farzmurz's temptation to Barkhia—a world free of God and the Divine Law. You remember the idols of the new age—acceptance of nationalism as the final expression of humanity. “This mischief-monger brings forth mischief,” says the Poet about the secular civilization. “Therefore take one of two cups from my brew, so that you may shine like an unsheathed sword!”

98. Devil's Parliament

The Arabian Gift is the last enclave of poetry in the Garden. The printing history informs you that the book was first published a few months after the Poet's death.

He is dead. This is his last will and testament for you.

Just as you may have expected, it is divided into five segments comprising of the Poet's addresses to God, Prophet, Nation, Humanity and 'the Like-Minded'. If these correspond to the human, angelic, soul, love and civilization perspectives then this sequencing is not without some ingenuous twist but you are heading for the fifth segment to find out what it has to offer on the present zone.

It is further sub-divided into six segments. *Six?* You look again, more carefully.

The sixth segment is followed by a section of Urdu poems while the rest of the book is in Persian. This section is simply titled 'Urdu Poems'. You take them as the invisible seventh segment of the fifth section—it is obvious that these poems are also for 'the Like-Minded.'

The very first poem is an eye-opener. It is titled 'The Devil's Parliament.' The sub-title assigns it a date: 1936. *A flashback?*

"The elements weave their ancient dance," the Devil's opening speech introduces an entirely new dilemma. "Behold this vile world, dust and ashes of the hopes of Heaven's exalted dwellers! That Creator whose *let there be* made all things, today stands ready to annihilate them."

Why should the Devil wish the end of the world? It doesn't make sense because there is always a resurrection, usually for the better. Unless, of course—if this time God wants an end to all!

You are reminded of the 'Creation Story' as you witnessed it in the enclave of *A Message of the East*, and on two more occasions thereafter. You recall how Life itself jubilated at the

birth of Adam, and the angels foretold that a handful of dust will become brighter than stars one day—and the Devil held up a challenge to the Almighty that “Adam, that short-sighted ignoramus creature of dust was born in your lap but will grow old in my arms!”

It seems that the Devil has put a clog in the wheel of civilization so that even a new cycle should not generate a better epoch. He will win his wager if the Almighty perceives in His Divine Wisdom that the sum total of good will go on decreasing, and therefore it is pointless for the world to continue. The abortion of the human experiment before it reaches its culmination will announce the final victory of the Devil against all forces of good that have been pushing on the human being towards the better since its conception.

You discover that the Devil has five councilors in the present session. A diabolical negative of the five planes! The Devil’s attempt at parodying the inner structure of God’s Universe?

The First Advisor is the most confident—you equate him with the perspective of the human world from the evil point of view. He has every reason to feel confident.

“In their heart no desire can in fact take its birth,” he says. “But if it does, perchance, it dies or is left unripe.” His master had tempted Adam in the name of desire itself, as you recall from the ‘Creation Story’: “*A life of passion and longing is better than eternal quiet.*” Now you can see that it was a trap. The Devil had said the right thing for the wrong reason, while in fact he was no patron saint of desire but the official sponsor of fear, guilt, pity and despair.

Such a diabolical conference cannot have an ‘angelic perspective’ as such but it has a close parallel. The Second Councilor seems to be observing the conscience of civilizations. An idea such as government of the people, for the people and by the people appears to him as the birth of that inward-out world that the Devil’s Parliament must prevent at all costs.

“Is this universal applause for democracy good or bad?” He confronts the First Councilor. “You are unaware of the latest developments in the world!”

The First Councilor is quite aware of this development, but he reminds the Parliament that they themselves dressed autocracy in

democratic costume when people began to observe and reflect. The true power and purpose of dominion is not conditional with the person of king. There is such a thing as tyranny of the people.

“Whoever casts his eye on another’s field is tyrant born,” says the First Councilor. “Have you not seen in the West governments elected by the people but their glittering exteriors hiding a heart darker than that of Genghis Khan?”

The Third and the Fourth Councilors seem to be the diabolical opposites of the wisdom of the Soul and Love. The first one of them is quite aptly worried about the rise of Bolshevism, and it seems that the Devil or his parliament played no role in the conception of scientific socialism.

The Fourth Councilor points out that Fascism was launched by them to compete Bolshevism in the market of ideologies, and already the news from Italy is quite hopeful. True to his characteristic as the Fourth Councilor, this mini-devil speaks only a four-lined dialogue. He fails to impress the Third Councilor, who points out a tragic flaw in Fascism: it removes the garb of civilization from the spirit of imperialism.

You now have a dissection of civilization from the perspective of your archenemy. Democracy and socialism parade as options for those who search for solutions against imperialism and fascism, but the Devil’s councilors have their own bag of tricks to prevent freedom of the souls.

You recognize the Fifth Councilor as the observer of civilization itself—the First Councilor appears ancient as soon as this futuristic genius opens his mouth.

Addressing the Devil in a bombast comparable in grandeur to the Devil’s own speech, he laments that politicians of the West, who were tutored by the Devil himself, are losing ground before the Bolsheviks. “My Lord!” He concludes, “The world that excepts no overlord except you is going to turn topsy-turvy.”

“I have absolute command over the world,” says the Devil. “The East and the West will see it for themselves when I warm the blood of the nations of Europe—a single call from me can instil madness into the leaders of politics as well as the patriarchs of the Church!” He then points out that Bolshevism is insufficient to address all aspects of human yearning, good or bad.

“The only menace I anticipate come from the community that still retains a spark of ambition hidden its ashes,” he means the Muslim Nation. Then he goes on to point out aspects of faith that you have discovered in the Garden, only this time the list is made from the Devil’s point of view—he wants those secrets to be kept hidden from the eyes of the world.

His mission statement is an exact inverse of what you have been given by Rumi. “Let the believers be engrossed with theology,” he advises his councillors. “Let them remain busy with interpretations of Quran—whether Jesus died on the cross or lives forever, whether the Divine Qualities form part of the Essence or exist separately, whether the Second Coming will be the advent of Jesus of Nazareth or a new Messiah with the attributes of the Christ?”

These and several other theological issues are listed by the Devil. The councillors are going to parade these as issues of religious importance.

Look into the depth of your own heart if you wish to see the essence of religion clearly, you remember the Poet’s advice to you. The Devil’s agenda is exactly the opposite. “Estrange the believers to the world of action,” he advises the councillors. “It suites us best that they should look down upon the world as transient, and leave it to the others. Keep them well absorbed in the thought and contemplation of God in pre-morning hours: Make them grow stronger in monastic disposition.”

Here is the villain, and you know that he will not go after the Poet. He will come after you, since you are the protagonist.

99. University of Barkhia

You wonder *where* your final battle with the Devil will take place?

This is the last enclave, a series of seven lectures called *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*. Unlike the rest of the Garden, it is written in English prose.

It was first published in 1930, and then revised with some addition in 1934—all while you were passing through the fifth and sixth stages of your journey in the third and the fourth zones of the Garden.

“The more genuine schools of Sufism have, no doubt, done good work in shaping and directing the evolution of religious experience in Islam,” the Poet now speaks to you as the Philosopher. “But their latter-day representatives, owing to their ignorance of the modern mind, have become absolutely incapable of receiving any fresh inspiration from modern thought and experience.” *They have merely inherited the office of guidance, you recall.*

“They are perpetuating methods which were created for generations possessing a cultural outlook differing, in important respects, from our own,” says the Poet. *It is now the age of openness*, and it seems that the heirs of the Sufi orders are the least aware of it!

There is, however, something else that sounds like a note apart from the melody. The book is supposed to be reconstruction of *religious thought* but this preface seems to focus only Sufism.

You recognize something that may have slipped many others who arrived in this farewell chamber without taking a guided tour of the Garden first. By “Religious Thought in Islam”, the Philosopher means something else—*O lofty soul, what is Sufism but to see the Religious Law in the recesses of Life’s heart itself.* He means Sufism, and this farewell chamber of the Garden is in fact the induction quarter to something else. The University of

Barkhia—a series of lecture halls where the only purpose of knowledge is to show you the splendors of yourself.

“Your creation and resurrection are like the creation and resurrection of a single soul,” the Philosopher quotes a verse from the Quran. He has not quoted it before, but you recognize that this is what you lived in the Garden itself. Those cycles of annihilation and resurrection, the interweaving of your journey with the surrounding reality itself until a tour through the Garden became a journey into yourself where you experienced a new cycle of birth each time the Garden died and revived from its ashes. *It is not over yet!*

“A living experience of the kind of biological unity, embodied in this verse, requires today a method physiologically less violent and psychologically more suitable to a concrete type of mind,” he says. *A living experience*, of course. What you have had in the Garden was a *virtual experience* of this kind of biological unity!

Methods employed in the Garden were obviously less demanding than those practised by the more genuine schools of Sufism in the past. They were based on the premise that you can translate an essentially cognitive experience into its real worlds equivalents, and that is what a concrete mind is more capable of achieving than an abstract mind—thought is more real to a concrete type of mind.

The Philosopher is now asking you to understand the necessity of *a living experience* to complement your virtual experience. Surprisingly, he gives you no clue about the methods that could make a living experience of this kind possible. “In the absence of such a method the demand for a scientific form of religious knowledge is only natural,” is all he says.

Why the absence of such a method? He has the method at his disposal, he has used it in the Garden. Why can't he spell out what is required to translate the same method in the real world? Then you remember something.

The real world is still a step away. Your virtual experience has not yet ended, and you have to win a battle in this narrative itself. “*Reason catches artful nature in a net, and thus Ahriman, born of fire, bows down before the creature of dust!*”—that is what the resurrected Adam says to God at the end of the ‘Creation Story’, and you know that you are that Adam.

Reason catches artful nature in a net. That is the final battle. Translate the insight you have gained from the Garden into the language of reason, and then you will defeat the villain—and thus *Ahriman, born of fire, bows down before the creature of dust!*

“The day is not far off when Religion and Science may discover hitherto unsuspected mutual harmonies,” says the Philosopher—*Religion and Science joining hands against the Evil?* To the glory of human being!

“It must, however, be remembered that there is no such thing as finality in philosophical thinking,” the Philosopher assumes a very different tone. You mark the change.

“As knowledge advances and fresh avenues of thought are opened,” he adds. “Other views, and probably sounder views than those set forth in these Lectures, are possible. Our duty is carefully to watch the progress of human thought, and to maintain an independent critical attitude towards it.”

You are thus reminded that the Poet-Philosopher is dead. You stand alone, and the battle begins *now*.

100. ‘Is Religion Possible?’

The seven lecture halls in the Barkhia University correspond exactly to the seven stages of your journey.

You go straight to the seventh hall. The sign board reflects you very well. ‘Is Religion Possible?’ it says.

The Philosopher divides religious life into three broad periods: Faith, Thought and Discovery. You recognize the pattern. On three occasions during your journey the Garden died and was born again.

“In the first period religious life appears as a form of discipline which the individual or a whole people must accept as an unconditional command without any rational understanding of the ultimate meaning and purpose of that command,” says the Philosopher—and you are reminded of your uncertainties in the first three stages of your journey while you still had to find Joseph, and were grappling with the principle of non-contradiction. “This attitude may be of great consequence in the social and political history of a people, but is not of much consequence in so far as the individual’s inner growth and expansion are concerned.”

That world came to an end with the Great War, and you witnessed its annihilation again while the Poet was standing with Khizr on the riverbank. Then the world was born again to redefine your role as the protagonist of the narrative, and you discovered the secrets of the Garden in the Temple.

“Perfect submission to discipline is followed by a rational understanding of the discipline and the ultimate source of its authority,” says the Philosopher. “In this period religious life seeks its foundation in a kind of metaphysics—a logically consistent view of the world with God as a part of that view.” You remember that the ‘metaphysics’ of the Garden unfolded at a rapid speed during this phase.

It was also there that you found Joseph. You know that Joseph is a kind of experience—but exactly what kind? Will this lecture help you rationalize it? You wonder.

“In the third period metaphysics is displaced by psychology, and religious life develops the ambition to come into direct contact with the Ultimate Reality,” and this phase started with your odyssey in the Planetarium during which you saw the Soul Zone of the Garden, after which your active participation in the narrative increased until you became a part of the Garden and, still further, the last zone of the Garden emerged from within you—and here you are!

“It is here that religion becomes a matter of personal assimilation of life and power,” the lecture goes on. “And the individual achieves a free personality, not by releasing himself from the fetters of the law, but by discovering the ultimate source of the law within the depths of his own consciousness.” The fifth zone of the Garden is subject to the same laws and yet it zone has emerged from within you.

Next, the Philosopher quotes from a Sufi: “No understanding of the Holy Book is possible until it is actually revealed to the believer just as it was revealed to the Prophet.”

Then he adds, “It is, then, in the sense of this last phase in the development of religious life that I use the word religion in the question that I now propose to raise,” he says. “Religion in this sense is known by the unfortunate name of Mysticism, which is supposed to be a life-denying, fact-avoiding attitude of mind directly opposed to the radically empirical outlook of our times”—*O lofty soul, what is Sufism but to see the Religious Law in the recesses of Life’s heart itself!*—“Yet higher religion, which is only a search for a larger life, is essentially experience and recognized the necessity of experience as its foundation long before science learnt to do so.”

He has come close to Joseph—“It is a genuine effort to clarify human consciousness, and is, as such, as critical of its level of experience as Naturalism is of its own level.”

A genuine effort to clarify human consciousness at this point cannot leave out your most significant experience in the Garden, which is Joseph himself, and the lecture is obviously going there too. “The modern man has ceased to live soulfully, i.e. from

within,” says the Philosopher. “In the domain of thought he is living in open conflict with himself, and in the domain of economic and political life he is living in open conflict with others.” *Is this where Joseph comes in?*

“The condition of things in the East is no better,” the Philosopher comments on the failure of medieval mysticism in the modern East. “Far from reintegrating the forces of the average man’s inner life, it has taught him a false renunciation and made him perfectly contented with his ignorance and spiritual thralldom.” You recall the Devil’s advice to his counsilors. It seems that they have been working on it!

“No wonder then that the modern Muslim in Turkey, Egypt, and Persia is led to seek fresh sources of energy in the creation of new loyalties, such as patriotism and nationalism,” the Philosopher oberseves, and you recognize the temptation offered by Farzmurz to Barkhia. That temptation had a very modern ring to it, you remember.

The temptation didn’t belong to the age of the Old Testament, it is happening now—just as the Philosopher speaks of it. “Both nationalism and atheistic socialism, at least in the present state of human adjustments, must draw upon the psychological forces of hate, suspicion, and resentment which tend to impoverish the soul of man and close up his hidden sources of spiritual energy.”

You recognize the godless world offered by Framurz. “Surely the present moment is one of great crisis in the history of modern culture,” the Philosopher adds. “The modern world stands in need of biological renewal.”

Biological renewal? This is Barkhia’s dilemma, then. You knew that you will be called upon to create a new world—a world free of affliction, the world of Marghdeen where people make their own destinies.

If there is one person who can bring about a biological renewal of the world, it is you. The zone of civilization itself is sprouting out of your self—like a hundred tulips growing up in a field. Yet, you were not expecting that the world you will create as Barkhia will be the real world, and not here in the virtual experience of the Garden—so, how will you decide?

You remember somethingn, and it is something important. *The treasures can be seized if one Joseph comes out of the Pharaoh's prison!*

Was it not one of the reasons why you entered the Garden? This thought was among the teasers that whetted your appetite for this journey.

You make your choice, and you can read it in the very next lines of the Philosopher: "And religion, which in its higher manifestations is neither dogma, nor priesthood, nor ritual, can alone ethically prepare the modern man for the burden of the great responsibility which the advancement of modern science necessarily involves, and restore to him that attitude of faith which makes him capable of winning a personality here and retaining it in hereafter."

As Barkhia, you have replied to the temptation of Farzmurz. The act has been done, and you keep hearing the vibrations of your reply for a while, like music when soft voices die:

"It is only by rising to a fresh vision of his origin and future, his whence and whither, that man will eventually triumph over a society motivated by an inhuman competition, and a civilization which has lost its spiritual unity by its inner conflict of religious and political values."

101. One

The Philosopher now starts telling you how the virtual experience of the Garden is related to the life outside.

“Religion as a deliberate enterprise to seize the ultimate principle of value and thereby to reintegrate the forces of one’s own personality is a fact which cannot be denied,” he starts.

“Judging from the various types of activity that emanated from the movement initiated by the Prophet of Islam”—the lecture goes on—“his spiritual tension and the kind of behaviour which issued from it cannot be regarded as a response to a mere fantasy inside his brain.”

You recall everything you learnt about the Prophet in the Garden. The Philosopher adds, “It is impossible to understand it except as a response to an objective situation generative of new enthusiasms, new organizations, new starting-points.”

The hierarchy through which the Garden is connected to the Quran shows you that. Joseph is also your connection to the heart of religion itself, since revelations of prophets were religious experiences of an infinitely superior degree. You can feel that the discussion is moving in your direction.

“Modern psychology has not yet touched even the outer fringe of religious life,” says the Philosopher. “In order to give you an idea of its richness and variety I quote here the substance of a passage from a great religious genius of the seventeenth century, Shaikh Ahmad of Sirhind”—of course, you know him. *Three centuries India’s wine-shops have been closed, it is time that your largesse be for all, O Saki!*

The Philosopher narrates the experience of one ‘Abd al-Mumin as it was described to the Shaikh: “Heavens and Earth and God’s Throne and Hell and Paradise have all ceased to exist for me,” the subject had narrated. “When I look round I find them nowhere. When I stand in the presence of somebody I see nobody

before me: nay even my own being is lost to me. God is infinite. Nobody can encompass Him; and this is the extreme limit of spiritual experience. No saint has been able to go beyond this.”

It sounds familiar to you. This is almost what was given to you in Poem 75 at the end of your premonitions in the Temple— *The temple and the Ka’bah are no more!*

Shaikh Ahmad replied to this, “The experience which is described has its origin in the ever varying life of the *Qalb*”—the Heart—“and it appears to me that the recipient of it has not yet passed even one-fourth of the innumerable ‘Stations’ of the *Qalb*. The remaining three-fourths must be passed through in order to finish the experiences of this first ‘Station’ of spiritual life.”

You remember that this was the end of the second zone of the Garden, and three more zones came later—did they correspond to “the remaining three-fourths” mentioned by Shaikh Ahmad?

It is possible, but not without complications, for Shaikh Ahmad also said, “Beyond this ‘Station’ there are other ‘Stations’ known as Ruh, Sirr-i-Khafa, and Sirr-i-Akhfa”—it is equally possible that the three latter zones of the Garden were a poetic representation of these later stations of the world of directive energy. “Each of these ‘Stations’ which together constitute what is technically called Alam-i-Amr”—*the world of creative energy*—“has its own characteristic states and experiences.

You consider the possibility of a garden-within-the-Garden, i.e., the Garden displays poetic representations of both orders depending on how you traverse it—“After having passed through these ‘Stations’ the seeker of truth gradually receives the illuminations of ‘Divine Names’ and ‘Divine Attributes’”—or Divine Qualities—“and finally the illuminations of the ‘Divine Essence’.”

You recognize that the whole point of narrating this example is not to discover your exact location on the map of medieval mysticism. The point is something else, as the Philosopher now states, “It gives us at least some idea of a whole universe of inner experience as seen by a great reformer of Islamic Sufism.”

“The truth is that the religious and the scientific processes, though involving different methods, are identical in their final aim,” he adds after a few lines. “Both are really descriptions of the same world with this difference only that in the scientific process the ego’s standpoint is necessarily exclusive, whereas in the

religious process the ego integrates its competing tendencies and develops a single inclusive attitude resulting in a kind of synthetic transfiguration of his experiences.”

You understand this by how you went about the Garden with the help of Joseph—ever since finding him, you were traveling into yourself just as you were traversing the Garden—your ego integrated the competing tendencies of the process of exploring the Garden and developed an attitude that covered yourself, the process and the Garden all at the same time.

Here, you also find an answer to half of the seventh question of the New Garden: *Of what sort is this traveler who is the wayfarer?* The other part regarding the Universal Human Being still remains to be answered, but you can see that your method was religious by definition. It was not scientific, because a scientific method would require you to stand outside the experience and approach the Garden as a detached observer. However, the religious nature of your process did not make it any less of a cognitive function.

Here are the unsuspected harmonies he had promised you when you were entering the university: *The day is not far off when Religion and Science may discover hitherto unsuspected mutual harmonies.* You just may not have suspected that the day was this close!

Showing you that religious and scientific processes are really complementary, he adds, “Both of them are directed to the purification of experience in their respective spheres.”

Now you know what kind is Joseph. He belongs to the Garden—you can find him here, and hence Rumi and the Poet-Philosopher are justified in calling him “their Joseph.” However, in you he may also *grow*.

The bridge between the Garden and the real world, which the Philosopher is building now, may also show you some ‘unsuspected possibilities’!

“The passage I have quoted from the great Indian saint shows that the practical student of religious psychology has a similar purification in view”—i.e., a purification of experience similar to that sought by modern science in its own sphere. “His sense of objectivity is as keen as that of the scientists in his own sphere of objectivity.” The sphere of objectivity of the scientists is to observe

the *behavior* of reality, whereas in the other case it is to observe the *nature* of reality.

In the next lines you find a strong parallel between your virtual experience and that of a practical seeker in a religious process: “He passes from experience to experience, not as a mere spectator, but as a critical sifter of experience, who by the rules of a peculiar technique, suited to his sphere of inquiry, endeavours to eliminate all subjective elements, psychological or physiological, in the content of his experience with a view finally to reach what is absolutely objective.”

You recognize that when you agreed to exclude preconceived notions from your reading of the narrative, you were actually eliminating the subjective elements. Consequently you reached what was absolutely objective about the Garden.

“This final experience is the revelation of a new life-process—original, essential, spontaneous,” the Philosopher adds. “The eternal secret of the ego is that the moment he reaches this final revelation he recognizes it as the ultimate root of his being without the slightest hesitation.”

You remember how each new discovery was essentially a recognition of something deeply connected to yourself—“Yet in the experience itself there is no mystery. Nor is there anything emotional in it.”

The same is true about experiences reached through a religious process in real life—one of which was mentioned as “a living experience” as compared to your virtual experience. “The experience reached is a perfectly natural experience and possesses a biological significance of the highest importance to the ego,” the Philosopher says. “It is the human ego rising higher than mere reflection, and mending its transiency by appropriating the eternal.”

The only danger in this Divine quest is the possible relaxation of the ego’s activity—such a relaxation may be caused by the ego’s enjoyment of and absorption in the experiences that precede the final experience. The whole point of the reform movement started by Sheikh Ahmad of Sirhind was to check such tendencies, and now you can see why Shaikh Ahmad is such a favorite of Rumi’s disciple.

“The reason is obvious,” the Philosopher begins to wind up. “The ultimate aim of the ego is not to *see* something, but to *be*

something. It is in the ego's effort to be something that he discovers his final opportunity to sharpen his objectivity and acquire a more fundamental 'I am'—you remember that this is where Nietzsche got confounded. Then you remember the second half of the ninth question of the New Garden: *Of whom shall I say that this one is a Universal Human Being?*

The point of your journey is now being driven home. "The end of the ego's quest is not emancipation from the limitations of individuality," says the Philosopher. "It is, on the other hand, a more precise definition of it. The final act is not an intellectual act, but a vital act which deepens the whole being of the ego, and sharpens his will with the creative assurance that the world is not something to be merely seen or known through concepts, but something to be made and re-made by continuous action."

102. Final combination

The Allahabad Address is a little souvenir you receive as you get ready to leave the Garden.

It is neither poetry nor philosophy but rather a small pamphlet in simple English prose. It is a unique document in human history. Originally delivered at a political gathering in 1930—around the same time when the lectures were first published—it was later adapted by the majority of Muslims in India as a guideline for their freedom movement two years after the death of the Poet-Philosopher. Seven years later, in 1947, the movement culminated in the creation of Pakistan, the largest Muslim state in the world at that time.

The Allahabad Address may be the only example where words written down by a poet played such an important part in the course of political history, and actually led to the creation of a new nation.

You are not surprised to see that the *Address* is divided into nine sections, and the passages that are most directly related to the creation of a new state occur in the fifth—the exact middle, which would correspond to the fifth stage for someone who is reading it in isolation. “I would like to see the Punjab, North-West Frontier Province, Sind and Baluchistan amalgamated into a single state,” says the Poet-Philosopher. “Self-Government within the British Empire, or without the British Empire, the formation of a consolidated North-West Indian Muslim state appears to me to be the final destiny of the Muslims at least of the North-West India.”

However, for your present purpose it is the eighth and ninth sections that concern you most. Since your journey has, in a way, already culminated in *The Reconstruction*, which had only seven chapters, it now remains for you to see what *The Address* has to offer you on the eighth and the ninth questions of the New Garden.

The ninth question was: *What point does the claim, ‘I am the Creative Truth’ imply?* From Hallaj you heard that he made this

claim because he saw a people who said that they believe in God but they did not believe in themselves.

The Address tells you more. “Indeed the first practical step that Islam took towards the realization of a final combination of humanity was to call upon peoples possessing practically the same ethical ideal to come forward and combine,” you find it written here. The a verse is quoted from the Quran: “O people of the Book! Come let us join together on *the word*, that is common to us all.” *The word* refers to Oneness, as you are told in parenthesis.

You remember that the ultimate aim of the ego is not to see something, but to be something. There is also a danger of absorption in the experiences that precede the final experience. A traveler who is a wayfarer will not settle down after becoming a Universal Human Being without exteriorizing his inner experience in the effort to materialize a final combination of humanity.

The most august invitation to other nations for joining hands in the creation of a global coalition of peoples had to come within the Islamic tradition from no other source than Quran itself—hence the verse quoted here.

“The wars of Islam and Christianity, and, later, European aggression in its various forms, could not allow the infinite meaning of this verse to work itself out in the world of Islam,” adds the Poet-Philosopher. If an inward perception of the oneness of creation is the noblest culmination of the journey for a seeker, then it is only natural for the outward manifestation of that unity to follow.

This leads you to the ninth question of the New Garden. The first part of it was: *Who was it that at last became familiar with the secret of Oneness?*

“Gentlemen, I have finished,” the Poet-Philosopher begins the last section of *The Address*. It is a brief section consisting of only one paragraph.

“One of the profoundest verses in the Holy Quran teaches us that the birth and rebirth of the whole of humanity is like the birth and rebirth of a single individual,” he says—and you know which verse he is talking about! “Why cannot you who, as a people, can well claim to be the first practical exponent of this superb conception of humanity, live and move and have your being as a single individual?”

Could this be the final missing piece in the puzzle? It has to be, because it fits perfectly well. You remember that paragraph from the 'Preface' of *The Reconstruction* which had seemed problematic to you. The verse was quoted there, and here is nothing more than a reference. However, here is given an explanation that would change the meaning of the 'Preface.'

You transpose the explanation of the verse from this paragraph to that one, and this is how the value-added piece from the 'Preface' of *The Reconstruction* now reads:

'Your creation and resurrection,' says the Quran, 'are like the creation and resurrection of a single soul.' A living experience of the kind of biological unity, embodied in this verse, requires today a method physiologically less violent and psychologically more suitable to a concrete type of mind.

You had wondered at this point what method was required. Now, you add the explanation of the same verse from *The Address* after these lines, and the method appears right in front of your eyes:

Why cannot you who, as a people, can well claim to be the first practical exponent of this superb conception of humanity, live and move and have your being as a single individual.

A society living with a common mission statement and engulfed in a synergy that is watered by the five planes of reality will regenerate positive energies even through everyday interaction between its members. That is a method psychologically more suitable to a concrete mind—and that is the world of Barkhia, seminally preserved inside the monasteries of genuine Sufi schools awaiting the age of openness.

In the absence of such a method the demand for a scientific form of religious knowledge is only natural.

The second half of the ninth question of the New Garden is now answered: *Who is the wise one that is a Gnostic?*

103. Live and let die

This is the last chapter. You have been wondering whether this narrative will end in your death, since the last signifier invokes upon the Lord of the Sun and the Moon:

Look at my scattered dust too—every particle is agitating!
Look at this wilderness!

You know the answer now. You are going to die as soon as you finish this chapter.

You were born in the Garden when you entered it. You will die to it when you leave it, and then you will be reborn into the outside world.

You a

Author's Note

References to the writings of Dr. Sir Muhammad Iqbal (1877—1938), as they occur in this work, are real. All quotations from them are also authentic.

The existence of an intricate secret code may not have been suspected in his writings but scholars as well as cult followers have always agreed on the possibility of undiscovered meanings therein. More questions have been raised than definite answers provided about several important portions of his cannon.

Hence, although the present book claims an approach essentially different from what has been tried out in the past, it is by no means unprecedented in the tradition of Iqbal Studies. The quest for deeper meanings in the works of Iqbal has been going on among his followers for several generations.

In my case, the trail goes back at least four generations, since my father was initiated into the 'Iqbal cult' at the age of nine-and-half by his grandfather on April 21, 1938—the very day when the Poet died. I was the same age at the time of the Poet's Centenary in 1977 when I was in turn initiated by my father.

This legend is by no means unique, and I would not be alone if I were to start relating the story of my life saying, "In the beginning was the word, and the word was Iqbal's." Among those who helped me interpret the word for the world outside the 'Cult' I must thank both my parents; my wife Bushra and son Hamza, who put up with the erratic routine I had to follow in finishing this book in less than three months; my mentor Abbas M. Husain, who handed me a bunch of literary keys to unlock the secret code; many of my friends, especially M. Suheyl Umar, the Director of Iqbal Academy Pakistan, who not only provided me the required facilities but was also the presiding genius over the project itself; and my senior colleague Mr. Ahmad Javid, on whose instigation I started writing this book without knowing what form it will eventually assume.

The writings of Iqbal extend into some three thousand odd pages in Urdu, Persian, English and German, but the authorized cannon comprises of only what he cared to protect by copyright, plus his Presidential Address to the All-India Muslim League (popularly known as *The Allahabad Address*). This last was a public document whose historical value had become evident during the Poet's own lifetime. In 1947 it became the foundational keystone of a real country on the map of this world, the Poet's dream child Pakistan.

Among the books of the authorized cannon listed below, 1, 2, 4, 5 and 8 are in Persian verse; 3, 6 and 7 are in Urdu verse; 9 contains Persian as well as Urdu verse; and 10 and 11 are in English prose.

1. *Secrets and Mysteries* (1915)
2. *A Message from the East* (1923)
3. *The Call of the Marching Bell* (1924)
4. *Persian Psalms* (1927)
5. *Javidnama* (1932)
6. *Gabriel's Wing* (1935)
7. *The Rod of Moses* (1937)
8. *What Should Now be Done* (1937)
9. *The Gift of Hijaz* (1938)
10. *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* (1930/34)
11. *The Allahabad Address* (1930).

Chapters of *The Republic of Rumi* are listed below.

1. The Second Coming
2. 'Who is Rumi?'
3. Joseph
4. The secret code
5. Enter the Garden

Part 1: Crisis

6. Non-contradiction
7. Love
8. Arbiter
9. The sheep's doctrine
10. Plato
11. Purpose
12. Vicegerency
13. Hyder
14. Diamond
15. Brahmin
16. War
17. Fire

Part 2: Reaction

18. Old Man of the Desert
19. Time
20. Silent tunes
21. Selflessness
22. Unity
23. Mission statement
24. Freedom
25. Transcendence
26. Tradition
27. World order
28. Fatima
29. Outline of history
30. Quran

Part 3: Reversal

31. Goethe
32. King of Afghanistan
33. Tulip of Sinai

34. Creation Story
35. Reflections
36. Tavern
37. Potiphar's Wife
38. Joseph of the West
39. Mind of Europe
40. Glory
41. Sicily
42. 'March 1907'
43. Burial of the kings
44. Mother
45. Shakespeare

Part 4: Tentpole

46. Khizr
47. Phoenix
48. Principles overlay
49. Spiritual democracy
50. Temple of a new David
51. Seven wishes
52. Journey
53. Conscious heart
54. Signifiers
55. Planes of reality
56. Déjà vu
57. Where angels dare
58. Markers
59. Civilization
60. Sidrah Tree

Part 5: Second Reversal

61. Shabistry
62. New Garden of Mystery
63. Museum
64. Taj Mahal
65. Planetarium

- 66. Song of the angels
- 67. Lonely evening
- 68. Zurvan
- 69. Moon
- 70. Comparative Religion
- 71. Mercury
- 72. Venus
- 73. Mars
- 74. Jupiter
- 75. Devil

Part 6: Lowest Point

- 76. India
- 77. Joseph's home
- 78. Kauthar
- 79. Beauty and death
- 80. Desire
- 81. Divine Presence
- 82. Javid
- 83. Gabriel's Wing
- 84. Genesis
- 85. Free association
- 86. Qualities
- 87. Mosque of Cordoba

- 88. Palestine
- 89. Dance of the soul
- 90. Mujaddid

Part 7: Climax

- 91. Falcon
- 92. Scent of the rose
- 93. White Man's Burden
- 94. Declaration of war
- 95. International
Relations
- 96. 'Prologue'
- 97. Mission
- 98. Prophet
- 99. Afghanistan
- 100. Devil's Parliament
- 101. University of Barkhia
- 102. 'Is Religion
Possible?'
- 103. Purification of
experience
- 104. Final combination
Live and let die