

NOTES ON THE INTRODUCTION

1. A Scotswoman who knew him in Afghanistan wrote in fictional form an admiring account of his efforts to establish order: see Lillias Hamilton, *A Vizier's Daughter* (London, 1900).
2. He is therefore, in full, Faiz Ahmad 'Faiz'. His own name, religious like nearly all Muslim names, would mean 'Bounty of the Highly Praised One'—the Prophet. (He writes himself 'Ahmed', not 'Ahmad'.)
3. *The Observer* (London), March 11, 1951, in an article at the time of Faiz's first arrest.
4. In an article on 'Faiz and his Poetry' (in *New Age*, Delhi, April 1956) Sajjad Zaheer wrote: 'The writer of these lines was a co-accused with Faiz in this case . . . and he can testify to the high morale, the patriotic fervour, the serenity and the undaunted courage and faith in the high destiny of his beloved people which Faiz exemplified during this whole period.'
5. It is due to the late administration of President Ayyub Khan to state that Faiz's *Zindān-Nāma* ('Prison Thoughts') was written before its term of office; and that although he was known to be not in sympathy with this administration, the sponsoring of the present volume by Unesco was authorized by it, in recognition of his position as one of the country's most eminent writers.
6. Miss Achla Chib (now Mrs Eccles).
7. This is the view of Mr M. Usman, lecturer in Urdu at Government College, Lahore, who gave me much light on this and many other subjects when I was living in the College in 1965.
8. R. K. Yadav, *The Indian Language Problem* (Delhi, ? 1967), discusses the position of Urdu in Pakistan as well as in India.
9. Faiz expresses a degree of scepticism about the generalizations in this paragraph.
10. Faiz points out that the *kū-e-malāmat* might connote the worldling or the Pharisee, as well as the seeker of illicit pleasure.
11. See e.g. A. J. Arberry, *Sufism* (London, 1956); Khaliq Ahmad Nizami, *Some Aspects of Religion and Politics in India during the 13th Century* (Aligarh University, 1961).
12. My friend and former colleague Mr Kishan Singh, of the Panjabi College at Delhi, has given me valuable information about this folk-poetry, of which he has been a lifelong student.
13. Much Elizabethan sonneteering has a similar character. Cf. Professor Arberry's remark in his English edition of Iqbal's long poem *Javid-Nama* (p. 13) that 'Persian is a language almost ideally suited to deliberate vagueness'.
14. Mr R. Russell of the University of London has written a most illuminating essay, 'The Pursuit of the Urdu Ghazal' (in the *American Journal of Asian Studies*, November 1969). See also, by him and Khurshidul Islam, *Three Mughal Poets* (London, 1969), and *Ghalib: Vol. 1, Life and Letters* (London, 1969).
15. A number of Iqbal's *ghazals* will be found in my *Poems from Iqbal*.

16. See the poem 'Capital and Labour', in *Poems from Iqbal*, pp. 21-3.
 17. See W. G. Archer, *Indian Painting in the Punjab Hills* (London, 1952), pp. 5, 39.
 18. This point of contrast was stressed during a discussion by Mr S. N. Chib.
 19. No. 113 in *Poems from Iqbal*.
 20. Dr Nazir Ahmad, in a letter of August 20, 1967. The same critic however has found occasional phrases of Faiz to be in very unorthodox Urdu. (Examples, for the student: no. 38, line 17; no. 52, line 14.)

NOTES ON THE POEMS

(The numbers below are those of poems in this collection; numbers in brackets refer to lines, in the original text and transliteration.)

- Naqsh-e-Faryādī*. This untranslatable title comes from the opening of Ghalib's Urdu poems, where instead of the conventional expression of gratitude to God the poet says that all created things are protesting against their creator.
- 8 (6) The 'alien dust' is an oblique allusion to the withering touch of imperialism; cf. the recurrence of the word *ajnabī* (alien), with a more overtly political reference, in line 14 of the next poem.
- 9 This was a favourite poem at college *mushā'iras*; to student audiences its blend of patriotic and romantic had a special appeal. The verse translation is in approximately the metre of the original.
- 10 The opening couplet parodies that of a poem of Iqbal, 'The Prayer of Tariq'—the Muslim conqueror of Spain. Iqbal's warriors of the faith are endowed with zeal for religion (*zauq-e-khudā'ī*), Faiz's mongrels with zeal for cadging (*zauq-e-gadā'ī*).
- 11 This poem made a great impression by its extreme simplicity and directness, though its style has seldom been reproduced since, either by imitators or by Faiz himself. The metre and rhyme-scheme of the verse translation are close to those of the original.
- 14 The situation referred to is that of the August rising of 1942 in India, though more than one interpretation is possible. The sonnet-form used in the translation seems not inappropriate. I once pointed out to Faiz that several of his poems were in fourteen lines, and asked whether they had been influenced by the sonnet; he said this might have happened without his being conscious of it, but fourteen lines happened to suit several of his rhyme-patterns.
- 15 (4) The two worlds are that of sense, and the other, invisible one.
 15 (8) *Parda-e-sāz* is a musical term, for note or key, so that there is a kind of double meaning here.
- Dast-e-Šabā*. *Šabā* is any light breeze, particularly of early morning; it recurs frequently in these poems, and may be said to symbolize both a prisoner's tenuous contact with the free world outside, and mankind's hopes of liberation.
- 17 One of several poems that Faiz composed in solitary confinement, when deprived of writing materials, and was only able to write down several months later.
- 17 (1) *Lauh-o-qalam* is an instance of a religious memory woven into a new context, as not infrequently with Faiz. Traditionally the phrase relates to the Book of Destiny where all that was to happen was written down before the creation of the world. For Faiz, who uses it several times in poems of this

- period (it forms the title of no. 20), it seems to symbolize the artist's endowment and his responsibility to his fellow-men.
- 18 The verse translation follows the *ghazal* form of the original, and its metre, except that its four feet (of five syllables each) are reduced to three.
- 18 (2) Faiz says that this line relates to recollections of youthful hope, with frustration and fulfilment alternating. But the whole poem is enigmatic and elusive.
- 18 (9-10) The antithesis of *rind* and *muhtasib*, rake and official censor of morals, is traditional, with a frequent insinuation that the latter is a hypocrite, no better in reality than the former. Possibly this couplet is linked to the previous ones by an implied suggestion that sinner and puritan are equally fascinated by the lady with whom the poet is in love.
- 20 (3-4) Conventionally what lends the world vitality is love, or—virtually identical with it—the *pain* of love. The poet will keep inspiring men with the things (*ashāb*) that cause or constitute love and prevent the world from withering into a desert.
- 20 (9-10) An example of old symbols adapted to new meanings. The tavern and its wine stand for genuine religious feeling, the *haram* or shrine for formal, perfunctory belief; here they suggest political idealism in contrast with soulless bureaucracy, and the *sanam* of line 12—idol, or mistress—is the People.
- 23 The poem was originally entitled 'Two Voices'. The metre of the verse translation is close to that of the Urdu, which except in the third stanza is in rhymed couplets like the translation.
- 23 (28) *Nuḥq*, 'mind', might also be rendered as 'the faculty of speech'.
- 23 (30) Kai: Khosrau, the ancient Persian king.
- 25 Written in solitary confinement in the spring of 1951, when Faiz was awaiting trial and there was reason to fear the worst.
- 25 (14) *Jabr* and *ikhṭiyār* have the theological sense of necessity and free will; in this context they imply the alternative of slavish submission or revolt.
- 28 (5-6) Cool cloudy days and moonlit nights are the two times poetically regarded as appropriate to convivial parties, and therefore must awaken painful memories of friends one is cut off from.
- 30 Some revision of this poem has been made by Faiz for the present edition. It should be taken in a general sense, not as referring to any particular place or time.
- 31 The verse translation follows the *ghazal* form of the original.

- 31 (2) The opening of the buds is compared with the *chāh-e-girībān*, the tearing of the garment from collar or breast downward, the traditional expression of unbearable emotion; cf. 13 (14).
- 31 (3-4) That is, signs of political progress could be observed here and there in the world. Asked about these signs, Faiz mentioned events in Persia, Egypt, Africa, and East Pakistan.
- 32 'May I be a sacrifice to—': a familiar expression of devotion, here ironical. Throughout this poem, as in various others, the poet uses the first person plural which may, as in Latin or Greek, denote either 'we' or 'I'. In this case he recommended that both words should figure in the translation, the idea being that one man is saying what many men are feeling.
- 32 (5-6) *Bast-o-kushād*, or 'administration', means literally 'closing and opening', and there is a punning allusion to a line of Sa'di where the same words refer to stones being kept shut up while dogs are turned loose. The point is that citizens are allowed no means of defending themselves against persecution.
- 32 (19 ff.) There are echoes here of Iqbal's poem *Main aur Tū* ('I and You'), in *Bāng-e-Darā*, with its allusion to the Quranic story, a favourite with Iqbal, of how Nimrod the tyrant, who pretended to be a god, tried to burn Abraham at the stake, and how the flames turned miraculously into flowers. At the end of this poem Faiz writes, in the 1967 edition, *Nā-tamām*—'Unfinished'.
- 35 The city for whose familiar sights, so close to him yet invisible, the poet felt homesick, was old Lahore. He was brought here from Montgomery jail for a short time in the spring of 1954. The poem was begun at Lahore on March 28 and finished at Montgomery on April 15.
- 35 (14) *Lailas*, or 'sweethearts': Laila was the legendary lover of Majnun, and romantic love and political idealism are, as so often, equated.
- 36 Written in Montgomery jail in December 1954. The crosses or crucifixes of the poem are those formed by the grating of bars over the cell window. For Muslims, Jesus is a prophet and miracle-worker, but is not believed to have suffered the shameful humiliation of crucifixion. Faiz is the first Urdu poet to make an imaginative use of the idea of death on the cross.
- 37 Written in Montgomery jail on March 30, 1955. The original title was 'Africa Come Back'—a phrase that Faiz had heard of as the watchword of rebels in some part of Africa. A number of his poems have circulated in East Africa in Swahili versions.
- Dast-e-tah-e-Saḅg*—a forced promise; one makes a pledge by

- putting one's hand in another's, but if the hand is trapped under a rock instead, no choice is left.
- 39 Impressions of a night at Urumchi in Sinkiang. The poem has a companion-piece called 'Peking'.
- 40 Written in April 1957.
- 41 A prison poem of 1956.
- 41 (5) I give the meaning as explained by Faiz, but the image, taken straightforwardly, is a curious one.
- 41 (6) The sacred marks on the forehead, and the smearing with ashes, belong to a Hindu holy man; and the closing lines evoke the morning ritual of a Hindu temple, with conch-shells blown to summon worshippers.
- 42 A poem in defence of patriots subjected to slander and misrepresentation.
- 44 (17-18) The wording is unusual; I give the meaning as explained by Faiz.
- 46 This and the next poem are coupled as 'Two Elegies' (*Do Marṣiye*); they were written in memory of a young progressive who perished in prison. He is imagined to be speaking in his own person. *Mulāqāt*—meeting, interview, visit—became a prisoners' term for a *visitor* allowed to see them.
- 47 (8) The madman pelted with stones by street urchins is a common poetical image.
- 47 (12-13) A quotation from Ghalib.
- 48 Written at Moscow, August 1963.
- 48 (4) *Khūn-e-jigar hone tak* is a phrase from Ghalib. The liver is associated with a more tender, affectionate kind of love than the heart.
- 49 Written at Moscow in 1963.
- 49 (12-13) There is an echo here, as so often, of Ghalib.
- 50 Written at Moscow in 1964. The recurrent word *āhista* usually means 'slowly', but may also mean 'softly': here, as Faiz pointed out to me, the two senses run into each other.
- 52 (10) *Yad-e-bezā*: a phrase used of the miraculous shining of Moses's hand in the presence of Pharaoh.
- 52 (14) The wording is obscure; Faiz says it means: 'till the river finds its banks'—that is, I suppose, when the floodwater subsides and the banks re-emerge.
- 52 (16) *Fanā*, 'death' or 'destruction', was a term of the Sufi mystics for the total submergence of the conscious self in the infinite.
- 54 *Hamd*, 'praise', often signifies a hymn, or praise of God.
- 54 (19) There is an echo here of the last line but one of Iqbal's poem *Jabrīl o Ibīs* ('Gabriel and Satan'), in *Bāl-e-Jabrīl*, but with a transposition of meaning.

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