I

Showing that the system of the universe originates in the Self, and that the continuation of the life of all individuals depends on strengthening the Self.

The form of existence is an effect of the Self,
Whatever thou seest is a secret of the Self.
When the Self awoke to consciousness,
It revealed the universe of Thought.
A hundred worlds are hidden in its essence:
Self-affirmation brings Not-self to light.
By the Self the seed of hostility is sown in the world:
It imagines itself to be other than itself.
It makes from itself the forms of others
In order to multiply the pleasure of strife.
It is slaying by the strength of its arm
That it may become conscious of its own strength.
Its self-deceptions are the essence of Life;
Like the rose, it lives by bathing itself in blood.
For the sake of a single rose it destroys a hundred rose-gardens
And makes a hundred lamentations in quest of a single melody.
For one sky it produces a hundred new moons,
And for one word a hundred discourses.
The excuse for this wastefulness and cruelty
Is the shaping and perfecting of spiritual beauty.
18 SECRETS OF THE SELF

The loveliness of Shírín justifies the anguish of Farhád,¹
The fragrant navel justifies a hundred musk-deer.
'Tis the fate of moths to consume in flame:
The suffering of moths is justified by the candle.
The pencil of the Self limned a hundred to-days
In order to achieve the dawn of a single morrow.
Its flames burned a hundred Abrahams²
That the lamp of one Mohammed might be lighted.

Subject, object, means, and causes—
They all exist for the purpose of action.

¹ Shírín was loved by the Persian emperor Khusrau Parwíz. Farhád fell in love with her and cast himself down a precipice on hearing a false rumour of her death.
² Abraham is said to have been cast on a burning pile by order of Nimrod and miraculously preserved from harm.
The Self rises, kindles, falls, glows, breathes,
Burns, shines, walks, and flies.
The spaciousness of Time is its arena,
Heaven is a billow of the dust on its road.

From its rose-planting the world abounds in roses;
Night is born of its sleep, day springs from its waking.
It divided its flame into sparks
And taught the understanding to worship particulars.
It dissolved itself and created the atoms,
It was scattered for a little while and created the sands.
Then it wearied of dispersion
And by re-uniting itself it became the mountains.
'Tis the nature of the Self to manifest itself:
In every atom slumbers the might of the Self.
Power that is unexpressed and inert
Chains the faculties which lead to action.

Inasmuch as the life of the universe comes from the strength of the Self,
Life is in proportion to this strength.
When a drop of water gets the Self’s lesson by heart,
It makes its worthless existence a pearl.
Wine is formless because its self is weak;
It receives a form by favour of the cup.
Although the cup of wine assumes a form,

It is indebted to us for its motion.
When the mountain loses its self, it turns into sands
And complains that the sea surges over it;
But the wave, so long as it remains a wave in the sea’s bosom,
Makes itself a rider on the sea’s back.
Light has been a beggar since the eye first rolled
And moved to and fro in search of beauty;
But forasmuch as the grass found a means of growth in its self,
Its aspiration clove the breast of the garden.
The candle too concatenated itself
And built itself out of atoms;
Then it made a practice of melting itself away and fled from its self
Until at last it trickled down from its own eye, like tears.
If the bezel had been more self-secure by nature,
It would not have suffered wounds,
But since it derives its value from the superscription,
Its shoulder is galled by the burden of another’s name.
Because the earth is firmly based on self-existence,
The captive moon goes round it perpetually.
The being of the sun is stronger than that of the earth:
Therefore is the earth bewitched by the sun’s eye.
The glory of the plane fixes our gaze,
The mountains are enriched by its majesty:
Its raiment is woven of fire,
Its origin is one self-assertive seed.
When Life gathers strength from the Self,
The river of Life expands into an ocean.
II

Showing that the life of the Self comes from forming desires and bringing them to birth.

Life is preserved by purpose:
Because of the goal its caravan-bell tinkles.
Life is latent in seeking,
Its origin is hidden in desire.
Keep desire alive in thy heart,
Lest thy little dust become a tomb.
Desire is the soul of this world of hue and scent,
The nature of every thing is faithful to desire.
Desire sets the heart dancing in the breast,
And by its glow the breast is made bright as a mirror.
It gives to earth the power of soaring,
It is a Khizr to the Moses of perception.¹

From the flame of desire the heart takes life,
And when it takes life, all dies that is not true.

When it refrains from forming wishes,
Its pinion breaks and it cannot soar.
Desire is an emotion of the Self:
It is a restless wave of the Self’s sea.

Desire is a noose for hunting ideals,
A binder of the book of deeds.
Negation of desire is death to the living,
Even as absence of burning extinguishes the flame.

What is the source of our wakeful eye?
Our delight in seeing hath taken visible shape.

¹ Cf. Koran, ch. 18, vv. 64-80. Khizr represents the mystic seer whose actions are misjudged by persons of less insight.
SECRETS OF THE SELF 25

The partridge’s leg is derived from the
elegance of its gait,
The nightingale’s beak from its en-
deavour to sing.
Away from the reed-bed, the reed
became happy:
The music was released from its
prison.¹
Why does the mind strive after new
discoveries and scale the heavens?²
Knowest thou what works this miracle?
'Tis desire that enriches Life,
And the intellect is a child of its
womb.
What are social organisation, customs,
and laws?
What is the secret of the novelties of
science?
A desire which broke through by its
own strength
And burst forth from the heart and
took shape.

¹ I.e. the reed was made into a flute.
Nose, hand, brain, eye, and ear,
Thought, imagination, feeling, memory,
and understanding—
All these are weapons devised for self-
preservation
By him that rides into the battle of Life.
The object of science and art is not knowledge,
The object of the garden is not the bud and the flower.
Science is an instrument for the preservation of Life,
Science is a means of establishing the Self.
Science and art are servants of Life,
Slaves born and bred in its house.
Rise, O thou who art strange to Life's mystery,
Rise intoxicated with the wine of an ideal!
If thou art an ideal, thou wilt shine as the dawn
And be to all else as a blazing fire.
If thou art an ideal, thou art higher than Heaven—
Winning, captivating, enchanting men’s hearts;
A destroyer of ancient falsehood,
Fraught with turmoil, an embodiment of the Last Day.
We live by forming ideals,
We glow with the sunbeams of desire!
III

*Showing that the Self is strengthened by Love.*

The luminous point whose name is the Self
Is the life-spark beneath our dust.

By Love it is made more lasting,
More living, more burning, more glowing.

From Love proceeds the radiance of its being
And the development of its unknown possibilities.

Its nature gathers fire from Love,

Love instructs it to illumine the world.

---

1 For the sense which Iqbal attaches to the word “love,” see the Introduction, p. xxv.
Love fears neither sword nor dagger,  
Love is not born of water and air and earth.  
Love makes peace and war in the world,  
The Fountain of Life is Love’s flashing sword.  
The hardest rocks are shivered by Love’s glance:  
Love of God at last becomes wholly God.  
Learn thou to love, and seek to be loved:  
Seek an eye like Noah’s, a heart like Job’s!  
Transmute thy handful of earth into gold,  
Kiss the threshold of a Perfect Man!  
Like Rúmí, light thy candle  
And burn Rúm in the fire of Tabríz!  

1 A prophet or saint.  
2 See note on p. 95. Tabríz is an allusion to Shams-i Tabríz, the spiritual director of Jalálu’ddin Rúmí.
There is a beloved hidden within thine heart:
I will show him to thee, if thou hast eyes to see.

His lovers are fairer than the fair,
Sweeter and comelier and more beloved.
By love of him the heart is made strong
And earth rubs shoulders with the Pleiades.
The soil of Najd was quickened by his grace
And fell into a rapture and rose to the skies.¹

In the Moslem’s heart is the home of Mohammed,
All our glory is from the name of Mohammed.
Sinai is but an eddy of the dust of his house,
The sanctuary of the Ka‘ba is his dwelling-place.

¹ Najd, the Highlands of Arabia, is celebrated in love-romance. I need only mention Lailá and Majnún.
Eternity is less than a moment of his time,
Eternity receives increase from his essence.
He slept on a mat of rushes,
But the crown of Chosroes was under his people’s feet.
He chose the nightly solitude of Mount Hirá,
And he founded a state and laws and government.
He passed many a night with sleepless eyes
In order that the Moslems might sleep on the throne of Persia.
In the hour of battle, iron was melted by his sword;
In the hour of prayer, tears fell like rain from his eye.
When he was called to aid, his sword answered “Amen”
And extirpated the race of kings.
He instituted new laws in the world,
He brought the empires of antiquity to an end.
With the key of religion he opened the door of this world:
The womb of the world never bore his like.
In his sight high and low were one,
He sat with his slave at one table.
The daughter of the chieftain of Tai was taken prisoner in battle
And brought into that exalted presence;
Her feet in chains, unveiled,
And her neck bowed with shame.
When the Prophet saw that the poor girl had no veil,
He covered her face with his own veil.
We are more naked than that lady of Tai,
We are unveiled before the nations of the world.

1 Her father, Hátim of Tai, is proverbial in the East for his hospitality.
In him is our trust on the Day of Judgement,
And in this world too he is our protector.
Both his favour and his wrath are entirely a mercy:
That is a mercy to his friends and this to his foes.
He opened the gates of mercy to his enemies,
He gave to Mecca the message, “No blame shall be laid upon you.”
We who know not the bonds of country
Resemble sight, which is one though it be the light of two eyes.
We belong to the Hijáz and China and Persia,
Yet we are the dew of one smiling dawn.
We are all under the spell of the eye of the cupbearer from Mecca,
We are united as wine and cup.
He burnt clean away distinctions of lineage,
His fire consumed this trash and rubble.
We are like a rose with many petals but with one perfume:
He is the soul of this society, and he is one.
We were the secret concealed in his heart:
He spake out fearlessly, and we were revealed.
Thesong of love for him fills my silent reed,
A hundred notes throb in my bosom.
How shall I tell what devotion he inspires?
A block of dry wood wept at parting from him.\textsuperscript{1}

The Moslem’s being is where he manifests his glory:
Many a Sinai springs from the dust on his path.

\textsuperscript{1} The story of the pulpit that wept when Mohammed descended from it occurs, I think, in the \textit{Masnavi}.
III SECRETS OF THE SELF 35

My image was created by his mirror,
My dawn rises from the sun of his breast.
My repose is a perpetual fever,
My evening hotter than the morning of Judgement Day:¹
He is the April cloud and I his garden,
My vine is bedewed with his rain.
I sowed mine eye in the field of Love
And reaped a harvest of delight.
"The soil of Medina is sweeter than both worlds:
Oh, happy the town where dwells the Beloved!"²
I am lost in admiration of the style of Mullá Jámí:
His verse and prose are a remedy for my immaturity.
He has written poetry overflowing with beautiful ideas

¹ When, according to Mohammedan belief, the sun will rise in the west.
² A quotation from the Masnavi. The Prophet was buried at Medina.
And has threaded pearls in praise of the Master—
“Mohammed is the preface to the book of the universe:
All the world are slaves and he is the Master.”
From the wine of Love spring many qualities:
Amongst the attributes of Love is blind devotion.
The saint of Bistám, who in devotion was unique,
Abstained from eating a water-melon.¹
Be a lover constant in devotion to thy beloved,
That thou mayst cast thy noose and capture God.
Sojourn for a while on the Hirá of the heart,²

¹ Báyazid of Bistám died in A.D. 875. He refused to eat a water-melon, saying he had no assurance that the Prophet had ever tasted that fruit.
² Mohammed used to retire to a cave on Mount Hirá, near Mecca, for the purpose of solitary meditation and other ascetic observances.
Abandon self and flee to God.
Strengthened by God, return to thy self
And break the heads of the Lát and Uzzá of sensuality.¹

By the might of Love evoke an army,
Reveal thyself on the Fárán of Love,²
That the Lord of the Ka'ba may show thee favour
And interpret to thee the text, “Lo, I will appoint a vicegerent on the earth.”³

¹ Lát and Uzzá were goddesses worshipped by the heathen Arabs.
² Fárán, name of a mountain in the neighbourhood of Mecca.
³ Koran, ch. 2, v. 28. In these words, which were addressed to the angels, God foretold the creation of Adam.
IV

_Showing that the Self is weakened by asking._

O thou who hast gathered taxes from lions,
Thy need hath caused thee to become a fox in disposition.
Thy maladies are the result of indigence:
This disease is the source of thy pain.
It is robbing thine high thoughts of their dignity
And putting out the light of thy noble imagination.
Quaff rosy wine from the jar of existence!
Snatch thy money from the purse of Time!
Like Omar, come down from thy camel! 
Beware of incurring obligations, beware!
How long wilt thou sue for office
And ride like children on a woman’s back?
A nature that fixes its gaze on the sky
Becomes debased by receiving benefits.
By asking, poverty is made more abject;
By begging, the beggar is made poorer.
Asking disintegrates the Self
And deprives of illumination the Sinai-bush of the Self.
Do not scatter thy handful of dust;
Like the moon, scrape food from thine own side!
Albeit thou art poor and wretched

1 The Caliph Omar was a man of simple habits and self-reliant character.
And overwhelmed by affliction,
Seek not thy daily bread from the
bounty of another,
Seek not waves of water from the
fountain of the sun,
Lest thou be put to shame before the
Prophet
On the Day when every soul shall be
stricken with fear.
The moon gets sustenance from the
table of the sun
And bears the brand of his bounty on
her heart.
Pray God for courage! Wrestle with
Fortune!
Do not sully the honour of the pure
religion!
He who swept the rubbish of idols out
of the Ka'ba
Said that God loves a man that earns
his living.
Woe to him that accepts bounty from
another's table
And his neck be bent with benefits!
He hath consumed himself with the lightning of the favours bestowed on him,
He hath sold his honour for a paltry coin.

Happy the man who thirsting in the sun
Does not crave of Khizr a cup of water!  
His brow is not moist with the shame of beggary;
He is a man still, not a piece of clay.
That noble youth walks under heaven
With his head erect like the pine.
Are his hands empty? The more is he master of himself.
Do his fortunes languish? The more alert is he.
The beggar’s wallet is like a boat tossing in waves of fire;

1 Khizr is supposed to have drunk of the Fountain of Life.
Sweet is a little dew gathered by one’s own hand.
Be a man of honour, and like the bubble
Keep thy cup inverted even in the midst of the sea!¹

¹ The bubble is compared to an inverted cup, which of course receives nothing.
V

Showing that when the Self is strengthened by Love it gains dominion over the outward and inward forces of the universe.

When the Self is made strong by Love Its power rules the whole world. The Heavenly Sage who adorned the sky with stars 435
Plucked these buds from the bough of the Self.
Its hand becomes God’s hand, The moon is split by its fingers.
It is the arbitrator in all the quarrels of the world, Its command is obeyed by Darius and Jamshíd. 490
I will tell thee a story of Bú Ali,¹
Whose name is renowned in India,
Him who sang of the ancient rose-
garden
And discoursed to us about the lovely rose:
The air of his fluttering skirt
Made a Paradise of this fire-born
country.
His young disciple went one day to
the bazaar—
The wine of Bú Ali’s discourse had
turned his head.
The governor of the city was coming
along on horseback,
His servant and staff-bearer rode beside
him.
The forerunner shouted, “O senseless
one,
Do not get in the way of the governor’s
escort!”

¹ Sheikh Sharafu’ddín of Pánípat, who is better known
as Bú Ali Qalandar, was a great saint. He died about
A.D. 1325.
But the dervish walked on with drooping head,
Sunk in the sea of his own thoughts.
The staff-bearer, drunken with pride,
Broke his staff on the head of the dervish,
Who stepped painfully out of the governor’s way,
Sad and sorry, with a heavy heart.
He came to Bú Ali and complained
And released the tears from his eyes.
Like lightning that falls on mountains,
The Sheikh poured forth a fiery torrent of speech.
He let loose from his soul a strange fire,
He gave an order to his secretary:
"Take thy pen and write a letter
From a dervish to a sultan!
Say, ‘Thy governor has broken my servant’s head;
He has cast burning coals on his own life."
Arrest this wicked governor,
Or else I will bestow thy kingdom on another.'”

The letter of the saint who had access to God
Caused the monarch to tremble in every limb.
His body was filled with aches,
He grew as pale as the evening sun.
He sought out a handcuff for the governor
And entreated Bú Ali to pardon this offence.

Khusrau, the sweet-voiced eloquent poet,¹
Whose harmonies flow from the creative mind
And whose genius hath the soft brilliance of moonlight,
Was chosen to be the king’s ambassador.

¹ Amír Khusrau of Delhi, the most celebrated of the Persian poets of India.
When he entered Bú Ali’s presence
and played his lute,
His song melted the fakir’s soul like
glass.
One strain of poesy bought the grace
Of a majesty that was firm as a
mountain.
Do not wound the hearts of dervishes,
Do not throw thyself into burning fire!
VI

A tale of which the moral is that
elegation of the Self is a doctrine in-
vented by the subject races of mankind
in order that by this means they may sap
and weaken the character of their rulers.

Hast thou heard that in the time of
old
The sheep dwelling in a certain pasture
So increased and multiplied

They feared no enemy?
At last, from the malice of Fate,
Their breasts were smitten by a shaft
of calamity.
The tigers sprang forth from the jungle
And rushed upon the sheepfold.
Conquest and dominion are signs of strength,
Victory is the manifestation of strength.
Those fierce tigers beat the drum of sovereignty,
They deprived the sheep of freedom.
Forasmuch as tigers must have their prey,
That meadow was crimsoned with the blood of the sheep.
One of the sheep which was clever and acute,
Being grieved at the fate of his fellows
And sorely vexed by the violence of the tigers,
Made complaint of the course of Destiny
And sought by craft to restore his fortunes.
The weak man, in order to preserve himself,
Seeks devices from skilled intelligence. 
In slavery, for the sake of repelling harm, 
The power of scheming becomes quickened, 
And when the madness of revenge gains hold, 
The mind of the slave meditates rebellion. 

“Ours is a hard knot,” said this sheep to himself, 
“The ocean of our griefs hath no shore. 
By force we sheep cannot escape from the tiger:

Our legs are silver, his paws are steel. 
’Tis not possible, however much one exhorts and counsels, 
To create in a sheep the disposition of a wolf. 
But to make the furious tiger a sheep —that is possible; 
To make him unmindful of his nature —that is possible.”
He became as a prophet inspired,
And began to preach to the blood-
thirsty tigers.
He cried out, “O ye insolent liars,
Who wot not of a day of ill luck that
shall continue for ever!"
I am possessed of spiritual power,
I am an apostle sent by God for the
tigers.
I come as a light for the eye that is
dark,
I come to establish laws and give com-
mandments.
Repent of your blameworthy deeds!
O plotters of evil, bethink yourselves
of good!
Whoso is violent and strong is miser-
able:
Life’s solidify depends on self-denial.
The spirit of the righteous is fed by
fodder:
The vegetarian is pleasing unto God.

1 These expressions are borrowed from the Koran.
The sharpness of your teeth brings disgrace upon you
And makes the eye of your perception blind.
Paradise is for the weak alone,
Strength is but a means to perdition.
It is wicked to seek greatness and glory,
Penury is sweeter than prindom.
Lightning does not threaten the corn-seed:
If the seed become a stack, it is unwise.
If you are sensible, you will be a mote of sand, not a Sahara,
So that you may enjoy the sunbeams.
O thou that delightest in the slaughter of sheep,
Slay thyself, and thou wilt have honour!
Life is rendered unstable
By violence, oppression, revenge, and exercise of power.
Though trodden underfoot, the grass
 grows up time after time
And washes the sleep of death from its
eye again and again.

Forget thy self, if thou art wise!
If thou dost not forget thy self, thou
art mad.

Close thine eyes, close thine ears, close
thy lips,¹
That thy thought may reach the lofty
sky!

This pasturage of the world is naught,
naught:
O fool, do not torment thyself for a
phantom!"
The tiger-tribe was exhausted by hard
struggles,
They had set their hearts on enjoyment
of luxury.
This soporific advice pleased them,
In their stupidity they swallowed the
charm of the sheep.

¹ Quoted from the Masnavi.
He that used to make sheep his prey
Now embraced a sheep’s religion.
The tigers took kindly to a diet of fodder:
At length their tigerish nature was broken.

The fodder blunted their teeth
And put out the awful flashings of their eyes.
By degrees courage ebbed from their breasts,
The sheen departed from the mirror.
That frenzy of uttermost exertion remained not,
That craving after action dwelt in their hearts no more.
They lost the power of ruling and the resolution to be independent,
They lost reputation, prestige, and fortune.
Their paws that were as iron became strengthless;
Their souls died and their bodies became tombs. Bodily strength diminished while spiritual fear increased:

Spiritual fear robbed them of courage. Lack of courage produced a hundred diseases—

Poverty, pusillanimity, lowmindedness. The wakeful tiger was lulled to slumber by the sheep’s charm:

He called his decline Moral Culture.
VII

To the effect that Plato, whose thought has deeply influenced the mysticism and literature of Islam, followed the sheep’s doctrine, and that we must be on our guard against his theories.¹

Plato, the prime ascetic and sage,
Was one of that ancient flock of sheep.

¹ The direct influence of Platonism on Moslem thought has been comparatively slight. When the Moslems began to study Greek philosophy, they turned to Aristotle. The genuine writings of Aristotle, however, were not accessible to them. They studied translations of books passing under his name, which were the work of Neoplatonists, so that what they believed to be Aristotelian doctrine was in fact the philosophy of Plotinus, Proclus, and the later Neoplatonic school. Indirectly, therefore, Plato has profoundly influenced the intellectual and spiritual development of Islam and may be called, if not the father of Mohammedan mysticism, at any rate its presiding genius.
His Pegasus went astray in the darkness of philosophy
And galloped over the mountains of Being.
He was so fascinated by the Ideal
That he made head, eye, and ear of no account.
“To die,” said he, “is the secret of Life:
The can’t is glorified by being put out.”
He dominates our thinking,
His cup sends us to sleep and takes the world away from us.
He is a sheep in man’s clothing,
The soul of the Súfí bows to his authority.
He soared with his intellect to the highest heaven,
He called the world of phenomena a myth.
”It was his work to dissolve the structure of Life
And cut the bough of Life’s fair tree asunder.
The thought of Plato regarded loss as profit,
His philosophy declared that being is not-being.
His nature drowsed and created a dream,
His mind’s eye created a mirage.
Since he was without any taste for action,
His soul was enraptured by the non-existent.
He disbelieved in the material universe
And became the creator of invisible Ideas.
Sweet is the world of phenomena to the living spirit,
Dear is the world of Ideas to the dead spirit:
Its gazelles have no grace of movement,
Its partridges are denied the pleasure of walking daintily.
Its dewdrops are unable to quiver,
Its birds have no breath in their breasts,
Its seed does not desire to grow,
Its moths do not know how to flutter.
Our philosopher had no remedy but flight:
He could not endure the noise of this world.
He set his heart on the glow of a quenched flame
And depicted a world steeped in opium.
He spread his wings towards the sky
And never came down to his nest again.
His phantasy is sunk in the jar of heaven:
I know not whether it is the dregs or the bricks.¹
The peoples were poisoned by his intoxication:
He slumbered and took no delight in deeds.

¹ *l.e.* it is worthless in either case. The egg-shaped wine-jar is supported by bricks in order to keep it in an upright position.
VIII

Concerning the true nature of poetry and the reform of Islamic literature.

'Tis the brand of desire makes the blood of man run warm,
By the lamp of desire this dust is enkindled.
By desire Life's cup is brimmed with wine,
So that Life leaps to its feet and marches briskly on.
Life is occupied with conquest alone,
And the one charm for conquest is desire.
Life is the hunter and desire the snare,
Desire is Love's message to Beauty.
Wherefore doth desire swell continuously
The bass and treble of Life’s song?
Whatsoever is good and fair and beautiful
Is our guide in the wilderness of seeking.
Its image becomes impressed on thine heart,
It creates desires in thine heart.
Beauty is the creator of desire’s spring-tide,
Desire is nourished by the display of Beauty.
’Tis in the poet’s breast that Beauty unveils,
’Tis from his Sinai that Beauty’s beams arise.
By his look the fair is made fairer,
Through his enchantments Nature is more beloved.
From his lips the nightingale hath learned her song,
And his rouge hath brightened the cheek of the rose.
'Tis his passion burns in the heart of
the moth,
'Tis he that lends glowing hues to love-
tales.
Sea and land are hidden within his
water and clay,¹
A hundred new worlds are concealed in
his heart.
Ere tulips blossomed in his brain
There was heard no note of joy or
grief.
His music breathes o'er us a wonderful
enchantment,
His pen draws a mountain with a single
hair.
His thoughts dwell with the moon and
the stars,
He creates beauty in that which is ugly
and strange.
He is a Khizr, and amidst his darkness
is the Fountain of Life:²

¹ *i.e.* in his body.
² Khizr, according to the legend, discovered the Fountain of Life in the Land of Darkness.
All things that exist are made more living by his tears.
Heavily we go, like raw novices,
Stumbling on the way to the goal.
His nightingale hath played a tune
And laid a plot to beguile us,
That he may lead us into Life's Paradise,
And that Life's bow may become a full circle.
Caravans march at the sound of his bell
And follow the voice of his pipe;
But when his zephyr blows in our gardens,
We stay loitering amongst tulips and roses.
His witchery makes Life develop itself
And become self-questioning and impatient.
He invites the whole world to his table;
He lavishes his fire as though it were cheap as air.
Woe to a people that resigns itself to death,
And whose poet turns away from the joy of living!
His mirror shows beauty as ugliness,
His honey leaves a hundred stings in the heart.

His kiss robs the rose of freshness,
He takes away from the nightingale’s heart the joy of flying.
Thy sinews are relaxed by his opium,
Thou payest for his song with thy life.

He bereaves the cypress of delight in its beauty,
His cold breath makes a pheasant of the male falcon.

He is a fish, and from the breast upward a man,
Like the Sirens in the ocean.
With his song he enchants the pilot
And casts the ship to the bottom of the sea.

His melodies steal firmness from thine heart,
His magic persuades thee that death is life.
He takes from thy soul the desire of existence,
He extracts from thy mine the blushing ruby.
He dresses gain in the garb of loss,
He makes everything praiseworthy blameful.
He plunges thee in a sea of thought,
He makes thee a stranger to action.
He is sick, and by his words our sickness is increased:
The more his cup goes round, the more sick are they that quaff it.
There are no lightning-rains in his April,
His garden is a mirage of colour and perfume.
His beauty hath no dealings with Truth,
There are none but flawed pearls in his sea.
Slumber he deemed sweeter than waking:
Our fire was quenched by his breath.
By the chant of his nightingale the heart was poisoned:
Under his heap of roses lurked a snake.
Beware of his decanter and cup!
Beware of his sparkling wine!

O thou whom his wine hath laid low
And who look'st to his glass for thy rising dawn,
O thou whose heart hath been chilled
by his melodies,
Thou hast drunk deadly poison through the ear!
Thy way of life is a proof of thy degeneracy,
The strings of thine instrument are out of tune.
'Tis pampered ease hath made thee so wretched,
A disgrace to Islam throughout the world.
One can bind thee with the vein of a rose,
One can wound thee with a zephyr.
Love hath been put to shame by thy wailing,
His fair picture hath been fouled by thy brush.
Thy ill-usage hath paled his cheek,
Thy coldness hath taken the glow from his fire.
He is heartsick from thy heart-sicknesses,
And enfeebled by thy feeblenesses.
His cup is full of childish tears,
His house is furnished with distressful sighs.¹
He is a drunkard begging at tavern-doors,
Stealing glimpses of beauty from lattices,
Unhappy, melancholy, injured,
Kick’ed well-nigh to death by the warder;

¹ In this passage the author assails the Persian and Urdu poetry so much in favour with his contemporaries.
Wasted like a reed by sorrows,
On his lips a store of complaints against Heaven.
Flattery and spite are the mettle of his mirror,
Helplessness his comrade of old;
A miserable base-born underling
Without worth or hope or object,
Whose lamentations have sucked the marrow from thy soul
And driven off gentle sleep from thy neighbours’ eyes.

Alas for a love whose fire is extinct,
A love that was born in the Holy Place and died in the house of idols!
Oh, if thou hast the coin of poesy in thy purse,
Rub it on the touchstone of Life!
Clear-seeing thought shows the way to action,
As the lightning-flash precedes the thunder.
It behoves thee to meditate well concerning literature,
It behoves thee to go back to the Arabs:
Thou must needs give thine heart to
the Salmá of Araby,
That the morn of the Hijáz may blossom
from the night of Kurdistan.
Thou hast gathered roses from the
garden of Persia
And seen the springtide of India and
Iran:

1 Arabic odes usually begin with a prelude in which
the poet makes mention of his beloved; and her name
is often Salmá. Here “the Salmá of Araby” refers to
the Koran and the ideals for which it stands.

2 It is related that an ignorant Kurd came to some
students and besought them to instruct him in the
mysteries of Súfism. They told him that he must fasten
a rope to the roof of his house, then tie the loose end to
his feet and suspend himself, head downwards; and that
he must remain in this posture as long as possible, reciting
continually some words of gibberish which they
taught him. The poor man did not perceive that he
was being mocked. He followed their instructions and
passed the whole night repeating the words given him.
God rewarded his faith and sincerity by granting him
illumination, so that he became a saint and could dis-
course learnedly on the most abstruse matters of mystical
theology. Afterwards he used to say, “In the evening
I was a Kurd, but the next morning I was an Arab.”
Now taste a little of the heat of the desert,
Drink the old wine of the date!
Lay thine head for once on its hot breast,
Yield thy body awhile to its scorching wind!
For a long time thou hast turned about on a bed of silk:
Now accustom thyself to rough cotton!
For generations thou hast danced on tulips
And bathed thy cheek in dew, like the rose:
Now throw thyself on the burning sand
And plunge into the fountain of Zemzem!
How long wilt thou fain lament like the nightingale?
How long make thine abode in gardens?
O thou whose auspicious snare would do honour to the Phœnix,
Build a nest on the high mountains,
A nest embosomed in lightning and thunder,
Loftier than eagle’s eyrie,
That thou mayst be fit for Life’s battle,
That thy body and soul may burn in Life’s fire!
IX

Showing that the education of the Self has three stages: Obedience, Self-control, and Divine Vicegerency.

1. Obedience

815 Service and toil are traits of the camel, Patience and perseverance are ways of the camel. Noiselessly he steps along the sandy track, He is the ship of those who voyage in the desert. Every thicket knows the print of his foot: He eats seldom, sleeps little, and is inured to toil.
He carries rider, baggage, and litter;
He trots on and on to the journey’s end,
Rejoicing in his speed,
More patient in travel than his rider.
Thou, too, do not refuse the burden of Duty:
So wilt thou enjoy the best dwelling-place, which is with God.
Endeavour to obey, O heedless one!
Liberty is the fruit of compulsion.
By obedience the man of no worth is made worthy;
By disobedience his fire is turned to ashes.
Whoso would master the sun and stars,
Let him make himself a prisoner of Law!
The wind is enthralled by the fragrant rose;
The perfume is confined in the navel of the musk-deer.
The star moves towards its goal
With head bowed in surrender to a law.
The grass springs up in obedience to
the law of growth:
When it abandons that, it is trodden
underfoot.
To burn unceasingly is the law of the
tulip,
And so the blood leaps in its veins.
Drops of water become a sea by the
law of union,
And grains of sand become a Sahara.
Since Law makes everything strong
within,
Why dost thou neglect this source of
strength?
O thou that art emancipated from the
old Custom,¹
Adorn thy feet once more with the
same fine silver chain!
Do not complain of the hardness of the
Law,
Do not transgress the statutes of
Mohammed!

¹ The religious law of Islam.
2. SELF-CONTROL.

Thy soul cares only for itself, like the camel:
It is self-conceited, self-governed, and self-willed.
Be a man, get its halter into thine hand,
That thou mayst become a pearl albeit thou art a potter’s vessel.
He that does not command himself
Becomes a receiver of commands from others.
When they moulded thee of clay,
Love and fear were mingled in thy making:
Fear of this world and of the world to come, fear of death,
Fear of all the pains of earth and heaven;
Love of riches and power, love of country,
Love of self and kindred and wife.
The mixing of clay with water nourishes the body,¹
But he that is drowned in sin dies an evil death.
So long as thou hold'st the staff of “There is no God but He,”²
Thou wilt break every spell of fear.
One to whom God is as the soul in his body,
His neck is not bowed before vanity.
Fear finds no way into his bosom,
His heart is afraid of none but Allah.
Whoso dwells in the Moslem Faith
Is free from the bonds of wife and child.
He withdraws his gaze from all except God
And lays the knife to the throat of his son.³

¹ *I.e.* water is an indispensable element in the life of the body.
² The first article of the Mohammedan creed.
³ Like Abraham when he was about to sacrifice Isaac or (as Moslems generally believe) Ishmael.
Though single, he is like a host in onset: Life is cheaper in his eyes than wind. The profession of Faith is the shell, but prayer is the pearl:

The Moslem’s heart deems prayer a lesser pilgrimage.¹

In the Moslem’s hand prayer is like a dagger
Killing sin and frowardness and wrong.
Fasting makes an assault upon hunger and thirst
And breaches the citadel of sensuality.

The pilgrimage enlightens the minds of the Faithful:

It teaches separation from one’s home and destroys attachment to one’s native land;

It binds together the leaves of the book of religion.

¹ The lesser pilgrimage (‘umra) is not obligatory like the greater pilgrimage (hajj).
Almsgiving causes love of riches to pass away
And makes equality familiar;
It fortifies the heart with righteousness,¹
It increases wealth and diminishes fondness for wealth.
All this is a means of strengthening thee:
Thou art impregnable, if thy Islam be strong.
Draw might from the litany “O Almighty One!”
That thou mayst ride the camel of thy body.²

3. Divine Vicegerency³
If thou canst rule thy camel, thou wilt rule the world

¹ The original quotes part of a verse in the Koran (ch. 3, v. 86), where it is said, “Ye shall never attain unto righteousness until ye give in alms of that which ye love.”
² *I.e.* overcome the lusts of the flesh.
³ Here Iqbal interprets in his own way the Súfi doctrine of the *Insán al-kúmil* or Perfect Man, which
And wear on thine head the crown of Solomon.
Thou wilt be the glory of the world whilst the world lasts,
And thou wilt reign in the kingdom incorruptible.
'Tis sweet to be God's vicegerent in the world
And exercise sway over the elements.
God's vicegerent is as the soul of the universe,
His being is the shadow of the Greatest Name.
He knows the mysteries of part and whole,
He executes the command of Allah in the world.
When he pitches his tent in the wide world,

Teaches that every man is potentially a microcosm, and that when he has become spiritually perfect, all the Divine attributes are displayed by him, so that as saint or prophet he is the God-man, the representative and vicegerent of God on earth.
He rolls up this ancient carpet.¹
His genius abounds with life and desires
to manifest itself:
He will bring another world into exist-
ence.
A hundred worlds like this world of parts and wholes
Spring up, like roses, from the seed of his imagination.
He makes every raw nature ripe,
He puts the idols out of the sanctu-
ary.
Heart-strings give forth music at his touch,
He wakes and sleeps for God alone.
He teaches age the melody of youth
And endows everything with the radiance of youth.
To the human race he brings both a glad message and a warning,
He comes both as a soldier and as a marshal and prince.

¹ *I.e.* his appearance marks the end of an epoch.
He is the final cause of “God taught Adam the names of all things,” ¹
He is the inmost sense of “Glory to Him that transported His servant by night.” ²
His white hand is strengthened by the staff,³
His knowledge is twinned with the power of a perfect man.
When that bold cavalier seizes the reins,
The steed of Time gallops faster.
His awful mien makes the Red Sea dry,
He leads Israel out of Egypt.
At his cry, “Arise,” the dead spirits Rise in their bodily tomb, like pines in the field.
His person is an atonement for all the world,

¹ Koran, ch. 2, v. 29. The Ideal Man is the final cause of creation.
² Koran, ch. 17, v. 1, referring to the Ascension of the Prophet.
By his grandeur the world is saved.  
His protecting shadow makes the mote familiar with the sun,
His rich substance makes precious all that exists.
He bestows life by miraculous works,
He founds a new system to work by.
Splendid visions rise from the print of his foot,
Many a Moses is entranced by his Sinai.

He gives a new explanation of Life,
A new interpretation of this dream.
His hidden being is Life's mystery,
The unheard music of Life's harp.
Nature travails in blood for generations
To compose the harmony of his personality.
When our handful of earth has reached the zenith,

1 These four lines may allude to Jesus, regarded as a type of the Perfect Man.
SECRETS OF THE SELF 83

That champion will come forth from this dust!
There sleeps amidst the ashes of To-day
The flame of a world-consuming morrow.
Our bud enfold a garden of roses,
Our eyes are bright with to-morrow’s dawn.
Appear, O rider of Destiny!
Appear, O light of the dark realm of Change!
Illumine the scene of existence,
Dwell in the blackness of our eyes!
Silence the noise of the nations,
Imparadise our ears with thy music!
Arise and tune the harp of brotherhood,
Give us back the cup of the wine of love!
Bring once more days of peace to the world,
Give a message of peace to them that seek battle!
Mankind are the cornfield and thou the harvest,
Thou art the goal of Life’s caravan.
The leaves are scattered by Autumn’s fury:
Oh, do thou pass over our gardens as the Spring!
Receive from our downcast brows
The homage of little children and of young men and old!
When thou art there, we will lift up our heads,
Content to suffer the burning fire of this world.