

**THE BUSTAN
OR ORCHARD OF SA'DI**

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OR ORCHARD OF SA'DI**

Translated and with an Introduction by

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EDITOR'S PREFACE

In the following introduction, the translator's biography of Sa'di is considered by modern scholars no longer accurate. A more up-to-date sketch of Sa'di's life, drawn from the introduction to the companion volume *The Gulistan or Rose Garden of Sa'di*, appears after the translator's introduction.

With the exception of the translator's introduction, which I have altered only slightly, I have chosen American over British English spellings and have replaced archaic words (and verb endings) with their modern equivalents. As necessary, word order has been modified to improve sentence flow.

Sadly, this edition is much abridged owing to the translator's unwillingness to include discursive text. In his introduction, he explains that, "numerous of the more far-fetched allusions have been discarded, to the benefit of the text." I must disagree with the translator. Yet half an orchard is better than none at all.

Finally, the translator originally translated the title as the *Garden of Sa'di*. To avoid confusion of this work with the better-known *Rose Garden of Sa'di*, I have translated the title as *The Bustan or Orchard of Sa'di*, by which this work is also known.

David Rosenbaum
2009

INTRODUCTION

If among the twenty-two works with which Sa'di enriched the literature of his country, the *Gulistan* ranks first in popularity, the *Bustan* (lit. "Orchard") may justly claim equal precedence in point of interest and merit.

No comprehensive translation of this important classical work has hitherto been placed before the reading public, but it cannot be doubted that the character of its contents is such as to fully justify the attempt now made to familiarize English readers with the entertaining anecdotes and devotional wisdom which the Sage of Shiraz embodied in his Palace of Wealth. This is the name which he applies to the *Bustan* in an introductory chapter, and it is one which springs from something more than a poet's fancy, for the ten doors, or chapters, with which the edifice is furnished lead into an orchard that is indeed rich in the fruits of knowledge gained by a wide experience of life in many lands, and earnest thought.

The *Bustan* is written in verse—a fact which adds considerably to the difficulties of translation, since the invariable rule of Sa'di, like that of every other Persian poet we have read, is to sacrifice sense to the exigencies of rhyme and metre. In not a few cases the meaning is so confused on this account that even the native commentators, who possess a fund of ingenuity in explaining what they do not properly understand, have been compelled to pass over numerous couplets

through sheer inability to unravel their intricacies and the abstruse ideas of the poet.

Probably in no other language in the world is poetic license so freely permitted and indulged in as in Persian. The construction of sentences follows no rule; the order of words is just that which the individual poet chooses to adopt, and the idea of time—past, present, and future—is ignored in the use of tenses, that part of a verb being alone employed which rhymes the best.

Notwithstanding idiosyncrasies of this kind, the *Bustan* is written in a style that is delightfully pure and admirably adapted to the subject. The devout spirit by which Sa'di was characterized throughout his chequered life is revealed in every page of the book. In the *Gulistan* he gave free rein to the quaint humour which for many centuries has been the delight of the Eastern peoples, and which an ever-increasing body of English readers is learning to appreciate and admire. In the *Bustan* the humour is more restrained; its place is taken by a more sober reasoning of the duties of mankind toward the Deity and toward their fellow men. Devotion to God and the inflexibility of Fate are the underlying texts of every poem, and the ideality of the one and the stern reality of the other are portrayed in language the beauty of which, it is to be feared, the English rendering does not always adequately convey.

The poems abound in metaphor, a figure of style which Eastern writers employ to a degree that is always exaggerated, and sometimes tedious; but for the purpose of this translation, which aims at a happy medium between literal accuracy and the freedom requisite in order to render Oriental phraseology into polite English, numerous of the more far-fetched allusions have been discarded, to the benefit of the text.

Although a memoir of Sa'di's life is included in another volume of this series, it may not be out of place to give here a brief outline of the poet's career, especially as the *Bustan* contains several references to his childhood and travels.

Sheikh Muslih-ud-din Sa'di was born in Shiraz, in Persia, A.D. 1175; that is to say, 571 years after the flight of Muhammad from Mecca to Medina. He was the son of one Abdu'llah (servant of God), who held a Government office under the Diwan of that time. Sa'di was a child when his father died, as is made clear from the pathetic poem in the second chapter, ending with these words:

*Well do I know the orphan's sorrow,
For my father departed in my childhood.*

But poorly endowed with earthly riches, Sa'di endured many hardships in consequence of this bereavement, and was eventually obliged to live, together with his mother, under the protection of a Saracen chief. How long he remained there it is

impossible to say, for the reason that his biographers are the reverse of informing. This much is, however, known, that being imbued from early childhood with an insatiable thirst for knowledge, he eventually journeyed to Baghdad, then at the zenith of its intellectual fame, and was enabled to enter a private school there through the generosity of a wealthy native gentleman. Making full use of the opportunity so favourably presented, the young aspirant progressed rapidly along the path of learning, and at the age of twenty-one made his first essays in authorship. Some fragmentary poems which he submitted with a long dedication to Shams-ud-din, the Professor of Literature at the Nizamiah College of Baghdad, so pleased that able and discerning man that he at once fixed upon Sa'di a liberal allowance from his own private purse, with the promise of every further assistance in his power. Soon after this, Sa'di was admitted into the college, and ultimately gained an Idrar, or fellowship. In the seventh chapter of the *Bustan* he narrates an instructive story reminiscent of his studies at Nizamiah, and, prone to conceit though he often is, he tells the story against himself.

His scholastic life did not terminate until he had reached the age of thirty. Of the value of this prolonged period of study he himself was fully cognisant. "Do you not know," he asks in the seventh chapter, "how Sa'di attained to rank? Neither did he traverse the plains nor journey across the seas. In his youth he lived under the yoke of the wise: God granted him distinction in after-life. And it is not long before he

who is submissive in obedience exercises command.” No better example of the truth of this passage could be cited than that afforded by his own case.

On leaving Baghdad, he went in company with his tutor, Abdul Qadir Gilani, on a pilgrimage to Mecca. This was the first of many travels extending over a period of thirty years, in the course of which he visited Europe, India, and practically every part of what are known as the Near and Middle East. A trip through Syria and Turkey is specifically mentioned in this book as inspiring the composition of the *Bustan*. Not wishing, as he tells us, to return empty handed to his friends at Shiraz, he built the Palace of Wealth, and offered it to them as a gift. He does not conceal the high opinion which he himself placed upon this product of his gifted pen. The gracefully worded phrases with which he predicted the undying popularity of the *Gulistan* find a parallel in the dedication of the *Bustan* to Atabak Abu Bakr-bin-Sad, the illustrious monarch of Persia beneath whose protection Sa’di spent the latter half of his life.

“Although not wishing to sing the praises of kings,” he writes, “I have dedicated this book to one so that perhaps the pious will say that Sa’di, who surpassed all in eloquence, lived in the time of Abu Bakr Sad.” Then, addressing the king, he adds: “Happy is your fortune that Sa’di’s date coincides with yours, for as long as the moon and sun are in the skies your memory will remain eternal in this book.” This conceit is pardonable, since it has been amply justified by time.

After the thirty years of travel, Sa'di, becoming elderly, settled down in Persia, where, as has been said, he gained the favour of the ruling prince, from whom he derived not only the dignity and the more tangible advantages of the post of Poet Laureate, but his takhallus, or titular name, of Sa'di. He died at the ripe age of 116, and was buried in his native city.

If the *Bustan* were the only monument that remained of his genius, his name would assuredly still be inscribed in the roll of the Immortals. One feature of his great intellectual faculties needs to be emphasized, and all the more so because it is apt to be overlooked. That is the increasing power which they assumed as he advanced in years, the truth of which can be understood when it is stated that he composed the *Bustan* at the age of 82, the *Gulistan* appearing twelve months later. Few, if any, instances of such sustained mental activity are to be found elsewhere in the entire world's history of letters.

Under the several headings of the various chapters a wide range of ethical subjects is discussed, the whole forming a compendium of moral philosophy the broad principles of which must remain for all time as irrefutable as the precepts of Scriptural teaching.

Sa'di's spiritual message is not that of a visionary. His religion was an eminently practical one—he had no sympathies with the recluse and the ascetic. To fulfil one's duties toward one's fellow men is to fulfil

one's duty toward the Deity. That is the root-idea of his teachings. "Religion," he observes, "consists only in the service of the people: it does not lie in the rosary, or prayer-rug, or mendicant's habit."

This couplet, occurring in the opening chapter, is put into the mouth of a certain pious man whom one of the kings of Persia is said to have visited in a repentant mood for the purpose of seeking counsel. The story, like many others in the book, may or may not have any foundation in fact, "the histories of ancient kings," which the poet frequently quotes as his authority, being rather too vague to be convincing. At the same time, the historical allusions form an interesting and instructive background to the legends and the moral precepts so abundantly interwoven among them.

Although Persia is only yet in the process of readjusting her ideas of government and the prerogatives of rulers, principles more advanced than seem compatible with despotism have been for many centuries current among her people, in theory, at least, if not in practice. Muhammad said that a little practice with much knowledge was better than much practice with little knowledge. On that ground Persia has defence, for the knowledge certainly was there. What could better describe the true relationship between king and people than Sa'di's thirteenth-century epigram?—

*Subjects are as the root and the king is as the tree,
And the tree, O son, gains strength from the root.*

Not many months ago the autocratic tree at Teheran was rudely severed from its root; perchance the successors of Abu Bakr were not of those to whom "the words of Sa'di are agreeable." The saving grace of benevolence is illustrated in the second chapter by means of some entertaining anecdotes, of two of which the hero is Hatim Tai, the famous Arabian chief, whose generosity was such that he preferred to die rather than disappoint the messenger sent by a jealous king to slay him. The story of the Darwesh and the Fox is noteworthy inasmuch as it throws a much-needed light upon the Eastern interpretation of all that is implied by "qismat." It is commonly supposed that the sense of inevitability removes from the Eastern's mind the necessity for individual effort. This view is distinctly erroneous. No such pernicious doctrine is, at any rate, subscribed to by the educated classes; to the lazy and ne'er-do-well who plead Fate as their excuse, Sa'di points the moral.

After demonstrating in the two succeeding chapters the powerlessness of man to avert the decrees of Fate, and the virtues of contentment, the poet passes on to discuss the cultivation of the mind. The comparison here drawn between the human mind and a city "full of good and evil desires," of which the Ego is the Sultan and Reason the Vazier, is original and full of meaning. Despite his own much-vaunted eloquence and facility of speech, Sa'di condemns in scathing terms the man of many words, remarking poignantly that "a grain of musk is better than a heap of mud." So, too, in his opinion, is a thief better than

a backbiter, and, apropos of the gentler sex, a woman of good nature better than one of beauty. The advice to take a new wife every year cannot be regarded seriously, even though it be true that last year's almanac has lost its usefulness. More worthy of the poet is the discourse on the training of children. Nothing truer than the sentiments expressed in this poem did he ever utter, and in England today there can be few who would dispute them.

Excessive charm pervades the three concluding chapters. If that bigotry and spirit of intolerance of which the Mussulman, no less than the followers of other creeds, is guilty is revealed in no small measure, criticism on that score must give place to wonder and admiration for the sincere and fervid homage which the poet renders to the Deity whom, in the essence, all nations worship.

The narrative, in the eighth chapter, of Sa'di's adventure with the idolaters in Guzerat will be found amusing as well as enlightening.

Nothing now remains for the translator but to join with Sa'di in his plea for indulgent criticism:

*Never have I heard it said
The wise found fault with what they read.
Though of Chinese cloth a robe be made,
Inside must a cotton lining be laid.
If you would but the cloth, seek not to condemn—
Gloss over the cotton with acumen.*

*On the Day of Judgment the wicked will be
Forgiven, through them that have purity.
If in my words you evil find,
Do likewise, forgive, for more is behind.
If a word in a thousand suit your taste,
Do not denounce the rest in haste.*

The poet goes on to remark that his compositions are esteemed in Persia as is the choicest musk of Tartary: the translator is less fortunate and more modest.

A. H. E.
1911

THE LIFE OF SA'DI

After the passage of more than 700 years, it is difficult to assemble a trustworthy biography of Sheikh Muslih-uddin Sa'di Shirazi. The tales that appear in his two celebrated works, the *Bustan or the Orchard of Sa'di* and the *Gulistan or the Rose Garden of Sa'di*, provide brief personal recollections. Some scholars have used these recollections to reconstruct Sa'di's biography. However, it is impossible to know if these tales are genuine accounts, or are inventions of the author intended for entertainment and edification, or are something in between. Doubtless they are an unreliable source for the details of Sa'di's life.

We do not know for certain when he was born. Scholars have never agreed on a date. According to tradition he was born between 1184 and 1185 CE. More recent scholarship places his birth in the early 13th century CE, perhaps as late as 1219. Scholars do agree that he died in or around 1292. If he was born in 1184, he enjoyed an unusually long life, dying at an improbable 108 years of age.

Sa'di was born in the city of Shiraz, which served as the capital of the southern province of Fars, a part of the Khwarezmian Empire that ruled a territory corresponding roughly with the geographical description of Greater Iran.

Sa'di's life coincides with the Mongol invasion and subjugation of both the Khwarezmian Empire and

the neighboring Abbasid Empire. The century-long devastation and dislocation wrought on the Muslim world by the invading Mongol armies is hardly comprehensible today. Yet its effects are still much evident, as the Muslim world, arguably at its cultural height prior to the invasion, never healed from this wound. The confidence that marked the rapid ascension of Muslim civilization never recovered. This was especially true after the destruction of Baghdad by the Mongols in 1258 in which as many as a million inhabitants of the city were put to the sword. Yet it was during these terrible and turbulent times that Sa'di thrived, and so too did his contemporary Jalal-ad-Din Rumi, author of the deservedly famous *Mathnawi*, considered the most important work of Sufi literature.

By about 1220 CE, Sa'di completed his early education in Shiraz. He then attended the Nizamiyah Academy in Baghdad. Sa'di, was Persian by birth, but in Baghdad he acquired his familiarity and fluency with the Arabic language and its tales and traditions. After concluding his studies Sa'di left Baghdad, but did not yet return to Shiraz. For many years Sa'di traveled, sometimes in the company of Sufi dervishes. Based again on the unsteady testimony of the *Bustan* and *Gulistan*, he refers to his travels from North Africa to Arabia, from Central Asia to India. Whether Sa 'di journeyed as far as India, we know at least that Sa'di traveled. We know that he was away from Shiraz possibly for several decades and did not return until 1256. He settled down at last from years of wander-

ing and put pen to paper recounting what his travels taught him. Shiraz had not been devastated by the Mongols; the city's ruler had wisely offered them submission and tribute, and the city was spared.

Upon his return to Shiraz, Sa'di was warmly welcomed by the ruler of the city, Atabak Abubakr Sa'd ibn Zangy, for whom Sa'di composed several panegyrics. Sa'di completed the *Bustan* in 1257 and the *Gulistan* in 1258. The completion of the *Gulistan* coincided with the sack of Baghdad by the Mongols. Unlike Shiraz, Baghdad, under the weakened Abbasid Caliphate, had unwisely chosen to fight the invaders.

While Sa'di wrote many panegyrics and hundreds of quatrains and sonnets, he is best known for the *Bustan* and the *Gulistan*. The didactic style of both works was in keeping with Sa'di's wish to provide a "mirror for princes," practical and corrective moral and ethical guidance for his benefactors. While other poets had certainly written didactic works, Sa'di is considered to have excelled his predecessors with his open and friendly style and simple, though not simplistic, diction. Sa'di does not merely recount amusing tales that support proverbs and morals, he makes the reader forget that he's being taught something; the medicine of Sa'di's verse is honeyed.

David Rosenbaum
2009

**THE BUSTAN
OR ORCHARD OF SA'DI**

IN THE NAME OF GOD,
THE COMPASSIONATE, THE MERCIFUL

In the name of Him Who created and sustains the world, the Sage Who endowed tongue with speech.

He attains no honor who turns the face from the door of His mercy.

The kings of the earth prostrate themselves before Him in supplication.

He seizes not in haste the disobedient, nor drives away the penitent with violence. The two worlds are as a drop of water in the ocean of His knowledge.

He withholds not His bounty though His servants sin; upon the surface of the earth has He spread a feast in which both friend and foe may share.

Peerless He is, and His kingdom is eternal. Upon the head of one He places a crown, another he hurls from the throne to the ground.

The fire of His friend He turns into a flower garden; through the water of the Nile He sends His foes to perdition.

Behind the veil He sees all, and conceals our faults with His own goodness.

He is near to them that are downcast, and accepts the prayers of them that lament.

He knows of the things that exist not, of secrets that are untold.

He causes the moon and the sun to revolve, and spreads water upon the earth.

In the heart of a stone has He placed a jewel; from nothing has He created all that is.

Who can reveal the secret of His qualities; what eye can see the limits of His beauty?

The bird of thought cannot soar to the height of His presence, nor the hand of understanding reach to the skirt of His praise.

Think not, O Sa'di, that one can walk in the road of purity except in the footsteps of Muhammad.

He is the patriarch of the prophets, the guide of the path of salvation; the mediator of mankind, and the chief of the Court of Judgment. What of your praises can Sa'di utter? The mercy of God be upon you, O Prophet, and peace!

ON THE REASON FOR THE WRITING OF THIS BOOK

I traveled in many regions of the globe and passed the days in the company of many men. I reaped advantages in every corner, and gleaned an ear of corn from every harvest. But I saw none like the pious and devout men of Shiraz—upon which land be the grace of God—my attachment with whom drew away my heart from Syria and Turkey.

I regretted that I should go from the garden of the world empty-handed to my friends, and reflected: “Travelers bring sugar-candy from Egypt as a present to their friends. Although I have no candy, yet have I words that are sweeter. The sugar that I bring is not that which is eaten, but what knowers of truth take away with respect.”

When I built this Palace of Wealth, I furnished it with ten doors of instruction.

It was in the year 655 that this famous treasury became full of the pearls of eloquence. A quilted robe of silk, or of Chinese embroidery, must of necessity be padded with cotton; if you obtain any part of the silk, do not fret—be generous and conceal the cotton. I have heard that in the day of Hope and Fear the Merciful One will pardon the evil for the sake of the good. If you see evil in my words, do the same. If one couplet among a thousand pleases you, generously withhold your fault-finding.

Assuredly, my compositions are esteemed in Persia as the priceless musk of Khutan. Sa'di brings roses

to the garden with mirth. His verses are like dates encrusted with sugar—when opened a precious stone is revealed inside.

**CONCERNING ATABAK ABU BAKR,
SON OF SAD**

Although not desiring to write in praise of kings, I have inscribed this book to the name of a certain one so that perhaps the pious may say: "Sa'di, who surpassed all in eloquence, lived in the time of Abu Bakr, the son of Sad." Thus in this book will his memory remain so long as the moon and sun are in the skies. Beyond count are his virtues—may the world fulfill his desires, the heavens be his friend, and the Creator be his guardian.

JUSTICE AND COUNSEL

The goodness of God surpasses imagination; what service can the tongue of praise perform?

Keep, O God, this king, Abu Bakr, beneath whose shadow is the protection of the people, long established upon his throne, and make his heart to live in obedience, to You. Render fruitful his tree of hope; prolong his youth, and adorn his face with mercy.

O King! Deck not yourself in royal garments when you come to worship; make your supplications like a dervish, saying: "O, God! Powerful and strong You are. I am no monarch, but a beggar in Your court. Unless Your help sustains me, what can issue from my hand? Succor me, and give me the means of virtue, or else how can I benefit my people?"

If you rule by day, pray fervently by night. The great among your servants wait upon you at your door; thus should you serve, with your head in worship upon God's threshold.

DISCOURSE 1

Thus, when at the point of death, did Nushiravan counsel his son Hormuz:

"Cherish the poor, and seek not your own comfort. The shepherd should not sleep while the wolf is among the sheep. Protect the needy, for a king wears his crown for the sake of his subjects. The people are as the root and the king is as the tree; and the tree, O son, gains strength from the root. He should not oppress the people who has fear of injury to his king-

dom. Seek not plenteousness in that land where the people are afflicted by the king. Fear them that are proud and them that fear not God."

DISCOURSE 2

The king who deals harshly with merchants who come from afar closes the door of well-being upon the whole of his subjects. When do the wise return to the land of which they hear rumors of bad custom?

If you desire a good name, hold merchants and travelers in high esteem, for they carry your reputation through the world. Be cautious also lest, being enemies in the guise of friends, they seek your injury.

Advance the dignities of old friends, for treachery comes not from them that are cherished.

When your servant becomes stricken in years, be not unmindful of the obligations toward him. If old age binds his hand from service, the land of generosity yet remains to you.

STORY 1

There once arrived at a seaport of Arabia a man who had widely traveled and was versed in many sciences. He presented himself at the palace of the king, who was so captivated by his wisdom and knowledge that he appointed the traveler to the viziership.

With such skill did he perform the duties of that office that he offended none, and brought the kingdom completely beneath his sway. He closed the

mouths of slanderers, because nothing evil issued from his hand; and the envious, who could detect no fault in him, bemoaned their lack of opportunity to do him injury.

At the court, however, there were two beautiful young slaves toward whom the vizier displayed no small measure of affection. (If you would that your ranks endure, incline not your heart toward the fair; and though your love be innocent, have care, for there is fear of loss.)

The former vizier, who had been dismissed to make room for the newcomer, maliciously carried the story to the king.

“I know not,” he said, “who this new minister may be, but he lives not chastely in this land. I have heard that he intrigues with two of your slaves—he is a perfidious man, and lustful. It is not right that one such as he should bring ill-fame upon the court. I am not so unmindful of the favors that I have received at your hands that I should see these things and remain silent.”

Angered by what he heard, the king stealthily watched the new vizier, and when later he observed the latter glance toward one of the slaves, who returned a covert smile, his suspicion of evil became at once confirmed.

Summoning the minister to his side, he said: “I did not know you to be shameless and unworthy. Such a lofty station is not your proper place, but the fault is mine. If I cherish one who is of evil nature, assuredly do I sanction disloyalty in my house.

"Since my skirt is free from guilt," the vizier replied, "I fear not the malignity of the evil-wisher. I know not who has accused me of what I have not done."

"This was told to me by the old vizier," explained the king.

The vizier smiled and said, "Whatever he said is no cause for wonder. What would the envious man say when he saw me in his former place? Him I knew to be my enemy that day when Khasrau appointed him to a lower rank than me. Never till Doomsday will he accept me as a friend when in my promotion he sees his own decline. If you will give ear to your slave I will narrate a story that is apropos.

"In a dream someone saw the Prince of Evil, whose figure was as erect as a fir-tree and whose face was as fair as the sun. Regarding him, the sleeper said, "O splendid being! Mankind knows not of your beauty. Fearful of countenance do they imagine you, and hideous have they depicted you on the walls of the public baths. The Prince of Evil smiled, "Such is not my figure," he replied, "but the brush was in the hand of an enemy! The root of their stock did I throw out of Paradise; now in malice do they paint me ugly.

"In the same way," continued the vizier, "although my fame is good, the envious speak ill of me. Those who are guiltless are brave in speech; only he who gives false weight has fear of the inspector."

"In truth," the king exclaimed, his anger rising, "I heard this not only from your enemy. Have I not seen with my own eyes that among the assemblage of this court you regard none, but those two slaves?"

"That is true," the vizier said, "But I will explain this matter if you will listen. Do you not know that

the beggar eyes the rich with envy? Once, like those slaves, did I possess both grace and beauty. Two rows of teeth were set behind my lips, erect like a wall of ivory bricks. One by one, like ancient bridges, have they fallen—regard me now as here I stand! Why may I not glance with envy at those slaves when they recall to me the past?”

When the wise man had pierced this pearl of lustrous truth, the king exclaimed: “Better than this it would be impossible to speak. For one who can thus excuse himself, it is permissible to look upon the fair. Had I not acted wisely with deliberation, I should have wronged him through the speech of an enemy.”

To carry the hand quickly to the sword in anger is to carry the back of the hand to the teeth in regret. Heed not the words of the envious; if you act upon them, you will be remorseful.

Admonishing the slandered for his evil words, the king further increased the dignity of the vizier, who directed the affairs of the State for many years with justice and benevolence, and was long remembered for his virtues.

STORY 2

A certain just king habitually wore a coat of coarse material. Some one said to him: “O happy king! Make for yourself a coat of Chinese brocade.”

“That which I wear,” the king replied, “affords both covering and comfort; anything beyond that is luxury. I collect not tribute that I may adorn my person and my throne. If, like a woman, I ornament my

body, how, like a man, can I repulse the enemy? The royal treasuries are not for me alone—they are filled for the sake of the army, not for the purchase of ornaments and jewelry.”

STORY 3

Darius, king of Persia, became separated from his retinue while hunting. A herdsman came running toward him, and the king assuming the man to be an enemy, adjusted his bow. Thereupon the herdsman cried, “I am no enemy. Seek not to kill me. I am he who tends the king’s horses, and in this meadow am thus engaged.”

Becoming again composed, the king smiled and said, “Heaven has befriended you, otherwise would I have drawn the bowstring to my ear.”

“It shows neither wise administration nor good judgment,” replied the herdsman, “when the king knows not an enemy from a friend. Those who are greatest should know those who are least. Many times have you seen me in your presence, and asked of me concerning the horses and the grazing fields. Now that I come again before you, you take me for an enemy. More skilled am I, O king, for I can distinguish one horse out of a hundred thousand. Tend your people as I with sense and judgment tend my horses.”

Ruin brings sorrow to that kingdom where the wisdom of the shepherd exceeds that of the king.

STORY 4

The story is told of Abdul Aziz that he had a pearl of great beauty and value set in a ring. Shortly after, a severe drought occurred, causing distress among the people. Moved by compassion, the king ordered the pearl to be sold and the money that it fetched to be given to the poor.

Someone chided him for doing this, saying, "Never again will such a stone come into your hands."

Weeping, the king replied, "Ugly is an ornament upon the person of a king when the hearts of his people are distressed by want. Better for me is a stoneless ring than a sorrowing people."

Happy is he who sets the ease of others above his own. The virtuous desire not their own pleasure at the expense of others. When the king sleeps neglectfully upon his couch, I doubt that the beggar finds enviable repose.

STORY 5

Tukla, king of Persia, once visited a devotee and said, "Fruitless have been my years. None, but the beggar carries riches from the world when earthly dignitaries are passed. Hence, would I now sit in the corner of devotion that I might usefully employ the few short days that yet remain to me."

The devotee was angered at these words.

"Enough!" He cried. "Religion consists in the service of the people; it finds no place in rosaries, or prayer-rug, or tattered garment. Be a king in sover-

eignty and a devotee in purity of morals. Action, not words, is demanded by religion, for words without action are void of substance.”

DISCOURSE 3

Say not that no dignity excels that of sovereignty, for no kingdom is more free from care than that of the dervish.

They that are the most lightly burdened reach the destination first.

The poor man is afflicted by lack of bread; the king by the cares of his kingdom.

Though one may rule and another may serve, though the one be exalted to the height of Saturn and the other languish in prison, when death has claimed them it will not be possible to distinguish between the two.

STORY 6

Qazal Arsalan possessed a fort, which raised its head to the height of Alwand. Secure from all were those within its walls, for its roads were a labyrinth, like the curls of a bride.

From a learned traveler Qazal once inquired, “Did you ever, in your wanderings, see a fort as strong as this?”

“It is splendid,” was the reply, “but it does not seem to confer much strength. Before you, did not other kings possess I for a while, then pass away? After you, will not other kings assume control, and eat the fruits of the tree of your hope?”

In the estimation of the wise, the world is a false gem that passes each moment from one hand to another.

STORY 7

Such famine was there once in Damascus that lovers forgot their love. So miserly was the sky toward the earth that the sown fields and the date-trees moistened not their lips. Fountains dried up, and no water remained but the tears of the orphans. If smoke issued from a chimney, it was but the sighs of the widows. Like beggars, the trees stood leafless, and the mountains lost their verdure. The locusts devoured the gardens, and men devoured the locusts.

At that time came to me a friend on whose bones skin alone remained. I was astonished, since he was of lofty rank and rich. I said, "O friend! What misfortune has befallen you?"

"Where is your sense?" He answered. "Do you not see that the severities of famine have reached their limit? Rain comes not from the sky, neither do the lamentations of the suffering reach heaven."

"You at least," I urged, "have nothing to fear; poison kills only where there is no antidote."

Regarding me with indignation, as a learned man regards a fool, my friend replied, "Although a man be safely on the shore, he stands not supine while his friends are drowning. My face is not pale through want; the sorrows of the poor have wounded my heart. Although, praise be to God, I am free from wounds, I tremble when I see the wounds of others."

Bitter are the pleasures of him who is in health when a sick man is at his side. When the beggar has not eaten, poisonous and baneful is one's food.

STORY 8

A bully fell down a well and passed the night in wailing and lamenting. Some one threw a stone down on to his head, and said, "Did you ever go to any one's assistance that you should today cry out for help? Did you ever sow the seeds of virtue? Who would place a salve upon your wounds when the hearts of all cry out by reason of your tyrannies? Across our path you did dig a pit, into which, perforce, have you now fallen."

If you do evil expect not goodness; never does the withered grapevine bring forth fruit.

O you who sow the seed in autumn! I think not that you will reap the corn at harvest time.

If you nourish the thorn-tree of the desert, think not that you will ever eat its fruit.

Green dates come not from the poisonous colocynt; when you sow seed, hope only for the fruit of that very seed.

BENEVOLENCE

If you are wise, incline toward the essential truth, for that remains, while the things that are external pass away.

He who has neither knowledge, generosity, nor piety resembles a man in form alone. He sleeps at peace beneath the ground who made tranquil the hearts of men.

Give now of your gold and bounty, for eventually will it pass from your grasp. Open the door of your treasure today, for tomorrow the key will not be in your hands.

If you would not be distressed on the Day of Judgment, forget not them that are distressed.

Drive not the poor man empty from your door, lest you should wander before the doors of strangers.

He protects the needy who fears that he himself may become needful of the help of others.

Are you not also a supplicant? Be grateful, and turn not away those who supplicate you.

STORY 1

A woman said to her husband, "Do not buy bread from the baker in this street. Make your purchases in the market, for this man shows wheat and sells barley, and he has no customers but a swarm of flies."

"O light of my life," the husband answered, "pay no heed to his trickery. In the hope of our custom has he settled in this place, and it would not be humane to deprive him of his profits."

Follow the path of the righteous, and, if you stand upon your feet, stretch out your hand to them that are fallen.

STORY 2

The wife of an officer of a king said to her husband, "Arise, and go to the royal palace, that they may give you food, for your children are in want."

"The kitchen is closed today," he answered. "Last night the Sultan resolved to fast awhile."

In the despair of hunger, the woman bowed her head and murmured, "What does the Sultan seek from his fasting when his breaking the fast means a festival of joy for our children?"

One who eats so that good may follow is better than a Mammon worshipper who continually fasts. Proper it is to fast with him who feeds the needy in the morning.

STORY 3

A certain man had generosity without the means of displaying it; his pittance was unequal to his benevolence. (May riches never fall to the mean, nor poverty be the lot of the generous!). His charity exceeding the depth of his pocket, therefore was he always short of money.

One day a poor man wrote to him saying, "O, you of happy nature! Assist me with funds, since for some time have I languished in prison."

The generous man would have willingly acceded to the request, but he possessed not so much as the smallest piece of money. He sent someone to the creditors of the prisoner with the message, "Free this man for a few days, and I will be his security."

Then did he visit the prisoner in his cell and say, "Arise, and fly with haste from the city."

When a sparrow sees the door of its cage open, it tarries not a moment. Like the morning breeze, the prisoner flew from the land. Thereupon, they seized his benefactor, saying, "Produce either the man or the money."

Powerless to do either, he went to prison, for a bird escaped is never recaptured. Long there did he remain, invoking help from none, nor complaining, though he slept not at nights through restlessness.

A pious man came to him and said, "I did not think that you were dishonest; why are you here imprisoned?"

"No villainy have I committed," he replied. "I saw a helpless man in bonds and his freedom only in my own confinement. I did not deem it right that I should live in comfort while another was fettered by the legs." Eventually he died, leaving a good name behind.

Happy is he whose name dies not! He who sleeps beneath the earth with a heart that lives is better than he who lives with a soul that is dead, for the former remains forever.

STORY 4

In a desert, a man found a dog that was dying from thirst. Using his hat as a bucket, he fetched water from a well and gave it to the helpless animal. The prophet of the time stated that God had forgiven the man his sins because of his kindly act.

Reflect, if you are a tyrant, and make a profession of benevolence.

He who shows kindness to a dog will not do less toward the good among his fellows.

Be generous to the extent of your power. If you have not dug a well in the desert, at least place a lamp in a shrine.

Charity distributed from an ox's skin that is filled with treasure counts for less than a dinar given from the wages of toil.

Every man's burden is suited to his strength—
heavy to the ant is the foot of the locust.

Do good to others so that on the morrow God may not deal harshly with you.

Be lenient with your slave, for he may one day become a king, like a pawn that becomes a queen.

STORY 5

A poor man complained of his distressed condition to one who was rich but ill-tempered. The latter refused to help him, and turned roughly upon him in anger.

The beggar's heart bled by reason of this violence. "Strange!" he reflected, "that this rich man should be of such forbidding countenance! Perhaps he fears not the bitterness of begging."

The rich man ordered his slave to drive the beggar away. As a result of his ingratitude for the blessings that he enjoyed, Fortune left him, and he lost all that he possessed. His slave passed into the hands of a generous man of enlightened mind, who was as gladdened at the sight of a beggar as the latter is at the sight of riches.

One night a beggar asked alms of the latter, and he commanded his slave to give the man to eat. When the slave involuntarily uttered a cry, and went back weeping.

His master asked, "Why these tears?"

"My heart is grieved at the plight of this unfortunate old man," the slave replied. "Once was he the owner of much wealth, and I his slave."

The master smiled and said, "This is not cause for grief, O son. Time, in its revolutions, is not unjust. Was not that indigent man formerly a merchant who carried his head high in the air through pride? I am he whom that day he drove from his door. Fate has now put him in the place that I then occupied. Heaven befriended me and washed the dust of sorrow from my face. Though God, in His wisdom, closed one door, another, in His mercy, did He open."

Many a needy man has become sated, and many a rich man has gone unsatisfied.

STORY 6

Someone saw a fox that was bereft of the use of its legs. He was wondering how the animal managed to live in this condition when a tiger drew near with a jackal in its claws. The tiger ate the jackal, and the fox finished the remains. The next day also did the Omnipotent Provider send the fox its daily meal.

The eyes of the man were thus opened to the light of true knowledge. "After this," he reflected, "I will sit in a corner like an ant, for the elephant's portion is not gained by reason of its strength."

So did he sit in silence, waiting for his daily food to come from the Invisible. No one heeded him, and soon was he reduced to skin and bones. When, at last, his senses had almost gone through weakness, a voice came out from the wall of a mosque, saying:

"Go, O false one! Be the rending tiger and pose not as a paralytic fox. Exert yourself like the tiger, so that something may remain from your spoil. Why, like the fox, appease your hunger with leaving? Eat of the fruits of your own endeavors; strive like a man, and relieve the wants of the needy."

Seize, O youth, the hand of the aged; fall not yourself, saying, "Hold my hand." In the two worlds does he obtain reward who does good to the people of God.

STORY 7

In the remote regions of Turkey, there lived a good and pious man, whom I and some fellow-travellers once visited. He received us cordially, and seated us

with respect. He had vineyards, and wheat-fields, slaves and gold, but was miserly as a leafless tree. His feelings were warm, but his fireplace was cold. He passed the night awake in prayer, and we in hunger. In the morning he girt his loins and recommenced the same politeness of the previous night.

One of our party was of merry wit and temper. "Come, give us food in change for a kiss," he said, "for that is better to a hungry man. In serving me, place not your hand upon my shoe, but give me bread and strike your shoe upon my head."

Excellence is attained by generosity, not by vigils in the night.

Idle words are a hollow drum; invocations without merit are a weak support.

STORY 8

Hatim Tai possessed a horse whose fleetness was as that of the morning breeze. Of this was the Sultan of Turkey informed.

"Like Hatim Tai," he was told, "none is equal in generosity; like his horse, nothing is equal in speed and gait. As a ship in the sea it traverses the desert, while the eagle, exhausted, lags behind."

"From Hatim will I request that horse." The king replied. "If he is generous and gives it to me, then shall I know that his fame is true; if not, that it is but the sound of a hollow drum."

So he dispatched a messenger with ten followers to Hatim. They alighted at the house of the Arab chief, who prepared a feast and killed a horse in their honor.

On the following day, when the messenger explained the object of his mission, Hatim became as one mad with grief. "Why," he cried, "did you not give me your message before? That swift-paced horse did I roast last night for you to eat. No other means had I to entertain you; that horse alone stood by my tent, and I would not that my guests should sleep fasting."

To the men he gave money and splendid robes, and when the news of his generosity reached to Turkey, the king showered a thousand praises upon his nature.

STORY 9

One of the kings of Yemen was renowned for his liberality, yet the name of Hatim was never mentioned in his presence without his falling into a rage. "How long," he would ask, "will you speak of that vain man, who possesses neither a kingdom, nor power, nor wealth?"

On one occasion he prepared a royal feast, which the people were invited to attend. Someone began to speak of Hatim, and another to praise him. Envious, the king dispatched a man to slay the Arabian chief, reflecting, "So long as Hatim lives, my name will never become famous.

The messenger departed, and traveled far seeking for Hatim that he might kill him. As he went along the road a youth came out to meet him. He was handsome and wise, and showed friendliness toward the messenger, whom he took to his house to pass the night. Such liberality did he shower upon his guest

that the heart of the evil-minded one was turned to goodness.

In the morning the generous youth kissed his hand and said, "Remain with me for a few days."

I am unable to tarry here," replied the messenger, "for urgent business is before me."

"If you will entrust me with your secret," said the youth, "I will spare no effort to aid you."

"O generous man!" was the reply, "give ear to me, for I know that the generous are concealers of secrets. Perhaps in this country you know Hatim, who is of lofty mind and noble qualities. The king of Yemen desires his head, though I know not what enmity has arisen between them. I shall be grateful if you will direct me to where he is. This hope from your kindness do I entertain, O friend!"

The youth laughed and said, "I am Hatim, see here my head! Strike it from my body with your sword. I would not that harm should befall you, or that you should fall in your endeavor."

Throwing aside his sword, the man fell on the ground and kissed the dust of Hatim's feet. "If I injured a hair on your body," he cried, "I should no longer be a man." So saying, he clasped Hatim to his breast and took his way back to Yemen.

"Come," said the king as the man approached, "what news have you? Why did you not tie his head to your saddle-straps? Perhaps that famous one attacked you and you were too weak to engage in combat."

The messenger kissed the ground and said, "O wise and just king! I found Hatim, and saw him to be generous and full of wisdom, and in courage superior to myself. My back was bent by the burden of his favors; with the sword of kindness and bounty he killed me."

When he had related all that he had seen of Hatim's generosity, the king uttered praises upon the family of the Arab chief and rewarded the messenger with gold.

STORY 10

A certain man, in the ceiling of whose house some bees had built their hives, asked his wife for a butcher's knife so that he might destroy them. "Do not do so," the woman said, "for then the poor creatures will be greatly distressed when turned out of their homes."

Accordingly, the foolish man left the bees in peace.

One day the woman was stung by one of the insects and stood wailing on the doorstep. Hearing her cries the husband left his shop and hurried toward the house. Angered, he said, "O, wife! Show not such a bitter face to the world; remember you did say to me, 'Kill not the poor bees.'"

How can one do good to the evil? Forbearance with the wicked but increases their iniquity.

What is a dog that a dish of viands should be set before him? Command that they should give him bones. A kicking animal is best well-burdened.

If the night watchman displays humanity, no one sleeps at night for fear of thieves.

In the battlefield, the spear shaft is worth more than a hundred thousand sugarcanes.

When you rear a cat, she destroys your pigeons; when you make fat a wolf, he rends one who is dear to you.

Raise not a building that has not a strong foundation; if you do, beware.

DISCOURSE

Protect him whose father is dead; remove the dust from his raiment, and injure him not. You know not how hard is his condition; no foliage is there on a rootless tree. Give not a kiss to a child of your own in the sight of a helpless orphan. If the latter weep, who will assuage his grief? If he is angered, who will bear his burden? See that he weeps not, for the throne of God trembles at the orphan's lament. With pity, wipe the tears from his eyes and the dust from his face. If the protecting shadow of his father's care is gone, cherish him beneath the shadow of your care.

Upon my head was a kingly crown when it reposed upon the bosom of my father. Then, if a fly settled upon my body, many were distressed on my behalf. Now, should I be taken in captivity, not one among my friends would come to aid me. Well, do I know the orphan's sorrow, for my father departed in my childhood.

LOVE

Happy are the days of those infatuated by love for Him, whether sorrowed by separation from Him or made joyous by His presence.

They are mendicants who fly from worldly sovereignty; in the hope of meeting Him they are patient in their mendicancy. Often have they drunk of the wine of anguish; if bitter, they remain silent. In the remembrance of Him patience is not bitter, for wormwood is sweet from the hand of a friend.

Those captive in the coils of His love, seek not to escape; they suffer reproach, but are monarchs in the seclusion of their mendication, and their way is not known. They are like the temple of Jerusalem, splendid of which is the interior, but whose outer wall is left in ruin.

Like moths, they burn themselves in the fire of love. Their Beloved is in their breasts, yet do they seek Him; though near a fountain, their lips are parched.

DISCOURSE

Your love renders you impatient and disturbed. With such sincerity have you placed your head at her feet that you are oblivious to the world.

When in the eyes of your beloved riches count not, gold and dust are as one to you.

You say that she dwells in your eyes—if they are closed, she is in your mind.

If she demands your life, you place it in her hand; if she holds a sword to your neck, you stretch your head forward.

When earthly love produces such confusion and such obedience, do you wonder if travelers on the road of God remain engulfed in the Ocean of Reality?

In the remembrance of their Friend they have turned their backs upon the world; they are so fascinated by the Cup-bearer that they have spilled the wine.

No medicine can cure them, for no one has knowledge of their pains.

With their cries of longing do they root up a mountain; with their sighs they dismember a kingdom.

Such is their weeping at dawn that the tears wash the sand of sleep from their eyes. Night and day are they immersed in the sea of love; so distracted are they that they know not night from day.

So enamored are they of the beauty of the Painter that they care not for the beauty of His designs.

He drinks of the pure wine of Unity who is forgetful of both this world and the next.

STORY 1

I have heard that, at the singing of a musician, one of fairy-face began to dance. Surrounded by distracted hearts, the flame of a candle caught her skirt. She was distressed and angered.

One of her lovers said, "Why agitate yourself? The fire has burned your skirt—it has entirely consumed the harvest of my life."

STORY 2

One who loved God set his face toward the desert. His father, being grieved at his absence, neither ate nor slept.

Someone admonished the son, who said, "Since my Friend has claimed me as His own, no other friendship do I own. When He revealed to me His beauty, all else that I saw appeared as shadows."

They that love Him care for no one else; their senses are confused and their ears are deaf to the words of them that reproach.

They wander through the desert of Divine Knowledge without a caravan.

They have no hope of approbation from their fellow-men, for they are the chosen of the elect of God.

STORY 3

An old man begged at the door of a mosque. Someone said to him, "This is not the place to beg; stand not here with impudence."

"What house is this," the man inquired, "from which no pity comes upon the condition of the poor?"

"Silence!" was the reply. "What foolish words are these! This is the house of our Master!"

The beggar raised a cry, "Alas," he said, "that I should be disappointed at this door. I have not gone hopeless from any street; why should I go thus from the door of God? Here will I stretch forth my hand of want, for I know that I shall not depart empty-handed."

For a year he remained devoutly employed in the mosque. One night, through weakness, his heart began to palpitate, and at daybreak his last breath flickered like a morning lamp. Thus did he exclaim with joy; "And whoever knocked at the door of the Bounteous One, it opened."

He who seeks God should be patient and enduring; I have not heard of an alchemist being sad. Much gold he reduces to ashes so that he may one day turn copper into gold. Gold is good with which to buy—and what could you wish to buy better than the face of your Friend?

STORY 4

An old man spent the night in worship and the morning in prayer. A guardian angel whispered to him, "Go, take your way, for your prayers are not acceptable at this door."

The next night again he passed the night in devotion, and a disciple, being informed of his circumstances said, "When you see that the door is shut, why do you thus exert yourself?"

Weeping, he replied, "O, my son! Do you suppose that although He has torn my reins I shall keep my hands from off His saddle-straps? When a supplicant is repelled at one door, what is his fear if he knows of another?"

While thus he spoke, with his head upon the ground, the angel uttered this message in his ears, "Although there is no merit in him, his prayers are accepted, for except Me, he has no refuge."

STORY 5

Some one found fault with the king of Ghazani, saying, "Ayaz, his favorite slave, possesses no beauty. It is strange that a nightingale should love a rose that has neither color nor perfume."

This was told to Mahmud, who said, "My love, O sir, is for virtue, not for form or stature."

I have heard that in a narrow pass a camel fell and a chest of pearls was broken. The king gave the signal for plunder, and urged on his horse with speed. The horsemen did likewise, and, leaving the king behind, gathered up the pearls. Not one of them remained near the king except Ayaz." O you of curly locks!" said Mahmud, "What have you gained of the plunder?"

"Nothing," he replied. "I walked in haste behind you, I do not occupy myself with riches away from your service."

If an honorable place in the court is yours, be not neglectful of the king because of gain elsewhere.

STORY 6

A village chief passed with his son through the center of the imperial army. In the presence of such pomp and splendor the man displayed humility and fled, through fear, into a corner.

"After all," observed the son, "you are a village chief, and of higher position than the nobles. Why do you tremble like a willow tree?"

"True," replied the father. I am a chief and a ruler, but my honor lies as far as my village."

Thus, are the saints overwhelmed with fear when they stand in the court of their King.

STORY 7

Perhaps you have seen the firefly shine like a lamp in the garden at night.

“O night-illuminating moth!” someone said, “Why do you not come in the daytime?”

The firefly gave an answer full of wisdom, “Because I am not visible before the sun.”

STORY 8

Someone said to a moth, “Go, you contemptible creature, and make friendship with one worthy of yourself. Go where you see the path of hope. How different is your love from that of the candle! You are not a salamander—hover not around the fire, for bravery is necessary before combat. It is not compatible with reason that you should acknowledge as a friend one whom you know to be your enemy.”

“What does it matter if I burn?” The moth replied. “I have love in my heart, and this flame is as a flower to me. Not of my own accord do I throw myself into the fire; the chain of her love is upon my neck. Who is it that finds fault with my friendship of my friend? I am content to be slain at her feet. I burn because she is dear to me, and because my destruction may affect her. Say not to the helpless man from whose hands the rein have fallen, ‘Drive slowly.’”

STORY 9

One night, as I lay awake, I heard a moth say to a candle, "I am your lover; if I burn, it is proper. Why do you weep?"

The candle replied, "O, my friend! Love is not your business. You fly from before a flame; I stand erect until I am entirely consumed. If the fire of love has burned your wings, regard me, who from head to foot must be destroyed."

Before the night had passed, someone put the candle out, exclaiming, "Such is the end of love!"

Grieve not over the grave of one who lost his life for his friend; be glad of heart, for he was the chosen of Him.

If you are a lover, wash not your head of the sickness of love; like Sa'di, wash your hands of selfishness.

A devoted lover holds not back his hand from the object of his affections though arrows and stones may rain upon his head.

Be cautious; if you go down to the sea, give yourself up to the storm.

HUMILITY

You, O creature of God, were created of the dust; therefore, be humble as the dust. Be not covetous, nor oppressive, nor headstrong. You are from the dust; be not like fire. When the terrible fire raised his head in pride, the dust prostrated himself in humility.

And since the fire was arrogant and the dust was meek, from the former was formed Iblis, and from the latter Adam.

STORY 1

A raindrop fell from a spring cloud, and, seeing the wide expanse of the sea, was shamed. "Where the sea is," it reflected, "where am I? Compared with that, truly I am extinct."

While thus regarding itself with an eye of contempt, an oyster took it to its bosom, and Fate so shaped its course that eventually the raindrop became a famous royal pearl.

It was exalted, for it was humble. Knocking at the door of extinction, it became existent.

STORY 2

A sagacious youth of noble family landed at a seaport of Turkey, and, as he displayed piety and wisdom, his baggage was deposited in a mosque.

One day the priest said to him, "Sweep away the dust and rubbish from the mosque."

Immediately, the young man went away and no one saw him there again. Thus, did the elder and his followers suppose he did not care to serve.

The next day, a servant of the mosque met him on the road and said, "You did act wrongly in your perverse judgment. Know you not, O conceited youth, that men are dignified by service?"

Sorrowfully, the youth began to weep. "O soul-cherishing and heart-illuminating friend!" he answered. "I saw no dirt or rubbish in that holy place but my own corrupt self. Therefore, I retraced my steps, for a mosque is better cleansed from such."

Humility is the only ritual for a devotee. If you desire greatness, be humble; no other ladder is there by which to climb.

STORY 3

When Bayazid was coming from his bath one morning during the Eid festival, someone unwittingly emptied a tray of ashes from a window upon his head. With his face and turban dirtied, he rubbed his hands in gratitude and said, "I am in truth worthy of the fires of hell. Why should I be angered by a few ashes?"

The great do not regard themselves; look not for godliness in a self-conceited man. Eminence does not consist in outward show and vaunting words, nor dignity in hauteur and pretension.

On the Day of Judgment you will see in Paradise him who sought truth and rejected vain pretension.

He who is headstrong and obdurate falls headlong; if you desire greatness, abandon pride.

DISCOURSE 1

Expect not he who is possessed of worldly vanities to follow the path of religion, nor look for godliness in him who wallows in conceit.

If you desire dignity, do not, like the mean, regard others with contemptuous eyes.

Seek no position more honorable than that of being known to the world as a man of laudable character.

You think him not great who, being of equal rank, is haughty toward you; when you make a similar display before others, do you not appear before them as the arrogant appear before you?

If you are eminent, laugh not, if you are wise, at them that are lowly. Many have fallen from high whose places have been taken by the fallen.

Though you may be free from defect, do not revile me for my blemishes.

One holds the chain of the Ka'ba temple in his hands; another lies drunken in the tavern. If God calls the latter, who can drive him away. If He expels the former, who can bring him back? The one cannot implore the divine help by reason of his good deeds, nor is the door of repentance closed upon the other.

STORY 4

A poorly clad doctor of law and divinity sat one day in the front row of seats in a Ghazi's court. The Ghazi gave him a sharp look, whereupon the usher took the man by the arm and said, "Get up; do you not know that the best place is not for such as you? Either take a lower seat, or remain standing, or leave the court

altogether. Be not so bold as to occupy the seat of the great. If you are humble, pose not as a lion. Not every one is worthy of the chief seat; honor is proportionate to rank, and rank to merit.”

He who sits with honor in a place lower than that of which he is worthy falls not into ignominy from eminence.

Fuming with anger, the doctor moved to a lower seat. Two advocates in the court then entered into a spirited discussion, and flew at each other with their tongues like fighting-cocks with beak and claw. They were involved in a complicated knot that neither could unravel. From the last row of seats the tattered doctor roared out with the voice of a lion in the forest:

“It is not the veins of the neck that should stand out in argument,” he said, “but the proofs, which should be full of meaning. I, too, have the faculty of argument.”

“Speak on,” they answered.

With the quill of eloquence that he possessed, the doctor engraved his words upon the minds of his listeners like inscriptions on a signet; and, drawing his pen through the letters of pretension, he invoked applause from every corner. So hard did he drive the steed of speech that the Ghazi lagged behind like an ass in the mire. Removing his cloak and turban, the latter sent them to the doctor as a token of his respect.

“Alas!” he said, “I did not discern your merit, nor welcome you on your arrival. I regret to see you in the condition with such a stock of knowledge.”

The usher then approached the stranger courteously in order that he might place the Ghazi’s turban upon his head. But the doctor repelled him with his hands and tongue, saying:

“Place not upon my head the fetters of pride, for tomorrow this fifty-yarded turban would turn my head from those in jaded garb. Those who called me ‘lord’ and ‘chief’ would then appear insignificant in my eyes. Is pure water different whether it is contained in a goblet of gold or an earthen ewer? A man’s head requires brain and intellect, not an imposing turban. A big head does not make one worthy; it is like the gourd, void of kernel. Be not proud because of your turban and beard, for the one is cotton and the other grass. One should aim at the degree of eminence that is comfortable with one’s merit. With all this intellect, I will not call you man, though a hundred slaves walk behind you. How well spoke the shell when a greedy fool picked it out of the mire: ‘None will buy me for the smallest price; be not so insane as to wrap me up in silk.’ A man is not better than his fellows by reason of his wealth, for an ass, though covered with a satin cloth, is still an ass.”

In this way the clever doctor washed the rancor from his heart with the water of words. Thus do those who are aggrieved speak harshly. Be not idle when your enemy has fallen. Dash out his brains when you are able, for delay will efface the grudge from your mind.

So overcome was the Ghazi by his vehemence that he exclaimed, "Verily, this day is a hard one." He bit his fingers in amazement, and his eyes stared at the doctor like the two stars near the pole of the lesser bear. As for the latter, he went abruptly out and was never seen there again. They in the court clamored to know whence such an impertinent fellow had come. An official went in search of him, and ran in all directions, asking whether a man of that description had been seen. Someone said, "We know no one in this city so eloquent as Sa'di."

A hundred thousand praises to him who said so; see how sweetly he uttered the bitter truth!

STORY 5

A man of smiling countenance sold honey, captivating the hearts of all by his pleasant manner. His customers were as numerous as flies around the sugar cane—if he had sold poison people would have bought it for honey.

A forbidding looking man regarded him with envy, being jealous of the way his business prospered. One day he paraded the town with a tray of honey on his head and a scowl on his face. He wandered about crying his wares, but no one evinced a desire to buy. At nightfall, having earned no money, he went and sat dejectedly in a corner, with a face as bitter as that of a sinner fearful of retribution. The wife of one of his neighbors jokingly remarked, "Honey is bitter to one of sour temper."

It is wrong to eat bread at the table of one whose face is as wrinkled with frowns as the cloth on which it is served.

O sir! Add not to your own burdens, for an evil temper brings disaster in its train.

If you have not a sweet tongue like Sa'di, you have neither gold nor silver.

STORY 6

I have heard that a debased drunkard caught a pious man by the collar. The latter received his blows in silence, and in forbearance lifted not his head.

A passerby remarked, "Are you not a man? It is a pity to be patient with this ignorant fellow."

The pious man replied, "Speak not thus to me. A foolish drunkard collars one by the neck in the thought that he is fighting with a lion; there is not fear that a learned man will contend with an inebriated fool."

The virtuous follow this rule in life—when they suffer oppression they display kindness.

STORY 7

A dog bit the leg of a hermit with such violence that venom dropped from its teeth, and the poor man could not sleep all night through pain.

His little daughter chided him, saying, "Have you not teeth as well?"

The unfortunate parent wept and then smilingly replied, "Dear child! Although I was stronger than

the dog, I restrained my anger. Should I receive a sword-blow on the head, I could not apply my teeth to the legs of a dog.”

One can revenge oneself upon the mean, but a man cannot act like a dog.

STORY 8

An eminent man, famous for his many virtues, possessed a slave of evil disposition, who in ugliness of feature surpassed every one in the city. He closely attended his master at meal times, but he would not have given a drop of water to a dying man. Neither reproof nor the rod influenced him; the house was in a constant state of disorder through him. Sometimes, in his bad temper, would he litter the paths with thorns and rubbish; at other times, throw the chickens down the well. His unhappy temperament was written on his face, and never did he perform a task successfully.

Someone asked his master, “What is there that you like in this slave—his agreeable manners, or his skill, or beauty? Surely, it is not worth while to keep such an unruly knave and burden yourself with such an affliction. I will procure for you a slave of handsome appearance and good character. Take this one to the slave-market and sell him. If a piece is offered for him, do not refuse it, for he would be dear at that.”

The good-natured man smiled and said, “O friend! Although the character of my slave is certainly bad, my character is improved by him, for when I have learned to tolerate his manner I shall be able to put

up with anything at the hands of others. It was not humane to sell him and thus make known his faults. And it is better to endure his affliction myself than to pass him on to others.”

Accept for yourself what you would accept for others. If distressed yourself, involve not your fellows.

Forbearance is at first like poison, but when ingrained in the nature it becomes like honey.

STORY 9

No one follows the path of Maruf Karkhi who does not first banish the idea of fame from his head.

A traveler once came to Maruf's house at the point of death—his life was joined to his body by a single hair. He passed the night in wailing and lamentation, sleeping not himself nor permitting any one else to sleep by reason of his groans. His mind was distressed and his temper was vile; though he died not himself, he killed many by his fretting. Such was his restlessness that every one fled from him. Maruf Karkhi alone remained. He, like a brave man, girt his loins and sat up many nights in attendance at the sick man's bedside. But one night Maruf was attacked by sleep—how long can a sleepless man keep up?

When the invalid saw him asleep he began to rave, “Cursed be your abominable race.” He cried, “What knows this glutton, intoxicated with sleep, of the helpless man who has not closed his eyes?”

Maruf took no notice of these words, but one of the women of the harem, overhearing them, remarked, “Did you not hear what that wailing beggar said?”

Turn him out, and tell him to take his abuse with him and die elsewhere. Kindness and compassion have their occasions, but to do good to the evil is evil; only a fool plants trees in barren soil. A grateful dog is better than an ungrateful man."

Maruf laughed, "Dear woman," he replied, "Be not offended at his ungracious words. If he raves at me through sickness, I am not angered. When you are strong and well yourself, bear gratefully the burdens of the weak. If you cherish the tree of kindness, you will assuredly eat of the fruits of a good name."

They attain to dignity who rid themselves of arrogance.

He who worships grandeur is the slave of pride; he knows not that greatness consists in meekness.

STORY 10

An impudent fellow begged of a pious man, but the latter had no money in his house. Otherwise, would he have showered gold upon him like dust. The infamous rascal, therefore, went out and began to abuse him in the street.

The eye of the fault-finder sees no merits. What regard has he who has acted dishonorably for the honor of another?

Being informed of his words, the pious man smiled and said, "It is well; this man has enumerated only a few of my bad qualities—only one out of a hundred that are known to me. The evil that he has supposed in me I know for certain that I possess. Only one year has he been acquainted with me; how can he know

the faults of seventy years? None but the Omniscient knows my faults better than myself. Never have I known one who has attributed to me so few defects. If he bear witness against me in the Day of Judgment, I shall have no fear. If he who thinks ill of me seeks to reveal my faults, tell him to come and take the record from me.”

Be humble when the veil is torn from off your character. If a pitcher were made of the dust of men, the calumnious would shatter it with stones.

STORY 11

A certain man knew something of astronomy and his head, in consequence, was filled with pride. Journeying far, he visited Kushyar, their sage, who turned his eyes from him and would teach him nothing. When the disappointed traveler was on the point of leaving, Kushyar addressed him with these words:

“You imagine that you are full of knowledge. How can a vessel that is full receive more? Rid yourself of your pretensions, so that you may be filled. Being full of vanity, you go empty.”

STORY 12

Someone heard the barking of a dog in the ruined hut of a pious man. Reflecting upon the strangeness of the fact, he went and searched, but found no traces of a dog. In truth, the devotee alone was in the house.

Not wishing his curiosity to be revealed, the man was departing, when the owner of the house cried out, "Come in, why stand you upon the door? Know you not, O friend, that it was I who barked? When I discerned that humility was acceptable to God, I banished pride and vanity from my heart, and clamored with barks at the door of God, for I saw none more lowly than a dog?"

If you desire to attain to dignity, let humility be your path.

Behold, when the dew lies low upon the earth, the sun raises it to the skies.

STORY 13

The slave of a king escaped, and though a search was made, was not discovered. Later, when the fugitive returned, the king in anger, ordered that he should be put to death.

When the executioner brought out his scimitar, like the tongue of a thirsty man, the despondent slave cried out:

"O, God!" I forgive the king the shedding of my blood, for I have ever enjoyed his bounty and shared in his prosperity. Let him not suffer for this deed on the Day of Judgment, to the delight of his enemies."

When the king heard these words his anger was appeased, and he appointed the slave to be an officer of the standard.

The moral of this story is that soft speech acts like water on the fires of wrath. Do not the soldiers on the

battlefield wear armor consisting of a hundred folds of silk?

O friend! Be humble when you deal with a fierce foe, for gentleness will blunt the sharpest sword.

STORY 14

Many writers affirm the falsity of the idea that Hatim was deaf.

One morning this attention was attracted by the buzzing of a fly, which had become ensnared in a spider's web. He observed, "O you, who are fettered by your own avarice, be patient. Wherever there be a tempting bait, huntsmen and snare are close at hand."

One of his disciples remarked, "Strange it is that you could hear the buzzing of a fly that hardly reached our ears. No longer can they call you deaf."

The Sheik replied, "Deafness is better than the hearing of idle words. Those that sit with me in private are prone to conceal my faults and parade my virtues; thus, do they make me vain. I feign deafness that I may be spared their flattery. When my assumed affliction has become known to them they will speak freely of that which is good and bad in me; then, being grieved at the recital of my faults, I shall abstain from evil."

Go, not down a well by a rope of praise. Be deaf, like Hatim, and listen to the words of them that slander you.

STORY 15

A certain man, whose heart was as pure as Sa'di's, fell in love. Although taunted by his enemies in consequence, he showed no anger.

Someone asked him, "Have you no sense of shame? Are you not sensible to these indignities? It is abject to expose oneself to ridicule, and weak to endure patiently the scoffs of enemies. To overlook the errors of the ignorant is wrong, lest it be said that you have neither strength nor courage."

How elegantly did the distracted lover make reply! His words are worthy to be writ in letters of gold:

"Alone is my heart there dwells affection for my loved, thus, it contains no room for malice."

STORY 16

I have heard that Luqman was of dark complexion and careless of his appearance. Someone mistook him for a slave, and employed him in digging trenches at Baghdad. Thus, he continued for a year, no one suspecting who he was. When the truth was known the master was afraid, and fell at Luqman's feet, offering excuses.

The sage smiled and said, "Of what use are these apologies? For a year my heart has bled through your oppression. How can I forget that in one hour? But I forgive you, good man, for your gain has caused to me no loss. You have built your house; my wisdom and knowledge have increased. I, too, possess a slave, and frequently set him to arduous labor. Nevermore,

when I remember the hardships of my toil, will I afflict him.”

He who has not suffered at the hands of the strong grieves not at the frailties of the weak.

If you are sorrowed by those above you, be not harsh with your inferiors.

RESIGNATION

Happiness comes from the favor of God, not from the might of the powerful.

If the heavens bestow no fortune, no valor can obtain it.

The ant suffers not by reason of its weakness; the tiger eats not by virtue of its strength.

Since the hand cannot reach the sky, accept as inevitable the fortune it brings.

If your life is destined to be long, no snake or sword will harm you; when the fated day of death arrives, the antidote will kill you no less than the poison.

STORY 1

In Isfahan I had a friend who was warlike, spirited, and shrewd. His hands and dagger were forever stained with blood. The hearts of his enemies were consumed by fear of him; even the tigers stood in awe of him. In battle he was like a sparrow among locusts; in combat, sparrows and men were alike to him. Had he made an attack upon Feridun, he would not have given the latter time to draw his sword. Neither in bravery nor magnanimity had he an equal.

This warrior formed a liking for my company, but as I was not destined to remain in Isfahan, fate transferred me from Iraq to Syria, in which holy land my staying was agreeable. After some time the desire for my home attracted me, so I returned to Iraq.

One night, the memory of the warrior passed through my mind; the salt of his friendship opened the wounds of my gratitude, for I had eaten salt from his hand. To meet him, I went to Isfahan and inquired as to where he lived.

I chanced upon him. He who had been a youth had become old; his form, once erect as an arrow, had become as a bow. Like a hoary mountain, his head was covered with snowy hair. Time had conquered him and twisted the wrist of his bravery. The pride of his strength had gone; the head of weakness was upon his knees.

“O tiger-seizer!” I exclaimed. “What has made you decrepit like an old fox?”

He laughed and said, “Since the day of the battle of Tartary, I have expelled the thoughts of fighting from my head. On the field I saw the earth arrayed with spears like a forest of reeds. I raised like smoke the dust of conflict, but when fortune does not favor, of what avail is fury? I am one who, in combat, could take with a spear a ring from the palm of the hand, but as my star did not befriend me, they encircled me as with a ring. I seized the opportunity of flight, for only a fool strives with fate. How could my helmet and cuirass aid me when my bright star favored me no more? When the key of victory is not in the hand, no one can break open the door of conquest with his arms.

“The enemy were a pack of leopards, and as strong as elephants. The heads of the heroes were encased in iron, as were also the hoofs of the horses. We urged on our Arab steeds like a cloud, and when the two armies encountered each other, you would have said they had struck down the sky to the earth. From the raining arrows that descended like hail the storm of death arose in every corner. Not one of our troops came out of the battle, but his cuirass was soaked with blood. Not that our swords were blunt—it was the vengeance of stars of ill fortune. Overpowered, we surrendered, like a fish which, though protected by scales, is caught by the hook in the bait. Since fortune averted her face, our shield was useless against the arrows of fate.”

STORY 2

One night a villager could not sleep owing to a pain in his side. A doctor said, “This pain is caused by his having eaten the leaves of the vine. I shall be astonished if he lasts through the night, for the arrows of a Tartar in his breast were better for him than the eating of such indigestible food.”

That night the doctor died. Forty years have since passed and the villager yet lives.

STORY 3

The ass of a villager died, so he set the head upon a vine in his garden in order that it might ward off the Evil Eye.

A sage old man passed by and laughingly remarked, "Do you think, O friend, this will effect the purpose? In life, the ass could not protect itself from blows; so, in weakness, did it die."

What knows the physician of the condition of the sick, when, helpless, he himself will die through illness?

STORY 4

A poor man dropped a dinar in the road. He searched much, but at last, despairing, abandoned the attempt.

Someone came along and found the coin by chance.

Good and ill fortunes are predestined. Our daily portion depends not upon our strength and efforts, for those who are strongest and strive the most stand often in the direst need.

STORY 5

There was once a rich and prosperous man named Bakhtyar. The wife of one of his neighbors, who was in the other extreme of poverty, upbraided her husband one night when he went to her empty-handed, saying, "No one is so poor and unfortunate as you. Take a lesson from your neighbors, who are wealthy. Why are you not fortunate like them?"

The man replied, "I am incapable of anything; quarrel not with fate. I have not been endowed with the power to make myself a Bakhtyar."

STORY 6

A dervish remarked to his wife, who was of ill-favored countenance, "Since fate has made you ugly, do not encrust your face with cosmetics."

Who can attain good fortune by force! Who, with collyrium, can make the blind to see?

Not one among the philosophers of Greece or Rome could produce honey from the thorn. Wild beasts cannot become men; education is wasted upon them. A mirror can be freed from stain, but it cannot be made from stone. Roses do not blossom on the branches of the willow; hot baths never yet made an Ethiopian white. Since one cannot escape the arrows of fate, resignation is the only shield.

STORY 7

A vulture said to a kite, "No one can see so far as I."

"Possibly," replied the kite, "but what can you see across the desert?"

Gazing down, the vulture exclaimed, "Yonder do I see a grain or wheat."

Thereupon, they flew to the ground. When the vulture settled upon the wheat he became caught in a trap. He had not known that, through his eating the grain, fate would ensnare him by the neck.

Not every oyster contains a pearl, not every archer hits the target.

"Of what use," the kite inquired, "was it to see the grain when you could not discern the trap of your enemy?"

“Caution,” said the captive vulture, “avails not with destiny.”

When the decrees of past eternity are brought to action, the keenest eyes are rendered blind by fate.

In the ocean, where no shoreline appears, the swimmer strives in vain.

STORY 8

A young camel said to its mother, “After you have made a journey, rest awhile.”

“If the bridle were in my hands,” was her reply, “no one would ever see me in the string of camels with a load upon my back.”

Fate is the helmsman of the ship of life, no matter though the owner rend his clothes.

O, Sa'di! Look not for aid from any man. God is the giver, and He alone. If you worship Him, the door of His mercy suffices you; if He drives you away, no one will ease you. If He made you to wear a crown, raise your head; if not, bow your head in despair.

STORY 9

Who knows that you are not pledged to God even though you stand in prayer without ablution?

That prayer is the key to hell which you perform only before the eyes of men.

If the high-road of your life lead to anything but God, your prayer mat will be thrown into the fire.

He whose heart is good and makes no outward show of piety is better than one of outward sanctity whose heart is false.

A night-prowling robber is better than a sinner in the tunic of a saint.

Expect not wages from Omar, O son, when you work in the house of Zaid.

If in private I am bad and mean, of what avail is it to pose before the world with honor? How much will the bag of hypocrisy weigh in the Scales of Justice?

The outside of the hypocrite's coat is neater than the lining, for the one is seen and the other is hidden.

CONTENTMENT

He knows not God nor performs His worship who is not contented with his lot.

Contentment makes a man rich—tell this to the avaricious.

O irresolute one! Be tranquil, for grass grows not upon revolving stones.

Pamper not your body if you are a man of sense, for in so doing do you seek your own destruction.

The wise acquire virtue, and they that pamper their bodies are devoid of merit.

Eating and sleeping is the creed of animals; to adopt it is the manner of fools.

Happy is the one who, in meditation, prepares for the last journey by means of the knowledge of God.

To him who knows not the darkness from the light, the face of a demon is as that of a Houri.

How can the falcon fly to the sky when the stone of avarice is tied to its wing?

If you pay less attention to your food than to worship you may become an angel. First, cultivate the qualities of a man, then reflect upon the character of angels.

Eat in proportion to your hunger; how can he give praises whom scarce can breathe by reason of his gluttony?

He whose stomach is full is void of wisdom. The prey is entrapped in the snare because of its greed.

STORY 1

A covetous man paid an early morning visit to the king of Khwarazm, and twice prostrated himself to the ground before him.

"Tell me, O father," his son inquired, "did you not say that Mecca was your place of worship? Why did you today repeat your prayers before the king?"

Contentment exalts the head; that which is full of avarice comes no higher than the shoulder.

He who has wrapped up the volume of his avarice needs not to write to anyone, "I am your slave and servant."

By begging will you be driven from every assembly; drive it from yourself, so that no one may drive you away.

STORY 2

Some said to a pious man who was stricken with fever, "Ask for some medicine from such a one."

"O friend!" He replied, "It were better to die in bitterness than to endure the affliction of his sour face."

A wise man does not take medicine from the hand of one whose face has been soured by pride.

Pursue not that which your heart desires, for the pampering of the body destroys the fires of life.

The gluttonous man bears the weight of his corpulence; if he obtains no food, he bears the weight of grief. It is better that the stomach should be empty than the mind.

STORY 3

In company with some religious mendicants I entered a date-grove in Basra. One of the party was a glutton. He, having girt his loins, climbed up a tree, and falling headlong, died.

The headsman of the village asked, "Who killed this man?"

"Go softly, friend," I answered, "he was thrown from the branch by the weight of his stomach."

STORY 4

The Amir of Tartary presented a silken robe to an elderly recluse, who, putting it on, kissed the hand of the messenger, and said, "A thousand praises to the king! Excellent is this splendid robe, but I prefer my own patched habit."

If you have relinquished the world, sleep upon the bare ground—kiss it not before any one for the sake of a costly carpet.

STORY 5

To a poor man who had nothing to eat but bread and onions, a foolish man remarked, "Go, wretched man, and bring some cooked meat from the public feast. Ask boldly and be not afraid of anyone, for he who is modest must go without his share."

Acting on this advice, the beggar put on his cloak and started off. The servants of the feast tore off his clothes and broke his arm.

Weeping, he cried, "O, my soul! What remedy is there for one's own actions? One seized by avarice becomes the seeker of his own misfortunes. After this, the bread and onions are good enough for me."

A barley loaf procured by the exertions of one's own arm is better than a loaf of flour from the table of the liberal."

STORY 6

A cat who lived in the house of an old woman of humble circumstances wandered to the palace of a noble, whose slaves repulsed the animal with arrows.

Bleeding from many wounds, the cat ran off in terror, thus reflecting, "Since I have escaped from the hands of those slaves, the mice in the ruined hut of the old woman are good enough for me."

Honey is not worth the price of a sting; better it is to be content with the syrup of dates than expose oneself to that.

God is not pleased with him who is not contented with his lot.

STORY 7

A certain child having cut its teeth, the father bent his head in anxious thought and said, "How can I obtain the bread and food of which the child will now have need?"

"Be not alarmed," his wife replied, "for until our child shall die, He who gave him teeth will send him bread. A rich man provides for his slave; why should

not He who created the slave do likewise? You have no trust in God that the purchased slave reposes in his master.”

I have heard that in olden times stones became silver in the hands of saints. Think not that this is contrary to reason—when you have become contented, silver and stones will be as one to you.

Say to the devotee who worships kings that a king is poorer than a dervish.

A dinar satisfies a beggar; Feridun was but half content with the whole of the kingdom of Persia.

A beggar free from care is better off than a troubled king.

The villager and his wife sleep more happily than the king ever did in his palace.

Though one be a king and the other a cotton-carder, when they sleep in death the night of both becomes day.

When you see a rich man filled with pride, go and give thanks, O you who are poor, that you, praise be to God, lack the power to inflict injury upon anyone.”

STORY 8

A holy man built a house as high as his own stature. Someone said to him, “I know you are able to erect a better house than this.”

“Enough,” he cried, “what need have I of a lofty roof? This that I have built is high enough for a dwelling which I must leave at death.”

Set not your house in the path of a flood, O slave,
for never will it be perfected.

STORY 9

A certain king died, and, having no heir, bequeathed the throne to a vulnerable dervish. When the recluse heard the roar the drums of empire, he desired no longer the corner of seclusion. He led the army to left and right, and became so strong and valiant that he filled the hearts of the brave with fear.

After he had slain a number of his enemies some others combined together against him and reduced him to such straits in his fortified town that he sent a message to a pious man, saying, "Aid me with your prayers, for the sword and arrow do not avail."

The devotee laughed and said, "Why did he not content himself with half a loaf and his vigils? Did not the wealth-worshipping Korah know that the treasure of safety lies in the corner of retirement?"

DISCOURSE

The generous man may attain to perfection although he possesses not gold.

Do you think that if a mean man became as rich as Korah his sordid nature would be changed?

If he who trades in liberality obtains not bread, his nature remains yet rich.

Generosity is the soil, and riches the seed that is sown; give, that the root may not be destitute of a branch.

Exert not yourself in the amassing of wealth, for evil is the smell of stagnant water; strive rather, to be generous, for running water becomes a flood.

The miser who falls from position and wealth, seldom stands a second time upon his feet.

If you are a precious jewel, grieve not, for Time will not pass you by; it is the stone by the wayside that goes unheeded. Shavings of gold that fall from the scissors are searched for with a candle.

EDUCATION

Those who turn the reins of their desires from unlawful things have surpassed Rustam and Sam in valor.

None is so fearful of the enemy as you, slave of your own passions.

The earthly body is a city, containing both good and evil; you are the King and Reason is your wise minister.

In this city, the headstrong men pursue their trades of avarice and greed; Resignation and Temperance are the citizens of fame and virtue; Lust and Wantonness the thieves and pick-pockets.

When the king shows favor to the wicked, how can the wise remain in peace?

The passions of evil, envy, and hatred are inherent in you as is the blood of your veins. If these your enemies gained in strength they would turn their heads from your rule and counsel; no resistance do they offer when they see the mailed fist of Reason.

Night-thieves and vagabonds wander not in the places where the patrols guard.

The chief who punishes not his enemy is bereft of power by the strength of the latter.

More on this point I will not speak—a word suffices to him who puts into practice what he reads.

DISCOURSE 1

Be silent, O you who know many things! For he that says little will be free from reproach on the Day of Judgment.

The man of many words is deaf; no counsel does he heed like silence.

When you desire continually to speak you find no sweetness in the speech of others.

Those who reflect upon right and wrong are better than triflers with ready answers.

He that speaks little you never see ashamed; a grain of musk is better than a heap of mud.

Beware of the fool whose volume of words is as that of ten men—a hundred arrows shot and each one wide of the target. If you are wise, shoot one, and that one straight.

Utter not slander before a wall—behind it are often listening ears.

Enclose your secrets within the city walls of your mind, and beware that none may find the gates of your city open.

A wise man sews up his mouth: the candle is burned by means of its wick.

STORY 1

Takash, king of Persia, imparted a secret to his slaves, adding, "Tell it not to anyone." For a year they kept this secret in their hearts; in one day it became diffused throughout the world.

The king ordered the slaves to be executed. One among them begged for mercy, saying: "Kill not your slaves, for the fault was yours. You did not dam up that secret when it was a spring: why seek to arrest its course now that it has become a flood?"

Entrust jewels to treasurers, but be the keeper of your own secrets. You have the power until the word is spoken; then the word gains mastery over you.

Speech is a demon confined in the well of the mind; leave it not free on your palate and tongue. When the genie has escaped from the lamp, no stratagem will bring him back.

STORY 2

There was once in Egypt a religious mendicant who never opened his mouth in speech. Wise men assembled around him from far and near, like moths around a candle.

One night, he reflected: "Merit is concealed beneath a silent tongue. If I remain thus silent, how will men know that I am learned?"

Therefore he indulged in speech, and his friends and enemies alike found him to be the most ignorant man in Egypt. His followers dispersed and his glory vanished. So he went on a journey and wrote on the wall of a mosque: "Had I but seen myself in the mirror of understanding I should not imprudently have torn the veil from off my mind. Although deformed, I exposed my figure in the thought that I was handsome."

A little-talker has a high reputation.

Silence is dignity, and the concealer of blemishes.

Express not in haste the thoughts of your mind, for you can reveal them when you will.

The beasts are silent, and men are endowed with speech—idle-talkers are worse than the beasts.

STORY 3

In the course of a dispute someone uttered improper words and was, in consequence, seized and nearly throttled.

“O you conceited fellow!” said an experienced man, “If your mouth had been closed like a bud, you would not have seen your skirt torn like a flower.”

Do you not see that fire is nothing but a flame, which at any moment can be quenched with water?

If a man possesses merit, the merit speaks for itself, not the owner of the merit.

If you have not the purest musk, claim not to possess it; if you have, it makes itself known by its scent.

DISCOURSE 2

Speak no evil concerning the good or the wicked, for thus you wrong the former and makes an enemy of the latter.

Know that he who defames another reveals his own faults.

If you speak evil of anyone, you are sinful, even though what you say be true.

STORY 4

To one who stretched his tongue in slander, a wise man said: “Speak not evil of any one before me, so that I may not think ill of you. Although his dignity is lowered, your own honor is not increased thereby.”

STORY 5

Someone said: "Thieving is better than back-biting."

I replied: "That is strange to me. What good do you see in thieving that you give it preference to slander?"

"Thieves," he explained, "live by virtue of their strength and daring. The slanderer sins and reaps nothing."

STORY 6

A fellow-student at Nizamiah displayed malevolence toward me, and I informed my tutor, saying: "Whenever I give more proper answers than he the envious fellow becomes offended."

The professor replied: "The envy of your friend is not agreeable to you, but I know not who told you that back-biting was commendable. If he seeks perdition through the path of envy, you will join him by the path of slander."

STORY 7

When a child, unable to distinguish between right and wrong, I once resolved to fast, and a certain devout man thus taught me to perform my ablutions and devotions: "First," he said, "repeat the name of God, according to the law of the Prophet. Second, make a vow. Third, wash the palms of the hands. Then wash your nose and mouth three times and rub your front teeth with your forefinger, for a toothbrush is

forbidden when fasting. After that, throw three handfuls of water upon your face; then wash your hands and arms up to the elbows and repeat your prayers by the telling of beads and the recital of the attributes and praises of God. Lastly, wipe again your head and wash your feet—thus end in the name of God.”

“No one,” added the old man, “knows the form of ablution better than myself. Do you not see that the elder of the village has become decrepit?”

Hearing these words, the elder cried: “O impious wretch! Did you not say that the use of a toothbrush was unlawful in fasting? I suppose, then, that slander is lawful? Before you set about a fast, wash first your mouth of improper words.”

STORY 8

Some Sufis were sitting together in private, when one of them opened his mouth in slander.

“Did you ever make a crusade in Europe?” he was asked.

“Never have I met so unfortunate a man,” observed the questioner. “The infidel remains safe from his enmity, yet a Muslim escapes not the violence of his tongue.”

STORY 9

In relation to an absent friend, two things are unlawful. The first is to squander his possession; the second, to speak evil of his name.

Look not for good words from him who mentions the names of men with scorn, for behind your back he says those things which he said to you of others.

He only is wise who concerns himself with his own affairs and is indifferent to the world.

DISCOURSE 3

Three persons only is it permissible to slander. The first is a tyrannical king who oppresses his subjects; it is lawful to speak of his misdeeds so that people may beware of him. The second is he who is shameless; deem it not a sin to speak ill of such a one, for by his own actions are his faults revealed. The third is he that gives false weight and is a cheat; say what you know of his evil ways.

STORY 10

Someone said to a pious man, "Do you know what such a one said concerning you?"

"Silence!" he replied, "it is best not to know what an enemy said. Those who carry the words of an enemy are assuredly worse than the enemy himself. Those who convey the speech of an enemy to a friend are in agreement with the enemy. You are worse than an enemy, for you reveal what he said in private."

A tale-bearer makes an old strife new; fly as far as you are able from one who stirs up a dormant quarrel.

To be tied by the feet in a gloomy pit is better than to carry mischief from place to place.

A quarrel is like a fire that the tale-bearer feeds with fuel.

STORY 11

Feridun had a vizier who was discerning and of enlightened mind.

Some one went to the king one day and said, "The vizier is your secret enemy. There is not a person in the kingdom to whom he has not lent out gold and silver on the condition that at your death the loans shall be repaid.

Regarding the vizier with threatening mien, the king exclaimed, "You appear before me in the guise of a friend; why are you my enemy at heart?"

The vizier kissed the ground as he replied, "I desire, O renowned king, that all the people should be your well-wishers. Since at your death they must repay me, they will pray for your long life from fear of me."

Approving of this explanation, the king increased the dignities of the vizier, while no one was more ill-fated and changed in fortune than the tale-bearer.

It is not compatible with reason to kindle between two men the fire of strife and burn oneself in the flames.

DISCOURSE 4

That poor man is a king whose wife is obedient and chaste. Grieve not over the troubles of the day when at night the dispeller of your sorrows is by your side.

He has obtained his heart's desire whose beloved is of the same mind as himself.

If a woman be pure and of kindly speech, regard neither her beauty nor her homeliness.

A woman of good nature is more to be desired than one of beauty, for amiability conceals a multitude of flaws. Beware the ill-tempered fairy. May heaven grant protection from a bad woman!

Prison is preferable to a house full of frowns; traveling is a joy to him whose house contains a woman of ugly mind.

Close the door of happiness upon that house whence the woman's voice comes louder than her husband's.

To walk bare-footed is better than to wear tight shoes; the hardships of a journey are better than discord at home.

DISCOURSE 5

If you desire that your name should remain, train your son in knowledge and wisdom, for if he possesses not these you die obscure, with no one to commemorate your name.

Teach him a handicraft, though you may be as rich as Korah. Place no hope in the power that you have—riches may go from you.

A bag of silver and gold is emptied; the purse of an artisan remains filled.

Do you not know how Sa'di attained to rank? He journeyed not over the plains, nor crossed the seas. In his youth he served under the yoke of the learned:

God grant him distinction in after-life. It is not long before he who served obtains command.

A boy who suffers not at the hands of his teacher suffers at the hands of Time.

Make your son good and independent, so that he may not be beholden to any man.

Protect him from evil associates and pity him not if he brings ruin and destruction upon himself, for it is better that a vicious son should die before his father.

STORY 12

There was a certain young preacher who was learned and intelligent, a man of sanctity and a true worshipper. He was forcible in eloquence and correct in grammar, but his articulation was so faulty that he could not properly repeat the letters of the alphabet.

I said to a holy man, "The youth has not got his front teeth!"

"Speak not thus," he replied. "You have discerned his fault, but your eyes are closed to his many virtues. Thorns and roses grow together; why do you regard only the thorns? He who is of bad nature sees nothing in the peacock but its ugly feet."

Expose not the faults of others, for thereby you are forgetful of your own failings.

Whether I am good or evil, keep silent, for I am the bearer of my own profit and loss, and God is better acquainted with my character than you.

I seek no reward from you for my virtues so that I may not be afflicted by you by reason of my sins.

For every good act God will bestow, not one, but ten rewards. If you see one virtue in a man, pass over the ten faults that he has.

Are not all things created the product of the art of God? They are black and white, handsome and deformed. Not every eye and eyebrow that you see is good: eat the kernel of the nut and throw the husk away.

GRATITUDE

I cannot give thanks to that Friend, for no expression of thanks is sufficient. Every hair of my body is a gift from Him; how could I thank Him for every hair?

Praise be to the very generous Lord, Who from non-existence brought His creatures into being. Who can describe His goodness? All praises are encompassed by His glory.

See how from childhood to old age he has endowed you with a splendid robe!

He made you pure. Therefore, be pure; it is unworthy to die impure with sin.

Let not the dust remain upon the mirror, for once grown dull it never again will polish.

When you seek to gain the means of life, rely not upon the strength of your own arms.

O self worshipper! Why look you not to God, Who gives power to your hand?

If by your striving you do good, take not the credit to yourself; know it to be by the grace of God.

You stand not by your own strength—from the Invisible are you sustained each moment.

STORY 1

Sorrowed at the conduct of her son, who gave no ear to her advice, a woman brought to him the cradle in which he once slept and said, "O weak in love and forgetful of the past! Were you not a weeping and helpless child, for whom through many nights I sac-

rificed my sleep? You had not then the strength you have today; you could not ward the flies from your body. A tiny insect gave you pain; today you excel amidst the strong. In the grave will you again be thus, unable to repel the onslaughts of an ant. How, when the grave worms eat the marrow of your brain, will you rekindle the Lamp of Intellect? You are as a blind man who sees not the way, and knows not that a well lies in his path. If you are grateful for your sight, this is good; if not, then surely you are blind. Your tutor gave you not the power of wisdom; by God was it implanted in your nature. Had He withheld this gift from you, truth would have appeared to you as falsehood.”

DISCOURSE 1

For you is set the bright moon in the sky by night, the world-illuminating sun by day.

Like a chamberlain, the heavens spread for you the carpet of Spring.

The wind and snow, the clouds and rain, the roaring thunder and the lightning glittering as a sword—all are His agents, obedient to His word, nourishing the seed that you have planted in the soil.

Let thirst not trouble you; the clouds bear water upon their shoulders.

From the bee He gives you honey, and manna from the wind; fresh dates from the date tree and the date tree from a seed.

For you He fashioned the sun and moon and the Pleiads; they are as lanterns upon the roof of your house.

He brings rose from the thorn and musk from a pod; gold from the mine and green leaves from a withered stick.

With His own hands did He paint your eye and eyebrows—one cannot leave one's bosom friends to strangers.

Omnipotent is He, nourishing the delicate with His many bounties.

Render thanks each moment from your heart, for gratitude is not the work of the tongue alone.

O God, my heart is blood, my eyes are sore when I behold your indescribable gifts.

DISCOURSE 2

He knows not the value of a day of pleasure who has not seen adversity. Hard is the winter for the beggar—the rich man heeds it not. If you are swift of foot, be thankful when you look upon the lame.

What do they know of the value of water who dwell upon the banks of the Jayhun? Ask it of them who are parched in the heat of the sun. What cares the Arab by the Tigris for the thirsty ones of the desert?

He knows the value of health who lost his strength in fever. How can the night be long to you reclining in ease upon your bed? Think of him who is racked with fever—the sick man knows the tediousness of night.

At the sound of the drum the master awakens—
what knows he how the watchman passed the night?

STORY 2

One night in winter Tughral passed by a Hindu sentinel, who was shivering like the star Canopus in the icy rain. Moved to pity, he said, "You shall have my fur coat. Wait by the terrace and I will send it by the hand of a slave."

On entering his palace he was met by a beautiful slave, at the sight of whom the poor sentinel passed from his mind. The fur coat slipped through the latter's ears; through guard's ill-luck it never reached his shoulders.

The king slept through the night devoid of care, but what said the chief watchman to him in the morning?

"Perhaps you forgot that 'lucky man' when your hand was upon the bosom of your slave. By you the night was spent in tranquility and joy; what know you how the night has gone with us?"

They with the caravan bend their heads over the cauldron; what care they for them that toil on foot through the desert sand?

Tarry, O active youths, for old and feeble men are with the caravan. Well have you slept in the litter while the driver held the nose-string of the camel. What of the desert and mountains? What of the stones and the sand? Ask how it fares with them that lag behind.

STORY 3

A thief was arrested by a night watchman and bound by the hands. Thus, crestfallen and afflicted, he remained. During the night he heard someone cry out in want.

“How long will you bewail your lot?” he asked. “Go sleep, O wretched man! Give thanks to God that the watchman has not tied you by the hands.”

Bemoan not your own misfortune when you see another more wretched than yourself.

STORY 4

Someone passed by a pious man whom he took for a scoundrel, and, therefore, struck him on the neck. The latter bestowed his robe upon the aggressor, who, becoming ashamed, remarked, “I acted wrongly and you have forgiven me. But what occasion is this for a gift?”

“I stood without anger” was the reply, “being thankful that I was not a scoundrel, as you supposed.”

STORY 5

One left behind on the road wept, saying, “Who in this desert is more distressed than I?”

A pack donkey answered, “O senseless man! How long will you bewail the tyranny of fate? Go, and give thanks that, though you ride not upon a donkey, you are not a donkey upon which men ride.”

STORY 6

A theologian passed by a drunkard who had fallen by the wayside. Filled with pride at his own piety, he disdained even to regard him.

The young man raised his head and said, "Go, old man, and give thanks that enjoy divine favor—misfortune comes from pride. Laugh not when you see one in bonds lest you likewise became bound. After all, tomorrow you may fall, like me, by the roadside."

If with a mosque the heavens have befriended you, revile not them that worship in the fire temple.

Muslim! Fold your hands and render thanks that He has not bound the idolater's thread about your waist.

Turn to Him who guides the hand of Fate; blindness it is to look for help elsewhere.

STORY 7

At Sumanat I saw an ivory idol. It was set with jewels like the Manat, and nothing more beautiful could have been devised. Caravans from every country brought travelers to its side; the eloquent from every clime made supplication before its lifeless figure.

"Why," I pondered, "does a living being worship an inanimate object?"

To a fire-worshipper, who was a fellow lodger and friend of mine, I said with gentleness, "O Magi! I am astonished at the doings of this place. All are infatuated with this feeble form; they are imprisoned in the well of superstition. No power has the idol to move its

hands or feet; if you throw it down, it cannot rise from its place. Do you not see that its eyes are of amber? It is folly to seek faithfulness from the stony-eyed.”

The Magi was angered at my words. He became my enemy, and informed the idolaters of what I had said. Since to them the crooked road appeared straight, they saw the straight one crooked. Though a man be wise and intelligent, he is a fool in the eyes of the ignorant.

Like a drowning man, I was destitute of help; save in politeness, I saw no remedy. When the fool bears malice toward you, safety lies in gentleness and resignation.

Therefore, I praised aloud the chief of the Magis, saying, “O old man! Expounder of the Zend Avista! I, too, am pleased with the figure of this idol. Its appearance was strange in my sight—of its nature I have no knowledge. Only recently have I arrived in this place, and a stranger can seldom distinguish between the evil and the good. Devotion by imitation is superstition, what reality is there in the form of this idol, for I am foremost among the worshippers?”

The face of the Magi glowed with joy as he said, “Your question is reasonable and your actions are good—whoever seeks for proofs arrives at his destination. Who but this idol can raise his hands to God? If you will, stay here tonight, so that tomorrow the mystery of this may become known to you.” The night was as long as the Day of Judgment; the fire-worshippers around me prayed without ablution. In the morning, they came again into the temple, and I was sick with anger and confused from lack of sleep. Suddenly, the

idol raised its arm; and later, when the crowd had left, the Magi looked smilingly toward me saying:

“I know that now you will have no doubts; truth has become manifest, falsehood remains not.”

Seeing his ignorance thus increased, I shed hypocritical tears and cried, “I am sorry for what I said.”

At the sight of my tears the hearts of the infidels were softened; they ran toward me in service and led me by the arms to the ivory idol, which was seated upon a golden chair set on a throne of teak. I kissed the hand of the little god—curses upon it and upon its worshippers! For a few days I posed as an infidel and discussed the Zend Avista, like a Magi. When I became a guardian of the temple, my joy was such that I could scarce control my feelings.

One night, I closed fast the door of the temple and searching, discovered a screen of the jewels and gold that went from the top of the throne to the bottom. Behind this screen the Magi high priest was devoutly engaged with the end of a rope in his hand. Then did it become known to me that when the rope was pulled the idol of necessity raised its arm.

Greatly confused at my presence, the Magi ran away in haste. I followed in hot pursuit and threw him headlong down a well, for I knew that, if he remained alive, he would seek to shed my blood. When the purpose of an evil man is revealed to you, pull him up by the roots, otherwise will he not desire that you should live. The alarm being raised, I fled quickly from the land. When you set fire to a forest of canes, beware of the tigers, if you are wise.

Whenever I supplicate at the shrine of the Knower of Secrets, the Indian puppet comes into my recollection—it throws dust on the pride of mine eyes. I know that I raise my hand, but not by virtue of mine own strength. Men of sanctity stretch not out their hands themselves the Fates invisibly pull the strings.

REPENTANCE

O you of whose life seventy years have passed, perhaps you have slept in negligence while your days have been thrown to the winds. Worldly aims have you well pursued; no preparations have you made for the departure to that world to come.

On the Judgment Day, when the field of Paradise will be arrayed, rank will be assigned in accordance with one's deeds.

If you should take a goodly stock of virtues, in proportion will be your profit; if you are bankrupt, you will be ashamed.

If fifty years of your life have passed, esteem as a precious boon the few that yet remain.

While still you have the power of speech, close not your lips like the dead from the praise of God.

STORY 1

One night, in the season of youth, several of us young men sat together; we sang like bulbuls and raised a tumult in the street by our mirth.

An old man sat silent, apart; like a filbert his tongue was closed from speech. A youth approached him and said, "O old man! Why sit you so mournfully in this corner? Come raise your head from the collar of grief and join us in our festivity."

Thus did the old man reply, "When the morning breeze blows over the rose garden, the young trees proudly wave their branches. It is not proper for me

to mingle in your company, for the dawn of old age has spread over my cheeks. It is your turn to sit at this table of youth; I have washed my hands of youthful pleasures. Time has showered snow upon my crow-like wings; like the bulbul, I could not sport in the garden. Soon will the harvest of my life be reaped; for you, the new green leaves are bursting. The bloom has faded from my garden; who makes a bouquet from withered flowers? I must weep, like a child, in shame for my sins, but cannot emulate his pleasures.

Well, has Luqman said, "It is better not to live at all than to live many years in sinfulness." Better, too, may it be to close the shop in the morning than to sell the stock at a loss.

DISCOURSE 1

Today, O youth, take the path of worship, for tomorrow comes old age. Leisure you have, and strength—strike the ball when the field is wide.

I knew not the value of life's day until now that I have lost it.

How can an old ass strive beneath its burden? Go your way, for you ride a swift-paced horse.

A broken cup that is mended—what will its value be? Now that in carelessness the cup of life has fallen from your hand, nothing remains but to join the pieces.

Negligently you have let the pure water go; how can you now perform your ablutions, except with sand?

STORY 2

One night in the desert of Faid my feet became fettered with sleep. A camel-driver awoke me, saying, "Arise; since you heed not the sound of the bell, perhaps you desire to be left behind! I, like you, would sleep awhile, but the desert stretches ahead. How will you reach the journey's end if you sleep when the drum of departure beats?"

Happy are they who have prepared their baggage before the beat of the drum! The sleepers by the way-side raise not their heads and the caravan has passed out of sight.

He who was early awake surpassed all on the road; what avails it to awaken when the caravan has gone?

This is the time to sow the seeds of the harvest you would reap.

Go not bankrupt to the Resurrection, for it avails nothing to sit in regret. By means of the stock that you have, O son, profit can be acquired; what profit accrues to him who consumes his stock himself?

Strive now, when the water reaches not beyond your waist; delay not until the flood has passed over your head.

Heed the counsel of the wise today, for tomorrow will the Angel question you with sternness. Esteem as a privilege your precious soul, for a cage without a bird has no value. Waste not your time in sorrow and regret, for opportunity is precious and time is a sword.

STORY 3

A certain man died and another rent his clothes in grief. Hearing his cries, a sage exclaimed, "If the dead man possessed the power he would tear his shroud by reason of your wailing and would say, "Do not torment yourself on account of my affliction, since a day or two before you I made ready for the journey. Perhaps you have forgotten your own death that mine has made you so distressed."

When he whose eyes are open to the truth scatters flowers over the dead, his heart burns not for the dead but for himself.

Do not weep for the death of a child. He came pure, and he departed pure.

Tie now the feet of the bird of the soul; tarry not until it has borne the rope from your hand.

Long have you sat in the place of another; soon will another sit in your place.

Though you are a hero or a swordsman, you will carry away nothing but the shroud.

If the wild ass breaks its halter and wanders into the desert its feet become ensnared in the sand. You, too, have strength until your feet go into the dust of the grave.

Since yesterday has gone and tomorrow has not come, take account of this one moment that is now.

In this garden of the world there is not a cypress that has grown which the wind of death has not uprooted.

STORY 4

A gold brick fell into the hands of a pious man and so turned his head that his enlightened mind became gloomy. He passed the whole night in anxious thought, reflecting, "This treasure will suffice me until the end of my life; no longer shall I have to bend my back before any one in begging. A house I will build, the foundation of which shall be of marble; the rafters of the ceiling shall be of aloe-wood. A special room I will have for my friends, and its door shall lead into a garden house. Servants shall cook my food, and in ease I will nourish my soul. This coarse woolen bed cloth has killed me by its roughness; now I will go and spread a carpet"

His imaginings made him crazy; the crab had pierced its claws into his brain. He forsook his prayers and devotions, and neither ate nor slept.

Unable to rest tranquil in one place, he wandered to a plain, with his head confused with the charms of his vain fancies. An old man was kneading mud upon a grave for the purpose of making bricks. Absorbed in thought for awhile, the old man said:

"O foolish soul! Harken to my counsel. Why have you attached your mind to that gold brick when one day they will make bricks from your dust? The mouth of a covetous man is too widely open that it can be closed again by one morsel. Take, O base man, your hand from off that brick, for the river of your avarice cannot be dammed up with a brick.

“So negligent have you been in the thought of gain and riches that the stock of your life has become trodden underfoot. The dust of passion has blinded the eyes of your reason—the simoom of desire has burned the harvest of your life.”

Wipe the antimony of neglect from off your eyes, for tomorrow will you be reduced to antimony under the dust.

Your life is a bird, and its name is Breath. When the bird has flown from its cage it comes not back to captivity.

Be watchful for the world lasts but a moment, and a moment spent with wisdom is better than an age with folly.

Why fix we thus our minds upon this caravanserai? Our friends have departed and we are on the road. After us, the same flowers will bloom in the garden, together will friends still sit.

When you come to Shiraz, do you not cleanse yourself from the dust of the road?

Soon, O you polluted with the dust of sin, will you journey to a strange city. Weep, and wash with your tears your impurities away.

STORY 5

I remember that, in the time of my childhood, my father (may God's mercy be upon him every moment!), bought me a gold ring. Soon after, a hawker took the ring from my hand in exchange for a date fruit.

When a child knows not the value of a ring he will part with it for a sweetmeat. You, too, did not recognize the value of life, but indulged yourself in vain pleasures.

On the Day of Judgment, when the good will attain to the highest dignity and mount from the bottom-most depths of the earth to the Pleiads, your head will hang forward in shame, for your deeds will gather around you.

O brother! Be ashamed of the works of the evil, for ashamed will you be at the Resurrection in the presence of the good.

STORY 6

Someone reared a wolf cub, which, when grown in strength, tore its master to pieces. When the man was on the point of death a sage passed by and said, "Did you not know that you would suffer injury from an enemy thus carefully reared?"

How can we raise our heads from shame when we are at peace with Iblis and at war with God?

Your friend regards you not when you turn your face toward the enemy.

He who lives in the house of an enemy deems right estrangement from a friend.

STORY 7

Someone robbed the people of their money by cheating, and whenever he had accomplished one of his nefarious acts he cursed the Evil One, who said:

“Never have I seen such a fool! You have intrigued with me secretly; why, therefore, do you raise the sword of enmity against me?”

Alas that the angels should record against you iniquities committed by the order of the Evil One!

Go forward when you see that the door of peace is open, for suddenly the door of repentance will be closed.

March not under a load of sin, O son, for a porter becomes exhausted on the journey.

The Prophet is the Mediator of him who follows the highway of his laws.

STORY 8

In the time of my childhood I went out with my father during the Eid Festival, and in the tumult of the mob got lost. I cried in fear, when my father suddenly pulled my ear, and said, “Several times did I tell you not to take your hand from the skirt of my robe.”

A child knows not how to go alone; it is difficult to travel on any road unseen.

You, poor man, are as a child in your endeavor; go, hold the skirt of the virtuous. Sit not with the base, but fasten your hand to the saddle straps of the pious.

Go, like Sa'di, glean the corn of wisdom so that you may store a harvest of divine knowledge.

STORY 9

In the month of July, a certain man stored his grain and set his mind at ease concerning it. One night,

he became intoxicated and lighted a fire, which destroyed his harvest.

The next day he sat down to glean the ears of corn, but not a single grain remained in his possession. Seeing him thus afflicted, someone remarked, "If you did not wish for this misfortune, you should not in folly have burned your harvest."

You, whose years have been wasted in iniquity, are he who burns the harvest of his life.

Do not so, O my life! Sow the seeds of religion and justice, and throw not to the winds the harvest of a good name.

Knock at the door of forgiveness before your punishment arrives, for lamentation beneath the lash is of no avail.

DISCOURSE 2

He who supplicates the Deity by night will not be shamed on the Day of Judgment.

If you are wise, pray for forgiveness in the night for the sins that you have committed in the day.

What is your fear if you have made your peace with God? He closes not the door of forgiveness upon them that supplicate Him.

If you are a servant of God, raise your hands in prayer and if you are ashamed, weep in sorrow.

No one has stood upon His threshold whose sins the tears of repentance have not washed away.

PRAYER

Come, let us raise our hands in prayer, for tomorrow they will be powerless in the dust.

Think not that he who supplicates before the Door of Mercy, which is never shut, will turn away in hopelessness.

O Lord, regard us with compassion, for sin has entered among Your servants.

O gracious God! By Your bounty have we been sustained; to Your gifts and loving kindness have we become habituated.

Since in this life You have ennobled us above all things created, hope of similar glory have we in the world to come.

O God, humiliate me not by reason of Your greatness; make me not ashamed by reason of my sins.

Let no one prevail over me, for it is better that I should suffer punishment from Your hand.

Let it suffice that I am ashamed in Your presence; make me not ashamed before my fellow men.

If the shadow of Your mercy falls upon me, mean is the dignity of the sky before my eyes.

If You give to me a crown, I will raise my head; exalt me, so that no one may cast me down.

STORY 1

I tremble when I recall the prayer of one distracted in the temple of Mecca. Thus did he lament:

“Throw me not down, for no one will hold my hand to succor me. Whether You call me or drive me away,

my head has no resting place but Your threshold. You know that I am poor and helpless; I am oppressed by my evil passions. Keep me from pollution, and forgive my sins. Close not my eyes from the face of happiness; bind not my tongue when I recite the creed. Place the lamp of Faith before my way; make my hand refrain from doing evil. From the sun of Your goodness one ray suffices, for except in Your rays I am not seen. Why should I weep because of my condition? If I am weak, my refuge is strong.”

STORY 2

A Zoroastrian turned his back upon the world and gave himself to the service of an idol. After some years he was overtaken by misfortune and wept at the feet of the idol, saying, “I am afflicted—help me, O idol! I am weary—have pity upon me.”

Long did he continue in his lamentation, but no benefit did he derive. How can an idol accomplish the desires of a man when of itself it cannot drive away a fly?

The idolater frowned and said, “O you, whose feet are bound to error! With folly have I worshipped you for years. I renounce you and will seek refuge in God.”

While his face was yet besmeared with the dust of the idol’s feet, the Almighty fulfilled his object.

A pious man was astonished when he heard this. Then did a voice from heaven speak into his ear, saying, “This old man prayed before the idol, but his

prayer was not heard. If at the shrine of God he were likewise spurned, what difference would there be between an idol and Him Who is eternal?"

