

Teacher's Guide

Teaching Sufi Poetry and Cultivating Poetic Knowledge in the Classroom

Introduction

This teacher's guide is designed to offer practical resources and activities for teaching Sufi poetry to high school and college undergraduate students. Inspired by our podcast series, [The Logic of the Birds](#), and drawing from experts in the field, this guide can serve as a tool to introduce students to the rich world of Sufi poetry. This guide can be used in classes on Islam, Religion, Literature, Poetry, and History. It contains activities that will help students engage deeply with Sufi poetry, exploring its literary dimensions, theological and philosophical insights, and historical contexts, and the relationships amongst all of these.

The guide consists of several sets of suggested activities with some helpful background information, organized by type of activity:

- 1) **Listening (to the podcast, to poetic performances)**
- 2) **Close Reading (of poetry, commentaries and articles about poetry)**
- 3) **Memorization and Recitation (of poetry in English and other languages)**
- 4) **Creative Writing (Creative Sufi commentaries on popular songs or composing Sufi-style poetry in English)**

Background Reading (for teachers and advanced students):

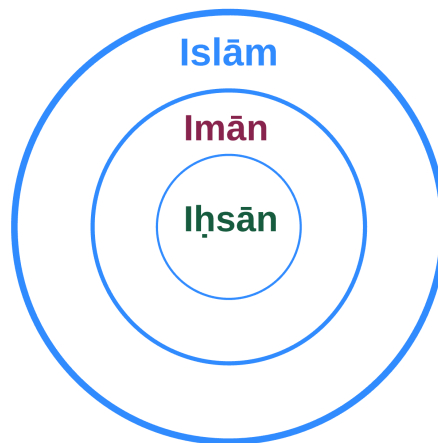
Oludamini Ogunnaike, "The Logic of the Birds: Poetry and Poetic Knowledge"
<https://renovatio.zaytuna.edu/article/the-logic-of-the-birds>

Background:

What is Sufism?

The Sufi tradition often defines itself with reference to the following two *ḥadīth*, or sayings of the Prophet Muḥammad. The first is called the Hadith of Gabriel, so called because the Prophet answers questions posed by the angel Gabriel. This Hadith defines three dimensions of the Islamic tradition: *Islām*, *Īmān*, and *Iḥsān*:

Umar ibn al-Khattab reported: We were sitting with the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, one day, a man appeared with very white clothes and very black hair. There were no signs of travel on him and we did not recognize him. He sat in front of the Prophet, rested his knees by his knees, and placed his hands on his thighs. The man said, “O Muhammad, tell me about Islam.” The Prophet said, “**Islam is to testify there is no god but God and Muhammad is the Messenger of God, to perform the daily prayers, to give charity, to fast the month of Ramadan, and to perform pilgrimage to the House if it is possible.**” The man said, “You have spoken truthfully.” We were surprised that he asked him and said he was truthful. He said, “Tell me about *Īmān* (Faith).” The Prophet said, “**Faith is to believe in God, His angels, His Books, His Messengers, the Last Day, and to believe in providence, its good and its harm.**” The man said, “You have spoken truthfully. Tell me about *Iḥsān* (Excellence).” The Prophet said, “**Excellence is to worship God as if you see Him, for if you do not see Him, He sees you.**”

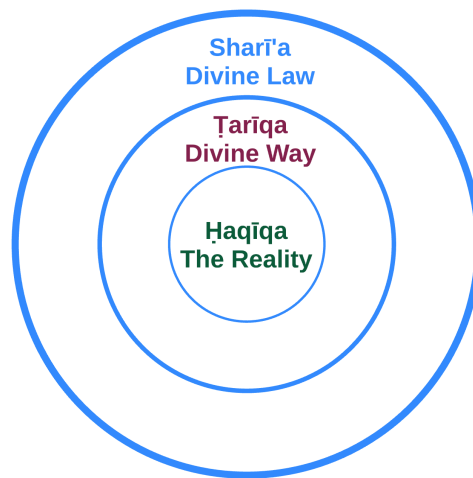


Islam concerns rituals one does with one’s body and came to be codified in the discipline called *fiqh*, or Islamic jurisprudence, that defines and interprets the *Sharī‘a*; *Īmān* concerns things one believes or knows with one’s intellect or heart and came to be codified in the discipline of *kalām*, or Islamic theology, while *Iḥsān* is the perfection of the other two dimensions and concerns awareness of and

intimacy with God, and came to be codified in a discipline known as *taṣawwuf*, translated as “Sufism.”

Another Hadith commonly used to define Sufism is known as the Hadith of *Nawāfil* or Supererogatory Devotions that defines another ternary: *Sharī‘a*, *Ṭarīqa*, and *Ḥaqīqa*:

The Messenger of God said that God said, “...And the most beloved things with which My servant draws near to Me, **is what I have enjoined upon him**; and My servant does not cease drawing near to me through **supererogatory acts of worship** so that I love him. **Then when I love him, I am his hearing with which he hears, and his sight with which he sees, and his hand with which he grips, and his leg with which he walks...**



The *Sharī‘a* is what is obligatory for all Muslims, but Sufis take on extra acts of worship—extra fasts, litanies, prayers, and these extra disciplines constitute the *Ṭarīqa*, or spiritual path of Sufism, leading to the Divine reality, the *Ḥaqīqa*, which is the realization of God’s non-exclusive non-duality, or Oneness (*tawḥīd*). The word *Ṭarīqa* also designates the various Sufi orders that began to emerge in the 12th century, codifying the spiritual regimen and way of life of their founding figure into increasingly important social-spiritual institutions. Previously, the tradition of Sufism was based more on individual master-disciple relationships, or small circles that gathered around a spiritual master, but the *Ṭarīqa* structure, like a school of martial arts, formalized and institutionalized Sufi rituals and practices.

Many Sufi texts focus on the theme of love and union to describe Sufism through two hadiths and two verses of the Qur’an:

The Messenger of God said that God said, “I was a hidden treasure and I loved to be recognized, so I created the creatures, so that they may recognize me”

He loves them and they love Him (5:54)

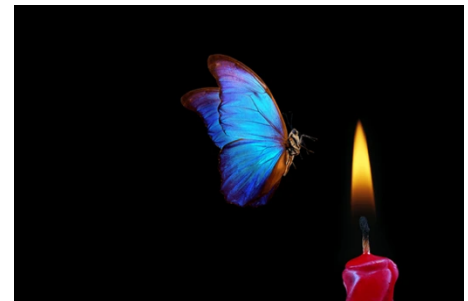
Say [O Prophet]: If you love God, then follow me, and God will love you (3:31)

“...and when I love him, I am his hearing with which he hears, and his sight with which he sees, and his hand with which he grips, and his leg with which he walks...”

Love is the reason for the creation of the universe, and God loves all creation generally, and creation’s love for God is a reflection of His prior love for them. The Prophet, as the ideal lover and beloved of God, sets the example for would-be lovers of God, and following his example leads to them becoming especially beloved. When God loves them in this specific way, He is their hearing, sight, hand, and leg.

This state of the consummation of love as “mystical union without confusion” is described by the Persian poet Farīd al-dīn ‘Aṭṭār in a famous poem about three butterflies and a candle flame:

Were all really three butterflies
In the world of love, we are a legend
The first came near the candle and said
“I have found the meaning of love”
The second fluttered its wing near the flame and said,
“I’ve been burned by the fire of love”
The third threw himself into the fire
Yes, yes, this is the meaning of love...



This burning up in the flames of love is known as *fanā’* (annihilation) or *jam’* (union) in technical Sufi vocabulary. But this is not the end of the Sufi path, there remains the annihilation of annihilation (*fanā’ al-fanā’*) or *baqā’* (subsistence). This yields the following popular schema of three stages:

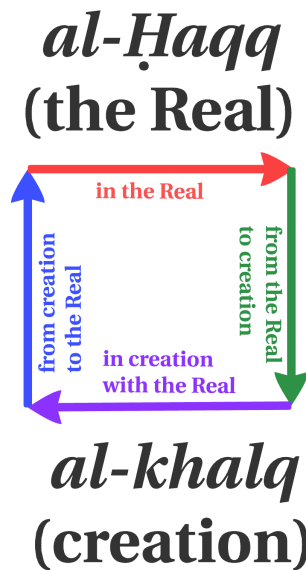
Separation (*farq*): In which one sees things, not God

Union (*jam’*): In which one sees God, not things (*fanā’*-annihilation)

Union of Separation and Union (*jam’ al-farq wa al-jam’*): In which one sees things in God and God in things (*baqā’*-subsistence)

Another common schema found in Sufi texts describes four “journeys” of increasing “gathering” (*jam‘*) or coming together of dimensions of reality once deemed separate:

- 1) From creation to God/the Real (*min al-khalq ilā al-Ḥaqq*)
- 2) Within God (*fi‘l-Ḥaqq*)
- 3) From God/the Real back to creation (*min al-Ḥaqq ilā al-khalq*)
- 4) In creation with (and in) God/the Real (*fi‘l-khalq ma‘ al-Ḥaqq*)



Sufism and Poetry

How does one go about describing these states of consciousness in which one sees God in all things and all things in God? How can we use language to convey experiences that transcend language? One way is poetry. If you are trying to tell your friends about a new movie or a new kind of fruit or a new food you tried at a restaurant, how would you do it? You would probably fall back on analogies, similes, metaphors (“it’s kind of like this, mixed with that, or the opposite of this”) and other poetic modes of speech to convey the experience. Poetry is like the child of music and prose, and particularly good at conveying the “what it’s like” of an experience or state while opening the words, sounds, and experience up to multiple levels of meaning. Think of break-up songs by Adele or anthems like Gloria Gaynor’s “I Will Survive”—what the artists are singing is profoundly intertwined with how they are saying it—the sounds of the words, their rhythm, their arrangement, the metaphors, similes, and allusions all combine to communicate more than the simple definitions of the words.

In the language of Sufi theory, poetry can express the ineffable in part because it is a *barzakh*, a liminal reality that both separates and joins opposites. For example, sunrise is a *barzakh* between night and day, a threshold is a *barzakh* between the inside and the outside. Poetry is a *barzakh* between the silence of ineffability and ordinary speech; it is a *barzakh* between music and prose, between feeling and thought, or in Arabic, between *ḥāl* (state) and *qāl* (statement), *adhwāq* (experiences) and *awrāq* (“papers”-discursive expression). The very form of Sufi poetry (virtually all of which is strictly metered and rhymed) also participates in this quality of being a *barzakh*: Rhythm or meter is a *barzakh* between eternity and time, between stillness and motion, rhyme is a *barzakh* between one sound and many sounds. And metaphor is a *barzakh* between the thing said and the thing meant. As the Arabic saying goes, “metaphor is a bridge to the reality.” The very medium of poetry is breath, which in Sufi cosmology, is a *barzakh* between body and spirit (and between conscious control and automatic functioning). In Sufi cosmology, human beings are a *barzakh* between Being and nothingness.

The Barzakh of Poetry

Silence Music Feeling <i>ḥāl / adhwāq</i>	Poetry	Speech Prose Thought <i>qāl / awrāq</i>
Eternity/Stillness One sound Signified	Rhythm Rhyme Metaphor	Time/Motion Many sounds Signifier
Being Spirit	Humanity Breath	Nothingness Body

Sufis took advantage of this power of poetry and the extremely rich pre-Islamic and early Islamic Arabic poetic tradition to convey their experiences, realizations, and worldviews in profound and profoundly affecting ways. Unlike Romantic notions of poetry, poetry in Islamic contexts is typically seen as a craft, not a spontaneous eruption of feeling, and poets described their craft through the punning metaphors of spinning wool or cotton/weaving cloth (*ghazl*) and stringing pearls and jewels on a necklace (*naẓm*): the former shares a root with the *ghazal*, the romantic lyric, and the latter (*naẓm*) is the generic term for verse. Although many poets excelled at improvising verses, like freestyle rappers, this was typically only possible after a long period of training in the craft of poetry, mastering and memorizing the vast tradition of poetry in Arabic, and later Persian, Turkish, and other languages.

One interesting feature of the Sufi tradition is that it tends to adopt poetry written about other topics (wine, beautiful beloveds, praise of kings, etc.) and interpret them as being about God and the Prophet. This is because in Sufi cosmology, everything that exists is an *aya* or sign, reflecting God’s Qualities and Attributes; and so poems about trees, love, wine, etc. are all indirectly about God (and his Prophet, who also reflects his Names and Qualities). For example, the following poem by a captured Arab prince, Abū Firās al-Hamadānī, begging his cousin, the King Sayf al-Dawlā to ransom him from a Byzantine prison has been beloved by Sufis for centuries and quoted as an expression of love for and devotion to God:

As long as you’re sweet, let life be bitter
 As long as you’re pleased, let everyone be angry
 As long as there’s a bond between me and you
 Let all between me and the worlds be in ruins
 If truly you love me, then all things are easy
 And let all that’s over the dust, be dust.

As a result, it can often be difficult to tell a “Sufi” poem from a “non-Sufi” poem, because any poem could potentially be a Sufi poem, and Sufi poetry is appreciated by many merely on its metaphorical (*majāzī*) level—as simply good love poetry. In fact, many Sufi discussions of poetry describe everything in creation as a metaphor (*majāz*) for the Real (*al-Ḥaqq*), one of the names of God. So discussions of Sufi poetry commonly discuss human love as “metaphorical love” (*al-‘ishq al-majāzī*) and God’s love/love for God as “real love” (*al-‘ishq al-ḥaqīqī*), and use the language of “metaphorical wine” (from grapes) to describe the “real wine” of the intoxication of Divine Love and remembrance of God, culminating in the “blackout” of annihilation (*al-fanā*) and “sobering up” of subsistence in God (*al-baqā*)

As a result of this perspective and the mutual influence of “Sufi” and “non-Sufi” poetry, scholars of Islamic poetry, like the British Orientalist R.A. Nicholson have noted that “students of Oriental poetry have sometimes to ask themselves, ‘Is this a love-poem disguised as a mystical ode, or a mystical ode expressed in the language of human love?’ and to acknowledge that they cannot tell.”¹ However, for many Sufi poets, this ambiguity is intentional and of the deepest significance. As Professor Michael Sells explains, “*Shawq* [longing], *eros*, is infinite. It cannot be confined into mutually exclusive categories of human and divine. At the most basic level, the *shawq* at the heart of Islamic love poetry may carry within it an inherently mystical dimension. In *shawq*, the normal rules of logic are suspended,

¹ R.A. Nicholson, *The Tarjuman al-Ashwaq*, 7.

and the human being opens onto the unlimited, a force that cannot be contained in space or time. Like the divine reality, *shawq* kills and brings to life, exists without and within, is both beyond the world and deep in the heart of the lover.”² For poets like Ibn al-Fāriḍ and Ibn al-‘Arabī, “mystical” and “romantic” love are not separate, but rather only seemingly distinct delimitations of the same absolute reality. As the great Egyptian Sufi poet Ibn al-Fāriḍ (known as the “Sultan of the Lovers”) writes, describing this unity of Divine and created beauty and love:

Declare beauty absolute! Do not profess to bind it
by being drawn to ornaments and tinsel.

Every charming man, every pretty girl
Their loveliness is lent to them from Her beauty

For Her, Qays was mad for Lubnā, and just so all the other lovers
Like Layla and Majnun, ‘Azzah and Kuthayyir³

Each of them desired the quality She had wrapped
In a form of loveliness shining forth in a loveliness of form

Because She appeared manifest in those sites
They thought they were other than Her, but She merely revealed herself in them

In veils, She came forth, hidden by external guise
Each showing shaded with shape shifting⁴

Sufi poetry traces out the connections and identities between these created and Divine qualities. One influential Sufi thinker, ‘Ayn al-Qudat Hamadani compared poetry to a mirror that allows each reader/listener to discover different meanings, depending on who they are, and what they point it at. So while there are definitely wrong ways to read or interpret Sufi poetry, there’s not one single right way to interpret a verse or a poem, whose meanings can be as vast and varied as humanity, the cosmos, or the Divine Reality, which they both reflect.

Watch and/or have your students watch this video by the contemporary American Sufi poet Amir Sulaiman, explaining this Sufi perspective on poetry:

Amir Sulaiman, “The Universe is a Poem”:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-UaXtQZunpY>

² Sells, *The Translator of Desires*, xxvii.

³ Famous lovers of Arabic literature, like Romeo and Juliet.

⁴ Homerin, *Poem of the Sufi Way*, 145-146. Translation slightly modified

Suggested Exercises

1. Listening and Comprehension

Icebreaker:

Poetry can often seem daunting and difficult to students, so break the ice by asking students to name their favorite songs, or songs whose lyrics have stuck with them, and ask them to explore why these songs are so meaningful to them or why the lyrics have stuck with them. What do the lyrics mean to them and why do they mean so much? This can be done in small groups or all together as a class.

Exercise 1:

Then as a homework assignment, have the students listen to an episode of the podcast on the [website: https://logicofthebirds.com/](https://logicofthebirds.com/)

Have them take notes and answer the following questions during/after listening to the podcast:

- 1) What was your favorite poem or verse cited in the episode? Why did you like it?
- 2) What do you think the poet meant in this verse? What does it mean to you?
- 3) What was your favorite idea or concept from the episode? Why did you choose this one?
- 4) What was one thing in the episode that surprised you? Why?
- 5) What was one memorable anecdote from the poet's life? What was the connection between the poet's life and his or her poetry? Why did he or she write poetry?

Have students discuss and compare their answers in class, either in small groups or as a class.

Exercise 2: (either for in-class or homework)

Choose a recording or performance of the poetry of the poet discussed in the episode you assign or from the Further Listening/Reading links on the website. ([This performance of a verse by Sa'di and a poem by Amir Khusrau](#), for example, is relatively short and accessible) Have the students first listen to the recording (or part of the recording) with their eyes closed (not reading the translation). What did they notice about the performance? How did it make them feel? Did it remind them of any other genres or traditions of music with which they are familiar? Could they detect the meter and the rhyme of the poem in the performance?

Then have the students watch the performance again, this time with the English translation. Ask them to discuss (in small groups or as a class): How was this experience different? How do the meanings and sound work together? How is the experience of listening to the performance of the poem different from simply reading the translation? How did the performance enhance their understanding of the poem?

These two performances (not currently on the website) are excellent for this exercise:

[Maulvi Haider Hassan, "I am the master of my heart"](#) :

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yjll-IOhHPY>

[Aziz Mian, "How Can I Understand?":](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MfnzBYV5fxs>

Online Resources for Listening and Reading Exercises:

[Sulaymanibnqiddees Blog](#)—a good source of English translations of Sufi poetry along with originals and YouTube performances):

<https://archive.blogs.harvard.edu/sulaymanibnqiddees/author/sulaymanibnqiddees/>

And:

[And interesting \(and funny\) tumblr page that discusses Classical Arabic poetry in relation to contemporary hip-hop songs and artists](#)

YouTube channels of performances of Sufi poetry with English subtitles:

[Hashim Aziz](#)

[Haqqani92](#)

[Sadai Salah](#)

[skyofwisdom](#)

[PakSufi](#)

[The Dream Journey \(A remarkable collection of contemporary Qawwali performances form Pakistan, all subtitled in English\)](#)

Background Primary Text Readings:

[An English translation of a treatise by the influential theologian and Sufi al-Ghazali \(d. 1111\) on listening to spiritual music and poetry.](#)

Recommended Questions: Why was listening to music and poetry controversial? How does al-Ghazali differentiate between “good” and “bad” uses of music and poetry? What is the ambience that al-Ghazali recommends for listening to spiritual music and poetry? Have you ever noticed at parties or sporting events that certain kinds of songs have particular kinds of influences on certain members of the crowd? (e.g. What kind of music do you listen to when you are working out? When you’re trying to fall asleep? When you’re working on a paper? When you’re dancing at a party? When you’re cleaning your room? When you’re at a funeral?) What happens if the wrong kind of music is played at the wrong event or in the wrong setting? What makes the music fit the setting or function?

[An English Translation of the polymath Ibn Khaldun’s \(d. 1406\) discussion of the craft of poetry in his *Muqaddima*](#)

[An English translation of selections of two treatises on the definition and nature of Arabic poetry](#) (these readings are predominantly concerned with “non-Sufi” poetry, but given the points discussed above, much of this also applies to Sufi poetry as well, since there is not a hard distinction between “Sufi” and “non-Sufi” verse).

Videos about Sufi Musical Traditions:

[“What is Sufi Music?” Let’s Talk Religion Youtube Channel](#)

[“Sufi Soul: The Mystic Music of Islam”](#)-Documentary on Sufi Music (50 mins)

[*Youssou Ndour-I Bring What I Love*](#)-Documentary on Senegalese Singer Youssou Ndour’s Sufi-inspired album and the controversies surrounding it. Ndour, like most Senegalese Muslims belongs to a Sufi order. (1h42mins)-rent or buy on Youtube.

2. Close Reading

After students have listened to an episode, pick a poem from the Episode or Further Reading section (or from the poems below) and have students complete one or a few of the following exercises.

For your reference, here is a [great example](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ap1Yevvy-Bs) of how to read and interpret a famous classical Sufi poem for a contemporary audience (the interpretation starts around 30:00): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ap1Yevvy-Bs>

Exercise #1: Mapping

Have students copy or print out the translation of the poem and highlight all metaphors in red, all similes in green, circle all pairs of opposites and paradoxes, and draw squares around phrases or images that they think might be allusions to other poems, stories, scripture, etc. Then have the students read through the poem another time and draw lines connecting any (not all, just a few) words, phrases, or images that seem to echo or connect with other words, phrases, concepts or images that appeared previously in the poem. Then have them read the poem again. How did this visual mapping or dissection of the poem change their perception of it?

Exercise #2: Looking for the Confusion

Have your students read through the translation of the selected poem out loud, and ask them to identify the two verses that were most confusing or surprising to them. Ask them to think about why they were confusing or surprising, then have your students pair up and have each student pair discuss their chosen confusing verses. Did their partner have the same verses? Have each pair of students discuss their confusing/surprising verses together to try to come up with possible ways of understanding/reading them. Then have each pair read the entire poem over again. Ask each student to think about or share how the meaning of the poem shifted for them after their discussion with their partner. Did they develop new insights or readings of the poem through their conversations of the confusing verses? What do they see in the poem now that they didn't before?

Exercise #3: Prose Translation or Commentary

Have the students read the poem silently once and a second time out loud, but quietly. Then have them write a prose "translation" of the poem. That is to translate the poem into simple English, in paragraph form.

One they have done this. Ask them to read their prosaic paraphrase of the poem. Ask them what, if anything, is lost in this “translation” and why? Then ask them if the paragraph improves on the poem in anyway? What does paraphrasing the poem like this add to it, if anything and why?

Next, have the students pair up, and have each student take turns verbally explaining the meaning and significance of each verse to each other. So, for example, Student A in a pair would explain the first verse to student B, then student B would explain the second verse to student A, and so on and so forth until the end of the poem. If you have time, give the student receiving the explanation time to respond to the other student’s commentary and add to it or present a different perspective on the verse’s potential meanings.

Exercise #4: Images

Have each student pick out his or her favorite image or set of images from the poem, and invite them to draw it/them out or represent it in another form. Invite them to imagine and think through all the different possibilities and ramifications of this image, whether it be burning sighs, a flood of tears, a reed flute, a veil being lifted, thorns on a rose, etc. What are the constitutive parts of the image? What is their relationship to each other? To the things around it?

For example, taking the image of the thorn and the rose:

thorns grow beneath the petals of a rose and protect the plant, if you prick your finger on a rose it bleeds red, the same color of the rose, so it is as if the thorn makes your finger bloom roses. Everyone wants to pick the flower of the rose, but no one wants to pick a thorn, so is it better to be a flower petal or a thorn? Eyelashes kind of look like thorns and the color and round shape and lines of the rose flower kind of make it look like a mouth. The rose flower blooms from a bud and then withers and falls, but the thorn endures.

Exercise #5: Translations

Since almost all the poems your students will be reading will be in translation, it is important to think about the process of translation, and just how different different translations of the same poem can be.

Have students pick out and compare two English translations of the celebrated “Song of the Reed,” the opening of Rumi’s *Masnavi* from this list:

<https://www.dar-al-masnavi.org/reedsong.html>

and compare them to each other. Are they very similar or very different? Why? Which do you prefer and why? Now that you have a “binocular” view of the original poem, how does reading the two translations together change your perception of the poem? Are some things more clear and others more obscure or mysterious? What questions came up for you while reading the two translations together?

Here are some poems that work well for these close reading exercises:

[This performance of a verse by Sa‘di and a poem by Amir Khusrau,](#)

Rabi’a al-‘Adawiyya

I've come to know love since I knew your love
I've locked my heart to all but you
I whispered to you who sees the secrets of hearts
while none of us see you
I love you with two loves, one of passion
and one because it is your due
As for the love of passion
it busies me with your remembrance away from all but you
As for the love that is your due
it lifts the veils from me until I see you
And I'm not to praise for this or that
But praise is yours for this and that

al-Hallaj

<https://archive.blogs.harvard.edu/sulaymanibnqiddees/2021/01/18/between-you-and-me/>

And:

My heart had various longings,
but since seeing you, they've all become one
My envied mine envier became, and
I became the Lord of mankind, since my lord you became
I left everyone to their world and their religion
busy with my love for you, oh my world and my religion
You lit two fires in my liver:
one between my ribs and the other in my guts.

And:

I saw my Lord with the eye of my heart
I said, “Who are you?” and He said, “**you**”
For where you are there is no where
and yet there is no where for **you**
There’s no imagining you at all
no where imagination could find **you**
You’re he who holds every where
without any where, so where are **you**?
In my annihilation, my annihilation is annihilated
and in my annihilation, you found **you**
In the wiping away of my name, all trace of my body
I asked about myself, and you said, “**you**”
My secret turned to you until
I vanished from myself, and there was only **you**
You are my life and the secret of my heart
So wherever I am, there’s **you**
You encompass everything in knowledge
So everything I see is **you**
Grant me your pardon, O my God
For I don’t want anything but **you**

Rumi:

<https://archive.blogs.harvard.edu/sulaymanibnqiddees/2022/11/28/rumi-its-a-lie/>

<https://archive.blogs.harvard.edu/sulaymanibnqiddees/2021/03/19/rumi-looking-for-a-true-human/>

See the [skyofwisdom Youtube Channel](#) for many other Rumi poems with English translations

Hafez, “The Lost Joseph”:

<https://archive.blogs.harvard.edu/sulaymanibnqiddees/2012/03/31/42/>

and

<https://archive.blogs.harvard.edu/sulaymanibnqiddees/2018/08/26/poems-on-hafezs-tomb/>

al-Shushtari:

<https://archive.blogs.harvard.edu/sulaymanibnqiddees/2017/09/07/shustari-if-loving-you-is-wrong/>

Ibn al-Farid:

<https://archive.blogs.harvard.edu/sulaymanibnqiddees/2015/03/15/it-is-love-so-surrender/>

<https://archive.blogs.harvard.edu/sulaymanibnqiddees/2014/02/18/increase-me-in-love-for-you-version-2/>

Further Resources:

Wikipedia has several very good pages on individual ghazals of Hafez, complete with verse-by-verse analysis and context:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Ghazals_by_Hafez

And a good page on Ghazal 163 by Rumi:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rumi_ghazal_163

[Poetry Chaikhana](http://www.poetry-chaikhana.com/)—A website that collects translations of poetry from several different traditions, they have a list of translations (of varying fidelity and quality) of Sufi poems here:

<https://www.poetry-chaikhana.com/Traditions/MuslimSufi/index.html>

3. Memorization and Recitation

Most Sufi poetry is typically recited or sung, and much of it is memorized. We have found that having students memorize a few verses of poetry in the original language helps them understand many of its linguistic features, even if they do not know the original language and gives them a deeper appreciation for the verses and their manifold meanings. We've found that students actually really enjoy this exercise since they rarely have the opportunity to memorize things any more (even if they complain about it at the beginning).

Have your students memorize and then recite from memory a few verses of a Sufi poem in its original language (See the Appendix for examples with transliterations and Youtube recordings for pronunciation). To memorize the poetry, we recommend having the students make a short recording of the poem being recited or sung and to listen to it on repeat. Once they have the pronunciation and rhythm down, we recommend repeating each verse 33-100 times out loud and/or writing it down as many times. You can have student memorize just one verse of poetry or several verses, depending on your time, their capacity, and interest.

For example, the famous opening of the Masnavi, called the "[Song of the Reed](#)," (transliteration below) we recommend having students memorize the first four verses (in bold), but if you have an enterprising student, or one who knows the poem's language, they can take on more, even the whole poem, if they have the time:

***Beshno az ney chon hekaayat mikonad
Az jodaayee ha shekaayat mi-konad***

***Kaz neyestaan ta maraa bebrideh and
Dar nafiram mardo zan naalideh and***

***Sineh khaaham sharheh sharheh az faraagh
Ta begooyam sharheh dardeh eshtiyaagh***

***Har kasi ku door maand az asleh khish
Az jooyad roozegareh vasleh khish***

*Man be har jamiyati naalaan shodam
Jofteh bad haalaano khosh haalaan shodam*

*Har kasi az zanneh khod shod yaareh man
Az darooneh man najost asraareh man*

*Serreh man az naaleyeh man door nist
Lik chashmo goosh ra aan noor nist*

*Tan zeh jaano jaan zeh tan mastour nist
Lik kas ra dideh jaan dastour nist*

*Aatash ast in baangeh naayo nist baad
Har keh in aatash nadaarad nist baad*

*Aatasheh ishq ast kandar ney fetaad
Jooshesheh ishq ast kandar mey fetaad*

*Ney, harifeh har keh az yaari borid
Pardeh hayash pardeh hayeh ma darid*

*Hamcho ney zahri o taryaqi keh did?
Hamchon ney damsaz o moshtaqi ke did?*

*Ney hadiseh raheh por khoon mikonad
Qesseh hayeh eshq e majnoon mikonad*

*Mahrimeh in hoosh joz bihoosh nist
Mar zaban ra moshtari joz goosh nist*

*Dar ghameh ma rooz ha bigaah shod
Rouz ha ba souz ha hamraah shod*

*Rouz ha gar raft gu ro baak nist
To bemaan , ey aankeh chin to paak nist*

*Har keh joz maahi zeh aabash dir shod
Har keh bi roozist, roozash dir shod*

*Dar nayaabad haaleh pokhteh hich khaam
Pas sokhan kootaah baayad, vassalaam*

Listen to more about this poem here:

<https://www.chaiandconversation.com/persian-poetry/rumi-beshno-een-nay-intro>

<https://www.chaiandconversation.com/persian-poetry/rumi-beshno-een-nay-part-2>

See the Appendix for more transliterations of poems for students to memorize.

4. Creative Writing:

Assignment #1: Sufi Commentary on a Pop Song

Have your students attempt to give a Sufi interpretation to a contemporary love song by writing a commentary on it. It can be fun if they get into the role-play aspect of it, following the conventions of the commentary genre, and illustrating the major themes and ideas covered in your module on Sufis or Sufi poetry. For help with the format and style of the commentary, see [this commentary on Rumi's Lament of the Reed](#) and [al-Qaysari's commentary](#) on Ibn al-Farid's "Wine Ode."

Tip: Invite the students to try to make sense of the song's lyrics as the poet-lover speaking to God, and then ask if they can make sense of the lyrics if the roles are reversed and God is the speaker of the verses and the human being is the beloved. Do both perspectives work? Why or why not?

For example, you could easily write a Sufi commentary on:

Stevie Wonder's "As":

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mlkcdOEWEL>Links to an

Donny Hathaway's "A Song for You":

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hDD5cAbf2BE>Links to an external site.

Minnie Riperton's "Lovin' You":

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9I3UTG1dSTc>Links to an external site.

Chris Stapleton's "Tennessee Whiskey":

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4zAThXFOy2c>

Bobby Caldwell's "What you Wont' do (Do for Love):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n9DmdAwUbxc>Links to an external site.

Al Green's "I'm So tired of Being Alone":

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7ll7ocQbH_k

Amy Winehouse's "Love is a Losing Game":

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fs1FveJqmEo>Links to an external site.

D'Angelo's "Nothing Even Matters":

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AWV7aiybbM8>Links to an external site.

Lauryn Hill's "Ex-Factor":

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r3p3G0tZunE>Links to an external site.

Marvin Gaye and Tammy Terrell's "Ain't No Mountain High Enough":
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5stepYJno7rU>Links to an external site.

James Taylor's "You've Got a Friend":
<https://blogs.harvard.edu/sulaymanibnqiddees/2013/07/06/james-taylor-and-sufism/>Links to an external site.

Assignment #2: Write an English Sufi Ghazal

Have your students write a Sufi poem in the form of a Ghazal (details below). After reading and listening to several Sufi poems, have your students try their hand at composing their own ghazal. It can be helpful to start by responding to a poem that they particularly liked or by having them spend 15 minutes outside in Nature trying to "listen and see like a Sufi": looking for the symbolic connections and mystical symbolism of the phenomena they observe or insights that come to them.

Some students find it helpful to write while listening to hip-hop instrumentals or instrumental music.

Here's all the info you'll need to guide your students through writing a ghazal:

The Ghazal is an ancient Arabic poetic form, derived in part from the *nasīb*, the opening nostalgic, romantic prelude of the *Qasīda*. The ghazal is essentially a love lyric, typically between 8 and 25 verses, and developed into the most popular poetic form in Persian, Ottoman Turkish, and numerous South Asian languages, including Hindi-Urdu. Ghazals are also written in West African Islamic languages like Hausa and Fulfulde, East African languages such as Swahili and contributed to the development of the European sonnet.

The resources below will help your students write their own Ghazals in English:

The ghazal is a metered form, with a distinct rhyme scheme consisting of a rhyme-sound (*qafiyya*) and an end-phrase (*radīf*) and a number of conventions. Each verse, or *bayt*, is divided up into two *misra*'s or hemistiches.

- 1) In the first bayt, called the *Matla*' , both hemistiches must end with the qafiyya and radif, in all subsequent bayts, only the second hemistich ends with the qafiyya and radif. This produces a rhyme scheme of AA BA CA DA, etc.
- 2) The last couplet of the ghazal is called the *maqta*' , and should contain the pen-name, or *takhallus*, of the poet. This last verse is typically more personal and reflective than other verses and typically contains wordplay on the meaning of the poet's pen-name.

- 3) Each hemistich is written in the same meter and contains the same number of syllables or metrical feet.
- 4) Each verse is a complete unit of thought and meaning and can stand on its own (almost like a stanza in English poetry). So while the arrangement and order of the verses affects their meaning, ghazals tend to be less narrative than English lyric poetry, with each bayt or verse of a ghazal taking up a different perspective on the poem's overall theme.
- 5) The poet typically takes up the position of a helpless lover addressing a cruel, indifferent, and transcendent beloved, whose overwhelming beauty provokes an all-consuming love in the poet.

When writing a ghazal in English, it is often easiest to start with the *qafiya* (rhyme) and *radif* (repeated phrase). Once that has been determined, your student can write down several rhyme-words for the *qafiya* and play with different ways to fit that to the *radif*. Pairings that bring out different meanings or shades of meaning of the *radif* phrase are considered especially good style. Once equipped with the raw materials, your poets can try to compose their ghazal. It is often easiest to start with the double-rhymed opening verse, that sets the tone and meter, and then play around with other verses, not forgetting the poet's pen-name in the confessional last verse.

Background information on the poetic form:

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ghazal>

<https://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/gazal-parent>

The Ghazal form in English:

[This Google Document has examples of Ghazals in English with the formal features highlighted](#)

<https://dversepoets.com/2011/08/11/formforall-ghazal/>

Examples of English ghazals:

https://franpritchett.com/00urduhindilinks/txt_peter_hook.html

<https://poets.org/poem/even-rain>

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/51652/tonight-56d22f898fcd7>

More Resources on English Sufi Poetry

Sufi Poetics:

Amir Sulaiman, "The Universe is a Poem":

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-UaXtQZunpY>

Path & Present Podcast, Baraka Blue and Amir Sulaiman:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zCMdMvm20U4>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8qzkjh1g0QQ>

English Sufi Poetry:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CQ9KoEQ2M6o>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FoWVs9NBFMI>

Appendix: Transliteration of Sufi Poetry for Memorization

Al-Buṣīrī's Burda:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xkG1Y3Spzo8>Links to an external site. (starts at 0:25)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_piNg3dtV-cLinks to an external site. (starts at 0:14)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FP36Hb5IbwQ>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hGXWFNVJWII> (starts at 2:00)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZdNPCwPbjLM> (starts at 1:15)

<https://blogs.harvard.edu/sulaymanibnqiddees/2013/01/31/rabi-al-awwal-burda-and-fiyashiyyah/>

Transliteration:

Chorus: Mawlay ya ṣallee wa sallim da'iman abadan 'ala'l-habeebika khairi'l-khalqi kulihimi

Amin tadhakkuri jeerānin bi Dhi Salāmi majazta dam'an jara min muqlatin bidami

Am habbatir-reehu min tilqaa'i kaaẓimatin wa awmaḍaal-barqu fīẓ-ẓalma'i min idami

fa ma li 'ainayka in qultakfufa hamata wa ma liqalbika in qultastatafiq yahami

A yaḥsibu-ṣabbu annal-hubbu munkatimu ma bayna munsajimin minhu wa muḍṭarimi

Original Arabic:

أَمِنْ تَذَكُّرِ جِيرَانِ بَدِي سَلَمٍ مَزَجَتْ دَمْعاً جَرَى مِنْ مَقْلَةٍ بَدَمٍ

أَمْ هَبَّتِ الرِّيحُ مِنْ تَلْقَاءِ كَاظِمَةٍ وَأَوْمَضَ الْبَرْقُ فِي الظُّلْمَاءِ مِنْ إِضْمٍ

فَمَا لِعَيْنَيْكَ إِنْ قُلْتَ أَكْفَا هَمَّتَا وَمَا لِقَلْبِكَ إِنْ قُلْتَ اسْتَفَوْقَ يَهُمِ

أَيَحْسَبُ الصَّبُّ أَنَّ الحُبَّ مُنْكَتَمٌ مَا بَيْنَ مُنْسَجِمٍ مِنْهُ وَمَضْطَرِمِ

Translation:

Chorus:

My Lord blessings and peace forever and eternally be upon the beloved the best of all creation

Is it from remembering the neighbors at Dhu Salam that you mingle with blood tears shed from your eyes

Or has the wind blown from before Kāzimah, and lightning flashed in the darkness of Iḍam

What ails your eyes, that when you bid them cease they weep still more? What ails your heart, that when you bid it wake, it wanders

Reckons the lovelorn that his love may be concealed, when part of him's a torrent, and the other is a blaze?

Rumi, "The Lament of the Reed"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qGscXhjCa6I> (poetry starts at 2:00)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YI4Rpu8xLxI>

Transliteration:

***Beshno az ney chon hekaayat mikonad
Az jodaayee ha shekaayat mi-konad***

***Kaz neyestaan ta maraa bebrideh and
Dar nafiram mardo zan naalideh and***

***Sineh khaaham sharheh sharheh az faraagh
Ta begooyam sharheh dardeh eshtiyaagh***

***Har kasi ku door maand az asleh khish
Az jooyad roozegareh vasleh khish***

Translation:

1. Listen to the reed how it narrates a tale,
A tale of all the separations of which it complains.
2. Ever since they cut me from the reed-bed,
Men and women bemoaned my lament.
3. How I wish in separation, a bosom shred and shred,
So as to utter the description of the pain of longing.
4. Whoever becomes distanced from his roots,
Seeks to return to the days of his union.

Original:

بشنو این نی چون شکایت می‌کند
کز نیستان تا مرا ببریده‌اند
سینه خواهم شرحه شرحه از فراق
هر کسی کو دور ماند از اصل خویش

از جدایی‌ها حکایت می‌کند
در نفیرم مرد و زن نالیده‌اند
تا بگویم شرح درد اشتیاق
باز جوید روزگار وصل خویش

Ibn 'Arabi, "My heart became":

<https://blogs.harvard.edu/sulaymanibnqiddees/2012/12/22/my-heart-became/>

Transliteration:

La qad s̄ara qalbī qābilan kulla s̄uratin
famar'a lighzlan wa dairu liruhbani
wa baitun li awthan wa ka'abatu tā'ifin
wa alwahu tawratin wa mushafu qurani
adeenu bi deeni'l-hubb annā tawajjahat
rakā'ibuhu fa'lhubbu deeni wa eemanee
lana uswatun fee bishri hindin wa ukhtihā
wa qaysi wa laylā thumma mayy wa ghaylani

Original:

لَقَدْ صَارَ قَلْبِي قَابِلًا كُلِّ صُورَةٍ
وَبَيْتٌ لِأَوْثَانٍ وَكَعْبَةٌ طَانِفٌ،
أَدِينُ بِدِينِ الْحَبِّ أَنِّي تَوَجَّهْتُ
لَنَا أُسْوَةً ۖ فِي بَشْرِ هِنْدٍ وَأُخْتِهَا

فَمَرَعَى لِعِزْلَانٍ وَدَيْرٍ لِرُهْبَانٍ
وَالْوَاخُ تَوْرَاةٍ وَمَصْحَفٌ قُرْآنٍ
رَكَائِبُهُ فَالْحُبُّ دِينِي وَإِيمَانِي
وَقَيْسٍ وَلَيْلَى ، ثُمَّ مَيٍّ وَغَيْلَانَ

Translation:

Receptive, my heart became, to every form
A meadow for gazelles, and a cloister for the monks
A house for the idols, and the pilgrim's Ka'aba
The tablets of the Torah, pages of the Qur'an
My religion is love's own and wheresoever turn
Her caravan, that love is my religion and my faith
We have an example in Bishr, lover of Hind and her sister,
And Qays and Layla, and Mayy and Ghaylan*

Ibn al-Farid's Khamriyyah:

<https://blogs.harvard.edu/sulaymanibnqiddees/2012/03/28/ibn-al-farids-khamriyyah/>

(second recording is the clearest)

Transliteration:

Sharibnā ‘alā dhikri’l habībi mudāmatan
sakirnā bihā min qabla an yukhlaqu’l karmu

Lahā’l-badrūn kasun wa hiya shamsun yudīruhā
hilālun wa kam yabdū idhā muzijat najmu

wa law lā shadhāhā mā’htadaytu lihānihā
wa law lā sanāhā mā tasawwarahā’l-wahmu

safa’un wa lā ma’un wa lutfun wa la hawa
wa nūrun wa la nārūn wa rūhun wa la jismu

Original:

شَرَبْنَا عَلَى ذِكْرِ الْحَبِيبِ مُدَامَةً سَكِرْنَا بِهَا مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يُخْلَقَ الْكَرْمُ
لَهَا الْبَدْرُ كَأَسْ وَهِيَ شَمْسٌ يُدِيرُهَا هَلَالٌ وَكَمْ يَبْدُو إِذَا مَزَجَتْ نَجْمَ
وَلَوْلَا شَدَّاهَا مَا اهْتَدَيْتُ لِحَانِهَا وَلَوْلَا سَنَاها مَا تَصَوَّرَهَا الْوَهْمُ

...

صَفَاءٌ وَلَا مَاءٌ وَأُطْفَتْ وَلَا هَوَاءٌ وَنُورٌ وَلَا نَارٌ وَرُوحٌ وَلَا جِسْمٌ

Muhammad al-Barraq: "In heaven there is a river"

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m8eukyv_qt0

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uh42mJ-24Qw>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z7d_cGK5Ce8

Transliteration:

Inna f'il jannati nahran min laban

Inna f'il jannati nahran min laban

li 'Aliyin wa husaynin wa hassan

li 'Aliyin wa husaynin wa hassan

Kullu man kana muhibban lahumu

Kullu man kana muhibban lahumu

yadkulu jannata min ghayri'l-hazan

yadkulu jannata min ghayri'l-hazan

Hubbu ahlil bayti fardun 'indana

Hubbu ahlil bayti fardun 'indana

Wa bi hadhal hubbi la nakhshal mihan

Wa bi hadhal hubbi la nakhshal mihan

Original:

إنّ في الجنّة نهرا من لبن

لعلي والحسين والحسن

كلّ من كان محبا لهم

يدخل الجنّة من غير الحزن

حبّ أهل البيت فردّ عندا

وبهذا الحبّ لا نخشى المحن

Translation:

In heaven there is a river of milk

In heaven there is a river of milk

for 'Ali and Husayn, and Hasan

for 'Ali and Husayn, and Hasan

Everyone who loves them

Everyone who loves them

Enters heaven without sorrow

Enters heaven without sorrow

Love of the Prophet's family is obligatory for us

Love of the Prophet's family is obligatory for us

and with this love we fear no trouble.

Shushtari, Layla stole my reason from me:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IJtEG-N9pS0>

<https://blogs.harvard.edu/sulaymanibnqiddees/2013/08/09/ah-layla/>

Transliteration (only the bold part need be memorized):

Salabat Laylā minnī al-'aqlā

qultu yā laylā irḥami'l-qatlā

ḥubbuhā maknūn

fi'l-ḥashā makhzūn

ayyuhā'l-maftūn

him bihā dhalā

innanī hā'im

wa lahā khādīm

ayyuhā'l-Lā'im

khalīnī mahlā

lazimtu'l-'atāb

wa ṭaraqtu'l-bāb

qultu lil-bawwāb

hal tarā waṣlā

qāla lī yā ṣāḥ

maharhā'l-arwāḥ

Kam muḥibb rāḥ

ya'shiqu'l-qatlā

ayyuhā'l-'āshiq

In kunta ṣādiq

lilsiwā fāriq

taghtanim waṣlā

Original:

قَلْتُ يَا لَيْلَى اِرْحَمِي الْقَتْلَى	سَلَبْتَ لَيْلَى مِنِّي الْعَقْلَى
فِي الْحَشَى مَخْرُونَ	حُبُّهَا مَكْنُونٌ
هَمُّ بِهَا ذَلَا	أَيْهَا الْمَفْتُونُ
وَلِهَا خَادِمٌ	إِنِّي هَائِمٌ
خَلَّيْنِي مَهْلًا	أَيْهَا اللَّائِمُ
وَطَرَقْتَ الْبَابَ	لَزِمْتُ الْأَعْتَابَ
هَل تَرَى وَصَلًا	قَالَتْ لِلْبَوَابِ
مَهْرَهَا الْأُرُوحَ	قَالَ لِي يَا صَاحُ
يَعْتَشِقُ الْقَتْلَى	كَمْ مَحِبِّ رَاخٍ
إِنْ كُنْتُ صَادِقٌ	أَيْهَا الْعَاشِقُ
تَغْتَنَّمُ وَصَلًا	لِلسُؤَى فَارِقُ

Translation:

Layla robbed me of my reason
I said, O Layla, have mercy on [those you have] slain

Her love is hidden
enshrined in my bones
O you who are entranced by her
Humble yourself in her love

I am mad with love for her
and for her, I am a slave
Hey, you blaming hater
Lay off me for a while

I camped out on her doorstep
and knocked at the door
I asked the doorman,
“Will I ever see union with her?”

He said to me, “My friend,
Her dowry is your soul.
How many lovers
Have come to the point of loving death.”

O lover
If you are sincere
Leave behind all else
then you will win union [with her]

Sa‘dī, “He Attained Perfection”

<https://archive.blogs.harvard.edu/sulaymanibnqiddees/2015/12/23/for-the-mawlid/>

Translation:

**He attained eminence by his perfection
The darkness was lifted by his beauty
Lovely are all of his qualities
Blessings upon him and his family**

Transliteration:

Balaghal-‘ulaa bi kamaalihi
Kashshafad-dujaa bijamaalihi
Hasunat jamee‘u khisaalihi
Saloo ‘alayhi wa Aalihi

Original:

بلغ العلى بكماه
كشفت الدجى بجماله
حسننت جميع خصاله
صلوا عليه و آله

Loving TaHa (Mauritanian Poem) (only bold part need be memorized):

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UCqZE_gRmMk

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oPZiMTomogs>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q3_V1gEbg88&

Translation:

Loving TaHa is delightful...How lovely is that Great Noble!
He's the treasure of creation, and to all goodness, a doorway
And he's peace and our protection, and he's food and our refreshment
He's a pearl and he's a treasure, he's the kernel and quintessence
The land without love of TaHa...is a wasteland so forsaken
And hearts without love of TaHa...are ruins, wrecked and desolated
And in each and every heart is....a portion from TaHa's passion
He's the soul's enchantment, truly...and he is the answered prayer
No beloved can distract you...from him, nor hearts, nor violin
Without that, I don't care at all...for any blessing or torment

Transliteration:

hubbu TaHa yustataabu . habadhaa dhaakal-janaabu
fahuwa dhukhrun lilbaraayaa . wahuwa lilkhayraati baabu
wahuwa amnun wa amaanun . wa ta'aamun wa sharaabu
wahuwa durrun wahuiwa kanzun . wahuwa lubbun wa lubaabu
inna ardan laysa feehee . . . hubbu taHa layabaabu
wa qulubban laysa feehee hubbu taHa lakaraabu
falyakun fi kulli qalbin min Hawaa TaHa nisaabu

Original:

.. حُبُّ طه يُسْتَطَاب .. حَبْدًا ذَاكَ الْجَنَابِ
.. فَهُوَ نَخْرٌ لِلْبِرَايَا .. وَهُوَ لِلْخَيْرَاتِ بَابِ
.. هُوَ أَمْنٌ وَ أَمَانٌ .. وَ طَعَامٌ وَ شَرَابِ
.. هُوَ دَرٌّ وَ هُوَ كَنْزٌ .. وَ هَوْلٌ وَ لُبَابِ
.. إِنَّ أَرْضًا لَيْسَ فِيهَا .. حَبُّ طه لِيَبَابِ
.. هُوَ قَلُوبًا لَيْسَ فِيهَا .. حَبُّ طه لَخْرَابِ
.. فُلَيْكُنْ فِي كُلِّ قَلْبٍ .. مِنْ هَوَى طه نَصَابِ
.. فَهُوَ رُقِيَا النَّفْسِ حَقًّا .. وَ الدَّعَاءِ الْمَسْتَجَابِ
.. لَا تَمْلُكُمُ عَنْهُ مَيٌّ .. أَوْ لُبَابٌ أَوْ رِبَابِ
.. لَا تَبَالُوا بِنَعِيمٍ .. دُونَ ذَاكَ أَوْ عِقَابِ

Swahili Poem (Unknown Author):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tf3rPApbwmU>Links to an external site.

Tumche aliyetumwa
Tulotunukiwa
Na Mola Karima
Ulma zote pia

[Let us honour the one who was sent
The one bestowed upon us
By God
And all knowledge]

Hii ndo ni fahari
Kula isilamu
Anayetasfiri
Neema za Karimu

[This is the great prestige
of Islam
The one who interprets
The grace of The Noble (God)]

Sote tuna siri
Bora za Kaumu
Tangu kudhihiri
Nuru za Nabia

[We have great secrets
of the Messenger
Since the revelation
of the light of The Prophet]

Tumche aliyetumwa
Tulotunukiwa
Na Mola Karima
Ulma zote pia

[Let us honour the one who was sent
The one bestowed upon us
By God
And all knowledge]