

# My Lord, My God

Kamala Surayya

Translated from Malayalam by:

Kalim Ahmed

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### **Kamala Surayya**

Kamala Surayya was born on the 31<sup>st</sup> of March 1934, in Kerala. She is a renowned poet and story writer. She belongs to the Nalapat family, which has a resounding reputation as being the home of so many illustrious literary figures. Literary talent runs in her blood, as is evidenced by the fact that her mother Balamani Amma was a famous Malayalam poet. Like her mother, she too excelled in writing. Her love of poetry began at an early age through the influence of her uncle, Nalappatt Narayana Menon, a prominent writer. Her father V.M. Nair was also a reputed person, being the managing editor of Mathrubhoomi Newspaper, a significant daily in Kerala, many years ago. Her husband Madhav Das was a senior consultant with the International Monetary Fund. He was also an eminent Journalist. He passed away in 1992. She has three sons.

She is one of the very few writers from Malayalam who writes effortlessly both in English and Malayalam, yet maintaining high quality in both. She had earlier used the pennames of 'Kamala Das' and 'Madhavi Kutty'; the former for her English writings, and the latter for Malayalam writings. Currently she uses the penname Kamala Surayya.

She was short-listed for the Nobel Prize in literature in 1984, along with Doriss Lessing, Yourcener and Nadine Gordimer. She has been honoured with a number of prestigious awards for her constructive contributions to the enrichment of human civilization. Many of these have come from internationally reputed organisations.

She received the P.E.N. prize in 1964, The Kerala Sahitya Akademi Award for best short fiction in 1969, the Chaman Lal Award for journalism in 1971, the Asian World Prize for literature in 1985, and the Indira Priyadarshini Vrikshamitra Award in 1988. Kent Award for English Writing from Asian Countries. Vayalar Rama Varma Sahitya Award. An Honorary Doctorate from the world Academy of Arts and Culture, Taiwan came her way in 1984.

She was the poetry editor of the Illustrated Weekly of India, which was once the best-known English magazine in India. She was specially invited to the South Bank Centre Poetry Festival in London.

An ardent humanist, Kamala Surayya tried to describe in her works the most basic of human emotion, love and the lust for it and the internal tensions. Her writing career literally started from the very beginning of her adolescence. Some of her creations have been filmed. Her story 'Rugmini' was filmed with a very appealing call to the social reformers to contain the evil reality of luring, trapping and selling of youngsters into the wretched world of flesh trade.

Her famous English writings include: The Sirens (1964), Summer in Calcutta (1965), The Descendants (1967), The Old Playhouse and Other Poems (1973), Only the Soul Knows How to Sing (1996), Collected Poems (1984), Best of Kamala Das (1991) and her autobiography, My Story (1976). Other equally reputed works include The Alphabet of Lust (1977) is a novel. A Doll for the Child Prostitute (1977), The Anamalai Poems (1985), Padmavati, the Harlot and Other Stories (1992) are short story collections, and The Path of the Columnist is a collection of her columns. 'Tonight this Savage Rite: The Love Poetry of Kamala Das and Pritish Nandy' is a book of poetry done in collaboration with Pritish Nandy. Her works are available in French, Spanish, Russian, German, Arabic and Japanese.

She is a well-travelled person, having had the occasion to participate in immense literary conferences all round the world. In order to read poetry she has been to Germany's Essen, Bonn and Duisburg universities, Adelaide Writer's Festival (Adelaide, Australia), Frankfurt Book Fair, University of Kingston, Jamaica, Singapore, and South Bank Festival (London), Concordia University (Montreal, Canada), Columbia University (New York), Qatar, Dubai, Sharjah, Abu-Dhabi, etc.

She has lectured in many famous universities. The audio contents of her speeches have been preserved in some universities for the benefit of posterity. Moreover, many of her works have been prescribed as standard text books in many universities. She converted to Islam in December 1999.

### **Translator's note**

Kamala Surayya is one of the most influential feminist writers of our times, her language reveals liveliness and imaginative aura.

I have a great admiration for Kamala Surayya's writings. Her simple prose and stirring poems have always attracted me to her, the personality as well as the writer.

This is one of her most celebrated collections of poems. This was first published in Malayalam by Islamic Publishing House, Kerala, in the year 2002. In many ways, this work reflects the real personality of this acclaimed poetess. The theme is directly connected to her intense emotional attachment to her God, Allah. The poems move through the wide array of her experiences in her incessant search for the god, in whom she wants to submit herself.

The total style of her writings is that of simplicity, and an enduring mood of passionate love. She takes the reader to the stirring world of physical caresses and emotional attachments that go beyond the parameters of modern social conditioning. Essentially, there is a lingering mood of sweet reminiscences and nostalgic yearnings, resounding throughout many of her works.

I express my gratitude to Ms. Surayya for permitting me to do the translation; it sure was a privilege. I hope that I have been able to do justice to the original verses.

I would like to place on record my gratitude to a few of my close associates who have motivated and helped me in this endeavour. They include Dr. Shihab M Ghanem, noted Arabian poet; Shaikh Mohammad Karakunnu, Director, Islamic Publishing House, Kerala, India; Balan Taliyil; M K Johnson; and P K Mohammad Kappad. I would also like to thank Ved from Victoria Institutions, for his superb copyediting.

Kalim Ahmed

### **A Romance with Divine Satiation**

by **Shihab M Ghanem Ph.D**

In 1996, Kamala Das, Yousuf Ali Kechery and I were honoured by the Dubai Kairali Kala Kendram in Dubai. During our brief meeting, Kamala Das gave me a copy of her book of collection of poems written in English, 'Only the Soul Knows How to Sing'. I gave her a copy of my book, 'Shades of Love' a collection of some of my Arabic poems, rendered in English.

During her speech, she made a literal translation of a few of my lines into Malayalam, and read it out. She spoke of the theme of love in my poems. It was truly impressive; her mental capacity to comprehend and to translate, so fast.

I became captivated with her writings, and within a few months, I had translated five of her famous poems into Arabic. They included 'Nani', 'An Introduction', 'Next to Indira Gandhi', 'My Grandmother's House', and 'The Intensive Care Cardiac Unit'. They came out in local literary magazines and newspaper supplements. Later in 2005, they were included in my collection of Arabic translations called 'Poems from Kerala'. This work consisted of around 50 poems of 28 poets from Kerala. Many of my translations of Kamala's poems have appeared in various Arabic websites.

Kamala's writings are vibrant with emotions and passions that transcend the barriers of national and sectarian divisions. Her ideas are original, and there is a pulsating mood striving for social change in her words. Beyond that, she writes with a daring that is most unusual. This along with the frankness of her words and thoughts are unique, and rare to discern in modern feminine Indian and Arabic writings. Her language is like a breath of fresh air, simple and vivid.

I have met her only once. That was in 1996 at the aforementioned function. I was impressed that she was attired in Islamic costumes. She had not yet converted. In fact, her conversion to Islam was only in 1999. This change of religion caused a new controversy around a poetess and writer who is probably India's most controversial writer; one who had won many prestigious prizes and was short-listed for the Nobel Prize for literature since 1984.

Her conversion was not a sudden impulsive act; on the contrary, it was decision taken after years of deliberation and intense evaluation of the Islamic faith. The poems in this collection were written by her as part of her search, and yearning to be with her God, Allah. She wrote them under her new name Surayya. They were compiled and published as a collection, with the title 'Ya Allah'.

When Kalim Ahmed, the translator of this collection from Malayalam, came to Dubai last year, he visited me. He gave me a copy of his book on Mohammad Iqbal's philosophy, 'The Living Stream'. He mentioned that he intended to translate 'Ya Allah' into English.

Recently, he sent me the translation of the first three poems in the collection. I translated them into Arabic. They have come out in my book 'Poems from India' published earlier this year. This book contains 80 poems written originally in 12 Indian languages by 30 well-known Indian poets.

I have gone through this complete collection of poems as translated by Kalim Ahmed, and I am impressed by the quality of the translation. I have enjoyed reading the poems.

In the first poem in the collection titled 'Oh! The Boundless' Surayya says:

You raze the boundaries of  
Cities and of households.  
Yet, I encapsulate you  
In the depth of my heart.  
Is it human heart alone  
A world never ending?

Prophet Mohammed (peace be upon him) has said that Allah is boundless; yet, the human heart of a true believer can contain Him. I find that Surayya conveys this very idea in the words quoted above. 'Ya Allah' is one of Surayya's celebrated collections of poems. It contains a true reflection of her intense spiritual personality. She lives in these poems, alone with her God. Her experiences are all very personal, and reaches out to divine yearnings. She stands submitting herself; nothing less. In the poem titled 'The Warmth and Cruelty of Love' she says:

Ya Allah!  
I don't yearn for  
The Kingdom of Heaven  
It is not my desire to  
Conceal my trespasses.

And in the poem titled 'Apology' she says:

Ya Allah!  
Forgive me, My Lord  
Even in the serene vicinity  
Of mosque  
My voice turns bitter  
As of a weary lover.

These are essentially romantic poems, with a difference. It is love, and love alone that is depicted here. Yet, not wanton cravings of the physical kind. It is really a spiritual journey, filled with passionate misgivings, and longings. The aim is to arrive, in the realm of mental equanimity, and spiritual salvation. The poetess' paramour is none other than her Lord God. It is poetry of the mystical kind; one that transcends the levels of ordinary human emotions. The reader familiar with Surayya's poetry can feel that this restless creative poetess has at long last found true peace.

Dr. Shihab M Ghanem

Dubai, May 2008

### **Submission**

The body and the soul; for ages,  
They were intimate companions.  
The soul lives in the body;  
And the body is its robe.  
When the body departs,  
The soul would be naked  
Like a new born baby, of course.  
Once, the simmering pangs of earthly living  
Revealed as an island of dense dark.  
My journey was to search  
Of cosmic luminance.  
At last, one night,  
When I was engrossed

In my prayers,  
I beheld the heavenly light, all at once,  
As if basked in the moonlit.  
That blessed sight made my eyes blind;  
Yet, it sprouted in me the sublime insight of love.  
I humbly offer these verses to Allah,  
The loving and the merciful.  
Kamala Surayya

### **Oh, the boundless**

Ya, Allah!  
Unbound by  
Religious shell, you are!  
Epitome of unbridled freedom, you are!!  
Your light  
And your shade,  
For my happiness, I seek!!!  
So too for my restful sleep.  
You raze the boundaries of  
Cities and of households.  
Yet, I encapsulate you  
In the depth of my heart.  
Is it human heart alone  
A world never ending?  
Oh, the core of boundless infinity,  
I worship thee.

### **Ya, Mohammed**

Ya Mohammed,  
May the lord shower  
His grace upon him!  
You are the golden dawn  
That illuminates the dark Arabian nights.  
The last prophet  
Who fight for fidelity and truth.

We hear about the luminosity of that face  
Even after the long fourteen centuries.  
We are unfortunate  
Who came late,  
We blame our fate.  
Oh, the master  
Esteemed by more than  
Forty generations  
We prepare for you,  
The banquets of love.  
You came like the raindrops,  
On the desert, unexpectedly;  
The rain has long gone,  
Yet, as a golden memory, it remains,  
In each tiny speck of sand.

**A forlorn woman**

You are not alone, Surayya!  
Allah's deep love is like the soft moonlight.  
You have worn it as a shield;  
You alone hear the rhymes  
Of the soundless tunes.  
As the seas - tongue,  
At the ebbing of the tides,  
Toiling to reach up these steep steps,  
You fainted at the door,  
With your soft bleeding feet,  
Seeking the formless guardian's care.  
No more would any dare stone you,  
Do not keep the agony of remorse yourself;  
The bewitching calmness  
Encased deep in the turbulent sea;  
Is yours from now.  
The soft hue of the twilight time,  
When the dying day  
Joins the emerging night;  
Is yours from now.



Mountains and wilds,  
Hillocks and streams,  
You have traversed;  
To reach here.  
Once under the flowering tree,  
When you strolled,  
The rain fell on you,  
Then came the shower of flowers;  
Your face lit with delightful smile;  
Does not this memory linger on in you?  
It was the rejoicing of the youth;  
Is the same mood reverberating again,  
In you?

### **Companion**

Ya, Allah,  
It may be for my faltering steps,  
And my hazy vision,  
I travel along with you,  
Always.  
My hopes and my yearnings  
Are in thy hands  
And yours alone.  
Somebody says,  
That Surayya is mad...  
It was enough for me  
The white rod the destiny of blindness  
In my loneliness, My lord.  
It has been thus said,  
Is the religion only a crutch?  
Attired in a shroud of discernment  
Burdened with decaying wisdom,  
How foolish has been this journey.  
Didn't I renounce, this foolish.  
The kith and kin, and the dwelling,

The attachments and the companions;  
My lord!  
Thou art everything,  
My kinfolk  
And my companion.  
In my manor, now,  
There is no empty granary.  
The ceilings are back to brightness,  
There are no doorways,  
You have not entered;  
There remain no beds,  
You have not slept in.  
No gardens  
You have missed;  
No ponds  
You forgot to swim in.  
Oh, my lord,  
This my last dwelling,  
Is yours.  
Your soothing caress, my lord,  
Is intoxicating  
Like the scent of the sweet alluring flower.

### **My Lover**

Bring no garland of flowers  
For my lover has no neck;  
No welcome with betel to chew  
For he lacks a human mouth;  
My lover is my lord,  
Who has no body.  
In the sphere, where the  
Spirit and the body,  
Vanishes, he exists.  
Oh, Ye wayfarers!  
Partake in my rejoicing,  
Won't you?

**Servant**

Ya Allah!  
I am ready to forget,  
Forsake, and refuse, everything.  
Oh, Time! who were you,  
In my previous birth?  
Only a servile escort  
To the harem;  
One who took me  
To the portico of my lord.  
In his radiance, I stood  
Awestruck, and numbed.  
Somewhere, soundlessly,  
My anklets fell down.  
Tongue-tied, I stood,  
Chiselled in electric silence.  
I forgot you in his presence.  
A singer I was,  
Yet, speechless and powerless,  
I stood.  
Though a dancer,  
I lost my steps.  
I have no care for you;  
You are in oblivion.  
Your brown eyes do not  
Haunt my sleep,  
Nor my dreams.

**Prostration**

Ya Allah!  
I immersed in joyous celebration  
In the pond lit by sunrays,  
Trees in blossom,  
Showered their flowers.  
Like sheep gone astray,  
On the meadow,  
Were spread  
The silver tinted clouds.

What is my offence,  
My lord?  
Is ecstasy  
A violation of rules?  
Jeers and sneers,  
I hear around me.  
I see furious eyes.  
My living and my departure,  
Mean the same.  
Who gains?  
Who loses?  
This novel sense twitches my body,  
My spirit feels ashamed,  
And it prostrates at your feet.

### **Hearths**

Ya Allah,  
In my desolate final moments,  
Will he come hither?  
To pay his dues?  
His right hand propping the doorframe up,  
Will he stand in the open doorway,  
A moment?  
And gaze at me,  
With his brown eyes?  
Thwart that reunion,  
My lord.  
No stirring fire kindles  
In my hearth, my lord;  
Only pieces of cinders,  
And barren ash, remain.

### **Experiment**

Ya Allah,  
I was a girl,  
Playing in the courtyard of my home,  
Celebrating the feel of the youthful sun,  
Of the early mornings.

It was you,  
Who put me through  
The appalling tests.  
The pain and agony of the  
Beastly deserts,  
I have experienced.  
A fraud woman and a liar,  
They called me.  
My lord,  
Was it for  
You sprung up inside me,  
Like a banyan sprout?  
And you bathed me in  
Your soft starlit moonlight always?  
My lord,  
You who, in your infinite patience,  
Allow the blasphemers  
To go scot-free;  
Is it possible that  
You may never come  
Giving me shelter?

### **Smiles**

Ya Allah!  
Can the forsaken laugh?  
May be they;  
Yet, what they create  
Is only artificial flowers,  
Shaped with miserable rags;  
By destitute,  
Bloomed in market.  
My lord,  
Wilt thou also,  
Forsake me,  
As your creations have done?  
Neither my lips smile,  
Nor my eyes wail.

The one who has no  
Reason to smile,  
And to wail too.  
Surayya, your servant who had  
Once cried out  
With unspeakable pain and yearnings  
At your feet.

**I am safe**

Ya Allah!  
Ye, who is true in words;  
Ye, who hath unveiled to me  
The gorgeous features of love,  
My lord!!  
I am your Sunflower,  
Basking in the Sun  
That you are.  
Both in my hours of sleep,  
And in my conscience,  
I have felt you.  
Oh, my dear husband,  
Who has died with  
Unfulfilled passions for me;  
Oh, my lover,  
Who left me with unrequited love;  
You both know not,  
That I am secure,  
And I have a guardian too.

**Sunflower**

Ya Allah!

In what season of the year

You covered my body  
With the blanket of love?  
And in what birth?  
My desolate solitude,  
Was the sun in the summit  
And your face a sunflower.

### **Mirrors**

Ya Allah!  
I, Surayya, desperate  
The expectations of the guests, always;  
Ill-Starred and inauspicious I am,  
I reach out to you  
With flung out arms.  
Memory, and also forgetting,  
Are both fleeting.  
In mirror-less corridors  
Where I wander,  
I find myself in oblivion.  
My terrible insufficiencies  
Also fade away along with me.

### **Another string of the moon**

Ya Allah!  
In your weaving house,  
For whom do you weave  
By the sacred silk thread,  
This soft and tender attire of worship?  
Could it be for me, my lord?  
Is it to wear for me, the belittled,  
In the solitary darkness of the night,  
This robe like the moon?  
When innumerable sins and trespasses  
Come bouncing to the top,  
Like cadavers in the ocean of oblivion

I hear the ranting  
Of the public  
A sinner you are, and  
Impure is your body.  
A stainless soul,  
Is it afar, for me?  
The lovely touch of my lover's body,  
Just a nightmare?  
Is the tender beauty  
Wrapped in frightening themes?  
Oh, You maiden,  
Standing under the gallows blind fold,  
Your body may fall  
Trembling to the ground;  
Yet,  
Your spirit,  
Your soul will flutter out,  
And join the moon  
As another ray of light  
In the brightness of the  
Moonlit night.  
The night of love  
Never would come to an end.  
The cocks won't crow  
In the silence of night.

### **Mercy killing**

Ya Allah!  
The moment you accepted me,  
My form, my figure, and my nature,  
All changed.  
Only the scar of worship,  
Remains, on my forehead.  
Where once an adornment  
Donned, a callus nothing more.  
A born fighter I was,



I cast my eyes downwards,  
And wrath died in mouth.  
Old foes and assailants, I seek  
My sentries are armed with guns;  
Who are the aggressors, they ask.  
Are they asleep  
In the dark corridors?  
Are they hiding  
In the dark attic of my dwelling  
Preparing for an assault?  
Is it destined that  
My life is meant  
For a mercy killing?

### **Locusts**

The onslaught of the locusts?  
On the golden paddy fields,  
Have you seen,  
With a ferocious roar,  
They come.  
Covering the skies,  
With a dark tinge;  
Their wings fluttering fast,  
They come thus,  
With an unnerving clamour  
In the air.  
A thousand locusts,  
Their immense hunger,  
Their yelling was my thirst;  
And their onslaughts,  
My yearnings.  
My desperation  
For quietude;  
I flew miles and miles  
Seeking a symbol of love.  
I fell into your fields,  
At last,

With wounded wings,  
I pressed my head  
At your invisible foot steps.  
Oh, Merciful Allah!!  
I am in need of nothing,  
You are my hunger;  
And you are its satiation, too.  
You are my thirst,  
And also the water to slake.  
Ya Allah!  
Surayya is safe and secure,  
Today.

**New Year**

Ya Allah!  
They say,  
The New Year is tomorrow,  
The hopeful children,  
The robust children,  
They came for the supper.  
I remained immobile,  
As a statue of stone,  
Though I heard the talks, unheard.  
When the moment of hunger  
Had passed; I the mother  
Who worn away to nothing,  
In ceaseless love for her children;  
Satisfied in seeing  
The triumph of the children,  
Become exhausted a moment,  
Because of a momentary feeling  
That I had landed in the remote  
World of dead.  
Unfortunate Surayya!  
Within the limits of compassion,  
Is she an abyss of love.

When the revelry is over,  
Come to this frail woman,  
As a sweet slumber.

### **Embrace**

Ya Allah!  
Weeds and plants  
Would grow at the cemetery;  
Flowers would bloom,  
On the grave;  
Allah will come  
As rain,  
As light,  
And embrace us.

### **Merger**

Ya Allah!  
Those who made haste  
Hearing the call to prayer;  
They cannot understand  
My reluctance.  
Surayya,  
She who failed to learn  
The table manners.  
She who failed to learn  
The refinements in expressions;  
With all her effort,  
She who failed to learn  
The quintessence of your words;  
That is me,  
Yet, I know you,  
I swim in your ocean of mercy.  
I rejoice loudly in you;  
The oceans that I felt  
Have the warmth of blood.

And the fondling of you, the formless,  
Enters deep down  
And reaches my inner-self.  
Today,  
I perceive that  
I am yours;  
I bow to thee.

### **Kingdom of the God**

Ya Allah!  
You reap gold,  
In the mine of my soul;  
What about my body?  
In each vessel which the artery bears  
You fill the radiance,  
Profound radiance,  
Like the newly reaped spike of corn.  
In the three-fold junction,  
I won't ask yet,  
The wayfarers the west.  
It was you who  
Lent me the glorious redness  
Of the setting sun,  
As a toy for the crying child,  
You gave me the Sun.  
A mere honeymoon,  
I lost;  
And the kingdom of God,  
I gained.

### **Seed**

Ya Allah,  
You were a seed within me,  
In the rain, you grew,  
In the heat, you dried;  
Yet, you remained,

Till the very end of the age.  
Endless you are;  
you need no farewell.  
I have felt the tremor  
Of ploughs in my heart;  
There was only my blood,  
To fertilise you;  
Yet, you sprouted,  
And grew as a tree,  
With twigs and branches,  
And bunches of flowers;  
I plucked your sweet fruits,  
And savoured it.  
Ergo, I remain beyond the  
Clutches of death;  
It cannot touch me.  
Designed to live  
In another planet,  
By God, I was.  
Yet, doomed,  
To wake up from sweet slumber  
Here forever.

**End of the footsteps**

Ya Allah!  
As the clock struck twelve tonight,  
Allah whispered in my ears:  
You need sleep, Surayya;  
Repose in me, and sleep Surayya!!  
You wake up from your bed  
When the cock crows at midnight.  
When you call me,  
I too leave my sleep.  
Shall I endure the impatience,  
That shatters the dreams?  
It is not time

For you to depart;  
Beggars are waiting for you,  
Children are waiting for your sweet kiss.  
Oh, you whose ears have  
The fragrance of the exotic scents;  
You, who is adorned in  
Sparkling diamonds;  
Devoid of indifference, you are.  
You didn't have miles to tread  
For you are on the doorsteps  
Of eternal abode;  
To the heart of gushing love;  
Oh, Surayya, the wayfarer,  
Your footsteps end here.

### **Palace**

Ya Allah!  
In which season of the year was it  
That I entered within you?  
I Surayya,  
Sought security  
Among human beings only;  
Gone astray I was,  
And made to wander  
In the dales.  
What was that propitious time  
That I came across your open doors?  
I treaded to the light,  
Pushing away the dark shrouds.  
The pain in my feet,  
Was forgotten,  
As I went up the stairs,  
Moonlight lingered  
In the mirrors;  
Unfamiliar was my face.

My countenance had changed,  
And my name erased,  
As I entered your chamber.  
The soul needs no name,  
And an address.

### **Fortunate Woman**

Ya Allah!  
I perceive thee alone,  
In the core of  
Each and every  
Inspiring truth.  
Hope fills my heart,  
You are my all.  
Love is just a mirage;  
It was you who  
Quenched my thirst.  
You lent the halo  
Of luminance to my face.  
You said, I will change  
All those I adopt,  
Not just the form,  
But also frame, and figure,  
And nature too...  
For You I bear,  
In the pond full of lotus blooms.  
In the incessant chirping of the birds,  
I whisper my love in your ears.  
Beloved in the chambers  
Of the Sultan;  
Who bathes in perfumes,  
Who clothes herself in soft silks,  
Who is the beloved of  
The eyes and the ears;  
She who has converted;  
The Chosen;  
Surayya!!

Fortunate Surayya!!!

**Warmth and cruelty of love**

Ya Allah!  
I don't yearn for  
The Kingdom of Heaven  
It is not my desire to  
Conceal my trespasses.  
In the end,  
When I slip and topple,  
Over the burning hell, insensibly,  
Do not let me,  
Weep in inconsolable despair.  
Today,  
You alone are my beloved;  
My solitary protector.  
Punishment, from you, I deserve;  
Long have I endured  
The rapturous ecstasy of love,  
And the pang of love's end.  
Why should I  
Who have felt  
The simmering heat and  
The harsh reality of violent passions,  
Need fear the burning fires of hell.

**Waters**

I have heard always;  
Islam is a lake,  
Risks hidden in its depth.  
In those green tinted waters,  
Await  
Green-eyed serpents,  
Crocodiles,  
Venom-spitting crabs;  
With morbid fear,  
I moved afar.



Really,  
Islam is a stream of peace;  
I have discerned  
Serene greenery in it.  
I swim in its cool waters;  
My deliverance,  
I seek in it with blessing..

### **Walls**

Ya Allah!  
Is to keep the soul  
Away from the soul,  
The wall of body?  
Futile is this intense effort,  
Futile is this penance.  
They curse the fence,  
Those who dream of sweet fruits.

### **Mirage**

Ya Allah!  
Life was a scorching desert  
For me,  
From the very dawn of my childhood,  
From the alpha of my memory,  
Till today.  
The sinking sun  
Was my companion,  
From the early dawn  
To the dusk.  
In the twilight,  
The sun had vanished;  
A Crescent moon was afar,  
The cool sand.  
The vagrant wind,  
Which had blown over the sand  
Lay motionless,

Like a fallen headgear on the ground.  
Blood pulsates  
In my veins again.  
I begin my journey,  
Casting off the heavy knapsacks  
My journey to the oasis,  
An oasis of date palms,  
And gushing waters.  
Is it not the abode of Allah?  
Is it not the kingdom of love?  
Here all yearnings get quenched;  
Passionate cravings get satiated;  
Allah's oasis,  
The oasis that gave me shelter.

### **Armour**

Ya Allah!  
In a script less language,  
I pray to thee, again and again,  
You are my owner,  
You are my master.  
You alone my attire;  
The only shield for  
This naked soul.  
They who once sneered at  
Hearing my forlorn lamentation,  
They who jeered at pointed to me,  
Stand now thus  
In solemn silence,  
Seeing the twinkling  
Glow in my eyes.  
I grow in your radiance;  
In your halo, I stand  
Reaching out to the skies.

## Apology

Ya Allah,  
Forgive me, My lord,  
Even in the serene vicinity  
Of mosque.,  
My voice turns bitter,  
As of a weary lover.  
How long more, My lord,  
Is the waiting,  
For this Surayya, the hapless,  
Who has fathomed  
The profundity of love,  
To reach you, the formless?  
To learn the ecstasy  
Of another embracing,  
How long more,  
Shall I wait,  
Ignoring the incessant  
Yearnings of my senses?  
Senses still has the sway,  
It is sure,  
For forbidden fruits,  
Haunt even my dreams.  
Satanic persuasions  
Fill my ears;  
My heart trembles  
With cataclysmic upsurges.  
I am scared of sleep;  
My journey,  
With wide open eyes  
Let me continue.  
Though blind,  
Let me thus,  
Behold the silver streaks  
Lining the horizons.

Fill my dreamy eyes  
With cataract;  
And the lenient gloom of oblivion too.

**Musk deer**

Ya Allah!  
Surayya, who flew,  
From the dreams of others,  
The hated,  
The guest who came uninvited,  
Accept me, My lord!!  
In desolate desperation  
I seek thee, everywhere  
Left and right;  
Front and back,  
With eager longing  
I run searching for you,  
Bearing the simplicity  
Of the musk deer.  
What forbids you to  
Fetter me?  
Why this lassitude?  
No place in me remains  
Where you have not entered;  
No colour remains in me,  
That you have not seen.  
Yet,  
Why dost thou,  
Hide in the pages of the Quran,  
In silence?

**On the cross**

Ya Allah!  
I need only you,  
As my refuge.  
They claim

They are your slaves;  
They stand around me,  
Cheats, treacherous traitors,  
Untrue in words,  
Untrue in passions,  
With deceitful eyes,  
They dare not  
Look at me in the face,  
The crucifiers;  
The beholders of cross;  
And those who anticipate  
For clemency  
From the one who is in heaven,  
Without being merciful  
Towards those who are on the earth.  
They measure mercy  
With the scale of money;  
Persecutors of woman  
They are.  
Dispassionately  
They plunge her,  
In tears of pain and agony.  
The huge thorny trees  
They are.  
The sliver moonlight  
They hide.  
Keep me away from them,  
Oh, lord;  
Raise me up  
To your realms,  
My God.

**Road to uphill**

Ya Allah!  
In slow paces,  
I learn

The elements of devotion.  
Evermore I toil  
In earnest worship  
To love you, the formless.  
To draw the water from the sea,  
In my palms,  
And thus to make it dry.  
I try to pluck the stars  
From the skies;  
To fly up  
With my fluttering wings;  
To drink dry  
The wild stirrings  
Of the night;  
To celebrate daylight  
With heady festivity.  
Pardon me, My lord,  
Is life a stairway,  
Reaching out  
To the pinnacle  
Of the mount?  
An endless array  
Of steps!  
There is pain in my legs  
And strange is the emotion!!  
I am triumphant,  
And you too.

**Beloved grand daughter's face**

Ya Allah!  
That auspicious day  
In which I merge within you,  
Is not afar.  
You inspire me  
To blow out the  
Desires of my body

One by one;  
And to passionately  
Crave the hug of death.  
It seemed that,  
The sky too going round  
When I felt giddy,  
And when my legs tremble,  
The axis of the earth may wobble.  
My fate, what has it  
Granted me,  
Is it this worthless body?  
Midsummer holidays, in its onset;  
My beloved granddaughter's face  
Stands shining as the golden moon  
In the doorway;  
What shall I do,  
Sightless as I am?  
Would I weep or laugh?  
**Tinkling of chandelier**

Ya Allah!  
Distresses and  
Bewilderments,  
Miserable darkness, they are.  
Yet, now,  
They do not pursue my foot steps.  
My eyes are fishes,  
Swimming in water,  
And their sight is faint.  
Life there is  
Even in the depth of the seas;  
There is the glitter of life  
In my eyes, too.  
No more malice  
I need to bear,  
No more barbed snicker

Have I to hear.  
All around me the angels dance,  
Hand in hand.  
The tinkling of their burst of laughter  
Is like the soft swaying of the lanterns  
In the palace of  
Shaikh Hamid bin Mohammed  
Of Abu Dhabhi,  
Where he dwells  
With his beloved, Roudha.  
**Sight of the blind woman**

Ya Allah!  
In ancient times,  
In my dreams  
Did you come  
And knock at my door?  
In my childhood  
And my adolescence  
Was I your playmate?  
As I went along the drive way  
Of the temple  
With hymns in my mouth,  
Did you not weaken my ardour?  
When I was called  
By my kinfolk from behind,  
Didn't you shield my ears?  
From its place of shelter,  
To newer shores  
Did my ship move in haste.  
I didn't get wet,  
In the rains that fell.  
Yet, soaked I was  
In the rain that never rained.  
Blinded I was  
By my streaming tears;



Surayya, the wretched,  
Yet, she glows  
In your presence.  
This sightless maid can envisage  
The pond where the full moon is born,  
Also, the countenance of the faceless.  
The hallowed divinity of the formless  
Has discerned this youthful lass.

### **Horse sacrifice**

Ya Allah!  
You placed me,  
In a palanquin of faith;  
Is it you who carry me,  
Or me you?  
Deeply obliged I am  
For both the ambrosia and venom.  
On the moonlit night  
I fly with the angels.  
There is the tinkling sound  
Of my gold bracelets;  
Awestruck and captivated,  
Infants pause sucking,  
Their tender ears attuned  
In pleasant anticipation.  
My feet are weary,  
And powerless to dance;  
Yet, using them as oars  
I traverse the vast seas,  
Reminiscences,  
There are none,  
Of the shores  
I have crossed.  
In the surging foams,  
A grand spectacle


Of supernatural radiance.  
There is adornment in the skies,  
Felicitating me; celebrating me.  
Oh, what stately gateway  
Has opened,  
As if by thunderbolt,  
Behind the veil of clouds?

### **Hospitality**

Ya Allah!  
You have veiled my sight,  
The midnight mist  
Permeates in my eyes.  
My old flame, his face,  
Like a reflection  
In the flurry waters,  
Lies shattered in my memory.  
His earnest eyes,  
Are in oblivion;  
Also, the strength of his arms.  
Oh, You the handless,  
My real master;  
Clasp tightly,  
This trembling soul,  
And this timorous body.  
I stand as a refugee  
In thy shelter;  
As your special invitee.  
Do I need any other hospitality?

### **Between burning green trees**

In the crowd of the city,  
on the burning black road,  
in the bar, in the concert,  
in the funeral of martyr,  
thus in many places

I have seen him often.  
He has given me his address  
at all times,  
and invited me home.  
The address were changing  
it was in the corridor of a  
yellowish government hospital  
that I met him last time.  
Then also he gave me his address  
and invited me home.  
He had reminded me  
that now his hut was  
between burning green trees,  
I promised him that  
I will come surely.  
Later,  
I saw his blood scattered  
on the pages of dailies and magazines,  
once I heard on the radio  
his warm request,  
his heart's lamentation  
to the time,  
to dispense with the debt of dream  
and to give back his pledged youth.  
Life of Parvathi and children,  
Marriage of Sushama,  
long journeys along the  
burning path,  
amnesia, pangs of love, wound  
children, life, hunger,  
Victor Leanus, Guhan, and Girish \*   
hunting death of beloveds....  
his name faded away from me.  
Meanwhile,  
I got his address from an old diary,  
the address he gave me last time.  
The corridor of that yellowish hospital  
spread in me....  
And my eyes filled with tears  
of the days that I begged.  
I felt that I want to see him,  
thus, I landed on his village  
and searched for him to many.  
Yet, there was nobody at this address  
nor a house  
they never knew such a person.  
Where is the burning green tree?  
I turned in to the address again, carefully  
suddenly,  
My eyes filled with tears ,  
Oh, my God,  
It was the very address of mine.

\* Young poets committed suicide