

From Behind the Caravan: Songs of Hâfez

Khwajeh Shams al-Din Muhammad Hafez-e Shirazi (also spelled Hafiz) (خواجه شمس‌الدین محمد شیرازی in Persian) was a Persian mystic and poet. He was born sometime between the years 1310-1337 in Shiraz , Persia (Iran), son of a certain Baha-ud-Din. His lyrical poems, ghazals are noted for their beauty and bring to fruition the love, mysticism, and early Sufi themes that had long pervaded Persian poetry.

These translations are by Wilberforce Clarke, published in 1891.

I. we have come

Mâ, be-din dar, na pey-e hesh-mat-o jâh... â-ma-de-'im;
az-bad-e hâ-de-se, 'in-jâ, be-pa-nâh, â-ma-de-'im.

*We, to this door, not seeking pride or glory — we have come.
For shelter from ill-fortune, here — we have come.*

Rah-rao-e man-zel-e 'esh-qim-o ze sar-had-de 'a-dam,
tâ, be-e-qlim-e vo-jud, in-ha-me râh... â-ma-de-'im.

*Travelers on the stage of love's journey are we, and from the limits
of nonexistence,
up to the realm of existence, all this way— we have come.*

Lang-ar-e helm-e to, ey kash-ti-ye tao-fi-q-ə ko-jâst?
ke, dar-in bahr-e ka-ram qarq-e go-nâh... â-ma-de-'im.

*O ship of grace, thy anchor of forbearance is where?
For in this ocean of generosity, immersed in sin — we have come.*

Hâ-fez, in kherq-e-ye pash-mi-ne bi-yan-dâz-ə, ke mâ
az-pey-e qâ-fe-le, bâ-'â-tash-e 'âh... â-ma-de-'im!¹

*Hâfiz, this woolen kherqe [Sufi cloak] cast, for we
from behind the caravan, with the fire of the sigh "ah!"— we have
come.*

II. suffer no grief

Yu-sof-e gom-gash-te bâ-zâ-yad be Kan-'ân.
Qam ma-khor!

*Back to Kan'an, lost Joseph cometh:
– suffer not grief:*

Kol-be-ye ah-zân sha-vad, ru-zi, go-le-stân.
Qam ma-khor...!

*One day, the sorrowful cell becometh the rose-garden:
– suffer not grief.*

Dar-bi-â-bân, gar, be-shoq-e Ka'-be, khâ-hi zad qa-dam,
Sar-za-nesh-hâ, gar ko-nad khâr-e mo-qi-lân,
Qam ma-khor...!

*If, from desire [of pilgrimage] to the Ka'be thou wilt plant thy foot
in the desert,[then] if the mighty Arabian thorn make reproofs,
– suffer not grief.*

Qam ma-khor, Qam ma-khor, ey del.

Suffer not grief, suffer not grief, O heart.

Vin sar-e shu-ri-de baz-â-yad be-sâ-mân.
Qam ma-khor...!

*Back to reason, cometh this distraught head:
– suffer not grief.*

O ey del, del-e qam-di-de,
ey! ey! Qam ma-khor...!

*O heart, grief-stricken heart,
O! O! – suffer not grief.*

Hich-ə râ-hi nist, ka-ân-râ nist pa-â-yân.
Qam ma-khor...!

*There is no road that has no end;
– suffer not grief.*

¹ Note: Hafiz is telling himself to throw away the outward sign of piety, the Sufi khirqah, which is burned up by the fiery heat of his breath when he sighs spiritually from deep within his soul; the sigh is fire and represents the true, spontaneous, sincere, inner spiritual yearning as opposed to the hypocritical pious outward appearances.

III. closer to the fire

Du-shə di-dam ke ma-lâ-yek dar-e mey-xâ-ne za-dand;
gel-e â-dam be-se-resht-and-o be pey-mâ-ne za-dand.

Jang-e haft-âd-o do mel-lat, ha-me râ oz-rə be-neh;
chon-ə na-did-and ha-qi-qat, rah-e af-sâ-ne za-dand.

Sho-kre i-zad ke mi-â-ne man-o u sol-hə of-tâd.
su-fi-an raq-sə-ko-nân, sâ-qar-e sho-krâ-ne za-dand.

Â-tash, Â-tash!
â! â!

*Last night I saw that the angels beat at the door of the tavern,
The clay of Adam, they shaped and into the mould, they cast.*

*The churches war among themselves, forgive them;
When they saw not truth, the door of fable they beat.*

*Thanks be to God, between me and Him, peace chanced,
Joyful Sufis dancing, raising toasts of thanks, cast.*

*Fire! Fire!
Oh! Oh!*

[Note: That “fire” stuff isn’t as out of place as it seems, though it is a strange cut in the text. I was trying to paint the following verse without having to make you learn the words:

*The real fire is not in the candle’s laughing flame,
Observe the moths where they gather, there the true beacon
blazes.*

-- Abbie]

IV. boatpeople

Del mi-ra-vad ze das-tam, sâ-heb-de-lân kho-dâ râ;
Dard-â ke râz-e pen-hân, khâ-had-ə shod âs-kâ râ.

Bar-khiz, bar-khiz... ey bād-e...

Â-sâ-yesh-e do gi-ti taf-sir-e in- do harf-ast:
Bâ dust-ân mo-rov-‘at, bâ dosh-man-ân mo-dâ-râ.

Kash-ti-she-kas-te-gân-im, ey bād-e short-e bar-khiz
Bâ-shad ke bâz bi-nam, di-dâr-e âs-na râ.

Bar-khiz, bar-khiz... ey bād-e...

Ben-gar...

*Forth from the hand, goeth the heart, for God’s sake come to
my cry. O pious ones!
O the pain that the hidden mystery [of love] should be
disclosed.*

Arise, arise... O breeze...

*Cosmic unity may be explained in these two words:
With friends, kindness; with enemies, courtesy.*

*We are the shipwrecked. O fair breeze! arise,
So that, again, we may behold the face of the Beloved.*

Arise, arise... O breeze...

Behold...

V. we have come (reprise)

Mâ, be-din dar, na pey-e hesh-mat-o jâh... â-ma-de-‘im;
az-bad-e hâ-de-se, ‘in-jâ, be-pa-nâh, â-ma-de-‘im.

‘âh... â-ma-de-‘im!

*We, to this door, not seeking pride or glory — we have come.
For shelter from ill-fortune, here — we have come.*

With the sigh "ah!" — we have come.