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Approaching Khvaja Mir Dard

I AM DRAWN to Dard's verse, and have begun to translate it. What is the best way to reconstitute these poems in English? Dard's authorial voice is direct, and many of his ghazals, or couplets within them, are almost breathtakingly vibrant and plain. But they could not be called simple—because the technical requirements of the ghazal are not simple. Since the unity of the ghazal is conferred largely (some would say wholly) by the meter and the recurrent rhyme-and-*radif* scheme, a close formal counterpart of the poem would seem beyond reach: for these rules are all but impossible to comply with in English. Should one drop the rhyme-scheme? But without that obstacle, the poem in English might appear facile. Translation might appear to render, far too easily, what has had to be wrested into form in the original poem.

Beyond these difficulties lie challenges to the understanding. Aside from conceptual challenges, the profusion of muted words (enclitics) and of short, vernacular phrases makes lexical misunderstanding only too probable, at least for the non-native speaker of Urdu. Dard's verse (like the ghazal in general) trains its effects on the simplest phrases. The small working vocabulary hides as much as it reveals. As with similar "impoverished" vocabularies in French writers—Racine, for example, or a modern poet like Bonnefoy—this leads, not to the contraction of meaning but to an expansion which at times threatens to become endless. Faced with such perplexities, a translator may welcome with relief almost any word he has to look up in the dictionary!

Since my training has been in anthropology—which has its own problematic of "cultural" translation—I am perhaps too conscious of just how much there is to translate. Even one's own culture can be viewed anthropologically. One's own culture, like the others, is a storehouse of particular insights and particular oversights, which can be valued as the unique source of the kind of flair that is required for getting by in it. Many

of the challenges of Dard's verse arise from a particular society (eighteenth-century Delhi) and his place in that. But I have not made an anthropological study of the ghazal scene. It is ignorance, taken with "a little knowledge," that prompts the remarks that follow. Every translator would like to think of his or her versions of poems as good since these will convey something of the fascination of the original. But if the translations should fail, or falter, as they often do, the following observations may still be of use.

I

A place to begin is with the apparent vacillation of meaning in the ghazal between two planes, the devotional and the erotic. The exploitation of this ambiguity is one of the resources of the Persian ghazal, in the hands of such classical masters as Ḥāfiẓ and Saʿdī. In the Urdu verse of Dard, a spiritual contemplative who lived in the compound of a Sufi order founded by his father, this time-honored uncertainty may have changed in value.

The principal ghazal writers in Urdu—Mīr Taqī Mīr (1722–1808), who was Dard's contemporary, and Ghālib (1797–1869)—are, by comparison, secular poets. It might be better to call them "civil" or, simply, "court-frequenting," even if the "courts" were merely those of prominent noblemen and not the Mughal emperor. Their perspective on Islam was nondogmatic. In a Muslim society, even a court-based society like those of eighteenth-century Delhi and Lucknow, there can be no question of a realized secular outlook of the kind illustrated in Europe by Byron or Leopardi. Cultural life afforded no place either for indifference—so that a poet could avoid mentioning religion altogether—or for a Stoic hostility towards religion as such. Hostility, or better, objection, would be directed towards stock figures, the sheikh and the maulvi, and not towards the faith. And indifference, though it did exist, was an achievement of the poet, or of the genre in which he wrote, never of his society. Its expression was always a statement.

Some of the best-known utterances in a nondogmatic vein by Mīr, Ghālib, Dard himself, and a host of lesser poets derive, in fact, from prototypes in devotional literature. Celebrated among these are the lines of Ibn ʿArabī (1165–1240) as translated by R. A. Nicholson:

My heart has become capable of every form; it is a pasture for
gazelles and a convent for Christian monks,

And a temple for idols and the pilgrim's Ka'ba and the tables of
 the Tora and the book of the Koran.
 I follow the religion of Love: whatever way Love's camels take,
 that is my religion and my faith.

(1911, 67)

Ibn 'Arabī is an influential source, too, of erotic expression in the service of God. This poet (who did not write ghazals) found erotic imagery even in the Qur'ān. He drew on it to powerful effect, as in the image of Bīlqīs, the Queen of Sheba, raising her skirts in the court of Solomon because she mistakes the glistening floor tiles for water. A place was carved out in verse for the expression both of sexual feeling and of doctrinal and sectarian unconcern, which—since it had no counterpart in society at large—tolled to far greater effect than does such expression in the modern European languages. Over time, with conventionalization, and in lesser hands, the effect ran out.

The question of indeterminacy in the ghazal can be reformulated (in part) as “the problem of the addressee.” In Dard's verse, God is addressed, the *saqī*, or cupbearer, is addressed, and an unnamed friend or beloved is addressed. These identities are distinct—but not always. The “*tū*,” “*tum*” and “*āp*”—words for “you”—vary in reference, often within the same poem, though not within the same couplet. Sometimes in the ghazal the “I”—rendered as “I” or as “we”—appears integral, sometimes it is divided. Third person reference, too, can function, conspicuously or evasively, as a form of address. In the last couplet of every ghazal the poet himself is addressed, or at least referred to, in the first, second or third person, by his *takhalluṣ* (nom de plume).

The ghazal stages the vicissitudes of an encounter. The staging is fitful, laconic and intense. It is incomplete, since the ghazal is basically a collection of couplets in no narrative order (though there are exceptions to this)—each corresponding to a discrete mini-drama. In each couplet, access is blocked—access to God, to the beloved, or perhaps only to the *saqī*. Less often, access is realized, or, rather, there is promise of realization, if not in intimacy, then at least by way of a vision accorded wholly by grace of the beloved (or of God). But such moments are rare. The ghazal more often carries the burden of a complaint.

Yet to speak of “complaint” is inadequate. In almost any ghazal the complaint is voiced, but there is more than complaint to the ghazal. This verse form is cherished by readers, listeners and conversationalists because of its success in registering the many nuances of an unequal

encounter: an encounter with somebody (or perhaps with some psychic or circumstantial force personified) other than the self. In a “religious” culture the norms of the ghazal are accepted because people are used to the notion of a being or a principle transcendent to the self. In a democratic culture, in a society consisting in principle only of peers and equals, the ghazal will still make sense: but only if the self is dethroned. There are dervishes, party-goers, idols and angels in the ghazal, but there is no sovereign self. The *dependence* of the self must be admitted—and not just with irony! Such is the “price of entry.” In a social world where its ontology is accepted, lines from the ghazal enter readily into everyday talk, at even the most mundane levels. The play of the self, its parts, and its encounter with whatever it acknowledges and personifies *besides* the self is engaged through this verse form.

The self and encounter being its topic, there is in the ghazal—and even in the devotional ghazal—a place for the erotic.

2

It will be wondered, in Dard’s case, whether all this can be true of him. In English, Donne, for example, penned “Holy Sonnets,” but that was *his* name for them. The name did, at least, distinguish them from his licentious verse. There are verse kinds, including some peculiar to Urdu—such as the *marṣiya*—of a religious character. But there is, so far as I know, no such subcategory as “the devotional ghazal.” A ghazal is a ghazal.

As has been shown, there is precedent in Islam for the toleration of a wide range of imagery in verse that deals with the encounter with God. Is this, strictly, devotional verse? And if it is, can one distinguish such verse from verse that merely professes devotion? Where the ghazal is concerned, can the two kinds even be told apart? *Should* they be told apart?—is it even desirable that such a criterion exist? Should one be able to tell, by genre, whether devotional sentiment in the ghazal is expressed by a true devotee? Might not something, some freedom to perform, be lost? Is not this the same question as asking of the author of a love poem whether he or she was truly in love?

Dard’s voice carries the burden of an extravagant expectation. As Muhammad Sadiq wrote in his much-thumbed *A History of Urdu Literature* (1964): “He is the first and last poet, in Urdu poetry before the Indian Mutiny, to strike an authentic mystic note. The others only amused themselves by versifying mystical thoughts” (103). Apart from the one-third of

his poetry authentic in its mysticism, “the other two-thirds is erotic” (*ibid.*).

This judgment, as may be seen, not only distinguishes the poet from other Urdu poets, it divides the body of his verse in two. Without looking for a quarrel over the meaning of such words as “authentic” and “mystical,” it seems to me that the first part of this judgment is unexceptionable. Sadiq heard a “mystic note.” He did not go on to maintain that this note was struck because the author was a mystic! The damage in his judgment, which derives, no doubt, from the well-known puritanism of this author, lies in his sundering two aspects of the verse, the “mystical” and the erotic, that belong together, and are indispensable to one another.

The expectation Dard’s verse has to bear is precisely the one Muhammad Sadiq refrained from stating. The author spent his life in a *ziyārat*. Perforce, this is Sufi verse! The exceptionality of Dard is not merely that he was the one ghazal writer of stature in Urdu who had a reputation as a Sufi. It is more than that. Even limited excavation in the quarry of his devotional, speculative and (in a sense) autobiographical writings in Persian is enough to confirm the intensity—let alone the sincerity—of his spiritual vocation.

I have not explored far. Pointed in that direction by Anne-Marie Schimmel’s magnificent study (1976), I am some way into the *Nāla-ye Dard*, in Persian prose, with its many quatrains, but I have no Arabic and have read too little even in Urdu to offer any but the most superficial comparisons. If it were a matter only of sincerity, the matter would be easier. When a spiritual vocation is called sincere, this is already high praise. A call has been heeded, and the discipline it imposes has been embraced, not evaded. But the sincerity of verse is another thing. It need not be the case, even among Sufis, that sincere verse is good verse—or the other way round. The question of Dard’s Sufism, and its relation to his verse, is far more intricate than any such equation can suggest.

One possibility is that Dard’s Urdu verse was wholly conventional, and bore scant relation to his beliefs and practices as a Sufi. This thesis can be defended on the grounds that the content of the prose works described by Schimmel is (to the Western, and, I suppose, to the South Asian reader as well) quite alien and amazing, whereas the ghazals can be readily approached following the example of other ghazals.

This view does not withstand scrutiny, even the little I have been able to bring to the topic. It is true that Dard’s ghazals are not “difficult,” whereas “difficult” is hardly the word for the *Nāla-ye Dard*! But the very lucidity of the verse makes its theme wholly apparent. That theme is an

intimate and unequal encounter with a diverse being. Enough has been said to indicate that this very theme is intrinsic to the ghazal. It is prominent in Mir's verse. Mir, too, claimed that his own father was a famous Sufi (he was not), and it is easy to imagine that he may sometimes have envied his contemporary Dard's location in the household of a contemplative order. To say this is to whittle away some of the distance that might be held to obtain between the devotional ghazal and other ghazals, but, as I have argued, there was no such distance. What is peculiar to Dard is that his all-embracing topic as a poet in Urdu was so congenial to the preoccupations of his spiritual vocation as to be all but inseparable from them. Time after time one encounters precepts and a record of experience that resound with Naqshbandī Sufi doctrine—even if they flout it—and could not have been penned by Dard in ignorance of the dictates of practice in his own environment.

A more promising approach to this question is doctrinal. In Dard's time the influence of Ibn 'Arabī—which in India, more than anywhere, has been enormous—had become a contentious issue within Sufism. That influence had been hotly contested from the days of Aḥmad Sirhindī (d. 1624) precisely within the Naqshbandī *ṭarīqa*, or order, of which Dard's compound in Delhi was a sub-order. The touchiest issue concerned God's presence in his creation. Ibn 'Arabī's much-repudiated doctrine of *vahdat al-vujūd* ("oneness of being") was taken to propose a God who was wholly immanent in the world, not transcendent, as the Qur'ānic revelation would imply. The fundamental duality of God and the world was, in effect, denied. To poets and mystics, there was immense experiential and expressive value in the possibilities and indeed the tensions (for what Muslim would deny the transcendence of God?) afforded by this doctrine. But where tact was missing, where a sense of the rich potentialities sheltered by this kind of ambiguity was missing, the doctrine might appear to propose a disabled God, one unable to survey the scene, or to intervene from without. Dard, who contributed to Sufi doctrine in other respects (Buehler 1998, 73, 1005), inherited from his father a certain graduated refusal of this attitude, which may sometimes be discerned in his verse—just as its opposite may be discerned. Much of his verse—the first poem in the Urdu *Dīvān*, for example (1988, 115)—affirms and works with the notion of God's transcendence, as do these lines:

tujhī kō jō yān jāva farmā na dekhā
barābar hai dunya kō dekhā na dekhā
 (ibid., 130)

These open the twenty-sixth ghazal in the *Dīvān* (with *radīf* ending in *alif*). “*Jalva-farmā*” (Declaring Splendor) is hard to do justice to, but a translation might run:

If you appeared in the world, and we missed seeing you—
What does it matter what we saw of the world?

Yet the seventh couplet of the same poem pertains to a quite different order of experience, and this, in turn, may or may not lead us to reconsider the question of the externality of the vision (*dekhnā*, to see) in the lines above.

hijāb-e rukh-e yār thē āp hī ham
kbulī ānkh jab, kō'ī pardā na dekhā
(*ibid.*, 131)

I was the veil obscuring the face of the beloved.
When I awoke, I saw no veil.

What is significant in the above example is the oscillation, or, better (since there are more than two ways), the fluctuation, between ways of experiencing God, or between ways of registering that experience. The poem stages, too, a small drama of the self's imperfection and abandonment, opening in the second couplet:

Merā ghunča-ye dil hai vō dil girifta
Ke jis kō kisū nē kabhū vā na dekhā
(*ibid.*)

This rose, so fingered in the bud,
Never known to bloom, is my heart.

For all this to be said of the poem, however, one would need to accept that the presence and order of the couplets have a reason, that they have not just “strayed” into the poem by an accident of meter and rhyme. If *this* were disputed, then the “defense” of a particular poem would give way to an explication of the *Dīvān* as a whole. As we will see, the matter is not a light one.

Much more can be said about the expectations rightly or wrongly to be held of ghazals by a Sufi. I refer to one further example, very striking in Dard's case. The poet, who, it should be remembered, was a married man, not a Christian priest or monk, and “very much captured in the love of wife and children” (qtd. in Schimmel 1976, 89), devoted to his brothers and to his father who was the founder of his sub-order—but that is an-

other story!—was fond of music (“fond” is not the word), and an accomplished musician. His work contains musical metaphors—though it is quite in the nature of the ghazal to do so. One of these metaphors, very famous where Dard’s work is known and, as verse, more than successful, makes up an entire poem consisting of a single couplet.

*Khalq mēñ haiñ, par judā sab khalq sē rabtē haiñ ham
Tāl kī gīntī se bāhar jis tarāḥ rūpak mēñ sam*

(1988, 159)

I am in the world; yet my dwelling is apart from the world,
Just as the “*sam*,” in *rūpak*, falls outside the measure.

This translation gives no idea—for the couplet is performative. And the norm of performance is peculiar to North Indian music, in which a vocal or instrumental musician is accompanied on the tabla. Tabla drumming proceeds (as medieval “isorhythms” proceeded in Europe) in a cycle of like measures, each consisting of a pattern of beats. The first beat of every measure is known as “*sam*.” Because it is heavily accented, it may sound like a conclusion—though its function is to initiate the measure. Audiences count the beats with hand gestures. An oddity of the frequently used “*rūpak*” *tāl*, or measure, is that the “*sam*” there is *not* emphasized by the tabla player. Intent audiences signify the omission with a wave of the hand. Dard has chosen this image to emphasize the way of being he treasured as a Sufi. The common term for it in the Naqshbandī Order is *khilvat dar anjuman* (seclusion in the gathering) (Ruspoli 1990, 102). To explain this meaning, however, does not convey the force of the couplet. In a way I cannot emulate, Dard communicates, through intentional mimesis, the particularity, and indeed the excitement, of the musical occasion. The full weight of his line descends on the missing “*sam*.”

Dard himself provided regular occasion, in his own compound, for musical performance. Yet, in this, he was at odds with Naqshbandī doctrine and practice. Listening to music (*sam*⁶) as an ingredient of spiritual exercise is not favored in Naqshbandī circles, though the rival Čistī Order has afforded an illustrious home to music in North India since the thirteenth century. Dard, then, got away with it. His observations on the matter, adduced by Schimmel from various sources, are tantalizing. In respect of his relations with the Sufi order, they perhaps suggest no more than a cultivated ignorance of his doings on the part of other Naqshbandī. Yet where Dard’s spiritual practice is concerned—for us, the more intriguing question—his words open up more questions than they resolve.

The least that can be said is that, from Dard's perspective, the musicians always came "of themselves" and that this seems consistent with his reluctance to testify to the labor (if any) entailed for him by verse writing. Dard's view, which accords with a theme in his verse and, indeed, with Naqshbandī practice, may well have been that, in matters of grace, one did not solicit.

3

What may it have meant for Dard's verse that he was a Muslim in a predominantly Hindu country?

This question can be asked, of course, of the entire ghazal tradition in India. Apartness and incuriosity about non-Muslims, which stemmed, in part, from the sufficiency of the Qur'ānic revelation, had become a mark of the *ashrāf* tradition since the inventive, incomparable days of Ibrāhīm 'Ādil Shāh in Bijapur (Eaton 1978) and Akbar in Delhi. These traits appear no less pronounced in Dard's case, and may have been enhanced by his decision to stay on in Delhi after its comprehensive sacking by Aḥmad Shāh Durrānī in 1757. The following year Dard's father died. Mughal rule seemed precarious—though not more so than it had a few years before, or in 1739, when Nādir Shāh invaded. In a Delhi abandoned by many of its leading figures, bereft of his father and revered spiritual guide, Dard lived on. The classic era of the Urdu ghazal—which ended, some purists say, with the departure of Mīr to Lucknow—had coincided with years of embattlement, and with the steep trajectory of Mughal decline. It was not a direct product of Mughal supremacy.

Whatever the quality of interaction with Hindus, and however much this may have varied between individuals, one thing seems incontestable: as metaphor alone, their location in India presented the ghazal writers with a new opportunity. Their conceptual framework, to be sure, barely changed. It was even reinforced. The place occupied in Persian verse by the Zoroastrian and similar outsiders—who were either a minority, or geographically removed from Persia—was now filled by a majority community, near at hand. The religious practices of Hindus—deplored by the orthodox, when they took any notice—could not have been more welcome, occupationally speaking, to the ghazal writers. The temple, the house of idols, was a godsend. No less than love and wine, here was the very image of transgression. Here—in an iconoclastic faith—was the image itself! The incorporation of Hindus as a figure into the Urdu ghazal, with its subtle and shifting dialectic, forever ringing the changes on uni-

versality and difference, was a project consistent with the norms of a society which conceptually, at least, had no need of any other. Dard was among the foremost of such incorporators.

Last of all, two points of a more technical nature. These have to do with decisions confronting a translator—any translator—working with Dard.

These questions concern, first, the unity of the ghazal, and, second, the unity of the ghazal in its translated version.

4

A ghazal consists of couplets in the same (quantitative) meter, having the same *qāfiya*-and-*radīf* (rhyme) scheme. The rules are complex and few non-poets, even among native Urdu speakers, can claim to have mastered them fully. This accounts for the practice of sending one's verses for "correction" to a master. Couplets are valued for their force, poise and concision. The ghazal is read aloud, and its couplets, intoned with the right pauses, may be greeted with emotion by an audience.

One concern of the non-native reader—which I confess I have never quite thrown off—is with movement *through* the poem. In European traditions, non-narrative verse, including even the most song-like lyric forms, typically "unfolds" a linked sequence of themes, instances or images, though rarely would one speak here of an "argument." The ghazal is different. It appears (in most cases) to dispense, not only with narrative devices, but with even the shadow of a narrative. Can this really be true? Is the ghazal, couplet by couplet, really so inconsecutive as all that?

It is true that some lovers of ghazals find a "mood" holding each poem together. And perhaps it is the Western reader, schooled by modernism but unhabituated to the ghazal, who is most likely to discern coherence of meaning or feeling in a miscellany of items. How else is one to read Joyce, Vallejo, or Ashbery? But with the ghazal, even when such a mood is identified—and this can be easy!—there may be no certainty that the mood is intrinsic to the poem. It might rather be supplied after the event, just as a miser fingers his accumulation of treasures in much the same "mood."

The argument *against* any such coherence to the ghazal, except as aftereffect, is buttressed by recognition of how the ghazal is used (as well as by suspicions of how it was composed). One may dispute the significance of the mushaira, or congregational event, as context for the ghazal, at least in Dard's case. But among a still wider public than the mushaira

assembles, the ghazal is appropriated by users for conversational purposes. This everyday currency of passages from ghazals would be the envy of poets in the West. A couplet will be remembered to suit the occasion. No one quotes a whole ghazal. No one even remembers a whole ghazal. But the couplet that *is* remembered is no lopped fragment. It is an artifact, through-composed, with (sometimes) the most exquisite, and inextricable, balancing of cadences. Because of this currency, the ghazal functions both as oral poetry—like the bush ballads in Australia—and as art, savored with relish. I have heard couplets quoted as sound-bites on Pakistan Television.

Want, expectation, bewilderment, the release or suspension of meaning—all these are to be found in the ghazal, whose themes and devices model the self's experience of the beloved. But where is the unity of the ghazal? In pursuing that question, we may be looking for wholeness in the wrong place. The poem's whole is its detachable part.

The ghazal remains one poem, but it keeps together, not through coherence of meaning but by way of a tethering-device: the meter and, more spectacularly, the rhyme-scheme of the poem, which has the function of leg-roping the couplets in one place. If one wants to locate a couplet, one searches for it by rhyme-scheme in the poet's divan.

My comparative reading is not wide but, technically speaking, I know of few truly successful ghazals in English. Agha Shahid Ali has shown the possibilities of a nativized, English-language genre (1992, 71–72). In *A Suitable Boy*, Ved Mehta briskly approximates the binding device, at least shows there is one: I think, to good effect (1993, 87 and elsewhere). But for my own part, I have been unable to sustain the *qāfia*-and-*radif* ending for more than two successive couplets, and no longer try.

5

What, then, do I put in its place? Nothing. And my practice is not even original. Better translations of ghazals than mine—for example, several by Adrienne Rich in Aijaz Ahmad's selection from Ghālib (1971)—also consist in a number of stand-alone couplets with little or nothing to show that they belong in the same poem, but, in Urdu, the verses are *yoked* together.

Rather than leave it at that, I mean briefly to revisit this question of through-movement in the ghazal. It is true that, in most cases, the couplet can simply be excerpted from the poem without damage to either. But there are exceptions. The wonderful, long poem by Ghālib—"Muddat

Hū'ī Hai Yār kā Mehmān̄ Kiye Hū'ē"—has a consecutive, indeed an accumulating sense, which does not depend wholly on the device, salient though it is, of the repetition of the word *phir*—"then" or "next"—from the third couplet on (n.d., 236, poem 231). There are other such examples, but I should turn to Dard.

In translating one long ghazal, the equal of Ghālib's, and of course doing without the rhyme-scheme, I was tempted to tighten the poem, to elicit from it a coherence I thought it had, by omitting two couplets. This would have made a better poem in English. But that poem in English!—having already departed from the technical demands of the original, what would it have owed to Dard but a succession of instances, subordinated to a pattern or movement which the translator thought he discerned?

But the question need not end here. The objection I have voiced to such tampering is by no means definitive. On Walter Benjamin's view, for example, the essential thing is not that the translation be faithful word for word, or perhaps even image for image, but that it retain an "echo" of the original which testifies to a means the original imposes for ensuring its own "afterlife" (1969, 71). An "effect" is communicated by the original in an alien language whose resources of expression are so different! The translator's task lies in discovering that effect (*ibid.*).

This is good guidance but, like all guidance in a practical task, it leads to a crossroads, or perhaps a series of them. Should one strive, like Robert Lowell in his approximations in *Imitations* (1961), for a good poem, which reads like any other Lowell poem? Benjamin himself writes of "the task of the translator" that it is "clearly differentiated" from that of the poet (1969, 76) by which I take him to mean, not that the poet's felicities are unwelcome in a translation, but that they are not the point. The point is that one should encounter the original, which is asserting its life force. This must be done by exploiting resources of the recipient language. But the language of the original, in this case Urdu, must also be allowed to imprint its mark on the recipient poem. That is why I still repent of my one major decision in the following translations, to dispense with the rhyme scheme. I might defend my departures from exact meaning, but the ghazal is for the ear!—and I have not captured the *sound* of it.

What I *have* tried to avoid in these translations is the sort of operation effected by some very fine musicians in the West on norms of traditional musical performance in Asia and Africa in the name of "world music." To me, what matters is not whether Western audiences listen to technological masterpieces plundered, say, from Sindhi- and Seraiki-language *kāfi* performances, but whether performers in Sindh and the southern Punjab

continue to produce and value this music, which has long been under assault from the Saudi-izers and their high-placed cultural agents in Pakistan, but which seems (so far) indestructible in the shrines and bazaars.

So while it is certain that there is a great deal in Dard's verse that I have been unable to render, I have not tried to "improve" on the poems. I have translated every couplet. Not even the Urdu-speaking reader will value every couplet, some of which are make-weight. They afford a critical mass, like the perfunctory or "filler" passages in Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven as explained by Charles Rosen (1972). If I begin by omitting couplets, which ones should go? Do I omit a magnificent couplet, in Urdu, which I have not been able to deliver in English? Do I retain a couplet which, even in Urdu, is no different from many another but which I have rendered rather well?

My compromise, in a single case, is to relegate a single couplet outside the poem, not because it is weaker than the others, but because I am still committed, however unjustifiably, to some notion of the sense of the entire poem. I cannot fit this couplet into the poem. The reader can restore it to its place.

In continuing with the work of which these twelve translations are a sample, I have been helped, in Sydney, by discussions with Dr. Mahmood Soofi over exact meaning. This is not to claim that I have succeeded, or even always tried, to honor exact meaning. My first encounter with the ghazal was in the everyday conversation of friends in Lahore in the 1960s. In India, Dr. Anis ur-Rehman of Jamia Millia University offered welcome encouragement (while disputing my meanings) and procured for me an invaluable audience with Khvāja Ḥasan Ṣānī Niẓāmī of the *dargāh* of Niẓamu'd-Dīn Auliya' in Delhi, in December 2002, on the subject of Dard. I was greatly assisted at Jamia Millia by Dr. Mushirul Hasan, Dr. Syed Shahid Mehdi, and Dr. Ghayas Makhdumi. At Jamia Hamdard I was able to locate precious texts with the help of librarian Mr. Tanveer. □

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