

**THE LOVE
OF
HIR AND RANJHA**

(WARIS SHAH)

translated by

SANT SINGH SEKHON

**OLD BOYS' ASSOCIATION
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE
PUNJAB AGRICULTURAL UNIVERSITY LUDHIANA**

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Every Panjabi knows about the romantic poem, *Hir and Ranjha*. Sayyad Waris Shah, the great poet of the eighteenth century, made this romance immortal. The poem is so completely interwoven in the social fabric of the Panjab, comprising diverse castes, creeds and religions, that verses from it are quoted almost as from *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*.

A deep knowledge of the social structure of those days as also the basic beauty of human nature is revealed in this great Panjabi classic. Such has been its popularity that for more than two centuries past poets have tried their talents in rewriting it, sometimes with additions to the original, suited, of course, to their own imagination. It was intriguing for me why this work had not been translated into English and made available to a wider readership even though it relates to an important sector of the history of the Panjab's rural life and culture.

Recently when I came to know that Professor Sant Singh Sekhon had translated this great poem into English, I got into touch with him. And when I actually saw the translation, which is done in verse, I was persuaded at once that it belonged in the sphere of cultural activity with which I am connected as President of the Old Boys' Association of the College of Agriculture, Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana. My proposal to bring it out as a publication of the association was enthusiastically supported by all the members.

When I put it to Professor Sekhon that it had an aspect other than literary, and that now when after retirement from his academic career he had settled as a farmer in the neighbourhood of this University, he should like to participate in the extension of its cultural activity, he readily accepted the idea.

Although I am not qualified to say much about the literary quality of this translation, yet I can feel the flavour of the original

Panjabi in the verses. In fact, I am pleasantly surprised by the poetical flair of Professor Sekhon, which experience, I hope, will be shared by other readers. Professor Sekhon is not only well known as a writer of Panjabi in more than one genre but is the doyen of literary criticism in India. And it required a talent like his to reproduce in a foreign language the social insight, moral wisdom and religious catholicity of the great Waris Shah.

I hope that this translation will contribute to the building of cultural bridges not only among the peoples of India but throughout the world. I take this opportunity to congratulate Professor Sekhon for this massive effort and also thank him for giving his consent to the Association to publish it.

Ludhiana
3rd April, 1978.

A. S. Atwal

PREFACE

The translation of the famous Panjabi classic, *Hir and Ranjha* by Sayyad Waris Shah, into English was initially assigned to me by the Arts and Literature Section of UNESCO. Owing to delay on my part in completing this assignment the book missed its chance to be published as a subsidised production. All the same, I thank UNESCO for providing the stimulus and paying the honorarium to me. I am also grateful to Mr Baldoon Dhingra for making many valuable suggestions which, no doubt, improved the translation.

Even though Panjabi literature is not known to be a major literature of the world, yet works of the most sublime poetry do exist in this language. To the Panjabis,, *Hir and Ranjha* by Waris Shah, is an immortal romance presented as a long narrative in verse. Since this genre has become almost extinct now I started this translation with some diffidence, but as I progressed I found to my relief that the long verse narrative was coming back into vogue and that even the novel in verse was emerging.

I believe that classic works of verse should be rendered in verse, for that is the best way to retain the spirit of the original. For me, to have changed the Panjabi verse into English prose would have been almost an outrage, for popular sentiment in my part of the country regards it as a sin to destroy a form.

The verse form that I have chosen is a double tetrameter, to parallel the long metre of the Panjabi original, and I have also used rhyme which may be considered a rather conservative practice. However I have tried not only to beat variations on the traditional rhyme patterns but also to strike a balance between the new and the old by using the modern idiom as far as possible, preserving at the same time the eighteenth-century tone. I can only hope that I have not laboured in vain.

I present this great Panjabi classic to the English reader so as to give him the feel of the rich Panjabi heritage interwoven in

the matrix of this romance. But he may find his way blocked here and there by references to Panjabi customs, proverbs, and socio-religious practices. I am afraid these could not be avoided, though brief footnotes have been provided to help the reader.

I take this opportunity to thank the members of the Old Boys' Association of the College of Agriculture, PAU, particularly its President, Dr A S Atwal, for undertaking the publication of this work.

Ludhiana
16 Feb. 1978

Sant Singh Sekhon

THE LOVE OF HIR AND RANJHA

INTRODUCTION

I

The love story of Ranjha and Hir represents an ideal of romantic love widely cherished by the Panjabi people. Dhido (Dahid?), youngest of the eight sons of Mauju (Muazzam) of the Ranjha clan of Jats, of Takht Hazara (in the present Gujarat district of Pakistan), is orphaned of both mother and father before he has quite grown into a self-dependent youth. When the ancestral land is divided among the brothers, he is given the least fertile part. Being unmarried yet, he is dependent on his sisters-in-law (as was the custom in old times and may occasionally be observed even today among the agricultural tribes of the Panjab) for his domestic chores, who, it may be presumed, cook and bring his meals to him in the fields by turns. He is ill-served, of course, and chided if he complains.

So he is obliged to leave home and hearth and go out in search of whatever may fall on his path, adventure, love or religious mendicancy. As on his journey he crosses the river Chanab (associated in Panjabi folklore with many romances) he falls in with Hir, the daughter of Chuchak, a squire of the river-side village, Syal (present Jhang in Pakistan). Hir has come to the river bank in the company of girls of about her age, who are in poetic parlance maids of her court as daughter of the village chieftain. Hir and Dhido fall in love at first sight, and the encounter ends with Hir taking Dhido home to her father for employment as a cattleherd.

Then, as is the common pattern of romance in medieval times, the love of Hir and Dhido gets good opportunity to thrive, unknown to Hir's parents, but only too well known to others in the village. The most perturbed of the whole clan of the Syals is one Kaido, who

though living as a fakir is yet not dead to feelings of family honour and pride. He informs Chuchak of the intrigue between his daughter and his cowherd, and even brings him upon the lovers envying a rendezvous. He chides Hir's mother, Maliki, also for shutting her eyes to the enormity of what was happening.

Dhido, who is also known by his clan name of Ranjha, is, in consequence, expelled from Chuchak's house, the most gentlemanly way of getting rid of such embarrassments. But a difficulty (something rather naive) arises for the house of Chuchak. The cows and buffaloes are so attached to Dhido that they are just uncontrollable, whoever else tries to be their herdsman. Chuchak is obliged to call Dhido back, but not before Dhido has extracted from Hir's mother a kind of promise of Hir's hand.

This promise does not find fulfilment. Under the advice of kinsmen, Chuchak agrees to give his daughter in marriage to Saida, son of Aju, head of a leading Khera family of the village of Rangpur (at present in Multan district of Pakistan). In the eyes of the kinsmen who form Chuchak's social world, Dhido, ostensibly without any patrimony, is hardly eligible as a husband for a daughter of the Syals. Besides, he has lowered himself by employment as a servant of the very family whose daughter he aspires to marry.

Before Hir has to go away with her bridegroom, she calls Dhido to her side and proposes elopement. Dhido rejects this proposal as dishonourable, though by the irony of fate—of which Waris Shah and about all other narrators of this romance seem unaware—the whole story after this point is that of Hir's elopement with Dhido from the house of her in-laws and the subsequent complications.

At this juncture also the cows and buffaloes given as dowry to Hir come to the aid of romance. They are again unwilling to go with the new owners unless their old herdsman, Dhido, goes with them, too. The Kheras, not sensing the intrigue behind it, it may be presumed, take Dhido along. But Hir manages to be alone with Dhido once or twice during the journey, which arouses the Kheras' suspicion, and they turn him away before even reaching their home.

Dhido once again behaves as a gentleman and comes back to Syal to his old duties, Hir or no Hir. We are not told how he is finding adjustment there, when the message of revived hope comes through a woman of the village. Hir has not surrendered to her husband and has in her misery succeeded in winning the sympathy of her husband's sister, Sahiti. This young scapegrace is agreeable to help Hir run away with her lover if he comes to fetch her under disguise of a fakir to deceive everybody. The price of this help Sahiti would get later when, with the attention of her people diverted to the pursuit of the eloping Hir and Dhido, she would run away with her own lover, Murad, the Baluch.

Much of the story henceforward deals with the few days that Dhido spends at Rangpur, disguised as a *yogi*, visiting Hir in her husband's house, indulging in obstreperous fun and even fighting with the wayward and capricious Sahiti, who, refractory one moment, is the next moment tame as a lamb. Here, too, Dhido, manages to speak in privacy to Hir and satisfies himself about her unsullied loyalty.

Sahiti and Hir contrive between themselves to play a ruse to help the cause of love. They arrange a sort of picnic in the fields. All young girls and wives of the village are invited to join, for they would also help in picking cotton in Aju's fields. There Hir pretends to have been bitten by a snake and Sahiti is all anxiety her life.

Hir is brought home. All available snake-charmers and other men of magic are called to her side. But no cure is in sight. When nothing else seems to avail, Sahiti advises her father to go to 'the new fakir' who is camping in the Black Park, a little way off the village, to read his charms. She warns him that the new fakir would need much coaxing and humility on their part, and may not come unless Saida, Hir's rightful owner, goes and begs him to. Saida goes to Dhido, the new fakir, and beseeches his grace. The new fakir first satisfies himself by interrogating Saida that Hir has not been ravished by him (for the ideal of romantic love needs this assurance) and only then agrees to accompany him to Hir's sick-bed.

Having examined Hir here in her husband's house, Ranjha advises them to bring her to a hut near the place of his meditations.

Hir's snake-bite being exceptionally deadly, he may have to read his charms continuously for many days and nights. Sahiti, of course, supports him and offers to stay with Hir as her constant nurse and guard.

From that hut they elope one night, Hir with Ranjha, and Sahiti with her lover, Murad, who has unobtrusively been taken into the plot.

The Kheras go in pursuit, but with greater keenness to capture Hir than, it may be presumed, their daughter, Sahiti, who in any case had to be married away. Also Sahiti's lover had an extremely fleet-footed dromedary to carry her away while Hir and Ranjha were on foot.

The Kheras overtake Hir and Ranjha near the town of Kot Kabula whose chief, called by the epithet 'just' in Waris Shah's story, and in about all other versions, is approached by both parties, and sends the dispute down to his kadi for settlement. The kadi, being naturally a supporter of the *sharia* or law, decides in favour of the Kheras and remonstrates with Ranjha for falling from the standards of his holy calling of a fakir into the tempting path of a house-holder.

The Kheras start, in jubilation, for their home, with the stupefied Hir in their escort. Ranjha is left behind to curse and imprecate. But his curses prove effective inasmuch as the whole town is now unaccountably set on fire. The townspeople flock in distress to their chief, seeing behind the sudden and devastating fire the hand of God punishing the town for the injustice its kadi had perpetrated.

The chief, reversing the kadi's decision, orders the Kheras and Hir to be brought back under duress. In the changed circumstances, the Kheras are content to be allowed to return home without their bride.

Hir who was only too willing earlier, now does not like to go with Ranjha to his paternal home at Takht Hazara. For such an unceremonious arrival will always remain a blot on her honour as a wife and subject of taunts and reproaches from the women of the village. She advises Ranjha to go with her to Syal, from where he should take her away as his bride with the consent and agreement of her parents.

The lovers are ostensibly well received at Syal. Ranjha is advised to repair to Takht Hazara and bring with him a wedding party composed of his kinsmen. The Syals will send Hir with him as his bride but not without proper ceremony and show. Ranjha, accordingly, makes for Takht Hazara where preparations are set afoot for his wedding, and invitations issued to kinsmen to join the wedding party.

But the Syals have all along been nursing treacherous designs. They poison Hir to death, and send the sad news to Takht Hazara. As he hears of it Ranjha utters a cry of final despair, and gives up the ghost.

2

This is one of many such stories of love and romance current in the Panjab and sung variously by poets and bards. These stories (and this, in particular) are likely to be interpreted in the west as expressions of a romantic revolt against the established social order and have in fact begun to be so interpreted by many west-oriented people in the Panjab. Romanticism in the west expresses the idea of revolt by the individual against a social order that has got hardened into a strait-jacket, tending to smother his very being. The individual there seeks for his revolt no other justification than his natural right of self-expression as an individual. It is a question of emotion versus reason, of nature versus man-made law.

Oriental romanticism as expressed in this and other such romances is something of a different order. It does not represent the revolt of the individual against society and its law as such. Of course, the rigours of the law are felt as destructive of true spirituality by a class of people who regard themselves as exceptional for having attained, through some kind of spiritual discipline or divine grace, the privilege of transcending social convention and restraint. This privilege is claimed by the Sufi fakir in Muslim society. The one condition for claiming this privilege is renunciation of the other good things desired by worldly men. It is, in brief, a privilege of the unworldly.

In his bid for freedom from social law and convention the individual renounces the world to which they apply. He does not claim anything as his natural right—to be united in life to the person of his choice. His claim is based on divine grace. The individual lover, man or woman, is in his or her single-minded devotion, a manifestation of the divine. His or her love is not the common human phenomenon of the flesh. It is some kind of a divine urge. For proof, lovers often claim this love to be untainted by sex, or at least so the bards and poets celebrating it are inclined to profess.

In the Panjab, there is a saying that there have been only two and a half instances of true love in the world—of course in the world of the Panjab: the love of Hir and Ranjha and of Sohni and Mahiwal make two, and that of Sahiban and Mirza adds the remaining half. The last-named is not a full love for the reason that it was not free from sexual taint or that the lovers had not renounced the world.

3

The first extant version of the love story of Hir and Ranjha is some two hundred years older than Waris Shah's and it is by a Hindu poet, Damodar. Observing probably the canon of Hindu literary philosophy, Damodar does not give a tragic ending to the story. In his version, after the chief of Kot Kabula, the Just, has decreed Hir to be Ranjha's, the two lovers retain their guise of fakirs to go to the Mecca, where they live for many years as attendants on the grave of the Prophet. (Damodar, presumably, does not care to distinguish in this respect Medina from Mecca).

Incidentally, it may be mentioned, that in *Triya Charitra*, ascribed generally to the Sikh Guru, Gobind Singh, Hir is mentioned as being in reality an *apsara* (dancer) of the court of Indra, the king of the gods, and Ranjha a *gandharva* (musician) of the same court; and the two were, for some fault, one may presume, of sensuality, expelled from Indra's court to live a life of penance in this world. Thus their love, far from being a romance in the Western sense of

the word, was a kind of penance, a life of austerity for the sake of rehabilitation in divine grace.

Muslim poets, coming after Damodar, and indeed all later poets, have given a tragic ending to the story, in deference, one may suppose, to the social reality. But all of them, before Waris Shah, treat the affair as something mystic and too dignified to be spoken of lightly or with irony and sarcasm, much less profanely. It is Waris Shah who first of all brings in the secular and ironical note, though he also pays lip regard to the idealist, mystic theory. Indeed, he starts with praising love as an attribute of Divinity itself, and now and then in the progress of the story harks back to this quality of love; as a matter of fact, he could hardly afford to discard this pretence altogether. In the end also he tries to turn the whole story into a kind of moral-spiritual allegory, but with little success, and that last stanza is often ignored by editors as not really belonging in the context.

Perhaps Waris Shah's secular and ironical treatment of this story is one reason of his greater popularity, apart from other factors, two of which are his uncommon 'gift of the gab' and many-sided wisdom, qualities that he seems to share with other great poets of the world.

About his secular viewpoint it may be mentioned that nowhere in the story is he really at pains to avoid the sexual taint for his lovers. On the other hand, he takes every occasion to allude, even profanely, to pleasures of the flesh, hardly proper to their unmarried state. Thus in Waris Shah's hands the story retains little of its idealistic character, which in common folklore indeed it does. Perhaps it is his gift of irony and satire which saves Waris Shah from idealistic hypocrisy.

Ironical and satirical Waris Shah is, with a vengeance. To start with, he paints Dhido's seven elder brothers and their wives as quite devoid of fraternal sympathy. They lose no opportunity of cheating and maltreating the immature youth, as in the division of the paternal acres. Their wives seem never to have enough of criticising and rebuking their teenager brother-in-law. Nevertheless, as Dhido is leaving house and home, the brothers and their wives come out to dissuade him, and bewail his departure.

The next to come under Waris Shah's lash is the keeper of the mosque in a village where Dhido passes the first night of his self-chosen exile. The poor fellow has to pay amply for all the sins of omission and commission for which his class is notorious everywhere in the world.

On his aimless path, Dhido comes to the Chanab. He crosses it ostensibly with the help of the ferryman, Luddan, but Waris Shah seems to attribute it to the lust that he has awakened in the hearts of Luddan's two wives.

Hir comes to the river, in the company of her maids, and finds Dhido asleep on the couch reserved specifically for her. Waris Shah first makes her fly into a rage to the point of aiming her lash at the sleeping Adonais, and then at a single word and a smile from him makes her fawn upon him like a bond-slave. In all this Waris Shah is explicitly and implicitly aiming his shafts at the fickleness of womankind, whom he loses no opportunity, throughout the story, of decrying and deriding.

The Syals, whose daughter is thus shown as enjoying the pleasures of love with a servant of the family, come in for particular ridicule and denigration. Under pressure from a priestly kinsman, Kaido, and sagging under the weight of popular contempt, Chuchak decides to turn Dhido out. But then Waris Shah shows him truckling meanly to expediency; indeed he makes Chuchak remark that anyway Ranjha cannot do much harm to the girl, and may be made to work for them for some time more until she is married away.

Later in the context of Hir's marriage to Saida Khera, the whole tribe of Jats is subjected to calumny and abuse as breakers of troths, sellers of daughters, thieves, robbers and waylayers. Waris Shah is himself a Sayyad, the community to which the Prophet of Islam belonged, and is for that reason quite overweening in his attitude towards the lower castes and clans, towards barbers, water-drawers, bards, and others. The worst of his wrath and ridicule is, however, reserved for the Jats, who considered low by the higher castes in India, yet arouse their envy and spleen because of their social strength and importance. For most of the land, the

basis of power and importance in feudal society, has for over one thousand years past belonged in the Panjab to the Jat tribes.

In the Panjab it was a feudalism of a different kind, though. The chiefs and lords of the land-owning tribes were generally of the same blood as their peasantry. They might exact heavy land taxes and rents, but the peasants would never cease to claim some kind of equality with them on the basis of community of blood. Thus, though Chuchak, the Syal, and Aju, the Khera, are named as chiefs of their villages, respectively, they are shown as constantly dependent on the opinion and support of their tribal kinsmen.

Dhido goes to the Yogi, Balanath, for initiation into his creed. But it is a strange kind of initiation that he seeks and obtains. We are told that Balanath has been affected by Dhido's good looks so much that he agrees to initiate him without delay and without any of the customary tests. And then when the Nath, seeking to lock the stable after the horse is gone, advises Dhido to stick to his vows of renunciation, the new initiate at once repudiates this advice and reveals the purpose for which he has become a *yogi*. All this of course throws a lurid light on the intentions that actuated many people to join religious orders of various kinds in the feudal age.

Dressed in a yogi's garb, Dhido repairs to Rangpur Khera where Hir is living as an unwilling wife. In the pasture-land of the village he meets a shepherd, who, reading Dhido's purpose in his face, quite flays him with his caustic wit. This is, of course, Waris Shah himself, pouring scorn on people who pursue their lust under the garb of religion. Legend has it that Waris Shah himself was the lover of a Jat woman and that his love met with even poorer success than Dhido's, and that is the main reason of his particular spleen against the Jat tribes.

The Kheras are presented in even worse colours than the Syals for accepting in marriage a young woman of whose reputation they were not unaware, solely for the sake of a good dowry. Saida, Hir's husband, is painted as an absolute imbecile; his sister, Sahiti as a profligate who is willing to singe her father's beard not only by herself running away with a stranger unacceptable to her

parents, but by becoming an unregenerate abettor of the same crime against them by their daughter-in-law.

A large part of the poem is made up of the very cynical, indecent and dishonorable passages-at-arms between Dhido, disguised as a *yogi*, and Sahiti, and it appears as if Dhido was romping there in Rangpur like a stud-bull among cows and castrated oxen. He gives and receives blows, in his quarrels with a Jat of the village, with Sahiti and her maid, and none seems to be there to call him to account. In all this, and later in the village girls' jokes at Hir after her return from a meeting with Dhido in the Black Park, Waris Shah gives free rein to his sadistic obscenity, often met with, indeed, among people who have renounced the world under religious vows, as a substitute for the actual pleasures they have missed. Some of these verses are untranslatable for shaer obscenity. (There are some others that have been left out in this translation, as they merely enumerate things, buffaloes, grasses, castes and creeds, sweets, jewelry and clothing, on different occasions, mere strings of names that have interest, if any, in the original only).

But these very qualities that have been described above in what may sound a too critical tone are among those that make for the popularity of this poem. It appeals direct to the rustic elements in the Panjab and to the latent rusticity of the urban and educated classes as well.

For all its rusticity, the irony, wit and humour of whatever Waris Shah has to say, a down-to earth wisdom and an indescribable gift of language make the poetry irressistible indeed for all but the very fastidious in the Panjab. How far these qualities have been brought out in the translation, the fate of this book may decide.

As Waris Shah himself reveals in the poem, he was born in a village, Jandiala Sher Khan, in the present district of Gujranwala in West Panjab. The year of his birth is put near 1738 A.D. and he is said to have lived to be a little over fifty years old. He seems to have received his education at Kasur, in the present district of Lahore, among Sufi fakirs, and to have passed most of his life in the village of Malik Hans, of the present district of Montgomery also in West Panjaó.

Not much is known of the details of his life, except that he was born a Sayyad, a priestly class among Muslims, for being the clan of the Prophet himself, and that the name of his father was Balihar Shah. The legend about his unhappy love for a Jat woman may not be true. The epithet, 'Bhagbhari', often applied lovingly to Hir in Waris Shah's verses, is said to have been the name of that Jat woman. But that may also be apocryphal; for the word only means 'full of luck'.

There are many other references to places and contemporary events which because of their extremely local character are pretty nearly inexplicable. For these and other words and names kept in the translation as in the original, and not explained through foot-notes, reference may be made to the glossary at the end.

THE LOVE OF HIR AND RANJHA

I

Invocation:

I start with song in praise of the Lord
 who made this world spring forth from love.
Prime lover of all is the Lord Himself,
 and He gave His love to the Prophet-envoy.
Love is the sign of saint and sage
 and the man of love will be solemn and shy.
And those who are fulfilled this wise
 will find admittance to grace above.

Then after the Lord I praise His Prophet—
 all heavens and earths were made for him—
Who, made of dust, is raised so high,
 purged of all evil of the world;
And who though chief of all the prophets,
 made himself dust before the Lord,
Discarded joy, care-ridden to save
 the faithful on the day of doom.

Also I praise the friends of the Prophet¹,
 four gems indeed of the purest ray—
Abu Bakar, Umar, Usman and Ali
 each with an excellence all his own:
Who, having drunk deep at the well of faith,
 gave all they had in the cause divine.
Setting pleasure aside, they lived their lives
 in abstinence. Blessed are they !

Next I must sing to the Pir Makhdum²
 whose goodness clothes his humblest ward.

We may seek a thousand other saints,
 only he in the end befriends in truth.
 And those to whom he lends his grace,
 enjoy all gifts of heaven and earth,
 And on the judgement day they shall
 wear robes of honour in reward.

Maudud's beloved son, Masaud,
 the sweet-tongued, of all sweets the store:
 Most perfect of the house of Cist,
 whose shrine, Pakpatan, is well-renowned;
 The highest of the twenty-two poles,*
 whose penance is famous all around;
 His grace dispels all Panjab's sorrow;
 and makes her peaceful evermore.

A friendly request is complied with:

Friends came one day and made request
 that the tale of Hir be told anew;
 In words poetic and sweet be put
 the flaming passion of that love;
 In verses full of high romance
 the heroic lovers be brought alive;
 So that where friends and lovers meet
 the love of Hir may get its due.

And bowing to the friends' command
 did I this wondrous tale compose
 In phrases elegant and demure,
 fresh as rose petals on the stalk.
 Great was the soul's travail, indeed,
 like Farihad's⁴ as he hewed the rock.

*According to one Muslim belief there are at any one time in the world twenty-two persons who serve as fixed reference points of the creed. They are given the name of 'qutb', meaning 'pole'.

This bouquet is of the choicest flowers,
with a perfume nobler than of the rose.

II

Of Takht Hazara and Dhido;—

In Takht Hazara, a wondrous place,
the Ranjhas⁵ live in joy and mirth;
Of where the youth are gallant and brave,
with handsome faces and broad chests;
Rings on their fingers and on their ears,
and *lungis** flowing round their waists;
How can you, Waris, describe Hazara,
a paradise, verily, on this earth?

Of Dhido's father:—

Mauju, the head, with a say in the village,
accepted chief among his peers;
A man of wealth and numerous issue,
two daughters and sons as many as eight;
Held in full trust by all his tribe,
and competent to arbitrate;
And, Waris,** as the Lord has willed,
To Dhido infinite love he bears.

Of the jealous brothers:

The brothers' hate against this love,
was foiled by fear of the father alone;
Their insinuations nipped the heart
of Mauju like a viper's tooth.
Their taunts in season and out of season,
would, if they could, have killed them both;

*A broad sheet of cloth to cover the lower part of the body with a silk border or sometimes entire of silk, worn by both men and women in rural West Panjab.

** Only the poet's name put facetiously in the last line of most stanzas.

O Waris, such is love of the self,
that kinship means but little to men.

Of Mauju's death:-

Death came to Mauju, as it was written,
and Dhido's fortune suffered reverse.
'You eat your fill to stare at wenches,'
with such rebukes was he addressed.
Each day afresh his heart was stabbed,
and old wounds with new cuts oppressed.
Their wives would nag and curse him, too,
they were, indeed, a good deal worse.

Of the partitioning of the paternal acres:-

In the Qazi's presence, with elders attending,
paternal acres were surveyed.
By graft the brothers acquired the best,
to Dhido's share fell bog and marsh.
The sisters-in-law poked fun at him,
their jesting was unkind and harsh.
The villagers talked and laughed and grieved
how Dhido had been fleeced and flayed.

Of the brothers:-

Say the brothers; 'You shave and look in the mirror,
how can you trudge behind the plough?
'No wench will ever care for the guy
that oils his hair and fattens his hide.
'To play the flute and sing all day,
it will not take you far, indeed;
'You grumble already over your share,
and never seem to have enough.'

Of Dhido in the fields:-

The morning spent behind the plough,
comes Dhido at noon to rest in the shade.

And the sister-in-law that brings his meal,
 is well regaled with his tale of woe.
 With kibes on hands and feet, he swears,
 he does not care to reap, and sow.
 A doting father's favourite, Waris,
 he could have fared no better, indeed.

Of Dhido railing against his sisters-in-law:-

'O wenches, worst of all my foes,
 you have estranged my brothers from me.
 'My gaiety you have turned to grief,
 and plucked the rose-leaves of my heart.
 'We eight were flesh and blood together,
 whom you have now torn all apart.
 Even so when we set out for heaven,
 you'll hold up and demand your fee.'

Of the sisters-in-law making a rejoinder:-

'For this we feed you with milk-pudding,
 for all our pampering this is the thanks?
 'The village wives, they laugh at us,
 are we not too fond of this boy?
 'Have we not fallen for youthful looks,
 like flies getting stuck in honey? they say.
 'None of our vaunted gentility can
 hide from their eyes your naughty pranks.
 'While everyone else here lives in peace,
 on us alone there lies a curse.
 'Only when you starve, away from home,
 will you these monkey-tricks unlearn.
 'The man of evil ways, indeed,
 ought to be shunned at every turn
 'For in his evil company things
 will surely go from bad to worse.'

Of Dhido's retort:-

'Deceitful ones, you'll turn poor men
 into rams, make serpents of mere strings,
 'She was one of you who made of Bhoj
 a horse and bridled him for a mount;
 'And she who sent to hell the Kaurava
 and Pandava⁷ hosts just with a taunt;
 'And Ravana⁸ with his Lanka of gold was burnt,
 in your hell-fires, O evil things!'

A rejoinder:-

'You scoundrel of a boy,' she said,
 'I won't be drawn into such brawls.
 'The woman is ruined, indeed, who looks
 to a brother-in-law like you for grace;
 'Already we are slandered in every home,
 the village wives we can hardly face;
 'We have nothing to do with you, go seek
 for bride a daughter of the Syals.'⁹

Of Dhido's taunt again:-

'You look so hideous, sister-in-law,
 putting into the fire moths burnt and dead.
 'What do I stand to gain from you
 that I should care for any of your wit?
 'A mansion of hate you have built, and barred
 all entrance to and exit from it.
 'O low-born, you but gain respect
 from my clan's name, and you call me a cad!'

Of the Sister-in-law again:-

'O ruffian, shut up, that is the limit,
 and mend your ways if you care to be fed.
 'You are discussed at watering-places,
 your ill-fame even the spinning wheels hum.
 'And many a girl you have ruined, that fell
 for you, forsaken of house and home.

'Your jet-black curls are cobra-snakes
that suck at the heart and drain its blood.

'O wanton, mad with the folly of youth,
you spit and belch the fire of pride.

'A blazing turban on hair well-curled
and oiled, at passing girls you stare.

'At home should the broth be short of salt,
you toss the trenchers into the air.

'A gourmand, wastrel, dandy, and shirker,
you put too much worth on your hide.'

Of Dhido beating a retreat:-

'I've strayed, unknowing, into your parlour,
O vampire, let me go my way.

'I'll go from here for fear of you,
and leave you mistress of the house.

'Why should you rack me day and night,
even if you have a handsome face?

'Encumbered with pride of beauty you go,
this pride will have a fall, beware!

'Stiff-lipped and vain, you seem to hate
to have to breathe this common air.

'Beloved of fortune and of man,
withhold your cruel scorn, I pray.

Of the sister-in-law mounting a further attack:-

'You donot care for any of us,
go bring for bride Hir of the Syals.

'Play at the flute, cast nets of love,
and bring for a haul the maid of Jhang.

'You have a way with women, I know,
a Kokila Rani¹⁰ you can win with a song.

'And if by day you don't succeed,
by night you sure can scale the walls.

Of Dhido's retort:-

'I'll win for bride the daughter of the Syals,
your taunts, O hussy, I'll suffer no more.

'Like ladies of the harem she'll languish on a couch,
and the likes of you shall serve as her maids.

'A rude rough wench like you deserves
to be hurled deep down the water-sheds.

'O stop your chatter, that's enough,
you have filled my lap with gifts galore.'

Of Dhido's departure from home:-

'How raw you are to make a row,
much like a co-wife,' came the jibe.

'Go make hay while you may,' she said,
'your youth otherwise may soon go stale.'

Offended deep, Dhido beat his head,

'O how you stick to me like burr!

'I'll leave this house, I'll leave this land,
and you may queen it here, for all

'I care. These bickerings let us end,
to all your swagger I demur.'

A blanket round him, shoes in hand,
leaves Dhido, like Waris, the home of his tribe.

Of the brothers' pleading with Dhido:-

'What ails you, Dhido?' the brothers plead,

'Why leave you thus your kith and kin?

'Are we not born of the self-same mother?

Forsake us not, that's most unkind.

'None other than your own brothers are we,
no alien thought may cross your mind.

'Forgive us and our sinning wives;

for who is born that is free from sin?'

Of brothers in general:-

There is no joy without brothers' sharing,
in social meet, in festive hour.

A brother's death is a blow that cripples,
and drives the victim from pillar to post.

In a brother's love great comfort lies,
 with a brother estranged, the battle is lost.
 No friend can equal a brother, Waris,
 and a brother can make one's fate or mar.

Of Dhido's disillusioned reply:-

'I have no share left in this house,
 I leave you all, for woe or weal.
 'You took all that belonged to us
 in common; is that the way of kin?
 'At heart you are pleased that I am going;
 your pleadings wear a bit too thin.
 'Why must you come upon me thus,
 with words that hurt much more than steel?'

Of the pleadings of the brothers' wives:-

'O Dhido,' pleaded the brothers' wives,
 'We shall serve you as your maids for ever.
 'But when you talk of leaving the home,
 our eyes overflow with tears of gore.
 'Our lives, all that to us belongs,
 we give to you to use or spare.
 'Bereft of you, we are fish out of water,
 and turn and twist as on a skewer,

Of Dhido's reply:-

'O sisters, I've renounced the world,
 do not seduce me back again.
 'Having turned my heart on fire, you now
 pretend you would apply the balm.
 'Brothers of my blood you have estranged.
 what kinship with you can I claim?
 'I am a hideous, ill-looking lout,
 while you are beauty's streams in flood.
 'You may exploit the whole wide world,
 dry bread is for me much too good.
 'What matter I, one against you seven,
 together flowing all amain?'

III

Of Dhido taking leave of his brothers:-

Against all his brothers' and their wives' pleadings,

Dhido leaves Hazara in sore distress.

A full day's march on an empty stomach

brings him to a mosque for the night's fare.

At midnight up he takes the flute,

and fills with melody the air.

Women and men rush out of their homes,

and gather'around him in a press.

And, Waris, who should come there next?

None other than the keeper of the mosque,

The mullah, a store-house of disputes,

he takes young Dhido, poor man, to task.

'Who are you to thus defy the law?'

at sight of Dhido the mullah cried.

'For cads who do not cut their hair

to proper length we have no room.

'May be you claim to be God Himself,

and like Mansur¹¹ await your doom.'

Ah, Waris, the smell of hing* will out,

even if with camphor it is alloyed.

Of Dhido chiding the Mullah:-

'The devil is hid behind your beard

of a Sheikh to ambush passers-by.

'You mount the dais, Koran in hand,

and snares of spurious piety throw.

'What can you teach of good and evil

to us who know already the law?

'The foulness that you bring in here!

Thank God for His great charity.

*Asfoetida.

'A maid, a wife, a widow, a sheep,
a she-ass, none is safe from you.'

Ah, Waris, the deeds these mullah do
in secret, and the fields they plough!

Of the mullah's angry retort:-

'A mosque is the house of God Himself,
and the lawless have in it no place.

'Long locks like yours, long whiskers, too,
had best be singed, I needs must say.

'And also a *lungi* that falls below
the ankle must be torn away.

'A sinful friar, a prayerless man
and a fouling dog deserve no grace.

'Hanged shall he be by the nearest tree
who breaks the law in Fikah* laid,

'And foes of God from a distance must
be shooed away like dogs indeed.'

Of Dhido mocking at the mullah:-

'O tell me what your prayer is like,
and where indeed was she born and bred.

'Is she a woman with ears, nose, eyes,
sent down here to the bane of man?

'Is she tall or short? What would be her age?
and what charms does she sport or own?

'Or is she just a weaver's web
on half a dozen pegs spread?'

Of the mullah's solemn warning:-

'We take our stand on the writ of Fikah,
and shun the wicked who break the law.

'Good actions, worship and prayer we preach
to help men cross the river of death.

*The Muslim book of law.

'By precept, practice, rule, command,
and precedent we sift the truth.
'And those who skip the daily prayer,
with whip and cord we beat them raw.

Of Dhido lashing at the mullah again:-

'In the house of God you let out farts,
and vaunt of it, devoid of shame;
'And full of sloth, like cripples and lepers,
you throw the dice of life and death.
'You smell of the pudding and taste of carrion,
and kill the living with pious breath.
'You shelter under the mask of law
the wicked, steeped in sin and crime.
'Then when in the small hours of the night,
hunger wakes you up, you crow for prayer,
'And all impatient with the lodgers
overnight, you drive them out of here.

(Of the mullah declaiming in wrath:-

'O churl, O clown,' the mullah cried,
'you may hide your arse here for the night;
'But ere the morning spreads itself,
rise from your slumber and slink away.
'Do not dispute in the house of God,
these devil's antics will not pay.'
Ah, Waris, truly, on our mosques
these cursed mullahs are a blight!

IV

(Of Dhido leaving the mosque in the morning:-

With the chirp of the sparrow and the swirl of the churn,
when the traveller sets out on his track;

When the genuine* dawn has broken at last,
 and reds and pinks begin to glow;
 And ploughmen put their beasts to the yoke,
 who have to break the earth to sow;
 And wives at the handmill grind the corn
 for ovenfuls of loaves to bake;

And maidens sit at the spinning-wheel,
 and the world resumes its daily chores;
 While those who enjoyed their wives' embraces,
 run for a bath to pond or well;
 Did Dhido set out for the river-bank,
 to find the boat crammed overfull,
 Where the churlish Luddan sits at the helm,
 like a butt of honey in a grocery stores.

Of Dhido pleading with Luddan the boatman:-

'O boatman, for God's own sake, please,
 take me across,' Dhido humbly prays.
 With folded hands, and bended knees,
 he pleads, 'I am in utter need.
 'If you kindly let me board your boat,
 I'll ply the oars and render you aid.
 'For I am driven from home and hearth
 by unkind brothers, the Lord God knows.'

Of the boatman's business-like reply:-

'You slip a coin into my hand,
 and I will carry you in my arms.
 'We offer our best to gentlefolk
 who give us a coin or even a rag.
 'Tramps, bards and friars who have nothing to pay,
 we shoo away just like a dog,

*According to the Arabs, there are two dawns before the sun rises,
 and the later of the two is the genuine dawn.

'And sons of priests like Waris Shah,
are welcome least, for all their charms.'

Of Dhido withdrawing to the bank:-

His prayer proving of no avail,
draws Dhido away from the water's edge.
If none will share his fire with him,
his own little faggot he will light.
He puts the flute to his lips and breathes
into it all his sorrow's weight.
And men and women desert the boat
and ferry both, all in a rage.

Of the discomfiture of Luddan the boatman:-

And soon a crowd is round young Dhido,
with Luddan's wives both pressing close.
The boatman shouts and bawls in wrath
and calls his women back to the boat,
And warns the crowd to beware of the evil
he sees in Dhido incarnate.
Yes, who the devil is this young guy,
who has bewitched the women thus?

Of Dhido's attempting to swim across the river:-

At the hue and cry thus raised by Luddan
Dhido was a good deal puzzled and moved.
His clothes and shoes in a bundle on his head,
he made for the water to swim abreast.
But Luddan's wives, overcome with pity,
would treat him as did the Prophet his guest.*
'Why are you being so desperate,
We are all for you, O well-beloved?'

*For whom he slaughtered his pet camel as there was nothing else to feed the guest with. An anecdote from the Phopphet Mohammad's life.

O, Luddan's wives pleading with Dhido:-

'The Chanab is a hundred fathom deep,
 don't plunge in it to certain death.
 'We would lift you on our backs, indeed,
 and not demur a moment's space.
 'You are the pupil of our eyes,
 and must not think of shifting place.
 'Oh, we would give a world for you
 who are our being's very breath.'

Of Dhido's being brought back to the boat:

So arm in arm they bring him back
 to the boat again, out of harm's reach.
 Like Adam, all his sin forgiven,
 were carried back to heaven again,
 Or Azrael coming to one in a dream,
 should take him to regions not mundane.
 And after that he is given a bath
 and made to rest on Hir's own couch.*

Of Dhido's wonder at seeing Hir's couch:-

The couch seems hardly meant for sleeping;
 it is reserved for Hir of the Syals,
 Who is queen of all the maids of Jhang,
 and daughter of Chuchak Khan, the chief.
 It is the couch of the fragrant-robed,
 to whom all fairy-land pays fief.
 All, boatmen, ferrymen, people on the bank
 are servants of Hir, her slaves and thralls.

In praise of Luddan's boat:-

No boat this, it is a lounge, indeed,
 where all like wedding-guests may meet.

*According to this, Chuchak seems to have had a kind of house-boat on the river, where Hir had a couch reserved for her.

And poor and rich, and young and old,
 ask Dhido about his present and past.
 As moths and insects round the flame,
 they gather around the young outcast;
 And as before a disciple of Khizr*
 put heaps of offering at his feet.

Of Luddan's remorse and panic:-

Now Luddan who would not row him across
 before, is siezed with utter remorse,
 And fearful too on account of his wives,
 who cling to Dhido as by the tab.
 Thugs of Banaras are well-known, but
 here is a great thug of the Chanab!
 He looks indeed a miracle man,
 and for poor Luddan all the worse.

Of the spreading of the news:-

The cowherds carry report to the village,
 a handsome youth is there at the ford,
 From whose soft lips sweet music falls
 like flowers, as the flute he plays.
 He adorns, indeed, the couch of Hir,
 while Luddan's wives about him press.
 But the maidens of Jhang are furies, too;
 they will soon be there with fire and sword.

Of people questioning Dhido:-

Some ask him about his tribe and place,
 while others bring him bread to eat.
 'You look so fine and soft of breeding,
 what sets you on this arduous course?
 'Why have you forsaken your kith and kin,
 on aged parents laying a curse?

*Khwaja Khizr, the legendary guardian saint of the river and of sailors, according to Muslim mythology.

'How did they let you go out of sight?
What villainy has conspired with fate?'

Of Dhido's state of mind:-

The night being past in mirth and sleep,
the morning finds his heart full sad.
Looking out he sees the boatmen's huts,
and goes to have some gossip there;
And having regaled them with his flute,
comes back to languish as before.
But news has also reached Hir's ears,
how a stranger has defiled her bed.

V

Of Hir's arrival on the scene:

Followed by her sixty maids, she comes,
full of youth's pride and beauty's charm.
Bunches of pearls hanging from her ears,
she looks a hourie of heavenly birth.
The bright red bodice over her breasts,
makes one forget both heaven and earth.
Her nose-ring like the pole-star dares
the fury of the summer's storm.
O reckless one, relent, for here
so many have pitched their tents and gone!
The squire's daughter sweeps all before,
so arrogant she, so proud and vain!

In praise of Hir's beauty:-

What praise may one bestow on Hir!
A full moon shines indeed in her brow,
With serpentine tresses spread round like night;
her eyes are wild like those of a fawn.
Her cheeks pulsate like petals of rose,
and the red in them is the colour of wine.

Like arches of Lahore her brows
 are arched, no end of beauty there!
 And as she marches at the head
 of her fair host, she sways in the air
 Like eagle's wing—a majesty
 that queens may well be proud to show.
 Inebriate, elephant-like she rocks
 as ever she walks before her maids.
 Ineffable should be the state of those
 who dare to have a glimpse of her.
 With kohl sunk deep on the fringes of her eyes,
 she marches like a conqueror,
 As hosts have marched ever from Panjab
 to Hindustan on conquering raids.
 The winsome make-up of her face
 reminds of a beautiful calligraph;
 To see her would be a pilgrimage,
 indeed, to the Prophet's cenotaph!

In further praise of Hir:-

Her lips are brilliant red like rubies,
 and chin a pear-fruit from Iran.
 Her teeth a string of lilies, pearls
 (for swans!) or seeds of pomegranate.
 Tall like a cypress brought from heaven
 and fair as a Chinese marionette,
 Her neck is as a swan's and shoulders
 marble of the purest vein.
 Her arms are rolls of kneaded butter,
 thighs round and slender and camphor-white,
 On her bosom heaving like a wave,
 two silken spheroids rise and fall,
 And the navel like a musk-pod floats
 on the crystal of a heavenly pool!

*Antimony powder or some other such cosmetic for the eyes.

Her loins are velvet-soft, while shins
 are slim like shafts of a minarette.
 A fairy from the garden of Lanka,
 or the court of Indra, or the circle of the moon,
 Hir would outshine a thousand beauties,
 far lovelier than the loveliest queen.

All like a row of forest deer,
 the amazons come with Hir at their head,
 Who rolls like a wave or skims the skies
 as a crane that flies ahead of the flock,
 And shines like a sword that is just unsheathed
 to fall upon the fatal block.
 And gallants coming across her path
 will surely fall upon its blade.

Throbs passion in every inch of her,
 like music trembling in a guitar,
 Her peasant step falls all on a dance,
 and the anklets rattle on her feet.
 Or like a Qazilbash* horseman who
 has run amuck on a crowded street.
 Or is it swords that clang afar
 as the host advances from Kandhar?
 Her lips are red with chewing bark,
 she has slain all merchants of the town.
 Ah, Waris, in this dice of love
 all come out losers, none shall win.

Of Hir punishing the boatmen:-

The boatmen are all bound and whipped,
 on orders from the amazon.
 'You let a lout lie on my couch,
 you dare commit such sacrilege!'

*Red-cap, a militant tribe of Afghans.

'Dear maid, but we are innocent.

Why do you fly into such a rage?

'We never invited this strange guest,
have fear of God, O arrogant one!

'Great has been our reward indeed,
for being at your service day and night!

Ah, thus does beauty humble man
and make him quake before its might!

Of Hir bursting out in wrath:-

Proud of her youth and her father's power,
what does she care for man or God?

'I'll pull him down my couch,' she roars,
'is he a royal prince or what?

'Let him a hundred thousand times
crawl at my feet, I care not a jot.

'Or is he the serpent-saint to come
to meet me, swaying, from Baghdad?'¹²

Of Hir waking up Dhido and rebuking him:-

'How dare you, sir, lie on my couch,
and sleep here like a log indeed?

'Finding the couch unoccupied.
you thought of shedding here your sloth.

'Is there a fever, an ague on you,
or does some spirit choke your breath?

'Look how he lies asleep, unmoving,
like dead, or is he really dead?'

Of Hir changing and growing kind:-

She shouts and shrieks, and swings the switch,
a fairy furious at a man.

He gets up, says, 'O beautiful,'
and she breaks into smiles all soft and kind.

Flute under his arm, rings on his ears,
and wisps of hair playing in the wind,

With thin-plucked eyebrows, *kohl*-lined eyes,
Dhido shows a face fair as the moon.

Like Taimus' daughter¹² at sight of Joseph,
His is thrown off her guard a once.
His wild looks pierce deep into her heart
like the point of a dagger in a thrust.
His rustic beauty wakes her up
as from a sleep, and she is all lost.
And nestling like a bow in the sheath,
beside him, says she, all in a trance:
'Thank God, I did not strike you or
in some other manner misbehave!'
Ah, Waris, nothing can help when eyes
meet on the battle-field of love!

Of Ranjha's soft remonstrance:-

'O youth-inebriate, all must die,
so like a dream it is to live.
'And to ensure the traveller's comfort
is but the duty of the elite.
'One may not be proud of one's beauty
or of one's wealth, or couch or seat,
'But place one's trust in the Lord Almighty,
and ever be prepared to leave.'

Of Hir's loving reply:-

'This couch, this earthly frame and all,
this life to you I dedicate.
'How fortunate I did not swear
at you or give you other offence!
'And now when I so crave your grace,
do not please show such indifference.
'I would give a world for your dear sake,
live ever a beggar at your feet.
'My spinsters' parties will be now
much of a wilderness to me.'

When God disposes, Waris, none
can ever stand in rivalry.

Of Ranjha's further chiding:-

'You are well conscious of your charms,
and play quite dexterously your cards,
'But nothing of this may avail,
for youth is a sharper of the trade.'

The honey-bee, the cobra, the friar and the lover
require great skill to be subdued.

Yet love will slay without a sword,
just with the witchcraft of sweet words.

Of Hir's further reply:-

'I'll roll like a carpet on your path,
O tell me from which side you come,
'What is your tribe, your father's home,
and after what clan are you known?
'I would love to have you to drive and graze
my father's herds, for show alone,
Ah, Waris, this piece of sugar-cane,
will snatch away his flute from him.

Of Ranjha giving vent to his misgivings as well as devotion:-

'On the fringes of my eyes shall graze
your father's herds, if you are kind.
'To look into your eyes, I'll be your slave,
and you may use me as you like.
'But you must think of some device,
that once a day we meet to speak;
'For I would not be a slave in chains,
out of your sight, out of your mind.'

Of Hir reiterating her resolve:-

'Along with all my spinster friends,
your bond-slave ever I shall stay,
'For now that God has brought you to me
all youthful friendships back I fling.

'And here in wood and pasture-land,
 our love will always have its spring.
 'By day we'll enjoy here in the wood,
 at night in the homesteads romp and play.'

Of Ranjha's further questionings:-

'Yes, with your spinster friends you'll sit
 on the spinning-wheel in pride of youth,
 'And I shall wait here in the yard,
 and none may care to attend to me.
 'You'll give me food and tell me off,
 adding insult to injury.
 'If you really mean to stick to the end,
 come, take with me a solemn oath.'

Of Hir taking the oath of love :-

'I may be orphaned of my father
 and mother both, should I prove false.
 'Without you food will be poison to me,
 my eye shall never meet another's.
 'I would be a sow to break the oath
 which I take here on this seat of Khizr's.
 'And should I take another lover
 may leprosy eat this my flesh!'

Of Ranjha ramming it down further :-

'At the first assault you may desert,
 the way of love is the hard, strait way.
 'In truth I say, tell me the truth,
 for this is the final moment of test.
 'Love is a hard task-master who
 will keep the whole world in unrest.
 'And if you are false to your pledges here,
 you'll pay the score on judgement-day.

Of Hir's further affirmation:-

'My life is dedicate to you,
 and all that here to me belongs.

On the dice of love I stake my head,
 to lose it and to see you win.'
 Assured and fortified thus, Ranjha
 prepares to go to Chuchak Khan,
 With Hir to sponser him, indeed,
 he need endure no misgivings.

VI

Of Hir recommending Ranjha to her father :-

Says Hir, 'Ah, father I would give
 my life in ransom for your sake.
 'For in the sunshine of your day
 in Sandal Bar* here I have played.
 'On swings of silk among its trees
 with friends of my heart I have swayed.
 'You are my prop, as the Ox of the earth,**
 and here is a herdsman you will like.'

Of counsel between father and daughter :-

The father, smiling, says, 'From where
 does the young man hail and who is he?
 'With a skin that a rustic touch might soil,
 he is hardly fit to graze the herds.'
 'Smart and clever,' says Hir, 'and wise,
 he can be put at the head of our guards.
 'He will prod the cattle soft and kind,
 and will not hit them churlishly.
 'It will not be serf-labour for him,
 he will conduct himself so fine.
 'And a light divine shines in his face,
 for with the Lord he seems in tune.'

*The land between the Chanab and the Ravi now in Jhang and Lyallpur districts, is so called.

**According to Hindu mythology, the earth is supported on the horn of a white ox.

Of Chuckak's questioning:-

'Which squire's son he, what is his tribe?
and how do you call him clever and smart?
'Why has he then resigned the world?
which saint affords him moral prop?
He came here like the head of a host,
who is used to being ever on top.
'Of what Jat clan is he a scion,
and what is it that saddens his heart?'

Of Hir's reply:

'Son of the squire of Takht Hazara,
he is of the noble Ranjha clan.
'With modest face and downcast eyes,
his is a figure to prepossess.
'His forehead shines with a kind of halo,
a generous nature, clear as glass.
'He knows how to sit in council with
the wise, to judge, to mete, to scan.'

Of Chuchak's further questioning:-

'What knows he of Jat and Dogar* laws,
and of justice's complex calls?
'Where comes he from, all roughing his way?
Why did he fall from his brothers' grace?
'Or quarrelling with his sisters-in-law,
why did he leave his native place?
'Is it because of the urge to see
the beautiful faces of the daughters of the Syals?'

Of Hir's further reply:-

'As advocate he will plead a case,
as judge he will listen to complaints;
'Oblige a robber to yield his booty,
and put an end to every brawl ;

*Dogar, a tribe akin to the Jats, somewhat lower in the scale, being mainly cattle-breeders.

'And rally together the strayed and the lost,
keeping them in sight as sentinel.

'He is indeed a tiger swift
to track the quarry to its haunts.'

Of Chuchak's consent to employ Ranjha:-

'I do agree to your request,
and give the herds all in his charge,

'But he should do the job with care,
for there are dangers in the wood.

'He may not get mixed up with thieves,
he lacks experience, I am afraid.

'Absorbed in playing his flute he may
not let the cattle roam at large.'

Of Hir speaking to her mother:-

And then Hir goes and speaks to her mother,

'I have engaged for our herds a man.

'The herds all unattended, roamed,
and often strayed out of the wood.

'Daily it was discussed in the village,
the matter is settled now for good.

'To the great good of our herds, O mother,
this herdsman comes of a noble clan.'

Of Hir counselling Ranjha:-

'You'll feed on milk and butter and cake,
attend to the herds, seek grace of the Lord,

'And pass your days in merriment,
needing no more than a jug of milk,

'Live under the providence of the Lord,
and do not mind if people talk.

'My maiden friends and I shall watch
over every single breath you take.

'Being with you always in my thoughts,
I'll keep a keen eye on your track.

'Just drive the cattle to the river-side,
and sit apart, only be on guard,

VII

Of Ranjha's meeting with the five saints:-

Ranjha went to the wood, but the gruelling heat
 unnerved him, and he called on God.
 And lo! to his great good luck appeared
 the five kind saints* out on their tour.
 'Feed on bread-pudding and buffaloe's milk,'
 they cheer him, never be heartsore;
 'For God has granted you the love of Hir,
 And think of us in your hour of need.'

Of Hir following after Ranjha in the wood:-

The morning meal, milk, butter and pudding,
 Hir takes to Ranjha into the wood.
 Finding him after a weary search,
 she plaintively tells of the hours thus spent.
 While Kaido**, the lame, is after her,
 a dog pursuing a sumptuous scent.
 Ah, Waris, the limping fellow will raise
 mischief worthy of the devil, indeed.

Of Kaido begging food of Ranjha:-

Hir going for water to the river,
 Kaido comes to where Ranjha waits for her.
 And pleading that he is dying with hunger,
 he begs for good in the name of God.
 Ranjha gives him a portion of the pudding,
 and he makes for the village with the utmost speed.
 As Hir returns, Ranjha asks of her
 from where and who was this Fakir.

*They are enumerated later in the text. Of course, here their spirits are meant.

**He is mentioned as an uncle of Hir, but is presumably a poor kinsman.

Of Hir's loving remonstrance:-

'O dear, you have made a blunder,' says Hir,
 'This limping fakir is such a cad.
 'Given day and night to evil, he
 will go and tell against us both.
 'He sows disunion everywhere,
 works for breach of all pledged faith.
 'Now will he traduce me in the village,
 and carry report to mum and dad.'

Of Ranjha's pleading ignorance:-

'I did not know he was a spy,
 when he came and begged for something to eat.
 'And then as soon as he gets the alms,
 he turns on me his filthy back.
 'He cannot have gone very far, O Hir,
 go catch the cad and bring him to book,
 'And give him a kick or two in the stomach,
 to make him belch his secret out.'

Of Hir catching hold of Kaido:-

Hir overtook Kaido on the way,
 pretending at first to speak in mirth.
 But coming near she roared like a tiger,
 shedding tears of wounded pride.
 Snatching away his cap and stole
 she threw him down with a violent thud.
 The devil must have been thrown from heaven
 thus by the angels, Waris, on earth.

Of Hir's threats to Kaido:-

Throwing him down, Hir said, sir uncle,
 return my pudding if you care for your life.
 'Otherwise I'll beat the breath out of you.
 and none will save you here from me.
 You dare pick quarrels with us girls,
 I'll dangle you from the nearest tree.

'Now if you have an iota of shame,
give back the pudding, or come to grief.'

Of Kaido's plaint to the villagers:-

Still Kaido was able to carry a portion
to show it to the village folk.

And on this proof he rated them
for not believing him before.

'Will no one here put Chuchak wise,
and make him beat some sense into her?

'She goes to the herdsman in the wood,
who does not care if people talk.'

Of Chuchak's answer:-

'He is carrying tales in vain,' says Chuchak,
'Hir goes to the river but with her friends.

'She swings on trees but with her friends,
or in the homesteads with them spins.

'This Kaido is just a bearer of tales,
his friarship is all a farce.

'Sometimes with jugglers takes he hemp,
or else with mediums he will dance.

'How can a scavenger be a priest,
how can a sheep turn into a horse ?

'And peasants', cobblers', oilmen's' sons,
can never indeed be reverends.'

Of women of the village complaining to Hir's mother:-

Women come to Maliki and complain,
'Your daughter has taken to evil ways.

'We, aunts and cousins, are dying for shame,
our hearts are all aroast within us.

'Qazi Shams-ud-din has always said,
marry off a wayward daughter at once.

'When girls go out with servants alone,
it is a slap in the parents' face.

'Your daughter is proud as a countess, indeed,
and the herdsman goes about as a count.

'And people are so scandalised,
at Hir's misconduct that they rant.'

Of Kaido's remonstrances with Maliki:-

'O Maliki, marry off your girl!

O witch, for the fear of God, take heed!

'Or cut her to pieces and with brands
burn up the corpse, to avoid the taint.

'You laugh at the antics of your daughter,
a heartless wanton, you will repent.

'Or throw her into a cellar in
an earthen urn and put on the lid.'

Of Maliki's anger:-

Going red with anger, Maliki cries
to Mithi, the barber-woman, to run

And find out Hir and bring her home,
telling the witch her mother calls;

'That witch with a tail, that meek-looking doe,
a wanderer of woods and dales.

'A lost creature,' like Waris Shah,
'who takes delight in causing pain.'

Of how Maliki rebukes Hir:-

Hir comes to Maliki, smiles and says,
'Look, mother, I have come at a run.'

But Maliki angrily retorts,

'You'll ruin us, O herdsman's maid.

'I'll have you thrown deep into a well,
you prattler, who were better dead!

'What passion has taken hold of you,
that you so badly need a man?

'If a grown-up daughter misbehaves,
it is best to quietly finish her off.

'A woman should care for the honour of her house,
and not with servants flirt, or laugh.'

She threatens her with dire consequences:-

'Your brother Sultan, should he come to know,
will put an end to all your whims.

'You have sullied the good name of your father;
what prompts you thus to give us pain?

'You have cut our nose, disgraced the house,
and all our love has been in vain.

'I'll tell the herdsman off tonight,
we do not want him any more.

'And take off all your jewelry,
no good to you these trinkets are.

'Indeed, I think, you much deserve
a thrashing that should warm your limbs.'

Of Hir's challenging reply:-

'This herdsman is a gift of God,

O mother you are so fortunate,

'That a man like him should come to hand,
the whole world would bend low in prayer.

'As God has willed, so has it happened,
your blaming me is most unjust.

'The men of God should not be teased,
who have dyed their robes in ash and dust.'

That is why, O Waris, the wise have said:
woman, sword and love should not go bare.

For those who carry the burden of love,
will not demur to force or fate.

Of Maliki taking counsel with Chuchak:-

'Hard luck, O husband,' Maliki grieves,
'this girl has brought disgrace all round.

'The neighbours taunt, the whole world mocks,
and laughter greets us everywhere.

'She has taken as lover the cowherd Ranjha,
and all the Syals are put to shame.

'And when I try to counsel her,
she challenges, hurls back the blame.

'O we have had enough of him,
take back the herds, pack off the man,

'Or let us drown the girl in a pool,
 even if the Book makes it a sin.
 'Best were to marry her off at once,
 this scapegrace has made grace so rare.'
 Ah, Waris has, too, been ruined by love,
 though God made him of noble kind.

Of Chuchak's regret:-

'O wife, we should have strangled to death
 this daughter of ours at her birth.
 'You ought to have given her a draught of poison
 which is now offered us to quaff;
 'Or thrown her into a violent stream,
 or drowned her in a sewage trough;
 'Or buried her, shedding fear of God,
 like Croesus' treasures under the earth.'

Of Chuchak's displeasure:-

At eve when the herds came back to fold,
 there was a frown on Chuchak's brow.
 'Your ways do not seem to be of the best,
 please let us be, make for your home.
 'Tell him, O wife, he is needed not,
 let him return from where he came.
 'In public places they laugh at us;
 we are pursued by neighbours' taunts.
 'We did not want him for a bull
 to lead our daughters to pasture-haunts.'
 Fortify yourselves against the evil,
 Waris, the word of God is so.

Of some things of wisdom:-

Thank God for bread when you spread the cover,
 it is not nice to revel like mad.
 All is made for man to eat and drink,
 but do so wisely, says the Lord.*

*A quotation from the Kuran.

In heaven and earth, and also in water,
this is indeed the holiest word.

But God's is the providence, Chuchak may
take back his cattle for all he would.

Of Ranjha leaving Chuchak's house:-

Full sick at heart of the land and its people,
as if he heard ghost voices there,
Ranjha goes off, leaving the herds behind,
throwing off his crook and blanket of wool,
As a thief when he hears footsteps in the street,
will run from where he has broken the wall.

'I do not care a straw for your herds,
only Hir's insistence kept me here.

'Now may your buffaloes go to the thieves
and the calves be likewise lifted away!

'I will not now care even for Hir,
overvalue her much as you may.

'Just for your cattle at dead of night
I have faced much peril in the wood.

'The herds entire now follow me,
please fold them safely in their pen.

'My wages even you will not pay,
you think I am so craven and mean.

'For twelve long years I have tended your cows,
and now for you I am no good.

'Like a usurer, master of his books,
you make your debts look mountain-large.

'You keep your daughter under your roof
and throw me out stripped to the skin;

'And like a peddler, plundered and robbed,
shiftless I go, in sun and rain.'

Man makes a rent coming into this world,
then cannot, Waris, fulfil his charge.

Of Chuchak's sorrow over the condition of the herds:-

The herds were running frantic now,
 and the other herdsmen all had failed.
 Many heads were lost, drowned in the river,
 or killed by beasts, or just strayed off.
 The Syals themselves, their dignity lost,
 went after the herds, with crook and staff.
 And Chuchak, indeed, was much aggrieved,
 for the herds were not to be controlled.

Of Hir protesting to her mother:-

'The herdsman driven away at last,
 you are mighty glad, mother, I am sure.
 'But God's alone is providence,
 and you indeed are no one's God.
 'The cattle have been clogged down in bogs
 or gone astray in the midst of the wood.
 'Being robbed of one's reward, you know,
 is not a pleasant thing to feel;
 'And you should know, too, that the wrath
 of God most certainly will fall
 'On herds and sons of those like you
 who are oppressors of the poor.'

Of Maliki counselling Chuchak to bring Ranjha back:-

Maliki reports to Chuchak thus:

'People all around curse us and swear.
 "He had grazed your cattle for twelve long years,
 and never complained even once," they say.
 "And now, not paying his dues, you tell
 him haughtily to go his way."
 'Go after him to bring him back,
 for a poor man's curse is hard to bear.'

Of Chuchak's reply:-

Says Chuchak, 'You may bring him round
 to stay till the girl is married away.'

'When she is put in the palanquin as bride,
 we shall turn him out should he protest.
 'What harm indeed can he do to the girl?
 We shall make him serve as may be best.
 'We Jats are known as shrewd and sly,
 for once a Jat's trick let us play.'

Of Maliki seeking Ranjha out:-

Maliki goes about to seek him out
 in the place of assembly of Chuchak's peers.
 'In a fit of gloom our Ranjha has left,
 has anybody seen him here or there?
 'My daughter Hir has sent for him
 to wash the paint on the legs of her couch.'
 Ranjha yawns up from the floor where he slept,
 'Chief of the homeless, here I crouch.'
 Like a novitiate to a yogi sect,
 he'd shaved off clean his locks of hair;
 Full of regrets, he yawned and sobbed,
 feeling like a thief caught by pursuers.

Of Maliki bidding Ranjha be of good cheer:-

'The Khan was harsh with you,' says Maliki,
 'but do not take his words to heart.
 'What quarrel can be between fathers and sons?
 you are to earn for us to dine.
 'Go after the herds, and with my blessing,
 and safe and sound return at dusk.
 'To milk the cows, put the milk to sour,
 and make Hir's bed is all your task.
 'The girl is cross from yesterday,
 come soothe her as alone you can.
 'The herds, the lands, Hir, all are yours,
 enjoy yourself as the lord of lords.'
 But Ranjha all obdurate, replies,
 'I care not for your daughter or your herds.'

'What do I own in this alien land?
For Takht Hazara I must depart.'

Of word between Ranjha and Hir:-

'Why does your mother now cling to me
ever since last night?' Ranjha flings at Hir.
'Dear, do her bidding,' she pleads with him,
'she is my mother, and I am all yours.
'Who knows what way the wind may blow?
And we may have to wait for years.'
Ah, Waris, in this business of love
none ever has profited, it is clear.

Of Ranjha agreeing to Maliki's request:-

Thus bowing down to the wishes of Hir,
Ranjha takes the cattle out into the wood.
And as it scatters over the pasture,
he plunges into the river to cool,
And Hir like providence follows him,
with curds and cakes and barley-meal;
When, lo! the five kind saints appear
and beckon to them both, man and maid.

Of the advice of the five saints to Hir and Ranjha:-

With folded hands the lovers stand
and the saints address the two as thus:
'Pray to the Lord, O children, you,
let not your love suffer ever a blot.
'To keep our good will, you should know,
you must not waver in deed or thought.
'Keep in your thoughts day and night the Lord,
render Him nothing but thanks and praise.'

VIII

Of the Kazi's advice to Hir:-

As Hir comes home back from the wood,
she finds the Kazi waiting for her.

Her father and mother around him, he
 asks her to come and listen to them.
 And in words all soft and honey sweet,
 he tenders advice that is ever the same.
 'It will not do to be free with servants;
 what do we know where they belong?
 'At home among friends of the spinning-wheel,
 good girls beguile themselves with song.
 'In a spinning match on a brand new wheel,
 how sweet the songs of the Chanab are!
 'You know, O Hir, your father, Chuchak,
 is head and chief of village and tribe.
 'Give due regard to their honour, your people
 bear among the Jats a name.
 'It's not for maidens to roam about;
 one of these days messengers may come.
 'Move modestly, with downcast looks,
 for that is what the wise prescribe.
 'We are making arrangements for your troth
 and elsewhere there is equal stir.'
 Ah, Waris, in a few days now
 the Kheras will come with fan and flare.

Of Hir's reply:-

Hir says, 'O mother, never can
 an addict give up opium.
 'I cannot live without this Ranjha,
 inveterate habits know no cure.
 'The tiger cannot live without flesh
 with a tearing blow he earns his fare.
 'Like taint of mango-juice or steel
 the taint of love for ever remains.
 'Heads may be felled, the love-disease
 does not admit of remedy.
 'I will respect your every wish.
 but one wish I cannot obey.

'So is it willed by fate, indeed,
 none can undo what fate ordains.
 'For I got my Ranjha from the court of heaven,
 God himself made me a gift of him.'

Of Chuchak declaiming in anger to Maliki:-

'Shear off her tresses, pull out her hair,
 then wring her neck and bury her deep—
 'Yes, batter her skull with the churn, I say,
 and break her back with a wooden splice.
 'Rip out her bowels with a sickle,
 stick needles into the balls of her eyes.
 'For you may plead with her as you might,
 she will not agree to give him up.'

Of Maliki's warning to Hir:-

'She will get her head chopped off her trunk,
 should a daughter arouse her father's wrath.
 'And the severed head is thrown in a stream,
 and the trunk is left to dogs and crows,
 'As Sasi¹³ was thrown in the river by her father,
 the Jam, you know how the story goes.
 'A father needs must kill a daughter
 that goes astray from virtue's path.
 'Indeed with injured pride, a father
 may cast his daughter in a burning pit.
 'For if we make short work of the wicked,
 we do not have to answer for it.'

Of Hir's reply:-

'O mother, he who kills his daughter
 shall be charged at doom of a cardinal sin.
 'He shall have to eat what he had killed,
 to make a meal of the daughter's flesh.
 'I am a humble slave of yours,
 and will respect your every wish.
 'But as for Ranjha, his I am
 by sacred oath, why bring him in?'



Of Hir's brother Sultan remonstrating with his mother:-

All in a rage comes brother Sultan,
 'Give this last warning, mother, to Hir,
 'Not a moment will I let her be,
 if I see her ever again in the wood.
 'Henceforth she must seclude herself,
 otherwise she shall not keep her head.
 'And the cowherd must never enter her quarters,
 else he'll be cut and quartered the same.
 'You have not kept her in control,
 and she has put us all to shame.
 'The right thing to do by a shameless daughter
 is to throw her deep in the bottomless river.'

Of Hir's protest to her brother:-

'I'll give my life for you, dear brother,
 but there is a point of no return.
 'For no amount of effort can
 divert a river from its bed.
 'When it is given a dagger thrust,
 the heart, poor thing, cannot but bleed.
 'The fruit of love will ripen on
 a severed head. It is not wise
 'All of a sudden to stop the bowels,
 so do the books of physic advise.
 Such is the tragic path of love
 that admonitions serve no turn.

Of the Kazi's protests to Hir:-

'O Hir, why are you courting death?
 Fear God's own wrath,' the Kazi cries.
 'Your tongue needs pulling out from your throat,
 I am afraid of your blood being shed.
 'The moment I pronounce the law,
 off from your shoulders flies your head.

‘Not heeding your mother, you invite God’s wrath
and daggers to tear your shameless eyes.’

IX

Of Ranjha invoking the aid of the five saints:-

‘Mother, father, and Kazi all went for me,
but I have failed not in my part.’

Says Hir, and Ranjha invokes the saints
as he hears from her to this effect.

He prays to them with folded hands
and the flow of tears is not checked.

‘My Hir is brought to bay, the Kazi
and all her people threatening worse.

‘Help me for the sake of God, O saints,
my love will go to ruin else.’

‘What trouble besets you, child,’ they ask,
‘that puts such tremors in your heart?’

The saints bid him be of good cheer,
and put the lover quite at ease.

‘To help your Hir is now the charge
of the most revered Jahania,

Who as you know is one of us.

And let us have some music now.’

And the peasant plays the flute so well
that the saints are moved to lend him grace.

Of the pleasure of the saints concerning Ranjha:-

Well pleased, the saints say, ‘You shall have
whatever be your heart’s desire.

‘To you we give this day this girl,
so steeped in love’s celestial hue.

‘But we will not give you the beggar’s sack,
nor make her a begger to tramp with you.

‘Not a beggar-miad at her father’s house,
elopement is not best for her.

'But nevertheless we are pleased with you
and grant your prayer. Hir shall be yours,

'And you shall have whatever you wish,
for we will be your providence.

'Go, play your flute to your herds and make
the wood resound with music, and dance.'

Ah, Waris, in this way the saints
bestow on man unlimited favours.

Of Ranjha and Hir making plans:-

'Come, sit with me, O Hir,' says Ranjha,
let us devise some secret plans,

'Unknown to your father and mother and others
who are, you know, so over-wrought.

'I must not be seen in the homes of the Syals;
they will, I am sure, forgive me not.

'But Mithi, the barber-woman, must
be taken into our confidence.

'By day or by night her house shall be
our meeting-place, if she will oblige.'

Hir goes to Mithi and puts five mohurs
in her hand, 'Give us a rendezvous

'In your house. None of the girls may know
This secret which we share with you.'

Even though we feast on our own, Waris,
It must be hidden from public gaze.

Of the barbers' house and the goings-on there:-

Close to the pen of the cattle for the night,
there the house of the barbers stood.

The wife did the chores in peasant homes
and the husband would run errands for them.

And like a youth at his father-in-law's
Ranjha played the lord in the barber's home.

And as the night settled on the lanes
and it was time to go to bed,

Mithi made the bed, strewing flowers on it,
 where the lovers like angels would alight,
 And the cattle sleeping at their owner's risk,
 they passed the night in double bliss.
 Ere it was dawn she came to her chamber
 and he would go into fields of rice;
 And each would engage in their daily tasks
 and the barber's house was left in quiet.

Of the pleasures of the riverside:-

And as the day arrived at noon
 Ranjha would repair to the riverside,
 Where he brought his cattle for a dip
 and she her maids for water sports.
 Standing in the stream, he would play the flute,
 and they would sing in chorus or parts.
 If one would wring her braids in his face,
 another would leap right on his head.
 And yet another of fragrant limbs
 cling to his waist, rub cheek on cheek.
 And still another would throw a challenge
 and run and, as he chased her, dive.
 Another would shout, 'Herdsman, beware,
 beware, your cow is going to calve.'
 If one would roll like a log in the water,
 another would float corpselike on her back.
 And another pretend the melons of her uncle
 were sour and bitter and swill it out.
 Another would dive deep down to the bottom
 and bring out silt or mud for a bet.
 They would assume a water-hen's shape,
 of a red wag-tail or a water-thrush,
 Or a daddy long-legs, or a long-bill heron;
 or like a wood-pecker peck and cluck,
 Or squeal like a water-mole or float
 above the water heifer-like;

While Hir herself cuts circles round Ranjha
 or swims like a rainbow-coloured fish.
 To catch this beau of Takht Hazara
 in many shapes she casts her nets,
 And so this peasant girl displays
 of coquetry full diverse feats.

X

Of Kaido coming again to remonstrate with Maliki:-

Says Kaido, 'O fool of a Maliki, your daughter
 has set the village again to talk.

'She goes to the river to cuddle the man,
 breaking all rules of genteel birth.

'She has not changed, you, Chuchak, the Kazi,
 Sultan, her brother, have wasted breath.'

Ah, Waris Shah, this limping knave
 will never stop from raking muck.

Of Maliki sending for Hir:-

'Look sharp, you, Alia, barber, man,
 and bring Hir home at once to me.

'And you, O cobbler Alafi, and
 you cowherd Muazzam and fisherman Dau,

'She has been out since early morn,
 and it is close on sunset now.

'Already the first of the herds are home,
 but the girl is nowhere near to see.'

Of the menials' warnings to Hir and Ranjha:-

Jhangar, the Dum,* and Fattu, the Kalal,**
 and Bhulla, the sweeper, and the cowherd Jhanda

Go to Hir and utter dire warning, 'Child,
 what have you raised this storm about?

*The bard caste.

**The water-drawer or wine-seller caste.

'Your mother is exceeding wroth with you,
 and your father's fury will blow you out.
 'And you, O Ranjha, your life is in danger,
 the Syals will surely kill you one day.
 'They will throw you down into a well,
 though you think yourself a clever chap.
 'Like a parrot you enjoy pecking at the mango,
 but the catapult ball will peck at your life.
 'Cold are the hearths of the Syals today,
 the entire clan is drowned in grief.'
 To kill the orphan Ranjha, Waris,
 conspiracy is brewing in the land of the Chanab!

Of Hir being reprimanded by her mother:-

Hir comes and curtsies to her mother,
 but is received with liberal abuse.
 'Adulteress, slave, devoid of shame,
 all riddled with evil, black of face!
 'O run-away, bird of ill-omen,
 to have turned your back on Allah's grace!
 'Midstream I will drown you tonight, O girl,
 it seems your doom is drawing close.
 'You have exhausted my patience, indeed,
 it only remains to slaughter you now!
 'I warn you again to mend your ways,
 Why must you be the cowherd's bride?
 'All like a cow in heat that goes
 and rubs against the bull her hide!
 'You ought to be beaten like clothes being washed,
 to have your skin striped red and blue.'

Of Hir's reply:-

'O mother, we go to swing and play
 in the wood, and you rail like the devil at me.
 'The liar's soft mouth is filled with dirt,
 why should you indulge in monstrous lies?

'And foul with falsehood's onion smell
 the costly fragrance of the rose?
 'What sin have I committed, indeed,
 for you to carp and cavil at me?'

Of Maliki's railings again:-

'For ill-luck, you have earned no grace;
 you have got your lovely shape defiled.
 'Daily you sin and daily repent,
 much like a common hypocrite.
 'We have tried our best to show you the right,
 but a dreadful curse is on you yet.
 'You are fed on milk and cream and butter,
 and still you look so pale and wild.'

Of Hir's reply again:-

'Enough, O mother, stop this swearing,
 to swear, you know, is the devil's wont.
 'You slay a daughter to invite a curse,
 for woman is the source divine.
 'O may some plague descend from heaven
 and carry me from this place of sin!
 'But Ranjha I will never forsake,
 though father, grandfather, great-grand-father rant.

Of Hir's playmates inciting Hir:-

At once the playmates find out Hir
 and whisper this into her ear:
 'Kaido, the lame, denounces you,
 indeed he is making too great a noise,
 'With the beat of a drum in the open street,
 as those damned dancing players do.
 'You would not be true to your name, indeed,
 unpunished if this were to go.
 'In such a manner we should deal with him
 that all should say he reaps as he sows.'

Waris, how these fair sinners are provoked!
And all the worse for the lame old bear.

Of Hir speaking to her playmates:-

Says Hir, 'Lead him into the close, and catch
him by the neck and gag his mouth;
'Lift him by the waist, drag him by the leg,
and throw him down in a stinking pool.
'Take up the fishermen's oars and cudgels
and beat into pulp this nosy fool;
'Rob him of his rags, set fire to his hut,
he much deserves all that, in sooth.'

Of Hir and her playmates beating Kaido:-

Breaking up into groups, Hir and the girls
deployed themselves in alley and lane,
And as he entered the village close,
report at once was brought to Hir.
Hemmed in like a potter's ass, poor Kaido
was stripped of his cape and beads of prayer
By the amazons who, sticks in hands,
rushed at him like the Devil's own train.
Snatching off his cap and coverlets,
they fastened his rosaries round his neck.
They broke his bowl and flailed his legs
and dragged and threw him into the slush;
They pulled his beard and battered his head,
and tore his clothes in a furious rush.
They gave him kicks, or cuts with the switch,
or blows with cudgel, oar and stick.
Like paddy they pounded the lame old rogue
or as the smiths beat brass or bronze.
Come, saints, witness a thief's chastisement,
as the law of the royal Hir commands.

Of Kaido's resistance:-

Screaming like a savage, with tooth and nail
Kaido tore at their bodies, skirts and shawls.

Like stars acluster around the moon
 or peacocks under a cloudy sky,
 Or pickets at a Lahore post,
 the girls had gathered for the fray;
 Kaido looked all dazed like the pheasant at the moon,
 and the furies burnt red and white like coals.

Of the girls setting Kaido's hut on fire:-

Having beaten him into pulp, the girls
 gather reeds and sedge for brands of fire.
 And set his hut aflame and burn
 to ash its mats and coverlets;
 And drive away his dogs and fowls,
 break pots and pans into shards and bits,
 And then return, as the royal hosts did
 after sack of Mathura to Lahore.

Of Kaido's plaint before the Syals:-

Wailing aloud, Kaido comes to the village,
 besmeared with blood, bespattered with mud;
 Complains to the elders, asks for justice
 against the violence done to him.
 'I suffer this for my love of truth,
 as Farihad did for his love of a dame.
 'In sack-cloth I shall go to the king,
 and get this village razed to the ground.
 'Or you may take me to the Kazi;
 this wrong must not go unavenged.'
 O Waris, these fools react to love
 only this way, to be battered and bled.

Of Chuchak's reply:-

'Hence, hence, O limping rogue,' says Chuchak,
 'you are so deft at kicking up rows.
 'You are the chief of thieves and robbers,
 a noted agent of the thugs.

'You start it and then you go about crying,
as is the way of knaves and rogues.'

This Kaido is a shape of the Devil, Waris,
source of all evil, of all woes.

Of Kaido describing his sad plight:-

'I have been beaten into pulp with cudgels,
and into the fire my hut has gone.

'The girls have broken my pestle and mortar,
and torn my quilts and mats into rags;

'Ruined my beds of hemp and poppy,
and driven away my fowls and dogs.

'Robbers and bandits do rob the rich,
these wantons have robbed my humble demesne.'

Of the Syals' annoyance with Kaido:-

'You graft your lies so well on truth
and discord is the crop you sow.

'Part son from father, and daughter from mother,
alienating friend from friend.

'You are addicted so to evil,
your machinations know no end.

'Go hence, O churl, leave us alone,
we are quite annoyed and done with you.'

Of Kaido repeating his plaint:-

'For fear of God, give me justice, elders,
in public I have been assailed.

'The bowl of my preceptor broken,
I am uprooted like weeds and grass.

'My bones all broken into splinters,
I have been beaten like an ass.

'They have done me terrible wrong, indeed;
I have lost my all,' still Kaido wailed.

Of the elders summoning and questioning the girls:-

The elders summon the girls and ask,

'Why did you assault this lame fakir?

'How could you be so thoughtless all,
 or did you first determine his guilt?
 'No doubt you've been most cruel to him,
 he weeps and wails without a halt.
 'Tell us for what misdeed of his
 you beat him like a pilferer.'

Of the girls' reply:-

They bite their fingers in mock-surprise;
 'O he will stop at nothing at all.
 'He pinches our cheeks and pulls our breasts,
 and sniffs at our behinds for smells.
 'Strips off his loin-cloth and then bares
 in front of us his genitals;
 'Goes searching where we relieve ourselves,
 and sniffs the place for a menstrual fall.'

Of Kaido's wailings again:-

'O fathers of daughters, this will not do,'
 poor Kaido, wailing, cries again.
 'It is true I am nobody with you,
 I live upon the crumbs you throw.
 'But parrots spoil the fruit in your orchards
 and you hang for it the poor crow.
 'When the chief among you are also the robbers,
 whom, indeed, can I arraign?'

Of the Syals consoling Kaido:-

'Have patience, Kaido,' the elders say,
 'It is foolish of them to tease you so.'
 But still he complains they side their daughters,
 and still they make light of his pleas.
 They wipe his tears to give him comfort,
 and seek to deceive him into peace.
 Blind rulers of a benighted city,*
 they put him off with little ado.

*A Panjabi saying.

Of Chuchak's reply to Kaido:-

'Bring me once upon them,' Chuchak says,

'I will behead both maid and man.

'Or send him packing once for all,

there is for the wicked here no place.

'Yes, blood shall flow, for we are not

a pack of cripples all of us.'

'O you will catch them in the act,

the sinners are human after all.

'If after that you do not kill,

you are a craven imbecile.'

Ah, Waris, so we see a war

between the old and the young is on.

Of Kaido consulting with himself:-

Kaido says to himself, planning thus;

they go to the wood and make love, sure.

But on my evidence alone,

he will not wring his daughter's neck.

They will not hang a village entire

for killing but one sheep of a flock.

And yet to warm himself the devil

will set all village huts afire!

Of Kaido concealing himself in the wood:-

Like a dog on a hearth on a wintry night

Kaido goes and hides himself in the wood.

At breakfast time to meet her lover,

Hir comes afrisking with her maids.

They tread the bushes, bringing down

red-berries on the ground in loads,

Till the wood is made a carpet of red;

but Kaido keeps all mum like dead.

Of Hir and Ranjha coming together :-

When after reddening sod and turf,

the girls make exit from the stage,

Come the lovers to their meeting-place

and the cattle roam to the river-side.

And as they lie in love's embrace,
 old Kaido quickens his limping stride,
 And at the feet of the village elders,
 flings down his turban for a gage.

Of Chuchak's going after Hir and Ranjha:-

So utterly defamed and humbled,
 poor Chuchak feels stabbed at the heart,
 Soon is he on his way to the wood,
 his scimitar flashing lightning-like.
 When a gentleman would sink within,
 old Kaido wears a triumphant look.
 And at the clang of the horse's hoofs,
 Hir hears the warning with a start.

'Oh, get up, Dhido, father comes,'
 withdrawing from his side, she says.

'Forgive me, father, never again
 shall I be here alone,' she pleads.

'They have hid somewhere or gone their ways,
 they have played a trick with me, these maids.'

She makes pretence as the stalking cat
 will hold his breath to catch the mouse.

Of Chuchak's reaction:-

As he sees the two alone together,
 in anger Chuchak flashes red.

With downcast eyes, Hir slinks away,
 with cups and plates tucked under her arm.

And Chuchak retorts, 'I assure you, child,
 of broken limbs and further harm.

'Indeed, what an enormity
 that a maid should roam thus in the wood !

Of Hir's explanation:-

'This Dhido goes after the herds
 and no one cares to bring him food.

'In future I shall care not, either,
 forget now, father, what is past is past.'
 Like one all numb and drowsy with hemp
 or hemlock, Chuchak stands aghast,
 And then decides he with himself,
 the girl must soon be made to wed.

XI

Of Ranjha's brothers in Takht Hazara coming to know his whereabouts:-

When Ranjha came to the Syals, and took
 charge of their cattle as a herd,
 In time they heard in Takht Hazara
 and Ranjha's brothers felt mortified.
 They sent a letter to the Syals,
 full of the pride of birth and blood.
 'You have kept for cowherd Mauju's son,
 Oh, such has been the will of the Lord.
 'He left us in a huff and we
 have searched for him throughout the land.
 'All these past years we have tilled and improved
 the fields which he had then disowned.
 'He lives for ever in our thoughts,
 our women weep to think of him.
 'Let him come and take his share from us
 of all the harvests we could raise.
 'As a grazier he has shamed us all,
 we have thousands of cattle at home to graze.
 'And if one day he leaves your herds
 to robbers, we must bear no blame.
 'Please do oblige us, send him back,
 or we shall come in a body to you.
 'Most humbly we beg pardon of him,
 whatever our sins, all seven of us.

'We send this letter to ensure
that you are left with no excuse.
'Or we shall come, his brothers and their wives,
and the elders of the village, too.'

Of Chuchak's reply:-

'He is my daughter's serving-man,'
thus Chuchak to the Ranjhas wrote.
'He holds all people here in awe,
the herdsmen all accept his lead.
'I have kept him here for being a Jat,
would throw him out else for a cad.
'Why did you send him away from home?
He is not a cripple, nor a sot.
'He has so fine a head of hair,
the rings on his ears look passing fine.
'He does not care for anyone else,
waits day and night on Hir alone.'

Of the sisters-in-law writing to Hir:-

In dudgeon, too, the sisters-in-law
wrote thus to Hir in stinging terms:
'We own you are prettier than us all,
but why indulge in passion thus?
'Our brother-in-law is a gallant youth,
he left home after a row with us.
'Please send him back, do us a favour,
as you would give a beggar alms.
'O do not rob us of our wealth,
we fear the sharp steel of your eyes.
'Why should you covet our precious lad?
One gets what is sent him from above.
'Look out for an older, worth-while fellow,
our boy is yet too young for love.'
And Waris runs with this to Hir,
the job of an errand-boy he knows.

Of Hir's reaction to this letter :-

And when this letter was brought to Hir,
 so full of bitter complaints and taunts,
 She got the scribe to read it out
 and pondered over each word enough.
 In brief it read, 'Send, back our boy,
 he parted from us all in a huff.'
 Hir sends for Ranjha and conveys
 to him the letter's full contents.

Of Ranjha's reply to his sisters-in-law :-

Writes back he, 'Brothers and sisters-in-law,
 you made me leave what was my home.
 'You robbed me of my heritage,
 my lands, and cast me then aside.
 'You gave me nothing except sharp words,
 and never fulfilled any promise you made.
 'And, brothers refusing me my share,
 you ploughed my land by naked force.
 'Both men and women, you humbled me,
 you killed my hopes, you deadened my cheers.
 'You challenged me to seek Hir of the Syals,
 and drove me out to wander and roam.
 'Here I am in the service of Hir,
 who has with kindness won my heart.
 'And now you ask for my return,
 I suppose, to try afresh your art.'

Of Hir's reply :-

Consulting Ranjha, Hir calls the scribe
 and answers back the challenge thus:
 'I understand your feelings well
 but it has grieved me all the same.
 'I have kept him here to graze my herds,
 and never mean to part with him.
 'Never shall the leaf go back to the stalk,
 nor can you repair broken glass.

'Nor ashes ever return from the Ganga,
 nor can you ever bring back the past.
 'Nor ever do dice return to the hand,
 and I will hold him ever and fast.'

Of the sisters-in-law's counter-challenge:-

'If you think yourself more fair than we,
 you do not know what beauties we are.
 'God knows we are slaves of our brother-in-law,
 all seven of us as long as we live.
 'We are mad about him all of us,
 for good or bad, you may believe.
 'He shall be the moon in the midst of us,
 and we around him each a star.
 'He may abuse us, beat us even,
 we shall be glad to be quartered and cut.
 'Ever since he left us we are shedding
 tears of blood and cursing our fate.
 'We shall give you another in his place,
 and shall be much obliged indeed.
 'As Yogis shave their disciples' heads,
 so are we shorn maid-slaves of love.
 'We beg of him with folded hands
 not to roast us in the fire alive.
 'We are utterly lost without our Dhido,
 like a flock of cranes without the lead.'

Of Hir's second reply:-

Unknown to her father Hir writes to the women,
 hoping to find them in good cheer,
 And as is the way of writing in letters,
 wishing them health, affirms her own.
 'But what you say about Ranjha my love
 is not quite proper, you will agree.
 'Why are you after him so much ?
 He is in truth in love with me.

'And I love him, with the Kuran to witness,
 I have taken an oath in the mosque.
 'And when we sit at the spinning-wheels
 our songs are songs of him alone.
 'In the morning he leads out the herds
 to the wood, and that is his daily task;
 'And back at eve he repairs to the mosque
 to join with Warish Shah in prayer.'

Of another letter of Hir's:-

'I would give my life to see his face,
 his diet is a glass of milk with bread.
 'He cries all day : "There is none but God;"
 reciting : "He is deathless, living for ever."
 'The herds are left to the care of the prophets
 like Khizr and Lot, and the saints of God.
 'You seem to have nothing to do with him
 but quarrel, at which you are so clever.
 'When he was of you, you railed at him,
 and called him a fool born of a fool.
 'I, body and soul, belong to him,
 and yet he is one whom flesh cannot soil.'

Of the second letter from Ranjha's sisters-in-law:-

'What should be ours belongs to you.
 strange are the ways of the world, indeed.
 'You gave him birth, you have brought him up,
 he is nothing at all to his brothers and to us.
 'Having robbed the owners of their wealth,
 you set up as a banker, that is fine.
 'You came for fire, became housewife,
 and swept him of his heritage clean.
 'A cad has fallen for a slut,
 as the husk of rice falls to a mouse,
 'May the curse of the Lord fall on you, Hir,
 you have estranged him from his blood.'

Of Hir's reply to the above:-

'O don't be after him so much,
there is no profit in this trade.

'I will not live away from him,
to him my life is dedicate.

'He roams in wood and moor and risks
his life for me, 'mid beast and brute.

'He toils and moils on my behalf,
and with my love shall be repaid.

'You did not care to be his sisters,
and cast him off as a worthless load;

'His brothers drove him out of home,
for the sake of some few acres of land.

'And now he says he will not come
even if you bring the law's remand,

'He left his home bereft of hope,
as a bead slips off a silken thread.'

Of the poet's observations:-

However much it is whetted on stone,
a sword will better shine in use.

The blot will never never be wiped
off the name of the chief of the Syal.

For the sake of her paramour, they'll say,
their daughter thwarted one and all.

And as for Waris, let women know
he can be purchased at no price.

XII

Of Chuchak taking counsel with his kinsmen:-

Chuchak tells a council of his kin,
his daughter should be married away.

'We may give her to Ranjha if you approve,
or she may be wedded to someone else.

'We should so plan it that the coin
 of our clan's honour ring not false.'
 'To be sure, O Chuchak, let us call
 some man of the law,' the kinsmen say.
 'We never allied ourselves with the Ranjhas,
 their sons could never marry our girls.
 'To add to it, he is a servant.
 and she the daughter of the best of us.
 'Let us give her to a youth of the Kheras,¹⁴
 with whom our clan has age-old ties.'
 Look, Waris, how they are trying to bury
 beneath gun-powder burning coals.

Of the Kheras' barber having come with the proposal:-

'The barber of the Kheras has come
 to say they will deem it such a favour.
 'It is noble of them to knock at our door,
 and we may also prove not mean.
 'It is our well-considered advice
 that you should gladly say amen.
 'This life is a highly precarious possession,
 one should not be proud of self and power.
 'With faith in God give this girl to the Kheras,
 do not for a moment hesitate.
 'For, Chuchak, pride will prosper never,
 we may not forget the Pharaoh's fate.'

Of Chuchak calling the elders together:-

Now Chuchak's word went round to call
 together the elders of the clan.
 With a mohur of gold and weight of sugar,
 they pledged their virgin daughter's troth,
 Retainers remark it is, indeed,
 a union of two pillars of the faith.
 The drum is beaten and peasant wives
 and daughters come with bowls of grain

Full to the brim, and sugar-cakes
 for wedding gifts, and sing and dance.
 Only Hir and Ranjha are sick at heart
 and bitter against the elders' plans.

Of the messages of congratulations to the Kheras:-

As the Kheras receive the cheerful news,
 they sing and dance in utmost joy;
 Collect in groups for frolic and fun
 and flaunt their good luck all around.
 Delighted at union with a house
 well-known and honoured throughout the land,
 They dole out sweets and milk and rice
 cooked in big cauldrons for the day.

Of Hir's quarrel with her mother:-

Hir quarrels with and scolds her mother
 for pledging her troth against her will,
 'When did I ask you for a groom ?
 You have acted as from an ancient grudge.
 'Unwise are they, O mother, who lay
 bricks meant for a tower in a drain of sewage.
 'Why do you now distort the facts?
 Like thieves you have carried out this deal.
 'You have joined the swan to an owl, indeed,
 to a satyr given a fairy maid.
 'You are eager to suck a cane of sugar
 all at once, not node by node.'

Of Hir holding counsel with Ranjha:-

'The dreadful has happened, O Ranjha,' says Hir,
 'make haste and hie from here if you can.
 'Let us take a long long road together,
 to live we do not need much space.
 'You may never expect me back again,
 if once I go to the Kheras' place.

'When my people decide to pack me off,
 they will not listen to what I say.
 'Having entered the lists of love, for us
 it is cowardly now to turn away.
 'When love is followed by the parting of ways,
 dire is, indeed, the fate of man.'

Of Ranjha's chiding reply:-

'There is no honour in love, O Hir,
 if but elopement is the end.
 'I gather from your counsels now
 that you would have me blacken my face.
 'You have kept me all along in the dark,
 so full of deceit are woman's ways.
 'I was warned of woman destroying whole hosts,
 when foolishly I forsook my land.
 'But I will not save my skin this way,
 for I am not a bondman's son.'
 A goldsmith knows, indeed, O Waris,
 the sound of a base and broken coin.

Of the preparations for Hir's marriage:-

Mehr* Chuchak forgetting all promises made,
 the wedding rites are put under way.
 Other daughters of the Syals approach
 the jilted lover, all in a crowd.
 'They are preparing for her wedding,
 invitations have gone abroad.
 'How will it go with you, O Ranjha,
 who tended her herds for years if a day?
 'Why do you not collar the wench, O fool?
 She has given you really such a raw deal.
 'How dreadful she chooses to go with them,
 the Kheras are being feted and fed:

*The title of a squire in West Panjab.

'Dishonouring all her pledges of love,
 she is making her toilet of a bride.
 'If she were to fail you thus in the end,
 why did she put you to all this toil?

'Having made you climb the tower of her love,
 she has withdrawn the ladder from under your feet.
 'Put distance between yourself and her,
 obey the writ of fate, be gone,
 'She has played you false and beaten you hollow,
 perhaps you are reaping what you had sown.
 'The devil can say well-done to her,
 breaking all her vows, she has turned you out.'

Of Ranjha's confident reply:-

'Why should I have to utter a word?
 In silence will I suffer it all.
 'If God rewards my patience, Hir's
 stay with the Kheras must be brief.
 'One day the heavens will tear apart
 and the world will all be plunged in grief.
 'The patience of my suffering heart
 will dig up the earth for my reward.
 'You are ignorant of the ways of love,
 it will drink the cup of bitterness.'
 Where loud laments may not avail,
 says Waris, silence brings success.

Of the maids reproaching Hir:-

From Ranjha they go to Hir and say,
 'Your lover, O Hir, sends us to you.
 'Throwing off his hook and rug and flute,
 he is making for some unknown place.
 'Why did you infest his heart with love,
 if in the end you would back out thus?
 'We have come to this conclusion indeed
 that you have prepared to break your vow.

'And when we contemplate his fate,
 we hardly can hold back our tears.
 'We have found out what is in your heart,
 your faith in love begins to fail,
 "You are closing the fist of faith, O Hir,
 and sending him off with an empty bowl.
 'He has got from love a fat reward,
 and his journey's end will be hell or worse!'

Of Hir's reply:-

Says Hir, 'Disguise him as a girl,
 and bring him here as one of you.
 'And keep it a secret from my father
 and mother and from everyone else.
 'He must speak out in front of me,
 and you will judge me true or false.
 'And I shall gladly then accept
 whatever punishment is my due.
 'I have tired myself with telling him,
 let us flee, there is no time to lose,
 'But he paid no heed then to my word,
 and now the blubbers and sobs and cries.'

Of Ranjha's being brought into Hir's presence:-

In such disguise at night the girls
 bring Ranjha to face the challenge of Hir.
 Says Hir in joy, 'O God be praised,
 my love has walked into my yard.'
 And Ranjha retorts, 'You are going to wed,
 I come to watch the festive scene.
 'And the best that a sinner like me can do
 is to repent of my life of sin.
 'The herds I tended along with the maid
 are all now under the Khera's guard.
 And when those thieves drive both away,
 the lover will be given the boot.
 These friends and relatives and all,

your aunts from mother's and father's side
 'Are gathered now to sing and dance,
 and to the hour's festivities add.
 'The sun will now rise from the west
 as it will on the day of doom.
 'You wanted indeed to be a bride,
 quite lost to honour or to shame.
 'What hope is there for the likes of me,
 before the Khera's wealth and might?
 'I can only trust you now to God,
 for you have given your heart elsewhere.'

On the fixing of the day of wedding:-

The Kheras consult astrologers
 about auspicious day and hour.
 And Thursday night, the ninth of sawan.*
 is fixed by the Brahmins** as the day.
 Third quarter of the night is the time,
 appointed for the ceremony.
 There is joy and feast and revelry,
 on both the Syal's and the Khera's part;
 And as the bridegroom's train arrives
 deep curses rise from Ranjha's heart.
 Yes, Waris was the bridegroom's man,
 with bow and arrows, all the quiver.

Of Ranjha's plight:-

The weaker cannot even protest
 as the stronger takes away his troth.
 'Devoid of all resource or help,
 like a wounded snake he turns and twists.
 Writhing in body and in soul,
 he may moot best were to kill or die.

*A month of the rainy season, third of the Indian solar calender.

**It is clear that in those early days of Islam in India the Hindus converted to Islam still in part observed Hindu customs and rites.

The good in him remains unknown,
 and none gives ear to his anguished cry.
 The poor are always given the lie,
 the word of the rich no one contests.
 Even when he is robbed of house and home,
 the weaker cannot open his mouth.

Of the guests from the bride's side:-

Come beauties row on row such as
 the houries of heaven would faint to see.
 And peasant women, lotus-faced,
 and fragrance-laden adorn the yard.
 Of all twelve creeds and seven traditions,
 they are all of fair figure and face.
 They sing and scoff and win applause
 they chide, revile and even abuse.
 With gossamer shawls they cover their heads,
 and silken *lungies* skirt their waists,
 They twist their necks to watch the show,
 open their shawls to show their breasts.
 With mirror-attested looks they come
 into the arena of romance.
 Wild peri-like village girls, they sing
 in sweet, full-throated voices and dance.
 Like peddlars they display their breasts
 and musk-pod navels thinly veiled.
 They clap their hands and sway and sing,
 of high romance, knight-errantry.
 They whirl about in ecstasy
 and come and go in an endless line.
 Till the koel-sweet turn raven-hoarse
 and some indeed fall out of tune.

Of the priest's arrival and Hir's protest:-

The priest is called to do the rites,
 but Hir is stubborn and over-wrought.

'I have pledged my troth to Ranjha, O Kazi,
why does my mother indulge in lies?

'My faith I have bestowed on Ranjha,
she may give the Khera all else there is.

'She is churning only butter-milk,
to Ranjha I have given the cream.

'Like the devil she pours poison in my throat,
while my poor life spills over the brim.

'She looks for fish in a puddle of urine,
like a fisherman bereft of sight.'

Of the Kazi's advice:-

'If you care to live, submit to the law,'
the Kazi pronounces, sharp and grim.

'Keep true to the faith that after death
you may be admitted to paradiise.

'Then you will quaff in the garden of Eden
the sherbet of love of the sweetest relish.

'Put on the veil of modesty.'
why should you wear the sack of shame?'

Of Hir's reply:-

Says Hir, 'To live is good, Sir Kazi,
but only if one lives in the truth.

' "All things are mortal, only God
is deathless," is the holy word.

'My mother has broken the pledge she gave,
I will complain in the cour' of the Lord.

' "All things I have created in pairs,"*
does He not say in the hoby Kuran?

'The primal ox that carries the earth,
and the serpent bearing him in turn,
'And earth and heaven, all fourteen worlds
bear witness to my dauntless faith.

'For all the riches of this world
I will not cast on another an eye.

*A verse from the Kuran.

'Waris, I will keep my word with Ranjha,
for after all we have to die.'

Of the Kazi's warning again:-

'Stray not from the path marked by Islam,
and from your heart root evil out.

'Lay no store by this beauty and youth,
like spicy wine they go to the head.

'The Lord's command, O peasant girl,
to man and woman is to wed.

'So take the Khera as your spouse
by law, do not be obstinate.'

Of Hir's reply again:-

'The believer's heart is the seat of God,
O Kazi, do not demolish His throne.

'Where the love of Ranjha has lodged itself,
the Khera cannot hold his sway.

'A ball in the catapult of love,
I will not fall, swing hard as you may.

'Why I should sell my faith indeed
for life that must fall a prey to death?'

Overcome with tears, she gets, up to say,
'O listen to my plea of faith.

'My father and mother may break their pledge,
but I am Ranjha's troth, in fine.

'Where does, O Sir, the book allow,
that one may break one's promised word?

'I have given up all other support
and rest my hope in the Merciful Lord.

Of the Kazi's dire threats:-

'I'll have you flayed by the Sharaa's command,
as Umar Khitab's¹⁴ own son was flayed.

'Or get you thrown on the blazing pyre
for all the world to see and learn.

'If you value your life, accept the Khera
and never breathe of Ranjha again.
'Shut fast your eyes to the world's temptations,
no more than the shadow of a cloud.'

Of Hir's retort:-

'The wicked must ever be planning to put
asunder hearts made one in love.
'That they should be bribed to sell their faith,
even Kazis like you, learned and wise!
'God wants them, maybe, to feed the fires
of Hell, so sinners even have a use.
'I find myself caught in a trap
and hardly know what to believe.'

Of the Kazi's threat again:-

'They shall be lost who deviate from
the path of right to stray into sin.
'Indeed they shall be threshed in the grave,
to separate the grain from the 'chaff
'On the day of reckoning, and found
for the pit of hell not good enough.'
Ah, Waris, these scarlet pawns of life
shall lose the game, and death shall win.

Of Hir's affirmation of her resolve:-

'My mother and father had promised indeed
to marry me to the man of my choice.
,And I gave my word to Ranjha in turn,
which I will keep to the brink of the grave.
'Hir shall at last be joined to Ranjha.
no power can defeat this love.'
But the simple maid knows not the feed
of the tiger shall be thrown to the ass!

Of the Kazi's remonstrances again:-

Those who are wedded to the truth
are welcome in the court of God.

'And as they share their love with Him,
 they are coveted guests in all the heavens.
 'But those who disobey the law
 become the food of crows and revens.
 'And having gone all stiff with pride,
 are slaughtered like a goat at Id.*
 'And those who cherish the flesh shall be
 on the day of doom thrown into the fire.
 'And those too clever iike the crow,
 shall one day fall in the devil's snare.'

Of Hir's further definance:-

'Sir Kazi, I care for or fear
 no other, being absorbed in one.
 'For those who are steadfast in faith
 find favour with the Lord above.
 'They shall attain both honour and rank
 who chant the magic word of love.'
 Waris, you have put in this your verse
 the meaning of the Holy Kuran.

Of the Kazi's advice to Chuchak:-

'Hard nut to crack.' the Kazi remarks,
 'she will not yield to law or reason.
 'Before she causes more ado,
 let us gag her and perform the rites.
 'She has left the mosque for the public place,
 she values pigs more high than goats.
 But, Waris, Hir has really churned
 out butter from the curds of passion.

Of the Kazi sending for the elders of the Syal clan:-

He sends for the elders of the clan,
 who come and settle on carpets and rugs.
 And the witnesses are summoned, too;
 they also gather there and then.

*The Muslim festival.

This marriage makes a noise that'll ring
 long in the assemblies of men.
 In dudgeon Hir protests, 'May God's
 and the Prophet's curse be on you, thugs.
 'I won't put henna to my palms,
 I'd rather be rolled and buried in dust.'
 The guests all slink away at this
 as deer at sight of the tiger must.

Of the marriage being performed against Hir's will:-

At last the marriage is solemnised,
 and Hir pushed into the palanquin.
 With a wealth of jewelry and costly dresses,
 and many other luxuries of a spouse;
 And gold and silver and precious stones
 and horses and camels, buffaloes and cows.
 But Hir's refusal to go with the Khera
 is shameful for the entire clan.
 The Kheras, adept at lifting cattle,
 will carry the wench away by force.
 Thus torn apart by fate, poor Hir
 and her love are left with little resource.

Of the buffaloes refusing to move without Ranjha:-

The buffaloes, breathing fire and fury,
 would not without Ranjha move a foot.
 They kick up dust and noise and rush
 at passers-by, break pots and pans.
 And the Syals are obliged to go to Ranjha
 who is feigning sleep or a mystic trance.
 They touch their brows with the dust of his feet
 as worshippers do to propitiate
 A saint. They gather round the man
 like pilgrims at a holy shrine.
 They offer him pudding as if he were
 Lord Shiva, all peerless and divine.

Of the wedding-party's return to Rangpur Khera:-

They coax him enough to drive the cattle
 and make him carry the trousseau on top,
 By day and night the Kheras march
 and sunrise sees them back at home.
 At Rangpur the maidens with song and dance
 of joy receive both bride and groom.
 Seven morsels of pudding they give them to eat
 and place a male child in her lap.'

Of Hir's expressing her helplessness to Ranjha:-

'Dear Ranjha?' says Hir, 'I have tried my best;
 'but matters have gone now out of hand.
 'The Kazi and my parents have acted as tyrants
 and given me into the Khera's control.
 'But I will never accept the Khera,
 disharmony shall ever prevail.
 'Good-bye, God willing we shall meet again,
 for the present our love has come to an end.'

Of Ranjha's bitter reply:-

'Whatever has been ordained by God,
 shalt come to pass; why should we whine?
 'You have kept me out of everything,
 such an ill-omened bird you are!
 'To save your skin in the battle of love
 you will poison me without demur.
 'You have roused the sleeping dragon and
 without a charm for the hornet's sting.
 'You had rather dismissed me from the first
 than thus to wound me in the wing.
 'Ah, Waris, if you are not athirst,
 why should you clink glasses of wine?'

Of Hir's solicitous reply:-

'You can return to me, if you care;
 I cannot come to you alive.'

'As soon, therefore, as I write to you,
 show yourself there in a friar's robes.
 'Go to a yogi, be his disciple,
 put ear-rings in your cleft ear-lobes.
 'Shave off your head, remove all marks
 of birth and creed, for the sake of love.'

Of Ranjha's cursing the Syals:-

'The Syals have proved all rotten and mean,
 and Hir on the truth has turned her back.
 'When the matter was brought to the council of elders,
 for shame Mehr Chuchak's head was bowed.
 'They break their word, and sell their daughters,
 and yet go stiff-necked and arch-eyed.
 'You talk of the beards of the Syals? They are
 but the husk of the lentil from the bog.
 'Fine outside, they are foul within,
 and know only to boast and brag.
 'Ah, Waris, they will hang a stone
 around a good-looking daughter's neck.'

Of the poet's comments:-

The Jat is a liar and his word is not
 to be trusted, it is a camel's fart.
 He is of the brotherhood only if
 he is a score of times disgraced.
 They come to their senses only when
 they roll in dust like a Brahmin's ass.
 Taking off the turban they put it under
 the seat, what sense of cleanliness!
 They are pleased to see themselves being mocked
 by mimics* or by the Mughal abused.
 To a stranger they will pledge a daughter,
 betraying the rightful husband's part.

*A customary practice at weddings.

Of Ranjha's plaintive cry:-

'The elders have discarded truth,
 and the Kazis have been suborned, it seems.
 'One is driven out for siding the right
 and thieves and thugs are aldermen.
 'The word of a man is honoured not,
 while tramps and pimps play the leading part.
 'Ravens take their delight of orchards and,
 peacocks have to peck at dirt.
 'The Kheras have snatched from me my love,
 and I have wept and wailed in vain.
 'In graveyards dwell the men of faith,
 for having been turned out of their homes.'

Of the poet's comments:-

The Syals are thugs without a doubt,
 they teach their daughters to cheat and rob.
 Sweet-tongued, they made a cowherd of
 one who was scion of a noble house.
 They eat their word, they break their vows,
 and graft their daughters on other stalks.
 The Jats are breakers of houses, thieves,
 waylayers and adulterers.
 Hiding under the beard of a saint the knife
 of a butcher, they sit as councillors.
 All jats are thugs, but the chief of them all
 are, Waris, these Jats of the Chanab.

Dogars and Jats will desecrate
 temples, breaking all their vows.
 Their women are like them, too, and lead
 their sons and daughters into sin.
 They have great admiration for
 outlaws and thieves and highwaymen.
 They ridicule the man of prayer
 and honesty and penance and faith.

Against their plighted word, they break
 betrothels, challenging God and death.
 They lead their daughters into bigamy even,
 and prove in this their greatest foes.

Of the wrist-band ceremony:-

Arrives the day of the wrist-band rite,
 and the ring match between groom and bride.*
 Great is the noise about these things,
 all are beside themselves with joy.
 Sits on the red stool Saida the groom
 and the girls around the bride deploy.
 They push her hands into the pan
 but her arms lie limp and loose like dead.

Word has gone round, the peasant wives
 and girls have come in flock and herd,
 Adorned with jewelry of all sorts,
 nose-tops, ear-rings, bracelets, and wreaths
 Of jasmine, lily and rose in their hair
 and scent and attar on their clothes.
 On this occasion, Waris, a feast
 of fragrance overflows the yard.

Sitting on the walls the women shine
 like rows of flames in chandeliers.
 In clothes just out from the washing-still
 they shine in beauty, bright and pure.

*These rites have now fallen into disuse more or less. The bands of red thread tied round the wrists of both bride and groom some days before the wedding are untied by each other. Then a gold ring is thrown into a pan of water to see who, the groom or the bride, can fish it out first. This is repeated seven times.

And Saida flaunts himself among
 them like the *subedar** of Lahore.
 The house is all alive with colour
 like flower-beds in the Shalamars.**

They group round Hir and place the pan
 of milkwash right in front of her.
 And throwing the wedding-ring in it,
 with coquetry they turn and swagger.
 At Saida's side Hir blanches pale
 like the goat at the butcher's lifted dagger.
 And as the wives grow forward and pert,
 she trembles in disgust and fear.

While the others shine like lotus blooms,
 paleness spreads on Hir's wan cheek.
 She cannot find the ring in the water,
 because her heart is not engaged.
 And when she is asked to loosen the thread
 on Saida's wrist, she glowers enraged.
 She does not tackle at all the knot,
 though they pull her arms to make them ache.

Bedevilled and humbled, the peasant-women
 take sadly away the ring and pan.
 'We were looking for a welcome shower,' they grumble,
 'and God has sent a hailstorm here.'
 None has the heart to hold them back,
 they leave in anger and despair.
 They guess Hir does not like the Khera,
 for whom her heart is filled with scorn.

*Governor of a *suba* or province under the Mughals. *Faujdar*,
 similarly an officer of a lower rank.

**The royal gardens at Lahore, laid by Jahangir, the Mughal emperor.

XIII

Of Ranjha's puzzlement :-

As Hir left for the Khera's place,
 for Ranjha it seemed to have ended there.
 And silent grew the Syals's house, too;
 the Kheras of course were festive and gay.
 Nobody seemed ever to notice Ranjha
 who like a cashiered *faujdar* moped,
 And tears started flowing again
 from his eyes if ever they had stopped.
 At Takht Hazara he was discussed
 and the sisters-in-law resumed their plea.
 They wrote to him, berating Hir,
 like shouting at the deaf from near.

Of the sisters-in-law's letter :-

'Whatever was written in Fate has happened,
 but you have touched us on the raw.
 'Even now, O Dhido, nothing is lost,
 come back with all your youthful swagger.
 'Where is she you wandered for in the wood
 in the midst of wolf and leopard and tiger?
 'The flower so jealously guarded by you
 has now been by the Kheras plucked.
 'Men are big fools indeed to trust
 fair maidens and be jilted and mocked.
 'In vain you toiled for her, not knowing
 that she was not ordained for you.
 'We shall offer gold-plate at the tomb of the saint,
 the day you enter again our court.
 'This is the vow we have taken, Waris,
 may Khizr himself be your escort.'

Of Ranjha's reply :-

'O sisters-in-law, when winter comes,
 in hope of spring lives on the bee.

The nightingale watches over the bough
that has dried, for it may bear blossoms again.

'So soon or late I'll go to her
who knows the pain at my heart alone.

'Who ever returned, once having left,
and do you expect just that of me ?

'Mauju Chaudhari's son is a grazier now;
is it not indeed a miracle?

'But the brave have always fought for love,
and hosts have thus gone under the earth,

'Only he will run away from love
who is an imbecile from birth.

'The likes of me, by harsh words stung
will go back at no summons or call.

'Time and life past will never return,
nor luck and chance if not availed.

'Word from the lips, arrow from the bow,
soul from the body, once having gone,

'Shall never return : to recognise
this is the highest wisdom of man

'But if you can call them back, dear ladies,
I'll come back, too, now that you've called

'Ah, now you want to steal my love
as then at home you stole my land.

'But I am now resolved in my mind
to join the ear-cleft Jogis' creed.

'I come back home only with Hir
or in the attempt I shall be dead.

'Ah, Waris, who cares to call me home?
Brothers and their wives alike pretend.'

Of other things in Ranjha's letter :-

He got it written and sent by hand:

'Accept you, first thing, my salam.

'The will of God prevails, not man's,

we have to live as He ordains.

'When the world has thrown one in the gloom,
of rising up there is no chance.

'It is beyond me, ladies, now,
I'm stranded on love's stormy shore.'

The sisters-in-law can find no answer
but that they'll wait for evermore,

'And patiently depend on God
to bring him home in His own time.'

Of the counsels of the Kheras:-

The Kheras take counsel with themselves,

'Now Hir must never go back to Syal,
'Lest the cowherd should grab her again
and heap obloquy on our head.

'This faithless woman is perverse too,
once there she is lost to us for good.

'She must not meet her lover again,
it is final, irrevocable.'

XIV

Of a peasant woman taking Hir's message to Ranjha:-

A Rangpur girl going back to Syal,
her father-in-law's, visits Hir to say:

'Your parents will like to hear from you,
tell me what I shall say to them.

'How goes it between your husband and you,
wives tell each other these things without shame?

'How do your in-laws treat you, too,
kind, harsh, or indifferent are they?'

'Between us two,' Hir says, 'it is
like as between silk and the moth.

'The less said about the likes of him,
my husband, the better for my faith.'

Of Hir's message for Ranjha :-

'With folded hands and chewing grass,*

I send to him my word of love.

'Having given me into the hands of foes,
my friends try now to forget my name.

'And parents having cast me midstream,
what have I now to do with them?

'Tell him to be kind to a destitute
like me who seems beyond reprieve.

'Dark clouds have lowered upon me, in
his absence I am roasted alive.

'A numbing pain has pierced my heart,
fed up with life I'd rather be dead.

'This separation consumes me so,
I feel exhausted, battered, bled.

'As cotton is beaten under the flail,
so am I being flailed by his love.

'Houses of the unwary are broken by night,
in broad day-light have I been robbed.

'Unless he comes somehow to help,
a bolt from the blue may fall on me.

For the wilderness 'I'll leave this house
where I have not lived anyway.

'The blows of fate have battered my soul,
the heart within me has been stabbed.'

Of the Rangpur woman enquiring about Ranjha :-

As the peasant wife arrived at Syal,
she started to ask where Ranjha was:

The gallant youth from Takht Hazara,
who tended herds of the village chief.

Could he be found in the village hall
or in the mosque? Where did he live?

*A sign of cow-like humility.

But those uprooted, Waris, by love
can have nowhere a dwelling-place.

Of the Syal girls' reply to these enquiries:-

Said the girls, 'He is a handsome youth
with a growth beginning on the cheeks.
'Known as a lover all over the land,
withdrawn from all the world's dispute.
'The day Hir was delivered to the Kheras,
he threw away his magic flute.
'He roams and shouts like mad in the wood,
the haunt of tiger, leopard and wolf.
'None dare address him, for who will
provoke the cobra even by half?'
But one suggests they should go to him
and try on him the charm of their sex.

Of the girls approaching Ranjha:-

The girls thus make an approach to Ranjha
who sat bowed down with leaden grief.
'O come and get a message of love,
you have been summoned by the Syal girl, Hir.
'She says for your sake, she has been
driven out of father's and husband's grace.
'She will not live without you long.
how can your heart be so at peace?
'At once assume a fakir's disguise
and reach her, pitch your tent out there.'
Ah, Waris, love is such a bondage
one gladly will contract for life.

Of Ranjha sending a reply to Hir:-

Ranjha goes then to the mullah and begs
him to write this to his love:
'Were I to speak all of my sorrow
both heaven and earth will go up in smoke.

- ‘The while I roll on burning coals,
 you share a husband’s bed and joy.
 ‘What charms you used to put me in thrall!
 woman can indeed pluck the stars from the sky!
 ‘From a herdsman now I turn a fakir;
 that is how you deal with a helpless bloke!
 ‘None other than God can help me now
 retrieve my fortune, Waris, to believe.
 ‘So eager were you to marry him,
 it is good at last you are married now.
 ‘Like luck you have forsaken me,
 are happy in your husband’s home.
 ‘A glamorous wife of the Khera, indeed,
 and worthy niece of Kaido the lame.
 ‘One should either give this life for love
 or wind it up, this faithless show.
 ‘Having brought you up with so much care,
 your parents gave you to Saida for luck,
 ‘I make complaint and challenge you
 to speak as lover to lover should speak.’

Of the poet's remarks:-

As the carrier took this letter to Hir
 at Rangpur, she was drowned in gloom.
 Ah, such is providence that the *koel*
 of Lanka is driven to Delhi’s heat.
 Even so the cowherd’s mynah, Hir,
 is caught by Saida, the Devil’s cat.
 Waris, death and chance can never be evaded;
 who can turn back the hour of doom?

Of Hir's bitter thoughts:-

‘You enjoyed my sweet when I was maid,
 come now to taste my bitter as wife.
 ‘Ah, stroke my locks, black cobra-like,
 and put your neck between their coils.

'I use the chewing bark, my eyes
are wild, too, like a wounded bull's.
'Come in the guise of a yogi, and try
to change if you can the fate of a waif?

And of her letter in reply:-

To the carrier Hir hands over her letter
to take it to Ranjha without delay,
Who should get it read in private by
a mullah, and ponder over its text.
'With folded hands I pray for you
while tears flow ceaseless from my eyes.
'I am indeed on the verge of death,
whom only your coming now can save.
'The Khera durst not approach my bed,
come, lover, to lower me into the grave.
'Come, come to say prayers for my soul,
bring to this tossing corpse some peace.
'By sorrows of love I am dried to straw,
come, lover, put a spark betwixt
'I cry and wail, if you love me at all,
hear me and make the best of your way.
'Take this my ring and bracelet, too,
I hand them to this man for signs.
'And fasten this upon your wrist,
a string I have made of my jet-black hair.
'Now pick up courage, gird up your loins—
Hir too is not a coward here;
'You should go to a perfect fakir who may have
the power to change God's ordinance.'

Of the messenger bringing Hir's letter to Ranjha:-

The carrier brings the letter to Ranjha,
telling him, Hir is near to death.
'You have worked some witchcraft on her mind,
and cheated her with some secret charm.

'Awake whole night, she counts the stars,
 and tosses like a boat in a storm.
 'She has not a moment's sleep, you have broken
 her heart, your love knows little ruth.
 'But she lives by your name alone
 you may or may not appreciate.
 'She has not a wink of sleep in bed,
 the people around keep urging and pressing.
 'She will not love the Khera at all
 for all his coaxing and caressing.
 'She does not let him sleep with her,
 indeed she is much too obdurate.
 'And often she happens to utter your name,
 and then there are quarrels and wry faces.
 'Come as a yogi, live somewhere near
 and then enjoy her warm embraces.'

Of the poet's observations on Ranjha's deflation:-

This was the letter and thus its purport
 in which Hir had described her grief.
 Having had it read, Ranjha was deflated
 and fell to sighing long and cold.
 He said, 'Write also of my vain desire
 to pluck the stars from heaven's fold.'
 The paper of the heart was signed in tears
 though the heart's despair had little relief.

Of Ranjha's reply to Hir:-

The tumult in his heart beyond
 control, Ranjha sent back in reply:
 'First, take beloved, my salaams,
 before, I'm drowned in mid-stream.
 'I offered you my life itself,
 but you severed all bonds without a qualm,
 'I am a fakir ever since the day
 my love was snatched away from me.

'You have joined yourself to the Khera now,
 depriving me of caste and creed,
 'You may be all smiles at your husband, but
 tears in my eyes have never stopped.
 'In vain has gone all my pursuit,
 the raiders have with their booty escaped.
 'Having squeezed out of me the juice of youth,
 you have taken now the trousseau of a bride.'

 'You are one of those who by their charms,
 would make strings into snakes, and catch
 'Stars in their baskets, having reduced
 their lovers to beggars, and engage
 'Elsewhere in wedlock's pleasures while
 the jilted lovers squirt out their bowels;
 'Turn scions of noble blood into serfs
 and find nobility somewhere else.
 'How can mere peasants cope with them
 who proved too clever for a Raja Bhoj?
 'But for the grace of God and his saints
 none can put an end to my disgrace,
 'Who from a Chaudhari's son became
 a herdsman of another house,
 'For a maid who would deceive in love
 and eagerly ride the bridal coach.'

XV

Of Ranjha's devising plans of going to Hir:-

'Prize of my life I have lost,' says Ranjha
 'and to recover it now must I
 'Renounce all caste and creed, assume
 a beggar's robe of ochre hue.
 'Yes, there the grace of God is served
 in platters, as it were, and now

'For me remains only to turn
a mendicant and I must try

'As well this last device; this soft
and supple frame on butter fed,
'May for a little now roll in dust.

An ear-cleft yogi I must find
'For my preceptor, learn from him
some useful magic. I have warmed
'Myself enough on othres' pyres
and now must light my own indeed.

'For long years have I lived with the Syals,
now must I go to another shrine.

'This bosom scorched with severance
needs now to be quenched in love's embrace.

'To cross the river that separates
I'll make a craft of reeds and grass.

'Now a prospect looms of getting back
with luck the treasure lost and gone.'

Love has no place for ego or pride,
abasement is attainment here.

If only one can lose the self
one comes out, Waris, a conqueror.

Of Ranjha preparing to become a fakir:-

Thus fanned, the smouldering fire of love
leaps into flame, and taking the oath
Of turning into an ear-cleft yogi,

Ranjha makes his way to the hermit's cave.
His hair long nourished on butter and cream,
is timed now for a close, clean shave.

Driving out all thought of birth and creed,
he goes to sell himself to the Nath,*

*The title of an order of *yogins*.

To serve a master who should teach
 the art of tripping a woman on the sly.
 Ah, Waris, these lovers are not afraid
 to lose their lives for love, and why?

Of Ranjha's invitation to others:-

He bawls it out from village to village;
 'Come who will be a fakir with me.
 'To beg one's eats, not bother to graze
 a buffaloe nor to milk a cow;
 'No work, no art, no craft, and yet
 to be a king without ado;
 'To bore the ears, rub ash on the body,
 and be preceptor for the world;
 'Neither to hail the birth of a son,
 nor to bewail death, lie all curled
 'In sleep in a mosque without a care,
 a borrower nor a lender be;
 'To insolently ask for alms,
 and yet to be in no-one's debt;
 'To rise from sleep at one's sweet will
 and sleep as long as sleep will let.'

Of Ranjha's pleading with the Nath:-

At the hermitage with folded hands
 begs Ranjha to be initiate.
 'I come across wild wood and marsh,
 for a glimpse of your divinity.
 'Inspired by faith and truth I come,
 admit me to your order, pray.
 'God is the King of all the worlds,
 fakirs His ministers of state.
 'Without you we cannot find the path,
 without milk no pudding can be made.

'You meditate on God alone,
 and from the world aloof you rest.
 'And yet you are its true support
 more than the prince or even the priest.
 'No father or mother or brother have I,
 no kinsman, and no friend or mate.
 'I am lost in the mazes of this world,
 pray cut the shackles off my feet.
 'Where else to go when you seem to me
 so patently a man of God?'

Of the Nath's reply:-

Tender of face and supple of humour,
 so handsome and intelligent;
 So thinks the Nath, his parents seem
 to have indulged him to excess.
 And he says, 'Tell me the truth, my lad,
 what grief brings you to a place like this?
 'What grievous trouble has made you run
 from home with such a grim intent?'

Of Ranjha's philosophic reply:-

'This world is a place of death, O Nath,
 this life is but a wall of sand.
 'Man's term is brief as the shadow of a cloud
 and Azrael tears it bit by bit.
 'Today or tomorrow the show must finish,
 how long can one play the king in it?
 'For all he may drink of the water of life,
 man is reduced to dust in the end.'

Of the Nath's reply:-

'Bracelets and armlets adorn your wrists,
 and rings of gold hang from your ears.

'All cut and trimmed in circles and rings
your hair is bathed in attar scents.

'In shawl and *lungi* your body is wrapped,
with *kohl*-touched eyes that seem to dance.

'Enjoying at the cost of their parents, why
should the likes of you become fakirs?'

Of Ranjha's philosophy again:-

'The things and objects of this world
are as but shadows in a dream.

'One should not dote upon its pomp
and show, the senses lead the soul

'To surfeit, while divine content
will save us all the bellyache.

'Hope and despair and pain and pleasure,
a homespun rug or a silken shawl

Are all alike to one whose soul
is thrilled by fear of God to quake.

'One must discard delights of the flesh
to be worthy of the preceptor's name.'

Of the Yogi's doubts again:-

'You enjoy good things like milk and curds,
and pamper and embellish yourself.

'Hard is indeed the path of penance,
to boast here is to earn disgrace.

'From playing the flute and staring at women,
and milking and caressing cows

'Why do you turn? What has occurred
you are giving up pleasures not by half?'

Of Ranjha's rejoinder:-

'This world is a place of infamy,
discarding it, I'll be a fakir.

'Deceit, iniquity, lechery, theft
and exploitation here abound.

'Only those who curb the body's desires
achieve the state of calm *nirvana*.

'Delight my heart by taking me
into your order, be so kind.

'Grant me salvation, too, as you
have done before to hosts of men.

'This world is full of evil, Waris,
may God protect one's honour here.'

Of the Nath's pronouncement:-

'The way of yoga is Mahadeva's way,
it is a difficult enterprise.

'Most bitter and pungent is its taste
like that of pounded leaves of *neem*.*

'One has to be as dust unto dust,
here power and pride do not become.

'In meditations blank and void
of light, a drizzle only pours.'

Of Ranjha's prayer to the Nath:-

'Pray tell me of the way of yoga;
the longing in my heart is writ

'As on a diamond. The fold of yoga
conceals all vice and lowly sin.

'It cools the fire of greed in the mind,
with waters of renunciation.

'Constant is the faith of a saint alone,
all others with pelf and power may shake.

'I am a servant at your door,
a slave in bondage. I shall take

'My bread for alms from the village folk
and save me the trouble of earning it.'

* An evergreen tree with leaves, bark and berries that taste bitter but are good blood-purifiers.

Of the Nath's warning reply:-

- 'Infinite' is the word to trumpet
and hard the penances indeed,
'The yogis, ascetics of all kinds.
the white-clad or the shaven-pate
'Have to do; to fall into a trance
and hold the breath at the soul's tenth gate;*'

'To set at naught all pleasure over birth
or grief over death, live in the void.
'It is easy to wear the robe of yoga,
but not so easy to practise it.
'To wash and scent the body? No,
besmear it all with ash and soot.
'To live in the wood a celibate life,
cast not at woman a covetous look,
'May she be ever so beautiful,
a hourie of heaven, or fairy.
'Hemp, poppy and lotus, herbs and roots
are to be taken for ecstasy.
'To regard the world as a web of dreams,
and live in it like a blessed bloke.
'To breathe all passion, anger, greed
and pride into pipe, shell and horn;
'To travel for a dip to Jagan Nath,
Godavari, Ganga, shrine to shrine,
'To attend the fair of the Siddhas** in the west,
to have a glimpse of the great Nath's nine.
'Yoga is the way of the desperate,
it is not for you, the peasant-born.

*According to the yogins this body has a tenth metaphysical orifice or opening, apart from the nine physical orifices.

**The Siddhas are yogins who have attained realisation or miracle-working powers. Nine is the conventional number of the great saints of the yogins of Siddha creed.

Of Ranjha's final entreaty:-

'If you mean to grant me yoga at all,
 now do it, make no more delay.
 'Why, will you break the heart of one
 who comes with much hope to your door?
 'If staunch in faith, one seeks for grace,
 will you throw him back into despair?
 'I have no-one to own me now,
 do not deny me grace, I pray.'

Of the Nath's reply:-

'With bridle of prayer and lash of content
 a good man tames the mind. Indeed,
 'It is given to the best of men to be
 fakirs, to give up self and power.
 'To fall in love is to run upon a sword,
 a coward can never be a lover.
 'Only those can practise yoga who are
 not in the least afraid to die.
 'Needed is courage to play with life,
 no antics, crude or clever, will do.
 'Without love and charity and faith,
 no use it is to beg for bread.
 'To practise yoga is to challenge death;
 it has to be written in one's fate.
 'With firm faith must the Guru be served,
 for that is what, first of all, yoga tells.
 'By dint of faith and truth did Dhanna,¹⁶
 the peasant, realise God in stone.
 'Washing off impurities from the heart
 the Guru attunes it to the Divine.
 'In the tabernacle in which, my child,
 you find yourself, God also dwells.
 'One sees God everywhere when one
 has cast out of one's mind all doubt.'

'As the thread runs through the rosary beads
so does the Lord all things ingather.

'In all living things He is life, in hemp
or opium the intoxicant.

'As blood or breath runs in the body
so is He this world's true content.

'His light is mingled in all things
as colour in the henna leaf.'

Ranjha supplicates so earnestly,
and the yogi tries to put him off.

Ah, Waris, he who falls in love
becomes unfit for this world and the other.

Of the poet's observation:-

As the Nath is moved to sympathy,
his old disciples burn with wrath.

They lash at him with whetted tongues
like daggers sharpened on the stone.

'You are going to grant yoga to this boy
who has a face fair as the moon.

'You never were so kind to us
who have worked for you long and hard.

'But those alone are fond of boys
whose wits are ruined by the Lord.

'Nay, those who are bewitched by beauty
can never recognise the truth.'

Of Ranjha's resentment:-

'The slanderer is a sinner to count
among the seven, with the thief,

'The liar and the scandal-monger,
the gossip, the lecher and the ingrate.

'I am not going to wear the robe
of yoga for long, be considerate.

'Bereft of hope here I expect
fulfilment in another life.'

Of the disciples' anger:-

The disciples all together fall
 upon the Nath and beat him numb.
 They rob and ruin the hermitage,
 then everyone takes his separate path,
 Leaving their stoles and caps and bowls,
 and quilts and blankets to the Nath,
 Ah, Waris, if the Lord stint not,
 man has all four sides open to him.

Of Ranjha's reply:-

'These unwise people are envious all
 of me, may not be so my God!
 'Take pity on me, O Nath, mend things
 and save my love from ruin and rack.
 'Wealth, beauty, might do not endure,
 one may not lord it over the weak.
 'Rather those who worsen matters for
 the poor, ought to be checked and chid.
 'The vessel laden with human freight
 may not be allowed to strike the sands.
 'Those whom we ourselves raise to the heights
 may not be dashed next to the ground.
 'Brook no delay in doing good,
 spin not the story round and round.
 'An orphan like Waris may be kindly treated
 who supplicates with folded hands.'

Of the Nath's reply:-

Moved at the youth's resolve to renounce
 the world and at his winsome stance,
 The Nath was angry at his erring
 disciples and rebuked them hard.
 The wise can separate milk from water
 by soaking in it the pith of reed.
 He bade them stop their chatter and hand
 their ear-rings back to him at once.

Back-biting, ill-will, envy, malice
 from time immemorial have been rife.
 But the moth and the lover will dare being burnt
 at the stake, they fear not for their life.

Of the disciples' submission to the Nath's command :-

Cowed down the Guru's disciples gather
 the mud of earth and heaven to knead.
 Invoke the three hundred and sixty* shrines,
 the nine Naths and the fifty-two pirs,**
 To the ten incarnates, celebrates six,
 and sixty-four yogis offer prayers;
 Then they prepare the baptismal water,
 on which their Guru's charms they read.

Whatever resentment, ill-will, malice
 there was in their breasts they now shed off.
 Finding defiance did not avail.

they make an effort to forget:
 Whatever the Guru commands accept,
 throw in their hands, admit defeat;
 They hold their breath, and to all reproaches
 heaped on them, are dumb and deaf.

Whatever they had spoiled in anger,
 from fear of the Guru they seek to repair.
 They strip poor Ranjha of all his clothes
 and trinkets and smear him with ash.
 Ear-rings of wood, for four days dried
 in the sun and the razor whetted fresh
 They bring to the Guru, who now prepares
 to shave off Ranjha's jet-black hair.*

*Again a conventional number in Hindu religious lore.

**According to Muslim myths.

* A part of the initiation rite

Of Balnath initiating Ranjha into yoga:-

Balnath calls Dhido into his presence
 for the initiation rite;
 Who clean-shaved and with ash-rubbed face
 disclaims all rights of birth and blood;
 The boring of ears and shaving of head
 has cleaned his mind of all its clutter,
 With a father's kindness to the son
 whom he has nourished on milk and butter,
 Balnath breathes into his ear his word
 and confides to him the secret of God,
 And then he shaves his eyebrows too,
 puts rings on his ears, rubs ash on his limbs.
 Like wild fire spreads the news all round,
 a yogin of rare appearance comes.
 As the goldsmith does with gold, the Nath
 has broken and reshaped the Jat.

Of the Nath's advice to Ranjha:-

Having given him the usual pious advice,
 Balnath tells Ranjha the ways of *yoga*;
 How to wash and bathe, rub ash on the body,
 and wear the ochro-tinted robe.
 'Meditate on the Name, first thing in the morning,
 carry the horn, the staff and the bowl.
 'Shouting the Word Infinite, go
 to the villages to dispel all ill;
 'Rain blessings all around and fill
 the house from which you beg with hope.
 "And having collected alms, return
 to hold with God your dialogue.'

And of his further advice about women:-

'Regard a woman as mother if old,
 and sister if not past her youth.

'Be she a virgin or a wife,
 the demon of lust you must restrain.
 'And save the clean white sheet of *yoga*
 which I give you, from spot or stain.
 'Waris, in the end faith brings reward
 and we should solely rest in truth.'

Of Ranjha's plaintive reply:-

Says Ranjha, 'Please, draw in the rein
 of tyranny, do not oppress me so.
 'Ill suits me this advice of yours
 make me not swallow this bitter pill.
 'If that is the way of *yoga*, transform
 me into a sexless imbecile.
 'Say all you have to say at once,
 this reiteration tires me sore.
 'If such indeed was your intent,
 a youth like me you had better spare.
 'O give some really good advice
 to a devotee like Waris Shah.'

Of the Nath's rejoinder:-

Says Balnath, 'You have taken on you
 a heavy load by joining my fold.
 'Go shout the Infinite Word and gather
 loaves and crumbs as alms with faith.
 'In *yoga* the ego has to be killed
 as we kill the snake that bars our path.
 'With the mace of faith beat out the dross
 that Satan has mingled with your gold.
 'A woman is like the sugar-cane
 exposed alike to pest and thief.
 'We must not foul ourselves with sin
 feed properly this body's beast.
 'Be humble, celibate and austere,
 and both in mind and body chaste.

'Chop off this troublesome lump of flesh,
O Waris, with a keen-edged knife.'

Of Ranjha's defiant retort :-

'Had I been pure and chaste, O Nath,
should I have brought this on my head?
'Could I refrain from love, need I
have left my home and brothers and peers.
'If I could truly subdue the self,
need I have ventured on this course?
'Should I have grazed the herds of the Syals
if I could live as a hermit in the wood?
'I would not let you shave my head
and pierce my ears, had I abstained.
'And had I known of your impost, I
would not take your rings to burn.
'I would not come to foul this mount
had I known from women you would warn.
'Make whole my ears again or I
invoke the justice of the land.'

Of the Nath's advice again :-

'Eat the bread of honest toil and speak
the truth, give up pretexts and feints.
'If you repent sincerely, I
forgive you all your sins and errors.
'Give up the ways of a vagabond
which have reduced you so to rags.
'Let go the bag of sugar you nibble,
the owners have come to claim it now.
'The buffaloe-calves that broke the yoke
are put by ploughmen to the plough.
'The earthen pots that had gone stale,
are washed and rinsed, made fit for use.
'You have committed theft in the open
and have not had to pay the cost.'

'Play foul with the world no more, give up
all wickedness, come down to dust.

'Your meekness much appealed to me,
the reason I put rings on your ears.

'But, Waris, habits do not change,
even if we are cut to pieces and joints.'

Of Ranjha's disclaimer:-

To be dead alive is difficult,
such penance I can't do a bit.

'A peasant, I can put a rope
to the plough, glass-beads I cannot string.

'I rue the moment my ears were pierced;
such ordeals will I suffer no more.

'I cannot carry the bowl or the horn,
at last I shall go back to the plough.

'Gurus who advise abstention from women
are not to be bound and milked like a cow.

'I cannot be deaf to a woman's voice,
I cannot wash myself so pure.

'All fun and frolic you forbid,
am I to collect only cakes of dung?

'Ah, Waris, who knows on judgement-day
we'll have to taste the bitter or the sweet?

Of Balnath's admonitions:-

'Give up these secret loves. O churl,
the ascetic's is an arduous course.

'To practise *yoga* is to swallow steel,
it leads one into great extremes.

'But the teachings of *yoga* will tame a man
as the nose-string the camel tames.

'For you the gourd, the conch, the beads
and prongs and chains and a coat of hair.

'Lust not for woman, be a true yogi,
what have the fakir and the world to share?'

Waris, for a Jat to be a fakir,
is like an ass should pose as a horse.

Of Ranjha's resigned acceptance:-

'I made indeed a bid for *yoga*,
the day I fell in love with Hir.

'When leaving my home and people and clan,
I turned a prideless buffaloe-herd.

'Then she was a lass with tresses trimmed,
and I a lad with a shade of beard.

'Enjoying to the full the passion of youth
the best of my life I lived with her.

'And she was then, too, under the sway
of the great intoxicant of love.

'Then luck left us, the secret was out,
and she was given to another rogue.

'In distress now I am obliged
to give me up to the rigours of *yoga*.

'Inevitable is the hour of love
it makes one carry the beggar's bowl

'Like the prophet Job. For love of Joseph,
did Jacob not like a woman wail?'

Just so with the tresses of the beloved
one Wais Shah is held a slave.

Of Balnath's prayer to God:-

His eyes shut fast, now Balnath prays
to God, and supplicates His aid.

'Unstinting is Thy court, O Lord,
where man is not ashamed to beg.

'The sky Thy limitless expanse,
Thou art the Lord of heaven and earth.

'This roguish Jat has turned to Thee
giving up all pride of name and birth.

'He seeks not aid of kith and kin,
with faith in Thee he craves for *yoga*.
'The shafts of the eyes of a woman have pierced
his heart, and drained it of its blood.

'Having shaved his head and beard and bored
his ears, the cup of hemp he has drained.
'Like the moth-fly's wing his wit is burnt,
and reason is smoked out of his brain.
'Out of the nest of a home he comes
to far-off lands, flying like the crane.
'Thou art Lord-guardian of the poor,
grant prayer, too, of this mendicant.

'Say, Lord, what is Thy will, this Ranjha,
the new-shorn yogi begs Hir of Thee.'
Recommending him for a tiger-skin,
the saints, all five, too, join his prayer.
The word of heaven descended then:
'We grant him Hir, he may not despair.'
Waris, those who are thus blessed of the Lord,
need fear, indeed, no earthly foe.

Of the Nath bidding Ranjha be of good cheer :-

The Nath then opened his eyes and said,
'Go now, the Lord has granted your prayer.
'The seed you had cast to the wind of heaven,
flowers and bears fruit on earthly soil.
'Hir shall be yours without a doubt,
the ruby is now strung with the pearl.
'Good omens these, go now, my child,
and beat the Kheras, your mortal foes.'
Cheered at this, Ranjha girds up his loins,
with folded hands he stands and prays,
And, Waris, with the blessings of the Nath,
he leaves the mount, filled with good cheer.

XVI

Of Ranjha's departure from the mount:-

Thus reassured, the herdsman hastes,
 as the eagle for the sparrow spars,
 While the old disciples burn with envy
 at the easy success of a novitiate.
 And Dhido chides superiorly
 to warn them from all evil thought.
 'Friends, by good luck is *yoga* achieved,
 the luckless may aspire in vain.
 'Like a gambler I had thrown the dice,
 only heavens' grace has made me win.
 'Even roasted grain will germinate
 when fortune comes to smile on us.
 'When the grace of God comes to their aid,
 the craftless even get across.
 'Ah, Waris, when the Lord is pleased,
 He sets in motion all our good stars.'

Of the people's curiosity about the youthful yogin:-

In the hamlets he set all to wonder
 who could this youthful yogi be !
 'Too tender his ears for rings of wood,
 his limbs too fair to bare like this.'
 But Ranjha says, 'I am a yogi,
 from seven generations, never once
 'Put hand to the plough; grandson I am
 of Dhanvantri,* the healer of pains.
 'Whoever bears a grudge to me
 will leave this world all issueless.
 'But then whoever wins my pleasure,
 will prosper here and multiply.'

*A famous physician of Hindu myth.

Of Ranjha making for Rangpur of the Kheras:-
 Across field and hamlet, he makes for the Khera,
 as a tiger on his usual beat.

His face to the Kaaba,* he utters the name
 of God, his feet show him the way.

Intoxicated he walks and rocks,
 like a beautiful woman on camel-back.

The bowl, the staff, the mortar and pestle
 and hemp and poppy in his sack,

Slowly he creeps towards the Khera
 as a cunning beast walks to his prey.

And he enters at last the bounds of the village
 With God alone for his retreat.

Of Ranjha coming across another herdsman:-

As he crosses the boundary of the Kheras

Ranjha meets one like him, grazing his sheep.

Approaching near, he stares at him
 as a lover would at his beloved.

'From where hail you, O youthful yogi?
 say truly, frankly, openly, please.'

'The Muni Agastha's disciple, I
 am a bird from Lanka across the seas.

'For twelve long years have I sat in prayer
 and another twelve years I will roam

'Around the world to see the Lord's
 creation, wonderful as a dream.

'Who ever comes across me now
 may certainly expect to be saved.'

But a pilferer's face, and a liar's tongue
 and a lover's eye cannot deceive.

Of the shepherd's taunting remarks:-

'You are the herdsman of the Syals,
 give up this cant, you, notorious knave!

*The holy of holies at the Mecca.

'For long years did you graze their herds,
made love to the daughter of the chief in the wood.

'On the Syal's fair name you were a blot,
and ill report spreads far and wide.

'The Khras will kill you, they are so proud
and jealous, haste you away from here.

'Let the faintest runour reach them, they
will set your Takht Hazara on fire.

'Make yourself rare, the Kheras will flay
your skin, and hand you over to the law.

'And there those angels of death, the guard
will beat the life quite out of you.

'And your poor bones will rattle indeed
as those of a sinner in the grave.'

Of Ranjha's reply to the shepherd:-

'To tend the sheep was the prophets' calling,
but the devil's own you seem to be;

'For sheer calumnies you invent
and pour out jests too harsh for the ear.

'Like a dancer you rock and roll your hips
and broadcast lies and curses in the air.

'I am a fakir. God's own black knight,
what mischief can you do to me?

Of the shepherd's rejoinder:-

'You gave up tillage for herdsmanship,
and when your plans misfired, you ran

'To the yogis, The Kheras snatched from you
your maid, leaving you to wail and rant.

'Now listen to me, prick up your ears,
why do you indulge in all this cant?

'Why do you mix onion in sugar
and waste your precious life in vain?'

Of the shepherd's further taunt :-

'Though you have smeared your face with ash,
and roll your eyes in the yogi way.'

'You are none but Ranjha, Hir's jilted lover,
for whom you have put these rings on your ears.

'The Khera has smacked your cheeks all right
by taking away your girl by force.

'And that is a blot on your face, my friend,
you cannot wash off all your life.

'You looked on as your beard was singed
and shaved for all to see and laugh.

'And when no other resource availed,
you went and knocked at Balnath's door.

'Having got your head shorn in the street,
you ask now for the lucky hour.

'O careless fellow, without good deeds
you have lost the precious years of youth.

'Now when you go into their yards
the Kheras will batter your limbs, forsooth.

'Having knowingly quaffed the cup of poison,
you ask for some elixir now.'

Of Ranjha's reply again :-

'Shut up, O rustic, for seven generations
my fathers have been yogi fakirs.

'I'll do with hood and cap alone
and live on alms even in my grave.

'I am afraid of the name of woman,
who is this Hir of whom you speak?

'I am a celibate yogi and come
from the hoary Himalaya's highest peak.

'You have the cheek to call me a peasant,
I feel like kniving you alive.'

Indeed so trembles Ranjha in rage,
his wrath bursts forth in copious tears.

Of the shepherd's stinging rejoinder:-

'She'd take your meal to the wood for you,
 and swing there mid the trees all day.
 'You played the flute to which they danced,
 she and her friends, those mischievous fays.
 'Such a potion had she drunk that ever
 infatuation shone in her eyes.
 'The milk of pregnant buffaloes and
 embraces of a beautiful maid!
 'And throwing your arms around her neck
 to kiss and pet her like your bride!
 'That was your luck! But then against
 her will, protesting, she was pushed
 'Into the bridal coach, you were left
 an empty drawer out of a chest.
 'Like a plaything you were left on the floor,
 the bridegroom taking the player away.

'As woman grown old will visit the Mecca
 and wave the fan over sainted graves,
 'And thief grown old goes into the mosque,
 so have you joined the beggars' band.
 'Run off, O fornicator, else
 you will be caught and killed or maimed.
 'This trickery will avail you not;
 no doubt, you are the best of knaves.'

Of Ranjha's break-down:-

'You shepherds are known for your cuteness like
 Lukman, the healer, as the légend goes.
 'Fate brings me to this alien land
 to win Hir, or my head shall roll.
 'My state is utterly desparate.
 and the prospect is not bright at all.
 'Do not reveal my secret, please,
 and I shall do as you advise.

'A secret should be safe with a man
 like you who'll keep it fast and tight,
 'Even though life's lock be broken, not spurt
 it out like the crow his morsel of meat.'

Of the shepherds's further taunts:-

'O you have disgraced the name of a lover,
 you could not deal as a man with a maid.
 'Why did you presume to love that sparrow
 if you could not save her from the kite?
 'You let her be taken away by the Khera,
 where went your pride of a lover and a Jat?
 'Why could you not quietly elope with her,
 not letting even the wind to know?
 'You should have died at the door of the Syals
 before your beauty was snatched from you.
 'O coward, losing your troth to the Khera,
 you got your beard singed in a crowd.'

Of Ranjha repeating his request:-

Pleads Ranjha, 'Your taunts have set my heart
 to sink, O friend, now this is enough.
 'These tryrants have robbed me of my right,
 my curses will certainly root them out.
 'Even should he see a thief break into
 a house, a man will keep it tight.
 'You must not speak of it in the village,
 for that will wholly spoil my game.
 'Let the doors of the Kheras fly open to me,
 pray that I should not miss my aim.
 'An elephant may escape from the bullet.
 one cannot ever escape from love.'

Of the shepherd giving encouragement to Ranjha:-

'I said it all in fun, O friend,
 go and by all means try you luck.

'Let it not singe or scorch your heart,
 for love is such a leaping flame,
 'Go meet the wild looks of your love,
 for whom you have earned in the world much blame.
 'A lover's chance is a panther's leap,
 a robber's hazard, or a swindler's trick.
 'O flee with her to the ends of the world,
 this Saida is no kin to me.
 'You have spent a life in grazing their cows
 yet your reward is beggarly.'

Of the poet's observations:-

The earth is never content without rain,
 so woman ever yearns for the lover's embrace.
 Nor will the lover ever turn from his love,
 though it may bring him nothing but ill.
 He may change his guise in a difficult hour,
 but danger will never make him quail.
 Only once in a while on thief and lover
 may thundering clouds ever shower their grace.

XVII

Of Ranjha's entry in the village of the Kheras:-

Having given the shepherd the vow of faith,
 Ranjha enters the village, his soul in a rage.
 Asks, 'Which is this village and who is the chief,
 since when has it existed here?
 Among maids drawing water from the well,
 rollicking and frolicking there like deer,
 Perhaps there is one who has guessed his secret
 but keeps it in her bosom's cage.

'This village is Rangpur of the Kheras,
 the fair-faced maid tells him with a pat,
 At which he laughs with open glee,
 drinks a pail of water and grinds some hemp.

'O eater of puddings, who is the chief?
 Is he liberal or stingy, what is his stamp?'
 'Aju is the chief, and his son is Saida,
 who has usurped one Ranjha's right.'

As the peasant-girl gave him these names,
 his heart was filled with joyful hope.
 Taking up his horn and skull-shaped bowl,
 he girds up his loins as if to dance.
 He shouts and he rocks, he weeps and he laughs,
 he throws himself into a trance.
 He is happy, indeed, like a peasant when
 rain pours upon his thirsting crop.

Of Ranjha's roaming in the village in a yogin's guise:-

'Come, yogi, how do you find this land?'
 young men in public places enquire.
 He rocks and chatters as in a trance,
 the cleft-eared lover has nothing to say.
 What praise might one bestow on the Kheras
 whose maidens are so bright and gay,
 With eyes as keen as flint and steel
 to set the hearts of lovers afire?

They challenge gallants by their looks,
 they hardly can conceal their charms.
 They seem to have emptied grocery stores
 of kohl and bark and henna and oils.
 Now these purveyors of youth have found
 in Ranjha a customer of their wiles.
 Their faces look all innocent
 and yet their eyes are full of harms.

They cluster round the yogi like
 snakes from the basket leaping out.
 He shuts his eyes as in a dream
 and visions of their love enjoys.

With the girls round him he like a king
 in the howdah of an elephant sways.
 But men who are fond of women, Waris,
 shall have from sorrow no respite.

Of the village girls' comments:-

Surprised at the looks and ways of the yogi,
 the village girls go home in glee.

'O mother, a yogi has come to our village
 with rings of wood stuck in his ears.

'He does not curse or imprecate
 if he does not get what he desires.

'Skull-bowl in hand, crook on his shoulder,
 a strange-like stole thrown over his back,

'He shouts and groans like one in a frenzy
 and his hair is falling about his neck.

'Nor shaven clean nor matted hair,
 of melancholy no devotee.

'His love-laden eyes are full of shine,
 jet black, but flashing bright and deep,

'Full of intoxication, wild
 and keen like daggers whetted fresh.

Sometimes he throws the soothsayer's dice,
 or draws mysterious lines in ash.

'Sometimes he stands and blows the horn
 and then he blows the conch and the pipe.

'He calls on God all hours of the day,
 and women give him alms with cheers.

'His eyebrows arch like he were drunk,
 he wears on his neck strange strings of beads.

'His handsome face looks under his locks
 like the moon under dark and thick-layered clouds.

'Without giving or accepting blame,
 his eyes sometimes shed copious tears.

'He seems to have met some perfect saint
who cleft his ears for rings of wood.

'He is a disciple of Bal Nath,
lashed into a frenzy by the love of God.

Of a girl bringing the news to Hir:-

A girl of the village brings news to Hir,

'A strange kind of a yogi is there.

'Strange rings of wood he wears on his ears,
and a stranger necklace of some bone.

'Looks searchingly into people's yards
as if he had lost a precious stone.

'He sings and cries and cries and sings,
in the village he has raised a roar.

'He looks like a scion of a royal house
with a beauty even greater than yours, by God.

'He stares at wives, he stares at maids,
no fair face seems to tempt him quite.

'Into girls at the spinning wheels he walks
and looks all eerily about.

'Some say he has suffered the blows of love
and that has made him shave his head.

'He has, indeed, for the love of a fair
changed gold ear-rings for those of wood.

'Some say he is Ranjha of Takht Hazara,
who is now a disciple of some Nath.

'He is but a pilferer of beauty, say some,
who roams about in a yogi's disguise.'

Waris, this fakir has to be watched,
he is here on some grand enterprise.

Of Hir's stricken wail:-

'You talk mysteriously, O sister,
I faint, I fail, help me, forsooth.

'Oh, as you speak of it, I sink
into the earth where I have stood,

'With cracking nerves and wandering wits,
collapsing lungs and freezing blood.

'How does he live, with those cleft ears?
to think brings me to the brink of death.

'I hardly can restrain my tears,
I sink down with my fists clenched tight.

'To hear you speak of his darkening lip
with a shade of hair, my life unrolls.

'I die for the sight of that rapt one
whose name revolves with spinning wheels.

'To what land does he belong, what fair's
displeasure has thus cast him out?

'Drinking of poppy, hemlock, hemp,
why should he purchase death withal?

'Without father or mother or brother or sister,
whoever is there to take his part ?

'He may collapse from hunger on the road
with no-one near to lend support.

'I am lost indeed to hear of his plight
like someone sinking in a deep whirlpool.

'Why should not people fear the wrath
of God and the fate written on their brows?

'The mother whose son has thus besmeared
his face, must go down under the blow.

'How could the wife whose love has got
his ears torn thus, contain her woe?

'Waris wanders abroad immersed in sorrow,
but why should people round him close?

'O God forbid it be not so,
yet if it is Ranjha, I am undone.

'Already I am being burnt in fire
and he comes to stir the smouldering stove.

'Having lost his woman and torn his ears,
what has he gained indeed from love?

'He suffers all this for my sake,
 has licked hot irons with his tongue?
 'I should shower myself upon my sweet,
 who has suffered for me thus all along.
 'A cowherd, then a mendicant,
 all dignity he has cast away!
 Silently under the veil she weeps,
 but her tears would fill a pitcher of clay.
 Ah, Waris, from this trade of love,
 for all its trials, there is no gain.

Of Hir's prayer to the girls:-

'Beguile him, bring him here somehow,
 and let us hear whatever he says.
 'With ash-smear'd face he roams abroad,
 what is his name and place and clan?
 'Of what estate is he the squire,
 And what other title does he own?
 'Is he from Rohi, Majha, or Tappa,*
 from the land of the Ravi, the Chanab, or the Beas?
 'Why does he thus disgrace himself
 by walking into people's yards
 'Mid spinning wheels? What is he agter?
 What secret in his heart he guards?

Of the girls going to bring the yogi to Hir:-

'Let us make a plan to bring him here.'
 and so the girls collect and go
 To the yogi, and after salutations
 they ask what they could do for him.
 'Grace has descended on this land,
 please with your presence bless Hir's home.'
 'I have yet to go to the village to beg
 for alms, to beg for people's crumbs.

*Names of different parts of the Panjab.

'And then I am bound for the fair of Kumbh.*

I cannot meet the wishes of dames.

'You've had your fill before coming here
and like dove-pigeons now can coo.'

'Come down, O yogi, to our world
and look a little while at its show.

'Pay a visit to the house of Aju,
and some attention, too, to Hir.

'And there is in that house another,
Sahiti, the daughter equally fair.

'Come, come to the house of the village chief,
and be not proud of sainthood so.'

Of Ranjha's reply:-

'I am a fakir from seven generations,
have never trodden the household path.

'I live on leaf and root in the wood,
most happy am I in such exile.

'A friend of thicket and bush am I,
while you are fair and beautiful.

'There is no amusement here for me,
I love to dwell in wood and moor.

'Wolf, tiger, panther, jackal, deer
to me are shapes familiar.

'And I know of the different kinds of monk,
vairagi, yogi, and tirtha and nath.'

Of the poet's observations:-

Came more young women, wives and maids,
and fell into raptures at the sight

Of Ranjha, and with mouths agape,
with wonder in their eyes they stood.

About who should speak to the yogi first
they mooted among themselves like mad.

*Sacred fair held at Prayag on the Ganges once in twelve years.

And standing in the mid-day sun,
went red with heat, got wet with sweat.

Of the girls' comments on Ranjha's looks:-

'O dear, look at the yogi's face,
he seems indeed at one with God,
'In whom these wanderers put their trust,
without house and home, or power and pelf.
'To turn this golden body to dust
and roll in mud to kill the self!
'These men will shy at nothing, they dab
their limbs with ash, to look so odd.
'Look at this gallant, fair as a rose,
with cultured looks like those of a prince.
'In every way he is a match for us
and just as colourful and young.
'Let us ask him from what land he comes
and to what clan he may belong.
'Indeed, it looks he is none else
than he for whom Hir grieves and pines.'

Of the girls' address to the yogi:-

'O listen, smart and youthfull yogi
of the frenzied looks and the rapt face.
'Which is the land you call your home?
Who shaved your head, and tore your ears,
And put the bowl and horn in your hands
and on your back this coat of hairs?
'There is an inward smile on your lips
and eyes which you shut at the least excuse.
'What bleak misfortune has befallen
to make you roam in alien lands?
'Perhaps a housewife made a taunt
that burnt you at the core of your being,
'For which you lost your caste and creed
and turned a yogi while yet so young.

'You are discussed mid spinning wheels,
 'mid handmills grinding corn and minds.
 'O tell us quick, we are losing patience,
 the sun is roasting us alive.
 'Ah, Waris, do not be so proud,
 though you are rich with all Hir's love.'

Of Ranjha's reply:-

Says Ranjha, 'Do not press; the snake,
 the tiger and the monk belong nowhere.
 'My breath's my native place, and yoga
 my caste, I claim no kith or kin,
 'He who thinks of native land or caste,
 is of this world, not a godly man.
 'Knowing we are all to mingle with dust
 in the end, no comfort I desire.
 'Do not annoy, O eaters of puddings,
 we do not wield the sword of wrath.
 'But if we return to our element,
 we fakirs are jinns with matted hair.
 'Why should we go to peoples houses?
 To wet their women? We do not care.
 'At night we shall hang down from a tree,
 with fire to warm us from beneath.'

Of the girls' rejoinder:-

'We thought you were a yogi and
 a touch of Balnath seemed to flaunt:
 'And thus we came to speak to you.
 It seems you cannot appreciate
 'Our humble ways, but roll your eyes
 in wrath that may be counterfeit.
 'We beg you to visit the house of the chief,
 and you find this favour hard to grant.'

Of Ranjha's retort :-

'How have your masters left you alone,
 sweet as the apples of Kashmir?

'God-mothers of the Devil himself,
 you'll tempt the angels of Paradise.
 'You will deceive even men of God,
 like the great Sheikh Saadi of Shiraz.*
 'Your fairy forms at the spinning-wheels
 like quivers full of arrows are.
 'You are utter strangers to my grief;
 for God's sake, go, leave me alone.
 'While you are here among your people,
 I am a beggar on alien soil.
 'You are each wiser than the rest,
 I am a simpleton, a fool.
 'I have thrown off the yoke of the world,
 you come to harness me again.
 'You are throwing stones into my water,
 beware, I am a deserted well,
 'And ghosts may rise up from my bottom,
 and possess you, body and soul.'

XVIII

Of Ranjha going to the village for alms:-

Taking up the bowl, Ranjha goes to the village
 and blows his horn from door to door.
 Some give him flour, some give him loaves,
 and some bring platters filled with rice,
 Some note his oddness as a yogi
 and put dark frowns upon their brows,
 Some call him a robber and a cad,
 and on his head pour all their ire.
 With folded hands some beg for blessings,
 saying they depend so much on saints.

*The famous poet of Iran who lived in the twelfth century.

While some remark he drunkenly swaggers
 and stares at them with a greedy eye.
 Some even say he is a man of frenzy
 who plays the flute so frantically.
 And some call him a seducer or
 a thief or a spy with secret haunts.

He quarrels and curses, and he shouts
 or jeers at people to frighten them;
 Takes only wheaten flour or butter
 or rice, he takes no crumbs or bones.
 Ah, Waris, this youth of the Ranjha clan
 is a moon that in the daytime shines,
 And in every house to which he goes
 women bless themselves for seeing him.

Of Ranjha's remarks about the village:-

'How desolate is this village of the Kheras
 where no girls sing to the spinning-wheels.
 'I feel so sick at heart over this
 I want to fly away from here.
 'None sings the song of the sweeper-maid,
 of the tramp, the rider of the white mare.
 'No girls to dance and frisk and leap
 and make the earth shake under their heels.'

Of the girls' rejoinder:-

'Come, yogi, we shall show you where
 young women sing to the spinning-wheels.'
 They took him to a house in the village
 where women had come together to spin.
 He saw them dance in reckless frenzy
 or play the sweeper-maid with a grin,
 Or other parts in which they seemed
 to emulate professionals.

Some look into Ranjha's eyes from near,
 and much admire his handsome face,

Bewitched by his looks they seem to fall
 into his snare like forest-deer.
 'Perhaps he has loved one in her teens
 whose fickleness he could not bear,'
 One says and wipes his face with her shawl
 with all her youthful tenderness.

Another approaches cheek to jowl,
 and asks what is his heart's desire.
 One cuddles to him and teases him much,
 stripping him of his stole and staff.
 On asking he is told that she
 is Sahiti, daughter of Aju, the chief,
 And sister of the gallant Khera,
 and sister-in-law to the beautiful Hir.

Of Ranjha's rebuking Sahiti:-

'She has been brought up as a thief,
 and swaggers like drunk, 'mid spinning-wheels.
 'And rather than kiss my stole of a yogi
 she is so insolent to me.
 'She removes my stole and strikes at me
 as if I were a cow astray.
 'She dances pertly like a mare,
 I think she neither spins nor coils.
 'Drunk with the wine of youthfulness,
 she overturns dishes and smashes plates.
 'I feel like tearing her into shreds;
 for a tyrant she has mushroom roots.'

Of Sahiti's retort:-

Sahiti retorts, 'What insolence!
 may be because you are of my age.
 'But dare you try conclusions with me,
 I certainly will put you wise.
 'I'll cut you into joints and quarters,
 and strip you of your false disguise.

'You may impose on the ignorant,
to me you are no kind of sage.

'If you enter my yard, I shall sure pull out
your hair for which you may thank the Lord,

'I'll tether and beat you like an ass,
and make you rue your evil fate.'

And ere she slinks away, she adds,

'When you come for alms, I'll give you a treat
'To remind you of the joys of love
from which you have been long debarred.'

Of Ranjha's equally pert reply:-

'Portentous like a tiger or a snake,
you'll eat man's flesh and suck his blood.

'Why should you thus contend with me?

I'll bless your parents, leave me alone.

'Pray stab no more the stricken hart,

O golden fairy, precious swan.

'I cannot give what you desire;

it is a husband's love you need.

'You leave the spinning-wheel to mock
at me, you need being caught and pressed.

'Don't be so hostile to a fakir,

if you do not want your love to be crossed.'

Of Ranjha entering a peasant's house:-

He wanders into a peasant's house
to where the peasant is milking a cow.

He blows the horn, revolves the wheel,*

roars like a cloud and pushes in.

Like a rampant bull he lows and rocks

and makes a mighty thunderous din.

As the mahout at the elephant,

he shouts aloud to make a row.

*An article of worship with yogins which is more popular among Tibetans.

Of the peasant's angry reaction:-

Taking fright the cow kicks at the pot
 and spills the milk and breaks her rope.
 'Look at this scout of a raiding host,'
 the peasant shouts to his wife in ire:
 'This starving beggar of people's crumbs,
 what foulness has he brought in here!
 'His eyes of a cad belie his guise
 of a yogi, for milk he craves like dope.'
 The yogi breathing fire and fury,
 weighs in his hand the bowl to throw.
 The peasant's wife fears in her heart,
 a fight cannot be averted now.

Of the peasant's wife and the yogi:-

The peasant's wife crying over spilt milk,
 tears off the veil of gentle repute,
 Rails at the yogi, and all his fathers;
 she would hang on a tree all his kith and kin.
 He gave her a kick on the buttocks and broke
 her teeth with a box beneath her chin.
 Like a raft the woman fell on the ground,
 or thief caught after hot pursuit.

Of the peasant's lament:-

His wife thus humbled, the peasant bawls,
 'The beast has hurled the fairy down.
 'Having beaten to death my precious wife,
 he has run away into the street.
 'O help me, people,' he wails and cries,
 he has ruined my home, this cad, this lout.
 'The devil has broken into the village
 like a jinn grown fat on backyard dirt.'
 Young men at this take up their cudgels
 as if to avenge a national hurt,
 They gather as clouds in the evening gather
 or smokes coil up from hearths at dawn.

Of the people collecting and the yogi's escape:-

At summons from their leading men,
 the peasants swarm up from all sides.
 And the yogi's heart misgives to think
 how they might beat him into pulp.
 And none to take any pity on him
 or come to his rescue or help.
 All quietly he slips away,
 taking soft but swift strides;

Like cattle-thief should cover his tracks
 from owners hotly giving him chase.
 Or kite flying off his perch to swoop
 on a dove, being itself safe from harm.
 Look, for this man of God to punish
 poor peasants for no, sin or crime!
 But the women of the village are shown the way,
 though one alone has suffered disgrace.

Of Ranjha's round of the village homes:-

The houses were enclosures of
 mud walls, with wickets or turnpikes;
 Where earthen pots on wooden frames
 lay or were hung on pegs in walls;
 With small girls sitting guard at the gates
 or women at the spinning-wheels.
 Hanging from the roofs could be seen plough-ropes,
 and blinds for oxen and goad-sticks.

In some homes maidens ground the corn,
 who had to drudge like galley-slaves.
 Elsewhere a fair one on a couch
 lazed queen-like after a night of pleasure.
 At places the house-wives threatened him
 with curses and oaths in liberal measure.
 Some gave him alms with a smile, while others
 dismissed him as the worst of knaves.

Having thus collected alms from the village,
 so much his bowl could hardly hold,
 He came to Aju's yard and cast
 a glance there like the rising moon's,
 When Sahiti, seeing him, said, 'O look,
 Hir, at this rogue with shaven groins.
 'He seems to have newly bored his ears,
 for reason of a curse that is never so old.

XIX

Of Ranjha entering Hir's courtyard:-

He wanders into the house of Aju,
 as a hungry hawk in search of prey.
 He is twice himself with joy, like he
 were appointed governor of Lahore.
 He pushes forth into the house
 like robber breaking open a door.
 He gives a shout and blows the conch
 and asks for alms with drunken sway.
 'Are you all right now, O bride of the Khera?'
 with tongue in cheek he enquires of Hir,
 This is the moment of noise and fury,
 Waris, as when oil is poured on fire.

Of Sahiti's questioning:-

'Tell me the truth, O yogi, it seems
 your heart is searching for something here.
 'As soon as you entered you began
 to prick with thorns a tender heart,
 'Like one who wanders into a palace.
 to pluck its roses, with no art.
 'A camel without a leading-string
 you'll fall and break your neck, I fear.'

Of Ranjha's retort:-

'Young woman, do not be a sinner,
 for which you later must repent.

'With pendants, rings, and bangles and bracelets
you strut like a peacock, vain and proud.

'Do not you start a quarrel now,
unpleasant things may get abroad.

'What old grudge do you bear, indeed,
to Waris Shah, a mendicant?'

Of Sahiti's rejoinder :-

'You broke our party yesterday,
and modestly we did disperse.

'Today you break into us again.
and the quarrel of yesterday renew.

'Like the ass that fell among naughty boys,
a curse seems to be driving you.

'What providence has sent you here
today for chastisement or worse?'

Of Ranjha showering more curses on Sahiti :-

'O trifier maid, O fury, O witch,
no more now of this coquetry.

'Why are you returning good for ill?
whom do you hope thus to ensnare?

'I asked for bread to appease my hunger,
you offer me a quarrelsome fare.

'You seem to be such a baiter of men,
waylaying innocent passersby.

'You revive the quarrels of yesterday
like ploughing a fresh-sprouted field.

'I came for alms to a noble house,
but find dishonour in wait for me.

'What is it you want that you should show
to a stranger like me such enmity?

'You bar the way of the poor fakir,
like a horned cow with fury filled.'

'Even as a maid you are well-known,
a heifer for approaching bulls.

'Give up this baiting of holy men
for the sake of your so beautiful eyes.

'If set on fishing, fish in a river,
and not in a puddle of urine, please.

'Do not provoke a mendicant,
do not break open a box of ills.'

Of Sahiti's appeal to women gathered there:-

'Look, sisters, at this dirt of a yogi,
this ram broke loose out of his fold.

'A rogue, a cad, a picker of quarrels,
from where could he have come, indeed?

'He does not look at all a stranger,
he knows of Hir, of me, of dad.

'He barks and then he eats his word,
in the same breath blows he hot and cold.

'I'll break his bowl, tear off his stole,
his matted hair I will pull out.

'I can this minute dishonour him,
no village alderman is he.

'A mimic, vagabond dancer or
scavenger of a caravan-serai.

'I try my best to put him off,
but he is spoiling for a fight.

Of Ranjha's retort:-

'You go at me with sword and shield,
O shaven-head, ill-omened bird.

'Deceitful, faithless, warlike witch,
you will hardly give the devil a chance.

'First of a host, on mischief bent,
you will girdle even the devil's loins.

'Were I to quarrel with peasants like you,
in vain would I have toiled so hard.

Of Sahiti's denunciation of Ranjha:-

'He is discussed at handmill and
at baking oven and cooking hearth.

'Like small-town cads he is low and mean,
 contentious, quarrelsome, unfair;
 'A vagabond, dishonest rogue,
 unyielding as an iron bar.
 'A thug of Majha, evil, wicked
 and restless like the hand of a flirt.
 'I can detect in him indeed,
 a peasant, playing a yogi's part;
 'One who will ruin an honoured house,
 a bankrupt squire, proud only of birth.'

Of the women's advice to Sahiti:-

Women of the neighbourhood protest,
 'Dear girl, you ought to show some tact.
 'This creature of the wood is hardly worth
 all the trouble you seem to take.
 'You should not waste your breath on him,
 may he be never so gentle and meek.
 'One should not set oneself against
 such people with no self-respect.
 'They only know to count their beads
 they know no argument at all.
 'Devoid of house and home, they go
 the coldest winter months undrest;
 'And wear the mask of sadness, yet
 would go abegging for a feast.
 Ah, Waris, the true cause is but youth
 of which both man and maid are full.

Of more invective by Sahiti:-

'He sighs to look into Hir's eyes,
 and shuts his own like he were sick.
 'He has no care for her repute,
 as a wicked husband defames his wife.
 'He is full of cant like a sinful woman,
 who'd bargain over a lover's life;
 'Ever ready for a row, he'd teach and preach
 evil like the mullah in a mosque.

'He'd pinch you in your side but cry
 if he is paid in similar coin.
 'He is either on a clear design,
 or just he is the devil's tool.
 'No ginn nor spirit, nor bear nor monkey.
 this roguish ascetic is no fool.'
 Ah, Waris, the cord of love is strange
 and stranger is its lilt and tune.

Of Ranjha's reply:-

'It is a universal truth,
 there is no grace like the grace of God.
 'No art like lying, no magic like Kamarup's,
 no bow like one made in Lahore.
 'And no disgrace like jilted love,
 no scandal like in Dipalpur.*
 'There is nothing to match the beauty of Joseph,
 the Chinese profile, Khutan's** scent.
 'Strongholds of steel I could reduce,
 on what strength are you adamant?
 'Such charm is there in Waris's verse,
 his every word is a magic rod.
 'There is no sage like me to whom
 the whole world is an open book.
 'No turban like that of Bijwara,**
 no tissue like that of Kasur.⊙
 'There is no light like that of the sun,
 no country beautiful as Kashmir.
 'The beloved is fairest by one's side,
 great is the charm of a distant drum.

*A town in Montgomery district, an important centre of administration in Mughal and Turkish times.

**in China

***Places in the Panjab

⊙ Of. above

'No face has half the grace of a hourie
no sound as dreadful as of doom.

'As Kaaba is the holiest place,
this Saida has the best of luck.

'There is no woman as evil as Sahiti,
no place so hot as the baker's oven.

'No smell so foul as that of *hing*
no flavour so sweet as that of *kachur*.*

'There is nothing so good as a peaceful life.
and nothing so bad as strife and war.

'None is so great a sinner as Waris
and nothing so cruel as the frown of heaven.'

Of Sahiti's questions:-

'Tell me what is the genesis
of *yoga*, of *sannyasa*, of *vairaga*?

'From where the bowl, the beads, the conch,
and the music of *yoga* comes forth from where?

'What reason is there for ash and cloth,
and origin too of the worship of fire?

'Who taught the peasant to meditate,
how many are the paths of *yoga*?'

Of Ranjha's answers:-

'From Mahadeva starts the path of *yoga*
and from Devadatta comes forth *sannyasa*.

'From Ramananda has come *vairaga*,
and from Rishi Vashishta *nirbana*.

'The juggler's Guru is Shah Madar,
the weaver's Kabir¹⁷ and Syed Jalal.¹⁸

'Khizr is the guardian-saint of sailors,
and the gamblers' patron-saint is Nal.¹⁹

'Kama** is the patron-lord of lovers,
and hunger of the woe-begone.

*A medicinal plant.

**The Hindu god of love.

'And as Satan is the Guru of the actors,
the Guru of the peasant is selfishness.'

Of the poet's observations:-

To back out of one's word of troth,
to run from the battle is cravenness.
'God's will and providence do not fail,
the Kaaba and the pole-star do not budge.
A woman at bay, a fakir in fury
will hurl defiance at the judge.
A peasant will not take warning,
a fool will seldom feel remorse.

The unjust ruler is a fruitless tree,
a wife is a bitch if she is disloyal.
A dancer is barren if she is not coy,
a man is an ass if he has no brains.
A yogi without meditation and prayer,
and youth without money has no chance.
It may not be accepted though,
yet Waris Shah's penance is not small.

Without courage man, without beauty woman
are insipid like food without salt.
Moustache without shame and beard without valour,
an unpaid army are no good.
Minister without wisdom and priest without prayer,
and banker without accounts are dud.
Waris, woman, fakir, and sword, and horse
are friends of no-one in default.

Of Ranjha's fling at women:-

'Friends of good actions ever are men,
women are to goodness ever hostile.
'Men set the standard, women are
false and deceptive weights and measures.
'Men are ships carrying freights of virtue

while women are boats with vicious treasures,
 'They'll ruin the good name of their fathers,
 and strip their brothers of honour and weal.'
 'Choppers of butchers they are and cut
 at bone and flesh, whether right or wrong.
 'They'll shave the lover's beard with kisses
 like a foolish barber's sharpened razor.
 'A lover must not divulge his secret,
 for the honour of love he may lose his head.
 'At what are you breathing with such fury?
 what rare achievement have you made?
 'You take the field against a fakir,
 from which you must come out a loser.
 'I can only throw in your face, young lady,
 all my good qualities in a throng.'

Of Sahiti's stinging rejoinder:-

'You cannot tread the path of *yoga*,
 none is scared of your matted hair,
 'Like the moustache of a shameless fellow
 wet with rice-water, or river reeds.
 'They cannot produce a Tansen's* music,
 though there be rebeck-players in crowds.
 'Your eyes are blinded by love, I know,
 grieved by the absence of a fair.
 'Your shaven face besmeared with ash,
 I know the nature of your itch.
 'Your tongue sounds like the creaking shoes
 of a dandy in a village fair.
 'To use foul speech with vagabonds
 becomes not a lady, to be sure.
 'What knows a scavenger of the sanctity of the Kaaba?
 He knows about the foul-water ditch.

*A renowned, perhaps, legendary, musician of the Emperor Akbar's time.

'You know not the ways of hermithood,
you have all the wisdom of a cattle-herd.

'With ash-smeared haunches you pursue
your quarry like a butcher's hound.

'Those who like asses deliver in the wood
know not the worth of a midwife's hand.

'Well-fed like a donkey, indeed, you go
sniffing at women and sneezing hard.

'You have not met a father yet,
that is why you snatch at maiden's breasts.

'You fix the tails of cows to buffaloes
and the shoes of buffaloes fix to cows.

I am amused at your clever ways,
your pleasantries and witty saws.

'But who will come to your rescue when
you are given a thrashing with poles and posts?

'Have you not heard the tales of lovers,
in river drowned, in desert dead?

'What do cowherds like you know of love,
who know only of bread and milk?

'What ginns like you have to do with fairies,
at killing a brother you will not balk?

'Waris, what do they know of son-in-law
who have no daughters of their blood?'

Of the yogi's challenge:-

'I am not, O Sahiti, scared at all,
though you look with eyes as sharp as steel.

'Charge elephants not at picture forts
nor roaches ever submit to flies.

'No lions are ever by jackals killed,
nor cattle die at the wishing of crows.

'In battle there are only two
blows and a half, and that is all:

'One is to kill, the second to be killed
and the half to flee in utter defeat.

'Of courage faint, though stout of thighs,
 such youthful soldiers are no use.
 'They might be forced to go into battle
 but strike their own from cowardice.
 'Yoga is not killed by empty jests,
 nor can rain set a stone to rot.
 'They'll burn their clothes or get them blacked,
 to gossip with blacksmiths who sit.
 'Charity exhausts not riches
 and sparrows do not empty bins;
 'While as you sow so shall you reap,
 that is the law of providence.
 'A quarrelsome woman is subdued
 by yogis with herbs and potions sweet.'

Of Sahiti's retort:-

'Who is scared of your rosaries,
 or frightened by your mask of a Bhil?*'

'Throwing off your bowl, you'll have to run
 as a thief runs from a challenge quick;
 'Or writhe here with a bandaged head
 as a serpent under the blow of a stick.
 'You will be driven out of this village.
 as heresy by the believer's call.
 'To the core of your being you'll tremble to see
 as the thief's heart trembles at a noise.
 'Your head like a serpent's itches for blows,
 beware you of a woman's wiles!
 'To beat you I am most reluctant
 as from the leap the foot recoils.
 'Your share here seems to have been finished,
 at the point of the lance you seek for poise.'

Of the yogi's challenge:-

'What parleys have you begun? We yogis
 regard you women as sugar-plums,

*A jungle tribe of Central India.

'To put in the mouth and chew and swallow,
with whom we do not care to be wise.
'Men filter hemlock, hemp and sherbet,
and we screen men in our eyes.
'While others enjoy themselves with women
awake, we ravish them in our dreams.'

Of Sahiti's reply:-

'Man is of little use without woman,
to whom you are so inimical.
'You could not have been born without woman,
nor anyone else in the world, indeed.
'Born of a woman was Prophet Mohammad
for whose sake was the universe made.
'Lord God made man to couple with woman
and woman with man and with no guile.'

Of the yogi's arguments:-

'O Sahiti, hear, this world is all
a manifestation divine.
'By His creative will He made
these various shapes and entities.
'Men pass their lives in ignorance,
in searching, in austerities.
'While some would die of shame, indeed,
some wallow in ignominy.
'Some are so quiet, sad and rapt,
depending all on destiny.
'Some strip themselves of everything,
and others love to look so fine.
'Some are with twofold wisdom blessed
and find new ways of livelihood.
'One may in silence find a treasure,
another may be loud in wail.
'One quite unskilled may win the game,
another lose for all his skill.

'Buy something to preserve and store,
ah, Waris, while the going is good.'

Of Sahiti's rejoinder:-

'Now, listen, O yogi,' Sahiti declaims,
 'do not try to force your wisdom on me.
'I am not certain in my mind
 that you will go without getting blows.
'If you quarrel with women, you ought to know
 that you will only earn disgrace.
'You cannot long keep up this mask,
 I warn you with all courtesy.

'If the Kheras come to know, they will
 pull out these matted locks of yours.
'Who will then lend support to you,
 to whom will you cry out your grief?
'You will not believe in what I say,
 but then you are playing with your life.
'When we are destined to mix in dust,
 it is vain to indulge in hopes and fears.'

Of the poet's general observations:-

Rain in June's heat, and wind in winter,
 dust-storms in autumn are not good.
Weeping at a wedding, singing at a death,
 recourse of men to women's retreat;
To sin with the priest, speak ill of the master,
 break faith with those whose salt we eat;
Entrust to the low-born government,
 turn hostile to old friends is bad.

Neglecting prayers, and drinking and lying,
 back-biting are repellent traits.
To deny the guardian saint, betray
 a comrade, covet a neighbour's wife
And property, claim friendship with
 an elder, fraternise a thief,

Back out of a pledge, quarrel with a fakir;
all these are signs of evil days.

Of Ranjha's bitterness against Sahiti:-

'Whatever of ill I get from the Khera,
shall be owing to your wickedness.
'Wonderful is the ordinance of God
to invest the foul with colours galore.
'But they shall not be harmed for whom God's will
and providence have kept a store.
'I'll turn you crazy with my charms
and make you dance and sing to my tune.
'You do not know how with our magic
we make disciples of king and queen.
'Return good with good and evil with evil,
remember, this is my advice.'

Of Sahiti's defiance:-

'I'll swallow all your magic potions
and drive the magic-worker mad.
'We women have bridled Rajas like Bhoj,
you cannot understand our ways.
'King's jail their brothers for our sake,
and brothers-in-law to princedom raise.
'You know how women can humble princes
like Rasalu* for all their pride.
'Joseph suffered much harm because of a woman
and Sasi's lover in the desert died burning.
'Sohni²⁰ lost her Mahiwal and herself,
and Jalali's Roda²¹ was cut into pieces.
'Turned Ranjha a cattle-herd, then a fakir,
while Hir to the Khera lent her graces.
'Ravana got his Lanka reduced to ashes,
for Sita's sake for all his learning.

*See Kokila, Glossary.

'The Pandavas lost full eighteen hosts
 in consequence of a woman's jibe.
 'Who be you, O yogi, you will have to pay
 tribute to woman, and all your tribe.'

Of Ranjha's retort:-

'What devilry is it, O woman?
 You appear too clever in thought and word.
 'You claim equality with man,
 what are the winning points in you?
 'I have for aid only the Lord,
 while you clever sisters-in-law are two.
 'But he who lives mindful of God,
 will find in the next world his reward.

'The brow of man betokens goodness
 while evil is writ on woman's face.
 'Woman robed in silk is odious still,
 while man in home-spun dressed is noble.
 'Good men find pleasure in content,
 in joy and grief are equal and stable.
 Men are by nature learned and wise,
 while women are forms of silliness.'

Of the poet's general observations:-

A good town is of discord free,
 an executioner merciless.
 A maid is known by modesty,
 by downcast eyes and honeyed speech.
 A Sayyad should not be a liar,
 a heartless miser, for a debauch.
 A country should be free from war,
 and silk should need no starch to press.
 A slave and a wife should never protest.
 a man should do no harm to them.
 A fakir should be free from sloth and greed
 and wrapped up ever in thoughts of Him.

A friend is one who helps in need,
 a lover who gives for love his life.
 A banker he who provides in famine
 gives thought to bread and broth of the poor.
 Blessed the cow yields milk in winter,
 a king that shepherds his people with care.
 A wife is loyal in poverty,
 and a yogi's mind should be free from strife.
 An ailment should be open to cure,
 an arrow should leave the bow with a swish.
 A pimp can have no self-respect
 a beggar will never take a wash.

Of Ranjha's reply:-

'God's is the providence, wealth comes next,
 all efforts are to conquer want.
 'From body's hunger Sayyads' sons
 graze asses, wandering far and wide.
 'From body's hunger watchman shouts
 all night, torn from his cosy bed.
 'All evil results from body's hunger,
 murder, arson, robbery, theft.
 'From body's hunger yogis break
 the vows under which their ears were cleft.
 'Both should be virtuous, man and woman,
 for then alone will good be born.
 'Generations have ended, ploughing this earth,
 and tragedy is the common turn.
 'Harvesters are not owners, masters
 are from lovers different.'

Of Sahiti's observations:-

'There is no giver as great as God,
 and none who is as the earth content,
 'A buffalo's patience is unique,
 unique the land of Hind-Panjab.

'Unlimited is the sky's expanse,
 and so the tyranny of a Nawab.
 'No influence equals learning and art,
 no crime's as bad as moral cant.
 'No planet is as cold as the moon,
 and nothing mighty as a command,
 'No calling as bad as a servant's is,
 none better than to meditate.
 'No writ as harsh as that of death,
 for no one can dishonour it.
 'No job as bad as a prostitute's,
 the lowliest may make a demand.
 'It would be a vice in a fakir
 to notice woman's ghastly shade,
 'Your actions are like the Devil's, Waris,
 although your beard is grey, indeed.

Of Ranjha's observations:-

'It would be vice to look at woman,
 if man were not given eyes to see.
 'The whole creation is beautiful
 for lovers to see it with their eyes.
 'Princes and kings have staked their heads
 to feast their eyes on woman's grace.
 'Even a god like Siva was made to bow
 to the Himalaya's daughter Parbati.²²
 'Pencil in hand waits Azrail,
 to score you off the roll of life.
 Ah, Waris, on the day of doom,
 you certainly will come to grief.
 'You have received what you deserved,
 dragging yourself from door to door.
 'Debasing your disguise of a yogi,
 and trading in all kinds of fraud.
 'God gives us silk to wear, and curds
 and butter to put on our bread.

'We go about bedecked in gold,
why should you yield to our allure?'

Of Ranjha's comments:-

'Silver and gold are meant for ladies,
but you are only a lady's maid.
'Adornments do not make a horse
of an ass, nor lady of a slut.
'You caper about like a dencing-girl,
of thieves and lovers you are a tout.
'I spoke of the Pir, you made it Hir,
your sense of hearing is so bad.
'We have one day to leave this world,
why then tell lies and trade in ill?
'Fakirs are a guise of God Himself;
they cannot be imposed upon.
'You may exploit the whole world with
your beauty, virtue you have none,
'What has been said should be enough,
you'll find no fish in a urinal.'

Of Sahiti's reply:-

'You tease and fret me to a quarrel,
with cudgels I will warm your limbs.
'We peasants have contrary ways;
noses of buffaloes we tear off.
'Son of a gourmand and a curmudgeon,
you know the art of swallowing enough.
'But we shall beat out with our pestles
your brains like beating starch off rice.
'Shoes, sticks and staves and cudgels and flails
are for fat buttocks remedies.
'A shaven head and cloven ears
are, Waris, results of evil whims.'

Of Ranjha's remarks:-

'A fakir is clothed in a lion's skin,
his secret never should be probed.

'The look of a lover is pure white milk,
no onion should be stirred in it.

'Give with a smile whatever you give,
earn blessings of a fakir, be sweet.

'You may insist on a higher price,
but must not weigh less than is due.

'Speak harshly not to the God-fulfilled,
behave not like a fretful shrew.

'Why should you so abuse a fakir?
you richly deserve being flogged and clubbed.'

Of Sahiti's rejoinder:-

'Wherever you see young girls and wives,
you begin to touch the holes of your flute.

'You gave a clue to my sister-in-law,
you think yourself a clever man.

'She is lying in bed, consumed with fever,
your antics only give her pain.

'I'd drive the wits out of a ghost,
your ash-smeared face gives me no fright.

Niether a physician, nor a mullah,
how can you work any occult spells?

'Like a parish thief you are crooked in shape,
you will only get your noddle bashed.

'You claim to be a yogi, indeed,
with matted hair you look a ghost.

'You have filled your pack with herbs and roots,
pretend that you can cure all ills.

'Get out of here, you clever mask,
or you will get your hair pulled out.

'You know no book of medicine,
what kind of a healer can you be?

'I'll break your bowl, if not your head,
what more do you want me now to say?

'Women have destroyed the faith of prophets,
I know what you are aiming at.'

Of Ranjha's reiteration of his occult powers:-

'I have performed austerities,
believe, O wicked peasant maid.
'You doubt my miracle-working power,
O evil-tongue, pray God for grace.
'Dispute not with a yogi, nor look
down into a well gone out of use.
'Enscenced in ego day and night,
open your eye of faith, do good.

'No trace of pain or ill is left
when a yogi reads his spell of grace.
'We drive out by our occult charms
ginn, ghost and spirit from people's minds.
'Your sister-in-law will be cured of all
her ills when a yogi's grace she finds.
'Be sweet of speech, and pliant like wax,
let not a frown disfigure your face.'

Of Sahiti's threat:-

'Know you, O demon-worshipper,
difficult to work are the spells of love.
'Love is a sleeping cobra, rouse
it not by blowing into its eyes.
'When did you study the *Ayur Veda*,*
and learn the nature of remedies?
'And when did you practise the *Veda* of *Yoga*,
and meditation's power prove?
'We woman are the world's great riddles, none
can plumb the depths of our pretence.

*The ancient Hindu system of medicine.

'Plato is our pupil, Aristo' our slave,
Lukman would have to wash our feet.

'You prattle too much, but the ills
of love are past your powers to treat.

'It is some ginn from Jhang Syal who
possesses her, I've told you once.

'Pretenders like you cannot heal,
you may deceive some women all right.

'But the game of pretence that you are playing,
is absolutely of no use.

'If you do not go when you are asked,
you'll certainly earn some bashing blows.

'A thrashing is such a fine device
as puts even ginn and ghost to fright.'

Of Ranjha's swearing at Sahiti:-

'It is the age-old habit of yogis
to be hard on woman who should protest

'Too much and snarl like a dog at him
who begging for alms knocks at her door.

'And one who stints when giving alms
will no less with her husband stint.

'Fit to be the tart of a Turk, you pose
as if you were God's only saint.

'A fakir has come to you for bread
and you rush at him like a savage boar.

'You first put flame to a rocket, then
sprinkle on it cold water and dust.

'I feel like snatching with a swooping hand
the tress playing on your ruddy cheek,

When swearing like a prostitute,
you go at me in a fit of pique.'

Of Sahiti's retort:-

'Nightingales that club with hawks
will find their flight cut short apace.

'And gulls that gambol with hunting-men
 will certainly be turned to roast.
 'And does that go to the watering-place
 of a lion will there find final rest.
 'And leeches that suck in warm red blood
 get squeezed to death to spill it out.
 'Clouds gathering thick and thundering loud
 pour down to earth in hail and sleet.
 'Those who get married to highwaymen
 will not live long in married bliss.
 'Your shoulders itch, my whip cracks, too,
 some one must smart for it today.
 'Refrain from evil if you look for good,
 Best were for you to slink away.'

Of Ranjha's challenge:-

'I am a cobra, listen, O Sahiti,
 a student of the occult arts.
 'Ghost, ginn, pretence we beat out all,
 and exorcise the evil soul.
 'By blowing into a peasant's nose
 the shadow of evil we dispel.
 "Reciting texts divine and holy,
 we root out evil from people's hearts.

 'From houses into which we cross,
 we drive out distress, grief and pain.
 'If we read a charm from the core of our hearts,
 we can revive extinguished love.
 'And should we want to kill a man,
 we nail him down in another's grave.
 'A charm on a clove will bring her round
 should a wife rebel against her man.

 'We pass our hands over a woman's breasts,
 the spell makes all her ailments go

- 'We break the teeth and cut the hair
of witches however much their skill.
- 'If a lover cannot get to his love
we give him a magic flower to smell.
- 'And should we bear a grudge against one,
we set a ghost to run him through.
- 'A woman who rudely speaks to a yogi,
ought to be shaved, put on an ass.
- 'We make our spirits and demons serve
those whom we wish all weal and good.
- 'If nothing else avails, we spray
the herb of love on a person's head.
- 'God willing we shall pull out, Waris,
the fairest plant from the Khera's house.'

Of Sahiti's tentative submission :-

- 'Perhaps you are a man of God,
to cure my sister of her ache.
- 'She suffers from some hidden disease,
and lies in bed all stricken and cold.
- 'She often goes lifeless and limp
and seems to slip out of one's hold.
- 'The centre and pivot of our house,
she makes us grieve much for her sake.
- 'Though as a rule she is sweet of speech,
and nice to young and old alike,
- 'She bears ill will towards my brother
as the Prophet to unbelievers might.
- 'Her in-laws just submit to her
in all things, whether wrong or right.
- 'Be a kind fakir and do us good,
and may the Prophet be at your back.'

Of Ranjha offering to cure Hir :-

- 'She may sit up and put forth her hand,
I'll feel her pulse and give the cure.

'She shall be healed of all her aches
 if she fully explains to me her case,
 'And how the trouble first began
 and the taste that on her palate stays.
 'You talk of ills, I have the power
 to drive the angel of death from her.'

Of Sahiti's doubts:-

'Millions of healers work in the world,
 what is broken none can join again.
 'Whatever the finger of fate has written
 no-one can ever obliterate.
 'If you had such miraculous powers,
 why should you suffer a beggar's fate,
 'Lapping untruth? How dare you change
 the will of God, O foolish man?'

Of Ranjha's further protestations:-

'Make not fun of a man of God—
 refrain from ridicule," says the Book.*
 'God honours the bidding of a fakir,
 which men to their ill luck ignore.
 'His grace cures all the body's ills,
 eat and dress to your heart's content.
 'Overlook the good and evil in him,
 probe not into a fakir's intent.
 'When He disposes, curds and whey
 will prove for all our ills the cure.
 'Revere a fakir with folded hands,
 not desecrate his cape and cloak.
 'Your ailments all shall go, O lass,
 tell me what rankles in your heart.
 'Take off the veil, uncover your face,
 O innocent, and have your cure.

*A quotation from the Kuran.

'If victory can be gained by peace,
 why should we rouse ourselves to war?
 'Give me the chance to give you health,
 before I from this place depart.'

Of Sahiti's thunder:-

'Shut up, O rustic,' Sahiti thunders,
 'you have divulged now all your plans.
 'Bards, fortuna-telles, yogis and dogs
 all have their tongues by Satan oiled.
 'They may deceive all other women,
 a Jatti* is not so easily foiled.
 'A gourmand, of all mind devoid,
 will swallow stale and sour at once.'

Of Ranjha's rebuff to Sahiti:-

'Speak gently in a womanly way,
 why should you roar like thunder-cloud?
 'One's vices one can cover up if
 one does not lose one's temper much.
 'A man may make all kinds of plans,
 only gifts from God can make him rich.
 'When all the world is under His sway
 how can one run away from God?'

And of his cajolery of Hir:-

'A fakir sees all the fourteen worlds;
 good lady, why cover your face from him?
 'You do not mean to lie in bed
 all of your life, show greater sense.
 'You may veil you from your father-in-law,
 not from a fakir who comes by chance
 'To examine a patient like you and save
 her from all harm, from ginn and gnome.'

*A Jat woman

Of Sahiti's remonstrance again:-

'What kind of physic do you profess,
and who has trained you in its use?

'Without ever needing to pierce your ears,
you knew pretexts and tricks enough.

'Looking like an ape in cloak and cap,
you rush in like a village rough.

'We never wrote or sent for you,
like a bailiff you have possessed our house.

'You are no healer nor a fakir,
in vain you seem to have shorn your head,

'You were born not wise, nor learnt any wisdom,
nor ever was wisdom on you thrust.

'You are turned on the wheel of evil days
and fate has played with you a jest.

'Ah, Waris, worship God alone
for that is what for you were made.'

Of Ranjha's mocking reply:-

'You are clever of mind and full of wiles,
with eyebrows trimmed like those of a thief.

'Athletes grow muscles in their thighs,
you have grown muscles in your tongue.

'Tell me what ails your sister-in-law,
this talking has gone on much too long.

'Somebody has sprayed ash in her head,
and nailed her spirit into a grave.

'Now a healer has come to your house, you may
not find in Delhi nor further east.

'I shall at once undo those spells,
you two yourselves are proving slack.

'I shall wave my hand over her and put
a scent to her nose, and she will walk

'For frolic and fun to river-bank
and be a wife with all the zest.'

'Ah, Waris, such a herb of love
 the yogi sprayed on the head of Hir,
 Her eyes grew soft and wet with tears
 and she saw her lover in the fakir.

Of Sahiti's retorts:-

'O churl, why should you quarrel with me
 like co-wives quarrel in our land?

'Exploiting your guise of saintliness,
 you do not plough or sow to eat.

'Some yogi has made a fakir of you,
 a guile-less bird, you are caught in a net.

'Deserting parents, priest and home,
 to no-one are you firmly bound.

'Demolishing all her castles of hope,
 you left perhaps a mother in tears.

'To pamper only your own belly,
 you may have even deserted a wife.

'Stripped of your clothes, besmeared with ash,
 old habits you hardly can put off.

'We are not all such imbeciles,
 for you to profit by our fears.'

Of Ranjha's remonstrances:-

'Drunk with the pride of beauty, soaked
 in evil, vessel of vanity.

'So many layers of wiles you have,
 you learnt all this in the Devil's school.

'Proud of your beautiful face you are,
 and of sharp eyes that are fringed with kohl.

'I care not for your sister-in-law
 whose great friend you pretend to be.

'You should not part those joined in love,
 but bring together those apart.

'Why are you set against me so?

Do not follow my tracks, O monstrous kid.

'This girl is a crane and the man an owl,
a fairy to a demon wed.

'Mate not a high-bred mare with an ass,
whatever skill you have in the art.'

Of Hir recognising Ranjha finally:-

Hir picks up her ears; who can he be
who is such a great well-wisher of mine?

Describing me as a high-bred mare,
he makes the Khera look an ass.

May be my own herdsman at last
has come to me in a yogi's guise.

So he has carried out my bidding,
I should now give him, too, some sign.

Of Hir admonishing Ranjha:-

Hir says, 'Please go away from here;
you should not laugh while other grieve.

'If you lack the power of penance in you,
intrude not into a yogi's garb.

'If you cannot keep from staring at women.
why have you left your ploughman's job?

'Not go for fun and frolic with girls,
a fakir should be all solemn and grave.

'He who has ruined others' homes
should himself seek no household joys.

'If he does not know the genuine cure,
he should not prattle of ghost and ginn.

'Why set in hot pursuit of one
who covers his ears and flies from the scene;

'And why should one tell secrets of the heart
to strangers, yogis and wild-looking guys?'

Of Ranjha's supplication:-

'A fakir or bard should not be sent
 back empty-handed from the door.
 'I may have committed some cardinal sin,
 forgive in your own beauty's name.
 'Give alms to me or turn me out
 and I shall bless you just the same.
 'Give something in the name of God,
 the humble have no other share.'

Of Hir's answer:-

'O yogi, false are all you claims,
 none can rejoin whom fate would part.
 'I am tired with searching and found none
 who could ever bring back the gone and the lost.
 'Tell me, indeed, when those long-gone
 are brought home by the Lord to roost.'
 'I'd give my hide to make his shoes,
 who could cure the ache that is in my heart.
 'I'd throw myself over in his name
 who comes to join my body and soul.
 'None can bring back the dear departed,
 the world has a way of charming grief
 'By telling the poor, oppressed of heart,
 tales ending in comfort and relief.
 'A crow has snatched the crane from a hawk,
 I wait to see if he'll keep quiet,
 'A peasant's crop is a fire, I wait
 for him to come to put it out.
 'I'd dole out pudding, burn butter in lamps
 to hear he comes home after all.'

Of Ranjha's declamation:-

'So long as the sky and the earth are there,
 so long the world's affairs will last.

'And when the trumpet of doom is blown,
 nothing shall remain but the throne of God,
 'His heaven, this earth, and the writing finger,
 paradise and hell, and souls of the dead.
 'All those weighed down with self and pride,
 will find themselves forlorn and lost.
 'If only you get up from your bed,
 I'll throw the dice and read the book,
 'And tell your future, the genuine truth,
 and make your fever leave you quick.'

Of Ranjha throwing the dice and telling Hir :-

'When you trimmed your locks and only a down
 showed on his cheeks, your hearts were joined.
 'He by his flute, you by your graces,
 captured each the other's heart.
 'He sold himself in love's exchange,
 assumed a cowherd's lowly part.
 'With a hope in his breast he grazed the cattle,
 and then you were married and he was ruined.
 'Then he got his ears bored and became
 a mendicant of the yogi creed.
 'Today he has entered this very village
 and has not gone out of its walls.
 'He may be disguised as a fortune-teller,
 and maybe, throwing the dice, he tells
 'A woman's future from his book,
 her present and her past, indeed.
 'The peasant's crop was saved from fire
 but by usurpers reaped and stored.
 'The reapers and guards have taken their leave
 and the peasant left in utter despair,
 'He has given up the world and has like Waris,
 the son of a Sayyad, become a fakir.
 'The hawk from whom the dove was snatched
 taking it as the will of God, expired,

Of the poet's observations:-

Hard are the trials of teenage love
 when sons of squires graze alien kine.
 Kings get their ears bored and as yogis
 roam in the wood with aches in the heart,
 Forsaking pride of birth and rank
 for the sake of woman, in humble part;
 With the passion to set eyes on their love,
 they give up all, even risk their head.
 Good luck sometimes may bring the day
 when lover may lie by lover's side.
 Waris, when the thrust of love goes home
 it is then that the mettle of steel is known.

Of Hir's eager supplication:-

Hir got up in her bed at this,
 for all the clues were right, indeed.
 'This yogi is a real astrologer,
 for he pronounces truths, though hard.
 'The clue of the flute is so exact,
 and he was, too, my father's herd.
 'He seems to be a learned man
 and all is just as he has said.'
 'Tell me, O yogi, if you can,
 in what direction has he gone?
 'And in what quarters does he roam,
 having ruined a woman's tender heart?
 'Estranged men come back to their homes,
 why has he clenched his fist so tight?
 'The friend is inside,* say your dice,
 and like a thief it makes me start.
 'He is in this same mansion, too?
 but then how can we search him out?

*This has obvious metaphysical overtones. "The friend can be God or the Divine. Similarly, the veil is a symbol of the physical.

'I am distraught and much perturbed,
ever since he left me woe-begone.'

Of Ranjha's remarks about Hir's veil:-

'This veil deserves to be put in fire;
it is the cause of many ills.

'It hides the splendour of a beautiful face,
and in the open ruin invites.

'It drowns the lover's heart in sorrow,
or stifles it like a bird in a cage.

'Come, see the world in all its glory,
let not the veil keep you in siege.

'The veil blinds even those who have eyes,
take off the veil, discover your lights.

'Pearls ought not to be buried in earth,
nor flowers, Waris, scorched on coals.'

Of Hir's rejoinder:-

'Why should one continue the search
if the hidden appears before one's eyes?
False are your claims; why need one look
outside for him if he be within?

'However much fuel is heaped on it,
a dead fire will not burn again.

'If he should deny having grazed one's cattle,
should one search for him on the ways?

'Love's secret ought not to be disclosed,
before no-one should it be aired.

'Coming on the lips it loses its virtue,
to utter it is not wisdom's part.

'A true lover will not speak of it,
with fortitude he 'll bear the hurt.

'Love is as the countless booty of war,
in pitchers it cannot be stored.'

Of Ranjha's oblique hints:-

'No wisdom needs one to talk to the sage,
 one needs only oneself be put wise.
 'All honour the man of wealth, the rare
 thing is to keep faith with the poor.
 'You carry the infant in your lap,
 yet cry its loss from door to door:
 'Warm quilt of beauty as you are,
 I am the pillow of love to use.'

XXI

Of Sahiti' addressing a warning to Hir:-

The two have hit it off together,
 he has conveyed his love to her,
 Thought Sahiti, and she is filled with joy,
 as though he had given her some charm.
 'O sister, do not rack your brains
 in vain, I'll save you from all harm.
 'Do not discuss with him, I take
 on myself all your ills, don't fear.
 'He may not put you by some charm
 in a frenzy, talk not much with him.
 'He frightens me like a ghost, indeed!
 who knows from where this devil hails?
 'O take your alms and go away,
 you are going too far now, or else.
 'You will accept no grain or flour,
 what shall we bring you, milk and cream?
 'You go on spreading wide your net,
 you think that we are all fools here.'
 But, Waris, it is not cleaverness
 on the poor man's part, it is love's despair.

Of Ranjha's address to Sahiti:-

- 'I am alone and a stranger, too,
while you are two and sisters-in-law.
'You have a courtesan's address,
with eyes fringed copiously with kohl.
'Bend to my feet and give me alms,
and be not obdurate at all.
'Be gentle, fix your thoughts on God,
for you are gentle born, not low.
'I'll search him out, the man you love,
grazing his camels in the wood.*
'Wait you to see the wonders He works,
my God whose worshipper I am,
'You think so poorly of the Guru
that you can swear so foul at him?
'Know you they ever are alive,
who leave good deeds behind when dead.'

Of Sahiti's stinging reply:-

- 'You are dead against unmarried women,
would taunt them on their secret aches.
'It is clever of you to speak of camels,
your spine is itching, it seems, for blows.
'So spoilt you are that you would reject
all alms save milk and butter and cheese.
'Grain, flour or a loaf of bread we can
give you as alms, not wedding-cakes.
'Even kings on elephants canopied
and fanned, need grain you so despise.
'Women have undone the crazes of many,
put right wrong-willed fakirs like you.
'The rod is the sovereign remedy
for the wicked, and you need it, too.

*Sahiti also has a lover, Murad by name, of the Baluch tribe.

'Even ghosts and demons fear the rod
in the hand of a woman who knows its use.'

Of Ranjha's rejoinder:-

'You come down violently upon
me and with wanton blatancy,
'Like dog that belches after he
has feasted on entails, and baits
"Thorough-bred mares; you two make jests
at me like cousins german or mates.
'No doubt you are much tired of fakirs
that crowd round you for charity.

'Woman would not keep faith even with him
who'd worship and treasure her like gold.
'She'll scratch her head and blow her nose
and fart and yet pretend to be sweet;
'Will scratch her belly while churning milk
and dogs may lick her cooking pot.
'Don't quarrel but take instead from me
these powders if you would be healed.'

Of Sahiti's annoyance:-

'I call on God and people to look
what a quarrel this rogue has picked with me.
'Such rogues were best put after herds,
or made to trudge behind the plough.
'And idle fakirs should be made to thresh
the crop they did not care to sow.
'These yogis are an ancient curse,
like asses they wallow in ignominy.'

Of Hir's protest at Sahiti's abusive language:-

Annoyed at Sahiti's bitter attacks
upon her lover, Hir protests,
'O sister, you are rather too fond
of jumping into the fights of bulls.

'We never should put ourselves at odds
with holy men, be they true or false.

'These God-forsaken ear-bored ones,
you never know, may be God's own guests.'

Of Sahiti's reply:-

'O sister, these yogis are dangerous men
you may not know of their exploits.

'With money in pocket, they go out begging,
collect milk in barrels and flour in bags.

'They let their hair and nails grow long
and wrap their bodies in dirty rags.

'They look like bursting out their hides
with necks held stiff like lizards and bats.'

Of Ranjha's retort:-

'There is a proverb in our land,
a peasant woman cares for four;

'She cards the wool and suckles the child,
and shouts at birds and grazes lambs.

'Fakirs she baits as of set purpose,
she'll ruin others to comfort her limbs.

'My dice can never miss the truth:
two lovers are in trouble here.'

Of Sahiti's threats:-

'My hands are itching, so too your skull,
you are going to get some pestle-blows.

'With a cobbler's eel I'll pare your skin,
you are playing indeed with a loaded gun.

'I'll knock your teeth out with a box,
to serve you well for poking fun.

'Your limbs will be thrashed like barley, Waris,
with stick and club and cudgel and mace.'

Of Ranjha's retort:-

'It is your back that itches for thrashing,
and my cudgel itches, too;

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'Your buttocks itch, as does my club,
the two are itching much to collide.
'I'll squeeze the pips out of your flesh,
held in a vice, you cannot slide.
'A governor will not punish the town
for having butchered just a sheep.
'You will be punished like an ass
that goes astray to ruin a crop.
'I'll beat you, Waris, like a drum,
and jump on you like bull on cow.

'Even as a fakir's hard calling requires,
I have much patience and keep quiet.
'I am on the point of fainting with hunger,
some cursed sight has made me sick.
'How can you have regard for a yogi,
with gold and silver round your neck?
'They are gone beyond all other reading,
who are used to reading bills of sight.

'You virgins need to be modest some,
not having dropped your milk teeth yet.
'A host of the beauties of Kashmir,
you are bent upon a yogi's wreck.
'But with a slap I'll throw you off,
my fingers can a miracle work.
'Your talk is elderly, otherwise,
your youthful tresses warrant it not.

Of Hir making a sign to Ranjha:-

Hir made a sign as if to say,
'Keep mum, I am only baiting her.
'If she has opened hostilities
against you, I am on your side.
'See how I pick a quarrel with her
and throw a noose around her head.'

She'll make her dance like a courtesan,
Waris, to her paramour!

Of Hir's admonition of Sahiti:-

Says Hir, 'O what a curse from heaven
you want to bring on this fakir?
'What profits it you to so torment
such humble people, devoid of aid?
'To battle with the men of God
is not the way of maidenhood.
'You should kiss the feet of this fakir,
and it may bring you good reward.
'Touch with your brow his rod; who knows
he may be an envoy of the Lord?
'Waris, if a fakir is thus displeased,
the village may suffer from a plague or fire.'

Of Sahiti's enigmatic answer:-

'O sister, you seem to be in league
with this fakir to pull me down.
'No yogi has a say in it
what Providence should will and bring.
'How can he know the scent of musk
who knows only the smell of *hing*?
'If we do not like silk to be spoilt,
wool is not the thing to rub it on.'

Of Hir's impatient interruption:-

'Know, Sahiti, these fakirs are like
the cobra, out of the layman's grip.
'If once a dervish curses you,
it will not then avail to rue.
'If you do not mean to quarrel with him,
these monkey-tricks you should not do.'
Woman is the foe of dervish, Waris,
as the deer are foes of the tender crop.

Of Sahiti's protest:-

'You are siding with the yogi, Hir,
 with a hammer tilted in your hand.
 'I'll pull the locks out of his head
 he shows me muscle and defies.
 'He'll look for a wooden club in vain,
 I'll break his limbs with pestle blows.
 'My wits can scale the heights his guru
 may well despair to negotiate.
 'When woman springs up in her fury,
 even gins and demons lose their wit.'
 But to quarrel with a fakir is, Waris,
 like biting weed of a poisonous kind.

Of Hir's annoyance with Sahiti:-

'O how you swear at a holy man,
 you are the limit, really.
 'A woman abusing shiftless beggars,
 remains for ever issueless.
 'And one who is so rude to yogis,
 shall go into the wilderness.
 'These three should never be teased, O Sahiti,
 the lover, the fakir, the honey-bee.'

Of Sahiti's retort:-

'If he is stubborn like an ass,
 a woman is also full of wiles.
 'If he is struck here in this world,
 women are from the Day of Owing* struck.
 'If he will hack like a blunt-edged knife,
 like keen-edged daggers we cut quick.

*According to Muslim theology, after the angels were created, God asked them to confirm that He was their God, and they confirmed or owned.

'If he counts himself among rogues and knaves,
we are clever tricksters, too, not dolls.

'If men are mansions of indulgence,
we women are chambers of ravishment.

'He prides himself over being a man,
we are of our sex equally proud.

'What power can a cowherd boast against us?
for a Raja Bhoj we were too shrewd.

'If men are cylinders of dignity white,
we are syringes of a scarlet tint.'

Of Hir's retort:-

'Those who contend with God's fakirs
shall go with empty hands from here.

'Beware, O girl, chockful of wiles,
why has a frown so curved your brows

'Like clouds that lowering heavily pour
and flood the world with foul disease?

'Perhaps you cannot remain inert,
so full of the poison of youth you are.

'You quarrel with this yogi, you need
a man, your nights are dull perchance.

'You so neglect the spinning wheel,
four cobs a day you do not spin.

'You want to rub your sides with them
and to sit squat in the midst of men.

'But those who have this madness within,
will not be cured by gnawing at bones.'

Of Sahiti's protest:-

'Look, sister-in-law, you are being too hard,
I am damned already, damn me no more.

'You say impossible things of me
and drag me over burning coals.

'You touch me on the raw, yourself
a sieve, you pick in the milk-pail holes.

'You're beautiful, but why should you
so cruelly suck the blood of the poor?

'You used him, then cast him away,
and now with all the world find fault.

'I'll ask my brother to thrash you sound,
for the insults you have heaped on me.

'You make grimaces like an ape,
and like an ass he is on the spree.

'A vixen, you would bewitch the boys
and milk the bulls were they not gelt.'

Of Hir's stinging reply:-

'O wanton, forsaken of man, you change
within my seeing chameleon shapes.

'Posing pure white, washed in milk,
you make me look a thief of thieves.

'Ill-looking, evil-face, you strut
as a pea-hen does in beauty's groves.

'Thief into chief, whore into lady,
strange are this world's haps and mishaps.

'Mad over a gallant Baluch, you
take on the airs of a winner of hearts.

'Look at your coquette's make-up like
that of a courtesan of Lahore!

'Notorious all about the Chanab,
like Sasi of old days round Bhambor,

'You taunt me now, your sister-in-law,
and strut like drunk in public parts.'

Of Sahiti's anger against Ranjha:-

'When peasants fight the menials suffer,
so let this yogi between us fare.

'He is the root cause of our quarrel,
much dust he has raised about our heads.

'He has read some spell to cause a rift
 between us two, what else he needs?'
 Helpless against Hir, Waris, Sahiti
 comes down upon the poor fakir.

Of Sahiti's address to the maid:-

'Get up, O maid,' says Sahiti at last,
 'let us give him alms to send him away.
 'A handful of flour or two of rice
 should be enough to end this row.
 'I'll ask my mother to put us apart
 from this my high-born sister-in-law.
 'Like yoking a camel with an ox it is,
 this living together of us two.
 'I will be a rebel against it all,
 and raise my flag of rebellion now.
 'Let us make a pass at Waris, too,
 get up, O bone of steel, I say.'

Of the maid's rough handling of Ranjha:-

With an angry twist of the nose, the maid
 put out to the yogi some rice on a plate.
 'For God's sake take this alms and go,
 I spread the folds of my scarf in appeal.'
 With a conquetish motion, she gave a push
 to the yogi and he tumbled to a fall.
 'Why do you arouse a sleeping snake?
 Go hence with your bowl unbroken now.'
 And she gave him a box beneath the ear
 and rubbed his face up to the brow.
 By entering the garden of the fair, the yogi
 has set in motion the wheel of fate.

Of Ranjha's reply:-

At this the yogi was greatly hurt,
 it was for him like milk turned sour.

Like the earth on the day of doom he burnt
with fury, his cheeks were all atremble.

'By giving me unhusked rice as alms
you have singed my beard, made me look humble.

'A food the Prophet did not bless,
that gives the eyes an insane leer,

'That cannot be made into loaf or cake
and cannot be bundled either in cloth;

'The cleverest have been drowned in this mud
of unhusked rice, curry or broth.'

O how distressful, thinks the yogi,
this wily woman has spoiled my game.

My begging bowl has been befouled,
I shall have to wash my cloak and hood.

And the alms are a handful of unhusked rice,
that is all they care for a man of God.

Waris, into a room full of gun-powder
the woman has thrown a leaping flame.

Of the maid's reply:-

'Unhusked rice is the peasant's share,
to the hungry and famished it is life.

'If there is butter-milk to go
with it, it tastes wholly delicious.

'When pounded and rolled into balls,
it is eaten with the greatest relish,

'I see the trick that you are playing,
the trick of rogue and cad and thief.'

Of Ranjha's moralistic observations:-

'Improper is unhusked rice as alms,
like flesh to a Brahmin and fish to a monk.

'Or liquor to a kazi or oil for a cough,
or flour to one with a head-cold sick.

'Or water to one stricken with rabies,
it nips life's flower off the stalk.

'Like fire to straw or plague to sheep,
and arsenic to rats and mice.

'As hare is forbidden food to the Chuhra*
and interest** to the Muslim is vice.

'As the Mullah's call is the Brahmin's curse,
and the Mullah's curse is the Brahmin's conch.'***

Of Sahiti's rejoinder:-

'Why burst with contradictions? Rice
is to the hungry nectar of life.

'When you are old and your limbs are cold
you may be thankful for a crumb.

'With no home anywhere or a wife,
you shoot your dart with no good aim.

'Waris, look how he is spoiling for trouble,
intoxicated with a loaf!'

Of Ranjha becoming violent:-

In fury the yogi flings his bowl
and leaps upon the woman in a flash.

Taking up his club, he prepares to fight
and blows his conch full in the yard.

With taunts and sarcasms, he assumes
indeed the look of a wounded pard.

Like the dog of a yeoman's house he barks
and flies at the maid with a furious dash.

His hand on the cudgel, he roars at her,

'To you the universe looks all void.

'Rice, wheat and milk and butter you get,
and stint so hard in giving alms,

*An untouchable caste, generally scavengers and field-labourers. Just as pork is forbidden to the Muslim, hare's flesh is said to be forbidden to the Chuhra; but this is only a legend.

**Under the Muslim canon charging interest on money is forbidden.

***Symbolic of Hindu-Muslim ritualistic antagonism.

'Go take this unhusked rice to the owners,
 or else I'll beat you into husk,
 'I'll bast your buttocks and fat parts,
 if you peck at me with your claw-like limbs.
 'Your head I'll batter with my club,
 and break your shins to make you frisk.
 'I'll uncover all your wedding dower
 and show you for what you are indeed.'

Of Sahiti reproaching her maid:-

The maid, stands mute and still and Sahiti
 chides, 'Why did you not give him alms?
 'This yogi is a low-born, shameless tramp,
 why should you kick up a row with him?
 'Now go yourself and give him rice,
 push me not into the jaws of death.
 'He has so roundly insulted me,
 and you have put me, too, to shame.'
 Waris, it is like removing the hood
 from the head of a hawk to stir his wrath,
 And setting him upon a sparrow,
 to tear the poor thing with no qualms.

Of Ranjha's reply:-

'I'll pull your pleats and catching you by
 the pigtail, I will dart you off.
 'You may hold out threats of the village to me,
 I write it off on the tip of this.
 'You have kicked up such a row with me
 that there can be no compromise.
 'I'll kick you in the stomach which
 is blown out like a pitcher and a half.
 'I'll beat the marrow out of you
 and all your pertness will be gone.
 'When once I put my hands on you,
 you will forget all coquetry.

'I see all three of you are ready
to wrestle with me, and I'll flay
'The skin off the two of them, the third
I do not mind if she flays mine.'

Of Ranjha's address to Hir:-

'O lady, I'm modest on your account,
or else I should have thrown her flat.
'I would have disgraced her thoroughly,
whatever support in the village she should find,
'As Akbar reduced the fort of Chitor*
and made it level with the ground.
'It will not cost me a fief if I
should strangle the life out of her throat.'

Of Hir's reply:-

'O sir, I am a stranger here,
cut off from home, cast all awash.
'Love-lorn, I am listless and inert,
I cannot speak in borrowed tones.
'Dust of your holy feet am I,
I do not make any false pretence.
'A peasant, I dare not oppose a fakir.
not a woman am I of the Quaraish.**

Of Sahiti's taunts to Hir:-

'Hid so long, now you stand revealed,
for a cowherd's mistress that you are.
'Your purpose served, you jilted him
to whom you gave yourself in the wood;
'And you put on the mask of piety now,
and make us look great sinners instead.

*Reference is to the fort of Rana Partap of Mewar, who though defeated, did not offer submission to Akbar the Great.

**The tribe to which the Prophet Mohammad belonged.

'With a wink of the eye you incite your lover,
you player of monkey-tricks and more.

'Come, rescue now the yogi from us,
we'll give a thrashing to both of you.'

Waris, having given your hand to one
you should not leave him half-way through.

Of Sahiti's breaking Ranjha's bowl:-

Contemptuously Sahiti proffered him alms,
at which was Ranjha highly grieved.

'Take this, O evil-doer, pretender;
why have you worn a fakir's disguise?

'The Kheras are going to be robbed today.'
flying into a passion, she wildly cried,

And poured the rice into his bowl;
he felt it like a jab in the side.

In anger he threw the bowl on the ground,
it broke and spilt the offered rice;

As when the glass breaks on a stone
and the wine is spilt. Ranjha felt bereaved.

Of Ranjha's taunting advice to Sahiti:-

'Be gentle when you are giving alms,
drop it from your hands with tender care.

'You must not be so proud of your youth,
so beauty-intoxicated, vain.

'O girl, you have worked great havoc, yes,
you have committed a deadly sin.

'O fortunate one, think of the day
when youth shall leave you old and poor.

'You have broken my bowl, you have ruined me;
may death overtake the man you love;

'And may your parents die and you
peddle your pride on the ferry and grieve'

Of Sahiti's retort:-

'I'd give my life to save my lover's,
O evil fellow, hold your tongue,

'What harm, what wrong have I done to you?

Against you I have not raised my hand.

'You abuse my lover before my maid,
what axe have you, O cad, to grind?

'Take here a handful more of flour,
this quarrel I would not prolong.

'You are not human, but a beast,
a monster oddly made by God;

'Should any of my people come to know
of this, you'll surely lose your head.'

Of Ranjha's rejoinder:-

'To scold you I am much ashamed;
why did you break my begging bowl?

'If unknown to your mother, you
can take a lover while yet a maid,

'And let the Baluch saddle you
for a ride and break your maidenhead,

'Why should you taunt your sister-in-law
thus over her cowherd lover and all?'

'You are a maid, why should you have
a secret from your mother to hide?

'Waris, we're at last to return to dust,
why should we indulge in pomp and pride?'

Of Sahiti's philosophic reply:-

'Yes, in this quarrel over a bowl,
all people will find you in the wrong.

'For it has broken all by chance,
that is the truth, you rave in vain.

'For all the ill the tongue my speak,
the bones, O yogi, shall suffer pain.

'Whoever is born must die at last,
this way the world shall go along.

'All that is shall return to dust,
the prophets of God will last alone.

‘Lords, temporal and spiritual,
 that rule their kind shall cease to be.
 ‘When man is asked to render account
 his limbs shall have to make reply.
 ‘As the end of life at last arrives
 the angel of death will pounce upon man.’

Of Ranjha's protest:-

‘May the Lord God work his wrath on you,
 you break my bowl and then make jests.
 ‘Finding me vulnerable, you
 gird up your loins to beat me out.
 ‘With cruel remarks you grieve my heart
 and none the less you scream and shout.
 ‘You call one evil, first, and then
 descend to blows when one protests.
 ‘Of course, all die as willed by God,
 but you would kill against His will.
 ‘I will expose you further yet,
 you cannot break again my bowl.
 ‘They may say you are a guileless maid,
 but you have played a vandal's part.
 ‘Mistress of varied tricks and snares,
 you are a vulture, a carrion-crow.
 ‘My heavy cudgel is itching to batter
 the head of a dirty whore like you.
 ‘And you, O bride, say something, too,
 whatever is there lodged in your heart.’

Of Hir administering a rebuke to Sahiti :-

‘What gaiety is this?’ Hir rebukes,
 ‘and why should you have broken his bowl?
 ‘These homeless birds with God alone
 for stay, should not be rubbed on the raw.
 ‘It is not for nothing he has rent his ears;
 why should you probe his secret vow?’

'You have carried the argument too far:
his game he will not let you spoil?

'He will not carry the house with him,
of which you are so vainly proud,
'Fight, if you must, your equals, girl,
do not flourish your stick at a shiftless beggar.

'This house is mine if you come to that,
what profits it you that you so swagger?

'The granary store belongs to the lord;
why should the labourer crow so loud?'

Just so is human pride, though man
brags day and night in vanity,
And worldly greed is futile, Waris,
we leave it all here when we die.

Of Sahiti's retort:-

'What do you say, so pure and holy?
on whose mat do I say my prayers?

'I am a stranger, the house is yours,
you have shipped it from your parents' place.

'You do not care for the likes of me,
but seeing the yogi, out you rush

'With all your coquetry. Was it
in the wood you got defiled by him?'

'You are such a confidante of the yogi,
with Saida you will not brush a limb.

'And a strumpet, now you come to us,
wearing the veil of a wedded wife.

'Beguiler of men and milker of bulls,
you will not change your way of life.'

Ah, Waris, the time of youth will pass,
while you are engrossed in the world's affairs.'

Of Hir's rejoinder:-

'You have entered into such a quarrel
with this fakir as you'll regret.'

'You certainly will run away
 from here, you lack the heart to stay.
 'You break his bowl and beat him, too,
 what answer will you give to God?
 'And nothing this yogi stands to lose,
 you but defame your maidenhood.
 'If the high-born scion of a Kshatrya house
 should wrestle with a scavenger boy,
 'Nothing will he gain but ridicule
 of which he'll surely be the butt.'

Of Sahiti's counter-reply:-

'For you he may have miraculous powers,
 to me he seems a cheat and a liar.
 'This youthful saint, my shoe, he may put
 a heap of bowls in front of me.
 'You kick like an ass at high-bred mares
 all in support of such as he.
 'If he is entranced, rapt I am, too,
 all his pretences are for crumbs.
 'But thousands like him have I taught
 and made them fly to save their limbs.
 'Limbs of such lusty fellows, Waris,
 should be scotched indeed with brands of fire.'

Of Hir's admonition again:-

'He is all rapt, provoke him not
 though you have not a tail to lose,
 'It may bring ruin upon the Kheras,
 some trouble even on your head.
 'Fall at his feet, propitiate him,
 his sigh of pain may freeze you dead.'
 Whoever works evil, Waris, to others
 will suffer in the grave its agonies.

Of Sahiti's answer:-

'Wait a little, sister-in-law,' says Sahiti,
 'I may show you some more of my wiles.'

'Your taunts and turns have broken my heart,
I'll get some poison to drink today.

I'll either die or get him killed,
you'll pay for it, O sister-in-law.

'When father or mother or brother comes,
I'll get you beaten with bamboo poles.

'Your past exploits I'll all recount
and tell my brother how he has been

'Given only the cowherd's leavings; then he
may kill your lover and you both.

'As Sita brought ruin on Ravana of Lanka,
you will work, too, destruction and death.

'If I am a woman I'll get you out
of here and bring my own lover in.

'I'll see his head is chopped into bits
as the broken bowl over which he cries.

'Take it from me, you'll get this love's
intoxication off to-night.

'I'll get you thoroughly beaten and battered
and by the pigtail turn you out.

'And you'll be tied and hung up high,
your limbs be bashed, to put you wise.'

Of Hir's chiding again:-

'To hang the village for slaughter of a sheep,
the world will come indeed to a close!

'To throw the quilt because of lice,
the winter's cold will be hard to bear!

'Let the yogi go with your brother's sister,
on me no rough dare lay his hand.

'I'll break his limb, and my people, the Syals,
will put his land to sword and fire.

'Let Saida divorce me and then you
take him to husband, end this row.

'Pulling out your locks, I'll exorcise
the ghost in you with blows of my shoe.'

Of Sahiti's stinging reply:-

- 'You line your eyes to the corners with kohl
and make your tresses coil and curl,
'And let the pleats fall on your bosom
to show the fairness of your face.
'For the ears of gallants in the street
your anklets jingle in the court of the house.
'Your blouse of silk is killing, indeed,
with fanciful embroidery.
'With made-up moles on chin and cheeks
you lay your nets for passers-by.
'And with such trifling having bewitched,
bend down your eyes like a teenage girl.

'Many times a day you change your dress
of silk or brocade, frilled, gold-laced.
'With tight pyjamas on your legs
you spin like a top or dance about;
'Or sit on the couch, proud of your beauty,
feeling like a hourie or heavenly sprite.
'To redden your lips you chew the bark,
and rub your skin with scented paste.

'With jewelry on every part,
you put to shame the golden deer.
'You lift your foot and let it fall
so coquettishly your anklets chink.
'You pose as queen in a cluster of beauties,
no one can equal you, you think.
'You perk your nose at others, and talk
scandal at large in your durbar.

'No way am I inferior,
if you think you are so beautiful,
'With sandalwood fragrance in my limbs,
I take you for a sweeper's broom.
'You may flaunt yourself as wife of a lord,
for the likes of me that has no charm.

'I have done no wrong to you, provoke
me not, to save your yogi from ill.

I'll beat the marrow out of his bones
to catch whose eyes you are straining thus.

'All your defences I will break,
you may flaunt your favours all in vain.

'I do not think much of your lover,
if you so much like me to be plain.

'You'll see how I beat and drive him out,
and I'll see who comes to his aid.

'I'll do it to you, for the world to see;
of your flings and darts who is afraid?

'From all this scandal you spread about me
nothing will you gain, I may tell you this.'

Of Hir's mocking reply:-

'Who are you making faces at,
curling your lip in mockery?

'And lolling out your tongue? Is it
for the yogi's favour that you strive?

'To look at all this coquetry
one would think not I but you were the wife.

'If you like this yogi, elope with him,
why else are you posing these riddles to me?'

Of Sahiti and her maid attacking Ranjha:-

Sahiti and her maid take up the pestles
with which they beat the unhusked rice,
And go for the yogi like witches, indeed,
as they would throw him in their stew.

His bowl was broken, his clothes were torn,
his handsome face turned livid blue.

They locked up Hir in a room apart
when she tried to save him from their blows.

He found himself without resource
against these female engines of war.

They changed their pestles then for churns
 and broke them too upon his head.
 Sahiti swooped down on him like a kite,
 some fury made her fight like mad.
 As Abu Samad of Chunian²³ fought
 against Husain Khan of Lahore.

Of Ranjha returning the blows:-

And now it was the yogi's turn
 to be possessed by the demon of war.
 An angel of heaven's sanctuary,
 he saw the fairy behind the fury.
 He tightened his belt, invoked the saints,
 and angels too came down in a hurry,
 So that his victory was complete
 like that of Fateh Khan of Lahore²⁴
 Over Bakhshi's host. But as the heat
 of battle subsided, in his heart
 The wounds that Sahiti's blows had numbed
 as if fomented, began to smart.

Of the yogi going at it again:-

So once again he went for them
 and gave the wenches blow on blow.
 He pinched their cheeks and squeezed their breasts,
 and tore their tight-fit bodices off,
 And catching them by their pigtails hurled
 the two about the yard of the house.
 He pulled their locks and boxed their ears
 and tickled their parts with naughtiness.
 He bashed their behinds and made them dance
 as bears do under the juggler's staff.
 While Hir from within kept begging him
 to stop and let the poor things go.

Of Sahiti and the maid raising a hue and cry:-

No sooner were the girls released
 than both began to scream and shout.

And half a dozen wantons gathered
 about the yogi like Kabuli dogs.*
 They beat and pushed him out of doors
 and shot the bolts, put on the clogs.
 Like the hawk torn from his bait of flesh
 the yogi was driven out of love's sight.
 Expelled like a cashiered subedar,
 he felt so anguished and distressed;
 Like one thrown into hell from heaven
 and left to wallow on rubbish heaps;
 He was amazed and much confused
 as if he had drunk some poison-drops.
 His broken bowl and hurts apart,
 fresh insults rankled in his breast.
 Under false pretence though, he had been
 with Hir, from where he now was driven.
 Waris, is it not a novelty
 that the peris should drive an angel from heaven?

XXII

Of the poet's observations on Ranjha's plight:-

Ranjha lost all feeling, wit and sense,
 like Adam cast out from the court of God.
 Or was he a Satan pushed out of Heaven?
 To which Christ had he refused to kowtow?
 He was barred from heaven like Shaddad²⁵, indeed;
 like Nimrud killed²⁶ by a mere mosquito.
 He had much reason to be perplexed
 like Noah, and Waris, caught in the Flood.

Of Ranjha reflecting by himself:-

Hir calmly saw them drive me out
 I seem to have fallen in with whores.

*The old Panjabi name for mastiffs.

I rue the day I did not heed
 the warnings coming from every side.
 I have lost the woman, besmeared my face,
 and young and old all cut me dead.
 Daughters of kings and wives of lords
 cannot be won except by force.

Gold, land and woman, go to the strong,
 the weak may stake no claim, indeed.
 Here I have been a complete washout,
 though I had won my yoga with jokes.
 Now my revenge is God's own honour,
 for they have beaten His man with rakes.
 The Devil's dozen consists of thirteen,
 the weak can only turn to God.

Of Ranjha's utter dismay:-

Flicking the dust from his seat, he groans,
 thou hast torn me from my love, O God.
 'I have no part in daily life,
 my fate is drawing me to the wood,
 'Where tigers roar and serpents hiss
 and day and night wolves howl aloud
 'I'll count the beads, keep nightly vigil,
 do penance till death sets me free.'

Of a mysterious voice coming to Ranjha:-

'You, who have access to the saints
 why have you got so out of tune?
 'Give a loud-voiced call to them and see
 the end of all your griefs and cares.
 'In whom can you put greater faith?
 why don't you call upon the Pirs?
 And then it came to Ranjha's mind
 that he could count on aid divine.

Of Ranjha in rage to himself:-

Could I read a spell for a miracle,
 to tear the Khera into strands.
 'I'd read! "May grief be the tyrant's lot,"
 and block in a moment the flow of waters.*
 'I am commander of no host
 to put the land to sword and fire,
 'No general to make her a captive and
 chop off her limbs to quench my ire.
 'Had I the power I'd catch this Sahiti
 by the hair and beat her to rags and tatters.
 Should the saints, all five, come to my aid,
 my fevers and aches will all abate;
 'And I of the black tongue lick the life
 out of the villain, by their might.
 'Should Hir be living across the seas
 I'd drain them out with the cup of my hands?'

Of Ranjha's state of mind:-

Being choked with grief, his heart would sink,
 recover and then sink again.
 He sweeps the ashes from the place
 in public view he had occupied;
 And goes to the Black Park** where he builds
 his fire afresh in the name of God.
 He makes a ridge around him there,
 enclosing a comfortable bit of space.
 'I have committed the sin of love,'
 he says, 'but God will lend it grace.'
 And as the flame leapt up to warm,
 he felt all other love was vain.

*The reference seems to be to Moses parting the waters of the Red Sea.

**A grove of trees outside the village of the Kheras,

In the shade of a tree he spreads his rug,
 and like a soldier leans on a pillow.
 Ah, Waris, he must rue the hour
 he fell in love, for all its halo.

Ranjha's penance:-

Eyes shut and mind fixed fast on God,
 he starts on penance, wails and cries;
 Performs austerities and fasts,
 calls on the Lord all day and night.
 Whether sitting or lying down to sleep,
 he does not cease to meditate;
 He makes ablutions of all kinds,
 in different yogic postures lies.
 Till the voice spoke out, 'Ah, Ranjha, our child,
 grieve not, prepare for the moment of test.'
 No use to grieve over hardship, Waris,
 whatever is to happen, will happen and must.

Of the girls going to the Black Park for recreation on a Friday:-

On a Friday, laying aside their spinning,
 the girls go out for frolic and fun,
 Like a flock of cranes, or a body of horse,
 or the scout of an army they advance.
 The earth resounds to the fall of their feet
 as mad with youth they leap and dance.
 And they enter the close of the yogi's fire
 like witches' cats mid noise and din.

Of the girls teasing the yogi:-

They kick at his ashes and at his bowl
 and conch and horn; his incense and myrrh
 And hemp and poppy-heads they scatter,
 and they break his rosaries, and his pipe
 With chain and tongs; they throw away
 his mortar and pestle, and would not stop.

As raiders have often despoiled the Panjab,
the girls despoil the yogi's fire.

Of Ranjha turning to the attack:

As the master of the fort, bored with the siege,
prepares to make in the night a sally;
Or the tiger leaps on a herd of cattle
out of the bush; so Ranjha leaps
Upon the girls, and helter-skelter
they run, when suddenly a fair one stops.
'You cannot run away from me,
the yogi thunders at the village belle.

She throws off all her trinkets and veils,
discarding all her tricky ways.
But Ranjha obscenely shouts his threats,
with bloodshot eyes, roaring like a lion;
Like the Angel of death who does not care
to cover the nakedness of the dying.
Ah, Waris, the girl is brought to book,
and the trumpet is blown right in her face.

Of the girl's appeal to Ranjha:

'You'll kill me, mad fakir,' she cries,
'O do not strike me with your staff.
'I'll certainly not survive a blow,
so frantic you are, O let me be.
'You are huge as a giant, I am slight as an elf,
a kick from you may finish me.
'Tell me whatever you have to say,
I shall carry it to Saida's wife.
'She is my aunt, the woman you love,
we are no strangers, by any means.
'I'll plead with her on your behalf,
I'll cringe before her for your sake.
'I'll tell her all about your ruse
or holy adventure, as you like.'

When Azrail, Waris, knocks at the door,
no plea whatever may one advance.

Of Ranjha's message for Hir:-

- 'Go tell her, then, how well she has done
to turn me into a shambles, indeed.
'To me the text of "Drown and die
or live in utter dishonour." applies.*
'The flag of love was black and white
she has poured over it the red of strife.
'As the Ghilzas fell upon Adina²⁷
and plundered his camp and ruined his life.
'Or Ahmed Shah²³ who broke into shards
India's empire of centuries.
'She has put on fire the thread of gold
and made it glow deep red as blood.'
- 'She has put the Khera on the throne,
and turned me out, a grazier of cows.
'She has brought to the Khera victory,
to Ranjha adversity and sorrow.
'Deserting the Syals, their herds and man,
she has come to settle in the Khera's borough.
'In league with Sahiti she treated me like
one caught red-handed, deserving no grace.
- 'As Hind and Panjab trembled before
the Persian Nadir²⁹, she made me quake.
'Son of a squire, I was her servant
and known as cowherd everywhere,
'In the Lord's court will she receive her due
for the wrongs she has heaped on the head of a lover.
'While giving her love, she gave me pain
and untold torments in its wake.'

²⁷A quotation from the Kuran, an imprecation on sinners and unbelievers.

Of the girl's address to Hir:-

Released, the girl ran homewards straight,
 her heart was stabbed with terror and fright.
 She sits by the side of Hir and tells
 the yogi's tale in full detail,
 Who had forsaken all honour and pride
 and joy and mirth, the spirit's weal.
 'With pestle-blows you have driven him out,
 in the Black Park he has made his seat.
 'From the bow of beauty you have aimed
 the arrow of torment at his heart.
 'Tears pour from his eyes day and night like rain,
 and he cries like one whose soul is hurt.'

Of Hir's circumspect reply:-

'Look, dear, Ranjha has been most unwise
 to bare his heart for the world to see.
 'Mansur, when he disclosed his secret,
 was put for it, you know, on the cross.
 'For silence is the way of love
 and he who opens out will lose.
 'The parrot's chatter lands it in the cage,
 the mute fire-bird gets beautiful feathers.
 'For telling his dream to his father was Joseph
 thrown into a well by jealous brothers.
 'With all his wealth was Croesus buried
 under earth for flaunting it foolishly.'

Of the girl's loving reproaches:-

'He was a herdsman for your cattle,
 he says, when you robbed him of his soul.
 'You flaunted your youth before his eyes,
 and the world for him was full of joy.
 'You left to become a wife of the Kheras,
 he turned a yogi in utter dismay.
 'In that disguise he came to you here;
 Sahiti lashed at him like God's own hail.

'Beaten out of his wits with pestle blows,
he ran for shelter to the Park.

'You are undone too, if you fail him now,
for that is the truth, as lovers claim.

'As the soul that breaks its promise with one
and goes to enter another's frame,

'In Saida's coach you were lost to love,
and became the whole world's laughing stock.

'Like the page who tightens his horse's belt
and saddle at a command from the knight,

'The humble and obedient are welcome at
the Lord's court, so the saints have taught.

'Defeated and beaten, he has left the village,
as good sense leaves a drunkard's head.

'And like the saint Shakarganj himself,
he is bent on mortifying the flesh.

'He has launched in the river, strong in faith,
and to get across he has made a dash.

'But he contemplates you every moment,
for you are his penance and his God.'

Of Hir's ironical reply:-

'I am a rebel against his love,
and dare him do the worst he can.

'I am proud of my beauty, and on the strength
of my beautiful eyes, yes, I will fight.

'Filling them with kohl, I'll lay my snare,
he shall not escape, try hard as he might.

'I'll put much heart into my husband,
and make him fight this yogi, the clown.

'Saida worships me as Ravana did Sita,
he will get his Lanka of gold destroyed

'For me. But let not Rama put trust
in the hope that I'll return to his hall.

'Ranjha may have torn his ears for a trick,
even so he will not escape my toll.

'Taking shelter in the Black Park, too,
my beauty's tax he cannot evade.'

Of the girl's counter-reply :-

'Heiress to beauty and love you have
entrenched yourself in the Khera's fort.

'If you were to fail him in the end,
you should not have made him dare all this.

'You should not have trifled with the life
of one who was happy to see your face:

'Love is a delicate vine, it cannot
stand such perfidy and hurt.

'But if in proper season trimmed,
rich and luxuriant it grows.

'You brought him down in the game of love
he played with you and your mates in the wood.

'Was all that youth a passing shadow,
and fleeting like the summer's cloud?

'One should not fail a faithful lover,
and suffer whatever comes to pass.

'Go and present yourself at once,
a good deed cannot brook delay.

'Do not for a moment forget the Lord,
aware of Him you should ever remain.

'If you desert your God-given lover
all your adornments are in vain.

'A parrot used to feeding on sweets
will not eat gravel, whatever you say.'

XXIII

Of Hir's request to Sahiti:-

As supplicants go to crave the saints,
Hir goes to Sahiti to bring her round.

'Forgive all my trespasses, sister,
be pleased with me, I kiss your feet,

'As God forgives the sins of men,
 though they commit them day and night.
 'And to bring between us peace has Waris
 come, too, as mediator and friend.'

Of Sahiti's offended reply:-

'I am not concerned one way or the other;
 I am happy if I escape being hurled
 'Into dishonour by the flings of people;
 I cower under their unkind taunts.
 'Hairs on my body stand on edge
 as I remember some events.'
 Ah, Waris, a stone will get no colour,
 immersed in all the reds of the world.

Of Hir's humility before Sahiti:-

Hir humbly pleads with the irate Sahiti,
 'Forgive the sins of your own Hir.
 'For all the wrongs I've done to you,
 henceforth I am yours in every way.
 'Forgive whatever improper I said
 while I was under the Devil's sway.
 'It is a deed of merit to share
 the pain of others, O sister, dear!
 'Buy me with a good turn at no price,
 say twice to me what I have said.
 'This house, its wealth and riches are yours
 and yours its cows and buffaloes both.
 'Let us go to meet my lover who is here,—
 you always taunted me on his faith.
 'Discarding pride of birth and station,
 he was my herdsman and unpaid;
 'The lover of my earliest youth,
 he fondled and loosened my virgin tresses.
 'He is sitting now on meditation
 and does not speak, save when he blesses.'

Of Sahiti's reply in the same strain:

- 'I wash my hands of all such affairs,
 this sowing and reaping I discard.
 'Kill me for wishing well of my brother,
 take into your bed whoever you like.
 'You have had me struck by a rough already,
 give me more yourself, I shall take.
 'If I advise you any more, cut
 my nose, parade me on an ass.
 'You have challenged my right to the house of my father,
 you may say whatever more you please.
 'But those who lie shall be barred from heaven,
 like interest-takers, by the Lord.'

Of Hir's further entreaties:-

- 'For God's sake now, forgive me, Sahiti,
 be sweet for once to your sister-in-law.
 'One should share the pain of the poor, not like
 a snake in one's own poison stew.
 'You cannot but be the helper of love,
 ah, fortunate one, come with me now.
 'Let us go to the Black Park and invite
 him to our house for kindness' sake.
 'For good or evil I will not waver,
 all blame he puts on me I'll take.
 'If a poor man's way be blocked, one should
 be kind enough to make it smooth.
 'I would give a world for one like you
 who delights in making smooth love's path.
 'However you can, bring us together,
 like sugar and milk we two must be.

Of Sahiti's agreement:-

- As on one's breach of the morning prayer,
 the devil begins to dance with glee,
 There is delight in Sahiti's heart;
 yes, a woman's heart is a thing of glass.

'Go, I forgive you all your faults,
 I know your love is true, alas!
 Waris, as she goes to meet a lover,
 another game starts from today.

Of Sahiti going to see Ranjha:-

Loading her platter with cream and sugar,
 and putting five silver rupees on top,
 Sahiti goes to Ranjha in the Park,
 her offering covered with a piece of cloth;
 With faith in love, like a Muslim's faith
 in prayer and in the angel of death.
 But the yogi who had turned his eyes away
 at her approach, now flares up.

'For us at peace like souls in heaven,
 wherefrom has come this blast of hell?
 'I pray for rain and a dust-storm comes,
 that surely is an omen of doom!
 With folded hands Sahiti makes her bow;
 there is no acknowledgement from him.
 A learned man turns into a thief,
 when the Lord gives, Waris, a peasant to rule.

Of the Yogi's observations:-

'When the Lord Creator made this world,
 He made manifest some freaks of his art:
 'Woman, boy, dog, hen, and goat, and camel,
 astrologer, and ginn, and demon,
 'All these were made but the cause of strife;
 they superseded creation's cause.
 'In great disgrace was Adam expelled
 from heaven, thanks to one of these.
 'To prince and priest she brings much grief,
 and kings turn monks because of woman.'
 All merit, Waris, is given to man,
 and all demerit is woman's part.

Of Sahiti's reply:-

It was greed that brought disgrace on man
and got him driven from Paradise.

'Impurity filled his heart so much
that he was in a hopeless state.

'The angels told him that he must
in no case eat the grain of wheat.

'The Lord's command was, 'Do not approach
that tree," but he broke it. And in this

'He was helped by the peacock and the snake
and they were, too, expelled from Eden.

'But the Devil became man's partisan,
and put on woman all the blame.

'Though it was Adam who brought disgrace
on Eve, she never deserted him.

'You are lying. Man commits trespass
and suffering is on woman laden.

It was when the Lord inspired the Prophet
that he laid it down for man to marry.

'These women are the treasure-troves of grace;
such riches in their wombs they carry!

Of Ranjha's retort:-

'What stew did a woman brew for Ravana!
and how another made a horse of Bhoj!

'They have proved false to priest and prince,
like Sirkap³⁰ and Shalivahana,³¹ too,

'Real men keep women under fear of the rod,
only slaves of lust will spoil them so.

'Beardless, with holes in nose and ears,
who will speak for them before the Judge?'

Of Sahiti's rejoinder:-

If man is proud of name and honour,
woman is a thousand times more fair.

'The home is brightened by her presence
 though she be wrapped in the veil, of course.
 'She may be fond of toiletries
 or happy with her household chores,
 'She keeps her eyes glued to the ground,
 for modesty prevails on her.'

Of Ranjha's further observations:-

'No eunuch will ever keep his word;
 a Khoja* will always make a deal.
 'A tiger will not carry a pack,
 but an ass is never without a load.
 'The storm of love rages not for ever,
 a yogi should not be a woman's mate.
 'There are no songs in praise of cowards,
 catamites do not form a state.
 'A good wife will not have a lover,
 a widow must not flaunt a gawd.
 'God is the competent cause of all,
 man has no power for good or ill.'

Of Sahiti's pleading:-

'A woman beautifies events,
 and weddings are gay with women's songs.
 'Even funerals need a woman's laments,
 she is the link between kith and kin.
 'Women are the legacies of truth,
 with hearts they hold communion,
 As wives they are forts of fortitude,
 as mothers charity's fountain-springs.'

Of Ranjha's questioning and raillery:-

'What for do you make this show, O woman?
 Are you not content with bridling kings?

*A trading class in North India, of the Muslim faith.

'Ravana was destroyed because a woman
divulged the secret of his state.

'And hosts of Kauravas and Pandavas both
were turned into dust because of you.

'The Imams were killed in Karbala³²
and by the faith's custodians, too.

'Whoever was a man of honour and pride
fell prey through you to the direst fate.

'This yogi has fled from women, why
are you trying to put him back in strings?'

Of Sahiti's chiding reply:-

'You are enamoured of yourself,
nobody can measure up to you.

'Yourself a miracle-working saint,
you call her names who gave you birth.

'Were there no women, this show would end,
and none would then be on this earth.

'I know the truth behind your power,
I can see through all this boasting, too.

'You may disguise yourself as you like,
you were sent for with my full consent.

'By telling you are the cowherd Ranjha,
I can get you thrown out of this park.

'You eat your fill here like an ass,
and give no thanks to us who work.

'You do not pray, live like a thief,
and yet you call yourself a saint.'

Of Ranjha's pious rebuke:-

'Great kings like Gopi Chand³³ had to leave
this garden of the world too soon.

'And Indra, king of the gods, was robbed
by the demon Makhasur³⁴ of power and pelf.

'And Egypt's mighty tyrant Pharaoh
 who claimed indeed to be God Himself,
 'And played with Moses many a stunt;
 and king Naushirvan³⁵ of Baghdad;
 'And Croesus with heavy treasures of gold
 left with but a load of sin on his head;
 'And Nebuchadnezzar who in a balloon
 went up to the sky to shoot God down;

'Soloman, Alexander, and many another,
 over continents supreme,
 'And the tyrant Nimrud who had built
 upon this earth both heaven and hell;
 'Even such as claimed to be God Himself
 but had to leave this world for good.
 'All they were certainly your betters;
 you carry such notions in your head.
 'Adam had to leave the garden of Eden;
 for eating the grain of wheat he fell.
 'God is Himself the Doer, Waris,
 man only takes on him the blame.'

Of Sahiti's retort:-

'Why do you open this box of woes,
 why make this show of sophistry?
 'I bring an offering on this plate,
 tell me if you can, what it is;
 'Cash or what else is on this plate,
 tell me, O gallant of the handsome face.
 'It is a gift for you who have
 no patience for things of this world.
 'But just as rice needs to be husked,
 the flag of love has to be unfurled.
 'All things are done with effort, Waris,
 and you may also make a try.'

Of Ranjha's pious reply:-

'A miracle is a terrible thing!
 an awkward issue you have raised.
 'You trifle with people, beauty-mad,
 having met so far no knowing man.
 'God does whatever the saints desire
 and you embarrass me in vain.
 'Your platter is filled with rice and sugar,
 on top five coins of gold are placed.'

Of Sahiti's false retort:-

'A blind hawk set upon a covey,
 will go to peck at a bullock's balls.
 'A blind man sent for pomegranates
 and mangoes, will pick berries and figs.
 'Instead of plucking flowers and roses
 he will go to break acacia twigs.
 'The merchants will be robbed and killed
 when a blind man leads the caravan.
 'The fool required to dye a shawl
 will put it in a frying pan.
 'You've started on deceit and tricks,
 I deal severely with such fools.'

Of Ranjha's rejoinder:-

'Take off the cover from your plate,
 let not suspicion cross your mind.
 'Your chatter frays my nerves, keep quiet,
 what I have said God will make true.
 'So that your doubts may be dispelled,
 do as I say, and make no bones.
 'And when it is uncovered, your heart,
 will also be of cant refined.
 'God does whatever the saints desire,
 in vain are you embarrassing me.
 'Your plate is filled with sugared rice,
 on top of which lie five gold coins.'

Of Sahiti's uncovering the platter:-

When Sahiti uncovered the platter, of course
 it was with rice and sugar piled.
 The point of the yogi's miracle had
 pierced through the heart of unbelief.
 And Sahiti's faith that had so wavered
 was by this miracle quite restored.
 The touch of a miracle cools the waters
 boiling more than the pit of hell.
 By being stubborn with fakirs
 one stands to lose the boons of life.
 The strong and the weak have no equation,
 the one will rob and the other howl.
 Death keeps account of all, and none
 that is born is ever fully cleared.
 But by the touch of the philosopher's stone
 is copper, Waris, turned into gold.

Of Sahiti's submission:-

Now Sahiti submits with folded hands,
 'I am your servant, body and soul.
 'I'll serve you like a slave-born girl,
 and dance attendance on you ever.
 'I've found you a true fakir, indeed,
 and now I am yours along with Hir.
 'I've seen the miracle of your doing
 and yield to the miracle of your will.
 'All that belongs to me, my life,
 and Hir, and all my friends, are yours.
 'I never submitted to anyone else,
 your love divine has floored me now,
 'Reposing my faith in a saint of God's
 all other support must I forgo.
 'Sharecropping serf of Waris Shah,
 I cannot ever pay my scores.'

Of Ranjha's angry reproaches:-

'You waged a contest with the yogi,
 and bawled like a peasant overfed.
 'Proud of your father's house you were
 and hissed at me like a cobra snake.
 'Your maid and you abused me so,
 and with your pestles mounted attack.
 'And when you were beaten in the fight,
 you ran to the village wives and cried.
 'Bold at the mildness of a lover,
 you barked with the fury of a pard.
 'Ask Waris why the soul was put
 in the body if not to worship the Lord!'

Of Sahiti's repentance:-

'Forgive me in the name of God,
 I did this when I did not know.
 'Man, fed on milk, is apt to err,
 from Adam he has inherited it.
 'He was driven from heaven, made victim of death,
 for he erred in eating the grain of wheat.
 'And Satan, chief of the angels, was damned,
 in error of pride he refused to bow.
 'The soul with a promise enters the body,
 forgetting which it burns in fire.
 'Like Croesus the miser, neglecting his duty
 of paying Zakaat*, earned God's great wrath.
 'In error Zaccharia hid in the tree
 with which he was sawn alive to death.
 'In the court of God man shall be punished
 without good deeds, as Waris is here.'

*One-fortieth portion of one's wealth which according to Islamic canon one should give in charity.

Of Ranjha's laying it thick:-

'You counted too much on your people
and would have throttled me with your thumbs!

'But in the end truth must prevail,
there is no land that is all of liars.

'You struck and I took it with patience,
not one of those slobberers.

'You made all kind of taunts at me,
as having lived on others' crumbs.

'A peasant woman, you struck a fakir,
like earthen bowl on ironware;

'Now having provoked the fakir, you have seen
the miracle worked by a lover's despair.

'All rights and privileges of those
whom the Lord God favours, He safeguards.

'When unbelievers came and questioned,
the Prophet broke the moon in twain;*

'Made miracle test of prophethood,
bringing, too, a camel out of stone.'*

Waris, when she saw this miracle
Sahiti was obliged to eat her words.

Of Sahiti's further submission:-

'I'll go and do as you desire,
submitting entirely to your will.

'There is no doubt, I was to you
most uncivil, for which I grieve.

'But as your holiness may direct
I'll take to Hir your message of love.

'Your miracle now has made me see
I was born a sinner and am one still.'

Of Ranjha's breaking down at last:

'Go you to Hir and say it from me,
"O come, my love, I crave it of you!"

*Miracles associated with the Prophet Mohammad.

- 'Tell her how Ranjha begs of her,
 "Take off the veil, I crave it of you!
 "The lock coiled round your lovely neck,
 undo the coil, I crave if of you!
 "Be gracious, come and show your face,
 fair as the moon, I crave it of you!
 "Day and night I have no peace, I yearn
 for you, and pine, I crave it of you!
 "O let your havoc-working eyes
 work havoc on me, I crave if of you!
 "Love-stricken Ranjha has come to you,
 most beggarly, I crave it of you!
 "The duty of prayer is a heavy burden.
 O take it off, I crave it of you!"'

Of Sahiti's submission:-

- 'I'll send your pea-hen, queen of the flock
 of swans, and beauty of the herd of deer.
 'Having seen your miracle-working power,
 I go back home, your servant and slave;
 'Won over by your divinity,
 I'll sit at your feet for ever, with your leave.
 'Grant me the love of Murad the Baluch,
 I'll own you my master here—and there.'

Of Sahiti taking Ranjha's message to Hir:-

- Sahiti went and sitting close to Hir,
 gave her the news with burning faith.
 'He who bewitched by you had been
 your cattleherd is here again.
 'Condemned by you to become a fakir,
 he has changed accordingly his skin.
 'You let him quite slip from your mind,
 having made him crazy from his youth.
 'He has smeared his face and rent his ears,
 and you are now another's bride.

'From a cowherd he has become a fakir,
getting lost to all his kith and kin,

'While like Zulaikha you pretend to be pure,
only he, like Joseph, butted in.

'You have broken all your promises
and taken for husband Saida the proud.

'The debtor having refused to pay,
the creditor has now come for it.

'We drove him, both, out of our house
with foul abuse and pestle blows.

'He calls you now in the Park, go visit
that shrine and you'll be filled with bliss.

'At the shrine of man woman is absolved
of sin and sees the saintly light.

'By strenuous penance has he won
the saints' support and occult powers.

'He comes as a governor reinstated,
pay fealty to him, the sovereign lord,

'Though the power of your beautiful eyes
that made him a yogi from a herd,

'Still works and you are the grace and the nectar
he seeks and prays for at all hours.

'Something like the mask of a Bhil he wears
with a hollow big turban on his head.

'This cloud that hails from the Chanab
can make or mar you now for ever.

'Only prayer can save you, Hir, my girl,
from the discontent of a saint and lover.'

Absorbed in play, Waris, man forgets
the promise made, makes a joke instead.

Of Hir's reply:-

Says Hir, 'I'll now take off my veil,
and set his yogi's garb on fire.

'With eyes made sharp as a knife by kohl

I'll make short work of his pretence.

'If ever he was my herd I'll put

his love to the test and make him dance.

'And then to assure him of my faith

I'll fall at his feet and crave his care.

'Even if, having lost me, he were dead,

I shall like Christ, give him new breath.'

In fact, she is going to burn him down,

Waris, as the flame burns down the moth.

Of Hir going to see Ranjha in the Black Park:-

Having washed herself and dressed in silks,

Hir rubs her hair with fragrant oils.

She curls her murderous tresses up

or lets them stray down over her cheeks.

Eyes filled with kohl, provoking lust,

carrying weapons of oppression, she walks.

Paste rubbed on her face and rouge on cheeks,

she lays it thick with a woman's wiles.

A shawl of tissue covering her head,

and bunches of rings on her ears, she goes;

Her bodice of brocade blazing like fire,

and bracelets tinkling on her arms,

And anklets rattling on her feet,

and keeping in reserve more charms;

A medal and a band of gold on her brow

with tassels of gold thread hanging loose.

And like an elephant mad with lust

she hurtles along, killing all in her path.

Her eyes with pride inebriate,

and lips with bark all murderous red,

The fairy-queen goes frisking along,

or pauses like a peacock dancing awhile.

Now disappointing passers-by,
 she drops the veil, then lifts it to kill.
 The peasant woman going out to meet
 her lover, becomes artful, indeed,
 Exhibits her treasures one by one
 for the pleasure of the master of her troth.

Of Ranjha's seeing Hir:

Ranjha thinks, seeing her, it is either a fairy
 or it is perhaps Hir of the Syal.
 She would be accompanied by her maids
 if she were not a heavenly thing.
 The wood and meadow are all aglow,
 indeed it is a cloud of spring.
 Ah, it has gathered thick to pour,
 what blessed land it is going to fill!

It shines like the night of the Prophet's birth,
 whoever it chooses has all the luck,
 Her carriage, her gait are beautiful both,
 she is an image or a vision.
 She stirs him like a neady wine
 or drug of rare intoxication.
 Ah, Waris, she comes and clings to Ranjha.
 a ruby round a donkey's neck!

Of the meeting of the lovers:

As she lifted the veil and flashed on his eyes,
 Ranjha, losing his wits, went into a trance,
 The fairy of the garden of Lanka yields
 him visions of beauty long since lost.
 'Cruel parents sent me here by force,
 and for your love I am ground to dust.
 'But I've forsaken them and their kind,
 your pluck is now our only chance.
 'I have not touched a limb with the other,
 God is my witness in this part.

'Your trust is whole as ever, intact,
 only pining has burnt my blood to ash.
 'God knows I have divorced myself
 from all desire, my only wish
 'Is, Waris, take me away drom here,
 and drive all sadness out of the heart.'

Of Ranjha's reply:-

'I gave up my paternal acres,
 and grazed your cattle, became your herd.
 'The word of a maid who is bodied desire
 with the power of a demon, who can trust?
 'Your father and mother played false with me,
 and gave to the Kheras all the best.
 'Those sinful people with dross in their hearts,
 would never keep their plighted word.
 'For your sake had I left my home
 and entered like a thief, another.
 'But once there, under your magic I fell,
 became your plaything altogether.'

Of Hir's reply:-

'Stubborn were the sons of the Prophet Noah,
 and they died by drowning in the flood.
 'Oppressors were the sons of Jacob,
 you have heard of Joseph being sold a slave.
 'And conflict between Abel and Cain
 shook even the pole star high above.
 'Had I known my parents would give me a captive,
 I would have left long ago their brood.
 'Seven ells is all the estate of man,
 and yet his involvement has no end.
 'Our love came under an evil star,
 and we sowed, as it were, but roasted grain.
 'Fate worked as was the will of God,
 who can defy the writ divine ?

'Without God who ever pays heed to the poor
who have lost their moorings like us, dear friend?'

Of Ranjha's reply:-

'They gave you away to the wrong man, Hir,
and I was left to wallow in grief.
'And you got on so well with the Khera
whose laughter made you forget my love.
'For all your boasting and pretence
I know what little now I have.
'This frame of over three maunds* I gave
to you, and now it is light as a leaf.
'For me 'poor three'** alone turns up
of all the numbers on the dice of time.
'What surety is there of this life.
like writing on a bubble-plum?'

Of Hir's agreement and leave-taking:-

'Whoever has come into this world
must, ruing his term, depart from here.
'Joy does not last for a whole life-time
like the bee it has a sting in the tail.
'Man cherishes hope each moment of his life.
watched all the time by Azrael.
'The path of the man of love is strewn
with thorns and brambles everywhere.
'I go back with your leave and there
consult with Sahiti, my sister-in-law.
'When grief dries up the stream of love
it needs for a refill wisdom's rain.
'All founts of wisdom may we tap,
so that our love flows full again.

*The Indian weight equal to about 82 lbs.

**The poorest throw in Indian dice.

'I think we should prepare at once
for leaving here, if you'll allow.
'Please write for me the *Sura Ikhlas**
and let me get a soothsayer's word
'Out of the book of prophecy;
or else let Hafiz** or Waris be heard.

Of Hir at the moment of leave-taking:-

Swayed by devotion she touches his feet,
and then with passion clings to his breast.
It is a wonder unique to see,
to kiss the moth leaps up the flame,
Let the whole world know in the flash of lightning
or by the beat of thunder's drum!
Ah, like the sugar-plum of the thugs,**
she gives him a kiss and he is blest.

He began to rave like mad, all frantic,
as if some spell were cast on him;
And from the smoke of his sacred fire
a flame leapt up to kindle the air.
In the Park two lovers have come together,
throughout the village there is a stir.
Ah, Waris, the sundered have been united,
a fairy and a moon-struck groom.

Of Hir's supplications to Sahiti:-

Having taken her lover's leave, Hir comes
to consult with Sahiti on further steps.
The fakir thrown out the other day
must now be appeased with a better gift.

*A text of the Kuran, meaning 'the hymn of liberation.'

**The celebrated Persian poet of love.

***Reference to the trick of the famous thugs who had infested North India in the first part of the nineteenth century, of giving a poisoned sugar plum to their victims and then robbing them.

The ship of love tossing on the waters
must now be saved from further drift.

'He has gone to this length for me, says Hir,
'and I must now fulfil his hopes.'

'May you get Murad and Ranjha I,
for both of us love's fullest bliss.

'The lover who has bored his ears for me,
should now with happiness be crowned.

'O make such plans, dear sister, that he
and I may live together to the end.

'A long long time we have lived apart,
now let us meet in a long embrace.

'The hearts of lovers are God's own heaven,
let us bring some coolth there, for His sake.

'Youth is a state that does not last,
let us give to some at least its joy.

'A guest of a few days is our beauty,
it must be given a lavish employ.

'We women are known for being more clever
than the Devil himself, so let us take

'Men at their word, accept the challenge,
design some good pretext to meet

'Him here within these walls; for us
to go out would be hardly fit.'

Of the girls Raiba and Sarifa, congratulating Hir and cutting lustful jokes:-

Hir is accosted by two girls,
Raiba and Sarifa, 'Sister-in-law,

'You went like dead and now return
very much alive! tell us the truth

'What joy have you had so that you look
placid and calm, all bright and smooth.

'What scandalous gain have you made on the sly,
your face has the golden sparrow's hue.

- 'As if you had drawn youth in a lot,
there is a sparkle in your eye.
- 'It looks that that mad elephant of a yogi,
in the Park has tripped you on the hip,
- 'Your step is quick, your ears are perked
like a young mare's under the rider's whip.
- 'It looks today some gallant knight
has ridden the mare on a stony way.
- 'Your eyes are wild, your cheeks are flushed,
the pips of your paps rise under your vest.
- 'Someone has rubbed and squeezed your bosom,
and scatched your loins with his nails.
- 'Some lips have sucked your gold-ripe mangoes,
and split the juice upon the trails.
- 'You have had union with some lover,
the lines of kohl in your eyes protest.
- 'Tell us the truth, you have been squeezed,
and in some corner sprayed your hues.
- 'Your breasts like full-grown peaches pressed,
the feel of a lover's hand betray.
- 'Some gallant has strained you in his arms,
show the beat of your heart and the sweat on your brow.
- 'Some oversmart fellow has won the game,
so cleverly has he thrown the dice.
- 'The general has taken the fort by storm,
and won submission of the ryots.
- 'The marks of teeth show on your cheeks,
some priest has licked the temple maid.
- 'Tired and exhausted, out of breath
you are, let us press your limbs for aid.
- 'Today there has been Id* in the Park,
the famished have gorged themselves with sweets.

*The Muslim festival after the month of fasting.

- 'Long thwarted hopes have been fulfilled,
may beauty visit the Park full often,
'So that there it is spring for ever
and yogis get plenty of butter and cream.
'Whoever was in the Park today,
has got whatever was his aim.
'Brighter, so much brighter today are the pearls,
ah, sister-in-law, what a bath they have taken!
- 'The jasmine garland of your beauty,
a clever guy has plucked today.
'Somebody has felt you under the vest
and tickled the musk-pods of your breasts.
'The targets that you kept ever hidden,
some archer has shot them on their crests.
'Someone has mightily stretched your bow,
the strings are loosened restfully.
- 'Your loins are pale, and breasts are red,
and over your navel a hand has passed.
'He has taken the lid off the pail of milk
and skimmed the cream all dexterously.
'In high tide sways your youth today,
and the water-fowl are full of joy.
'Some thief has broken open the lock
and the casket of musk has been displaced.
- 'The strings of your bodice have fallen loose,
a lover has rolled you down on the floor.
'Your red skirt waves high in the wind,
its folds look twice as thick and flow.
'The red of your lips someone has sucked
and they are like sucked mangoes now.
'He must be a skilful Bowman, indeed,
who has shot and brought down this musk-deer!
- 'The black line of your kohl has flown
over to your temples and cheeks, even chin.

- 'Some waylayer seems to have kissed your lips
and chewed the roses, pink and red.
- 'The plunderers, having plundered the fruit,
do somewhere in the bush now hide.
- 'Your neck and bosom have been pressed
like wool that has been through the gin.
- 'What kind of press have you been through,
your face is yellow as the flower of gourd.
- 'Your limbs have all been stroked and squeezed,
excessive displacement there has been.
- 'Big trade in beauty has been done,
some new trader is active quite.
- 'Some washerman from abroad has come
and washed all silk and velvet white.
- 'The Kheras today like Kabuli dogs
have got their tails and ears chopped clean.
- 'A rare event has happened, Waris,
thieves cut the ears of the sleeping guard.'

Of Hir's evasive reply:-

- 'Some spirit has cast its shadow on me,
dear friends, that is why my face is pale.
- 'My rings got pressed against my cheeks,
and left impressions stiff and rough.
- 'I have been sucking my lips myself,
and the colour of the bark has been sucked off.
- 'I wept and tears flowed from my eyes,
that is why the lines of kohl have spread.
- 'I happened to hug the calf in my arms,
and for that reason my bosom is red.
- 'It pushed its head against my stomach
and that has left behind a weal.'

Of the giri's rejoinder:-

- 'Your eyes are blood-red, sister, today,
inordinately beautiful,

'Your thoughts are soaring in the skies,
you can hardly notice us human beings.

'Your looks are different altogetyer,
and differently your carriage swings.

'They are asking today who is this Khera,
where does he belong, that imbecile.'

Of Hir's address to Sahiti:-

'I am disturbed I know not why,
I cannot put my heart in work.

'I see a frown on the Khera's face,
as if it were a leaping flame.

'I have remembered that friend today,
for whom the whole world gives me blame.

'Over and again the strings of my bodice
come loose as if pulled from my neck.

'I have stepped over some evil magic,
it seems, or a ginn has got into me.

'From corners of the house I take such frights
as if some Tartar were lurking about.

'The tide of youth flows high today
and there are flakes of foam on it.

'Do not speak of it to anyone.

I may behave most wretchedly.

Of Sahiti's taunting reply:-

'Somebody has dealt with you today
as with a thief caught on the spot.

'The lines of kohl in your eyes have leaked,
and look like dents in a dagger-stab.

'Today a change of regime has been,
Qandharis have taken over the Panjab.

'Like a load of musk were snatched from traders,
you have been by a lover caught.

'Some hungry bachelor's luck has turned,
whose love had languished into despair,

'Those who were rolling before in dust,
become today lords of the land.
'Your toiletries make such a show,
like a whole shipload had been distrained.
'But those who are used to perfumes and pastes,
how can they ply the trade of war?'

Of Hir's lame excuses:-

'What a row you are making in vain, O girl,
insulting one who is down and out!
'Where did I, wailing for my brother, go out?
am I a maneater you'd shout me off?
'Forsaken of kith and kin I am,
and you toss my name about and laugh.
'I've been to bring a charm from one
for an ache in the bowels that leaves me not.'

Of Sahiti's counter-reply:-

'Somebody has smartly bridled you,
and pressed his heels into your sides,
'And galloped over a field left open
to him by someone off his guard.
'Hot is the mare's breath, her lips are bloody,
the rider has pulled the reins too hard.
'What had to happen has happened, Waris,
it little avails if someone chides.'

Of Hir's anguished reply:-

'I am lost, the sky falls ever my head;
the girls of the village have lost their wits.
'They heap calumny on someone's daughter,
devoid of sympathy, strangers of blood,
'All kinds of darts they shoot at me,
who am innocent in word and deed.
'Themselves full of the lust of youth,
they swagger and reel like drunken sots.'

Of Sahiti's taunts again:-

'We know all of your ways, O Hir,
excuses that you can trip up.

'You play yourself the dangerous game,
and say we are intoxicated.

'You claim to be selfless, guileless, blameless,
and let the Kheras be robbed and looted.

'The game of love you much enjoy,
and dance around without a stop.'

Of Hir's attempt at evasion again:-

'From all such intent, I am free,
I say on oath, if you will believe.

'I do not follow your oily talk,
and the subtleties you bandy in gnomes.

'I only remember my father's home,
drawing lines* to see if someone comes.'

But, Waris, how can they get any peace
who gasp for breath in the desert of love?

Of Sahiti's taunts again:-

'Tell me if we are lying, my lady;
did you feel like this even yesterday?

'You return from the Park, so out of breath,
and see a frown on the Khera's face.

The mare that was fidgetting constantly,
is now at peace, all placid and smooth

The stalk being stripped of all its blossoms,
is striving for new bloom today

Of Hir's reply of pain:-

'Ill-fated, I am caught in a vice,
by yearning stabbed, with an ache in my heart

*A superstitious custom in the Panjab. Parallel lines are drawn and then scored into pairs. If an odd line remains it indicates a guest will come.

'That starts somewhere deep in the loins,
 and my being is laid prostrate and trembles.
 'All of mine is taken in escheat,
 and I have not a cownie left.
 'People strive and struggle for a profit,
 I am of even my stock bereft.
 'I planted mangoes, fed them with milk,
 but they have all turned into brambles.
 'My soul does not feel at home with the Khera,
 God and the Prophet will take my part.'

Of Sahiti's lustful reply:-

'Your tresses are waving upon your cheeks,
 and the lines of kohl run deep in your eyes.
 'And butterflies flit about, afraid
 on dagger-sharp edges to alight.
 'Eyes that have turned kings into beggars,
 their chariots and elephants lost overnight.
 Waris, locks and eyes, and cheeks, and lips
 most murderous are of love's decoys.

Of Hir's confession of a sort:-

'Rain follows a drought of full twelve years,
 and garden and orchard are a riot of colour.
 'The commander dismissed being reinstated,
 has dusted his carpets, tents, and all.
 'Vines long gone dry turn green again
 at sight of love and beauty in the soil.
 'I had foundered like a boat upon a shoal,
 how waters have drenched me up to the collar!'

XXV

Of Sahiti's coming round:-

Having flung her taunts and jibes at Hir,
 the hypocrite Sahiti advises caution.
 Drilling deep in layers of pretence,
 she opens her plentiful store of deceit.

Inside she is the Devil himself,
 outwardly would the scripture quote.
 Negating all precedent of faith
 she opens the page of gross damnation.
 'Day and night I worry over you and your lover,
 but fear at heart on my brother's account.'
 And then before her mother, Waris,
 she would all falsely make lament.

Of Sahiti's plaintive speech to her mother:-

'We brought her for a bride, she feels
 a crane ensnared, an endless worry.
 'In front of her rightful husband she burns
 with rage, is ever tense with him.
 'She has seldom sat up hale and hearty,
 lying in bed ever since she came.
 'Countless her ailments are, though now
 of yesterday she is somewhat well.
 'A home should thrive with a faithful wife,
 but she has proved so ruinful.
 'She takes not kindly to wheat or rice,
 or milk, and starves herself to die.'

Of the mother's reply in the same strain:-

'The elephant is an army's pride,
 and the horse adornment of a man.
 'To eat and dress well, live in pomp
 and show, are the blessings of this earth.
 'Buffaloes and cows are the beauty of pens,
 and wives are the beauty of home and hearth.
 'The horse of a prosperous owner would fly
 without wings and on the race-course win.
 'To return unfaith for faith is the way
 of the she ass, child, that is the word.
 'A wife should be faithful to her spouse,
 the whole world works upon that rule.'

'Women can by love win the hearts of men
 who'll come like stages ever to the same pool.
 'But an evil woman will come to her senses
 only when she is kicked in the sides and hard.

'Our Saida avoids her like a fury,
 and they look like mortal enemies.
 'She cannot put her heart in the village,
 what cure is there for unreal ills?
 'Shall we sell her in the market if she is fair?
 'We'll have our son marry someone else.
 'She has never sat on the couch in our yard,
 we are grieved so much over all her ways.

'Mullah, physician, and the healer
 earn so much from us on her account.
 'Why should we have to pay these fines
 for sins we did not ever commit.
 'We'll put them together in a room
 and lock it from the outside tight.
 'Let Saida force her down and take
 his due from her as it was meant.

'We'll bear that shame before the world,
 and turn our faces aside for a while.
 'We will not be frightened by her shrieks,
 let her cry and weep, that will set her right.
 'How can we spinning parties hold?
 on the spinning-wheel she would not sit.
 'Ah, Waris, for shame on her account,
 we feel like drowning ourselves in a well.'

Of Hir approaching her mother-in-law:-

As the Sharper³⁶ Umar to the angel Azazil,
 so Hir approaches her mother-in-law.
 'May I go with Sahiti for a round of the fields?
 I waste myself all pent up here.'

And chirping similar false excuses

Sahiti, too, comes up to her.

Like the cock of the thugs crowing at midnight.

she crows with evil intent, the daw.

Of Sahiti joining Hir in this:-

Like the hag who poisoned Hasan Imam,³⁷

a cock-and-bull tale she invents.

Damning the lawgiving kazi and her mother,

she proves more clever than the Devil, indeed.

'Come, sister,' she says, 'let us breathe some air

of this fair world before you are dead.

'My heart suggests I should take her out

a-picking cotton,' and the mother consents.

Of Sahiti reproaching her mother on Hir's account:-

'She is a beauty of fragrant limbs,

do not let her languish, she needs fresh air,

'This precious ruby you have thrown

in a cellar, for lack of discernment, mother.

'You have crushed this rose-flower in your fist,

in anguish she will fade and wither.

'You are bent upon killing the daughter of the Syals;

ah, Waris, who do you think you are?

Of Sahiti commending Hir to her mother:-

'Daughters-in-law are pictures of a vision,

embodied pride they are of the home.

'Fair-faced like figures from the moon,

some soft like wax, some may look severe.

'Some are like angels, some pea-hens

of the Park of Grace, all gay and fair.

'They dress fair, look fair, and are fair

in give-and-take all generous and sweet.

'They flourish like wood-nymphs out of doors,

not pent indoors like a harem-mate.

'Waris, some are laden with pride of youth,
and some in beauty glow and beam.'

Of the mother giving Sahiti permission to take Hir out:-

'Yes, let her leave the bed for once,
so that her limbs are nimble for a while.
'Day and night she has lain an invalid,
fresh air may bring some colour to her face.
'If a daughter is unwell in the home,
to parents it is no small distress.'
Why should not Hir speak smartly, too,
When Sahiti is with her, heart and soul?

Of Hir addressing her mother-in-law:-

'O mother, always lying in bed.'
she says, 'my poor heart I consume.
'It may revive in the open air,
this remedy also let me try.
'I sorrow over my fate alone,
nobody else I wrong, do I?'
Look, Waris, how fate challenges
by setting out another game?

Of Sahiti instructing the other girls:-

To sit together and think out measures,
Sahiti sends for her friends and speaks to them
Of whom some are maids and some are wives,
each fair as the moon in face and brow.
They gather round Sahiti as students do
around their teacher to hear and know.
Virgins who will make roasts of their parents
as they will roast common pulses and gram.
With Hir and Sahiti placed in the centre,
the vanities cluster around the mark,
Like elephants maddened by their pilots
to set to break the gate of a fort.

'Get you up early in the morning, friends,
and come out to our common resort.

'Her parents no-one is to inform
for we go tomorrow to invade the Park.

'And Hir will go along with us
to refresh her spirit that has been ill.

'The skirting ceremony of the cotton.*
we shall perform, with no man there.

'We shall invent a lie, of course,
should some one on the way enquire.

'We shall leap and jump, and frisk and dance,
and fill with colour all the water in the well.'

'Pick cotton and put it in our sacks,
wind shawls on our heads so that we look fine.

'Mocking at passersby, we'll make
a fine sight, all same size and age.

'And then to the wood with girt-up loins
to dig up every mark and ridge.'

Thus, Waris, they settle among themselves
to head towards Aju's fields in a line.

Of the consultations and impatient waiting of the girls for the morning:

The night was passed in consultations
or in madly counting the stars.

And it was hinted in every home,
they would gather in the morning at the well;

Hold wrestling contests, other matches,
and challenges flew from one and all.

Impatient about the morning, they
forgot about their daily chores.

A reproachful father was thrown off his feet,
and a chiding mother slapped in the face.

*The first day of picking cotton which is done in the Panjab generally by women : hence skirting.

In the morning they gather and whirl and dance,
as is the way of the young and fair.

Some, coy and arch, stick up their noses,
and some are simple, not quite aware.

Some are quiet and graceful, virtuous wives,
some are wanton and playful, lacking grace.

Hosts of the Devil, sophisticated,
without fire they set the wood ablaze.

They gird up their loins, shed dust and sloth
off their fair persons before they start.

No spinning today, all parties cancelled,
as spinning cotton was the Devil's part.

Their narrow pyjamas were rolled at the ankles
and skirts revolving all in a maze.

Applying henna to their palms at night
and lines of kohl to their eyes at dawn;

And artificial moles throwing into
relief their beauty, and their lips

With chewing bark red, and their bosoms
displaying the breasts like dancing tops,

The married ones particularly
throw passer-by out of step, out of tune.

Of the Poet's observations:-

The night was passed in vigil and prayer,
and fate too seemed to have quickened its step.

Indeed whatever is fated happens,
all complications arise from fate.

Fate has turned kings into beggars and made
princesses bring their honour to naught:

Fate makes the beloved indifferent to
her lover who loses all peace and sleep.

Some all absorbed, grow mad like Punnu
and drink themselves out of their senses.

Even Ali³⁸, so eminent, killed the slave,
and the Asahabis knowing not at all.

What an occasion has Hir created,
 with the girls of the village rallying to her call!
 Ah, friends, it is an arduous task,
 one love needs a hundred thousand pretences.
 Having made their plans at night, like raiders
 from Kandhar planning to raid the Panjab,
 Waris, girls of every description gather
 on the fields of the Khera, to do a job.

Love brought Farihad to a sorry end,
 made Joseph bear the lot of a slave.
 Brave knights like Mirza³⁹ were killed in the wood,
 and beauties like Sohni drowned in the river.
 Even kings cringe beggarlike before love;
 what strength has one to defy its power?
 A princess like Sasi died in the desert
 that blazed in summer's noon like fire.
 The whole creation are subjects to love,
 it is nothing new to happen to Hir.
 For, Waris, strange are the ways of the world
 and stranger still the ways of love.

Of the girl's preparations:-

Having to go to the fields in the morning
 the girls had flattered and humoured their mothers.
 Each in her way prepared herself,
 the married as well as the unmarried;
 As pilgrims prepare for Haj to the Mecca,
 and fasters look for the moon of Id;
 Like brides who are filled with joy on the eve
 of wedding, though they may not show it to others.

They dance with joy and make the earth
 throb, quake and tremble under their feet.
 Long chains of bangles clinking on the wrists,
 at every step they leap and frisk.
 They gather around the mangers on the farm,
 all in their best, adorned and brisk,

Sahiti took leave of her mother, too,
after everyone gave her a shout.

They file into lines and rows to march,
all like a traders' caravan,
With Sahiti assembling them together
like strands of hair gathered in a tress.
Daughters of Brahmins, of Khattris, of Jats,
of goldsmiths, too, around her press.
As a horse runs wild without a rider
so bounce and curvet wife and maid,
With faces fair as the moon, sharp eyes,
and figures like columns of sandalwood.
Waris, Hir will now be bitten by a snake,
that is the ruse agreed upon.

Of Sahiti starting out with Hir and others:-

Taking from her mother permission for Hir,
as it was settled all, of course,
Sahiti prepares along with Hir to go
with others of silver hue alike.
Like Turks flowing out from their lines for a visit
to the town bazaar, they gambol and frolick;
The streets look like race-courses, for
not a young one there is left indoors.

It is Holi* being played in the court of Indra,
with clinking and rattling of silver and gold;
Nose-rings and ear-rings with gold leaves
and *tikkas*** fine upon their brows,
Bracelets and anklets tinkling, and tassels
scattering fragrance of the rose!

*The Hindu festival when people throw coloured water on one another.

**A medallion-like ornament worn on the forehead.

They rush about in all this splendour,
 with an understanding of their task,
 Like deer of the forest on the run,
 their well-shaped bodies aquiver with musk.
 The girls look a band of long-haired friars,
 and Sahiti is leader of the fold.

The host of beauty spills into the fields.
 with girt-up loins as for the attack.
 They run and dance and leap and whirl,
 and dig up every hedge and close.
 Breaking from the stalk a bramble-thorn,
 Hir pricks her foot for blood to ooze.
 The archer taking a well-fixed aim,
 has shot the queen of beauty's flock,
 It was nothing less than a hooded snake
 had bitten her, Sahiti the charmer said.
 Waris, out of the revenues of the land,
 only the share of Kasur is paid**.

XXVI

Of Hir's condition after the snake-bite:-

With clinched teeth, Hir fell prone on the ground,
 and Sahiti raised a cry of dolour.
 The blackest cobra, swelling its hood,
 had bitten the foot of her sister-in-law.
 The others joined in the wail, and a crowd
 collected, off their work for the day.
 They carried Hir home on a cot,
 while every minute her face changed colour.

Out of all the prose and poetry
 Pesian and Turk, women draw pretence,
 But the ruse these tricksters have played here,
 no book has mentioned ever before.

**A rather private joke.

The Devil even would come and bow
to them and own defeat for sure.
They could have singed even Plato's beard,
and, full of wonder, Waris looks askance.

Hir clenches her teeth, contracts her limbs,
deflates her cheeks, and twists her jaw.
With nostrils shaking, she sobs and weeps
her eye balls showing blue and pale.
She looks like dying, in the rigours of death,
no remedy other than a charm would avail.
The Devil and his comrades fold their hands,
acknowledging Sahiti their regina.

Of the distress of the Kheras:-

The trackers of the Kheras come
upon the scene among a crowd,
As the news of the mishap reached the village,
and the earth seemed under their feet to tremble.
The bride of the Khera, daughter of the Syals,
and queen of all where women assemble;
Whose gait was smooth like the royal swan's
or like the peacock's dance was proud;

Between whom and the Khera from the very start
ruled discord, she did not love the lout;
To the grief of her mother-in-law, has been
bitten by a snake, the serpent-maid,
About women it is written in the Holy Kuran,
that they are great deceivers, indeed.
She has melted the gold of the Kheras entire
in the furnace of her scorn, no doubt.

Of the snake-charmers and physicians being sent for:-

Magicians and physicians and
snake-charmers from all around were called.
They brought the Feringi's alchemy,
and Plato's sovereign remedy.

Thousands of snakes the charmers brought,
 kept in their baskets for display;
 Incense and perfume, amulets, shells,
 and threads by virgins spun and rolled.

Then Hir was curtained off from others,
 and cactus-milk and herbs and roots,
 And betel-nut and onion juice,
 the snake-bead steeped in milk and butter;
 Oil, chillies, copper-ash and ghee
 were put in her mouth with a nervous flutter.
 A village, Waris, whole of snake-charmers,
 had brought all kinds of antidotes.

Of Hir's precarious condition:-

The cures are all irrelevant,
 no difference can be marked in Hir.
 Women, seeing her, say, 'The poison has spread,
 not much chance of survival is seen.'
 Says Hir, "A dagger has pierced my heart,"
 as if she would be finished soon.
 'It seems she is going to die,' they whisper,
 both good and evil, showing great concern.
 'Ever since she smelt that string of beads,
 she has lost herself beyond return.'
 Waris, let us send for Ranjha, the healer,
 he has alone the cure for her.

Of Sahiti speaking to her mother:-

'This snake seems pliable to no charm,'
 went Sahiti to her mother and said.
 'A yogi with occult powers has come
 in the Black Park, perhaps he can cure this ill.
 'All kinds of snakes, frog-eater, spot,
 the viper, the adder, dread him all.
 'The crowned, the flying, the coiled, all kinds,
 black cobra, python are afraid.

'All ginn and ghosts fly from his magic;
no pain or ache but he can cure.

'Whoever comes to him is rid
of chronic, even malignant ills.

'Demons and fairies, kings and queens,
all come to him to show their pulse.

'Where other physicians own defeat,
his skill prevails, and it shall here.'

Of the Khera's counsels to send for the yogi:-

'Whom should we send,' discuss the Kheras,
'who should throw himself down at his feet?

'Ask him to help in the name of God,
and wave the scarf of his grace on us.

'Apprise him of our plight in full,
for women are blessings of homes, to be sure.

'Should say, "For God's sake come along,
your entry there will draw His grace."

'We spent so much to wed this Hir,
and were trated there with even more.'

Thus all of the tribe decide, 'Let Saida
go to the yogi when the two lights mix.'

They say, 'Bring him as best you can;
touch his feet with your hands, and brow, and cheeks.

'Tell him, "you rule over bird and beast,
and ginn and ghost, your wisdom is great.'

Of Aju sending Saida to the yogi:-

'Go, Saida, my son, says Aju, 'to the yogi.

'Wives are exceeding precious things.

'Saluting him with folded hands,
say, "You have saved whole clans and tribes."

'Tell him everything, with hope in your heart,
make humble entreaties, ignore his jibes.

'Describe how a snake has bitten your wife,
tell her condition in detail.

'Say, "Come, O yogi, for the Lord's own sake,
we are in great distress," bewail.'

Ah, Waris, where love has taken his bite,
no charm can ever allay the pangs.

Of Saida going to the yogi:-

Saida takes his wrap and tightens his belt
and dusts his shoes and takes a stick.

He makes great haste and swings his arm,
as if in hot pursuit of a herd.

And as he crosses into the Park,
the yogi starts up at the sight and wonders.

'Stop, boy, where are you rushing in?'

he stamps his staff on the ground and thunders.

Saida shakes with fright like a leaf in the wind,
the beating of his heart can be heard.

He raises his arms and shouts his name,
and caught with fright, feels giddy and sick.

'What has happened to you,' the yogi asks,
'that you cry in such distress and quake?'

'For God's sake, yogi, come to my help,
a knife is grinding at my heart.

'My wife went cotton-picking in the fields,
where a cobra bit her all apart.

'As a snake unknown may bite the listeners
assembled to hear the Holy Book.'

Of Ranjha's disheartening reply:-

'It is sinful to try to change what is fated,
a snake bites, for fate wills it so.

'The snakes of Syal, at any rate,
will not respond to any spells.

'And those in love with God are eager
to live whatever way He wills;

'And having forsaken this world for the wood,
care not to share a woman's woe.

'I am done with women, and fear to go
 near them, my witness is the Kuran.
 'Let the woman die that I may hear
 laments in every tune and pitch.
 'When a young woman dies, mad friars like me
 are siezed with a strange delight and itch.
 'Waris, having shaved my head and beard
 I have grown quite cold and hard as a stone.'

Of Saida's further entreaties:-

With folded hands and bended head
 and grass in mouth, Saida begged and craved.
 'In God's name I appeal to you,
 if you go to her she will be healed.
 'We have not eaten since yesterday,
 we are cut into pieces, hacked and mauled.
 'A poisonous snake has bitten my wife;
 we have tried all charmers of the land.
 'For God's sake come and rescue us,
 Our ship is sinking on the strand.
 'If you go with me to my snake-bitten wife,
 she will be cured and we'll be saved.'

Of Ranjha's further reply:-

'It would be the will of God that one
 should die when bitten by a snake.
 'What cure can I find, man, for your wife,
 I who have ruined my house and clan?
 'You are only catching at straws, O peasant;
 time, fate, and the will of God alone
 'Prevail, even prophets cannot turn
 them from their course,' the yogi spoke.
 'I have discarded riches, power
 and pelf of the world, and turned a fakir.
 'Why should I turn to them again,
 catch at the flying, leaving those in hand?

'My art does not work on married women,
 for them I have no magic wand.
 'A sin it would be for a fakir
 to go to a woman, under any excuse,
 'As for a soldier to desert
 the battlefield from cowardice.
 'If I sit on the stage and open the Kuran,
 I shall be casting only a snare.'

Of Saida's further entreaties:-

Says Saida, 'My wife cries so in pain,
 there is indeed no stopping her.
 'A tall young thing, all fairy-like,
 she looks splendid in her working dress.
 'But at my touch she would tear at it
 and weep and cry in sore distress.
 'For her mother-in-law or sister-in-law
 she does not have a word to spare.
 'I dare not put my hand on her bed;
 in that way she is nothing afraid.
 'She has beaten me often and then cried,
 and balked me so far of my right.
 'I have not touched a limb of her,
 and know not if she is lean or stout.'
 Waris, I have wasted all my life
 just so, neglecting to worship my God.

Of a trick of Ranjha:

The yogi now draws a circle and fixes
 a dagger at the centre of it.
 And then he puts poor Saida on oath
 to speak the truth, as they do with a thief.
 He places the dagger on Saida's neck:
 'Swear now, you have not had her, oaf!'
 Thus, Waris, man forgets his God
 and wastes this life in fear and doubt.

Of Saida taking the oath:-

The Khera gave assurances

to the yogi, 'I swear by the name of God!

'May I die of leprosy, if ever

I have been intimate with Hir.

'For me she is distant like the line

of the mounts of Caucasus or Kashmir.

'Far off across the seas like Lanka,

or just like Farihad's sweet canal.

'I view her from afar and pray

as on the grave of Pir Panchal.*

'She looms before me like a hill

against which in vain I may knock my head.

'Such a withering scorn she darts at me,

I dare not look her in the face.

'If a cow would gore you with her horns,

vain are your hopes of milk and cream.

'I hear them say Hir is a fairy,

for me her face is like a tomb.

'It is sinful, Waris, to lie to a saint,

or misappropriate what is his.'

Of Ranjha beating Saida:-

Even so with the fury of an injured man,

Ranjha rises from his heap of embers.

With bloodshot eyes, he cries in wrath,

'Look at this owner of Hir, this lout,

'Stepping on my seat with dirty shoes,

you have dared defile my place of prayer.'

His eyes are filled with tears of rage,

like a shopman plundered in open bazaar.

He throws down Saida and beats him like

a thief or lover caught on the spot.

*In Kashmir.

And, Waris, in fear of God I weep
till my eyes are drained of tears and slumbers.

Of Saida running away:-

Reeling under the blows, Saida starts to run;
in a jiffy he is back at home.

'He is not a fakir, he is a robber,'
he wails and shows the marks and weals.

'All magic of Kamrup* he may know,
what havoc he will work, I wonder.

'A demon come down ont his land,
to strike one's life out with his thunder;

'He draws a circle, blows the conch;
then he reads the Kuran, gives prayer-calls.

'He would have beaten me into pulp;
and broken my arm or other limb.'

Of Aju's constrenation:-

'Unheard of is this banditry,
the havoc this fakir has done.

'My son of gold he has battered near dead,
and made him unfit ever to work.

'Fakirs should work grace on the world,
this yogi works horror, naked and stark.

'Wearing the mask of a holy fakir,
the demon! he poses for a man.'

Of Sahiti's advice to her father:-

Says Sahiti, 'Father, go yourself,
Saida is too stiff-necked, rather prim.

'His head is stiff like a lizard, indeed,
there is defiance in his face.'

*Old name of the country now known as Assam, a state of the Indian Union. It was in old times renowned for its magic.

Perplexed at the state of his daughter-in-law,
 Aju rides his horse at a trotting pace.
 Like Waris rapt too much in his youth,
 he now repents over wasted time.

Of Aju appealing to the yogi:-

Aju begs the yogi with folded hands,
 'You are the loved one of the Lord.
 'A perfect man of God you are,
 you sure can change the writ of fate.
 'Your prayer is ever granted by Him,
 and you can put all matters right.
 'Day and night you meditate on God,
 the demon of self you have stabbed and gore'd.

'You are also under His writ, but are
 a special minion of His court.
 'A snake has touched my daughter-in-law
 you can with your charms take out the sting.
 'The young thing surely can be saved,
 if you let her catch your apron-string.
 'Forgive all sins of Waris Shah,
 forgiveness is your gracious part.'

Of the yogi's dialogue with himself:-

I gave up the world and took to the woods,
 but thus they will not let me live.
 Like worms gone deep into the bone,
 their hopes and fears beset them so.
 My spells, like the wheels of a cart, have made
 a rut out of which I cannot go,
 Waris, I am fed up with this world,
 one of these days I'll have to leave.

Of Aju's humility:-

'Come, come, O Yogi, for the sake of God,
 this is a call from man to man.

'I offer whatever I can afford,
 my cattle, my stores, myself my kin.
 'Since yesterday we are plunged in grief,
 and asking omens of kites and crows.
 'This is my prayer with folded hands,
 my most humble submission.'
 Most wonderful are your ways, O Lord,
 the thief is asked to guard the close.
 Who can rely, Waris, on this breath?
 we waste our precious lives in vain.

Of the yogi going to examine Hir:-

His soul all wrought, gets up the yogi,
 and for good omen the partridg trills.
 The Kheras may wait for a better hour,
 they bring the yogi to shave them clean.
 Look at their loss of wits entire,
 they give the hawk the prey it seeks.
 The hungry one is asked to watch
 over rice and sugar and pudding and cakes.
 The widower called to marry others
 would rather marry himself again:
 The ass is to guard the heap of hay,
 the blind one asked to read out bills:

 The snake of pretence has bitten the fairy,
 King Solomon comes to read the charm.
 The expert comes to do his job,
 all laymen have been turned aside.
 In all good faith they have sent for him,
 and he has come to seduce their bride.
 They have called him as a charmer of snakes,
 but he will work a different charm.
 He will unsettle well-settled homes,
 and pull the trees out from their roots.

You were sent, O Waris, to worship the Lord,
but you have indulged in vain pursuits.

Of the women's remarks:-

'Hir may be taken now for saved,
the much-needed healer has come by chance.
'He left his home to be a herd,
and then he practised *yoga* that heals.
'A thousand charms live in his flute
and each can cure a hundred ills.
'There is a riot of colour in the trees
like it were the month of showers and rains.'

Of the Poet's observations:-

God is pleased to notice Sahiti, too,
this yogi is master of all hearts.
All parties have realised their wishes,
that was the purpose of his fire.
His charms have started to work on the Kheras,
the Great Call* has achieved desire;
As when the bridegroom comes for the bride,
her parents play allotted parts.

A show is put up by the spirits,
and dust is thrown in the eyes of all.
One charm will make two puppets fly,
such are the feats of a charming saint.
The gentleman stealer is on a visit,
the gentleman seducer has pitched his tent.
For long the yogi has burnt his fire,
today the Kheras must answer his call.

He can make a mountain of a mole,
has cured Hir's illness, has the Lord,

*The shout of the yogis is so called.

Long mumbled prayers have now been heard,
 the lover has come to his fair host.
 Desires of people have been fulfilled,
 and the long-lost treasure recovered at last.
 Now Sahiti takes matters in her hand
 and Hir is lodged in a house under guard.

That is the way women can bewitch,
 look at the trickery of these two.
 She gives the herd herself to robbers,
 in beating the drum she also leads.
 The two of them shall not be here
 tomorrow, so the omen reads.
 The Devil is put to shame by women
 who will grind a rock on china-clay.

Of the girl's jokes with Hir:-

'Congratulations, sister-in-law,
 girls come to Hir from hither and thither.
 'The thirsting one is blessed with nectar,
 you have become a yogi's ward.
 'The fire of hell round you is quenched,
 and the veriest heaven is your reward.
 'God had conceded your heart's desire,
 the pearl and the ruby are strung together.'

Of the yogi sending men and women away:-

The yogi now in an auspicious hour
 prepares to bake the loaf of the saint.⁴⁵
 'No man or woman must hover near
 no shadow should be cast on her.
 'I want to be left alone in a corner,
 it is surely not a wrestling fair.
 'I have to read my charms in her ear,
 not to publish them abroad with a vaunt.'
 'One person only is permitted,
 and that too an unmarried one.'

'Burning incense and myrrh in the night,
 I have to concentrate my mind.
 'It is hard to deal with a snake, it may
 escape and leave its breath behind.
 'Do not forget to pray, it is stressed,
 seven hundred times in the Holy Kuran.
 'I have to read a thousand charms
 and more just as I have been taught.
 'The doors of the place should all be shut
 that I may not be disturbed for aught.'

Of Sahiti obeying the yogi's command:-

Sahiti was called in to watch the job,
 she put her sleeping cot in the yard.
 A room belonging to the village bard
 outside was chosen as the site.
 The yogi sat beside the couch,
 after due propitiatory rite.
 As a knight the lover proudly sat
 beside his lady-love as guard.

The Khera went home and slept in peace,
 having left the dove to the eagle's care.
 Snapping its fingers and wagging its hand,
 Fate cooes and crows above his head.
 They'll throw dust over their heads and wail
 who brought Hir to their home as bride.
 Waris, they will now make loud laments,
 who sang the wedding songs before.

XXVII

Of Ranjha praying to the five saints:-

At midnight Ranjha thinks of the Pirs*
 with the tassel of Khizr in his hand, he prays.

*Here the five saints of old times celebrated for granting people's wishes, are named, Khizr is not included in these five.

He kisses the kerchief of Shakarganj, weighs
 on his palm the ring of Lal Shahbaz;
 And the crook of Syed Jalal Bukhari,
 from which are wafted musk and rose.
 Taking out Makhdum Jahania's dagger,
 Ranjha shakes within himself and sways.

Baha-ud-din Zaccharia gives a shake
 and the wall falls down to open a way,
 He says, 'What are you waiting for?
 Get up, we have smoothed your path, and go.'
 Waris, when the angel of death comes down
 and, challenging, catches hold of you,
 Then you wil l certainly repent
 you did not ever care to pray.

Of Sahiti's request to Ranjha as he escapes with Hir:-

Now as the yogi prepares to leave,
 comes Sahiti and gives him a meek salute.
 'O help my boat to cross the river,
 on you is God's abounding grace.
 'Bring me and my lover together now
 for the part I played in your success.
 'I have handed my sister-in-law to you,
 and dared the Kheras' wrath and might.
 'For you I have played false to my kin,
 as the slave to Ali, and Ravana to Ram.'
 Ah, Waris, when God is kind to man,
 He showers his bountiful grace on him.

Of Ranjha praying for Sahiti:-

Ranjha lifted his hands in prayer, 'O Lord,
 to this young rustic thing be kind.
 'She has worked for me with great devotion,
 help her as she has helped another.'
 At once a voice came from the Pirs,
 'The Lord will bring the lovers together.'

So God was kind, the lover came.
Murad for whom her heart so pined.

Of Shah Murad meeting Sahiti:-

Bellowed the camel of Shah Murad,
and the lover himself came to the tryst.
'God's favoured one, rise to the occasion,
get up behind me, cool and bold.
'My caravan may have lost its way,
I come to you, your magic prevailed.
'You who are a bird of paradise,
mount on this angel of a beast.'

Of the two lovers going away with their girls:-

Thus Sahiti with Murad and Hir
with Ranjha ride over desert and dale.
The hawks have caught the cranes in the night,
like tigers trampling snakes under foot,
They haste away, each on his path;
like wolves with sheep they have torn from the flock.
Early in the morning watchmen shout,
for rescue and the Kheras are out.
To cut at the roots of faith these peasant
woman are axes, sharp and quick.
Waris, those who mate with others' wives
shall be scorched with burning brands in hell.

Of the Kheras sending out rescue parties:-

The villagers, some race up with joy,
they are glad the fakir has achieved his hope.
And others come hollering out of the village
whose richest treasure has been lost.
Some, half-clad, follow, cudgels in hand;
their ballyhoo frightens Hir the most.
For it takes not long to shave if you
can whet the razor on the strop.

Of one rescue party coming upon Murad's caravan:-

One party overtakes Murad,
 in whom they meet a formidable host.
 Baluches set upon the Kheras,
 with bows and arrows, left and right.
 They wield the sword and the spear as well,
 and the rescue party suffers a rout.
 The grace of God being on Murad,
 the clouds of terror vanish fast.

XXVIII

Of the second party coming upon Ranjha and Hir:-

The second party comes upon
 the yogi as he lay asleep
 In the wood, his head in the lap of Hir,
 like a snake upon his treasure-mound.
 They threaten him with club and spear,
 their horses stamp on the ground and neigh.
 They tie up Ranjha, catch hold of Hir,
 thus sunder apart the newly joined.
 With his own string they fasten his hands,
 beat him all over, red and blue.
 Ah, Waris, used to an easy life,
 he is torn to shreds with lash and whip.

Of Hir's plaint over Ranjha's sleep:-

Hir said, 'Whoever slept was lost,
 sleep has betrayed both prince and priest.
 'It has destroyed the holiest,
 it has destroyed the common tramp;
 'Reducing kings to beggars, sleep
 has made them rue their pride and pomp.
 'Tiger, and dragon, and prophet it has killed,
 destroyed the wisest, not the least.'

Of the poet's observations on the same:-

King Solomon through sleep became
 a baker's slave,⁴⁰ shorn of his power;
 And Joseph, Jacob's son, was thrown
 in a well, and then sold as a slave.
 Sleep got Ishmael⁴¹ stabbed to death;
 and Jonas found in a fish his grave.
 It cast misfortune over Sasi,
 dying in the desert for her love.

Like Adham⁴² are they lost who sleep,
 sleep is a giant against man the child.
 It turns to naught the morning prayer,
 it is of the camp of the Devil, indeed.
 The Kheras capture Ranjha and Hir,
 and just for going to sleep in the wood.
 Three and a half hands* in the lot of man,
 why does he enclose vast acres in the wild?

Of Hir's remonstrances with Ranjha:-

'I cautioned you, O son of the Ranjhas,
 you did not heed, now face your ruin.
 'You've fallen among your deadly foes,
 you have no chance against them, friend.
 'The matters complicated thus
 will never come now to an end.
 'If we wrap gold-cloth around an ass,
 it will not become a hourie of heaven.
 'For social traits prevail in the end.
 Now we can only go to the prince,
 'He is known as the justest in the land,
 cry for his justice, raise your hand.
 'If it is submitted to alchemy,
 even copper is turned to gold, my friend,'

*haed signifies forearm in villagers' measures, equal to one foot and six inches.

You will be punished, without good deeds,
O son of Qutb,* as you go from hence.

Of Ranjha going to the prince's court:-

Ranjha went to the court, raised hue and cry,
and the prince enquired what was the noise.

'Long may you live, O prince,' says he,
'the Merciful keep all harm away!

'You are given this land to rule upon,
and it is well administered.

'You are held in awe by Rum and Sham,**
and the neighbouring lords acknowledge your say.

'I have been robbed in your domain,
I am innocent, and must be heard.'

Waris, as the bee is stuck in honey,
so is man stuck in the world, alas!

Ranjha made his plaint, and waved his cloth,
'I have heard much good, prince, of your might.

'They have taken by force what was my own,
who other than you may I invoke?

'Your ministers appear so noble,
your court is just and fair of look.

'If you heed my plaint, I'll pray for you,
and God will set all matters right.'

Of the Raja ordering arrest of the Kheras:-

To arrest the Kheras on their way,
on the Raja's orders, soldiers ride.

'Do not protest, make not a row,
come to our Raja straightway.

'Come on your own or under arrest,
we will not listen to what you say.'

*Waris Shah here addresses himself. Qutb Shah is his father's name.

**The Turkish and the Syrian empires.

Waris, even the sun and the moon go under
eclipse for all their heavenly pride.

Of the Kheras being brought before the Raja and of Ranjha's protestations:-

The Kheras are brought before the Raja
and they too like complainants cry.
At which says Ranjha, 'They have satched my woman
from me, these robbers, thieves, blackguards.

'They ran away with her, as bards
at weddings snatch for gifts and run.

'Justice I seek from you, O Rai,
for which your court is so well known.

'They are the Devil's agents, yes,
do not mistake their turbans and beards.

'Like prostitutes' abodes their persons
are foul within, though fair to see.'

Of the Kheras' prayer:-

With folded hands the Kheras pray,
'We do not deserve being treated so rough.

'A thug from Majha,* well he knows
the art of growing a tree on his palm.

'He enters homes to beg for alms
but crosses into the women's realm.

'One day our wife was bitten by a snake;
we looked for charmers, near and far,

'When Sahiti, our daughter told us he
lodged in our park, knew well the cure.

'We took him home to work his charm,
we were so keen to save her life.

'One was our daughter, the other our bride,
and both of them came under his spell.

*The central Panjab, present districts of Lahore (Pakistan) and Amritsar (India).

'He poses as a fakir of God,
he looks a saint, but is a crook.

'He ran away with Hir, and helped
out daughter to run away likewise.

'The ruler's part is to punish evil,
the rule is to put a thief on the cross.

'Kill the criminal ere he commits the crime,"*
that is the final word of the Book.

'Kings have to render justice here,
for the time of reckoning comes for all.'

Of Ranjha's rejoinder:-

Said Ranjha, 'They saw a beautiful woman
with me, pursued us to this place.'

'Care-taker of the tombs of saints,
she could be no relation of theirs.

'I ran for fear, they were mighty of the land,
they have followed me on camel and horse.

'All others have denied their claim,
in your domain they seek success.'

'Look how they lie even in your court,
they're not afraid to raise a hell.

'I am afflicted already and now
my healing parts they tease and tear.

'They did not kill me, thanks to God.
I am fated yet to breathe this air.

'They posed as owners of the bride,
and struck and battered me as a ball.'

Of the Raja's concern:-

'I'll have them slaughtered,' says the Raja,
'tell me if they got too near your woman:

'Tell me the truth if they played the mischief,
I shall get them cut and quattered all.'

*A quotation from the Kuran.

'They had yoked the oxen, but,' says Ranjha,
 'could draw no water from the well.
 'I was all the time near and around,
 none knocked indeed at the door of hymen.'

Of the Raja's chiding the Kheras:-

'You have done much wrong,' the Raja chides,
 'Much have you grieved this holy fakir.
 'I'll get your noses and ears chopped off,
 do not think what has happened is now past.
 'When prosperous, Jats are difficult
 to manage, I know, and full of lust,
 'Snatch wives of the poor, commit highway crime,
 and flushed with pride, they know no fear.
 'Like Satan you have riled the world,
 you steal by night, abduct by day.
 'When the kazi of the law gives you the lie.
 you will enjoy the air on the gallows
 'Power, pelf and pride live not for ever,
 death is the truth to recognise.
 'And, Waris, this world is like a dream,
 a night passed in a caravan-serai.'

Of the Kheras and Ranjha going before the kazi:-

Then when they came before the kazi,
 he asked them to depose the truth.
 'Tell me the story in detail,
 I shall be just like Umar Khattab.
 'Hir is a daughter', the Kheras say,
 'of the house of Chuchak, Lord of the Chanab,
 'He gave her in marriage to Aju's son,
 others tried their best but failed to please.
 'We went there and brought her as bride;
 we gave away much in charities.
 'In thousands the people had gathered there,
 Jat, Mussalman and Hindu both.

'Due rites were done, the mullah was called,
who knew the holy text by heart.

'He read the proper wedding text,
as is ordained in the Kuran.

'We spent much wealth to marry her
the people of the land will own.

'Waris, now our wife should go with us,
and everyone may get his part.'

Of Ranjha's retort:-

'Then ask them how a thorny twig.'
says Ranjha, 'got caught in the folds of their dress.

'Where did they meet a ginn like me?

I did not catch them on the road.

'I who have gone to the ends of the land
along with her without let or goad.

'Waris, I have squeezed the juice of her
like the heather-flower, in my press.'

Of the statement of the Kheras:-

'When grain was selling two coins a seer,
and a terrible famine raged in the land.

He came from somewhere, famished and starved,
and got employed as buffaloe-herd.

'The master, Chuchak, had a grown-up daughter
he dearly loved in deed and word.

'This man, spoilt by the maids of the Syals,
began to cast for the daughter's hand'

'A grazier of cows he was ambitious,
aspired to win her for his bride.

'He claimed being a son of Mauju, the squire
of Takht Hazara, this harlot's child.

'We expect from you the justice of Umar
against this cheat who has defiled

'Our honour. His bowl and his bawl are tricks
of the trade, as are his cape and hood.

'By charms he'd make a cock of a feather,
and turn into plums the berries of *neem*.
'He combs his hair with a red-hot comb,
a juggler he is and a rope-walker.
'In an oven he'd grow a seedling of mangoe,
he calaims to be a saint from the Mecca.'
God knows alone these mysteries, Waris,
these well-made turbans are masks of crime.

Of the kazi's questions:-

'Tell me the truth, O fakir,' the kazi
says, 'As you were in the court of God.
'This woman has earned ignominy,
for which you and she are both to blame.
'In the past you have milked and churned as you pleased,
it was tolerated at the time.
'You have humbled these Jats, the Syals and the Kheras,
reduced to dust their power and pride.
'Well have you managed to stake a claim,
I salute you for your tricks and tropes,
'You have eaten the half-baked grain all right,
now yield to the Kheras the full-cooked pie.
'Women are for the worldly, for fakirs
God has ordained austerity.
'Give up this woman if you have some shame,
else I will give you a taste of stripes.'

Of Ranjha's angry protest:-

'Look you who listen and speculate,
these are the sailors who sink the boat.
'He gives advice to those who steal
by night and live by day on the land.
'Give your own daughter to the Khera,
dear sir, if you really are so kind.'
Ah, Waris, the greatest of the world shall perish,
if with fakirs they raise dispute.'

Of the kazi's decision:-

The kazi gave orders, 'Woman, you go
with the Khera, this yogi is all a cheat.
'A seducer and a thief indeed.
thought outwardly he is a saint.
'He closes his eyes as he would pray
and go into a trance or faint.
'He poses as a teacher of the sheikhs,
and hosts would perish if he should bleat.'

XXIX

Of the plight of Ranjha and Hir at this moment:

Catching hold of Hir, the Kheras hasten
to go, and Ranjha is left behind.
Should he fly or sink into the ground?
The sky or the earth yield him no space.
As the crop is destroyed by hail or fire,
and the worker's share is an utter loss;
Or the hawk having flown, the master of the hunt
is left with empty strings in his hand.
As one whose head is battered with a ram
and he retains no sense or wit,
Hir lifted her veil in consternation,
like the *sati* besides dead husband's pyre.
Like the bow acquiver in its sheath,
her frightened figure shook in her attire.
Her sharp eyes stayed in the field of love
like a warrior steadfast in defeat.
Like dead, as the body without the soul,
speechless she stood all dumb and mute.
In utter surprise the lovers are lost,
and the devil reads, 'Thine is the dread and the might.'*

*A quotation from the Kuran.

Of Ranjha's despairing words to Hir:-

'Go, why are you looking back?' says Ranjha,
 'This parting is much worse than death.
 'Robbers have raided and plundered my home,
 what should other people know of my grief?
 'Saida takes you, ashes are my share,
 'I'll pine and ail for the rest of my life,
 'What pleasures of the world can they enjoy,
 whose necks are under the yoke of death?'

Of the poet's observations:-

The crane for the hawk, the doe for the tiger,
 that is ordained as heaven's rule.
 How can a man ever blossom at heart
 whose pedlar's load is daily grief?
 For a good man these are chronic ills,
 a quarrelsome neighbour, a shrewish wife.
 A wrestler without a nourishing diet,
 shall soon be reduced to an empty shell.
 The skies may fall, they will not die
 whose feed here is not finished yet.
 God's ordinance is a cobra-snake,
 love is bitten to death, may be soon or late.

Of Hir still expressing a hope:-

'If there is rain at the proper time,
 it puts an end to hunger and want.
 'The ambrosial lips of love can breathe
 life yet again into the dead.
 'Let us swallow our despair and grief,
 a miracle may yet come to our aid.
 'Our curses will set the town on fire
 and the Raja shall have to render account.'

Of Hir's curse on the town:-

Hir drew a sigh of utter despair,
 'Lord, how the innocent are assailed !

'There is fire in front, and a tiger behind,
on all four sides our way is barred.

'Unite us either here for life,
or end our lives, if so ill starred.

'These people have done us a grievous wrong,
set fire to their town, Lord of the Wild.

'Visit, O Lord, your wrath on this town,
such as descended on the Pharaoh.

'Such as was sent on Zaccharia,
in the hollow of a tree to be sawn alive.

'Such as dethroned King Solomon
and he had to work as a baker's slave.

'Such as was visited on Abraham
so that he had to plunge into fire.

'Such wrath indeed as poured on Jonah,
when he was swallowed by a fish.

'Visit such a wrath with the knife of which
was Ishmael slaughtered like a calf.

'Such ire and wrath under which was Joseph
thrown into the well, sold as a slave.

'Such ire as made the old hag finish
Amir Hamza's life⁵² with a treacherous dash.

'Such wrath under which that white blonde woman
poisoned Hasan Imam to death.

'Such wrath with which you got Yazid⁵³
to put Hussain Imam to slaughter.

'Such wrath under which was Shah Mardan⁵⁴
killed by his own attendant squire.

'With which you have destroyed so many,
Lord, on this town, pour that same wrath.'

Of Ranjha's imprecations:-

Ranjha raised his imprecating hand,

'You are known as the Lord of Terror and Wrath.

'Your name of the Terrible justify,
 O Lord, and set fire to this town,
 'Devatsate it, burn it to ashes,
 to punish them for my rack and ruin.
 'By a miracle vindicate our honour,
 make us achieve our destined faith.'

Of instances of such wrath from Hindu lore:-

'That wrath under which Indra, king of the Gods,
 was overthrown by Mahakhasur.
 'That wrath under which Harnakashyapa, the demon,
 was disembowelled with tiger-claws.
 'That wrath which made Vishvamitra, the sage,
 work terror and death on the sons of Vyas.
 'That wrath which made Lord Rama to put
 the Lanka of Ravana to sword and fire.
 'That wrath which filled his loving mind,
 when he chopped off the maid Sarupnakha's nose.
 'That wrath under which Lachhman, Nal and Nil,
 made short work of Kumbakarana, the giant,
 That wrath with which was by Narsingh
 Kansa caught by the hair and dashed to the ground.
 'Lord, work that wrath with which the Pandacas
 destroyed the Kauravas all of their house'
 This wish was granted at once by the Lord,
 and soon the town was filled with fires
 And threatened with utter rack and rain;
 people flocked to the court, praying and in tears.

Of the poet's observations:-

The fire raged wild all over the town,
 reducing house and hut to ash
 With greater speed the news went round,
 wayfarers were, too, siezed with fear.
 They said it was the yogi's curse.
 and the Raja despatched his troops at once

With orders to apprehend the Kheras
 who had defiled his governance.
 The Kheras were overtaken soon
 and brought back to the town in leash.
 Waris, only the knife of prayer and fast*
 can cut the bonds of the law of man.

Of Hir and Ranjha giving blessings to the Raja:-

The Raja restored his love to Ranjha
 who wished him a long and happy life,
 Invoking blessings on the Raja,
 reciting praises of the Lord.
 'May weal prevail in your domain
 and all that is evil be debarred.
 'Grain, plenty, riches, power and pelf
 may ever in your land abound.
 'Your hosts, horse, camel, cannon prevail,
 your writ run over Sind and Hind.'
 May God save everyone's honour, Waris,
 and keep in this world their secrets safe.

XXX

Of Ranjha's proposal to repair to Takht Hazara:-

Now Ranjha proposes to take her home,
 'God has, my dear, given you to me.
 'He has delivered you from the Kheras,
 and led you this way all along.
 'The saints too, have been kind to us,
 and pearl with ruby is now strung.
 'You will be the lady of Takht Hazara,
 so let us now make it our home.
 'You will be received there as my bride,
 and I return as a happy groom.

*From the Kuran.

"All things towards their essence strive,"*
the Prophet says, and so do we.'

Of Hir's protest:-

Says Hir, 'But going there like this,
I shall be said to have eloped,
"Drowning your people in the pool of shame,
whose living have your robbed," they'll say.
'Aunts senior and junior both will taunt,
decry me as a runaway.'
Waris, she is in an ecstasy,
with such a magic herb she is doped.

Of the Syals receiving Hir and Ranjha:-

Cowherds reported in the village,
'Our Hir has come back with her man.
'She has shaved the beard of the Kheras clean,
without a bubble of water and foam.'
That they might not pass them on the road,
the Syals sent men to bring them home.
'They let it be understood that Ranjha
should properly wed Hir as a bride.
'We'll give her a dowry, too, as due,
and make some gifts to you beside.
'Bring a wedding party, dower and all,
and take her home in a palanquin.'

Of the Kheras' barber following Hir and Ranjha:-

Hard on the heels of Hir and Ranjha,
the barber of the Kheras came.
But said the Syals, 'We hope the Kheras
will no more play any tricks with us.
'Never since they took Hir away as their bride
did they let her pay a visit to Syal.

*From the Kuran.

'For all we know they have killed and thrown
 her deep somewhere in pond or well.
 'We should have expected no better from them,
 but they have betrayed their hollowness.'
 With such retorts and taunts was sent
 the Kheras' barber packing home.

*Of Hir and Ranjha being made welcome
 to the Syal's home:-*

Hir's brothers gave her welcome, too,
 to Ranjha also they were kind.
 His ear-rings were removed, the bores
 in his ears were neatly sewn up then.
 And he was given a turban to wear
 and fed with milk and sugared rice.
 They spread for him a couch, indeed,
 to lie on and relax; it was
 Like Jacob's son being taken out
 of the well and placed upon a throne.
 They told him in all confidence
 to go back to his native place,
 And come from there with his brothers and friends
 to wed their daughter with honour and grace.
 They called their kith and kin together
 and told the story from end to end.
 And then they made an evil resolve
 to kill this daughter of their blood.
 A new fraud, Waris, is being played—
 inscrutable are the ways of God!

Of Ranjha making preparations for the wedding:-

Having rested some time Ranjha began
 preparing for the wedding day,
 Sitting as a gallant in the midst of women,
 he would regale them with his exploits.

He got her a wedding band
 with bards and singers playing pipes and flutes.
 Trumpets and drums were blown and beaten,
 and the air was filled with melody.

Of the Syals taking counsel to poison Hir:-

The Syals took counsel and resolved,
 'We'll guard our honour at any cost.
 'This girl is a blot on our good name, and
 the tale has travelled far and wide.
 'We lose our honour to send our daughter
 with our own cowherd as his bride.
 'These people repay kindness with ill,
 and, winning our confidence, betray.
 'Infamy of daughters destroys households
 as vices of sons and foul tongues may.
 'The law allows the killing of such,
 and men of honour will not desist.'
 Look at the Syals by whose false wisdom
 innocent lovers will be destroyed.
 They poison Hir to death—such was
 the will and the glory of the Lord!

Of the Syals writing to Ranjha of Hir's death:-

Hir's soul went to the Lord, her body
 was buried, they wrote to Ranjha thus:
 'The holiest of the holies have died,
 the Ultimate, the Real is Death.
 • "All things will perish", says the Book,
 "Whatever the cause"* , that is the truth.
 'Since time began it has been so,
 bear it with fortitude, like us.
 'For something different we had hoped;
 "all hope is vain*," it has been said.

*From the Kuran.

'None can avert the will of God,
and by that same will Hir is dead.'

Of the messenger meeting Ranjha:-

The messenger went with this letter
to Takht Hazara, because he must.

He went to Dhido's dwelling-place,
and handed him the letter, in tears.

'What bad news have you brought?' asks Ranjha.

'Why is your mien so ominous?

'O, Messenger, my precious Hir?

Why are you crying and sobbing thus?

'Your jewel has been robbed by one
from whom no one can rescue it.

'From the throne of life you have been pushed,
and cruel dismissal is your lot.

'Hir has been dead now for eight watches,
and the Syals have sent me here for worse.'

This world is the play of children, Waris,
and dust at last must mingle with dust!

Of Ranjha's cry of death:-

Like Farihad Ranjha uttered a moan,
his soul joined Hir's in the upper air.

Both passed to the House of Life Eternal,
whole and true from this House of Death.

Firm in this earthly shape of love,
they lived it out with the utmost truth.

Waris, in this place of dreams have many
blown trumpets and left for nowhere.

Of the poet's observations:-

On the tree of life many birds have sung,
none made on it a permanent nest.

Tyrants have ruled over vast domains,
shiftless they had to leave this world.

A tale of the spirit and the tabernacle
 this is, with wit and good will told;
 For men of wisdom to ponder over
 this lay of Hir has been composed.

The year of Hijra a hundred and eighty
 over one thousand is the date.

Of the Vikram Era it would be
 a thousand, eight hundred and twenty-three.*
 Hans Malikan, well-known village of the Kharals,**
 these verses there were put to pen,
 In the land of long stretches.*** Poets
 can judge this poem's worth alone.

The high-born have been put to grief
 the lowly peasants are on the spree□

They have become lords of the land;
 new governments rise in every part.

The thief is the squire, the strut a lady
 and evil everywhere is rife.

Waris, those who read the Holy Word
 will safely sail to Eternal Life.

*Corresponding to 1766 A.D.

**The tribal name of the Jat owners of the village, now in Montgomery district, Pakistan.

***Lamma (long) is the old name of that part.

□A reference to the ascendancy the Sikhs were gaining in the Panjab at that time.

GLOSSARY OF REFERENCES

1. Friends of the Prophets. The first four Caliphs of Islam, named two lines below are termed friends (Sahaba) of the Holy Prophet.
2. *Mukhdum Pir*: Makhdum Jahania, Syed Jalal-ud-Din Bukhari (787-800 A.D.) of Multan, grandson of Syed Jalal Bukhari. He is mentioned among the five saints who were in spirit supporters of Ranjha's love for Hir.
3. *Masaud* : The original name of Sheikh Masaud-ud-Din Farid, (1173-1265 A.D.) popularly known as Sheikh Farid Shakarganj (Storehouse of sugar), who belonged to the Chishti branch of the Muslim Sufis.
4. *Farihad*: A legendary lover of Iran who, a mason-painter working in the palace of Chesroe II (599-628 A.D.), fell madly in love with the King's daughter, Shirin. His madness grew so overpowering that the king, half in jest, asked him to dig a canal from the mountains to the city to win Shirin's hand. He succeeded in this, but the king did not honour his pledge. At this Farihad killed himself with a blow of the adze with which he was cutting the stones.
5. *The Ranjha's* : The name of a Jat clan.
6. *Bhoj Raja* : A Parmara Rajput ruler of Ujjain in the tenth century, known as well for his learning as for military strength. But he was also reputed to be an uxorious husband who on one occasion in his intimacies consented to become his wife's bridled horse.
7. *Kaurava and Pandava hosts*: One of the causes of the suicidal warfare between the princes of these two families, first cousins, villains and heroes, respectively, of the Mahabharata, is said to be practical joke that they have been a Pandava prince, Draupadi, played on the eldest of the Kaurava brothers, Dhana, In their newly built palace at Hastinapur the Pandavas had constructed two tanks, one of which appearing

to be full of water, was in fact empty and the other appearing empty was filled with water. Duryodhana, in the course of a visit, fell into the second tank and got drenched.' At this Draupadi, exercising her right as a cousin-in-law, tauntingly called him 'Blind son of a blind father'—Duryodhana's father Dhritrashtra was born blind.

8. *Ravana*: The king of Sri Lanka who had abducted Sita, wife of Rama, the famous god-ruler of Ayudhia in the Gangetic valley. This is said to have led to the invasion and destruction of the city of Lanka by Rama's forces.
9. *Syals*: A Jat clan in which the heroine of this lay, Hir, was born.
10. *Kokila Rani*: A princess figuring in the legends of the Panjab, connected with Raja Rasalu who, apparently a profligate, was, in fact, a *yogin*. This princess fell desperately in love with him, but was ultimately persuaded to forego love's pleasures.
11. *Mansur*: A famous Muslim Sufi, of the eleventh century, who proclaimed in a mystical sense that 'he was God Himself' (an-ul-haq) and was crucified by the Caliph of Baghdad for this heresy.
12. *The Serpent saint from Baghdad*: This Baghdad is a town in the Bahawalpur district of Pakistan, and is the shrine of Guga, a legendary Rajput prince. Guga means snake and for this reason he is transformed by legend into a snake. He is also regarded as a saint to whom an appeal against snake-bite lies.
13. *Sasi*: Heroine of another love legend of Sind and Panjab. Misled by astrologers that the daughter newly born to him would bring disgrace to the royal house, the Jam, ruler of Bhambor, got the infant enclosed in a casket, and put it to float on the current of the river. He had enough precious stones put in it to serve to bring her up, should anybody pick up the casket downstream. This actually happened and the picker-up, a washerman named Ata, brought Sasi up as almost a princess. When the girl grew up she fell in love with a travelling merchant-prince, Punnu. This love did not fare well. Punnu was snatched away from her side by Punnu's

kinsmen and Sasi set out in pursuit of him through waste-land and sandy desert, where she died of heat and thirst.

15. *Umar Khattab*: Umar, son of Khattab, the second Caliph after Mohmamad, mentioned as the Prophet's friend, at the beginning. He passed the sentence of flogging on his own son for fornication, who died after receiving sixty cuts, and the remaining forty were struck on his grave.
16. *Dhanna*: A peasant saint of the medieval period, who worshipped God in the form of a stone so fervently that the stone sprang up into life to perform certain errands for the saint.
17. *Kabir*: A Vaishnavite saint of medieval India (15th century) who is known to have been born in a Muslim weaver family, but grew up as a disciple of Ramananda. There is great similarity between his preaching and that of the Sikh Gurus. Indeed, a part of his compositions are included in the *Adi Granth*, scripture of the Sikh faith. Hence his popularity in the Panjab.

Shah Madar is a legendary figure. The word, *madari*, means a juggler in Panjabi and in the other north Indian languages. Mahadeva is another name of the god Siva, one of the Brahmanic Trinity, and is known as the first ever yogi. Devadatta and Ramananda are other Hindu saints of medieval India, the founders of the *Sannyasin* and *Vairagin* cults, respectively, in those later times.

Rishi Vashishta is known as the composer or compiler of the great epic of Hinduism, *Mahabharata*. His being a founder of *nirbana* is rather obscure. *Nerbana* means a kind of 'absolute life' on which much stress was laid by the Buddha.

18. *Syed Jalal*: Syed Jalal Bukhari (13th century) who came from Bukhara and became a disciple of Syed Baha-Ud-Din Zakaria of Multan.
19. *Nal*: A king whose romantic story figures in the *Mahabharata*. He fell in love with Damayanti, princess of a neighbouring kingdom, through report of her exceptional graces, and she likewise fell in love with him. The gods of water, air, fire,

and thunder were his rivals for the hand of Damayanti, who however chose him in the *Swayamvara*. At this the gods subjected the couple to great privations out of which all they came out successful. Gambling was the besetting vice of Nal, as of many other Hindu princes of ancient times, among whom even the great hero of *Mahabharata*, Yudhishtira, is included.

20. *Sohni*: Heroine of another medieval love legend of the Panjab. She was the daughter of a potter of Gujarat and caught the fancy of one Izzat Beg, a merchant from Bukhara, when he came to make some purchases at her father's shop. He wasted all his substance buying the wares of the shop and disposing of them at throwaway prices. Later he got employed as the potter's cowherd. During this period he won Sohn's heart. too. The love met with the usual reactions and difficulties and ended in the death of the two lovers by drowning in the Chenab.
21. *Jalali and Roda*: Another pair of legendary lovers of the Panjab. Roda the lover was killed by his beloved's people.
22. *Siva*: An allusion to the great love, almost fondness, of the god for his consort.
23. *Abu Samad*: Governor of Lahore, under Farrukh Siyar, is famous for having captured the Sikh leader, Banda, in 1716 A.D. About the battle of Chunian, this brief account is available in *History of the Panjab* by Syed Abdul Latif. 'Nawab Abdus Samad Khan, Dilerjang, Viceroy of the Panjab, had kept the Sikhs well in check. He was now called upon to take the field against the Pathans of Kasur, south of Lahore, who had raised the standard of revolt under their leader Husain Khan, and taken possession of some fertile districts about Kasur and Lahore. The viceroy of Lahore marched against him at the head of seven or eight thousand troops. The two armies met at Chunian. A desperate fight took place in which the viceroy of Lahore was on the point of being borne down, when Akhgar Khan rushed upon the

enemy with his corps of Durranis.....and changed the state of affairs. Husain Khan's army was thrown into confusion.....a musket charge.....having pierced Husain Khan's forehead; he too fell and was immediately despatched by the sword of the brave Afghan warriors. The Pathan troops, now considerably reduced, fled in disorder, the drums of victory were beaten in the imperial army, The exact date is not given, but it was a little later than 1721 A.D.

24. *Fatch Khan*: Seems to be a brother of Husain Khan.
25. *Shaddad*: A pre-Muslim king of the Adites of Azamaut, the province adjoining Yemen, who built a magnificent garden as an earthly paradise. He was killed by a falling arch when he was inspecting this garden. The fate of Shaddad is held up as a warning to earthly pride.
26. *Nimrud*: A Babylonian king of great might by whose order the prophet Abraham had to leap into the fire which however turned into flowers. This despot is said to have been killed by a mosquito entering his ear.
27. *Adina*: Adina Beg, governor of Jullundur in the turbulent days when in the middle of the eighteenth century the Sikhs had begun to challenge Mughal power. On quite a few occasions Adina Beg joined or encouraged the Sikhs against the Mughal governor of Lahore.
28. *Ahmad Shah*: This is Ahmad Shah Abdali whose repeated invasions demolished the power of the Mughals and gave the Sikhs the long sought chance of establishing themselves in the Panjab. Ala Singh, founder of the Patiala state, won recognition as ruler from Ahmad Shah Abdali.
29. *Nadir*: Nadir Shah of Iran invaded India in 1739 and defeating the decadent emperor, Mohammad Shah, ordered a general massacre in Delhi which lasted 48 hours.
30. *Sirkup and Shalwahana*: Legendary rulers of places in the
31 Panjab of primeval times.
32. *Gopi Chand*: A legendary Hindu ruler of Dhar (Central India) in pre-Muslim days who gave up his kingdom to become a *yogin*.

33. *Karbala*: Where Husain, second son of Ali the fourth Caliph, was killed in battle (680 A.D.) by the forces of king Yazid of Damascus. The annual festival of Muharram is celebrated by the Shia Muslims all over the world in memory of this martyrdom.
34. *Mahkhasur*: The demon in Hindu myth, with a buffaloe's head, who drove Indra the king of the gods, out of his heavenly kingdom, but was killed by the goddess, Chandi, who fought in Indra's interest.
35. *Naushir Van*: Sassanian king of Iran (529-579 A.D.), noted for his justice. He is said to have founded the city of Baghdad (modern Iraq), as *Baghdad*, garden of justice.
36. *Umar the Sharper*: A character in the Arabic story of Amir Hamza, uncle of the Prophet Mohammad. Umar was the foster brother of Amir Hamza. He was noted as a clever pilferer.
37. *Hasan Imam*: The elder son of the Caliph Ali, who died of poisoning at the hands of an old maid-slave at the instance of Yazid.
38. *Asahabis*: The other three caliphs of companions of the Prophet.
39. *Mirza*: Hero of another love legend or the Panjab, who was killed by the brothers of his beloved, Sahiban, in an unequal fight.
40. *A baker's slave*: The Jewish prophet, Solomon, who is said to have passed twelve years as a baker's slave, when, having lost the magic ring that gave him power over the spirits, he fell on evil days.
41. *Ishmaeel* : Son of Abraham, killed and offered as sacrifice to Jehovah by Abraham himself.
42. *Adham*: A different Abraham, king of Balkh, who gave up his kingdom and became a Sufi faquir.

