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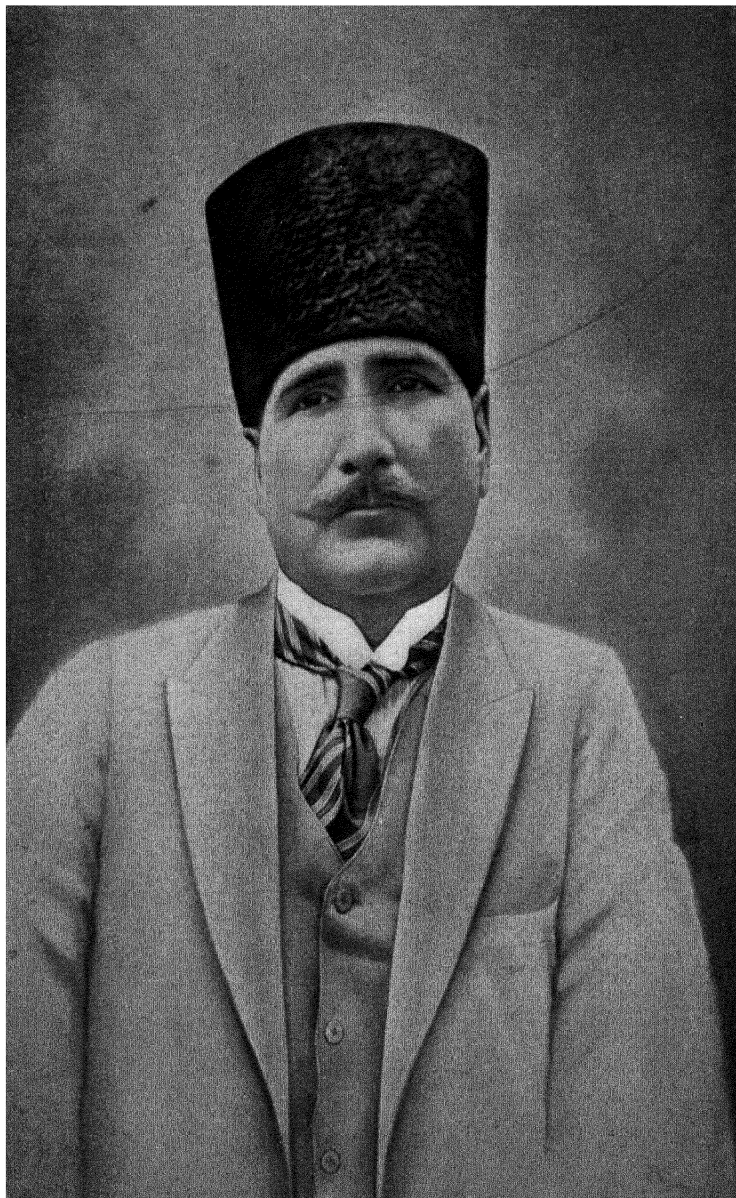
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Iqbal, Sir Muhammad

Title

Tulip of Sinai 1944

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SIR MUHAMMAD IQBĀL
(1876-1938)

THE TULIP OF SINAI

Translated from the Persian of the late
SIR MUḤAMMAD IQBĀL

by

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

SIR MUHAMMAD IQBĀL was born at Sialkot, Punjab, in 1876. His family originally came from Kashmir, and had produced a number of learned pundits, being converted to Islam several generations before the birth of its most distinguished member. His early education was obtained at the Sialkot Mission College, from which he proceeded to Lahore University. Immediately on taking his M.A. he was appointed to the Chair of History and Philosophy at the Oriental College, Lahore; some years later, in 1905, he came over to England to study philosophy under McTaggart at Cambridge, his college being Trinity. After taking his degree by research he was called to the Bar by Lincoln's Inn in 1908; before returning to India he furthered his philosophical studies at Munich, and was admitted to the Ph.D. degree on a thesis which was published at London under the title *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia*.

Coming back to India thus deeply versed in Western philosophy and methods of research, Iqbāl soon made his influence felt and eventually achieved a position of unchallenged eminence among modern Islamic thinkers. He reacted strongly against the forces of conservatism and sterile tradition which he felt to be destroying the vital energy of his people, and urged that Indians should understand the dynamism of Western civilization and recreate within themselves those powers of self-realization which had once made their ancestors great. He turned to poetry as potent to convey his message to those millions who had less taste for formal dialectic: his first essay in Persian

verse, the *Asrār i Khudī* ("Secrets of the Self"), was published at Lahore in 1915 and met with a striking success. The late Professor R. A. Nicholson found the poem so powerful and original that he at once sought permission of its author to publish an English translation, and corresponded with him to seek elucidation of certain features of his highly individual philosophy.

Iqbāl followed up this appeal for individual reform with an equally arresting summons to communal regeneration in his *Rumūz i Bīkhudī* ("Mysteries of Selflessness"), which appeared in 1916. Seven years later he produced the *Payām i Mashriq* ("Message of the East"), of which one section is translated in this book. In the same year, 1923, his great eminence as a thinker and a writer was recognized by the conferment on him of a knighthood. Iqbāl had been gradually turning from pure philosophy and metaphysics to politics, and from 1925 to 1928 he served as a member of the Punjab Legislature. Towards 1930 he began to advocate the formation of a North-West Indian Moslem State: later the advocates of Pakistan claimed him as a supporter. He came to London in 1931 as a delegate to the Round Table Conference. He was also a member of the All India Mohammedan Educational Conference.

Meanwhile he had turned from Persian to Urdu as a vehicle for his poetical gifts, and published successively the *Bāng i Darā* ("The Bell Tolls"), the *Ẓarb i Kalīm* ("Drumroll of Moses") and the *Ẓabūr i 'Ajam* ("Persian Psalms"). A volume of Persian and Urdu verses was published posthumously in November 1938 with the title *Armagh̄n i Hijāz* ("The Gift of Hijaz"). This steady output of poetry did not, how-

ever, cause Iqbāl to neglect his first love, philosophy. An invitation from the Madras Muslim Association was the occasion for him to deliver six lectures at Madras, Hyderabad and Aligarh, which were later published as *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* (Lahore, 1930; revised edition, O.U.P., 1934). This important book, which reveals a very wide study of modern scientific as well as philosophical thought, is perhaps the most significant attempt yet made to create a new philosophy of Islam.

Sir Muḥammad Iqbāl was made an honorary Litt.D. of the University of the Punjab in 1933, and two years later was invited by Oxford to be a Rhodes Memorial Lecturer. His health was now beginning to decline, and he withdrew more and more from public life. He died on April 21, 1938. His death was mourned as a national catastrophe by all Indians. Rabindranath Tagore declared: "India has lost a poet whose work has a great universal appeal." The years which have elapsed since his death have if anything further enhanced the authority and esteem he enjoyed during his lifetime. Many books and articles by learned Indians have already appeared examining and estimating the various aspects of Iqbāl's personality, writings and doctrines, and it is clear that his influence will continue to be felt powerfully in the world of Muslim thought for many years to come.

A. J. A.

PREFACE

The verses here translated form a section in the *Payām i Mashriq* ("Message of the East") of the late Sir Muḥammad Iqbāl, a volume of poetry composed, as the author has declared, in reply to Goethe's *West-oestlicher Divan*. In these poems Iqbāl expresses those characteristic doctrines which are well summarized in the preface to Professor R. A. Nicholson's translation of his *Asrār i Khudī* ("Secrets of the Self"): that book may with profit be used as a commentary on "The Tulip of Sinai."

In making this translation I have sought to be as faithful to the letter of the original as possible, and have imitated the stanzas used by Iqbāl. The notes may be useful to those readers who are not entirely familiar with the poet's religious background. I read "The Tulip of Sinai" with my pupil Mr. Muḥammad Ramazān, and derived much benefit from discussing the poems with him. Iqbāl is not an easy writer to understand, as Professor Nicholson himself confessed; and the form of the quatrain he uses in "The Tulip of Sinai" further augments the difficulty of grasping his full meaning. But I think I have made out his intention in each poem, and have endeavoured to compress it into the version.

Iqbāl was very modest about his Persian poetry. "I am of India," he writes in the *Asrār i Khudī*. "Persian is not my native tongue. I am like the crescent moon: my cup is not full. . . . O Reader, do not find fault with the wine-cup, but consider

attentively the taste of the wine." In fact, "The Tulip of Sinai" contains some poetry of a very high order, and is certainly in the first rank of modern Persian literature.

THE TULIP OF SINAI

I

ALL Being is a martyr to His whim,
All Life is graven with the need of Him;
Seest thou not the Sun, that flames the Sky,
Has left the scar of Worship on Dawn's rim ?

2

My heart is bright with burning inwardly,
Mine eye weeps blood, yet all the world does see;
Let him still less Life's mystery attain
Who says that Love is but insanity !

3

Love gives the Garden the soft breeze of May,
Love lights the star-buds in the Meadow gay,
The ray of Passion plunges through the Deep,
Love gives the fishes sight to see the Way.

4

Love reckoneth the price of eagles cheap,
And giveth pheasants to the falcons' grip;
Our hearts look carefully to their defence,
But suddenly, out of ambush, Love doth leap.

5

'Tis Love that paints the tulip petals' hue,
'Tis Love that stirs the spirit's bitter rue;
If thou couldst cleave this carrion of clay,
Thou shalt behold, within, Love's bloodshed too.

6

Not every soul of Love hath capital,
 Not every spirit respondeth to Love's call;
 The Tulip flowereth with a branded heart,
 The Ruby's heart hath not a spark at all.

7

A spent scent in the Garden I suspire,
 I know not what I seek, what I require,
 But be my passion satisfied, or no,
 Yet here I burn, a martyr to Desire.

8

The world is clay; our hearts its harvest be;
 Yet is this drop of blood its mystery;
 Surely our sight is double, or the world
 Of every man is in his heart, to see.

9

At dawn the Bulbul to the gardener spake:
 " Within this clay the roots of Sorrow lie—
 The desert thorn thrives on till it is old,
 The rose blossoms in youth, that it may die !"

10

This world of ours, where Loss is born with Gain,
 And Dissolution is with Being twain,
 Our heart will not endure it, soon or late:
 Make new the old, and build it up again !

11

Man is the Keyboard of Love's melody,
 Man is the Solver, and the Mystery;
 God made the world; Man made it yet more fair;
 And Man God's competitor to be ?

12

End nor Beginning is the quest for me:
 Mysterious, for a world of Mystery
 I look. Were all Reality unveiled,
 Yet would I seek Perchance, and It-may-be.

13

How long this fluttering of the moth, my Heart ?
 When wilt thou take at last the manly part ?
 Why hoverest thou about another's flame ?
 Go, burn thyself within the Fire thou art !

14

A hand of dust, a Body fortified
 Firmer than rocky rampart shall abide,
 Yet beats therein a sorrow-conscious Heart,
 A river flowing by a mountainside.

15

Of Water and of Clay a Figure fine
 God wrought, a world than Eden more divine,
 And still the Saki fashioned with his flame
 Another world, out of this Dust of mine.

16

The Brahman spake on Resurrection's day
 To God: "Life's lustre was a spark at play:
 But, if I may so speak without offence,
 The Idol lasted more than Adam's clay."

17

Swift-paced thou hast departed, Star of dawn,
 Perchance disgusted that we slumbered on:
 It was through ignorance I lost the Way—
 Wakeful thou camest, wakeful thou art gone.

18

The Tavern were exempt of turbulence,
 No spark illumed our clay's indifference,
 Love had not been, nor all the alarm of Love,
 If Heart possessed the Mind's intelligence.

19

O new-fledged Spirit proudly hovering,
 God made thee all delight upon the wing;
 'Tis fleshly passion checks our sluggard flight,
 While thou ecstatic unto Heaven dost spring.

20

What sweet delight, dear Lord, to live, to be !
 Each atom's heart pulses with radiant glee;
 The rosebud, bursting through the rose's stem,
 Glows with the smile of living ecstasy.

Thus, in annihilation, spake the Moth:

“ Give me awhile the glow and fever of Life;
 Though at the dawn my ashes shall be strewn,
Grant me one night of burning and of strife !”

Moslems ! I have a word within my heart
 More radiant than the soul of Gabriel;
 I keep it hidden from the Sons of Fire,
 It is a secret Abraham knew well.

O heart, my heart, unto His street thou’rt gone,
 O heart, my heart, thou leavest me alone;
 Each instant thou createst new desires;
 O heart, hast thou naught other to be done ?

Thou reachest to the bosom of a star;
 Yet of thyself thou art all unaware;
 Grain-like, upon thyself open an eye,
 And thou shalt rise from earth a sapling fair.

How sweet a birdsong on the air was borne
 Within the leafy garden, at the dawn !
 “ Give out whatever in thy heart thou hast—
 Carol, or make lament, or sigh, or mourn !”

If thou wilt take from me the lesson of life,
 I'll tell thee a close-guarded mystery:
 Having no soul in body, thou must die;
 Thou shalt not die, be there a Soul in thee.

O hush your fable of the candle-sprite,
 The tale of its burning grates upon the ear:
 That Moth alone I recognize as such
 That labours fiercely and blazes with good cheer

The draught that makes thee stranger to thyself,
 Of that delightful juice I have no part;
 Then seek no other goods in my bazaar,
 For, like the Rose, I have a bleeding heart.

Walk in my garden, and thou'lt find but loss,
 Except thy soul be martyred to the Quest;
 I shew what flows within the Rose's veins,
 No magic scents and hues my Spring possessed.

Forth from this world of How and Wherefore flee,
 This maelstrom of our Be and Not-to-be !
 Let Selfhood be the tenant of thy flesh,
 And build, like Abraham, a sanctuary.

31

Those meadow birds are all to me unknown,
 Here by the nest I sit and sing alone;
 Then leave me, if too tender is thy heart,
 For in my anthem all my life is gone.

32

Dear Lord, what sweet commotion fills the world !
 Thou hast made all drunken with a single bowl;
 Thou gavest glance communion with glance,
 But partedst heart from heart, and soul from soul.

33

Subtly spake Alexander to his Guide:
 “ Share this hard venture over land and sea;
 Watch not the conflict from the arena side,
 But die in combat, and more living be !”

34

Dust is the throne of Kay, the crown of Jam,
 Church, Temple, dust the Shrine of Abraham;
 I do not know what essence is in me—
 I gaze beyond the skies, yet dust I am !

35

If there were set within thy hand of dust
 A heart, a hundred fragments of warm blood,
 And of spring's clouds if thou couldst learn to
 weep,
 Tulips shall blossom from thy sorrow's flood.

36

Each breath new images are being cast,
 Not in one form finds Life stability;
 If thy To-day reflects thy Yesterday,
 No vital Spark within thy Dust can be.

37

Whene'er the joy of Music brings me forth
 The vast Assembly rages with my Fire,
 But when I would a little be alone
 Within my Heart I lose the World entire.

38

Enquirest thou, what is this Heart of thine ?
 The Heart was born, when Fire consumed the
 Brain:
 The joy of Agitation formed the Heart,
 And when this ceased, it turned to Clay again.

39

“ The eye cannot attain Him,” said the Mind:
 Yet Yearning's glance trembles in hope and fear.
 It grows not old, the tale of Sinai,
 And every heart yet whispers Moses' prayer.

40

Cathedral, temple, mosque, or monastery,
 Naught hast thou made, this hand of dust apart:
 Only the Heart can save from alien rule,
 And thou, O fool, thou hast not found a heart.

41

Not in these Bowers have I bound my heart,
But fare on free from this imprisonment:
Awhile I tarried, like the breath of dawn,
And gave the roses fragrance as I went.

42

This youthful Wine I poured into the Cup
Revives the aged toper near to die,
For, like the ancient Magians, this wine
I borrowed from the Saki's languorous eye.

43

His Wine hath made my sherd the Cup of Jam
And hid the Ocean in the drop I am:
My intellect had built an idol-house;
Love made of it the shrine of Abraham.

44

The Mind is Past's and Present's prisoner
And tends the Idols of the eye and ear;
It has an Image hidden in its sleeve—
The Brahman's son the girdle too shall wear.

45

In each man's head an intellect is set;
My flesh, like others', is of clay and blood,
But in this flesh there dwells a spaceless Thought—
I only have this secret understood.

46

A beggar thou didst stand on Sinai,
 For of itself thy soul is unaware;
 Stride boldly forth; be searching for a Man;
 In that enquiry God Himself doth share.

47

Speak this my message unto Gabriel:
 " My body was not made with light aglow;
 Yet see the fervour of us sons of earth,
 This joy-in-grief no Child of Light can know !"

48

Shall Knowledge fall the Phoenix in thy net?
 Be less assured: let Doubt imprison thee.
 Wouldst Work? Then let thy Faith be more
 mature:
 One be thou seeking, One behold, One be !

49

Mind wove the veils that cover up Thy face,
 And ah ! mine eyes thirst upon Thee to gaze.
 Thought with Desire is all the while at war—
 What tumult in my poor heart Thou dost raise !

50

Thy heart quivereth at the thought of Death,
 Pale as a lime in terror thou dost lie:
 Fear not; take thou a Selfhood more mature,
 Which grasping, after death thou shalt not die.

51

Why ask, what links my body and my soul ?
 I fall not in the snare of How, How Long:
 Awhile my breath is choked, but when I rise
 Clear of the reed's embrace, I am a song.

52

Thus spake the wise preceptor unto me:
 " Thy every Day the Morrow's message is:
 Preserve thy heart from the unheeding fair—
 No foot may tread its sanctuary but His."

53

Why ask of Razi what the Book denotes ?
 Behold, its best interpreter I am:
 Mind lights a flame, Heart burns—thus compre-
 hend
 The tale of Nimrod and of Abraham.

54

Whether I am, or not, I hold my peace—
 To say " I am " were self-idolatry:
 Who is the singer, then, and whose the song
 That cries " I am " within the heart of me ?

55

Tell thou from me that poet of bright words:
 " Thy tulip flame, what profit does it bring ?
 Thou meltest not thyself with such a fire,
 Nor lightest up the night of sorrowing."

56

I do not know thy Ugly and thy Fair:
 Thou takest Gain and Loss to measure by.
 I am the loneliest in this company—
 I view the vast world with another eye.

57

Perchance, grave minister, thou knowest not
 Love too shall have its Judgment after death,
 But in that Hall nor Book nor Balance is,
 Nor sin, nor infidelity, nor faith.

58

The water-drop, when it is self-illumed,
 Amidst a hundred as one pearl shall be:
 Then at this feast of choristers so live
 To take their garden for an oratory.

59

Ye men of learning, I am in a maze,
 The Mind this meaning cannot understand:
 How in a hand of Dust there beats a heart
 Wherein gazelles of Fancy rove the land.

60

Take not thy banquet on the shore, for there
 Too gently flows the melody of life:
 Plunge in the sea, do battle with the waves,
 For immortality is won in strife.

61

I am a hidden thought: the prying glance
 Of wordy spinners fills me with disgust:
 Say not Freewill or Destiny, for I
 Am living, revolutionary dust.

62

Speak not about the Purpose of this life:
 Thou hast not sight to see its blandishments.
 I have such joy in travelling the Road,
 Except the stony way, no stage I sense.

63

If thou wouldst fix thy gaze upon a rock,
 It did become a jewel through thy lust:
 Weigh not thyself by gold; thou slave of gold—
 It was thy glance that gilded the base dust.

64

Stranger it was, nor faithfulness did know,
 Its gaze was restless, searching to and fro:
 When it beheld Him, from my breast it flew—
 I knew not that His hand had taught it so.

65

Speak not of Love, and of Love's wizardry:
 Whatever shape thou wilt, he doth descend:
 Within the breast he is a spark, no more,
 But on the tongue a tale without an end.

66

Sweet newborn bud, why art thou so forlorn ?
 What seekest thou within this garden fair ?
 For here is dew, a river, song at morn,
 Birds in the grass, red roses, summer air.

67

One day a withered rose thus spoke to me:
 " Our manifesting is a spark swift blown:
 My heart is anguished for the Artist's pain,
 The painting of His brush fadeth so soon !"

68

Behold this world of ours that has no end
 Drowned like a fish within the sea of days:
 A sea of days drowned in a single bowl
 If thou wouldst view—fix on thy heart thy gaze.

69

My talk is with the songsters of the glade;
 The tongue of tongueless rosebuds I was made;
 When I am dead, O cast my dust on air—
 Attending roses is my only trade.

70

This vale of roses, is it as it seems ?
 What makes the tulip's fiery heart to glow ?
 A sea of colours is the mead we view:
 How nightingales behold it, who can know ?

71

I am a circling planet, Thou my sun,
The light that bathes me by Thy glance is thrown:
Far from Thy bosom I imperfect am,
Thou art the Book, one chapter I alone.

72

Sweet is His image in my sight to stay,
Sweeter His love, my life to steal away;
It was a subtle Teacher taught me this—
Sweeter than lodging is the winding Way.

73

A girdled infidel, this Brain of mine,
It worships idols of its own design;
Regard my Heart, weeping for Passion's grief—
What is to thee my Way, my Faith divine ?

74

The free-paced fir His bondsman was before,
Fire in the rose's cheek His wine did pour,
Sun, moon and stars His sanctuary are,
The heart of Adam, His unopened door.

75

A hundred worlds stretched star to farthest star,
Where'er the Mind soared, there the heavens are,
But when I looked within upon my Self,
I saw a margin infinitely far.

76

Set not the chain of Fate upon thy foot;
There is a Way beyond this rolling sphere;
If thou believest not, rise up, and find
Thy foot uplifted leapeth in the air.

77

My Heart to its own spell is prisoner,
The world is lightened by its radiance fair;
Seek not my dawn and even in a sun
That ere my rising shone a many year.

78

Played by Thy hand, the soul makes melody;
How art Thou in, and yet without the soul?
With Thee, my flame, I burn, without Thee, die;
How farest Thou without me, O my Whole?

79

The heaved breath is a breaker of His sea,
He lips our reed, and plays our melody;
We grow as grass by an eternal stream,
His dew is in our vein and artery.

80

There is one pain that tortureth Thy breast:
Thou madest this world of colours and of scents,
Why does it pain Thee else my fearless love,
Who didst create this mighty turbulence?

81

Whom seekest thou ? What fever fills thy mind ?
 'Tis He is patent, thou the veil behind :

Search after Him, and but thyself thou'lt see,
 Search after Self. and naught but Him thou'lt find.

82

Leave childishness, and learn a better lore ;
 Abandon race, if thee a Moslem bore ;

If of his colour, blood, and veins and skin
 The Arab boasts—an Arab be no more !

83

Not Afghans, Turks, or sons of Tartary,
 But of one garden, and one trunk, are we ;

Shun the criterion of scent and hue—
 We all the nurslings of one springtime be.

84

There is a world concealed within my breast,
 Heart in my dust, by passion's grief possest,

And of the Wine that first lit up the soul
 One drop within my pitcher yet doth rest.

85

O heart of mine, I call thy name thrice o'er :
 Thou art my barque, my ocean, and my shore !

Art thou the dew that trickled o'er my dust,
 Or a red rosebud that my ashes bore ?

86

What maketh Foul and Fair, how shall I say?
 Tongue trembleth, such a riddle to declare:
 Without the stem, thou seest rose and thorn,
 Within, nor rose nor thorn is patent there.

87

What man in secret is not sorrowful,
 He hath a body, but he hath no soul:
 Desirest thou a spirit? Then pursue
 The fire and fever that shall never cool.

88

O ask not what I am, or whence came I:
 'Tis self-involvement I am living by:
 Within this sea I am a restless wave,
 And when I am no more involved, I die.

89

With all Thy glory, Thou the veil dost wear,
 The passion of our gaze Thou canst not bear,
 Thou runnest in our blood like potent wine,
 But ah! how strange Thou comest, and too rare.

90

Hug not the rest-house; on the roadway run;
 Keep bright the vision, as the moon and sun;
 The goods of Mind and Faith to others give,
 But guard Love's sorrow that thy heart hath won.

91

Come, Love, thou heart's most secret whispering,
 Come, thou our sowing and our harvesting;
 These earthly spirits are too aged grown—
Out of our clay another Adam bring !

92

Speech bringeth pain and grief—so best it were;
 This long lament to me is lovelier;
 The joy I have not Alexander knew—
 Better than Jamshid's realm a slow, sweet air.

93

I have no swift-paced steed to ride upon,
 I am no courtier of a monarch's son;
 This, friend, for me is happiness enough
 That, when I dug my heart—a ruby shone !

94

Wouldst thou the perfect life attain ? Then learn
 On Self alone to fix the opened eye;
 The world to swallow in a single draught;
 To break the spell it is encompassed by.

95

“ A child of earth is Adam,” thou dost say,
 “ Bond to the world of Being and Decay ”;
 Yet Nature wrought a miracle indeed—
 The sea's foundations on his fount to lay !

To dauntless hearts leopards mere sheep appear,
 The quaking spirit tigers sees in deer;
 The sea's a plain, if thou art unafraid,
 In every wave's a shark, if thou dost fear.

Wine am I, or the bowl where it doth lie?
 Pearl, or the bosom it is treasured by?
 I scan my heart, and this is all I see:
 One thing my soul is, and another I.

Thou sayest, " Lo, our bird is in the snare,
 No more shall he stretch wings and fly in air ";
 Yet grows the soul more salient through the flesh,
 Our dagger's whetted by its scabbard there.

Declare: how in the heart is born desire,
 How in the dwelling burns the lantern's fire,
 Who sees with this our sight, and what he sees,
 And how the soul was lodged within our mire.

When I was dead, and walked in Paradise,
 This earth and heaven I could clearly see;
 One doubt yet lingered in my troubled soul—
 Was it the world, that world of imagery?

Our world is nothing but an artist's sketch,
 Prisoner of alternate eve and dawn;
 The file of destiny maketh it smooth;
 This dusty form is not yet fully drawn.

Being so distant, heaven-circling sun,
 What manner to my vision dost thou come?
 Nigh to the earthy, from the earth so far!
 O vision dazzler, whither dost thou roam?

Take thou thine axe, and excavate thy path;
 To go another's road is cruel hard;
 If by thy labour something rare is wrought,
 Though it be sin, it hath its own reward.

The roving heart likes not at home to stay,
 To be contained in water, fire, and clay;
 Think not that in the body is repose,
 This rolling sea comes to no shore to play.

Why choolest thou to sit alone, apart?
 With Nature's beauty be at dalliance:
 God gave to thee an eye with vision clear
 Out of its lustre to create a glance.

106

Mid clay and water I have sat alone,
From Plato and Farabi I am gone,
I begged not for the eyes of any man,
Nor looked upon the world save with my own.

107

The origins of Selfhood no man knows,
To dawn and eve no fellowship it owes.
I heard this wisdom from the Heavenly guide:
“Not older than its wave the Ocean flows.”

108

Heart, in the Rosebud view Life's mystery:
Truth in Contingent there unveiled is shewn;
Although it springeth from the shadowed earth,
Its gaze is fixed upon the radiant sun.

109

Garden and mead are in His radiance dight,
His wine the rose adorns in lustre bright,
None in this world benighted He hath left,
His brand hath kindled in each heart a' light.

110

In the narcissus bed a bud did rise,
The dew of dawn washed slumber from its eyes,
Self out of Selflessness appeared, and so
What it had sought, the world did realize.

111

The world, that findeth in itself no stay,
 Sought in the street of Yearning for a way,
 From the embrace of Non-existence fled,
 And last in Adam's heart for refuge lay.

112

Of flesh and soul my heart the secret knows;
 That death is grief for me, do not suppose;
 What sorrow, if one world the less I see?
 A hundred worlds within my brain repose.

113

The Rose and I one problem have to tell;
 We both are seized by the Assembly's spell;
 The petal's tongue was not made eloquent,
 But in his wounded breast a heart doth dwell.

114

The self-sown tulip's temper I know well,
 Within the stem the roses' scent I smell,
 The meadow songster loves me as a friend,
 The tone wherein he carols I can tell.

115

One song of yearning fills the world entire,
 This yearning strings the universal lyre;
 Whatever is, and was, and is to be
 I see one moment of all Time's desire.

116

My heart is all the yearning of unrest,
 Tumult and agitation fill my breast;
 What discourse, comrade, seekest thou of me ?
 All I would say, is to my self addressed.

117

Survival is, unendingly to burn;
 Like fishes, we can naught but twist and turn;
 Seek not the shore, for in the shore's embrace
 One moment's twisting ends in death eterne.

118

And if the Brahman, preacher, biddeth us
 Bow down to idols, furrow not thy brow:
 Our God Himself, who shaped an image fair,
 Bade Cherubim before an idol bow.

119

Philosophers a hundred idols break,
 Yet Being's Somnath they will not forsake;
 With Adam not yet to the saddle tied,
 Angels, and God, do they presume to take ?

120

Out of my hand of clay worlds spring like grain;
 Come, from my harvest capital obtain;
 Lo, thou hast missed the way unto the Friend;
 Then lose thyself awhile in my heart's plain.

A thousand years with Nature I did make
 Near comradeship, and did my Self forsake;
 And all my history was summed in this—
 I fashioned, and I worshipped, and I brake.

I flew the broad plains of eternity,
 From chains of clay and water I was free;
 My worth is very precious in Thy sight,
 For in life's market Thou hast offered me.

What are these thoughts that flash within my breast,
 While all without by secrets is possessed?
 Explain me this, my wise philosopher—
 My soul a traveller, and my flesh at rest!

I boast, I am a beggar without need;
 I shake, I burn, I melt; I play my reed;
 My melody has set thee all ablaze;
 Mirrors I make, being Alexander's breed.

If thou well knowest all thy quality,
 Lay down thy dew, and build thereon the sea:
 How long this begging at the moon, my heart?
 Light up thy dark with thy own radiancy!

Why sorrowest thou ? The heart lives not by
 breath,
 It is not chained to Being and to Death.
 Fear not to die, O thou of little sight,—
 Though the breath stop, the heart continueth.

Heart, while thou sittest in the breast of me
 Better my rug, than sovereign dignity:
 Wilt thou be in my bosom after death ?
 Lo, all my hopes and fears are fixed on thee.

Take to the Sufis pure this word from me:
 “ Ye seek for God, and know all subtlety,
 Yet will I serve the man who worships Self
 And in the light of Selfhood, God doth see.”

Narcissus-like, unseeing do not creep
 Out of the mead, as scent the rosebuds weep:
 God gave to thee a more illumined eye—
 Pass not with waking brain, and heart asleep !

After my likeness I an image made;
 I bound on God the fashion that I wore;
 Wherefore I cannot out of Self depart—
 Whatever be my guise, Self I adore.

Thus spake the new-sprung blossom to the dew:
 " We meadow children have no piercing eye:
 In this broad plain, that holds a hundred suns,
 What difference existṣ 'twixt low and high ?"

Take earth, heaven's mysteries to understand,
 By finite space let spacelessness be spanned;
 Each atom flies toward the Friend's abode—
 Then mark the roadway by the shifting sand.

Thou only art in the Creator's " Be !"
 Thou only art the Sign that none may see;
 Then tread more fearlessly the road of life,
 The world's broad plain containeth only thee.

Earth is the dust upon my tavern door,
 Heaven one passing of my cup, no more,
 Long is the story of my passion's grief,
 The world is but the prelude of my lore.

Gone is Iskandar, with his sword and throne,
 His tribute and his treasure—all is gone;
 Know then that folk endure beyond their kings:
 Though Jam is dead, yet Persia liveth on.

136

My breast was torn, and thou hast seized my
heart,
Yea, with my dearest prize thou didst depart;
Whom gavest thou my passion's precious store?
What hast thou done with my most cherished
smart?

137

The world of colour and of fragrancy,
Earth, sky, dimension, all are gone from me;
Didst thou desert His tumult, O my heart,
Or hath He left thee to thy privacy?

138

I do not know the instrument or key,
Yet well I recognize Life's melody;
So sang I in the brambles, that the rose
Asked of the thrush, "What caroller is he?"

139

In the great throng so rapturous I did play,
I struck the spark of Life out of their clay,
I lit the heart with the mind's radiance,
And probed the mind against the heart's assay.

140

My songs have brought back Persia's youth again,
Her fame is quickened by my heart's refrain;
My ringing cry has urged along the road
The throng who lost their way upon the plain.

141

The soul of Persia kindles at my song,
The caravan moves on, my call is strong;
Like Urfi I will lift a livelier lilt,
For heavy is the load, the way sleeps long.

142

Out of my restless spirit the flames start,
In the East's bosom I have stirred a heart,
Its clay is set afire by my lament,
Like lightning to its inmost soul I dart.

143

I am a wanderer like the breeze of morn,
Roselike my heart is into fragments torn,
My glance, which cannot see the evident,
A martyr to the joy of sight is borne.

144

Cotton to cloth of gold the Mind can bring,
Stones turn to mirrors, by its polishing:
The poet, with his magical melody,
To honeyed potion doth convert Life's sting.

145

I have consumed the fruit of Passion's tree,
And understood Life's inmost mystery;
Lo, I have brought the message of the Spring—
Beware the Gardener, Lord of archery !

My thought plucks flowers that in Eden grew
 To shape and fashion fancies rare and new,
 Then shakes my heart a leaf within my breast,
 A petal trembling 'neath the Summer dew.

Persia's a sea that never comes to shore,
 Wherein are pearls of diamantine hue,
 Yet I'll not sail my barque upon a sea
 Within whose waves is never a shark to view.

Say not, the world's affairs unstable be;
Our every moment veils eternity;
 Hold firmly to To-day: for yet remains
 To-morrow in the mind of Destiny.

Thou hast escaped the mastery of the West,
 And yet to tomb and dome thou still dost pray:
 Thou art so well inured to servitude,
 Thou carv'st a Master of the stony way !

How long Life's garment parted shred by shred ?
 How long like ants make in the earth thy bed ?
 Rise up on wings, and learn the falcon's way,
 Nor search forever in the straw for bread.

151

Nest amid roses and anemones,
Learn from the thrush his plangent melodies;
If impotence has made thee grey and old,
From the world's youth a vital portion seize !

152

It was the Soul the body's image hewed,
The rose bloomed double, yearning to be shewn;
The restless Soul a thousand habits hath,
And turns to flesh, when it is used to one.

153

I heard a voice proclaiming from the grave:
" Beneath the dust life can be lived again;
Breath he possesses, but he has no soul,
Who lives to please the whim of other men."

154

This hand of dust that scattereth into air
Not long endureth; yet do not despair;
When Nature fashioneth a living form,
It needs an age, to make perfection there.

155

It must be known, this world of scent and sheen;
They must be plucked, the roses in the dene;
Yet do not close thine eyes upon the Self,
Within thy soul a thing is to be seen.

156

“ I am, and God is not ”: thou sayest so:
 “ Water and clay into the boundless go ”:
 Yet I have not resolved this mystery—
 Whether it is mine eye that sees, or no.

157

I have no roasted fowl on which to sup,
 No mirror-shining wine is in my cup,
 Upon green grasses grazes my gazelle,
 Yet fragrant musk filleth his heartblood up.

158

My passion makes the Moslem's blood to dance,
 His eyelids shed my tears' exuberance,
 Yet knows he not the tumult of my soul,
 He has not viewed the vast world with my glance.

159

Words are too frail, abodelessness to bear;
 Look inwardly, and see this point is clear;
 The soul has such a seat within the flesh
 One cannot say, “ It is not here, but there !”

160

Love plays with every heart a different rôle,
 Now as a stone, and now a crystal bowl;
 Love robbed thee of thy self, and gave thee tears,
 But brought me ever closer to my soul.

From clay and water thou art not yet free,
 Thou sayest thou art Afghan, Turkoman:
 First I am man, and have no other hue,
 Thereafter Indian, Turanian.

The love of speech first filled my heart with blood
 And set aflame the dust upon the road;
 But when I oped my lips, to speak of love,
 Words veiled this secret in a thicker shroud.

At last from subtle reason he has fled;
 His self-willed heart knew passion, and it bled;
 What askest thou of Iqbāl in the clouds?
 Our wise philosopher has lost his head.

NOTES

1. Moslem hagiographers often adduce as evidence of holiness the scar or blaise on the saint's forehead caused by frequent prostrations. The poet compares the red rim of dawn with this blaise.

4. Strength and weakness, aggressiveness and pacifism are alike no protection against the overwhelming power of Love.

5. Persian poets are fond of comparing with the flower's red petals the lover's bleeding heart.

8. "Double sight" has not the same connotation in Persian as in English: there it is a metaphor of unreliability and imperfect vision. The poet illustrates the philosophical hypothesis that every man's world is the product of his own thought.

11. Is Man God's partner in making the world a fairer place?

15. The Saki's flame is the Persian poet's image of the wine of spiritual intoxication.

16. The image wrought by man endured long after its maker's death.

22. The reference is to the legend of Abraham and Nimrod as told in Koran, Sura xxi. 60-69: "He said, What! do ye then worship, instead of God, that which doth not profit you at all, nor injure you? Fie on you and on that ye worship instead of God! What! do ye not then understand? They said: Burn him, and come to the succour of your gods: if ye will do anything at all. We said, O fire! be thou cold, and to Abraham a safety!" (J. M. Rodwell's translation.)

29. The rose's scent and hue are mere external, sensual manifestations: the poet knows the secret of the rose's life-blood.

30. Abraham overthrew the idols in the temple at Mecca and built the Kaaba for the worship of the One God: see Koran, Sura xxii. 27.

31. The "meadow birds" are the conventional poets of India whose traditional style Iqbāl scorns.

33. In the Alexander-legend as told by Moslem writers, the great conqueror set forth to seek the source of the Water of Life and was accompanied on this quest by the mysterious Khizr (though in some versions Khizr and Alexander pursued different ways).

34. Kay-Ka'us and Jamshid are ancient kings of Persia.

39. Moses on Sinai said to God, " My Lord, show me Thy self, that I may gaze on Thee," but God replied, " Thou shalt not see Me, but look upon the mountain: if it stand still in its place, then thou wilt see Me." God revealed Himself to the mountain, and it crashed into ruin. See Koran, Sura vii. 139.

42. The last line is a quotation from the Persian poet Iraqi; I have quoted E. G. Browne's translation of this line: see his *Literary History of Persia*, iii, p. 126.

43. The Cup of Jamshid had the miraculous property of revealing the whole world.

50. " Pale as a lime ": the original says, " yellow as *zarir* " (a wood giving a yellow dye).

53. Razi wrote a great Commentary on the Koran.

64. The poet speaks of his heart.

71. " One chapter ": literally, " a thirtieth part " of the parts into which the Koran is divided.

118. When God created Adam, He commanded the angels to bow down before him: all obeyed, except Iblis. See Koran, Sura ii. 32.

119. Somnath was the famous Hindu temple destroyed by the conqueror Mahmud of Ghazna.

124. Alexander is said to have possessed a mirror which had the same magic properties as Jamshid's cup.

141. Iqbāl quotes from the famous Persian-Indian poet Urfi, who served Akbar and died in 1591.

147. Persia here symbolizes the traditional forms of thought and poetry, the doctrine of quietism against which Iqbāl rebels.

152. " The rose bloomed double ": the original refers to the rose that is red inwardly and yellow outwardly. The poet compares the red soul within the yellow flesh with such a rose.

