Fragrances perceived upon the Prophet’s Birthday

by Fariduddin Attar

done into English by Abdal Hakim Murad
The crown of all the kings is he,
with joyful heart declare!
The lord of all the Prophets he,
his acts beyond compare!

How would he be the Leader of the Poor,
if the slightest of desires had stained his heart?
Poor he remained, because that man’s a Boor,
whose wedding gifts his bride from him do part.

Because he had nothing, he sat on the sand;
Because he was hungry he tied stones to his waist.
Absolute poverty’s proof was in him,
Absolute wealth was his secret within.
The trusted of Prophets,
the proof of the Way;
The king with no seal,
no crown for his sway.

What more can I say?
For thy Qualities’ Array
Past ken of mind and soul,
O’er a hundred worlds hold sway.

If the poet’s reward is the dust on your road,
he receives in each mote a new sun.
He has praised with his soul the dust of your road,
Let him Join it, magnanimous one!
All Prophecy lacked the estate of one Brick,
A gap of greatest sanctity!
Our Prophet said: ‘That precious Gap,
I close for all eternity.’

During his Ascent, heaven’s veil was rent
Because he was God’s intimate for ever.
The very Firmament wished to offer him a Gift,
So God adorned the night with Stars forever.

Paradise is but a single Draught
Sipped from his crystal glass.
From the two M-Letters of his Name
Two worlds have come to pass.
When his religion gave light to the world,
The other rites halted and stayed, as God knows;
For what may become of the myriad Stars
When over the world a new Sunrise glows?

His miracles Astounding cannot rightly be descried.
His essence cannot rightly be explained.