

Classic Poetry Series

**Mirza Ghalib**  
**- poems -**

**Publication Date:**  
2012

**Publisher:**  
Poemhunter.com - The World's Poetry Archive

# Mirza Ghalib(27 December 1797 – 15 February 1869)

Mirza Asadullah Baig Khan (Urdu/Persian: میرزا اسد اللہ بیگ خان) was a classical Urdu and Persian poet from India during British colonial rule. He is also known as 'Mirza Asadullah Khan Galib', 'Mirza Galib', 'Dabir-ul-Mulk' and 'Najm-ud-Daula'. His pen-names were Ghaliband Asad or Asad or Galib. During his lifetime the Mughals were eclipsed and displaced by the British and finally deposed following the defeat of the Indian rebellion of 1857, events that he wrote of. Most notably, he wrote several ghazals during his life, which have since been interpreted and sung in many different ways by different people. He is considered, in South Asia, to be one of the most popular and influential poets of the Urdu language. Ghalib today remains popular not only in India and Pakistan but also amongst diaspora communities around the world.

## <b> Family and Early Life </b>

Mirza Ghalib was born in Agra into a family descended from Aibak Turks who moved to Samarkand after the downfall of the Seljuk kings. His paternal grandfather, Mirza Qoqan Baig Khan was a Saljuq Turk who had immigrated to India from Samarkand (now in Uzbekistan) during the reign of Ahmad Shah (1748–54). He worked at Lahore, Delhi and Jaipur, was awarded the subdistrict of Pahasu (Bulandshahr, UP) and finally settled in Agra, UP, India. He had 4 sons and 3 daughters. Mirza Abdullah Baig Khan and Mirza Nasrullah Baig Khan were two of his sons. Mirza Abdullah Baig Khan (Ghalib's father) got married to Izzat-ut-Nisa Begum, and then lived at the house of his father in law. He was employed first by the Nawab of Lucknow and then the Nizam of Hyderabad, Deccan. He died in a battle in 1803 in Alwar and was buried at Rajgarh (Alwar, Rajasthan). Then Ghalib was a little over 5 years of age. He was raised first by his Uncle Mirza Nasrullah Baig Khan. Mirza Nasrullah Baig Khan (Ghalib's uncle) started taking care of the three orphaned children. He was the governor of Agra under the Marathas. The British appointed him an officer of 400 cavalrymen, fixed his salary at Rs.1700.00 month, and awarded him 2 parganas in Mathura (UP, India). When he died in 1806, the British took away the parganas and fixed his pension as Rs. 10,000 per year, linked to the state of Ferozepur Jhirka (Mewat, Haryana). The Nawab of Ferozepur Jhirka reduced the pension to Rs. 3000 per year. Ghalib's share was Rs. 62.50 / month. Ghalib was married at age 13 to Umrao Begum, daughter of Nawab Ilahi Bakhsh (brother of the Nawab of Ferozepur Jhirka). He soon moved to Delhi, along with his younger brother, Mirza Yousuf Khan, who had developed schizophrenia at a young age and later died in Delhi during the chaos of 1857.

In accordance with upper class Muslim tradition, he had an arranged marriage at the age of 13, but none of his seven children survived beyond infancy. After his marriage he settled in Delhi. In one of his letters he describes his marriage as the second imprisonment after the initial confinement that was life itself. The idea that life is one continuous painful struggle which can end only when life itself ends, is a recurring theme in his poetry. One of his couplets puts it in a nutshell:

"The prison of life and the bondage of grief are one and the same  
Before the onset of death, how can man expect to be free of grief?"

### <b>Royal Titles</b>

In 1850, Emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar II revived upon Mirza Ghalib the title of "Dabeer-ul-Mulk". The Emperor also added to it the additional title of conferment of these titles was symbolic of Mirza Ghalib's incorporation into the nobility of Delhi. He also received the title of 'Mirza Nosha' by the emperor, thus adding Mirza as his first name. He was also an important courtier of the royal court of the Emperor. As the Emperor was himself a poet, Mirza Ghalib was appointed as his poet tutor in 1854. He was also appointed as tutor of Prince Fakhr-ud Din Mirza, eldest son of Bahadur Shah II, (d. 10 July 1856). He was also appointed by the Emperor as the royal historian of Mughal Court.

Being a member of declining Mughal nobility and old landed aristocracy, he never worked for a livelihood, lived on either royal patronage of Mughal Emperors, credit or the generosity of his friends. His fame came to him posthumously. He had himself remarked during his lifetime that although his age had ignored his greatness, it would be recognized by later generations. After the decline of Mughal Empire and rise of British Raj, despite his many attempts, Ghalib could never get the full pension restored.

### <b>Poetry Career</b>

Ghalib started composing poetry at the age of 11. His first language was Urdu, but Persian and Turkish were also spoken at home. He got his education in Persian and Arabic at a young age. When Ghalib was in his early teens, a newly converted Muslim tourist from Iran (Abdus Samad, originally named Hormuzd, a Zoroastrian) came to Agra. He stayed at Ghalib's home for 2 years. He was a highly educated individual and Ghalib learned Persian, Arabic, philosophy, and logic from him.

Although Ghalib himself was far prouder of his poetic achievements in Persian, he

is today more famous for his Urdu ghazals. Numerous elucidations of Ghalib's ghazal compilations have been written by Urdu scholars. The first such elucidation or Sharh was written by Ali Haider Nazm Tabatabai of Hyderabad during the rule of the last Nizam of Hyderabad. Before Ghalib, the ghazal was primarily an expression of anguished love; but Ghalib expressed philosophy, the travails and mysteries of life and wrote ghazals on many other subjects, vastly expanding the scope of the ghazal. This work is considered his paramount contribution to Urdu poetry and literature.

In keeping with the conventions of the classical ghazal, in most of Ghalib's verses, the identity and the gender of the beloved is indeterminate. The critic/poet/writer Shamsur Rahman Faruqi explains that the convention of having the "idea" of a lover or beloved instead of an actual lover/beloved freed the poet-protagonist-lover from the demands of realism. Love poetry in Urdu from the last quarter of the seventeenth century onwards consists mostly of "poems about love" and not "love poems" in the Western sense of the term.

The first complete English translation of Ghalib's ghazals was written by Sarfaraz K. Niazi and published by Rupa & Co in India and Ferozsons in Pakistan. The title of this book is Love Sonnets of Ghalib and it contains complete Roman transliteration, explication and an extensive lexicon.

### <b>His Letters</b>

Mirza Ghalib was a gifted letter writer. Not only Urdu poetry but the prose is also indebted to Mirza Ghalib. His letters gave foundation to easy and popular Urdu. Before Ghalib, letter writing in Urdu was highly ornamental. He made his letters "talk" by using words and sentences as if he were conversing with the reader. According to him Sau kos se ba-zaban-e-qalam baatein kiya karo aur hijr mein visaal ke maze liya karo (from hundred of miles talk with the tongue of the pen and enjoy the joy of meeting even when you are separated). His letters were very informal, some times he would just write the name of the person and start the letter. He himself was very humorous and also made his letter very interesting. He said Main koshish karta hoon keh koi aesi baat likhoon jo parhay khoosh ho jaaye (I want to write the lines that whoever reads those should enjoy it). When the third wife of one of his friends died, he wrote. Some scholar says that Ghalib would have the same place in Urdu literature if only on the basis of his letters. They have been translated into English by Ralph Russell, The Oxford Ghalib.

Ghalib was a chronicler of this turbulent period. One by one, Ghalib saw the bazaars – Khas Bazaar, Urdu Bazaar, Kharam-ka Bazaar, disappear, whole

mohallas (localities) and katras (lanes) vanish. The havelis (mansions) of his friends were razed to the ground. Ghalib wrote that Delhi had become a desert. Water was scarce. Delhi was now " a military camp". It was the end of the feudal elite to which Ghalib had belonged. He wrote:

"An ocean of blood churns around me-  
Alas! Were these all!  
The future will show  
What more remains for me to see".

**<b>His Pen Name</b>**

His original Takhallus (pen-name) was Asad, drawn from his given name, Asadullah Khan. At some point early in his poetic career he also decided to adopt the Takhallus Ghalib (meaning all conquering, superior, most excellent).

Popular legend has it that he changed his pen name to 'Ghalib' when he came across this sher (couplet) by another poet who used the takhallus (pen name) 'Asad':

The legend says that upon hearing this couplet, Ghalib ruefully exclaimed, "whoever authored this couplet does indeed deserve the Lord's rahmat (mercy) (for having composed such a deplorable specimen of Urdu poetry). If I use the takhallus Asad, then surely (people will mistake this couplet to be mine and there will be much la'anat (curse) on me!" And, saying so, he changed his takhallus to 'Ghalib'.

However, this legend is little more than a figment of the legend-creator's imagination. Extensive research performed by commentators and scholars of Ghalib's works, notably Imtiyaz Ali Arshi and Kalidas Gupta Raza, has succeeded in identifying the chronology of Ghalib's published work (sometimes down to the exact calendar day!). Although the takhallus 'Asad' appears more infrequently in Ghalib's work than 'Ghalib', it appears that he did use both his noms de plume interchangeably throughout his career and did not seem to prefer either one over the other.

**<b>Mirza Ghalib and Sir Syed Ahmed Khan</b>**

1855, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan finished his highly scholarly, very well researched and illustrated edition of Abul Fazl's Ai'n-e Akbari, itself an extraordinarily difficult book. Having finished the work to his satisfaction, and believing that Mirza Asadullah Khan Ghalib was a person who would appreciate his labours, Syed

Ahmad approached the great Ghalib to write a taqriz (in the convention of the times, a laudatory foreword) for it. Ghalib obliged, but what he did produce was a short Persian poem castigating the *Ai'n-e Akbari*, and by implication, the imperial, sumptuous, literate and learned Mughal culture of which it was a product. The least that could be said against it was that the book had little value even as an antique document. Ghalib practically reprimanded Syed Ahmad Khan for wasting his talents and time on dead things. Worse, he praised sky-high the "Sahibs of England" who at that time held all the keys to all the a'ins in this world.

This poem is often referred to but has never translated in English. Shamsur Rahman Faruqi wrote an English translation.

The poem was unexpected, but it came at the time when Syed Ahmad Khan's thought and feelings themselves were inclining toward change. Ghalib seemed to be acutely aware of a European[English]-sponsored change in world polity, especially Indian polity. Syed Ahmad might well have been piqued at Ghalib's admonitions, but he would also have realized that Ghalib's reading of the situation, though not nuanced enough, was basically accurate. Syed Ahmad Khan may also have felt that he, being better informed about the English and the outside world, should have himself seen the change that now seemed to be just round the corner. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan never again wrote a word in praise of the *Ai'n-e Akbari* and in fact gave up taking active interest in history and archaeology, and became a social reformer.

### <b>Personal Life</b>

Mirza was born in Kala Mahal in Agra. In the end of 18th century, his birthplace was converted into Indrabhan Girls' Inter College. The birth room of Mirza Ghalib is preserved within the school. Around 1810, he was married to Umrao Begum, daughter of Nawab Ilahi Bakhsh Khan of Loharu (younger brother of the first Nawab of Loharu, Nawab Mirza Ahmad Baksh Khan, at the age of thirteen. He had seven children, none of whom survived (this pain has found its echo in some of Ghalib's ghazals). There are conflicting reports regarding his relationship with his wife. She was considered to be pious, conservative and God-fearing. Ghalib was proud of his reputation as a rake. He was once imprisoned for gambling and subsequently relished the affair with pride. In the Mughal court circles, he even acquired a reputation as a "ladies man". Once, when someone praised the poetry of the pious Sheikh Sahbai in his presence, Ghalib immediately retorted:

"How can Sahbai be a poet? He has never tasted wine, nor has he ever gambled; he has not been beaten with slippers by lovers, nor has he ever seen

the inside of a jail."

He died in Delhi on February 15, 1869. The house where he lived in Gali Qasim Jaan, Ballimaran, Chandni Chowk, in Old Delhi has now been turned into 'Ghalib Memorial' and houses a permanent Ghalib exhibition.

### <b>Religious Views</b>

Ghalib was a very liberal mystic who believed that the search for God within liberated the seeker from the narrowly Orthodox Islam, encouraging the devotee to look beyond the letter of the law to its narrow essence. His Sufi views and mysticism is greatly reflected in his poems and ghazals. As he once stated:

"The object of my worship lies beyond perception's reach;  
For men who see, the Ka'aba is a compass, nothing more."

Like many other Urdu poets, Ghalib was capable of writing profoundly religious poetry, yet was skeptical about the literalist interpretation of the Islamic scriptures. On the Islamic view and claims of paradise, he once wrote in a letter to a friend:

"In paradise it is true that I shall drink at dawn the pure wine mentioned in the Qu'ran, but where in paradise are the long walks with intoxicated friends in the night, or the drunken crowds shouting merrily? Where shall I find there the intoxication of Monsoon clouds? Where there is no autumn, how can spring exist? If the beautiful houris are always there, where will be the sadness of separation and the joy of union? Where shall we find there a girl who flees away when we would kiss her?"

He staunchly disdained the Orthodox Muslim Sheikhs of the Ulema, who in his poems always represent narrow-mindedness and hypocrisy:

"The Sheikh hovers by the tavern door,  
but believe me, Ghalib,  
I am sure I saw him slip in  
As I departed."

In another verse directed towards the Muslim Maulavis (clerics), he criticized them for their ignorance and arrogant certitude: "Look deeper, it is you alone who cannot hear the music of his secrets". In his letters, Ghalib frequently contrasted the narrow legalism of the Ulema with "it's pre-occupation with teaching the banyas and the brats, and wallowing in the problems of

menstruation and menstrual bleeding" and real spirituality for which you had to "study the works of the mystics and take into one's heart the essential truth of God's reality and his expression in all things".

Ghalib believed that if God laid within and could be reached less by ritual than by love, then he was as accessible to Hindus as to Muslims. As a testament to this, he would later playfully write in a letter that during a trip to Benares, he was half tempted to settle down there for good and that he wished he had renounced Islam, put a Hindu sectarian mark on his forehead, tied a sectarian thread around his waist and seated himself on the banks of the Ganges so that he could wash the contamination of his existence away from himself and like a drop be one with the river.

During the anti-British Rebellion in Delhi on 5 October 1857, three weeks after the British troops had entered through Kashmiri Gate, some soldiers climbed into Ghalib's neighbourhood and hauled him off to Colonel Burn for questioning. He appeared in front of the colonel wearing a Turkish style headdress. The colonel, bemused at his appearance, inquired in broken Urdu, "Well? You Muslim?", to which Ghalib replied, "Half?" The colonel asked, "What does that mean?" In response, Ghalib said, "I drink wine, but I don't eat pork."

#### <b>Views on Hindustan</b>

In his poem "Chirag-i-Dair" (Temple lamps) which was composed during his trip to Benaras during the spring of 1827, Ghalib mused about the land of Hindustan (the Indian subcontinent) and how Qiyamah (Doomsday) has failed to arrive, in spite of the numerous conflicts plaguing it.

"Said I one night to a pristine seer  
(Who knew the secrets of whirling time)  
"Sir, you well perceive  
That goodness and faith,  
Fidelity and love  
Have all departed from this sorry land  
Father and son are at each other's throat;  
Brother fights brother, Unity and federation are undermined  
Despite all these ominous signs, Why has not Doomsday come?  
Who holds the reins of the Final Catastrophe?  
The hoary old man of lucent ken  
Pointed towards Kashi and gently smiled  
"The Architect", he said, "is fond of this edifice  
Because of which there is color in life; He



Would not like it to perish and fall."

### <b>Contemporaries and Disciples</b>

Ghalib's closest rival was poet Zauq, tutor of Bahadur Shah Zafar II, the then emperor of India with his seat in Delhi. There are some amusing anecdotes of the competition between Ghalib and Zauq and exchange of jibes between them. However, there was mutual respect for each other's talent. Both also admired and acknowledged the supremacy of Meer Taqi Meer, a towering figure of 18th century Urdu Poetry. Another poet Momin, whose ghazals had a distinctly lyrical flavour, was also a famous contemporary of Ghalib. Ghalib was not only a poet, he was also a prolific prose writer. His letters are a reflection of the political and social climate of the time. They also refer to many contemporaries like Mir Mehdi Majrooh, who himself was a good poet and Ghalib's life-long acquaintance.

# "No, I Wasn'T Meant To Love And Be Loved"

No, I wasn't meant to love and be loved.  
If I'd lived longer, I would have waited longer.

Knowing you are faithless keeps me alive and hungry.  
Knowing you faithful would kill me with joy.

Delicate are you, and your vows are delicate, too,  
so easily do they break.

You are a laconic marksman. You leave me  
not dead but perpetually dying.

I want my friends to heal me, succor me.  
Instead, I get analysis.

Conflagrations that would make stones drip blood  
are campfires compared to my anguish.

Two-headed, inescapable anguish!—  
Love's anguish or the anguish of time.

Another dark, severing, incommunicable night.  
Death would be fine, if I only died once.

I would have liked a solitary death,  
not this lavish funeral, this grave anyone can visit.

You are mystical, Ghalib, and, also, you speak beautifully.  
Are you a saint, or just drunk as usual?

Mirza Ghalib

# A Thousand Desires

Thousands of desires, each worth dying for...  
Many of them I have realized...yet I yearn for more...

Why should my killer (lover) be afraid? No one will hold her responsible  
For the blood which will continuously flow through my eyes all my life

We have heard about the dismissal of Adam from Heaven,  
With a more humiliation, I am leaving the street on which you live...

Oh tyrant, your true personality will be known to all  
If the curls of my hair slip through my turban!

But if someone wants to write her a letter, they can ask me,  
Every morning I leave my house with my pen on my ear.

In that age, I turned to drinking (alcohol)  
And then the time came when my entire world was occupied by alcohol

From whom I expected justice/praise for my weakness  
Turned out to be more injured with the same cruel sword

When in love, there is little difference between life and death  
We live by looking at the infidel who we are willing to die for

Put some pressure on your heart to remove that cruel arrow,  
For if the arrow comes out, so will your heart...and your life.

For god's sake, don't lift the cover off any secrets you tyrant  
The infidel might turn out to be my lover!

The preacher and the bar's entrance are way apart  
Yet I saw him entering the bar as I was leaving!

Thousands of desires, each worth dying for...  
&gt;Many of them I have realized...yet I yearn for more

Mirza Ghalib

## About My Poems

I agree, O heart, that my ghazals are not easy to take in.  
When they hear my works, experienced poets

tell me I should write something easier.  
I have to write difficult, otherwise it is difficult to write.

Mirza Ghalib

# Come That My Soul Has No Repose

Come that my soul has no repose  
Has no strength to bear the injustice of waiting

Heaven is given in return for the life of this world  
But that high is not in proportion to this intoxication

Such longing has come from your company  
That there is no control over my tears

Suspecting torment, you are indifferent to me  
So no love resides in these clouds of dust

From my heart has lifted the meaning of pleasure  
Without blossoms, there is no spring in life

You have pledged to kill me at last  
But there is no determination in your promise

You have sworn by the wine, Ghalib  
There is no faith in your avowal

Mirza Ghalib

# Ghazal

I wish to go and dwell,  
In such a place,  
Where there's no one else.  
No one to understand my speech,  
No one around to talk with,  
There, I want to reach.

I wish to build,  
One such house,  
Without a door to enter,  
Without the boundary walls,  
Thus there will be no neighbours,  
And there will be no guard.

There will be no one thus,  
To take care of me,  
When I will fell ill.  
And there will be no one,  
To mourn or cry,  
When I will die.

Mirza Ghalib

# Gilah Hai Shauq Ko

Mirza Ghalib

# He Was, When It Was Aught

He was, when it was aught  
He would still be, even if it might have been naught  
Drowned I am in my ego  
What would have happened if 'I' was not  
Laden with distraught and feeling apathetic  
do I have to worry about the head being severed  
If it did not severe from the body  
The head would have simply reposed on the lap  
It has been ages that 'Ghalib' died  
Yet the memories linger on  
His saying this on every occasion  
If it was 'like this' then what it would be!

Mirza Ghalib



# Heart It Is, Not A Brick Or Stone

Heart it is, not a brick or stone  
Why shouldn't it feel the pain?  
Let none tyrannize this heart  
Or I shall cry again and again  
Neither the temple, nor the mosque  
Nor on someone's door or porch  
I await on the path where He will tread  
Why others should compel me to go?  
The illumined grace that lights up the heart  
And glows like the midday sun  
That Self that annihilates all sights  
When then it hides in the mysterious net?  
The amorous glance is the deadly dagger  
And the arrows of emotions are fatal  
Your image may be equally powerful  
Why should it appear before you?  
The rules of life and bonds of sorrow  
In reality are the one manifestation  
Before realizing the ultimate truth  
How can then one attain liberation?  
Love is laden with noble thoughts  
Yet what remains is the carnal shame  
Trust conscience the still little voice  
Why do you want test the rival?  
There the pride of modesty resides  
Here dwells the social morality  
How shall we meet, on which road  
Why should he invite me to the abode?  
True he is an atheist  
Unfaithful and unchaste  
Dear to who is faith and heart  
Why should he then venture there?  
Without the wretched 'Ghalib'  
Has any activity come to a halt?  
What then is the need to cry?  
What then is the need to brood?

Mirza Ghalib

# I Have Seen Almost All The Possible Troubles In My Life

I have seen almost all the possible Troubles in my life,  
The last one that I have to face is the Death.

Mirza Ghalib

# I Will Not Cry

I will not cry for satisfaction if I could get my choice,  
Among the divine beautiful virgins of heaven, I want only you.

After killing me, do not bury me in your street,  
Why should people know your home address with my reference.

Be chivalrous for you are the wine bearer (beloved) , or else I  
use to drink as much wine as I get every night.

I have no business with you but O! dear friend,  
Convey my regards to the postman if you see him,(to remind him that he has to  
deliver my message to my beloved) .

I will show you what Majnoo (Hero of the famous Arabic love tale, Layla Majnoo)  
did,  
If I could spare some time of my inner grief.

I am not bound to follow the directions given by Khizar (A prophet who is  
believed to be still alive and guide the people, who have lost their way, to the  
right path) ,  
I accept that he remained my companion during my journey.

O! The inhabitants of the street of my beloved see  
if you could find the insane poet Ghalib there some where.

Mirza Ghalib

# In Her Every Indication

Although in her every indication, the aim is something else  
If she shows her affection(with me) , then different suspicion arises

Oh Lord, 'they' have not understood, nor will [they] understand, my speech  
Give 'them' another heart, if you don't give me a different tongue

Does that glance of coquetry have a connection with the eyebrow?  
It is certainly an arrow- perhaps it has a different bow

If you're in the city, then what grief do I have? when we get up  
I will go and bring back from the bazaar a different heart and life

Although [I /we] became quick-handed / deft in idol-breaking  
If I am alive, then in my path there will be many heavy-stones

The blood of the liver is in turmoil—or I would have wept to my heart's content  
If I had had a number of different pure-blood-scattering eyes

I will die [of love] for that voice, although my head may fly off!  
But let her keep saying to the executioner, 'Yes, more/another! '

People are deceived about the world-{heating/burning} sun  
Every day I show one different hidden scar/wound

There are many good poets in this world.  
But it is said that Ghalib is in a league of his own.

Mirza Ghalib

# Innocent Heart

Innocent heart, what has happened to you?  
Alas, what is the cure to this pain?

We are interested, and they are displeased,  
Oh Lord, what is this affair?

I too possess a tongue-  
just ask me what I want to say.

Though there is none present without you,  
then oh God, what is this noise about?

I expected faith from those  
who do not even know what faith is.

Mirza Ghalib

# It Is Not Love It Is Madness

(You say) It is not love, it is madness  
My madness may be the cause of your fame  
Sever not my relationship with you  
If nothing then be my enemy  
What is the meaning of notoriety in meeting me  
If not in public court meet me alone  
I am not my own enemy  
So what if the stranger is in love with you  
Whatever you are, it is due to your own being  
If this not known then it is ignorance  
Life though fleets like a lightening flash  
Yet it is abundant Time to be in love  
I do not want debate on the sustenance of love  
Be it not love but another dilemma  
Give something O biased One  
At least the sanction to cry and plea  
I will perpetuate the rituals  
Even if cruelty be your habit  
Teasing and cajoling the beloved cannot leave 'Asad'  
Even if there is no union and only the desire remains

Mirza Ghalib

# Kiss Me

Ghooncha-e-nashiguftha ko dhoor se math dikha key yoon  
Bosey ko poonchtha houn mein munh se muchey batha ki yoon

Translation:

Don't stay afar pouting your lips at me like a rosebud;  
I asked you for a kiss--let your lips answer my plea.

Mirza Ghalib

## Let The Ascetics Sing Of The Garden Of Paradise --

Let the ascetics sing of the garden of Paradise --  
We who dwell in the true ecstasy can forget their vase-tamed bouquet.

In our hall of mirrors, the map of the one Face appears  
As the sun's splendor would spangle a world made of dew.

Hidden in this image is also its end,  
As peasants' lives harbor revolt and unthreshed corn sparks with fire.

Hidden in my silence are a thousand abandoned longings:  
My words the darkened oil lamp on a stranger's unspeaking grave.

Ghalib, the road of change is before you always:  
The only line stitching this world's scattered parts.

Mirza Ghalib



# Naqsh Faryadi

Mirza Ghalib

# No Hope

I am left with no hope at all,  
No possibility to reach my goal,

The Day of my death is fixed,  
I am so very anxious that I can not sleep all night.

Though I know the reward of obedience and worship,  
But I have no tendency for it.

I am silent for a certain reason,  
Otherwise I can convince you with my words,

Why I shouldn't cry,  
For when I don't, she asks about me,

My heart is burning, though you cannot see the spot,  
But O my doctor, can't you smell my heart burn?

I have reached to a certain state,  
From where even I cannot find myself.

I am dying (Waiting anxiously) for my death,  
I don't know where the hell my death has gone.

With what face you will go to Ka'ba, O! Ghalib,  
You should be ashamed of yourself while thinking to go there.

Mirza Ghalib

# No Hope Comes My Way

No hope comes my way  
No visage shows itself to me

That death will come one day is definite  
Then why does sleep evade me all night?

I used to laugh at the state of my heart  
Now no one thing brings a smile

Though I know the reward of religious devotion  
My attention does not settle in that direction

It is for these reasons that I am quiet  
If not, would I not converse with you?

Why should I not remember you?  
Even if you cannot hear my lament

You don't see the anguish in my heart  
O healer, the scent of my pain eludes you

I am now at that point  
That even I don't know myself

I die in the hope of dying  
Death arrives and then never arrives

How will you face Mecca, Ghalib  
When shame doesn't come to you

Mirza Ghalib

# Pain Did Not Become Grateful To Medicine

Pain did not become grateful to medicine  
I didn't get well; [but it] wasn't bad either

Why are you gathering the Rivals?  
[It was just] a mere spectacle [that] took place, no complaint was made

Where would we go to test our fate/ destiny?  
When you yourself did not put your dagger to test

How sweet are your lips, that the rival  
[after] receiving abuse, did not lack pleasure

Recent/ hot news is that she is coming  
Only today, in the house there was not a straw mat!

Does the divinity belonged to Namrood'?  
[cause] in your servitude, my wellbeing did not happen

[God] gave life- the given [life] was His alone  
The truth is; that the responsibility was not fulfilled [by us]

If the wound was pressed, the blood did not stop  
[though] the task was halted, [but the bleeding still] set out

Is it highway robbery, or is it heart-theft?  
Having taken the heart, the heart-thief set out [to depart]  
Recite something, for people are saying  
Today &quot;Ghalib&quot; was not a ghazal-reciter

Mirza Ghalib

# Rahm Kar Zaalim

Mirza Ghalib

# The Dropp Dies In The River

The dropp dies in the riverof its joy  
Pain goes so far it cures itself

In the spring after the heavy rain the cloud disappears  
That was nothing but tears

In the spring the mirror turns green  
holding a miracle  
Change the shining wind

The rose led us to our eyes

Let whatever is be open.

[Translated by W. S. Merwin and Aijaz Ahmed]

Mirza Ghalib

# The World Is A Playground

I perceive the world as a playground  
Where dawn and dusk appear in eternal rounds  
In His Universal form is a plaything the throne of Solomon  
The miracles of the Messiah seem so ordinary in my eyes  
Without name I cannot comprehend any form  
Illusionary but is the identity of all objects  
My anguish envelopes the entire desert  
Silently flows the river in front of my floods  
Ask not what separation has done to me  
Just see your poise when I come in front of you  
Truly you say that I am egotistical and proud  
It is the reflection, O friend, in your limited mirror  
To appreciate the style and charm of conversation  
Just bring in the goblet and wine  
Hatred manifests due to my envious mind  
Thus I say, don't take his name in front of me  
Faith stops me while temptations attract  
In spite of Kaaba behind and church ahead  
I am the Lover, yet notorious is my charm  
Thus Laila calls names to Majnu in front of me  
'Dies' not one though the union is a delight  
In premonition of the separation night  
Alas, this be it, the bloody separation wave  
I know not what else is in store ahead of me  
Though the hands don't move, the eyes are alive  
Wine and goblet, let them stay in front of me  
Says 'Ghalib'  
Conscience is companion and trusted friend  
Don't pass any judgments in front of me.

Mirza Ghalib

# These Divine Verses

These divine verses,  
As I write  
Are  
The hallowed revelations  
Descending  
From on high  
The sound of the scribe's pen  
In the stillness of the night is indeed  
The heavenly muse  
Uttering her immortal words

Mirza Ghalib



# This Was Not Our Destiny

This was not our destiny, that union with the beloved would take place.  
If we had kept on living longer, then would have been kept waiting

If I lived on your promise, then know this that I knew it to be false  
For would I not have died of happiness, if I had had trust [in it]?

From your delicacy I knew that the vow had been bound loosely  
You could never have broken it, if it had been firm

Let someone ask my heart about your half-drawn arrow  
Where would this anxiety/ pain have come from, if it had gone through the liver?

What kind of friendship is this, that friends have become Advisors?  
If someone had been a healer, if someone had been a sympathizer!

From the rock-vein would drip that blood which would never have stopped  
If this which you are considering 'grief' this were just a spark

Although grief is life-threatening, how would we escape, while there is a heart?

If there were not the grief of passion, there would be the grief of livelihood

To whom might I say what it is- the night of sadness is a bad disaster!  
Why would I have minded dying, if it took place one time?

Since upon having died, I became disgraced- why were I not drowned in the  
ocean?

Neither a funeral procession would ever been formed, nor would there anywhere  
be a tomb

Who can see him? for that Oneness is unique  
If there were even a whiff of twoness, then somehow [He] would be two or four

These problems of mysticism! this discourse of yours, Ghalib!  
We would consider you a saint- if you weren't a wine-drinker.

Mirza Ghalib

# Tum Apne Shikve Ki Baatein

Mirza Ghalib

# What Cannot Be Said

There's one who took my heart away.  
But does she own it? I can't say.

See her as unjust though I may,  
Is she a tyrant? I can't say.

She strides a bloodless battlefield  
Where there's no battle-axe to wield.

She keeps a wineless banquet-hall  
Where there's no bowl to raise at all.

Although she serves wine ceaselessly,  
Her fingers bring no cup to me.

Her idol-carving hand is sure,  
But you cannot call her Azer

When riots quiet down, why must  
You brag of ousting the unjust?

There will be nothing you can say  
Of the unjust on Judgment Day.

Within the breast the secret lies  
Which none can ever sermonize.

How strange a thing it is that throws  
The mind askew till no one knows

How I Ghalib am no believer  
But can't be called unfaithful either.

&lt;b&gt;Note: &lt;/b&gt;

Azer: in the Islamic tradition, Abraham's father who manufactured and served Nimrod's idols. Known as Terah in the Judeo-Christian tradition.

[Translated from Persian ]

