



RE-FINDING MY CULTURE AND MYSELF IN TRANSLATION

Jatinder Kaur

The poems I have translated from Punjabi into English are from my books titled *Bracket de Baharwaar* (1994) and *Angad* (2008). [*Bracket de Baharwaar* is the winner of a prestigious award in India]. Both books are available at Apnaorg.com, electronically; hard copies can be ordered at Amazon.

As regards my experience in translation, I seem to have lost nothing; the gain is tremendous- I have found my misplaced self while translating my poems aged decades.

In the process, I have gained insight into the place of translation in inter-cultural communication. An unanticipated gain is also there, which is touching, sweet and soothing and much more at the same time. That gain is of intra-cultural communication. [Re] Publishing your poetry in a foreign land, in its original script is a feeling which can be translated in to 'home coming'; word to word and in total equivalence; my gratitude to you, Dr. Marco Sonzogni, for this opportunity.

Below, I am sharing an extract from a poem in progress, since it is on self-translation and hence, relevant:

On Self-translation

Translating yourself,
is like getting pregnant with the same child,
again (and again)

The pain of labour brings pleasure, beyond measure, though
it's not a child's play, getting pregnant again with the same child, in a different way

It's worth the wait, looking for the altered state, and living at once the fate;
of a *Sadhu*, a shaman, and a labouring woman,
living and loving the best of both words; of all worlds

1.

The benevolence

The benevolence of your soul
has turned me into a sacred verse

ਇਨਾਇਤ

ਤੇਰੀ ਰੂਹ ਦੀ ਇਨਾਇਤ
ਮੈਨੂੰ ਕਰ ਗਈ ਕੋਈ ਆਇਤ



2.

Angad

These are not mere historical events or sheer twists of fate, a chance

The soul connection we share, for instance, O dear!

Silently, my soul absorbs the pain of yours'
that passes through it, serenely.
There is no need to name this bond as 'Love', or,
as a 'sacred affair from the above'

Why give it a name?
Which name?

I know it is not looking for a title or a name

If you must add a title to the relation, co-relation, the bond of this kind
do name you will find
for robin's love for Jesus, pure?

When picking a thorn from Jesus' head, they tell the bird bled.
And yet this love has no name

Named or not, love sustains

You may choose to trust this prophecy, or,
You may call it a legacy of souls
'cause it will happen like this again, and again.
A soul soaked up in a soul, will find and pick the pain

It must be a divine grace!
That elevates a *Lehna* to an *Angad* in *Nanak*'s embrace

It is a history, not a mere history though.
A happy chance, but not just a chance

It is also true of this, or any other *yug*; the state of time:

Whenever a pain will bind the souls again
A robin will come to the crown (of Jesus), to lessen a thorn.
In the embrace of a *Nanak*, an *Angad* will be born.

The pain divine, in this time, in any time,
will keep binding the souls, as it has, yours's and mine.



ਅੰਗਦ

ਮਹਿਜ਼ ਕੋਈ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ
ਰਿਸ਼ਤੇ ਦਾ ਇਤਫਾਕ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ
ਤੇਰੀ ਰੂਹ ਦੀ ਚੁੱਪ ਵੇਦਨ ਦਾ
ਇੰਝ ਮੇਰੇ ਸੀਨੇ 'ਚੋਂ ਲੰਘਣਾ
ਤੇ ਮੇਰਾ ਇਸ ਚੁੱਪ ਵੇਦਨ ਨੂੰ
ਇੰਝ ਅਪਣੇ ਸੀਨੇ ਵਿਚ ਜਰਨਾ

ਇਹ ਲਾਜ਼ਿਮ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਰੂਹ ਲਈ
ਰੂਹ ਦੀ ਕਲੀ-ਕਾਰੀ ਜੂਹ ਲਈ
ਰਿਸ਼ਤੇ ਦਾ ਕੋਈ ਨਗਰ ਉਸਰਨਾ
ਤੇ ਇਸ ਚੁੱਪ ਵੇਦਨ ਦੇ ਮੂੰਹ ਤੋਖ
ਰੂਹ ਦੀ ਪੀੜਾ ਜਰਦੀ ਰੂਹ ਤੇ
ਰਿਸ਼ਤੇ ਦਾ ਹਸਤਾਖਰ ਕਰਨਾ

ਇਹ ਵੀ ਤਾਂ ਰਿਸ਼ਤਾ ਹੀ ਹੁੰਦੈ
ਇਹ ਕੋਈ ਇਤਫਾਕ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ
ਰੋਬਿਨ ਪੰਛੀ ਦੇ ਪੈਰਾਂ ਵਿਚ
ਈਸਾ ਦੀ ਸੂਲੀ ਦਾ ਪੁੜਨਾ
ਤੇ ਈਸਾ ਨੂੰ ਚੁਭਦੇ ਕਿਲ ਨੂੰ
ਇੰਝ ਰੋਬਿਨ ਪੰਛੀ ਦਾ ਚੁਣਨਾ

ਇਹ ਵੀ ਤਾਂ ਰਿਸ਼ਤਾ ਹੀ ਹੁੰਦੈ
ਇਹ ਕੋਈ ਇਤਫਾਕ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ
ਨਾਨਕ ਦੀ ਰੂਹ ਦੇ ਸਾਗਰ ਚੋਂ
ਲਹਿਣੇ ਦਾ ਸਚ ਦਾ ਘੁੱਟ ਭਰਨਾ
ਤੇ ਫਿਰ ਲਹਿਣੇ ਦਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇ
ਸੀਨੇ ਲਗ ਕੇ ਅੰਗਦ ਬਣਨਾ

ਮਹਿਜ਼ ਕੋਈ ਇਤਫਾਕ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ
ਇਸ ਯੁਗ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਤਾਂ ਮੁਮਕਿਨ ਹੈ
ਰੋਬਿਨ ਪੰਛੀ ਦੇ ਪੈਰਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ
ਈਸਾ ਦੀ ਸੂਲੀ ਦਾ ਪੁੜਨਾ
ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇ ਸੀਨੇ ਨਾਲ ਲਗ ਕੇ
ਫਿਰ ਲਹਿਣੇ ਦਾ ਅੰਗਦ ਬਣਨਾ



ਮਹਿਜ਼ ਕੋਈ ਇਤਫਾਕ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ
ਤੇਰੀ ਰੂਹ ਦੀ ਚੁਪ ਵੇਦਨ ਦਾ
ਇੰਝ ਮੇਰੇ ਸੀਨੇ 'ਚੋਂ ਲੰਘਣਾ
ਤੇ ਮੇਰਾ ਇਸ ਚੁੱਪ ਵੇਦਨ ਨੂੰ
ਇੰਝ ਅਪਣੇ ਸੀਨੇ ਵਿਚ ਜਰਨਾ

3.

Bureaucracy

The question is: what is a bureaucracy?

Well, when a table and a chair
embed a pair of human legs between theirs'

The sum of those legs; ten, and many units like them,
run the system and its affairs!

Can these legs; the units of ten go anywhere, alone?
Well, they can't.
Like crutches, they cannot move on their own

Thus, they just stay
Night and day

These slouchy units of ten,
form a cult with those like them

They push, they pull, they play fouls.
They win the matches; friendly, or hostile

They are seen as familiar groove.
The system's crutches, to make it move

Or, may I tell you, my views on them?
These good-looking figures of ten,
are like the vanity kit of the call girl; named 'system'

ਅਫਸਰਸ਼ਾਹੀ

ਅਫਸਰਸ਼ਾਹੀ ਕੀ ਹੈ?
ਜਿਵੇਂ ਲੱਕੜੀ ਦੀ ਮੇਜ਼
ਤੇ ਲੱਕੜੀ ਦੀ ਕੁਰਸੀ ਦੇ
ਦਰਮਿਆਨ



ਦੇ ਲੱਤਾਂ ਹੋਰ ਜੋੜ ਦਿਤੀਆਂ ਜਾਣ
ਇਹ ਦਸ ਦੀਆਂ ਦਸ ਲਤਾਂ
ਤੁਰਦੀਆਂ ਨਹੀਂ
ਪਹੁੰਚਦੀਆਂ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਿਧਰੇ

ਇਹ ਲਤਾਂ
ਸਿਰਫ ਹਿੰਦਸੇ ਪੂਰਦੀਆਂ
ਦੁਲਤੀਆਂ ਮਾਰਦੀਆਂ
ਅਤੇ ਅਗੇ ਪਿਛੇ
ਸਜੇ ਖਬੇ
ਉਤੇ ਹੇਠਾਂ
ਦਿਸਦੇ ਅਣਦਿਸਦੇ
ਦਸ ਦਸ ਦੇ ਹਿੰਦਸਿਆਂ ਵਿੱਚ
ਲਤਾਂ ਅੜਾਉਂਦੀਆਂ
ਦੌੜਾਂ ਬਣਾਉਂਦੀਆਂ
ਜਾਂ ਆਉਟ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦੀਆਂ

ਜਾਂ ਫਿਰ ਜਿੱਤ ਦਾ ਭਰਮ ਪੈਦਾ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ
ਫਾਉਲ ਖੇਡਦੀਆਂ

ਮੇਜ਼ ਤੇ ਕੁਰਸੀ ਵਿਚਕਾਰ ਜੜੀਆਂ
ਇੰਨਾ ਦੇ ਲਤਾਂ ਦੀ ਅਹਿਮੀਅਤ
ਬੈਸਾਖੀਆਂ ਜਿੰਨੀ ਹੀ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਏ
ਜੇ ਆਪ ਕਿਸੇ ਰਾਹ ਤੇ
ਤੁਰ ਕੇ ਜਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਕਦੀਆਂ

ਇਹ ਦਸ ਦਸ ਦੇ ਹਿੰਦਸੇ
ਸ਼ਿੰਗਾਰਦਾਨ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਨੇ
ਹਕੂਮਤ ਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਤਵਾਇਫ ਦੇ

4.

A prayer

Empower my despair
With articulation; profound

Upraise my scribbles; scattered here and there,
to the verses of prayer
that end,



with gratitude for the God-sent.

My joined hands, hold my head,
to submit it in your abode,

Bless me!
Light my way to *Harmandar*, O lord!

ਦੁਆ

ਰੱਬਾ
ਵੇ ਸਚਿਆ
ਮੇਰੇ ਦਰਦ ਨੂੰ ਹਰਫ ਦੇ
ਹਰਫਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਰੂਹ ਜਗਾ ਦੇ
ਪਿਘਲਾ ਕੇ ਮੇਰਾ ਕੁਲ ਦਰਦ
ਹਰਫੇ ਦੁਆ ਬਣਾ ਦੇ
ਸਿਰ ਕਰਜ਼ ਮੇਰੇ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀਆਂ
ਮੈਨੂੰ ਅਪਣੀ ਸਿਫਤ ਸਲਾਹ ਦੇ
ਦੇ ਅਸੀਸ ਮੇਰੇ ਸੀਸ ਨੂੰ
ਰਾਹ ਹਰਮੰਦਰ ਦੇ ਪਾ ਦੇ

5.

The Spring

Imagine! How lonely may I be!

It's my loneliness, and me!

Oh! Come home.
Bring with you, the spring for my step
Bring me back, 'my home'!

Oh, come with your majestic command to the gloom, to leave and make room
for the sun to pop up,
for the flowers, to bloom.

To see me thrive, come home, bring me spring
How else would I know I am alive!



ਬਸੰਤ

ਛਾਈ ਉਦਾਸੀ ਰੂਹ ਤੇ
ਤੂੰ ਆ ਜਾ ਏਸ ਰੁਤੇ
ਆ ਜਾ ਕਿ ਨਿਸਰਨ ਕਲੀਆਂ
ਤੂੰ ਆ ਕਿ ਉਗੇ ਸੂਰਜ
ਪੱਤਝੜ ਹੈ ਮਨ ਦਾ ਮੌਸਮ
ਤੂੰ ਆ ਕਿ ਬਦਲੇ ਮੌਸਮ

6.

The passage of the letter

The passage of your letter and its message; my immersion in it,
is like a holy dip of a pilgrim
Tell me, if a truth I'm dreaming,
Or, has a dream come true

Oh! Someone, look at the horizon and its pearly hue!
Pearls, that adorn, the steps between heaven and down,
and thousands of glow worms, light my town

Oh! The velvety touch of your text, its cooling shade
and this blessed night! Just heaven made!
Kismet? Destiny? Tell me what it is? My soulmate!

Behold your soul and mine, entwine,
Let me waive off the gold my soul holds
Around the

O friend of my soul
You are me, my love
Let me spin around your soul, the pearls and gold, my soul holds

ਖਤ ਦੀ ਇਬਾਰਤ

ਇਹ ਖਤ ਦੀ ਇਬਾਰਤ ਹੈ
ਕਿ ਰਬ ਦੀ ਜ਼ਿਅਰਤ ਹੈ
ਕੋਈ ਖਾਬ ਹੈ ਹਕੀਕਤ ਜਿਹਾ
ਖਾਬਾਂ ਜਹੀ ਹਕੀਕਤ ਹੈ



ਅਰਸ਼ਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਫਰਸ਼ਾਂ ਤਕ ਨੇ
ਕਈ ਸੁਚੇ ਮੋਤੀ ਬਿਖਰੇ
ਰੂਹ ਦੇ ਨਗਰ 'ਚ ਆਕੇ
ਕਈ ਲੱਖਾਂ ਜੁਗਨੂੰ ਚਮਕੇ

ਇਸ ਮਖਮਲੀ ਇਬਾਰਤ ਨੇ
ਇੰਝ ਰੂਹ ਤੇ ਛਾਂ ਕੀਤੀ
ਇਹ ਰਾਤ ਸਾਡੇ ਸਿਰ ਤੇ
ਅਸੀਸ ਬਣ ਕੇ ਬੀਤੀ

ਰੂਹ ਵਰਗੇ ਸੋਹਣੇ ਸਜਣਾ
ਆਜਾ ਤੈਨੂੰ ਪਿਆਰਾਂ
ਰੂਹ ਆਪਣੀ ਦਾ ਸੋਨਾ
ਤੇਰੀ ਰੂਹ ਦੇ ਸਿਰ ਤੋਂ ਵਾਰਾਂ

7.

Snake and ladder

There are possibilities you cannot ignore.

Things happen to those, who stop here and there, in despair.
Indulge in things unjust or fair

And then they find a few gems or a gem
that now belongs to them

One fine day.
While telling their stories of leaps, to those in dismay,
they tell they are sure, that they deserve all they have found,
and much more.

In your silence you wish to speak of their claims
as ladders that took them to the peak,
in the snakes and ladders game

Oh! look at us, and many like us
Nobody hears, the stories we write
with our blood, sweat and tears

Success for us, and for those like us
is not a tale to be told.
For us, rainbows hold no gold



Is it a jinx?
Or the fate of a phoenix

Is it mere a story-
of dying, to be reborn with glory?

We wax and we wane, to wax again
We live without fame, or even a name.

Is it what it takes?
When you do not play games; of ladders and snakes?

If at all our lives ever take leaps,
no ladder has taken us to peaks.

Why, then the snakes hiss and jump, to bite us,
to see us slumped
[can a mongoose kill a snake,
or, is it a myth, that the mongoose wins in the quarrel of a snake and mongoose?]

Snakes are here and there, they are everywhere!

I ask you to shield yourselves, and yours,
and the bones of your homes,
and the milk on your hearths, from snakes
save all that belongs to you,
with whatever it takes

Come on mate!
Let not a snake dim the shine of your lifeline,

KILL THE SNAKE

Killing a snake is a virtue, not a sin, it helps it liberate

To get over, distribute *sirni*, and celebrate!

ਸਪ ਤੇ ਪੈੜੀ

ਇਹ ਲਾਜ਼ਿਮ ਤਾਂ ਨਹੀਂ
ਕਿ ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਕਾਮਯਾਬੀ ਦੀ ਪੈੜੀ ਤੇ
ਜਾਇਜ਼ ਜਾਂ ਨਜਾਇਜ਼ ਜੇਰ ਨਾਲ



ਇਕ ਪੈਰ ਰਖ ਲਓ
ਤਾਂ ਸੰਜੋਗਾਂ ਜਹੀ ਕੋਈ ਸ਼ਕਤੀ
ਗੁਰੂਤਾ ਦੇ ਉਲਟ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ
ਉਤਲੀ ਪੇੜੀ ਤੇ
ਯਕਲਖਤ ਪੁਚਾ ਹੀ ਦੇਵੇ

ਹਰ ਸਖਸ਼ ਦੀ ਜਿੰਦਗੀ ਵਿੱਚ
ਸੰਜੋਗਾਂ ਦੇ ਮੇਢੇ ਚੜ੍ਹ ਕੇ
ਅਕਾਸ਼ ਛੂਹਣੇ ਨਹੀਂ ਲਿਖੇ ਹੁੰਦੇ
ਜਿੰਦਗੀ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਲਈ
ਤਿਲ ਤਿਲ ਮਰਨ
ਅਤੇ ਮੁੜ ਟੁਕੜਾ ਟੁਕੜਾ ਜੁੜ ਕੇ
ਜਿਉਣ ਦਾ ਨਾਂਅ ਏ

ਜਿੰਦਗੀ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਲਈ
ਸਿਰ ਨੂੰ ਤਲੀ ਤੇ ਟਿਕਾ ਕੇ
ਲੜੀ ਜਾਣ ਵਾਲੀ
ਲੜਾਈ ਏ ਸੂਰਮਗਤੀ ਦੀ

ਸਪ ਤੇ ਪੇੜੀ ਦੀ ਖੇਡ
ਜਦ ਸਾਡੀਆਂ ਰੂਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਹੀ ਮਾਫ਼ਕ ਨਹੀਂ
ਫੇਰ ਕਿਓਂ
ਉਪਰਲੇ ਮਕਾਮ ਤੇ ਖੜ੍ਹੇ
ਜਹਿਰੀਲੇ ਨਾਗ
ਸਾਨੂੰ ਇਕੋ ਫੁੰਕਾਰੇ ਨਾਲ
ਹੇਠਲੀ ਪੇੜੀ ਤੇ ਸੁੱਟਣ ਲਈ
ਬਜਿੱਦ ਨੇ

ਸਪ ਨਿਉਲੇ ਦੀ ਬਾਤ ਤਾਂ
ਬੀਤੇ ਵਕਤਾਂ ਦੀ ਬਾਤ ਏ
ਅੱਜ-ਕੱਲ੍ਹ ਤਾਂ ਵਕਤ
ਤਰਾਂ ਤਰਾਂ ਦੇ
ਸਪਾਂ ਦੀ ਹੀ ਕਾਸ਼ਤ ਕਰਦੈ

ਸਪ ਜਹਿਰੀ ਤਾਂ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਨੇ
ਪਰ ਫੇਰ ਕੀ ਹੋਇਆ
ਮਹਿਫੂਜ਼ ਕਰੇ ਅਪਣੇ ਅਪਣੇ ਘਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ
ਇੰਝ ਨਾ ਹੋਏ ਕਿ ਸਪ



ਤੁਹਾਡੇ ਕੰਧਾਂ ਕੋਲਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ
ਚਟਦਾ ਫਿਰੇ
ਤੇ ਤੁਹਾਡੇ ਚੁੱਲ੍ਹੇ ਤੇ ਪਏ
ਦੁਧ ਨੂੰ
ਫੁੰਕਾਰੇ ਮਾਰੇ

ਜਦ ਤੱਕ ਚਿੰਤਨ ਕਰ ਰਿਹੈ
ਸਾਡੇ ਮਥਿਆਂ ਦਾ ਸੂਰਜ
ਚਲੇ ਸਪ ਮਾਰਕੇ
ਸੀਰਨੀ ਵੰਡ ਦੇਈਏ
ਸਪ ਨੂੰ ਮਾਰਨ ਦੀ
ਮਜਬੂਰੀ ਨੂੰ ਭੁਲ ਜਾਓ
ਬਸ ਤੁਹਾਡੇ ਹਥ ਉਸਨੂੰ
ਜੂਨੀ ਮੁਕਤ ਕਰ ਸਕਣ
ਸੀਰਨੀ ਮੁਕਤ ਕਰ ਦੇਵੇਗੀ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ
ਪਾਪ ਬੋਧ ਤੋਂ

8.

The gift-wrapping paper

In endurance, she believes

a woman plasters her hearth and her face
she hems her dresses; adorns them with lace.

She sews and knits and crochets the covers, of each thing she endears, and
covers up the wrongs of her darling dears

What's the matter with you, dear?
What is the worst fear that you fear?
Why all these mends and amends-
That bring closer all the ends.

She tells me that she is strong,
and that, she can go far any long, (CAN right the wrongs)
because she treasures her gift, her home,
her own, sweet home.

So, next time you see a shrine like dome
Stop there, it's her home,
Stand somewhere in a corner bright
Look for a woman on every side
Oh, here she is, all bound to her home!



playing a wrapping paper; tied tight
around her precious gift inside,
or, if you see a woman still stand
with a bow and a wrapping paper in hand...
you know, you understand!

The myth of a bull that carries the earth
is about that woman by her hearth
that keeps the home fires burning, in the ways perfect,
Simply, for keeping 'that home, intact'

Her life story and those of her friends'
are good stories with a moral in the end,
A recipe for life in all its motion
A heavenly home and its promotion:

'Mind your wings stay on earth,
so keep up, adorn your hearth
with the lovely beads of your sweat and tears
your flesh and bone's your home, dears

what if one day a stone or a slate
that resembles your house- sign plate-
tells about your dreams profound
Which you have buried under the ground;

of the house, oh home!
If better sounds!

Beware here, take care!
let not your dead dreams be found
let not a hound dig down the ground

wipe your tears, bind your feet to your ground,
treasure your gift; the rare found,
now, when you have found it, wrap yourself around it,
And don't get slow
Until you have adorned it, with a bow.

Now, walk swift

to those gathered at the backyard
go, meet them, and smile too
share with them a tale or two,
of your home,
your lovely, sweet home.....



My apologies, dear,
I'm not staying, I 'll be praying,
For you, dear!

Do you hear, what I did not say?
Yes, I envy you, I swear!

it's ok, it's fine, girl,
it's not the right time to swirl,
to tell the tale, to make a show
just keep up with what you call, 'ho ho ho'

'look at you!
A perfect gift- wrap with a lovely bow!'

[Or, at least a blank cheque, duly signed
Which they may cash, any time]

Does she hear that awkward pause
Between the handclaps; the rounds of applause

is she smart, or a being, crap?
Not knowing she is a gift, not a gift-wrap?

I don't know, and I have my fears,
Someone, kindly, tell me, dear!
Spill out, I am all ears

Is the ocean of her shed tears enough ink,
to write a story of this link?
Between herself being a gift divine, and
becoming a wrapping paper, fine.

May we ask her
not to rewrite the story of all times?

Think over it, yes, I will think too.
And I will meet you again in a day or two
over that party? oh yes.....

of course, in my new dress!



ਗੁੱਡੀ ਕਾਗਜ਼

ਔਰਤਾਂ ਤਾਂ ਮੁੱਢੋਂ ਸੁਢੇਂ
ਚੀਜ਼ਾਂ ਦੀ ਹੰਢਣਸਾਰਤਾ ਦੀਆਂ ਕਾਇਲ ਨੇ
ਤਾਹੀਓਂ ਤਾਂ ਉਹ
ਨਿਤ ਦਿਹਾੜੇ
ਪਾਏਦਾਨਾਂ ਤੇ ਕਿਨਾਰੀ ਲਾਂਦੀਆਂ
ਚਿਟਾਈਆਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਕੰਨੀਆਂ ਸਿਉਂਦੀਆਂ
ਦੁਪੱਟਿਆਂ ਤੇ
ਤਾਰਕਸ਼ੀ ਕਰਦੀਆਂ
ਚੁਲੇ ਲਿੰਬਦੀਆਂ
ਚਮੜੀ ਰੰਗਦੀਆਂ
ਨਿੱਕੀਆਂ ਮੋਟੀਆਂ ਵਸਤਾਂ ਦੇ
ਕਜਣ ਸਿਉਂਦੀਆਂ ਉਣਦੀਆਂ

ਔਰਤਾਂ ਤਾਂ ਅਸਲੋਂ
ਰਿਸ਼ਤਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਹੰਢਣਸਾਰਤਾ ਲੋੜਦੀਆਂ ਨੇ
ਤਾਹੀਓਂ ਤਾਂ ਉਹ
ਰਿਸ਼ਤਿਆਂ ਦੇ
ਉਧੜੇ ਤੇਪੇ ਸਿਉਂਦੀਆਂ
ਟਾਕੀਆਂ ਲਾਉਂਦੀਆਂ
ਟੁੱਟੀਆਂ ਗੰਢਦੀਆਂ
ਵਕਤ ਨੂੰ ਟਾਕੀਆਂ ਲਾ ਲਾ ਕੇ
ਮਘਾਉਂਦੀਆਂ

ਔਰਤਾਂ ਆਪ ਵੀ ਤਾਂ ਕਜਣ ਬਣਦੀਆਂ
ਕੂਲੇ ਕੋੜੇ ਰਿਸ਼ਤਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ
ਅਪਣੇ ਅੰਦਰ ਤਕ
ਸਹੇਜ ਲੈਂਦੀਆਂ
ਤੇ ਆਪ
ਉਹਨਾਂ ਮੈਸਮੀ ਰਿਸ਼ਤਿਆਂ ਤੇ
ਲਿਫ ਜਾਂਦੀਆਂ ਗੁੱਡੀ ਕਾਗਜ਼ ਵਾਂਗ
ਬਣ ਜਾਂਦੀਆਂ
ਬਲੈਕ ਚੈੱਕ

ਮਰਦਾਂ ਨੇ ਜਦ ਕਦੇ
ਇਸ ਚੈੱਕ ਨੂੰ ਕੈਸ਼ ਕਰਵਾਣਾ ਹੁੰਦੈ
ਮਨਚਾਹੀਆਂ ਰਕਮਾਂ ਭਰ ਦੇਂਦੈ ਇਸ ਵਿਚ



ਔਰਤ ਪੂਰੀ ਖੂਬਸੂਰਤੀ ਨਾਲ
ਗੁੱਡੀ ਕਾਗਜ਼ ਤੇ ਬੰਨ੍ਹੀ
ਰੇਸ਼ਮੀ ਡੋਰੀ ਨੂੰ
ਮਰਦ ਦੇ ਹਵਾਲੇ ਕਰ ਦਿੰਦੀ

ਇੰਨਾ ਰਿਸ਼ਤਿਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਵਧ ਹੰਢਣਸਾਰ
ਹੋਰ ਕੁਝ ਹੈ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ
ਦੁਨੀਆਂ ਵਿੱਚ

ਔਰਤ ਦੀ ਅਖ ਦੇ ਸਾਰੇ ਦੇ ਸਾਰੇ ਹੰਝੂ
ਉਸਦੀ ਇਸ ਗੁੱਡੀ ਕਾਗਜ਼ ਵਾਲੀ ਹੋਂਦ ਨੂੰ
ਕਿਹੜੇ ਯੁਗ ਵਿਚ ਖੋਰਨਗੇ
ਪਤਾ ਨਹੀਂ

9.

To the sun

Add up my eyesight
To your light

Up light for him
The way back home

Tell him
I unsay that I said before.
for it was a sin to claim
That I have the endurance of earth.
That I can live without him

Count for him the sighs that I sigh,
Tell him I am sad and alone
and ask him to come back home

bring him home, or the chill, will kill me,
and all the dreams
I have seen with him, for him

Tell my sun to bring its warmth, and shine, divine
To the home, to this home, his home, and mine



ਸੂਰਜ ਨੂੰ

ਜਾ ਵੇ ਸੂਰਜਾ
ਲੈ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਅੱਖੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਲੋਅ ਵੀ
ਜਾ ਉਹਨੂੰ ਮੋੜ ਲਿਆ
ਉਹਨੂੰ ਘਰ ਦਾ ਦਸੀਂ ਰਾਹ
ਤੇ ਦੇਈਂ ਸੰਦੇਸ਼ ਮੇਰਾ
ਕਿ ਮੈਂ ਝੂਠ ਕਿਹਾ ਸੀ ਮੇਰਾ
ਨਹੀਂ ਜੇਰਾ ਧਰਤ ਜਿਹਾ
ਜੇ ਸਚ ਹੁੰਦਾ
ਬਣ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਨਾ ਹਉਕੇ
ਅੱਜ ਮੇਰੇ ਸਾਰੇ ਸਾਹ
ਉਹਨੂੰ ਆਖੀਂ ਧਰਤ ਤੇਰੀ ਤੇ
ਕਿਤੇ ਲੋਅ ਨਹੀਂ ਬਿਨ ਤੇਰੇ
ਤੇਰੀ ਧੁੱਪ ਬਿਨਾਂ
ਖਿੜਦੇ ਨਹੀਂ ਖਾਬ ਮੇਰੇ
ਉਹਨੂੰ ਆਖੀਂ ਸੂਰਜ ਬਣ ਕੇ ਤੇ
ਮੇਰਾ ਘਰ ਮਹਿਕਾ ਜਾਵੇ
ਉਸ ਸੂਰਜ ਜਹੇ ਨੂੰ ਆਖੀਂ ਵੇ
ਅਪਣੇ ਘਰ ਮੁੜ ਆਵੇ

10.

Iceberg

Look at me, a river
Loving you, an iceberg

submerge in you, I can
Though river I am

And I will always be that river
like the river I am

'I am the way I am', you claim
'Unyielding, estranged, why blame?'

Whenever you soak up, however,
(And you often do),
I overflow my shores
To give you even more



Worry not, my love
We both are Water
At the core

What if I am always a river
What if you are an iceberg (not always though),
As you claim
A river, an iceberg, and many more
People know water by various names

ਆਈਸਬਰਗ

ਨਦੀ ਮੈਂ ਸਿਮਟ ਜਾਂਵਾਂ ਤੇਰੀ ਬੁਕ ਵਿਚ
ਮੇਰਾ ਪਿਆਰ ਕਹਿੰਦਾ
ਮੇਰੇ ਪਾਣੀਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਡੁਬ ਕੇ ਵੀ ਤੂੰ
ਕੁੱਝ ਅਣਡੁਬਿਆ ਰਹਿ ਜਾਂਦਾ
ਮੈਂ ਬਾਲਾਂ ਜਹੀ ਤੇਰੀ ਜਿੰਦ ਨੂੰ
ਤਕਦੀ ਹਾਂ ਮੰਨਦੀ ਹਾਂ
ਮੈਂ ਨਦੀ ਤੇਰੇ ਵਿਚ ਡੁਬਦੀ ਹਾਂ
ਨਹੀਂ ਡੁਬ ਸਕਦਾ ਬਸ ਇਹੋ ਜਿਹਾਂ
ਅਣਭਿਜ ਜਿਹਾ ਤੂੰ ਕਹਿੰਦਾ
ਮੈਂ ਹਸ ਪੈਂਦੀ ਮੇਰਾ ਬਉਰਾ ਮਨ
ਤੇਰੇ ਵਿਚ ਡੁਬਿਆ ਰਹਿੰਦਾ
ਪਰ ਕਦੇ ਕਦੇ
ਤਰਦਾ ਮੇਰੇ ਪਾਣੀਆਂ ਤੇ
ਤੂੰ ਪਿਘਲ ਪਿਘਲ ਜਾਂਦਾ
ਮੇਰੇ ਤਕ ਲੰਘ ਆਉਂਦਾ
ਮੇਰਾ ਅੱਥਰੂ ਬੱਦਲ ਬਣ ਬਣਕੇ
ਤੇਰੀ ਛੱਤ ਤੇ ਵਸ ਜਾਂਦਾ
ਮੇਰਾ ਹਉਕਾ ਬਣ ਅਰਦਾਸ ਜਿਵੇਂ
ਰਬ ਦਾ ਦਰ ਛੂਹ ਆਉਂਦਾ
ਮੈਂ ਨਦੀ ਜੇ ਅੱਥਰੂ ਵੀ ਬਣਦੀ
ਬਸ ਤੇਰੀ ਹੀ ਰਹਿੰਦੀ
ਪਾਣੀ ਆਂ ਮੈਂ, ਤੂੰ ਵੀ



Notes

Angad

The poem *Angad* has two symbols in it.

One, in the story behind the redbreast of robin. Robin is said to have picked a thorn from the crown of Jesus, to ease Jesus's pain. There are different versions of the story: It was Jesus's blood / it was robin's blood/, or it was both Jesus's and robin's blood that gave robin a redbreast. The spirit behind all versions of the story is the same, however. Robin DID come forward to ease a pain. A small story of robin is grand enough to make you feel gratitude for the souls like robin's.

The world needs a lot of aroha.

I have used the of symbol of robin in my poem as an anticipation-may good prevail evil!

Two, the name of the poem; *Angad* .

Angad is the title poem of my second poetry book (2008).

In Punjabi, *Angad* means 'the one who has(d) been touched' in body, and/or in spirit.

There is a story behind the nomenclature of the second Guru of the Sikhs which is also the story of the elevation of a disciple of Guru Nanak; named *bhai Lehna* to the status of the Guru.

'When the two spirits; one of *Guru Nanak Dev* and the other, of *Bhai Lehna* got aligned, it was *Guru Nanak*'s embrace that elevated *Bhai Lehna* to the rank of Guru and the successor of *Guru Nanak*; the founder of Sikhism' (words mine)

[*Sikh* means a learner. *Sikhi* is the journey of a *Sikh* as an eternal learner].

The metaphor *Angad*, to me, has a connotation beyond a spiritual bond-a body connection- *Guru Nanak* taking *Bhai Lehna* in his 'embrace', to give him the name *Angad*!

The Punjabi word *Angad* comes from *Ang*. The literal and broader meaning of *ang* is body itself. *Ang* is also a word for parts; the common use of the word is for body parts or a part.

Ang lagna/ang lagaana= bodies touching /making the bodies touch.

The words, *Ang lagna/ang lagaana* have more frequently been used in Hindi poetry/songs than they have in Punjabi. When used, *Ang lagna/ang lagaana* have a blunt meaning-a body connection between a man and a woman, possibly (but not essentially) involving a spiritual connection as well.

Bureaucracy

This poem comes from my sad experience and observation of red tape; a cripple system that is guided (or misguided) by the ruling lot in several countries including India.

However, this kind of relevance of bureaucracy (as depicted in the poem) for New Zealanders depends on many factors, including their personal confrontations with it.

Considering most poetry being culture specific, literary translation studies is an appropriately safe place for this poem to be considered as a cross-cultural concept and practice; I have translated this poem to be included in this selection, on purpose.

A Prayer

Shaheed and *sati* are two powerful symbols in folk culture of Punjab. The word *shaheed* comes from the Urdu word *shahdi*, which broadly means 'witnessing' ('witnessing truth' in religious parlance, or otherwise). Both *shaheed* and *sati* are martyrs. *Shaheed* dies for a cause; mainly religious, although other altruistic causes serve towards this entitlement. For example, a trade union leader who died during or after his hunger strike as a protest following his fellow workers' exploitation by the management in a factory, may be called *shaheed*, provided he was a man of character as well.

Zinda Shaheed or a 'living martyr' is a title for a person, living or have lived a benevolent life.

Whereas *Shaheed* is mainly a gender-neutral word, *sati* is feminine. *Sati* is a woman who self-immolates at the pyre of her dead husband; the practice which have long been legally banned in India.

Sati is also a title for a virtuous woman, living or have lived a life in the service of others.

In Punjab, for example, a young widow who chooses not to remarry for the sake of her children, raising them in adverse circumstances is considered a *sati*, and so is a woman who did not get married to avoid the responsibilities of a married life coming in the way of her supporting the orphans in an orphanage, voluntarily.

An episode from my own life would make it clearer.



The data collection phase of my Ph. D. research was utterly challenging for me, especially in the beginning. People in the village were not comfortable with my visiting them and asking them questions on 'strange' topics. My justification: gathering knowledge on people's concepts of disease and cure was not working. My idea of 'writing a book' on 'their' way of life did not seem viable to them, and 'my' asking questions about 'their' ancestors and 'the gods they worshipped' was not 'legitimate', they kept telling me. Gathering knowledge on the issues like this at my young age when I was not even married, was both irrelevant and threatening, as per the 'responsible' people in the village. I would be stuck with *kasar* ; a taxonomy of disease relating supernatural causes and cures, they feared .

Charno, a woman in the village was one of those people, with a difference, though. She valued me and my devotion to the work I had undertaken. However, Charno, and others like her were concerned about my safety. In saying so, they did not mean bad people in or around the village who could potentially harm me in some way. What they meant was 'their' dead ancestors and deities, who would not like 'me' talking about them or writing on them could punish me for this. Being an outsider in their culture, the displeasure they might send me in the form of disease and misfortune would be differently challenging for me. I convinced myself on the point that my pursuit was an invasion; an 'unauthorised access' to the knowledge I was not entitled for, as per their culture. Not only I ingested their comments, I changed my sails, too. Peacefully. I kept visiting people in the village, persistently for listening to their episodes of lived experiences of disease, and drawing their concepts of disease and cure therefrom. Soon, a tedious journey turned into an effortless pursuit and the same people started looking forward to talking to me on my area of research, and more.

My resilience touched Charno (and others), who considered me as a *sati*, visiting the village in all weathers and not fearing *kasar*. Charno, a shaman herself, kept protecting me throughout my research.

Coming back to the poem and the concept of a martyr's offering his head in reverence. In metaphor, offering one's head may mean the surrender of one's worldly wisdom to the Law of *Dharma*, (popularly portrayed as the will of God), and living a life full of gratitude. Punjabi folklore, however, has stories of people literally continuing their fight with their bodies when the enemy had already chopped their heads and separated them from their bodies.

One such story relates to *Shaheed Baba Deep Singh*, a Sikh martyr, who is believed to have approached *Harmander Sahib* (the most famous Sikh shrine in India, popularly known as *Golden Temple*), with his chopped head lying on his palm, with the intention of offering it there.

To me, the determination of 'reaching over there' despite all the obstacles on the way is simply resilience, above everything else.

Martyrdom is certainly a blend of faith and strength, though the aspect of faith as strength resonates well with popular religion in Punjab and elsewhere.

Snake and ladder

sirni is sweetmeat which the family (or the person) performing a ritual distributes among the attendees. In Punjab, the term *sirni* is closely associated with the killing of a snake.

In almost all parts of India, snakes are worshipped; the related cult popularly named *Gugga* has a huge following in Punjab.

Here is a paradox, though. Snakes show often, more often during the monsoon in India. A snake, when noticed must be killed right before it kills you. To deal with the resulting guilt of killing a deity, culture gives a solution: the distribution of *sirni*.

I have used the concepts of 'snakes' and 'ladders' from the popular game named 'snakes and ladders' as a symbol of leaps and downs of life. Manipulated leaps, and the resulting downfalls possibly come as a package and should be understood that way, for many people.

What happens when the players of the above game indulge in 'playing games' with those who are not even the 'players of their game', however? The answer as suggestion is: 'Kill the snake and distribute *sirni*'. The inspiration for the suggested act has a support from the culture itself, in which even the situation when a devotee needs to kill his deity, has remedies.

Following this, guilt is sometimes a side effect of the right act and can be dealt with, no matter.

The gift-wrapping paper



The bull in this poem signifies the mythical bull that carries the load of earth on one of its shoulders, at a given time. In folk religion of Punjab, the bull is nothing but the law of dharma, that ensures righteousness. This is the first part of the myth and I have used the myth in my poem, this far only.

However, the second part of the myth is about the bull shifting its load from one shoulder to the other, on intervals. The state brings major changes in the Universe, including the social order.

As I understand it, the liminal state; the state that signifies disorder lies in the middle of two states of order: one, when the order is violated and two, when it is restored.

Any amount of disorder can be chaotic to any given time; a minimal may be conceptualized as 'social change'.

A special note is about the The translation of my Punjabi poem *Guddi kagaz*, into English, as 'The gift-wrapping paper'; parts thereof may be read more as a 'soul-to-soul' translation than a 'word-to-word' one.

Jatinder Kaur comes from a family (and she is married into one) that migrated from Pakistan to India during 1947. She was born and raised in India and stayed there until she came to New Zealand along with her husband, a civil Engineer, in 1996. In the same year, she gave birth to her son, named Newzea, after this land. She journeyed back to India in 1998, a trip that turned out to be a long one for various reasons. Gazal, her daughter was born in India.

Jatinder Kaur holds a PhD in Sociology and Social Anthropology, and she is currently preparing her proposal for a second PhD in Literary Translation Studies at Te Herenga Waka-Victoria University of Wellington.





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