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الحمد لله و الصلاة و السلام على النبي محمد و على آله و أصحابه أجمعين أما بعد

This is a collection and brief explanation of approximately one hundred and forty lines from the poetry of the famous Arab poet Al-Mutanabbi. Initially collated from Al-Amthaal As-Saa'irah Min Shi'r Al-Mutanabbi of Ibn 'Abbaad, the quotations were subsequently verified from Mutanabbi's Diwan. Wherever there was a variation between the text of Ibn 'Abbaad and the Diwan, I relied on the latter. The last line, however, is an exception. Almost all the explanation was drawn from the commentary of Bargoogi. Occasionally, the commentary of 'Akbari was also utilised. However, all balaaghah-related explanation was based on my own understanding. The actual quotations were collated about one year ago. However, the translation and explanation was done between the 19th and the 27th of March, 2020. Finally, this is not an exhaustive collation of the amthaal and hikam (parables and examples) in the poetry of Mutanabbi. Likewise, I have not presented an exhaustive explanation of the balaagharelated aspects in these quotations. Allah-willing, we may add more quotations and explanation in the future.

Finally, I request the reader's du'aas for acceptance in the court of Allah Ta'aala. I also request their suggestions and constructive criticisms.

Abu Hudhaifa Lenasia 4 Sha'baan 1441 29 March 2020

Pg, 1



Children of Ishaq, be noble and exercise patience Great people exercise patience in achieving great goals

- إنّ العظيم على الأمر العظيم . . . الأمر i.e. محذوف that is موصوف of a صفة is the العظيم صبورُ
- In a another version the word عن is used instead of على In this instance we will regard المفقود as the موصوف محذوف Accordingly, the translation of the second half would be:

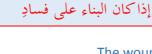
Great people exercise patience upon the death of great people

When it is said 'take it easy', he says, 'there is a time for tolerance Being tolerant at the wrong time is ignorance'

Recent anger no matter how strong Does not take revenge due to previous kindness

People hesitate in taking revenge from their benefactors. If a person who previously helped you makes you angry, you hesitate in taking revenge.

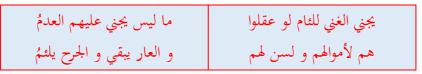
Pg. 2



و إنّ الجرح ينفر بعد حينٍ

The wound recurs after a while When the treatment was incomplete

At times, when a wound that seemed to have healed recurs, we realise that the inside is still raw. Similarly, people squabble with each other and then 'patch up' only to have a worse quarrel some time later. The second quarrel tells us that the ill-feelings after the first quarrel were not completely resolved. This is what Mutanabbi is actually referring to.



Wealth harms the wealthy if they only knew In a manner that poverty will never do They belong to their wealth, their wealth does not belong to them Disgrace remains even though the wound may heal

- Wealth results in arrogance which leads to disgraceful behaviour.
- Such behaviour is like a wound, but unlike the wound of a sword, it never heals.

Pq. 3

و إن كانت لهم جثتٌ ضخامٌ و لكن معدِن الذهب الرَّخامُ

و دهر ناسه ناسٌ صغارٌ ما أنا منهم بالعيش فيهم

A time whose people are 'small' Even if they have huge bodies I'm not one of them by living with them But gold is mined from stone

Do not judge me by the people among whom I live. Before being mined, gold is surrounded by stone. I am the same. I am a good man but unfortunately, the people around me are not the same as me.

و ماكل بمعذور ببخل

و ماكلّ ببخل يلام

Not everybody is blameworthy for being stingy (Yet) not everybody is excused for behaving miserly

و من يعشق يلذّ له الغرام	تلَذّ المروءة و هي تؤذي
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Chivalrous behaviour is pleasurable although it may be inconveniencing Love is pleasurable for those who are in love

Some people insist on behaving in a chivalrous manner despite the inconvenience it may cause them. In fact, they enjoy the inconvenience experienced in such behaviour. Mutanabbi compares such joy to the joy of the lover even though love may be tiring and a form of 'punishment'.

Pq. 4

و قبض نوال بعض القوم ذامً هي الأطواق و الناس الحمامُ

و قبضُ نواله شرفٌ و عزّ أقامت له في الرقاب أيادٍ

Accepting his gift is an honour But accepting the gift of some others is a disgrace His favours surround the (people's) necks They (his favours) are (like) the collar-rings and the people are (like) the doves

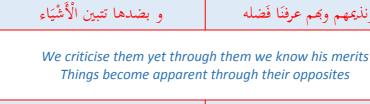
The second line is an example of what the experts of Arabic rhetoric call تشبیه التمثیل (comparison of a صورة comprising more than one item to another صورة that also comprises more than one item). In this example, Mutanabbi is comparing the صورة of the king endearing people by means of his favours to the صورة of man placing collar-rings around his pigeons' necks to ensure that they will not be stolen by somebody else.

و زارك بي دون الملوك تحرّج إذا عنّ بحرٌ لم يجز لي التيمّم

Uneasiness drove me to visit you instead of the other kings When the sea appears, tayammum is not permissible for me

He felt uneasy visiting other kings instead of the king he was addressing. Going to any other king would be like making tayammum in the presence of water. This is line is another example of التشيه الضمني and تشبيه التمثيل

Pq, 5





My poem regarding them was befitting Necklaces are regarded as beautiful on the necks of beautiful woman

The beauty of a necklace is enhanced wen worn by a beautiful woman. Likewise, the beauty of my poetry was enhanced when I used it to praise them. Had I used my poetry to praise somebody else, the beauty of my poetry would not be appreciated fully. This is also an example of تشبيه التمثيل and التشيه الضمني

يجد به مرا الماء الزلالا

و من يكن ذا فم مرّ

ونذيمهم وبمم عرفنا فضله

The person whose mouth is bitter due to illness Finds sweet water to be bitter

The reason why some people criticise my poetry is that they lack sound 'taste'. Do you blame the water if a sick man with a bitter mouth describes it as bitter? Similarly, there is nothing improper in my poetry if it is criticised by people who lack sound taste. This is an example of

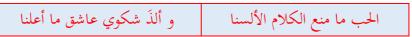
usage of a sentence beyond its original meaning). It has الاستعارة التمثيلية now become a مثل (adage) and is used for a variety of similar situations.

Pg, 6



Not everybody who seeks lofty ambition achieves it Not all men are brave

People have dreams and ambitions but not all of them have the determination to pursue them until the end.



Love does not prevent the tongues from speaking The lover's most pleasurable complaint is what he divulges

- The translation of the first half is based on the understanding that \Box in the first half is use
- The meaning of this line is that love does not prevent the lover from complaining of the person he loves. In fact, he finds pleasure in expressing such complaints.

و ذو اللبّ يكره إنفاقه

و أنفس ما للمرء لبّه

The most valuable belonging of a man is his intelligence A man of intelligence will dislike losing it

Every act of tolerance that results from inability (to execute revenge) Is an argument in which shameful people seek refuge

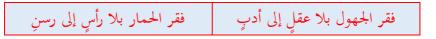
Pg. 7

Only shameful, useless people describe their inability to take revenge as tolerance.

من يهن يسهل الهوان عليه ما لجرح بميتٍ إيلامُ

Belittlement is easy for those who are humble Wounding a dead man causes him no pain

Be humble because just as wounding a dead man does not hurt him, belittlement at the hands of others does not 'hurt' humble people. This is also تشيه ضمنى



The unintelligent ignorant person's need for adab Is like the headless donkey's need for rope

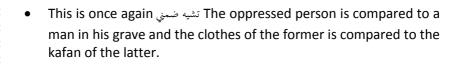
Intelligence is the requisite for learning adab. A fool lacks adab. So then how can he learn adab? Does a headless donkey need a rope? Obviously not. Likewise, a man without intelligence does not need adab.

و هل يروق دفينا جودة الكفن لا يعجبن مضيما حسن بزته

An oppressed man should not be fascinated by his smart clothes Does quality of the kafan delight a man in his grave?

 This type of question is called استفهام إنكاري (a question whose answer is obviously negative).

Pg, 8



إذا أتتك مذمّتي من ناقص فهي الشهادة لي بأبي كامل

When you hear me criticised by somebody imperfect Then that is testimony that I am perfect

As long as I am not criticised by somebody perfect (accomplished), the criticism of others does not matter. In fact, it is proof of my perfection. If I am imperfect, why has no accomplished person criticised me?

There are two types of استعارة in this line:

استعارة تبعية 1.

- The word أتَنْك is derived from الإتيان which means 'to come'.
- Criticism does not come to anybody. Instead, he is informed by others. The Arabic word for being informed is derived from إذا أخبرتَ بذمتي . . . لإخبار The poet was supposed to say . . . he compared الإخبار to الإخبار and then used a derivative of the latter i.e. أتتْ
- استعارة مكنية .2

He compare مذمة (criticism) to a human being but sufficed with only mentioning منمة and an attribute of the human being i.e. الإتيان other words, he mentioned the مشبه but not the مشبه به

Pg. 9

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مخافة فقرٍ فالذي فعل الفقرُ	من ينفق الساعات في جمع ماله	
The one who spends hours amassing wealth because he fears poverty, Then what he is doing is poverty		
و يشيب ناصية الصبي و يهرم	الهمّ يخترم الجسيم نحافة	
Worry makes a fat man thin It makes a lad hoary and old		
و أخو الجهالة في الشقاوة ينعم	ذو العقل يشقي في النعيم بعقله	
Due to intelligence the intellig	ient man suffers in his bounty	

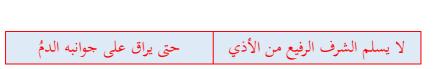
Yet the ignorant man enjoys his hardship

An intelligent person ponders over the consequences of events and is cognisant of changing circumstances. Thus, he worries despite his comfort. On the contrary, an unintelligent person does not ponder over changing circumstances and the future. Hence, he has no worries and enjoys himself even in hardship.



The tear of your enemy should not deceive you Pity your youth from a merciful enemy

Pg. 10



Lofty status is not safe from harm Until blood is spilt on his sides

A man of status is always envied and will always have enemies until he eventually sheds the blood of his enemies and those who hate him. After killing some of them, the rest will fear him and acknowledge his status.

من البلية عذل من لا يرعوى عن غيّه و خطاب من لا يفهم

Reprimanding one who does not desist from deviance And speaking to a person who does not understand is a calamity

Some enmity may benefit you Some friendship may be harmful and cause pain

Actions of those begotten by noble parents are noble Actions of those begotten by ignoble parents are ignoble

• The crux of this line is that actions are based on lineage. Noble actions are the result of noble lineage while ignoble actions are the result of ignoble lineage.

Pg, 11

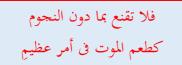
- 0 0 بأرض مسافر كره الغماما
 - is the plural of أعجم which means non-Arab. However, it is used in the meaning of لنام (wretched, ignoble people) because that is how Arabs regarded the non-Arabs.
 - The word أعجم is derived from العجم meaning inability to speak. Thus: العجماء Animals are called
 - dumber) أعجم من الجبل dumber than a mountain).

و لم نذمم أياديك الجساما

و لم نملل تفقّدك الموالي و لكنّ الغيوث إذا توالت

We are neither tired of your endless concern Nor do we criticise your great favours But when it rains nonstop in the land of the traveller He dislikes the clouds

I am a traveller and I need to continue with my journey, but your kindness and gifts prevent me from doing so. I compare my inability to continue my journey due to your kindness to the traveller's inability to continue his journey due to incessant rain. He gets upset when he sees more clouds because the clouds signal further delay. Similarly, I am not tired of your gifts. I appreciate them, except that they cause further delay in my journey.



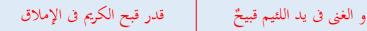
إذا غامرت فی شرف مروم	
فطعم الموت في أمر حقيرٍ	

When you pursue desired honour Then don't suffice with less than the stars The taste of death in a trivial cause is The same as its taste in a significant cause

Message: Do not hesitate in pursuing lofty ambitions because ultimately we all have to die.



How many people criticise speech that is sound (Because) their understanding is not sound



Wealth in the hand of a wretched man is evil Like the evil of a generous man in poverty

 Wealth in the hands of a wretched man is evil because of his failure to discharge its rights. Furthermore, it often leads to pride and arrogance. On the other hand, poverty or insufficient resources is bad for a generous man. Seeing the destitute, widows and orphans, he yearns to help them but lack of resources prevents him from doing so.

Pq. 13

- Mutanabbi should was supposed to say قدر قبح الإملاق في الكرم (like the evil of poverty for a generous man). However, he did not do so on the basis of poetic necessity and in order to maintain the قافية
- The word حرف الجر i.e. there is a حذف الخافض due منصوب before it that is حرف الجد

و الدرّ درّ برغم من جهلة

و يظهر الجهل بي و أعرفه

Unawareness of me is apparent and I know it But the pearl is a pearl despite those who don't know it

Their unawareness of who I am does not diminish my status and accomplishments.

قد هذّبت فهمَه الفقاهةُ لي و هذبت شعري الفصاحة له لا يحمد السيف كلّ من حملة فصرتُ كالسيف حامدا يدَهُ

Intelligence enabled him to understand me Eloquence made my poetry easy for him to understand I am like the sword that praises his hand The sword does not praise everyone who carries it

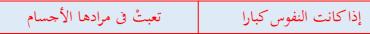
There are two reasons why he understands my poetry; he is intelligent and I am eloquent. By praising his understanding and appreciation of my poetry, I am like the sword that praises his hand. The sword does not praise every hand that carries it. Despite the sharpness of the sword, it is useless in the hands of a coward or unskilled fighter. Anyway, just as the sword does not praise any and every hand that carries it, I do not praise anybody and everybody. In short, I am not praising him for nothing.

و يصطحب الإنسان من لا يلائمه و قد يتزيا بالهوى غيرُ أهلهِ

Sometimes people who don't love wear the garments of love And (sometimes) man is accompanied by people who do not suit him

- The word تفعّل is on the scale of تريا which portrays تكلّف (). Thus, the implication of يتزيا باهوى is that such people are at great pains to demonstrate their love yet they:
 - a. Make a mess of it (as explained in the commentary of Barquqi)
 - b. Do not actually love you

There is استعارة مكنية in the first half. الثوب (love) is compared to الثوب (a garment). However, the poet only mentioned الحوى and sufficed with mentioning a quality of الثوب



When souls are great Their bodies get tired trying to attain their goals

Great people tire themselves in order to achieve the goals.

و كثير من البليغ السلامُ	فكثير من الشجاع التوقي
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Defending himself from you is too much for the brave Greeting you is too much for the eloquent

Pg. 15

Nobody hurts you on the battlefield. The most that they can do is save themselves from you. Even off the battlefield you have so much of awe that the barely manage greeting you.

فإن تفق الأنام و أنت منهم فإنَّ المسك بعض دم الغزال

If you excel the creation whereas you are one of them Then certainly musk is also part of the gazelle's blood

Excelling the rest of the people although you are one of them is not farfetched. It may be likened to the excellence of musk over the rest of the blood of the gazelle. Musk is found in the gazelle and it is nothing more than blood.

أو يبصر الخيل لا يستكرم الرمكا من يعرف الشمس لا ينكر مطالعها

One who knows the sun does not deny how high it rises One who sees the horses does not think much of work horses

Just as those who know the sun do not dispute how high it rises and just those who have knowledge of horses never overrate certain types of horses, those who know you will never dispute your excellence.

و لكنّ صدم الشرّ بالشرّ أحزمُ و ما ذاك بخلا بالنفوس على القنا

That's not because we do not want to share our lives with the spears But rather repelling evil with evil is prudence

Explaining the reason for wear steel armour before going to the battlefield, he explains that it is not due to fear of death. Instead, it is

Pg. 16

because prudence demands that evil should be repelled with evil. Going to battle unprepared and ill-equipped is stupid.

	أنف العزيز بقطع العزّ يجتدع	ليس الجمال لوجه صحّ مارنه
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The beauty of a face does not depend on a straight nose An honoured man's nose is cut by cutting his honour

- Not every face with a straight nose is good looking. When a man's honour is 'cut', he is disgraced and when he is disgraced, he is like a man with a disfigured (crooked) nose.
- The reason for mentioning the nose and not any other part of the body is that the Arabs have a tendency to refer to the nose when referencing disgrace. The translation of أرغم الله أنفه is 'may Allah cover his nose in dust'. However, it is used in the meaning of 'may Allah disgrace him'.

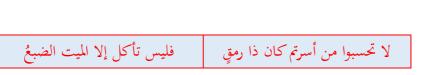
دواء کل کریم أو هي الوجعُ و المشرفيّة – لا زالت مشرّفة

And the sword – May it always shine – is the cure or ailment of every nobleman

دواء is the مبتدأ and its المشرفية •

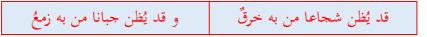
- The words جملة معترضة constitute a جملة معترضة for the sake of دعاء
- The sword is the nobleman's cure because through it he achieves his ambitions and becomes a king.
- However, he may be killed by the sword before attaining his ambitions. If this happens, the sword is not his 'cure' but his 'ailment'.

Pg, 17



Don't think that your prisoners had any life in them Hyenas only eat carrion

Due to fear and cowardice your prisoners are actually dead. By attacking and capturing these 'dead' people rather than living people (brave, fearless fighters) you are like hyenas. Hyenas only eat dead animals (carrion).



Sometimes a weak person is regarded as brave And sometimes a person who is trembling with anger is regarded a coward

Weapons are carried by all the people But not all clawed animals are lions

- Just as not every clawed animal is a ferocious lion, not every person who carries a weapon is brave.
- حبر bis its السبّع and مبتدأ is its مبتدأ is a كلّ ذوات المحلب
 the مبتدأ and its السم and its ليس fo حبر be المي عبد الشأن (ليس fo المي عبد)

Pg. 18



وحيد من الخلان في كل بلدة

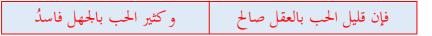
Without friends in every city When the objective is great, helpers are few

is the مبتدأ of a مبتدأ that is معذوف The poet meant . . .) أنا وحيد (*I am without* second that is وحيد *friends* . . .)

That's the decree of time among the people The difficulties of some people benefit others

Everybody sees the ways of bravery and generosity But the nafs is guided by its nature

Despite knowing what is bravery and generosity, many people are cowards and stingy because of their nature.



A little of love with intelligence is good Plenty of love with ignorance is bad

Pg. 19



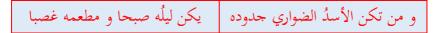
Message: The conditions of life gradually change and are never permanent. Happiness is replaced with grief and wealth is lost. Often times the passage of time reveals to man his misjudgement of people

Pg, 20

and events. Conveying the same meaning another poet, Abu Nawaas, said:

إذا امتحن الدنيا لبيب تكشَّفتْ له عن عدوٍّ في ثياب صديق

When an intelligent man examines the dunya it shows him an enemy in the garb of a friend



When ferocious lions are a man's ancestors His night is day and his food is booty

If a man's ancestors were brave and fearless like lions, he too will live like a lion, brave and fearless. The darkness of the night will not deter him from combating his enemies and he will live off the booty he takes from them. Some commentators note that the words يكن ليله صبح are based on the following statement of another poet:

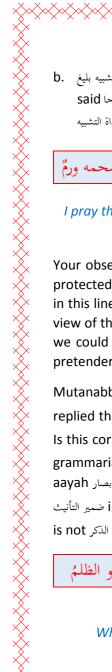
فبادر الليل و لذذّاته فإنما الليل نحار اللبيب

Hasten to (do not overlook) the night and its pleasures The night is the day of the intelligent

تشبيه In the above line of Mutanabbi there are two types of

 a. تشبيه مقلوب – He used the مشبّه in the place of the مشبّه and vice versa. What this means is that he was supposed to say, 'when a man's ancestors were ferocious lions . . .' However, to create مبالغة he said, 'when the ferocious lions were a man's ancestors'. The مبالغة here is to portray his ancestors as braver than the lions.

Pg, 21



b. يكن ليله كصبح Instead of saying – تشبيه بليغ – Instead of saying – تشبيه بليغ (his night is like the day), he said يكن ليله صبحا (his night is the day). In other words, he omitted the تشبيه بليغ Hence, this is وحه الشبه عليه



I pray that your (generally) sound observations are protected from judging the swelling of a fat man to be fat

Your observations are generally sound. However, I pray that you be protected from misjudging a swollen body as well-built. The message in this line is actually: Do not misjudge a fake poet as a poet! Well, in view of the preceding lines, that is what Mutanabbi meant. However, we could attach a much broader meaning to it: Do not misjudge a pretender!

Mutanabbi was asked about the مرجع of the أعيذها in ضمير التأنيث in مرجع and he replied that it is نظرات This means that the ضمير was used before its نظرات Is this correct? May the ضمير was used before its مرجع The majority of grammarians disallow it. However, Akhfash, permitted it citing the aayah مرجع as substantiation. He claimed that the مرجع of the ضمير التأنيث in ضمير الأبصار in فإنحا in ضمير التأنيث but rather grammarians disagree. They say that this is not إضمار على شريطة التفسير but rather الأسمار على شريطة التفسير المنا وضمار قبل الذكر but rather والمحار على شريطة التفسير التأليث

و ما انتفاع أخي الدنيا بناظره إذا استوت عنده الأنوار و الظلمُ

How will a man in the dunya benefit from his eyes When he sees no difference between light and darkness

Pg, 22

This is the sequel of the previous line. Mutanabbi meant: You must differentiate between me and the fake poets just as you would differentiate between light and darkness.

> When you see the teeth of the lion showing Don't think that the lion is smiling

When the lion shows his teeth, nobody thinks that he is smiling. Likewise, when I smile at the fool, he should not be bluffed and think that I am happy with him.

فما لجُرح إذا أرضاكم ألمُ

فلا تظنَّنَّ أن الليث يبت

إن كان سرّكم ما قال حاسدنا

إذا رأيت نيوب الليث بارزة

If you are pleased by what those who are jealous of us say Then (remember that) there is no pain in a wound that pleases you

I am happy so long as you are happy. Hence, if hearing people who are jealous of me criticise me makes you happy, then I am also happy. Of course, such criticism is like a wound, but it is like a painless wound.

إن المعارف في أهل النهي ذممً و بيننا لو رعيتم ذاك معرفة

There is acquaintance between us if you consider Surely acquaintance is a responsibility among men of intelligence

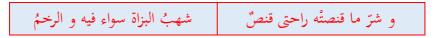
- بینا معرفة is a معرفة and its معرفة So the actual sentence is بینا (we know each other)
- (جملة معترضة) اعتراض is لو رعيتم ذلك •

Pg. 23

- The مشار إليه of the actual sentence i.e. لو رأيت أن بيننا is the مضمون of the actual sentence i.e. لو رأيت أن بيننا
 (if you consider that we know each other)
- The meaning of the second half is that intelligent people are especially considerate towards those whom they know. They treat acquaintance as a pledge and a responsibility which must not be neglected.
- In short, the poet is telling Saif-ud-Dawlah that even if you do not love me, you should consider that we know each other and intelligent people do not turn a blind eye at those whom they know.

شر البلاد مكانٌ لا صديق به العزمو شرّ ما يكسب الإنسان ما

The worst of places is one in which you have no friend And the worst thing man earns is what makes him blameworthy



The worst thing my hand caught is a prey That is shared by grey falcons and vultures

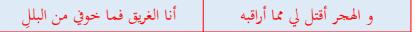
- Falcons are regarded as majestic birds whereas vultures are regarded as despicable birds.
- Mutanabbi was upset with Saif-ud-Dawlah for treating him no different that certain poets who he regarded as inferior than himself. It is as if he was saying: How could you treat me the same as so-and-so? How could you give me the same as what you gave him? You should have given me more!

Pg. 24

و ما صبابة مشتاق على أملٍ

The yearning of one who desires and hopes to meet Is unlike the yearning of one who desires with no hope

There is a مضاف محذوف The كمشتاق بلا أمل in مضاف محذوف There is a
 حسبابة مشتاقي Therefore, the text should be understood as



Leaving her kills me more than what I anticipate I am drowning, so why should I fear getting wet

• ما أراقبه refers to the wrath of her family

- If her family lay their hands on me, they will kill me. But that does not matter because separation from her is killing me even more. Does a drowning person fear getting wet?
- Isn't this تشبيه التمثيل Pe is comparing the صورة of him not fearing being killed by her family because he is already dying from the pains of separation from her to the صورة of a drowning man who does not fear getting wet with the rain.
- Isn't this also تشبیه خمنی The تشبیه was expressed without useage of any أداة of أداة تشبیه for

Pg. 25

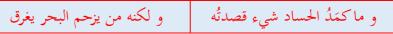


الشمس ما يغنيك عن زحل	طلعة	فى
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خذ ما تراه و دغ شيئا سمعت بهِ

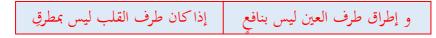
Take what you see and omit what you hear In the rising of the sun there is no need for Saturn

Comparing the person being praised to the sun and his ancestors to Saturn, the poet is telling us to praise the man for his qualities rather than the qualities of his ancestors. You can see the man's qualities but you can only hear of his ancestors' qualities, you cannot see them. Why look for Saturn when you have the sun?



The grief of those who envy me is not something I intended But the one who jostles with the sea will drown

I do not bother of those who envy me. Hence, I did not aim to make them grief. However, the reason for their grief is that they tried to compete with me and they failed. Remember that if you jostle with the sea, you will drown.



Lowering the gaze is of no benefit When the gaze of the heart is not lowered

This is a message to the pranksters that he's not looking at them does not mean that he is unaware of them. He does not look at them with his eyes, but he looks at them with his heart (i.e. he is aware of their behaviour).

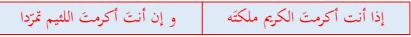
Pg. 26

و ما قتل الأحرار كالعفو عنهم و من لك بالحرّ الذي يحفظ اليدا

Nothing kills free people like forgiveness But who can guarantee you a free man who guards favour?

- نافية preceding it is ما and the ما فعل ماضي is قتل The word ما
- منصوب and therefore قتل of مفعول is the الأحرار •

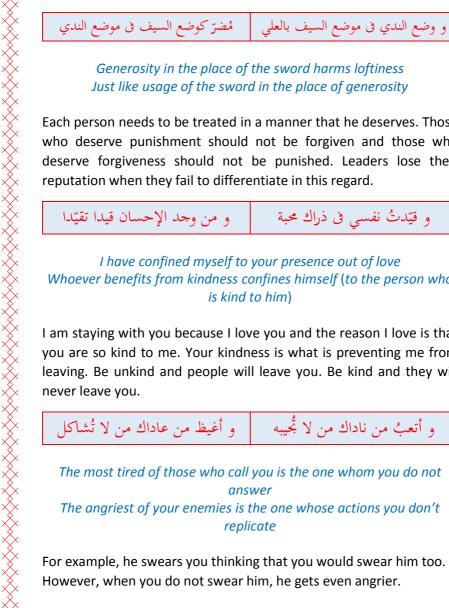
- قتل of فاعل and it is the مثل in the meaning of اسم is an كالعفو in كاف The
- The words الأحراار and الحرام have been used in the meaning of الكريم and الكرم
 (decent, honourable people).
- The meaning of the first half is that by forgiving a decent person you 'kill' him i.e. you subdue him.
- The gist of the second half is that most people are not كرام and that's why they so often forget the favours that were done to them.



When you honour a decent person, you become his owner But when you honour an indecent person, he becomes arrogant (it goes to his head)

- This is merely emphasis of the previous line.
- Becoming his owner means he is subdued to you.

Pg. 27



Each person needs to be treated in a manner that he deserves. Those who deserve punishment should not be forgiven and those who deserve forgiveness should not be punished. Leaders lose their reputation when they fail to differentiate in this regard.

و من وجد الإحسان قيدا تقيّدا و قيّدتُ نفسي في ذراك محبة

I have confined myself to your presence out of love Whoever benefits from kindness confines himself (to the person who is kind to him)

I am staying with you because I love you and the reason I love is that you are so kind to me. Your kindness is what is preventing me from leaving. Be unkind and people will leave you. Be kind and they will never leave you.

و أغيظ من عاداك من لا تُشاكل و أتعبُ من ناداك من لا تجيبه

The most tired of those who call you is the one whom you do not answer The angriest of your enemies is the one whose actions you don't

replicate

For example, he swears you thinking that you would swear him too. However, when you do not swear him, he gets even angrier.

Pg, 28



و کم ذنبٍ مولّدہ دلالٌ

So many errors are caused by being spoilt So often estrangement is caused by closeness

His parent's spoiled him and that is why he is taking advantage of them. This, however, does not apply to the parent-child relationship only. A young inexperienced teacher may make the same mistake. He was too lenient with the learners and that is why they are now taking advantage of him. Another example could be that of a king who gave one of his ministers too much of liberty to do as he desired. Eventually the minister does something which he thinks will be overlooked by the king whereas it actually annoys or even angers him.

فحل بغير جارمه العذاب

و جرم جرّہ سفھاء قوم

Many crimes are committed by fools But the punishment lands on people other than the perpetrators

 The word خذوف in the beginning. Therefore understand the text as . . . و رُبّ جرم

Pg. 29

و تأتى على قدر الكرام المكارم على قدر العزم تأتي العزائم و تكبر في عين الصغير صغارُها و تصغر في عين العظيم عظامها Ambitions materialise according to determination

Ambitions materialise according to determination Noble achievements materialise according to noble mindedness Small achievements appear big in the eyes of small people Great achievements appear big in the eyes of great people

- The second line is an example of two aspects in Arabic rhetoric, مطابقة and مطابقة There is طباق
 - تصغر and تكبر a.

- العظيم and الصغير .
- عظامها and صغارها ..
- There is مطابقة between the components of the two halves.

إذا لم يكن في طبعه و الخلائق و ما الحسن في وجه الفتي شرفا له

A handsome face is not the reason for a man's honour When there's no beauty in his nature and demeanour

الحسن is مرجع and its ضمير هو is لم يكن of اسم The •

و ما بلد الإنسان غير الموافقِ و ما أهله الأدنون غير الأصادقِ

A man's town is not the town that does not agree with him His close family are not ones who are not his friends

Pq. 30

Commentators of the Diwan explain that the purpose of this line is to encourage people to travel. Thus, Mutanabbi says that every town that agrees with you is your town and whoever is your friend is your family.

كما يوجع الحرمان من كفّ رازقٍ يوجع الحرمان من كفّ حارم

Deprivation does not hurt the palm of a person who does not have As it hurts the palm of a person who has

The pleasure of live is more enjoyable and sweeter to the soul than being bored of

When an old man says uff, he's not tired of life He's tired of his weakness

The tools of life are health and youth When they leave a man, he (also) leaves

يا فيا ليت جودها كان بخلا	
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أبدا تستردّ ما تحب الدن

The dunya always takes back what she gives If only her generosity were miserliness

Pq, 31

- There is استعارة in this quote. The dunya is compared to a woman but the latter is not mentioned. Instead, two actions of a woman (مقب and استعارة مكنية) are mentioned. This is
- بُخلا and جودها between طباق There is also



She is loved despite her treachery

She neither guards past relationship nor does she allow such relations to be completed

Many matters may reach you about which you may not praise the doer but you will praise the action

You boasted in the garments of praise Not being praised is the ultimate poverty

Nothing stops me other than the talk of tale carriers Their talks are a means for spreading lies

The reason I do not visit you is that I fear being slandered by people who carry tales. There tales spread a lot of lies.

Pg. 32

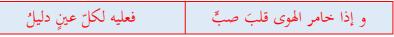




و من ركب الثور بعد الجوادِ

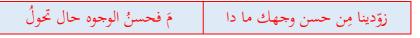
The one who rides an ox after riding a horse Will not like its hoofs and dewlap

- الغبب is a fold of loose skin that hangs from the throat of cattle and other animals. In English it is called dewlap.
- The preceding lines in the Diwan indicate that in this line Mutanabbi is praising Saif-ud-Dawlah. Comparing Saif-ud-Dawlah to a horse and other kings to cattle, he explains that after staying with Saf-ud-Dawlah, he will never enjoy the company of any other king.

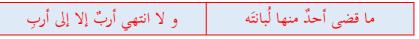


When love penetrates the heart of a lover Each of his eyes prove his love

• His eyes show the love that he hides in his heart. Look at his eyes and you'll realise that he is in love.



Allow us to enjoy the beauty of your face for as long as it remains Because facial beauty is a condition that changes



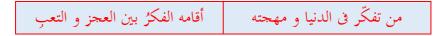
Nobody ever fulfils his need for the dunya No need ends except to another

Pg. 33

Message: Man's worldly needs never come to an end. In this regard, the pre-Islamic poet, Umayyah bin Abi-Salt, said:

تموت مع المرء حاجاته و تبقى له حاجة ما بقي

Man's needs die with him But as long as he's alive, he always has a need



The one who ponders over the dunya and its soul, Pondering will leave him between helpless and tired

By pondering over the dunya and the fact that he will inevitably also leave the dunya, he feels sad and fearful. However, when he realises that this is ordained by Allah and he cannot escape it, he finds himself between two conditions; helpless and tired.

Seeing death as your cure is sufficient illness It is sufficient for death to be your hopes

- The مفعول of مفعول is the (ضمير أنت) كاف and the زائدة is بك in باء The باء The رائدة is بائد is the ناعل of ناعل is the word كفى بالله in الله is the word كفى بالله in (كفى
- كفي of فاعل is the أن ترى الموت شافيا •

• He means: If you think that your solution is in dying, then you must be very ill.

Pq. 34



فما الحداثة مِن حلمٍ بمانعةٍ

Young age does not prevent a man from being tolerant Tolerance is found in youth and the aged

When the actions of a man are evil, his thoughts are evil And he believes his usual suspicions He becomes hostile to his friends due to what his enemies say And he enters a dark night of doubt

The fastest of your actions to change is To force yourself to do something contrary to your nature

The most tired of Allah's creation is the person with great ambition But his strength is insufficient for attaining his desires

- is in the meaning of همة is in the meaning of هم
- قصر of فاعل is the وجده
- Some commentators observe that in this line Mutanabbi is talking of himself. Thus, he is saying that he is the most tired of Allah's

Pq. 35

creation because he has great ambitions but he lacks the monetary ability to pursue them.

و مركوبه رجلاه و الثوب جلدُهُ و في الناس من يرضي بميسور عيشه

Among the people is he who is happy with whatever he has in life Yet his conveyance is his feet and his clothing is his skin

- Mutanabbi is criticising such people for lack of courage and ambition. They are content with their inferior living standard, even though they have no conveyance and insufficient cloths.
- کنایة is مرکوبه رجلاه for not having a means of transport.
- كناية is كناية for not having sufficient cloths.

و أعرفها في فعله و التكلُّم أصادِق نفس المرء من قبل جسمه

I befriend a man's soul before his body I recognise his soul from his actions and speech

I tolerate my friend knowing that When I repay his insolence with tolerance, he regrets

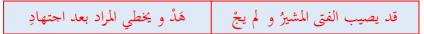
جزيتُ بجود التارك المبته و إن بذل الإنسان لي جود عابه

If a man shows me the generosity of a frown I repay him with the generosity of one who refrains with a smile

Pg. 36



Not every intender of good does it And not every doer of good completes it



Sometimes a man gives sound counsel without exertion But misses the point after exertion

In the Diwan the words k the used instead of k the meaning is the same.

When tolerance is not in a man's nature Being born earlier will not make him tolerant

Message: Because tolerance does not come with age, the opinion of the aged is not necessarily better than the opinion of a young man.



When death is unavoidable Being a coward is helpless

Pq. 37

جزيتُ على ابتسامٍ بابتسامِ	
لعلمي أنه بعض الأنام	

فلا يذر المطيّ بلا سنام

لما صار ودّ الناس خبّا و صرتُ أشكّ فيمَن أصطفيه

و من يجد الطريق إلى المعالى

When love of the people became deceptive I repaid a smile with a smile And I doubted the person I chose Because I know that he is one of the people

I am amazed at the person who finds the way to loftiness Yet does not leave his conveyance without a hump

- The preceding line in the Diwan is . . . عجبتُ لِمن له
- مَن له on معطوف is مَن يجدُ الطريق •
- I am astonished at the man who finds the way to loftiness but does not undertake the journey i.e. he wastes the opportunity.

و لم أرَفي عيوب الناس شيئا كنقص القادرين على التمام

Among the people's faults I have not seen anything Like incompletion on behalf of people who are able to complete

صديقٌ و لا يفضي إليه شرابُ و للسرّ منّى موضع لا يناله

Secrets have such a place in me which no friend can find And to which alcohol cannot penetrate

Pg. 38

I never share my secrets with any of my friends. I never expose any of my secrets, not even in the state of intoxication.

و خير جليس في الزمان كتاب أعزّ مكانٍ في الدني س

The noblest place in the world is the saddle of a horse And throughout time the best person to sit with is a book

- دنيا is the plural of دنیَ
- is a fast horse سابح

- The horse's saddle is the noblest place because seated on his saddle he is able to meet kings, fight his enemies, flee from injustice, protect himself from many forms of evil and attain a lot of good.
- The book is the best person to sit with because sitting with a book requires no formalities and you do not have to hide any of your secrets from it. There is no fear of being harmed by a book.



O lion in whose body is the soul of a lion How many lions there are whose soul are dogs!

Praising the courage of Saif-ud-Dawlah he says that he has the courage and bravery of a lion. Other kings punish their opposition like lions (they afflict their opposition with severe punishment) but lack courage and bravery. Due to their lack of courage and bravery they are like dogs. Thus, Mutanabbi describes them as dog-hearted lions.

Pq. 39

و كلّ الذي فوق التراب ترابُ

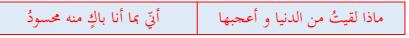
إذا نلتُ منك الودّ فالمال هيَّنُّ

When I've gained your love, then wealth is insignificant Everything above the sand is sand

قبحا لوجهك يا زمان فإنه وجهٌ له من كلّ قبحٍ برقُعُ

May Allah spoil your face, O Time! It is a face that is veiled with every evil

- قبّح الله وجهَك .i.e محذوف that is فعل of a مفعول مطلق is the قبحا 🔹
- There are so many evils in the face of time that it is as though time veiled her face with these evils.



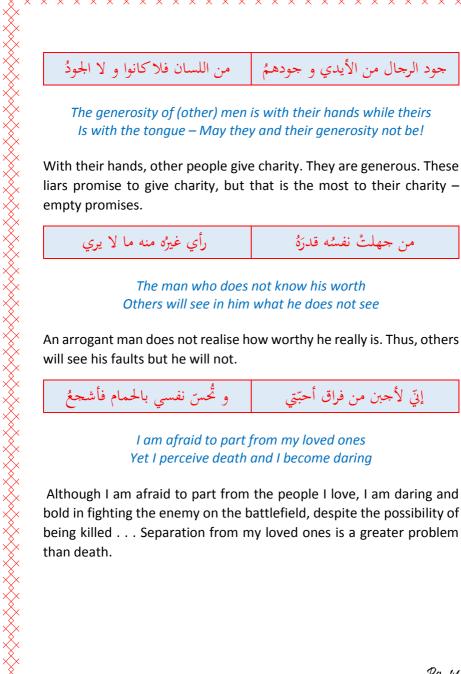
What have I experienced in the dunya! And most astonishingly I cry for the reasons for which I am envied

- ماذا لقيت is not intended. Instead, it حقيقة الاستفهام but obviously استفهام is ماذا لقيت is a ماذا لقيت (complaint) and its purpose is تعظيم (to highlight the extent of his difficulties).
- This version has أعجبها (the most astonishing aspect of the dunya).
 A second version has أعجبها (the most astonishing of my difficulties)
- In this line Mutanabbi is conveying the same meaning as the adage

رُبّ مغبوطٍ بدواء هو داؤه

Often a man is envied for a cure which is his ailment

Pg, 40

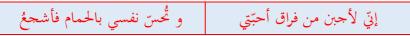


The man who does not know his worth Others will see in him what he does not see

جود الرجال من الأيدي و جودهمُ

من جهلتْ نفسُه قدرَهُ

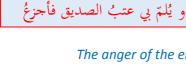
An arrogant man does not realise how worthy he really is. Thus, others will see his faults but he will not.



I am afraid to part from my loved ones Yet I perceive death and I become daring

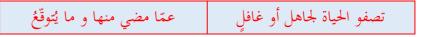
Although I am afraid to part from the people I love, I am daring and bold in fighting the enemy on the battlefield, despite the possibility of being killed . . . Separation from my loved ones is a greater problem than death.

Pg. 41



و يزيدني غضبُ الأعادي قسوة و يُلمّ ب

The anger of the enemies makes me harsher But the reprimand of a friend touches me and I fret



For an ignorant or negligent man life is clean From what past and what is awaited

In life there are two people who never have any worries and regrets; an ignorant man and an inattentive man who neither bothers of taking heed from past events nor bothers of future consequences, in particular situations that he may not be able to bear. On the contrary, an intelligent person ponders over the dunya, ponders over past events and thinks of the future, will he manage or not. Thus, life is never 'clean' for him.

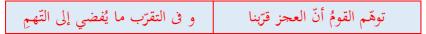
و يسومها طلب المحال فتطم و لِمَنْ يُغالط في الحقائق نفسه ما قومُه ما يومُه ما المص أين الذي الهرمانِ من بنيانه

To the one who deceives his nafs regarding the truth And burdens it with seeking the impossible thus, it becomes greedy Where is the one who built the pyramids? Where's his people, When did he perish and how did he die?

يغالط ف الحقائق نفسه means he promises his nafs that she's going to live forever and that there is nothing for her to fear.

Pg. 42

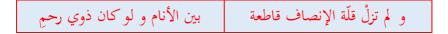
- طلب المحال refers to a life of very long (almost eternal) life in which there is no difficulty and hardship.
- ساهرمان means the two pyramids and this refers to the big and the middle pyramids.
- الذى الهرمان من بنيانه (the one/king whose buildings include the two pyramids). This is كناية (allusion) to might and strength.
- The crux of this is that everybody has to die.



People think that (my) inability made us close And in being close there is cause for suspicion

• القوم are the people he praises in his poetry

- Gist of the first half: The people I praise think that I stay close to them due to my inability to earn a livelihood.
- Gist of the second half: They cannot be blamed for such suspicion. Keeping close to people does cause them to be suspicious. Thus, they think that *he just wants my assistance*.



Unfairness always severs ties between people even if they be relatives

Explaining the reason for severing ties with the people he mentioned in the previous line, he says that if unfairness results in severing of ties with family members, why should I not sever ties with these people who are not even related to me?

Pg. 43



هوّنْ على بصري ما شقّ منظرُهُ

Ease for my eyes that which is difficult for it to see Because wakefulness of the eye is like a dream

- شق of فاعل because it is the مرفوع is منظره
- ما صعبتْ رؤيتُه is ما شَقّ منظرُه The meaning of
- (noble actions) المكارم refers to ما شَقّ منظرُه
- Difficulty in seeing noble actions is كناية for paucity.
- I so seldom see people engaging in noble actions that when do, it is as if I am seeing a dream.
- So the meaning of the second half is that what you see while awake is so similar to a dream.

شكوي الجريح إلى العقبان و الرخم و لا تشَكَّ إلى خلق فتشمتَهُ

Do not complain to a person thereby making him happy Like the complaint of a wounded person to the eagles and vultures

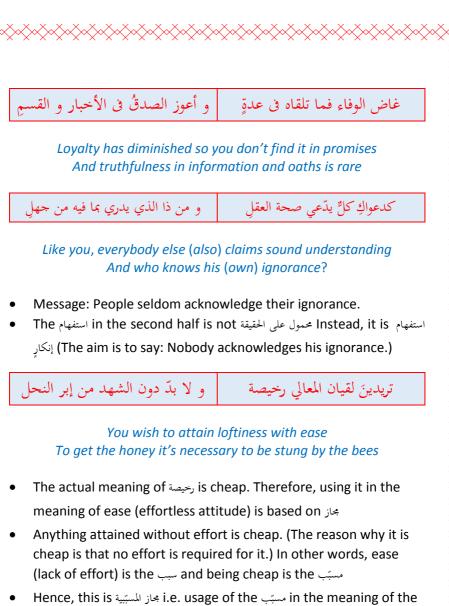
Do not complain to somebody who will rejoice at your difficulty. If you do so, you will be like a wounded person who complains to wild birds that await his death so that they may eat his flesh.

و لا يغرّك منه ثغرُ مبتس و كن على حذر للناس تستره

Be cautious of people but conceal your caution Don't be deceived by the opening of the smiling person's mouth

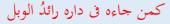
Message: Do not be deceived by people's smiles.

Pg, 44



(إطلاق المسبب على السبب) سبب

Pg. 45



و ليس الذي يتّبّع الوبل رائدا

The one who seeks the rain as a scout is not Like the one to whom the scout of rain comes

- ستبّع was actually إدغام but إدغام took place between the first and second تاء
- Junce means scout, a person who is sent to search for suitable pasture and places where the rain falls and collects.
- The words رائد الوبل were used on the basis of مشاكلة (similarity with the words الوبل رائدا)
- The apparent meaning is that those people who have to send a scout to look for rain are less fortunate than those who do not have to do so because the rain 'comes to them'. However, the poet's aim is that 'you are fortunate that he came to you'. Some commentators say that he meant: You are like the clouds that rain on us thus, saving us the need to travel in search of pastures.



Being feminine does not harm the sun Being male is no pride for the moon

This line is taken from Mutanabbi's eulogy of Saif-ud-Dawlah's mother. In the preceding line he said she had better qualities than any man. Hence, if other women were like her, they would excel the men. Having said that, he reminds his audience that it is not impossible for a woman to excel men. After all, the sun is brighter than the moon yet

Pg. 46

the sun is feminine and the moon is masculine. Alluding to the same meaning, another poet said:

و الشمس ليس بضائر تأنيثها و تزيد بالنور المنير على القمر The sun is not harmed by being feminine Instead, it shines even more than the moon

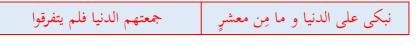
و لكن لا سبيل إلى الوصال

و مَن لمْ يعشقْ الدنيا قديما

Who never loved the dunya in the past? But (unending) union is impossible

- The poet actually means: There استفهام in the first half is for إنكار The poet actually means: There is nobody who never loved the dunya.
- There is a مضاف مخلوف before the word الوصال i.e. دوام That is why the word unending was added to the translation.
- وصال is the union of lovers.

- The meaning of this line is that just as the lover never enjoys perpetual union with his beloved, the lover of the dunya too will never stay in the dunya forever. Just as the lover eventually parts from his beloved, one day the lover of the dunya will also have to part from her.
- In terms of Arabic rhetoric, is this not عثيل (comparison of one صورة or حال to another)?



We cry for the dunya yet there are no people whom The dunya gathered and they did not disperse

Pg, 47

و لا الأمن إلا ما رآه الفتي أمنا

و ما الخوف إلا ما تخوّفه الفتي

Fear is only what man fears Safety is only what man thinks is safe

و عناهم مِن شأنه ما عنانا صحب الناسُ قبلنا ذا الزمانا ه و إن سرّ بعضَهم أحيانا و تولّوا بغصّةٍ كلّهم من ه و لكن تُكدّر الإحسانا رُبما تُحسن الصنيع ليالي

People before us accompanied time And the issues of time that affect us affected them as well All of them left it with a lump in their throats Even if it sometimes pleased some of them At times its nights do good But then it spoils its kindness

- His message in the first two lines is that throughout time people suffered various difficulties.
- In the second line he tells us that hardly anybody left the world having attained all his goals.
- In the third line he tells us that sometimes, people are treated well, but not for too long. Happiness and comfort are soon followed by sadness and discomfort. Another poet said:

الدهر آخِدُ ما أعطى مكدَّرُ ما أصفى و مُفسدُ ما أهدى له بيدِ Time takes what it gives, dirties what is clean and spoils the gifts it gives

There are four cases of استعارة in these lines.

Pg. 48

- الزمان (time) is compared to a human being, but only الزمان and a الزمان (quality) of time are mentioned. The لازمة of time mentioned is ستعارة مكنية This is محتية
- In the third line the nights are compared to a human being, also by way of استعارة مكنية
- There is استعارة تبعية in the poet's usage of the word تُحدر He used the word تُعسِد in the meaning of تُعدر Basically, he compared
 الإفساد to الإفساد and then used a derivative of the latter.
- 4. There is also أتكتر الإحسانا in the words أتكتر الإحسانا The poet compared kindness to clean water but only mentioned kindness (the مشبه and a لازمة of water (the مشبه به). The كدورة that he alluded to is كدورة (to be muddy).



Even if I have sinned every sin The one who comes having repented deletes all sin

The text of Ibn 'Abbad has the words كلّ الذنب (all sins) but the Diwan has the words كلّ الحو (total deletion). Either way, this line is based on the hadith التائب من الذنب كمّن لا ذنبَ له (*The one who repents for his sin is like the one who has no sin*).

> Abu Hudhaifa Muhammad Karolia 04 Sha'baan 1441 29 March 2020 Lenasia

Pg, 49