



by

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**Translated by**

**Sir Edwin Arnold (1899)**



**World Famous Persian Poet of 13th Century**



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بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

*In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful*

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## Chapter 1



### The Manners of Kings

#### Story 1

I heard a Padshah giving orders to kill a prisoner. The helpless fellow began to insult the king on that occasion of despair, with the tongue he had, and to use foul expressions according to the saying:

اسیر که از زندگی ناامید شده بود  
خشمگین شد و شاه را مورد سرزنش و دشنام خود

Who washes his hands of life  
Says whatever he has in his heart.

When a man is in despair his tongue becomes long and he is like a vanquished cat assailing a dog.

گریز وقت ضرورت چو نماید  
دست بگیرد سر شمشیر تیز

In time of need, when flight is no more possible,  
The hand grasps the point of the sharp sword.

When the king asked what he was saying, a good-natured Vizier replied:

'My lord, he says:

Those who bridle their anger and forgive men; for Allah loveth the beneficent.'

The king, moved with pity, forbore taking his life but another Vizier, the antagonist of the former, said:

'Men of our rank ought to speak nothing but the truth in the presence of Padshahs. This fellow has insulted the king and spoken unbecomingly.'

The king, being displeased with these words, said:

'That lie was more acceptable to me than this truth thou hast uttered because the former proceeded from a conciliatory disposition and the latter from malignity;

and wise men have said:

آن دروغ پسندیده تر آمد مرا زین راست که تو گفتی که :  
روی آن در مصلحتی بود و بنای این بر خبیثی

"A falsehood resulting in conciliation is better than a truth producing trouble."

هر که شاه آن کند که او گوید  
حیف باشد که جز نکو گوید

He whom the shah follows in what he says,  
It is a pity if he speaks anything but what is good.

The following inscription was upon the portico of the hall of Faridun:

جهان ای برادر نماند به کس  
دل اندر جهان آفرین بند و بس  
مکن تکیه بر ملک دنیا و پشت  
چون تو پرورد و کشت که بسیار کس  
چو آهنگ رفتن کند جان پاک  
چه بر تخت مردن چه بر روی خاک

O brother, the world remains with no one.  
Bind the heart to the Creator, it is enough.

Rely not upon possessions and this world  
Because it has cherished many like thee and slain them.  
When the pure soul is about to depart,  
What boots it if one dies on a throne or on the ground?



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## Story 2

One of the kings of Khorasan had a vision in a dream of Sultan Mahmud, one hundred years after his death. His whole person appeared to have been dissolved and turned to dust, except his eyes, which were revolving in their orbits and looking about. All the sages were unable to give an interpretation, except a dervish who made his salutation and said:

هنوز نگران است که ملکش با دیگران است

'He is still looking amazed how his kingdom belongs to others.'

بس نامور به زیر زمین دفن کرده اند  
کز هستیش به روی زمین يك نشان نماند  
وان پیر لاشه را که نمودند زیر خاک  
چنان بخورد کزو استخوان نماند خاکش

Many famous men have been buried under ground  
Of whose existence on earth not a trace has remained

And that old corpse which had been surrendered to the earth  
Was so consumed by the soil that not a bone remains.

فرخ نوشیروان به خیر زنده است نام  
گرچه بسی گذشت که نوشیروان نماند

خیری کن ای فلان و غنیمت شمار عمر  
زان پیشتر که بانگ بر آید فلان نماند

The glorious name of Nushirvan survives in good repute  
Although much time elapsed since he passed away.

Do good, O man, and consider life as a good fortune,  
The more so, as when a shout is raised, a man exists no more.



### Story 3

I have heard that a royal prince of short stature and mean presence, whose brothers were tall and good-looking, once saw his father glancing on him with aversion and contempt but he had the shrewdness and penetration to guess the meaning and said:

ای پدر

کوتاه خردمند به که نادان بلند . نه هر چه بقامت مهتر به قیمت بهتر

اشاة نظيفة و الفیل جیفیة

'O father,

a puny intelligent fellow is better than a tall ignorant man, neither is  
everything bigger in stature higher in price.

A sheep is nice to eat and an elephant is carrion.'

اقل جبال الارض طور و انه

لاعظم عندالله قدرا و منزلا

The smallest mountain on earth is Tur; nevertheless  
It is great with Allah in dignity and station.

آن شنیدی که لاغری دانا  
گفت بار به ابلهی فربه  
اسب تازی وگر ضعیف بود  
از طویله خر به همچنان

Hast thou not heard that a lean scholar  
One day said to a fat fool:  
'Although an Arab horse may be weak  
It is thus more worth than a stable full of asses.'

The father laughed at this sally, the pillars of the state approved of it, but the brothers felt much aggrieved.

تا مرد سخن نگفته باشد  
عیب و هنرش نهفته باشد  
هر پیسه گمان مبر نهالی  
شاید که پانگ خفته باشد

While a man says not a word  
His fault and virtue are concealed.  
Think not that every desert is empty.  
Possibly it may contain a sleeping tiger.

I heard that on the said occasion the king was menaced by a powerful enemy and that when the two armies were about to encounter each other, the first who entered the battlefield was the little fellow who said:

شت من آن نه من باشم که روز جنگ بینی پ  
آن منم گر در میان خاک و خون بینی سري  
کان که جنگ آرد به خون خویش بازي مي کند  
روز میدان وان که بگریزد به خون لشکري

'I am not he whose back thou wilt see on the day of battle  
But he whom thou shalt behold in dust and blood.

Who himself fights, stakes his own life  
In battle but he who flees, the blood of his army.'

After uttering these words he rushed among the troops of the enemy, slew several warriors and, returning to his father, made humble obeisance and said:

ای که شخص منت حقیر نمود  
نپنداری تا درشتی هنر  
اسب لاغر میان ، به کار آید  
روز میدان نه گاو پرواری

'O thou, to whom my person appeared contemptible,  
Didst not believe in the impetuosity of my valor.  
A horse with slender girth is of use  
On the day of battle, not a fattened ox.'

It is related that the troops of the enemy were numerous, and that the king's, being few, were about to flee, but that the puny youth raised a shout, saying:

ای مردان بکوشید یا جامه زنان بپوشید

'O men, take care not to put on the garments of women.'

These words augmented the rage of the troopers so that they made a unanimous attack and I heard that they gained the victory on the said occasion. The king kissed the head and eyes of his son, took him in his arms and daily augmented his affection till he appointed him to succeed him on the throne.

His brothers became envious and placed poison in his food but were perceived by his sister from her apartment, whereon she closed the window violently and the youth, shrewdly guessing the significance of the act, restrained his hands from touching the food, and said:

محال است که هنرمندان بمیرند و بی هنران جای ایشان بگیرند

'It is impossible that men of honor should die, and those who possess none should take their place.'

کس نیابد به زیر سایه بوم  
ور همای از جهان شود معدوم

No one goes under the shadow of an owl  
Even if the **homa** should disappear from the world.

This state of affairs having been brought to the notice of the father, he severely reproved the brothers and assigned to each of them a different, but pleasant, district as a place of exile till the confusion was quelled and the quarrel appeased; and it has been said that:

ده درویش در گلیمی بخشبند و دو پادشاه در اقلیمی نگنجد

ten dervishes may sleep under the same blanket but that one country cannot hold two Padshahs.

نیم نانی گر خورد مرد خدا  
بذل درویشان کند نیمی دگر  
ملك اقلمی بگیرد پادشاه  
همچنان در بند اقلیمی دگر

When a pious man eats half a loaf of bread  
He bestows the other half upon dervishes.  
If a Padshah were to conquer the seven climates  
He would still in the same way covet another.



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## Story 4

A band of Arab brigands having taken up their position on the top of a mountain and closed the passage of caravans, the inhabitants of the country were distressed by their stratagems and the troops of the sultan foiled because the robbers, having obtained an inaccessible spot on the summit of the mountain, thus had a refuge which they made their habitation. The chiefs of that region

held a consultation about getting rid of the calamity because it would be impossible to offer resistance to the robbers if they were allowed to remain.

درختی که اکنون گرفته است پای  
به نیروی مردی برآید ز جای  
و گر همچنان روزگاری هلی  
به گردونش از بیخ بر نگسلی  
سر چشمه شاید گرفتن به بیل  
چو پر شد نشاید گذشتن به پیل

A tree which has just taken root  
May be moved from the place by the strength of a man  
But, if thou leavest it thus for a long time,  
Thou canst not uproot it with a windlass.  
The source of a fountain may be stopped with a bodkin  
But, when it is full, it cannot be crossed on an elephant.

The conclusion was arrived at to send one man as a spy and to wait for the opportunity till the brigands departed to attack some people and leave the place empty. Then several experienced men, who had fought in battles, were dispatched to keep themselves in ambush in a hollow of the mountain. In the evening the brigands returned from their excursion with their booty, divested themselves of their arms, put away their plunder and the first enemy who attacked them was sleep, till about a watch of the night had elapsed:

قرص خورشید در سیاهی شد  
یونس اندر دهان ماهی شد

The disk of the sun went into darkness.  
Jonah went into the mouth of the fish.

The warriors leapt forth from the ambush, tied the hands of every one of the robbers to his shoulders and brought them in the morning to the court of the king, who ordered all of them to be slain.

There happened to be a youth among them, the fruit of whose vigor was just ripening and the verdure on the rose-garden of whose cheek had begun to

sprout. One of the Viziers, having kissed the foot of the king's throne and placed the face of intercession upon the ground, said:

'This boy has not yet eaten any fruit from the garden of life and has not yet enjoyed the pleasures of youth. I hope your majesty will generously and kindly confer an obligation upon your slave by sparing his life.'

The king, being displeased with this request, answered:

پرتو نیکان نگیرد هر که بنیادش بد است  
تربیت ناهل را چون گردکان برگنبد است

'He whose foundation is bad will not take instruction from the good,  
To educate unworthy persons is like throwing nuts on a cupola.

'It is preferable to extirpate the race and offspring of these people and better to dig up their roots and foundations, because it is not the part of wise men to extinguish fire and to leave burning coals or to kill a viper and leave its young ones.

ابر اگر آب زندگی بارد  
هرگز از شاخ بید بر نخوری  
ایه روزگار مبربا فروم  
کز نی بوریاشکر نخوری

If a cloud should rain the water of life  
Never sip it from the branch of a willow-tree.  
Associate not with a base fellow  
Because thou canst not eat sugar from a mat-reed.'

The Vizier heard these sentiments, approved of them nolens volens, praised the opinion of the king and said:

'What my lord has uttered is the very truth itself because if the boy had been brought up in the company of those wicked men, he would have become one of themselves. But your slave hopes that he will, in the society of pious men, profit by education and will acquire the disposition of wise persons. Being yet a child the rebellious and perverse temper of

that band has not yet taken hold of his nature and there is a tradition of the prophet that:

كل مولود يولد على الفطرة فابواه يهودانه او ينصرانه او يمجسانه

every infant is born with an inclination for Islam but his parents make him a Jew, a Christian or a Majusi.'

پسر نوح با بدان بنشست  
خاندان نبوتش گم شد  
سگ اصحاب كهف روزی چند  
دم شدپی نیکان گرفت و مر

The spouse of Lot became a friend of wicked persons.  
His race of prophets became extinct.  
The dog of the companions of the cave for some days  
Associated with good people and became a man.

When the vizier had said these words and some of the king's courtiers had added their intercession to his, the king no longer desired to shed the blood of the youth and said:

'I grant the request although I disapprove-of it.'

دانی که چه گفت زال با رستم گرد  
دشمن نتوان حقیر و بیچاره شمرد  
رددیدیم بسی ، که آب سرچشمه خ  
چون بیشتر آمد شتر و بار ببرد

Knowest thou not what Zal said to the hero Rostam:  
'An enemy cannot be held despicable or helpless.  
I have seen many a water from a paltry spring  
Becoming great and carrying off a camel with its load.'

In short, the vizier brought up the boy delicately, with every comfort, and kept masters to educate him, till they had taught him to address persons in elegant language as well as to reply and he had acquired every accomplishment.

One day the vizier hinted at his talents in the presence of the king, asserting that the instructions of wise men had taken effect upon the boy and had expelled his previous ignorance from his nature. The king smiled at these words and said:

عاقبت گرگ زاده گرگ شود

گرچه با آدمی بزرگ شود

'At last a wolf's whelp will be a wolf  
Although he may grow up with a man.'

After two years had elapsed a band of robbers in the locality joined him, tied the knot of friendship and, when the opportunity presented itself, he killed the vizier with his son, took away untold wealth and succeeded to the position of his own father in the robber-cave where he established himself.

The king, informed of the event, took the finger of amazement between his teeth and said:

شمشیر نیک از آهن بد چون کند کسی؟  
ناکس به تربیت نشود ای حکیم کس  
باران که در لطافت طبعش خلاف نیست  
در باغ لاله روید و در شوره زار خس  
زمین شوره سنبل بر نیآورد  
در او تخم و عمل ضایع مگردان  
نکویی با بدان کردن چنان است  
که بد کردن بجای نیکمردان

'How can a man fabricate a good sword of bad iron?  
O sage, who is nobody becomes not somebody by education.  
The rain, in the beneficence of whose nature there is no flaw,  
Will cause tulips to grow in a garden and weeds in bad soil.  
Saline earth will not produce hyacinths.  
Throw not away thy seeds or work thereon.  
To do good to wicked persons is like Doing evil to good men.'



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## Story 5

I saw at the palace-gate of Oglimish the son of a military officer who was endowed with marvelous intellect, sagacity, perception and shrewdness; also the signs of future greatness manifested themselves on his forehead whilst yet a small boy.

بالای سرش ز هوشمندی  
می تافت ستاره بلندی

From his head intelligence caused  
The star of greatness to shine.

In short, he pleased the sultan because he had a beautiful countenance and a perfect understanding; and philosophers have said:

توانگری به هنر است نه به مال  
بزرگی به عقل است نه به سال

'Power consists in accomplishments, not in wealth  
and greatness in intellect, not in years.'

His companions, being envious, made an attempt upon his life and desired to kill him but their endeavors remained fruitless.

What can a foe do when the friend is kind?

The king asked: 'What is the cause of their enmity to thee?'

He replied:

'Under the shadow of the monarchy of my lord I have satisfied my contemporaries except the envious, who will not be contented but by the decline of my prosperity, and may the monarchy and good fortune of my lord be perpetual.'

توانم آن که نیازم اندرون کسی  
حسود را چه کنم کوز خود به رنج در است  
بمیر تا برهی ای حسود کین رنجی است  
که از مشقت آن جز به مرگ نتوان رست  
شوربختان به آرزو خواهند

I may so act as not to hurt the feelings of anyone  
But what can I do to an envious man dissatisfied with himself?  
Die, O envious man, for this is a malady,  
Deliverance from which can be obtained only by death.  
Unfortunate men sometimes ardently desire

مقبلان را زوال نعمت و جاه  
گر نبیند به روز شب پره چشم  
اب را چه گناه؟ چشمه آفت  
راست خواهی هزار چشم چنان  
کور، بهتر که آفتاب سیاه

The decline of prosperous men in wealth and dignity.  
If in daytime, bat-eyed persons do not see  
Is it the fault of the fountain of light, the sun?  
Thou justly wishest that a thousand such eyes  
Should be blind rather than the sun dark.



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## Story 6

It is narrated that one of the kings of Persia had stretched forth his tyrannical hand to the possessions of his subjects and had begun to oppress them so

violently that in consequence of his fraudulent extortions they dispersed in the world and chose exile on account of the affliction entailed by his violence.

When the population had diminished, the prosperity of the country suffered, the treasury remained empty and on every side enemies committed violence.

هر که فریادرس روز مصیبت خواهد  
گو در ایام سلامت به جوانمردی کوش  
بنده حلقه به گوش از ننوازی برود  
لطف کن که بیگانه شود حلقه به گوش

Who desires succor in the day of calamity,  
Say to him: 'Be generous in times of prosperity.'  
The slave with a ring in his ear, if not cherished will depart.  
Be kind because then a stranger will become thy slave.

One day the Shahnamah was read in his assembly, the subject being the ruin of the dominion of Zohak and the reign of Faridun. The vizier asked the king how it came to pass that Faridun, who possessed neither treasure nor land nor a retinue, established himself upon the throne. He replied:

'As thou hast heard, the population enthusiastically gathered around him and supported him so that he attained royalty.'

The vizier said:

'As the gathering around of the population is the cause of royalty, then why dispersest thou the population?

Perhaps thou hast no desire for royalty?'

همان به که لشکر به جان پروری  
که سلطان به لشکر کند سروری

It is best to cherish the army as thy life  
Because a sultan reigns by means of his troops.

The king asked: 'What is the reason for the gathering around of the troops and the population?'

He replied:

'A Padshah must practice justice that they may gather around him and clemency that they may dwell in safety under the shadow of his government; but thou possessest neither of these qualities.'

نکند جور پیشه سلطانی  
که نیاید ز گرگ چوپانی  
م افکند پادشاهی که طرح ظل  
پای دیوار ملک خویش بکند

A tyrannical man cannot be a sultan  
As a wolf cannot be a shepherd.  
A Padshah who establishes oppression  
Destroys the basis of the wall of his own reign.

The king, displeased with the advice of his censorious vizier, sent him to prison.

Shortly afterwards the sons of the king's uncle rose in rebellion, desirous of recovering the kingdom of their father. The population, which had been reduced to the last extremity by the king's oppression and scattered, now assembled around them and supported them, till he lost control of the government and they took possession of it.

پادشاهی کو روا دارد ستم بر زیر دست  
دوستداریش روز سختی دشمن زور آور است  
بارعیت صلح کن وز جنگ ایمن نشین  
زانکه شاهنشاه عادل را رعیت لشکر است

A Padshah who allows his subjects to be oppressed  
Will in his day of calamity become a violent foe.  
Be at peace with subjects and sit safe from attacks of foes  
Because his subjects are the army of a just Shahanshah.



## Story 7

A Padshah was in the same boat with a Persian slave who had never before been at sea and experienced the inconvenience of a vessel. He began to cry and to tremble to such a degree that he could not be pacified by kindness, so that at last the king became displeased as the matter could not be remedied.

In that boat there happened to be a philosopher, who said: 'With thy permission I shall quiet him.'

The Padshah replied: 'It will be a great favor.'

The philosopher ordered the slave to be thrown into the water so that he swallowed some of it, whereon he was caught and pulled by his hair to the boat, to the stern of which he clung with both his hands. Then he sat down in a corner and became quiet.

This appeared strange to the king who knew not what wisdom there was in the proceeding and asked for it. The philosopher replied:

از اول محنت غرقه شدن ناچشیده بود و قدر سلامتی نمی دانست  
همچنین قدر عافیت کسی داند که به مصیبتی گرفتار آید

'Before he had tasted the calamity of being drowned, he knew not the safety of the boat;

thus also a man does not appreciate the value of immunity from a misfortune until it has befallen him.'

ای پسر سیر ترا نان جوین خوش نماند  
معشوق منست آنکه به نزدیک تو زشت است  
حوران بهشتی را دوزخ بود اعراف  
از دوزخیان پرس که اعراف بهشت است

O thou full man, barley-bread pleases thee not.

She is my sweetheart who appears ugly to thee.

To the Huris of paradise purgatory seems hell.

Ask the denizens of hell. To them purgatory is paradise.

فرق است میان آنکه یارش در بر  
با آنکه دو چشم انتظارش بر در

There is a difference between him whose friend is in his arms  
And him whose eyes of expectation are upon the door.



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## Story 8

Hormuzd, being asked what fault the viziers of his father had committed that he imprisoned them, replied:

'I discovered no fault. I saw that boundless awe of me had taken root in their hearts but that they had no full confidence in my promises, wherefore I apprehended that they, fearing calamities would befall them, might attempt my life and I acted according to the maxim of sages who have said:

از آن کز تو ترسد بترس ای حکیم  
وگر با چو صد بر آیی بجنگ  
از آن مار بر پای راعی زند  
که برسد سرش را بکوبد به سنگ  
نبینی که چون گربه عاجز شود  
برآرد به چنگال چشم پانگ

'Dread him who dreads thee, O sage,  
Although thou couldst cope with a hundred like him.  
Seest thou not when the cat becomes desperate  
How he plucks out with his claws the eyes of a tiger?  
The viper stings the shepherd's foot  
Because it fears he will strike his head with a stone.'



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## Story 9

An Arab king was sick in his state of decrepitude so that all hopes of life were cut off. A trooper entered the gate with the good news that a certain fort had been conquered by the good luck of the king, that the enemies had been captured and that the whole population of the district had been reduced to obedience. The king heaved a deep sigh and replied:

'This message is not for me but for my enemies, namely the heirs of the kingdom.'

بدین امید به سر شد، دریغ عمر عزیز  
که آنچه در دلم است از دم فراز آید  
امید بسته، برآمد ولی چه فایده زانک  
امید نیست که عمر گذشته باز آید

I spent my precious life in hopes, alas!  
That every desire of my heart will be fulfilled.  
My wishes were realized, but to what profit? Since  
There is no hope that my past life will return.

کوس رحلت بکوفت دست اجل  
ای دو چشم! وداع سر بکنید  
ای کف دست و ساعد و بازو  
همه تودیع یکدیگر بکنید

The hand of fate has struck the drum of departure.  
O my two eyes, bid farewell to the head.  
O palm, forearm, and arm of my hand,  
All take leave from each other.

بر من اوفتاده دشمن کام  
آخر ای دوستان حذر بکنید  
روزگارم بشد به نادانی  
من نکردم شما حذر بکنید

Death, the foe of my desires, has fallen on me  
For the last time, O friends. Pass near me.  
My life has elapsed in ignorance.  
I have done nothing, be on your guard.



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## Story 10

I was constantly engaged in prayer, at the head of the prophet Yahya's tomb in the cathedral mosque of Damascus, when one of the Arab kings, notorious for his injustice, happened to arrive on a pilgrimage to it, who offered his supplications and asked for compliance with his needs.

درویش و غنی بنده این خاک و درند  
آنان که غنی ترن محتاجترند

The dervish and the plutocrat are slaves on the floor of this threshold  
And those who are the wealthiest are the most needy.

Then he said to me: 'Dervishes being zealous and voracious in their dealings, unite thy mind to mine, for I am apprehensive of a powerful enemy.'

I replied: 'Have mercy upon thy feeble subjects that thou mayest not be injured by a strong foe.'

به بازوان توانا و فتوت سر دست  
خطا است پنجه مسکین ناتوان بشکست  
گان نبخشاید؟ نترسد آنکه بر افتاد  
که گر ز پای در آید، کسش نگیرد دست

With a powerful arm and the strength of the wrist  
To break the five fingers of a poor man is sin.  
Let him be afraid who spares not the fallen  
Because if he falls no one will take hold of his hand.

خم بدی کشت و چشم نیکی داشت هر آنکه ت  
دماغ بیهده پخت و خیال باطل بست  
ز گوش پنبه برون آر و داد و خلق بده  
و گر تو می ندهی داد، روز دادی هست

Whoever sows bad seed and expects good fruit  
Has cudged his brains for naught and begotten vain imaginations.  
Extract the cotton from thy ears and administer justice to thy people  
And if thou failest to do so, there is a day of retribution.

بنی آدم اعضای یکدیگرند  
که در آفرینش ز یک گوهرند

The sons of Adam are limbs of each other  
Having been created of one essence.

آورد روزگار چو عضوی به درد  
دگر عضوها را نماند قرار  
تو کز محنت دیگران بی غمی  
نشاید که نامت نهند آدمی

When the calamity of time afflicts one limb  
The other limbs cannot remain at rest.  
If thou hast no sympathy for the troubles of others  
Thou art unworthy to be called by the name of a man.



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## Story 11

A dervish, whose prayers met with answers, made his appearance, and Hejaj Yusuf, calling him, said: 'Utter a good prayer for me', whereon the dervish exclaimed: 'O God, take his life.'

He replied: 'For God's sake, what prayer is this?'

The dervish rejoined: 'It is a good prayer for thee and for all Muslims.'

ای زبردست زیر دست آزار  
گرم تا کی بماند این بازار؟  
به چه کار آیدت جهانداری  
مردنت به که مردم آزاری

O tyrant, who oppressest thy subjects,  
How long wilt thou persevere in this?  
Of what use is authority to thee?  
To die is better for thee than to oppress men.



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## Story 12

An unjust king asked a devotee what kind of worship is best?

He replied:

تورا خواب نیم روز تا در آن يك نفس خلق را نیازاري

'For thee the best is to sleep one half of the day so as not to injure the people for a while.'

ظالمی را خفته دیدم نیم روز

گفتم : این قتنه است خوابش برده به

و آنکه خوابش بهتر از بیداری است

آن چنان بد زندگانی ، مرده ، به

I saw a tyrant sleeping half the day.

I said: 'This confusion, if sleep removes it, so much the better;

But he whose sleep is better than his wakefulness

Is better dead than leading such a bad life.'



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## Story 13

I heard a king, who had changed might into day by pleasures, saying in his drunkenness:

ما را به جهان خوشتر از این یکدم نست

کز نیک و بد اندیشه و از کس غم نیست

'We have in the world no moment more delightful than this,

Because I care neither for good nor for bad nor for anyone.'

A naked dervish, who was sleeping outside in the cold, then said:

ای آنکه به اقبال تو در عالم نیست

گیرم که غمت نیست ، غم ما هم نیست

'O thou like whom in happiness there is no one in the world,  
I take it if thou carest not, we also do not care.'

The king, being pleased with these words of unconcern, held out a bag of a thousand dinars from the window and said: 'Dervish, spread out thy skirt.'

He replied: 'Whence can I, who have no robe, bring a skirt?'

The Padshah took pity on his helpless condition, added a robe to his gift and sent it out to him but the dervish squandered the money in a short time and returned.

قرار برکف آزادگان نگیرد مال  
نه صبر در دل عاشق نه آب در غربال

Property cannot abide in the hands of the free,  
Neither patience in the heart of a lover nor water in a sieve.

The case of the dervish having been brought to the notice of the king when he was not in good humor, he became angry and turned his face away. Therefore it has been said that:

intelligent and experienced men ought to be on their guard against the violence and despotism of kings because their thoughts are generally occupied with important affairs of state so that they cannot bear to be importuned by the crowd of vulgar persons.

حرامش بود نعمت پادشاه  
که هنگام فرصت ندارد نگاه  
مجال سخن تا نیابی ز پیش  
به بیهوده گفتن مبر قدر خویش

He will be excluded from the beneficence of the Padshah  
Who cannot watch for the proper opportunity.  
Before thou seest the occasion for speaking at hand  
Destroy not thy power by heedless talk.

The king said: 'Drive away this impudent and prodigal mendicant who has in so short a time thrown away so much money. He does not know that the Bait-ul-

mal is intended to offer a morsel to the needy and not to feed the brothers of devils.'

ابلهی کو روز روشن شمع کافوری نهد  
زود بینی کش به شب روغن نباشد در چراغ

The fool who burns by day a camphor-light  
Will soon not have an oil-lamp for the night.

One of councilor viziers said:

'My lord, it would seem proper to grant to such persons a sufficient allowance to be drawn from time to time so that they may not squander it. But anger and repulsion, as manifested by thee, are unworthy of a generous disposition as also to encourage a man by kindness and then again to distress him by disappointing his expectation.'

به روی خود در طماع باز نتوان کرد  
چو باز شد، به درشتی فراز نتوان کرد  
کس نبیند که تشنگان حجاز  
به سر آب شور گرد آیند  
هر کجا چشمه ای بود شیرین  
مردم و مرغ و مور گرد آیند

The door ought not to be opened to applicants so  
That, when it is ajar, it may not be shut again.  
Nobody sees the thirsty pilgrims to Hejaz  
Crowding at the bank of briny water.  
Wherever a sweet spring happens to be  
Men, birds and insects flock around it.



## Story 14

One of the ancient kings neglected the government of his realm and kept the army in distress. Accordingly the whole of it ran away when a powerful enemy appeared.

چو دارند گنج از سپاهی دریغ  
دریغ آیدش دست بردن به تیغ

If he refrains from giving treasure to the troops  
They refrain from putting their hands to the sword.

What bravery will they display in battle array when their hands are empty and affairs deplorable?

I was on terms of friendship with one of those who had acted treacherously and reproached him, telling him that it was base, ungrateful, despicable and undutiful to abandon an old master when his affairs have changed a little and to disregard the obligations incurred for benefits received during many years.

He replied:

'If I inform thee, perhaps thou wilt excuse me for my horse had no barley and my saddle-cloth was pawned.

A sultan who grudges money to his troops, they cannot bravely risk their lives for him.'

زر بده سپاهی را تا سر بنهد  
و گرش زر ندهی، سر بنهد در عالم

Give gold to the soldier that he may serve thee.  
If thou withholdest gold, he will serve elsewhere.

When a warrior is full, he will be brave in fight but if his belly be empty, he will be brave in flight.



## Story 15

A vizier, who had been removed from his post, entered the circle of dervishes and the blessing of their society took such effect upon him that he became contented in his mind. When the king was again favorably disposed towards him and ordered him to resume his office, he refused and said:

'Retirement is better than occupation.'

آنان که کنج عافیت بنشستند  
دندان سگ و دهان مردم بستند  
کاغذ بدریدند و قلم بشکستند  
وز دست و زبان حرف گیران پرستند

Those who have sat down in the corner of safety  
Have bound the teeth of dogs and tongues of men.  
They tore the paper up and broke the pen  
And are saved from the hands and tongues of slanderers.

The king said: 'Verily we stand in need of a man of sufficient intelligence who is able to carry on the administration of the government.'

He replied: 'It is a sign of sufficient intelligence not to engage in such matters.'

همای بر همه مرغان از آن شرف دارد  
که استخوان خورد و جانور نیازارد

The huma excels all other birds in nobility  
Because it feeds on bones and injures no living thing.

A donkey, having been asked for what salary he had elected to attend upon the lion, replied:

'That I may consume the remnants of his prey and live in safety from my enemies by taking refuge under his bravery.'

Being again asked that, as he had entered into the shadow of the lion's protection and gratefully acknowledged his beneficence, why he had not joined the circle of intimacy so as to be accounted one of his favorite servants, he replied:

'I am in the same way also not safe of his bravery.'

اگر صد سال گبر آتش فرزند

اگر يك دم در او افتد بسوزد

Should a Guebre (fire-worshiper) kindle fire a hundred years

If he falls one moment into it he will be burnt.

It may happen that a companion of his majesty the sultan receives gold and it is possible that he loses his head.

Philosophers have said that:

it is necessary to be on guard of the fickle temper of Padshahs because sometimes they are displeased with politeness and at others they bestow robes of honor for rudeness.

It is also said that:

much joculariry is an accomplishment in courtiers but a fault in sages.

تو بر سر قدر خویشتن باش و وقار

بازی و ظرافت به ندیمان بگذار

Abide thou by thy dignity and gravity.

Leave sport and joculariry to courtiers.



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## Story 16

One of my friends complained of the unpropitious times, telling me that he had a slender income, a large family, without strength to bear the load of poverty and had often entertained the idea to emigrate to another country so that no matter how he made a living no one might become aware of his good or ill luck.

بس گرسنه خفت و کس ندانست که کیست

بس جان به لب آمد که بر او کس نگریست

Many a man slept hungry and no one knew who he was.  
Many a man was at the point of death and no one wept for him.

He was also apprehensive of the malevolence of enemies who would laugh behind his back and would attribute the struggle he underwent for the benefit of his family to his want of manly independence and that they will say:

مبین آن : بی حمیت را که هرگز

نخواهد دید روی نیکبختی

که آسانی گزیند خویشتن را

زن و فرزند بگذارد بسختی

'Behold that dishonorable fellow who will never  
See the face of prosperity,  
Will choose bodily comfort for himself,  
Abandoning his wife and children to misery.'

He also told me that as I knew he possessed some knowledge of arithmetic, I might, through my influence, get him appointed to a post which would become the means of putting his mind at ease and place him under obligations to me, which he could not requite by gratitude during the rest of his life. I replied:

'Dear friend! Employment by a Padshah consists of two parts, namely,

- the hope for bread and
- the danger of life,

but it is against the opinion of intelligent men to incur this danger for that hope.'

کس نیاید به خانه درویش

که خراج زمین و باغ بده

یا به تشویش و غصه راضی باش

یا جگر بند، پیش زاغ بنه

No one comes to the house of a dervish  
To levy a tax on land and garden.

Either consent to bear thy anxiety or grief  
Or carry thy beloved children to the crows.

He replied: 'Thou hast not uttered these words in conformity with my case nor answered my question. Hast thou not heard the saying?

"Whoever commits treachery let his hand tremble at the account."

راستی موجب رضای خدا است  
کس ندیدم که گم شد از ره راست

Straightness is the means of acceptance with God.  
I saw no one lost on the straight road.

Sages have said:

'Four persons are for life in dread of four persons:

- a robber of the sultan,
- a thief of the watchman,
- an adulterer of an informer, and
- a harlot of the muhtasib.

But what has he to fear whose account of the conscience is clear?'

مکن فراخ روی در عمل اگر خواهی  
که وقت رفع تو باشد مجال دشمن تنگ  
تو پاک باش و مدار از کس ای برادر، پاک  
گازران بر سنگ زنند جامه ناپاک

Be not extravagant when in office, if thou desirest  
On thy removal to see thy foes embarrassed for imputations against thee.  
Be thou pure, O brother, and in fear of no one.  
Washer men beat only impure garments against stones.

I said: 'The story of that fox resembles thy case, who was by some persons seen fleeing with much trouble and asked for the cause of his fear replied:

'I have heard that camels are being forced into the service.'

They said: 'O fool, what connection hast thou with a camel and what resemblance does the latter bear to thee?'

The fox rejoined: 'Hush. If the envious malevolently say that I am a camel and I am caught, who will care to release me or investigate my case?

Till the antidote is brought from Iraq the snake-bitten person dies.'

Thou art a very excellent and honest man but enemies sit in ambush and competitors in every corner. If they describe thy character in a contrary manner, thou wouldst be called upon to give explanations to the Padshah and incur reproof. Who would on that occasion venture to say anything? Accordingly I am of opinion that thou shouldst retire to the domain of contentment and abandon aspirations to dominion. Wise men have said:

به دریا در منافع بی شمار است  
اگر خواهی ، سلامت در کنار است

'In the sea there are countless gains,  
But if thou desirest safety, it will be on the shore.'

My friend, having heard these words, became angry, made a wry face and began to reproach me, saying:

'What sufficiency of wisdom and maturity of intellect is this? The saying of philosophers has come true, that:

دوستان به زندان بکار آیند که بر سفره همه دشمنان دوست نمایند  
friends are useful in prison because at table all enemies appear as  
friends.'

شمار آنکه در نعمت زند دوست م  
لاف یاری و برادر خواندگی  
دوست آن دانم که گیرد دست دوست  
در پریشان حالی و درماندگی

Account him not a friend who knocks at the door of prosperity,  
Boasts of amity and calls himself thy adopted brother.  
I consider him a friend who takes a friend's hand  
When he is in a distressed state and in poverty.

Seeing that he had thus changed and ascribed my advice to an interested motive, I paid a visit to the President of the State Council and, trusting in my

old acquaintance with him, explained the case of my friend whom he then appointed to a small post.

In a short time my friend's affable behavior and good management elicited approbation so that he was promoted to a higher office. In this manner the star of his good luck ascended till he reached the zenith of his aspirations, became a courtier of his majesty the sultan, generally esteemed and trusted. I was delighted with his safe position and said:

ز کار بسته میندیش و در شکسته مدار  
که آب چشمه حیوان درون تاریکی است  
برمنشین ترش از گردش ایام که ص  
تلخ است ولیکن بر شیرین دارد

'Be not apprehensive of tangled affairs and keep not a broken heart  
Because the spring of life is in darkness.'

Do not grieve, O brother in misery,  
Because the Ill-merciful has hidden favours.

Sit not morose on account of the turns of time; for patience,  
Although bitter, nevertheless possesses a sweet fruit.

At that time I happened to go with a company of friends on a journey to Makkah and on my return he met me at a distance of two stages. I perceived his outward appearance to be distressed, his costume being that of dervishes. I asked: 'What is the matter?'

He replied: 'As thou hast predicted, some persons envied me and brought against me an accusation of treason. The king ordered no inquiry on its truthfulness and my old well-wishers with my kind friends who failed to speak the word of truth forgot our old intimacy.'

نبینی که پیش خداوند جاه  
نیایش کنان دست بر بر نهند  
اگر روزگارش درآورد ز پای  
همه عالمش پای بر سر نهند

'Seest thou not in front of the possessor of dignity  
They place the hands on their heads, praising him;  
But, if fortune's turn causes his fall,  
All desire to Place their foot on his head.

'In short, I was till this week undergoing various persecutions, when the news of the pilgrims' approach from Makkah arrived, whereon I was released from my heavy bonds and my hereditary property confiscated.' I replied:

'Thou hast not paid attention to my remarks when I said that the service of Padshahs is like a sea voyage, profitable and dangerous, so that thou wilt either gain a treasure or perish in the waves.'

یازر به هر دو دست کند خواجه در کنار  
یا موج ، روزی افکندش مرده بر کنار

The khawjah either takes gold with both hands to the shore  
Or the waves throw him one day dead upon the shore.

Not thinking it suitable to scratch the wound of the dervish more than I had already done and so sprinkle salt thereon, I contented myself with reciting the following two distiches:

ندانستی که بینی بند بر پای  
چو در گوشت نیامد پند مردم ؟

Knewest thou not that thou wilt see thy feet in bonds  
If the advice of people cannot penetrate into thy ear?

دگر ره چون نداری طاقت نیش  
مکن انگشت در سوراخ کژدم

Again, if thou canst not bear the pain of the sting  
Put not thy finger into the hole of a scorpion.



## Story 17

Several men were in my company whose external appearance displayed the adornment of piety. A great man who had conceived a very good opinion of these persons had assigned them a fixed allowance but, after one of them had done something unbecoming the profession of dervishes, his opinion changed and they fell into disgrace.

I desired in some way to save the allowance of my friends and intended to wait upon the great man but the doorkeeper would not allow me to enter and was rude. I pardoned him, because it has been said:

در میر و وزیر و سلطان را  
بی وسیلت مگرد پیرامن  
سگ و دربان چو یافتند غریب  
این گریانش گیرد، آن دامن

The door of an Amir, vizier or sultan  
Is not to be approached without an introduction.  
When a dog or a doorkeeper sees a stranger  
The former takes hold of his skirt, the latter of his collar.

When those who could at any time approach the presence of the said great man became aware of my case, they took me in with compliments and desired to assign me a high seat but I humbly took a lower one and said:

بگذار که بنده کمینم  
تا در صف بندگان نشینم

'Allow me who am the smallest slave  
To sit in the line of slaves.'

He said: 'Allah, Allah, what need is there for such words?'

گر بر سر چشم ما نشینی  
بارت بکشم که نازینی

If thou sittest on my head and eyes  
I shall be polite, for thou art polite.

In short, I took a seat and we conversed on a variety of topics till the affair of the error of my companions turned up and I said:

چه جرم دید خداوند سابق الانعام  
که بنده در نظر خویش خوار می دارد  
ی و لطف خدای راست مسلم بزرگوار  
که جرم بیند و نان برقرار می دارد

'What crime has my lord seen, who was bountiful,  
To make the slave despicable in his sight?  
To God that magnanimity and bounty is surrendered  
Which beholds the crime but nevertheless bestows the bread.'

The governor, being pleased with these words, ordered the support of my friends to be attended to as before and the arrears to be made good. I expressed my gratitude, kissed the ground of obedience, apologized for my boldness, and said:

ر بعید چو کعبه قبله حاجت شد از دیا  
روند خلق به دیدارش از بسی فرسنگ  
تو را تحمل امثال ما بیاید کرد  
که هیچکس نزند بر درخت بی بر، سنگ

'Since the Kasbah has become the Qiblah of wants from distant lands  
The people go to visit it from many farsangs.  
Thou must suffer the importunity of such as we are  
Because no one throws stones on a tree without fruit.'



## Story 18

A royal prince, having inherited abundant treasures from his father, opened the hand of liberality and satisfied his impulse of generosity by lavishing without stint benefits upon the army and the population.

نیاساید مشام از طبله عود  
بر آتش نه که چون عنبر ببوید  
بزرگی بایدت بخشندگی کن  
که دانه تا نیفشانی نرود

A tray of lignum aloes will emit no odor.  
Place it on fire, it will smell like ambergris.  
If thou wishest to be accounted great, be liberal  
Because grain will not grow unless it be sown.

One of his courtiers began heedlessly to admonish him, saying:

'Former kings have by their exertions accumulated this wealth and deposited it for a useful purpose. Cease this movement because calamities may arise in front and enemies in the rear. It is not meet for thee to be helpless at a time of necessity.'

اگر گنجی کنی بر عامیان بخش  
رسد هر کد خدایی را برنجی  
چرا نستانی از هر یک جوی سیم  
که گرد آید تو را هر وقت گنجی

If thou distributest a treasure to the multitude  
Each householder will receive a grain of rice.  
Why takest thou not from each a barley-corn of silver  
That thou mayest accumulate every day a treasure?

The royal prince turned away his face at these words and said:

'God the most high has made me the possessor of this country, to enjoy and to bestow, not to guard and to retain.'

خانه گنج داشت قارون هلاك شد كه چهل

نوشين روان نمرد كه نام نكو گذاشت

Qarun, who possessed forty treasure houses, perished.

Nushirvan has not died because he obtained a good reputation.



## Story 19

It is related that, whilst some game was being roasted for Nushirvan the just during a hunting party, no salt could be found. Accordingly a boy was sent to an adjoining village to bring some. Nushirvan said:

'Pay for the salt lest it should become a custom and the village be ruined.'

Having been asked what harm could arise from such a trifling demand, Nushirvan replied:

'The foundation of oppression was small in the world but whoever came augmented it so that it reached its present magnitude.'

اگر ز باغ رعیت ملك خورد سیبی

برآوردند غلامان او درخت از بیخ

به پنج بیضه كه سلطان ستم روا دارد

زنند لشكريانش هزار مرغ به سیخ

If the king eats one apple from the garden of a subject

His slaves will pull him up the tree from the roots.

For five eggs which the sultan allows to be taken by force

The people belonging to his army will put a thousand fowls on the spit.

A tyrant does not remain in the world but the curse on him abides for ever.



## Story 20

I heard that an oppressor ruined the habitations of the subjects to fill the treasury of the sultan, unmindful of the maxim of philosophers, who have said:

اند هر که خدای را عز و جل بیازارد تا دل خلقي به دست آرد خداوند  
تعالی همان خلق را بر او گمارد تا دمار از روزگارش برآرد

'Who offends God the most high to gain the heart of a created being,  
God will use that very being to bring on his destruction in the world.'

آتش سوزان نکند با سپند  
آنچه کند دود دل دردمند

Fire burning with wild rue will not  
Cause a smoke like that of afflicted hearts.

The prince of all animals is the lion and the meanest of beasts the ass.  
Nevertheless sages agree that:

an ass who carries loads is better than a lion who destroys men.

مسکین خر اگر چه بی تمیز است  
چون بار همی برد عزیز است  
گاو و خران بار بردار  
به ز آدمیان مردم آزار

The poor donkey though void of discernment  
Is nevertheless esteemed when he carries a burden.

Oxen and asses who carry loads  
Are superior to men oppressing mankind.

When the king had obtained information of some of the oppressor's misdeeds and bad conduct, he had him put on the rack and slain by various tortures.

حاصل نشود رضای سلطان  
تا خاطر بندگان نجویی  
ه خدای بر تو بخشخواهی ك  
با خلق خدای كن نکویی

Thou wilt not obtain the approbation of the sultan  
Unless thou seekest the goodwill of his subjects.  
If thou desirest God to condone thy transgressions,  
Do good to the people whom God has created.

One of the oppressed who passed near him said:

نه هر که قوت بازوی منصبی دارد  
به سلطنت بخورد مال مردمان به گزاف  
توان به حلق فرو برد استخوان درشت  
ولی شکم بدرد چون بگیرد اندر ناف

'Not everyone who possesses strength of arm and office  
In the sultanate may with impunity plunder the people.  
A hard bone may be made to pass down the throat  
But it will tear the belly when it sticks in the navel.'



---

## Story 21

It is narrated that an oppressor of the people, a soldier, hit the head of a pious man with a stone and that the dervish, having no means of taking vengeance,

preserved the stone till the time arrived when the king became angry with that soldier, and imprisoned him in a well. Then the dervish made his appearance and dropped the stone upon his head.

He asked: 'Who art thou, and why hast thou hit my head with this stone?'

The man replied: 'I am the same person whom thou hast struck on the head with this stone on such and such a day.'

The soldier continued: 'Where hast thou been all this time?'

The dervish replied: 'I was afraid of thy dignity but now when I beheld thee in the well I made use of the opportunity.'

ناسزایی را که بینی بخت یار  
عاقلان تسلیم کردند اختیار  
ه تیزچون نداری ناخن درند  
با ددان آن به ، که کم گیری ستیز  
هر که با پولاد بازو، پنجه کرد  
ساعد مسکین خود را رنجه کرد  
باش تا دستش ببندد روزگار  
پس به کام دوستان مغزش برآر

When thou seest an unworthy man in good luck  
Intelligent men have chosen submission.  
If thou hast not a tearing sharp nail  
It will be better not to contend with the wicked.  
Who grasps with his fist one who has an arm of steel  
Injures only his own powerless wrist.  
Wait till inconstant fortune ties his hand.  
Then, to please thy friends, pick out his brains.



## Story 22

A king was subject to a terrible disease, the mention of which is not sanctioned by custom. The tribe of Yunani (Greek) physicians agreed that this pain cannot be allayed except by means of the bile of a person endowed with certain qualities.

Orders having been issued to search for an individual of this kind, the son of a landholder was discovered to possess the qualities mentioned by the doctors. The king summoned the father and mother of the boy whose consent he obtained by giving them immense wealth.

The Qazi issued a judicial decree that it is permissible to shed the blood of one subject for the safety of the king and the executioner was ready to slay the boy who then looked heavenwards and smiled. The king asked:

'What occasion for laughter is there in such a position?'

The youth replied:

'A son looks to the affection of his father and mother to bring his case before the Qazi and to ask justice from the Padshah. In the present instance, however,

- the father and mother have for the trash of this world surrendered my blood,
- the Qazi has issued a decree to kill me,
- the Sultan thinks he will recover his health only through my destruction and I see no other refuge besides God the most high.'

پیش کہ برآورم ز دستت فریاد؟  
هم پیش تو از دست تو گر خواهم داد

To whom shall I complain against thy hand  
If I am to seek justice also from thy hand?

The sultan became troubled at these words, tears rushed to his eyes and he said:

'It is better for me to perish than to shed innocent blood.'

He kissed the head and eyes of the youth, presented him with boundless wealth and it is said that the king also recovered his health during that week.

I also remember the distich recited by the elephant-driver on the bank of the Nile:

زیر پایت گر بدانی حال مور  
همچو حال تو است زیر پای پیل

'If thou knewest the state of the ant under thy foot  
It is like thy own condition under the foot of an elephant.'



---

## Story 23

One of the servants of Umru Laith had fled but some men, having been sent in pursuit, brought him back. The vizier who bore a grudge towards him desired him to be killed that the other servants may not imitate his example.

He placed his head on the ground before Umru Laith and said:

هر چه رود بر سرم چون تو پسندی رواست  
بنده چه دعوی کند ، حکم خداوند راست

'Whatever befalls my head is lawful with thy approbation.  
What plea can the slave advance? The sentence is the master's.'

'But, having been nourished by the bounty of this dynasty, I am loath that on the day of resurrection thou shouldst be punished for having shed my blood; but, if thou desirest to kill me, do so according to the provisions of the law.'

He asked: 'How am I to interpret it?'

The slave continued: 'Allow me to kill the vizier and then take my life in retaliation so that I may be killed justly.'

The king smiled and asked the vizier what he thought of the matter.

He replied: 'My lord, give freedom to this bastard as an oblation to the tomb of thy father for fear he would bring trouble on me likewise. It is my fault for not having taken account of the maxim of philosophers who have said:

پیکار چو کردی با کلوخ انداز  
سر خود را به نادانی شکستی  
چو تیر انداختی بر روی دشمن  
چنین دان کاندرا آماجش نشستی

When thou fightest with a thrower of clods

Thou ignorantly breakest thy own head.

When thou shootest an arrow at the face of a foe

Be on thy guard for thou art sitting as a target for him.'



---

## Story 24

King Zuzan had a khawjah of noble sentiments and of good aspect who served his companions when they were present and spoke well of them when they were absent. He happened to do something whereby he incurred the displeasure of the king who inflicted a fine on him and also otherwise punished him.

The officials of the king, mindful of the benefits they had formerly received from him and being by them pledged to gratitude, treated him kindly whilst in their custody and allowed no one to insult him.

صلح با دشمن اگر خواهی هر گه که تو را  
در قفا عیب کند در نظرش تحسین کن

سخن آخر به دهان می گذرد مودی را  
سخنش تلخ نخواهی دهندش شیرین کن

If thou desirest peace from the foe, whenever he  
Finds fault behind thy back praise him to his face.

A vicious fellow's mouth must utter words.

If thou desirest not bitter words, sweeten his mouth.

He was absolved of some accusations brought by the king against him but retained in prison for some.

Another king in those regions secretly dispatched a message to him, to the purport that the sovereigns of that country, not knowing his excellent qualities, had dishonored him, but that if his precious mind (may Allah prosper the end of his affairs) were to look in this direction, the utmost efforts would be made to please him, because the nobles of this realm would consider it an honor to see him and are waiting for a reply to this letter.

The khawjah, who had received this information, being apprehensive of danger, forthwith wrote a brief and suitable answer on the back of the sheet of paper and sent it back.

One, however, of the king's courtiers, who noticed what had taken place, reported to him that the imprisoned khawjah was in correspondence with the princes of the adjacent country. The king became angry and desired this affair to be investigated. The courier was overtaken and deprived of the letter, the contents of which were found on perusal to be as follows:

'The good opinion of high personages is more than their servant's merit deserves, who is unable to comply with the honor of reception which they have offered him, because having been nourished by the bounty of this dynasty, he cannot become unthankful towards his benefactor in consequence of a slight change of sentiments of the latter, since it is said:

آن را که به جای تو است هر دم کرمی  
عذرش بنه ار کند به عمری ستمی

He who bestows every moment favors upon thee  
Is to be pardoned by thee if once in his life he injures thee.'

The king approved of his gratitude, bestowed upon him a robe of honor, gave him presents and asked his pardon, saying: 'I committed a mistake.'

He replied:

'My lord, it was the decree of God the most high that a misfortune should befall this servant but it was best that it should come from thy hands which had formerly bestowed favors upon him and placed him under obligations.'

گر گزندت رسد ز خلق مرنج  
که نه راحت رسد ز خلق نه رنج  
از خدا دان خلاف دشمن و دوست  
کین دل هر دو در تصرف اوست  
پیر از کمان همی گذردگرچه ت  
از کماندار بیند اهل خرد

If people injure thee grieve not  
Because neither rest nor grief come from the people.  
Be aware that the contrasts of friend and foe are from God  
Because the hearts of both are in his keeping.  
Although the arrow is shot from the bow  
Wise men look at the archer.



---

## Story 25

One of the Arab kings ordered his officials to double the allowance of a certain attendant because he was always at the palace expecting orders while the other servants were engaged in amusements and sports, neglecting their duties. A pious man who heard this remarked that:

high degrees at the court of heaven are similarly bestowed upon servants:

بامداد گر آید کسی به خدمت شاه دو  
سیم هر آینه در وی کند بلطف نگاه

If a man comes two mornings to serve the shah  
He will on the third certainly look benevolently on him.

Sincere worshippers entertain the hope that they will not be disappointed at the threshold of God.

مهتری در بول فرمان است  
ترك فرمان دلیل حرمان است  
هر که سیمای راستان دارد  
سر خدمت بر آستان دارد

Superiority consists in attending to commands.  
The neglect of commands leads to exclusion.  
Who possesses the criterion of righteousness  
Places the head upon the threshold.



---

## Story 26

It is narrated that a tyrant who purchased wood from dervishes forcibly gave it away to rich -people gratuitously. A pious man passing near said:

ماری تو که کرا ببینی بزنی  
یا بوم که هر کجت نشینی نکنی  
زورت از پیش می رود با ما  
با خداوند غیب دان نرود

زورمندی مکن بر اهل زمین

تا دعایی بر آسمان برود

'Thou art a snake, stingest whom thou beholdest,  
Or an owl; wherever thou sittest thou destroyest.

Although thy oppression may pass among us  
It cannot pass with the Lord who knows all secrets.

Oppress not the denizens of the earth  
That their supplications may not pass to heaven.'

The tyrant, being displeased with these words, got angry and took no notice of him until one night, when fire from the kitchen fell into the store of his wood and burnt all he possessed-transferring him from his soft bed to a hot mound of ashes-the same pious man happened again to pass and to hear him saying to his friends: 'I do not know whence this fire has fallen into my house.' replied:

'From the smoke of the hearts of dervishes.'

حذر کن ز درد درونهای ریش

که ریش درون عاقبت سر کند

بهم بر مکن تا توانی دلی

که آهی جهانی به هم بر کند

Beware of the smoke of internal wounds  
Because at last an internal wound will break out.  
Forbear to uproot one heart as long as thou canst  
Because one sigh may uproot a world.

Upon the diadem of Kai Khosru the following piece was inscribed:

چه سالهای فراوان و عمرهای دراز

ر ما بر زمین بخواهد رفت که خلق بر سر

چنانکه دست به دست آمده است ملک به ما

به دستهای دگر همچنین بخواهد رفت

For how many years and long lives  
Will the people walk over my head on the ground?  
As from hand to hand the kingdom came to us  
So it will also go to other hands.



---

## Story 27

A man had attained great excellence in the art of wrestling, who knew three hundred and sixty exquisite tricks and daily exhibited something new.

He had a particular affection for the beauty of one of his pupils whom he taught three hundred and fifty-nine tricks, refraining to impart to him only one. At last the youth had attained such power and skill that no one was able to contend with him and he went so far as to say to the sultan:

'I allow superiority to my teacher on account of his age and from gratitude for his instruction but my strength is not less than his and my skill equal.'

The king, who was not pleased with this want of good manners, ordered them to wrestle with each other and a spacious locality having been fixed upon, the pillars of state and courtiers of his majesty made their appearance.

The youth made an onslaught like a mad elephant with an impulse which might have uprooted a mountain of brass from its place but the master, who knew that he was in strength superior to himself, attacked him with the rare trick he had reserved to himself and which the youth was unable to elude; whereon the master, lifting him up with his hands from the ground, raised him above his head and then threw him down.

Shouts were raised by the spectators and the king ordered a robe of honor with other presents to be given to the teacher but reproached and blamed the youth for having attempted to cope with his instructor and succumbed.

He replied: 'My lord, he has not vanquished me by his strength but there was a slender part in the art of wrestling which he had withheld from me and had today thereby got the upper hand of me.'

The master said: 'I had reserved it for such an occasion because wise men have said:

"Do not give so much strength to thy friend that, if he becomes thy foe,  
he may injure thee."

Hast thou not heard what the man said who suffered molestation from one  
whom he had educated?

این زمانه نکرد یا مگر کس در  
کس نیاموخت علم تیر از من  
که مرا عاقبت نشانه نکرد

Either fidelity itself does not exist in this world  
Or nobody practices it in our time.  
No one had learnt archery from me  
Without at last making a target of me.'



---

## Story 28

A solitary dervish was sitting in a corner of the desert when a Padshah happened to pass by but, ease having made him independent, he took no notice. The sultan, in conformity with his royal dignity, became angry and said: 'This tribe of rag-wearers resembles beasts.'

The vizier said: 'The Padshah of the surface of the earth has passed near thee. Why hast thou not paid homage and shown good manners?'

He replied:

'Tell the king to look for homage from a man who expects benefits from him and also that kings exist for protecting subjects and subjects not for obeying kings.'

پادشه پاسبان درویش است  
گرچه رامش به فر دولت او است  
گوسپند از برای چوپان نیست  
بلکه چوپان برای خدمت او است

The Padshah is the guardian of the dervish  
Although wealth is in the glory of his reign.  
The sheep is not for the shepherd  
But the shepherd for the service of it.

یکی امروز کامران بینی  
دیگری را دل از مجاهده ریش  
روزکی چند باش تا بخورد  
خاک مغز سر خیال اندیش

Today thou beholdest one man prosperous  
And another whose heart is wounded by struggling.  
Wait a few days till the earth consumes  
The brain in the head of the visionary.

فرق شاهی و بندگی برخاست  
چون قضای نوشته آمد پیش  
گر کسی خاک مرده باز کند  
ر و درویش نماید توانگ

Distinction between king and slave has ceased  
When the decree of fate overtakes them.  
If a man were to open the tombs of the dead  
He would not distinguish a rich from a poor man.

The king, who was pleased with the sentiments of the dervish, asked him to make a request but he answered that the only one he had to make was to be left alone.

The king then asked for advice and the dervish said:

درياب کنون که نعمتت هست به دست  
کين دولت و ملك می رود دست به دست

'Understand now while wealth is in thy hand  
That fortune and kingdom will leave thy hand.'



---

## Story 29

A vizier paid a visit to Zулnun Misri and asked for his favor, saying: 'I am day and night engaged in the service of the sultan and hoping to be rewarded but nevertheless dread to be punished by him.' Zулnun wept and said:

'Had I feared God, the great and glorious, as thou fearest the sultan, I would be one of the number of the righteous.'

بیم راحت و رنج گرنه امید و  
پای درویش بر فلک بودی  
ور وزیر از خدا بترسیدی  
همچنان کز ملك ، ملك بودی

If there were no hope of rest and trouble  
The foot of the dervish would be upon the sphere  
And if the vizier feared God  
Like the king he would be king.



## Story 30

A Padshah having issued orders to kill an innocent man, the latter said: 'O king, seek not thine own injury on account of the anger thou bearest towards me.'

He asked: 'How?'

The man replied: 'This punishment will abide with me one moment but the sin of it for ever with thee.'

دوران بقا چو باد صحرا بگذشت  
تلخی و خوشی و زشت و زیبا بگذشت  
پنداشت ستمگر که ستم بر ما کرد  
در گردن او بماند و بر ما بگذشت

The period of life has passed away like the desert wind.  
Bitter and sweet, ugliness and beauty have passed away.  
The tyrant fended he had done injury to us.  
It remained on his neck and passed away from us.

This admonition having taken effect, the king spared his blood.



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## Story 31

The viziers of Nushirvan happened to discuss an important affair of state, each giving his opinion according to his knowledge. The king likewise gave his opinion and Barzachumihhr concurred with it.

Afterwards the viziers secretly asked him: 'What superiority hast thou discovered in the opinion of the king above so many other reflections of wise men?'

The philosopher replied:

'Since the termination of the affair is unknown and it depends upon the will of God whether the opinion of the others will turn out right or wrong, it was better to agree with the opinion of the king so that, if it should turn out to have been wrong, we may, on account of having followed it, remain free from blame.'

خلاف راءى سلطان راءى جستن  
به خون خویش باشد دست شستن  
اگر خود روز را گوید: شب است این  
بباید گفتن ، آنک ماه و پروین

To proffer an opinion contrary to the king's  
Means to wash the hands in one's own blood.  
Should he in plain day say it is night,  
It is meet to shout: 'Lo, the moon and the Pleiades!'



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## Story 32

An impostor arranged his hair in a peculiar fashion, pretended to be a descendant of Ali and entered the town with a caravan from the Hajaz, saying that he had just arrived from a pilgrimage. He also presented an elegy to the king, alleging that he had himself composed it.

One of the king's courtiers, who had that year returned from a journey, said: 'I have seen him at Basra on the Eid Duha festival, then how can he be a Haji?'

Another said: 'His father was a Christian at Melitah. How can he be a descendant of Ali? And his poetry has been found in the Divan of Anvari.'

The king ordered him to be beaten and expelled the country for his great mendacity. The man said: 'O lord of the surface of the earth, I shall say something more and, if it is not true, I shall deserve any punishment which thou mayest decree.'

He asked: 'What is it?'

غریبی گرت ماست پیش آورد  
دو پیمانہ آبست و یک چمچہ دوغ  
اگر راست می خواهی از من شنو  
جهان دیده ، بسیار گوید دروغ

When a stranger brings before thee buttermilk

Two measures of it will be water and a spoonful sour milk.

If thou hast heard heedless talk from thy slave, be not offended.

A man who has seen the world utters much falsehood.

The king laughed, told him that all his life he had not uttered more true words than these and ordered the present which the fellow hoped for to be got ready.



---

## Story 33

One of the viziers of a king treated his subordinates with kindness and sought the goodwill of his colleagues. Once he happened to be called to account by the king for something he had done whereon his colleagues endeavored

to effect his liberation. Those who guarded him treated him leniently and the great men expatiated upon his good character to the Padshah till he renounced all further inquiry. A pious man who took cognizance of this affair said:

تا دل دوستان به دست آری  
بوستان پدر فروخته به  
پختن دیگ نیکخواهان را  
هر چه رخت سر است سوخته به  
با بداندیش هم نکویی کن  
دهن سگ به لقمه دوخته به

'In order to gain the hearts of friends  
Sell even the garden of thy father.  
In order to boil the pot of well-wishers  
Burn even all the furniture of the house.  
Do good even to a malevolent fellow.  
Tie up the mouth of the dog with a sop.'



---

## Story 34

One of the sons of Harun-ur-Rashid went to his father and angrily informed him that the son of an official had used insulting expressions towards him whereon Harun asked his courtiers what requital he deserved.

One of them proposed capital punishment, another the amputation of the tongue whilst a third recommended fine and imprisonment. Then Harun said:

'Oh my son, it would be generous to pardon him but, if thou art unable to do so, use likewise insulting expressions concerning his mother; not

however to such a degree as to exceed the bounds of vengeance because in that case the wrong will be on thy side.'

نه مرد است آن به نزديك خردمند  
که با پيل دمان پیکار جوید  
بلی مرد آنکس است از روی محقیق  
که چون خشم آیدش باطل نگوید

He is not reputed a man by the wise  
Who contends with a furious elephant  
But he is a man in reality  
Who when angry speaks not idle words.

An ill-humored fellow insulted a man who patiently bore it saying:

'O hopeful youth, I am worse than thou speakest of me for I am more conscious of my faults than thou.'



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## Story 35

I was sitting in a vessel with a company of great men when a boat which contained two brothers happened to sink near us. One of the great men promised a hundred dinars to a sailor if he could save them both. Whilst however the sailor was pulling out one, the other perished.

I said: 'He had no longer to live and therefore delay took place in rescuing him.'

The sailor smiled and replied: 'What thou hast said is certain. Moreover, I preferred to save this one because, when I once happened to lag behind in the desert, he seated me on his camel, whereas I had received a whipping by the hands of the other.'

When I was a boy I recited:

**(Quran 59:20) مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلِنَفْسِهِ وَمَنْ أَسَاءَ**

He, who doth right, doth it to his own soul and he, who doth evil, doth it against the same.'

تا توانی درون کس متراش  
کندر این راه خارها باشد  
کار درویش مستمند بر آر  
شدکه تو را نیز کارها با

As long as thou canst, scratch the interior of no one  
Because there are thorns on this road.  
Be helpful in the affairs of a dervish  
Because thou also hast affairs.



---

## Story 36

There were two brothers: one of them in the service of the sultan and the other gaining his livelihood by the effort of his arm. The wealthy man once asked his destitute brother why he did not serve the sultan in order to be delivered from the hardship of laboring. He replied:

'Why labourest thou not to be delivered from the baseness of service because philosophers have said that it is better to eat barley bread and to sit than to gird oneself with a golden belt and to stand in service?'

به دست آهک تفته کردن خمیر  
به از دست بر سینه پیش امیر

To leaven mortar of quicklime with the hand  
Is better than to hold them on the breast before the Amir.

عمر گرانمایه در این صرف شد  
تا چه خورم صیف و چه پوشم شتا  
ای شکم خیره به نانی بساز  
دمت دو تاتا نکنی پشت به خ

My precious life was spent in considering  
What I am to eat in summer and wear in winter.  
O ignoble belly, be satisfied with one bread  
Rather than to bend the back in service.



---

## Story 37

Someone had brought information to Nushirvan the just that an enemy of his had been removed from this world by God the most high. He asked:

'Hast thou heard anything about his intending to spare me?'

ادمانی نیست اگر بمرد عدو جای ش  
که زندگانی ما نیز جاودانی نیست

There is no occasion for our rejoicing at a foe's death  
Because our own life will also not last for ever.



## Story 38

A company of philosophers were discussing a subject in the palace of Kesra and Barzachumihr, having remained silent, they asked him why he took no share in the debate. He replied:

'Viziers are like physicians and the latter give medicine to the sick only but, as I perceive that your opinions are in conformity with propriety, I have nothing to say about them.'

چو کاری بی فضول من بر آید  
مرا در وی سخن گفتن نشاید  
و گر بینم که نابینا و چاه است  
اگر خاموش بنشینم گناه است

When an affair succeeds without my idle talk

It is not meet for me to speak thereon.

But if I see a blind man near a well

It is a crime for me to remain silent.



---

## Story 39

Harun-ur-Rashid said when the country of Egypt was surrendered to him:

'In contrast to the rebel who had in his arrogance of being sovereign of Egypt pretended to be God, I shall bestow this country upon the meanest of my slaves.'

He had a stupid negro, Khosaib by name, whom he made governor of Egypt but his intellect and discrimination were so limited that when the tribe of Egyptian

agriculturists complained and stated that they had sown cotton along the banks of the Nile and that an untimely rain had destroyed it he replied:

'You ought to have sown wool.'

A pious man heard this, and said:

اگر دانش به روزی در فزودی  
ز نادان تنگ روزی تر نبودی  
به نادانان چنان روزی رساند  
که دانا اندر آن عاجز بماند

'If livelihood were increased by knowledge  
None would be more needy than the ignorant.  
Nevertheless the ignorant receive a livelihood  
At which the learned stand aghast.

بخت و دولت به کاردانی نیست  
جز بتاءبید آسمانی نیست  
او فتاده است در جهان بسیار  
بی تمیز ارجمند و عاقل خوار

The luck of wealth consists not in skill  
But only in the aid of heaven.  
It happens in the world that many  
Silly men are honored and sages despised.

کیمیاگر به غصه مرده و رنج  
ابله اندر خرابه یافته گنج

If an alchemist has died in grief and misery,  
A fool discovered a treasure amidst ruins.'



## Story 40

A Chinese slave-girl having been brought to a king, he desired to have connection with her whilst in a state of intoxication but, as she repelled him, he became angry and presented her to one of his negro-slaves whose upper lip was higher than his nostrils whilst the lower one hung down to his neck. His stature was such that the demon Sakhras would have been put to flight and a fountain of pitch emitted stench from his armpits.

تا قیامت زشت رویی تو گویی  
بر او ختم است و بر یوسف نکویی

Thou wouldst say that, till the resurrection, ugliness  
Is his stamp as that of Joseph was beauty.

شخصی نه چنان کریه منظر  
کز زشتی او خبر توان داد  
آنکه بغلی نعوذ بالله  
مردار به آفتاب مرداد

His person was of so wretched an aspect  
That his ugliness surpassed all description  
And from his armpits we take refuge with Allah,  
They were like a corpse in the month of Merdad (August).

At that time the desire of the negro was libidinous, his lust overcame him, his love leapt up and he took off the seal of her virginity.

In the morning the king sought the girl but could not find her and, having obtained information of what had taken place, he became angry, ordered the negro and the girl to be firmly tied together by their hands and feet and to be thrown from the lofty building into a ditch.

One of the viziers, placing the face of intercession upon the ground, pleaded that there was no guilt in the negro since all the servants of his majesty usually receive presents and benefits as he had received the girl.

The king rejoined: 'What would it have mattered if he had for one night delayed his enjoyment?'

He said: 'My lord, hast thou not heard that it was said:

تشته سوخته در چشمه روشن چو رسید  
شدتو میندار که از پیل دمان اندی  
ملحد گرسنه در خانه خالی برخوان  
عقل باور نکند کز رمضان اندیشد

When a man with a burning thirst reaches a limpid spring,  
Think not that he will care for a mad elephant.

When a hungry infidel is in an empty house at table  
Reason will not believe that he cares for the Ramadan.'

The king, being pleased with this sally, exclaimed: 'I make thee a present of the negro. What am I to do with the girl?'

He replied: 'Give the girl to the negro because that half is also due to a dog of which he has consumed the other half.'

هرگز آن را به دستی میسند  
که رود جای ناپسندیده  
تشنه را دل نخواهد آب زلال  
نیم خورده دهان گندیده

The thirsty heart does not wish for limpid water  
Half of which was consumed by a fetid mouth.  
How can the king's hand again touch  
An orange after it has fallen into dung?



## Story 41

Iskandur Rumi (Alexander), having been asked how he had conquered the east and the west, considering that the treasures, territories, reigns and armies of former kings exceeded his own and they had not gained such a victory, replied:

'Whatever country I conquered by the aid of God the most high, I abstained from distressing its population and spoke nothing but good of the king.'

بزرگش نخوانند اهل خرد  
که نام بزرگان به زشتی برد

The intelligent will not call him great  
Who speaks ill of the great.

All this is nothing as it passes away:

Throne and luck, command and prohibition, taking and giving.

Injure not the name of those who have passed away

In order that thy own name may subsist.



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