Our poets

249 The filthy archive of poetry and odes, more foul than a cesspool in its putridity,
By which the earth is convulsed as if by an earthquake, and which makes the angels blush in heaven,
Such is the place among other branches of learning of our literature, by which learning and faith are quite devastated.

250* If there is a punishment for writing bad verse, and if it is impermissible to give tongue to vain lies,
Then in that court of which God is the judge, where penalties for the good and the bad are determined,
All sinners will be acquitted, while our poets fill up hell.

All labourers and menials in the world prosper through their own efforts.
 Singers are the favourites of the rich, while even tambourine players get something by begging.
 But God knows what disease they who are afflicted with this hectic fever are supposed to be a cure for!

252 If there were no water-carriers, all would depart this life. The world would get dirty, if all washermen disappeared.

Things would collapse if all menials left the city. If there were a shortage of sweepers, all houses would become filthy.

But if our poets should chance to make a collective exodus, it would be a case of 'less rubbish and a cleaned-up world'.

253 The Arabs, who were the founders of this art in the world, who had no equal throughout its length and breadth,
Whose eloquence was universally acknowledged, have at last had all their traces wiped clean by our dear friends.
After losing all their arts and skills, they have finished by submerging poetry itself.

It was they who imparted life to letters, their style which gave lustre to faith.

They used their tongues as lances, and the thrusts of their tongues were more deadly than those of spears.

Morals were burnished by their verses, and the world was stirred into turnult by their sermons.

Their silver-tongued descendants here, popular amongst young and old because of their eloquence,

And famous throughout India on account of their rhetoric, are on the whole capable only of this:

That after wasting their whole lives on poetry, clowns should sing their lyrics at concerts.

256 Courtesans have their complete works by heart, and singers are under boundless obligation to them.

The desires of the taverns are fulfilled by them. Iblis and Satan sing their praises, saying,

'They have so blinded people's minds that they have relieved us of all care.'

The younger generation of the aristocracy

- 257 The children of the aristocrats are badly brought up. Their condition is ruined and their ways are evil.
 Some have the vice of flying pigeons, others have a mania for quail-fighting.
 Some are addicted to hemp and cannabis, others are addicted to the delights of opiates.
- On the closest terms with menials, they feel a sense of community with every wastrel and good-for-nothing.
 They are driven to distraction by even the shadow of the educated, and they hate schools and learning.
 All they do is waste their lives in the gatherings of the base, to curse them and to be cursed themselves.
- We do not find them in institutions of learning, nor do they move in decent society.
 But they go and add lustre to fairs, where they wander about staring and eating.
 From books and teachers they flee, but are up in front of all where there is singing and dancing.
- 260 If one were to enumerate the utter scoundrels from whose side even the wind itself shies to save itself,
 By whom their ancestors' honour has been mingled with the dust, and by whom their families' lofty reputation has been destroyed,
 Then all those who are utterly depraved will be found to be the sons of noblemen.

- In their childhood they received the close superintendence which governs the life of a prisoner. As soon as they began to mature somewhat and to attain discretion, and adolescence has bewitched them like a spirit. It immediately becomes difficult for them to be restrained at home, and their rovings take them to wrestling arenas and taverns.
- They are utterly intoxicated by the wine of love. They are beset by the ranks of the evelashes' army. They are tormented by suffering on account of the eye and the eyebrow. Their hearts lie completely helpless. What are they to do? Love is in their natures. Their very self is filled with burning passion.
- If there is any heart-stealer anywhere in the world, their hearts are given up to her unseen. If they catch a glimpse of her in a dream, may God preserve its memory night and day. Here the life of all is filled with wild passion. Whoever you see here is a Qais or a Farhad.
- If a mother is in distress, it is because of them. If a father is crippled, it is because of them. If there is nothing to eat at home, it is because of them. If the family is dying, it is because of them. What do those who are taken up with passionate love for their darling care about anything else?
- They do not shy away from vulgar abuse or insults, or shrink from the shoe and the slipper. If they go to fairs, they display their shamelessness. If they go to social gatherings, they start disturbances. Ruffians tremble at their laughter. Wastrels flee from their vicinity.
- If you have to marry off your worthy sons, take on yourselves the burden of your daughters-in-law. If you must worry about allying your daughter in marriage, you nephews are all evil-livers. This is the lament in every street, in every house: 'There is no shelter for a daughter-in-law, no match for a daughter.'

- 267 They do not have the knack of expressing ideas properly, nor of attendance at court, Nor of serving as apprentices, nor of being usefully employed. A labourer or menial is at least of some use, but how could anyone fit them under any head whatever?
- Those who are unable to get bread to fill their stomachs get by through committing a hundred crimes.
 Those few among them who come from prosperous homes spend day and night longing for their fathers' demise.
 These are the representatives of our noblemen and aristocrats. Their ancestors were men of one kind, these epigoni are of quite another.
- 269 Perhaps this is the younger generation of Islam, upon which all eyes are fixed,
 From whom there are hopes of betterment in the future, and upon whom the continued existence of Islam depends.
 Will they put new life into the ancient garden? Will spring enter it through them?
- Are these our happy progeny who will bestow strength upon the Faith? Are these the ones who will alleviate the community's distress? Are these the ones by whom all our hopes are bounded? Are these the ones who will light up the candle of Islam? Are these the ones who will add lustre to their forbears' name?
- 271 If these really are their descendants here, if these are the ones who offer prayers for their departed ancestors,
 If these are the present memorials of those revered figures, if these are the issue of nobles and aristocrats,
 Then they will be remembered here only by the fact that here a people of that name did once dwell.
- 272 Those people here who consider themselves civilized, who pride themselves on their freedom of thought, Who ridicule their community's manners, and in whose opinion all Muslims are ignorant, If you look among them for genuine sympathizers with their comrades, then few brave spirits will emerge.

- They are completely unmoved by the Muslims' destitution, care nothing for their education and upbringing,

 And have neither the will to make an effort nor a paisa to give,

 But they will freely offer caricatures of everyone, sometimes mocking their dress, sometimes jeering at their diet.
- If they find their friends at fault in any matter, they make them a target for their quips.
 With their joy at others' misfortunes, they grieve their brethren's hearts. They make fun of their own people, turning them into strangers. Their hearts are untroubled by any twinge of feeling. Their moist eyes hold not a drop of heartfelt tears.
- There is a boat being caught in a whirlpool, putting the lives of young and old at risk.

 There is no way out or room for escape. Some of them are asleep, while others are awake.

 Those who are asleep stay intoxicated with their profound slumber.

 Those who are awake mock the others.
- 276 Let someone come and ask them, 'What do you hope to gain by standing there laughing, you who are so aware? 'The evil time which is about to befall the craft will spare neither those who are asleep nor those who are awake. 'Neither you nor your companions will escape. If the ship sinks, you will all be drowned.'

General condition

- Well, what kinds of faults are we to describe, when the whole community is so utterly ruined?
 The state of all, poor, ignorant, weak or mighty, can only be despaired of.
 Few are such hopeless cases in the world as those amongst us, who once ruined cannot right themselves.
- Someone asked this question of a wise man, 'What is the greatest blessing in the world?'
 He said, 'Wisdom, by which this world and the next are gained.' The other said, 'If a man is not endowed with this?'
 He said, 'Then the most important things are knowledge and skill, which give a man cause for pride.'