

The SECOND LETTER (*×arf*) relating to two words (sword) and pen which are cutting as well as out weighing¹ each other and decisive proof against each other. This discourse of sword and pen is adorned with the address of (the axiom); the pleasure of two sides lies in the lines of two words.²

Hemistich:

Look at his pedigree also from the two words of pen and sword.³

(Arabic) Verses:

You who have waged war against all secret enemies,
You have been named (or christened) the sword of the Faith for
liquidating the infields.⁴
No sooner did I (plan to) write your praise.
Than the pens kiss the tablets⁵ of praise.

May the pearl of the person of brilliant qualities of the helper of the holy warriors, Saif al-Dîn,⁶ left hand of kings and right hand of the sovereigns who has been selected by the hand of Allah and wrapped up on the fingers of the compassionate (lord) may Allah.

Strengthen his hand through his support the clear and bright (unaffected) by the revolutions of the rust colored sky, until the termination of innumerable ages, by the blessings of the Qur'ân *Sûrah*, "*×adid*."⁷

Couplet:

You who are the sword of the king,
Through who in the war, the brave and courageous could conquer the world.

The slave Khusrau, who is the fastener (i.e., .author) of this elegant writing, places the head of the pen of the command on the border of the carpet of joy, in the place of service to uphold (i.e., observe) the rites of kissing the ground (i.e., obedience);⁸ and every day and night, he turns his night into day and carries the

¹ *Rajih and Jarih*, a case of *Tajnis-i-Mutarraf*.

² *Hallut-taraffain fi khalî-i-harafain* instead of *khattu'l-harafain fi khatti't-tarafain* of the text.

³ That is, he (the addressee) is mater of the pen and sword.

⁴ This refers to the title Saifu'd-Din of the Addressee.

⁵ The text has *anvah* instead of *alvah*.

⁶ Sword of the state and religion.

⁷ Chapter 8 of the Qur'ân literally means Iron.

⁸ That is he gladly complies with the order of writing a letter.

day into night in writing and making a clean copy of the praise and eulogy of the lord.

The purpose these discourses and presentation of these speeches is based on the fact what the writer (of these lines) is on calling-terms with the men of pen (writers), while (at the same time) is not cut off from the men of sword (soldiers) and is grappling, from time to time, with the body of some quick tongued people who compare themselves with sword, pronounce with their own tongue the cutting power of their sword, take their sword to the sharpening wheel and sharpen it and censure the pen (lit. cause the pen to touch its head on the ground of the paper), so that if I were to say something with the tongue of the pen, they might talk with the tongue of the sword.

Yesterday, having taken the pen in my hand, I was stirring (contents of) the cauldron of writing with a skimmer and was serving the smoke-filled thus strained contents⁹ on fine tables. (in the process), I had a sword(tied) in my waist, the tongue of which came out and wanted to lap it up (lit. take on its tongue laid out paluda), but the pen resisted (lit. inverted itself) saying, now some ignorant fellows are assisting our skimmer-liker with strength and power of the elbows and sharpening it. I who have toiled hard (lit. have devoured smoke of lamp while studying), have gone through (lit. glanced over), all the books of knowledge, and have acquired the store (of knowledge) with so much (mid-night oil) burning that talks about me have (i.e., my reputation has) reached in all the directions (of the world), they do not take my life for anything. For a police of iron, they advertise (lit. sell) such cutting that the very sword of theirs resembles the head in the armpit. The sword was reclining on my thigh and was indulging in fancy-play with mirror of the knee. On account of that thing which the pen displayed, an idea found way to its heart and by way of reflection, it came face to face of me and asked me to tell that black head on his behalf, "O you hopeful of the wages of the office (*Dîwan*), do you obediently (lit. with head thrown down) go after your own read-writing (*chubak-nawisî*) you display, like me, your supremacy (lit. world-conquest, sovereignty) in (the art of) writing – me who carves out one hundred thousand wooden dolls like you in one instant you must persevere in harming me.

Couplet :

He who strikes himself with a sword.
You know what punishment he deserves.

It is not that I do not have hand (expertise) in the art (lit. profession) of letters. Lo, a whole page of mine is all dots and letters.

⁹ *Paluda* is a beverage made of water flour or china –grass and sugar; a king of jelly.

Couplet:

The sword itself is all dots and letters, provided they draw it,
The letter of that drawing (picture) is not without a dot.

All are aware that if I were to make pen of my metal (lit. Iron), I might create thinner (writings) in this style (*siyâfat*) and I would not present them except on a golden tablet. But I have to engage myself (lit. do the work of) crusade and holy war. Therefore, having abandoned writing, I have left it to follow you I am not a mad-cap like you that I lay my head on the (dotted) line of (submit to) the writers and bend my head (i.e., yield) to their upper handedness. Rather, all bend their head before me,

Couplet:

I am that sword whom I know (for certain) to be a breaker of ranks,
Not a pen like who is a trickster in the chancellery (*Dîwan*).
You are not able to drown yourself into water,¹⁰ while
I am one who can immerse myself in blood.

When the melancholic¹¹ pen saw that affronter¹² of the sword, it cast its head down and felt helpless. Then with the whisper of (its) scratch, it said, "O you shameless (*nadashî*) arm-server, who strip yourself of all cover (or become naked), in every field of (battle) and indulge in back biting,¹³ if a (little) harm befalls you, you trouble like a willow-tree, and if they do not catch hold of you, you would so fall as to want to bury yourself in the ground. At a place where I issue an order to be carried out and write the government royal edict. (order bearing the *îughraseal* of the king), who takes note of you, (lit. knows you), who might have remained under the thighs of a horseman or hid yourself under the armpit of a foot-man (soldier-*mufaradî*, lit. single, without a horse), added to that, you practice fraud with your leather sword belt (dual) to make it run as much as you want it. You cannot deceive me. I know that all this preparation for sharpness you make is with a view to scrape me. But I am not one of those who is easily deceived,

Couplet:

¹⁰ *Âb* is also a special formation of water with which the sword-steel is treated for acquiring sharpness.

¹¹ *Sauda'* means pertaining black (on account of ink) and also melancholic, affected with black bile (*sauda*)

¹² The sword 'raising its head' when drawn.

¹³ *Zaban-awari* also means fluency of speech, eloquence.

You work for (lit. before) me I would give you the fuel wood for a cauldron.¹⁴

But if you try to scrape stump of wood with it, you cannot gain anything from me (lit. from my knot or purse).

You go to those who keep you with their hand on you; you wax eloquent and sold that group of people with whom you are associated and you also attach yourself to them. Do not serve your attachment with them lest you fall down. Let them take your hand (lend a helping hand) until the time when I am in absolute need of you; and (then) bring you to me. Has your affair come to such a pass that you flaunt your power before me and cut as under the iron.¹⁵ Don't you know that if the pen made out of your iron produces thinness, a hair-split appears in my reed so that by the time your sword-wielder makes a move, my flying arrow will pierce his heart and will displace it in such a way that it will not be able to direct you to do any work. I myself was an arrow but due to my high-flying (vanity), I got kicked and broke (into pieces) and became a pen. And the day I was an arrow, so, it is clear to the face and back of (its) point (*pushtpaikan*) that I would have been all the while in the bond of union and would not have tried, like you, to severance (of relations) and on account of my straight-forward going (trait), I would have entered the inside of two enemies and united both of them. You are that smug or go-getting.¹⁶ Blood-thirsty one is he who know nothing but cutting in the handful fellow-professionals of your type. On account of your two-facedness you are such that wherever you go, you cast one body into two and rend as under the bonds in such a way that it is not possible to bring them together any more.

Quatrain:

I am such pen that anyone who has some work
Can't afford to leave me aside even for a moment.
A life-time is required to be one's place. O sword if one thinks of you,
he (himself) becomes blood-thirsty (lit. spills blood).

Once again the sharp-clawed and parrot-like sword which held a mirror in front of it (to show itself off), started talking and said to the nightingale – tongued pen, “you crooked-legged, long-tailed, soot-eating, crow-beaked wretch who has been captured by men like a clever bird and whose head has been so lowered at the

¹⁴Deg means a cauldron as well as a big cannon.

¹⁵*Ahanraqalam mi-kuni*, literally means ‘you are making pen of iron’. *Qalamkardan* is an idiom meaning to cut, hack, etc.

¹⁶*Qani* ‘means a contented one and also one who moves from place to place. (F.Stieingass, p.949).

foot of a snare, that how so ever you indulge in crow-footedness (reproach), you cannot extricate yourself from that snare. What is all these webs which you spin (i.e., vain talk you make) the whole day and summon me (to be) under the boots of the foot-soldiers and beneath the stirrups of horsemen. For god, may his glory be exalted, has granted the rank of a live person to one who is killed by me (as per the Qur'anic verse) And think not those who are killed in the path of Allah as dead: nay they live. Finding their sustenance in the presence of their lord.¹⁷ And to this fact, all the martyrs¹⁸ bear testimony. And sufficient is Allah as witness,¹⁹ and he has sharpened (lit. brightened) me with the wet stone of, and we have sent down iron,²⁰ and has granted immunity to the swordsman, and kill the polytheists, all of them.²¹ Through the strength of his arm, as (is clear from the tradition) I am a prophet on account of the sword. He has also watered me (i.e., sharpened) me for washing away (cleansing) the fifth of the blood-smeared ones in the battle, as the saying goes 'the sword obliterates sins'. (on the contrary), O you dry little piece of reed – who at times weave the thread for making a web on the door of the weaver and at other times, become a (measuring) yard for cutting²² in the tailors shop coming to me and making out yourself (i.e., pose as) a sovereign (giver of orders).

Verse:

It is a matter of disgrace for me to be (seen) in your company (lit. to sit with you).

For, no one makes the handle of a sword from reed.

What have you to do with (giving) order? just out of show (or by way of formality), they have had you held in the hand of your scribe, so that with the mere pointing of a finger, he might order you to do service (in such a way) that if you were to move your head from the (dotted) line (i.e., disobey him) even to the extent of a drop (i.e., even to a slightest extent), you would be left without water²³ (i.e., you would lose your importance). You have supplicated a thousand times and yet have not extricated yourself from his clutches (lit. hands). Being such an

¹⁷Qur'ân, III, 169.

¹⁸*Shuhada'* also means Witnesses.

¹⁹Qur'ân, (48:28).

²⁰Ibid.,)57:25).

²¹ Cf. Qur'ân (57:25).

²²*Qasb* means 'cutting' and *qasab'* a kind of fine cloth, muslin'; both the meanings applicable here.

²³*Bi-abshawi* literally, will have no water. 'water' means liquid ink as well as "luster" importance.

underhand (i.e., inferior),²⁴ you indulge in world-play (i.e., talk) with a upper hand (superior)²⁵ like me. perhaps you have two heads: you come to me with one head but go back from my presence, laying down one head that split which I have caused in the middle of your forehead, (only) your head knows as to how it was inflamed and you have treated it with an ointment and then only it has healed up (lit. joined). Then again do you want your head to cut? At the end of the day, they would bring you, tied up and bound, to my presence. Then I shall know what is to be done to your head. If I do not cut up you waist or do not serve your joint from joint, I would not be of pure descent (lit. essence).

Quatrain:

I am sword and my job is to rule (lit. practice kingship),
(while O your obsession is to blacken things.
The way you have talked impudently with me,
If I sever your head, what will you do?

The dark natured²⁶ pen was badly wounded by these brazen-faced-ness (or cheekiness) of the sword so much so that the paper also became brittle and the very inside of the inkpot with a black heart interior also dried up since its chest had been filled up with soot and it demanded water. Two three drops of water were trickled into its mouth, whereupon it (the ink-pot) revived itself. It called the pen inside and applied black water (ink) on its head saying, "O dry beaked one! you come to me whereby you moisten your tongue (i.e., toil and labor)²⁷ in acquiring (the art of) letter and word, writing volumes of knowledge and accomplishment, and unraveling the mystery of the unseen, amount to this only that you remain dumb and depraved before the sharpness of the opponent? You are neither unfashioned nor is your tongue blunted. Then, what more courage do you require to face the sword?²⁸ Why don't you get up and talk and give expression through your tongue to the matter you already have.

The tongue of the pen had dried up, but with the assistance of the heart of the ink-pot, it again started talking and dashed this book of censure against the page of the sword (saying), "O you who drank the water of India," you are not yet mellowed down even by so many hard slaps which your face has received from the

²⁴ *Zabardasti* in the text should be *zirdasti*.

²⁵ *Zirdasti* in the text should be *zabardasti*.

²⁶ *Tarik* in the text, referring to the black ink, a necessary requisite of writing for the pen. It could also be *baik*, - referring to the thin, that is fine point of the pen.

²⁷ Reference to the position of the pen while writing.

²⁸ The text has *arzu-i-tigh*. Could it be *azru-i-tigh*? *Ru-i-tigh* means 'edge' of the sword.

spheres ; after all, you will still concern yourself with killing, wounding and mutilating people. They should confine and hold you tight within the scabbard and not draw you out until in that narrow prison you become the food for rust.²⁹ And when after they release you (lit. bring you out), then only the blackish ness of your plight will be brightened by the furbishers (or polishers), and you realize your own limitation, namely that you are nothing but an executioner. And since, as it is truly said,

Couplet:

I am the upholder of the standard of kingship,
And I become illustrious (from) whiteness of dawn to the darkness (of dust).³⁰

Who has given you authority to scratch our page and damage (lit. wound) it and boast (lit. say), "I shall dismember it from joint to joint (i.e., completely). Unless they whet you hundred times on the stone, you cannot even cut a reed, perhaps you will dismember the paper from joint to joint i.e., cut it into pieces.

Couplet:

I agree that you have made your name through steel.
But do not all at once (pretend) to be (so hard as) a diamond.

I consider you to be better placed in the scabbard, for you on your own do not know how to cut.³¹ But I should know this much from people that (some of them)³² provide you with an edge (lit. tongue) for the cake of cutting.

Couplet:

You show your power on the strength of others.
And then by yourself you call it a day.³³

And if you feel proud (lit. honored) in that God the mighty and the exalted has granted the rank of a living person to one killed by you, and the splitter of the

²⁹ *Murcha* also means 'luster of sword'.

³⁰ That is from morning to evening to evening during which the state flag flies, a practice even followed till today.

³¹ Or I know well that in your scabbard, you do not on your own know how to cut.

³² *Kasan*, men, people ; some part of it I.e. san means whetstone, file, by hich the cutters are sharpened.

³³ *Barbasfi*, 'freezing' 'shutting up through frost'.

shield of moon (Prophet Muḥammad),³⁴ has declared, “ I am the Prophet ρ with (the help of) sword” and said “the sword obliterates (removes) all sins.” , (know that) my writing on the head (i.e., destiny) on the preserved tablet³⁵ is far superior to this, for the lord of kaf and noon (*kun* = ‘be’) i.e., certain has sworn by me (in the Qur’ānic verse), by the inkstand (Nun) and (by) the pen and (by)_ that which they write.³⁶ And has ordained instructions of knowledge through me, (as per the Qur’ānic dictum) , (who) taught (man) by the pen, taught man what he knew not.³⁷ (on the other hand), you are one whom I find destitute of all knowledge as a result of which any ignorant and foolish person would bid you do (their) work. But it would require one whole world of men to lay a finger on (find fault with) my writing. Your tablet (*takhtah*)³⁸ can not in the least compete with my stamp (writing).

Hemistich:

Roll up (your tongue), though you can never do it.

Quatrain:

O sword: I am a pearls-producing pen.

Do not indulge in waxing eloquent (or bragging) before one like me.

For, at a place where they make much of me,

You are one who is of no account whatsoever.

The pen was writing this narrative on the tablet of the sword, (where upon) the latter changed color and turned black (i.e. was overcast with affliction) and on account of peevishness, was recoiling upon itself. The scabbard had kept its mouth open, but due to distress (lit. straitenedness of heart). Nothing of it was going down (the mouth): as a result, its stomach (being empty), had stuck to its back, and the belly was empty. It (therefore) wanted to take the sword inside. It vacated the middle of the house and whisperingly called the sword inside and somewhat stealthily subjected it to rod-treatment (punishment) and put forth whatever words it had to say (thus) ; “ And my breast is straitened and my tongue is not fluent.³⁹ O you backward looking wretch, your raising (your) head⁴⁰ consists in no more than

³⁴ Prophet Muḥammad who split the moon into two (miracle of *shaqqul-qamar*)

³⁵ *Lauh-i-Mahfooz*, preserved tablet on which destiny is of all creatures. Are written from all Eternity.

³⁶ Qur’ān(68:1).

³⁷ Ibid ., (96: 4-5).

³⁸ Also means writing –board

³⁹ Qur’ān, (26:13).

⁴⁰ Reference to drawing out of the sword when it is pointed upwards. *Sarkashl* idiomatically means ‘disobedience,’ ‘obstency’ etc.

that you attack me (lit. come upon my head) with two-yard (long) tongue and if I drink one drop of water of yours, you extract it from my throat with your fist. But when you go to the pen. You come up with hypocrisy, mend it (tarashmigiri) and you straighten the tongue of its ruptures (i.e. you make it alright). If today you cut the throat of the pen, I would be convinced (lit. know) that you have the real cutting power. .But, in your appearance is reversed, then you cannot be accommodated in my house⁴¹ and you (have to) go out. The real luster (*ab-i-tar*) is that which I had. Now you go out of my house."

When the sword, which, bent and beaten by hammer and anvil, had crept into its narrow house, experienced those exhortations of expulsion (lit. going out), it cast itself out with so much freezed and congealed water (i.e. in utter dejection) and raised its voice bash fully (*Ba-rangi*) and said to the pen, " O you who appear to remain silent but talk much, the more I scrape your tongue, the more your licking is.

Couplets:

Do not say that the harshness of the spheres has afflicted you and did not mellow you down.

No one has ever seen that steel becomes soft iron.

Are you aware in the least that the sphere has to revolve several times,
In order to vanquish in the world one like me.

Me who put up with chain, you taunt me as bound –in-planks and a prisoner. Keep quiet and do pot-licking in a corner of the inkstand, or else, I shall cut your throat in such a way that your imprint (writing) will be obliterated from all-the official records. Have you lost your head (i.e. have you gone out of your senses) that you dare take the name of knowledge on your tongue, censure me for being used (lit. held) by ignorant and foolish persons and call me denuded of the dress of knowledge? After all, I remove (lit. erase) your errors. You do not know in the least as to what decisive knowledge is, the impetuous lion (‘Ólîτ), may Allah glorify his face (majesty) about whom is the statement of Prophet Muammadρ. I am the city of knowledge and ‘Ólîτ is its gate –has presented to the faces of the infidels. But my drawback is only this that I hold t myself my tongue. In spite of the fact that so many pearls of ideas I possess, no one ever hears a word coming out of my tongue, while you, due to your empty-within (indigence or lack of ideas)⁴²even if you see a semblance (thereof) coming from yo, wherever you

⁴¹ Text has: *pish - i- dar-i-khana-i-man ba-gunji*, 'you can be contained in front of my house. It has been read: *bishdar khana-i- man na- gunji*.

⁴² *Tahi-mayani* refers to the hollowness of the reed-pen.

go, your tongue will not stop (talking about it) till you do not tire it out (lit. drop it down). And wherever you cannot go, you remit letters. Go way a, for you are not worth a dime, due to your utmost insignificance, look at your head and foot (that is, know your worth) and do not equate yourself with a person of great worth like me.

Quatrain:

I am a sword and what can be my price except gold.
Your price, o pen, is affordable (lit. small, slight,) whatever it be.
Those who see me and you in one place,
Know what a straw is and what a gem is.

At hearing these words, the pen was greatly distressed and said, "O sword, do not brag too much, for your tongue, with so many gems of ideas picks up crumbs from me, you talk much about removing my mistakes. But your cutting (i.e. scraping) me is not of your own volition, rather, some one else has edged you and has robbed you of your own value. Hence, you vehemently threaten me to cut off my head. It is clearer to your heart is more illuminated than a mirror that the more they pair off my head, the more worthy (lit.head-exalting, distinguished) I become and my skill is augmented (or multiplied), while if they separate a part from you, you will stumble and collapse.⁴³ You should open a shop in the market of peddlers, for your place is amidst the rubbish. You sharpen your intellect (or luster)claiming that your beads are more lustrous have, if they ask you to impart freshness to a thing by that, you may perhaps be able to do it when blood spills. Black, that also (ink) is watery. And with a simple flourish of mine, the needy persons acquire one hundred thousand *dirams* and *dinars*. But you, anywhere you traverse (lit .cut) the path, they do not give you a dime (small coin), unless you do not produce (proofs of) killing and wounding. You do not teach men anything but clenching their first.⁴⁴With so much gold which is in your hand (lit. first), that is your greatest art (or skill). If they throw a *dirham* in front of you, you take it with (the tip of) your tongue and if you are a stone you go no licking it continuously. If the stone is a magnet, you yourself would make yourself attracted to it, you come to grapple with me (i.e. try your strength with me), but you do not know that whoever clinches his fist, cannot extract any thing from me. You scrape off from me (to mend me) and at the same time you reproach me. So many battering on head (received by you) from the hammer and anvil do not seem to have escaped (not been forgotten by) your heart, for (the adage) the iron reforms (or corrects) the

⁴³ *Saqata*. Means stumble and *saqat-furush*, a pedlar. There is *Tajnis-Mudhayyal* here.

⁴⁴ That is stinginess. Reference to the men holding sword in their grip (first).

iron was the writing on your tablet, and (this) you used to recite loudly in front of the teacher. And every time they beat (or battered) you, they lent their hand for the head-beating⁴⁵ due to heat, you would get immersed in water (for tempering, after being heated) and made you harder by watering, and again heating (lit .burning) you.

Quatrain:

O sword, although you are a fine cutter,
I am after all a per; how can you resemble me? You will not break by the
blow of my tongue, because you are (already) seasoned by the blows of
hammer and anvil.

The sword was greatly afflicted by the head-beating taunt (lit. head-beating) of hammer and anvil and on account of that distress (lit. beating), its heart began to get more straitened (afflicted). Despite so much sharpness (of wit), a single word did not come to its tongue. I had taken and held it in my hand. But it got out (lit.fell) of my hand and called out, "O you, with a severed head, the more I cut off the tip of your tongue, the more foul-mouthed your tongue becomes. I am the *Muqta* (land lord) of your town, you try to distress (lit. break) me with the taunt of hammer and anvil and bring to the surface (divulge) my heart-burns. Perhaps you have not read the acrostic (*muwashshah*).⁴⁶

Couplet:

Whoever he is breaks up (or is flattened) by the blows of hammer and
anvil, while I
Became perfect only when I received unlimited blows.

Certainly, to receives blows and to undergo (treatment of) water and fire is my job and on account of personal prowess,⁴⁷ I am iron-bodied (very strong) and therefore do not turn away my face from the trouble (sought to be caused) by brazen-bodied ones (like *issfandyar*), who know that I have become this much (strong) after having experienced so much heat and cold. I am not like you who is black-headed and has sprouted a mole (that is, is young and inexperienced and raw). You are a tender (lit. newly – risen), not fully grown, twig with so many hard knots that until these are not removed, it cannot achieve anything. Yet , you clench

⁴⁵*Sarzanish*, also, 'censure' 'reproach'

⁴⁶*Muwashshahis* that artifice in which the first letters of the hemistiches of a poem forms the intended word or name. in this couplet, the word is *zad* 'beaten'

⁴⁷text *faut-i-dhat* which makes no sense. Perhaps *quwwat-i-dhat* is meant here.

your fist against me (challenge me) (and allege) that whatever I take by the strength of my arm, you attribute it to (lit. keep its account with) trick and deceit, and with so much scribbling you steal something from that through the hands of others and you have me held by the hands of others, and by your (perpetrating) black deeds, the hands of all the writers (pen-wielders) are doomed to (lit. assigned to) being cut off. With so much crooked-faced-ness of yours, you show yourself to be upright in the eyes of men. The truth of the matter is that (i.e. in fact), your (entire being) from head to foot is a transaction of impression and fancy-making, while as to me, the whole world has acclaimed me as high-minded. Here it is a well-known saying that the sword is high-minded. Wherever there is gold i.e. money, it comes to one's hand (lit. first) through my iron. Hence, there is gold in the hands of whosoever holds me in hand (lit. for whosoever I become a hand). You, a non-descript fellow come to me and describe (i.e. flaunt) your high mindedness and tell me that you moisten your lamp's black soot with its tongue, from the tip of the wick, in front of me. Or it has urged wickedness (lit. blackening) to find it greasy, and has lowered down the oil of its lamp and consumed it and it was burnt out (lit. smoke rose from its constitution). And it has provided you with stock from that transaction so that by means of that, you have become black-bowled (miserly) a hundred times in front of the lamp-black of the inkstand and you have poured down the obsession of miserliness in its head. Hence if you go to it with a frigid tongue and put your head down and put your feet up, it will moisten the tip of your tongue with the help (lit. device) of water couplet: and at that time you are such a water-well, dark and turbid that it can neither be drunk nor can face or hands be washed with it.

With so much holding back (stinginess), you move from the path and call yourself one who abrogates the historical works of the ancient and the modern (writers). You recall to your mind (your) early circumstances (namely) that after all, you are a self-grown species (that is, no one had planted and nursed you). From the first day, they brought you, a wretch of no lineage (or origin), before me, uprooted and with fetters on feet,⁴⁸ from the land where you have grown up; I untied your bonds (removed your knots) I only christened you with the name 'sharp-pointed'⁴⁹ and put my tongue into your mouth as a result of which your tongue (i.e. tip) got straightened. (thus) you have reached the stage of writing and lettering, through the blow from my tongue. Still, you come every time with an impaired (lit. broken) tongue to me, get yourself mended and go away. You seem to entertain (many) violent desires, for you talk too much; you give out whatever comes out of your tongue and you tread the path of coming and going with paper

⁴⁸ That is knots on the reed.

⁴⁹ Sartiz also means irascible

which has reverse and obverse (lit. back and stomach), that is you put whatever comes on your tongue on both sides of the sheet. This verse fully describes (lit. conforms to, is according to) your condition.

Quatrain:

Know, O pen: it is you only who fights shy of the sword
And it is you only who has crept into the dark well. O you beheaded one
(or one with head cut off), with dark and black hair (lit. ringlet)⁵⁰
You are but a two- tongued and tail-cut serpent.

The pen, by this incantation that it was called a serpent, was smitten by itself (i.e. coiled upon itself) and put its head in the hole of the ink- pot. I who am its snake-charmer, I (i.e., the author) brought it out inea with magic and wheedled⁵¹ it to cross over to (i.e. face) the sword. It swallowed the fluid of its teeth and spat out the water (saliva) of its mouth (and said) "O two-faced one harboring rust in your chest: whosoever from an infidel or a *Muslim* took you in his hand, you become his property and ultimately turn your back to your patron (lit. who has taken your hand). You yourself are two- faced and you scrape (and make) two tongues of mine. The attribute of oneness of god without duality begets from (i.e. is pronounced by) a pen. For I am the carrier of the revelation of prophets (i.e. commit to them in writing in scriptures)I (only) bring in the net of my bond all the sciences which are intractable (i.e., I put all sciences in tracts by writing them).you claim that you are mending (setting right) my tongue. (know that) my tongue has been set right and mended on the preserved tablet (on the day of eternity without beginning), for I have been always a confidant (keeper) of the mysteries of the unseen and it is I who have written the wirting-boards of all the learned men of the world and have prepared the lessons for man.⁵²while once in a while, I frequent (lit. come and go to) the scribes of the chancellory (*dīwan*), through the tip of my (nib) I am also being held (responsible) to the extent that if they steal in a hundred ways, you will impute that to me and you portray yourself as clean- hearted. But you cannot visualize this in your heart that with a scraped head, I am engaged, day and night, from morning till the evening in saying, praying (standing, bowing) prostration and have the verses of the Qur'ân and (formulas of) invocation of prayers on the tip of my tongue. I have traveled through all the dark and bright

⁵⁰ *kafcha* means, a ladle, spatula, a snake's hood,acurl,a ringlet.

⁵¹ Lit.' playing' (*ba-bazi*).

⁵² Text has *alsan*which lhas no meaning. It seems to be a scribal error for *Insan*(man).

regions of the world and have discarded them and have exempted them whether to share or separate. And I have taken up residence in (and confined myself to) a corner of the pen-case with annoyance and the root and cause of my pedigree and origin and through night risings I have become such that when for meditation (to divine secrets), I lower down my head inside the wool(of the inkstand)⁵³ I give out secrets of the Unseen, through inspiration (during meditation).

You also flaunt before me the defect of (i.e., charge me with) miserliness, (but forget) that the whole mankind receive their men of livelihood from the office where I operate. The difference between your gift and my generosity is this that you spill blood, while I sprinkle musk ; you have a few showy pearls,⁵⁴ which too you hold back, while I bring from the invisible one hundred thousand real gems of ideas shower them over the head of the people of the world; you are itching (lit. raising an uproar) to take the life of (i.e., kill) the men of holy wars, while I am all the while made after granting eternal life to men of ideas (writers and authors)

Persian Poem:

Do you know at all what that blackness (ink) is,
It is the dark regions for the elixir.
Pen is a garden for blackness⁵⁵
It is like the vernal cloud for the confines of garden.
Come, come, have a look at your surroundings,

The pearl scattering of I who am a vernal cloud, you call me miserly. After all, I do have a bowl, and am not like who does not have even that, and even if you have one, that is a helmet, which along with the cup of the head (skull) of a man, is always inverted⁵⁶ unless when men put their head down and their feet up, so that your bowl settles itself (lit. sits) straight on the ground. And more strange fact is that from that bowl you drink nothing but blood. You are calling yourself the *muqta* of the town, of me who has conquered so many large tracts (of Land) by galloping horses and have granted you tracts of land at the point of a whip. You are nothing more than fief-holder of my rule. If I were to confront you straight forwardly, you will get branded by the taunt of my tongue and you would be after my destruction (lit. cutting me off), you want to be sharp and therefore grind yourself under the (whetting) stone. See that a spark rises in this midst. If I am a dry stick or not, do not set fire to me for if my fire blazes up (or rises in flames),

⁵³ *Suf* means wool (used for dress by the *Øûfis*) as also a piece of wool etc. put into an inkstand.

⁵⁴ Reference to the lustre of the sword.

⁵⁵ *Sawad* also means region , environs.

⁵⁶ *Kasa-i-Nagunsar*, 'inverted bowl or cup' means poor, empty-handed.

you will get scalded and you may lose your shine and not be able to show face before any one.

Couplet:

O sword, do not get heated up on the strength of your cutting-power,
I am after all a pen; do not wound my heart.

You (yourself) are on water (i.e., unstable); hence, carry not⁵⁷ antagonism so far

That you loose your shine (lit. water) and you cannot cut (anything) any more. The sword became downcast and felt disgraced and its tongue got blunted. I (the author) goaded it with the tongue of the pen. It shouted, "O you base mercenary, you call me two-faced; have you not read this (established truth) that my two-facedness is o account of this that on the battlefield, no one may see my back under any circumstance. (on the other hand) you are (that one) who fights shy of taking me by horns (i.e. facing me manly), and creeps into the black-hole (prison, lit. black house); rather you cast yourself into a well and immerse yourself in the turbid water and murky clay. And if they drag you out from that position, you cannot raise your hand (face people)on account of your black face. I clean up your black stains I do not have any work except scraping off your crookedness (lit defect) and rectifying your affair. You were uncouth and I shaved off your head. You owe both your shave (scrape off) and separating. Every time, you hid (lit. carry) your head under the wool and ask people to recite incantation in your snare and with an un-scraped head, you fraudulently issue letters of authority (or mandates). A group of weavers who know you well, may Allah break up their power, arrange your curls, ⁵⁸but nothing recoils into your head. If hair grows on your head, all your incantation will be nullified.

Couplet:

With a shaved head, you (still) have a *jad* (ink clotting),
You have a quick pace, though with (only) one foot.

Come so I, who am the bright visor of brave men, show you to be a dry twig and that of no consequence. With such a frail stature, you have made yourself notorious by putting on the act of structuring (walking with a pompous bearing)⁵⁹. With blue mark, you creep into the lower part of the ear of beautiful damsels and

⁵⁷ *Jad-i-qalam* "clotted ink adhering to the pen (Steingass, p.364)

⁵⁸ *jad-i-qalam*, clotted ink adhering to the pen (Steingass ,p. 364).

⁵⁹ *Na-yi*, 'you art not, nothing as well as 'you are a reed'.

from there you stretch to the corner of (their) eye; and from half closed eye, you have a bodkin-thrust (applied to you? And on account of anger, you run upwards and also have indigo (*wasma*) rush there. You halt (or limp) at the nod the eye-brow and imprint a kiss close to the lip under the pretext of a mole. And your action also leaves a brand behind.

While the sword was indulging in this fanciful talk-play, there came all of a sudden a hair-dress and handed me (author?) a mirror (to be shown to the sword?). The sword said, "Lo, you have portrayed (vividly described your tale and have brightened the mirror of my merits (lit. inherent worths) and also, some of it (lit. a thing) is clear." The mirror turned its face and showed the vertebrae of its back (or showed its back-side)⁶⁰ and brought out the vision which it had in its heart in a better way, saying, "All turn their face and indulge in vision-seeing." I show them the true picture (i.e., state) of affairs which is known (clear to me) of his as well as of whoever he might be *Mathnavi*,

Verses:

I am a mirror, the main stay of truthfulness.
I do not hold back any body's visage.
I shall tell you one incident, if you (are included) to listen,
From the state of affairs of the pen, both in form and reality,
See the shaved head one wrapped up in wool,
So concealed and so apparent.

When the pen perceived its picture, such as it was, from the mirror, said "O mirror! Whether, I have done or not, you have neither seen it nor heard after all. You have just raised a picture on your own (fabricated it), and have led people to indulge in conjecture. But it is not your fault that you find fault and outwardly, you (pretend to) reflect (lit. show the face of) the fronts and backs of others, with utmost clarity, but inwardly, you are very black-hearted, wherever, you go, you belong there and do not reflect except their picture, When you leave them, again you revert and put forth the picture of the viewers through fraud and deceit. Surely, all these well known qualities of yours are backed by money (lit. gold). If you and the sword were to league up with all these, they should not think that they can confront me with that condition in front of people, even if you all come together for presenting a picture."

The mirror said "O pen, do not drive all with one stick (i.e., do not treat all alike). You know as well as that other party (that) if they want me to stop light that state, I can show it at the place it appears. And what is this that you say I am in

⁶⁰*Fiqr*, "vertebrae of the back"; *Faqr* "poverty", *Fuqr* "a side".

front and back of others and call me black-hearted. If I was not apprehensive of sigh (which would obscure me), I would show whatever is to be shown.”

I was under this impression and firm belief that this mirror was turned back and told to go and wrap itself up in a corner of its (cloak of) coarse cloth and wait (lit. sit), so that they might not once again taunt (lit. say) that you are backed by money.

At this, the mirror turned its back and drew the pen across the sword, saying, “wherefrom did you produce this adopted sister (*Khwahar-Khwanda*) who gives evidence without being an eye-witness (lit. without saying).” The sword said, “Everything has happened in its presence and people have very well read your writings (lit. imprints); may, the children of elementary schools too put a finger on (criticize) your words, that you have degrade yourself (lit. gone down) with your black-heartedness. Men have caught you (held you in their hand) a thousand of times, your head has blackened, and you have tried to take yourself out of their fingers. (on the contrary, here) is I, on whose word no one can lay a finger. If he does, I shall cut off his finger. On account of my purity (brightness), I have my face under the arch and on account of my prowess, I have my place (lit. take my seat) in the ranks of holy warriors (or champions of the faith), and I always keep company with my equals. Necessarily therefore whenever you come to me, you leave with your head cut off.”

Quartrain:

I am the sword whose sweat is the blood of my enemy.
I am a constant cause of pain to you, O pen!
As long as my steel works successfully on reed,
How can you be secure from my cuttings off your head?

On account of this verbal scathing attack which the sword had inflicted on its head, the pen swallowed a part of its tongue. And due to inflammation of head, in the core of its heart (i.e., heart burning), it blurted out like the smoke-raising reed, “O you Indian sword who are playing in the hands of (your) Indian priest⁶¹ and who like the Brahmins, are engrossed (lit. gone deep down) in (Vedas)⁶² and are sleeping in the scabbard of a heretic, an idol worshiper you apply ash on your body like the idol worshipers of Banaras and visualize your purity from there. You call yourself one belonging to a (prayer) niche,⁶³ and mention the name of wool

⁶¹ Text has giran, ‘snatchers’. It is very probably gabran ‘magis’.

⁶² Bid ‘Veda, the holy book of the hindus, unless, unproditable work, ‘willow-tree’, etc. here it is intended to mean useless pursuits. Note also the words play with bidin in the next phrase.

⁶³ *Mifrabī*, also arch-shaped.

and shaving off my head.⁶⁴ If a surgeon (*jarrah*) shaves the head of men of wool (*Sufis*), he becomes their leader. After all, I am the occupant of the (Øufistic) Monastery (*khanqah*) of the Arabic saying “the first Allah created was the pen”. And, also from the very beginning they have created me for ‘wool’,. And as to what you say that children put a finger on my writing, it is because the teacher has on my account, made them carry the (school) bag round their neck, with rod-punishment. And if I have gone down into the inkpot with which I am coupled, there is no need to strike me with reproach (or to hit me with a taunt), because the fulfiller of the needs (God) has tied my Knot (of marriage with it) and I have begotten several bright sons (I have produced many brilliant ideas through writing).

Couplet:

The collyrium of the eye of all learned men .
I have been called in front of all readers.

If you were to unite that knot a hundred times, separation between us will never take place. But you have reproach of me as a javelin, for my straight lance has conquered you so that with distressed heart, you make a long face you have made a dry small stick (I.e. a scabbard) your partner and you have gone down it till your neck. Unless they do not help you in your state of being down in the scabbard, you cannot come out. They take you by your neck several times from your horse (scabbard) and draw you out, but again you creep into it and you have scraped, rolled up and gathered in one corner whatever there was in its stick-store, prior to that. If they lay you bare (unsheathe you), you immediate come forth to make a kill and turn cold and livid (with rage)”.

Quatrain:

O sword! If you could be at place⁶⁵ with me for a moment,
Then, this smoke also will not remain in my head (i.e., I would not be so haughty).⁶⁶
I know your heart is not without blackness.
Hence you have become so cold and livid.

⁶⁴ *Suf* and *sar-tarashidan*: a disciple of a *sufi* saint has his head shaved by his master.

⁶⁵ Text has *sud*, ‘gain’, profit, which is very probably used here as a contraction of *asud*. Also, *azdami* may be a similar error for *ardami*.

⁶⁶ *Dud-i-Dimagh* means ‘pride’, ‘haughtiness’.

The sword was lying with its tongue rolled out (was fatigued) and its tongue was wearied of (had no strength left) to lick even. I (author) caught hold of it and gave it a shake. It came to face the rank (or came in the way) of the pen and moved its tongue to say, "O you wretched mixer of color! You call me cold and livid me whose blue blade, in (winning) the laurels in war is a violent death and a red opponent for the enemy. With these two to three words with which you garble (i.e. color) (your speech) and formulate them on my tablet, I am certainly not going to blush and change my color when I roll in the blood of (my) enemies. But I am not like you who show yourself to be of one color (sincere) and say,

Couplet:

There is no other color before blackness,
Or after blackness, there is another color.

If you get caught up in the hand of a painter, you produce a hundred wiles in a little while and change colors ten times. You present yourself before people with the shaven head. If there is no color-mixing in your head, then wherefrom do hairs come up (grow) on your head, when you fall in front of the painters. Now it has become known that wherever you are, you are not without coloring and deception. You are a mere tool in the hand of all doers of black deeds you call me a plaything of the patrons of hind. But then, do not those very Hindus read up your tablet, when you confine (to writing) their absurd (lit. false) sciences, which are absolute heresy, inscribe their inverted writing with a running head and creep into their ear-lobe. You chide me with being besmeared with ash, while at the time when they scatter dust on your lettering, you sulk.⁶⁷ Due to your self-willingness, you have fallen into the leather cover of the pen holder and reserved (lit. assigned, put) a place for yourself. And your voice is full-throated. Rather, you have got pasted with some one. Hence if any one shakes the pen-case, since your operators have sealed its mouth out of deceitfulness, you will remain (inside) with head downcast and nothing can make you come out, while due to your light headedness (folly), you will noise inside the belly. And if someone opens the seal of its mouth, and wants to extract something rightfully from it, you will all at once excoriate yourself (lit. come out of your skin) and having laid out a shop of tongue, will come out with one tongue.

(As against this) (it is) I, who even though they may not move me from any place, on account of my inherent strength and weight age, do not make any noise. And if they want that I may come out from my bed-chamber of the scabbard,

⁶⁷ *Khushkawardan*, to keep silent due to bad temper to sulk.

unless they give an undertaking and pledge⁶⁸ that I shall be held above their heads and will be stationed above every one else, then only I step out. There may be a time when I remain adamant (lit. display force) and stay put (do not come out at all). What has you, a weakling of a broken and tied reed piece, to do with me? go to your reed-forest and raise a commotion there until the day of resurrection comes. And write something about me who am from those on the right hand (favored ones).⁶⁹

Verse:

I am a sword and wherever I come out (i.e., am drawn), I am active.³
And in all respects and senses, O pen, I am better than you.

I have in my right hand such strength that I would not allow you to stand erect (defiant), before me.

The moment the sword stopped (lit. rested), since there was nothing in between, I took the pen to talk and said, "O you courage of an ass and a wretched night-prowler (lit. walker in the night) whatever furbishing the sword does on your head, it is rightfully done (lit. it takes place out of rightfulness). If the allies of the sword use force, they will break you. Although I am on your side I do not have the strength to break the sword."

The pen has engaged in writing a few (lit. two) disjointed words⁷⁰ on the tablet (blade) of the sword. Although, on account of my thrashings, it was dejected, yet, it recovered (lit. took itself out) by pulling itself up. It put jar.⁷¹ Under every letter and also wrote a *Tashdid* (the sign of doubling the letter, confirming) under the *jarr*. It laughed in (marking) *Tashdid* and showed its teeth.⁷² While looking down at itself it told me, "O Khusrau! Do you compare that dross of an iron with me who talk to the angel in the unearthing of treasures of the unseen. The angels are not compared to iron. It is imperative upon you not to remove your hand from over my head (i.e keep on keeping your hand over me, protect me). You write the answer to the sword with my head (tip) and see what assaults I make (on it).

When I saw this much doggedness on the part of the pen, I took it to the presence of the sword so that it put this brand on the petty complaint of the sword,

⁶⁸ *Dast-i-rastdar-mayanarand*, give the right hand i.e pledge. *Dast-i-rast* also means right hand man, a person next to the chief.

⁶⁹ *Ashabul-yameen*, Qur'ân (56:.,27).

⁷⁰ *Muqatta'atare* letters in a word not joined with one another, example Dardi as against *muwassalat*, joined letter example ' *naheef* .

⁷¹ *Jarr* means "dragging" "drawing" as well as the vowel *Zir* or *Kasara* put beneath a letter, at the end.

⁷² The shape of *tashdid* resembles a arrow of teeth.

" O you dullard (lit. unskilled one)! You find fault with me in different ways, on the basis of the art of the painting (writing), that I portray an animate object, out of nothing, while you who destroy the picture of an animate one, you consider it a skill.

Couplet:

While I make pictures of men, with vermilion (color you call be a criminal),

You shed blood from the form of man and consider it to be an achievement (lit. a brilliant thing).

After all, what do you portray? For, you come out a hundred times from the band (lit. side) of priest⁷³ and way layers and traverse the path of (pose as) *Muslims* and wound a large number of people. But when I, for some expediency, gather knowledge about the affairs of the priest⁷⁴ and upset their design, you draw a line of infidelity on my forehead. If I write the alphabet of the priest, it is because I am conversant with their sciences and put forth decisive arguments on behalf of Islam. If one has no knowledge about their doctrine, I cannot draw the line of preaching, on their page, nor can I lead you to attack them so that you can invalidate their pseudo decisive proofs. If I have accommodated myself in the pen-case, in the rank of the righteous ones who have got together by typing knots, what capacity has your tongue there (to talk?) there is heat in me any time I can accommodate myself in its house in such a way that I enter its stomach and stretch my feet there I have (understanding) with righteous ones who are in its heart in the matter of stretching legs (i.e being comfortable). But you go deep down into yourself and see that not only are you crooked with yourself but you enter your own house (scabbard) in a crooked (bent) manner. And this analogy is quite appropriate as has been said,

Hemistich:

'A body of Iron' is not a misnomer for it.

For a crooked (curved) sword, a crooked (curved) scabbard has got to be made.

Quatrain:

O sword whose head has been raised on account of its crookedness (curve),

And have been thrown in with (made to face) my straightness,

⁷³ Text giran the marginal gloss reads it is gabranmagis (instead of giran, snatchers), which is correct. Here gabran is used as a synonym of the use of the word *Musalmaan* in the next phrase Brahmins whose books, the sword alleged, the pen was writing (cf, 37)

⁷⁴see the preceding note.

I cannot be crooked, as by nature (origin), I am straight.
While you cannot turn straight as they have made you crooked only.

In this strain the pen was expostulating and the sword was after repudiating (its claims). Whatever questions the pen posed, the sword answered them, all of a sudden, the pen took its head to the inkpot. The sword got an opportunity and turned to me and said, "O Khusrau! You are a *Turk* and off spring of saif(sword).⁷⁵ Help me (lit. take my head), for my strength stems from the arm of *Turks*." I answered that "I am a Turk but no more than a figure head, for my job would not be done (lit. take place) except with pen, and it is (now) in my hand. Therefore, unless I put my head on its back (I give it up), that would not work,⁷⁶ however, I have no authority over you. But I have a patron who is a master-of-sword as well as master-of-pen.

Couplet:

He has in the battle utmost mastery,
The name iron-bodied is not a misnomer for him.

⁷⁵Saifud-din was the name of Khusrau's father.

⁷⁶*Amad-wa-shudīn*adarand in the text; here, the subject in plural is undeterminable.