must regretfully admit that he did not care what weapons he used.

To put it as briefly as possible, Sauda followed three methods in his satires. His greatest weapon is exaggeration. He magnifies the defects of his victims past all bounds—and things when exaggerated with point and wit become humorous, as in a caricature. In poems of this class, the touch with reality is never lost. With Sauda often an insignificant bacillus of truth grows and grows until it acquires portentous dimensions. His attitude here is humorous and playful, and his satire is successful; when he loses his temper or is at the mercy of his feelings, especially his religious feelings, he becomes abusive. In the third he rushes into the fanciful. He is now very ingenious, but not particularly amusing. These categories are not mutually exclusive. The first and the third moods run into each other generally. The second stands by itself and includes most of his failures.

Sauda’s *qasidas* mark the summit of achievement in that genre in Urdu; and in the opinion of competent critics they are quite on a par with the works of great Persian panegyrists both in sound, movement, and the profusion of utterly impossible conceits. They leave us cold today, but it is impossible not to be struck by their lofty carriage. The following from the *nasib* of a *qasida* celebrating the advent of spring are magnificent and contain some fine personifications of natural objects.

Mir (Muhammad Taqī Mir) has left a full-length account of all but the last thirty years of his life in *Zikr-e-Mir*. It does not give his date of birth, and it is only recently that the discovery of a manuscript copy of his poems, in the library of the Rāja of Mahmūdābād, has enabled us to establish conclusively that he was born in 1722 in Akbarābād and died at an advanced age in Lucknow on 20 September 1810. His father, Mir ‘Abī Mūtaqī, a religious man with a considerable following, died when Mir was still a boy, and he was brought up by Sayyid Amānnūlah, one of his father’s intimate friends and disciples. Some three years after his death, Mir left for Delhi at the age of seventeen or so. Here he was granted a stipend of one rupee a day by Amīr-ul-Umār Samsān-ud-Daula; but on his death, during Nādir Shāh’s invasion (1739), Mir was forced to go back to Akbarābād to his family.
The treatment accorded to him by his relatives greatly disappointed him. ‘Those who had treated him as the collyrium of their eyes’, writes Mir, now cold-shouldered him, and when he left for Delhi the following year, to stay with his foster-uncle, Khān-e-Ärzū, his foster-brother carried his enmity so far as to write to the latter ‘never to countenance a mischief-monger like Mir’. In his autobiography, Mir brings out to the full the pathos of the situation, but is discreetly silent about the cause of this estrangement and hostility. It is believed that what precipitated his departure from Akbarābād and ranged his family against him was a clandestine love-affair with one of his relatives. Whatever the reason or reasons, Mir suffered much during this period. Poverty, disappointment in love, and the indignities heaped upon him all worked on his hypersensitive mind, and the result was a temporary madness.

Khān-e-Ärzū was far too generous to disown Mir, but he is said to have bitterly rebuked him, and their relations were far from happy. In Āb-e-Hayāt, Āzād ascribes their growing estrangement to their religious views. Ārzū, he writes, was a Ḥanafī and Mir a Shi‘ī. But the real cause was probably the family scandal, although the bitterness may have been accentuated by their religious differences.

In the ‘Introduction’ to Kulliyāt-e-Mīr, Ṣā‘īd Bārī has pointed out the disparity in the account of Khān-e-Ärzū as given by Mir in Nikāt-ush-Sha‘arā (1751) and Zikr-e-Mīr. In the former he lauds his uncle as a man and scholar, and is proud to call him his teacher. In the latter, written after Ärzū’s death (1756), he rakes up the old grievances against him, disowns Khān-e-Ärzū as his teacher and writes of having ‘read a few books with some persons in the city’. I agree with Ṣā‘īd that Mir’s reticence in the earlier volume was dictated by considerations of mere prudence. He had much to fear Khān-e-Ärzū alive, for the latter could any time justify his severity to him by disclosing the real cause of their estrangement. He had nothing to fear from Khān-e-Ärzū dead. He, therefore, chose to expatiate on his good points and his indebtedness to him in the earlier volume, giving full vent to his grievances in the second.

Like other poets of the day, Mir’s first choice was Persian, but he was persuaded to take up Urdu instead. His rise into prominence was rapid. After his estrangement from his uncle, he experienced a quick change of patrons either on account of the extreme political instability of the day, or his own egotism and vanity. His troubles culminated after the sack of Delhi at Nādir Shāh’s order. When he returned to Delhi after the defeat of the Mahrattas, he was profoundly grieved at the desolation of the city, and has given a poignant expression to it in some of his ghazals.

Mir’s life enters its second phase with his invitation to Lucknow by Āsāf-ud-Daula. He was held in high esteem, and must have been a constant companion of the Nawab, as is proved by his several realistic maqsūūds on the latter’s marriage and his hunting expeditions. These poems show that Mir was much more of a court poet than is generally conceded.

But Mir was never quite happy in Lucknow, despite his complete freedom from financial worries and the high honour in which he was held. The reason was an excessive nostalgia for Delhi, engendered by his early memories. He despised Lucknow—the haven where at long last he had found peace, security, and honour. The real reason for his dissatisfaction lay more in his temperament than in his yearnings for home. Mir was a man who could not be perfectly happy anywhere. Egotistical to a fault, he found it increasingly difficult to get on with his patrons. He imagined insults or slights where none were intended; and was rude and brusque. It must be said to the credit of his patrons that they treated him with uniform courtesy, and put up with his vagaries with good humour and forbearance. But much of this was lost on him. Once in a fit of sulk he went so far as to withdraw from Āsāf-ud-Daula’s court, but was recalled and provided for by his successor.

As a man Mir was antisocial and cynical. A confirmed egoist, he was incapable of seeing merit in others, and frequently resorted to a bluntness which lost him his friends and admirers and incensed his enemies. His irritability was not due to the fact that his talent had not been duly recognized, or that he had not been adequately rewarded. In Delhi and Lucknow he had actually lived in a blaze of reputation. Financially, he was far from secure in Delhi, and was throughout dogged by insecurity on the death or downfall of his patrons. Yet the fact remains that he was, for the most part, well looked after. He was preferred help by the King which he rejected on account of his vanity. He rated himself so high that all that was done for him in Lucknow seemed to him to be altogether inadequate to his extraordinary merit. Hence his sullen broodings, his pathetic complaints, and his boorish manners.

Mir’s vanity is not a figment of Āsāf’s fancy, as his admirers generally
think; it is an indubitable fact. Let us, for the time being, ignore the anecdotes related about him by Āzād, and confine ourselves to the evidence provided by his works. Of the right to self-praise which Persian and Urdu poets have arrogated to themselves, there are very few who have made a more lavish use than Mir. This self-complacency is only equalled by his attacks on others. He has pilloried poet after poet in Nikāt-ush-Shu’ara, and anyone who succeeds in getting a good word from him must be a fortunate man indeed. He is a judge with a black cap on, sentencing his victims to summary execution, with no possibility of reprieve. In a fit of egregious vanity, he once compared himself to a dragon in Aigar Nāma and his contemporary poets to reptiles and vermin who are scorched to death by its poisonous breath. For once, this was more than they could bear. There was a furore when the poem was read out, and a rising poet bearded him with an impromptu composition, containing the line:

O Nisār! Haidar, the Mighty, has endowed me with such powers that I can rend asunder the jaws of the dragon.

Nor was Mir unconscious of this weakness, for he refers to it himself in his poetry occasionally:

Fie upon you Mir! that you should carry your bad manners so far
As to be at loggerheads with the sky and the earth.

And:

The fact is I am not free from worries for a single moment;
My heart burns with inward sorrow like a lamp.
My bosom is torn with pain and my heart seared with grief;
In public assemblies I am known as Mir the ill-tempered
Such is the unsavoury reputation I have acquired for my short temper.

The chief quality of Mir’s mind is his realism. This quality is temperamental and marks him off from Sauda for whom the real is often merged in the exaggerated and the fanciful. The mirror he holds up to life is not a normal one; it is predisposed to reflect whatever is sad and distressing; but with this reservation, he is usually a true chronicler of his moods, feelings, and susceptibilities. Of course, he is not free from the false taste of his age, there being a great deal in his ghazals that is a concession to the reigning taste. Nevertheless, the best of him is a true picture of the various states of his mind.

As regards the emotional experiences which form the warp and woof of his mind, they are predominantly sad and pathetic. He is the best representative in Urdu poetry of the passivity and wistfulness we associate with the East—an attitude considered the fittest theme for lyrical poetry by some, and voted as morbid by others. Mir was frail, nervous, resigned, and reacted with extraordinary force to the accidents and vicissitudes of life. For him the course of life and love did not run smooth, and his love lyrics are an expression of the grief, disappointments, and pathetic yearnings consequent to it.

Mir’s gloom is not all personal; it also reflects time’s sad decay. As such his poetry is an unusually sad man’s commentary on his own defeated life and the decay and extinction of what was most dear to him in the life and associations of the Imperial City. Here are some of his reflections on the departed glory of Delhi and the reign of terror that followed it:

The head that is proud of kingship today,
Tomorrow there is a cry of lamentations about him.

No one has gone safe from the caravanserai of the world,
Not a traveller but has been robbed of his belongings in this journey.

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Spare some time to pay a visit to the tombs of these luckless persons;  
Who knows what afflictions they might have been subjected to in their life.

O Mir, how many friends of thine have gone the way to dusty death,  
Fool! hath anyone ever grieved at another's death!

In this tempestuous world Fate breaks us like a bubble  
Do not be misled by the prosperous look of the world;  
A house flourishes here after being ruined a hundred times.

By one wanton act you have destroyed these august persons  
Whom the sky produced by long sifting the dust.

His Shair Ḥashōb also sheds light on the deplorable contemporary scene and should be studied side by side with Saund’s poems on the subject.

Mir’s style is simple and bare even to nakedness. There are some minds that cannot contemplate a thing without trailing a cloud of images. Mir shows little of this imaginative fertility. He is neither allusive nor subtle. Whatever the nature of his thoughts, he can be expected to be straightforward. This simplicity or lucidity, this contemplation of a thing without a host of associative images, is the chief feature of his mind and distinguishes him from a poet like Ghalib. He is remembered today for such lines as the following:

I inquired how long is the life course of a rose;  
The bud heard it and broke into a smile.

It feels cheerless and depressed with the coming of the evening;  
My heart is like a pauper’s dimly-burning lamp.

Pangs of separation, yearnings for union, intense passion,  
Behold; what a tumult I took with me into the grave!

This world is full of illusions;  
We behold here what we imagine.

By luring me into the street of the beloved,  
My heart has made me even more miserable than before.

In the earlier stages of love I was all afire,  
I am now all dust and ashes—such is the end of my love.

The streets of Delhi were not mere streets, they were like a painter’s album;  
Every figure I saw there was a model of perfection.

Do not wonder at the depth of my misery,  
Such are the ups and downs of life!

Like the vain musings of a pauper, how far and wide have my thoughts wandered in the loneliness of separation from you!

Was it the fragrance of a flower or the song of a nightingale?  
How quickly have the days of my life passed!
Mîr tried his hand at several other genres but with little success. His satires are personal and fully as vulgar and censorious as Sauda’s. His erotic masnâsî, commonplace both in form and substance, are failures. Crudely tragic, they show a penchant for unhealthy themes and homosexual love.

Of a much higher order, and unique in their own way, are *Dar Hajû-e-Khâna-e-Khûd* (‘A Skit on my House’), *Dar Hajû-e-Khâna-e-Khûd kih ba Sabâb-e-Bânâr Kharáb shuda bid* (‘A Skit on my House that had suffered badly during the Rainy Season’) and *Narsang Nâmâ*. They stand in a class apart in Urdu poetry and, as the taste for what is natural and really pathetic develops, they will come more and more into notice. They are all autobiographical, the first two describing the discomforts of his humble dwelling, and the third giving a vivid account of a sojourn in a dismal and bleak country in the company of a nobleman. Here, for once, Mîr is an amused spectator of his own mishaps and discomforts. In their blend of humour, pathos and realism they represent the high watermark of humour in the poetry of the classical period.

Since humour in Mîr has gone unnoticed, I give below two passages from *Narsang Nâmâ*, the concluding part of the *Skit on my House in the Rainy Season*, and a few verses from *Dar Bayân-e-murgabhâzân* (‘About Cock-fighters’).

It was nothing short of a godsend to find accommodation in an inn kept by a hostess, and I forthwith accepted all her conditions. When she asked what food she was to cook for me, I explained that my food was supplied by the nobleman I served. I got my food morning and evening from him. Whatever is sent I partake of, and what is left over I send back. Hearing this she heaved a deep sigh and said: I took you for a man of rank with these five or six persons standing around you. But you have turned out to be a penniless coxcomb; you are as poor as Emperor Shâh ‘Alam. You don’t intend to eat or drink, and I don’t know how I shall pass the night. How very unlucky to have lodgers like you! Alas, on what evil days my inn has fallen! I said: My dear lady, here is something to console you; and don’t take against me so much. Some come to eat, others to feed others, and still others who are like me.

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A little way off there was a bazar with four or five shops of banyas. One of them had some pulses and flour that was fly-blown. The other had nothing but
When in return for the rent I paid for the house, I could have the roof only, we thought it advisable to leave the house, using the thatch as rafters. We deemed it preferable to quit the house, as it was better to be drowned than to be buried alive. The idea struck us as reasonable, and we decided to follow it. I, therefore, lifted the bundle of clothes, and my brother carried the charpai on his head. He who was carrying the bundle of clothes suffered from stiff shoulders. One was carrying a lamp, another a cup. One of us held the winnowing-fan over his head to protect himself from the rain, and another was floundering in the rain. Another covered his face with a sieve, and still another set a door-screen over his head. Another quickly took up the network for hanging food and hung the legs and sides of a bedstead round his neck. Another wrapped himself in a mat, and managed to hold whatever he could. Carrying our baggage and holding a clothes-line for fear of being drowned, we left the house in single file to reach some place to shelter. And as we filed out in this ludicrous trim, we looked like a band of gypsies on its way to a new encampment. And all those who saw us then smiled and tittered. At this we felt ashamed, and at last arrived at the house of a brother. Since then we have been in great trouble for want of residence; for we have not been able to get a house, even as small as a bubble, in which we could live comfortably for a breathing-while in our own way.

The cock-fighters are wild with excitement,
And everyone of them is holding a cock in his arms.
The cocks exchange one or two kicks,
And a hundred ejaculations by these fools.
The cocks flap their wings and these twitch convulsively,  
They hit with their beaks and these vociferate and shout.  
If the cocks stand erect, these bend low,  
And change their position and posture according as the cocks do.  
The cocks once flap their wings,  
And they make a hundred vulgar remarks.  
One of them says: it has received a knock-down blow,  
Another, that it will lick the dust.  
They bend down and seem to parry the attacks;  
One would think it is they and not the cocks that are receiving the kicks.  
One of them is sucking the beak of a cock,  
And another indulging in vulgar remarks.  
They blurt out what’s uppermost in their minds,  
And look daggers at one another.

The last of the famous quartette, Khvāja Mir Dard was born in 1719, in Delhi, and died on 7 January 1785. Mysticism ran in the family; for he was descended on the father’s side from Khvāja Bahā-ud-Dīn Naqshbandi, and on the mother’s side from Hazrat Ghaus-e-Ā’zam. His father Khvāja Nāṣir ‘Andalib, a poet and the writer of Nāla-e-‘Andalib (a voluminous work on mysticism and theology in Persian), had held a high position at court, but had retired from service to devote himself to a life of meditation. Dard studied theology with his father, and learnt the art of poetry from Khān-e-Arzī. For some time he was in the army; but he gave it up to lead a life of retirement and study and, at thirty-nine, on his father’s death, succeeded him as the head of the sanctuary.

The ziyārat in which he resided was outside the rampart, west of Pahār Ganj, later known as Baraf Khāna. During Nādir Shāh’s invasion, he received an invitation from a member of the royal family to move into the city, but he stuck to his place. Later, he moved into the house especially constructed for his reception in Kūcha Chelān. Dard was well versed in music, and is said to have composed Khayāls, thumris, and dhrupads. This tradition is supported by the following line in his younger brother, Mir Asar’s Manzuri-e-Khāb-o-Khayāl:

\[ \text{کے میں کو ہے وہاں کے} \]
\[ \text{کے اک کی جگہ دو کا مال} \]

The beautiful khayāl composed by Dard—  
How can I tell you how profoundly moving they are!

and the following of his own verses:

\[ \text{ہمایوں کے ہمایوں کے کو ہے وہاں کے} \]
\[ \text{ہمایوں کے ہمایوں کے کو ہے وہاں کے} \]

The high and low are equal in my eyes,  
Just as the high and low notes are equal in a musical instrument.

I am of the world, yet live apart from others,  
Very much as the sam [final beat] in the measure called Rāpak is outside the musical time.

Music being forbidden in Islam, Dard has appended the following apologia for his weakness:

I do not put music so high as do other mystics, nor do I rate it so low as the