

Wine Poems from Rūmī's *Diwān*

1) Ghazal 81

Oh Cupbearer! Fill the soul from that pre-existent cup, that thief of the heart, that ambusher of formal religion.

Fill it with the wine that springs from the heart and mixes with the spirit, the wine whose bubbling intoxicates the God-seeing eye.

That grape wine – it belongs to the followers of Jesus; but this Hallajian¹ wine, it belongs to the followers of the Qur'ān.

Vats of this wine, vats of that: until you break that vat, you will never taste this wine.

That wine frees the heart from sorrow for an instant: never can it snuff out sorrow, never can it uproot malice.

One drop from this cup will turn your work into gold – may my soul be sacrificed to this golden cup!

When this state (of wine-drinking) comes,² mostly it comes in the pre-dawn hours, to him who scatters his bed-roll and pillow.²

Beware lest the bad companion³ deceive you through whisperings – never break the covenant with kings⁴ through weakness.

Translated by William Chittick in “Jami on Divine Love and the image of wine” originally published in *Studies in Mystical Literature*, 1/3 (1981), pp. 193-20 and now available on <http://www.ibnarabisociety.org/articles/jamiwine.html>

¹ A reference to the famous 10th century mystic, Mansūr al-Hallāj who was famous for his states of spiritual ecstasy. For a previous session on this seminal figure in the mystical tradition of Islam, see <http://www.ibnarabisociety.org/courses/oudce1201.html>

² i.e. who spends his night in prayer

³ i.e. your own lower self

⁴ i.e. Islamic law

2) Ghazal 1720

Once more we come like dust adance in air
 From beyond the skies of love, aturn
On the field of love like polo balls we roll
 skittering to the side, coming to the fore

Love reduces one to need – if that’s your lot
 it suits you – not us, who come from the beyond
This gathering’s in your honour and the guests
 have all arrived. But not for bread alone
 we come here; pour out the firewater!
As you course through our veins, made wretched by
 our wounds for you, thank God we come quick to life!

Shams of Truth this love of yours thirsts for my blood
 I head straight to it, blade and shroud in hand!
Tabriz aboil your salt alone can simmer!
 We – pride of all the earth in caring for you –
 have come to help you stir the age up.

Translation from Franklin Lewis *Rūmī*, p. 347-8

3) Ghazal 2131

Let go all your scheming, lover,
Let yourself go mad,
 go mad
just step into the heart of fire
make yourself like a moth,⁵
 a moth⁵

Turn yourself into a stranger
raze your house to the ground
then come and stand under one roof,
 beneath the same roof
and live among the lovers.

Scrape your heart, like a plate,
clean of envy, with cascades of water
then fill up like a chalice
 like a chalice
with the wine of love.

Metamorphose purely into soul
make yourself worthy of the Soulmate
If you are going to see the drunkards
 walk tipsy
 with inebriation

Like a model
your earring pendant dangles
brushing intimate against your cheek
incline that cheek and ear
 to the Mother Pearl
 that Precious Pearl⁶

As your spirit rises in the air
From the sweetness of our tale
Efface yourself
And like the lovers be a legend
 legendary...⁷

Translation from Franklin Lewis *Rūmī*, p. 385-6

⁵ A common symbol in the mystical tradition because of its attraction towards light.

⁶ Another common symbol for the Beloved, or for the pure Divine Intellect because of its luminosity and perfection.

⁷ This is just the first part of the poem, whose subject is the Night of Power

4) Ghazal 3154

Top of the morning, you're already smashed
 oh yes you are! You tied your turban crooked.
Today your eyes look shot, all glazed over
 I think you drank a hundred proof last night
Light of our lives and light of our hearts!
 Salutations to you! How are you feeling?

You imbibed and travelled to the heavens
 got yourself sotted and broke all bonds
 The face of reason always freezes hearts
 The face of love turns all heads giddy
You got sotted, started wrestling lions⁸
 Wine-suckled, rode bare-back on a lion's neck
Like an old shaykh the aged wine guided you
 Go now, freed from the ancient spinning wheel.

Sāqi, you hold truth and justice on your side
 refusing worship to all things but wine
You've borne away our reason
but this time carry us away
like we'll never go again.

Translation from Franklin Lewis *Rūmī*, p. 349-50

(References to Foruzānfar's critical edition *Kulliyāt-e Shams yā Divān al-Kabīr* in 10 Volumes, Tehran, 1957-67.)

⁸ The lion could have a number of meanings; it could mean the animal soul, which is often likened to a wild animal which needs to be tamed in order to achieve spiritual union. Or it could be a reference to the Quṭb, or spiritual pole, the perfected man around whom the universe turns, who is depicted elsewhere by Rūmī as a lion.

5) Ghazal 283

I went to the master's street and said, "Where is the master?"

They said, "The master is a lover and is drunk and is wandering from street to street".

I said, "I have a duty, at least give me a clue; after all, I am the master's friend, not an enemy".

They said, "The master has fallen in love with that garden; seek him in the garden or beside the stream."

Drunkards and lovers go after their beloved; if a man has fallen in love, go and wash your hands from him.

The fish that has known water remains not on land; how should a lover stay in the sphere of colour and scent?

The frozen snow that has seen the face of the sun is devoured by the sun, though it be heap upon heap.

Especially he who is in love with our king, a king peerless, faithful, sweet-tempered.

Any copper which that infinite, immeasurable, incomparable alchemy touches becomes gold at the word *Return*.⁹

Sleep away from the world, and flee from its six direction; how long will you foolishly wander and roam hither and thither?

Eventually in the end they will bring you of your own choice, go with glory and honour before the king.

Had there not been a meddler¹⁰ in the midst, Jesus would have revealed the mystery line by line.

I have closed the road of the mouth and opened the secret way; I have escaped by one cup of wine from the frenzy of speech.

Translation from Arberry *Mystical Poems of Rūmī* 2, 1991, p. 65-6

⁹ A reference to Q 89:28: Oh you peaceful soul, return to your Lord, well-pleased and well-pleasing.

¹⁰ This word *Sar-ekhar* means literally 'donkey-head' and the meaning is someone before whom one cannot talk openly because they would create embarrassment.