

Baba Farid: poems

1.

Honey, molasses, sugar,
the buffalo's milk – all these
are sweet.

But not
through such sweetness goes
the way to God.¹

2.

Set your mind on your Love,
still your wandering heart, be
patient as a tree, live
like a dervish.²

3.

The Maker is in all
His creation,
His creation
speaks His Being:
Whom shall we call
evil when He is in
everyone?³

4.

Do not slander the dust, Farid!
There is nothing to equal it.
While we are alive, it lies beneath our feet;
and when we are dead, it covers us all over.⁴

¹ *Slokas*, 30.

² *Slokas*, 64.

³ *Slokas*, 80. Cf. *Shakar Ganj*: Farid, the Creator is manifest in His creation; the creation is in Him. Caviil not at anyone; He pervadeth all.

⁴ Quoted in Nizami, p. 101.

5.

If you do not awake to pray, o Farid
in the later part of the night,
although alive, you are no better than the dead.
But listen even if you have forgotten God,
God has not forgotten you.⁵

6.

God is not in the echoes
of the forest
nor in the ascetic pain
of pressed thorns;
turn within from dross.⁶

7.

All men's hearts are priceless jewels.
It is vile to break any.
If you yearn for the Beloved,
do not break the heart of anyone.⁷

8.

Serve the Lord, Farid,
casting off the doubts of your mind,
for men of God are required to be
forbearing like the trees.⁸

⁵ Quoted in Nizami, p. 102. Alternative trans: "Farid, if you aren't awake/ in the small hours of the night/
you have died while living./ If you have forgotten God/ God has not forgotten you." (Sagar, no. 107)

⁶ *Slokas*, 22.

⁷ Quoted in Nizami, p. 102. Alternative version: "The heart is precious./ If you wish to shorten/ the distance
to your Love,/ spare every heart pain." (*Slokas*, 140).

⁸ Quoted in Nizami, p. 102. Alternative version: "Farid, serve the Lord/ feel light at heart;/ men of God
need to have/ patience like trees." (Sagar, no. 60)

9.

When virgin, then excitement.
When married, then problems.
Farid, the regret is:
one does not become virgin again.⁹

10.

Farid, on the river bank,
a crane plays games.
When it is playing swan,
the hawks swoop down on him.
When the hawk of God strikes,
games are forgotten.
That which was not in the mind or memory,
that is done by God.¹⁰

11.

Not me, by God, my friend, it is not me!
I am the soul of the soul, the spirit of the spirit, not me.
I am the pure light of Ahmad [wrapped] in a handful of dust—
[it is no wonder] if my light does not reach the blind of heart.
In my self the Friend has manifested,
Not me Mas‘ud, by God, it is not me!¹¹

12.

There are few saints
who, though wise, are simple,
who, though strong, are weak,
who, though having not, divide what they have.¹²

⁹ Sagar, no. 63.

¹⁰ Trans. Sagar, no. 99.

¹¹ Quoted in Chopra, p. 63. Trans. SH. Ahmad is one of the names of the Prophet Muhammad.

¹² Quoted in Anand, p. 65.