

Mirza Asadullah Khan Ghalib (1797-1869)

Naqsh      faryādī      hai kis kī      shokhī-e      tahrīr      kā  
drawing      complain-      is whose      playfulness      of writing elegantly      of  
design      ant           whimsicality      ornamental lines  
                coquetry      setting free  
                brightness

Kāghaz-hī hai pairahan har      paikar-e tasveer kā  
Paper      is robe      every face      of picture      of  
      mantle      figure      portrait  
           likeness      image

Kāvkāv-e sakht janīhā-e tanhāī na poochh  
Subh karnā shām kā fāna hai jū-e shīr kā

Agahi dām-e shunīdan jis qadar chāhe bichāi  
Muḍḍū'ā anqā hai apne ālam-e taqrīr kā

Of whose exquisite scribbling  
does the image complain  
That paper is the garment  
of every figure's form

Don't ask of the torment of  
the intense struggles of solitude  
Making evening morning  
hewing a river of milk

However understanding spreads  
nets of awareness  
Meaning is the Anqa'  
of our realm of words

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Juz Qais aur koi na āya ba-rū-e kār  
Sahra maḡar ba-tangī-e chashm-e husūd thā

Thā khwāb meN khayāl ko tujh se mūāmala  
Jab ānkh khul gayī na ziyāN thā na sūd thā

Lethā hūN maktab-e gham-e dil meN sabaq hanōz  
Magar yehī ke "raft" gayā aur "būd" thā

DhāNpa kafan ne dāgh-e 'uyūb-e barahnagī  
MaiN warna har libās meN nang-e wujūd thā

Tīshe ba-ghair mar na sakā Kohkan, Asad  
Sargashta-e khumār-e rusūm o quyūd thā

But for Qais none came  
suited to the task of love  
Perhaps the desert narrowed  
jealous as an eye, it was.

In dream, the imagination had  
dealings with you  
When the eye opened, neither  
gain, nor even loss, it was.

I take lessons still  
from the school of heart's sorrow  
But only this:  
"allait"-- he went, "etait"-- it was.

The shroud concealed the stain  
of the shame of nakedness  
Otherwise in every garment  
existence was disgrace, it was.

Kohkan couldn't even die  
without an axe, Asad,  
Head spinning high drunk on  
custom and constraint, he was.