PRISON THOUGHTS

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ZINDĀN-NĀMA
35. OH CITY OF MANY LIGHTS

Listless and wan, green patch by patch, noonday dries up; 
Pale solitude with venomed tongue licks at these walls; 
Far as the skyline, like a fog, an oozy tide 
Of blockish misery swells and shrinks, heaves up and falls.

Beyond that fog the lights of my thronged city lie. 
Oh city of many lights!— 
Who could make out what way from here your lights are? Dark 
As a town's ramparts isolation hems me in, 
And war-worn hope's faint soldiery droops on every side.

OH CITY OF LIGHTS

1 Greenery by greenery, the pallid yellow noon is withering, 
The poison of solitude is licking the walls; 
Far away to the horizon keeps dwindling, swelling, rising, sinking, 
Like a mist, the turbid wave of unlovely pains.

5 Behind this mist the city of lights is situated; 
Oh city of lights, 
Who could say in what direction is the road to your lights? 
On every side stand the unit city-walls of banishment: 
Weary, in every direction, the exhausted army of ardour is sitting.

AI RAUSHNIYOŃ KE SHAHR

1 Sabza sabza sūkh-rahī hai phīki zard do-pahr, 
Divāroṅ ko chāt-rahā hai tanhā'i kā zahr; 
Dūr ufaq tak ghaṭṭī, baṛhtī, uṭhtī, girtī-rahī hai 
Kuhr ki šārat be-raunaq dardoi kī gadli lahr.

5 Bastā hai is kuhr ke pichhe raushniyon kā shahr; 
Ai raushniyon ke shahr, 
Kaun kahe kis sīnt hai teri raushniyon ki rāh? 
Har jānīb be-nūr kharī hai hijr kī shahr-panāh: 
Thakkar har su bāiṭh-rahī hai shauq kī mānd sipāh.
Today doubt fills my soul.
Oh city of many lights,
Let hope's armed ranks not turn from their night-marching yet!
Fortune befriend your loving hearts; say to them all—
This evening, when the lamps are lit, turn the wick high.

10  Today my heart is in anxiety;
Oh city of lights,
May the torrent of aspirations not turn its face away from the night-attack!
May it be well with your sweethearts; say to them all,
This evening when they light the lamps let them turn the flame high.

10  Āj mērā dil fikr meṅ hai;
Ai raushniyoṅ ke shahr,
Shabkhāṅ se muṅh pher na jā'ė armānoṅ ki rau.
Khair ho terī lailāṅ ki, in sab se kah-do
Āj kī shab jab diye jalā'ėn ūṅchī rakkheṅ lau.