LII

Imputing infidelity to honest (and righteous) freethinkers.

Though he found in my friends nothing blameworthy or sinful,
The preacher denounced them as 'Infidels' and 'Lost souls.'

When evidence is wanting to a false accuser,
He dares to name 'God' as a witness to his charge.

LIII

Apathy and complacency.

If the order of the Universe depends upon motives,
It is hard work, O Hāli! to arouse that race,
Which cares not for its honour in the very least degree,
And takes not the least degree of shame from its disgrace.

LIV

Forgiveness with a present power of revenge.

Moses uttered this thought, 'O God Almighty!
Who most, of all Thy servants, is accepted by Thee?'

There issued the instruction, 'My servant is he,
Who can take, and will not take, revenge for injury.'
LV

The answer to harshness is mildness.
So far as may be, treat a 'mischief' discreetly;
If any one spit poison at you, give him words of nectar.
Anger only makes anger flare up more fiercely;
In this disease, similibus similia Non curantur.

LVI

Courage.
Tamurlane watched a tiny ant under a wall
Crawl upwards a hundred times with one grain of corn;
At last it reached the top with the grain; then he said,
'No arduous exploit is impossible to courage.'

LVII

Cowardice.
Those endless disputes about Fate and Freewill;
When I looked at them, I found they do not hinge on any creed.
Those men who were cowardly have always yielded to fate,
And those possessed of courage have exercised free will.

LVIII

Remorse.
What comes in the end to overweening unbelief,
That same is the fruit of mere neglect and ignorance.
I have learnt from the bitter taste of many contritions,
That 'Hell' is but a name for what we call Remorse.

Lit. 'between the fatalist and the believer in free will.'
1. The quatrains of Hālī

LIX

A lament on the death of the late Nawāb Ziyā-ud-dīn
Ahmad Khān (known as ‘Na‘īyar’) of Delhi.

No turtle dove,—no peacock,—no mocking chakor,—
These all took their flight at the first approach of autumn,
One token of the Spring lingered—the plaintive nightingale;
And his voice, since yesterday, is audible no more.

LX

Not Ghālib, nor Shefta, nor Naiyār remain;
Not Wahshat, nor Šalik, nor does Anwar remain;
Now must you accept, Hālī! for that circle of friends,
Those scars upon your heart, which will for ever remain.

LXI

Labour.

What fruit is in each lap, is the fruit of labour here,
And all that is harvested are God’s blessings on labour.¹

To be ‘Shepherd of his people’ was not given to Moses,
Until he had tended goats in the land of Midian.

LXII

Incitement to beggary.

A sturdy young man, whom I once found begging,
Was sharply reproved by me, and put to open shame.

Then said he, ‘The plague of this hangs on their necks,
Who taught me to beg, by always giving when I asked.’¹

¹ Lit. ‘The fruits of labour only are in each skirt (held up to contain them); the blessings (of God) on labour only are in each garner.’

59

ta-amṣuf bār waqfāt e nāvāb gīyā-un d dīn
-āḥmad hās marhām (naiyār takhallus),
dihlavi.
quurr hā, na ūs-ā, na kubk e ūmāz;
-štā hā khasīn kā, kar ga-e sab parwās.
-thī bāgh kī yādār—i-k bulbul ḍ zār;
so -us kā bī kāl se naḥīn -ātī -āwās.

60

ghālib hā, na shefta, na naiyār bāqī;
waḥshat hā, na sālik hā, na -anwar bāqī;
ha[lī] -ab īsī kā baζm e yārīŋ samhī,
yâroz kā jō khūḍ dâh hānī dīl par bāqī.

61

miḥnāt.

miḥnāt hā kā phal hās yāhī hār īk dāman meŋ;
miḥnāt hā kā bārkaṭez hānī hār khirmān meŋ.
mūsā kā mīlī na qaum kā ḍāpānī,
jāb tak na ḍaṟūn bākriyān mādyan meŋ.

62

gudā-i kī targāb.

-īk mard ē tawānā kā, jō ē-l ēl pāyā,
ki maṅī nē mālāmāt aṛt bahut ēzhāmaŋā.
boṇā, ki ‘hāi -īs kā -un kī gordan pā wibāl,
de de kā jīnhūŋ nē mānguṅ sīkhāyā.
LXIII

Imputing infidelity to Muslims.
From hearing so often raised against true believers
The schoolmen's cry, 'Unorthodox,' we are now convinced of this:—
Undoubtedly a Muslim will be asked in his grave,
'Did the Schoolmen denounce you as an Infidel or not?'

LXIV

Adieu to Lovers' talk.
Some word of the people's ills from us you will hear;
Some word of our fall in men's esteem you will hear;
Romanus of Qais and Kohkan¹ we have forgotten;
If you want one—from us—our own tale you will hear.

LXV

The fall of the people of Islam.
Would any one see humiliation transgressing her limits?
Let him look at Islam, not lifting her head after falling.
That high tide follows low tide, he would never admit,
Who should watch the ebbing wave of this ocean of ours.

LXVI

Effort first and Prayer next.
In effort lies the first pledge of success for any man;
And next he ought to pray for help from the Almighty.
It was not until he used hand and arm that Noah
Obtained the boon of rescuing his race from the deluge.

¹ Qais, better known by his title Majnūn (the distracted), was the lover
of Laila, celebrated in Arabic poetry. Kohkan (the rockflower) is the
title of Parhād, the lover of Shirin, celebrated among the Persians.

63

takfīr e -ahl e -islām.
kahna fuqahā kā mūminon ko 'bedīn''
sunte sunte, yih ho gayā ham kō yaqū,
mūmin sē, 'zarūr hogā marqād mēn suwāl:
takfīr bhi kī thi fuqahā no, ki nāhi?

64

tark e -āshīqāna go-k.
kuch qaum ki ham sē sengwāri sun lo!
kuch ēshān kū jahān mēn -apnī khwāri sun lo!
-āshā -ē qais ē kohkan yād nāhi;
ētho, tō kathā ham sē hamāri sun lo!

65

tanazzu' e -ahl e -islām.
pastī kā, kō-h, ēd sē gujarāi dekhā,
-islām kā ē sāhīn na -ubhārāi dekhā;
ūnāe na kabhī, ki mād ēhā har jazar kē ba-d,
cāryā kā hamāre jō -utarnā dekhā.

66

-armız̄ kāshīk āswar ba-d dwa-nā.
kāshīk mēn hāi ṣhart ē -ibīdā -insān se;
phir ēshiyā māngū madad yezdā̄n se.
jab tak ki na kām dast ē bāzū sē liyā,
pā-ī na najāt nūh ne ūfān se.
LXVII

To be working agrees with man’s vitality.
Work takes the side of Life for all human kind;
No zest is in living save with some work being done.
You live!—then be doing something to show you are alive;
What death in life have they, who have lived like corpses!

LXVIII

False show.
All persons are apt to dilute truth with fiction;
Men being anything are rarer than those who pretend to be.
Those people in whose pockets watches ever dwell
Are often precisely those who most waste their time.

LXIX

A few defects cannot obliterate many excellences.
If a thousand fine qualities are patent in a man,
Do not grudge your esteem to him for one or two defects.
Because your eye has fallen on the peacock’s ugly legs,
You must not deny the grace and splendour of his beauty.

LXX

The taciturnity of an ignorant dervish.
So deeply engrossed upon your text is your honor,
Silence is your safest course:—so thinks your honor?
Open your mouth, and speak:—or do not speak:—your
Highness!
I have my own gauge of the depth of your honor.

67

kám karná ján ke sáth hai.
hái ján ké sáth kám, -inság ké liye;
banti nahíng zindagi mén be kám hiye.
jíte hó, tó kuch léjiye, zindon ké taghá;
murdoñ ké taghá jiye, to kýa thák jiye?

68

jhabhí nánájísh.
háng jhúth ké saç mén sab samone wále;
banne wálon së kam háng hone wále.
gharyán rahi háng jin ké jebon mén mudán,
-aklab háng wáho waqt ké thán wále.

69

cand -rañ balut së khabíshon ko nakhíng wita wálte.
mañúd húnar hóng, gát men jis ké, hañár,
bud gán na hó, -rañ us mén -sarag hón do ór.
tá-ás ké pë -sáht par kar ké nagar,
kar ḥusn ò jamál ké na -us ké -inkár.

70

súkát e darwesh e jábíl.
mañúf jó you wágañá khwání mén háng -áp,
kháir aqí samajh tá be zaháñi mén háng -áp.
bóleñ kuch múp shí:—yá na bóleñ, háshrat!
ma-lám háng hám ké jína pání mén háng -áp.
LXXI

The reproach of unbelievers against Musalmans.

A scoffer of Holy writ was saying yesterday,
'What will these men of the Qibla get, squabbling among themselves?
If they have courage, let them come into the open:—otherwise
Any dog too is a lion, inside his own lane.'

LXXII

The Materialist's retort upon an Idol worshipper.

A worshipper of idols spoke thus to a materialist,
'There will not be a reprobate in the world like thee.'
The materialist said, 'What! Is any denier of God
More far gone than one who may have lakhs of little gods?'

LXXIII

The plight of a wise man among fools.

What difference—if the ears have no sense of hearing—
Between the words of wisdom, and old wives' tales!
Uncouth as a pilgrim in a land far from his home,—
Just so is the plight of any wise man among fools.

LXXIV

The limit of reform.

For washing, O reformer! there is good reason left,
So long as any stain upon the cloth is still left;
Wash the stain with a will:—but do not rub so hard,
That no stain upon the cloth—and no cloth be left.

Lit. 'of the Qur-án and (recorded) tradition.'
LXXV

Contempt of admiration.
Feels grin with delight at any praise forthwith;
But such is not by any means the way of wise men.
When they hear their praises, they are greatly displeased:
They want something better in the way of commendation.  

LXXVI

A good opinion does not let the real truth reveal itself.
The Sufi (may be perfect, but) no one has ever tried him;
No one has ever dared to hint a doubt of his goodness.
There may be in current coin too, perchance, some alloy,
But no one has ever tested it as yet in this country.

LXXVII

The misdeeds of believers bring their religion into disrepute.
When they see the sorry plight of believers in Islam,
All nations of the world cry shame on the religion.
By their own intemperance the sick lost their health,
And lightly the Healer of creation was blamed.

LXXVIII

Reflections on the latter end.
The haven is far off:—gird on food for the journey!
The sea is boisterous:—look well to your vessel!
The purchaser is keen:—let the goods you take be pure!
And make your load light!—for the course is full of toil.

1 The word -aur may mean 'more' or 'different.'
**LXXIX**

*The truth about Man.*

It is possible, that a man may become like an Angel;
It is possible, that no spot should remain in him of evil;
Yes; all things are possible—but the truth is this,
Man up to this day remains the same ‘ally of Satan.’

**LXXX**

*The love affairs of kings.*

Though the issue of all men’s lovemaking is evil,
Where kings are concerned, it is especially disastrous;
If a king is rightly named ‘God’s shadow,’ then Love
Is the ‘hour of abridgement’ for that ‘shadow of God.’

**LXXXI**

*The collaboration of Time.*

O Time! there is a cure for the ill will of all things,
But no power of resistance in quarrelling with these.
Should thou alone prove thyself to be on my side,
Thenceforward, I care not if the whole world turn from me.

**LXXXII**

*In old age one should keep oneself prepared for death.*

In the service of self we have allowed years to pass;
And during our youth kept no count of the end.
We’ve had our full measure of the night;—now, Hāli!
Break up the entertainment! The time has come of dawn.
LXXXIII

In wealth it is very difficult to keep a firm footing.
Dread is, lest despair of your own heart should befall you;
Take heed to yourself a little, ere you grow rich. 1
For like as the touchstone is a sure test of gold,
So gold is the test of what is sterling in a man.

LXXXIV

Anger beyond bounds has claims to forgiveness.
My anger is provoked by another's anger only
So long as he keeps within the bounds of common sense.
When you have yourself become outside of yourself,
With whom should I be vexed?  You are no longer you.

LXXXV

The praise and blame of the ignorant.
When ignorant people are abusing all you do,
Give thanks to God, for then your innocence is proved.
But if, by any bad luck, they sing your praises,
Take heed, that your state is the reverse of what is good.

LXXXVI

The disease of old age is incurable.
Escape from the grip of weakness now is—you know.
Exchanging an old age for youth is—you know.
We have lost that thing, which to find is impossible;
That hour approaches, which to shun 2 is—you know.

1 Lit. ' (It is good) to become rich (only) after having reflected and understood (yourself) a little.'
2 Lit. 'of which the being shunned.'
LXXXVII

Inordinate expenditure.

Would the open handed not, simply, sow thorns for themselves,
They must not squander recklessly the wealth God has given.

Suppose people should laugh at their meanness:—that is better
Than that any should weep over their extravagances.

LXXXVIII

Sporning a petition.

True it is, that begging is a fault:—not a virtue;
But fierce denunciation of a beggar is not seemly.

Worse, a thousand times worse, O mean spirited man!
Than the cry of any beggar, is thy bitter response.

LXXXIX

Food without hunger gives no delight.

Many a dainty dish has been served to me unsought,
Which, when I saw and tasted it, has pleased me from my heart.

But sweeter by far than all, were those meals, O Hunger!
Which thou hast, from time to time, caused me to enjoy.

XO

Learning and Conduct are a better capital than wealth
and grandeur.

Dismiss your ideals of wealth and grandeur betimes;
For grandeur and wealth alike are mere ‘guests of a day.’

But heap up a store of that, to which may never come
Any prospect of perishing, nor danger of decay.

87

-irāf.

musrif na, bas, apne ḥaq mē gānṣe bo-ey,—
ni-mān na khandā kē rā-āgān yōn khe-ey!

gar bhākī pa log un kē hāsen:—bhītar hai
-is se, ki faṣāliyon pa -un kē ro-ey.

88

ra'd e suwāl.

yih sač hai, ki māngnā khatā hai, na šawāb;
zbā naḥīn sā-īl pa magar qāhr ḍī-ā Nashāb.

badār hāi, hāsrā hār, -ai dūn himmat!
sā-īl kē suwāl se tārā talkh jawāb.

89

khandā ba ghair bhāk ke māsā naḥīn detā.

khāne tū bahut mūyassar ‘a-e hānīn hameq,
jo, dekh kē, ḍakh kē, dīl sā bhi-e hānī hameq;
par sab sā lagāg the wuh khāne, -ai bhāk!
jo tū nē kabhī kabhī khilā-e hānī hameq.

90

-ilm o-amal kā sarmāya māl o daulat se
bhītar hāi.

chōro kabhī jald māl ʾo daulat kē khayāl?
mīnhān kē-dī din kē hānī, daulat hō, ki māl,

sarmāya kāro wuh jam-, jis ko na kabhī
-andešā-ʾt fāt ḍō, na ḍō khauṭī zawāl.
XCI

*Good people derive pleasure even from hearing themselves abused.*

Men cease to feel the want of praise and commendation,
Who do good,—and hear all that is bad from the public.
In those, who get a zest for these revellings, Hâli!
No sense of enjoyment is aroused by benedictions.

XCII

*Gratitude for friendly criticism of the author.*

Ferment of a wine cask in an empty flagon—
Once more in the heart of Hâli tumult has arisen.
Such kind appreciation of my verse from Taslim!—
I, yes even I, begin to doubt my own incompetence.

XCIII

*Benevolence free from obligation.*

If for any favour you desire some reward,
'Twill be your better plan not to grant that favour.
When you do a kindness, make it common to all;
So common, that no one in the world need be obliged.

XCIV

*Laws are not always preventive of moral depravity.*

No doubt to a great extent laws are inefficient;
'Twere ill, if the order of the world hinged on them.
For those, who are good, there is no need of them at all;
And by their means the wicked are not made good; far from it.
XCV

To contradiction there is no better reply than silence.

Having spoken the truth, do not strive with the perverse;
The fire of spite will crackle all the worse under rebuff.
You wish your opponents to be silent?—if so,
You have no resource, but to forgo opposition.

XCVI

The Income tax.

'All men,' said the preacher, 'are dallying with time';
One thing which never fails to keep its time is Death:'—
Here a banker stood up, and humbly said, 'My lord!
Tax time is just the same;—there's no putting it off.'

XCVII

Man conceals his own faults even from himself.

Such as I appear to men—this is not what I am;
And such as I think myself—that is not what I am.
I hide my own failings even from myself;
Yes; I know myself only as I—such as I am.

XCVIII

Inflating oneself with thoughts of love in old age.

Sighs in old age—old man! men do not heave, like this;
Men give their hearts, but do not throw their lives away, like this.
You were quit of all bondage, as I thought, for ever;
Men, who live, do not pine in lover's fashion, like this.

Lit. All (appointed) times are being put off (by men).

95

mukhālfat kā jawāb khalīqī se bihtar nahi.
beq bol kö, ahl e qar sē -aun ā na kahin;
bharogī mudafsāt sē -aur 'atish e kīn;
gar ēktī ho, ki ēq naheē ahl ē kīhāf.
jūk tark e kīhāfat, kē-1 tadīr naheē.

96

ṭikas.

wajīg nē kahī, ki 'waqt sē jātē hāī ātī;
-ik waqt sē -apne naheē ātīt, tō -ātī:—
ki -aarī yih -ik saved nē, -ūth karī, ki 'huqūr!
hāī tākē kā waqt bhi, -ūsī ṣārī, -aṭāl.'

97

-insēn -apne -āib -apne se bhi chāpā hái.
jaīsē nāgar 'atā hūn, na -aśā hūn maiē;
aur jaīsē samajīta hūn, na waisē hūn maiē.
apne sē bhi -āib hūn chipāta -apne:—
bās, mujh kē hī ma-lum hái, jaīsē hūn maiē.

98

būdhōpe meē -āśāqī kō dēm bhārnā.
-sheēq pīrī meē, sheēk! bhāre naheē, you;
dil dētē háī—par jī sē guztē naheē, you.
the tum tō hē ik quid sē -āzād sūdā:—
jo jītē háī, -is ārētē wuh māte naheē, you.
XCIX

The intolerant utterances of preachers.
When a fireworshipper asked to know the principles of Islam,
The preacher addressed him in words full of harshness.
Then said he, ‘The creed which your worship represents—
To such a creed, and such a religion, I make my bow.’

C

In honour of the Nauób Qádirul-humara Íqbaluddaula bahádur1.
‘Good fortune’ abandoned the companionship of him,
Who sought to win a victory over ‘Success.’
Who is the man, Hálí! who could win any prize
From one, in whose veins runs the blood of Asaf Jáh?

CI

A quatrain written in early life.
His daily remembrance is the task of my life;
This cup, never empty, be the flask of my life!
How could I forgo the praise of His name—It is His.
How should I refrain—from all I ask of my life?

1 After winning a polo match.