In the Name of God the Compassionate the Merciful

QUATRAINS

The Unity

I

There is a thorn in every breast, stuck fast, telling of Thee;
There is a staple-ring hung in every ear, telling of Thee;
He, who has not confessed Thee, has known Thee perforce;
Yes, even in a heart lost, there is alarm, telling of Thee.

II

The Hindu in his idol has discovered Thy glory;
Parsees over their fire have chanted Thy music;
The Materialist from his universe has postulated Thee;
Denial of Thee by any being has not been found possible.

III

In the whirlwind, when the ship is being tossed round and round—
When the caravan in the sand-drift is frantic with agony—
When hope in all earthly means vanishes away—
There, excepting Thee, none else is remembered.

bismi l-lāhi r raḥmāni r raḥīm

rubā'-iyāt

tauḥīd

1

kāntā hādi, har ik jigar mēg -aṭkā, terā;
halqa hādi, har ik gozh mēg lāṭkā, terā;
māna nahūn jia nē tujh kā, jānā hāi ṣarūr;
ḥaṭke bu-ē dīl mēg bhī hāi ḥaṭkā terā.

2

hindū nē śanam mēg ṣalwa ṣāya terā;
-ṣātīgh pa mughān nē rāg ṣāya terā;
dhārī nē kīyā dahr sē ṭa-hār tujhā;
-inkār kisē baṁ na -ṣāya terā.

3

fūsīn mēn, hāi jab jahāz ṣaṅkhar ḥātā—
jab qaṭūla wādī mēg hāi sar ṣaṅkharā—
-ṣaḥāb kā -āsrā hāi jab -uṭh jātā—
whāu, terē siwā, kō-i nahūn yād ātā.
IV

When there encompass him on all sides the signs of Thy power,
Even the Atheist cries aloud to Thee, under compulsion.
    To the bat no highway to darkness was visible,
When the sun's light blazed forth in every direction.

V

When despair fails thick upon the hearts of mankind,
It forces Thy name upon the lips even of foes.
    It is possible that infants in their joy forget their mother,
But, when they are in pain, she is first in their thoughts.

VI

From earth, and air, and fire, and water, in this world
Innumerable secrets have become revealed to man.
    Not less are Thy treasuries, from eternity till now,
Hidden, as before, within the safe of the unseen.

VII

From Thy being is the glow and scent of life—for the good of all;
In worship of Thee is self-respect—for the good of all;
    Excepting Thee alone, all supports are feeble;
All are for their own sake—and Thou for the good of all.
VIII
What other proof shall be of Thee more absolute than this?
In the world is not a soul who would be naturally joyful.
Yet those, who are waiting with their hearts fixed on Thee,
Stay on by every pain and every grief untrammelled.

Commendation (of the Prophet).

IX
Thou madest the righteous self-effaced in His glory;
Thou madest the lovers filled with ecstasy of sight.
No partner was left to share the worship of The Truth;
Through thee, when thou camest, was The One known as The One.

X
The pebble strewn Arabia thou madest illustrious;
And its illiterate people the chosen of nations.
'Rest you upon God!' united Rûm and Tartary;
That scattered flock of sheep thou didst gather together.

XI
Petraea was ennobled because of thy nativity;
Yathrib ² won renown from thy dwelling therein;
Not only thy offspring make a boast of thy name;
Thy sires are ennobled through paternity of thee.

¹ i.e. The Byzantine Empire.
² The proper name of Medina; which word means simply 'city.'

8
kya hogi dahi tujah pa -aur is sè diya? 
dunyà mënh nahi hî -ek dil, jo ki hî shád;
par, jo ki hîn tujah sè lau lagë-e baïhe,
rahte hîn har ek ranj ò gham se -azâd.

9
zuhhad kô tû nê maivy ñ tawjêd kiyâ;
-ramshâq kô mast ñ laggat e did kiyâ;
të-ñat mënh, rahi na, haq kî, sigh ko-î;
tauhid kô, tû nê, -a kê, tauhid kiyâ.

10
baïhâ -ê rawb kô muhyram tû nê kiyâ,
suí -ummiyân kô khair ñ -umam tû nê kiyâ;
-islam nê -ek kar diya rûm ñ tatür;
bîhre hu-ê galla ko baham tû nê kiyâ.

II
baïhâ kô ha-û, teri wîlat sê, sharaf;
yagrib kô mila, teri -iqamat sê, sharaf;
-anlât hî ko tâhîr nahiin kuçh tujah par;
-ábâ kô bhi hai, teri -ubûwat sê sharaf.
XII

Good will to all.

Where we strive not with Hindus, nor bear ill will to Parsees—
Where we shrink from doing harm and in return for harm do good—
Let those, who are muttering that 'This world is a Hell,'
Only come, and explore the delights of this Paradise.

XIII

Discontinuance of Love poems.

I have done matching my voice with the nightingale in the garden;
I have done reciting verses in the conclave of poets;
Since thou hast forsaken me, O lively heart of my youth!
I too have forsaken thy interminable stories.

XIV

Cheerful old men.

They are blithe in adversity—as if they were successful;
They fight with their feebleness—as if they were athletes;
Their hearts are their measures, who are bringing to a close
Their old age—laughing and talking—as if they were youths.
XV

Good and Evil are near neighbours.

Those people who are famed for their virtues very much,
Let them of their virtues not be vain over much.
Even a good deed is bad, if the heart be not in it;
And evil is distant from the good—not very much.

XVI

The time of trial.

A zealot used to say, 'My life is offered on my creed.'
But when his faith came to the touch of persecution,
Some one asked him humbly—'Tell us, what is best now?'
Quoth he, 'My brother! know, whilst there is life, there is the world.'

XVII

Love.

Is love a physician for the unhealthy at heart?
Or is it in itself the home of thousands of woes?
Of that I know nothing; only this much I have heard,
For those without work it is a charming pastime.

XVIII

The appraisement of the good.

Set not down good men as bad, O my son!
If one gesture or half a gesture of theirs displease thee.
The fineness of a pomegranate is not spoilt to the taste,
If there should be inside it one or two pips rotten.
XIX
Unreasonable expectations from friends.
Through life, they have been cast upon a picture of fancy,
Who have always been demanding immaculate friends.
Those, who have quarrelled with their comrades at every little
thing,
Have lived outside the pale of the blessings of companionship.

XX
Wine and Youth.
Young men! be not seduced to any drinking of wine;
Take not upon your necks the blood of God-given reason.
The time itself of Youth is a madness—and now
Do you pile upon one madness another madness; you?

XXI
Worse than all faults is pride.
It is not in nature that a man be free of faults,
But keep yourself from them to your utmost, without fail.
Make smaller the faults you have—but still be on your guard,
Lest, from their decreasing somewhat, your pride should increase.

XXII
The mutual antagonism of speech and action.
They, who achieve much, say little with their tongue;
You can't have both together—word craft and deed craft.
So much as the gift of speech has gone on increasing,—
So have we in the same degree been falling off in action.
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XXIII

The condition of acceptance.

It is possible that worth may have no value somewhere;
But value anywhere without worth there is none.

They refuse amber gratis—it may be:—but still
In lieu of amber no one will accept dried cowdung.¹

XXIV

It behoves a ‘Seeker’ to be wary in adopting an ‘Elder’
(i.e. a spiritual guide).

Old guides may be or not be men of knowledge and conviction;
The fear is lest the Seekers be rash in any way.

To a buyer there is some need of two pair of eyes;
And even of one eye there is no need to the seller.

XXV

What the difference is between a wise man and a fool.²

In ignorance all men, wise or foolish, are equal;
No difference between them is perceptible save this:—
The wise man has knowledge of his own unwisdom;
The fool of his ignorance has not the slightest notion.

XXVI

The goal of modern progress.

When yesterday they inquired the limit of man’s progress,
‘Mine host,’ with a laugh, thus replied to my friends;—
‘There will not survive at last any fault in man;
By paring and paring they will all become merits.’

¹ Such as is used for fuel in the East.
² Or, perhaps more literally, ‘between a learned man and a dunce.’

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23

shart e gabal.

mumkin hái, ki jaunhar ki ne ho qadr kahun;
par qadr kahun ba ghair jaunhar kñ naheñ.
-amar kñ na len muft, yih -imkñ hái:—magar
-amar ki jagah na legñ ko-i sargñ.

24

jñññ hy so sone yshñ kar pír banññd tñhñye.
bon yñ na bóñ pír -áñl è -irññ è yagññ,
par dar hái, ki jñññ na bóñ nadñn kahun;
ghañk kñ hái -íñiyáq áñr 'áñkhn kñ;
aur ek kñ bhñ beññwale kñ naheñ.

25

-álim o jñññ meñ kyñ fañq hñi.
haññ jñññ mññ sab—-álim o jñññ—-hãmsar;
-áññ náñññ fañq, is kñ ñwññ, -un mññ nagar;
-álim kñ hái -álim -ánpñ náñññ kñ,
jñññ kñ náñññ jñññ jñññ kñ kuch -áñññ khabññ.

26

manññáda taragnñ bñ -anjanm.
puñññ ññ kal -anjanñ e taragnñ è basññh,
yánoñ kñ kahñ pír è mughññ ne, luññ kñ,
-ññññ na rañññgñ kñ-1 -imkn mnññ -ñññ;
ho jñ-èngñè, chil chilñ kñ, sab -ñññ bñññnè.
XXVII

How salvation may be obtained for a spendthrift.

A munificent spendthrift spoke thus to a pious man,
'Utter on my behalf a prayer to God for my salvation!'

The pious man raised his hands to heaven, and said,
'Hasten, O God Almighty! Thy making this man a pauper.'

XXVIII

Despatch of business.

For waiting, in this world, when does any find respite?
If to-day he is arriving, to-morrow he departs.

What things you have to do, accomplish them with speed;
The missive for your summons is there! coming towards you.

XXIX

Self-interest.

There is in the self of man, by nature, this disease,
That he seeks a compensation for each effort he makes;

Deeds which I had done purely for God's sake—when I looked,
There was hidden in them even some selfish aim.

XXX

The vicissitudes of fortune.

Homes, peopled and peopled, are deserted—by thousands;
Standards, fixed and fixed, are uprooted—by lakhs;

If A booms to-day—tomorrow B has his turn;
Thus game after game as soon as made is but marred.

1 Lit. 'Games made and made are just so being marred.'
XXXI
The tyranny of years.
When they found Hâli yesterday cold-hearted,—as they thought,
They inquired the reason:—he laughed, and thus replied,
‘Don’t cherish the hope, now, of those former socialities;
Those times have gone by; another season has arrived.’

XXXII
A man who has no trust in life cannot achieve any great work.
This commonplace world—you may call a fleeting picture;
All that happens in the universe—you may deem an idle tale;
But:—when you set your purpose to any noble work,
Think every breath you draw to be life eternal.

XXXIII
Signs of decadence.
The fathers—secure in their land and possessions;
The sons—with a dream of contentment in indolence;
The children running riot; the young men doing nothing;—
Such families are here only as ‘guests of a few days.’

XXXIV
The trophies of reverse.
In the desert when I came upon a bare bleak plain,
On which in the rains there was no sign of verdure,
Which the peasants had long ceased to have the heart to till,—
I thought on the trophies of reverse of my race.
XXXV

The diagnosis of insincerity.

In every assemblage to win shouts of applause,
Through blindness of verbiage to become 'pure honey,'
Is not possible,—until there be insincerity in the heart.
It is not an easy task, being popular with all men.

XXXVI

The uncharitableness of Musalmáns.

Not until he be a thorough enemy of our brothers,
Is the faith of a believer reckoned thorough nowadays.
I pray the Almighty to have pity on our race,
When I hear 'a thorough Musalmán' said about any one.

XXXVII

Deceit and Hypocrisy.

Háli! Those who travel on the straight road always,
Incur no risk of wolves, nor terror of lions.
But vigilance is needèd against those sheep-raveners,
Who make a fair appearance in the clothing of sheep.

XXXVIII

The germ of potentiality.

There are signs of capability in the wholly untaught;
Disguised among savages are many human beings.
They are innocent of any garb of education; otherwise
Men of Tús or of Ráz are hidden in these shapes.¹

¹ Tús (the ancient name of Mashhad) was the birthplace of Firdausí.
Ráz or Ray (the same as Râghâ) was situated near the present site of Teherán.
XXXIX

Knowledge.

O knowledge! by thee have whole nations been enriched;
From wherever thou hast vanished, there has come decay;
The treasures of the hidden world have been unlocked for those
Races, who have established thee as their stock in trade.

XL

Thou, knowledge! art the key to the storehouse of joy;
Thou art a welling fountain of delights and profits;
Rest in respect of both worlds is under thy shade;
Thou art a means of subsistence here, and a guide to the hereafter.

XLI

So rich as the region of the West is through thee,
Like bounty to the East from thee, O knowledge! there is none.
Ah knowledge! can it be, that, like the moon of Nakshab,¹
Thy rays of light are limited to that one spot?

XLII

Family honours.

Until a son free himself from baseness of his own,
He inherits no honour from his father's honour.
If you reflect—rubbish too has a lengthy pedigree,
But is not ennobled in the least by the connexion.

¹ The 'Veiled Prophet' of Khurásán, who claimed miraculous powers,
pretended to make the moon rise from a well at Nakshab. It is said that
after his death a bowl of quicksilver was found at the bottom of the well.
His opponents denounced the imposture on the ground that the semblance
of the moon was always at the full, and always in the same place.

39

-ai -ilm! kiyyā hālī tā nē mulkān kō nihāl;
ghū-ib hu-ā tā jahān sē, wāhāy -ayāx nāwāl;
-un par hu-ē ghaib kē khibānā māfīā,
jin qaumān nē ḍhahrāyā ṭujhe ṭuṣā l māl.

40

-ai -ilm! kalīd ē ganj ē ḍhādī tā hai;
sar ḍhāmā ē na-mā wū -ayāt tā hai;
-āstāyī s ē do jahān hāī sāya mēn tāre;
dūnyā kā wasāla, dīn kā hadī tū hai.

41

hai τujh sē nihāl jāāt maghrib kī zamānī,
maghrib kō wū faiz τujh sē, -ai -ilm! nāhīān,
shāyād, -ai -ilm! māh ē nakshāb kī ṭarāh
rāhī hāī sūh-ā-śā terī mahdūd wāhīn.

42

khāndānī ṛizzāt.

beṭā nīkē na jāb talāk gillāt se
-ṛizzāt nāhīn -us kō ḍhāp kī -ṛizzāt se,
-śūnā tū hāī ḍhāt kā masbā bhi ṭālī,
par -us kō shārāf nāhīn kuch is nīhāt se.
XLIII

In what thing is Honour.

Wealth said, ‘Wherever honour exists, it is from me.’
Culture affirmed, ‘I am the true badge of honour.’

Then honour spoke, and said, ‘The claim of each of you is wrong;
I am the secret of Eternal Truth which is hidden in goodness.’

XLIV

Misplaced expectation.

Our friends are good comrades—but not in adversity;
Our relations stand by us—but not in disgrace;
Vain is the expectation of that thing from a man,
Which is not in the nature of the species called mankind.

XLV

Reason and Friendship are conflicting terms.

As far as the rise or fall extends in a man’s reason,
So wide is the range of his estrangement and affection.
Who has thought of the consequence, is no longer a friend;
Two mutual opposites are friendship and foresight.

XLVI

Wanton self-indulgence.

The fruit of dissipation always becomes bitter;
Each burst of laughter is but a forerunner of tears.
Whatever race I find given over to pleasure,—
I say to myself, ‘See now! what is going to happen!’

43

-izzat kis di mey hai.
daulet ne kaha, ‘muqta s hai, -izzat hai jahang.’
formey hunar ne, ‘mai hong -izzat k nihaan.’
-izzat boli, ‘ghalat hai—donon k bayan;
mai bhed hong haq k, jo hai nehi mung nihaan.’

44

tawaqqur be jaa.
hai yar rafig—par musbat mung nahin;
sathi hai -aziz—lek gillat mung nahin;
-
us bata k -inaan o tawaqqur hai -aban,
jo nau o baqar ki khud jibillat mung nahin.

45

-aql aur dost mutazadd hai.
hai -aql mung jis qadar kamai aar beahl,
-utni h muqta-arat hai, yahang, aar kheel.

wuh dost nahi, jis ni kiyah aik o maal;

ghidain hai dosti o durrandehi.

46

-rihvar o -rihvar.
-rihvar k samar talkh sadh hota hai;
har qababa paigham o buka hota hai.

jis qaum ko -raish dost patta hun main,
kahtai hun, ki ‘-ab, dekhiye! kyaa hota hai’
XLVII

O riotous living! where thou hast had dominion,
Thou hast made the king a beggar, the wealthy man needy.
Thou madest a solitude of Babylon and Nineveh;
Thou broughtest destruction upon Baghdad and Cordova.

XLVIII

Slander.

The éclat of every party, now, consists in slander;
Backbiting God’s creatures is the rule at every gathering.
It is only of others’ foibles that a people can boast,
Who have not one excellence left within themselves.

XLIX

Love.

O Love! thou hast caused whole households to be ruined;
Old men to be dotards; and young men to be ruined;
In thy felicitation evermore I have seen
Nations brought low, and long lineages ruined.

How a government loses vigour.

When you see the affairs of any kingdom upside down,
You may take it that the footfall of some Godsend is upon it.
Either there is some lady a privy councillor of state:—
Or else the prime minister is some learned professor.