

must regretfully admit that he did not care what weapons he used.

To put it as briefly as possible, Sauda followed three methods in his satires. His greatest weapon is exaggeration. He magnifies the defects of his victims past all bounds—and things when exaggerated with point and wit become humorous, as in a caricature. In poems of this class, the touch with reality is never lost. With Sauda often an insignificant bacillus of truth grows and grows until it acquires portentous dimensions. His attitude here is humorous and playful, and his satire is successful; when he loses his temper or is at the mercy of his feelings, especially his religious feelings, he becomes abusive. In the third he rushes into the fanciful. He is now very ingenious, but not particularly amusing. These categories are not mutually exclusive. The first and the third moods run into each other generally. The second stands by itself and includes most of his failures.

9

Saуда's *qasidas* mark the summit of achievement in that *genre* in Urdu, and in the opinion of competent critics they are quite on a par with the works of great Persian panegyrist both in sound, movement, and the profusion of utterly impossible conceits. They leave us cold today, but it is impossible not to be struck by their lofty carriage. The following from the *nasib* of a *qasida* celebrating the advent of spring are magnificent and contain some fine personifications of natural objects.

تیغِ آردی نے کیا ملکِ خزاں متاصل	اٹھ گیا بہمن وئے کا چمنستاں سے عمل
دیکھ کر باغِ جہاں میں کرمِ عز و جل	سجدہ شکر میں ہے شاخِ ثمر دار ہر ایک
ڈال سے بات تلک بھول سے لیکر تا پھل	توت نامیہ لیتی ہے نباتات کا عرض
آب جو قطع لگی کرنے روش پر تحمل	واسطے خلعتِ نوروز کے ہر باغ کے بیج
پوشش چھینٹ قلم کار بہر دشت و جبل	بخشتی ہے گل نورست کی رنگ آمیزی
کارِ نقاشی مانی ہے دوم، وہ اول	عکس گلبن یہ زمین پر ہے کہ جس کے آگے
ہار پہناتے کو اشجار کے ہر سو بادل	تار بارش میں پرتے ہیں گہرائے تگرگ
لوٹے ہے سبزے پر از بس کہ ہو اپنے بے کل	بار سے آب رواں عکسِ ہجوم گل کے
شاخ سے گاؤں زمین کے ہے جو چھوٹے کوئل	جوشِ روئیدگی خاک سے کچھ دور نہیں
خطِ گلزار کے صفحے پہ طلالی جدول	آب جو گر دچمن لہو خورد شیر سے ہے

سایہ برگ ہے اس لطف سے ہر اک گل پر
ساغرِ گل میں جوں کیجے زمرہ کو حاصل

Gone is the sway of December and January from the garden;
The sharp edge of the sword of April has overrun the land of autumn.
Every fruit-bearing tree has bowed itself down in grateful prostration,
Beholding how graciously God has showered bounties on the world,
From the branch to the leaves, and from the flower to the fruit,
The power of growth extends its range in the vegetable world.
For the robe of honour on the new year's day,
The rivulet is busy cutting velvet on the grass.
The rainbow hues of the new-blown rose
Are dressing hills and dales in printed chintz.
The nightingale's bewitching shadow on the ground
Surpasses in beauty a masterpiece painted by Māni.
The clouds sailing here and there, string pearly hails on the threads of vernal
showers
To bedeck with garlands long rows of trees,
The stream rolls on the verdure in extreme restlessness,
Weighed down with the shadow of the profusion of flowers.
No wonder if on account of the extraordinary fertility of the soil
The branch (horn) of the bull supporting the earth on its horns should
produce a bud.
The rivulet round the garden, glittering in the light of the sun,
Draws a golden margin on the page of the garden.
The shadow of the leaves falls in such ways on every flower
That it presents the picture of an emerald dissolved in a diamond chalice.

10

Mir (Muhammad Taqī Mir) has left a full-length account of all but the last thirty years of his life in *Zikr-e-Mir*. It does not give his date of birth, and it is only recently that the discovery of a manuscript copy of his poems, in the library of the Rāja of Mahmūdābād, has enabled us to establish conclusively that he was born in 1722 in Akbarābād⁸ and died at an advanced age in Lucknow on 20 September 1810. His father, Mir 'Alī Muttaqī, a religious man with a considerable following, died when Mir was still a boy, and he was brought up by Sayyid Amānullah, one of his father's intimate friends and disciples. Some three years after his death, Mir left for Delhi at the age of seventeen or so. Here he was granted a stipend of one rupee a day by Amīr-ul-Umarā Samsām-ud-Daula; but on his death, during Nādir Shāh's invasion (1739), Mir was forced to go back to Akbarābād to his family.

The treatment accorded to him by his relatives greatly disappointed him. 'Those who had treated him as the collyrium of their eyes',⁹ writes Mīr, now cold-shouldered him, and when he left for Delhi the following year, to stay with his foster-uncle, *Khān-e-Ārzū*, his foster-brother carried his enmity so far as to write to the latter 'never to countenance a mischief-monger like Mīr'¹⁰. In his autobiography, Mīr brings out to the full the pathos of the situation, but is discreetly silent about the cause of this estrangement and hostility. It is believed that what precipitated his departure from Akbarābād and ranged his family against him was a clandestine love-affair with one of his relatives. Whatever the reason or reasons, Mīr suffered much during this period. Poverty, disappointment in love, and the indignities heaped on him all worked on his hypersensitive mind, and the result was a temporary madness.

Khān-e-Ārzū was far too generous to disown Mīr, but he is said to have bitterly rebuked him, and their relations were far from happy. In *Āb-e-Hayāt*, Āzād ascribes their growing estrangement to their religious views. Ārzū, he writes, was a Hanafite and Mīr a Shi'ite. But the real cause was probably the family scandal, although the bitterness may have been accentuated by their religious differences.

In the 'Introduction' to *Kulliyāt-e-Mīr*, M. 'Abdul Bārī has pointed out the disparity in the account of *Khān-e-Ārzū* as given by Mīr in *Nikāt-ush-Shu'ara* (1751) and *Zikr-e-Mīr*.¹¹ In the former he lauds his uncle as a man and scholar, and is proud to call him his teacher. In the latter, written after Ārzū's death (1756), he rakes up the old grievances against him, disowns *Khān-e-Ārzū* as his teacher and writes of having 'read a few books with some persons in the city'.¹² I agree with Āsī that Mīr's reticence in the earlier volume was dictated by considerations of mere prudence. He had much to fear *Khān-e-Ārzū* alive, for the latter could any time justify his severity to him by disclosing the real cause of their estrangement. He had nothing to fear from *Khān-e-Ārzū* dead. He, therefore, chose to expatiate on his good points and his indebtedness to him in the earlier volume, giving full vent to his grievances in the second.

11

Like other poets of the day, Mīr's first choice was Persian, but he was persuaded to take up Urdu instead. His rise into prominence was rapid. After his estrangement from his uncle, he experienced a quick change of patrons either on account of the extreme political instability of the day, or his own egoism and vanity. His troubles culminated after the sack of

Delhi at Nādir Shāh's order. When he returned to Delhi after the defeat of the Mahrattas, he was profoundly grieved at the desolation of the city, and has given a poignant expression to it in some of his *ghazals*.

Mīr's life enters on its second phase with his invitation to Lucknow by Āsaf-ud-Daula. He was held in high esteem, and must have been a constant companion of the Nawab, as is proved by his several realistic *masnavīs* on the latter's marriage and his hunting expeditions. These poems show that Mīr was much more of a court poet than is generally conceded.

But Mīr was never quite happy in Lucknow, despite his complete freedom from financial worries and the high honour in which he was held. The reason was an excessive nostalgia for Delhi, engendered by his early memories. He despised Lucknow—the haven where at long last he had found peace, security, and honour. The real reason for his dissatisfaction lay more in his temperament than in his yearnings for home. Mīr was a man who could not be perfectly happy anywhere. Egotistical to a fault, he found it increasingly difficult to get on with his patrons. He imagined insults or slights where none were intended, and was rude and brusque. It must be said to the credit of his patrons that they treated him with uniform courtesy, and put up with his vagaries with good humour and forbearance. But much of this was lost on him. Once in a fit of sulks he went so far as to withdraw from Āsaf-ud-Daula's court, but was recalled and provided for by his successor.

12

As a man Mīr was antisocial and cynical. A confirmed egoist, he was incapable of seeing merit in others, and frequently resorted to a bluntness which lost him his friends and admirers and incensed his enemies. His irritability was not due to the fact that his talent had not been duly recognized, or that he had not been adequately rewarded. In Delhi and Lucknow he had actually lived in a blaze of reputation. Financially, he was far from secure in Delhi, and was throughout dogged by insecurity on the death or downfall of his patrons. Yet the fact remains that he was, for the most part, well looked after. He was proffered help by the King which he rejected on account of his vanity. He rated himself so high that all that was done for him in Lucknow seemed to him to be altogether inadequate to his extraordinary merit. Hence his sullen broodings, his pathetic complaints, and his boorish manners.

Mīr's vanity is not a figment of Āzād's fancy, as his admirers generally

think; it is an indubitable fact. Let us, for the time being, ignore the anecdotes related about him by Āzād, and confine ourselves to the evidence provided by his works. Of the right to self-praise which Persian and Urdu poets have arrogated to themselves, there are very few who have made a more lavish use than Mīr. This self-complacency is only equalled by his attacks on others. He has pilloried poet after poet in *Nikāt-ush-Shu'ara*, and anyone who succeeds in getting a good word from him must be a fortunate man indeed. He is a judge with a black cap on, sentencing his victims to summary execution, with no possibility of reprieve.¹³ In a fit of egregious vanity, he once compared himself to a dragon in *Ajgar Nāmā* and his contemporary poets to reptiles and vermin who are scorched to death by its poisonous breath. For once, this was more than they could bear. There was a furore when the poem was read out, and a rising poet bearded him with an impromptu composition, containing the line:

حیدر کرار نے وہ زور بخشا ہے نشانہ
ایک دم میں دو کرول اژدہ کے کچے حیر کر

O Nisār! Haidar, the Mighty, has endowed me with such powers that I can rend asunder the jaws of the dragon.

Nor was Mīr unconscious of this weakness, for he refers to it himself in his poetry occasionally:

اتنی بھی بد مزاجی ہر لمحہ تیر تم کو
الجھاؤ ہے زمیں سے جھگڑا ہے آسمان سے

Fie upon you, Mīr! that you should carry your bad manners so far As to be at loggerheads with the sky and the earth.

And:

حالت تو یہ کہ مجھ کو غموں سے نہیں فراغ
دل سوزشِ زردنی سے جلتا ہے جوں چراغ
میں تہ تمام چاک ہے سارا جگر ہے داغ
ہے نام مجلسوں میں مرا تیر بے دماغ
از بس کہ کم دماغی نے پایا ہے اشتہار

The fact is I am not free from worries for a single moment; My heart burns with inward sorrow like a lamp. My bosom is torn with pain and my heart seared with grief; In public assemblies I am known as Mīr the ill-tempered. Such is the unsavoury reputation I have acquired for my short temper.

The chief quality of Mīr's mind is his realism. This quality is temperamental and marks him off from Sauda for whom the real is often merged in the exaggerated and the fanciful. The mirror he holds up to life is not a normal one; it is predisposed to reflect whatever is sad and distressing; but with this reservation, he is usually a true chronicler of his moods, feelings, and susceptibilities. Of course, he is not free from the false taste of his age, there being a great deal in his *ghazals* that is a concession to the reigning taste. Nevertheless, the best of him is a true picture of the various states of his mind.

As regards the emotional experiences which form the warp and woof of his mind, they are predominantly sad and pathetic. He is the best representative in Urdu poetry of the passivity and wistfulness we associate with the East—an attitude considered the fittest theme for lyrical poetry by some, and voted as morbid by others. Mīr was frail, nervous, resigned, and reacted with extraordinary force to the accidents and vicissitudes of life. For him the course of life and love did not run smooth, and his love lyrics are an expression of the grief, disappointments, and pathetic yearnings consequent to it.

Mīr's gloom is not all personal; it also reflects time's sad decay. As such his poetry is an unusually sad man's commentary on his own defeated life and the decay and extinction of what was most dear to him in the life and associations of the Imperial City. Here are some of his reflections on the departed glory of Delhi and the reign of terror that followed it:

جس سر کو غرور آج ہے یاں تاجِ درجی کا
کل اس پر ہیں شور ہے پھر توہ گری کا

The head that is proud of kingship today,
Tomorrow there is a cry of lamentations about him.

آفاق کی منزل سے گیا کون سلامت
اسبابِ نثاراہ میں یاں ہر سفری کا

No one has gone safe from the caravanserai of the world,
Not a traveller but has been robbed of his belongings in this journey.

ٹنگ گورِ غریباں کی کر سیر کہ دنیا میں
ان ظلم رسیدوں پر کیا کیا نہ ہوا ہوگا

Spare some time to pay a visit to the tombs of these luckless persons;
Who knows what afflictions they might have been subjected to in their life.

کیا کیا عزیز دوست ملے تیرے خاک میں نادان یاں کسو کو کسی کا بھی عزم ہوا

O Mir, how many friends of thine have gone the way to dusty death,
Fool! hath anyone ever grieved at another's death!

اس موج خیز دہریں ہم کو قضا نے آہ پانی کے بلبیلے کی طرح سے مٹا دیا

In this tempestuous world Fate breaks us like a bubble

دیکھو نہ چشم کم سے معمورہ جہاں کو بنتا ہے ایک گھریاں سو صورتیں بگڑ کر

Do not be misled by the prosperous look of the world;
A house flourishes here after being ruined a hundred times.

وے لوگ تم نے ایک ہی شوخی میں کھو دیئے پیدا کیے تھے چرخ نے جو خاک چھان کر

By one wanton act you have destroyed these august persons
Whom the sky produced by long sifting the dust.

His *Shaihr Ashob* also sheds light on the deplorable contemporary scene and should be studied side by side with Sauda's poems on the subject.

15

Mir's style is simple and bare even to nakedness. There are some minds that cannot contemplate a thing without trailing a cloud of images. Mir shows little of this imaginative fertility. He is neither allusive nor subtle. Whatever the nature of his thoughts, he can be expected to be straightforward. This simplicity or limpidity, this contemplation of a thing without a host of associative images, is the chief feature of his mind and distinguishes him from a poet like Ghālib. He is remembered today for such lines as the following:

کہا میں نے کتنا ہے گل کا ثبات کھلی نے یہ سن کر تبسم کیا

I inquired how long is the life course of a rose;
The bud heard it and broke into a smile.

شام سے کچھ بٹھا سا رہتا ہے دل ہوا ہے چراغ مفلس کا

It feels cheerless and depressed with the coming of the evening;
My heart is like a pauper's dimly-burning lamp.

داغ فراق و حسرت وصل آرزوئے شوق میں ساتھ زیر خاک بھی ہنگامہ لے گیا

Pangs of separation, yearnings for union, intense passion,
Behold; what a tumult I took with me into the grave!

یہ تو ہم کا کارخانہ ہے یاں وہی ہے جو اعتبار کیا

This world is full of illusions;
We behold here what we imagine.

دل مجھے اس گلی میں لے جا کر اور بھی خاک میں ملا لایا

By luring me into the street of the beloved,
My heart has made me even more miserable than before.

آگ تھے ابتداء عشق میں ہم اب ہوئے خاک انتہا ہے یہ

In the earlier stages of love I was all afire,
I am now all dust and ashes—such is the end of my love.

دلی کے نہ تھے کوپے اوراق مصور تھے جو شکل نظر آئی تصویر نظر آئی

The streets of Delhi were not mere streets, they were like a painter's album;
Every figure I saw there was a model of perfection.

میرے تغیر حال پر مت جا اتفاقات ہیں زمانے کے

Do not wonder at the depth of my misery,
Such are the ups and downs of life!

ترے فراق میں جیسے خیال مفلس کا گئی ہے فکر پریشاں کہاں کہاں میری

Like the vain musings of a pauper, how far and wide have my thoughts
wandered in the loneliness of separation from you!

بوے گل یا نواے بلبل تھی عمر افسوس کیا شتاب گئی

Was it the fragrance of a flower or the song of a nightingale?
How quickly have the days of my life passed!

Mir tried his hand at several other *genres* but with little success. His satires are personal and fully as vulgar and censorious as Sauda's. His erotic *masnavis*, commonplace both in form and substance, are failures. Crudely tragic, they show a penchant for unhealthy themes and homosexual love.

Of a much higher order, and unique in their own way, are *Dar Hajv-e-Khāna-e-Khud* ('A Skit on my House'), *Dar Hajv-e-Khāna-e-Khud kih ba Sabāb-e-Bārān Kharāb shuda būd* ('A Skit on my House that had suffered badly during the Rainy Season') and *Narsang Nāmā*. They stand in a class apart in Urdu poetry and, as the taste for what is natural and really pathetic develops, they will come more and more into notice. They are all autobiographical, the first two describing the discomforts of his humble dwelling, and the third giving a vivid account of a sojourn in a dismal and bleak country in the company of a nobleman. Here, for once, Mir is an amused spectator of his own mishaps and discomforts. In their blend of humour, pathos and realism they represent the high watermark of humour in the poetry of the classical period.

Since humour in Mir has gone unnoticed, I give below two passages from *Narsang Nāmā*, the concluding part of the *Skit on my House in the Rainy Season*, and a few verses from *Dar Bayān-e-murghbāzān* ('About Cock-fighters').

جو کہا ان نے ہم گئے سب مان	رہنا بھٹیاری کے غنیمت جان
میں نے اظہار اپنا حال کیا	کچھ پکانے کا جب سوال ہوا
زندگانی مری ہے ان کے ہاتھ	یاں جو لائے ہیں مجھ کو اپنے ساتھ
صبح کا صبح مجھ کو شام کا شام	پہنچے ہے ان کے رو برو سے طعام
کچھ رہا سو اٹھا دیا میں نے	جو کچھ آیا سو کھا لیا میں نے
اور بولی کہ واہ صاحب واہ	سن کے اک دل سے کھینچی ان نے آہ
چار پانچ آدمی ہیں پاس کھڑے	ہم نے جانا کہ آدمی ہو بڑے
ہم کچھ ان کے سب سے پاویں گے	کچھ یہ کھاویں گے کچھ کھلاویں گے
ہو گدا جیسے شاہ عالم تم	سو تو نکلے ہو کورے بالم تم
دیکھئے کس طرح سے گزرتے رات	کھانے پینے کی کچھ نہیں ہے بات

صدتے ہیں ایسے ہی اُتارے کے
میں کہا مہترانی جی کچھ لو
سو گئے سخت گھر ہمارے کے
مجھ سے آزرده دل نہ اتنی ہو
بعضے کھاتے ہیں کچھ کھلاتے ہیں
بعضے مجھ سے بھی آتے جاتے ہیں

It was nothing short of a godsend to find accommodation in an inn kept by a hostess, and I forthwith accepted all her conditions. When she asked what food she was to cook for me, I explained that my food was supplied by the nobleman. I served. I get my food morning and evening from him. Whatever is sent I partake of, and what is left over I send back. Hearing this she heaved a deep sigh and said: I took you for a man of rank with these five or six persons standing around you. But you have turned out to be a penniless coxcomb; you are as poor as Emperor Shāh 'Ālam. You don't intend to eat or drink, and I don't know how I shall pass the night. How very unlucky to have lodgers like you! Alas, on what evil days my inn has fallen! I said: My dear lady, here's something to console you; and don't take against me so much. Some come to eat, others to feed others, and still others who are like me.

اور آگے گئے تو تھا بازار	اس میں بنیوں کی تھیں دکانیں چار
ایک کے پاس دال کچھ آٹا	تس کو بھی مکھیوں نے تھا چاٹا
ایک کے ساواں اور تھوڑے چنے	چھبڑوں میں خاک دھول ایک کنے
جو تھا باقی رہا سو تھا کنگال	نانوں کے کہتے تھے اسے بقال
ایک کنجڑے کے چار گٹھی پیاز	تس پہ اس کو ہزار خنجر و ناز
ایک دوکان تھی پساری کی	ان نے ہم لوگوں سے بھی یاری کی
اس سے جا کر جو مانگئے ہلدی	زر دمٹی کو باندھ دے جلدی
دیکھ کر کچھ کہو تو وہ یہ کہے	بس تم اس بستی میں میاں جی ہے
یاں جو کچھ ہے چلن سو دیتا ہوں	میں بھی پیسے لگا کے لیتا ہوں
مانگو اس سے جو مرچ یا دھنیا	دیوے نچا وہی بتا دھنیا
اس میں دو دانے اور سب کتکر	دیوے کاغذ میں ہاتھ لبا کر
لونگ چورا نفر سے منگو آیا	لال مرچیں کٹی ہوئی لایا

A little way off there was a bazar with four or five shops of banyas. One of them had some pulses and flour that was fly-blown. The other had nothing but

dust in his baskets. Another had four or five bulbs of onions, and thought no end of himself on that account. There was another grocer and I made friends with him. If I asked him to give me some turmeric, he straightaway packed some yellow dust in a piece of paper and gave it to me. When I remonstrated with him, he retorted: 'This is no place for a man like you. I give what's in demand here; and mind you, I don't get these things gratis; I pay for them.' If I asked him to give me chillis or coriander seeds, the fine fellow would give me something that had two or three seeds, the rest all gravel. I sent my servant to bring some ground clover and what he brought was chillis.

بہم سبھیوں میں یہ مصلحت ٹھہری
 کسوٹی میں بیٹھ کر نکلیں
 ہے کنارہ یہاں سے کرنا خوب
 خاطر میں یہ حرف ٹھہرایا
 سر پہ بھائی کے چار پائی تھی
 اس کا سارا فگار کا ندھا تھا
 کوئی سر پر اجباغ لے نکلا
 میندھ کے مارے کوئی لوٹ چلا
 ایک نے سر کی کا کیا گھوپا
 پائے پیٹی گلے میں ڈال لئے
 اور پایا جو کچھ سمیٹ لیا
 الگنی سب کے ہاتھ میں دے کر
 تاکہ پہنچیں کہیں شتابی سے
 جیسے کنجر کہیں کو جاتے ہیں
 ہنس کے بے اختیار وہ بولا
 بارے اک بھائی کے گھر آئے ہم
 نہیں ملتا ہے گھر بہ قدر حجاب
 طور پر اپنے بود و باش کریں
 جب اجاگے پہ آ کے چھت ٹھہری
 آؤ اب چھوڑ کر یہ گھر نکلیں
 دب کے مرنے سے ڈوب مرنے خوب
 سن کے ہراک کے جی میں در آیا
 گٹھری کپڑوں کی میں اٹھائی تھی
 بوجھ کپڑوں کا جن نے باندھا تھا
 ساتھ کوئی چسراغ لے نکلا
 چھاج کی کوئی اوٹ لے کے چلا
 منہ پہ پھیلنے کو ایک نے روپا
 ایک نے چھینکے حال حال لئے
 ایک نے بوریا پلیٹ لیا
 اپنا اسباب گھر سے ہم لے کر
 صفت کی صفت نکلی اس خرابی سے
 میسر جی اس طرح سے آتے ہیں
 جس نے اس وقت آنکھ کو کھولا
 سن کے اس بات کو نرائے ہم
 تب سے رہنے کو اب تلک ہیں خراب
 جس میں خوش یک نفس معاش کریں

When in return for the rent I paid for the house, I could have the roof only, we thought it advisable to leave the house, using the thatch as rafters. We deemed it preferable to quit the house, as it was better to be drowned than to be buried alive. The idea struck us as reasonable, and we decided to follow it. I, therefore, lifted the bundle of clothes, and my brother carried the charpai on his head. He who was carrying the bundle of clothes suffered from stiff shoulders. One was carrying a lamp, another a cup. One of us held the winnowing-fan over his head to protect himself from the rain, and another was floundering in the rain. Another covered his face with a sieve, and still another set a door-screen over his head. Another quickly took up the network for hanging food and hung the legs and sides of a bedstead round his neck. Another wrapped himself in a mat, and managed to hold whatever he could. Carrying our baggage and holding a clothes-line for fear of being drowned, we left the house in single file to reach some place to shelter. And as we filed out in this ludicrous trim, we looked like a band of gypsies on its way to a new encampment. And all those who saw us then smiled and tittered. At this we felt ashamed, and at last arrived at the house of a brother. Since then we have been in great trouble for want of residence; for we have not been able to get a house, even as small as a bubble, in which we could live comfortably for a breathing-while in our own way.

مرغ بازوں کو ہے قیامت جوش
 مرغ رطے ہیں ایک دو لائیں
 ان نے پر جھاڑے یہ پھڑکنے لگے
 وہ جو سیدھا ہوا تو یہ ہیں کج
 مرغ کی ایک پر فشانی ہے
 ایک بولے کہ کاری آئی چوٹ
 جھکتے ہیں آپ کو تر اتے ہیں
 ایک کے مونہہ میں مرغ کی منقار
 منہ پہ آیا جو کچھ وہ بجنے لگے
 جس کو دیکھو تو مرغ در آغوش
 سینکڑوں ان سفیہوں کی باتیں
 ان نے کی نوک یہ کڑکنے لگے
 ساتھ اس کے بدلتے ہیں سچ و جج
 ان کی صدر رنگ بدزبانی ہے
 ایک کہتا ہے بس گیا اب لوٹ
 لائیں گویا کہ یہ ہی کھاتے ہیں
 ایک کے ب پہ ناسزا گفتار
 تیجھی نظروں سے سب کو تکنے لگے

The cock-fighters are wild with excitement;
 And everyone of them is holding a cock in his arms.
 The cocks exchange one or two kicks,
 And a hundred ejaculations by these fools.

The cocks flap their wings and these twitch convulsively,
They hit with their beaks and these vociferate and shout.
If the cocks stand erect, these bend low,
And change their position and posture according as the cocks do.

The cocks once flap their wings,
And they make a hundred vulgar remarks.
One of them says: it has received a knock-down blow,
Another, that it will lick the dust.
They bend down and seem to parry the attacks;
One would think it is they and not the cocks that are receiving the kicks.
One of them is sucking the beak of a cock,
And another indulging in vulgar remarks.
They blurt out what's uppermost in their minds,
And look daggers at one another.

17

For the past three quarters of a century it has been customary among critics to approach Mīr with bated breath and on tiptoe. He gets nothing but praise, pressed down and brimming over. His historical position apart, it is doubtful if Mīr as a poetic genius deserves that unctuous flattery, wrongly called criticism. There are several methods of estimating that rarest of all qualities—genius. According to one standard, the greatness of a poet may be measured by the lines of supreme beauty in him. This is pre-eminently a sound test, for it is only a really great poet who can give you lines of outstanding beauty. Judged by this standard, Mīr does not fare badly. We hear of his seventy-two lancets or poignant lines, selected by his contemporaries. We do not know, today, which they are. But it is possible to select probably a larger number of lines which will be accepted even by fastidious critics as meriting distinction.

But these lines of supreme beauty are few and far between in his unusually voluminous works. We expect to meet in great poets not only supreme moments of poetry; we expect them to be fairly frequent too. At any rate, we expect all notable poets to keep to a certain standard, or, at least not to fall as low as the very lowest. An earlier critic who had more courage than we have, said: 'His high is very high and his low is very low. This dictum needs the necessary amendment that he is very rarely at his best.

18

The last of the famous quartette, Khvāja Mīr Dard was born in 1719, in Delhi, and died on 7 January 1785. Mysticism ran in the family; for he was descended on the father's side from Khvāja Bahā-ud-Dīn Naqshbandī, and on the mother's side from Hazrat Ghaus-e-Āzam. His father Khvāja Nāsir 'Andalīb, a poet and the writer of *Nāla-e-Āndalīb* (a voluminous work on mysticism and theology in Persian), had held a high position at court, but had retired from service to devote himself to a life of meditation. Dard studied theology with his father, and learnt the art of poetry from Khān-e-Ārzū. For some time he was in the army; but he gave it up to lead a life of retirement and study and, at thirty-nine, on his father's death, succeeded him as the head of the sanctuary.

The *ziyārat* in which he resided was outside the rampart, west of Pahār Ganj, later known as Baraf Khāna. During Nādir Shāh's invasion, he received an invitation from a member of the royal family to move into the city, but he stuck to his place. Later, he moved into the house especially constructed for his reception in Kūcha Chelan. Dard was well versed in music, and is said to have composed *Khayāls*, *thumrīs*, and *dhurpads*. This tradition is supported by the following line in his younger brother, Mīr Asar's *Masnāvī-e-Khāb-o-Khayāl*:

حضرت درد کے بنائے خیال کیا کوں کیا کریں ہیں دل کا حال

The beautiful *khayāls* composed by Dard—

How can I tell you how profoundly moving they are!

and the following of his own verses:

بلند و پست سب ہوا رہیں اپنی نگاہوں میں برابر ساز میں ہوتا ہے جوں سُر زیر اور ہم کا

The high and low are equal in my eyes,

Just as the high and low notes are equal in a musical instrument.

خلق میں ہیں پر جدا سب خلق سے رہتے ہیں ہم تال کی گنتی سے باہر سخن رُپاک میں ہم

I am of the world, yet live apart from others,

Very much as the *sam* [final beat] in the measure called *Rūpak* is outside the musical time.

Music being forbidden in Islam, Dard has appended the following apology for his weakness:

I do not put music so high as do other mystics, nor do I rate it so low as the