West-East Divan

The Poems, with "Notes and Essays": Goethe's Intercultural Dialogues



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"Notes and Essays" translation assisted by PETER ANTON VON ARNIM

West-East Divan

by

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Translated

by

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Moganni Nameh
Book of the Singer

Twenty years I let pass by,
Relishing my destined lot;
Time that lent a pleasure high,
As when Barmecides had wrought.

Hegira

North and South and West — they shake!
Thrones are cracking, empires quake,
To the purer East, then, fly
Patriarchal air to try:
Loving, drinking, songs among,
Khizer's rill will make you young.

There, in what is pure and right,
Generations I, with might,
Urge to depth of origin
Where they from the Lord would win
Earthly-worded Heaven-lore;
They will rack their brains no more.

Where their fathers they respected,
Alien rule at length deflected,
Youthful limits I'll embrace:
Thought confined in faith-wide space;
Word still worthy to be heard
For it was the *spoken* word.

Mine with shepherd-lives will mesh
At oases that refresh
When with caravans I wander,
Coffee, shawls, and musk up yonder;
Every path I'll travel down
From the desert to the town.

As we ride the rocky way
Solace in your song will stay,
Háfiz, when the leader will,
High on mule-back, music-thrill
Lend, that stars might wake in light
While the robbers quake in fright.

I'll in baths and taverns, too,
Holy Háfiz, think of you
If my Lovely lift her veil,
Fragrant hair shake, amber-pale:
Poet's lyric whispered loves
Heat with sweet the houri-doves.

If you envy him this joy
Or would spoil it for the boy,
Know that poet-words await
By the paradisal gate —
Softly knocking, they will sway,
Asking for Eternal Day.

Blessing Pledges

True believers' *talisman*
Luck will gain: carnelian.
Onyx-mounted, hallowed, this
Consecrated lips may kiss.
Every ill it drives away,
Guards you everywhere you stay
If the graven word will say
Allah's name, which when you heed
Will be kindled love and deed.
Women, specially, raised high,
Talismans will edify.

For an *amulet* divine
On a paper write a sign.
Gems confine in narrow frame;
Here a wider space you'll claim.
Souls may write with piety
Longer verses and more free.
Shoulder-hanging, some prefer —
Making them a scapular.

The plain *inscription* nothing more will hide;
Quite self-sufficient, needing nought beside.
Whatever else behind the words may lie,
Candidly answer, "I, I said it — I."

Bring *Abraxas*? No, a fright!
Odd, contorted form, that some
Craftsman made in madness glum,
Thinking it the highest height.
Do I sound a bit absurd?
That's "Abraxas," perfect word!

A *seal ring*'s tricky to design,
The highest meaning, littlest frame.
But should you the essential thing divine,
The word's engraved! — no guessing how it came.

Freethought

Let me get my saddle, don't need rest!
Stay in hut and tent, for you they're best!
I'll be riding footloose, free, and far;
And above my cap, many a star.

He set the stars, that you may guide
Your course, by land and sea;
That you may take delight, beside,
Looking up, steadily.

Talismans

To God belongs the Orient!
To God belongs the Occident!
The Northern and the Southern lands,
Resting, tranquil, in His hands.

He, the Righteous, in His height
Wants, for everyone, what's right.
By His names, all hundred, then,
Lauded be the Lord! Amen.

Straying aims to faze the mind,
Yet from error You unbind.
When I act, when I indite,
Lord, direct my steps aright.

Ev'n when I think of worldly things
I gain a height with mind-quick wings.
The spirit earthly dust won't pulverize:
It's driving, driven, upward to the skies.

Two graces of competing kinds
One in the feat of breathing finds.
Pressured, breathe in; breathe out refreshed:
How well is life-strength intermeshed!
So thank the Lord when you are stressed,
And thank Him when He grants you rest.

Four Gifts of Grace

That Arabs might traverse a wide
Terrain in happiness,
Four gracious aids the Lord applied,
The common gain to bless.

The turban, first, will finely show —
No kingly crown compare;
A tent, to carry when you go —
For living everywhere;

A sword, that better will defend
Than cliff and lofty wall;
A helpful song to thrill a friend,
A maiden to enthrall.

I'll write a song about the flow'rs
Upon her fragrant shawl;
She knows her captivating pow'rs
And likes me most of all.

Flowers and fruits I will for you
On pleasant table set.
You want some moral lessons, too?
The freshest, you will get!

Confession

What will resist being hid? A fire!
Daytime smoke will give it away,
Flames at night, getting huge, climb higher.
Further, what's harder to hide, I'd say,
Is love. No matter how quiet kept,
You'd see how light from the eyes outleapt.
Hardest to hide is a poem you write;
Folks don't put verse under bushels, right?
A poet who's sung a song, fresh-made,
Is filled with the notes that he knows won't fade.
Soon as he's written it, nice and new,
He wants for the world to like it, too.
Reads it to everyone, loud, bright-eyed,
Whether we're tortured or edified.

Elements

What have been the elements
That authentic song have fed
So the laymen love the sense,
Craftsmen, too, are comforted?

Love must be, above all things,
Here the theme the lyric sings:
When it through our music rings,
Better far the tune it flings.

Then the glasses loud will clink,
Sparkle rubies of the wine:
Greeting all who love, or drink,
Garlands beckon, wreaths entwine.

Weapon-tones will be required
And the trumpet bravely sound:
Let, when joy's to flame inspired,
Heroes be in triumph crowned.

Hate, though, isn't justified:
Poets empathy need give.
What is ugly don't deride;
This, like beauty, too, let live.

Elements — these mighty four —
Will the poet nobly mesh.
Háfiz-like, his folk the more
Firing up, he will refresh.

Create and Enliven

Jack Adam was an earthly clod
That God a man would make,
But certain things uncouth and odd
From mother-womb he'd take.

The Elohim into his nose
The best of spirits blew,
At which improved respect arose.
He sneezed — and that was new.

With bones and limbs and head on top
He stayed half clod, not whole,
Till Noah for the needed drop
Had found the needed bowl.

The clump feels, right away, the swing,
Soon as he tastes the wet,
Much as the dough, when leavening,
In motion will be set.

So let us all your holy song
And model, Háfiz, heed:
With drink in clinking goblets strong,
To Heaven's temple lead!

Phenomenon

When to the wall of rain
Phoebus is wed
Rainbow's bright color-stain
Shines overhead.

Then in the haze I see
Once more a bow.
White it is, certainly;
Heavenly, though.

So, cheerful senior, you
Ought not to mope.
White is your hair, it's true;
Love is your hope.

Lovable

Where's the color that could bind
Heav'n with brightness, height for me?
Morn's gray mist will merely blind.
Looking hard, I cannot see.

Maybe tents of a vizier
Built for women meant for love?
Rugs, the festal day to cheer,
For the favored placed above?

White and red, when sprinkled, blent —
Nothing richer to display.
How might Shíraz' wealth be lent
To our graying northern day?

Háfiz! Poppies Persian-born,
Wide extending, neighborly,
Putting war-god red to scorn,
Cover fields for us to see.

May the able ones be wise
Flower grace to raise each day:
We will pray for sunny skies
Brightening them on our way.

Rift

When on the stream-bank light
Cupid-flute's heard,
And on the field at right
Mars-trumpet's stirred,
That's where our eager ear
Fondly is drawn,
Yet by the sweet and clear
Falsely led on.
Flute-tones are ever full
Still in war-thunder.
Mad! — it seems laughable —
Is that a wonder?
Flute notes are ravishing:
Raving, I'm crazed!
Drums in my skullbone ring!
Are you amazed?

Past in Present

Lily, rose, bedewed by dawn,
In the garden bloom nearby;
Friendly, wooded, farther on
Boldly climb the cliffs on high.
And with rounding forest nigh,
And with knightly castle-crown,
Summit-arc will guide the eye
To the valley, looking down.

Green aroma memory —
When we suffered so from love:
Strings upon my psaltery
With the morning sun ray strove,
When the hunter-songs undwindling
Full in rounded tone were heeded,
Sound refreshing and enkindling,
As the heart-deeps wanted, needed.

So the woods forever grow;
Raise your spirit then with this:
What rejoiced you long ago
Now enjoy in others' bliss!
No one then will us reprove
That we care for self alone —
Now, wherever life will move,
Blending in the merry tone.

By our singing borne away,
We're with Háfiz, genial boy:
The perfection of the day
With enjoyers we'll enjoy.

Song and Image

Let the Grecian mold his clay
Into forms that glow,
That his delectation may
In his handcraft grow.

Greater pleasure may be lent:
Hold Euphrates' waves.
In the flowing element
Love what sways and laves.

When I damp the spirit-brand,
Then a song may sound.
Poet, with creative hand,
Makes the water round.

Audacity

What's the healthy principle
Human life has shown?
People like a sound that's full —
Vibrant, rounded tone.

Down with all that halts the race!
Gloomy brooding — worst!
Lyric singing? Second place!
Living — always first.

Let the copper gong of life
Rumble through the soul!
Poets with their inner strife
Reconciled, are whole.

Rough and Ready

Poetry's high-spirited:
I am not to blame!
Heat your blood and free your head —
Then you'll be the same.

If I suffered, every hour,
Bitter misery,
Modest I, with waning pow'r,
More than you, would be!

Nothing wrong with modesty
When a maiden flow'rs.
She'd be courted tenderly —
Fleeing coarser pow'rs.

Modesty have lauded, too,
Men I've counted wise:
Time, eternity in view,
They can well advise.

Poets, though, are spirited!
Be alone and write —
Let your mind by friends be fed
Lively-blooded, bright!

Monk without a cap or cowl,
Don't keep blabbing so!
You will make me want to howl,
Not be modest, *no!*

Hollow phrases, roundabout,
Music will betray.
With my shoes I ground them out,
Rubbed them all away.

When the poet's busy mill
Runs, do not impede!
Once you comprehend, you *will*
Pardon — paying heed.

The Living All

Dust — a comely element,
That in music well belongs,
Háfiz, for your true love meant,
When you sing her charming songs.

Yes, her threshold dust at dawn
More than carpets will appeal —
Gold-sewn blossoms whereupon
Máhmud's eager minions kneel.

Clouds of dust the nimble wind
From her gate will whisk away.
Yet you love it more than twinned
Rose-oil, musk aroma-play.

In the shrouded, cloudy North
Dust of earth had been belied.
In the heat it's coming forth,
And I'm greatly gratified.

It's been long since well-loved gates'
Hinges moved with eager will.
Heal, you rainstorm, one that waits:
Fragrance of the green instill!

Now, when all the thunders roll,
Sky shines through where maelstroms moil;
Wild, the dust the storm-wind stole,
Moistened, falls upon the soil.

Underlying life will spring —
Welling, blesséd work of birth
In a greening — freshening
Vernal regions of the earth.

Blessed Longing

Tell it none, except the wise
(Lest the rabble cry, for shame!),
Living beings I will prize
Who but long for death by flame.

Cooling, after loving-night
When you passed your life-seed on,
Alien feeling will alight
When the candle's gleaming, calm.

Now no more are you surrounded
In the night by shadow-net;
Rather, new desire unbounded
Rends you, that you may beget.

Freedom from long effort granted,
Flown, you're held here fast, illumed,
And at last, by light enchanted,
Butterfly, you'll be consumed.

And until you learn the best,
This: Die, and become!
You are but a sullen guest,
Earth is dull and glum.

Height will reeds of cane fulfil,
Worlds the sweeter grow!
From my able writing quill
Let endearment flow.

Hafis Nameh
Book of Háfiz

Spirit's like the bridegroom who
With the Word-bride rhymes.
That's the wedding we may view,
Prizing Háfiz' lines.

Sobriquet

Poet

Tell me why, Muhammad Shem-
seddin, you are "*Háfiz*" to
Worthy folk.

Háfiz

For asking, you
Merit thanks. I answer, then:
Legacy of the Qur'an
I unaltered carry on
Hallowed in my memory
And, by acting piously,
Daily every injury

Ward away from me and those
Who the Prophet-word and seed
Treasure and their duty heed.
So my name the people chose.

Poet

Háfiz, it would seem to me
That I needn't yield to you:
Like another I will be
When I think as *he* would do.
We are quite alike, I see.
Taking in an image of
Value from the Book I love —
As upon a cloth had He
Image of the Lord impressed —
I revived in quiet breast
(Quelling foe, denier, thief)
With the image of belief.

Accusation

Whom are the devils watching, gathered all
On desert sand, between a rock and wall?
Wait for a moment — look! — and they'll have grabbed —
To take to hell — the men they've lured and nabbed:
Slyest of liars and a crook — what gall!

Why is the poet there? Why's he allowed
To spend his time with that obnoxious crowd?

And — can he guess how such a person acts?
He's all involved with madness, not with facts.
Knowing no limit, stuck with stubborn will —
Spends all his time out in the wilds until
The rhyme-laments he wrote in sand piles spill
Into the wind and waft away;
Even what he himself will say
He doesn't understand, and doesn't care.

His songs are honored, though — and is that fair? —
When the Qur'an they plainly contradict!
You expert legal minds, *you* tell us, then —
Such wisely pious, educated men —
Haven't we some convictions that restrict?

Háfiz? — a scandal-writer, rousing rancor!
Mirza hurled souls to nowhere — doubters' canker! —
What shall we do when no one has an anchor?

Fetwa

Háfiz' lyric writings boldly show you
Truths enduring, firm, uncontroverted.
Here and there, however, little items
Fall outside the bounds of the commandments.
If you'd walk secure, you must be able
Theriac and venom to distinguish.
Yet, with gladdened spirit to surrender
To the pure delight of noble action,
Meanwhile warding off, in thought well-pondered,
Things that only lead to endless torment,
Is the way mistakes may be avoided.
This was written by poor Ebusu'ud,
Be his sins by God in mercy pardoned.

The German Offers Thanks

Holy Ebusu'ud, yes, you've got it!
Here, the holiness the poet wanted;
For precisely to these little items
Found outside the bounds of the commandments
He, high-spirited, is heir apparent,
Ev'n in sorrow happy, moving freely.
Theriac and venom well may
Seem to take one form and then another.
Death's not in the latter, life the former.
For eternal innocence of conduct
Is the truer life, that so is proven

As it injures no one but the doer.
So the poet, old, continues hoping
That, well-pleased, in Paradise the houris
Welcome him in blooming youth transfigured.
Holy Ebusu'ud, yes, you've got it!

Fetwa

The Mufti works of Misri had perused,
One then another — till the lot were done —
Then prudently consigned them to the fire:
A finely written book, and quite destroyed.
Said the high judge, "Let anyone be burned
Who speaks, believes like Misri — he alone
The one exception to the penalty:
For Allah lent His gifts to many a poet.
If in a sinful life he misapply them,
Let him see to it, making peace with God."

Unbounded

That you can make no ending makes you great;
That you have no beginning is your fate.
Your song turns round, a star-vault heaven-frame;
Beginning, ending, evermore the same;
And the clear import of the middle part
Is present at the end, as at the start.

Of joys you are the truest poet-spring,
That wave on wave unnumbered up will fling;
Lips ever ready for a kiss,
From ardent breast a hymn that flows,
Throat eager for the drinker-bliss,
A kind, outpouring heart that glows.

Should the whole world to ruin sink,
Háfiz, with you, with you alone
I'd vie! Desire and painful moan —
We'll share them both, we twins have grown!
To be like you in love, in drink —
My pride, my life in this be shown!

My song, your fire's unique to you!
You have united old and new.

Emulation

I'm hoping that I learn to write with ease
Using your rhyme-form, repetition, too.
First meaning, then the word I'll seek, to please;
Let any end-tone that returns to view
Deepen the meaning innovatively.
No one more gifted at this feat than you.

For as the spark enkindling — rapidly —
Moscow, when horrid rising flames climbed round,
Aroused more wind, by heated winds blown free,
Then vanished, quelled, to higher star-hall bound,
From you came forth eternal glowing gold,
A German heart to liven and make bold.

Measured rhythms charm us, after all;
Talent loves the pleasure they prepare.
Yet how quickly they repel, appal,
Hollow mask, no blood, no meaning there.
Even cleverness will not enthrall
If it can't invent redeeming form,
Getting rid of a morbific norm.

Open Secret

They've claimed you, holy Háfiz,
A mystic tongue command.
These men of words, however,
That word don't understand.

They call you "mystic," thinking
Their nonsense-thought — for shame!
While impure wine they're drinking
And serving in your name.

But you're pure, and *mystically.*
Yet they cannot make it fit
That you're blest without any piety!
And this they will *not admit.*

Hint

Correct are those I've chided, too:
A word can't bring all things to view —
That would defy poetic odds.
The word's a fan! Between the rods —
A glancing pair of comely eyes:
With fans, a gauze we will devise,
That even if it shade her face
The maiden-beauty we may trace.
Her eye! — that is the loveliest:
It lightnings into mine! I'm blest.

To Háfiz

What all desire, you well have known
And aptly understand;
For longing holds, from dust to throne,
All in an iron band.

So great the pain, then sudden cheer —
Oppose it — who would dare?
The first man breaks his neck? No fear:
Forward the next will fare.

Pardon me, Master — don't demur —
For my audacity.
The eye cannot but follow her,
Sweet wand'ring cypress tree.

Her walking foot like tendrils curves
And wantons with the ground.
Her breath, a breeze, caressing, swerves;
Her words light, cloudlike, sound.

Filled with presentiments you go
To view her curling hair.
In fullness dark brown ringlets flow,
Whisper in windy air.

And when you see her forehead, clear,
Your heart is comforted:
A bright, authentic song you hear,
Making your spirit's bed.

And when her lips so sweetly move
The soul such height attains,
You're free, yet would no longer rove
But lay you down in chains.

You breathe — your breath would not return
But soul to soul would flee.
Entwined aromas make you yearn;
They bind, invisibly.

Yet when desire more strongly burns
The drinking-bowl's sublime:
Cupbearer leaves and then returns —
Always another time.

With lightning eye, a heart that quakes,
A lesson he would hear:
While wine your spirit lively makes,
Your teachings will endear.

He feels a roominess of worlds,
A healing rule within,
A swelling breast, light down that curls:
His man-life will begin.

And if no mystery remain
That heart and world may hold,
Love for the thinker you'll retain
Who could the sense unfold.

The royal refuge we've preferred —
Let's keep it ever near:
Say to the Shah a grateful word
And to the good vizier.

These things you know, and sing today,
Tomorrow sing, beguiled.
Your guidance aid us on our way
Through life, when rough or mild.

Ushk Nameh
The Book of Love

Tell me true
What my heart lit.
My heart's with you,
Treasure it.

Models

Hear: keep in mind
Six couples kind.
Word-image kindled; love-stirred, new:
Rustan and Rodawu.
Although unknown, they are not far:
Yussuf and Zuleiká.
A love where none would win:
Férhad and Shirín.
Wholly devoted, ah!
Méjnun and Lailá.
In old age loving saw
Jamil his Buthaynáh.

Sweetest lovers' lark:
Solomon, Lady dark.
Think: all of the above,
And you'll be strong in love.

One More Couple

Ah, love's a merit, ever great!
Its profit who could overrate?
You won't be rich or filled with might,
And yet you'll reach a hero-height.
As of the Prophet men will tell,
We Asra, Wamik laud as well.
Little to say except the name
Of each — and yet they merit fame!
What they have done, to action moved,
Nobody knows. But that they *loved*
We know. To tell it ends our task
When you of Wamik, Asra ask.

Primer

Book of Books, the very oddest
Here — the Book of Love.
Alertly have I read it:
Of joy a few brief pages,
Volumes filled with sorrow;
And then a part that deals with parting.
Rendezvous — a little chapter,
Fragmentary. — Tomes on worry
Lengthened by the clarifers,
Measureless, no end.
O Nizami! — in the long run,
Though, you found the right direction.
Unresolvable — who solves it?
Lovers being reunited.

Yes, it was the glancing eye
And the mouth, the kissing lips,
Rounded body, slender hips,
As on green of Eden lie.
Was she there? Where did she go?
There! she gave — as off she sped —
Gave her self — surrendered, fled! —
Fettering my life in woe.

Warned

I've been caught in locks of hair,
Captured gladly, too.
These, friend Háfiz, could ensnare
Me as well as you.

Ah, but now to plaiting braids
Do the ladies turn:
Helmeted, they fence, fair maids,
As we lately learn.

Those who think the matter through
Won't take fright and run:
Heavy chains we rightly rue,
Lighter ones are fun.

Immersed

So curly-tressed the head, so round! —
Whenever I amid your rich-grown hair
Full-handed roamed, and wandered here and there,
Happy in heart, what depth and health I found!
I'm kissing forehead, lips, and eyes, and brow —
Feel fresh — then wounded — don't know why or how.
My searching five-pronged comb — where should it stay?
Back to your hair, no more to stray —
Even your ear enjoys the play.
Not merely skin, nor merely flesh —

Tender for jesting, loving-fresh!
So fondling, wandering away,
My happy hands in fine-rich hair
Forever up and down will fare.
Thus, Háfiz, *you* have often done;
We but repeat what you'd begun.

Dubious

Of the em'rald shall I tell
That your finger nicely shows?
Though a word might serve us well,
Often — better — nought disclose.

I will say: the color's green
And enlivening the eye,
Yet — won't mention: scar and spleen
In that jewel, too, may lie.

Whoops, I've said it, truth not fleeing!
Mighty, why with pow'r so rife?
"So much peril in your being
As the emerald lends life."

Dearest! Bound in printed band,
Once-free tunes — immobile grown
That in purest heaven-land
Gladly to and fro had flown!

Time, all other life denying,
These alone will stand above:
Every line shall be undying,
Everlasting as our love.

Cold Comfort

I wept and I sobbed at midnight —
You had gone — I sorrowed . . .
Then came the night-time phantoms,
And I felt embarrassed.
I said, "Night phantoms,
Weeping and sobbing
You find me here, whom once you
Swept over while he slept.
I am bereft of treasure.
Think no worse of me now:
The one you called wise —
He's afflicted with evil . . ."
The night-time phantoms —

Gaunt, their faces —
Wafted past,
Whether I am wise or foolish
Not caring in the least.

Contented

"What can you, fool, be thinking of?
You've won the girl over with simple love?
I cannot be happy — it saddens me:
She's merely a master of flattery."

Poet

Even with that, I'm gratified.
I have a reason, don't you see?
Love's a free gift — can't be denied —
What fitting tribute — flattery!

Greeting

What an ecstatic feeling!
Strolling in the country —
Where Hudhud comes across my path.
When I looked in the rock for mussels,
Petrified, of the ancient seas,
Hudhud ran in front,
His crest unfolding;
Preening in a teasing way,
And jesting over death —
He, the living.
"Hudhud," I said, "Indeed!
A beautiful bird are you.
So hurry, hoopoe!
Hasten to tell
My darling that I
Am hers forever.
Truly, you played —
For Solomon
And Sheba's queen —
The pander, long ago."

Submission

"Being consumed, and yet — so friendly!
You fret and grieve, but sing, so fey!"

Poet

Love, like an enemy, will rend me!
So in confession I will say:
I'm singing with a heavy heart.
Glance at the candles, that's their art:
Radiate while you waste away.

Love's pain demanded fitting place
Abandoned and bereft and waste;
My blank and barren heart it faced
And nested in the empty space.

Unavoidable

Who will require on the meadow
Quiet, for birds, be the rule?
Who will instruct not to struggle
Sheep being sheared, but a fool?

Am I unruly? Why blame me?
Cutters will ruffle my wool.
Rougher behavior won't shame me
When they dishevel and pull.

Who can prevent me from singing,
Loud, to the heavens above? —
Clouds, I'll confide in you, flinging
Cries: I am smitten with love!

Secret

People stop and, startled, look
At my darling's eyes.
I, well versed in lovers' book,
Know what this implies.

For it means: the one I love's
He and none beside.
So, good folk, your glance that roves
Need no farther glide.

True, she quickly looks around
With peculiar pow'r —
Signal to the one she's found:
Soon — the sweetest hour!

Deep Secret

"We, whom anecdotes would cheer,
Eagerly desire to hear:
Who may be your dearest dear?
Many rivals need you fear?

You have fall'n in love, we see:
And we hope you'll favored be:
So devoted, though, is *she*?
Little probability..."

I can't stop you, worthy sirs —
Seek her out! But hear my theme:
Striking is that might of hers!
Of her brilliance will you dream.

Shehabeddin, well you know,
Laid his cloak on Ararat:
No reproaches will we throw,
Knowing what he meant by that.

Near the royal throne, I say,
Or before your loved one dear
If your name is mentioned, may
This alone be grateful cheer!

So it dismal was and drear
That Mejnún, when death was near,
Learned that Laila, ever dear,
Nevermore his name would hear.

Tekfir Nameh
Book of Observations

Hear the advice that the lyre will sound!
But it only works if your mind is clear:
The happiest word is doubtful found
When it goes awry in the listener's ear.

What sounds the lyre? Can't be denied:
The prettiest isn't the finest bride.
But it's also true ('tween me and you)
It's good to have prettiest, finest, too.

Five Things

Five things five others never let appear;
You, to my teaching lend an eager ear!
From the proud breast will friendship never spring;
The viler-minded nothing kindly bring;
A mischief maker greatness never gains;
Enviers care not for the poor man's pains;
In vain the liar hopes he'll be believed.
Hold fast to this; by no one be deceived.

Five Others

What speeds up time for me?
  Activity.
What makes life long, yet less?
  Idleness.
What brings in debt?
  Be patient yet.
Makes profit great?
  Don't hesitate.
Earns reverence?
  Self-defense.

Lovable the maiden-gaze that winks;
Kind the drinker's eye before he drinks;
Greeting of a master that commands;
Sunshine in the fall; on *you* light lands.
Kindlier than all — with mental eye
Picture this: a needy hand nearby
Raised to get a little gift — received
Gratefully by one whom *you* relieved.
Greeting, gaze, and gain: to help to live —
View it truly — and you'll always give.

In *Pend Námeh* there's a thought
That your heart was author of:
One to whom a gift you've brought
As another self you'll love.
Give by hand the welcome penny,
Don't amass a legacy.
Now's a time as fine as any,
Better than a memory.

If near the smithy you happen to be,
Who knows? — one day, when your horse needs care...
A cottage in open field you see —
Who knows? — may be that your love lives there.
You meet a good-looking youth, and brave:
Who'll be the winner, you or he?
One thing I'll say of that vine you have:
It's an advantage, certainly.
Just keep alert to the world's concern —
There's nothing further you need to learn.

A stranger's greeting hold in high regard!
Value it as a treasure from a friend.
Just a few words, and then a warm "Farewell!"
He's headed east, you to the west. But then,
When after many years your paths will cross
Quite unexpectedly, you'll shout for joy:
"It's him, there — *that's* the one!" — as if on land
And sea the many days of traveling,
The many roundings of the sun were nought.
Now you will trade your goods, and both will gain!
A former confidence, a latter bond.
Worth many thousands more — that kindly word.
In everyone who greets you, greet a friend.

They have shamed you with your failings,
And with blame regaled,
Grandly candid in their flailings
(*They* have never failed!).
Had they lauded all your merits —
In a friendly way
Taught you — that would be more fair, it's
Better far, I'd say.

Then would not the ever best
Long be hid from me —
Rare the ones that pass the test:
They'd my tutors be.

Me, as pupil, they select
Prudently to teach.
Better penance these Elect
When we're failing preach.

Markets, charming us: "Come buy!"
Knowledge, too, is puffed up high.
Look around with quiet sigh:
See how love will edify.
Day and night you're occupied —
Much to hear, for knowledge wide.
Listen by another door:
Deeper truth will be in store.
If what's right would enter in
Feel your rightful part in Him.
Love that burns with purity
Recognized by God will be.

Faithful to honesty —
Yet I had failed.
Over the years with
Impatience I quailed.
Valued, or valueless —
Which will it be?
"Hey, be a scalawag —
Try it, and see!"
Nothing but misery —
Dismal for me...
Then I thought: "Honesty —
Back to the past!
Even in misery
That will stand fast."

Worry not what entry gate
Led you to the godly town;
Quiet in your place await
Where you've lived and settled down.

Look about, and find the wise
And the mighty in command.
Those are able to advise;
These will strengthen act and hand.

Useful and at peace, if you
To the state are faithful, true,
Know that none will hate you then:
You'll remain belov'd of men.

Loyalty the Prince will view
As an ever-living act:
Thus authentic is the new
As the well-established fact.

Where did I come from? I could never say;
The way I entered, *that* I barely know.
And now and here — a heaven-happy day —
The friendliest of meetings: Joy and Woe.
O brightest fortune when the two are one!
How could they either laugh or cry — alone?

One thing after another, or
Before another... So
Eagerly, boldly all the more
Along the life-road go.
A certain progress you will lack
When stopping, blooms to choose...
Horribly, though, what holds you back
Is being false! Refuse.

Deal with women indulgently!
With crooked rib did God create
Woman — never could make it straight:
Breakable when you bend it, see?
Let it rest — it'll bend yet more.
Adam, troubles for you galore!
Deal with women indulgently:
It's no good when it's broken, see?

Life is a joke that's fallen flat.
Some lack this and some lack that —
Meek or greedy — sad to say...
"Can" and "Luck" will a *big* role play.
"*Bad* luck" adds to the trouble there,
All bemoaning their load of care.
Till in the end the happy heir
Cannot-Willnot away will bear.

Our life is but a game of "Geese."
The more you move ahead,
Closer the goal when efforts cease
(Regrettably, you're dead).

Too often, geese are foolish found
By those who don't speak true.
There! one's turning his neck around
To turn *me* backward, too.

In this our world it's not the same,
Where everything's moving forward.
One stumbles, falls — but you're not to blame
If you don't look back! Quite horrid.

"You claim the years have taken much away:
Authentic pleasure of the senses' play;
Remembering the dalliance loved the best
Not long ago — bold travel, little rest,
Over the countryside — can't stand it! Praise
Of honorable recognition, ways
Of showing bravery in daring action —
No hope! There's nothing granting satisfaction.
Does anything remain worth dreaming of?"

What stays will be enough: Idea, Love.

Find an expert — there's the test
That can show what way is best.
When you've plagued yourself and flailed,
He will know where you have failed.
He'll applaud — and with delight —
When he finds you've got it right.

The generous are cheated,
The pikers' wealth depleted,
The clever led astray,
The thinkers lose their way,
The rigid is outflanked,
The credulous unthanked.
The strength of lies relieve:
Let the deceived deceive!

He that can command will praise
And will be reproving you.
If your duty you would serve,
Take the one, the other too.

Though he'll laud a trivial act,
Chide you when you're at your best,
Be high-spirited, with tact:
In the end you'll pass the test.

Mighty ones, by God be led!
You're weak, too. Strong, only He.
Act and suffer, as may be;
Ever stay high-spirited.

To Shah Shuja and Those Like Him

Mid Transoxanian song
Of crowning praise
Our hymns are loud and strong
To laud your ways!
From every fear set free,
We live in you.
Live long! Your realm let be
Longeval, too!

Highest Favor

Quite untamed, as I was then,
I a master quickly found.
Many years had vanished when
I as well a mistress found.
As a trial wasn't spared
They in me one loyal found,
And for me they kindly cared
As a treasure they had found.
None two masters ever fed
Who a finer fortune found.
Gladness they have merited —
They rejoiced when I'd been found.
Lucky star my life has led
Since I both of them had found.

Firdusi speaks

"O world! how shameless and wicked are you!
You feed, teach, and kill — all the same when or which."
Yes, only one favored by Allah, 'tis true,
Will feed himself, teach himself — living, and rich.

But then, what is wealth but a sun that will warm?
A beggar will relish it; equally, we.
Let none of the wealthy antagonized be
A sweet-dreaming beggar bliss ever to harm.

Jalaloddin Rumi speaks

You'd linger in the world — it, dreamlike, flees.
Travel — but fate will say what land one sees.
You can't hold back the heat, or keep the cold.
And all that blooms will rapidly get old.

Zuleika speaks

In mirrors, beautiful am I.
But fate will make me age, you say.
Unchanging, we — in Allah's eye:
Love Him in me — right now. Today.

Renj Nameh
Book of Anger

"Where did you get it from?
How could it ever come?
With life incitement dwindling
How did you find that kindling,
A final driving spark
Reviving in the dark?"

To you it needn't seem
A small or common gleam:
In bold, unmeasured motion
Upon the stellar ocean —
There I was not forlorn
But feeling newly born.

The sheep in waves of white
Upon the hillside bright
Watched by an earnest guide
Who served me food, beside —
What pleasing people these,
With peaceful husbandries!

In shudderings of night
A threat of sudden fight —
The camels' moaning drear
That pierced the soul, the ear —
The drovers rode unbowed
Who daily showed so proud.

We traveled high and wide,
More room on every side:
Drawn forward, ever led,
It yet appeared we fled.
Past armies, desert, we:
The blue, delirial sea.

Not a rhymer can we find
But will think himself the best,
Every fiddler's deaf and blind
To the skill of all the rest.

Chiding, though, I'll set aside.
If to friends we honor give;
What will happen to our pride?
Can one live if others live?

That's the thinking in a house
Where I doubted it was nice
When the people mixed up mouse
Dung and coriander spice.

Each a broom would like to be —
Clean the mental house at last!
But the sweepers cannot see
What was broomlike in the past.

When the nations are divided
In reciprocal contempt,
That distinctions are elided
Is what no one ever dreamt.

Boasters boldly self-anointed
Such have mocked, by envy moved;
They've been badly disappointed
When the bragging valid proved.

If a person is cheerful, emits a glow,
Trouble comes from a neighbor.
The active one relishes life and labor —
Some want to stone him, though.

And when, thereafter, he is dead,
Others are glad to spend,
To honor the needy life he led
With a monument at its end.

The crowd should take a little rest,
Measure their gain if they can:
I think by now it would serve them best
Quite to forget the man.

True predominance, you'll feel,
From the world can not be banned.
With the best I wish to deal:
Masters with an able hand.

True, the foolish and constrained
Ever were most violent,
And the half-men, narrow-aimed,
On our subjugation bent.

I've declared that I am free
From the fools as from the wise:
These showed equanimity,
Those their *own* woes might devise.

Thinking that, by love or might,
Finally we'd be united,
Sunny day they turned to night,
Phantom shadows wild incited.

Háfiz, Ulrich Hutten too,
Warded off their foes who took
Symbol-cowls of brown or blue;
Mine like other Christians look.

"Name them, then — the enemy!"
No, we'll leave the matter there.
They, in our society,
Gave me quite enough to bear.

Keep adhering to the good,
Likely none will chide.
Doing what you think you should
Is a noble guide.
Even if you put a fence
Round your property,
I will trust to confidence,
Undeceived and free.

Folks are good, so I would say —
Better yet would be,
Thinking: what another may
Do is not for me.
Travel calmly and with grace,
None will call you foe;
Heading to a single place,
Best together go.

We'll encounter here and there
Much that may oppose.
When in love, what friends are fair?
Helpers? Don't need those.
Money, honor, people would
Gather on their own;
Even wine (so loyal, good)
Discord will have sown.

Háfiz human fooleries
Helpfully explains,
Over sad stupidities
Having racked his brains.

Little, doubtless, will it aid
Saying, "World, good-night!"
When you find your aims betrayed,
You can have a fight!

Things on names are never based.
Let them quietly unfold:
I love beauty, goodness placed,
Formed, as by the Lord, of old.

One I love — this love I need.
None I hate. If hate's required
That's a call that I can heed,
Hate *en masse* if so desired.

Yet if you would wisdom win,
Separate the good and bad;
What you found a splendor in,
Little rightness might have had.

You'll attain correctness by
Living in well-founded ways.
Gossiping so time will fly
Leads to hollowness and haze.

Let the weatherbeaten Rumbler
Parry wits with Herr Hair-Splitter;
Then the irritable Grumbler,
Brilliant, mid his ilk will glitter.

We've a need for novelty
Daily changing, more and more,
And we let distraction be
Devastation at the core.

This our Germans have preferred
In a new or ancient strain.
Hidden hear a little bird:
"Thus it was and will remain."

"Méjnun" means — I cannot claim
That it *really* meant "insane."
"Méjnun" I myself would name.
Do not blame me, or complain.

When my heart, in honesty,
Opens up to spare you pain,
Do not yell, "What lunacy!
Get the rope, the stake, the chain!"

When you've fettered them at last
(Clever people — in disgrace),
Held by stabbing nettles fast,
Flaming shame in vain you'll face.

Have I ever counseled you
How your *battle* you should fight?
Scolded, told you what to do
When the *tranquil* time was right?

Fishermen may peacefully
Throw a net without my aid.
Carpenters will sharpen T-
squares the best. They've learned their trade.

You, however, claim to know
More than I, who've often thought
"Nature's aid! — to this I owe
All that on my own I've wrought."

Have you felt an equal strength?
Fine, apply it now, I ask!
Look into my works at length —
Learn it well: he knew his task.

Wanderer's Peace of Mind

Wasted time, what's mean and base
Vainly to deride.
That a mighty ill we face
Cannot be denied.

Avarice it will command,
Aiding avid gain.
Morals are distorted and
Arrogance will reign.

Wanderer! Such willful greed,
Would you still resist?
Pay the whirlwind-filth no heed —
Let it turn and twist.

Who would from the world demand
What it, dreaming, lacks, delays,
Looking sidewise, backward, and
Slighting so the day of days?
All its effort, eager will,
Limps the quicker life behind.
What a vanished need might fill
Granted late today you find.

Self-praising? A mistake, we feel;
Doers of good all do it, though, we see.
But if their words the simple truth reveal,
The good's the good — will always be.

Fools! — let the wise be glad to ponder
The wisdom of his attitude —
Leave him, a fool like you, to squander
The world's insipid gratitude.

Think you then, from mouth to ear
Genuine's the mental gain?
O you fool! Tradition's mere
Spinning of the whimsied brain.

Wise the judgment we've applied:
You in fetter-faith who rave
Reasoning alone can save,
Which you long ago denied.

Whether it's German, English, or
Italian, French we're born to speak,
A single thing makes people seek:
Our vanity's demanding more!

We love no recognition by
A group of friends, or just by one,
Unless our pride it satisfy
And put our selfhood in the sun.

Let what's right the triumph gain
On the morrow from its friends
If today the bad attain
Fame that place and favor lends.

Who the last three thousand years
Will not reckon with, appears
Living on from day to day
In a blind, benighted way.

Formerly when the Qur'an was cited
You'd name the sura. 'Twas thought the best
That Muslims' piety not be slighted,
Their ethics lent respect and rest.
The newer dervishes haven't advanced:
Old-and-new chatter — endurance test!
Bafflement — every day enhanced:
O Holy Qur'an! O Eternal Rest!

The Prophet speaks

Someone's peeved that Allah's gleam
Grants Muhammad help and hope?
Let him fasten to a beam
In his hall a sturdy rope
And be hanged with knot well tied.
He will feel that wrath subside.

Timur speaks

High-spirited my warning storm!
Priests — you condemn mendaciously!
Had Allah wanted me a worm,
A worm He'd have created me.

Hikmet Nameh
Book of Proverbs

With talismans will I this book bestrew.
So amplitude and balance there will be.
With a believing needle, prick — and see:
Everywhere is a helpful word for you.

From today and from tonight
Desire no more
Than yesterday had brought to light.

People born in evil days
Even evil things will praise.

Why something is light
He knows who invented it, getting it right.

The sea is flowing ever,
The land contains it never.

Something, I fear, each hour is wrong.
Life is short and the day is long.
The longing heart would wend away —
Maybe to heaven, couldn't say;
Here, there, happy it cannot be —
Till from itself 'twould rather flee.

Fleeing to the beloved's breast
In heaven, unaware, 'twill rest;
Life's whirlwind rends it then away,
While in one place it yet would stay;
Whatever's wanted, lost! One rule:
Stays till the end a self-made fool.

Your fate is proving you, wise plan at root.
It wants you a renouncer. Follow, mute.

It's day — let man bestir himself, not shirk.
The night will come when further none may work.

Why rail at the world? It's made, it's there.
The God of Creation took thoughtful care.
Your lot has been chosen, the mode is meet;
So, now you've begun it, the trip complete.
For sorrowing, worrying, nought will alter
But fling you off balance, and all will falter.

When the heavy-laden wail:
"Hope and help forever fail!" —
Healing is effective, true,
With a friendly word from you.

"Clumsy, unwise — so high to set
Yourself when extra luck you get!"
The maiden didn't seem upset
But visited again, you bet.

How splendid the heritage, never scant!
Time is my wealth — and my field to plant.

For love of good, good deeds to do —
Into your blood instill it deep;
If children should dishearten you,
Goodness the grandchild's heart will keep.

Anvari claimed — a clever man, oustanding —
A knowledge of deep heart, high mind commanding:
"In every place and time, belov'd will be
Uprightness, judgment, flexibility."

But why lament your foes?
How could you ever make friends with those
For whom your nature, and mode of being,
Rebuke in the silence their way of seeing?

No folly is harder to tolerate!
A wise man's told by a fool:
When you do something truly great,
Make modesty your rule.

Were God a neighbor such as you
Or — just as bad — like me,
Small honor would to us accrue.
He lets each person be.

Admit it! Greatest and the best
Are poets of the East, not West.
But we have wholly equaled them
In hatred of our fellow men.

Everyone wants to put on shows,
For in our world that's how it goes.
I'd let a man be gross, God knows,
But only in a field he grows.

Pardon, Lord, our sin.
Wrens big voices win.

If envy wants to rend its prey,
Let it feed on its hunger, pray.

To keep your self-respect,
You'd best well-bristled be!
Though falcons prey dissect,
Wild boars from beaks are free.

The priestly orders dare berate,
Who tried to foster fear?
What I have told them plain and straight,
Oblique they'll never hear.

To praise and name a hero great
A man will love who's boldly fought.
Merit one can't evaluate
Who heat and cold has suffered not.

Purely do good for love of good.
Nothing of it will stay for you —
And even, maybe, if it could,
It won't stay with your children too.

If you'd evade the most rapacious thief,
Conceal your gold, departure, and belief.

How does it happen? Everywhere
We hear apt things, yet many — dumb!
Youth parrot elders' words with care
And think these from themselves have come.

Don't let yourself be led astray
Vainly to contradict.
The wise become ignorant when they
With the ignorant conflict.

"Why does truth seem gone for good —
Hidden down in deepest ground?"

None see it at the time they should.
But if the truth in time were found,
In plenitude it would appear,
Be gently felt and light and clear.

Should your mind to the question go
How generosity might flow,
Your cakes onto the water throw:
Who'll savor them you'll never know.

When a spider once I killed,
I was worried: was it right?
To partake of day's delight
We were meant, as God had willed.

"The night is dark, with God is light."
Why don't we have His kind of sight?

Colorful company!
God's table: here sit friend and enemy.

A stingy man you're calling me —
Give what to squander, and you'll see.

Want me to show you all the land?
First on the roof you'll have to stand.

Silent, you're free of care:
Under the tongue! — a man lies hiding there.

Master, two servants — well
His wealth will not be kept.
A house wherein two women dwell
Is never cleanly swept.

You people, in perplexity
Say merely, "Ipse dixit."
Why man and wife, or he and she?
"Adam and Eve" will fix it.

Why am I thanking Allah? He
Knowledge and sorrow kept apart, for man.
Despair would flatten us if we
Could know disease the way the doctor can.

I find it foolish, and quite odd,
That stubborn folk seek to deny:
If "Islam" means we all serve God,
We all in Islam live and die.

New in the world, a house he'll build.
He's gone — another lives there now
Who'll rearrange it anyhow.
Building goes on — the stir unstilled.

Within my home I'll let the guest
Decry what seemed for years the best;
Don't be surprised, though, if, outside,
His little whims I won't abide.

My home — I hope You like it, Lord —
Where I am living modestly.
A bigger one I might afford —
The man inside would still be me.

You're always safe, I'd say —
To you, the best belongs:
Two friends, all cares away;
Wine goblet, book of songs.

"How startling, what a marvel-feat,
With ugly Luqmân's aid!"
The reed, the cane, is never sweet
Until the sugar's made.

Splendidly the Orient
Spread beyond the Middle Sea:
One who Háfiz love had lent
Calderón hears perfectly.

"Why have you the *right* hand made
Richly decked — unfittingly?"
Left for right may gifts unlade,
Needing more activity.

If one to Mecca were to ride
On Jesus' donkey, it would not
By this be deepened in its thought
But as a donkey still abide.

Mud trampled long
Gets broad, not strong.

But if you pound it down with might
In solid form, you'll shape it right.
A sound analogy, I'd say,
Would be the brick they call pisé.

Don't, worthy souls, your fate bewail:
Who fails not, knows when others fail.
But one who fails may pass the test
Of seeing others at their best.

"In writing thank-yous you're behind
Schedule. Why not start?"
Trifles preoccupy your mind:
A gift lives in my heart.

You must work for good repute
And distinguish, as will suit.
Wanting more than this, corrupts.

The flood of passion storms in vain
The never conquered solid land. —
Poetic pearls thrown on the sand!
And that, for living, is a gain.

Confidant

Many petitions did you grant,
Even when harm to you was done;
The good man's wishes were but scant,
So little risk you would have run.

Vizier

The good man's wishes were but scant;
Yet, had I given him that grant,
He would at once have been undone.

It happens, but it none behooves:
Truth to the realm of Error moves.
With him, she really feels at home.
Who'll chide her if she likes to roam?
But — Error wants to marry Truth?
She'd battles have! — regret and ruth.

I'll tell you what I cannot stand:
So many talk and sing — disasters!
What drives the lyric from the land?
The poetasters!

Tímur Nameh
Book of Tímur

Winter and Tímur

Now, with mighty horror, Winter
Held them all surrounded. Spreading
Icy breath among the people,
He combined the rival windstreams
Into opposition harsh.
Over them he lent his weapons
To the storm frost-pointed, sharpened —
Then came down to counsel Tímur.
Shouting, threatening, he started:
"Act more slowly, gently, wretched
Tyrant, mustering injustice!
Will men's hearts continue being
Singed and burnt in further arson?
If of the accurséd spirits
You are one, I am the other!
You are old, I too. The people
And the land we're paralyzing.
Mars, you are! And I am Saturn —
Malefactor constellations,
Horridest when they're combined.
If you kill off spirits, numbing
The surrounding air, my currents
Are yet colder than your coldest.
You torment the wildest armies,
Credulous, of thousand martyrs:
Fine! — in time be sure that *I* will
(Help me, God!) far worse engender.
And, by God! I owe you nothing.

Hear me, God! — what I am asking!
Yes, by God! from cold that's fatal
You, old man, won't be protected
By a fireplace with its coal-glow —
Not one flame-tongue in December."

To Zuleika

To be fondled by their fragrance
And to have your joy increase,
Thousand budding roses' flagrance,
Though yet glowing, had to cease.

To possess a tiny phial
Of aroma so impearled
With its finger-slender style
Had required of us a world:

World of loving aspiration
That in fullness ever strong
Breathed in Bulbul's ministration,
Avian soul-exciting song.

Should that torture then torment us
If your pleasure it empow'red?
Had not Tímur's rule portentous
Myriad worthy men devoured?

Suleika Nameh
Book of Zuleika

I was thinking, in the night,
That in sleep I saw the moon;
But when I awakened,
Unawaitedly the sun arose.

Invitation

Mustn't flee from pressing worry,
For the day to which you hurry
Won't be better than the present.
If you rest and find it pleasant
Where I set the world aside
That it nigher might abide,
You may stay with me and hide!
What's tomorrow? Now won't last.
Weak, the future, and the past —
Or to pull, or hold me fast.
Then remain, my ever dear,
Friend so generous, come near!

That a Joseph Zuleika delighted
Required no art;
He was young; youth draws the heart.
He was handsome, had a true attraction —
She had beauty: mutual reaction.
But that you, for whom I have waited so long,
Send fiery, youthful love-looks bright,
And love me now, and will later delight —
That's what my songs are made to praise,
And I'll call you "Zuleika" all my days.

Now "Zuleika" is your name:
Newly named must *I* then be!
When your lover you acclaim,
"Hátem" — that's who I will be.
If I thus am recognized
No presumption might it be.
Who as "George the Knight" is prized
No "Saint George" need claim to be.
"Hátem" Thai, most freely-giving,
I, the beggar, may not be.
"Hátem" Tógrai, richest-living
Of the bards, I'll never be.
Yet these both to keep in sight
Unimpeachable will be:
Taking, lending luck's delight

Will a satisfaction be.
Love we share by day or night
Gladsome paradise will be.

Hátem

Thieves occasion doesn't make
But itself commits a theft.
From my heart it dared to take
All the love that yet was left;

Turned it over then to you,
All my life had cared to gain;
Now, prepared, a pauper true,
Life from you I may attain.

Mercy I already feel
In your fiery jewel-gaze,
Fate renewed in worth and weal —
That is *mine*, in *your* embrace.

Zuleika

I, delighted in your love,
Blame not opportunity.
As for what it robbed you of,
Sweeter thievery for me!

Anyway, what need to thieve?
Freely give yourself by choice!
I'd too eagerly believe
I had stol'n you, and rejoice.

What you've given me, so willing,
Brings a brilliance that allures.
Tranquil, rich, and life-fulfilling —
Glad, I grant it, it is yours.

Needn't joke — no alms, no harms;
Aren't we both enriched by this?
When I hold you in my arms
Mine can equal any bliss.

The lover won't go wide astray
Ev'n when distraught. If mad Mejnún
And Laila came alive today,
They'd learn from me love's pathway soon.

Ah, can it be — caressing you, and full
Of pleasure, that a godly voice I hail?
The rose appears to me impossible,
And inconceivable the nightingale.

Suleika

Gold the ring my finger left
On Euphrates while I sailed;
Slipped into a water-cleft:
Lost your gift! — and nought availed.

So my dream. At dawn of day
Through the tree, a lightning gleam!
Tell me, Poet; Prophet, say,
What's the meaning of the dream?

Hátem

I'll decipher it, and clearly:
I have noted frequently
That the Doge of Venice yearly
Has a wedding with the sea.

So the ring from off your finger
The Euphrates, glad, would take:
Dream that sweetly bade to linger,
Hundred heaven-hymns to make!

I, who from the Indian Ocean
Went to Syria with awe,
Cheered by caravans in motion
Till the Sea of Reeds I saw —

Me you've married to your river
And the terrace and the grove:
To your spirit I'll deliver
Dedication, faith, and love.

Be acquainted with men's gazes:
One declares, "I love, I suffer!
I desire — in desperation!"
Maidens, you will know the others...
None of that will ever help you —
And it nevermore will move me.

Ah, but Hatem, love!, your glances
Lend the very day a radiance,
For they're saying, "I love *that* one
As I never loved another.

Roses I behold, and lilies,
All the gardens' charm and honor;
Myrtle, violet, and cypress
Earth adorning in arousal.
What an ornamental wonder,
An astonishing surrounding,
Healing, livening, and blessing!
We can feel we're now recovered
And prepared again to suffer."

Then you looked upon Zuleika
And were healthy in your illness
And were ill in being healthy,
Looking round, and you were smiling
As you never smiled to others.
In your look, Zuleika heard the
Words eternal: "I love *that* one
As I never loved another."

Ginkgo Biloba

Here's a leaf the East, with favor,
To my garden would confide —
Tree with meanings we may savor,
To the wise a vital guide.

Do we spy *one* living being
That had split itself in two?
Is it *two* things we are seeing
That we yet united view?

To this query quite revealing
I have found the right reply:
Won't my singing give the feeling
That both two and one am I?

Zuleika

You've so many lyrics made,
Poems here and there displayed,
Lovely script in careful hand,
Richly bound, gold edging, and
Every stroke and point complete,
Many books, alluring, sweet;
Whom have you been dreaming of?
Were they all a pledge of love?

Hátem

Yes, of pure and mighty glances
That a shining smile enhances,
And of teeth so blinding-bold,
Eyelash-arrow, serpent-hair,
Neck and bosom decked with care,
Perils here a thousandfold!
Many secrets might abide
That Zuleika prophesied.

Zuleika

The rising sun, a splendor shining!
The sickle-moon enclasped it round.
To solve the riddle, your divining
In time the answer will have found!

Hatem

Yes, for the Sultan wedded them,
A world-pair — picked most fittingly
To emblemize, in anadem,
The boldest nobles' company.

Our rapture it will image, too!
Myself and you again I see:
You call me "sun," dear love; you do!
Come, sweetest moon, embracing me!

Come, darling, come! my cap needs winding well!
No one but you can twist my turban round.
Abbas, on hghest Persian throne, might tell:
His own more winsomely was never wound!

The turban — headband, ribbons flowing down,
Adorning Alexander's lofty brow —
It admirably served as royal crown
(So lesser emulators would allow).

Our Emperor's adorned with turban, too.
They call it "crown" — forget about the name!
Jewels and pearls we may delight to view,
But muslin looks much better, all the same.

And this one here, in silver stripes arrayed,
Wind it about my brow, love, tenderly.
What then is majesty? It's ready-made:
When you admire, I am as great as he.

There's little that I long for, now;
All the world's bounty pleases me.
This little, ev'n — a wonder how
The world yet lends, abundantly!

I in the tavern sit serene;
Serene at home, content, confined:
But soon I think of *you* — my dream
Filling my broadened, conqu'ring mind!

The empire-wealth of Tamerlane
Should serve you, his commanders hear:
Rubies from Badakshán you'd gain,
Caspian turquoise rare and dear,

Dried fruit, and honey-sweet, for you,
Bokhara-granted, sunny land,
And myriad loving lyrics, too,
On silken leaf of Samarkand.

And you elatedly would read
What I from mighty Hórmuz write,
How all my global trade, indeed,
Shuttles and moves for your delight.

So in the Brahmin country can
A thousand fingers' work be stirred
That wool and silk from Hindustan
From looms emerge as you've preferred.

To make my love resplendent pour
The mountain torrents of Bengal!
From sand and soil and quarry — more
Diamonds in your lap may fall.

When divers, brave to find a prize,
Pearl-treasures from the gulf will take,
So an assembly of the wise
The finest of arrangements make.

And let Bassora, last of these,
Incense and herb in fertile lands
And all whereby the world can please
Bring you in ample caravans.

Yet all these goods imperial
Would but, at best, confound the eyes:
Spirits, of highest liking full,
One in the other find their prize.

Would I ever hesitate
Balkh, Bokhara, Samarkand —
Baubled cities' favors great
To deliver to your hand?

Of the king I can't request
That to you he cities give!
He, though wise, and mightiest —
Knows not how by *love* we live.

King, be wiser! Gifts like ours
Ever lie beyond your powers!
Maid like mine no wealth can buy:
Best — a beggar such as I.

The prettily written,
Splendidly gilded
Presumptuous leaves! —
Quietly smiling,
You've pardoned my boasting
Over your love,
My success — your own doing! —
Forgiving my winning self-praise.

Self-praise! — a bad smell, to the jealous…
Fragrant to friendship —
And much to my taste!

Joy in our being is great,
Greater our joy in all Being,
When you, Zuleika,
Reward me, exuberant,
Toss me your passion
As throwing a ball
That I catch —
And throw back
My whole love-hallowed self —
That is a moment!
Later, they tear me away:
Now the Frank, now the Armenian.

But days will it take,
Even years, till I newly acquire
Your thousandfold poured-out abundance,
Unravel the colorful threads of my luck,
In myriad ways interlaced
By you, O Zuleika.

Now here, in return,
Poetical pearls
Born of your passion
In me — mighty surging
Threw on the desolate
Shore of our life —
Charmingly chosen
With delicate fingers,
Threaded in jeweler's
Golden adornment —
Place on your neck,
On your breast!
Raindrops of Allah,
Humble, in mussel-shell ripened.

Love for love and hour for hour,
Word for word and glance for glance,
Kiss for kiss, your lips' true flower,
Breath for breath, shared hearts enhance.
As at eve, so on the morrow;
Yet within my songs you feel
Still a sweet and hidden sorrow —
Joseph-grace I'd like to borrow
To your beauty to appeal.

Zuleika

People, vassal, conqueror —
They in every age agree:
Highest good, that all prefer,
Is our personality.

Any life is good to lead
When you stay yourself. No bar:
You can lose the world, indeed,
If you're true to what you are.

Hátem

Maybe. That's what people say...
I am on another track.
Only by Zuleika may
Joy arrive that leaves no lack.

If she lavish love on me,
I beome a worthwhile "I."
Then she's gone, and instantly —
Lost, abandoned! Self, goodbye!

That would be the end, you see —
Yet my fate I've changed to blessing:
I become — and eagerly! —
One she's presently caressing.

Rabbi? No, there's no allure
In a role I'd not prefer;
Firdusi, Motanabbi — sure!
Or possibly the Emperor.

Hátem

Colored cut-glass lantern lights
Round the goldsmith's counter play —
Maidens' beauty love ignites
Round the poet growing gray.

Maiden

You Zuleika praise again!
Such make us the sufferers:
She gets poems, we get pain;
Enviable fate is hers.

Even if she ugly were,
You have painted her so fine!
Thoughts of Jámil must occur,
Who Buthayna deemed divine.

But because we're pretty, too,
Painted *we* would hope to be!
Make it cheap, and you'll accrue
Gains galore, we guarantee.

Hátem

Come, brunette, let's try, we'll see:
Small combs, large — the braids in place —
Decorate your purity
As the dome the mosque will grace.

You, the blonde, as well, are so
Fine in all your traits and ways
It is not too far to go
You as minaret to praise.

You, in back! your eyes, astray,
Split your vision-field in two.
Mastered well! — that double view —
Yet I'd better keep away...

One lid half-obscures an eye,
Hiding so the shining star.
There's the second standing by
Glancing at a rogue not far.

When the first with light attacks,
Comes the other eye to heal.
Glad a man will never feel
Who that double favor lacks.

All the maidens might I praise,
All the maidens might I love:
None, as high as them I raise,
Can my Lady stand above.

Maiden

Glad will bard a servant be
For it grants him mastery;
What will please beyond all things
Is if now his *maiden* sings.

Is she capable of song
That upon our lips is strong?
For it will restrain our praise
If her might in hiding sways.

Hátem

Who could guess what she fulfills? —
Where her depth of strength may rest?
Self-felt song-rill overspills;
Self-made lyric — hers — the best!

Could you poet-ladies tell? —
None her likeness here may own,
For she sings to please me well...
You but love yourselves alone!

Maiden

It's a houri you have shown —
Just a fevered dream, indeed.
Fine! — but kindly leave alone
Maids whom flattery'd mislead.

Hátem

Braids of hair, contain me, caught
In the fair encircling face!
Serpentine, with lady-grace —
I, to counter them, have nought.

Nothing but my heartened pow'r
Swells in youthful meadow high;
Under snow and cloudy show'r,
Etna, raging, meets your eye.

You made blush, rose-dawning flirter,
Mountain peaks' austere retreat.
Once again arousing...Hátem —
Breath of spring and summer's heat.

Cupboy, here! A bottle, pray!
Plus the goblet she'll require!
Ashes finding, she will say,
"He had burned for me in fire."

Zuleika

You I'll never lose, in truth.
Love will lend your love more pow'r.
You may use, to grace my youth,
Mighty passion, every hour.

It is flatt'ring to my drive
When the folk my poet praise.
Love will keep us all alive;
Life of life — our spirit-rays.

Allow your sweet, your ruby lips
No importunity to curse.
What good the pain of love that grips,
But to get well? — not worse!

When from your love you're riven, rent,
As Orient from Occident,
The heart is through the desert sent —
Our guide no matter where we are.
Baghdad — for lovers — can't be far!

Though it may feel itself complete —
Your fragile world I see,
These clear, wide eyes, they gleam to greet;
That heart — it beats for me!

The senses are too multiple, I find!
They overwhelm — what pleasure then for me?
For when I see you, deaf I'd wish to be,
And when I hear you, blind.

Though far away, you're yet so near!
Then, unawaited torment's here.
But when your voice I hear once more,
Again you're with me, as before.

How to remain serene,
Far from the day and light?
Don't want to drink. To dream,
Maybe, and try to write...

When she enthralled my will,
Nothing remained to say.
But as the tongue was still,
Mute is my pen today.

So — go ahead, my dear,
The goblet quickly fill!
Keep me in mind, you hear?
It's well you know my will.

When you're on my mind
Comes the cupboy kind:
"Why so quiet, sir?
What you wisely tell
Now to hear as well
Saki would prefer."

When I'm resting, laid
Under cypress shade,
Peaceful, too, he lies.
Calm in still surround,
Deep, my thought, and sound,
Solomonic, wise.

Book of Zuleika

This book I'd like to fasten, tie up tight;
It would be quickly done, just like the rest.
But how could briefer line and leaf be best
When lovers' madness mind leads out of sight?

What ample branching clusters
Of wonders, Love, are seen!
Plump fruit Abundance musters
With prickly skin and green.

Longwhile they've hung, well-rounded,
Quiet, and unaware;
The boughs with fruit unbounded
Patiently shake in air.

Yet ripening within
Full swells the kernel brown,
Air-freedom wants to win —
The yellow sunlight-crown.

And so the shell will burst:
The fruit is falling. Too,
The songs I have rehearsed
Fall in a heap for you.

Zuleika

Where the merry fountains stand
While the water-threadings played,
Couldn't say why I delayed.
Ah, but from your writing hand —
My initials, curving, true!
Down I looked, bestirred by you.

Where the channel's ending here
Of the tree-lined avenue
Up I look, to pierce the blue,
Then look down — and see what's dear:
My initials, sweet to view...
Stay, beloved, ever true!

Hátem

Let the water, springing, swelling,
And the cypress tell you true:
From Zuleika, to Zuleika,
I am coming, going, too.

Zuleika

Barely do I have you back,
Sing, and kiss, and nothing lack —
Yet you're brooding, inward turning:
Why the troubled, worried yearning?

Hátem

Ah, Zuleika, shall I say?
Who would praise, laments today!
You had sung my songs to me,
Ever fresh, repeatedly —

How can I these new ones laud?
They intrude, so aren't they flawed?
Not by Háfiz, nor Nizami,
Not by Saadi, nor by Jami.

Fathers' songs, in mem'ry found,
Every syllable and sound —
These can not be lost, forlorn;
Yours are all but newly born —

All invented yesterday!
Have you then been led astray?
When you breathe audaciously
Airs of alien shape to me,

Can they so enliven you,
Loving, move in such a hue,
Tempting into union true,
As *my* harmonies would do?

Zuleika

Hátem had been so long away
I learned to make new tunes each day:
My songs you always greatly praised —
New proof, our separation raised!
So how could they be strange to you?
They are Zuleika's and — yours, too!

They say that Báhramgur invented rhyme;
Pure driving spirit, uttered with delight.
Dilaram soon, belov'd in happy time,
Mirrored the word and sound and sang them right.

And so, Beloved, you for me were bid
To bring the rhyme of pleasing love to view,
That I great Báhramgur, the Sassanid,
Need never envy, for I have it, too.

You waked this book in me, you gave it me;
Full-hearted, ardent, everything I'd said
Your gladsome life re-echoed avidly,
So gaze to gaze and rhyme to rhyme are led.

Loud let it sound for you, though far away.
Tone, echo gone, the word will reach you still.
Is it not like the star-thrown sky-array?
Or love, transfigured in a higher will?

First and last, your lips and heart,
Being of my soul a part,
And your gaze, your voice to hear,
Daily made you more than dear.

Yesterday appeared the last,
Light and fire put out and past.
Every jest — that laughing lilt —
All-too-dear, and filled with guilt.

Till the will of Allah please
To unite us once again,
Sun, moon, world my heart won't ease
But occasion be for pain.

Zuleika

What's the meaning of the stirring?
What's the east wind heralding? —
With its wings refreshing, whirring,
Cooling, soothing heart-wounds' sting.

With the dust it plays, caressing,
Whirls it up in lightsome cloud,
Driving, safe, to vineyard-blessing
Newly vital insect-crowd.

Mildens lightened solar glowing
While it cools my heated cheek,
Kissing vines while fleeing, flowing
Fieldward to the season-peak.

To a whisper soft I hearken,
Myriad greetings from a friend;
And before the hillocks darken,
Myriad kisses will it send.

Forward, onward well you wander!
Serve your friends and those that grieve.
Near the glowing mountains yonder
Soon I'll find him. I believe.

Ah, the heart-borne tidings true,
Breath of love, new-freshened from
Longed-for lips will come to you,
Only from his breath can come.

A Sight on High

The sun, Greek Helios, we see
Ride gleaming up the highway-sky;
The world to conquer, certainly,
He looks below, around, on high.

He sees the beauteous goddess cry,
Cloud-daughter, child of heavenkind;
In her, all shining seems to lie.
To the serener places blind,

He sinks, in pain that never ends;
And yet more fully flow her tears.
To light her grief, delight he sends;
Each pearl he with a kiss endears.

And now she feels the glance's power,
And yet, unflinching, looks above.
Pearls will transfigured be — to flower
In each, his image! — mirrored love.

And thus, enwreathed in hue and bow,
Serenely gleams her beaming face;
Drawn to her, he himself will go —
Yet will he not attain that place.

So, daunted by assailing fate,
Are you, my love — withdrawing, pale.
Ev'n were I Helios the Great,
What would my chariot avail?

Echo

It sounded wondrous when the bard
Likened himself to emperor and sun.
Yet he concealed the grieving faces marred
When in the darksome night he'll come.

Caught in the shredded cloud,
The purest blue sank into black away;
Haggard and pale my cheeks! — I'm bowed;
And tears, come from my heart, are gray.

Leave me not so — to dark, to pain! —
You, all-beloved, face of moon at night,
My phosphorus, my candle-flame,
O you my sun, O you my light.

Zuleika

Oh how, West Wind, those rain-wet wings
I envy you, in desolation —
Messenger who the missive brings
Of how I pine, in separation.

The moving of your wing appears,
Wakes in the breast a longing, still;
Flower and eye and wood and hill
Are by your breathing bathed in tears.

And yet — your wafting, mild and soft —
Cooling my hurt and fevered eyes!
I'd long have died of woe, did oft
My hope to see him not arise.

To my beloved hasten, graced:
Calmingly speaking to his heart,
Conceal the grief that I have faced,
And hide my pain, the searing smart.

Say to him only, quietly,
That in his love alone I live,
That life and love will both, for me,
With bliss again his nearness give.

Reunited

Can it be? My gleaming star,
Pressed against my heart again!
Dark! — to be apart, afar —
Dread abysm filled with pain!
You — of every impulse glad
Sweet and darling counterpart!
Thinking back — when we were sad —
Made me shiver — painful start!

When the world in deepest ground
Lay in God's eternal breast,
Forming, He an order found
(Never will His making rest);
Came the word then: "Let it be!"
Next — a wail of misery! —
When the All, force wholly free,
Broke into reality.

Light awoke! The Dark, made shy,
Parted, pulled itself away.
Then the elements would fly;
Separating, none would stay.
Wild, in fierce and dreamlike race,
Each would seek to be unbound —
Rigid, in unending space,
Reft of longing, reft of sound.

All was empty, mute and wan;
God discovered solitude!
Then he made the crimson dawn,
Grief with mercy-warmth endued —
Play, for spirits long withdrawn,
Resonant and many-hued —
Introducing, thereupon,
Love! to sun reclusive mood.

Now with striving, and in haste,
Natures, fitted, would combine;
Vision, feeling, turning, faced
Never-measured life divine.
Seizing we in stride may take
If controlled and well contained.
Allah no more world need make;
We His forming force have gained!

So, with morning-crimson wing
To your lips I gladly sped;
Myriad seals the night would bring,
Starbright, strengthen what we said.
Paragons on earth are we
Both in joy and sorrow sore.
And a second "Let it be!"
Will dissever us no more.

Full-Moon Night

Mistress, tell me, why the whispers?
What the thought that moved your lips?
You are ever murmuring,
Sweet as wine in little sips!
Think that with your talking-sisters
You'll another couple bring?

"Kiss, I want to kiss, I told you."

See! In doubtful darkness, bold,
Blossom glowing branches' edges,
Glad, down-show'ring star on star;
Emeralding through the hedges
Gem-fire sparkling thousandfold;
Yet your soul from all is far.

"Kiss, I want to kiss, I told you."

Far, your darling now will test,
As do you, the bitter-sweet
Feeling — woe and brilliance blest.
As you'd vowed, each other greet
When the moon is full and high.
Here's the moment — see? — the best!

"Kiss, I want to kiss, I told you."

Code

O diplomats, allow
Your help receptively —
Potentates aiding — how
Kindly and cleverly!
Let hidden cipher-sending
The world keep busy till
Imbalance have an ending
When we have learned good will.

Here from my Lady sweet
Has come a code that's fit —
Cipher I gladly greet,
For she invented it! —
Domain that she can fill,
Abundant, with her spell,
With fair and faithful will,
Such as we both know well.

Innumerable blooms
Frame colorful bouquet:
Angelic mood illumes
A crowded house today.
With motley feathers free
The winds the heaven sow;
On song-resounding sea
Aromas calm and go.

It is the double-writing
Of lofty drive, in marrow
Of life itself a smiting
With arrow after arrow.
The secret I selected
Is pious custom true;
Kept quiet, well protected,
Let it be used by you.

Reflection

I've somehow acquired a mirror
And like to look. 'Twould seem
My imperial order is clearer —
A star with a double gleam.

Yet not by ego blinded
Do I so enjoy this view;
I'm very sociable-minded,
And that will apply here, too.

When I stand before that pane
In my house of a widower,
To lighten my grief, I gain
My beloved — the face of her!
I quickly turn round, and again
She's gone, whom I just had seen.
So I look in my songs, and then
She's there, where she'd always been.

More comely the lines arise
And — truer to my mood —
Though critics my flight despise —
Are with daily gain endued.
Her richly bordered face —
Made grander, lovelier
By the gold-scrolled roses' grace
In an azure frame for her.

Zuleika

Innermost contentment: how,
Song, I feel the depth of you! —
Full of love — announcing now:
I am by his side. So true

That he always thinks of me! —
And the blessing of his love:
Messages, though distant, he
Knowing sends to me, for of

You my heart's the faithful mirror,
Friend! — wherein yourself you saw;
Like my breast, where you, none dearer —
Kiss on kiss impressed with awe.

Sweetest lines, and purely true,
Fetter me in empathy! —
Bodying the love by you
Clad in verse's clarity.

World-mirror leave to Alexander.
What can it show? That, here and there,
Quiet nations that Commander
Moved, uprooted, filled with care.

Then let no alien struggle move you!
Sing what you always sang so well.
Think: I am living, and I love you,
And me, at least, you might compel.

The world entire is fine to look upon;
The grandeur-world of poets, though, outstanding.
On motley, bright, or silver-gray, or wan
Land-tract by day and night, there's light expanding...
Radiant to me is all: may 't thus remain!
So glasses of my love today make plain.

You in a thousand forms yourself may hide,
Yet, All-Beloved, I acknowledge you.
Covered with magic veil you may abide,
All-Present One, yet I acknowledge you.

In young, pure striving of the cypress trees,
All-Beauteous-Grown, straight I acknowledge you;
When the pure channel-waters flow with ease,
Then, All-Alluring, I acknowledge you.

When climbing high the water-jet outspreads,
All-Playful, gladly I acknowledge you;
When clouds, reshaping, raise their heaven-heads,
All-Manifold, there I acknowledge you.

On veil beflow'red with meadow-tapestry,
All-Color-Starry, I acknowledge you;
When myriad grasping ivy-arms I see,
O All-Surrounding, I acknowledge you.

When morning kindles on the hills and downs,
All-Clear, Serene, I greeting send to you;
And when, above, the heaven softly rounds,
All-Heart-Expanding, I am breathing you.

What I with outer sense and inner know,
You All-Instructive, I but know through you;
And when through Allah's hundred names I go,
From every one — an echo-name for you.

Saki Nameh
Book of the Cupbearer

Yes — I went to the tavern, too, and sat —
Talked to the rest of them — all that.
They haggled, shouted, gabbed about today —
Happy or sad — whatever came their way.
I sat and gave my deeper feelings play;
Thought quickly of my darling: does she love?
That bothers me — what I know nothing of!
I love her if there ever was a true
Heart that was ardent, faithful — slavish, too...
Where were the stylus, parchment? I would show
All of it caught — that's how it was! — just so!

Alone, just me.
And what could better be?
Drinking wine
Alone — quite fine.
No obligation, free —
My thoughts may wander by their own design.

Mulei, the thief, the skillful cheat,
Drunken, still keeps that writing neat.

Is the Qur'an from eternity?
That, I will not ask.
Might the Qur'an created be?
No answer — a thankless task.
That it the Book of Books need be
My Muslim faith made clear to me.

That wine is from eternity —
This, I question not.
That it *might* a pre-angel creation be
May also well be taught.
The drinker — whatever the case may be —
Looks God in the face — the freer he!

Drunk is what all of us *ought* to be!
Youth's being drunk without wine, you see?
If age can drink itself back to youth,
That's wonder-virtue, too, in truth.
Dear life brings worry all the time —
A worry-breaker is the vine.

All right — no more investigation!
The rule about wine is renunciation.
But yet, if you still would drunken be —
Make it of highest quality.
To drink bad wine is heresy
Made twice as bad, it seems to me!

"So long as you're sober
There's no delight.
Becoming more mellow,
You know what's right.
But then there's the question
Of 'extra' drink —
I'm curious, Háfiz,
What *you* might think."

"A middling opinion
I'm thinking of.
If you're no drinker,
You shouldn't love.
But drinking isn't
Enough, I think.
If you're no lover
You shouldn't drink."

Zuleika

Why in the world are you so — unkind?

Hátem

The body's a prison where I'm confined!
The spirit was put in this binding gloom,
Deceived into having no elbow room.
And should she but try to escape the pains,
They tie up the prison itself in chains.
And that's why the darling's in danger twice,
And that's why her conduct is not so nice.

Well, if the body's a dismal jail,
Why does the prison's thirst not fail?
The spirit's content in a pleasant cell
And would gladly stay sober enough, as well —
But all of a sudden — a flask of wine,
And another, another — all right, it's time! —
Spirit can't *stand* it any more
And she smashes the bottles against the door.

To the Waiter

Don't set the wine-jug down, you boor,
In front of my nose, so crassly there!
And give your manners a bit more care,
Or vintage "eleven" will be impure.

To the Cupbearer

You charming boy, come right inside:
Why do you stand at the entry there?
You'll be my cupbearer! — at my side —
And every wine will be fine and fair.

Cupbearer speaks

You, there, with the light brown curls,
Go away, you scheming Miss!
Master thanks me when I serve,
And my forehead gets a kiss.

You, though, I would have to bet,
Couldn't be content with this...
Overeager cheeks and breasts
Wearily will he dismiss.

Do you think you're fooling me
When you leave, ashamed? I'll lie
On the threshold and awake
When I feel you gliding by.

Folks have, regarding drunkenness,
Found fault with us before
And are, about our drunkenness,
Ready to say much more.
Generally, a drunkenness
Will down you till the dawn.
But here, at night, my drunkenness
Hunted me, on and on.
It is my lover-drunkenness
That plagues unmercied makes;
From day to night, from night to day
Dismays a heart that quakes,
A heart, that in a drunkenness
Of swelling singing plays —
Of *that*, no sober drunkenness
Can wanted warning raise.
Love-, song-, and wine-made drunkenness
Whether by day or night —
Ah, the divinest drunkenness
Will plague me — and delight!

You little rascal!
I'm staying aware —
That is what matters.
And that's why your company

Gladdens me so,
You darling of darlings —
Although I am drunk.

Crack of dawn — already, we
A tavern riot had today!
Host, girls, torches — crowds in glee —
Shouted insults, hagglings, hey!
Shrilling fifers, drummers' beat,
It was a madhouse play.
But I was happy — love is sweet —
Of course I had to stay.

Those who chide me like to say
I am blind to moral rules.
Yet I've wisely kept away
Pulpit quarrels, warring schools.

Cupbearer

What a condition! Sir, so late
Crawling out of your room — sad state!
"Bidamag buden," says the Persian;
"Hangover" — the German version.

Poet

Leave me please, devoted boy,
Every pleasure's doomed to fail:
Sunshine, roses — don't enjoy —
Or the tuneful nightingale.

Cupbearer

That's where I may lend some aid;
I've a clue — no time to waste:
Here — fresh almonds! You'll be made
Happy! Wine — just try the taste!

Then, some air — the terrace! — you
Fresher breezes will imbue.
While I look into your eyes
I would like a kiss, my prize!

Look! the world is not a cave!
Rich in birds that nesting play —
Rose aroma, oil — we crave
Bulbul, too, as yesterday.

That vile trollop,
A temptress,
"World," they call her —
She swindled me
As all the others:
Took away Faith,
Then Hope,
Now she wants
To grab Love!
But I snatched it away.
To secure forever
The treasure I'd saved,
Dividing it wisely
Between Zuleika and Saki —
Each of the two
Kept busy competing
For maximum profit.
I'm richer than ever!
I've got my Faith back!
Belief in her Love;
He, with a goblet, grants me
A glorious feeling of *Now.*
So who needs Hope, then?

Cupbearer

You have eaten well, I feel;
Even more, today, you've drunk.
Bits from the completed meal —
Safely in a basin sunk.

Look, a "little swan" we call it;
Well-fed guests quite like such things.
My own swan, I know, is hungry,
On the wave, with outstretched wings.

Singing swans are widely known,
Though, to sound before they die.
Let me miss the music-moan
That declares your end is nigh.

Cupbearer

In the market, praises ring:
"Ah! great bard!" — they're proud of you.
I delight to hear you sing,
Listen when you're silent, too.

But my love is yet more dear
When a mem'ry kiss I win.
Words go by and disappear.
Yet your gift remains within.

Rhyme on rhyme — you have no peer;
Best — deep thinking, silently.
You can sing while *others* hear —
With your cupboy, quiet be.

Poet

Cupboy, come! Another cup!

Cupbearer

You've already drunken up.
They'll insult you when you're drunk.

Poet

Have you ever seen me sunk?

Cupbearer

Look, Muhammad banned it.

Poet

Darling!
No one's list'ning, let me tell...

Cupbearer

I won't pester you with questions;
When you speak I listen well.

Poet

Hear! Let Muslims, all the rest,
Be soberly prostráted —
He, in zeal the holiest,
Alone intoxicated.

Saki

Think, sir, during drunken larks
How you spray a foaming glow!
Crackling lightning, thousand sparks —
No idea where they'll go.

When your fist the table hits,
Monks in corners I can see,
Thought concealers, hypocrites;
You speak open-heartedly!

Tell me why we young ones, though,
Not from any error free,
Weak in virtue, too, may grow
Wiser than the old can be.

You know all that's in the sky
And that on the earth is housed,
Yet no tumult do you try
Hiding when your heart's aroused.

Hátem

Yes, dear boy, that's why, you see,
Young and wise you'd better stay.
Heaven gave us poetry
That, in world-life, will betray.

First, be lulled in mystery,
Then, speak freely, nights and days.
Silent, poets cannot be.
Poetry itself betrays.

Summer Night

Poet

Now the sun has gone to rest,
Yet it glitters in the west.
All that brilliant shimmer vast —
Wish I knew how long 'twould last.

Cupbearer

If you want, sir, I will stay,
Wait outside the tent here, too.
If the night defeat the day,
I will soon be telling you.

For to look, I know, you love
At unendingness above
When the flamings in the blue,
Praising, one another view.

And the brightest will but say,
I am shining where I'm placed.
If to give you greater day
God had willed, you'd so be graced.

For the Lord it all is fine
Since, of all, He is the best;
Birds asleep, by kind design,
In a big or little nest.

One is anchored on a bough;
Cypress branch will gently bend,
Dangled when the wind will sough,
Till the vapor-dew descend.

That is what you've taught to me,
Said as well as I can say;
What I've heard devotedly
From the heart won't flow away.

I'll be owl-like, looking forth,
On the terrace vigil keep,
Till the star-twins of the north
Turn about while people sleep.

And the midnight will appear
When you rise to early cheer;
It will be a sight of fire
When we two the All admire!

Poet

In this fragrant garden bright
Bulbul's trilling through the night:
You'd be long obliged to wait
Till the night-song grew so great.

For it's in this time of Flora
(So her old Hellenic name)
Fair abandoned red Aurora
Is for Hesperus aflame.

Look around! she's coming, quickly,
Over wide and blooming fields:
Light is strewn about so thickly —
Ah, the night to brightness yields!

And on light and rosy sole
To her love, behind the sun,
In bewilderment she's run,
Breathing hard — elusive goal!

Go — of sons the loveliest —
Far inside, and shut the door;
You, so handsome, all the more
Might be lured like Hesper blest.

Cupbearer

(sleepily)

Deep the wisdom you have lent:
God's in every element.
This you taught so lovably!
How I love your love for me.

Hátem

What well-earned sleep! 'Twere best he slept...
To me, your teacher-friend, you've lent
What you, kind youth, might well have kept
(So young to know what old age meant).
A healthy wholeness now can fill
Your limbs, and all your soul renew:
I'm drinking, but I'm quiet, still...
Postpone the joy that wakes, with you.

Mathal Nameh
Book of Parables

From sky to wilding sea the droplet sank
In fear: the flooding gulf struck mightily.
But God repaid believing modesty:
That drop with lasting pow'r He'd thank.
A mussel shell, a home divine:
And now — eternal fame and praise —
On royal crown — the pearly rays
With kindly gaze and mildened shine.

Bulbul's night-notes through the shower
To the throne of Allah rose;
To reward her well for those,
Golden cage would be her bower.
Prison is the body when
She may feel herself confined,
But when rightly tuned in mind,
Soul will sing and sing again.

Believing in Miracles

Once I had shattered a lovely bowl
And felt in sheer despair
Clumsiness', hastiness' hopeless role:
"Begone to the devils' lair!"
At first I raged, then I wept, poor soul,
While gathering shards galore.
This grieved the Lord, and he made it whole,
As good as it was before.

The pearl that away from the mussel ran,
Most lovely, nobly born,
To the jeweler, that worthy man,
Complained, "I am most forlorn!
If you bore a hole, my beauteous all
Will be ruined, broken, stained —
And with sisters (prison to appall),
For the worse, together chained!"
"I aim to profit — well you know —
And you'll have to pardon me.
How can I make a necklace-row
If I can't quite horrid be?"

I look with a pleasurable surprise:
A peacock plume in a Kóran lies;
Welcome, within that holy place,
An earthly shape with heaven-grace.
Here, as when luminaries burn,
God's greatness in little we may learn
Where He that all the worlds surveyed
The ímpress of His eye hath laid
And lightsome down so comely made,
Never a king in splendid state
That majesty might emulate.
Humbly love what fame will come
And you will merit halidom.

An emperor had two chancellors,
One for taking, one to spend.
Former a well-filled hand prefers,
Latter found emptiness, no end.
The spender died. King couldn't know
To whom the spending job should go:
Before he could rightly look around,
Unbounded wealth the taker'd found.
No room to move, gold lay about;
Nothing was ever given out.

The emperor saw, with some alarm,
What had engendered all the harm.
The windfall *he* would treasure now:
Who needs a spender, anyhow?

Said to the kettle the newer pot,
"Why've you that black belly got?"
"From cooking-use it comes to us,
And you, smooth drop, for all your fuss —
    Your pride will fail, you'll find.
Your handle has a shining face.
But do not rise above your place —
    Just glance at your behind."

All the people, big and small,
Spin fine webs, and I mean all,
While they, with pointed claw, as fit,
Prettily in the middle sit.
And should a broom by chance intrude,
The spinner will cry, "Unheard of! Rude!
Highest of palaces — trashed! How crude!"

From heav'n descending, Jesus brought
Eternal Gospel, holy writ.
Night, day, disciples heard, and thought:
A godly word, great strength in it.
Returning then, he took it back.
They'd felt it deeply, though, and well;
And each one wrote, no gap or lack,
What he had heard the teacher tell.
They differed. What that means, one sees:
They differed in abilities.
And so the Christians, one can say,
Will differ till the Judgment Day.

It Is Good

One moonlit night in Paradise
Jehovah found, in slumber deep,
Adam. Behold! he gently lies
With Eve, who'd also fall'n asleep.
There, in the limits earth affords —
The best inventions of the Lord's.
"Good!!!" He proclaimed, with praise-filled heart,
And would not readily depart.

No wonder, then, we are entranced
When freshly eye in eye's enhanced;
Our souls seem to have gone — so far —
To be with Him Whose thoughts we are.
And if He call us, that's our task,

But only — both at once! I ask.
Within my arms you softly rest:
Of all the thoughts of God, the best.

Parsi Nameh
Book of the Parsi

Legacy of Ancient Persian Faith

Friends, what legacy to you should come
From the poor, departing, pious one
Nourished by disciples patiently,
That his end-time fostered, honored be?

Often, when we saw the monarch ride,
Decked in gold, and gold on every side
(Gems by him and every magnate shown —
Jewels, heaven-hailstones thickly sown),

Did you ever envy him that fire?
Or were you, unsated, gazing higher,
When the sun on morning pinion rose,
Numberless the hilltops to disclose,

Bowlike, of Darnáwend? Who'd restrain
Sight? I felt, I felt — oh, it was plain
Myriad times! — so many life-days, strong,
I by shining Sun was borne along

To acknowledge God on skiey throne,
Lord of Source-life Him to name alone,
Honor one who merited high gaze —
And to wander on his light-filled ways.

But, a fiery circling done for good,
I in final darkness blinded stood,
Struck my breast, my freshened body bowed,
Forehead first, to earth, to praise him proud.

Let there be a sacred legacy
Left to brothers' will and memory:
Heavy service every day maintained —
No more revelation need be framed.

Every baby pious hands will raise,
That one turn him to the solar blaze;
Body, soul immerse and bathe in fire!
Grace of every morning will inspire.

Let the live help those who've died. Not least,
Cover up the carcass of a beast
(Soil, and rocks). And if you can succeed,
Cover all impurities, indeed.

Dig your field in pure and pleasant land
That the Sun may gleam on working hand;
And, in planting, put your trees in rows;
That's how order flourishes and grows.

Also water in canals will be
Ever pure, and always flowing free;
Zenderud, from hill-spring risen pure,
Stream kept clean, will downward so endure.

Not to weaken water's gentle fall,
Clean a ditch efficiently, and all
Reeds and rushes, little vermin, odd
Salamanders empty from the sod!

If you keep the earth and water pure,
Sun, in breezes gleaming, will allure,
Where, on being served so worthily,
Weal for pious lives he'll oversee.

You, by labors upon labors tried,
Be consoled, for all is purified;
Man may want, as priest if he would like,
God's own image from the stone to strike.

Fire alight you see, of gladness full,
Night is bright, and limbs are flexible.
Over hearth-fire energies that dance
Juices richen from the meats and plants.

When you bring the wood, I'm glad indeed:
From the sun of earth, you bear the seed;
Plucking pámbeh, you may say (and bless)
It's a wick, and bears a holiness.

If you in that lamp-fire burning bright,
Pious, recognize the Higher Light,
No ill fate will halt you when you pray
To the Throne of God at dawning day.

Of our lives behold th' Imperial Seal,
Our and angels' godly mirror. Feel
That what stems from solar hymning here
There is gathered up in sphere on sphere.

Now away from Zenderud I'll tend,
Beat my wings, and fly to Dárnawend,
Greet the sun that dawning light will lend,
And from to you from there a blessing send.

When a man the earth will treasure
That the sun illumes with life,
In the grapevine taking pleasure
Which is crying at the knife
(For she knows her brew of juices,
Cooking well, the world to cheer,
Many energies unlooses,

But will choke some folk, I fear),
He'll be thankful to the heat
That our fertile world has filled.
Mumble drunks on stumbling feet;
Temp'rate singing men — unstilled.

Chuld Nameh
Book of Paradise

Foretaste

The faithful Muslim tells of Paradise
As if he'd visited that very place:
For the Qur'an's depiction and advice
A doctrine offer of that heaven-grace.

And yet the Prophet, who the Book has given,
Our weakness and our defect seeking out,
Can see, despite the curses thunder-riven,
Our faith is oft embittered by our doubt.

He therefore lent me from the heaven-spaces
A young example to renew my youth;
Down wending, she enfettering enlaces
My neck — no sweeter mesh-embrace, in truth.

Upon my lap, against my heart I hold
My heaven-angel! I am saved from care —
In Paradise my faith is growing bold!
Forever I could wish to kiss her there.

Authorized Men

After the Battle of Badr, under a starry sky

Muhammad speaks

Let the enemies bemoan their dead:
These will not return, for all their tears.
Don't regret our brothers' fall. Instead,
Know: they wander over yonder spheres.

For the planets, the elated seven,
Open metal doors; adoring, wait...
Bravely friends in radiant forms of Heaven
Knock upon the Paradisal gate...

Joy-filled, more than hoped for, they will find
Brilliance touched upon my wingéd flight
When my wonder-horse, with lightning kind,
I through heavens led on wonder-night.

Wisdom-tree on tree, like cypress soaring,
Gold-graced apples lifting high indeed,
Trees of life their shadows wide outpouring,
Cover arbor flowers, herbal mead.

Now a sweeter wind-breath from the east
Brings the host of maidens heavenly.
With your eyes you may begin the feast;
Gaze alone will sate you pleasantly.

What you have achieved, they seek to learn:
Bloody struggle, for a mighty plan?
Coming here, a hero's name you earn,
Yet — what kind? They'll fathom what they can.

By your wounds they readily discover
Clear memorials of worth attained.
Fortune, rank are gone, yet nought will cover
Wounds that in defense of faith were gained.

Garden tents they take you to, and bowers
Rich in pillars lit with jewels bright;
To the noble vine's refining powers
They with friendly sip the guest invite.

Youth! You're welcome here as more than youth!
Every outline in the light made clear:
If you love one specially, in truth,
She'll be "first among your houris dear."

Yet the most delightful will not please
Even such condign grandiloquence.
She will speak, unenvying, with ease,
Telling of the splendors of her friends:

Each one leads you to the others' meal —
Sweet, outstanding all, and planned with care.
Many women, tranquil house — you'll feel
Eden had been worth the winning there!

Savor, then, the peaceful Eden joy
Nothing takes away, nor aught would alter.
These unwearied maidens never cloy;
Wine like *this* — clear mind will never falter.

Thus I filled you in on little things —
Showed the Muslim widening holy wings;
Paradise of men, faith hero-kings,
Well-equipped with what the spirit brings.

Chosen Women

Women nothing need forgo,
Hope let purest faith declare;
Yet of only four we know
Certainly who entered there.

First, Zuleika, light of earth
Seeking Joseph-delectation,
Now in Eden bliss-rebirth
Gleaming gem: renunciation.

Then, the ever-blessèd maid
For the heathen's healing born:
She, in bitter grief betrayed,
Saw her son on cross forlorn.

Next, Muhammad's wife and aide
Brought him splendor from above
And a testament she made:
One Lord God, one spousal love.

Fátima's kind, guileless role:
Daughter, wife — no flaw she had;
Purest, her angelic soul
Honey-golden beauty clad.

These the four we view in grace:
Who with lady-praise will please
Merits, in that Eden-place,
Heaven-favor, too, from these.

Admittance

Houri

By the gate of Paradise
I'm the one on guard today.
What to do? I can't surmise:
You're a doubtful case, I'd say!

Have you sure and certain ties
To our Muslim doctrine dear?
Have you fought? Or otherwise
Merited admittance here?

Are you of that hero throng?
Show me, then, the wounds you bear,
Worthy of a lauding song,
And your entry I'll prepare.

Poet

No more quibbling or delay!
Go ahead and let me in:
I was human. That's to say:
Yes, a fighter I have been.

Here — look hard, and you will see
(Gazing, penetrate my breast!)
Life-wounds' long malignity,
Love-wounds' passion, reft of rest.

Yet I sang, believingly,
That my dear to me was true —
World, whatever it may be,
Filled with love, and grateful, too.

With resplendent beauties I
So engaged that now my name,
By the darling hearts held high,
Triumphs in a tender flame.

No unworthy man am I!
Give that gentle hand to me:
On those fingers, by and by,
I will count...eternity!

Resonance

Houri

Where I'd often wait,
When first I spoke to you,
I'd watch and guard the gate,
As told to do.
But then I heard — so odd! — a rustling —
Syllable, tone — what busy bustling! —
Somebody wanted in!
But no one came close — and I couldn't hear —

The sound was too faint, it would disappear!
It had the feeling of a song you'd made —
I well recall — *that* memory won't fade.

Poet

Ever Beloved! — tenderly
You in your grace remember me.
All tones in earthly mode and air
That strength prepare
Desire to rise, up high to go!
Heaps of them perish there below.
Others with spirit-raising wings
Like the Buraq that the Prophet brings,
Will fly and, fluting, wait
There by the gate.

If friends hear the music in heaven play,
They ought to take note in a friendly way,
Strengthen the echo throughout the skies,
The tone let downward race —
And stipulate
That in any case
Whoever may come will get a prize
For the melody he had giv'n.
So *both* worlds gain, the earth and heav'n.

Let them reward him well,
In a kind, compliant way
And with them gladly let him dwell —
Good souls contented stay.

But you are meant for *me* —
We're sharing the peace of eternity:
Guarding the gate is not for you!
A "single" sister — she will do.

Poet

Your love, your kiss — delight me so!
I will not probe the mysteries;
But — did you ever (tell me, please!)
Partake of earthly days?
It seemed — so many ways —
I'd swear — and I could prove it, too —
You were "Zuleika" — say it's true!

Houri

We're made of purest elements —
From water, fire, and earth, and air —
Directly. Vapors drawn — from there
Below — our nature won't befriend.
And so we never will descend;
But when you rise to rest, with you
We always find enough to do.

For when the faithful came, you see
(The ones the Prophet had commended),
To claim their Paradise, then we
Made sure to be, as he intended,
With such a comely charm endued
As even angels hadn't viewed.

First, second, third — surprise! they had
Their prior favorites, each lad.
Sad paragons, not worth the fuss,
Yet they loved *them* far more than *us*.
Cheer, wit, and charm — we showed no lack.
The Muslims wanted to go back!

Now we, the highborn, heavenly,
On this ill-conduct well might frown.
Incited to conspiracy,

We talked the problem up and down.
Through heaven as the Prophet went,
We sought to tell our discontent;
When heading back, he thought it best
The wingéd steed should get some rest —

Then he was *with us* for awhile!
Though friendly, grave, in prophet-style,
He uttered some instruction brief,
Which lent resentment no relief.
That we his purpose might attain
We had to take no little pain
Your thoughts to think, both small and great;
Your prior loves to emulate.

Our self-love had to disappear.
(We rubbed our heads behind the ear.)
Well, in Eternal Life, we thought,
Best to accept what God hath wrought...

Each man now sees what he has seen.
What happened happens now (his dream!).
We'll be a blond or a brunette;
We have our moods and whims (you bet!),
And shifty little tricks and winks —
Each man is right at home, he thinks.
We stay so lively, fresh, the lad
Is quickly taken in; he's glad.

To you, though — free, good-humored, dear —
I paradisally appear.
My looks and kisses would beguile
Even if not Zuleika-style.
Yet, being sweet exceedingly,
She *perfectly* resembled me!

Poet

You blind me with your heaven-hue,
Whether your words be false or true;
Enough, I love! as you've divined.

Not to neglect your duty, too,
To please a German glad are you:
A houri speaks in rhymes entwined!

Houri

Yes, *you*, rhyme too! is my advice.
Just as your spirit impulse lends.
We, kindly here in Paradise,
Incline to word and deed that sense commends.
Animals, too, are welcome when they're nice,
Being obedient and faithful friends.
Ev'n on rough words no irked reproach we throw;
We feel, what's coming from the heart,
What from a freshened spring will start,
In Paradise may freely flow.

Houri

Again your counting finger I'm
Noticing: how much eon-time
Have we been dwelling together here?

Poet

Well...I'd rather not tell you, dear!
So varied is the freshened bliss —
An ever chastely bridal kiss!
If every minute lends a thrill,
Why should I ask — when the time stands still?

Houri

Absent in mind, you're not yet "here":
I've noticed that you were *away*, my dear.
You entered the World-All and, free of fear,
The Depth of the Heaven — to disappear.
But now to your darling pay heed, as well:
Haven't you finished that song, pray tell?
Recall how it sounded — beside the gate?
How? Well, forget it, I just can't wait! —
If songs *to Zuleika* you sing for me,
They'll be your best, for eternity.

Favored Animals

Four animals were promised they
In Paradise might dwell:
There the eternal year and day
With saints they're spending well.

The donkey is the first of them,
He comes with lively stride,
For Jesus to Jerusalem
Upon his back would ride.

Half shy, the wolf the Prophet had
By stern commandment led:
"Don't snatch the poor man's lamb — that's bad —
The rich man's grab instead."

Now, tail a-wagging, merry, brave,
By kindly master kept,
The dog that in the Seven's cave
Long faithfully had slept.

Beside the Lord, a cat, caressed,
Abu Hurayra's, purrs.
The holy Prophet, stroking, blest
A friend he yet prefers.

Higher and Highest

Wonder-things if we would teach
None should criticize, or chide:
Clarity if you would reach,
Seek within, where depths abide.

Then you'll surely come to know:
Man, with selfhood well in view,
Far to save his "I" will go,
As below, in Heaven, too.

And my darling "I" requires
Many kinds of comfort there:
Bliss requiting earth-desires
Our Eternity won't spare.

Beauteous garden-bloom will please,
Flower, fruit, and pretty child —
We have known delights like these;
Higher joys can not be mild!

Young and old, that all my friends
There be gathered might be nice;
Speaking German pleasure lends:
Stammer words of Paradise.

Every dialect you'll hear,
Human, angel language kind;
With a hidden grammar we're
Finding poppy, rose declined.

Now we also into sight's
Rhetoric might wholly wend
And to heavenly delights
Far above all tone ascend.

Yet, that tone and pitch escape
Words may well be evident:
More decisively to shape
Life transfigured, strength is lent.

For the senses five thereby
Paradise provides with ease:
There will be, for such as I,
But *one* sense for all of these.

So more lightly will I go
Higher through eternal spheres:
God's perfusing Word will show
Pure and livened, what endears.

Binding strivings high above,
Endings never need we fear:
We'll adore Eternal Love
When we, soaring, disappear.

Seven Sleepers

Courtiers six and highly favored,
Fled before the ruler's anger,
Who as god would fain be honored
But as god had proved a failure:
Came a fly — the king was hindered
From enjoying tasty morsels.

Servants, shooing with their fanning,
Failed, and there's the fly, remaining,
Pestering and stinging, wand'ring;
All at table are confounded.
Look, it's coming back, the spiteful
Emissary of the fly-god!

"Now," the boys at court are asking,
"Should a god by flies be hampered?
Should a god be eating, drinking,
Just as *we* do? No, the One that
Made the sun, the moon created,
And the star-glow vault of heaven —
He is God. Let's go!" The tender,
Lightly shod and costumed court-boys,
By a shepherd led, are hidden
With him in a cave, a hollow.
Comes the shepherd-dog, unyielding,
Driv'n away, foot badly broken,
Keen on staying with the master;
By the hiding ones befriended,
He and they are sleep-protected.

Now the prince whom they're escaping,
Love-offended, ponders vengeance:
Sword and burning he renounces
But with bricks and lime is blocking
Up the entrance to the hollow.

Yet the boys continue sleeping,
And the angel, their defender,
Stands before God's throne, reporting:
"To the right and to the left the
Bodies I have gently shifted,
So their limbs, the young and lovely,
Won't by fetid mist be injured.
Cracks I've made within the cave-rock,
So the sun when setting, rising,
Youthful cheeks will be renewing
While the boys are happy, sleeping."
There, on forepaws newly healthy,
Slumber, too, the dog will relish.

Years go by, more years advancing:
Now the boys, at length awaking,
See the wall, the long-corrupted,
Totally collapsed, decaying.
And Yamblíka says, the finest
And maturest of the comrades,
(While the shepherd, fearful, wavers):
"I will go and get some breakfast —
Risk my life, and try this gold-piece!"

Ephesus, for many years now,
Lauds the doctrine of the prophet
Jesus. (Peace upon him, Holy.)

Then he ran, and found the gateway,
Tower, turret, all looked different;
Then into the nearest bake shop
Hurried, turned, some bread to purchase.
"Rascal!" cried the baker, "have you
Found, my boy, perhaps a treasure?
Give! The gold-piece has betrayed you!
I want half — a bit of penance!"

And they haggle. Then the problem
Comes before the king, who wants to
Split the gold, as did the baker.

Now a miracle a hundred
Signs reveal, with each one clearer.
At the palace he had helped to
Build, behold — his rights' protection!
Hollowed pillar, penetrated,
Leads to designated treasure.
Then the generations gather,
Offering their varied counsel.
Proud and stately, handsome forebear,
Stands Yamblíka, youth renewing.
He, ancestral, hears the telling
Of his children and the grandsons —
By great-grandchildren encircled
(These a people boldly-mannered)
Him, the youngest, all acclaiming.
Here's a token, more than others,
That completes the demonstration:
He has character! — confirming
Personality for comrades.

To the hollow he's returning
While the king and people lead him.
Not to king, nor to the people
Will the chosen one be coming:
For the seven, who for ages
(Eight, of course, the dog included)
From the world were separated
Gabriel's unfathomed power
Has, to God alone compliant,
Into Paradise admitted,
And the wall closed up entirely.

Good Night

Lay ye down, my lovely hymns,
On my people's bosom bowed!
And within a musky cloud
Gabriel protect the limbs
Of the weary, pleasantly,
So that, fresh and hale and fit,
Glad and ever kindly, he
Rising rocky cliff may split,
Walking Paradise's way;
Heroes of the olden day
Willingly with him will stay;
Where the lovely, ever new,
Yet will grow, with no decay,
For the multitude to view.
Ev'n the little dog, the true,
Join the masters daily may.

Unpublished by Goethe

Who knows himself and others well
No longer may ignore:
Occident and Orient dwell
Separately no more.

'Twixt two worlds I love the way
Back and forth a man may sway;
So between the East and West
Moving to and fro's the best.

Háfiz, next to you to be —
What a fancy, mad!
Yet on sea-wave rapidly
See the ship rush, glad,
Feel the sail a-swelling high,
Wander proud and brave —
Though, if ocean strikes, 'twill lie
Rotting on the wave.
Light and swift in song-desire
Waves, cool-welling, flow,
Seething in a rising fire;
Swallowed, I, in glow!
But, in me, a dark will swell,
Boldness it will give.

I on land had known, as well,
How to love and live!

They've been attempting now for fifty years
To mirror me, reshape, mis-emulate.
I thought, they test what you can tolerate
Here in your fatherland — so it appears.

You, in your time, have gone quite mad with wild
Demonic throngs whom youthful genius cheers;
Then, you came gently, with advancing years,
Nearer unto the wise, the godly-mild.

Can't I use what likeness I
Wish, to build a bridge?
God's life-likeness I espy:
Gnat or fly or midge.

Can't I use what likeness I
Wish — whatever lives?
God in my beloved's eye
Godly likeness gives.

Sweetest child, a pearly row,
Trying but to find a way,
I to you had lent, to show
What my lamp-wick love would say.

With an emblem, though, you come
That's Abraxas-like, a sign
Void, to me, of halidom,
Lacking anything divine.

All this modern foolery —
Fit for Shíraz, the bazaar!
Can I laud rigidity?
Wood-bar crossed on wooden bar?

'Twas the Lord of sky and star
Abraham as Father chose;
Moses, in the desert far,
Through the One to greatness grows.

David, ev'n with all his sins
(Crimes he might but ill afford)
Truly absolution wins:
"I've been faithful to One Lord."

Jesus purely, thoughtful, awed,
Felt One God, when all was still.
Who'd make Jesus into God
Would but pain his holy will.

Right it seems, and bright as sun —
What Muhammad knew so well;
Through the concept of the One
All the world could he compel.

If you so unwisely choose
Homage to that thing to pay,
This perhaps we might excuse:
Many others think that way.

Yet we see that women — six —
Turn ev'n Solomon aside
And in awful worship-tricks
Doctrine of their gods provide,

Isis' horn, Anubis' jaw
Offering to Jews to laud.
Shall I serve as God, with awe,
Such a sorry wooden gaud?!

Yet I'd not seem better, more,
Than I'd be if closely eyed:
Solomon his God forswore;
I my deity denied.

Burden of a renegade
Let me lighten in a kiss:
Vitzli-Putzli would have made,
For *your* heart, a charm of bliss.

Let me weep! embraced by night,
In endless waste land.
Camels rest, the drivers too.
Planning, the Armenian keeps quiet vigil.
But I, standing by him, reckon the miles
That keep me from Zuleika, reimagine
The frustrating, distancing meanders.

Let me weep! it is no disgrace.
It's good for men to weep.
Achilles wept for Briseis!
Xerxes bewept his undefeated army;
Over his self-slain beloved
Alexander wept.
Let me weep, tears enliven the dust.
Already the air feels fragrant.

Why won't he send
(The cavalry captain)
An emissary
From day to day?
Has plenty of horses,
And skill in writing;

In Arab script or
The Persian system,
Well could indite
On silken pages.
I, in his place,
Would write, and quickly.

The patient will not,
Can not recover
From sweet of sorrow.
She, who with tidings
Come from her loved one
Would heal, is ill.

No longer on silken leaf
Do I write symmetric rhymes;
No more do I enfold them
In golden scrollings;
What for shifting sand are designated
The wind wafts over, yet the strength remains,
Firm to the center of the earth,
Bound to the soil.
And the wanderer will come,
The lover, and encounter
This place, and he'll quiver
Through all his limbs.
"Here, before me, lived a lover.
Was it Méjnun, the tender?
Férhad, the forceful? Jámil, the enduring?
Or one of those myriad
Sad-and-happy others?
He loved! I love, as he did!
I sense him!"

Ah but Zuleika, you rest
On the tender pillow
That I prepared, adorned for you.
You, as well, feel your limbs quiver.
"It's the one who's calling me, Hátem.
And so I call *you*, O Hátem, Hátem!"

NOTES AND ESSAYS FOR A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE *WEST-EAST DIVAN*

by

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Translated

by

Martin Bidney and Peter Anton von Arnim

Notes and Essays for a Better Understanding of the *West-East Divan*

Poetry if you would know,
To its country you must go;
If the poet you would know,
To the poet's country go.

(1) INTRODUCTION

"To everything there is a season!" According to this dictum, whose meaning we learn to appreciate more and more the longer we live, there is a time to keep silent and a time to speak. I am opting for the latter now. If doing and acting are proper to younger years, it is contemplation and communication that suit the later ones.

I sent the writings of my early years into the world without a preface, without even indicating what they were intended for. I did that because I trusted that the nation would sooner or later make use of what I had offered. Thus, many of my works succeeded in having an immediate impact, while others, not equally accessible or striking, needed several years to attain recognition. But now that this time has gone by, a second and third generation are repaying me double and triple for the wrongs done me by earlier contemporaries.

But this time I would like to see to it that nothing should stop my little book from making a good immediate impression. So I decided to clarify, explain, and illustrate, in every way I could think of, what would help readers attain immediate comprehension, even if they had little familiarity with the Orient. People will not need my supplement, of course, if they are already versed in the history and literature of this remarkable part of the world. Instead, they will quickly picture the springs and brooks whose enlivening water I have diverted onto my flower-beds.

What I would like best, though, is to be regarded as a traveler who will be worth hearing if he eagerly assimilates the ways of life of a strange country, tries to appropriate its forms of speech, and learns how to share views and comprehend customs. He will be forgiven if he succeeds only in

part, if he still continues to be identifiable as a foreigner because of a distinctive accent or a resistant inflexibility in his national character. It is in this sense that readers may pardon my little book. Judicious people will be forgiving because they understand. Amateurs, less distracted by my shortcomings, may accept without bias what is offered.

Also, to let his countrymen enjoy more readily whatever he brings back, the traveler takes on the role of a merchant who displays his goods appealingly and tries in many ways to make them pleasing. Readers will not object to a variety of verbal presentations: stating, describing, or praising.

To begin with, I would like to make it clear that in regard to morality and aesthetics I have made it my duty to keep this work within everyone's grasp. So I use the plainest language, the easiest, most understandable cadences of my vernacular, and only distantly allude to phrasings by which the Oriental tries to please through artificiality and mannerisms.

But understanding may be hindered by many unavoidable foreign words that are obscure because they refer to specific objects, matters of faith, opinions, traditions, fables, and customs. I have made it my next obligation to explain these by taking into account needs that were made apparent by questions and objections raised by German listeners and readers. An index will note both the page where an obscure passage occurs and the place where I explain it [Goethe's brief index is not included here. — MB]. Each explanation is made within a specific context, so rather than scattered notes the reader will find an integrated text. Though lightly and loosely handled, it can still provide a clarifying overview.

I hope my efforts in accomplishing the project will please the reader. I am entitled to that hope, for now that so many things from the Orient are being truly integrated into our language, it may well be worthwhile to draw attention to that area from which so much of greatness, beauty, and excellence has reached our country over the centuries, and from which we may hope for more each day.

(2) HEBREWS

In every country, native poetry is the first of its kind. It underlies all the succeeding varieties. The more freshly and naturally it comes to the fore, the more happily will later epochs evolve.

As we are speaking about Oriental poetry, it becomes imperative to mention the Bible as the most ancient collection. A large part of the Old

Testament is written in a lofty spirit, with enthusiasm, and belongs to the realm of poetry.

If I now vividly recollect the time when [Johann Gottfried] Herder [1744–1803] and [Johann Gottfried] Eichhorn [1752–1827] enlightened me on this topic personally, I recall a sublime delight, comparable to a pure Oriental sunrise. What these men bequeathed to me can only be hinted at, and I will be forgiven for my haste in passing by such treasures.

As an example we may think of the Book of Ruth. While pursuing its lofty goal of providing a king of Israel with reputable, interesting forebears, it can be regarded at the same time as the most lovely small, well-unified work handed down to us in an epic and idyllic form.

Next, I will dwell for a moment on the Song of Songs, the most tender, inimitable expression of passionate, graceful love that has been transmitted to us. Certainly we deplore the fact that poems thrown together as fragments and piled one on top of the other afford us no full, pure enjoyment. But we still take pleasure in transporting ourselves into the circumstances of the poets' life. A mild breeze of the loveliest region of Canaan wafts through the work — intimate rustic settings, wine production, garden plants and spices, something of urban constriction, but then a royal court with splendors in the background. The main theme, though, is still the ardent affection of youthful hearts that seek, find, repel, and attract each other, in a variety of very simple circumstances.

Several times I thought of singling out a few things from this lovely confusion and arranging them. But it is precisely the enigmatic, inscrutable nature of these few pages that lends them grace and distinction. How often have well-thinking, orderly minds been enticed to formulate or impose some kind of plausible organizing plan, while the next reader is still confronted with the same task.

In a similar way the Book of Ruth has already exerted irresistible charm upon many a well-disposed man who has succumbed to the illusion that events depicted with invaluable concision could gain something from a more detailed, roundabout treatment.

And thus, in book after book, the Book of all Books may demonstrate that it has been given to us in order that we, as in a second world, may test ourselves by it and get lost in it, be enlightened through it and educate ourselves with it.

(3) ARABS

With a people farther east, the Arabs, we find splendid treasures in the [eighth-century compilation] *mu'allaqat.* These are songs of praise that were crowned with victory in poetic competitions — poems arising before the time of Muhammad [570–632], written in golden letters, and hung on the gates of the temple in Mecca. They point to a nomadic, cattle-raising, warlike nation, made insecure by the mutual conflict of several tribes. Featured here are a firm attachment to one's fellow clansmen, ambition, bravery, and an insatiable thirst for revenge, mitigated by love-pangs, good will, and self-sacrifice — all without limit. These poems give us an adequate idea of the high culture of the tribesmen of Qoraish. Muhammad himself emerged among them. But he threw over them a somber religious veil that was to shroud any prospect of purer developments.

The value of these exquisite poems, seven in number, is yet heightened by the fact that the greatest diversity prevails throughout the sequence. We cannot give a briefer and more accurate account of this variety than by inserting an evocation of their character by the insightful [Sir William] *Jones* [1746–1794]. "The poem of *Amralkais* is soft, joyful, lustrous, delicate, varied and graceful. The one of *Tarafa* — bold, excited, bouncing, and yet interwoven with some gaiety. The poem of *Zoheir* — sharp, serious, chaste, full of moral commandments and serious maxims. *Lebid's* poetry is light, amorous, refined, delicate. It recalls Virgil's second eclogue, for he complains about the pride and arrogance of the beloved and takes the occasion to enumerate his virtues and praise his tribe to the skies. The song of *Antara* shows itself proud, ominous, striking, magnificent, but not without beauty in the descriptions and images. *Amru* is impetuous, sublime, vainglorious; *Harez,* full of wisdom, discernment, and dignity. The latter two appear also as poetic-political polemics, delivered before an audience of Arabs in order to appease the destructive hatred of two clans" [*Poes. Asiat. Comment.* 72].

As I have surely aroused the reader now to read or reread these poems, I will add here another one, from Muhammad's time, and fully in the same vein. One could describe its character as gloomy or even sinister, glowing, vindictive, and replete with vengeance.

[Ascribed to Ta'abbata Sharran]

1

In the ravine, on the path,
Someone lies slain
Upon whose blood
No dew is dripping.

2

A heavy burden he left me —
And departed;
Truly this burden
I will bear.

3

"Heir of my vengeance:
The sister's son,
The warlike,
The irreconcilable:

4

Mute, exuding venom,
Silent like the viper,
A serpent spitting poison.
Against it no charm avails."

5

Violent word spread among us
Of a great, mighty disaster;
Even the most powerful
Would have been overwhelmed.

6

Fortune has plundered me,
Harming the friendly one,
None of whose guests
Were ever hurt.

7

He was the sun's heat
On a cold day;
And when Sirius burned,
A shade, a cooling.

8

He was lean-limbed,
Not a complainer,
Moist of palm,
Audacious and vehement.

9

With a steadfast mind
He pursued his goal —
Until he rested;
Then rested, too, the steadiness.

10

He was the rain of a cloud,
Distributing gifts;
But, when attacking,
An angry lion.

11

Stately before his people —
With black hair, long garment;
When raiding the enemy,
A haggard wolf.

12

He dispensed two flavors,
Honey and wormwood.
A dish of these flavors
Everyone tasted.

13

Terrible, he rode alone,
Accompanied by none,
Only a sword of Yemen,
Adorned with notches.

14

At noon we young warriors
Began our expedition,
Traveled through the night —
Floating clouds without rest.

15

Everyone was a sword,
By swords girded round —
Ripped from the sheath,
A lightning flash.

16

They sipped the spirit of sleep,
But when they nodded
We struck them,
And they were gone.

17

We took complete revenge;
From the two tribes
But few escaped,
Few indeed.

18

And the Hudhaylis, to destroy him,
Would break his lance,
Because he, with his lance,
Had shattered Hudhayl.

19

On a rough place of rest
They laid him,
By a jagged rock, where even camels
Shattered their hooves.

20

When morning hailed him there,
At the gloomy site, murdered,
He had been robbed,
The booty stolen.

21

But now they've been killed by me —
The Hudhaylis, with deep wounds.
Bad luck doesn't wear me down,
It wears itself down.

22

The thirst of the spear was quenched
With a first draught;
It was not forbidden
To drink again, again.

23

Now the wine denied
Is once again allowed;
With much hard work
Did I win permission.

24

To sword and spear
And horse I extended
The privilege
Now common to all.

25

Hand me the drinking-cup then,
O Sawad ben Amre!
My body, for my uncle's sake,
Is an open wound.

26

And to Hudhayl have we handed
The chalice of death,
Whose effect is wretchedness,
Blindness, humiliation.

27

The hyenas were laughing
Over the Hudhaylis' death;
You could see wolves,
Their faces shining.

28

The noblest vultures came flying,
They walked from corpse to corpse,
And from the meal in surfeit
They were unable to soar.

Little is needed for us to reach an understanding of this poem. The grandeur of character, the earnestness, the righteous cruelty of the action are the marrow of the poetry. The first two stanzas give a clear exposition. In the third and the fourth the dead man speaks and imposes upon his relatives the burden of revenge. The fifth and the sixth are linked by their meaning to the first stanzas; they appear lyrically transposed. The movement from the seventh to the thirteenth elevates the slain one, so we may feel the greatness of his loss. From the fourteenth through the sixteenth stanza the expedition against the enemies is portrayed; the eighteenth leads back again; the nineteenth and twentieth could come right after the first two stanzas. The twenty-first and twenty-second could be placed after the seventeenth; then follows the flush of victory and enjoyment of the banquet. The conclusion, though, is the horrible delight of seeing vanquished enemies lying before us and left as food for hyenas and vultures.

Most remarkable is the fact that in this poem the pure prose of the action becomes poetic through the transposition of events. By that means,

and because the poem lacks nearly all outward embellishment, its gravity is heightened. Anyone making his way deeply into it will see the events that have occurred, from beginning to end, building up before him in imagination.

(4) TRANSITION

If we now turn to a peaceful, civilized people, the Persians — since it was their poetry that initially prompted me to write this work — we must go back to the earliest times so we can understand the more recent period. It will always remain remarkable to the historian that no matter how often a land has been conquered by enemies — subjugated, even destroyed — a certain core quality of the nation always survives in its character, and all of a sudden a well-known popular feature reappears.

From this standpoint it may be enjoyable to hear about the ancient Persians, and so to stride on to the present day with a more assured and freer step.

(5) ANCIENT PERSIANS

The ancient Parsis' worship of God was grounded in the contemplation of nature. Adoring the Creator, they turned to the rising sun as the most striking of all magnificent phenomena. Here they believed they had caught sight of the throne of God, surrounded by the radiance of angels. Everyone, even the lowliest, could make the glory of this uplifting service come alive for himself each day. The poor man issued from his hut, the warrior from his tent, and the most religious of all duties was fulfilled. The newborn child was given the baptism of fire in solar rays. All day long, throughout his life, the Parsi would see himself accompanied by that primary star in all his actions. The moon and stars illumined the night, likewise unattainable, belonging to infinity. But then the fire stood ever by one's side, lightening, warming, as best it could. To pray in the presence of that emissary, to bow down before what was felt to be infinite, became a pleasant, pious duty. There is nothing purer than a cheerful sunrise. Fires had to be kindled and tended with the same neat cleanliness if they were to be, and to remain, holy reminders of the sun.

Zoroaster [or Zarathustra, tenth to eleventh century BCE] was apparently the first to transform the noble, pure natural religion into an elaborate

cult. Mental prayer, which includes and excludes all religions and pervades the moral conduct of only a few people who have been blessed by God, evolves with the majority merely as a transiently ardent, blissful moment of feeling. When it fades away, the individual, returned to himself, unsatisfied and idle, immediately falls back into the most tedious boredom.

To fill this void meticulously with ceremonials, consecrations, and expiations, with comings and goings, with inclinations and bows, is the duty and privilege of the priestly guild, who in the course of centuries have fragmented their occupation into countless trivialities. Drawing a quick summarizing line between the first childlike, happy adoration of the rising sun and the insane rites of the Guebers [a now obsolete term for Zoroastrians], as practiced by them yet today in India, we may perceive in the one case a youthful nation rising from sleep to meet the sunrise, and in the other a dreary people who try to kill ordinary boredom with pious boredom.

But we should not forget that ancient Parsis did not venerate only fire. Their religion is based throughout on the dignity of all elemental proclaimers of God's presence and might. Hence the pious fear of sullying water, air, or soil. Such a reverence for everything natural that surrounds the human being leads to every civil virtue: attentiveness, neatness, diligence are encouraged and fostered. Here was the basis of the national culture. Just as they would not pollute a river, so they dug their canals with care to save water and keep it clean. From controlled water circulation sprang the fertility of the country, so that during that era of empire ten times more land was plowed. They carried out with utmost diligence whatever work the sun would smile upon. But above all else they cultivated the vine, the sun's true child.

Their strange way of burying the dead derives from the same exaggerated endeavor not to pollute pure elements. The police of the cities worked according to these tenets. Keeping the streets clean was a religious concern. Even today, when the Guebers are a banished, repudiated, despised people and find their lodgings, at best, in suburban quarters of ill repute, a dying member of that faith will bequeath a sum of money so that one street or another of the capital may be thoroughly cleansed at once. Such a lively practical worship of God made possible that incredible population to which history bears witness.

A religion as tender as this, based on God's omnipresence in his works of the sensory world, is bound to have a distinct influence on moral conduct. Consider their main commands and interdicts: thou shalt not lie, not incur debts, not be ungrateful! Every ethicist and ascetic can readily elaborate on the fruitfulness of these teachings. The first prohibition really contains

the other two and all the rest, which in fact originate in nothing other than the need to combat falsehood and infidelity. Thus the devil may be designated in the Orient as none other than the eternal liar.

Since this religion leads, however, to contemplation, it could easily bring on a softness, just as the long, wide cloaks seem to indicate something feminine. Yet in the Zoroastrians' morals and constitution the opposite tendency was equally strong. They carried weapons, even in peacetime and in social life, and practiced their use in every possible way. The most deft, fierce horse-riding was common. So their games, notably polo on long racetracks, kept them spry, strong, agile. A relentless conscription would make them all heroes at the first hint from the king.

Let us look back at their way of conceiving God. Initially, public worship was limited to a few fires and so was all the more reverent. But then an exalted priesthood gradually multiplied and so augmented the number of sacred fires. The tendency of this close-knit priestly power to revolt occasionally against the secular authority lies in the nature of their always incompatible relationship. Not to mention that the false Smerdis [d. 522 BCE], who usurped the kingdom, had been a magus, elevated and supported for some time by his fellows — so we encounter now and then magi who become alarming to the rulers.

Scattered by Alexander's invasion, out of favor with his Parthian successors, then given prominence again and brought together by the Sassanids, the magi proved always firm in their principles and resisted any ruler who hindered them. Thus they obstructed in all possible ways the union of Khusrau [reigned 592–628] with the beautiful Shirin, a Christian.

They were displaced forever by the Arabs and driven away to India, with whoever remained of them or of their spiritual kindred in Persia despised and reviled until this very day — now tolerated, now persecuted, according to the whims of the rulers. Yet their religion still maintains itself here and there in its primary purity, even in miserable corners, as I have tried to convey in my poem, "Testament of the old Parsi" [*Parsi Nameh, MA* 11.1.2, 111ff; see poem 228, "Legacy of Ancient Persian Faith," p. 146].

It is beyond question that over a long time we have come to owe much to this religion, and that in it lay the possibility of a higher culture which has spread over the western parts of the eastern world. It is no doubt extremely difficult to give an adequate idea of how and whence that culture spread. Many cities, centers of life, lay scattered in various regions; but for me the most admirable fact is that the fatal proximity of the Indian idolatry was unable to affect them. Since the cities of Balkh and Bamian lay so near each other, it remains astonishing to see in the latter the maddest idols of

gigantic size being crafted and worshiped, while in the former the temples to pure fire survived, huge monasteries of this faith arose, and the mubads [priests] assembled in great numbers. How splendid the founding of such institutions must have been may be evidenced by the extraordinary men who emerged. Among their posterity were the family of the Barmecides [descendants of Barmak, eighth century], who excelled for so long as influential statesmen, until at last, as would happen to a somewhat kindred dynasty in our time [French royalty, Old Regime], they were rooted out and driven away.

(6) GOVERNANCE

If the philosopher constructs for himself a natural, international, and constitutional law based on principles, the friend of history inquires what human legal circumstances and associations might have been like. We find that in the most ancient Orient all sovereignty can be derived from the right to declare war. This privilege lies, like all the others, initially in the will and passion of the people. When a clan member is injured, masses of people are at once moved, unbidden, to take revenge on the offender. But the crowd cannot guide itself in its actions. So it confers leadership in the fight upon a single person, whether for one military expedition only or for many, and it does this on the basis of election, custom, or habit. To the capable man it grants the dangerous post for a lifetime, and perhaps finally also to his descendants. In this way the individual, by demonstrating his ability to conduct a war, acquires the right to declare war.

From this right further derives the warrant to summon, command, and compel all citizens to battle — citizens who may be viewed as in any case pugnacious and combative. Conscription always had to be merciless if it was to prove fair and effective. The first Darius [reigned 522–486 BCE] prepares for war against a suspect neighbor; his innumerable subjects heed the signal. An old man must give up his three sons; he asks that the youngest be exempted from the campaign; the king sends back the lad, cut to pieces. Here, then, the right to decide on life and death has been proclaimed. In the battle itself no questioning is tolerated: think how often an entire section of the army is vainly sacrificed in an arbitrary and inept manner, and nobody calls the leader to account.

In martial nations, however, this same state of affairs extends to include the brief periods of peace. Around the king there is always war, and no one's life at court is secure. In addition, the taxes the war had made

necessary continue to be levied. That is why Darius Codomannus [reigned 336–330 BCE] prudently fixed regular tributes instead of voluntary contributions. Based on this principle, with this constitution, the Persian monarchy rose to the highest degree of power and happiness, but it was finally run aground by the ambition of a neighboring, small, fragmented nation.

(7) HISTORY

The Persians, after extraordinary princes had consolidated their armed forces into a single unit and had raised the flexibility of the masses to the highest level, proved dangerous even to distant peoples, and all the more so to the ones nearby.

All were overcome: only the Greeks, at odds among themselves but united against the numerous enemy who advanced several times, developed a model spirit of sacrifice, the first and last virtue containing all the others. A respite was gained, so that, in the same measure as the Persian power was disintegrating internally, Philip of Macedonia [382–336 BCE] was able to

Persians and appropriated the realm.

The Persians had made themselves not only alarming but extremely odious to the Greek nation by simultaneously warring against the government and against public worship. Devoted to a religion in which the heavenly bodies, fire, and the other elements were venerated as divine beings out in the open, they thought it quite reprehensible to see gods confined to habitations and worshiped under a roof. So they burned and destroyed temples, thereby creating the very monuments that made them hated forever, for the Greeks decided in their wisdom that they would never re-erect the ruins out of the rubble, but let them ominously lie there to incite future revenge. The Greeks brought to Persian soil their intention to repay the injuries inflicted on their religious worship. Many an atrocity can thus be explained, and the same justifying tactic is employed to excuse the burning of Persepolis.

The religious practices of the magi — who, admittedly far altered from their earlier simplicity, already required temples and monasteries — were similarly abolished; and the magi were chased out and scattered, though a great many of them still secretly organized and retained their convictions and religious services in hope of better times. Their patience was sorely

tried. When, upon Alexander's death, the short-lived autocracy collapsed and the realm fell apart, the Parthians took hold of the region we are speaking of. The language, customs, and religion of the Greeks took root among them. Five hundred years were to pass over the ashes of the ancient temples and altars. But under them the sacred fire continually smoldered. So at the beginning of the third century A.D., when the Sassanids, professing again the old religion, reinstituted the earlier rite of worship, they immediately found a number of magi and mubads, who on and across the boundary with India had survived in secret and maintained their convictions. The ancient Persian language was reinstated, the Greek language superseded, and the base for a particular nationality was re-established. Here then we find in the space of four hundred years the mythological prehistory of Persia, restored to a certain degree through poetic and prose accounts. The radiant dawn of Persian prehistory continues to delight us, and a variety of characters and events may awaken great interest.

According to what we hear about plastic arts and architecture in this epoch, however, they were merely a matter of pomp and glory, grandeur and magnitude and deformed figures. How could it be otherwise? They had to derive their art from the Western world, which had already been so deeply degraded. I myself own a signet ring of Shapur the First [ca. 241–272], an onyx, evidently carved by a Western artist of that time, perhaps a prisoner of war. Would the seal-carver of the conquering Sassanids have been more skilled than the seal-carver of the conquered Emperor Valentinian [321–375]? What the coins of that time looked like is unfortunately all too well known to us. In the same way, through the efforts of knowledgeable writers, the poetic fairytale quality of those remaining monuments was reduced, by and by, to historical prose. Here we clearly grasp, once again, that a people may stand at a high moral-religious level, surround itself with splendor and pomp, and yet be counted among the barbarians with regard to the arts.

Similarly, if we want to appreciate Oriental and especially Persian poetry of the following period and not overestimate it to our own later annoyance and embarrassment, we must properly consider where, after all, truly worthy poetry could actually be found in those days.

Very little seems to have strayed from the West to even the nearest East. But India was observed with particular interest. To Persian venerators of fire and the other elements, the insanely monstrous religion of India was no more acceptable than an abstruse Indian philosophy was to a Persian man of the world. Persians only took from India what all humanity values — writings that bear witness to worldly wisdom. They assigned the fables

of Bidpai the highest value, though in doing so they were already destroying a future poetry at its very foundation. At the same time they acquired from India the game of chess, which in connection with Persian worldly wisdom is perfectly suited to kill all poetical sensibility. If we take all this into account, we will admire and extol the later Persian poets, who, as soon as favorable conditions arose, were able to strive against so many adversities, to evade them, perhaps even to overcome them.

The nearness of Byzantium, the wars with the Western emperors, and the resulting mutual relationships finally brought forth a mixture, with the Christian religion wedging itself between the religions of the ancient Persians, not without resistance from the mubads and religious custodians of that region. So we can understand how many irritations arose. Even the great misfortune that befell the excellent prince Khusrau Parviz originated merely because the lovable, charming Shirin held fast to her Christian faith.

All of this, even if considered only perfunctorily, obliges us to admit that the goals and methods of the Sassanids [226–651] merit every praise, though they were not strong enough to survive when surrounded by enemies on all sides in a highly turbulent period. After strong resistance, they were subjugated by the Arabs, whom Muhammad had united and raised to the most alarming power.

(8) MUHAMMAD [570–632]

Since in these reflections I either deliberately take the standpoint of poetry as point of departure or return to it anyway, it will be helpful to speak first of all about the extraordinary Muhammad, who vehemently affirmed that he was a prophet not a poet, and that his Qur'an was to be viewed as divine law rather than a book written by a mortal for instruction or pleasure. To indicate more clearly the difference between a poet and a prophet, I would say: both are seized and enkindled by one god, but the poet expends the enjoyable gift bestowed upon him in order to produce pleasure, to attain honor, or at least a comfortable life, by what he produces. He neglects all other purposes, seeking to be versatile, and to prove himself unconfined in his convictions and artistic production. In contrast, the prophet has one purpose in mind, and to attain it he uses the simplest means. He wants to proclaim some teaching and to gather people around it, as one would rally them round a banner. To achieve this it is only requisite

that the world believe. The prophet must therefore become and remain monotonous. For one does not believe in the manifold, one discerns it.

The entire content of the Qur'an, to say much in few words, is found at the beginning of the second sura: "There is no doubt in this book. It is instruction for the pious, who hold the mysteries of *faith* for true, observe the specific times of *prayer*, and distribute *alms* from what we have bestowed upon them; who believe in the revelation which has been sent down to the *prophets* prior to you, and have a definite certainty of the future life: these are guided by their Lord and shall be happy and blessed. As for unbelievers, it is all the same to them whether you warn them or not; they will not believe anyway. God has sealed their hearts and ears. A darkness shrouds their face, and they will suffer grave punishment" [Sale/Arnold Koran p. 3].

In this way the Qur'an repeats itself sura for sura. Belief and unbelief are divided into the upper and the lower sphere. Heaven and hell are intended, respectively, for those professing the belief and those denying it. Closer designations of what is commanded and forbidden, legends from the Jewish and Christian religions, elaborations of all kinds, numberless tautologies and repetitions form the body of this holy book, which, whenever I approach it, repels me always anew, but then attracts me, astonishes me, and in the end elicits my admiration.

Why it must therefore be of the greatest importance to every historian I will explain in the words of an excellent man: "The main purpose of the Qur'an seems to have been to unite the adherents of the three different religions that were prominent in the populous Arabia of that time — living mostly mixed together at random and roving about without shepherd and guide, since the major part of them were idolators and the others either Jews or Christians of a highly erroneous and heretical belief — to unite these groups in the recognition and veneration of the one eternal and invisible God, through whose omnipotence all things are created and those which have not been can be created; of the most almighty Sovereign, Judge, and Lord of all lords, confirming this by certain laws and the external signs of ceremonies, instituted partly in olden times and partly in new, and which through the representation of both temporal and eternal rewards and punishments were enjoined upon them, and to induce them all to obey Muhammad, as the prophet and messenger of God, who after the repeated remembrances, promises, and menaces of prior times was at length to spread and confirm God's true religion on earth by force of arms, in order to be acknowledged as the high priest, bishop, or pope in spiritual matters, as well as the highest prince in worldly affairs" [Golius, qtd. in Sale/Arnold Koran, "Introduction," p. 79].

If we bear this conviction firmly in mind, we cannot blame the Muslim for calling the time before Muhammad the time of ignorance, and for being thoroughly persuaded that only with Islam do enlightenment and wisdom begin. In compliance with the content and purpose of the Qur'an, the style is austere, grand, fearsome, and in places truly sublime. Thus one nail drives another, and no one should wonder about the great impact of this book. That is why true believers declare it uncreated, eternal along with God. Nevertheless there were astute minds who acknowledged that there had been a better kind of poetry and writing in former times, and they claimed that if God had not been pleased to reveal His will at once through Muhammad and so to provide definitive legal guidance, the Arabs would gradually have reached this level by themselves — even a higher one — and would have developed purer concepts in a pure language.

Others, more audacious, claimed that Muhammad had corrupted their language and literature, so that it will never recover. But the boldest among them, a witty poet, was daring enough to assert that everything Muhammad had said, he too would have said, and better; he even assembled a number of sectarians around himself. He was therefore given the sobriquet *Motanabbi*, [915/6–965], the name by which we know him, and which means "the one who would like to play the prophet."

Muslim criticism finds in the Qur'an many a question. Some passages quoted in earlier times can now no longer be found in it. Other statements, mutually contradictory, abrogate one another. Additional flaws appear of the sort that cannot be avoided in written traditions. Nevertheless, this book will remain highly effective to all eternity insofar as it was designed to be thoroughly practical and to suit the needs of a nation that bases its fame on ancient traditions and adheres to inherited customs.

In his aversion against poetry Muhammad appears quite consistent in banning all fairytales. These games of a frivolous imagination vacillating between reality and fantasy and setting forth the improbable as something true and beyond doubt were very well suited to Oriental sensuality, gentle leisure, and comfortable indolence. Such aery creations, floating above a wondrous ground, had become endlessly abundant at the time of the Sassanids, as attested by the loosely organized *Thousand and One Nights*. Their distinctive character is that they have no moral purpose and therefore lead a person not inward but rather outside himself into unconditioned open-endedness. It was precisely the opposite of this mentality that Muhammad wanted to advance. Note how he succeeds in transforming the traditions of the Old Testament and events befalling patriarchal families into legends. True, these rest on an unconditional faith in God, an unwavering obedience,

and thus equally on an *Islam* [surrender to God]. With effective thoroughness Muhammad can increasingly proclaim and enjoin the need for trust, obedience, and faith in God. In achieving this, he habitually indulges in a kind of fairytale writing, though it always serves his goals. If we judge his stories of Noah, Abraham, and Joseph in this context, we will truly admire him.

(9) CALIPHS

Returning to my main topic, I note again that the Sassanids ruled for about four hundred years, perhaps in the end not with their previous authority and glory. But they might have survived even longer if the power of the Arabs had not so increased that no older governance could resist them. Soon after Muhammad, the dynasty that had kept ancient Persian religion alive and had spread an uncommon level of culture perished under Omar [reigned 634–644].

The Arabs immediately pounced upon all books they considered needless or harmful. They ravaged all monuments of literature; the merest traces of them were barely able reach us. The Arabic language that was immediately introduced prevented any re-establishment of what could be called national. But here too the culture of those who had been conquered eventually overcame the rudeness of the conquerors. Muslim victors relished the love of pomp, the pleasing customs, and the poetic fragments of the vanquished. So until today that era still remains famous as the most brilliant epoch, the time of the Barmecides' influence in Baghdad. These, coming from Balkh, not monks themselves but patrons and guardians of huge monasteries and institutions of learning, preserved the holy fire of poetry and rhetoric and commanded a high standing even in the political sphere through their worldly wisdom and magnanimity. The era of the Barmecides therefore proverbially stands for a period of local learning and activity filled with life — a period such that, once gone, it might hopefully spring up again elsewhere under like circumstances.

But the Caliphate, too, was of short duration: the huge realm survived barely four hundred years. The more distant governors gradually became more and more independent, recognizing the Caliphs as at most a spiritual authority with the power to distribute titles and religious revenues.

(10) PRELIMINARY OBSERVATION

No one denies the impact climate has on the formation of the human body and physical traits, but we sometimes fail to remember that varied forms of government produce equally varied moral climates, in which the character develops in varying ways. I am not speaking now of the masses but rather of significant, distinguished figures.

A republic fosters the development of great and happy personalities capable of calm and pure activity. If the republic rises into an aristocracy, dignified, effective, assiduous men arise, admirable as commanders and as subordinates. If a nation falls into anarchy, daring men at once become prominent, men without respect for morals, ready to act violently at any moment, viewing moderation with horror. In contrast, despotism creates great characters: prudent, placid supervision, rigorous activity, firmness, determination — all qualities required in serving a despot — develop in capable spirits and procure for them the primary positions in the government, where they are trained to become rulers themselves. Such officials arose under Alexander the Great [356–323 BCE], and after his early death his generals succeeded him immediately as kings. The Caliphs were in charge of a gigantic realm, the administration of which they had to delegate to governors, whose power and independence increased in proportion as the authority of the highest ruler waned. Such an excellent man, who knew how to establish and to merit his own realm, is the one I need to speak of now, so as to acquaint you with the bases for the newer Persian poetry and the beginnings of its meaningful life.

(11) MAHMUD OF GHAZNA [971?–1030]

Mahmud's father had founded a strong government in the mountains facing India. While the caliphs sank to nothingness in the plains of the Euphrates, Mahmud continued his father's work and made himself famous like Alexander and Frederick [the Great, 1712–1786]. He lets a caliph maintain a kind of spiritual authority that he is willing to acknowledge to some degree for his own advantage. But first of all he expands his regime, and he presses into India with great strength and uncommon good fortune. As the most zealous Muslim he proves himself untiringly earnest in spreading his faith and destroying idolatry. Belief in the One God is always heartening insofar as it urges the human being to reflect on the unity of its own self. Nearer to the believer stands the national prophet, who demands

only devotion, formalities, and injunctions to spread a religion which, like all religions, will leave room for innumerable exegeses and misinterpretations by varied sects and factions, yet remains ever the same.

Such a simple worship of God had to stand in harshest contradiction to Indian idolatry. And it aroused opposition and conflict, even bloody wars of extirpation. Zeal for destruction and conversion was further heightened by the gain of countless treasures. Gigantic, grotesque images, whose hollow bodies had been found filled with gold and jewels, were dismembered and smashed to pave thresholds of Muslim sanctuaries. Even now the Indian monstrosities are hated by everyone of sincere feeling. How hideous must they have appeared to the Muslim who abhors iconographic representations!

It will not be wholly out of place here to remark that the basic merit of any religion can only be judged after centuries by its consequences. The Jewish religion will always spread a certain rigid obstinacy but at the same time a frank wisdom and a lively activity. Islam does not release its adherent from a dulling narrowness, since, commanding no arduous duties, it bestows on him within this limit everything he can wish for, yet at the same time, in anticipation of the future, it instils and sustains in him bravery and a religious patriotism.

The Indian teachings were useless from their very origin, and so at present their several thousand gods, none of them subordinate but all equally and unconditionally powerful, increase the confusion of the contingencies of life, encourage the absurdity of every passion, and favor the madness of vices as if they were the highest stage of holiness and bliss.

But even a purer polytheism like those of the Greeks and Romans was obliged, on its own false path, finally to lose its adherents and its very self. On the other hand, the highest praise is due to the Christian religion, whose pure, noble origin is continually confirmed by the fact that after the greatest aberrations in which it was involved by unenlightened people, it suddenly emerges again and again in its first lovely distinctiveness, as a mission, a familial community and brotherhood, and an invigoration for human ethical needs.

If we approve of Mahmud's iconoclastic zeal, we will not begrudge him the infinite treasures he gained at the same time but will revere especially in him the founder of Persian poetry and higher culture. Of Persian [actually Turkic] descent, he did not allow himself to be drawn into the narrowness of the Arabs. He felt strongly that the fairest ground for religion was to be found in nationality. This rests upon poetry, which transmits to us the most

ancient history in wondrous images, then gradually emerges into clarity, seamlessly joining the past to the present.

With these thoughts in mind we arrive at the tenth century of our era. Let us take a look at the higher culture which, regardless of its exclusive religion, continually pressed in upon the Orient. Here were assembled, almost against the will of the wild and weak rulers, the legacies of Greek and Roman accomplishments and of so many inventive Christians whose distinctive attainments had been rejected by the church, which also, like Islam, was aiming at one single unified belief.

Yet two large branches of human knowledge and activity attained a freer activity!

Medicine is supposed to heal the infirmities of the microcosm, and astronomy to interpret what the heavens might flatter or threaten us with in the future. Medicine had to pay homage to nature, astronomy to mathematics, so both were highly commended and well maintained.

To be part of an administrative body under despotic rulers would always be dangerous, even with the greatest vigilance and alertness. A custodian of the chancellery needed as much courage to move into the "divan" or council room as a hero into battle. The one was no more certain than the other to see his home and hearth again.

Traveling merchants always brought an increase in treasures and knowledge. The interior of the country, from the Euphrates to the Indus, presented a world of objects of its own. A mass of peoples fighting against one another, rulers having either been banished themselves or driven out others, illustrated far too often a startling shift from victory to submission, from sovereignty to servitude, and led gifted men to entertain the saddest ruminations over the dreamlike evanescence of worldly things.

We must keep in mind all of this and even more, including the broadest range of unending fragmentations and sudden restorations, if we are to be fair to the poets who followed, especially the Persians. Everyone will admit that the conditions I have described can by no means be thought conducive to a poet's nurture, growth, and flourishing. I regard even the noble achievement of the Persian poets of the first era as problematic. Nor should they be measured by the highest standard. While reading, we must often indulge them and, after reading, often pardon.

(12) POET-KINGS

Many poets gathered at Mahmud's court. It is said that four hundred practiced their craft there. And as everything in the Orient has to be subordinated to serve higher demands, so the prince appointed a poet-prince, who was supposed to test, judge, and encourage poets to compose in ways suited to each one's talent. This position would have to be called one of the choicest at court. The poet-prince was the minister of all scholarly historical-poetical activities. He meted out favors to underlings. And when he accompanied the court, he brought such a great entourage, such a majestic cortège, that one might well have taken him for a vizier.

(13) TRADITIONS

Anyone who considers how to transmit to future generations information about events that immediately concern himself will need to feel comfortable with contemporary happenings, to sense their outstanding value. So first of all he consolidates in his memory what he has heard from his forebears and hands it down in wondrous wrappings, for oral transmission will always amplify narrations in a fairytale fashion. But if the art of writing has been invented, if a people attains priority in the use of writing, the resulting chronicles will continue to retain poetic rhythm when the poetry of imagination and feeling has long since disappeared. The latest age provides us with detailed memorials and autobiographies under various guises.

In the Orient, too, we find very early documents with a meaningful view of the world. Even if our holy books were only later laid down in written form, they were occasioned by ancient transmissions and can only be regarded with the highest gratitude. How much, at any moment, must have arisen in the Middle East, as we may call Persia and its surroundings, surviving despite all devastation and dispersal! For if it is good farming technique not to hand over huge stretches of land to one owner but rather to divide them among several, then this same condition also aids preservation. What perishes in one place can survive in another; what is driven out of this corner can flee to that one.

In this way, notwithstanding all destruction and devastation, many transcripts from earlier times must have survived, which from one epoch to another were partly copied, partly renewed. Thus we find that under Yazdegerd [III, reigned 632–651], the last Sassanid, a history of the realm

was written, probably pieced together from old chronicles, like the ones that Ahasuerus, in the Book of Esther, already had read to him on sleepless nights. Copies of a work entitled *Bastan Nameh* have survived because four hundred years later a revision of it was undertaken under Mansur I [reigned 961–976], from the house of the Samanids, though it remained uncompleted, and the dynasty was swallowed up by the Ghaznavids. Mahmud, however, the second sovereign of the above named clan, is animated by the same predilection, and allocates seven parts of the *Bastan Nameh* among seven court poets. Ansari [1006–1088], who succeeds in gratifying his master the most, is named poet-king and allotted the task of revising the whole. But he, comfort-loving and prudent enough, finds ways to delay the business and may well have been quietly looking around to find someone to take it over.

(14) FIRDUSI
Dies 1030

The important epoch of Persian poetry which we now are reaching offers a chance to consider how major world events only unfold when certain tendencies, concepts, and intentions, sown or scattered individually, here and there, without connection, bestir themselves and quietly, continually grow until at length, sooner or later, a general cooperation takes place. It is remarkable that at the same time as a powerful prince was intent on restoring a folk and tribal literature, the son of a gardener in Tus simultaneously acquired a copy of the *Bastan Nameh* and eagerly dedicated his amiable inborn talent to such studies.

Intending to complain about the local governor because of some ill-treatment, he goes to the court and vainly tries for a long while to make his way to the ruler Ansari and through the latter's intercession to attain his purpose. Finally, a fortunate, deeply meaningful rhymed couplet, spoken on the spur of the moment, allows him to meet the poet-king, who, placing trust in his talent, recommends him and secures for him the charge of a great work. Firdusi begins the *Shah Nameh* under favorable circumstances. At the beginning he is to some extent adequately rewarded, but after thirty years of work the royal gift no longer corresponds to his expectations in any way. Embittered, he leaves the court and dies at the very moment when the king remembers him favorably once again. Mahmud outlives him by barely a year, during which time Firdusi's aged master Essedi finishes writing the *Shah Nameh.*

This work is an important, serious, mythic-historic founding work of the nation. It preserves the origins, lives, and works of ancient heroes. It makes references to both the earlier and later past, which is why, finally, the factual history increasingly takes prominence, whereas the fables earlier on transmit many an ancient traditional truth only in veiled form.

In general, Firdusi appears to have been superbly qualified for the task: he passionately held fast to what was ancient and national and also, with regard to language, sought to reattain an earlier purity and skill. He banned Arabic words and paid special attention to the old Pehlevi.

(15) ANVARI
Dies 1152

He studied in Tus, a town celebrated for important educational institutions and even suspected of being too highly cultured. When, sitting by the door of a lecture room, he saw a great man riding by with his entourage and pomp, yet heard to his amazement that the man was a court poet, he decided to reach the same height of advancement. A poem written overnight, winning him the favor of the prince, has been left to us.

In this and several other pieces of poetry that have been transmitted, a cheerful spirit, gifted with unfailing tact and a sharp, happy perspicuity, gazes out. He commands an incalculable amount of material. He lives in the present, and as he shifts at once from student to courtier, he becomes a free encomiast, finding that there is no better art than to delight his companions with praise. He adorns viziers, noble and beautiful women, poets, and musicians with his panegyrics and knows how to offer each one something attractive from his wide world of resources.

So I cannot consider it fair that after so many centuries he is faulted for the circumstances in which he lived and exercised his talent. What would become of a poet if there were no high-ranking, powerful, clever, busy, attractive, and skilled individuals whose merits could help him lift himself up? Like the vine on the elm tree, like the ivy on the wall, it is upon them that he climbs, refreshing eyes and mind. Should one reprove a jeweler who spends his life using the gemstones of the East and West Indies for the glorious adornment of excellent men? Should he be told to take up the admittedly practical trade of paving roads instead?

But as fully as our poet was at ease with the earth, he was ruined by the sky. The people had been alarmed by his momentous prediction that on a particular day a gigantic storm would devastate the country. It did not come

true. The Shah himself could not rescue his favorite from the general anger of the court and the city. He fled. Even in a distant province it was only the resolute character of a friendly governor that protected him.

Yet we may still vindicate the honor of astrology if we assume that the coming together of so many planets within one zodiac sign would point to the coming of Jenghiz Khan, who wrought more ravages in Persia than any gale could muster.

(16) NIZAMI
Dies 1180

A sensitive, highly gifted mind, who, as Firdusi had exhausted all the traditional stories of heroes, chose the most charming exchanges of intimate love as subject matter for his poems. He presents Mejnun and Laila [seventh century], Khusrau and Shirin, loving pairs destined for each other by intuition, skill, nature, habit, inclination, and passion; firmly in each other's good graces; but then parted by caprice, obstinacy, contingency, necessity, and force, then just as oddly brought together again, and yet finally, in one way or another, torn apart and separated.

These materials and their treatment arouse an ideal longing. Nowhere do we find satisfaction. Grace is abundant, multiplicity infinite. Also in his other poems, devoted to directly moral purposes, the same charming clarity breathes forth. Whatever ambiguity we may encounter, he always leads it into the realm of practicality and finds the best solution to every riddle in an ethical form of activity.

Fittingly for his tranquil occupation, he led a quiet life under the Seljuks [or Saljuqs ca. 1038–1152] and was buried in his hometown of Ganja.

(17) JALALODDIN RUMI
Dies 1262

Seeking relief from vexing tensions with the sultan, Jalaloddin's father moves away from Balkh, and the boy accompanies him on the long journey. On the way to Mecca they meet [Farideddin] Attar [1142–1220], who presents the boy with a book of divine secrets and ignites in him a desire for sacred studies.

Here we must note this much: the true poet is called upon to grasp the splendor of the world and therefore will always be more inclined to praise than to blame. Consequently, he seeks to find the most worthy topic and, when he has exhausted everything, at length prefers to use his talent to praise and glorify God. This urge is most congenial to the Oriental, for he tends always toward exuberance and believes that he glimpses it in utmost plenitude in contemplating the Divinity, so that in each of his poetic realizations no one may blame him for excess.

The so-called Muslim rosary, in which the name Allah is exalted with ninety-nine qualities, exemplifies such a litany of praise and glory. Affirmative and negative attributes indicate the most incomprehensible being: the worshiper marvels and resignedly reassures himself. And while the secular poet assigns the perfections he has in mind to ideal persons, the poet devoted to God takes refuge in the impersonal being that has permeated everything for all eternity.

Thus Attar withdrew into contemplation, and Jalaloddin, a pure young man, who also had just moved away from the prince and the capital city, was all the more ready to be aroused to more profound studies.

Now, after completing pilgrimages, he crosses Asia Minor with his father. They remain in Iconium [today's Konya, Turkey]. There they teach, are pursued, driven out, reinstated. And there they lie buried with one of their most faithful teaching colleagues. Meanwhile, Jenghiz Khan [1162–1227] had conquered Persia without touching their peaceful abode.

After the above introduction, no one will blame the great poet if he directs his thought to the abstruse. His works appear somewhat motley: he uses little stories, fairytales, parables, legends, anecdotes, exempla, problems, to make more accessible the mysterious teachings he himself cannot clearly account for. Instruction and edification are his aim, yet on the whole he seeks, through the doctrine of unity, if not to fulfil then somehow to resolve all longing, and to indicate that in the Divine Being everything will be ultimately submerged and transfigured.

(18) SAADI
Dies 1291, aged 102

Born in Shiraz, he studies in Baghdad, and misfortune in love destines him as a young man to the unsettled life of a dervish. Fifteen times he goes on pilgrimage to Mecca. In his wanderings he reaches India and Asia Minor and as a prisoner of the Crusaders even reaches the West. He survives

wondrous adventures and gains a fine knowledge of countries and people. After thirty years he withdraws, revises his works, and makes them known. He lives and works within a wide range of experience and is rich in anecdotes, which he adorns with adages and verses. To instruct the reader and the listener is his ultimate purpose.

Very secluded in Shiraz, he lives to the age of one hundred and two, and he is buried there. The descendants of Jenghiz had made Iran their own realm, where people lived peacefully.

(19) HAFIZ
Dies 1389

Recall from the second half of the previous century how among the Protestants of Germany one might encounter not only clergymen but laymen as well who had acquainted themselves with the Holy Scriptures to the point where, like living concordances, they were well prepared to specify, for every saying, where one could find it and in what connection. They knew the most important passages by heart, keeping them ever ready for any application. Such men necessarily accumulated great learning from this practice because the memory, always occupied with worthy objects, preserved for feeling and judgement fresh material to be enjoyed and applied. They were called *bibelfest* [well grounded in scripture], and this appellation conveyed an outstanding worthiness and an unequivocal recommendation.

What arose among us Christians from natural disposition and good will was a duty with the Muslims. If a brother in faith earned the greatest merit in reproducing a copy of the Qur'an or in having it copied, it was no less a merit to learn it by heart so that on any occasion one might quote the appropriate passages, to promote edification or to settle a dispute. Such persons were given the honorary title *Hafiz,* and this remained with our poet as the principal name to designate him.

Yet soon after its genesis, the Qur'an became an object of interminable commentaries, eliciting sophisticated hairsplitting. The book stirred the mind of everyone who read it. Infinitely diverse opinions and mad combinations arose, and even the most unreasonable associations of all kinds were tried out. A truly intelligent, sensible man had to make every effort to return to the original, pure text, and they did so. That is why in the history of Islam we find interpretation, application, and practice often worthy of admiration.

It was for such a skill that the finest poetic talent was trained and educated. The entire Qur'an belonged to him, and no religious edifice founded on it was a secret to him. He himself says:

"Due to the Qur'an alone
Is whatever I've achieved." [Mim 43, 39; Hammer 2, 223]

In his hometown Shiraz, to which he limited himself, he taught as a dervish, sufi, and sheikh, well liked and highly regarded by the Muzaffar family and their connections. He was occupied with theological and grammatical works and rallied a large number of disciples.

To these serious studies, involving the holding of a teaching post, his poems stand in total contradiction, which might be resolved, however, if we say: the poet must not believe in and live everything he expresses, least of all the poet who, born in a later period, gets into complicated circumstances requiring him to assume a rhetorical disguise and to present what contemporaries want to hear. That was the case with Hafiz. For just as a teller of fairytales does not believe in the magical happenings he narrates but only thinks of how to animate them in whatever way will give his hearers the most pleasure, so too the lyrical poet has no need to affirm in his own practice what he invokes to delight and flatter singers and readers, high and low. It seems our poet did not set a great value on the songs that flow so smoothly: disciples collected them only after his death.

I will say but little about these poems: one should enjoy them and bring oneself into harmony with them. A tempered, yet upwelling vitality streams from each. Unassumingly happy and judicious within limits, taking part in the fullness of the world, looking into the mysteries of the Divinity from afar, but also at one point rejecting religious practice as well as sensual pleasure, the one as much the other — so in general this kind of poetry, whatever it appears to promote and teach, must above all maintain a skeptical mobility.

(20) JAMI
Dies 1494, aged 82

Jami gathers the whole harvest of previous efforts. He sums up the religious, philosophical, scientific, and prosaic-poetical culture. He has the great advantage of being born 23 years after Hafiz' death and of finding as a young man an entirely open field before him. The greatest clarity and tact are in his possession. Now he attempts and accomplishes everything,

appearing both sensual and spiritual at the same time. The splendor of the real world and of the world of poetry lies before him, and he moves between them. Mysticism held no appeal for him. But because he would not have filled the sphere of national interest without it, he gave a historical account of all the follies through which, in stages, the human being, caught in his earthly existence, intends to come closer to the Divinity and finally to become one with it. In this process, however, finally nothing but unnatural, perverse, monstrous figures come to light. For what else does the mystic do but creep past problems, or shove them aside if that can be managed?

(21) OVERVIEW

From historians' very neatly arranged sequence of the first seven Roman kings, people have tended to conclude that this history was cleverly and intentionally invented. I leave that question undecided. In contrast, I want to observe that the seven poets whom Persians consider the best, and who appeared within a period of five hundred years, really do stand in an ethical-poetic relation to each other which might equally appear to have been fabricated if the works they left behind had not demonstrated their real existence.

If we further examine this constellation of seven stars to the best of our ability at this great distance in time, we find that they all possessed a fertile talent that renewed itself continually. Through this, they saw themselves lifted above the majority of very capable men and above the large number of mediocre, everyday talents. But in fact they had also chanced to come into a particular period and situation where they could happily gather a great harvest and would weaken for some time the impact of equally talented successors, until once again an interval would pass when nature might reveal new treasures to the poet.

With this in mind, I will sum up the main points about those I have surveyed:

Firdusi [940?–1020?] pioneered the presentation of all prior national and imperial events, preserved in either legendary or historical form, so that the only thing left for a successor was reference and comment, but no fresh treatment and presentation.

Anvari [eleventh century] held fast to the present. As radiant and splendid as nature appeared to him, rich in joy and gifts, he observed in addition the court of the Shah. To link both worlds and their advantages

with the most delightful words was a duty and a pleasure. None equaled him in this.

Nizami [1141–1209] grasped with friendly force everything available in his vicinity in the form of legends of love and semi-miracles. Already in the Qur'an a hint had been given of how, for one's own purposes, very ancient traditions, laconically transmitted, could be treated, elaborated, and made delightful when developed in detail.

Jalaloddin Rumi [1207–1273] feels uneasy on the problematic ground of reality and seeks to solve the riddles of inner and outer phenomena in a spiritual, spirited way. Thus, his works pose new riddles, requiring new solutions and commentaries. He finally feels the urge to flee into the doctrine of unity, where all that finally remains is the either comforting or discomforting zero. But then how could any kind of communication, poetic or prosaic, ever succeed? Fortunately,

Saadi [ca. 1210–1290], the excellent, was driven out into the wide world, swamped with boundless particulars of empirical reality. But he knows how to gain something from all of it. He feels the need for composure, convincing himself that it is his duty to teach, and thus he has become fruitful and beneficial for us of the West.

Hafiz [ca. 1320-1389], a great, cheerful talent, content in rejecting everything that men desire, pushing aside everything they might not want to do without, and still appearing always as the happy brother of such people. He can only be properly appreciated in his own national and temporal circle. But as soon as he has been grasped, he remains a winning companion for one's life — so that even now, unconsciously more than consciously, camel and mule drivers sing him to themselves, by no means because of the content, which he himself willfully fragmented, but on account of the mood he effuses, eternally pure and pleasant. Who then could succeed him, as everything else had already been anticipated by his predecessors? Who but —

Jami [1414–1492], the equal of anything that happened to him or around him. Since he bound all of this together in sheaves, reproduced, renewed, expanded it, and combined with the greatest clarity within himself the virtues and failings of his predecessors, nothing was left to the poets of the following era but to be like him (insofar as poetry did not worsen). And that is how things remained for three centuries. In this connection I want to note only one more thing: if sooner or later the art of drama had achieved a breakthrough, and if a poet had been able to excel in that genre, the entire history of literature would have taken a different course.

If I have dared to portray five hundred years of Persian poetry and rhetoric in only these few remarks, I have done so in the hope (to put it in the words of Quintillian [ca. 35–ca. 100], our ancient master) that it will be accepted by my friends in the same way that we are allowed to use round numbers — not for the sake of precision, but for convenience' sake, to offer an approximate, general idea.

(22) GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

The fertility and diverse range of the Persian poets arises from the immeasurable breadth of the outer world presented and its infinite wealth. A public life continually bestirred, where all objects have equal value, moves before our imagination. That is why their comparisons are often, for us, so very striking and disagreeable. Without a second thought they connect the noblest with the basest images, a practice we cannot easily get used to.

But let me state it frankly: a real man about town, who breathes freely in the practical world, has no aesthetic sensibility and no taste; he is content with reality in acting, enjoying, contemplating — and similarly in poetry. And if the Oriental, in order to create a strange effect, rhymes the seemingly unrhymeable, the German reader, who might well encounter similar things, should not look askance at it.

The confusion that arises from such productions in the imagination may be compared to what happens when we go through an Oriental bazaar or a European fair. Not always are the most costly and the cheapest wares widely separated in space. They mix before our eyes, and often we behold also the barrels, boxes, and sacks in which they had been transported. Similarly, in a market for fruits or vegetables we see not only herbs and roots and fruits, but also here and there all manner of refuse, peels, and stalks.

Furthermore, it costs the Oriental poet nothing to raise us from earth to heaven and from there to let us fall again, or vice versa. From the carcass of a rotting dog Nizami knows how to draw an ethical observation that amazes and edifies us.

> As Jesus wandered through the world
> He passed, one day, a marketplace;
> Along the path, a dead dog lay,
> Dragged to a nearby house's door.
> A group stood by the carrion

As vultures round cadavers crowd.
And one said: "That offensive smell
Will utterly wipe out my brain."
And one: "It's more than I can take.
What graves reject brings dreadful luck."
So each one sang, to his own tune,
The dead dog's body to disdain.
But now, when it was Jesus' turn,
He spoke, without reviling, kind.
In his warmhearted way, he said:
"The teeth are white as any pearls."
Hearing the words, the people felt,
Like glowing mussels, burning hot.

[*Makhzan al-asrār* chap. 10; Hammer, *Redekünste Persiens* p. 325]

Everyone feels affected when the loving as well as ingenious prophet, in his very particular way, demands forbearance and indulgence. How powerfully he can lead the restless crowd back to itself, to be ashamed of the spurning and cursing, and to view disregarded merit with recognition, perhaps even envy! Every bystander now thinks of his own teeth. Beautiful teeth are strongly appealing everywhere, especially in the Orient, as a gift of God. A rotting creature becomes, through what still remains perfect in it, an object of admiration and of the most pious meditation.

Not quite as obvious and penetrating, for us, is the excellent comparison with which the parable closes. So I will take care to explain it.

In regions lacking lime deposits, mussel shells are used to prepare an indispensable building material. Placed in layers between parched twigs, it is burned through by the ignited flame. The observer cannot help but feel that these beings, nourishing themselves and growing in the ocean when alive, and having enjoyed the common pleasure of existence in their own way only a short while before, now surely are not burnt but, thoroughly annealed, fully retain their form, although all the life in them has been driven out. Let us now assume that night falls and that, to the observer's eye, these organic remnants really appear to glow. There can then be no more glorious image of a deep, secret torment of the soul brought before our eyes. Anyone who wants to get a perfect view of this should ask a chemist to subject oyster shells to phosphorescent heat. He will then agree with me that a seething, hot emotion that penetrates a human being when a just reproach hits him unexpectedly amidst the arrogance of a comfortable self-conceit could not be conveyed with greater terror.

Such comparisons could be found by the hundreds. They presuppose the most immediate observation of what is natural and real, and yet they awaken at the same time a highly ethical concept based on pure, cultivated feeling.

Most valuable, within this limitless breadth of the poets' attentiveness to the smallest detail, is the sharp, loving look that seeks to abstract from a significant object its peculiarity. They have many a poetic "still life" that may take its place next to those of the best Dutch artists and even, in the ethical sense, excel them. As a result of this inclination and ability they cannot free themselves from certain favorite objects: no Persian poet tires of presenting the lamp as blinding, the candle as shining. That is precisely the origin of the monotony for which they are reproached. But, looked at closely, the natural objects become a surrogate for mythology: rose and nightingale occupy the place of Apollo and Daphne. Considering what they lacked — they had no theatre, no pictorial art — their poetical talent was not inferior to any other from time immemorial. In this regard we will be obliged, as friends of their distinctive world, to admire them more and more.

(23) BROADEST OBSERVATIONS

The most outstanding characteristic of oriental poetry is what we Germans call *Geist* [spirit], the predominance of superior guidance. It unifies all other qualities, without any of them standing out by asserting a particular prerogative. Spirit belongs chiefly to old age or to an aging epoch of the world. An overview of global affairs, irony, a free use of one's abilities — these are what we find in all poets of the Orient. Conclusion and premise are presented to us at once. That is why we see such a high value placed on an improvised word. Poets of spirit have all objects present before them and relate the most distant things easily to one another. Hence they come close to what we call wit. But wit does not stand so high, for it is selfish and complacent — traits from which spirit remains completely free, and for that reason it can and must be called genius-like.

But not only the poet enjoys such merits; the whole nation is brilliant, as becomes evident from innumerable anecdotes. One witty word infuriates a prince, another one appeases him. Inclination and passion dwell in the same element of words: thus, Bahramgur and Dilaram invent rhyme; Jamil and Buthayna remain passionately bound to each other into extreme old age. The whole history of Persian poetry teems with such examples.

If we bear in mind that during the time of Muhammad, Nushirwan [531–579], one of the last Sassanids, ordered the fables of Bidpai and the game of chess to be brought from India at enormous expense, then the state of such an epoch is entirely apparent. Judging by what has been transmitted to us, these poets compete with one another in worldly wisdom and in attaining a freer view of earthly affairs. That is why four centuries later, even in the first, best epoch of Persian poetry, no perfectly pure naïveté could possibly be found. The wide range of circumspection required from the poet, the increased knowledge, the conditions at court and in war — all of this demanded great self-awareness.

(24) NEWER AND NEWEST

Following the ways of Jami and his time, succeeding poets would more and more mix poetry and prose, so that to all kinds of writing only one style was applied. History, poetry, philosophy, official documents and letters — all is delivered in the same manner, and things go on like that for three centuries. Luckily, I can offer an example of what shows the most novelty.

When the Persian ambassador, *Mirza Abul Hassan Khan* [b. 1776], stayed in St. Petersburg, he was asked for a few lines of his handwriting. He was kind enough to write a page, and here I will insert the translation:

> Traveling through the whole world, for a long while I visited many people. Every corner provided me with some benefit, every stalk with a wheat ear. But for all that I have never seen a place comparable to this city nor to its beautiful houris. May the blessings of God rest upon it for ever!
>
> How well did that merchant speak who had fallen among robbers pointing their arrows at him! "A king who stifles trade closes the gate of well-being in the face of his army. Would any judicious man visit a country with that kind of reputation? If you want to earn a good name, you should treat merchants and envoys with respect. Those who are great will treat travellers well, to gain a good name. The country that doesn't protect foreigners will soon perish. Be a friend to strangers and travelers, for they are to be considered a means to acquire a good name. Be hospitable, respect

those passing by, beware of being unjust to them." One who follows that envoy's advice will surely derive advantage from it.

We are told that Omar ibn Abdel-Aziz was a mighty king. At night, filled with humility and submission, he turned his face to the throne of the Creator and said: "O Lord! Great things hast thou entrusted to the hand of thy weak servant. For the sake of the glory of the pure and holy ones of thy kingdom, grant me justice and equity, save me from the wickedness of the people. I fear lest the heart of someone innocent be afflicted and the curse of the oppressed come down upon my neck. A king should always remember the rule and presence of the highest being, the transiency of worldly things. Let him consider that the crown passes from a worthy to an unworthy head, and not let himself be tempted into arrogance. For a king who becomes haughty, despising friend and neighbor, cannot prosper long on his throne. One should never let oneself be puffed up by the glory of a few days. The world resembles a fire lit on one's way: whoever takes what is needed to illumine his path will suffer no harm, but the one who takes more burns himself."

When Plato was asked how he had been living in this world, he replied:

> "I entered it in pain, my life was a continual astonish ment, I leave it reluctantly, and nothing have I learned but that I know nothing." Keep away from one who intends to undertake something and is ignorant, from a devout person who is uninstructed: you may compare them both to a donkey that turns the mill without knowing why. The saber is nice to look at, but its effects are unpleasant. A well-meaning man obliges foreigners, but a wicked man alienates himself from his fellows. A king said to a certain Behlul, "Give me advice." The latter replied: "Don't envy a miser, an unjust judge, a wealthy man who does not know how to set his house in order, an open-handed man who squanders his money, or a scholar who lacks judgment. You acquire in the world either a good or a bad name. So it is possible to choose between the two. And since everyone is going to die, happy the one who preferred the fame of virtue."

> These lines were written, following the request of a friend, in the year 1231 of the Hegira, the day of Jumadi al-thani, according to the Christian era on May ... 1816, by *Mirza Abul Hassan Khan, from Shiraz*, during his stay in the capital St. Petersburg as Envoy Extraordinary of His Majesty of Persia Fath 'Ali Shah Qajar. He hopes that an ignorant man who undertook to write a few lines will be graciously pardoned.

As is clear from the foregoing, for three centuries a certain prose poetry was maintained, and the official style of letters remains, publicly and in private affairs, always the same. So, too, we learn that in most recent times at the Persian court there are still poets who transmit the events of the day — everything the emperor undertakes and all that happens — in the form of rhymed verse, neatly written down for a specially appointed archivist. Hence it appears that in the immutable Orient since the time of Ahasuerus, who had such chronicles read to him on sleepless nights, no further change has taken place.

I note, incidentally, that such a reading is done in a certain style of declamation, recited emphatically in a rising and falling tone, said to resemble closely the way French tragedies are declaimed. This can be imagined all the more readily as the Persian binary verses offer a contrast like that of the two halves of the alexandrine line.

This persistence might be the reason why, after eight centuries, Persians still love, esteem, and venerate their poems. I myself have witnessed an Oriental contemplating and treating a splendidly bound and preserved manuscript of the *Methnewi* with as much reverence as if it were the Qur'an.

(25) DOUBTS

But Persian poetry and what resembles it will never be received by the Occidental as entirely pure, with complete ease — a fact we need to be aware of if we are not to be suddenly disturbed in our enjoyment.

Yet it is not religion that keeps us at a distance from that poetic art. The unity of God, submission to his will, mediation through a prophet — all of this coincides more or less with our own beliefs, with our conceptions. Our holy scriptures are similarly rooted there, even if only in a legendary form.

We are already long since acquainted with the fairytales of that region — the fables, parables, anecdotes, witty and jesting speeches. Their mysticism should also appeal to us; at least it would deserve to do so, because of a

deep and thoroughgoing seriousness, comparable to ours. But such feeling, in most recent times, if looked at closely, turns out to express only a spineless and inept yearning. The way it parodies itself is illustrated in the following verses:

Eternal thirst alone avails me
After thirst.
[Eichendorff, *Ahnung und Gegenwart* 2 Kap. 12]

(26) DESPOTISM

But what never will enter the mind of an Occidental is spiritual and physical submissiveness to one's master and overlord, which is derived from time immemorial when kings took the place of God. In the Old Testament we read without particular astonishment about a man and a woman prostrating themselves before a priest or hero and worshiping them, for these worshipers are accustomed to doing the same before Elohim. What at first arose from a natural pious feeling transformed itself later into a complicated court etiquette. The kowtow, a thrice-repeated threefold prostration, is derived from this. How many Western legations at Eastern courts have failed in that ceremony — and Persian poetry, in general, cannot be well received by us if we do not make such matters clear.

What Occidental is able to tolerate the idea that the Oriental not only hits his head nine times on the ground but even throws it away anywhere at all to serve some goal or purpose?

Polo, with ball and mallet sharing a major role, repeatedly takes on renewed, even quite personal, interest in the eyes of the ruler and the people. But if the poet lays his head as a ball on the mallet-path of the shah so that the prince may take notice of it and, with the mallet of his favor, dispatch it to further happiness, then we cannot and will not follow him, either in our imagination or in our feelings. For this is how it goes:

How long, without a hand or foot,
Will you be polo ball of fate?
A hundred paths you'll overleap,
Yet won't escape the mallet blows.
On the Shah's path lay down your head,
And maybe he will notice you.
[Jami, *Rosenkrantz der Gerechten* 16. Knoten 6 ff.;
Hammer, *Redekünste Persiens* p. 325]

And further:

None can mirror happiness
Save the single lucky face
That was rubbed into the dust
By the hoofbeats of this horse.
[Hafis Dal 12: 9; Hammer 1: 224]

Yet not only before the sultan, but equally before the beloved does one humble oneself — and even more frequently:

My face was lying on the way,
He took no step to pass it by.
By your pathway's dust
O my tent of hope!
And by your foot soles' dust,
Than water more desired!
[Hafis Dal 17: 1; Hammer 1: 232]

The one who crushes underfoot
My skull into the dust,
An emperor I'll call him,
Whenever he returns.
[Hafis Dal 126: 9; Hammer 1: 395]

From this we clearly see that one simile means as little as another — first applied on a worthy occasion, then used and abused more and more often. So Hafiz says in a truly farcical manner:

My head amid the road dust
The inn host owns.
[Hafis Dal 50: 3; Hammer 1: 278]

A deeper study would possibly confirm the supposition that earlier poets employed such expressions with more modesty, and that only later ones, treading the same ground and using the same language, finally descended to such abuses, not even in all seriousness, but taking them parodically, until the tropes deviated so far from their object that no connection can be imagined or felt any longer.

And so we close with the lovely lines of Anvari, who, gracefully and becomingly, venerates a worthy poet of his time:

For the judicious the lyrics of Shuja are dishes delightful.
Hundreds of birds, much as I, settle on them with desire.

Go, kiss the ground at the feet of my lord, humble poem, and tell him:
You, the time's virtue today, are virtue's own epoch as well.
[Hammer, *Redekünste Persiens* 91]

(27) OBJECTION

To add some clarity about the relationship of despots to their subjects and to what extent it is still a humane one, and possibly to reassure ourselves regarding the servile practices of the poets, I would like to insert here a passage or two which will offer testimony about how people who know history and the world have judged this matter. A judicious Englishman expresses himself in the following way:

> Absolute power, which is, in Europe, softened by the usages and the knowledge of a civilized age into a moderate government, has, among the nations of Asia, always the same character, and follows nearly the same course. The few shades of distinction that do exist depend chiefly upon the personal disposition and power of the despot, and often more upon the latter than the former. For no country can be happy or prosperous if exposed to continual war; and for the earliest period this appears to have been the state of every eastern kingdom whose ruler was not powerful. It follows that the greatest happiness the mass of the population can obtain under such a government must have its source in the power and fame of the monarch; and the comparative blessings which his subjects enjoy form the substantial ground of their pride in such rulers. We must not, therefore, attribute the flattery they receive solely to base and venal motives. Unaware of the value of liberty, and ignorant of all other forms of government, they naturally prize that state in which they find they have most security and pleasure. And they are not only content but proud to humble themselves before one exalted man, when in the magnitude of his power they see a refuge and protection from more intolerable and oppressive evils. [John Malcolm, *History of Persia* 1, p. 313]

Likewise a German critic offers an intelligent, knowledgeable assessment, as follows:

> Though admiring the sublime buoyancy of the laudatory poets of that epoch, the author at the same time rightly reproves the minds that waste their energy in exuberant panegyrics and deplores the

generally resulting degradation of their personal dignity. It must be noted, however, that in the total edifice of art of a truly poetic people, built with multifarious adornment in highest perfection, panegyrical poetry is as essential as the satirical sort, constituting only its opposite. The resolution of this conflict is then to be found either in moral poetry — a quiet judge of human virtues and defects, a guide to inner calm — or in the epic poem, which with impartial audacity places the noblest human excellence alongside the common way of life which then is no longer reproved, but accepted as contributing to an integral whole. Epic poetry resolves the two opposites by uniting them in a pure picture of human existence. For if epic poetry corresponds to human nature and testifies to its sublime origins in grasping with enthusiasm the nobility of human action and the higher perfections allowing a renewal of the inner life, then similarly the praise of the might and power revealed in princes is a magnificent phenomenon in the realm of poetry and has only fallen into decline among us because (a good reason!) those who had dedicated themselves to such praise were for the most part not poets but cheap sycophants. Yet who, listening to Calderón praising his king, carried along by the bold sweep of his imagination, would ever be inclined to think in a disapproving way about the alleged venality of panegyric? Who has ever been willing to shield his heart against Pindar's victory anthems? Although in that period the despotic nature of Persian rule may have found its counterpart in a vulgar worship of force by the majority of those who sang the praise of princes, nonetheless, through the concept of a transfigured power which it has engendered in noble minds, that power has evoked poems worthy of posterity's admiration. And insofar as those poets are worthy of that admiration still today, so are those princes in whom we find a genuine respect for the dignity of the human being and for the arts that celebrate their memory. *Anvari*, *Khaqani*, *Zahir-e Faryabi* and *Akhsikati* are the panegyrical poets of that period whose works, even now, are read with delight in the Orient, their noble names shielded from any revilement. A proof of how close the endeavor of the panegyric poet comes to the highest demand by which a human being can be challenged is the sudden transition that one of these panegyric poets, *Sanajis*, has made to religious poetry. From someone praising his prince he became a singer filled with enthusiasm for none but God and eternal perfection, having now learned to find, in the

world beyond, the concept of the sublime that he had earlier been content to seek in this life alone. [Matthäus von Collin, *Jahrbücher der Literatur* 1, Wien 1818, 15]

(28) ADDENDUM

The views of these two serious, thoughtful men will lead us to be lenient in our judgement about Persian poets and encomiasts because they confirm our previous remark: in dangerous times everything in national governance depends on the capacity of the prince not only to protect his subjects but also to lead them personally against the enemy. For this truth, confirmed right up to the present, there are age-old examples to be found. As one of these, I would invoke the imperial constitution that God bestowed on the people of Israel with its unanimous consent at the moment when it demanded to have a king once and for all. Here I quote this constitution verbatim, although nowadays it may certainly seem a bit odd:

> And Samuel told all the words of the Lord unto the people that asked of him a king: This will be the manner of the king that shall reign over you: He will take your sons, and appoint them for himself, for his chariots, and to be his horsemen; and some shall run before his chariots. And he will appoint him captains over thousands, and captains over fifties; and will set them to ear his ground, and to reap his harvest, and to make his instruments of war, and instruments of his chariots. And he will take your daughters to be confectionaries, and to be cooks, and to be bakers. And he will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your oliveyards, even the best of them, and give them to his servants. And he will take the tenth of your seed, and of your vineyards, and give to his officers, and to his servants. And he will take your menservants, and your maidservants, and your goodliest young men, and your donkeys, and put them to his work. He will take the tenth of your sheep: and ye shall be his servants. [I Sam. 8:10–5]

When Samuel wants to warn the people that such an agreement is dubious and tries to dissuade them from agreeing to it, they shout unanimously: "Nay; but we will have a king over us; that we also may be like all the other nations; and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles" [I Sam. 8:19–20].

In this sense the Persian speaks:

With sword and wisdom he embraces, guards the land;
Embracing and protecting ones are in God's hand.
[Hammer, *Redekünste Persiens* p. 245]

In fact, while judging the different forms of government one usually fails to take sufficiently into account that in all of them, whatever they may be called, freedom and serfdom are two coexisting poles. If the power is in one hand, the crowd is submissive; if the power is with the crowd, the individual is at a disadvantage. This goes on through various stages until somewhere, though only for a brief time, an equilibrium may be found. For the historian this is no secret, but in troubled moments of life one cannot see it clearly. Hence we never hear more talk about freedom than when one party wants to subdue another and nothing else is intended but to ensure that power, sway, and property should pass from one to the other. Freedom is the faint watchword of secret plotters, the loud-voiced battle-cry of public revolutionaries, even the slogan of despotism itself, as it leads the subjugated masses against the enemy and promises to liberate them from foreign oppression for all time.

(29) COUNTEREFFECT

Such a captious general consideration, however, is not what I want to indulge in, but rather to return to the Orient and see how human nature, which will always remain impregnable, resists extreme pressure. In the Orient we find everywhere that in their love of liberty and autonomy individuals maintain themselves in equilibrium against the omnipotence of an autocrat. They are slaves, but not subdued; they take unheard of liberties. Selecting an example from ancient times, let us join an evening banquet in the tent of Alexander, where we find him with his men in vivid, passionate, even fierce verbal exchanges.

Clitus, Alexander's foster brother, playmate, and then fellow soldier, loses two brothers in the war, saves the life of the king, and proves an outstanding general, a faithful governor of major provinces. He cannot approve of the monarch's arrogated divinity. He has seen him growing up and has known him in need of service and help. He might be cultivating an inner bilious grudge, perhaps overrating his own merits.

The talk at Alexander's table may always have been of great significance. All the guests were able, cultivated men, all born in the period of the highest oratorical brilliance in Greece. Usually, while sober, they would deliberately or casually select important problems and assert them with

more or less conscious oratorical sophistry against each other. But when everyone defended the faction he was attached to, when drunkenness and passion were mutually heightened, in the end violent scenes were bound to occur. In this way we come to suspect that the conflagration of Persepolis was not simply sparked by crude, absurd reveling but flared up from the kind of table talk in which one faction asserted that once the Persians had been defeated they should be treated with indulgence, while the other group, recalling to everyone's memory the ruthlessness of the Asians' destruction of Greek temples, incensed the general madness to inebriated fury and reduced the ancient royal monuments to ashes. The participation of women, who are always the most vehement, most irreconcilable enemies of the enemies, renders my supposition more likely still.

Should some doubt remain about this, we are all the more certain of what caused a deadly conflict at the banquet we have been discussing. History [Curtius Rufus VIII 3, 22 ff.] has preserved it for us. For it was the ever recurring struggle between old age and youth. The old, on whose side Clitus was arguing, could claim for themselves a conclusive chain of exploits which, in faithfulness to king and country and to the goal set forth, they had accomplished with unrelenting effort and wisdom. The youth, it is true, took for granted that all of this had happened, that much had been done, and that the borders of India had really been reached. But they argued that much had still to be done, offered to equal those achievements, and, promising a brilliant future, they succeeded in dimming the splendor of past actions. That the king took this side is quite natural as, for him, what had happened was no longer worth speaking of. In opposition to this, Clitus displayed the indignation he had previously kept hidden and repeated in the presence of the king slanders which, spoken behind his back, had already come to the ears of the prince. Alexander reacted with admirable restraint but unfortunately held back for too long. Clitus broke out into loathsome utterances until the king sprang to his feet and was supported by those next to him, who dragged Clitus away. Clitus, however, in a frenzy, comes back with new abuses; and Alexander, seizing a guard's spear, knocks Clitus to the ground.

What happened afterward is not relevant here; I will only mention that the bitter complaint of the desperate king contained the consideration that from now on he was going to live in seclusion like an animal in the forest because no one, in his presence, would dare to express himself freely. This utterance, whether we attribute it to the king or only to the historian [VIII 2, 7], confirms what I had suggested earlier.

Even in the past century it was still possible to contradict the emperor of Persia impudently at a banquet. But finally the rash dinner guest would be dragged away by the feet and indeed right past the prince, in the hope that the latter might kindly confer a pardon. If not, out with him! — and a free-for-all!

Trustworthy historians have favored us with anecdotes of the infinitely stubborn and refractory ways favorites behaved towards the emperor. The monarch is like destiny, inexorable, but he is defied. Hot-tempered characters lapse into a kind of madness, of which the most peculiar examples could be cited.

Moderate, firm, logical personalities submit to the supreme power from which everything flows — blessing and pain — in order to live and work in their own ways. But the poet, above all, has every reason to dedicate himself to the most exalted person who appreciates his talent. At court, in conversations with the great, a cosmopolitan view opens up to him, and he needs this to attain a wealth of subject matter. Here lies not only an excuse but a justification for flattery, as befits the panegyrist, who does his job best by enriching himself with abundant subject matter to adorn princes and viziers, maidens and youths, prophets and saints, and even at last, overladen with praise like a human sovereign, the divinity itself.

We also laud our Western poet when he accumulates a world of enhancement and splendor to glorify the image of his beloved.

(30) INTERPOLATION

The reflectiveness of the poet relates mainly to form; subject matter is given to him more than generously by the world, and content springs spontaneously from the abundance of his heart. Unconsciously, subject matter and content meet, and in the end you cannot tell to whom this wealth truly belongs.

But form, although it is specifically rooted in individual genius, wants to be discerned, to be thoughtfully considered. This is where reflection is required, so that form, subject matter, and content mutually adapt and interpenetrate.

The poet holds much too high a place for him to engage in partisanship. Serenity and awareness are the beautiful gifts for which he thanks the creator: awareness, so he will not be terrified by what is frightening; serenity, so he will know how to represent everything in a satisfying way.

(31) BASIC ELEMENTS OF ORIENTAL POETRY

In the Arabic language one cannot find many word roots and stems that do not refer to the camel, the horse, and the sheep, if not directly, then with slight changes or transformations. This primal expression of nature and life may not be called merely metaphoric or tropological. Everything an individual expresses with natural freedom is related to life, yet the Arab is as intimately related to the camel and the horse as the body is to the soul. Nothing can happen to him that would not equally affect these creatures and link their being and acting with his in a vivid way. Think of the domestic and wild animals that come before the eyes of the freely roving Bedouin: one will encounter these, too, in all walks of life. Proceeding in this way and paying heed to all the other visible objects — mountain and desert, rocks and plain, trees, herbs, flowers, river and sea and the many-starred firmament — one will discover that anything reminds the Oriental of any other thing. So, just as he is accustomed to connect the most distantly related objects, so, by means of minor changes in the letters and syllables of words, he unhesitatingly derives contradictory ideas. Here we can see that the language is already productive in itself — rhetorically insofar as it adapts to one's thought, and poetically insofar as it appeals to one's imagination.

If we started from the first, indispensable primal tropes or metaphors and proceeded to designate more liberal and audacious ones until we arrived finally at the most daring and arbitrary, or even, beyond that, at the clumsily conventional and fatuous, we would complete an overall survey of the basic elements of Oriental poetic art. But we could easily confirm that what we call taste, namely the separation of the proper from the improper, does not come into question in this kind of literature. Its virtues cannot be separated from its defects: they are interrelated and spring from each other, and you have to accept them without carping and haggling. Nothing is more unendurable than the way [Johann Jakob] *Reiske* [1716–1774] and [Johann David] *Michaelis* [1717–1791] first praise those poets to the skies, then treat them as silly schoolboys.

Yet it is equally clear that the earliest poets, who lived close to the natural source of impressions and formed their language in poetic creation, must have had eminent advantages. Those who arrive in a thoroughly cultivated period, in complicated circumstances, show indeed the same striving but eventually lose the scent of what is right and commendable. For if they snatch at ever more distant tropes, the result is pure nonsense. At best, what remains is the most general rubric under which the objects might possibly

be summarized, the sort of concept that abolishes all imagery and hence poetry itself.

(32) TRANSITION FROM TROPES TO SIMILES

Since everything said so far is likewise valid for related similes, our assertion may be corroborated with some examples.

You see the huntsman, waking up in the open field, who compares the rising sun to a *falcon.*

> Once again, firm-footed, here am I:
> Life and action penetrate my breast.
> See the broad-wing'd golden falcon fly,
> Hovering above his azure nest.
> [Hafis Dal 197; Hammer 1: 443]

Or, in an even more splendid way, to a *lion*:

> Daybreak turned into a wider light:
> Glad again, at once, my heart and head,
> Since that shy gazelle, the quiet night,
> From the morning lion's menace fled.
> [Diez, *Denkwürdigkeiten* 2: 727]

How much must *Marco Polo* [1254?–1324?] have admired such similes — he who had seen all this and more!

Incessantly we see the poet playing with *curls*:

> There are more than fifty fish-hooks
> Hidden in your curly hair
> [Hafis Dal 135: 29; Hammer 1: 107]

is addressed in the most pleasing way to a beautiful head rich in curls; the imagination does not mind fancying the hair-tips as hooks of a sort. Yet when the poet says that he is entangled in someone's hair [Hafis Ja, 27: 13; Hammer 2: 396], this does not really appeal to us. And if, beyond that, it is said about the Sultan:

> In your ringlets' bonds the foe's
> Neck has lain ensnared
> [Hafis Lam 9: 27; Hammer 2: 146]

then the imagination is provided with either a repugnant image or none at all.

It may still be tolerable to be murdered by *eyelashes*, but to be impaled on eyelashes cannot please us. Further, if eyelashes, compared to brooms, sweep the stars down from the sky, we feel this is becoming preposterous. The *forehead* of the beautiful woman as a smoothing-stone for the heart; the *heart* of the lover as glacial drift, carried away and rounded off by a flood of tears — such witty rather than sensitive ventures wring from us a friendly smile.

It can be called highly ingenious, however, if the poet wants the enemies of the Shah to be treated like *tent equipment:*

> May they forever like splinters be split — be they ripped up like rags!
> Even like nails, be hammered down! and like pickets, stuck!
> [Anvari, "An Sultan Melekschah"; Hammer, *Redekünste Persiens* p. 90]

Here you see the poet at headquarters, envisioning the steadily repeated mounting and dismantling of a tent.

From these few examples, which could be multiplied *ad infinitum*, it becomes evident that no dividing line can be drawn between what we might think praiseworthy and reprehensible, because their virtues are, strictly speaking, the blossoms of their defects. If we want to acquire an insight into all these works of splendid spirits, then we will have to orientalize ourselves; the Orient will not come to meet us. And although translations are highly welcome to allure and introduce us, it is obvious from our observations that in this kind of literature it is language as language which plays the main role. Who would not want to acquaint himself with these treasures at their source?

Taking into account that poetic technique necessarily has the greatest influence on any kind of poetic production, we will find here, too, that the verses of the Orientals in rhymed couplets demand a parallelism which, instead of concentrating the mind, distracts it insofar as the rhymes point to entirely disparate objects. In this way their poems gain the appearance of an improvisation with specified end-rhymes, but to create something excellent in that style the most outstanding talents are required. How rigorous a judgement the nation has passed in this regard can be seen from the fact that in the course of five centuries it has recognized only seven poets as supreme.

(33) ADMONITION

Everything I have said so far can very well be offered as testimony for my best intentions toward Oriental poetic art. So I may dare to approach persons who are favored with a closer, even an immediate knowledge of these areas, with an admonition that will not disavow my purpose of averting all possible damage from such a good cause.

We all make judgements easier for ourselves by using comparisons, but this, at the same time, makes things more difficult. For since a comparison carried too far is a lame one, a comparative judgment turns out to be all the more inappropriate the more closely it is scrutinized. I do not want to go too far afield but will state briefly only this: if the superb [Sir William] *Jones* [1746–1794] compares the Oriental poets to the Romans and Greeks [*Poes. Asiat. Comment.* 2 ff.], he has his reasons: his position in England and the classical critics there forced him to do so. Educated in the strict classical school himself, he understood quite well the exclusive prejudice that nothing was of value unless it had come down to us from Rome and Athens. He knew, esteemed, loved his Orient and wanted to introduce, really to *smuggle*, its creations into Old England, something that was possible in no other way than under the hallmark of antiquity. All that is nowadays utterly needless, even harmful. We are able to appreciate the poetic art of the Orientals; we see in them the highest merit. But they should be compared with each other. We must honor them in their own right by forgetting that there once were Greeks and Romans.

Nobody should be blamed who, when reading Hafiz [fourteenth century], is reminded of Horace [65–8 BCE]. Regarding this matter, an expert has given an admirable explanation, so that the connection has been summed up and done with once for all. He says:

> The similarity between Hafiz and Horace in their views of life is striking and may be explained only by the similarity of the epochs in which the two poets lived, when — all security of civil life having been destroyed — man was confined to a fleeting enjoyment of life, as if seizing it in passing. [Matthäus von Collin, 22]

One thing I earnestly request, however, is not to compare Firdusi [ca. 940–ca. 1020] with Homer. The former must lose in every respect, with regard to subject matter, form, and treatment. If you want to satisfy yourself about this, compare the terrible monotony of the seven adventures of Isfendiar to the twenty-third song of the *Iliad*, where at the obsequies of Patroklos the most varied prizes are won by the most dissimilar heroes in

the most different ways. Through such comparisons, have we Germans not done the greatest harm to our marvelous Nibelungs? As highly appealing as they are when we integrate ourselves properly into their sphere and welcome everything with trust and gratitude, that is exactly how strange they appear if we measure them by a yardstick we ought never to use for them.

Even for a single author, who has written many and varied things for a long time, the same is true. Let us leave it to the common, clumsy crowd to commend, select, and spurn by making comparisons. In contrast, the teachers of the nation must begin with a standpoint where a clear and comprehensive overview will promote a pure, unhampered judgement.

(34) COMPARISON

Since I have just rejected any comparisons in judging writers, it may seem strange if immediately after that I speak about a case where I find it permissible. I hope, though, to be allowed this exception, inasmuch as the thought is not really mine but someone else's.

A man who has penetrated the breadth, height and depth of the Orient considers that no German author has come closer to the Eastern poets and other writers than *Jean Paul Richter* [1763–1825]. This statement seemed to be too important not to examine carefully. I can also clarify it all the more readily since all I need is to refer to what has been spelled out above.

The works of Jean Paul, particularly if we look at the personality behind them, testify to a judicious, far-sighted, sensible, well-instructed, cultivated, and at the same time benevolent and pious mind. An intellect like his will look around in his world, eagerly and boldly, in a truly Oriental manner. This sort of mind creates the strangest relationships, connecting what is incompatible, but in such a way that a secret ethical thread weaves through, lending the whole a certain unity.

Having indicated, a while back, the natural elements from which the earliest and best poets of the Orient formed their works, I will now clarify matters by noting that, if they were active in a fresh and simple region, Jean Paul on the other hand has to live and work in a polished, over-sophisticated, deformed, intricate world and so has been obliged to master the strangest elements. To illustrate in outline the contrast between the surroundings of a Bedouin and those of our author, I will extract from some of his pages the most significant expressions:

> Barrier treaty, newspaper "extras," cardinals, special recess, billiards, beer mugs, imperial benches, session chairs, plenipotentiary, enthu-

> siasm, scepter queue, half-length portrait, squirrel cage, stock speculator, mudlark, incognito, colloquia, canonical billiard-bag, plaster cast, promotion, foundry boy, naturalization document, Pentecost program, masonic, hand-puppetry, amputee, supernumerary, jewelry booth, Sabbath walk, etc. [*Hesperus*, 10. "Hundspoststag"]

Since all these expressions are known to an educated German reader or can be known through an encyclopedia, just as to the Oriental the outer world is known through commercial caravans or pilgrimages, we may boldly regard a similar mentality as justified in employing the same literary procedures within a completely different context.

So if we concede to our estimable, prolific writer that as he is living in later days, in order to be inventive in his era he has to allude in the most varied manner to conditions which are infinitely intertwined and scattered through art, science, technology, politics, and negotiations and damages in war and in peace, then we are confident that we have sufficiently confirmed the Oriental character which has been attributed to him.

There is one difference, however, between a poetical and a prosaic procedure, which I want to stress. Verse meter, parallelism, syllable count, rhyme, which seem to put the greatest obstacles in the way of the poet, prove to be to his greatest advantage if he successfully unties the puzzle-knots imposed on him or which he imposes on himself. We pardon him the boldest metaphor on account of an unexpected rhyme, and we delight in the adeptness of the poet, maintained amid such constraints.

The prose writer, in contrast, has his elbows totally free and is responsible for any temerity he permits himself: everything that could offend taste is charged to his account. But since in prose writing, as shown above, one cannot separate the proper from the improper, everything depends on the individual who undertakes the venture. If it is somebody like Jean Paul, a worthy talent, a man of dignity, the reader is immediately reconciled: everything is permitted and welcome. You feel at ease in the neighborhood of that amiable man; his feeling comes across. He arouses our imagination; he flatters our weaknesses and reinforces our strengths.

You exercise your own wit in trying to solve the riddles set in a strange way. In and behind a multifarious and checkered world, just as behind another kind of charade, you enjoy finding entertainment, excitement, emotion, even edification.

This is roughly what was needed to justify my comparison. I wanted to express conformity and difference as briefly as possible even though a text like his could seduce us into endless interpretive commentary.

(35) TAKING CARE

Anyone who considers words and expressions to be sacred testimonies and does not want them to be possibly brought into rapid, immediate circulation like small coins or paper money, but rather to be interchanged in intellectual trade and traffic as true value indicators, cannot be blamed for pointing out that conventional expressions, to which nobody takes exception anymore, nonetheless exercise a harmful influence, obscure our views, distort our conceptions, and lead entire discplines in a wrong direction.

Of this kind might well be the established practice of using the heading *art of rhetoric* as a general rubric under which poetry and prose are supposed to be subsumed, juxtaposed, and then appropriately subdivided.

Poetry, considered purely and truly, is neither discourse nor art. It is not *discourse* because for its perfection it requires rhythm, song, movement of the body, and play of the features. It is not *art* because everything is based on one's natural temperament, which may be regulated but not disturbed by artistic deliberations. Poetry will always remain the expression of an inspired, heightened genius, without goal or purpose.

The art of rhetoric, however, in its proper meaning, is a discourse and an art. It is based on a distinct, measured, passionate *discourse* and is an *art*, artful, in every sense. It pursues its purposes and is a contrived dissimulation from beginning to end. By being classified under a rubric that we censure, poetry is degraded. Aligned with, if not subordinated to, the art of rhetoric, poetry diverts both the latter's name and dignity.

This naming or categorizing has certainly won approval and gained ground, for highly valuable poetry books prominently bear the label of rhetoric, and it is hard to break this habit. But such a procedure stems from the fact that in the classifying of the arts the artist is not asked for advice. For the literary critic, poetic works are encountered first in print; they lie before him as books that he is called upon to arrange and classify.

(36) POETICAL GENRES

Allegory, ballad, cantata, didactic poem, drama, elegy, epigram, epistle, epic, fable, heroic poem, idyll, narrative, novel, ode, parody, romance, satire.

If you wanted to classify methodically these poetical genres, which I have arranged in [German] alphabetical order, and more of the kind, you would encounter great difficulties, not easily put aside. If you look at the

rubrics above more closely, you will find that they are labeled in some cases according to external criteria, in others according to the content, but only rarely according to an essential form. You will quickly notice that some of them can be coordinated, others subordinated one to another. For enjoyment and pleasure, each one might have an existence and an effect of its own; but if for didactic and historical purposes a more rational arrangement is required, then it is worthwhile to look for one. I submit the following for examination.

(37) NATURAL FORMS OF POETRY

There are only three natural forms of poetry: the clearly narrated kind, the sort generated by enthusiasm, and the type that presents direct personal action: *epic, lyric,* and *drama.* These three modes of poetry can work together or separately. They can often be found jointly even in the shortest poem, and precisely through this compression into the smallest space they engender the most admirable creations, as we can notice clearly in the ballads of all nations. In early Greek tragedy we see all three of them united as equals, and only after a certain period of time do they separate. So long as the chorus plays the primary role, lyricism ranks at the top. When the chorus becomes more of a spectator, the other two become more prominent. Finally, when the action is reduced to personal and domestic life, the chorus is felt to be unwieldy and burdensome. In French tragedy the exposition is epic, the middle part dramatic, and the fifth act, which ends passionately and enthusiastically, can be called lyrical.

The Homeric heroic poem is purely epic. The rhapsode always predominates. What happens is told by him: no one he has not previously permitted to speak, no one whose statement or account he has not announced, is allowed to open his mouth. Interrupted dialogues, the most beautiful enhancement of drama, are not tolerated.

But let us now hear a modern extemporizer treat a historic subject in the public market. For clarity, he will first narrate and then, to raise people's interest, speak as a participant in the action, and finally blaze up in enthusiasm and enrapture people's minds — so marvelously can these elements become entwined and the poetic genres be varied *ad infinitum.* That is why it is so hard to find an organizing system enabling us to arrange them side by side or in sequence. But we can benefit to some extent by putting the three main elements in a circle facing each other and then searching for models where each single element predominates. Then we may collect examples

that tend to the one or the other side, until finally all three appear united and the circle is closed.

In this way we attain a beautiful view not only of the poetic genres but equally of the traits of varied nations and their tastes in consecutive epochs. And although this method may be more useful for one's own instruction, entertainment, and balanced evaluation than for teaching others, it might be possible to work out a set of categories to present contingent outward forms and at the same time these internally coherent primal origins in a comprehensible arrangement. Yet this attempt will always be as difficult as the endeavor in natural science to uncover the relationship between the outer marks of minerals and plants and their inner components so as to form a mental picture of a natural order.

(38) ADDENDUM

It is highly remarkable that Persian poetic art does not include drama. Had a dramatic poet been enabled to arise, their whole literature would have gained an altered outlook. The Persian nation is inclined to rest; it likes to be told stories — hence the numberless fairytales and the limitless poems. Oriental life is in any case not communicative in itself. Despotism does not favor dialogues, and we find all sorts of objections to rulers' wills or edicts coming forth only in quotations from the Qur'an and from well-known poets — a recourse presupposing a clever mentality and a broad, deep, logical training. But the fact that Orientals cannot dispense with conversational forms of literature any more than any other people is witnessed by the admiration they have for the fables of Bidpai and for their copies, imitations, and continuations. The conversations of birds by Ferideddin Attar similarly offer the most beautiful example.

(39) BIBLIOMANCY

A person trapped every day in gloom and looking for a brighter future grasps eagerly at chance happenings for any kind of prophetic intimation. Indecisive, he finds rescue in a resolve to submit to the dictate of the drawn lot. Of this kind is the widely used oracle in which you pose a question to some prominent book by inserting a needle between its pages. Reopening the volume, you faithfully scrutinize the passage marked. In earlier years I was closely acquainted with people who in this way confidently sought advice

from the Bible, the [devotional] *Treasure Casket*, or similar edifying books and thus often found consolation, even support for their whole life.

In the Orient we also find this habitual practice. It is called *fal*. Hafiz received such an honor immediately after his death. When the orthodox did not want to have him buried ceremonially, people inquired directly of his poems. When the marked passage mentioned the tomb the pilgrims were going to venerate one day, they concluded that he had to be buried honorably. I also allude to this custom and hope that the same honor may be bestowed on my little book.

(40) EXCHANGING FLOWERS AND SYMBOLS

So as not to think too highly of the so-called language of flowers or always to expect something heartfelt from it, we should take counsel from experts. Not only are meanings given to single flowers so a bouquet will offer a secret message, but it is not flowers alone that form the words and letters for such a mute dialogue. Rather, everything visible and portable is used in the same way.

But how that happens so as to bring about a change in feelings and thoughts can only be imagined if we bear in mind the principal features of Oriental poetry: far-reaching view of all objects in the world, ease with rhyme, but then additionally a certain pleasurable popular tendency to pose riddles, which at the same time nurtures a skill in solving them — something that will be evident to anyone whose talent is inclined toward charades, logograms and the like.

In this connection I must note: when a lover sends an object of any kind to the beloved, the recipient must first name the object, then figure out what rhymes with it, and lastly choose among many possible rhymes the one that might suit the current situation. It is all too obvious that this demands emotional guesswork. An example may clarify the matter, so let us work through the following short romance in such a correspondence:

Through deeds of love the watchers could
Confirm their love for aye.
How we each other understood
Is what we'll now betray.
Let others try the bright design
That gave us joy tonight.
The darkened lamp — let's make it shine
To lend the lovers light.

Those who can love as we and heed
Ways to unblock the ear,
Find it a simple thing indeed
To rhyme, as will appear.
We sent each other notes to read:
The messages were clear.

Amaranth	A flame to dance.
Rue	Spy? Who?
Tiger hair	Bold fighter there.
Hair of gazelle	But where, pray tell?
Hairs in a cluster	See the luster.
Chalk	Balk.
Straw	I burn with awe.
Grape bunches	Good hunches.
Coral pin	You can win.
Almond seed	Yes indeed.
Turnip	Make me búrn up.
Carrot	Mocking parrot.
Onion food	But why brood?
Grapes of green	What's that mean?
Grapes, dark blue	Trust — in you?
Couch-grass	Teasing lass.
Carnation	Enervation?
Narcissus	You'll miss us.
Violet	A whíle yet.
Cherry	Crushing — very.
Raven feather	Us — together.
Budgerigar	I'll take you far.
Chestnut fruits	We need roots.
Lead-metal	Let's settle.
Rosy hue	Joy died too.
Silken gown	Let me down.
Bean	Spared, serene.
Marjoram	Feeling glum.
Blue	Not meant for you.
Grapevine	You're mine.
Berry	Ward off — scary.
Figs	Keep still — no jigs.
Gold	I'm kind though bold.

Leather	Write with a feather.
Paper sheet	I'm yours, my sweet.
Ox-eye daisy	Write me, lazy.
Dame's violet	I'll get it yet.
A thread	Softly tread.
Bouquet	At home today.
Enwind	Me you will find.
Myrtle-leaf	Need relief.
Jasmine	Let me in.
Balm	**** on a cushion, calm.
Cypress stick	Forget it, quick.
Blossoming bean	Fickleness seen.
Lime	Rogue-boy mine.
Coal	**** take your soul.

If Jamil and Buthayna had
Not such communication,
How could her name, so fresh and glad,
Be said with such elation?

The foregoing distinctive means of communication may very easily be carried out between lively persons mutually attracted. When the mind begins to move in this direction, it performs miracles. For proof, I select one anecdote among many:

Two lovers undertake a pleasure trip of several miles and spend a happy day together. On the way back they entertain themselves by setting each other charades. Very soon each lover not only solves every one of these at the moment it leaves the other's mouth but ultimately, by immediate divination, each will guess and pronounce the word the other is thinking of and is on the point of transforming into a word riddle.

Today, if you speak about such a thing and confirm it, you need not fear ridicule, for such psychological phenomena do not even approach what "organic magnetism" has brought to light.

(41) CODE

There is another way of communicating, however, which is clever and affectionate! If in the previous instance hearing and wit were involved, this time it is a tenderly loving aesthetic sense, on a par with the highest poetry.

In the Orient people would learn the Qur'an by heart, so playing lightly on words in suras and verses enabled the experienced to create a mutual understanding. We have witnessed the same in Germany, where fifty years ago our education was directed at grounding every child in scripture: they would not only learn major verses by heart but acquire at the same time an adequate knowledge of the rest. Some people showed great skill in applying verses from the Holy Scripture to anything that happened and in using the Bible in their conversation. Out of this grew, undeniably, the wittiest and most gracious replies, as still today certain standard phrases, always applicable, occur here and there in ordinary speech.

Likewise we use classical sayings to indicate or express a feeling or an event as something continually recurring.

Fifty years ago, when we as young people admired our native poets, we would also refresh our memory through their writings and grant them the most beautiful approval by expressing our thoughts through their select, refined words, thereby admitting that they had known better than we how to unfold our most intimate feelings.

But, to come to my main point, let us recall a well known, yet still secret method of communicating through codes: if two individuals agree on a book whose page and line numbers they will refer to in their letters, the sender can be sure the recipient will readily detect the meaning.

The kind of song I put in the "code" category is intended to indicate such an arrangement. Two lovers agree to choose the poems of Hafiz as the instrument for their exchange of feelings; they each designate the page and the line that embody their present state of mind. In this way songs are composed, with thoughts most beautifully expressed. Magnificent passages scattered in the pages of the invaluable poet are bound together through passion and feeling. Inclination and choice lend the whole an inner life. And, though separated, the lovers find themselves comforted in their resignation as they adorn their grief with the pearls of his words.

To open my heart
To you I long.
To hear from yours —
For that I long;
The world so sadly
Looks at me!
Only my friend
In my heart now lives,
No hint of the trace
Of a foe it gives.

Brighter than sunrise —
A resolution!
Starting today,
I'll devote my life
To serving only
The one I love.
I think of him —
My heart is bleeding.
I have no power —
Only to love him,
Duly in secret,
Whatever happens! —
Want to embrace him! —
Yet I cannot.

(42) A FUTURE *DIVAN*

At one time certain publications used to be circulated in Germany as *manuscripts for friends.* If you think this odd, bear in mind that ultimately every book is written solely for sympathizers, friends, admirers of the author. I would particularly like to place my *Divan* in this category, the present edition being incomplete. In earlier years I would have held it back for some time, but now I find it more advantageous to put it together myself rather than leave the task to posterity as Hafiz did. For the very fact that this little book appears as I was currently able to present it makes me want to complete it eventually in proper form. I will indicate, book by book, what might possibly still be hoped for in this regard.

Book of the Poet. This part, as it now stands, puts forth with enthusiasm the lively impressions that some objects and phenomena produce on our senses and our mind, and it hints at my closer connections to the Orient. If I continue in the same way, the pleasant garden may be adorned in the most charming manner. But its layout will be most delightfully extended if I do not merely deal with myself and act on my own behalf but also offer thanks to my respected benefactors and friends, so as to remember the living with cordial words, and to recall the deceased with honor.

Here one has to bear in mind, however, that the Oriental dash and buoyancy in this amply and even exorbitantly laudatory poetry may perhaps not appeal to the feelings of a Westerner. We, by contrast, move along boldly and freely, without resorting to hyperbole, for in fact only a pure,

truly felt poetry can possibly express the authentic merits of outstanding men, whose perfection can be rightly appraised only when they have passed away, when their peculiarities no longer disturb us while the effectiveness of their actions yet comes daily and hourly to the fore. A short while ago I had the chance to make good, in my fashion, part of my indebtedness at a majestic celebration in the presence of a most worthy Majesty [the Masque-Processional of 1818 for Empress Mother Maria Fyodorovna in Weimar; see *MA* 11.1.1, 321–359].

Book of Hafiz. If all who use the Arabic language and tongues related to it are already born and raised as poets, one can imagine that from such a nation innumerable excellent minds will emerge. If such a people, after five hundred years, concede the first rank to seven poets only, we are truly obliged to accept that dictum with respect. Yet, at the same time, we may be allowed to investigate the real reasons for the preference.

To solve this problem to the extent of my ability may again be left to a future *Divan.* For, to speak only of Hafiz, admiration and liking for him grow the more one comes to know him. He has the most cheerful temperament, great learning, a free facility, and the pure conviction that you please people only when you sing for them what they like to hear and can hear with ease and comfort, making it possible, once in a while, for you to let something heavy, difficult, or unwelcome slip in. If experts will to some extent recognize in the following song the image of Hafiz, the Westerner will be especially pleased for having made the attempt to portray him:

To Hafiz

What all desire, you well have known
And aptly understand:
For longing holds, from dust to throne,
All in an iron band.

So great the pain, then sudden cheer —
Oppose it — who would dare?
The first man breaks his neck? No fear:
Forward the next will fare.

Pardon me, Master — don't demur —
For my audacity:
The eye cannot but follow her,
Sweet wand'ring cypress tree.

Her walking foot like tendrils curves
And wantons with the ground.
Her breath, a breeze, caressing, swerves;
Her words light, cloudlike, sound.

Filled with presentiments you go
To glimpse her curling hair.
In fullness dark-brown ringlets flow,
Whisper in windy air.

And when you see her forehead clear,
Your heart is comforted:
A bright, authentic song you hear,
Making your spirit's bed.

And when her lips so sweetly move
The soul such height attains,
You're free, yet would no longer rove
But lay you down in chains.

You breathe — your breath would not return
But soul to soul would flee.
Winding aromas make you yearn;
They bind, invisibly.

Yet when desire more strongly burns,
The drinking-bowl's sublime:
Cupbearer leaves and then returns —
Always another time.

With lightning eye, a heart that quakes —
A lesson he would hear:
When wine your spirit lively makes,
Your teachings will endear.

He feels a roominess of worlds,
A healing rule within,
A swelling breast, light down that curls:
His man-life will begin.

And if no mystery remain
That heart and world may hold,
Love for the thinker you'll retain
That might the sense unfold.

The royal refuge we've preferred —
Let's keep it ever near:
Say to the Shah a grateful word
And to the good vizier.

These things you know, and sing today,
Tomorrow sing, beguiled.
Your guidance help us on our way
Through life, when rough or mild.

The *Book of Love* would swell considerably if the six loving pairs were to appear more distinctly, with their joys and sufferings, and if additional lovers emerged more or less clearly from the obscure past. Wamik and Asra for example, of whom nothing is known but their names, could be introduced in the following way:

One More Couple

Yes, love's a merit, truly great!
Its profit who could overrate?
You won't be rich or filled with might
But like the greatest heroes bright.
Of Wamik, Asra, faithfully
We'll speak, as of a prophecy. —
Not only speak but also name:
Let all who hear this lend them fame.
What they have done, to action moved,
Nobody knows. But that they loved
We know. To tell it ends our task
When you of Wamik, Asra ask.

This book is no less suited for symbolic digressions, which in the field of the Orient one can hardly do without. A great mind, not content with what is shown him, considers everything presented to the senses as a mummery, behind which a higher spiritual life is hiding in a waggish-willful way, to blandish and attract us into nobler regions. If the poet proceeds here with consciousness and measure, you can value that, enjoy it, and test your wings for a more determined flight.

The *Book of Observations* expands every day for one who is at home in the Orient. Everything there is observation, which vacillates between the sensuous and the suprasensory without settling on one or the other. This contemplation to which we are invited is of a very special kind, not only directed at our sagacity, though the latter makes the strongest demands, but

also guided to those points where the strangest problems of our earthly life stand plain and pitiless before us, and we are compelled to bow our knees before chance, before a providence and its unfathomable decrees, and to pronounce unconditional resignation as the highest political-moral-religious law.

Book of Anger. If the other books have a chance to grow, the same right may well be granted to this one. Delightful, amiable, sensible supplements should first be brought together before outbursts of anger can be tolerated. A general human benevolence, a helpful inclination to leniency, links heaven to earth and offers human beings the paradise they have been accorded. In contrast, anger is always egotistic. It dwells on demands that cannot be met. It is arrogant, repugnant, and pleases no one, scarcely even people seized by the same feeling. But a person cannot always refrain from such explosions. In fact, one even does well in seeking to vent rage in this way, especially if aroused by an activity hindered or obstructed. My book would already have been far stronger and richer by now had I not, to avoid discord, put many such items aside. I would like to note, in this connection, that utterances which for the moment seem questionable but will later be accepted with amusement and good will as harmless have been saved for publication in future years under the heading *paralipomena.*

I utilize this opportunity, however, to talk about arrogance, and first of all about the way it is manifested in the Orient. The ruler himself is the one who primarily arrogates everything and seems to exclude everyone else. All are at his disposal, he commands himself, nobody commands him, and his own will power creates the rest of the world, so that he can compare himself to the sun, indeed to the universe. Strikingly, though, precisely for this reason he is obliged to choose a co-regent to assist him in such a boundless field, even simply to keep him on the throne of the world. It is the poet who acts with him and on his behalf, and elevates him above all mortals. If many talented people come together at court, he appoints among them a poet-king, proving he recognizes the highest talent as his equal. But in this way the poet is encouraged, even inveigled to think of himself as highly as of the prince, namely as co-possessor of the highest privileges and perquisites. He is confirmed in this through the innumerable gifts he gets, the wealth he amasses, and the influence he wields. He even gets so caught up in this mode of thinking that any shortfall in his expectations may drive him mad. An earlier indication from the emperor leads Firdusi to expect sixty thousand gold coins for his *Shah Nameh.* Instead he is given only sixty thousand silver coins, just while he happens to be taking a bath. He divides the sum into three parts, giving one to the errand boy, one to the bath

attendant, and the third to the cupbearer. Then, with a few defamatory lines, at one stroke he annihilates all the praise he had lavished on the Shah for many years. He flees, hides, refuses to recant, and transmits his hatred to his kin. So his sister equally scorns and rejects a considerable gift that the Shah (who in the meantime had been reconciled) had sent to her, but which unluckily arrived only after her brother's death.

If I wanted to dilate further on this, I would say that from the throne through all the social levels down to the dervish at the corner of the street, we find people brimful of worldly or spiritual haughtiness, which at the slightest incident will immediately let loose a violent outburst.

Regarding this moral defect, if it ought to be considered as such, there is a strange attitude in the West. Modesty is basically a social virtue, indicating refined education. It is an outward self-denial, which, being founded on great inward value, is regarded as the loftiest trait in a person. And so we hear that outstanding people are praised chiefly for their modesty, with no special regard for their other qualities. But modesty, always linked to pretense, is a kind of flattery that is all the more effective when it pleases another person in an unobtrusive way, since it will not disconcert him in his cozy *amour propre*. Yet whatever we call good society is based on increasing self-denial. Social relations would tend toward zero unless our talent developed to the point where we could flatter the other person's vanity by gratifying our own at the same time.

But I would like to reconcile my compatriots to my presumptions. In the *Divan* a certain boastfulness cannot be omitted if the Oriental character is to be fairly expressed.

I have not tended to indulge in unpleasant assertiveness toward the upper classes. My fortunate situation exempted me from a struggle with despotism. To be sure, all the world chimes in with whatever accolades I may have bestowed on my princely sovereigns. The august personalities I had been associated with have won general praise and continue to be praised. So I might even be faulted for not making the laudatory part of my *Divan* rich enough.

Yet so far as the *Book of Anger* is concerned, some of it might be found objectionable. Every angry man makes it all too clear that his expectations have not been fulfilled, his merits not acknowledged. So, too, with me. I am not restrained from above, but, so to speak, from below and from the side. Spokesmen of an intrusive, often vapid, often malicious crowd hamper my activity. At first I arm himself with pride and irritability, but then, tried and pressed too hard, I feel strong enough to fight my way through.

But grant me this: I know how to mitigate some of my presumptuous claims by transferring them at last, feelingly and skillfully, to my beloved. I humble, indeed annihilate myself before her. For that, the reader's heart and mind will give me credit.

The *Book of Aphorisms* should expand more than any of the others. It relates closely to the *Book of Observations* and *Book of Anger.* Oriental aphorisms preserve the distinctive quality of the whole poetic art in that they very often refer to sensuous, visible objects. Many can be called laconic parables. For those of the West, this genre will remain the most difficult one because our environment presents itself as dry, regular, and prosaic. But Old German proverbs, where the meaning is transformed into a parable, may serve here as our model.

The *Book of Timur* would actually still need to be worked out, and maybe some years will have to pass before too close an interpretation of terrifying world events would no longer hinder us from viewing them in a sublimated way. Their tragedy might be lightened if we decided to allow occasional appearances of the whimsical Nasreddin Khodja [thirteenth century], who was the companion, in trek and tent, of Timur [or Tamerlane, 1335–1405], that dreadful devastator of the world. Happy hours and a free mind will take us far along our chosen path. I will include here a model of the little tales passed down to us.

Timur was an ugly man, with a blind eye and a lame foot. One day when Nasreddin was with him, Timur was scratching his head because it was time for a shave, and he ordered the barber to be summoned. After the head had been shaved, the barber, as usual, handed Timur the mirror. What Timur saw in that mirror was so ugly he started to cry. Nasreddin, too, began weeping, and so they wept for a few hours. Then some companions cheered up Timur and entertained him with strange stories to make him forget everything. Timur stopped crying. Khodja didn't stop but began weeping all the more strongly. Finally Timur spoke to Khodja: "Listen! I looked in the mirror and saw I was very ugly. I was deeply saddened because I am not only the emperor but have great wealth and many female slaves, and I'm still so ugly — that's what I've been crying about. But why do you continue weeping?" Nasreddin answered: "If after a single glance into the mirror you absolutely couldn't bear the sight of yourself and had to cry over it, how can we keep from tears when we have to look at your face night and day? If we don't weep, then who should be weeping? That is why I wept." Timur was beside himself with laughter.

Book of Zuleika. This book, the most extensive in the whole collection, might well be considered complete. The scent and spirit of the passion

wafting through it do not readily come back. At least, their return must be awaited, like a good vintage year, in hope and humility.

I may, however, make a few remarks about my behavior. Following the example of many an Oriental predecessor I keep myself at a distance from the sultan. As a modest dervish I may even compare myself to a prince, for the true beggar is said to be a kind of king. Poverty engenders temerity. My determination not to recognize worldly goods and their value, not to ask for them or to ask for only little, produces a feeling of ease and freedom from care. Instead of worriedly seeking possessions, I imagine giving away lands and treasures, and I make fun of the man who has really owned and lost them. I have in fact admitted a voluntary poverty, but only so as to come forward all the more proudly, since there is a sweetheart who is nonetheless devoted and attentive to me.

But I pride myself on an even greater deficiency: the bloom of my youth has withered away. I adorn my age, my grey hair, with the love of Zuleika, not obtrusively like a fop — no! — but sure of her returning my love. She, the spirited one, knows how to value the spirit which ripens youth early and rejuvenates age.

Book of the Cupbearer. Neither intemperate propensity for half-illicit wine drinking nor delicacy of feeling for the beauty of an adolescent could be omitted from the *Divan.* But the latter had to be treated in all purity, in accordance with our morals.

The mutual inclination between younger and older individuals fundamentally points to a truly pedagogic relationship. A child's passionate inclination toward an aged man is not really a rare phenomenon, but rarely is it made use of. Here one should notice the relationship of a grandson to his grandfather, and of the late-born heir to the surprised and tender father. It is in this relation that children's intelligence can develop. They are attentive to the dignity, experience, and authority of the elder. Pure-born souls feel a need for a respectful liking: the old person's affections are captured and held fast. If youth feels and employs its preponderance to achieve innocent aims and satisfy childlike needs, charm reconciles us to an early archness. Most touching, however, is a growing awareness in the youngster who, stirred by the elevated spirit of the old person, feels an amazement which lets him foresee that something of the kind could happen to him as well. I planned to hint at such beautiful relationships in *Book of the Cupbearer* and presently to explain them further. Yet Saadi has preserved examples whose delicacy, acknowledged by all, reveals the most perfect understanding.

Here is what he tells in *Rose Garden* [5: 16]:

In the year when Muhammad Khovarezm Shah made peace with the king of Khata, I entered the cathedral mosque of Kashgar, which, as you know, includes a school, and saw an extremely handsome, graceful boy. He was holding in his hand a book of Arabic grammar, for he wanted to learn that language purely and thoroughly. He read aloud, specifically, the example of a rule: *Daraba Zaidun Amran*: "Zaid struck, or defeated, Amru." Zaidun is the nominative and Amran is the accusative. (The two names stand here for a general indication of two opponents, as we might say "Tom, Dick, and Harry.") After he had repeated these words several times to commit them to memory, I said, "Why? If Khovarezm and Khata have finally made peace, should Zaid and Amru continue to wage war against each other?" The boy smiled graciously and asked where I was born. And when I replied, "The soil of Shiraz," he asked, being fond of the Persian language, "What do you remember of the compositions of Saadi?"

I answered, "As your temperament has devoted itself to grammar out of the love of pure language, so love for you has wholly enticed my heart. The form of your nature has blotted out the form of my intellect." He looked at me attentively as if he wanted to find out whether I was quoting the words of the poet or expressing my own feelings. But I continued: "Like Zaid, you have captivated the heart of a lover in your snare. I would like to be your companion, but you are unwilling and hostile to me, like Zaid to Amru." Yet he replied, in modest embarrassment, with lines of my own poems, and I had the advantage of being able to tell him the most beautiful things in the same manner, and so for some days we were continually engaged in graceful conversations. But when the court was preparing for a new journey and we were getting ready to leave early in the morning, one of my companions told him, "That is Saadi himself, whom you had asked about."

The boy came running to me, acting quite friendly in all deference toward me, wishing that he had got to know me before, and said, "Why didn't you want to reveal yourself to me all those days and tell me, 'I am Saadi,' so I might pay you due honor as best I could and humble myself before your feet in service?" But I replied, "Looking at you, I was not able to pronounce the words 'I am he': my heart burst open toward you like a rose beginning to bloom." He further asked whether it might not be possible for me to spend more days in this country so he could learn from me

> about art and science. But I replied, "It cannot be. For I see here excellent men sitting between high mountains, while, for my part, I am pleased and contented in having nothing but a cave in this world, and staying there." After that he seemed to me a bit sad, so I asked why he didn't go into the city where he could free his heart from the bonds of melancholy and live more cheerfully. He replied, "One sees lovely and graceful things there. But the streets are muddy and slippery. Even elephants might stumble and fall. And so, in viewing bad examples, I might fail to stand on my feet." Having spoken thus, we kissed each other's heads and faces, and parted. So what the poet says came true: "In parting, those who love are each like an apple; one cheek pressing on the other turns red from desire and life; the second one, pale from sorrow and sickness."

Elsewhere the same poet tells [5: 17]:

> When I was young I maintained a sincere and durable friendship with a young man like myself. To my eyes, his face belonged to the heavenly realm that magnetized our prayers. Being with him was the greatest gain in all my life's activities. I hold that no earthly mortal, perhaps only an angel in heaven, could equal him in beauty of form, sincerity, and uprightness. Having enjoyed such a friendship I took an oath, and it would seem wrong to me if after his death I were to bestow my love on someone else. It happened that suddenly his foot was caught in the snare of his destiny, hastening him to the grave. I kept him company sitting and lying on his tomb, holding vigil for many days, and composed a good many songs of grief on his loss and our separation. These will always remain moving for me and others.

Book of Parables. Although Western nations have appropriated many things from the wealth of the Orient, one still might find here many an item to be gleaned, as the following will reveal.

Parables, like other poetic genres of the Orient related to proper conduct, can be rightly divided into three categories: ethical, moral, and ascetic. The first group contains events and indications related to human beings as such and their circumstances, without explicit affirmations of what is good or bad. But the second group does affirm this contrast and offers the hearer a judicious choice. The third, however, adds a further constraint: here the moral suggestion becomes command and law. To these categories a fourth may be added: parables that depict the miraculous guidings and acts of

providence that emanate from unfathomable, imponderable decrees of God, teaching and confirming what is properly speaking *Islam*, unconditioned "surrender" to the will of God, the conviction that no one can evade his destiny. We may add a fifth kind that would need to be called mystical: it drives the human being from a prior state of anxiety and depression to a unity with God already in this life, and to a temporary renouncing of goods whose eventual loss would cause pain. By keeping separate the different purposes of contrasting categories of Oriental uses of imagery, we will gain a great advantage. Mixing them up will confuse every issue when we look for a moral application where there is none while overlooking a deeper intention elsewhere. Striking examples of all the varied groupings would make the *Book of Parables* interesting and instructive. I leave to the discerning reader the task of categorizing the ones so far provided.

Book of the Parsi. Numerous distractions have prevented me from presenting in its full poetic range the Persian reverence for sun and fire, a phenomenon that may seem abstract but yet is so energetically effective. There is a rich supply of material to choose from. May I be granted the opportunity to compensate happily for what has been omitted.

Book of Paradise. This area of Islamic faith has many beautiful places, paradises within Paradise, where one would like to stroll or even settle. Levity and gravity are thus intertwined here in a lovely way, and a transfigured everyday life lends us wings to reach higher and higher levels. And what should prevent the poet from mounting the miraculous horse of Muhammad and whirling up through all the heavens? Why should he not devoutly celebrate that holy night when the Qur'an was brought down complete from on high? Here is an abundance yet to be attained.

(43) STUDIES IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

After flattering myself with the sweet hope that in the sequel I will be able to amplify both the *Divan* and the appended explanations, I am leafing through my preliminary studies which, unused and unfinished, are heaped up before me as so many loose leaves. There I find a treatise, written twenty-five years ago, referring to still older papers and studies.

From my biographic essays my friends might well recall that I have dedicated a lot of time and attention to the First Book of Moses and strolled in the paradises of the Orient during many a youthful day. But I also devoted diligent, eager study to the historical writings that followed it. The last four books of Moses obliged me to conduct careful investigations,

and all their strange results are contained in the following treatise. Let them have a place here. For as all my wanderings in the Orient have been occasioned by the Holy Scriptures, so I always return to them as the most refreshing rills. When they become turbid here and there or hide awhile under the earth, immediately afterward they pour forth, pure and fresh, like spring water.

(44) ISRAEL IN THE DESERT

"Now there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph" [Ex. 1: 8]. As the ruler, so too the people had lost the memory of their benefactor. To the Israelites, the names of their forefathers seem to ring faintly like time-honored sounds from afar. After four hundred years the little family had increased tremendously. The promise given to their great ancestor in such improbable circumstances had been fulfilled. But what was the good of that? It is precisely this larger number that raises the suspicions of the majority. They try to harass, frighten, molest, exterminate them. As much as their stubborn nature resists, the Israelites well foresee their complete destruction. Formerly free shepherd folk, they are now obliged to build perdurable cities with their own hands. Located within the country and at the borders, these towns are clearly intended to become their dungeons and jails.

Before we go further and work our way through these oddly, even unsatisfyingly edited books, we have to ask what will remain the basis, the primary substance of the four last books of Moses as we try to remember the main points while passing over some of the others.

The true, unique, and deepest theme of world and human history, the one to which all others are subordinated, remains the conflict between unbelief and faith. All the epochs when faith rules, in whatever form, are splendid, heartening, and fertile for contemporaries and posterity. But all the eras when unbelief, in whatever form, maintains a miserable victory, even if they temporarily boast an apparent splendor, vanish before posterity. No one wants the torment of admitting what has been fruitless.

If the First Book of Moses pictures the triumph of faith, the next four books have unbelief as their theme. Unbelief does not challenge and attack faith, which in fact has not yet shown itself in greatest plenitude. Instead, it meanly obstructs it, step by step. Through the bestowal of benefits, and more often yet by abject punishments, unbelief is not cured, not rooted out, but only temporarily placated. It continues its crawling gait so effectively

that a great, noble project undertaken on the basis of magnificent promises at the behest of a reliable national god threatens to collapse right at the start and in any case can never be achieved in its fullness.

If the unwieldy nature of this content, the bewildering elusiveness (at least at first glance) of the basic thread running through the whole, makes us uncomfortable and annoyed, the Books of Moses are made utterly unpalatable by a deeply saddening, unintelligible mode of editing. We see the historical narrative obstructed everywhere by the interpolation of innumerable laws. We cannot detect the real cause and purpose of most of these, or why they have been offered at a particular moment, or, if they they originated later, why they are invoked and inserted here. In such a vast campaign, inherently encumbered with so many obstacles, we cannot understand why anyone would try so deliberately and pedantically to pile up the religious baggage of ceremonies, making any progress immeasurably more difficult. It is incomprehensible why laws for the future, which is still wholly suspended in mid-air, are being pronounced at a time when every day, every hour is lacking in word and deed and when the commander-in-chief, who ought to stay on his feet, repeatedly prostrates himself to beg for mercies and punishments from above — both dispensed only in a random, scattered way. Like the distraught people, we lose sight of the main goal.

In order to find my way through that labyrinth, I took pains to isolate meticulously for analysis whatever is, properly speaking, a narrative, whether presented as history, fable, or both together (poetry). First I separated the narrative component from whatever was taught and commanded. Under the "teaching" rubric I placed what would be appropriate to all countries, to all moral human beings. Under the heading of "commands" I included what concerns the people of Israel in particular and binds it together. I hardly dare to judge how far I succeeded in doing this since right now I am not in a position to take up those studies again but only to bring together from earlier and later papers what will help make my point. I want to draw the reader's attention to two things. The first is the way this strange expedition unfolds from the personality of the commander, who at the start does not appear in the most favorable light. The second factor is my hypothesis that the expedition did not take forty but scarcely two years. This latter consideration will justify and restore to honor the commander whose conduct we earlier had reason to blame. And at the same time it will salvage, and nearly restore in its initial purity, the honor of the national god notwithstanding the inequity of his harshness, which is even more unpleasant than the stubbornness of a people.

So let us first recall the people of Israel in Egypt, in whose great affliction the latest posterity is called on to participate. Among these people, from the violent tribe of Levi, arose a violent man marked by a vigorous sense of what is right and wrong. He appears worthy of his fierce forebears, whose progenitor exclaims: "Simeon and Levi are brethren; instruments of cruelty are in their habitations. O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united: for in their anger they slew a man, and in their selfwill they digged down a wall. Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel: I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel" [Gen. 49: 5–7].

Moses presents himself in quite the same way. He secretly slays the Egyptian who maltreats an Israelite. His patriotic assassination is discovered, and he must flee. There is no reason to ask about the education of one who has committed such an act and presented himself as purely a man of nature. He is supposed to have been favored as a boy by a princess and to have been educated at court, but nothing has had any effect on him. A splendid, strong man, he has remained crude in all circumstances. In his exile, too we find him a vigorous, curt, taciturn man, unskilled in communication. His daring fist gains him the favor of a princely Midianite priest, who immediately takes him in as one of the family. There he gets to know the desert, where later on he will perform the burdensome duty of a commander-in-chief.

And now, most important, let us glance at the Midianites, among whom Moses now finds himself. We must recognize them as a great nation, who like all nomadic and trading people, with diversified tribal activities and a wide range of mobility, seem greater than they are. We find the Midianites at Mt. Horeb, on the western side of a small gulf, and then heading toward Moab and the Arnon. Earlier we found them as traders traveling in a caravan from Canaan to Egypt.

Among such an educated people Moses now lives but, once again, as a separate, reticent shepherd. In the saddest of circumstances for an excellent man not born for thinking and reflecting but keen on action, we see him lonely in the desert, his mind constantly preoccupied with the destiny of his people, always turned to the god of his ancestors. Ill at ease, he feels the effects of exile from a land which, though not the land of his fathers, is still the land of his people. Though too weak to use his fists in promoting this great affair, he cannot devise a plan, and even if he could, he lacks the capacity for any negotiation, any coherent oral performance that might show his personal qualities to advantage. In such circumstances, it would not be at all surprising for such a strong nature to consume itself.

He can derive some comfort through contact with his own people, maintained by caravans going to and fro. After many a doubt he resolves to return and to become the savior of the people. His brother Aaron comes to meet him, and he learns that popular unrest has peaked. Now both brothers can make bold to face the king as representatives. But the monarch proves disinclined to let a multitude leave so easily and and regain their old independence, now that over the course of centuries they have advanced from shepherding to agriculture, craftsmanship, and the arts, a massive labor force available, at the very least, to erect huge monuments and build new cities and fortresses.

So the request is turned down. As public calamities invade the country the same request is raised ever more urgently and refused ever more adamantly. But the agitated Hebraic people, now in sight of the hereditary homeland an age-old tradition had promised, and thus filled with the hope of independence and self-governance, will not acknowledge any further duties. Under cover of a general festivity they wheedle the neighbors out of their gold and silver vessels, and just at the moment when the Egyptians believe the Israelites to be occupied with harmless banquets, a "Sicilian vespers" in reverse is brought about. The stranger murders the native, the guest murders the host. A cruel policy dictates that only the firstborn be killed, so as to stimulate the selfishness of later-borns in a land where one's birthright brings so many privileges. Instant vengeance is evaded by a hurried flight. The stratagem succeeds; the murderers are banished, not punished. Only later does the king assemble an army. But the horsemen and chariots armed with scythes, otherwise so terrifying to the infantry, fight on swampy ground in unequal contest against the light and lightly armed rearguard. These lighter forces were probably the same determined, fearless band who had already gained practice through their earlier bold exploit of widespread killing. Their cruelty will make it impossible for us not to recognize them again later.

A well-armed military and popular expedition so well equipped for attack and defense alike was able to choose more than one way to the Promised Land. The seaside route, passing through Gaza, was unsuited to caravans and might be dangerous on account of the well-armed, bellicose inhabitants. A second itinerary, though longer, seemed to offer more security and greater advantages: it went along the Red Sea to Sinai. From there again one had two routes to choose from. The first, leading more directly to the desired destination, stretched along a little bay through the country of the Midianites and Moabites to the river Jordan. The second, across the desert, pointed toward Kadesh. The land of Edom was on the left if you took

the first option, on the right if you chose the second. It was the first one that Moses had probably planned to take, but he seems to have been induced to adopt the second by the clever Midianites. In a little while I intend to show the likelihood of this, but first I need to bring out the apprehensive mood evoked by the way the circumstances of the expedition are depicted.

The serene night sky, glowing with innumerable stars, to which Abraham's attention was called by his god, no longer spreads a golden canopy above us. Rather than emulate the serenity of heavenly lights, a numberless people move ill-humored in a gloomy wasteland. All phenomena that might afford cheer have vanished; only fire-flames emerge in every nook and cranny. The Lord, who in a burning bush had summoned Moses, now moves before the masses in turbid glowing smoke, which by day can be regarded as a column of clouds, by night as a meteoric fire. Lightning and thunder threaten from the darkened peak of Sinai, and at seemingly minor offenses flames burst out of the ground and consume the outer parts of the camp. Food and drink repeatedly fall short, and the desire of the disgruntled people to turn back becomes all the more anxious the less their guide shows any substantial ability to help himself.

Already early, even before the expedition reaches Sinai, Jethro comes to meet his son-in-law, bringing daughter and grandson, who had been kept safe in the father's tent during the times of hardship. Jethro proves himself a prudent man. A people like the Midianites, who can move freely wherever they wish and exercise their powers as they will, must be more educated than those who have lived under a foreign yoke in perpetual conflict with themselves and their circumstances. How much more elevated would be the perspective of a leader of these freer people than that of a taciturn, melancholy man, who feels born to act and rule, but to whom nature has denied the means for such a perilous venture.

Moses could not rise to the idea that a ruler need not be present everywhere or do everything himself. On the contrary, by personally intervening he makes his leadership bitter and burdensome. Jethro makes the point clear for the first time and then helps him organize the people and appoint subordinate authorities, something he should have been able to think of on his own.

Yet Jethro may have been taking into account not only the welfare of his son-in-law and the Israelites but also his own potential benefit and that of the Midianites. Moses, whom he had once taken in as a refugee and had until recently included among his servants and bondsmen, Jethro now encounters at the head of a great mass of people who have left their

previous dwelling place, are looking for a new one, and spread terror wherever they go.

Now to a man of insight it would be no secret that the most direct route for the children of Israel would lead right through the territories of the Midianites and that everywhere they went their expedition would encounter Midianite herds, settlements, and well-organized towns. The policy principles of such an emigrating people are no secret; they are based on the right of conquest. Emigrants cannot relocate without resistance, and in every resistance they see an injustice. Whoever defends his property is an enemy to be unsparingly eliminated.

We need no special insight to realize what prospect would confront any people exposed to such a downrush of clouds of locusts. This fact may well lead us to suppose that, when advising his son-in-law Moses, Jethro discredited the best, most direct route and instead persuaded him to proceed across the desert. This view is further supported by the fact that Hobab will not budge from the side of his brother-in-law until he sees him go in the recommended direction and even accompanies him farther so as to turn the whole expedition away from the settlements of the Midianites.

The trek began only in the fourteenth month after the exodus from Egypt. At one point on the way, the people suffered a great plague in punishment for lewdness. They called the area *Tombs of the Lewd.* Then they moved to *Hazeroth* and camped further in the desert of *Paran.* No one doubts that they covered this distance. They were now already close to the goal of their journey. But they still faced the mountains separating the land of Canaan from the desert. They decided to send out scouts and in the meantime advanced to *Kadesh.* That is where the scouts returned, bringing news of the splendor of the country but also, unluckily, of the ferocity of the inhabitants. Again sad discord rose, and the struggle of faith with unbelief began anew.

Unfortunately, Moses had even less talent as a commander than as a ruler. Already during the strife against the Amalekites he withdrew to the mountain to pray, while Joshua at the head of the army finally wrested from the enemy a victory whose likelihood had for a long while seemed doubtful. Now at Kadesh the troops found themselves once more in a dubious position. Joshua and Caleb, bravest of the twelve delegates, counsel attack, confidently declaring they will win the land. But meanwhile an exaggerated description of armed tribes of giants arouses terror. The intimidated army refuses to move. Again Moses is at a loss. First he challenges them, but then he, too, begins to fear an attack. He proposes to move to the east. A committed contingent of the army may have judged it unworthy to

abandon, at this long-desired juncture, a serious plan to which so much exhausting effort had already been devoted. They rally and march to the mountain. But Moses stays behind, and the ark is not moved. So it is not appropriate for either Joshua or Caleb to stand at the head of the bolder troops. In short, the high-handed, unsupported vanguard is beaten. Impatience grows. The people's displeasure, which has already erupted so many times, and the repeated mutinies in which even Aaron and Miriam participated break out, all the more violently this time, and testify again to how little Moses was equal to his great vocation. It was clear to everyone and confirmed beyond a doubt by the testimony of Caleb that at this point it would be possible, in fact indispensable, to penetrate into the land of Canaan, to take possession of Hebron and the grove of Mamre, to conquer the holy tomb of Abraham, and by so doing to secure for the whole enterprise a goal, a point of defense, and an organizing center. In contrast, what disadvantages would accrue for the unfortunate people if it were suddenly decided that the plan Jethro had proposed (not wholly disinterested but not wholly treacherous either) must be impiously given up!

The second year after the exodus from Egypt was not yet over, and one could envision oneself in possession of the most beautiful part of the desired land before year's end (already late enough). But the inhabitants, watchful, had put a stop to progress, and where to turn now? The soldiers had advanced far enough to the north and now were asked to march east simply in order to go in the direction they could have taken from the start. But precisely here in the east lay the land of *Edom*, surrounded by mountains. The men requested entry, but the clever Edomites refused categorically. To fight one's way through was not advisable. They had to choose a detour leading past the Edomite mountains on the left, and here the journey proceeded more or less without hindrance. They needed only a few stops — Oboth, Ijim — to reach the brook Sared, the first to pour its waters into the Dead Sea, and then move farther to the Arnon. Meanwhile Miriam had died, and Aaron had disappeared shortly after the rebellion against Moses.

From the brook Arnon onwards they had better fortune than before. For the second time the people saw themselves close to the realization of their wishes in an area with few obstacles. Here they might massively forge ahead to subdue, destroy, and expel the people who had refused them entry. Advancing farther, they attacked the Midianites, Moabites, and Amorites in their most attractive territories. The Midianites were annihilated — exactly what Jethro had so carefully tried to avoid. The left bank of the Jordan was taken, and some impatient tribes were allowed to settle.

Once again laws were made, orders given in the traditional way; and the people hesitated to cross the Jordan. While these things were happening Moses himself disappeared as Aaron had done. After tolerating the rule of a narrow-minded man for some years, Joshua and Caleb might well have deemed it proper to put an end to that regime and to send him out next, following the many unfortunate scouts he had delegated, thereby bringing the affair to a close and putting themselves firmly in possession of the entire right bank of the Jordan and the lands it contained.

My account may be accepted as a lively and coherent narrative of an important enterprise, but it will not immediately earn trust and appproval because it shows the expedition achieving its aim in a short time, whereas the explicit letter of Holy Scripture depicts a process lasting many years. So I need to explain why I think I am entitled to such a major deviation. To accomplish this I ask you to reflect on the terrain that a mass of people had to cross and on the amount of time a caravan would need for such a march. Consider in this context what has been handed down to us.

I will put aside the march from the Red Sea to the Sinai together with everything that happened in the vicinity of the mountain. I will mention only that a great mass of people set out from the foot of Mt. Sinai on the twentieth day of the second month in the second year of the exodus from Egypt. From there to the desert of Paran they had only forty miles to go, which a loaded caravan covers reasonably in five days. Give the whole column time for each day's travel and enough days of rest. Let it have an additional rest stop. With all allowances made, they could come to the destined area within twelve days, a view in accord with the Bible and with common opinion. It is here that the emissaries are dispatched. The whole mass of people advances only a short distance farther to Kadesh, where the delegates return forty days later. Then, after an ill-advised attempt at battle, negotiations begin with the Edomites. Give this parley as much time as you want; it probably will not extend to more than thirty days. The Edomites bluntly refuse entry. For Israel it was in no way advisable to rest for long in such a perilous situation: if the Canaanites in the north, in alliance with the Edomites in the east, had sallied forth from their mountains, Israel would have been in a bad position.

The narrative does not pause here, either. Immediately the decision is made to march around the mountains of Edom. Now the expedition around the mountains of Edom, at first directed south, then north, up to the river of Arnon, will once again not even cover forty miles. If you add the forty days when they mourned the death of Aaron, we will still have six months of the second year for any kind of slowing down and hesitating and

for the marches that will bring the children of Israel happily to the Jordan. But what then becomes of the remaining thirty-eight years?

These have created a good deal of trouble for commentators, as have the forty-five way stations, including fifteen about which the narrative says nothing (placed in an index, though, they have given geographers plenty of pain). Now the interpolated sites are related in a lucky legendary way to the superfluous years. Sixteen sites of which nothing is known and thirty-eight years about which nothing is heard give us a fine chance to go astray with the children of Israel in the wilderness.

I will correlate the way stations of the story that are noteworthy because of what occurred there to the way stations in the index, so that we can distinguish between sites with empty names and those with historical content.

Way Stations of the Children of Israel in the Wilderness

Story sites (Bks. of Moses 2, 3, 4, 5)	Index sites (Bk. 4, Ch. 33)
	Rameses.
	Sukkoth.
	Etham.
Hahiroth.	Hahiroth. Migdol.
	Through the sea.
Mara, desert of Sur.	Mara, desert of Etham.
Elim.	Elim, 12 springs.
	At the sea.
Desert of Sin.	Desert of Sin.
	Daphka.
	Alus.
Raphidim.	Raphidim.
Desert of Sinai.	Desert of Sinai.
Tombs of the Lewd.	Tombs of the Lewd.
Hazeroth.	Hazeroth.
	Rithma.
Kadesh in Paran.	Rimmon Parez.
	Libna.
	Rissa.
	Kehelata.
	Mountains of Sapher.
	Harada.
	Makeheloth.

	Tahath.
	Tharah.
	Mithka.
	Hasmona.
	Moseroth.
	Bnejaekon.
	Horgidgad.
	Jathbatha.
	Abrona.
	Ezeon-Gaber.
Kadesh, desert of Zin.	Kadesh, desert of Zin.
Mt. Hor, frontier of Edom.	Mt. Hor, frontier of Edom.
	Zalmona.
	Phunon.
Oboth.	Oboth.
	Ijim.
	Dibon Gad.
	Almon Diblathaim.
Mountains of Abarim.	Mountains of Abarim, Nebo.
Brook Sared.	
Arnon on this side.	
Mathana.	
Nahaliel.	
Bamoth.	
Mountain of Pisgah.	
Jahzah.	
Heshbon.	
Sihon.	
Bashan.	
Moabite fields at Jordan.	Moabite fields at Jordan.

Now what we have to notice above all is that while the story leads us immediately from Hazeroth to Kadesh, the index after Hazeroth leaves out Kadesh and mentions it only after the inserted list of names that follow Ezeon-Gaber, so it brings the desert of Zin into contact with the little arm of the Arabian Gulf. Commentators have not known what to make of this. Some of them assume two places called Kadesh while others, the majority, assume only one, and they are doubtless right.

The story as I have fastidiously pruned it of all interpolations speaks of a Kadesh in the desert of Paran and immediately afterward of a Kadesh in the desert of Zin. From the first one the emissaries are dispatched, and

from the second one the whole mass of people marches away after the Edomites have denied passage through their land. From this it becomes self-evident that it is the same site, for the intended march through Edom was a consequence of the failed attempt to penetrate into the land of Canaan. Other passages make clear that the two repeatedly mentioned deserts border each other — Zin lying more to the north, Paran to the south — and that Kadesh was situated in an oasis as a resting place between the two deserts.

No one would have ever come up with the idea of two places named Kadesh if not for the embarrassment of having to keep the children of Israel moving through the desert for forty years. But those who assume only one Kadesh and still want to account for the forty years' march and the inserted way stations are even worse off. Especially if they have to trace the march on a map, they cannot envision a technique sufficiently peculiar to demonstrate the impossible. For the eye is a better judge of incongruity than any inner sense. [Nicolas] *Sanson* [1600–1667] inserts the fourteen spurious stops between Sinai and Kadesh. Here he cannot draw enough zigzags on his map, and still each station is only two miles distant from the one before it, a stretch of land that is not even enough to make such a monstrous military worm move on.

How well-populated and built-up must this desert be, where every two miles we find, if not towns and villages, at least way stations with names! What an advantage for the commander and his men! But this desert wealth quickly becomes fatal to the geographer. From Kadesh he finds only five stations to Ezeon-Gaber, yet on the way back to Kadesh, where the armies have to return, he unluckily finds none. So he puts some strange towns which are not even mentioned in that list along the route of the marchers, as in earlier eras one might conceal the emptiness of certain places on a map by drawing in some elephants. [Augustin] *Calmet* [1672–1757] knows how to save the situation by creating crisscross roads: he puts some of the redundant sites nearer the Mediterranean Sea, makes Hazeroth and Moseroth into one site, and through extravagant leaps manages to bring his people finally to the Arnon. [Edward] *Well* [1667–1727], who assumes two Kadeshes, distorts the layout of the land beyond measure. [Jean-Baptiste] *Nolin* [1657–1725] has the caravan dance a polonaise bringing it back to the Red Sea with Sinai northward behind it. It is impossible to show less imagination, perspective, precision, or judgment than do these pious, upright men.

But when we scrutinize the matter, it appears highly probable that the redundant index of the sites was interpolated in order to save the problem-

atic forty years. For the text that we minutely follow in our account [Deut. 2:1 ff.] says this: beaten by the Canaanites and refused passage through the land of Edom, as the people moved toward Ezeon-Gaber, they passed the land of the Edomites on the way to Sea of Reeds. From this arose the error of assuming that they went to the Sea of Reeds after Ezeon-Gaber (which at that time probably did not yet exist, although the text speaks of moving around the mountains of Seir on the road mentioned). But to say "on the way to the Sea of Reeds" need not imply that they ever reached it: we might say "The driver is taking the road to Leipzig" without meaning he is necessarily going all the way to Leipzig. And if we have now eliminated the superfluous sites, we will probably succeed also with the superfluous years. We know that the chronology of the Old Testament is artificial, that the whole chronology was predetermined to amount to precisely forty-nine years, and that in order to create such mystically calculated epochs, many historical numbers would have had to be altered. And where could thirty-six to thirty-eight years that had gone missing from a cycle be more easily interpolated than in an era shrouded in so much darkness and allegedly spent in some unknown desert spot?

So without even touching on chronology, the most difficult of all studies, I want here to consider shortly, in favor of my hypothesis, the poetical part of it. Several numbers, which may be called round, sacred, symbolic, or poetical, appear in the Bible as well as in other archaic scriptures. The number seven seems dedicated to action, work, and deed. The number forty seems allotted to contemplation and expectation, but particularly to seclusion. The deluge that was intended to separate Noah and his family from the rest of the world swells for forty days. After the waters have remained long enough, they flow away for forty days. For the same period of time Noah keeps the door of the ark bolted. For an equal period Moses stays twice on Mt. Sinai, each time sequestered from the people. The emissaries remain just as long in Canaan, and similarly the whole people, after the same number of wearisome years of being kept apart from other nations, will in the end have confirmed and sanctified an equal space of time. Even to the New Testament the significance of this number is transmitted in its full value: Christ remains forty days in the desert, awaiting the Tempter.

If I have succeeded in reducing the time the children of Israel spent wandering from Sinai to the Jordan (even while possibly overemphasizing the vacillating, unlikely delays), getting rid of so many futile years and fruitless way stations, I will also (despite reservations I have been obliged to note) have restored the commander-in-chief to his full merit. Further: the

way God appears in those books will no longer be as oppressive as before. He has seemed quite dreadful and horrid throughout. Already in the Books of Joshua and Judges, and even further on, a purer patriarchal relationship emerges. The God of Abraham, too, appears in friendly fashion before his people. But the God of Moses has for some time filled us with horror and disgust. To clarify this I will merely say: as the man, so his God. Now then, some final words on the character of Moses!

Someone might object: "With great audacity you have denied in an extraordinary man the qualities he has been valued for, those of a governor and of a commander-in-chief. So what made him outstanding? What qualified him for such an important calling? What gives him the temerity to press on in his duties in spite of internal and external disadvantages if he lacks those principal requirements and indispensable talents that you, with unheard of insolence, deny him?" My answer: it is not talents or skills for one thing or another that make the *man of action.* It is the personality that everything depends on. Character is based on personality, not on talents. Talents may be accessory to a person's character; it is not accessory to them. For everything is dispensable to him except himself. So I readily admit that the personality of Moses, from the first assassination through all the subsequent cruelties to his final disappearance, gives a highly remarkable and dignified picture of a man driven by his nature to the greatest deeds. But of course such a picture is thoroughly distorted if we see a strong man of laconic speech and prompt action stumble around for forty years, without either sense or necessity, together with an immense mass of people in such a small area and in direct view of his intended goal. Simply by shortening the way and the time he spends I have mitigated everything derogatory that I had dared to say about him and have raised him to his rightful place.

So I have nothing more to do than repeat what I started with. No harm is done to the Holy Scriptures, as little as to any other tradition, if we treat them from a critical perspective, disclosing where they contradict each other and how often an original, better text has been concealed, even disfigured, by subsequent additions, interpolations, and accommodations. The internal, inherent, original, and essential value emerges all the more alive and pure, and it is this that everyone, consciously or unconsciously, looks for, seizes upon, and spiritually profits from, disregarding and forgetting, if not discarding, all the rest.

Summary Review:
Second Year of the March

Rests on Sinai	1 Month	20 days
Travel to Kadesh		5 "
Days of rest		5 "
Stop because of Miriam's illness		7 "
Emissaries' absence		40 "
Negotiation with the Edomites		30 "
March to the Arnon		5 "
Days of rest		5 "
Mourning of Aaron		40 "
Total		157 days

So, all together six months. From this it clearly follows that even when we take hesitations, halts, and episodes of opposition into account as much as we want, the march will have reached the Jordan well before the end of the second year.

(45) FURTHER ASSISTANCE

If the Holy Scriptures evoke the original circumstances and the gradual development of an important nation, and if men like [Johann David] *Michaelis* [1717–1791], [Johann Gottfried] *Eichhorn* [1752–1827], [Heinrich Eberhard Gottlob] *Paulus* [1761–1851], and [Arnold Hermann Ludwig] *Heeren* [1760–1842] show yet more of what is natural and immediate in those traditions than we would be able to discover, we will learn most about recent times and present-day conditions in this area from the travel books and related documents that a number of Westerners who have penetrated to the East (not without hardship, enjoyment, and danger) have brought back, imparting splendid instruction. From these I will note briefly a few of the men through whose eyes I have assiduously attempted, for many years, to view those remote, unfamiliar topics.

(46) PILGRIMAGES AND CRUSADES

The innumerable descriptions of these are no doubt instructive, too, in their way. But as regards the true condition of the Orient they confuse our

imagination more than they help it. The one-sidedness of the Christian-hostile view limits us through its own limitations, which in more recent times widen only to a relative degree, as we are gradually getting to know the military exploits better through Oriental sources. But we continue to owe a debt of gratitude to all the lively pilgrims and crusaders. To their religious enthusiasm and their strong, untiring opposition to Eastern intrusion we owe the protection and preservation of European cultural conditions.

(47) MARCO POLO [ca. 1254–ca. 1324]

This outstanding man stands naturally at the top. His voyage takes place in the second half of the thirteenth century. He travels to the most distant East, showing us the most exotic situations, whose nearly fairytale-like appearance induces wonder and astonishment. If particulars do not come immediately into focus, the compact narration of this wide-ranging wanderer is superbly suited to arouse in us the feeling of the infinite, of the colossal. We find ourselves at the court of Kublai Khan [1215–1294], who as Jenghiz' successor ruled over boundless regions. What shall we think of the extent of a realm where it is said, "Persia is a great province consisting of nine kingdoms" [1. Ch. 13] and everything else is measured on such a scale? Correspondingly immense is the royal residence in the north of China, the castle of the Khan, a city within the city. Here are gathered incalculable treasures and weapons, public servants, soldiers, and courtiers — all repeatedly invited to banquets along with their wives. Equally impressive is our stay in the countryside, with arrangements favoring all kinds of pleasures, in particular an army of hunters, a widespread delight in hunting. Tamed leopards; trained falcons, the hunters' most active companions; uncountable booty in heaps. All year long gifts are offered and received. Gold and silver, jewels, pearls, all sorts of precious objects are at the disposition of the king and his favorites, while the remaining millions of subjects have to settle for the exchange of mock coins.

If we accompany the traveler from the capital on a journey, with all the suburbs we cannot tell where the city ends. We are overwhelmed by houses and houses, villages and villages, and along the magnificent river a row of resorts — all in a day's travel, and many such days.

The traveler now moves to other areas, at the Emperor's behest. He leads us through vast deserts, then to districts abundant in herds, up to mountain ranges, showing us men of wondrous appearance and customs.

He lets us look over ice and snow, offering a final glance at the eternal polar night. Then suddenly, as on a magic mantle, he floats us down onto the Indian peninsula. Ceylon lies beneath us, Madagascar, Java. Our sight is bewildered on strangely named islands, yet everywhere he informs us about human figures and customs, about landscapes, trees, plants and animals, in enough detail to certify the truth of his views, although many a thing may seem fairytale-like. I have had to be content here with a general impression, for no notes or annotations proved available to supplement my earlier studies.

(48) JOHN OF MANDEVILLE
[or Montevilla, fourteenth century]

His voyage starts in the year 1320, and its narrative has come down to us as a popular book, unfortunately much modified. We may grant that the author has traveled widely, has seen much and seen it well, and has also described it correctly. But then he chooses not only to "plow with an strange calf" but to insert old and new legends making even the truth lose credibility. In its altering forms — with the Latin original first translated into Low German and then into High German — the little book suffers from accumulated distortions of the names. The translator also allows himself omissions and insertions, as our [Joseph von] *Görres* [1776–1848] indicates in a worthy publication on German folkloric books [60]. Such factors have hampered the enjoyment and lessed the utility of this important work.

(49) PIETRO DELLA VALLE [1586–1652]

From an age-old Roman lineage able to trace its pedigree back to the noble families of the republic, *Pietro della Valle* was born in the year 1586, at a time when all the realms of Europe enjoyed a high spiritual culture. In Italy [Torquato] Tasso [1544–1595] was still alive, though in a sad state; but his poems powerfully influenced outstanding minds. Verse craft had spread so far that improvisers flourished and no young man with a lively mind would willingly pass up the chance to express himself in rhyme. Language study, grammar, oratory, and the art of style were treated thoroughly, so the youth grew up carefully schooled in all these accomplishments.

Military exercises on foot and on horseback, the noble arts of fencing and riding, served daily to develop physical power and the strength of character intimately linked to it. The savage exploits of earlier crusades had now been refined to an art of warfare and chivalrous conduct enhanced by gallantry. We observe the young man as he pays court, chiefly in verse, to several beauties but faces deep dismay when one of them, whom he had thought to make his own, binding himself to her in earnest, sets him aside and yields to someone hardly worthy. His pain is boundless, and to give vent to his feelings he resolves to march in pilgrim garb to the Holy Land.

In the year 1614 he reaches Constantinople, where his noble, engaging character wins him the finest reception. As with his former studies, he throws himself immediately into learning Oriental languages, attains an overview of Turkish literature and of the manners and customs of the country, and then leaves for Egypt, an early departure lamented by his new-made friends. He utilizes the time spent in Egypt to seek out, with the greatest determination, traces of the ancient world in the newer one. From Cairo he marches to Mt. Sinai to venerate the tomb of Saint Catherine and comes back, as if on a pleasure jaunt, to the Egyptian capital. Departing from there a second time, after sixteen days he reaches Jerusalem, a hint to our imagination about the true measure of the distance between the two cities. There, worshiping at the Holy Tomb, he implores the Savior, as earlier he had begged St. Catherine, to be delivered from his passion. The scales fall from his eyes: what a fool he has been to regard this hitherto adored woman as the only one meriting homage! His rejection of the feminine sex has vanished. He looks for a spouse and writes to his friends, whom he hopes to see again soon, to find one worthy.

He has visited and prayed at all the holy places, aided in this by the recommendations of his friends in Constantinople, in particular Capighi, appointed to be his companion. Aware of these benefits, he now continues his travels and reaches Damascus, then Aleppo, where he dresses in the Syrian manner and grows a beard. There he faces an important adventure that will determine his fate. He is joined by a traveler who never tires of telling about the lovable beauty of a young Georgian Christian who is staying with her family in Baghdad. In truly Oriental fashion, della Valle falls in love with an image made of words, and now eagerly seeks it. Her presence augments his inclination and desire. He knows how to win over the mother; the father, too, is persuaded. But they yield only with reluctance to his impetuous passion; to let their lovely daughter go appears too great a sacrifice. Finally he marries her and so gains the greatest treasure for his life and travels. True, he began his pilgrimage with the knowledge and

learning of a nobleman; in observing everything related to human beings he is attentive and fortunate, and he has been on his best behavior with everyone. Yet he lacks the knowledge of nature, a field of study confined in that era to a narrow circle of earnest researchers. So he can only imperfectly satisfy the behests of his friends, who want reports about plants and types of wood. But the beautiful Maani, an amiable family doctor, is able to give a full account of roots, herbs, and flowers and how they grow; of resins, balms, oils, seeds, and woods as introduced by trade. She enriches her husband's observation according to the manner of the country.

More important still are the implications of this union for his activity in life and travel. Maani, though perfectly feminine, shows a resolute character, equal to all contingencies. She fears no danger but rather seeks it and behaves nobly and calmly everywhere. Riding a horse the way men do, knowing how to tame it and drive it on, she is a continually lively, cheerful companion. Equally important is her adroitness in relating to women. Her husband is well received, treated, and entertained by the men while she conducts herself properly with their wives.

But now the young couple enjoy a type of good fortune not yet known to them when they were traveling through the Turkish empire. They come to Persia in the thirtieth year of the reign of Abbas the Second [1633–1666], who like Peter [1672–1725] and Frederick [1712–1786] merits the name of "the Great." Acceding to the throne after a menaced, anxious youth, he realizes right away that he must widen the borders of his empire to protect it and secure his dominion of the realm by all available means. At the same time his overall planning principle was to restock the depopulated empire with foreigners and to enliven and facilitate commerce with the help of public roads and guest-houses. The major earnings and benefits are expended on immense structures. Isfahan, prestigious capital, is dotted with palaces and gardens, caravanserais and houses for royal guests. He builds a suburb for Armenians, who endlessly show their gratitude by trading for both their own and the royal account, being clever enough to pay the prince back at the same time with profit and tribute. A suburb for Georgians and another for fire-venerating Parsis enlarge the city, which at length spreads as wide as our new empire centers. Roman Catholic priests, particularly Carmelites, are welcomed and protected. This is less the case with Greek Orthodoxy, which being under the protection of the Turks, seems to belong to the common enemy of Europe and Asia.

For more than a year della Valle has stayed in Isfahan, actively using his time to gather precise information about all the circumstances and relationships of the people. How lively his descriptions! How accurate his

information! Finally, after having enjoyed everything to the full, he lacks only the culmination of the enterprise: personal acquaintance with the emperor he so highly admires, an understanding of how the court, the combat troops, and the army function.

In the land of Mazenderan, on the southern coast of the Caspian Sea, an area admittedly swampy and unhealthy, the active, restless prince builds a great city called Ferhabad and decrees that it be populated. Close by he builds for his own use many a country estate on the heights of an amphitheatrical basin, not very far from his adversaries, the Russians and Turks, in a locale protected by mountain ridges. That is where he usually resides, and della Valle goes to see him. He comes with Maani, is well received, is presented to the king after a circumspect, prudent Oriental hesitation, wins the royal favor, and gains entry to banquets and drinking parties where he is above all obliged to give an account of the European constitution, customs, and religion to the well informed, inquisitive Prince.

In the Orient in general, but especially in Persia, a certain naïveté and innocence are to be found through all ranks reaching up to the vicinity of the throne. True, at the upper level a resolute formality is shown at audiences, banquets and so on. But soon there develops in the imperial circle a bit of the freedom of carnival, which is highly amusing. If the emperor goes walking in gardens and kiosks, no one is allowed to wear boots while standing on the carpet where the court are assembled. A Tartar prince arrives; his boots are being pulled off. Unaccustomed to stand on one foot only, he begins to lose his balance. The emperor himself now comes and holds him till the boots are off. Toward evening the emperor stands in a circle of the court, and golden bowls filled with wine are passed around, many of moderate weight but some, with a reinforced bottom, so heavy that the uninformed guest is liable to spill the wine or even — to the great amusement of the sovereign and his initiates — drop the cup altogether. The drinking is done in a circle until anyone no longer able to stand on his feet is taken away or steals away opportunely on his own initiative. At the end of the festivity no respects are paid to the emperor: the guests leave, one after the other, until the ruler remains alone, listening for a while to melancholy music, until he, too, finally withdraws to rest. Even more curious tales are told of the harem, where women tickle their ruler, tussle with him, and try to bring him down onto the carpet, while he, amidst great laughter, can only counter this with grumbling.

When we hear such amusing things about relationships within the imperial harem, we must not think the prince and his council or *divan* remained idle or negligent. It was not a restless mind alone that aroused

Abbas the Great to build a second capital by the Caspian Sea. Ferhabad was not only favorably situated for the pleasures of hunting and holding court but also protected by a chain of mountains close enough to the frontier so that the emperor was able to hear in time about the movements of the Russians and the Turks, his arch-enemies, and to take suitable measures. From the Russians there was at the moment nothing to be feared; their inner imperial stronghold, wrecked by usurpers and mock-princes, had no solid foundation. The Turks on the other side had already been subdued twelve years earlier by the emperor in a battle with such a lucky outcome that he had no longer anything to fear from that quarter but was even continuing to acquire large land areas. Yet a proper peace between such neighbors had never been secured. Isolated provocations, public demonstrations, awakened both parties to permanent vigilance.

Presently, Abbas realizes he must prepare more seriously for war. In the most time-honored style he assembles his entire military host on the plains of Azerbaidjan. Everywhere in his divisions people press forward, on horseback or on foot, with the most diverse weaponry — an unending procession. Like emigrants, each man takes along his wife, children, and luggage. Della Valle, too, leads his lovely wife Maani and her women, on horseback and in a sedan chair, toward the army and the court. The emperor lauds him for this; he is proving to be a respectable man.

When an entire people sets itself in motion as a body, nothing must be lacking that they might need at home. So merchants and traders of all kinds march along with them and set up a temporary bazaar, counting on good sales. That is why the imperial camp is always likened to a city, where such effective policing and law enforcement are in force that no one, at the risk of cruel penalties, may forage or commandeer, still less plunder. Items big and small must be paid for in cash. Not only do the towns on the way provide plentiful stock, but food and supplies unfailingly come from provinces near and far.

But what strategic or tactical operations can be expected of such an organized disorder? Especially when we learn that all popular, tribal, and military groups are mixed together in combat, without a particular man designated to stand in front, at the side, or in the rear, but with everything done randomly, in confusion, we see why a lucky victory can so easily be abruptly altered and a single battle lost can for many years determine the fate of an empire.

This time, however, it does not come to such a terrible hand-to-hand fighting or armed conflict. True, they pass through the mountains with inconceivable hardship. But they hesitate, withdraw, are even ready to

destroy their own towns to let the enemy perish in devastated regions. Panicked alarm and empty tidings of victory alternate chaotically. Terms of peace insolently declined or proudly refused, pretended desire to fight, deceitful hesitation — all these first delay and then favor the peace. So at the command and threats of the emperor, everyone goes home without delay, subject to no further need or peril save what he has suffered already from the journey and the crowd.

We again find della Valle in Kasbin in the vicinity of the court, dissatisfied that the expedition against the Turks had come to such an early end. We need to consider him not merely as a curious traveler, an adventurer driven by circumstance; he rather maintains his own goals, which he continues to pursue. Persia was then properly a country for foreigners. The longtime liberality of Abbas had attracted many an alert spirit. It was not yet the time of formal embassies. Bold, agile voyagers asserted themselves. [Sir Anthony] Sherley [or Shirley, 1565–1635?], an Englishman, had earlier effectively appointed himself mediator between East and West. So, too, della Valle, independent, wealthy, distinguished, well-educated, recommended, finds entry at court and tries to incite hostility against the Turks. He is driven by the same Christian compassion that inspired the first crusaders. He had seen the ill-treatment of pious pilgrims at the Holy Tomb and had himself suffered to a degree. All western nations wanted to see Constantinople harassed from the east. But Abbas does not trust the Christians, who, thinking of their own advantage, had not offered him timely aid. Now he has come to an agreement with the Turks. But della Valle does not give up and seeks to create a union of Persia with the Cossacks of the Black Sea. He comes back to Isfahan with the aim of settling there and promoting the Roman Catholic religion. He enlists his wife's relatives, then still more Christians from Georgia. He adopts a Georgian orphan, stays with the Carmelites, and has in mind nothing less than to receive from the emperor a region in which to found a new Rome.

Now the emperor himself again appears in Isfahan, and ambassadors from all parts of the world arrive in throngs. The ruler on horseback, in the largest square, in the presence of his soldiers, the most respectable servants, and foreign dignitaries (the most notable ones with their suite also on horseback), gives official audiences in good humor. Gifts are presented, gorgeously displayed, yet soon afterward arrogantly disdained and Jewishly commercialized, so the Majesty continually vacillates between the highest and the lowest. Now secretly enclosed within his harem, now appearing before the eyes of all and involved in all public affairs, the emperor shows himself in tireless, willful activity.

We notice, too, throughout all this a particular liberal-mindedness in religious affairs. It is only forbidden to convert a Moslem to Christianity. But conversions to Islam, which the emperor had earlier favored, no longer give him pleasure. In other matters all the people are allowed to believe and undertake what they want. For example, right now the Armenians are observing their feast of the baptism of the cross, which they solemnly celebrate in their splendid suburb traversed by the river Zenderud. Not only does the emperor want to attend this function with a great retinue, even here he cannot help giving orders and directions. First he speaks with the priests to find out what they are about to do, then he gallops to and fro, rides back and forth, and commands in precise tones that the procession observe calm and order, as if he were dealing with his warriors. After the ceremony he calls together the priests and other dignitaries and talks with them about many religious opinions and customs. But this liberty in approaching persons of another faith does not apply only to the emperor; it is enjoyed by *Shiites* in general. These adherents of Ali [599?–661], who was ousted from the caliphate and then assassinated when he had regained it, can in many ways be regarded as the oppressed members of the Islamic religion. Their hatred is therefore mainly directed against the *Sunnites*, who additionally accord consideration and reverence to the Caliphs that ruled between Muhammad and Ali. The Turks are devoted to this faith. A political as well as religious schism divides the two groups. The Shiites hate to the utmost their own fellow believers who think differently, while they are indifferent to members of other denominations, to whom they grant a favorable reception more readily than to their internal adversaries.

But also — bad enough! — even this liberality suffers from the influence of imperial arbitrariness! To populate or depopulate an empire are options equally acceptable to the despotic will. Abbas, roving about disguised in the countryside, hears the disdainful speech of some Armenian women and feels so terribly offended that he inflicts the cruelest punishments on the male inhabitants of the village. Terror and mourning spread on the banks of the Zenderud. The suburb Khalfa, at first filled with joy at the participation of the emperor in their celebration, sinks into deep sorrow.

I empathize with the feelings of great nations which have been alternately elevated and degraded by despotism. I admire the high level of security and wealth to which Abbas by his own will has raised the empire while conferring on the state a stability such that only after ninety years were weakness, foolishness, and irrationality able to ruin the country. But I must also indicate the other side of this imposing image.

As every autocracy rejects all influence and has to preserve the personality of the ruler in the most complete security, it follows that the despot must continually suspect treason, anticipate danger, and fear violence from all sides, for he confirms his lofty position only through violence. He is therefore jealous of everyone else who inspires respect and confidence, shows brilliant ability, amasses treasures, and seems to compete with him in his activity. The heir apparent must give rise to the deepest suspicion. It takes magnanimity for a royal father to regard without envy a son to whom nature in a little while will irrevocably assign all possessions and acquisitions. The son, for his part, is obliged to be noble and well-behaved, to show good taste, moderate his hopes, hide his desire, and not anticipate destiny even in appearance. And yet! — where is human nature so pure and great, so calmly temporizing, so willingly active under forced conditions that the father will not complain about the son, the son about the father? Even if they both were angel-pure, sycophants would stand between them. Imprudence becomes a crime; appearance, proof. How many examples does history provide! Think only of the grievous family labyrinth in which King Herod was entangled. Not only did his family keep him in steadily imminent danger, but a child singled out by prophecy aroused concern that brought on widespread cruelty shortly before the king's death.

That is what also happened to Abbas the Great. Sons and grandsons became suspects, and they aroused suspicion. One, innocent, was assassinated; another one, half-guilty, blinded. The latter said, "You have taken light not from me but from the empire."

To this regrettable defect is inevitably added another, engendering even more random acts of violence and crimes. Everyone is governed by habit. Yet, restricted by external conditions, people behave moderately, and this moderation becomes a habit. Just the opposite happens with the despot: an unrestricted will becomes enlarged and, if no warnings are given, expands indefinitely. We find here the solution of the riddle of how a laudable young prince, whose first years of rule have been blessed, eventually develops into a tyrant, to the distress of the world and the ruin of his family, who frequently are forced to deliver themselves from agony by violence.

Unfortunately, our inborn striving for the absolute, though it fosters all virtues, will become dreadful in its effect if joined by sensual blandishments. From this develops the worst hypertrophy of will, which luckily dissolves, in the end, into complete numbness. I speak of the excessive use of wine, which, instantly bursting the boundary of a thoughtful fairness and equity, something even the tyrant, as a human being, cannot deny altogether, brings about unlimited disaster. We may apply what has been said of

Abbas the Great, who in his fifty years' rule raised himself to become the only unconditional will of his widely populated realm. Of a liberal nature, sociable and good-humored, he was led astray through suspicion, vexation and, worst of all, by an ill-conceived love of justice. He was further aroused by impetuous drinking and, not to overstate the matter, tormented and brought to despair by a disdainful, incurable physical illness. We may conclude that those who put an end to such a dreadful earthly phenomenon merit pardon if not approval. We therefore praise as blessed those educated nations whose monarch governs himself by a noble ethical awareness. Happy the moderate, regulated governments that their rulers themselves have reason to love and promote. Such a government will spare the ruler many a responsibility and much cause for regret.

Not only the prince, but everyone who through confidence, favor, or arrogance partakes of the highest power will be in danger of overstepping the circle that law, custom, humanism, awareness, religion, and birth have drawn around the human race for its happiness and trust. Let ministers and favorites, representatives of the people and the people themselves, take care not to be carried away by the whirlpool of absolute will power, drawing themselves and others irrevocably to destruction.

Returning to our voyager, we find him in an uncomfortable position. With all his love for the Orient, della Valle must have come to feel he is living in a land where it is impossible to think about plans and results, and where even with the mightiest will power and the most diligent activity no new Rome could be built. Not even family ties suffice to keep della Valle and his wife in the area: even after acquiring intimate friends in Isfahan, they still would rather go back to the Euphrates to continue their habitual way of life. The remaining Georgians show little zeal. Even the Carmelites, though they in particular must have heartily endorsed the great project, can get neither sympathy nor assistance from Rome.

Della Valle becomes wearied in his zeal, and he decides to return to Europe, unfortunately at the most unpropitious time. To march through the desert seems intolerable, and he resolves to go through India. But now military conflicts arise among the Portuguese, Spaniards and English over Hormus, the most important commercial center, and Abbas finds it to his advantage to join the dispute. The emperor resolves to fight his discomfiting Portuguese neighbors, to remove them, and in the end, possibly by resorting to cunning and delaying tactics, to thwart the purposes of the helpful English and to exploit all advantages.

In such critical times our traveler is now taken aback by the peculiar feeling that puts a man in greatest conflict with himself — a sense of

remoteness from the fatherland just at the moment when, uneasy in a foreign country, he wants to return to the homeland or even wishes he were there already! He can no longer ward off impatience. So moved, our friend finds that his eager nature and his noble, powerful self-confidence delude him about the difficulties ahead. His risk-prone audacity has succeeded thus far in overcoming all obstacles, carrying out all plans, and he flatters himself with visions of equal luck in the future. Since the way home through the desert seems unbearable, he decides to go by way of India, accompanied by his beautiful Maani and their foster daughter Mariuccia.

Many a disagreeable event occurs, presaging added menace. But he marches through Persepolis and Shiraz, attentive as always, precisely noting and distinguishing the objects, customs, and manners of the country. Arriving at the Bay of Persia, he predictably finds all ports closed, all ships confiscated after the outbreak of war. There on the shore, in a most unhealthy area, he encounters a camp of Englishmen, whose caravan, also halted, awaits an opportune moment. Responding to their friendly welcome, he joins them, erecting his tents near theirs and a palm hut for greater comfort. Here a friendly star seems to shine on him! His marriage was so far childless. To the great joy of both husband and wife Maani announces she is pregnant. But della Valle falls ill; bad food and tainted air have a destructive effect on him and unluckily also on Maani. She is confined too early, and the fever will not abate. Her steady character keeps her alive for awhile even without medical aid. But finally she feels her end approaching, resigns herself in silent impassivity, and demands to be brought from the palm hut to the tent area. While Mariuccia holds the consecrated candle and della Valle recites the traditional prayers, she dies in his arms. She was twenty-three.

To calm the shock of the enormous loss, he firmly and irrevocably resolves to transport the body to his family vault in Rome. Though lacking resins, balms, and precious spices, he luckily finds a shipment of the best camphor, which can preserve the body when meticulously applied by experienced people.

But with this he takes on the weightiest burden. From now on, for the whole journey, he must try, through appeasement or bribery, to placate superstitious camel-drivers, greedy and prejudiced public servants, and alert customs officials.

We accompany him to Lar, the capital of Laristan, where he finds better air and a good welcome, and he awaits the Persians' conquest of Hormuz. But even their triumphs do not advance his project. Driven back again to Shiraz, he at length sets out for India on an English ship. Here we

find his conduct equal to what we have seen before. Steadfast bravery, knowledge, and noble virtues win for him everywhere an easy entry and a honorable sojourn. But he is finally forced back to the Persian Gulf and must return home by way of the desert.

Here he suffers every hindrance he had feared. Decimated by tribal chiefs, taxed by customs officers, robbed by Arabs and even in Christendom everywhere irritated and delayed, he nonetheless salvages and brings to Rome curiosities and precious objects — the most precious being the body of his beloved Maani. There, in Ara Coeli, he performs a magnificent funeral, and as he descends into the grave to pay her the final honor, we find two virgins at his side — Sylvia, his daughter who in his absence has grown to full loveliness, and Tinatin de Ziba, whom we have known by the name of Mariuccia, both about fifteen years old. He now decides to marry the latter, against the will of his relatives and even of the Pope, who intend for him more distinguished and upper-class relationships. But after the death of his spouse, Tinatin had been the faithful companion of his voyage and his only solace. For several more years yet, he will be brilliantly active in accord with his vehemently daring and courageous character, not without quarrels, annoyance, and danger. Dying at age sixty-five, he leaves a numerous progeny.

(50) APOLOGY

One naturally likes one's own path to understanding more than any other, preferring to initiate and guide successors along the same lines. Accordingly, I have portrayed Pietro della Valle in great detail because he was the voyager who made the particular features of the Orient dawn upon me first and most clearly. My bias convinced me that only by such a portrayal could I give my *Divan* an adequate foundation. In these times, so rich in essays and isolated pamphlets, I would like to encourage others to read a substantial book that will lead them to a meaningful world. In the latest travel accounts that world will appear superficially altered yet fundamentally the same as it did to that excellent man in his time.

If the poet you would know,
To the poet's country go.
In the Orient it's true
What is old is what is new.

(51) [ADAM] OLEARIUS [ca. 1603–1671]

The accumulation of printed sheets for this book reminds me to proceed from now on with more prudence and fewer digressions. So I mention the excellent Olearius only in passing. We find English travelers, among whom I regret to neglect Sherley and [Sir Thomas] Herbert [1606–1682]; then we find Italians and Frenchmen. At this point, let a German enter, in strength and dignity. Unfortunately, in his voyage to the Persian court he was associated with a man who, more adventurer than ambassador, played both roles willfully, clumsily, even insanely. The excellent, upright Olearius comes through unruffled, offering pleasant and edifying travel accounts, all the more precious because he arrived in Persia only a few years after della Valle and shortly after the death of Abbas the Great. After his return he further acquainted Germans with the excellent Saadi through an effective, gratifying translation. I hate to break off — I want to give this man abundant thanks for all the services I owe to him. I am equally obliged to shortchange the next two travelers, whose merits I will touch on only superficially.

(52) [JEAN-BAPTISTE] TAVERNIER [1605–1689]; JEAN CHARDIN [1643–1715]

Tavernier, goldsmith and jewelry merchant, whose richly elaborate wares recommend him, advances with intelligence and clever skill to Oriental courts, and everywhere knows how to assimilate and adapt. He reaches the Indian diamond mines and after a perilous return voyage receives no friendly welcome in the West. The writings he left are highly instructive. Yet *Chardin,* his compatriot, successor, and rival, not only impedes him in his course of life but effaces him in public opinion afterward. At the beginning of his trip Chardin is obliged to surmount the greatest hazards. He knows well how to exploit the mentality of Oriental rulers and plutocrats, who vacillate between magnanimity and selfishness. Resourcefully, he caters to their inappeasable greed for fresh jewels and foreign goldsmith-work (though these potentates may already possess the greatest treasures). So at length he returns, favored by good fortune and advantage.

These two men cannot be admired enough for their intelligence, equanimity, dexterity, pertinacity, winning behavior, and dependability, and every man of the world on his voyage through life might well venerate

them as a model. But they had two advantages not at everyone's disposal: they were Protestant and French — attributes that in combination may produce highly capable individuals.

(53) LATER AND LATEST TRAVELERS

I cannot even touch on all we owe to the eighteenth and already to the nineteenth century. Recently the English have enlightened us about the most unknown regions. The kingdom of Kabul, the old Gedrosia and Karamania, have become accessible. One cannot deny, but must clearly recognize, that as the English roam across the Indus their activities there attain wider range daily, furthering in the West an ever-growing desire for a deeper, more extensive knowledge of languages.

When I recall how eagerness and assiduity went hand in hand in allowing the English to advance from a limited Hebrew-rabbinical realm to the depth and breadth of the Sanskrit, I am glad to have been a witness to that progress for so many years. Even the obstructive wars that destroy so much have revealed many advantages to our deepened insight. Down from the Himalayan mountains, the regions on both sides of the Indus, so fairytale-like in prior accounts, have been made clearer to us in their connection with the rest of the world. From the peninsula down to Java we can expand the survey according to our preferences, energy, and opportunity, instructing ourselves in the most minute detail. One after the other, gates open to friends of the Orient, whether we are curious about unanswered questions of early history, flaws of a strange local constitution or an ill-fated religion, or the splendor of a poetry where pure humanity, noble custom, serenity, and love take refuge, to console us for the conflict of castes, for fantastic monsters of religion and abstruse mysticism, and to convince us that in the end it is in such a poetry that the salvation of humanity is held.

(54) TEACHERS: FOREBEARS AND CONTEMPORARIES

To give myself an account of who has taught me this or that as I pursued my studies, of how not only friends and comrades but foes and adversaries, too, have helped me to progress, is a difficult task I can hardly accomplish. Yet I feel impelled to name a few men to whom I gratefully acknowledge a special debt.

[Sir William] *Jones* [1746–1794]. The merits of this world-famed man have been so widely praised that nothing remains for me but to recognize that I always tried to apply his labors in any way possible. But I want to note one part of his achievement that stands out in my mind.

With his English education he is so well schooled in Greek and Latin literature that he can not only appreciate its creations but work in these languages. Familiar with Oriental and European literatures alike, he enjoys the twofold ability to estimate every nation on its own merits and at the same time to find everywhere attainments of the good and beautiful, realms where all nations excel.

But in conveying his insights he encounters many a difficulty. He must chiefly confront the predilection of his nation for classical Greek and Roman literature. And if we observe him closely, we notice that he prudently seeks to connect the unknown to the known, the estimable to what is already esteemed. Disguising his preference for Asiatic poetry, with skillful modesty he mainly offers examples of a sort readily comparable to highly regarded Latin and Greek poems. He employs the rhythmical antique Western forms to make the graceful tendernesses of the Orient equally appealing for classicists. Not only the archaizing bias of his country but its patriotic motivation gave him trouble: he was pained by the disparagement of Oriental poetry. This becomes brilliantly clear in the pitiless ironical essay, only two pages long, called *Arabs, sive de Poesi Anglorum Dialogus*, at the end of his work *Of Asiatic Poetry*. Here, with undisguised bitterness, he shows how absurd Milton or Pope would appear in Oriental clothes. From this it follows, as I, too, repeat so often, that we should go and see, know and esteem, every poet in his own language and in the particular context of his era and customs.

[Johann Gottfried] *Eichhorn* [1752–1827]. It is gratifying to recognize that in my present work I still try to emulate the same exemplary model this highly meritorious man offered through his edition of Jones' works forty-two years ago, when we still counted him as one of us and heard from him so much salutary advice. During all this time I have quietly followed his instructions, and recently I was delighted to receive yet another highly important work enlightening us about the *prophets* and their circumstances. For what could be more enjoyable, for the quietly contemplative man as well as for the enthusiastic poet, than to see how these God-gifted men viewed their troubled times and indicated the strangely perturbing nature of what was taking place as they punished, warned, comforted, and raised the spirits of their hearers.

With those few words let me acknowledge my gratitude to the worthy Eichhorn.

[Georg Wilhelm] *Lorsbach* [1752–1816]. It is also obligatory to commemorate here the stout-hearted Lorsbach. He entered our circle when already advanced in years, and he was not able to find a comfortable situation for himself; yet he responded to all my requests with valid information within his sphere of knowledge, at times too circumscribed. At first I would wonder why I could not find in him a particular friend of Oriental poetry. Yet his frame of mind was that of a person who has applied himself for a long period of time with zeal and liking to a task he did not consider proportionately rewarding. Then, though old age is the time when rewards would be merited, enjoyment falls short just when most deserved. His intelligence and his sincerity were equally good-humored, and I always recall with pleasure the hours I spent with him.

(55) [HEINRICH FRIEDRICH] VON DIEZ [1786–1817]

An important influence on my studies, which I thankfully acknowledge, is that of the prelate von Diez. At the time when I was carefully researching Oriental poetry, the *Book of Kabus* came into my hands. It seemed so important that I devoted much time to it and invited many friends to have a look at it. Through a traveler I transmitted my sincere thanks to that estimable man from whom I had learned so much. He kindly sent me in return a little book about tulips. I had a sheet of silky paper which I directed to be adorned with a splendid golden floral design. On that sheet I wrote the following poem:

> How to be prudent in our wanderings
> Uphill, or down, departing from a throne —
> Dealing with people, horses, other things —
> All a king teaches to his son — you've shown.
> Through your fine gift, such knowledge now is ours.
> To that, you even add a tulip bloom!
> Were this gold frame not narrowing my powers,
> To sing your praise I would need endless room.

And so developed a conversation in letters, which the worthy man continued, in an almost illegible hand, amid sufferings and pains, until the end of his life.

Since I have so far become acquainted with the customs and history of the Orient only in a general way, and with its languages not at all, such kindness was most important to me. Because I was working in a planned, methodical way, I needed accessible information that would have required time and energy to locate in books. So when in doubt I consulted him and always got an adequate, practical reply to any question. The content of these letters would make them worthy of printing; they would serve as a monument to his knowledge and benevolence. As I knew his strict and distinctive cast of mind, I was careful not to mention certain topics. But, quite in contrast to his usual mode of thought, when I wished to learn about the personality of *Nasreddin Khodja*, merry travel- and tent-companion of the global conqueror Timur, von Diez obligingly translated for me some of the anecdotes. These showed once again that many audacious fairytales, which Westerners have treated in their own way, have their origin in the Orient but in being transformed have lost their special coloring, their true, appropriate tone.

Because the manuscript of that book is now to be found in the royal library of Berlin, it would be highly desirable for a specialist to offer a translation. Perhaps it might be most properly undertaken in Latin so the scholar would be the first to know it fully. One might then make a decent translation of some excerpts available to the German public.

The present collection of essays may serve as proof that I have made good use of that friend's additional writings, such as the *Memorabilia of the Orient* etc. It is riskier to admit that his not always admirable quarrelsomeness also profited me a good deal. But let me recall how, during my years at the university, I would rush to the fencing room to watch masters or seniors try their force and dexterity against each other. This undeniably gave me a chance to mark strengths and weaknesses that would have eluded anyone who had not seen such a contest.

Doubly dear to me, the more I read him, is the author of the *Book Kabus* [*Qabus Nama,* or *Mirror for Princes*], namely *Kai Ka'us* [ibn Iskander, eleventh century], king of the Dilemites. He lived in the mountainous region of Ghilan, which hides the Euxine Bridge to the south. Carefully educated as crown prince for the freest, most active life, he left the country to acquire further culture and practical training farther in the East.

Shortly after the death of Mahmud (whose glorious achievements I earlier had occasion to summarize), he came to Ghazna, where he was well received by the latter's son Mesud and, in the wake of many a service in war and peace, was married to one of Mesud's sisters. At the court where Firdusi had written the *Shah Nameh* just a few years before, where a great

assembly of poets and talented men continued to flourish, and where the new ruler, courageous and bellicose like his father, valued the society of the clever and gifted, Kai Ka'us could find the most precious opportunity for further instruction.

But I need to speak first of his education. To perfect his physical training, his father had entrusted him to an excellent teacher. From this man the boy acquired practice in all the chivalrous arts: shooting, riding, equestrian shooting, spear throwing, and hitting a ball adroitly with a polo mallet. After all this had been superbly achieved and the king seemed to be satisfied, he praised the teacher but added: "You have instructed my son in all the activities he needs implements for. Without a horse he cannot ride. He cannot shoot without a bow. What is his arm, if he has no javelin? Polo, without mallet and ball? You have not taught him the one activity where he needs only himself alone, the one most necessary and where no one can help him." Standing there ashamed, the teacher heard that the prince lacked the art of swimming. So the prince learned it, though with some reluctance, and it saved his life when, on a voyage to Mecca, his boat, filled with pilgrims, ran aground in the Euphrates. Only he and a few others survived.

That he was just as thoroughly educated in matters of intellect is proved by the good reception he found at the court of Ghazna. He was appointed companion to the prince, which at the time meant a good deal, because he had to be smart enough to give a reasonable and agreeable report of everything that went on.

The succession to the throne of Ghilan was made as insecure as the realm itself by powerful, warmongering neighbors. Finally, after the death of his royal father, who had been deposed and then restored to rule, Kai Ka'us ascended to the throne with great wisdom and with full awareness of its likely hazards. Foreseeing, in his old age, that his son Ghilan Shah would hold a position even more precarious than his own, he writes this memorable book, in which he tells the youth "that he wishes to educate him in the arts and sciences for a twofold reason: that through any art necessary he may gain a means of livelihood, should destiny place him in that position; or if not, that he may at any rate be well instructed in the reasons for things if he should remain in power."

If only in our time such a book had been available to noble emigrés who with admirable resignation often supported themselves by the work of their hands — how consoling it would have been for them!

That such an excellent, invaluable book has not become better known may be largely due to the fact that the author published it at his own expense and the Nicolai publishing firm has taken it only on commission,

which in the book trade will bring such a work immediately to an initial standstill. But to let the country know what treasures the book holds, I will sum up the contents of the chapters and request that respected daily papers such as the *Morgenblatt* and *Gesellschafter* make known to the general public the edifying, entertaining anecdotes and stories and the incomparable maxims the work contains.

Contents of the *Book Kabus* by chapters:

1) Knowledge of God.
2) Praise of the Prophet.
3) God is praised.
4) Fullness in godly service is necessary and useful.
5) Duties toward father and mother.
6) Lineage shall be elevated through virtue.
7) Rules governing speech.
8) The last teachings of Nushirwan.
9) Condition of old age, and that of youth.
10) Decency and rules at meals.
11) Behavior when drinking wine.
12) How guests are to be invited and treated.
13) How to have fun, to play at stones and chess.
14) Conduct of lovers.
15) Use and harm of cohabitation.
16) How to bathe and wash.
17) State of sleep and rest.
18) Organization of hunting.
19) How to practice playing ball.
20) How to confront the enemy.
21) Means of increasing one's property.
22) How to preserve and to give back goods one has been entrusted with.
23) Purchase of male and female slaves.
24) Where to buy possessions.
25) Purchase of horses and traits of the best.
26) How the man is to take a wife.
27) Rules for the education of children.
28) Advantages in making friends and choosing them.
29) Not to be careless about the plots and schemes of the enemy.
30) It is meritorious to forgive.
31) How to seek knowledge.

32) Business.
33) Rules of doctors, and how to live.
34) Rules of astronomers.
35) Attributes of poets and poetry.
36) Rules of musicians.
37) The way to serve emperors.
38) Conduct of confidants and companions of the emperor.
39) Rules of the chancelleries.
40) Organization of the office of vizier.
41) Rules for commanding an army.
42) Rules of emperors.
43) Rules of plowing and agriculture.
44) Benefits of virtue.

A book with such contents promises, beyond question, a broadened knowledge of Oriental circumstances, and we will doubtless find a wealth of analogies that can teach us about our European condition and how to evaluate it.

At the end a short chronological summary: King Kai Ka'us came to power approximately in Heg. 450 = 1058, was still ruling in Heg. 473 = 1080, and had married a daughter of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna. His son, Ghilan Shah, for whom he wrote the work, was robbed of his lands: we know little about his life, nothing of his death. See the translation by Diez, Berlin 1811.

I would ask the bookshop that has undertaken to publish *Book Kabus* or taken it on commission to include this information. A low price will facilitate wider sales.

(56) [JOSEPH] VON HAMMER [1774–1856]

Every part of my little book demonstrates how much I owe to this worthy man. I had long been aware of Hafiz and his poems, but nothing I had found in literature, travel books, journals, or other documents had conveyed any sense of the merits of this extraordinary man. When I finally encountered a complete translation of all his works in the spring of 1813 [1814], I felt I had grasped his inner nature with a special affinity and tried to establish a relation to him through my own production. This collegial activity helped me get through precarious times and allowed me finally to enjoy in the most agreeable way the fruits of the peace I attained.

For some years I had known in a general way about the flourishing enterprise of the *Fundgruben* [*Oriental Sources*; see Bibliography], but now came the time for me to take full advantage of it. This work pointed in many directions, arousing and satisfying the needs of the time. Here again experience confirmed a basic truth: our contemporaries aid us most rewardingly when we are willing to apply their worthy contributions with cordial gratitude. Well-informed men teach us about the past, indicate starting points for present ventures, and point out the next road we may take. Fortunately the splendid *Oriental Sources* is now being supplemented with the same zeal, and though I have to backtrack to keep up, I always gladly return with renewed interest to what is so freshly enjoyable and useful from many perspectives.

One thing should be noted: I could have used this important collection even more efficiently if the editors, whose efforts and contributions are targeted toward specialists, had also focused attention on laymen and amateurs. Had they prefaced at least some of the articles with brief introductions about historical contexts, people, and places, they would have spared an eager student many a wearying, distracting search.

But whatever that presentation left to be desired is now amply compensated by everything I was taught about the history of Persian poetry in such an invaluable work. I will gladly admit that as early as 1814, when the *Göttinger Anzeigen* offered a tentative account of the book's contents, I immediately organized my studies according to the given rubrics, which profited me greatly. When the whole work, so impatiently awaited, finally appeared, I found myself at once in a familiar world, whose circumstances I could note and observe in detail, no longer in a generalized way as if through shifting, misty veils.

I hope you will be reasonably satisfied with the way I have used this work, intending to attract those who might otherwise never have heard of such an abundance of treasures.

Surely we have now acquired a basis on which to display the magnificence of Persian literature. Using this model we may similarly elevate the position and advance the appreciation of other literatures. It would remain highly desirable to preserve chronological order and not attempt to arrange the poetry according to its different genres. With Oriental poets everything is too interwoven to allow items to be isolated. The character of the era and of the poet in his era is the only enlightening context to enliven each poet. I recommend that my method continue to be used.

I hope readers will acknowledge the special merit of the splendid "*Shirin*" [Hammer, "*Schirin*"], the amiably and earnestly instructive "Clover-

leaf" [Hammer, "Morgenländisches Kleeblatt"] which I have placed with such pleasure at the end of this work.

(57) TRANSLATIONS

As Germans continue to approach the Orient more closely by way of various translations, it makes sense to insert here something that, however well known, can never be repeated enough.

There are three kinds of translations. The first acquaints us, in our own mode of understanding, with a foreign country: a simple prosaic rendering is most appropriate here. For as prose wholly obliterates all distinctive features and brings poetic enthusiasm down to the general low water level, it initially does the greatest service because in the midst of our customary national domestic life, our common daily round, it startles us with something splendidly new. We are unwittingly lifted into a heightened mood and genuinely edified. Luther's Bible translation invariably has this effect.

Had the *Nibelungen* been turned into powerful prose and marketed as a popular book, much would have been gained. The strange, earnest, melancholy, cruel knightly spirit would have spoken to us in all its vigor. Whether this may still be appropriate and feasible we leave to the judgment of writers more intensely involved in these antiquarian studies.

Next comes a second mode of translation, where you are trying to place yourself in the context of the foreign country but are able to assimilate unfamiliar material only by representing it in your own way. Such a mode I want to call the *parodistic* one, in the purest root meaning of that word. It is mostly clever and inventive people who feel attracted to such an occupation. The French use this mode in rendering all poetical works: we find hundreds of examples in the translations of [Jacques] Delille [1738–1813]. As the French verse translator adapts foreign words to make them palatable, he deals in the same way with feelings, thoughts, even objects. He demands for every foreign fruit a surrogate grown on his own ground.

The translations of [Christoph Martin] Wieland [1733–1813] belong to this mode. He had distinctive criteria of reason and taste that allowed him to approach a distant time or foreign locale only insofar as he found in it what suited him. This outstanding man may be regarded as representative of his time, extraordinarily effective insofar as what he liked, appropriated, and imparted was also what his contemporaries favored and enjoyed.

But we cannot long remain in any state, whether perfect or imperfect: things keep changing. So we have witnessed a third phase of translation, the

last and highest, where we seek to make the translation identical to the original, not a substitute but a replacement.

At the outset, this mode encountered the greatest resistance. The translator who faithfully follows the original text will have to sacrifice, to a greater or lesser degree, the distinctiveness of his own tradition. And so a *tertium quid* arises — a new item of such a kind that, to develop a taste for it, most people will need to educate themselves.

The inestimable [Johann Heinrich] *Voss* [1751–1826] could not initially satisfy the public, which only later began to accustom itself to the new manner. But who now fully appreciates what has happened, what Germans have gained in versatility, what rhetorical, rhythmical, metrical advantages are now available to talented, inventive youth, how Ariosto and Tasso, Shakespeare and Calderón, newly Germanized, are brought to us with double and triple benefit? I hope literary history will state candidly who was the first to take this path, bestrewn with obstacles as it was.

The translations of von Hammer also indicate, for the most part, a similar treatment of Oriental masterworks, in which particularly the approach to external form is to be recommended. How infinitely more rewarding are his renderings of passages by Firdusi than those of the would-be remodelers in *Oriental Sources* [*Fundgruben des Orients*]. Such remodeling of a poet is in our opinion the saddest error a diligent translator can make, even if he is equal to the demands of the text in other ways.

Because in every literature those three modes or phases of translating repeat, reverse themselves, or take effect at the same time, a prose translation of the *Shah Nameh* and of the works of Nizami would still be suitable now. I used one for a cursory reading, focusing on the main drift, relishing the stories, legends, morals in general, and becoming more and more familiar with the characteristic convictions and ways of thinking, till I was able to make friends with them.

Remember the emphatic applause we Germans accorded to such a translation of the *Shakuntala* [by Sanskrit playwright Kalidasa]: we may well credit its good reception to the accessible prose into which the original verse had been dissolved. But now it is time for someone to offer a translation of the third kind, which would convey the different dialects and types of rhythmical, metric, and prosaic diction found in the original and would make this poem newly enjoyable and familiar to us in all its distinctiveness. A manuscript of the immortal work may be found in Paris. A German living there could earn eternal merit by such a project.

The English translator of [Kalidasa's] *Megadhuta* or *Cloud Messenger* is also worthy of all respect, for the first encounter with such a work will

always mark an epoch in our life. But his translation is actually in the second mode or phase, paraphrasing and supplemental: iambic pentameters charm the Northeasterner's ear and sense. To our [Johann Goffried Ludwig] *Kosegarten* [1792–1860], however, I owe some verses done directly from the original and offering a quite different insight. The Englishman has further allowed himself to transpose themes, something the experienced aesthetic viewer immediately discerns and dislikes.

I would like to explain briefly why I called the third phase of translation the "last" one. A translation that tries to identify with the original finally approaches an interlinear version and greatly eases our understanding of the original. As a result, we are led, in fact driven, back to the basic text. So at length we close the whole circle in which the nearing of the foreign to the familiar, of the known to the unknown, has taken place.

(58) FINAL CONCLUSION!

Experts and friends will benevolently judge to what degree I have succeeded in linking the age-old, departed Orient to the newest and liveliest one. Something belonging to the present day recently came to hand that may offer a happy and enlivening conclusion to the whole.

About four years ago, when the Persian ambassador destined for Petersburg received departure orders from his emperor, the illustrious wife of the monarch did not miss this opportunity to send important gifts to Her Majesty the Empress-Mother of All the Russias, along with a letter which I have the good fortune to convey in translation:

Message from the Wife of the Persian Emperor to Her Majesty the Empress-Mother of All the Russias

> So long as the elements last from which the world is made, may the illustrious Lady of the Palace of Grandeur, the Treasure Casket of the Pearl of Empire, the Constellation of the Stars of Rule, the One Who Has Borne the Gun of the Great Realm, the Circle Around the Center of Sovereignty, the Palm-tree of the Fruit of Supreme Power, may she always be happy and shielded from all adversities.
>
> Having presented these my most sincere wishes, I have the honor to announce that now, since in our fortunate times, through the work of the great mercy of the Almighty Being, the gardens of the two high powers produce new, fresh rose blossoms, and all

that had crept in to separate the two splendid courts has been put aside, in recognizing this great blessing, all who are linked to the one or to the other court will not cease to maintain friendly relations and correspondence.

Now, at this moment when His Excellency Mirza Abul Hassan Khan [b. 1776], ambassador at the great Russian court, departs to its capital, I have found it needful to open the door of friendship with the key of this sincere letter. And because it is an old custom, in accord with the principles of friendship and cordiality, that friends offer each other gifts, therefore I beg you to receive with pleasure the finest jewelcraft of our country presented here. I hope that, in turn, with the cordial drops of friendly letters, you will quicken the garden of a heart that loves you dearly. I ask as well that you may gladden me with requests which I devotedly offer to carry out.

May God sustain your days pure, happy, and full of glory!

Presents

A pearl-necklace, weighing 498 carats
Five Indian shawls
A cardboard casket, work of Isfahan
A small box in which feathers may be placed
A receptacle with needed utensils
Five pieces of brocade.

How the ambassador, who stayed in Petersburg, prudently and modestly expressed himself further about the conditions of the two countries is a matter I have already dealt with above in connection with the history of Persian literature and poetry.

But lately I find that this "*born ambassador*" (so to speak), when already on his way to England, was contacted in Vienna by his Emperor. The sovereign enclosed further gracious gifts, to which he desired to add meaning and splendor through poetical expression. I add these poems, too, as a final keystone to my cupola. Though made of diverse materials, God grant it may be durable!

در درفش

فتحعلی شه ترک جمشید کیتی افروز
کشور خدای ایران خورشید عالم ارا
چترش بصحن کیهان افکنده ظل اعظم
کردش بمغز کیوان افکنده مشک سارا
ایران کنام شیران خورشید شاه ایران
زانست شیر وخورشد نقش درفش دارا
فرق سفیر دانا یعنی ابو الحسن خان
بر اطلس فلك شود ار این درفش خارا
از مهر سوی لندن اورا سفیر فرمود
زان داد فرّ و نصرت بر خسرو نصارا

On the Banner

Great Fatih Ali Shah the Turk's like Jémshid,
Lord of Iran, World Light, Sun of the Earth.
His shield throws on the global mead wide shadows,
His belt breathes musk, regaling Saturn's brain.
Iran's a lions' den, the sun their prince;
Both sun and lion shine on Dara's banner —
The head of Abul Hássan Khan, the herald,
To heaven's vault by silken banner raised.
It is with love that he was sent to London,
Brought luck and triumph to the Christians' lord.



On the Ribbon of a Knightly Order
with Images of Sun and King

God bless this ribbon of a noble luster;
The veil before it has the sun withdrawn.
Embellished by a second Mani's brush,
A sun-crowned portrait: Fatih Ali Shah.
Great herald of his lord with heaven-court
Is Abul Hássan Khan, well-schooled and wise,
Weighed down from head to foot in kingly pearls.
He trod the path of service, end to end.
So that his head to sun-height might be raised,
The sun of heav'n his servant would become.
Such happy tidings have a sense profound
For the ambassador, beloved, noble.
His bond is that of Dara, global ruler;
His word, that of the Master, heaven-bright.

Under the semblance of a childlike naïveté, Oriental courts maintain a particularly clever, shrewd behavior; the preceding poems are a proof of that.

The latest Russian legation to Persia found Mirza Abul Hassan Khan indeed at the court but not in special favor. He modestly remains with the legation, renders them many a service, and gains their gratitude. A few years later the same man is sent to England with a sizable suite, but to glorify him rightly, a particular means is used. He is not immediately provided with all the advantages planned for him to enjoy but is left to set out with credits and whatever else is necessary. But having barely arrived in Vienna, he is overtaken by splendid confirmations of his dignity, striking testimonies to his importance. A flag with imperial insignia is sent to him, the ribbon of an order adorned with images of the sun and even of the emperor himself. All this raises him to the position of representative of the highest power: in and with him, the Majesty is present. But even that is not enough: poems are added, glorifying the banner, sun, and pictures in the Oriental manner, in splendid metaphors and hyperboles.

To clarify details, I will add a few remarks. The emperor calls himself a *Turk*, as he comes from the Turkish-speaking Katshar tribe. All the main tribes of Persia contributing personnel to the army are divided by language and descent into those speaking Turkish, Kurdic, Ulric, and Arabic.

He compares himself to *Jemshid* because Persians classify their powerful princes in relation to certain attributes of their ancient kings: Feridun for his dignity, Jemshid for his splendor, Alexander for his power, Darius for his protective care. A *shield* is the emperor himself, a shadow on god's earth; but on hot summer days he himself needs protection. Yet this king casts a shadow not on himself alone but on the whole world. The *smell of musk* — the finest, most enduring and effusive — ascends from the belt of the Emperor to the brain of Saturn. For these Persians, Saturn is still the highest of the planets; his circle closes the lower world. Here is the head, the brain of the whole. Where there is a brain, there are senses. Saturn is therefore still susceptible to the odor of musk rising from the emperor's belt. *Dara* is the name of Darius and signifies ruler; the memory of ancestors is never slighted. Calling Iran a *lions' den* I find important because the region of Persia where the court is now staying is mostly mountainous, and the empire can well be thought of as a den populated by warriors, or "lions." The *silken banner* elevates the status of the ambassador as high as possible, and a friendly, affectionate relation to England is expressed at the end.

As for the second poem, I would generally remark that the linguistic relationships give Persian poetry a lovely inner life. They are highly characteristic and lend pleasure by their meaningful assonance.

The *ribbon* is valid also for all sorts of enclosures which have an entrance and need a doorkeeper, as the original text says: "Whose curtain (or door) the sun is lifting." Often the door of an Oriental room is a curtain, so the holder and lifter of the curtain is the doorkeeper. By *Mani* is meant Manes, head of the sect of the Manicheans. He is said to have been an able painter and to have spread his strange doctrines mainly through his pictures. He figures here as we would speak of Apelles and Raphael. At the phrase "kingly pearls" our imagination feels strangely animated. Pearls may signify drops: we can think of a sea of pearls, in which the gracious lord immerses his favorite. If he draws him out again, the drops remain suspended on him, and he is preciously adorned from head to foot. But then, too, the *official channels* have head and foot, beginning and end, start and goal: because the servant has faithfully followed his path, he is praised and rewarded. The succeeding lines point again to the purpose of elevating the ambassador effusively and aim to secure for him the highest confidence at the court where he has been sent, as if the emperor himself were present. We may conclude that his mission to England is of the highest importance.

It has been truly said that Persian literature is involved in a perpetual process of exhaling and inhaling. The preceding poems confirm this view. They continually go into the infinite and then immediately back again into the specific. The ruler is light of the world and at the same time lord of his empire. The shield protecting him from the sun spreads its shadows on the global meadow. The perfumes of his belt can be smelled even by Saturn. And so everything tends towards remoteness and back to nearness, from the most legendary times to a brief day at the royal court. From this we learn again that their tropes, metaphors, hyperboles can never be comprehended on their own but only within the meaning and context of the whole.

(59) REVISION

Considering the part of the Persian legacy which from the most ancient to most recent times has been entrusted to the written tradition, we find most of it enlivened by the fact that on those parchments and writing-sheets there is always still something to be altered and improved. If it were

possible for a copy of an ancient work that was admittedly error-free to be handed down to us, it might soon be put aside.

I would not deny that we pardon a book many an *erratum*, feeling flattered by its discovery. May this human trait also benefit my publication, since errors and defects remain to be righted by me or others: small contributions will be welcomed.

I might first mention the spelling of Oriental names, where uniformity can hardly be attained. For as Eastern and Western languages differ so greatly, it is hard to find strict alphabetic equivalents. Since the differing origins and varied dialects of European languages have lent the letters of their alphabets different meanings, uniform spelling of the names becomes even more difficult.

It is under French escort that I was chiefly led into those areas. The dictionary of [Bartélémy d'] *Herbelot* [1625–1695] assisted me in my desires. But the French scholar had to adapt Oriental words and names to French pronunciation and phonic expectations; and these versions eventually entered Germany. So even today we prefer to say Hegire, rather than Hejra, as more pleasant and more familiar.

How much the English have achieved! Though they do not agree about their own idiom, they have reasonably acquired the right to pronounce and to write Oriental names in their way — giving us in Germany more hesitations and doubts.

The Germans, who write most easily in the way they normally speak and do not hesitate to adapt foreign sounds, rhythms, and accents, did serious work. But precisely because they tried to approximate more and more to what was foreign and strange, we find a big difference between older and newer writings. Here again, it is hardly possible to find a reliable authority.

But these concerns were alleviated for me by my careful and obliging friend J[ohann] G[ottfried] L[udwig] Kosegarten, who also did the above translation of the imperial poems. He kindly helped me and offered corrections. May this trustworthy man look with empathy upon my preparations for a future *Divan.*

(60) SILVESTRE DE SACY [1758–1838]

Pledge yourself, my little book,
Gladly to our Master — go.
Here, the start and finish — look:
Eastern, Western, A and Ω.

سیلویستر دساسی
یا ایها الکتاب سر الی سیدنا الاعز
نسلم علیه بهذه الورقة
التی هی اول الکتاب واخره
یعنی اوله فی المشرق واخره فی المغرب

ما نصیحت بجای خود کردیم
روزگاری دریں بسر بردیم
گر نیاید بگوش رغبت کس
بر رسولان پیام باشد وبس

Good counsel to the people have we given
And many days devoted to the words.
If to the ear they seem discordant, duty
Yet bade a herald speak. So let it be.