

THE LAMENTS

By

BABA TAHER 'ORYAN

1) Thy tangled curls are scattered o'er thy face,
Mingling the Roses with the Hyacinths;
But part asunder those entangled strands,
On every hair thou'lt find there hangs a heart.

2) I am the ocean poured into a jug
I am the point essential to the letter;
In every thousand one greater man stands out,
I am the greater man of this mine Age!

3) By day and night the desert is my home
By day and night mine eyes shed bitter tears,
No fever rocks me, I am not in pain,
All I know is that day and night I grieve.

4) I go, I depart, I leave this world of ours,
I journey beyond the furthest bounds of Chin,
And journeying, ask Pilgrims about the Road
"Is this the End?" Or must I journey on.

5) Comest thou thyself? I will cover thee with caresses,
Comest thou not? For thine absence I will sorely grieve
Be thy sorrows that they may, lay them upon my heart
And I will either die of them or be consumed by them, or bear them bravely

6) That phrase "They said yes!" fills me with alarm
I bear more sins than does a tree bear leaves;
When, on the last day, "They-that-read-the book" shall read,
I bearing such a record, will hang my head.

7) If the mood takes me to seek my Loved one's face,
Restrain me not, my heart is thrall to her;
Ah, Camel-man, for God's sake hast not so!
For I am a laggard behind the caravan.

8) Lord! Who am I, and of what company?
How long shall tears of blood thus blind my eyes?
When other refuge fails I'll turn to Thee,
And if Thou failest me, whither shall I go?

9) O heart of Stone, thou burnest not for me,
That stone burns not, is not, indeed so strange;
But I will burn till I inflame thy heart.
For fresh-cut logs are difficult to burn alone.

10) The picture of thy Beauty, Love quits not my heart,
The down, the mole, Love, on thy cheek I see always;
I'll knit my lashes close o'er wrinkled eyes,

That, weeping, thine image ne'er can leave me.

11) If single were my grieve, what should I care?
If small my sorrows were, what should I care?
Call to my couch lover or my leech,
If either one were nigh, what should I care?

12) Art thou a lion or leopard, O Heart, O Heart;
That thou warrest ever with me, O Heart, O Heart?
Fall thou into my hands; I'll spill thy blood,
To see, what colour it is, O Heart, O Heart

13) A Phoenix I, whose attributes are such
That when I beat my wings, the world takes fire;
And should a Painter limn me on a wall
Mine image being there would burn the house.

14) My new-born Vision of Beauty, where art thou?
Where art thou with thy surmesh-shaded eyes?
the soul of Tâhir struggles to be free,
and, at this Supreme Moment, where art thou?

15) A falcon I! and as I chased my prey,
An evil-eyed-one's arrow pierced my wings;
Take heed ye Heedless! Wander not the heights,
For, Him who heedless roams, Fate's arrow strikes.

16) I am wastrel called a Kalandar,
I have no home, no country, and no lair,
By day I wander aimless o'er the earth,
And when night falls, my pillow is a stone.

17) The breeze that played amid the curling locks,
Is sweeter far than hyacinths to me;
All night I pressed thy picture on my breast,
At dawn my bed gave forth a scent of roses.

18) My heart is giddy and distraught for love of thee
And tears in torrents flooded my beating eyes;
How like a new-cut log are lovers' hearts,
Whilst one end burns, the other bleeds its sap.

19) He who has suffered grief knows well its cry
As knows the Assayer when gold is pure;
Come then ye Burnt-in-Heart, chaunt we laments,
For well we know shat 'tis to Burn-In-Heart.

20) If my Sweetheart is my heart, how shall I name her?
And if my heart is my Sweetheart, whence is she named?
The two are so intimately interwoven that
I can no longer distinguish one from the other.

21) O wicked, wanton, wastrel heart of man,
When the eyes sin the heart must bear the doul.
If the eyes never saw a lovely face,
How would the heart e'er know where beauties are?

22) More than a thousand hearts hast thou laid waist,
More than a thousand suffer grief for thee
More than a thousand wounds of thine I've counted
Yet the uncounted still are more than these.

23) O may thy sunny face grow brighter yet
May thy love's arrow split my heart in twain;
Knowest thou why thy cheek's mole is so black?
All things become burnt black close to the sun.

24) Grieving for thee my heart is ever sad,
A brick my pillow, and my couch the earth;
My only sin is loving thee to well;
Surely not all thy lovers suffer so?

25) Mine is a heart that has no health in it,
Howe'er I counsel it, it profits not;
I fling it to the winds, the winds will none of it,
I cast it on the flames, - it does not burn.

26) Full is my heart with fire and mine eyes with tears
Brim full the vessel of my life with grief;
But dead, I should revive with thy perfume,
If haply thou shouldst wander o'er my grave.

27) Come, O ye Burnt-in-Heart, let us gather round
Let us converse, setting forth our woes,
Bring scales, make trial of our weight of woe,
The more we burn, the heavier weighs our grief.

28) O Burnt-in-Heart, com ye and mourn with me,
Mourn we the flight of that most lovely Rose;
Hie we with the ecstatic Nightingale of the Rose-Garden,
And when she ceases mourning, we will mourn.

29) Happy are they who live in the sight of Thee,
Who hang upon Thy words, and dwell with Thee,
Too frail to approach, I see Thee from afar,
and seek the sight of those that see Thee ever.

30) Homeless as I am, to whom shall I apply?
A houseless wanderer, whither shall I go?
Turned from all doors, I come at last to Thee,
If thy door is denied, where shall I turn?

31) come and illumine my chamber for one night,
Keep me not wretched by thine absence from me
By the two arcs that are thine eyebrow's curves I swear
Since thou'st forgotten, Grief only shares my bed.

32) Subdue the glories of thine hyacinthine hair,
Wipe the tears of blood from thy narcissus eyes.
Why robb'st thou me of the Sun - which is my love?
Day passes quick, bring not the night too soon!

33) When thou'rt away, mine eyes o'erflow with tears
Barren the Tree of Hope when thou'rt away;
Without thee, night and day, in a solitary corner,
I sit till life itself come to an end.

34) Without Thee my heart has no moment's peace,
And if I see thy face my grief has fled
If all men had a share in my Heart's grief
No heart in all the world but would be sad.

35) O Lord! This heart of mine afflicts me sore,
I weep this heart of mine both day and night;
Often I grieve but for my grief; O Some-One
Rid me of this heart that I may be free.

36) Without-Thee in the Garden, Lord, may no rose bloom
Or blooming, may none taste its sweet perfume,
So, should my heart expand when Thou art not nigh,
'T were vain! my heart's grief naught could turn to joy.

37) My beautiful! Thou hast my heart and soul,
Thou hast mine inner and my outer self;
I know not why I am so very sad
I only know that thou hold'st the remedy.

38) O Heart!, I mourn in purple for thy flight,
I bear my grief as the train-bearer bears the train;
As the dawn boats the rising sun, boat I thy love,
Henceforth till Israfil shall sound his trump.

39) Since that first day when Thou createdst us,
What hast Thou seen in us save forwardness?
Lord! by the Faith of Thy blest Twelve Imams
Forget Thou seest for us the Camel of Death.

40) With two strands of thy hair will I string my r^bab
In my wretched state what canst thou ask of me?
Seeing that thou hast no wish to be my Love
Why comes thou each midnight, in my sleep?

Bābā Ṭāhīr 'Oryān, The Lament of Bābā Ṭāhīr:
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