X

Setting forth the inner meanings of the names of Ali.

Ali is the first Moslem and the King of men,
In Love’s eyes Ali is the treasure of the Faith.
Devotion to his family inspires me with life
So that I am as a shining pearl.
Like the narcissus, I am enraptured with gazing;
Like perfume, I am straying through his pleasure-garden.
If holy water gushes from my earth, he is the source;
If wine pours from my grapes, he is the cause.
I am dust, but his sun hath made me as a mirror:
Song can be seen in my breast.
From Ali's face the Prophet drew a fair omen,
By his majesty the true religion is glorified.
His commandments are the strength of Islam:
All things pay allegiance to his House.
The Apostle of God gave him the name Bú Turáb;
God in the Koran called him "the Hand of Allah."
Every one that is acquainted with Life's mysteries
Knows what is the inner meaning of the names of Ali.
The dark clay, whose name is the body—
Our reason is ever bemoaning its iniquity.
On account of it our sky-reaching thought plods o'er the earth;
It makes our eyes blind and our ears deaf.
It hath in its hand a two-edged sword of lust:
Travellers' hearts are broken by this brigand.
Ali, the Lion of God, subdued the body's clay
And transmuted this dark earth to gold.
Murtazá, by whose sword the splendour of Truth was revealed,
Is named Bú Turáb from his conquest of the body.¹
Man wins territory by prowess in battle,
But his brightest jewel is mastery of himself.
Whosoever in the world becomes a
* Bú Turáb
Turns back the sun from the west;²

¹ Murtazá, "he whom with God is pleased," is a name of Ali. Bú Turáb means literally "father of earth."
² A miracle of the Prophet.
Whosoever saith but the steed of the body
Sits like the bezel on the seal of sovereignty:
Here the might of Khaibar is under his feet,¹
And hereafter his hand will distribute the water of Kauthar.²
Through self-knowledge he acts as God's Hand,
And in virtue of being God's Hand he reigns over all.
His person is the gate of the city of the sciences:
Arabia, China, and Greece are subject to him.
If thou wouldst drink clear wine from thine own grapes,
Thou must needs wield authority over thine own earth.

¹ The fortress of Khaibar, a village in the Hijáz, was captured by the Moslems in A.D. 628. Ali performed great feats of valour on this occasion.
² A river of Paradise.
To become earth is the creed of a moth;
Be a conqueror of earth; that alone is
worthy of a man.
Thou art soft as a rose. Become hard
as a stone,
That thou mayst be the foundation of
the wall of the garden!
Build thy clay into a Man,
Build thy Man into a World!
If thou art unfit to be either a wall or
a door,
Some one else will make bricks of
thine earth.
O thou who complainest of the cruelty
of Heaven,
Thou whose glass cries out against the
injustice of the stone,
How long this wailing and crying and
lamentation?
How long this perpetual beating of
thy breast?
The pith of Life is contained in action,
To delight in creation is the law of Life.
Arise and create a new world!
Wrap thyself in flames, be an Abraham!¹
To comply with this ill-starred world
Is to fling away thy buckler on the field of battle.
The man of strong character who is master of himself
Will find Fortune complaisant.
If the world does not comply with his humour,
He will try the hazard of war with Heaven;
He will dig up the foundations of the universe
And cast its atoms into a new mould.
He will subvert the course of Time
And wreck the azure firmament.
By his own strength he will produce
A new world which will do his pleasure.
If one cannot live in the world as beseems a man,

¹ See note on l. 213.
It is true life to give up one's soul.
He that hath sound intelligence
Will prove his strength by great enterprises.
'Tis sweet to use love in hard tasks
And, like Abraham, to gather roses from flames.¹
The potentialities of men of action
Are displayed in willing acceptance of what is difficult.
Mean spirits have no weapon but spite,
This is their one rule of life.
But Life is power made manifest,
And its mainspring is the desire for victory.
Mercy out of season is a coldness of Life's blood,
A break in the rhythm of Life's music.
Whoever is sunk in the depths of ignominy
Calls his weakness contentment.

¹ The burning pyre on which Abraham was thrown lost its heat and was transformed into a rose-garden.
Weakness is the plunderer of Life,
Its womb is teeming with fears and lies.
Its soul is empty of virtues,
Its milk is a fattening for vices.

O man of sound judgement, beware!
This spoiler is lurking in ambush.
Be not his dupe, if thou art wise:
Chameleon-like, he changes colour every moment.

Even by keen observers his form is not discerned:
Veils are thrown over his face.
Now he is muffled in pity and gentleness,
Now he wears the cloak of humility.
Sometimes he is disguised as a victim of oppression,
Sometimes as one whose sins are to be excused.
He appears in the shape of self-indulgence
And robs the strong man’s heart of courage.
Strength is the twin of Truth;
If thou knowest thyself, strength is the
   Truth-revealing glass.
Life is the seed, and power the crop:
Power explains the mystery of truth
   and falsehood.
The false claimant, if he be possessed
of power,
Needs no argument for his claim.
Falsehood derives from power the
authority of truth,
And by falsifying truth deems itself
true.
Its creative word transforms poison
into nectar;
It says to Good, "Thou art bad," and
   Good becomes Evil.
O thou that art heedless of the trust
   committed to thee,
Esteem thyself superior to both worlds!\(^1\)

\(^1\) The "trust" which God offered to Man and which
Man accepted, after it had been refused by Heaven and
Earth (Koran, ch. 33, v. 72), is the divine vicegerency,
\(i.e.\) the duty of displaying the divine attributes.
Gain knowledge of Life’s mysteries!
Be a tyrant! Ignore all except God!
O man of understanding, open thine eyes, ears, and lips!¹
If then thou seest not the Way of Truth, laugh at me!

¹ A parody of the verse in the Musnawi quoted above. See l. 603.
XI

Story of a young man of Merv who came to the saint Ali Hujwîrî—God have mercy on him!—and complained that he was oppressed by his enemies.

The saint of Hujwîr was venerated by the peoples,
And Pîr-i Sanjar visited his tomb as a pilgrim.¹
With ease he broke down the mountain-barriers
And sowed the seed of Islam in India.
The age of Omar was restored by his godliness,

¹ Hujwîrî, author of the oldest Persian treatise on Sûfism, was a native of Ghazna in Afghanistan. He died at Lahore about A.D. 1072. Pîr-i Sanjar is the renowned saint, Mu'înuddîn, head of the Chishti order of dervishes, who died in A.D. 1235 at Ajmîr.
The fame of the Truth was exalted by his words.
He was a guardian of the honour of the Koran,
The house of Falsehood fell in ruins at his gaze.
The dust of the Panjáb was brought to life by his breath,
Our dawn was made splendid by his sun.
He was a lover, and withal a courier of Love:
The secrets of Love shone forth from his brow.

I will tell a story of his perfection
And enclose a whole rose-bed in a single bud.
A young man, cypress-tall,
Came from the town of Merv to Lahore.
He went to see the venerable saint,
That the sun might dispel his darkness.
"I am hemmed in," he said, "by foes;
I am as a glass in the midst of stones."
Do thou teach me, O sire of heavenly rank,
How to lead my life amongst enemies!"
The wise Director, in whose nature
Love had allied mercy with wrath,
Answered: "Thou art unread in Life's lore,
Careless of its end and its beginning.
Be without fear of others!
Thou art a sleeping force: awake!
When the stone was anxious on account of the glass,
It became glass and got into the way of breaking.
If the traveller thinks himself weak,
He delivers his soul unto the brigand.
How long wilt thou regard thyself as water and clay?
Create from thy clay a flaming Sinai!
Why be angry with mighty men?
Why complain of enemies?
I will declare the truth: thine enemy is thy friend;
His existence crowns thee with glory. Whosoever knows the states of the Self Considers a powerful enemy to be a blessing from God. To the seed of Man the enemy is as a rain-cloud:

He awakens its potentialities. If thy spirit be strong, the stones in thy way are as water:

What recks the torrent of the ups and downs of the road?
The sword of resolution is whetted by the stones in the way
And put to proof by traversing stage after stage.
What is the use of eating and sleeping like a beast?
What is the use of being, unless thou have strength in thyself?

When thou mak'st thyself strong with Self, Thou wilt destroy the world at thy pleasure.
If thou wouldst pass away, become free of Self;
If thou wouldst live, become full of Self!¹
What is death? To become oblivious to Self.
Why imagine that it is the parting of soul and body?
Abide in Self, like Joseph!
Advance from captivity to empire!
Think of Self and be a man of action!
Be a man of God, bear mysteries within!”

I will explain the matter by means of stories,
I will open the bud by the power of my breath.
"'Tis better that a lovers' secret
Should be told by the lips of others.”²

¹ These lines correct the Súfí doctrine that by means of passing away from individuality the mystic attains to everlasting life in God.
² I.e. allegorically. This verse occurs in the Masnaví.
XII

*Story of the bird that was faint with thirst:*

1145 A bird was faint with thirst,
The breath in his body was heaving like waves of smoke.
He saw a diamond in the garden:
Thirst created a vision of water.
Deceived by the sunbright stone
The foolish bird fancied that it was water.
1150 He got no moisture from the gem:
He pecked it with his beak, but it did not wet his palate.
"O thrall of vain desire," said the diamond,
"Thou hast sharpened thy greedy beak on me;
But I am not a dewdrop, I give no drink,
I do not live for the sake of others.
Wouldst thou hurt me? Thou art mad!
A life that reveals the Self is strange to thee.
My water will shiver the beaks of birds
And break the jewel of man's life." ¹

The bird won not his heart's wish from the diamond
And turned away from the sparkling stone.
Disappointment swelled in his breast,
The song in his throat became a wail.
Upon a rose-twig a drop of dew
Gleamed like the tear in a nightingale's eye:
All its glitter was owing to the sun,
It was trembling in fear of the sun—

¹ I.e. if he swallow a diamond, he will die.
A restless sky-born star
That had stopped for a moment, from
desire to be seen;
Oft deceived by bud and flower,
It had gained nothing from Life.
There it hung, ready to drop,
Like a tear on the eyelashes of a lover
who hath lost his heart.
The sorely distressed bird hopped under
the rose-bush,
The dewdrop trickled into his mouth.
O thou that wouldst deliver thy soul
from enemies,
I ask thee—"Art thou a drop of water
or a gem?"
When the bird melted in the fire of
thirst,
It appropriated the life of another.
The drop was not solid and gem-like;
The diamond had a being, the drop
had none.
Never for an instant neglect Self-
preservation:
Be a diamond, not a dewdrop!
Be massive in nature, like mountains,
And bear on thy crest a hundred clouds laden with floods of rain!
Save thyself by affirmation of Self,
Compress thy quicksilver into silver ore!
Produce a melody from the string of Self,
Make manifest the secrets of Self!
XIII

Story of the diamond and the coal.

Now I will open one more gate of Truth,
I will tell thee another tale.
The coal in the mine said to the diamond,
"O thou entrusted with splendours everlasting,
We are comrades, and our being is one;
The source of our existence is the same,
Yet while I die here in the anguish of worthlessness,
Thou art set on the crowns of emperors.
My stuff is so vile that I am valued less than earth,
Whereas the mirror's heart is rent by thy beauty.
My darkness illumines the chafing-dish,
Then my substance is incinerated at last.
Every one puts the sole of his foot on my head
And covers my stock of existence with ashes.
My fate must needs be deplored;
Dost thou know what is the gist of my being?
Thou art a condensed wavelet of smoke,
Endowed with the properties of a single spark;
Both in feature and nature thou art star-like,
Splendours rise from every side of thee.
Now thou becom'st the light of a monarch's eye,
Now thou adornest the haft of a dagger."

"O sagacious friend!" said the diamond,

"Dark earth, when hardened, becomes in dignity as a bezel.

Having been at strife with its environment,

It is ripened by the struggle and grows hard like a stone.

'Tis this ripeness that has endowed my form with light
And filled my bosom with radiance.

Because thy being is immature, thou hast become abased;

Because thy body is soft, thou art burnt.

Be void of fear, grief, and anxiety;

Be hard as a stone, be a diamond!

Whosoever strives hard and grips tight,

The two worlds are illumined by him.

A little earth is the origin of the Black Stone
Which puts forth its head in the Ka'ba:
Its rank is higher than Sinai,
It is kissed by the swarthy and the fair.
In solidity consists the glory of Life;
Weakness is worthlessness and immaturity."
XIV

*Story of the Sheikh and the Brahmin,*
*followed by a conversation between*
*Ganges and Himalaya to the effect that*
*the continuation of social life depends*
*on firm attachment to the characteristic*
*traditions of the community.*

At Benares lived a venerable Brahmin,
Whose head was deep in the ocean of
  Being and Not-being.
He had a large knowledge of philosophy
But was well-disposed to the seekers
  after God.
His mind was eager to explore new
problems,
His intellect moved on a level with the
Pleiades;
His nest was as high as that of the Anká;¹
Sun and moon were cast, like rue, on the flame of his thought.²
For a long time he laboured and sweated,
But philosophy brought no wine to his cup.

Although he set many a snare in the gardens of learning,
His snares never caught a glimpse of the Ideal bird;
And notwithstanding that the nails of his thought were dabbled with blood,
The knot of Being and Not-being remained untied.
The sighs on his lips bore witness to his despair,
His countenance told tales of his distraction.

One day he visited an excellent Sheikh,

¹ A mysterious bird, of which nothing is known except its name.
² Rue-seed is burned for the purpose of fumigation.
A man who had in his breast a heart of gold.
The Sheikh laid the seal of silence on his lips
While he lent his ear to the Sage's discourse.
Then he said: "O wanderer in the lofty sky,
Pledge thyself to be true, for a little, to the earth!
Thou hast lost thy way in wildernesses of speculation,
Thy fearless thought hath passed beyond Heaven.
Be reconciled with earth, O sky-traveller!
Do not wander in quest of the essence of the stars!
I do not bid thee abandon thine idols.
Art thou an unbeliever? Then be worthy of the badge of unbelief!"
O inheritor of ancient culture,
Turn not thy back on the path thy fathers trod!
If a people’s life is derived from unity,
Unbelief too is a source of unity.
Thou that art not even a perfect infidel
Art unfit to worship at the shrine of the spirit.
We both are far astray from the road of devotion:
Thou art far from Ázar, and I from Abraham.¹
Our Majnún hath not fallen into melancholy for his Lailá’s sake:
He hath not become perfect in the madness of love.
When the lamp of Self expires,
What is the use of heaven-surveying imagination?"

Once on a time, laying hold of the skirt of the mountain,

¹ Ázar, the father of Abraham, was an idolater.
Ganges said to Himalaya:
“O thou mantled in snow since the morn of creation,
Thou whose form is girdled with streams,
God made thee a partner in the secrets of heaven,
But deprived thy foot of graceful gait.
He took away from thee the power to walk:
What avails this sublimity and stateliness?
Life springs from perpetual movement:
Motion constitutes the wave’s whole existence.”
When the mountain heard this taunt from the river,
He puffed angrily like a sea of fire,
And answered: “Thy wide waters are my looking-glass;
Within my bosom are a hundred rivers like thee.
This graceful gait of thine is an instrument of death:
Whoso goeth from Self is meet to die.
Thou hast no knowledge of thine own case,
Thou exultest in thy misfortune: thou art a fool!
O born of the womb of the revolving sphere,
A fallen-in bank is better than thou!
Thou hast made thine existence an offering to the ocean,
Thou hast thrown the rich purse of thy life to the highwayman.
Be self-contained like the rose in the garden,
Do not go to the florist in order to smell sweet!
To live is to grow in thyself
'And gather roses from thine own flower-bed.
Ages have gone by and my foot is fast in earth:
Dost thou fancy that I am far from my goal?
My being grew and reached the sky,
The Pleiads sank to rest under my skirts;
Thy being vanishes in the ocean,
But on my crest the stars bow their heads.
Mine eye sees the mysteries of heaven,
Mine ear is familiar with angels' wings.
Since I glowed with the heat of unceasing toil,
I amassed rubies, diamonds, and other gems.
I am stone within, and in the stone is fire:
Water cannot pass over my fire!"
Art thou a drop of water? Do not break at thine own feet,
But endeavour to surge and wrestle with the sea.
Desire the water of a jewel, become a jewel!
Be an ear-drop, adorn a beauty!
Oh, expand thyself! Move swiftly!
Be a cloud that shoots lightning and
sheds a flood of rain!
Let the ocean sue for thy storms as a
beggar,
Let it complain of the straitness of thy
skirts!
Let it deem itself less than a wave
And glide along at thy feet!
XV

Showing that the purpose of the Moslem’s life is to exalt the Word of Allah, and that the Jihād (war against unbelievers), if it be prompted by land-hunger, is unlawful in the religion of Islam.

Imbue thine heart with the tincture of Allah,

Give honour and glory to Love!

The Moslem’s nature prevails by means of love:

The Moslem, if he be not loving, is an infidel.

Upon God depends his seeing and not-seeing,

His eating, drinking, and sleeping.
In his will that which God wills becomes lost—

"How shall a man believe this saying?"\(^1\)

He encamps in the field of "There is no god but Allah";
In the world he is a witness against mankind.

His high estate is attested by the Prophet that was sent to men and Jinn—

By the most truthful of witnesses.

Leave words and seek that spiritual state,

Shed the light of God o'er the darkness of works!
Albeit clad in kingly robe, live as a dervish,

Live wakeful and meditating on God!

Whatever thou doest, let it be thine aim therein to draw nigh to God,

That His glory may be made manifest by thee.

\(^1\) See Introduction, p. xix, note 1.
Peace becomes an evil, if its object be aught else; War is good if its object is God. If God be not exalted by our swords, War dishonours the people. The holy Sheikh Miyán Mír Walí,¹ By the light of whose soul every hidden thing was revealed— His feet were firmly planted on the path of Mohammed, He was a flute for the impassioned music of love. His tomb keeps our city safe from harm And causes the beams of true religion to shine on us. Heaven stooped its brow to his threshold, The Emperor of India was one of his disciples.² Now, this monarch had sown the seed of ambition in his heart And was resolved on conquest.

¹ A celebrated Moslem saint, who died at Lahore in A.D. 1635. ² Aurangzib.
SECRET OF THE SELF

The flames of vain desire were alight in him,
He was teaching his sword to ask, "Is there any more?" 1
In the Deccan was a great noise of war,
His army stood on the battlefield.
He went to the Sheikh of heaven-high dignity
That he might receive his blessing:
The Moslem turns from this world to God
And strengthens policy with prayer.
The Sheikh made no answer to the Emperor's speech,
The assembly of dervishes was all ears, 1360
Until a disciple, in his hand a silver coin,
Opened his lips and broke the silence,
Saying, "Accept this poor offering from me,
O guide of them that have lost the way to God!"

1 Koran, ch. 50, v. 29.
My limbs were bathed in sweat of labour
Before I put away a dirhem in my skirt."
The Sheikh said: "This money ought to be given to our Sultan,
Who is a beggar wearing the raiment of a king.
Though he holds sway over sun, moon, and stars,
Our Emperor is the most penniless of mankind.
His eye is fixed on the table of strangers,
The fire of his hunger hath consumed a whole world.
His sword is followed by famine and plague,
His culture lays a wide land waste.
The folk are crying out because of his indigence,
His empty-headedness, and his oppression of the weak.
His power is an enemy to all:
Humankind are the caravan and he the brigand.
In his self-delusion and ignorance
He calls pillage by the name of empire. 1380
Both the royal troops and those of the enemy
Are cloven in twain by the sword of his hunger.
The beggar's hunger consumes his own soul,
But the sultan’s hunger destroys state and religion.
Whoso shall draw the sword for anything except Allah, 1385
His sword is sheathed in his own breast.”
XVI

Precepts written for the Moslems of India by Mir Najat Nakshband, who is generally known as Bábá Ṣá'īd

O thou that hast grown from earth,
like a rose,
Thou too art born of the womb of Self.
Do not abandon Self! Persist therein!
Be a drop of water and drink up the ocean!
Glowing with the light of Self as thou art,
Make Self strong, and thou wilt endure.

1 This appears to be a pseudonym assumed by the author.
Thou gett'st profit from this trade,
Thou gain'st riches by preserving this commodity.
Thou hast being, and art thou afraid of not-being?
O foolish one, thy understanding is at fault.
Since I am acquainted with the harmony of Life,
I will tell thee what is the secret of Life—
To sink into thyself like the pearl,
Then to emerge from thine inward solitude;
To collect sparks beneath the ashes,
And become a flame and dazzle men's eyes.
Go, burn the house of forty years' tribulation,
Move round thyself! Be a circling flame!
What is Life but to be freed from moving round others
And to regard thyself as the Holy Temple?
Beat thy wings and escape from the attraction of Earth;
Like birds, be safe from falling.
Unless thou art a bird, thou wilt do wisely
Not to build thy nest on the top of a cave.

O thou that seekest to acquire knowledge,
I say o'er to thee the message of the Sage of Rúm:¹
"Knowledge, if it lie on thy skin, is a snake;
Knowledge, if thou take it to heart, is a friend."
Hast thou heard how the Master of Rúm
Gave lectures on philosophy at Aleppo?

¹ Jaláluddín Rúmí.
Drifting o'er the dark and stormy sea
of understanding;
A Moses unillumined by Love's Sinai,
Ignorant of Love and of Love's passion. 1420
He discoursed on Scepticism and
Neoplatonism,
And strung many a brilliant pearl of
metaphysic.
He unravelled the problems of the
Peripatetics,
The light of his thought made clear
whatever was obscure.
Heaps of books lay around and in front
of him,
And on his lips was the key to all their
mysteries.
Shams-i Tabrız, directed by Kamál,¹
Sought his way to the college of
Jaláluddín Rúmí
'And cried out, "What is all this noise
and babble?"

¹ Bábá Kamáluddín Jundí. For Shams-i Tabrız and
his relation to Jaláluddín Rúmí see my Selected Poems
from the Diváni Shamsi Tabriz (Cambridge, 1898).
What are all these syllogisms and
judgements and demonstrations?"

"Peace, O fool!" exclaimed the
Maulavi,

"Do not laugh at the doctrines of the
sages.
Get thee out of my college!
This is argument and discussion: what
hast thou to do with it?
My discourse is beyond thy under-
standing,
It will not brighten the glass of thy
perception."

These words increased the anger of
Shams-i Tabríz
And caused a fire to burst forth from
his soul.
The lightning of his look fell on the
earth,
And the glow of his breath made the
dust spring into flames.
The spiritual fire burned the intellectual
stack
And clean consumed the book of philosophy.
The Maulavi, being a stranger to Love's miracles
And unversed in Love's harmonies,
Cried, "How didst thou kindle this fire,
Which hath burned the books of the philosophers?"
The Sheikh answered, "O unbelieving Moslem,
This is vision and ecstasy: what hast thou to do with it?
My state is beyond thy thought,
My flame is the Alchemist's elixir."
Thou hast drawn thy substance from the snow of philosophy,
The cloud of thy thought sheds nothing but hailstones.
Kindle a fire in thy rubble,
Foster a flame in thy earth!
The Moslem's knowledge is perfected by spiritual fervour,
The meaning of Islam is *Renounce what shall pass away.*
When Abraham escaped from the bondage of “that which sets,”¹
He sat unharmed in the midst of flames.²
Thou hast cast knowledge of God behind thee
And squandered thy religion for the sake of a loaf.
Thou art hot in pursuit of antimony,
Thou art unaware of the blackness of thine own eye.
Seek the Fountain of Life from the sword’s edge,
And the River of Paradise from the dragon’s mouth,
Demand the Black Stone from the door of the house of idols,
And the musk-deer’s bladder from a mad dog,

¹ Abraham refused to worship the sun, moon, and stars, saying, “I love not them that set” (Koran, ch. 6, v. 76).
² See p. 91, note.
But do not seek the glow of Love from the knowledge of to-day,
Do not seek the nature of Truth from this infidel's cup!
Long have I been running to and fro,
Learning the secrets of the New Knowledge:
Its gardeners have put me to the trial
And have made me intimate with their roses.
Roses! Tulips, rather, that warn one not to smell them—
Like paper roses, a mirage of perfume.
Since this garden ceased to enthral me, I have nested on the Paradisal tree.
Modern knowledge is the greatest blind—
Idol-worshipping, idol-selling, idol-making!
Shackled in the prison of phenomena,
It has not overleaped the limits of the sensible.
130 SECRETS OF THE SELF

It has fallen down in crossing the bridge of Life,
It has laid the knife to its own throat.
Having fire, it is yet cold as the tulip;
Having flame, it is yet cold as hail.
Its nature remains untouched by the glow of Love,
It is ever engaged in a joyless search.
Love is the Plato that heals the sicknesses of the mind:¹
The mind’s melancholy is cured by its lancet.
The whole world bows in adoration to Love,
Love is the Mahmúd that conquers the Somnath of intellect.²
Modern science lacks this old wine in its cup,
Its nights are not loud with passionate prayer.

¹ In the Masnavi Love is called “the physician of our pride and self-conceit, our Plato and our Galen.”
² The famous idol of Somnath was destroyed by Sultan Mahmúd of Ghazna.
Thou hast misprized thine own cypress
And deemed tall the cypress of others.
Like the reed, thou hast emptied
thyself of Self
And given thine heart to the music of others.
O thou that begg'st morsels from another's table,
Wilt thou seek thine own kind in another's shop?
The Moslem's feast is burned up by the lamps of strangers,
His mosque is consumed by the Christian monastery.
When the deer fled from the sacred territory of Mecca,
The hunter's arrow pierced her side.¹
The leaves of the rose are scattered, like its scent:
O thou that hast fled from thy Self, come back to it!

¹ The pilgrims are forbidden to kill game.
O trustee of the wisdom of the Koran,
Find thy lost unity again!
We, who keep the gate of the citadel of Islam,
Have become unbelievers by neglecting the watchword of Islam.
The ancient Saki's bowl is shattered,
The wine-party of the Hijáz is broken up.
The Ka'ba is filled with our idols,
Infidelity mocks at our Islam.
Our Sheikh hath gambled Islam away for love of idols
And made a rosary of the zunnár.¹
Our spiritual directors owe their rank to their white hairs
And are the laughing-stock of children in the street;
Their hearts bear no impress of the Faith
But house the idols of sensuality.

¹ See p. 110, note.
Every long-haired fellow wears the garb of a dervish—
Alas for these traffickers in religion!
Day and night they are travelling about with disciples,
And ignoring their religious duties.
Their eyes are without light, like the narcissus,
Their breasts devoid of spiritual wealth.
Preachers and Súfís, all worship worldliness alike;
The prestige of the pure religion is ruined.
Our preacher fixed his eyes on the pagoda
And the mufti of the Faith sold his decision.
After this, O friends, what are we to do?
Our guide turns his face towards the wine-house.
XVII

*Time is a sword.*

Green be the pure grave of Sháfi‘í,¹
Whose vine hath cheered a whole world!
His thought plucked a star from heaven:
He named Time “a cutting sword.”
How shall I say what is the secret of this sword?
All its brilliance is derived from Life.
Its owner is exalted above hope and fear,
His hand is whiter than the hand of Moses.

¹ Founder of one of the four great Mohammedan schools of law.
At one stroke thereof water gushes
from the rock
And the sea becomes land from dearth
of moisture.

Moses held this sword in his hand,
Therefore he wrought more than man
may contrive.

He clove the Red Sea asunder
And made its waters like dry earth.
The arm of Ali, the conqueror of
Khaibar,

Drew its strength from this same sword.
The revolution of the sky is visible,
The change of day and night is perceived.

Look, O thou enthralled by Yesterday
and To-morrow,
Behold another world in thine own
heart!

Thou hast sown the seed of darkness
* in thy clay,
Thou hast imagined Time as a line:
Thy thought measures length of Time
With the measure of night and day.
SECRETS OF THE SELF

'Thou mak'st this line a girdle on thine
infidel waist;
Thou art an advertiser of falsehood,
like idols.
Thou wert the Elixir, and thou hast
become a peck of dust;
Thou wert born the conscience of Truth,
and thou hast become a lie!
Art thou a Moslem? Then cast off
this girdle!
Be a candle to the feast of the religion
of the free!
Knowing not the origin of Time,
Thou art ignorant of everlasting Life.
How long wilt thou be a thrall of night
and day?
Learn the mystery of Time from the
words "I have a time with God." ¹
Phenomena arise from the march of
Time,

¹ The Prophet said, "I have a time with God of such
sort that neither angel nor prophet is my peer," meaning
(if we interpret his words according to the sense of this
passage) that he felt himself to be timeless.
Life is a part of the contents of Time's consciousness.
The cause of Time is not the revolution of the sun:
Time is everlasting, but the sun does not last for ever.
Time is joy and sorrow, festival and fast;
Time is the secret of moonlight and sunlight.

Thou hast extended Time, like Space,
And distinguished Yesterday from Tomorrow.
Thou hast fled, like a scent, from thine own garden;
Thou hast made thy prison with thine own hand.
Our Time, which has neither beginning nor end,
'Blossoms from the flower-bed of our mind.
To know its root quickens the living with new life:
Its being is more splendid than the dawn.
Life is of Time, and Time is of Life:
"Do not abuse Time!" was the command of the Prophet.

Oh, the memory of those days when
Time's sword
Was allied with the strength of our hands!¹
We sowed the seed of religion in men's hearts
And unveiled the face of Truth;
Our nails tore loose the knot of this world,
Our bowing in prayer gave blessings to the earth.
From the jar of Truth we made rosy wine gush forth,
We charged against the ancient taverns.
O thou in whose cup is old wine,

¹ The glorious days when Islam first set out to convert and conquer the world.
A wine so hot that the glass is well-nigh turned to water,
Wilt thou in thy pride and arrogance and self-conceit
Taunt us with our emptiness?
Our cup, too, hath graced the symposium;
Our breast hath owned a spirit.
A new age hath been endued with our beauty
And hath risen from the dust of our feet.
Our blood hath watered God's harvest,
All worshippers of God are our debtors.
The takbīr was our gift to the world,\(^1\)
Ka'bas were built of our clay.
By means of us God taught the Koran,
From our hand He dispensed His bounty.
Although crown and signet have passed from us,

\(^1\) The takbīr is the cry "Allah akbar," "Allah is most great."
Do not look with contempt on our beggarliness!

In thine eyes we are good for nothing,
Thinking old thoughts, despicable.
We have honour from "There is no god but Allah,"
We are the preservers of the universe.
Freed from the vexation of to-day and to-morrow,
We have pledged ourselves to love One.
We are the conscience hidden in God’s heart,
We are the heirs of Moses and Aaron.
Sun and moon are still bright with our radiance,
Lightning-flashes still lurk in our cloud.
Our essence is the mirror of the Divine essence:
The Moslem's being is one of the signs of God.
XVIII

An invocation.

O Thou that art as the soul in the body of the universe,
Thou art our soul and thou art ever fleeing from us.
Thou breathest music into Life's lute;
Life envies Death when death is for thy sake.

Once more bring comfort to our sad hearts,
Once more dwell in our breasts!
*Once more let us hear thy call to honour,
Strengthen our weak love.
We are oft complaining of destiny,
Thou art of great price and we have naught.
Hide not thy fair face from the empty-handed!
Sell cheap the love of Salmán and Bilál!¹
Give us the sleepless eye and the passionate heart,
Give us again the nature of quicksilver!
Show unto us one of thy manifest signs,
That the necks of our enemies may be bowed!
Make this chaff a mountain crested with fire,
Burn with our fire all that is not God!
When the people let the clue of Unity go from their hands,
They fell into a hundred mazes.
We are dispersed like stars in the world;
Though of the same family, we are strange to one another.

¹ Salmán was a Persian, Bilál an Abyssinian. Both had been slaves and were devoted henchmen of the Prophet.
Bind again these scattered leaves,
Revive the law of love!
Take us back to serve thee as of old,
Commit thy cause to them that love thee!
We are travellers: give us devotion as our goal!
Give us the strong faith of Abraham!
Make us know the meaning of "There is no god,"
Make us acquainted with the mystery of "except Allah!"
I who burn like a candle for the sake of others
Teach myself to weep like the candle.
O God! a tear that is heart-enkindling, Passionful, wrung forth by pain, peace-consuming,
*May I sow in the garden, and may it grow into a fire
That washes away the fire-brand from the tulip's robe!
My heart is with yestereve, my eye is
on to-morrow:
Amidst the company I am alone.
"Every one fancies he is my friend,
But my secret thoughts have not
escaped from my heart."
Oh, where in the wide world is my
comrade?
I am the Bush of Sinai: where is my
Moses?
I am tyrannous, I have done* many a
wrong to myself,
I have nourished a flame in my bosom,
A flame that seized the furniture of
judgement,
And cast fire on the skirt of discretion,
And lessoned with madness the reason,
And burned up the existence of
knowledge:
Its blaze entrones the sun in the sky,
And lightnings encircle it with adora-
tion for ever.
Mine eye fell to weeping, like dew,
Since I was entrusted with that hidden fire.
I taught the candle to burn openly,
While I myself burned unseen by the world’s eye.
At last flames breathed from every hair of me,
Fire dropped from the veins of my thought;
My nightingale picked up the spark-grains
And created a fire-tempered song.
Is the breast of this age without a heart?
Majnún trembles lest Lailá’s howdah be empty.
It is not easy for the candle to throb alone:
Ah, is there no moth worthy of me?
How long shall I wait for one to share my grief?
How long must I search for a confidant?
O Thou whose face lends light to the moon and the stars,
Withdraw thy fire from my soul!
Take back what Thou hast put in my breast,
Remove the stabbing radiance from my mirror,
Or give me one old comrade
To be the mirror of mine all-burning love!
In the sea wave tosses side by side with wave:
Each hath a partner in its emotion.
In heaven star consorts with star,
And the bright moon lays her head on the knees of Night.
Morning touches Night’s dark side,
And To-day throws itself against To-morrow.
One river loses its being in another,
A waft of air dies in perfume.
There is dancing in every nook of the wine-house,
Madman dances with madman.
Howbeit in thine essence Thou art single,
Thou hast decked out for Thyself a whole world.
I am as the tulip of the field,
In the midst of a company I am alone.
I beg of Thy grace a sympathising friend,
An adept in the mysteries of my nature,
A friend endowed with madness and wisdom,
One that knoweth not the phantom of vain things,
That I may confide my lament to his soul
And see again my face in his heart.
His image I will mould of mine own clay,
I will be to him both idol and worshipper.

THE END
