

# ENGLISH RENDERING OF GHAZAL IN BAL-I-JIBRIL

*A. A. Shah*

The tracts in space are not enough  
To hold my passion great and strong:  
The guess about the desert wide,  
By my craze, perhaps was wrong.  
With help of Self we can break  
This talisman of hue and smell,  
But firm belief that God is One  
The Muslims have not followed well.  
Get eyes to see, o heedless man;  
Its glories Nature must reveal;  
For the Ocean can't remain  
Oblivious of its surge's weal.

12

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The rift between the Priest and Saint  
is to pulpit's error due;  
For the gibbet of Hallaj  
Appears a rival in its view.  
Trust in God alone can shield

The holy folk from worldly harms,  
Be they in chains or be they free,  
Like a sturdy coat of arms.  
Try not, Gabriel, to emulate  
My frenzy great and rapture strong:  
Prayers and worship only suit  
The ease-inured angel's throng.

24

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Many a tavern have I seen  
Both in the East and in the West:  
No Saqi here the taverns have,  
There the wine imparts no zest.  
The like of early Muslims true  
No more the Muslim lands can show—  
To thrones of Caesars and Chosroes  
By faqr they dealt a fatal blow.  
The things have come to such a pass  
That the Elder of the Shrine  
Steals and sells to feed himself  
The robes of persons most divine.

36

To God did Israfil complain  
That this slave by fiery rhyme  
The Judgment Day might bring about  
Long before the appoint'd time.  
A Voice was heard that said, "No less  
It is than Last Day's tumult deep:  
Ready the Chinese for pilgrimage,  
In Batha Meccans lie asleep".  
The bowl of wine the West confers  
Blights the roots of true belief.  
But the Saqi holds no cup  
Of antidote to give relief.  
Weak and low are still in tone  
The cries and shrieks of Western Lands,  
For stifled are the cries as yet  
By the fiddler's crafty hands.  
From the self-same ocean rise  
The angry waves with mighty sweep  
That bring about the ruin of dens  
Where dwell the monsters of the deep.

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The state of bondage means to be  
Without the sense of good and fine:  
That is nice and good alone,  
Which as such the free define.  
On the wit and sense of slaves  
No one ever can rely,  
For only brave and free possess,  
In this world, the seeing eye,  
He is the master of his Time  
Who by dint of hard assay  
Picks out Tomorrow's precious pearl  
From the ocean of Today.

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The Man of West who blows the glass  
By art to liquid turns the rock:  
Glass can turn as hard as flint  
By the charm I, hold in stock.  
The breed of Pharoahs lies in wait,  
As of yore, to bring me low:  
I do not grieve, for in my sleeve

1 have the hand with dazzling flow.  
Beneath the heap of straw and dust  
How can that spark its fire lose,  
Which the Mighty Lord of World  
For the bed of reeds did choose?  
Love on Ego keeps a watch  
And knowledge of the Self bestows:  
With utter scorn it turns its gaze  
From halls of Caesars and Chosroes.  
No wonder, if the Pleiades and the Moon  
My noose may pull down to the ground:  
To saddle of a Gracious Lord  
My meek and humble head is bound.  
The Lord of all, the Prophets' Seal,  
The Guide to path that does not err:  
Radiance of the Mount Sinai  
On way-side dust he did confer.  
He is the First and He the Last,  
With love enraptured gaze, if seen:  
He the *Quran*, He the *Furqan*,  
He the *Ta'Ha* and He the *Yasin*.

Out of regard for Ghazna's Sage  
From further diving back I keep,  
Though gems lustrous still abound  
At the bottom of this Deep.

100

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Who be the bard that sings the song  
So full of fire and rapture sweet:  
A tinge of madness it imparts  
To all who claim to be discreet?  
Though Faqr and kingship seem alike,  
And keep the regal wont and way,  
Yet without the help of arms  
A monarch cannot hold his sway.  
  
No trace of Faqr can now be seen  
In the cells where mystics dwell—  
The brand of Faqr that by its might  
The hearts of mighty lions can quell.  
O Darwesh band, that man of God  
Alone is noble, true and best,  
Who keeps the stir of Judgment Day

Conceal'd within his manly breast.  
His praise of God such heat imparts  
That like a flame he burns and glows:  
His wit in grasping subtle facts  
Far swifter than the lightning shows.  
Kingship, no doubt, to brain imparts  
Signs and symptoms of insane:  
The mad man's swelling to reduce,  
God's lancets prove, men like Tamerlane.  
The men who dwell in Muslim Lands  
My fiery songs extol and say,  
"Lo, this heathen born in India,  
Without the spear and sword can slay!"

42-43)

(Bal-i-Jibril P.

The breath of Gabriel  
If God on me bestow,  
I may in words express  
What Love has made me know.

How can the stars foretell  
What Future holds in store?  
They roam perplex'd and mean  
In skies that know no shore.

To fix one's mind and gaze  
On goal is life, in fact:  
To Ego's death do lead  
The thoughts that mind distract.

How strange! the bliss of Self  
Having bestow'd on me,  
God Mighty wills that I  
Beside myself should be.

By Holy Prophets Ascent  
This truth to me was taught:  
Within the reach of man  
High heavens can be brought.



I neither like nor claim  
Plato's thought or Croesus' gold:  
Clean conscience, lofty gaze  
And Zeal is all I hold.  
This Life perhaps is still  
Raw and incomplete:  
"Be and it becomes"  
E'er doth a voice repeat.

The West hath cast a spell  
On thy heart and mind:  
In Rumi's burning flame  
A cure for thyself find.

Through his bounty great  
My vision shines and glows.  
And mighty Oxus eke  
In my pitcher flows.

43-44)

PAN ISLAMISM

On road to goal thou art as yet,  
For long at one site do not pause:  
Forget the lands of Pers. and *Sham*.  
Forgo the thought of Egypt and Hijaz.

A different meed is due to him  
Who acts not out of lust for gain:  
Give up the hope of cup and wine,  
From thoughts of tents and Hour's refrain.

Though the beauty of the West  
Is winsome much and charming, yet  
Thou art high-soaring bird and must  
Shun this lowly grain and net.  
Thy stroke can cleave the rock in twain  
Before thee bow the East and West:

Like the sword of crescent moon,  
  
Come out of sheath, eschew its rest.  
Thy guide no firm conviction holds  
No rapture thine prayers impart:  
Such vain and useless worship quit,  
Company with such leaders part.

## NOTES

15. Hallaj: The celebrated mystic Martyr, executed on a charge of blasphemy in A.D. 922.
21. Gabriel: It is the name of the angel who according to Muslim belief to deputed by God to convey His messages to the Prophets.
31. Titles adopted by the Roman and Sassanian emperors respectively.
37. Israfil The name of an angel who will blow on his trumpet on the Last Day.
44. Batha It is the name of the river-bed of Mecca.
73. Pharoah: It is the generic name of the ancient kings of Egypt.
76. Hand with dazzling glow: The White Hand first manifested in Moses is a symbol of the miraculous power of Prophets.
87. Gracious Lord: It refers to Muhammad, the Holy Prophet of God,
91. Mount Sinai: It was on this mountain that the Prophet Moses witnessed the effects of Divine Epiphany.

95. Koran and Furqan: These words mean Muhammad who is the speaking Koran.
96. Ta'ha and Yasin: Titles by which the Holy Prophet has been addressed in the Koran,
97. Ghazna's Sage: Hakim Sinai, a celebrated mystic and poet, This poem was inspired by Iqbal's visit to the tomb of Sinai at Ghazna.