

A MESSAGE FROM THE EAST

M. HADI HUSSAIN



A MESSAGE FROM THE EAST
(Pāyām-i Mashriq)

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A Translation of Iqbal's
Payām-i Mashriq
into English Verse

by

M. HADI HUSSAIN

With a Foreword by
DR S. A. RAHMAN
Retired Chief Justice of Pakistan



National Committee for Birth Centenary Celebrations
of Allama Muhammad Iqbal

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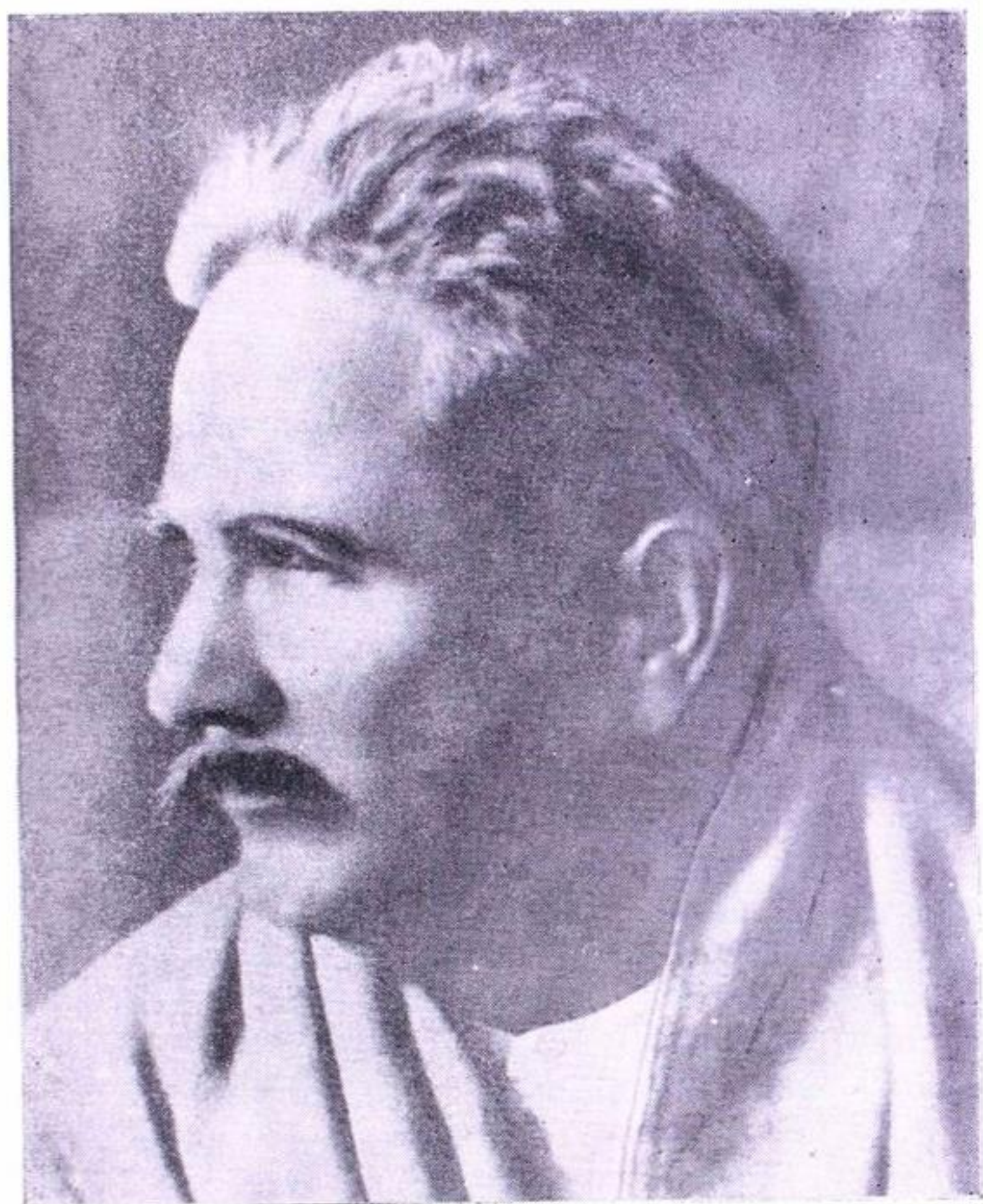
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ALLAMA MUHAMMAD IQBAL
(1877—1938)

FOREWORD

In the first decade of this century, Iqbal had become a name to conjure with in Indo-Muslim literature. In the context of the socio-political renaissance of the Muslim community in the subcontinent, he was hailed as a veritable Messiah. It was, however, only in 1920 that he was first introduced to Western readers, by the translation of his Persian work, the *Asrār-i Khudī*, into English by the late Professor R.A. Nicholson of Cambridge under the title *Secrets of the Self*. He was later to become the ideological inspirer of the concept of Pakistan and to win wider recognition in Iran, the Middle East, Egypt, Italy, France, Germany, England and Russia. The august assemblage of his translators includes Mr Victor Kiernan and Professor Arberry from England, Abdul Wahhab Azzam from Egypt, Professor Baussoni from Italy and Professor Annemarie Schimmel from Germany. The latest to join this distinguished group is Mr Hadi Hussain with his rendering into English verse Iqbal's Persian *Payām-i Mashriq*—"A Message From the East".

The *Payām-i Mashriq* was published in 1922. It was intended as the response of the East to Goethe's *West-Oestlicher Divan*. During his productive period, extending over almost half a century, Iqbal was very much concerned with the human situation in the phenomenal world. The Faustian element in the human drama engrossed his attention no less than the volun-

taristic urges manifested in the cosmos. His robust optimism, born of a lifelong study of his Islamic heritage, led him to formulate a melioristic philosophy of the perfectibility of the human ego in an existential setting of ceaseless struggle and striving. The egalitarian system of Islam, which cuts across the barriers of colour, race and geography, was regarded by him as the base for the emergence of a universalist democracy of unique individuals presided over by the most Unique Individual—God. But his was not a mere dry-as-dust philosophy. Richly endowed with the poetic sensibility, his genius burst forth into songs of exquisite beauty and power. The *Payām-i Mashriq*, *par excellence*, bears witness to his wide range of interests and sympathies. To translate the work of such a genius is an arduous enterprise and its difficulties can properly be appreciated only by one who has attempted to transmute the magic element of poetry in one language to that of another. The elusive quality of thought, peculiar diction and imagery steeped in Eastern tradition, of the *ghazals* in the *Payām-i Mashriq* are specially difficult to transmit in a form intelligible to the Western reader. Mr Hadi Hussain has, however, acquitted himself with credit even in this difficult sector.

It is a truism to say that a competent translator has to be fully conversant with the two languages he seeks to work in. For the genre of poetry, the translator must himself have the gift of poetic expression. Mr Hadi Hussain fortunately possesses both these qualifications in abundant measure. He is an acknowledged litterateur who is at home both in Persian and English, with a number of scholarly publications to his

credit. He has also an established reputation as an accomplished poet. He is, moreover, an experienced translator. While preserving to a great extent the charm and grace of the original, he has produced an elegant translation which should be regarded as an achievement of a very high order. He has successfully avoided the twin danger besetting such a venture—a literal and prosaic translation on the one hand and a free rendering which reeks little of the form and content of the original, on the other. His is a faithful translation which reads well. Indeed, at places in some of his rhymed translations he has attained Fitzgeraldian heights. I feel sure that his translation of the *Paṃam-i Mashriq* will rank among the major efforts made to introduce Iqbal to sophisticated Western audiences.

S. A. RAHMAN

Lahore :
21 June 1977

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

This is a revised and enlarged edition of my book published in 1971 under the same title and with the sub-title "A Selective Verse Rendering of Iqbal's *Payām-i Mashriq*". The rendering was selective in a quantitative rather than in a qualitative sense: it was confined to those of the poems in the *Payām-i Mashriq* which had in the first instance appealed to me most as a translator, much as I admired the whole of that great work. The present edition is a complete rendering except for one poem, namely, *Jū-i Āb*, which I have omitted simply because it is itself a translation.

A word about the translation. Without being literal, it is as close to the original as English grammar, idiom and prosody permitted. At the same time, I have tried to make it readable as English verse. Bearing in mind Robert Frost's famous saying, "Poetry is that which is lost in translation," I have spared no effort to minimise the loss.

As regards the title. I have preferred "A Message from the East" to "The Message of the East" because the *Payām-i Mashriq* is not a sustained essay on what the East stands for or what it has to say to the West, but a collection of poems on a wide range of subjects, this being only one of them, and not always either explicit or specific at that.

I have transliterated Oriental words in two different ways, one intended for the common reader and

the other for the scholar. In the verse text I have used the popular English spellings (with a few exceptions), while in the Author's Preface and the Notes I have followed one of the international academic systems of transliteration, including diacritical marks. The Notes, I hope, will help in co-ordinating the two.

M. HADI HUSSAIN

Karachi :

12 August 1977

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

The impulse that brought forth the *Payām-i Mashriq* was provided by the *West-Oestlicher Divan* of the German "philosopher of life," Goethe, about which Germany's Jewish poet, Heine, writes :

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

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

in the past and partly on Mr Charles Remy's brief, but very useful, monograph on the subject.

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

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

In 1812, Von Hammer published a complete translation of the *Divan* of Ḥāfiẓ, and it was this event that set on foot the Oriental movement in

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

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

(viz. Tīmūr¹ in the case of Ḥāfiz, and Napoleon in that of Goethe,) and preserving their internal peace and composure, in times of general destruction and ravage, succeeded in going on with their singing."

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

1. The story of the meeting between Ḥāfiz and Tīmūr does not appear to be true, since Ḥāfiz died before Tīmūr's conquest of Shīrāz.

(the Dutch philosopher who believed in the unity of being) and who wrote in support of Bruno (Italy's existential philosopher) should not have acknowledged Rūmī, if he had known him well enough.

To sum up, Goethe tried through the *West-Oestlicher Divan* to instil the Persian spirit into German literature. Later poets, such as Platen, Rueckert and Bodenstedt, completed the Oriental movement initiated by the *Divan*. Platen learned Persian for his literary purposes. He composed *ghazals* and *rubā'iyāt* in which he observed rhymes and rhyme-adjuncts and even the rules of Persian prosody. He even wrote a *qasīdah* on Napoleon. Like Goethe, he freely uses Persian metaphors, such as "the rose-bride," "the musky ringlet" and "tulip-faced," and he is devoted to the *ghazal* pure and simple. Rueckert was well versed in Arabic, Persian and Sanskrit. He thought highly of Rūmī's philosophy and wrote most of his *ghazals* in imitation of Rūmī. Since he was a scholar of Oriental languages, the sources of his Oriental poems were also more diversified. He gathered gems of wisdom from wherever he could lay hands on them, as, for example, from Nizāmī's *Makhzan al-Asrār*, Jāmī's *Bahāristān*, Amīr Khusrau's *Kulliyāt*, Sā'dī's *Gulistān*, and from *Manāqib al-'Arifin*, *'Ayār Dānish*, *Manṭiq al-Ṭair* and *Haft Qulzum*. In fact, he embellishes his writings even with pre-Islamic traditions and stories of Persia. He has also beautifully narrated some events of Islamic history, such as the death of Mahmūd Ghaznavī, Mahmūd's assault on Somnat, the deeds of Sulṭānah Raḍiyah. The most popular poet of the Oriental movement after Goethe is Bodenstedt; who published his poems

under the pseudonym of Mīrzā Shafī'. It was a small collection which became so popular that it went through 140 editions within a short period. So perfectly did Bodenstedt assimilate the Persian spirit that for long people in Germany took his poems to be translations of Persian poems. He profited from Amīr Mu'izzī and Anvarī as well.

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

Also deserving mention among minor poets of the Oriental movement are Daumer, the imitator of Hāfiz, Hermann Stahl, Loeschke, Stieglitz, Lenthold and Von Shack. The last-mentioned enjoyed a high position in the world of learning. Two of his poems, "The Justice of Maḥmūd Ghaznavī" and "The Story of Hārūt and Mārūt," are well known and his poetry, on the whole, bears the impress of 'Umar Khayyām's influence. However, a complete history of the Oriental movement and a detailed comparison of German and Persian poets designed to assess the exact extent of

Persian influence call for an extensive study, for which I have at my disposal neither the time nor the means. It may be that the brief sketch given here will enthuse someone younger than I am to undertake the necessary research.

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

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

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

In the present-day world, and especially in Eastern countries, every effort which aims at extending the outlook of individuals and nations beyond geographical boundaries and at reviving or generating in them a healthy and strong human character is worthy of respect. It is for this reason that I have dedicated

these few pages to His Majesty the King of Afghanistan, who appears to be well aware of this fact, thanks to his natural intelligence and keen intellect, and who is specially keeping in view the education and training of the Afghans. May God help him in the fulfilment of this grand mission.

In the end, I must thank my friend, Chaudhry Muhammad Hussain, M.A., who arranged for publication the manuscripts of the poems presented here. Had he not taken the trouble of doing this, the publication of this collection would have been delayed very much.

IQBAL

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DEDICATORY EPISTLE

TO

KING AMANULLAH KHAN OF AFGHANISTAN¹

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

EVER since I found out life's mystery,
It is as if a fire blazed inside me.
My song is a flame of that inner fire—
A song of passion sung on wisdom's lyre.
That Western sage, that bard of Germany,
That ardent lover of things Pahlavi,
Saluted the East with his great *Divan*,

That tribute to the poets of Iran
And veritable picture-gallery
Of vignettes, all in Persian imagery.
To that salute this book is a reply,
This gleam of moonlight in the Eastern sky.
Without deluding myself, I will dare
To tell you how the two of us compare.
His was the vital spark of the young West;
Mine has been wrung from the East's aged breast.
A flourishing spring garden gave him birth;
I am a product of a long-dead earth.
He was a nightingale that filled with song
An orchard; I am but a desert gong,
A signal for the caravan to start.
We both have delved into the inmost heart
Of being; both of us are messages
Of life in the midst of death's ravages;
Two daggers, morning-lustred, mirror-bright;
He naked; I still sheathed, concealed from sight.
Two pearls, both precious, both unmatched, are we,
Both from the depths of an unfathomed sea.
He burst out of the mother-of-pearl's womb,
For he could rest no longer in that tomb.
But I, who still am lying shell-enshrined,
Have yet to be astir in the sea's mind.
No one around me knows me properly:
They go away with empty cups from my
Wine-fount. I offer them a royal state,

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

You see, O king, the Muslims' sun dimmed by
The darkling clouds that overhang the sky—

The Arab in his desert gone astray ;
The way of godliness no more his way ;
The Egyptian in the whirlpool of the Nile ;
And the Turanian slow-pulsed and senile ;
The Turk a victim of the ancient feud
Of East and West, both covered with his blood ;
No one left like that ardent soul, Salman² ;
His creed of Love now alien to Iran,
Which has lost all its fervour, all its zest,
The old fire all cold ashes in its breast ;
The Indian Muslim unconcerned about
All save his belly, sunk in listless doubt.
The heroes have departed from the scene :
All, all gone—Khalid,³ Umar,⁴ Saladin.⁵

GOD has endowed you with a feeling heart,
That bleeds to see the Muslims thus distraught.
Across this wilderness pass like a breeze
Of spring ; blow back Siddiq's⁶ and Umar's days.
This race of mountain-dwellers, the Afghans,
The blood of lions flowing in their veins,
Industrious, brave, intelligent and wise,
With the look of the eagle in their eyes,
Have not, alas, fulfilled their destiny :
Their star has not yet risen in the sky.
They dwell hemmed in by mountain fastnesses,
Shut off from all nascent influences.
O you, for whom no labour is too great,

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

LIFE is a struggle, not beseeching rights ;
And knowledge is the arms with which one fights.
God ranked it with the good things that abound
And said it must be grasped, wherever found.
The one to whom the Quran was revealed,
From whom no aspect of truth was concealed,
Beheld the Essence itself with his eye ;
And yet "God, teach me still more" was his cry.
Knowledge of things is Adam's gift from God,
The shining palm of Moses⁷ and his rod,
The secret of the greatness of the West,
The source of all that it has of the best.
We would see, if our spirits had true zest,
Nothing but diamonds in the roadside dust.
Knowledge and wealth make nations sound and
strong,
And thus enable them to get along.
For knowledge cultivate your people's minds ;
For wealth exploit your mineral finds.
Go, plunge a dagger into your land's bowels ;
Like Somnat's idol⁸ it is full of jewels.
In it do rubies of Badakhshan lie ;
In its hills is the thunder of Sinai.⁹

IF YOU desire a firmly founded state,

Then make of men a proper estimate.
 Many an Adam acts like an Iblis¹⁰;
 Many an Iblis acts like an Idris,¹¹
 With false pretences that cheat simple folk,
 His tulip-heart a lamp that is all smoke;
 Deceitful, with a show of piety,
 His heart full of hate and hypocrisy.
 O king, be careful in assessing them,
 Not every stone that glitters is a gem.
 The sage of Rum,¹² 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."¹³

A KING in Islam is God's servitor—
 A selfless Ali¹⁴ or a just Umar.
 Among your multifarious tasks of state
 Give yourself time to think and contemplate.
 The ambusher of Self can never lose
 A quarry: quarries fall into his noose.
 In royal robes live like an anchorite:
 Eyes wide awake, but thought of God hugged tight.
 That soldier-king, the Emperor Murad,¹⁵
 Whose lightning-spouting sword kept his foes awed,
 An Ardeshir¹⁶ with an Abu Dharr's¹⁷ soul,
 Played both a king's role and a hermit's role.
 His breast wore armour for his soldier's part,
 But in it dwelt a hairshirt-wearer's heart.

All Muslim rulers who were truly great
Led hermits' lives despite their royal state.
Asceticism was their way of life ;
To cultivate it was their constant strife.
They lived as Salman lived in Ctesiphon.¹⁸
A ruler he who did not care to don
The robes of royalty and who abhorred
All outfit save the Qur'an and the sword.
Armed with love of Muhammad, one commands
Complete dominion over seas and lands.
Ask God to grant you some small part
Of that love for Muhammad which the heart
Of Siddiq and of Ali bore, because
The life of the Islamic people draws
Its sustenance from it and it, in fact,
Is that which keeps the universe intact.
It was Muhammad whose epiphany
Laid bare the essence of Reality.
My soul has no peace but in love of him—
A light in me that never can get dim.
Arise and make the cup of Love go round,
And in your hills make songs of Love resound.

THE TULIP OF SINAI

[1]

The world is under His proud power's sway
Whom all things were created to obey.
The sun itself is nothing but a mark
Of long prostration on the brow of day.¹⁹

[2]

My heart is lit up by an inner flame ;
Tears of blood²⁰ lend my eyes a cosmic frame.
May he stray farther from life's mystery
Who thinks that madness is Love's²¹ other name.

[3]

Love²² breathes spring breezes upon garden bowers,
And it star-spangles hills and dales with flowers.
Its sunbeams pierce the darkness of the sea,
And give the eyes of fish path-seeing powers.

[4]

Love²³ humbles falcons' proud, predaceous might,
And it makes tiny quails put them to flight.
However carefully we guard our hearts,
Love ambushes them in the quiet night.

[5]

Love²⁴ paints the tulip's leaves a vivid red,
And storms our hearts with its disastrous flood.
Split up your carnal frame and see how Love
Paves its way through your being's core with blood.

[6]

On very few men is Love's wealth bestowed;
Not all men find it does their system good.
The tulip's breast glows with a purple heart,
But cold and sparkless is the ruby's red.

[7]

I roam this garden like its flowers' scent,
Not knowing on what quest my heart is bent.
Whatever be the fate of my desire,
Its fire in my breast never will be spent.

[8]

This world is mere dust and the heart its fruit—
A drop of blood at all its troubles' root !
If we had not a double vision, we
Would find our world within our heart's retreat.

[9]

"O gardener," said the nightingale one morn,
"No plant but grief has this soil ever borne.

The rose dies as soon as it reaches youth;
To a ripe old age lives the desert thorn."

[10]

From nothing did this world originate,
Loss and gain are twin principles in it.
Destroy the old; on its foundations build
Afresh. For Time's sweet will we cannot wait.

[11]

Love's music found its instrument in man.
He unveils mysteries, though himself one.
God made the world; man makes it beautiful.
Man is God's colleague and companion.

[12]

The origin and end of this world—these
I do not seek; but I seek mysteries;
For I am myself one. Should the truth be
Unveiled, I would miss my uncertainties.

[13]

How long this moth-like fluttering, O heart?
Why do you not adopt a manlier part?
Burn yourself at your own flame for a while:
Why round an alien flame thus dance and dart?

[14]

Build yourself with a handful of mere dirt
A frame much stronger than a rock-built fort ;
And like a river in the midst of hills,
Let there reside in it a feeling heart.

[15]

With water and with earth God, builder-wise,
Made a world fairer than His Paradise :
But from my body, with the fire he owns,
The Saqi²⁵ has made a new world arise.

[16]

The Brahmin said to God on Judgment Day,
“Life was a short-lived spark that died away ;
But, if You do not mind, I will say this :
The idol’s stay was longer than man’s stay.”

[17]

O morning star, you came and swiftly fled,
Shocked, I suspect, to find us still in bed.
You keep to your course, always wide awake :
Of ours we, sleeping too long, lose the thread.

[18]

Life’s tavern would have lain death-still and dark,
Our dust would not have had a vital spark,

Love and its frenzy would have been unknown,
If man's heart like his wisdom had been sane.

[19]

O swift-winged bird, with your light weight,
You are the joy of flying incarnate.
We are held down to earth by worldly greed ;
You fly because your happy wings vibrate.

[20]

What joy it is, O God, to be, just be !
Each atom's heart feels this joy gratefully.
When a bud bursts forth from its mother-branch,
Its smile of happiness is good to see.

[21]

I hear a moth before Creation prayed :
"For one bright moment, God, let me be made.
At daybreak cast away my ashes ; but
For one night let my splendour be displayed."

[22]

O Muslims, I have something to unfold,
More luminous than Gabriel's soul. I hold
It back from Azar-like²⁶ men ; for it is
One of the secrets Abraham was told.

[23]

You go so often to His street, O heart,
Forsaking me in my retreat, O heart.
You keep creating new desires for me :
Are you in doing so discreet, O heart ?

[24]

A stranger to your own identity,
You seek new paths to the stars in the sky.
Open your eyes to yourself like a seed
So that you come out of the earth a tree.

[25]

One morning in a garden, passing by,
I heard a bird perched on a high branch cry :
“Out with whatever you have inside you—
A song, a plaint, a dirge, a cry, a sigh.”

[26]

To make you understand life's mystery,
I tell you one thing in all secrecy :
You die if you do not possess a soul ;
But if you do, you live eternally.

[27]

Do not tell me about that silly moth
Who met an easy, suicidal death.

It is the hardy moth that I admire,
The one who bravely fights with his last breath.

[28]

I do not sell the stuff that generates
Forgetfulness and that inebriates.
A rent breast like a flower's is all I have
To offer, nothing that exhilarates.

[29]

Do not come to my garden if you have
An uninquiring mind, which does not crave
To know the souls of flowers. My spring is not
Mere smell and colour nor a surface wave.

[30]

From being and non-being's whirlpool free
Yourself; in this world of contingency
Build in yourself a Kabah²⁷ sacrosanct
Like Abraham's home of eternity.

[31]

The garden songsters' chorus I, for one,
Do not join. But sing on my branch alone.
If you are weak, do not come near me; for
In my song you will see my heart's blood drawn.

[32]

A wonderful show, God, is Your world. All
Things seem to have drunk from the same wine-
bowl:

Eye intimate with eye ; but heart from heart
And soul from soul divided by a wall.

[33]

Sikandar²⁸ said to Khidar²⁸ aptly: "Dive
Into the stormy sea of life and strive
Against the waves. Why watch them from the shore?
Jump in and die and be the more alive."

[34]

The throne of Kaikobad²⁹ and Jamshed's³⁰ crown,
Church, temple, Kabah—all dust to be thrown
Away. What is my essence is not known
To me—glance sky-transcending, body dust.

[35]

If in the handful of dust that is you
There is a bleeding heart that cannot view
The world without tears, learn from the spring cloud
To shed tears so that you make tulips grow.

[36]

Life keeps expressing itself in new ways:
Content with one fixed form it never stays.

You have no spark in you if your today
Is just a copy of your yesterdays.

[37]

When the desire to sing aloud grips me,
I storm the world with bursts of poesy.
When I seek solitude, I let the world
Get lost in the waste of my privacy.

[38]

You ask me what is this heart in your breast.
It is your intellect that has been blest
With feeling: while it feels, it is alive;
But when it ceases to feel, it is dust.

[39]

The intellect says He cannot be seen.
But still the eager eye stays caught between
Hope and fear; Mount Sinai is still there, and
In man a Moses there has always been.

[40]

You only built church, temple, idol-house
And mosque—all symbols of your slavery.
You never built yourself a heart, without
Which a free agent you can never be.

[41]

I never got attached to this world, this
Fair-seeming garden, and its vanities ;
But rather, lending colour to its flowers,
I wandered round it like the morning breeze.

[42]

I offer you a strange, new kind of wine,
Which makes old tipplers sober, sane and wise ;
And like the mystical Magi of old
I borrowed it from the Cupbearer's eyes.

[43]

His wine turned my cup into Jamshed's cup³¹
A sea poured into me, a tiny drop.
In my head reason built an idol-house :
Love's Abram to a Ka'bah raised it up.

[44]

To past and present reason is a slave ;
It worships images of eye and ear ;
It always has an idol up its sleeve ;
It is a Brahmin bred and born, beware !

[45]

There is an intellect in every man.
My body is, like others', clay and blood,

Just mud. But no one knows this secret but
Myself: a subtle soul informs my mud.

[46]

You went to Mount Sinai, soliciting
A sight of God, being a stranger to
Yourself. Go and seek man; for God Himself
Is seeking man; yes, He is seeking you.

[47]

Go and tell this to Gabriel from me:
I was not given his frame of light. But O
What ardour keeps our frames of clay aglow!
No separation pangs do angels know.

[48]

If you seek knowledge, then be of two minds:
Increase your doubt, decrease your certainty.
If you seek action, doubt less, be more sure,
Be of one mind, one personality.

[49]

My eyes are thirsty for a sight of You;
But intellect keeps Your face veiled from me.
My eagerness is mixed with fear. O how,
You like to fill my soul with agony!

[50]

Your heart quakes with the fear of death : you pale
At the mere thought of it. Go and acquire
A selfhood and hold fast to it. If you
Do this, you will not die when you expire.

[51]

You ask how close the link between my soul
And body : that link is beyond compute.
Mere swirling, choked-up breath while in it, I
Am music when I issue from the flute.

[52]

A wise man said to me : "All your todays
Are earnest of a great Tomorrow ; so
Protect your heart from heartless fair-faced ones ;
Into His sanctum do not let them go."

[53]

Why ask of Razi³² what the Qur'an means ?
By each man's own heart is it best construed.
Mind lights a fire, heart burns in it : the one
Is Abraham, the other is Nimrud.³³

[54]

I do not say if I exist or not.
To say I do were self-idolatry.

But what is this still, small voice saying, "I
Exist"? O who is this one inside me?

[55]

Tell the flamboyant poet this from me :
"What use your fire if but a tulip-spark?
It neither melts you with its heat nor makes
An evening of some saddened heart less dark."

[56]

I do not know what you regard as fair
Or ugly; profit is what you judge by.
I feel so lonely in this company,
For I view this world with another eye.

[57]

Perhaps, O holy one, you do not know
The world of Love too has its Judgment Day;
But there will be no balance, book or sin,³⁴
No Muslim and no infidel, they say.

[58]

A water-drop, with native lustre, can
Outshine a hundred pearls. In company
Be like the bird who proudly sings apart,
Choosing the garden for its privacy.

[59]

This riddle is beyond me – reason is
Unable to resolve it, O wise men—
How in a pinch of dust the mind appears,
That field for thought's gazelles to wander in.

[60]

Do not content yourself with resting on
The shore: the rhythm of life there is slow.
Plunge in the sea and grapple with the waves:
Eternal life consists in struggling so.

[61]

I am a hidden meaning which defies
The glance of spinners of mere words. Away
With free will and with destiny ; for I
Am living, revolutionary clay.

[62]

Do not speak of the purpose of this life:
Enjoy its interesting spectacle.
I love wayfaring so much that to me
A destination seems an obstacle.

[63]

Because you cast a wistful eye on it,
A piece of stone became a jewel. Why,

O slave of gold, weigh yourself by mere gold?
For gold derives its value from your eye.

[64]

Perfidious, cold, aloof, and all the time
In search of someone, with a restless eye,
It flew to Him from my breast as soon as
It saw Him, Whom it must have been tamed by.³⁵

[65]

Love's wizardry is great: it can take on
A hundred shapes. In the heart's privacy
It is a little secret; on the tongue
A tale that goes on till eternity.

[66]

Do not be broken-hearted, new-born bud.
In this fair garden what more can you want
Than a stream's brink, flowers' company, birds, dew,
Cool breezes, morning songsters' chant?

[67]

One day a faded rose spoke thus to me:
"Our life is as brief as a spark that flies.
My heart grieves at the Artist's wasted pains.
How soon each of His fair creations dies!"

[68]

This world of ours, stretched out infinitely,
Is drowned like a fish in the sea of Time.
But look into your mind, and you will see
The sea of Time contained in a small cup.

[69]

I join the garden's songsters, and I am
The voice of tongueless buds; cast my dust to
The breezes when I die so that I may,
Through it, still play with roses—my sole joy.

[70]

Do we behold for what it is this vale
Of roses? What is in the tulip's heart
Of fire? For us this garden is a wave
Of hues. What is it for the nightingale?

[71]

You are the sun; I am a planet that
Revolves round You, illumined by Your sight,
Apart from You in an imperfect state.
You are the Book, I but a part of it.

[72]

Dearer His image in the inner eye;
Sweeter the yearning for a sight of Him.

Pine, soul. "Better," I was thus counselled by
A sage, "the winding path than journey's end."

[73]

A dyed-in-the-wool infidel, my brain
Creates and worships idols of its own.
But see how my heart weeps for love of God,
And do not be concerned about my creed.

[74]

His freed slave is the proud, upstanding fir ;
The rose's cheeks are flushed with His strong wine ;
His sanctuaries are stars, sun and moon,
And man's heart is His still unopened door.

[75]

There are a hundred worlds from star to star,
And sky on sky, as far as mind can soar.
But when I look into my self, I see
In it horizons of infinity.

[76]

Do not put chains of fate upon your feet.
There is a way under this rolling dome.
If you doubt this, rise and shake off your chains :
Your feet will find an open field to roam.

[77]

My mind is dazzled by its own strong light,
Though it lights up the universe for me.
O do not ask the sun, already old
Before my time, about my day and night.

[78]

A lute, played by You, I make melody.
You are my soul and yet outside my soul.
A lamp, I burn with Your flame; else I die.
How are you, O my life, outside of me?

[79]

Our breath is a stray breaker from His sea.
His breath makes music in our souls, His flutes.
Grown by the stream-brink of Eternity,
We draw the sap from it through our grass-roots.

[80]

Unable to bear Your stark loneliness,
You made this world of colours and of scents.
Having taught it, why spurn as an excess
Our passionate search for Your lineaments?

[81]

Whom do you seek? Why are you so perturbed?
For He is manifest and you concealed.

Seek Him and you will only see your Self.
Seek your Self; you will find but Him revealed.

[82]

Learn to respect yourself O childish one.
Are you a Muslim? Then abandon pride
Of birth. If Arabs preen themselves on skin
And blood, say goodbye to them there and then.

[83]

Called whether Tartars, Turks or Afghans, we
Belong to one great garden, one great tree,
Born of a springtide that was glorious.
Distinction of colour is a sin for us.

[84]

There is a world concealed within our breasts,
Hearts in our dust and passion in our hearts.
Of that strong wine which once lit up our souls
There are a few drops still left in our bowls.

[85]

O heart, my heart, O heart within my breast,
You are my sea, my barque and my seashore.
Did you drop on my dust like dew at night,
Or did you grow like a rose from my dust?

[86]

I cannot say what is foul and what fair :
The riddle is too hard for me to dare.
Outside the stem you see both rose and thorn ;
Inside it neither rose nor thorn is there.

[87]

One who has been blessed with no secret grief
May have a body, but has not a soul.
If you desire to have a soul, then seek
A fever of the heart that will not cool.

[88]

Why ask what I am and where I came from ?
In this sea I am like a restless wave,
Self-agitated and therefore alive.
Were I to rest, I should just cease to be.

[89]

With all your glory, You keep Yourself veiled ;
You cannot bear our passion's eager gaze.
You course in our blood like a potent wine ;
Yet how aloof, how distant are Your ways !

[90]

Forget the goal, be steadfast on the path,
Keep bright your vision like the sun and moon.

Give others all your wealth of mind and faith;
And keep divine Love's sorrow for your own.

[91]

Come, O Love, guarded secret of our hearts,
Come, O our sowing and our harvesting.
These men, clay idols, have grown far too old.
Another Adam now needs fashioning.

[92]

If poetry is sad, so let it be.
Dear to my heart is sorrow's minstrelsy.
Sikandar did not know this luxury:
I would give Jamshed's kingdom³⁶ for a song.

[93]

I have no steed to ride upon, nor am
Some great king's courtier. Enough for me,
O friend, is this wealth that, whenever I
Dig into myself, I bring up a gem.

[94]

Do you wish to attain the perfect life ?
Learn to fix on yourself your opened eyes,
To swallow the whole world in one big draught,
To break the circle of its earth and skies.

[95]

You say that man is made of humble clay,
Bound to this world of being and decay.
But nature in her universal scheme
Has laid her sea's foundation on his stream.

[96]

Lions to dauntless hearts appear as sheep,
While quaking hearts see tigers in mere deer.
The sea is a plain, if you do not fear.
But if you fear, each wave contains a shark.

[97]

I do not know if I am wine or bowl,
A pearl or the possessor of a pearl.
When I fix my eyes on my mind, I find
My soul and I are not identical.

[98]

You say that we are like birds in a snare,
Which cannot stretch their wings so as to fly.
In fact, the body prods the soul: it is
The scabbard that the sword is whetted by.

[99]

How is desire born in our hearts? How does
This lamp which lights our dwelling burn? Who
sees

With our eyes and what does he see? How is
The heart accommodated in our mire?

[100]

When after death I walked in Paradise
And found before my eyes this earth, these skies,
A doubt arose in my mind: was it fact
Or fantasy, this world before my eyes?

[101]

This world of ours, a sculptor's study still,
Is undergoing changes night and day.
The chisel of Destiny in due course will
Give it a shape; for it is still rough-hewn.

[102]

O sun, O restless roamer of the skies,
How are you from so far seen by our eyes?
Close to us of the earth for all your height,
Where are you, after all, O dazzler of our sight?

[103]

Dig your path with your own pickaxe. It is
A shame to tread somebody else's path.
If you do something new, be it a sin,
I tell you it will not incur God's wrath.

[104]

The mind, great rover, has no journey's end
Within this little world of elements.
Nor does it in the body rest ashore,
This boundless sea that knows no continents.

[105]

Come, drink in Nature's beauty with your eyes.
Why muse like a recluse? O exercise
The gift that God has given you of sight.
O look, the world is beautiful and bright.

[106]

Eschewing Plato and Farabi³⁷ I
Observed the world of sense with my own eye.
I never begged or borrowed others' sight,
But always used my own sight, come what might.

[107]

Nobody knows how Selfhood came to be.
It is not of this world of time and space.
I heard this wise saw from the Prophet of the
Sea³⁸ :

"The ocean is not older than its waves."

[108]

Learn from the rosebud how to live, O heart.
It is a symbol of life's search for light.

It springs out of the darkness of the earth,
But has its eye on the sun's rays from birth.

[109]

His radiance is in hill and dale, and flowers
All have their cups full of His lustrous wine.
He has left unillumined no one's night:
In each heart does the light of His love shine.

[110]

A bud sprang up in the narcissus bed,
And dew washed sleep out of its eyes.³⁹
Thus out of Selflessness did Self arise:
The world at last found what it had long sought.

[111]

The world, which has no being of its own,
Groped for a way to self-fulfilment, and,
Escaping from non-being's no-man's-land,
It found its being in the heart of man.

[112]

My heart knows soul and body's mystery,
And so death is not frightening for me.
What if one world will vanish from before
My eyes? My mind has many worlds in store.

[113]

My problem is the rose's problem too :
An audience irresponsive to our art.
The rose's petal was not made a tongue,
But in its rent breast too there beats a heart.⁴⁰

[114]

I know the ways of the wild tulip well.
I can smell roses' fragrance in the stem.
The garden songsters take me for a friend
Because I sing in harmony with them.

[115]

The world is filled with one song of desire.
Desire's strings make the cosmic harmony.
In my eyes what is, has been or may be
Is but one moment of that symphony.

[116]

My heart is all afire with one desire.
There is a tumult raging in my breast.
What discourse, my friend, do you ask of me?
My only discourse is soliloquy.

[117]

Unceasing restlessness is life for us.
Like fish we must always remain mobile

And shun the shore; for it is dangerous—
One vibrant moment, and then quietus.

[118]

O preacher, if the Brahmin asks that we
Bow down to idols, then why should you be
Displeased? The greatest idol-maker, God,
Bade angels bow down to His idol, man.⁴¹

[119]

Philosophers break idols in their wrath,
But still are prisoners of Being's Somnat,⁴²
They chase God and His angels But how can they
Capture them? Have they yet captured man?

[120]

Worlds spring like grain from my handful of clay.
Come, share my harvest. Though you went astray
From the highway that leads to God, yet come;
You may find Him in my heart's wilderness.

[121]

With Nature my relations are age-old.
I gave myself up to it heart and soul.
But my age-long romance with it is told
In these few words: I carved, adored and broke.

[122]

Winging Eternity's uncharted space,
Still an unbodied spirit, I was caught
And, as You thought me saleable, was brought
To this, Your ever-busy market-place.

[123]

What is this tumult of thought inside me?
Why am I outwardly a mystery?
Explain to me this, wise philosopher:
The body rests, the mind roams. How and why?

[124]

I am proud of my gift, my inner fire.
I burn, I blaze, I melt and play my lyre.
I melt you in my furnace into glass
And make of your minds mirrors for truth's face.

[125]

If you know your potentialities,
Then with the dew you are create vast seas.
O heart, why beg the moon for alms of light?
Let your own flaming breath light up your night.

[126]

Why sorrow? The heart does not live by breath,
And is not chained to being and to death.

Death, O short-sighted man, you need not fear.
If breathing stops, the heart will still be there.

[127]

So long as you are in my breast, O heart,
My mat is better than a monarch's throne.
Will you be still in my breast after death?
My hopes and fears are fixed on you alone.

[128]

Convey this to those seekers after God,
The Sufis, who know all things recondite,
That I admire the courage of the man
Who sees God only in his Selfhood's light.

[129]

Do not pass through this garden with eyes closed
Narcissus-like, and do not, like scent, keep
Yourselves shut up in buds. God gave you eyes.
O do not walk with brains awake and hearts asleep.

[130]

All idols that I make resemble me.
God is after my likeness, even He.
Unable to go out of my Self, I
Adore myself, no matter in what guise.

[131]

The new-sprung bud addressed these words to dew :
“We garden creatures cannot see so far ;
But in that upper space with countless suns
Do they distinguish between high and low ?”

[132]

Take earth to be the confidante of Heaven
And space a gloss upon infinity.
Make shifting sands your signpost of the road,
As each sandgrain flies to the Friend's⁴³ abode.

[133]

You are the meaning of God's fiat, “Be,”
The only clue to Being's mystery.
Tread life's path more intrepidly ; advance :
There is no one but you in this expanse.

[134]

The earth is mere dust at our tavern's door,
The sky our wine-cup going round, no more.
The story of our heart is long, so long,
The world seems to be but its opening song.

[135]

Iskandar and his flag and sword are gone ;
Gone are his tribute and his mines and seas.

Longer than kings' are peoples' histories :
Jamshed is gone, but Persia still lives on.

[136]

You stole away my heart through my breast's rent :
You robbed me of all I possessed, in brief.
Whom did You give my yearning's precious goods ?
What did You do with my long-cherished grief ?

[137]

The world of smell and colour, earth and sky,
This lovely, lively world abandoned me.
Did you flee from His stormy presence, heart ?
Or did He leave your doleful company ?

[138]

Although I have no knowledge of the keys,
Yet I know very well life's melody.
So nicely did I sing it in the trees
The rose said to the thrushes, "Who is he?"

[139]

I sang with such fine rapture to the crowd
That I struck life's spark out of stolid clay.
I lit the heart with wisdom's radiance,
But I put wisdom to the heart's assay.

[140]

Iran is young again, thanks to my song,
Which has enhanced the lustre of her fame.
A crowd lost in the wilderness became
A caravan at the sound of my gong.

[141]

Iran's soul has been kindled by my song—
The resting caravan's departing gong.
I sing with Urfi⁴⁴ livelier marching tunes;
For heavy is the load, asleep the road.

[142]

Emitting from my fervent soul a flame,
I put a living heart in the East's frame.
Its clay has been ignited by my song.
Like lightning I have darted to its core.

[143]

Mine is to wander like the breeze of morn
With a heart like a full-blown rose's rent,
And eyes, blind even to the evident,
Yet given to the joy of looking on.

[144]

The mind turns cotton into cloth of gold
And turns mere stone into a looking glass.

But poets, with the magic songs they sing,
Extract a honeyed potion from life's sting.

[145]

I have partaken of the fruit I sought
And had life's mystery revealed to me.
Beware the gardener, O bird-hunter. See
The spring is nigh whose message I have brought.

[146]

When my imagination, which culls flowers
From Eden's garden, shapes a rare, new thought,
My heart is all aquiver with delight
Like petals trembling under dewdrops' weight.

[147]

Iran is like a boundless sea which teems
With pearls as rich as diamonds in sheen.
Yet on that sea I will not sail my barque
Whose waters do not have a single shark.

[148]

Do not say life is merely transitory;
Each moment of ours veils Eternity.
Hold firmly to today: tomorrow is
Still an idea in the mind of Time.

[149]

Though you deny the Western demi-gods,
Yet you kneel down and worship tombs and domes.
So used have you become to servitude
That you carve idols from stones on the road.⁴⁵

[150]

How long will you remain depressed like this?
How long have your nest in the dust like ants?
Learn how to fly like falcons and soar high;
Seek food, not on the ground, but in the sky.

[151]

Nest there where roses grow and tulips glow;
From Nature's songsters learn their melody.
If you are old through feebleness, acquire
A portion of this world's vitality.

[152]

The soul designed the body, love of self-display
Thus fashioning a double-tinted rose.
The soul assumes a thousand forms, all fresh.
Content with one, it would become mere flesh.

[153]

I heard a voice from ~~inside a grave~~ say:
"You can commence a new life in the grave."

The man who lives by others' wishes may
Have breath in him, but has no soul to save."

[154]

Do not despair of your handful of dust,
This mutable stuff, quickly blown away.
When Nature fashions some new form, it must
Have time—millennia—to round it off.

[155]

Worth knowing is this world of hue and smell:
Worth culling are the flowers in this fair dell,
But do not close your eyes upon your Self;
For it has something worth observing well.

[156]

You say that *you* exist but God does not
And that the universe is infinite.
But I still do not know if what I see
Is all illusion or reality.

[157]

I have no roasted fowl on which to dine,
And in my cup there is no sparkling wine.
My mind's gazelle feeds only on green grass,
But none the less its heart-blood is pure musk.⁴⁶

[158]

My fervour has warmed up the Muslim's blood,
His eyes have shed my tears by empathy.
But my soul's tumult he still does not know:
He does not see the world yet with my eye.

[159]

What is abodeless cannot be encaged
In words. You can observe this in yourself;
For in the body the soul is so lodged
You cannot say it is here, and not there.

[160]

With every heart Love plays a different part—
Now as a stone, now as a crystal bowl.
It robbed you of your self and gave you tears
Instead: it brought me closer to my soul.

[161]

You are still tied to colour and to race,
So you call me Afghan or Turkoman.
But I am first of all a man, plain man,
And then an Indian or Turanian.

[162]

The love of self-expression seized my heart
And charged it with a vital energy.

To speak of Love I opened my lips, but
Speech thickened the veil of its mystery.

[163]

At last from artful reason he has freed
Himself and taught his selfish heart to bleed
For love. Iqbal, that soarer in the skies,
Our savant, is now mad, no longer wise.⁴⁷

REFLECTIONS

THE FIRST ROSE

I do not find a single comrade in the garden yet :
For springtime is approaching and I am an early
rose.

I look at myself in the mirror of the rivulet,
Creating a companion through this self-deluding
pose.

The pen that Destiny employed in writing Being's
scroll

Inscribed a message on my leaves for everyone to
read.

My heart is with the past ; my eye is on the present's
roll.

A prophet of the future, I proclaim the future's creed.
I sprang up out of dust, and I assumed a rose's robe ;
But am, in fact, the Pleiad that was lost in the blue
globe.

A PRAYER

O you who filled my glass with wine galore
From Nature's own winestore,

See to it that my glass is melted by
 This fire sent from Your sky.
 O let my spirited lament provide
 Love with its wealth of pride.
 Would that the dust of my Sinai became
 An all-consuming flame.
 When I die, let my ashes form a bed
 Where tulips will be bred,
 So that my passion's wounds, revived, may shine
 In tulips' hearts⁴⁸ again.

THE NEW MOON OF EID

New moon of Eid,⁴⁹
 You cannot manage to evade
 The eager view
 Of people waiting for a sight of you.
 A thousand glances have
 Conspired to weave
 A net to catch you in:
 Open your eyes
 To yourself. Do not grieve
 That you are a bare outline.
 Within you lies
 A real full moon.

THE CONQUEST OF NATURE

(1) *The Birth of Man*

“Here’s one with a bleeding heart,”
Rang abroad Love’s joyous cry.
Beauty trembled and said, “Look.
Here’s one with a seeing eye.”
Nature was surprised to see
From its passive dust appear,
All of a sudden, one who was
Of himself maker, breaker, seer.
Whispers travelled all the way
From Eden to night’s dark abode,
“Look out, veiled ones, here comes one
Who will tear up every shroud.”
Not yet self-aware, Desire
Lay curled up in Being’s lap.
Opening its eyes, it saw
Before it a new world unwrap.
Life exclaimed, “O happy day!
I writhed in dust aeon after aeon.
Now has opened at long last
A door out of this ancient prison.”

(2) *Satan’s Refusal*

I am no creature of mere light
That I should bow to man.

He is a base-born thing of dust,
And I am of fire born.

The blood in the veins of the world
Is lit up by my flame.

The tearing speed of wind is mine,
And mine is thunder's boom.

I forge the atoms' harmony,
The elements' concourse.

I burn, but also shape : I am
The fire that makes the glass.

The things I make I break to bits,
And scatter in the dust,

In order to create new forms
From fragments of those lost.

This restlessly revolving sky

Is a wave of my sea ;

And in my throbbing substance dwells

The shape of things to be.

The stars' bodies were made by You ;

I am their motive force.

I am the substance of the world.

I am life's primal source.

The body draws its soul from You.

But I arouse the soul.

While You waylay with blissful peace,

I lead with action's call.

I never begged obedience
Of slaves who always pray.
I rule without a Hell : I judge
Without a Judgment Day.

That low-born creature of earth, man,
Of mean intelligence,
Though born in Your lap, will grow old
Under my vigilance.

(3) *The Temptation of Adam*

A life of struggle, strain and stress
Is better than eternal rest.
When a dove strains hard at its net,
An eagle's heart beats in its breast.
O you are fit for nothing but
Abject obeisance like a slave.
Like a tall cypress stand erect,
O you who do not act but crave.
These streams of milk and honey have
Deprived you of the strength to act.
Come, take a hearty draught of wine
From the cup of the vine direct.
Good and evil, virtue and sin,
Are myths created by your Lord.

Come, taste the joy of action and
Go forth to seek your due reward.

Arise, for I will show to you
The prospect of a whole new world.
Unveil your eyes and look around ;
Go forth and see it all unfurled.

You are a tiny, worthless drop ;
Become a shining, priceless pearl.
Descend from Eden's halcyon heights
And plunge into the life-stream's swirl.

You are a brightly shining sword ;
Go, dip into creation's heart.
To prove your mettle issue forth
And from your scabbard's bosom part.

Unfold your eagle-wings and soar
And shed the blood of timid quails.
O for an eagle it is death
To live within its eyrie's walls.

You have not learnt this lesson yet ;
Fulfilment dooms desire to death.
You know what is eternal life ?
To burn anew with each new breath.

(4) *Adam Sings on His Exit from Paradise*

O what a joy it is to make

One's life a constant, ardent glow ;
And with one's breath make desert, hill
And plain like molten metal flow ;
Open a door out of one's cage
Onto the garden's vast expanse ;
Roam in the spaces of the sky,
And tell the stars one's weal and woe ;
With secret yearnings, open prayers,
Cast looks on Beauty's seraglio ;
At times to see a single flower
In the riot of a whole field ;
At other times tell hurtful thorns
From roses that in their midst blow.

I burn in a slow-burning fire :
I am an agonised desire.
I give up faith for living doubt ;
I seek, I question, I aspire.

(5) The Day of Judgment : Adam in God's Presence

O You, Who are the sun from Whom
The satellite of soul draws light,
You have made of my heart a lamp
That keeps Your whole Creation bright.

I took Your ocean and poured it
Into canals made by my art.
My pickaxe brought forth streams of milk

And honey from the mountain's heart.

The moon is my devoted slave,
And Venus is my worshipper.
My enterprising intellect
Has made me Nature's conqueror.

I delved into the depths of earth,
And I soared the heights of the sky.
The mighty sun and tiny motes
Are all thralls of my sorcery.

I was deflected from the path
Of virtue by the Devil's fraud.
Forgive my error and accept
My humble penitence, O God!

One cannot subjugate the world
Unless one yields to its allure;
For Beauty's wild pride is not tamed
Until it falls into Love's snare.

In order to melt the heart of
This stone god with a fervid sigh,
I had to wear his sacred thread
As proof of my idolatry.

Though Nature is ingenious, yet
To intellect it falls a prey,
And Ahriman, the fireborn god,
Kneels down and worships mortal clay.

THE FRAGRANCE OF THE ROSE

Bored in a coign of the Garden of Eden,
A houri woefully cried:
“Nobody told us of the things that happen
On Eden’s nether side.

“What are morning, evening, night and day?
They are all above my head.
O tell me what they mean when they say
One is born or one is dead.”

Changing herself to a breath of fragrance,
She appeared in a rose’s form;
And in this way she took up residence
Where day and night are the norm.

She opened her eyes and became a bud.
Then she laughed and she burst
Forth into a rose; but presently shed
Her petals in the dust.

Of that innocent damsel who chose to fly
From Eden’s magic frame
There is one memento left : a sigh,
And fragrance is its name.

THE SONG OF TIME

For all my solar heraldry

And all my stellar pageantry,
I am a mere nonentity,
If you look hard enough at me.
But from your human point of view
I am the very life of you.
I dwell wherever you men dwell—
In city, desert, hill and dell—
And in ways no one can foretell
I come into your life as well.
I am both pain and remedy,
Both ennui and great luxury.

I am an all-destroying sword ;
I am the fountain of eternity.

The ravages of Genghis Khan,
The victories of Tamerlane,
Are merely handfuls of dust thrown
Up by my powerful typhoon.
The West's disaster-spelling reign
Is one of my stray sparks upflown.
Man and the planet he lives on
Are merely sketches I have drawn.
The sketches have as yet to don
A painting's garb ; and there has gone
Into them —call it foul or fair—
The rich heart-blood of men who dare.

I am an all-consuming fire ;
I am the garden of immortality.

My paradox is manifest,
(To take it at its trickiest):
Eternal flux, eternal rest;
Unchangingness in change's breast.
Derive tomorrow's ecstasies
From my today's wine, if you please.
You will find hidden in my mind
A hundred worlds still undefined,
Worlds of a beautifuller kind
Than yours. The worlds I have outlined
For making are new galaxies,
New suns and moons and lands and seas.
I am the element that man lives in,
The milieu of divinity.

Fate is my magic powers' source.
Endeavour is the source of yours.
You pitch against me your will's force,
Designing for yourself your course,
I am the desert that you rove,
Seeking the Laila⁵⁰ that you love.
I am free as the soul is free
From attributes of quantity—
Duration and extensity,
Succession and priority.
You are the secret inside me;
I am your being's mystery.

I live because you have a soul;
 And my abode is your soul's privacy.
 I am a traveller on the road:
 You are my goal and my abode.
 I am a field that has been sowed
 And you the yield it has bestowed.
 By yourself a grand orchestra,
 You fill the world with your eclat.
 O you, who have strayed from your way
 In this world made of grades of clay,
 Try to find out what part it may
 Be fitting for the heart to play.
 Contained in this cup you can see
 The whole of being's boundless sea.
 It was your own tide riding high
 That made the raging storm that I am be.

SPRING

[1]

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

Arise, for in plain, hill and dale spring clouds
have pitched their tent.

[2]

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

The breezes of spring blow again.

The birds sing songs in unison.

The spring-mad tulip's dress is torn.

There is a new rose to adorn

Beauty, and for love a new thorn.

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

[3]

The nightingales are carolling, the ring-doves
coo aloud.

All warmed up is the garden's blood.

O you, in silence closeted,

Break all commands of your sane head ;

Get drunk with mystic wine instead ;

Sing and go in rose-petals clad.

The nightingales are carolling, the ring-doves
coo aloud.

[4]

Abandon your retreat and into fields and pastures go.
Sit by a brooklet's margin so

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

[5]

O you, who cannot see the obvious, open your
 mind's eye.

See tulips row on row, and see
 Their bodies on fire seemingly,
 But their hearts inwardly soothed by
 The dawn-dew's tearful ministry—
 Stars in a twilight-reddened sky.

O you, who cannot see the obvious, open your
 mind's eye.

[6]

Sprouts from the garden's soil the secret of
 Creation's heart—

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

Sprouts from the garden's soil the secret of
 Creation's heart.

ETERNAL LIFE

Do not imagine that the work of the Wine-maker⁵¹
is complete.

With unknown quantities of undrunk wine the vine
is still replete.

The garden is a happy place, but you cannot survive
as buds

In it for long; the breeze will come and tear your
being's robe to shreds.

If you possess the faintest knowledge of life's
awesome mystery,

Then do not seek a heart entirely free from longing's
agony.

Be like a mountain, grave and lofty, with your native
dignity,

And not like straw. Beware, there is a wildfire raging
savagely.

REFLECTIONS OF THE STARS

[1]

I hear a star said to another star :

“We are adrift on a sea with no shore.

We were created with a wander-lust :

Our caravan will not stop any more.

[2]

“If we still are what we were long ago,
Then what use is this shining on and on?
We are all of us captives in Time’s net.
Lucky are they who have not yet been born.

[3]

“No one can bear this heavy load for long.
Far better were it never to have been.
I do not like this azure space at all;
That nether world presents a fairer scene.

[4]

“How happy is man with his restless soul,
So gaily riding on the steed of Time.
Life is a garment tailor-made for him,
Because he is a maker of new things.”

LIFE—1

One night the spring cloud tearfully complained:
“A ceaseless shedding of tears is this life.”
But lightning, flashing quickly, intervened:
“O no, it is a momentary laugh.”
Who bore this to the garden I do not know;
But there is talk between the rose and dew.

DIALOGUE BETWEEN KNOWLEDGE AND LOVE

Knowledge

My eye sees the whole spectrum of material thing
It captures the world in its comprehensive net.
My field of vision is this side of heaven : I have
Nothing to do with those celestial happenings.
My instrument creates a thousand melodies,
And I put on the market all my mysteries.

Love

Your evil magic sets the ocean's waves ablaze,
And shrouds the atmosphere in a foul gaseous
haze.
When you were friends with me, you were incarnate
light ;
But since you broke with me, your light is a dread
blight ;
You were born in the sacred shrine of the Divine ;
But you got yourself firmly caught in Satan's twine.
Come, make this dusty waste a garden once again.
Rejuvenate this ancient, time-worn, ailing world.
Come, take from me a little of my passion's pain,
And under the skies build a lasting Paradise.
From the first we have kept each other company :
We are the treble and bass of one grand harmony.

SONG OF THE STARS

Order is our very being;
Rapture for us is our moving;
Our revolving with no stopping
Is for us life everlasting.
Each of us is Fortune's darling.
So we watch things and move on.

This world of appearances,
Tabernacle of images,
Battleground for all that is—
All each other's enemies—
And Time's odd priorities:
We watch all this and move on.

Nations' armed hostilities,
Utter follies of the wise;
Crowns and thrones and stakes, the rise
And fall of ruling dynasties;
Time's fantastic gimmickries—
We watch all this and move on.

Masters are no longer masters;
Slaves no longer are in halts;
Gone are all the Czars and Kaisers,
All the conquering Alexanders;
Gone too are the idol-makers.
We watch all this and move on.

Silent and uproarious,
Lazy and industrious,
Sometimes quite hilarious,
And sometimes lugubrious,
Man, earth-lord, is slave to us.
We watch his ways and move on.

You in this world's magic circle,
Your mind struggling with its puzzle,
Caught in a snare like a gazelle,
Sad, afflicted and in trouble.
Sheltered in our lofty castle,
We watch all this and move on.

Why this veiled and why that veilles?
What is light and what is darkness?
Eye and heart and conscious process?
Why is human nature restless?
What is distance and what nearness?
We think all this and move on.

What is much for you for us is
Little: for us your year passes
In an instant. O you with seas
In your bosom, why do you seize
Dewdrops? Conquer these vast spaces,
Where to new worlds we move on.

THE MORNING BREEZE

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

THE HAWK'S ADVICE TO HIS YOUNG ONE

You know that all we hawks are cut out for the
 selfsame part :
A mere handful of feathers, each one has a lion's
 heart.
Be brave and self-respecting, and try only for big
 prey.

Do not have anything to do with partridge, grouse
or quail,

Unless, of course, you want to try on them your
hunting skill.

It is a low-born, cowardly, unenterprising brood
That cleans its beak with dirt by picking from the
ground its food.

The foolish hawk who imitates his quarry's timid
way

Is destined to find one day that he is his quarry's
prey.

I know of many hawks who fell in the dust on
their face,

Because they had acquired the ways of the grain-
picking race.

Preserve your dignity and thereby lead a happy
life;

Be always coarse-grained, unrelenting, brave and
strong in strife.

Let the poor partridge have a body delicate and
spare;

Build yourself sinews as strong as the horns of a
male deer.

Whatever happiness can be derived by mortals
here

Comes from a life that is courageous, vigorous,
austere.

What valuable counsel did the eagle give his son:

Prefer the brightness of a blood-drop to a ruby's
sheen.

Do not lose yourself in the herd as deer and
buffaloes do ;

Be on your own just like your ancestors since long
ago.

I well remember how my elders always counselled
me.

“Do not,” they said, “build your nest in the branches
of a tree.

We hawks do not seek shelter in man's orchards
or his fields ;

Our paradise is on high mountains and in wastes
and wealds.

To us it is prohibited to pick grain from the ground ;
For God has given us the higher spaces with no
bound.”

A high-born denizen of the air who settles for the
earth

Is in my view much worse than a bird of domestic
birth.

For hawks the proper hunting ground is rock and
rough-edged stone.

For rock acts as a whetting stone to sharpen their
claws on.

You are one of the cold-eyed children of the
wilderness,

By ancestry a griffin of the purest breed, no less :

A thoroughbred young hawk who, if he should be
challenged by

A tiger, could pluck out the very pupil from his
eye.

Your flight is sure-winged and majestic like the
angels' flights;

In your veins flows the blood of ancient lords of
mountain heights.

Under the canopy of these extensive, dome-like
skies

Seize by the right of might whatever objects please
your eyes.

From no one's hand ought you at any time to take
your food.

Be always good and listen to the counsels of the
good.

THE BOOKWORM AND THE MOTH

I hear that in my library one night

A bookworm spoke thus to a moth:

"I have long lodged in Sina's⁵² tomes

And have consumed much of Farabi's⁵³ manuscript.

But I have not learned anything

About life's mystery,

And am just as much in the dark

About it as before."

The half-burnt moth gave it a fine reply :
“You will not find life’s mystery
Explained in books.
However, here it is :
What gives to life intensity
Is ardency.
It lends life wings
With which to fly.”

VANITY

Said snow in cold superior syllables to the mountain
stream :
“O babbler, I am weary of your meaningless
uproar.
You talk so impudently and you walk so saucily,
And ever bolder are your gait and glances than
before.
You are not fit to be a member of our family ;
So never claim to be a creature whom the mountain
bore.
You roam and roll and tumble like an urchin in
the dust.
Go to the fields and plains and let us hear of you
no more.”
The stream replied, “O do not speak such hurtful
words to me.

Do not be so proud and, what is more, do not be
a boor.

I go because the mountain household is too high
for me;

But you be careful lest the sun should melt you to
the core."

THE TULIP

I am the flame
which on
Creation's dawn
was kindled in love's heart
before the nightingale and the moth came
to play their sacrificial part.

I am far bigger than the sun,
and pour
into each atom's core
a potion of my light:
I lend my spark to everyone,
and it was I who made the heavens so bright.

Residing like its life-breath in
the garden's breast,
in pristine rest,
I was drawn up into its bosom by
a tree-stem, delicate and thin,
as sap that rises up towards the sky.

It quenched my inner fire
and, wanting to beguile
me, it said, "Stay awhile,
and don't go out into the day";
but my heart's long-repressed desire
could brook no more delay.

I writhed and writhed within the tree,
encaged,
enraged,
until the essence of my being found its way
to summits of the ecstasy
of self-display.

With its pearls of the purest water dew
bestrewed my way,
as if to say,
"O what a glorious birth!"

The morning laughed its brightest hue:
the breezes blew in hymeneal mirth.

The nightingale heard from the rose
that I had thrown
away my own
primordial consuming flame.

It said, because this crowned its woes,
"He paid a heavy price to thrive. For shame."

I now stand by,
my breast rent open to
the sun's effulgence so

that it may set ablaze
again the fire of my
prenatal days.

PHILOSOPHY AND POETRY

Bu Ali⁵⁴ got lost
In the dust
Kicked up by
Laila's⁵⁵ dromedary.
Rumi's⁵⁶ hand
Seized the curtain
Of her litter.
This one dived
Deeper, deeper still,
Till he came
Upon the pearl
He was after.
But the other
Got caught in
A whirlpool like a piece of straw.
If the truth
Has no fervour,
It is plain philosophy.
If it has the proper fervour,
It is poetry.

TO THE GLOW-WORM

A tiny atom found itself a living thing by chance,
Aquiver with life's ardour, it began a moth-like
 dance,
And set aglow the night's expanse.

A dormant sunbeam reawoke and shot up with a
 dash.
The alchemy of life converted it to gold from trash ;
Came vision to it in a flash.

A restlessly aflutter moth was bold enough to dart
Into the candle's flame, became one with its fiery
 heart,
And ceased to be a thing apart.

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

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

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

You are a torch for birds that in the evening fly to
rest;

But what and whence this restless passion burning
in your breast,

Which keeps you in unceasing quest?

Like you we entered into this world by earth's
dusty door.

We saw and tossed about; we did not see, and
tossed about the more.

O never did we reach the shore.

I speak from ripe experience and true is what I say,
Don't think of lost horizons and be steadfast on
your way:

Keep shining like this while you may.

REALITY

The eagle, who sees far, said to the swan,
"My eyes see nothing but a bright mirage."

That truthful bird replied, "You see, and I
Know that you see, a watery expanse."

From the sea's depth arose a fish's cry,
"There is something in an unceasing dance."

SONG OF THE HEJAZI CAMEL-DRIVER

My fleet-footed dromedary,
 My doe of the Tartar country,⁵⁷
 O my riches, O my money,
 O my entire patrimony,
 O my fortune, O my plenty,
 Quicken your pace just a little ; journey's end is not
 far off.

O you bright and beautiful thing,
 You are lovely, you are charming,
 O you houri of my dreaming,
 You, the Laila⁵⁸ of whom bards sing,
 You, the desert's sprightly offspring.
 Quicken your pace just a little ; journey's end is not
 far off.

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

Like the clouds a constant roamer ;
 Sailless boat with sand for river ;
 Born path-knower like a Khizar,⁵⁹
 Carrier who does not murmur,

Darling of the camel-driver.
Quicken your pace just a little ; journey's end is not
far off.

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

If at dusk you are in Yaman,
Then at dawn you are in Qaran.⁶⁰
Rough sand of your native region
Is to your feet soft like jasmine.
O you fleet gazelle of Khotan,⁶¹
Quicken your pace just a little ; journey's end is not
far off.

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

Lively is the song that I sing ;
Lively, but full of foreboding—

For the caravan a warning
 That the hour has struck for starting.
 Kisser of the Haram's paving,⁶²
 Quicken your pace just a little ; journey's end is not
 far off.

THE RAINDROP AND THE SEA

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

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

For all
 Your smallness, you have had
 Experiences which were great.
 You have watched dawn and evening alternate.

You have seen orchard, plain and glade.
Suspended on a blade
Of grass or a cloud-flake,
You have reflected the sun's rays.
There have been days
On which it fell to you to slake
The thirst of desert shrubs. Again,
There were days when you soothed the pain
In the rent bosom of a rose.
At times you slumbered in the vine
To wake up as a potent liquid—wine.
At other times abed
In dust, you made mere mud.
It was out of my waves that you arose.
Born of me, you come back to me,
Come back to be
A part of me. Now rest
In my broad breast,
And make my mirror gleam
With one more beam
Of light. Become a pearl and be
Lodged in the depths of me—
My moon, my star,
As bright as those of the sky are.”

DIALOGUE BETWEEN GOD AND MAN

God

I fashioned this world out of one and the same clay ;
 You made Iran, Ethiopia and Tartary.
 From mere earth I made steel, pure and without
 alloy ;
 You fashioned sword and arrowhead and musketry.
 You made the axe, with which you felled trees grown
 by Me,
 And fashioned cages for My singing birds born free.

Man

You made the night ; I made the lamp that lights it up.
 You fashioned clay ; I made of it a drinking cup.
 You made the wilderness, the mountain and the
 steppe ;
 I fashioned garden, orchard, avenue and scape.
 I change dread poisons into panaceas, and
 I am the one who fashions mirrors out of sand.

SAKI-NAMAH

O what a happy season this !
 O what a joyous time !
 The meadows are star-spangled with
 Fresh flowers in spring's prime.

Like partridge-wings the ground is pied
With variegated flowers.
How bountiful the waterfall!
What diamonds it showers!

Of roses and of tulips what
A riot meets the eye!
The breezes frolicsomely roll
On miles of greenery.

Have you seen mirrored in the stream
The self-admiring bud?
What fascinating beauty and
What unabashed self-pride!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

THE EAGLE AND THE FISH

A saucy little fish addressed an eaglet thus :
“This network of waves that you notice is all sea,
The home of crocodiles that rumble like the clouds,
And perils of who knows what dread variety.
It has flood-tides, rock-rolling, all-engulfing, swift,
Though it also possesses precious, sparkling pearls.
We never can escape its all-pervading tide—
Above us and beneath us and on every side.
Eternally young, never resting, always fresh,
To all the winds that have blown it has stood four-
square.”

The fish, while saying all this, went red in the face.
The eaglet, laughing, lifted itself in the air
And screamed : “An eagle, I have nothing to do with
Your earth ; its lands and seas are all beneath my
flight.

Abandon your sea, come into this upper space.
The difference is clear to those who look down
from a height.”

THE GLOW-WORM'S SOLILOQUY

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

SOLITUDE

I went up to the ocean and, addressing a wave, said :
"You're always restless ; tell me what is it that
troubles you.

You have a million pearls enfolded in your garment's
skirt,

But do you, like me, have a heart—the only pearl
that's true?"

It squirmed, retreated from the shore, and uttered
not a word.

I went up to the mountain and said, "O huge heap of
stone!

Can you not hear the wailing of a heart in agony?
If in your stones there is a gem which is a drop of
blood,

Then speak, O speak, to a sad soul that pines for
company."

If it had breathed, it breathed no more, and uttered
not a word.

I travelled long in upper space, approached the
moon, and said:

“O ceaseless wanderer, is there any rest ordained
for you?”

Your radiance makes the whole world gleam white
like a jasmine field.

But is your breast aglow with a live heart whose
light shines through?”

She looked round at the starry corps, and uttered
not a word.

Transcending sun and moon, I went up to the Throne
of God.

“There’s not a thing,” I said, “I can be friends with,
not a thing.

Your world is heartless, while my dust is all of heart’s
stuff made.

A pretty garden, but not the kind of place to make
one sing.”

He answered with the smile He wore, and uttered
not a word.

DEW

“Come down,” the voices said to me, “from your
remote celestial heights.

Recoil upon yourself and get embroiled with stormy
ocean-tides.

Ride where the billow rides,
And make new waves besides.
Arise as pearls whose sheen abides.”

I did not buy the luxury of losing myself in the sea;
I did not taste the wine which robs you of your
self-identity.

Another I refused to be:
Said goodby to the sky
And chose the tulip's company.

The tulip said, “O what is all this tumult of birdsong?
And why do all these morning songsters on the
treetops throng?

Why all this flitting up and down daylong?
And should the rose to thorns belong?
O is not this quite wrong?

“Who are you and who am I and why do we thus
consort?

And wherefore are my branches all these singing
birds' resort?

What is their singing's long and short?
And what is in the breezes' heart?
What is this garden in which they disport?”

“It is,” I said, “a battlefield of life's war raging
everywhere,

A unity of many, each one separately self-aware.
 To breathe is to sing songs of fire.
 The soul? The inner being's self-exposure.
 This is the secret of God's empire.

“I have descended from the skies and you have grown
 up out of dust.

They both are forms of self-display, my fall and your
 upthrust.

You writhed within a tree-stem first
 Until your hundred veils were burst—
 And then you reached your being's crest.

“The sap that rises in the world's veins is our
 morning tears ;

Our own illusion are those upper and these lower
 spheres.

Part of our being are the stars,
 Our kith and kin and our confreres :
 They are our eyes and we the seers.

“Just like a needle in a damsel's garment is the
 rose's thorn :

Close to the rose, its boon companion and with it
 twin-born :

All thin and wan like one lovelorn,
 Though in the dear one's bosom borne—
 Another prank of the spring morn.

“Arise and re-engage your heart with friendships of
 the early days ;

And with the sun, the tulip of the sky, exchange a
knowing gaze.

Consort with those with seeing eyes;
Like me take to celestial ways—
Have you the will to soar the skies?"

DIVINE LOVE

My thought, engaged in finding out the final truth,
Went to the Kaaba and the idol-temple both.
I wandered widely in inquiry's wilderness,
Collecting my skirts like the whirlwind's flowing
dress,
I found for an unknown destination with no guide,
On my imagination's shoulders borne astride,
Demanding wine with just a broken cup in hand,
Broadcasting like the dawn a net to catch the wind,
Recoiling upon myself like waves in the sea,
Roaming the desert in a whirlwind's agony;
But suddenly Your love came and assailed my heart,
And with a mighty blow it cut the Gordian knot.
It taught me all that being and non-being mean;
It changed my idol-temple to a holy shrine;
And striking lightning fashion my Self's granary,
It taught my heart the joy of burning silently.
All in a rapture I was carried off my feet;
And I became a shadow, from myself discrete.
The sublimating force of what You taught my heart

Sent my dust soaring right up to Heaven's starry
height.

My being's storm-tossed ship at long last came to
port,

And into beauty's channel all my ugliness was
poured.

I have no tale to tell except the tale of love ;

I do not care if men approve or disapprove.

Of learning's light I do not have the slightest need ;

And all I have to do is burn and melt and bleed.

LIVE DANGEROUSLY

Said one gazelle to another, "I will
Take shelter in the Haram from now on ;
For there are hunters at large in the wild,
And there is no peace here for a gazelle.
From fear of hunters I want to be free.
O how I long for some security."

His friend replied : "Live dangerously, my
Wise friend, if it is life you truly seek.
Like a sword of fine mettle hurl yourself
Upon the whetting-stone ; stay sharp thereby.
For danger brings out what is best in you ;
It is the touchstone of all that is true."

THE WORLD OF ACTION

This world is a free tavern, and to all who come to it
Wine is served in accordance with their bowl's
capacity.

The secret that has not yet been expressed in words
Has been expressed here in wine's overbrimming
character.

Those who come here get drunk with action and
not with mere words.

Dregs at the bottom of life's cup is mere philosophy.
We have endeavoured hard to make life take to
action's path,
And now its morning's sun is near the margin of the
sky.

O you who try to be consistent with your past
mistakes,

Whatever you regard as rest is here mobility.

We who have come out to pursue the path of seeking
have

Converted knowledge into action and thus made it
live.

LIFE—2

I asked a man of wisdom, "What is life?"

He said, "A brew, the bitterer the better."

I said, "A worm lodged in the rose's heart."
He said, "A child of fire, a salamander."
I said, "There's evil in its make-up."
He said, "To see no good in it is wickeder."
I said, "Its love of wandering is goalless."
He said, "Its very goal it is to wander."
I said, "It comes from and returns to dust."
He said, "The seed bursts forth from dust a flower."

THE WISDOM OF THE WEST

The story goes that in Iran
A worthy man,
Intelligent and wise,
Died, suffering great agonies,
Departing with a heart
Full of distress and smart,
He went up to God's throne
And said: "God, I am one
Grieved at the way that I
Was made to die.
Your Angel of Death is
Supposed to be a specialist,
And yet he has no expertise,
No knowledge of the new skills that exist
In the fine art of killing. He
Kills, but does it so clumsily.
The world is going rapidly ahead.

But his growth has stopped dead.
The West develops wonderful new skills
In this as in so many other fields.
Fine are the ways it kills,
And great are its skill's yields.
It has encompassed even thought with death.
Death is all its philosophies' life-breath.
It is what all its sciences devise.
Its submarines are corcodiles,
With all their predatory wiles.
Its bombers rain destruction from the skies.
Its gases so obscure the sky
They blind the sun's world-seeing eye.
Its guns deal death so fast
The Angel of Death stands aghast,
Quite out of breath
In coping with this rate of death.
Despatch this old fool to the West
To learn the art of killing fast—and best.”

THE HOURI AND THE POET

The Houri

You neither relish wine nor even look at me.
Strange that you do not know the ways of amity.
In every song you sing, in every breath you draw,
There is a quest, a pining for things yet to be.

O what a fair world you have fashioned with your
 song.

It makes me feel as if Heaven were illusory.

The Poet

With your barbed tongue you waylay simple mortal
 men ;

But mortal thorns give mortal men far sweeter pain.

What can I do ? I cannot stay at rest, for I

Am like the zephyr blowing over hill and plain.

As soon as my gaze comes to rest on a fair face

My heart begins to yearn for a still fairer one.

From spark to star, from star to sun, progressively—

Such is my flight. To stop would be sheer death for
 me.

When I rise, having quaffed a cup of vernal wine,
 I sing a song of yet another spring to be.

I seek the end of that which has no end at all

With ever-hopeful heart and never-wearied eye.

The hearts of lovers die in an eternal Heaven—

With no grief, none to share it with, no plaintive cry.

ACTION AND LIFE

(A Rejoinder to Heine's Poem Entitled "Questions")

The motionless shore said, "Though I have long
 been here,

I am not yet aware of my identity.”
The restless wave rolled fast and said, “For me
To roll on is to be, to lie still not to be.”

GOD'S COUNTRY

When Tariq⁶³ burned his boats on Andalusia's coast,
His men observed: “It was an unwise thing to do.
We are so far from home; how shall we now return?
Forgoing means is wrong in the Divine Law's
view.”

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

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

ALAMGIR'S LETTER

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

Do you know that to punish and reward
Has been from old the business of the Lord?
He has heard many anguishing laments
From this benighted planet's residents.
Like Shabbir⁶⁴ He has seen streams of blood flow.
But did a cry escape His lips? Oh no.
While Jacob wept, He looked on unimpressed;

And by Job's wailing He was not distressed.
 Do not think that you ever can ensnare
 That seasoned Hunter with Your foolish prayer.

PARADISE

This world of ours is full of a strange jugglery.
 Heaven does not have this kind of a revolving sky.
 Its Joseph⁶⁵ is a stranger to imprisonment;
 And its Zulaikha's⁶⁶ heart does not know how to cry.
 Its Abraham has not been cast into a fire.⁶⁷
 Its Moses does not have a live spark in his soul.
 Its barque has never had to cope with stormy winds,
 And never has been tossed about by seas that roll.
 There certainty has never been assailed by doubt.
 There union is not plagued by separation's fear.
 How can you have the joy of straying from the path,
 If the path that you have to tread is fixed and clear?
 Never live in a world devoid of joy and zest,
 Where God exists, but Beelzebub does not exist.

KASHMIR

Repair to Kashmir's land and see
 Hills, meadows, pastures, wealds.
 See miles on miles of greenery
 And endless tulip-fields.

Whiff after whiff spring breezes blow,
And hosts of birds of spring—
The thrush, the quail, the dove—all go
From place to place and sing.

To hide it from the jealous sky
The earth veils its fair face
Behind a complex tracery
Of shrubs that interlace.

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

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

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

LOVE—1

The intellect, which, if it chose,
Could set the universe aflame,

Learns from Love to illuminate,
Instead of burning up, its frame.

To Love it is that your soul owes
Its heightened states' engenderment—
From Rumi's⁶⁸ ardent passion to
Farabi's⁶⁹ solemn wonderment.

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

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

HUMANITY

Last night an infidel wine-vendor⁷⁰ said to me:
"Attend to the wise counsel I give and hold fast
To it. The custom of the drinkers of the past
Was to go from the tavern drunk quite merrily,
But in their senses still. I do not ask that you
Should not say your heart's say; but say it with all
due

Respect and only drink what you can carry well.
As for God's role, O it is grand; but let me tell

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

SLAVERY

Man out of his shortsightedness
Consents to be a slave.
He had something in him, but gave
It all away to kings.
Because of this servility
He is worse than a dog.
No dog will ever call adoringly
Another dog his lord.

THE RIDDLE OF THE SWORD

Name that very keen contender
Which draws lustre just like water⁷¹
From a stone,
But which, unlike Alexander,⁷²
Does not owe it to a Khizar⁷³
As a boon,
And which, like a tear-washed vision,
Purified by that ablution,
Is a gleam,
Neat and clean and clear and limpid,
With its raiment quite unwetted

In midstream.
 Its theme needs no longer statement
 Than a single line,⁷⁴ if trenchant.

DEMOCRACY

You seek the treasures of an alien philosophy
 From common, low-grade people, themselves poor
 of mind.
 Ants crawling on the ground cannot attain
 The heights of wisdom of a Solomon.⁷⁵
 Avoid the method of democracy ;
 Become the bondman of someone of ripe intelligence ;
 For a few hundred donkeys cannot have, combined,
 The brains of one man, of one homosapiens.

TO A MUSLIM MISSIONARY IN ENGLAND

Time has rekindled Nimrod's fire⁷⁶
 So that the mettle of Islam may once again be proved.
 Come, let us lift the veil from our heart's wound,
 For it is the sun's nakedness that makes it shine
 over the world.
 You have made many subtle points before the
 charmers of the West,
 And melted many idols' hearts with the heat of your
 arguments.

Come, now give some news of the city of Sulaima⁷⁷
to the people of Hejaz,
And fling a spark into the dead, cold conscience of
the people of Turan.
O knower of *Maqam*,⁷⁸ strike the note of Iraq⁷⁹ and
Khurasan⁸⁰;
Revive the singing of ghazals in the assemblies of
the Ajamis.⁸¹
It is a long time since the Afghan's lute awaits the
plectrum's strokes.
What melodies have turned to blood, pent up within
its breast.
Why tell Love's story to a people given to lust?
Why put the *surma* of wise Solomon into ants'
eyes?⁸²

GHANI KASHMIRI

That nightingale of poetry, Ghani,
Who sang in Kashmir's paradisaal land,
Used, while at home, to shut up all the doors,
But leave them open while away from home.
Somebody questioned him concerning this.
"O charming bard," he said, "why do you do
This strange thing, which nobody understands
The meaning of?" Ghani, who had no wealth
Except his gift of poetry, replied:
"What people see me doing is quite right.

There is nothing of any value in my house
 Except myself. When I am in, the house
 Is to be guarded like a treasure-house.
 When I am out, it is an empty place,
 Which nobody would care to walk into."

LINES ADDRESSED TO MUSTAFA KAMAL PASHA

There was once an unlettered man,⁸³
 Thanks to whose wisdom we learned all
 About the mysteries
 Of human destiny.
 In origin we were
 Nothing but a faint spark.
 He looked at us, and we became
 A world-illuminating sun.
 The old man of the Haram⁸⁴ wiped
 The imprint of Love from his heart,
 And we were humbled in the world
 In keeping with our sin's degree.
 It is the desert wind that suits
 Our natural make-up.⁸⁵
 The morning breeze's breath turned us
 Into buds with constricted hearts.
 O that tumultuous din of ours which once
 Used to shoot up above the sky,
 Reduced to treble and bass,
 Became a mere lament.

How many quarries we once caught
Without nets and tied to our saddlestraps !
But now, with bows and arrows under armpits, we
Ourselves became our quarries' prey.

“Wherever you can find a way
Race your horse thither, for
We have been outdone many times
On this manoeuvring-ground.” (Naziri)⁸⁶

THE AEROPLANE

Perched on a rosebush branch
One morning, a bird said
To other birds :
“The son of man has not been given wings,
And so this poor fool is earthbound.”
I said to him : “O little bird,
Who talk so airily,
Do not mind if I speak the truth to you.
We have made of the aeroplane our wings,
And so have found a way to heaven.
What a sky-soaring bird
Is this our aeroplane,
With speedier wings than angels' wings,
In flight a royal falcon and
An eagle in sheer strength,
With far-flung regions in its range !
While in the sky, it thunders and it roars ;

But in its nest it is as quiet as a fish.
Our wisdom has created Gabriels
From common clay,
And has made of the earth a proof of heaven.”
On hearing my speech that wise bird
Looked at me in a knowing way.
Then, scratching his wings with his beak,
He said: “I do not marvel at your words;
But tell me, O you, who can see
The how and why of things,
Whose magic holds sway over everything,
Be it high, be it low,
Have you done well your tasks on earth
That you are meddling with the sky ?”

LOVE—2

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

CIVILISATION

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

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

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

But when war tore the veil
Off its pretence,
It stood exposed
As man's blood-thirsty enemy.

LYRICAL NECTAR (GHAZALS)

[1]

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

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

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

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

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

One night a witty old man in the tavern⁸⁷ made
An apt remark. He said :

“In every age there is an Abraham,
And there is also Nimrod’s fire.”

What forms I shaped
In life’s workshop !

What passing things have passed away !
And what things that were there are now no more !

Speak gently to the idol-worshipper ;
For Love, that brooks no slight,
Laid the foundations of an idol-house
In Mahmud’s heart itself.⁸⁸

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

[2]

Around my grave
Stood in a ring
A bevy of fair mourners,
All comely, winsome, lily-white.⁸⁹

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

You seek good manners, learning, taste
In the schoolroom.
But no one buys wine from
A glassware factory.⁹⁰

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

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

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

[3]

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

Come to the roof-top and remove
Unhesitatingly Your face's veil.
There is nobody in Your street
More eager to see You than I.⁹¹

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

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

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

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

The harp of the Timurids⁹² broke :
Its music is alive.
It burst forth from
Another instrument of Samarkand.

Custodian of the Haram,
Do not admit Iqbal ;
For he has up his sleeve
New idols every day.⁹³

[4]

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

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

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

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

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

In living men's creed life
Is a pursuit of hardships.
I have not visited the Kaaba. Why not ?
Because the journey is so safe.⁹⁴

Untold assemblies have been organised,
Only to be dissolved,
In this small halting-place
Illumined by the moon.

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

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

My song has relit old fires
In Persia, but Arabia
Is still a stranger to
My ardent lays.⁹⁵

[5]

This is my way of finding in this company
A confidant :
I sing ghazals and through them I
Convey the message of my Friend.⁹⁶

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

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

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

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

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

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

Its dome with its doors shut
Cannot contain me.
I am a thorn
In the side of this ancient sky.⁹⁷

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

[6]

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

The path is like a tulip-bed
With passers-bys' blood-drops.
Who is the one whose proud might has
Waylaid the caravan of humble Love ?⁹⁸

Since You have opened to the garden
Its sleepy eye,
Give the narcissus time
Sufficient for a glance.⁹⁹

To inmates of the inner sanctuary say
This from me, tongueless as I am :
"Words never uttered by you are
On little children's lips."¹⁰⁰

O you who lengthen out your prayers
In front of other men,
When you bow your head on the ground,
The unbelievers watching fume indignantly.¹⁰¹

Although the intellect
Rates Love not very high,
I would not give a lover's anguished sigh
For Jamshed's throne.¹⁰²

A Brahmin said to Ghaznavi:
"Look at my magic powers;
You who broke idols have become
Yourself Ayaz's slave."¹⁰³

[7]

Let me tell a secret to
The servants of the king:
You can make the whole world yours
With a moving song.¹⁰⁴

Why pride yourself on your riches?
In the city of the lovesick
Mahmud's broken heart
Is not worth Ayaz's smile.¹⁰⁵

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

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

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

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

My prostrations have strewn roses
On the idol-temple's path.
Too great is my heart's devotion
For mere two-prostration praying.¹⁰⁶

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

[8]

Come, for a saki with a rose-like face
Is playing on a lute.
The air of spring has made the garden look
As if it were a painting from Arzhang.¹⁰⁷

The tulip-bride has used for henna
The heart's blood of the spring.¹⁰⁸
How greedily, how lustily,
She hankers after colour!

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

Look with the eyes of Love
So that you find some trace of Him.
To reason's eye the world
Is nothing but illusion and deceit.

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

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

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

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

[9]

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

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

I worship in the idol-house,
And I pray in the Kaaba,
Around my neck the sacred thread,¹⁰⁹
And in my hand the rosary.

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

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

[10]

The breeze of spring makes of
The garden a wine-tavern.

It casts buds into jar-shapes,
And makes of flowers cups.¹¹⁰

When love attains its climax, then
No rivalry remains.

In flitting round a candle moths
Join hands with one another.

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

An eagle in a cage,
When he accepts food offered,
Becomes so timid that he trembles
On seeing shadows of quails' wings.¹¹¹

O gardener, tell Iqbal
To be off from the garden,
For this spellbinding singer
Makes men forget the roses.¹¹²

[11]

Convey my salutation
To that fire-eating Turk¹¹³
Who set aflame with one glance
A cityful of longing.

The point of this will be seen by
A sympathetic heart :
I swore to drink no more,
But did not break the jar of wine.¹¹⁴

O nightingale, I warned you many times
Against the rose's infidelity ;
But you persist in clinging to
Its scentless skeleton.¹¹⁵

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

O I am happy that to lovers You
Have granted restless souls
And that You have created no
Cure for the malady of seeking.¹¹⁶

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

Create a furor in the garden,
Storm it with your lament.¹¹⁷
Until breath gets choked in your breast
Do not give up your wailing.

[12]

You have made every thorn
Prick us and know our tale.
You took us to the wilderness
Of madness, and let everybody know.¹¹⁸

Our fault was we ate of a grain,
And his that he refused to bow.
You never pardoned that poor devil,
Nor have You yet forgiven us.¹¹⁹

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

Like colour the reflection of Your beauty
Shines through the glass.
You have made of the goblet's wall
A screen for Yourself, just like wine.¹²⁰

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

[13]

Happy the man who burned with flames of wine
His intellectual goods.

He gained a new thing from the flames,¹²¹
Rich like the tulip's fiery hue.

Come you, too, give your face
A vernal freshness with a cup of wine,
For spring makes pious sufis sell
Their garments for that stuff.¹²²

I felt great pity for
The jurist, when I heard
The taverner refused to buy of him
A legal ruling for a cup of wine.¹²³

Do not judge music by
My ineffectual songs.
A lightning flash of it can burn
An Alexander's whole domain.

O morning breeze, convey
My greetings to the happy Weimar town.
The light that radiated from it has
Illumined many sages' minds.¹²⁴

[14]

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

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

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

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

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

From his pleasing verses
 It is clear that Iqbal,
 Teacher of philosophy,
 Turned to Love's vocation.¹²⁵

[15]

I long for manly weapons—
 Bow, dagger, spear and sword.
 O, do not come with me,
 For mine is Shabbir's way.¹²⁶

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

He said: "Keep your lips sealed.
Let not My secret be betrayed."

I said: "O no, I must
Proclaim that You are great."¹²⁷

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

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

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

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

[16]

Learn how to put a rosary
Bead on the sacred thread,
And if your eyes see double,
Then learn how not to see.¹²⁸

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

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

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

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

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

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

When I knocked at the tavern door,
The tavern-keeper said :
“Go, light a fire in the Haram itself,
And let it set your heart aflame.”¹²⁹

[17]

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

I would not give
For Jamshed's realm
Naziri's line :

“One who has not been killed can never have been
from our tribe.”¹³⁰

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

You do not know the *Rah*,¹³¹
And you are ignorant of the *Maqam*.¹³²
There is no tune
Which is not in Sulaima's¹³³ lute.

I have my eyes so fixed on myself that,
Although the beauty of my Friend¹³⁴
Has conquered the whole world,
I have no time to look at it.

Come, let us make an uproar in
The city of the lovely.
The madness of the lively does not seek
A desert for a roaming ground.¹³⁵

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

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

Live in the company
Of lively revellers.
Shun the discipleship of one
Who is not an uproarious man.¹³⁶

The acme of expression is
Not to speak in bare, literal terms.
The speech of inmates of the inner circle is
Always in symbols and in signs.

[18]

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

A cityful of hearts can well be made to bleed
With a poignant song.

A gardenful of flowers can well be pierced
By a whiff of the morning breeze.

The mighty Gabriel can well be turned
Into a hand-trained sparrow.

His wings can well be tied up with
A single near-singed hair.

O Alexander, kingship is
More frail than Jamshed's cup.

A whole worldful of mirrors can be smashed
With but a single stone.¹³⁷

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

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

[19]

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

Do you know how
 You can tell love from lust?
 The former is Farhad's pickaxe,
 The latter is Parvez's guile.¹³⁸

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

A pleasing song sung by
 An early morning bird
 Intoxicates me and enraptures me,
 O saki, O musician.

From Samarkand, I fear,
 There may arise again
 The threat of a Hulaku or
 The terror of a Genghis Khan.¹³⁹

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

[20]

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

[21]

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

[22]

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

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

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

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

Do not pass unconcernedly
By my distracted song,
For I am a celestial bird
Charged with a message from the Friend.

I draw the curtain and
 Behind it speak.
 O I am a blood-shedding sword,
 But I keep myself sheathed.¹⁴⁰

[23]

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

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

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

Men of Hejaz have robbed
 Our caravan of all its goods.
 But silence ! For our friend
 Is from Arabia.¹⁴¹

The tree of the Turks has borne fruit because
 It was struck by the lightning of the West.
 The advent of the Chosen One took place
 Because of Abu Lahabism.¹⁴²

Do not assess what I sing by
The standards of Iran and Hindustan.
It is a gem which is the product of
Nocturnal tears.

Come, I have brought
From the vat of the guide of Rum
The wine of poesy,
Much younger than the wine of grapes.

[24]

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

I am glad my grave has been built
In the Haram's own street.
With my eyelashes I will dig
A tunnel from the Kaaba to the idol-house.

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

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

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

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

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

[25]

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

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

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

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

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

[26]

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

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

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

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

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

A hundred times were raised to heaven,
 A hundred times were buried in the earth
 The power and the pomp
 Of Khaqans¹⁴³ and Faghfurs,¹⁴⁴ of Daras¹⁴⁵ and
 Jamsheds.¹⁴⁶

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

[27]

Lines Addressed To A Sufi

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

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

We have pledged our hearts and our faith
To Ajam's¹⁴⁷ lovely ones.
The flame of love for Sulaima¹⁴⁸
Burns neither you nor me.

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

Do not talk any more about
The Joseph¹⁴⁹ we have lost.
The warmth of a Zulaikha's¹⁵⁰ heart
Have neither you nor I.

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

[23]

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

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

The tale of Farhad's grief¹⁵¹
And of Parvez's happiness¹⁵²
Is told in every age
In different ways.

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

[29]

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

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

Abandon reason and become embroiled
In the waves of the sea of Love,
In reason's little stream
There are no pearls.

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

[30]

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

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

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

The singer at the tavern made
A subtle point last night. He said:
“The tasting of wine is a sin;
The drinking of it none.”¹⁵³

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

“Our goal is God.”
This saying of the guide of Rum¹⁵⁴
Was like a flame flung at
The straw that is my Self.

[31]

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

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

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

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

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

Mahmud of Ghazna, who
Razed idol-houses to the ground,
Himself became a votary
Of the heart's idol-house.¹⁵⁵

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

[32]

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

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

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

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

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

[33]

You cannot fit into the Haram,¹⁵⁶ nor
 Into the idol-house.

But O how eagerly You come
 To those who seek You eagerly.

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

You plunder the possessions of
 The sayers of the rosary,
 And You make night-raids on the hearts
 Of wearers of the sacred thread.¹⁵⁷

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

On the bush of a Moses You
 Hurl flames so ruthlessly,
 And to the candle of an orphan¹⁵⁸ You
 Come gladly like a moth.

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

[34]

The animation in the idol-temple of Ajam¹⁵⁹
Does not match the great ardour of my heart,
For with one glance Muhammad of Arabia
Has conquered the Hejaz that is in me.

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

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

[35]

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

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

In this world learn
To unfurl your own wings,

For you can never fly
With others' wings.

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

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

[36]

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

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

There are a thousand Khaibars¹⁶⁰ here,
A hundred kinds of dragons too.
Not everyone who lives on barley bread
Can know a Haidar's¹⁶¹ ways.

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

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

The West makes glass,
And fashions jars and cups.
I am surprised it thinks the glass itself
To be "the fairy in the glass".¹⁶²

What can I say about a Muslim who
Is not a Muslim in his ways
Save this that, though a scion of Abraham,
He follows Azar's way of life.¹⁶³

Come into my abode of woes
Just for a while and see
How well an ill-starred man
Has mastered alchemy.

Come and join Iqbal's company,
And share a drink or two with him.
Although he does not shave his head,
He knows qalandars'¹⁶⁴ ways.

[37]

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

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

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

Attach your heart to Him and shun
 These wearers of patched clothes.¹⁶⁵
 Do not become the quarry of gazelles
 Which do not come from His own Tartary.

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

My heart applied the *qashqa*¹⁶⁶ to the brow,
 And took to Brahmins' ways ;
 But did so in a manner which
 Did not befit its sacred thread.

Love speaks out in the company
That it finds in the tavern.
In idol-house and in Haram.
It finds no confidant.¹⁶⁷

[38]

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

O connoisseur of music, melody
Comes forth from strings invisible,
Not from the singer's throat,
Nor from the frets of lute or harp.

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

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

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

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

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

[39]

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

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

O tell the creatures of light¹⁶⁸ this:
That by dint of the intellect
We creatures of dust ride
The stars.

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

Like the narcissus we
Have grown eyes in this garden.¹⁶⁹
O lift the veil that hides Your face ;
We are all eyes for You.

[40]

O may Arabia become a tulip-field,
Thanks to my tears of blood.
May Ajam, which has lost its fragrance, find
A new spring in my breath.¹⁷⁰

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

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

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

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

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

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

[41]

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

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

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

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

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

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

[42]

There is no breaker of wine-jars
Not merrily drunk with Your wine.
There is no sweet-tongued poet who
Has not sucked rapture at Your ruby-tinted lips.¹⁷¹

In Arab dress you are
Most pleasing to the eyes,
But there is no dress which
Does not suit you.¹⁷²

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

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

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

[43]

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

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

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

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

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

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

Come, let us catch hold of
The skirt of Iqbal's robe,
For he is not one of those men who go about
In patched-up dresses at saints' shrines.¹⁷³

[44]

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

Love's meekness, when complete,
Is one with Beauty's pride.
So in my desert Qais
Is given Laila's name.¹⁷⁴

From India have I come with an urge
To prostrate myself on your threshold—
An urge which has
Turned to blood in my brow.¹⁷⁵

Put into this old unbeliever's hand
The sword of *La*,¹⁷⁶
And then see how the tumult of
My *Illa*¹⁷⁷ rages in the world.

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

The whole world benefits
From Your abounding grace,
But You do not grant my Sinai
Any theophany at all.

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

[45]

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

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

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

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

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

WESTERN THEMES

A MESSAGE TO THE WEST

O morning breeze, convey this to the Western sage
from me :

With wings unfolded, Wisdom is a captive all the
more.

It tames the lightning, but Love lets it strike its very
heart.

In courage Love excels that clever sorcerer by far.
The eye sees just the colour of the tulip and the rose ;
But far more obvious, could we see it, is the flower's
core.

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

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

Though you have gathered knowledge, you have
thrown away the heart ;

With what a precious treasure you have thought it
fit to part !

The courting of philosophy is a vain quest, indeed ;
For in its school Love's lofty regimen is not decreed.
Such are its blandishments, it leads astray the pupil's
heart :

There is no mischief its coquettish glances do not
breed.

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

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

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

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

The wisest thing that we can do is to appeal to Love ;
For our desires' fulfilment we should always kneel
to Love.

Wisdom, since it set foot on life's labyrinthine way,
Has set the sea on fire and made the whole world
go awry.

Its alchemy converted worthless grains of sand to
gold ;

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

Alas ! we were so foolish as to let it steal our wits :
It waylaid us, subjecting us to highway robbery.

It raised up much dust from the civilisation of the
West

To cast into that civilisation's Holy Saviour's eye.
O how long can you go on sowing sparks and reap-
ing flames,

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

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

The nightingale and falcon have two different kinds of wings.

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

Another to peck at gems in the Pleiades' earrings.

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

Another to delve in the rose's inmost ponderings.

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

Another to look up and see celestial happenings.

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

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

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

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

O look at our adventurousness in the game of life ;
For we have robbed the wealth of both the worlds
and boldly staked it.

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

With our tents pitched right on the margin of a
running streamlet.
Once in our heart, which launched a night-raid on
this ancient fane,
There was a fire which we breathed into all things
dry or wet.
We were a flame; we flickered, broke down and
became a spark:
And since then we burn fitfully, with yearnings
vague and dark.

Love learned the greedy ways of earthly lust and
burst all bounds.
It caught men in its toils as fish are caught by
fishermen.
Preferring war to peace, it reared up armies every-
where,
Which plunged their swords into the hearts of their
own kith and kin.
It gave the name of empire to its acts of banditry;
And heavy sat its yoke on those who lived in its
domain.
Now, holding in its hand a goblet full of human
blood,
It dances madly to the tune of flute and tambourine.
It is high time that we washed clean the tablet of
our heart.
It is high time that with a clean slate we made a
fresh start.

The royal crown has passed into the hands of
 highwaymen.
 Hushed is the song of Darius; mute is Alexander's
 flute.
 Farhad¹⁷⁸ has changed his pickaxe for the sceptre
 of Parvez.¹⁷⁹
 Gone are the joy of mastership, the toil of servitude.
 Freed from his bondage, Joseph sits on Pharaoh's
 high throne:
 The tales and wiles of Potiphar's wife cannot win
 her suit.
 Old secrets that were veiled stand unveiled in the
 market-place.
 No longer are they subjects of debate for the elite.
 Unveil your eyes and you will see that in full view
 of you
 Life is creating for itself a world completely new.

In this our ancient dust I find the pure gold of the
 soul:
 Each atom of it is a star's eye with the power to see.
 In every grain of sand lodged in the womb of mother
 earth
 I see the promise of a many-branched fruit-laden tree.
 I find the mountain as light as a tiny blade of grass,
 And heavy as a mountain seems a blade of grass
 to me.
 A revolution too big for the universe's mind
 I see, I know not how: I see it just about to be.

O happy he who sees the horseman, not the dust
alone,
Who in the throbbing of the strings sees music's
essence drawn.

Life is and, as long as it lasts, will be a running
stream.

This old wine's youthful effervescence always will
be new.

What has been but should not have been will not be
any more :

What should have been but has not been will be—it
must be so.

Love is all eyes for Beauty's revelations yet to be :
And Beauty, fond of self-display, must always be
on view :

Deep in the earth that I have watered with my
blood-stained tears

My teardrops will remain embedded, gems of a rich
hue.

"I see in the dark night a portent of the coming dawn.
My candle has been put out but to greet the rising
sun."

THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

In order to induct the ways of war
Into this old assembly-hall of peace,
Those whose hearts bleed for man have laid a new

Foundation. All I know about it is
That a few thieves of grave-clothes have set up
A body for dividing the world's graves.

SCHOPENHAUER AND NIETZSCHE

A fledgling bird flew from its nest to roam
Around a garden and see what it
Was like. It sat on a rose-tree to rest.
By a mischance, it ran a thorn into
Its tender breast. Enraged by this, it cursed
The garden as an evil place and shed
Tears over its own pain and others' pain.
It said that tulips were mere drops of blood—
Blood of the innocent—and that rosebuds
Hid in their pent-up hearts the secret of
The spring's deceit. It asked if in this world,
With its foundation wrongly laid, there was
A single morning into which Time had
Not built an evening ; and it wept so much
That song turned to blood in its throat and dripped
As tears from its eyes. Moved by its lament,
A hoopoe drew the thorn out of its breast
With its long beak and said, "Extract your gain
From your loss as the flower extracts gold from
Its rent breast in the shape of pollen. When
You suffer pain, do so in such a way
That it becomes its own redress. Get used
To thorns : become the garden's very self."

PHILOSOPHY AND POLITICS

Do not weigh politician and philosopher
In the same scale.

The one's eyes are blind to the sun,

The other's shed no tears.

The one advances unsound arguments

In proof of truths.

The other proves untruths

By cogent arguments.

AN ASSEMBLAGE IN THE OTHER WORLD

Tolstoy

Ahriman's hirelings,

Warriors of kings,

Draw oppression's sword

For a loaf of bread.

Evil is their good,

And the husk their food.

Friends of others, these

Are their own kin's foes.

Country, church and crown

Are narcotics grown

By the masters to

Buy their slaves' souls with.

Karl Marx

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

Hegel

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

Tolstoy

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

*Mazdak*¹⁸⁰

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

Wrest back from him
The good things he deprived you of.

*Kohkan*¹⁸¹

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

NIETZSCHE—1

The heart of the philosopher
Bled at man's sinews' laxity.

So his thought fashioned a new cast of man.
He raised a fresh storm in the West.
It was as if a lunatic
Had crashed into a glassware factory.

EINSTEIN

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

Except that from
The race of Moses and of Aaron there has come
A Zarathustra in our age?

BYRON

Flames would spring up,
Just as rose and tulip do,
From the garden's soil,
If you poured a drop or two
On it from his cup,
Always on the boil.
England's chilly climate
Did not suit his spirit.
His heart's message's great ardour
Set aflame love's messenger.
What a fairyland of beauty
Was created by his fancy!
Seeing his epiphanies,
Youth goes into ecstasies.
But his genius, that high-soaring bird,
Left its nest to fall into a snare,
Which it preferred
To soaring in the air.

NIETZSCHE—2

If you are after melodies, then do not go to him;

For thunder's rumble is all the music that his pen's
flute makes.

He plunged a surgeon's knife into the live heart of
the West:

His hands are covered with the blood he has wiped
off Christ's cross.

On the foundation of the Kaaba he built his own
idol-house.

His heart is a believer's, but his brain an infidel's.
Go and burn yourself in the blazing fire of this
Nimrod:

For Abraham's flower-garden blossomed out of
Azar's fire,

JALAL¹⁸² AND HEGEL

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

The man whose spirit's glory, like the sun,
Has made the sky of Rum and Syria bright ;
Whose flame in this benighted wilderness
Shines like a path-illuminating light ;
From whose words meanings grow spontaneously
Like tulips riotously breaking out.
"You sleep," said he, "awake, awake. To ply
A boat in a mirage is folly's height.
O you bid wisdom guide you on love's path!
O you look for the sun by candle-light!"

PETOFI

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

For one brief moment in
This earthly garden
You sang of the rose-bride,
And thereby made
Some people's hearts the gladder,
And others' hearts the sadder.
With your own blood
You painted red
The tulip's palm,
And with your morning sigh for balm
You soothed open the rosebud's heart.

In the creations of your art
 You found your most befitting tomb.
 To the earth's womb
 You did not and could not return,
 For you were not earth-born.

DIALOGUE BETWEEN
 AUGUSTE COMTE AND THE LABOURER

Comte

All men are one another's limbs,
 The leaves and stems
 Of one big tree.
 If man's brain is the seat
 Of intellect and if his feet
 Trail on the ground,
 This is because they both are bound
 By Nature's ineluctable decree.
 One man commands, another works, both born
 To it. A Mahmud¹⁸³ cannot do
 The work of an Ayaz.¹⁸⁴
 Do you not see it is because
 Work is divided between you
 That life becomes a garden, with both rose and
 thorn ?

The Labourer

Philosopher, you cheat me when you say

That I can never break my way
Out of this magic circle that you weave.
You pass base brass for gold,
And teach me to resign myself to fate.
With my pickaxe I excavate
Long waterways, in which I hold
The very ocean prisoner, and retrieve
Milk and honey from Nature's stores.
Purveyor of strange subtleties,
You give poor Kohkan's prize, for all his sores,
To the idle, rich and sly Parvez.
Do not try passing wrong for right
With your philosophy.
You cannot dupe a Khizar's¹⁸⁵ sight
With a mirage's trickery.
The capitalist, with nothing to do but
Eat and sleep, is a burden on this earth,
Which thrives because of those who work on it.
Do you not know this idler is a thief by birth?
The crime that he exists you want excused.
With all your wisdom you have been bemused.

HEGEL

His thought is fully rational
And unrelated to the sensuous,
Although his ideas
Are decked out in the garb of brides.

Do you know what kind of a bird
Is his high-soaring thought?
It is a hen which through excess of heat
Conceives without a mate.

JALAL AND GOETHE

In Paradise the German seer
Met his Iranian compeer,
Who, though without prophetic fame,
Has an inspired book to his name.
To that connoisseur of the real
He read out his tale of the deal
The doctor and the Devil made.
When he had heard it, Rumi said:
"Portrayer of the inmost soul
Of poetry, whose effort's goal
Is capturing the seraphim
And God himself, yes even Him,
Your thought, consorting with your heart,
Remade the world by means of art.
O you have seen the spirit's flame
Ablaze in its corporeal frame,
And you from observation know
How in their shells pearls form and grow.
All this you know, but there is more.
Not all can learn Love's secret lore,
Not all can enter its high shrine.

‘One only knows by grace divine
That wisdom is the Devil’s own,
While Love belongs to man alone.’”

BERGSON’S MESSAGE

If you desire to have life’s mystery
Revealed to you, then do not separate
Yourself from the flame like a flying spark.
For looking do not borrow other’s eyes:
Do not pass through your homeland stranger-like.
The image you have formed of this world is
All fantasy. Go and procure yourself
An intellect well-tutored by the heart.

THE WINESHOP OF THE WEST

I well recall the days
That I spent in the Wineshop of the West.
Its wine-bowls shine
Like Alexander’s looking-glass.
Its saki’s eyes are as
Intoxicating as its wine,
And every glance of theirs conveys
A message to some drinker’s breast.
But O it has no Moses to
Experience epiphanies,

No Abraham to undergo
 Ordeals by fire.
 There intellect with careless ease
 Robs Love of its entire
 Possessions, and there is no heat
 In its air of a fervent sigh.
 No one is so intoxicated by
 Its wine as to sway on his feet.

DIALOGUE BETWEEN LENIN AND KAISER WILHELM

Lenin

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

The Kaiser

Why blame idols for their winsome ways?
 It is in the Brahmin's nature to adore.
 He keeps fashioning new idols, for
 He gets bored stiff with the ones he has.
 Do not tell me of the highwaymen:
 His own robber is the traveller here.

If you crown the common people, then
You will find oppression is still there.
Never does greed die out of men's hearts :
In a furnace fire must always blaze.
Power's sorceress has the same arts
Irrespective of the part she plays.
"Shirin's beauty never goes abegging :
Khusroes or Farhads are never lacking."

THREE PHILOSOPHERS

Locke

The tulip came into this garden with an empty cup.
The morning poured the sun's wine into it and lit
it up.

Kant

The tulip has a gusto for the wine sunbeams distil,
And came out of Eternity's night with a cup to fill.

Bergson

With neither wine nor cup did it come from Eternity ;
It is its branded heart that gives it all its ardency.

FOUR POETS

Browning

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

Byron

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

Ghalib

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

Rumi

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

THE TAVERN OF THE WEST

Last night, while I was in the tavern of the West,
I was delighted by a witty thing a drinker said.
"This place is not a church," said he, "that you
should find
Here pretty girls and organ music and sweet songs.
This is the tavern of the West, where wine
Has the effect of making things that are considered
bad seem good,
We have weighed good and evil on another kind of
scales.

The scales of the Jews and the Christians were askew.
What is good in you will be bad, if you should
break your fist.

What is bad in you will be good, if you increase
your might.

If you look carefully, you will find life is all
hypocrisy.

Whoever follows the path of truth and sincerity
Just ceases to exist.

Claims of truth and sincerity
Are only covers for hypocrisy.

Our master says that brass must have on it a silver
plate.

I have revealed to you the secret of success in life.
Let no one know of it, if you care for success.

A WORD TO ENGLAND

The Easterner has had a sip of Western wine.
No wonder if he broke his vow of temperance.
The West's new-fangled thought has taught him
how to think

And act for himself. Ah, the blood is boiling in
The veins of that old worshipper of Destiny.
O saki, do not be displeased if drinkers of
Your wine are clamouring for more of it. Be fair.
Think who it was who taught them to want and
demand.

“The nightingale would not know of a garden if
The rose’s smell did not provide it with a clue.”

DIVISION BETWEEN

THE CAPITALIST AND THE LABOURER

Mine is the din of the steel factory,
And yours is the church organ’s melody.
Mine is the bush that pays the king a tax,
Yours Eden with its *sidrah*¹⁸⁶ and its *tuba*.¹⁸⁷
Strong liquor with a hangover is mine,
For you drink comes from Adam and Eve’s brewery.
Duck, pheasant, pigeon are my birds: *huma*¹⁸⁸
And *anqa*¹⁸⁹ are your royal property.
The earth and what is in its bowels are mine;
From earth to heaven all is your territory.

THE LABOURER’S SONG

The hard work of the cotton-wearing labourer
Provides the idle rich with their silk robes.
The gem in the employer’s ring is made up of my
sweat.
The rubies in his horse’s reins are my child’s tears.
The Church is fat through sucking my blood like a
leech.
My arm’s strength forms the sinews of the state.
My morning tears make gardens of waste lands.

My heart's blood glistens in the tulip and the rose.
Come, time's harp is tense with new melodies.
Come, pour out strong wine that will melt the very
glass.

Let us give a new order to the tavern and the taverner,
And let us raze all ancient taverns to the ground.
Let us avenge the tulip's blood on those who laid
the garden waste.

For rose and rosebud's gatherings let us establish a
new style.

How long shall we exist like moths that flit round
candle flames?

How long shall we exist forgetful of ourselves like
this?

THE FREEDOM OF THE SEA

"The sea has been declared free," cried a duck with
glee,

"So says a proclamation made by Khizar's court."

"Go where you like," rejoined a shark on hearing
this,

"But always bear in mind that we live in the sea."

FRAGMENTS

[1]

Each atom of our being is convulsed.
In every breath of ours inheres a storm.
Said Khizar to Iskandar at the spring of life,¹⁹⁰
"To die is hard, but it is harder still to live."

[2]

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

[3]

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

[4]

I am one who has walked around
The Haram with an idol under my arms.
I am one who has shouted Allah's name
When idols were in front of me.
My heart still wants
That I should go on seeking, though
I have set foot
On a path thinner than a hair.

[5]

“The joy of living for one spring,”
The rose said, “is a precious thing.
One morning in the garden is
Far better than long centuries
Elsewhere. Before somebody plucks
You and for decoration tucks
You in his turban, it is nice
To die in your own twig’s embrace.”

[6]

The poet is child, youth and old man all in one.
Distinctions of age are unknown to poetry.

[7]

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

[8]

O brother, come, let me tell you
A useful thing concerning life :
Regard sleep as a minor form of death,
And death as heavy sleep.

[9]

If you do not possess

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

[10]

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

[11]

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

[12]

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

[13]

Do not apply a hair-dye to
Your eyebrows and your beard,

For you cannot get back your youth
By stealing years from time.

[14]

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

[15]

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

[16]

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

THE END

NOTES

1. This poem, essentially addressed to a type rather than to an individual, remains unaffected by the fall of Amānullah Khān from power in 1929.

2. *Salmān*. A leading Companion of the Prophet Muhammad.

3. *Khālid*. An early commander-in-chief of the Muslim army.

4. *'Umar*. The second caliph.

5. *Saladin* (*Salāhuddīn*). Famous Muslim hero of the Crusades.

6. *Ṣiddīq* (*Abū Bakr*). The first caliph.

7. *The shining palm of Moses*. The miracle of the white palm performed by Moses.

8. *Somnat* (*Somnath*). A Hindu temple in India reputed to have in it idols made of gold and precious stones, which Maḥmūd of Ghaznah (*Ghaznī*) sacked.

9. *The thunder of Sinā'ī*. The divine thunder heard by Moses on Mount Sinā'ī.

10. *Iblīs*. Satan.

11. *Idrīs*. The prophet Enoch.

12. *The sage of Rūm*. Jalāluddīn Rūmī, Turkish mystic and poet, who wrote in Persian.

13. The line means, "which could not distinguish between truth and falsehood".

14. *'Alī*. The fourth caliph.

15. *Murād*. A Turkish emperor.

16. *Ardeshir*. The founder of the Sassanian dynasty of Persia.

17. *Abū Dharr*. A Companion of the Prophet.

18. *Salmān in Ctesiphon*. See note 2. Salmān became governor of Ctesiphon.

19. What the sun has here been likened to is a callus that forms on the forehead of some devout Muslims as a result of frequent bowing down of the forehead on rough prayer-mats. The callus is regarded as a mark of distinction.

20. *Tears of blood*. Tears of devotional fervour.

21. *Love*. Love of God, absorption in God.

22. *Love*. The creative principle at work in the universe.

23. *Love*. The militant Self making itself felt by the non-self and then recoiling upon itself.

24. *Love*. The other storming the citadel of the Self, which houses a passion for self-immolation.

25. *The Sāqī*. The mystical Wine-server, i.e. God.
26. *Āzar*. Abraham's father, who was a maker and worshipper of idols.
27. *Ka'bah*. The Muslim holy sanctuary at Mecca, believed to have been built originally by Abraham.
28. *Sikandar (Iskandar)*. Alexander the Great.
- Khizar (Khidr)*. The Prophet Khidr. Khidr is said to have discovered and drunk of the water of life, thereby becoming immortal. According to Oriental tradition, he was a vizier of Alexander. He is also regarded as the guardian spirit of the sea.
29. *Kaikobad*. A king of Iran.
30. *Jamshed (Jamshīd)*. A king of Iran.
31. *Jamshed's cup*. A wine-bowl said to have been manufactured by, or at the command of, Jamshed, which, legend has it, reflected the whole world. Generally used as a symbol for wisdom, intellect, creative imagination.
32. *Rāzī*, Fakhruddīn of Rayy (Iran), a famous philosopher and exegete.
33. *Nimrūd*. Nimrod, who is said to have cast Abraham into the fire.
34. The allusion is to the Muslim belief that the good and evil deeds of men, which are being recorded by the angels in a book, will be weighed on Judgment Day in God's presence.
35. What is described in this quatrain is the flight of the human soul from itself to God.
36. *Jamshed's kingdom*. See note 30 above.
37. *Fārābī*. Abū Naṣr Muḥammad al-Fārābī, a famous philosopher of Iran.
38. *The Prophet of the Sea*. See note 28 above.
39. Persian poets describe the narcissus as a sleepy-looking eye and frequently compare beautiful human eyes to it.
40. In Persian poetry the rose is the silent partner of the voluble nightingale, its lover.
41. For Persian poets the Brahmin is the archetypal idol-worshipper.
42. *Somnat*. See note 8 above.
43. *The Friend*. God, in the vocabulary of the mystics (Sufis).
44. *'Urfī*. A Persian poet in India.
45. This is an attack on idolatrous and superstitious practices among the Muslims.
46. The allusion is to the musk-deer.
47. It is one of the conventional practices of the Persian poet to speak to or of himself in the second or third person singular, using for the purpose a *nom de plume*, which may or may not be a part of his ordinary name.
48. Iqbal often uses the tulip as the symbol of a bleeding heart.

49. *Eid*. 'Īd. One of the two major annual festivals of the Muslims, celebrated on sighting the new moon of the relevant month. The new moon is, therefore, looked forward to and looked for up in the evening sky.

50. *Lailā*. The beloved of Qais (also known as Majnun, i.e. the madman), the archetypal lover of Arabic and Persian poetry.

51. *Wine-maker*. God.

52. *Sīnā*. Ibn Sīnā, Avicenna.

53. *Fārābī*. See note 37 above.

54. *Bu 'Alī (Sīnā)*. Avicenna.

55. *Lailā*. See note 50 above.

56. *Rūmī*. See note 12 above.

57. *Tartar country*. The deer of Tartary are spoken of in Persian poetry as symbols of grace and beauty.

58. *Lailā*. See note 50 above.

59. *Khizar*. See note 28 above.

60. *Qaran*. A place in Arabia.

61. *Khotan*. Tartary.

62. The dromedary is here addressed as if, like human pilgrims, it did reverence to the Ka'bah by rubbing its face on its threshold.

63. *Tāriq*. The conqueror of Spain under the Umayyad caliphs.

64. *Shabbīr*. A title of Imām Husain, grandson of the Prophet, martyred at Karbalā in 'Irāq.

65. *Joseph*. The Prophet Joseph, who is said to have been imprisoned by his brothers.

66. *Zulaikhā*. Potiphar's wife, whose passion for Joseph is a common theme of Persian poetry.

67. The allusion is to Nimrod's casting Abraham into the fire.

68. *Rūmī*. See note 12 above.

69. *Fārābī*. See note 37 above.

70. *An infidel wine-vendor*. A Zoroastrian or fire-worshipper, generally used in Persian poetry as a symbol of secular wisdom and freedom from religious bigotry and hypocrisy.

71. The original poem is a play upon the word "āb," which has a double meaning, viz. "water" and "lustre". I have brought out the double meaning as best I could in my translation.

72 & 73. *Alexander and Khizar (Khiḍr)*. See note 28 above. Alexander is said to have sought from, but been refused by, Khiḍr a drink of the water of life.

74. *A single line*. A hemistich, used as an image of the sword's single blade.

75. *Solomon*. The Prophet Solomon, believed to have possessed supernatural wisdom.

76. *Nimrod's fire*. See note 33 above.

77. *Sulaimā*. An archetypal Arab beloved.

78. *Maqām*.
 79. 'Irāq.
 80. *Khurāsān*. } Names of tones in Persian music.

81. 'Ajāmīs. Non-Arabs, especially Persians, whom the Arabs at one time looked down upon as their intellectual inferiors. Iqbal generally refers to them as a people lacking in Islamic characteristics in comparison with the Arabs.

82. *Solomon's surmah in ant's eyes*. Solomon is believed to have possessed a *surmah* (collyrium) which enabled him to see the hidden treasures of the earth : it would not give such power to ant's eyes.

83. *An unlettered man*. The Prophet Muḥammad.

84. *The old man of the Ḥaram*. The custodian of the Ka'bah, presumably, Sharīf Husain of Mecca or his son, King Faiṣal I of 'Irāq, who joined forces with Lawrence of Arabia against Turkish rule.

85. Iqbal admired the desert-dwellers' ruggedness of character possessed by the early Arabs.

86. *Nazīrī*. A Persian poet.

87. *A witty old man in the tavern*. See note 70 above. The fire-worshipper is often spoken of as a tavern-keeper or a frequenter of the tavern.

88. Maḥmūd of Ghaznah (Ghaznī) is said to have been in love with his male slave, Ayāz ; thus, for all his idol-breaking, he worshipped an idol of his own.

89. Persian poets often speak of their own imaginary death.

90. Mere academic learning is a favourite target of ridicule with Persian poets.

91. These lines have been addressed to God as if He were a veiled beloved, with His lovers waiting outside His house to catch a glimpse of Him unveiled on the house's roof-top.

92. *The Timurids*. The Mughul dynasty of India, whose founder (Tamerlane) hailed from Samarqand. The reference is probably to the resurgence of the Muslim states of Soviet Russia in a new style.

93. The poet is speaking of himself as a third person. See note 47 above. It is one of the mannerisms of Persian poets to exhibit their unorthodoxy, often with a wry pride.

94. Mere formal conformity to the commandments of religion is too jejune a thing to satisfy the poet's adventurous spirit.

95. The reference is probably to the intellectual renaissance that was taking place in contemporary Persia as contrasted with the somnolence of the Arab nations. Iqbal's poetry made some contribution to the former.

96. *My Friend*. See note 43 above.

97. The reference is to man's endeavours to break out of his spatial confines, as, for example, by astronomical explorations.

98. These lines describe the triumphant march of Divine Love over the territory of the human self and its leaving behind it a trail of destruction—destruction of the sordidly human.

99. See note 39 above.

100. What is meant by these lines is that the intuitive wisdom of the unspoiled and the unsophisticated may sometimes surpass the esoteric knowledge of the mystic.

101. Iqbal often casts derision on parades of piety, such as long-drawn-out prayers in public.

102. *Jamshed's throne*. See note 30 above.

103. See note 88 above.

104. A suggestion of the Orphic power of poetry.

105. There are too many broken hearts in the city of the lovesick for any single one to count for much in comparison with beauty's sovereign charms.

106. The basic unit of the Muslim form of prayer is a series of movements including two prostrations. The poet considers this bare skeleton of prayer inadequate for his pilgrimage to the mystical idol-temple, i.e. for spiritually fervent devotion to God.

107. *Arzhang* The picture gallery of the Persian painter, Mānī.

108. The rich red glow of the tulip is one of Iqbal's favourite motifs, almost a leitmotif. Also see note 48 above.

109. The sacred thread is a symbol of Hindu piety and the rosary one of Muslim piety.

110. This Bacchanalian conception of spring and gardens is typical of Persian poetry.

111. In Iqbal's poetry the eagle is a symbol of strength, courage, highmindedness and independence.

112. See notes 47 and 104 above.

113. *That fire-eating Turk*. In Persian poetry the word "Turk" metaphorically means both "a ferocious, predatory person" and "a beautiful boy or girl," the two meanings being combined to stand for "the beloved".

114. The meaning is that the poet confined his piety to self-denial and did not let it become iconoclastic intolerance and lack of sympathy for the innocent instruments of sin.

115. In Persian poetry the nightingale is depicted as an infatuated and self-deluding lover of the rose, pining for an inconstant and evanescent object.

116. Indefatigable striving after the unattainable is one of Iqbal's favourite precepts.

117. "Lament" here means "uninhibited self-expression" or "clamorous self-assertion".

118. The imagery here is based upon the legendary Arabian lover, Qais, madly wandering in the thorny wilderness of Arabia in quest of his

beloved, Lailā. Although he wishes this not to be known, it is made public by the tell-tale thorns covered with his blood. Qais here stands for the human soul or mind and Laila for God or reality. The lines describe, on the spiritual plane, the human soul's agonised yearning for God and, on the temporal plane, man's long and arduous search after the nature and meaning of the universe and life.

119 The allusion is to Satan's sin of disobeying God's command to do obeisance to Adam and to Adam's sin of partaking of the forbidden fruit (according to Christian theology) or of wheat (according to Muslim theology).

120. The poet tells God that He is hiding Himself behind His manifestations, i.e. His essence is veiled by His attributes.

121. The wine referred to is mystical wine, i.e. the state of being God-intoxicated. This Bacchanalian imagery is characteristic of Persian mystical poetry.

122. See note 110 above.

123. The jurist is portrayed here as a pious fraud, lacking credit in the eyes of honest, forthright men.

124. A compliment to Goethe, of whom Iqbal was an ardent admirer.

125. See note 47 above.

126. Shabbīr (see note 64 above) took up arms against the illegitimate accession and tyrannical rule of Yazīd.

127. These lines describe the conflict between the gnostic's jealous guarding of his esoteric knowledge and the open adoration of the orthodox Muslim.

128. See note 109 above. What is advocated here is a liberal, eclectic approach to all religions, the essence of them all being devotion to God.

129. See notes 62 and 70 above. The tavern-keeper is commending genuine fervour of the heart.

130. See notes 30 and 86 above. Nazīrī's line is in praise of bravery.

131. *Rāh*.

132. *Maqām*.

} Names of musical tones.

133. *Sulaimā*. Here used as a generic name for an Arab woman, meaning Arabia. Also see note 77 above.

134. *My Friend*. God.

135. Persian poets often speak of themselves as mad lovers roaming in a desert or seeking one to roam in.

136. This Dionysian admiration of uproarious carousers is one of the conventional attitudes of Persian poetry, especially mystical poetry. Iqbal is here holding up to admiration a dynamic and adventurous man of action, his *beau ideal*.

137. According to Persian legend, Alexander invented the mirror, the symbol in his case of megalomaniac narcissism, while Jamshed invented or possessed a world-reflecting cup, the symbol of knowledge and wisdom. These lines mean that Alexander's empire, represented by the mirror, was a frail thing compared with what Jamshed with his world-reflecting cup stood for.

138. *Farhad's pickaxe and Parvez's guile*. Farhad is a legendary lover of Persia, who, in order to please his beloved, Shirin, bored a tunnel through a huge mountain, but who was tricked out of winning her hand by the cunning of his rival, Prince Parvez.

139. The reference is to the rise of Communist Russia, which Iqbal regarded as a dangerous portent for Islam.

140. Most Persian poets, Iqbal included, are fond of making sapiential claims and proclaiming the special power of their secret knowledge. In Iqbal's case, however, as in very few others, there was behind such utterances a genuine sense of mission, a conviction that it was his duty and privilege as a man of vision to enlighten and inspire his people.

141. This refers to those Arab leaders who cooperated with Lawrence of Arabia. "Our friend" means the Prophet.

142. The "Chosen One" means the Prophet. Abū Lahab was an uncle and inveterate enemy of his.

143. *Khāqān*. Emperor of Tartary.

144. *Faghfur*. Emperor of China.

145. *Dārā*. Emperor of Iran.

146. *Jamshed*. Idem.

147. 'Ajam. Persia. See notes 81 and 95 above.

148. *Sulaimā*. See note 133 above.

149. *Joseph*. See note 65 above.

150. *Zulaikhā*. See note 66 above.

151. *Farhad's grief*. See note 138 above.

152. *Parvez's happiness*. See note 138 above.

153. A condemnation of doing things, even forbidden ones, half-heartedly.

154. *The guide of Rūm*. See note 12 above.

155. See note 88 above.

156. *The Ḥoram*. The Ka'bah.

157. See note 109 above.

158. *An orphan*. The Prophet Muhammad.

159. 'Ajam. See notes 81 and 95.

160. *Khaibar*. A Jewish fort sacked by the Caliph 'Alī.

161. *Haidar*. 'Alī, whose daily food was bread made of barley flour.

162. *The fairy in the glass*. An evil spirit brought down and shut up in a bottle by magic or by sacred incantations.

163. *Āzar's way of life*. See note 26 above.

164. *Qalandars*. Itinerating Muslim dervishes, with shaven heads, who abandon every worldly thing and lead a life of poverty.

165. *Wearers of patched clothes*. Dervishes, *qalandars*, religious mendicants.

166. *Qashqa*. A sectarial mark made with saffron, etc., by Hindus on their foreheads.

167. *The idol-house and the Haram*. Here bracketed together as religious shrines and contrasted with the profane tavern, to the latter's advantage.

168. *Creatures of light*. Angels.

169. See note 39 above.

170. See notes 81 and 95 above.

171. These lines, with all their sensuous and even hedonistic imagery, are addressed to God as the mystic's beloved.

172. The addressee here is the Prophet Muhammad.

173. See note 47 above.

174. For Qais and Lailā see note 50 above.

175. The poet has addressed these lines either to God or to the Prophet as if on a pilgrimage to Mecca or Medina.

176. *Lā*. Arabic for "no".

177. *Illā*. Arabic for "except".

} The two together occur in the dogmatic declaration, "There is no God but God," i.e. denial of false gods and affirmation of the true and only God.

178. *Farhād*. See note 138 above.

179. *Parvez*. Ibid.

180. *Mazdak*. A famous hierarch of Persia, with communist ideas.

181. *Kohkan*. Literally, "mountain-digger," a title of Farhad. See note 138 above.

182. *Jalāl*. Jalāluddīn Rūmī. See note 12 above.

183. *Mahmūd*. See note 88 above.

184. *Āyaz*. Ibid.

185. *Khizar*. See note 28 above.

186. *Sidrah*. } Names of trees in Paradise.

187. *Tūba*. }

188. *Humā'*. A fabulous bird whose shadow augurs a crown for any head on which it may fall.

189. *'Anqā'*. A fabulous bird supposed to exist only in name.

190. See note 28 above.

