

## *The Mosque Of Cordoba*

The succession of day and night

Is the architect of events.

The succession of day and night

Is the fountain-head of life and death.

The succession of day and night

Is a two-tone silken twine,

With which the Divine Essence

Prepares Its apparel of Attributes.

The succession of day and night

Is the reverberation of the symphony of Creation.

Through its modulations, the Infinite Demonstrates

The parameters of possibilities.

The succession of day and night

Is the touchstone of the universe;

Now sitting in judgement on you,

Now setting a value on me.

But what if you are found wanting.

What if I am found wanting.

Death is your ultimate destiny.



Death is my ultimate destiny.

What else is the reality of your days And nights,  
Besides a surge in the river of time, Sans day, sans night.

Frail and evanescent, all miracles of Ingenuity,  
Transient, all temporal attainments;  
Ephemeral, all worldly accomplishments.

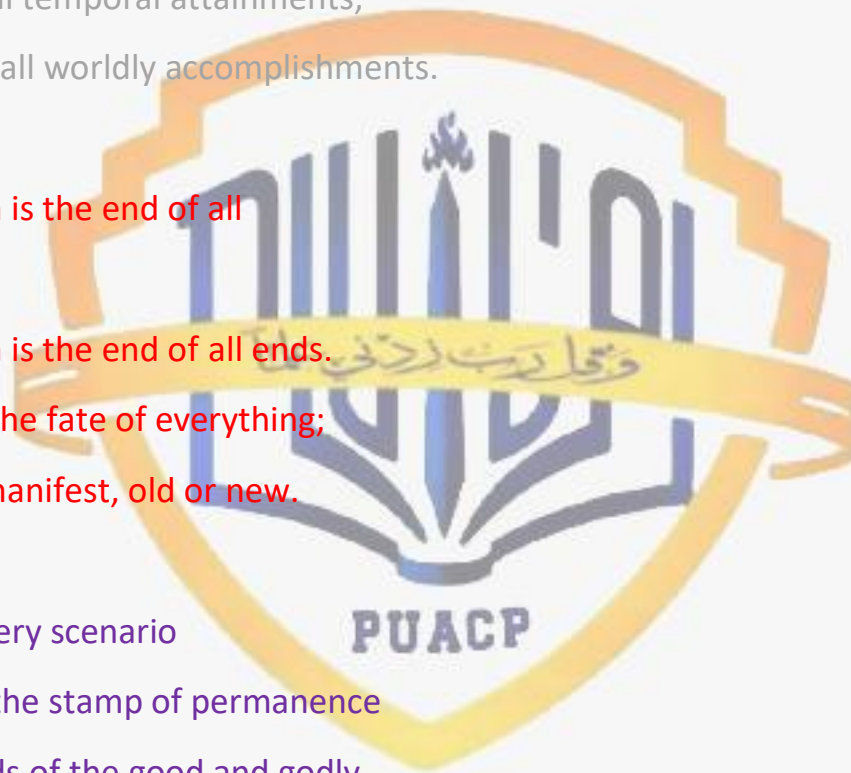
Annihilation is the end of all  
Beginnings.

Annihilation is the end of all ends.  
Extinction, the fate of everything;  
Hidden or manifest, old or new.

Yet in this very scenario  
Indelible is the stamp of permanence  
On the deeds of the good and godly.

Deeds of the godly radiate with Love,  
The essence of life,  
Which death is forbidden to touch.

Fast and free flows the tide of time,



But Love itself is a tide that stems all tides.

In the chronicle of Love there are times

Other than the past, the present and the Future;  
Times for which no names have yet Been coined.

Love is the breath of Gabriel.

Love is the heart of Mustafa.

Love is the messenger of God.

Love is the Word of God.

Love is ecstasy lends luster to earthly Forms.

Love is the heady wine,

Love is the grand goblet.

Love is the commander of marching troops.

Love is a wayfarer with many a way-side Abode.

Love is the plectrum that brings

Music to the string of life.

Love is the light of life.

Love is the fire of life.

To Love, you owe your being,

O, Harem of Cordoba,  
To Love, that is eternal;  
Never waning, never fading.

Just the media these pigments, bricks And stones;  
This harp, these words and sounds, just The media.  
The miracle of art springs from the Lifeblood of the artist!

A droplet of the lifeblood  
Transforms a piece of dead rock into a living Heart;  
An impressive sound, into a song of Solicitude,  
A refrain of rapture or a melody of mirth.

The aura you exude, illumines the Heart.  
My plaint kindles the soul.  
You draw the hearts to the Presence Divine,

I inspire them to bloom and blossom.  
No less exalted than the Exalted Throne,  
Is the throne of the heart, the human breast!  
Despite the limit of azure skies,  
Ordained for this handful of dust.

Celestial beings, born of light,

Do have the privilege of supplication,  
But unknown to them  
Are the verve and warmth of Prostration.

An Indian infidel, perchance, am I;  
But look at my fervour, my ardour.  
'Blessings and peace upon the Prophet,' sings My heart.  
'Blessings and peace upon the Prophet,' echo My lips.

My song is the song of aspiration  
My lute is the serenade of longing.  
Every fibre of my being  
Resonates with the refrains of Allah hoo!

Your beauty, your majesty,  
Personify the graces of the man of faith.  
You are beautiful and majestic.  
He too is beautiful and majestic.

Your foundations are lasting,  
Your columns countless,  
Like the profusion of palms  
In the plains of Syria.



Your arches, your terraces, shimmer with the Light  
That once flashed in the valley of Aiman  
Your soaring minaret, all aglow  
In the resplendence of Gabriel's glory.

The Muslim is destined to last  
As his Azan holds the key to the Mysteries  
Of the perennial message of Abraham And Moses.

His world knows no boundaries,  
His horizon, no frontiers.

Tigris, Danube and Nile:  
Billows of his oceanic expanse.

Fabulous, have been his times!  
Fascinating, the accounts of his Achievements!  
He it was, who bade the final adieu to the outworn order.

A cup-bearer is he,  
With the purest wine for the connoisseur;  
A cavalier in the path of L  
With a sword of the finest steel.

A combatant, with la ilah

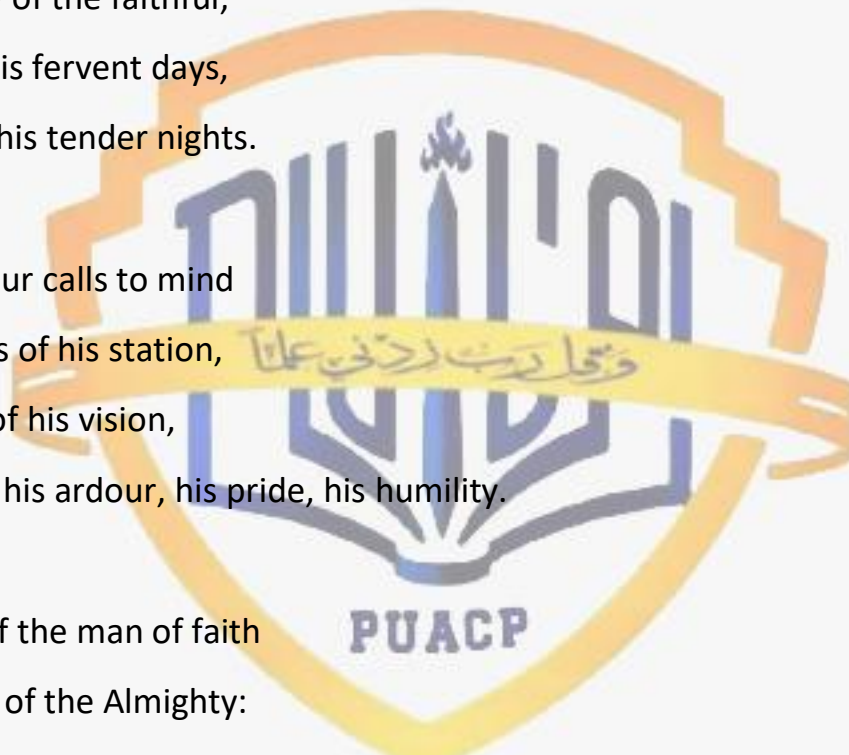
As his coat of mail.  
Under the shadow of flashing  
Scimitars,  
'La ilah' is his protection.

Your edifice unravels  
The mystery of the faithful;  
The fire of his fervent days,  
The bliss of his tender nights.

Your grandeur calls to mind  
The loftiness of his station,  
The sweep of his vision,  
His rapture, his ardour, his pride, his humility.

The might of the man of faith  
Is the might of the Almighty:  
Dominant, creative, resourceful, consummate.

He is terrestrial with celestial aspect;  
A being with the qualities of the Creator.  
His contented self has no demands  
On this world or the other.





His desires are modest; his aims exalted;  
His manner charming; his ways winsome.

Soft in social exposure,  
Tough in the line of pursuit.  
But whether in fray or in social Gathering,  
Ever chaste at heart, ever clean in conduct.

In the celestial order of the macrocosm,  
His immutable faith is the centre of the Divine compass.  
All else: illusion, sorcery, fallacy.

He is the journey's end for reason,  
He is the raison d'être of Love.  
An inspiration in the cosmic communion.

O, Mecca of art lovers,  
You are the majesty of the true tenet.  
You have elevated Andalusia  
To the eminence of the holy Harem.

Your equal in beauty,  
If any under the skies,  
Is the heart of the Muslim





And no one else.

Ah, those men of truth,  
Those proud cavaliers of Arabia;  
Endowed with a sublime character,  
Imbued with candour and conviction.

Their reign gave the world an  
Unfamiliar concept;  
That the authority of the brave and spirited  
Lay in modesty and simplicity,  
Rather than pomp and regality.

Their sagacity guided the East and the West.  
In the dark ages of Europe,  
It was the light of their vision  
That lit up the tracks.

A tribute to their blood it is,  
That the Andalusians, even today,  
Are effable and warm-hearted,  
Ingenuous and bright of countenance.

Even today in this land,



Eyes like those of gazelles are a common sight.

And darts shooting out of those eyes,

Even today, are on target.

Its breeze, even today,

Is laden with the fragrance of Yemen.

Its music, even today,

Carries strains of melodies from Hijaz.

Stars look upon your precincts as a piece of heaven.

But for centuries, alas!

Your porticoes have not resonated

With the call of the muezzin.

What distant valley, what way-side abode is holding back

That valiant caravan of rampant Love.

Germany witnessed the upheaval of religious Reforms

That left no trace of the old perspective.

Infallibility of the church sage began to Ring false.

Reason, once more, unfurled its sails.

France too went through its revolution

That changed the entire orientation of western life.

Followers of Rome,  
Feeling antiquated worshipping the Ancientry  
Also rejuvenated themselves With the relish of novelty.

The same storm is raging today  
In the soul of the Muslim.  
A Divine secret it is,  
Not for the lips to utter.

Let us see what surfaces  
From the depths of the deep.  
Let us see what colour  
The blue sky changes into.

Clouds in the yonder valley  
Are drenched in roseate twilight.  
The parting sun has left behind  
Mounds and mounds of rubies, the best from Badakhshan.

Simple and doleful is the song  
Of the peasant's daughter:

Tender feelings adrift in the tide of Youth.



O, the ever-flowing waters of Guadalquivir<sup>1</sup>,  
Someone on your banks  
Is seeing a vision of some other period of time.

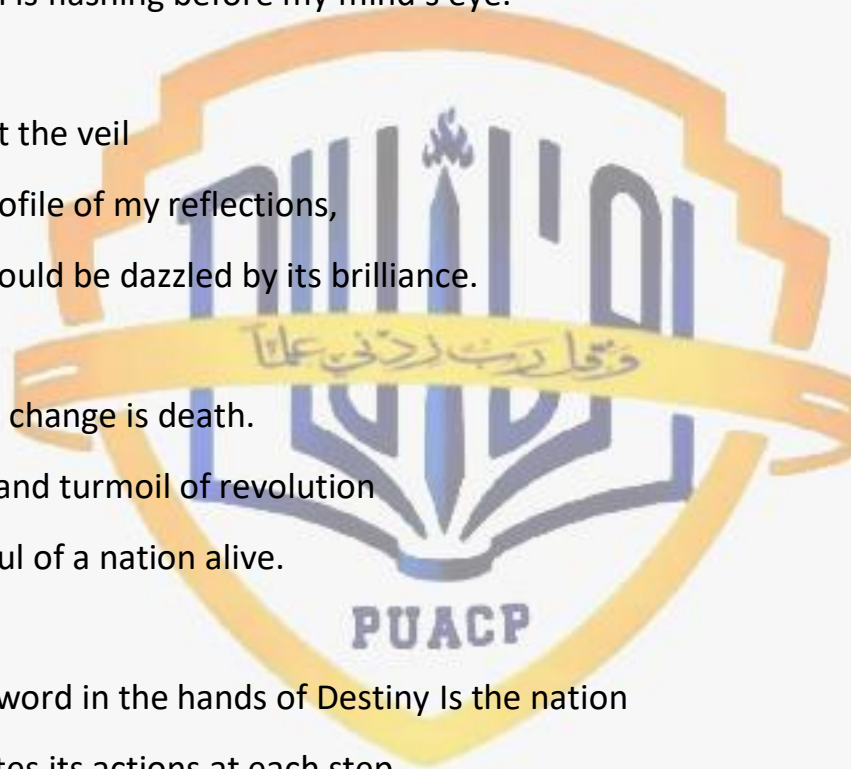
Tomorrow is still in the womb of Intention,  
But its dawn is flashing before my mind's eye.

Were I to lift the veil  
From the profile of my reflections,  
The West would be dazzled by its brilliance.

Life without change is death.  
The tumult and turmoil of revolution  
Keep the soul of a nation alive.

Keen, as a sword in the hands of Destiny Is the nation  
That evaluates its actions at each step.

Incomplete are all creations  
Without the lifeblood of the creator.  
Soulless is the melody  
Without the lifeblood of the maestro.



[Translated by Saleem A. Gilani]

