

Shaikh Ayaz

SONGS OF FREEDOM

(Selected poetry & Prose)

Translated from the Sindhi originals by

Saleem Noorhusain



Sindhi Adabi Board

AYAZ SONGS OF FREEDOM

(Selected Poetry & Prose)

Translated from the Sindhi originals by

Saleem Noorhusain



Sindhi Adabi Board

Jamshoro, Sindh

2006

Copyright © 2003. All rights of translations herein reserved with Saleem Noorhusain.

The moral rights of the author have been asserted

First edition: December 2003

Second revised edition: December, 2006

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, without the prior permission in writing of the translator.

Enquiries concerning reproduction should be sent to the publisher at the address given below.

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form of binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser

Price Rs. 110.00

Us \$. 5.00

To be had from

SINDHI ADABI BOARD KITAB GHAR

Tilak Incline, Hyderabad

(Ph: 022-2633679, Fax: 022-2771602)

E:mail Address: sindhiab@yahoo.com

Website: www.sindhiab.com

Printed by Syed Sikandar Ali Shah Manager Printing Press and Published by Mr. Aijaz Ahmed Mangi Secretary Sindhi Adabi Board, Jamshoro Sindh Pakistan.

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Plato felt glorified to have been born in the age of Socrates and so do I to live in the age of a prodigal poet Shaikh Ayaz in our land. The poet, who once felt so ignored by odd times that he expressed as O' God! Why didn't you put me in the orchard valley? In desert the fragrance went away!

Great poets are birds of same feathers and always fell the same way. Like Shaikh Ayaz, Urdu language's greatest poet Mirza Ghalib too had expressed his anguish similarly:

"I am the nightangle of the garden yet un born."

But our beloved poet whose profound insight and unsarpassed vision made him claim that he was the poet of the past of past and future's future. The fragrance of his melodious poetry is spreading and reaching the nook and corner of international borders to which he always felt committed as a Humanist. In this regard Sindhi Adabi Board has published this slim volume of the English translation of his selected poetry to mark his 9th death anniversary.

Today, on his death anniversary while lying my hands as an student on his tombstone. I remember his words: "This is the last stone of my land, not turned to tears up on his death".

Monday, 26th Zul-Qad 1427
18th December 2006

Aijaz Ahmed Mangi
Secretary
Sindhi Adabi Board,
Jamshoro, Sindh

CONTENTS

• Preface	-- Saleem Noorhusain	05
• Prologue	-- Mohammed Ibrahim Joyo	09
• <u>Poems</u>		
- Three short verses		17
- Selections from ' <i>Kee Jo Beejal-a Bolio</i> '		18
- Selections from ' <i>Vijoon Wasan Aanyoon</i> '		24
- Selections from ' <i>Rin-a Te Rimjhim</i> '		32
- Selections from ' <i>Chand-u Chambeli-a Vull</i> '		40
- Selections from ' <i>Kapar Tho Kunn-a Kare</i> '		51
• <u>Operas</u>		
- Death of Dodo Soomro		57
- Hanging of Bhagat Singh		73
- Bandits of Ranikot		87
• Epilogue	-- Shaikh Ayaz	97
• Notes	-- Various sources	115

PREFACE

(1)

While commenting on the art of translation the other day, a pioneer of the progressive movement in Sindhi literature remarked: "The translator and the poet to be translated should be of the same caliber. Translation by a person of lower caliber would be in the same league as a child's walk on all fours." The remark has the force of truism; and since I am much below the caliber of *Ayaz*, my translation of his poetry (and prose), as compiled in this book, is a mere walk on all fours. A lyricist par excellence with deeper than the deep *command* over language and lore, *Ayaz*, like *Walt Whitman*, "contains multitudes" of galactic magnitude. Translating him is like reaching for the stars, like harnessing a hurricane. I, with so many limitations, have over-reached myself and done what I have done — compressed powerful imagery-rich verse into plainly literal, static and prosaic lines. I have done what I have done just for the love of it.



Saleem Noorhusain belongs to a hide and skin merchant family of the Punjab, which made Sindh its home on the eve of the First World War. He was born at Sukkur on 05.10.1937, the third child of Hafiz Noor Husain ad Khadija Begum, both of whom died—the former in the early forties and the latter in the late forties of the last century before he came of age. He completed his

primary education at Sukkur, secondary at Khairpur Mir's and tertiary at Karachi. He married Fareeda Begum, a widow and younger than him by 11 years, in August 1972. She died in April 2002. He has four children, three sons and one daughter. He was a working journalist from 1955 to 1967, having been associated with Sindhi dailies 'Naeen Sindh', Karachi, 'Mehran', Karachi/Hyderabad and 'Nawai Inqalab', Sukkur; Sindhi monthly 'Naeen Zindagi', Karachi, and Central News Organisation of Radio Pakistan at Karachi as translator/sub-editor. From 1967 to 1998 he worked at non-journalistic administrative posts. His literary endeavor includes a number of original as well as translated (English> Sindhi> English) short stories, articles and/or books. The present work is the first of his two book-length English translations of Sindhi literature, the second being an anthology of twelve short

stories by six male and six female writers and titled 'Glimpses of Sindhi Short Fiction.' He has also edited the English translation of all the thirty Surs of Shah-Jo-Risalo by Agha Saleem for the Culture Department, Govt. of Sindh, in 2006.

And also for keeping myself from being sucked in the vortex of shock, self-reproach and anguish over the sudden and tragic death of my wife, *Fareeda*, on 15th April, 2002. A martyr in life and a martyr in death, she was indeed a better half — as a parent, as a neighbour, as a social being. To her heart-rending memory I dedicate this collection.

It is also dedicated to. —

- My children/grandchildren — *Danyal, Maheen, Aazer and Hameer/Ayaan, Aamna, Falah and Hamza* — whose very presence has kept me whole; and
- My Raakhi-Bandhan sister, *Tahzeeb*, whose care and concern in the aftermath of *Fareeda's* death has sustained my sanity.

The idea and inspiration to do this collection came from *Agha Saleem's* English translation of Shah Lateef's various melodies.

The poems (i.e. *Nazms* as distinct from other genres of poetry such as *Ghazal* etc.) included in this collection were selected by me at random without any preconceived notion of what to look for. They were chosen (from the very few books of *Ayaz* I have in my personal library and from the four lent to me by Mr. Taj Baloch) simply because I liked them more or found them easier to translate than others. Now that the whole selection is before me, I am pleasantly surprised to see that most are thematically interlinked by that of freedom; hence the title of the collection: *Songs of Freedom*. For better or worse, they are my selection alone.

And in comprehending some of their more complex or unfamiliar expressions I was helped by *Mr. Nuruddin Sarki, Hameed Sindhi, Agha Saleem* and many more. I appreciate their help. Similar appreciation is also due to.—

- (a) *Mr. Mohammed Ibrahim Joyo*, a leading light of enlightenment in Sindh and an authority on Shaikh Ayaz, for reviewing the whole manuscript word by word.

- (b) The officials of the Liaquat Memorial Library, Karachi, who loaned me the relevant book for photostatting of the myth quoted by *Ayaz* at the tail-end of his 115-page preface to his book of poetry titled *Katyan Kar-a Moria Jadehn* ('When Pleiades Faded Out,' 1992). An excerpted translation of the preface (done by me) focusing on life and death appears as Prologue in this collection. The preface to this work, highlighting the role of *Ayaz's* art in the nationalist upsurge in Sindh, is an excerpted translation of the 28-page preface written by *Mr. Joyo* for the poet's 1970 collection titled *Kee Jo Beejal-a Bolio* ('So Sang the Minstrel Beejal').
- (c) My good friends Mr. Nuruddin Sarki, Mr. Shamsul Haq Memon and Dr. Sahib Khan Channo for sponsoring this *Ayazian* collection to mark the 6th death anniversary of the great poet, "whose mind," to borrow the words of *St. John Ervine*, "is not immediately comprehended but must be approached many times before its fullness is seen."

(Karachi; 25th October, 2003)

(2)

This edition purports to be 'Revised' because it not only includes translation of three more poems but also rearranges certain entries of the earlier (2003) edition. The rearrangement comprises (a) omission of 'Shaikh Ayaz & His Detractors' as Epilogue, and (b) redesignation of Prologue ('Of Life & Death') as Epilogue, of Preface ('A Minstral Divine') as Prologue, and of 'Translator's Note' as Preface. As far as possible, printing mistakes as well as certain important dates/notes have also been corrected.

(Karachi, 11.12.2006)



A MINSTREL DIVINE

The injustice, to which Sindh was subjected after the dissolution of four provinces into the single province of West Pakistan (popularly known as 'One Unit') in 1955, was resisted by Sindhians on the same scale of rebellion as had arisen against the British imperialism throughout the sub-continent. The language and culture of Sindh seemed to have come under the shadow of an evil star. The portents were that the poets and writers of Sindh would soon become third-rate imitators of some other language and culture. It was right at this testing time that the poetry of Shaikh Ayaz came along and gave back to Sindhi poesy its own language, its own traditions, awareness of its own ethos, its own earth and its own sky. Before this, the Sindhi poet



Mohammed Ibrahim Joyo was born on 12th August 1915 at village Abad near Tirath Lakki, taluka and distt Kotri. He is B.A., B.T., having been educated at his village (primaray), Sindh Madrassah, Karachi (secondary, matric; 1930), D.J. College, Karachi (B.A.; 1938) and Bombay (B.T.; 1941). His service career includes teacher (1938-51), Secretary, Sindhi Adabi

Board (1951-61; 1963-67), and several postings under the Education Deptt, wherefrom he retired in 1973. He was also Chairman of Sindhi Adabi Board from 1996 to 2002. He has published a number of original as well as translated articles/books in Sindhi and English languages. His critical appreciations of the poetry of Shaikh Ayaz are ranked as trail blazers in the field of Sindhi literature. All his English writings have been collected and published in 2006 in a two-volume book titled 'Sindh Bides the day for Freedom.' The book includes the one ('Save Sindh Save the Subcontinent'), which had incurred the wrath of the then president of Sindh Madrassah, Pir Illahi Bukhsh, and resulted in his removal from service.

gave the semblance of a disowned and confounded mendicant of Lucknow and Sheeraz, whose language was three parts Urdu and Persian, the locale in whose poetry was non-Sindhi and so were all its flowers, plants, trees, mountains, rivers, folklore, similes, metaphors, traditions and characters. His whole repertoire emitted the stench of alienage. Such are the

proclivities of a subject and disaffected people. The emancipation and self-respect of Sindh required, first and foremost, that the literature of Sindh be resurrected as Sindhian and made conscious of its own things by repeated references to *Kaaronjher** and *Khirthar** of Sindh; *Manchher** and *Keenjher** of Sindh; *Kaachho** and *Kohistan** of Sindh; *Karachi** and *Ketibunder** of Sindh; the pigmented *Loees** and *Ajraks** of Sindh; the adornments and jewelleries of the handsome and chaste damsels of Sindh; the *turbans* and *axes* of the ever-radiant braves of Sindh; *Hamracho**, *Moro** and *Hojamalo** of Sindh; and to her plants and trees, insects and animals, birds and their free flights, flowers and their refreshing fragrances. And when the poetry of Ayaz came on the scene, the whole of Sindh, as the world knows, was enveloped in its rhythm, and all of her nerves were attuned to it like strings of a lyre, and remain so attuned to this day. The native orientation of this poetry has so affected the youth of Sindh that hundreds of them, incarcerated for the crime of loyalty to Sindh, sang it while turning the spinning wheel, weaving blankets and grinding handmills in their prisons; and continue to sing it in chorus wherever they be now.

A revolutionary poet's is a two-perspective world, inner and outer, and he lives his life in both of them concurrently. The inner perspective of his world takes over when he, wearied of the bitterness of reality, weaves dreams for his own people and for those of the world; and these dreams, turning into shades of his suffering, pour forth in his poetry. And such poetry of his or its pleasure and pigment are supra-national and universal. The outer perspective of his world manifests itself when the revolutionary forces of his own society are ascendant, or when he believes them to be so ascendant, that they can advance to effect social change as per their reach and desire; then he, using his poetry as voice of the passionate feelings and determined wills of those who stand, fight and push forward in the field, makes it a part of them in the battle field. And such poetry of his turns into poetry of all the people of his society. The poetry of Ayaz contains creations from both these perspectives of his world.

The great Lenin, in one of his writings titled '*Art & Literature*', had said about Gautier, the creator of the '*International*,' that "*He is the best propagandist in verse.*" Each song of Ayaz is the shaft of a propagandist, and, at the same time, as and when – now

or ten, twenty or hundred years later – its propagandist role comes to an end, even then it shall always remain, with its supra-national and universal significance, a priceless gem of literature and art.

The French writer, Jean Cocteau, was once asked: "*What would you bring out from a house on fire with a child and an artwork inside?*" His reply was: "*I would bring out fire.*" Fire there is in the poetry of Ayaz but it is for the protection of both the child and the artwork. Ayaz wants to set the fortress of oppression and falsehood on fire and burn it to ashes because inside it devilish instruments and schemes of destruction of millions upon millions of children and artworks are conceived, manufactured and sent out all the time.

During his exile in Mexico, Trotsky had, in collaboration with the great Mexican artist, Diego Rivera, founded an association of the world writers. In its manifesto, which he had himself drafted, he says: "*Art is the best comrade of revolution.*" It is a strange coincidence that a couple of years before One Unit became defunct the greatest artists of all the three oppressed nations of West Pakistan were behind bars in the same prison at the same time. The best poet of Baluchi language, Gul Khan Naseer, the best poet of Pashtu language, Ajmal Khattak, and the best poet of Sindhi language, Shaikh Ayaz, alongwith 13 other top political leaders of the country came together as prisoners in Sahiwal and Peshawar jails. Such top-level togetherness of art and revolution, wherever it forms, constitutes best propaganda for revolution; and serves as a single-minded torch to burn the monster of anti-revolutionary forces to ashes. A revolutionary poet and writer performs this function from within the outer perspective of his life and under its influence and in apt response to its requirement.

For literature to become a comrade of and to serve as propaganda for revolution is possible only when literature remains literature first. The greatest living commander of the world revolution Mao ZeDong*, in his address to Yuan Conference of the Chinese writers, said: "*To be eligible for propaganda, art has to be art first.*"

The significance of the art of Ayaz as the best propaganda for revolutionary movement of the Sindhi nation lies in the fact that it is art first and then propaganda. As there is no limit to beauty, to love, to

* Chairman Mao, born on 26.12.1893, passed away on 09.09.1976.

truth and virtue; likewise there is no limit to excellence in art. Ayaz himself sets limits to the artistic excellence of his literary creations, and overtakes/excels them himself. Simple and beautiful words, their apposite selection and full use, the flow and rhythm of verse and its captivating posture, some times short and tender meters, at others long meters and galloping-through-rocky-terrain rhythm, sometimes lighter-than-air rhymes, utterly innocent and heart-warming use of Hindi prosody *Chhand* and the *melody* of folk-songs, and such novel symbolism and imagery that one's empty lap is filled with pearls of meanings, ears remaining ever cocked to hear and tongue ever-eager to hum them. There aren't any lines of Ayaz, which fail to find a place in one's heart for their lyrical beauty and sweetness! I have heard hundreds of young men reciting from memory complete poems, song after song, and hundred upon hundred verses of Ayaz. In every phase of Sindh's national struggle, Ayaz has written so fittingly appropriate lines that they, besides reflecting the historical spirit of the period, are epitomes of his sublime and unattainable loftiness.

Certain critics of art and literature contend that in true literature "treatment of the issues of a particular period for the contemporaneous people" is not only unnecessary but dismissible too. In their opinion, the universal significance of art and literature cannot be maintained by such co-relating of time and space. They say that literature is not meant for a particular people or a particular time but it is of world importance and meant for the future, that is to say, for coming generations. They deny that true literature has any social significance, since it does not stand tied to the contemporary utilitarian function for a current period or a particular society. But the supreme commander of the Cuban revolution, Fidel Castro, is of a totally different view. He says: "*We declare that there are no such artists, who create their artworks for posterity. Even as we concede that our viewpoint is arguable, we proclaim that whoever follows this assumption suffers from self-delusion. It does not mean that any artist, who endeavors for the people of his own time, has no chance of finding acceptance and popularity for his creations among futures generations because when an artist creates an artwork for the people of his own time -- whether or not the people of his own time comprehend it -- then due to this very reason that creation can achieve historic and universal importance. We are not bringing about revolution for the future generation. We are bringing about revolution with the support of the present generation for the present generation irrespective of its utility for future generations or its finding a place in*

history as an important happening. We are not bringing about revolution for coming generation. This revolution would have significance for posterity because it is a revolution for the men and women of today. If we were to bring about revolution for posterity, who would care about it or follow us? Indeed, we can strive for the people of our own time, and our creation is for them — and by doing so, no creation can remain without ever-lasting popularity."

I don't think, any other Sindhi poet has so sublimely blended art with revolution in his poetry as Ayaz has done. The new revolutionary Sindh is a living testimony to how a great revolutionary poet can transform the destiny of his people by his art. Shah Abdul Lateef Bhittai, the immortal poet of Sindh, has amply and concisely made the point thus:

'The divine minstrels do not drop down on earth and walk off in aimless pursuit, as if they had nothing better to do high above in heavens.'

(Hyderabad, July 21, 1970)



⁶⁰ Fidel Castro – 'Address to Intellectuals', June 1961

POEMS

Three Short Verses

(1)

O torch,
Stay alight, stay alight –
Adverse is the wind,
All over it's dark,
Ice cold, freezing, deluge;
Stay alight, stay alight,
O torch!

(2)

Whenever anyone's shackles broke,
I felt as if my own neck were freed!
O subjects n' oppressed of the whole world,
When anyone won release from subjection,
I felt as if my own neck were freed!
Whenever a killer's hands shook,
I felt as if my own neck were freed!

(3)

Wherever, whenever, whoever
Is oppressed,
I am the victim;
Whenever an arm is axed,
I cry out;
Any reed that is cut (from a river bank),
Is of my bank.

Kee Jo Beejal-a Bolio
['So Sang The Minstrel Beejal']
(1970)

①

I'm a sinner, I'm a sinner,
I've sinned many a time.

The blue lotus in this murky moss of reeds
Is too a sinner,
So is the red-legged partridge
That flies in the dark.
It isn't a sin that I've
Kneaded man's clay again.

I'm a sinner, I'm a sinner,
I've sinned many a time.

It isn't a sin that I
Forsook heaven for the love of earth,
I didn't exchange
Seven coloured dusk for the sun.
I soar like clouds n' rain like rays.

I'm a sinner, I'm a sinner,
I've sinned many a time.

Those panderers of thy earth,
Whether mystics or ascetics,
They all were empty vessels, cheats,
Putrid were their chants of hymns n' *mantras*;
I sang sturdy songs every day n'
Gave shade like a dense banyan tree.

I'm a sinner, I'm a sinner,
I've sinned many a time.

This red beard of the Mullah,
This black tuft of the Pandav,
To me,
One is no different from the other,
Both are the fire of burnt out ember,
Religion is their ware
To replenish their fare.

I'm a sinner, I'm a sinner,
I've sinned many a time.

It isn't a sin that I've
Built a temple to the heart;

Thou hast raised the wall of hate,
I've uprooted its foundation,
I've sung the song of love;
I've redirected the reins of motherland.

I'm a sinner, I'm a sinner,
I've sinned many a time.

I respond to every sob,
Thou oppress, I console,
Thou howl like a tiger,
I roar like a lion,
I'm thy strange adversary,
Keeping close watch over thee.

I'm a sinner, I'm a sinner,
I've sinned many a time.

Thou art the last whiff of autumn,
I'm the burning bloom of spring;
Thou shy away even from shadows of the lowly,
I sing songs of the cobblers;
Where the rust boils n' iron melts,
There the people of bellows dwell.

I'm a sinner, I'm a sinner,
I've sinned many a time.

Yesterday I sang, as a cuckoo,
The songs of the branches of *Kesuphul*¹;
Today I sing
The glittering songs of the glistening paddies,
Some are the songs of unhappy sickles,
Some are the songs of down-trodden tillers.

I'm a sinner, I'm a sinner,
I've sinned many a time.

When some hopefuls emerge
From the rising shimmer of summer heat,
N' these green fields ripen
Through the season in simmering vapour,
I perceive a great battle coming,
N' my limbs whirl in a dance.

I'm a sinner, I'm a sinner,
I've sinned many a time.

When humans scorched by hot winds
Come out on the streets,

When workmen, smutted by suffering,
Come out of factories,
I strike my string,
N' hearts become carefree.

I'm a sinner, I'm a sinner,
I've sinned many a time.

I blew the trumpet of liberty
N' removed the shackles of slavery;
Were these mere songs or magic,
The age-old chains are broken;
All are picking my tears as pearls
From my shirt-front.

I'm a sinner, I'm a sinner,
I've sinned many a time.

I've come up with a unique gift,
String is locked in combat with swords;
When I collide my songs with thy ramparts,
Thy strong towers shake n' shiver,
Thou art no stronger with thy weaponry .

I'm a sinner, I'm a sinner,
I've sinned many a time.

Thou'll hang me by gallows?
No way,
I'll never die by thy hand,
I'm the spring of that life,
Which'll resound even after I'm gone;
I'll become another minstrel,
N' taking a lyre,
I'll come back, I'll come back;
The sages, who're glory of the land,
Are first denounced as sinners, hence
I'm a sinner, I'm a sinner,
I've sinned many a time.

●

2

The storm is as yet away –

A blast of wind shakes the trees,
N' leaves fall with a crackle,
Even as the cart clogs,
Wheels roll on.

Why dost thou travel in the cart,
Stopping at every toll post,
N' with such a big bundle of riff-raff,
Thou start at every rut in the path.

The storm is as yet away –

But mounted on a charger of swift wind,
He is to come, he is to come;
Every wheel is to break down as it rolls,
N' all hell is to break loose,
The riff-raff is to scatter,
Better thee overcame thy fears,
Mastered thy nerves,
N' went with him astride the charger.

(3)

This here is a verse, this here a bomb,
Pick whichever thou want.

To me one is no different from the other,
This verse is also a comrade of this here bomb,
N' of the bone and skin
That roared in the battle field last night.

The blow struck by this verse
On the whole expanse is grievous,
This verse is a relentless bombardment
Upon that injustice, which
Takes away bread from thy basket
N' puts it in the dog's mouth every day,
And snatching thy songs from thee,
Puts nails into your throat.

This verse is not a verse of cotton,
I've filled it with steel –
Thou hast heard many a verse afore,
Thou hast taken a sip of poison –
Perceive its force,
It has demolished many a fortress,
With it I've struck, many a time,
The pinnacles in the land of injustice,

This here is a verse, this here a bomb,
Pick whichever thou want.

●

4

Where there hot wind blows n' mudars bake,
That land, o traveller, is my homeland.

Where there sun rises in glare,
Fire n' flame,
And days fry like pans,
That land, o traveller, is my homeland.

Where there scorching sunlight drenches young camels,
N' sand rains upon camelmen's trails,
That land, o traveller, is my homeland.

Where there locust swarms fall upon plants,
N' woodsmen bravely live through hot blasts,
That land, o traveller, is my homeland.

Where there misfortunes befall
N' terror strikes
Since centuries past,
That land, o traveller, is my homeland.

At long last, in some season of clouds,
Rains shall fall n' grasses rub against tracks,
Where there some day verdure shall finally grow rich n' dense,
That land, o traveller, is my homeland.

Where there
One day rain-clouds shall hopefully burst into showers,
Deluging the expanse end to end,
N' keep on raining without cease,
That land, o traveller, is my homeland.



Vijoon Wasan Aaiyoon
('Rainclouds are Amassed to Burst Forth')
(1973)

①

I give thee songs, O Earth,
Thou put me in chains.
These songs of rosy drizzle,
These songs of intoxicating drizzle;
These songs of the season of rains,
That gladdens hearts;
These songs of swarming clouds;
These songs of thirsty peacocks –
Throats of the desolates inert on sand;
These songs of the golden Indus,
That bluish deep Indus,
Which is a dream at dusk;
These songs of rower on ferry;
These songs of raging windstorms;
These songs of unflinching men;
These songs of silvery arms,
N' of separations and cries
Of the dense cloud-like youth,
Of the gale like youth;
These songs of juicy colours,
Of swings of crazy emotions;
These songs of new utensils,
Of boughs n' shades,
These songs of the lovers' nightly tiffs,
N' of intense intimate whisperings;

These songs of the pain of parting,
N' of pillow-sides of beauties,
N' of pitch black tresses,
N' of fragrant memories;
These songs of the pangs of separation,
N' of a great longing,

N' of constant shedding of tears,
These songs of cause n' effect;
At times these songs were in earnest,
N' glimpses of overcast sky;
At times these were serious,
N' water of the deep mountain torrents;
These songs of Mother Earth,
Of the grain and water Earth;
These songs of tears of blood,
N' of endless sobs;
These songs of flown ringdoves,
N' of wind-swept nests;
These songs of children in hunger,
N' of stars of future _
Of the distressed, of the workers,
N' of the sun-scorched fields,
Of fetters, of gaols,
N' of hardy humans,
N' of leaders on scaffolds;
These songs of timeless signs;
These songs of open spaces,
N' of lust for life;
These songs of inevitable freedom,
N' of muscle-strength freedom;
These songs are of all those commoners,
Who destroy the high walls of bondage;
What songs have I given thee __
The songs of dew n' flame,
The songs of dream n' beauty,
I give thee victory, O Earth,
Thou put me in chains.



2

Eyes're scales,
Our eyes're scales,
Both the worlds're fake,
Even so they're beloved,
Our eye're scales:
They know not tilting for any one,
Abiding untruth is not their wont;
In the weighing of values,
One country's scale is ever equal to another's;
In dispensing justice
They never fail, wittingly or unwittingly;
Wealth against dust they never weigh;
Believer n' unbeliever
They stay away from both;
Wherever we go the customers 're fake,
All seekers are false but love,
Love is our stock-in-trade,
To whom should we sell?
To whom should we go
For valuation of the pain of heartbreak?
Say, is there any mart for truth?
Say, is there any buyer of beauty?
There's to be some one
In God's whole world?
Both the worlds're fake,
Even so they're beloved.
There's to be some one
In both their favour,
Like ours his eyes too
Have to be scales.

●

3

Even as each moment is a false coin,
 Yet some moment has a body of gold;
 Clenched in the hand of some moment
 Is the secret of life;
 Even as some moment overnights on sand
 In intense frosts n' deep shadows,
 Yet some moment causes
 Stubble to blossom,
 Rich colours to spread,
 Yea yea, some moment hovers over
 Camelthorns like a butterfly;
 Yea yea, some moment is wary
 Like a crimson-hued lass;
 Yea yea, some moment is afloat,
 Like a damsel in Gangetic waters ;
 Yea yea, some moment is grief-stricken
 Like a *Chikor*² in the night of full moon;
 N' some moment
 Fills up, thunders, rains, creates,
 Like the gentle pearl-bearing oyster-shell.



4

To the Son of Doolah Darya Khan ³

In any case
Thou shalt die in *Kaachho*.
Today thou must, tiger-fashion,
Leaping into shadows of a hill
Shoot down bullets;
N' crouching behind a boulder,
Shake the land with staccato.
If thy dead body
Spins down on *Nain Gaaj*⁴,
It matters not;
If the heaven falls down on earth,
The earth is weaker.
Don't cower before the ferocious bully,
For every heart is a gun,
Every bullet has a lingo,
Which all with sense know;
Thou may say it's a riddle,
But this riddle is easy to unravel;
If bullet is thy slave,
Thou art no one's slave;
Today thou must, tiger-fashion,
Leaping into shadows of a hill,
N' crouching behind a boulder,
Shoot down bullets,
N', in tune with their resonant rhythm,
Sing the hymn to liberty.

●

5

On the Death of Che Guevara

The one who hath lived
 A life of freedom,
 Death is no big deal for him.
 Has the lion, seeing snares at every step,
 Ever stopped roaring?
 Has the falcon ever hid in its nest
 Out of fear?
 The solace of lair is for the jackal,
 Only a sparrow fears the (eagle's) swoop.

The one who hath lived
 A life of freedom,
 Death is no big deal for him.

A single moment of freedom
 Is better than a lifetime of slavery,
 N' the moment in which
 Thou hast lived fully,
 That moment has the strength of centuries,
 Its age is longer than all.

The one who hath lived
 A life of freedom,
 Death is no big deal for him.



6

[The following lines are versification of what I felt when news of the Viet Cong⁵ attack at Danang brought to mind a poem by Ho Chi Minh - Ayaz]

None has won
Freedom by tears;
Thou art upon a lowland,
The night is starlit;
Behold the expanse of clouds,
What a twinkle the genius holds;
Be a flame of the song of fire;
Poetry may become a torch,
Advance like a tide in a violent sea
N' strike as a thunder clap
Falls upon a mountain!
Victory of a song
Is the victory of people.
Yesterday in a distant land
The tigers of Danang,
Flying red banners,
Burst upon the imperialists,
Who, rent and slit,
Fell in heaps, like dogs that they're;
Hot land pulsates, n' vultures,
Having had their fill of carcasses,
Wing about in sated leisure.
Now songs shall blossom,
Cities sparkle, life bustle,
Child's smile'll mirror peace,
Mother's smell'll have freshness of peace,
Peace'll reign again,
Peace'll reign again.

--

Every one has dreams,
They saw reality,
Who wagered life against death,

They won finally,
N' didn't lose.

--

O my Land, I've made verse
With a heart afire
Some spark in lyre
Has leaped into life,
Dreams are alight,
Some reality is ashine
Thou too should become
Flame of the song of fire,
Flame of the song of fire,
Flame of the song of fire.



Rin-a Te Rimjhim

**['Dance of Raindrops on Desert Sand']
(1986)**

1

Would that you knew:
What air of freedom is like!
Would that you knew:
What carefree wings are like,
What free clime is like!

Would that you sang
The unfinished song, which
Bhagat Singh had sung on the gallows that night!
Would that you wore
The wreath, which
Tantia Tope⁶ had worn while suspended in the air!

From the streets of history
Comes at all times a call,
Which pulls you to the paths of blood!
As if a bullet of Dyer⁷ were lying
In wait for you to this day,
N' forcing your steps toward execution ground;
History, like a hungry panther,
Roars on the four-way square!

Would that you knew:
What price are the songs of freedom,
Wither the liberation, of which you sang, leads!
Would that you knew:
How that freedom is won!



2

The future, that's come into my heart,
 Is closed like the eyes of a newborn baby;
 This world,
 A cheat that it is,
 Shall change soon,
 N' wouldn't cheat any one again;
 Both pans of the truth-scales
 Shall balance;
 All deals shall be closed
 In a straight forward manner;
 The thieves and pickpockets of this world
 Shall be cowed down;
 All merchants of untruth n' deceit
 Shall be crushed;
 All plants of violence n' tyranny
 Shall be uprooted;
 All drum-beaters n' go-betweens
 Shall be done away with;
 All the loud cries of sham patriotism
 Shall be stilled;
 Seeds of love
 Shall be strewn;
 Today too fields of future
 Blossom inside me,
 Many a flower blooms into fragrance,
 Even though
 The future that's come into my heart
 Is closed like the eyes of a newborn baby.



3

The song of love
Resonates again
Losing itself in the echoes of space;
Time, crocodile style, gobbles up
The song of love.

Then from the bosom of earth,
From the embrace of lovers,
The song of love
Grows up again and again
Into the rose garden of life --
Because if there be any thing on this earth
Immortal, adorable,
Victorious over death,
Distinct from all,
Happy at every step,
That thing is
The song of love,
The loveable song of love.

●

4

Bulhay Shah, my brother,
 You and I,
 We dance to the tune of love,
 This land belongs to us both
 N' Indus is our mother,
 O brother,
 We dance to the tune of love.
 What has happened to Punjab,
 What afflicts her?
 O brother,
 We dance to the tune of love.
 Sindh knows nothing of hate,
 She knows only love,
 O brother,
 We dance to the tune of love.
 Those who are stoking
 The fires of disharmony,
 Have lost their sense;
 O brother,
 We dance to the tune of love.



(5)

Is there such a melody,
When a person sang in it,
From within it arose into heaven
Pinnacles of the fortress of Aror⁸,
Swift flow of Indus hoar-frothed
As if –
Some heads arose dreamily from ships;
Heavy stones struck ramparts;
Black horses pounded paths;
Arrows flew into heaven,
Like swallows,
N' fell down on ground,
A battle ensued;
The wounded finally crashed to the ground;
Some damsel standing up on her
Henna-dyed toes,
Looked down from the turret,
Some virgin shooting her lamp-blackened eye-lances,
Wounded the far off horizon,
From which arose
Pinnacles of the fortress of Aror;
Yea,
Such a melody is mine.

●

6

For me
Moon n' stars are pathways,
Houses of worship!
You say that I'm an agnostic!
To me
Cosmos is every inch a mosque,
N' man's heart a grand mosque,
Inside which, in the first row
I and Faiz⁹ are standing since yesterday;
In the same row stand
Such other agnostics as
Bulhay Shah, Bhitae.

●

7

If dreams were free
What else one would wish for?

Our dreams are prisoners of war,
Spitten upon by victors,
Pulled down with swishing swords.

Our dreams were --
Like a storm as it roars through wilderness,
Like the clamour of desires in motherland's heart.

Dreams are
The most heinous criminals
On this earth today;
Dreams of freedom are
More heavily damned
Now than ever before;
Powerless dreams,
So much poison brims their eyes.

But from this spark of theirs --
Fire is akindle again,
A far off destination is in sight,
A direction pointed out,
The sand, as it were, consoles,
The afflicted have been shown a path;

If this slogan is shouted all around:
'Long live Earth!'
What else one would wish for?
If dreams were free,
What else one would wish for?

●

8

The world of dead contains every thing,
What is there in the world of gods?

In the world of dead are –
Eye-cups overflowing with wine,
Swarthy damsels of dawn,
As heart-winning as blue heaven.
As though a mart of dreams were in business,
As though the festival of *Vaisakhi*¹⁰ were in progress;
At every turn
Are hundreds of wine-coloured maidens,
Whose hearts are like goblets of honey;
Also there is
A number of sleepy virgins,
Whose body perfume wafts in air,
Whose embraces are warm;
The moon is peeping through clouds;
Monsoon showers are falling;
Clouds are aglow with strokes of lightning;
Rains are falling upon wine-drinkers;
Wine in pitchers is strong;
In the world of dead, every man
Walks along enchanted;
There are many playthings
To keep entertained like children;

The world of gods is smoke-ridden;
The world of dead is like a mirror,
Whose silence is lyrical
Like moonlight in *Madhuban*¹¹,
In which my luckless talent
Has cooed like cuckoos;
In every leaf of *Madhuban*,
My cry has pulsated like heart,
The tearful eyes of the world of dead
Are as dear as dew-drops;
They are like stars at daybreak
Over the expanse of night.



Chand-u Chambeli-a Vull
['*Jasmine-Creper Moon*']
(1985)

①

As day breaks over *Mithi*¹²,
Sand-dunes are dyed red
Like rose flower,
Like dream of this Earth.
Sand is as crimson as
Strong wine in horizon.
Horizon is so deeply scarlet,
As if camelmén,
Each turn of their turbans ashimmer like flames,
Were come,
N' picketed their camels near me,
Touched my feet,
Wiped my tears,
N' raised their slogans, which
Resounded through sand-dune to sand-dune,
Like the lyre of my soul;
Sand-storms rage all over the land,
Men rise like windstorms
As they would on the Day of Judgment,
Yes, O yes, like my dream,
Like red rose.



2

If poetry be of use to thee,
I'll sing again for thee.

If thou want me to break
My feeble bones again,
I'll remain loyal to thee.

While bathing in pools of blood
N' sustaining deep wounds,
What I had sung I'll sing again.
If my flute hurts me again
N' my eyes become moist while dying,
I'll hide my tears from thee.

The fire that has died down,
The turmoil that has subsided,
I'll flare them up again.

With fiery heat I'll enliven the flame,
N' upraise care-worn heads
Higher than before.

I'm sacrificing for thee
My body, heart n' riches,
But, o my Land,
Give me thy word that –
Thou shall not retreat,
Thou shall not listen to liars,
N' shall never be as forgetful
As to confuse the trusting
N' lead them astray.
Even though far off, the destination is there,
The path to end misery lies ahead,
Thou shall arrive by taking it.

Zigzag are the paths of truth,
Taxing the traverse over hills,
Waver not for it'll confuse thee.

But thy destination is one,
As man's heart is one,
Thou shall regret turning back.

If poetry be of use to thee
I'll wear shackles again,
I'll sing again
For thee.



3

O soil of *Sehwan*¹³,
 Bowing my head, I search in thee
 The footprints of *Alexander*¹⁴.

Many overcame this land,
 Smothering all like poison gas.

I read the history of *Arghuns*¹⁵ n' *Tarkans*¹⁶,
 N' looked for the fate of immortal men,
 Who suffered privation n' oppression,
 But sang songs never before sung.

These grains of wheat –
 A veritable hell since centuries galore –
 How long ought I fight for them?

O *Marwandi*¹⁷,
 Why dost thou smile n'
 Turn thy head away from me,
 Is it because thou too think that:
 A final battle is yet to come
 N' I am to die fighting,
 So be it,
 But my Land will be saved.



From the far off mount *Kailash* ¹⁸
Winter moon always beckoned to my heart.

Warrior that I was,
I took time off from battle,
Away from piercing spears,
For a few short naps, which I liked.

The nails of sun-heat were
Pointedly sharp on battlefield,
Yesterday I didn't avert my face from scratches,
Wounds of my chest healed,
They were like plants of black rose,
My adversaries, none of them,
Accused me of dealing mean blows,
It wasn't that I was afraid to die or kill,
But yet
On the shimmering sand of battlefield,
From the far off mount *Kailash*,
Winter moon always beckoned to my heart.

●

5

Amrita Preetam,
I'm thy *Waris Shah*¹⁹.
Speaking from graves,
I retell tales of old romances
Over and over again since ages.
Thine, mine n' every one's sorrows n' pains,
I sing of them in each of my songs;
Applying ointment from friend to friend,
I cure old wounds.
I'm *Ranjhoo*²⁰, I'm the flute,
In rapturous motion I make the wood dance,
N' please the *Panjnad*²¹.
O *Amrita Preetam,*
I'm him, thy *Waris Shah*.

●

(6)

What a bad smell is issuing,
Dogs are plucking at a carcass,
Their bellies'll never be filled,
For they vomit all they feed on
Out on the ground.
The day is hot,
The branches of thorn-tree,
Stretching tight, like an arrow,
Shed yellow leaves;
The crowing of untimely crows,
Intertwine the ground underneath
With sunrays.
At long last, rainclouds would come
Pouring seasonal showers;
At long last, the whole earth
Shall resonate into challenges;
How long the populace
Shall bear the brunt of sun-heat?

●

7

My son rings up from *Dublin*²²
*Sukkur*²³ is burning in sun,
 Month of June is a hell,
 Hot wind is blowing outdoors,
 But in *Dublin*
 It is cold and raining.

World is so small,
 It is, as it were, a pack of poison.
 Some are divided by apartheid,
 Poison-filled hate causes
 Clashes among races,
 Savage teeth of one nation are
 Stuck in another nation's flesh;
 Men are, as it were, dogs,
 Who snarl without cause,
 Baring their fangs, rend n' tear,
 Aim and kill with their bullets,
 Throw bombs, sprinkle poisonous germs,
 Devour one another,
 On mere suspicion;
 Men in uniforms frighten
 Their own people, country to country;
 Men of riches
 Fleece with abandon,
 Make the world fight
 With weaponry loaned by them,

What tricks they play
 To destroy the world!
 It's a western poet, who,
 Visualizing the future,
 Said, "*Mediterranean sea has evaporated,
 Turning the air into brackish vapour.*"
 Men in uniform,
 Men of riches,
 Both are foes of Earth;

Hightime we got rid of them,
Removing all national boundaries,
Made one nation.
How small is Earth!
Why is it a poison pack?
Why not shower water of life?
Why not spread love everywhere?



8

Friends have become strangers,
They say: 'Thou hast broken up.'

Iron n' stone they break up too,
I'm just fragrance,
They say: 'Thou hast broken up.'

Even though I can still fly sky-high,
They say: 'Thou hast broken up.'

Even though I still adore emigrants,
They say: 'Thou hast broken up.'

Even though I still abhor oppression n' tyranny,
They say: 'Thou hast broken up.'

They know not,
How boughs break up in storms,
They say: 'Thou hast broken up.'

I'm always one step ahead,
My former comrades say: 'Thou hast broken up'



9

They hit the table with a fist,
Leaves fall from the tree of *nineteen-seventeen*.
What do they think?
Is this the same world?
What do they look for in *Lenin* ?
They know that dictators of today
Are not the *Romanovs* ²⁴.
None has hang-ups
Like those of *Dostoyevsky* ²⁵,
Today's hangmen are not the same,
Neither are the *Pervezs* ²⁶ same,
Nor the *Farhads* ²⁷ same.
The mountain shall be split,
Yea, but no river of milk'll
Flow through it, instead
A river of blood shall flow.
Hearing me say so,
They are incensed
And hit the table with a fist.



Kapar Tho Kunn-a-Kare

[The Coast Is Eddying]

(1975)

①

O earth,
How long thy grain growers can
Live in want,
Pick hunger from granaries,
Suffer in silence,
How long, how long?

Every portal in this tyrannous land
Metes out injustice, travesty,

The asset of liberty is gained
Only by sacrifice of home n' hearth.

Whose tears can I wipe
In this smile-starved land?

Whom can I console
In this time of oppression n' persecution?

Today converse is held in bullets,
While I've wasted my life in words.

O' my homeland,
I haven't the heart
To put songs in the lap of suffering!
Today ---
As thunderous slogans resound,
As braves forge ahead in fight,
I too join in
For songs are of no avail.

•

2

Every one thinks
The weighing scales of truth
Tilt in his favour.

The just n' the unjust,
Both say they speak the truth.
May be there're many truths.
Even so I think,
This one truth
Has been here from eternity
N' I take to it as my own:
Every one has been fighting since eons
For his bread,
For his beloved homeland, n'
For his freedom;
[This fight is worthwhile
For it brightens life.]
This fight, this war for living
Shall go on as long as
The sun rises,
Mothers keep on bearing children.

●

3

Truth,
A great offender,
Ever since genesis
Seized and chained,
Hunted out and killed.
Condemned to drink hemlock²⁸,
Hanged from gibbet²⁹,
Roasted alive in a cauldron of boiling oil³⁰,
Crushed in oil expeller³¹,
Thrown down from mountain top³².
Despite all he persists in his luckless custom.

Any heart that he³³ breaks into
Is always in turmoil;
Today he's thy guest;
Have thee ever paused to ponder
Whom thou hast befriended,
The great offender,
Truth!



OPERAS

DEATH OF DODO SOOMRO¹

ACT ONE

[A candelabrum is burning in the tent. Chanayser sips wine as his concubine, Chholi², sings and whirls in a dance.]

Chholi:

Drink to live, live to drink,
Dingle a dink, dingle a dink;
Darky night, look aquick,
Dingle a dink, dingle a dink;
Candle aflutter, finale aquench,
Dingle a dink, dingle a dink;
Dingle a dink, dingle a dink.

Chanayser (*in itoxicanted chant*):

All things come n' go,
All things their custom break,
Whatever is, is this moment,
Death is inevitable, death is inevitable –
It's *Karoonjher*, it's *Kaachho*,
It's *Manchhar*, it's *Miani*³,
It's bed-time of cloudy season,
It's time of *Vaisaakhhi*,
It's footprints thine n' mine,
It's born with thee n' me,
It's come from the unknown,
N' returns to the unknown,
Yields not to any one.
Many have come on this earth,
N' made her dance to their tune;
No one knows of them today,
Whence repose?
There isn't any resting place (for them) –
The other world is nowhere situate,
Dust has no beginning;
Whatever any one may say,

Whom doth death support?
It turns all truth into untruth –
Death sparkles like a gem,
That's set into life,
Into every one's chest –
Is there any runaway
Or anyplace on this earth,
Which is free from it?
Every man is a lyre
Attuned in death –
Every moment is a grain split upon heart;
If every one hath to die,
Not ever to return,
Then all this phenomenon is in vain!
Every scowl n' arrogance is in vain!
All ego is false,
Every one's measure is a yard or two;
A tribute given or taken, so what!
A loss suffered or inflicted, so what!
All man's glory is dust,
His dignity is dust;
Guilty and guiltless
Have the same terminus;
For all have to die
N' fill up earth's belly.

[He holds a lock of Chholi's hair in one hand, and with the other fills his cup from the flagon.]

Even if it be lame,
A living dog is better than a dead saint!
O my girl, how do I know
If the sun rises after my death!
The present, the full-moon-lit night,
Is every thing;
Thy sprig-like body
Is jasmine-fragrant
N' honey-sweet --
Nightlong cooing of a cuckoo
In a dark wood is better,

N' that fair dame is better,
Who offers her ripe body
N' provides a few juicy moments.
In the rainy season a nightlong swing
Turns the jarful of date-tree juice
Into richly fermented drink
That sets every nerve on fire.
"There's no greater glory than living,"
Is what the sages say.
Death is total darkness,
A blow unto a fistful of bones.

Chholi:

Sire, I'm just a potteress,
Not very wise or sensible,
Even as I hold life dear,
I've observed how
Earthen urns are baked in a kiln
N' painted with many a pattern!
Some turn out to be so half-baked
That a small blow or jolt breaks them;
Yea, but no body is sure,
Which one is full-baked;
I have seen even such pitchers
Breaking into pieces on a fall from the stand –
Yea, even so '*Gharoli*⁴' sung to their beat
In our tender n' gentle speech,
How sweet, how lovely it sounds!
N' what is an earthen cup!
But when it's filled with wine cooled nightlong,
Whoever has sipped it, all smiles,
In the wane of night,
His life is worth it;
Otherwise dust is all worthless,
Wine is the great substance, Sire,
Otherwise dust is nothing, Sire.

[*Chanayser goes into a reverie, and then raising his head stares at Chholi for some moments and tells her to sing some other song. Chholi sings a Vaaee*⁵.]

Chholi:

Though flowers wilt every day,
 Fragrance doth stay;
 For once the air smelt sweet
 As all guiles of fear lay in defeat,
 Though flowers wilt every day.
 If you took my hint,
 You'll leave your scent
 Permeating all over --
 Fragrance doth stay,
 Though flowers

[The song is stopped midway as Saalaar Khan, Commander of Allauddin's forces, enters the tent without permission and tells Chanayser that Dodo had refused to surrender. Chanayser fills a wine up and offers it to Saalaar Khan, who guzzles it down in a gulp, and then both plan a stealthy night attack on Dodo's army. Chholi hears it all, dumbfounded. Saalaar Khan, having guzzled several cupfuls of wine in the meanwhile, pulls Chholi to himself, intoxicated. She frees herself and clings to Chanayser.]

Chanayser [*laughing lewdly*]:

Hoho hoho, haha haha,
 Oho oho, aaha aaha,
 "Though flowers wilt every day,"
 Even then every one likes them --
 Female is a charm,
 Moonlight is fragrant,
 Any beefly, drawn by scent,
 Would go to suck the nectar;
 Female is a casket of musk,
 Whoever takes its lid off
 N' spreads its perfume,
 Warms every one's heart.

[Looking towards Saalaar Khan, he continues.]

She is my deed,
 My crown, my throne,

My hand, my weapon,
And a blow to the foe,
I'm no fool to hide her from you.

[*To Chholi :*]

Fear not sword n' sheath,
Shed thy shyness, go,
To him thou go.

[*Chanayser pushes her towards Saalaar Khan, who pulls her so eagerly that her bodice is torn at shoulder. Curtain.*]

ACT TWO **SCENE I**

[*It is midnight. Dodo is sitting outside the tent looking at the sky. His sister, Baaghhi, is by his side.*]

Dodo:

Thick clouds have laid a siege
With dense darkness, shutting out
The moonshine, that was there a short while ago;
Gusts of rugged wind resound through the night,
Little wonder if force of the wind
Blows away canvas-walls of the tent
N' the tent itself, whole of it,
Comes crashing to the ground!
Every thing appears to be unsteady
Except man's spirit;
Stronger than every rock though he be,
At times softer than cotton he becomes
As if he were a water bug;
But when he takes it upon himself,
Sky and earth shake,
Stars bow to him,
Mountains pay him obeisance.

[Looking at Baaghhi, addresses her:]

Khilji has asked for thy hand in marriage,
N' wants the throne for Chanayser.

Baaghhi:

What of crown, what of throne,
What of gold-cast fortune,
Man's cupidity is in vain;
Man comes naked, returns naked,
But you do grant
That your throne is a trust,
All treasure is a trust.
Though there be kings aplenty,
People are happy with you –
Every abode has a green tree,
All around there come festivities at dusk;
The *Larries*⁶, having tilled their fields,
Bedeck themselves with flower-patterned *Ajraks* at
sundown,
N' gather at bathing places along canal-bank,
Singing the sweet melody of *Raano*⁷,
For their woes n' worries are no more
N' their slumbers are sound and happy.
If you surrender your crown,
You'll cause distress to every one;
Those alien invaders, wherever they set foot,
Let loose a reign of terror n' plunder –
When a serpent crawls out of her hole,
Nothing escapes her darting tongue,
The monster gobbles up raw
The little ones of the dove in bushes;
If you've seen a serpent,
You must have seen,
So long as her tracks remain intact,
Every being trembles in terror.

[Placing her hand on Dodo's chest, she continues:]

In every man breathes his father
 N' all his paternal, maternal forefathers,
 One or the other confronts him every day,
 As none of them ever remains unconcerned;
 Any coward among them assaults him masked every time,
 Stifling the truth in him,
 Robbing him of his courage.
 This creature of blood n' sinews
 Is indeed a reflection of his ancestry.
 If you go down fighting,
 You'll have sacrificed yourself for this Land;
 O Dodo, you'll breath no more,
 But people's faith'll live on;
 Your sons, if not, then your grandsons
 Would remain parallel with you,
 For liberty they'll crawl
 N' fight acrawling unto the last;
 Leave a precedent for them,
 Or leave a blank, if you so wish
 For me, you may accept anyone,
 Khilji or a dog,
 It's all upto you!

Dodo:

Thee n' me are of the same blood,
 Thee n' me have the same zest for life,
 It was wise what thee said just now,
 It's after my own heart;
 Man isn't a lump of clay,
 He's neither deaf nor dumb,
 Man is all a mystery but a voice too;
 A teal flying off water
 Is like a flash of cold light;
 Death is a shadow sans substance,
 Yea, but something likely outlives,
 That's spark of gene,
 Which lives through posterity,

Averting obsolescence,
 Imparting strength n' sap;
 Baaghhi, what thou sayest is true,
 That if I lay down my life today,
 Sacrifice myself for this Land,
 I'll breath no more,
 But people's faith'll live on.

[*Chholi comes running, and falling down on Dodo's feet cries out sobbing:*]

Chholi:

May you live long, lord Dodo,
 My gracious lord Dodo,
 Melody is a dream,
 When I sing, this whole universe
 Is wrapped up in the blue beauty of rhythm;
 With me comes a respite
 In the suffering of generations,
 With me comes a wave of happiness,
 I am tingling of ankle-bells,
 When I whirl my feet on this earth,
 Star-coins jingle,
 Gold-coins, my barter, are nothing,
 I was a fool to have traded my body,
 My body, upon which
 The moon bowed,
 All phenomena bowed,
 I am priceless.
 But, oh, if some one loves me,
 Brings his palm lotus-like,
 Showers pearls, enjoys me
 No pearl is a match for dew,
 A wet eye is priceless,
 But, alas, I didn't
 Appreciate my own worth,
 Or see through Chanayser;
 What spell did charm me,
 What weakling did enamour me so,
 As to have wasted my life!

Today my face is ash-strewn,
 N' I am all nude;
 I am a flower-bed of trampled-upon blooms,
 Laid waste from close proximity in close intimacy,
 The blame for it all is mine.
 I didn't realize what I'm,
 Woe betake Chanayser,
 A delusion, a snake in grass,
 Victory gained by chicanery ends in rout;
 Whoever sets foot in morass,
 Goes down and dies
 No one has swallowed morass;
 Dodo, my liege, they're plotting
 A surprise attack for tonight.

[Dodo takes Chholi by the arm and pulls her up to her feet.]

Dodo:

There's no better shawl than honour,
 Freeing oneself from falsity,
 Any time, is no cause for regret;
 Truth is a washerman,
 Whose steam-wash
 Knocks out sins, removes filth from heart.
 They're bright hearts,
 Who keep away from falsehood.
 They finally come up from pits,
 Whose nerves are like ropes.
 Every life lived without truth
 Is tasteless.
 The pain thou hast suffered would
 Brighten thy songs,
 Enkindle lamps inside thee.

[Looks towards Baagghi:]

All comrades of a coward are liars,
 When want stretches its hand to beg,
 Its bowl is filled with falsity,
 And when the beggar goes away,

Falsity laughs at him,
Tearing away the sheet that covers his face —
Whoever happens to touch it, regrets,
Whoever takes alms, becomes a leper,
Chanayser may now think whatever he likes,
No one knows him better than I:
Whose string is in alien hand,
Can't help to dance to the string-puller's tune,
Utterly helpless that he is,
A tug at the string pulls him down,
Places him on a throne, then pushes him off,
Makes and breaks him,
Pulling him by the nose-string.

Baaghhi:

Every thought of a coward is false,
His gain, his toil are all false,
His way is false,
His love is false,
As if he mistook a fragile bangle,
For a handcuff of others!
N' perhaps he thinks —
There's no reaction to an action;
Every thing is here and now,
Man is no more than a corpus
That breathes,
Death dwells in his guts
Like a tick on a dog's ear.

Dodo:

Death is everyone's foe,
Though a hunter lies in ambush,
The birds, hundreds of them,
Fly from their nests down to water holes,
N' flutter their wings,
Hold sun to their bosoms,
Not worrying when and who of them
Would be pierced with an arrow!
Why man is afraid,
Death being a catcher's catch!

Why is this fear in man?
 No one can say after his death:
 "Alas, I am dead,
 A pass-away with time."
 Death is a fear in futility,
 But time is inexorable.
 There's is no sunset over void,
 Darkness is not infinite,
 Stars twinkle within it,
 Cascading in lights,
 Life is the glow of generations,
 Luster of bright gazebos,
 From which look out every day,
 Wise men, lighting their lamps;
 Spark of life shall ever remain aglow,
 It's come down aglow to me,
 N' shall remain aglow after me,
 Staying with every posterity.
 What I've to do this day,
 I shall do, that is,
 Light up my own lamp.

[Curtain.]

SCENE II

[Dodo orders the war drums to be beaten and the warriors to be armed. Sky is no more cloudy, and the camp is visible in the moonlight.]

Dodo:

The braves, armed to teeth, are marching out
 In orderly formations,
 And my heart beats in jubilant dance.
 O Soomris, get ready
 To leave and seek this very night
 Protection of Abro,
 Whose equal in valour
 Is nowhere to be found

All across this Land.
 At the moment the river is dry,
 Some of you may ride
 Eight-year old camels
 N' some thirteen year olds,
 And some may walk a brisk step!
 Protection by Abros
 Is like the shade of dense trees;
 These princes fight
 With their shields unshielding,
 And kill even while they die;
 Honour is steeped in their every nerve,
 They value it more than their lives;
 Sipping the cup of self-sacrifice,
 They confront n' resist, strike n' deflect.
 Until they fall at the feet of Motherland Sindh.

[*To Baaghhi:*]

Who knows who will be slain,
 Those cowards coming in swarms
 To attack thy brother,
 And may be Sindh will be lost.
 I'll strike n' behead the enemy until I die;
 As long as this head is on my shoulders,
 They sha'n't occupy this Land,
 Who is our Mother.
 Else this life is of no use;
 Would that it be of use to the Mother
 Would that it bears no blame,
 Would that no harm comes to thee,
 Would that thy day is not spoiled;
 O my own sister, I wish thee
 To be always always happy n' contented.

*[Baaghhi and other Soomro ladies depart riding camels.
 Curtain.]*

ACT THREE
SCENE I

[As Dodo exhorts his army, Chholi watches from inside the tent.]

Chholi *[to herself]*:

Dodo was a spell of a charmer for thee, or,
The Moon;
Thou had wondered,
'I am a chholi,
'How can I rise to reach him?
'Moon casts shadows from afar,
'What multiforms he displays from afar!
'Yea but he is so distant
"That to be near him is not possible."
How did thee go ashore,
What is in the shallows, o Chholi?
Dirty n' defiled as thou art now,
What doth thee hope to gain by coming back?
Moon is gone, gone too far,
Last hour is come!

Dodo *[to his army]*:

Why art people affrighted by death,
When they die every day?
Some die of this,
Some die of that,
Some die this way,
Some die that way,
Those, who pass their time
With braves, with swords, with arrows,
N' have their limbs chopped in battle field,
Those valiant ones, they die for some cause;
Some drink physician-prescribed toxin,
N' live and die as lames, maims,
Or waste away, groaning n' grumbling.
Every day thousands of men,
As if in queues n' files,
March into dark tortuous death-grounds.

This crumbling soil,
Who knows whose it is!
O ye sons of those bygone brave-hearts,
Those high-head mighties,
For whom retreat was a shame,
They wouldn't step into homes
So long as alien steps trod this soil!
Those resolute intrepid men
Were never cowed by adverse wind,
Nor were those courageous steel-limbed ones
Ever shaken off their feet by a dust-storm;
Those valiant ones shine in thee,
Exultant and proud.
O ye true sons of Sindh, Self-Sacrificers,
Go n' vie with the enemy today,
Each one of you should so train his bow
As to be right on target,
Shooting arrows in a swishing shower,
Like a heavy hail-storm,
Not even a reed is to survive!
Let thy thorough-breds run in a gallop,
Raising dust-storms all around,
Their neighing striking such terror into enemy
That he loses his spirit instantly.
Today ere we return,
We'll cut down n' kill,
Or go down fighting!

Chholi [*aside*]:

This crimson-headed liberty,
It's deep-sown in man,
It appraises self-reliants,
Gives heart to weaklings!
Bestows free will on fate
N' fate on free will.
How it heightens suffering!
Roars like a lion
N' stretches roped paws,
How it resonates in roaring!
O Dodo, may my life be forfeit for you,
May it be so
That I too defeat the guiles of fear!

[Chholi comes out of the tent carrying a bow and a quiver full of arrows. As she hangs the quiver on her shoulder, there appears in the distance a whirl of dust and dirt, and sounds of horses' hooves are heard. Curtain.]

SCENE II

[It is twilight time. Most of Dodo's army has been extirpated, and the rest has dispersed. The battlefield is littered with slain and mortally

wounded warriors in their thousands. Among them lies Dodo on the ground, looking at Chholi with sad eyes. Chholi holds a firebrand in one hand and in the other a water bag from which she pours water into Dodo's mouth, sobbing bitterly.]

Dodo:

The last hour is come,
Death is a final gasp,
As one unties the rope from the shore,
N' the boat rushes off in a flash,
Unaware of the mystery of the Deep,
Neither of this shore nor of that shore.

[Chanayser comes looking over dead bodies, and seeing Dodo, stands over him.]

Chanayser *[to Dodo]*:

The swell of a water-bubble is in vain,
Why did you choose death, Dodo?
Every man's renown is dust,
His sway on this earth too is dust;
Had you agreed to submit,
You would've lived in luxury
N' not died in prime like this!

Dodo:

Say what thou may,
I wont die,
I'll come back in changed guises;
Though thou may wish otherwise,
Thou too, Chanayser, 'll come back before me,
Under a new name,

In a new guise,
Thou n' I are locked in mortal combat,
Since eternity,
N' shall remain so locked
Till eternity

[*Dodo passes away. Chholi wipes her eyes and sings.*]

Chholi:

Every day moths burn themselves up,
Behold, flame of the lamp burns as ever.
One light goes out, another is lit,
Gazebos are ashimmer at all times,
Behold, flame of the lamp burns as ever.
In every darkness, in every maze,
Some men smile and swagger.
Behold, flame of the lamp burns as ever,
Behold, flame of the lamp burns as ever.

[*The curtain falls.*]



HANGING OF BHAGAT SINGH

[(Freedom), I put this dangerous word into brackets as a wild beast is held by its horns – a Greek writer.]

ACT ONE

The Argument

After the great upsurge of 1921-22, the Indian National Congress has split into two factions. Only the Sawraj Party, under the patronage of M. K. Gandhi, is moving at a slow creaking pace. General public meetings are a rare affair. There is no politicking outside the legislative assemblies. Most revolutionaries are incarcerated. Throughout India there is a sense of helplessness.

Industrial workers' mammoth rallies in Bombay, Calcutta and Kanpur have impressed the outside world, but India itself remains largely unmoved. Against this backdrop of frustration and gloom, some young men turn to terrorism as a means to political emancipation.

Characters: * Bhagat Singh
 * Chander Shekhhar Azad
 * Kishori Lal
 * Sukhhdev
 * Dr. Gia Prasad
 * Raj Guru

Time: A night in 1928

Scene: A basement in Lahore, lit by four lanterns. A map of India and four framed pictures of Rani of Jhansi¹, Teepu Sultan², Tantia Tope, and Nana Sahib³ adorn the walls. A desk in the middle of the floor is flanked by six chairs with Bhagat Singh, Kishori Lal and Dr. Gia Prasad occupying three on one side and Chander Shekhhar Azad, Sukhhdev and Raj Guru occupying the other

three on the opposite side. Upon the desk top are six grenades, which have been manufactured in the secret factory hidden in the basement. A newspaper lying on the desk is folded to the black-bordered report of Lala Lajpat Rai's death.

Bhagat Singh: The whole country is confused,
 Its sickly heart is confounded;
 Every one of its sages,
 Dressed in ochre n'
 Trident raised to threesome stars of night,
 Finds solace in the desolation of sand;
 All his renunciations are diseased,
 All his destinations are diseased,
 His every wake is a sham,
 His every connection is a sham,
 Whatever he says is profound,
 But, on closer look,
 Turns out to be shallow.
 What myth there be,
 Is wise n' sensible,
 As if a mouse, wanting something,
 Were nibbling at it in its heart –
 These ascetics galore in every forest,
 N' ash-covered pot-bellies on pathways,
 Pilgrims hair matted n' foreheads vermilion-
 spotted,
 Invoke support of sacred places, over n' over
 again,
 To efface from their hearts
 The swirling sorrow, the beastly burden
 Of this Land, saying every time,
 "All that happens is fine!"
 N', pointing to a distant promise,
 They forget their own pain.
 Some rejoice in penury,
 N', drinking up scriptures,
 Live on some ancient poison,
 Smearing their own bright hearts,

They wash their sacred threads
Every now n' then;
Some put themselves
through rigours of austerity,
N' trek long distances to mountains
To pay homage to Kailash,
N' witness the sky over its whiteness;
Some look upto Kanchenjunga⁵,
Some upto Jamuna⁶ n' Ganges⁷,
Some sing Qawalis⁸,
N' drape tombs of saints with palls,
N' make a routine of visiting Data Darbar⁹,
Some look forward to Amritsar¹⁰,
Singing hymns to Guru Nanak,
The pain that torments the whole land,
What a germ-infested morass it is!
Has any one thought of it?
Understood it?
Looked into it?
When every one suffers,
These Rai Bahadurs¹¹, these Khan Bahadurs¹²
Cringe before Ungrez Bahadur¹³,
These black chisellers,
In daily cabals with white scavengers,
Hatch up nefarious plots,
Hundreds of them,
For what?
Their laws are spiders, which
Spread their cobwebs,
Trapping the whole country
In a deceptive warp n' woof.
These misleaders involve
Every man's heart in a foolish wrangle –
N' every one, like a fly gone blind,
Goes groping his own way,
Believing the head-splitting sticks
To be his support.
These heads, whenever got together,
Differences, apprehensions,
Spurious pros n' cons

Came into play
Confusing the whole Land,
Making natives fight among themselves.
How to remove, how to remove
The rust that coats the cause
N' every fighter's thinking:
How to upset this set up?
How to shake up the whole country?
How to wake up all people?

Dr. Gia Prasad:

Every walk twisted ankle,
Every thought caused unavailing struggle,
Every Shanker¹⁴ yearns for nothingness,
Wherein the owl hoots;
Sages search for dense banyans
N' not the present.
There's a Gautam¹⁵ n' there's a Gandhi¹⁶,
But no one tells,
How to lift the pall of gloom
That hangs over the country!
No one tells,
How to illuminate the darkness
That envelops the whole Land!
What a crowding of quacks there is,
Of those husk-like brains,
Who pronounce a few jingles,
Causing wounds to throb,
N' suggest solutions
That turn cuts into sores!
Let's stack up their creeds
N' saliva-smear scriptures,
N' make a bonfire of it all.
How to dispel the Ravan¹⁷-like night, for
Dawn has retired to forest solitude,
No one knows of Kumbhkaran¹⁸,
When'll he awaken from sleep?
Will dawn never come?
I've thought over it again n' again
'Ve picked own brain day in day out!

In every house here live bugs,
 Who suck man's blood,
 N' there 're snakes everywhere,
 If any one strikes at them,
 He is condemned to eternity.
 How the whole land is silent!
 Immense snows cover the Himalayas,
 When'll they melt, can't be said.
 Would that clouds arose,
 Dense n' black n' in force!
 Would that storms came raging
 N' shook Dhaulagiri¹⁹,
 Made a dent in Gorishanker²⁰,
 N' their force dislodged rocks,
 Setting this insensitive earth,
 This gray, purple earth, aquiver,
 Knocking out all its settlements,
 N' set snows soaring to stars,
 Would that, would that!
 The whole wide earth stirred,
 All ancient trees shook;
 Would that
 The refuge of nests disappeared,
 N' every one joined the fight!
 The Ghaghra²¹, Gandak²², Bhagmati²³,
 N' Ganges, Jamuna, Saraswati²⁴,
 Filled up bank to bank
 N' flowed out thundering to sea,
 N' these immense snows melted,
 Until then
 Let's become a storm, for
 Storm is necessary, comrades,
 Tumult is necessary, comrades!

*(Chander Shekhhar Azad has picked up a
 grenade and contemplates it. Sukhhdev looks at
 him.)*

Sukhhdev: This land of Bhawani²⁵,
 Nourished young blood;
 Some such act has to be performed

As proved this blood worthy.

Chander Shekhhar [*Pointing to the grenade in his hand*]:

This is deliverance,
This is worshipful devotion,
This grenade is that power,
Which no worship or devotion has;
This grenade in my hand
Can destroy tyrants,
Destruct oppressors.
No bow is its match;
What does that simple-mind Babu²⁶ have?
A fake guise of non-violence,
Which will not liberate any one.
Mewar²⁷ is calling every heart,
Pratab²⁸ has migrated to another land!
Until every one becomes Shivaji²⁹,
This land will not be free!
Today we've to fight,
Today we've to fight!
If we crawl with feeble bodies,
We'll never reach destination –
At long last this Land'll laugh;
These tears of blood on shirt-front,
This stammering, faltering speech,
This beating about bush in actions
N' every surprise in actions
Can be exploded by this bomb
N' that objective attained,
Which the old rotten sightless politics
Of the past hundred years
Has failed to attain –
Today every man is mute,
This grenade, as it explodes
With a strange violent bang,
Will agitate every palate
N' every one'll rise to sing
Some new songs of the Earth
N' take all risks for the Earth,
N' every nation'll blow the trumpet of freedom,

N' be master of her own destiny.
 The destruction wrought by this explosive
 Shall bring freedom nearer –
 Enemies indulge in killings every now n' then,
 But our countrymen moralise:
 "Killing any one is not good;"
 As if being killed were good!
 Yesterday Lala Lajpat Rai died;
 What a fine man he was!
 They weep for him over n' over again
 N' wash away their guilt with tears;
 Out there the white killers laugh
 N' pass their nights
 Drinking n' gulping scintillating whiskies
 N' dancing rumba samba;
 They live like blood-suckers,
 Singing 'Rule, Britannia, Rule.'
 Alas! We'll continue to sing,
 The same songs, the songs of –
 Some Murli Manohar³⁰,
 Some Cowherd³¹ n' Milkmaid³²,
 N' haunt Brandaban³³,
 Remembering Ayodhia³⁴,
 Wish for the reign of Lord Rama³⁵,
 N' look away from imperialism
 In swings somewhere on a landing along Jumuna,
 As wounds sway in flowers;
 Our Muslim brethren too
 Live in mortal fear of the same witch,
 They crave, not their own country,
 But Iran n' Arabia;
 For them some Sanusi³⁶ or Sadani³⁷,
 Some Abdali³⁸ or Afghani³⁹,
 Builds a fake paradise,
 N' every one runs for it,
 Trampling the head of Teepu,
 Treading through the blood of Teepu,
 N' reaches some imaginary world,
 Some simple incomprehensible world.
 Let's join today in a vow
 To dislodge everything,
 So that blood flows like rivers,
 N' no fear or care remains in the flow.
 This country is like a ewe,

An exhausted enfeebled ewe,
 N' tearing n' rending wolves all around her
 Rise every time in hautier
 To strike her!
 We've to march on a killing spree,
 Like a hurricane in high flood n' mad rush,
 Raising all hell with grenades,
 Littering fields with corpses
 Of tyrants n' despots,
 We'll come back.
 Freedom is not charity,
 Any one desiring freedom
 Should think not of pall-bearers;
 Comrades, message of Gandhi
 Is worse than suicide today.
 The slumber that's in all our homes,
 This grenade'll explode it,
 This grenade'll explode it.

[Kishori Lal, listening in silence, lights six wax-candles and places them on the desk. All of them hold their wrists over the flame to test their resolve. The acrid smell of burning flesh fills the air. As the candles go out, each of them kisses the burn on his wrist. Then all rise to their feet and march toward exit of the basement, singing a song in chorus with Kishori Lal as the lead singer.]

Kishori Lal: Mine heart craves something different,
 Mine heart craves something different.
 The Dwarka⁴⁰ nourished by thee
 Is Upsaraka⁴¹ for me,
 Mine heart craves something different.
 Whole country is temple-bells,
 Neither thou art free from them
 Nor I,
 Mine heart craves something different.
 The abode of freedom
 Is Andaman⁴²,
 Mine heart craves something different.

[Curtain.]

ACT TWO

The Argument:

The Central Assembly was bombed, and Bhagat Singh and a companion were arrested. Both of them boldly accepted their responsibility and were sentenced to life imprisonment. Later the police found the underground explosive factory. Sukhhdev, Kishori Lal and many other revolutionaries were nabbed, of whom Jai Gopal and Hansraj Vohra confessed, as a result of which several arrests were made in Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and the Punjab. Some of the revolutionaries went underground. In 1929, Bhagat Singh and others under arrest were tried by a special tribunal in Lahore Conspiracy Case. The farcical trial was held in the absence of the accused, their lawyers and defence witnesses. In 1930, the Tribunal announced its judgment sentencing Bhagat Singh, Sukhhdev and Raj Guru to death and some others to life imprisonment while some were set free. Bhagat Singh and his two comrades-in-arms are to be hanged at 4:00 O' clock⁴³ this morning. At this point in time, Bhagat Singh is about 24 years old.

Characters: * Bhagat Singh
 * Sukhhdev
 * Raj Guru

Time: April, 1931

Scene:

The condemned prisoners' cell in the Lahore Central Jail. It is 3:00 A.M. The cell is lighted by a single electric bulb suspended from the ceiling. Both Sukhhdev and Bhagat Singh are sitting cross-legged on the floor, the former with unopened Geeta⁴⁴ before him and the latter in silent contemplation, while Raj Guru is stretched out on the floor, eyes closed but unsleeping. Bhagat Singh, rising to his feet, walks up to the barred window and looks out into the darkness. Outside a jail sentry is singing:

Come, night is passing,
We've to go far,

Fate is waiting.
This moment of separation,
How bitter it is!
Come, night is passing,
Come, night is passing.

Sukhhdev [*To himself*]:

Leaving this abode, this world, for ever,
Leaving one's home n' hearth,
Dying before one's time,
Never returning,
N' fearing not the distant,
What a difficult dream it is!
What an easy dream it is!
The courtyard at nesting time of birds,
N' the green tree there atwitter,
N' the dim glow of wick,
N' sweet-smelling wife near the hearth,
A flower in her black hair,
Her hands on bread in pan –
A scripture in my lap,
Some lines spoken in lyrical language,
N' prayers in eternal speech,
Like a tale in cuckoo's cooing –
Midnight, swing of breezes,
Scentful meeting of bodies
N' sleepy-eyed looks,
Today all this'll die with me,
This fragrance shall not return.

[*Looks at Bhagat Singh*]

Today the land is subdued,
That dream is burnt,
Which had come asinging yesterday
N' set every heart on fire;
Yesterday
Each nerve was atingle with challenge,
What hatred there was for aliens!
In the tomb of silence today

There isn't even a whisper,
 No groan nor a cry,
 As if the whole country were dead!
 In this moment of disillusionment,
 Of crisis of confidence,
 When I'm about to sacrifice my life,
 I'm assailed by doubts:
 Why have I given my life?
 Is my sacrifice in vain?

[Raj Guru opens his eyes, turns to look at Sukhhdev and then at Bhagat Singh.]

Bhagat Singh *[staring at Sukhhdev]*:

All who crave freedom know,
 Freedom is not a piece of cake
 That ye can swallow butter-like.
 This unaffordable drives out
 Every affordable from the heart,
 N' soars high to cleave
 The lofty fortresses of bondage;
 Human freedom, my dear,
 Is nothing without staking life,
 Because if thou art given it
 As a child's mouthful,
 Thou would't gain anything,
 Sooner or later thou would be
 Chained n' manacled.

[After a thoughtful pause he resumes.]

The pull n' snap,
 That breaks the neck in hanging
 N' lets the corpse swing in air,
 Jolts this earth like a quake
 For centuries –
 This death of ours
 Will come up like a question –
 The wine'll finally ferment
 To scintillation n' turn

Every one crimson
N' the country to sparkle;
Not every man turns to cinder n'
Lead a worthless life.
A man would fight for centuries,
N' crawl through blood
Toward a destination, which
He had glimpsed once in life,
N', as time passes,
He remains ahead than before;
There're a few persons,
Who gain glory through death,
They throb inside history n',
After an interval of dormancy,
Again flare up into a blaze
Over the earth;
Appearing suddenly at some point in time,
They light their fire n'
Melt shackles around necks!

[Places his hand on Sukhhdev's shoulder]

Is thy sacrifice in vain?
The spark that thou hast kindled
Shall become a blaze,
N' soaring to heavens
Challenge injustice,
Flinging it into nothingness;
What greater feat a man can perform!
Thou hast hidden a pull
In the ropes twisted by thee as fated,
Thy sacrifice is worthwhile.

Raj Guru *[Stands up and approaches Sukhhdev]:*

What's this dreadful whimpering?
What's troubling thee?
It's thy foolish heart
That fills thee with fright –

[Raises his eyes to the star-studded sky]

Sky is a tree,
Whose star-leaves twinkle far above,
N' life is an experience
Like that of a moving insect
On the last leaf at the treetop,
(whose root is still sapful),
who witnessed nadir n' zenith,
N' shimmering bank of dense clouds,
Which envelops all that there be;
Darkness is aglow with eternal light,
Yea, all therein is imperishable;
This hanging, whose hanging it be?

[His gaze turns to Bhagat Singh and then returns to the sky]

Hail to the last moments of the end,
Many a lotus floats today
In the spa of dusk!
Not a thing complicates death;
Air is vaporous,
Climes are alight,
As if in the beds of blue heaven
Star-flowers were blossoming,
This waft of breeze,
This scent of dew,
This sliver of moonlight,
N' last dreams of birds
On the twigs of flower-beds,
All this will stay in me
N' accompany me all through my journey,
Yea, all is imperishable within me;
This hanging, whose hanging it be?

[Sound of key turning in the lock. Cell-door opens. Sentries enter and take away the three revolutionaries to the gallows.]

Sukhhdev: These eye-perceivings of departures,
 These swimming pupils of departures,
 Cling to every thing in affection,
 N' hold back tearful sobs,
 Causing eyes to smile
 N' enjoy, for the last time,
 This sea of beauty
 N' water-temple of life.

*[Looks obliquely at Bhagat Singh, and when their eyes meet,
 lowers his own.]*

Bhagat Singh [*singing aloud*]:

Long live Motherland,
 Long live Birthland!

[Raj Guru sings in rhythm with Bhagat Singh,
 and a while later Sukhhdev too rhymes in. All
 three march toward the scaffold, singing in
 chorus.]

Long live, Mother, Birthland,
 Thy lap has bestowed on dust
 Immortality and honour;
 By dying for thee, Mother,
 I've traversed
 Paths of all births;
 Long live Mother,
 Long live Mother,
 Long live Earth,
 Long live Earth,
 Long live Mother, Birthland.

[Curtain falls.]



BANDITS OF RANIKOT*

[As the curtain rises, a thatched hut enclosed by a straggling barrier of thorn weeds and reeds comes into view. In a corner of the courtyard, a number of cattle is seen tied to pegs fixed in the ground, and near the hut door are two cots, side by side, on one of which sleeps Veenguss, and on another lies Valhaar, intoning as he looks up at the spring sky.]

Valhaar:

This sky _
It appears so limitless, so lovely,
It won't fall apart,
Nor crumble in a moment,
Like man;
Stars behind, stars ahead,
Self asleep, whole world awake;
Who hath raised this firmament?
Who hath brought this dust,
This dust underfoot,
From non-being into being?
This dust--
It's immortal, it's indestructible,
It's grey, it's purple,
It's scarlet, it's yellow,
So colourful it is!
It blooms and withers every day
In beauty and fragrance,
It is the wonder of sweet union,
Love of sun n' shadows;
Life is a flicker of bright red,

* "That portion of the Sind hill country, which lies southward of Sehwan..... is a tract full of interest. There is the wonderful hill fortress of the Talpur rulers of Sind, Ranikot, perched above a gorge where the Mohan nai cuts through the middle of the Lakhi range. It was never occupied; but after one hundred and fifty years looks as if just finished and ready to receive its garrison." H. T. Lambrick, 'The Hill Country of Sind and its People', 1975. A section of the fortress is now a part of the Khirthar National Park.

Death, fear of the unknown, hovers;
Even so life is sweet,
Loveable and liveable.

[*Turns to Veenguss, intoning :*]

Her wheatish breasts
Are two globes glowing at midnight,
Which is an earthen pitcher of curd;
Her cascading tresses
Invite life, heave a sigh;
Her long neck in deep repose-
As if a crane is lying dead;
Her thin torso-sheet is blown and her bodice tensed
By wafts of north breeze,
Revealing the alluring lines of her bust,
Like those of a stone goddess;
Her lips in a momentary quiver
Show a row of sparkling pearls;
Her wave-like dreams are as pure and restless
As the waters of *Nain Mohan*;
These midnight dreams contain
Stars, waters, stones, shadows;
These dreams –
Like a wounded ibex,
Roam the hills, panting in pain and thirst;
Like wild ducks,
Scattered into frightened flight;
Like flaming torches,
Lighting up the darkened path;
Many soar to high heaven,
And many remain earth-bound;
In accord and discord
What a warp and weft they weave.
When a person is asleep,
What a mystery he becomes;
Nothing is as boundless as man,
He is what he is!

[*Veenguss wakes up with a start.*]

Veenguss:

Midnight, sudden dreams,
Black lake, fearsome dreams;
The ultimate fate of a pair of birds,
Flying together, is separation;
The sensuous world is a wonder,
Water-worshipper is a hunter.

Valhaar:

That's why the world is loved
And man is worldly;
The impulses of youth,
The feverish ardour of bodies, ephemeral emotions,
Are nothing, yet everything;
Where the Pleiades are hurtling?
No one knows,
Nor has anyone measured their density.
All these beauteous natural phenomena
Are nothing but momentary illusions,
As short-lived as the flitting of a butterfly,
As the flicker of a glow-worm;
Each moment has
Its own savour, its own spark;
One moment
Is a tear, another a pearl,
Yet another comforting like the north wind.
Why, o why do men confound confusion?
Why do they inflate it into a mountain?

Veenguss:

Love is a momentary illusion,
A deceptive shadow,
Even so one can't do without it,
There's no escape from love,
Deliverance of heart lies in it,
It ends all floundering;
When love fills up the soul,

Melody resonates from cloud to cloud;
 It's nothing but love in the soil
 That brings forth plant out of seed,
 And with the coming of dewdrops n' rainfall,
 Love in the soil blooms,
 The whole universe blooms.
 This sky is ocean-like,
 Or like man's inner self,
 Of which there's no limit,
 It's made nor unmade,
 Moonlight on its expanse
 Is nothing but love;
 Man's heart kneads with love
 Manifolds into soil;
 Love resides in man's heart
 As does a cuckoo in a sandalwood forest.
 As a butterfly wing-flaps at day-break
 Over a field of rape;
 Why do people forsake love
 And live in angst;
 Sans love
 This earth is just black sunlight, useless sand,
 Inhabitable.

[The night reverberates with the sound of firing. Hit by a bullet in the left arm, Veenguss sinks to her knees in a swoon. While Valhaar recovers her thin torso-sheet and ties it around her injured arm, Aadho (The Aged), Daadho (The Bully), and Kaadho (The Scout) emerge from darkness and untie the cattle. Some shadowy figures, armed with axes, are seen peeping from behind a clump of salvadora trees. They are fellow-villagers of Valhaar.]

Aadho:

I'm Aadho, I'm Aadho,
 But I'm stronger than Daadho;
 I've robbed
 Dawn of its light, twilight of its vermilion;
 I committed dacoities alone,
 Kingly palaces and noble mansions,
 I held them all to ransom,

To pay which they ransacked their dominions.
 Even as old age has crept upon me,
 I am not slowed,
 For I've guns and bullets,
 And caskets of gold;
 Pitiless bullies and timid scouts,
 Now I take them both along
 For a hand in plunder.
 In the past, shameless cattle-owners
 Slept through the nights,
 Their days were dull,
 So were their daggers n' axes;
 Nowadays the cattle-owners remain awake,
 Yes, indeed, they're no longer the same.
 But my gang speaks with bullets;
 Be it a peasant, a woman, or a privileged person,
 Every one knows what language we speak,
 None dares come out of doors when bullets fly,
 If any one so dares,
 Ammunition rains on every dwelling,
 I storm every door,
 And let the bullets do the talking.

Kaadho:

Though Daadho be a real bully,
 Master mine is Aadho,
 I adore him,
 For we're as brothers.

Daadho:

Strong in body though I be,
 Master mine is Aadho;
 Be it comfort or discomfort,
 They, my comrades in outlawry,
 Hold me in affection,
 For I'm born the same as them,
 Also I'm the interceptor,
 To keep any help from reaching our prey,

My gun loaded, I shower bullets all around,
Firing at everyone till
All homes are robbed
N' everything worth taking taken.

[As Aadho and Kaadho disappear in the night with the stolen jewellery and cattle, leaving Daadho to rearguard, Valhaar makes a leap for his axe and removes it from the ceiling-post nail. Stepping cautiously, he raises it to strike Daadho, who, taken by surprise, fires his gun but misses and, as Valhaar's axe hits his head, he falls on the ground with a loud thump, bleeding copiously, his gun slipping from his grasp.]

Valhaar:

Robber, thou hast raised arms against weaklings,
Coward that thou art, Daadho,
Now swines shall gobble up n'
Vultures devour thee.

[As Valhaar picks up Daadho's gun, his fellow-villagers emerge from behind the salvadora trees, carrying their axes.]

Valhaar:

Ye rock-like villagemen,
Why, o why ye
Feel helpless,
Be afraid,
Cower?
What a shame, what a shame!
Coward killers,
They come in the dead of night,
Their intents nefarious,
Ransack and rob every home,
Injuring its males,
Molesting its females,
Collect n' take away all its valuables.
Such life, filled as it is,

With the poison of non-resistance,
Is not worth living.
Life is a wave
Made by a waft of wind on shallow waters;
The wave moves, its head high,
Rippling in melodious songs,
For a little while, and then subsides into
This earth, this sky, n' this deep blue ocean,
But in the ocean are sharks
That attack all life in waters
N' every rightful privilege.
O ye rock-like villagers,
Why, o why ye feel helpless?
Bandits are jackals
Masquerading as lions.
Today we've to pursue n'
Kill Aadho and Kaadho,
For they've robbed
The twilight of vermilion,
The dawn of light;
They've to be terminated this very day,
We mustn't turn back without finishing them off.

[Looking towards Veenguss, he continues:]

O Veenguss, thy tresses are fine,
N' so is my fondness for'em;
While enjoying in their shade
I've enwrapped the whole earth
With a dream, but alas,
I've to go away from thee;
The brigands, the inflictors
Of thy midnight injury n' suffering,
Have to be destroyed, till then
I've to remain away;
But I'll come back at last,
N' dance with thee
On this colourful intoxicating earth,
As a playmate of leafless sandy plants
And stars of dawn.

[The bleeding of Veenguss' wounded arm having stopped, Valhaar unties her blood-stained thin torso-sheet and ties it to the barrel-top of his gun, which he holds aloft.]

Under the shade of this here flag,
Dyed crimson red in thy radiant blood,
I'll confront foes, one and all,
Wherever they be,
Inside a fortress or out in the open,
N' fall on them as a panther
Pounces, in an arrow-like straight leap,
On a crop-destroying animal
N' breaks its neck with a
Single powerful blow of his paw.

[Turning his glance to the dead body of Daadho, Valhaar resumes:]

Yea, the killer had bullets,
But his heart was hollow;
When I struck him,
He fell flat like a rock
Falling into shallow waters.
The tyrant, the oppressor,
Even as a killer,
Is a coward;
Seen from a distance,
The enemy looks like a mountain,
A mountain that's awesome in appearance only,
Tyranny eats into its vitals all the time,
Hollowing it out to a skeleton.

[Valhaar's eyes now rest on his comrades-in-arms.]

O ye innocents, o ye sufferers,
Advance like thunder-clouds,
Challenging n' striking each such mountain;
All oppression has to end,
N' no oppressor is to be allowed

To infest this or any other land.
 Half the night is gone in maraud,
 N' what remains of it
 Is also passing;
 All converse must stop
 As we've to go after the foe
 N' break his neck panther-fashion.
 Yes, dawn shall come, kind and benign,
 N' its rays shall dance on the waters of *Nain Mohan*,
 Aglitter as silver ornaments on a peasant dame
 Cause eyes to blink with their lustre.
 When we've split the mountain
 N' killed the killers,
 These simple folks with
 Their thatched huts,
 Curds in baked earthen pitchers,
 Water buffaloes n' cows,
 Generosities n' bounties,
 And free from all fear n' worry,
 Shall sleep in that waft of breeze,
 Which is to come again in the season of winds.
 That man never dies, who dies –
 For his honour,
 For his woods n' woodsmen,
 For his fields n' crops,
 And for his own ways.
 This world is very charming,
 This net very alluring,
 Some hunter has occupied the pier
 N' ensnared everyone;
 Human heart is hooked,
 There's a thorn in the head
 Pinching in slight pleasurable pain.
 But when dacoits attack n'
 Oppression holds sway over earth,
 Then –
 From the moon and sky,
 From the fragrance of earth,
 From the grasses of pasture,
 From ones own bone n' flesh,

From the music of harps n' cattle-bells,
As if from the whole cosmos,
Rises the stench of tyranny n' oppression,
And of a deep sorrow;
From woodsmen n' plainsmen,
From smoke n' iron-pan,
From bread n' bread-basket,
From sacred thread around neck,
From heads of silken black hair,
From fiddle-strings,
From songs n' poems,
From scruples of a genius,
Comes the very same stench in waves,
And sprays of deep sorrow.
Today we'll destroy tyranny
And set this flag flying,
N' by its fluttering frenzy
Kindle a sun and
Bring forth day
All over the land.

[Valhaar's comrades-in-arms raise their clenched fists in the air, singing all together in chorus.]

Well kindle a sun n'
Bring forth day;
May this flag flutter,
In its scarlet frenzy,
All over the land;
We'll kill those killers,
We'll split that mountain.

[Wounded Veenguss regains consciousness and, rising to her feet, ties crimson threads around all their necks. The chorus resumes.]

We'll kindle a sun,
We'll kindle a sun.....

[So singing, the chorus is seen moving away in a halo. The curtain falls.]



OF LIFE & DEATH

On the midnight of 26th March 1991, I had an attack of angina pectoris. I was rushed to the Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases, where I was admitted in the Intensive Care Unit. The pain left the following dawn. While convalescing in the hospital bed, I read Tagore's¹ *Wings of Death*, a collection of poems that he had written during the two years of his terminal illness. I wanted to know what the great poet had thought in his last days. May be, his following poem is a pointer in that direction.

First sun of the day asked:

"Who are you?"

He didn't receive any reply.

Year after year passed.

Last sun of the day asked the same question --

In the twilight,

On the shore of western sea --

"Who are you?"

He too didn't receive any reply.



Before Partition Shaikhpur (Sindh), a 17th century town, was famous for its gardens and flowers. Shaikh Ayaz was born there in the season of breezy fragrances on 2nd March 1923 and named Mubarak Ali. His father, Ghulam Hussain (d. 1935), was a law agent and a book lover, his mother, a convert

from Hindusim, and his grandmother, an Urdu speaking lady from Meerut, whom his grandfather Shaikh Bungal (d. 1888) had married during one of his travels. After schooling in his native town upto intermediate, Shaikh Ayaz went to Karachi, where he did his B.A. and LL.B. (1945-48), worked for a year or so with four eminent lawyers (two of whom later became Chief Justices of the Sindh High Court), and then moved to Sukkur to found his own law firm which flourished. He left legal profession in 1976 for vice-chancellorship of the University of Sindh. In 1980, his tenure as Vice Chancellor being over, he again moved to Karachi, where he lived upto his death in 28th December 1997. His two marriages bore him 08 children, 04 sons and 04 daughters. His overseas

travels took him to India, the United Kingdom and the USSR. His poetry and politics landed him thrice (1965, 1968 and 1970) in jail. In 1994 he was awarded the country's highest civil award, Hilale Imtiaz, in recognition of his literary genius. While several other prestigious publishing houses of Sindh have brought out posthumous translations and critical appreciations of Ayaz, the Shaikh Ayaz Chair at the Shah Abdul Latif University, Khairpur Mirs' (Sindh), and Shaikh Ayaz Foundation, Hyderabad (Sindh), are exclusively concerned with the Poet's intellectual legacy of promoting love for truth, beauty, virtue and personal as well as national freedom. His published works include 36 collections of poetry and 08 of prose in Sindhi, and 02 collections of poetry and 01 a versified translation of Shah-Jo-Risalo in Urdu. 02 collections of his Sindhi poetry including the winner of the Pakistan Writers Guild Prize) and 01 of his Sindhi prose were variously proscribed by the government in 1964 and 1968.

The poem reminded me of an incident in the life of my favourite philosopher, Schopenhauer². Once the great thinker went for a walk in the municipal garden. There he began talking to plants and orange blossoms. An onlooker, surprised at his strange behaviour, asked him who he was. The philosopher looked at the questioner quizzically and remarked: "You would do me a great favour if you could tell me who I am." Bulhay Shah³ too has mused over the same theme:

'Bulhia ki jana maen kaun'

[*"Bulhia, who knows who I am!"*]

I have studied most of the world philosophers including Plato⁴, Aristotle⁵, Epicurus⁶, Marcus Aurelius⁷, Francis of Assisi⁸, Aquinas⁹, Bacon¹⁰, Spinoza¹¹, Locke¹², Hume¹³, Voltaire¹⁴, Kant¹⁵, Hegel¹⁶, Schopenhauer, Emerson¹⁷, Spencer¹⁸, Nietzsche¹⁹, James²⁰, Pinsky²¹, Bergson²², Santayana²³ etc. Of these I prefer Epicurus, Schopenhauer and Spinoza. I think all the three have been influenced by Indian philosophy; the first by the materialists of *Lokayata* [i.e. the doctrine of radical materialism, dated from pre-Maurian era (400 BC). It is one of the unorthodox (*Nastika*) systems of Indian philosophy, which denies the authority of the Vedas (sacred Hindu hymns) and the soul.-Tr.], and the last two by *Vedanta*. Communist thinkers particularly Marx²⁴, Lenin²⁵, the author of *Anti Durhing*²⁶ whose name has slipped my memory, and other such materialists including M.N. Roy²⁷, bore me so much that,

like religious scriptures, I have never finished any of their works. However, some twenty years ago, Che Guevara's²⁸ books, '*Staccato of Gurf*' in particular, had held my interest throughout.

I have also read Muslim philosophers like Farabi²⁹, Razi³⁰, Bu Ali Seena³¹, alBeruni³², Imam Ghazali³³, Omar Khayyam³⁴, and Ibne Rushd³⁵. Muslim thinkers of India such as Alif Thani³⁶, Shah Waliullah³⁷ and the like have seldom interested me.

Such intensive as well as extensive study of philosophy has totally rid me of the fear of death even though many of the aforementioned philosophers were themselves afraid of death. In any case, fear of death completely left me when I became sure of transmigration of souls and rebirth. The writings of Dr. Radha Krishnan³⁸, Dr. Tarachand³⁹, Aurobindo Ghosh⁴⁰, Vivekananda⁴¹, Rama Krishna⁴², and others including some Western authors have influenced me in this respect. For me now death is no more than stepping over the threshold.

My first philosophy of life was that of Epicurus. He considered happiness, refined sensuous enjoyment, the ultimate aim of life. For he distinguished one kind of enjoyment from another. The pleasure that comes from poetry is not the same as that of hunting a boar or playing rummy.

This first philosophy of life was overshadowed in later years by Schopenhauer's pessimism. He taught "that all existence is essentially evil and that release can be obtained by overcoming the will to live." According to him, life is nothing but swings of pendulum between desire and ennui. All attainment, fulfillment of this life is negative. No sooner we satisfy one desire than we run after another. All history testifies that desire is a deficiency, a shortcoming, a weakness, a wanting, a constraint that awakens another desire in man, fulfillment of which too is impossible. Here Schopenhauer seems to have the imprint of Buddha⁴³.

The pessimism arising out of Schopenhauer's thought proves only that man does not remain content with status quo

for long. But it cannot stop him from defending and protecting himself or his nation and her culture from suppression. Nor does it stop him from opposing the past Nazism of Hitler's times and the resurgent Nazism of today or enjoying the poetry of Goethe⁴⁴ or Schiller⁴⁵ and the music of Beethoven⁴⁶. And past centuries have been witness to the fact that interest in poetry has not waned.

It is true that study of Schopenhauer kept me from being overly influenced by Marx, Bakunin⁴⁷, Che Guevara, Fidel Castro⁴⁸, Ho Chi Minh⁴⁹, General Giap⁵⁰, Naxalbari Movement⁵¹ and the like. But it would have wrecked me if I had not previously delved deep into Epicurus. Incidentally, at this hour of my life, meaninglessness of it all reminds me constantly of Schopenhauer. But in my youth Epicurus charted a way of life for me that would have been the envy of Omar Khayyam, and he would have juxtaposed my poetry with his own stanzas and my library with his own observatory.

Epicurus' was a short-lived influence in the prime of my youth, but his philosophy is reflected in my poetry even today. Some of his thoughts have always lived in my memory. He says. –

(1) We are not born of a benevolent or virtuous being, but are stepchildren of a fickle-minded neither-here-nor-there nature. Life is not a systematically conceived artwork of an artist. It is a casual accident of mechanical nature. We can, nevertheless, make it a happy, or at least, improvised pleasant accident, ridding mankind of two fears, one of the gods and the other of death.

(2) This is not the only world. There are many others, so extensive and wondrous that they have their own plains, mountains and oceans, nations and populaces, castes and sub-castes, birds and animals. We are mere pebbles on the shores of an endless ocean. All things are made up of atoms, whose various combinations produce animate and inanimate objects.

(3) It is by trial and error that animate objects adapt to changing environment, and only those survive which are more adaptable. (Here Epicurus is precursor of Darwin⁵² in the Theory of Evolution by 2200 years).

(4) Since we cannot overcome death, we should free ourselves from its fear. Death is a long eternal sleep. There is no awakening from it, no life after death. Howsoever short life may be, it is here and now, and we should live it in refined sensuous enjoyment.

The materialistic view of life has also helped me banish the fear of death.

A somewhat different view I found in Spinoza, who believed in spiritualism and life after death. This view, being an echo of pantheism, is closer to Shah⁵³, Sachal⁵⁴ and Sami⁵⁵ of the country of Sindh. By affirming the immortality of soul, it drives away the fear of death and leads one to believe that man is made in the image of God. Thus it confers equality on all men and lays the true foundation of democracy. Spinoza says. –

(1) This world is eternal and infinite. It was never created, nor would it ever die.

(2) This earth, these planets, indeed, all suns and stars are no more than grains of sand amid eternity, which have gathered in an obscure corner of the universe. And that which we call universe is a mere speck in the whole.

(3) It is as if there is an aperture in the wall of prison through which we are glimpsing the sea and the sky. We are imprisoned inside our bodies. An insect, while crawling on ground, can see only a tiny part of this infinite universe. A purblind person can only have impression of colours.

(4) We cannot comprehend all the attributes of God. He is the Eternal Artist, who is weaving garments for the

stars and planets on the roaring loom of time. The story that he has written into the drama of this life is beyond our comprehension.

(5) In the warp and woof of eternity each one of us is an essential thread, a meaningful note in the eternal melody and a useful stroke of brush on the canvas of Supreme. This universe in its entirety belongs to God. Stars, planets, plants, trees, oceans, mountains, clouds - all are existence of God. It is God's will that gives them shape, colour, motion and beauty. All human bodies are parts of God.

This is philosophy of *Wahdat-al Wajood* (oneness of all existence). It has been spread from Roomi⁵⁶ to Bedil Dehlvi⁵⁷, from Shah Latif to Sami. My poetry has inherited it. This philosophy is not just a theory. It has wide-ranging practical and moral implications. It is capsuled in a line of Saadi⁵⁸:

"*Bani aadam ajza-e yak deegar und:*"

["Adam's offsprings are limbs of one another"]

It means no man can hurt another without hurting himself. Hitting a neighbour is like chopping ones own hand or plucking ones own eye. An individual's well being lies in the well being of the entire mankind, and mankind, like an individual, is a living organism. All of us together are a family, whose head is God. This is what Sachal calls the '*Divine Secret*' and answers Bulhay Shah's query, "*Who knows who I am.*"

We are products of a particular environment. Nothing is complete or pure in itself. Nor has it any will of its own. All our actions are predetermined. They are reactions of actions, and this chain of action-reaction extends to the outermost reaches of imagination. It was destined that a Shakespeare⁵⁹ would appear and write immortal plays, a Socrates⁶⁰ would be born and die by hemlock for the sake of his friends and pupils. Likewise, I have been assigned the task of what a Persian poet describes as 'imprinting our immortality on the journal of universe' ["*Sabt ast ber jareeda-e aalam davaam-e mad*"]. If, as Spinoza says,

Shakespeare's plays were so ordained, my poetry too is so ordained. And there is so much of it inside me that what I have composed so far is only a small fraction of it.

In this last hour of my life I want to be able to proclaim that my poetry encompasses all themes and none is left for a future poet to cover; I want that when I leave this world, other poets may express their disappointment in the following words.

*"Hareefaan baadaha khurdand o raftund,
Tahi khumkhanaha kardand o raftund."*

[*"Rivals swallowed wines and went away,
They emptied the wine-houses and went away."*]

Spinoza says, *Man is a part of the Divine Whole. When a man dies, his soul returns, like a drop of water, to an immense ocean, like a note to a symphony.* I have mulled over the idea deeply, and do not find it contradictory to the concept of transmigration of souls or rebirth. In any case, the concept of oneness-of-all-existence completely freed me from the fear of death. Formerly, I was obsessed by the notions that there is nothing beyond; that there is only darkness afterwards, you too would be swallowed by it; that life is short, imbibe as much of its juice as you can. And sometimes in low spirits I would think that the fruit might fall before ripening or be plucked and driven away by a windstorm before it came to some one's lips; and that it is unimportant how life ends. At first I sought escape in Epicurus, whose influence is evident in my earlier poetry. Then I represented to Guru Nanak⁶¹ that '*God's Will tastes sweet*' was not true, but that '*God's Will tastes sour*', as was the hemlock drunk by Socrates. Then I found solace in Schopenhauer and Spinoza. These words of Spinoza I can never forget: *"The greatest good is the knowledge of union, which the mind has with the whole of nature."* Shah Lateef says:

*Which way the camel I may take,
It's moonlight on all sides,
It's Rano everywhere,
N' nothing else is there.*

If the world is not made for you, delight in the idea that you are made for the world. You are an important page in the book of life. It would be incomplete without you. This concept constitutes the true basis of democracy, and looks at all wars of aggression and expansion with protest as did Spinoza at the war between his countries, Holland and France. Even so, there is justification for struggling for the survival of man and his nation. In the post-USSR scenario, the significance of nationalism has increased, but this nationalism is not of the ultra-right German or Italian variety of the 1930s. That was fascism, whereas the nationalist movements in the third world including Sindh are for security and survival as independent nations. However, the basis of their fight cannot be materialistic. All men are equal because they are divine images, and none of them has the moral justification to exploit, oppress or terrorise others. This is the philosophy I have come to believe in after careful study of Spinoza, Shah Lateef, Bulhay Shah, Kabir⁶², etc. Of these the last three were not philosophers but poets, and their poetry is based on this philosophy, which enthuses every man and his nation for self-survival, and restrains him from oppressing or terrorizing others.

I was still in hospital when I read a report in the US weekly *Newsweek* of 13th May 1991 that shook me. It was about death by suicide of the Polish writer, Jerzy, the author of the *Hermit of 69th Street*, who had once written: "*I am not a suicide freak, but I want to be free. If I have a terminal disease that could cloud my mind or body, I would end it.*" I was bothered by the issue of suicide by writers and poets. It haunted me. Why do they commit it? One can understand an agnostic like Koestler⁶³ killing himself, but the suicides of Urdu poets Noon Meem Raashid, Hassan Koozagar, Suleman Sarbazanu and Saba Veeraan cannot be easily explained, specially Saba Veeraan's last wish in London that his dead body be cremated. Had he become acutely and intensely conscious of his Indianship? Would Quratul Ain Haider⁶⁴ too do the same? The hero of her novel, *Aag Ka Darya* ('River of Fire'), dies by drowning.

Indeed, my body is my house. I can leave it whenever I wish to. You have no business locking it on the outside. If I choose to do so, I can wreck it. It is my ultimate freedom. But is

it my ultimate freedom or a writ of my destiny that I would bring about my own end? Albert Camus⁶⁵ doesn't consider it one's own doing. He says that such an act is planned in serenity of the mind and is the supreme achievement of art. The artist himself is unaware of it. Be that as it may, what has kept me from contemplating suicide is the thinking of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. Taking the question of '*To be or not to be*' as important, he concludes his argument thus. –

*"But that dread of something after death,
The undiscovered country, from whose bourn
No traveller returns, puzzles the will,
And makes us rather bear those ills we have,
Than fly to others we know not of."*

As it is, suicide is not my cup of tea, never has been. On the contrary, every new line of verse enthuses me to go on living. I haven't any dread or dislike of death. But I want to live more, see more beauty, love more. I want to redo the social status quo, and for that I want to live more. When I was young, the first couplet that I wrote was inspired by the diaries of Swami Ramatiratha⁶⁶ who, while looking down from a bridge at the waves of Ganges, became so possessed that he jumped into the river, chanting: "*Thou art a wave, I'm a wave.*" His body was never found. I consider such a death a waste, a meaningless act. Here I am reminded of Santayana, who says: "*The dark background, which death supplies, brings out the tender colour of life in all its purity.*"

The Buddhist scripture, *Dhampad*, which I have read ten times, has a very significant line: "*Body dies but soul is not interred with it.*" I don't agree with Saint Augustine⁶⁷, when he says that body dies when soul forsakes it; and, likewise, soul dies when God forsakes it.

Today's men are hurtling toward death as in the lyrical Persian poem of Allama Iqbal⁶⁸, which he wrote under the caption of 'Song of the Camel-Rider of Hijaz.'

*O my ambler camel,
O my deer of Tartar,
Thou art my Dirham, my Deenaar,*

*My little one, my big one,
 Let thy stride be longer,
 For our destination is not far.
 In the heat of sun
 Thy dive into mirage,
 In the moonlit night
 Thy comet like streak,
 Thy unsleeping eyes,
 Let thy stride be longer,
 For our destination is not far.*

Thus spake Schopenhauer, my favorite philosopher, on the theme of life and death: *"Every day is a little life, every waking and rising a little birth, every fresh morning a little youth and every going to rest and sleep a little death."*

This very moment a cuckoo is cooing outside the hospital, and her cooing is so captivating! It seems as if she is pecking at stars, and pecking at moon as fruit. As death is inevitable, humans should try to achieve immortality through poetry, painting, sculpture, music by investing the word, the colour, the stone, the sound with ever lasting beauty. But these words (whose, I cannot say) are resonating in my mind:

"The carpenter of Galilee, who walked up and down the roads of Palestine two thousand years ago, lived and thought in terms of immortal being. His thought was the thought of one who was immortal. His talk was the talk of an immortal. He forgave like an immortal. He prayed like an immortal. He died like an immortal and he lives today as an immortal."

One evening in Goa I had bought a 5-volumes book titled *'The unexplained.'* One of its volumes, *'Survival After Death,'* was of much interest to me. The volume discusses in detail if man lives after his death in one or the other form. It collates testimonies to the effect that spirits had spoken through mediums. I don't think it is all balderdash. The volume has photographs, pictures and sculptures from various civilizations and religions tending to prove that there is life after death. One of its chapters, *'The Latest Works of Beethoven, Brahms⁶⁹ and Liszt⁷⁰'*, tells of claims by many

sensible people that dead writers, musicians and painters transmit their works through them. Another chapter, '*A Gallery of Psychic Art*,' poses the question: Does creative genius die with the artist or it survives and finds expression through sensitive people? The chapter contains works of art by long dead Van Gogh⁷¹, Renior⁷² and Modigliani⁷³, which are said to have been painted by living persons. Other chapters such as '*Poets from the Shadows*' and '*Literature of Dead*' tell of novels, poetry and plays written posthumously by dead persons through the medium of living people. In short, the volume deals with various aspects of post-death life.

Be the spiritual reality as it may, I write my poetry myself and no spirit makes me write it because the poetry I write no one could have written before. It is, however, true that some people write on the frontier betwixt conscious and unconscious, and I myself have lately been writing on the frontier betwixt conscious and subconscious.

One man said to another: *Life is so short that one has no time to worry about it.* The other replied: *That's the real worry.* Andre Malraux⁷⁴ has said that '*Death is not death --- It is only I who dies.*' Man has come alone and would go alone. Collectivism will not go with him. But He remains, who hath thousands of names and who is nameless. He is with man after death Poets, philosophers and apostles, I have studied them all. All have employed metaphors and similes. None has been able to explain the truth about death. We will have to die ourselves and see for ourselves.

I am in that period of life where proximity to death has altered my view of future and my concepts of life and death. This change is not the result of sickness, weakness or feebleness. This thinking, this curiosity, this delving was already there, which has now reached its zenith. One of my contemporaries discovered undertones of mysticism in the first collection of my poetry, *Bhaunr Bhire Aakaas'* ('Beefly Soars to Heavens'). Now I really think that this world is a play-house, a stage, and we are all actors; and every action, every battle, alertness and dexterity or bewilderment, slackening and slowing are all an integral part of a grand *Maya*. This whole universe is an illusion. I read Amrita Preetam's⁷⁵ autobiography *Surkh*

Dhaage Ka Rishta ('The Bond of the Crimson Thread') and followed it with a perusal of Jung's⁷⁶ *Memories, Dreams & Reflections* and the biography of Jung by Laurens Vander Post. What is said therein may be compressed as follows:

Universe and life in it can be understood and managed by reason alone. Deeper understanding and knowledge can only come through dreams and myths.

What Jung has written in his books shakes up our traditional and customary thought process. Be that as it may, I reproduce here a myth from Heinrich Zimmer's *Myths & Symbols In Indian Art & Civilization*, the like of which I have not read in my whole life.

Hindu mythology treats of the riddle of Maya graphically, in pictorial script that renders accessible to the common mind the philosophical implications of the puzzle. The tales have been handed down in a great tradition of oral communication; they appear today in many variants. A vast number of these variants have become fixed in literary renderings; others continue in the fluid form of unwritten folklore.

The story is told of a semi-divine ascetic, Narada, who once demanded directly of the Supreme Being to be taught the secret of his *Maya*. This *Narada*, in the mythology of Hinduism, is a favorite model of the devotee on the "path of devotion" (*bhaktimarga*). In response to his prolonged and fervent austerity, Vishnu had appeared to him in his hermitage, and granted the fulfillment of a wish. When he humbly expressed his profound desire, the god instructed him, not with words, but by subjecting him to a harrowing adventure. The literary version of the tale comes to us in the *Matsya Purana*, a

Sanskrit compilation that assumed its present form during the classical period of medieval Hinduism, approximately in the fourth century A.D. It is presented as recounted by a saint named *Vyasa*.

A group of holy men had gathered around the venerable hermit, *Vyasa*, in his forest-solitude. "You understand the divine eternal order," they had said to him, "therefore, unveil to us the secret of Vishnu's *Maya*."

"Who can comprehend the *Maya* of the Highest God, except himself? Vishnu's *Maya* lays its spell on us all. Vishnu's *Maya* is our collective dream. I can only recite to you a tale, coming down from the days of yore, of how this *Maya* in specific, singularly instructive instance worked its effect."

The visitors were eager to hear. *Vyasa* began:

"Once upon a time, there lived a young prince, *Kamadamana*, 'Tamer of Desires,' who, conducting himself in accordance with the spirit of his name, spent his life practicing the sternest of ascetic austerities. But his father, wishing him to marry, addressed him on a certain occasion in the following words: 'Kamadamana, my son, what is the matter with you? Why do you not take to yourself a wife? Marriage brings the fulfillment of all of a man's desire and the attainment of perfect happiness. Women are the very root of happiness and well-being. Therefore, go, my dear son, and marry.'

"The youth remained silent, out of respect for his father. But when the king later insisted and repeatedly urged him, *Kamadamana*

replied, 'Dear father, I adhere to the line of conduct designated by my name. The divine power of Vishnu, which sustains and holds enmeshed both ourselves and everything in the world, has been revealed to me.'

"The royal father paused only a moment to reconsider the case, and then adroitly shifted his argument from the appeal of personal pleasure to that of duty. A man should marry, he declared, to beget offspring so that his ancestral spirits in the realm of the fathers should not lack the food-offerings of descendants and decline into indescribable misery and despair.

" 'My dear parent,' said the youth, 'I have passed through lives by the thousand. I have suffered death and old age many hundreds of times. I have known union with wives, and bereavement. I have existed as grass and as shrubs, as creepers and as trees. I have moved among cattle and the beasts of prey. Many hundreds of times have I been a Brahmin, a woman, a man. I have shared in the bliss of Shiva's celestial mansions; I have lived among the immortals. Indeed, there is no variety even of superhuman being whose form I have not more than once assumed: I have been a demon, a goblin, a guardian of the earthly treasures; I have been a spirit of the river-waters; I have been a celestial damsel; I have also been a king among the demon-serpents. Every time the cosmos dissolved to be re-absorbed in the formless essence of the Divine, I vanished too; and when the universe evolved again, I too re-entered into existence, to live through another series of rebirths. Again and again have I fallen victim to the delusion of existence, and even through the taking of a wife.

" 'Let me recount to you,' the youth continued, 'something that occurred to me during my next to last incarnation. My name during that existence was *Suptapas* ('*Whose Austerities Are Good*'); I was an ascetic. And my fervent devotion to Vishnu, the Lord of the Universe, won for me his grace. Delighted by my fulfillment of many vows, he appeared before my bodily eyes, seated on *Garuda*, the celestial bird. "I grant to you a boon," he said. "Whatever you wish, it shall be yours."

" 'To the Lord of the Universe I made reply: "if you are pleased with me, let me comprehend your *Maya*."

" 'What should you do with a comprehension of my *Maya*?" the god responded. A I will grant, rather, abundance of life, fulfillment of your social duties and tasks, all riches, health, and pleasure, and heroic sons."

" 'That," said I, "and precisely that, is what I desire to be rid of and to pass beyond."

" 'The god went on: " No one can comprehend my *Maya*. No one has ever comprehended it. There will never be anyone capable of penetrating to its secret. Long, long ago, there lived a godlike holy seer, *Narada* by name, and he was a direct son of the god *Brahma* himself, full of fervent devotion to me. Like you, he merited my grace, and I appeared before him, just as I am appearing now to you. I granted him a boon, and he uttered the wish that you have uttered. Then, though I warned him not to inquire further into the secret of my *Maya*, he

insisted, just like you. And I said to him: 'Plunge into yonder water, and you shall experience the secret of my *Maya*.' *Narada* dived into the pond. He emerged again – in the shape of a girl.

" ` " *Narada* stepped out of the water as *Sushila*, 'The Virtuous One,' the daughter of the king of Benares. And presently, when she was in the prime of her youth, her father bestowed her in marriage on the son of the neighboring king of *Vidarbha*. The holy seer and ascetic, in the form of a girl, fully experienced the delights of love. In due time, then, the old king of *Vidarbha* died, and *Sushila's* husband succeeded to the throne. The beautiful queen had many sons and grandsons, and was incomparably happy.

" ` "However, in the long course of time, a feud broke out between *Sushila's* husband and her father, and this developed presently into a furious war. In a single mighty battle many of her sons and grandsons, her father, and her husband were all slain. And when she learned of the holocaust she proceeded in sorrow from the capital to the battlefield, there to lift a solemn lament. And she ordered a gigantic funeral pyre and placed upon it the dead bodies of her relatives, her brothers, sons, nephews, and grandsons, and then, side by side, the bodies of her husband and her father. With her own hand she laid torch to the pyre, and when the flames were mounting cried aloud, 'My son, my son!' and when the flames were roaring, threw herself into the conflagration. The blaze became immediately cool and clear; the pyre became a pond. And amidst the waters *Sushila* found herself – but again as the holy *Narada*. And the god *Vishnu*, holding the saint by the hand, was leading him out of the crystal pool.

“ “ “ After the god and the saint had come to the shore, *Vishnu* asked with an equivocal smile: ‘Who is this son whose death you are bewailing?’ *Narada* stood confounded and ashamed. The god continued: ‘This is the semblance of my *Maya*, woeful, somber, accursed. Not the lotus-born *Brahma*, nor any other of the gods, *Indra*, not even *Shiva*, can fathom its depthless depth. Why or how should *you* know this inscrutable?’

“ “ “ *Narada* prayed that he should be granted perfect faith and devotion, and the grace to remember this experience for all time to come. Furthermore, he asked that the pond into which he had entered, as into a source of initiation, should become a holy place of pilgrimage, its water--thanks to the everlasting secret presence therein of the god who had entered to lead forth the saint from the illusory depth -- endowed with the power to wash away all sin. *Vishnu* granted the pious wishes and forthwith, on the instant, disappeared, withdrawing to his cosmic abode in the Milky Ocean.”

“ “ ‘I have told you this tale,’ concluded *Vishnu*, before he withdrew likewise from the ascetic, *Sutapas*, ‘in order to teach you that the secret of my *Maya* is inscrutable and not to be known. If you so desire, you too may plunge into the water, and you will know why this is so.’ ”

Would any one believe that I have plunged deep into these waters and understood the riddle of *Maya* more than *Narad* ! Is not my poetry, which I have written while sitting on the brink of death, a proof of that?

(Karachi, 01.10.1991)



NOTES

PROLOGUE

- *Karoonjher* and *Khirthar* are mountains respectively in Thar and Dadu districts of Sindh.
- *Manchhar* and *Keenjher* are lakes respectively in Dadu and Thatta districts of Sindh.
- *Kaachho* and *Koshitar*: Vallies and hilly region in Dadu district of Sindh.
- *Karachi* is the port city, provincial capital, and financial commercial centre of Sindh, while *Ketibunder* is formerly a flourishing and currently a decaying ferry-town in the Indus delta in southeastern Sindh.
- *Loee* and *Ajrak* are cotton shawls typical to Sindh. The former is worn by women, and the latter by both the sexes. Both wears symbolise virtue and dignity.
- *Hamarcho*, *Moro* and *Hojamalo* are typically Sindhi chorus-dances.

POEMS

1. **Kesuphul**, saffron in English. A species of crocus; its dried stigmas used as a dye and flavouring; its colour orange-yellow; used in liquid form to spray everyone around during the Hindu festival of Holi, which is characterized by boisterous revelry.
2. **Chikor**. The red-legged partridge, whom the sub-continental lore make a lover of moon.
3. **Doolah Darya Khan** (d. 11.12.1520). Minister and general of two Samma rulers of Sindh, Jaam Nizamuddin (also called 'Jaam Nindo'), and his successor, Jaam Feroz; renowned for his patriotism, sagacity and bravery, hence remembered in Sindh history as Doolah, i.e., magnate.
4. **Nain Gaaj**. A hill torrent in the mountainous region of Sindh.
5. **Viet Cong**, in full Viet Nam Cong San, i.e. Vietnamese communists. The guerrilla force that with the support of the North Vietnamese army fought against South Vietnam (late 1950s-1975) and the United States (early 1960s-1973).
6. **Tantia Tope**, original name Ramchandra Panduranga (c. 1819-1859). A leader of the Indian rebellion of 1857. Though without formal

military training, he was probably the best and most effective of the rebels' generals. His rebel forces were broken up in June 1858, but he continued resistance as a guerrilla fighter in the jungle until his betrayal and execution.

7. **Reginald Edward Harry Dyer** (1864-1927). British army officer, who as brigade commander at Amritsar, the Punjab, had ordered his troops to open fire on the unarmed and defenceless Indian civilians, who had gathered in Jalianwala Bagh for a protest meeting on April 13, 1919. The firing killed 379 people and injured many more. As a result, General Dyer was removed from command into forced retirement.
8. **Aror.** Now a small village 5 miles (8 kms) south-east of Rohri in Sukkur district of Sindh; it was capital of Sindh before the Arab conquest in 712.
9. **Faiz Ahmed Faiz** (1919-84). A teacher, army officer journalist, trade union leader, broadcaster and script writer, but above all one of the most admired progressive Urdu poets of Pakistan; and an enlightened, humanist socialist; twice jailed under the Public Safety Act (first: 1951-55; second: 1958-59); edited English and Urdu journals—dailies *Pakistan Times* and *Imroz* and weekly *Lail-o Nahar* from Lahore (1947-58); and periodical 'Lotus' from Moscow, London, Beirut and other cities of the Middle East (1966-84); awarded MBE (1946) and Lenin Peace Prize (1962); author of poetical works: *Naqsh-e Faryadi* ('Complaining Image,' 1943), *Dast-e Saba* ('The Zephyr's Hand,' 1952), *Zindan Namah* ('Prison Thoughts,' 1956), *Daste Tahe Sang* ('The Hand under the Rock,' 1965), and *Meray Dil-Meray Musafir* ('My Vagabond Heart,' 1981), and a work of critical essays *Meezaan* ('The Balance,' 1960).
10. **Vaisakhi.** A Hindu festival held in the 7th month of the Bikrami era, usually on the banks of a river.
11. **Madhuban.** A mythical forest in the ancient Indian lore.
12. **Mithi.** A town in Thar district of Sindh.
13. **Sehwan.** A town in Dadu district of Sindh, and a place of pilgrimage for the devotees of the Sufi saint Mohammed Usman Marwandi, popularly known as *Qalandar Lal Shahbaz* (1166-1274), whose mausoleum is located here.
14. **Alexander** (356 B.C. – 323 B.C.). Byname 'Alexander the Great,' pupil of Greek philosopher Aristotle from age 13 to 16; known as the greatest general in history; overthrew the Persian Empire, carried Macedonian armies to India, laid the foundations of the Hellenistic world of territorial kingdoms, and became a legendary hero in the process; died in Babylon after being taken ill following a prolonged banquet and drinking bout; his body, diverted to Egypt, was eventually placed in a golden coffin in Alexandria.

15. **Arghuns.** A Central Asian dynasty of Turkish descent that ruled Sindh from 1520 to 1556.
16. **Tarkhans.** Another Central Asian dynasty of Turkish descent that wrested control of Sindh from the Arghuns and reigned over it from 1556 to 1596.
17. **Marwandi,** of Marwand, a place in Central Asia wherefrom Qalandar Lal Shahbaz had come and settled in Sehwan, Sindh.
18. **Kailash.** One of the highest and most rugged range in the Himalayan Mountain system, located in the southwestern part of Tibet, China. Mount *Kailash* is an important holy site both to the Hindus, who identify it with the paradise of Shiva (one of the three gods of Hinduism), and to the Tibetan Buddhists, who identify it with Mount Sumeru, cosmic centre of the universe.
19. **Waris Shah** (1735-84). Born in a Syed family of Gujranwala district, Punjab, Pakistan. Though only one work, the love story of *Heer and Ranjha*, is ascribed to him, some scholars have also credited him with having composed the folktale of *Sassi Punnu* and *Seharfis* (3-line verses). His strongest point is the gift of gab. The tenor of his diction is loud, foxy, even foul. His wisdom is that of a man, who is deeply grounded in feudal lore, and can remain detached at the same time.
20. **Ranjhoo.** A variation of the name *Ranjha*, who was hero of the folktale of love *Heer-Ranjha*, immortalized by Waris Shah.
21. **Panjnad.** A river in Punjab, Pakistan, formed just below Uch by successive junctions of the Sutlej, Beas, Ravi, Jehlum, and Chenab rivers. Three of these rivers now belong to India under the Indus Basin Treaty of 1960⁵. The Panjnad (literally Five Rivers) flows 44 miles (71 kilometers) southwest to its junction with the Indus near Mithankot.
22. **Dublin.** Located in east central Ireland at the head of Dublin Bay on the Irish Sea, Dublin is the country's chief port, centre of financial and commercial power and seat of culture.
23. **Sukkur.** A city in upper Sindh on the right bank of River Indus, famous for its places of interest like the *Minaret of Maasoom Shah* and *Satiyan Jo Aastan* ('The Resting Place of Virgins'), and its engineering marvels the *Sukkur Barrage* and the *Landsdowne Railway Bridge* over Indus. Shaikh Ayaz spent better part of his life here.
24. **Romanovs.** A dynasty, which ruled Russia from 1613 until the February revolution of 1917. Its last ruler, Nicholas II, abdicated the throne on March 2 (March 15, new style) in favour of his brother, Michael, who refused it the following day. Nicholas and supposedly all his immediate family were executed in July 1918.

25. **Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoyevsky** (1821-1881). Russian journalist, novelist, and short story writer, whose psychological penetration into the darkest recesses of the human heart, together with his unsurpassed moments of illumination, have had a profound and universal influence on the 20th century novel. His novels include *Crime and Punishment* (1866), *The Idiot* (1868-69), *The Possessed* (1869-72) and *The Brothers Karamazov* (1879-80). The last is often considered his masterpiece.
26. **Pervez.** (see Note No. 27 below)
27. **Farhad.** Hero of the Persian folktale of love., *Shirin-Farhad*. An architect by profession, he was rival of the Sassanian king of Iran *Khosrow Pervez II* (591-628) for the hand of Shirin, who was herself a queen. To win her, Farhad had to cut a milk-stream across Koh-e Bistun. He had almost finished the dig when a slave-girl brought him the false news of his beloved's sudden death. Heartbroken, he hit his head with the tool he had used for cutting rock and died there and then.
28. The Greek philosopher, Socrates(469-399 BC).
29. The Arab soofi, Hussain bin Mansoor alHilaj (858-922 AD)?
30. The translator regrets his failure to indentify this historical figure.
31. The Sindhi saint, Makhdoom Bilawal (d. 1520[22?] AD). .
32. Tegh Bahadur, the nineth Guru of Sikhs (d. 11.11.1675)?
33. Use of the subject pronoun 'he' instead of the object pronoun 'it' for the abstract noun 'truth' is intentional.

DEATH OF DODO SOOMRO

1. **Dodo Soomro.** The opera is based on the folktale, *Dodo-Chanayser*. Dodo is a legend among the Soomros – a native dynasty, which ruled parts of lower Sindh locally known as *Larr* from c.1058 to c.1348. Dodo is venerated as a true patriot who died defending the independence and honour of Sindh against the foreign invasion launched by Khalji armies in 1297. At the invitation of his half brother, Chanayser, a pretender to the throne, who succeeded in his nefarious design and is denigrated as traitor in the history of Sindh.
2. **Chholi** is equivalent of 'wave' in Sindhi.
3. **Miani.** Literally, a fishery. Historically, the site of the first of the two decisive battles fought between the hastily collected/regrouped and ill-equipped forces of the native Talpur rulers of Sindh, and the highly disciplined and heavily equipped forces of the British -- the first took place on 17th February 1843 at 'Miani' about 13 kilometers north of the

Hyderabad Sindh Fort on the banks of *Phuleli* canal while the second was fought 5 weeks later on 24th March near Dubbo, a village 13 kms. east of the Hyderabad city. As a result Sindh became part of the Raj.

4. **Gharoli.** Literally, a small baked-earth pitcher. Here a kind of Sindhi song sung to the accompaniment of music produced by rhythmically striking a *gharoli* with palm and fingers.
5. **Vaaee.** A kind of Sindhi verse.
6. **Larries.** The people of Larr, which is the southeastern region of Sindh.
7. **Raano.** Hero of the folk love story, *Moomal – Raano* ; here the typical melody in which Shah Lateef's verses on the folk-tale are sung.

HANGING OF BHAGAT SINGH

1. **Rani of Jhansi.** Maharani Lakshmi Bai, ruler of Jhansi (a district in Uttar Pradesh, northern India), was a prominent leader of the Great Indian Rebellion of 1857 against the British imperialist rule. She found a soldier's death, when her forces were broken up in June 1858. Her heroic role in the Rebellion has been eulogised in folk songs.
2. **Teepu Sultan**, full name Fateh Ali Teepu, and byname *Tiger of Mysore* (1749/53? – 1799). Succeeded his father, Hyder Ali, as Sultan of Mysore in 1782, defeated the invading British armies twice (1782 and 1789) but was overwhelmed by them in the Fourth Mysore War in 1799, and died leading his troops at Seringapatam; revered as hero by Muslims and Hindus alike.
3. **Nana Sahib**, Byname of Bhondur Pant (c.1820-c.1859). A prominent leader in the Great Indian Rebellion of 1857. Although he did not plan the outbreak, he assumed leadership of the rebels; declared Peshwa in July 1857 by Tantia Tope and his followers; driven into Nepal hills in 1859, where he is believed to have died.
4. **Lala Lajpat Rai** (1865-1928). Indian writer and politician, outspoken in his advocacy of a militant anti-British nationalism in the Congress Party, and as a leader of Hindu supremacy movement; died after being attacked by police during a demonstration. His most important writings include *The Story of My Deportation* (1928), *Arya Samaj* (1915), and *Unhappy India* (1928).
5. **Kanchenjunga.** A 28,208 feet high peak in the Great Himalayan Range.
6. **Jamuna.** A holy river in India; Vrindavan, the birthplace of Lord Krishna is situated on its bank.
7. **Ganges.** A 1,557 mile long river in India, which rises in the Himalayas and empties into the Bay of Bengal. Its waters are believed by Hindus to be sacred.

8. **Qawali.** A kind of devotional song, sung in chorus, usually at the mausoleums of Muslim saints.
9. **Data Darbar.** The mausoleum at Lahore of Syed Abul Hasan Ali Hajveri (c. 11th century AD), popularly known as '*Data Ganj Bukhsh*' ('The Munificent'); a widely revered Muslim saint and Soofi writer. Though he is reputed to have authored 10 treatises, only one, *Kashful Mahjoob* ('Unveiling the Veiled'), has survived.
10. **Amritsar.** A holy city of Sikhism in the Indian part of the Punjab.
11. **Rai Bahadur.** An honorific title bestowed by the British upon Hindu elite for services to the Raj.
12. **Khan Bahadur.** The Muslim equivalent of *Rai Bahadur*.
13. **Ungrez Bahadur.** A form of address used for the Englishmen in the Raj, usually as a mark of respect and occasionally in derision.
14. **Shanker.** Name of a Hindu saint.
15. **Gautam.** Short for Gautama Buddha, the founder of Buddhism.
16. **Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi.** (1869-1948). Father of the Indian nation, revered as a saint and a thinker; called 'Mahatma'; originator of the doctrine of non-violence i.e. passive resistance as a form of political action in all struggles for the achievement of rights; assassinated by a Hindu fanatic during a prayer meeting for preaching communal harmony.
17. **Ravana.** In Hindu mythology, the 10-headed king of demons, whose abduction of Seeta and eventual defeat by her husband, Rama, are the central incidents of the popular epic, the *Ramayana*. The Ram-Lila festival, an annual pageant popular particularly in northern India, is climaxed with the defeat of *Ravana* and the burning of huge effigies of the demons.
18. **Kumbh-karna>Kumbha-Karna.** [A character in the Hindu scripture *Ramayan*.] Son of Visravas by his Rakshasa wife Kasini, and full brother of Ravana. A monster who, under the curse of Brahma (or, as otherwise represented as a boon), slept for six months at a time and remained awake for only a single day. When Ravana was hardpressed by Rama, he sent to arouse Kumbha-Karna. This was effected with great difficulty. After drinking 2,000 jars of liquor, he went to consult with his brother, and then took the field against the monkey army. He beat down Su-grina, the monkey chief, with a large stone, and carried him a prisoner into the city of Lanka. When he returned to the battle, he encountered Rama, and after a short fight he was defeated, and Rama cut off his head. (Courtesy; Mr. Waliram Valabh)

19. **Dhaulagiri.** 26,810 feet high peak in the Great Himalayan Range.
20. **Gori Shankar.** Another peak in the Great Himalayan Range.
21. **Ghaghra.** An Indian river.
22. **Gandak.** -do-
23. **Bhagmati.** -do-
24. **Saraswati.** -do- (See also Note No. 18 above).
25. **Bhavani. (1)** Another name of Parvati, wife of Siva.
26. **Bapu.** Allusion to Mahatma Gandhi, who is also called *Bapu*, which is a reverential form of address for a father figure.
27. **Mewar.** (see following Note No. 28).
28. **Rana Pratab Singh (1545?-1597).** Hindu Maharaja (1572-97) of the Rajpoot confederacy of Mewar, now partly in northwest India and partly in eastern Pakistan. Rana Pratab successfully resisted the efforts of the Mughal Emperor Akbar to conquer his area. He is honoured as a hero in Rajasthan. He was succeeded by his son, Amar Singh, who submitted in 1614 to Emperor Jahangir, son of Akbar.
29. **Shivaji (1627/30?-1680).** Indian king (1674-80), founder of the Maratha kingdom of India; its security was based on religious toleration and on the functional integration of Brahmans, Marathas and Praphus. Shivaji breathed new life into a moribund race that for centuries had resigned itself to abject serfdom and led them against Aurangzeb, a powerful Mughal ruler. Above all, in a place and age stained by religious savagery, he stands almost alone as one who practiced true religious tolerance.
30. **Murli Manohar.** (see Note No. 35 on *Rama*).
31. **Cowherd.** -do-
32. **Milkmaid.** -do-
33. **Brandaban.** -do-
34. **Ayodhia.** -do-
35. **Rama.** One of the most widely worshipped Hindu deities, the embodiment of chivalry and virtue. Although there are three *Ramas* mentioned in Indian tradition (*Prasurama*, *Balarama*, and *Ramchandra*), the name is especially associated with Ramchandra, the seventh incarnation (*avatara*) of Lord Vishnu. It is possible that *Rama* was an actual historical figure, a tribal hero of ancient India, who was later deified. His story is told briefly in the *Mahabharata* ('Great Epic of the Bharata Dynasty') and at great length in the *Ramayana* ('Romance of Rama'). References to *Rama* as an incarnation of Vishnu appear in the early centuries AD. There was, however, no special

worship of him before the 11th century, and it was not until the 14th and 15th centuries that distinct sects appeared that venerated him as the supreme god. Rama's popularity was increased greatly by the retelling of the Sanskrit epics in the vernaculars, such as Tulsidas' celebrated Hindi version, *The Ramcaritmanas* ('Sacred Lake of the Acts of Rama'). Rama and Krishna (the 8th incarnation of *Vishnu*) were the two most popular recipients of adoration from the *Bhakti* (devotional) cults which swept the country during that time. Whereas *Krishna* is adored for his charming innocent pranks and amorous dalliances, *Rama* is conceived as a model of reason, right action and desirable virtue.

The basic sources of *Krishna's* mythology are the epic *Mahabharata* and its 5th century-AD appendix, the *Harivamsa*, and the *Puranas*, particularly Books 10 and 11 of the *Bhagavata Purana*. As a youth the cowherd *Krishna* became renowned as a lover, the sound of his flute (hence his byname *Murli Manohar*) prompting the *gopis* (wives and daughters of the cowherds, hence also *milkmaids*) to leave their homes to dance ecstatically with him in the forests, such as *Brandaban*.

Ayodhya is believed to be the birthplace of Lord Rama.

36. **Sidi Mohammed Ibn 'Ali Sanusi** (1787-1859). An Islamic theologian, who founded a militant mystical movement, the *Sanusiyah*, which helped Libya win its independence from Italy in the 20th century.
37. **Sadani**. Belonging to Sadah, a town in the mountainous region of Yemen. It was the original capital of the Zaydi dynasty of *imams* (leaders) of Yemen (AD 860-1962). The effective founder of Sadah as a base of Zaydi power was Imam Yahya al-Hadi ila al-Haqq (ruled 893-911). Under his successor, the dynasty briefly extended its power to embrace most of eastern Arabia, from al-Hijaz to southern Yemen.
38. **Ahmed Shah Abdali** (1722-72). Founder of the state of Afghanistan and ruler of a short lived empire that extended from the Amu Darya to Indian Ocean and from Khorasan into Kashmir, the Punjab and Sindh.
39. **Jamal al-Din Afghani** (1838-97). Muslim thinker, politician, and journalist, whose belief in the potency of a revived Islamic civilization in the face of European domination significantly influenced the development of Muslim thought in the 19th and early 20th centuries.
40. **Dwarka**. The city of many gates (Sanskrit Dvaraka or Dvaravati) is also known as Jagat or Jigat. Dwarka was the legendary capital of the god Krishna, who founded it after his flight from Mathura. It is said to have been submerged by the ocean seven days after his death. Its consequent sanctity makes it one of the seven great places of Hindu pilgrimage. Its original temples were destroyed in 1372 by the Delhi emperors.
41. **Upsaraka>Abhesaraka**. A woman who visits her lover at night, or keeps an appointment made by him.

42. **Andaman.** One of the two Indian island groups (the other being Nicobar) in the Bay of Bengal. Because of their position on the India-Burma trade route, their existence has been known from the earliest times. After the mid 18th century, the islands were associated with the British, who established penal colonies there. Since the 1950s the Andamans have been colonized with displaced persons from East Pakistan (now Bangladesh), evacuees from Burma, and Indian emigrants from British Guiana (now Guyana).
43. According to a **biographical study** (1986) written by **Mr. Ahmed Saleem**, the three revolutionaries—*Bhagat Singh* (born 27.09.1907 in district Lyalpur now Faisalabad, Punjab); *Raj Guru* (born 1901 in district Pune) and *Sukhhdev* (birth date and place not mentioned)—were hanged at 7:00 p.m. on 23.03.1931.
44. **Bhagavadgita** (Sanskrit: 'Song of the Lord'), one of the greatest and most beautiful of the Hindu scriptures. It forms part of Book VI of the Indian Epic the *Mahabharata*, and is written in the form of dialogue between the warrior Prince Arjuna and his friend and charioteer Krishna, who is also an earthly incarnation of the god Vishnu. It was probably written in the 1st or 2nd century AD, and consists of 700 Sanskrit verses divided into 18 chapters. A predominantly theistic work, it often describes the ultimate reality as personal god, identified with Krishna. However, it also quite frequently refers to the supreme as the immanent spirit, as the transcendent absolute, and, finally, as the state of one's own awakened soul. The three paths of the Hindu religious tradition leading to mystic union with God are all described as different aspects of a single way of approach.

EPILOGUE

1. **Rabindranath Tagore** (1861-1941). Bengali poet and prose writer; won Nobel Prize for Literature in 1913 but surrendered it in 1919 as a protest against the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre; founded a school at Shantiniketan near Bolapur, where he sought to blend the best in Indian and Western traditions; in 1921 he inaugurated the Vishva-Bharati University there.
2. **Arthur Schopenhauer** (1788-1860). German pessimistic philosopher, who taught that absolute reality is a blind and restless will, that all existence is essentially a burden, and that release can be obtained only by overcoming the will to live.
3. **Bulhay Shah** (1692-1757). Soofi poet of Punjabi language, famous for his '*Kaafis*'.
4. **Plato** (c.427-348 B.C.). Greek philosopher, pupil of Socrates and author of *Dialogues* based on the teachings of Socrates and the doctrines of Pythagoras. The central conception of the philosophical

system of Plato is existence of a world of ideas, divine types, or forms of material objects, and that ideas are alone real and permanent, while individual material things are but their ephemeral and imperfect imitations.

5. **Aristotle** (344-322 B.C.). Greek philosopher, pupil of Plato at Athens; became tutor to the young Alexander of Macedon; wrote the 'Ethics', 'Politics', and 'Poetics', and works on zoology, physics, metaphysics, logic (which he invented), and rhetoric.
6. **Epicurus** (c. 300 B.C.). Athenian philosopher, who held that pleasure (the end result of the practice of virtue) is the highest good.
7. **Marcus Aurelius Antoninus** (121-180). Roman emperor (161-180) and Stoic philosopher; author of 12 books of 'Meditations' in Greek.
8. **Francis of Assisi**, St. Giovanni Francesco Bernadine (1181-1226). Italian friar, founded (c. 1209). The *Franciscan Order* of friars whose rules require chastity, poverty and obedience, and lay special stress on preaching and ministration to the sick.
9. **St. Thomas Aquinas** (c. 1225-74). Italian philosopher, a Dominican friar whose *Summa theologiae*, and *Summa contra* represent the culmination of scholastic philosophy.
10. **Francis Baron Verulum Bacon** (1561-1626). Lord Chancellor of England (1618-20); philosopher who introduced the inductive method into science, and author of the famous 'Essays.'
11. **Benedict de Spinoza** (1632-77). Philosopher; a Dutch jew of Portuguese origin; author of 'Ethics,' in which he rejected the Cartesian dualism of spirit and matter and saw only one infinite substance, of which finite existences are 'modes' or 'limitations.' God was for Spinoza the immanent cause of the universe, not a ruler outside it, and his system is thus pantheistic. He also denied personal immortality and the transcendent distinction between good and evil.
12. **John Locke** (1632-1704). English empirical philosopher; had great influence on 18th century philosophy; author of 'Essay concerning the Human Understanding' and several works on education, government, and religious toleration.
13. **David Hume** (1711-76). Scottish philosopher; author of *Treatise of Human Nature* and *Enquiry concerning Human Understanding*. In his system of philosophical skepticism human knowledge is restricted to experience of ideas and impressions, and ultimate verification of their truth or falsehood is impossible.
14. **Francois Marie Arouet de Voltaire** (1694-1778). French deist philosopher, historian, dramatist, and writer of historical and satirical

poems and tales; famous for his anti-clericalism, his witty skepticism, and his influence on the leaders of the French Revolution.

15. **Immanuel Kant** (1724-1804). German metaphysician; founder of the school of transcendental philosophy, of which one of the fundamental principles is that knowledge of the external world depends upon sense-impressions coordinated or synthesized by reason, employing such 'categories' or laws of thought as quality, quantity, causation, etc.
16. **George Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel** (1770-1831). German philosopher in whose system of *Absolute Idealism*, pure being is regarded as pure thought, the universe as its development, and philosophy as its dialectical explication.
17. **Ralph Waldo Emerson** (1803-82). American philosophic writer and essayist; the leading exponent of *New England Transcendentalism*.
18. **Herbert Spencer** (1820-1903). English philosopher, who sought the unification of all knowledge on the basis of the single principle of evolution. The principle of his philosophy was laid down in his *Programme of a System of Synthetic Philosophy* (1860) to the elaboration of which he devoted the rest of his life.
19. **Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche** (1844-1900). German philosopher; originator of the idea of *superman* and of the doctrine of perfectibility of man through willful self-assertion and superiority to ordinary morality.
20. **William James** (1842-1910). American philosopher and psychologist, elder brother of the novelist Henry James; formulator of the *Theory of Pragmatism*.
21. **David Pinsky** (1872-1959). Yiddish playwright, novelist, and editor; born in Moscow, Russia, and died in Haifa, Israel. His plays include, *Der Oitzer* ('The Treasure'), and *Den Eybiker Yid* ('The Eternal Jew'); while his novel *Dos Hoyz fun Noyakh Edon* ('The Generations of Noah Edon') portrays the deterioration of Jewishness in America and argues against assimilation.
22. **Henry Bergson** (1859-1941). French philosopher, the first to elaborate what came to be called a *process philosophy* which rejected static values in favour of values of motion, change, and evolution. He was also a master literary stylist, of both academic and popular appeal. Awarded Nobel Prize for Literature in 1927.
23. **George Santayana** (1863-1952). Philosopher, poet and literary critic; author of several philosophical works including *Sense of Beauty*, *The Life of Reason*, (1905-06), *Animal Faith* (1923), and *The Realms of Being* (1927-40), and also a novel *The last Puritan* (1935).

24. **Karl Marx** (1818-83). German revolutionary thinker and writer; settled in England after 1849; wrote *Das Kapital* (1867), criticizing the capitalistic system and advocating *socialism*, which is a theory, principle or scheme of social organization that places means of production and distribution in the hands of community; originator of the theory of *dialectical materialism*, which views history as a conflict between two opposing forces, *thesis* and *antithesis*, which is resolved by the forming of a new force, *synthesis*, present conditions being due to a class struggle between the capitalists whose aim is private profit, and the workers who resist exploitation.

25. **Lenin**, assumed name of Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov (1870-1924) Russian revolutionary, exponent of the doctrines of Marx, founder of *Bolshevik* party; after imprisonment left Russia (1900), returned there in disguise and took part in the revolution of 1905; escaped in 1907 and directed revolutionary operations from abroad until 1917, when he returned to Russia and founded the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) becoming head of its new proletarian government.

26. **Author of Anti-Duhring**. The book was authored almost alone by Friedrich Engels (1820-95), German Socialist philosopher and closest collaborator of Karl Marx in the founding of modern Communism. Published in 1877-78, *Anti-Duhring* probably did most to promote Marxian thought and destroyed the influence of Karl Eugen Duhring (1833-1921), a German philosopher and political economist who attacked militarism, Marxism, religion and Judaism.

27. **M.N. Roy** (1887-1954). A Marxist thinker, revolutionary and journalist of India; real name Narendranath Acharya, son of a Sanskrit teacher; lived 16 years (1915-30) out of India working full-time with world revolutionary movements; underwent 6-year rigorous imprisonment for pre-1915 acts of terrorism; joined Indian National Congress after release in 1936; published and edited an English weekly newspaper *Independent India* in 1937; author of *Fascism-Its Philosophy & Function*; *Historic Role of Islam*; *Indian Ideal of Womanhood*; *Materialism, Scientific Politics and Reason*; *Romanticism & Revolution*; etc, and propounded the doctrine of *Radical Humanism*.

28. **Ernesto 'Che' Guevara** (1928-67). Latin-American guerrilla leader, revolutionary and theoretician, who helped Fidel Castro to achieve his revolution in Cuba and in the administration of Castro's new *socialist* regime. In the autumn of 1966, Guevara went to Bolivia, incognito, to create and lead a guerrilla revolutionary group. On October 8, 1967, the group was almost annihilated by the Bolivian army. Guevara was captured after being wounded and shot soon afterward.

29. **Abu Nasr al-Farabi** (c. 870-c.950). Greatest philosopher of Islam before Abu Ali ibn Sina; wrote commentaries on a number of Aristotelian texts and composed many original treatises on psychology, mathematics, and the occult sciences; both his commentaries and original compositions attempted to demonstrate the unity of Plato and

Aristotle, and to prove the primacy of philosophy; maintained that, in contrast to philosophy, religion represents the truth in a symbolic form for non-philosophers; attempted to reconcile Islam with philosophy in all his writings, revealing influence on him of mystical *Neoplatonism*.

30. **Abu Bakr Mohammed ibn Zakariya al-Razi** (c. 865 – c.923 or 932). Celebrated alchemist and Muslim philosopher, considered also to be the greatest physician of the Islamic world; viewed himself as the Islamic version of Socrates in philosophy and Hippocrates (c. 460 B.C. c. 377 B.C.) in medicine; pursued a tendency in his atomic theory of composition of matter similar to that of Greek atomist philosopher Democritus (c. 460 B.C. - 370 B.C.). His books on medicine include *Kitab-al-Mansuri* ('Book of Mansur') and *Kitab al-Hawi* ('The Comprehensive Book'), and on philosophy 'The Spiritual Physick of Rhazis.'
31. **Bu Ali ibn Sina** (980-1037). Persian philosopher; spent his life as a physician and scholar-in-residence at many Islamic courts; his works are of a compendious nature, the most notable being a philosophical encyclopaedia. Like other Muslim philosophers of the Greek school, he attempted to reconcile philosophy and Islam. His summaries of Aristotle reveal *Neoplatonic* outlook, especially in his emphasis on dualism of mind and matter; saw matter as passive and creation as the act of instilling existence into this passive substance; only in God are being and existence one. He also wrote numerous works on medicine, best known of which is 'Canon of Medicine.'
32. **Abu Rehan al-Beruni** (973-1048). An Islamic thinker, who hit upon the great mathematical idea of function, which is the essence of dialectics as it involves the concepts of movements and interdependence, seeing the world as a conglomerate of interdependent processes.
33. **Abu Hamid Mohammed al-Ghazali** (1058-1111). A theologian, mystic and apologist, one of the most revered personalities in the Muslim world; wrote more than 50 books, of which the *Tahafat al-Flasafah* ('The Refutation of Philosophy') and the *Ihya Ulum al-Din* ('The Revival of the Religious Sciences') are particularly important.
34. **Abu al-Fat'h Omar bin Ibrahim al-Khayyam** (1051-1122). Persian poet, mathematician and astronomer, whose work on algebra was known throughout Europe in the Middle Ages. He also contributed to calendar reform, but his fame as a poet has eclipsed his scientific achievements even though versions and the forms and verses used in the *Rubaiyat* existed in Persian literature before him, and the number of verses that can be attributed to him with certainty is very small.
35. **Ibn Rushd** (1126-98). Spanish Arab philosopher and a noted Aristotelian scholar in Islam; called the "commentator" by Thomas Aquinas, composed 38 treatises on the various works of Aristotle as

well as original tracts on astronomy, physics and medicine. His primary work is 'Tahafat-al Tahfa' ('Refutation of the Refutation' c.1180), a spirited defence of his *Neoplatonic* and *Aristotelian* philosophy.

36. **Shaikh Ahmad Mujaddid Alif Thani** (1562-1624). Eminent Soofi, scholar and theocrat of India, who revolted against Mughal emperor Jalaluddin Akbar's (1542-1605) heterodoxy and opposed his plans to bring Islam and Hinduism together on religious level. A prolific writer on religion and mysticism, more famous of his works are epistles which he wrote to different persons, covering a wide range of subjects. Retracting to orthodoxy in mysticism, he rejected the theory of Wahdat al-Wajud and came to believe that relation between man and God is that of 'Abd' (worshipper) and 'Ma'bud' (worshipped).

37. **Shah Waliullah** (c. 1702-62). An Indian Muslim religious reformer, who developed a philosophy emphasising the reconciliation between the fundamental creed of Islam and the changing economic and social conditions of the modern world. The centre-piece of his thought was the doctrine of *tatbiq*, which permitted basic Islamic principles to be interpreted and applied afresh in accordance with the Quran and the traditions of the Prophet (PBUH). His philosophy developed in response to the evolving situation in India, where large number of Muslims came under non-Muslim rule after the death (1707) of the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb. His most famous work is *Asrar ad-din* ('The Essences of Belief').

38. **Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan** (1888-1975). One of modern India's most respected scholars and statesmen; President of India (1962-67); authored many influential books and articles on Indian philosophy and religion, including *Indian Philosophy* (1923-27), *An Idealist View of Life* (1932), *Eastern Religions and Western Thought* (1939).

39. **Dr. Tarachand**. An eminent scholar, historian and thinker of India. Author of *Society & State in the Mughal Period* (Lectures), *Influence of Islam on Indian Culture* (written in 1922 and published in 1936 when he was principal of Kaysatha Pathshala University College, Allahabad), and a multivolume history of India, which was sponsored by the post-Independence Indian Government.

40. **Aurobindo Ghosh** (1872-1950). Indian nationalist and one of India's most original philosophers. He expounded that cosmic salvation involved both an evolution and enlightenment; that, on the one hand, humanity evolved from matter to the present stage of development called mind and is now in the process of moving to a higher state of super mind or divinity; and, on the other hand, human enlightenment and energy come from above. His voluminous, extremely complex and sometimes chaotic literary output includes philosophically oriented poetry, plays and other works, titled *The Life Divine* (1940), *The Human Cycle* (1945), *The Ideal of Human Unity* (1949), *On the Vedas* (1956), *Collected Poems & Plays* (1942), *The Synthesis of Yoga* (1948), and *Savitri, A Legend and a Symbol* (1950).

41. **Vivekananda** (1863-1902). Hindu thinker, founder of the *Ramakrishna Order*, wrote and lectured extensively, propounding his philosophy of *Advaita Vedanta*, which he interpreted in a more rationalistic and activist vein and in an eclectic manner that appealed to those who professed various faiths. He was originally named Narendranath Datta.

42. **Paramhansa Sri Ramakrishna** (1836-86). A Bengali Brahmin, originally named Gadadhar Chatterji, who is perhaps the most famous Indian holy man of modern times; experienced ecstatic mystic visions as a child; experimented with many different religious practices, including *Tantra*, *Vedanta*, *Vaishnav* cults, Islam and Christianity; pronounced that all religions were directed by the same God along different paths. Though not a scholar, he was praised by his pupils for illuminating old truths, and his influence on those who visited him was profound. His wife, Sarada-Devi, and other pupils, such as Vivekananda and Keshab Chandra Sen, spread his ideas.

43. **Buddha**. Enlightened One; name applied specially to Sidhartha Gautama (c.560-c. 480 B.C), son of the rajah of the Sakya tribe (hence also called *Sakyamuni*, 'Sage of the Sakayas'). As a young man he left his home in Nepal and renounced the world; practiced extreme asceticism, preached, and became the founder of one of the great Asiatic religions, *Buddhism*. Originally practiced in India, the religion declined there by the 4th century A.D. It, however, diffused over China (which it reached in the 1st century), Japan, and central and S.E. Asia. There are two principal forms of Buddhism, 'the greater vehicle' (*Mahayana*), which became predominant in Japan, China, and Tibet, and 'The lesser vehicle' (*Hinayana*), which survives in Sri Lanka, Mayanamar and Thailand. Its principal doctrines are: that suffering is inseparable from existence, which is an evil; that the principal cause of suffering is desire; and that the suppression of desire, and consequently of suffering, can be obtained by discipline and ultimately rewarded by *nirvana*, which is extinction of individual existence and absorption into the Supreme Spirit.

44. **Johann Wolfgang von Goethe** (1749-1832). Germany's greatest poet, also scientist and statesman; author of many lyric poems, dramas, and novels, of which *Faust*, a dramatic poem, and the novels *The Sorrows of Young Werther* and *Wilhelm Meister* are the most famous.

45. **Johann Christoph Friedrich von Schiller** (1759-1805). German dramatist, lyric poet and historian; author of the dramas *Die Rauber*, *Don Carlos*, *Wallenstein*, *Maria Stuart*, *Die Jungfrau von Orleans*, *Die Braut von Messina*, *Wilhelm Tell*, etc.

46. **Ludwig van Beethoven** (1770-1827). German composer of Flemish descent; worked mainly in Vienna; contributed much to the development of the symphony and other musical forms; wrote 9

symphonies, an opera, many pianoforte sonatas, string quartets, and other orchestral and chamber music. During his later years he was stone-deaf.

47. **Mikhail Alexandrovich Bakunin** (1814-1876). Russian aristocrat, who became an anarchist and revolutionist; taught that man is basically good, but corrupted by existing institutions, and advocated violent overthrow of the state, the church and the economic system to permit men to start over again in voluntary associations of free individuals; was bitter critic of Marxism, which he saw as authoritarian.
48. **Fidel Castro** (1926 -). Revolutionary leader of Cuba, whose party wrested control of the country from the dictator Batista in 1959. Castro remained prime minister of Cuba upto 1976, when he became president and remains so till date. He believes that individuals can overcome most obstacles if they have the will to do so, and that revolution at home and abroad is an important mission worth pursuing. As he said, "The duty of every revolutionary is to make the revolution."
49. **Ho Chi Minh**, original name Nguyen That Thanh, also called Nguyen di Quoc (1890-1969). Founder of the Indochina Communist Party (1930) and its successor, the Viet-Minh (1941), and president from 1945 to 1969 of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (North Vietnam). As the leader of the Vietnamese national movement for nearly three decades, Ho was one of the prime movers of the post-World War II anticolonial movement in Asia. Among 20th century revolutionaries, Ho waged the longest and most costly battle against the colonial system of the great powers. One of its effects was to cause a grave crisis in the national life of the mightiest capitalist country, the United States. As a Marxist, Ho stands with the Yugoslav leader Tito as one of the progenitors of the 'national communism' that developed in the 1960s and (at least partially) with Communist China's Mao ZeDong in emphasizing the role of the peasantry in the revolutionary struggle. Most of Ho's writings are collected in the two-volume *Selected Works*, published in Hanoi in 1960.
50. **General Vo Nguyen Giap** (1912 - ?). Vietnamese military and political leader whose perfection of guerrilla as well as conventional strategy and tactics led to the Viet Minh victory over the French (and to the end of French colonialism in Southeast Asia) and later to the North Vietnamese victory over the American interventionists. He was a full member of the Politburo of the Vietnamese Communist Party until 1982. Giap was the author of *People's War, People's Army* (1961), a manual of guerrilla warfare based on his own experience.
51. **Naxalbari Movement**. The armed peasant revolution that rocked several states in eastern India during the late 1960s and erupts here and there even now was signaled by a peasant convention held on 18th March 1967 in Naxalbari, a remote village in the north of the Indian state of Bengal. (The same period also saw the emergence and subsidence of not a very dissimilar movement in Sindh, Pakistan, under the leadership of Comrade Salam Bukhari, for the liberation of villages from the stranglehold of feudals and big

- landlords.). The Naxalbari Movement declared the Indian independence as fake, India as semi-colony, and the ruling bourgeoisie as comprador; rejected the path of 'peaceful transition' through parliamentarism and upheld the path of peoples war; and set as its immediate goal the achievement of democratic dictatorship of peasants (as the leading force), workers, middle class, and the national bourgeoisie through guerilla warfare, building of peoples' army, creating liberated base areas in the countryside and capturing cities. The Movement was later transformed into a political party, 'The Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist),' which went fully underground when paramilitary forces were deployed into all struggle areas and a man-hunt was launched for its leaders in April 1970.
52. **Charles Robert Darwin** (1809-82). English naturalist, author of the *Origin of Species by means of Natural Selection* (1859), in which he propounded the theory that organisms tend to produce offspring varying slightly from their parents, that the process of *natural selection* tends to favour the survival of those best adapted to their environment, and that by the operation of these factors new species may arise widely differing from each other and from their ancestors. This theory is popularly known as *evolutionism*.
 53. **Shah Abdul Lateef Bhittai** (1689-1752). The immortal poet of Sindh, whose magnum opus *Risalo* is ranked among the greatest works of classical literature, all its verses having been set by himself to various *Raags* and *Ragnis* or *Surs* (melodies) of the sub-continental music. Venerated as a Soofi sage, his mausoleum at Bhittshah in Hyderabad district of Sindh is a place of pilgrimage for both Muslims and Hindus who come to pay homage from far and wide all the year round in their hundred thousands but specially during the three-day Mela in the Hijri month of Safar.
 54. **Abdul Wahab 'Sachal Sarmast'** (1729-1827). A Soofi poet in the Jalali tradition of Bayazid Beustami and Husain bin Mansoor al-Hilaj, who composed his poetry in many languages, mainly in Sindhi, Persian and Siraiki; his mausoleum at Draza in Khairpur district of Sindh is, like that of Shah Lateef, a place of pilgrimage.
 55. **Chayn Rai Sami** (1730-1850). A member of the triumvirate of the Sindhi classical poetry, the other two being Shah Lateef and Sachal Sarmast. Born at Shikarpur, Sindh, Sami used his verses, called *Salook-a*, to expound philosophy of the Vedas so as to reveal the underlying unity of all religions, particularly Hinduism and Islam.
 56. **Jalal al Din Rumi** (1207-73). Also called Maulavi; Persian mystic and poet revered both for his spiritual teachings and his poetic innovations; founded the Soofi order known as the *Whirling Dervishes*. In 1223 he began to teach his mystical doctrines and in 1244 came under the influence of Shams Tabriz, an itinerant Soofi. The earliest of his poetical works is a collection of lyrical odes named for Tabriz. The second is called the *Masnavi* (c. 1246-73), a long poem in six books consisting of fables and anecdotes, describing the soul's quest for

union with God. Rumi's poetic style is characterized by a depth of feeling and wealth of images drawn from daily life, often in disregard of the rigid rules of Persian rhetoric.

57. **Abdul Qadir Bedil Dehilvi**, (1644-1720). A renowned Muslim mystic, thinker and Persian writer of the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb's period; author of six poetical works, called masnavies, include *Muheete Azam Tilsime Hairat*, *Taure Ma'arfat*, *Irfan*, *Tanbih al-Mohusin* and a narrative masnavi. Prose writings: *Chahar Unser* and *Ruqa'at*, and a treatise titled *Talif al-Ahkam*, which has been lost.
58. **Sheykh Moslehaddin Saadi** (c. 1200-1292). Persian poet and prose writer. His poetical work *Bostan* ('Orchard', 1257) a didactic epic containing ethical maxims and transcendental speculation, and prose work *Gulistan* ('Rose Garden', 1258), a collection of humorous and ethical anecdotes are considered classics of Persian literature.
59. **William Shakespeare** (1564-1616). England's greatest dramatist and poet.
60. **Socrates** (469-399 B.C.). Greek philosopher, who was tried at Athens on the charge of corrupting the young by his teaching, and sentenced to death (by drinking hemlock); he left no writings, but his method and doctrines are preserved in the *Dialogues* of Plato.
61. **Guru Nanak** (1449-1539). Founder of Sikhism, who sought to combine Hindu and Muslim elements in a single religious creed and taught 'The unity of God, brotherhood of man, rejection of caste and the futility of idol worship.
62. **Bhagat Kabir** (1440-1518). Indian mystic and poet, who attempted to bridge or unite Hindu and Muslim thought and preached the essential unity of all religions and the essential equality of all men. He was a fore-runner of Sikhism, established by his disciple Nanak and also of a number of cults, the most important of which is *Kabirpanth*. He composed his verses in Hindi language, some of which are incorporated in the *Adi Granth*, the sacred book of the Sikhs; a book called *Bijak* (account book), containing his verses and observations was compiled by a disciple about 1570.
63. **Arthur Koestler** (1905-83). British-Hungarian political novelist and journalist; one of important voices in the 20th century literature and ideas; his writing exhibits an international and humanistic sensibility; author of *The Gladiators* (1935), *Darkness at Noon* (1940), *Arrival & Departure* (1943), *Insight & Outlook* (1949), *The Sleep walkers* (1959), *The Act of Creation*, etc.

64. **Quratulain Haider** (b. 1927). An eminent Urdu writer and journalist; her important publications include *Sitaron Se Age* ('Beyond Stars', short stories, 1947), *Mere Bhi Sanam Khane* ('My Own Idols', novel, 1949), *Safinae Ghame Dil* ('Barge of Heart's Pain,' novel, 1952), *Sheeshe Ka Ghar* ('House of Glass,' short stories, 1954), *Aag ka Darya* ('River of Fire,' novel, 1959), and *Patjhar ki Awaaz* ('Sounds of Autumn,' short stories, 1965), etc.
65. **Albert Camus** (1913-60). French novelist, dramatist, essayist and journalist, whose writings had a profound influence in the mid 20th century on the conscience of Western man. Both his personality and his work were deeply marked by the heroic struggles that shook European civilization during his lifetime. A man of great personal integrity he sought to define, not a dogma, but a way of life that would respect, in equal measure, the logic of heart, the logic of mind, and the limitations imposed on the individual by reality. He was awarded Nobel Prize for Literature in 1957.
66. **Swami Ramatirtha**, original name Teerath Rama (1873-1906). Hindu religious leader known for the highly personal and poetic manner in which he taught what he styled *Practical Vedanta*, using common experiences to illustrate the divine nature of man. For Ramatirtha any object whatever could be approached as a "mirror to God." While serving as professor of mathematics at Foreman Christian College, Lahore, his meeting with the Bengali ascetic, Vivekananda, strengthened his inclination toward religious study and desire to end his life in the propagation of the monotheistic system of *Advaita Vedanta*. He helped to found an Urdu journal, *Alif*, in which many of his articles on Vedanta appeared. He spent the rest of his life advocating a "wholesale liberation of mankind beginning with the personal liberation of the individual." His uniqueness was in the joy with which he propagated the otherwise traditional teachings of Vedanta.
67. **St. Augustine** (354-430). Theologian, son of a pagan father and a Christian mother (St. Monica); was for a time attracted by Manichaeism (a dualistic ascetic religious system that regarded existence as a conflict between the powers of light and the demons of darkness; founded by Mani, who lived in Persia in the 3rd century AD), but baptized as Chirstain in 387; became bishop of Hippo in north Africa in 391; defended Christianity against ancient religions and philosophies and contemporary heresies in numerous writings, of which the best known are the *Civitas Dei* ('The City of God') and the autobiographical *confessions*.
68. **Sir Mohammed Iqbal** (1877-1938). Indian poet and philosopher, known for his influential efforts to direct his fellow Muslims toward the establishment of a separate Muslim state, eventually realized in the country of Pakistan; knighted in 1922; author of many poetical works in Urdu and Persian languages, including *Naya Shivala* ('The New Altar'), *Shikwah* ('The Complaint'), *Jawab-e Shikwah* ('The Answer to the Complaint'), *Bange Dara* ('The Call of the Bell'), *Asrar-e Khudi* ('Secrets of the Self'), *Rumuz-e Bekhudi* ('Mysteries of

Selflessness), *Payam-e Mashriq* (Message of the East), *Zabur-e Ajam* (Persian Psalms), *Javednamah* (The Song of Eternity), *Bal-e Jibrial* (Gabriel's Wing), *Zarb-e Kalim* (the Blow of Moses), and *Armaghan-e Hijaz* (Gift of the Hijaz). His philosophical position was articulated in *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*. He argued that a rightly focused man should unceasingly generate vitality through interaction with the purposes of the living God. The dialectical quality of his thinking is expressed in his poetical works, which show his progressing from individualism to self surrender.

69. **Johannes Brahms** (1833-97). German composer of songs, symphonies, etc.
70. **Franz Liszt** (1811-86). Hungarian pianist and composer, whose best known compositions are his '*Hungarian Rhapsodies*.'
71. **Vincent Van Gogh** (1853-90). Dutch post-impressionist painter active chiefly in France. [Postimpressionism was a reaction against the limitations of Impressionism in visual arts. In general, Postimpressionisms led away from a naturalistic approach and toward two major movements of the early 20th century art that superseded it: Cubism and Fauvism, which sought to evoke emotion through colour and line.]
72. **Pierre Augusto Renoir** (1841-1919). French impressionist painter. [Impressionism was a major movement first in painting and later in music that developed chiefly in France during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Its adherents sought to express the general tone or impression produced by a scene or idea, departing from the strong, direct structure or themes of the earlier Romantics and Realists.]
73. **Amedeo Modigliani** (1884-1920). Italian painter and sculptor, who combined Renaissance and modern influences with a deep personal tenderness and melancholy.
74. **Andre Malraux** (1901-76). French novelist, revolutionary fighter, political organizer and an influential Gaullist minister of culture; author of *Man's Fate* (1933), *The Voices of Silence* (1953), *Anti-Memoirs* (autobiography, 1967), etc. Malraux's prose is tense, jerky and superbly metaphorical.
75. **Amrita Preetam**. (1919-2006). Eminent Indian poetess and novelist; writes in Punjabi language; has many honours to her credit, such as *Sahitya Akedami Award* (1956) and D. Litt. (Honorary) from Dehli University (1975). A sensitive writer, she espouses progressive causes. Her works include:- Poetry: *Lok Pead* ('The People's Pain'), *Pathar Geete* ('Gravel Stones'), *Lamian Vatan* ('Long Marches'), *Sunehe* ('Messages'), etc; Novels: *Jai Shiri*, *Dr. Dev*, *Pinjer* ('Skeleton'), *Alhana* ('The Nest'), etc.
76. **Carl Gustav Jung** (1875-1961). Swiss psychologist; originally a follower of *Sigmund Freud* (1856-1939); later founded school of *analytical psychology*, differing from psycho-analysis in its use of the concepts of unconscious and libido and in its advocacy of a complex classification of personality types.

