The Tragedy of Alhallaj

By Salah Abdul Sabur

Rendered into English by

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INTRODUCTION

When considering Arabic dramatic output since its early days towards the end of the 1840s, the student of this genre is greatly bewildered. This bewilderment is the direct result of the absence of ‘tragedy’ in its Aristotelian sense as ‘an imitation of an action that is complete, and whole, and of certain magnitude. A serious play in which the chief figures by some peculiarity of character pass through a series of misfortunes leading to the final catastrophe’. The essence of true tragedy is also not devoid of a religious content pertaining to the relationship of the hero to the gods or destiny.

Despite diverse attempts by Arab dramatists, we can scarcely find a genuine ‘tragedy’ before the appearance of works by two Arab dramatists and modern poets: Salah Abd AlSabur and `Abd Al-Rahman al-Sharqawi, who left us Ma’sat alHallaj (The Tragedy of al-Hallaj) and Tha’ru Allah (The Revenge of God) respectively. In this essay, we shall try to evaluate and study Ma’sat alHallaj from a comparative point of view, attempting to trace the foreign influences in this work.

In this respect, it is essential to point out that the late Salalh Abd Al-Sabur was a pioneer of free verse, (al-shi‘r al-hurr), one of the movements of modernization in Arabic poetry. He was influenced by T. S. Eliot who is renowned, inter alia, for his revival of poetic drama in English, which had been dominated by prose plays since the 19th century. Drama began as a poetic expression, and the ancients referred to the play as a ‘poem’; even early Arabic plays were poetical works, as the pioneers tried to imitate European models which they found in the works of Moliere and Racine. These attempts oscillated between verse and prose; but poetic drama never gained momentum prior to the dramatic works of Alhmad Shawqi, the Egyptian poet.
laureate, whose plays are considered a victory for Arabic verse drama, despite the fact that his plays were dominated to a great extent by the lyrical element. After Shawqi and his school no real poetic tragedy was written.

Abd al-Sabur commented on the relationship between drama and poetry: ‘Drama was born in the cradle of poetry, and it will most likely return to poetry despite the domination of a social prosaic element since the end of the 19th century. The poetical flashes that permeate prose drama are now signs of the return of drama to poetry. Precise prose style, as one of the critics has mentioned, is nothing but an attempt to come closer to poetry in its concentration and music.’

The first thing that draws our attention to The Tragedy of al-Hallaj is its title. The use of the word ‘tragedy’ should not pass unnoticed. Abd Al-Sabur did not choose such a title haphazardly or irrationally. Once it is realised that this poet was a diligent student of the art of drama from the Greeks till now, we realise why he insisted on such a title. His choice of ‘tragedy’ is an indication of the importance he attached to this work which has a tragic end. There are a number of precedents such as The Tragical History of Dr. Faustus by Marlowe and Shakespeare’s The Tragedy of Coriolanus. One may venture to suggest that Abd Al-Sabur’s choice of title seems to serve the purpose of oversimplifying both the form and content of the play. As regards subject matter the playwright is dealing not merely with an historical character who suffered a great deal, so much as with the quintessence of suffering, violence and tragic death that ended Al-Hallaj’s life. What he tried to convey to us is that the dilemma or rather the tragic life of Al-Hallaj is worth contemplating. His crucifixion on a tree is a human tragedy because of the injustice of the sentence.
Any poet must be influenced to a certain extent by others. He must learn from and imitate others before his own talent and character develop. Mature artists often withhold their first attempts from public view because they are not completely happy with them. Salah Abd Al-Sabur tells us about his experiments and how The Tragedy’ was preceded by other works where he was influenced by Shakespeare. His fear that his works may have seemed copies of other well-known works made him discard them. His confession regarding the influence of Shakespeare on him leads us to investigate that which Eliot exerted on him. Abd Al-Sabur admits that:

`Poetical drama remained for me an ambition for some years until I wrote “The Tragedy of Al-Hallaj”. Before that, I experimented with an unfinished play on the subject of the Algerian war of liberation. I decided to discard this task as I found myself captivated by Shakespeare by creating a Hamlet-like character of an Algerian intellectual torn between justified killing and meditation. This play was lacking some scenes. When I was certain of falling completely under the influence of the Bard, particularly, in the scene in which the hero refused to kill his enemy, while saying his prayers, I gave it up.

`Another idea occurred to me to write a play based on the tale of al-Muhalal b. Rabiah; but I found myself falling for the second time under the influence of Shakespeare. No sooner did I think of its structure than I found myself approaching Julius Caesar. Kulayb is a tyrant king like Caesar. Jassas b. Murrah is the counterpart of Brutus. And as I created out of him a character demanding justice, I had to find somebody to instigate the killing. Thus I created a new Cassius,
while al-Muhalhal became Mark Antony and the war of changing fortunes was the war.

‘I did not go on any further with this experiment until I changed my mind and began to write “The Tragedy”. I tried to escape from the influence of Shakespeare; but I really do not know if I was saved from falling under other wheels.’

It seems to me that Abd al-Sabur’s saving himself from falling under the influence of Shakespeare led him to fall under somebody else’s. He, in something akin to a cautious admission, does not deny this. Abd Al-Sabur fell under the spell of Eliot voluntarily. To him Eliot represented a model that could be followed. Although Eliot was a representative of the generation of misery between the two wars in Europe, these writers and intellectuals had their counterpart in the Arab World in what we might call the post-1948 generation or the generation of defeat. These Arab intellectuals had to turn to other cultures in search of a common factor or a phenomenon open to imitation.

It is perhaps worth mentioning that the question of influence in literature, as in many aspects of life, is something legitimate and indeed essential, for without it numerous literary works would not have appeared. The fact that Salah `Abd al-Sabar was influenced by the works of Eliot is not a matter of coincidence or lack of awareness on the part of the author. When we bear in mind that he was a great admirer of Eliot, we realize why this particular influence appears. As a result of this admiration, Abd Al-Sabur became one of the elite of those studying and specialising in Eliot in the Arab world. He translated his poems, his essays and three of his plays: *Murder in the Cathedral, The Cocktail Party and The Elder Statesman*. As a result of this interest and admiration, the influence of Eliot is apparent in this play in particular, not only in the form, but also in the content.
Beside the apparent influence in the dramatic form chosen by Salah Abd Al-Sabar for this work, the extent to which the main subject of this work is similar to Eliot’s Murder in the Cathedral is quite obvious. Martyrdom is the common factor in these two works. In *Murder in the Cathedral* Becket is martyred as a result of an evil murder; and such is the case in *The Tragedy*. Here the martyrdom is represented in an unjust judgement by a sham trial that ends in the sentencing of Husain b. Mansur al-Hallaj to death by crucifixion. The protagonist in both plays represents a holy man who gives up this temporal life for the hereafter. Both men choose the path of God well aware of the end awaiting them. Hence we realise that these two tragedies stem from a religious source as an essential element of tragedy. The whole idea of martyrdom is based originally on a religious conception. Conflict in the two plays is based on the desire of the heroes to gain the honour of martyrdom on the one hand, and between righteousness and justice as opposed to injustice and tyranny, on the other. Hence politics and religious concepts became mixed in such tragic works as these. To be fair to Salah `Abd al-Sabur it must be pointed out that he never wished to emulate consciously *Murder in the Cathedral* with a view of ultimately creating a copy of Eliot’s tragedy. If we can trace echoes of *Murder in the Cathedral* in the work of Abd al-Sabur, this is the result of influence stemming from his admiration of Eliot’s poetry, and his use of Eliot’s art and manner of versification, thus unconsciously falling under his influence.

There can be no attempt here to compare Becket and Hallaj, because of the complex relationship between the Archbishop of Canterbury and Henry II. We are really dealing with two different situations: Hallaj’s conflict with the authorities is not as evident as is the case in Eliot’s play, particularly regarding the questions of freedom, pride and the quest for martyrdom. The depth of conflict inside Becket, as represented by the Four
Tempters, has no counterpart in the conflict of Hallaj, which has an ostensibly external dimension represented by the interrogation and trial that ends in his indictment for blasphemy and atheism.

The subject of both plays is centred around the conflict between a man of God and the temporal authorities, who fear the danger this man might bring if he were to disagree with them, since he is not considered one of their supporters. Here, physical liquidation becomes the only solution, justified by a legal means of trial and indictment, as in the case of Hallaj, or by a voluntary undertaking on the part of some of the king’s knights to murder the Archbishop in his cathedral, as in the case of Becket. One, because of his preference for religion over the temporal world, met his fate charged with high treason; the other was charged with blasphemy and atheism. Hallaj’s enemies were so malicious that they did not charge him with treason but with atheism, when they knew that he was far from being an atheist, because he was clearly overcome by his love of God.

It is clear that `Abd Al-Sabur intended to imitate Eliot’s play with respect to its form at least.

When the form is considered, the first thing that attracts our attention is that The Tragedy follows the same dramatic structure as that of Murder in the Cathedral. Both plays consist of two parts and a number of scenes. Note too that there are no acts, the usual structure of drama. The first part is concerned with ‘the word’, whereas the second is concerned with ‘death’. Hallaj met his fate because of ‘the word’ as a result of disclosing his secret, the secret of divine love between the sufi and God. In the midst of Hallaj’s ecstasy, a constable manages to persuade him to reveal his secret (64):
Sufi [to the gathering]:
Fellow countryman!
This constable has persuaded
him with cunning to reveal his state.
But have they arrested him for talking about love?
No; but for talking about want.
They arrested him because of you,
Because of the poor, the sick,
A tribute to the army of want.
Hallaj had spoken of sufi love for those assembled around him: (60)
Hallaj: How do we then clear our dark heart,
To receive God’s face, to elucidate his beauties?
We pray . . . recite the Quran . . .
We visit His House, and fast in Ramadan.
Yes, but this is the first step towards God,
Steps made by physical bodies!
The path to my Lord belongs to the heart,
He will not be satisfied with aught save love.
Contemplate! If you fall in love, do you not
Want to be like your beloved?
This is our love for God.
Is not God the light of the universe?
Be a light like the light of God,
So that His beauty will be reflected
in our mirror . . .
To the layman, *sufi* love is absolute blasphemy, but to the *sufis* this indicates a state of ecstasy. In order to justify this state, one of the *sufis* explained to the constable who charged Hallaj with blasphemy and atheism (64):

> Oh no, countryman!

> This is the drunkenness of the *sufis*.

> The heart has overflowed and is in uproar!

> The ecstasy of love has overcome the intention!

> Constable: This is utter nonsense!

> Let us safeguard religion against unbelievers.

The first scene in Part I deals mainly with one question: who killed Hallaj? Knowing the reason is not important, but what is important is who killed him. A farmer, preacher and trader meet a group of poor people who lament the death of Hallaj. Sadness is apparent in their tone because of their belief that they were responsible for killing him with words. Can a word kill? This is what none of the three could understand (11):

Preacher: 0 countrymen!

> [They come forward one step towards him idly]

> Who is this crucified old man?

Leader of chorus: One of the poor.

Preacher: Do you know who killed him?

Chorus: We are the killers.

Preacher: But you are poor like him.

Chorus: This seems so from our appearance.

But the leader of the chorus volunteers to give an explanation. He is in doubt about what has happened. He poses a rhetorical question (11-12):
Leader of chorus: Have we really killed him with words . . .?

We do not know, here is what happened today . . .

Chorus: They made us stand in lines:

Those who were tall with loud voices
Were put in the first line;
Those with soft and weak voices
Were put in the second line.
They gave each of us a golden dinar,
Bright, untouched by hand, before
They said, ‘Cry out, “You unbelieving heretic!”’
We cried out, ‘Heretic . . . unbeliever!’
They said, ‘Cry out, “He should be killed,
his blood be on our shoulders.!”’

It is obvious that those who wanted to see an end to the life of Hallaj were not so stupid as to send him to the gallows without a genuine reason or on some reprehensible charge. Are not blasphemy and atheism alone sufficient to incriminate an apostate? Is it not strong proof when people cry out that Hallaj is an atheist? As a result, he was tried and executed.

To the chorus the word was a mere fabrication of the truth. To the sufis it has another connotation. They feel responsible for his death. So we have different types of killers and they all suffer from the sting of guilt. His companions’ sense of guilt stems from their egoism, from their love for words (13-15):
Farmer: Let us ask this gathering
‘Who are you . . .?’
Sufi chorus: We are the killers.
   We loved him, so we killed him.
Preacher: Today we meet none but the killers.
   Maybe when you killed this crucified old man.
Sufi chorus: We killed him with words.
Farmer: Things have become more obscure!
Sufi chorus: We loved his words
   More than we love him.
   We let him die so that his words may remain.
The first scene ends without obtaining a satisfactory answer to their question.

These people meet three groups, each of which claims responsibility for the killing of Hallaj. The poor who were deceived feel guilty and bear the responsibility for his death. So do his companions, the sufis, and last but not least al-Shibli, Shaykh of the sufis, claims responsibility for Hallaj’s killing.

Oh my God! I cannot look.
My soul and thoughts are wondering
If only I had some of your certainty,
I would be hanged on your right,
But I was spared when I tested my life
And uttered obscure words,
When they threw you into the hands of the judges.
It was I who killed you.
It was I who killed you.
This opening scene is of great dramatic significance.

The terms ‘killing’ and ‘crucifixion’ recur quite frequently in the play. We should be reminded that the former indicates that Hallaj was perhaps killed illegally and the latter gives a definite religious meaning. In this respect religious ideas creep into the tragedy and give it a more profound essence like that of *Murder in the Cathedral*. Both plays share the idea of killing and murder which are synonymous. Both Becket and Hallaj are thought of as martyrs. Both sought martyrdom and finally attained it. Here the echoes of Eliot are audible. `Abd Al-Sabur could not resist the influence of his Anglo-American mentor.

Although the charge of atheism and unbelief in God is one of the levels of the word, the prosecution of this man was caused by his boldness in speaking the truth in a community that strove to conceal it. Knowing the truth is a dangerous thing in some cases and may bring about dangerous reactions, even to the point of inciting the populace against those in power. The authorities in Baghdad felt the danger of the word uttered by Hallaj and wanted to put an end to it. They are suspicious of Hallaj and his utterances. The following passage is from Part I, scene 2, where Ibrahim bin Fatik describes to Hallaj how the authorities feel about him (34-35):

Ibrahim: We are no longer well.
   I paid a visit to Qadi Ibn Surayj today.
   He told me that the men in authority think ill of you.
Hallaj: Of me, Ibrahim?
Ibrahim: . . . and they say
   This is a man who openly criticizes rulers
   And incites public hatred.
He requested me to implore you
To be cautious and discreet.

Hallaj: Why do they resent me?

Do they detest me because I speak to my faithful followers
And tell them that the ruler is the heart of the nation?
Is it good if he is not righteous?
When you are entrusted with command, forget not to pour the wine of power into the goblets of justice.

It is obvious that ‘the men in authority’ are fed up with Hallaj and his ‘political’ activities, as he, in his many conversations and sermons, preaches justice, charity and benevolence to the poor and the needy. It seems that preaching justice in public has angered the authorities and they regard his activities and preaching as inciting the poor to revolt.

Besides the dramatic irony of the first scene, seriousness remains the dominant climate in this tragedy. Because of its nature debate becomes its distinctive style. Salah `Abd Al-Sabur, realising this, wants to soften its tone by introducing some comic relief to break the monotony of serious dialogue. Was it a mere coincidence that Part I scene 1, is permeated with dramatic irony while Part II scene 1, abounds in comic relief? Or was it a deliberate design on the part of the playwright? In Part I scene 1, Alhallaj is thrown into a dungeon. Being unable to see anything, he does not realize that he is committed to a dark prison. His request for light arouses sarcasm in the two inmates (74-75).

The first prisoner thinks that Alhallaj is a good and sane man, while the second thinks the contrary. The dialogue develops
into a climax of comic relief when the second prisoner jumps on the back of his companion, as if riding a donkey. This comic interlude comes to an end with the entry of the guard and the questioning of the two prisoners about who started the noise. Each convincingly denies that he started it. Then the guard turns to Alhallaj, having made up his mind that it is he who was shouting. His interrogation reaches a peak of violence when he begins whipping Alhallaj. Despite continuous lashes Alhallaj is not moved and does not utter a single cry, as if he cannot feel the pain. This leads the guard to break down. When the guard collapses, the comic relief at the beginning of the scene develops into pathos. This is no doubt a skilful change on the part of the playwright.

The trial of Alhallaj in Part II scene 2, raises several questions, among which is the freedom of belief and independence of judicial authority. It is clear from the very beginning that the court of the Chief Qadhi in Baghdad has arrived at its verdict in advance and that holding this trial is a mere formality. The three judges, Abu Omar Alhammadi, Ibn Sulayman and Ibn Surayj are not concerned with administering justice, but rather with carrying out the sultan’s desire. This fact is made clear by Ibn Surayj, the most scrupulous and impartial of the three. He makes the point quite openly to the chief Qadhi, Abu Omar (113-5):

Ibn Surayj: [In a low voice]

Abu Omar, I pray you tell me, I appeal
to your conscience.

Does not your description of Alhallaj as vile and an enemy of God

Before a careful review of his case

Mean that you have convicted him . . .
And it is futile for this court to convene?

Abu Omar: Are you mocking me, Ibn Surayj?

This is a man sent to us by the Sultan,
Branded with rebellion.

We must choose a just punishment for this rebellion...

The trial of AlhaIlaj reveals the bizarre style of buffoonery and fun that at times creates an atmosphere of amusement when seriousness and levity are mixed together. It is not unlikely that Salah Abd Al-Sabur was recalling to mind, when writing this scene, the famous court of Mahdawi, held in Baghdad in 1958 after the fall of the monarchy. That court turned out to be nothing but a festival of poetical contests and harangues, to say nothing of the speeches made, as if from minbars. In such an atmosphere the trials were turned into a platform for rhetoric that had nothing to do with justice.

When Alhallaj is brought before the court an important question is raised relating to the principle of the separation of authority. Executive and judicial authorities should not be held in one hand. This is the first premise of self-defence used by AlhAllaj in an answer to a question put to him by the chief qadhi (121):

Abu Omar: Hallaj! Do you know why you are brought here?
Hallaj: So that God may accomplish His will, sir.
Abu cUmar: This is true . . .

And God — He is ever blessed and almighty —
Has invested our good Caliph — God preserve him —
with the scales of justice and its sword.

Hallaj: They never meet in one palm, sir.
Abu Omar: This is a fascinating remark, not understood by the likes of you, you people of dissension!

The charge of corruption in the land is itself sufficient to send Alhallaj to the gallows. This charge, however, has both religious and secular dimensions. It should be borne in mind that in the 3rd/9th century, and until recently in many Islamic communities, there was no differentiation between civil and religious law, as known nowadays. The trial would have continued had there not been an intervention on the part of the Minister of the palace, who sends a messenger to the chief qadhi with the following message (148-50):

The State has forgiven Hallaj for what he was charged, and that of which the Sultan was certain, namely instigating the populace and the mob to corruption. 
There is a full pardon and acquittal.

Ibn Sulayman: This is really very kind and generous on the part of our lord.

Abu Omar [Resumes the reading of the letter.]:
But the minister of the palace adds, `Suppose we ignore the right of the Sultan? . . 
What are we to do with the right of God? 
We are told that Alhallaj Reports that God descends into him, and what delusions and errors the Devil makes him believe. 
I want him questioned on his charge of atheism. 
The governor may pardon those who commit crimes against him,
But he does not pardon those who commit crimes against God.

Therefore, the trial of Alhallaj on the charge of atheism and unbelief must be continued so as to see him put to death. Ibn Surayj answers the Chief Qadhi, in defence of Hallaj as follows (139):

Ibn Surayj: No, this is just a state of mysticism. We should not concern ourselves with matters relating to the relationship between God and man, a thing that God alone may judge.

Ibn Surayj has raised an important issue concerning religious belief and the relationship between God and man. If what Ibn Surayj has said is true historically, he would certainly have pre-dated his age by several centuries. When he finds that Abu Omar will not budge an inch from his stance to indict Alhallaj, he resists this honourably and refuses to have a hand in incriminating an innocent man. Consequently, he resigns from the court when it turns out that the court intends to question the nature of his faith, even after it has been proved that he supplied ample evidence to confirm his belief.

Through the character of Ibn Surayj, Salah Abd al-Sabur is ringing the danger bell for freedom of belief which in essence is a relationship between the individual and his God. No human is allowed to make himself a judge or a guardian of what people should believe.

Ibn Surayj: Hallaj . . .!

Do you believe in God?

Hallaj: He is our Creator and unto Him we return!
Ibn Surayj: This is enough to prove his faith.

Abu Omar: Ibn Surayj!

I am not investigating his faith

But the nature of his faith.

What brought about Hallaj’s tragic end was not the word of Al-Shibli, nor the word of the chorus of the poor, but the word of the Minister of the Palace to the Chief Qadhi to carry out the Sultan’s command to exterminate Husayn b. Mansur in the name of religion; of course, religion is innocent of shedding the blood of this pious man.

One final comment should be made about the poetic language used in this play. The poet has successfully used the new poetic language adopted by modern Arab poets, namely that of free verse. This language is very much akin to blank verse. We would not expect the use of traditional rhymed verse here which would turn this beautiful dialogue into an affected, mechanical set piece. This new verse composition is the most suitable medium for poetic drama. Abd Al-Sabur and the modern Arab poets have rendered a service to poetic drama by this adoption. They have liberated themselves from the restrictions that rhyme would impose on the poet. A mellifluous and easily flowing, if simple, language with everyday diction is more appropriate to modern poetic drama. CAbd al-Sabur, on the other hand, admits that he was confronted with a problem of rhythm and music and to overcome this he manipulated four kinds of Arabic verse metre, namely: rajaz, wafir, mutagarib, and mutadarik.4 With the use of these four metres of varied lengths he manages to liberate the music of his poetry from the monotony of a single rhythm. This has contributed to the creation of a lively atmosphere from an essentially dramatic language, as opposed to a pure poetic language.
An important feature of this poetic language is its precision. This gives the diction a dramatic role. Here we do not find the lyrical spirit which is bound to creep in with the existence of long compositions or set pieces. In drama there is no space for superfluous speech. Here there is a differentiation between what is dramatic and non-dramatic. The language that Abd Al-Sabur uses here is a dramatic language in the first place. In this context one is bound to consider the view of Eliot rendered into Arabic by Salah Abd Al-Sabur himself and used as a part of the preface of his Arabic version of Murder in the Cathedral: in Poetry and drama Eliot stresses that, ‘No poet has begun to master dramatic verse until he can write lines which, like these in Hamlet, are transparent. You are consciously paying attention, not to the poetry, but to the meaning of poetry. If you were hearing Hamlet for the first time, without knowing anything about the play, I do not think it would occur to you to ask whether the speakers were speaking in verse or prose’.\(^5\) Dare we say after all that Abd Al-Sabur was not influenced in this work by Eliot? Perhaps not.

Mohammed A. Alkhozai

Notes

1 Cf. A. F. Scott, Current Literary Terms, London 1965, 293
2 Cf. Salah Abd Al-Sabur, Ma’sat AlHallaj, Beirut, 1972, 167
3 Cf. S. Abd Alsabur, Hayati Fi Alshi’r, Beirut, 1981, 157-8
4 Ma’sat, 167
5 S. Abd Alsabur, (trs.) Jarimat Qatl fi Alkatedraiyya, Kuwait, 1982, 19.
**Dramatis Personae:**

(In order of appearance)

Merchant
Farmer
Preacher
Chorus Leader
Chorus
Members of Chorus 1 - 6
Chorus of Sufis
Leader of Sufis
Ashshebli: A friend of Al Hallaj (A Sufi)
Al Hallaj: Al Hussain Bin Mansur, (A Sufi)
Ebrahim Bin Fatek
Hunchback
Lame
Leper
A Policeman
Another Policeman
A Third Policeman
A Guard
First Prisoner
Second Prisoner
Chief of Police
Abu Omar (Chief Judge)
Doorman
Ibn Suleiman (Judge)
Ibn Sureij (Judge)
PART I:
"The Word"
SCENE - I

A square in Baghdad. In the depth of the right scene a trunk of a tree is visible with a short branch is in an orthogonal position on the trunk. This does not indicate the traditional crucifix, only a trunk of a tree with an elderly man hung on it. The fore front of the stage is lit showing three vagrants.

MERCHANT: Look ..can you see what they placed on our path.
FARMER: A crucified old man

   How strange what we come across nowadays
PREACHER: He seems to be sound asleep.
MERCHANT: His eyes spilled on his chest
PREACHER: As if his life is heavy on his eyelids
   Or his days have rendered him helpless
MERCHANT: His bent back made him stare at the ground
PREACHER: To search for his grave on his foothold
FARMER: Do you know why he was killed?
   Or who killed him?
MERCHANT: …Do I know the science of the future?
   Ask Maulana¹, the preacher
FARMER: Have you any idea, Maulana?
PREACHER: No, ..let us ask one of the passersby
MERCHANT: Yes, perhaps his affairs is an interesting tale
   That I narrate to my wife when I return in the evening
   As she loves dishes of conversation on dinner table

¹ Maulana is an expression of respect addressing clergymen or an elderly Shaikh meaning our lord or our master
FARMER: As for me, I am curious by nature
   As if I am a stupid crippled old woman
   And whenever I decided not to be inquisitive
   My nature has the upper hand on my behavior

PREACHER: I wish in his story
   There would be something to preach and a moral
   My mind is completely void of inventing a
   suitable tale that would be of interest to the audience
   That I would make it the subject matter of
   My sermon at Almansur Mosque

(The right forestage is lit where we find a CHORUS of people headed
by their leader)

   Let us ask this gathering ....
   Kinsfolk ..... 

(They near to him one step in a lazy movements)

   Who is this crucified old man?

CHORUS LEADER: One of the poor folks..
PREACHER: Do you know who killed him?
CHORUS: We are the murderers
PREACHER: But you are poor just like him
CHORUS: That is what seems from our look
CHORUS LEADER: Look .. I am blind

   I beg in the streets of Alkarkh²

ONE IN THE CHORUS: (Makes one step, speaks as if introducing
himself, he retreats after finishing his speech, and this is repeated
with each one of them.)

² One of the two main districts in Baghdad
And I am a monkey trainer
ANOTHER ONE: And I am a blacksmith
A THIRD ONE: And I am a blood letter
A FOURTH ONE: And I am a tender in a bath
A FIFTH ONE: And I am a carpenter
A SIXTH ONE: And I am a veterinary
THE MERCHANT: Is there a hangman amongst you
CHORUS: “Exchange looks, then all in one voice) No...No..
MERCHANT: By your own hands...?
CHORUS: By words
MERCHANT: “Laughing , and looking at his colleague”
They killed him by words...
Ha...ha... ha....
CHOUS LEADER: Did we really kill him by words...?
We do not know, here is what happened....
In this day....
CHORUS: They lined us ...line...by line
He who has the loudest voice and the tallest
They placed on the first line
He who has a softer voice and hesitant
They placed on the second line..
They gave each one of us a Dinar of deep yellow gold
Bright never touched by anyone
They said:“shout ... Atheist Unbeliever
We shouted ...Atheist....Unbeliever
They said :” Shout “let him be killed” we are
Responsible for his blood
Let him be killed, we are responsible for his blood
They said “Go” So we went
He who has the loudest voice and the tallest
Goes to the first line
He who has a softer voice and hesitant
Goes to the second line

(With their last words, they exit the stage)

MERCHANT: Have we understood anything?

(Another side of the stage is lit, a Chorus of Sufis appear)

PREACHER: No, I did not understand
FARMER: Let us ask this gathering..
    Who are you?
SUFI CHORUS: We are the assassins
    We loved him so we killed him
PREACHER: This day, we meet no one but assassins
    Perhaps also when you assassinated this crucified old man..
CHORUS: We killed him by words..
FARMER: The matter is getting more ambiguous?
CHORUS: We loved his words
    More than we loved him
    We let him die so the words live
MERCHANT: Who are you?
CHORUS: Members of a brotherhood just like him
PREACHER: Were you scared when the poor shouted
    And denied him?
CHORUS: Scared...No...No...
No one is scared of death save the dead
We executed what he willed us to do

PREACHER: He willed you...?

SUFI CHORUS: We used to meet him at the marketplace
thirsty so he quenched us
A drink of water word
Hungry, and he feeds us from the fruit of wisdom
And drinks with us goblets of longing for luminous wedding.

PREACHER: How strange, I do not understand
(Turning to his two colleagues)
Do you understand? And you?
(They both shake their heads)

SUFI CHORUS LEADER: Do not seek understanding..
just feel and sense
Do not seek knowledge...just get acquainted
Do not seek sight...just discern
These were his words.

PREACHER: These words do not let you forsake him

SUFI CHORUS LEADER: He used to say
If I washed my body and limbs in blood
I would have performed ablution like prophets
He wanted to die, so he could return to heavens
As if he was a heavenly homeless child
Who lost his father in an evening maze
He used to say:
As if he who kills me, answers my will
And executor of the will of the Compassionate
As if he creates from the dust of an obliterated Man
A legend, a wisdom and a thought.
He used to say: He who kills me shall go to Heavens
Because he has completed the circle by his sword
Because he has aided with blood when the vein had dried up
A dead bush I planted with my barren language
And life invaded, branches grew longer
Became fruitful turning green at the time of famine and bears at no fixed date, at no time
And when the Sultan sent him to the judges
And the judges returned him to the Sultan
And the Sultan sent him back to the jailer
And his parts informed about the fruit of blood
He attained what he wanted
Shall we deprive the world of a Martyr?
Shall we deprive the world of a Martyr?
PREACHER: Were you not saddened by his loss...?
CHORUS: He made us cry that we parted from him
And we delighted when we were reminded that we hanged him in his word
And we raised him by it up the tree.
MEMBRS IN THE CHORUS:-- And we shall go so we can drop what we retained from it.
In a slot for the ploughs of the farmers
- And hide it in the fold of goods of the traders
- And carry it for the moving winds above the waves
- And we shall hide it in the mouth of cameleers
  Wandering in the desert
- And we document on papers filed between Pleats of the dress
- And we shall make verses and poems out of them

CHORUS: Tell me...what would his words be
If he had not been martyred?

(They exit the stage with the last words ..)
(From behind the tree enters an elderly man with a rose in his hand)

TRADER: What is this ? ....

PREACHER: This is Ashshebli... the Shaikh of the Ascetics
  He had estates in our village
  And gave them up so he can join the Sufi Brotherhood
  Let us wait and see what he could do..

FARMER: We may know then the whole story..

ASHSHEBLI: My Companion and Beloved
  ‘Have we not prohibited worldly things to you?’
  And you did not heed
  You were the perfume lying in its rose
Why did you spill?
And a Pearl guarded in its sea?
Why did you reveal yourself?
Does this world, that you gave your blood for,
equalize this with that you have bestowed?
We went together as companions on this road
You reached first
You loved till you generously donated
But I was a saver
When you saw the light you longed for the return
And here you have returned
I give you some of what you bestowed to life
Some of what you have bestowed..
(Throws a red rose at him)

My God, I cannot look further afar
I am occupied in soul and thought
If I had some of your certainty
I would be hanged on your right
But I was spared when I examined my age
And uttered an ambiguous statement
When they threw you at the hands of the judges
It is I who killed you
It is I who killed you
(Exits)
FARMER: How strange! We perceived nothing
TRADER: My wife will not be content with me tonight
PREACHER: I lost my sermon I should pursue this
good old man
   And narrate the story to me.
   O Shaikh..what is the story..what is the story..
who is the murderer of this hanged man?
Can we reach him, to talk to us...?

(They all follow him)

(CURTAIN)
SCENE - II

(At The House Of Alhallaj)

(Alhallaj and his friend Ashshebli talking..each of them is wearing the sufi rag ,two elderly men at the end of their age)

ASSHSHEBLI: … O Hallaj...hark me
    We are not people of this world, so that this world
    distract us
    We hastened in our walk to God, and when our thirsty
    yearning exhausted us
    We flew with two wings
    And touched the flashes of light
    Could we then see from our heart our silver blinds?
    Nothing but withering ghosts in the glare of knowing
    And dying blaze cannot be touched by eye lids
ALHALLAJ“ However..O you the most faithful of my
    companions ..do
    Tell me
    How can I kill the light in my eyes
    This hidden sun in the fold of days
    Rises languidly every morning, then shakes slumber
    from its eyes
    And with sleep, twilight
    And continues its brutal journey over the roads
    Over fields, inns, infirmaries, baths
    And gathers from a burning world
With its fiery red fingers
Images, ghosts, weaving from them shirts with running blood in its weft and warp is blood
In every evening wipes my eyes, wakes me up from glorification of love
And returns to the dark dungeon
Tell me, Shebli
Am I sore-eyed?

ASHSHEBLI: No, you have stared at the sun
And our brotherhood is to look into the inner light
And therefore, I relax my eyelids in my heart
And stare inside it, and rejoice
I see in my heart trees, and fruits
And angels, worshippers, and moons
And green and yellow suns, and rivers
And golden jewels, treasures of rubies
And hidden treasures and images
Each at his highest excellence
Or at his best form.

ALHALLAJ: Do you know, my good Shaikh
Why God enlightened your heart?

ASHSHEBLI: This is my state, Hallaj
You shall not envy me, God forbid, by our brotherhood such a thing occurs to you
To numerate what a creature receives from the goodness of his Lord
But do not ask me again..How would I know?
Conditions of Sufis are governed by talents.

ALHALLAJ: No, I explain to you

Why the Lord chooses individuals from among his creation
To dispense in them his lights,
To be the ill balance of the universe
And bestow God’s light upon the poor of heart
And so God’s light does not diminish when it flows over the rich
The light of the recipients never runs short when it flows over the poor.

ASHSHEBLI: No, Hallaj

I dare not go down to the people
And look upon the world
And see, its fortunes, I wish for goodness and riches,
And see its misfortunes, I avoid misfortunes
And light dies in my heart.

ALHALLAJ: Suppose we friend life
What shall we do with evil?

ASHSHEBLI: Evil
What do you mean by Evil?

ALHALLAJ: Poverty of the poor
Hunger of the hungry, there are words in their eyes I am not certain of its meaning
Sometimes I read in it
‘There you can see me
However, you dread to discern me
God curse you for your hypocrisy’
Sometimes I read in it
‘In your eyes compassion withers list it reveals your pride
May God forgive you’
My eyes may evoke tears, I may suffer
But what fills my heart with fear, and languishes my soul with awe and sorrow
Is the eye that closes its lids and lashes
Over a harmful question
‘Where is God’ ...?
And shackled prisoners driven by a heartless policeman
Holding a whip in his hand knowing not who put it in his palm
Who has raised him above killed prisoners?
And men and women who lost their freedom
Some considered them slaves, not God, mockingly,
O Shebli
Evil dominated the Kingdoms of God
Tell me ... how I could ignore life
Except when my heart is darkened
ASHSHBLI: Slow down...slow down..
You are now on the brink of your heart is darkened
ALHALLAJ: Not at all, but I am enlightened from the top of my head to the bottom of my foot
ASHSHEBLI: Silent! Here is your response so you may return to yourself

Are you asking me who made poverty?
Who threw in the eyes if the poor
Words that you are scared by their meaning
Here is the answer to your question:
Injustice...

Are you asking me who made the damned shackle, and grew a whip in the palm of the policeman?
Here is the answer to your question?
Injustice..

Are you asking me who made slavery?
Injustice..

But I am throwing in your face
A question like your question
Say: Who made death?
Say: Who made disease and cure?
Say: Who branded the lepers?
And the epileptics?
Say “Who plucked off the eyes of the blind?
Who stretched his fingers into the ears of the deaf?
Who pulled the tongue of the dumb?
Who blackened the face of the black?
Who yellowed the face of the yellow?
Who threw us in this life imprisoned?
To choke with our drink, and get poisoned by what we eat
Breathe the foulest smell emitted by the belch of the dead
The living dead, the murdered murderers
The fraudulent liars, the baby snatchers, the incestuous and blood traders
The fornicators by night and procurers of relatives
And collectors of the finance houses
And market usurers and wine sellers
Who threw us after this tranquility of light
In this overflowing whore house
Who...who...?

ALHALLAJ: No.. No.. I dare not
Do you want to say ....
No.. no..
Do not fill my soul with doubts, Shebli

ASHSHEBLI: I fill it with knowledge and certainty,

O Hallaj
Evil is old in the world
Evil is designed for those in the universe
So that my God should know who is saved and who is Failed
Each one of us should manage his salvation route
If you came across the route, proceed on it
Make it a secret; do not disclose your secret.

ALHALLAJ: O Shebli
Let me contemplate over what you have just said
Here you are shaking me in my abode
The market is shaking me to leave my abode
Your words are pulling me to the right wisest...
And my eyes pulling me left wise . . .

(A visitor is heard calling outside)

EBRAHIM: May I enter my Shaikh?

ALHALLAJ: How beautiful is the seclusion of our souls, Shebli
How beautiful is to be candid, but our days are niggard
And our affections are endless
Let Ebrahim see us
Do you know him, a youth from the people of God

ASHSHEBLI: ...And I love him

ALHALLAJ: Come in, Ebrahim

(Ebrahim Bin Fatik enters hurriedly upset)

ALHALLAJ: What are you hiding in your heart that spills on your visage?
Calm down, the world to Ashshebli is good, as long as we are all well.

EBRAHIM: We are no more well
I was visiting today Ibn Suraij, the judge,
He informed me that the rulers think evil of you

ALHALLAJ: About me, Ebrahim?

EBRAHIM: ...and they say
This man speaks badly about rulers
And instigate hatred of the commons
And he begged me to inform you his request
To be cautious and discreet
ALHALLAJ: Why do they feel bad about me?

Are they indignant at me that I speak with my favourites
And I tell them that the Ruler is the heart of the nation
And it is not healthy if he is not
If you are in charge, do not forget to pour the wine of power
In the goblet of Justice.

Do you think they are indignant at me because of my views in the affairs of the people?
As I see them marching to death

However, their direction towards death alienates them from the God of Death?

EBRAHIM: They claim that you sent confidential messages
To Abu Bakre Almatharai, and Attoluni and to Hamad Alqanai
And to others who vie for power

ALHALLAJ: They are some of the nation’s nobility

They are also my confidantes, my loved ones
They promised me if they were in charge
They would behave well and abstain from low deeds
They are to give the people their rights owed by the rulers
And in return, they are to give the rulers their dues
They are the flower of my hopes in this world, Ebrahim,
That is why I water them by my ideas, and dew them by kind speech
ASHSHEBLI: O, Hallaj
I know no friends of the Sufi except supplication at night
And crying out of fear of this world
And ecstatic love songs and groans of humility
And opening up of the lover by the lightness of communication
And if he is heavy hearted by loneliness
Let him join the people of the rags, the children of poverty
Those who were content with despair instead of high hopes
Those who discarded denial by the sea of acceptance
And they saw what no eye can see
Tell me Hallaj
Have you trusted the immanent leaders of the nation you know?
If they parted, they remained still loving you?
ALHALLAJ: I care not if they maintain my affection or forget it
What I care for is to heed my words
ASHSHEBLI: How do you know that when they were made governors
they were not drunk by the wine of power
And that they never surrounded you
Except for the fear of him he who left you
ALHALLAJ: I have failed then, but my words did not
There shall come ears that contemplate on hearing
When my words fall on the heart
And hearts that make ability out of my words
And tighten sinews of the arms
And processions marching towards light, but never return
Except to be irrigate with the saliva of the Sun
The soul of the vanquished tormented man

EBRAHIM: My Lord
   I fear unjust intrigue is in store for you
   What are you intending to do?
ALHALLAJ: Whatever God designs for man created in His own image, with a soul bearing His virtues
EBRAHIM: Is My Lord aiming for Khurasan
   And remain there until heated search subdues?
ALHALLAJ: Khurasan..Khurasan
   May my God enlighten your heart, Ebrahim
   Is Khurasan..the Paradise
   That he who is burdened by life aim for?
   Is there justice and tranquillity in Khurasan
   So that who is sickened by injustice aims for?
EBRAHIM: My Lord
   Injustice is found everywhere
   And Paradise is Man’s final pursuit
   Not his first pursuit
   Here you are all alone, a fatigued old man, tired of roaming
   In this world seeking discernment
And returning to find imprudence dominating all corners
Harassing you
Thousands of fools..Thousand of Thousands
Your enemies are countless, my Lord
ALHALLAJ: But my friends are more than my enemies
EBRAHIM L: I cannot see any of them my Lord
Except my Shaikh Ashshebli, and I
And both of us are humble feeling his steps
ALHALLAJ: My companions are too numerous to be counted,
Ebrahim
My companions are the verses of the Quran and its letters
The words of the distressed and deserted on mount Olive
The living dead, the promised martyrs
Knights on multicoloured horses of green attires
Thousands of the unjustly treated, the saddened
EBRAHIM: My Lord
In a mad world, cruel, and stasher
My God will not make an abnormal miracle, to save a doomed generation,
Who had died before death
ALHALLAJ: My son, how you misconstrued!
I am not asking my God to make a miracle, but to endow me with patience
So I can conceive my companions in his presence
EBRAHIM: My Lord
My fear does not aid me to understand you
Will you allow me to go to Almatharai
To advise me as to what I should do?

ALHALLAJ: But consult your heart!

EBRAHIM: But you shall allow me, and I am grateful

ALHALLAJ: Go, tell him

*Alhallaj begs you*

To keep it in your heart

*“Ebrahim leaves”*

ASHSHEBLI: A good man
And he loves you.

ALHALLAJ: This keeps him away from me
Sometimes he mistakes the paths of love
And loves God in my person

ASSHEBLI: What do you mean..?

ALHALLAJ: If he loved me in God
Instead of loving my God in me
He would not be terrified, and would not advise me to immigrate to *Khurasan*³

ASHSHEBLI: This is right
I would not advise going to *Khurasan*

Tell me, *Hallaj*
Have you not longed for going to *Haj*⁴?

ALHALLAJ: *Haj*...
Nothing has set fire in my heart but *Haj*?

³ A Province in Persia
⁴ Hai is pilgrimage to the Holy City of Mecca is one of the five pillars of Islam
Has anything ripened my heart but the heat of the desert and strolling of the desert
And fasting until the lean body slept in the trunk of the palm tree
In the land of his green town
The words of God were born there in my heavy heart
I brought them, and went around the land of the people
With its beauty I revealed the hems of my clothes gradually
So the beauty of carriage would not overwhelm them
And would think evil of me, and accuse my faith

O Shebli
I have not yet disclosed my outward appearance
And Haj would lay a heavy burden in my heart
No..no..my heart is not yet ready

ASHSHEBLI: You have indicated, but not declared, what do you intend?
ALHALLAJ: Do you recall what Amre Almakki said to us
When he gave us the rag and covenant?
‘My Son ...
True love
Is the death of the lover,
So that the beloved lives
There is no love if you do not shed off your descriptions
So that you would acquire his descriptions’
And I intend that my love be consummated in God
And that I shed off my descriptions in His
I am a man tormented by thinking and overcome by fear
O my beloved, stabilize my heart
I am a man thirsty for justice and handicapped by narrowness of steps
My beloved, please lend m your steps
And be my Interceptor in the truth of desire and intention
My overburdened heart
And my tears at night
I shall go on the paths of God
Divinely till I am engrossed in it
So that He stretches His hand, and takes me out of myself
Do you ask me what I intend to do?
I intend to go down to the people
And talk to them about the will of my God
God is Powerful, Aye You sons of God
Be like Him
God is Omnipotent, Children of God
Be like Him...
God is Powerful, O Children of God

ASHSHEBLI: Reduce your extremism, O Shaikh
You have excluded yourself from the people by the dress of the Sufi

ALHALLAJ: Do you mean this rag
If it is a shackle in my limbs
Secluding at home next to dumb walls
So that my loved ones will not hear my words
I discard and take it off... O Shaikh
If it is a symbol of humiliation and disgrace
A symbol that reveal us as combining poverty of the soul
with poverty of finance
I reject, take it off, O Shaikh
If it was a cover woven out of our own self
To veil us from the eye of the people, and to be covered
from the eye of God
I discard and take it off... O Shaikh
O God bear witness
This is your cloth
And symbol of our slavery to you
I discard, and take it off for your gratification
O God bear witness
O God bear witness
‘Takes off the rag’

(CURTAIN)
SCENE - III

‘Day time, a square in Baghdad, the preacher, trader, and farmer loitering’

PREACHER: ...And every house owner
   Were forced to drop one Dinar for the treasury
   To approve the right of the King
FARMER: Have you approved of the right of the king
   to the two Courts in Baghdad and the house erected in
   environs of Alkarkh
PREACHER: Your question is naive if struck your mind
TRADER: And publicly asking indicates that
   you are doubly naive
PREACHER: And if I answered or commented,
   I would be the greatest naive
TRADER : It is said that some of the kind people
   Made attempts at the Court so Justice prevails
FARMER: Are they people of Justice in their estates and
   wealth With servants, followers, workers and slaves
PREACHER: A second naive question
TRADER: Then, the world is based on aggression
   There is no point; we can only make a deceit
   And beseech the Lord of the Throne to keep it
   away from us.

‘ They move to one side on the stage, three other men a Hunchback,
A Lame and a Leper, they are members of the chorus that appeared in
Scene One.’
HUNCHBACK: Yes, I do love the Shaikh
   But I ask my bewildered self
   Can he really straighten up my hunched back?
LAME: I feel when I hear his good speech
   That I am able to bend my leg, and run and play
   Yes indeed, I may feel that I am a free bird in his skies
   But when I leave his lodge the shadows
   Of doubt appeared in my condition
   And I returned pulling my handicapped leg, with
   limping tired steps
   On the knocks of legs of poverty and need.
LEPER: As if the sun when I see him has responded to my
   prayers And has painted my humiliations
   And began to wander proudly in the roads, with a
   shining face and rosy arms
   Without illness nor poison in my face
   But when I leave him I pull my clothes on my limbs
   And I run with hiding my famine and fatigue and
disease
   
   'They turn to another side of the stage "Three Sufis inter"
THE FIRST: But our Shaikh has taken off his rag
THE SECOND: Suppose he has taken off the rag
   I wonder if he has taken off the heart that lies within the
   rag?
   Or God that lives in this heart?
THE THIRD: But our sign, and rank that we are brightened
with And feel when we attained it
That we took off the universe, and clipped our yearning wings
And consecrated ourselves to Haj, and vowed to meeting the light
And if we managed, and attained what we hoped for
That would be our much fortunate lot...
May the sea, voyage and port be pleasant
And the flying up flag..
Our ensign, flag of our ship...the rag
And if   the current was against us, and the mariner
Was unable to conceive the route, he would look for the heavenly star
And the dawn concealed its face, and the night fell down
And the passenger and sailor were lost in waves and storms
And the dream of light above its broken glass
It suffices that we are dead, and were shrouded in our flags
Like a martyred defeated *Mujahid*

THE SECOND: And does the rag prohibit us from taking note of injustice
And to stand up against the oppressor
And to resist evil against our feeble loved ones?
Have you not perceived   some of the followers enjoying the dress?
And when they approached austerity, and discarded pleasure
They desired a pleasure more malicious than all pleasures
They desired the pleasure of denying pain and denying people
And strode lightly folded above themselves
And when they talked, they concealed themselves behind the rag.

THE THIRD: You are right; however, I fear that when we take it off We would be like the others arguing in their affairs And riding their worldly boat, and satisfying their Heads And flannelling in their policies, and nearing their foolish And our hand may get wet from a barrage of their evils And their closeness that we attained may be marred by keeping aloof from them

THE FIRST: And here, confusion stops me to put an end to it! What if we let our worry be known to the Shaikh when he arrives, And this is the time of his return from the mosque.

(They step aside)

(The voice of Alhalaj from the end of the stage)

ALHALLAJ: Come along, ye strangers..ye poor.. ye..Infirm Broken hearted and organs, I have just laid down my table Come along..come along To have a bite of the bread of our Lord and Master Come along to me, so I can guide you to my God And to my God’s satisfaction.
((People gather, and another three enter, they seem to be on their guards, they are in uniforms, they seem to be policemen, this is clear from their eyes and whispers and standing closely to each other)

TRADER: Who is this shouting, Shaikh?

FARMER: Guiding us – as he claims- to God

A lunatic Shaikh, how we meet with his likes
In the market of beggars.

TRADER: Let us go

I left my son at my shop
And he is a feeble minded
If a beautiful maid came to him
He would offer her five pieces
At the value of three or four.

FARMER: And I have sold my wheat in the market this day
And would like to go back to my family off Baghdad
With my money intact before night fall
If I linger my feet would lead me
To a bodega where I would melt my money
In a goblet or burry it in a waistband of trousers

PREACHER: God bless you, what you said
Inspired me a sermon for next week
What a beautiful well written sermon
About a farmer who sold his wheat in the market
Went astray by Satan
And fornicated with the money, and went back to find the children hungry
He cried..and..and
And God shall inspire me to say the remaining
I shall make its moral and conclusion
Beware of the deception of women.

(They leave)
(The voice of Alhallaj rises..and his steps approach..and the crowd circle him).

God ordained that his beauties be revealed, and his lights be declared
From the ether of His Supreme ability, He created an example, he moulded clay
And in the midst of its sides He casted some of His superabundance from His own Being
He refined it, and adorned it and His creation was man
We are to him like a mirror, on its surface
The beauty of the Supreme Being perfected, and His beauty is in us witnessed
If the hearts of the people are purified, the look of the Merciful is
Amiable to our mirror and His look is prolonged and enliven us
And if the hearts of the people are not purified, His face is turned away from us
And he forsakes us, and estranges us
What could man do if his God alienates him?
The universe is narrowed in his eyes, and loses the friendliness of things
The sun becomes lines of fires in his eyes dropping its peripatetic weight
On the face of heaven and earth colours of flames
And the full moon becomes a broken grey circle
Of dead tin, thrown on the desert
The eyes of the people have dried up, becoming a black dot
The tree branches wither, dropping its weight on the ground
Burying them like an abortionist burying its shame in the mud
And famine walks in the markets levying breathing tax
From children and the infirm
His bag has no bottom; it is never filled when donations are made
And his desire is without watering, it is never silent when asked
And behind famine, the soldiers of famine walk under the shade of sent flag,
The army of evil and vengeance
Their features deformed, as if the tail above the head
Led by Lucifer, the Minister of the King of Famine
Not murder and charlatanry and theft
Not betraying companions and flattery
And not injustice and aggression and violation
Are nothing but subjects of famine, soldiers of Lucifer, his Minister
God disdains, and is indignant to look himself in our mirrors
And turns His head away from us
How can we then purify our dull heart?
To meet the Face of God, and discover its beauties
We pray…recite the Quran..
Visit His House, and fast in Ramadan
Yes, but these are the first steps towards God
Paces made by bodies
And my God’s intent is the hearts
And is not sufficed save with love
Contemplate: if you fall in love do not you desire to be similar to your beloved
This is our love for God
Is not God the light of the universe?
Be a light like God
So His beauty is reflected on our mirror..

POLICEMAN; (interrupting)
But our good Shaikh, has my God’s eyes
To look into the mirror?

ALHALLAJ : But my good son, but was your heart locked?
So the Quran speaks up
" Or some hearts were locked

ANOTHER POLICEMAN: Well replied, how do you think of God Without description or similarity?

ALHALLAJ: I think of God, How, and His light is lamp
And my thought is aperture of lantern
And my being is part of Him and it returns to him

POLICEMAN: Do you mean that this ruined structure is
part of Him
And that God His Glory is innumerable is dispersed in men

ALHALLAJ: Indeed, the ruined structure is part of Him if the senses are cleaned up
And His sublimity is dispersed as light equally to His creatures
And all this generosity is never decreased the least from his light

A THIRD POLICEMAN: You are then, a God like him as you are part of Him?

ALHALLAJ: May God care for you my son, why do you rouse my fear
And make me disclose the secret of what he gave?
Do not you know that love is a secret between two lovers?
Do not you know that if the secret is revealed our gallantry falls?
Because when the lover was generous in his contact we were comforted
And entered the area of secrecy, we were fed and offered drinks
We danced and made to dance, we sang and sang unto
We were told secrets and told secrets, we were pledged and we pledged
And when morning came we dispersed,
We promised, that I keep the secret till I am entered in the grave..

POLICEMAN: That is enough, Shaikh, what you say is
exactly infidelity
ALHALLAJ: Exactly infidelity!...woe unto you..
this speech is for me,
then hark, even if I shall be in trouble if I disclosed the secret..Indeed no, but woe unto me, I was dragged from my pride to my doom.
But..how.. should I leave this pronouncement thrown over my clothes?
Then, listen, and say in this matter what you like
I loved who is just
And he gave me as I gave..
POLICEMAN: Ye People of Islam..this Shaikh is heretic
SECOND POLICEMAN: Let us take him to prison
THIRD POLICEMAN: Come along..you infidel..
ONE OF THE SUFIS: No.. ye people
This is the drunkenness of Sufis
The heart is full and overflew
Love overcame intent
POLICEMAN: This is nonsense
Let us defend the Religion from Infidels
A SUFI: “To the crowd”
Ay you people
This Policeman persuaded him to reveal his condition
But have they held him responsible for the talk of love?
No, but for speaking about famine
They hiked him responsible for you yourselves
For the poor, the infirm, the levy of the army of famine
LAME: This is true
   The Police are servants to the Sultan
   What has the Police to do with Love
   Let us release him from their hands

   “Noise and hands brandishing about to ensue into a fight”

ALHALLAJ: No, my friends
   Pay no attention to me
   I trust you with my words
   Go back..go back
   And leave me until they penetrate my body
   To make me behave
   The words of fiery rebuke of the lover

THE LEPER: “To one of the sufis”
   What did he say?

THE SUFI: He is still in a state of ecstasy…
   Speaking from his heart

POLICEMAN: Gentlemen
   The Shaikh has admitted his crime
   Let go to be punished
   O Shaikh! Have you admitted your crime?

ALHALLAJ: This is true my son..
   I have sinned against him
   When I have revealed the secret

POLICEMAN: Have you heard that..

ALHALLAJ: O my love! Punish me for disclosing
   and betraying the promise
Do not forgive me, the heart has narrowed for ecstasy
But punish me as the punishment of foe to his foe
Not as the punishment of the owed one to his lover
Do not forsake, do not keep away your face from me
Do not kill my soul by your coyness
Make my lean body or my wrinkled skin
Instruments of your punishment

(Alhallaj advances ahead of the policemen as if leading them, and the crowd follows, and when they reach the end of the stage, a voice of one of the Sufis is raised.)

THE SUFI: Shall we leave him to the Police?
ANOTHER SUFI: This is what he recommended us do.
(The Sufis exit repeating :’This is what he recommended us do’)
LEPER: What shall we do..?
HUNCHBACK: What do you think..?
LAME: Shall we follow them to see what will happen?
(They exit repeating : See what will happen)
(The Preacher enters hurriedly from the end of the stage following The Lame, who follows his colleagues)
(To The Lame pulling his shirt) Hey you..
    What was going on here a little while?
    I was attracted by the echo of the noise.
LAME: The Police took him
PREACHER: Who ..?
LAME: The good man
PREACHER: Why..?
LAME: He was talking to us from his heart
He could not conceal, so he revealed Let me go
(Pulls his shirt..and proceeds)

PREACHER: (Alone on the stage) He revealed..
   What did he reveal, for the Police to take him?
   I do not know, any way, the days are strange
   The sane is he who is cautious with his words
   Says nothing bad
About the regime or a person or a situation or a law or a judge
or Governor or auditor or Ruler.

(CURTAIN)
PART - II :

"Death"
SCENE - I

(A door opens on a dark prison where Alhallaj enters pushed by a guard)
WARDEN: Enter, ye the greatest foe of God!
ALHALLAJ: May God forgive you, you gave the poor Alhallaj more than he deserves.
WARDEN: Get in, and do not talk too much
And sit amid your companions.
(Alhallaj enters, he could hardly see anything in the sombre darkness)
ALHALLAJ: O, owner of this house
Offer your guest some light so he can see his steps
Or adorn his eyes by your brilliance
Ye, owner of this house.
FIRST PRISONER: (Whispering to his mate) This is a stupid man Imagining we came here for a feast or a party
ALAHALLAJ: Some light, ye owner of this house..
SECOND PRISONER: Ask our good warden a lamp or a candle.
FIRST PRISONER: (Whispering to his mate) He is not aware that we are at the bottom of the prison
SECOND PRISONER: We are not at the Court of the Wali\(^5\)
FIRST PRISONER: Or the house of the Qadhi.\(^6\)
SECOND PRISONER: Or in a tavern on the bank of Alkarkh\(^7\)

\(^5\) Wali is a Governor appointed by the Caliph or the Sultan
\(^6\) Qadhi is usually a Judge in Is
\(^7\) Alkarkh is one of the districts of Baghdad
ALHALLAJ: O, you owner of this house  
The light of your eyes is belated  
If you see that I should be guided by suspicion  
Lead my steps.

FIRST PRISONER: Let him ask our good warden  
To hold his palms tenderly  
And lead his steps to throw him  
On the shadow of the wall.

SECOND PRISONER: But our good warden’s palms are fond  
of Joking with his ribs and beautifying the legs

FIRST PRISONER: *With a sad tone highly exaggerated* Pity on  
This poor fellow  
Oh! I wish the warden has helped him with the  
light..!

SECOND PRISONER: *Sarcastically* Do not worry so your heart  
will not break  
Who knows, is he a poor man like me and you  
Was thrown into jail as he is too weak to escape the  
tyranny of the law  
Or a rogue, the Bad Days have imposed on him a  
harder rogue than himself  
A policeman who betrayed the people and  
accumulated wealth dazed the eyes of the Chief of the  
police  
Confiscated his wealth  
And threw him in prison

FIRST PRISONER: Or a *Wali* who chose the best of what the
Scoundrels had
Of the most beautiful women and furniture
And invited the Minister of the Court, fed him
and hosted him. This watered the mouth of the
Minister of the Court
And took his wealth as his
SECOND PRISONER: And threw him in prison.
ALHALLAJ: O, ye owner of this house
    Thank you, your light was not slow
    Peace be upon you both, my lords
FIRST PRISONER: And upon you...
ALHALLAJ: (Sitting in a close corner, murmuring,
    then raising his voice)
    And in your name was my migration, and the feet went on,
    May god bless our entry and residence.
SECOND PRISONER: (Whispering) I knew him
    From his chin, murmuring, and beard
    And his mentioning of the Name of God at the
    beginning of his talking
FIRST PRISONER: And who is he ...?
SECOND PRISONER: Story teller of Alrasafa Mosque
    He who— as was told-was
    Blaming the neighbour for the fault of his neighbour
FIRST PRISONER: Who did you mean?
SECOND PRISONER: When moved by love
    Stabs his loved ones in the back

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8 Alrasafa is another district in Baghdad
FIRST PRISONER: *(Smiling)* Ah, You mean Ibn Buqayn..no..no..
   No, I know who you mean
   He does not look like this Shaikh
SECOND PRISONER: Do you really know him quite well?
   Woe to me! how do you feel if I take a nap beside you
   Let it be known that I am a filly that never ride or be ridden
   I do not mind to ride
   But not be ridden
   *(Moves towards his mate)*
FIRST PRISONER: Shut up !
   Do not make jokes with me or else, I shall smash your head
SECOND PRISONER: My head..! Who are you to smash my head?
FIRST PRISONER: You do not even know me till now
   Heh..Take this so you should know me
   *(Hits him..and the Second holds him from the foot and twists it)* : Let go of my foot...you will break it..I shall call the warden
SECOND PRISONER: No, not until you let me ride
FIRST PRISONER: Let go of my foot..Ay you Warden..
   this is a mad beast
ALHALLAJ: *(Going closer to him)*
   My son, I beg you
   Let go of his foot
SECOND PRISONER: For your sake only, my Lord, the judge
Tell me ..are you a judge?
ALHALLAJ: Judge...No, my son.
SECOND PRISONER: Are you a Teacher at a mosque?
ALHALLAJ: No..How can I teach
And I do not know
FIRST PRISONER: (Approaching him whispering)
Who are you then?
ALHALLAJ: My name is Alhallaj Hussain bin Almansoor
SECOND PRISONER: What do you do?
ALHALLAJ: I meditate, my son
FIRST PRISONER: A poet?
ALHALLAJ: Sometimes
FIRST PRISONER: Do you read in the books of the ancients?
ALHALLAJ: Sometimes
FIRST PRISONER: Do you search in the secrets of the universe?
ALHALLAJ: But I witness them sometimes
FIRST PRISONER: Are you attracted?
ALHALLAJ: Always to light
FIRST PRISONER: Are you a saint?
ALHALLAJ: No but a follower
And my God and your God is a witness
(The two prisoners exchange looks, and about to speak, but stop.
After a moment they both speak in unison)
BOTH PRISONERS: Why do not you ask who we are?
ALHALLAJ: My companions in the land of migration.
FIRST PRISONER: What does this mean?
ALHALLAJ: We for a while in the land of fear
Keeping within the ribs
A secret list ears should steal
But the musk was spilt in the Heart of Alhallaj and was known

FIRST PRISONER: This is a good man
Saying something I cannot figure out
But I can feel it.

SECOND PRISONER: This is a demented man

FIRST PRISONER: No, but a good man
And a saint among the peoples of God, though he may deny

SECOND PRISONER: Shut up you fool
This is a demented quack
FIRST PRISONER: No, it is you who is a demented quack
SECOND PRISONER: You are a stupid fool
FIRST PRISONER: No, it is you a stubborn like a mule
SECOND PRISONER: No, but it is you an ass without a saddle
and reigns
Excuse me, this is your saddle
And my arms your reigns
Come on, take me to the White Court
So I can sing the praises to our Lord the Wali of Al Sham\(^9\)
With a hanged ode rhymed in \(Lam\)^\(^{10}\)
And I return with a filly, a maid and a slave boy
Ha..ha..ha..(Rides over his shoulder)
FIRST PRISONER: Get off me ...or I will drop you down to the

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\(^9\) The old name for Syria
\(^{10}\) Lam is the ‘L’ of the Arabic Alphabet
Ground
And smash your ribs
SECOND PRISONER: You cannot, I have tightened your bridle
   (He violently encircles his neck with both arms)
FIRST PRISONER: Let off me, you mad man
     Your are strangling me...I am going to die
SECOND PRISONER: Then the count of our Lord’s subjects shall
decrease by one ass
FIRST PRISONER: O guard! Save me
     Guard..guard..guard...
   (The lock is turned on the door; the warden enters..each one of
them shrinks to his corner)
THE WARDEN: Who is making this noise ?
   ( To the First Prisoner)
   Is it you?
FIRST PRISONER: No,, my Lord, the Wali,
     I did not say a word
     I fear your wrath
     I respect this sensitive hearing
     To hear the voice of base people like me
   (The warden pats him, then moves to the second prisoner)
WARDEN: Is it you?
THE SECOND PRISONER: No, Sir
     I know the rules of the prison
   ( The warden puts his hand on his forehead pondering, then
looks at Ahallaj and says)
WARDEN: It must be then the third man
It is a matter of sense
You are who was shouting
ALHALLAJ: No, my son
I was only talking to myself in a soft voice
WARDEN: Soft...you liar
ALHALLAJ: I never tell lies, my son
WARDEN: And you argue with me, you liar?
ALHALLAJ: Do not swear at me, my son..
Swearing is a sin
WARDEN: Liar ...and a *Faqih*\(^\text{11}\)!
Take..

(Lashes him, and Alhallaj is quiet and smiling and adjusts his dress)
(The warden becomes more violent, and his whips
WARDEN: Why don’t you cry:
ALHALLAJ: Can a dead body cry, my son?
WARDEN: Cry..make me stop lashing you
ALHALLAJ: You shall get fed up and keep silent, my son
WARDEN: cry..I shall not stop till you cry
ALHALLAJ: Pardon me, my son, my voice does not aid me
WARDEN: I said cry..you are tormenting me with your Calmness
ALHALLAJ: May God forgive me for your suffering
Does my shouting mitigates that..tell me
How do you want me to shout.....and I will say?
WARDEN: Avow to me by God , by my children, by my
father’s grave.
Look at me in fear following my whip, as it flies, then

\(^{11}\) An Islamic jurisprudent
flicker and fall.
Pray to God for long life, or abundance in wealth, promotion in status, do anything to stop me, please.. make me stop, I am exhausted.

(Breathing heavily)
I am worn out..I am worn out..I am worn out
O God..What is this fatigue?
O Shaikh
Tell me who you are..
You are Satan..?
But you are an angel..Gabriel
You are a saint ..a man of God
Who are you..?!
Who are you..?!
(Falls down beside him ..and cries on his shoulder)
Whoever you are forgive me..forgive me..

ALHALLAJ: I rather thank Him that he is fair with me in love
... that he punished me in my body
(Alhallaj rises, and keeps a little away from the Warden)
O God
If I am not imprisoned, beaten, and tortured
How am I certain that you keep the avow of love?
But now I am certain of the certainty of the heart
That you are looking at me, caring for me..
That your eye still highly regards me
You still see me the closest among your lovers
God’s eye is kept on me
And his gifts are received
And the best of his goodness is granted
Blessed is me
Blessed is me ..

(The Warden retreats heavily from near the wall,
till he reaches the door..and turns to Alhallaj saying:
WARDEN: If your heart does not disdain me
Remember me in your prayers, O Shaikh
(Exits)

(The Prisoners come closer to Alhallaj..The Second Prisoner speaks first)
SECOND PRISONER: Forgive us, Mister
    
    The prison reveals
    the ugliest thing in man
FIRST PRISONER: Do you curse us in your prayers?
ALHALLAJ: On the contrary, I implore my God to alleviate your ordeals
FIRST PRISONER: A question is on my tongue that I do not know what to do with.
  Would you allow me to pose it to you, Mister?
ALHALLAJ: Do not conceal anything from me, my son
FIRST PRISONER: I am afraid it may harm you to hear it
ALHALLAJ: It hurts me to keep it to yourself
FIRST PRISONER: (after some hesitation)
  Why are you here...
ALHALLAJ: It was destined, my son
FIRST PRISONER: I do not mean this..help me..my words do not aid me..I mean..why did they throw you here?

ALHALLAJ: So what is destined is accomplished..

SECOND PRISONER (Pointing to the First)
This is a man who does not speak well
He means..what is the accusation?

ALHALLAJ: I look forward to greeting the dead

SECOND PRISONER: (sarcastically)
Are you a second Christ!

HALLAJ: No, I have not reached the importance of the Son of the Virgin
I was not given his manipulation of the bodies
Or his ability to resurrect bodies
I was only content with resurrecting the dead soul.

SECOND PRISONER: (Mockingly)
How easy what you are content with!

ALHALLAJ: You did not understand me, my son
To revive a body,, you must attain the status of Jesus or his miracle, but to revive the soul , it suffices to possess his words
Tell me how many soul did Jesus revive before the famous miracle
Thousands souls; but the blind among the dead were not convinced, so God bestowed upon him the secret of the creation
A gift that I do not wish to be repeated

SECOND PRISONER: And with what do you revive the Souls

ALHALLAJ: With words

SECOND PRISONER: Do I see that you are saying...
Pray... fast... discard this world and achieve
Something related to the promised hereafter
Obey the rulers even if they loot your eyes bleeding
Inlaid them as red rubies in the crowns
Good tidings, you shall inherit the kingdoms,
I beg your pardon; this is a term of your equal
ALHALLAJ: Thank you, you give me more than my worth
However, there is some truth in what you say
I sometimes shout at them: leave this corrupt rotten world
And let your dreams weave another world
SECOND PRISONER: Another world wrought out of dreams...
ALHALLAJ: The dream is the embryo of reality as to crowns....
I know not anybody with one except God
People are all equal to me
Amongst them, they elect heads to manage matters
A just Wali
Is a beacon from the light of God that enlightens some of its land
But the unjust Wali
Is a curtain that hides the light of God from the people
So that it incubates under the mantle of evil
This is what I say.... my son
SECOND PRISONER: Good speech .. but can make nothing
Sayings that dig inside me, awaken memories of my youth
To make me feel that I am in my early days
Do you know my Good Shaikh
That I, one day...loved words
When I was young and innocent
I had a good mother who took care of me
And used to see the light of the universe through my eyes
She saw me the most handsome among my peers, the cleverest among my companions
I used to love wisdom
And spend my morning at houses of learning
Or between the shops of stationers and copiers
And I return to surprise her with brilliant words like glazed pottery
The essence and entity
The essence and statistics
Categorises
All Greek that cannot be understood
My mother used to enjoy my sayings; her ears swallow them as pure honey,
Her cheeks brighten, her eyes, her wrinkled parting hair,
And on her lips a voice singing that no one can hear but me then.
‘May God preserve you for me’
‘And may you live longer so I can see you’
‘A Professor at Bayt Alhekma’
‘Or a Shar’ Qadi’
‘Or a Wali in a province’

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12 Bayt Al Hekma is the Institute founded by the Abbasid Caliph Almamoun to translate into Arabic the heritage of the Greeks Literally it means the House of Wisdom.
‘Or a rich Shaikh’

My mother was a maid who collected bread crumbs and left out clothes
From some merchants’ houses
And I am a helpless child
Except in this crazy chatter
My mother fell sick, she was crippled, she was aged, she was dead
Did she die out of famine, no, this is a naive oversimplification
That poets enjoy, the fool and preachers and rascals
So they can hide with a hateful exaggeration
The hard face of truth
My mother did not die of hunger, my mother lived in hunger
That is why she fell sick in the morning, became aged at noon, died before night

ALHALLAJ: May God have mercy on her soul
SECOND PRISONER: Rather say curse on them who killed her..
ALHALLAJ: They killed her...?
SECOND PRISONER: Who gave my mother what was enough to feed her or me?
Those who made me eat mother’s flesh to live and grow?
Tell me.. will my words reform them?
ALHALLAJ: Will your anger reform them?
SECOND PRISONER: My anger should not reform but deracinate..
ALHALLAJ: Who do you want to deracinate?
SECOND PRISONER: The wicked ...
ALHALLAJ: How do you know them...
SECOND PRISONER: By their behaviour
ALHALLAJ: My son ...
    Evil is innate hidden under the dress
    No one can know it except he who sees what is in the heart
    We are here few creatures in one of the corners of his world
    You...I...this..our warden with the whip dangling from
    his waist
    Who is the wicked among us..who is the good among us ?
    Who among us will be uprooted by your sword , or be
    pardoned and preserved?
    Suppose the sword changes your right hand
    To my right hand or the right hand of the warden
    When can we raise it or put it down?
FIRST PRISONER: And why do you not put the sword in my
    palm?
ALHALLAJ: Who will you kill then..?
FIRST PRISONER: Myself...Mr..?
SECOND PRISONER: (To the First)
    There is no need for all this hollow nonsense
    (To Alhallaj)
    Listen to me Shaikh
    You are one of the cleverest hearts I met,
    The firmer at the time of problems
    And you love people, because you are for the
    people
You were imprisoned and tortured
But, do you spend your life oppressed in the shadow of
these dump walls?
Like an owl howling over wrecks in the days of evil
Distressed, waiting for an aimless stone
To smash your head
Why don’t you get away?
ALHALLAJ: Why should I get away?
SECOND PRISONER: To bear your sword for the people
ALHALLAJ: Someone like me does not bear a sword.
SECOND PRISONER: Are you afraid of bearing a sword?
ALHALLAJ: I am not afraid of bearing the sword but I am
scared to walk with it
The sword if you bear has a blind grip
And becomes a blind death
SECOND PRISONER: Why don’t you make out of your
words the light to its path
ALHALLAJ: Suppose my words sang for the sword, and
the sounds of its strike is an echo of its syllabus, or
resonance of its commas and rhymes. Between the
consonant and the consonant,
A head tumbles that was moving
A heart is shattered in the magnificence of simile
And an arm is severed in the music of assonance
How wretched I am, then, how wretched
My words have killed
SECOND PRISONER: It killed in the name of the ill-treated
ALHALLAJ: The ill-treated
Where are the ill-treated and where are the iniquitous?
Has not any of the ill-treated ever
Ill-treated a neighbour or a spouse or a child or a concubine or a slave?
Has none of them ever ill-treated his god?
Where can I get an ever discerning sword..!
Where can I get an ever discerning sword..!!
(His eyes are in tears)

FIRST PRISONER: Are you crying Mister?
Don’t be sad, things may turn for the best

ALHALLAJ: I do not weep out of grief, my son, but out of amazement
Because of my inability my tears are shed
Out of bewilderment of my view and misleading of my doubts
Comes my distress, and my groan outburst
Has my God punished me in my soul and certainty?
That he has concealed his light from me
Or is it the clouds of confused words concealed the light from my eyes
And confused thoughts?
Or is he calling me to choose for myself?
Supposing I chose for myself, what should I choose?
Should I raise my voice?
Or should I raise my sword?
What should I choose..?
What should I choose..?

(The stage is gradually blackened, until it is all black. This indicates
the passage of days, then it is gradually lightened, to see the same
scene, but we do not see the SECOND PRISONER, the days have
shed more sadness on the whole scene, its walls, floor and even its air).

FIRST PRISONER: Days fall in days
    And months fell in the depth of months
    Since we have been thrown into this damned well.
ALHALLAJ: How long have you spent in this prison?
FIRST PRISONER: Few days before you..
FIRST PRISONER: I do not know why the prison is
    tormenting me now?
    Is it because I know that the warden
    Deserves more than me to be in my place
    Why, you did not you let me escape when our
    third mate asked me to join him?
ALHALLAJ: But I did not prevent you
    But I did not know
FIRST PRISONER: But you sensed
    And that is why you were very friendly with me
    And bring me closer to you in the first hours of night.
    And you talked to me and talked to me until
    you tied my steps.
    That is why I said to myself, when he asked me
to run away,
'What good is it for my soul to leave a narrow prison
To be kept in a narrower prison...?'
'What shall I do with a world that has denied me?
And where I am unable to find a place in it
Except by ignoring my soul, kill this ambiguous thing fixed in my heart of your words?'
And to myself I said:
'What can a man hope for more than to be happy?
And I I have been happy in your shade ..'
How hopeless is my effort
How hopeless is my effort..
I loved you until your love bounded
In this trap like a crippled rat
May God forgive you!
By your words I lost my life...
By your words I lost my life...
ALHALLAJ: O! God
   Inspire me to choose
   Inspire me to choose
(At this moment, the chief warden enters, accompanied by two guards)
CHIEF WARDEN: Who is it amongst you is Alhallaj?
ALHALLAJ: It is me Mister...
CHIEF WARDEN: Today, judges of the state will try you
Come along in front of me..
ALHALLAJ: This is the most beautiful thing my God gave me
God has disposed....
God has disposed....

(CURTAIN)
SCENE - II

(The tribune of the Chief Judge in Baghdad. It is composed of three judges: Abu Omar Alhamadi, smartly dressed, corpulent, Ibn Suleiman, short welcoming in his speech, and calm, and Ibn Suraij, lean and good mannered, the doorman)

ABU OMAR: In the name of God, the guide to righteousness
And on him we count
We beg Him to guide us to justice
And make us succeed in fulfilling our trust
Doorman....
Why have not they brought the corrupt man?

DOORMAN: The police is bringing him from
Khurasan gateway
They are taking empty roads to avoid commoners
To shun people of dissension...

ABU OMAR: Dissension...!
Is it because the enemy of God and the enemy of the Sultan is disciplined
The scum assemble on the roads?
Truly, how petty are the dreams of commoners..

DOORMAN: A prisoner who was with him has assembled them
In Khurasan Gateway since this morning

ABU OMAR: This is negligence on the part of the Police Commandant
Why didn’t he unleash his aides at them?

DOORMAN: This is what he is doing now

ABU OMAR: How many were the commoners?
DOORMAN: One hundred or two
ABU OMAR: No...No...There is no fear
They cannot confront the police force
Look, have they brought the corrupt man?
DOORMAN: Well heard, my Lord
(Exits)
IBN SURAIJ: (In a soft low voice)
Oh, Aba Omar, tell me something, I plead your conscience
Does not your description of Alhallaj
As corrupt, and enemy of God
Before looking carefully into his case
That the verdict has been issued..
And that there is no point of holding our session.
ABU OMAR: Are you deriding me, Ibn Suraij?
This is a man the Sultan has sent us
Branded with disobedience
And we have to choose a just retribution for this disobedience
If it was justifiable...
IBN SULEIMAN: We would find him excusable
ABU OMAR: And if it was necessary to eternize him
In Bab Khurasan Prison
IBN SULEIMAN: We would eternize him
ABU OMAR: And if it was necessary to have him put to death
IBN SULEIMAN: We would do that.
ABU OMAR: No, not by our hands, we are mere judges, not
executioners, what we do is to tighten a knot in the rope
of the gallows of the divine laws. The executioner is he who pulls the rope.

IBN SULEIMAN: This is a magnificent expression
But no wonder it is coming from the mouth of our honourable Lord Alhamadi.

ABU OMAR: You are most welcome, Ibn Sulieman
Your flattery makes me blush, and reminds me
That God may grant me success
Always to attain magnificent expression.
I’ll tell you a story...
Yesterday, I met my friend Judge Alharawi
Who, as you may know,
Is vainglorious of his talent and intelligence
I asked him:
(Ma ajda ma yata’n man ta’ina ‘an att’an) what purpose of tikk if there is no tikk nor a tikk
He was bewildered, and did not understand
And I repeated the saying, so the judge will have no excuse
(Ma ajda ma yatta’n man ta’ina ,an att’an)
And he was stupefied and hummed
Like the horse of Ibn Zabibah, Antar
‘Which turned away on arrows falling on its chest
And complained to me crying and humming’
I can recite thousands of lines of poetry
Had I not being ashamed, I would have composed poetry
And in this, I would have surpassed Abu Tammam and Ibn

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13 Zabibah was the mother of Antar, the Pre-Islamic Arab poet
Arrumi in chasing gold
But I am, as you know, cannot be tempted by cash
Let us go back to our story...
Our conceited judge did not know
The meaning of my brilliant expression
I scratched my nose and went away
IBN SULEIMAN: May God preserve you, you have revealed his
  Stupidity
  But, do tell me
  May God help you
  What does this mean?
ABU OMAR: Do you perceive its meaning, Ibn Suraij?
IBN SURAIJ: My Lord,
  We are here in a Council of Judgement not a Council of
  Riddles
  I am a limited man, my mind is too narrow
  To be broadened for your expressions
ABU OMAR: A tactful response, by God
  But that does not excuse you from responding
IBN SULEIMAN: A response that does not excuse him from
  responding
  That is also a brilliant expression
IBN SURAIJ: My Lord
  I implore you by God
  In order that our Court may not be crowded by twisted
  expressions

14 Two famous Abbasid poets
And with it steps of justice does not go stray
Please elucidate to Ibn Suleiman the meaning of your Expression

ABU OMAR: Here you are Ibn Suleiman
The first ta’n means the clattering of the teeth
Tattuck ..tattuck..tattuck
The second ta’ana means he is aged
Eh...eh...eh
As to the third ta’n, it means the stabbing of thighs
Shakshak, shaaksh,shakshak
Now listen to this and contemplate
(Ma ajda atta’n liman ta’ina ‘an att’an)
That is
What is the use of eating for him who is unable to ....

DOORMAN: My Lord, the Judge
The runaway prisoner was killed
But the populace are still gathering on the roads

ABU OMAR: Have they diminished or increased?
DOORMAN: Half of them ran away from the police

ABU OMAR: This is what I thought....
   No..No...there is no fear
(The Doorman exits and he turn to Ibn Suleiman)
What do you think of this riddle, Ibn Suleiman?

IBN SULEIMAN: How pleasant is your entertainment, my Lord
No wonder that Caliphs preferred you as a close friend
And ministers make you a close companion
And they listen to your spoken views
ABU OMAR: It is my knowledge that fascinates them,

*Ibn Suleiman*

DOORMAN: *(At the door of the Court)*

Our Lord *Bakr Bin Alawsi, the Wali* of the Police

And in his company *Alhallaj Hussain bin Almansur*

*(The Police Wali enters accompanied by Alhallaj, the Wali exchanges greetings with the judges, he exits leaving Alhallaj behind present to the judges.)*

ABU OMAR: O Halllaj..do you know why you are brought here?

ALHALLAJ: So God may fulfil his will, Sir

ABU OMAR; This is true..

And God to be praised and exalted

Has entrusted in the hand of our good Caliph, may God preserve him,

With the scales of justice and the sword

ALHALLAJ: These two do not meet in one hand, Sir

ABU OMAR: This is a fascinating idiom

That cannot be perceived by people of dissention like you

IBN SULEIMAN: Beautiful..beautiful

Your speech did not charm me, Sir.

ABU OMAR: It shall terrify you later

Hark and heed

Our Lord does not send any of his subjects to the executioner

Except what he calculated the wrongs he has committed

In the balance of justice

Our Lord knows for some time how you have
Corrupted on earth
You sow dissent
In the heart of the commons
And mind of the populace
At time you hide behind the grey beard
Or the clothes of the poor mad
And the ambiguous speeches of doubtful meaning
Where you wrought and rhymed like the nonsense of poets
Tell me ...What are you aiming at by your hallucination?
Do you want the Muslim to put
the sword of hatred in the neck of the Muslim?

ALHALLAJ: No, Sir...
All I want is that the Muslim extends
The hand of mercy and love to the Muslim

ABU OMAR: And thus you expose the rulers
Of good judgement and good fortune
What are you aiming at?
That the law is unbalanced and the affairs of the commons
Higher than the affairs of the elite
And that the fools and ignorant rule us
And that the rule be given to those unworthy

IBN SULEIMAN: And the day of judgement arrives
And the domes day arrives

ABU OMAR; O, Hallaj...
The obvious crime is not negated by acting stupidly and murmuring
IBN SURAIJ: My Lord, should you not give the man a chance to speak? You have investigated and fixed the charge, then issued the verdict

ABU OMAR: What need us in this court to listen to? Torrents of ambiguous nonsense? Let the word of justice be the higher when the crime is dumb

God Almighty said:
‘ The penalty of those who corrupt in the land.’

IBN SULEIMAN: O Abu Omar..truly what you said
But I ask for a messenger to be sent to the Court Seeking a formal counsel about the judgement

ABU OMAR: Are you afraid of being responsible for the death of this corrupt man?

IBN SULEIMAN: I am not afraid that I should be responsible for his death in the name of the Shar’15 (explain in margin) But I do not accept to be responsible in the name of the authority I have not witnessed him corrupting in the land

ABU OMAR: The Police have witnessed him

IBN SULEIMAN: But I have not verified the testimony of the Police

ABU OMAR: O, Ibn Sulieman
We are the people of investigation...
But people of Fatwa, the most learned in this generation in the rules of the Shar’

15 Islamic Jurisprudence
The Police, the *Wali* and the Sultan administer the affairs of the nation
And identify the culprit, and weigh up carefully the crime and prove
If they find the crime is obvious, they would refer the culprit to us
To see the just opinion of the *Shar’* applied to him

IBN SULEIMAN: My Lord
Your view is mine too
You made it clear
In such a manner that someone like me cannot perceive its beauty
Allow me to exhibit my view
In my free from cleverness of words
I may ask myself now
Who are we, and what is wrong with this Council?
We are the men of knowledge, people of the *Shar’*
And the *Wali* asks us to give our *Fatwa*\(^\text{16}\) in a matter...
We have to be competent in our *Fatwa*
It does not matter to me the name of the defendant present to us
*Alhallaj* to us, is a case, not a person standing trial
As if the Wali is asking us
What is the just rule of the *Shar’*
Applied to him who corrupts in the land, and sows the seeds of *fitna*\(^\text{17}\)

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\(^{16}\) Formal legal Islamic opinion
\(^{17}\) Strife, turmoil, civil war
Here we are immersed in the rules, we spread them, we opt from them and we say:

To the Wali, not to Alhallaj

This is the rule of the Shar’

On him who corrupts the land, and sows the seeds of Fitna

That his legs be amputated, his hands, and be crucified on a trunk of the tree

And the court is adjourned

Is our fatwa binding to the Wali?

No...He may execute it

Or takes back his order

And here we are not responsible for a shed blood in injustice or justice

IBN SUREIJ: No, no, Ibn Suleiman

What you are weaving from well woven speech

Is the snare of the devil

When words raise a sword, they are the sword

The judge does not issue a fatwa, but holds the balance of justice

He does not rule phantoms, but souls dear to God

Except when they are taken by right, or in justice

The Wali and the judge are important

For omnipotence and right

Their goals are not approached by stallions of ability

They cannot attain their goals

Except when the knights of justice

Hold their bridles
If you desire to upset the status
To throw the knights of justice
Dead under the hooves of the stallions of omnipotence
Then I excuse myself from your court.

ABU OMAR: Ibn Sureij
This is a special court of justice
Looking into a special affair
And as it goes with the saying

IBN SUREIJ: (Interrupting)
Special...special....special
Has this court been endowed with injustice..?
Tell me in a clear statement
Are we judges in the name of God
Or judges in the name of the Sultan?

ABU OMAR: You tell us
Do you deny that the Sultan is the representative of the God of the universe on the worlds?

IBN SUREIJ: That is the just Sultan..

ABU OMAR: Do you want to dismiss from Our Lord the attribute of justice?

IBN SUREIJ: On the contrary, I want to assert it to him
Justice is not a heritage the livings receive from the dead
Or an insignia of rule that precedes the name of the Sultan when he is appointed
Like his turban or sword
The just king is dead
Long live the just king
Justice is a stance
Justice is an eternal question raise every time
If you were inspired by the answer, it is formed in other words
And another question is ensued, requiring an answer
Justice is a ceaseless dialogue
Between the Sultan and his authority

ABU OMAR: Justice..justice..justice
What do you want so justice be applied?

IBN SUREIJ: To listen to the voice of the defendant presented to us And ask ourselves and conscience..

ABU OMAR: Heh..
He does not want to speak
Anyway, our court is still in session
Let him make us listen to some of his nonsense
You old man with uncombed beard
What do you defend yourself with?

IBN SUREIJ: (To Alhallaj)
O, Hallaj
Do not defend yourself
But tell us what is inside it
If it is right, we would know it with you
If it is falsehood
We would draw your attention to it
And would find you guilty of..

ALHALLAJ: Did you promise if it was right....
You would proceed with me?
ABU OMAR: Proceed with you..
   You are either a naive man
   Or more intelligent, more than we imagine
   That is why you have spoilt the vagabonds among the
   Commoners
   In any case, there is no harm
   We may become among your followers (Sarcastically)
   Who are you, what is the matter with you...?

ALHALLAJ: I am a man of the common muwali\textsuperscript{18},
   of poor origin and roots
   My esteem does not rise to heavens, and my wealth did
   not raise me high to it
   I was born like thousands of people born, like thousands
   in this life
   Because a poor man, one night, sought to the lap of a
   poor woman
   And there quenched the bitterness of his hard times
   We die like thousands who grew up, living on the bread
   of the suns..
   And drink rain water
   You find them sad young lads on sad roads
   And you wonder how they grew and became tall and
   mature
   And this life is sparing
   I wandered in the lanes of life, entered its dismal cellars
   With my palm I hid the flame of the noon in the deserts
   And lit my eye, my own guide and friend in the darkness

\textsuperscript{18} Muwali are the Non-Arab Muslims
And the sun of the day melted my mind, and the oil of the lamps on the pages of the books
I ran after knowledge many years, like a dog sniffing the smell of the quarry
And follows it, then tricks it until it catches it, it runs, and attacks
Knowledge did not make my heart happy, but added more fearful bewilderment,
That made me cries and shakes
I felt I am lonely and little like a drop of hue
And a grain of sand
And a miserable broken heart, afraid and coward
My learning never led me to knowledge
I suppose I knew the outlines of this existence
Its towns and villages
Its valleys and shelters
Its history of its ancient ownership
And vestiges of its new ownerships
How by knowing the secret of existence, its aim, its beginning and end
To eliminate my fear, fear of death, and fear of life, and fear of fate
To be reassured
I asked the Shaikhs, and was told
Come closer to god, pray so you will not be mislead..
pray to be happy
I was oblivious of my prayer, so I prayed to the god of death, and the god of life, and the god of fate
And the wind of fear was blowing in my bones and roaring like the wind of the wilderness
And while I was kneeling and bowing and worshipping
I realised that I was praying for my fear, not for God...
I was a polytheist not monotheist
And my god was my fear
And I prayed vying for His heaven
So that the image of domed Courts are depicted in my eye
And I hear the temptation of jewels, and whispering of silky clothes
And I felt that I was selling my prayers to God..
If I perfected the skill of prayers the price would be higher
And I was a polytheist, not a monotheist
And my god was avarice
And a question mystified my heart:
Disbelief in God is the destiny of creatures
Otherwise, how could I only pray for Him
And empty my heart from others
So as to alleviate fear from my thoughts
And to be reassured
(A Pause)
Like meeting yearning the love of thirsty deserts the yearning of bountiful clouds
So was my meeting with my Shaikh
Abi’l Aass Amre bin Ahmad,, may his God sanctify his grave
Love brought us together, I loved questioning, and he loved offering
He gives, and the stone of the heart is moistened
And gives, and the veins are hued and certainty glitters
And gives, and my branch is verdant
And gives, and my saying and thought flourish
And he unclothes me, and wraps me with the rag of knowledge
He says it is love, the secret of rescue, you love and admit
And be buried in soul of your beloved, you become he who prays, and you are the prayer
And you are the faith and god and the mosque
I was loved till I loved, I imagined till I saw
Saw my beloved, and he presented me with the perfection of beauty, beauty of perfection
And I presented him with the perfection of love
And I buried myself in his.

ABU OMAR; Silence,, this is obvious blasphemy!
IBN SURAIJ: This is one of the conditions of Sufis
Should not be considered in our tribunals
It is a matter between man and his creator
No one judges this but God
Let us question him about instigating the commoners
For this the Sultan had apprehended him here
Have you spoilt the commoners, Hallaj?
ALHALLAJ: No one corrupts the affairs of the commoners except a corrupt Sultan, who enslaves and starves them
IBN SULIEMAN: Does that mean, you were goading on disobeying the rulers?

ALHALLAJ: On the contrary, I was goading on obeying the Lord of the rulers
God created the world with its rules and systems
Why was it disturbed and the rules were shaken?
He created man in his own image in the best form
Why was he lowered to the level of animals?

ABU OMAR: What does this Shaikh mean?
Is this also one of the conditions of the Sufis?
Or is he hiding behind confused articulations
To hide the face of his terrible crime?
I am asking you an explicit question
To give an explicit response
Are you claiming to be a Sufi..

ALHALLAJ: God classifies me as He wishes

ABU OMAR: Are you claiming that you have forsaken this world and its affairs?

ALHALLAJ: Here I am in this world,
Sir Keeping myself busy responding to your questions

ABU OMAR: Have you sent letters to Abu Bakre Almatharai and Others to demonstrate against the State?

ALHALLAJ: The State...?
I do not occupy myself with the State
I occupy it with the hearts of my beloved

ABU OMAR: You deny..?
Doorman ...
Tell the police to summon the Almatharai

DOORMAN: Almatharai fled Baghdad, My Lord
And so did Hamad Attoloni and Alqanani

ABU OMAR: Since when?...

DOORMAN: Two days ago
Since a spy at the Court told them
About the nearing of the arraignment of Alhallaj

ABU OMAR: How did you know...

DOORMAN: The police told me, My Lord

ABU OMAR: (To Alhallaj) I suppose you shall continue denying
But I shall convict you by your own words
Did you send letters?

ALHALLAJ: Bits from my heart I present to the hearts of my beloved..

ABU OMAR: What is in it?

ALHALLAJ: Reminding them that Man is wretched in the kingdom of God
God did not create us to torture us, and belittle us in His Eyes
But to see us grow, and our forehead touches the face of the sun
Or have fun under its mantle like joyful lambs

ABU OMAR: Why did you send them your poisoned letters?

ALHALLAJ: This is what occurred to me
I saw poverty bolstering in the streets
And destroying the spirit of humans
I asked myself:
What should I do?
Should I invite all the poor
To drop the sword of discontent
In the heart of the unjust?
What a wretchedness to drop some evil by some evil
And cure a sin by a crime
What should I do?
I ask the unjust
To eliminate injustice off the people
But can a word open
A heart locked by an intellectual bolt?
What could I do?
I have nothing but to speak
And let my words be carried by ravelling wind
And let me commit it to paper as a testament of a man
with a vision
Perhaps a thirsty heart amongst the hearts of elite of the nation
Finds these words agreeable
And paddles with it in the roads
And patronizes it on becoming in charge
And balances between the ability and the thought
And combines wisdom with action...

ABU OMAR: Do you want poverty to be eliminated from the land?
ALHALLAJ: What is poverty?
Poverty is not hunger from food and need of nakedness to attire
Poverty is compulsion
Poverty is applying poverty to subjugate the soul
Poverty is applying poverty to kill love and implant hatred
Poverty says – to the rich-
Hate all the needy people
They wish the elimination of your fortunes
And it says to the needy
When you are hungry eat the flesh of your brother
God says to us:
Be beloved and lovers
Poverty says to us:
Be hated and haters
Hate...hate...hate
This is the saying of poverty

ABU OMAR: This is a matter that cannot be kept silent about
This Shaikh says:
Man is wretched in the Kingdom of God
This means that the nation is unhappy under the Caliphate of Our Lord
And says:
Poverty is behaving noisily on the streets
This means the nation cannot find food
Let us then ask who usurped the food!
And says:
But the word cannot open a heart locked by an intellectual bolt?
Meaning the princes and the well off
And these doubtful terms
Lead the poor to disregard obedience...
And obeying discord
And for this I can satisfactorily judge him to be indicted and punished
What do you think Ibn Suleiman?

(Before Ibn Sulieman replies, the Doorma inters hurriedly)

DOORMAN: A messenger from the Minister of the Court
Asks for permission to enter

ABU OMAR: From the Minister of the Court
He may enter...

MESSANGER: My Lord the Minister of the Court
Sends his regards
And addresses this letter to you

(Gives Abu Omar the letter, opens it, and looks in it)

ABU OMAR: (looking in the letter)
My Lord the Minister of the Court
Kindly and generously
Tells us in his letter

(Reads)
The state has forgiven Alhallaj
With regard what he is accused of, and the Sultan has been certain of his instigating the commoners and the mobs to be corrupt and has forgiven him completely and irrevocably.
IBN SULEIMAN: This is really, very kind of Our Lord

ABU OMAR: *(Resuming looking in the letter)*

But the Minister of the Court adds:

(Suppose we ignored the right of the Sultan..
What should we do with the right of God?
We have been told that *Alhallaj*
Says that God inters inside him, or what Satan wishes
From delusions and sins
And for this may I request if he should be asked about his blasphemous charge
The *Wali* may forgive him who has committed a crime in his right
But does not forgive him who commits a sin against the right of God,

IBN SULEIMAN: This is also right!

IBN SURAIJ: But this is a cunning deceit

You have tightened the noose of death
But you feared his memory may live
And wanted to eliminate it
But you feared the anger of the commoners who I hear their voice in this court
And wanted him to be delivered slain
Slain in reputation and name

*O Hallaj* ..

Do you believe in God?

ALHALLAJ: He is our creator and to him we return

IBN SURAIJ: This is enough to prove his belief
ABU OMAR: O Ibn Sureaij
    I do not investigate his belief
    But the manner of his belief
IBN SURAIJ: The manner of his belief..
    Would you desire to excavate his heart
    Is this the right of the Wali
    Or is it the right of God
ABU OMAR: It is the right of the judges of the Shar’
IBN SURAIJ: No, but this is the right of God
    I dare not ask a man about his belief
    If you would like to proceed with this sin....
ABU OMAR: We shall proceed, Ibn Suraj
IBN SURAIJ: Then I excuse myself from your Council
ABU OMAR: As you wish, Ibn Suraj
    (Ibn Suraj leaves the court, exits hurriedly from the hall, saying)
    But this is the right of God
    But this is the right of God
ABU OMAR: We are still in session
    (Returns to the letter)
This is a post script in the letter of the Minister of the Court...reads...
‘May I request the people of Justice, the Judges of the Right
To refer the matter of Alhallaj witnesses of truth
And the Police have gathered them at the door of the hall
So as to relieve you from this matter.’
Doorman
Who is at the door?

DOORMAN: Ashshebli the Sufi and some of the commoners

ABU OMAR: Let them in

(The Doorman leaves, enters in the company of Ashshabli, followed by the group of the poor we saw in the First Scene)

(Ashshebli advances)

ABU OMAR: Come forward, Shebli

(Ashshebli advances in front of the Court)

ABU OMAR: Do you know this Shaikh?

(Ashshebli nods indicating agreeing)

What do you know about him?

ASHSHEBLI: My Lord... forgive me, and let me go

They pulled me from my beloved
And brought me guarded unwillingly

ABU OMAR: If you ever loved justice

Give your testament to us about the truth of the matter of Alhallaj

ASHSHEBLI: About the truth of his matter...?

This is a power that no one has but God

ABU OMAR: Is he not a friend of yours?

ASHSHEBLI: And an highly esteemed Imam of our order

ABU OMAR: Do you claim like him

That God appeared to you...
Or he interred inside your body?

ASHSHEBLI: each one of us talks about his own condition
Or keeps silent when he beholds

Alhallaj beholds...
And is happily mad, till he hallucinates and shouts
While I take pleasure in my silence

ABU OMAR: In you also God interred?

ASHSHEBLI: My Lord

If you loved and were faithful to your promise
Does your being remains your being
Or do you melt in your beloved
By this people of love feel
A soul is melt in its creator
Nothing in your world except his entity
Even you
Have become so

ABU OMAR: Blasphemy ... blasphemy
Are these your words or the words of Alhallaj?

ASHSHEBLI: My Lord

May you please...dismiss me..you are throwing me in hell
I promised God
Not to disclose his blessings
Not to disclose the face of mysteries
Never to talk about my condition
Let me keep my promise, and dismiss me

ABU OMAR: It is the words of Alhallaj, then ....

ASHSHEBLI: (Imploringly) Could I go, My Lord

ABU OMAR: Go out

(Ashshebli leaves terrified)

What do you think, you people of Islam
Of him who says that God appeared to him
Or that God interred into his body?

THE GROUP: Blasphemer .. *(Kafir)* .Blasphemer *(Kafir)*

ABU OMAR: With what would you penalize him ?

THE GROUP: To be killed, to be killed

ABU OMAR: His blood is your responsibility...?

THE GROUP: His blood is our responsibility

ABU OMAR: And now..leave and walk in the souks

  Go around squares and inns
  And stand by crossroads
  And say what your eyes have witnessed
  That the words of *Alhallaj* about poverty were a mask
  hiding his blasphemy
  But *Ashshebly*, his companion, has disclosed his mystery
  And you were angry for the sake of God, and have executed His will
  And carried his blood in your necks as your responsibility
  And ordered that he should be killed
  And be crucified on the trunk of a tree
  The State did not pass the judgement
  Even we the judges of the State did not pass the judgement
  It is you...
  Who passed the judgement, you passed the judgement..
  Go, tell the commoners
  The commoners have put Alhallaj on trial
Go...go...go..

(They leave in slowly and submissively)

( CURTAIN )
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