A DANCE OF SPARKS

Imagery of Fire in Ghalib's Poetry

ANNEMARIE SCHIMMEL

Ghalib Academy
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IN MEMORIAM

DR ZAKIR HUSAIN

FOREWORD

The four articles contained in this book—with the exception of the Introduction—were developed out of talks given in connection with the Ghâlib Centenary in 1969 in Karachi and Delhi. The last article, *Poetry and Calligraphy,* was published without footnotes, and in a slightly different form, in *Pakistan Quarterly* XXII.

The articles constitute an attempt to offer the reader some of the theoretical background necessary for a proper evaluation of Ghâlib's poetry.

ANNEMARIE SCHIMMEL

Cambridge, Mass.
May 1974

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTES, ABBREVIATIONS

Ghālib's works are quoted in the Lahore edition, 17 volumes, 1969.

U = *Dīvān-i Ghālib*, Urdu, ed. Ḥamīd Aḥmad Khān (quoted in pages).

IV — *Ghazaliyāt-i Fārsī*, ed. Sayyid Wazīr ul-Ḥasan ᶜAbidī (quoted according to numbers : IV Nr. 219).

Q = *Qaṣā'id u mathnawīhā-yi Fārsī* (Vol. V), ed. Ghulām Rasūl Mehr, both *qaṣīdas* (Q) and *mathnawīs* (M) quoted with Roman numbers Q III, M VI.

Qit = *Qiṭᶜāt, Rubāᶜiyāt, tarkīb-band, tarjīᶜband, mukhammas* (Vol. VI) ed. Ghulām Rasūl Mehr, quoted Qit. Nr. 19; R — Rubāᶜī Nr. . .

S = *Sabadchīn* (Vol. VII), ed. Sayyid Wazīr ul-Ḥasan ᶜAbidī (quoted according to pages).

The XVIth volume of these publications (*maṭbūᶜāt-i Majlis-i yādgār-i Ghālib*) contains an introduction into Ghālib's work : Sayyid Fayyāz Maḥmūd, *Ghālib. A Critical Introduction.*

Main studies in Western languages :

Ralph Russell—Khurshīdul Islam, *Ghālib, Life and Letters*, London 1969, Vol. I.

Dr. ᶜĀrifshāh C. Sayyid Gīlānī, *Ghālib. His Life and Persian Poetry*, Karachi 1962.

A. Bausani, *The Position of Ghālib in the History of Urdu and Indo-Persian Poetry*, in: *Der Islam* 34/1959.

id. *La Poesia di Ghālib*, in: *Orientalia Romana* 39/3, Rome 1969.

An excellent introduction is: *Ghālib. The Poet and his Age* Edited by Ralph Russell, London 1972.

Every History of Urdu Literature, from Garcin de Tassy through Saksena and Bailey to Muḥammad Ṣādiq contains a more or less detailed account of Ghālib's life and work.

Translations of his verses into English have been attempted by a considerable number of Indian, Pakistani, and Western writers; none of them is, however, fully satisfactory owing to the immense difficulties of Ghālib's style. The most successful attempt seems, to me : *Ghalib. Selected Poems*, translated with an introduction by Aḥmad Ali, I.S. M.E.O., Rome 1969.

A German translation by the present writer :

Woge der Rose, Woge des Weins, Verlag der Arche, Zürich 1971.

Beginning with Ḥālī's *Yādgār-i Ghālib*, the literature about our poet produced during the last 75 years is extremely vast. Many scholars of India and Pakistan have devoted their lives to the study of his life and work; we may mention among them Mālik Rām, S. M. Ikrām, Ghulām Rasūl Mehr, Imtiyāz ᶜAlī ᶜArshī, Khalīfa ᶜAbdul Hakīm, Yūsuf Husain Khān, Āl-i Aḥmad Suroor, Ebadet Brelwi,

Āfāq Husain, to single out only the most prolific writers in this field.

Abbreviations of oft-quoted poetical sources :

Amīr Khusrau, *Dīvān*, ed. Saʿīd Nafīsī / M. Darvish, Tehran 1343 sh.

Armaghān-i Pak (AP), ed. S. M. Ikrām, Karachi 2nd ed. 1953.

ᵃAṭṭār, Farīduddīn, *Dīvān*, ed. Saīd Nafīsī, Tehran 1339 sh.

ᶜAṭṭār, Farīduddīn, MT = *Manṭiq uṭ-ṭair*, ed. M. J. Mashkūr, Tehran s.d.

Bedil, *Dīvān*, lith. Bombay 1302 h.

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Dard, Khwajā Mīr, *Urdu Dīvān*, ed. Khalīl ur-Raḥmān Dāʾūdī, Lahore 1962.

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Fānī, Muḥsin, *Dīvān*, ed. G. L. Tikku, Tehran 1342 sh.

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Jāmī, *Dīvān-i Kāmil*, ed. Hāshim Riḍā, Tehran 1341 sh. (quoted: number of *ghazals*).

Kalīm, *Dīvān*, ed. by H. Partav Baiḍāʾī, Tehran 1336 sh.

Kashmīr: Aṣlaḥ Mirzā, *Tadhkira-yi shuᶜārā-yi Kashmīr*, ed. Sayyid Hussamuddin Rashdī, Karachi 1346 sh. *Kashmīr A*: the first volume by Aslah, *Kashmīr I-IV* the *takmila* volumes composed by H. Rashdī.

Khāqānī, *Dīvān* = *Dīvān-i Khāqānī-yi Shīrwānī*, ed. Ḍiyāʾuddīn Sajjādī, Tehran 1338 sh.

Naẓīrī, *Dīvān*, ed. Maẓāhir Muṣaffā, Tehran 1340 sh.

Rūmī, Maulānā Jalāluddīn, *Dīvān-i kabīr*, ed. Badīᶜuzzamān Furūzanfar, 10 vols., Tehran 1336 sh. ff.

Rūmī, Maulānā Jalāluddīn, *Mathnawī*, ed. and translated by R. A. Nicholson, 8 vols., London 1925-1940.

Rūmī, *Selected Poems: Selected Poems from the Dīvān-i Shams-i Tabrīz*, ed. and translated by R. A., Nicholson, Cambridge 1898.

Saᶜdī, *Kulliyāt*, ed. M. A. Furūghī, 4 vols.: I *Gulistān*, II *Būstān*, III *ghazaliyāt*, IV *qaṣāʾid*, Tehran 1342 sh.

Ṭālib-i Āmulī, *Dīvān — Kulliyāt-i ashᶜār*, ed. Ṭāhirī Shihāb, Tehran 1346 sh.

ᶜUrfī, *Kulliyāt*, ed. Ghulām Ḥusain Jawāhirī, Tehran s.d.

All the other sources are quoted in the text and the footnotes.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

There are other good poets, too, on earth —
But they say that Ghālib's measure is something different!

ہیں اور بھی دنیا میں سخنور بہت اچھے
کہتے ہیں کہ غالب کا ہے انداز بیاں اور

It would be difficult to find a Pakistani or Indian Muslim who would not agree with this statement of Mirzā Asadullāh Ghālib—a poet whose verses have become part and parcel of everyday speech, are quoted like proverbs and sung in different tunes, and have formed a source of inspiration for later poets as well as for painters and calligraphers.

Ghālib's life almost coincides with the final breakdown of the Mughal Empire in India, that means, with the breakdown of the political and economic system of the Muslim upper classes who had been ruling India for more than 800 years.

Delhi, since 1206 the proud capital of a rich and expanding empire, became the target of attacks and pillaging after the death of Aurangzeb in 1707. Under Aurangzeb's weak successors internal enemies like the Mahratta and Sikh proved as disastrous for the remnants of the Mughal Empire and its capital as the Muslim neighbours, whether these came as conquerors like Nādir Shāh of Iran in 1739, or as 'helpers' like his successor Aḥmad Shāh Abdālī Durrānī. The result of the advent of their soldiers was always the same. Struggles between the different factions at the Mughal court added to the tragedy.

Meanwhile, the British and French gained a foothold in India. They were active first in the southern parts of the sub-continent which had never, or only for a limited time, been under Mughal supremacy. With the Battle of Plassey in 1757, the British East India Company got hold of an important district in Bengal, the core of their ensuing activities. The hapless Mughal ruler Shāh ʿĀlam II 'Āftāb' was blinded by the chief of the Rohillas in 1787, and he and his successors came under the tutelage of the British who extended their influence on parts of India both externally and internally. In their hands was part of the legal administration, and they reorganized the educational

system, replacing in 1835 Persian—the hitherto used official language—by English. In 1843, Sind was annected; a few years later, Lahore and the Panjab were incorporated into the realm of British supremacy.

It was natural that the Hindus should more willingly respond to the new possibilities of education than the Muslims; for them, one foreign rule had been replaced by another, and the new rulers seemed to offer them better chances. The Muslims, however, with the pride of the former ruling classes, in general refrained from participating in a modern 'un-Islāmic' educational and administrative system and thus lost many chances to compete with the Hindus in government offices (as far as these were allotted to Indians at all).

During this period of disintegration of the Muslim power, Mirzā Asadullāh opened his eyes to this world in Agra, on December 27, 1797. His parents were, like many nobles, of Turkish descent. He lost his father soon; the uncle who was in charge of his education died shortly afterwards. The premature boy spent his days and nights in more or less innocent games, and the family married him—at the age of 13—to a pious girl, Umrao Begum, who was then eleven years old. The marriage proved, as one can imagine, not happy; but Ghālib's sarcastic verses about the yoke of marriage and his nasty remarks about women and about the fetters and chains on neck and hands have been quoted almost too often by his biographers and should, perhaps, be taken with a grain of salt. Umrao Begum's fate was even more tragic since none of the seven children she bore to Ghālib survived the first fifteen months. Still the marriage lasted almost 60 years, and Ghālib never took a second wife into his house. He has alluded, though, to an affair with a young lady, perhaps a courtesan—but nothing is known about the details of his obviously deep attachment to her, nor do we know anything about later liaisons.

During his early teens, the boy Asadullāh indulged in an intense study of Persian under the guidance of a certain ᶜAbduṣ Ṣamad who hailed from Iran and therefore introduced him into the genuine Persian way of expression. Shortly afterwards, Ghālib settled in Delhi. The young, handsome and charming poet was well-known in the literary circles. But soon began the long period of difficulties: Ghālib got involved in legal procedures, in the hope to get his 'pension' from the estate of one of his relations. But none of the claims and petitions which he filed in during 25 years yielded any result. To be sure, the poet enjoyed travelling to Calcutta in 1826; there he hoped for justice from the British authorities. In the lively atmosphere of Calcutta he got involved in a literary controversy with some of the

Persian writing poets of Calcutta, followers of the Bengali poet Qatil. The poetical fruits of this journey are a number of descriptive *maṯlnawīs* and some *qaṣīdas*. When Ghālib returned, after nearly three years to Delhi, he continued his old style of life, struggling with the authorities, drinking and gambling. He was permanently in debt and asks ironically :

Is it possible that someone should not know Ghālib ?
A good poet—though of bad reputation...

ہوگا کوئی ایسا کہ غالب کو نہ جانے
شاعر تو وہ اچھا ہے پہ بدنام بہت ہے

During these years the poet compiled a *dīvān* of his selected Urdu verses and was engaged in gathering his Persian poetry and prose-works. In 1842, he was offered a professorship of Persian at Delhi College but declined the offer for trivial reasons. In 1847, the poet was imprisoned for three months because of gambling—a beautiful Persian poem tells of his feelings.

Ghālib's hope to get access to the Mughal court was eventually fulfilled in 1850: the first official assignment given to him was the composition of a Persian history of the house of the Timurids—a work which he did not like and which he never finished; the Emperor himself did apparently not approve of its complicated Persian prose style. When Zauq, the poet laureate of the Mughal court died in 1854, Ghālib was ordered to correct the poems of the Emperor Bahādur Shāh 'Ẓafar', like almost all his ancestors a talented poet, who wrote in Urdu. At the same time our poet was made the poetical instructor of the heir-apparent. His poems written in honour of the ruler wrapped the weak Bahādur Shāh in a pompous robe of brocaded Persian verses which make the reader forget that they were written only a few years before the end of the Mughal Empire.

The last Nawwab of Oudh, the gay and gifted Wājid ᶜAlī Shāh, sometimes sent verses for correction to Ghālib; but Lucknow, the resort of elegant poets since the late 18th century was annected by the British in 1856 and the poet-ruler deported to Calcutta. At the same time, Ghālib's royal pupil died. One year later the so-called 'Mutiny' ended the Muslim rule in India.

Ghālib lost his pension once more owing to his connections with the court, and neither his friendly relations with some British officers and civil servants nor his *qaṣīdas* in honour of Queen Victoria helped him much to win the favour of the new masters. The small

booklet *Dastanbū* in very archaic Persian, written to attract the interest of the British authorities, contains his account of the critical summer of 1857 in Delhi. As to the title of the strange composition, e.g. *Dastanbū*, 'A Posy of Flowers', I venture to suggest that it contains an allusion to a line of the great panegyrist Khāqānī (d. 1199) who has used this rare word in an ode to Princess Iṣmatuddīn :

In the hand of her lofty fortune I saw seven
dastanbū from stars —

در کف بخت بلندش ز اختران
هفت دستنبوی زیبا دیده‌ام

Was not Ghālib's booklet dedicated to the most powerful ruler of his age, Queen Victoria, the princess of truly lofty fortune, at the occasion of the conquest of India?

Delhi was a dead city in the first years after the revolt; in his letters Ghālib has described the pitiable situation of the few surviving and abiding Muslims. He himself had lost during the revolt his mentally deranged brother who had lived with him for years. His difficulties were enhanced by the fact that he had adopted the two children of his wife's nephew, ᶜĀrif, a talented young poet,

Whose cheek is the candle of my family.

آن پسندیده بخوی عارف نام
که رخش شمع دودمان منست

ᶜĀrif had died in 1852, and the elegy written for him is perhaps Ghālib's most touching Urdu poem :

لازم تھا کہ دیکھو مرا رستا کوئی دن اور
تنہا گئے کیوں اب رہو تنہا کوئی دن اور

Ghālib's letters reveal some of the difficulties which he experienced in handling and feeding the two growing boys during those dark times.

After a while the poet formed some connections with the court of Rampur, one of the princely states which had not come under the British Crown; he visited Rampur first in 1860 together with his two grandnephews, and his poetry secured him again a certain amount of money which was sufficient for the modest maintenance of the family

and for the bottle of red wine which inspired him in the evenings; his debts, however, never ended.

Even during the long and painful illness which confined him to bed for nearly three years, Ghālib did not abstain from correcting the verses younger poets would send him. He prepared his works for the press and saw them printed before he died on February 15th, 1869. One of his poetical disciples, Sayyid Ghulām Ḥusain, published a dirge in his memory in the *Avadh Akhbār*—one of the leading newspapers; this curious poem which was printed on March 9, 1869, is an artistic chronogram of fifteen verses: the first hemistich of each verse gives the Christian year 1869, the second hemistich the *hijra* date 1285. The centenary of Ghālib's death in 1969 has made his name better known even in the Western hemisphere thanks to numerous articles and a few books written in his honour, and with the aim of translating his poems, so well known and so much loved among the Urdu speaking people.

Ghālib's poetical output—published once more in connection with the centenary by the Panjab University Lahore—is comparatively small: there is the delightful little Urdu *dīvān* and the Persian *dīvān* which comprises all kinds of poems, from mystical *mathnawīs* to chronograms. Ghālib's unfinished *mathnawī* in honour of the prophet Muḥammad, called *Abr-i gauharbār*, 'The Pearl-bearing Cloud' has attracted the interest of both Western and Indian scholars during the last years. Ghālib's *qaṣīdas* show his great skill in handling difficult forms. His *ghazals* are often powerful, but both genres become at times cumbersome owing to the heavy burden of complicated images inherited from the great poets of the Indian style. His *qiṭᶜas* convey some personal impressions; the quatrains are partly satirical, partly mystical. Ghālib's Persian prose comprises, besides the History of the House of Timur (*Mihr-i nīmrūz*) and the *Dastanbū*, letters and a corrective study of the Persian dictionary *Burhān-e qāṭiᶜ* which got him entangled in a heated controversy with other scholars of Persian.

Ghālib's most personal legacy are his Urdu letters, which reveal his mastery of the language and reflect his self-irony, his wit and his talent for sharp observation. Yet, they are sometimes motivated by the wish to display his wit and are, thus, rather poetical reflections than realistic 'photographic' pictures.

The poet was not too much loved by many of his contemporaries; his way of life did not agree with the ideals of pious Muslims; his pride, even arrogance in dealing with literary enemies was well-known,

and the difficulty of his style made his antagonists joke :

We did understand the verses of Mīr, and what Saudā says —
But Ghālib's verses! — Save he and God, we know
not who can understand them.

On the other hand, the sources often mention and praise his hospitality and fidelity, and unsurpassed was his talent for refined conversation, that typical expression of Mughal culture. This talent is palpable in his letters and, to a certain extent, in the ingenious way of inserting colloquial sentences into the most complicated and highflown Urdu verses.

Ghālib's fame throughout the country was to a large extent due to Ḥālī's book *Yādgār-i Ghālib*, which appeared in 1896 and has since been considered the standard work on his poetry. Muḥammad Iqbāl, the poet-philosopher of Indo-Pakistan, has mentioned the name of the great poet among those spiritual guides who showed him the way to poetry during his formative period; in his own poetry he has quoted his verses several times. Ghālib, buried in the dust of Delhi, was, for him, the peer of Goethe who rests in the 'rosegarden of Weimar'.

* * * *

These are the dry and outward facts, some glimpses of the life of the greatest Urdu poet in the 19th century who was also the last classical writer in the field of Persian poetry in India.

The methods of modern comparative literature have not yet been applied to Ghālib (nor to other Persian poets); but one would be tempted to interpret Ghālib's life according to a pattern developed by Robert Minder for the German poet Ludwig Tieck (1773-1853) who was only a few years senior to the Muslim poet, *viz.*, the pattern Splendor—Chaos—Play. These three elements, following each other and interwoven with each other, can easily be detected in Ghālib's life and in his poetry: there is the splendour of the firework which he has used so often as a metaphor for the state of his burning heart, the chaotic background of a life spent in restlessness after the few joyful years of his splendid youth, and there is the playful way of scattering unexpected images and rhetorical figures over his poetry and prose—an ease and playfulness acquired by hard intellectual labour.

For Ghālib was not a poet who composed his verses without effort; he has described the secret of poetry as :

drawing the heart-blood from the veins of speech;

خون جگر است از رگ گفتار کشیدن

but he was able to offer the reader the most elaborate results of his artistic endeavour in gracefully moving lines, comparable to the reflection of figures dancing on the dark and chaotic waters of a torrent.

* * * *

It is revealing to look at our poet's names—for the importance of the personal name, and even more the poetical pen-name, is even greater in the Islamic lands and especially in India than it is in the West, and often permits us some insight into a poet's or mystic's character, his ambitions and ideals.

His parents had called him Asadullāh, 'Lion of God', that is one of the surnames of ʿAlī, Muḥammad's cousin and son-in-law and the fourth caliph of Islam. The pen-name 'Ghālib' is likewise an oft-used surname of the same caliph *ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib al-Ghālib*, the 'triumphant conqueror'. Thus his names form a homage to the hero of Shiʿa Islam, the religious form to which the poet was inclined, contrary to his family who were Sunnites. Ghālib could easily play with his *nom-de-plume* :

whosoever is his companion, is the companion
of the victorious hero.

ہوا نہ غلبہ میسر کبھی کسی پہ مجھے
کہ جو شریک ہو میرا شریک غالب ہے

However, in times of despair he could close a *ghazal* with the line :

Wherever you see my pen-name Ghālib in a ghazal,
erase it, and write instead Maghlūb (= 'conquered', 'overcome')

ہر کجا غالب تخلص در غزل بینی مرا
سی تراش آنرا و مغلوبی بجایش مینویس

Such a pun on the words *ghālib* and *maghlūb* is found as early as in Niẓāmī's epical poem *Khusrau Shīrīn*, and this little instance shows how deeply Ghālib was steeped in the poetical tradition of Iran and India.

When he started writing, Persian literature in the sub-continent had a history of more than 800 years, and its outward form in the Arabic-Persian quantitative meter had never changed: the long *qaṣīda*—mostly a panegyric, a satire, or a hymn, the shorter *ghazal* as vehicle

for love poetry, mystical or profane, the *qiṭ*ᶜ*a* or 'occasional piece — all of them keeping the rhyme enunciated in the first verse throughout the ensuing poem; further the *mathnawī* in which the hemistichs rhyme together two by two and which thus allowed the development of longer, mainly epical and didactic poems. The quatrain often served for aphoristic purposes, and was a genre of which mystical and erotic poets were likewise fond. A by-product, produced by connecting a number of ghazals in the same meter by a verse which expresses the general *Stimmung* of the chain of poems, is the *tarkīb-band* and the *tarjī*ᶜ*-band.*

These inherited forms had been elaborated and refined by numberless poets in Iran proper, in Turkey, and in the Indian subcontinent. As early as in the 11th century—only a few decades after Maḥmūd of Ghazna's conquest of Northwest India—the fame of the poets in the Panjab, Abu'l-Faraj Rūnī and Masᶜūd ibn Saᶜd-i Salmān, spread widely over Iran, and with Amīr Khusrau (d.1325), the virtuoso in poetry and music and sweet-talking 'Parrot of India', the new style of Persian poetry opened its first buds: in his verses we find some of the complicated, even abstruse metaphors and the extremely artistic technique which were later so common in the so-called *sabk-i hindī*, the 'Indian Style' of Persian poetry.

It was at the Mughal court that this poetry lived through its 'Indian Summer', as Ethé has called it so poignantly: glowing and pathetic in the masterly verses of ᶜUrfī (d. 1592), more cerebral in the poems of his contemporary Faiḍī and, slightly later during the reign of Jihāngīr, in the *qaṣīdas* and *ghazals* of the fertile Ṭālib-i Āmulī, highly sophisticated in Naẓīrī's literary work. Suffice it to mention, out of the hundreds of poets who swarmed to the generously laid tables of the Mughal nobles, the names of Kalīm (perhaps the most attractive poet of the 17th century), of Qudsī and of Ghanī Kashmīrī, and to remember those poets who were connected with the luckless heir apparent Dārā Shikoh; some of them, like Sarmad, were executed like the prince at the hand of Aurangzeb and his officials. And in the later days of Aurangzeb's reign, when literary and artistic life was no longer encouraged by the ruler, the poets retired into a world of fancy; the tunes of weariness and despair—already palpable in the earlier Mughal poetry—became shriller and more dissonant; the complicated conceits of Indo-Persian literature waxed so difficult and cumbersome that some of the poetical and prose works of Nāṣir ᶜAlī Sirhindī (d. 1697) and Mirzā Bedil (d. 1721) became almost incomprehensible even for a native Persian (if we believe the critical statement of the Persian refugee ᶜAlī Ḥazīn, whose style in turn was criticized by Khān Ārzū).

Persian poetry had always chanted the withering of the rose of happiness : for everything on earth is transitory, as the *Qurᵓān* attests. The poets have echoed these words in numerous metaphors and have combined the complaint about the instability of life with the quest for immortal beauty, influenced in their world-view and their imagery by the Muslim mystics who tried to descry the Eternal and Unique Source of Life and Beauty behind the manifold manifestations of this world.

The beloved to whom the poets address their verses is always considered cruel; and he/or she (Persian knows no grammatical gender) can be interpreted by turns as a noble virgin living in *purdah* whom one knows only by hearsay or through a picture; as a coy courtesan, fickle by profession; as a young attractive boy, preferably fourteen years old; as the despotic ruler; or as the Lord Himself Whose will is inscrutable and Whose Essence is beyond the reach of human thought. The 'rival' and the 'reproacher', so closely associated with the love-drama, fit as well into the scenery of court-intrigue, or they could represent the dry-as-dust theologians and lawyer-divines who, fettered by the chains of tradition, envy the lover who dares to sing of the mystery of intoxicated love. The special charme of Persian and related, *viz.*, Turkish and Urdu poetry, consists of this ambiguity which permits different interpretations of an outwardly simple verse.

Innumerable are metaphors connected with suffering and with death in this poetry—the poets knew of the

Terminate torment
Of love unsatisfied
The greater torment
Of love satisfied (T. S. Eliot),

and believed that death is the only way which leads to permanent union with the beloved—in whatever sense we may interpret this term. Love is proved and matured by constant suffering, as gold is purified in the melting pot. That is why the poets never tired of inventing new images to symbolize this suffering in love: the nightingale who is wounded by the rose, that radiant symbol of Divine Beauty and Majesty, or Majnūn the demented lover, conversing with the animals in the desert, or Farhād, the deceited worshipper of Princess Shīrīn. The polo ball as well may symbolize the head of the lover in the tresses of the beloved; the liver is roasted in the fire of love, the house destroyed by the torrent. Many other images which were taken from the *Qurᵓān*

or from Persian history, from the colourful garden or the pastimes of feudal lords served the same purpose.

The metaphors and symbols of Persian poetry are restricted; they have been elaborated during the centuries according to the taste and skill of each poet. But the repertoire of words was almost inexhaustible : the Persian poet who was in need of a rare rhyme or wanted to surprise his reader could easily recur to the Arabic vocabulary. Not the genuine expression of personal feelings was regarded as the poet's goal: the real art was to surpass former poets. The more time passed Persian writing poets would compose their *qaṣīdas* and *ghazals* on a given *zamīn* 'ground', e.g., according to a given meter and rhyme as preformed by the previous masters; this skeleton was, then, covered, embellished and ornated with words according to the skill, wit and erudition of the ambitious poet.

The Western reader gets perhaps bored when meeting for the fiftieth time with a metaphor associated with Joseph and his marvellous beauty, with Moses and the Burning Bush, with the lifegiving breath of Jesus, or the world-showing glass of the Persian ruler Jamshīd—but did not European literature live, for many centuries, from the material furnished by Greek mythology and biblical language respectively ? And when a modern dramatist expresses the tragedy of a family in terms taken from Antigone or Oedipus, or sings his love in the disguise of figures borrowed from Shakespeare, when Ezra Pound or T. S. Eliot insert learned and subtle quotations into their poems they do nothing else but what the Oriental poets have always done when they borrow their motifs from the *Qurʾān*, the Shāhnāme, or the epics of Niẓāmī, ʿAṭṭār and Maulānā Rūmī. The essence is the same : love, jealousy and death, whether the experience be that of Othello or of Khusrau Parwīz. However, translations of Persian or Urdu poetry which convey only the rather meagre contents of this kind of lyrics without explaining the subtleties of style, the allusions and the whole cobweb-like system of rhetorical devices can never impress the Western reader who is too often inclined to distill a Weltanschauung out of the arabesque-like verses of Ḥāfiẓ and his compatriots. It should always be remembered: Persian poetry is learned poetry—much more so than medieval European poetry, much more even than the verses of John Donne and other Metaphysical poets.

The poet should be judged "as craftsman like other craftsmen, a goldsmith of words, a jeweller of verbal images." This remark of A. J. Arberry about the Arabic poets can as well be applied to those writing in Persian, Urdu and Turkish. This poetry lacks the spontaneity which we associate with the word 'lyrical'; the poets rather prefer to surprise the reader with their erudition in all fields of human knowledge (often hoping for an adequate reward for their performances). Persian poems therefore demand from the student an extensive study of the numerous rhetorical figures and a careful interpretation of each symbol and metaphor, and perhaps their most interesting aspect for the reader is to observe the poet in his artistic performance. He has to find out how he uses the device of harmonically selecting the motifs or that of phantastic aetiology in an unusual way; whether he is able to allude to three parts of the body in one hemistich, or to combine four allusions to religious items in two lines, whether he finds a new rhyme-word in a sequence of rhymes, or conceals a witty amphibology in an innocent phrase. By such a careful analysis the verse reveals new dimensions every time we read it; comparing it with similar verses by earlier writers we enjoy the new and unexpected turn given to an old metaphor, the surprising introduction of a novel subject.

This is the kind of intellectual game which Ghālib played so well—not always avoiding in his verses the danger of puzzling the reader in the 'labyrinth of ... tortuous inventiveness', to use once more an expression coined by Arberry. For this reason it is almost impossible to adequately translate his verses into any Western language. For if the translation of classical Persian poetry is not an easy task, that of Indo-Persian poetry is rendered even more difficult owing to the peculiarities of the so-called Indian Style. The use of abstract infinitives, often put in the plural, and unusual grammatical forms, are typical of the later period of Indo-Persian poetry. And when the classical poets followed certain rules in the harmonious combination of motifs, the Indo-Persian writers showed an inclination towards uncouth compositions of images and words. Inherited metaphors are sometimes broken up and put together in a different sequence, a method by which the poets achieved surprising kaleidoscopic effects. The categories of time and space were now and then interchanged, optical and acoustical metaphors were blended together, cause and effect strangely mixed.

The traditional poet would compare the small mouth of his beloved to a dot, to the tiny letter *mīm*, or to a nothing; Ṭālib-i Āmulī, however, turns the metaphor and complains that he has become so silent,

as if my mouth had been a wound which is now healed,

e.g., which is no longer visible. And Ghālib, in turn, consoles himself

when his beloved refuses to kiss him and scolds him instead—how could she kiss him at all since she has no mouth?

بوسہ نہیں، نہ دیجئے دشنام ہی سہی
آخر زباں تو رکھتے ہو تم گر دھاں نہیں

Another trend in Indo-Persian poetry is a predilection for gruesome motifs. The roses turn more and more into bleeding wounds or threatening flames, just as in earlier times the tulips were considered the blood-stained shrouds of the martyrs. The symbolism of fire occupies an even greater room than in classical poetry, as the *dīvāns* of the poets in India, from ᶜUrfī to Ghālib, can easily prove. The poets who formerly put only salt on their wounded hearts now use diamond powder, so that Ghālib can inform his reader that the main ingredient in the salve for the wounds of his heart is pulverized diamond

نہ پوچھ نسخہ مرہم جراحت دل کا
کہ اس میں ریزۂ الماس جزو اعظم ہے

—the hardest element conceivable—which adds to the gall. 'Shroud' and 'scratching nail', the 'blister of the foot' and the 'stone flung by children at the lunatic' are expressions used frequently by the 17th century poets in India, and although most poets in the Persian tongue had described the endless way of love and longing, it was the Indo-Persian poets who introduced into lyrics the concept of *khamyāza*, lit. 'yawning', and then 'insatiable thirst', the thirst of the shore to embrace the sea.

Longing and breaking down—these are two favourite subjects of Indo-Muslim poetry (probably influenced by the mystical teaching which makes the 'breaking of the lower soul' a prerequisite for the mystical path). One of Ghālib's most ingenious lines—scarcely preceded by any other poet—states that nothing but the breakdown of hope and wishes is the result of loving attachment :

Heart pressed unto heart were so-to-speak a 'lip of regret',

حاصل الفت نہ دیکھا جز شکست آرزو
دل بہ دل پیوستہ گویا یک لب افسوس تھا

that means lips pressed together in regret and sorrow.

This example shows that great poets—but only these!— could achieve impressive results in this style; the reader who perseveres in struggling his way through hundreds of complicated lines will suddenly find some

verses, dark and glowing, or unforgettable aphorisms full of despair and marvellous wording. The 'glad tidings of being killed'—again a mystical concept—is a common expression among those poets who, like ᶜUrfī, would boast :

I went to the door of the executioner's house, singing a ghazal...

منم آن سیر ز جان گشتہ کہ با تیغ و کفن
بدر خانۂ جلاد غزلخوان رفتم

Ghālib has often echoed these tunes :

Don't ask how happy the yearning ones are when
they see the place for execution!
It is the ᶜId of expectation (that) the
sword should become naked.

عشرت قتل گہ اہل تمنا مت پوچھ
عید نظارہ ہے شمشیر کا عریاں ہونا

The crescent which announces the *ᶜId al-fiṭr*, e.g., the Festival at the end of the fasting period, is compared in a traditional image to a scimitar; and as much as people long for the sight of the new moon which brings to an end the month of fasting as much do the lovers enjoy the sight of the scimitar drawn from the scabbard at the place where they shall be sacrificed. The word *ᶜId* in connection with the new moon points to the Festival of Breaking the Fast, but in connection with slaughtering it bears a relation to the second festival of the Islamic calendar, the Feast of Sacrifices at the end of the annual pilgrimage to Mecca.

In a small example it can be shown how much Ghālib stands in the tradition of classical Persian poetry; one of his verses which is often quoted to convey the idea of his dynamic world-view, e.g.:

Come and behold the fervour of my longing to see you—
behold my dropping from my eyelashes like tears

بیا و جوش تمنای دیدنم بنگر
چو اشک از سر مژگان چکیدنم بنگر

With this the poet elaborates an image which can be found in one of Khāqānī's *ghazals* when he complains that he, being like to the teardrop, is too weak for reaching the eyelashes.

Notwithstanding his sharp attacks against the Indo-Persian poets Ghālib himself follows the Indian style to some extent. The frequent use of abstract infinitives, even in his Urdu poetry, belongs

here, and so do long sequences of genitive constructions which resist a poetical translation.

But in spite of all its intrinsic difficulties one cannot but admit that this poetry has a charm of its own. I venture to guess that our generation who is used to the enigmatic style of modern poems as well as to the weird images of some expressionist poetry, and has also learned to appreciate the beauty of metaphysical poetry may find a certain mental pleasure in disentangling the complicated arabesque-like twists of Indo-Persian and classical Urdu poetry, whose most outstanding master was Ghālib. The reader of Ghālib's poetry will be amply rewarded. He will suddenly find verses which are tender and human:—

In union be gracious according to the measure
of (the lover's) endurance,
For it means death for the thirsty when the
water rises over his head

به وصل لطف به اندازهٔ تحمل کن
که مرگ تشنه بود آب چون زسر گزرد

There is the proud attestation of his fidelity :

May my bier, carried on people's shoulder, be an
example for those with hearts:
No one leaves the street of his beloved on his own feet

به دوش خلق نعشم عبرت صاحبدلان باشد
به پای خود کسی از کوی جانان بر نمی آید

And there are again those consoling words which friends in Pakistan use to recite to parting friends :

Parting and union have each a flavor of its own :
Go away a thousand times—come a hundred thousand times!

وداع و وصل جدا گانه لذتی دارد
هزار بار برو، صد هزار بار بیا

Even more frequent are such verses in Ghālib's Urdu poetry.

Urdu as a literary language had flourished in the Deccan since the early 16th century; its poetry was partly influenced by Persian models. It was surely no accident that its reception in Delhi as a medium of poetry coincides with the breakdown of the Mughal Empire after Aurangzeb's death (1707). The newly discovered literary medium

was immediately accepted by major and minor poets; the great love-poet Mīr Taqī Mīr, the satirist Saudā, the mystic Mīr Dard, the romantic Mīr Ḥasan, all purified and refined the language, made it pliable enough to express every nuance of human feelings. Their poetry was understood by the masses, by the people sitting at the doors of the Great Mosque in Delhi, while the sophisticated Persian poetry could be appreciated only by the members of the educated classes, and became more and more petrified since it had lost contact with the spoken Persian of Iran.

Owing to the successive disasters which came over the once so glorious capital, the imperial Delhi, many poets migrated in the second half of the 18th century to Lucknow, and there, at the court of a dynasty of cheerful rulers, Urdu was polished until it could flawlessly reflect the dazzling luxury of the court and the gaiety of the Lucknow society, but was also able to produce mourning-poems for Ḥusain, the Prophet's grandson, in deep coloured images and dramatic scenes.

This was the language in which Ghālib wrote his masterpieces. Who could surpass the lines in a ghazal which is a favourite object of study for European Urdu scholars :

Sleep is his, sweet intoxication is his, the nights are his,
On whose arm your tresses lie, dishevelled....

نیند اس کی ہے دماغ اس کا ہے راتیں اس کی ہیں
تری زلفیں جس کے بازو پر پریشاں ہوگئیں

Who save Ghālib could invent the verse :

You may kindly call me whenever you like—
I am not time past, that I could not return!

مہرباں ہو کے بلالو مجھے، چاہو جس وقت
میں گیا وقت نہیں ہوں کہ پھر آ بھی نہ سکوں

We find mystical lines which show Ghālib's sound knowledge of the Islamic tradition, besides amusing verses like the *qiṭ'a* of a *ghazal* which is made up completely from juridical technical terms :

پھر کھلا ہے در عدالت ناز
گرم بازار فوجداری ہے

There are swinging songs of wine and love as well as the expression of the hope that his beloved may not sever all relations with him—even

if their relation be enmity, it would be more welcome than her indifference :

قطع کیجئے نہ تعلق ہم سے
کچھ نہیں ہے تو عداوت ہی سہی

But darkness and despair loomed large in the poetry of Ghālib who sighs,

I am the dried-up lip of those dying from thirst...

لب خشک در تشنگی مردگاں کا

This darkness is the background for the sparkling fires, the gushing floods which threaten his very existence. The hope for death is at times predominant in his verses, and still, the poet advises his reader to enjoy each melody of life, be it that of happiness or that of mourning; for 'the instrument of life will be silent one day!'

نغمہ ہائی غم کو بھی ای دل غنیمت جانئے
بے صدا ہو جائے گا یہ ساز ہستی ایک دن

Ghālib knew that nobody could surpass him in Urdu, but he was likewise sure that he was on equal footing with the greatest representatives of Persian poetry, and that his knowledge in poetical matters was as comprehensive as his capacity for literary work :

When others hew their axes into the mine (of rubies),
I make a night-attack on Badakhshan

دیگران گر تیشہ برکان می زنند
من شبیخون بر بدخشان می زنم

He wanted to conquer the whole province in which the precious stones were found, and not to contend himself with a single mine which might yield only a few jewels...

* * * *

The aim of our book is simply this :
we want to introduce the Western reader into the complex imagery of Ghālib's poetry and to facilitate his access to a literary field which has still to be discovered by the lovers of comparative literature. In the present moment, this can be only a first attempt. The verses from

earlier Persian poetry which have been chosen to explain some of Ghālib's images have been plucked at random, not systematically; everyone acquainted with classical Persian poetry will be able to add other examples. But completeness was not intended and would be impossible as long as large parts of Persian poetry still remain unknown to us; besides, such an attempt would by far transgress a single scholar's capacity. Still, we hope that we can convey at least a certain idea as to what extent Ghālib was indebted to his predecessors, and in how far he surpasses them with his ingenious ideas.

GHĀLIB'S DANCING-POEM

If somebody were to ask me to contribute three Persian poems by Ghālib to an anthology there would be no doubt about the first two items: without any hesitation I would choose the *ghazal* with the rhyme-word *be-raqṣ*, 'dance', which seems to me, to reveal more of Ghālib's character than many other verses of his.

چون عکس پل به سیل به ذوق بلا برقص
جارا نگاه دار و هم از خود جدا برقص

My second choice would be the *ghazal* with the rhyme-word *namīdam-ash*, 'I called it',

دود سودائی تتق بست، آسمان نامید مش
دیده بر خواب پریشان زد، جهان نامید مش

where the poet describes how he, regarding each subjective experience as the reflexion of a higher objective fact, named the manifestations accordingly: the smoke of his passion wove veils, and he called them 'sky'; there was a confused dream which his eye beheld and which he called 'the world'; the small speck of dust which suspicion threw into his eye, seemed to him 'the desert', and the single droplet which tumbled from his eyelashes, was called 'the endless ocean'. In this vein he continues until he designates the Kaʿba, the goal of the pilgrims, as 'the footprint of the wayfarers', faithful to the imagery of mystical poets before him. And after all these enthusiastic and highflown images where the poet functions as a kind of second Adam, 'naming the things' and thus exerting power over them, he suddenly turns in one of those surprising changes of key which make his poetry so charming, to a witticism in the last verse :

Ghālib was a nightingale from the rosegarden of Persia—
I was mistaken and have called him the 'Parrot of India'.[1]

بود غالب عندلیبی از گلستان عجم
من ز غفلت طوطئی هندوستان نامید مش

Thus, he introduces an elegant allusion to Amīr Khusrau (d. 1325),

called 'the Parrot of India', but at the same time implies his claim of superiority even over this master of style, since in Ghālib's opinion, only Persian-born poets were able to write that flawless style which Indo-Persian poets but rarely achieve.

As to the selection of the third poem, I would need some careful thought. I might choose one of Ghālib's poignant and sarcastic quatrains in which he jokes about the lucky pilgrim who walks so full of joy that the poet understands that he has left a quarrelsome wife behind him, and therefore envies him.

اے آن که به راه کعبه روی داری
نازم که گزیده آرزوی داری
زین گونه که تند می خرامی، دانم
در خانه زن ستیزه خوی داری

Or else I might select a *qaṣīda*, preferably Nr. XXVI which begins with a marvellous hymn about the miraculous powers of 'those who have got insight',

رهروان چون گهر آبلهٔ پا بینند
پای‌را پایه فراتر ز ثریا بینند

but ends in an insipid panegyric for the last Mughal ruler. But finally I would probably turn my predilection to Ghālib's little poem on his cat in which the baroque wording contrasts so charmingly with his affection for the graceful animal of supple movements.

I have in this world a cat of pure nature,
The wave of her gait is of a fairy-child's wing ...

دارم به جهان گربهٔ پاکیزه نهادی
کز بال پریزاد بود موج رم او . . .

But the very first poem of my selection seems to provide best access to a large number of Ghālib's favourite metaphors, and perhaps even to some aspects of his feelings, and his contradictory character. This is the *ghazal* with the rhyme-word 'dance':

1. *Like the reflection of the bridge in the torrent dance in the delight of affliction !*
   Keep your place firmly, and yet dance, separated from yourself !

2. *Time (or: the covenant) has no loyalty; the single moment is a nice booty —*
   dance in the blandishment of the loyal covenant from the beautiful ones!
3. *Constant seeking is delight—what do you talk of getting over the way?*
   Give up walking—dance at the sound of the caravan bell!
4. *We have been thriving and have walked gracefully in the meadows —*
   o flame, dance in melting our straw and our thorns!
5. *Take the way of the mystical dance (samā') to the melody of the owl,*
   and dance likewise in the passion (hawā, also 'air') of the trembling of the Kingbird's wing!
6. *In love, the spreading out (in cheer) does not reach an end — become like a whirlwind of dust and dance in the air!*
7. *Leave aside the decayed pictures of the dear friends —*
   dance to the trumpet of mourning and at the banquet of condolence!
8. *Like the wrath of the pious and the friendship of the hypocrites be not in yourself, but dance in the throng!*
9. *Do not seek pain from burning, nor joy from opening —*
   dance recklessly in the arms of hot storm and morning-breeze!
10. *Ghālib, with that exultation (of thinking): "Upon whom do you depend?"*
    Wax forth from yourself and dance in the fetters of affliction!

چون عکس پل به سیل به ذوق بلا برقص
جارا نگاه دار و هم از خود جدا برقص

نبود وفای عهد، دمی خوش غنیمت است
از شاهدان به نازش عهد وفا برقص

ذوق است جستجو، چه زنی دم ز قطع راه
رفتار گم کن و به صدای درا برقص

سر سبز بوده و به چمنها چمیده ایم
ای شعله در گداز خس و خار ما برقص

هم بر نوای چغد طریق سماع گیر
هم در هوای جنبش بال هما برقص

در عشق انبساط به پایان نمیرسد
چون گرد باد خاك شو و در هوا برقص

فرسوده رسمهای عزیزان فرو گزار
در سور نوحه خوان و به بزم عزا برقص

چون خشم صالحان و ولای منافقان
در نفس خود مباش، ولی برملا برقص

از سوختن الم، ز شگفتن طرب مجوی
بیهوده در کنار سموم و صبا برقص

غالب بدین نشاط که وابسته کهٔ
بر خویشتن بیال و به بند بلا برقص

The necessarily pedestrian translation can only convey the contents, without reflecting the charms of the poem. In its external form, it is strictly classical, as poems with the rhyme-words 'dance!', 'the dance', 'I will dance', etc. are by no means rare in Persian poetry. In fact, classical Persian mystical poetry contains a rather large number of verses in which the author either tells himself to rise and dance, or else praises the movement that frees him from all earthly concern. This particular kind of poems in praise of dance (alien to the rigid orthodoxy of Islam and therefore often objected to by the pious) belongs to a much larger tradition in which poets of all races and religion have praised the dance, still preserving a dim memory of its essentially sacred character.

Indeed, dancing occupies a special place in almost every religion.[2] One has called dance the 'absolute play', for, as the catholic theologian Karl Rahner once remarked: every play is, in its deepest meaning a dance, a *Reigen* (round-dance) which revolves around Reality.[3] It takes man away from the world, from the gravity and density of our earthly existence, and imbues him with a sense of closeness to heaven.

As it is well-known from ancient Greek tradition, two deities were connected with dance: they are Dionysos who enraptures

man in wild dances and carries him forth from himself, and Apollo who teaches him to move in harmonious forms and fixed rhythm. In primitive societies, dance is often connected with religious purposes, be it that man wants to influence the spirits by his movements, as is the case in the dances of the hunters who imitate the movements of the game they intend to stalk, or that the faithful try to repeat the harmonious movement which they ascribe to superhuman powers. In many societies magic practices are connected with dance : at the times of eclipses and of war and during the highly critical occasions of human life, e.g., death, birth and marriage, special dances are considered necessary to avert the evil spirits which might wish to interfere with the great event in question and thus threaten the happiness and health of the family or clan. To give an example: the villagers in some parts of Eastern Prussia used to dance around the bier of a deceased family member. In medieval Christian painting a reflection of this thought is found in the frequently used motif of the *Totentanz*, the most famous examples of which stem from Holbein's brush—Death dances with the human being whom he wants to carry away into his kingdom.[4] The medieval paintings had reflected the horrors of the times when plague decimated the population (first in 1348). The terrors of the wars in our century have resulted once more, in whole series of 'Totentanz' in European painting, like those by the German artist HAP Grieshaber.

Primitive society used dance as a means for warding off evil spirits, but also as an imitation of the movements of nature: examples from northern Europe are, the dances at Easter and summer solstice in which the movement of the sun is 'repeated' by dancing in order to 'renew' the strength of the luminary by the magical practice.[5] One should not forget the exhausting rain-dances in Australia which are executed for producing rain. To secure fertility, dances on the fields or around the seedbeds in springtime were quite common in Europe.

In all these dances, the simplest and most frequently used form is the circle and round-dance, which evolved from the practice of describing a magic circle around a certain object. Such circles were drawn to confine, hence possess an object, or to attain a share in its power, or else to impart it with some power of one's own. That is the meaning of the circumambulation around sacred objects which is known in most religions—from the *ṭawāf* around the Kaʿba in Islam to dance around the Christmas-tree in Western countries. By means of this act some of the power of the sacred object penetrates the worshipper who seeks to acquire part of its *mana*.

In many early societies, dance was considered a most valuable gift for the deities. It was a kind of offering of beautiful forms by which man tried to express his feelings of gratitude toward the higher powers; these in turn, were imagined as enjoying the same delights as human rulers did. Indian and Indonesian religious dances are in part developed out of this peculiar attitude; indeed, a dancer who fulfils the thousands of complicated rules of a classical Indian religious dance in perfect harmony and beauty has brought something precious to entertain the gods. Similar ideas were formerly alive even in the early Christian church.[6] In some places the faithful would dance in honour of the Virgin Mary and the martyrs. The official church has never approved of these dances, but has rather issued a number of decrees against dancing of which that of the council of Toledo in 589 is best known. Nevertheless, it is precisely in Spain (Seville) that a sacred dance is still performed once a year in some churches. On the other hand, the idea of dancing in honour of the Virgin is a well-known topic in literature and folklore: a poor and helpless girl, or a destitute juggler dedicate the only thing they possess, namely their dances, to the Virgin who is to find pleasure in their sincerity and in the beauty of such a spectacle; as a consequence the hero or heroine is proven worthy of eternal beatitude.[7]

But even more important than the magical aspects of dance is the fact that it can carry a man out of himself and bring him—so to speak—in touch with a higher reality. Numerous examples of ecstatic dances can be found in many primitive societies, from the Shamans in Siberia to the Red Indians in America. The prophets in old Israel attempted to reach the ecstatic state through the practice of dancing exercises (1. Sam. 19,19; 1. Kings 18,29.) The underlying reason for such a behaviour is simple: by spinning around one's own axis or turning around a specific centre one feels exempt from the law of gravitation; in a centrifugal movement the body flees away from his original centre of gravity and seems to draw closer to the celestial spheres. For this reason dances are quite common in the ecstatic communities of the ancient Near East and Europe—and, we may add, up to this very day. Considering the dangerous implications of such dances which seem to set people free from the rigid system of law and duty, early Christian theologians had reacted energetically.[8] "Where there is dance, there is Satan" says St. Chrysostomus.[9] Yet ecstatic dance played an important role in a few medieval heretic movements, like that of the Korizantes and Dansatores who wandered for a short while through Europe; in 17th century Russia the Chlysts

and Skopz considered dancing as a means of elevation into higher spheres.

This ecstatic dance developed particularly in Islam, although Islamic orthodoxy condemned it as violently as St. Chrysostomus did for Christianity. The *samāᶜ*—originally only a musical gathering, then the whirling dance of those who were enraptured by the music—was known since the mid 9th century among the mystics of Baghdad; they opened the first place for *samāᶜ*-meetings in 864. The question if and how far *samāᶜ* was licit became from that time onwards one of the most controversial problems in Islamic mysticism. The long dissertations found in the classical handbooks of Ṣūfism, like Sarrāj's *Kitāb al-lumaᶜ*,[10] Qushairī's *Risāla*,[11] Hujwīrī's *Kashf al-maḥjūb*[12] and many other works show how engaged defenders of both viewpoints were in the discussions that ensued. The problem remained unsolved throughout the centuries. In India, some of the mystical orders permitted *samāᶜ* (like the Chishtiya), while others, like the Naqshbandiya, were strictly against it. Every group tried to defend their own viewpoint in exhaustive books and articles filled with quotations from the *Qurʾān*, the Prophetic traditions and the works of the Fathers.[13]

The *samāᶜ* became institutionalized in the *Mevlevi* order in Turkey (the Whirling Dervishes) in the late 13th century, and nobody who has witnessed a performance of mystical dance in Konya, the centre of the *Mevlevis*, can forget its breathtaking beauty.[14] The biographies of saints, especially in the Eastern part of the Muslim world, often contain stories about people who practised *samāᶜ* and died in the midst of their dancing as a result of their acute agitation.[15] A strange Western echo of the feelings of a participant in the *samāᶜ* is the "Ode, by a Western Spinning Dervish: The Secret of the Universe" by Edward Dowden (d. 1913), who tries to portray the emotion of constant spinning in consonance with everything created:

> *...as Time spins off into Eternity,*
> *And Space into the inane Immensity,*
> *And the Finite into God's Infinity—*
> *spin, spin, spin, spin,*[16]

Since dance is connected with leaving the earthly sphere it is often considered to be a movement peculiar to the gods. Dancing deities exist not only in ancient Mexico, but even the Phoenicians knew a Baal Marqod, a 'Lord of the Dance'. The most famous example of this type of deity is *Shiva*, the Hindu god of destruction, that terrible dancer (*nata-rāja*) with four arms who dances through the world with dreadful and yet spellbinding movements. And as the

Greeks confronted Dionysos and Apollo, India knows not only the deity who dances destruction but also the harmonious dance of *Krishna, Vishnu's* incarnation; he plays and leads the round-dance being surrounded by the gopis, those cowherd girls who symbolise the individual souls, each gopi imagining that she alone dances with the divine beloved.

The idea that dance is the typical movement of those freed from the laws of gravity is reflected in the Middle Ages in poetry and painting. According to Gregorius of Nyssa, the great Cappadokian church-father of the 4th century, in the first created paradise a dance of all those touched by the power of the Logos was performed, until all this sweet harmony was destroyed by Adam's sin; at the end of the world, however, there will be a new dance performed by all those who have been admitted to Paradise.[17] "There is a dance in Heaven" is indeed the beginning of an old Dutch song, and the delightful paintings of Fra Angelico show this everlasting dance: the blessed ones and the angels dance together around the source of eternal Love and Beauty.[18]

The concept that everything created revolves in a kind of dance around the source of life, is already found in Platonic philosophy. Plotin and Philo have expressed similar ideas about the well-organized dance of the spheres and of the spirits spinning around eternal Beauty,[19] and the Christian fathers, otherwise so inimical to dance, have gladly adopted the image. David's dance before the ark (2. Sam. 6,14) became for them a symbol of this wondrous dance of the spirit around the Lord.

In the New Testament we read Christ's word "I have played the flute but you did not dance" (Matth. 11,17); due to this saying the heavenly dance came to be associated with Jesus himself; the Church father Hippolyt held that the divine Logos is the sovereign performer in the eternal dance. The gnostic Acta Joannis (II 12) use the same vocabulary, depicting Jesus as the heavenly musician to whose melodies everything moves in spiritual dance.[20] Medieval German mystics, especially Mechthild of Magdeburg, were extremely fond of this image and the genre of *Geistliches Tanzlied*, i.e., the 'spiritual dancing song' was often used by the medieval German nuns to express their longing for Christ in tender verses.[21] Later, Jacob Boehme describes the highest bliss as the moment when the soul enters "into the Inner Choir, where it joineth hands and danceth with Sophia, or the Divine Wisdom".[22] This symbolism so greatly cherished by the medieval mystics, is echoed even today, by the beautiful Ronda 'Jesus' by the Chilean Nobel-prize winner Gabriela Mistral, to whom Spanish poetry

owes some of its finest dance poems, recalling in very modern language the age-old traditional feeling that dance is the movement of the cosmos. With her ronda, Gabriela Mistral is an outstanding representative of the numberless poets and poetesses who have used the dancing image in their literary works—be it specimens of modern Latin American poetry, or the graceful and enchanting dancing verses by E. E. Cummings. To mention only one outstanding example in German literature, the poet Rainer Maria Rilke (d. 1925) elaborated the motif of dance from his earliest religious poems to the cryptic verses in the 'Sonette an Orpheus'.

The largest number of examples of this dance imagery is again found in the Islamic world. As already mentioned, the *samāᶜ* was practised by the Ṣūfīs from the 9th century. Yaḥyā ibn Muᶜādh (d. 872) is, as far as we can see, the first to sing in short and touching Arabic verses about man's revolving in the love of God :

The Truth we have not found ;
So, dancing, we beat the ground !
Is dancing reproved in me,
Who wanders distraught for Thee ?
In Thy valley we go around
And therefore we beat the ground.[23]

The classical example of the spinning and the ensuing state of annihilation in the new centre of gravity is the metaphor of the moth which flies around the candle until it is burnt to gain new life in union, a story told for the first time by Ḥallāj, the martyr-mystic of Baghdad.[24]

But even without the moth-and-candle motif the range of dancing symbolism would be wide enough. We would expect it to become popular in Persian poetry only after the time of Jalāluddīn Rūmī, the spiritual initiator of the Whirling Dervishes, but a short review of the poetry of his predecessor Farīduddīn ᶜĀṭṭār (d. 1220), one of the most prolific writers in Persian mysticism, shows an abundance of verses in which the image of dancing is used in association with intoxication and the rending of his garments, in short, as symbol for that spiritual rapture in which the poet claimed to live since pre-eternity.[25] The reader as well is called to dance and to cast off the fetters of this world. Āṭṭār's younger contemporary Saᶜdī of Shīrāz praises in his *Būstān* the intoxicated dance and alludes several times to the lovers whose 'soul dances when they listen to the word of the friend'.[26] And the oft-used expression that he who dances 'tramples the world under his feet', i.e., no longer cares for it, is found in his lyrics.[27] Perhaps

the most daring expressions of the mystic's ecstatic dance 'with God' can be found in Rūzbihān Baqlī's (d. 1209) writings.[28]

In Rūmī's work, then, dance symbolism reached its apex and perfection. The tradition tells how the mystic would fall into an ecstatic state when listening to the melodious sound of the hammers of the goldsmiths in the bazaar in Konya, or to the chatter of the water-mill in the lovely suburb of Meram; he would, then, spin around himself, reciting and singing poetry. A careful analysis of his poems indeed reveals that many of them were born in the throes of rhythmical movement, and the reader is often tempted to follow this movement, being more transported by the sound and rhythm than by the semantics of the text. By virtue of his lending ear to the 'inward song of the soul',[29] Rūmī has used the imagery of dancing frequently: in one of his quatrains he describes how the eternal Beloved dances on the screen of his heart and teaches him the art of dancing.[30] Perhaps the finest description of the mystical dance of the Beloved is the short ghazal which begins with the words :

I saw my friend, he went around the house...

دیدم نگار خودرا، میگشت گرد خانه
بر داشته ربابی میزد یکی ترانه[31]

The *samāᶜ* is 'nourishment for the soul',[32] and when the lover touches the soil with his dancing feet, the water of life will gush forth from the darkness.[33] Taking over neoplatonic ideas, the poet compares the spinning of the lover around the beloved to the movement of the spheres around the moon. This idea has also been expressed in some of the later theoretical explanations of the ritual of the Whirling Dervishes. The lover who enters the mystical dance is loftier than the spheres, for the call to *samāᶜ* comes from Heaven; he enters a place which is beyond heaven and earth, even beyond the Divine Throne.[34] And one of the comparisons most highly favoured by Rūmī as well as by later poets is that of the dust-particles which dance around the central sun to the lovers who in turn, move around their divine beloved—the word *dharra*, 'dust particle' and 'atom', cannot but recall to the modern mind the movement of the atoms around their nucleus... In such a mystical round-dance the soul looks towards the beloved and becomes in a certain way united with the centre, since only the power of the central sun can make the particles move.

Apart from the traditional cosmic explanation of the mystical dance Rūmī went so far as to associate the story of God's revelation

on Mount Sinai with the dance-motif (Sura 7/139).[35] The *Qurʾān* describes how the mountain was split asunder by the impact of overwhelming revelations, an event which is called by Rūmī "The Sinai began to dance"; for the movement of the mountain appears to him as a dance of ecstasy, during which it unrivets itself and attains the state of annihilation, scattered and piecemeal in the presence of God—an exact counterpart of man who will be naughted in God as a result of his dance. Once the spirit is freed by such a dance from the fetters of worldly density and has attained a life in union, he sees that each tree, each plant in the garden is dancing, touched by the spring-breeze of love; only those branches which are dried up or frozen do not participate in this movement that permeates all stages of being.[36]

These few examples show that in the Mevlevi tradition, dance means both dying and being revived; e.g., dying from this world and living in the larger cosmic harmony, in permanent union with God. Annihilation and duration in God, *fanāʾ* and *baqāʾ*, the twofold goal of mysticism can thus be expressed in the symbolism of mystical dance.

When Friedrich Rückert, the German orientalist-poet (1788-1866), translated in 1819 a number of poems of Jalāluddīn Rūmī in a rather free adaption, he found an exquisite formulation for the mystery of dance :

Wer die Kraft des Reigens kennet, lebt in Gott,
Denn er weiss, wie Liebe töte—Allah Hu ![37]

or, in W. Hastie's English rendering of the Rückert translation :

Who knows Love's mazy circling, ever lives in God,
For Death, he knows, is Love abounding: Allah Hu.[38]

Hugo von Hofmannsthal, the Austrian writer, has in one short sentence alluded to this secret of the mystical dance as he had learned it from Rückert's translation of Rūmī: it means, to recognize that life and death, passing away and resurrection are intimately related, are part of each other, as movements in the eternal dance.[39]

This is the tradition out of which Ghālib's verses on dance should be understood.

For Jalāluddīn Rūmī's symbolism was largely accepted by the Persian speaking mystics. No poet has influenced the literatures of Iran, Turkey and Muslim India as much as he; quotations from his work and allusions to its most famous verses are found everywhere; for centuries, commentaries have been written on his compositions, and they have been translated into the various Islamic languages.

In the Subcontinent the tradition of music and dance was mainly connected with the Chishtiya order which had been implanted in Indian

soil by Muʿīnuddīn Chishtī (d. 1236 in Ajmer), one of the most influential personalities of medieval India. It is small wonder therefore that his later disciple in the Deccan, Gīsūdarāz (d. 1421), rather frequently uses dance symbols in his Persian poetry.[40] Soon these allusions were popular with all poets, mystics and non-mystics alike, and it is no difficult task to discover numerous places in Indo-Persian poetry during the 16th and 17th centuries which praise the enthusiastic dance. Thus ʿUrfī says, in moth-and-candle imagery :

He dances in his own fire—
that is how a moth should be.[41]

در خون جگر غرق بیغلطد و بیسوزد
در آتش خود رقصد پروانه چنین باید

Some other poet dances

like mad, longing for the stones of the children.[42]

به شوق سنگ طفلان هر طرف دیوانه می رقصم

Or else he admits his utter bewilderment like Kalīm who sings :

I have fallen into this sea because of bewilderment —
my boat begins to dance wherever it sees a whirlpool

من درین بحر از پی سرگشتگی افتاده ام
کشتیم در رقص آمد هر کجا گرداب دید

Ghālib is only one in the long line of poets who have sung of the enthusiasm of dancing in East and West, although he is definitely not a romantic 'dancing with the daffodils' but rather a poet who would have felt closer to the exuberant Dancing Songs of Nietzsche, if one should look for western parallels to his attitude.[43]

Our poem is written in the meter *muḍārīʿ*

— ∪ — | ∪ — — ∪ | ∪ — ∪ — | ∪ — — ,

a meter which seems to the Western ear much too heavy and irregular for the light movement that it is supposed to convey. Rūmī's dancing poems are generally composed in smoother meters, often with a hiat in the middle of each hemistich, so as to underscore the beating of the foot and the clapping of the hands in the whirling movement.

Ghālib's poem ends with the rhyme word *be-raqṣ*, 'dance!' preceded by a long a. Its very first verse is of striking beauty and of quite novel imagery. To repeat it once more :

Like the reflection of the bridge in the torrent dance in the delight of affliction!
Keep your place firmly, and yet dance, separated from yourself!

The metaphors are not common—the bridge had been used in classical Persian tradition in general as a symbol of this world, as it was introduced by the early Arabic ascetics who relied upon an alleged Prophetic tradition. ᶜAṭṭār compares the world to a bridge, or to a castle on a bridge,[44] and earlier a poet like Khāqānī had used the same metaphor :

Life is a bridge with a breach in it; the events are the torrent which breaks the bridge—

Strive that you may pass over the cracked bridge before the torrent comes![45]

Rūmī uses the image of the bridge for death which leads to the shores of the other world.[46] But the idea of the torrent which shakes, undermines, and eventually destroys the bridge of life is already found in ᶜAṭṭār's lyrics. From here Ghālib's imagery is derived through the numerous other poets who had written verses about the association of bridge and torrent, among them Naẓīrī (d. 1612) whose example Ghālib follows to a certain extent in this ghazal.[47] Kalīm (d. 1645) admonishes the reader that in the way of 'world-burning love' neither king nor beggar is safe; for

The order of the torrent goes over ruins and inhabited land.

در رہ عشق جہانسوز چہ شاہ و چہ گدا

حکم سیلاب بویرانہ وآباد رود

He thus uses a combination of images which were inherited in turn by Ghālib. Bedil (d. 1721) associates the movement of water with dance as well :

For the wave of the ocean, trembling is the dance of the joy of living —

or : *The fever of longing for someone keeps the pulse of the sea adancing.*[48]

Ghālib is very fond of the combination of dance—breaking—torrent. He has expressed one and the same idea in a Persian and an Urdu verse (as he has done several times over) :

You would think, the building of my house delights in being destroyed, for its walls are engaged in dance owing to the constant coming of the torrent

بنای خانہ ام ذوق خرابی داشت پنداری

کز آمد آمد سیلاب در رقصست دیوارش

which he varies in the Urdu poem with the rhyme *dar ū diwār* :

Do not ask how one is bereft of one's senses in the pleasure of the torrent's arrival —:
door and wall are dancing from top to bottom.[49]

نہ پوچھ بے خودیٔ عیش مقدم سیلاب

کہ ناچتے ہیں پڑے سر بسر در و دیوار

The joy of being destroyed is one of the main topics of classical Persian poetry. It is the yearning for *fanā'*, annihilation, as the mystics say; for by annihilation a new and everlasting life is acquired. Kalīm expresses this very idea with the imagery of the devastated wall which so to speak, 'dies before dying' (the Prophet is related to have taught his followers: "Die before ye die", a *ḥādīth* which forms part of the basic vocabulary of Islamic mysticism):

The downfall of the old wall is its regeneration :
No one but death is necessary for my reconstruction.[50]

افتادن دیوار کہن نو شدن اوست

جز مرگ کسی درپی آبادی من نیست

In harmony with Kalīm's verse, the poets of the late 17th and early 18th centuries would prefer to use for this state the word *shikast*, i.e., the 'breaking' of one's self in order to be rescued from this world and its deceiving manifestations.[51] Did not Ghālib say in an Urdu line whose meaning seems to me, less negative as one would expect :

I am the sound of my own breaking

میں ہوں اپنی شکست کی آواز

an expression which is repeated almost verbatim in his Persian poetry ?

دیگر ز ساز بیخودی ما صدا مجوی

آوازی از گسستن تار خودیم ما

It was Ḥāfiẓ who—following Saᶜdī's example [52] had sung in a famous line :

It behoves to go under the sword of His grief in dancing,
for he who has been killed by Him finds a good end.[53]

زیر شمشیر غمش رقص کنان باید رفت
کاں که شد کشتهٔ او نیك سر انجام افتاد

This idea of longing for the delight of pain and affliction, the *dhauq-i balā'*, forms one of the central subjects in Ghālib's poetry—full many a time has he dwelt upon the rose garden which looks to him, like wounds

مقتل کو کس نشاط سے جاتا ہوں میں کہ ہے
پر گل خیال زخم سے دامن نگاہ کا

or reminds him of the promise of his beloved to slay him

وعدۂ سیر گلستاں ہے، خوشا طالع شوق
مژدۂ قتل مقدر ہے جو مذکور نہیں

The lovers are in his poetry, 'greedy for the savouriness of molestations'

وا حسرتا کہ یار نے کھینچا ستم سے ہاتھ
ہم کو حریص لذت آزار دیکھ کر

and, have slowly turned completely into pain.

وہ لوگ رفتہ رفتہ سراپا الم ہوئے

Here he remains quite faithful to the tradition of mystical poetry in both the classical languages and the folk literatures throughout the Islamic world, though he as an ingenious poet, sings of this pain in more colourful images and adds some new variants to the old story. He thus may compare the thorns on which small bits of his torn liver are impaled to bushes on which red flowers bloom.

لخت جگر سے ہے رگ ہر خار شاخ گل
تا چند باغبانیٔ صحرا کرے کوئی

The idea of delighting in suffering is also very well expressed in a Persian verse of his, where he speaks of Farhād, the unlucky lover who

after being cheated by the king, killed himself with the axe he had used to forge a canal through the rocks :[54]

I tremble in blood with envy and dance with delight due to the axe which trembles in the hand of Farhād.

از رشک به خون غلطم و از ذوق برقصم
ز ان تیشه که در پنجهٔ فرهاد بجنبد

(Another of Ghālib's favourite words, that is *rashk*, 'envy, jealousy', appears in this same verse.)

This constant dwelling upon the cruelty of the beloved and the pleasure the poet seems to take in his suffering is at times an agonizing ordeal for the Western reader; but one should always remember the wonderful verse in Ghālib's Urdu *dīvān* which has summarized the philosophy of pain and suffering :

When pain surpasses its limits, it becomes a remedy (in itself).

درد کا حد سے گزر نا ہے دوا ہو جانا

However, it seems to me that Ghālib's introductory verse of the dancing-ghazal contains more than the usual longing for the delight in pain. It also alludes to a polarity which is characteristic of the poet's world-view. The representatives of Islamic theology, and especially the mystics, have always highlighted the contrast of God's *jamāl*, Beauty, and *jalāl*, Tremendous Power and Majesty, as the two poles of life which are crowned by *kamāl*, Absolute Perfection. They have seen in the contrasting mystical states which alternate in the mystic's spiritual pilgrimage the movement which leads eventually into unity. The words of the Muslim creed with their stark juxtaposition of the negation *lā (ilāh)*—'There is no deity'—and the affirmation *illā (Allāh)* 'but Allah'—play an important role not only in religious life but also in poetical language. Outside the mystical sphere, one of the favourite devices of classical Persian poetry is to juxtapose two contradictory nouns, or adjectives, or whole clauses in one verse. Ghālib has made use of this rhetoric device very often; in his *qaṣīda* on Divine Unity which is modelled after ᶜUrfī's *tauḥīd*, he has elaborated his ideas concerning this Divine Unity which reveals itself in contradictory manifestations.

It thus seems that sharply contrasting elements enthralled him all the more since he himself was not a straightlined character but bore many contradictory characteristics in himself :

The heart an ocean of weeping, and the mouth wont to smile.
دل محیط گریه و لب آشنائے خنده ہے

(Apart from its simple meaning, this Urdu verse contains a fine pun on the word *āshnā* which means both 'accustomed to' and 'swimming', thus furnishing a rhetorical association with 'ocean'.)

In this connection it is highly interesting to read Ghālib's horoscope as he has rendered it in his eulogy to ᶜAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib. There he shows which contrasting influences have ruled his life :

Call it not an astronomical table, for it is a
manuscript full of infirmities,
call it not an astronomical table, for it is a
thing that comprises opposites...

مگوی زائچه کاین نسخه ایست از اسقام
مگوی زائچه کاین جامع ایست از اضداد

The fact that both Jupiter, the 'Greatest Fortune', and Mars, the 'Smaller Misfortune', are located in the sign of Pisces convinces Ghālib that not only the guarantee for integrity but likewise the guide of corruption dominate his life, and that not alone the flood of Noah but the fatal storm (*ṣarṣar*) which decimated the People of ᶜAd are depicted in the signs of his stars.[55] Harshness and 'strange tenderness' are detected by the poet in his horoscope, and those contradictory characteristics which made life sometimes so difficult for him are, in his opinion, imbedded into his soul from the moment of his birth.

His life was not governed by a single mood or by one attitude in spite of his occasionally stubborn behaviour in practical life; spiritually he was trembling like a dewdrop on the thorn, moved by each sunbeam,

لرزتا ہے مرا دل زحمت مہر درخشاں پر
میں ہوں وہ قطرۂ شبنم کہ ہو خار بیاباں پر

learning by the sun's gracious view the secret of annihilation.

پر تو خور سے ہے شبنم کو فنا کی تعلیم
میں بھی ہوں ایک عنایت کی نظر ہونے تک

This supersensitivity, the 'watery' element, makes him the author of verses which appeal to everyone in every mood, as Ghālib seems to utter what the reader has always felt.

دیکھنا تقریر کی لذت کہ جو اس نے کہا
میں نے یہ جانا کہ گویا یہ بھی میرے دل میں ہے

This element of instability is reflected in many of his poems. To be sure, the 'picture on the water' had long since been a fixed image for passing away, and especially the poems by the 18th century mystic Mīr Dard contain many allusions to this 'picture' or 'print' on water, an image which Western poetry uses as well.[56] Here lies the source for Ghālib's 'reflection of the bridge on the surface of the water', an ingenious elaboration of earlier motifs.

In other poems Ghālib has described his changing mood in images of the garden. Perhaps the most gracefully flowing lines are those from a Persian *qaṣīda* where he says :

At times I roamed through the deserts like a madman,
at times I went, intoxicated, to the promenade of the rosegarden,
at times, I choose, like the nightingale, the garden-wall's crest,
at times I went into the firework due to the
mothlike state of my heart.

گه دیوانه صفت سیر بیابان کردم
گه مستانه به گلگشت گلستان رفتم

گه چو بلبل سر دیوار چمن بگزیدم
گه ز پروانگی دل به چراغان رفتم

Like the moth he seeks annihilation in the flame, but his flames are a whole *chirāghān*, a firework in which spectators may delight. The dance of the reflection of the bridge on the surface of the gushing waters which will eventually undermine and destroy this very bridge, indicates the same end. The dance of the sparks of the firework which annihilates the moth, fascinates the poet as much as the constantly changing movement of his shadow on the floods that threaten his very existence. Ghālib, however, remains steadfast and firm despite this dread of the coming flood—be the torrent a symbol of his attacks of psychological stress or be it an allusion to the political and social situation in India during the 19th century.

The second verse plays less ingeniously, with a traditional idea of Persian poets, namely, that the beautiful beloved is utterly faithless and never keeps his (or her) promise. One should not desire more than the present moment's bliss (such is the teaching of ᶜUmar Khayyām),

without expecting longstanding loyalty. Alone the lover should boast of his loyalty and proudly dance.

Time (or: the covenant) has no loyalty; the
single moment is a fair booty —
dance in the blandishment of the loyal covenant
from the beautiful ones.

This rather conventional, but nevertheless elegant, verse is followed by one of those lines which clearly illustrate why Muḥammad Iqbāl, the poet of restless movement and advocate of dynamism and continuing development, was so fond of Ghālib's poetry :

Constant seeking is delight—what do you talk of
getting over the way ?
Give up walking—dance to the sound of the caravan-bell !

The ideal of Ghālib's wayfarer is not the regular straight-forwarded pace, like that of the camel which walks steadily through the desert in the hope of soon reaching its goal, but rather a restless 'dance' which cares only for the movement itself, not for the destination.

The image of the caravan-bell—known to the modern reader from the title of Iqbāl's first collection of Urdu poetry, *Bāng-i darā*, 'Sound of the Caravan bell', if not from Richard Burton's famous 'Kasidah' called 'The Tinkling of the Camel-bell'—is as old as Eastern poetry itself, the journey of the caravan being a central topic of Arabic and Persian poetry.[58] Mystics and non-mystics have described the bell which awakens the traveller in the caravan from the short sleep—the 'sleep of heedlessness', as the Ṣufīs would say. Or else they have listened to the sound of the bell which announces the arrival of the expected caravan in town, as Saᶜdi says :

My ear is the whole day on the road because I wait
for you, and my eye is on the threshold,
and when the call of the muᵓadhdhin comes, I think
it is the bell of the caravan.[59]

گوشم همه روز از انتظارت
بر راه و نظر بر آستانست
ور بانگ مؤذنی بیاید
گویم که درای کاروانست

As so often it was Ḥāfiẓ who created the two verses that subsequently became models for later poets: in the first ghazal of his *dīvān* we hear the complaint that the lover finds no rest in the halting place as the bell

summons him for departure from one moment to the next; in a later poem we become acquainted with the idea that

No one knows where the halting-place of the beloved is :
only that much is clear that a sound of the bell
comes (from somewhere)[60]

کسی ندانست که منزلگه معشوق کجاست
این قدر هست که بانگ جرسی می آید

The image of the caravan-bell is very often found in Jāmī's (d. 1492) poetry when he plays with the different aspects of bell and sound.[61] A poet like Faiḍi might excuse himself for making noise since he is a bell leading the caravan,[62] or, again in the same strain, attest that he who has reached union will no longer ask Why and How, for

When the way is finished the bell has no longer a tongue.[63]

چون ره تمام گشت جرس بی زبان شد (کلیم)

Others might claim that they had become mute and speechless from weeping since

the bell does not produce any sounds when it is
immersed in water,[64]

باز ایستد زناله چو باشد جرس در آب

or perhaps they might complain full of envy that the sound of the bell reaches the beloved earlier than the lover who rides with the caravan.[65] In short, the caravanbell is a common expression with Persian and Indo-Persian poets, which was immediately adopted by Urdu writers as is clearly shown in the poems of Mīr Dard and Mīr.

The association between the bell and the dance which appears in Ghālib's verse is similarly prefigured in classical models: Jāmī speaks of the camel dancing on the *mughīlān*, the 'Arabian thorn', at the sound of a bell that tells him of the Kaᶜba of Union.[66] ᶜUrfī uses a similar imagery,[67] whereas his contemporary Faydi speaks of his own caravan in which

neither the dance of the bell nor the sound of
the caravan-bell...

رقص جرس و بانگ درا نشناسیم

is to be found. This image was imitated by Ghālib when he describes, in almost the same words, the *ahl-i fanā'*, those who have reached annihilation, as

a caravan without the highway's dust or the peals of the caravan-bell
این قافله بے گرد ره و بانگ درا ست

Jihāngīr's court-poet Ṭālib-i Āmulī, in turn, desires to 'set the howdah a-dance' when he himself is bound at the feet of the camel instead of a bell,[68] and Naẓīrī mentions how the sound of the caravan-bell induces him to ecstasy and *samāᶜ*.[69] Ghālib himself occasionally alludes to the complaint or the sonorousness of the bell which, in his poetry, is associated with the motif of roving about aimlessly in the wilderness when yearning drives the lover deeper and deeper into the desert and over the mountain ranges :

Why do you ask how long the journey of longing is ?—
For in this way
the sound of our bell has dropped down like dust.

طول سفر شوق چه پرسی که درین راه
چون گرد فرو ریخت صدا از جرس ما

And in his Qaṣīda on Divine Unity he has spoken of those who measure the path of God and who have, in their endless quest

cast the nine spheres like the bell at the necks
of the camels of the caravan...

جاده پیمایان راهت نه فلک را چون جرس
در گلوی ناقه های کاروان انداخته

an impressive hyperbola which fits into his general praise of longing and into his descriptions of the never ending road.[70]

The following verse expresses once more the polarity which is closely connected with the dancing motif :

We have been thriving and have walked gracefully in the meadows—
O flame, dance in melting our straw and our thorns !

The flowers and greenery of the garden and meadows, fresh and lively as they were in spring, will one day wither. Nevertheless, one thing is left for them, i.e., to gain new value by being burnt.

Since Ghālib's fire-imagery forms the core of his poetry we will devote a special chapter to it.

After having alluded to his favourite subject, that of the dance of the sparks, Ghālib now turns to another classical symbolism when he sings :.

Take the way of the mystical dance (samāᶜ) to the melody of the owl, and dance likewise in the passion (or: air) of the trembling of the Kingbird's wing (humā) !

It may well sound strange that he urges that the mystical whirling dance be performed at the shriek of the owl, which is usually regarded as a bird of ill omen, inhabiting ruins and associated with places of desolation and times of calamity—, all the more so since the next hemistich introduces Ghālib's favourite bird, the Humā, a bird of happy omen which prognosticates a crown to every head it overshades.[71]

However, the combination of these two birds is already found in earlier poetry. According to ᶜAṭṭār, the owl worships gold (which is understood from its residing in ruins, the hidingplace of treasures), whereas the Humā is modest and content.[72] Khāqānī, the outstanding panegyrist in 12th century western Iran, says :

The bird whom you call Humā
is an owl which has sprung from my nest!

مرغی که تواش همای خوانی
جغد یست کز آشیان ما جست

i.e., it is only a low product of his thoughts, but people are unaware of its origin and consider it precious, though the poet could produce much more wonderful things. ᶜUrfī associated the owl with poverty in contrast to the royal bird, or else with grief;[73] Kalīm expressed the thought that

In the country of love where the owl has the
splendour of the Kingbird (Humā)—
that head which does not see its edification
from the torrent has gained a bad omen.

در دیار عشق کانجا جغد را فر هماست
بد شگو نست آن سری کز سیل معماری ندید

Love sees only one thing everywhere, regardless of owl and Humā; its goal is new life through annihilation—it is the same imagery as used by Ghālib in our ghazal: the torrent, destroying the firmly entrenched walls and bridges which rejoice in their devastation, corresponds to the owl, a bird of evil omen haunting places of ruins which nevertheless becomes in the eyes of the lover a symbol for the treasures found when the ravaged castle has been unearthed. Even the idea that the lover should

dance to the song of the owl in the ruins

can be found in the ravishing dancing-poem by ᶜUrfī which begins :

Say "Idol" and dance in the idol-temple...

صنم میگوی و در بتخانه میرقص
نوای میزن و مستانه میر قص

The expression *raqṣ-i bismil*, the 'dance of the just slaughtered bird', which means the fluttering of the poor lover's heart, is another instance of an association of 'dance' with suffering and death; Indo-Persian poets have lovingly used this term throughout the centuries.

Indeed, bird-symbolism as used by Ghālib in this verse was always very popular in Persian poetry. In many primitive and ancient societies the bird had been the symbol of the soul which spreads its wings heavenward;[74] even today one can hear Turks say *can kuşu uçtu*, 'his soul-bird has flown away', when they speak of somebody's death. In Persian poetry it is mainly the nightingale which was chosen as symbol of the soul in its longing for the eternal Beauty of the red rose, the manifestation of Divine Beauty and Majesty, the flower created from the perspiration of the Prophet.[75] Or the soul-bird may be the falcon who awaits the melody of the drum of the Lord which will call him to leave his earthly cage and to return to the fist of his Divine Master. We may also think of Sanā'ī's charming 'Rosary of the Birds',[76] a longish qaṣīda in which he interprets the way the various birds praise God—verses which deeply influenced Jalāluddīn Rūmī. Half a century after Sanā'ī ʿAṭṭār relates in his *Manṭiq uṭ-ṭair* the story of the thirty birds who wander in search of the Simurgh, traversing the valleys of longing, poverty etc. and undergoing many trials and tribulations until they finally find the Divine bird; then they realize their essential unity with him: the thirty birds, *sī murgh*, are none other than the *Sīmurgh* himself.... Thereafter, Persian bird-symbolism relied to a large extent upon ʿAṭṭār's characteristics of the individual birds.

Ghālib does not employ the combination rose-nightingale as often as some other poets do. He speaks of the pheasant's graceful gait and compares it to a dance;

تا سرو سنج سنجد و گل پیرهن درد
رقص از تدرو جست و سرود از هزار باد

but he is especially fond of three other birds: the peacock, the parrot, and the Humā. The first two are typical Indian birds which earlier Persian poetry generally associated with the Subcontinent. The peacock is, according to tradition, a glorious bird that once lived in Paradise.[77] To the multi-coloured peacock, Persian poetry occasionally attributes the capacity of dancing—he dances, enthralled by his own beauty (unless he looks down at his ugly feet which mortify him with

shame).[78] Ghālib invents a rather weird image in this connection: he sees the flask fluttering like freshly slaughtered peacocks because it is so delighted when beholding the cupbearer's graceful approach.

هوای ساقی دارم که تاب ذوق رفتارش
صراحی را چو طاوسان بسمل پر فشان دارد

The unusual comparison rests upon the movement of the reddish wine in a vessel most likely enamelled or gilt.

As to the parrot, the 'sugar-chewing bird', it is connected in Persian poetry with the sweet talking poet; that is why Amīr Khusrau was called the *ṭūṭī-ye Hind*, the 'Parrot of India',[79] a name which Ghālib thought not too suitable for himself, as we saw in the beginning although he once claims to be

a palmtree which bears parrots instead of dates

نخلم که هم بجای رطب طوطی آورم

The parrot's colour is green like that of unripe dates. This auspicious hue reminded pious souls of the birds in Paradise which, according to the tradition, are green; green being the colour of Paradise and of highest bliss. In a verse similar to that of the slaughtered peacock Ghālib might even compare the meadow on which his coquettish beloved struts to a freshly slaughtered parrot, dying under her feet in joyful convulsions ...

بتی دارم که گوئی گر بروی سبزه بخرامد
زمین چون طوطی بسمل تپد از ذوق رفتارش

Or the verdigris on his mirror might be considered by his jealous beloved, the reflection of a parrot.

کیا بد گماں ہے مجھ سے کہ آئینے میں مرے
طوطی کا عکس سمجھے ہے زنگار دیکھ کر

Since these birds are taught to speak by means of a mirror, the combination parrot-mirror is rather frequently found in Persian and Urdu poetry, particularly with the mystics. By the way, the symbolism of mirrors belongs to the outstanding features of Ghālib's poetry.

Ghālib's favourite bird, the Humā, is a strange mythical animal, particularly noted for two characteristics: its shadow needs only fall upon a man to transform him into a king, and its food consists of dry bones. For this latter reason the Humā is regarded by some mystical poets as a symbol of contentment. ʿAṭṭār lets him speak for himself like a true Ṣūfī :

I give bones to the dog of my lower instincts, and thus I give the spirit peace from that dog.
Since I gave always bones to my lower soul my soul had consequently found this lofty rank.

نفس سگ را استخوانی می دهم
روح را زین سگ امانی می دهم
نفس را چون استخوان دادم مدام
جان من زان یافت این عالی مقام

And Nāṣir ʿAlī Sirhindi (d. 1697), whose poetry Ghālib admired in his youth, elaborates this idea in a well-known verse :

The noble gets no share from his own wealth —
How could the Humā sit under his own shadow [60] *?*

کریم را نرسد بهرهٔ زسایهٔ خویش
هما چگونه نشیند بزیر سایهٔ خویش

Other poets like to describe how the Humā tried to pick at their dry bones.[61] This is an aspect of the image, which Ghālib highlights. He may think that his bones do not befit the ascetic bird :

Keep far away from the crumbs of my bones, o Huma, for this is the table of invitation for fire-eating birds.

دور باش از ریزه‌های استخوانم ای هما
کاین بساط دعوت مرغان آتش خوار هست

Even his dead bones are still so full of fire that the King-bird will not be able to devour, let alone to digest them. On the other hand, Ghālib hopes that the Humā's beak will peck at his bones after his death, as this sound and feeling would remind him of that time in his life when the eyelashes of his beloved were still pricking his heart :

رسید نهای منقار هما بر استخوان غالب
پس از عمری به یادم داد رسم و راه پیکان را

He also compares himself to the Humā in a daring image which, like the first one, is associated with his fire-symbolism :

We are the Humā of hot-racing flight ; do not expect grace from us ! Our shadow, like smoke, rises upwards from our wing.

ما همای گرم پروازیم فیض از ما مجو
سایه همچون دود بالا میرود از بال ما

Ghālib's flight is so swift, so 'hot' that his shadow soars upward like smoke without touching anyone on earth. (In another similar passage which, however, bears no relation to the Humā, Ghālib describes his running through the desert where 'his shadow trembles like smoke'). The following lines exemplify this same style of phantastic exaggeration :

The humiliation which appears in the way of love —
write it down with the ink of the shadow of the Humā's wing

خواری کاندر طریق دوستداری رو دهد
از مداد سایهٔ بال هما یش مینویس

For any humiliation and distress imparted to the lover by his love will be regarded by him as even more precious than the kingly rank conferred by the shadow of the Humā.—Ghālib expresses a similar idea in a very unusual metaphor in a Persian *maṭlāʿ* where he once more dwells upon the delight in suffering :

The brain of those who aim at annihilation enjoys affliction—
On top of my head, the saw is ascending like the Humā's wing.

دماغ اهل فنا نشئهٔ بلا دارد
به فرقم اره طلوع پر هما دارد

That means: the saw which will split his head (as it happened, according to Muslim legends, to the Prophet Zakariyā) is, in the poet's eyes, instrumental in granting him the high rank of annihilation: affliction and martyrdom are more valuable than worldly wealth and happiness, than kingdom and power.

Ghālib's comparisons with the Humā are quite variable; thus he can see the (blackish) hyacinth growing under the shadow of the Humā in spring.

نرگس زچشم طالع بیدار ساز داد
سنبل زظل بال هما کرد روزگار

Or he may compare the fresh young grass to the shade of the Kingbird because it grants the earth new strength and beauty

در هر ذرهٔ هر خاك هوای دگر ست
هان و هان سبزهٔ نو خیز مگر ظل هما ست

He uses the word rather frequently in his panegyrics, comparing himself to the Kingbird who flies over his object of praise (Muṣṭafā Khān, Q LX) or associating the spear of his patron with the Humā's beak which picks at the bones of the enemies (Q LIII).[82] But essentially, even the royal bird is too mean a prey for him; although it has come into his snare several times, he sends it away and searches for the ᶜAnqā, the bird of Non-existence which can never be found...

رفت و باز آمد هما در دام ما
باز سر دادیم و عنقا خواستیم

An association of owl and Humā as in our dancing-poem occurs in other poems as well;

چغد و آزادی جاوید همارا نازم
کش بهر سو کششی از شکن دامی هست

The shadow of the owl corresponds with the 'evening of affliction':

شام بلا از رقمش کردهٔ
سایه چغد از اثرش پردهٔ

Ghālib now and then refers to himself as a nightingale. In the very first *ghazal* of his Persian dīvān he asks the Almighty to grant him Paradise: would it not be agreeable for God to have such a nightingale with lovely new melodies in that garden? However, he similarly and quite logically expresses his despair and hopelessness in symbols drawn from the realm of birds. Utterly helpless in this prison of life he no longer feels the passing of the seasons, he no more descries the sight of roses:

Here are we, and the cage, and the mourning for wing and feather...

خزاں کیا، فصل گل کہتے ہیں کس کو، کوئی موسم ہو
وہی ہم ہیں، قفس ہے، اور ماتم بال و پر کا ہے

and: *This is the likeness of my striving:*
like the imprisoned bird which gathers straw
for his nest...

مثال یہ مری کوشش کی ہے کہ مرغ اسیر
کرے قفس میں فراہم خس آشیاں کے لئے

a vain and useless task, devoid of both hope and meaning.

Was not Iqbāl correct to describe Ghālib's poetry with the words :

Now you understand how far the reach of the
bird of imagination is !

فکر انسان پر تری ہستی سے ہے روشن ہوا
ہے پر مرغ تخیل کی رسائی تا کجا

To sum up the verse upon which we first commented : man should seize every opportunity to surrender to the music of life, whether the melody be that of sadness and destruction as brought forth by the owl, or the song of happiness as is heard from the movement of the wings of the Humā.[83] Both modes belong together and are as inseparable as life and death, as annihilation and eternal duration, as symbolized in dance.[84] Exactly the same feeling is expressed in the Urdu line :

If it is not the melody of joy, let it be the melody of mourning.

نوحۂ غم ہی سہی ، نغمۂ شادی نہ سہی

Let us enjoy every sound of life, for :

The instrument of life will be silent one day ...

بے صدا ہوجائے گا یہ ساز ہستی ایک دن

Consequently, the poet continues his thought in our *ghazal* with the seventh verse :

Leave aside the decayed pictures of the dear friends —
Dance to the trumpet of mourning and at the banquet
of condolence !

There is nothing to be gained from constant lamenting and indulging in the memories of past happiness; although Ghālib speaks in many a passage of those who have been consigned to the dust, and of whom

only a few have reappeared, in the shapes of roses and tulips [85]—ideas expressed by Persian poets since at least ᶜUmar Khayyām.

Between the two verses which sing of 'dancing' even in moments of despair, Ghālib inserts another verse about the eternal movement of love and timeless expansion of the lovers :

In love, spreading out (in cheer) does not reach an end —
Become like a whirlwind of dust and dance in the air!

Love extends the faculties of man, widens his heart—the word *inbisāṭ* which the poet has chosen is derived from the Arabic root *basṭ* which expresses in the language of the mystics the joyful state of opening one's heart as contrasted to *qabḍ*, the feeling of dejection and of spiritual depression, of 'dryness'; it is relaxation, all-embracing happiness, and may even expand into a sort of cosmic consciousness. We may interpret the above verse in a purely verbal sense: the heavy clay of the human body will be scattered and carried by the wind into all possible directions, or else we may link it with the theories of the mystics who felt that the lover's road knows no end.[86] When the journey toward God ends, the journey in God begins. For the sanctuary of Love

has a hundred stations, the first one being resurrection,

غافل مرو که درین بیت الحرام عشق
صد منزلست و منزل اول قیامت است

as ᶜUrfī says in a touching verse. Or may we find in this verse an allusion to the fate of Ḥallāj (whose figure will become visible in the last verse of the *ghazal*)? For ᶜAṭṭār relates that Ḥallāj was asked, on the day of his execution: "What is love"? And he answered: "You will see it today and tomorrow, and day after tomorrow". 'And on this day they slew him, and the next day they burnt him, and on the third day they gave his ashes to the wind'. This, too, is the way of annihilation in love.[87]

Ghālib often emphasizes the dynamic character of love and, even more, of longing, *shauq;* the latter word becomes almost a coterminous with the inward movement driving man toward the infinite. He has spoken of the hot race of the lover, of his way in which the Ṭūbā-tree (at the far-off limits of Paradise) is only a shady resting-place halfway

راهے ست زعبد تا حضور الله
خواهی تو دراز گیر و خواهی کوتاه
این کوثر و طوبی که نشانها دارد
سر چشمهٔ و سایه ایست در نیمهٔ راه

It seems typical of the poet's attitude that the expression *ṣarṣar-i shauq*, the 'cold storm of longing', occurs several times in his Urdu and Persian poetry,[89] and is usually associated with the dust of the road. Ghālib sees himself as :

the bird of longing, fallen in the snare of expectation
طائر شوقم به دام انتظار افتاده ام

And in an even more original metaphor he says :

I am the she-camel of longing, and Gabriel is the singing caravanleader for me
ستیم عام بدان و روشم کهل بگیر
ناقهٔ شوقم و جبریل حدی خوان من است

i.e., his poetry is inspired by the angel who sings to him divine melodies and spurs him to moving in excitement and haste. As classical Arabic literature often tells, certain melodies can excite camels so that expert cameldrivers could goad their animals into incredible speed by their modulations.[90] The same idea is repeated by Iqbāl's highly rhythmical 'Cameldriver's Song' in the 'Message of the East.'[91]

In Ghālib's poetry, longing is the positive force which makes real life possible:[92]

It is longing that has given my mirror to polishing.
It is longing by which the parrot of my nature became eloquent,
شوق است که مرآت مرا داده به صیقل
شوق است کزو طوطی طبعم شده گویا

as he says in a lengthy passage on the power of longing in Qaṣīda VI, cleverly using two of his favourite images, that of the mirror and that of the sweet-talking parrot.

The idea of the ashes and dust being carried away, after death, by the storm (again the expression *ṣarṣar* which our poet otherwise associates with the People of ᶜAd according to *Qurᵓānic* usage) may at first sight seem rather materialistic, but actually it is quite common among the Persian and Urdu poets and even in the verses of pure mystics like Gīsūdarāz in the 15th and Mīr Dard in the 18th century.

Whichever interpretation of the verse we may choose, both are in harmony with classical models.[93]

The eighth verse of the *ghazal* dwells once more upon the polarity of life which this poem has so often set forth :

Like the wrath of the pious and the friendship of the hypocrites
be not within yourself, but dance in the throng!

The meaning behind this verse of quite unusual imagery is, in some way, associated with that of the first verse: the pious will never nurture true wrath within themselves but will only make an outward spectacle of anger when some worthy cause demands it; the same is the case with the hypocrites whose friendship and loyalty is only an external show, but by no means innate in their hearts. Man should move about in the crowd like an exhibition of 'pious wrath' and 'hypocritical friendship', just as the shadow of the bridge would move on the water's surface: devoid of any deep concern, in a sort of *tamāshā*, 'show'— to use Ghālib's expression for this kind of behaviour, as he says of 'those endowed with insight':

Whatever they see, they consider it a show (tamāshā)

هر چه بینند به عنوان تماشا بینند

Ghālib's line may remind us of ᶜUrfī's poem with the rhyme-word *mī-raqṣ*, 'dance constantly', where he says :

In your soul, do not mix with any but the beloved,
with your body, dance with the sagacious and the madman.[94]

بجان با غیر جانان در میا میز
به تن با عاقل و دیوانه میر قص

This resembles the state which the *Naqshbandī* mystics would call *khalwat dar anjuman* : it means to be isolated even in the midst of the crowd, to act with them and still keep aloof from them, as the bridge is steadfast in itself and enjoys the sight of its reflection dancing on the waters. The metaphor used here by Ghālib is, as far as I can judge, both novel and very striking.

Then he once more employs the imagery of burning and of wind:

Do not seek pain from burning, nor joy from unfolding —
recklessly dance in the arms of hot storm and morning breeze !

The heart is like a bud, dependent upon the wind if it is to bloom into a flower or else wither away, leaving no issue. But the bud should be quite unconcerned as to whether the hot desert-wind burns it or the soft morning breeze caresses it: its only care should lie in its devotion to dancing, heedless of its future lot. "The Ṣūfī is *ibn al-waqt*",

الصوفی ابن الوقت

says an old mystical saying, he is 'the son of the time', i.e., the present moment; *waqt* denotes that moment in which certain manifestations of the Divine Power descend upon the mystic; manifestations to which he has to conform by resigning his own wishes, hopes, and fear.[95]

The last verse repeats the rhyme-word *balā*. 'affliction', of the first one, but in a wider framework :

Ghālib, with that happiness (of thinking):
"To whom are you bound ?"
Wax forth from yourself and dance in the fetters of affliction!

The expression 'dance in the fetters of affliction' occurs also in another Persian verse by Ghālib :

My heart dances with joy in the ring of the fetters of affliction,
because it imagines itself in the ringlet of her curls,

دلم در حلقهٔ دام بلا میرقصد از شادی
هما نا خویشتن را در خم زلفش گمان دارد

The fetters of affliction appear to the lover as a substitute for the curls of his beloved for which he has longed and which finally seem to ensnare him so that he starts dancing with joy. Ghālib's rhetorical question in our *ghazal*, "To whom are you bound" ? (that means "You are bound to this or that person whom you love") seems to tend into this same direction. But in general, the expression immediately reminds the reader of the story of Ḥusain ibn Manṣūr al-Ḥallāj, the martyr-mystic of Islam, whose impact on poetry in the countries under Persian cultural influence was so greatt hat we have to devote a separate chapter to him.

The whole *ghazal* with its ten verses, and not only its isolated strands, is a highly characteristic expression of Ghālib's thought. The rhyme-word 'dance' shows the inner dynamics which are so typical of his poetry —

Roses dance on the crest of the wall in spring

or : *I dance in the delight of his face, when I see him in the street*

رقصم به ذوق روی او چون بینم اندر کوی او. . .

The motif of restlessness and movement recurs again and again in his verses though often concealed behind traditional forms and behind an imagery whose twists must first be disentangled before the deeper layers of meaning can be detected. Movement, produced by longing and love is the only thing that gives meaning to life, and it will continue even after death, be it as the dance of the bits of dust in the wind, or be it as the ascension of the spirit to higher spheres. Life and death are interdependent, destruction implies construction, and even though the poet in some of his most touching verses speaks of his wish to rest and to live lonely in a corner far away from human beings,

رهیے اب ایسی جگہ چل کر جہاں کوئی نہ ہو
ہم سخن کوئی نہ ہو اور ہم زبان کوئی نہ ہو . . .

remote from all movement, the dynamic aspects of his poetry, as expressed in the motif of dancing even at the shriek of the owl, prevail nevertheless. Dancing is the movement of everything created, be it the torrent which destroys the bridge, be it the wall that awaits the flood, be it the straw desirous of its consummation in flames.

It is certainly no mere accident that Ghālib employs the same word of 'dance' in a famous verse portraying the activity of the artist who apprehends still invisible beauty in a raw block of marble; it is he who anticipates

the dance of the still uncreated idols of Azar

دیدہ‌ور آنکہ تا نہد دل بہ شمار دلبری
در دل سنگ بنگرد رقص بتان آذری

This metaphor has not been coined by Ghālib; it has been used a number of poets before him, including Mīr Dard; but it seems revealing that Ghālib selects this very expression from a variety of other possible metaphors. Since ancient times, the process of moulding ideas into forms of speech had been considered analogous to that of carving an idol out of stone—an idol which is already concealed within the marble. The genuine artist is he who sees the movement of figures and words before they become visible to the world. He feels the hidden power of the sparks in the stone, and he joins forces with them by freeing them so that they may partake in the upward movement of life.

We would be tempted to see a symbol of Ghālib's own situation in the first verse of this *ghazal*: the foundation of the bridge was firm

despite the dancing of its reflection on the waters. It is much the same way that Ghālib himself stands firmly and faithfully in the centuries-old tradition of poetical art as the last great classical master in Indo-Persian poetry. But nevertheless he 'danced forth from himself' and proved so flexible that his poetry is made to reflect each shade of the soul like the running waters; he was flexible enough as to be affected by the slightest movement and emotion, which he expresses in his verses, thus opening a new era for Urdu lyrics. Thus he is able to convey to his readers a dance of sparks which issue from his burning and suffering heart, a dance of wit on the never resting waters of imagination.

FOOT NOTES

[1] About Ghālib's attitude towards Indo-Persian poets, his literary fight with Qatīl, and the controversy about the Burhān-e qāṭi^{c} see Russell-Islam, *Ghālib, Life and Letters*, and Arifshah C. Sayyid Gilani, *Ghalib, His Life and Persian Poetry*, ch. IV. Cf. also the last line of IV Nr. 21.

[2] About the sacred dance cf. Bonnet, *Histoire generale de la dance sacrée et prophane*, Paris 1724; W.O.E. Oesterley, *The sacred Dance*, Cambridge 1923; C. Sachs, *Eine Weltgeschichte des Tanzes*, Berlin 1933; W. Schulz, *Das Bild des Tanzes in der Mystik*, Phil. Diss. University of Marburg (typescript only), 1941; L. Vaillat, *Histoire de la Danse*, Paris 1942; R.R. Torniai, *La danza sacra*, Roma 1951; F. Bowers, *The Dance in India*, New York-London 1953-54; G. van der Leeuw, *Phänomenologie der Religion*, Tübingen 2 1956; F. Heiler, *Erscheinungsformen und Wesen der Religion*, Stuttgart 1961, pp. 239-243 (with exhaustive bibliography); Sources Orientales VI: *Les Dances Sacrées*, Paris 1963, an excellent survey written by specialists; the chapter by Marijan Molé, *La Dance Exstatique en Islam*, is the best account of this topic.—For the whole problem and further bibliography see *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, Vol. VI, Tubingen 1963, s.v. *Tanz*.

[3] Karl Rahner, *Der spielende Mensch*, in: Eranos-Jahrbuch 1948 (pp. 11-37), p. 64.

[4] About Totentanz see Heiler, l.c. 242 (with bibliography); *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart* VI 957; Hellmut Rosenfeld, *Der mittelalterliche Totentanz*, 1954; Id., *Der Totentanz in Deutschland, Frankreich und Italien*, in: Letteratture moderne 5, 1954.

[5] C. M. Edsman, *Den dansande solen* (RoB 1957), 3-37.

[6] L. Gongaud, *La Danse dans les églises*, in: *Rev. d'Histoire Eccles.* 15/1914, pp. 2-22, 229—245.

[7] The most famous example is the short story by Gottfried Keller, *Tanzlegendchen*. A similar subject is treated by N. Lesskow, *The Juggler Panphalon*.

[8] C. Andresen, *Altchristliche Kritik am Tanz*, in: Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte 72/1961, pp. 217—262.

[9] Chrysostomus, *Hom. in Matthaeum* 48, in: Migne PG 58/491.

[10] Abū Naṣr as-Sarrāj, *Kitab al-luma^{c} fi't-taṣawwuf*, ed. R. A. Nicholson, London 1914, p. 299 ff.

[11] al-Qushairī, *Ar-risāla al-qushairiyya*, Bulaq 1284 h., p. 197.

[12] Hujwīrī, *Kashf al-maḥjūb*, translated by R. A. Nicholson, London 1911,2 1959, pp. 393—420.

[13] Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazzālī, *Iḥyā'^{a} ^{c}ulūm ad-dīn*, II 236-256; cf. D.B. Macdonald, *Emotional Religion in Islam as affected by Music and Singing*. Being a Translation of a Book of the *Iḥyā'^{a} ^{c}Ulūm ad-Dīn* of al-Ghazzālī with Analysis, Annotation, and Appendices, in JRAS 1901, pp. 195-252, 705-748.—See also F. Meier, *Der Derwisch-Tanz*, in: Asiatische Studien 8, 1954, p. 107 ff.

[14] H. Ritter, *Der 'Reigen der Tanzenden Derwische'*, in: Z. f. vgl. Musikwissenschaft, 1933; id., an account of the celebrations of Jalāluddīn Rumī's anniversary in Konya 1964, in: Oriens XVIII, 1966.—About European pictures of the Whirling Dervishes see Sahabettin Uzluk, *Mevlevilikte Resim, Resimde Mevleviler*, Ankara 1957.

[15] A typical example is the story of al-Ushnānī, in Abū'^{a}l-Ḥasan ad-Dailamī, *Sirat Abī ^{c}Abdallāh ibn al-Khafīf ash-Shirāzī*, ed. A. Schimmel, Ankara 1955 ch. VII Nr. 33.

[16] *The Oxford Book of English Mystical Verse*, Oxford 1945, p. 341 f.

[17] Quoted by Rahner, l.c. p. 87, after Migne, PG. 44/508 b.

[18] G. van der Leeuw, *In den Hemel is eenen dans*, Amsterdam 1930, German translation 1938.

[19] Plato, *Phaidron* 250 b.; Plotin, *Enneads* III 2, 14; VI 9; for Philo see Rahner, l.c. p. 71.

[20] Rahner, l.c., p. 52 after Migne, PG 25, 1465 b.

[21] Grete Luers, *Die Sprache der deutschen Mystik des Mittelalters im Werke der Mechthild von Magdeburg*, München 1926.

[22] Evelyn Underhill, *Mysticism* (Meridian Books) New York 4 1956, p. 231, from Jacob Boehme, *The Way to Christ*, part I p. 23.

[23] Abū Nu^{c}aim al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-auliyā'^{a}*, Cairo 1930 *ff.*, Vol. X, p. 61, translation by A. J. Arberry, *Sufism*, London 1950, p. 62.

[24] al-Ḥallāj, *Kitāb aṭ-ṭawāsīn*, ed. and translated by L. Massignon, Paris 1914, Ch. II; *ṭāsīn al-fahm*. Cf. H. H. Schaeder, *Die persische Vorluge von Goethe's Seliger Sehnsucht;* in, Festschrift für Eduard Spranger, Leipzig 1942.

[25] Some typical verses in ^{c}Aṭṭār's *Dīvān*: ghazal Nr. 26, 149, 403, 543, 456. 548, 560; *tarjī ^{c}band* II, p. 86.—Khāqānī, too, uses the dancing motif, see *Dīvān* p. 654.

[26] Sa^{c}di, *Būstān*, Ch. 3, p. 116.

[27] Sa^{c}di, *Ghazaliyyāt*, (Kulliyāt Vol. III), p. 100; also 453; cf. the verse p. 348 where 'the name of the beloved moves both the speaker and the listener to dance.'

[28] L. Massignon, *La vie et les oeuvres de Ruzbehan Baqli*, in: Studia Orientalia Ioanni Pedersen Septuagenario, Copenhaguen 1953, p. 238; see also H. Corbin; *Quiétude et inquiétude de l'âme dans le soufisme de Ruzbehan Baqli*, in: Eranos-Jahrbuch XVII, 1948, p. 101.

[29] N. von Arseniew, *Das Innere Lied der Seele*, in: Archiv f. Religionswissenschaft 22/1934.

[30] Jalāluddīn Rūmī, *Rubā^{c}iyyāt*, Ms. Esad Efendi, Istanbul: f. 318 b 3; 318 b 4; 337 a 1; 316 a 6.

[31] *Selected Poems from the Dīvān-i Shams-i Tabrīz*, ed. and translated by R. A. Nicholson, London 1898, 2 1961, Nr. XLI; *Dīvān-i Kabīr*, ed. B. Z. Furūzānfar, Tehran 1336 sh. ff. Nr. 2395.

[32] *Mathnawī-yi ma^{c}nawī*, ed. and translated with a commentary, by R.A. Nicholson, London, 1925-1940, Vol. IV v. 742. The closing Turkish hymn during the Mevlevi *samā^{c}* likewise contains the expression *rūḥa gīdadır* '(The *samā^{c}*) is nourishment for the spirit'.

[33] *Rubā^{c}iyyāt* f. 322 a 5.

[34] id. f. 317 b 5; cf. f. 335 b. 4.

[35] *Mathnawī* II 1942; cf. *Dīvān-i Shams* (Nicholson) Nr. II v. 11.

[36] *Mathnawī* IV 742; cf. Rubā^{c}iyyāt f. 329 b.2; the expression is frequently used by Rūmī and later Persian and Turkish poets. See also *Mathnawī* I 867, I 1346 f.; III 96 ff.; *Dīvān-i Shams* (Nicholson) Nr. XXVI 4; Rubā^{c}īyyatf. 329 b. 2. Rūmī's verses connected with dance are almost numberless, some particularly beautiful examples are *Dīvān-i Kabīr* Nr. 2276, 2282, 2365, 2366 with the rhyme-word *pā kūfta*. The poets of the Mevlevi order in the Ottoman Empire have, then,

elaborated this imagery. A very interesting representative of this literature is Ghālib Dede (d. 1799 in Istanbul) whose language shows at times amazing similarity with that of our Ghālib, especially in his use of the fire imagery. About him see E. J. W. Gibb, *A History of Ottoman Poetry*, 6 vols., Leiden 1900-1909, Vol. IV p. 198-206.

[37] Friedrich Rückert, *Ghaselen: Dschelaleddin Rumi*, Stuttgart 1819; particularly Nr. 9-11.

[38] W. Hastie, *The Festival of Spring from the Dīvān of Jalāleddīn*, rendered in English Gazels after Ruckert's version, Glasgow 1903: Nr. VI (translation of Rückert Nr. 11).

[39] Hugo von Hofmannsthal, *Sebastian Melmoth* (Werke III p. 131).

[40] Gīsūdarāz, *Anīs al-ᶜushshāq* (lith. s.d.), p. 16.

[41] ᶜUrfi, ghazal, *Kulliyāt* p. 357.
But the same poet has also praised the motionless suffering of the lover in terms of mystical dance :
To surrender completely and not to quake is our *samāᶜ*

تسلیم گشتن و نطپیدن سماع ماست

id. p. 316. According to some mystics the Sūfi who controls himself and resists the enrapturing music is superior to him who is moved by music and poetry to dance; this is the quintessence of the story of Junaid who refused Nūrīᵓs invitation to join the dance with the Qurᵓānic quotation: "You see the mountains that you supposest fixed passing by like clouds..." (Sura 27/88).

[42] Begharaz, in: *Kashmir* I 141.

[43] Friedrich Nietzsche, *An den Mistral*. Ein Tanzlied.

[44] Cf. ᶜAṭṭār, *Dīvān, ghazal* 28 (twice), 718.—Mīr Dard, *Dīvān-i Fārsī*, Rubāᶜī, p. 119.

[45] Khāqānī, *Dīvān, qaṣīda*, p. 426

عمر پل است رخنه سر، حادثه سیل پل شکن

[46] Rūmī, *Dīvān-i Kabīr* Nr. 102.

[47] Naẓīrī, *Dīvān, ghazal* 396: "The world is a torrent, the Other world a bridge". Cf. id. *ghazal* 242 and the very elegant expression in ghazal 354.

[48] Bedil, *Kulliyāt, ghazal* 37, *ghazal* 10.

[49] Cf. also IV Nr. 61:
The eye of our hut of sorrows is waiting for the torrent.

...که چشم غمکدهٔ ما به راه سیلاب است

We may add the following references to the torrent :

مقدم سیلاب سے دل کیا نشاط آہنگ ہے
خانۂ عاشق، مگر ساز صدائے آب تھا
پرتو مہتاب سیل خانماں ہو جائے گا
اے عافیت کنارہ کر، اے انتظام چل
سیلاب گر یہ در پئے دیوار و در ہے آج

Typical of Ghālib's approach is the question :
To whose house will the torrent of affliction come after my death ?

کس کے گھر جائے گا سیلاب بلا میرے بعد

Further IV Nr. 249 :
We have cleaned the abode from furniture with (the help of) the torrent.

کاشانہ را ز رخت بہ سیلاب شستہ ایم

[50] Kālīm, *Dīvān, ghazal* Nr. 76. Cf. Rūmī, *Mathnawī* IV 2540 (discussed in: A. Schimmel, *Zu einigen Versen Dschelaladdin Rumis*, in: *Anatolica* I, 1967.

[51] The importance of metaphors for 'breaking', 'broken' is further enhanced by the wellknown *ḥadīth qudsī* "I am with those whose hearts are broken for My sake". Cf. Fighānī, *Dīvān, ghazal* 79. The word *shikast* is extremely often used by Bedil. Mīr Dard says in a Persian quatrain (*Dīvān-i fārsī* p. 84) : "I am the slave of him who has broken himself."
Indo-Persian poets have invented the metaphor of the lock which can be opened only by breaking it (thus ᶜUrfī, *Kulliyāt, ghazal* 285;

دلکشائی خویش را سنجیده با دلتنگیش
زان کلید اینجا شکست و قفلها بر در گزاشت

cf. also the verse by Nāṣir ᶜAlī Sirhindī, Kashmir II 936); thus our being broken becomes the opening of the door of our Paradise (quoted in Muḥammad Nāṣir ᶜAndalīb, *Nāla-yi ᶜAndalīb* I 522).
A few examples from Ghālib's poetry :
The lover's instrument produces a sound when being broken.

ساز عاشق ز شکستن به صدا می آید

Cf. also IV Nr. 115, Nr. 135, and

آرزو سے ہے شکست آرزو مطلب مجھے

[52] Saᶜdi, *ghazalīyyāt* (Kulliyāt III) p. 289.

[53] *Die Lieder des Hafis*. Persisch mit dem Kommentar des Sudi herausgegeben von H. Brockhaus, 1854-60, repr. Osnabruck 1969: dāl Nr. 179.

[54] H. Duda, *Ferhad und Schirin. Zur Geschichte eines literarischen Sagenstoffes*. Prag 1933.

[55] See Sura 41/15; 54/19; 69/9.

[56] A fine example in Dard, *Urdu Dīvān*, p. 42. The expression is well known in the West, see Shakespeare, *Henry VIII*, 4/2 :
Men's evil manners live in brass; their virtues we write in water.

[57] Very typical of this attitude is a Persian *ghazal* with contrasting pairs of words:
I possess neither the wealth of this world nor the good recompense (in the other world) ;
I am neither powerful like Nimrod, nor patient like Khalil.

نہ مرا دولت دنیا نہ مرا اجر جمیل
نہ چو نمرود توانا نہ شکیبا چو خلیل

Its last *qiṭᶜa* forms a sort of prayer to that God who does such wondrous things:
O Thou who hast closed Satan's eye with the nail of predestination and hast burnt with hot breath Gabriel's wing ....

ای بمسمار قضا دوخته چشم ابلیس
یه دم گرم روان سوخته بال جبریل...

This poem would deserve a detailed analysis.

[58] Some beautiful examples in ʿAṭṭār's *Dīvān*, thus *ghazal* Nr. 489. Famous is Rūmī's line (*Dīvān-i Kabīr* Nr 304.
Our cry is like that of the bell of the caravan,
or like the thunder when the clouds pass by.
O traveller, do not put your heart on any halting-place,
for (then), you will become fatigued in the moment of attraction.

[59] Saʿdī, *Ghazaliyyāt*, (Kulliyāt III), 79.

[60] Ḥāfiẓ, l.c., *dāl* Nr. 206.

[61] Some examples from Jāmī, *Dīvān*. Nr. 106, 389, 489; 572; further Nr. 90, 107, 425, 568, 647, and 712 with the lovely verse:
Reason and patience and intellect have all gone, o heart, do not stop lamenting !
(For) when the caravan has started moving, the lament of the bell is a condition.

[62] Fayḍī, quoted by Yūsuf Ḥusain Khān, *L'Inde mystique aux Moyen-Ages*, Paris 1929, p. 164.

[63] Kalīm in: *Kashmīr* I 159.

[64] *Kashmīr* I 159.

[65] *Kashmīr* IV 1702.

[66] Jāmī, *Dīvān, ghazal* Nr. 30.

[67] ʿUrfī, *Kulliyāt*, ghazal p. 297.

[68] Ṭālib-i Āmulī, *Dīvān, ghazal*, Nr. 47.

[69] Naẓīrī, *Dīvān, ghazal* Nr. 535; cf. Dard, *Dīvān-i Fārsī, rubāʿī* p. 118 and often.

[70] Other examples from Ghālib: as a sign of the passing of life :

ز رنگ و بوی گل و غنچه در نظر دارم
غبار قافلهٔ عمر و نالهٔ جرسش
همزبانم با ظهوری مطلعی گو تا ز شوق
با جرس در ناله آوازی بر آواز افگنم

[71] C. H. de Fouchecour, *La description de la nature dans la poésie lyrique persane du XIe siècle*, Paris 1969, shows that the Humā is first mentioned in the poetry of Farrukhī (d. 1037).

[72] ʿAṭṭār, MT p. 65.

[73] ʿUrfī, *Kulliyāt, ghazal* 286; 398 'the owl of grief', جغد غم

[74] Cf. I. Goldziher, *Der Seelenvogel im islamischen Volksglauben*, in: Globus 1903/ p. 301 ff.—Cf. also A. Schimmel, *Die Bildersprache Dschelaladdin Rumis*, Walldorf 1949, pp. 33-37. A fine example of this symbolism is Rūmī, *Mathnawī* II 3749 ff.

[75] Cf. A. Schimmel, *Rose und Nachtigall*, in: Numen V 2, 1958; L. Massignon, *Ruzbehan Baqlī*, in: *Studia Orientalia* ... p. 249, 230; art. *Gul* in *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2nd edition.

[76] Sanāʾi, *Dīvān*, ed. M. Rizavī, the long qaṣīda called *tasbīḥ aṭṭuyūr*, p. 29 ff.

[77] Amīr Khusrau, *Dīvān, ghazal* Nr. 1410: the intoxicated beloved is comparable to a peacock who just came from Paradise.
The association of the peacock with India, and India with Paradise, since it possessess both serpents and peacocks, has been elaborated by Amīr Khusrau as well as by later poets in India and Iran.—Faiḍī speaks of the 'peacock of desire' which struts elegantly, AP p. 180.

[78] Saʿdī, *Gulistān*, Ch. II p. 57. Cf. Ghālib's witty lines :
The picture of the saucy idol in the rival's embrace —
(to paint it) Mānī's brush would need a peacocks foot !

نقش ناز بت طناز به آغوش رقیب
پاے طاوس پے خامهٔ مانی مانگے

a clever combination of the peacock-like charm of the beloved with the ugliness of the peacock's feet which spoil the whole picture; for can there be anything more repelling than the sight of the mirthful beloved in the rival's arms.?
Ghālib's verse is strangely reminiscent of ʿAṭṭār's description of the peacock in the *Manṭiq aṭ-ṭair* (MT 52) where the colourful bird is made to say :
When the Painter of the Unseen produced my picture,
the fingers of the Chinese became reduced to a stump.
In Islamic tradition, the Chinese, and among them Mānī, are considered to be the true masters of painting (probably a reminiscence of the marvellously decorated Manichean manuscripts which were found in Turkestan).—'Reduced to a stump': the Persian expression *qalam shudan* contains a pun on *qalam* 'pen', the instrument for painting.

[79] Amīr Khusrau, the 'Parrot of India' often uses images connecting the parrot and his homeland; but already in Khāqānī's qaṣīdas (*Dīvān* qaṣīda p. 380 and often) the relation of both parrot and elephant with India is commonplace. That holds true also for ʿAṭṭār's poetry (see *Dīvān, ghazal* 667).—Fouchécour has shown that the parrot or perroquet was rather frequently mentioned by the earliest Persian lyrical poets, and that Manuchehrī (d. 1040) has alluded to India as its original country where the bird speaks Hindi. (Fouchécour, l.c. p. 143).
Ghālib often uses the word, thus in IV Nr. 10, 119, 171; the reflection of a parrot looks like verdigris in the mirror of a luckless person :

در آینهٔ ما که ناساز بختیم خط عکس طوطی به زنگار ماند

Cf. also IV Nr. 5, and Qaṣīda XLI, l. further U 141, and 106: everything in the six directions is a mirror for the parrot :

طوطی کوشش جہت سے مقابل ہے آینہ

[80] Nāṣir ʿAlī Sirhindi, *Kashmīr* II 923; cf. the verse of Kalīm (*Dīvān* Nr. 204) who says sarcastically :
The Sky keeps the means of wealth and power for the ignoble,
If the Humā has a shadow, he has it only for bones.

فلك اسباب دولت را ز بہر ناکسان دارد
هما گر سایه ای دارد برای استخوان دارد

[81] Cf. Ṭālib-i Āmulī, *Dīvān, ghazal* Nr. 219, 223; Fighānī, *Dīvān*, ghazal 129.

[83] More Humā birds are found in IV Nr. 99, where even a *humā-yi bismil* is mentioned; IV Nr. 174, 280;

I have neither a kingbird's shadow nor a dog's nature—
I do not want a morsel from bones.

Further: Q LXIV: the shadow of the Humā: IV Nr. 66, *Abr-i goharbār*, Ḥamd; other uses of the word: Q XXII; Q LVIII; IV Nr. 116, Nr. 193; *tarkīb-band* II, etc.

[84] The contrast Humā and crow also in ᶜAmīr Khusrau, *Dīvān* Nr. 1622; Rūmī, *Dīvān-i kabīr* Nr. 2258, 2158 Humā and owl; ᶜUrfi, *Kulliyāt*, ghazal 317, 343; Kalīm, *Dīvān*, ghazal Nr. 371;—Mīr Dard says in praise of *faqr* 'poverty', that The Humā is, in his own eyes, a crow.
Dīvān-i fārsī, p. 106.

[85] Similar statement :

نغمه های غم کو بھی اے دل غنیمت جانیے
دلا یہ درد و الم بھی تو مغتنم ہے کہ آخر
نہ گریۂ سحری ہے نہ آہ نیم شبی

Cf. Mīr Dard, *Dīvān-i Fārsī*, p. 95:

One must give hospitality to pain and distress,
One must keep one's heart and will cultivated through grief.
The opportunity is given gratuitously, o you who are negligent of existence :
If it is not a joyful occasion (or: wedding), one must arrange a gathering for mourning.

[86] Cf. A. Bausani, *The Position of Ghālib in the History of Urdu and Indo-Persian Poetry*, in: Der Islam 34/1959, where he comments upon the famous ghazal *Sab kahān* U 90.—Cf. also Mīr Dard, *Urdu Dīvān*, p. 67, about the treasure-house under the dust, e.g. the numberless beautiful people who have turned into dust and ashes.
A hyperbole which immediately reminds the reader of the last mentioned verse though in a completely different setting, is found at the end of the first *nauḥa* 'lamentation' written in honor of the martyred members of Muḥammad's family. It is a verse in which Ghālib praises himself with the words:

My speech has induced the angelic beings into samāᶜ,
In the mourning-elegy I have become the panegyrist of Mustafa.

[87] Cf. H. Ritter, *Das Meer der Seele*, Leiden 1955, p. 30 (according to ᶜAṭṭār's *Muṣībatnāma*), and p. 635.

[88] ᶜAṭṭār, *Tadhkirat al-auliyāᵓ*, ed. R. A. Nicholson, London-Leyden 1911. Vol. II, 142.

[89] Cf. Khāqānī, *Dīvān*, qaṣīda p. 290: the Sidrā-tree is not his ultimate goal.

[90] Cf. IV Nr. 204: his dust after death is carried by the *ṣarṣar* :

بعد مردن مشت خاکم در نورد صر صر ست...

id. Nr. 26: resurrection will be nothing but a *ṣaṣṣar* :

کف خاکیم ازما بر نخیزد جز غبار اینجا فزون از صرصری نبود قیامت خاکساران را

IV. Nr. 329 :

The scent of roses and dew do not befit our hut—
Oh cold storm, where did you go ? Oh torrent, where are you ?

بوی گل و شبنم نسزد کلبه مارا صر صر تو کجا رفتی و سیلاب کجائی

In connection with affliction :

غم آغوش بلا میں پرورش دیتا ہے عاشق کو چراغ روشن اپنا قلزم صر صر کا مرجان ہے

IV Nr. 246 and U 150 speak of the *ṣarṣar-i shauq*, the 'cold storm of longing'.

[90] Cf. the story told by Sarrāj in the *Kitāb as-samāᶜ*. of his Kitāb *al-lumaᶜ*. p. 270. Cf. also Ghālib's *tarkīb-band*, S 37.

[91] Iqbal, *Payām-i Mashriq, Ḥudā*, p. 125; German verse translation by A. Schimmel, *Botschaft des Ostens*, Wiesbaden 1963, p. 50.

[92] Cf. IV Nr. 45;

غم افسرد گیم سوخت، کجائی، ای شوق

[93] One might think of Gīsūdarāz, *Anīs al-ᶜushshāq*, p. 44 :

I hope for the fire of separation which burns me and transforms me into dust so that the wind carries me away ....

or of Mir Dard, *Urdu Dīvān*, p. 42.

[94] ᶜUrfi, *Kulliyāt, ghazal* 400. Instead of *ᶜāqil ū dīvāne*. 'intelligent and demented', the quotation in *Kashmīr* reads *ᶜāqil u farzāna* 'intelligent and clever', that in *Nāla-yi ᶜAndalīb*. with the change of one dot *ghāfil u farzāne* 'negligent and clever'. The contrast is lost in the *Kashmīr* variant.

[95] For the discussion of *waqt* in the mystical sense see Hujwīrī, *Kashf al-maḥjūb*, transl. R. A. Nicholson, Ch. XXIV: Time is a cutting sword, it cuts the roots of the future and the past.—Cf. also Rūmī, *Mathnawī* I 133 and Nicholson's commentary, Vol. VII p. 21; further Rūmī's *ghazals* Nr. 2241 and 2498 in the *Dīvān-i Kabīr*, and id. Nr. 2341, a *ghazal* about *samāᶜ*.

A DANCE OF SPARKS
THE IMAGERY OF FIRE IN GHĀLIB'S POETRY

Ghālib's Dancing-poem alludes in its fourth verse to the straw that will dance with the fire, and thus contains an image which is central to our poet. In Ghālib's imagery straw and thorns belong to the furnace; it is their privilege to kindle the fire and enhance its splendour and heat.

فنا کو سونپ ، گر مشتاق ہے اپنی حقیقت کا
فروغ طالع خاشاک ہے موقوف گلخن پر

That is why he could compare himself, being separated from those who could appreciate him and his art, to the 'straw that is not in the furnace'.

تھی وطن میں شان کیا غالب کہ ہو غربت میں قدر
بے تکلف ہوں وہ مشت خس کہ گلخن میں نہیں

But he could likewise sigh from within the prison :

Woe to this abode in which one can find no air except the hot storm that burns the straw and thorns of the desert.[1]

آہ ازیں خانہ کہ دروی نتوان یافت ہوا
جز سمومی کہ خس و خار بیابان سوزد

In consuming the bits of straw the fire sparkles forth a radiance of happiness and dances in spasms of joy, and the straw itself dances as well, just as our poet said in his Qaṣīda on God's Unity :

The dance of the straw on the flame renders me so much intoxicated that I know that the cupbearer has put saffron into the wine.

رقص خس بر شعلہ ز انسان سر خوشم دارد کہ من
دانم اندر بادہ ساق زعفران انداختہ

The dance of the straw in the flame is compared, here, to the movement of yellow saffron powder which was apparently put into the wine in

order to enhance its flavour, as already mentioned in a poem by ᶜUrfī;[2] the colour comparison—yellow into red—is quite correct. In most cases, however, Ghālib speaks not of the dance of straw but of the 'dance of the flame' or the 'dance of the spark'. One of his most quoted lines is :

The lust of the banquet lasts as long as a dance of sparks

گرمئی بزم ہے اک رقص شرر ہونے تک

That means, it ends immediately, for sparks live only a single moment, as our poet has stressed in a late Persian verse :

I am the sparks of love's radiant fire, so that the moment of my birth and my death are one —tanā nā hā yā hū!

شرر آتش رخشندۂ عشقم کہ یکی است
دم میلاد و وفاتم تنہ ناھا یا ھو

Ghālib has repeated the image of the *raqṣ-i sharar*, the 'dance of the sparks', in his *qaṣīdas* by boasting :

When I give a sign of my steadfastness to the fire of the heart,
I bring forth the dance of sparks from the nature of dust.

تمکین خود بر آتش دل گر نشان دھم
رقص شرر ز طینت اخگر بر آورم

His heart, though of dust, will loosen sparks as if it were a piece of flint that has been struck by some other stone. For Ghālib often associates in the classical tradition the sparks with the flint stones in which they lie concealed.

Blood would have gushed forth from the vein of the stone,
not to be stopped,
if what you know as sorrow were a spark of fire.

رگ سنگ سے ٹپکتا وہ لہو کہ پھر نہ تھمتا
جسے غم سمجھ رہے ہو یہ اگر شرار ہوتا

Such sparks also leap from the axe of Farhād, the unlucky lover who tried to hew through the rocks a passageway for a canal for milk and thus became a model for the staunch but lost labour of love

بدیں سوزم رواجی نیست ، ہے فرہادرا نازم
کہ از تاب شرار تیشۂ گر سست بازارش

The different aspects of love and jealousy again reveal themselves, to Ghālib, as fiery sparks, and

I pour sparks into the shirt of the rose when I describe your face;
I am the fire of jealousy, fallen into the breast of spring.

ریزم از وصف رخت گل را شرر در پیرهن
آتش رشکم ، به جان نو بهار افتاده ام

This fine combination of the red cheek, the red rose, and the red spark is, in its colouring, very typical of Ghālib's imagery.

In a similar combination of roses and sparks, which is somewhat more obscure to the Western reader, the poet says :

Even after his death the madman remains the goal
of the visit of children;
the sparks of the stones have shed roses over my tomb.

پس از مردن بھی دیوانه زیارت گه طفلاں ہے
شرار سنگ نے تربت پہ میری ، گل فشانی کی

The lunatic—a prime target for stone-throwing children—is a standing figure in Indo-Persian poetry; Ghālib's Urdu verse about this subject has become almost proverbial :

I, too, threw stones at Majnūn (the demented lover) in my childhood
until I thought of my own head.....

میں نے مجنوں پہ لڑکپن میں اسد
سنگ اٹھایا تھا کہ سر یاد آیا

In the above-mentioned verse, he connects the idea with roses which (as can be seen in many Indo-Muslim places of pilgrimage) are laid in tribute upon the tomb of the saints, overspreading the sarcophagus in thick layers; with these roses he equates the sparks that leap from the stones flung at him by children after his death.[3]

Another use of the connection 'straw-flame' is found in an expression which sounds strange if not repelling to a Western ear: it is 'the straw of the voice's flame' which occurs sometimes in Ghālib's verses.[4] But the connection of the candle and its 'tongue', e.g., its wick, with speech is rather common in the Indo-Persian tradition. The extinguished candle is 'silent', and the 'candle of talk' can become more radiant by 'adding straw to the flame of speech', i.e, giving it more fuel for speaking. Ghālib dwells on the 'voice's flame' in a number of

his verses and may even fear that he has waxed so hot in his melodies that he has become 'the roast of his voice's flame', a rather weird idea indeed!

Quite contrary to Ghālib's use of the straw-and-flame[5] image was the usual association with 'straw-and-torrent' as employed by classical imagery: the torrent seizes everything in his way and sets the straw and all kinds of sprigs and rubbish to dancing on the foam. Kalīm, one of the great masters of 17th century India, cleverly combines both motifs in a verse which is reminiscent of Ghālib's way of thought:

Be at times the rubbish of the torrent, and at
times the straw of the flame —
He who wanders through different modes will not
dwell in one halting-place.

گاهی خاشاک سیل ، گه خس شعله باش
ساکن یک مرحله سالک اطوار نیست

Ghālib would say, in describing his own state of mind :

Like unto a wave I waxed into a flood,
in the style of the flame I dance in fire.[6]

بسان موج سیبالم به طوفان
به رنگ شعله سیر قصم در آتش

Time and again he returns to the association of straw and fire, sometimes inventing daring images, as in his *qaṣīda* on Divine Unity where he says that he who ventures to describe God in words

has thrown on the steed of the flame the horse-armour of straw,

آنکه و صفت را ز خود بینی به گفتن داده ساز
بر سمند شعله خس بر گستوان انداخته

i.e., has attempted something impossible, and has thus doomed himself to failure.

The flame is not irritated when straw hangs upon it—why, then, should the poet refrain from speaking when mean and miserly men insinuate themselves into his company ?

طبعم از دخل خسان باز نه استد ز سخن
شعله را ، غالب ، از آویزش خاشاک چه باک

(The verse, which again contains a hint to the 'flame of speech', more-

over embodies a subtle hint on the word *khas* in its twofold meaning of 'rubbish' and 'mean, miser'.) On the contrary, the flame is in need of some straw for presenting itself more radiantly :

به عرض شهرت خویش احتیاج ما دارد
چو شعلهٔ که نیاز اوفتد به خار و خسش

Ghālib also uses the relation of straw, thorns and fire in the traditional meaning of substantial union. Just as Rūmī had described the block of iron that assumes itself to be the fire in which it had been cast,[7] Ghālib claims :

Straw and thorns, whenever they burn in fire
become fire —
I have died from the delight of the lip so much,
that I shall become soul.

خار و خس هر گه در آتش سوخت ، آتش میشود
مردم از ذوق لبت چندان که جان خواهد شدن

The soul is imagined, in poetry, as being manifest in the breath and bearing thus association with the kiss.[8] The exchange of souls by means of a kiss is an idea found already in ancient Greek and Latin poetry. In Persian, *jān be-lab*, 'he whose soul is on his lips', is a term for somebody on the point of death, but in poetical language it is moreover a term for someone who is dying, longing for a kiss, to put his soul into the mouth of the beloved and thus partake in the latter's soul, while sucking the lips that quicken him. From here, the connection with the life-giving breath of Jesus was easy.[9] The lover in Ghālib's verse is changed into soul because he is obsessed by the soul of the beloved, being consumed by the fire of love.

An idea inherited from ancient science is likewise found in Ghālib's straw-and-fire imagery: the straw is beheld in expectation of the fire, or fire is viewed as an essential part of its ingredients (being one of the four elements which constitute the material world) and longs for its liberation. The poet speaks, therefore, of the fire which can be detected from the throb of the pulse of the straw and longs for fire.

عجز سے اپنے یہ جانا کہ وہ بد خو ہوگا
نبض خس سے تپش شعلهٔ سوزاں سمجھا

He also may describe those who have attained the last station of

longing by saying that

they have become straw and thorns for their own fire

پوچھے ہے کیا وجود و عدم اہل شوق کا
آپ اپنی آگ کے خس و خاشاک ہو گئے

That means, they consummate themselves in uninterrupted burning which they enhance by casting their hearts and souls into the flames.

As far as I can judge, there are few poets in the Islamic world who used the symbolism of fire as frequently as Ghālib did. It is surely no accident that Iqbāl, in his *Jāvīdnāme*, where he confronts Ghālib, Ṭāhira and Ḥallāj in the Sphere of Jupiter, often uses metaphors and expressions associated with constant fire, 'fire under the feet', 'fire of longing'.

To be sure, already in classical times—especially in the verses of ʿAṭṭār[10] and Rūmī—almost innumerable verses sing of the fire of the heart, the burning of love, the roasting of the liver in the flames of separation and the annihilation of the moth in the flame of the candle; but the tragic aspects of fire-symbolism became more and more evident in Indo-Persian literature, beginning with ʿUrfī's *qaṣīdas* and *ghazals*.

Certainly, it was Ḥāfiẓ who in the mid-14th century coined the verse :

The fire of the cheek of the rose has burnt the
harvest of the nightingale;
the smiling face of the candle became the
calamity of the moth.

آتش رخسار گل خرمن بلبل بسوخت
چهرهٔ خندان شمع آفت پروانه شد

This imagery has been imitated through the centuries—whether by ʿUrfī who 'throws fire into the nightingales by his *gulbāng*'[11] (the 'loud shout' or 'note of the nightingale', a word which contains the word *gul*, 'rose') or by Mīr who speaks in his Urdu verses of his beloved with similar expressions. Finally Ghālib portrays the same idea in his Persian verse :

The growth of the rose has cast me today in suspecting,
perhaps that my nest on the rose's twig is burnt again.

مرا دیدن گل در گمان فگند امروز
که باز بر سر شاخ گل آشیانم سوخت

He speaks of this strange association between rose-fire and nightingale in his *qaṣīda* on Divine Unity :

آتشی از روی گلهای بهار افروخته
شعلهٔ در جان مرغ صبح خوان انداخته

The Creator Himself has placed fire into the face of the rose abloom in spring, thus casting the flames into the poor bird's heart.

To know the manifestation of the rose as burning fire:

آن جلوهٔ گل آتش سوزان شناختن

That is what he considered essential for the lover. This motif of the 'rose-fire' has been very popular also among Turkish poets, even in our day.[12]

Ghālib can as well combine the two images of the Ḥāfiẓ-verse, fancying that the fiery face of the rose has attained such a state of glow that even the butterflies draw nigh to its twigs :

گل چهره بر فروخت بد انسان که بارها
پروانه را هوس به سر شاخسار برد

This is a beautiful *ḥusn-i taᶜlīl*, 'phantastic aetiology', for explaining why butterflies flutter around a rosebush, as Persian poetry otherwise will not permit them any movement but to spin around the candle and to perish in the flame. Ghālib believes that the nightingale too should be burnt out of jealousy for the rose, and he reproaches him because his wings are not yet coloured by the red flame.

بلبل ، سزد زغیرت پروانه سوختن
رنگین به شعله نیست ترا بال و پر هنوز

The bird whose nest is being burnt

طائری که بسوزانی آشیانش و لرزد...

is a subtle metaphor for the heart that trembles at the thought of separation.

And here, Ghālib is surely indebted to Kalīm and his oft imitated verse :

In this garden, when a rose does not listen to my lament —
where is the lightning to carry away my nest ?

درین چمن چو گلی نشنود فغان مرا
کجاست برق که بر دارد آشیان مرا

Kalīm, too, had compared the cheek of the rose to this ravaging glare of lightning.[13] The relation between flame, lightning (which is in Oriental poetry always seen as red), and the red roses could lead, then, to new combinations which might add to the picture the red colour of blood or of wounds.[14]

It was ᶜUrfī whose impressive poems (with the rhyme-word *ātish*, 'fire', or *ātish-ast*, 'is fire') have largely contributed to shape the fire-imagery of the Indo-Persian poets. One of his poems has been imitated by Ghālib :

Without cermonies—to be in affliction is better than the fear of affliction —
the bottom of the sea is a paradisical fountain,
and (only) the surface of the sea is fire.

بے تکلف در بلا بودن به از بیم بلا ست
قعر دریا سلسبیل و روی دریا آتشست

This verse is an exact reversal of ᶜUrfī's statement, to wit, that fire lies concealed within the depths of the sea so that the lover should become first a fish, swimming in the clear water and revelling in the pleasure of life and love; but that later he is to become a salamander and thus better equipped to endure the pain which expects him the more the deeper he gets involved.[15] Naẓīrī who, like ᶜUrfī, composed several poems rhyming in 'fire', similarly describes

the path of the lover amidst seven seas of fire.

راه عاشق درمیان هفت دریا آتش است

And Kalīm compares the poor man who 'enters the path of love with the cane of reason' to one who tries to traverse a fiery desert with wooden legs.[16] Before him, Ṭālib-i Āmulī had opened his *dīvān* with the poetical prayer :

O my God, enhance the flame of my longing !
Make me into fire and cast me into the world !

الهی شعلهٔ شوقم فزون ساز
مرا آتش کن ودرعالم انداز

thus preparing the reader for the numerous verses on 'fire', 'burning'

and related words in his *dīvān*. But it seems that Ghālib has surpassed his predecessors by the variety of expressions connected with fire-symbolism. He said, in one of his frequent ironical lines, that people fancy him to be a fire worshipper when they see the sparks leap from his hot sighs :

آتش پرست کہتے ہیں اہل جہاں مجھے
سر گرم نالہ ہائے شرر بار دیکھ کر

and comparisons of his state with that of Zarathustra, or of his heart with the burnt fire temple

سوخت آتشکدہ ، زآتش نفسم بخشیدند . . .

(neither of them rare in classical Persian poetry)[17] are found several times in both Urdu and Persian :[18]

It is a dishonour for the breast if it is not a fire temple,
It is a disgrace for the heart if the breath does not spread fire

ہے ننگ سینہ دل اگر آتشکدہ نہ ہو
ہے عار دل نفس اگر آذر فشاں نہیں

Ghālib may also, like a number of earlier poets, among them Amīr Khusrau, allude to the custom of the Hindus to burn their dead or to make a wife commit *suttee;* for he wants his fiery state to continue even after death :

Burn my bier, for I am not less than a brahmin,
I can not carry into my tomb the shame of not-burning.[19]

نعشی مرا بسوز ، کم از برہمن نیم
ننگ نسوختن نتوان در مزار برد

Sūkhtan and *jalnā* 'to burn', in Persian and Urdu respectively, are two of the key-words of Ghālib's poetry, and there are numerous verses which rhyme either to 'fire' or to words connected with fire.[20] The poet eventually needs no longer fiery tulips and the red blossoms of the Judas-tree, as his whole nature is fire.

آتشی اندر نہاد من زدہ اند
لالہ و ارغوان نمی خواہم

Since his nature becomes a red flower bed as a result of all the sparks

that glow within him, the dark spot (*dāgh*),[21] e.g., cauterization-mark, placed upon his heart by separation and yearning, can suddenly sprout into a *chirāghān*, a firework; it is 'the seed of a cypress of firework'.[22]

مرا ہر داغ دل اک تخم ہے سرو چراغاں کا

Although Ghālib has once written a *qiṭa'* on a genuine fire-work in Delhi (Qit. Nr. 59), the expression *chirāghān* is usually associated with the sparks that issue from the scar of his heart, delighting everyone with a most lovely spectacle. The Western reader may be strangely reminded of the lines of Edna St. Vincent Millay who uses the burning-image in a very similar connection :

My candle burns at both ends;
It will not last the night —
But ah, my foes, and oh, my friends —
It gives a lovely light![23]

Ghālib's imagery sometimes surpasses the limits of what the general reader would consider good taste; as for example when he seeks 'the roast of the salamander's heart' for the table of his heart

مرے قدح میں ہے صہبائے آتش پنہاں
بہ روے سفرہ کباب دل سمندر کھینچ

From the days of Plinius, the salamander has been considered to be an extremely 'cold' animal which can extinguish fire. In Islamic folklore it is sometimes thought to have been born in fire and is, at least from the 13th century onwards, regarded as a bird, not as a reptile —perhaps a confusion with the Phoenix who is reborn out of fire.[24] We find quite an amazing amount of these animals creeping through Ghālib's poetry though I doubt that he had ever actually been aware of a genuine fire-salamander's appearance, as the species is nowhere found in the Indo-Pakistan Sub-continent. He may say, that 'the nation of the roses has adopted the salamander's religion',

بسکہ بہ آتش سپرد تامیہ سیمای گل
امت گل فوج فوج کیش سمندر گرفت

for the face of the rose is glowing like fire. He himself bears within his breast the heart of a moth fluttering intent on self-immolation, but tempered with the steadfastness of a salamander which cannot burn.[25]

این چہ شور است کہ از شوق تو در سر دارم
دل پروانہ و تمکین سمندر دارم

Imitating ᶜUrfī's fire-*ghazal* he describes himself as a combination of outward water and inward fire so that he who searches his sea for fishes will find salamanders instead.

از برون سو آبم اما از درون سو آتشم
ماهی ار جوئی سمندر یابی از دریای من

Or else, he may claim to unite in himself the nature of the nightingale and the function of the salamander, etc.

هیچ میدانی که غالب چون بسر بردم به دهر
من که طبع بلبل و شغل سمندر داشتم

The poet wants to be set fully aflame so that neither 'smoke of speech' nor hearing may rise from him

تا کیم دود شکایت زبیان بر خیزد
بزن آتش که شنیدن زمیان بر خیزد

but that all and everything be burnt. That is why he is overjoyed when beholding his present state :

How lovely is my state: the body fire! the bed fire !
Where is the wild rue that I may throw it on the fire ?

خوشا حالم تن آتش بستر آتش
سپندی کو که افشانم بر آتش

The seed of the wild rue, sipand, is used for fumigations against the evil eye; when thrown onto the fire it 'dances', as many poets say. Since Ghālib considers complete burning as the state of perfect happiness, he needs magic to ward off the Evil Eye of any envy-ridden person who might wish to harm him. Just as earlier poets commonly cast their hearts, or bits of their liver as a substitute for the wild rue upon the fire of love, Ghālib compares the innermost spot of the heart, the *suwaidā*, 'little black one', to the rue.[26]

But what happens to the poor lover who is so completely consumed by the flames of love ? His body is burnt to cinders, and so is his heart—why, then, gives the beloved no rest and disturbs his remnants, poking in his ashes ? She will no more find that heart which once burnt for her ...

جلا ہے جسم جہاں ، دل بھی جل گیا ہوگا
کریدتے ہو جو اب راکھ جستجو کیا ہے

In a comparatively simple Persian verse Ghālib claims to be superior to Abraham for whom, as the tradition attests, the flames of Nimrod's pyre were changed into a cool rosegarden (cf. Sura 21/69);[27] Ghālib, however, needs not even a pyre for burning :

Look, how I can burn without flame, without sparks !

شنیدۂ که به آتش نسوخت ابراهیم
ببین که بی شرر و شعله میتوانم سوخت

Once more Ghālib has used the Qurᵓānic figure of Abraham, so often associated by Persian poets with the symbolism of fire-rosegarden—in one of his finest didactic lines he alludes to the obedience of Ishmael who was to be sacrificed by his father :

The child puts his neck under the sword of his father,
when this very father enters into the fire of Nimrod.

فرزند زیر تیغ پدر می نهد گلو
گر خود پدر در آتش نمرود میرود

The child beholds the heroic behaviour of his father who is willing to undergo all trials and tribulations for the sake of his faith or his ideals, seeing in him the perfect model for himself and the ideal with which he wishes to be identified; he will thereupon obey him without qualms—a sound pedagogic counsel for parents !

Notwithstanding its destructive force, fire definitely enjoys a positive evaluation in Ghālib's poetic language, as it is associated with the power of love and is the sensuous symbol for the domination of the Beloved when He reveals Himself in His cruel and wrathful aspect of 'consuming Fire', a fire which destroys everything besides itself.[28] This positive evaluation becomes particularly vivid when Ghālib evokes the image of lightning, which was, in traditional Persian poetry, often associated with the smile or the laughter, in contrast to the 'weeping of the cloud'. We saw earlier that straw and grass are longing for the moment when their interior fire shall be set free. ᶜUrfī puts it correctly when he says :

Wherever my way passed in the desert of gnosis,
I saw the grass in trading with the lightning.

هر گه رهم فتاد بصحرای معرفت
با برق در معامله دیدم گیاهرا

Ghālib therefore considers the grass (that is he himself), as having been athirst already in Non-Existence (*ʿadam*) for the lightning of affliction.

سبزهٔ ما در عدم تشنهٔ برق بلاست
در ره سیل بهار شرح دمیدن دهیم

A frequently interpreted verse of his which asserts a close association between destruction and edification belongs to the same group of images :

The First Principle (hayūlā) of the lightning which destroys the harvest is the hot blood of the husbandman.

مری تعمیر میں مضمر ہے اک صورت خرابی کی
ہیولی برق خرمن کا ہے خون گرم دھقاں کا

The villager who cultivates the earth bears in his own nature the fire which, one day, will be manifest in destroying his harvest; and since 'burning' conveys the meaning of destruction for the sake of edification, the lightning will be instrumental in leading the harvest to its proper destination.[29] Another of Ghālib's Urdu verses conveys a similar idea :

The brightness of life comes from the house-destroying love. The assembly is without a candle as long as the lightning is not in the harvest.

رونق ہستی ہے عشق خانہ ویراں سازسے
انجمن بے شمع ہے گر برق خرمن میں نہیں

Thus 'the spiritually free have lit the candle of the house of mourning from the lightning' which destroys all.

غم نہیں ہوتا ہے آزادوں کو بیش از یک نفس
برق سے کرتے ہیں روشن شمع ماتم خانہ ہم

The reader acquainted with German literature and philosophy will certainly be reminded of Nietzsche's view expressed in the foreword of 'Fröhliche Wissenschaft' where he attributes to the flame the same positive value :

> Wir müssen beständig unsere Gedanken aus unserem Schmerz gebären und mütterlich ihnen alles mitgeben, was wir von Blut, Feuer, Lust, Leidenschaft, Qual, Gewissen, Schicksal, Verhängnis in uns haben. Leben—das heisst für uns, Alles, was wir sind, beständig in Licht und Flamme verwandeln.

The Western reader who is usually not accustomed to this philosophy of immolation and probably shocked by the repetition of such weird metaphors in Ghālib's poetical work should remember such sentences, all the more as the remarkable cross-relation between Ghālib, Iqbāl and Nietzsche can be understood by meditating upon their similar approaches to the problem of what we may call the Phoenix-effect, i.e., gaining new life by willingly burning oneself along with one's 'nest'. This imagery is in perfect harmony with the verses of many mystics in the lands of Islam who have regarded the annihilation of the self as the prerequisite for union with the eternal Beloved. For them, suffering "is God Himself, whereas happiness comes from Him" as Ḥallāj once said.[30] These ideas came to be combined with the actual suffering of the masses brought about by the deteriorating political and social situation. They were further nurtured in an environment where the lover had to overcome severe obstacles on the worldly plan, be it the cruelty inflicted upon him by his coy mistress or his coquettish young beloved, be it the tyranny of unjust rulers or the assault of plundering soldiers. Thus these ideas oozed into all strata of thought to permeate the whole fabric of Persian, Urdu and Turkish literatures until, at the end of the 19th century, a new *Weltgefühl* expresses itself in those literatures. The poets began to teach activity instead of suffering, and self-realisation instead of annihilation. Yet, the role of suffering and martyrdom as a means of obtaining a higher goal is central in their verses as well; now it was the flame of the thirst for political freedom which coloured their poetry.

To turn back once more to the lightning : we should not forget the charming image in Ghālib's vocabulary that the lightning 'has dyed his feet with henna'—anyone whose feet have been bedaubed with red henna will find himself unable to walk fast; Ghālib might therefore think that life passes so quickly that compared with it the lightning is as slow as if he had henna-dyed feet.

تیری فرصت کے مقابل اے عمر
برق کو پا بہ حنا باندھتے ہیں

The poet often describes himself as fiery, so much so that his

reed-pen 'casts fire into the reed-bed',

خامه هم راز دم گرم من است
آتش ازنئے در نیستان می زنم

a comfortable allusion to the beginning of Rūmī's *Mathnawī* where love casts fire into the complaining reed;[31] as the pen which writes his love-poems is made of reed it can easily scatter its sparks into the world. In Persian poetry, especially in India, reed-bed and fire as well as reed-flute and reed-pen are often associated,[32] and Ghālib's verse is in this respect hardly original. However, when he claims that his running is so swift (=hot) that he has even burnt the thorns in the desert, thereby deserving the thanks of all the feet of subsequent travellers,

خارها از اثر گرمی رفتارم سوخت
منتی بر قدم راه روانست مرا

the reader will accept this strange idea with a smile. He will also read with considerable amusement the statement that the desert appears like a paper spotted with firemarks from the hot footprints of the poet

یک قلم کاغذ آتش زدہ ہے صفحۂ دشت
نقش پا میں ہے تب گرمئی رفتار ہنوز

who lives constantly 'with fire under his feet'.

بسکہ ہوں غالب اسیری میں بھی آتش زیرپا
موے آتش دیدہ ہے حلقہ مری زنجیر کا

Ghālib's fire comprises not only his own person, or the objects of this world; he even intends to burn Paradise with his flamelike breath so that no one may know that Paradise was nothing but the abode of his beloved.

خلدرا از نفس شعلہ فشاں میسوزم
تا ندانند حریفاں کہ سر کوی تو بود

The fire which glows in his breast is stronger than hellfire:

Where would be in hellfire this heat ?
The burning of hidden griefs is something different.

آتش دوزخ میں یہ گرمی کہاں
سوز غمہاے نہانی اور ہے

He goes even so far as to tell his reader not to be afraid of eternal punishment in Hell: for that will be a lovely spring without autumn.

زینہار از تعب دوزخ جاوید مترس
خوش بہاریست کزو بیم خزاں بر خیزد

(The tertium comparationis is, probably, the left-out rose of which the fire reminds him; the roses of our garden will wither in the fall but Hell-fire is everlasting ...)[33] Still, this daring hyperbole is contradicted by a—though less artistic but more human—line in which he addresses the Prophet of Islam, trusting in his intercession for his community :

Eternal Hell is unlawful for Thy community —
Beware that thou shouldst not intercede for those who are burnt !

بر است تو دوزخ جاوید حرامست
حاشا کہ شفاعت نکنی سوختگان را

The idea that hellfire is no longer required for those burnt by love in this life goes back to early Islamic mystics. Jalāluddīn Rūmī has once associated this idea with the name of Muḥammad's arch-enemy, called Abū Lahab, 'Father of the flame', whose major sin was that he lacked this fire of love :

It is said, the burning fire is the lot of the infidels,
I have not seen anyone deprived of Thy fire but Abū Lahab.[34]

گویند سوز آتش باشد نصیب کافر
محروم از آتش تو جز بو لہب ندیدم

As to Ghālib, it is not hellfire which burns him, who is 'infidel owing to love', but the 'jealousy of the heat of Ṣanᶜān's adventures'

کافر عشقم و دوزخ نبود در خور من
غیرت گرمی ہنگامۂ صنعانم سوخت

Shaikh Ṣanᶜān (as ᶜAṭṭār describes him in his *Manṭiq uṭ-ṭair*) had been a devout saint who had fallen in love with a Christian maiden, had exchanged the rosary for the infidel's girdle, had drunk wine and

herded the swine of his beloved. He became a favourite model case for those poets who stressed the overwhelming force of love which can destroy even the piety of 70 years. According to ᶜAṭṭār, the Shaikh returned later on into the fold of Islam. His fate inspired several of Ghālib's lines as the latter claims to envy him, the veritable heretic. But this kind of envy and admiration has been a *topos* with Persian poets of the post-ᶜAṭṭār period, and is not the expression of a subjective state of mind.

Since the use of contrasting pairs of words belongs to the standard rhetorical devices in Persian poetry, the combination of fire and water as manifest in the unhappy lover's tears and the burning of his heart has always been favoured by poets. This combination was popular already with the earliest Arabic mystical poets around 900 who claimed that a dearth of fire and water would certainly take place if the burning hearts of the lovers and the floods of their tears would not vouchsafe both elements to the world.[35] It would surprise us if Ghālib had not written a number of lines in this strain :

My weeping is such that water is beneath the dust
—that much,
My lamentation is such that there is fire up to the
summit of Pleiads

گریهٔ دارم که تا تحت الثری آبست و بس
نالهٔ دارم که تا اوج ثریا آتشست

A subtle, though traditional, pun juxtaposes *thurayyā*, 'Pleiads', and *tharā*, 'dust'. The fire in his breast and the water (he means, of course, the wine) in his cup rend the poet independent of both Hell and the sweet well of Kauthar in Paradise.

تا چه سنجم دوزخ و کوثر که من نیز اینچنین
آتشی در سینه و آبی به ساغر داشتم

In a similar though wittier image he claims to possess
the furnace of the old woman and the condition of the deluge

تنور پیرزن و ماجرای طوفان را

According to Islamic tradition the deluge started with some hot water which emerged from the furnace of an old woman in the Iraqi town of Kūfa: Ghālib's heart incorporates the heat of this very furnace, and in his eyes there is enough water to inundate the whole earth.

Another contrasting pair of words which Persian-writing poets would use frequently is the pun on *gulshan*, 'rose-garden', and *gulkhan*, the 'fireplace in the bathhouse', 'dust-bin'.[36] It designates the contrast between the delightful place where roses bloom, visited by happy people in the springtime, and the lowest place in the bathhouse where only the most indigent used to seek shelter in winter, and where a few red sparks might occasionally evoke the memory of the rosegarden. The *gulkhan* is, as the medieval Turkish poet Yūnus Emre (d. 1321) puts it so excellently, the place where the nightingales had burnt their wings in the fire of love.[37] Kalīm remarks that eventually even the leaves and petals of the roses will wither and decay and that their shrubs will be cast in the fire—therefore :

The eye that sees One, knows no difference between
rosegarden and ash-house.

سبزهٔ گل را که بینی آتش و خاکستر ست
چشم یک بین امتیاز گلشن از گلخن نکرد

Ghālib, in his turn, reverts the idea and tells us that he is

wounded by the rosegarden, as it is spring, and
no duration (of happiness possible)
but made happy by the firehouse, for there
is autumn, and yet no autumn

داغیم ز گلشن که بهارست و بقا هیچ
شادیم به گلخن که خزانست و خزان نیست

for : *The radiance of the ascendent of the straw is dependent upon the ash-house —*

فروغ طالع خاشاک ہے موقوف گلخن پر

Straw, as mentioned before, reaches its destination only when thrown into the fire : that is the happiest moment predicted by its horoscope. That is why Ghālib complains about his own uneven state :

When I am a rose, I am in the ash-house,
when I am a straw, I am in the rosegarden.

جو گل ہوں تو ہوں گلخن میں جو خس ہوں تو ہوں گلشن میں

Wherever he may chance to be, he feels that he is in the wrong place, a place where his true value can not be appreciated.

One of the favourite images in Persian poetry is that of the candle, used in different connotations. The traditional combination is that of the candle with the moth as found for the first time in Ḥallāj's *Kitāb aṭ-ṭawāsīn*. Besides providing a fine metaphor for the tongue and thus for speech, the candle was from classical times often used to express the poet's own state of mind: it laughs and weeps at the same time; its flame is radiant with joy, but its body melts away in hot tears.[38] It is natural that Ghālib should have used the image of the candle as often as his predecessors had done. Most of the current comparisons (so that with the red tulips) are found in his Persian *ghazal* rhyming in *shumᶜ*, 'candle'.

We find, in his poetry, the candle in association with the moth, although not too frequently; there is also the traditional comparison of the candle with the tongue, given in his Urdu poem with the rhyme-word *shamᶜ*, 'candle' :

The story-telling of the candle resembles the way
of those who aim at annihilation.

کرے ہے صرف بہ ایمائے شعلہ قصہ تمام
بطرز اہل فنا ہے فسانہ خوانئی شمع

For its tongue, the wick, diminishes by 'talking', e.g., giving light. And silence means death for those endowed with the gift of speech, for the extinguished candle is useless—an idea expressed almost verbatim by Mir Dard.[39]

Ghālib invents still another positive evaluation of the fire in association with the candle: it rescues the lover from his troubles and his pain. His way of expressing this idea is quite ingenious :

By the splendour of beauty the difficulty of the
lovers becomes solved,
the thorn of the candle's foot will not disappear,
unless the flame disentrenches it.

فروغ حسن سے ہوتی ہے حل مشکل عاشق
نہ نکلے شمع کے پاسے نکالے گر نہ خار آتش

Here, the wick is compared to the thorn which, embedded in the foot, causes pain; the wick's consumption by the flame means the destruction of the 'thorn', hence the deliverance of the candle from its pain which lasts as long as life itself.[40]

But the candle is more often connected with death—the underlying idea is that it illuminates and animates the gay assembly at night, but is extinguished when morning comes, just as the conversation of those friends—who have gladdened the assembly and have set their hearts to gleaming—ends in these morning hours.[41] The expression *shamᶜ-i maḥfil*, 'candle of the assembly', which is used to designate the most attractive personality in such gatherings should be borne in mind when reading any line associating the candle with the assembly and the morning. ᶜUrfī had written the famous verse :

Do not imagine that when you leave, the world will also pass away,
A thousand candles have been slain, but the assembly is still there.

گمان مبر کہ تو چوں بگزری جہاں بگزشت
ہزار شمع بکشتند و انجمن باقیست

The 'killed' candle as well as the 'mute oil-lamp' (*chirāgh*, an oil-lamp with a wick, deprived of which it is useless and 'without tongue') became standard words for the Mughal poets, and the images created by their ingenious use are sometimes very touching and impressive.[42] Ghālib speaks of the candle which shines till dawn and then is healed from the grief of existence.[43]

غم ہستی کا اسد کس سے ہو جز مرگ علاج
شمع ہر رنگ میں جلتی ہے سحر ہونے تک

But sometimes the burning candle is extinguished too early, and the poet in his bitter mood may compare himself to just such a candle, a candle which remains 'an imperfect scar', useless and suffering, neither radiant in the company of the friends, nor dead-silent at dawn.

اس شمع کی طرح سے جس کو کوئی بجھادے
میں بھی جلے ہوؤں میں ہوں داغ نا تمامی

'The smoke of the slain candle' is an expression of which Ghālib is particularly fond,

شمع خموشم وز سرم دود میرود

and in a complicated Urdu quatrain

رحم کر ظالم کہ کیا بود چراغ کشتہ ہے
نبض بیمار وفا دود چراغ کشتہ ہے

دل لگی کی آرزو بے چین رکھتی ہے ہمیں
ورنہ یاں بے رونقی سود چراغ کشتہ ہے

he compares the pulse of one who is rendered ill by his loyalty in love with the smoke of the slain candle: the fire of love no longer consumes him, and only the last throbbing issue of smoke reveals the tiny spark of life left within him.

Quite close to this melancholy metaphor is the expression 'candle of the grave'. ᶜUrfī had furnished the classical model for it in his verse :

Wherever I turn there comes the scent of the killed lamp —
Probably formerly the tomb of those slain by love was there.

بہر سو میروم بوی چراغ کشتہ می آید
مگر روزی مزار کشتگان عشق بود اینجا

The most utterly desolate state in whose description Indo-Persian and Urdu poets indulge is that of the candle flickering at the tomb of a destitute stranger.[44] Ghālib, once more, laments his place outside the pale of society, and asks :

Why burns in the desert at the tomb of strangers
that radiant candle
which would be befitting for the happy gathering ?

در بادیہ بر گور غریبان زچہ سوزد
آن شمع فروزان کہ بود در خور محفل

During his imprisonment, he complains in his truly touching *tarkīb-band* of his situation in quite similar terms taken from the sphere of burning, though not from the candle-imagery :

Do not burn my aloes-wood in vain—if it has to be burnt
then let it burn in the king's censer.

عود من ہرزہ مسوزید و گر سوختنی ست
بگزارید کہ در مجمر سلطان سوزد

The comparison of the suffering lover with aloes-wood that produces lovely fragrance while being consumed by the flames was known from the early days of Persian poetry and Rūmī often combines the *ᶜūd*, 'aloe', with its *sūz*, 'burning' and the *ᶜīd*, 'festival', and its *sāz*, 'manner', or 'instrument'. Our poet may even admit that his life passes in such

darkness that the light of the candle of the tomb makes him joyful

عمری بہ تیرگی بسر آوردہ ام کہ مرگ
شادم بہ روشنائی شمع مزار کرد

or he may call himself 'the moth of the candle of his own tomb'.

پروانۂ چراغ مزار خودیم ما

Unable to express the thousands of wishes which are hidden in his breast he heaves a sigh :

The dead candle am I, without tongue, on the
tomb of the strangers.

خموشی میں نہاں خوں گشتہ لاکھوں آرزوئیں ہیں
چراغ مردہ ہوں میں بے زباں گور غریباں کا

Ghālib speaks of smoke in connection with the shadow of the King-bird's wings, but he also devotes quite a number of verses to the dark smoke enshrouding his heart and his life, symbolizing his confused mind and the hopelessness of his situation. In an address to his beloved he draws a comparison between her and this state of his : she lives in the colourful waves of joy, he fills heaven and earth with the fire of his sighs.

فرش سے تا عرش واں طوفاں تھا موج رنگ کا
یاں زمیں سے آسماں تک سوختن کا باب تھا

This poem contains many fire-images other than this from its very first line to its end. Or else he complains :

From bouquets and bouquets of hyacinths and roses your bed-linen
from heaps and heaps of smoke and sparks my woof and warp.

از دستہ دستہ سنبل و گل رخت خواب تو
و ز پشتہ پشتہ دود و شرر پود و تار من

The smoke and the hyacinths, the sparks and the roses form a perfect parallelism as it is visible also in the closing lines of his qaṣīda III in honour of the Prophet.[45] More than once he speaks of the fire-particles that rise from his bed-stead.

ز رخت خوابم آتشپارہ ہا رفتست ، بی داند
تبم در لرزہ افگند ست باد صبحگاہی را

or set the bedroom aflame;

یا ۔ گزمی هنگامهٔ خواهش نشکیم
آتش به شبستان زدم ، ای آب ، کجائی

and not only his bedding but his whole existence is, without distinction, made of fire—both sides of the fabric of his life are alike, as it is the case with the flame.

تماش هستی یکسر از آتشست آتش
مرا چو شعله بود پشت و روی کار یکی

On the other hand his word may be compared to smoke, quite in keeping with the ancient proverb according to which the intelligent can discern the trace of fire from the smoke it produces.[46]

بجوی حال من از قال من که کار شناس
سراغ آتش سوزنده از دخان گیرد

The poet tells us that all the walls of his hut have become blackened by the smoke rising from his heart, so that his abode looks like the black tent of Laila, the beloved of the demented Majnūn:[47]

بسکه دیوار و در از دود دلم گشت سیاه
کلبهٔ من به سیه خیمهٔ لیلی ماند

In one of his *mathnawīs* he again describes how he is completely transformed into flames without smoke; therefore he can once more claim in another poem that his fire of longing produces no smoke whatsoever; his beloved can therefore hardly be blamed for her lack of tears when beholding him.

گرشی بدیدن من گریه روننداد ، چه جرم
نهاد آتش شوق من از دخان خالیست

The situation would be quite different if the glow within him had produced some outward sign of it, that is: the smoke which bites the eyes and causes tears.[48]

This verse is typical of Ghālib's talent to express a melancholy topic with a dash of humour,—occasionally attaining the first outposts of black humour. That is surely true of a verse in which he has used the

traditional image of the blackish down appearing on the face of the beloved and consequently destroying his youthful beauty. He utters this thought, so common to Persian poetry, in his fire-imagery, possibly influenced by one of Sa^{c}dī's quatrains :

As a result of the down's advent the market of
the beloved became cold (i.e. without customers),
The down of the friends face was so-to-speak the
smoke of the slain candle.

آمد خط سبز هوا ہے سرد تجو بازار دوست
دور شمع کشته تها شاید خط رخسار دوست

The radiant, candle-like loveliness vanishes into black lines which mark the end of the friend's youth so that he can no longer remain an object of admiration and love for his former worshipper. Very elegant is the combination of the 'cold', i.e., no longer frequented, market with the smoke which is a sign of the extinguished, i.e., 'cold' candle.

We are therefore not at all surprised that Ghālib predicts that after his death

the flame of love will wear black, after me ...

شعلهٔ عشق سیه پوش هوا میرے بعد

Ghālib sees signs of fire everywhere. In the garden,

the path is the wick for the tulip's cauterization-mark

یاں جاده بهی فتیله ہے لالے کے داغ کا

The tulip, burning red and therefore often compared to flames, is distinguished by the black spot in its 'heart';[49] this spot—not rarely mentioned by poets in a negative sense—is now associated with the 'wick' of the straight path in the orchard which the beloved might have graced once with her visit; thus burning the hearts of the flowers with the mark of yearning and separation. The sunset which dyes the cloud in a flush of lovely red hues reminds Ghālib of the moment when fire rained upon the rosegarden on the day of separation from his beloved.

مجهے اب دیکھ کر ابر شفق آلوده یاد آیا
که فرقت میں تری آتش برستی تهی گلستان پر

This is a very appropriate image when one thinks of the small rose-like clouds that momentarily spread over the sky in certain evenings.

And those who know Delhi or Lahore will certainly remember how the red sandstone buildings of the Mughal period, like the Red Fort, 'answer light to light' immediately after sunset; the walls appear transparent for an instant as if they conceal a fire which now shines forth in shades of deep copper and purple.

Ghālib may exclaim in jubilant exaggeration that he would burn the wings of the 'Anqā in the realm of Non-Existence by dint of the fire of his imagination, but in the same breath he may write one of his most touching poetic lines in which sheer human hopelessness is expressed without any rhetorical play :

In the heart, the delight of union and the
memory of the friend are no longer left —
Fire fell into this house so that whatever was
has been burnt to cinders.

دل میں ذوق وصل و یاد یار تک باقی نہیں
آگ اس گھر میں لگی ایسی کہ جو تھا جل گیا

Or could anything be more forlorn than the idea that even the memory of the beloved and the wish for union has been, for ever, annihilated ?

FOOTNOTES

[1] A weird connection between flame and straw is the verse :

ہم سے رنج بیتابی کس طرح اٹھایا جائے
داغ پشت دست عجز، شعلہ خس بدنداں ہے

[2] ᶜUrfī, *Kulliyāt, ghazal* Nr. *314*.

[3] Kalīm was apparently very fond of the image of the stone-throwing children, cf. *Dīvān, ghazal* Nr. 159; id. Nr. 497 has an elegant combination of the stones and the desert in which the demented lover will, eventually, abide :

Due to the impudence of the children no stones remained in the walls—
When the town becomes waste, I draw myself into the desert.

سنگ در دیوار ها از شوخی طفلان نماند
شہر اگر ویران شود خودرا بصحرا میکشم

In another poem (quoted AP p. 229) he combines the 'stones of the children' with the glass-vessel which, in Persian imagery, is always scattered by the stones flung at it; a similar combination is found in a ghazal by Maẓhar Jānjānān (AP p. 284). How popular this image was can be gathered from a verse by Āzād Bilgrāmī, the 18th century writer whose verses are, though not at all very original, yet an excellent compendium of all those stylistic and rhetorical devices that were in fashion in 18th century India (cf. the charming verse in his biography by Mīr ᶜAlī Shīr Qāniᶜ, *Maqālāt ash-shuᶜarāᵓ*, ed. H. Rashdī, Karachi 1957, p. 58):

سنگ طفلان ست در دشت جنون بالین ما
وز بساط سبزہ و گل مسند رنگین ما

Cf. also Mīr Dard, *Urdu Dīvān* p. 73; Bedil, *Dīvān*, p. 260.—Ghālib (U 107) has connected fire-symbolism and the children's game :

ہے سنگ پر برات معاش جنون عشق
یعنی ہنوز منت طفلان اٹھائیے

Another comparison points to the roses on the tombs of saints and martyrs :

My roses and my candles became wasted on the tomb of the martyrs:
You did not consent (to my wishes), and my life was wasted in supplication.

گل و شمعم بہ مزار شہدا گشت تلف
نشدی راضی و عمرم بہ دعا گشت تلف

[4] IV Nr. 210. He uses the expression also in S 39, Q XXVII, and says in an Urdu verse that the silent beauties use ᶜthe smoke of the voice's flame' as collyrium for their eyes.
The expression *shuᶜla-yi āwāz* was common in India, see the examples by Ghanī (*Kashmīr* II 999), Sālik (id. I 305) and Ḥijāb (id. A 53); the latter two are connected with the nightingale; Bedil, *Dīvān* 99; Mīr Dard, *Dīvān-i fārsī* p. 64.—Ghālib speaks also of the *shamᶜ-i sukhan*, the 'candle of speech' :

حسن فروغ شمع سخن دور ہے اسد پہلے دل گداختہ پیدا کرے کوئی

[5] Combinations of fire and *kabāb* 'roast', though quite unpleasant for Western taste, are commonplace in Persian and related poetry from early times; to roast his heart is a normal action for every poet, and he often will add the 'wine of his blood' to the roast. Nāṣir ᶜAlī Sirhindī makes the nightingale the roast of the rose's fire (*Kashmīr* II 934), an idea frequently expressed in various forms during this period of Indo-Persian poetry.
A few examples from Ghālib's verses: in M III; due to the roses, spring becomes the *kabāb* for its own fire,

فروزد هر قدر رنگ گل، افزاید تب و تابش
کباب آتش خویش است پنداری بهار ما

or the *kabāb* of spring burns in the oven of the tulip.
Cf. IV Nr. 157, Nr. 71, Nr. 151; S. p. 37. Not even the Prophet of Islam is spared such a comparison :

The cloud of his grace makes Paradise grow out of Hellfire,
The lightning of his wrath turns the cloud of mercy into smoke of kabāb.

ابر لطفش ز آتش دوزخ بیالاید بهشت
برق قهرش ابر رحمت‌را کند دود کباب

[6] Other examples: IV Nr. 117, Nr. 200, Nr. 243, particularly Nr. 213 :

Out of envy that my breast is so fiery the fire draws a dagger of flame towards itself.

ز رشک سینهٔ گرمی که دارم
کشد از شعله بر خود خنجر آتش

Cf. also U 61 'the flame-carrying breath' :

جلتا ہے دل کہ کیوں نہ ہم اك بار جل گئے
اے ناتمامیٔ نفس شعلہ بار حیف

[7] Rūmī, *Mathnawī* II 1347. The same symbolism was used by a number of Christian mystics, like Richard of St. Victor, Mechthild of Magdeburg, St. Catherina of Siena (cf. E. Underhill, *Mysticism*, p. 421); further in the *logos*—speculations of Origines, in the mysticism of the Greek monk Symeon the New Theologian, etc. In the Indian tradition, Baba Lal Das, the partner of Prince Dārā Shikoh, used the 'iron-in-fire' imagery; cf. C. Huart-L. Massignon, *Les Entretiens de Lahore*, JA 1926. Bedil, *Dīvān* p. 86 uses a line very similar to that of Ghālib.

[8] Cf. Hastings, *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, VII 739 ff. One of the numerous classical examples are the lines of the Roman poet Petronius :

haesimus calentes
et transfudimus hinc et hinc labellis
errantes animas.

The idea of the exchange of souls by means of a kiss has often been expressed by European poets; likewise the expression of Christian mystical theology according to which the Holy Spirit is the 'kiss between Father and Son' comes from this root.

[9] The examples in Persian and related poetry are almost numberless; suffice it to mention Rūmī's line (Rubāᶜiyyāt f. 334 b 1) :

My soul came onto my lips—give me your lip
so that I may put my soul into your mouth;

The connection of the life-bestowing breath of Jesus with the kiss of the beloved, so common in Islamic poetry, belongs to this cluster of images.

[10] ᶜAṭṭār's *Dīvān* contains eight ghazals rhyming in derivations of *sukhtan* 'to burn', viz. Nr. 16, 17, 213, 214, 454, 495, 549, 699.

[11] ᶜUrfī, quoted in AP p. 166; cf. Dard, *Dīvān-i Fārsī*, p. 27.

[12] The combination rose-flame-nightingale in Ghālib's poetry : IV Nr. 62, Nr. 78, Nr. 179; Nr. 301 (with *gulbāng*). For the imagery see A. Schimmel, *Rose und Nachtigall*, (Numen V 2); Faẓlī (d. 1563) the author of the Turkish epic poem *Gül u bülbül* (German translation by J. von Hammer-Purgstall, *Gül u bülbül, das ist Rose und Nachtigall*, 1834) uses in his introductory prayer poem almost the same words about the creator who has lit the torches of the roses and cast fire into the harvest of the nightingales (Cf. E.J.W. Gibb, *History of Ottoman Poetry*, VI 147 ff.). Other examples from Persian and Turkish poetry in Schimmel, l.c. p. 102; among modern Turkish poets we may mention Ahmet Haşim, Yahya Kemal, Ahmet Hamdi Tanpinar who used the rose-fire imagery; the finest example is found in a ghazal by the Mevlevi poet Ghālib Dede (d. 1799, vd. Gibb, l.c. VI p. 147) :

The rose is fire, the rose-twig fire, the rosegarden fire,
the bank of the brook is fire...

[13] Kalīm, *Dīvān* Nr. 56 ghazal. فروغ عارض گل برق آشیان منست

[14] Shāh ᶜAbdul Laṭīf Bhitāʾi, *Shāh jo risalo*, Sur Sārang I,10 describes the red lightning that has put on the red wedding garment and thus becomes a lovely symbol of the Beloved whom the bride expects as longingly as the thirsty earth waits for the lightning and the ensuing rain.

[15] ᶜUrfī, *Kulliyāt, ghazal* p. 295; Cf. id. *ghazal* p. 378 :

The ritual washing of the martyr of love must be performed by fire, not with water,
How could one wash a flame with water?

غسل شہید عشق بآتش سزد نہ آب
چون شعله را بآب کسی شستشو کند

That may be inspired by Rūmī, *Dīvān-i Kabīr* Nr. 1096.

Love is an ocean whose waves are invisible,
The water of this ocean is fire, and its billows pearls.

[16] Kalīm, *Dīvān, ghazal* Nr. 236.

[17] Comparisons taken from the Zoroastrian tradition are frequently found in Persian literature without, however, implying a real knowledge of pre-Islamic customs and ideas. M. Muᶜīn has discussed the Zoroastrian heritage in Persian literature in his *Mazdayasnā u tāsīr-i ān dar adabiyāt-i Fārsī*, Tehran 1326 sh/1947. The fire as qibla of the Zoroastrians is found from Daqīqī (d. ca 980) onwards (cf. H.H. Schaeder 'War Daqiqi Zoroastrier?' in *Festschrift Georg Jacob*, 1932). Comparisons of the garden and its red flowers with the fire temple were popular in early Persian poetry (Abuʾl-Faraj Rūmī) and occur frequently in Ḥafiẓ's poems. Later, the juxtaposition of fire temple and *miḥrāb* or Kaᶜba became a

fixed topos, just as that of the *shaikh* and the brahmin. Typical is ᶜUrfī's line :
The niche of my firetemple laughed a hundred times at the miḥrāb.

برهمن کیشم که صد قم طعنه بر اصحاب زد طاق آتش خانه ام صد خنده بر محراب زد

[18] Examples from Ghālib: Q I; IV Nr. 66, Nr. 78, Nr. 84; Nr. 143; Nr. 248: Nr. 288; Nr. 318; Nr. 320, and U 141:

آتشکده ہے سینہ مرا راز نہاں ہے اے وائے، اگر معرض اظہار میں آوے

Charming is IV Nr. 156 :
Whosoever sees her on the road says :
The qibla of the fire worshippers comes a-walking !

ہر کہ بیند در رہش گوید ہمی قبلۂ آتش پرستاں میرود

For the rosy cheeks of the beloved remind the poet of fire which is, again, the *qibla* of the fireworshippers; thus, looking at the beautiful beloved everyone becomes a fireworshipper. This is only a deviation from the usual idea that the lovers are idol-worshippers, *but-parast;* the meaning remains the same.

[19] The Hindu in connection with burning is mentioned by Niẓāmī, *Haft Paikar* 34 (see H. Ritter, *Über die Bildersprache Nizamis*, Berlin 1927, p. 12, 13). The custom of *sati* is several times mentioned in the poems of Amīr Khusrau, who must have eyewitnessed it in India, cf. *Dīvān* Nr. 678 :
To die from love, o friend—learn that from the Hindu,
for it is not easy to enter the blazing fire alive.
Cf. for the combination Hindu-fire id. Nr. 42, Nr. 735, Nr. 1442. Other poets have taken over this idea and speak of the 'fireworshipping Hindu' or the Indian who burns himself, see Jāmī, *Dīvān* Nr. 208; Nr. 312, etc.; Maulānā Qāsim Kāhī in: *Maqālāt ash-shuᶜārā* p. 677; ᶜUrfī, *Kulliyāt, ghazal* p. 327; Naẓīrī, *Dīvān, ghazal* Nr. 77; Nr. 166, Nr. 328 in the 19th century Furūghī, *Dīvān* 221, and in early classical times Khāqānī, *Dīvān, qaṣīda* p. 223. Even in the poetry of the regional languages the combination Hindu-fire is not rare, thus in Khushḥāl Khān Khaṭak's Pashto poetry (see Raverty, *Selections* p. 221). For the whole complex cf. A. Schimmel, *Turk and Hindu, a poetical image and its application to history*, in: Proceedings of the fourth Levi della Vida Conference, Wiesbaden 1974.—Ghālib uses the image also in IV Nr. 296 :

گوئی بہ شحنہ گوی کہ کس را نکشتہ ایم
آن نعش نیمسوختہ ز آتش کشیدہ کو

[20] IV Nr. 59; Nr. 78; Nr. 91, Nr. 213; cf. the imagery in *band* 2 of the *tarkībband* written in jail, S. 37.

[21] The expression *dāgh* 'scar, cauterisation mark' occurs very frequently in Ghālib's poetry. *A few examples: Q IV, Q XXV, Q XIX; IV Nr. 11, Nr. 28, Nr. 37; Nr. 91; Nr. 116; Nr. 213; Nr. 214; U 2, 51, 78; very typical is U 21 :*
That lament which did not reach the lip becomes a scar of the heart,
that droplet which did not become an ocean is the food of the dust;

سینے کا داغ ہے وہ نالہ کہ لب تک نہ گیا
خاک کا رزق ہے وہ قطرہ کہ دریا نہ ہوا

e.g. both of them did not reach their destination.

[22] Mīr Dard uses the same image, *Dīvān-i Fārsī* p. 17, (cf. Urdu Dīvān p. 131): The cauterisation marks have turned me into a cypress of fire-work (or; 'illumination').
Cf. also Bedil, *Dīvān*, 191. Ghālib loves the expression *chirāghān;* cf. U 187; the sighs which he heaves with 'sparkling breath' shall turn into a firework :

پھر گرم نالہ ہائے شرر بار ہے نفس مدت ہوئی ہے سیر چراغاں کئے ہوئے

or IV Nr. 256 :
From flames I have made the custom of a firework for my lamentation,
from the boiling blood have I made a rosary of corals for my weeping.

نالہرا از شعلہ آئین چراغان بستہ ایم
گریہ را از جوش خون تسبیح مرجان کردہ ایم

Cf. further U 83; U 155:

نگہ گرم سے اک آگ ٹپکتی ہے اسد
ہے چراغان خس و خاشاک گلستان مجھ سے

The connection with the moth is found in IV Nr. 309 and U 66; in this verse Ghālib complains that his sparkling remains unknown to the world :
We are the firework (or: illumination) of the bedchamber of the moth's heart.

باوجود یک جہاں ہنگامہ، پیدائی نہیں
ہیں چراغان شبستان دل پروانہ ہم

[23] Edna St. Vincent Millay, *Collected Lyrics*, New York 1969 (paperback), p. 95.

[24] Kamāl ud-Dīn ad-Damīrī, *Ḥayāt al-ḥayawān al-kubrā*, Cairo 3 1956, Vol. I p. 515, says that the salamander is, according to Ibn Sīda, "a creeping animal known among the Indians and Chinese". His information is correct so far as poetical expression is concerned, though not from the scientific viewpoint. In any case, the majority of Persian writing poets in the Middle Ages regarded the *samandar* as a bird, probably confusing it with the Phoenix. Examples are found in abundance in Rūmī's lyrics, cf. A. Schimmel, *Die Bildersprache Dschelaluddin Rumis*, p. 44; several examples in Sulṭān Valad, *Vāladnāma*, Saᶜdī, *Bustān* p. 109, and often. For the relation of the fiery salamander to hot Hindustan cf. Fānī, *Dīvān* p. 91, who says :
So much blossoms the rose of fire from the water and soil of Hind,
that everyone who comes to Hindustan becomes a salamander.

[25] Other salamanders in Ghālib's poems : *Q XXIV: his hot breath casts fire into the nostrils of the salamander;*

اینت غالب کہ آتش از دم گرم در مسام سمندر اندازد

IV Nr. 213; Nr. 19; Nr. 276; a combination of salamander and firetemple

جاری تھی اسد داغ جگر سے مری تحصیل
آتشکدہ جاگیر سمندر نہ ہوا تھا

[26] ᶜAṭṭār, *Dīvān* Nr. 19 (liver as *sipand*), Q X p. 32 and Q XXVI p. 77 (the *sipand* of the eye); likewise Khāqānī, *Dīvān*, ghazal p. 587 (the pupil of the eye as *sipand*), and ghazal p. 644 (*sipand* for the fire of the face). Rūmī, *Dīvān-i Kabīr* Nr. 2410 goes a-dancing into the fire like *sipand* (a poem with the rhyme 'burnt'), Nr. 1249 (rhyme-word 'fire'). Cf. also Amir Khusrau, *Dīvān* Nr. 1294; Gīsūdarāz, *Anīs al-ᶜushāq* p. 8; Fighānī *Dīvān*, ghazal 76 and 171, and numerous other instances.

[27] Cf. Q I where God is addressed as :

Oh Who has cast the model of a rosegarden from Nimrod's fire into the pleasant place of the surrender of the God-knowing prophet.

ای به نزهت گاه تسلیم رسول حق شناس
ز آتش نمرود طرح گلستان انداخته

Cf. also IV Nr. 155.

گفته باشی که به هر در آتش فگنش
غیر میخواست مرا بی تو به گلزار برد

[28] About fire-symbolism in different religions cf. Heiler, *Erscheinungsformen* p. 43 ff. Christian mysticism, relying upon *Ep. ad Hebr.* 12, 29, has often used fire symbolism, see Mechthild von Magdeburg, *Revelations*, book 6, chapter 29, and many instances.

[29] The connection of the lightning with the harvest is part of classical imagery, cf. Saᶜdi, *Ghazaliyyāt* (Kulliyāt III) p. 269. Rūmi, *Dīvān-i kabīr* Nr. 2263, addresses the Beloved with a line suggesting the positive value of burning :

Whose neck you cut, his neck will become long,
Whose harvest you burn, his harvest will become great.

Hence, the use of the word *dihqān*, 'farmer, husbandman' develops, for it is he whose harvest is destroyed by the lightning. The poets of the Indian style have turned and twisted the image, and Ghālib uses it in different connotations. He speaks of the singer's voice as lightning of annihilation,

ڈھونڈے ہے اس مغنی آتش نفس کو جی
جس کی صدا ہو جلوۂ برق فنا مجھے

or thinks that

When the lightning of your blame remains hidden, it means darkness for the ascendent in the horoscope of some one's grass.

در خود گم است جلوۂ برق عتاب تو
این تیرگی به طالع مشت گیاه کیست

He speaks of the 'lightning of blame' (IV Nr. 27) and of the 'lightning of beauty' (U 122) to show beauty's overwhelming power; often, the connection with the harvest or the farmer is mentioned, thus IV Nr. 10; Nr. 305; U 125; Q XVII; further IV Nr. 125; Nr. 126; Nr. 145; Nr. 241; Nr. 243; U 119; cf. in the *tarkībband* from prison with the *radīf* سوزد 'burns' S p. 37 :

I am that one with burnt harvest from whose story
the breath of the wayfarer and the highwayrobber and the farmer gets burnt.

منم آن سوخته خرمن که ز افسانهٔ من
نفس را هرو و رهزن و دهقان سوزد

[30] L. Massignon, *La Passion d'al Hosayn ibn Mansour al-Hallaj, martyre mystique de l'Islam*, 2 vols., Paris 1922, p. 622.

[31] Rūmi, *Mathnawī* I 9,10. Cf. *Dīvān-i Kabīr* Nr. 2249 a strange association of fire and reedbed.

[32] Cf. Khāqānī, *Dīvān*, qaṣīda p. 154; Kalīm, *Dīvān*, ghazal Nr. 102, Nr. 350.

[33] Cf. U 126:

جلوہ زار آتش دوزخ ہمارا دل سہی
فتنہ شور قیامت کس کی آب و گل میں ہے

[34] *Dīvān-i Shams-i Tabrīz* Nr. XXXII 2 (*Dīvān-i Kabīr* Nr. 1690 Cf. also Yaḥyā ibn Muᶜādh (d. 872): "If they would give me Hell I would never burn a lover in it, since love has already burnt him a hundred times" (ᶜAṭṭār, *Tadhkirat al-auliyā*, I p. 301).

[35] Cf. Q. XVII; IV Nr. 175; Nr. 298; R 9.

[36] The famous example by Ibn al-Khawāṣṣ in Abū Nuᶜaīm, *Ḥilyat al-auliyā'* Vol. X p. 364.—Ṭālib-i Āmuli makes from the fire of his heart a hot bath in his eyes (*Dīvān*, ghazal Nr. 316); Kalīm likes the confrontation of fire-sighs and torrent-tears (*Dīvān*, ghazal Nr. 6, Nr. 173); Mir Dard takes up a very traditional idea in his verses (*Dīvān-i fārsī*, p. 86) :

The torrent of the hot tears has all my limbs
— oh Dard!—partly inundated and partly burnt.

Dard, too, has connected the burning of love with the deluge that destroys his house, *Urdu Dīvān* p. 117.
In Ghālib's Persian *Dīvān* : IV Nr. 13, Nr. 48; N4. 51; Nr. 132; Nr. 147; Nr. 306; Nr. 331.

[37] About the ash-house and related words see H. Grotzfeld, *Das Bad im arabisch-islamischen Mittelalter*, Wiesbaden 1970. *kūlhanbeyi*, lit. 'the man of the ash-house' means in Turkish generally 'a rough, a rowdy, a destitute person'.—A connection of *gulshan* and *gulkhan* is found as early as in Khāqānī's poetry (perhaps even earlier); he speaks in a qaṣīda (*Dīvān* p. 318) of 'the fly in the rose-garden, the Phoenix in the ash-house' to denote the wrong state of things. Rūmī sings (*Dīvān-i Kabīr* Nr. 2526) :

I said to the rose-twig: 'Why do you dance in this ash-house ?
Enter the soul's garden, look at fresh buds and twigs !'

Cf. also Kalīm, *Dīvān, ghazal* Nr. 98, Nr. 106.

[38] *Yunus Emre Dīvān*, ed. A. Gölpinarlı, Istanbul 1943; p. 428.

[39] Khāqānī, *Dīvān, ghazal* p. 645. Mīr Dard often speaks of the candle in similar connections, thus *Dīvān-i fārsī* :

In this desolate banquet one has, from the beginning to the time of death,
to live like a candle, equally laughing and weeping.

Dard's contemporary Ḥazīn, who came to India as an unhappy refugee, uses a fine image to show the contrast between the radiant beloved and the hopeless lover; he has modelled his verse in accordance with a rhetorical question which

was repeated, from the 13th century onward, by almost every Persian writing poet in India :

O you with silver body—the candle of whose bedchamber have you been ?
If am burnt—whose niche did you decorate?

سیمین بد نا شمع شبستان که بودی
من سوختم آرائش ایوان که بودی

The idea that the beloved fills someone else's room with the splendour of his beauty makes the jealous lover burn and melt as though he were a candle. (AP p. 275).—For Ghālib cf. Q XIX; IV Nr. 22; Nr. 225; other combinations U 143; 155; Q XIV; IV Nr. 6 (the 'painted candle' Nr. 37; Nr. 254; Nr. 39; Nr. 255.

[40] Cf. Ṭālib-i ʿĀmulī :

I was mistaken, I am a flame-bearing tongue,
For I am a candle, I can not stand silence.

(Anthology K. A. Rashid, p. 63); Ghanī says likewise (*Kashmīr* II 976)

We show by the tongue that we are alive.

اظہار زندگی بزبان میکنیم

The image occurs very often in Dard's poetry and prose; he connects it with the 'morning of old age' (*Dīvān-i Fārsī*, rubāʿī, p. 101-102; cf. id. p. 16); he teaches:

to be silent when the morning of old age comes,
for the candle is silent when dawn draws near.

And he speaks likewise of those endowed with the capacity of speech comparing them to candles which are bound to be radiant, for :

The glory of the 'possessor of a tongue' (i.e. poets and speakers) is the word ; the silent candle is black-faced (e.g. dishonoured).

Dīvān-i fārsī p. 33. See: A. Schimmel, *Mīr Dards Gadanken über das Verhältnis von Mystik und Wort*, in: Festgabe deutscher Iranisten zur 2500-Jahrfeier Irans, herausgegeben von W. Eilers, Stuttgart 1971. Ghālib uses the expression 'candle of the word' in U 174 :

حسن فروغ شمع سخن دور ہے اسد پہلے دل گداختہ پیدا کرے کوئی

He also complains that

we are the silent candle of our own dark abode

روی سیاہ خویش ز خود ہم نہفتہ ایم شمع خموش کلبۂ تار خودیم ما

(IV Nr. 12), that means utterly helpless and useless.

[41] Cf. the famous line U 94 according to which

The fetters of life and the chains of grief are essentially one—
How could one find rescue from grief before one's death?

قید حیات و بند غم اصل میں دونوں ایک ہیں
موت سے پہلے آدمی غم سے نجات پائے کیوں

[42] Kalīm, *Dīvān, ghazal* Nr. 89: the caravan of the candles will go toward annihilation at daybreak.

سفر ملک فنا ای دل اگر خواہی کرد
وقت شد قافلۂ شمع سحر خواہد رفت

Cf. Ghālib U 138.

اک شمع ہے دلیل سحر سو خموش ہے

[43] *chirāgh* : IV Nr. 2, Nr. 119; Nr. 192; U 85, 181.

[44] Ṣāʾib (*Kashmīr* II 604). Kalīm speaks of his state as having

The soul on the lip (i.e. on the point of dying), the head on the palm of the hand;
I am the morning candle; I do not need an executioner.

در راہ تو جان بر لب و سر بر کف دستم
شمع سحرم حاجت جلاد ندارم

i.e. I shall be extinguished soon, and nobody need cut my wick (i.e. cut my neck). *Dīvān, ghazal* Nr. 442. Cf. Ghālib IV Nr. 161; Q IV.

[45] Some more examples of the 'candle of the tomb' from Ghālib: IV Nr. 9; Nr. 22; Nr. 192; Nr. 278. In IV Nr. 75 he speaks of the soul which came like a moth of the tomb's candle a hundred times, seduced by the manifestation of the murderer.

بہ فریب اثر جلوۂ قاتل صد بار
جان بہ پروانگی شمع مزار آمد و رفت

Cf. also the *chirāgh-i mazār* in *tarkīb-band* II.

[46] Smoke: Q VII: Q XVII: Q XXXVI: IV Nr. 11; 288; U 155; in U 28 the poet calls himself 'the addict of the smoke of the candle' i.e. a person who remains awake at night.

تریاکیٔ قدیم ہوں دود چراغ کا

Comparison of the heaven or the world with smoke: IV Nr. 131; Nr. 214; Nr. 228. The 'smoke of the sigh' Q XLIX.

[47] Cf. J. van Ess, *The logical structure of Islamic Philosophy*, in: *Logic in Classical Islamic Culture*, ed. by E. G. von Grunebaum, Wiesbaden 1970, p. 26: smoke was the example of the relation of the *dalīl* to the *madlūl*. e.g. the fire.

[48] Already ʿUrfī had compared the black book of the sinners at Doomsday to the lover's house of mourning which is covered with black soot from the smoke of his burning heart, *Kulliyāt*, qaṣīda p. 187.

ای کہ داری نامہ اعمال را از فعل زشت
چون مصیبت خانۂ عاشق ز دود دل سیاہ

[49] For similar metaphors cf. IV Nr. 59; Nr. 67; Nr. 136.

[50] A verse with similar imagery opens the *manqibat-i Ḥaidarī*. U p.189 :

ساز یک ذرہ نہیں فیض چمن سے بیکار
سایۂ لالہ بے داغ سو یدای بہار

A DANCE IN CHAINS

GHĀLIB AND THE TRADITION OF HALLĀJ[1]

ᶜAṭṭār tells us in the *Tadhkirāt al-auliyā*, relying on Arabic sources, that the martyr-mystic Ḥallāj danced in his chains when he was led to the gallows, reciting a quatrain about the wine of love and the cruel beloved.[2] This 'dance in chains' or 'on the gallows' which so excellently symbolizes the state of the suffering lover was adopted by many poets in Iran and became soon a *topos* throughout the Persian speaking world—Laᶜl Shāhbāz of Sehwan in Sind, a 13th century mystic, signs a *ghazal* ending with the words

... *and I dance on the gallows,*[3]

ومن بردار میرقصم

and his contemporary Saᶜdī of Shiraz coins the lovely phrase :

Lover is he who, without himself, out of delight of the samāᶜ, comes dancing before the sword of affliction.[4]

عاشق آنست که بیخویشتن از ذوق سماع
پیش شمشیر بلا رقص کنان می آید

The story of Ḥallāj's suffering was transformed into one of the most frequently used symbols in Persian, Turkish and Urdu literature, not to mention Sindhi, Panjabi and Pashto folk poetry.[5] The great mystic is praised as the 'martyr of love' *par excellence*, who was doomed to die since the jealous theologians would not permit him the public utterance of the secret of his Divine love by proclaiming *Anāʾl-ḥaqq*, 'I am the Creative Truth'—often translated as 'I am God' (*Ḥaqq* is one of the Most Beautiful Names of Allah, and became a general expression for 'God' among many of the later mystics). Even Ḥallāj's contemporaries on the mystical path thought that such a divulgation of the secret of love was liable to punishment: That not only problems of mystical theology were responsible for Ḥallāj's imprisonment and final execution in 922 but that his process was conducted for certain social and political reasons, was, of course, overlooked by the later mystics whose interpretations of Ḥallāj's ideas rarely conform to his original teachings. His words "I am the Creative Truth"—not an

ecstatic exclamation but the quintessence of his mystical thought—were interpreted as testimony of the Unity of Being, and he was considered by many as a typical pantheist. But nothing could be farther from the truth. To be sure, we must admit that most of those poets who talked about 'Manṣūr'—as he is usually mentioned with his father's name—were seldom aware of the historical facts underlying his story and they used his name in much the same way as they used the names of legendary heroes, such as Majnūn, the demented lover, or Farhād, the luckless worshipper of the princess Shirin. A typical combination of this kind is found in Ghālib's verse :

The trial of Qaīs (=Majnūn) and Kuhkan (=Farhād)
is in the stature and the tresses (of the beloved) ;
where we are, there is the trial of the gallows and the rope.

قد و گیسو میں قیس و کو ھکن کی آزمائش ھے
جہاں ھم ھیں ، وھاں دار و رسن کی آزمائش ھے

This is a clever pun, as the erect stature corresponds to the high gallows and the tresses, to the rope. What Ghālib intends is that Majnūn and Farhād were concerned only with the outward manifestation of their beloved, whereas the real lover—like Ḥallāj and his 'disciple' Ghālib—prefers another type of love, the sort that eventually results in punishment and death.

The expression *dār u rasan*, 'gallows and rope', has become almost proverbial in post-Ghālibian poetry, though Ghālib is by no means the first poet to use this combination. It is also found in his *qaṣīda* on God's Unity where he speaks of the Lord,

Who has kept the lovers in the station of gallows and rope,
and has cast the heroes in the meeting-place of sword and spear—

عاشقان در موقف دار و رسن وا داشته
غازیان در معرض تیغ و سنان انداخته

The 'heroes' intended here are, as always in combinations such as this, the martyrs of the battle of Kerbela, namely Ḥusain, the Prophet's grandson, and his family, who where killed in combat on the tenth of Muḥarram (October 10) 680.[6]

The expression *dār u rasan* has become a *topos* in post Ghālibian Indo-Muslim poetry. But a Persian verse by Ghālib which contains another traditional juxtaposition, to wit: 'gallows'—'minbar', has even

more become part and parcel of everyday speech among the Muslims of India and Pakistan :

That secret which is hidden in the breast is not a sermon —
you can utter it on the gallows, but you cannot
utter it on the pulpit.

آن راز که در سینه نهانست نه وعظ است
بردار توان گفت و به منبر نتوان گفت

This verse contains an allusion to the fate of Ḥallāj who was accused of divulging the secret of loving union between man and God.[7] As such it is one of the traditional juxtapositions of Manṣūr, the lover, and the dry-as-dust theologians and preachers who would never allow the lover to express his love and his yearning for union, let alone the mystery of union with the Beloved.[8]

Ghālib is only one poet in the long procession of poets who have used the name of Manṣūr in their poetry. Ḥallāj's fate and his tragic figure has fructified the imagination of more poets than any other historical personality of Islam. After his execution, his words were recorded and preserved by some of his devotees, especially in the Persian speaking areas, particularly in the school of Shiraz as inaugurated by Ibn Khafīf, the last mystic to visit Ḥallāj in prison in 922.[9] ᶜAinul Quḍāt Hamadhānī who was executed in the year 1132, and thus resembles Ḥallāj, cited some of his sayings in his books; Rūzbihān Baqlī of Shiraz (d. 1209) not only commented upon his *Kitāb aṭ-ṭawāsīn* but collected material concerning his life and work. It is he to whom we owe the preservation and explanation of most of Ḥallāj's sayings.[10] At the same time the Ḥallājian renaissance found its most prominent representative in ᶜAṭṭār. He was spiritually affiliated to the martyr-mystic of Baghdad and believed "that the same fire which had fallen into Manṣūr's soul had also touched him".[11] It is therefore only logical that later Sindhi folk poetry mentions Ḥallāj and ᶜAṭṭār together as two symbols of the sad truth that the Divine Beloved showers afflictions upon his friends and kills them.[12] 'Aṭṭār's Persian biography of Ḥallāj in the *Tadhkirat al-auliyā* has furnished the poets of the following centuries with all those details which are alluded to in the poetry sung between Istanbul and Delhi; his lyrical work similarly contains some references to the martyr-mystic.

From ᶜAṭṭār the tradition goes on to Jalāluddīn Rūmī who not only alludes to Ḥallāj several times but also poetically commented upon his *Anā'l-ḥaqq*.[13] In his *Mathnawī* he compared the state of the

mystic to that of iron cast into the fire—the iron, thereupon, calls out "I am the fire" because it feels united with the latter although its own substance is still maintained (an interpretation of mystical union which is also common in Chrisitian and Hindu mysticism).[14] And as Rūmī's *Mathnawī* influenced literature and mystical thought wherever Persian was read, many a poet paraphrased his words about Manṣūr in the same way as Rūmī had composed poetical variations of the *Anā'l-ḥaqq* and of Ḥallāj's famous *qaṣīda uqtulūnī*—

Kill me, o my friends —
for in my being killed there is my life . . .[15]

اقتلونی یا ثقاتی ان فی قتلی حیاتی

From Rūmī, the Ḥallājian tradition in Turkish literature continues onto the order of the Whirling Dervishes in Anatolia and from them in modern Turkish poetry. However, an even stronger predilection for Ḥallāj is found among the popular Turkish mystics some of whom even have, like him, 'performed their ablution with their own blood'. The most outstanding poets in this tradition are Nesimi, the enthusiastic Ḥurūfī poet (flayed alive in Aleppo 1417), and Pīr Sulṭān Abdāl (hanged in approximately 1560 in Sivas). In the rustic order of the Bektashis the central room in the convent, where the disciple was to swear allegiance to the mystical leader, was called *dār-i Manṣūr*, 'the gallows of Manṣūr', since there the neophyte was to be slain to his lower instincts and to worldly lust.[16] Ḥallāj's name was, and still is, also associated with the guild of the cotton-carders ('cotton carder' is the meaning of the Arabic word *ḥallāj*), and he has become just as stereotyped a figure in Turkish poetry as he has in Indo-Muslim literature.

It is only natural that the great Ṣūfī orders should have discussed the question of Ḥallāj, although their leaders were often quite reluctant in vouching for his orthodoxy. The Naqshbandiya order was very critical of him, comparing him to a narrow vessel which could not contain the mystery of Divine truth and love; his clamour produced by his illicit intoxication 'broke the vessel', i.e., resulted in his execution. He is described, among these groups, as having stopped at a comparatively low stage of mystical experience, for his *Anā'l-ḥaqq* was interpreted as 'unity of Being' which the Naqshbandīs consider as only a passing stage of 'intoxication' compared to their own experience of 'unity of vision'

This—quite incorrect—pantheistic interpretation of the *Anā'l-ḥaqq* —so easy to grasp by everybody—prevailed in fact among the masses and has tinged mystical folk poetry, after it had been, occasionally, used even by the great masters of Ṣūfism, like ʿAṭṭār and Rūmī.[17] Ḥallāj is a manifestation of God, and the judge who dooms him to death is likewise a manifestation of another aspect of the Divine—that is the general tenor of these poets. But Ḥallāj—as we saw in Ghālib's verse about the pulpit and the gallows—also represents the strife and struggle between free spiritual religion, the religion of dynamic love, and the established order of the religious law, or, in general terms, the conflict between revolutionary forces and the establishment, as it has been interpreted in our own days.

Whatever the different interpretation of the motif of Manṣūr may be—his name was so well-known to everyone in the Persian speaking parts of the Islamic world that even the Urdu satirist Akbar Allahabādī (d. 1921)—to mention a typical example—used his name and made allusions to his story in satirical verses directed to a wide public. In fact, Muslim India was the country where the Ḥallājian tradition was stronger than anywhere else in the Muslim world. As I have shown elsewhere, Ḥallāj is the central figure in Sindhi mystical folk poetry, and he takes a prominent place in the Panjabi and Pashto tradition as well.[18] The high Persian literature as it developed in the Subcontinent from the 11th century onward adopted him soon as a symbol of love and suffering; already the first theoretician of Ṣūfism who settled in Lahore, Dātā Ganj Bakhsh Hujwīrī, composed a book on Ḥallāj which is unfortunately lost.

In Amīr Khusrau's (d.1325) poetry allusions to 'Manṣūr' Ḥallāj are visible, transported into a sphere of courtly life and elegant behaviour

I have become a flag in love, and in the religious way of the lovers
I shall become victorious (manṣūr) when you put me on the gallows.

در عشق علم گردم ودر مذهب عشاق
منصور شوم گر بسر دار بر آرید

Ḥallāj's name and fate must have been known to everyone during the Mughal period; otherwise would be difficult to understand why a chronogram for the execution of the vizier Khwājah Manṣūr-i Shirazi in 989/1581 called him *thānī Manṣūr-i Ḥallāj*.[20] At approximately the same time Maulānā Qāsim Kahi, the witty and charming poet of 16th century India even dared to write:

The secret of anā'l-ḥaqq is visible from bang, *for every leaf of it has the shape of (the word) Allah.*[21]

از بنگ شود سر انا الحق ظاهر
چون هر برگش بصورت الله است

The intoxication caused by *bang* (hemp) and the 'intoxicated' state of Manṣūr in which he uttered, allegedly, his word "I am God" are here cleverly connected. Faiḍī mentions Ḥallāj in his verses,[22] but even stronger is the tendency of playing with his name in ʿUrfī's poems. In his quatrains he asks where the true religion, and true love, have remained, and believes that besides the *anā'l-ḥaqq* there are still hundreds of other secrets in Manṣūr's heart.

باور نکنم گرچه انا الحق زده کز عشق
صد راز دگر در دل منصور نماند ست

And following the example of many other poets he feels like a successor of Ḥallāj, dreaming of gallows and rope:

I do not know the shape of the rosary, nor the figure of the niche for prayer:
I am intoxicated by thinking of the gallows and the thought of the rope.

نه شکل سبحه شناسم نه صورت محراب
ز فکر دار و ز اندیشهٔ رسن مستم

This verse with its fine *laff u nashr* rosary—rope, miḥrāb—gallows shows that ʿUrfī belongs to those who have prefigured Ghālib's verse of the *dār u rasan*. In his great qaṣīda on Unity, so skilfully imitated by Ghālib, ʿUrfī speaks of God who has given contradictory orders in the way of love: law teaches man to be silent, whereas love forces him to divulge the secret;

شرع گوید منع لب کن عشق گوید نعره زن
ای توهم در ره عشقت عنان انداخته

the mystic thus lives in the constant tension between prudence and enthusiasm.[23] Ghālib takes up this motif in a very similar way.

The poets at the Mughal court have continued the tradition of using the figure of Ḥallāj in various images: faithful to the imagery set by Rūmī they might see the roses as 'hundreds of heads of Manṣūr on the gallows while the nightingale sings *anā'l-ḥaqq* (Ṭālib-i Amuli)

or they might contrast the word *ḥaqq* 'Truth', but also 'reality' with *bāṭil* 'non valid'. That is how Naẓīrī speaks of Ḥallāj, and it is he who speaks of Manṣūr's dance in his prison: here is one of the roots of Ghālib's imagery.

The sober people set upright the gallows—
In intoxication, Manṣūr, dance in the prison !

هوشمندان دار برپا می کنند
مست گو منصور در زندان برقص

In Ṣā'ib's (d. 1671) and Abū Ṭālib Kalīm's (d. 1651) poetry the image is not lacking either; Kalīm plays once with the proper meaning of Ḥallāj's name, e.g., cotton carder, and regrets that the "bow of Ḥallāj" (as it is used in carding the wool or cotton), has long since been out of use.[25] That the minor poets of the Mughal court, and those who were connected in any way with the Persian tradition, were fully aware of the possibilities of nice word plays with Manṣūr and Ḥallāj goes without saying.[26]

It is natural that Ḥallāj's figure was particularly important in the circle around Dārā Shikoh, and Sarmad's verse pertaining to his execution has often been quoted :

It is a life that Manṣūr's voice became old :
I give new life to gallows and rope.

عمر یست که آوازهٔ منصور کهن شد
من از سر نو زنده کنم دار و رسن را

Fānī Kashmīrī, though a rather mediocre poet from this circle, has added to the inherited imagery a few new variants, thus the verse :

As much as Manṣūr is inclined to high flight,
Love draws eventually the moth upon the gallows of the candle.

بسکه چون منصور دارد میل پرواز بلند
عشق آخر میکشد پروانه‌را بردار شمع

Since Ḥallāj had for the first time used the allegory of moth and candle in his *kitāb aṭ-ṭawasīn* this image is particularly fitting. Ḥallāj is being educated "by the wooden stick of the gallows", for he had proclaimed the secret of union out of lack of etiquette ; [27] or else the gallows are the rod which helps the mystic climbing up the steep roads of love.[28] Fānī may also call the gallows a date-palm on which the head of Manṣūr is the fruit.[29]

Ghālib's verse that every drop exclaims *anā'l-baḥr*, or every atom says 'I am the sun' was, again, prefigured in the very first verses of Ghanīmat Kunjāhī's (d. 1695) *Mathnawī nayrang-i ʿishq*.[30]

The two latest masters of the *sabk-i Hindi*, Nāṣir ʿAlī Sirhindi (d. 1697) and Mirzā Bedil (d. 1721) were fully aware of the Ḥallājian tradition. Nāṣir ʿAlī, in his late days a member of the Naqshbandi *ṭarīqa*, and a friend of Saʿdullāh Gulshan (d. 1728) who was instrumental in attracting Walī Deccani to Delhi has not hesitated to use the traditional motif notwithstanding the aversion of most Naqshbandi mystics toward Ḥallāj. In a beautiful line he says:

Manṣūr became dust, but the complaining call anā'l-ḥaqq has not disappeared :
That flute was burnt, but on the lips of the flute player there is still the same sound.

خاك شد منصور و فریاد انا الحق گم نگشت
سوخت این نی ، بر لب نای ، همان آواز ماند

The elegant combination of the figure of Ḥallāj, into whom God breathed and who thus was able to speak of union with the motif of the flute, known to Islamic mystics from the very first line of Rūmī's *Mathnawī*, shows Nāṣir ʿAlī's poetical talent very well; and although the flute, annihilated by the fire of love of which Rūmī speaks, may have disappeared from this world, the great musician who spoke the word of love and union, e.g., God, is as He was in eternity.

The use of the Ḥallāj tradition by Bedil would deserve a detailed study; the idea of the *tunukẓarfī*, the vessel which is too small and too shallow to contain the Truth, is repeatedly used in his verses.[31] He is also fond of expressions connected with the 'cotton of Manṣūr', which may manifest itself in his white hair.[32] Bedil speaks of the dance in prison, following Naẓīrī's example,[33] of the candle, as did Fānī,[34] and like him he uses the equation 'palmtree-gallows'. [35] This latter motif is, then, cleverly connected with the revelation on Sinai in Wadi Aiman :

In this valley the dust of "I am the Love" is not sound,
when I put fire into myself, I am my own palmtree of the Valley of Aiman.

درین وادی ندارد عافیت گرد انا العشق
اگر آتش زنم در خویش نخل ایمن خویشم

Generally Bedil follows the tradition, but twists the meaning often in such a way that one can discover the original connotation only with difficulties.[36]

The Urdu poets who lived in the environment of Nāṣir ᶜAlī, Bedil, and the great masters of Delhi took over the symbolism of Ḥallāj, of gallows and rope; whether we think of Mīr who uses the same palmtrees, and the same 'wine of Manṣūr', or of Saudā. A particularly interesting instance is found in the *Nāla-yi ᶜAndalīb* by Mīr Dard's father and mystical master Nāṣir Muḥammad ᶜAndalīb (d. 1758) who describes in most lovely details (Vol. I, p. 132) how a gazelle entered a garden and fell in love with the gardener; the animals gathered around the graceful animal and asked what lovely fruits and odoriferous herbs she had brought for them; but the poor gazelle, enraptured by love, and forgetting the shallowness of her own capacity "began to sing unfitting words", claiming to be a *ḥaywān-i nāṭiq*, an animal endowed with speech and logic, and eventually, overwhelmed by the experience of Perfect Beauty she exclaimed "I am the Human Being" *anāʾl-insān*... In this little story Nāṣir ᶜAndalīb has dealt with Ḥallāj in a very charming way. In another place, he explains the *ḥaqq* in Ḥallāj's claim as being the contrast of *bāṭil*, and since the human soul, though created, is eternal and will not perish after death, a mystic who has reached the state of perfect spirituality may say *anāʾl-ḥaqq* and thus confirm his own spiritual reality without claiming that he is Allah. Does one not say that Paradise is *ḥaqq*, real? (Vol. I 622).

Since Ghālib stands in a line with Bedil, Nāṣir ᶜAli, and the Delhi tradition of poetry and, to a certain extent, mysticism, it is small wonder that he has taken up the Hallājian imagery to apply it in a most ingenious way. The idea that the lover must delight in his afflictions constitutes one of his main topics. By means of an expression employed frequently by the folk poets, he speaks of the 'goblet of Manṣūr'—a word which reminds the reader of 'intoxication' by the wine of love, and he knows that to speak the truth—or to utter the word *ḥaqq*, 'Divine Truth'—will indispensably lead man to the gallows, for

the end of those who see One is the gallows.

چون عاقبت یگانه بینان دار است

دریاب که انجام دو بینان چه بود

In his *mathnawī* that pays homage to the Prophet he has expressed it thus :

Those of this (friends) who sing "He is Truth" are seeking the Unseen,
Those of his singers (who utter) "I am the Truth" speak bitter.

هوالحق سرایان او غیب جوی

اناالحق نوایان او تلخ گوی

'Truth' is always considered 'bitter' in Persian poetry, and those who claim to be themselves the Divine Truth must be prepared for yet more bitterness.

Ghālib, too, follows sometimes the Naqshbandi-Suhrawardī tradition which argues that Manṣūr was unwise, immature, and narrow in his claim to be one with God—

every drop can claim "I am the ocean!'

دل هر قطره ہے ساز انا البحر

but : *Though we know that our drop is essentially the sea,*
we do not imitate the 'shallow-vesselness' of Manṣūr—

قطره اپنا بھی حقیقت میں ہے دریا لیکن

ہم کو تقلید تنک ظرفی منصور نہیں

This verse of his is a strange combination of the view held by the representatives of essential monism and of the criticism set forth by orthodoxy against Ḥallāj. However, Ghālib holds that one should not declare the intoxicated lover guilty when he exclaims "I am the Truth", for this act is nothing other than the manifestation of the Beloved which incites the jealousy of others—

مجرم سنج رند انا الحق سرای را

معشوقه خود نمای و نگهبان غیور بود

especially of the 'custodians', i.e., those entrusted with safeguarding the purity of faith and the fulfilment of religious law; these are responsible for the punishment of a demented and lawless lover and will be recompensed when they catch the transgressor. Did not Ḥallāj himself often call the masses to kill them so that they might be recompensed by God for their pious and law-bound action? The orthodox are portrayed in Ghālib's poetry as watchmen who must discharge their

duty in the night :

The voice of the law is higher than Manṣūr's head—
the complaint of our night-watchman results from
our nocturnal ramblings

آوازهٔ شرع از سر منصور بلند ست
از شب روی ماست شکوه عسس ما

It is—as Ghālib puts it in a slightly extravagant verse—the fascinating sound of Divine Beauty which 'has thrown the ring of desire into the ear of Manṣūr's blood', i.e., has made his blood desirous to become His servant (the meaning of 'having a ring in one's ear').

وقت کار این جنبش خلخال کاندر ساق تست
حلقهٔ رغبت به گوش خون منصور افگند

In this verse Divine Beauty is compared to the sound of the ring which adorns the ankle of the beloved; the 'footring' in the first hemistich corresponds to the 'earring' in the second one, so that the formal connection is perfected.

Jalāluddīn Rūmi had once confronted, in a famous and oft quoted passage of his *Mathnawī*, the spiritual state of Pharao who exclaimed "I am your Highest Lord" (*Sura* 79/24) and that of Ḥallāj who said "I am the Truth". In the first case that 'I' became a curse for the speaker for he spoke out of himself, in the second case it was Divine grace. Ghālib, in his turn, invents a parallelism between the Divine address to Moses "I am God" which 'made the bush a-speaking' and Ḥallāj's word which 'brings a man to the gallows'.

هم انا الله خوان درختی را بگفتار آورد
هم انا الحق گوی مردی را سردار آورد

He can continue this thought which takes up a comparison very common among the Sūfī poets in another *ghazal* from the same late period of his life.

ز رمز نخل انا الله گوی نا آگاه
حدیث جلوه گه و موسی و عصا گویند
مگر ز حق نه بود شرم حق پرستان را
که نام حق نبرند و همین انا گویند

Ghālib has not only altered the Ḥallājian *Anā'l-ḥaqq*, 'I am the Creative Truth', into the exclamation *Anā'l-baḥr*, 'I am the ocean', as uttered by the droplet,

دل هر قطره ہے ساز انا البحر

or into the exclamation *Anā'sh-sharq*, 'I am the East', as uttered by the light of morning (similar to the introductory lines of Ghanīmat's *nayrang-i ʿishq*) He even goes so far as to tease his beloved by asking her to declare frankly *Anā'ṣ-ṣanam*, 'I am the idol', since his own religion is far from persecuting infidelity and idolworship...

بیخطر از خودی بر آ لب به انا الصنم کشا
شیوهٔ گیر و دار نیست در کنش کنشت ما

Ghālib does not hesitate to call himself the 'Manṣūr of the faction of the ʿAlī-Ilāhī',

منصور فرقهٔ علی اللهیان منم
آوازهٔ انا اسد الله در افگنم

the extremist Shiʿa group who consider ʿAlī, Muḥammad's cousin and son-in-law, a Divine manifestation. The reason for Ghālib's claim is that his name Asadullāh, is synonymous with the honorific name of ʿAlī, the 'Lion of God'; hence, by merely mentioning his own name, he can exclaim, without exaggeration :

I am Asadullah (i.e., the Lion of God)

becoming, thus, 'the careless Manṣūr without gallows and without rope'.

فیض دم انا اسد الله بر آورم
منصور لا ابالی بی دار و بی رسن

Ghālib emphasizes the fact that the gallows are by no means a place for every rogue and highway robber. Quite to the contrary, they are a noble place, and exaltation to them befits the genuine lover.

نه هر که خونی و رهزن ، به پایه منصور است
بدین حضیض طبیعی ز اوج دار چه حظ

This is reminiscent of a word play popular since the days of ʿAṭṭār : the gallows mean, to the lover, ascension toward his beloved (this

saying, beside its deep meaning, furnished the poets with the elegant rhyme *Ḥallāj-mi ᶜrāj*, 'ascension'). For it is the 'longing bent on lofty things' which 'seeks the rank of Manṣūr'.

شوق بلندی کرای‌پایهٔ منصور جست
حوصلهٔ نا رسا پی به سر تیر برد

Ghālib's verse shows that he is well aware of the danger that any rebellious freebooter might try to attain the rank of martyrdom for selfish purposes under some idealistic pretexts. But it is only for the true lover to

Rise up and sing like Manṣūr,
Thrust your existence away !

خیز و چو منصور نوای بزن
هستی خود را سر پای بزن

ᶜAṭṭār had sung long before that he had exclaimed 'I am the Truth' in the Baghdad of pre-eternity. In a similar way Ghālib claims that he knows no fear of the gallows; for in his own world the story of Ḥallāj has not yet been told, and still awaits its realisation in time and space—it is still 'a letter under his lip'.

زگیر ودار چه غم ، چون به عالمی که منم
هنوز قصهٔ حلاج حرف زیر لبیست

But Ghālib also contrives to give the tragic motif a witty twist by reproaching the sober writers of theoretical treatises who fail to understand deeper meanings; he says :

O had you pondered that, for killing the deeper
meaning with one stroke,
the manifestation of pen and sign may become
gallows and rope !

کاشی سنجیدی که بهر قتل معنی یك قلم
جلوهٔ کلك و رقم دار و رسن خواهد شدن

The spell of the Ḥallāj-motif continues, after Ghālib, in Iqbāl. It seems that the words *dār ū rasan*, 'pulpit and gallows' belong to the keywords of Iqbāl's interpretation of his admired predecessor in Urdu and Persian poetry; another concept is the fire imagery to which he alludes in his *Jāvīdnāme*.[37] Unless one focusses upon the emphasis

laid upon the motif of Ḥallāj by Ghālib, one will barely understand why Iqbāl has displayed the figure of Ghālib along with Ḥallāj and Ṭāhira, the martyress of Babism, in the 'Heaven of Jupiter', to discuss with them problems of longing and love and prophetology. It appears that he saw in Ghālib the poet of dynamism, a man who had the capacity of expressing the inner movement of life, who knew that to love means to suffer, and moreover to accept suffering gladly. Ghālib and Ḥallāj become, in Iqbāl's epic, the representatives of the same world-view, the models of the conflict between dynamic love and tradition-bound theology.

Iqbāl's interpretation of Ḥallāj as almost a predecessor of Ghālib and himself has, to a certain extent, influenced modern Urdu poetry. Ghālib's verse on *dār ū rasan* conveys the necessity of suffering for one's ideals and is therefore used quite successfully even in the writings of the most progressive writers of our day who aim at combating fossilized traditions and established order.[38] A similar development can be witnessed in recent years, in the Arabic countries, where Ḥallāj has come to be interpreted as a kind of forerunner of modern socialism (thus Salāḥ ᶜAbdus Ṣabūr, Bayātī, etc.).[39]

FOOTNOTES

[1] L. Massignon, *La Passion d'al-Hallaj*, Paris 1922; a good English account of Ḥallāj's life and death in Eric Schroeder, *Muḥammad's People* Portland/Maine 1955.

[2] *Akhbār al-Ḥallāj*, ed. by L. Massignon et Paul Kraus, Paris 3 1957, ch. 16, and *Dīvān*, essai de reconstitution par L. Massignon, JA 1931, Sect. I b, Nr. 37.

[3] H. 1. Sadarangani, *Persian Poets of Sind*, Karachi 1956, p. 8.

[4] Saᶜdī, *Ghazaliyyāt* (Kulliyāt III), Nr. 289. A lovely verse about the dance on the gallows' rope in Rūmī, *Dīvān-i Kabīr* Nr. 2365.

[5] A. Schimmel, *al-Halladsch, Märtyrer der Gottesliebe*, Köln 1968, pp. 109-173 contains a survey of Ḥallāj's influence on Islamic poetry. id., *The Martyr-mystic al-Ḥallaj in Sindhi Folk poetry*, in: Numen IX 3, 1962, p. 161-200.

[6] The combination of the name of Ḥusain ibn Manṣūr al-Ḥallāj with that of Ḥusain ibn ᶜAlī provided the poets with a fine pun on the name of Ḥusain, common, to both martyrs, cf. ᶜAṭṭār, *Dīvān* Nr. 109. This combination was used by a number of Bektashi poets in Turkey, and is also found in later Persian poetry, see the quotation in *Nāla-yi ᶜAndalīb* II 90.

[7] Manuchehri as quoted by ᶜAufī, *Lubāb al-albāb*, II p. 55; Sanāᵓī, *Ḥadīqat al-ḥaqīqa*, ed. M. Riẓawi, Tehran 1950, p. 100; ᶜAṭṭār, *Dīvān* ghazal Nr. 357; 368; 407; Rūmī *Dīvān-i Kabīr* Nr. 1374.

[8] About the *ifshāᵓ as-sirr*, the divulgation of the secret, cf. Ghālib IV Nr. 109; Q XLVIII.

[9] See ad-Dailamī, *Sīrat Ibn al-Khafīf ash-Shīrāzī*, ed. A. Schimmel, Ankara 1955.

[10] Rūzbihān Baqlī, *Sharḥ-i shaṭḥiyāt*, ed. H. Corbin, Tehran-Paris 1966; the best introduction to Ḥallāj's thought.

[11] ᶜAṭṭār, *Dīvān* ghazal Nr. 53. Cf. L. Massighon, *L'oeuvre hallajienne dᶜAttar*, in: REI 1941-46.

[12] Cf. Schimmel, *The Martyr-mystic*, and Sachal Sarmast, *Dīvān-i Ashikār*, ed. Makhdum Amir Ahmad, Lahore 1957.

[13] Rūmī, *Mathnawī* V 2536; the comparison between Ḥallāj and Pharao, which goes back to Ḥallāj's *kitāb aṭ-ṭawasīn*, Ch. VI 20 ff., is elaborated *Mathnawī* II 305 ff.; II 2522; V 2035 ff.

[14] *Mathnawī* II 1347. Cf. p. 88 note 7.

[15] The qaṣīda *uqtulūnī*, 'Kill me, o my faithful friends!' (Ḥallāj, *Dīvān*, ed. L. Massignon, qasīda Nr. 10) is used by Rūmī in the *Mathnawī* I 3934 ff.; III 3836 ff.; id. 4186 ff.; IV I 106 ff.; V 2675; VI 4062; *Dīvān-i Kabīr* Nr. 2813 and often—Cf. Sachal, *Dīvān-i Ashikār* p. 191, and id. *Sirāīkī kalām*, ed. Maulvi Ḥakīm Muḥammad Ṣādiq Ranipuri, Karachi 1959, p. 239.

[16] J.K. Birge, *The Bektashi Order of Dervishes*, London 1937, 2 1965, p. 180, glossary of terms p. 259.

[17] ᶜAṭṭār sometimes proclaims this idea (see *Dīvān, qaṣīda* 16). It is also found in Rūmī, *Mathnawī* III 690 ff., and becomes popular from the late 13th century onward (Yunus Emre in Turkey, and all the subsequent mystical poets who wrote in Persian, Turkish, Urdu, Sindhi and Panjabi).

[18] Schimmel, *The Martyr mystic* p. 194 ff.

[19] *Dīvān*, ed. M. Darwish, Tehran 1343 sh., Nr. 454; cf. Nr. 912, 976, 1130.

[20] *Catalogue of the Persian Manuscripts in the Library of the India Office*, Vol. II, Oxford 1937, Index p. 156, 724-726, Index of Dates p. 709.

[21] *Islamic Culture*, Hyderabad, XXVII, p. 174.

[22] *Armaghān-i Pak*, p. 181.

همچو منصور نگو راز سرا پردهٔ وصل

[23] ᶜUrfī, *Kulliyāt*, rubāᶜī p. 431; *rubāᶜī* p. 433; *ghazal* p. 325; *ghazal* p. 324; *qaṣīda* p. 192; further qaṣīda (*naᶜt*) p. 45, 54, 63; *ghazal* p. 274, 326, 351; 371; 406; *Sāqīnāma* p. 457.

[24] Dīvān, ed. T. Muṣaffā, Tehran 1340 sh., *ghazal* Nr. 58; *ghazal* Nrs. 47, 53, 94, 155; 231; 234; 281; 336; 401; 545; Nr. 126; Nr. 24.

[25] Dīvān, ed. P. Baiḍāᵓī, *ghazal* Nr. 543; cf. also Nr. 95; 113; 195; 253; 285; 450; 527; *qaṣīda* Nr. 9.

[26] M. Aṣlaḥ, *Tadhkira-yi shuᶜarā-yi Kashmīr*, II 968; A 309; A 285; II 737; *Armaghān-i Pak* p. 213.

[27] *Dīvān-i Fānī*, ed. G. Tikku, Tehran, p. 94, cf. p. 98.

[28] l.c.p. 133.

[29] l.c.p. 45 (also quoted in *Nāla-yi ᶜAndālīb* II 695); cf. also p. 88; 57; 50.

زمهرش سینه ها جولان گه برق دل هر ذره در جوش انا الشرق

[30] *Armaghān-i Pāk*, p. 247.

[31] Bedil, *Kulliyāt*, Kabul 1965 ff. Vol. p. 1162.

[32] l.c.p. 597; another connection with cotton p. 746; cf. p. 470, p. 672.

[33] l.c.p. 776.

[34] l.c.p. 956, cf. p. 717, 484.

[35] l.c.p. 579.

[36] l.c.p. 772; p. 306, 214; p. 691, 642; further p. 502, 406, 90, 92; 98; 352; 369; 566; 636; 661; 778; 931; 1060.

[37] Muḥammad Iqbāl, *Jāvīdnāme*, p. 133; English translation by A.J. Arberry, London 1966; p. 90 ff.; German translation (*Buch der Ewigkeit*) by A. Schimmel, Munich 1957, p. 103 ff.—Cf. A. Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing. A Study into the religious ideas of Sir Muḥammad Iqbāl*, Leiden 1963, p. 343-352.

[38] Cf. the poems by Ḥālī (in: AP p. 328) and Girāmī Jalandari (id. p. 253, and the examples in M.A.R. Barker's *Modern Urdu Poetry*, Montreal 1970, p. 29 (Jālib), p. 203, 204 (Hōsh). An Indian research fellow in economics at Harvard once read to me a poem of his own in which he applied the Ḥallāj imagery to the Czech freedom fighter Fucik.

[39] Ṣalāḥ ᶜAbd aṣ-Ṣabūr, *Maᵓsāt al-Ḥallāj*, Beirut 1965 (English translation by K. Samaan, *Murder in Baghdad*, Leiden 1972). Cf. the divans of Adonis, the Libanese poet, of ᶜAbd al-Wahhāb al-Bayātī, the Iraqi poet, and others; see A. Schimmel, Zeitgenössische arabische Lyrik, 1975, for the Ḥallaj motif in modern Arabic poetry.
Cf. also : A. Schimmel, *Das Hallaj - Motiv in der indo-persischen Poesie* (Fest schrift Henri Corbin, Tehran 1977).

POETRY AND CALLIGRAPHY

ASPECTS DRAWN FROM THE WORK OF MIRZĀ GHĀLIB

In May 1969, the Fogg Art Museum of Harvard University inaugurated an exhibition of Persian and Arabic calligraphy as a tribute to Mirzā Asadullāh Ghālib the centenary of whose death was celebrated, in that year, all over the world. It seemed to us meaningful to connect the memory of the great poet of Indo-Pakistan with the art of writing and calligraphy, for there is scarcely another poet who was such a devoted letter-writer; and the number of images in his poetical work taken from the art of writing, from calligraphy and letters, is quite remarkable. Ghālib was by no means the first to use these similes and images; it is well-known that the symbolism of letters, playing either on the shape or on the hidden meaning (or both) of the letters of the Arabic alphabet is one of the most cherished traditions of Arabic poetry since the *Jāhiliyya*, and was elaborated in Persian and inherited by Persian-influenced languages.[1] Ghālib stands in this respect, as in his whole use of metaphors, at the end of a tradition which goes back far more than a millenium. But so far as I can judge no other poet before him had the courage to open a *dīvān* with a line like this :

The picture—of the impudence of whose writing does it complain ?
From paper is the shirt of every written form !

نقش فریادی ہے کس کی شوخی تحریر کا
کاغذی ہے پیرہن ہر پیکر تصویر کا

This initial line of his Urdu Dīvān shows very clearly Ghālib's ingeniousness and the way how he handled classical imagery. To be sure, the connection of the 'paper-shirt' — that means, according to an old juridical custom, the dress of the petitioner at court—with letter-writing or with a pun on the *khaṭṭ*, i.e., the 'down' or the 'script' of the beloved, is not new: already ᶜAufī quotes an example;[2] the mystical poets ᶜAṭṭār (d. 1220) and Rūmī (d.1273),[3] as well as the great panegyrist Khāqānī (d.1199) have used the expression,[4] and Amīr

Khusrau (d. 1325) has put it very charmingly :

In my paper-shirt I am due to you
like the picture of the crescent moon on the calender —

صنم در کاغذ ین پیراهن از تو
چو نقش ماه نو بر روی تقویم

that means, as weak and lean as the new moon.[5] Auḥadī Marāghī and Ḥāfiẓ likewise speak of the 'paper-shirt', the dress of complaint.[6] The image is—as a good metaphor should be—absolutely correct: could a letter be visible without being on paper ? Paper is the essential 'garment' for everything written or painted; hence every painting wears the 'garb of the petitioner'. That means, for Ghālib, that everything written complains of the hand of the master calligrapher : "Why did you write me this way ? Why did you connect me with those letters? Why did you write me at all ? Probably only in order to show your power and strength, your skill and the beauty of your hand, without considering how much the letter, the picture will have to suffer after you have put away the pen and its fate can no more be altered . . .". The classical Islamic ideas of the 'writing of destiny', of the *sarniwisht*, 'fate', the fear that 'the Pen has already dried up' (*qad jaffaᵓl-qalam*)[7] —all these lie behind Ghālib's transparent verse which is, indeed, a concise description of human life in almost classical and yet 'expressionist' terminology.

Ghālib has used the expression 'paper-shirt' once more in a Persian *manqibat* where he compares himself to the shadow and the flame which is nourished by smoke and scars, and continues :

I put on a dark blue dress and make a paper-shirt :
sometimes mourning for knowledge, sometimes longing for justice.

کبود پوشم و قرطاس پیرهن سازم
گہی بما تم دانش ، گہی بحسرت داد

The idea of the 'writing of destiny', so dear to Persian and Turkish poets, has been expressed by Ghālib in a charming way when he asks :

Why should I not be disaffected against the way
and customs of meritory works?
The pen of my fate has been cut in a crooked way !—

ھوں منحرف نہ کیوں رہ و رسم ثواب سے
ٹیڑھا لگا ہے قط قلم سر نوشت کو

The beauty of the writing depends, as it is well-known, largely upon how the reed-pen is cut.[8] The complaint about the cruel fate makes Ghālib say in a slightly joking manner :

Destiny wanted that I should be 'ruined by the wine of friendship' (ruined=completely drunk); but the pen wrote only 'ruined' and did not go further ...

قضا نے تھا مجھے چاہا ''خراب بادۂ الفت،،
فقط ''خراب،، لکھا بس نہ چل سکا قلم آگے

Thus, there is no 'wine of friendship' allotted to him.

The poet may also joke about the concept of *sarniwisht*, 'fate', lit. 'what is written on the forehead'[9] — for what else could his *sarniwisht* be if not the mark of constant prostration performed on the threshold of the beloved idol ?

کہتے ہو کیا لکھا ہے تری سر نوشت میں
گویا جبین پہ سجدۂ بت کا نشان نہیں

One should add that the dark mark on the forehead, caused by constant prostration during the ritual prayers, is regarded as a sign of special piety among the Muslims (cf. *Sura* 48/29).

Hundreds of poets have thought of the Book of Deeds which will be opened at Doomsday,[10] and have compared the face or the tresses of their beloved to that very book. Ghālib follows them, exclaiming in a traditional phrase :

Your face is as white as the page written by your right hand,
Your hair is as black as the book written by my left hand !

رویت بیاض صفحه نگار یمین تو
سویت سواد نامه نویس یسار من

Faith and unbelief, pious actions and sins, the radiant whiteness of the book which is given in the right hand of the faithful whose faces shall be shining white, and the blackness of the book which is given in the left hand of the black-faced sinners are all present for him when he looks at the beauty of his beloved.[11]

More frequent in Ghālib's verses, however, than images taken from *Qur'ānic* sources as they were current among the poets for centuries are allusions to the act of writing proper. The ink which

flows on the paper when he starts writing and forms a blot becomes a symbol of the black nights of separation which his black fate has destined for him.

سیاهی جیسے گر جائے دم تحریر کاغذ پر
مری قسمت میں یوں تصویر ہے شبہائے ہجراں کی

He may consider the blackish smoke of the dying candle to be a sign of mourning for the deceased poet, or see on the black face of his notebook that :

speech has put on a black garment because of the death of the eloquent.

(سپرس وجه سواد سفینهٔ غالب)
سخن بمرگ سخن رس سیاه پوش آمد

Like his predecessors, he plays with the word *khaṭṭ*, denoting both 'script' and the 'down' of the beloved which

grows on the paper on which nothing had been written before,

viz. on the immaculate white face of the young man, on which the fresh down looks like lines of black ink on a white piece of paper.

خط عارض سے لکھا ہے زلف کو الفت نے عہد
یک قلم منظور ہے جو کچھ پریشانی کرے

When he says that his

heart has become illuminated by the book of the beloved.

روشن سواد نامهٔ محبوب گشته ایم

he contrasts very well the *sawādnāma*, the 'black' writing, with the idea of illumination. In this state he feels like a king; for the pigeon, carrier of letters, looks to him like the Humā whose shadow raises man to royal honour—touched by the wing of the pigeon which brings a letter from the beloved, the lover is happier than any king in the world can be ;

What comes not from the Humā I expected from the pigeon

نامهٔ شاهی دگر عنوان شاهی دیگر است
آنچه ناید از هما چشم از کبوتر داشتم

since

the letter of the lovely beloved is something,
and the royal title something else,

The connection of the Humā with the art of writing is also found in another verse of Ghālib's, a line in which his poetical exaggeration reaches once more an apex :

The meanness and distress which appear in the way of love —
write them down with the ink made of the shadow
of the Humā's wing.

خواری کاندر طریق دوستداری رو دهد
از مداد سایهٔ بال همایش مینویس

It is a beautiful though unusual idea that out of the very shadow which can transform an ordinary human being into a king the poet should distill ink to write how distressed he has been rendered by love.[12] Both the shadow and the ink are black; Ghālib has compared the shadow of the Humā's wing once to black smoke,

ما همای گرم پروازیم فیض ازما مجو
سایه همچون دود بالا میرود از بال ما

and in old times the best ink was prepared on the basis of lampblack. No image could better describe the state of the lover than this comparison—for him, the deepest distress and abjection which he finds in the way of love is still much higher than kingship bestowed by the Humā's wing.

Apparently, Ghālib's ink was of a very peculiar character : when the look of his beloved falls upon his letter full of fidelity, the ink immediately springs out of the paper and becomes antimony for her lovely eyes which have been kind enough to look once at the letter, and therefore deserve to be embellished and brightened . . . ;

نگاهش ار بسر نامهٔ وفا ریزد
سواد صفحه ز کاغذ چو توتیا ریزد

In exuberant self-praise, again, our poet may utter the wish that his ink should be made of pulverized musk, whereas the inkpot should be the navel of the Khotanese musk deer, full of fragrance,

هم سواد صفحه مشك سوده خواهد بیختن
هم دوا تم ناف آهوی ختن خواهد شدن

a hope which he expressed in connection with the idea that his star of fame which is still in the nadir of Not-Being will rise one day among the people of the world.

Numerous are Ghālib's poems about 'paper' and 'pen'. Faithful to the poetical tradition has he described his marvellous pen in glowing words: it may speak with Solomon about the devil and may pour sugar in the way of the ant, and if it were close to Zulaikhā it would certainly draw a sketch for her painted castle . . . ;

با زلیخا اگر شود همراز
طرح کاخ مصور اندازد

He is not the only poet, in fact, who thinks that the sound of his pen can rob someone's reason so that that person will no longer enjoy the song of the nightingales;

آنرا که صریر قلمم هوش رباید
دیگر نبرد ذوق ز آواز عنادل

other poets before him had already compared the reed-pen to the immortal Khiḍr and the black ink to the water of life which is hidden in a dark valley,[13] or to the Virgin Mary giving birth to the—likewise immortal—Jesus,[14] or else had heard in the scratching of their pens the song of Sarosh,[15] the angel of inspiration, as Ghālib does in the closing line of one of his finest Urdu *ghazals*.

آتے هیں غیب سے یه مضامیں خیال میں
غالب صریر خامه نوای سروش هے

When Ḥāfiẓ makes dance the Messiah with Venus (Zuhra) at the sound of his pen,[16] Ghalib's musical pen induces even the ninth heaven into dance, the messiah being an inhabitant of the fourth sphere only . . . ;

آنم که درین بزم صریر قلم من
در رقص در آورده سپهر نهمین را

When his pen moves in the ambush of his thought, angels will become his prey, and Solomon—acquainted with the language of birds—his game :

از جنبش قلم به کمینگاه فکر من
باشد فرشته صید و سلیمان شکار باد

One may think here of the comparison of the pen with an arrow as used by earlier poets. It seems, however, a genuine Ghālibian idea when the poet asserts, at the end of his introduction to the Persian *Dīvān*, that he has selected and put a winehouse beneath each letter of his poems so that the reader can become intoxicated by reading his *dīvān*.

Sometimes he turns to simpler comparisons. In a very special connection with his constant fight for the purity of the Persian language which, according to him, was suffering at the hands of Persian-writing poets of India, he goes back to the imagery of the *Shāhnāme* :

As long as my pen is in my hand, what shall I fear from the enemy ? When Faridun displayed his banner, what fear need be from Zahhak ?

کلك ما تابه کف ماست ز دشمن چه هراس
چون فریدون علم آراست زضحاك چه باك

His pen is like the banner of Farīdūn in defeating the intruder into the field of Persian poetry: did he not call his book about the errors of the dictionary *Burhān-i Qāṭiᶜ* in its second edition *'Dirafsh-i Kāwiyānī'*, 'The Banner of Kawe' which amounts, historically, to the 'banner of Farīdūn'?[17]

Ghālib may become more lyrical in the description of his masterly pen and his paper :

From the new and modern picture which Ghālib produced the paper has become completely bound in gratefulness to the pen ;

ز ین نقش نو آئین که بر انگیخته غالب
کاغذ همه تن وقف سپاس قلمستی

or he may say, in a spring description :

The pen flaunted owing to the movement of the paper like grass from the wind,
the paper unfurled itself from the call of the pen like a rose from the morning breeze.

قلم ز جنبش کاغذ چمد چو سبزه ز باد
ورق ز بانگ قلم بشگفد چو گل ز نسیم

The picture which Ghālib draws with bleeding pen cannot be repeated in the world since it is so fresh and unusual.

از تازگی بدهر مکرر نمی شود
نقشیکه کلك غالب خونین رقم کشد

Taking over the oft expressed idea that the pen is so hot from love that it would burn the paper whereas the paper is so flooded by tears that it is almost dissolved,[18] Ghālib closes his first great *qaṣīda*—that wonderful Hymn on Unity—with an allusion to Rūmī's *Mathnawī*:

The sound of my pen burnt the world :
I am Ghālib who has thrown fire from the song of the reed into the reed-bed.

سوخت عالم را صریر کلك من غالب منم
کاتش از بانگ نی اندر نیستان انداخته

The pen is, of course, made of reed, and thus its association with the reed flute is easy for him like for many Indo-Persian poets who like to allude to Rūmī's line at the beginning of the *Mathnawī* :

Fire is that song of the reed, it is not wind;
whosoever does not have this fire may be naught.[19]

آتش است این بانگ نی و نیست باد
هر که این آتش ندارد نیست باد

It is the fire of love which is visible in Ghālib's poetry—an ordinary pen would break when it reaches the word 'love' in writing, as Rūmī had said.[20]

Ghālib's peculiar charm lies in his fondness to use all of a sudden most serious images and metaphors in a humorous or ironical sense; that is true of his fire-imagery as well :

I am writing hot words from the burning of my heart,
so that nobody can put his finger on my letters !

لکھتا ہوں اسد سوزش دل سے سخن گرم
تا رکھ نہ سکے کوئی مرے حرف پر انگشت

Everybody who would like to put his fingers on his verses for the sake of blaming him would immediately get burnt. In another verse he

again indulges in an admirable hyperbole speaking of the fire of his heart; here he connects, once more, smoke and ink:

Since my pen walked so intensely hot (=swift) on the paper, fire sifted out of it;
I prepare now ink from the smoke which every moment comes out from the paper —

ز بس تاب خرام کلکم آذر بیزد از کاغذ
مداد اندوزم از دودی که هر دم خیزد از کاغذ

indeed a most practical way of writing !

Using the traditional imagery of Zoroastrian fire-worship together with his favourite combination 'straw-and-fire' our poet may consider his heart

the object of worship for Zoroaster (=fire), and I gave the spreading of fire to the straw, I mean the pen.

دلم معبود زردشتست ، غالب فاش می گویم
به خس یعنی قلم من داده ام آذر فشانی را

And if, on the one hand, his hot sighs and glowing words burn the paper, his tears, on the other hand, drown it and dissolve it: when he wants to commit to paper a complaint about the cruelty of the beloved, the pen becomes like a piece of straw hit by a torrent;[18] it moves without being able to work, and is carried away, eventually, by the floods of tears.

خواستم شکوهٔ بیداد تو انشا کردن
قلم از جوش رقم شد خس طوفان زدهٔ

How often has our poet complained about his sad fate by telling his readers that he writes the story of his madness, or the story of his unfulfilled love, with bleeding fingers, reduced to a stump.

درد دل لکھوں کب تک ! جاؤں ان کو دکھلاؤں
انگلیاں فگار اپنی ، خامہ خونچکاں اپنا !

These verses—which contain an elegant pun on *qalam*, 'pen' and the 'reducing to a stump, cutting' *qalam karnā*, have inspired the Pakistani painter Sadiqain to some of his exciting illustrations of Ghālib's Urdu *divān*.[21]

There is an expression, common in earlier Indo-Persian poetry, which Ghālib often used and in which his predilection for the writing-imagery is combined with the fire-imagery: it is the 'firestruck paper': paper with writing on it, when burnt, will give, for a short while, a certain glitter; the letters will sparkle for a moment owing to the structure of the ink, and the black firemarks, then, look like the cauterisation-mark or wound of which Persian and Urdu poets have so often complained.[22] Thus the poet can regard this kind of paper as possessing sparkling mirrors; he can even compare the desert to a sheet of half-burnt paper, since in the footprints the heat of his walking is still visible—so swift, so 'hot' was the movement of his burning feet that it left even the desert, typical abode of the madman, spotted with dark burning-scars.

یك قلم کاغذ آتش زده ہے صفحهٔ دشت
نقش پا میں ہے تپ گرمئی رفتار ہنوز

He may combine it with birds; every handfull of dust is flying toward heaven as a dove (doves being ash-grey), and every piece of firestruck paper becomes the trap for the peacock, for both have the same sparkling marks.

کف هر خاك به گردون شده قمری پرواز
دام هر کاغذ آتش زده طاوس شکار

The association of 'fire-struck paper' and the peacock is found already in 17th century Indo-Persian poetry.[23]

Thus in a Persian poem Ghālib says quite in harmony with the models of the masters of the Indian style :

The letter-carrier got lost—now I throw the letter in the fire: if it is not a pigeon I make a peacock fly.

نامه بر گم شد در آتش نامه‌را باز افگنم
چون کبوتر نیست طاوسی به پرواز افگنم

The pigeon is the usual carrier for letters, but since there is no pigeon available, the fire may turn the letters of his writing into a sparkling pattern like that of a peacock's tail. This verse reminds the reader immediately of a charming Urdu verse

کھلے گا کس طرح مضموں مرے مکتوب کا یا رب
قسم کھائی ہے اس کافر نے کاغذ کے جلانے کی

in which Ghālib asks how his beloved shall become acquainted with the contents of his love-letter, for—and now there are two possibilities of interpreting the second hemistich—either she has sworn to burn all paper (and then she would not see its contents at all) or, if the oath-particle is taken in the contrary meaning: she has sworn not to burn any paper (and thus she will be deprived of seeing the letters sparkling and revealing the fire of his love).

The latter meaning is confirmed by a Persian verse in which he addresses his beloved :

Throw it in the fire and regard my fever and fire —
what need to open my letter full of grief ?

بفگن در آتش و تب و تابم نظارہ کن
غمنامۂ مرا بکشودن چہ احتیاج

Ghālib writes the 'picture of the eye' — i.e., the letter *ṣād* ص or *ʿain* ع — on the letterhead so that his longing to behold the face of the beloved may be fulfilled when she opens the letter —

آنکھ کی تصویر سرنامے پہ کھینچی ہے کہ تا
تجھ پہ کھل جاوے کہ اس کو حسرت دیدار ہے

a witty idea which has, however, been expressed by Jāmī who writes his name as *ʿāshiq-i ṣādiq*, so that he can look at the beloved through the eye of the *ṣād* when she reads the letter.[24]

Our poet leaves his house early in the morning to ask a scribe to write a letter to the sweetheart :

مگر لکھوائے کوئی اس کو خط تو ہم سے لکھوائے
ہوئی صبح اور گھر سے کان پر رکھ کر قلم نکلے

How often has Ghālib, himself author of masterly letters in charming and poignant conversational Urdu complained in his verses that his beloved has not written, or will not answer!

However, we should not take this complaint too seriously, because the poets of the Middle East were fond of inserting into their poems lamentations about the faithless beloved who did not write a

single line to them: we may think, to mention only the most famous example, of Ḥāfiẓ's *ghazal* with the opening line :

It is a long time that the friend has not sent line !

دیری ست کہ دلدار پیامی نفرستاد
ننوشت کلامی و سلامی نفرستاد

We should like to mention here the strange fact that even in the regional literature of Pakistan, especially in Sindhi and Panjabi, the complaint about friends and family-members who do not write letters forms a whole genre of poetry. Here belong the touching verses in Shāh ʿAbdul Laṭīf Bhitaʾī's *Sur Maruʾi* where the poor girl waits for a letter from her family (similar to many of bridal songs)[25] or the beautiful poems in Sachal Sarmast's Sindhi *risālō*, especially in *Sur Malkos*.[26] This is all the more surprising as the percentage of illiteracy in these parts of the Muslim world was very high, particularly among women. Thus, when Ghālib relates that his beloved does not write, he follows rather a traditional *topos* than to convey his own experiences.

Yet, he gives even the traditional subject of letter-writing a quite different aspect by his unexpected use of words. Thus he tells with great amazement that at one place of the letter the word *wafā* 'fidelity' was written; it was, however, immediately erased—the paper must have been *ghalaṭbardār*, 'uplifter of error' when the beloved wrote her lines.

ایک جا حرف وفا لکھا تھا سو بھی مٹ گیا
ظاہرا کاغذ ترے خط کا غلط بردار ہے

Ḥālī thought it necessary to explain this word *ghalaṭbardār* by saying that 'it is that paper from which the mistake can be very easily removed so that no trace of it remains'.[27] Ghālib has used the term very elegantly to convey the idea that the word disappears by itself: even if the beloved had indeed written once the word 'fidelity' the paper is of such a kind that this word, which was not really intended immediately disappeared without leaving any trace.

This lack of fidelity leads the poet also to think that the lover, wherever he should see a gesture of friendliness from the beloved in writing, should write on the side of that paper: 'May my soul be sacrificed for her'.

رحمی از معشوق ہرجا در کتابی بنگری
بر کنار آن ورق ''جانہا فدایش،، می نویس

And could we think of a more charming description of the strange state of a lover than that given in the lines :

We shall write a letter, even though there be no subject — we are in love with your name!

خط لکھیں گے گرچہ مطلب کچھ نہ ہو
ہم تو عاشق ہیں تمہارے نام کے

That is the reason for repeating over and over again the name of the sweetheart in the address of otherwise useless and meaningless letters.

But besides these direct references to correspondence we find also other allusions to the writing of letters in his poetry. The poet who complained :

It is a 'O would that' which I have written in a hundred places !

آئندہ و گذشتہ تمنا و حسرت است
یك کاشکی بود کہ بہ صد جانوشتہ ایم

could summarize his life in the lines :

The meaning of the word 'hope' is in no copy, although I have written the dictionary of the letters of longing.

در ہیچ نسخہ معنی لفظ امید نیست
فرہنگ نامہ ہای تمنا نوشتہ ام

'Dictionary', 'register', 'note-book'—these are words frequently used in his *qaṣīdas* in different connections.

As well as my breast — from the affliction of the charming ones whose occupation is cruelty — is a dictionary of the experience of time's justice
Is my eye, from the behaviour of the beloved ones who have the attitude of magicians, an index of the diary of expectation's grief.

ہم سینہ از بلای جفا پیشہ دلبران
فرہنگ کاردانی بیدار روزگار
ہم دیدہ از ادای مغاں شیوہ شاہدان
فہرست روز نامۂ اندوہ انتظار

He who had seen the 'writing on the forehead' in the black spot caused by untiring prostration on his beloved's threshold sees again his forehead, with wrinkles and lines, and says gratefully :

He has from my wrinkled forehead understood my hidden grief; he has understood the secret of the letter from the disconnected address.

وہ مری چین جبین سے غم پنہاں سمجھا
راز مکتوب بہ بے ربطئی عنواں سمجھا

The wise reads the story of unhappiness from the forehead of the lover since grief has engraved there disconnected, confused and confusing lines which reveal the bewildered state of his heart (and this, again, implies the concept of *sarniwisht*, 'fate').[28] Even more touching is the line :

Death was a letter whose title page is life —

مرگ مکتوبی بود کوراست عنواں زیستن

perhaps the most ingenious application of the symbolism of letters the like of which can be found only in a truly great poet like Ghālib.

But Ghālib was likewise well versed in the art of comparing single letters to other objects, as through the centuries, the *alif* had stood for the slim stature of the beloved and had been the symbol of Divine Unity and incomparability; the *jīm* ج, the *dāl* د, or the *lām* ل had signified curls and tresses, the *sīn* س teeth, the *mīm* م the small mouth—unless it was connected with the name of Muḥammad and speculations about his high rank. This trend to play with the letters of the Arabic alphabet, so typical of Islamic poetry, is not lacking in Ghālib's verse. A nice instance is the verse about his visit to Lucknow on his journey to Calcutta where he gives the reason for his short stay in the city with the following line :

Our road is the long-drawing kāf of karam (kindness).

جادۂ رہ کشش کاف کرم ہے ہم کو

Waiting for the kindness and favour of the ruler, the poet has very cleverly compared the long stroke of the initial *kāf* at the beginning of

the word *karam*, 'kindness' to the long way on which he travelled toward Lucknow. The expression *kāf-i karam* was not unfamiliar among the Persian poets; [29] but quite unusual is Ghālib's idea that

even the tyrant is injured by his own tyranny since on the head of the (word) arra (saw) there is the saw of tashdīd—

ظالم هم از نهاد خود آزار می کشد
بر فرق ارهٔ تشدید بوده است

as if the word 'saw' itself were put under the infliction of a threatening saw, for the *tashdīd*, which marks the duplication of a consonant, resembles a tiny saw.

Ghālib may also use the traditional way of hinting at a certain object by means of two or more letters, which are used in a detached way in a verse. Thus, a classical Persian poet might say :

From the alif of her stature and the lām of her tresses and the mīm of her mouth is the result alam, 'pain'.

آن دهن و زلف وقد مستقیم
راست بگویم الف و لام و میم

The combination of these three letters points, however, also to the mysterious letters *alif-lām-mīm* at the beginning of the second *sūra* of the *Qurʾan*.[30] Ghālib jokes in this strain :

Why should I put my heart on the promise of tomorrow ? For since yesterday it is in the ring of the mīm and in the ringling curl of the lām.

بر وعدهٔ فردا چه نهم دل که ز دیروز
در حلقهٔ میم و شکن طرهٔ لامست

'Tomorrow' designates, based on *Qurʾānic* expressions, the Day of Judgment, whereas 'yesterday' is, in the language of Persian poets, the day of the pre-eternal covenant, the *rūz-i alast* when God addressed the not yet created posterity of Adam: *"Alastu birabbikum"*, "Am I not your Lord?" (*Sura* 7/171). That very day the fate of man was fixed, as the poets often maintain: Ghālib's fate was that he should be involved in the study of the letter *mīm*, symbolizing the tiny mouth of the beloved, and the letter *lām*, representing her long tresses; both letters together, however, read *mul*, مل i.e., 'wine' so that the poet's peculiar weakness is also expressed in a subtle allusion.

Puns on single letters are generally found in Ghālib's religious poetry. He may play with the letter *alif* which is in his verses often connected with the *alif-i ṣaiqal*, a certain grade of polishing the sword or the steel mirror, or is associated with the slit in the shirt. But in both cases it is used to convey the idea of God's Unity and Unicity which has always been symbolized in mystical poetry and theology by the letter *alif*.

The *lām-alif* لا is usually the letter which designates close relationship, love, and embrace. Thus when Ghālib says that he had already been absorbed in the lesson of annihilation while Majnūn was still writing the *lām-alif* on the wall of the school

فنا تعلیم درس بے خودی ہوں اس زمانے سے
کہ مجنوں لام الف لکھتا تھا دیوار دبستاں پر

he thinks of the old story, often illustrated in miniatures, how Majnūn went to school with Laila and was in love with her before he had to learn the lesson of losing his mind and roaming through the deserts in hopeless quest for his lost beloved: our poet claims to be much senior to him in the study of annihilation.[31]

The *lām-alif* may also be compared, in the traditional vein, to ʿAlī's mysterious sword Dhūʾl-Fiqār which looks, in representations, like the word *lā*:

And this two-edged sword which, for rubbing off associationism, Throws the lightning of lā into the constellation of infidelity: When it becomes polished with the alif-i ṣaiqal of faith, Will it produce in the eye of success the manifestation of illā—

وان تیغ دو سر کز اثر شرك زدای
بر کوکبهٔ کفر زند صاعقهٔ لا
چون طرح شود با الف صیقل ایمان
در دیدهٔ توفیق دهد جلوهٔ الا

the *ṣalif-i aiqal*, the straight line of polishing, is a technical term for polishing steel until it shines perfectly: thus the attestation of God's unity emerges out of the "sword of *lā*" which cuts the head of infidelity and burns away, like a lightning, everything besides God. The identification of the *lā* with the lightning which Ghālib used in the praise-poem of ʿAlī is also found in his charming little *mathnawī* on Benares where he speaks, at the end, of the necessity of uttering the *illā* and

assenting to the idol-destroying *lā*—

Say Allah, and become the lightning of everything
what is besides Him!

بگو الله و برق ماسوا شو

To destroy everything besides God, that is the quality of the prophetic spirit which has found its clearest expression in the Islamic creed, and likewise the ideal of the mystic who sees nothing but Him, marvelling at His Unity and His manifestations in time and space which are real only so long as they depend upon Him.

Thus he may pray:

Erase the picture of duality from the page of my breast,
o you whose glance is the alif-i ṣaiqal of our mirror!

محو کن نقش دوی از ورق سینهٔ ما
ای نگاهت الف صیقل آئینهٔ ما

I.e., the mirror of the heart should be polished by the straight look (hence comparable to the straight *alif*) of the Lord so that it reflects only the Divine Unity and is purified from the dust and rust of associationism (*shirk*).

We find the poet further asserting that he has thrown the split of *lā* into the shirt of the directions so that the beloved may proudly wander outside the veil of our imagination,

چاك لا اندر گریبان جهات افگنده ایم
بی جهت بیرون خرام از پردهٔ پندار ما

or he may use the old Ṣūfi expression of the 'broom of the *lā*' جاروب لا for sweeping away all signs of duality from the world.

These puns on the letters *alif* and *mīm*, or the *lā* and *illa*, filled with religious meaning for every Muslim poet, lead the reader into the wide field of Ghālib's religious ideas. A particularly brilliant example of the use of *alif* and *mīm* is given in Qaṣīda III. Here Ghālib uses the classical tradition according to which God declared *anā Aḥmad bilā mīm*, 'I am Aḥmad without *m*'-Aḥad, 'One', a tradition which was frequently quoted at least since ᶜAṭṭar and Rūmī. He himself has used (in M VI) for this *m* the expression *mīm-i imkān*, the ᶜ*m* of possibility' or 'of contingent existence', namely the existence of everything created as opposed to the Necessary Existence which belongs to

God alone. The *m* is, thus, the letter of created, i.e., contingent beings, the first of which is Muḥammad.

میم امکان اندر احمد منزویست
چون ز امکان بگذری دانی که چیست

First one has to take the m from Aḥmad;
for the m is the veilkeeper of the essential name of the Prophet.
Whenever haply by the knowledge of the essence of Aḥmad
the m disappears from between, and the One (Aḥad) becomes manifest,
See without the veil Allah from the alif manifested,
and from the hāʾ and dāl count and find 8+4=(*twelve*).

باید نخست میم ز احمد فرا گرفت
کاں میم اسم ذات نبی را ست پرده‌دار
هر گه به یمن معرفت ذات احمدی
میم از میانه رفت و احد گشت آشکار
بی پرده بنگر از الف الله جلوه گر
وز حا و دال بشمر و دریاب هشت و چار

This kind of letter-mysticism had been popular among Muslim mystics since long: the word Aḥmad, after losing its *m*, becomes *Aḥad*, 'One'. Its first letter *alif*, with the numerical value 1, is always considered the symbol of Allah, the one and Absolute,[32] the numerical value of the remaining letter *ḥ* is 8, that of *d* is 4, the sum of which, 12, is the number of the twelve imams of the Imamiya Shᶜīa, so that the name of the Prophet, *Aḥmad*, contains 1) the *alif* hinting to God, 2) the *m* of contingent existence and humanity, and 3) the number of the Shīᶜite imams who distribute the light of Muḥammad on earth.

There are sometimes allusions to painting in his poetry—he could tell his beloved that he had even learnt the art of painting for the sake of finding a way of drawing closer to her or to arouse her attention.

Ghālib has several times compared his poetry to colourful paintings: who does not quote the verse in which he calls his Persian poetry colourful, his Urdu verses colourless ? And he elaborates this

idea in the subsequent lines of his poem where he boasts, addressing Bahādur Shāh Ẓafar :

Look at my Persian so that you may know that in
the country of imagination
I am Mānī and Arzhang, and this copy is my Artang.

فارسی بین تا بدانی کاندر اقلیم خیال
مانی و ارژنگم وآن نسخه ارتنگ منست

Mānī is regarded by Persian poets as the master-painter—probably owing to the beautifully and lavishly decorated remnants of Manichean manuscripts from East Turkestan or Western China, and Artang is, in Islamic poetry, the cave in China where Mānī retired and which he decorated with paintings.[33] Of course, if our poet sees his lovely beloved in the embrace of the rival he would rather need a peacock's foot than Mānī's brush: the peacock's foot has always been regarded as the ugliest part of this colourful proud bird.

نقش ناز بت طناز به آغوش رقیب
پاے طاوس پے خامۂ مانی مانگے

The picture of his beloved should be the only sign on the paper of his mind :

غیر تمثال تو نقش ورق هوش مباد

How ingenious does Ghālib play on the double meaning of *pardah* as 'veil' and 'canvas for painting'![34] For him, Majnūn—always represented naked on miniatures—becomes the example for the sad truth that love and longing are never compatible with wealth :

Qais (=Majnūn) has become naked even in the veil (=on the canvas) of the picture ....

شوق هر رنگ رقیب سر و ساماں نکلا
قیس تصویر کے پردے میں بھی عریاں نکلا

Ghālib was able to express every mood at least once in the symbolism of writing—whether he claims pridefully that

the ink in my inkpot is from the blackness of the
Night of Might (lailat ul-qadr),
the sky is my page and the stars are dust-
sprinkling on my lines.

از سواد شب قدرست مدادم به دوات
آسمان صفحه و انجم خط پاشان منست

or whether he complains of his old age :

We have written on the pages of time, and it passed away,
we have become the unique one in the art of the
word, and it passed ....

اوراق زمانه در نوشتیم و گزشت
در فن سخن یگانه گشتیم و گزشت

it is always the true expression of that sensitive, proud poet who knew his own value and who was hopeless and full of hope at the same time.

Every written letter complains in its paper-shirt of the hand of the Great Calligrapher, and still, every letter is unique and cannot be exchanged for another one. The poet who saw everywhere the writing of destiny and saw himself as part of that writing—only he could invent the line in which the complaint of the letters is echoed once more :

O God, why does time obliterate me ?
I am not a letter which could be repeated on the
table of the world !

یا رب زمانه مجھ کو مٹاتا ہے کس لئے
لوح جہاں پہ حرف مکرر نہیں ہوں میں

Surely, he was not such a letter; the hand of the Eternal Calligrapher had drawn him perhaps on a dark paper, that of the darkening age of Muslim India, and of the breakdown of the established order in which his personal life was deeply interwoven—but he was surely one of the most impressive and intriguing letters which the pen of destiny has ever written in the *dīvān* of world-poetry.

FOOTNOTES

[1] For examples of letters used in Islamic poetry see F. Krenkow, *The use of writing for the preservation of ancient Arabic poetry*, in: *Ajabname* in honour of E.G. Browne, Cambridge 1922; F. Rosenthal, *Significant uses of Arabic Writing*, in: *Four Essays on Art and Literature in Islam*, Leiden 1971; A. Schimmel, *Schriftsymbolik im Islam*, in: *Aus der Welt der islamischen Kunst, Festschrift für Ernst Kühnel*, Berlin 1959; id., *Islamic Calligraphy*, Leiden 1970.

[2] ʿAufī, *Lubāb al-albāb*, ed. E. G. Browne and M. Qazwini, London 1906, 1903, Vol. II p. 345 (Pāʾizī).—A historical instance of the use of a paper shirt is given by Junaid-i Shirazi, *Shadd al-Izār*, ed. Muḥammad Qazwini and ʿAbbās Iqbāl, Tehran 1949, where the Qāḍī Jamāladdīn ibn Yūsuf al-Miṣrī who had come to Shiraz from Egypt and felt disappointed by the treatment he was given put on a paper shirt and went out to complain at the Madrasa of Ṣāḥib ʿAmīd-uddīn, and "this is the custom in Egypt that the oppressed, when he despairs of justice, puts on a paper shirt". (p. 356).

[3] ʿAṭṭār, *Dīvān*, ghazal Nr. 503; Rūmī, *Dīvān-i Kabīr* Nr. 2134.

[4] Khāqānī, *Dīvān*, qaṣīda p. 197 compares the complaining drum to someone who has put on a paper shirt; twice he compares the paper shirt to the target for the arrow (*tarkībband* p. 541, *qaṣīda* p. 258): those who envy him should wear a paper shirt like a target for the arrow ;

حاسدانم چون هدف بین کاغذین جامه

he also 'will make a paper shirt because of the cruelty of the friend' (*ghazal* p. 557)

از جور یار پیرهن کاغذین کنم کو کاغذ و سر قلم از من دریغ داشت

and has invented the charming comparison of the snowbound mountains in winter to people in paper shirts, for they so to speak complain of the cruelty of winter :

بر باغ قلم درکش وز جور دی آتش کن چون پیرهن از کاغذ کهسار همی پوشد

[5] Amīr Khusrau, *Dīvān, ghazal* Nr. 1152; cf. Nr. 1712 (again: target for the arrow).

[6] Ḥafīẓ, *Dīvān*, ed. Abuʾl-Qāsim Injūwī, Tehran 1967, p. 122; there the quotation from Auḥadī is given. Cf. also Fighānī, *Dīvān*, ghazal Nr. 310.

[7] A fine poetical elaboration of the *ḥadīth* "The pen has dried up" in Rūmīs *Mathnawī*, V 3132 ff.

[8] Amīr Khusrau, too, speaks of the crooked letters, *Dīvān, ghazal* Nr. 1080.

[9] Cf. S.p. 111, *ghazal* Nr. 1: You know my state, even though the *sarnīwisht* is illegible?

دانم از حال ومآلم خبری داشته باشی سر نوشت ازلی گرچه ندارد خط خوانا

The Turks speak of *alīn yazīsī* 'what is written on the forehead', the Arabs usually call fate *maktūb* 'written'.

[10] The book of actions is mentioned in the *Qurʾān Sura* 10/62; 18/47; 34/3; 83/7/12; it is fastened at the neck of everybody, *Sura* 17/14; f., or given into man's right or left hand, *Sura* 69/19,25.—*Sura* 3/102 speaks of the black and white faces of the pious and the sinners respectively.

[11] The contrast black-white is often used; cf. S. p. 90, *qiṭʿa* Nr. 23 the morning is compared to white paper.

سفیدهٔ سحری کاغذ است و من راقم سواد صفحه خط روی بد سگال سیاه

[12] There are other strange methods to produce ink, if we believe Persian poetical imagery: Jāmī makes ink from the *suwaidā*, the little black spot which is considered the innermost part of the heart (*Dīvān ghazal* Nr. 637), and the Indian mystic Kabīr in the 15th century, whose imagery combines Muslim and Hindu ideas, claims to burn his body in order to make ink of it, the bones being, then, used as pens (Ch. Vaudeville, *Kabīr Granthavalī. Doha*. Pondichery 1957, p. 8. ch. 3 verse 12.)

[13] Thus Saʿdī, *ghazaliyyāt* (Kulliyāt III) Nr. 635; Ṣāʾib adds that this Khiḍr transforms the white page into a garden filled with hyacinth; the comparison of the black curling letters of the *nastaʿlīq* or *shikasta* styles to curling dark hyacinths is very elegant (*Kashmīr* I 53).

[14] Thus Ṭālib-i Āmulī, *Kashmīr* II 697; cf. id. 700.

[15] About Sarosh see M. Moʿīn, *Mazdayasnā ū tasīr-e ān dar adabiyāt-i fārsī*. p. 448 ff.

[16] Ḥāfiẓ, ed. Brockhaus, *alif* Nr. 9; cf. Ghālib's Q XXXVIII or S. p. 15: "It enraptures the heart like the song of the Psalms from David's lips".

[17] Lahore edition 1969, Vol. XI, ed. Muḥammad Bāqir. — Cf. Russell-Islam, *Life and Letters*, p. 333 and 357.

[18] Sarrāj quotes in his *Kitāb al-lumaʿ fīʾt-taṣawwuf*, ed. Nicholson, the famous line of Abū ʿAlī Rudhbārī (p. 249):
I wrote to you with the water of the eyelids.

کتبت الیکم بما الجفون و قلبی بماء الهوی مشرب
و کفی تخط و قلبی یمل و عیناى تمحو الذی کتبت

This poem alludes in its last line to the fact that Oriental ink is solvable in water. The idea has, then, be elaborated by many a poet in the Muslim world, particularly to create the idea that the 'black book of sins' can be washed off by the water of tears.
The combination of water and fire is very common in connection with writing, cf. Saʿdī, *ghazaliyyāt* (Kulliyāt III) Nr. 357; Khāqānī, *Dīvān* p. 920; Naẓīrī, *Dīvān, ghazal* Nr. 460, and many others. Some charming examples from Hispano-Arabic literature are given by Soledad G. Fenesch, *Sobre una extrane manere de escribir*, in: al-Andalus 14/212.

[19] Rūmī, *Mathnawī* I 9, 10. Cf. Nicholson, Commentary Vol. VII. p. 19. The combination of 'fire' and 'reedbed' was commonplace in medieval Persian and even more in Indo-Persian poetry: see Bedil, *Dīvān* 105, 141.

[20] Rūmī, *Mathnawī* I 114 ;

[21] See also U 176 about the fire-spreading pen :

سخن میں خامہ' غالب کی آتش افشانی یقین ہے ہم کو بھی لیکن اب اس میں دم کیا ہے

[22] His words are almost verbatim found in Dard, *Urdu Dīvān*, p. 7.

[23] Some examples: Salīm, in *Kashmīr* I 383; Qabūl, in *Kashmīr* A 292; Bedil, *Dīvān* p. 69, 81, 191; in 188 he says :

Like the fire-struck paper we are the guests of baqō (duration, remaining in God)
We are the peacock that spreads its feathers and adorns the meadow.

Mīr Dard has compared the world to a fire-struck paper (*'Ilmul-kitāb* p. 180) and speaks of the 'hundred eyes' of such paper (*Dīvān-i fārsī*, Rubāʿī p. 118); cf. his *Urdu Dīvān* p. 46, 73; Nāṣir Muḥammad ʿAndalīb, *Nāla-yi ʿAndalīb* I 85, II 309, 526.

Bedil speaks of 'binding the letter at the voice's flame' so that it may reach its destination (*Dīvān* 99). He also says :

I am the letter of colour that is bound to the wing of the peacock (*Dīvān* 167); cf. also id. 219 the combination of the peacock with a *chirāghān* 'firework' and 157 the *ghazal* with the rhyme *kāghidh*, 'paper', further the verse id. 159 :

I did not write a letter in which the heart has not become blood,
Find your news about my letter in the peacock's feathers.

Dard likewise connects the peacock with the scar (*Dīvān-i fārsī rubāʿī* p. 141), and with eyes and a trap (id. 84); the connection of 'fire-struck paper' and 'snare' is found in a poem of Nāṣir ʿAlī Sirhindī (*Kashmīr* II 936). It is but natural to associate the sparkling tail of a peacock with fire, the round designs reminding the poet of scars; cf. the line from the *Westminster's Drollery*, 1671:

I saw a peacock with a fiery tail...

As to the pigeon, it is mostly associated with ashes due to its greyish colour; thus the juxtaposition of the faithful pigeon, the ash-coloured letter-carrier, with the fire coloured peacock becomes even more impressive.

[24] Jāmī, *Dīvān* Nr. 357 (p. 309). The elegance of the verse is enhanced by the fact that the poet uses the Persian word *chashm* for 'eye'—for every reader would expect the Arabic *ʿain* 'eye' which is also the name of the first letter of the word *ʿāshiq* 'lover—This combination is found also in a poem by Mīr 'Alī Shīr Qānīʿ, *Maklināma*, ed. H. Rashdi, Karachi 1956, note 185: "When the *ṣād* saw the *ʿain* of the lover. (*āshiq*)...." and in other verses.

[25] Shāh ʿAbdul Laṭīf, *Shāh jo risālo*, ed. Kalyan Adwani, Bombay 1957, *Sur Marui* II 1 ff.; cf. A. Schimmel, *Hochzeitslieder der Frauen im Industale*, in Zeitschrift f. Volkskunde, 1963.

[26] Sachal Sarmast, *Risālo*, ed. ʿUthmān ʿAlī Anṣārī, Karachi 1958 *Sur Marui* III 3 ff.; *Sur Malkos* III, IV.

[27] Ḥālī, *Yādgār-i Ghālib*, Lahore 1963, p. 218 (ed. Khalīl ur-Raḥmān Daʾūdī).

[28] Similar allusions are frequently found in Indo-Persian poetry, cf. *Kashmir* A 242, 81; Even the Pashto poet Khushḥāl Khān Khattak (d. 1689) says :

Those are real men (of God) who in this world
read on the tablet of the forehead the writing of the heart.

(*Rubāʿī* Nr. 88 in *Muntakhabāt*, ed. Anwār ul-Ḥaq, Pashto Academy, Peshawar, s.d.).

[29] Thus Kalīm says :

Beneath the qāf of qanāʿat (contentment) the kāf of karam found place.
Our narrow hand was higher than the hand of the wealthy.

در ته قاف قناعت یافت جا کاف کرم دست تنگ ما بود بالای دست اغنیا

i.e. contentment and poverty are more important than wealth because they are like the mountain Qāf, all embracing, and contain kindness and friendliness; the 'narrow hand' reminds us, that the *kāf* was usually mentioned because of its extreme narrowness: 'narrower than a *kāf-i kūft*' is a standing expression with Sanāʾī.

The expression *qāf-i qanāʿat*, *qāf* of contentment, is used by Khāqānī, *Dīvān, qaṣīda* p. 293; and goes back to earlier Sūfī tradition. The expression became very common in later times and is connected, by Fānī, with the *f* of *farāghat*, 'leisure' (*Dīvān* p. 58, cf. id. 43), which, however, is not very witty.

[30] F. Rückert, *Grammatik, Rhetorik und Poetik der Perser*, new ed. by W. Pertsch, Leipzig 1872, repr. 1968, p. 310.—Other examples in Rūmī, *Mathnawī* V 1316; Fighānī, *Dīvān*, ghazal 75; *Nāla-yi ʿAndalīb* II 802; M. U. Daudpota, *Kalām-i Girhōrī*, Karachi 1956, p. 55 note 85 about the *alif—lām-mīm* and its mystical explanation according to which the *lām* is the secret between Allah (*alif*) and Muḥammad (*mīm*).—A favourite combination was that of *dil* 'heart' with *dāl* and *lām: 'Heart* is outside of *d* and *l*,' says ʿAṭṭār (*Dīvān, ghazal* Nr. 74); he also composes *ʿishq*, 'love' from *ʿain, shīn*, and *qāf* (id. Nr. 108). Khāqānī combines both words in his verse :

صورت عین شین و قاف در سر یعنی که عشق
نقش الف لام میم در دل یعنی الم

The form of ʿain shīn qāf is in the mind, that means ʿishq 'love'
The figure of alif lām mīm is in the heart, that means, alam, pain.
(*Dīvān, qaṣīda* p. 260). Cf. Rūmī, *Dīvān-i kabīr* Nr. 1187

[31] Since the story of Majnūn and Laila forms part of Niẓāmī's *Khamsa*, it has been frequently illustrated, and the miniatures preserved in European, Asian, and American museums and collections mostly show Majnūn in the wilderness, naked and reduced to skin and bones; the next frequent topic is the school scene, where the two children learn *alif* and other letters.

[32] Cf. U 29. یک الف بیش نہیں صیقل آئینہ ہنوز...
The idea that the mystic need not learn any letter besides the *alif*, is commonplace in the biographies of saints; for the knowledge of Divine Unity as symbolized in the *alif* renders him independent of this world. These stories recur in Turkey (Yunus Emre, d. 1321) and in Pakistan (Shāh ʿAbdul Laṭīf Bhitāʾī, d. 1752), and the idea of the *alif* as comprising everything imaginable has often been expressed in high literature and folk literature throughout the Islamic world. Cf. Sarrāj, *Kitāb al-lumaʿ*, p. 89, and a few more examples in Schimmel, *Schriftsymbolik*; further see A. Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, Chapel Hill 1974, Appendix I.

[33] Already Manuchehrī expresses the view that Mānī was a skilful painter, see Fouchécour, p. 99; Qaṭrān speaks of the 'Chinese painter' (Fouchécour p. 187). Niẓāmī uses the expression in connection with Farhād; Saʿdī and Rūmī are fond of the comparison. The story of the contest of the Greek and Chinese painters as told by both Niẓāmī and Rūmī—though in differing form—points to the same admiration for Chinese painting (which became, in any case, much better known in the Western Islamic world after the Mongol conquest). That Mānī the Painter was a topos known to every educated person becomes clear from the fact that it occurs even in Pashto poetry (see Raverty p. 286). About the whole topos cf. J. Rypka, *History of Iranian Literatures*, Dordrecht 1968, p. 61 ff.

In Indo-Persian poetry the image often becomes a symbol of the transitoriness of glory, as Naẓīrī says :

Although the country of China was filled with paintings of Mānī,
It became waste, neither a picture is there anymore, nor Mānī.

(*Dīvān, qaṣīda* Nr. 40, p. 509, cf. *ghazal* Nr. 386).—A particularly charming application of the traditional 'picture in China' was invented by Mīr Dard in his *Dīvān-i Fārsī*, p. 5 :

Come, that your picture may take place on the heart's tablet!
Do not go to China, for there, pictures are (painted) on silk!

[34] An allusion to the painter who draws Majnūn reduced to skin and bones by Sālik, *Kashmīr* I 307. Cf. Nāṣir ʿAlī, id. II 934 :

The disappearing of the painting means the shirt for the naked... i.e. he will no longer be seen as naked, for when the picture disappears he, too, becomes invisible.

INDEX