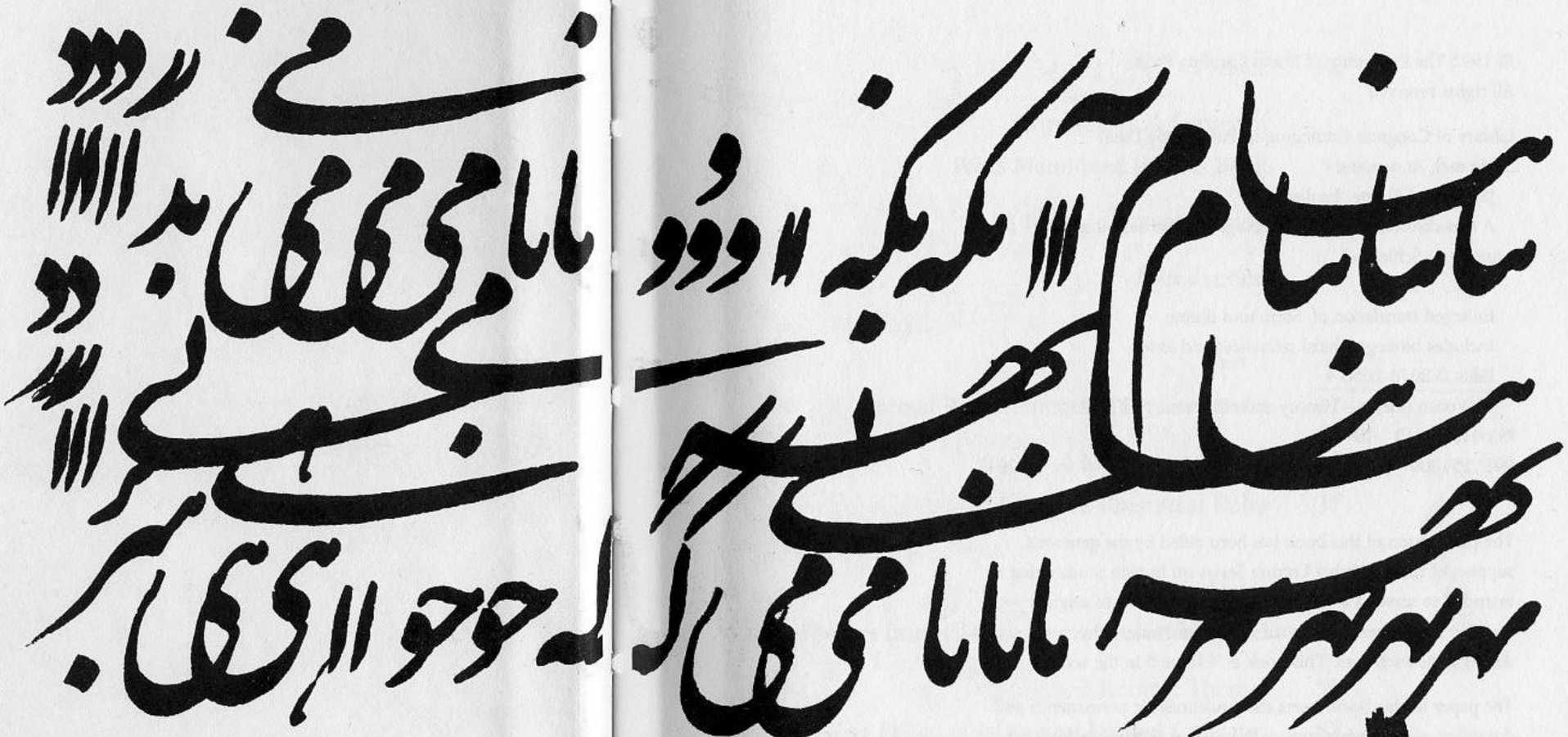

In the name of Him

who has no name,

and shows Himself at

every name you call!

A Two-Colored Brocade

The Imagery of Persian Poetry

Annemarie Schimmel

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Contents

Preface vii

Chronological Survey of Poets Mentioned in This Book xi

A Note on Transliteration xxiii

Introduction 1

Part 1
Formal Requirements of Persian Poetry 17

1 Meter and Genres 19
2 Rhetorical Rules 37

Part 2
Themes from History, Literature, and Legend 53

3 Koranic Themes 55
4 The Pillars of Islam and Related Concepts 87
5 Themes from Early Islamic Times 99
6 Themes from Pre-Islamic Times 107
7 Themes from Islamic History 123
8 Ideal Loving Couples 129
9 Turk and Hindu 137
10 Poetical Geography 145

Part 3
The Book of Nature 153

11 Stones 155
12 The Garden of Delight 161
13 The Language of the Birds 177
14 Fantastic Beasts and Other Creatures 191
15 The Sky, the Wind, and the Sea 201

Part 4
Themes from Life and Letters 217

16 A Two-Colored Brocade 219
17 The Art of Calligraphy 227
18 From the Scholar's Bookshelf 245
19 Playing with Numbers 255
20 Colorful Things from the World around Us 263
21 Entertainment, Music, and Festivities 271
22 Courtly Games and Pastimes 283
23 Dreams, Reality, and Bells 291

Appendix 303

Notes 325

Bibliography 449

Index of Koranic Quotations 491

Index of Authors and Works 493

Index of Technical Terms and Concepts 507

General Index 523

Preface

This book developed out of a lecture series which I have been giving at Harvard for more than twenty years. These lectures were meant, in the first place, to introduce students without knowledge of Persian into the colorful world of Persian and Persianate poetry, for the endowment of my chair specified as one of its main goals the study and translation of the poetry of Ghalib, the famous nineteenth-century poet of Delhi, who wrote in Persian and Urdu. As his extremely complicated style can barely be understood by anyone who lacks a thorough grounding not only in the aesthetics of Persian poetry as it developed over nearly a millennium but also in general Islamic culture, I found it necessary to offer at least a condensed introduction into this immense field of poetical language.

My lecture notes crystallized, in 1984, into a German book, *Stern und Blume*, which constitutes the basis for this enlarged version. The German title alludes to a line by the Romantic poet Clemens Brentano:

> O Stern und Blume, Geist und Kleid,
> Lust, Leid und Zeit und Ewigkeit.
>
> O star and flower, spirit and garment,
> Joy, sorrow, time, and eternity.

To me these lines seemed to reflect perfectly the constant interplay of the form (garment) and the spirit as well as the opalescent character of Persian poetry which so often allows the interpretation of a verse on two or even more levels.

This interplay of form and meaning has always fascinated me ever since I started translating some of Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi's (1207–73) poems into German verse as a teenaged student. My interest in and love for Rumi has continued, and in fact increased, over the years, but other poets too have attracted me, especially Muḥammad Iqbal (1877–1938), the modern-

ist poet-philosopher of Indo-Pakistan. Later my fascination with Ghalib (1797–1869) led me into the history of earlier Urdu and Indo-Persian poetry. Beyond the highly sophisticated urban poetry of Iran, Muslim India, and Ottoman Turkey, however, I have enjoyed discovering poetry in the regional languages of Pakistan as well as popular Turkish poetry. Delighted listeners still hear the songs of Shah ʿAbdul Laṭif (1689–1752) in Sind and the simple songs of the Turkish mystical bard Yunus Emre (d. ca. 1321) in Turkey, and I share their pleasure.

But my interest in the poetical language, the symbolism, the rhetorical aspects of Persian and, in a larger context, Islamic poetry has still another reason. When one translates specimens of this poetry poetically into one's mother tongue one realizes time and again how difficult it is for an untutored German- or English-speaking reader to understand the images, the numerous allusions to the Koran and to the heroes of classical Arabic and Persian history, and the role which language as language plays in this poetry—a language that is elaborated as if the finest work of a goldsmith. On the other hand, the feelings expressed in this poetry are often measureless; love and unfulfilled longing, adulation and satire are expressed in metaphors and hyperbole that seem strange, if not absurd, to a "sober" modern reader.

To smooth the Western reader's approach to this art I have thought it useful to collect whatever material seemed interesting to me: verses which I found simply delightful; others in which images appear that are not exactly compatible with modern taste; and, of course, many verses that seem to me typical expressions of this or that poetical interpretation of life and world. The thousands and thousands of notes I gleaned while reading poetry over the years have contributed to the growth of this book. Yet these are only minute droplets from an immense ocean, and every lover of Persian, Turkish, and Urdu poetry can immediately add other examples to augment the ones I offer here. For, as Mir Dard says:

> How to describe the curls of the friend?
> They are so long . . . and life is so short!

I am lucky in that I have always found friends with whom I could discuss poetry. Thus I came to know the neighborhoods of Istanbul through verses that classical and modern Turkish poets had composed about their beloved

city, and my journeys through the deserts of Sind have been much enlivened by the recitation of poetry by my travel companions, as have been travels through the mountains of Afghanistan or long drives to the medieval Muslim cities in the Deccan. The same happened in the rose gardens of Shiraz and under the starry skies of Bangladesh. Poetry was in the air, was part and parcel of life, and a well-placed verse could enchant everyone, be it a member of the Pakistani government or an old illiterate woman in a Turkish village.

Because I have experienced Persian and Persianate poetry as a living force I have not attempted to construct literary theories but rather tried simply to show some of its peculiarities in the hope that the reader will learn to enjoy the variegated colors and forms of this art.

I have to apologize for two things. First, as the book was published first in German, the reader will find many references to Goethe, whose understanding of the spirit of Persian poetry was much superior to that of many learned scholars, and also references to Rückert, the ingenious orientalist-poet who, through his poetical translations from Arabic, Persian, Sanskrit, and many other languages, fulfilled in the German-speaking areas Herder's dream of a "world literature." English-language poetry does not have as strong a tradition of Persian influences and thus offers few cogent passages that might be more familiar to readers of the present edition. I hope they will be content, instead, with my translations from the German.

The second point is that only a few works of Persian, Turkish, or Urdu literary criticism are mentioned in the bibliography. But as the book is intended for the "general reader" who is not acquainted with these languages, I felt justified in offering only a small selection among them.

It is impossible to thank all those whose remarks have contributed to the growth of this book. Special gratitude, however, is due to William Chittick, who kindly read the whole manuscript in April 1990, and to Laura Oaks, gentlest of editors.

Cambridge, Massachusetts
29 May 1990

Chronological Survey of Poets Mentioned in This Book

940	d. Rudaki, the master of the first, simple Persian lyric poetry at the Samanid court of Bukhara.
977–981	d. Daqiqi, who for the first time elaborated parts of the ancient Iranian heroic epic, the *Shāhnāma*.
1001	d. Kisa'i of Merw, an author who composed graceful lyrics at the Samanid court.
1020	d. Firdausi, author (taking up the task where Daqiqi had left off) of the heroic epic *Shāhnāma*, which comprises some 50,000 verses. He had worked in Ghazna at the court of Maḥmud of Ghazna.
	The following poets also had their center in Ghazna in the next two decades:
1037	d. Farrukhi, at an early age; he was an outstanding author of panegyrical poetry in elegant and smooth style.
1039	d. ʿUnṣuri, Farrukhi's master in poetry.
1040	d. ʿAsjadi, another panegyrist at the Ghaznawid court.
About 1040	d. Manuchihri Damghani, famous for his *qaṣīdas* and *musammaṭ* poems.
At about the same time	ʿAyyuqi composed the romantic epic *Warqa and Gulshāh*; somewhat later Gurgani (died after 1054) wrote the epic poem *Wīs and Rāmīn*.

Before 1072	d. Azraqi, known as a lyric poet at the Seljukid court.
Shortly afterward	d. Qaṭran, in Azarbaijan, who was noted for his extraordinarily artificial verses.
Between 1072 and 1077	d. Naṣir-i Khusrau, the Ismaili poet and philosopher; his philosophically tinged *qaṣīdas* are of great stylistic power.
1089	d. ʿAbdullah-i Anṣari, mystic of Herat and author of a small prayer book in mixed poetry and prose.
About 1091	d. Abu'l-Faraj Runi, the first known poet at the Ghaznawid court in Lahore.
After 1114	d. Raduyani.
1122	d. ʿOmar Khayyam, mathematician and astronomer, whose quatrains (*rubāʿiyyāt*) are among the best-known specimens of Persian poetry in the West, although his authorship is not yet fully established.
About 1125	d. Amir Muʿizzi, an author of elegant panegyrics at the Seljukid court.
1126	d. Aḥmad Ghazzali, whose mystical doctrines about the spiritual love relations between lover and beloved influenced much of later Persian lyrics.
1131	d. Masʿud ibn Saʿd-i Salman, the most important early Persian poet of Lahore.
	d. Sana'i, in Ghazna. A prolific court poet and lyricist, he is mainly known for his mystico-didactic epic, *Ḥadīqat al-ḥaqīqat*.
Between 1143 and 1148	d. Adib Ṣabir.
1148	d. ʿAmʿaq Bukhari.
After 1157	d. Niẓami ʿAruḍi, author of the *Chahār Maqāla*, which deals, inter alia, with the profession of the poet and the prerequisites for poetry.

About 1177	d. Rashid Waṭwaṭ, "the Bat," known for his artistic panegyrics, mainly for the Khwarizmshah in Central Asia.
About 1190	d. Anwari, the most famous panegyrist of the later Seljukids; his *qaṣīdas* have often been imitated.
1191	d. Suhrawardi, the "Master of Illumination" (*shaykh al-ishrāq*), a mystical philosopher; by execution, in Aleppo.
1199	d. Khaqani of Shirwan, the uncontested master of highly complicated *qaṣīdas*, endowed with an apparently infinite talent for inventiveness.
1201	d. Ẓahir Faryabi, in Tabriz, a panegyric poet whose verses were often taken as models by later poets.
1203	d. Niẓami of Ganja, the unsurpassed master of romantic epics; his *Khamsa* (Quintet), imitated ever since, has greatly influenced poetical imagery as well as miniature painting.
1209	d. Ruzbihan-i Baqli, in Shiraz, who wrote on mystical love and interpreted the sayings of the martyr-mystic al-Ḥallaj.
1220	Mongol invasion of eastern Iran.
	It is likely that Fariduddin ʿAṭṭar, lyrical poet, hagiographer, and author of the best-known mystical *mathnawīs*, died during this year.
After 1230	d. ʿAufi, to whom we owe the first major collection of biographies of Persian poets.
1240	d. Ibn ʿArabi, the *magister magnus* of theosophical Sufism, in Damascus. His formulations and thoughts have largely tinged the language of later mystically oriented poetry.
After 1267	d. Lal Shahbaz Qalandar, ecstatic mystic, in Sehwan, Sind.

1273	d. Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi, in Konya, Anatolia (Rum). Hailing from the area of Balkh, he settled in Konya and is famed for his ecstatic lyrical *Dīwān*, of some 36,000 verses, and his didactic poem known simply as *The Mathnawī*.
1289	d. Fakhruddin ʿIraqi, in Damascus, a master of mystical love poetry and author of a booklet on mystical love.
1292	d. Muṣliḥuddin Saʿdi, in his hometown, Shiraz, at a great age. He is the author of delightful lyrical verses, some *qaṣīdas*, and the didactic epic work *Būstān* (Garden) and of the *Gulistān* (Rose Garden), written in mixed poetry and prose—a work famed for its elegance, which has introduced generations of readers in both East and West into the Persian language and ways of life.
1298	d. Auḥadi Kirmani, author of mystical quatrains.
1320	d. Maḥmud-i Shabistari, author of the mystical epic *Gulshan-i rāz* (Rosegarden of Mystery), which has attracted frequent commentary.
1321	d. Yunus Emre, the Anatolian bard. He is the first representative of popular religious poetry in Turkish.
1325	d. Amir Khusrau, the "Parrot of India," in Delhi. He was a versatile lyricist, musician, author of a "Quintet," and inventor of the genre of *mathnawīs* dealing with contemporary events. His witty puns seem to foreshadow some peculiarities of the later "Indian style."
1328	d. Amir Ḥasan Sijzi, in Daulatabad (Deccan); like his friend Amir Khusrau, he was a disciple of the Chishti mystic Niẓamuddin Auliya and wrote sweet lyric poetry.

1338	d. Auḥaduddin Maraghi, noted for his *mathnawī* entitled *Jām-i Jam*.
1350	d. Żiaʾuddin Nakhshabi, in northern India; his main fame rests upon his version of the *Ṭūṭīnāma* (Book of the Parrot).
Between 1352 and 1361	d. Khaju Kirmani, known as a lyrical poet and author of a romantic epic, *Humāy and Humāyūn*.
1368	d. Ibn-i Yamin, famous for his *qiṭʿas*, "fragments."
1371	d. ʿImad-i Faqih Kirmani, author of lyrical and didactic works.
At about the same time	d. ʿUbayd-i Zakani, a satirist famous mainly for his small epic poem *Mūsh u gurba* (Mouse and Cat).
1371	d. Salman-i Sawaji, a fine lyricist who apparently composed the first *sāqīnāma*.
1389	d. Muḥammad Shamsuddin Ḥafiẓ, in his native town, Shiraz. He is rightly praised as the greatest Persian lyric poet, and the meaning of his verse—as expression of worldly feelings, as religious poetry, or even as political criticism—has been discussed by generations of Persian, Turkish, and Indian scholars. To this day, orientalists have not yet agreed on the "correct" interpretation. But there is no doubt that Goethe's admiration for him was perfectly justified.
About 1400	d. Kamal Khujandi, the lyrical poet.
1405	d. Nesimi, the Turkish Ḥurufi poet, cruelly executed in Aleppo.
1422	d. Gesudaraz, mystical poet, in Gulbarga, Deccan.

Between 1424 and 1427	d. Bu Isḥaq al-Aṭʿimma, who gained fame from his parodies of traditional imagery by using descriptions of foodstuff.
1431	d. Niʿmatullah Kirmani, the Sufi master; his thought and teachings spread widely in Iran and India.
1433	d. Qasim al-Anwar, the mystical poet.
1436	d. ʿIṣmat Bukhari, lyricist and panegyrist.
1448	d. Fattaḥi. His original name was Yaḥya Sibak. His allegories—*Ḥusn u dil* (Beauty and Heart) and *Dastūr-i ʿushshāq* (Rules of the Lovers)—were imitated in Turkey and India, especially in early Deccani literature.
1449	d. ʿArifi. His small epic poem *Gūy u chaugān* (Ball and Mallet) was often copied during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.
1453	d. Shahi Sabzawari, a lyric poet, musician, and calligrapher whose poetry was highly appreciated at the courts of Iran and India.
1462	d. Laʿli, the last independent ruler of Badakhshan.
1492	d. Maulana Jami, in Herat at the Timurid court. An extremely versatile poet who composed lyrics, seven epics, and mystical and hagiographical works as well, he was an unsurpassable master of wordplay and elegant, sophisticated diction. He is considered the last classical poet of Iran and deeply influenced the development of Persian lyrics in India.
Around 1500	The new political constellation began, shifting the center of gravity of poetry from Iran proper to Turkey and Muslim India, for in 1501 the young Ismaʿil the Safavid had introduced the Shia as state religion in Iran, a religio-political situation that has continued to the present day. Ismaʿil himself wrote poems in Turkish, while his adversary, the Ottoman Sultan Selim (called Yavuz, "the Grim"), composed Persian poetry; the last Mamluk ruler of Egypt, Qanṣauh al-Ghuri, who was defeated by Selim in 1516, also composed Turkish verse. In the East, Babur founded the empire of the Grand Mughals in India in 1526; he too wrote verses in Turkish and in Persian, as did his Timurid ancestors and, later, his descendants.

1501	d. Mir ʿAli Shir Nawaʾi, a vizier at the Timurid court of Herat; he is known for his literary works in his mother tongue, Chaghatay Turkish, which was widely spoken and used in literature in eastern Iran and northern India.
1506	d. Sultan Ḥusayn Bayqara of Herat, who wrote lyrical verses in Chaghatay.
1509	d. Necati (Nejati), in Istanbul, a lyric and panegyric writer.
1512	d. Mesiḥi, in Istanbul; he is mainly famed for his Spring Ode.
1514	d. Cafer Çelebi, in Istanbul.
1519	d. Baba Fighani, in Shiraz; his soft, melting lyrical verses were much loved and imitated.
1529	d. Hilali, author of an epic poem *Shāh u gadā* (King and Beggar), in Herat.
1535	d. Meʾali, a witty Turkish poet, in Istanbul.
1551	d. Qaḍi Qadan, the first mystical poet in the Sindhi language, in Sehwan, Sind.
1556	d. Humayun, the second Mughal ruler, in Delhi; he was succeeded by his young son Akbar, under whom Persian poetry in India took a new turn.
	d. Fuzuli, a multitalented Turkish poet who also wrote in Arabic and Persian; his work is a trove of witty and elegant allusions and expressions.

1561 d. Bayram Khan, Humayun's generalissimo from a Turcoman family; he wrote in Turkish and Persian.

1563 d. Faẓli, the author of an epic *Gül u bülbül*, in Istanbul.

1580 d. Qasim-i Kahi, allegedly at the age of more than a hundred years. He had come to India from Afghanistan. His fame rests upon his very witty comparisons.

1591 d. ʿUrfi of Shiraz, in Lahore; his *qaṣīdas* are among the most impressive Persian poems and have influenced Turkish poetry as well.

1595 d. Fayżi, ʿUrfi's rival at the Mughal court. He was Akbar's favorite and included some Indian themes in his epics.

1600 d. Baqi (Baki), in Istanbul; the most famous and powerful *qaṣīda* writer of Turkey.

1612 d. Naẓiri, lyric and panegyric writer, in India.

1615 d. Ẓuhuri, at the court of Bijapur in the Deccan.

1627 d. Emperor Jahangir.

d. Ṭalib-i Amuli, Jahangir's court poet.

d. The Khankhanan ʿAbdur Raḥim, the former generalissimo and most generous patron of poets and artists, who was himself a poet in Persian, Turkish, and Hindi.

1635 d. Nefʿi, mainly known as a satirist, in Istanbul.

After 1640 d. Ghawwaṣi, in the Deccan; he was one of the major writers in Deccani Urdu at the court of Golconda.

1651 d. Kalim, in Kashmir. He is probably the finest representative of the "Indian style."

1661 d. Ghani Kashmiri, Kalim's friend, also in Kashmir.

d. Sarmad, the eccentric convert, a friend of the heir apparent Dara Shikoh (executed 1659) and composer of melancholy quatrains; he was executed for heresy.

1670 d. Fani Kashmiri.

1675 d. Shaukat Bukhari, in Iran.

1677 d. Ṣaʾib, in Iran; he had stayed for some time in India, and his succinct verses have often been quoted and copied.

1689 d. Khushḥal Khan Khattak, in the Northwest Frontier of India, a Pathan leader, warrior, and poet in his native tongue, Pashto.

1692 d. Sulṭan Bahu, Panjabi folk mystic, in Jhang.

1697 d. Naṣir ʿAli Sirhindi, known for his extremely convoluted style.

1707 d. Emperor Aurangzeb, the last powerful Mughal ruler.

1707 or later d. Wali, the Deccani poet; he followed Jami's model, and his delightful poetry influenced emerging north Indian Urdu poetry.

1721 d. Mirza ʿAbdul Qadir Bedil, in Delhi. His style in his lyrics and his prose works often seems incomprehensible. He was never appreciated in Iran but became the favorite poet of the Afghans and the Tajiks.

1725 d. ʿAbdul Jalil Bilgrami, a versatile Indian littérateur.

1730 d. Nedim, in Istanbul; he was one of the most charming poets in the Ottoman "Tulip Period."

1752 d. Shah ʿAbdul Laṭif, the most famous mystical poet in Sindhi; in Bhit Shah, Sind.

1754 d. Bullhe Shah of Qasur, ecstatic Panjabi poet.

1756 d. Khan-i Arzu, the "lawgiver of Urdu poetry," in Lucknow.

1758 d. Naṣir Muḥammad ʿAndalib, in Delhi; he was a mystic and the author of a long allegorical novel.

1763 d. Siraj Aurangabadi, one of the finest Urdu mystical love poets.

1766 d. ʿAli Ḥazin, in Benares; he was a refugee from Iran and extremely critical of Indo-Persian poetry.

1781 d. Mirza Sauda, the famous satirist of Urdu, in Lucknow.

1783 d. Hatif-i Iṣfahani; his *Tarjīʿband* is still a favorite with Sufis.

1785 d. Mir Dard, son of ʿAndalib, in Delhi. He is the author of the only truly spiritual Urdu verse.

1786 d. Azad Bilgrami, in Aurangabad. He composed Arabic hymns in honor of the Prophet and wrote historical studies and interesting Persian poetry.

1799 d. Ġalib Dede, in Istanbul. He was the head of the Mevlevihane of Galata and author of a romantic epic, *Hüsn u aşk* (Beauty and Love).

1810 d. Mir Taqi Mir, in Lucknow at a great age. A native of Delhi, he is considered the greatest lyric poet in early Urdu.

1815 d. Momin, a good lyric poet in Urdu, in Delhi.

1826 d. Sachal Sarmast, an ecstatic mystical bard in Sind.

1838 d. Nasikh, known for his complicated style in Urdu, in Lucknow.

1854 d. Qa'ani, court poet and one of the great masters of the Persian language; in Tehran.

1869 d. Mirza Asadullah Ghalib, in Delhi. His *Urdu Dīwān* is complicated but very much loved in India and Pakistan, although he himself preferred his Persian verse, which occupies the major part of his literary output and shows the strong influence of Bedil.

1905 d. Dagh, refined Urdu poet, in Hyderabad, Deccan.

1914 d. Ḥali, in Delhi. Author of the famous *musaddas* "Ebb and Flood of Islam," he gained great fame and was very critical of traditional Urdu poetry.

1936 d. Mehmet Akif, author of the Turkish national anthem.

1938 d. Muḥammad Iqbal, in Lahore. His Persian and Urdu poems contain new themes while transforming traditional poetical motifs; his main subject is the development of individuality, not a mystical unification of the soul with the divine ocean.

1958 d. Yahya Kemal Beyatli, the last classical Turkish poet; and Asaf Halet Çelebi, surrealistic Turkish poet; both in Istanbul.

A Note on Transliteration

Even the most accurate transliteration does not help much if one is not acquainted with the language which is transliterated. That is what I realized when a budding American poet came to my office because he wanted to learn something about the poetry of Heifetz—it took me some time to discover that he was interested in Ḥafiẓ. Some of my readers will perhaps be disappointed that I am following the traditional way of transliterating Persian, that is, that I write *gul*, not *gol*, and *Ḥafiẓ*, not *Ḥāfez*. But at the time that most of the verses discussed here were composed, the rose was indeed pronounced *gul*—otherwise the Turkish development into *gül* would be impossible. That holds true for the short *u* as it does for short *i*, which is nowadays often transcribed as an *e*.

On the other hand, an important distinction in classical Persian was lost in the heartland of Iran while it was (and is) preserved in areas of Afghanistan, Tajikistan, and Indo-Pakistan: that between *maʿrūf* and *majhūl* vowels, whereas *e* and *o* have been united with *i* and *u* in modern standard Persian. Nowadays *shīr* means both "milk" and "lion," but in the eastern dialects the lion is still *shēr*. It is necessary to know these distinctions when one studies the rhymes and puns in classical Persian. One has to remember that in the days of Saʿdi and Rumi a word like *fīrūz* was pronounced *fērōz*. Although it is now normal to transcribe the letter *qāf* as *gh*, it appears here in its traditional form, *q*, which is in particular important in Arabic loan words: *qibla* should not be written as *ghebleh*, etc.

A Two-Colored Brocade

Introduction

In a conversation with a leading Persian scholar I once mentioned my interest in and love for minerals and crystals. That prompted him to remark that he now better understood my interest in Persian poetry. This may sound somewhat absurd—for what could be the common denominator for crystals and Persian poems? Yet it seems to me that this combination is perfectly correct. More than one literary critic has discovered something "gemlike" in the artfully elaborated symbolism, the harmonious choice of images, and the precious character of classical Persian poetry (which also comprises, for our purposes, classical Ottoman and Urdu poetry, as both traditions are unthinkable without Persian models).

Rainer Maria Rilke, with his amazing insight into the spiritual world of the East, speaks in his *Sonnets to Orpheus* of "wie in Glas / eingegossene Gärten von Isphahan und Schiras"—"Gardens of Isfahan and Shiraz as if they were encased in glass."[1] It is this "crystalline" character of Persian poetry which induced Goethe to write that "das höchste Vorwaltende," the highest guiding principle of Persian poetry, is the *Geist*,[2] mind (in a different interpretation of *Geist* one could also say "refined wit"). The ideal of the poets was not the spontaneous, as it were, "vegetabilian" growth of a poem; rather, every verse should be a closed unit, fastidiously completed like a piece of jewelry or polished to perfection like a flawless gem. Like a crystal every verse should reflect the light in different colors, so that a constant interplay between the real and the surreal, the sensible and the supersensible, the this-worldly and the otherworldly sphere, is maintained. For at least in lyric poetry these two spheres are completely interlocked—which causes much trouble and soul-searching for the interpreter and even more for the translator.

Again from the world of jewelry comes an image which Persian poets have used time and again for their art: they speak of "piercing pearls."[3] Each verse resembles a priceless pearl which is then beautifully "strung" on the thread of

the rhyme to be offered to the listener or reader. This expression translates the true meaning of the word for poetry, *naẓm*, "ordering." Whereas prose is something "scattered," *nathr*, one has to arrange the pearls in a poem "like the necklace of the Pleiads" in order to "adorn the bride Meaning."

Hans Heinrich Schaeder has rightly pointed out that Persian poetry has nothing in common with the kind of *Erlebnislyrik* to which we have become used in German literature at least from the days of Klopstock in the eighteenth century,[4] nor has it any similarity with English Romantic poetry. Persian poetry is perhaps comparable to medieval traditional urban verse as it was produced by the Meistersingers according to established rules—a craft rather than an inspired art. An even better comparison would be with the Metaphysical Poets, in the first place John Donne. When I was translating John Donne's poems into German verse[5] it seemed to me that it would be much easier to reproduce his love poetry in classical Persian poetical style than to try a modern German version: his use of learned metaphors, of most skillfully arranged images and comparisons, of sophisticated poetical forms, seemed to me almost like "translations" of verses composed by his Persian-writing contemporaries at the Safavid court in Iran or at the Mughal court in Agra and Lahore.

Just as one needs to be aware of the immense wealth of allusions in Donne's verse, one needs to know the entire complicated system of symbols and signs that are at the basis of Persian poetry. Only then can it be fully enjoyed. One must also know the roots of Islamic culture and history, for just as occidental poets have reverted for centuries to figures from classical antiquity and have expressed the conflicts and problems of their own times by referring to Oedipus, Iphigenia, or Orpheus, so Persian poets possess a basic treasure of allusions which has barely changed over the centuries and is always known to the audience. A single expression could conjure up a whole story and one single word may evoke a plethora of related meanings. This basic poetical vocabulary has been refined and embellished in the course of the centuries in the hands of master after master, even though one can discover specific trends and rhetorical fashions at certain points in history or in certain places.

In the "Indian style" of Persian poetry,[6] that is, from the late sixteenth century onward, a number of new metaphors and images were added to the poetical treasure house, many of them reflecting the meeting of Indo-

Muslim civilization with new foreign influences. From this point, metaphors from previous times often become twisted, broken, and reordered in unexpected ways so that mannerist effects can be observed; the ideal was—as Naẓiri says—to "find a farfetched meaning, a rare rhyme."

A Persian poem—and especially the *ghazal*, the short lyric poem—is not meant to describe exactly this or that state of mind or to tell of the poet's personal situation in such a way that one can speak of a unique experience. Rather, as one of the leading literary critics of Urdu, Dr. Syed Abdullah, has correctly stated, "the *ghazal* is not meant to explain and illuminate the poet's feelings; on the contrary, it is meant to veil them."[7] It seems to me that one should carefully listen to such remarks from Pakistani literary critics and their colleagues from the greater Persianate world, as their approach can teach us much of the cultural situation of that literature, of which most Westerners are unaware. Few people realize that poetry was, and to some extent still is, a most important part of cultural life in the East; it was not something for specialists but rather a form of expression that was loved, and to a certain degree practiced, by nobles and villagers alike. That not all poetical utterances reflected the same lofty feelings as those which we encounter in the best *ghazals* goes without saying—there is no lack of coarse satire or "facetiae."

However, we are most concerned with the poems which appear to be quintessential expressions of refined Persian culture, poems which allow the reader a number of possible interpretations. This ambiguity is intended; in fact it is one of the most fascinating aspects of this art. One may think of the colorful tiles in Persian mosques, which look different at every hour of the day and are often reflected in little ponds, where their mirrored images assume still other colors to delight the patient spectator. Similarly one has to look at poems in different moods and at different hours in one's life to grasp (perhaps!) the intended meaning.

Such ambiguity may of course be ascribed to the pressure to hide one's real thoughts from those in power. This "escapism" seems typical of literatures that develop under "despotic" regimes, as Goethe remarked with deep insight in his *Noten und Abhandlungen*.[8] It often takes considerable time to find out whether one is dealing with a love poem, a prayer, or a "political" poem, and hidden allusions to yet other spheres of life may escape the untutored reader. Thus when Ḥafiẓ complains that a friend did not send

him a letter "to catch his heart's bird with chainlike script" (see below), one may understand this as one of the numerous complaints of a lover waiting for a word from his beloved, or of a Sufi hoping for a sign of Divine grace. But the word "chainlike" conveys that the expected letter is in *musalsal*, "chained" script, which is typical of the chancellery style: the poet is waiting for good news from an office, perhaps from the prince himself.[9] This example shows that the reader and translator need an inquisitive mind and much patience, which may account for the very small number of good translations that introduce the Western reader into both the form and the meaning of this poetry.

The general tendency in dealing with these "glass flowers" of poetry has been to reproduce "poetically" highly sophisticated lyrics according to their meaning or whatever the translator thinks their meaning is. Thus in translation Ḥafiẓ's Turkish cupbearer might degenerate into a waiter or even into a barmaid, his complicated yet perfectly transparent sentences become dissolved into more or less "intoxicated" stammering, and his very terse, crystalline verses sprawl into diffuse strophic compositions. Even the first German translator of Ḥafiẓ, Joseph von Hammer, complained of these tendencies,[10] and one can also observe them in A. J. Arberry's useful anthology of Ḥafiẓ's poems rendered into English.[11]

A more recent problem in the interpretation of Persian lyrics is that the younger generation of Western-educated Persians or Pakistanis often have little knowledge of their literary traditions, and besides, many Persian, Urdu, or Turkish words have changed in meaning in the course of nearly a millenium, as has happened in German or English as well.[12] Misreadings and wrong interpretations are often the result of well-meant attempts to understand classical poetry and make it understood to others.

I have placed the name of Ḥafiẓ at the beginning of this study, for not only is he the undisputed master of the classical style of Persian lyric poetry, but it was his verse which first attracted European orientalists when the study of Persian and Turkish began in the mid-eighteenth century. The first Latin translations of some of his poems were published by Sir William Jones and Count Revitzky in 1771 and 1774,[13] but it was Hammer's translation of the entire *Dīwān* in 1812–13 that made the name of Ḥafiẓ famous in the German-speaking areas. This verse translation cannot be called graceful and is marred by a great number of printing mistakes, yet it seems closer to the

original text than many later so-called poetical versions. Hammer's book was the reason for Goethe's hegira into the "pure East" which resulted in his composition of the *West-Östlicher Divan*, in which he reflected the spirit of Ḥafiẓ and other Persian poets in poetical compositions of his own.[14] This collection of German poetry in various forms was complemented by his *Noten und Abhandlungen*, a collection of essays in which he critically approached Arabic and Persian history and literature as far as information was available to him in those days. He understood Ḥafiẓ with the insight of both a true poetic genius and a historian. His remarks not only about his "twin brother" Ḥafiẓ but about the spirit of Persian poetry as it developed under certain political conditions are as valid today as they were one hundred and fifty years ago.

Another scholar-poet inspired by Hammer was Friedrich Rückert,[15] an incredibly skillful poet and linguist, who would express his love for a poet by writing free adaptations before embarking upon translations which were equally correct from the philological and rhetorical viewpoint and faithfully mirrored the spirit of the poet in question. Rückert's volume *Östliche Rosen* is a particularly fine example of symbiosis between the Persian and the German spirit, and one can learn from these delightful poems more about the character of Persian lyrics than from many learned, heavily annotated scholarly works. The same holds true for his free variations on Jalaluddin Rumi's verse, which are still unsurpassed both in style and in content, although Rückert took much of his inspiration from Hammer's raw translations in his *Geschichte der schönen Redekünste Persiens* (1818). It was in a small collection of Rumi's verse that Rückert, in 1819, "planted" the literary form of the *ghazal* in the "German language garden" (see below); and Count Platen and other poets followed him in using the new form.

We also owe to Rückert a still unsurpassed description of Persian rhetoric during the last phase of its development: his analysis of the *Haft Qulzum* (Seven Oceans), a highly convoluted Indo-Persian work which was printed in 1821 shortly after its completion in Lucknow, where King Ghaziuddin Ḥaydar had installed the first letterpress with movable Arabic letters brought to India. Rückert produced a German translation and interpretation of the last, seventh "Ocean," which was replete with every conceivable rhetorical figure, with logogriphs and chronograms.[16] One admires not only his sharp mind but also his sense of humor, which was much needed for

dealing with a badly printed text whose translation would constitute a major problem even for a present-day scholar equipped with the entire toolbox of modern philology. Rückert's translation has remained the standard work in the field of Persian rhetoric. It was commissioned by his one-time teacher, Hammer himself, whose own remarks, both in his introduction to his translation of Ḥafiẓ and in his *Geschichte der schönen Redekünste Persiens*, are still valuable for the student of Persian poetic language.[17]

The tradition was continued in France by Garcin de Tassy,[18] but no one in Germany took up Hammer's and Rückert's example. German poets, however, produced a considerable amount of orientalizing verse which offered a rather distorted picture of "Persian" culture—akin to some of the "orientalist" painters who indulged in scenes from an imaginary world of the harem.[19] In the English-speaking world Edward FitzGerald's very free version of the *Rubāʿiyyāt* ascribed to ʿOmar Khayyam, which first appeared in 1859, shaped much of the popular Western conception of Persian life and literature. There is scarcely a language into which FitzGerald's verse has not been translated.[20]

On the scholarly side Clément Huart's edition of a small work on poetical language, Rami's *Anīs al-ʿushshāq* (1875), was and still is useful despite some mistakes in translation.[21] Two comprehensive studies in literary history which appeared shortly after the turn of the century have remained standard works to this day, even though one may occasionally disagree with a remark or an interpretation of a verse: E. J. W. Gibb's monumental *History of Ottoman Poetry*[22] and E. G. Browne's *Literary History of Persia*.[23] The numerous translations in Browne's work, from all genres of literature, make delightful reading. Nor should one forget the erudite work of Hermann Ethé in *Grundriss der iranischen Philologie*, which demonstrates his wide reading and knowledge of literary tradition.[24]

A new interpretation of Persian poetry was offered in 1927 by Hellmut Ritter in a small book that soon became a classic: *Über die Bildersprache Niẓāmīs*.[25] There he philosophically analyzes some themes in the work of the leading medieval epic poet Niẓami. Ritter's outlook and his terminology have helped to form the approach of a whole generation of Islamicists. That is true not only of his study on Niẓami but also of his numerous articles on Arabic and Persian manuscripts and on problems of mystical and profane love, as well as his magisterial analysis of ʿAṭṭar's work in *Das Meer der Seele*.

Ritter's *Bildersprache Niẓāmīs* was reviewed by Jan Rypka,[26] who would become the acknowledged master of analyzing rhetorical aspects of classical Persian and Turkish literatures. His *History of Iranian Literature* (1968) shows his vast erudition and knowledge of the historical sources, although the spiritual aspects of literature are given but little emphasis.[27] His disciples in Prague have continued his approach and produced valuable studies on Urdu (Jan Marek) and Tajik (Jiří Bečka) literature.

One of the finest interpretations of Persian poetry and of certain poetical images can be found in Alessandro Bausani's comprehensive works *Persia religiosa* and "Letteratura neopersiana" (1959, 1958). His studies on Indo-Muslim and Urdu literatures reflect a stupendous linguistic versatility and are very thought-provoking.[28]

I myself have tried to decipher various aspects of Jalaluddin Rumi's work time and again.[29] But it must be stressed that Rumi is not typical of classical Persian poetry. The greatest bard of mystical love in the Islamic Middle Ages and one of the most outstanding mystical poets of all times and religions, he is much more spontaneous in his—generally inspired—verse than "classical" poets. The paradox of having to express the incommunicable mystical experience of love in words colors his fiery lyrics and results in powerful and at times weird images. The flood of inspiration carries him away, and it seems difficult for him to dam it. Yet even in a state of ecstasy he shows an astounding mastery of all the rules of inherited rhetoric and uses extremely daring, though perfectly correct, puns and wordplay.

This latter aspect of Rumi's lyrics has been analyzed by J. Christoph Bürgel,[30] who in other works has similarly emphasized the interpretation of rhetorical effects in Persian and Urdu poetry. One example is his sensitive introduction to a selection of Ḥafiẓ's verse, to which he also contributed a good number of verse translations himself.[31] He can be considered one of the leading specialists in the field of Persian poetical language, especially of Ḥafiẓ and Niẓami.[32]

The highly erudite but idiosyncratic analysis of some of Khaqani's poems by the Swiss scholar Benedikt Reinert leads the reader into linguistic and mathematical realms.[33] At the other end of the spectrum of possible approaches, the French Iranologist C.-H. de Fouchécour's study of the description of nature during the first centuries of Persian poetry[34] is useful not only to the specialist but to anyone interested in the descriptive aspect of

Persian poetry. Without major philosophical speculations Fouchécour guides the reader through the development of certain favorite concepts and images from their first appearance in the verse of poets around the year 1000 to the beginning of the twelfth century.

Recently several new methods have been proposed for understanding and interpreting Persian poetry, and a considerable number of new books on individual poets, translations, and critical studies have appeared. Various methods have been applied, especially to Ḥafiẓ,[35] who has an irresistible attraction for interpreters, whether they use a traditional, or historical, or structuralist approach; others have tried to trace the richness of chronograms in a *ghazal*[36] or explain the *ghazal* as a mirror structure.[37] One should not overlook, in this connection, the numerous publications of the Persian Sufi master and psychiatrist Dr. Javad Nurbakhsh, who offers a welcome introduction into how the Sufi tradition interprets the poetical vocabulary.[38]

One question that is discussed time and again is, how can one understand the character of Persian poetry, and especially lyric poetry, at all? Is it "atomistic," such that each verse is closed in itself and can subsist without all the other verses? This impression of discrete "poetical pearls" is strengthened when one browses through the anthologies of Persian poetry as they were prepared for centuries in Iran and the countries under her cultural influence. In such collections it is conventional to demonstrate the greatness of a poet not by quoting an entire *ghazal* but rather by highlighting selected single verses which are regarded as outstanding. These anthologies are useful guides, if not to "literary history" in the strict sense, at least to a better understanding of the taste of those for whom this poetry was meant.[39] One may encounter there one ravishing line by a poet whose very name is never mentioned in a history of literature, simply because he produced only that one exquisite verse.[40]

On the other hand, when one concentrates upon a whole poem one is often tempted to call it "carpetlike"—much in consonance with Goethe's homage to Ḥafiẓ:

Dass du nicht enden kannst, das macht dich gross,
Und dass du nie beginnst, das ist dein Los.
Dein Lied ist drehend wie das Sterngewölbe,

Anfang und Ende immerfort dasselbe,
Und was die Mitte bringt, ist offenbar
Das, was am Ende bleibt und Anfangs war.[41]

That you cannot end, that is your greatness,
and that you never begin, that is your fate.
Your song is revolving like the starry sky,
beginning is the same as is the end,
and what is in the center, clearly shows
that what will remain in the end is what was there at the beginning.

The *ghazal* with its numerous images, which are apparently kept together only by the rhyme, reminds the reader often of a very finely woven garden carpet whose pictures, flowers, and arabesques should be seen against a larger background: each of them is meaningful, and yet the whole of its beauty is more than the sum of its parts.

One can similarly speak of the "description in tapestry," as Fouchécour does,[42] and others have also emphasized the musical quality of a poem in terms of themes in counterpoint which constitute the internal "polyphonic" unity of the *ghazal*.[43] It seems that comparing a *ghazal* to a piece of chamber music may give the Western reader a better impression of how such a poem can really be enjoyed than any comparison with a poem in the European post-Baroque tradition. Given themes are offered in variations, and rhythm and sound are central factors. To me, the verse of Ḥafiẓ has the same transparent beauty and harmonious perfection that Mozart's music has, and in Rumi I feel the same pressing, searching power as in Beethoven, whose passionate rhythms lead, in the end, to heights of spiritual joy. Furthermore, though music permeated European life, both in sophisticated urban circles and in the villages, it never played the same role in the East, where poetry was instead the "common language" of people in every walk of life. Scarcely a German villager could recite from Goethe's verse or quote an apt line of poetry in self-defense, but even the simple peasant in Iran or Afghanistan could draw upon a treasure-hoard of classical poetry.

But however one interprets Persian poetry—as a carpet, as music, as crystal or a chain of pearls—what is lacking is the "architectural" aspect. Classical Islamic literature has never developed a drama, and the structure

of poems—even of epics—lacks a truly dramatic element. To be sure, the plot of an epic poem like Niẓami's *Khusrau Shīrīn* can be highly dramatic, and the *qaṣīda* starts out from a specific vantage point to lead along well-arranged ways toward a goal; yet the true greatness of a poem consists in the perfect joining of images and figures of speech—an aspect, however, that is of necessity lost in translation. Even if some of the combinations are rendered verbatim into a foreign language, they can never convey the delightful opalescence and the graceful key-shifts which hinge on both the written letters and the sound patterns—and the impatient Western reader will find much of Persian poetry in translation pretty boring.

Furthermore, the background of Persian poetry consists of feelings whose extreme power appears to us as strange or excessive. Hammer is right when he says that "the poet's imaginative power outsoars the universe and himself."[44] Measureless adulation of a prince, expressed in hyperbole which seems to us absurd if not nonsensical, and measureless love are the most remarkable features. And to highlight them, emotions and abstract concepts are often concretized, even personalized, and a mysterious bond is created between the words and figures.

At the center of poetry stands someone who *can* never be reached, and *should* never be reached. It may be God, the Absolute Beloved, whose inscrutable will mankind has to accept lovingly and who is not to be found unless one goes the path of annihilation and divests oneself completely of personality or ego. On the political level it may be the prince, and the whims of the ruler can appear as incomprehensible as the fate decreed by the Divine Ruler; one must flatter him with the choicest and most novel comparisons and images and yet can never be sure how he will react and whether he will grant the poet some pearls from the "ocean of his generosity." This side of poetical language has led some orientalists, especially from Eastern European countries, to regard Persian poetry as a typical expression of a feudalist structure,[45] in which allegory can be used as an instrument to criticize social and political evils. The third possible manifestation of the unattainable central figure is the beautiful youth, the *shāhid*, "witness," a present witness to the invisible beauty of God which radiates through him.[46] He is the object of loving admiration and veneration, and he too can never be reached by his loving "worshiper."

To avoid misunderstanding about the person of the beloved, it must be

remembered that neither Persian nor Turkish has grammatical genders. Thus the beloved being can be interpreted as either male or female. In epics the beloved is usually feminine, but it is difficult to claim the same for lyric poetry, for the down that sprouts on the youthful friend's lips and cheeks is one of the most important ingredients in the description of beauty. Hammer's sober remark in his introduction to his translation of Ḥafiẓ's *Dīwān* echoes this same point: "[the translator] did not allow himself any changes in places which by no stretch of imagination could be pointing to feminine beauty, . . . [lest by making such changes] he would stumble into incongruities such as praising girls for their sprouting green beards."[47]

One may see in such terms a veiling tactic: it was of course impossible to allude openly to a feminine beloved, and one thus had to mention a boy's attributes when describing the beloved. Yet when one considers the cultural situation as a whole it makes more sense to keep the masculine gender in most cases. It may be that in rare cases a lady who lived in purdah might indeed have been the target of such a love poem because the longing poet did not want to endanger her. Certainly even the suspicion of a love affair—be it as little as an innocent, perhaps even involuntary exchange of glances—could result in the girl's suicide or her being killed by her enraged brothers.[48] The "dying from love" which is such a central theme in Persian poetry had a very real background. It was probably safer to fall in love with a bewitching picture and set out to seek the subject of the portrait—a theme that appears often in fairy tales and (predominantly) in epic poetry.[49]

Given the difficult situation of lovers, it was one of the poet's most important duties never to reveal the beloved's name. Tradition has it that the mystic Ḥallaj was executed because he had publicly divulged the secret of his love and union with God. But one can reveal such a secret only in death, as Persian poets have said in ever-changing images. That is why many of them have described the charms of their beloved but always repeat "I don't tell his [her] name," as can be seen in a playful little *ghazal* by the early Turkish poet Cafer Çelebi:

I love a sweetheart that delights me—I don't tell who it is.
Even though longing may oppress my heart—I don't tell who it is.
And even if they would cut me to pieces, small as ears—

the one who delights me, with rings in the ears—I don't say
who it is. . . .[50]

The basic theme of lyric poetry is the constant interplay between unchanging beauty (God, the cupbearer, the rose) and the ever-longing lover (the human being, the winebibber, the nightingale).

The lovers were created from the material of yearning (*niyāz*).
The beloved were created from the material of coquetry (*nāz*).[51]

That explains why so many contrasting pairs appear in Persian poetry, all of them manifesting the eternal play of Beauty and Love. It must be emphasized, though, that in the course of time this interplay was often seen as the play of the Primordial Love with itself. ʿIraqi in the thirteenth century, and Jami in the fifteenth, were the leading poets in this trend, which then became universal. But the motif of suffering, which is an integral part of love, remained central all through the history of Persian poetry, and it sometimes seems as if it were growing ever more important in the thought of later poets, who never ceased to invent images of increasing cruelty to describe the lover's plight.

The ambiguity of Persian poetry, mentioned earlier, has still another reason. The Koran rebukes poets, "who stray in every valley and do not do what they say" (Sura 26:226). Much of what our poets sang indeed belonged, in theological terms, to the sphere of the *ḥarām*, religiously prohibited things, such as wine or free love, and for that they were blamed by the more legalistically minded theologians and related groups.[52] Much of Persian poetry thus contains statements pertaining to the idea that the poet would rather *not* follow the injunctions of the law, that he would prefer to live as a *rind* or a *qalandar*, an intoxicated, free-roaming soul, to leave the city of intellect and rationality and wander into the desert of madness where no law applies. A poet might claim to color the prayer rug with wine, to exchange his prayer beads for an infidel's girdle, or even to spread his bed near the Kaʿba instead of piously and dutifully circumambulating the sacred place. This tension between legalism and spiritual freedom, between intellect and love, has colored Persian poetry to a large extent and has led to the adoption of a great number of images from the Zoroastrian and Christian environments (though often in a completely unexpected interpretation).[53] Such images

have been used through the centuries by even the most law-abiding writers. The poetry of Ayatullah Khomeini, which caused such a shock in the West in late 1989, is a typical expression of a tradition in which many images had completely lost their original meaning and become fossilized.[54]

The use of imagery taken from the sphere of the *ḥarām* was facilitated, at a rather early stage, by the Sufis. Under the influence of the mystics a complicated system of relations was developed by which each and every worldly image could be explained as a metaphor for something spiritual. The winehouse, *kharābāt*, is the primordial state of the universe, when the not-yet-created souls quaffed the wine of love and where they will return at the end of days; the dark tresses of the beloved represent the dark, earthly world, which is "beautifully decked out" (Sura 3:14) and therefore very dangerous for the seeker, who may be trapped in a snare-like curl; and so on. In later times detailed handbooks of such equations were published, and with their help even the most frivolous poem could be interpreted as an expression of mystical rapture or religious intoxication.[55]

It is understandable that Muḥammad Iqbal, like many other reformist writers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries,[56] very clearly perceived the danger inherent in the most delightful verses: those who read them might take the expressions at face value and understand every cup of wine as real wine, every longing for the beloved's embrace as factual, and thus would see nothing but sensual, lascivious amusement without being aware of the deeper layers of meaning.[57] That his fear was right becomes clear when one looks at the blatant misinterpretations of Ḥafiẓ in some of the "translations" that were produced in Western languages.

Yet it is certainly not necessary to study all the endless and often rather boring equations between wine and inspiration, between curls and earthly delight as they were produced by the commentators. In their ardor to approach the images from a philosophical-theological viewpoint they apparently were not completely aware that the word in itself possesses a certain translucence. Thus they set a heavy armor of metaphysical explanations around verses that are as fragile and flighty as butterflies. Goethe, being a poet, understood this secret better:

Das Wort ist ein Fächer und zwischen den Stäben
blickt ein Paar schöner Augen hervor . . .[58]

The word is a fan, and between its sticks
a pair of beautiful eyes looks forth . . .

The poetical word, rightly understood, both hides and reveals at the same time. The great poets of Iran and its neighboring area knew that very well. They understood the multiple layers of meaning concealed in a single word, for they were still deeply rooted in that Reality out of which all words grow:

Rose and mirror and sun and moon—
wherever we looked, there was only Your face.[59]

Ultimately, when reading Persian poetry one should not forget that the artistic forms are not ornamental additions but are part and parcel of the verse, since a thought gains its artistic and poetical value only when it is represented in an adequate form. When Michelangelo speaks of "la man che ubbidisce all'intelletto"—"the hand that obeys the intellect"—he expresses what Persian poets felt in their own field. Feelings and experiences have first to be filtered through the intellect and to be refined and purified until an absolutely flawless verse emerges, a verse that resembles the one drop of rose oil which is distilled from thousands of roses and whose fragrance never vanishes. True art is to create a masterpiece—be it only one single unforgettable line—by concentrating all feelings and experiences to gain the quintessence which is then offered in a crystalline vessel.

Such art can, however, easily degenerate into sheer mannerism in the hand of less gifted artists, where artificial rhymes and farfetched puns replace true poetry. And one has to admit, with all one's love for Persian poetry, that even major poets have violated the rules of good taste now and then for the sake of an unexpected rhyme.

But the truly great masters of this art were aware of the double quality of the poetical word, which veils and unveils, and it is not without reason that many Persian poets speak of their work as "weaving a festive dress for the bride Meaning." One can admire the wonderful fabric of the garment as one can admire the beauty of the bride hidden beneath it, and thus one can enjoy the verbal art of Persian poets as much as their way of expressing eternal feelings and ideas.

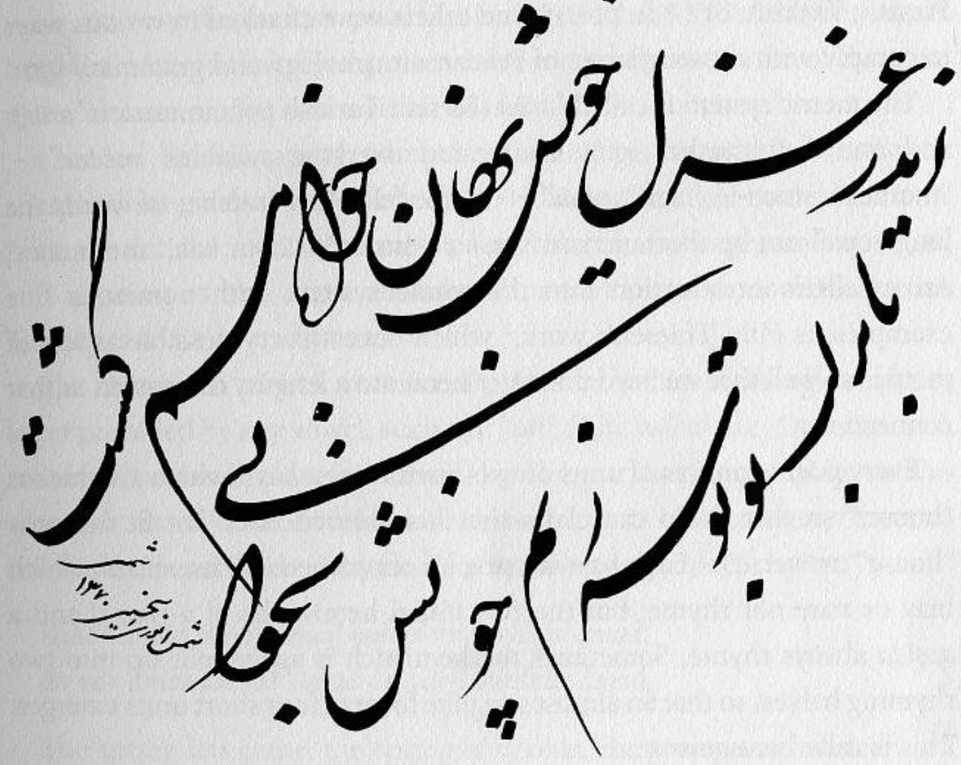
Friedrich Rückert best conveys the secret of Ḥafiẓ's verse when he writes in a German wordplay that is as Persian in spirit as Ḥafiẓ's own poetry:

Hafis, wenn er redet über Sinnliches,
scheint zu reden über Übersinnliches,
oder redet er, wo Übersinnliches
er zu reden scheint, nur über Sinnliches?
Sein Geheimnis ist unübersinnlich,
denn sein Sinnliches ist übersinnlich.[60]

When Ḥafiẓ talks about something sensual,
he seems to talk about something supersensual.
Or does he, when he apparently talks about supersensual things,
only talk about sensual things?
His mystery is unsupersensual,
for his sensual words are supersensual.

Part 1

Formal Requirements of Persian Poetry



I'd like to hide myself
in my poem, so that I
can kiss your lips when
you read it.

Among the formal requirements of Persian poetry[1] the most salient to the reader's eye and ear are metrical structures. To appreciate and—if one is reading the original verse—to understand a poem it is necessary to determine the meter of each poetical work. Classical Persian uses quantitative meters which were taken over from Arabic, where sixteen different meters were known and used. Some of these are almost never used in Persian, Turkish, or Urdu poetry, and others were changed in various ways to comply with the exigencies of Persian morphology and grammar.

The metric system is called *ʿarūḍ* (Persian-Turkish pronunciation *ʿarūż*), and one distinguishes long, short, and overlong syllables: *mādar* – ⏑, "mother"; *pisar* ⏑ –, "son"; *uftādʿ* – – ⏑, "he fell." In a number of words the long vowel can be shortened: *kāh* or *kah*, "straw"; *kūh* or *kuh*, "mountain." An excellent introduction into the whole system, with numerous fine examples, is Finn Thiesen's work,[2] which covers every possible aspect of metrics so well that we need not enter here into a lengthy discussion in that connection.

Every poem consists of units of two-lined verses, *bayt* (which also means "house," so that Rumi can claim that his beloved does not fit into any "house" or "verse").[3] Each *bayt* is made up of two hemistichs, *miṣraʿ*, which may or may not rhyme; but the two initial hemistichs of a *ghazal* and a *qaṣīda* always rhyme. Sometimes the hemistich is again split up into two rhyming halves, so that an almost songlike form of four short units emerges. This is called *musammaṭ*:

Sarmāya-i mastī manam | ham dāya-i hastī manam
bālā man u pastī manam | chūn charkh-i dawwār āmadam.

I am the capital of intoxication, and also the wet nurse of being,
I am high and lowliness, I came like the revolving sky.[4]

Thus says Rumi, who was fond of the form, which is reminiscent of four-lined Turkish folk poems (and can almost be scanned according to stress, as it had grown out of the rhythm of drums and other instruments).

Many poets had their favorite meters, and a special charm in good poetry is the perfect congruence of meter and content. Though classical poets, especially Ḥafiẓ, wrote their verse with such delightful fluency that barely any hiatus is felt, later poets often tried their hands at hard, "stony" (*sangīn*)

meters to prove that they were able to produce lengthy poems under the most difficult metrical conditions (and, if possible, with extremely rare rhyme words). On the other hand, one sees great masters who were able to reproduce conversation in everyday language in complicated meters which seem to disappear into the conversational tone: suffice it to think of the ease with which Rumi offers conversations in his *Mathnawī* or even in his lyric verse, or how the Turkish poet Mehmet Akif (d. 1936)[5] describes scenes from daily life so fluently that the reader is actually not aware of the strict metrical patterns that underlie his poems.

Classical Persian poetry comprises several genres which usually are sharply distinguished from each other. However, in all of them the rhyme plays the decisive role.[6] Rhymeless poetry is not found in premodern times, and rhyming is also often an integral part of prose in Arabic, Persian, Turkish, and Urdu traditions.

The rhyme can consist, as it usually does in Arabic, of a single rhyming letter preceded by any vowel, such as *l*: *ʿādil*, *fāḍil*, *bulbul*, etc. Or, as is much more frequent in Persian, it is formed by a long or overlong syllable, such as *-dam*, *-ār*, etc. One often finds a whole word, parts of a sentence, or even a full sentence matched in rhyme. This is called *radīf*, "over-rhyme."

Bahār āmad bahār āmad bahār-i mushkbār āmad,
ān yār āmad ān yār āmad ān yār-i burdbār āmad,

The spring has come, the spring has come, the spring that carries musk has come,
That friend has come, that friend has come, that friend that bears our load has come,[7]

is a verse which, besides being a nice *musammaṭ* (verse with internal rhyme) shows also some other technical peculiarities. The rhyme word is *-ār*, the words *-ār āmad* are the *radīf*.

The same rhyme should not be repeated too soon.

One sometimes wonders whether the use of certain rhyme patterns, especially in *qaṣīdas*, may not be connected with certain topics; but no study of this aspect of poetry has been made. It may also be that the convention of imitating famous models is the reason for the amazing number of long poems rhyming in *-ār* (alone or with added *radīf*).

The best known form in Persian and Persianate poetry is the *ghazal*, a short poem with monorhyme in the rhyme scheme *aa xa xa xa xa*, etc. Ideally it should comprise seven to twelve verses, but there are also shorter and longer *ghazals*, the short one often consisting of five *bayt*.

The literary form of the *ghazal* was introduced in Europe in 1819 by the German orientalist poet Friedrich Rückert, who offered the German reading public a superb poetical version of twenty-four *ghazals* by Maulana Rumi in German *ghazal* form. From that time onward the *ghazal* became an accepted literary form in German, just as the sonnet and ritornelle had already been adopted, and it enjoyed for several decades such a popularity among German poets (unfortunately mostly mediocre ones) that the sober author Karl Immermann satirized these poets in his famous lines

> Von den Früchten, die sie aus dem Gartenhain von Schiras stehlen,
> essen sie zu viel, die Armen, und vomieren dann Ghaselen.[8]
>
> They steal from its gardens the fruits of Shiraz,
> overgorge—poor souls!—and vomit ghazals.

The theme of the *ghazal* is love, be it worldly or divine, but to the untutored reader the poem often seems to lack a "logical" development. It appears to be bound together mainly by the rhyme, and Goethe is certainly not too far off the mark with his remark that "this form instead of collecting the spirit scatters it, as the rhyme points to completely different [and seemingly unconnected] things. That results in the poem's looking like a quodlibet, or prescribed end rhymes, but to produce something exquisite in this style, the best talents are required."[9]

In the Introduction I mentioned various metaphors for the structure of the *ghazal*—atomistic, carpetlike, musical, contrapuntal, crystalline. In certain cases, for instance in a few of Rumi's poems, a *ghazal* seems a logically closed entity in which one can easily observe a thought progress; in others he, like many of his compatriots, is simply carried away by meter and rhyme.

One may compare the *ghazal*, the lyric form par excellence, to chamber music. Even the most cruel images and the most heartrending sighs of the poet are formulated with such delicate verbal art that they do not hurt the reader's feelings but rather evoke in him a similar—usually melancholy—sensibility. As the *ghazal* expresses the never-changing human emotions—

love, suffering, longing, hope, and despair, the joy of spring, autumnal sadness—in traditional images in which as it were the experience of millions of human beings is distilled to a fragrant essence, the reader will inevitably find a verse which seems to be written exactly for his or her present situation, as if the poet had felt the reader's wishes and worries centuries ago. That is why the *Dīwān* of the greatest lyric poet, Ḥafiẓ, has been used for prognostication throughout the centuries. A verse by Ghalib, the major Indo-Muslim poet of the nineteenth century, could equally have been said by many of his predecessors:

> He [an admirer] heard my word's charm and said: "Amazing!
> I too knew that . . . it is as if it came straight out of my soul!"[10]

We have *ghazals* and fragments of *ghazals* from the earliest days of Persian literature, the tenth century, when Persian was developing more and more into a vehicle for higher literature after Arabic had dominated the culture since the Muslim conquest of Iran, from 651 onward. The greatest representatives of the art of the *ghazal* belong to the area of Shiraz and flourished during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries: Saʿdi and Ḥafiẓ, whose mausoleums adorn the city to this day. Among the seemingly infinite number of *ghazal* writers in both Iran and Muslim India one must also mention Amir Khusrau of Delhi and, at a later stage, Jami, the multifaceted author of Herat (d. 1492). After about 1600, poets in the "Indian style" (*sabk-i hindī*) enriched the *ghazal* tradition by introducing new themes and images, and in Ottoman Turkish as well as in Urdu the *ghazal* became a favorite of numerous writers. In both traditions, especially in Urdu, *ghazals* of great tenderness and beauty are still being composed. But modern Turkish writers consider the form to be stale and "escapist."

Some types of *ghazals* look to traditionally indecorous topics. There are *khamriyyāt*, "wine poems," and *kufriyyāt*, "poems of infidelity" (that is, verses in which the author shows himself as one who rejects all traditional religious inhibitions and boasts of his radical denial of faith), and *hazal*, "facetiae," poems whose language is anything but chaste and in which very matter-of-fact love affairs or coarse satire form the main content. It has been a source of great chagrin to staid historians of Persian literature that even Saʿdi, the author of the masterpiece of "educational" writing, the *Gulistān*, composed a volume of this latter kind of poems.[11]

The *qaṣīda* resembles the *ghazal* in its external form—it has a monorhyme and uses the same meters—but extends to a much larger number of verses. One may also say that it uses, as it were, a much stronger instrumentation, more a full orchestra than a chamber ensemble. The hyperbole is daring, the images often grandiose and sometimes very powerful. The masters of the *qaṣīda* are Anwari and Khaqani, who wrote in the twelfth century. In India, ʿUrfi (d. 1591) is the unsurpassable master of farfetched but impressive imagery in that form.

The contents of the *qaṣīda* can be praise, satire, or description, generally directed to a patron, worldly or spiritual. *Qaṣīdas* in which God and His wonderful works are described in ever more convoluted images are called *ḥamd*, "praise," or *tauḥīd*, "acknowledgment of God's unity." Another form is the *qaṣīda* in honor of the Prophet Muḥammad, *naʿt*, and at a somewhat later moment *qaṣīdas* in praise of the Shia imams and in particular ʿAli ibn Abi Ṭalib, the Prophet's cousin and son-in-law, the first imam of the Shia. These are called *manāqib*, as are *qaṣīdas* in honor of certain Sufi saints. But most *qaṣīdas* are devoted to rulers or to the poet's patrons or someone whose interest he hopes to awaken. The patron's qualities are not only duly emphasized but indeed overstressed, as the poet anticipates some remuneration for his efforts.

The ideal *qaṣīda* has a powerful first verse, the *maṭlaʿ*, by which the listener's interest should be aroused. This leads to the *tashbīb* (exordium), in which the poet may give a description of a natural scene—a garden in full bloom in spring, the first snow on the hills, or a charming love and/or drinking scene. This is followed by a transition, *gurīzgāh*, from the introduction to the praise of the patron, *mamdūḥ*, "the praised one." This transition is of great importance, as the writer must use all his skill to link a description of nature, or whatever it be, with that of the *mamdūḥ*'s laudable qualities. Did not the full moon that shone upon his own garden house remind him of the moonlike beauty of the patron, and the dewdrops that fell upon his rose petals adumbrate the silver which the *mamdūḥ*'s hand will (he hopes!) strew upon the poet's eyes? This would be a typical *gurīzgāh*.

The last part of the *qaṣīda* often contains long chains of anaphora which begin with the word *tā . . . tā*, "as long as." May—for instance—the good fortune of one's patron last

as long as the lovers' backs resemble the bow [because they are bent under the burden of unrequited love],
as long as the beloved's tresses resemble the noose . . .[12]

or

as long as at the time of autumn the garden turns yellow like orpiment,
as long as at the time of the spring breeze the garden turns green like verdigris . . . ,[13]

that is, forever.

In religious *qaṣīdas* God is implored to forgive the poet's sins, and the Prophet is asked for his hoped-for intercession at Doomsday.

A *qaṣīda* can extend over more than a hundred verses, and to make its structure clearer the poets may use *tajdīd-i maṭlaʿ*, "renewal of the introductory line": that is, a verse which reverts to the opening rhyme scheme *aa* and thus stands out from the general sequence *xa*. This was a good way to introduce a new topic. From later times one finds *qaṣīdas* with three or more secondary *maṭlaʿ*.

Just as the *ḥusn-i maṭlaʿ*, the "beauty of the introductory verse," was important in both *qaṣīdas* and *ghazals*, so too the last verse, *maqṭaʿ* (in *qaṣīdas* sometimes several verses), has a special importance, as the early Arab poets liked to close their *qaṣīdas* with exaggerated self-praise; the Persian and Persianate poets followed suit.[14] The Western reader is often shocked by the excessive self-aggrandizement which even otherwise modest poets may exert, as this boasting can at times assume grotesque dimensions. One should, however, not take it at face value or judge that a poet so excellent as ʿUrfi at Akbar's court was a megalomaniac because he indulged in such fantastic hyperbole as to dwarf any other poet. One must accept it as part of the literary tradition, as a kind of necessary play or a (sometimes admirable) contest.

This self-praise in the last verse is usually connected with the poet's mentioning his pen name, *takhalluṣ*. Thus Ḥafiẓ says:

Nobody has lifted the veil from the face of inner meaning like Ḥafiẓ
Ever since one first arranged the curls of the bride Speech.[15]

"Speech" is the lovely bride, behind whose bridal veil true meaning can be glimpsed. Ḥafiẓ claims to have been able to lift that veil more completely than anyone else.

The pen name was introduced at a rather early stage in Persian poetry, either to be mentioned for identification or, as we just saw, for self-praise. It was often chosen by the poet himself to emphasize one of his qualities or ideals; otherwise, especially in later times, it was given by his master in poetry or his mystical mentor. The name Ḥafiẓ means simply "he who knows the Koran by heart." The name Saʿdi emphasizes its holder's relation to his patron, Prince Saʿd ibn Zangi. ʿUrfi chose his name because his father was a judge in customary (*ʿurfī*) law. In early times many pen names echoed something proud and glorious: among others, Anwari is a form derived from *anwar*, "most luminous"; Farrukhi, from *farrukh*, is "joyful, radiant." (For others, see below, chapter 18.) Later, especially in India, one sees a contrary tendency to express one's lowly miserable state, as in Bedil, "without heart, weak"; Betab, "without strength"; or Bekas, "lonely." Sometimes the pen name was a shortened form or a derivative of the normal given name: Ḥifẓ Allah Khan became Ḥifẓi; Insha Allah Khan became simply Insha.

At other times the poet's relation to his instructor, who was supposed to correct his verse, can be understood from the pen name. In Delhi the mystical poet ʿAbdul Aḥad Gul (*gul*, "rose") had a disciple whom he named Gulshan, "Rosegarden," whose favorite disciple in turn was Muḥammad Naṣir ʿAndalib, "Nightingale" (for the nightingale, *ʿandalīb*, belongs to the rose garden); ʿAndalib's son was in his turn called Dard, "Pain," because the nightingale sings always of his pain in longing for the rose.[16]

Very few women are renowned as poets. A decent lady might assume the pen name Makhfi, "Hidden," but more often one encounters verses by the "daughters of the bazaar," that is, courtesans.[17]

To come back to the *qaṣīda*: some are constructed as *munāẓara* (tenzone, boasting contests) and portray a competition between two things—a dispute between the sword and the pen, for instance, or between wine and hashish, or day and night.[18] This form, which was common in the Arab world as well, offered the poets ample possibilities to prove their knowledge in various fields of learning.

Another type of *qaṣīda* is the *saugandnāme* (*saugand*, "oath"), in which the poet swears by everything he can think of that he "has never done" and "would never do" some dreadful misdeed or sacrilege.

Usually the *qaṣīda*—with the exception of the purely religious kind and didactic kind called *dar ḥikmat*, "About Wisdom"—was paid art, and one must always keep in mind that the medieval Persian poet was more like a modern journalist than a "poet" in the romantic tradition. One can well understand that some poets became fed up after writing this kind of verse for years instead of using their talents (and talented and learned they were indeed!) and finally gave up writing for money. The most telling poem, by Anwari, one of the leading panegyrists of the twelfth century, expresses this frustration very well; other poets have either alluded to their feelings or expressed them in much cruder form.

Anwari tells how a young man approached him, asking him to write a *ghazal* for him. But the poet refused:

I wrote *ghazals* and praise songs
  and satires only, friend,
as lust and greed and anger
  were all too strong in me:
That one [lust] remained all night long
  in grief immersed and thought,
how to describe the tresses,
  the curls, the lips so sweet.
The other one [greed] was toiling
  all day in pain, all night,
whence, how, from whom, and whether
  some pennies to obtain.
A tired dog, the third one [anger],
  whose consolation is
to find somebody's weakness,
  and to abuse him then.
Since God has these three hungry,
  these dogs—far may they be!—
turned from me in His mercy

and made poor me now free,
how could I sing a ghazal,
a satire, or a praise?[19]

This touching confession is, however, neither a *ghazal* nor a *qaṣīda* but a *qiṭʿa*, a "fragment," which means that it does not begin with the two rhyming hemistichs *aa* but immediately starts out with *xa*. The *qiṭʿa* serves usually for descriptions or topical poems. One can describe events of sorts, be it the construction of a fortress or a cheerful musical party; one can satirize an enemy in not exactly lyrical expression or congratulate a friend at the birth of a son. One can even express the most personal thoughts in a *qiṭʿa*. Anwari, for example, does not hesitate to ask someone for a pair of new shoes or to speak about his *mamdūḥ*'s dental problems; once he even apologizes for having vomited at last night's party due to excessive drunkenness.[20]

In satires of this kind (as well as in some *qaṣīdas*) one finds extreme coarseness of expression, and an astonishing heaping of insults upon the target, along with his wife, his mother, and his whole household. Yet crude as the expressions might be, the poets never forgot the rules of meter and harmonious choice of images.

A *qiṭʿa* frequently contains a chronogram (*taʾrīkh*): as each letter of the Arabic alphabet has a numerical value, it was easy to produce chronograms by means of cleverly connected meaningful words. These had to fit the special nature of the occasion and give the date of the event (see below, chapter 18).

The best-known form of Persian poetry among Europeans and Americans is the *rubāʿī*, "quatrain," which was made popular by Edward FitzGerald's very free adaptations of the *Rubāʿiyyāt* of ʿOmar Khayyam. In Islamic countries ʿOmar Khayyam is much better known as a mathematician and astronomer of high rank than as a poet of rather skeptical quatrains. European scholars have nevertheless devoted much time and energy to searching for the "original" form and content of these quatrains, ranging in their appreciation of the available material from full-fledged acceptance to complete denial of the authenticity of the verses.[21]

The *rubāʿī* can almost be called an epigram; it is short and pithy and resembles in many respects traditional pre-Islamic Persian folk poetry. Its

meter is much more flexible than that of the other genres, and its peculiarities have been studied by a considerable number of orientalists, among whom the most important are Wilhelm Eilers, Fritz Meier (in his book on the early Persian poetess Mahsati, who is known for her rather frivolous *rubāʿiyyāt*), and Benedikt Reinert.[22] One knows that *rubāʿiyyāt* have been used since early times in the musical meetings of the Sufis: their comparatively flexible meter lends itself well to musical settings.

As the *rubāʿī* usually does not mention the pen name of the author, the problem of "wandering quatrains" has been a major source of distress for scholars, who may find the same quatrain ascribed to two or three different authors. Art history may be helpful, at least to a certain degree, in establishing an approximate date for some *rubāʿiyyāt*, for many of them are scribbled around the rims of early thirteenth-century ceramic plates and bowls from Iran, so that a *terminus ante quem* can be obtained.[23]

The general rhyme scheme of the *rubāʿī* is *aaxa*. The first two lines give, as it were, the thesis; the third one, which does not rhyme, an antithesis or new idea; the fourth, which takes up the rhyme again, can offer a synthesis. That is at least the ideal form of the quatrain. One also finds some *rubāʿiyyāt* in the form *aaaa*, with all lines rhyming. In popular poetry there is a two-verse (*dū baytī*) variant, in which rhyme schemes like *abab* are used. This form appears in our own century in some of the quatrains written by Muḥammad Iqbal of Lahore,[24] but it is otherwise not very common among sophisticated classical poets.

One major poetical form does not use the monorhyme but consists of rhyming couplets: the *mathnawī*, which means "doubled." The *mathnawī* was the ideal vehicle for stories, didactic poetry, heroic and romantic epics—in short for every kind of poetical narrative that extended over many hundreds or thousands of *bayt*. Unlike the monorhymed forms, which were introduced into Iran via Arabic poetical traditions, the *mathnawī* developed exclusively in Iran and was gladly taken over by Turkish and, later, Urdu-writing poets.

The first, and also most monumental, work in this style was Firdausi's *Shāhnāma* (The Book of Kings), which consists of some fifty thousand distichs—the number varies in different manuscripts. This work, written at Ghazna in the first two decades after the year 1000, tells the entire history of Iran from the mythological beginnings to the Muslim conquest. It remained

the model for any later heroic epic; its heroes were transformed into poetical images (see chapter 6), and it was copied and illustrated from ca. 1350 into the present century.[25]

Romantic epics also developed early on. In part these elaborated themes that had been mentioned by Firdausi only in passing. The undisputed master of this genre is Niẓami (d. 1203), whose *Khamsa* (Quintet) has ever since inspired writers all over the Persianate world to compose imitations either of the entire work or of single stories from it. The *Khamsa*'s five epics—*Makhzan al-asrār*, *Laylā Majnūn*, *Khusrau Shīrīn*, *Haft Paykar*, and *Iskandarnāma*—have been illustrated hundreds of times, and the heroes and heroines of these stories became, even more than those of the *Shāhnāma*, ciphers of specific states of mind. Niẓami's refined language, with its inimitable puns and subtle rhetorical plays, has never been surpassed.[26]

Somewhat earlier the mystical *mathnawī* began in the eastern part of the Islamic world. Its first representative is Sana'i (d. 1131), who spent most of his life in Ghazna, where Firdausi had been active a century before him. A court poet turned if not mystic, at least ascetic, he composed a lengthy *mathnawī*, the *Ḥadīqat al-ḥaqīqat*, in which he inserted anecdotes and stories from the early Sufi tradition along with stories originating in India.[27] The two other great authors of mystical *mathnawīs* belong, like him, to eastern Iran. Fariduddin ʿAṭṭar (d. 1220) lived in Nishapur, and his *Manṭiq uṭ-ṭayr* as well as his other *mathnawīs* are of the greatest importance for the development of mystical thought in Iran.[28] But the *mathnawī* par excellence—*The Mathnawī*, as it were—is the work of Jalaluddin Rumi, who hailed from the province of Balkh but spent most of his life in Konya, Anatolia (*Rūm*, hence his surname). There he composed this work—called by Jami of Herat "the Koran in the Persian tongue"—during the last two decades of his life, after pouring out thousands of verses of *ghazals* and *rubāʿiyyāt*.[29] Jami himself in turn composed, not merely five *mathnawīs* to honor Niẓami's example, but rather seven, called *Haft Aurang* (The Seven Thrones, or Ursa Major).[30]

In India the form was taken over by many Persian-writing poets, who produced variations not only on traditional themes in Niẓami's style but also versified tales from the traditions of the Indus Valley and the Punjab.[31] More importantly, Amir Khusrau of Delhi, "India's Parrot," not only emulated the *Khamsa* but also was the first to use the epic form for description of contemporary political events.[32]

A *mathnawī* usually begins with an introductory poem in praise of God, His grandeur, and His beauty. The imagery used in this opening part often points to the general character of the poem: when the poet deals with a love story, he may describe and invoke God with His loving and beautiful names; in a heroic poem he might prefer allusions to God's overpowering greatness or His strength in helping His followers. Then follow verses in praise of the Prophet of Islam, which often contain important theological and prophetological statements (these unfortunately are rarely studied, let alone translated, by modern scholars).[33]

Sometimes there ensues colorful description of the Prophet's heavenly journey, the *miʿrāj*—such poems have inspired some of the finest miniature paintings in Persian art.[34] After that may come a poem, or perhaps four poems, concerning the first four successors of the Prophet, the *khulafā-i rāshidūn*; among Shia writers this phase is changed into praise of ʿAli alone, or of ʿAli and his family. *Mathnawīs* dedicated to a prince likewise contain a special section in which he is duly praised and flattered.

In *ghazals* and *qaṣīdas* any meter may be used. The meters to be applied to *mathnawīs*, however, are restricted to seven. They generally consist of eleven or twelve syllables, for a longer meter would become tedious in the long run: one can scarcely enjoy thousands of verses in a meter with fifteen or more syllables in each hemistich! In rare cases poets have ventured to try an unusual meter (Amir Khusrau did so occasionally), but even then it is not longer than twelve syllables.

The application of the meters also follows a rather strict canon. Heroic epics like the *Shāhnāma* and, following its example, the *Iskandarnāma* and related epics of this genre are written in the *mutaqārib*, ⏑ – – | ⏑ – – | ⏑ – – | ⏑ – (–). This simple and fluent meter can also be used in didactic poetry, the prime example being Saʿdi's *Būstān*,[35] but it occurs very rarely in lyrics. (Urdu seems one of the few languages in which *ghazals* were composed in it.)

Didactic and mystical epics are usually composed in *ramal musaddas*: – ⏑ – – | – ⏑ – – | – ⏑ –. It seems that ʿAṭṭar was the first to use it in part of his epics, and Rumi's *Mathnawī* then made it very popular.

All the writers who tried to emulate Niẓami followed his metrical pat-

terns as well as the character of his epics. His most frequently imitated poem seems to be *Makhzan al-asrār* (The Treasure Grove of Mysteries), in the meter *sarīʿ*: - ⏑ ⏑ - | - ⏑ ⏑ - | - ⏑ -. Not only is this easygoing meter carried over into the works of his imitators, but also the form of the title: whenever one comes across an epic that has a title rhyming in *-ār*, it is definitely based on this meter. Examples include Amir Khusrau's *Maṭlaʿ al-anwār*, Jami's *Tuḥfat al-aḥrār*, and numerous other, lesser-known poems.[36]

A variation on this meter is often used at the very beginning of poems of this kind. As every work must begin with the formula *Bismiʾ Llāhiʾr-raḥmāniʾr-raḥīm*, "In the name of God the Merciful, the Compassionate," the poets liked to quote it as the first hemistich of their poems. They did so in a variant of *sarīʿ* in which the two short syllables were combined into one long one: - - - | - - - | - ⏑ -.

Sana'i had used the slightly jumping meter *khafīf* for his *Ḥadīqat al-ḥaqīqat*, and the same is employed in Niẓami's *Haft Paykar* (The Seven Beauties, or Seven Pictures) and its imitations: - ⏑ - - | ⏑ - ⏑ - | ⏑ - -.

The love story of *Khusrau and Shīrīn* is in the easiest possible meter, the simple *hazaj*: ⏑ - - - | ⏑ - - - | ⏑ - -, which is also used by Jami in his *Yūsuf Zulaykhā*. A variant of *hazaj* appears in Niẓami's *Laylā Majnūn* and its imitations: - - ⏑ | ⏑ - - ⏑ | ⏑ - -.

As in Arabic, the meter *rajaz* was used mainly for instructive works: - - ⏑ - | - - ⏑ - | - ⏑ -.[37]

An Indo-Persian work, *Haft Asumān* (The Seven Skies), was written in the nineteenth century to deal with all the *mathnawī* meters and the different epics written in them, but alas! only the first "Sky," that on *Makhzan al-asrār*, was completed and published.[38] Knowledge of these metrical rules is useful to the art historian as well as the student of literature, for it enables one to identify (at least to a certain degree) an isolated page as containing verses from this or that kind of *mathnawī*.

A typical *mathnawī* may extend over thousands of *bayt*, but later a shorter form, the *sāqīnāma*, became quite popular. The poem begins with an invocation of the *sāqī*, the cupbearer, who is asked to bring wine; then the poet speaks of sad or joyous events, or voices his criticism. In Iqbal's poetry *sāqīnāmas* are usually concerned with the beauty and, following that, the political problems of Kashmir. It is an ideal form for singing of his longing for and worries about his ancestral homeland.[39]

Occasionally, especially in postclassical poetry, the uniformity of the *mathnawī* is interrupted by the insertion of *ghazals* or *rubāʿīyyāt*, a stylistic device which is often very refreshing.[40]

Strophic forms are also found in Persian poetry. To achieve them one could bind together a number of *ghazals* in the same meter and then connect them by a *bayt*, which could either be repeated between every two *ghazals* (*tarjīʿband*) or be varied in each instance (*tarkībband*). Another possibility for achieving a strophic structure was to mine a famous *qaṣīda*, take its verses one by one, and add before each some lines of one's own poetry. That had been done in Arabic for famous *qaṣīdas*, and was done in Persian and Urdu as well.[41] In most cases in classical times one added three verses of one's own and thus achieved a five-part strophe, *mukhammas*. Later a six-lined strophe (*musaddas*, "sixfold") became an art form in itself: four lines with the same rhyme were followed by two lines with separate rhyme. This grew—probably out of other such composite forms—into an important genre; these six-lined stanzas were used, especially in India, for religious purposes, and in nineteenth-century Lucknow, the Urdu *musaddas* flourished at the Shia court of Awadh.[42]

The poets of Lucknow devoted hundreds of stanzas in the *musaddas* form to the events in Kerbela, that is, to the suffering and death of the Prophet's grandson Ḥusayn and his family, who were slain in the desert by government troops on 10 Muḥarram 680. This central theme of Shiite piety was elaborated in ever so many new threnodies, in which even the smallest detail of the last hours of the martyrs of Kerbela was described in high-sounding verse. The *musaddas* was an ideal vehicle for such poetry, as it could be extended ad libitum and was more lively than the *mathnawī*, thanks to its changing rhyme patterns. This use of the strophic form led the Urdu reading public to expect religious and didactic contents in a *musaddas*. For this reason Ḥali, the reformist poet of Muslim India, used the form for his provocative poem *The Ebb and Flood of Islam* (1879), which has come to be known simply as "The *Musaddas*."[43] Iqbal's *Shikwah* (Complaint) and *Jawāb-i shikwah* (Answer) (1911–12) take up Ḥali's form, and other, less famous Urdu writers used the *musaddas* likewise for ideological poems.[44]

A poet's works were generally collected in a *dīwān*, either by himself or by his friends. A *dīwān* usually begins with *qaṣīdas*, which are followed by

ghazals, *qiṭ'as*, and *rubā'iyyāt*; *tarkībbands*, if there are any, are placed in between the two latter sections. Within each category the poems are arranged alphabetically according to the final rhyme letter: if a poem's last word is *sharāb*, "wine," one looks for the complete *ghazal* or *qaṣīda* under *b*, if it is *safar*, one looks up the rhyme *r*. In some editions the poems under each rhyming letter are further arranged according to their meter. This general arrangement has advantages, but it does not consider the historical sequence; only internal evidence or certain allusions will enable the patient scholar to reach conclusions about the poet's life, journeys, and the like.

Just as the first line of a poem should be of special beauty, the first line of a *dīwān* should be even more outstanding. Often the poet—provided he arranged his *dīwān* himself—would begin with some pious verse. But some preferred shock therapy for their readers: the first line of Ḥafiẓ's *Dīwān* is an Arabic quotation from a poem by the Omayyad caliph Yazid, the most hated ruler in the Shia world, as it was under him that the tragedy of Kerbela happened. Ghalib begins his Urdu *Dīwān* with—instead of the expected praise of God—an outcry against the Creator, a verse that has been considered incomprehensible by many who are unaware of its linguistic and literary antecedents (see below, chapter 17).

In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries anthologies were often written on small, rather narrow pages which were then bound at the top. This was a *safīna*, "boat"; one could place it easily in a sleeve or in the folds of a turban. In these, as in later anthologies, *ghazals* are rarely quoted in full: the collector simply chose his favorite verses. The selected poems, *shi'r*, for each poet are often introduced by the Arabic words *wa lahu ayḍan*, "and this too is his."[45]

Besides the classical forms of poetry as they were used almost everywhere up to the beginning of the present century, there existed a more popular poetry all over the Islamic world. It too included heroic sagas, and also tender love tales. Folk songs and poems in Iran and Turkey were composed not in *'arūḍ* but in syllable-counting meters and specific patterns. In Turkey the popular rhyme pattern is usually *xaxa yyya zzza*, etc., that is, it looks almost like a *musammaṭ ghazal* written differently. Meters of eight plus eight or six plus six syllables are frequent.

In India indigenous traditional forms like the two-lined *dōhā* or the four-lined *chaupay* are used, both of which have an elaborate system of counting long and short syllables, *mātras*: these forms occur, along with strophic forms, in Sindhi, Panjabi, and other Indo-Pakistani languages. The classical *ghazal* was introduced into these languages, especially Sindhi, only at a late point in history, and never took root well enough to yield any truly beautiful results. Another regional form that is worthy of mention is the Pashto *landay* or *tappa*, a two-lined verse consisting of nine plus thirteen syllables, which in some respects resembles the Japanese haiku.

Modern European forms became fashionable in the late nineteenth century. Especially in British India, one recognizes the deep influence of Romantic and Victorian poetry in both form and content. In Turkey, on the other hand, French symbolism and the ideals of the Parnassians were introduced through poets like Ahmed Hashim and Yahya Kemal. (The latter, however, always remained faithful to the *'arūḍ*, which he handled with remarkable elegance.)

During the past few decades free verse has become a generally accepted vehicle for poetry almost everywhere, although classical forms have not completely died out. Classical symbolism and images used since the Middle Ages are still employed to express modern feelings and issues.

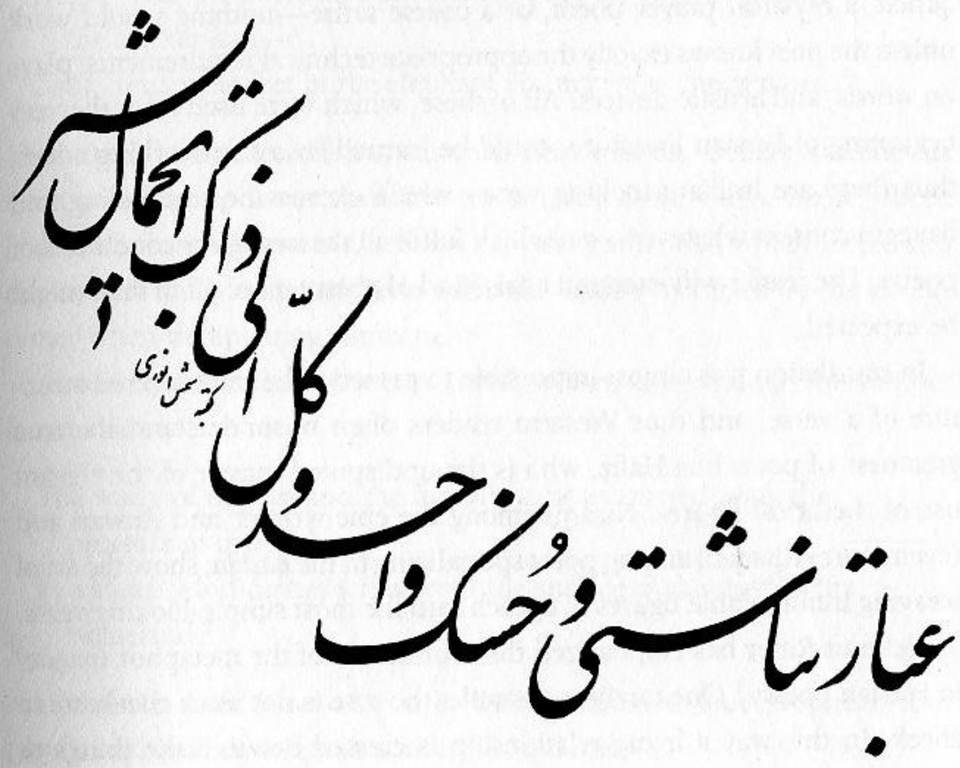
A typical example of modern use of traditional forms is the poetry of Muḥammad Iqbal, who utilized mainly forms inherited from Persian and Urdu poetry, though he sometimes also applied European forms. He used traditional imagery but filled it with new content, and it seems clear that his listeners would scarcely have accepted his daring message had he told it in free verse or in images taken from the English or German tradition. People—literate or illiterate—were so used to certain rhythms, rhyme forms, and images that their use facilitated Iqbal's work tremendously.[46]

A similar situation can be seen in a booklet that caused an immense surprise, if not shock, in the West in 1989: the lyric verse of Ayatullah Khomeini. For the orientalist there is nothing surprising in a religious leader's using the time-honored concepts of wine and cupbearer, of leaving the Ka'ba and going to the idol temple: this play with concepts had been part and parcel of the Persian tradition for the last millenium. The forms and images used in this poetry have their own qualities. Hundreds of pious Muslims who never touched a glass of wine have written poetry in praise of

the goblet and the beautiful cupbearer, because for them another reality was hidden behind the changing figures of Layla and Majnun, behind the Ka'ba and the temple, behind the rose and the nightingale.

It is the world of such images as they appear in poetry that ultimately concerns us here, but first we must turn to the rhetorical requirements of a poem, which are extremely important.

Rhetorical Rules 2



Our expressions are different, but Your Beauty is One, and everything points to that Beauty.

The formal requirements of Persian poetry, besides the metrical rules, are very strict. One could say that a traditional English or German Romantic poem would constitute, in the eyes of a Persian poet, at best the raw material for a true poem in which all the rules of the "interior form" have yet to be applied. Whether we are dealing with a sweet love poem, a powerful *qaṣīda*, a mystical prayer poem, or a coarse satire—nothing would work unless the poet knows exactly the appropriate technical requirements, plays on words, and artistic devices. All of these, which were used from the very beginning of Persian literature, could be learned by a hardworking adept; thus there are brilliant-looking verses which express no real feeling and have no content whatever—yet which fulfill all the necessary conditions of poetry. The reader will encounter this kind of poetry more often than might be expected.

In translation it is almost impossible to preserve the multilayered structure of a verse, and thus Western readers often misunderstand the true greatness of poets like Ḥafiẓ, who is the undisputed master of the elegant use of rhetorical figures. Niẓami among the epic writers, and Anwari and (even more) Khaqani among poets specializing in the *qaṣīda*, show the art of weaving innumerable figures of speech into the most simple-looking verse.

Hellmut Ritter has emphasized the central role of the metaphor (*majāz*) in Persian poetry.[1] One rarely sees simile: the rose is not *like* a cheek, it *is* a cheek. In this way a living relationship is created between the things or names in a good verse, where everything seems to belong to an almost "mythical" universe.

The most important rhetorical figures can already be seen in the lengthy *qaṣīda* by Qiwami of Ganja, a writer of the twelfth century, who in one hundred and one *bayt*[2] dealt with every possible figure, just as his brother, Niẓami of Ganja, applied these figures most elegantly to his epic poems. He and Niẓami ʿAruḍi proved that Persian poetry was indeed learned poetry and could and should be studied for years until one really mastered it sufficiently.[3]

One of the most common rhetorical plays is *tanāsub* or *murāʿāt-i naẓīr*, "the harmony of similar things." In this the poet joins, in one *bayt*, expressions that belong to one specific sphere of meaning—for instance, the four seasons, the four elements, names of prophets or kings or of flowers and trees—so that they form an inseparable unit. Perhaps the most frequently

quoted example is taken from the Mada'in *qaṣīda* of Khaqani (d. 1199), a grand poem in which he laments the ruins of Seleucia-Ktesiphon on the bank of the Tigris. Alluding to the fact that the Ghassanid king Nuʿman was trampled to death by an elephant, he says in a seemingly very clear *bayt*:

Alight from the horse and put the cheek to the earth, which is like
the leather mat—
Look, under the feet of the elephant Nuʿman was checkmated.[4]

This verse, the clue to which is the word "checkmated," contains besides its overt meaning no fewer than five terms taken from chess: horse, cheek (*rukh*), elephant, checkmate, and the *naṭʿ*, the leather mat which served as a chessboard but which could also mean the leather mat used by the executioner when decapitating someone.

Anwari sets the four elements (earth, water, fire, and air) in another famous verse:

The water of the eye and the fire of the heart carried away the
pleasure of my soul
as a sharp wind carries straw from the surface of the dust in the
wasteland.[5]

Six centuries later Khan-i Arzu in Delhi combined four prophets, four plants, and four elements in a nice little quatrain:

The pomegranate flower in fire, like the stature of Abraham;
in the earth of the meadow the tulip became the hand of Kalim
(Moses);
with wide steps strutting like Khiżr, the greenery on the bank of the
water;
the eglantine, like the mouth of Jesus from the bounty of the
breeze.[6]

These concepts will be explained later, but for the moment one should keep in mind that the combination of Jesus and Khiżr, both being immortal and life-bestowing, is very common. Two other prophets, Abraham and Moses, are also frequently paired. In Persian poetry there are numerous pairs which necessarily belong together, so that when one is found in a verse the other can also be expected: rose and nightingale, cypress and

watercourse, Farhad and Shirin, Maḥmud and Ayaz, and many more. In the verse of some poets the use of contrasting pairs is a central feature, as in Iqbal's Persian and Urdu poetry. It is this device which makes his poetry so easy to memorize.

Harmony of concepts can be considered one of the most important ingredients of Persian poetry. But the simple *tanāsub* can be enlarged by *īhām-i tanāsub*, "amphibiological congruence," which means that an expression has a double meaning such that the listener or reader is momentarily puzzled as to which meaning the poet intends. Ḥafiẓ says:

My moon went out of town yesterday,
and it seemed to me like a year.[7]

The word "moon," *māh*, will probably first be understood as pertaining to "month," as "year" and "day" are also mentioned; but what is meant is the moonlike beloved. To add to the play, the word *shahr*, "town," also means "month" in Arabic. Another ingenious example is the verse by Ḥafiẓ's contemporary and rival ʿImad-i Faqih:

When the heart saw the reflection of your lovely cheek in running water,
it became confused and cried out: "*Māhī*!"[8]

Māhī! can mean "A fish!" or "You are the moon!" or, in Arabic, "What is that?!" On a different level but again in similar forms one admires the battle description in one of Anwari's *qaṣīdas*, in which he combines four aspects of battle and four of a thunderstorm:

The drum like thunder, the swords like lightning,
the arrows like rain, and dust like a cloud![9]

Another frequently used stylistic form is *taẓādd*, "contrast." One juxtaposes, as it were, the two contrasting attributes of God—Beauty (*jamāl*) and Majesty (*jalāl*)—which reveal themselves in every event on earth. The poet sees "the laughter of the lightning and the weeping of the cloud," the poverty of Salman (one of the companions of the Prophet) and the glory of Sulayman (the prophet-king Solomon), or perhaps describes himself as having "yellow cheeks and red tears, dry lips and wet eyes."

I jumped up from the sleeping place and sat in the house:
my breast filled with fire, and my eye filled with water.[10]

Thus says Anwari, to mention only one typical example.

One tendency shared by Persian and Turkish poets is a love of *mubālagha*, that is, exaggeration or hyperbole. This holds true for both lyric and panegyric poetry: everything seems measureless. Anwari offers a fine example of *mubālagha* in a *qaṣīda*:

I shed so many tears that Noah's ark was almost submerged,
I uttered such a sigh that it almost set the tents afire.[11]

And a sixteenth-century poet, Ashki of Qum, complained thus of his miserable state:

So much has my body melted away in grief at thine absence
that if thou castest a chain on my neck it falls about my feet![12]

There is no lack of impossible hyperbole:

From the dust of the hooves of his horses became, on this wide plain
the earths six and the heavens eight,[13]

that is, so much dust was stirred up by the cavalry that one of the seven earths disappeared in dust and reappeared on high as an eighth heaven.

The tendency to use hyperbole grew stronger in the course of time, so that a completely powerless ruler like the last Mughal king, Bahadur Shah Ẓafar, was treated in his court poets' verse as if he had the armies of stars at his disposal.[14] The exaggerations of lovers' sufferings are equally impossible.

Another way to emphasize a comparison is the *rujūʿ*, "return": that is, one repeats a sentence, correcting it. After stating that a radiant friend is indeed like a moon in the fourteenth night, one "takes it back" and adds:

No, no, I am wrong—the moon is his blackish slave![15]

Perhaps the most beautiful, but certainly the most typical rhetorical form in Persian poetical language is *ḥusn-i taʿlīl*, "the beautiful explanation of a cause" or, as Hellmut Ritter calls it, "fantastic aetiology."

Out of longing for your cheek and your coquettish eye the rose and
the narcissus
[became] wet-eyed and with a torn garment.

This verse, which also contains the form *laff u nashr*, "folding and unfolding," tells that the rose (always connected with the beloved's cheeks) tore its garment, that is, opened its petals and began to bloom *because* it longed for the lovely rose-colored face of the friend; meanwhile the narcissus, always connected with the eye, was filled with dew so that it seemed to have tears in its eyes *because* it was yearning for the friend's half-opened, languid eyes. The very simple statement that roses open and narcissi are covered with morning dew is used here to express the longing of everything in the garden for the view of the beloved. In this way Persian poets would explain even perfectly normal facts by seeing some fantastic cause behind them, and one can enjoy their poetry only when one is able to unravel these statements carefully and lovingly.

A feature which often makes it somewhat difficult to understand a verse is the poet's tendency to insert verses or fragments of verses from the Koran, *iqtibās*. Of course every educated Muslim knew the Holy Book well enough to understand such allusions, even rather oblique ones. In such cases an entire Arabic sentence may be treated like a single Persian word, regardless of Arabic grammar:

A face like "By the Morning Light!"—*Rukh-i chūn wa'ḍ-ḍuḥā!*[16]

"By the Morning Light!" is the beginning of Sura 93, which was often quoted in connection with the Prophet's radiant face but could also be used for the beloved in general.

Within this same category belongs *irsāl-i mithāl*, the insertion of proverbs. Though evident to a native speaker, such figures are sometimes difficult for a foreigner to disentangle (see chapter 18).

Poetical thefts, *suraqāt-i shi'rī*, were regarded as a special category. A poet might insert either overtly or covertly a verse, a hemistich, or simply three or four words from an earlier poet. Sometimes he acknowledges his source in a phrase like "Following so-and-so's example," but as with Koranic phrases and proverbs he often simply assumes that the well-read reader or listener will recognize it in any case and admire his skill. Farrukhi introduces one such quotation in elegant style:

I remember a verse which, although Rudaki
did not say it on your behalf, yet it is fitting for you:
"As you do not know anything but high, one could say that you are
fire;
as you do not seek anything but justice you resemble the scales."[17]

True plagiarism did occur, however, and incited satirists to compose biting verses against their colleagues. Thus Katibi Nishapuri rebuked Kamal (Khujandi, or Farisi?)[18] over his relation to Ḥasan Dihlawi and Amir Khusrau:

When Ḥasan took the meaning from Khusrau one could not hinder
him,
for Khusrau is a master—rather, the masters' master.
And when Kamal took the meaning from Ḥasan,
one could not say anything, for a thief stole from a thief!

To steal the meaning was one thing, but to imitate the form of a poem was something else: it was considered a special art to write a poem with the same meter, *zamīn*, and rhyme as an earlier poet's but with somewhat different contents. A glance into the *ghazals* and even more the *qaṣīdas* of later centuries shows that certain rhyme and rhythmical patterns were repeated over and again from the thirteenth to the nineteenth century.

Among the most fanciful rhetorical figures is *tajāhul-i 'ārif*, which means that "someone who knows well feigns ignorance." By this technique the beauty and special qualities of the *mamdūḥ* or the beloved can be inventively highlighted, for instance in variations on a traditional comparison. The beloved's stature and the cypress, his face and the moon, his mouth and a ruby, were among many such favorite subjects:

Is this a cypress or is it your stature?
Is this a ruby bezel or is it your mouth? . . .

Someone else might then ask:

You are a moon, if a moon has a cypress's stature.
You are a cypress, if a cypress has a breast [made of] moon.[19]

And still another poet wonders:

He was like the moon and like a cypress but was neither moon nor cypress:
The cypress has no robe, and the moon does not wear a belt![20]

Anwari's question concerning the extremely small mouth and the hairlike waist of the beloved—both of which were central in the description of beauty—is more sophisticated:

As he has no mouth—where can he pour the wine?
As he has no waist—where can he bind his belt?[21]

All of nature can participate in the poet's plight:

Why does the bud tear its shirt when I am in love?
Why does the tulip wear a bloodstained shroud when I am killed?[22]

This leads to the form called *suāl u jawāb*, "question and answer."

I said: "Give me three kisses, o delightful moon!"
He said: "Has the moon ever given a kiss?"[23]

The "I said" and "He said" can be left out, or a rhetorical question can be posed instead:

What did he say? He said . . .[24]

This form belonged apparently to Farrukhi's favorites and gives the poem a somewhat dramatic character. The dramatic force can reach remarkable heights. One of the truly great masterpieces of Persian poetry is Qa'ani's poem on the martyrs of Kerbela, which consists of a conversation in terse, intense sentences which reflect the poet's and the listeners' horror when they think of the massacre of the Prophet's grandson:

What rains down?—Blood.—Who?—The eye.—How?—Day and night.—Why?—
From grief.—What grief?—Grief for the monarch of Kerbela.[25]

The preceding forms are connected predominantly with the meaning of a verse, but there are also a large number of purely rhetorical figures which form an integral part of a poem. These too have to be carefully observed.

We have already glimpsed the figure of *laff u nashr*, "folding and unfolding," that is, of mentioning several facts or objects in the first hemistich and then explaining them in the second one. Once more we may take an example from Khaqani's Mada'in *qaṣīda*:

If the Tigris would mix the cold sigh [lit. "wind"] that flows from its lip with the heat of its heart,
it would freeze on one half and be turned into a fiery oven on the other half.[26]

Such a distribution can also be explained in greater detail (*taqsīm*). An excellent example of this is ʿUnṣuri's praise of the king:

Either he binds or opens, either he takes or he gives,
as long as the world exists our king is remembered by this:
What he takes: kingdoms. What he gives: jewels.
What he binds: enemies' feet. What he opens: gates of fortresses.[27]

Another elegant device is the "turning of the back to the breast," *radd al-ʿujz ʿala'ṣ-ṣadr*, which means that the poet finishes the verse with the same word as he had begun with. Niẓami's masterly line from *Khusrau Shīrīn* is a perfect example:

ba ṣad jān arzad ān sāʿat ki jānān
na-khwāham gūyad u khāwad ba ṣad jān,

A hundred souls [or, "lives"] is that moment worth when the beloved
Says: "I do not want" and yet wants with a hundred souls.[28]

Anaphora, the continuous repetition of one expression or one word, perhaps of an exclamation, is often found in eulogies, especially in religious *qaṣīdas* where the poet tries to emphasize his topic or describe his *mamdūḥ*'s power and beauty from various vantage points. It is also found in the chains of oaths which *qaṣīda* writers sometimes insert toward the end of their poems, or in the repeated *tā . . . tā . . . tā*, "as long as . . . ," when they skillfully bring together contrasting pairs which will last "forever" (or so they think) in order to wish the patron everlasting happiness. In *mathnawīs* the introductory remarks in praise of God often contain chains of anaphora; ʿAṭṭar's *Ilāhīnāma* offers a very beautiful sequence of exclamations.[29] But anaphora can sometimes be found even in *ghazals*.

The poets similarly employed *ʿaks*, "reversal," a kind of palindrome, by using the words of the first hemistich in reversed or nearly reversed order in the second hemistich.[30] This too is meant to highlight the meaning. One pleasant little example comes from a Turkish song:

Didem yüzüne nazir, nazir yüzüne didem
Kiblem olali kaşin, kaşin olali kiblem.

My eye is looking at your face, looking at your face is my eye,
Since my prayer direction became your eyebrow, since your eyebrow became my prayer direction.

Repetition of the same word for the sake of emphasis can also occur.

A form that requires much technical skill is *tarṣīʿ*, "studding with jewels," in which a *bayt* consists of two hemistichs whose words are absolutely parallel:

Ay falakrā hawā-yi qadr-i tū bār
Ay malakrā thanā-yi ṣadr -i tū kār.

O you, the love of whose excellence is the sky's burden,
O you, the praise of whose high place is the angels' business!

And a somewhat more complicated example:

Arāyish-i āfāq shud rukhsār-i bazm-ārā-yi tū
Asāyish-i ʿushshāq shud dīdār-i rūḥ-afzā-yi tū.

Your banquet-adorning face became the ornament of the horizons,
Your spirit-increasing view became the ease of the lovers.[31]

In the class of repetitive figures we must also recall *luzūm*, the repetition of a specific word throughout the whole poem in each and every *bayt*. There are poems from early times in whose every *bayt* a word like *banafsha*, "violet," or *laʿl*, "ruby," occurs. Sometimes a cluster of words is repeated: perhaps three different gemstones, or three different flowers.[32]

Persian poets, like the Arabic poets and those in other Oriental societies, were extremely fond of wordplay and puns. Although punning is seldom considered a high poetic virtue in Western languages, puns belong to

classical Persian and Persianate poetry as a fully developed and generally appreciated art.

The most common form of puns is *tajnīs* or *jinās*, "homonymy," the complete similarity of two or more words in script and pronunciation. Arabic and Persian words, in Arabic lettering, are often alike or look alike and can easily be put together. A perfect *tajnīs* is one in which both words are absolutely alike: for example, *shahr*, Persian "town," Arabic "month." In a *tajnīs-i khaṭṭī* one vowel may be different. But some words which now look like perfect *tajnīs* were formerly not considered so, as their pronunciation has since changed. *Shīr* is now both "milk" and "lion," but in the Middle Ages the two words, which look alike, were pronounced *shīr*, "milk," and *shēr*, "lion" (as they still are today in eastern areas like Afghanistan, Tajikistan, and Pakistan). Thus they would form an imperfect *tajnīs*, though still a perfect *tajnīs-i khaṭṭī*, as the words have the same graphic form.

To the *tajnīs*, connected with Arabic lettering, belongs also the art called *taṣḥīf*, the change of a word's meaning by placing the diacritical marks differently. That can be achieved very easily, as the dots can be changed without any difficulty. For example, by replacing the dot, *khudā* خدا, "God," turns into *judā* جدا, "separate," and *ʿāqil* عاقل, "intelligent," can become *ghāfil* غافل, "heedless." A charming example of *taṣḥīf* is Saʿdi's verse from the *Būstān*:

Give me, he said, a kiss (*būsa* بوسه) with wrong diacritical marks,
For the dervish, provisions (*tūsha* توشه) are better than a kiss.[33]

Among the varieties of *tajnīs* one also sees *tajnīs-i zāʾid*, when one word has one more letter than the other, such as *khaṭṭ* خط, "script, down," and *khaṭā* خطا, "error, sin." Or, as Ḥafiẓ says gracefully:

Dastam andar sāʿid-i sāqī-yi sīmīn-sāq būd.[34]

My hand was at the arm of the silver-thighed cupbearer.

Sāqī, "cupbearer," and *sāq*, "thigh," form a *tajnīs*—which can even be imitated in German with the words *Schenke*, "cupbearer," and *Schenkel*, "thigh."

A more complicated form is the *tajnīs-i murakkab*, which means that a number of words sound alike and/or look alike but have a completely different meaning:

Atash ast īn bāng-i nay u nīst bād,
Har ki īn ātash nadārad nīst bād.

The sound of this reed is fire, it is not wind—
everyone who has not got this fire, may be naughted![35]

The pun, in this famous *bayt* from the beginning of Rumi's *Mathnawī*, is on *bād*, which means both "wind" and "may . . . be."

An even more elegant example, by Jami, plays with the concept that the shadow of the wings of the Huma bird grants felicity and sovereignty (see chapter 13):

Tū humā-ī u nīst ẓill-i humā
juz dū zulfat dāma ẓilluhumā.[36]

You are the Huma, and the shadow of the Huma
is nothing but your two tresses—may their shadow last!

Ẓill-i humā, "shadow of the Huma," is converted in the second hemistich into a frequently used Arabic blessing formula: "May the shadow of both of them last for ever!"

Persian poets also played at times with the reversal of letters, another kind of *ʿaks*, or palindrome. The most famous of these is a pun on the word *iqbāl*, "good fortune":

اقبال *Iqbāl-rā chū qalb kunī lā baqā buwad.*

لا بقا When you reverse *iqbāl* it becomes *lā baqā*, "transient."[37]

Besides admiring this meaningful pun one should realize that *qalb*, "turning over, reversing," also has the same three root letters as *iqbāl*: *q.l.b.*

This leads us to *ishtiqāq*, "paronomasia," the use of words which come from the same root or contain the same three Arabic root consonants, even though in different sequence. Thus *rauḥ*, *rūḥ*, *rāḥ*, and *rīḥ*, "fragrance," "spirit," "wine," and "wind," are all derived from the root *r.w.ḥ*. An example of shared root consonants is Niẓami's remark that *sharʿ* and *shiʿr* and *ʿarsh*, "religious law," "poetry," and "Divine Throne," belong together and that "the whole world was adorned by these three letters," that is, by *ʿ*, *r*, and *sh*.[38]

One also encounters instances where two words look as if they were derived from the same root but are in reality from different roots; or one

word is Arabic, the other Persian; and the like. *Rūyat*, "your face," and *riwāyat*, "report," would form such an incorrect *ishtiqāq*, a ruse which occurs quite often. Another pleasant "false" *ishtiqāq* is found in a *ghazal* by Amir Khusrau, who complains that he has neither strength nor money to come close to his beloved:

Zōr u zar bāshad asbāb-i wiṣāl amā mārā
Nīst chīzī ghayr-i zārī dar tamannā-yi wuṣūl.

Strength (*zōr*) and gold (*zar*) are the means to reach union but I have
nothing but complaint (*zārī*) in the wish of reaching [the friend].[39]

This same versatile poet also wrote verses in which certain words give different meaning in Arabic and Persian respectively:

Naqd-i dilī ki sikka-i waḥdat nayāfta ast
An qalbrā be-hīch wilāyat rawāj nīst.

The cast money of a heart that has not found the stamp of Unity—
this false money has no value in any country.[40]

Qalb means "counterfeit, false," especially in connection with money, but in Arabic it means "heart," so that one can also read "This heart has no value." His verse even occasionally contains plays between Persian and Hindwi, the colloquial language of Delhi. When he asks a pretty Hindu woman the price of one of her hairs, she answers, "*Dur mūyi!*"—which means, in Persian, "Every hair a pearl!" but in Hindwi "Begone!"[41]

One could even change a Persian verse, or hemistich, into Arabic by placing the diacritical marks differently (*dhūʾr-ruʾyatayn*).

There was no limit to poets' imagination (especially in India or Ottoman Turkey) in inventing the most delightful or most tasteless rhetorical turns. That does not mean that earlier poets did not indulge in wordplay: Qaṭran (d. ca. 1075), for instance, is noted for his incredible skill in twisting words. E. G. Browne offers a fine example of such a tour de force where a double rhyme looks like an *ishtiqāq*:

O heart, if you want to be a rider in the way of glory,
make the horse of ambition gallop swiftly (*tāz tīz*) in the arena of
contentment . . .

. . . And if you know correctly where to sit and where to get up,
You may sit in Armenia and get up in Abkhazia (*Abkhāz khīz*) . . .[42]

In strophic poetry such as the *tarkībband*, the *band* that connects the *ghazals* into a unit is sometimes not Persian or Turkish but Arabic, to give it greater strength. A good example is Hatif's mystical *tarjīʿband* with its recurrent statement that there is no deity save God.[43] Another is the great *tarjīʿband* by the nineteenth-century Turkish poet Ziya Pasha, who describes the unfathomable greatness of the Divine and the confusing state of the world by quoting as *band* the Arabic verse:

Subḥāna man taḥayyara fī ṣunʿihi'l-ʿuqūl,
Subḥāna man bi-qudratihi yaʿjuzu'l-fuḥūl,[44]

Praised be He about whose work intellects are stunned,
praised be He concerning whose power the heroes are incapacitated,

a verse which—incidentally—was often inscribed on Ottoman arms and armor as well.

One special realm of Persian poetry is "visual poetry," the arrangement of verses into shapes: trees, pentagrams, umbrellas, all sorts of other items. This belongs to a rather late period and is comparable to similar games in both the Hebrew and the European literary traditions.[45]

Poets often displayed a breathtaking technical control over the material which they brought together into harmonious sets of images, and they tried to crystallize their experiences and their knowledge in flawless verses. To do so they had to study the works of their predecessors, a rigorous process that Niẓami ʿAruḍi described as early as the twelfth century.[46] Verses of thousands of classical and "modern" poets had to be learned by heart, the rules of rhetoric had to be observed down to the smallest minutiae, and the poet was expected to display a knowledge not only of religious sciences, history, and geography but also of the implements of everyday life, from the production of textiles to calligraphy and medicine—not to mention the vocabulary of the pastimes of the grandees, of hunting and chess, of music and drinking, and much more (which will be explained in detail in the following chapters). Only after learning all this could the poet prove his skill in extemporization, or in eulogies for a patron in which he extended the realm of metaphors and hyperbole farther and farther, or in a song in which

he sighed about his unrequited love in ever new variations on the traditional themes. The Western reader who knows this poetry only in translation will not be able to enjoy it fully, for it requires an understanding of many rhetorical forms which are generally glossed over by translators, although they belong to the poem as much as its "meaning"—perhaps even more.

Still another aspect to this poetry becomes clearer when one recalls that many of the poems were first recited—that is, offered aloud to an audience of connoisseurs, or extemporized in the company of princes, scholars, or boon companions. This suggests one further approach to this poetry: the study of its purely acoustical qualities. Western readers, who are usually first confronted with Persian poetry in printed or handwritten form, will perhaps have some difficulty in realizing the importance of the sound patterns. Yet there has been, to my knowledge, no major study of the role of certain vowels, or the importance of specific meters, in the work of this or that individual poet. In fact modern Persians themselves do not care much for the rhythmical stress when reciting poetry. (Recitations by Afghan or Indo-Pakistani artists, on the other hand, take the rhythmical patterns much more into consideration.)

Whoever has attended a Pakistani *mushāʿira*, a poets' contest, knows how a well-said (which also implies well-scanned) verse can induce in the listeners a state of near ecstasy, and how the audience will repeat special verses which appear to them as being perfect in form and content, over and over, until the best lines are known all around the city the very next day. At these contests a candle is passed from poet to poet, the recitation beginning with the least famous one and ending with the master poet, who thus becomes truly "the candle of the assembly." In times of political tension the verses recited at such occasions can have a great impact on political developments.[47] For example, the strong rhythmical structure of Iqbal's verse made it easy for Indian Muslims to rally around them, repeating them day after day, year after year.

Thus it would certainly be worthwhile to study the use of long vowels or the preference for certain word and rhythmical patterns in the work of single masters such as Ḥafiẓ, Rumi, or one of the *qaṣīda* writers. Though useful for its own sake, such knowledge would probably also be valuable in preparing critical editions, in small but perhaps significant ways. Has not

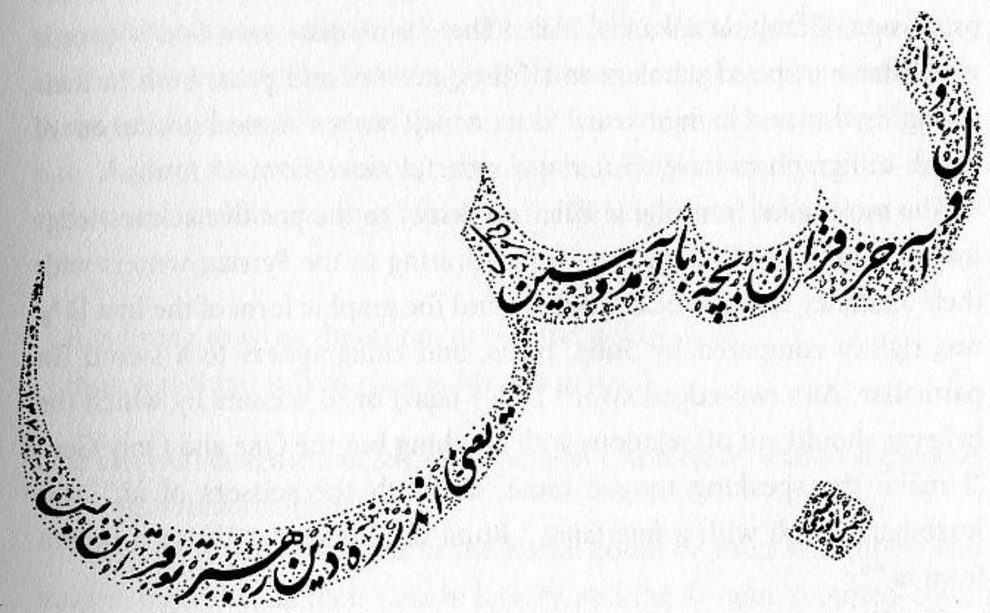
every great Western composer certain key harmonic phrases, and favorite intervals as well?

For the meantime, however, we must remain in the accustomed realm of the written word. Exploring rhetorical forms and imagery should enable us to gain a feeling for this poetry, in which the inherited treasure of such devices served not so much to reveal as to hide the poet's feelings. The goal was to say things which could be enjoyed by everyone, as they seemed to express general human feelings. The reader should not take wine and idols at face value, or really believe that the poet placed a petty king's army higher than the armies of spirits led by Solomon. One should enjoy the technical brilliance of many of these verses and admire the poets who wove garments of different material for "the bride Inner Meaning." Sometimes, to be sure, the verses seem to be gorgeous blossoms supported by all too slender stems—much as flowers are painted in some seventeenth-century miniatures. But when one reads a classical Persian poem, especially a *ghazal* by Ḥafiẓ or Jami, written in most elegant *nastaʿlīq* calligraphy and surrounded by marvelous border decorations in golden and silverish hues, then one must agree with the art historian who said that this art is almost "too heavy with beauty."

I hope the following survey of the most common fields of imagery will prove helpful to those who want to know something about the poetical tradition and its development.

Part 2

Themes from History, Literature, and Legend



The first and last

letters of the Koran are

b *and* s: *that means, in*

the way of religion, the

Koran is enough (bas)

for you.

One can say without exaggeration that the most important source of inspiration for Persian poets was the Koran. Just as in Christian countries in former times allusions to biblical terms or sayings were perfectly natural, so too for the Muslim the word of God, the Koran, has always occupied a central position in life. Père Nwyia has rightly spoken of a "Koranization of the memory" when discussing the early Sufis.[1] But every Muslim, even the least educated one, was acquainted with the words of the profession of faith, *lā ilāha illā' Llāh*, "There is no deity save God"—words which have inspired scholars and artists, mystics and poets both in their strong rhythm and in their visual form, which has ten vertical strokes out of which calligraphers have created a wonderful network of art forms.[2]

The movement from the *lā ilāh*, "no deity," to the positive acknowledgment *illā'Llāh*, "save God," was very inspiring to the Persian writers with their tendency to dialectical thinking, and the graphic form of the first *lā* لا was rightly compared by Sufis, poets, and calligraphers to a sword (in particular ʿAli's two-edged sword Dhu'l-fiqar) or to scissors by which the believer should cut off relations with anything but the One and Only God. "I make the speaking tongue mute, *lāl*, with the scissors of *lā*," says Ruzbihan-i Baqli with a fine *tajnīs*.[3] Rumi has his reader "bring a broom from *lā*."[4]

The Koran, God's word "inlibrated" (as in Christianity, Christ is God's word "incarnated"), offered the faithful thousands of possible interpretations, ranging from purely literal ones to esoteric ones; even today some search the sacred text for references to contemporary issues from Darwinism to the H-bomb. But the poets discovered other aspects of the Koran that inspired them. Countless poets have seen the face of their beloved as a manuscript copy of the Koran in which the human features are as immaculate as the written letters (for if the copyist makes a mistake, the page must be remade). As the creative power of God was revealed through the letters and words of the Koran, it is also revealed in the perfect beauty of a human face.

> Whosoever saw your face, compared it to the copy of the Koran,
> and whosoever heard that said: "Yes, there is no doubt!"[5]

This reply comes from the beginning of Sura 2 and thus makes the verse particularly elegant. Ḥafiẓ, in contrast, wanted to read from his friend's face

an *āyat*[6]—that is, both a miracle or sign and a verse of the Koran—as these things offer clearer explanations than anything found in commentaries like the *Kashshāf* or the *Kashf*.[7] The idea is that a single sign of the radiant beauty of the beloved's face, like a single verse from the Koran, surpasses all the wisdom of the commentators.

Comparisons of the human face with the perfectly copied Koran, *muṣḥaf*, appear early in poetry but become even more common in later periods, when Shia and especially Hurufi tendencies become stronger. The eyebrows are then the artistically drawn *ṭughrā*, "In the name of God," and the dark down on the friend's upper lip resembles the script of revelation (for the pun in *khaṭṭ*, "down," "script," see chapter 17).[8] However, even a rather early poet like Khaqani may allude to the beauty of the beloved in similar terms:

> It is fitting to write the Koran in red and gold—
> thus, a red and yellow robe is fitting for you.[9]

One can well imagine that such comparison could easily lead to somewhat frivolous transformations!

All the persons mentioned in the Koran could be used as symbols and images, regardless of their time in history, and the Koranic prophets could appear, as it were, as partial aspects of the beloved, just as in theology they are considered precursors of Muḥammad, each of whom manifested a specific aspect of him, the Perfect Man.

Entire Koranic sentences were likewise, though selectively, incorporated into or alluded to in Persianate poetry. That is in particular true of the Koranic statement in Sura 7:171, a centerpiece of mystical meditation, according to which God addressed in pre-eternity, the not-yet-created souls with His word *Alastu bi-rabbikum*, "Am I not your Lord?" and they answered *balā*, "Yes!" This primordial covenant, as it has been called, in which the souls surrendered willingly to God's eternal lordliness is mentioned frequently under the rubric of the "banquet of *alast*," the festive meal during which the entire future of humanity was fixed, and love, suffering, intoxication, and grief were distributed once for all.

> Whatever He pours into our goblet, we drink it,
> be it the wine of Paradise, be it the poisonous wine of death.[10]

On that day it was the primordial wine of love that intoxicated the souls. Around the enormous dome of the mausoleum of Gesudaraz (d. 1422), the great Chishti Sufi in Gulbarga, Deccan, are inscribed his famous verses which begin,

> Those who are deeply drunk from Love's cup
> are senseless from the sweet wine of *Alast*. . . .[11]

That *alast* also rhymes well with *mast*, "intoxicated," certainly facilitated such allusions at least among minor poets.

But the human answer *balā!*—"Yes!"—also had a special meaning. Playing with the word's second meaning, "affliction," poets at least from the days of Sana'i found that

> Because of one *balā* which the soul said in pre-eternity,
> the person who said "Yes" is eternally in affliction (*balā*).[12]

The moment of the covenant in which the destinies were fixed was often called *dūsh*, "yesternight," in contrast with *fardā*, "tomorrow," which designates in the Koran the Day of Judgment, which is as close as or even closer than tomorrow. Thus when Ḥafiẓ sings, at the beginning of a famous *ghazal*,

> Yesternight I saw the angels knocking the tavern's door,
> they kneaded Adam's dust and cast it into the goblet,[13]

he is not describing a poetic vision or a dream but rather thinking of the banquet of the covenant as well as of the day when the dust of the newly created Adam (kneaded, according to tradition, forty days by the hand of God) was saturated with the wine of love. Rumi perceived the Divine word *alast* as heavenly music, which so intoxicated Nonbeing that it rushed dancing into existence.[14]

The poets also like to quote the *amāna*, "the entrusted good" (Sura 33:72), which is, for Ḥafiẓ and those who follow his tradition, the burden of love which heaven and earth refused to carry while humans, though "stupid and cruel," accepted it without knowing what they were doing.[15] For Iqbal, on the other hand, the *amāna* is the spark of individuality, of human personality.

The poets loved to play with the ninety-nine Most Beautiful Names of God, which are applicable to every situation in life. Thus they found

consolation in the thought that even though they might indulge in the prohibited pleasures of wine, God is *al-ghafūr*, "The All-forgiving,"[16] and that the singer, *mughannī*, does nothing but praise "the Eternally Rich One," *al-ghanī*, as they say with a fine pun on the root *gh.n.y.*[17]

A number of Koranic sayings were preferred for describing the beauty of the beloved. One was *nūr ʿalā nūr*, "Light upon light" (Sura 24:35), which might express the beloved's unsurpassable radiance. Another was the first three letters of Sura 2, *alif-lām-mīm*, which seemed to point by their graphic form to the stature, tresses, and mouth of the beloved (see chapter 17). Around 1300, Amir Khusrau of Delhi sang that

> I used to talk as much about her eyebrows and eyelashes
> as children in school recite *Nūn wa'l-qalam!* ["*Nūn*, and by the Pen!"][18]

The children here are reciting the beginning of Sura 68, which refers to the letter *nūn* ں and, quite literally, to the pen. This rounded letter is generally compared to the beloved's eyebrows, and the long, dark eyelashes similarly resemble long, thin reed pens. So, just as the schoolchildren recite this sura again and again until they know it by heart, the poet talks ceaselessly about his beloved's eyebrows and eyelashes. An additional point is that the last three verses of this sura, *Wa in yakādu* . . . , "They nearly had . . . ," are recited against the evil eye. Thus by alluding to this particular chapter of the Koran, the poet at the same time averts the rival's evil eye from the beloved's beauty.[19]

Other poets are more daring. ʿUrfi, the master of grand hyperbolical conceits who lived at the Mughal court in Lahore toward the end of the sixteenth century, claims that Gabriel, the angel who brought the revelation, would not have been able to utter the words *Lā taqnaṭū*, "Don't despair [of God's grace]" (Sura 39:54), had he only seen ʿUrfi's own innumerable sins.[20] Ḥafiẓ, more subtle in his use of shocking motifs, informs his listener that the dreaded market superintendent, *muḥtasib*, is intoxicated by "the wine of hypocrisy"—

> Thus you may drink, and "Do not fear!"[21]

The "Do not fear," from Sura 20:71, in this context gently invites the reader to drink wine without fear as the *muḥtasib* himself is drunk and thus cannot

control anyone else; and besides, his drink is hypocrisy, which is certainly more abominable than wine.

Allusions to the *shaqq al-qamar*, "Splitting of the moon" (Sura 54:1)—one of the miracles the Prophet Muḥammad performed—can be found now and then when a poet wants to point out the overwhelming beauty of his friend, before whose moonlike face the moon itself is ashamed. But one may find it rather tasteless when an author, after a series of puns on letters, compares the friend's nose to the Prophet's finger, which split the moon (that is, the face) into two halves.[22]

Weaving such allusions into poems of course presupposed a sound knowledge of the Koran on the part of readers and listeners as well as poets. But that was something one could take for granted in medieval Muslim society.

If allusions to single words or even entire verses of the Koran are quite common, allusions to the persons mentioned in the Holy Book, or to specific events, are even more frequent. There is scarcely a prophet anywhere in the Koran who does not feature in some poetic context or another.[23]

Adam, the prototype of humanity, is the one to whom the angels were ordered to bow down (Sura 2:31), as God had breathed into him from His breath (Sura 15:29) and, according to Muslim tradition, he was "created in His image." That, among other things, accounts for man's superiority over everything in the universe: did not God also "teach him the names" (Sura 2:31) and thus make him the overlord of the named beings? But, as Ḥafiẓ thinks, the angels who obediently fell down before the newly created father of mankind intended in reality to prostrate themselves before his, the poet's, beloved to kiss his feet![24]

The only angel[25] who refused to bow down before Adam was Satan, Iblis, who was cursed then by God. As Ghalib says in his great hymn on Divine Unity, God

> has stitched the eye of Iblis with the nail of Destiny.[26]

However, as one strand of Islamic mysticism claims, Iblis accepted this curse as though it were a robe of honor.[27] Recalling God's pre-eternal will that nobody should fall down before anyone but Him, Iblis obeyed the hidden will and not the spoken word, thus becoming, as Hellmut Ritter has put it, "more monotheistic than God."[28] For this reason he appears in some Persian and Indo-Muslim poems as the great lover who suffers for his obedience and yet will never reach God, who is actually his only beloved. Sarmad, the eccentric Judeo-Persian poet at the Mughal court, who was executed in 1661 on account of heresy, thus dared to say:

> Go, and learn the art of true service from Satan.
> Choose *one* direction of prayer and don't fall down before anyone else![29]

These ideas percolated even down to the level of folk mystics such as Shah ʿAbdul Laṭif in Sind (d. 1752), whose remark *ʿāshiq ʿAzāzīl*, "Lover is Satan," has caused his interpreters so many headaches.[30] At the other end of the spectrum, Iqbal's image of Satan as the necessary whetstone for man—who must fight him and who will overcome him at the end of time, so that he will finally offer to perfected man the obeisance he did not deign to the immature Adam—is a very sophisticated development of this image.[31]

For most poets, though, Satan is the embodiment of analytical, loveless intellect,[32] or the one-eyed seducer, the cunning fiend. How thus can one confront him? One poet suggests that

> If Iblis had only once drunk some wine,
> he would have performed two thousand prostrations before Adam![33]

Intoxicated by love, Iblis would have recognized the divine spark in the dust-form of Adam and would not have boasted of his own origin—fire, which he regarded as superior to Adam's clay. But as the inventor and victim of dangerous rational comparison, he was liable to punishment.

In the context of Adam's story one should not forget that in Islamic tradition Adam was not seduced by means of an apple and that Eve had no share in the seduction. Instead both are equally guilty, and the means of seduction is usually considered to be a grain.[34] Comparisons of the mole of the beloved with this dangerous grain, by which the soul-bird easily falls into the snare, therefore recur frequently in poetry.

It is rather rare to find Noah (Nuh) mentioned by the poets, unless his name is used to point to *nūḥa*, "complaining, lamenting." Nevertheless his ark stands for salvation from danger, as one easily understands, and for this reason Ḥafiẓ calls even the "boat of wine"—the cup—an ark, for without its

help the poet would be carried off easily by the flood and tempest of events.[35] More in tune with the dramatic aspect of the story of the flood is Kisa'i's use of the topic in a threnody about a deceased patron:

[The city of] Marw became like Noah's flood from the water of the
[people's] eyes—
your bier floated thereon like the ark![36]

In panegyric poetry the ark and even more Mount Ararat (Judi) generally offered good comparisons for praise, because the ruler offers the greatest (perhaps the only) security in the storm of trials and tribulations. According to popular legend the flood was started by an old woman in Kufa, who boiled water on her stove and lost control over it. Hence Ghalib claims that

My heart incorporates the heat of the furnace,
my eyes have enough water to inundate the whole world.[37]

Much more prominent in poetry is Abraham (Ibrahim), the "friend of God," *khalīl Allāh*, who according to the Koran built the Ka'ba and destroyed the idols of his father Azar. He is thus the ideal monotheist. Goethe says, in an allusion to Sura 6:98,

Abraham, den Herrn der Sterne
hat er sich zum Herrn erlesen . . . ,[38]

Abraham has chosen as his lord the Lord of the stars . . . ,

because Ibrahim, after looking at sun, moon, and stars, ultimately turned to their creator, for he "loved not those that set," *al-āfilīn*.

Ibrahim's role as the razer of idols inspired Sa'di to address a friend of his, named Khalil, with the lines

My eye cannot rest on anyone,
my friend (*khalīl*) has destroyed all of Azar's idols.[39]

That is, the poet now knows only one single object of worship, though whether this is his worldly beloved, or the Eternal Beloved, is left obscure. To understand such puns completely one must remember that the word *but* or, less frequently, *ṣanam*, "idol," was generally used for the beloved: *but* and *ma'shūq*, "beloved," are interchangeable, which accounts for many "impious" expressions. Later poets sometimes regarded the "idol" as a positive object—after all, is not God constantly busy with creating new "idols"?

Does not God give wine all the time, yet he cannot be called
cupbearer?
He always chisels idols and yet cannot be called Azar![40]

Thus says Ghalib, who created one of the finest descriptions of the true artist, as Azar, who "sees the dance of the uncreated idols already in the stone."[41] Here one can see, if one wants, an allusion to the inherent conflict between legalistic, unimaginative religious attitudes and creative artistic work. And thus the *butān-i āzarī* have led a rather cheerful life throughout the history of Persian poetry.

More frequent, however, than these images are those that developed out of Sura 21:69, which tells how the tyrant Nimrod cast Ibrahim into a blazing pyre—but "We [Allah] addressed the fire 'Be cool and peaceful!'" Hence the innumerable allusions to the "rose garden of Ibrahim," a term which appears both in poetry and as a title of books, in particular those dedicated to a patron named Ibrahim.[42] Poets admonished their readers to remain safe amid the fire of troublesome events "as Ibrahim was in Nimrod's fire."[43] For Ibrahim is the ideal believer, whose pure faith can change even fire into cool rose gardens—just as the lover feels like being in a rose garden when he is in the midst of love's flames.

I am the one who gathers roses from *Khalīl*'s rose garden.
I am in the fire, but I am a-smiling,[44]

says Mir Dard in eighteenth-century Delhi. Five centuries before him an ecstatic mystic in the Indus Valley, Lal Shahbaz Qalandar, had sung in jubilant verses:

Due to my friend's love I dance every moment in midst of fire![45]

In between, hundreds of poets took up this theme.

At some point Ibrahim also began to appear as the representative of daring love, leaping into the fire (of love and ecstasy) when intellect would hesitate to move. This contrast appears especially in Iqbal's poetry.[46] In a similar image more familiar to Westerners of Christian background, it was Ibrahim's absolute and unquestioning faith which inspired his son Isma'il

to offer himself without hesitation when he was to be sacrificed. The father's model inspired the son's faithful action.[47]

Other poets who liked to extend traditional comparisons to their farthest limit could boast that "you have heard that Ibrahim did not burn in the pyre, but I burn without sparks or flame."[48] By burning but not showing his suffering, the lover is superior to those who are famous for the miracle of not burning in the fire.

There is yet another side to the fire symbolism. In garden poetry, red flowers can be seen as flames. Thus Ḥafiẓ tells his reader to

> Refresh the ritual of Zarathustra in the garden,
> now that the tulip has lit the fire of Nimrod![49]

With the double allusion to ancient Persian fire worship and to the fire of Nimrod he has cleverly brought together two non-Islamic figures noted for their associations with fire, though their connections were quite different.

As for Nimrod himself, he was killed in a slow and painful process by a gnat that entered his brain.[50] The smallest cause, be it only a tiny insect, can thus bring the death of the mightiest tyrant. This example appears with some frequency in Islamic poetry and in general literature as well.

As important as Ibrahim is for the religious tradition, the true favorite of Persian and Turkish poets is Joseph (Yusuf), to whom the Koran devotes a whole sura (Sura 12) and whose story is called "the most beautiful story." In poetry Yusuf became the embodiment of Beauty and of the beloved, but he also appears, in more general applications, through his adventures as told in the Koran.[51] The time he spent in the well, where he was thrown by his envious brothers, seems to model the lover's situation: one learns patience in the seemingly hopeless darkness.

> All the nights of sorrow are pregnant with the day of joy—
> they see the Yusuf "Day" in the well of the longest winter night.[52]

Thus says Khaqani, cleverly introducing in his first hemistich the well-known proverb "Nights are pregnant." Amir Khusrau, on the other hand, describes "losing his heart" as a tumble into the well:

> My heart fell in the well the very moment that from his face
> the *Sūra Yūsuf* came as a good omen![53]

Here the beloved's beautiful face and "the most beautiful story" seem interchangeable, and the whole story of Yusuf—separation, suffering love, his second imprisonment in Egypt, and final reunion—is, no doubt, a good omen for everyone who seeks prognostication from the Koran.

The enamored poet could also compare his narrow heart to the well that encloses the beautiful Yusuf, who will manifest himself someday.[54] The Western reader, however, will find less pleasure in the frequent image that the dimple in the beloved's chin resembles a well into which thousands of Egyptian Yusufs might fall, because the beloved surpasses them in beauty a thousand times.[55]

Yusuf would have never attained to such a high rank in Egypt had he not left his native country and suffered patiently. For emigration—be it that of the Prophet, or of Yusuf, or of any comparable being—is the condition for growth and development.

> In its native country the pearl is nothing but a blister—
> how could Yusuf have reached the rank of the Mighty One, had he
> not been sold?[56]

Thus asks Kalim, who refers to the old belief that pearls are nothing but water drops (or, in the parlance of seventeenth-century poets, blisters) which, risen to the clouds, fall back into the ocean and can be swallowed by an oyster to grow into a pearl (see below, chapter 15).

This aspect of the Yusuf story was frequently used by the poets to console themselves (for many of them had left their native country) and also their listeners. The mystics could even see this story as pointing to the mystery of death and resurrection.[57] ʿUrfi describes his suffering by the same set of images, only interpreted in the negative:

> I am that unfortunate Yusuf, who has not reached Egypt—
> barely rescued from the well I have gone to the prison. . . .[58]

One of the great themes of Persian literature is the love of Zulaykha (in the Western tradition, Potiphar's wife) for Yusuf. Long before Jami gave this romance its classical form in a celebrated epic poem, numerous poets had alluded to the story, in which the eternal interplay of Beauty and Love, the factor that underlies almost all of life, is represented so beautifully. As Ḥafiẓ expresses the experience,

When Zulaykha saw the day-illuminating beauty of Yusuf,
Love brought her out from the veil of chastity.[59]

Wherever there is Beauty there is a lover to adore it—that is the quintessence of the Yusuf story. The Koranic statement that the Egyptian women whom the lovesick Zulaykha invited to a feast gazed so at Yusuf's beauty that they did not feel it when they cut their hands, instead of the fruits they were holding (Sura 12:30–31), is a favorite with the poets. Would the lover feel any pain provided he can enjoy the presence of the beloved? The beloved's presence would make him forget everything. In this story infatuation with a beautiful human being could be described as being much like the complete surrender of the heart in the contemplation of the Divine Beloved.

Jami's epic poem *Yūsuf Zulaykhā* describes the colorful palace which the longing woman had built and decorated with sensual pictures in the hope of seducing her beloved. These ravishing settings have offered a fine subject to the miniature painters who illustrated the great poem.[60]

But how could Yusuf have been tempted to look at such imperfect pictures? He, who is Beauty personified, needs only one thing: a pure mirror. That is the only gift one can offer him, as Rumi has repeatedly stated—a mirror that, like the purified heart of the lover, reflects the beauty of the beloved.[61]

Poets who dwelled upon Yusuf's beauty and its bewitching effects may have felt themselves to be embodiments of Zulaykha's soul. For them, as Rumi says in a breathtaking passage at the very end of his *Mathnawī*, everything is a reflection of Yusuf:[62] wherever they look, they see him; wherever they listen, they hear his voice; every breeze brings them the fragrance of his garment, until his name becomes "food in the time of hunger, a fur coat in winter days," and they are lost in his remembrance. For the woman-soul, first greedy and trying to seduce the beloved Yusuf, is purified in suffering: the *nafs ammāra*, the "soul inciting to evil" of which the Sura Yusuf speaks (12:53), grows into the *nafs lawwāma*, "the blaming soul" (Sura 75:2), and ends in speechless contemplation of the Beloved, as the *nafs muṭma'inna*, the "soul at peace" (Sura 89:27).

This romance reveals the never-ending interaction of Beauty and Love, but there is still another aspect to the Yusuf of Sura 12. This is his relation to

his father, Jacob (Ya'qub), who had wept so much in the pangs of separation from his most beloved son that he had become blind. He was cured, as the Koran tells, by the scent of Yusuf's shirt. Sitting in the "hut of sorrows," *kulba-i aḥzān* as the Persian poets call it, he is consoled by the fragrance of his son, for scent or fragrance is the miraculous power which calls back to memory the faraway or invisible beloved.[63]

Scent is the portion of him who does not enjoy the actual vision,

says Rumi,[64] who used the motif of scent hundreds of times in his work (and was very fond of the Yusuf motif). When one of the translators of Rumi's *Mathnawī* into Urdu called his work *Pīrāhan-i Yūsufī* (Yusuf's Shirt), he conveyed by that very title that he was offering in his book at least a first "taste" of the great poem to those unable to read the original: like the shirt placed into Ya'qub's hands, it might give the reader some spiritual joy and bring healing to the eyes of the heart.[65]

Yet only rarely, in this connection, do poets speak of another of Yusuf's shirts, the bloodstained one that his brothers had shown to Ya'qub after throwing Yusuf into the well. In early poetry a tulip may remind the writer of that shirt,[66] but it is more common to compare the beautiful rose to Yusuf. The rose exudes fragrance, and its shirt is torn (the petals, when the bud opens) just as Yusuf's was torn by Zulaykha:

The Yusuf "Rose" arrived, and thanks to the scent of his garment
the narcissus became radiant.[67]

To enjoy this line by Amir Khusrau one needs also to know that the narcissus has been since olden times the ideal substitute for the eye (see below, chapter 12). Often it is thought to be blind, because the flower is white. And the formula "May your eye be radiant" (or "bright") is used to congratulate someone. Thus the poet is saying that the narcissus should be congratulated because the rose is approaching, and at the same time he congratulates his eye which, being cured of blindness, will soon be able to see the roselike cheeks of the Yusuf-like beloved.

Later poets ventured into even more exotic comparisons. They thought that the red wine with its fragrance, which certainly enamored them, resembled the attractive Yusuf:

You cannot see any more wine in the bottle
because Yusuf cannot endure the prison.[68]

Thus Qudsi describes a drinking party in seventeenth-century India. Two centuries later Insha compared the bottle to a shirt for the rose(-colored) Yusuf, that is, the wine itself.[69]

Yusuf is the favorite figure of poets for whom the manifestation of beauty is the highest goal. But he rarely if ever appears in the work of Iqbal, whose emphasis is on God's Majesty and human spiritual strength. Iqbal prefers Moses, the prophet "to whom God spoke," *kalīm Allāh*, and who was turned back when he asked to see God without veils. *Lan tarāni*, "Thou shalt not see me" (Sura 7:143), was the Divine answer to this daring request—and for the poets it is the answer given by the beloved when asked to show his (or her) face to the lover, who longs for direct vision. In *ghazal* poetry writers have even gone so far as to describe the beloved's minute mouth with an allusion to this same divine word:

The atom (*jauhar-i fard*) of his [or her] mouth tells the seeker:
"Thou shalt not see me!"[70]

The dialogue between Moses and his Lord could also be invoked in panegyrics. For example, Muḥammad ibn Naṣir says of his patron:

Eternal duration (*baqā*) says to him all the time: "Let me see you!"
Annihilation (*fanā*) says to him: "You will not see me in eternity!"[71]

That is, the patron's life will last forever, and so will his rule.

Because Moses saw the Lord's glory made manifest through the burning bush, it was easy for poets to connect him with fire. In spring poems one sometimes finds the "fire of Ibrahim" and the burning bush of Moses paired in one verse, when the poet tells of roses and tulips coming into bloom.[72] A late Indian poet like Ghalib might even compare the pretty girls in the streets of Benares to the burning bush[73]—may we assume here a (subconscious?) combination of the Divine fire with the fire that was so central in Hindu rites? But for Iqbal the "Tulip of Sinai," *lāla-i Ṭūr*, constitutes a model for the ideal human being: like a flaming tulip in the steppes, man should grow out of his own depths and illuminate the world by his fire.[74]

God's command to Moses as he stood before the burning bush—"Put away your two sandals!" (Sura 20:12)—also offered possibilities of punning to poets and in particular to mystical writers. Around 1700 an Indian poet wrote:

Cast fire upon the world—that is [true] seeking!
Throw away both worlds like two sandals—that is good behavior![75]

However, many poets thought that Moses' burning bush was much too insignificant a vision. They craved a more "direct" vision of God or even boasted of having known him much more closely. This seems to be the case especially among Indo-Muslim writers, beginning with ʿUrfi and continuing to Iqbal. Even Sir Sayyid Aḥmad Khan (d. 1898), the modernist reformer of Indian Muslims, had written on his tombstone:

Neither Moses nor the Sinai could bear the radiance of one
manifestation—
this is my heart, which has seen thousands of that kind.[76]

Iqbal's last poetical collection in Urdu, *Żarb-i Kalīm* (The Stroke of Moses),[77] honors the power of the prophet, whose miraculous rod could produce water out of the rock, cleave the Red Sea, and overcome the magicians of Pharaoh, whose rods turned into serpents which were in turn devoured by Moses'. For this reason, in Iqbal's verse Moses is the symbol of a strength that is not cut off from its divine source—the kind of strength the poet envisaged for the ideal modern Muslim.

In an earlier era, when Kalim claimed that times had deteriorated, he warned that it does not mean that Moses has appeared when a stick falls into a blind man's hand.[78] It was in memory of this Kalim, whose pen name itself alludes to Moses, the *kalīm Allāh*, that another Kashmiri poet invented a fine threnody, playing on his name:

Finally he went off and put the pen out of his hand—
Kalim traveled on this road without his wand.[79]

Just as Moses performed miracles with his wand, the poet had performed miracles with his pen. Such claims can be found in earlier poets' self-praise,[80] but they gain a special charm here when linked to a poet who chose a name that recalled Moses'.

Only rarely do poets allude to the earlier stages of Moses' life. One such

instance invokes his herding the cattle of Shuʿayb in the Wadi Ayman (Sura 28:21), to teach the listener patience in heeding the incomprehensible decrees of God:

He makes Yazid sit on the carpet of the caliphate,
He makes Kalim work in the dress of a shepherd.[81]

Much more frequent are allusions to another of Moses' miracles, that of the White Hand (Sura 7:105), known also from the Old Testament: when he placed his hand in his bosom it came out white. This becomes in Persian poetry a symbol of prophetic and, by extension, poetic power. To underscore Islam's miracle-working, egalitarian force, Iqbal sings that

Love gives the White Hand to the black man![82]

More often, however, the image appears in love poetry in quite unexpected connections: the beloved's face and mole are "the hand of Moses and the heart of Pharaoh,"[83] that is, "wonderful and cruel," or, as an early Indian Sufi poet envisioned it,

His tress is Moses' serpent,
the palm of his hand is like the White Hand.[84]

That the white lily in the garden is likewise compared to the White Hand is understandable,[85] for it is the prophet that announces spring.[86]

Moses' antagonist is Pharaoh, the cruel tyrant and restive infidel who instead of listening to the prophet's preaching considered himself to be God (Sura 79:24). He was punished for this sin when the Red Sea swallowed him. It is important to remember that this theme, though not too frequently mentioned in poetry, inspired Muslims to invent the chronogram *Firʿaun gharq-i baḥr*, "Pharaoh drowned in the sea" = [A.D.] 1916 when Lord Kitchener's boat capsized during World War I and the British commander lost his life: had he not fought against the Mahdi of Sudan and his followers and opened the Mahdi's grave? Iqbal, in his *Jāvīdnāma* (published in 1932), builds a dramatic scene on this comparison.[87]

Another actor in the Moses story is Samiri (Sura 20:85), who according to Islamic tradition invented the Golden Calf and thus turned the Children of Israel away from the worship of the One God.

Don't be Samiri who gave gold and, out of asininity,
left Moses, to run after a calf![88]

Thus says Ḥafiẓ, with a nice pun on the stupid ass and the calf.

Another, and more frequently mentioned, negative figure appears from the same story: Qarun (the biblical Korah), known as the rich miser who was in the end swallowed up by the earth, pressed down under the weight of his treasures.[89] Saʿdi admonishes his reader to remember that

Qarun perished although he had forty treasure houses,
Nushirwan did not die because he left behind a good name.[90]

And Iqbal compares the learned mullah to a "Qarun of Arabic dictionaries,"[91] because he clings only to the outward letter of the Koran and *ḥadīth* and thus will go down under the dust, as he never understood the spirit of faith and love, which carries the true believer heavenward.

One of the most fascinating figures connected with the story of Moses in the Koran is Khiḍr, or Khiżr, the mysterious guide.[92] Although he is not mentioned by name in the Koran, tradition identifies him with Moses' companion on the way to the "confluence of the two oceans" (Sura 18:59–60). The three strange actions of this traveler were not comprehended by Moses, who saw only their external, seemingly destructive aspects without knowing the esoteric meaning. Khiżr, whose name is derived from the Arabic root *kh.ḍ.r*, "to be green," more generally appears as the guide of the wayfarer and the mystic in his quest for the Water of Life, for it was he who guided Alexander to the Fountain of Life and, drinking from it, became immortal, while Alexander was deprived of the drink. The Water of Life can be found only after overcoming the most terrible obstacles and surviving frightful adventures, for it is hidden in deepest darkness. In poetry it is always connected with the name of Khiżr, and even Goethe sings in the very beginning of his *West-Östlicher Divan*:

Unter Lieben, Trinken, Singen
soll dich Chisers Quell verjüngen.[93]

While loving, drinking, and singing,
Khiżr's fountain shall rejuvenate you.

The Water of Life thus came to mean, among the poets, either wine, or the kiss of the beloved. Ḥafiẓ, taking up earlier examples, skillfully plays with the name Khiżr, "Greenish," when describing the "greening" down that sprouts on his friend's cheek and upper lip:

Your down is Khiżr, and your mouth is the Water of Life. . . .[94]

The lover who has tasted this elixir will remain eternally alive; or rather, he has found Paradise and eternal bliss already here on earth. Ḥafiẓ even thinks that

If the Water of Life is that which is contained in the friend's lip,
then it is evident that Khiżr owns only a mirage.[95]

Compared to a lip, even Khiżr's water cannot quench the lover's thirst and make him immortal. In later times the image was stretched rather far: one may not exactly savor the idea that the beloved's mouth is Khiżr's fountain, in which the tongue is a fish.[96] Yet an eighteenth-century poetaster in India went even farther:

In the sugar of your smile I saw the pearls of a few teeth—
a few orphans are the inhabitants of Khiżr's fountain![97]

"Orphan," *yatīm*, is also the term for a "priceless pearl" or a unique (hence "orphan") jewel.

Besides the beloved's saliva and the wine, one other thing can constitute the Water of Life: the poet's ink, for it is hidden in the dark valley of the inkwell and grants immortality to the poet or the calligrapher who uses it for his work, as it also helps to immortalize the patron in whose honor the poem was written.[98]

Khiżr's own immortality is often mentioned but not always construed as a positive value—for, as lovers knew, "Death is a bridge that leads the lover to the beloved."[99] Perhaps, as Ghalib remarks, one should rather pity Khiżr and his immortal companions, as they have no hope of dying and being rescued from this miserable life.[100] The endless duration of Khiżr's life has also inspired longing souls to compare it to an event that seemed endless to them:

The life of the true lover would be longer than that of Khiżr,
if he would count the days of separation as life,

says Qasim-i Kahi,[101] implying that a day without the beloved is not real life at all.

The term *majmaʿ al-baḥrayn*, "the confluence of the two oceans," which occurs in the overlapping contexts of the Khiżr story and Moses' story, is sometimes used to denote the unification of two seemingly remote entities. But its most famous use in Persian literature is the title of Prince Dara Shikoh's (d. 1659) work *Majmaʿ al-baḥrayn*, which aims at the "confluence" of the ocean of Islam and that of Hinduism.[102]

Though the cluster of persons and events from the life of Moses is widely represented in poetry in various contexts, Luqman (Sura 31) appears, like his Koranic prototype, exclusively as the wise old man who offers good advice to people. Thus one finds him more frequently in didactic and, at times, panegyric poetry than in lyrics, and Anwari invented a book allegedly written by the sage which contains typical models of behavior.

Āṣaf's wisdom, Qarun's treasure, the prophet Job's patience—
these are the three which the wise Luqman has mentioned in his book.

One would expect David (Da'ud), the singer of the Psalms (*Zabūr*), to play an important role in the poetical universe.[103] However, it was mainly his skill in making coats of mail (as mentioned in Sura 34:10) which inspired poets when they attempted to describe the gentle movements of silvery brooks and rivers in the spring. He also appears as the singer with the enchanting voice, so that "Davidian song" is a common expression for every lovely sound, in particular for the birds' twittering on a spring morning.

But when Ḥafiẓ says,

O morning breeze, repeat David's song,
for the Solomon "Rose" has returned from the air,[104]

the emphasis is placed rather on Solomon (Sulayman), who, according to Sura 27, was master over spirits and animals, which he ruled by virtue of his magic seal. He was wont to sit on a lofty, windborne throne—hence his relation to the rose, which blooms atop a high stem, moved by the gentlest breeze. However, this windborne throne also often reminded the poets of the impermanence of power or glory in the cold wind of fate. Friedrich Rückert, imitating Ḥafiẓ, writes in perfectly "Persian" imagery:

Salomon, wo ist dein Thron? Hingegangen in den Wind!
Lilie, wo ist deine Kron'? Hingegangen in den Wind!

Solomon! Where has your throne gone? Oh, gone into the wind!
Lily, say, where has your crown gone? Oh, gone into the wind![105]

And knowing the passing glory of even the most spectacular power, the poets would generally think:

For the lover who has dwelt in the corner of your love—
a torn reed mat is Solomon's throne![106]

Solomon's love story with Bilqis, the Queen of Sheba—told with a number of details in Sura 27—enabled poets to create a charming wordplay on *sabā*, "Sheba," and *ṣabā*, "the morning breeze," although allusions to the actual story are rarer than one would expect. Rumi, however, devotes an interesting chapter in his *Mathnawī* to the love of the glorious queen, who was introduced by Solomon into the mysteries of Divine love and true faith.[107]

Much more common is Solomon's seal, the inscribed stone which has given its name to various spells and talismans.[108] In poetry it is a metaphor for the ruby-like mouth of the beloved, which is much more precious and can perform more miracles than a hundred seals of Solomon. The combination of "ruby" with "mouth" offered itself without any difficulty, but any spiritual value that helped man to overcome the vicissitudes of fate could also be called "Solomon's seal" or "ring." Thus the Pashto poet ʿAbdul Qadir Khan sings:

The universe lies under the seal of contentment and resignation—
shouldst thou draw it on thy finger, it is Sulayman's magic ring.[109]

The demons that surround Solomon's throne have inspired numerous miniature painters, who enjoy showing them in strange forms and colors.[110] They also turn up in poetry: at the beginning of this century, a poet compared them to the tsarist troops then threatening Iran.[111]

Though poetical and Koranic inscriptions on weapons for Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent's armory show that he certainly felt himself heir to the prophet-king's glory, Solomon's importance was particularly emphasized in the mystical tradition. The mystics derived their interest in him from the Koranic statement that he was aware of the "language of the birds," *manṭiq uṭ-ṭayr* (see below, chapter 13); in turn the soul-bird listens to his word. Rumi asks:

How would it be if one bird were flying
around whose neck there is the collar of our Solomon?[112]

that is, a soul who is completely bound to the mystical leader, and/or to the spiritual Beloved. This relation between Solomon and the birds, especially his role as the mystical guide who knows how to talk to the soul-birds, has inspired not only single verses but entire epic poems, the most famous being ʿAṭṭar's *Manṭiq uṭ-ṭayr*. And everywhere the hoopoe, *hudhud*, appears as the harbinger of good news, for he once was the go-between for Solomon and Bilqis.

The Koran (Sura 27:18) also speaks of Solomon's relation with the ant (after which animal the whole sura has received its name). According to legend a tiny ant once complained to the mighty king that the horses of his soldiers were disturbing the ants' colonies, and Solomon heeded the insect's complaint. This juxtaposition of highest power and grandeur with infinitesimal smallness and insignificance offered the poets wonderful possibilities for hyperbolic statements about their own unworthiness and the ruler's, or the beloved's, glorious position.[113]

Who will bring the ant's heartache to Solomon's throne?

Thus asks Amir Ḥasan Sijzi Dihlawi, as did many others.[114] In love lyrics, the motif could gain a new turn:

Whosoever saw the ant of your beauty spot no longer asks for
Solomon's place![115]

With these words the Turkish poet Fuzuli claims that to look at the antlike, minute beauty spot or mole on the beloved's cheek makes the lover much happier than to occupy Solomon's throne. The equation mole = ant occurs often; Mir Dard even sees the blackish down close to the beloved's mouth as "ants that have reached Solomon's place."[116]

From rather early times onward Solomon was identified, in Persian lore, with the mythical Jamshed (see chapter 6). Thus some distinctive images, such as Solomon's throne or Jamshed's cup, are mentioned in allusions to both rulers.[117] Similarly, the wise vizier Aṣaf ibn Barkhiya, who assisted

Solomon and has become proverbial for his wisdom, is often interchangeable with the legendary Persian vizier Buzurjmihr: both of them embody the wisdom of statesmanship.

One aspect of Solomon's activities has influenced folk tales and reached, in strange new forms, even American popular culture. This is the story that he took disobedient djinns and put them into bottles, which he sealed and cast into the sea. From the beginning stories in the *Arabian Nights* to the film television series *I Dream of Jeannie* (1965–70; frequently rerun) the "fairy [or genie] in the bottle" has entertained many generations.

Two other spirits are given a prominent place in the Koran as well as in tradition: the angels Harut and Marut (Sura 2:102). Enamored of a lovely musician, the playful Zuhra (Venus), they lightheartedly revealed to her the secret of the Greatest Name of God. As a punishment they were hung by their feet in a deep well in Babylon, and Zuhra was transferred into the fifth sphere of the sky. For the poets, Harut and Marut became the bewitching dark eyes of the beloved, or perhaps the beloved's long black tresses—a comparison which cleverly involves the theme of "hanging down." "Babylonian magic" as the power of a bewitching human being is understandably a rather frequent term.[118]

Among the Koranic prophets who are rarely mentioned by poets is Jonas (Yunus), who was swallowed by the fish. His story, according to the *ḥadīth* used by Rumi,[119] is a kind of "reversed heavenly journey": just as the Prophet Muḥammad reached his Lord in his heavenly flight during the *miʿrāj*, so Yunus found Him in his dark cell, that is, in the fish's stomach. Rumi's allusion evokes the two ways of mystical experience—the journey upward and the journey downward. But in poetry Yunus could scarcely be used for comparison to a patron or to the beloved. He appears, however, in poems that speak of God's mysterious ways of treating His friends.

> He gave flesh to the worms from the body of the patient one [Job],
> and gave to the fish a mouthful of Yunus.[120]

Job (Ayub) is more likely to be cited as the prototype of the afflicted lover who undergoes all kinds of tribulations and accepts whatever his beloved sends him.

Another Koranic prophet is Idris, who, according to legend, entered Paradise by a trick. He too is not among the common figures in lyric or

panegyric poetry, but he is sometimes mentioned with other prophets who already enjoy eternal life, such as Khiżr, Ilyas (Elias/Elijah), and Jesus. In popular poetry, however, especially in Turkey, he appears as the heavenly tailor who sits under the Ṭuba tree and is busy with stitching the garments for the inhabitants of Paradise.[121]

The rebellious peoples ʿAd and Thamud, who were extinguished because of their disobedience and their refusal to listen to the prophets' words, or the dangerous personalities of Gog and Magog, who dwell behind Alexander's iron wall in eastern Asia (cf. Sura 21:96), appear mainly in *qaṣīdas*, when the poet intends to vilify his patron's enemies, who will be extinguished the same way that ʿAd and Thamud were destroyed by divine wrath. Panegyrists like Khaqani and Anwari, as well as those who imitated them in later centuries, might also compare the sound of the poet's pen to the blowing of an icy wind, *ṣarṣar*, which could destroy the patron's enemies.[122] And the beautiful gardens and the palace of ʿAd, *Iram dhāt al-ʿimād*—the richly pillared castle mentioned in Sura 89:6—are used as signs of worldly power which will be destroyed unless people repent.

Every Koranic figure could play a role in the poetical cosmos, whether it was the mighty Solomon or the Seven Sleepers, whose faithful dog Qiṭmir became the model of fidelity. Often the prophets are portrayed not only in their glory but also as suffering heroes who willingly took the suffering upon themselves for the sake of God and thus—as mentioned in the Koran itself—prefigure the Prophet of Islam, who had to suffer until he was given victory thanks to his "beautiful patience" (Sura 12:18). With this quality they also become models for the individual believer and, by extension, for the true lover. Was not Zacharias (Zakariya) sawn asunder while he was hiding in a hollow tree, without complaining when the saw was put on his skull? Likewise the lover should not utter a cry of despair when the saw of separation, or any other affliction, overcomes him.

The Christian reader will be surprised and perhaps shocked at the way Jesus (ʿIsa al-masiḥ) is presented by the poets. His virgin mother, Mary, is considered one of the four best women that ever lived. The dried-up palm tree which she grasped when labor overcame her and which showered sweet dates upon her (Sura 19:23–26) symbolizes unexpected release from deepest despair—one immediately thinks of Paul Valéry's poem *La Palme*, in which this motif is masterfully developed. As Mary became pregnant

from the breath of the Holy Spirit or Gabriel (as Rumi has told in a remarkably tender description in the third book of the *Mathnawī*),[123] the beginning of spring and the opening of buds were greeted with allusions to the lovely virgin.

Perhaps the midnight breeze has become Gabriel,
so that branches and twigs of the dried-up trees have become
Mary![124]

This verse was written by Kisa'i, one the earliest Persian poets, and the symbolism was taken over by numerous later poets; the idea that the buds resemble the virgin touched by the Holy Spirit is certainly moving. The rosebud too was compared to Mary, and the fragrance of roses reminded poets of the breath of Jesus, which could quicken the dead.

Mystical poets—here again, especially Rumi—regarded Jesus as the symbol of the human soul, or as the embodiment of spiritual values. The material body is often manifested in the donkey which carried Jesus to Jerusalem but had to stay behind when Jesus was taken up to heaven.[125] Rumi, who was fond of juxtaposing Jesus and his donkey, often indulges in rather vulgar details to highlight the difference between the spiritual Jesus and the material world. The donkey is thus as much part and parcel of the theme "Jesus" as the rod is part of the theme "Moses," and numerous poets have taken up Anwari's question:

How would everyone who carries a rod
and has a donkey, be like Moses and like Christ?[126]

The most common images in connection with Jesus are, however, developed from the statement (Sura 5:110) that Jesus' breath could heal the sick and quicken the dead. He could fashion little birds of clay and breathe into them to bring them alive (just as the beloved revives the agonizing lover by his breath), and he could wake the dead, as he first did for Lazarus (ʿAzar). Thus he was an ideal image for the beloved.

The breeze became, as it were, Jesus son of Mary,
for it gave sight to the eye of the blind-born (*akmah*) in the
garden.[127]

Thus said Waṭwaṭ, but Rumi gives the theme its classical expression:

If someone wants to see how Jesus quickened the dead,
then give me a kiss in his presence: "Thus, thus!"[128]

This expression was imitated throughout the centuries in Persian and Urdu poetry,[129] and when a poet rhetorically asks his friend, "Whose Jesus have you been?" he means, "Whom have you revived by your kiss?"—for according to ancient concepts a kiss is an exchange of souls. This is attested widely in Greek and Latin poetry, and the Persian expression, *jān bi-lab āmad*, "My soul came on my lip," means "I was on the point of dying"—so that some fresh, life-giving breath of Jesus is required to keep the ailing lover alive.[130]

Even in the first days of Persian poetry this concept was combined with the topic of the Christian cupbearer and the monastery as the place where one could drink the prohibited wine. As early as in Raduyani's work one finds a verse which plays with these concepts:

His two tresses became a cross and his lips a Jesus,
his face a psalm of loveliness and his waist a *zunnār* [infidel's
girdle].[131]

The crosslike tresses are often mentioned in early drinking poetry. But although this verse of Raduyani's looks very matter-of-fact and may well describe an actual party (for Abbasid Arabic poetry and prose description tell of such festivities in the Christian environment), there is still room for the mystical interpretation as well: the wine of Divine Love is found outside of orthodox sobriety.

Jesus, to whose followers such "impious" acts are frequently ascribed, appears in Sufi tales as the ideal ascetic, radiant in his love of God. Yet according to legend he lives not in the immediate presence of God but rather in the fourth heaven. One account says that despite his homelessness and poverty, he had not reached absolute trust in God, for he carried a needle in his garment. This tiny object was sufficient to bar him from the highest rank of poverty; at his stage of spirituality, a needle constitutes a veil as dangerous as Qarun's treasures.[132]

The Divinely prepared table which gives Sura 5 its name, *al-Mā'ida*, is mentioned only rarely. This table is given to those who fast and avoid sins, as Rumi says. But Jesus and Moses—the representatives of love and law, mildness and sternness—often appear together, in songs in honor of the

Prophet, "to glean the crumbs from Muḥammad's table," as Khaqani claims,[133] because the Prophet of Islam came to reveal the middle path between the ways that Jesus and Moses had shown to previous communities. They too belong to the store of dramatic contrasts which Persian poets like so much to pose and develop.

The tendency simply to combine different prophets and their specialities in order to describe either the beloved or the patron is likewise quite strong:

> Your lip is Jesus, and your cheek Yusuf, but your bloodshedding eye
> is clearly Khalil (Ibrahim), and I am its hidden Isma'il [who is to be
> sacrificed].[134]

The archangel Gabriel, who carried the divine breath into Mary's shirt or sleeve, is also the angel who brought the revelation to Muḥammad. That is why he is regarded as the mediator between man and God. But one must keep in mind that the angels are not equal to human beings. They had to bow down before Adam, who carried in him all the potential for development and spiritual growth whereas they are perfect and need no change or development. Millenium after millenium they remain in the same attitude of prayer for which they have been destined. Being perfect and created from light, they have no choice between good and evil, while humans have to prove their values in choosing the right path. Humans are made, as Rumi says with a drastic image, by binding a donkey's tail and an angel's wing together,[135] and just as man can reach the immediate presence of God, which even Gabriel cannot, man can also fall deeper than any beast. Man can, as the Persian poets liked to say, "hunt angels"; but the state of mystical confusion, *ḥayrat*, is a snare even for Gabriel, as Fayżi claims.[136] Gabriel and the angels are only a lowly prey in the snare of true man's high ambition: so Iqbal, following earlier writers, repeats unceasingly.[137] And for this reason one finds that Gabriel becomes a symbol of intellect, which can lead the seeker to the threshold of the sanctuary but is not allowed inside. The mighty angel had to stay back at the *sidrat al-muntahā*, the border point of the created universe, when the Prophet continued on his flight into the Divine Presence.[138] Yet Ghalib sees himself as "the she-camel of longing, and Gabriel [as] the singing caravan leader for me."[139]

If Rumi describes the angel of inspiration as a symbol of intellect, Iqbal goes farther and contrasts, in witty verses, the position of the static angel

with that of ever-striving man. He goes so far as to write in one of his most famous Urdu poems that Iblis, Satan, teases the obedient archangel and jokes about his constant and unswerving obedience—which is, he thinks, a pretty boring affair. He himself, as he boasts, never ceases playing the role of a thorn in God's side, and thus (one may infer) keeps Him awake.[140]

The traditional angels of Islam appear in various states in Persian poetry. There are, first of all, the *kirām kātibīn* (Sura 82:11), the noble angels who sit on every human shoulder to note down each person's actions. Sometimes a poet may claim that these angels cannot write down as many sins as he commits;[141] or perhaps he may hope and expect that the recording angel will be so confused and excited by the delightful countenance of the poet's beloved that the pen will fall from his hand and he will fail to take further notes.[142] (And, of course, he will not write down the sins the lover may commit during this period.) Or so Amir Khusrau thinks.

After death each human being will be asked what he or she believes. The two angels of the grave, Munkar and Nakir, are thus much feared, as they not only interrogate the deceased but punish them if necessary. But these angels too can be seen on earth—the beloved's cruelty is a perfect reflection of their behavior.

> Under your lip, a Christ is hidden,
> under your eyelashes there are Munkar and Nakir.[143]

That is, though these lips are life-bestowing, the eyes are tormenting.

The period before the general resurrection is the time that the Mahdi and/or Jesus will appear on earth to fight the Dajjal, after whose death will come a time of peace. This is the eschatological peace for which mankind has always hoped, the time when "lion and lamb shall lie down together." To many poets the reign of their patron would seem to inaugurate this peace—hence the numerous allusions, in panegyrics, to the Peaceful Kingdom. Sometimes, though rarely, the reign of the beloved is also seen as bringing peace between predatory animals and soft-hearted lambs and goats.[144] Similarly, Persian and Indo-Muslim miniaturists sometimes depicted this scene when the painter wanted to honor the patron—as in the well-known portrait of the emperor Jahangir.[145]

Once the period of peace is over, the mighty angel Israfil will appear and blow the trumpet to inaugurate resurrection and Doomsday, awakening the

dead, who will run around in terrible turmoil. Thus it is that the word *qiyāmat*, "resurrection," has acquired in most Islamic languages the meaning "riot, horrible tumult, absolute confusion."[146] A pun occasionally is worked between *qiyāmat* and *qāmat*, the "stature" of the beautiful friend. With this *ishtiqāq* the poet intends to convey the confusion into which the lover is thrown at the very sight of the beloved's graceful form.[147]

Yet quite a few poets have felt that they are no less than Israfil—is not the scratching of the poet's pen equal to the sound of the trumpet of resurrection? They too are able to awaken slumbering humanity by their powerful words—that, at least, is what they like to think.[148] In the present century Iqbal has used the motif often and elaborated it in various ways: Israfil even complains because the poet himself has announced resurrection earlier than expected.[149]

Most of the eschatological vocabulary serves to describe the poets' own state of mind, although they at times ridicule the whole instrumentarium that will be set up on this terrible day. Why should God need scales to weigh the dirty sins of man? And why does he build a bridge thinner than a hair over which people have to walk?[150] Rebellious questions of this type are found primarily among folk poets in the Turkish tradition, who sometimes elaborate them into highly amusing verses.

Most of the classical poets, however, would probably agree with Ḥafiẓ:

> The story of the horror of the Day of Judgment, which the city
> preacher told us yesterday
> is nothing but an allusion to the day of separation.[151]

The time when the lover is separated from the beloved is as long and painful as the apparently endless Day of Judgment, which will be scorching hot. But as for those who are close to the beloved, they would not care even if there were seventy thousand suns that day![152]

On the Day of Judgment everyone will be given the book of his actions in his right or left hand, according to whether the actions were good or evil. But Qudsi in India declares enthusiastically that he would rather bring along the picture of his beloved—because that is all that he was busy with during his life.[153] Such a picture would be all the more fitting as many a writer has claimed that the beloved indeed reminds him of the events on Doomsday, for the beloved has

> a face like the result of good actions [that is, white]
> and tresses like the book of the sinners [that is, black].[154]

These ideas have been repeated over the centuries; therefore one enjoys the fresh view of these events given in Ṣa'ib's critical verse:

> Concerning the day of resurrection there is only one thing that
> worries me.
> That is, that I have to see the faces of these people once again.[155]

For the majority of poets the fires of love and Hell are interchangeable; or rather, Hell is just a tiny spark of the fire of love, as Sauda said in the eighteenth century, using a traditional image. Hell thus appears time and again in the visions of the poet who is separated from his beloved and carries, as it were, Hell within himself (thus Ghalib). Paradise too is connected with the beloved: the water of the heavenly fountain Kauthar comes from the beloved's sweet lips, and so does the pure water of the *salsabīl* (the paradisiacal pond), and the high-rising Ṭuba tree is nothing but the reflection of the beloved's slender stature.[156] Once in a while, though, both heavenly fountains may represent the poet's ink.[157]

In a verse that has become proverbial Ḥafiẓ sums up the lovers' viewpoint, addressing the letterbound theologian and the ascetic:

> You and the Ṭuba tree, I and the stature of the beloved—
> everyone's thought corresponds to his ambition.[158]

That is, the orthodox believer's ambition, *himmat*, is to reach the paradisiacal tree by works of piety and obedience, whereas the lover thinks only of the ravishing beauty of his beloved. Whether this beloved is one of flesh and blood, or the eternally beautiful Beloved, is left to the reader's understanding.

Ḥafiẓ also reminds his readers that there is a reflection of Paradise right here and now:

> Ḥafiẓ's eye under the balcony of that houri-like being
> had the character of a "garden under which flow rivers."[159]

The balcony or roof of the unattainable beloved is, for the lover, Paradise with a houri in it, and as he cannot come close to that heavenly virgin his

tears flow like the rivers beneath the Garden of Paradise, as the Koran mentions several times.

Now and then descriptions of the primordial Paradise are transferred to the beloved:

> With the cheek and curl and face which you have,
> you have a peacock, a paradise, and also a serpent.[160]

According to popular tradition the serpent (here, the beloved's tresses) entered Paradise (the cheek) by means of a trick: carried in the peacock's beak, it managed to reach the presence of Adam and Eve. Such comparisons were used with increasing detail in later days.

The promised Paradise is, for many writers, nothing but a projection of their present state:

> How long shall I still ponder Hell and Kauthar? For I too have
> such a fire in my breast and such a drink in my goblet,[161]

says Ghalib.

To think of castles and houris, *ḥūr u quṣūr*, is no doubt a mistake, *quṣūr*, as the poets like to pun. What matters is the contemplation of the smiling face of the eternal Beloved.[162] After all, these houris are already many thousand years old; they may be good enough for the ascetic who longs for such a recompense for his deprivations in this life.[163] But

> Riḍwan's garden, which is praised so much by the ascetic,
> is nothing but a rose bouquet in the niche of oblivion for us who
> have lost ourselves,[164]

as Ghalib says in a convoluted Urdu verse. A withered nosegay, left in some abandoned nook and never noticed by those who have forgotten themselves in their quest for the Real—that is the traditional Paradise. True lovers, however, know that

> In the sanctuary of Love
> there are a hundred stations, the first of them being resurrection.[165]

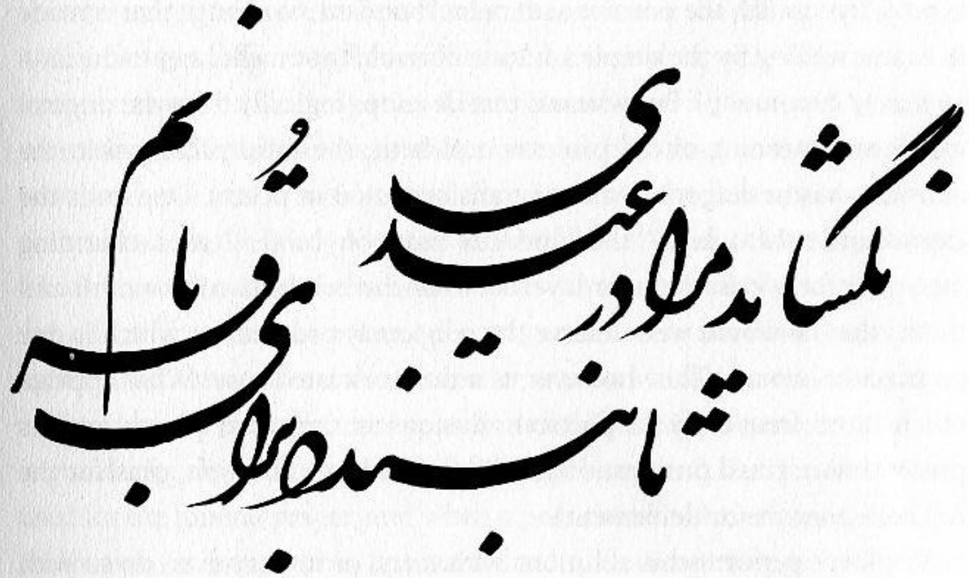
Thus they will continue wandering into ever new depths of the fathomless abyss of the Infinite, "growing without diminishing,"[166] as Iqbal says at the end of his spiritual journey, or

> bis im Anschaun ew'ger Liebe
> wir verschweben, wir verschwinden,[167]
>
> until in looking at Love Eternal
> we float away and vanish,

as Goethe says in the Book of Paradise in his *West-Östlicher Divan*, perfectly faithful to the spirit of Persian poetry.

4

The Pillars of Islam and Related Concepts



He does not open me

at the Feast unless he

binds me for sacrifice.

The Five Pillars of Islam—the profession of faith, five daily prayers, almsgiving, fasting in Ramaḍan, and the individual's pilgrimage to Mecca—could be used in poetical imagery in various ways. In chapter 3 we saw that the profession of faith offered poets many possibilities of contrasting themes and emphasizing the transformation from *lā*, the negation "there is no deity," to *illā*, the positive statement "but God," a change that is made in Arabic writing by the simple addition of an *alif* (a straight line) to the *lā*—so that لا becomes لإ. But whereas that develops logically from the original words and meaning of the profession of faith, the third pillar, *zakāt*, the alms tax, has undergone a strange transformation in poetry. One finds the expression *zakāt-i laʿl*,[1] "the alms tax paid on rubies," as a charming metaphor for a kiss: the poor lover looks at the beloved's ruby mouth and thinks that he would well deserve the religiously ordered tax which is due on precious stones. This, however, is a rather isolated case. What appears much more frequently in poetical allusions is the ritual prayer and its precondition, ritual purification (*wuḍūʾ* for the lesser ablution, *ghusl* for the full bath after major defilement).

The lover performs his ablutions with tears, or he may even do so with blood in imitation of the martyr-mystic Ḥallaj.

When the lover does not perform his ablution with blood,
Then, as Mufti Love has stated, his prayer is not valid.[2]

A real-life *muftī*—the lawyer who gives legal opinion, *fatwā*—would not permit the slightest impurity, let alone blood, on the garment of anyone who intends to perform the ritual prayer. Mufti Love, however, decrees that the lover has to bathe in his heart's blood: only this, the sign of having sacrificed himself completely, is able to purify him as it behooves.

If one cannot find water for the ablution, one is allowed to use sand, in which case the purification is called *tayammum*. Thus it is that Anwari addresses the princess Maryam:

To sing praise and laud for anyone but you
is like an ablution with sand at the seashore![3]

That is, it is absolutely illegal. (The line also contains a pun—a false *ishtiqāq*—on Arabic *tayammum* and Persian *yam*, "sea.")

This is not the place to discuss the numerous types of poetical prayers which one finds in Persian literature. The introductions of the great mystical, didactic, and even romantic epics contain prayers of great beauty and depth. *Qaṣīdas* addressed to God the Creator of the Universe and its contradictory and inexplicable events are often deeply moving, though they become more and more complicated in the course of the centuries. In lyrics it is sometimes difficult to know whether one is dealing with a love *ghazal* or a prayer; that is particularly true of Rumi's verse. Last but not least one must remember the deeply felt personal prayers which combine (often rhyming) prose with poetical insertions (usually quatrains); the first major examples of this kind are the lovely *Munājāt* of ʿAbdullah-i Anṣari of Herat (d. 1089), which inspired many later writers. But as with Koranic allusions, poets used the different aspects of prayer in settings that were not always truly "religious" and sometimes make the reader wonder what their real intent was.

Consider, for example, the expression *chahār takbīr*, "to say four times the beginning of the call to prayer," that is, *Allāhu akbar*.[4] This fourfold call is used for the funeral prayer, and when a poet claims to have uttered the four *takbīr* over the five prayers, he means that he has completely given up ritual prayers—has, as it were, "buried them." Poets who did so might also see the wine bottle as engaged in constant prostration and standing, as if performing the movements of prayer, while the goblet performs a circumambulation, *ṭawāf*, as is done around the Kaʿba.[5]

A special sign of piety is a dark spot on the forehead, the result of frequent prostration. Thus for the poets this spot could turn into the scar of love which marks them.[6]

Likewise the *qibla*, the direction of the Kaʿba in Mecca, whither the Muslim must always turn in prayer, becomes instead the face of the beloved. From the twelfth century the expression occurs:

Mā qibla rāst kardīm bi-samṭ-i kajkulāhī,[7]

We have directed our prayer direction toward the dwelling place of
the one with his cap awry,

that is, toward a charming and self-conscious young boy. But to understand this expression correctly one must remember that according to apocryphal

tradition the Prophet, during his heavenly journey, saw his Lord in the most beautiful form and, even more specifically, as a youth with his silken cap awry.[8] This background underlies all verses that mention the *kajkulāh*.

Similarly, the beloved's beautifully arched eyebrows may remind the poet of the arch of the prayer niche, *miḥrāb*. Thus a witty poet like Amir Khusrau sees the "intoxicated" eyes beneath the arched brows and asks innocently:

Has one ever seen a drunken person in a prayer niche?[9]

And although admirers throng before the beloved's face just as beggars assemble before the mosque on Friday after the noon prayer,[10] Ḥafiẓ finds a way to reach his friend:

Show the prayer niche of your eyebrows, so that in the morning
I may lift my hands for prayer and embrace you![11]

The lifting of the hands is a typical gesture of supplication: the hands are lifted with the palms showing upward and kept at the height of the face. How wonderful are these eyebrows—thus thinks Saʿdi, amazed and full of delight:

I don't know what kind of *miḥrāb* your eyebrows are
that the heretic, when he sees them, begins to perform the ritual prayer![12]

Poems in the "Indian style" contain references to the compass that shows the direction of the *qibla*. This *qiblanumā* is often called a "*qibla*-showing bird," which offers the possibility of a comparison with the human heart. Kalim says:

Only the *qiblanumā* can look toward the face [of the beloved]
and thus guide people who do not see the Divine Truth (*ḥaqq*).[13]

Mir Dard thinks that the loving heart is no less than such a "bird": wherever it turns and wherever it shows the true goal, one falls down in adoration.[14]

The various positions of prayer can be detected in the different attitudes of trees and plants in the garden: some stand upright, some seem to kneel, others seem to prostrate themselves or, like the plane tree, lift their hands—for all of them are, according to the Koran, occupied with worship and

praise God in their own silent language. They perform, as it were, their own *dhikr*, as Yunus Emre tells in a lovely spring poem.[15]

The *dhikr*, a hundred- or thousandfold repetition of a religious formula, a Divine name, or the profession of faith, was common among the Sufis from early days onward and became a most important ingredient of religious life in general. These formulas were counted with a rosary, *tasbīḥ* or *subḥa*, of thirty-three or ninety-nine beads.[16] In poetry the *tasbīḥ* is usually associated with pious ascetics, or even with hypocrites who behave all too ostentatiously. The true lover, however, should throw away his rosary and put on the *zunnār*, the "infidel's girdle." This became a very widely used image, especially after ʿAṭṭar told, in his *Manṭiq uṭ-ṭayr*, the story of Shaykh Ṣanʿan, who fell in love with a Christian maiden and in his infatuation not only tended her swine and drank wine but also threw away his *tasbīḥ* to put on a *zunnār* instead.[17] As this seems to be the most telling proof of true love, Ṣanʿan's name occurs not only in the lyric tradition of Iran proper but also in the popular poetry of Kashmir, in Pakistani regional languages, as well as in Indonesia.[18]

The *tasbīḥ* contains one major bead that hangs down and is called the *imām*. Thus when a poet claims that he, or his patron or friend, is like the *imām* of the rosary it means that although he is of the same material as the others, he excels them and is conspicuous among his peers.[19]

In later times the rosary was used not only in connection with the *zunnār* but became a symbol of human life. Kalim complains:

I kissed everyone's hand like the rosary—what's the use?
No one opened the knot of my affair![20]

And the moving of the beads along the string seemed to be a good likeness to human endeavor, which never leads to a result:

Like the rosary's bead I never rest from traveling:
the road which I passed lies always before me in the same strain.[21]

It is thus not surprising that the coral beads of the *tasbīḥ* become identical with blood-colored tears: the poets seem to pierce the beads with their eyelashes—one by one the red drops fall from their weary eyes in hopeless pursuits. This theme, however, seems to occur only in later Indo-Muslim

poetry. Mir Dard combines all these different aspects of the rosary in his quatrain

When the teardrops have become friends of the rosary,
then the rosary's work is blessed for you.
But if your heart is hardened, be sure
that the thread of the rosary has turned into an infidel's girdle.[22]

One of the most important times in the year is Ramaḍan, the month of fasting. It is often greeted by the poets as a good friend and a welcome and honored guest: one loves to see him come but also to see him go.[23] The first sight of the crescent moon that announces the end of the fasting time has been described by many poets,[24] for though it is still thin and looks very ascetic, it brings back to the lovers the joy of drinking wine. For that reason this new moon was even called the "key of the tavern," when the Mughal emperor Jahangir and his queen Nurjahan exchanged verses about it. Salman-i Sawaji expresses his feelings about the crescent with a virtually untranslatable pun:

The moon of the Feast appears to me today like a cup,
which means that today it is absolutely meritorious to look at the cup.[25]

"Absolutely meritorious" is in the original *ʿayn-i thawāb*; *ʿayn*, however, also means "eye" and "essence." Thus it is obligatory to "look at" the cuplike crescent and the real cup with one's own eye.

Lust and hunger are subdued in Ramaḍan. Hence Kalim says:

Thanks to fasting, the children Lust and Sensual Passion were in school—
now the Feast has come, and the children are free from school![26]

He also boasts:

My work is, like that of the crescent of the Feast, to carry off grief—
I do not renew the burning of pain for people, as does the crescent of Muḥarram.[27]

(The first ten days of Muḥarram are devoted to mourning for the martyrs of Kerbela.)

ʿId ul-fiṭr, the Feast of Fastbreaking, is celebrated with great joy, and Imami's verse to his beloved has become almost proverbial:

We celebrate the ʿId but once a year—
a constant feastday is your presence, dear![28]

One further important feature of Ramaḍan is the *laylat ul-qadr*, the Night of Might—the night in which the first revelation of the Koran took place. It occurred on one of the last three odd nights of Ramaḍan, and during this blessed night pious people can still see a radiant light and experience "peace until dawn begins" (Sura 97:6). For this reason poets like to compare it to the night in which their longing for union was fulfilled. Ḥafiẓ has, as so often, set a beautiful example:

That Night of Might of which those in seclusion speak is tonight—
O Lord, from which constellation comes this fortune?[29]

Many centuries later the Urdu poet Atish described his "Night of Might," the conjunction of Jupiter and Venus, in one of the most delightful Urdu poems ever written:

'Twas the night of love with the full moon's charm,
and God, He was kind: she was in my arm!
More blessed this night than the Night of Might,
a conjunction of Venus and Jupiter white!
More radiant a night than daytime so bright,
betwixt heaven and earth a stream of clear light!
Two moons faced each other on yonder sky,
not night, but a morning in Paradise high!
A nuptial night— and so sweet was the kiss,
the mind full of joy, the heart full of bliss—
our worldly love seemed now true Love Divine,
the hidden unveiled, and real the sign.
It sounds like a dream what I have just sung . . .
it tells of a time when Atish was young![30]

This *musalsal ghazal*, which tells one story in uninterrupted sequence, is probably closest in Persian-Urdu poetry to what we would call an *Erlebnislyrik* (a poem drawn from a real experience) and is understandable even

to someone who does not know the symbolism of the radiant and blessed Night of Might.

The last Pillar of Islam is the pilgrimage to Mecca which all Muslims should undertake at least once in life provided they have the means to do so. In poetical parlance this duty could easily become the symbol of the long and difficult road that leads toward the beloved—the theme of Pilgrim's Progress, with all its different aspects, that is common to all religious and literary traditions. In Persian poetry the restive camel, that is, the body or the lowly *nafs*, "the soul that incites to evil" (Sura 12:53), is driven through deserts and steppes. The camel may try to run home, or prefer the thorns of the desert to the fragrant grass in the friend's garden,[31] but for the lover who longs to visit the house of the beloved even the stones, thistles, and thorns (*mughīlān*) in the desert become soft as silk, lovely as roses.[32] (At times the poet may see all the thornbushes abloom with red blossoms which, he realizes in delight, are nothing but the livers of martyred lovers.)[33] For the lover the house of the beloved is the true Kaʿba, as Ḥafiẓ says:

> The heart that found a halting place (*wuqūf*) from the
> circumambulation (*ṭawāf*) of the Kaʿba of your street
> does not yearn for Ḥijaz, out of longing for the sacred place
> (*ḥaram*).[34]

The vocabulary of this verse consists almost exclusively of terms from the pilgrimage, and the reader is left puzzled whether the poet intends a visit to Mecca, or to his human friend, or to the spiritual dwelling place of the Divine Beloved.

The black stone in the corner of the Kaʿba, which the pilgrim is supposed to kiss, is often "desacralized" in poetry and appears as the mole on the cheek of the beloved. Or else, by kissing the stone the lover is reminded of the friend's mouth (which, as we saw, is often compared to a stone, that is, a ruby).[35]

In Khaqani's poetry[36] the Kaʿba is described as a bride in a luminous black veil, so that the pilgrimage becomes a journey toward the spiritual Beloved which is still hidden.[37] It is in fact customary to cover the Kaʿba with a heavy silken cover on whose black fabric golden Koranic verses are embroidered. But in contrast to Khaqani's positive evaluation of the longed-

for Lady Kaʿba, an ardent Shia poet like ʿUrfi may declare that the sacred place is clothed in black because it mourns the martyrs of Kerbela.[38]

The names of two stations of the pilgrimage, Ṣafa and Marwa, were sometimes connected in a pun with *ṣafā*, "purity," and *muruwwa*, "virtue."[39] When Ghalib says, in a spring poem,

> Don't send any breeze to circumambulate the friend's sacred place
> unless it has put on an *iḥrām* [pilgrim's garment] from the roses'
> fragrance,[40]

he introduces the vocabulary of pilgrimage in perfect simplicity into the description of the spring breeze which passes through the roses and brings their fragrance to the beloved's home.

The pigeons that nest near the Kaʿba and fly around the sanctuary appear likewise as soul-birds in the lover's sacred space—the roof of the beloved—or as messenger birds that bring news from the beloved to the longing soul.[41] To kill them, as if in hunting, is prohibited. Hunting is prohibited in the precincts of Mecca, and Iqbal admonishes his fellow Muslims not to leave the sacred place, for

> When the deer fled from the sacred territory of Mecca
> the hunter's arrow pierced it.[42]

That is, Muslims who forget the protection which Mecca gives them are likely to fall prey to foreign hunters.

For many poets the Kaʿba was no more than a symbol, but nevertheless a necessary symbol, and they would have probably agreed with Fayżi, who addressed Love:

> Do not destroy the Kaʿba, o Love, for there now and then
> the people who have stayed back on the road find for a moment a
> resting place.[43]

Real lovers, however, are beyond outward signs, and as their prayer does not fit into the outward ritual, so too their pilgrimage is toward the infinite spiritual world.

At the Feast of Pilgrimage, celebrated on the tenth day of the last lunar month, animals (preferably sheep) are sacrificed in memory of Abraham's

sacrifice. The imagery of this rite allows the poet to offer himself as a sacrificial lamb to the beloved, even if he may have become lean from sorrow and lovesickness and is no longer a very good, fat victim.[44] To be sacrificed to the beloved is the lover's highest goal, an idea which poets have repeated for centuries, often in cruel images.[45]

Besides numerous allusions to events in the Islamic calendar, which regulates every moment of believers' lives, the poets also mention traditional Persian feasts. Of special importance is Nauruz, the vernal equinox, which ushers in the happy springtime; Mihrijan, the autumnal equinox, is sometimes mentioned as well. The longest night, the winter solstice, is the Shab-i yalda—*yaldā* being the "birth," namely of Christ—a pre-Islamic, Christian expression taken over by the Muslims. Saʿdi plays very skillfully on two contrasting concepts:

> To look at your face is like the dawn of Nauruz,
> and in separation from you every night is a Shab-i yalda . . .[46]

In addition to feasts and seasonal landmarks, some poets also transformed the daily obligations of the believer into symbols of a very different character. Thus Kalim says in a wine poem:

> The duty of a Muslim is to clothe the orphans.
> So I give the "daughter of the grape" [the wine] a shirt of enamel [an enameled glass or bottle].[47]

Others invoke the technical lexicon of jurisprudence, the roots, *uṣūl*, and the branches, *furūʿ*. Amir Khusrau remarks that

> As long as I read the signs [or, Koranic verses] of love from the musk-colored script [facial down] of the friend,
> the traditions (*riwāyāt*) of the branches (*furūʿ*) without roots (*uṣūl*) disappear from my memory.[48]

That is, by looking at the "script" which the down has put on the face of the beloved, he forgets all traditional learning. Somewhat later Gesudaraz, the Chishti mystic from Gulbarga, Deccan, thought that

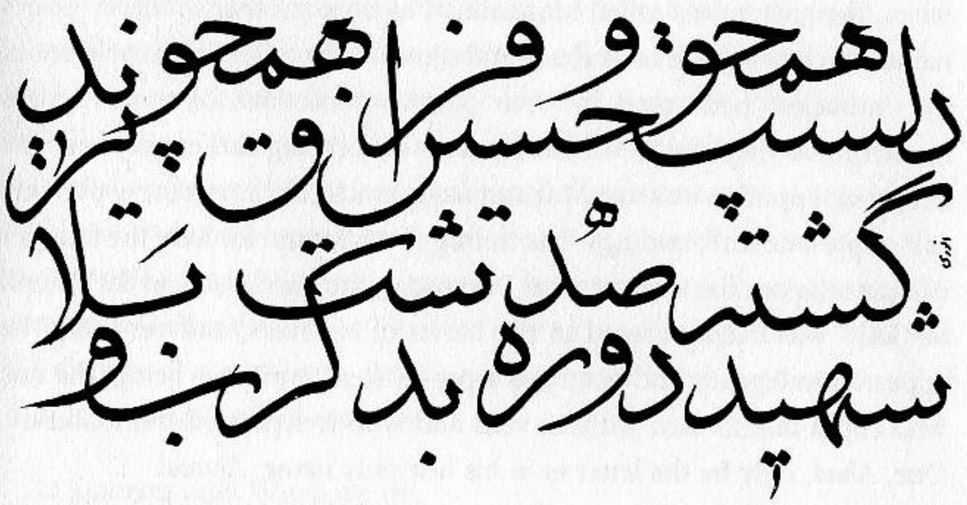
> to look at the eyes of the handsome is individual duty, *farḍ-i ʿayn*,[49]

that is—in a pun—both "individual duty" and "the duty of the eye." Plays on the double meaning of *ʿayn*, "eye" and "essence," are often used in such verses. But one of the most ingenious verses to draw on juridical terminology is, again, by Ḥafiẓ:

> My beloved is a *shāhid* and a child. When someday
> he kills me in play, he will be innocent before the law.[50]

The verse hinges on the word *shāhid*, which means both "witness at court" and also the ideal beloved, who is a witness to eternal Divine beauty, which manifests itself through the medium of human beauty. The poet eventually will die of love for this *shāhid*, whose ideal age is fourteen; but the boy, being minor, cannot be held responsible. The ambiguity of the term *shāhid* gives this verse its real charm, and the wording once again proves Ḥafiẓ's superiority as a poet.

5 Themes from Early Islamic Times



The heart is like Ḥusayn,

and separation like

Yazid—it has been

martyred two hundred

ways in the desert of

grief and affliction.

The Koran has furnished poets with countless images which may be used in literature both sacred and profane, but the person of the Prophet Muḥammad occurs very rarely, if at all, in nonreligious verse. Around him a separate genre of poetry developed instead, as I have shown elsewhere.[1] Some poets in the eastern Islamic world might invent comparisons between an admired patron and the Prophet, especially in cases where the patron was called Muḥammad or bore another of the Prophet's names, such as Aḥmad or Muṣṭafa, and some daring court poets could see in the "miracles" performed by their patrons reflections of the Prophet's miracles—as they did it without restraint concerning earlier prophets! Yet the general opinion was that Muḥammad is much too important to play any role in profane surroundings. The feeling of veneration for him, the founder of their religion, the intercessor at Doomsday, the legislator, and the "friend of God," was deeply rooted in the hearts of believers, and very soon he appeared in legends and poetry as a pre-existent luminous being, the one who could talk to God without veils and who is separated from God the One, *Aḥad*, only by the letter *m* in his heavenly name, *Aḥmad*.

To be sure, there are cases where one cannot decide whether a poem is meant to point to the Prophet or to a worldly beloved or even to the Eternal Beloved, for in the course of time Muḥammad was recognized as the beloved whose cheek is described at the beginning of Sura 93 ("By the Morning light!) and whose tresses are meant by the introductory words of Sura 92 ("By the night!"). But once in a while a poet might insert one of the Prophet's names into a little love poem, as when the Ottoman poet Me'ali wrote to his friend Muṣṭafa:

How should I not love you, o master, handsome like Yusuf?
For he who does not love Muṣṭafa is an infidel, o idol![2]

One of the few attributes of the Prophet that was carried over into profane literature was his miraculous steed, Buraq, on which he undertook his nightly journey into the Divine Presence and which, as legend tells, had a woman's face and a tail like a peacock's. To this day representations of this flying horse can be found in popular truck- and teahouse-painting in the eastern part of the Muslim world. But in poetry Buraq embodies love—the love that can carry the poet to the beloved when the donkey (the matter-bound body) can never reach such proximity.[3]

If the Prophet himself appears in poetry only rarely, allusions to *ḥadīth*, the numerous traditions which refer to his sayings and actions, are quite frequent, and not only in religious contexts. The use of the term *ḥadīth* often signals an ambiguous meaning of a verse.

One particular group of *ḥadīth* has been used throughout the ages, and in the shifting emphases attached to their meanings one can discover reflections of the changing priorities of Persian and Indo-Persian writers. Among these favorite *ḥadīth* is *An-nāsu niyām wa idhā matū'ntabahū*, "People are asleep, and when they die they awake." Earlier poets like Rumi saw in this *ḥadīth* a happy prediction of the wonderful morning light of eternity, in which all actions which we have performed like dreamers in our earthly life will be interpreted properly and we shall no longer see shady dream figures, but unveiled Reality. In later centuries, however, poets liked to offer this very *ḥadīth* as consolation to Muslims who were suffering terrible trials and tribulations at the collapse of their political power. The prime example of this is Mir Dard's oft-quoted line

O ignorant one! When we die,
it will be proven to us:
A dream was what we have seen,
and what we have heard was a tale.[4]

In another *ḥadīth* the Prophet spoke of the *ḥabl matīn*, "the firm rope," that is, the Divine Word. Poets liked to compare the beloved's long tresses to such a useful rope, to which they would love to cling.[5]

A centerpiece of later poetry is another saying ascribed to the Prophet: "Who loves and remains chaste and dies, dies a martyr." This *ḥadīth* underlies the concept of the *ḥubb ʿudhrī*, that kind of chaste love in which, according to legend, the members of the Arab tribe Banu ʿUdhra excelled.[6]

Und mein Stamm sind jene Azra,
welche sterben, wenn sie lieben.

And my tribe are those Azra,
who die when they fall in love,

as the German poet Heinrich Heine wrote a hundred and fifty years ago. This chaste love has been praised and described in ever new expressions. In

one version the poet feels that by *not* attaining his goal, he will certainly die happily on the road toward his friend, shedding his blood, as it were, to water the flowers and grass on the wayside or in the desert.

The increasingly cruel imagery in later Persian and Urdu love poetry is nothing but a boundless elaboration of this hope to die in love, and much of the fire imagery, the fountains of blood, the bleeding rose petals, and the burning nightingales are part and parcel of this concept of suffering in love. Poets in Iran and the areas under its cultural influence would have agreed with T. S. Eliot's lines from "Ash-Wednesday":

The single Rose
Is now the Garden
Where all loves end
Terminate torment
Of love unsatisfied
The greater torment
Of love satisfied.

The theme itself is very convenient for expressing the different levels of Persian poetry. Unrequited love required, according to the code of fine behavior, that the beloved must remain out of the lover's reach, whether it was a handsome young boy, a veiled lady, or a cruel courtesan. The object of praise could equally be a sultan or prince (both far away from the eulogist) or, theologically speaking, the Eternal Beloved and Ruler, whom one could never reach as far as one might wander through the levels of His manifestations, His names, or His qualities. Fulfillment of the lover's longing was impossible. Thus the *ḥadīth* on chaste love should be kept in mind when interpreting much of Persian poetry.[7]

It is not surprising, however, that modernist Muslim theologians and poets have protested against this concept that "dying for an unattainable beloved" is true martyrdom. A true martyr, so they have held, is someone who dies in defending the faith and fighting its enemies.[8]

One often finds the poets adopting *ḥadīth qudsī* (extra-Koranic revelations).[9] One of these, "I was a hidden treasure and I wanted to be known [or, loved]," has inspired innumerable writers who saw in it the basis for their world view: the Divine Beloved created the universe like a mirror in which His Beauty and Grandeur is to be admired.

The *ḥadīth qudsī* according to which God described Himself as *Aḥmad bilā mīm*, "Aḥmad without *m*," that is, *Aḥad*, "One," has been used in religious and nonreligious verse in the eastern countries of Islam, but it seems never to occur in the Western, Arabic, and North African traditions.[10]

There are frequent references to the *ḥadīth qudsī* "I am with those whose hearts are broken for My sake." Fighani is only one of the numerous poets who used it:

My heart was broken, and my beautiful soul is happy:
for the friend is not separated from our broken heart.[11]

Among historical figures from the Prophet's time one sometimes encounters Abu Lahab, "the Father of Flame," in poetic imagery. He, the archenemy of his nephew the Prophet, is the only one who has not felt the fire of love, as Rumi sings: his part is Hellfire, not the wholesome fire of love.[12]

One of the favorite heroes of Persian poets is Muḥammad's cousin and son-in-law ʿAli ibn Abi Ṭalib, the fourth caliph and first imam of Shia Islam.[13] He is often called by his surnames Ḥaydar or Ghaḍanfar, both of which mean "lion," for he is indeed Asad Allah, "God's lion." But he can appear likewise under his nickname Abu Turab, "Father of Dust," which is variously explained.[14] Some poets think that in the morning the sunrays write his name in the dust, *turāb*.[15] His miraculous double-edged sword, Dhu'l-fiqar, seems to serve many a prince or king whom a court poet wants to flatter, and many swords and daggers in the Islamic world are inscribed with the saying *Lā fatā illā ʿAlī, lā sayf illā Dhū'l-fiqār*, "There is no heroic young man like ʿAli and no sword like Dhu'l-fiqar." A ruler who owns such a sword will be able to conquer fortresses, as ʿAli Ḥaydar conquered the fortress of Khaybar in Arabia. (The rhyme *Ḥaydar–Khaybar* proved very useful in this connection!) Love poets have compared the beloved's "infidel" tresses to the stronghold of Khaybar.[16]

Dhu'l-fiqar soon became the sword par excellence, and whenever a poet wants to mention something exceptionally sharp he will certainly invoke that apt comparison. Among the items mentioned in this connection is the poet's sharp tongue, as ʿAli Ḥazin boasts:

Only those brag in the battlefield of talk
who have not seen the Dhu'l-fiqar of my tongue![17]

ʿAli's white mule, Duldul, also appears now and then,[18] though not as often as his sword. This steed's good character inspired some poets to call the heart a Duldul, an idea facilitated or perhaps caused by the nice *tajnīs* between *dil*, "heart," and *Duldul*.

ʿAli's heroism led Persian poets to combine his name with that of Rustam, the greatest warrior in the indigenous Iranian tradition (RustamʿAli is a common name in Iran and Central Asia), and ʿAli's valor, bravery, and wisdom even appear in a remarkable number of Persian poems whose authors were strict Sunnites. That his image grew almost infinitely in the poetry of Shia poets is self-explanatory, and with the introduction of the Ithnaʾʾashari Shia as the state religion in Iran in 1501 his role became even greater. In fact one observes a tendency to insert verses in praise of ʿAli into the poems of earlier, Sunni poets, and it is sometimes difficult to detect such interpolations. The Shia poetry in his honor is not restricted to urban and courtly Persian poetry; one encounters many such verses in the poetry of the Turkish Bektashis and Alevis as well as in popular songs in Sindhi and Panjabi.

Still more important for the literary tradition, however, is ʿAli's cadet son Ḥusayn, who was killed in Kerbela (Iraq) on 10 Muḥarram 680. Around him a vast literature developed, ranging from short mourning songs to so-called *marthiyas* (threnodies) which can run to hundreds of verses in the form of *musaddas*—these latter found a special place in the area of Lucknow, where a Shiite dynasty ruled between 1740 and 1856. In Iran ritual passion plays on the theme were and still are very common.[19]

The martyrdom of Ḥusayn suggested numerous metaphors and even solemn puns: does not the very name *Karbalā* show that it is the place of "grief," *karb*, and "affliction," *balā*?[20] In later lyrics the tulip reminds the poets of the bloodstained shrouds of the martyrs of Kerbela, and *shām-i gharībān*,[21] "the evening of the poor strangers," that is, the eve of 10 Muḥarram, becomes the symbol of the deserted lover's sufferings (and thus is sometimes combined with the thought of the beloved's long tresses, which are black like that long, hopeless night, in which one nearly despairs).

More sinister than the Evening of the Poor I went away because of grief,

says ʿUrfi in his *qaṣīda* called *Ḥasb-i ḥāl* (Statement), a masterpiece in the application of poignant pairs of contrasts:

I came in the morning like a nightingale on the spring festival
toward the rose garden:
I went away in the evening like choirs mourning from the dust of
the martyrs. . . .[22]

Though ʿAli and his family occupy a place of honor in Persian poetry, the first three caliphs are rarely if ever mentioned, for the increasingly Shia character of Persian literature discouraged praise of figures earlier than ʿAli and possibly even led, in some places, to the effacement of their names. Only Abu Bakr, the first caliph and *yār-i ghār*, "Friend of the Cave," who spent one night with the Prophet in a cave during the emigration from Mecca to Medina, has a certain value as poetical symbol, representing faithfulness and fidelity.[23] Sunni poets occasionally compare their patrons to the mighty ʿOmar, the second caliph, whose justice was highly admired.[24]

Other figures from early Islamic history have featured in long folktales which spread in various areas. Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥanafiyya, a son of ʿAli by another wife than Fāṭima, became surrounded with romances which are known as far east as Malaysia.[25] The Prophet's companion Tamim ad-Dari was turned into the hero of a story which tells countless adventures until he returns home at just the moment when his wife, despairing of his life because of his prolonged absence, is about to marry someone else. This story is found even in Tamil.[26] The adventures of the Prophet's uncle Ḥamza were similarly elaborated in an almost endless tale, a written version of which was adorned with several hundred large illustrations at Akbar's court.[27]

The Prophet's Persian barber, Salman, appears especially in Sufi and even more in Shia traditions, as he remained faithful to ʿAli and his family.[28] His spiritual achievements are sometimes juxtaposed to those of the mighty prophet-king Sulayman as representing the two poles of spiritual life (thus often in Iqbal). This combination has a special charm as the name Sulayman is grammatically the diminutive of Salman.

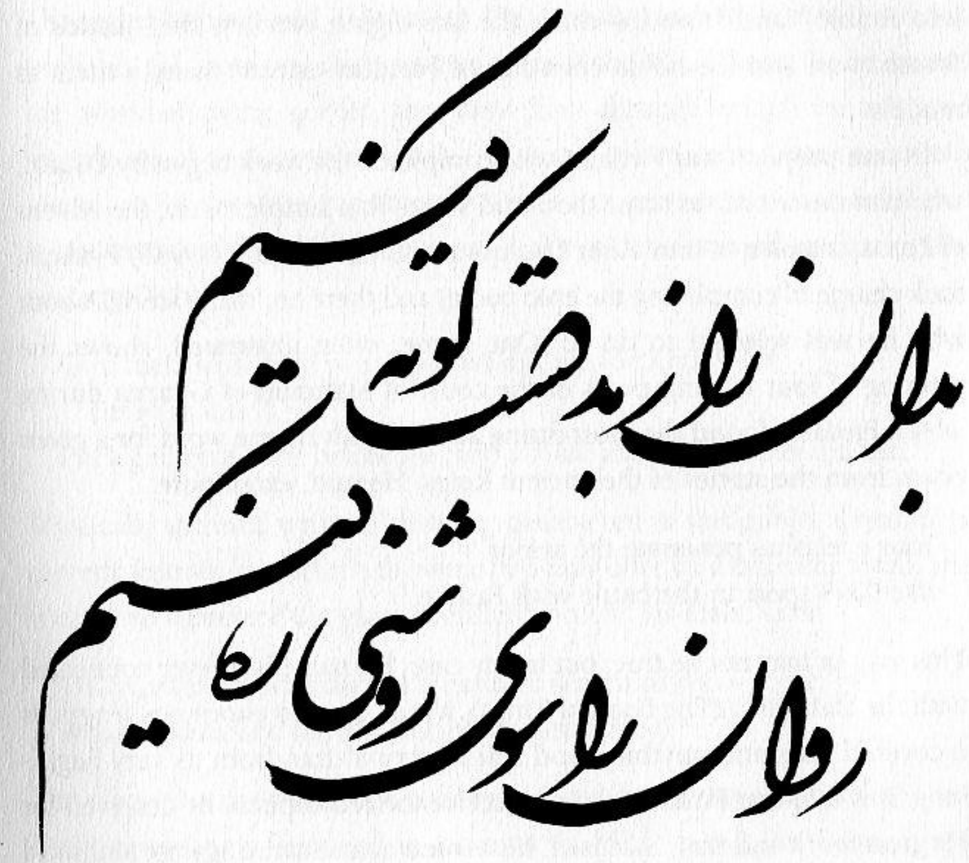
The black mole on the beloved's cheek could be compared by a daring poet to the Ethiopian Bilal,[29] the first to utter the call to prayer for the young

Muslim community. And the mysterious figure Uways al-Qarani, who appears time and again, seems to be in the background of many poetical allusions to Yemen, the country where he lived. A simple shepherd, he embraced Islam without ever seeing the Prophet; but as legend has it, the Prophet felt that "the breath of the Merciful," *nafas ar-raḥmān*, came to him from Yemen.[30] Hence it is natural that a poet whose patron bore the name of Uways, like Salman-i Sawaji's prince Uways-i Jala'iri, studded his verse with allusions to Uways al-Qarani. And when Ḥafiẓ says that

> The felicity (*yumn*) of the look of everyone who knows the breath (*nafas*) of the Yemeni wind
> transforms stone and clay into rubies and carnelian,[31]

he combines the Yemeni breeze as "breath of the Merciful" with carnelian, the typical product of Yemen, and introduces a pun on *yumn*, "felicity," a word from the same root as *Yemen*: that is, he who knows of the Divine Breath can transform rubble into gems.

6 Themes from Pre-Islamic Times



We keep our hands
back from the bad,
we lead our heart
toward clarity.
—Firdausi

It would be amazing if Persian poets had not made use of motifs from their own national heritage, all the more so as pre-Islamic history was very much alive at the beginning of Persian literature. Persian themes had been taken over into Arabic at a very early moment of Abbasid history, when the Persian influence on Muslim culture began to increase. Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ is the first major writer to be connected with the inclusion of Iranian themes into Arabic,[1] and from his time, the late eighth century, the "justice of Anushirwan and the noble character of Faridun" served many writers as models.

In Iran proper it was Firdausi who completed the work begun by Daqiqi, who had described, in some thousand verses in a simple meter, the advent of Zoroastrianism in Iran. After Daqiqi's assassination (ca. A.D. 980) Firdausi took charge of completing the epic poem, and there are many stories about why he was selected to do so. One scene, often illustrated, shows the meeting of four leading poets of the court of Maḥmud of Ghazna during which Firdausi found the most fitting and difficult rhyme word for a given poem from the stories of the ancient kings. He said, extempore:

> Your eyelashes penetrate the armor
> like Giv's spear in the battle with Pashan.[2]

This may or may not be true; but in any case, his name is forever connected with the *Shāhnāma* (The Book of Kings), which grew to enormous length as it covered the entire mythical and real history of Iran from its very beginning. It is said that Firdausi did not receive the recompense he deserved for his great work and that, incensed, he wrote a coarse satire against Maḥmud who, being the son of a Turkish military slave, did not know a true man's value.[3] He died in A.D. 1020, one decade before Maḥmud himself.

The *Shāhnāma* with its fifty thousand to sixty thousand verses soon gained fame, although all known manuscripts belong to a somewhat later period. Certain manuscripts must have existed, however, for the historian Ibn ar-Rawandi states in his *Rāḥat aṣ-ṣudūr*, completed about 1200, that "it would be more than ten *Shāhnāmas* and *Iskandarnāmas*" if he were to tell the complete story of the Seljukid dynasty.[4] From the late thirteenth century onward the *Shāhnāma* was illustrated; thus its major heroes and most important scenes became widely known wherever Persian literature was

appreciated, and the names of its kings and princes were to become an important part of Persian and even Turkish nomenclature.[5]

The story begins with the *Pīshdādiyān*, the first kings of Iran, when Gayumarth introduced various aspects of civilized life, such as stitched garments instead of animal skins. (One of the most glorious miniatures in the "Houghton *Shāhnāma*" shows this scene in a truly unearthly beauty.)[6] Through Hushang and Tahmurath the dynasty reached Jamshed, who is probably the most popularly known ruler of the *pīshdādiyān*, for he owned the world-showing goblet, the *jām-i Jam*, through which he acquired knowledge of the events on earth. This vessel often served later poets as a metaphor for the wine cup through which one can reach a knowledge that is not disclosed to sober people, as Ghalib still maintained in nineteenth-century Delhi:

> Give me a kiss from your lips and ask me for Khiżr's life
> [immortality]!
> Put a goblet of wine before me, and ask me about Jam's cheerful life![7]

Mystically inclined writers, however, discovered in this goblet a symbol of esoteric knowledge (which the wine cup may offer on a different level), and it came to represent the glass of enlightenment. As Ḥafiẓ says:

> For years my heart roamed around in search of Jam's goblet—
> what it possessed itself it sought from strangers![8]

The survival of the wondrous goblet is proved by the name of one of the first Urdu newspapers, founded in Calcutta in 1826: called *Jām-i Jam*, it was supposed to show to its readers all the events in the world. (It is interesting to note that somewhat later other journalists tried to replace it with the title *Āyina-i Iskandari*, "Alexander's Mirror," another magical boon that showed what was going on in the world.)[9] Lately some people have even thought that *Jām-i Jam* would be a nice term for television.

From the days of Farrukhi onward, King Jamshed has often been combined with King Sulayman. Like Solomon's throne, Jamshed's too is carried by the wind, and he too boasts a ring that makes him the master of djinns and demons. But Jamshed, like other Persian kings, is usually mentioned by poets to point to the flightiness of human fortune:

Where is Alexander's and Jamshed's fortune and Kaykhusrau's name?[10]

Or, as Jami puts it (again replacing Sulayman with Jamshed):

The crown of the narcissus and the throne of the rose
reminded me of the vanishing of Parwez's crown and Jamshed's high seat.[11]

And when ʿOmar Khayyam admonishes the reader to be careful when drinking from an earthen cup because it might be made from the skull of Jamshed or Bahman, he too implicitly alludes to the miraculous goblet from long-forgotten days.[12]

After Jamshed comes Faridun, praised through the ages for his noble character. With the help of the blacksmith Kawah he overcame Ḍaḥḥak (Persian pronunciation Żahhak), the embodiment of evil. Taking their inspiration from this event, Persian emigrants in Berlin after World War I called their journal *Kaveh* after the smith, because they too wanted to fight for justice and freedom for their country. And when Ghalib in Delhi tried to show his compatriots what really pure Persian grammar and style was, he called his publication *Dirafsh-i kāwiyānī* (Kawah's Flag).[13]

Ḍaḥḥak (Żahhak, Zohak) is an old demon of evil, from whose shoulder every day two black serpents grew, which had to be fed by human flesh. He appears often in miniature paintings, hanging in a dark cave where he was put by Faridun. With a false etymology from the Arabic word *ḍaḥḥāk*, "laughing much," Amir Khusrau alludes to him in a morning scene: the night is two smoky serpents, between which the morning rises, "laughing," *ḍaḥḥāk*.[14]

Before dividing his kingdom, Faridun had tested his three sons in the guise of a dragon: Salm then received the Near East; Ṭur, Central Asia (Turan); and Iraj, the center, Iran. With this constellation began the never-ending war between Iran and Turan, the civilized country and the empire of the steppes—a struggle that forms the central leitmotif of the entire *Shāhnāma* and expresses in poetic images the tension between the urban Iranian settlers and the tribes that swept over Iran and neighboring countries time and again.

In this fight the hero Rustam plays the decisive role. In fact, although his saga belonged originally to another cycle of tales, he is the most important single figure in the whole *Shāhnāma*. Rustam's father, Zal, born with white hair and therefore cast away by his own father, who considered the albino child to be a demonic creature, was brought up by the mysterious bird Simurgh, who nourished him with her own chicks until he was discovered and brought home. In a romantic scene Firdausi tells how the princess Rudaba fell in love with Zal, whom she had never seen, and married him.

Like most of the heroes of the *Shāhnāma*, Zal appears in *qaṣīdas* rather than in lyric verse. For instance, a poet may praise his patron with a whole chain of *tajnīs*:

Zāl-i zar dar azal zalzāl-i shamshīr-i tū dīd,

Zal-i zar saw already in pre-eternity the shivering of your sword,

as Qaṭran says to claim that his patron's heroism was known in the world even before creation.[15]

Zal and Rudaba, one of the great loving couples in Persian tradition, had one son, Rustam himself, also called Tahamtan, "With Strong Body." He appears in every poetic genre as the ideal hero, sometimes supported by his wonderful steed, Rakhsh, and when a poet wants to praise his own prince beyond measure he tells him that Rustam's actions are nothing compared to the prince's fabulous feats in the battlefield.

Rustam had to undertake seven adventures, *haft khwān-i Rustam*, to which the poets are fond of alluding. And, as said in chapter 5, he may even be paired with ʿAli, the ideal hero of early Islam. His courage is often combined with the generosity of Ḥatim, the paragon of hospitality in ancient Arabia—though not in favor of either if the poet's own prince is to be praised:

Ḥatim's generosity is, compared to your largesse, simply stinginess,
Rustam's struggle is, compared to your bravery, just a play![16]

In one delightful spring scene Anwari sees April as the Rustam-like hero who vanquishes the snow on the hillsides.[17]

But there is a very tragic side to Rustam's story. Having spent only one night with his wife, Tahmina, he was not aware that she had borne him a son. When he met a young warrior who alone seemed able to withstand

him, he killed him by means of the magic power of the Simurgh's feather—only to discover, when the blood was trickling from the youth's fatal wound, the token he himself had once given to Tahmina.[18] The motif itself is well known in Indo-European tradition, as in the German tale of Hildebrand and Hadubrand. But it seems amazing that scarcely any later Persian writers mention the father's grief after Suhrab's death.

One of Rustam's heroic deeds was to relieve Bizhan from a pit where he had been cast. In poetical language Bizhan is the innocent prisoner who longs for home, visited now and then by his faithful friend Manezha. Thus when Masʿud ibn Saʿd-i Salman was held in the fortress of Nay (ca. A.D. 1100), he complained in his prison poems that his beloved—in this case his beloved hometown, Lahore—did not send any greetings to console him:

> You have not asked: "How are you, captive like Bizhan?"[19]

But it needed an artist like Khaqani to weave into a single verse allusions to three heroes of the *Shāhnāma*: the night closes Bizhan's well, but when morning appears like the white-haired Zal, the "blood of Siyawush" is spread over the earth. Siyawush, the son of Kayka'us, who fled to Turan, was killed, and the reddish color that appears at the moment of sunrise reminds the poet of the blood of this innocent young prince.[20]

Even in comparatively modern Persian poetry Bizhan is a well-known motif. In the early twentieth century Maḥmud Khan Afshar compared the situation of Iran to that of Bizhan in the well;[21] the nation was hoping for a true, Rustam-like hero to lead it out of the darkness.

Rustam served mainly under the second major dynasty, the Kayanids: Kaykobad, Kayka'us, and Kaykhusrau. All were successful rulers who continued the wars with Turan. But, as mentioned above, Siyawush the son of Kayka'us fled to the Turanian ruler Afrasiyab and married his daughter. Like Jamshed, the Kayanids often appear as symbols of passing glory, even though Kayka'us invented a flying machine that took him as far as China. As for Afrasiyab, he represents the positive aspect of Turanian kingship; as late as the nineteenth century the great Urdu poet Ghalib boasted of being descended from him—a claim also voiced by other Indian Muslims of Turkish ancestry.

Firdausi continues the line of early rulers with Luhrasp and Gushtasp. There, taking up Daqiqi's description, he speaks of the introduction of

Zoroastrianism into Iran. Gushtasp's son Isfandiyar is a heroic figure rather like Rustam; he too has to undergo seven adventures and proves himself a true hero. With Darab the poet reaches the threshold of historical time, for the two sons of that great ruler are none other than Iskandar (Alexander) and his half-brother Dara (Darius). Thus the Greek conqueror of Iran, Alexander the Great, is taken into Persian tradition and not treated as a foreign intruder.

Through the Ashkaniyan Parthians the epic arrives at the Sassanids, the last dynasty before the advent of Islam. Among them Khusrau Anushirwan is famed for his administration of justice and hence is a model for every king: his name therefore outshines those of other rulers in panegyrics and in didactic writing. Nevertheless a comparison like that of Farrukhi, who equated the justice of Anushirwan with that of the second caliph, ʿOmar ibn al-Khaṭṭab,[22] would have been impossible in later, Shia Persian poetry. Anushirwan's wise vizier, Buzurjmihr, is often set in parallel with Sulayman's minister Aṣaf.

> The banquet of Anushirwan was a heaven,
> to whose realm belonged Buzurjmihr [lit. "Great Sun"].[23]

But to flatter a patron by claiming that

> Compared to your justice, Nushirwan's justice was tyranny;
> compared to your knowledge, the wisdom of the Greek was ignorance,[24]

is hyperbole which is certainly not to be taken at face value.

The Sassanian ruler Bahram Gor, who ruled from A.D. 420 to 438, is known as a keen hunter—hence his nickname (*gōr* is the wild onager). Two centuries after the *Shāhnāma* Niẓami transformed him into the hero of his fascinating epic *Haft Paykar* (The Seven Pictures, or Seven Beauties). He is shown visiting the seven pavilions of seven princesses, each of whom represents one weekday and its astrological aspects, colors, musical modes, and scents, and thus becomes the centerpiece of Niẓami's masterfully arranged spiritual universe, in which everything has its fixed place and its order, *niẓām*.

Another Sassanian king who became the hero of one of Niẓami's epic poems is Khusrau Parwez (ruled 590–628), whose love for the Armenian

princess Shirin was briefly told by Firdausi. Niẓami, however, elaborated the story into a most touching romance of love, longing, treason, union, and death (see below, chapter 8). The hero's court musician, Barbad, occurs now and then in other poems, as he does in miniatures.

On examining how images and figures from the *Shāhnāma* were appropriated in the literary tradition, one discovers that only certain poets have a command over the whole range of Firdausi's heroes. When Ghalib, in nineteenth-century Delhi, enjoyed playing with even the most obscure names from the *Shāhnāma*, no doubt he did so to impress his fellow poets in India with his superb knowledge of the true Iranian tradition and linguistic purity.

An amusing introduction to the series of pre-Islamic Persian kings appears in a poem by an early writer, Abu'l-Maḥamid al-Jauhari, quoted by ʿAufi.[25] The poet describes his old and decrepit horse, which has served every hero since the days of Gayumarth and is appalled that its present master wants to put a saddle on its back: is it not a marvelous creature, much too noble to be used by any modern person? Thus it begins to tell its story:

I was first Tahmurath's horse;
He rode on it when he built the city of Marw.
I still recall when Faridun made Iraj
the ruler and gave him the greatest power.
I saw how Salm ruled in the realm of Rum,
and saw Tur as the king on Turan's throne . . .

And so it goes on. This was probably the first time that the theme of the shabby old horse was dealt with in Persian poetry—a theme which became quite common in later times (see below, chapter 14).

Among the pre-Islamic heroes Iskandar (Alexander) occupies a special place. He is known by his nickname Dhu'l-qarnayn, "the Two-Horned One," but it is not clear whether the Dhu'l-qarnayn mentioned in the Koran really refers to the same person. To Iskandar is attributed the construction of an enormous wall against Gog and Magog (Yajuj and Majuj), the powerful enemies who threaten the civilized world and may break loose in times to come (cf. Sura 83:94).

The Alexander Romance, a cycle of stories well known in Europe thanks

to the prose redaction of pseudo-Kallisthenes, must have reached the Middle East at an early point in history, for even by the eleventh century Farrukhi would say:

The story of Iskandar became a legend and became old.[26]

The main feature that is mentioned in poetical contexts is Alexander's mirror. He had fixed a mirror on a tower, mainly in order to annihilate a serpent: everyone who saw the serpent would die; if it should see itself in the mirror, it was bound to die too. However, the mirror is much more frequently imagined as an instrument that shows the whole world, like Jamshed's cup.[27] For this reason Bedil shrewdly combined the two objects in a single verse (which sounds like a late echo of the lines from Ḥafiẓ quoted above):

What we have seen in the ring of the scar of love,
Alexander did not see in his mirror, nor Jamshed in his goblet![28]

And even in Goethe's *West-Östlicher Divan* one finds the advice:

Lass den Weltenspiegel Alexandern—

Leave the world-showing mirror to Alexander.[29]

Alexander is also connected with the search for the Water of Life. Khiżr was able to obtain this water of immortality, but Alexander was not so fortunate. The interrelations between the Alexander Romance and the legends woven around Khiżr have led a number of scholars to investigate sources and variants. One particular turn of the motif in poetic imagery may seem surprising if not outré to a modern reader: a poet may try to compare the Water of Life to the dew of perspiration in the dimple of the friend's chin:

So many confused Alexanders are in the world who have not found
The trace of the Water of Life from the well of the chin.[30]

Niẓami describes Alexander's adventures in his *Iskandarnāma* with many fantastic details that are reminiscent to a certain degree of the European Alexander Romance.[31] However, he is even more interested in his hero's spiritual development, and though he indulges in colorful descriptions of

Alexander's conquests in the first part of his epic, he devotes the second part to Alexander's discussions with the philosophers, especially Aristotle. This tendency was taken over by many of his imitators, including Amir Khusrau in his *Ayina-i Iskandarī* (Alexander's Mirror), Jami in the *Khiradnāma-i Iskandarī* (Book of Alexandrian Intelligence), and Jami's colleague and friend in Herat, Mir ʿAlishir Nawaʾi, who composed a *Sadd-i Iskandarī* (Alexander's Wall) in Chaghatay Turkish. (To praise a prince as a "second Iskandar" who builds an impassable wall against all his enemies is a form of flattery that grows naturally out of this tradition.)

Scholars have long discussed whether Daqiqi, the Persian poet who first began to write the *Shāhnāma*, was a Zoroastrian and was therefore fascinated by the indigenous Persian religious tradition, which he mentions in the fragment with which he started his project. Hans Heinrich Schaeder, however, has demonstrated that Daqiqi was only superficially aware of the religion and the teachings of the founder of Zoroastrianism or of the religious ideas of his contemporaries.[32] This is also true of many other Persian poets, who like to insert themes or terms from the Zoroastrian tradition into their poetry, much as they adopt items of Christian and Hindu lore.

Thus the *mājūs*, the "magus" or fire worshiper, and the *mughbacha*, the young Zoroastrian, appear in poetry not so much as real persons but rather as ciphers and symbols, as does the *pīr-i mughān*, the old, wise magus who is generally mentioned in drinking poems; for unlike Islam, Zoroastrianism permits the use of wine. These figures came to represent the wise master and the lovely cupbearer who introduce the seeker into the mysteries of spiritual intoxication. They are integral to that group of images with which poets try to indicate the contrast between law-bound exterior religion, or narrow legalism, and the religion of love, which transgresses the boundaries of external forms. The same can be said for the imagery—widespread—of Christian monasteries and delightful young monks with cross-shaped haircuts. Regardless of whether there really were drinking bouts in monasteries, this imagery had become frozen in Persian poetry in very early times and could be used unblushingly by even the most orthodox Muslim, who looked to the mystical meaning behind the images—the recently published poems of Ayatullah Khomeini bear witness to this tradition.

Zoroastrianism was undoubtedly a living tradition in Iran when Persian

poetry emerged. Some of the great Persian fire temples are mentioned by name. Abu'l-Faraj Runi of Lahore, in the late eleventh century, is by no means the only writer to compare the tulip garden in spring to the fire temple of Barzin.[33] The tulips' fire then can be connected with the song of the spring birds, who seem to recite the words of the sacred scriptures of the Zoroastrians—the Zand Avesta—with soft twittering and sweet chirping.[34] Such recitations indeed are given in a low voice, and poets could also produce a fine pun between *zamzama*, the "murmuring" of the Zand, and the sacred spring Zamzam in Mecca.[35] In the orderly universe of the poets the glowing colors of the garden in spring could even appear as a combination of two pre-Islamic traditions:

> Renew in the garden the rites of Zoroastrianism
> now that the tulip has lit Nimrod's fire,[36]

says Ḥafiẓ, following the example of earlier poets such as Manuchihri.

The fire itself is sometimes called in early poetry "the *qibla* [prayer direction] of Zarathustra." Daqiqi thus describes a cold winter night in the Afghan hills with a bit of mockery:

> Rise, and light up the *qibla* of Zarathustra!
> Sit down and put the ermine on your shoulder!
> How many people who have turned away from Zarathustra
> now turn their faces again to Zarathustra's *qibla* out of necessity![37]

Although these people have turned their backs on their ancestral religion, their need for warmth forces them to turn to the fire as if worshiping it.

It sometimes happens that a poet confuses ancient Persian rites with Hindu customs. Amir Khusrau, who lived in India, requests of his companions:

> After my death don't place my bier in the mosque:
> take it and put it into the fire place of the Ghebers [the Parsis].[38]

The idea would be horrible to a true Zoroastrian: fire must not be defiled, and corpses are to be placed on the Towers of Silence. But the poet's wish here is understandable when one thinks of the customs of cremation ambient in his Indian environment.

But what of these fire temples of Barzin and Fars? Has the lover not more

fire in his heart? Ḥafiẓ claims that his breast is superior to the temple of Fars and that his eye contains more water than the Tigris near Baghdad.[39] Centuries later, Ghalib would sing in India:

> The people of the world would have called me a fire worshiper
> Had they seen my hot sighs filled with sparks. . . .[40]

Now and then Iranian terms and names of deities appear in Persian poetry.[41] The Iranian deities, *yazata*, are transformed into *īzad*, a word that is rather commonly used to mean simply "God." Ahriman, the spirit of evil, surfaces time and again, for it is he (as some poets think) who has created the dark tresses of the beloved—the beloved's radiant face was of course created by the good God, Yazdan.

One name from the Zoroastrian past that is particularly important in poetical language is Sarosh. His origin is the ancient Sraosha, the angel of hearing and obedience, who in later Zoroastrianism became the psychopomp, the spirit that guides the soul of the deceased across the Chinvat Bridge, which leads to the otherworld. That, at least, is the picture one gets from works like the *Arda Virafnāma*, an account of the journey of the soul. In somewhat later tradition Sarosh serves as the angel of inspiration and is therefore a counterpart of Gabriel, whom he sometimes replaces—with the difference that Gabriel inspires the prophets and Sarosh the poets. In this capacity he has long assumed an important role, and Ḥafiẓ has him appear as a protecting spirit against Ahriman's insinuations: for Sarosh guides the poet into a higher world, and like Gabriel he assures him that Divine Grace is greater than all else.[42] Sarosh maintained this position in later poetry as well, and Iqbal, who acknowledges him as an inspiring force, allots him an important place in his *Jāvīdnāma*.[43]

It would be interesting at this point to pursue the development of angelology as set forth in Suhrawardi al-Maqtul's illuminist philosophy, but that belongs to a different area of research.[44]

It was easy for poets to combine Zoroastrian and Christian themes.

> In the coral of your two sugar pieces [lips] the miracle of Christ is concealed,
> In the narcissus of your eyes the proof for Ahriman is hidden.[45]

Thus says Amir Muʿizzi, of the twelfth century, to describe lips that grant him new life by a kiss, and the diabolical spell of the beloved's black eyes. As for the young Christian boy, he is the exact counterpart to the Zoroastrian *mughbacha*. When poets speak of the *dayr-i mughān*, the "monastery [or convent] of the Zoroastrians," the word *dayr* makes the reader immediately think of the iconostasis in an Orthodox church. To poets brought up in a religion that prohibits pictorial representation, especially in sacred places, the world around them seemed as colorful as the richly tinted icons in the sanctuaries of Eastern Christianity.

> A young Christian boy came intoxicated from the magians' convent,
> A cross on his shoulder, a nice cup in his hand.[46]

This is not the verse of a libertine winebibber, but of Shah Niʿmatullah, one of the leading Sufi masters of the late fourteenth century.

But Ghalib, who was fond of his glass of port, took the tradition very much at face value when he complained of the sad fate of Muslims after the British established rule over vast parts of India:

> The Muslim never became a true ruler at any time—
> when the magian went away from the wine house, the Christian grabbed it.[47]

This tendency to use the terms and names of two other religious traditions as symbols of freedom and intuitive, loving experience, as contrasted to the legalism of their own faith, also led poets to call their beloved ones simply *but* or *ṣanam*—that is, "idol." For just as "metaphor is the bridge toward reality," as was often repeated, so might the love of "idols" lead—or so one hoped—to the most sublime object of love.

The classic symbol of this attitude is the *zunnār*—the belt of the infidel or the Brahmin's thread, whichever the context required—which, as we saw, is often contrasted to the rosary of law-bound, pious people. Under ʿAṭṭar's influence the *zunnār* became widely used as a metaphor for infidelity which was in reality a deeper faith. An ingenious, different development of the theme can be seen in Iqbal's work, where the *zunnār* becomes the symbol of created, serial time as contrasted to Divine, nonserial time, the Eternal Now, in God.[48] For him, to tear the *zunnār* means to leave the realm of time and

space and experience the Infinite Presence in God which is without Before and After—the ecstasy of the moment in which the Prophet himself said, "I have a time with God."[49] Iqbal's interpretation of the *zunnār* is all the more interesting in that the girdle is associated with Zurvan, the ancient Iranian god of time.[50]

Another figure from pre-Islamic history who features in a somewhat surprising context is Mani. He appears not as the founder of a religion that was considered extremely dangerous—first by the Christians (such as Saint Augustine) and later by Muslims—but rather as the master painter. The Muslims certainly knew of the beautifully illuminated books of the Manicheans, and some who lived or traveled in Central Asia and Western China may even have seen caves that the Manicheans had decorated with marvelous wall-paintings. Mani's hand—so the poets say—shows its art especially in springtime, when the garden is painted in fine colors; and whenever they want to praise the variegated appearance of anything delightful, they will invoke Mani and his marvelous picture book *Arzhang*.[51] But they can also lament that

> Even though China was filled with Mani's pictures,
> yet it is now destroyed, and neither a picture has remained nor has Mani.[52]

Such verses make a bridge to the concept of China as the homeland of artful painting (see chapter 10).

Jews appear in Persian poetry only rarely, despite a remarkable, independent Judeo-Persian literature that developed in Iran over the centuries.[53] But poets knew the yellow robes or headgear of the Jews, and thus it was that Masʿud ibn Saʿd-i Salman in Lahore claimed that his garden had now turned into a Jew, in yellow garments, which had caused the murmuring of the Zoroastrian priest (that is, the chirping of the birds) to cease.[54]

Compared to the wealth of figures taken from both Islamic and Persian traditions, the lack of themes from Greek civilization is remarkable. Yet one must remember that aside from the figure of Alexander—who was (as we saw) adopted into pre-Islamic legend as a Persian in his own right—the entirety of Greek epic, dramatic, and lyric poetry was unknown among the Muslims; and had they seen Greek (or Roman) statues they would have been as appalled as they were when confronted with Hindu idols. The great

number of admirable Arabic translations of Greek philosophical and scientific works from the early ninth century onward belonged to a different world,[55] and thus it is only the names of philosophers or physicians that are encountered in literary contexts. Aristotle (especially because of his relation with Alexander), Plato, and Galen appear most frequently; other scholars and physicians, such as Hippocrates, now and then.[56] Galen is the model of the physician, and Rumi compares Love to Galen and Plato because Love can cure all ailments. But more often a poet confesses that

> Galen has no power over the lovesick person![57]

Plato was sometimes considered a kind of magician, and Anatolian folk tradition knows him very well as the great master who gave the area around Konya its present shape. But often he is confused with Diogenes the Cynic, who resided in a barrel:

> Who could tell us about the secret of the philosophers
> if not the Plato who sits in the barrel? [That is, the wine.]

Thus asks Ḥafiẓ in a charming verse.[58]

In panegyrics, or course, the virtues of Greek philosophers and wise men are nothing compared to those of the patron:

> Plato is the meanest slave of your knowledge,
> a thousand Alexanders are the lowliest slaves of your writing,[59]

says Anwari. Similar rhetoric appears in poems of self-praise.

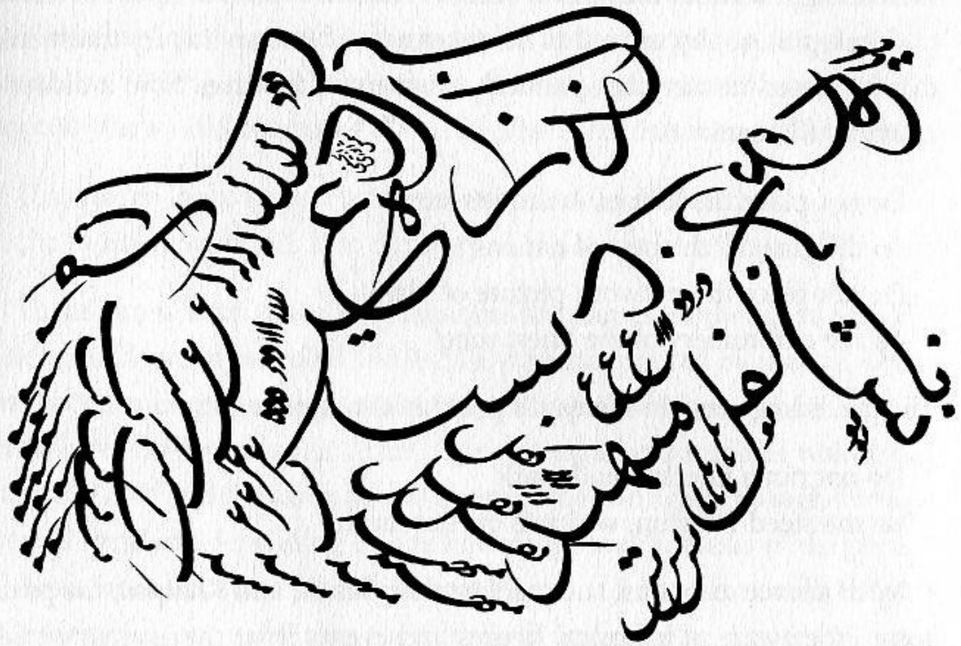
One must not forget that Muslim theologians and mystics had a somewhat negative attitude toward Greek philosophy and the strands of Islamic thought which developed under its influences. The orthodox Muslim's aversion to philosophers—expressed lucidly in Ghazzali's *Tahāfut al-falāsifa*[60]—was taken up by one line of poets in Iran and India and reflected in their verse. This line seems to begin with Sana'i and ends with Iqbal, who himself was a remarkable philosopher but inherited the traditional views about the "dangerous" Greek philosophical approach to religion.

These poets would hold that even Aristotle, who had taught Alexander the secrets of wisdom, was helpless against death. The only solution open to philosophers would be to forget their intellectual stance in order to learn love, and to become demented in love, as Amir Khusrau says:

I have seen many Platos and Aristotles,
who had become in love Majnun and Buhlul![61]

That is, they became demented like the great lover Majnun and talked in nonsensical words like Buhlul, the wise idiot, who appears in stories and anecdotes from the late eighth century onward.

7 Themes from Islamic History



Don't put the brand of

Greece on the crupper

of the Arab-born steed!

If the poets usually disliked the Greek philosophers, the same seems to be true, at least in certain circles, for Muslim philosophers, among whom Avicenna (Ibn Sina) appears to have been particularly hated. Even in the present century Iqbal has contrasted the bookworm, who spends a miserable life in the pages of Abu ʿAli's (Avicenna's) manuscript, with the moth that casts itself in loving ecstasy into the candle's flame, or the firefly that radiates light without the help of others.[1] It seems typical of Iqbal's aversion to Greek philosophy, as well as his awareness of Persian literary traditions, that he closed his very last political statement with verses from a didactic poem by Khaqani:

Do not place the lock of Aristotle's story
on the gate of "the best of nations"!
Do not place the outworn picture of Plato
on the embroidery of the finest robe!

The preceding verse in Khaqani's poem is also quite typical:

Do not put a Greek brand mark
on the steed Religion, which is of Arab birth.[2]

With a few exceptions, such as Farrukhi, Sanaʾi, and Khaqani, the poets seem little aware of historical figures and events from the Islamic world. Rather early on, the persons and facts of Arabic and later Muslim history became more or less congealed into fixed models—much like the figures from the Koran, who also serve as mere paradigms and not as "historical" personages in the modern sense.[3]

Learned poets might adopt from classical Arabic poetry the names of celebrated women like Salma or Hind as ciphers for the faraway beloved, or they might speak, like a classical Arab poet, of the deserted dwelling places where the caravan had passed in which, perhaps, the beloved was traveling.

Among the historical or pseudo-historical figures that do appear in Persian poetry Ḥatim aṭ-Ṭaʾi stands head and shoulders above other early Arab heroes. He was the paragon of generosity and limitless hospitality—hence the numerous comparisons of the ruler's generosity to that of Ḥatim, whom the ruler would of course surpass by far. Sometimes Ṣahban, the master of highest and most impressive eloquence, appears along with Ḥatim; or Ḥatim is paired with Rustam.[4] Sayf ibn Dhi Yazan, hero of an

ancient tradition from South Arabia, appears now and then in early *qaṣīdas*, for example, those of Sanaʾi.

Although one now and then finds allusions to figures from Abbasid history, only one of these features in a more widely acclaimed metaphor: Muqannaʿ, the "veiled prophet of Khorasan." It is told that he tried to begin a revolution in Iran in 780, and in order to prove his miracle-working powers he had an artificial moon rise from a ditch in Nakhshab. The "moon of Nakhshab" thus became a fine metaphor for something false and utterly worthless.[5] ʿUrfi—never particularly modest—uses the image to rebuke anyone who would compare him to his great predecessor in *qaṣīda*-writing:

If someone looks for a relation between Anwari and ʿUrfi—
the radiant moon tells him the story of the moon of Nakhshab![6]

Poems from later times may mention the names of the great Seljukid rulers, such as Sanjar (ruled 1119–57), who was praised by many a writer and sometimes appears in combination with ancient Iranian kings.[7] But on the whole, the formulation of the code of images and symbols was closed around 1200, and the same figures appear time and again, though perhaps treated variously depending on the knowledge and interests of the poets.

Aside from the heroes and historical figures of Islam who could be used in panegyrics, one must also consider Sufis and religious figures who not only influenced predominantly Sufi poets but also entered the general lore of poetry. There is, for instance, Rabiʿa al-ʿAdawiyya (d. 801), the model of a pious woman. There is also Ibrahim ibn Adham (d. ca. 777), the arch-ascetic, who, legend has it, left his home for the sake of homelessness, just as the Buddha did centuries before him.[8] As he hailed from Balkh, the old center of Buddhism, this transformation in a man of Arab parentage is not too surprising. Though he is seldom mentioned in lyric or panegyric verse, he has been the subject of popular epics. Dhuʾn-Nun the Egyptian (d. 859), usually in company with the word *nūn*, "fish," appears now and then, as does Bayezid Bisṭami (d. ca. 874), whose exclamation *Subḥānī!* "Praise be to me!" was often quoted or alluded to by mystical writers and frequently combined with another theopathic locution, Ḥallaj's *Anāʾl-ḥaqq*, "I am the absolute Truth," interpreted as "I am God."

Ḥallaj, the arch-martyr of mystical Islam, who was cruelly executed in Baghdad on 26 March 922, became the model for all who were persecuted

and killed for the sake of love.[9] His words *Anā'l-ḥaqq* were repeated thousands of times by those who thought they had reached complete union with the Divine Beloved or were convinced that there was nothing but God. Thus his name, which is often changed into his father's name, Manṣur, "the Victorious One," occurs in virtually all poetical collections in the central and eastern Islamic world, and especially in popular poetry from Anatolia to Sind and Bengal.

The poets are ever in quest of the "Manṣuri" wine that intoxicated Ḥallaj, and his death on the gallows is, as ʿAṭṭar observed, his "heavenly journey," *miʿrāj*. (*Ḥallāj* and *miʿrāj* form a good rhyme and were therefore often used together.) ʿAṭṭar's description of Ḥallaj's suffering, in his hagiographical work *Tadhkirat al-auliyā'*,[10] became the model for innumerable poems, dramas, and songs that deal with the martyr-mystic, for whom, as Sindhi folk poets sing, "the gallows were his bridal bed."[11]

But Ḥallaj is also mentioned as a warning example to all who divulge the secret of love, for the lover must never reveal the secret of loving union or the name of his beloved.

> The secret that is in your heart is not a sermon—
> you can say it on the gallows, but not in the pulpit![12]

Dār, "the gallows," and *minbar*, "the pulpit in the mosque," had been paired for centuries before Ghalib wrote this line, which became almost proverbial in the Subcontinent.[13] The juxtaposition of these two items, both of which are made of wood (and perhaps, as poets might think, even from the same tree), expresses once again the contrast between legalism and love, sobriety and intoxication.[14]

Rumi's description of a ripe apple hanging from a branch as "like Manṣur"—that is, poor hanged Ḥallaj—is proof that allusions to the martyr's fate could be made almost jokingly.[15] In fact quite a few poets have played with the image, as when the Turkish poet Fuzuli remarks:

> The heart that took its place in that confused tress—
> what was its crime that it had to be hanged?[16]

Ḥallaj became the figure in whom overwhelming love seemed most manifest. He was what every poet wanted to become (at least in theory!): the true martyr of love, the one who testified for his love with his own life and

"performed his ablutions with blood."[17] For this reason he has also been praised by modern poets as a martyr who died for his convictions, thus prefiguring the fate of all who suffer in prison for their political beliefs. In the leftist Arabic and Turkish (and to some extent in Urdu) literature he has become a social reformer, a rebel against the establishment, as we may see in the works of Ṣalaḥ ʿAbd aṣ-Ṣabur, Adonis, ʿAbdulwahhab al-Bayati, and others.[18] He can also stand for the doctrine of *waḥdat al-wujūd*, "Unity of Being" (which is usually wrongly interpreted as a sweeping pantheism), or represent one who had to suffer because his love was too great to be contained in the shallow vessel of his worldly existence.

Ḥallaj "Manṣur" is probably the most frequently cited figure from classical Islamic history. Most other such personalities are restricted in their application to poetical purposes. For obvious reasons historical figures appear more frequently in *qaṣīdas* and didactic poetry than in lyrics, as in those genres authors were freer to adduce personalities that fit into their own world views. But the standard themes were as firmly established as were Orpheus or Iphigeneia in the West.

دل مجنون و خم طرّهٔ لیلی بهم است
شمس انوری
یار دل محنت و خم کفهای اماست
رخسارهٔ محمود و پی

The heart of Majnun
and the twist of Layla's
curl, the face of
Maḥmud and the sole
of Ayaz's foot [belong
together].

Many historical figures have been transformed, in the course of time, into symbols for something completely different from their original significance. This is particularly conspicuous in the case of one of the great Muslim kings, the conqueror of parts of northwestern India, Maḥmud of Ghazna (ruled A.D. 999–1030). From his capital Ghazna in eastern Afghanistan he invaded the Subcontinent no fewer than seventeen times and laid the foundations of Muslim rule in the northern part of what is now Pakistan, with Lahore as the provincial capital. His court was the most brilliant in the eastern Islamic world and boasted poets like Firdausi, ʿUnṣuri, and Farrukhi, to mention only the best-known. Farrukhi described his patron's Indian campaigns in colorful and elegant verse, and Firdausi's *Shāhnāma* was, as we have seen, the sourcebook for many later poets and painters. One would thus expect that Maḥmud would serve as the model of a wealthy, brave, and admirable ruler whose example should be emulated by others. But his reputation of having disappointed Firdausi led poets to use his name in a rather negative connotation, and from the late eleventh century onward his predilection for the Turkish officer Ayaz, with whom he was apparently infatuated, became a favorite literary topic: the king, who became his slave's slave.[1]

Ayaz is the model of a slave (like most officers he belonged to the class of Turkish military slaves who were the real supporters of the kingdom), but a slave who by his absolute surrender to his master wins his heart, so much so that the king loves him so deeply for his unswerving obedience that their roles become, as it were, reversed: lover and beloved cannot be separated; they seem to be mirror images of each other. This offered mystical poets a wonderful topic for pointing to the love relationship between man and God, and in the nonmystical tradition numerous epics were composed to celebrate the fascinating relation between the king and his slave.[2] Poets have never ceased to hope that Fate would "make Maḥmud's eye happy on Ayaz's foot once more,"[3] that is, grant the lover the fulfillment of his wishes by rubbing his forehead on the beloved's foot (as one does when greeting a venerable elder or a spiritual master).

The primordial interplay of Beauty and Love made Maḥmud forget his kingdom (as the poets claim with some exaggeration). And it was easy to combine the name Maḥmud with the *maqām maḥmūd*, "the praised place," mentioned in Sura 17:80. Khaju Kirmani thus says:

I remained constantly in your street, for Ayaz's threshold
is, for the people of truth, Maḥmud's place [or, a praised place].[4]

In Iqbal's poetry Love appears as the Maḥmud who destroys Somnath, the idol temple of Intellect.[5] The historical Somnath was the famous Hindu temple in Kathiawar, pillaged by Ghaznawid troops in 1017—an act which made Maḥmud an antihero in the Indian tradition. Much earlier than Iqbal, a poet had exclaimed:

Show your face so that all the idol-worshipers in the area of
Somnath [may] become believers![6]

The allied theme of the love relation between king and beggar, *shāh u gadā*, which has been used variously to describe love affairs, may have originated in or at least been influenced by the Maḥmud–Ayaz tradition. It was elaborated in epic form during the latter part of the fifteenth century, the most famous version being that by Hilali, who lived at the Timurid court of Herat.[7]

Maḥmud and Ayaz are only one—though the most unusual—loving couple in poetical imagery. Amir Khusrau says correctly:

Majnun's ear and Layla's ring,
Maḥmud's head and Ayaz's threshold [belong together].[8]

(To "have a ring in one's ear" is to be someone's slave.)

Indeed, the old Arabic love story of Majnun and Layla became a favorite topic among Persian poets.[9] Qays, a young Arab who was Layla's schoolmate—or so legend has it—became demented, *majnūn*, when his beloved was married to someone else—hence that epithet became his name. He retreated into the desert, where the dark eyes of the gazelles reminded him of Layla's eyes, and, completely reduced to skin and bones, he talked to the wild animals and birds nested in his matted hair. Fuzuli turned this traditional image in a very subtle way:

The nest of the bird Heart is in your disheveled tresses . . . ,[10]

for the lover has lost his heart, which is often compared to a bird (see chapter 13), in the dark curls of the beloved.

It is told that the caliph asked Majnun why he was so infatuated with a

woman who did not seem at all attractive. Majnun's answer became proverbial:

> One can see Layla's beauty only with Majnun's eyes—[11]

for only the eye of love transforms reality into beauty.

In the end, Majnun found Layla in his own heart and experienced—at least according to the mystical poets—such a complete union with her that he would not even allow himself to be bled, "for it would hurt Layla." He no longer yearned for her actual presence, rather he shunned it—for he who has found the beloved in himself does not want an external picture.[12]

But how to reach Layla's dwelling place? Ḥafiẓ gives the answer:

> There are many dangers for the soul on the way to Layla's dwelling place—
> the condition for the first step is that you become Majnun [or, demented].[13]

For intellect does not help on the road to the desert. And like every madman, Majnun was put in chains—though, as Amir Khusrau asks with amazement, were not Layla's tresses chain enough for him?[14] But when the chains are real, the poet knows that their sound is nothing but the echo of Majnun's cries.[15]

The tears he sheds in the desert make grass grow in the sacred place of Layla's tent, and after his death every flower that springs from his grave smells like Layla.[16] Images of this kind were used very often by Jami who, imitating Niẓami, also composed a *mathnawī* about the unlucky lovers. But despite our admiration for his seemingly inexhaustible stock of images he transgresses the borders of good taste when he claims that the sparks that sprang from Majnun's breast, to reveal the fire of his love, "turned all the gazelles in the steppes into roast meat."[17]

One aspect of the story is that Majnun loved everything that had even the slightest relation with Layla and made him feel her presence—so much so that he kissed the paws of a dog that had gone through the lane where she lived.[18] This image was used almost too often in later lyric poetry, and in popular idiom to this day a despised companion whose presence one tolerates only because he knows one's beloved is termed *sag-i Laylā*, "Layla's dog."

The epics concerning Layla and Majnun were often illustrated, for in the wake of Niẓami's poem many other writers treated the romantic story—Amir Khusrau, Jami, Mir ʿAlishir Nawaʾi, and many more. Majnun sitting in the wilderness, surrounded by animals, became one of the favorite themes of Persian miniature painters.[19] Ghalib alludes to these pictures of the naked lover in one of his Urdu verses:

> Longing has proven itself the jealous rival of all possessions.
> Qays appears naked even in the veil [or, on the canvas] of the picture![20]

He uses a different aspect of the Majnun theme in another Urdu verse:

> I too threw stones on Majnun in my childhood
> until I thought of my own head.[21]

Indeed one of the most touching miniatures of the Majnun cycle, painted about 1540 by Mir Sayyid ʿAli, shows children casting stones at the enchained madman.[22] The combination of "children" and "stone throwing" remained common in later poetry, and Azad Bilgrami in eighteenth-century India even says:

> The children's stones are my pillow in the desert of madness:
> and my colored seat is from the carpet of rose and greenery.[23]

For him, as for his innumerable predecessors, Majnun is the lover who has fled from the City of Reason and wanders in the boundless, trackless desert of Love, and who has torn his shirt as people do who experience a mystical rapture. (Such tearing of shirts happened frequently during the mystical whirling dance, but the image is generally used outside that theme.) The Urdu poet Siraj Aurangabadi has described his own complete annihilation in love, his loss of identity where "neither the curtain-mending of intellect nor the curtain-rending of madness" finds room.[24] This is the fulfillment of Majnun's hopes.

Layla's name could be used in manifold connections with the Arabic word *layl*, "night," which may point to her black tresses or even to the complete "blackout" that Majnun experienced in her love.

Persian literature knows many more loving couples, some of whom Goethe sums up in a playful verse in his *West-Östlicher Divan*.[25] He speaks

there of Rustam and Rudaba, which is, of course, a wrong combination: it should be either Rustam and Tahmina or else Zal and Rudaba. The latter choice would fit with his remark that the "picture of words," that is, tales told by her maids, enflamed the lady's heart. We have already seen something of these two pairs of lovers from the *Shāhnāma*, as well as Yusuf and Zulaykha; Farhad and Shirin will be treated presently. Among the others on Goethe's list, Jamil and Buthayna, an early Arab poet and his beloved, are barely mentioned in Persian.[26] But Wamiq and ʿAdhra, whose names are recorded in Goethe's next poem in the *Divan*, are better known in Persian tradition, for although their story is originally Arabic it was retold in a romantic poem by ʿUnṣuri at Maḥmud Ghaznawi's court, and Farrukhi too alluded to it.[27] Later this couple rarely appears in the poets' inventory.

Another entirely Persian romance, somewhat reminiscent of the Tristan legend, is that of Wis and Ramin, a story which was poetically elaborated by Gurgani and other early authors.[28] Even less important for later poetical imagery was the romance of Warqa and Gulshah, told at a very early stage of Persian literature by ʿAyyuqi.[29] It seems that these once-famous tales lost their role as treasure houses for images because they were not incorporated into Niẓami's great *Khamsa* (Quintet), to which all later writers referred openly or obliquely.

Thus Khusrau, Farhad, and Shirin, the protagonists in Niẓami's epic *Khusrau Shīrīn*, are often cited in lyric verse as parallel with Layla and Majnun. Firdausi had described the love story of Khusrau and the Armenian princess, but Niẓami added a new dramatic element with the introduction of Farhad, an architect who fell in love with Shirin. Farhad fulfilled all kinds of tasks in order to win Shirin's hand, and even dug a tunnel through solid mountain rock so that the milk of Shirin's cows could flow to a lower area. (A modest grave in the Las Bela region of Makran, Pakistan, where rocks around a spring are covered with whitish sinter, is locally called "the tomb of Farhad and Shirin" because the white mineral deposit makes people think of the milk stream.)[30]

The story of Farhad and Shirin was widespread in Iran, Turkey, and the Subcontinent.[31] Farhad, the suffering, hard-working lover, became the symbol of the poet who toils to produce something very difficult and precious.

Amir Khusrau, who also composed an epic *Khusrau Shīrīn*, invented

much wordplay with his own name, mainly in his lyrics. In one of the closing lines of a *ghazal* he says:

> I am Khusrau who, out of grief, carries in his breast
> Farhad's mountain and yet does not own a single stone![32]

And the name Shirin, "Sweet" (derived from *shīr*, "milk"), enabled poets to spin infinite cross-relations between the stream of milk, the princess's sweet smile, and unfulfilled love.

> You with your sugar smile are so sweet that I could say:
> "O Khusrau [= king] of the beautiful: you are the Shirin of this time!"[33]

Farhad is often called Kuhkan, "Mountain-digger," and his story is likewise associated with Mount Bisutun in Iran, where actual rock reliefs are found. But—to resume our story—the helpless lover was ultimately cheated and did not receive the recompense for his labors. Instead Khusrau sent an old woman to him with the (false) news that Shirin had died: thereupon Farhad committed suicide.[34] He, who was required to produce a milk stream from the rock, now shed a stream of blood from his eyes, and his only share of happiness is the echo that comes from Bisutun—the festive music is Khusrau's share.[35] The poor wretch should have known—so think the poets—that however deep he might dig into the rock, the ruby of Shirin (or, the sweet ruby mouth) is hidden in Khusrau's treasury and will never be given to him.[36]

If Majnun represents the poet or lover who roams through the desert of madness, Farhad is the artist who tries to pry out poetical gems with his pen (or, some say, with his eyelashes) through hard work:

> How difficult the "stony ground" may be—
> when the pen is used as adze, Nasikh is not less than Kuhkan![37]

One can almost distinguish two types of poets: those who prefer Majnun and his symbols to represent their own attitude to life and love, and those who prefer Farhad.

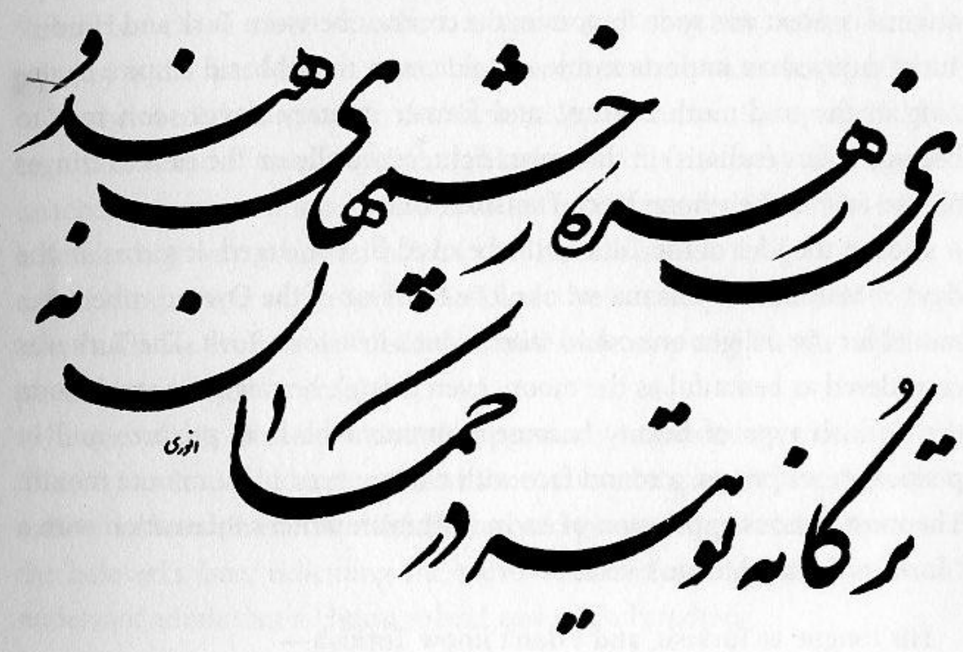
In modernist poetry (for instance, in Iqbal's verse) Farhad also features as the worker who is defrauded by the capitalist and never properly paid.[38] It may well be that a similar empathy with the poor "proletarian" worker

Farhad prompted the Turkish communist poet Nazim Hikmet to devote a drama to him.[39]

And so the story is over: Farhad's blood has colored the meadows of Bisutun red like flowers, and there is silence:

> Today the sound of the adze does not come from Bisutun—
> it is as though Farhad has gone into sweet sleep [or, into Shirin's dream].[40]

9 Turk and Hindu



O Venus, from your
Hindu-eyes notch the
arrow on the bow like
a Turk!

Over the preceding chapters we have observed that Persian poetry is imbued to a certain extent with images that evoke the external interplay of Beauty and Love, or the tension between legalism and love, between intellect and inspired madness. As with Maḥmud and Ayaz, we may also discern this tendency in another favorite combination that arose in historical and social reality but served mostly as a poetical image whose original context was soon forgotten: the contrast between Turk and Hindu.[1] Turks enjoyed an important role as soldiers in the Abbasid empire beginning in the mid-ninth century, and former military slaves soon rose to become rulers (sultans) in their own right, especially on the eastern fringes of Iran and in their homeland, Transoxania.

Indeed the idea of the Turk as the beloved first emerged, it seems, in the days of Maḥmud of Ghazna, whose love for Ayaz of the Oymaq tribe was a model for the delight one could take in one's love for a Turk. The Turk was considered as beautiful as the moon, even though he might be cruel. Soon the Turkish type of beauty became prominent both in pictures and in poetical descriptions: a round face with narrow eyes and a minute mouth. The most famous expression of an Indo-Persian writer's infatuation with a "Turk" is Amir Khusrau's verse:

His tongue is Turkish, and I don't know Turkish—
how nice it would be if his tongue were in my mouth![2]

Turkish cities in Central Asia, such as Chigil and Ṭaraz, became ciphers for the dwelling place of the beloved, where the lover directs his thoughts. Thus Ḥafiẓ asks, using a fitting *tajnīs*:

That Turk with a fairy's countenance went away from me
yesterday—
what mistake (*khaṭā*) did he see, that he took the road to Khaṭa
[Cathay]?[3]

As for the Hindu, he is the perfect contrast to the Turk.[4] Like the Greeks, the peoples of Western and Central Asia regarded the Indians as black, and the Arabs were in contact with the dark-skinned inhabitants of southern India well before the advent of Islam. Thus the black Hindus came to be compared to devils, both in travelogues and in mystical visions—where the

angels, of course, resembled Turks.[5] Moreover, India was for the Muslims a country benighted in blackest heathendom:

Light up the candle of monotheism,
Set forth into infidel Hindustan,[6]

says Sana'i. The term *hindū*, then, meant in the first place "black," but also "lowly, slave"—a slave who had to serve and obey the ruling Turkish princes, as the first Muslim dynasties in northern India were indeed Turks.

The beloved's beauty mark, the black mole, the tresses, the eyes, could all be called "Hindu" because of their blackness, but the term also implied treacherous and faithless behavior. The "infidel tresses of Hindu origin" lurk like highway robbers,[7] or else they stretch across the pale ear like a naked Hindu on a white bed.[8] The Hindu tresses may even open a shop: "Give a life for every hair!"[9] And the small mole may be a Hindu child that plucks roses from the cheek.[10]

Images of this kind show that the apparently negative connotation of the "black" Hindu could be transformed into something quite lovable, and in somewhat later times Katibi Iṣfahani would give a delightful description of the beloved's face, ridiculing the narrow-minded theologian who would rather not admit that a Hindu infidel can reach Paradise:

O ascetic, if you deny that a Hindu finds the way toward Kauthar
and an infidel comes to the eternal garden,
then look how those tresses and the mole came on his face and his
ruby mouth:
an infidel in the garden of Paradise, a Hindu at the well of
Kauthar![11]

Hindustan is, then, logically, the country of blackness (and for some poets it was even the veritable Hell, as Khushḥal Khan, the Pathan warrior, states).[12] A late poet, longing for his home in Iran, sighed during his stay in India:

Like a black hair that finally turns white
I draw myself from India to Iran.[13]

And Ḥazin, in a comparable situation, saw his stay in Hindustan as proof of the sad fact that the day of his life had ended in black night.[14]

More famous, however, is Ṭalib-i Amuli's remark, on his emigration from Iran to India, that now perhaps his bad luck (called in both Persian and Turkish "black fortune") would finally leave him alone:

Nobody has ever brought a Hindu as gift to Hindustan—
therefore leave your "black fortune" in Iran![15]

The darkness could, however, also gain a positive meaning—was not the Water of Life hidden in darkness? Therefore Molla Shakibi praised the Mughal Khankhanan ʿAbdur Raḥim, the greatest benefactor of poets around 1600, with the verse:

Come, cupbearer, give the Water of Life!
Draw it from the Khankhanan's fountain!
Alexander sought it but found it not,
for it was in India and he hastened into the darkness.[16]

In astrology, Saturn, connected with black, is called "the Hindu of the sky" or else the Hindu doorkeeper, as it was the last planet known to medieval observers. Hence the chapter in Niẓami's *Haft Paykar* about Saturday, which is ruled, as its name says, by Saturn, takes its comparisons, images, and stories entirely from this sphere of blackness. The Indian princess whom Bahram Gor visits is a gazelle with Turkish—that is, dangerous—eyes, eyes of the kind that are often called "drunken Turks," and the black tresses on her rosy cheeks resemble fire-worshiping Hindus.[17]

The Muslims had a certain knowledge of the rites of cremation as practiced by the Hindus, and Amir Khusrau in particular, who lived in India, sometimes alludes to the custom of *satti*, the burning of widows.

Learn from the Hindu how to die of love—
it is not easy to enter the fire while alive.[18]

He also describes sunrise with a related image:

The Hindu Night has died, and the sun
has kindled the fire to burn that Hindu.[19]

The custom of *satti* formed on one occasion the topic of a Persian epic, Nauʿi's *Sūz u gudāz* (Burning and Melting), which was composed for Akbar's son Daniyal and was several times illustrated.[20]

Cross-relations with the fire worship of the Zoroastrians occur now and then (see also chapter 6 above). A typical example, from the late sixteenth century, is by Yolquli Anisi, who tells his beloved:

My heart is a fire temple when I think of you,
and on it is your brand, like a black Hindu who tends the fire.[21]

Such mixture of images is found as early as Niẓami's *Haft Paykar*.

The Hindu was the slave of the Turkish rulers, and for this reason poets liked the idea that they would lovingly become Hindu slaves if only their Turkish beloved would be kind to them[22]—an idea paradoxically elaborated in Ḥafiẓ's often-quoted *ghazal* about the "Turk of Shiraz" (see below).

The word *Turk* came to designate, in India as in parts of Europe, the Muslim in general, and the positive picture of the moonlike Turkish beloved often also has a tinge of cruelty to it. Poets developed a large stock of metaphors about the pillaging, drunken "Turk" who gallops through the countryside, shooting arrows with his eyelashes to wound his admirers: perhaps he plays polo with the severed head of a victim who enjoys being treated like that, and he plunders (*yaghmā*) every place.[23] Such negative images—without the positive aspect—can be found, for instance, in satires by ʿUbayd-i Zakani.[24] But when reading these descriptions one must always keep in mind that the beloved in traditional Persian poetry is indeed cruel and does not care for his lover, and that the lover, in turn, seems to relish all the wounds inflicted on him—for the beloved's cruelty is better than outright indifference.[25]

The mystics too made use of the Turk–Hindu contrast. Rumi saw the whole world as a dark Hindustan that must be destroyed "in Turkish style" so that the soul may finally be freed from material fetters.[26] And Turk and Hindu appear in "the Hindustan of clay and water and the Turkestan that is the spiritual world."[27]

As Saturn is the "Hindu of the sky," Mars, the martial planet, is rightly called the "Turk of the sky." But in the service of the beloved both are lowly slaves, as Bayram Khan, a Turcoman general in Mughal service, sings:

For your castle, old Saturn is the doorkeeper;
for your Hindu curls the Turk of the sky is a Circassian slave![28]

Much later another poet from India would complain:

From grieving for you I have black fortune and wet eyes—
I own [the whole area of] black [fertile] soil from India to the Oxus![29]

The contrast of Turk and Hindu was certainly strengthened by the realities of Muslim history at the turn of the first millenium, but the many possible interpretations of both terms made them a favorite for poets throughout the centuries. With these possibilities in mind one gets closer to the secret of Ḥafiẓ's famous (and often misinterpreted) verse:

If that Turk of Shiraz would take my heart in his hand,
I would give for his Hindu mole Bukhara and Samarqand.[30]

The Shirazi Turk has a black—Hindu—mole, and for this mole, which is traditionally seen as a black slave, the poet is willing to sacrifice the most beautiful cities of the Turkish empire. Besides this grand exaggeration in which all values seem to be reversed, the verse contains three names of cities (Shiraz, Bukhara, Samarqand), as well as three parts of the body (hand, mole, heart), and furthermore plays on the contrast of giving and taking, so that a whole chain of rhetorical figures is incorporated into these seemingly simple lines which express the poet's hope for some kindness from his beloved. But the whole beauty of the verse is inevitably lost in translation, especially in translations by those unaware of the delightful wordplay which the poet—effortlessly, as it seems—puts before his readers.

The Turk also appears, though rarely, in other connections. On a few occasions the aggressive riders from the steppes are contrasted with the complacent, urban Tajiks,[31] and sometimes a poet collects a veritable "league of nations" around his friend's face:

The Turk of your eye carries away the heart from the Arab and the soul from the Persian;
the Abyssinian mole on your face makes the Hindu a slave![32]

In the eighteenth century Qaniʿ, the historian of Sind, considered that Byzantines, Europeans, and Indians were all variously destroyed by his beloved's face, his down, and his lip—each of which corresponds to a color: white, black, and red.[33]

Besides the Turk and the Hindu one finds the juxtaposition of Rum and

Ḥabash—Byzantium and Ethiopia—to allude to white and black, but in this connection the meaningful symbolism that lies behind Turk and Hindu is lacking. The Ethiopian or Negro, *zanjī*, is usually remembered for his curly hair, as Saʿdi says in the *Gulistān*:

The world is more confused than a Negro's hair.[34]

A similar combination of the Daylamites—mountain-dwellers near the Caspian Sea—with curly, "broken" hair occurs in early Persian poetry.[35]

From the late sixteenth century onward the role of the Turk as dangerous beloved was taken over at least in part by the Firangs—the "Franks"—that is, the Europeans and in particular the Portuguese, who from 1498 had begun to settle on the southern and western coast of India and had plundered affluent ports, like Thatta in the Indus Delta, most cruelly.[36] They thus could replace the pillaging Turk, and the "European prison"[37] became a new image in Indo-Persian poetry. This prison sometimes seems rather colorful, and the Europeans are generally connected with colors and pictures, for European paintings were brought to Mughal India beginning in the days of emperor Akbar and were copied by indigenous artists with amazing skill: hence the new combinations in color imagery in later poetry.[38] But the Turk and the Hindu still survive in folk poetry, even in lullabies.

آن وطن بهشهر عراق و شام نیست آن وطن شهریست کانرا نام نیست

That homeland is neither

Iraq nor Syria—

that homeland is the city

that has no name.

If historical facts and persons form a closed universe for the Persian poets, the same holds true for the geographical knowledge of writers. Thus the great rivers of the central Islamic world occur frequently, and even poets who never visited Iraq, the country of the Two Rivers, sing of the Tigris and sometimes of the Euphrates when they describe the measureless stream of tears they have shed. They could have easily found much larger rivers in India, but only in rare cases—a few times in the verses of Masʿud ibn Saʿd—does the Ganges feature as a river impressive for its enormous size.[1] The Indus is mentioned only in folk poetry of the peoples and tribes that dwell on its banks and is thus not a poetical image but a real object of admiration or fear.[2] In classical poetry Jayḥun, the Oxus or Amu Darya, and sometimes the Ṣayhun (Sir Darya) appear as comparable with the flood of tears which this or that poet sheds.

The Tigris was, naturally, associated with Baghdad, the seat of the Abbasid caliphate from A.D. 754 to 1258, but long after the capital had been destroyed and the last Abbasid caliph killed, the city remained for poets the Baghdad of Beauty where the beloved lives in full glory like a caliph while a Tigris of tears flows at his feet.[3]

But one could interpret the Tigris differently, as Khaju Kirmani did:

> The dust of Baghdad weeps for the caliph's blood—
> what else is the river that flows in Baghdad?[4]

Here the mighty river is nothing but the tears shed by Baghdad and its suburbs after the caliph's death at the hand of the Mongols.

Another reason for frequent poetical use of the Tigris was that pilgrims coming from Iran and Central Asia had to cross Iraq on their way to Mecca. This experience could inspire not only grand poems like those of Khaqani (*Tuḥfat al-ʿIrāqayn*, which he composed during his first pilgrimage, in A.D. 1156) but also serve to describe spiritual states:

> On the road to the Kaʿba of union one of my two eyes
> is the Tigris and the other the Euphrates.[5]

The ancient fire temples of Fars, the southern province of Iran, and the Tigris are often mentioned together as they symbolize the lover's burning heart and his tearful eyes.[6]

Another part of the standard geographical inventory is the Nile, associated with Moses: it was cleft asunder for the Children of Israel, but it turned to blood for Pharaoh and his army. Thus an early poet can complain:

> From the burden of pain for you, my stature has become like a thread (*nāl*);
> From the beating of the hand of your love, my cheek has become like the Nile [that is, cleft and full of blood].[7]

(The words *nāl* and *nīl* form a pleasant *tajnīs-i nāqiṣ*.)

In some poems certain cities or landscapes are praised for specific reasons. One of the best examples is Rudaki's poem on *bū-yi jū-yi Mūliyān*, "the scent of the river Muliyan," near Bukhara—in which he urges his patron to hurry back to the seat of his government after a prolonged stay in Samarqand.[8] Imitations of this poem appear in almost every period of Persian literature, from Rumi in the thirteenth century[9] to Ghalib in the nineteenth.[10]

Another classic example is Khaqani's *qaṣīda* about Mada'in,[11] the ruins of the old capital Seleucia-Ktesiphon near the Tigris; the river, a "mirror of admonition," weeps for this lofty hall, which once had surpassed the Milky Way in splendor. How many joyful banquets were held there, how much pomp and splendor was displayed—but now, as the poet sighs while gazing at the ruins,

> Khusrau, the golden carpet,[12] the gold of Parwez—
> they have been carried away, have gone with the wind, and become one with the dust. . . .

In later centuries one finds clusters of poems devoted to certain cities. That holds true especially for Istanbul, where both during Ottoman times and in the twentieth century many have expressed their love for this beautiful place in serious or cheerful poems.[13] In Urdu poetry Delhi was "the heart of men and spirits, nay even the heart of the whole world," as Dagh wrote after the so-called Mutiny in 1857, when the city was largely destroyed and the Mughal empire ended in blood and tears.[14]

Although the Kashmir Valley was fully islamicized only in the early fourteenth century, Persian poets had praised the region's dolls—that is, its

lovely boys and girls—much earlier than that.[15] Qaṭran, in the eleventh century, claimed that his beloved ruled over the idols of Kabul and Kashmir,[16] and thereafter the "idols of Kashmir" long remained a poetical topos.

After Kashmir was incorporated into the Mughal empire by Akbar in 1586 and served its rulers as summer residence, numerous poets settled in the hilly country and described it in their poems, just as painters represented the region's manifold kinds of flowers and animals in delightful paintings. The poetical descriptions range from Kalim's poem about an utterly detestable cold winter day[17] to Iqbal's jubilant songs about the superbly beautiful flowers of his ancestral country, and also the political misery of the area[18]—so that one can say that Kashmir is a veritable literary theme in itself.

In classical poetry most of the romantic local names are associated with Central Asia, the homeland of the beloved Turks. Chigil and Khotan occur frequently, the latter usually mentioned together with the muskdeer, which is supposed to live there. Ḥafiẓ, with his admirable poetical skill, combines no fewer than five such concepts in one *bayt*:

> Your two impudent eyes have destroyed Khaṭa and Khotan,
> For the curls (*chīn*) of your tresses, Machin and India have to pay taxes.[19]

The beloved's eyes are comparable to plundering Turkish warriors, and the tresses are crooked, *chīn*—a word which also means "China." *Chīn* and *Māchīn* (an imaginary country beyond China) usually appear together as the countries in the farthest East. Furthermore, as the tresses are black they are also related to India. Samarqand and Bukhara likewise belong to this Central Asian scene, as we saw in connection with Ḥafiẓ's famous line (quoted in chapter 9).

Early poetry mentions not only Kashmiri "dolls" but also Chinese dolls or puppets. The traditional pun on *Chīn*, "China," and *chīn*, the "curl" of the tress, continued for centuries, and a poet from the seventeenth century says wittily:

> Everyone reaches a certain rank by setting out from a certain vantage point—
> I become the Faghfur thanks to the *chīn* of your tress.[20]

The *faghfūr* is the emperor of China, known from early times as a poetical image and sometimes paired or contrasted with *qayṣar-i Rūm*, the emperor of Byzantium: Khaqani juxtaposes the "daughter of the Qayṣar [Caesar] of Rum and the wife of the Faghfur" in one of his lines.[21]

The Faghfur became much more important in the verse of later writers, in particular the masters of the "Indian style," Bedil and Naṣir ʿAli Sirhindi. His role in their verses may seem somewhat surprising, but it is important for art history, as it relates to "haired" porcelain, that is, celadon ware with a craquelé glaze, a fine porcelain imported during Mughal times to India from China. It impressed the poets and inspired a great number of verses; as one put it,

> This porcelain, which has hairs [hairlines] everywhere,
> should be made a vessel for medicine.
> You cannot describe it in a quatrain or a *ghazal*—
> I think of a *qaṣīda* with the *radīf* "Hair."[22]

Looking at the fine, hairlike lines, the poets compared such ware with the plaited coiffure of the Chinese emperor:

> When the emperor of China dies,
> the porcelain will let down its hair from despair,[23]

that is, it will shatter—so says Bedil, who invented a remarkable number of comparisons and cross-relations between the emperor and the porcelain, many of them nearly impossible to translate.

And China is always connected with pictures and painting. It was the legendary home of Mani the painter (see above, chapter 6), and the poets must also have seen the delicate paintings on silk that came from China.

> Oh, come, so that your picture be placed within my heart—
> don't go to China, for there they'll paint it just on silk![24]

Thus says Mir Dard. When China and Rum (Byzantium) are contrasted as the farthest poles of the known world, as often happens, they are also accounted the countries where the greatest artists live—artists who approach the problem of "painting" in different ways. Rumi, who took over, and reversed, the story of the Chinese and Greek painters found in Niẓami's *Iskandarnāma*, tells in his *Mathnawī* how Chinese artists strove to represent

reality absolutely faithfully or, rather, how their pictures seemed to surpass reality. But the art of the Greeks was greater: they polished the wall they were supposed to decorate, and in the end the wall was shining like a mirror and then reflected the colorful Chinese painting with perfect fidelity. For the Greek artists were aware that one had to become empty and polish the mirror of the heart so that everything, and most importantly, the eternal Beauty of the Beloved, could be reflected therein.[25]

When Persian poets talk about the Arab world, they single out Egypt and Yemen as important poetical landscapes. Yemen, as we saw (chapter 5), is the home of Uways al-Qarani, whence the "breath of the Merciful" comes; it is also the area where the star Suhayl (Canopus) rises and where the fine, reddish carnelian (*ʿaqīq*) can be found. The richness and allure of the Queen of Sheba, who is mentioned in the Koran, and remembrance of ancient caravans carrying incense from Yemen to the Mediterranean world, may have helped shape a dream image of *Arabia Felix*. A poet could claim that the wine

> radiates in the goblet in such a way that one would say,
> it is a Yemenite carnelian in a Yemenite Canopus.[26]

In mystically oriented literature Yemen is the country of spiritual illumination, as Suhrawardi, the "Master of Illumination," *shaykh al-ishrāq*, had shown.[27] As such it is contrasted with the Maghrib—the West—where Kairouan (in Tunisia) in particular is cited as the place where the exiled soul suffers in *al-ghurbat al-gharbiyya*, the Western Exile. Kairouan, *Qayruwān*, could then be easily combined with *qīr*, "tar," to point to the pitch-black environment in which the poor soul lives.[28] This traditional pairing of Yemen and Maghrib shows that the contrast between "spiritual East" and "material West" is not a modern invention but was fully developed in the mystical philosophy of medieval Islam: there the seeker already performed the *Morgenlandfahrt*, the "quest for the East." It is interesting, in this context, that in Indo-Muslim tradition the quest for spiritual enlightenment is likewise associated with the East, *pūrab*, even though the pilgrim's actual goal may lie west of his home.[29]

As a "dark" place, Qayruwan sometimes appears along with Qandahar in Afghanistan, which now and then (through a delightful wrong etymology) is said to derive its name from *qand*, "sugar."[30]

Egypt, aside from Yemen the most important Arab country in poetical imagery, is the land of Moses and of Yusuf, both prominently mentioned in the Koran. Perhaps because Moses' story eventually led away to Canaan, Yusuf seems to play a more prominent role in Egyptian themes, even though he is often referred to as Yusuf-i Kanʿan, Joseph of Canaan. Another reason may be that Egypt exported sugarcane during the Middle Ages, and poets could easily detect a relation between that sugar and the sweetness of the beloved, who is as lovely as Yusuf the Egyptian.[31]

Tabriz, otherwise not a poetical symbol, was celebrated by Rumi as the hometown of his fiery friend, Shams-i Tabriz. By explaining the word as an Arabic noun from the root *barraza*, "to make clear," the poet could see in Tabriz the "place of manifestation."[32]

To express that two places, or people, were very far apart, poets in classical times would invoke Marw and Rayy (a city in eastern Iran, and present-day Tehran) or speak of Iraq and Khurasan (in northeastern Iran)—unless the separation seemed indeed as far as Byzantium and China.

Among cities praised in their own right and then turned into poetical images Shiraz has pride of place. Ḥafiẓ sang about his beautiful hometown and its environs, as did Saʿdi a century before him, and later poets saw there the true home of classical Persian lyrics, the ideal city of the purest literary tradition. To state that one hailed from Shiraz was a claim to spiritual and linguistic nobility. Hence Ghalib did not want to be called *ṭūṭī-yi Hind*, "the Parrot of India" (thus assuming the nickname of his great medieval predecessor, Amir Khusrau of Delhi), but rather preferred to be considered "a nightingale from the meadows of Shiraz."[33] Yet he appears modest in his claim when one reads ʿUrfi's lines:

> Why was Saʿdi so proud of this handful of dust, Shiraz,
> if he did not know that this would be my birthplace and my dwelling place?[34]

Both of them, however, appear almost humble compared to a very mediocre Indian poet who wrote:

> My homeland is nothing less than the Kingdom of the Word—
> Anwari had Mihana as hometown, and ʿUrfi [only] Shiraz . . .[35]

The Book of Nature Part 3

I drink ruby-colored
wine from the emerald
goblet—for the ascetic
is a serpent, and I
blind him with this
[magic].

Persian poets found "signs in the horizons" and indeed surveyed all of nature, from stones to the ocean, from plants to stars, from the lion to the tiniest insect, for images to use in ever-changing patterns.

Islamic countries were renowned for the wealth of precious and semi-precious stones which were found there: rubies in Badakhshan, emeralds in Egypt, and carnelian and agate in Yemen, not to mention lapis lazuli in Afghanistan and turquoise (lit. "Turkish stone") in the Central Asian border areas. Further, medieval Muslim scholars contributed a great deal to the knowledge of gems by translating, and adding valuable information to, Greek mineralogical treatises. It is thus not at all surprising that a glittering selection of precious stones appears in poetical language as well.[1] As early as the eleventh century the names of gems such as *laʿl* (ruby), *yāqūt* (dark ruby or garnet), or *ʿaqīq* (carnelian, agate) appear as rhyme words in poetry, and ʿAufi quotes a *tarkībband* in which the words *gauhar* (pearl), *laʿl* (ruby), and *zumurrud* (emerald) form the *radīf*.[2]

When Ḥafiẓ asks:

Is it astonishing that my tear has the color of *ʿaqīq* [carnelian]?
For the bezel of your ruby ring [that is, your mouth] is like *ʿaqīq*![3]

he uses a comparison that remained popular through the ages: the lips of the beloved look like ruby or carnelian, and the same is true for the lover's tears—which are, one assumes (if not told outright), red from the blood he sheds from his heart or liver.

ʿAqīq is considered to be a stone full of *baraka*, blessing power, and is therefore frequently used in seals and amulets—an aspect that should be kept in mind whenever this stone is mentioned. As its main mines were apparently in Yemen, it is often used poetically with other Yemenite objects, such as the radiant star Suhayl (Canopus) or the fine leather fabricated in Ta'if. Thus when Muʿizzi speaks of the fresh down on the radiant cheeks and above the red mouth of his young friend he writes:

Someone drew a line of musk perfume over Suhayl
and placed a load of little ants on the carnelian.[4]

Seven centuries later Ghalib would claim, in a convoluted image:

Deeper meaning is a stranger to the pretender, but is born in my house—
the carnelian is rare everywhere but plentiful in Yemen![5]

That is, while other people only own bits and pieces of true inner meaning while pretending that they have its full share, he owns a whole mine of it.

Another Yemeni stone is *jazʿ*, the onyx. It appears rarely in poetry, but Khaqani takes an oath on the eyes of his beloved—or, more precisely, on the dark pupils that rest within them:

By the two intoxicated Abyssinian brides
which sleep in your cell of Yemenite onyx![6]

A favorite with medieval poets and scientists was the emerald, *zumurrud*, which according to ancient traditions had healing power and was thought to blind the eyes of venomous serpents and dragons. Whenever emerald is mentioned one should recall this healing quality, which apparently was also known in Europe, as Goethe alludes to it. Love may appear as a radiant emerald that blinds everything:

With the pain of his love, my heart is
as the light of the serpent's eye in the presence of emerald—[7]

that is, struck blind.[8] The image can also be used in panegyrics, where the patron's strength against his enemy is likened to the power of the emerald over a serpent.[9] In the mystical tradition the spiritual guide, the Pir or *shaykh*, can be compared to this miraculous stone that renders every spiritual enemy blind but heals and refreshes the eye of the true seeker.[10] And when Love blinds man's eye to divert him from everything but the beloved, it also heals and revives him as does the radiant green stone.

The garden appears to be filled with emeralds, especially in classical poetry, and the flowers often seem to consist of precious stones, as in Ḥafiẓ's verse:

The rose has put an emerald throne in the garden—
now find wine like a fiery ruby![11]

These are perfectly natural combinations which every uninitiated reader can enjoy, but when later poets, especially in the "Indian style," compare the

emerald with the "green," fresh down on the beloved's upper lip, a modern critic may find the image somewhat strange, even if the combination of emerald and ruby (= lip) makes it technically flawless. The meaning, too, is clear: the green "emerald," the down, protects the ruby lip against enemies—or, as Ghalib thinks, it has a specific relation with the tresses, which are serpents to be blinded lest they intrude on the rose garden of the face.[12]

Diamonds play a negligible role in classical Persian poetry, as diamond cutting was not yet fully developed. Muʿizzi once describes glittering tears as thousands of diamonds.[13]

The most precious stones were *yāqūt* and *laʿl*, both generally used in the meaning of "ruby," although *yāqūt* originally denoted the more precious corundum and *laʿl* applied to stones not quite as hard. In poetry *laʿl* seems to occur more often.[14] It was mainly mined in northeastern Afghanistan in the mountainous area of Badakhshan, and the last prince of that country, in the fifteenth century, assumed the pen name Laʿli in his Persian *dīwān*.[15]

Like the emerald, the ruby had miraculous powers, and (relying upon Aristotle's lapidary) the Muslims believed that if you wear a ring with a ruby, plague cannot hurt you, lightning will not strike you, and your wishes will be fulfilled.[16] The comparison of the translucent red stone with red wine, found in early Arabic poetry, could easily be adopted by Persian and Turkish writers, but the most important item likened to a ruby was the beloved's lip. That is why Rumi and some other poets compared the kiss to the *zakāt-i laʿl*, the alms tax due on precious stones. But rather refreshingly the Mughal emperor Humayun tells in one of his quatrains that when he saw a Hindu boy whom he liked and wanted to kiss,

> I said: "I am devastated by your wine-colored ruby!"
> He began to laugh and said: "But Humayun! Lip and stone?"[17]

That is, you have said something quite ridiculous, to speak of a soft lip as a hard gemstone!

In traditional medicine, ruby was used in small quantities in the preparation of *mufarriḥ*, a remedy to cheer up people of melancholy temperament, or even a kind of tranquilizer. This gave the poets good reason to mention the friend's "ruby" as the only thing that would cheer up their sorrowful hearts.[18]

In mystically tinged poetry a beautiful myth is connected with the red ruby. The gem was born from an ordinary stone which had imbibed the radiance of sunlight and was transformed through long, long periods of suffering into a stone worthy to be worn in the king's crown. Rumi loved this image, as it enabled him to speak at length of the transforming spiritual power of his beloved Shams-i Tabriz, the "Sun of Tabriz." Whenever he describes spiritual wealth he uses the image of the radiant ruby and advises the seeker to go into his own depth, to travel into his soul and to find the mine of rubies in himself.[19] Ḥafiẓ too alludes to the mystical transformation that may occur in the patient seeker:

> One says that the stone, reaching the station of patience, becomes a ruby—
> yes, it turns into a ruby, but by spending its heartblood![20]

This, no doubt, is the way of the true seeker, the true lover.

The idea that one can find precious rubies in oneself became a commonplace among poets. When Ghalib claims that he is not satisfied with one ruby, nay, not even a mine of rubies, but rather makes a night attack on all Badakhshan itself,[21] Iqbal takes up the topic and tells his readers that for him the highest felicity is that he can quarry rubies from his own breast.[22]

It seems that the ruby indeed manifested spiritual glory best, for comparisons with this gem are by no means restricted to the Islamic tradition. The Tamil saint Tayumanavar saw the Divine Presence like a mountain of rubies, and at almost the same time that Rumi experienced the manifestation not only of True Poverty (*faqr*), but also of Divine Glory (*kibriyā*), as rubies,[23] Dante, at the end of his *Divine Comedy*, was writing of the *balascio*, the ruby from Badakhshan, to describe the radiance that is beyond description.

One should not forget that Persian poets could also talk of very real scenes at their courts in which not mystical but tangible gems were displayed. Kalim's verse of 1636, when the famous Peacock Throne was inaugurated in Delhi on the day that the Feast of Fastbreaking and the vernal equinox, Nauruz, fell together, is certainly impressive:

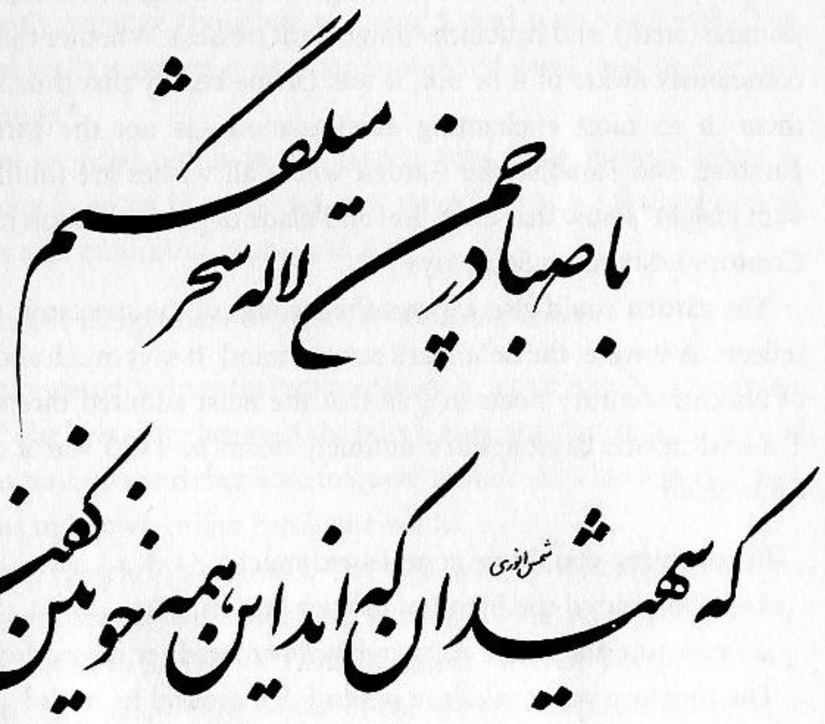
> The rays of its rubies and emeralds fall on diamonds
> like lamplight playing on a water cascade.[24]

To understand this description fully one has to remember that the little waterfalls in the watercourses in Mughal castles often flowed over marble inlaid with gemstones.

The gemological repertoire of Persian poets is by and large restricted to emerald, ruby, and carnelian. Turquoise (*fīrūza*) and lapis lazuli (*lājiward*) appear more frequently to describe colors in nature, in particular that of the sky in its various hues, or of some flowers.[25]

Part of the imagery connected with gemstones is that of the ring-stone, in particular the bezel onto which a name or a protective prayer was engraved or the seal (usually of *ʿaqīq*) on which the owner's name was inscribed in elegant calligraphy. The poets liked to call a seal—which may have been given by some friend to the present owner—the *muhr-i mihr*, "the seal of friendship,"[26] that contained the vow of friendship eternally engraved in stone. And, especially in the Subcontinent, the lover often stated that he had become empty—blank—like a seal stone, so that nothing but the beloved's name was engraved on him, which was the only thing that gave him any worth. Moreover, as seals are cut in mirror script, "one will perceive your wrong aspects as right," if you bear that adored name.[27]

12 The Garden of Delight



I asked the morning breeze in the tulip garden: "Who are all those martyrs in bloodstained shrouds?"

Even more than the world of precious gems, the vegetable kingdom inspired Persian poets. The relation between flowers and the body or cheek of the beloved could be used in ever-changing variations: the rose is the beloved's rosy face, the narcissus his (or her) half-intoxicated eye; the cypress offers only a weak reflection of a slender stature. Or comparisons could be inverted: the beloved is a garden of delight with roses (cheeks), jasmine (teeth), and hyacinths (long, dark tresses). Whether the poets were consciously aware of it or not, it was Divine beauty that thus appeared to them in its most enchanting manifestation—is not the garden a little paradise, and Paradise the Garden where all wishes are fulfilled? "Those with insight" know that every leaf and blade of grass is a book revealing the Creator's wisdom, as Saʿdi says.[1]

The garden could also express the feelings of the spectator: each flower reflects, as it were, the beholder's state of mind. It says much about the taste of fifteenth-century poets in Iran that the most admired threnody for the Timurid prince Baysonghur's untimely death in 1433 was a quatrain by Amir Shahi:

In lamenting you, Time complained much;
the tulip poured the blood of its eyes into its skirt,
the rose tore the collar of its *arghuwān*-colored [crimson] frock,
The ringdove put a necklace of black felt around its neck.[2]

The power of life is inherent in every plant, and the idea of the Tree of Life seems to be almost as old and widespread as the human race. It was thus easy to compare the living heart to a tree which grows and stays alive as long as it is permeated by sap and its branches are moved by the gentle breeze.[3] For Sufi poets such as Rumi and Yunus Emre in Anatolia, as well as Shah ʿAbdul Laṭif in Sind, the tree that is not moved into dancing by the "breeze of Love" has withered and died. It should be cut and thrown into the fire—a subtle allusion to Sura 111, which speaks of the kindling for Hellfire, the fate of unbelievers who have never felt the fire of Love.[4] In another image, the presence of God in the heart, a tender plant, must be watered by the *dhikr*, the constant repetition of Divine names or the profession of faith. It can then develop into a strong jasmine bush whose fragrance fills the entire body and soul.[5]

As the garden is a replica or weak reflection of the heavenly abode, it

reminds the visitor of eternal joys, and each and every flower and plant in this garden has its own meaning in the poetical cosmos.[6] Some flowers occur only rarely in poetry, like the jasmine, which is sometimes compared to radiant white teeth, sometimes to stars shimmering against a dark sky (especially in Arabic poetry), and sometimes to a chain of pearls with which one may adorn oneself when going out for a party.[7] But its name is also associated with negative thoughts: one could read it as *yās-i man*, "my despair," and for this reason it was not considered good taste to give this flower to friends.[8]

In lakes or artificial ponds in the garden grew lotus flowers. Lotus is mentioned chiefly in its blue species, and since blue is a color connected with sadness and mourning, a poet can sing:

I have stitched the garment of grief like the lotus flower.

Or else it is compared, as in early Persian poetry, to a pale monk who wears a dark gown.[9] The love story between the bumblebee and the lotus, so typical of the Indian tradition and therefore frequent in Indo-Muslim mystical folk poetry, seems unknown in the Persianate world.

Among the "cheerful" blossoms is the *arghuwān*, or redbud (*Cercis*). Its crimson flowers are usually associated with red wine or, less frequently, with the red cheeks of the beloved. Goblets filled with red wine are carried, according to the poets, by the hands of the *chināR*, the plane tree, whose leaves—similar to maple leaves—indeed resemble from far a human hand.[10] Thus the "hands of the plane tree" often occur as substitutes for the poet's hands, whether the tree lifts them in prayer or expects them to be filled with gifts from a generous patron. Anwari very elegantly praises his king's hoped-for generosity along such lines:

When your palm (*kaf*) [also, "foam"] nourishes the cloud,
the fist of the plane tree breaks from [the abundance of] silver.[11]

That is, a rain of silver will descend upon the waiting tree if the patron fills the cloud of generosity from his ocean-like hand.

The stately *ṣanaubar*, a pine tree, attracts the poets' interest mainly because its cone resembles a human heart, and the heart in the breast—as distinct from the "spiritual" heart—is always called the *qalb-i ṣanaubarī*.[12]

These trees, and some others typical of the individual poet's environment

(like the banyan tree in Indo-Muslim folk songs),[13] appear fairly frequently in poetry but are by far surpassed by the cypress, *sarw*, which is the generally accepted symbol for the slender, elegant stature of the beloved. Thus *sarw-i rawān*, the "walking cypress," is one of the stereotypes for the gracefully walking beloved. When such a "walking cypress" enters the garden, the real cypress becomes crooked and bends from envy; and although it is often called *āzād*, "free," because it stands majestically alone, unburdened by fruits, yet it becomes enslaved by the beloved's stature:

The manifestation of the walking cypress in the garden
makes sleep forbidden for the doves,
and as free as the cypress may be otherwise,
yet it became a slave when it saw his stature![14]

The cypress is generally surrounded by ash-gray pigeons, a combination first used, it seems, by Manuchihri.[15] Thus Qasim-i Kahi, in the sixteenth century, always looking out for novel combinations of images, invented the verse:

This is not a cypress that has lifted its head in the garden;
rather, it is a green candle whose moths are doves.[16]

For just as the moth casts itself into the candle's flame, so the doves circle around the cypress—which, we may surmise, reminds them of the beloved—and in this "fire" they seem burnt to ashes, for their plumage is gray.

In classical poetry the cypress is further related to a watercourse, like the canals which divide Persian Charbagh gardens into four areas. The terms *sarw* and *āb*, "water," or *jū*, "canal," are frequently found together. Ḥafiẓ uses this combination ingeniously:

The phantom of the stature of his cypress stands constantly in my eye,
because the place of the cypress is at the bank of the canal.[17]

He constantly sees the figure of his beloved before his eyes, which are shedding tears as though they were a running watercourse.

Among the flowers, the narcissus attracted the interest of poets very early on, and Arabic poets of the Abbasid period sang of this flower profusely. It

was always associated with wide-open or intoxicated eyes and, later, also with blindness; there are stories that one should avoid indulging in shameful acts such as drinking or lovemaking when there are narcissi in the room, lest they observe one's actions.[18] Thus the narcissus could be used simply as a substitute for "eye," and the two terms became interchangeable.

It seems to be typical of the changes in emphasis in quite a few images known through the centuries that later poets dwelled more intensively on tragic, melancholy aspects of this or that flower or object. The narcissus, being white, could thus become "blind"—"white-eyed" being a term for blindness—as Qasim-i Kahi expresses it in a witty verse:

It is not a narcissus that has appeared on my tomb;
rather, the eye of my expectation has turned white [from looking] on your way.[19]

Waiting and weeping for the friend who never comes to visit the poet's grave has made his eyes blind, just as Jacob became blind in his grief for his lost son Yusuf. The idea underlying Qasim's verse is that the flowers which grow out of a grave show the state of the deceased person's heart.

For Iqbal, in the present century, the "blindness" of the narcissus indicates that only rarely does a true "man" endowed with seeing and perceiving eyes appear in the garden of this world:

The narcissus has been crying because of its lack of light—
it is very difficult for someone endowed with true sight to appear.[20]

The term *dīdawar* for the one "endowed with true sight" in Iqbal's verse harks back to a famous line by Ghalib;[21] but Ghalib himself takes a more positive stand in relation to the narcissus:

In order to see the greenery and the rose
God has given the eye of the narcissus the power of seeing.[22]

But aside from the nearly countless narcissi which represent the eye, one also finds some other comparisons in which the pretty flower was used. Was it not like a treasure of gold and silver, with a stem made of emerald?[23] Its petals are indeed of silver, surrounding a golden dinar; perhaps, Jami muses, it has brought Qarun's treasure from out of the earth, where it was hidden long ago.[24] Slightly later the Turkish poet Fuzuli thought that

every narcissus carries on its head a silver tray filled with gold,
in order to spread it (*nithār*) in the rose garden.[25]

This is an allusion to the custom of strewing gold and silver coins in front of a bride and bridegroom. In garden poems, the lovely bride is usually the rose; when the rose appears, the time of the narcissus must come to an end, and it will shed its gold and silver petals to the ground before her. The art of *ḥusn-i taʿlīl*, "fantastic aetiology," in these simple-looking lines is admirable. On a less lofty level, one might consider that Busḥaq-i Aṭʿimma, a Persian poet of the fifteenth century, noted for his food imagery, compared the narcissus to a fried egg surrounded by six slices of white bread.[26]

Compared to the thousands of verses in which the narcissus occurs, the lily, *sūsan*, is rarely mentioned. Its shape suggested comparison with the tongue, and for some reason poets usually endowed it with ten tongues. The lily "is silent with ten tongues" and thus sets the example for the true lover, who does not reveal his state of mind. Or else it is seen as "praising God with ten tongues" in silent eloquence.[27] But its tongues can also be compared to drawn swords, with which it defeats winter, and in this case it becomes a model for the *ghāzī*, the fighter for the faith, standing upright and tall in the garden like a true hero,[28] just as it can represent the White Hand of Moses.[29]

In contrast to this proud and powerful flower, the violet has often been connected with lowliness and humility. In Manuchihri's verse it can be a humiliated enemy,[30] and Ẓahir Faryabi takes up this image when he prays for his patron:

May your head be green [fresh and forceful] like the cypress,
and may the one who envies you be restless like the violet in a
windy night![31]

More frequent is the violet's association with the ascetics, which was very fitting as the flower seems to wear the dark blue gown of the Sufis while kneeling on its green prayer rug, the lawn. Amir Khusrau makes it read the "alphabet of the grass," as if it were still a child despite its bent back—its heart is still interested in youthful things.[32] The violet's bent back can also be attributed to the heavy burden of events that happen in the garden of the world,[33] and sometimes it is seen as wearing a mourning dress and crying

for the appearance of the rose.[34] An interesting variant on the blue garment is found in a line by Amir Khusrau, who calls the flower *ajraq pūsh*, literally "wearing blue";[35] but here the term *ajraq* (the Indian pronunciation of the Arabic *azraq*, "blue") seems to allude to the *ajraq* typical of the people of Sind—a cotton shawl with blue, red, black, and white designs which, seen from a certain distance, has exactly the color of the violet.

But the violet is not only a pious, elderly ascetic; it can also be used as a cipher for the blackish down on the beloved's cheek or, rarely, for dark curls.[36]

A comparison of the violet with the black banners of the Abbasids appears in a poem by Ẓahir Faryabi[37] and also in a Turkish *qaṣīda* with the *radīf* "violet" (*benefşe*, that is, *banafsha*).[38]

An additional feature of violets as an image for modesty and somber moods was the custom of using violet oil as a medicine against melancholia.

Rather than violets, the preferred flower for representing tresses or curls was the hyacinth, *sunbul*, which was apparently known exclusively in its dark blue variant. The curls can be seen as an umbrella of hyacinths around the rose.[39] The hyacinth's fragrance and recurved petals make it indeed a fitting image for perfumed tresses.

Much more frequently in Persian poetry one finds the tulip, that is, the small wild tulip that grows in Iran and Afghanistan and covers the hillsides in spring with a radiant red carpet. Because of its shape the tulip, *lāla*, is often seen as a goblet filled with red wine,[40] and Ḥafiẓ thinks, summing up the feelings of many Persian and Turkish poets:

Maybe the tulip knew of the infidelity of Time,
that from birth to the end it let not the wine cup slip from its
hand![41]

Or else the tulip resembles a joyous young beau who has proudly put his silken cap awry[42]—a typical description of the ideal beloved.

As the idea of drinking wine, *sharāb*, often reminds Oriental writers of *kabāb*, "roast meat"—which is not only eaten during parties but forms an almost natural rhyme with *sharāb*—some poets have even connected the tulip with "roasting," as Ghalib says in a quite outlandish line:

The *kabāb* "Spring" burns in the oven of the tulips.[43]

He also saw the black scar at the bottom of the blossom as some dark *kabāb*.[44] But the red color of the flower did make it easy to compare to fire and flames, and indeed the black spot at the tulip's inside seems to most writers to be a burning scar. One of the finest examples is Żiya Nakhshabi's verse:

The tulip has got one scar on its heart, and the whole world knows it.
I have a hundred scars, and no one is aware of them.[45]

Much as Qasim-i Kahi saw his blind eyes represented by the narcissus on his grave, Ḥafiẓ and many others think that tulips will grow out of their dust to commemorate the fire in their hearts and the scars of hopeless love that branded them during their lifetime.[46]

For poets who were constantly in search of fresh comparisons and rhymes, the tulip or its buds might look like an Indian parrot with blood at its beak (thus Qaṭran).[47] Jami, on the other hand, perceived it as opening a ruby umbrella above an emerald carpet.[48]

Still others have blamed the tulip for being two-faced and hypocritical. It is *surkhrū*, "red-faced, honorable," but its heart is completely black.[49] With these qualities it is not only a deceiving charmer but also a worldly, negligent person:

You are the heedless tulip, o slave,
with a black heart, a short life, and yet laughing![50]

Nevertheless the idea of the tulip as a model of suffering is much better represented in poetry, though not many writers go so far as to perceive their tulips as liver morsels scattered in the garden, as Ghalib does.[51] But comparisons of the red color with blood offered themselves without difficulty, and Jami saw in the tulip a charming friend in a rose-colored shirt who, he imagines, kills his lovers and draws his skirt through their blood.[52]

In later days the main association of the tulip was with martyrs in general and with the martyrs of Kerbela in particular. Their blood becomes visible, as it were, in the tulip meadows every spring. Thus it becomes, as Irène Mélikoff has said, "la fleur de la souffrance,"[53] the flower of suffering.

I said to the morning breeze in the tulip garden:
What martyrs are all these in their bloodstained shrouds?

Jami even sees the "desert of nonexistence" as a tulip garden,[54] as this is the place to whence so many martyrs have disappeared, wounded by the fiery scar of the beloved, wrapped in shrouds soaked in blood.

Jami was also perhaps the first to elaborate on the combination of Farhad and the tulip: the tulips that grow in Bisutun were drowned in blood after Farhad committed suicide—was it not as though the ruby, for which he was longing, had appeared after all from the rocks he had tunneled so diligently?[55]

The topos of the tulip that grows out of the grave continued into this century: Iqbal claimed in his last collection of poetry that a tulip on his grave will represent him, silent and with a bleeding heart.[56] Yet for him the tulip had a very special significance: it is the flower of unfettered growth and strength, a flower that grows in the desert under great difficulties and seems to manifest the flame of Divine light, comparable to the burning bush that Moses beheld. He most loves *lāla-i Ṭūr*, the tulip of Sinai, as it seems to him that this flower has the strongest "personality," for it strives to realize its innate powers and, without external help, illuminates the steppes. As the fiery flower of that high, open wilderness, the tulip seemed a better symbol for the modern Muslim than the rose, which flourishes most fragrantly in well-trimmed Persian gardens.[57]

And certainly the rose was the favorite flower of Persian poets as for poets all over the world, the flower that seemed to embody sheer beauty more than any other plant. From the Latin hymn in honor of the *rosa rorans bonitatem* to Goethe's *Heidenröslein*, from Dante's mystical visions and the wisdom of Angelus Silesius to W. B. Yeats and T. S. Eliot, to R. M. Rilke or Hermann Hesse—all of these, and innumerably more poets, have praised the rose in its various stages, from the innocent bud to the withering blossom that seems to die with a smile. But the rose had still deeper connotations in Islamic tradition. It is said that when the Prophet saw a rose he kissed it and placed it on his eyes. He also regarded the rose as a manifestation of Divine glory, as a tradition has it, and legend tells that the rose grew out of a drop of his perspiration which fell to earth during his heavenly journey—hence it carries his sweet scent to remind mankind of him and his beauty.[58] Divine glory and beauty are both found in the rose, which, as Rumi says in his great poem about it, "grows from crescents that altogether form a full moon."[59]

Arabic poets of the Abbasid era sang of the two-colored rose, which seemed to combine the lover's pale cheek and the beloved's rosy face,[60] and such ideas were taken over into Persian and related literature. Most frequently the rose represents the beloved's cheek[61]—unless it is ashamed to appear in the beloved's presence at all! It can appear as Jesus, "all soul" (thus Jamal-i Khujandi),[62] and Iqbal saw in it the embodiment of a paradisiacal houri who wanted to experience the passing of time, the mystery of life and death.[63] Is there anything more delightful than the rose?

The rose is a grace, a gift sent from Paradise;
people become nobler by the grace of the rose.
O rose vendor, why do you sell a rose for silver?
What can you buy that's better than a rose?[64]

This quatrain by Kisa'i certainly expressed the feelings of poets and non-poets alike!

There are of course numerous variants of the rose motif. Jamal-i Khujandi enumerated quite a number of them in his long *ghazal* devoted to the rose: she is sitting in the garden in her festive red veil, surrounded by jealous thorns to protect her from enemies, while the morning breeze serves as her hairdresser.[65]

Some poets repeat the idea that the rose is unfaithful, for her life lasts only the time of a smile:

"How long is the life of a rose?"
The bud heard my question and smiled.[66]

That is how the Urdu poet Mir has described the opening of the bud, taking up an idea which his compatriot from Delhi, Amir Khusrau, had expressed centuries before:

As our heart was filled with blood like the rosebud,
we suddenly opened like a rose and went away.[67]

From the moment the smile of the bud turns into the laughter of the fully opened rose, one knows that its petals will soon be shed. And whereas the bud smiles with closed lips, the rose laughs with its whole body.[68]

Most poets would probably agree with Ḥafiẓ, who describes the lover's ambition in this world:

What is the heart's goal when looking at the garden World?
To pluck roses from your cheek with the hands of the [eye's] pupil![69]

The lover aspires to naught but gazing at the beloved's roselike face. And from the tomb of those who constantly think on the beloved's face roses will grow, just as tulips tell of the fire of love.

In Turkish, poets could play with the words *gül*, "rose," and *gülmek*, "to laugh." But although such verses sound delightful in the original language, they lose every charm in translation:

Sen gülersin gül gibi, ben bülbülü nalanim—

You laugh like the rose, I am the complaining nightingale.

The rosebud that is about to open reminds the lover instantly of red lips that open for a kiss,[70] and the morning breeze in the rose garden resembles the wind that brought the scent of Yusuf's shirt to his blind, grieving father, for the rose is as beautiful and fragrant as Yusuf. This comparison to the Koranic story could be extended, for sometimes the opening bud seems to tear its shirt, an allusion to Yusuf's shirt that was torn by the lovesick Zulaykha. The rose, whether intoxicated with or longing for the beloved's rosy cheek, must tear its shirt into hundreds of pieces, that is, must open widely. And it was a poet from the earliest days of Persian literature who discerned that the Sufis, who tear their frocks in ecstatic dance, indeed imitate the rose.[71]

Later poets, on the other hand, may scold this lovely flower because it slept in the dew's embrace and thus acquired a "wet hem"; that is, it has become disgraced, instead of lovingly turning to the faithful nightingale.[72] And pitying the poor nightingale, some Turkish poets have shown the beauty queen Rose as somewhat kinder than usual: would it not be sweet, were the rose to take its red handkerchief and wipe away the nightingale's tears?[73] Fuzuli goes even further:

It seems that the bride Rose has married the nightingale for the sake of peace,
for she has hidden herself in a green veil.[74]

The time of the roses being over, only green leaves are visible, and the song of the longing nightingale has also ended in the late summer nights.

If the rose could be the coquettish beloved and lovely bride it was also, in a rather common image, the "sultan of the garden" who sits in a ruby dress with a chrysolith umbrella on an emerald carpet[75] or perhaps, instead, sits on Solomon's windborne throne, such that the violet falls prostrate before it and the birds chant "Davidian melodies" in its honor.[76]

As the sultan is surrounded by guardians, so the rose is surrounded by thorns. The relation between rose and thorn has fascinated poets in both Persia and Europe, and Ḥafiẓ's verse,

I am amazed, o rose, to see your kindness,
that you can sit together with the thorn—
you have apparently discovered
which way is useful in this time and place![77]

has been repeated in ever new variations. Thus the Urdu poet Atish, in the nineteenth century, admonished his readers and himself:

Once you put your foot into the garden of the world,
sit beside the thorn, o Atish, smiling like a rose![78]

For a mystic such as Rumi, however, rose and thorn are inseparable, as both show the different aspects of the Divine: beauty and power, kindness and wrath.[79]

But is the rose happy or unhappy? What does its laughing mean but self-destruction? Poets in the "Indian style" pondered this question in many verses, and Azad Bilgrami, in the eighteenth century, sighed:

In the end, kingdom again becomes poverty:
the rose's crown turned finally into a beggar's bowl.[80]

And his contemporary, Mir Dard, expressed the paradox of the rose in an unforgettable verse:

Joy and pain have the same shape:
you can call the rose an open heart, or a broken heart.[81]

The rose is, as Rilke said in one of his last lines, "reiner Widerspruch," "pure contradiction."

As the rose often appears to be flighty or evanescent, the poets think of enjoying the few days that it blooms, which implies that they do not want to

let the skirt of the roselike beloved nor the cup with rose-colored wine slip from their hands.

O cupbearer! What a lovely rose the wine cup is!
Whosoever takes it in his hand turns into a nightingale!

Thus jokes the Turkish poet Baki,[82] for whom the rose garden turns, as it were, into a winehouse and the nightingale, *bülbül*, becomes a relative of the *bülbüle*, a long-necked wine carafe.[83]

Yet if the rose can be a goblet filled with red wine, it can also be a book. It is the hundred-petaled centifolia from whose pages the nightingale can sing the old story of Beauty and Love in a thousandfold repetition.[84] That one of the Arabic names of the nightingale is *hazār*, which in Persian also means "thousand," offered ample opportunities for poetical play around these themes. In one of the most beautiful poems of the collection *Östliche Rosen*, published in 1820, Friedrich Rückert told this story in perfect harmony with Persian imagery; he asks, at the beginning,

Was steht denn auf den hundert Blättern
der Rose all?
Was sagt denn tausendfaches Schmettern
der Nachtigall?[85]

What's written on the hundred petals
of roses pale?
And what repeats, in thousand wailings,
the nightingale?

What is written and repeated over and over again is only "that Beauty has drawn a magic circle and Love knows nothing else," for the never-ending story of Beauty and Love is the whole content of the book of the rose, of the song of the nightingale.

When one studies this book of the rose, one does not need any scholarly or theological treatises or argument:

The nightingale read from the rose petals a word
which a hundred commentators can explain only with difficulty,[86]

says Jami. Yet the single petals that constitute the full rose remind "those with insight" of still more:

In the state of union are single beings only one:
All the petals of the rose are together only one.[87]

These lines of Mir Dard find a late echo in Iqbal's line on the relation between the Prophet and his community, which is like a rose with many petals and one fragrance—and he is that fragrance.[88]

The rose, however, has not only a "smiling" face: like everything connected with the mystery of Love and Beauty, it is also dangerous, cruel, and bloodthirsty, or at least no stranger to blood and fire. Often not even the scent of the rose or of rose oil, which was used against headache, could console the lover. The association of roses with fire found its finest expression in Khaqani's lines about Love:

It looked to me from afar like a handful of roses [or, a rose bouquet].
When I saw it from near, it had fire in its hand.[89]

Although known in the Middle Ages, this connection grew stronger in the course of time and can be found everywhere in later Ottoman, Indo-Persian, and Urdu verse.

Rose is fire, rose-twig is fire, garden is fire, the river bank is fire—[90]

that is how Ġalib Dede, the last classical poet of Ottoman Turkey, experienced the garden, much as his namesake Mirza Ghalib in Delhi, half a century later, indulged in this same imagery.

The latter also brings in the element of blood: the rose's petals that fall on the ground resemble drops of blood or are tears of blood which the flower shed when regarding the suffering lover—or, in Shia tradition, when it wept for the martyrs of Kerbela.[91] In his love for the rose the poet may reach a stage in which he himself turns completely into blood and becomes, as it were, his own rose garden.[92] That, at least, is what Ghalib says in one of his typical exaggerations.

The rose-fire that increasingly burned in poets' *dīwāns* became joined with Nimrod's fire, which turned into a cool rose garden for Ibrahim (Sura 21:69), even though it might cast its flames into the nest of the nightingale: for being burnt by the rose means to be freed from worldly fetters. The lover will then "die with a smile like the rose."[93]

For the mystics, the rose is the perfect manifestation of Divine glory and beauty. As Rumi says in the *Mathnawī*:

Every rose that spreads fragrance in the outward world—
that rose speaks of the mystery of the Whole.[94]

That means, the rose, *gul*, points to the mystery of the whole, *kull*, universe. As the German mystical poet Angelus Silesius (d. 1677) asked with a similar emphasis: Does not the rose which our eyes see, bloom eternally in God?[95]

The rose could therefore also be a symbol of everything dear to poets—they speak of the "rose of faith" (which may fade and wither if sins become too plentiful), or of the "rose of hope,"[96] as well as of the "rose garden of affliction," for like Ibrahim the true believer will be happy among the rose-flames.[97]

The clouds of roses which revealed Divine glory to Ruzbihan-i Baqli during his great vision[98] seem to live in the poets' subconsciousness, and thus even the most profane poem that speaks of the love between the rose and the nightingale is nothing but an allegory for the infinite love story between the soul and God—even though the poet himself may not be aware of this. Mir Taqi Mir, the leading Urdu poet, who died in 1810, teaches his readers:

Open the eye of understanding to the rose and the nightingale—
your walking through this rose garden is not in vain!
The rose, o ignorant one, is a memory of the lovely ones,
the bird of the garden is a symbol of those without tongue.[99]

Only a few years after Mir's death Goethe wrote, in purely Oriental style:

Unmöglich ist immer die Rose,
unbegreiflich die Nachtigall—[100]

Ever impossible is the rose,
incomprehensible the nightingale.

The rose is caressed by the morning breeze, wetted by the morning dew. The dewdrops—tears of the stars or of the nightingales—glitter at dawn on its petals like pearls; but later poets dwelled increasingly upon their relation to tears. They disappear as soon as the sun rises, and Wali Deccani thus invites his beloved to grace the garden with her sunlike radiance:

Gracefully walking, come into the garden, o Sun of Beauty,
so that the color of the rose may vanish like the dew![101]

One of the most eloquent masters when it came to describing roses and dew was Mir Dard, who summed up the story in a single verse:

My meeting with you is like that of rose and dew—
all the weeping from me, all the smiling from you.[102]

For Bedil, in whose spiritual tradition Mir Dard grew up, the dew was part of the "morning of old age," one of his favorite themes: dew drops are the tears of an aging person who wakes up from the "sleep of heedlessness" and who will soon be extinguished like the candle in the morning light. And thus he refuses to use the inherited imagery:

The dew does not dream of the bud, or think of the rose.
The dew meditates on the theme of its dissolving. That's it.[103]

13 The Language of the Birds

بقصد مرغ دل خستگان مفکن دام
که طایران هوایت کبوتر حرمند

Don't cast a snare to
catch the heart-bird of
the weary, for the birds
of your air [or, passion]
are pigeons of the
sanctuary.

But let us turn back to the dew as the nightingale's tears, for the relation between rose and nightingale is at the center of Persian lyrics—so much so that they have been called, somewhat condescendingly, "rose-and-nightingale poetry." Certainly the easy rhyme *gul–bulbul* (in Turkish pronunciation, *gül–bülbül*) has prompted probably as many Persian and Turkish verses on this theme as German can boast from the rhyme *Herz–Schmerz* (heart–pain). And a third rhyme, *mul*, "wine," may be added for extra flavor. Yet behind this seemingly simple image lies a deep spiritual experience, and Joseph von Hammer (1774–1856), the pioneer of Oriental studies in Europe, captured its importance very well when he wrote in 1818 in his *Geschichte der schönen Redekünste Persiens*:

> The poem of the love of the nightingale for the rose is one of the oldest and most tender myths of Persian poetry, as old and tender as the rose gardens of the Persis, where the nightingale spoke Pehlevi or ancient Persian even before Firdausi's *Shāhnāma*.[1]

The mythological significance of the story lies in the idea, common since time immemorial in many different cultural traditions, that the soul is a bird. Even today one may say in Turkish, *Can kuşu uçtu*, "His soul-bird has flown away," when speaking of someone deceased. Innumerable examples of the continuity of this concept are well known, from ancient Egypt to the present, including the Platonic idea of the soul's wings, the Christian image of the Holy Spirit as a dove, the soul-birds that were supposed in pre-Islamic poetry to live near graves, and Iqbal's expression of his longing for Medina:

> Just like a bird who, in the desert night,
> spreads out his wings when thinking of his nest.[2]

In the Muslim world the most famous work to use this symbolism is ʿAṭṭar's *Manṭiq uṭ-ṭayr* (The Language of the Birds), whose title alludes to Sura 27:16. It is based on a *Treatise of the Birds* by Avicenna and a book by the same name, *Risālat uṭ-ṭayr*, by al-Ghazzali, but it was ʿAṭṭar who invented the end of the story with the most ingenious pun in the Persian language. A century before him, Sana'i of Ghazna had written the *Tasbīḥ aṭ-ṭuyūr* (The Birds' Rosary), a long *qaṣīda* in which he translated each and every bird's thoughts, praise, or complaint into human language.[3]

In ʿAṭṭar's poem the hoopoe, *hudhud*, once the messenger between Solomon and the Queen of Sheba (Sura 27:16ff.), tries to persuade the other birds to accompany him in quest of the mythical king of birds, the Simurgh, who lives on Mount Qaf at the end of the world. But almost every bird has a pretext for avoiding the long and exhausting journey, and the nightingale excuses himself by saying:

> The nightingale has no strength to love the Simurgh—
> for the nightingale the love of the rose is enough.[4]

Indeed the nightingale, who always remembers the rose, is the most prominent soul-bird.

> From the *gulbāng* [loud cry] of the nightingale comes always the
> rose's scent,

says Munir Lahori, playing with the syllable *gul* in the term *gulbāng*.[5] And it is true: the bird is so completely immersed in its love for the rose that it does nothing but sing her praise with a thousand tongues. There are even poets who dare claim that the nightingale is so intoxicated from the wine of the rose that one could make wine from its blood.[6]

From the days of ʿUnṣuri, and very prominently in Farrukhi's verse,[7] thousands of Persian and Turkish poets have sung in swinging rhythms and lilting rhymes of the eternal love story between the bird and the rose-like cheek or the cheek-like rose. Ḥafiẓ says:

> You know what good fortune is? To see the friend's vision,
> now to talk secretly with the rose like the morning breeze,
> now to hear the secret of loving from the nightingale . . .[8]

On rare occasions the nightingale may sigh for a moment over the infidelity of the rose, thus becoming a faithful mouthpiece for all those poets who consume themselves in a love that can never be fulfilled but seek their happiness in describing their situation in lovely and heart-rending songs. Is it not enough happiness for the nightingale, *bulbul*, that his name rhymes with *gul*, and thus shows their inseparable union? Thus asks Ḥafiẓ.[9] And Rumi says, rightly,

> For Heaven's sake, do not talk about the rose!
> Talk of the nightingale who is separated from his rose![10]

For though the rose's beauty can never be described in words, the nightingale, rendered eloquent by the pain of separation (an idea emphasized by Iqbal), resembles the poet who ventures again and again to describe something that cannot be expressed. Rumi even thinks that through unrequited love, or love of someone ever inaccessible, his heart will burst into a thousand pieces—

> and one could make a nightingale out of each piece. . . .[11]

And autumnal hopelessness, the "dryness of the soul," can scarcely be expressed more subtly than in the quatrain by Jami:

> A nightingale, hurt by autumn in the garden, complained,
> now awakened to understand his own state:
> "Nobody," he says, "knows the secret of my plight but
> a nightingale who gave away the skirt of his rose!"[12]

In one strange mixture of images the rosebud is the bird's blood-filled heart:

> O bud, are you the heart of the weeping nightingale?[13]

(The dew is, as we saw, the bird's tears of longing.)

Ḥafiẓ was perhaps the first to assert that

> the fire of the rose's cheek burnt the harvest of the nightingale [that is, all it had reaped from life];
> the laughing face of the candle became a disaster for the moth.[14]

From the "fire of the rose garden," *gulshan*, it was only one step (and one *tajnīs-i nāqiṣ*) to the *kulkhan*, the "ash-house" which is situated beneath the hot bath in Oriental *ḥammāms*. Leaves and petals dry up, wither, and get burnt:

> The greenery of the rose which you see is fire and ashes,
> The eye that sees One knows no difference between rose garden and ash house![15]

The one is the epitome of beauty, the other of ugliness and lowliness, yet both are held together by the common denominator "fire," for the nightingale burns its wings in the fire of love for the rose. Jami has a somewhat more elegant way of expressing the same idea: for him, the flower of the rose in its blue-green calyx is a brazier of turquoise with whose glowing coals the rose brands the nightingale to show that the bird belongs to her.[16] (It was common to brand animals for that purpose.) Thus it is also logical that the Turkish poet Fażli begins the introductory prayer in his epic poem *Gül u bülbül* by addressing God:

> O You that kindle the candles of the rose
> and cast fire into the harvest of the nightingales![17]

The rose is all *nāz*, "coquetry." The nightingale, who is all *niyāz*, "petitioning and worriful complaint," symbolizes the soul that wants to see either the worldly rose-cheeked beloved or the eternal mystical rose. Is not the soul like a nightingale, fallen here in this world to sit among owls and ravens who know nothing of fragrant spring?[18] But as soon as it breathes the rose's scent, it will hurry back to the eternal garden, leaving the dark, earthly birds behind.

Other soul-birds undergo similar experiences. The falcon or hawk, *bāz*, is called thus because he returns, *bāz āyad*, to his owner[19]—an image very natural in a civilization where falconry was and to some extent still is a favorite pastime. The falcon, as Suhrawardi Maqtul tells in a delightful mythical story,[20] has fallen into the hands of an old crone, Mrs. World—the ghastly *Frau Welt* of medieval German writers!—who has covered his head with a hood and stitched his eyelids shut lest he see where he is, but someday when the hood is removed, he may hear from afar the sound of the falconer's drum and fly away, back to the prince who trained him. And even though his education by the prince had been hard, it was the best that could happen to a worthless, untrained bird, who now will return happily to the fist on which he had grown up before he strayed. Thus the soul hears the Divine call *Irjiʿī*, "Return, o soul at peace!" (Sura 89:27), and happily leaves this distressing terrestrial environment.[21]

The falcon is often the symbol of Love or, in Rumi's verse, of that ecstasy which tears out one's heart like a weak pigeon or partridge and carries it away.[22] It also appears, as a heroic bird, in panegyrics. For Iqbal, the falcon is the model of a strong character: he dwells on lonely rocks and does not

mix with the rank and file, nor is he satisfied with lowly prey. He is the independent, heroic "man" who does not want to owe gratitude to anyone and will open his wings to conquer farther and farther horizons.[23]

Every bird has a favorite place and tries to lure other birds there as well (even though birds of a feather flock together):

The crow drags you to the desert, the parrot, to sugar.[24]

The parrot is a favorite of Persian poets. He loves sugar, and because he is so intelligent and can learn to speak he is usually called "sugar chewing," which means that his speech is sweet. For this reason Amir Khusrau of Delhi was called *ṭūṭī-yi Hind*, "India's parrot"; an Indian-born writer of Turkish descent, he soon became known for his delightful Persian verse. Indeed the parrot is a bird of India, as poets as early as Manuchihri knew (according to him the bird even speaks Hindi),[25] and in Islamic lore the bird incorporates many traits of its Indian heritage. Thus in didactic writing the parrot often plays the role of a wise but misogynistic teacher, watching over women's virtue and concerned with the decent behavior of humankind. The classic example of this type is Nakhshabi's *Ṭūṭīnāma* (Book of the Parrot), based on Indian parrot stories, which was imitated in many literatures both East and West.[26] This parrot is the guardian of a young woman whose husband is traveling; she longs to meet her lover but is kept at home by the parrot's tales. The bird then tells his master of her plotting, and the man gets rid of her (though she has not actually done anything).

In another Indian work, the *Ḥujjat al-Hind*,[27] the parrot plays a more enjoyable role: he introduces the Hindu princess into the teachings of mystical Islam, quoting, for that purpose, lengthy passages from Najmuddin Daya Razi's *Mirṣād al-ʿibād*.[28] A parrot also appears as teacher in the Ismaili epic *Dasamo Avatar*.[29]

Poets knew that the parrot could learn to talk provided one placed him before a mirror where he could see his reflection; while his master talked from behind the mirror, the parrot would think—so one assumed—that the parrot in the mirror was speaking and would try to imitate the sound. This idea offered a good metaphor for the disciple who learns mystical secrets from his spiritual guide, whose heart is a pure mirror of the Divine Beloved. Hence parrots appear frequently along with mirrors,[30] and Qasim-i Kahi, noted for his somewhat exotic imagery, exclaims:

Since the mirror became filled with roses thanks to the reflection of
your cheeks,
every parrot that looks into it is transformed into a nightingale.[31]

In Rumi's *Mathnawī* a merchant's imprisoned parrot sends a message to the birds of his native forest. To learn that their friend is so miserable makes one of the birds apparently die from grief; the encaged parrot, who understands this return message, drops down lifeless in his cage. The owner, in despair, throws him out—and the "dead" bird flies off and regains his freedom—just as the soul regains its spiritual freedom by following the old Sufi advice, "Die before ye die."[32]

That the parrot may be beautifully green suggests a connection with Paradise. But when Ghalib compares the green grass that trembles under the feet of his beloved to a *ṭūṭī-yi bismil* one may find the image somewhat outré,[33] for a *murgh-i bismil* is a bird whose throat has been cut according to the *sharīʿa* while uttering the formula *Bismillāh*, "In the name of God." As everyone knows, such a bird trembles and runs about "like a chicken without its head." So the grass, Ghalib contends, moves in raptures like a ritually slaughtered green parrot at the very touch of the beloved's foot.

The *murgh-i bismil* became a favorite image in Persian and in particular Indo-Persian poetry and seemed to represent perfectly well the mad convulsions of a lover who (as is customary, especially in later poetry) always wants to be sacrificed by his beloved. And if my "chicken without its head" sounds rather prosaic, the Persian poets themselves speak, full of delight, of the *raqṣ-i bismil*, the "dance" of the slaughtered bird. The term seems to have become prominent after ca. 1300, the classical locus being Amir Khusrau's wonderful *ghazal*:

I do not know which place it was,
the nightly place in which I was . . .
The *raqṣ-i bismil* ev'rywhere—
the nightly place in which I was. . . .[34]

Like the parrot, the peacock belongs to India, and it is said that "he who wants a peacock must suffer the oppression of Hindustan." Though the peacock is rarely used as a soul-bird, one occasionally finds verses like this:

The peacock Soul struts in pride from joy
when the parrot, your lip, begins to talk.[35]

Often the peacock manifests the radiant beauty of the beloved or a colorful garden in spring. (In autumn the garden would rather resemble the brown, speckled feathers of a partridge, as Farrukhi thinks.)[36] But the glorious bird has one fault: its feet are very ugly. Hence we have the best-known verse about peacocks, Saʿdi's line in the *Gulistān*:

In the eye of mankind my external form is beautiful,
while I'm thinking of my hidden faults.
Everyone praises the peacock's colors,
but he is ashamed of his ugly feet![37]

Ghalib, known for indulging in absurd comparisons, once described the wine bottles that surround the elegant cupbearer to *ṭāʾūsān-i bismil*, "ritually slaughtered peacocks," because they seem to tremble when beholding his beauty.[38]

The hoopoe, on the other hand, has only one role, namely to lead the lover to the beloved. Even Goethe took up that motif, along with the word *hudhud*; he can safely entrust to that bird his message for his beloved, as the hoopoe was long ago the go-between for Solomon and Sheba. It is the hoopoe who guides the thirty birds in ʿAṭṭar's *Manṭiq uṭ-ṭayr* to the dwelling place of the Divine Bird, the Simurgh.

More common is the pigeon, *kabūtar*, or ringdove, *fākhta*. Qabus ibn Washmgir once compared silently falling snowflakes to flying pigeons,[39] but in general the apparently softhearted bird is famed for its fidelity. Yet it is weak and can therefore easily be carried away by the hawk, just as the heart is seized by Love, or the enemy overcome by the victorious ruler.[40]

In medieval Islamic countries a postal system of carrier pigeons was highly developed, and thus the pigeon appears mainly as a messenger bird. In this connection the pigeon of the sanctuary in Mecca played a special role. However:

Once the pigeon of the Meccan sanctuary circumambulates the
friend's street,
it will no longer flap its wings to fly toward the other Kaʿba.[41]

Like many similar verses this can be interpreted in a profane and rather frivolous sense (perhaps that the Kaʿba in Mecca is unnecessary), but it can also denote the flight of the soul-pigeon toward the Divine Beloved.

The gray dove is inseparable from the cypress (see above, chapter 12) and seems to be fashioned from the ashes of hearts immolated in love.[42] The ringdove also resembles the lover, because by "the dove's necklace," *ṭauq al-ḥamāma*, the dark feather collar around its neck, it is bound forever to the beloved.[43] Many poets have understood the dove's constant cooing as the Persian word *kū*, which means "Where?" That was easily interpreted as the dove's, and the lover's, call for the faraway beloved: "Where, where is he?"

There are lovely soul-birds, such as the nightingale, the dove, and the gracefully tripping partridge, and there are strong ones like the falcon and the eagle; but there are also birds with negative qualities. The crow is typical of wintry times—that is, the world of matter in which the soul is imprisoned. That is why it does not understand at all why the nightingale pines for spring and dreams of the fragrant rose.[44]

If the crow were to see its own ugliness,
it would melt like snow,[45]

thinks Rumi—but alas, the crow does not see it.

Though Persian and, before them, Arabic poets spoke of *ghurāb al-bayn*, "the raven of separation," and attributed several unpleasant traits to that carrion-eating bird, the crow, *kāng*, has enjoyed a completely different role in Indo-Pakistani folk poetry, especially in Sindhi. There it is a messenger bird, and many folksongs are addressed to the "sweet darling crow," *kāngal*, whose wings one would like to decorate with golden threads if it would only bring news from the beloved. Nevertheless the traditional motif of the crow that lives on carrion is not unknown in the Indian environment, for poets also invite the crow to eat their flesh or, as in Sindhi love songs, even offer their eyes to the crows.[46]

Among the sinister birds one must include the owl, a bird always associated with ruins. The story of Anushirwan and the owl is the classic expression of this idea: if the king continues to be unjust, the whole country will fall to ruins and can be given as a splendid dowry to the owl's daughter.[47] And because the owl lives in ruins it seems to be fond of gold, as

treasures are usually hidden in ruins. Sadiq Hedayat's story "The Blind Owl," which has attracted so many translators and interpreters, has carried the depressing and negative qualities associated with the word "owl" into modern literature.[48]

As for the rooster, he is usually a good Muslim bird, calling the pious to their morning prayers. But precisely because of his early cry he is also the enemy of all lovers who are disturbed in their long-expected union with the beloved and have, as Saʿdi says, to separate their lips from the mouth that is as red as the rooster's eyes.[49] Sometimes they simply want to kill the dutifully watching bird, as one can see in some charming miniature paintings.[50]

We may even add to our list the hen, rare as she is in poetry, because one early Persian poet spoke ironically of a "chicken that in her excitement laid eggs without the aid of a rooster"—empty eggs, of course. Iqbal incorporated this saying into his own poetry, satirizing with these very words the all too imaginative but insubstantial philosophy of Hegel.[51]

The duck too is not a very "poetical" bird, but it served the mystics as a symbol of the human being: we live half on the earth but also belong to the ocean of God, and have to choose our true home.[52] In the Indo-Muslim tradition one encounters the *hāṅs*, a word usually translated as "swan" but in reality denoting the large goose or gander—a noble bird that is supposed to feed on pearls and to separate milk from water.[53] Indian Sufi poets took the *hāṅs* as their model in their search for the pearls of wisdom.[54]

Slightly more frequently (although, again, mainly among the religious writers) one finds the stork, whose name, *laklak*, echoes its constant sound, which is interpreted as an uninterrupted praise of God: *al-mulk lak, al-ʿizz lak, al-ḥamd lak*, "Thine is the kingdom, Thine is the glory, Thine is the praise!"[55] For the stork—so say the people of Anatolia—is a pious bird: it performs every year a pilgrimage to Mecca, wears the white gown of a pilgrim, and builds its nest preferably on mosques and minarets,[56] much as storks in Europe are wont to nest on church spires.

Strange stories, however, are told about the ostrich, whose Persian and Turkish names, *shuturmurgh* and *devekuşu*, mean "camel bird." A proverb says that if one asks the ostrich to carry a burden, he will claim that he is a bird, but if one asks him to prove that by flying, he will say: "I am a beast of burden." Thus he can well represent the unreliable person.[57] Sometimes

one also comes across the ancient belief that the ostrich lives on fiery coals.[58] This latter quality connects him with the truly mythical birds, such as the Huma and the Simurgh or ʿAnqa.

It is said that the Huma's shadow is so full of blessing power that whoever is touched by it will become a king. This mysterious bird achieved its high rank by virtue of its modesty, for it lives only on dry bones. Being completely without self-interest, it is able to raise others to a loftier place.

> The noble one gets no share from his own wealth—
> how could the Huma sit under its own shadow?[59]

A greedy bird like the owl could not provide such fortune, and Saʿdi therefore asks:

> Who would go under the owl's shadow,
> even if the Huma were extinct?[60]

And as Kalim would say, centuries later:

> The crow does not become a Huma by eating bones![61]

One of the finest poetical applications of the Huma's shadow was a remark by the Mughal emperor Humayun, when, driven out of India, he sought refuge at the Persian court of Shah Ṭahmasp:

> All the princes seek the Huma's shadow—
> behold this Huma [me, Humayun] who enters under your shadow![62]

The story of the Huma's shadow was well known at the court of Maḥmud of Ghazna, where Farrukhi praised the king by stating:

> His shadow fell once on the Huma during the hunt—
> that's why the shadow of the Huma's feather is so glorious![63]

It is likewise told that once a Huma passed over Maḥmud's army, and everyone ran to find a place where its shadow might touch him—except for Ayaz, Maḥmud's beloved Turkish officer, who ran instead to Maḥmud's shadow, the place where he found the highest fortune.

For the lyric poet the beloved's shadow indeed equals the Huma's shadow, as his presence bestows highest bliss. Thus Jami addresses his beloved with a fine *tajnīs*, mentioned earlier:

You are the Huma, and the Huma's shadow is nothing but
your two tresses—may their shadow last forever![64]

But two centuries later Kalim could complain:

Stupidity has reached such a degree
that every fly considers itself a Huma![65]

The noble bird was a favorite with grandiloquent poets who always claimed their superiority. Khaqani contrasted the owl and the Huma in a not exactly modest way:

The bird whom you call Huma
is an owl that has sprung from my nest.[66]

Mirza Ghalib announced that he was much stronger than the Huma, for whom his bones, replete with the fire of love, would probably prove indigestible.[67] He also expressed the wish that he, the poet, could

. . . write the miseries he has seen in love
with the ink of the shadow of Huma's wing.[68]

He crowned his use of the Huma image with the remark that

the brain of those who aim at annihilation enjoys affliction—
the saw is descending on top of the head like the Huma's wing.[69]

Alluding to the story of Zakariya, who was sawn asunder (see above, chapter 3), he thus reverses the happy event of the Huma's wing and indulges, as he does so often, in a celebration of a gruesome death.

ʿAnqa, the "long-necked" female bird, dwells in the lands encircling Mount Qaf, and the proverb often goes that she has a name but not a body, *ismi var cismi yok*, as it is said in Turkish. Thus she becomes the symbol of everything that exists only in the world of imagination.

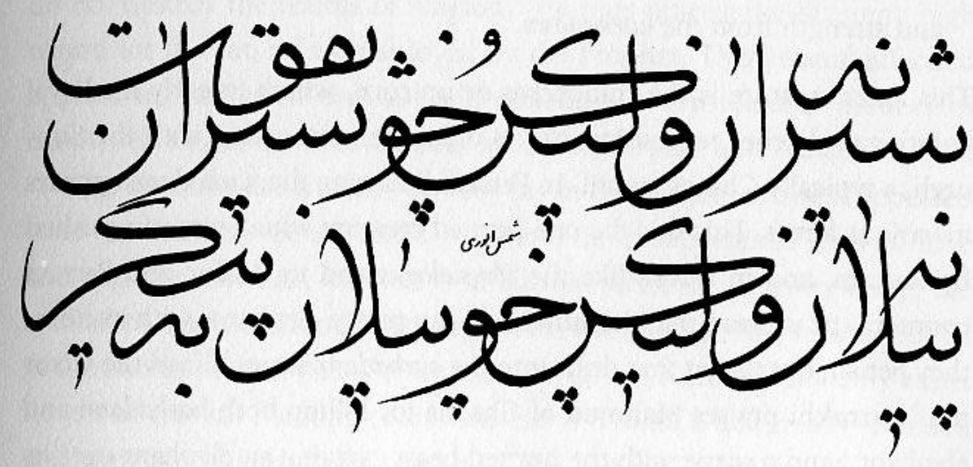
The same can be said about the Simurgh, who was originally likewise a female bird and is, in poetry, interchangeable with ʿAnqa. As Firdausi tells us, it was she who brought up Rustam's father, Zal, and presented him with a miraculous feather when they parted. This feather, of superbly radiant colors, can help its owner fulfill his wishes; and because of its marvelous colors it is connected in some way with China, the land of painting. As ʿAṭṭar explains it:

This feather is now in the picture-land China;
this is meant by [the *ḥadīth*] "Seek knowledge, be even it in
China!"[70]

But ultimately the Simurgh was taken as the manifestation of spiritual reality, an idea elaborated in Suhrawardi Maqtul's work.[71] Thus poets over the centuries could complain that virtue and fidelity are nowadays as difficult to find as the philosopher's stone, or the Simurgh.[72]

And so we come back to ʿAṭṭar's ingenious finale to the *Manṭiq uṭ-ṭayr*. The thirty birds who heed the hoopoe and survive the arduous journey through the seven valleys into the Simurgh's presence discover in the end that they themselves, being *sī murgh*, "thirty birds," *are* the Simurgh. The individual souls recognize their identity with the Divine Soul.

14 Fantastic Beasts and Other Creatures



Not lions, but strong like

lions; not elephants, but

shaped like elephants.

In Islamic objects of art one sometimes sees strange animals, composites of different creatures, and in the verse of an early Persian poet one finds a remark that seems to refer to such fantastic beasts. As he states, the Simurgh has

> energy from the falcon, power of flight from the Huma,
> a long neck from the ostrich, a feathery collar from the ringdove,
> and strength from the *karkadann*.[1]

This latter creature is the rhinoceros or unicorn, which in early medieval painting and other representations is often seen struggling with the Simurgh, a typically Chinese motif. In Persian literature the *karkadann* appears in various forms. This was the one-horned creature which was vanquished by Rustam, and in works like the *Physiologus* and its Arabic and Persian counterparts we read that the *karkadann* can pierce elephants with its horn: they perish, but the fat that drips into the *karkadann*'s eyes blinds the victor too.[2] Farrukhi praises Maḥmud of Ghazna for killing both *karkadann* and elephant,[3] and a scene with the horned beast carrying an elephant over its head was rather frequently presented on ceramics, stone slabs, and other works of medieval art. Rumi, who must have passed hundreds of times by the stone relief in the citadel of Konya with its representation of unicorn and elephant, described Love as a unicorn which pierces humans and carries the helpless creatures away.[4]

It is interesting that birds far outnumber other animals who either serve as symbols or are generally used in poetry. But in didactic and panegyric poetry quadrupeds often appear in situations known from the fables of *Kalīla wa Dimna*,[5] the famous collection of tales which originated in India and was illustrated time and again. It became a major source of inspiration not only in the East but also in medieval and Renaissance Europe. Such animals are not used so much as true symbols and metaphors but rather in a more descriptive way.

Thus the cat appears as a clever but usually hypocritical animal (or as a substitute for such a person).[6] The best-known story in this respect is ʿUbayd-i Zakani's short *mathnawī* entitled *Mūsh u gurba* (Mouse and Cat), which has been imitated and also illustrated several times.[7] ʿUbayd's contemporary Ḥafiẓ sings in one of his *ghazals*:

> O you gracefully tripping partridge that struts so coquettishly—
> don't get misled when the pious cat performs her ritual prayer![8]

For as soon as the cat has finished her prayer or her *dhikr*, or comes back from pilgrimage, she will again return to her normal profession—hunting mice. After all, that is her way, and Rumi therefore compares her once to the First Intellect, which sees to it that the "mice of infidelity and faithlessness" do not destroy the realms of religion.[9] He thus reflects the Muslim's high regard for the cat, an animal loved by the Prophet. This general affection applied to individual cats as well; one finds a considerable number of deeply felt elegies for beloved pets in Arabic, Persian, and Turkish.

"The cat is the lion's uncle," as they say in the Punjab, or else it appeared from the lion's sneeze in Noah's ark. But if the cat appears in both positive and negative contexts, the lion is in Islamic literature, as everywhere, the symbol of majestic strength. He represents the mighty saint who is hidden in the thicket of the Divine Presence, or the strong ruler who not only hunts lions and can kill the king of animals but is himself a lion, ready to attack and overcome his enemies. And as "Lion of God"—*Ḥaydar*, *Asad Allāh*, *Ghaḍanfar*—is a surname of ʿAli ibn Abi Ṭalib, the fourth caliph and first imam of the Shia, lions appear frequently in Shia poetry.

Contrasted with the lion is either the cunning fox or the shy gazelle that lives in the steppes. The Central Asian gazelle or muskdeer represents the ideal goal for the poet's quest: it is the fragrance of the muskdeer that guides the lover in his search for the beloved's home.[10] The gazelle's dark eyes not only remind Majnun of Layla's eyes but are generally associated with the beloved, who, shy and fugitive, escapes every attempt at capture and yet can easily catch the heart of the lion, that is, its heroic lover.[11] In later poetry the gazelle's eyes were sometimes used in absurd combinations, like these by an Indian poet:

> The whole ground of the desert became [like] a leopard's back,
> because the eyes of so many gazelles are on [the beloved's] road.[12]

Early Persian poets mention the cheetah, *yūz*, which was used for hunting in Iran and especially in India. But—so they claim—unlike the wild lion, which kills his prey to live on its blood and meat, the tame, meek cheetah lives on cheese—a strange remark which I could never substantiate.[13]

The hare, *khargūsh*, is commonly characterized from the expression *khwāb-i khargūsh*, "the hare's sleep," which means real or feigned negligence, as the hare keeps one eye open while sleeping. To put someone in the hare's sleep means that one tries to dupe him.[14] The hare and the lion appear together in fables such as Rumi's lengthy story in the *Mathnawī*. And Bedil, who like many later poets speaks of the "lion in the carpet" (or "lion on the banner"), remarks that

> the lion of the carpet is overcome by the hare's sleep.[15]

Poets also mention the camel and the donkey, both poor, earthbound creatures. The camel patiently carries his burden to the Kaʿba of union[16] or dances intoxicated on thorns when listening to the voice of the beloved caravan leader.[17] This image is found mainly in religious poetry, where the wanderer is spurred by the song of his beloved Prophet or mystical leader, but the joy of the "intoxicated camel" who runs through the desert once he hears the beloved's voice is a common expression, especially in Rumi's poetry.[18] Otherwise the camel, restive as it is, may be inclined to turn back toward home instead of bringing the lover to the beloved, and indeed the journey of life can be seen as a constant struggle with the stubborn creature.

The donkey is even more a part of the material world, and the poets, again especially Rumi, do not mince words when they describe this dirty, sensual creature that indulges in all kinds of unclean activities.[19] The donkey, *khar*, is traditionally contrasted with Jesus, for while Jesus—the spiritual part of man—went up to heaven, his donkey stayed behind. Even if one drove it to Mecca, a donkey would certainly not become a pilgrim!

Horses, on the other hand, are frequently mentioned in panegyrics, where the patron's swift steed is often described and praised as being superior to the famous legendary horses, Rustam's lion-killing Rakhsh and Shirin's Shabdiz. Still, for the mystics, the horse could become, like the donkey and the camel, a symbol for the *nafs*, the lower soul or "the flesh," which has to be trained to be usable in the service of the Lord.[20] Allusions to this restive creature in Persian and Urdu literature point to an even more common theme: the satirical figure of a shabby old nag which the poet—so he claims—was given by some other person and which he now wants to exchange for something better. Beginning with al-Jauhari's satire mentioned by ʿAufi (see above, chapter 6), Kalim, Muḥsin Tattawi, and other Indian poets explored the theme, which found its most eloquent expression in Sauda's great Urdu poem *Taẓḥīk-i rūzgār* (The Laughingstock of the Time).[21] How far these poems were influenced by the numerous drawings in Persian manuscripts which show a miserable horse with as miserable a groom, cannot be said—or was it the poets' complaints that inspired the drawings?[22]

Two legendary mounts belong here too. First is Buraq, the wondrous animal on which the Prophet traversed the spheres during his night journey. This heavenly creature, swift and radiant as lightning (*barq*), understandably became a fine symbol for Love, which carries the heart into the presence of the beloved. Buraq also became a kind of traveler's amulet and was and still is represented in expressive paintings on trucks and in garish prints at Indo-Pakistani saints' shrines. And besides Buraq, ʿAli's white mule, Duldul, whose name (because of its graphic form) could easily be connected with *dil*, "heart," also appears quite frequently in lyrics.

It is surprising to see how many dogs appear in Persian poetry. According to Islamic law the dog is unclean, and when a dog draws too close to a person at prayer, the prayer is invalidated—unlike the cat, whose presence does not affect ritual acts. Poets such as Sanaʾi have warned that people with canine qualities will be transformed into dogs at Doomsday.[23] But the moving story of the Seven Sleepers, who spent 309 years in a cave—"and their dog was with them" (Sura 18:17ff.)—helped secure a very special place for the faithful animal.

> Das Hündlein, das den Siebenschlaf
> so treulich mitgeschlafen . . . ,[24]

"the little doggie that faithfully slept along with the Seven Sleepers' sleep," belongs in Goethe's *Divan* among the few animals which, like Abu Hurayra's cat, are admitted to Paradise. (His name, incidentally, is Qiṭmir.) And does not the *ḥadīth* say that "when a believer loves a believer, he loves even his dog"?

Poets dreamt of sitting with the dogs at the door of fidelity (thus Rumi)[25] and liked to describe themselves as the most despicable dog in the beloved's lane. And then there is the story that Majnun, ever seeking his Layla, kissed the paw of a wretched street cur, as though he were saying,

What do I care for the lion of the sky [the constellation Leo],
when I am acquainted with the dog of your lane?[26]

So Sana'i asks, in the early twelfth century.

His later compatriot Jami used the motif of the dog in its different aspects more than any other poet, and Friedrich Rückert, on translating Jami's lyrics into German, remarked jokingly that he had to send away quite a few of these little dogs. Indeed one industrious reader of Jami's *Dīwān* counted more than three hundred dogs in its pages! Jami goes so far as to transform even the Pleiades into the collar of the dog that keeps watch at his beloved's door.[27]

When a poet tries to represent himself as a faithful dog, he implies that he hopes to be purified like Qiṭmir, the dog of the Seven Sleepers, by remaining close to the beloved. This idea is particularly strong in religious poetry, when the writer introduces himself as the dog of the Prophet's threshold or as the cur at the gate of a Shia imam or a saint: by staying there patiently he hopes to reach perfection thanks to the blessings of the saintly person.

It is possible, although it cannot be proved, that the ancient Iranians' well-attested love of the dog may have played a certain role in its popularity as a motif. The Zoroastrian conviction that the dog belongs to the good side of creation may have survived subconsciously, for it would be difficult to explain, from purely Islamic data, the amazing number of dogs that run through medieval Persian poems.

Though the Christian West developed a rich symbolism of serpents, that animal does not play such an important role in Persian verse. The serpent is the animal that tempted Adam and Eve in the primordial Paradise, and the beloved's black tress may thus seem to the lover like a serpent curled beside or stretched across the rose-colored Paradise of the beloved's cheek. But in general serpents, and their great mythological relative, the dragon, serve as guardians of treasures. For snakes live in ruins, and ruins are always associated with the treasures which may be buried under their debris.

One common contrast is that between the eye of the serpent, *mār*, and the ant, *mūr*, which is mesmerized by the staring glance of the shimmering snake. It often serves to describe the horror which the powerful prince may cause in the hearts of his enemies.[28] Yet the tiny ant (to which Mighty Sulayman was kind) is not blamed when it brings a locust's leg into the

ruler's presence: everyone is judged according to his capacity, and "a locust's leg" became an often-used expression for a gift.[29]

Even flies and other not very poetical creatures make their appearance in Persian verses—but, after all, John Donne too devoted a poem to the flea on his beloved! Sometimes the fly features as a minute, weak thing, similar to the powerless lover:

Poor me—I am not someone [to bear] the pain for you!
The Elburs—and a fly to carry it![30]

How could the poor insect carry the Elburs, the highest mountain of Iran? And the lover may resemble the fly in another respect: flies assemble where they find sugar, thus the lovers long for the sweet lips of the beloved:

Is it amazing that your lovers throng at your threshold?
Wherever there is a place with sugar, there are flies![31]

These lines by Ḥafiẓ are comparatively logical, but Amir Khusrau before him had already reached the zenith of hyperbolical speech when he claimed that

the saliva of that lip [is so sweet] that, when an angel sees it,
he'll lose his wings and resemble a fly in syrup. . . .[32]

Incidentally, Amir Khusrau used the fly remarkably often in his verse. Nor did Rumi shrink at comparing the lovers to "insects in rancid buttermilk."[33]

A rare but beautiful poetical use of an insect is Iqbal's allusion to the firefly, which to him represents the human being who has so developed his inner self that he can shine through his own light and no longer needs any external source of illumination. Although Lahore's Canal Bank twinkles with fireflies on warm summer evenings, so that the sight must have been familiar to him, one cannot help feeling that this image goes back to the description of the perfected sage in the Bṛhadaranyaka Upanishad, who shines through his own light.[34]

At the other end of the Persianate world, in Ottoman Turkey, the poet Necati once observed that during a blizzard "snow locusts destroyed the green field of joy."[35]

Bees are comparatively rare in poetical parlance, although the Koran (Sura 16:68) praises the bee as an animal that was inspired by God. Khaqani

compares his heart to a beehive: it may look simple but is full of sweet graces.[36] Amir Khusrau finds the friend's eyelashes more dangerous than the bee's sting, and the beloved's waist is, he thinks, as slender as a wasp's.[37]

Yet all these little insects are unimportant compared to one whose fame is surpassed only by that of the nightingale. The tale of the moth and the candle belongs among the oldest and most beloved symbolic stories in the Sufi tradition. The martyr-mystic Ḥallaj (see chapter 7) had spoken of it in his Arabic *Kitāb aṭ-ṭawāsīn*: delighted by the candle's radiance, the moth draws nearer, feels its heat, and finally immolates itself in the flame to become united with the fire.[38] Thus when Fani Kashmiri, in the seventeenth century, refers to "the moth on the gallows of the candle,"[39] the image may not be attractive but it correctly evokes Ḥallaj and his death on the gallows. The story of the moth and the candle was repeated thousands of times by writers in Iran and Turkey before it reached Goethe, who (in his poem *Selige Sehnsucht*) saw in it the perfect expression of "Stirb und werde"—"Die and become!"

Like many others, this image could be used in various contexts. It was perfectly legitimate to see the rose as a candle:

> The rose made its face glow so much
> that the butterfly longed to come to the twig![40]

This fine *ḥusn-i taʿlīl* explains why butterflies flutter around rosebushes. For ʿUrfi, then, to "dance in one's own fire" becomes the ideal for the seeker's fate:

> ʿUrfi wallows and burns in the blood of his liver:
> he dances in his own fire—that's how a moth should be![41]

It is not surprising that this rather brutal image occurs frequently in late Persianate poetry, but the classic quotation in the Persian lyric tradition is probably Ḥafiẓ's verse:

> Fire is not that about whose flame the morning laughs—
> fire is what is thrown into the moth's harvest![42]

Hammer was therefore right to remark in his *Geschichte der schönen Redekünste Persiens*: "The moth is, for the Eastern understanding, not, as it is for the Western, a symbol of instability and fluttering mind but rather a

symbol of the most faithful love, which is oblivious of itself and sacrifices itself."[43]

One other animal is even more drawn to fire than the moth: that is the salamander.[44] From the days of the ancient Greek scientists onward the salamander was regarded as being so cold that it could extinguish fire. In fact its greatest pleasure was to live in the midst of flames; hence the lover who lives in the fire of love feels happy like a salamander and never complains. And if Ghalib wants to have "roast liver of salamander" for his banquet, he is once again proposing something absolutely impossible.[45] One must add that the salamander is considered, in Persian tradition, to be a bird (to this day some of my Oriental friends still believe that).[46] The idea may have risen from a confusion between this fire-extinguishing amphibian and the mythological phoenix, who immolates itself to be reborn from its ashes.

The animal that should be mentioned in the end—imported, like parrot and peacock, from India—is the elephant. Abraha's attack on Mecca in 570 or somewhat earlier, during which a miracle occurred—the appearance of the *abābīl* birds, who drove away the elephants used for the siege—was known to the Muslims from Sura 105, and in classical epic and panegyric poetry the elephant is the mighty fighter in wartime; massed in battle they seem like mountain ranges or black waves, like gigantic billows of the ocean of affliction.[47] The poets of Maḥmud of Ghazna's court proudly described his achievements in overcoming the elephants of his Indian adversaries; as Farrukhi said:

> While Rustam in his youth killed one elephant,
> you have killed thousands of raging elephants![48]

The victims were trampled to death by elephants. This was also a rather common form of execution, to which Khaqani alludes cleverly in his Madaʾin *qaṣīda*, with cross-reference to the "elephant" piece in chess. Poets might complain that they felt as miserable as an ant under an elephant's foot,[49] and didactic writers took up the story of the blind men and the elephant from Indian sources and interpreted it as pointing to the impossible task of describing God, who appears differently to every seeker.[50]

At some point in the twelfth century a transformation of the motif took place. Suhrawardi Maqtul mentions that the elephant remembered Hindustan,[51] and in Niẓami's *Haft Paykar* one reads:

Suddenly the elephant of that garden saw a dream and ran toward India.[52]

This expression then became commonly used, especially by the mystics, to allude to a sudden illumination: the soul, reminded by some event—perhaps only a single word, or a scent or a sound—of its true homeland, rends all its fetters and rushes homeward, just as an elephant in exile breaks his chains and flees to the Indian jungle for which he has pined in captivity. Rumi subtly emphasizes that this desire is virtually invincible:

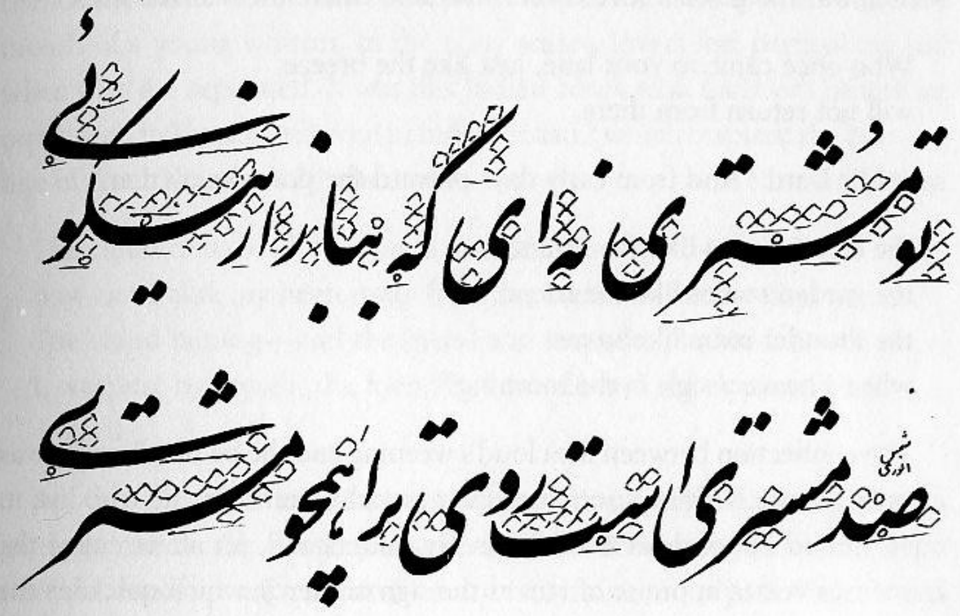
The elephant that yesternight saw India in his dream,
leapt from his chains—who has the strength to keep him back?[53]

The wild yearning and final success of the imprisoned animal is taken up in poetry to point either to the poet's spiritual state and his homesickness or to the soul, which cannot be kept back once it remembers its primordial home. Rudyard Kipling adopted the theme in his powerful poem "The Captive's Dream," and a number of Indian and Persian miniature drawings show the elephant joining his family in ecstatic frenzy, with the broken chains still dangling from his legs.[54]

To sum up the stories of animals we may quote a verse by Qudsi Mashhadi that skillfully deploys animal and geographical contrasts:

I am not an elephant that I should remember Hindustan,
I am not a Chinese gazelle [muskdeer] that I should take the way to Cathay![55]

15 The Sky, the Wind, and the Sea



You are not Jupiter,
o you for whose face there
are a hundred Jupiter-
like buyers in the
marketplace of beauty!

The entire world offered the poets likenesses, and "in the horizons" (Sura 41:53) they saw sun and moon, stars and clouds, ocean and rain. The morning breeze, *ṣabā*, becomes a messenger as if it were bringing news from the Queen of Sheba, *Sabā*, to Solomon: it carries the fragrance of the rose Yusuf to the longing heart, or the "breath of the Merciful" from Yemen to the seeker. But the place it loves best is the lane where the beloved lives.

Who once came to your lane, just like the breeze,
will not return from there,

says Mir Dard.[1] And from early days onward the poets knew that

the cloud weeps like the lovers,
the garden smiles like the friend,
the thunder roars like to me
when I heave a sigh in the morning.[2]

The connection between the cloud's weeping and the beloved's smile was a topos among both mystical and nonmystical writers. People who live in cool, humid zones do not always easily understand, let alone enjoy, the numerous verses in praise of rain as the sign of mercy, which quickens the parched soil, as it is experienced in the countries of the Middle East.[3] In religious poetry, the "quality of mercy" that "droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven" is usually an expression of the poet's love for the Prophet Muḥammad, who was sent "as mercy for the worlds" (Sura 21:107). He is the rain cloud by which the dead hearts of unbelievers are quickened—an idea poetically elaborated in Shah ʿAbdul Laṭif's *Sur Sārang* in his Sindhi *Risālō* as well as in Ghalib's *mathnawī* in Persian, *Abr-i gauharbār* (The Jewel-carrying Cloud), both of which combine depictions of actual clouds with invocations to the Prophet, who dispenses mercy and grace.[4] A somewhat more recent example is Muḥsin Kakorawi's Urdu *qaṣīda* which begins with the line

From Benares to Mathura went the cloud . . .

and, after introducing Hindu mythological concepts in pure Hindi, turns to high-flown arabicized Urdu to describe the Prophet's glory and power while sustaining the theme of the cloud in different connotations throughout the lengthy poem.[5]

That this kind of poetry occurs mainly in the Indo-Muslim tradition is understandable, as classical Indian poetry in Sanskrit and the regional languages has a special category of songs devoted to the rainy season. This is best expressed in the genre of *bārahmāsa* poems. These are poems in varying meters and verse forms in which the peculiarities of the months (hence the name *bārah māsa*, "twelve months") are described through the mouth of a young woman. In the rainy season lovers feel particularly sad when they are separated. It was this Indian *bārahmāsa* tradition, otherwise rarely seen in Persian and even in Indo-Persian,[6] which inspired the opening line of Amir Khusrau's *Dīwān*:

The cloud rains, and I am separated from my friend—
how can I take my heart away from my friend on such a day?
The cloud raining—and the friend and I standing to bid farewell:
I, weeping by myself, the friend by himself, and the cloud by itself. . . .[7]

Another result of the rains, which may bring fertility and fragrance to gardens, can be the dangerous *sayl*, the flash flood that suddenly rushes over the dried-up soil and carries away everything on its path. Poets found this a good metaphor for the complete eradication of the matter-bound self and thus happily awaited (or so they claim) the dancing torrent which would shatter their doors and walls and drive them out into the desert of madness.[8]

Don't ask how one is bereft of one's senses in the pleasure of the torrent's arrival—
door and wall are dancing from top to bottom![9]

Such a use of the image seems typical of Indo-Persian and Urdu poets. Folk poets in Anatolia, on the other hand, have compared themselves outright to the running, restless torrent or to the dust that dances on the roads in hot summer days: that is what Love has done to them.[10]

The overwhelming torrent of Love, which may remind the Western reader of Madame Guyon's *Torrents spirituels* in seventeenth-century France, is a powerful image; but another image connected with rain is much more frequently used by Persian writers: the idea that moisture, which has risen from the ocean, resided in a cloud, and then consolidated itself into a

raindrop, will return to the ocean, where it may lose itself completely in the immense waters. This was what most mystics hoped for: to return to the original unity, without an individual existence, to become one with the primordial sea.

Yet another line of thought considers the raindrop fortunate when it finds an oyster in which it can rest and ripen into a precious pearl—

> Regentropfen Allahs,
> gereift in bescheidener Muschel—
>
> Allah's raindrops,
> matured in a modest oyster,

as Goethe calls his verses in his *West-Östlicher Divan*.[11] According to popular belief, raindrops that fall in April are especially apt to be transformed in this way. April rain was thought to possess special power and sanctity; in olden times it was collected in special vessels, often of wonderful workmanship, and to this day the Anatolian villager may preserve some April rain for the purpose of blessing and healing.

The transformation of the raindrop into a pearl is, for the Sufis, a fine description of the mystical path: one must first leave home, for in its aboriginal ocean a pearl is nothing but a water bubble. After maturing in separation one will find (or become) the pearl, which can be the pearl of illumination or of wisdom which the seeker finally discovers in his oyster-like heart, provided he has been silent and not taken to foreign, external influences:

> As long as the oyster is not without wish it will not become filled,[12]

says Rumi, and Jami elaborates this idea:

> You will not become the treasure house of the pearls of Divine Reality
> as long as you do not become all ear like the oyster.[13]

As for Shah ʿAbdul Laṭif, he admonishes his heroine to wait for the precious drop of sweet rain and not to swallow the salty water of the surrounding area, for such greed would never result in the formation of a pearl.[14]

The pearl as the metaphor for the treasure of Divine Wisdom had a long

tradition in pre-Islamic times. The most famous expression of the seeker's quest for this jewel is the gnostic *Song of the Pearl*, which is of considerable interest to students of Persian literature.[15] Most Persian poets, however, were rather in quest of ultimate reunion with the Divine Ocean; thus it is that Mir Dard teaches his readers:

> When one becomes powerful and strong, one becomes hardhearted:
> the raindrop that turned into a pearl is stonehearted.[16]

For Iqbal, on the other hand, it was just this hardening of the raindrop that was important. The transformation into an individual pearl that lives and breathes in the ocean of the Divine, surrounded by it, nourished by it, and yet distinct from it, seemed to him the best symbol for the ideal development of human personality and individuality, which he preached in all his major works.[17]

Pearls are of course also a fitting image for the tears which flow unceasingly over the lover's face like jewels on a string. Waṭwaṭ skillfully uses this motif in a *qaṣīda*, in a sophisticated transition from the erotic introduction to praise of his ruler:

> Because of grief for you, o pearl in Beauty's ocean, my face
> sheds numerous pearls like the hand of Muẓaffar Shah![18]

He hopes, that is, that the oceanlike hands of the king will shower upon him a multitude of pearls, just like the tear-pearls which he himself sheds as a result of his love. The pun on *kaf* (meaning both "foam of the sea" and "palm of the hand"), widely used in panegyrics of this kind, is here implied.

It may seem odd that the ocean is so central in Persian poetry, unless one remembers that this theme is very important in the Koran.[19] It is very likely that most of those who sang of the sea had never laid eyes on the real ocean; yet they would readily tell of the horrors of the ocean and the danger of traveling by boat.

> How would those who stand at the shore with light burden
> understand our plight [in our dangerous journey by sea]?[20]

Thus asks Ḥafiẓ in the very first *ghazal* of his *Dīwān*, pointing with this image to the ocean of Love, which looks so delightfully cool at the beginning but in which the poor traveler's boat is soon likely to capsize, and in

which he will encounter dreadful, threatening crocodiles and other man-eating creatures—or which may even be all of fire.[21]

Ibn ʿArabi, the *magister magnus* of theosophical Sufism, once saw a vision of the Divine as a green ocean, and Rumi tells in rapturous verse how he gazed at an ocean from which waves and foam surfaced and then disappeared again into the fathomless depths that summon foam and droplets home, to the original unity.

> The billowing sea was foaming, and in each foam fleck
> someone's picture was visible and grew into a figure,
> and each foam-body that received a sign from the ocean
> melted according to this sign and disappeared again in the sea.[22]

Rumi also saw how the fragile boat of material existence is shattered when the wave *Alast*, the sudden reminiscence of the primordial covenant, reaches the soul.[23] In the poetry of the regional languages of Indo-Pakistan, the story of Sohni, who swam every night to the island where her beloved dwelled, reflects the same idea.[24] Her pitcher, which buoyed her on these journeys, was finally shattered and, bound in love to her friend from the "day of *Alast*," she became united with him through death.

> My path reached the ocean of Nothingness,[25]

says Yunus Emre in Anatolia, and at about the same time, in the late thirteenth century, Lal Shahbaz Qalandar in the Indus Valley sang:

> I reached an ocean whose waves are man-eating,
> there is no boat in this ocean, nor a boatman—it's a strange thing.
> The *sharīʿa* [religious law] may be the boat, the *ṭarīqa* [the Sufi path]
> its sail, and *ḥaqīqa* [Divine Truth] its anchor—
> for the way of Poverty is difficult![26]

In this ocean the soul lives like a fish, for the water is inexhaustible, as much as all thirsty fish may drink.[27]

But not only raindrops return to the ocean. Running waters, the streams that hurry back to reach the ocean, have also been utilized by poets. The Shiite theologian Kulayni in the tenth century may have been the first to apply the image of the stream to the Prophet. Goethe's use of the same motif for Muḥammad in his poem *Mahomets Gesang* shows his intuitive understanding of the feeling that the Prophet is indeed like a river which, starting from a small and seemingly insignificant source, grows and widens on its way through mountains and plains, attracting more and more brooks, rivulets, and rivers, which it then carries joyfully to the "waiting father," that is, the ocean. Iqbal included a free rendering of Goethe's poem in his *Payām-i Mashriq* because he admired this interpretation of the Prophet's activity, and somewhat later he himself adopted the pen name Zindarud, "Living Stream," in his *Jāvīdnāma* to show his relation to the major stream, the tradition of the Prophet.[28]

Sometimes a poet may see the ocean or a lake as the perfect mirror of the moon, symbol of beauty; or perhaps his own tears form a lake in which the moonlike face of the friend can be reflected.[29] But alas, this lovely and consoling reflection disappears as soon as one tries to grasp and keep it.[30] Similarly, when the beloved resembles the sea, the lover can be seen as the long, stretching coastline that can never hold back the ocean, which approaches and recedes under its own mysterious tides.

> Look, her relation with me is that of ocean and coast:
> ever and ever so close, ever yet fleeing from me![31]

There are also pure descriptions of the mirrorlike water, as when the Turkish poet Nefʿi sings of the sheer beauty of a spring day:

> The sun reflected in water: whoever sees that will think
> it is a golden stamp on a garment of blue silk.[32]

It is possible to draw cross-relations between the ocean, the rain showers, and the Water of Life, which is hidden in the darkness and can only be found when Khiżr guides the thirsty. Sometimes the purifying quality of water is mentioned,[33] and the quintessential description of the eternal love relationship between man and God is expressed in Rumi's simple verse:

> Not only do the thirsty seek the water,
> the water seeks likewise the thirsty![34]

In later times one encounters a strange preference for the word *ḥubāb* "water bubble, blister," which accords well with the generally melancholy attitude of Indo-Muslim poets after ca. 1650.

It is in the mirror of Not-being that Being manifests itself:
this ocean billows completely in the water bubble.[35]

For this world is irreal and transient like a fata morgana, and the little bubbles, which are in themselves empty, become visible, and somewhat more real, when the ocean reflects itself in them—in contingent beings that are granted a short span of existence.

There were of course less solemn ways of playing with the concept of the water bubble. Bedil thus satirizes the false community leader:

Don't seek truth from the *shaykh*'s brains, for like a water bubble
he has no head when you take off his turban![36]

Beneath this enormous round turban (the size of which generally corresponded to the importance of the religious dignitary) there is nothing, just some air, that's all. Nasikh, an Urdu poet of Lucknow, also uses the image in a quite amusing way:

As I have died by diving constantly in the ocean of Love,
a water bubble is enough for me as a dome [for my mausoleum].[37]

Sun and moon generally appear in connection with the beloved or the eulogized patron, whose name the sunrays seem to write in gold on the silver tablet of the morning.[38] A countenance as radiant as the sun naturally invites the poet to juxtapose the night of the tresses. In this context one should think of allusions to the Prophet as well, to whose face and tresses the two Koranic verses "By the morning light!" (Sura 93:1) and "By the night!" (Sura 92:1) were applied. The classical basis for this imagery in Persian seems to be Sana'i's *qaṣīda* in which he comments most skillfully on Sura 93.[39]

The only poet who constantly and invariably uses the theme of the sun is Jalaluddin Rumi, remembering the name of his beloved Shamsuddin, "the Sun of Religion." His poetry is filled with verses that sing of the power of the sun, which transforms everything but also burns everything:

The sun that fills the world with warmth and light—
if he drew near, the whole world would ignite![40]

Rumi's lyrics and his *Mathnawī* are replete with allusions to the triumphal sun which embodies the two Divine qualities, Beauty and Majesty. When

this sun enters the zodiacal sign of Aries, the ice of matter melts and the earth is transformed into a green paradise.[41]

Rumi expresses his love for the sun by frequently referring to the dance of the dust particles, *dharra*, around the sun. He is not the only poet to do so but undoubtedly the most eloquent one. The dust motes or (as one is tempted to translate in a modern idiom) atoms seem to be drawn by the sun's magnetic power into an eternal, whirling dance and gain their lives only thanks to the sun, upon which they totally depend. Just so does the lover dance without interruption around the sunlike face of the beloved. When Rumi and later poets of the Mevlevi order use this imagery, one thinks immediately of the whirling dance of the Mevlevis, in which this mystery of all-pervading cosmic dance is represented.[42]

The sun is always there, even though it may set in order to reappear in even greater splendor in the morning. And it will not disappear when one puts a hand over one's eyes or closes the eyes, or even flatly denies that it exists. The enemies of a patron can therefore be compared to bats who flee from the sun of his strength. The same motif is frequent in mystical literature, where Suhrawardi Maqtul—probably the first to use this theme—recounted a delightful story of how the bats decided to punish a lizard by exposing him to sunlight—and their captive found happy release in what the bats had thought was his death![43] And was there not a saying of the Prophet that "the hatred of the bats is a proof that I am the radiant sun"?

In general, however, one can safely say that the sun motif is used not too differently in Persian poetry than in Western literature.

Much more typical of Persian imagery is the moon, which is preferred over and again as the metaphor for the round, radiant face of the young beloved, who is "more than moon." Poets like to express their hope that such a moon might shine for them at midnight. Rarely, the Koranic "Splitting of the moon" (Sura 54:1) is connected with the "moon-face" (see above, chapters 2 and 9).[44]

But one must not forget the importance of the crescent moon, which indicates the beginning of each lunar month and is particularly mentioned in connection with the month of fasting. To describe the crescent's loveliness poets have never tired of inventing new comparisons: it is like the foot-ring of a dancing girl on the blue carpet of the sky, or a golden goblet,

or the gracefully curved eyebrow of an angel, but also like the key to the winehouse that was lost during the month of fasting, and so on. Muʿizzi mentions the most common comparisons in an ingenious quatrain,[45] and Ḥafiẓ tenderly alludes to the passing of time, of sowing and reaping:

I saw the green field of the sky and the sickle of the new moon.
I remembered the day of my sowing and harvesting.[46]

Cruel variants of the theme are not lacking either, and one of the most touching remarks about the crescent that marks the beginning of Muḥarram—the month of Ḥusayn's martyrdom at Kerbela—was written by the Urdu poet Sauda, an ardent Shiite:

It is not the crescent of Muḥarram that rises on the sky—
risen on the sky is the scimitar of grief and affliction.[47]

In about the same era (the eighteenth century) another comparison became popular, which was only rarely used in classical times. The crescent is a fingernail, scratching heaven's heart, as Mir Dard thinks;[48] but alas, the fingernail is not able to disentangle the knotty problems that beset the poet![49] The Deccani poet Nuṣrati even offers an explanation for the seemingly strange comparison of crescent and fingernail. He connects it with the miracle of the "Splitting of the moon" (Sura 54:1) and addresses the Prophet:

Considering the nail on your finger,
even now the new moon phases into a crescent.[50]

One should also recall here Iqbal's use of the theme. The crescent moon "scrapes food from its own side": that is, without anyone's help it grows into a full moon and is thus a model for man, who should not beg for help from anyone.[51]

But only in the Indian tradition could one encounter a comparison like that in Ibrahim ʿAdilshah II's *Kitāb-i nauras*:

The world is a milk pot full of the milk of moonlight,
the moon is pure butter.[52]

Lightning is given a special place in Indo-Persian tradition. To be sure, it has always had a specific role: when the cloud weeps the lightning laughs,

although its thoughtless laughter is only brief and meaningless. Yet lightning and rain work together so that the garden awakes in spring, all the more so as the thunder blows the trumpet of resurrection. But the "laughing" lightning more and more frequently came to be seen as a destructive force. When Kalim had his nightingale say,

The rose, woe! does not listen to my sighs—
where is the lightning to destroy my nest?[53]

he struck a chord that would reverberate in Indo-Muslim poetry for the next two centuries.[54] But if the lightning "sweeps away the harvest of one's life," it also frees the element of fire which is hidden in straw or other flammable material and thus serves as a kind of savior, liberating the essence by destroying the external veil.[55]

In Ghalib's verse lightning, roses, and fire—all of them red—are placed in constantly changing relations with blood and red wine. Comparisons involving fire apparently became increasingly common in the course of time, and Nimrod's fire and "the *qibla* of Zarathustra" and the burning bush of Moses were integral parts of classical imagery. Yet these images never reached the level of cruelty that seems to be typical of later poetry.

It is surprising that the rainbow is mentioned only rarely. At least I have very seldom found in Persian poetry a comparison like that invented by the Arabic poet Ibn ar-Rumi, who saw the rainbow as a maiden in colorful robes, each shorter than the next. Manuchihri, who does have a few rainbow comparisons, imitated it.[56] Farrukhi too offers a colorful description of the rainbow,[57] and Khaqani saw it as a *ṭughrā* in the sky—that is, the ornamental handsign that appears at the beginning of an official document.[58] At about the same time, the Kashmiri poet Aẓhar explained the rainbow differently:

When the [red] color of the friend and the yellowness [pallor] of
the lover are brought together,
a rainbow appears on the sky's forehead from their reflection.[59]

Meʾali, on the other hand, wonders whether the rainbow is a magic circle drawn by angels to bewitch the fairylike beloved.[60]

A poet who observed the sun, the moon, and the reviving clouds in order to compare his beloved and his patron to them might also incorpo-

rate the entire world of the stars into his verse. This was all the more natural as astronomy and astrology were highly developed in Islamic lands, and numerous names of stars in Western languages attest the extent of the Arabic contribution to the sciences of the sky.[61] Niẓami ʿAruḍi stated in his classical handbook, the *Chahār Maqāla*, that a court poet must know at least something of astrology so that he will be able to prognosticate his patron's fate from certain constellations and signs or save him from misfortune by observing the position of stars, or else cast a horoscope for a newborn child. Not every poet went as far as Ghalib, who inserted his own horoscope into one of his Persian *qaṣīdas*,[62] but Anwari in the twelfth century and Momin Khan Momin in the nineteenth were known as astrologers, as were many other writers. That their predictions were sometimes wrong, as the famous story of Anwari shows, is natural.[63] Nevertheless the science of the stars was well known to them, and allusions to certain constellations could be easily understood by every listener. They are comfortably inserted into lyrics:

> When his new down sprouts, I flee because of grief for him,
> for when the moon comes into Scorpio one must not travel.[64]

The dark hairs in the young man's facial down remind Khaqani of the sign Scorpio, in which the round moon-face seems to disappear—and the "moon in Scorpio" is a most unfortunate zodiacal aspect. One should read such verses with a view to the *fālnāma*, the illustrated rhyming descriptions of the different signs and constellations, which were quite well known in the medieval Islamic world.

There was scarcely a court poet who did not call his patron *ṣāḥibqirān*, "Lord of the Happy Conjunction," that is, the conjunction of Jupiter and Venus, both planets connected with good fortune. Officially only Tamerlane and Shah Jahan were given this high-sounding title, but it was easy for poets to mention it in flattering verses in other contexts.[65]

The medieval Muslim was also fully aware of the symbolism of stars, and the best poetical introduction into that field is undoubtedly Niẓami's *Haft Paykar*, which deals with the propensities and peculiarities of each of the seven planets then known (including the sun and moon).[66] Rumi used the imagery of astronomy in many of his lyrical verses, especially in his early poetry, where he points to the "sun" without divulging the name of his

beloved Shamsuddin: his way of playing with the names and qualities of the planets and other heavenly bodies, all of which are in some way or another dependent upon the "sun," is quite ingenious.[67]

Jupiter (Mushtari) is the "greater fortune." Under this star, as Ḥafiẓ says, a conjunction between the moon and the friend's cheek can be achieved.[68] But as the Arabic word *mushtarī* means also "buyer, customer," poets could thereby obliquely express their hope that the prince, who is comparable to the star of good fortune, might also "buy" their verses:

> I am a seller of words, and the king is for me *Mushtarī*,[69]

that is, either the lucky star or a buyer. This line of Khaqani's is typical of the normal use of the word.

Even dark Saturn can cooperate with Jupiter and become a positive force; but alone he represents the greatest misfortune. He is the doorkeeper of the spheres, for he rules and dwells in the last, seventh sphere, and because of his blackness—indeed he is associated with anything black—he is called "the Hindu of the sky." That accounts for the image with which a poet at the court of Ghazna described his patron Maḥmud, the conqueror of northwest India:

> The redness of dusk gave news in the evening
> that Saturn's throat was ritually cut by the king's sword.[70]

The king killed the (black) Indian enemies, and this religious act colored the horizon at sunset.

Venus (Zuhra or Anahid) is, as everywhere else, the "lesser fortune." She is the heaven's musician and is therefore often represented on bronze and ceramic vessels holding a lute. (Ceramic plates and bowls as well as metalwork were extensively decorated with representations of astrological signs; one hopes that someone will soon undertake a comparative study of poets' use of the stars and artists' applications of their attributes.) Full of delight and cheer, Venus accompanies Ḥafiẓ's *ghazals* and makes even Jesus enter the heavenly dance,[71] for she became endowed with magical powers on the day that she seduced the angels Harut and Marut, long, long ago. Her melodies are delightful, and a remarkable degree of hyperbole is reached when the Turkish poet Me'ali claims that the meowing of his cat is so melodious that Venus, full of envy, on hearing it would break her lute.[72]

Mars is the "Turk of the sky," the reddish, bloodthirsty warrior and "lesser misfortune." The role of Mercury is likewise in harmony with the traditions developed in Western classical antiquity: he is the writer or calligrapher and is therefore sometimes mentioned by calligraphers in their poems; but he is also the master of mute eloquence.

The traditional attributes and qualities of the stars appear in countless verses, but it would require a special study to understand the interrelations revealed in the poets' apparently effortless allusions to planets and ascendents, conjunctions, and oppositions, and many more details. The reader lucky enough to grasp at least some of these allusions is suddenly confronted with a whole new world of meaning and gains insights into another level of the poem's meaning, a meaning which may be much more important than usually recognized.

Among the fixed stars Suhayl (Canopus) appears frequently. It rises, as was mentioned (see chapter 10), over Yemen and played a role in navigation. It can be juxtaposed with the very small star Suha; thus Anwari writes of one of his patrons that

> on the sky of his perfection, the [visible] sky is smaller than Suha![73]

A favorite ornament of the heavenly realms are the Pleiades (Thurayya or Parvin). They represent order—the order of a beautiful necklace, for instance. Ibn-i Yamin, who had lost his collected writings, expressed the hope that they might be retrieved and rearranged,

> so that my poems, scattered like Ursa Major, may come into an orderly arrangement like the Pleiades.[74]

The expression "from the Pleiads (*Thurayyā*) to the dust (*tharā*)" means the whole created universe. Another expression for the sublunar world is *az māh tā māhī*, "from the moon to the fish," for the earth rests upon the horns of a bull who stands on a fish which in turn lives in a vast, surrounding ocean.

The Great Bear, Ursa Major, is usually called *Banāt an-naʿsh*, "Daughters of the Bier," which name inspired Sana'i to remark sarcastically that daughters were indeed best placed on a bier.[75] Unpleasant as this remark is, it is counterbalanced by Ghalib's famous Urdu line:

> All day long the Daughters of the Bier were hidden in purdah—
> what has come to their mind to appear suddenly naked at night?[76]

For it is only at nighttime that the stars become visible, as if leaving their *purdah* (lit., "veil"), the traditional sequestration of Muslim women. The more poetical name for Ursa Major, *Haft aurang*, "the Seven Thrones," provides the title for the collection of Jami's seven *mathnawīs*.

The stars in the firmament are for the poets flaming torches or seem to be letters which write in radiant script the glory of a ruler on the tablet Sky. Mystics could find heavenly names or words, even Koranic verses, in the star-script.[77] They might also see the firmament as a screen for shadowplay, with the stars as puppets.[78] And stars and white flowers are sometimes interchangeable (as in some of Naṣir-i Khusrau's grand *qaṣīdas*).[79] Anwari regards the Milky Way as a line of jasmine drawn over a bed of violets.[80]

But the sky itself, that great wheel that turns without rest, is always rebuked on account of its unreliability. It is infidel, faithless, and cruel. One can see that merely from the color of its frock, for dark blue is usually a color related to hypocrisy or (false) piety, as well as mourning.[81] How many people have been annihilated by the revolving wheel! How often has the never-ending change between black and white, between night and day, disappointed people—but who could expect reliability from these black and white horses, who are constantly exchanged?[82] Who could see the unity behind the two-colored yarn of time?

Ġalib Dede in Turkey joined the numerous poets who complain of the wheel of the spheres when he composed a lullaby for the infant Love in his fascinating epic poem *Hüsn u aşk* (Beauty and Love):

> Sleep, jasmine-breasted child, sleep softly in the cradle.
> Watch the changing movement of the sphere.
> Every star completes a changing circle—
> look what they are going to do with you soon!
> You'll become the millstone in the river of sorrow![83]

The combination of the revolving sky with the millstone, which seems to crush everything mercilessly, is commonplace in poetry, especially in the postclassical period.[84] It culminates in a new, unusual but impressive sigh from Bedil:

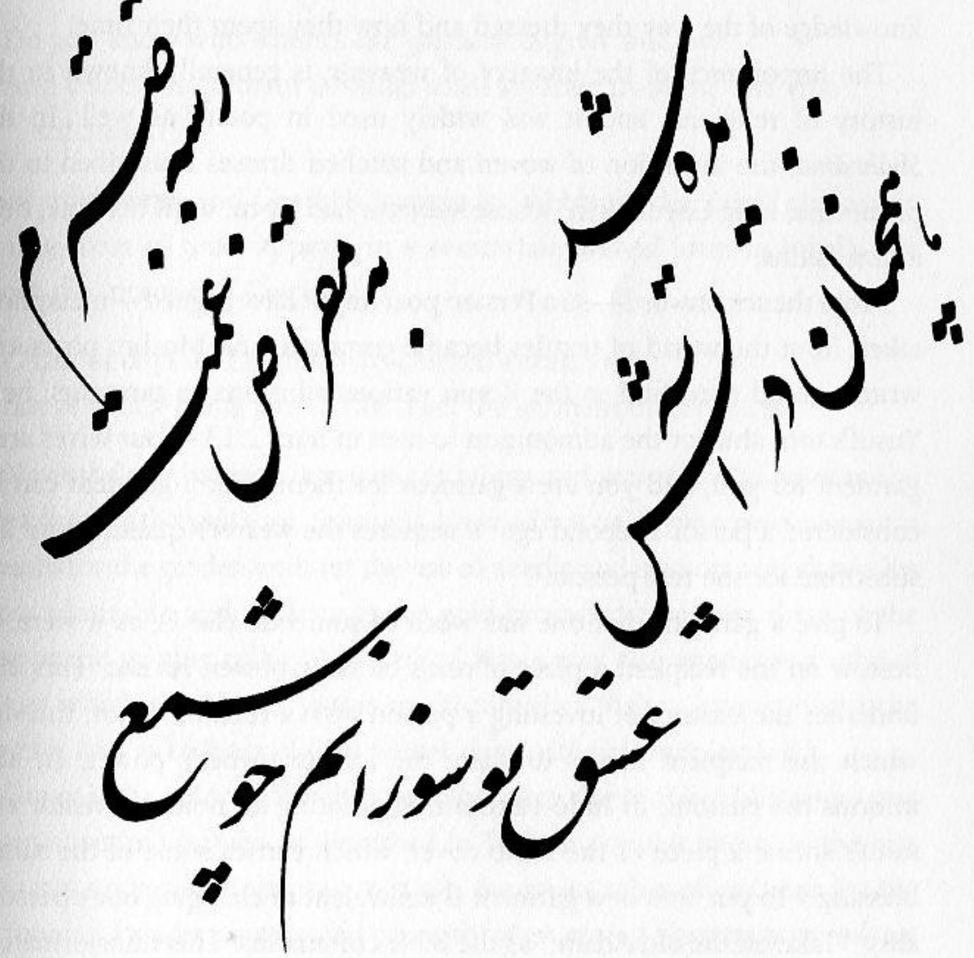
Bedil, on this field, what do the eyes finally see?
Hope is the grain, and the wrung hands are the millstones![85]

The emphasis on fatalism, which does not hope for anything good from the turning of the heavenly wheel and the ever-changing constellations but sees humans as tragic figures who come and go without recognizing the meaning of life, is evident in the quatrains attributed to ʿOmar Khayyam, which caught the imagination of Europe so strongly because they seemed to be in tune with the Zeitgeist of the late nineteenth century. One could say, with great simplification, that the entire history of Persian poetry seems filled with the tension between this skeptical, basically fatalistic attitude and the loving acknowledgment of God's infinite wisdom, which sees that no leaf will fall from the tree unless He orders it. Many poems can therefore be interpreted via different sets of meaning: while one interpreter may consider the nightingale's melting away for love of the rose as something that only proves how cruel and meaningless the whole universe is, the same image may convey to another reader an expression of happiness despite apparent suffering, nay, joy in suffering for the beloved's sake, and hence something deeply meaningful. Similarly, an invitation to enjoy wine can arise from the skeptical wish to do so "before they make pitchers from our dust," or it can mean the experience of a wine that leads mankind beyond earthbound gravity and into the heavenly, spiritual dance around the central sun.

But the wheel of the sky will continue to turn wherever the lover conceives of sun and moon as images or reflections of a transcendent beauty which alone gives meaning to the change of day and night, of summer and winter, of joy and pain.

Part 4

Themes from Life and Letters



The thread of my
patience was cut by the
scissors of grief: that
much did I burn like a
candle with love for you.

Like the Koran, history pre-Islamic and Islamic, and the entire book of nature, everyday human activities served Persian poets as sources of inspiration and were woven into the colorful carpet of their verses. Spinning and weaving, calligraphy, medicine, education, and—last but not least—the pastimes of the great belong into this category, for as poetry was largely composed to flatter wealthy patrons the poet had to have a thorough knowledge of the way they dressed and how they spent their time.

The importance of the imagery of weaving is generally known in the history of religions, and it was widely used in poetry as well. In the *Shāhnāma*, the invention of woven and stitched dresses is ascribed to the primordial king Gayumarth, whose subjects had worn, until his time, only animal skins.

From thence onward—so a Persian poet might have argued—metaphors taken from the world of textiles became common, and Muslim poets and writers could even find in the Koran various allusions to garments, be it Yusuf's torn shirt or the admonition to men in Sura 2:13: "Your wives are a garment for you, and you are a garment for them." For a garment can be considered a person's second ego: it acquires the wearer's qualities and is a substitute for the real person.[1]

To give a garment that one has worn to someone else is, as it were, to bestow on the recipient a piece of one's blessing power, *baraka*. This idea underlies the custom of investing a person with a robe of honor, through which the recipient comes to share the former owner's power. (It also informs the custom, in Indo-Pakistan, of granting an honored visitor at a saint's shrine a piece of the tomb cover, which carries some of the saint's blessing.) To put on a new garment is equivalent to changing one's personality: "Take off the old Adam," as the Bible commands. This transformation by virtue of the new garment lies behind the donning of official dresses or uniforms as well as academic robes. And mystics in all religious traditions have experienced something that seemed to them, expressed in human images, like being "clad in God" or in His grace.

God wears "light as a garment" as Psalm 104 says, and in Christian poetry the starry sky appears as the cosmic cloak of the Virgin Mary. Such veils are necessary, as the human eye cannot bear the unveiled radiance of the Divine—which, in Islamic parlance, is hidden behind seventy thousand veils of light and darkness. For this reason, even Grace can be described as a

garment for God, as Meister Eckhart says, for the sheer fire of His majesty would immolate everyone who came close to it or dared look at it.

But such garments are woven by God Himself: He is the great weaver and weaves a cloak for Creation from the two-colored yarn of days and nights. And poets, including Goethe, Blake, and Rumi, have often seen the changing aspects of life as a fabric that is woven by His hand.

> Do you know who stitches the garment of grief and joy?
> And could the garment consider itself separate from the one who stitches it?[2]

Thus asks Rumi, and Goethe's "sausender Webstuhl der Zeit,"[3] the never-resting loom of time, appears in a somewhat twisted form in Iqbal's ode about the mosque of Cordova:

> Chain of days and nights, two-colored silken yarn,
> out of which Being weaves for itself the garment of attributes.[4]

Nevertheless there are many minor tailors and weavers who work in the workshop of the universe. Spring is a marvelous tailor who produces satin dresses for the garden without the use of needle and scissors and shows his most admirable performance in the gold-brocaded turquoise dress of the rose or the shining collar of the tulip.[5] Roses may also appear as a robe of honor which the Master grants to thornbushes if they have suffered the poverty and nakedness of cold winter days without complaining.[6]

Green is the color of Paradise, and therefore the prophet Idris, who was taken alive into heaven, is described in Turkish popular poetry as the one who sits under the Ṭuba tree to stitch the green robes of Paradise for the fortunate.[7] Paradise is reflected on earth when spring flowers grow radiant like heavenly houris—and the lily, resembling a needle, stitches for herself a most remarkable gown, as Khaqani thinks.[8] As for the court poets, they will of course claim that

> . . . every garden receives
> a colored robe of honor from the splendor of the prince.[9]

Thus sings Farrukhi, in whose poetry images of weaving, as well as comparisons with woven and brocaded fabrics, are abundant.[10]

For mystically inclined Persian poets Love is often interchangeable with

God and therefore appears as a weaver or tailor who produces either black or white garments. Most of the garments this tailor offers to his customers, however, are black, as this is the color of melancholia and unfulfilled love and passion.[11] Yet the border between weaver and fabric is often blurred, and Love can also become the garment of those who are fortunate. In parallel expressions one finds juxtaposed the gown, *qabā*, of coquetry and the robe of honor of *rindī*,[12] that state of carefree, intoxicated behavior which usually has a highly spiritual undertone.

When life in its entirety is regarded as a woven fabric, it is easy to find puns that point to some of its characteristics—for example, the play between *qabā*, "tunic, cloak," and *baqā*, "duration, lasting state." Sana'i even adds another *tajnīs* to these words:

> He constantly weaves for you, in the courtyard (*fanā*) of annihilation (*fanā*), the tunic (*qabā*) of permanence (*baqā*).[13]

Complete dissolution of the self in God (German *Entwerden* is a better term than "annihilation") leads to eternal duration—*fanā* leads to *baqā*, as the Sufis knew well. Besides, the words *fanā* فنا and *qabā* قبا are distinguished only by the number and position of their dots in Arabic writing. Jami describes the garment of life in a somewhat more comprehensive image:

> Heaven has never stitched for anyone a tunic (*qabā*) of permanence (*baqā*):
> life is a very precious robe of honor—its fault is that it is too short![14]

Poets could also be more concrete in their verses and describe the beloved's attire to express to their listeners just how delicate the beloved is. Jami's beloved was so tender that he (or she) could wear only a dress woven from the threads of the soul;[15] but some time later another poet feared that even that would be insupportable, "for there is such a heavy knot in the thread":[16] all the sorrows and worries which the soul undergoes in love are, as it were, materialized into knots that cannot be untangled. Even the most delicate things—a rose petal, nay, even the shade of the rose woven into the silk—may hurt the tender body.[17] But before Jami and his imitators had thus described the beloved, Katibi Turshizi had a better idea:

> I will transform my entire body into soul and spread it upon you
> when, like a candle, I am allowed to spend one night close to your pillow. . . .[18]

Miniature paintings show the tight-fitting bodices of graceful boys and girls, and the very thought of them squeezes the poet's heart too:

> You have put on your tunic and have left. Come back! For, far from you,
> the garment Existence has become as tight on me as the dress on your body.[19]

The poor lover can no longer really breathe from the excess of pressure and stress!

Sometimes the lover himself is a weaver and can weave from tears and blood a shiny brocade saddlecloth for the Buraq "Love."[20] But much more frequently poetry itself is compared to a woven fabric. The most famous example is Farrukhi's *qaṣīda* which uses this imagery in an unforgettable way:

> I went from Sistan with the caravan that carried the [festive] dress (*ḥulla*).
> I wore a dress spun from heart and woven by the spirit,
> a garment of fine silk, woven from the word,
> a garment with delicate ornament, made by language.
> Each thread of its warp [was] twisted by the spirit with pain,
> each thread in its weft [was] cut from the heart. . . .[21]

Somewhat later Khaqani spoke of weaving "words whose warp and weft are spun by the Holy Spirit";[22] Jami wove a robe of honor for Beauty and Love from the words of his verses;[23] and Sauda boasted that his tongue was a tailor in the Kingdom of Speech who had prepared a fitting shirt for the bride Spirit.[24] All of them wanted to use their poetical fabric to clothe the highest values they could think of: only the art of the poet can produce such robes, which, according to the need at hand, may be of finest silk or heavy brocade, feather-light shawls or cloaks of coarse wool. The reader can feel the content, the "body" of the intended meaning, just from the material which the poet offers him.

There is also a tragic aspect to the imagery of weaving, as there is to almost every metaphor in Persian literature. Khaqani, among others, mentions "the warp and weft of faithfulness,"[25] but Ṭalib-i Amuli had his doubts:

I stitched a shirt from the threads of fidelity.
As it could not bear your kind of fidelity [that is, your infidelity], it
turned into a shroud.[26]

From that time (the early seventeenth century) onward the shroud appeared in poetry in Muslim India, until Bedil arrived at its final expression:

The warp and weft of the shroud is nothing but one's white
hair. . . .[27]

Artists in those days of political decline also felt that they resembled the needle, which always stitches robes for others but remains naked itself, as Ghani says in a comparison that is proverbial in Persian and Turkish.[28]

Yet another application of textile themes, especially in mystical poetry, is that the *dhikr*, the many-thousandfold, uninterrupted repetition of the Divine names or of the profession of faith, is held to resemble the act of spinning. Just as the thread becomes finer and more regular by constant spinning, so the human heart is refined by constant *dhikr*, and the soft, murmuring sound which its reciters often make resembles the humming of the spindle. Once the heart or soul is pure and finely spun, God can buy it for a good price (a somewhat farfetched allusion to Sura 9:112). But the lazy soul, the lazy girl who has neglected the *dhikr*, will be exposed naked on Doomsday as she has not provided the material for her trousseau and her wedding dress.[29]

The idea that one spins and weaves one's own fate from one's actions and thoughts is particularly well known in the Indian tradition, and the finest poems that sing of the spinning of the *dhikr* come from the cotton-growing areas in the Indus Valley and the Punjab, where reality and poetry worked together to produce unusually moving poetical images.

Silk was produced not only in China but also—as becomes evident from allusions in early poetry—in Shushtar, one of the centers of silk trade in southern Iran. The poets used red *aṭlas* (which has a satiny finish) and black shining silk, *iksūn*, in their fabric of words. The evening thus weaves *iksūn*,[30] and the charming young morning in his reddish, brocaded garment lifts his

head from the silken veil of dawn, as Khaqani says in one of his grand images.[31] Contrasted with the silk in which the poets clad everything that they loved and admired is the coarse woollen material, *palās*, that was typical of ascetic life.[32]

Although Masʿud ibn Saʿd, a poet of Lahore around 1100, expressed his longing for his native town with its wonderful velvets,[33] velvet generally appears only in comparatively late works. It took some time for velvet to become transformed into a poetical image, but once Bedil and his contemporaries in Muslim India discovered the possibilities in this material, it became almost a hallmark of their verse, especially Bedil's and Naṣir ʿAli Sirhindi's.[34] It seems that its name, *kamkhā* (which is used as well as *mukhmal*), inspired the poets to call it *kam khwāb*, "sleeping little"; in addition, the tradesman's expression *khwābash khūb ast*, "it sleeps nicely," means that the velvet lies perfectly straight and has the ideal soft touch to it.[35] That is why Indo-Persian poets sing constantly of "the velvet's sleep," for when it wakes up it rises and gazes at the onlooker with a thousand horrified eyes.[36]

One seventeenth-century poet from Kashmir describes his strange state in a series of textile paradoxes, alluding in passing to the superstition (see chapter 23) that cotton is destroyed by moonlight:

The silk of our flame is woven from water;
our cotton is woven by the moonlit night.
You look for sleep [while] in love? Go, my heart,
to the velvet factory, where sleep is woven![37]

In this phase of literature velvet was often juxtaposed as well against the *būryā*, the straw mat of the dervishes; but both of them, as Bedil asserts, "weave sleep."[38] Or else, while the whole world is sleepless because it longs for the "sleep of velvet," Greed is now quiet thanks to the peace which the straw mat has provided him.[39] The same idea—that the straw mat is the only place where one can find rest—is expressed by Azad Bilgrami in a perfectly correct image which nevertheless may sound strange to the modern reader: he claims to have "chased the lion of the carpet away from the reedbed of the straw mat."[40] He does not want artistic velvets with animal and plant designs, but only his modest little *būryā*; yet because the lion, according to traditional imagery, usually lives in reedbeds or jungles, it may

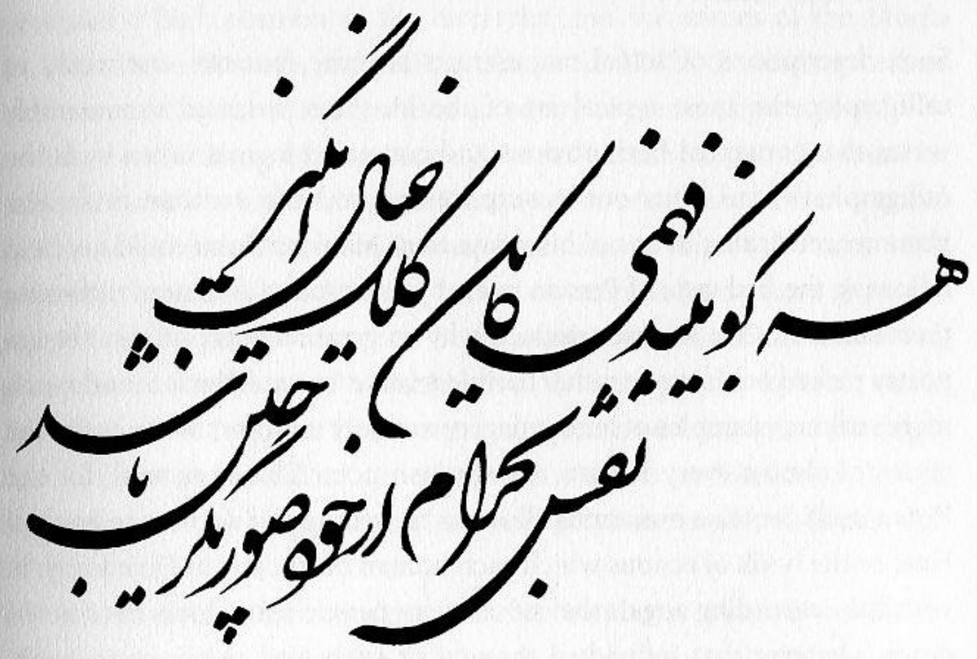
want to approach the reed mat. This the poet wants to avoid: there is no relation between luxury and true poverty. (Allusions to lions on flags or banners are, as we saw, rather common.)[41]

The Western reader might reasonably expect to find in Persian poetry a wealth of images associated with carpets, rugs, or flat-woven rugs, but these items appear very rarely—perhaps precisely because they were so widely used. In fact the most "Persian" verse involving carpet imagery was written not by a Persian poet but by Rilke, in his *Sonnets to Orpheus*:

> Welchem der Bilder du auch im Innern geeint bist—
> sei es auch ein Moment aus dem Leben der Pein:
> Fühl, dass der ganze, der rühmliche Teppich gemeint ist.[42]
>
> To which image you may be united in the interior—
> even though it be a moment from a life of pain:
> feel that the whole, glorious carpet is intended!

With this advice to the "silken thread that came into the fabric," the German poet is very close to Maulana Rumi, who would console a despairing companion by reminding him that his life is in the hands of the Great Weaver, who knows exactly how the pattern will look in the end, whereas human beings try to shape things according to their own will and imagination, worrying constantly about the outcome.

> Weave not, like spiders, nets from grief's saliva
> in which the woof and warp are both decaying.
> But give the grief to Him, Who granted it,
> and do not talk about it anymore.
> When you are silent, His speech is your speech,
> when you don't weave, the weaver will be He.[43]



Anyone who does not
understand this reed
that makes images—
even though he were
master painter in
China, may his picture
be forbidden [i.e., worth
nothing].

In 1636, in an album in which miniature paintings and calligraphic pages by the great masters of the past had been collected for the Mughal emperor Shah Jahan, the poet Kalim expressed his admiration with the words:

> The loops of the letters are nooses for those who gaze upon the album's beauty. . . .[1]

Such descriptions of actual manuscripts are rare, but the vast world of calligraphy, the most typical art of the Muslims, inspired innumerable verses that contained both obvious and concealed images taken from the calligrapher's art.[2] Thus one is surprised to find the Austrian orientalist Hammer remarking in one of his essays that "Maulana Rumi could not help following the bad taste of Persian poets by using puns on letters and using their names."[3] One wonders indeed why so great an authority on Persian poetry picked out just one rather harmless verse: he could have found much more striking examples of letter imagery not only in Rumi's work but in the verses of almost every Persian and Turkish poet. This is natural, for the Koran itself contains numerous allusions to writing and also to the Book of Fate, or the book of actions which each human must carry at Doomsday, in which the recording angels that sit on every person's shoulders have noted down whatever that individual thought or said. And to possess a book, *kitāb*, was, according to the Koran, the main distinction between the Muslims, Christians, and Jews and the scriptureless peoples.

In every country where Muslims dwelled, the Arabic letters of the Koran had to be learned so that the believers could recite the sacred text correctly. And the Divine word, the Koran, had to be written as beautifully as possible: whoever could write the formula "In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate" flawlessly was promised entrance into Paradise.[4] Thus poets and writers in every part of the Muslim world could easily recur to letter imagery, and every educated person could understand such allusions. Moreover, every letter of the alphabet has a numerical value. And the Sufis, in addition to that, developed a refined system of mystical interpretation for each and every letter. But allusions to letters are found even in pre-Islamic poetry, and ancient Arab poets loved to compare the deserted resting places in the desert to crooked letters scribbled on parchment.[5] Somewhat later, writing on sand and also writing on water came into

use as a metaphor for vanishing traces, evanescence, and flightiness.[6] Classical Arab literature is filled with imagery from writing, a tradition that has held true even in comparatively recent times.

Writing was a highly honored profession, and kings and dervishes alike indulged in it because of its inherent blessing. Court calligraphers often occupied a high position in the hierarchy, and the names of Ibn Muqla (d. 940), Ibn al-Bawwab (d. 1020), and Yaqut (d. 1298), the leading masters of the cursive style, were often used in poetry to create elegant puns.[7]

Before considering writing imagery per se, we should pause to recall an art form that plays a special role in Persian and—even more so—in regional poetry: the Golden Alphabet, known from ancient times (cf. Psalm 119), whereby the initial letters of the verses or strophes in a poem show the alphabet in its proper sequence. Such poems were useful for instructing people (as in Sind and the Punjab) both in the letters of the alphabet and in key concepts of religion. Thus a verse beginning with the letter *ṣād* might speak of *ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm*, "the straight path," mentioned in Sura 1, or a *qāf* might point to *qurb*, "proximity," or perhaps to the mythical Mount Qaf. And so forth.

It seems that this form was particularly common in mystical or religious poetry. A good example is the *Alifnāma*, a sixteenth-century Persian poem by Qasim-i Kahi, in which he praises ʿAli, the first Shia imam. The verse that begins with *d* (*dāl*) offers a fine proof of his skill:

> *Daulat ṭalab zi nādi ʿAlī,*
> *dād-i ū hast chūn bi-daulat dāll.*
>
> Ask for fortune (*daulat*) from [the invocation] *Nādi ʿAliyyan* ["Call upon ʿAli"],
> for his justice is pointing (*dāll*) to fortune.[8]

The *tajnīs* between the letter's name, *dāl*, and the word "pointing to," *dāll*, is an additional feature of the verse.

The poets were fond of alluding to the Pen of Destiny, which in preeternity had already designated each mortal's fated beloved.

> The pen of Divine Power drew you on the tablet of my breast
> when it selected you from the anthology of the beloved ones,[9]

says the Turkish poet Fuzuli, as if there had been a primordial book containing pictures and descriptions of lovable beings, from which the Pen chose and copied down the most attractive one for the poet. Fuzuli also thought that "the writers of pre-eternity have written lovers' destiny in black."[10] That is, lovers are bound to be unhappy, for "black fortune" means bad luck, unhappiness.

In this connection one of the most frequently discussed lines—if not in Persian, at least in Urdu—is the first verse of Ghalib's *Dīwān*, whose wording has puzzled generations of interpreters. For instead of beginning this collection of his Urdu poems with the customary praise of God or with lines admiring the Creator's unfathomable wisdom, he says:

Naqsh faryādī hai kiskī shūkhī-i taḥrīr kā?
Kāghidi hai pīrahan har ṣūrat-i taṣvīr kā.

About the impudence of which writer does the design [of the letters] complain?
Every form in the design wears a paper shirt![11]

The poet sees everything created as a letter written by the Primordial Pen (cf. Sura 68:1). As for the paper shirt, it was customary in medieval times for the plaintiff in court to wear a shirt made of paper. Hence to wear a paper shirt means to complain before a judge. Since every letter is written on paper, it wears, as it were, a paper shirt and complains of the hand of the Eternal Scribe, who has placed it in the company of other letters with which it may not agree, or made it part of an unpleasant sentence, or perhaps set it on ugly, coarse paper. Every being thus seems to rebel against its creator—indeed an unusual way to start a collection of poetry! (The image itself, however, is attested in medieval verse: Khaqani speaks of the paper shirt, as does Rumi, and in India the expression was known at least from the days of Amir Khusrau.)[12]

The idea that everything was written in pre-eternity and that, as a *ḥadīth* claims, "the Pen has dried up" (so that nothing can be changed) is commonplace in Muslim thought, although there are various interpretations of the *ḥadīth*.[13] In much the same strain one speaks of "the writing on the forehead" (*sarniwisht* in Persian, *alin yazisi* in Turkish), an inscription that cannot be changed—a traditional view challenged by Iqbal.[14]

The believer could also feel that the heart is like a pen between two of God's fingers, being moved in whatever direction He wills.[15]

But most prominent in the poetical language is the individual's ultimate "book of actions," which will be black for the sinner, white for the virtuous. Yet ink could be washed off with water; Ḥafiẓ and many of his admirers hoped that their black letters might be washed away by tears.

Pour water on the diary of our actions;
perhaps you can annihilate the letters of sin. . . .[16]

Poets also surmised that *khaṭṭ-i khaṭā*, "wrong letters," would blacken the book, especially when one took into consideration the ambiguity of the word *khaṭṭ*, which also means "down" or "fuzz" (see below). If the mere thought of the beloved's dark facial down might leave black lines on the lover's book,[17] the black tresses might lead the lover further astray and thus deepen the blackness of his account. But the beloved's fair-skinned, shining face was like the white book of the believers.[18]

Allusions to writing occur everywhere, but some poems contain more specific descriptions of the act of writing, or of letter writing. Manuchihri, for instance, takes up the classical Arabic stereotype of the deserted settlement, then—cleverly using a first *miṣrāʿ* in Arabic—turns to graceful praise of the Ṣaḥib Ibn ʿAbbad, a leading littérateur and vizier under the Buwayhids:

The traces of desolated dwelling places and abandoned lands
looked like the handsign of aṣ-Ṣaḥib at the beginning of an official document:
petals of hyacinths are fallen on white eglantine
like the lines of a secretary on the face of paper![19]

The world of the government office forms an elegant contrast to the image of wilderness on the one hand, of the garden on the other.

Arabic and Persian poets alike have described how difficult it is to compose a love letter, because the letters nearly burn the paper while the unhappy lover's tears wash away the writing.[20] Others confide that their letters are so burning hot that nobody can lay a finger on them (which also means, can blame them).[21] Though known from the Middle Ages, such ideas were especially popular among later Indian poets, in particular

Ghalib.[22] Turkish writers might write, "the letter of longing on the paper of the soul," as Ahmadi says in a delightful *ghazal* from the fourteenth century,[23] and the complaint that the beloved never answers letters is a standard theme not only in classical Persian poetry but even in the folk poetry of Sind and the Punjab.[24] Here, as so often, the locus classicus is a poem by Ḥafiẓ:

> For a long time now my friend has not sent a letter. . . .
> Though he knew that my heart's bird would fly away,
> he did not send a message in chainlike letters . . .[25]

The verse speaks apparently of a normal love letter, but the word *silsila*, "chain," immediately evokes the calligraphic style *musalsal*, "chainlike," which is typical of chancellery script. We may surmise that the friend is an official person, probably a prince or king, from whom the poet expects a sign of kindness or some official grant. Such ambiguity can of course be expected, but the same imagery can also easily be extended to the religious sphere, to portray the soul anxiously awaiting a sign of grace from the Divine Lord and Beloved.

I have already referred briefly to one pun which makes the translation of much of Persian calligraphic imagery extremely difficult, namely the double meaning of *khaṭṭ*. It means "script" but also the first, fine black line of "down" on the cheeks and the lips of the beloved, who is ideally a boy of fourteen, comparable in beauty to the moon in the fourteenth night.[26] This pun gives much of traditional Persian and Turkish writing imagery a special charm and, although it is lost in translation, should always be kept in mind. Some examples from Jami's *Dīwān* may illustrate:

> Every form which Jami did not write with the blackness [or, melancholia, yearning] of your *khaṭṭ*,
> he washed it away with the tears of repentance from his wet eye.[27]

That is, whatever was written without thinking of the beauty of the beloved had to be washed off. Jami also claims to have turned the tablet of the sun, which was white like a clean copy, *bayāż*, into a scrapbook, a *muswadda* (lit. "blackened," like a rough sketchbook), when he tried to work the design of his friend's *khaṭṭ* and cheek into his verse.[28] (The *khaṭṭ* is black, the face white.) And in an ingenious allusion to the names of the two early master

calligraphers, Ibn Muqla and Yaqut, and by playing on the double meaning of *khaṭṭ* as well as of *naskh* (both "*naskh* writing" and "abolishing") Jami opines that it is more important to gaze on the beloved's down, which grows around the ruby mouth, than to study the calligraphy of Yaqut: the combination of *laʿl*, "ruby," and *Yāqūt*, which also means "precious ruby," adds to the elegance of the lines:

> Now the writing (*khaṭṭ*) of Yaqut has become abolished (*naskh*),
> and all the lovely ones learn writing in school [or, instruction concerning your down] from your ruby mouth.[29]

Man's whole life could be seen as writing, and Ghalib's verse about the complaining letters (cited earlier in this chapter) seems to be prefigured in a quatrain by Sarmad, the weird poet who was executed for heresy in Delhi in 1661. One verse describes his unusual life fairly accurately:

> The writing wrong, the meaning wrong,
> the style wrong, the spelling wrong.[30]

This idea of "wrong" writing could also be expressed through the image of the *khaṭṭ-i tarsā*, "the script of the Christians." Even the ancient Arab poets were aware that the script of non-Semites goes from left to right and not, as Hebrew and Arabic, from right to left. To suggest the magnitude of his misfortune Khaqani complains that the movement of the heavenly spheres is "more crooked than the writing of the Christians"—which also permits a pun on *tarsā*, "Christian," and *tars*, "wrong direction."[31] Sami, a Turkish poet in the eighteenth century, used the same expression for the strange-looking writing on the tablet of destiny.[32]

Virtually everything sharp and pointed could become, in the poet's eye, a pen. The beloved's eyelashes can write an incantation or an amulet; in Niẓami's epic the fingers of Shirin write her admirers' death sentences as though they were ten pens.[33] Even the sunrays can be golden pens, writing the names of Muḥammad and ʿAli on the silver plate of the morning.[34]

The reed pen has to be carefully trimmed before it can be used for writing. Thus the poets sometimes imagined that its head, or its tongue, must be cut so that it may become more eloquent. Only when its head is cut off will it be able to speak of the mysteries of love,[35] like the martyr of love whose death reveals his devotion. To be sure, however, no pen can really

explain the mysteries of love and union—for the pen is split when it comes to the word Love, as Rumi states in the beginning of his *Mathnawī*.[36]

A special relation was construed between the pen and the Water of Life, as the writer's black ink could easily be compared to the mysterious water that grants immortality and is found only in the deepest darkness. With this image the life-bestowing activity of the poet himself—or indeed the life-giving power of his patron—could be elegantly described, and the black ink could make poet, patron, and calligrapher all equally immortal.[37]

Writing surfaces likewise can appear in poetical metaphors, from the silver tablet of the morning to the dust of the earth into which the sun writes the name of Abu Turab, "father of dust," the surname of ʿAli ibn Abi Ṭalib.[38] Colored papers were used for special purposes, and one Ottoman poet worried that his eyes had become like red paper from constant weeping—how then could anyone read the lines which his blood-red tears would write?[39] For tears are always red; Jami, in a traditional verse, says:

> Every moment I write the commentary of longing for you
> with red tears on my yellow face,[40]

as if his wrinkled cheeks were yellowish pieces of parchment on which a text is being written with red ink. One might also remember in this connection a little Arabic verse quoted by the authority on Mamluk chancellery life, al-Qalqashandi in Egypt (d. A.D. 1415), who says:

> My tears form lines on my cheeks—
> that is not astonishing, as the tear is Ibn Muqla,[41]

muqla being the "pupil of the eye"—so that the tear, being "Son of the Pupil," is truly an Ibn Muqla, the master calligrapher of Baghdad.

Firm, yellowish parchment was the writing material used in early times for Korans and documents of great importance. Later poets also mention marbleized paper, *abrī*, or *ebru* ("clouded"), especially when they describe clouds and rain.[42] Marbleizing became rather fashionable in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in India and Turkey, and such verses always belong to the later period of Persian literature.[43] Allusions to the ruler—a frame with silk threads stretched at intervals, which could be placed between two sheets of paper to leave a thin trace of where to write—are frequent in "Indian style" poetry.

The garden too has often been compared to a book, in which the different flowers resemble letters and dots[44] and whose text can be read by the birds, especially by the nightingale; and a beautifully illuminated manuscript may in turn seem to be a garden.[45] But when the poet wants to describe the beloved's beauty it would be right, as Baki (Baqi) thinks, to write "lines of hyacinths on paper of rose petals."[46] And, asks Fuzuli, is not the face of the beloved like a lustrous page that was gilded by the sun so that the lovely *khaṭṭ* might appear in full glory?[47]

The mystical meanings that the Sufis attached to the individual letters give such verses an extra dimension. In this connection it is remarkable that the imagery of calligraphers, poets, and Sufis coincides in the use of certain concepts. Ibn Muqla himself had invented the geometrical structure of the letters, each of which was shaped according to strict rules and measured by circles, semicircles, and dots, which corresponded to the breadth of the pen. It is these dots which form the basis of all harmonious writing, and each letter is described in the number of dots that are needed to construct it and which vary according to the intended style. Thus it is not surprising that the mystics too envisioned the created world as a primordial dot that appeared first on the white page of Unity—and that dot was drawn out to shape an *alif*, the first and most important letter of the alphabet, according to whose measurements every other letter is shaped. Bedil likewise compares the human heart to such a primordial dot, which carries in itself a universe.[48]

Alif, the first letter of the alphabet, is connected with *Allāh*, as it constitutes the first letter of that word, and with its numerical value 1 it again represents the One and Unique God. To "know the *alif*" means to know God and, with Him, the contents of all revealed Scriptures:

> The meaning of the four revealed books is contained in an *alif*,[49]

says Yunus Emre, like most mystics, especially folk mystics, all over the Muslim world. And because calligraphers see in the *alif* the slim and slender stature of a human being,[50] it has been used by the poets as the ideal cipher for the beloved. The best-known example that evokes both meanings is, not surprisingly, by Ḥafiẓ:

> On the tablet of my heart there is nothing but the *alif* of my friend's stature.
> What can I do? My teacher did not teach me any other letter.[51]

The poet either thinks only of his friend's graceful body or else remembers nothing but the Divine Unity: the *alif* comprises both. The poet whose mind concentrates on the *alif* sees this letter everywhere—in the falling raindrops, in the flight of birds, or the lines produced by ducks swimming in the pond. And as Alif (Elif) is also used as a feminine name in Turkey, we wonder whether he thinks of God or of an Elif of flesh and blood.[52]

Among the other letters *jīm* ج often represents the curls, or perhaps the ear, as Amir Khusrau says:

> For me, the first letter of my soul (*jān*) is the tip of the curl
> which looks like the ringlet of *jīm*.[53]

Rudaki seems to have been the first Persian poet to make this comparison, and for him, the dot inside the letter's curve represents the beauty spot, the black mole on the beloved's face. In Amir Khusrau's play on the word *jān*, "soul," *jīm* could also be connected with *jamāl*, "beauty," which too is enhanced by the curling tresses.

The letter *dāl* د means something bent, like an old man's stature: the expression that "the *alif* of one's back is bent like a *dāl*," as a result of grief or old age, is commonplace.[54] Sometimes, as we saw earlier in this chapter, *dāl* appears in *tajnīs* with *dāll*, "pointing to"—the black curl on the cheek "points to," *dāll*, the master calligrapher's art, as Jami says.[55] *Dāl*'s curve can represent a crescent, but that is more frequently the case with *rā* ر, which is also seen as a scimitar. As the first lean crescent moon of the fasting month, Ramaḍan, *rā* is a scimitar that cuts off worldly pleasures.[56]

Sīn س is often compared to a saw or to the teeth,[57] and *ṣād* ص usually occurs as the eye because of its almond-like shape.[58]

The eye is also connected with *ʿayn*, whose name in fact also means "eye," as well as "fountain" or "essence"—which offers endless possibilities for punning. But because of its shape ع *ʿayn* can appear in connection with the tresses, as in Abu Bakr Sarakhsi's verse:

> The ringlet of your tresses is a *qaṣīda* with the rhyme *ʿayn* ع
> the ringlet of your curls is a *qaṣīda* with the rhyme *dāl* د.[59]

The term *qaṣīda* conveys to the listener that these tresses are very long, as if forming a poem in which the rhyming letter is repeated dozens of times.

Tresses are also compared to the *qāf* ق and, more frequently, to the long, stretchy *lām* ل.[60]

But the most important letter after *alif* is *mīm*. This small, round sign was used in Arabic poetry to describe the bubbles which appear when one mixes water with wine (thus Ibn al-Muʿtazz),[61] but in Persian poetry it means something extremely narrow, like a heart compressed by sorrows[62] or—preferably—the beloved's tiny mouth. Poets like the black mole that lurks close to the mouth, and after Amir Khusrau admired this beauty spot though admitting that "there is no need for a dot on the *mīm*,"[63] Jami followed up with the somewhat outré conceit that

> the mole on that mouth is a slip of the pen
> which a stupid calligrapher put above the *mīm*.[64]

For the mystics, however, *mīm* pointed to the Prophet, as it was the letter by whose appearance in his name, Aḥmad, he was separated from Aḥad, the One. And as *mīm* has the numerical value of 40, it was understood as an allusion to the forty stages that separate man and God. The common use of the phrase "Aḥmad without *m*," which can be observed throughout the eastern Muslim world, has found a lovely expression in Panjabi, where the Prophet was called, by one poet, "the handsome friend who wears the shawl of *mīm*."[65]

The curved *nūn* ن is a sign for the curls and the mole together but, if inverted, instead represents the gracefully arched eyebrows; and of course

> the crescent (*hilāl*) shaped eyebrows are better than anything
> that Ibn Muqla and Ibn Hilal could write.[66]

In rare instances the Arabic meaning of *nūn*—"fish"—is used for comparisons. In connection with the pen (as in Sura 68:1) *nūn* looks to the poet like a mysterious inkwell.[67]

While *h* ھ is, for the mystics, a cipher for the Divine *huwiyya*, "ipseity," poets saw in its initial form ھـ a human head with two eyes. These eyes weep profusely: as it is said in Turkish, *He'nin iki gözü iki çeşme*, "The two eyes of *h* are two fountains."[68] Calligraphers, however, would call the initial *h* a "cat's face," *wajh al-hirr*.

Wāw is seldom used as an image in profane texts, with the exception of

early Arabic, where (like *mīm*) it appears as bubbles in mixed drinks. But it plays a role in late Ottoman decorative calligraphy.[69]

The last letter of the alphabet would be *yā*, which has no symbolic value, but for the poets there remained the problem of whether to include in their reckoning the combined form of *lām* and *alif*, the *lām-alif* ﻻ, as a single letter. It is usually mentioned to express an extremely close relation of two items or two people ("I took him to my breast like a *lām-alif*")[70] and can therefore mean the soul's proximity to God. But it may also point to dangerous relations, as in Jami's well-known verse that warns his little son not to come close to bad people, for "the straight *alif* becomes crooked in the neighborhood of *lām*."[71]

Yet along with all these imaginary meanings, *lā* occurs very often as the simple word *lā*, "no," the first word of the profession of faith, and poets knew how to combine this use of the grapheme with other, more worldly meanings of *lām-alif*.

Writers liked to combine several letters in an elegant *tanāsub*:

From your stroke the stature of your enemy, which was like *alif*,
became two halves and fell backward like the shape of *dāl*.[72]

Thus Azraqi praises his patron's prowess in war. Another early writer, ʿUtbi, described the *kamāncha*, a small stringed instrument, as a *nūn* and a *mīm* with an *alif* in the middle, and a *dāl* on each side—and then swings over to another comparison:

ﻥ ﺍ ﺩ The sun has not seen anything like you, for in one moment
one hand grasps the full moon and the other hand the crescent.[73]

(The round *mīm* is here the full moon, the *nūn* the crescent.) Baki (Baqi), much later, asked in feigned ignorance what the crescent of the fasting month might be: a *nūn* belonging to the end of Shaʿban (the preceding month, whose name ends with *n*), or rather a *rā*, which "points" (pun on *dāl*) to the beginning (or first letter) of Ramaḍan?[74]

In many cases letters with their individual distinctions can be combined to form a new, cogently meaningful word, as in Kamal-i Khujandi's lines:

ﺩ ﺍ ﻡ The *dāl* of the curls, the *alif* of the stature, and the *mīm* of the mouth
are all three a trap (*dām*) and catch many people like me![75]

That is, the letters *d*, *a*, and *m* constitute the word *dām*, "trap, snare." Before him, Ẓahir-i Faryabi had complained that

now, no more than these two letters are left in life:
a heart narrow as the eye of *mīm*, and a stature like the curve of *nūn*.[76]

The two letters *m* and *n* together read *man*, "I."

Indian poets, whether they wrote in Arabic or Persian, used the same devices. ʿAbdul Jalil Bilgrami says (in Arabic):

The bow of my friend's eyebrow is like a *nūn* ﻥ
and the shape of his eye is a *ṣād* ﺹ written by the hand of Ibn Muqla.
By my life! This is a clear text (*naṣṣ* ﻧﺺ)
[proving that] the casting of arrows is the right of his eye [or, his personal right].[77]

The word *naṣṣ*, "clear text," means a legally binding text, and the allusion to Ibn Muqla contains the word *muqla*, "pupil of the eye." The *ʿayn*, "eye," in the last hemistich is, in legal contexts, connected with personal and individual duties and rights. But when the friend's teeth are like a *sīn* and his round mouth like a small *mīm*, the result can be *samm*, "poison," for the poor lover.[78]

These latter examples lead us into the art of riddles and logogriphs, which were a favorite pastime in Iran, especially during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, when a whole literature on *lughz* and *muʿammā*, letter- and name-riddles, was produced in eastern Iran and northern India. One example of this "spiderweb-like art," as Rückert calls it, which has recently been masterfully explained by Shams Anwari-Alhosseyni,[79] is Muẓaffar Harawi's riddle:

We saw your figure and your mouth and your tresses and your curls:
every single one has taken a letter as its model.
I saw an *alif* from silver and a *mīm* from coral,
a beginning of a *jīm* from musk, and a *dāl* from *ghaliy* [a strong perfume made of musk and ambergris].[80]

The white, fair-skinned, slender body and the coral-colored mouth along with the fragrant curls and tresses provide us with the name of this wonderful person, that is, *Amjad*.

This is probably the easiest *muʿammā* I have ever seen. Others require addition and subtraction, and there is an extensive traditional technical vocabulary concerning the various steps to take in order to arrive at the intended name.

One may also think, in this connection, of the possibilities for intentional "mistakes" which can be skillfully produced by punctuating the letters differently—the single form ـنـ means, according to how the dots are placed, *b* ـبـ, *t* ـتـ, *th* ـثـ, *n* ـنـ, and *y* ـيـ. Thus a scribe can be accused of changing *raḥmat* رحمت, "grace," into *zahmat* زحمت, "pain," merely by placing a dot on the first letter. But for the (fortunate) writer, the *a* of the word *dawāt* دوات, "inkpot," could be linked to the final *t* دولت and thus become *daulat*, "fortune, good luck."[81] There are endless such witty plays in the classical Islamic literatures, and they percolated down even to the level of folk poetry and popular songs.

One is amazed to see how often the lovely face is compared to a copy of the Koran, which has to be absolutely flawless—and, we should add, is being kissed by the believer.

> Everyone who saw the Koran copy (*muṣḥaf*) of your face
> at school, has seen a good omen.[82]

So says Jami, alluding to the custom of opening the Koran at random for prognostication (much as Westerners have used the Bible or the *Aeneid*). Such comparisons became all the more frequent where the Ḥurufi movement influenced Shia lore, for they saw everything under the image of letters.[83] But non-Shiite poets have used the comparisons as openly, and the ambiguous word *khaṭṭ* played a major role. A Kashmiri poet says:

> Is it a *khaṭṭ* that has grown on your cheek, o you of lovely qualities,
> or was the Koran sent down in the blessed moon?[84]

Māh, which means both "month" and "moon," points equally to the moon-like face of the beloved and to the month of Ramaḍan, during which the Prophet's first revelation took place.

One writer whose poetry abounds in such comparisons was Shah Ismaʿil, the founder of the Safavid dynasty in Persia (ruled 1501–24). He wrote his verse in Turki, not in Persian, but the vocabulary is the same. He addresses the beloved:

> O you, the *āya* [sign, verse] of whose beauty is the title page of the
> old Divan,
> and the *ṭughrā* of whose eyebrows is "In the name of God, the
> Merciful, the Compassionate"![85]

The title pages of books, especially Korans and poetical anthologies, were usually beautifully illuminated, and the *ṭughrā*, originally the ruler's hand-sign at the beginning of a document, was elaborated into a marvelous ornament.[86] The term is now used for any artistically drawn figure consisting of letters—be it mirror script, animals, or even human faces.

Arabic calligraphy developed in various styles. The poets rarely allude to the old, heavy Kufic style used, in the first centuries of Islam, for writing stately, solemn Korans and architectural inscriptions. Only the *kāf-i kūfī*, the letter *k* as written in some manuscripts in an extremely narrow shape, occurs now and then.[87] Other styles are more common; the *ghubār* or dust-script was used, for instance, for messages sent by pigeon post. Ḥafiẓ offers an example of calligraphic imagery in perfect harmony:

> Should it happen that I should see the dust of your feet,
> I would write dust-script (*ghubār*) on the tablet of my eye![88]

That is, the lover would rub his eyes in the dust of the beloved's feet.

Baki (Baqi), who uses *kirma* (*qirma*), "broken" script, a very fine, difficult style of Turkish calligraphy usually associated with chancelleries, describes how one must become broken, *kirma*, to write about one's beloved.[89] Slightly later, when *shikasta*, "broken" script, became fashionable in Iran and India, Indo-Persian poets invented hundreds of lines in which the term *shikasta* is found in different shades of meaning.

Besides the minute *ghubār* and the small, complicated *kirma*, the large and impressive *ṭūmār* or "scroll" script is sometimes mentioned, a style mainly used for important documents. Baki (Baqi) saw *ṭūmār* script in saffron on the lily's white petals,[90] and a Persian poet boasts, not exactly modestly:

When the scribe of heaven writes down my poems,
the sky willingly becomes a scroll (*ṭūmār*).[91]

As *ṭūmār* means both the scroll itself and the script, the verse implies that his poems will be emblazoned on the broad sky in large, handsome letters.

Garden imagery usually goes together with *rīḥānī* script. *Rīḥān* is sweet basil and, in general, any odoriferous herb; *rīḥānī* is a fine form of *naskh*, the normal cursive, with flat, sharply defined serifs on the lower letters. It was used during the later Middle Ages for Koran manuscripts along with the large form of the same "dry" style, *muḥaqqaq*. Ḥafiẓ was thus able to wish his patron as many years of happy life as the morning breeze in springtime writes a thousand designs in *rīḥānī* script on the page of the garden—that is, as long as flowers bloom in this world.[92]

Muḥaqqaq, a decorative script in which some of the most famous Koran copies in Iran and Egypt were written during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, generated opportunities for puns as well. Lovers will certainly (*muḥaqqaq*) prefer the *khaṭṭ* of the beloved's lip to the script of Yaqut. Cafer Çelebi, like many others, plays with the usual combination of *khaṭṭ*, *yāqūt* (ruby), and so on but strengthens his point by adding *muḥaqqaq*, "verily."[93]

Nastaʿlīq, the "hanging" Persian style of writing, is rarely mentioned, as it developed only around 1400, when the poetical imagery was already fairly well established. But it can appear in connection with black, curly hyacinths.[94] This style was very rarely used for Arabic, and a Koran in *nastaʿlīq* can scarcely be found. Hence Salim says:

The condition of love is not loveliness, like a Koran in *nastaʿlīq*.[95]

That is, what one loves is the content, not the outward form.

Ultimately the whole world seemed a wonderful book for the poet—though a book "whose first and last pages are missing," as Kalim claimed.[96]

One may sometimes wonder why allusions to actual paintings are so rare, compared to the almost limitless plays on letters.[97] As we saw (in chapters 6 and 10), Mani is the great painter of legend, and China is the country of painting. But the development of miniature painting occurred much later than that of calligraphy, and the names of the famous masters of that art—as far as they were known at all—appear only very late as metaphors. Earlier poets may repeat the standard expressions about "the lion painted in the

bathhouse"[98] or some other themes from wall painting, for castles in Umayyad Syria as well as Seljukid castles like Kobadabd near Konya were much decorated with wall paintings and painted tiles, as were the later Safavid palaces and kiosks. But whenever wall paintings are mentioned, they mean something lifeless: the painted Rustam cannot fight,[99] the painted drum does not sound, nor can the painted rose be moved by the breeze.[100]

Only in late Mughal days, and then especially in the verse of the prolific and difficult Bedil, did Bihzad, the most famous painter of the Timurid court at Herat, appear in poetry (though he was famed enough to be regarded as the unsurpassable model for any artist in other connections).

One should not create Chinese pictures of European beauties;
your role as Bihzad is to remove your hand from this world.[101]

With this verse Bedil admonishes his contemporaries and probably also himself, for he had observed the advent of Europeans in an India that suffered from political and economic problems and was an eyewitness, in the last years of his life, to the collapse of the glorious Mughal empire after the death of emperor Aurangzeb in 1707. One could find rest only by not clinging to this world, by not "painting" it in attractive colors. But Bedil also praised that painter when he invoked the traditional imagery whereby the slender waist of the beloved is thinner than a hair:

What pictures did Wish not draw on the canvas of Longing?
The phantom of the "hair of your waist" is the brush of Bihzad![102]

Whether one admires the poet's extreme skill or not, his imagery is perfectly correct: the tips of the brushes of the great Persian and Indian painters indeed consisted of a single hair.

Other than these somewhat eccentric remarks among late poets, one at times finds interesting sidelights on specific kinds of books or paintings. When Manuchihri says that

the birds sit on the trees like soothsayers;
they have placed before themselves notebooks filled with pictures,[103]

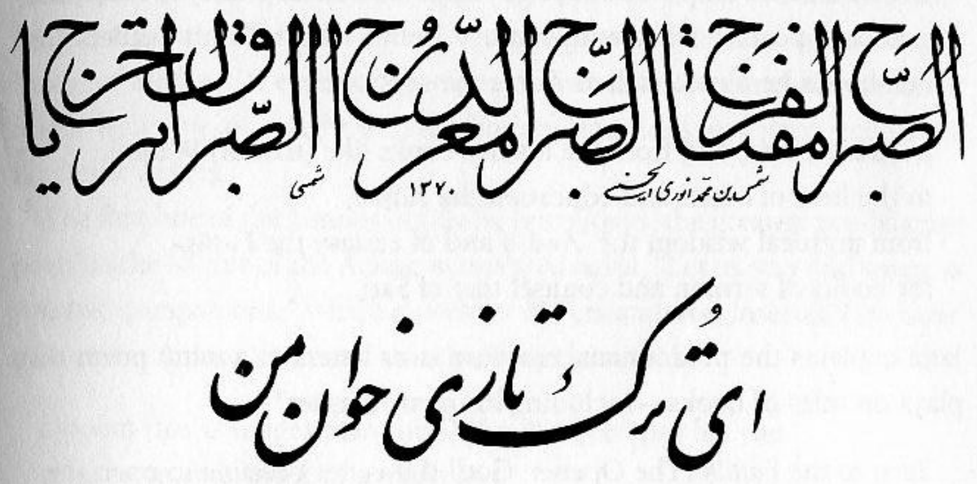
he refers to the genre of *fālnāma*, books that contained mythological and semihistorical paintings along with texts, which were used for prognostication. As his verse shows, their use must have occurred rather early in

Islamic history, but only scattered fragments of somewhat later *fālnāmas* are now extant.

As for why the poets speak of calligraphy so much more frequently and artistically than of painting—which after all, according to tradition, is not permitted—and why there is really no "official" place for painting in Islam, Jami knows the answer:

As it is impossible to paint your beauty,
the *sharī'a* [religious law] has prohibited painting![104]

From the Scholar's Bookshelf 18



Patience is the key to
joy, patience is the
ladder with steps,
patience is the antidote
for constraint—
o you who plunder
my table!

As Persian classical poetry is predominantly learned poetry, one finds in it numerous allusions to religious, juridical, or philosophical books which every student in the *madrasa*, the religious college, had to study and much of which he was expected to learn by rote. To decipher poetry by masters like Khaqani or Jami without a thorough knowledge of the whole corpus of learning available to them is next to impossible.

It would be nice if poets always gave their sources as clearly as Muṭahhar, a mediocre poet of fourteenth-century Delhi, who tells his readers just which books he has consulted. Some, he says, are

> from medicine, and from the history books like [that of] Waqidi,
> in the field of ethics and education the *Nāṣirī*,
> from mystical wisdom the *ʿAwārif* and of ecstasy the *Fuṣūṣ*,
> for books of sermon and counsel that of Sari. . . .[1]

Jami explains the predominance of love over letters in a witty poem that plays on titles of books—including his own "Flashes":

> Turn to the *Fattāḥ* [The Opener, God] if it is not possible to open the gate of meaning with the *Miftāḥ* [The Key of Sciences].
> Leave the *Kashshāf* [The Unveiler, a commentary on the Koran], for by it the doors of intuitive wisdom (*kashf*) will be closed.
> In our "Standpoints" [*Mawāqif*] is something from which there is no hope for salvation with your "Purposes" [*Maqāṣid*].
> When the "Flashes" [*Lawāʾiḥ*] of love become luminous upon you, then you will throw away the tablets like Moses.[2]

The *Miftāḥ* (Key of Sciences) mentioned here is Sakkaki's complicated work on rhetorical problems, for which the author Taftazani composed one long (*muṭawwal*) and one short (*mukhtaṣar*) commentary. Imitating verses by Jami, the Urdu poet Wali Deccani thus uses these terms for the description of his beloved:

> Every night one treats your tresses with the *muṭawwal*,
> and when one comes to your mouth one makes it *mukhtaṣar*.[3]

The beloved's night-black tresses are so long that they deserve an extended commentary, but the minute mouth can be treated only very briefly.

One also finds allusions to Arabic grammatical terms, as when Khaqani

speaks of a "man who has come in the state of an *i*," that is, determined by the vowel sign *kasra*, whose original meaning is "broken"[4]—and when a person is *maksūr*, "broken," he is indeed "broke" in the American sense: he has no more money.

Part of the art of learned allusions was to compare oneself to one's predecessors and, in that connection, show off one's own talents. Anyone who praised the Prophet in long *qaṣīdas* could be called a "second Ḥassan," for Ḥassan ibn Thabit was the first to eulogize Muḥammad when he was living in Medina. A careful collection of such allusions and comparisons might well give an insight into the literary traditions and predilections of medieval writers.

The first line of the famous *qaṣīda* by Imruʾlqays, the greatest pre-Islamic poet,[5] is the source of the Arabic words *Qifā nabki*, "Let us stay and weep, o you two companions," which a number of Persian poets inserted into their own verse. Among them is Farrukhi, who claims that

> a poem that is longer than the *Qifā nabki* becomes for you
> as short as the rhyme of a *mathnawī*.[6]

In a *qaṣīda* like the *Qifā nabki* the rhyme letter (in this case *l*) is repeated through some seventy verses, whereas in a *mathnawī*, couplet, the rhyme occurs only twice.

Farrukhi's poetry is replete with allusions to classical Arabic wisdom and history. He mentions the famous early dictionary, the *Kitāb al-ʿayn*, and quotes from Mutanabbi,[7] the master poet of the tenth century; he also displays a good knowledge of Abbasid history.

Acknowledged or (more frequently) not, quotations from earlier poets are, like learned allusions, part of the poetical art. Even Rumi liked to borrow verses, from Mutanabbi, Khaqani, and—most especially—Sanaʾi; one of his most moving *ghazals* includes the beginning of a fine passage by Anwari:

> If trees could move and wander far away,
> they would not suffer from the axe or saw. . . .[8]

And in his threnody for Sanaʾi,

> Someone spoke: Master Sanaʾi has died!

he uses a poem which Sanaʾi had written for himself but whose form had been taken from Rudaki.[9]

Niẓami's *Khamsa* (Quintet) offered Persian and Urdu poets numerous possibilities for punning. The Urdu poet Mir admonishes his reader:

Collect the five senses so that they become ordered,

mentioning not only the "five" of the *Khamsa* but also their "order," *niẓām*, which is connected with Niẓami's pen name.[10] And at about the same time an Indo-Persian poet praised the Niẓam of Hyderabad with the verse:

Moral qualities have found through him a glorious order (*niẓām*);
the heart has a copy of the Treasure Grove of Mysteries (*Makhzan al-asrār*) in its hand.[11]

Fakhruddin ʿIraqi's name could be linked with the musical mode *ʿIrāq*, and there is no lack of references to Saʿdi's *Gulistān* (Rose Garden), for that book served for centuries as the best introduction to elegant Persian style as well as practical wisdom and the rules of etiquette. As late as the eighteenth century, ʿAli Ḥazin praised his own poetical achievement in such terms:

Look at the black letters of my pages so that you may see a rose garden (*gulistān*);
walk through my notebook so that you may see a spring without autumn![12]

Just as poets might liken themselves to their great models Saʿdi and Niẓami, Jami refers elegantly to Amir Khusrau of Delhi:

When Ḥasan in India heard Jami's word he said:
Khusrau with the sweet (*shīrīn*) words has returned—[13]

for both poets had composed an epic poem *Khusrau Shīrīn* in imitation of Niẓami's work.

In India other references can be found, for example, to the Ḥamza story, which recounts the endless adventures of the Prophet's uncle Ḥamza and was illustrated lavishly in the days of the emperor Akbar.[14] Alluding to this long and convoluted tale, Ghalib says somewhat condescendingly:

If every time [the beloved] is mentioned, blood issues not from the root of every hair,
that is the "story of Ḥamza," not the talk of love.[15]

And in recent times the Urdu poet Fayż used the Indian epos *Mahabhārata* as a metaphor for something utterly long and quite boring.[16]

One could even produce entire poems made from the names of well-known Persian poets, as was cleverly done by Wali Deccani. He may have been following the fine example of Rasmi, a seventeenth-century writer who wrought into verse the names of all the major poets who had eulogized the greatest patron of poetry in Mughal India, the Khankhanan ʿAbdur Raḥim.[17] Wali, however, describes his beloved in terms taken from the literary history of Persia:

Your face is radiant (*Mashriqī*), your beauty most shining (*Anwarī*),
your manifestation is that of Divine Beauty (*Jamālī*).
Your eye is cup-like (*Jāmī*), your forehead paradisiacal (*Firdausī*),
your eyebrow crescent-like (*Hilālī*).
Wali is longing (*Shauqī*) and inclined (*Māʾil*) to your stature and eyebrow,
so that every *bayt* of his is sublime (*ʿĀlī*), and every hemistich imaginative (*Khayālī*).[18]

Among the mystical writers the name of ʿAṭṭar, which literally means "druggist" or "perfume dealer," reminds the reader of roses and fragrance as well as of his *Manṭiq uṭ-ṭayr* (The Conversation of the Birds).

I said: "Thanks to your fragrance the morning breeze has turned into a perfume dealer (*ʿaṭṭar*)!"
He said: "Jami, by your lovely breathing (*nafaḥāt*) you have become our ʿAṭṭar!"[19]

This is a graceful allusion to Jami's hagiographical work *Nafaḥāt al-uns* (The Breaths of Familiarity), which largely replaced ʿAṭṭar's collection of saints' legends.

While Rumi is comparatively rarely mentioned by name, the beginning of his *Mathnawī*, the "Song of the Reed" as it is often called, inspired

numerous poets in the Persianate world. Thus one finds the complaining reed flute, or the fire of love which the reed's song casts into the world, or its longing for its native reedbed—often in very unexpected places. Bedil uses it in the context of velvet and the straw mat (see above, chapter 16):[20] the reedbed—that is, the straw mat—contains a fire which it will someday cast into the velvet, which is to say that True Poverty destroys worldly luxuries. And Qasim-i Kahi quotes Rumi's famous statement—"I was raw, I became 'cooked,' I burnt up"—very beautifully by combining it with the topic of a Hindu's self-immolation:

An old Hindu at the gate of Somnath
recited one verse, and I learned:
"The result of my life was not more than three words:
I was raw, I became 'cooked,' I was burnt up."[21]

Borrowings from Rumi are also frequent in Iqbal's poetry, and one can easily follow the process by which he incorporated and reinterpreted the text according to his own ideals.[22]

A mystical work widely read and often quoted from the fourteenth century onward in mystically inclined circles was *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* (The Bezels of Wisdom), a small but weighty book that contains the prophetology of Ibn ʿArabi.[23] Jami, himself an interpreter of Ibn ʿArabi's mystical writings, addressed his beloved:

If the author of the "Bezels" had seen your lip,
he would have composed a hundred bezels about the wisdom of Jesus.[24]

The lips of the beloved, resembling a ring made of ruby, contain the life-giving breath of Jesus (see above, chapter 3).

The names of the founders of the four schools of law appear, as is natural, rather rarely in poetry. But among them we may especially mention Abu Ḥanifa, founder of the Hanafi school that was predominant in the Turkish areas and northern India. He is often called al-Kufi,[25] from his hometown Kufa. As late as the eighteenth century, *lā-kūfi*, "not Kufi," still meant someone who did not follow a particular school of law and, by extension, someone who was not bound by law.[26]

Among the numerous allusions which the patient reader may discover in classical and, even more, in postclassical poetry one seems to me particularly interesting. Mirza Ghalib wrote a booklet entitled *Dastanbūy* (Nosegay) to explain the events of the so-called Mutiny of 1857 in northern India.[27] Written in a very archaic style of Persian, it is dedicated to Queen Victoria. Its graceful title appears to refer to a line from a *qaṣīda* by Khaqani:

In the hand of her lofty fortune I saw seven nosegays (*dastanbū*).[28]

Khaqani wrote this for the princess ʿIṣmatuddin. Ghalib was dedicating his book in turn to the noblest princess of his time, hoping for a sign of her favor in the same way.

Inserted proverbs belong to our present theme as well.[29] Some are favorites with the poets and occur time and again. Among these is the saying "The sound of the drum is nice from afar," perhaps most famously elaborated in a quatrain by ʿOmar Khayyam:

Some people say: "Paradise with houris is nice."
I say: The water of the grape is nice.
Take this cash and don't touch the credit—
for to hear the voice of the drum from afar is nice![30]

Poets often mention the saying "Nights are pregnant,"[31] and another proverb that has undergone strange variations in the course of time is the biblical adage "Cast thy bread upon the waters, for thou shalt find it after many days" (Ecclesiastes 11:1), which seems to have been taken up via oral tradition. Saʿdi follows the original text quite closely:

Do something good and throw it into the Tigris—
God will give it back to you in the desert.[32]

Ḥafiẓ changes it ironically:

Cast me into a boat filled with wine, o cupbearer!
For it was said: Do something good and throw it into the water![33]

And another two centuries later Qasim-i Kahi extended the image:

I would love to see your reflection in the water of my eyes.
So: "Do something good and cast it into the water!"[34]

The beloved, so we understand, should at least cast the reflection of his moonlike beauty into the lake of the lover's tears.

The same skillful poet uses another proverb in his lines:

> From remembering your lip I reach never the aim (*kām*) [or, palate]:
> "The mouth does not become sweet by saying "halvah."[35]

This practical advice was then turned by Prince Dara Shikoh into a mystical line:

> From pronouncing the profession of faith you do not become a true monotheist (*muwaḥḥid*):
> "The mouth does not become sweet from the name of sugar."[36]

An important part of learned poetry is the chronogram, *tārīkh*, which consists of meaningful combinations of letters whose numerical value produces a date.[37] Thus the date of the Prophet's death, 11 of the Hegira, can be found from the word *hū*, "he": *h* is 5, *w* is 6; "his small *he* was united with the great *He*, that is God." Those who enjoy more complicated schemes can derive the same date by saying *Az Muḥammad zamāna khālī būd*, "Time was empty of Muḥammad": take the name "Muḥammad" (92) from the numerical value of *zamāna*, "time" (103)—subtraction is being indicated by the phrase "is empty, devoid"—and the result is again 11.

The real art was to construct chronograms that reflected a deceased person's character or the feelings people had about him. The number of disagreeable chronograms devised on the death of Fayżi, the emperor Akbar's favorite court poet, is remarkable. Among them is a *tārīkh* alluding to his fondness for dogs: *Chi sagparastī murd*, "What a dog-worshiper has died," which yields A.H. 1004 (A.D. 1595).[38] And when a much-hated Persian politician died on 25 December 1837, someone invented the chronogram *Shab-i walādat-i ʿĪsā bi-murd īn dajjāl*, "In the night of Jesus' birth this Dajjal died"[39]—a fine pun, as Jesus is supposed to combat the Dajjal at the end of time, before the resurrection and Last Judgment take place.

There is likewise no dearth of chronograms celebrating the achievements of the pious. When ʿAbdul Jalil Bilgrami in India died in A.H. 1143 (A.D. 1730), his grandson Azad discovered no fewer than three Koranic passages referring to the bliss of Paradise that calculated out at 1143, one of them being *muqarrabūn fī jannāt an-naʿīm*, "drawn near in the gardens of pleasure." This scholarly poet also composed on the same occasion a *ghazal* in which the letters of each hemistich result in 1143.[40]

Numerous chronograms can be found honoring weddings, the births of princes, victories, the completion of mosques—virtually any happy or august event.[41] One also finds them in building inscriptions and on tombstones, and in later centuries, especially in the Subcontinent, writers invented book titles whose numerical value corresponded to the date of completion or publication. The well-known Urdu reading book *Bāgh u bahār* (Garden and Spring) tells by its very title that it was completed in A.H. 1217 (A.D. 1803).[42] It is thus advisable to analyze the titles of books from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries when considering their place in literary history, and indeed the history of such titles may be a literary topic in its own right.

دو کون در نظر من یکی شد ای خواجه
تو در شمار سه و چار و پنج و شش مباش

The two worlds have
become one in my view,
master—
you may continue to
count three, four, five,
and six.

The art of chronograms leads us naturally to number symbolism in general and the playful use of numbers, which is common in Oriental literature.[1]

Following the Pythagoreans, Muslims love odd numbers, and a *ḥadīth* claims that "God is an odd number (*witr*) and loves odd numbers." For this reason certain formulas and acts are repeated three or seven times, for the predilection of the ancient Oriental civilizations for these two sacred numbers was preserved unremittingly through the millenia.

Two, the number of created beings as contrasted to the Oneness of God, appears not overtly but in rhetorical features, as in the contrasting pairs that form such an important rhetorical device in Persian poetry. How far one may adduce in this connection the remnants of Iranian dualism is a question which cannot be answered without a great deal of speculation.

Three shows itself in the threefold repetition of formulas and in the tendency to form tripartite groups: one has only to think of *islām*, *īmān*, and *iḥsān*—the general faith, the interiorized faith, and action in the knowledge that every act is "immediate to God." The religious way is made up from *sharī'a*, the religious law; *ṭarīqa*, the mystical path; and *ḥaqīqa*, the Divine Truth. Even the mystical stages and stations are usually divided into one for the rank and file, one for the elite, and one for the elite of the elite. More important in our context are the three stages of the *nafs*, "soul": *nafs ammāra*, "which incites to evil" (Sura 12:53), *lawwāma*, "the blaming soul" (Sura 75:2), and *nafs muṭma'inna*, "the soul at peace" (Sura 89:27). And at the end of the road the wayfarer discovers that wine, cup, and cupbearer are one and the same, that lover and beloved are united in the higher reality Love,[2] and that the one who remembers the beloved is joined with his remembrance in the object of remembrance, that is, the Divine Beloved.

Four is connected with cosmic order, as it indicates the four cardinal points and the four elements, which were known to the Muslims through Greek sources. The four humors play a considerable role in medicine, and to escape from the "created four" (elements) was the hope of the seekers, who thus liked to utter the "four *takbīr*," the fourfold repetition of the call *Allāhu akbar*—that is, the funeral prayer—over everything created.[3]

Five, related since ancient times to Venus and hence to sensuality and organic life, is the number of the five senses and therefore dangerous for the striving person. But in Islam it is also the number of the "pillars of religion"

and of the daily ritual prayers. And it is said that life consists of five days—one week, not counting the days of birth and of death.[4] The magic propensities of the hand with its five fingers, the so-called "Hand of Fatima," for both cursing and protection from curse are well known.[5]

Just as the poet wants to flee from the four (elements), he would also leave behind the five (senses) and the six (directions). For six is an important cipher for the created world. Although the hexagonal basis of the honeycomb is not mentioned (to my knowledge) in poetry, six is a number connected with creation (which, after all, was completed in six days), and resembles a cube: the four directions, along with the upper side and the lower side. Cross-relations between this "cube" and the die could be made easily.[6] The poet would love to be rescued from this cube—although the six directions that capture him could be quite lovely, as Ḥafiẓ says:

> My way was closed from six sides: the mole and the down
> and the curl and the face and the cheek and the stature![7]

The poet might also feel driven by the unpredictable movements of the six-sided die of Fate, which often brought him into a hopeless situation in backgammon, called *shashdara*, "six-doored." Sometimes he experienced the enigmatic character of life in this world, from which he could not easily escape, as a six-sided mirror, in which the poor parrot Soul becomes hopelessly confused.[8]

Seven has had a central position in number mysticism from the days of ancient Babylon, for it is the sum of the ideal three, which is the first "real" number and basis of the first geometrical figure, the triangle, and of four, the number of cosmic order. Premodern Islamic science knew seven planets, including the sun and the moon; and the four phases of the moon, each comprising seven days, were most important for the regulation of sacred and profane time. Thinking of the planets, one perceived heaven and, parallel with it, the earth, as consisting of seven layers each. In a witty line Ghalib compares the sky to a turned-over wine cup and tells the cupbearer:

> For this reason let me have another few cups of wine![9]

The expression he uses is *ēk dō chār aur*, "yet one, two, four more," which colloquially means "a few more" but, added up, results in seven, the number of the spheres.

Seven was also, more generally, a magic number from the oldest times onward; hence the sevenfold repetition of various actions. As such, seven plays an enormous role in folklore, especially in Iran, where one finds a vast number of *haft*—"seven" things—which express number, items, distances, times, etc. The best known is *haft sīn*, "seven things beginning with the letter *s*," mainly foodstuffs, which should be found on the festive table of Nauruz.[10]

One is especially likely to find sevens in mystically tinged literature, for the seven steps, or grades, on the mystical path are known equally in East and West: in Persian one thinks immediately of ʿAṭṭar's *Manṭiq uṭ-ṭayr*, which tells of the soul-birds' wandering through seven valleys before reaching the goal of their quest.

Sometimes Islam speaks of eight paradises and seven hells, for the number of paradises must be larger than that of hells to prove that God's mercy is greater than His wrath.[11] In any case, eight was the number of eternity in many traditions, transcending, as it were, the seven created days, and in this context, which also allows for beautifully symmetrical structures, it often inspired the design of octagonal gardens or mausoleums. Gardens of this kind, divided, like Paradise, by four watercourses, are sometimes called *hasht bihisht*, "Eight Paradises," which is also the title of Amir Khusrau's epic composed as a counterpart to Niẓami's *Haft Paykar* (Seven Pictures, or Seven Beauties) with its astrological symbolism. And one should not forget that books with titles like *Gulistān* (Rose Garden) are usually divided into eight chapters as though they reflected a true garden.[12]

Whereas the Semitic and Iranian traditions emphasized the seven, nine is more common in the Central Asian and Turkish world, where one finds the concept of nine spheres. This idea is reflected in Amir Khusrau's *mathnawī* entitled *Nuh sipihr* (Nine Spheres), but the idea was common long before him. Khaqani, for instance, mentions *nuh muqarnaṣ-i dawwār*, "the nine revolving stalactite-adorned [spheres]."[13] One wonders whether the nine spheres in the Islamic context add the Divine Throne, *ʿarsh*, and Divine Footstool, *kursī*, to the traditional spheres, or whether we must accept Turkish cosmology. Ninefold repetition of ritual and social acts was common among Turkic peoples, as is attested both in the history of the Mamluks in Egypt and in Mughal customs.[14]

The doubled nine, eighteen, is, at least in the Mevlevi tradition, connected with the eighteen introductory verses of Rumi's *Mathnawī*.[15] But long before that there were traditions according to which there exist eighteen thousand worlds.

Ten, being the first closing number of the decade and also consisting of the sum of 1+2+3+4, is at times used for ordering purposes. The genre of the *dihnāma*, "ten[-part] book," comprises groups of ten letters or chapters, often love stories.[16] Sometimes in poetry one finds allusions to *al-ʿashara al-mubashshara*, "the ten who were promised Paradise"—the most faithful companions of the Prophet.[17]

With the exception of Shia concepts of the twelve imams, or occasional references to the twelve signs of the zodiac, twelve plays only a minimal role. But fourteen is more prominent in poetry: it points to the full moon, fourteen days old, which manifests its radiance most beautifully in the youth of fourteen years. In Shia environments one may think of the fourteen innocent ones. In grammar and calligraphy fourteen letters out of the twenty-eight in the Arabic alphabet are known as "sun letters" and the other fourteen as "moon letters," and there are also fourteen dotted and fourteen undotted letters. When Ibn ʿArabi speaks of the "maid of fourteen," he means the most perfect soul. Such speculations were particularly important in the literature of the Ḥurufi sect, who saw everything revealed in letters.[18]

Among the higher numbers the only one truly central to Islamic lore and life is forty.[19] This was, from time immemorial, the number attached to trials and tribulations, patience, and final release. Just as Israel had to spend forty years in the desert and Jesus stayed forty days in the wilderness, and just as Lent lasts forty days, so Muslims know the Sufi's seclusion for forty days, his *arbaʿīn* or *chilla*, during which he is supposed to mature spiritually. ʿAṭṭar's *Muṣībatnāma* describes the spiritual journey during these forty days in moving images. On the folk level, one may recall the amusing poem by the Turkish mystic Kayğusuz Abdal from the fifteenth century, who devoted a lengthy poem to his attempts to tame his "lower soul," presenting the latter as a tough old goose which just will not become edible:

> I cooked it forty days, and it never got done![20]

Many taboos are connected with forty, such as a woman's impurity after giving birth or the impurity that ensues after a death, restrictions in both cases being lifted after that critical number of days are over. But one is also

supposed to become, eventually, fully intelligent at age forty. In later Sufi lore one reads about the forty steps between man and God, which can be symbolized by the letter *m*, which has the numerical value 40. This is also the letter typical of Muḥammad as Aḥmad (see chapter 17).

One finds allusions to fortyfold seclusion in very unexpected places, as when Ḥafiẓ sings:

> We suffered forty years and were grieved, but finally
> we were brought into shape by the hand of a two-year-old wine.[21]

Even wine itself can be described as a good Sufi who lives for forty days in seclusion in the bottle in order to mature and thus to become pure.[22]

One should not, however, forget that forty can often serve as just a large, round number: ʿAli Baba's forty thieves belong in this category, as well as the Turkish saying that the offering of one cup of coffee will bring forty years of friendship.

Once in a while one encounters seventy or seventy-two in poetry, mainly in connection with the seventy-two sects in Islam, one of which will be the group that is saved; their discord points to useless diversity. Ḥafiẓ speaks, in a line that has become proverbial, of the "fighting of the seventy-two sects," which he considers to be meaningless.[23]

Nor should one forget that two hundred sometimes appears as a major round number:

> His kindness was not matched by that of
> two hundred mothers![24]

An old popular custom, in both East and West, is to compose chains of numbers in ascending or descending order. A charming example in our present context begins with the *ʿashara al-mubashshara*:

> The ten friends from the nine spheres and the eight paradises,
> and the seven stars from the six directions have written this letter:
> among the five senses and four elements and three souls
> God has not created in *both* worlds a *single* idol like you![25]

Such chains occur several times in love poetry, especially when one tries to tell how many kisses one would like to be given:

> It is nice when I ask that idol for a kiss to calm me down:
> one or two I borrow, and three, four, five, and six she gives out of
> kindness![26]

Aging poets play with the double meaning of *shaṣt*—both "sixty" and "net"—and praise the lucky person into whose net anything falls after fifty.[27] And as the beloved's two long tresses resemble the long letter *lām*, whose numerical value is 30, they can form a net ($2 \times 30 = shaṣt$, 60) to catch a hundred fishes—that is, hearts.[28]

The Persian and Turkish expression "to wait with four eyes," to wait longingly, inspired Qasim-i Kahi to write:

> It's not that I've put on spectacles because of my age;
> rather, because of the *khaṭṭ* [script, facial down] of the young boys
> my two eyes have become four—[29]

as if his eyes had doubled in order to read the delightful "script" which the fine, dark down had written on the page of his youthful friend's cheeks.

As such wordplay usually sounds fairly insipid to the Western reader, who misses the witty combinations of words, I refrain from giving more examples of this frequent use of numbers, though they formed an important ingredient of Persian poetry, especially in later times.

Mathematical processes per se are scarcely mentioned in poetry. The only instrument which occurs comparatively often is the pair of compasses—or the compass, in some American usage—the simple tool that one uses to draw a circle. It could remind the poet of his own turning head or else of the turning of the spheres. Ḥafiẓ is the spokesman of those who found in this object a good example of their own state of mind:

> Ḥafiẓ's head turns as a result of his love for your down and mole
> like compasses, but the heart point is firm.[30]

But he also phrases his experience differently:

> The intelligent are the point of the compasses of existence,
> but Love knows that their head is turning in this circle![31]

Salman-i Sawaji sees it from another angle:

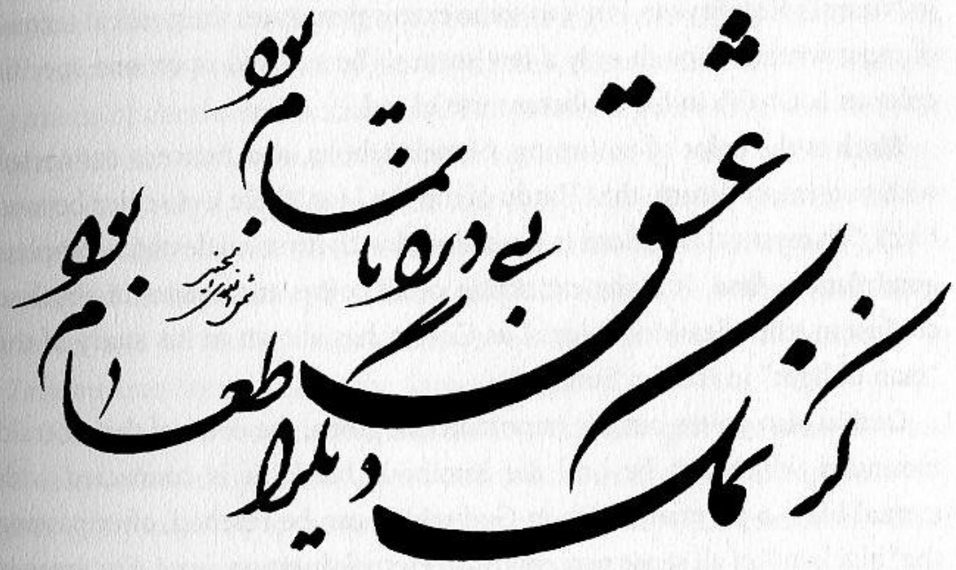
For a while the turning of this circle has,
like compasses, separated us and again brought us together.[32]

One will often be reminded of John Donne's use of the same motif in his "Valediction." Pure Sufis, on the other hand, would see in the movement of the compasses a metaphor for the development of creation—"the dot which became a circle,"[33] as Shah Niʿmatullah says.

But the ultimate paradox of the human situation is described in a fine mathematical image by a late Indo-Persian poet:

I am under constraint yet have free will in the execution of every work—
I am acting and not-acting: I am the zero in counting. . . .[34]

20 Colorful Things from the World around Us



Love without pain is incomplete, for salt in the kettle makes the food [tasty].

The created world is full of colors, contrary to the colorless Light of the One, and it is also filled with countless items, whose use in daily life inspired Persian poets through the centuries. The reader of Persian, Turkish, and Urdu poetry will find that poets often used specific colors to describe gardens and stones, brocades and birds. Yet no comprehensive study of color symbolism has appeared, with the exception of Henry Corbin's articles and brief remarks.[1] Color symbolism finds its most perfect expression in Niẓami's *Haft Paykar*, but it to some extent permeates the poetical texture of most writers, though only a few seem to be so fixed upon one specific color as is Ghalib in his exuberant use of red.

Black is the color of mourning, of melancholia, and hence is connected with outermost Saturn, the "Hindu of the sky," for "there is no color beyond black." In mystical traditions it is associated with mystical death in complete annihilation, *fanā*. It is the extinction of all colors and senses in absolute confusion, the "death of colors," as Corbin has shown in his study of the "man of light" in Iranian Sufism.[2]

Corbin also points out the importance of green, the color of the emerald mountain which lies beyond the luminous black. It is connected with eternal life—a permanent life in God which can be reached, after passing the "blackout" of all sense perception, in eternal duration, *baqā*. For green is the color of Paradise and the color of Islam: according to legend the Prophet was wrapped, after his miraculous birth, in green and white garments.[3]

In the innumerable poems in Persian and Persianate literature that are devoted to green, verdant gardens one feels that the poets are speaking not only of the real color of trees and meadows which refresh one's eyes but also have in mind the garden's paradisiacal connotations. One may even think in this context of cross-relations with the healing propensities of the emerald, the great medicinal gem. Angels and saints are both *sabzpūsh*, "wearing green," and in Paradise the clothes of the blessed will also be green.[4] Furthermore, green is generally the color of Khiżr, the mysterious prophet-saint (see above, chapter 3) and patron of travelers, who is particularly associated with rivers: his very name is derived from the Arabic root *kh.ḍ.r*, "being green." Green always suggests happiness and points to freshness, as in the many compounds like *sar sabz*, "with green head," that is, "fresh and blossoming."

Blue, on the other hand, is generally a negative color. A blue eye is considered dangerous, and its influence must be counteracted by the use of

objects of the same color, such as blue beads. Dark blue, *kābūd*, is the color of the old ascetic dress, and hence it is often used to express the poet's none too friendly regard for the dry ascetic. The violet flower is portrayed as *azraq (ajraq) push*, wearing a bluish robe, as it is the poor little ascetic in the world's flower bed. The dark blue sky in its ascetic garb is called infidel, faithless, unreliable—it is showing off, but (as Rumi says rather drastically) this poseur ascetic does not even wear pants beneath his blue gown.[5] If one wishes to describe the sky's beauty, one calls it green, or turquoise, not blue.

As for red, it is the color of blood, of roses, tulips, and wine, of rubies and garnets, of cheeks and bridal veils. The greater a poet's skill, the more red items he can pack into a single verse by combining roses with blood-red tears, fiery tulips, *arghuwān* trees that carry wine flasks, and the radiant cheek of the beloved. Red being also the color of the martyrs' blood, it occupied an important place in the religious dimensions of poetical imagination and is further connected, as we saw earlier, with Nimrod's or Zarathustra's fire as well as the flame of Sinai.

The beloved's rosy cheeks and the lover's black gall (melancholia) and cheeks yellowed by suffering lead us from colors as they were applied very frequently in poetry to the field of "poetical medicine." Lovesickness was, of course, not invented by Persian poets but goes back to the Greek world; Persian writers adopted it as a favorite topic.[6] It is the beloved for whose sake the lover turns lean and pale like a piece of straw (magically attracted by amber, the beloved); his cheeks are yellow, his eyes or his tears red, and the throbbing of his pulse tells the wise physician the reason for his illness.[7] His heart is in a terrible state, and even more his liver, an organ which from ancient times was regarded as the seat of feelings (hence it helps produce the blood-colored tears that flow incessantly from his eyes). His only hope is that the beloved may come and act as his physician, quickening the dying lover like Jesus with his breath—for the wound can only be healed by the one who caused it.

The lover's complaint can also be chronic. As Sa'di says to his beloved,

> I never get enough of you, for the one smitten with dropsy
> never gets enough water.[8]

Many lovers in poetry seem to suffer from consumption and therefore are pale as gold, unlike the red-cheeked beloved, who is always sleek and

handsome.[9] Others complain of bile and stomach problems, and when such a lover wants a kiss from his beloved he is bluntly told that sweets are bad for the bilious.[10]

Only a specialist could begin to detect all the qualities of herbs and drugs mentioned or alluded to in poetry. Roses and rose oil are good for headache, violet oil was supposed to cure melancholia. The word *tiryāq*, "theriac" (an antidote), is either a term for everything that may be useful or else denotes the beloved, whose presence alone can cure the lover. Oriental medicine, *ṭibb yūnānī*, still uses, among other ingredients, infinitesimal doses of metals such as gold and silver as well as pulverized gemstones and pearls. The *mufarriḥ*, "tranquilizer," contained, as we mentioned earlier (chapter 11), some ruby.[11]

Poets sometimes directly describe the act of diagnosing an illness: besides feeling the pulse, one finds numerous allusions to the urine bottle, which reveals the causes of an illness. Rumi goes so far as to compare man's heart to such a vial, because by looking into it the spiritual physician, the *shaykh* or *pīr*, can see what is wrong with the patient.[12]

Sometimes we likewise find actual descriptions of treatment, as when ʿArifi tells about his sore eyes:

> The white salve on the red eyelid
> is exactly (*bi-ʿaynihi*) pulverized salt on roast meat.[13]

His suffering apparently has not kept him from inventing a not exactly beautiful comparison and pun on the word *ʿayn*, "eye" and "essence."

It is very likely that many expressions and allusions in Persian poetry contain remarks about ailments and their cures, and about popular superstitions and similar aspects of everyday life in Iran. Thus when Khaqani admonishes someone who is about to do something utterly wrong, he says (with a *tajnīs-i nāqiṣ*):

> Why do you intend (*qaṣd*) to have yourself cupped (*faṣd*)
> while the moon is in Libra?[14]

Under that constellation bloodletting, otherwise considered very beneficial, was not recommended, nay, was even dangerous.

One even finds remarks about the ailments of animals. We learn, for

example, from Qasim-i Kahi that a dog with rabies dies when it sees water. The poet satirized his rival—that dog!—with the words:

> Thanks to my weeping, the rival becomes restless,
> because the mad dog dies by [looking at] water![15]

So the lover's tears may have at least one positive result: even though they bring him no nearer to the beloved, the sight of them may kill the nasty rival.

Like medicine, alchemy too lent a number of terms to poetry, for (as its very name, *al-kīmīyā*, reveals) it was developed mainly by medieval Muslims whose goal was the transformation of base metal into pure gold—a goal well known to mystics of Islam and of other religions as well. In its practice the base qualities and instincts were to be isolated and removed by a long and painful process during which the base metal (the lower soul) was tried in the crucible (of love). One hoped for its ultimate transformation into pure spiritual gold, with all worldly pollutions burnt completely away. That is why the alchemy of love, the elixir, and the philosophers' stone were so frequently used in poetry to symbolize either purification through suffering in general, or the mystical experience itself: the pale, "golden" cheeks of the true lover bear witness to this painful process of suffering in the fire of love.[16] Here again, the specialist's eye might well discern much more latent alchemical vocabulary than the reader would suspect.

In this connection one may also think of the magnet. Hard as the iron heart may be, it cannot escape the magnet's powerful attraction,[17] any more than the tiny piece of straw can avoid the (electromagnetic) attraction of amber. The Persian name for amber is in fact *kahrubā*, "straw robber," and straw, pale and worthless, is a fitting image for the lover.[18]

Medical and chemical terms lead us toward the realm of home life and culinary imagery, which offered poets a good number of metaphors and comparisons. But the translator may find it tricky to deal, for example, with the word *kabāb*, "roast meat," in poetry, all the more as this word—though now commonly used in the West as well—rhymes so beautifully with *sharāb*, "wine." There is scarcely a poet who does not at some juncture turn his liver or his heart into *kabāb*, roasted in the fire of love or, even more romantically, in the fire of the beloved's rosy cheek, while his blood,

intoxicated by passion, turns into red wine.[19] That means, of course, merely that his heart was impaled and seared "on the spit of Love,"[20] but the underlying idea is that everything raw has to be "cooked," has to mature through pain. This concept permeates poetry and offers poets a set of images not always very tasteful to a modern Western reader—though one eventually gets used to finding lovers aboil on the fire or in the kettle of Love or turning (as if on skewers) into various *kabābs*.

But we also discover beautiful images from the culinary realm.[21] Poets knew that the kettle makes noise only as long as the water is not yet boiling:[22] as soon as steam begins to evaporate there is no sound left—is this not the likeness of the lover, who talks fervidly about his love and his beloved only before he has experienced perfect union? The comparison was also used, by the Sufis, for Ḥallaj, whose word *anā'l-ḥaqq*, "I am the Absolute Truth," seemed to indicate to them a still immature position.[23] And does not smoke vanish, when fire burns with a pure flame?

Among Persian poets Rumi is the special master of concrete kitchen imagery.[24] He mentions all the different foodstuffs for which the city of Konya was and still is famous, and not only do the kettle Heart and the pot-lid, man's tongue, appear in various places both in his lyrics and in his *Mathnawī*, but even the preparation of boiled chickpeas served him as a metaphor for the maturing of the soul through tribulation.[25] This very down-to-earth imagery, however, is an exception among classical Persian poets; one may find something similar in the verse of a few Turkish folk poets, such as Kayğusuz Abdal.[26]

Most people would combine the sugar lips of the beloved with salt, for "salty," *bānamak*, also means "charming" and "lovely." One must remember that during the Middle Ages salt was a rare and expensive commodity; yet only salt could give taste to otherwise rather insipid food.[27] Sugar too was rare, being imported mainly from Egypt, and Rumi describes the little pieces of paper into which druggists used to wrap small quantities of the precious sweet.[28]

Nevertheless it is the *kabāb* whose smell indeed rises from all Persian *dīwāns*, so that we are often confronted with flaming roses that roast nightingales, with fiery sighs and burnt livers—all this to describe the poor lover's suffering, and in the course of time the poets indulged in these

images increasingly. But even Sana'i, a representative of the earliest stratum of poetical language, wrote in one of his *qaṣīdas*:

> It is not nice that Gabriel should burn with love for you—
> for then one would have to hope for a broiled bird from Riḍwan
> [the Gatekeeper of Paradise]![29]

Ghalib's wish for salamander *kabāb* at a banquet where the wine is blood[30] sounds rather modest compared with Sana'i's idea!

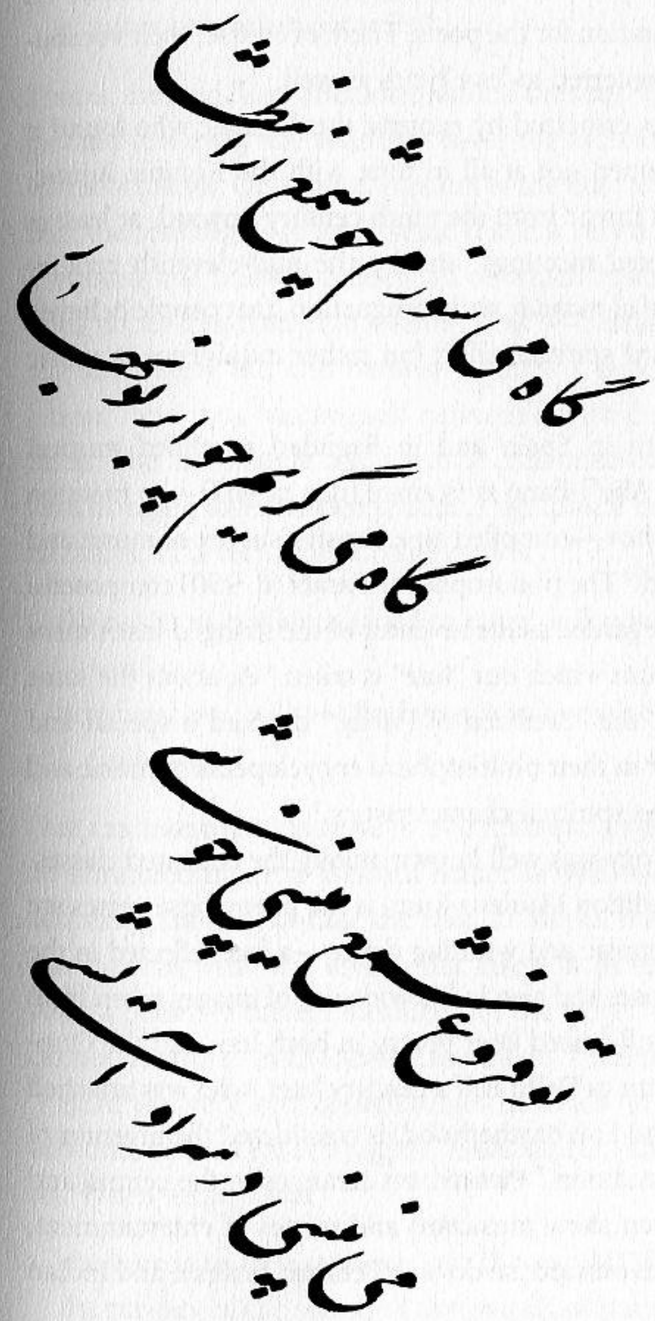
The only poet who was fond of celebrating real food was Busḥaq al-Aṭ'imma (ca. A.D. 1400).[31] At times one really enjoys his imagery and his tendency to compare flowers and everything else in the world to foodstuff (see chapter 12 above for his narcissus).

Love may be the great cook that roasts the human heart, but it is also the teacher, and the heart is a child that attends Love's classes.[32] Here again we must look first to Rumi, who transformed the normal life of a child, almost from the moment of conception, into a fine series of symbols of human development and, by doing so, gave his readers enduring, realistic descriptions of daily life in medieval Konya.[33] Otherwise this group of images is scarcely seen, for children appear in poetry amazingly rarely. To be sure, the young beloved can be described as a child who is not yet legally liable for punishment, even though he should kill his admirer (see chapter 4). Children also are mentioned in the romance of Majnun and Layla, who went to school together; later in the same story, children throw stones at the demented lover, a scene which became a topos in itself. Otherwise, as far as I can see, school children are mentioned mainly in later poetry, where now and then one finds the tear that hangs from the eyelashes compared to a little child that wants to run away. One high-ranking Mughal officer spoke of a little tear-child which he wanted to keep back, but could not,

> though children from good families rarely leave their home . . .[34]

Entertainment, Music, and Festivities

21



گاهی سوزم چو شمع از انتظار
گاهی گریم چون بهار ابر بهار
تو فروغ شمع بینی نه گداز
می نبینی در سرش آتش چرا

Sometimes I burn like a
candle from expectation;
sometimes I weep like a
spring cloud.
You see the candle's
radiance and are happy,
but you don't see the fire
at its head.

Only a rather restricted number of metaphors from the realm of the ordinary medieval home became generally accepted poetical images. Those taken from games and entertainment outshine them by far, for in a society where poetry was largely intended to serve at courtly ceremonies and to celebrate pastimes of the grandees or games of the noblemen, such as hunting, polo, and nightly drinking parties, those activities became an important source of inspiration for the poets. Then, of course, their vocabulary and imagery was transferred to love lyrics as well.

Music had always been criticized by exoteric theologians, who found it disturbing because it seemed not at all in tune with the Koranic injunctions.[1] But the Sufis used music from the ninth century onward, at least at some of their more relaxed meetings, and by the mid-eleventh century Hujwiri stated in his *Kashf al-maḥjūb*, with indignation, that people believed that Sufism was not a hard spiritual effort but rather indulgence in music and dance.[2]

At Muslim courts both in Spain and in Baghdad a refined musical tradition developed, and Abu'l-Faraj al-Iṣfahani (d. A.D. 967)—to mention only one outstanding author—compiled an extensive survey of music and singers of this early period.[3] The philosopher al-Farabi (d. 950) composed a treatise on music and is regarded as the inventor of the stringed instrument called *al-ʿūd*, the word from which our "lute" is taken.[4] At about the same time the Ikhwan aṣ-ṣafa, the "Brethren of Purity," devoted a special and highly interesting chapter in their philosophical encyclopedia to music and its mathematical as well as spiritual characteristics.[5]

Thus musical terminology was well known among the educated classes. In the Persian-Turkish tradition Maulana Rumi is the poet whose verses are most directly born from music and whirling dance—a fact reflected in the rhythmical forms he chooses and also in his wide use of images taken from both arts.[6] His example influenced later poetry in both Iran and the Ottoman Empire. Amir Khusrau in Delhi half a century later, who was attached to the music-loving Chishti Sufi brotherhood, is considered the inventor of the Hindustani musical tradition.[7] Pictures on ceramics in the central and eastern Islamic world often show musicians and scenes of entertainment, from the early Middle Ages onward; so do later Persian, Turkish, and Indian miniature paintings.

In the Persian tradition the double meaning of the word *parda*, both "veil" and "musical mode," invited much punning. In the most famous application of this combination Rumi says at the beginning of his *Mathnawī*, about the flute:

Pardahā-ash pardahā-i mā darīd.

Its tunes tore apart our veils.[8]

That is, the reed flute's melodies remind the soul of its forgotten spiritual origin and tear away the veils that cover the individual's spiritual eye in this world of matter. Once the complaint of the flute tells of the primordial reedbed, the soul begins to understand that it is veiled here from its true home.

Among the musical modes, all of which have meaningful names, one finds rather frequently the solemn *ʿIrāqī*[9]—perhaps not only because of its musical beauty but also because it forms a good rhyme with *sāqī*, "cupbearer," and thus was in itself connected with descriptions of festive banquets. The ʿIraqi mode could also be combined easily with the Ḥijaz mode, thus bringing together two pseudogeographical concepts. And Amir Khusrau sings, in a very typical combination:

Do not in vain take the road to Ḥijaz, following the adversary's words;
otherwise you will not find your way to the veil (*parda*) of the lovers (*ʿushshāq*).[10]

One can interpret this verse in two different ways: a mystic (and probably an untutored modern Western reader as well) would understand that the addressee should not take the road to Mecca, for there he would not find communion with true lovers. But taken in its technical, exterior sense it gives a perfectly correct meaning, for the singer who uses the Ḥijaz mode cannot modulate from there to the mode ʿUshshaq.

Ḥafiẓ was very fond of such verses, in which he played wittily with names of modes such as Rast (Straight), ʿUshshaq (Lovers), Nawa (Melody), and so on. When he says that

the humming of love threw into ʿIraq and Ḥijaz
the melody of the sound of the *ghazals* of Ḥafiẓ of Shiraz,[11]

he combines the names of three locations and four musical concepts apparently without any difficulty. Jami, however, surpasses him—if not in beauty, then in refinement—when he says in a praise poem for Sultan Ḥusayn Bayqara of Herat:

> For me, the *maqām* [melody; or, place] Ḥusayni deserves the epithet "royal,"
> for lovers (*ʿUshshāq*) constantly sing the melody (*Nawā*) of his love.[12]

With these words he flatters not only the king but alludes with the term *Nawā* to Ḥusayn Bayqara's powerful minister Mir ʿAlishir Nawaʾi, who in the late fifteenth century played an important role as a poet in his native Chaghatay Turki, as a translator, and as a patron of poets, calligraphers, and Sufis.

Names of musical instruments likewise appear in meaningful combinations. Thanks to Rumi the reed flute, *nay*,[13] gained fame as the symbol of the soul that longs for the primordial reedbed and comes alive when the beloved's lip touches it, for only the musician's breath can make it sing (just as Adam was given life by God's breathing into him). Like the flute, the lover should be hollow, "with an empty stomach" or without marrow, in order to be able to sing.[14] The flute can also be compared to an arrow, because of its shape and its material—but even more because its sound tears the lover's heart asunder.

> Like a flute my body was pierced full of holes from your arrow
> and produces sounds when one breathes into it,

says a Turkish poet.[15]

But even more logical is the flute's relation to the reed pen, for the pen is cut from the reedbed as is the flute, and while the flute divulges the secrets of love by its sound, the pen divulges them by writing them out.[16] Indeed, has not good Arabic calligraphy itself often been praised for its "musical" quality? And exactly as Rumi's flute casts fire into the world, the reed pen ignites hearts by the words it writes.

Thus it is only natural that both these reed instruments are connected in poetry with sugarcane, because of their inherent sweetness. The sweet tunes of the flute and the sweet words written by the pen allow poets to create

additional cross-relations.[17] Iqbal finally regards the flute that is separated from its native ground as more fortunate than the reed that abides at home—were the reed not taken from its home it would not be able to sing, for only separation makes the soul creative.[18]

Just as the flute can sing only when someone blows into it who is *hamdam*, "of the same breath," that is, fully aware of its longing, so the *rabāb*, a small stringed instrument, and the *chang*, or harp, sound only when the beloved's fingers touch them.

> As soon as you begin to act as my musician,
> I become now a harp, now a *tār*—day and night,[19]

says Rumi. The harp, bent from grief, is pressed to the musician's breast and wants to be caressed by his fingers, while the *tār* (string) of the *rabāb* longs to be plucked by the plectrum. Poets have thus claimed on occasion that all their veins or nerves have turned into the strings of one or another of these instruments,[20] or that cruel Time—that is, Fate—twists their ears as though they were a lute (whose tuning pegs, at the end of its long neck, have to be tightened frequently).[21] As for the *rabāb*, it offers in addition a good rhyme word for the two important ingredients that belong to a cheerful party: *kabāb* and *sharāb*, roast meat and wine.

One may find rather concrete allusions in musical imagery, as when Ẓuhuri of the Bijapur court sings, with a threefold *tajnīs* (*chang*, "harp"; *jang*, "war"; *Changīz*, Genghis Khan):

> Bring the Aṣaf "Melody," take up the harp,
> for the Changiz "Grief" beats the war drum.[22]

Aṣaf was the wise vizier of Solomon who, as the poet presumes here, would be able to check the martial enterprises of Genghis Khan: that is, music can dispel grief.

As for the drum, *duhul*, it carries within it the sounds of the outward world and makes noise; its voice, as the oft-quoted proverb says, is pleasant only from afar. Amir Khusrau therefore remarks:

> I am a drum which, when it is tuned
> is filled with the noise of the world.
> If I do not shout at the enemy during battle
> it is the [king's] order that my skin be taken off my head.[23]

But even amid the most enjoyable banquet poets could suddenly be reminded of their unrequited love, as Baki (Baqi) sees it:

> The goblet weeps blood, the tambourine beats its breast, and the
> flute complains—
> it seems that the whole assembly is hit by Love's grief.[24]

The sound of music could also induce its listeners—at least in the mystically inclined groups—into a whirling dance during which shirts were often torn and which could result in mass ecstasy. The whirling dance—called *samāʿ*, "hearing"—as it became institutionalized in the order of the Mevlevis, the so-called "whirling dervishes," greatly inspired the poets, for dance and, in particular, dancing around a sacred central object has been a religious rite since time immemorial—whether one thinks of the Dionysian and Apollonian forms of dance in ancient Greece, or of Indian temple dances, or remembers Fra Angelico's delightful representations of the heavenly dance or even the grim, horrifying pictures of the *Totentanz*, the dance of Death with his next victim in medieval and modern European traditions. Whichever image is envisioned, for whatever reason one might have, to dance is to leave one's earthbound center and circle around a different center of gravity; it means participation in a new life-rhythm after one has been freed from material fetters, be it only for short moments of happiness.[25]

For Rumi the mystical poet, the *samāʿ-i samāwī*, the heavenly dance, is the mystery that permeates the entire universe—a universe which, as he says in one daring poem, came from nonexistence into existence on the day of the primordial Covenant, when the sound of the Divine address *Alastu bi-rabbikum*, "Am I not your Lord?" sounded to non-existence like a beautiful music that induced it to dance and thus to become, to be existentialized. Sun and dust specks, spirits and angels and devils, the living and the dead, all participate in this cosmic dance which revolves around the Central Sun, the Eternal Beloved.[26]

It is understandable that allusions to dance are found in particular in garden poetry, for once the nightingale appears as the music master and sings Davidian melodies, while the spring breeze lovingly touches twigs and grass so that they immediately begin to dance, the lover too would like to

join them in this musical feast.[27] On such days the tulip will offer the wine cup, and poets, enchanted by the beauty they see revealed in nature, will not heed the warnings of sober orthodox teachers. Rather they will play with "the daughter of the grape," that "bitter," *talkhwash*, drink which the ascetic calls "the mother of evil things," *umm al-khabāʾith*,[28] but which appears in ever-changing disguise: as the beautiful Yusuf in the prison of the bottle, as fire, as the fragrant rose, as liquid ruby, as life-granting Jesus, or as Water of Life.[29] Or else the poet may enjoy his wine in the company of the Old Man of the Magi or the young Christian cupbearer, who equally offer the wine of love, whether in the convent or in the tavern, *kharābāt* (lit. "ruins"). Yet as Kalim reminds his readers, one should not drink in the daytime but learn one's etiquette from the sky, who drinks (red) wine only when dusk appears (and the western horizon is red).[30]

One interesting aspect of the poets' innumerable drinking scenes are their descriptions of the bottle and the glass in which the wine is offered—a drink which reminds them by its color of the medicine *mufarriḥ*, one of whose ingredients was pulverized ruby. The wine comes matured from sitting in a barrel like Plato (that is, Diogenes)[31] or perhaps emerges from forty days' seclusion like a good Sufi:

> The wine in the Chinese porcelain bottle and in the Aleppan glass
> became medicine for the lovers,[32]

says Ḥafiẓ. For indeed finest flasks and goblets were made of Aleppan (*ḥalabī*) glass, which was often beautifully decorated with gold and enamel painting or inscriptions, for northern Syria had been long renowned for its precious glass products, especially enameled objects. Azraqi seems to be the first Persian poet whose verse alludes to this fine material.[33] It was easy, then, to compare the heart to a fragile *ḥalabī* flask[34]—and there are all too many stones that can break such a vessel, as the poets knew.[35] But the image could be skillfully inverted: did not Ḥafiẓ charmingly adduce the state of the poor fellow who tries to repent from the sinful pursuit of drinking the prohibited wine?

> The foundation of repentance, which was as firm as a stone—
> look, how a [glass] goblet could break it so easily![36]

But even before him poets had decided to pour their wine into an enameled glass and cast stones instead at the "glass of the sky," that is, destroy the treacherous heavens, which appeared to them like a glass bowl turned over. And, as Azad Bilgrami was to ask centuries later:

In dealing with this old sky, does it matter
whether it is of European, Aleppan, or Syrian glass?[37]

The bottle, which constantly bows down as if it were performing the prostration in ritual prayer, or goes around from one guest to the next as if circumambulating the sacred Kaʿba in Mecca (as poets would lightheartedly say)[38]—this bottle can also contain something different than wine. The story of the fairy or genie in the bottle, derived from the story of Solomon, who put some ill-behaved djinns into bottles and cast them into the sea, was well known in Persian lore (see chapter 3 above). It appears quite early; Rumi uses it several times,[39] and it is especially prominent in the Indo-Persian tradition. Poets liked it because it showed well that in the fragile bottle Heart one can find a lovely magical being: the beloved, whose dwelling place is the purified heart.[40] Hence they might refer to the art of *parīkhwānī*, of conjuring up this beloved being, whom they address:

I said: "You should dwell in my heart!"
She said: "The fairy indeed belongs in the bottle!"[41]

During evening parties light was required, and everyone who has admired the artistically decorated niches in Persian and Indian palaces, where lamps and candles could be placed at night, knows the predilection of Oriental princes for colorful illumination. Thus the candle inspired poetical language to a large extent, beginning with Manuchihri's famous *qaṣīda* about it,[42] which suggests even at the outset the full range of possible allusions and comparisons.

The candle represents the beloved, in whose light the moth immolates itself; yet it also appears frequently as an image of the sad lover, who consumes himself during the night:[43]

O you of silver body—the candle of whose bedchamber have you been?
If I am burnt—whose niche did you decorate?[44]

Thus asks Ḥazin, for the very idea that the beloved fills someone else's room with splendor makes the forsaken lover burn and melt like a candle. And "do you not see," asks Sauda,

Do you not see that I, at gatherings,
weep while smiling—like a candle?[45]

This combination of simultaneous smiling and weeping remained typical of most images in which candles are involved. Sometimes too the weeping candle and the smiling morning are juxtaposed—both sets of images were in use through the nineteenth century.[46]

The beautiful beloved is called *shamʿ-i maḥfil*, "the candle of the assembly" (a term of which Jami was very fond): around the beloved all hearts are thronging like moths that thirst for death. This very expression is in fact still used for the most important and attractive participant at a meeting or party. To protect his "candle" from the wind, Jami wants to make a house for it from paper, that is, put it into a lantern (which will also hinder rival "moths" from coming too close).[47]

The candle's shape, especially its flame, resembles a tongue which tells its story in its own silent language.[48] One thus finds inversions of the image, such as "the flame of the tongue" and similar expressions, mainly in the "Indian style," as when Ghani describes a rather noisy party:

The fire of the wine makes the flame of the voice sharp—
one must bind the musician's string on the winegourd.[49]

That is, wine makes people talk and scream; the wine bottle, which often was a dried gourd vessel, should be closed by transforming it into a musical instrument, for these too were often made from gourds. This is a comparatively simple example of the combination of flame and tongue, but many verses are so grotesque that they defy translation into "logical" sentences.

The candle has other aspects as well. Ṣaʾib warns his reader:

Everyone who has lifted his neck like the candle [wearing] a golden crown,
will often sit neck-deep in his own tears.[50]

And poets also know that

one cannot heal the rebellious by a swordstroke—
have you not seen that the candle becomes more haughty when one
cuts off its head?[51]

This idea—that the candle becomes more radiant after its wick has been trimmed—occurs sometimes in allusions to the fate of Ḥallaj, whose fame spread after his execution. It has been used in allusions to recent historical events as well.

After the candle has illuminated the night with its smile, talking with the silent eloquence of its flame yet all the while weeping, it becomes silent as soon as dawn appears:

In dark nights my goal is to annihilate myself like the candle![52]

says Ḥafiẓ, and such thoughts were repeated by dozens of writers. In later centuries they would claim that it is fitting that the poet whose white hair shows the dawning of "the morning of old age" become silent like a candle in the morning light.[53] This develops into a tragic scene: the poet sees himself as the candle of his own tomb, left to burn there in the fire of unrequited love and finally fade away, without anyone to look at him, until the only thing left of him is a little trace of smoke.[54]

But not all writers indulged in such melancholy images. The idea could also provoke parodies, as in the verse of the Urdu poet Nasikh, who claimed that he would rather see on his tomb the slim white leg of his sweetheart than a white candle.[55]

An extension of the candle motif is that of fireworks, *chirāghān*, which were and still are popular in India at certain occasions such as the *shab-i barāt*, the night of the full moon in the eighth lunar month, Shaʿban, and, in the Hindu setting, at Divali. Indian miniatures attest that weddings were always accompanied by colorful fireworks as well as special illuminations, which likewise can be observed every day in the modern Subcontinent. Ghalib, with his preference for "a dance of sparks," uses the motif often and claims:

Every dark brand of my heart
is the seed of a cypress of fireworks![56]

Every pain he experiences will burst into a beautifully shaped coruscation of verses.

Now and then the candle is mentioned in connection with the shadow play, which had reached the Islamic world from China during the early Middle Ages. Mystics found it a fine metaphor for real life, with God as the Great Playmaster, the *magister ludi*. Shadow play occurs in Persian literature most prominently in ʿAṭṭar's *Ushturnāma*,[57] and in the Arabic tradition of approximately the same time, shortly after 1200, both the poet Ibn al-Fariḍ and his contemporary Ibn ʿArabi used it.[58] The charming Chinese figures are moved by the invisible hand of the Great Puppeteer, who will cast them, ʿAṭṭar reminds us, again into the "dark box of unity" once the play is over.

Sometimes the sky was imagined as the screen for the play, sometimes the human heart, sometimes also the whole world. And are not lover and beloved bound to each other like candle and lampshade?

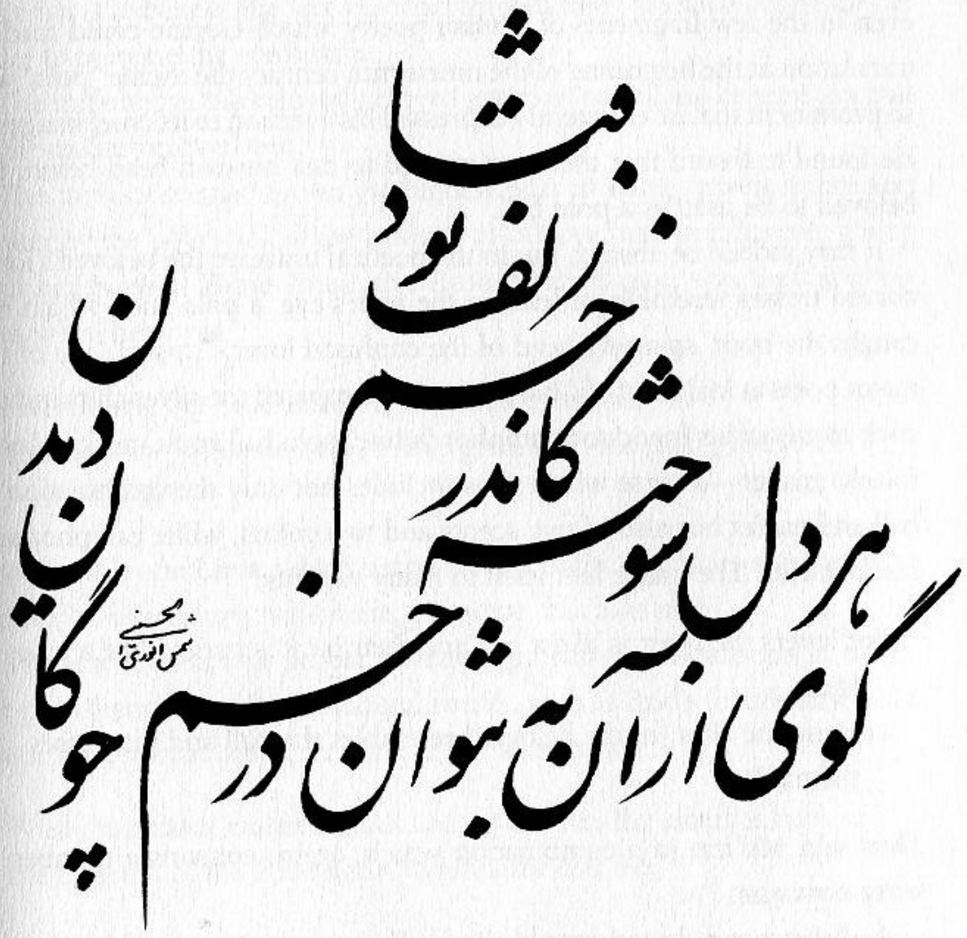
For his soul in his body lives on the light of the beloved's cheek.[59]

In connection with festive events one also finds the use of incense and the burning of aromatic black aloe, *ʿūd* (an East Indian wood),[60] a word that is often used in connection with ʿId, the Feast of Fastbreaking, thus creating a nice *ishtiqāq*. And Anwari praises his patron by claiming that for his sake

the black aloes-wood Night is burnt in the censer of the Sun.[61]

But there were times when poets or princes repented of all the delightful but, alas! so sinful pursuits like wine and music and, in the case of the Persian Shah Ṭahmasp, also fine arts. It was Ṭahmasp himself who sang in colorful verse of his resolve to turn to colorless and innocent water.

Sometimes we went for pulverized emerald [*bhāng*, hemp].
Sometimes we became defiled by liquid ruby [wine].
Beneath every possible color there was defilement—
we washed it off with the [clear] water of repentance
and became quiet![62]



You cannot see a better
ball in the curve of the
mallet than the burnt
heart that fell into the
twist of your tress.

Princes apparently spent a considerable amount of time at *bazm u razm*, banqueting and fighting—that, at least, is the impression one gets when reading classical Persian poetry. The most prominent of the games they practiced was polo, which had come from Central Asia and which has remained very popular in the mountains of the Hindu Kush range to this day. It offered the poets fine material for their images—so much so that even in the few fragments of Persian poetry which Goethe could read in translation at the beginning of the nineteenth century the theme "polo" was so prominent that he eloquently expressed his aversion to its cruel imagery.[1] He found it absurd that the lover wanted to cast his own head before the beloved to be used as a polo ball.

It may indeed be absurd, but in the poetical universe the beloved's long, curved tresses resemble, at least in the poet's eye, a polo stick which has caught the poor, spinning head of the confused lover. ʿUnṣuri, one of the major poets at Maḥmud of Ghazna's court, compared the silver chin and the dark tresses of his friend to a camphor (white) polo ball and a musk-colored (black) mallet—a verse which thus includes not only the combination of ball and mallet but also of two scents and two colors, white camphor and black musk.[2] The image lent itself to many variants.

For lovers the heart is like a ball and their back is curved like a polo stick,
because the chin [of the beloved] resembles the ball and his tresses the mallet.[3]

Thus says Muʿizzi in a combination which, again, contains a number of witty contrasts.

And was not polo the typical game of the "princely rider," the king or beloved for whom even the heavenly spheres were servants, or toys?

Every month, on the playground of the sky, for the sake of your game,
[being] crescent and full, the moon becomes like a mallet and ball![4]

Amir Khusrau, in whose verses the drunken Turk, wildly galloping across the polo ground, is a frequent sight, uses the polo motif often,[5] but in Ḥafiẓ's verses it has been changed quite a bit:

O you, who drew upon the moon an *ambra*-colored mallet:
make me, whose head turns in any case, even more confused![6]

When the poet thus requests his friend's favor, he ascribes his confusion to the beautiful moon-face and the curved, mallet-like eyebrows (black as ambergris) of the beloved, thanks to which his own head spins like a ball. His wish is to behold the face that had thrown him into such confusion, in order to increase the confusion.

The mole above the beloved's curved eyebrow could also be seen as a ball in the mallet's curved end.[7]

The mystics seemed to see the highest bliss in being driven hither and thither by the polo stick of the beloved or of Love itself and happily giving their heads away. Yunus Emre, the Turkish folk mystic, was their spokesman when he wrote:

I have made my head a ball in your tresses' mallet—
like Majnun [or, demented], I have gone onto the polo ground of that Layla.[8]

The wordplay on Layla, which suggests *layl*, "night," includes an allusion to the mallet-like tresses, which are, of course, black as night.

Western readers will probably better appreciate comparisons in which the polo theme is applied to natural events, such as Baki's (Baqi's) fine verse about the crescent moon on the Eve of Fastbreaking:

With the golden mallet he touched, as it were, the emerald ball—
the crescent of the Feast again mounts the colt Sky,[9]

as if the young crescent were a golden polo stick and the evening sky a greenish ball. (The comparison of the sky to a horse—and usually to a restive horse—was not unusual.)

One may grasp just how extensively the polo theme served as a metaphor for love relations by considering that ʿArifi's small poem *Gūy u chaugān* (The Ball and the Polo Stick) was copied many times by the leading calligraphers of Iran, including Shah Ṭahmasp himself.[10] It also appears in a number of illustrated manuscript copies, and indeed polo scenes occur very often in illustrations of Persian poetry or even as single-page drawings or paintings.

If kings sought to emulate the art of warfare while playing polo, as Rumi explains in his prose work *Fīhi mā fīhi*,[11] hunting too was a royal occupation and is therefore represented in numerous Persian and Indian miniatures.[12] Poets thus had to know the vocabulary of hunting as well as that of polo. Farrukhi says, rightly:

There are four things for kings to do:
To feast, hunt, play polo, and make war.[13]

The prince—and the beloved too—thus often appears as a successful hunter who can easily seize lions. They are an easy prey for him, as much as the soft-eyed gazelles that are waiting for him impatiently. Amir Khusrau says, in one of his most frequently quoted verses, when describing the beloved's beauty and majesty:

All the gazelles of the steppe have placed their heads on their hands,
hoping that you, friend, will come someday and hunt all of them![14]

The prince or beloved can also be a lion himself, who overcomes his enemies as though they were small prey. The same is true for comparisons with the falcon:

Your majestic presence is like that of the falcon,
who is so strong the he can hunt the angel of death. . . .[15]

Thus Adib-i Ṣabir flatters his patron. For the high-soaring imagination of mystical poets, even Gabriel is only a lowly prey, for their goal is to catch God Himself in their snare—an idea put forth in the present century especially by Muḥammad Iqbal.[16]

Much as every long, sharp object could turn into a pen for the poet, it could also become as an arrow instead, and every bent thing resembled a bow. Most poets would probably have agreed with Sa'di's set of comparisons:

The shield (*sipar*) of patience (*ṣabr*) cannot withstand the arrow of separation.[17]

The impossible task of reaching God was expressed by Rumi in similar "hunting" imagery:

Oh seize the hem of His favor,
for suddenly He will flee!
But do not draw Him, like arrows,
for from the bow He will flee![18]

The imagery of bow and arrow is common in both panegyric and love poetry, for "the arrows of affliction" are hidden everywhere, especially in the beloved's eyelashes—which, launched from the bow of the eyebrows, always hit their target.[19]

Trapping animals is another kind of hunt, and the poor lover or poet may feel like a weak, trembling little bird in the snare—a snare or net which the beloved's tresses knit for him time and again. Or perhaps he is seduced by the mole on the friend's cheek, which is then understood as a tempting kernel of grain cleverly laid in the snare for the stupid, greedy bird Heart.

Almost every epic poem in the Persian language contains colorful descriptions of hunting parties, and similar descriptions are also part of panegyric poetry. All of nature is incorporated into these scenes, so that the poet has ample opportunity to sing of his patron's bravery, intelligence, and generosity in grandiose hyperbole. To this category also belong poems like Farrukhi's beautiful *qaṣīda* about the branding of the prince's horses, a masterpiece of elegance in which the poet, at the end, seems himself to become a creature that has been hunted and ensnared by the patron's generosity and has become, as it were, his possession, exactly like the horses:

Whosoever hath been captured by the noose and circling line
on the face and flank and shoulder ever bears the Royal sign.
But though on one side he brandeth, gives he also rich reward,
leads his poets with a bridle, binds his guests as though with cords.[20]

While polo and hunting were activities in which princes indulged often to enjoy nature and, in many cases, to continue their seminomadic life style, chess was also among their pastimes, and it demanded a more intellectual approach to reality. Chess is mentioned by panegyrists and *ghazal* writers alike; that the central piece in the game is the "Shah" made allusions to chess particularly fitting for panegyric purposes.

Firdausi's *Shāhnāma* tells how chess was brought to Iran from India and how the Persian vizier invented backgammon, whose simplicity was just the opposite of the complicated rules of chess. One thus sometimes finds that chess symbolizes a certain amount of free choice, whereas backgammon represents predestination, for nobody can change the movement of the dice.[21] A famous anecdote connected with this image illustrates the skill of Persian courtly poets. A king once threw two ones instead of the two sixes he needed to win his game, and was furious. But his poet, Azraqi, improvised the quatrain:

> Reproach not Fortune with discorteous tricks
> if by the king, desiring double six,
> two ones were thrown: for whomsoe'er he calls
> face to the earth before him prostrate falls.[22]

The king was so delighted by this clever homage—for if the ones were showing, the sixes must indeed be face down on the table—that he forgot his anger and remunerated the skillful poet.

As for chess, one often encounters the sentiment that human beings are merely figures on the chessboard of the world who are being moved about without knowing why and where. And some of the terms used in chess have ambiguous meanings that can express simple facts of life as well as point to the figures on the chessboard—an ambiguity very welcome to the poets. It was easy for them to compare the ruler and his soldiers to the figures in the game, as ʿAsjadi did for Maḥmud of Ghazna:

> The king played the chess game of the king with a thousand kings,
> and he checkmated every Shah in a different way.[23]

The verses in Khaqani's Mada'in *qaṣīda* that allude to King Nuʿman's having been trampled to death by elephants in his residence Ktesiphon have often been taken as a model of the rhetorical form *murāʿāt an-naẓīr*, "the harmony of equal things" (see above, chapter 2). Rumi used similar verses in which one can easily detect four or five terms from chess vocabulary, beginning with the seemingly simple statement:

> How happy is the *king* who *died* due to your *cheek*![24]

("Cheek," *rukh*, is in chess the "rook" or "tower.") And ʿAṭṭar uses chess imagery to warn against unnecessary anxiety about worldly possessions:

> Even if you became a shah, you will be checkmated by every beggar;
> for king of the [chessboard] mat of Certainty is he who is
> checkmated.[25]

That is, only he who gives himself completely to the Divine Beloved, to be, as it were, defeated by him, will reach true certainty.

Chess imagery continued through the centuries. The chessboard could represent human fickleness:

> How can you place your cheek on the area of single-coloredness—
> you, whose heart is filled with black and white like a chessboard?[26]

So Jami addresses a hypocrite. Two centuries later Sarmad compared his friends to chess pieces: two-colored, they carry the Koran tucked under one arm but nevertheless imitate Europeans and fight among themselves for the most advantageous place, just like chess pieces.[27] And Mir Dard admonishes his reader:

> Wherever you come, your goal is farther ahead—
> like a pawn in chess, one can never turn back.[28]

It is interesting to see that chess symbolism also plays a role in modern Indian literature. In dramas by Khwaja Muʿinuddin and by the Panjabi writer Pirzada, the black and white stones symbolize the conflicting Hindus and Muslims (on the "black" Hindu, see chapter 9).[29] But the game is also used to show how fatal a lack of decisiveness can be in times of crisis: Premchand's short story "The Chess Players," which was turned into a successful film by Satyajiv Ray, is a good example of the sometimes dangerous fascination that the game has exerted throughout the centuries.

To return for a moment to the other widespread game, backgammon, poets might think of their misfortunes as imprisonment in the *shashdara*, the hopeless position, and also see the world as a die whose movements nobody can foretell.[30] But though such allusions are sometimes, or indeed most of the time, rather negative, one should not overlook Ibn-i Yamin's

practical advice—that people must work together—drawn from the cooperation of the two dice in backgammon:

> Alone, they do not reach the house;
> but when the two dice support each other
> they will not suffer from the enemy's stroke.[31]

As for the real lover, he could not care less whether he loses or wins: he is like the gambler who is willing to risk everything, for what is the use of anything but Love? And thus he becomes *pākbāz*, someone who is willing to lose everything while playing.[32] That—we are assured by the poets—is true love, be it heavenly or this-worldly.

Dreams, Reality, and Bells 23

Listen to our story, for
in love we have become
a story—how long will
you sleep?

After spending one's day hunting and playing games or, in the scholar's case, reading and writing, the time for sleep came. The wayward wanderer who found some rest in a thatched hut by the roadside, the prince who had enjoyed his successful hunting party, the calligrapher who had spent his day in copying love poems, the craftsman who had fashioned a water jar or a bronze vessel—they all longed for rest. But before they fell asleep they might like to listen to a story or two, stories of past glory, stories of love and longing, or of the heroes of yore whose adventures expanded every time they were told. Did not Rumi say:

I listened to the stories of the lovers—
now I've become a love story myself . . .[1]

The most famous example of the combination of "sleep" and "story" is the framework of the Arabian Nights, in which Shahrazad keeps the king from executing her by inventing ever new stories until a thousand and one nights have passed.[2] And indeed the words *khwāb*, "sleep," and *afsāna*, "story," form almost a unit in lyrical poetry. It is of course possible to tell infinite tales about the long tresses of the beloved, black as night, and Fani asks, as do numerous other poets:

How could Fani [or, an ephemeral being] finish the story of your tresses?
The sleep of the Evening of the Distressed (*shām-i gharībān*) knows no morning.[3]

The darkness of these endless tresses exemplifies the poet's hopeless state. Dard, on the other hand, knows that

today, my friend, you find sleep from a tale,
tomorrow you'll sleep and become a tale.[4]

Sleep is the time when the lover hopes to see the phantom or dream image of his beloved: the *khayāl*, which is mentioned from early days onward. If the beloved does not appear before one's eyes in the daytime, one might as well spend the night in dreaming of him (or her).

I talk all night long with a dream image about the tales of my pain—
thus all my sleeplessness comes from these tales![5]

So says Amir Khusrau, inverting the original combination. A later poet from Kashmir describes his miserable state:

Coquettishly she said to me: "One night
I shall come close to you, friend, in a dream."
I thought on that, since I believed her word;
thus all my life has passed just like a dream. . . .[6]

A compatriot of his sings of the lover's paradoxical situation in a charming little verse:

All night long I dream that I'll reach union in daytime.
All day long I hope to see you at night in my dreams![7]

One of the finest verses about the beloved's dream image and the lover's sleep was uttered by Amir Khusrau:

I set a thorn hedge of eyelashes as a fence around my eyes,
so that your phantom cannot leave—nor can sleep enter![8]

And it would require a special study to show how Rumi tells about poor Sleep who, mistreated by Love's fist or else afraid of the salty ocean of tears, avoids the lover's eye.[9]

Sleep and the dream image, *khwāb u khayāl*, became the theme of several romantic epic poems in the Persian and Urdu tradition. The best known poem of this kind is Mir Athar's tale, by this name, to which Muhammad Sadiq has devoted an extensive analysis.[10]

Another aspect of the endless love story is the lover's relation to the mirror, for the heart should be polished like a (steel) mirror to reflect nothing but the beauty of the beloved. That can be interpreted both as a mystical experience and on the level of worldly love; in either case, the mirror presented to the beautiful Yusuf is the link. The theme, however, has so many layers that it cannot be treated simply as a poetical image: it reflects the fullness of human experience. And when the poet—like the violet—puts his head on the "mirror of the knee," he sees, in his contemplation, the beauty of the Divine Beloved.

The Prophet's saying that "people are asleep, and when they die they awake" was also ingeniously interpreted in the context of "sleep and tale":

Infidelity and faith finally come to one end:
the dream is one dream, but its interpretations are different.[11]

Now and then the poets allow us a look at popular customs and even superstitions. Since ancient times people have liked to sweep their sacred places, and when an early Arabic Sufi writer once remarked that "he who does not make his soul into a broom at the beloved's door is not a real lover,"[12] the expression was taken very seriously by some poets, who even expanded it. In Persian poetry the lover usually sweeps the street or the threshold of his beloved with his eyelashes,[13] although in Jami's verse the venerable *shaykh* may make his white hair or beard the broom of the sacred place, that is, the tavern.[14] But Jami also has an amusing turn of the image:

Yesterday I rubbed my eyelashes with hundredfold joy in the dust of his foot.
He said: "Jami, you are stirring up dust! Move your broom a bit more slowly!"[15]

But even that does not match the witty remark in Kamal-i Khujandi's verse:

He said: "If you want to pour water from tears on my threshold, then sweep it also with your eyelashes!" I said: *"Bi-chashm!"*[16]

The lover's reply means both "With the eye!" and "With pleasure!"

The custom of sweeping a saint's mausoleum is known to this day in Muslim countries. In Ankara the devout have modernized their practice and simply offer a broom to Hajji Bayram's mosque if a wish is fulfilled.

Another belief still current among some people is that moonlight is dangerous for linen and cotton, because it wears it out. Thus the beloved with his moonlike face causes the lover to grow skinny, as though he were a threadbare rag.

I said: "My body has been damaged because of your face!"
He said: "Does not linen become torn when the moon shines on it?"[17]

Thus replies the witty beloved in Muʿizzi's delightful dialogue.

But not only the lover suffers. The beloved too must be careful, for Beauty is always endangered, and the evil eye is feared throughout the Near and

Middle East. To avert the evil eye one recites *Wa in yakādu*, the last three verses of Sura 68, or else one burns the seed of the wild rue, *sipand*. Hence poets are quite willing to burn their livers or the pupils of their eyes like wild rue in the fire of love, in the hope of warding the evil eye from the beloved.[18] But even in early days a poet joked:

For him, neither fire nor rue are of use—
for his face [is] like fire and his mole like rue seed![19]

When the beloved himself resembles fire and *sipand*, what can one do?

Ghalib even wants to be completely burnt in love and feels so happy in the midst of the fire that he asks his readers to cast some *sipand* on him, to avert the evil eye of his rival, who may envy him in this blessed state[20]—a typical exaggeration of "Indian style" poets!

Poetical vocabulary became somewhat enlarged in the "Indian style," and one can observe there that certain objects turned into poetical metaphors at almost the same time that they began to appear in miniature painting.[21] Perhaps the most conspicuous of these is the hourglass, whose ever-shifting balance between emptiness and fullness fascinated the writers. Some poets compared the hourglass to the wine cup, but Kalim dared to use the term in his description of a famine in the Deccan, when the "hourglass World" was increasingly filled with the dead and emptied of the living.[22] His friend Ghani then saw himself as an hourglass, passing his life just in counting his breaths.[23] The connection with death seems to be a favorite with the poets. Mir Dard sees the deceased themselves as resembling an hourglass, drinking now sand instead of water.[24] And Bedil sighs:

We became annihilated, but our dust beneath the enameled sky
has not for a moment the scent of rest, like dust in the hourglass.[25]

And even the stern emperor Aurangzeb, so often blamed for his rather orthodox views, cannot help lamenting:

Too great is the grief of this world, and I have only one heart bud—
how can I pour all the desert's sand into an hourglass?[26]

Somewhat earlier than the hourglass on which emperor Jahangir was depicted sitting in state,[27] one finds in miniatures representations of people with eyeglasses. That occurs mainly when the artist portrays calligraphers

and painters. These eyeglasses were probably imported from Venice; the Turkish poet Me'ali mentions them at the beginning of the sixteenth century, and they appear in Indo-Persian poetry from the mid-sixteenth century onward—first, as far as I can see, in the verse of the inventive and witty writer Qasim-i Kahi.[28] Fani, taking up a mystical concept, thought that

the heart's eyeglasses lie in the mirror of the knee.[29]

That is, through sitting in meditation one finds illumination for the heart.[30] But Kalim, more romantically minded, sees the narcissus in morning time wearing spectacles made of dew,[31] and all of Kashmir seems to be wearing eyeglasses of ice during the winter season.[32] But he also admits that heaven itself must put on spectacles consisting of sun and moon to be able to admire the beauty of an extremely intricate piece of inlay.[33]

Other poets would rather convert the wine bottle into spectacles, so that they can better recognize the fine lines on the wine cup.[34] But—they ask, under the same image—how could an old man still hope for love?

How could one enclose a fairy in the bottle "spectacles"?[35]

Because his eyeglasses make him unattractive to young beaux, he cannot (as it were) capture any. How common the image was in seventeenth-century India may be understood from the comparison of extremely fine, translucent Egyptian sweetmeats to eyeglasses, which is found in the epic *Gulshan-i ʿishq* by the Deccani poet Nuṣrati.[36] Bedil, however, wants to make spectacles from the *ābila*, the blister on his foot.[37]

The blister was in fact a favorite term in the "Indian style," little as the word might seem to belong to the sphere of lyrical poetry. The *ābila* occurs even in classical Persian. Khaqani sees the stars as blisters on the sky's face[38]—a description that does not strike us as particularly aesthetic—and he discovers, in his Mada'in *qaṣīda*, that the lips of the Tigris are covered with blisters from the excessive heat of its sighs of despair.[39] Anwari, on the other hand, claims that "the foot of his heart" is covered with blisters as a result of his quest for the beloved.[40] Later poets elaborated this rather unpleasant motif in ever new combinations. When Ghani sings that

like that of the candle, our weeping too has no result—
every teardrop turns into a blister on our face,[41]

the image is at least logical and correct, for the wax of the "weeping" candle does indeed form little "blisters" on the candle's body. But other verses in this realm are truly absurd, to mention only Bedil's expression "the bell of the blister."[42]

Another favorite expression in late Indo-Persian style is *shikast, shikasta*, "broken," with all its derivations like "breaking" or "being broken." The reason for this fashion is not quite clear. Should one ascribe it to the desperate political situation in India during the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries? Or rather to the hope that perhaps a treasure might be found when the outward husk is broken? ʿAṭṭar saw that the millstone attains final rest from its constant turning only when it is broken,[43] and Rumi often alludes to the *ḥadīth qudsī* in which God promises that "He would be with those whose hearts are broken for His sake," as he also frequently mentions the treasure beneath the (broken) ruins—an image common to Persian poets.

Nevertheless it is remarkable that the term *shikast* occurs hundreds of times in Bedil's *Dīwān* alone, at a time that *shikasta* calligraphy had reached maturity—and the results of *shikasta* calligraphy are as difficult to decipher as Bedil's Persian verses. The quintessence of his philosophy of being broken (if one may use that expression) seems to occur in this verse:

If you succeed in breaking yourself like the bud,
you will hear the sound of your own leaping forth from the fetters.[44]

This means that by breaking all worldly relations and attachments and opening like a rosebud, as it were, tearing apart one's garment, one can find a way to absolute freedom, disappearing in the air of nonexistence like evaporating fragrance. Bedil's idea was echoed some 150 years later in Ghalib's Urdu verse:

I am not the blossom's melody,
I am the sound of my own breaking.[45]

The expression *shikast*, "breaking," may also have developed under the influence of the mystical brotherhoods, especially the Naqshbandiyya. This "sober" fraternity, which originated in Central Asia, played an important role in fifteenth-century Afghanistan, where some of the leading poets of Ḥusayn Bayqara's court were affiliated with it, most notably Jami. After its

arrival in India in Akbar's later days, its members played a considerable role in the development of Urdu poetry.[46] One expression which was taken over into poetry from the religious vocabulary of the Naqshbandiyya was *safar dar waṭan*, "travel in one's homeland," which means the interior journey of the seeker. Does not the candle travel toward its home, that is, toward extinction?[47] Thus asked the poets, and Mir Dard, one of those who used the term frequently, describes his state of mind:

Like the sphere, our heart has its home in journeying,
but one does not know where its wish will lead it in the end.[48]

Two centuries before him, Ṭalib-i Amuli had complained, in a related vein:

Because of our weakness every place where we sat down became our homeland,
and because of our weeping every direction where we went became a garden.[49]

Whether traveling or falling down from weakness, man seeks for the place where he will find peace, a true home in the tempest of events. This restlessness and longing for permanence shows itself in the increasing use of negative images. Though classical poets were, on the whole, generally able to transform even the unpleasant aspects of life—the fire of love, and tears and wounds—into images of sheer, translucent beauty, later poets seem to have observed only the passing shadows of the world and not the permanence behind it. That led in the late seventeenth century to the frequent use of images like the "footprint in water" or simply the "footprint."

The people in the streets, they trample
on me as if I were a footprint—
O my past life, where did you leave me?[50]

Thus asks Mir Dard who, as he thinks, has fallen so low that he cannot get up without being annihilated, just like a footprint.[51] Or else he claims to be "as invisible as a trace on water."[52] Even stronger is the verse of his poetical ancestor Bedil:

Like tears that drip from the eyelashes into the dust,
I have lost myself in my own foot's trace.[53]

More outlandishly, Bedil also describes his stature, bent by grief, as the "eyeglass of the trace of my foot": that is, he has become completely circular.[54] Compared to this flight of imagination one almost enjoys the remark by Kalim, that the traces of his bloodstained feet lie fallen on the ground like autumn leaves.[55]

A term almost impossible to translate is *khamyāza*, "yawning," which especially worries those who want to render Indo-Persian poetry into English or German verse. This word is a favorite with Indo-Muslim poets, who have used it as an expression for never-ending longing. Everything that opens wide can be a representative of *khamyāza*. It may be that ʿUrfi was the first to make this term poetically acceptable when he sang in his praise of God (a *qaṣīda* consisting exclusively of contrasting pairs of concepts):

He has thrown the haste of thinking into the skirt of the arrow,
and the custom of "yawning" into the pocket of the bow.[56]

That is, the arrow "thinks" and acts extremely fast, whereas the bow seems to open its mouth widely as though it were yawning.

Bedil sees envy as a pair of scissors with its mouth open:

Even if it has cut apart friendship, envy does not rest:
the scissors' mouth yawns more widely the more it cuts![57]

This is a fine application of the concept, and Bedil is probably also the poet to whom we owe the most beautiful and meaningful description of *khamyāza*:

The thirsty person's intoxication, o cupbearer,
corresponds to the measure of the cup:
If you are the ocean of wine, then I am
the always yawning mouth of the shore![58]

Did not Rumi once say, in a plain image, that grace is given according to the capacity of the seeker?

Endless thirst, infinite longing, remains the central theme of Persian poetry in all its manifestations. Is not everything in nature a sign that speaks of this longing in its own silent language, as ʿAṭṭar shows so perfectly in his *Muṣībatnāma*?[59] And Bedil, one of the poets whose work is permeated with expressions of this endless quest, sings:

Out of longing to see you, look how in the desert's breast
the shifting sand dunes beat like an exhausted heart![60]

In this desert, whose quicksand (*rēg-i rawān*, another favorite term of the "Indian style") consists of broken shards of Aleppan glass because all the festive banquet halls are destroyed[61]—in this quicksand the way can easily be lost.[62]

One can find there only a single helper: the sound of the caravan bell. The bell that calls the sleeping wanderers to pack up, because the caravan is moving again, is known from ancient Arabic poetry, and many writers would sigh with Ḥafiẓ:

How could we enjoy life in the dwelling place of the beloved,
when every moment the bell calls: "Bind up the litters!"[63]

But the bell gives also news from the caravan in which the lovely Layla may be traveling:

No one knows where the dwelling place of the beloved may be—
only that a bell's sound comes from there.[64]

Thus says Ḥafiẓ, and although the image is applicable to any human beloved, one can think here of the tradition that the revelations that overcame the Prophet Muḥammad were accompanied, in the beginning, by a ringing sound like that of a bell.

Alluding to the old image and wanting to determine his own place, Iqbal chose the title *Bāng-i darā* (The Sound of the Camel Bell) for his first Urdu *Dīwān* (1924), because he felt like such a bell at the foot of the Prophet's camel and had, as such, the duty to call travelers to the right path—that is, the direction to Mecca. The bell has to make noise: that is its duty, as poets have repeated again and again.[65] And the poet too cannot stop singing, or spreading his message in poetical words. Yet poets also knew that the caravan bell can be heard only as long as the caravan moves onward.[66] Once the goal is reached, it becomes silent.

Likewise the poet becomes silent once he has reached the greatest possible proximity to the beloved, let alone union. For the mystery of love and of loving union cannot be described and must not be revealed. The lover who

holds his friend in his arms cannot speak of the bliss of union, and the mystic who has found The Reality no longer has words, but sings God's praise without words, without tongue.

He who has reached the goal closes his lips from Why and How—
when the road is finished, the bell no longer has a tongue.[67]

Appendix

It seemed useful to add a number of examples from various areas of Persian poetry that make some of the concepts clearer and offer some additional information.

Poetry and Rhetoric

I'll tell you the [true] issue of poetry, Ghalib:
it is to draw the liver's blood from the veins of speech.
—Ghalib, [1]
Kulliyāt-i fārsī, 4: no. 281

That is, poetry is something that can be written only with one's heart's blood. The liver is, in Persian, the seat of feelings and the organ that supplies blood.

A talk in which there is no metaphor has no elegance;
a poem that has no metaphor has no salt.
—Ṭalib-i Amuli, *Dīwān*, no. 572 [2]

The aim is coquetry and ogling, but in speaking
it does not work without "scimitar" and "dagger."
We talk much the same of the contemplation of God:
it does not work without speaking of wine and goblet.
—Ghalib, [3]
Urdu Dīwān, p. 48

This Urdu verse by Ghalib sums up the attitude of Persian poets: metaphor is absolutely necessary, as reality can never be expressed in human words.

The tale of the moon, your face, was completed in the *maṭlaʿ* [the first *bayt*],
the story of your tresses went on long, until the *maqṭaʿ* [the last verse].

When I bind together the description of your face in one verse,
then a door from mercy will be opened in every hemistich.
—Jami, *Dīwān*, ghazal no. 791 [4]

The first *bayt* of a poem has to be splendid, radiant as the beloved's face, and the length of his (or her) tresses extends to the last line.

Are these two locks of hair on the whiteness of her cheeks,
or two marginal columns on the book of beauty?
or two nights of the two ʿ*Īd* festivals that came together?
or are these two of the seven *muʿallaqāt* hung on the Kaʿba?
—Azad Bilgrami [5]

This verse from Bilgrami's *Mirʾāt al-jamāl* (Mirror of Beauty) shows how each part of the beloved's body can be described with metaphors taken from all walks of life: the long black tresses surround the book of beauty, the face, as if they were scholia written in the margin, and if the face resembles the Kaʿba, then the tresses may be some of the famous pre-Islamic *qaṣīdas* which, it is told, were hung on the Kaʿba to honor them. The face, furthermore, is radiant like both of the two festivals which are preceded by an "eve."

O you who are pure like water, don't consider me lowly like dust,
be kind like the wind and don't burn this body of mine like fire.
—Abu Bakr al-Washi [6]
(ʿAufi, *Lubāb*, 1:285)

A pleasant use of *murāʿāt an-naẓīr*, the observation of related objects: here the four elements appear in one verse.

More complicated is a later example, in which the poet was able to place four days, four places, four flowers, and four elements in his verses:

The day before yesterday in Merw the tulip lighted a fire;
yesterday in Balkh the lotus flower fled into the water.
Today in the dust of Nishapur opened the rose;
tomorrow in Herat the wind will sift out the jasmine.
—Maulana Luṭfallah (Azad, *Khizāna-i ʿāmira*) [7]

Yet another poet uses a skillful *laff u nashr* to describe his state:

To say it briefly:
You have broken, burnt, carried off, robbed Mukhliṣ's
heart, patience, rest, soul,
and gone away.
—Mukhliṣ [8]
(Aṣlaḥ, *Tadhkirat-i shuʿarā-i Kashmīr*, p. 371)

A wish in complicated *taṣḥīf*, changing of diacritical dots, and reversion:

As long as the intelligent have a hat (*kulāh*) on their head like the hoopoe,
as long as the content grow a cloak (*qabā*) from the body like parrots,
may your enemy be like the *taṣḥīf* of *qabā* [i.e., *fanā*, "annihilated" فنا قبا]
and your envier like the reversed form of *kulāh* [i.e., *halāk*, "destruction" هلاك كلاه].
—Sanaʾi, *Dīwān*, p. 48 [9]

Poets often revert to the contrast between the minuteness of the beloved's mouth and the length of the beloved's tresses:

Jami hoped for the end of your tress.
I said to him: "Beware of extended hope!"
—Jami, *Dīwān*, ghazal no. 842 [10]

"Extended hope," to hope for something that is far away, was considered by the Sufis and the poets to be dangerous and almost forbidden. Hence Jami quotes the Arabic warning in this verse.

I said: "Thy mouth is no more substantial than an idea!"
He said: "The idea that you have formed of me is correct."
—Khan Zaman ʿAli Quli Khan [11]
(Bada'uni, *Muntakhab at-tawārīkh*,
3:239 [trans. p. 331])

This joke about "ideas" is one of the many variations that play on the "nonexistent" mouth, further elaborated in the following verse, which deals with a constantly repeated theme:

I dared to speak about a kiss.
He laughed and said: "Oh, Khusrau—where is the mouth?"
—Amir Khusrau, *Dīwān*, no. 1474 [12]

Allusions to the Koran and Religious Concepts

Your face is like a Koran copy without any mistake and flaw
which the Pen of Destiny has written exclusively from musk.
Your eyes and your mouth are verses and dot for stopping; the eyebrow a *madda* [lengthening sign],
the eyelashes signs of declension, the mole and the [facial] down letters and dots.
—Ismaʿil Bakhshi (Qaniʿ, *Maqālāt ash-shuʿarā*, p. 44) [13]

Your eye with its blandishments, your lip with its sugar smile,
make the commentary on the Sura "He created death and life."
—Jami, *Dīwān*, no. 137, p. 185 [14]

The eyes bring about death; the mouth, life. The allusion here is to Sura 67:2.

Before those with insight, the kingdom of Sulayman is wind—
probably he who is free from kingdom [and possession] is Sulayman.
—Khaju-yi Kirmani (Daulatshah, *Tadhkirat ash-shuʿarā*, p. 297) [15]

The constantly repeated advice that only freedom from possessions constitutes true kingdom.

The juggler who sits on the prayer mat of the blue expanse Sky
shines in the morning with the mark of piety on his face.
At midday he straightens himself up in prayer,
and when he, the imam, makes his prostration, the rest bow down as well.
—Mir Imami Mughbacha [16]
(Bada'uni, *Muntakhab at-tawārīkh*, 3:184 [trans. p. 258])

This is the sun, which appears and rises; finally, when it sets, the whole world, as it were, performs the prostration (in the late evening prayer) and goes to sleep.

He called out to the writers of actions and said:
"O scribe who notes down the good and evil actions of humans,
wash off ʿUrfi's book, for God Most High
has selected him among all His servants and set him free!"
—ʿUrfi [17]

The poet here expresses his hope that God will not look at his book of actions because he has been elected as a friend and is no longer a slave.

Eschatological imagery is applied by an early poet to the ideal rule of his prince, whom he praises with a skillful *laff u nashr*:

Due to the perfect justice of the Khusrau and the all-embracing security of the ruler,
pheasant and partridge and wild onager and ant have become in the world
the first dwelling together with the falcon, and the second one sleeping with the hawk,
the third one friendly with the lion, and the fourth one attached to the ostrich.
—ʿAbdul Wasiʿ Jabali (Daulatshah, *Tadhkirat ash-shuʿarā*, p. 84) [18]

Verses about the *tasbīḥ* (Rosary)

The Sky finds the same [pleasure] from separating friends
as children do when they tear apart a rosary.
—Yaḥya (Aṣlaḥ, *Tadhkirat-i shuʿarā-i Kashmīr*, 4:1705) [19]

The bead of the rosary was made from that *ambra*-colored [black as ambergris] mole;
the circle of the *zunnār* was made from the cross-like tress.
—Furughi [20]

The combination of tress and "cross-shape" occurs often.

The *shaykh* made the teeth of greed sharp with the toothpick;
the rosary hangs from his hand like the seeds of hypocrisy.
—Kalim, *Dīwān*, ghazal no. 224 [21]

The image of the rosary as seeds or grain set out to catch the heart of the ignorant, or as kernels by which the "seed of hypocrisy" is sown, is not uncommon. The toothpick (*miswāk*), like the rosary, is a sign of a good Muslim.

My heart pierced the pearls of the rosary of Love
and swept the dust of heedlessness from the realm of the soul.
One bud from the garden of the sweetheart's beauty opened
and said: "How glorious are the praises of His eternal face!"
—Jami, *Dīwān*, rubāʿī no. 50 [22]

In contrast to the negative remarks about the rosary in the example given above (no. 21), Jami here finds the constant use of the rosary of Love important, as it will lead to the acknowledgment of the eternal beauty of God's face.

Variations on Turk and Hindu

No Turk is born in Kashgar like him!
No cypress grown in Kashmir like him! [23]
—Muʿizzi
(Aṣlaḥ, *Tadhkirat-i shuʿarā-i Kashmīr*, 4:1829)

He is a Bulgharian Turk with a cheek like ermine and eyelashes like beaver—
Who am I that my arm could draw his bow?
—Khaqani, *Dīwān*, p. 650 [24]

Bulghar is the northern area near the Volga; ermine and beaver pelts were among the commodities imported from the Russian areas that lay to the north. The strength of Turkish archers in drawing their bows was famous, and is shown in many miniatures.

O moon-faced Turk—how would it be if one night
you would come into my room and say *qonuq gerek* ["I must stay as your guest"]?
—Suzani (ʿAufi, *Lubāb*, 2:194) [25]

Several poets, including Rumi, have used Turkish expressions in verses written in honor of a "Turkish" beloved. The formula *qonuq gerek* occurs several times: would the beloved Turk not stay with the lover?

My soul is darker than the tress of the beauties of Khotan;
my heart is narrower than the eye of the Turks of Ṭaraz.
—Anwari [26]

The narrow eye, like the small mouth, is a sign of "Turkish" beauty.

This red stream of tears on the yellow cheeks of the lovers—
[so] the caravans of Yemen carried the *maḥmal* toward Kashmir.
—Aṣil [27]

The red tears remind the poet of the red carnelian that was a famous product of Yemen. The *maḥmal*, a covered litter or palanquin, usually denotes the black cover of the Kaʿba, but here it is likely to mean simply a load of precious things. Kashmir is connected with the beloved's beauty.

You became enraged when I told you: "You are my Turk!"
I am sorry for that word—I am your Hindu!
—Baqli, *ʿAbhar al-ʿāshiqīn*, section 84 [28]

The lover offers himself as a dark-skinned slave to the beloved, who refuses to be called "Turk." Saʿdi uses the same contrast:

How nicely did Saʿdi say in the tune *ʿushshāq* ["Lovers"]:
"My Turk, throw off the veil [*parda*, also 'musical mode'], for I am your Hindu!"
—Saʿdi, *Kulliyāt*, 3: no. 362 [29]

A fine play with musical terms: the lover hopes that the beloved will throw away the veil—or that the musician who plays in the mode *ʿushshāq* will change to another mode.

That mole that sits in the corner of his lip is,
as it were, a Hindu child that fell into a sugar bowl.
—Ṣalabat Khan [30]
(Aṣlaḥ, *Tadhkirat-i shuʿarā-i Kashmīr*, A:149)

I am getting envious of your Hindu tress,
for that infidel comes with the intention to kiss your face.
Your tress, which reclines coquettishly on a rose petal—
look at that Hindu propping his foot on a Koran copy!
—Raushan [31]
(Aṣlaḥ, *Tadhkirat-i shuʿarā-i Kashmīr*, A:289)

This latter verse, composed by a Hindu author, evokes a double insult: a Hindu's touching a copy of the Koran, and even worse, placing his foot upon the sacred book, which Muslim law requires should be touched only by those who are purified

(Sura 56:78) and should never be touched with the foot. The tress, extending toward the immaculate face, performs the same sacrilege.

Somewhat friendlier is the idea that even an infidel might perform his ablution at the paradisiacal fountain:

I am amazed at the mole on his lip: lo, a Hindu child
performs ritual ablution at the brink of the Kauthar.
—Dhihni (Aṣlaḥ, *Tadhkirat-i shuʿarā-i Kashmīr*, A:76) [32]

I am amazed at your musk-colored Hindu mole:
an infidel has grabbed the Koran copy of your face.
—Hashim (Aṣlaḥ, *Tadhkirat-i shuʿarā-i Kashmīr*, A:538) [33]

Thoughts about the Bezel and Seal

The kings who had pitched their tents on the summit
similar to the sky, asking for dignity from it:
for some evenings and mornings in this heavenly shape
they have been sitting like a seal, and have got up.
—Mir Dard, *Dīwān-i fārsī*, p. 101 [34]

All glorious rulers pass away. Only their traces, like a seal's implant on wax, remain.

Like a ring-stone on which a prayer is engraved,
there is nothing in our house but the name of God.
—Qabil (Aṣlaḥ, *Tadhkirat-i shuʿarā-i Kashmīr*, A:305) [35]

As much as we are lowly, yet we are most high;
we are stone, but we are the Kaʿba of vision.
Do not seek from us any other name:
Like the bezel, we are the place of manifestation for the names.
—Mir Dard, *Dīwān-i fārsī*, p. 118 [36]

According to the theories of Ibn ʿArabi, the human being is the object on which the Divine Names manifest themselves. This is also meant in the next verse:

We became empty [blank] like the ring-stone, so much that
His name and sign have become our name.
—Mir Dard, *Dīwān-i fārsī*, p. 7 [37]

Complete selflessness, *kenosis*, enables man to receive the fullness of Divine manifestation.

On the lip of us who have no tongue, nothing but the friend's name passes:
like a bezel we have chosen one of the names.
—Fani (Aṣlaḥ, *Tadhkirat-i shuʿarā-i Kashmīr*, 3:1067) [38]

Just as a seal ring bears one name, the mouths of those who are speechless in love repeat only one name, that of the beloved.

Garden Dreams

Subtleness cannot be manifested without coarseness:
the garden is the verdigris on the mirror of the spring breeze.
—Ghalib, *Urdu Dīwān*, p. 38 [39]

It is an old saying that spiritual powers need a material veil to become visible: we cannot see the breeze, but we perceive the movement of the grass in the garden, which manifests the breeze. Verdigris points to metal mirrors, because the green color is needed to describe the grass.

The green leaves of the trees are for those endowed with understanding:
each is a book telling of the Creator's skill.
—Saʿdi, *Kulliyāt*, 3: no. 296 [40]

The idea that everything created praises the Creator with its own *lisān al-ḥāl*, "silent eloquence," permeates Persian poetry.

The garden has become like the assembly of Kisra, filled with houris and fairies;
the meadow has become the book of Mani, full of designs and pictures.
—Farrukhi [41]

Here two pre-Islamic figures are united: Kisra, the general term for a Sassanian king; and Mani the painter.

I never dare to enjoy the view of the garden,
for I weep blood and have a hundred rose gardens in my sleeve.
—Mir Dard, *Dīwān-i fārsī*, p. 51 [42]

The red roses remind the poet of his tears of blood, which turn him into a veritable rose garden. As with the similar English idiom, "to keep something in one's sleeve" means to carry it secretly.

The glowing of the roses has cast me in doubt today:
perhaps my nest on the rose twig is burnt again.
—Ghalib, *Kulliyāt-i fārsī*, 4: no. 78 [43]

A continuation of the previous verse: the garden is not only reminiscent of blood but also, and perhaps even more, of fire. That the roses burn the nightingale's nest is a traditional topos.

The garden became perhaps the sign Cancer, for the branches of its eglantines
raised in one night a thousand Siriuses.
—Anwari, *Dīwān* (ed. Nafisi), qaṣīda no. 12 [44]

Sirius appears in the sky in summer with the zodiacal sign Cancer; the radiant white eglantine blossoms seem each to be a Sirius.

If I should show my face in the ocean, the fishes' scales would turn into roses.
If I should spread my hair in the desert, it would become filled with hyacinths.
—Zeb un-Nisa (Aṣlaḥ, *Tadhkirat-i shuʿarā-i Kashmīr*, A:107) [45]

A remarkable hyperbolic expression of the rose cheek and hyacinth curls which could completely transform the world.

What is lovelier than that the lover sleeps weeping, and his beloved comes to the rose garden and pours roses on his pillow?
—Fighani, *Dīwān*, ghazal no. 213 [46]

One of the rare verses in which the beloved is kind to the poor lover!

His face is a garden, and what a garden! A paradise in spring:
the down greenery, the mouth a fountain, the cheek a rose parterre;
the mole that is drawn beside the tress
is a peacock with the head of a serpent in its beak.
—Qaniʿ, *Maqālāt ash-shuʿarā* [47]

The last sentence shows that the primordial Paradise is meant: the peacock carried the serpent into Paradise to seduce Adam and Eve.

There is the promise of a visit to the rose garden—what a wonderful ascendant [lucky star] for lovers!
The good tidings of killing are intended even though a meeting is not mentioned.
—Ghalib, *Urdu Dīwān*, p. 82 [48]

To see the rose garden reminds the lover of blood, and when the beloved mentions that she intends to visit the garden, the lover understands that she is intent on killing him and is happy to become her sacrifice.

It is the action of a man that keeps him alive:
the rose's name remains when it becomes rose water.
—Naẓiri, *Dīwān*, ghazal no. 61 [49]

The outward form may pass, but beauty and goodness carry the name of the former owner and save him from oblivion.

Birds and Beasts

You do not say for what reason the crow's wing became black like tar
and why the apparition of the peacock became colorful like a chameleon.
What was the reason for Huma and crow in creation?
Why did this one become so ill-starred and that one so fortunate?
—Sana'i, *Dīwān*, p. 537 [50]

The question of the meaning of creation, which was asked century after century by poets and thinkers, is posed here perhaps in allusions to the *ḥadīth* "The lucky one is lucky in his mother's womb, the unlucky one is unlucky in his mother's womb"—that is, everyone is predestined from the day of creation.

You are not a Simurgh that one mentions you without your being there.
You are not a peacock that one looks at you when you are there.
You are not a nightingale that one would tear one's garments due to your melodies—
So, what kind of bird are you, and how can one buy you?

—Sanaʾi, *Dīwān*, p. 1134, rubāʿī [51]

Such addresses to unreliable human beings who cannot be classified under any of the known categories of "birds" occur also in Rumi and in other poets.

The birds have learned the alphabet like little children.
The nightingale, reciting *al-ḥamd*, became the schoolmaster of the primary school.

—Khaqani, *Dīwān*, p. 42 [52]

The nightingale usually appears as the leader of a band of musicians or, as here, as the teacher of those who are beginning to learn the Koran, beginning with *al-ḥamdu lillāhi*, "Praise be to God" (Sura 1:1).

A hundred meadows have bloomed into roses from the heart of my confusion—
I am the nightingale of the painted garden—don't ask about my lamentation!

—ʿAndalib, *Nāla-i ʿAndalīb* [53]

The "nightingale of the painted garden" cannot sing, as he is also only a lifeless painting.

I am like a parrot and the world before me like a mirror.
Definitely I am excused when I do not see anything but myself.
Whatever my intellect instructs me from behind the mirror,
I bring just that meaning to my tongue.

—Khaqani, *Dīwān*, p. 248 [54]

The parrot learns speaking through a mirror behind which someone speaks. Thus every word of the poet is not his own, although he is reflected everywhere in the mirror world.

Get up so that you may see on the branch of the young plant
Parrots like emerald effigies.
Sometimes coral remains there from their beaks,
sometimes they spread peridot from their wings.

—Ghalib [55]

A traditional description where everything turns into gemstones. The red beaks of parrots are often compared to red stones; peridot is a lucid, greenish gem.

The duck, like a picture on marbleized paper
sits firmly on the ice.

—Kalim, *Dīwān* (ed. Thackston), muqaṭṭaʿ no. 24 [56]

A poor brownish duck on a winter day in Kashmir, where marbleized paper was very much *en vogue* in the seventeenth century.

Such love has Qays got for the peacock feather
that it would seem that he believes its eye to be the footprint of Layla's camel.

—Chishti (Bada'uni, *Muntakhab at-tawārīkh*, 3:215 [trans. p. 298]) [57]

Qays-Majnun saw in everything a trace of his beloved, Layla. Thus even the peacock feather, which was highly esteemed for its beauty, reminded him only of Layla.

Out of stupidity I made his dog acquainted with the rival.
Now they are friends, and I am repentant like a dog!

—Rafiʿi (Azad Bilgrami, *Khizāna-i ʿāmira*, p. 232) [58]

Hoping that his rival (that cur!) would be frightened away, the lover introduced him to the beloved's dog. The foolish plan backfired; now he's in a hangdog mood.

Oh, I am free from the wrong imagination of the colorful play of Time:
the peacock of this garden has flown away from my imagination.

—Bedil [59]

Life looks beautiful and colorful, but for those who reach higher insight it is like a flighty bird which no longer interests them.

Your dog has left my lean body;
the Huma has remained far away from my bones.
—Jami, *Dīwān*, no. 318, p. 255 [60]

The poor lover is not devoured by the beloved's dog because he is too bony; the Huma, who lives on bones, will not settle on him either. He is deprived of any kind of good luck.

Images Connected with Writing

O God, why does time obliterate me?
I am not a letter that could be repeated on the tablet of the world!
—Ghalib, *Urdu Dīwān*, p. 89 [61]

Human beings as letters are a common image. Ghalib expresses his complaints often in these terms.

If the page would receive one letter from the description of his sword,
paper and starch would fall apart.
—Kalim, *Dīwān*, qaṣīda, p. 50 [62]

Paper is coated with *āhar*, a fine starch, to make it smooth, and *āhar* is inseparable from the paper. Yet the patron's sword is so sharp that even one letter from its description would be sufficient to separate the two—and how much sharper would the actual sword be!

From His power the heavy mountain has become like the ring of *mīm*,
from serving Him the back of the spheres is like the curve of *dāl*.
—Sana'i, *Dīwān*, p. 351 [63]

God's power can transform even the mightiest and strongest things into small, curved, and unimportant shapes.

Everyone who opens his eyes toward the *mīm* of your mouth like a [two-eyed] *hā*:
I draw a needle into his eye from the *alif* of my *Ah*!
—Jami, *Dīwān*, no. 357, p. 307 [64]

The word *Ah* آه is combined of the long, needle-like *alif* and the *hā*; the *hā*, in its initial form, was called "two-eyed." The poet's "needle" will blind anyone who would dare to look at the beloved.

As the heart of little children turns to colored papers,
I make the paper in my letter to you ruby-colored from the blood of my liver.
—Jami, *Dīwān*, ghazal no. 655 [65]

In this verse, from a *ghazal* whose *radīf* is *kāghidh*, "paper," Jami alludes to the colored paper used for calligraphy; his young friend may enjoy it and not realize that its pleasant color comes from the lover's blood.

The tears of grief have not left any trace of my black [sinful] work:
the children have washed off my dark night like a *mashq*.
—Ra'ij (Aṣlaḥ, *Tadhkirat-i shu'arā-i Kashmīr*, A:79) [66]

The book of actions is, as we saw, often blackened by sins and may look like a *siyāh mashq*, a page on which letters and words are written on top of each other; but tears—here, as often, compared to children—have washed away the ink as if they were wiping off their wooden school slates.

Imitation of the generous is a stingy affliction.
What use would cloud paper be when the cloud has water?
—Bedil, *Dīwān* (Bombay ed.), p. 45 [67]

When stingy people try to behave like generous ones, it is of no avail, because the difference between the two is like that between a generous raincloud and "cloud paper," that is, marbleized paper, which of course cannot give anything.

When Khusrau writes the story of eye and heart,
the paper becomes wet from weeping, the pen catches fire.
—Amir Khusrau, *Dīwān*, no. 402 [68]

Yesterday there was a rival in the friend's party:
unfitting, like a misfitted letter.
—Shayda'i (Aṣlaḥ, *Tadhkirat-i shuʿarā-i Kashmīr*, 1:557) [69]

The harmony of the script is important, as is the arrangement of the letters on the *kursī*, the "throne" (the horizontal baseline on which the writing is grounded); one wrongly placed letter can spoil the beauty of the whole.

He sees the reflection of his *khaṭṭ* [facial down, script] in the mirror with such an aversion
that one would think a Christian were looking at a Koran copy.
—Afsar (Aṣlaḥ, *Tadhkirat-i shuʿarā-i Kashmīr*, 1:610) [70]

The young beau is so horrified that the Koran copy of his face is now changed by his first whiskers that he hates to look in the mirror, just as a Christian (so the poet assumes) would hate to look at the Koran.

The School of Life

For those with insight the flood of events is a school:
the beating of the waves is not less than the rod of the teacher.
—Ghalib, *Urdu Dīwān*, p. 83 [71]

How many copies did the child Tear see and wash away,
yet from confusion did not become acquainted with the book.
—Fani, *Dīwān*, p. 82 [72]

Tears flow and flow, and yet one does not learn how the book Life really looks and what is written in it.

When the old tavernmaster teaches the book known as *Peace with All*,
one can wash off the pages of the different religious sects with the wine of *tauḥīd* [monotheism].
—Fani [73]

An intelligent combination of the traditional idea of the *magus* who told Ḥafiẓ to color his prayer rug with wine, and the teaching sponsored by the emperor Akbar, "Peace with All." This lesson should be enough to obliterate the disputes between religious sects and perpetuate the faith in the One God.

In the school of life I have day and night the slate of wish at my breast—
there is no child in that school which knows by heart the Sura "Fidelity."
—Khaqani, *Dīwān*, p. 64 [74]

No one in the School of the World has ever truly learned fidelity, which, to the poet, seems like a sura of the sacred Scripture.

I am a child, but I am aware that from the blood of my heart
has that tree been tended from which my school tablet must be cut.
—ʿUrfi [75]

The child writes on a wooden slate, and the poet feels that his slate is filled with worries and his own heartblood.

Wherever my heart begins with the lesson "Madness of Love,"
you see that child, still learning the alphabet at school, as [equal to] a hundred Platos.
—Dhihni (Aṣlaḥ, *Tadhkirat-i shuʿarā-i Kashmīr*, A:70) [76]

Everyone who enters the madness of love is superior to all philosophers, even at the first step on the road.

This idea has been summed up in the lines:

You still read the alphabet of Intellect
and talk about the riddle of Love!
—Khaqani, *Dīwān*, p. 679 [77]

The Reed Mat (*būryā*)

Everyone who must write the manuscript of the etiquette of Poverty
rules off the page for "Body" with the design of the straw mat.
—Kalim, *Dīwān*, ghazal no. 316 [78]

When one wants to learn true poverty one sleeps on reed mats, which leave a striped design on the sleeper's lean, parchment-like body.

His lip sent out a laugh at the possessions of the dervish—
a hundred caravans of sugar came into the reed of the mat.
—Naẓiri, *Dīwān*, ghazal no. 262 [79]

A single smile of the beloved, or his laughing at the worthless worldly belongings of the dervish, fills the lover's straw mat with sweetness as though it were made of sugarcane.

To turn from one side to the other is my heavenly journey (*miʿrāj*).
The design of the reed mat became a ladder for me.
—Ghani (Ikram ul-Ḥaqq, *Shiʿr al-ʿajam*, p. 70) [80]

The dervish, or the poor lover, who sleeplessly turns all night long on his hard straw mat, feels as if the reeds were a ladder which, as he hopes, will bring him into the Divine presence.

The Pair of Compasses

The order of the country comes from the movement of his pen,
just as a circle appears from the turning of compasses.
—Farrukhi, *Dīwān*, qaṣīda no. 50 [81]

My beginning and my end are one in my turning;
we are the line made by compasses; our end is our beginning. [82]

The seeker's way begins in God and returns to Him; beginning and end fall together.

Colorful Things

The black night resembles your little curls,
the white day resembles your cheeks in purity.
—Daqiqi [83]
(Lazard, *Les premiers poètes*, 2:147)

May the eye of him who envies you be white like the body of a leper!
and the face of your enemy black like a dark, moonless night!
—Anwari, *Dīwān* (ed. Nafisi), qaṣīda no. 157 [84]

"White eye" means "blind"; this patron's adversaries are cursed in an often-used color combination.

Since the black and white box on the carpet of dust
is filled with fraud, we have quaffed red wine.
—Amir Khusrau, *Dīwān*, no. 1274 [85]

The "checkered" events produced under the two-colored (fickle) sky drive people, in despair, to drink wine to forget the whole fraudulent game.

The white work of the black heart of the sky that looks green
has given me a dark blue breast and red tears and a yellow face.
Its color remains like a bleacher's scar on me;
perhaps it has brought me out of the vat of the dyer.
—Khaqani, *Dīwān*, p. 864 [86]

"White work" is "whitewashing"; the sky appears green, not blue, but has a black, sinister heart and has tried the poet so much that his breast is filled with traces of beating, as if he had been beaten by bleachers, who pound laundry against stones.

The essences of all the multicolored glasses became clear
when the radiance of the Sun of Existence fell on them.
Every glass that was red or yellow and dark blue—
the sun appeared in it exactly in that color.
—ʿAndalib, *Nāla-i ʿAndalīb*, 1:807 [87]

The white radiance of Eternity, seen through the glasses of the material world, as through a stained window.

Entertainments

Who is it on the ball "Earth" in the curve of the mallet "Sky"
whose stature did not become like a mallet due to the ball of your chin?
—ʿUtbi (ʿAufi, *Lubāb*, 2:289) [88]

This very early verse well expresses the eternal connection between the ball Earth and the ball "chin," as well as the curved polo stick and the back of the lovers, which resembles it.

When the distributor of pre-eternity cast the die of Fate,
everyone's fate was realized from that die.
That day the sign of beauty was drawn on your name,
the lot of love fell on the name of me, the miserable.

—Abdullah-i Anṣari, *Tafsīr*, p. 36 [89]

The idea that the lot of every individual was cast on the day of the Primordial Covenant permeates Persian poetry.

One does not take our name from us to the carpet of your proximity.
Surely you are a king, yet from us, shame overcomes you.

—Jami, *Dīwān*, no. 417, p. 331 [90]

This verse contains an untranslatable pun (which is also used by other poets, such as Rumi): *az mā t*, "from us for you [comes shame]," which also reads *az māt*, "from checkmate [comes shame to you, the king]."

Planning is like two dice, and destiny is like their design:
it is in your hand, and yet it is not in your hand.

—Hashim (Aṣlaḥ, *Tadhkirat-i shuʿarā-i Kashmīr*, A:538) [91]

One has the dice and casts them, but the player does not govern the final outcome.

The lion in your carpet, in whose body there is no life,
hunts, thanks to your majesty, the Leo of the sky.

—Waṭwaṭ, *Dīwān*, qaṣīda, p. 230 [92]

Even the lifeless figure woven into the patron's carpet is, because of the high rank of his owner, so strong that he can easily grasp the constellation Leo (which is usually connected with energy).

You have grief: consider it a medicine. Regard difficulties as easy:
when you are in love, consider as one the Leo of the sky and the lion on the flag.

—Sanaʾi, *Dīwān*, p. 935 [93]

For the lover, there is no difference between pain and medicine, between the powerless lion on the flag and the strong constellation Leo.

Beauty and Love

It is impossible that the manifestation of beauty should appear without love:
wherever there is an idol, a Brahman was created.

—ʿĀli (Ikram, *Armaghān-i Pāk*, p. 258) [94]

Beauty cannot be without someone to adore it.

Don't say that the singers of Love are silent—
the song is subtle, but our companions have cotton in their ears!

—ʿUrfi [95]

The materialists have closed their ears to the song of love and cannot be persuaded that it exists, as its voice is too subtle.

Come and behold the fervor of my longing to see you:
behold me dropping from my eyelashes like tears.

—Ghalib, *Kulliyāt-i fārsī*, 4: no. 193 [96]

The poet is so completely turned into longing that he rushes from his own eyes toward the beloved, as if he were a tear.

From pre-eternity Beauty and Love were collected together:
they are two candles which kindle each other.

—ʿUrfi [97]

And, to close:

Whatever exists of the fine points of the stars
or amid the hidden parts of science:
I have read these and sought through every page—
when I found you, I washed off the page!

—Niẓami (Jami, *Nafaḥāt al-uns*, p. 608) [98]

Notes

Introduction

1. Rilke, *Sonnets to Orpheus*, part 2, no. 21. For Rilke and the Oriental world see Schimmel, "Ein Osten, der nie alle wird."

2. Goethe, *West-Östlicher Divan*, Noten und Abhandlungen, p. 195, "Allgemeinstes."

3. Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān*, p. 2 (unless otherwise stated, citations are to the edition by Abu'l Qasim Anjuwi). For the problem, see Bürgel, "Der schöne Türke, immer noch missverstanden."

4. The controversy arose from Karl Stolz's article "Die seelische Entwicklung des Dichters Hafis," which was sharply attacked by H. H. Schaeder in "Lässt sich die seelische Entwicklung des Dichters Hafis ermitteln?" Stolz replied to this question in his "Die seelische Entwicklung des Dichters Hafis lässt sich ermitteln."

5. Schimmel, *Nacktes denkendes Herz*.

6. For the *sabk-i hindī* see the studies by Bausani, Heinz, Abidi, Abdul Ghani, and Schimmel listed in the Bibliography.

7. Dr. Syed Abdullah, *Walī sē Iqbāl tak*, p. 157. This Urdu study of the development of Urdu literature deserves an English translation.

8. Goethe, *West-Östlicher Divan*, Noten und Abhandlungen, p. 200, "Despotie."

9. Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān*, p. 80.

10. Ḥafiẓ, *Der Diwan von . . . Hafis* (Hammer), p. vi. For the development of translations into German and the reception of Ḥafiẓ in Europe see Schimmel, "Hafiz and His Critics"; and Bürgel's introduction in Ḥafiẓ, *Dreiundsechzig Ghaselen*.

11. For Ḥafiẓ's reception in the Anglophone world see Arberry, *Fifty Poems of Hafiz*; idem, "Hafiz and His English Translations."

12. For example: the word *murgh*, "bird," is now usually understood as "chicken," so that the wonderful pun at the end of ʿAṭṭar's *Manṭiq uṭ-ṭayr*—where the thirty birds, *sī murgh*, discover their identity with the *Sīmurgh*—cannot be properly interpreted and appreciated (an observation for which I thank William Chittick). Likewise *gul*, formerly only "rose," is now "flower" in general, so that the traditional combination of *gul u bulbul*, "rose and nightingale," is no longer correctly understood. Not to mention rare words such as the classical *dūsh*, "yesternight," which most modern Persians know only as "douche, shower."

13. Jones, *Poeseos Asiaticae Commentariorum Libri Sex*; Revitzky, *Specimen Poeseos Persicae*.

14. The classic study is still Schaeder's *Goethes Erlebnis des Ostens*. For the relation between Hammer and Goethe see Solbrig, *Dem Meister das Werkzeug*.

15. Schimmel, *Friedrich Rückert, Dichter und Orientalist*. I also compiled a representative selection of Rückert's own poetry and his translations from Oriental languages in two volumes (see Rückert, *Werke*) for the anniversary of his birth in 1988.

16. Rückert/Pertsch, *Grammatik, Poetik und Rhetorik der Perser*.

17. Hammer has often been criticized for his "superficial" translations. Many of his "mistakes" are simply printing errors, as he apparently never carefully proofread his numerous books. But his *Geschichte der schönen Redekünste Persiens* shows a remarkable insight into the poetical language of the Persians and is therefore very useful. At times his style rises to poetical heights, drawing upon all the rhetorical elements of Persian literature.

18. Garcin de Tassy, *Rhétorique et prosodie des langues de l'Orient musulman* and *Allégories, récits poétiques et chants populaires*, which contain translations from Arabic, Persian, Turkish, and Urdu, are still valuable.

19. Cf. Stevens, *The Orientalists*, a catalogue of the 1984 exhibition at the Royal Academy of Arts, and the voluminous catalogue of the 1987 exhibition in Stuttgart, *Exotische Welten, europäische Phantasien*, which give a good survey of orientalizing tendencies in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and contain important studies concerning these problems.

20. See Arberry, *The Romance of the Rubaiyat*. Another fine study is Dashti's *In Search of Omar Khayyam*. The literature about ʿOmar Khayyam is immense; for some translations see Yar-Shater, *Persian Literature*, "Translations," pp. 503–4; Potter, *A Bibliography of the Rubaiyyat*.

21. Rami's *Anīs* is a rather early, useful introduction to the different metaphors used for the parts of the body; Huart's translation is not always correct.

22. Gibb's classic *History of Ottoman Poetry* has numerous examples in text and translation and a fine introduction into the rhetorical elements of Ottoman poetry. For a historical study see Bombaci, *Storia della letteratura turca*. Walter Andrews has recently published a number of interesting studies on Ottoman literature. Numerous anthologies of Turkish poetry appeared after the change from Arabic to the Roman alphabet in Turkey in 1928. Modern educated Turks could no longer read the immense amount of classical poetry (*Divan edebiyati*), nor did they understand the highly arabicized and persianized language of these poems and their traditional puns. Thus many new collections contain "translations" of the classical poems into "modern" Turkish, along with extensive vocabularies. The first, and best, anthology is Köprülüzade's *Eski şairlerimiz*.

23. Browne's *Literary History of Persia* has not lost its central place in Persian studies. A shorter survey is Arberry's *Classical Persian Literature*. Storey's *Persian Literature* offers useful bio-bibliographical information.

24. Ethé's long article there ("Neupersische Literatur") shows his vast knowledge of the manuscript traditions and gives numerous examples for the development of the different literary genres over the course of the centuries.

25. Niẓami's work had been studied from a historical viewpoint by W. Bacher. In the decades since Ritter's study appeared, numerous translations of Niẓami's poetry have been published, for his epics constitute a veritable treasure house for the imagery of later Persian poets and, to a certain extent, Ottoman and Urdu poets as well.

26. See Rypka, "Streiflichter auf die persische Metapher."

27. In this voluminous work a number of Czech orientalists collaborated with Rypka to contribute in their special fields. The bibliography is very rich and useful.

28. Both of Bausani's major studies deserve translation, for his interpretation of the poetical and religious aspects of Persian literature is excellent. His *Storia delle letterature del Pakistan* is the first survey of Pakistani literatures in a Western language. For Indo-Pakistani and, in particular, Urdu literature see Garcin de Tassy, *Histoire de la littérature hindoue et hindoustanie*; Saksena, *A History of Urdu Literature*; and the comprehensive Urdu work *Urdu Adab* (ed. Quraishi et al.). Schimmel, "Classical Urdu Literature," gives a survey in the framework of Gonda's *History of Indian Literature*. Sadiq's well-written *History of Urdu Literature* deals mainly with postclassical development and shows little understanding of the traditional forms.

29. My first study of Rumi's imagery was *Die Bildersprache Dschelaladdin Rumis* (1949); since then I have published a number of books and many articles on the subject in German, English, and Turkish, such as *The Triumphal Sun*.

30. See Bürgel, "Lautsymbolik und funktionelles Wortspiel bei Rumi"; idem, *Licht und Reigen* (selections in translation).

31. See Ḥafiẓ, *Dreiundsechzig Ghaselen des Hafis* and *Gedichte aus dem Diwan*. Bürgel has also published numerous articles on Ḥafiẓ and other Persian poets, especially Niẓami, from whose epic poetry he has translated several works.

32. See especially Bürgel, *The Feather of Simurgh*.

33. See Reinert, *Hāqānī als Dichter*.

34. Fouchécour's *Description de la nature dans la poésie lyrique persane du XIe siècle* is a useful survey which enables the reader to trace images and expressions back to the early days of Persian poetry.

35. See Schimmel, "Hafiz and His Critics," and Bürgel, in Ḥafiẓ, *Gedichte aus dem Diwan*.

36. See Windfuhr, "Metrics, Licenses, and Historical Linguistics" and "Spelling the Mythos of Time."

37. See Skalmovski, "The Meaning of the Persian Ghazal." For other recent works see those listed for Clinton, Hillmann, and Meisami in the Bibliography.

38. See Nurbakhsh, *What the Sufis Say*, and a large number of works on Sufi imagery published by the Khaniqah-i Nimatullahi in London and New York.

39. Kortantamer, "Die rhetorischen Elemente in der klassischen türkischen Literatur," quotes H. Tolsai, according to whom writers of *tezkere* (*tadhkira*, biographical dictionaries) distinguish between true poets and pseudo-poets. In Indo-Persian and Urdu *tadhkira* writing this differentiation is less outspoken.

40. For classical Persian poetry ʿAufi's *Lubāb al-albāb* and Daulatshah's *Tadhkirat ash-shuʿarā* are indispensable. Indo-Persian poetry is dealt with in Azad Bilgrami's *Khizāna-i ʿāmira* and Aṣlaḥ's *Tadhkirat-i shuʿarā-i Kashmīr*; of the latter's five volumes only one constitutes the original work (the rest being additions by the learned editor). Both works deal also to a certain extent with classical Persian poetry. This is also the case with Shibli Nuʿmani's *Shiʿr al-ʿajam*, which is one of the best collections of its kind. Ikram's *Armaghān-i Pāk* deals with poets who lived in the area of present-day Pakistan; Qaniʿ, *Maqālāt ash-shuʿarā*, concerns poets who had any connection with Sind. For Urdu *tadhkiras* in general see Schimmel, "Classical Urdu Literature," pp. 211–12. For Indo-Persian *tadhkiras* see idem, "Islamic Literatures of India," pp. 46–48.

41. Goethe, *West-Östlicher Divan*, p. 21, "Unbegrenzt."

42. Fouchécour, *La description de la nature*, p. 240. Similarly, Massignon (*La Cité des Morts*, p. 64) speaks of "la lourde tapisserie en brocart mordoré" when discussing the *Tāʾiyya* of the great medieval Arabic mystical poet Ibn al-Fariḍ.

43. Feldman, "A Musical Model for the Structure of the Ottoman Gazal," deals with a very interesting problem, which should be developed further.

44. Hammer, *Geschichte der schönen Redekünste Persiens*, "Dritte Abtheilung."

45. Thus Rypka in his *History of Iranian Literature*.

46. For the problem of *shāhid* see especially Ritter, *Das Meer der Seele*, pp. 470–78, 493ff., and index s.v. *šāhid*; idem, "Arabische und persische Schriften über die profane und mystische Liebe."

47. Hammer, in Ḥafiẓ, *Der Diwan von Hafis*, introduction, p. vii.

48. In Balochistan and other areas a woman suspected of even the slightest relation with a man—be it only eye contact—was mercilessly killed by her family, for the honor of the family was at stake. Numerous Urdu short stories deal with the problems arising from this strict code of honor, which also plays an important role in folktales.

49. For this theme see Bürgel, "Dies Bildnis ist bezaubernd schön."

50. Gibb, *History of Ottoman Poetry*, 6:98. Cf. Rumi, *Dīwān*, no. 2995/31840:

A lock is on my mouth for the sake of the jealousy of the lovers,
lest I say "This is so-and-so."

Kalim (see Aṣlaḥ, *Tadhkirat-i shuʿarā-i Kashmīr*, 3:1416) claims that "his lip does not know whose name is on his tongue," and Ghalib goes even farther (*Urdu Dīwān*, p. 128):

Don't bury me in her lane after she has killed me—
People should not find her house from my traces!

51. Qaniʿ, *Maqālāt ash-shuʿarā*, p. 439.

52. Ritter, "L'orthodoxie a-t-elle une part dans la décadence?" p. 173, has followed up this development. For the problem see also Bürgel, "Die beste Dichtung ist die lügenreichste."

53. Bausani, *Persia religiosa*, gives a good survey of this development.

54. See Khomeini, *Sabū-yi ʿishq*. This small collection, whose title may be translated "The Pitcher of Love," applies in its verses the whole vocabulary of traditional love lyrics.

55. See Arberry, *Sufism*, pp. 115ff. The publications of Dr. Nurbakhsh point to the same principle.

56. In Turkey it was Namik Kemal and Ziya Paşa, in the 1860s, who blamed the *Divan Edebiyati* for being remote from reality; the poets' interest in imitating traditional models, and their fondness in punning, seemed to these critics inappropriate for modern times.

57. Ḥali, in his *Muqaddima-i shiʿr u shāʿirī*, speaks of the

unclean book of poetry and *qaṣīdas*,
which is more stinking than a latrine.

(Quoted in Sadiq, *History of Urdu Literature*, p. 14.) For this question see also Bausani, "Alṭāf Ḥusain Ḥālī's Ideas on Ghazal."

58. *West-Östlicher Divan*, p. 23, "Wink."

59. Dr. Syed ʿAbdullah, *Naqd-i Mīr*, p. 117. See also Mir Taqi Mir, *Kulliyāt*, and for the poet's biography, Russell and Islam, *Three Mughal Poets*.

60. Rückert, *Werke*, 2:30.

Chapter 1

1. Browne, *A Literary History of Persia*, vol. 2, contains an excellent survey of the rhetorical arts, which should be carefully read by every student of Persian literature. The first volume of Gibb's *History of Ottoman Poetry* likewise offers a fine introduction to Ottoman poetry, whose requirements are almost the same as those of Persian. Rückert/Pertsch, *Grammatik*, is equally important. Garcin de Tassy's *Rhétorique et prosodie* and Huart's edition of Rami's *Anīs* are useful. The advanced student will find most important material in works by Persian and Indian authors such as Raduyani, Shams-i Qays (see Razi), and Nadwi.

2. Thiesen, *A Manual of Classical Persian Prosody*, contains a much greater wealth of information than the title suggests. This beautifully produced book is a veritable treasure trove for prosody and technical aspects of Persian and Persianate literatures.

3. Rumi, *Dīwān*, rubāʿī no. 839.

4. Rumi, *Dīwān*, no. 1379/14595.

5. The Turkish poet Mehmet Akif, who wrote the text of the Turkish national anthem, reproduced long conversations in his narrative poems—e.g., *Köy kahvesi* (The Village Coffeehouse)—which are so lively that nobody would recognize the strict rules of *ʿarūḍ* behind them. Similarly, Yahya Kemal's lyrical verse only barely betrays the *ʿarūḍ* structure on which his poetry is built. See Schimmel, "Yahya Kemal und seine Zeit."

6. The German poet Franz Werfel pointed to the importance of the rhyme in his lines:

> Der Reim ist heilig. Denn durch ihn erfahren
> wir tiefe Zweiheit, die sich will entsprechen.
>
> The rhyme is sacred, for through it we learn of deep duality which seeks correspondence.

7. Rumi, *Dīwān*, no. 569/6043ff. On the *radīf* see Lewis, "Fire and Water."

8. For the development of the *ghazal* in Germany see Schimmel, *Orientalische Poesie in Nachdichtungen Friedrich Rückerts*, introduction; idem, "The Emergence of the German Ghazal." For a different tradition see Bečka, "Gazel v české poezii." Neither the English nor the French have developed a real tradition of *ghazal*-writing, some attempts among translators from the Arabic and Persian notwithstanding.

9. Goethe, *West-Östlicher Divan*, Noten und Abhandlungen, p. 213, "Übergang von Tropen zu Gleichnissen." See also Bausani, "Considerazioni sull'origine del ghazal."

10. Ghalib, *Urdu Dīwān*, p. 126.

11. See Rumi, *Mathnawī*, 5: line 2497, his remarks that his "dirty jokes are not dirty jokes but instruction," a saying he took over from Sana'i. For the problem of "dirty jokes" in poetry and mysticism see Meier, *Abū Saʿid-i Abū'l Hair*, p. 205. Van der Leeuw, *Phänomenologie der Religion*, p. 257, speaks of the "polarity between unbridled behavior and renunciation."

12. Farrukhi, *Dīwān*, qaṣīda no. 81.

13. Farrukhi, *Dīwān*, qaṣīda no. 51. See also Büchner, "Stilfiguren in der panegyrischen Poesie der Perser"; and, for the entire concept of court poetry, Meisami, *Medieval Persian Court Poetry*.

14. The classical Arabic tradition of self-praise has recently been treated by Müller in his *Ich bin Labid*. It sometimes happened that a poet had to eulogize a patron who had a very complicated name. That is particularly true in India. But even in such a situation one was expected to find a solution. Ghalib says wittily (*Kulliyāt-i fārsī*, 5: qaṣīda no. 56):

> I am excused when your name does not fit into the meter—
> How could I fit the Tigris and the sea into a pitcher?

This verse also contains a hidden pun on the word *baḥr*, "meter," whose primary meaning is "ocean."

15. Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān*, p. 78.

16. ʿAbdul Aḥad with the pen name Gul was the grandson of the Indian Naqshbandi reformer Ahmad Sirhindi; see Khushgu, *Safīna*, 3:69. For the entire sequence of these writers see Schimmel, *Pain and Grace*, part 1.

17. Makhfi is supposed to be Zeb un-Nisa, daughter of the emperor Aurangzeb. The question of the authenticity of the *Dīwān-i Makhfī* is discussed in the Catalogue of the Persian Manuscripts in the Khudabakhsh Library in Bankipore. It was first published in Cawnpore in A.H. 1345 (1926); an English version (*Fifty Poems*) had appeared in 1913. Fakhri Harawi's *Rauḍat as-salāṭīn* contains a second work called *Jawāhir al-ʿajā'ib*, which deals with poetesses and high-ranking ladies who wrote poetry in both Persian and Turkish in the time before 1530. Garcin de Tassy, *Histoire de la littérature hindoue et hindoustanie*, 2:563ff., enumerates seventy-one female authors (see also Schimmel, "Classical Urdu Literature," p. 235 n. 69). For the later period in Urdu see Schimmel, "A Nineteenth-Century Anthology of Poetesses." In Ottoman Turkey the best-known early poetess is Mihri Hatun, who, like Zeyneb Hatun, lived ca. 1500 (see Gibb, *History of Ottoman Poetry*, 2:132ff., 6:70–74); at the beginning of the nineteenth century Fitnat Hanim and Leyla Hanim were well-known poetesses (see Gibb, 4:290ff, 6:293; 4:345–46, 6:351). The most remarkable poetess in that period in Iran was Ṭahira Qurrat ul-ʿAyn, a follower of the Babi religion who died as a martyr to her faith in 1852. The classic study of a famous woman writer is Meier, *Die schöne Mahsati*, about a lady whose often flippant and not very chaste quatrains are among the most interesting verses in early Persian literature.

18. This genre, known from both classical and popular Arabic, was very common in Persian, Turkish, and Urdu and is found in both *qaṣīdas* and *mathnawīs*. There are *munāẓara* between rose and narcissus, sugar and rice, etc.

19. *Anvari's Divan: A Pocket Book for Akbar* (ed. Schimmel and Welch), p. 61; Anwari, *Dīwān* (ed. Nafisi), p. 423; (ed. Ražawi), 2:694, no. 367. Cf. a similar complaint from the Urdu poet Sauda, cited in Russell and Islam, *Three Mughal Poets*:

> No sooner has the Khan's sperm fallen into the Begum's womb
> Than he racks his brain to produce a chronogram for the birth;
> and should a miscarriage happen to her, he'll sing an elegy—
> Don't ask, Sir, where the poor man stands!

Ẓahir Faryabi complains that his poverty has forced him to call a confused Negro a "houri" (see Rückert/Pertsch, *Grammatik*, pp. 348–51).

20. Anwari, *Dīwān* (ed. Ražawi), 2:559, no. 90.

21. See above, Introduction, note 20. The literature concerning the authenticity of ʿOmar's *rubāʿiyyāt* is almost inexaustible (see the Bibliography), and translations are available in almost every language of the world, from Esperanto to Eskimo, not to mention amusing imitations such as Oliver Herford's *Rubaiyyat of a Persian Kitten* (New York, 1905). A telling example of his influence is a Sindhi adaptation of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, by Mirza Qalich Beg, in which the hero recites quatrains from ʿOmar Khayyam in Sindhi verse translations. The best German translation is still Rosen's *Sinnsprüche Omars des Zeltmachers*; the most recent English one is by Peter Avery and John Heath-Stubbs.

22. Eilers, "Vierzeilerdichtung, persisch und ausserpersisch"; Reinert, "Die prosodische Unterschiedlichkeit von persischem und arabischem Rubāʿī" (The Prosodic Difference between Persian and Arabic *rubāʿī*); and esp. Meier, *Die schöne Mahsati*, whose subtitle, *Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des persischen Vierzeilers* (A Contribution to the History of the Persian *rubāʿī*), marks it as the standard work on this topic. Thiesen, *A Manual of Classical Persian Prosody*, also devotes a lengthy chapter to the quatrain. The *rubāʿī* was often used in musical sessions (see Meier, pp. 20–21); this also becomes clear from a verse in Rumi (*Dīwān*, no. 1302/13773), where he says, in the middle of a *ghazal*:

> Musician of the gnostics, come! The gnostics have become intoxicated.
> Quick! sing a *rubāʿī*! Enter! Take the tambourine!

23. Some examples appear in Bahrami, *Gurgan Faiences*. Much research remains to be done in this field.

24. Iqbal, "Lāla-i Ṭūr," in *Payām-i Mashriq*, mixes both types of quatrains.

25. Numerous heroic epics were composed in Persian over the last nine centuries, including a long modern poem on Abraham Lincoln (Khalkhali, *Ḥamāsat-i hīzamshikan*) and, in Urdu, Hafeez Jhallandari's *Shāhnāma-i Islām*. For the early development see Barthold, "Zur Geschichte des persischen Epos."

26. Niẓami, *Kulliyāt-i Khamsa*. See the Bibliography under Niẓami. Imitations of Niẓami's *Khamsa* between the thirteenth and nineteenth centuries are listed in Ethé, "Neupersische Literatur," pp. 245ff. Sometimes the themes were changed: thus Yaʿqub Ṣarfi Kashmiri (d. 1591) wrote an epos *Maghāzī an-nabī* (The Battles of the Prophet) in place of the *Iskandarnāma*, and his contemporary Fayżi at Akbar's court introduced the Indian story of Nal and Damayanti, *Nāl Daman*, into his *Khamsa*. In the Deccan, *Laylā Majnūn* appeared both in Persian (by Mir Jumla Muḥammad Amin) and in Dakhni Urdu (by a certain Aḥmad) in the days of Muḥammad-Quli Quṭb Shah (ca. 1600). For the role of the *mathnawī* in Dakhni and later Urdu in the romantic tradition, with adaptation of Indian themes, see Schimmel, "Classical Urdu Literature," pp. 137ff.

27. De Bruijn, *Of Piety and Poetry*, analyzes Sanaʾi's work on the basis of painstaking philological research. See also Berthels, "Grundlinien der Entwicklungsgeschichte des sufischen Lehrgedichtes."

28. The comprehensive work on ʿAṭṭar is Ritter's *Meer der Seele*, which was preceded by his numerous articles about the great Persian mystical poet in the series of *Philologika*. ʿAṭṭar's *Manṭiq uṭ-ṭayr* (The Birds' Conversation, or, lit., The Language of the Birds) was adapted into Turkish by Gülshehri as early as 1317. Among the translations of ʿAṭṭar's epics only Gastines's French version of the *Muṣībatnāma* (*Le livre de l'épreuve*) fulfills all conditions of a good translation. *Manṭiq uṭ-ṭayr* has been rendered into English a few times, but none of the versions is fully satisfying. No German translation of ʿAṭṭar's works is available.

29. Furuzanfar's edition of the *Dīwān-i kabīr* and Nicholson's of the *Mathnawī* offer a solid basis for further studies. Nicholson's complete translation of the *Mathnawī* is a great help for the student, though its very scholarly, Victorian style does not at all convey the sweetness and fluency of the original. The same is true for Arberry's prose translations from the *Dīwān*. But both these English scholars have published useful anthologies from Rumi's work. His prose *Fīhi mā fīhi* was translated into English by Arberry, into French by Meyerovitch, and into German by Schimmel. For more translations see the Bibliography under Bürgel, Schimmel.

30. Jami's most famous epic poem, *Yūsuf Zulaykhā*, has been translated rather freely into English by Pendlebury. Rosenzweig's German translation, *Jusuf und Zalicha*, appeared as early as 1824, and Rückert translated a considerable number of *ghazals* and quatrains from Jami's *Dīwān* into German verse. More than any other of his poems, Jami's *Yūsuf Zulaykhā* was imitated outside Iran, beginning with Ḥamdi's moving Turkish version. One finds versions in Dakhni Urdu around 1640 by Malik Khushnud ʿAdilshahi, and in 1687 by Hashim. In 1697 one Mir ʿAli Amin from Gujarat put Zulaykha "in the dress of respectable Indian women" (see Dar, "Gujarat's Contribution to Gujari and Urdu," p. 30). For more *naẓīra* see Ethé, "Neupersische Literatur," p. 321.

31. See Hoshyarpuri, *Mathnawiyyāt-i Hīr Rānjhā*. See also the versions of the Sindhi folktale *Sassui Punhuñ* by Mir Maʿṣum Nami (d. 1608) in his Persian *Khamsa* as *Nāz u niyāz*. The Pathan poet Maḥabbat Khan composed an Urdu epic on the same theme, *Asrār-i Maḥabbat* (Lucknow, 1845). Idraki Beglari, a Sindhi contemporary of Nami's, included the story *Līlā Chanēsar* in his incomplete *Khamsa*.

32. Many of Amir Khusrau's works have been published (see the Bibliography). The most comprehensive biography is Waheed Mirza's *Life and Works of Amir Khusrau*, now in its third edition. See also Schimmel, "Islamic Literatures of India," pp. 16–18. Celebrations of his 650th anniversary (he died in 1325) were held in both India and Pakistan in 1975. In 1988 an Amir Khusrau Festival took place in Chicago; the numerous contributions by a great number of scholars, which ranged from Amir Khusrau's role in the formation of Hindustani music to his use of Hindwi expressions and his knowledge of astrology, will eventually be published.

33. See Schimmel, *And Muhammad Is His Messenger*, chap. 10.

34. Sulṭan Muḥammad's painting in the Niẓami manuscript in the British Library is one of the most spiritual pictures in Islamic art. See Welch, *Wonders of the Age*, no. 63. For the *miʿrājnāma* of Herat in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris see Séguy, *Miʿrāğname: The Miraculous Journey of Mahomet*.

35. Saʿdi's poetry and prose have attracted numerous translators ever since the first French version, by A. de Ryer, and the German one by Olearius, which appeared in 1654. See the Bibliography under, e.g., Gelpke, Rückert, and Wickens. A good introduction is Massé's *Essai sur le poète Saadi*. For other metrical questions see also Rypka, "La métrique du *mutaqārib* épique persan." However, *mutaqārib* also appears in classical Urdu as an attractive meter.

36. Aḥmad ʿAli, *Tadhkira-i Haft āsumān*, mentions no fewer than seventy-eight epic poems modeled on this pattern. A Dakhni version of the *Makhzan al-asrār* by one Kalami dates back to the fifteenth century. Rückert/Pertsch, *Grammatik*, pp. 67ff., gives a survey of the meters used in *mathnawī*, as does Thiesen's *Manual of Persian Prosody*, passim.

37. Such instructive poems are called *urjūza*; they were generally not of great artistic value. (For the Arabic tradition see Ullmann, *Untersuchungen zur Raǧaz-Poesie*.)

38. See Aḥmad ʿAli, *Tadhkira-i Haft āsumān*.

39. One of the most famous *sāqīnāmas* is that of Ẓuhuri (meter *mutaqārib*), which sings of the delights of life in Bijapur under Ibrahim II ʿAdilshah (reigned 1580–1627). Iqbal's best *sāqīnāmas* are in *Payām-i Mashriq*, pp. 133, 160. In Turkish, Nefʿi's famous *sāqīnāma* begins, "Welcome, o enameled cup with ruby-colored wine!" (see Gibb, *History of Ottoman Poetry*, 6:197). For the genre see Abdun Nabi Qazwini, *Maykhāna* (The Wine House), a collection of famous *sāqīnāmas* composed in the time of the emperor Jahangir (reigned 1605–27).

40. A good, though late, example of this technique is Iqbal's *Jāvīdnāma*, in which the poet introduced some of his own poems as well as *ghazals* from earlier Persian writers.

41. Browne, *Literary History of Persia*, 2:43, calls such poems "multiple poems." *Takhmīs* ("making fivefold") and similar forms were frequently used in religious poetry: there are, e.g., numerous *takhmīs* of Buṣiri's famous Arabic *qaṣīda* in honor of the Prophet, the *Burda*, not only in the Arab world but even in southern India.

42. See Schimmel, "Classical Urdu Literature," pp. 200–202.

43. Ḥali's *Musaddas* is available in numerous editions and partial translations.

44. Iqbal's *Shikwah* and *Jawāb-i Shikwah* are now in the collection *Bāng-i darā*, pp. 177–87, 220–32. Translations by Altaf Husayn appeared in Lahore in 1945 and 1948; and by Arberry in Lahore in 1954.

45. See my discussion of *safīnas* and the subsequent use of their fragments for the decoration of miniature paintings, in Welch et al., *The Emperors' Album*, pp. 37ff.

46. On Iqbal's attitude to poetry see Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing*, pp. 61–72.

Chapter 2

1. Ritter, *Über die Bildersprache Niẓāmīs*. He remarks that this preference for metaphor over comparison is unlike Arabic poetical conventions.

2. See Browne, *Literary History of Persia*, 2:47–76, the *qaṣīda-i maṣnūʿ*.

3. See Niẓami ʿAruḍi, *Chahār Maqāla*, and its translation by Browne: "Second Discourse: On the Essence of the Poetical and the Aptitude of the Poet." See also Clinton, "Shams-i Qays on the Nature of Poetry," a translation of the final part of the *Muʿjam* by this early Persian literary critic.

4. Rypka, "Hāqānī's Madāʾin Qaṣīda rhetorisch beleuchtet." For the Madaʾin *qaṣīda* (Khaqani, *Dīwān*, pp. 358–60) see also Clinton, "The Madāʾin Qaṣīda of Xāqānī Shērvānī," and its second part, "Xāqānī and al-Buḥturī."

5. Anwari, *Dīwān* (ed. Nafisi), p. 125; (ed. Ražawi), 1: no. 79. For this type of figure see also Garcin de Tassy, *Rhétorique et prosodie*, p. 149. Saʿdi (*Kulliyāt*, 3: no. 42) asks for reward in this style:

> Instead of poetry, pearls drop from Saʿdi's speech—
> If you had silver [= money], you would write his words with gold.

6. Quoted in Azad, *Khizāna*, pp. 397–98. Khan-i Arzu (d. 1756) was the master of Urdu rhetoric; the modernist biographer Muḥammad Ḥusayn Azad wrote of him in his *Āb-i ḥayāt* (1881) that "he has done for Urdu what Aristotle did for logic" (quoted in Sadiq, *History of Urdu Literature*, p. 170). Azad Bilgrami himself was a very skillful poet; he also wrote, as other Indian poets did, verses in the genre *sarāpā* ("from head to foot") or *mirʾāt al-jamāl* ("mirror of beauty"), in which the beloved's beauty is described by using every conceivable rhetorical device—a typical mannerist convention. (See above, Appendix, no. 5.) Urdu poets even produced a *sarāpā* describing the beauty of the Prophet.

7. Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān*, p. 41; quoted in Rückert/Pertsch, *Grammatik*, p. 283.

8. Rami, *Anīs*, p. 54.

9. Anwari, *Dīwān* (ed. Nafisi), p. 208. Cf. Goethe's example in *West-Östlicher Divan*, Noten und Abhandlungen, p. 213, "Übergang von Tropen zu Gleichnissen."

10. Anwari, *Dīwān* (ed. Ražawi), pp. 29–31, qaṣīda no. 13.

11. Anwari, *Dīwān* (ed. Ražawi), pp. 165–58, qaṣīda no. 71.

12. Badaʾuni, *Muntakhab at-tawārīkh*, 3:186 (English ed., p. 261).

13. Rückert/Pertsch, *Grammatik*, p. 306. A famous example of *mubālagha* is Ṭalib-i Amuli's verse (see Aṣlaḥ, *Tadhkirat-i shuʿarā-i Kashmīr*, 2:682):

> I closed my mouth from talking so much that one could say:
> The mouth was a wound on the face, which is now healed.

14. Ghalib, *Kulliyāt-i fārsī*, 5: nos. 14–28.

15. These forms can be found among earlier poets very frequently and usually

follow the model "You are a cypress—no! no! the cypress would bend its back when you appear . . ."

16. Rumi, *Dīwān*, no. 463/4917.

17. Farrukhi, *Dīwān*, qaṣīda no. 213. Cf. Rückert/Pertsch, *Grammatik*, p. 363. On the art of imitation as practiced by a nineteenth-century poet see Gilani, *Ghalib: His Life and Persian Poetry*: among the 334 *ghazals* of this Indian master, 29 follow Naẓiri, 19 Ẓuhuri, 18 Ṣa'ib, 16 Ḥafiẓ, 7 Amir Khusrau, 7 ʿUrfi, 16 Ḥazin—and on and on. Similarly, in his *qaṣīdas* Ghalib imitated ʿUrfi 5 times, Naẓiri 9, Anwari 5, Khaqani 4—and so forth. For the problem cf. Grunebaum, "The Concept of Plagiarism in Arabic Literary Theory."

18. Browne, *Literary History of Persia*, 3:491. Whether the Kamal mentioned here is Kamal-i Farisi, or another Kamal, is not clear. The theme of "answering" or quoting was mentioned in Lozensky's paper "Things No One Has Seen in the Key of B."

19. Garcin de Tassy, *Rhétorique et prosodie*, p. 36; cf. Rückert/Pertsch, *Grammatik*, p. 291:

You are a moon, if a moon has eyebrows like a bow;
You are a cypress, if a cypress has *ambra*-colored [ambergris: dark, fragrant] locks.

A similar verse by Farrukhi is quoted in Raduyani, *Kitab Tarcuman al-balâġa*, p. 51; it would be easy to find dozens of other such expressions.

20. Garcin de Tassy, *Rhétorique et prosodie*, p. 90.

21. Rückert/Pertsch, *Grammatik*, pp. 65.

22. Rückert/Pertsch, *Grammatik*, pp. 294–95.

23. Muʿizzi, in Saleman and Shukovsky, *Persische Grammatik*, p. 56. Farrukhi has three lengthy *qaṣīdas* in this form (*Dīwān*, nos. 136, 157, 177); ʿUnṣuri also has one (Daulatshah, *Tadhkirat ash-shuʿarā*, p. 66).

24. Farrukhi, *Dīwān*, qaṣīda no. 121, lines 4772–73, and often.

25. Browne, *Literary History of Persia*, 3:180, with translation. The form, however, is much older: Raduyani, *Kitab Tarcuman al-balâġa*, p. 98, quotes a verse in exactly the same form of very brief questions and answers:

Where is the heart?—Taken.—By what?—The lip.—When?—Day before yesterday.
Suddenly?—Yes.—Where?—On the road.—When?—Today.

26. Khaqani, *Dīwān*, p. 359. Cf. Garcin de Tassy, *Rhétorique et prosodie*, p. 93. See also Manuchihri, *Dīwān*, p. 130, no. 52, a poem with four comparisons in each *bayt*; and Farrukhi, *Dīwān*, qaṣīda no. 69.

27. ʿUnṣuri, in Rückert/Pertsch, *Grammatik*, p. 296.

28. Ritter, *Über die Bildersprache Niẓāmīs*, p. 66, has drawn attention to this beautiful verse.

29. See especially ʿAṭṭar's *Ilāhīnāma* (ed. Ritter); Boyle's translation, based on a different edition, is not as powerful. See also Manuchihri, *Dīwān*, p. 37, lines 570–77.

30. Salman-i Sawaji's verse (Rückert/Pertsch, *Grammatik*, p. 169) can be read backwards:

In generosity you are Ḥatim, in loftiness Kisra,
in ordering you are Āṣaf, in proof you are Jesus.

Because the first words of the two lines—*iḥsān*, "generosity," and *firmān*, "order"—rhyme, as do the last words, ʿIsa and Kisra, the reversion was easy. A fine example by Adib Naṭanzi is cited in Israeli, *Hadi Hasan's "Golden Treasury,"* p. 69: *zi Nāṭanz āmad rakht-i khirad-i mā zi Nāṭanz*, "From Naṭanz came the goods of our intellect, from Naṭanz!"

31. ʿAbdul Wasiʿ Jabali, quoted in Rückert/Pertsch, *Grammatik*, p. 89.

32. Rückert/Pertsch, *Grammatik*, pp. 128ff., offers some famous verses. Khaqani (*Dīwān*, pp. 221–24) wrote a *qaṣīda* with the word *ʿid*, "festival," recurring in every verse, and Qasim-i Kahi did the same with the word *fīl*, "elephant." In this context one should also recall other tours de force such as writing a poem consisting entirely of unconnected letters (see Raduyani, *Kitab Tarcuman al-balâġa*, p. 110). Waṭwaṭ, *Dīwān*, muqaṭṭaʿ no. 578, has such an example, but he was a wizard when it came to rhetorical techniques, a field to which he had devoted a full-length study, the *Ḥadāʾiq as-siḥr*. Other poets tried to write verses consisting exclusively of letters without diacritical dots or of letters which could all be connected with each other. This art was perfected among the Arabs in Ḥariri's *Maqāmāt*.

33. Quoted in Browne, *Literary History of Persia*, 2:80.

34. Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān*, p. 59.

35. Rumi, *Mathnawī*, 1: line 9.

36. Quoted in Garcin de Tassy, *Rhétorique et prosodie*, p. 123.

37. This pun was used by Athir Akhsikati (ʿAufi, *Lubāb*, 2:224); Khaqani applied it in his *Dīwān*, p. 213; see also Amir Khusrau, in Daulatshah, *Tadhkirat ash-shuʿarā*, 2:274. The saying was so popular that it was carried over even into Pashto poetry; see Raverty, *Selections from the Poetry of the Afghans*, p. 261 (Ashraf Khan). A very clever application of this kind of *ʿaks* appears in Sanaʾi, *Dīwān*, p. 48.

38. Niẓami (in Daulatshah, *Tadhkirat ash-shuʿarā*, p. 9). Qasim-i Kahi advises his reader:

Wash off the book of knowledge like Kahi,
What's the use (*ḥāṣil*) from this studying (*taḥṣīl*) without result (*ḥāṣil*)?

See Hadi Hasan, "Qasim-i Kahi," p. 217.

39. Amir Khusrau, *Dīwān*, no. 1104.

40. Amir Khusrau, *Dīwān*, no. 272.

41. For this well-known *mulamma*ʿ, "macaronic verse," see Rückert/Pertsch, *Grammatik*, p. 274. Thus also Israeli, *Hadi Hasan's "Golden Treasury,"* p. 221.

42. Browne, *Literary History of Persia*, 3:490.

43. Quoted in Browne, *Literary History of Persia*, 4:284–97, in text and translation.

44. Gibb, *History of Ottoman Poetry*, 6:362.

45. See Rückert/Pertsch, *Grammatik*, pp. 453ff., with drawings of trees, umbrellas, and other designs. Raduyani, *Kitab Tarcuman al-balâġa*, mentions *mudawwar*, "circular," and *murabba*ʿ, "square," poems. The same traditions were known in Europe; see Liede, *Dichtung als Spiel*, vol. 2. An exhibition and symposium about such figural poetry ("Text als Figur") was held in Zurich in the spring of 1990.

46. Niẓami ʿAruḍi, *Chahār Maqāla*, "Second Discourse."

47. For the technique of reciting poetry see Regula Quraishi, "*Tarannum*, the Chanting of Urdu Poetry." The importance of poetry for political developments could be observed in Tehran in the fall of 1977, when hundreds of poets recited verses against the Shah's regime and were joined by thousands of spectators who were highly excited by the verses. If this could happen in an era of well-functioning mass media, one can imagine how great the poet's power and the influence of the poetic word were in earlier centuries.

Chapter 3

1. Nwyia, *Ibn ʿAṭāʾ Allāh (m. 709/1309) et la naissance de la confrèrie šāḏilite*, p. 46.

2. See Schimmel, "The Sufis and the *shahāda*."

3. Baqli, *Sharḥ-i shaṭḥiyāt*, section 64/196. Sanaʾi had used the same image in his *Dīwān*, p. 191.

4. Rumi, *Dīwān*, no. 1876/19770. See also Sanaʾi, *Dīwān*, p. 197, and idem, *Ḥadīqat al-ḥaqīqat*, p. 139. The nineteenth-century poet Ghalib, though anything but a "religious" poet in the traditional sense, uses the formula frequently. He also speaks of the "broom of *lā*" (*Kulliyāt-i fārsī*, 5: qaṣīda no. 17) and the *chāk-i lā*, "the split of *lā*" (4: no. 5). An image which he apparently invented or at least made known is the combination of the *lā* with the so-called *alif-i ṣayqal*, "the *alif* of polishing," which was explained to me by experts as a very high degree of steel polishing. He thus compares the addition of the letter *alif* to the *lā*—that is, the transformation of the *lā*, "no," in the profession of faith, into *illā*, "but"—to such an *alif* (5: qaṣīda no. 6, p. 49):

> And this two-edged sword which in order to rub off *shirk* [associating something with God]
> throws the lightning *Lā*, "no," into the constellation of infidelity:
> When it becomes polished with the *alif-i ṣayqal* of faith,
> it will give the glorious manifestation of *illā*, "but," to the eye of success.

5. Umid (Khushgu, *Safīna*, 3:7; Aṣlaḥ, *Tadhkirat-i shuʿarā-i Kashmīr*, 2:569). The Western reader can understand when mystically inclined poets praise the beloved/Beloved with Koranic expressions, but when such expressions occur in panegyrics for worldly rulers one feels somewhat uneasy. As early a poet as Farrukhi went so far as to say that "praise of [his patron] is for the poets like Sura 112, the *sūrat al-ikhlāṣ*," a pun on *ikhlāṣ*, "sincerity" (*Dīwān*, qaṣīda no. 121). He also thinks that praising the patron is as meritorious as reciting the Koran (qaṣīda no. 150).

6. Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān*, p. 11.

7. Zamakhshari's *Kashshāf* (The One That Opens Thoroughly), composed in 1134, was a very widely used commentary on the Koran. The *Kashf* is probably Hujwiri's *Kashf al-maḥjūb*, written in the second half of the eleventh century in Lahore, the first theoretical work on Sufism in Persian. But Chittick has suggested to me that the *Kashf* might instead refer to Maybudi's *Kashf al-asrār*, an important mystical commentary.

8. One important aspect of this comparison is that the pious Muslim *kisses* the copy of the Koran; cf. the verse by Ashraf (Aṣlaḥ, *Tadhkirat-i shuʿarā-i Kashmīr*, 4:1741).

9. Khaqani, *Dīwān*, p. 326. A later poet, Athar, goes into more detail (Aṣlaḥ, *Tadhkirat-i shuʿarā-i Kashmīr*, 1:7):

> The reflection of my eye with the bloodstained eyelashes looks
> like a Koran whose vocalization is written in red.

Rumi's comparisons are more subtle (*Dīwān*, no. 2756/29292):

> I am a faulty copy of the Koran (*muṣḥaf*); but I become corrected when you [the beloved] read it.

He also claims to have read a verse from the "Koran copy of madness," which resulted in the abrogation of (external) knowledge and the art of recitation. But Ghanimat, in the late seventeenth century, wanted "to sell the *sīpāra* of his heart when love comes" (Ikram, *Armaghān-i Pāk*, p. 250). The *sīpāra*, "thirty parts," are the divisions into which the Koran was often copied so as to provide a handy text for each day of the month.

10. Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān*, p. 11.

11. Ikram, *Armaghān-i Pāk*, p. 151.

12. Sanaʾi, *Dīwān*, p. 41.

13. Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān*, p. 77. Sauda, an Urdu poet of the eighteenth century, says, in a fine image (*Dīwān*, letter *a*, rhyme *bīmkā*):

> O ascetic—in the tavern of pre-eternity the cupbearer has
> washed off the pictures of fear and hope.

That is, thanks to the intoxication of love, one does not bother any more about Hell and Paradise.

14. Rumi, *Dīwān*, no. 1832.

15. Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān*, p. 78.

16. Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān*, p. 128, with a quotation from Sura 6:166.

17. Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān* (ed. Brockhaus), no. 557. The other editions of the *Dīwān* do not carry this line.

18. Amir Khusrau, *Dīwān*, no. 69. In Sinnami's "Debate between Pen and Sword" (Ikram, *Armaghān-i Pāk*, p. 103) the pen boasts that *Nūn wa'l-qalam* was revealed for its sake, and numerous allusions to this Koranic verse are found in writings about calligraphy. See Schimmel, *Calligraphy and Islamic Culture*, chaps. 3–4.

19. For this use cf. Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān*, p. 113; similarly Jami, *Dīwān*, no. 637, p. 416; Ghalib, *Kulliyāt-i fārsī*, 5: qaṣīda no. 26, for Bahadur Shah.

20. For a different use of the same Koranic verse see Iqbal, "Dialogue between Iblis and Gabriel" (*Bāl-i Jibrīl*, p. 192), where Iblis asks whether *taqnaṭū*, "despair of God's mercy," would not be better for him, as this word keeps him alive in endless longing.

21. Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān*, p. 157.

22. Rami, *Anīs*, p. 41. ʿUrfi (*Kulliyāt*, p. 448, rubāʿī) claims that every corner of Shiraz with its moon-faced beauties points to *shaqq al-qamar* (for the moon will be split from envy when looking at them).

23. Aside from the Koran itself, the background of most allusions to the prophets is the genre of the *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā* (Tales of the Prophets), which was very popular. For a good English translation of the best-known of these works see Thackston, *The Tales of the Prophets of al-Kisāʾī*.

24. Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān*, p. 272.

25. Iblis was created from fire (Sura 7:11) and is thus connected with the djinns, but he is also called the "teacher of the angels" and thus has a close relationship with them. The most moving "Complaint of Iblis" is found in Sanaʾi, *Dīwān*, p. 871.

26. Ghalib, *Kulliyāt-i fārsī*, 4: no. 237.

27. For the topic as a whole see Awn, *Satan's Tragedy and Redemption*. In connection with the devils and djinns the Koran speaks of the *shihāb*, "shooting star," by which intruders are repelled when they try to peep into the secrets of the heavenly realms (Sura 72:9). Sanaʾi therefore compares the powerful pen of his patron to such a *shihāb* (*Dīwān*, p. 477).

28. Ritter, *Das Meer der Seele*, p. 538.

29. See Ikram, *Armaghān-i Pāk*, p. 238. See also Hashmi, "Sarmad." Sarmad was a Persian or Armenian Jew who studied religious sciences with the famous mystical philosopher Mulla Ṣadra of Shiraz, became a Muslim, and went to India as a merchant, where he fell in love with a Hindu boy in Thatta (Sind). Under the shock of this experience he turned into a dervish, walking around stark naked, and

became a close friend of the Mughal heir apparent, Dara Shikoh. The prince was executed because of alleged heresy in 1659, by his younger brother, the emperor Aurangzeb. Sarmad was likewise executed, in 1661. He is buried in a modest shrine near the Great Mosque in Delhi.

30. ʿAbdul Laṭif, *Risālō*, "Sur Yaman Kalyān," 5: verses 23–24.

31. See Bausani, "Satano nell'opera filosofico-poetica di Muhammad Iqbal"; Schimmel, "Die Gestalt des Satans in Muhammad Iqbals Werk"; idem, *Gabriel's Wing*, pp. 208ff.

32. Rumi, *Mathnawī*, 4: line 1402, quoted by Iqbal in his poem "Goethe and Rumi," in *Payām-i Mashriq*, p. 246.

33. Rückert/Pertsch, *Grammatik*, p. 67.

34. Farrukhi, *Dīwān*, qaṣīda no. 6, compares the trees in spring to Adam's discovery of his nakedness; cf. qaṣīda no. 150.

35. Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān*, p. 34 (cf. pp. 5, 135).

36. Kisaʾi (ʿAufi, *Lubāb*, 2:34). Cf. also Khaqani's powerful verse (*Dīwān*, p. 577):

Your light filled the desert and my tears appeared as an ocean:
Moses saw the fire once more, and Noah renewed the flood.

37. Ghalib, *Kulliyāt-i fārsī*, 5:381. The hot water is mentioned twice in the Koran: Sura 11:40 and Sura 23:27. See also Khaqani, *Dīwān*, p. 318; ʿAṭṭar, *Manṭiq uṭ-ṭayr*, p. 3; ʿUrfi, *Kulliyāt*, p. 373.

38. Goethe, *West-Östlicher Divan*, "Aus dem Nachlass," p. 140. See also Renard's fine essay "Images of Abraham in the Writings of Jalaladdin Rumi."

39. Saʿdi, *Kulliyāt*, 3: no. 40. Amir Khusrau's ghazal no. 1637, where he calls the beloved *rishk-i butan-i Azarī*, "envy of Azar's idols," remains popular to this day.

40. Ghalib, *Kulliyāt-i fārsi*, 4: no. 83.

41. Ghalib, *Kulliyāt-i fārsi*, 4: no. 331. The same idea was expressed, a century before him, by Mir Dard (*Urdu Dīwān*, p. 47).

42. A well-known example is the historical work *Gulshan-i Ibrāhīm*, by Firishta, which was written under the aegis of Sultan Ibrahim II ʿAdilshah of Bijapur shortly after 1600. The ruler's court poet Ẓuhuri (see Azad, *Khizāna*, p. 315) alludes to him in his garden poetry:

Perhaps from Ibrahim's fire the candle of the flower on the
branch of the pomegranate became illuminated.

ʿAli Ibrahim Khan's biographical dictionary, published in 1784, bears the similar title *Tadhkira Gulzār-i Ibrāhīm*.

43. Anwari, *Dīwān* (ed. Nafisi), p. 320.

44. Mir Dard, *Urdu Dīwān*, p. 59. In this verse the Urdu term *bāgh bāgh*, "smiling, happy," means literally "garden, garden," so that the garden motif is perfectly maintained. For a similar image cf. Sanaʾi, *Dīwān*, p. 297.

45. Lal Shahbaz of Sehwan was an ecstatic mystic of Sind (d. post 1267) (see Qani', *Maqālāt ash-shu'arā*, p. 435).

46. Iqbal, *Zabūr-i 'ajam*, 2:38, and several times elsewhere.

47. Ghalib, *Kulliyāt-i fārsī*, 4: no. 127:

The child puts his neck under his father's sword
when this very father enters Nimrod's fire.

48. Ghalib, *Kulliyāt-i fārsī*, 4: no. 78. One can find the motif of "burning without sparks" in Indo-Pakistani folk poetry from the sixteenth century onward, when the enamored poet compares himself to a potter's kiln.

49. Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān*, p. 103.

50. A poem about this event is quoted in 'Aufi, *Lubāb*, 2:310. Cf. Anwari's *tauḥīd* (*qaṣīda* on God's Unity), *Dīwān* (ed. Nafisi), p. 175:

Sometimes He lowers the People of the Elephant by birds,
Sometimes He orders the destruction of Nimrod by a gnat.

The first hemistich alludes to the siege of Mecca (ca. 570), mentioned in the Koran (Sura 105).

51. Allusions to Yusuf's dream that the stars bowed down before him are comparatively rare. There are, however, in this connection a number of witty references to the moonlike Yusuf; as Amir Khusrau describes his own friend Yusuf (*Dīwān*, no. 638):

The moon that fell down before Yusuf is his slave,
though he was born in Delhi, whereas Yusuf was born in Canaan.

52. Khaqani, *Dīwān*, p. 97.

53. Amir Khusrau, *Dīwān*, no. 1083. Cf. no. 1069:

O Yusuf of this time, come, that I may tell you
the commentary of "the most beautiful story" from your own story.

Jami, to whom Persian owes the finest elaboration of the story of Yusuf and Zulaykha, thinks that his beloved has become so famous that children repeat the story of his beauty as though they were reciting the Sura Yusuf (*Dīwān*, no. 14, p. 138).

54. Ḥazin (see Azad, *Khizāna-i 'āmira*, p. 197).

55. Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān*, p. 146. Cf. Fani (*Dīwān*, p. 140), who "has given up looking at the world like [the blind] Jacob, because his child, the tear, has fallen in the well of a chin."

56. Kalim (Ikram, *Armaghān-i Pāk*, p. 231). For blisters see below, chapter 13).

57. Thus Rumi, *Dīwān*, no. 911/9564.

58. 'Urfi, quoted in Ikram, *Armaghān-i Pāk*, p. 165. This poem, *ḥasb-i ḥāl*, is one of the most impressive examples of masterly use of contrasting concepts.

59. Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān*, p. 2. But see Azad Bilgrami's deeply felt verse (Qani', *Maqālāt ash-shu'arā*, p. 60):

People looked at Yusuf's torn shirt—
but who has seen how torn was Zulaykha's ruined heart?

Another, much earlier version, based on Jami's epic, is the Ottoman poem by Ḥamdi, in which Zulaykha's song, an inserted *ghazal*, is of rare beauty (see Gibb, *History of Ottoman Poetry*, 6:77). For the topic as a whole see Yohannan, *Joseph and Potiphar's Wife*; and now see Schimmel, "Yusof in Mawlana Rumi's Poetry" and *Yusuf's Fragrant Shirt*.

60. As late as the nineteenth century Ghalib alludes to the "painted castle"—if his pen were close to Zulaykha, it would draw its own design (*Kulliyāt-i fārsī*, 5: qaṣīda no. 24).

61. Rumi, *Mathnawī*, 1: lines 3192ff., *Dīwān*, no. 1508/15880, *Fīhi mā fīhi*, chap. 49.

62. Rumi, *Mathnawī*, 6: lines 4023ff.

63. Thus Rumi, in his often-quoted *ghazal* with the *radīf -m ārzūst* (*Dīwān*, no. 441/4633):

Like Jacob I cry out: Oh, woe!
My wish is the beautiful view of Yusuf of Canaan.

Ḥafiẓ devoted his *ghazal* with the *radīf* "Don't grieve!" (*Dīwān*, p. 133) to Jacob in the *kulba-i aḥzān*.

64. Rumi, *Dīwān*, no. 468.

65. *Pīrāhan-i Yūsufī* was published in Lucknow in 1889.

66. Abu 'Ali Marwazi ('Aufi, *Lubāb*, 2:340).

67. Amir Khusrau, *Dīwān*, no. 1082. Cf. Jami, *Dīwān*, no. 372, p. 276; no. 480, p. 365; Sa'di, *Kulliyāt*, 3: no. 328, and many more.

68. Qudsi (Ikram, *Armaghān-i Pāk*, p. 223).

69. Insha Allah Khan Insha (Ikram, *Armaghān-i Pāk*, p. 292). An interesting version of the Yusuf story, which is diametrically opposed to the countless romantic images, is the drama which the Turkish communist writer Nazim Hikmet devoted to Yusuf and in which he shows him as an oppressor of the people. See Spuler, "Das türkische Drama der Gegenwart."

70. Salman-i Sawaji (Rami, *Anīs*, p. 66).

71. Muḥammad ibn Naṣir ('Aufi, *Lubāb*, 2:270). Ghalib sees Bahadur Shah's threshold as equal to Mount Sinai and addresses the powerless king: "Let me see you!" (*Kulliyāt-i fārsī*, 5: qaṣīda no. 14), and he also perceives such a divine manifestation in the person of Kalb 'Ali Khan, the *nawwāb* of Rampur (5: qaṣīda no. 4 in the appendix, p. 463).

72. A typical example is the *maṭla'* of Ḥafiẓ's *ghazal* (*Dīwān*, p. 244):

The nightingale recited yesterday from the cypress branch a loud cry (*gulbāng*) in Pahlawi,
teaching the spiritual stations:
That means: Come, for the rose shows the fire of Moses
so that you may hear the fine points of *tauḥīd* [monotheism].

The combination of the Persian, that is, Zoroastrian, terminology with Moses the monotheist, who saw God's manifestation in the fire, is very elegant, along with the pun on *gul*, "rose," and *gulbāng*, "loud cry."

73. Ghalib, *Kulliyāt-i fārsī*, 5: mathnawī no. 3, *Chirāgh-i dayr* (The Lamp of the Monastery).

74. Iqbal, *Payām-i Mashriq*, no. 39, "Lāla-i Ṭur":

It never grows old, the tale of Sinai,
every heart still whispers Moses' prayer.

In *Żarb-i Kalīm* he says:

Every moment new Sinais, new lightnings of revelation—
may God grant that the path of longing never be finished!

For Iqbal's approach to the figure of Moses see Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing*, p. 261.

75. Farda, a poet who died about 1705 (Khushgu, *Safīna*, 3:48). The Koranic expression is used, in classical Sufism, as the title of Ibn Qasyi's mystical work *Khalʿ an-naʿlayn*, which was rather controversial.

76. Sayyid Aḥmad Khan (Ikram, *Armaghān-i Pāk*, p. 326). It seems surprising that the leader of the modernist movement in Indian Islam should have selected for himself such a verse, with all its traditional overtones. However, the image was used by numerous poets, such as ʿUrfi and Fayżi in Akbar's days. Probably the best-known verse concerning Moses' inability to bear the radiance of the burning bush is found in Jamali Kanboh's *naʿt* in praise of Muḥammad (Ikram, *Armaghān-i Pāk*, p. 158):

Moses swooned at one manifestation of the attributes,
you see the manifestation of the essence and still smile.

A poet of the eighteenth century, Dhihni, treated the motif differently when comparing himself to Moses (Aṣlaḥ, *Tadhkirat-i shuʿarā-i Kashmīr*, p. 78):

Kalim, you and I are both burnt from love—
you are burnt by the manifestation, and I, by the veil.

77. This last collection of Iqbal's Urdu poetry (1937) contains many critical verses in which one sees the angered spirit of a fighter.

78. Kalim (Ikram, *Armaghān-i Pāk*, p. 232).

79. Ghani (Ikram, *Armaghān-i Pāk*, p. 242).

80. Thus ʿAbdul Wasiʿ Jabali (ʿAufi, *Lubāb*, 2:106).

81. Ghalib, *Kulliyāt-i fārsī*, 4: no. 182. Moses' brother and helper Harun (Aaron) (see, e.g., Sura 20:92) is rarely mentioned in poetry. He appears sometimes in *qaṣīdas* such as Waṭwaṭ's verse telling his patron that "by his strength the back of the Prophet's religion is strengthened just as was Moses' back by Harun's company" (*Dīwān*, p. 403).

82. Iqbal, *Payām-i Mashriq*, p. 206; cf. also *Jāvīdnāma*, line 276.

83. Rami, *Anīs*, p. 50.

84. Bu ʿAli Qalandar, *Dīwān*, fol. 9, quoted in Tafhimi, *Sharḥ-i aḥwāl-i . . . Abū ʿAlī Qalandar*, p. 386. But more frequently the poets seem to echo the Egyptians who cried out at Moses' and Aaron's actions "Verily these are two magicians!" (Sura 20:66), when they describe the bewitching eyes of the beloved. See, e.g., Amir Khusrau, *Dīwān*, no. 1178.

85. Kamal Ismaʿil (Rami, *Anīs*, p. 51); cf. also the examples in Rami's preceding pages.

86. Baki (Baqi) (Köprülüzade, *Eski şairlerimiz*, p. 275).

87. Iqbal, *Jāvīdnāma*, "Sphere of Venus."

88. Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān* (ed. Rosenzweig), letter *d*, no. 44. The other editions of the *Dīwān* do not include this line in the relevant *ghazal*; it must be an insertion, but a pleasant one. Ghalib, *Kulliyāt-i fārsī*, 4: no. 329, calls upon himself to show (by his art) the White Hand to the calf-worshipers. Another antihero in the Moses story is Haman, Pharaoh's minister. Thus Sanaʾi (*Dīwān*, p. 97) rebukes someone who had assumed the name "Musa Kalim" with the words: "Your *galīm* [woven rug] is woven only by Haman."

89. Suras 28:76–77, 39:39, 40:24. Cf. Anwari, *Dīwān* (ed. Nafisi), p. 60.

90. Saʿdi, *Kulliyāt*, 1: Gulistān, chap. 2.

91. Iqbal, *Bāl-i Jibrīl*, p. 50.

92. Khiḍr probably developed out of an ancient vegetation deity. See Friedländer, *Die Chadirlegende und der Alexanderroman*. For pictorial evidence see Coomaraswamy, "Khwaja Khadir and the Fountain of Life." In poetry, everything that guides to the highest goal or to the beloved can be called a Khiżr or *Khiżr-i rāh*: Ṭalib-i Amuli thinks that the scent of the rose is the nightingale's Khiżr (*Dīwān*, p. 247, ghazal no. 66), whereas for Iqbal, "Desire" is the Khiżr to the Moses of "Perception" (*Asrār-i khudī*, line 277). The sudden appearance of a helper is acknowledged in Turkey with the expression *Hizir gibi yetişti*: "He arrived rushing like Khiżr."

93. Goethe, *West-Östlicher Divan*, p. 3, in the very first poem.

94. Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān*, p. 47. Cf. Jami, *Dīwān*, no. 143, p. 188, and no. 340, p. 263:

The heart that by night found life from the cup of the morning draft
pointed to Khiżr and blackness and the Water of Life.

Cf. also Amir Khusrau, *Dīwān*, nos. 1059 and (more outré) 1628. Jami (*Dīwān*, no. 25, p. 142) describes the sprouting down with the words "God made a beautiful plant grow," which he ascribes to Khiżr: it is an allusion to Sura 3:32, in the story of Mary.

95. Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān*, p. 47. One may also think of his claim that the water of the fountain of Allahu Akbar in Shiraz is better than Khiżr's water, which is hidden in the darkness (p. 15).

96. Bada'uni, *Muntakhab at-tawārīkh*, 3:239 (trans. p. 331). Another verse (3:350, trans. p. 481) goes even farther: the "greenish" down around the life-bestowing mouth is Khiżr in company with Jesus.

97. Azad Bilgrami (Qani', *Maqālāt ash-shu'arā*, p. 59).

98. Ḥafiẓ's pen splashes drops from the Water of Life (*Dīwān*, pp. 235, 221). But Khaqani thought that the Water of Life filled his mouth when the name of his beloved came to his tongue (*Dīwān*, p. 634).

99. For these ideas see Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, pp. 197–98. Thus Kalim says in a *ghazal* (*Dīwān*, p. 149) that for the *ahl-i dil*, the true possessors of a heart, it is preferable to die thirsty at the brink of the Fountain of Life than to participate in Khiżr's eternal life.

100. Ghalib, *Kulliyāt-i fārsī*, 4: no. 6. He also jokes that the only prayer that will certainly be fulfilled is "Long live Khiżr!" (*Urdu Dīwān*, p. 55).

101. Hadi Hasan, "Qasim-i Kahi," p. 201; cf. 'Ali (Ikram, *Armaghān-i Pāk*, p. 257).

102. See Hasrat, *Dara Shikuh*. On a different level, *majma' al-baḥrayn* means "the unification of two meters in prosody," as *baḥr* also means "meter" (Rückert/Pertsch, *Grammatik*, p. 132).

103. Ẓahir Faryabi compares the scratching of his *mamdūḥ*'s pen to David reciting the Psalter, *zabūr* ('Aufi, *Lubāb*, 2:31).

104. Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān*, p. 110. An elegant combination of the two prophets appears in Khaqani, *Dīwān*, p. 1280:

> The goblets are like David's tears due to the wine
> and resemble Solomon's fairy houses—

an allusion to the "fairy [or genie] in the bottle" (on which see a little later in this chapter).

105. Rückert, "Östliche Rosen" (*Werke*, 2:42). The verses are based on Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān*, p. 43:

> Ḥafiẓ found Sulayman's place from the fortune of your love:
> that is, from union with you only wind remained in his hand.

106. Garcin de Tassy, *Les oeuvres de Wali*, p. 413. Mir Dard (*Dīwān-i fārsī*, p. 13) praises selflessness in a frequently occurring image:

> Everyone who gave his throne to the wind like Sulayman
> sits on the high seat of sovereignty.

107. Rumi, *Mathnawī*, 4: lines 562ff. For the theme see Bausani, "Drammi popolari sulla leggenda de Salomone e della regina de Saba"; for reflections of the same theme in Eastern and Western literature see Diederichs, *Märchen aus dem Land der Königin von Saba*.

108. See Hammer, "Über Siegel und Charaktere der Moslemen"; and Winkler, *Siegel und Charaktere in der muhammedanischen Zauberei*.

109. 'Abdul Qadir Khan (Raverty, *Selections from the Poetry of the Afghans*, p. 274).

110. Persian and Indian paintings show a great and delightful variety of colorful demons; for the Sulayman theme see the illustration from the *'Ajā'ib al-makhlūqāt* in the Preussische Staatsbibliothek (reproduced in Schimmel, *Stern und Blume*, figure 2).

111. I cannot find the exact source for this verse by Sami'i 'Aṭa, as I noted it down long ago from someone's poetry notebook. But the text runs thus:

> *Parra zadand gird-i takhtgāh-i shahinshāh*
> *Hamchūn dīwān bi-gird-i tahkt-i Sulaymān.*

112. Rumi, *Dīwān*, no. 239/2694. For "the dove's necklace" see below, chapter 13.

113. Amir Khusrau (*Dīwān*, no. 1141) complains that he is like an ant trampled beneath the horses' hooves without reaching Solomon's foot—a theme often used in *qaṣīdas*.

114. Hasan Dihlawi (Ikram, *Armaghān-i Pāk*, p. 134).

115. Fuzuli, *Divan*, no. 115.

116. Mir Dard, *Urdu Dīwān*, p. 50.

117. Jami, *Dīwān*, no. 837, p. 493; see also Naẓiri, *Dīwān*, p. 302.

118. Bewitching eyes termed Harut and Marut appear in 'Abdul Wasi' Jabali ('Aufi, *Lubāb*, 2:107). The rhyme *yāqūt*, "ruby," for the mouth fits well with this image, and the dimple of the chin as the Babylonian well appeared from at least the days of Sa'di (*Kulliyāt* 3: no. 73) down to Ghalib (*Kulliyāt-i fārsī*, 4: no. 172).

119. Rumi, *Mathnawī*, 2: lines 3140–41; *Dīwān*, no. 3016/32064 (among others); *Fīhi mā fīhi*, chap. 25.

120. The same idea can be found in 'Aṭṭar's *Pandnāma* and generally in *tauḥīd* poems. But Fani Kashmiri certainly goes somewhat too far when he admonishes the reader to enter the ocean in order to grow (*Dīwān*, p. 149), for

> Yunus fell into the water and became the essence (*'ayn*) [or, eye] of the sea,
> and the fishes' eyes became spectacles for him.

121. See *Yunus Emre Divani*, p. 477, no. 101, in the beautiful poem "The Rivers all in Paradise," which poetically describes the whole scene of Paradise, where there is

nothing but the name of Allah. ʿImaduddin Ghaznawi (ʿAufi, *Lubāb*, 2:267) admonishes people to pray in the morning, as Idris's morning prayer opened heaven to him.

122. Anwari loves the word *ṣarṣar*, which he often connects with winter: "Sultan December hit the world with the army of *ṣarṣar*" (*Dīwān*, ed. Nafisi, p. 136, second maṭlaʿ). Khaqani (*Dīwān*, p. 648) says with a pun:

The friend is the Hud of right guidance (*hudā*),
and I am like the *ṣarṣar* from you, which demolishes the ignorant ʿAdites.

Khaqani also (p. 19, in a *qaṣīda*) sees his pen as *ṣarṣar*. Ghalib, on the other hand, thinks that resurrection is nothing but a *ṣarṣar* that makes whirl the dust of dustborn people (*Kulliyāt-i fārsī*, 4: no. 26).

123. Rumi, *Mathnawī*, 3: lines 3700ff.

124. Kisaʾi (ʿAufi, *Lubāb*, 1:36). Manuchihri (*Dīwān*, qaṣīda, pp. 116ff.) has rather tasteless comparisons of Maryam, the grape, and Jesus, the wine, and loves allusions to her pregnancy. He says (p. 22, line 2666) that "wine drinking is the way and religion of Jesus."

125. Schimmel, *The Triumphal Sun*, pp. 180–93. A first attempt at classifying some poetical allusions to Jesus is Wyham's "Jesus in the Poetry of Iran," written from a missionary viewpoint. See also Schimmel, "Jesus and Mary in Rumi's Poetry." For a recent development see Soroudi, "On Jesus' Image in Modern Persian Poetry." Cf. also Iqbal's criticism of Europeans: "It is not strange that you have the miracle of Christ—stranger is that the sick person becomes sicker due to you!" (*Payām-i Mashriq*, p. 226). Similar ideas appear in his *Jāvīdnāma*, "Ṭāsīn-i Masīḥ."

126. Anwari, *Dīwān* (ed. Rażawi), qaṣīda no. 56, pp. 123–25.

127. Waṭwaṭ, *Dīwān*, p. 21. *Akmah* is the Koranic term for the blind-born who were healed by Jesus (Suras 3:43, 5:110).

128. Rumi, *Dīwān*, no. 1826/19180.

129. Thus by Amir Khusrau, *Dīwān*, no. 1403; Ghalib, *Urdu Dīwān*, p. 95; and many more. *ʿIsā-dam*, "Jesus-breath'd," or *hamdam-i ʿIsa*, "of the same life-giving breath as Christ," are common epithets for the beloved.

130. The kiss is an exchange of souls (see Hastings, *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, 7:739ff.), a theme common to classical antiquity and the European languages and traditional in Persian, for the soul was often considered to be connected with the breath. The most famous example in English literature are John Donne's lines

So, so break off this last lamenting kiss
which sucks two souls and vapors both away. . . .

In the same strain, ʿAṭṭar says (*Dīwān*, ghazal no. 494):

And if you say: "I'll give you my soul via my lip"—
it is with this very hope that my soul came onto my lip!

Or Amir Khusrau (*Dīwān*, no. 650):

My soul came to my lip—please come that I may remain alive!
For after I am no longer, for what purpose will you come?

See also Fuzuli, *Divan*, no. 154.

131. Raduyani, *Kitab Tarcuman al-balâġa*, p. 75.

132. The story that Jesus kept a needle with him and was therefore excluded from the highest heaven appears rather early in Sufism. Sanaʾi says (*Dīwān*, p. 85):

A needle was made the fetter of Jesus' feet—
love of the world is a fetter, be it only one needle!

133. Khaqani, *Dīwān*, p. 99.

134. Rückert/Pertsch, *Grammatik*, p. 297. In panegyrics one can find descriptions like this (Anwari, *Dīwān*, ed. Rażawi, p. 505, no. 205):

You are not Yusuf or Jesus or Moses, but among the kings
you are the ruler with Yusuf's face, Moses' hand, and Jesus' breath!

135. Rumi, *Fīhi mā fīhi*, chap. 17 (18), trans. in Arberry, *Discourses of Rumi*, p. 118.

136. Fayżi (Ikram, *Armaghān-i Pāk*, p. 191).

137. Thus in *Bāl-i Jibrīl*, p. 119. See Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing*, pp. 204–8.

138. Rumi, *Mathnawī*, 1: line 1055; thus also Saʿdi, "Būstān," *Kulliyāt* 4:6, and ʿAṭṭar, *Ilāhīnāma* (ed. Ritter), p. 16. See Schimmel, *And Muhammad Is His Messenger*, p. 176.

139. Ghalib, *Kulliyāt-i fārsī*, 5: qaṣīda no. 38.

140. Iqbal, *Bāl-i Jibrīl*, pp. 192–93.

141. Thus ʿUrfi, but he hopes to wash off the black book of sins with the water of the Prophet's kindness (*Kulliyāt*, naʿt, p. 58).

142. Amir Khusrau, *Dīwān*, no. 1073.

143. Abu Bakr Sarakhsi (ʿAufi, *Lubāb*, 2:18).

144. The image of the lion and the lamb, known to Western readers from the Old Testament, is likewise a symbol of eschatological peace in Islamic literatures, and when a poet wants to praise his *mamdūḥ* as the "prince of eternal peace" he may allude to the lion and the lamb lying down together. The same image can be used to evoke the beloved's kingdom of love and peace; see Shafruh (Daulatshah, *Tadhkirat ash-shuʿarā*, p. 171).

145. The Mughal painting of Jahangir standing with Shah ʿAbbas of Iran on a lion and a lamb has often been reproduced (see Welch, *Imperial Mughal Painting*, p. 21), but here the two animals have an even deeper meaning, as Shah ʿAbbas was related to the Turcoman house of the Aqqoyunlu, "White Sheep," and Jahangir was a descendant of Babur, "Tiger."

146. Thus in the well-known verse by Bedil (Ikram, *Armaghān-i Pāk*, p. 262):

hama ʿumr bā tū qadaḥ zadīm u naraft ranj-i khumār-i mā,
chi qiyāmati ki namīrasī zi kanār-i mā bi-kanār-i mā!

All our life long we have drunk together with you, and the pain of our hangover has not yet disappeared—
what a riot (*qiyāmat*) are you, that you do not come from our embrace [or, side] into our embrace!

147. Thus Saʿdi, *Kulliyāt*, 3: nos. 94, 293, and often.

148. Thus Anwari, *Dīwān* (ed. Nafisi), pp. 58, 196. Cf. also Schimmel, *Calligraphy and Islamic Culture*, chap. 4 n. 41.

149. Iqbal, *Żarb-i Kalīm*, p. 133.

150. *Yunus Emre Divani*, "Munācat," p. 535. This kind of accusation is not rare in Turkish Bektashi poetry. One of the poets, Azmi Baba, goes so far as to ask God why He needs this Hellfire: is He perhaps a *külhanbeyi*, that is, a destitute character who sleeps in the warm ashes of the bathhouse? (Kocatürk, *Şiir defteri*, p. 28). In another twist of mockery at the eschatological instrumentarium Kalim compares the thin neck of his emaciated horse to the Ṣiraṭ Bridge, for people shiver with fear when they look at it (*Dīwān*, muqaṭṭaʿ no. 64).

151. Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān*, p. 36. See also his famous lines that play ingeniously with religious concepts (p. 238):

O you, the story of Paradise is a tale about your lane,
the explanation of the beauty of the houris is a story of your face:
the breaths of Jesus are a delightful anecdote about your ruby lip,
the water of Khiżr is an allusion to drinking from your lip.

The numerous technical terms—*ḥadīth*, *riwāyat*, etc.—add even more flavor to the comparison; and *rūyat*, "your face," and *riwāyat*, "tale," form a false *ishtiqāq*.

152. Thakur, *Qāḍī Qādan jō kalām*, no. 52. Poets often mention the length of the terrible day; for a good example see Naẓiri (Ikram, *Armaghān-i Pāk*, p. 195).

153. Qudsi (Ikram, *Armaghān-i Pāk*, pp. 223–24).

154. Abu'l-Faraj Runi (Ikram, *Armaghān-i Pāk*, p. 85). Cf. also ʿUrfi, *Kulliyāt*, p. 187:

O you, who have a book of evil actions,
which is black from the smoke of the heart like the lovers' home of affliction!

For book imagery in general see chapter 18 below.

155. Ṣa'ib (Browne, *Literary History of Persia*, 4:274). But Ṣa'ib also has another fine verse about resurrection (Aṣlaḥ, *Tadhkirat-i shuʿarā-i Kashmīr*, 2:602):

Don't say that the breaking of the bottle "Heart" has no sound—
this sound will become loud at resurrection.

156. Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān*, p. 162.

157. Ḥazin boasts that the lips that thirst in the desert of longing for *salsabīl* have not seen the running water of his poems (Ikram, *Armaghān-i Pāk*, p. 273). Puns on *sabīl*, "way," and *salsabīl* are frequent. Often the pond of Kauthar appears, which in Shia tradition is connected with ʿAli ibn Abi Ṭalib, the first imam of the Shia, who is the *sāqī-yi kauthar*, the cupbearer who distributes heavenly water. Anwari's verse on the garden and Paradise (quoted in Garcin de Tassy, *Rhétorique et prosodie*, p. 90) contains a number of comparisons which recur time and again:

The garden, a paradise; the wine, Kauthar; and the plane tree, the Ṭuba.

Anwari flatters his patron (*Dīwān*, ed. Rażawi, no. 131, pp. 336–38):

Your swift-reined grace makes Hell a Kauthar,
Your heavy-stirruped wrath turns the Zamzam to fire.

158. Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān*, p. 27. On the basis of this line the Urdu satirist Akbar Allahabadi ridiculed Darwin's theory of evolution and juxtaposed it with Ḥallaj's exclamation *Anā'l-ḥaqq*, "I am the Creative Truth," that is, "I am God":

Darwin said: "I am a monkey." Manṣur said: "I am God!"
"Everyone's thought corresponds to his ambition."

(For Akbar Allahabadi see Schimmel, "Classical Urdu Literature," p. 238.) Because *Ṭūbā* means "Good fortune, how lovely!" Jami could invent a witty pun with it (*Dīwān*, no. 8, p. 135):

Your stature came like a Ṭuba at the times of strutting—
if it walks toward us—what luck, for us (*ṭūbā lanā*)!

These puns become even more delightful when one realizes that Ṭuba is also a feminine proper name.

159. Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān*, p. 18. Cf. Tafhimi, *Sharḥ-i aḥwāl-i . . . Abū ʿAlī Qalandar*, p. 384:

My Paradise: the friend's face; distance from it is Hell,
union with him is like light (*nūr*), separation from him is like Hellfire (*nār*).

160. Khaqani (Garcin de Tassy, *Rhétorique et prosodie*, p. 30). Cf. also Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān*, p. 20: the dark, fragrant tress in the paradisiacal rose bed—the cheek—is a peacock fallen in the garden of blessing.

161. Ghalib, *Kulliyāt-i fārsī*, 4: no. 247.

162. Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān*, pp. 178, 128; many others also claimed not to care for *ḥūr u quṣūr* but hoped for the *visio beatifica*. Dard, referring to the *ḥadīth* "And your Lord is smiling," sings (*Dīwān-i fārsī*, p. 88, rubāʿī):

Ascetic! You think of [or, care for] rose-plucking in the rose garden of Paradise—
my friend's smiling is a different Paradise!

163. *Yunus Emre Divani*, p. 53. Iqbal's poem "Huri and Poet" (*Payām-i Mashriq*, p. 147) and also the scene in Paradise at the end of his *Jāvīdnāma* well express this feeling of eternal seeking and the never-ending quest.

164. Ghalib, *Urdu Dīwān*, p. 9.

165. ʿUrfi, *Kulliyāt*, p. 305, based on Rumi, *Mathnawī*, 5: line 2189:

Love is greater than a hundred resurrections.
Resurrection is a limit, Love is limitless.

166. Iqbal, *Jāvīdnāma*, final chapter, "In the Presence of God."

167. Goethe, *West-Östlicher Divan*, p. 151, "Buch des Paradieses".

Chapter 4

1. Rumi, *Dīwān*, no. 2764/29376 and others; Jami, *Dīwān*, no. 167, p. 197; Saʿdi, *Kulliyāt*, 3: no. 190; Ghalib, *Urdu Dīwān*, p. 22, speaks of the *zakāt* of beauty.

2. Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān*, p. 138. He also states that true ablution is "by the water of the eyes and the blood of the liver" (p. 52); similarly, Gesudaraz, *Dīwān Anīs al-ʿushshāq*, p. 199. Such expressions go together with the idea that the real imam (leader of the prayer) is Love itself. Cf. the verse in *Yunus Emre Divani*, no. 43.

3. For Raḍiyat addīn Maryam see Anwari, *Dīwān* (ed. Ražawi), qaṣīda no. 133, pp. 341–42. There is an additional pun with *yam* and *Maryam*. A later poet, Naqi, claims that only *tayammum* is acceptable in the ritual prayer of love—namely, being purified by the dust of the beloved's street (Azad, *Khizāna-i ʿāmira*, p. 442). Cf. also a verse by ʿAlawi (Aṣlaḥ, *Tadhkirat-i shuʿarā-i Kashmīr*, 1:255).

4. Ḥafiẓ (*Dīwān*, p. 42) states that he uttered the four *takbīr* over everything at the very moment he performed his ablution from the Fountain of Love.

5. Thus Ṣadruddin Khujandi (ʿAufi, *Lubāb*, 1:265) and Qudsi (Ikram, *Armaghān-i Pāk*, p. 222): hence the tavern becomes the *ḥaram*, the sacred place. Khaqani (*Dīwān*, p. 128) compares the bottle which is learning to bow, to a Byzantine who has just embraced Islam. A particularly extensive description of the bottle that prostrates itself before the prayer-niche "goblet" appears in Manuchihri, *Dīwān*, lines 2402–4. Another example of this imagery appears in ʿAndalib, *Nāla-i ʿAndalīb*, 1:444.

6. Ghalib (*Kulliyāt-i fārsī*, 4: no. 261) will show the scar of love on his forehead when at Doomsday he is asked about the mark of prostration. Long before him, Khaqani had claimed (*Dīwān*, p. 336):

Everyone who performed the prostration in your court—
on the Day of Resurrection the word "Don't despair!" [Sura 39:54] will be written on his forehead.

7. ʿAṭṭar (*Dīwān*, p. 27). The best-known verse about the *kajkulāh* is that by Ḥasan Dihlawi (Ikram, *Armaghān-i Pāk*, p. 135). There is also a pun on *rāst kardan*, "make straight, direct," and *kaj*, "awry, crooked." For the justification of such an attitude see Baqli, *ʿAbhar al-ʿāshiqīn*, section 79: "The vision of Adam [i.e., the human being] is the *qibla* of the lovers." Baqli also combined the statement *Qad qāmat aṣ-ṣalāt*, "The ritual prayer begins," with the *qāmat*, "stature," of the beloved, a pun that became common in poetry and appears in the verse of Saʿdi (e.g., *Kulliyāt*, 3: nos. 143, 293) and Amir Khusrau. For the *kajkulāh* see also Jami (*Dīwān*, no. 363, p. 272, and no. 372, p. 276), who is fond of this idea.

8. The theme is extensively discussed in Ritter, *Das Meer der Seele*, pp. 445ff.

9. Amir Khusrau, *Dīwān*, no. 1553, imitated by one Saba (Aṣlaḥ, *Tadhkirat-i shuʿarā-i Kashmīr*, 2:608).

10. Amir Khusrau, *Dīwān*, no. 592.

11. Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān*, p. 13; cf. p. 193. The theme of the *miḥrāb* is given a sophisticated elaboration by a Hindu poet, Anandram Mukhliṣ (Azad, *Khizāna-i ʿāmira*, p. 426), who takes up the term *shīsha-i ḥalabī*, "Aleppan glass" (see below, chapter 21), which means glass of the finest quality:

It is not the reflection of his [her] eyebrows in the mirror—
rather a mosque was built in Aleppo.

Cf. also Amir Khusrau, *Dīwān*, no. 487:

The story of love which the heart reads from his eyebrow
is the Sura Yusuf written above the *miḥrāb*.

12. Saʿdi (quoted in Rami, *Anīs*, p. 21). See also Mir Dard, *Urdu Dīwān*, p. 4, and Jamali Kanboh (Azad, *Khizāna-i ʿāmira*, p. 178). But Manuchihri claims (*Dīwān*, p. 43, line 674) that the service for his patron Masʿud-i Ghaznawi is another ritual prayer.

13. Kalim, *Dīwān* (ed. Thackston), qaṣīda no. 2/60. Cf. Mir Dard, *Dīwān-i fārsī*, p. 87, rubāʿī.

14. Mir Dard, *Urdu Dīwān*, p. 130. In his *Dīwān-i fārsī*, p. 11, he claims to be the guide of the people who, like a *qibla*-showing bird, was therefore put in a cage. Mirza ʿAẓima Iksir "flies like a *qiblanumā* in his own house" (Khushgu, *Safīna*, 3:5).

15. *Yunus Emre Divani*, p. 540. For an interesting elaboration of the prayer imagery by a Mughal poet, Mughbacha, see below, Appendix, no. 16.

16. For a survey (which unfortunately does not consider the numerous poetical allusions to the rosary) see Venzlaff, *Der islamische Rosenkranz*.

17. ʿAṭṭar, *Manṭiq uṭ-ṭayr*, chap. 14/1; see Ritter, *Das Meer der Seele*, pp. 387ff. The contrast was, however, known before ʿAṭṭar gave it its classical form: Sanaʾi (see *Dīwān*, p. 337, and several other places) contrasted faith and infidelity, *tasbīḥ* and *zunnār*, monastery and tavern. Anwari says in a *ghazal* (*Dīwān*, ed. Nafisi, p. 557):

As I am not worthy of prayer rug or rosary,
my friend, I may become worthy of the *zunnār*.

Much later, Ghani in India jokes (Aṣlaḥ, *Tadhkirat-i shuʿarā-i Kashmīr*, 2:979):

The ascetic should be excused when he does not grasp the goblet,
for his hands have blisters from the beads of the rosary.

18. For the Kashmiri version see "Histoire de Shaikh Sanaan," *Catalogue des manuscrits indiens* 878, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

19. Ghalib, *Kulliyāt-i fārsī*, 4: no. 257; 5: qaṣīda no. 2. Expressions that point to someone's superiority over those to whom he belongs by nature are common: the Arabic poet Mutanabbi says that musk, though part of the muskdeer, is more precious than its origin, and Mir Dard (*Urdu Dīwān*, p. 45) compares himself to a *sam*, that pause which is necessary in a certain rhythm and is part of it without really belonging to the notes.

20. Kalim, *Dīwān*, ghazal no. 18. Cf. Ghalib, *Urdu Dīwān*, p. 9.

21. Ashna (Aṣlaḥ, *Tadhkirat-i shuʿarā-i Kashmīr*, 1:15). Naṣir ʿAli Sirhindi (Ikram, *Armaghān-i Pāk*, p. 254) invented a fine image on this motif:

Love has a way, hidden in the secluded place of the hearts
like a rosary's thread this road is lost beneath the stations.

22. Mir Dard, *Dīwān-i fārsī*, p. 94, rubāʿī.

23. Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān*, p. 250.

24. For the *hilāl-i ʿīd* see ʿAufi, *Lubāb*, 2:105; for the dialogue between Jahangir and Nurjahan see Hadi Hasan, "Qasim-i Kahi," p. 184. Ḥafiẓ, following Saʿdi's example (*Kulliyāt*, 3: no. 98), says (*Dīwān*, p. 62):

One has to see the crescent of the feast from the friend's eyebrows,

and Jami thinks (*Dīwān*, no. 178, p. 201):

To seek the crescent of the feast is the business of ordinary people—
for the elite, the crescent of the feast is the circling movement of the goblet.

Kalim, however, turns the topic around (*Dīwān*, ghazal no. 121):

My body has become so lean due to the separation from wine
that I have become an object to which one points with fingers as to the
crescent in the night of the feast.

25. Salman-i Sawaji (Azad, *Khizāna-i ʿāmira*, p. 258).

26. Kalim, *Dīwān* (ed. Thackston), qaṣīda 7/7. But one should also remember Khaqani's powerful image of the month of fasting (*Dīwān*, p. 244):

When the sky bakes hot bread in the oven of the East [at sunrise],
I bring the voice of fasting into all my limbs.

27. Kalim, *Dīwān*, ghazal no. 477.

28. Imami (Browne, *Literary History of Persia*, 3:117).

29. Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān*, p. 10.

30. Atish (Dr. Syed Abdullah, *Walī sē Iqbāl tak*, p. 180). The meter of this charming *musalsal* (that is, logically developing) poem is the lyrical *mutaqārib*. For Atish see Schimmel, "Classical Urdu Literature," p. 198.

31. Shah ʿAbdul Laṭif, *Risālō*, "Sur Khanbhat." Rumi (*Mathnawī*, 4: lines 1533ff.) tells of Majnun's attempt to reach Layla while his camel kept trying to turn back to his village, where its kid had been left behind; it was not interested in the spiritual values of love.

32. The combination of thorns and silk occurs often in classical poems, facilitated by the rhyme *mughīlān–parniyān*. See Saʿdi, *Kulliyāt*, 3: no. 196, and Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān*, p. 29, to mention only two well-known examples.

33. Ghalib, *Urdu Dīwān*, p. 174.

34. Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān*, p. 134.

35. Wali (Garcin de Tassy, *Les oeuvres de Wali*, p. 273).

36. Khaqani, *Dīwān*, p. 95. Jami (*Dīwān*, no. 281, p. 240) compares his beloved to the Kaʿba, for "wherever he [she] is, there is the best country" (like Mecca). The idea also occurs in panegyrics; see Farrukhi, *Dīwān*, qaṣīda no. 1:

I constantly see poets circumambulating your castle—
Your castle is the Kaʿba, and the surroundings of your castle are Baṭḥa.

See now the excellent analysis of the topic by Beelaert, "The Kaʿba as a Woman."

37. Khaqani, *Dīwān*, p. 90. Ghalib compares the black Kaʿba to the navel of the earth, similar to a muskdeer's navel, which is filled with black, fragrant musk (*Urdu Dīwān*, p. 115). The idea that the Kaʿba is the navel of the world, which is found throughout Islamic literature, goes back to the ancient symbol of the *omphalos*, the veritable center of the world.

38. ʿUrfi, *Kulliyāt*. Yet one may doubt the good taste of a minor eighteenth-century poet in Kashmir (Aṣlaḥ, *Tadhkirat-i shuʿarā-i Kashmīr*, 4:1739):

The musk-black down around his light-spreading face
is a piece of the cover of the Kaʿba in which a Koran is wrapped.

39. Cf. Rami, *Anīs*, p. 50, and Naẓiri, *Dīwān*, ghazal no. 544. Wali adds to this imagery of Ṣafa and Marwa the line:

In the pit of your chin I see the trace of Zamzam [the well near the Kaʿba].

40. Ghalib, *Kulliyāt-i fārsī*, 4: no. 157.

41. ʿUrfi (*Kulliyāt*, p. 367) tells that he circumambulated the Kaʿba with burning heart and was therefore afraid lest the flames singe the wings of the birds in the sanctuary.

42. Iqbal, *Asrār-i khudī*, line 502; cf. *Payām-i Mashriq*, p. 143. Ḥafiẓ (*Dīwān*, p. 28) compares his heart, which his cruel friend has killed, to a pigeon slain in Mecca—but asks God not to punish him for this sin.

43. Fayżi (Yusuf Husain, *L'Inde mystique au Moyen Age*, p. 169). Similarly, Ghalib says (*Kulliyāt-i fārsī*, 4: no. 214):

I saw the Kaʿba, and called it the footprint of those who walk along.

See also no. 83 in the same volume. In another passage Ghalib claims to be so weak that instead of spreading out his prayer rug at the Kaʿba he places his bed there (4: no. 242).

44. Abu ʿAli-i Marwazi (ʿAufi, *Lubāb*, 2:344).

45. The idea of sacrificing oneself for the beloved permeates Persian and Urdu verse; for examples see Schimmel, *A Dance of Sparks*, p. 15. In a strange combination of both festivals, Ghalib says (*Urdu Dīwān*, p. 16):

Don't ask how happy the yearning ones are when they see the place for execution:
it is the *ʿīd* of expectation that the sword may become naked.

The Feast of Sacrifice in connection with the pilgrimage is combined here with the crescent that announces the end of the fasting month, and which resembles a dagger.

46. Saʿdi, *Kulliyāt*, 3: no. 112.

47. Kalim, *Dīwān*, ghazal no. 534. Ḥafiẓ jokes (*Dīwān*, p. 39):

The jurist of the *madrasa* [theological college] was drunk yesterday and issued a legal opinion (*fatwā*):
Wine is prohibited, but it is better than [embezzling] money from pious foundations (*waqf*).

48. Amir Khusrau, *Dīwān*, no. 1104.

49. Gesudaraz, *Dīwān Anīs al-ʿushshāq*, p. 50.

50. Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān*, p. 152.

Chapter 5

1. See Schimmel, *And Muhammad Is His Messenger*.

2. Meʾali (Ambros, *Candid Penstrokes*, p. 36, ghazal no. 147). A similar pun appears in ghazal no. 32.

3. Cf. the references to Buraq in Schimmel, *And Muhammad Is His Messenger*, pp. 166, 170, 171; for pictorial evidence see Arnold, *Painting in Islam*, chap. 7; on a specialized theme see Ettinghausen, "Persian Ascension Miniatures of the Fourteenth Century."

4. Mir Dard, *Urdu Dīwān*, p. 2, with the traditional combination of "sleep" and "story" (see below, chapter 23).

5. ʿUrfi, *Kulliyāt*, p. 469, mathnawī with a pun on *ḥadīth*. But cf. his rubāʿī, p. 435:

Love came and went bloodthirsty to the market;
asceticism came and shed deceptive tears.
That one looked for a breast with a scar, and this one for cotton in the ear:
that one twisted the *ḥabl matīn*, and this one a *zunnār*.

That is, Love, which looks only for wounded hearts, gives man the "firm rope"; hypocritical asceticism may end in infidelity. Khaqani (*Dīwān*, p. 502, tarjīʿband) speaks of his *zunnār*, which is from the *ḥabl-i matīn* in the Street of the Magi; Kalim (*Dīwān*, ghazal no. 15) thinks that the angels weave the *ḥabl-i matīn* from the hairs of the covering of the throne of Poverty, *faqr*.

6. The Banu ʿUdhra were a tribe in Arabia whose poets, in the seventh and eighth centuries, were renowned for the expression of chaste love in their verse. Critics derived from their poetry, such as the poems of Jamil, a theory of chaste love which was particularly elaborated in the late ninth century by Muḥammad ibn Daʾud aẓ-Ẓahiri (d. 909), whose anthology *Kitāb az-zahra* contains much material. Although at the beginning the representatives of *ʿudhrī* love and the Sufis were in opposite camps, the Sufis eventually adopted the ideal of chaste love as they recognized a manifestation of Divine Beauty in the beautiful human being; it became an important ingredient of later Persian and Persianate literature.

7. In a crude verse Amir Khusrau says (*Dīwān*, no. 720):

The lover who is killed by love and lust—
his blood is not a martyr's blood; rather, it is the menstruation of women.

Women, in the abstract, appear in Persian poetry usually as representatives of the lower instincts, the *nafs ammāra* (Sura 12:53), and are regarded as impure. Yet the qualification *mard*, "man," can be applied to a woman as well, provided she has reached a high spiritual position. Between the ideal "man," that is, the "man of God," and woman as the *nafs* principle, interested only in the material world, stands the *mukhannath*, the catamite, who is neither man nor woman and is therefore ridiculed in not exactly quotable verse in satires as well as in epics (e.g., in Rumi's *Mathnawī*).

8. The hopeless longing for an unattainable beloved was sharply criticized by modernist thinkers in Turkey and Muslim India; Ḥali's *Muqaddima-i shiʿr u shāʿirī* as well as some of Iqbal's remarks in letters and articles show this attitude.

9. See Graham, *Divine Word and Prophetic Word*.

10. Schimmel, *And Muhammad Is His Messenger*, pp. 116–17, 200–201, and index.

11. Fighani, *Dīwān*, p. 79.

12. Rumi, *Dīwān*, no. 1690.

13. Rahim, "Perfection Manifested," gives an extensive survey of the use of metaphors and expressions connected with ʿAli. ʿAli Ḥaydar appears also as *karrār*, the "often-attacking" hero, and is then frequently combined with his brother Jaʿfar *aṭ-ṭayyār*, "the flyer," who was slain in the battle of Muʾta in 629 and, after his hands and feet had been cut off, flew, as it were, to Paradise. See Sanaʾi, *Dīwān*, p. 13, and often in Rumi.

14. This surname is explained by Shia writers as an honorific name given to ʿAli by the Prophet, and by early adversaries of ʿAli as a deprecatory nickname. See Schimmel, *Islamic Names*, p. 7.

15. Daulatshah, *Tadhkirat ash-shuʿarā*, p. 476.

16. Ẓahir Faryabi (Rami, *Anīs*, p. 15).

17. ʿAli Ḥazin (Ikram, *Armaghān-i Pāk*, p. 273).

18. According to tradition Duldul (the name basically means "large hedgehog") was sent to the Prophet by the Muqauqis, the Coptic patriarch, along with other gifts, including the slave girl Maria.

19. See Chelkowski, *Taʿziyeh: Ritual and Drama in Iran*, which contains numerous contributions about Muḥarram practices. An Arabic book composed in Lucknow in 1820 by Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ash-Shirwani (d. 1840), *Al-manāqib al-ḥaydariyya*, tells dramatically how King Ghaziuddin Ḥaydar's favorite elephant was trained to trumpet, during the Muḥarram procession, *Wāh Ḥusaynā wāh Ḥussssayyyynāāā, wāh Ḥusayn* . . . . The story is verified in Mrs. Meer Hassan Ali's account, *Observations on the Mussulmauns of India* (1832).

20. This interpretation of the name of Kerbela apparently comes from Ibn Babuya's *Al-āmālī waʾl-majālis* (Qumm, A.H. 1272 [1855], p. 71), based on a tradition. Rumi uses it (*Dīwān*, no. 230/2595). The cruelty of the beloved could be expressed in terms connected with the tragedy of Kerbela. Daqiqi, at the very beginning of Persian poetry, says (Lazard, *Les premiers poètes*, 2:152):

> So much tyranny and injustice as he wrought on me,
> the family of Abu Sufyan [the Omayyads] did not bring over Shibr
> [= Ḥasan, here intended as Ḥusayn ibn ʿAli].

21. Huart's translation of Rami's *Anīs* misinterprets the term, which became common in later Persian poetry, especially from Safavid times (1501) onward. The other item mentioned by later Shia poets is the *nakhl-i mātam*, "the palm tree of mourning," the high pole carried in the Muḥarram processions.

22. ʿUrfi, *Ḥasb-i ḥāl* (Ikram, *Armaghān-i Pāk*, p. 165).

23. Rumi, *Dīwān*, no. 2934/31129. Sanaʾi, alluding to Abu Bakr's nickname *aṣ-Ṣiddīq*, "the very trustworthy," says (*Dīwān*, p. 482):

> If you seek sugar without poison don't be a thorn without dates—
> you need sincerity like that of Abu Bakr—then pitch your tent in the cave.

Rumi (*Dīwān*, no. 901) compares "heart and Love" to Aḥmad and Abu Bakr and also alludes to the spider which helped the two by covering the cave with cobweb (no. 2871).

24. In epic poetry one often finds poems in praise of the first four caliphs, the *rāshidūn*, "rightly guided ones," after the eulogy for the Prophet himself. In an anti-Shia verse (*Dīwān*, p. 319) ʿAṭṭar admonishes the reader:

> If you do not keep the love of the four friends in your soul,
> don't imagine that your five [daily] prayers are licit for you.

25. For the Malay tradition see Brakel, *The Story of Muhammad Hanafiyya*. The story is also mentioned in Dakhni Urdu; see Garcin de Tassy, *Histoire de la littérature hindoue et hindoustanie*, 1:260, 3:142; see also Schimmel, "Classical Urdu Literature," p. 152, for the relevant epics by Sayyid al-Ashraf and Muḥammad Fayżi Azad.

26. Ṣanʿati, *Qiṣṣa-i bēnaẓīr*, written in Dakhni in 1544, deals with Tamim, whose story was also retold in Tamil; see Shulman, "Muslim Popular Literature in Tamil." On other related epics, such as stories about Ḥatim aṭ-Ṭaʾi, the paragon of generosity, see Ethé, "Neupersische Literatur," p. 322. In 1470 the Persian author Ibn Ḥusam told the adventures of Saʿd ibn Abi Waqqaṣ, Abuʾl-muʿjam, and ʿAli in his *Khāwarnāma*; in 1649 Kamal Khan Rustami wrote a Dakhni Urdu version of the story. Saʿd's alleged tomb can be seen in Canton (Kuang-chou), China.

27. For the *Ḥamzanāma* see Ethé, "Neupersische Literatur," p. 310, where Persian, Turkish, Urdu, Hindi, Malay, and Javanese versions are mentioned. For the *Ḥamzanāma* ordered by Akbar see Egger, *Der Hamza-Roman*; the pictures—now in various museums and private collections—are in part available in a facsimile edition published in Graz. ʿAbdun Nabi Qazwini wrote a *Dastūr al-fuṣaḥā* about the technique of reciting the *Qiṣṣa-i Ḥamza*, and Qiṣṣakhwan Ḥamdani produced a Persian work in this line, *Zubdat ar-rumūz*, at Muḥammad Quṭbshah's court; see Marshall, *Mughuls in India*, no. 1490.

28. Sanaʾi combines Salman's name with the Prophet's saying *Aslama shayṭānī*, "My 'Satan' has become a Muslim"—that is, "My lower faculties have become completely obedient to the Divine Will" (both *aslama* and *Salmān* belong to the same Arabic root, *s.l.m*)—and says (*Ḥadīqat al-ḥaqīqat*, p. 300):

> Everyone who becomes in intellect like Salman—
> know that the evil spirit of his heart has become a Muslim.

29. This image was rather widespread and occurs even in Pashto poetry; see Raverty, *Selections from the Poetry of the Afghans*, p. 129. Yet one finds it somewhat strange when Ma'il, an eighteenth-century poet from Sind, says (Qani', *Maklīnāma*, p. 468):

When Bilal saw that mole under my friend's nose,
he fell from the *minbar* due to excessive amazement.

Bilal was popularized in a different way through two poems by Iqbal (*Bāng-i Darā*, pp. 78, 272), in which he was praised; this caused many Pakistani parents to call their sons Bilal.

30. *Yunus Emre Divani*, p. 571. Cf. also Salman-i Sawaji (Azad, *Khizāna-i 'āmira*, p. 257). Sana'i combines Bilal and Uways in a complicated verse (*Dīwān*, p. 598), and Bu 'Ali Qalandar mentions him in his *Dīwān* (Tafhimi, *Sharḥ-i aḥwāl-i . . . Abū 'Alī Qalandar*, p. 280):

With its fire-spreading breath, every morning the Sufi "Sky"
has become related (*aqrān*) to Uways al-Qarani out of longing for you,

with an allusion to the *ḥadīth* that the "breath of the Merciful" reached the Prophet from Uways's presence in Yemen.

31. Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān*, p. 38.

Chapter 6

1. Ibn al-Muqaffa' (ca. A.D. 720–756) translated the original Indian stories of *Kalīla wa Dimna* into Arabic from the Pahlavi and also gave an Arabic account of the Persian *Khudāynāma*, which contained historical and legendary information.

2. This scene has often been represented in manuscripts of the *Shāhnāma*. For a fine example see Welch, *Wonders of the Age*, frontispiece and no. 4. Firdausi's verse is cited by Rami (*Anīs*, p. 32) as an example of a metaphor for the eyelashes.

3. Browne, *Literary History of Persia*, 2:95, translates Jami's verse:

Gone is the greatness of Maḥmud, departed his glory,
and shrunk to "he knew not the worth of Firdausi" his story.

The most recent edition of the *Shāhnāma* was published in Moscow from 1966 to 1971; for translations of the whole work or parts of it see Yar-Shater, *Persian Literature*, p. 500. Nöldeke's "Iranisches Nationalepos" is still valuable.

4. Ibn ar-Rawandi, *Rāḥat aṣ-ṣudūr*, p. 91 (Arabic text).

5. The most comprehensive study of the magnificent *Shāhnāma* prepared in Iran under Shah Ṭahmasp is Dickson and Welch's *Houghton Shāhnāma* in two volumes. A smaller version of the work is Welch's *A King's Book of Kings*. A fine analysis of an illustrated *Shāhnāma* of 1605 (now in Berlin) is Enderlein and Sundermann's *Schahnama: Das persische Königsbuch*. Grabar and Blair's *Epic Images and Contemporary History* considers very early versions of the miniatures. See also Maguire, "The *Shahnamah* and the Persian Miniaturist" and "The *Haft Khwan* of Rustam and Isfandiyar."

6. The miniature of Gayumarth from the *Houghton Shāhnāma*, by Sulṭan Muḥammad, is published in Welch, *Wonders of the Age*, no. 8, plate 2.

7. Ghalib, *Kulliyāt-i fārsī*, 4: no. 205.

8. Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān*, p. 87. See also his warning (p. 244):

Jamshed took nothing with him from this world but the story of the goblet—
beware lest you put your heart on worldly assets!

9. For the newspaper see Schimmel, "Classical Urdu Literature," p. 213.

10. The theme occurs frequently in 'Omar Khayyam's *Rubā'iyyāt*, but a considerable number of other poets have taken up the idea as well. Thus Ẓahir Faryabi (Daulatshah, *Tadhkirat ash-shu'arā*, p. 123):

The story of Dara and Kayqobad became a legend,
Jamshed's and Arduwan's governing was abolished.

11. Jami, *Dīwān*, no. 613, p. 407. For another fine example see the lines of Ni'matullah-i Kuhistani (Daulatshah, *Tadhkirat ash-shu'arā*, p. 379):

Where are the highly esteemed kings,
from Hushang and Jam to Isfandiyar?
All of them have now dust and earth as pillow—
happy he who has sown the seed of goodness!

See also Fuzuli, *Divan*, no. 58.

12. See also Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān*, p. 94.

13. Ghalib, *Dirafsh-i kāwiyānī* (*Kulliyāt-i fārsī*, vol. 11). He also boasts of his pen, which looks like Faridun's flag (*Kulliyāt-i fārsī*, 4: no. 243).

14. Amir Khusrau, *Dīwān*, no. 1528. Żahhak is derived from the ancient Persian demon Azhidahak and arabicized as Ḍaḥḥak. See also Taeschner, "Zohak."

15. Qaṭran ('Aufi, *Lubāb*, 2:217).

16. This combination—which is rather frequent—is skillfully enlarged by Waṭwaṭ (*Dīwān*, p. 189) in a fine *laff u nashr* and *tajnīs*:

One would say that he has borrowed in banquet (*bazm*) and fighting (*razm*) and decision (*ḥazm*) and intention ('*azm*)
the hand of Ḥatim, the intelligence of Rustam, the body of Bizhan, the heart of Ḥaydar.

17. Cf. also Soroudi, "Islamization of the Iranian Historical Hero Rustam."

18. Rückert, *Rostem und Sohrab* (1838), excerpts in *Werke*, 2:70ff. Before Rückert, James Atkinson had composed his *Soorab, a Poem Freely Translated from the Original Persian of Firdousi* (Calcutta, 1814; 2d ed., 1828). See also Southgate, "Fate in Firdausi's *Rustam wa Suhrab*."

19. Masʿud ibn Saʿd (Ikram, *Armaghān-i Pāk*, p. 89). Manuchihri writes (*Dīwān*, p. 62, line 609):

The Pleiades [are] like Manezha near the well,
my two eyes on them like Bizhan's eyes.

20. Khaqani, *Dīwān*, p. 377.

21. The exact source escapes me, but the Persian text reads:

Nigāhī kardam az bālā bi pāʾin
Waṭanrā dīdam andar chah chu Bizhan.

22. Farrukhi, *Dīwān*, qaṣīda no. 137. Both Anushirwan and ʿOmar appear frequently in Farrukhi's verse (the rhyme letters *r* and *n*, incidentally, form the major part of his poetry).

23. Anecdotes about Anushirwan and Buzurjmihr appear in the *Qābūsnāma* (see Browne, *Literary History of Persia*, 2:279) and in almost all *Mirrors for Princes* in the subsequent centuries as well as in edifying works like Saʿdi's *Gulistān* and Jami's *Bahāristān*.

24. Abuʾl-Faraj Runi (Ikram, *Armaghān-i Pāk*, p. 84).

25. Jauhari (ʿAufi, *Lubāb*, 2:114–17).

26. Farrukhi, *Dīwān*, qaṣīda no. 157.

27. Ḥafiẓ's verse (*Dīwān*, p. 5) is famous:

Iskandar's mirror is perhaps the cup of wine
which can show you the situation in Dara's kingdom.

28. Bedil, *Kulliyāt*, 1:195.

29. Goethe, *West-Östlicher Divan*, p. 96, in "Buch Suleika."

30. Rami, *Anīs*, p. 72. Alexander is generally identified with Dhuʾl-qarnayn, the one "with two horns" mentioned in the Koran (Sura 18:82ff.) who built the dam against Gog and Magog. Yet poets were mainly interested in his having been deprived of the Water of Life, as Azad Bilgrami mentions (*Khizāna-i ʿāmira*, p. 128):

The delight of poverty is not given to those who own a crown,
the cup with Khiżr's water is not given to Alexander.

Wali turns it differently:

O Alexander, don't seek the Water of Life, whose guardian Khiżr is—
this water is nothing but eloquence.

See Schimmel, "Classical Urdu Poetry," p. 155.

31. See Nagel, *Alexander der Grosse in der frühislamischen Volksliteratur*; Boyle, "The Alexander Legend in Central Asia"; Bečka, "Alexander the Great in Persian, Tajik, and Czech Literatures." A good survey is *Iskandarnamah: A Persian Medieval Alexander Romance* (trans. Southgate), appendix 1, "Persian Alexander Romances." See also Ethé, "Alexanders Zug zum Lebensquell." See Bürgel's German translation.

32. Schaeder, "War Daqīqī Zoroastrier?" See also Ishaque, "Daqiqi, the Precursor of Firdausi."

33. See Fouchécour, *La description de la nature*, p. 119; Muʿizzi, in Rückert/Pertsch, *Grammatik*, p. 167; Farrukhi, *Dīwān*, qaṣīda no. 24.

34. The Indian tradition offers an interesting parallel to the notion that the "chirping of the birds" sounds as though they were reciting sacred texts in an unknown language: see Staal, "Mantras and Bird Songs." *Zamzama* is often associated with lovely and loving sounds, as in Naẓiri's verse (*Dīwān*, no. 41):

If the lesson of the educator were the *zamzama* of love,
he would draw the runaway child to school [even] on Friday.

35. Manuchihri hears the nightingale sing like a musician, whereas the turtledove murmurs like the fire priests, *mōbad* (Fouchécour, *La description de la nature*, p. 142).

36. Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān*, p. 103.

37. Daqiqi (Lazard, *Les premiers poètes persans*, p. 160). This expression for "fire" or anything radiant remained alive for centuries. Ghalib says (*Kulliyāt-i fārsī*, 4: no. 156):

Everyone who sees her walking on the road
says: "The *qibla* of the fire worshipers comes!"

38. Amir Khusrau, *Dīwān*.

39. Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān*, p. 129; Masʿud ibn Saʿd, *Dīwān*, p. 306 (cf. p. 395). See also Runi, *Dīwān*, p. 30; Farrukhi, *Dīwān*, qaṣīda no. 140.

40. Ghalib, *Urdu Dīwān*, p. 49.

41. See especially Moḥammad Moʿin, *Mazdayasnā u taʾthīr-i ān dar adabiyāt-i fārsī*.

42. Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān*, p. 208 (cf. p. 82 and several other places).

43. The appearance of Sarosh in the first scene of Iqbal's *Jāvīdnāma* takes up the traditional imagery. The modernist poet was very fond of this angelic being and even considered calling his first Persian *mathnawī* "Sarosh's Song" (*Naghma-i Sarōsh*); see Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing*, pp. 41, 207.

44. For Suhrawardi see Corbin, *L'homme de lumière*.

45. Muʿizzi (ʿAufi, *Lubāb*, 2:73).

46. Shah Niʿmatullah Kirmani, quoted in Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān*, p. 26 n. 1.

47. Ghalib, *Kulliyāt-i fārsī*, 4: no. 95.

48. For Iqbal's use of *zunnār* see Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing*, pp. 295–96. A good example appears in *Zabūr-i ʿajam*, p. 51. The poets liked to compare the beloved's long tresses to a *zunnār* by which they could easily be bound; see Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān*, p. 202 (the blackness of the tresses is an additional sign of how dangerous and impious they are). This imagery was taken over into Pashto; see Khushḥal Khan Khatak (Raverty, *Selections from the Poetry of the Afghans*, p. 171).

49. The tradition "I have a time with God where no one can enter, not even Gabriel" (Furuzanfar, *Aḥādīth-i Mathnawī*, no. 100) points in the first instance to the Prophet's experience during his *miʿrāj* and then, in general, to the moment of prayer when one is completely submerged in the Divine Presence.

50. The basic study of Zurvan's role is Zaehner's *Zurvan: A Zoroastrian Dilemma*.

51. "Mani composed Artang in a cave in Turkestan. It is an encyclopedia of his cosmological ideas. This work was admired by Abu'l-Maʿali in the treasure chamber of the Shah of Ghazna as late as the year 1092, but subsequently it was lost" (O. Klíma, in Rypka, *History of Iranian Literature*, p. 63). The *Artang* or *Arzhang* is mentioned in a fine verse by ʿUnṣuri (Raduyani, *Kitab Tarcuman al-balaġa*, p. 91):

> The cloud is not Mani—why has the garden turned into an *Artang*?
> The wind is not Azar—why did the garden become full of pictures?

This theme was taken up by Farrukhi several times (e.g., *Dīwān*, qaṣīda no. 39, for spring). Mani the painter appears as early as the verse of Abu Shuʿayb (Lazard, *Les premiers poètes persans*, 2:129), and the easy rhyme between *Artang* and *rang*, "color," facilitated its use.

52. As China was considered the home of painting (see below, chapter 10), Qaṭran calls Mani "the Chinese painter" (Fouchécour, *La description de la nature*, p. 187). Of the Timurid artist Shahi, who was not only a poet but a calligrapher and painter, it was said (Daulatshah, *Tadhkirat ash-shuʿarā*, p. 481):

> If a copy of a drawing from his pen were brought to China—
> how would Mani [still dare to] admire his own art?

The idea of Mani the painter was inherited by Pashto poets as well and became as common in Mughal India as it had earlier been in Iran. It is interesting that two Hindu artists in nineteenth-century India composed treatises on calligraphy in which the word *Arzang* is used: Shaʾiq, *Arzang-i Shāʾiq: A Treatise on Caligraphy* [*sic*] (Benares, 1861), and Deviprasada, *Arzhang-i Chīn: A Treatise on Caligraphy* [*sic*] *with Elegant and Curious Specimens of Writing* (Lucknow, 1879).

53. See Rypka, "A Short Survey of Judeo-Persian Literature," in Rypka, *History of Iranian Literature*, pp. 737–42, with a brief but useful bibliography, mainly the studies of J. P. Asmussen. Recent years have seen editions and studies of a number of Judeo-Persian texts.

54. Masʿud ibn Saʿd, *Dīwān*, p. 471.

55. In modern times one can observe some interest in the literary tradition of classical antiquity. Excellent, though rather isolated examples are the two Turkish dramas by Selahettin Batu: *Iphigenia* and *Helen Remains in Troy*. The latter was staged, in a German translation by Bernd von Heiseler, during the Bregenzer Festspiele in 1967.

56. Farrukhi and Khaqani are the masters in whose work one finds the greatest number of allusions to classical scholars and sciences. For a typical, very early example of the helplessness of physicians and philosophers against death see Maysari (Lazard, *Les premiers poètes persans*, 2:191).

57. Thus Jami, *Dīwān*, no. 54, p. 159.

58. Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān*, p. 135; cf. also Mahir (Azad, *Khizāna-i ʿāmira*, p. 423). It is interesting to note that the poet Bedil was praised by his biographer Azad Bilgrami (Azad, *Khizāna-i ʿāmira*, p. 152) as "the Pir [spiritual guide] of the tavern of eloquence and the Plato who sits in the barrel of inner meaning." Sanaʾi (*Ḥadīqat al-ḥaqīqat*, p. 293) mixes up the two persons: "not everyone who sits in a barrel is a Socrates," and—with more confusion, or a printing mistake for *Suqraṭ* (p. 689)—"Buqraṭ [Hippocrates] who lived in a barrel."

59. Anwari, *Dīwān* (ed. Ražawi), qaṣīda no. 85, pp. 213–19. To boast of one's superiority over Plato and Aristotle remained a topos for centuries and is found even in the Indian modernist Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan's "Tombstone" (Ikram, *Armaghān-i Pāk*, p. 235).

60. Abu Ḥamid al-Ghazzali's *Tahāfut al-falāsifa* (The Inconsistencies of the Philosophers) seems to have influenced poets like Sanaʾi and Khaqani. An English translation by S. A. Kamali was published in Lahore in 1958.

61. Amir Khusrau, *Dīwān*, no. 1098. "Do not the children in the school of Love ridicule Plato?" asks ʿUrfi (*Kulliyāt*, p. 403). But the main reason for the aversion of poets, from Sanaʾi to Iqbal, to Greek philosophers was that the philosophers did not acknowledge the Prophet of Islam:

> Anyone who does not believe in him, is ignorant,
> even if he be the wise Aristotle and Plato,

says ʿAbdurrazzaq-i Iṣfahani (Daulatshah, *Tadhkirat ash-shuʿarā*, p. 160). See also below, chapter 7. For Buhlul, the wise idiot, see Marzolph, *Der weise Narr Buhlul*.

Chapter 7

1. Iqbal, *Payām-i Mashriq*, p. 119. But long before him, Fani (*Dīwān*, p. 69) thought that it would not be surprising if the fire of the lovers would set Avicenna's shop aflame.

2. Khaqani, *Dīwān*, p. 172, quoted in Iqbal, *Speeches and Statements*, p. 239.

3. Sometimes one finds unexpected allusions to historical events: Abu ʿAbdallah al-Walwaliji (ʿAufi, *Lubāb*, 2:22) compares the black curls on the beloved's forehead to the "army of the Zanji [black workers] plundering Baghdad," an event that occurred in A.D. 876.

4. Khaqani (*Dīwān*, p. 182) praises someone as "Aṣaf with the generosity of Ḥatim and Aḥnaf with the eloquence of Ṣaḥban, as Yaḥya with the gifts of Khalid, and Jaʿfar with Harun's qualities." Aḥnaf was a famous Tamimite leader of the first century of Islam. Yaḥya, Khalid, and Jaʿfar were members of the house of the Barmakides, who wielded enormous power and were incredibly wealthy in the days of Harun ar-Rashid. Allusions to the Barmakids can be found in a number of *qaṣīdas* from the earlier period of Persian literature. But Khaqani also swears by a number of disgusting aspects of well-hated figures from early Islamic days (*Dīwān*, p. 55), beginning with "the menstruation of Hind" and ending with "the beard of Musaylima the liar." In between, several Omayyads feature likewise. Hind was the wife of Abu Jahl, the archenemy of the Prophet, and Musaylima emerged as a rebel after the death of Muḥammad, claiming the status of a prophet.

5. Muqannaʿ appears in poetry from Sana'i (*Dīwān*, p. 275) and Anwari to Ghalib. Niẓami (*Khusrau Shīrīn*, lines 190, 391) says that even an impostor can produce an artificial moon, but the proof comes in times of adversity, "when the ditch of Nakhshab is filled with water." Khaqani, punning on the nickname *muqannaʿ*, "veiled," thinks that the beloved's chin is like the moon of Nakhshab (probably supposed to appear from behind the veil) (*Dīwān*, p. 663); he also likens the morning that rises from behind a mountain to the moon of Nakhshab (p. 41). Furughi (*Dīwān*, p. 32), in an unusual image, compares his friend to this moon when he (or she) comes into his embrace at night—probably meaning that this too is only an illusion. Despite the numerous allusions to this counterfeit moon one would scarcely expect to find Muqannaʿ in St. Louis, Missouri, where the V.P. [Veiled Prophet] Lodge is inspired by his name, probably via the first tale in Thomas Moore's *Lalla Rookh*, "The Veiled Prophet of Khorassan."

6. ʿUrfi, *Kulliyāt*, p. 97.

7. Sanjar appears several times in Rumi's poetry, and Bu ʿAli Qalandar claims that Love gives him the fortune of Faghfur and Khaqan (the rulers of China and Central Asia) and is powerful like Maḥmud (of Ghazna) and Sanjar (Tafhimi, *Sharḥ-i aḥwāl-i . . . Abū ʿAlī Qalandar*, p. 281).

8. Andrae, *In the Garden of Myrtles*, p. 65.

9. Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, pp. 62–77, gives bibliographical information.

10. ʿAṭṭar, *Tadhkirat al-auliyā*, 2:135–45.

11. Schimmel, "The Martyr-Mystic Hallaj in Sindhi Folk Poetry."

12. Ghalib, *Kulliyāt-i fārsī*, 4: no. 83. ʿUrfi says (*Kulliyāt*, p. 234):

I do not know the shape of the rosary or the form of the prayer niche—
I am intoxicated by the thought of the gallows and dream of the rope.

(Cf. also *Kulliyāt*, pp. 325, 192.)

13. Cf. Sana'i, *Dīwān*, pp. 208, 210, 247, 662. See also Schimmel, "Das Ḥallāj-Motiv in der modernen islamischen Dichtung," pp. 171–72. In the *Maqālāt-i Shams-i Tabrīz*, the verse is quoted:

Whom He does not make into a rose, He makes into a thorn.
If He does not make a *minbar*, He makes a gallows tree.

14. Schimmel, "Zur Verwendung des Hallaj-Motivs in der indo-persischen Poesie."

15. Rumi, *Dīwān*, no. 581/6164; cf. also 864/9033, 784/8198, 758/7940.

16. Fuzuli, *Divan*, no. 157.

17. For Ghalib's use of the Hallaj motif see Schimmel, "A Dance in Chains," in *A Dance of Sparks*, pp. 96–111.

18. Schimmel, "Das Ḥallāj Motiv in der modernen islamischen Dichtung."

Chapter 8

1. For the general theme see Schimmel, "Eros—Heavenly and not so Heavenly—in Sufi Literature and Life." For an approach to the historical Maḥmud see Hardy, *Mahmud of Ghazna and the Historians*. Farrukhi (*Dīwān*, qaṣīda no. 78) composed a poem "in praise of Amir Ayaz Oymaq."

2. For the literary developments see Browne, *Literary History of Persia*, 2:95; Spiess, *Mahmud von Gazna bei Farīdu'ddīn ʿAṭṭār*. Ethé, "Neupersische Literatur," 250ff., mentions *mathnawīs* concerning Maḥmud and Ayaz: Fakhruddin ʿAli Ṣafi, the son of Ḥusayn Waʿiẓ-i Kashifi (d. 1532), in the meter of *Majnūn Laylā*; Anisi (d. 1605), a poet in the entourage of Khankhanan ʿAbdur Raḥim, in the meter of *Khusrau Shīrīn*; Zulali (d. 1614); Ṣa'ib; and Ḥaji Mir Abu Ṭalib. Zulali's poem, in his collection of seven *mathnawīs*, *Sabʿ sayyara* (printed in Lucknow, A.H. 1290 [1880]), was famous for its introductory line, which is quoted in Rückert/Pertsch, *Grammatik*, p. 358, as a model for elegant opening:

Bi-nām-i ān ki maḥmūdash Ayāz ast

In the name of Him whose Ayaz is Maḥmud [or, praiseworthy].

See also the verse quoted by Daulatshah (*Tadhkirat ash-shuʿarā*, p. 8) and often repeated:

Love is a hairdresser woman who mixes colors
to make Reality take on the color of metaphor.

She carefully combs Ayaz's tresses
until she brings Maḥmud's heart into the snare!

3. Amir Khusrau, *Dīwān*, no. 1010; see also Sana'i, *Dīwān*, pp. 300, 304, 659. Later a mediocre poet, Salik, used the imagery to praise his own verse (Aṣlaḥ, *Tadhkirat-i shuʿarā-i Kashmīr*, 1:310):

Each of my hemistichs is curled like Ayaz's tress—
but what can I do? I have no praiseworthy ascendent [or, Mahmud's ascendant]!

Qudsi (Aṣlaḥ, 3:1231) combines the motif with that of the beloved's eyebrows as prayer niche:

For lovers it is prohibited to perform the ritual prayer with two prayer niches—
the *qibla* of Maḥmud's obedience is Ayaz's eyebrow.

4. Khaju-yi Kirmani (Azad, *Khizāna-i ʿāmira*, p. 215). Ḥafiẓ too plays with *ʿāqibat maḥmūd*, "His ending is praiseworthy" or "His end is Maḥmud" (*Dīwān*, p. 196).

5. Iqbal, *Asrār-i khudī*, line 1487. Ghalib (*Kulliyāt-i fārsī*, 5: qaṣīda no. 2) speaks of the "Somnath of imagination," where his reader should forget ʿUrfi-yi Shirazi and Zulali Khurasani.

6. Rami, *Anīs*, p. 39.

7. Babur, who visited his cousin Ḥusayn Bayqara in his capital Herat, makes some very disgusted remarks about an epic in which the king was featured lowly as a prostitute (*Tuzuk-i Bāburi*). For content and pictures of Hilali's epic see Ethé, "König und Derwisch"; Arnold, *Miniatures in Hilali's The King and the Dervish*.

8. Amir Khusrau, *Dīwān*, no. 1026.

9. Niẓami's poem was translated into German prose by R. Gelpke in 1962, and an English version of that translation appeared in 1978. For the interpretation of the Majnun legend see Khairallah, *Love, Madness, and Poetry*. An Ottoman version of Niẓami's *Majnūn Laylā* was first done by Ḥamdi in the late fifteenth century, but the classical Turkish version is that by Fuzuli (d. 1556).

10. Fuzuli, *Divan*, no. 96.

11. "If you sit in Majnun's eye, you'll see only Layla" is one of the renderings of this saying, which was taken over into German literature in the late eighteenth century by J. G. Herder.

12. Ritter, *Das Meer der Seele*, index s.v. *Macnun, Leylā*. See also Gelpke, "Liebe und Wahnsinn als Thema eines persischen Dichters."

13. Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān*, p. 236.

14. Amir Khusrau, *Dīwān*, no. 566.

15. Jami, *Dīwān*, no. 402, p. 326.

16. Jami, *Dīwān*, no. 188, p. 205. Cf. also no. 404, p. 326:

Every tulip that grows out of Majnun's dust bears the scar of Layla in its heart,
and every blade of grass that grows from the sacred surroundings of Layla's tent is nourished by the springs of Majnun's eyes.

(Further examples in Jami appear in no. 437, p. 339; no. 489, p. 397; no. 529, p. 375.) ʿUrfi turns the theme around (*Kulliyāt*, p. 110):

Did Layla show her beauty from the corner of the camel litter,
or is it a tulip that has lifted its head from the hem of the hill?

The idea of Majnun's tears continued; Danish says (Aṣlaḥ, *Tadhkirat-i shuʿarā-i Kashmīr*, 1:214):

If it does not rain in Layla's valley, it does not matter—
the desert's hem is still damp from Majnun's tears.

17. Jami, *Dīwān*, no. 44, p. 149. Ṣa'ib exaggerates even more (Aṣlaḥ, *Tadhkirat-i shuʿarā-i Kashmīr*, 2:531):

From the fire that Majnun's lament cast into the mountains and desert,
smoke still rises from the windows of the eyes of the gazelles.

18. For the "dog" see Ritter, *Das Meer der Seele*, pp. 405–6 and index s.v. *Hund*. Rumi uses the motif in his *Mathnawī*, 3: lines 567–68.

19. The beautiful picture of Majnun in the wilderness which appears in the British Library's Niẓami, Or. 2265, is reproduced in Welch, *Wonders of the Age*, no. 62. The theme of the desert, and especially its vastness, seemed very attractive to poets, who liked to contrast the desert of madness with the city of intellect. See Ghalib, *Urdu Dīwān*, p. 55: "the desert is so vast that the bowl of the sky is merely a wastebasket in it."

20. Ghalib, *Urdu Dīwān*, p. 5.

21. Ghalib, *Urdu Dīwān*, p. 30, last line. According to Ghalib (ibid., p. 134), the madman remains a target for children even after his death, and the sparks of the stones they throw turn into roses in his dust. For this theme see Schimmel, *A Dance of Sparks*, p. 87 n. 3.

22. The miniature by Mir Sayyid ʿAli is published in Welch, *Wonders of the Age*, no. 61. Another scene that was frequently illustrated was Majnun and Layla together in school, and poets liked the theme that Majnun already loved his classmate while he was writing the *lām–alif*—the cipher for close embrace—on the wall of his school (Ghalib, *Urdu Dīwān*, p. 50; on the cipher see below, chapter 17). The Turkish poet Ġalib Dede applies the same motif to the heroes of his romantic epic *Hüsn u Aşk* (Beauty and Love); see Köprülüzade, *Eski şairlerimiz*, p. 623.

23. Azad Bilgrami (Qaniʿ, *Maqālāt ash-shuʿarā*, p. 58). ʿUrfi says (*Kulliyāt*, p. 357):

Longing for the children's stone I dance madly everywhere.

The word "madly," *dīwāna*, alludes to the madman, Majnun. It seems that the madman and the children's stones were known from early times: see ʿAṭṭar, *Muṣībat-nāma*, p. 234. Later the combinations became increasingly hyperbolic: Fani says that his "house in the desert is [made] of the children's stones" (*Dīwān*, p. 2); Kalim claims that because of the children (who need stones) not a stone has remained in the walls of his house, so that he has had to retreat into the desert (like Majnun) (*Dīwān*, ghazal no. 497). Sometimes these stones are combined with the stones that break the glass of the heart (thus Ikram, *Armaghān-i Pāk*, pp. 229, 270).

24. Siraj Aurangabadi, *Kulliyāt*, p. 667, radīf *y*, no. 151.

25. Goethe, *West-Östlicher Divan*, p. 27.

26. Jamil (ca. A.D. 660–701) belonged to the Banu ʿUdhra, famed for their chaste love, which is reflected in his poems.

27. In 1833 the indefatigable Austrian orientalist Joseph von Hammer published a German version of this epic as *Wamik und Asra, d[as] i[st] Der Glühende und die Blühende, das älteste persische Gedicht, im Fünftelsaft abgezogen*: that is, he offers his readers the quintessence of this "oldest Persian poem." In works from early times one finds a considerable number of allusions to Wamiq and ʿAdhra, all the more so as poets could develop *ishtiqāq* relations between the name ʿAdhra and *ʿidhār*, "the cheek," as well as *ʿudhr*, "excuse"; see, for example, Jami, *Dīwān*, no. 173, p. 199. Waṭwaṭ uses the couple in a description of nature (*Dīwān*, p. 20):

The air became dark and weeping like Wamiq's eye;
the earth became fresh and smiling like ʿAdhra's face.

Sanaʾi uses their names (*Ḥadīqat al-ḥaqīqat*, p. 333) and enumerates even more couples from the classical Arabic tradition (*Dīwān*, p. 837) to illustrate the truth of the saying "Patience is the key to joy." Among them are ʿUrwa and ʿAfra, whose names also appear in a *qaṣīda* by Khaqani (*Dīwān*, p. 135).

28. Gurgani's romance *Wīs u Rāmīn* (1058) has attracted the interest of a number of European scholars, although (or perhaps because?) the story is a far cry from the ideals of Islamic society. See Minorsky, "*Vīs u Rāmīn*, a Parthian Romance"; Haug, "Die Tristansage und *Wis und Ramin*"; Bürgel, "Die Liebesvorstellungen im persischen Epos *Wīs u Rāmīn*"; and studies by Gabrieli. English and French translations are available (see the Bibliography). J. C. Bürgel has reminded me that Wis, the beautiful woman whose life story does not at all fit with the Islamic code of conduct, is quoted in Niẓami's *Khusrau Shīrīn* as a warning example for Shirin, who should not take her as a role model. Bürgel also mentioned that Gurgani did not miss the opportunity to use the rhyme words *Bilqīs* and *Iblīs* when speaking of Wis: she has both the positive (Queen of Sheba) and the negative (Satanic) aspects of an extremely attractive woman.

One of the rare imitations of this romance is the Turkish version by Lamiʿi (see Gibb, *History of Ottoman Poetry*, 6:32ff.).

29. See ʿAyyuqi, *Varqa va Gulšāh*, a two-volume facsimile edition with commentary. See also Ateş, "Un vieux poème romanesque persan: le récit de Warqah et Gulshah"; Melikian-Chirvani, "Le roman de Varqa et Golshah."

30. My visit to the site occurred in November 1987, during a stay at Las Bela.

31. Duda, *Farhad und Schirin*, follows the development of the story in the classical Persian and Turkish traditions: in the latter, Sheyhi and Ahi are the best-known classical exponents. Burrill, "The Farhad and Shirin Story," takes up Duda's thread, and Soucek, "Farhad and Taq-i Bustan," discusses the legend from an art-historical perspective.

32. Amir Khusrau, *Dīwān*, no. 1158.

33. Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān*, p. 265; cf. also Amir Khusrau, *Dīwān*, nos. 778, 779.

34. Farhad's suicide at the false news of Shirin's death is described variously by later poets: according to Amir Khusrau he hit his head on a stone; in another version (taken up by Ghalib) he uses his own adze to kill himself. According to Hatifi he had found gemstones in a cistern and made ruby rings on which Shirin's picture was engraved. His artistic qualities, which enabled him to chisel reliefs on the rock of Bisutun, also allowed poets to connect his name with that of Mani the painter. Jami sums up (*Dīwān* no. 482, p. 356):

Shirin's picture disappears from the stone,
but it is impossible that the phantom of her cheek should leave Farhad's memory.

35. Jami, *Dīwān*, no. 410, p. 329; no. 427, p. 335.

36. Jami invents a fine pun on [Khusrau] *Parwēz* and *parwāz*, "flight" (*Dīwān*, no. 301, p. 248):

The heart-bird of Kuhkan was fitting to fly to the summit of love,
but the heart-bird of Parwez was not strong enough for such a flight.

(Cf. also no. 625, p. 411; no. 364, p. 312.) The idea of Farhad's survival continued, as in the verse by Shafiʿ (Qaniʿ, *Maqālāt ash-shuʿarā*, p. 337):

Every grain that you sow in the ground of love is the blood of Farhad
and brings forth pomegranates, year after year, to this day.

37. Ghalib, *Urdu Dīwān*, p. 3: "The continuous digging in loneliness produces the milk stream." Ṣaʾib says (Azad, *Khizāna-i ʿāmira*, p. 288):

In the work of love I strive like Farhad—
I practice madness with the steel pen.

But though all these poets boast of their skill in performing hard work, Amir Khusrau had used the theme in a much sweeter way (*Dīwān*, no. 1120):

My tongue has become Farhad's adze for every stone heart
because I tell the story of my Shirin [or, my sweet story] so often.

38. Iqbal, *Payām-i Mashriq*, p. 237 (Kuhkan).

39. Nazim Hikmet's drama is discussed in Spuler, "Das türkische Drama der Gegenwart."

40. Ḥazin (Ikram, *Armaghān-i Pāk*, p. 273). Fighani, however, "still hears the echo of Farhad's lament in Bisutun" (*Dīwān*, p. 179).

Chapter 9

1. For the theme see Schimmel, "Turk and Hindu." Rumi sums up the medieval view in his verse (*Dīwān*, no. 1838/19330):

Life and intelligence and cleverness He gave to the Hindus, but
beauty, loveliness, and charm He gave to the Khotanese [Central Asian]
beloved (*shāhid*).

For India was often associated with black magic, jugglery, and wisdom, as one understands from medieval Arabic historians. Elsewhere he says, "The mouth of Love laughs that I call him Turk!" (no. 2499/26446).

2. Amir Khusrau, *Dīwān*, no. 1368.

3. Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān*, p. 10. Saʿdi—warning himself not to fall in love with a "Turk"—alludes to the alleged Prophetic word *utrukūʿl-atrāk*, "Leave the Turks!" (*Kulliyāt*, 3: no. 276):

Did I not tell you, Saʿdi, "Don't look at the Turks!"
As you did not say, "Leave the Turk!" you have to bear this [disaster]!

(See also no. 122.)

4. Hammer, *Geschichte der schönen Redekünste Persiens*, p. 30, enumerates: eyelashes, facial down, mole, hair, etc. Khaqani speaks of Hindu infants when mentioning the beloved's eyes (*Dīwān*, p. 256). (Huart, translating that passage as given in Rami's *Anīs*, p. 51, wrongly calls them *nègres*.) "Hair" as Hindu appears as early as in Shahid-i Balkhi's verse (see Lazard, *Les premiers poètes*, 2:35). ʿAṭṭar (*Dīwān*, ghazal no. 636 and often) and Khaqani as well (*Dīwān*, p. 219; cf. p. 629) claim to be the "Hindu of the Hindu," that is, the slave of the beloved's tress. A comparison that occurs in both Arabic and Persian sources is that of small insects with the Hindu. Mushfiqi of Bukhara says (Badaʾuni, *Muntakhab at-tawārīkh*, 3:329 [trans. p. 453]):

The land of Ind is a sugar field, its parrots all sell sugar;
its black Hindus are like flies in their turbans and long coats.

The Arabic Sufi and scholar ʿAbdul Ghani an-Nabulusi (d. 1728) mentions in his travelogue (ed. Busse, p. 33, Arabic text):

fleas like Hindus, with small bodies, and black.

The general idea that Hindu and "black" were almost synonymous is the reason that in Persian miniatures Indians usually are painted in black or dark blue—as one sees in Bihzad's miniatures for Saʿdi's *Būstān*, now in Cairo.

5. Najmuddin Kubra, *Fawāʾiḥ al-ǧalāl wa fawātiḥ al-ǧamāl* (ed. Meier), esp. p. 155. See also Baqli, *Sharḥ-i shaṭḥiyāt*, 8:270, where the mystic Ḥallaj is described as "coming from the Qipchaqistan of the Divine Realm, *malakūt*, . . . and succeeding in playing on the polo ground of Realization." (Polo playing is a typical "Turkish" occupation.) The contrasting colors of Turk and Hindu were sometimes mentioned as a sign of God's creative power; or else He was asked, as by Nasir-i Khusrau (see Moʿin, *Mazdayasnā u taʾthīr-i ān dar adabiyāt-i fārsī*, p. 260):

Why did the countenance of the Hindu and the face of the Turk become
like a hellish heart [black] and a paradisiacal face [white]?

As for the Hindu slave, Amir Khusrau says: "If he was bred and brought up to be of good character, he is like a beautiful rose flower of Paradise, though he is born of a hellish Hindu." Female Hindu slaves, he claims, are "by nature soft and cool, whereas Turkish girls flare up easily." (See Askari, "Rasāʾil ul-iʿjāz," p. 126.) ʿAṭṭar (*Ilāhīnāma*, section 176/17) tells a story about a lovable Hindu slave.

6. Sanaʾi, *Ḥadīqat al-ḥaqīqat*, p. 589.

7. They appear as thieves in Niẓami's *Khusrau Shīrīn* (lines 219, 253) and are often equated with black robbers. On the other hand they can also serve as watchmen and doorkeepers, just as dark Saturn is the doorkeeper of the spheres (see Rückert/Pertsch, *Grammatik*, p. 287):

Your Hindu tress did not look after me for one night,
although Hindus generally are watchmen.

8. Jami, *Dīwān*, no. 541, p. 379. An early poet, Sharafuddin Shafruh (ʿAufi, *Lubāb*, 1:269), complains that the Hindu tress rests on fresh rose petals while he lies on a bed of thorns.

9. Masani, *Court Poets of Iran and India*, p. 70.

10. Ahmet Paşa, in Köprülüzade, *Eski şairlerimiz*, p. 95. For a lengthy play on the term *Hindu* see Anwari, *Dīwān* (ed. Nafisi), p. 144.

11. Katibi Iṣfahani, in Masani, *Court Poets of Iran and India*, p. 70; cf. Dhihni (Aṣlaḥ, *Tadhkirat-i shuʿarā-i Kashmīr*, A:78); Rahi (Aṣlaḥ, A:104), a Hindu sitting at the Fountain of Life; Ṣalabat (Aṣlaḥ, A:149), a Hindu in a sugar box. The Hindu tress then becomes a *zunnār* around the Kaʿba Heart (Mumtaz, Aṣlaḥ, A:463), and the

beautiful face beneath the black hair is "our Koran copy, which lies under a Hindu's head" (Ghina, Aṣlaḥ, A:264); cf. also Hashim (Aṣlaḥ, A:538). Raushan, a Hindu poet, says (Aṣlaḥ, A:289):

> The Muslim is in love with his [white] face, and the Hindu infatuated with his tress—
> look at the *muwaḥḥid* [monotheist] who brings together a Koran copy and a *zunnār*!

These examples show that this kind of "cross-religious imagery" was particularly frequent in seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century Kashmir, a country where religious tolerance was common under both the indigenous Sultan Badshah (ruled 1420–70) and Akbar.

12. Raverty, *Selections from the Poetry of the Afghans*, p. 194.

13. Khaliṣ (Qaniʿ, *Maqālāt ash-shuʿarā*, p. 192); cf. Fani, *Dīwān*, p. 73, "black fortune."

14. Ḥazin (Azad, *Khizāna-i ʿāmira*, p. 197). Azad himself felt perfectly happy with his friend's Hindu tresses, for thus "I have found my home in the country of Hindustan" (in Qaniʿ, *Maqālāt ash-shuʿarā*, p. 59).

15. Ṭalib-i Amuli (Browne, *Literary History of Persia*, 4:255; mentioned also in Aṣlaḥ, *Tadhkirat-i shuʿarā-i Kashmīr*, 2:678). Cf. Qasim-i Kahi (Badaʾuni, *Muntakhab at-tawārīkh*, 3:173 [trans. p. 244]) for similar ideas, whereas Ṣaʾib admonishes himself to bring not rubies and pearls to India but rather his colorful poems (Aṣlaḥ, 2:552).

16. Shakibi (Browne, *Literary History of Persia*, 4:166–67). Cf. Kalim's praise of India (*Dīwān*, ed. Thackston, qaṣīda no. 14), where the *sarāb*, "mirage," is satiated, *sīrāb*, by the Water of Life. The Khankhanan ʿAbdur Raḥim (1556–1627), son of Bayram Khan, to whom the emperor Humayun largely owed his victorious return to India, was Akbar's generalissimo and is famed as the greatest patron of poets in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. His panegyrists are enumerated in Nihawandi's *Maʾāthir-i raḥīmī*. The Khankhanan, who translated Babur's memoirs from Turki into Persian, was a good poet in Persian, Turki, and Hindi and, despite his military profession, deeply interested in mysticism and fine arts.

17. For examples see Ritter, *Über die Bildersprache Niẓāmīs*. The idea of the fiery face and the black curls appears also in Jami, *Dīwān*, no. 312, p. 252; cf. no. 208, p. 213, where the heart in the fire of the breast is a Hindu of the beloved. Cf. also Naẓiri, *Dīwān*, ghazal no. 328: the Hindu curls dance around the fire (of the face).

18. Amir Khusrau, *Dīwān*, no. 678; also no. 1442. Almost identical ideas are expressed by Khushḥal Khan Khattak (Raverty, *Selections from the Poetry of the Afghans*, p. 221; cf. p. 226) and Aḥmad Shah Abdali (Raverty, p. 301). In his work on epistolography Amir Khusrau compares the pen to a juggling Hindu (*Rasāʾil*, 2:36, in Askari, "Rasāʾil ul-iʿjāz," p. 137). Before him, Khaqani described his pen as "a Hindu talking Arabic" (*Dīwān*, p. 858). A similar comparison also appears in the poetry of Kushajim, an Arabic poet whose grandfather came from Sind, so that his blackish ink resembled, as it were, his grandfather (see Schimmel, *Calligraphy and Islamic Culture*, p. 122).

19. Amir Khusrau, *Dīwān*, no. 735.

20. The finest illustrated manuscripts of Nauʿi's *Sūz u gudāz* are in the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, nos. 268, 269, and in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, Suppl. Persan 769. See also the translation by Dawud and Coomaraswamy. A few years after this poem was composed and dedicated to Akbar's son Daniyal, Kalim claimed, in order to praise the Mughal emperor, that "Islam was so well established in India that the Hindus immolate themselves from grief so that finally neither a Hindu remains nor a temple and only moths immolate themselves in India" (*Dīwān*, ed. Thackston, mathnawī 4, 18–30).

21. Badaʾuni, *Muntakhab at-tawārīkh*, 3:187 (trans. p. 262). The author, Yolquli Anisi, was a close friend of Khankhanan ʿAbdur Raḥim.

22. Amir Khusrau states that he is "a Hindu of that Turkish eye" (*Dīwān*, p. 765).

23. Ibrahim Sammani (ʿAufi, *Lubāb*, 2:402) had already combined *yaghmā*, "plunder, pillaging," with the dangerous Hindu tresses. Amir Khusrau (*Dīwān*, no. 1056) combines Hindu tress and Turkish eye, both of which perform *yaghmā*.

24. Browne, *Literary History of Persia*, 3:252.

25. This idea is central in Persian and Persianate poetry, from the traditional story of Iblis, who gladly took upon himself God's curse because God would continue to look at him (Ḥallaj, *Kitāb aṭ-ṭawāsīn*, "Ṭāsīn al-azal wa'l-iltibās"), to the "Indian style" (*sabk-i Hindī*) poets who often used the term *taghāful*, "feigned indifference, neglect," for the most dreaded attitude of the beloved.

26. Rumi, *Dīwān*, no. 1876/19765. Before him, ʿAṭṭar described the morning as a radiant Turk who kills the Hindu "Night" (*Manṭiq uṭ-ṭayr*, p. 84) and thought that God casts the ambergris of the morning breeze into the bosom of the Turk "Morning" (*Dīwān*, qaṣīda no. 1, *tauḥīd*).

27. Rumi, *Dīwān*, no. 570/6062. Cf. tarkībband 11, line 35032: Turks have gone from the *qishlaq*, the winter camping place, to the *yayla*, the summer grazing ground—that is, the lovely spring has come.

28. Bayram Khan, *The Persian and Turkish Diwans*, p. 16. See also ʿAṭṭar, *Dīwān*, ghazal no. 655:

> O you, for whose face the moon is a slave and for whom Saturn has become the doorkeeper.

29. ʿAli Niʿmat Khan (Azad, *Khizāna-i ʿāmira*, p. 334).

30. Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān*, pp. 1–2. Saʿdi had preceded Ḥafiẓ in his love for a Shirazi Turk (*Kulliyāt*, 3: no. 578):

Nobody has died of as much cruelty from the Turk of Cathay
as I do from the hand of the Turk of Shiraz.

31. Rumi, *Dīwān*, no. 2568/27264. Later Jami thought that before the beloved's blood-shedding Hindu eye, Turks became lowlier than Tajiks (*Dīwān*, no. 531, p. 490). The Tajiks, peaceful city-dwellers, were sometimes contrasted with the ruthless riders from the steppes; cf. Jami, *Dīwān*, no. 831: "He performs a *turktāzī* [Turkish running attack] over Turks and Arabs (*tāz*)."

32. Qaniʿ, *Maqālāt ash-shuʿarā*, p. 640. The poetic device of accumulating different peoples is, however, much older. A certain Ṣandali (ʿAufi, *Lubāb*, 2:336) expressed the wish that his patron might be happy

as long as around the faces of the Turks exist Hindu-like curls,
as long as this clamor comes from the Negroes to the dust of Byzantium;
may your smallest fief be Turk and Hind and Rum [Byzantium] and Zanj
[the land of the black, specifically Zanzibar].

33. Sadarangani, *Persian Poets of Sind*, p. 94, compares the mole on the sweet lip to a Hindu in Qandahar (the pun is on *qand*, "sugar"; see below, chapter 10).

34. Saʿdi (Rami, *Anīs*, p. 10). Even today something very confused is called in Turkish *Arap saçi gibi*, "like a Negro's hair." In earlier poetry the contrast-pair *zanj*, "Negro," and *rūmī*, "Byzantine," appears rather frequently, probably under the influence of the images provided in Niẓami's *Iskandarnāma*, where Alexander's actual conquests are described with a great number of geographical names, which then served later poets as images. The same is true for the term *ḥabash*, "Ethiopian," for black people, which is usually contrasted with China.

35. Rami, *Anīs*, p. 10.

36. Allusions to *firang* appear as early as in Saʿdi's work (whose "Frankish imprisonment" may have triggered the use of the image in the beginning), but the outspoken and sometimes realistic poetical reactions to European influences, especially in the Subcontinent, are related to the Portuguese and British presence in India. See Schimmel, "Turk and Hindu," p. 125 n. 82, about the first instances of the Firangs in Indo-Persian and Sindhi poetry.

37. ʿAqil Shahjahanabadi (Azad, *Khizāna-i ʿāmira*, p. 350) thinks that the things in this world to which one ascribes credibility are not more than a *qayd-i firangī*, a "European prison," which should be completely destroyed. Interestingly, he uses the term *johar*, which in India means inhabitants' willful destruction of a besieged castle or city by setting it afire—self-immolation.

38. A number of good examples of such European influences in painting, from the Virgin Mary to the Christian saints, as well as imitations of European landscape perspective and botanical handbooks, are reproduced in Beach, *The Grand Mogul*, and Koch, *Shah Jahan and Orpheus*.

Chapter 10

1. Even Masʿud ibn Saʿd (*Dīwān*, pp. 307, 438) mentions the Ganges only in his descriptions of conquests, scarcely as a poetical image. But the Mughal poet laureate Naẓiri claims that he has been burnt (from longing) and one should cast his ashes into the Ganges (*Dīwān*, ghazal no. 395). To the nineteenth century, the Tigris remained the ideal metaphor for a river with much water; see Ghalib, *Kulliyāt-i fārsī*, 4: no. 243:

I am fallen far from my friend; I am a fish without the Tigris.
My heart is not in my breast; I am a Tigris without a fish.

2. The Sindhi poet Qaḍi Qadan describes the overwhelming and destructive power of love (Thakur, *Qāḍī Qādan jō kalām*, no. 37):

When the Indus is in spate, the canals overflow—
thus the love of my friend is too strong for my soul.

This verse, incidentally, is a fine description of the *shaṭḥ*, the ecstatic utterances of the mystic, produced in a state of being completely "filled" with Divine love. It is almost identical with Sarraj's description of the *shaṭḥ* as "overspilling of water" (*Kitāb al-lumaʿ*, p. 375). Examples from the genre *landey* or *tappa* in Pashto are rather different. These are two-line verses of nine plus thirteen syllables; they are veritable folk poetry, often uttered by women:

The Indus flows a-glittering, glittering.
Its water makes me think of colorful Kashmir shawls.

3. Jami, *Dīwān*, no. 786, p. 473.

4. Khaju-yi Kirmani (Daulatshah, *Tadhkirat ash-shuʿarā*, p. 250).

5. Jami, *Dīwān*, no. 167, p. 197; no. 556, p. 385. Cf. also Sanaʾi, *Dīwān*, p. 804.

6. Muʿizzi (Rückert/Pertsch, *Grammatik*, p. 167):

My bleeding eyes are like the Tigris,
my grieved heart is like a fire temple.

7. Shihabuddin Tirmidhi (ʿAufi, *Lubāb*, 2:118). The "sea," *baḥr*, in Sura 20:79–80 was often understood as "big river," that is, the Nile. For a combination of the Tigris and the Nile see Waṭwaṭ, *Dīwān*, p. 231.

8. Rudaki, quoted in Niẓami ʿAruḍi, *Chahār Maqāla* (trans. Browne), p. 35; also in Browne, *Literary History of Persia*, 2:15.

9. Rumi, *Dīwān*, no. 2897.

10. Ghalib, *Kulliyāt-i fārsī*, 5: qaṣīda no. 46.

11. Khaqani, *Dīwān*, pp. 358–60.

12. The golden carpet was an enormous garden carpet of sixty cubits' length,

decorated with embroidery of budding plants and flowers in gold and silver, which was used to cover the floor of the large audience hall of Ktesiphon. When the Muslims conquered Seleucia-Ktesiphon in A.D. 637, they captured this incredibly valuable carpet, and ʿOmar, then caliph, had it cut up and distributed the pieces. (See Qaḍi Rashid, *Kitāb adh-dhakhāʾir waʾt-tuḥaf*, section 192.)

13. See the example of Vecdi in Gibb, *History of Ottoman Poetry*, 6:213. In the early eighteenth century Nedim sang the most delightful poems about the city, which was then enjoying its "tulip period," *lâle devri*. See the fine anthology by Çelebi, *Divan Şiirinde Istanbul*. In the twentieth century, the classical poems of Yahya Kemal (d. 1958) and the modern poems of Orhan Veli (d. 1950) have described the charm of Istanbul.

14. Dagh's *Fighān-i Delhi* (Lamentation for Delhi) was published in Delhi in 1863; see Dr. Syed Abdullah, *Walī sē Iqbāl tak*, p. 266. Cf. also Mir Taqi Mir, from a century before, who sighed, after the Mughal capital had been plundered several times (see Russell and Islam, *Three Mughal Poets*, p. 221):

Tears flow like rivers from my weeping eyes;
my heart, like Delhi, lies in ruins now.

15. Kashmiri beauties are mentioned by ʿUnṣuri, from shortly after the year 1000 (Aṣlaḥ, *Tadhkirat-i shuʿarā-i Kashmīr*, 4:1827). His contemporary Farrukhi includes them in a catalogue of good things which were considered to belong together, by which he wished his patron good luck (*Dīwān*, qaṣīda no. 123):

as long as the idol comes from Kashmir and musk from Tibet,
and sugarcane from Egypt and fine leather from Ṭaʾif!

Amir Muʿizzi (Aṣlaḥ, 4:1828) claims that even a Kashmiri picture would appear ugly before his friend's face.

16. Qaṭran (Daulatshah, *Tadhkirat ash-shuʿarā*, p. 78). Saʿdi likewise speaks of the dolls, *luʿbatān*, of Kashmir (*Kulliyāt*, 3: no. 304), and Ḥafiẓ knows the black-eyed Kashmiris as parallels to the Turks of Samarqand (*Dīwān*, p. 256). Gesudaraz mentions Kashmiri idols in combination with the two "teachers of Babel," Harut and Marut (*Dīwān Anīs al-ʿushshāq*, p. 66). In applying the topos of India as "black" to the idea that precious glass is "Aleppan," *ḥalabī*, Fani says (*Dīwān*, p. 9):

How could I take the trouble to travel from Kashmir to India?
Would anyone carry a mirror from Aleppo to Zanzibar [the country of the *zanj*, black people]?

17. Kalim, *Dīwān* (ed. Thackston), muqaṭṭaʿ no. 24/28.

18. Iqbal, *Payām-i Mashriq*, p. 155; *Jāvīdnāma*, pp. 184–93. See ʿAbdur Raḥman, "Kashmir in Indo-Persian Literature." Ethé, "Neupersische Literatur," p. 337, mentions that Molla Ṭughraʾi Mashhadi (d. ante 1667) composed a number of literary works on Kashmir. For Kashmir as an ideal Islamic country see Aṣlaḥ, *Tadhkirat-i shuʿarā-i Kashmīr*, 4:1833:

My liver has turned into blood in India due to the mixing of Zand and Pazand—
how lovely is Kashmir, and the recitation of the Koran in the shade of a willow tree!

See also a fine chronogram from Shah Jahan's time, by Farigh (Aṣlaḥ, 1:280):

As a prayer, Farigh said this chronogram:
"May Islam always be in Kashmir!" [= A.H. 1062 (1651)]

19. Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān*, p. 45. Khaju-yi Kirmani wonders (Azad, *Khizāna-i ʿāmira*, p. 216):

The heart that traveled to the *chīn* [twist; or, China] of the friend's curls—
how does it fare in the "evening of the strangers"?

20. Raqim (Azad, *Khizāna-i ʿāmira*, p. 242). The imagery was well known in Ottoman Turkey as well; Sheykhulislam Yaḥya says (Gibb, *History of Ottoman Poetry*, 6:202):

That moon-faced [friend] loosens her wicked [lit. "blackness-producing"] tress
as if the merchant of China [or, twists] and Cathay [or, errors] had opened his house.

21. Khaqani, *Dīwān*, p. 176. Faghfur appears as the title of the Chinese emperor in classical Arabic literature (e.g., Masʿudi, *Murūj adh-dhahab*, 1:292). The juxtaposition of *faghfūr* and *qayṣar* was common; see Manuchihri (ʿAufi, *Lubāb*, 2:53); Farrukhi, *Dīwān*, qaṣīda no. 39, line 1603; Sanaʾi, *Dīwān*, p. 511; Anwari, *Dīwān* (ed. Nafisi), qaṣīda no. 70. Waṭwaṭ (*Dīwān*, p. 60) claims that the lowliest representative of his patron is equal to a hundred Caesars and the smallest chamberlain to a hundred Faghfurs. Before him, Farrukhi had used similar hyperbolical statements (*Dīwān*, qaṣīda no. 29, last verse). Fighani continues this imagery (see *Dīwān*, p. 9).

22. Ashraf (Aṣlaḥ, *Tadhkirat-i shuʿarā-i Kashmīr*, 4:1743).

23. Bedil, *Kulliyāt*, 1:1050 (letting down the hair is a sign of mourning); also pp. 679, 889, and often. E.g., p. 92:

In times of well-being, one does not think of kindness with loud voice—
it is the empty porcelain vessel that remembers the Faghfur.

And p. 847:

The porcelain of the Faghfur broke, let the earthenware come up:
what art is it when I bring a hair from the dough of the stone?

This latter expression, "to come out like a hair from the butter" (or "a hair from the dough")—that is, to do something very quietly, quickly, and without hurting anyone—is still current in Iran and Turkey. Used by ʿAṭṭar (*Muṣībatnāma*, p. 30), it is frequent in the "Indian style." For more examples of the Faghfur and porcelain see Schimmel, "Gedanken zu zwei Porträts."

24. Mir Dard, *Dīwān-i fārsī*, p. 5; see also Saʿdi, *Kulliyāt*, 3: no. 465:

> If the community of China could see your form, o idol,
> they would all repent of idol-worship.

And, no. 475:

> I have an idol the China [or, twist] of whose eyebrows
> tells of the idol temple of China.

25. Niẓami, *Iskandarnāma*, 1.1077ff.; Rumi, *Mathnawī*, 1: lines 346ff. The basis of the story seems to be Ghazzali's *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm ad-dīn* (Wonders of the Heart). This scene, to which Saʿdi alludes (*Kulliyāt*, 3: no. 345), was also illustrated; the best-known picture is in the Chester Beatty Library, ms. Pers. 142, fol. 1242. China is also associated with "colors" because the Simurgh (see below, chapter 13) cast one of its miraculous feathers into the area.

26. Raunaqi (ʿAufi, *Lubāb*, 2:27).

27. For this idea see Corbin's works on Suhrawardi *shaykh al-ishrāq* and his *L'homme de lumière*.

28. Sana'i uses the combination *qayruwān–qīr* in *Ḥadīqat al-ḥaqīqat*, p. 342. Niẓami, whose descriptions of Iskandar's conquests are more realistic, mentions Qayruwan along with Qulzum, "Ocean," and also Qannauj in India (*Iskandarnāma*, 2.1311). See also Manuchihri, *Dīwān*, p. 29, line 431.

29. See Shah ʿAbdul Laṭif, *Risālō*, "Sur Pūrab," a song concerning the East, although the actual goal of pilgrims from Sind lay in the west. For Muslim pilgrims this was Mecca; for Hindus it was the sacred mountain cave of Hinglaj in Makran.

30. Khaqani juxtaposes *Qayruwān* and *Qandahār* in *Dīwān*, pp. 407 and (here) 402:

> The smallest fiefs of his dog-trainers are Qandahar and Qayruwan in east
> and west respectively.

Farrukhi, *Dīwān*, qaṣīda no. 86: the sugar, *qand*, of the Qandahar-like lip. Sana'i speaks of the "idols of Qandahar" (*Dīwān*, p. 895), and later Ayman says (Aṣlaḥ, *Tadhkirat-i shuʿarā-i Kashmīr*, A:29):

> By drinking from his lip Qandahar was conquered;
> from his face we saw the rose parterre of Kabul.

31. Saʿdi tells the reader where good things originate (*Kulliyāt*, 3: no. 311):

> Sugar comes from Egypt, Saʿdi from Shiraz!

He in his *Būstān* (*Kulliyāt*, 2:110) and Rumi (*Dīwān*, no. 344/3727; *Mathnawī* 1: line 167, 3: line 3863) both combine Samarqand with *samar*, "nighttime conversation," and *qand*, "sugar," perhaps following Khaqani's model (see his *Dīwān*, p. 84).

32. See Nicholson, *Selected Poems from the Dīvān-i Shams-i Tabrīz*, whose note to VI, verse 15, points to this etymology.

33. Ghalib, *Kulliyāt-i fārsī*, 4: no. 214. See also his attack on the poet laureate of the Mughal court, Dhauq, who was nicknamed Khaqani-yi Hind (5: qaṣīda no. 38):

> Delhi became Ganja and Shirwan thanks to me—
> Ganja is Niẓami's birthplace, Shirwan [west of the Caspian, east of Georgia],
> Khaqani's.

34. ʿUrfi (Browne, *Literary History of Persia*, 4:246).

35. Khushgu, *Safīna*, 3:6.

Chapter 11

1. Comparisons involving gemstones occur in early Arabic poetry, especially in the verses of ʿAdi and Aʿsha, both of whom were connected with the court of Hira and probably learned something of the life of luxury, unknown to the majority of early Arab poets. The comparisons first appear in wine poems, especially those of Abu Nuwas, and are then applied to descriptions of gardens. See Schoeler, *Arabische Naturdichtung*, pp. 72–74.

2. ʿAufi, *Lubāb*, 2:394, a *tarkībband* by Jannati Biya; see also 1:203, 205.

3. Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān*, p. 159. One of the earliest Persian poets, Abu'l-Mu'ayyad Balkhi, said:

> Kiss the carnelian lip and drink the carnelian wine!

(See Lazard, "Abu'l Mu'ayyad Balkhi," p. 99.) For a poem whose *radīf* is *ʿaqīq* see ʿAufi, *Lubāb*, 2:325. Ẓuhuri (Azad, *Khizāna-i ʿāmira*, p. 314) not only has an *ʿaqīq*-bezel with his beloved's name on it but has transformed each and every drop of blood, from his intense longing, into *ʿaqīq*.

4. Muʿizzi (ʿAufi, *Lubāb*, 2:75).

5. Ghalib, *Kulliyāt-i fārsī*, 4: no. 79.

6. Khaqani (quoted in Rami, *Anīs*, p. 30). But the comparison of the eye with an onyx had already occurred to Kisa'i (Raduyani, *Kitab Tarcuman al-balaġa*, p. 46).

7. Goethe, *West-Östlicher Divan*, p. 50, "Bedenklich."

8. Cf. Anwari, *Dīwān* (ed. Nafisi), qaṣīda 101: the heavens' evil eye was blinded this way. And (qaṣīda 35): "The eye of supplication was before your hand, so that

one would say it was the serpent's eye before the emerald"—which probably means that it was blinded by the patron's stunning generosity. Cf. also Sana'i, *Ḥadīqat al-ḥaqīqat*, p. 472, and Rumi, *Dīwān*, no. 551/5854 and elsewhere. Ghalib too alludes to this idea (*Urdu Dīwān*, p. 8).

9. See ʿAufi, *Lubāb*, 1:216, where the "emerald sky" incapacitates the patron's foe. Cf. an inversion of this image by Abu Bakr Ruḥani (ʿAufi, 2:285): he praises the safety one enjoys in his patron's area, where "not a single grain would think that the viper fears the emerald or the straw piece [fears] the amber." That is, everything is perfectly peaceful.

10. Rumi, *Mathnawī*, 3: lines 2548–49.

11. Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān*, p. 9.

12. Ghalib, *Kulliyāt-i fārsī*, 4: no. 206.

13. Muʿizzi (Rami, *Anīs*, p. 34). But the poets now and then mention diamond dust, rather than salt, as an agent that increases pain in open wounds. Thus Niẓami speaks of "crushed diamonds in the liver" (*Laylā Majnūn*, line 569), and Mir Dard has a similar image (*Urdu Dīwān*, p. 1). Fayżi (Ikram, *Armaghān-i Pāk*, p. 183), on the other hand, sees the shifting sand dunes on the road of the lovers in the desert of Love as consisting of diamond dust (which wounds their feet).

14. For the names of gemstones see Veselá, "Sur la terminologie des gemmes *yāqūt* et *laʿl*."

15. Laʿli was killed by the Timurid ruler Abu Saʿid in 1467.

16. See Schimmel, "The Ruby of the Heart."

17. Hadi Hasan, "The Unique *Dīwān* of Humayun," p. 223.

18. For different kinds of *mufarriḥ*, with ruby and gold ingredients, see Reinert, *Ḫāqānī als Dichter*, p. 19.

19. Rumi, *Dīwān*, no. 1877, describes true spiritual poverty as ruby. See also his *Mathnawī*, 2: line 1322. The transformation of ordinary stones into rubies is also mentioned in his *Dīwān*, no. 1142.

20. Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān*, p. 60. Sana'i composed a beautiful poem about the long periods needed for this development (*Dīwān*, p. 486):

It takes years for an ordinary stone, thanks to the sun,
to become a ruby in Badakhshan or a carnelian in Yemen.

Daulatshah (*Tadhkirat ash-shuʿarā*, p. 559) quotes this line in honor of his patron, Mir ʿAlishir Nawa'i. See also Jami, *Dīwān*, no. 364, p. 312, on rubies and Farhad's blood.

21. Ghalib, *Kulliyāt-i fārsī*, 5: qaṣīda no. 60.

22. Iqbal, *Payām-i Mashriq*, "Lāla-i Ṭūr," no. 93.

23. Rumi, *Dīwān*, no. 2015/21275, and often. A beautiful description of the transforming power of fire is given by ʿAṭṭar (*Muṣībatnāma*, p. 168):

You turn the kindling into Badakhshani ruby,
you turn the iron into pomegranate-colored corundum.

The *rummānī*, the pomegranate-colored corundum, was considered the finest-quality ruby.

24. Kalim, *Dīwān*, p. 81, muqaṭṭaʿ. The Peacock Throne was carried away by Nadir Shah when he plundered Delhi in 1739, and was afterward used in Iran.

25. To one early Arabic poet, Ibn ar-Rumi, the iris looked as if it had been dipped in lapis lazuli—a rare combination. See Schoeler, *Arabische Naturdichtung*, p. 181.

26. Saʿdi, *Kulliyāt*, 3: no. 65. Hammer once wrote an artless little verse about a ring on whose stone was engraved *mihr-i muhr* or *muhr-i mihr*, words that look alike in Arabic letters and mean "seal" (*muhr*), and "sun" and "friendship" (*mihr*), so that various combinations are possible.

27. Ta'thir (Aṣlaḥ, *Tadhkirat-i shuʿarā-i Kashmīr*, 2:590). The idea that one "gets up like the bezel so that only one's trace [imprint] remains" is commonplace among the "Indian style" poets; see Ghani (Aṣlaḥ, 2:69) and Mir Dard, *Dīwān-i fārsī*, p. 56. Yet as Bedil knows (*Kulliyāt*, p. 37):

It is difficult to become world-famous without headache:
the bezel always has wrinkles on his forehead as a result of the name.

That is, the engraved name, by which the seal ring becomes known, looks like wrinkles on the stone's face. See the Appendix for further examples.

Chapter 12

1. Saʿdi, *Kulliyāt*, 3: no. 296 (see the Appendix here, no. 40).

2. Amir Shahi (Browne, *Literary History of Persia*, 3:501). For Shahi, in his time one of the favorite poets of the Timurids, see Schimmel in Welch et al., *The Emperors' Album*, pp. 38–39. For a basic study see Schoeler's *Arabische Naturdichtung*, which contains important material for the understanding of Persian poetry as well.

3. Masʿud Bakk (Ikram, *Armaghān-i Pāk*, p. 150).

4. *Yunus Emre Divani*, p. 77. Shah ʿAbdul Laṭif deals with the same theme (*Risālō*, "Sur Ḍahar"). A basis for both of them may have been Rumi's quatrain (MS Esad no. 329b2):

When the spring breeze of Love begins to blow,
every branch that is not dry enters the dance.

To appreciate this imagery fully one must remember that Persian allows a fine *tajnīs* between *bād* باد, "wind," and *yād* یاد, "remembrance," as these words differ only

by one dot: the "tree" heart has to be moved by the loving remembrance of the friend, which is, as it were, a soft breeze that helps leaves and petals to open.

5. Sultan Bahoo [Bahu], *Abyāt*, *alīf* no. 1.

6. See Moynihan, *Paradise as a Garden*; Hanaway, "Paradise on Earth"; and Schimmel, "The Celestial Garden in Islam." For the development of garden imagery see Fouchécour, *La description de la nature*. For the poets it was easy to see the beloved as the garden of one's dreams, with a rose face, hyacinth curls, budlike mouth, apple chin, etc. See Baba Sauda'i (Daulatshah, *Tadhkirat ash-shuʿarā*, p. 477).

7. Ghalib, who generally emphasizes the cross-relations between the red flowers, blood, and fire, also dwells on another aspect of the garden: in one of his best-known Urdu *ghazals* (*Urdu Dīwān*, p. 90, *Sab kahān*) he sees the garden as a treasure house in which only a few departed friends reappear in the shape of roses and tulips. This idea, however, had already been used by ʿOmar Khayyam and by others in the fifteenth century (Daulatshah, *Tadhkirat ash-shuʿarā*, p. 446) when a poet voiced the opinion that it is not at all astonishing that roses grow from the dust, as so many dear friends with limbs like roses sleep under the dust. A related idea is that the garden is Qarun, whose treasures sank with him into the earth, for "gold and silver appear in it" (namely, as narcissi). Thus Rafiʿi Harawi (ʿAufi, *Lubāb*, 2:33).

8. See Abu'l-ʿAla Nakuk, in an Arabic poem quoted in ʿAufi, *Lubāb*, 1:73; Rumi, *Dīwān*, no. 1790/18752.

9. Kisa'i (ʿAufi, *Lubāb*, 1:35).

10. See Farrukhi, *Dīwān*, qaṣīda no. 86: the *arghuwān* has Badakhshi rubies in its necklace. In the same *qaṣīda* he says, in the final blessing:

> As long as the red goblet Rose rises from the twig,
> as long as the leaves, like human hands, come out from the plane tree (*chināri*). . . .

In a description of autumn he remarks (qaṣīda no. 12, line 466):

> Everyone who enjoys walking under the plane trees
> puts his foot constantly on hands colored with henna.

Henna, a red vegetable dye, is used especially during wedding ceremonies to color the hands and feet of the bride and her attendants. "The prayer of the *chināri*" is mentioned, e.g., by Anwari, *Dīwān*, qaṣīda no. 84; Waṭwaṭ, *Dīwān*, p. 243; Aḥmad Hanswi (Ikram, *Armaghān-i Pāk*, p. 105); and often. According to Kalim (*Dīwān*, ghazal no. 142), every plane-tree leaf prays for Kashmir—and indeed one understands these images better when one has seen the large plane trees in Kashmir on a radiant autumn day.

11. Anwari, *Dīwān* (ed. Rażawi), qaṣīda no. 137, pp. 349–51.

12. One expression that often occurs in garden poetry when dealing with trees is *barg-i bi bargī*, a pun on the double meaning of *barg*: "leaf," and "possessions." When the tree loses all its leaves and is poor like a true dervish, it will gain new spiritual wealth, which will become visible in the spring. See Meier, "Der Geistmensch bei dem persischen Dichter ʿAṭṭar." Rückert invented a fine poetical translation of this pun in German: "spriessendes Kraut" and "Erspriessliches" (Rückert/Pertsch, *Grammatik*, p. 371 n. 1).

13. See Thakur, *Qāḍī Qādan jō kalām*, no. 56: the banyan tree with its numerous air-roots reminds the poet of the Divine Beloved who is One and yet manifests Himself in various forms.

14. Rami, *Anīs*, p. 85. See Schimmel, *The Triumphal Sun*, "Gardens," n. 100.

15. Manuchihri (Fouchécour, *La description de la nature*, p. 142). Thus Manuchihri (*Dīwān*, p. 129, line 1695) sees the narcissus as stooped in ritual genuflection because the gray dove calls to prayer from the cypress (which resembles a slim minaret). Bedil, on the other hand, understands from the close relation between the ash-colored dove and the cypress that lowliness (*khāksārī*, "relation with dust") and freedom are intimately connected (*Kulliyāt*, 1:123).

16. Hadi Hasan, "Qasim-i Kahi," p. 208.

17. Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān* (ed. Brockhaus), no. 108. The verse is not found in Anjuwi's edition (but there cf. pp. 26, 35). Salman-i Sawaji prays that God may water the coquettish cypress with his tears (Azad, *Khizāna-i ʿāmira*, p. 255). Fuzuli, however, describes the garden differently (*Divan*, no. 145):

> As he knew that my cypress was going to come to the garden,
> the prince Rose has placed thousands of torches on both sides of the road.

18. The Abbasid poets, such as Abu Nuwas, Ibn al-Muʿtazz, and especially Ibn ar-Rumi, were fond of this idea, which they traced back to a saying of the Persian king Khusrau Anushirwan; see Schoeler, *Arabische Naturdichtung*, p. 38. Ibn al-Muʿtazz uses the term "only eye" (*Dīwān*, 4:93), which was to become a standard formula in Persian.

19. Qasim-i Kahi (Qaniʿ, *Maqālāt ash-shuʿarā*, p. 684). Among the Arabs, al-Buḥturi thought that narcissi have eyelids of camphor (white), which have caught cold in the chilly east wind (and hence cannot twinkle); see Schoeler, *Arabische Naturdichtung*, pp. 135, 140.

20. Iqbal, *Bāng-i darā*, p. 306. Cf. Mir Dard, *Dīwān-i fārsī*, p. 45:

> We are unaware of our own manifestation in this garden—
> the narcissus does not see its own spring with its own eye.

21. Ghalib, *Kulliyāt-i fārsī*, 4: no. 331; cf. 5: qaṣīda no. 26.

22. Ghalib, *Urdu Dīwān*, p. 149.

23. Abu'l Ḥasan-i Sarakhsi (ʿAufi, *Lubāb*, 2:56).

24. Jami, *Dīwān*, no. 725, p. 250.

25. Fuzuli, *Divan*, no. 118. See also the graceful verse by one Baqi of Kolab (Bada'uni, *Muntakhab at-tawārīkh*, 3:195 [trans. p. 270]):

He never becomes free like the cypress in the garden of the world—
[he] who, like the narcissus, fixes his eyes always in covetousness on silver and gold.

The association of the narcissus with jewelry was already known among Arabic poets by Abbasid times; they could describe it as "a yellow hyacinth under white pearls on green emerald." See Schoeler, *Arabische Naturdichtung*, p. 38.

26. For Busḥaq see Browne, *Literary History of Persia*, 3:344–51. See also Rückert/Pertsch, *Grammatik*, p. 125 n. 1.

27. Hammer, who gives a fine description of the poetical qualities of the lily in his *Geschichte der schönen Redekünste Persiens*, p. 26, once asked a traveler to Iran to find out whether there really was a lily "with ten tongues"; he was disappointed by the negative result to this inquiry. One of the finest descriptions of the lily, among other flowers, praising God, is in the proem of ʿAṭṭar's *Ilāhīnāma* (ed. Ritter, p. 6). See also Rumi, *Dīwān*, no. 220/23242 and often. Mir Dard then sums it up (*Dīwān-i fārsī*, p. 55):

With ten tongues, the lily is without tongue.

28. Rumi, *Dīwān*, no. 2242/23760.

29. Baki (Köprülüzade, *Eski şairlerimiz*, p. 275). For the lily as tailor see below, chapter 16, note 11 and related discussion. In this connection one should think of the pun between *sūsan*, "lily," and *sūzan*, "needle."

30. Manuchihri (Fouchécour, *La description de la nature*, pp. 76–78). For the "prostrating" violet see also Rumi, *Dīwān*, no. 1961/20691; in no. 2046/21584 the lily accuses the violet of being "crooked."

31. He imitates Manuchihri (*Dīwān*, p. 129, line 1704; see also p. 43, line 685).

32. Amir Khusrau, *Dīwān*, no. 642; for a similar effect, with the change in "green *khaṭṭ*" (facial down), see no. 1556.

33. Ḥafiẓ (*Dīwān*, p. 190) takes over a verse from Khaqani:

Without the coquetry of his narcissus we have, out of boredom,
"put the head on the knee like the violet."

Ṣanaubari thinks that "the fresh violet has put on mourning garments as it has lost patience [in waiting for the rose]" (see Schoeler, *Arabische Naturdichtung*, p. 318).

34. Khaqani takes up the contrast between rose and violet (*Dīwān*, p. 35):

In case you have not made a blood-garment like the rose;
be not less than the violet, who has stitched a dark blue covering cloth!

35. Amir Khusrau, *Dīwān*, no. 468; see also Rückert/Pertsch, *Grammatik*, p. 22.

36. Jami, *Dīwān*, no. 660, p. 325.

37. Ẓahir Faryabi (ʿAufi, *Lubāb*, 2:303). The comparison of flowers with flags goes back to Abbasid poetry: Abu Tammam saw yellow and red flowers as Yemeni and Muḍari flags waving side by side. See Schoeler, *Arabische Naturdichtung*, p. 111.

38. Both Ahmet and Necati wrote a Turkish *qaṣīda* whose *radīf* was *benefşe*; see Köprülüzade, *Eski şairlerimiz*, pp. 102, 273.

39. Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān*, p. 52. Bedil sees the hyacinth garden as a notebook in which his own broken and dark state is written (*Kulliyāt*, 1:15), whereas Baki observes how the hyacinth writes a fresh *ghazal* in the garden (Köprülüzade, *Eski şairlerimiz*, p. 273). In Ghalib's *qaṣīda* in honor of the Prophet (*Kulliyāt-i fārsī*, 5: qaṣīda no. 2), black hyacinths are contrasted with black smoke. See Schimmel, "Ghalib's *qaṣīda* in Praise of the Prophet," p. 204.

40. See also Waṭwaṭ, *Dīwān*, p. 20:

The border of the greenery became filled with radiance because of the tulips;
the mouth of the tulips became filled with glittering pearls because of the dew.

Khaqani greatly admired the elegant robe of the tulip (*Dīwān*, p. 42), and Rumi sings (*Dīwān*, tarkībband 11, line 13569):

The tulip's dress is even rarer, as it is black and red;
its collar is a sun, and its hem belongs to the evening.

41. Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān*, p. 94.

42. Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān*, p. 22. ʿAṭṭar sees a *kulāh*, "cap," of blood on the tulip (*Manṭiq uṭ-ṭayr*, p. 35). See also chapter 4 above, on the *kajkulāh*.

43. Ghalib, *Kulliyāt-i fārsī*, 4: no. 33.

44. Ghalib, *Kulliyāt-i fārsī*, 4: no. 151.

45. Żiya Nakhshabi (Ikram, *Armaghān-i Pāk*, p. 148). For *dāgh*, "scar from burning," see also ʿUrfi (Aṣlaḥ, *Tadhkirat-i shuʿarā-i Kashmīr*, 2:813):

I put so many scars on my heart that there remained no trace of the heart.
Before this I had a hundred scars on my heart—now it is all one.

Fani (*Dīwān*, p. 140) feels like a tulip and "arranged a *dīwān* using the scars of his heart as pages." Mir Dard was "turned into a tulip bed from the attack of scars" (*Dīwān-i fārsī*, p. 40).

46. Thus Ghalib, *Kulliyāt-i fārsī*, 4: no. 184. Arabic poets of the Abbasid era often used comparisons involving the radiant red anemone, *shaqā'iq*, which prefigures those that employ the tulip, *lāla*, in Persian. Ibn al-Muʿtazz interpreted anemones growing on a grave as a sign that a lover is buried there (*Dīwān*, 4: no. 167).

47. Qaṭran (ʿAufi, *Lubāb*, 2:214).

48. Jami, *Dīwān*, no. 259, p. 232.

49. Manuchihri (*Dīwān*, p. 16, line 224, in a poem with many floral images) describes the tulip as a little child with its mouth open: its lips are carnelian, and the depth of its palate is black.

50. Thus the tulip could also be considered a "flower of the body" as contrasted with the soul-flower, the rose; see Kalim, *Dīwān* (ed. Thackston), tarkībband 2, line 4:

It is a long way from the soulless body to the bodyless soul!

51. Ghalib, *Kulliyāt-i fārsī*, 4: no. 116.

52. Jami, *Dīwān*, no. 259, p. 232.

53. Mélikoff, "La fleur de la souffrance," gives a fine survey of these aspects of *lāla* in Turkish and Persian poetry, with special emphasis on the Shia tradition. See Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān*, p. 214. One may also think of Abu ʿAli Marwazi's comparison of the tulip with Yusuf in his bloodstained shirt (ʿAufi, *Lubāb*, 2:340). Cf. also Ghalib, *Kulliyāt-i fārsī*, 5: mathnawī no. 2:

The tulip is growing out of the blood of the martyr,
its atoms are from the essence of the sword of Yazid.

54. Jami, *Dīwān*, no. 21, p. 140.

55. Jami, *Dīwān*, no. 287, p. 242. See also Khaju-yi Kirmani (Daulatshah, *Tadhkirat ash-shuʿarā*, p. 250). Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān*, p. 94, also has the combination of Khusrau, Shirin, and tulips.

56. Iqbal, *Armaghān-i Ḥijāz*, p. 15. Iqbal's collection of quatrains *Lāla-i Ṭūr* (The Tulip of Sinai) in *Payām-i Mashriq* bears witness to his infatuation with the "active, independent" tulip; poems like *Lāla-i ṣaḥrā* (*Bāl-i Jibrīl*, p. 164) and *Lāla* (*Payām-i Mashriq*, p. 121) show his ideals.

57. It is noteworthy that Abu'l-Faẓl (*The Aʿin-i Akbarī*, 1:654, trans.) quotes a Kashmiri poet, Maẓhar Kashmiri, with a verse that sounds almost like a model for Iqbal's:

I am the tulip of Sinai, and not like the stem-born flower:
I cast flames in the slit of my collar instead of hemming it.

That is, he tears himself apart in ecstatic growth like the tulip stalk from its bulb, instead of sitting in the garden, like a flower on a stem, conscious of proper external behavior.

58. For the relation between the Prophet Muḥammad and the rose see Schimmel, *And Muhammad Is His Messenger*, p. 165. Khaqani alludes to the legend that the rose grew from the Prophet's perspiration (*Dīwān*, p. 44); Baqli likewise mentions it (*ʿAbhar al-ʿāshiqīn*, no. 265).

59. Rumi, *Dīwān*, no. 1348/14259.

60. See Abu'l Ḥasan-i Sarakhsi (ʿAufi, *Lubāb*, 2:56), and before him the eleventh-century Arabic poet al-Khalidi.

61. The rose is often seen as the "cheek without eyes" (e.g., in ʿAufi, *Lubāb*, 1:105) and is difficult to reach, whereas the narcissus is the "eye without cheeks." The Turkish poet Lamii says (Köprülüzade, *Eski şairlerimiz*, p. 482):

We too went for the rose's sake into the garden of union,
but everywhere there were the eyes of the narcissi—it became difficult for the nightingales to lament.

For contests between the narcissus and the rose in classical Arabic poetry see Schoeler, *Arabische Naturdichtung*, pp. 204ff., 317ff.: Ibn ar-Rumi preferred the narcissus, Ṣanaubari the rose. A pleasant comparison also appears in Saʿdi (*Kulliyāt*, 3: no. 526):

If the rose could look like the narcissus so that she could see the world,
she would be in water like the lotus flower for shame before the color of [the beloved's] cheek.

62. From Khujandi's rose poem, which is quoted in full in ʿAufi, *Lubāb*, 1:267–68.

63. Iqbal, *Payām-i Mashriq*, p. 101. An early poet, Ṣafiuddin (ʿAufi, *Lubāb*, 1:404), had already used the comparison with the houri.

64. Kisa'i (Browne, *Literary History of Persia*, 2:164).

65. Cf. note 62. For a mediocre *qaṣīda* which has *gul*, "rose," as its *radīf* see Daulatshah, *Tadhkirat ash-shuʿarā*, p. 433. Almost every poet in Iran, Turkey, and Muslim India attempted at least one poem with this *radīf*; a remarkable number of such *ghazals* were composed by Bedil (see *Kulliyāt*, 1: rhyme letter *l*).

66. Mir (Schimmel, "Classical Urdu Literature," p. 180).

67. Amir Khusrau, *Dīwān*, no. 1151. The flightiness of the rose is well expressed in a line by Mahir (Azad, *Khizāna-i ʿāmira*, p. 420):

O rose, don't spread out and don't outgrow yourself
in a robe that will turn into a shroud after a week!

Saʿdi's *Būstān* presents an often-imitated bit of advice (*Kulliyāt*, 2:183):

Had you kept your mouth closed like the bud,
you would not have seen your shirt torn like the rose!

68. Rumi, *Dīwān*, no. 974; in no. 84/974 the rose smiles with her whole body.

69. Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān* (ed. Brockhaus), no. 461.

70. Kaukabi Marwazi (ʿAufi, *Lubāb*, 2:65). Seven centuries later, in his spring *qaṣīda*, Qa'ani (d. 1853) likewise used the comparison of the bud and a mouth that

promises a kiss. The bud also appears as the heart of the nightingale (see Şeyhzade Yahya, in Kocatürk, *Divan şiiri antolojisi*, p. 54). Saʿdi sees the rose as a Yusuf who has become the Mighty One, *ʿazīz*, of Egypt; the zephyr brings the fragrance of his shirt to the town (*Kulliyāt*, 3: no. 328). For a very similar conceit see Ṭalib-i Amuli (*Dīwān*, no. 64, p. 245).

71. Azraqi (Azad, *Khizāna-i ʿāmira*, p. 12).

72. Poets might also think along similar lines that the spring breeze opens the rosebud's buttons; thus Baki (Köprülüzade, *Eski şairlerimiz*, p. 275) and Ẓuhuri ("Sāqīnāma," in Ikram, *Armaghān-i Pāk*, pp. 202–4).

73. Köprülüzade, *Eski şairlerimiz*, p. 381.

74. Fuzuli, *Divan*, no. 131.

75. Jamaluddin Khujandi (ʿAufi, *Lubāb*, 1:265). Like Ḥafiẓ, the Ottoman poets Nefʿi and Nedim (Köprülüzade, *Eski şairlerimiz*, pp. 432, 540) see the rose as Sulayman—which in their case may include a subtle allusion to Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent. Ishak Çelebi (Gibb, *History of Ottoman Poetry*, 6:125) extends the imperial Turkish comparison to a very concrete topic: the rose, overcoming the tulips, looks like the Ottoman Sultan marching against the Kizilbash. The Kizilbash "redheads" were the elite troops in the Persian Safavid empire, against whom the Ottomans fought many times. Amir Khusrau uses the royal aspects of the rose in a somewhat more romantic style (*Dīwān*, no. 1103):

> The branch has produced a jewel-studded crown from every opening bud—
> Fortune spreads an emerald carpet under the feet of the rose.

76. Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān*, p. 110.

77. Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān*, p. 245. However, the faithful thorn is recompensed for guarding the rose:

> Grace grants the naked thorn the robe of honor, that is, the red silken rose.

Thus Rumi, *Dīwān*, no. 3029/32079; cf. no. 3041/32340.

78. Atish (Schimmel, "Classical Urdu Literature," p. 198).

79. For examples in Rumi see Schimmel, *The Triumphal Sun*, p. 92.

80. Azad Bilgrami (Qaniʿ, *Maqālāt ash-shuʿarā*, p. 60).

81. Mir Dard, *Urdu Dīwān*, p. 41.

82. Baki (Kocatürk, *Divan şiiri antolojisi*, p. 38).

83. Rumi also uses the term *bulbula* for a long-necked bottle. This imagery was very common from the days of Manuchihri, who says (*Dīwān*, p. 40, line 625):

> Let the *bulbula* lower its head quickly over the goblet,
> as the *bulbul* [nightingale] performs the call to prayer from the cypress,

as if he sees the flask performing the prostration in prayer. In an Urdu *qaṣīda* in honor of King George III of England the versatile poet Insha used similar images;

and to please his British patron he came up with the first verses to use English words in Urdu text:

> The flower will prepare its *glass*
> when the rosebud opens the mouth of the *bottle*.

(See Schimmel, "Classical Urdu Literature," p. 193.) Farrukhi (*Dīwān*, p. 217, tarjiʿband) sees the rose as a carnelian goblet adorned with white pearls—the raindrops. Waṭwaṭ invented an unusual comparison, seeing the twig bent like a ring in which the rose is the ruby bezel (*Dīwān*, p. 108).

84. Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān*, p. 100 (also in Rückert/Pertsch, *Grammatik*, p. 24):

> Not I alone sing *ghazals* for that rose of the cheek—
> for you have, from all sides, thousands of nightingales.

Hazārān, "thousands," also means "nightingales," and the last name of the nightingale mentioned in this verse is *ʿandalīb*. (Cf. also Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān*, p. 124.) The rose is rather often compared to a book: according to Ṣafi (Köprülüzade, *Eski şairlerimiz*, p. 120) the nightingale reads from it; Ġalib Dede (Gibb, *History of Ottoman Poetry*, 6:88) thought it looked "as if the rose were reading the *Manṭiq uṭ-ṭayr* to the birds." An earlier Ottoman poet, Nabi (Gibb, 6:226), thought that "the rosebuds recite the Koranic verse of conquest in the spiritual garden where we are the nightingales." In one of the comparatively rare poems devoted to autumn Jami compares the garden to a notebook, colored by the leaves, but he admonishes the spectator that he will soon see the white book—the snow-covered garden (*Dīwān*, no. 598, p. 401). For a similar autumnal description see Fuzuli, *Divan*, no. 132.

85. Rückert, *Werke*, 2:37. The rose can also be seen as a notebook whose pages are filled with the pure blood of suffering lovers; thus Fighani, *Dīwān*, p. 151. Similarly Umid (Aṣlaḥ, *Tadhkirat-i shuʿarā-i Kashmīr*, 1:569) imagines it as a book torn into a hundred pieces. This idea may have been influenced by Jami (*Dīwān*, no. 331, p. 260), who claimed to have destroyed the notebook of the rose because there was no letter on its pages (the petals) about the beloved's beauty: that is, the rose could not describe the rose-cheeked beloved adequately.

86. Rückert, "Aus Dschamis Diwan" (in *Werke*, 2:101). I could not retrieve the original in Jami's *Dīwān*, but it is an idea that occurs often.

87. Mir Dard, *Urdu Dīwān*, p. 7.

88. Iqbal, *Asrār-i khudī*, lines 394–95.

89. Khaqani, *Dīwān*, p. 556.

90. Ġalib Dede, *Hüsn u aşk* (Köprülüzade, *Eski şairlerimiz*, p. 608). The Turkish poetical tradition has preserved the image of the rose fire to this day—e.g., in the verses of Ahmet Haşim, Ahmat Hamdi Tanpinar, and Yahya Kemal. For the Indian tradition, which reached its culmination with Ghalib (see *Kulliyāt-i fārsī*, 4: no. 290), see Schimmel, *A Dance of Sparks*.

91. Ghalib, *Kulliyāt-i fārsī*, 4: no. 240. For allusions to Kerbela see 4: no. 161.

92. Ghalib, *Kulliyāt-i fārsī*, 4: no. 12. But even before him the Ottoman poet Nef'i (Köprülüzade, *Eski şairlerimiz*, p. 441) had claimed that the nightingale's breast is so torn and covered with red blood that the bird carries its own rose garden in itself.

93. Rumi, *Dīwān*, no. 1493; see also nos. 2948/31312, 1824/19155, and *Mathnawī* 5: line 1256. Cf. Hermann Hesse's "Welkende Rosen," which describes the rose slowly shedding its petals and happily "drinking death in a kiss."

94. Rumi, *Mathnawī* 1: line 763, 2022; *Dīwān*, no. 326/3546. In this context one may recall the delightful poem by the Turkish mystical folk poet Ümmi Sinan (Kocatürk, *Tekke şiiri antolojisi*, p. 201), who describes the "city of roses" where everything—walls, wells, houses, mills, etc.—are roses: a lovely translation into garden imagery of the hoped-for Paradise.

95. Angelus Silesius, *Der Cherubinische Wandersmann*, 1: no. 108.

96. *Yunus Emre Divani*, p. 492, "the roses of faith"; Ġalib Dede (Köprülüzade, *Eski şairlerimiz*, p. 592), "the rose of hope." Rumi (*Mathnawī*, 2: line 3288) speaks of the "rose garden of gratitude," and Nef'i (Köprülüzade, p. 397) refers to his colorful imagination as a rose garden.

97. Book titles like *Gulshan-i rāz* (The Rose Garden of Mystery, Shabistari's famous mystical poem) or Izzet Molla's *Gülşen-i aşk* (The Rose Parterre of Love) point to this tendency to combine the rose with everything that is precious and dear to the author.

98. Baqli, quoted in Massignon, "La vie et les oeuvres de Rûzbihân Baqlî."

99. Dr. Syed Abdullah, *Naqd-i Mīr*, p. 113.

100. Goethe, *West-Östlicher Divan*, p. 70, in "Buch Suleika."

101. Wali (Schimmel, "Classical Urdu Literature," p. 154).

102. Mir Dard, *Dīwān-i fārsī*, p. 58. Cf. also his *Urdu Dīwān*, p. 45:

We have not understood, Dard, the secret of joy and grief:
the morning laughs—why does the dew weep, remembering someone?

103. Bedil, *Kulliyāt*, 1:993. Turkish poets saw the dew as a seal on the garden or the rose; thus Mesihi in his famous spring ode (Köprülüzade, *Eski şairlerimiz*, p. 115). Comparable is Amir Khusrau, *Dīwān*, no. 336.

Chapter 13

1. Hammer, *Geschichte der schönon Redekünste Persiens*, p. 25. Persis is the ancient province of Fars, where Shiraz is located. For the theme see Goldziher, "Der Seelenvogel im islamischen Volksglauben"; Schimmel, "Rose und Nachtigall"; van der Leeuw, *Phänomenologie der Religion*, pp. 272, 283. Marie-Luise von Franz discusses the symbolism of the bird motif in her *Individuation in Fairy Tales*. Mokri, *Le chasseur de Dieu*, pp. 22ff., deals with bird symbolism among the *ahl-i ḥaqq* in Iran. In Turkish poetry the motif has been common since the time of Yunus Emre (*Yunus Emre Divani*, pp. 455, 514), down to the modern painter-poet Bedri Rahmi.

As birds represent humans, the poets sometimes wonder why they are so different: thus Sana'i, *Dīwān*, p. 537.

2. Iqbal, *Armaghān-i Ḥijāz*, p. 29.

3. Sana'i, *Dīwān*, pp. 31ff. Khaqani too has a *qaṣīda* called *Manṭiq uṭ-ṭayr* (*Dīwān*, pp. 41–45).

4. ʿAṭṭar, *Manṭiq uṭ-ṭayr*, p. 48. For illustrations of this epic see Grube, "The Language of the Birds: The Seventeenth-Century Miniatures." The *hudhud* (hoopoe) and his role are discussed in Duprée, "The Hoopoe in Afghan Folklore and Magic."

5. Munir Lahori (Ikram, *Armaghān-i Pāk*, p. 216). This combination can be found throughout Persian poetry (see also chapter 3, note 72).

6. Danish (Qaniʿ, *Maqālāt ash-shuʿarā*, p. 210).

7. Fouchécour, *La description de la nature*, chap. 4. See also Jami (*Dīwān*, no. 574, p. 392):

Do you not see what the not-yet-opened buds are in the garden?
Nightingales have tied their bleeding hearts to the rose twigs.

8. Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān*, p. 212.

9. Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān*, p. 20.

10. Rumi, *Mathnawī*, 1: line 1802. Ḥafiẓ begins a *ghazal* (*Dīwān*, p. 37) with the nightingale's complaint: for a change, this nightingale does not suffer quietly but tells the rose that there are many like her in the garden. The rose, admitting that, still smiles and answers: "Did a lover ever complain of the beloved?"

11. Rumi, *Dīwān*, no. 684/7117. It is extremely rare to find a happy nightingale in Persian poetry. Fani says, in an unusual verse (*Dīwān*, p. 85):

The nightingale cannot fit into his nest from joy,
for the letter of the rose petal came via the hand of the breeze.

12. Jami, in Rückert, "Aus Dschamis Diwan" (*Werke*, 2:101). The quatrain is not in the standard edition of Jami's *Dīwān*.

13. See chapter 12, note 70. Cf. Jami, *Dīwān*, no. 340, p. 263:

Why is the bud bloody inside and the rose's shirt torn,
unless the bird in the garden has told the story of separation?

Fuzuli, however, turns the idea around (*Divan*, no. 34):

Every rose petal is a tongue to explain grief:
not in vain does the nightingale lament when he sees the rose.

14. Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān*, p. 64. Cf. Naṣir ʿAli Sirhindi (Aṣlaḥ, *Tadhkirat-i shuʿarā-i Kashmīr*, 2:934), who thinks that love is "something different": the nightingale turns into roast meat, *kabāb*, from the rose's fire.

15. Kalim, *Dīwān*, no. 347, p. 228. For the *külkhana* see Grotzfeld, *Das Bad im arabisch-islamischen Mittelalter*. Allusions to *gulshan* and *kulkhan* are frequent from early times onward (see, e.g., *Yunus Emre Divani*, p. 428); usually poets use this contrast to show just how wrong things can go. See, e.g., Khaqani, who observes with disgust (*Dīwān*, p. 318):

The fly in the rose garden, the Huma in the ash house,

and Ghalib (*Urdu Dīwān*, p. 70), who states his misery that

when I am a rose, I am in the ash house,
when I am straw, I am in the rose garden.

Khaki, emphasizing the spiritual life, asks (*Dīwān*, p. 104):

How long are you in the ash house of forms?
Find your place in the rose garden of inner meaning!

16. Jami, *Dīwān*, no. 174, p. 200. For the rose as the fire of Moses see no. 310, p. 251.

17. See Gibb, *History of Ottoman Poetry*, 3:111–16, 6:146ff. (text), and Hammer's translation *Gül u bülbül, das ist Rose und Nachtigall*.

18. Rumi, *Mathnawī*, 2: line 334, and several other times. Niẓami describes the arrival of spring in similar images (*Makhzan al-asrār*, in *Kulliyāt-i Khamsa*, p. 42):

The document of the official secretariat of the garden was,
that the rose decrees [to shed] the crow's blood.

19. See Schimmel, *The Triumphal Sun*, p. 117. Poets especially praise the white falcon, *bāz-i ashhab* (see, e.g., Sanaʾi, *Dīwān*, p. 1030). This term was sometimes applied to leading Sufi masters such as ʿAbdul Qadir Gilani.

20. Sohrawardi, *Oeuvres en persan*, p. 226, "ʿAql-i surkh"; cf. also the *Risālat aṭ-ṭayr*, in the same volume.

21. See Schimmel, *The Triumphal Sun*, pp. 116–18.

22. Rumi, *Dīwān*, no. 649/6770. At a very early point in Persian literature Daqiqi described a sunrise in which the air became "like the falcon's breast from the partridge's blood" (Lazard, *Les premiers poètes*, 2:161).

23. Iqbal praised the falcon, *shāhīn*, so intensely that it became almost an emblem among his admirers—including stuffed falcons!

24. Rumi (see Schimmel, *The Triumphal Sun*, p. 118).

25. Manuchihri (Fouchécour, *La description de la nature*, p. 143). Later, Jamali

Kanboh saw his pen as an Indian parrot from whose beak dripped the water of Khiżr (Ikram, *Armaghān-i Pāk*, p. 157), and Fani thought that in spring the parrots of Hindustan should sprout (green) betel leaves instead of feathers (Aṣlaḥ, *Tadhkirat-i shuʿarā-i Kashmīr*, 3:1048).

26. Nakhshabi's *Ṭūṭīnāme*, which is based on the Indian tales *Sukaśaptati*, was published in different versions. The first English translation, by Garrens, appeared in 1792; it formed the basis of Iken's German translation in 1832. Ethé, "Neupersische Literatur," pp. 124–25, gives a survey of the different versions. In India a Dakhni version was composed by Ghawwaṣi at the Quṭbshahi court in Golconda; an Urdu version, *Totā kahānī*, by Ḥaydari, appeared in 1801 and formed the basis of the Sindhi version. The Turkish version is the basis for Rosen's German translation of 1858, which in turn has been reissued by J. C. Bürgel. Marzolph has studied the Persian *Chihil Ṭūṭī* (Forty Parrots); see also Hatami's *Untersuchungen zum persischen Papageienbuch des Naḫšabī*. The beautiful manuscript in the Cleveland Museum has recently been published in facsimile, and the story has been rendered into English by Simsar. (See my Bibliography.)

27. *Ḥujjat al-Hind*, by one Miḥrabi of the seventeenth century, contains a dialogue between a *ṭūṭī* and a *meena* bird about Islam and Hinduism (see Marshall, *Mughuls in India*, nos. 221, 1809).

28. For a translation of Daya Razi's work see Algar, *The Path of God's Bondsmen*.

29. Quoted in Khakee, "The Dasa Avatara," one such wise parrot teaches the Hindu princess.

30. Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān*, p. 165 (also Rückert/Pertsch, *Grammatik*, p. 361) states that he is like a parrot before a mirror and repeats only what the primordial teacher tells him to say. Khaqani uses a similar image (*Dīwān*, p. 248).

31. Qasim-i Kahi (Qaniʿ, *Maqālāt ash-shuʿarā*, p. 684). Sanaʾi (*Ḥadīqat al-ḥaqīqat*, p. 329) says that the parrot represents intellect, the heron, love—apparently a unique comparison.

32. For the story of the merchant and the parrot see Rumi, *Mathnawī*, 1: lines 1547–1848. He may have been inspired by Sanaʾi's line (*Ḥadīqat al-ḥaqīqat*, p. 225):

When the parrot Soul broke its cage,
it went and perched on Gabriel's head.

33. Ghalib, *Kulliyāt-i fārsī*, 4: no. 215. He also compares himself to a palm tree that "bears parrots instead of dates," to point to his sweet and eloquent speech (4: no. 242).

34. Although it is probably his best-known poem, Amir Khusrau's song *Namīdānam chi manzil būd* is not in Nafisi's edition; see instead Ikram, *Armaghān-i Pāk*, p. 128. The expression *bismil kardan*, "to slaughter ritually by saying *bismillāh*, 'In the name of God,' while cutting the jugular vein," was used by Ẓafar Hamadani (ʿAufi,

Lubāb, 2:214). ʿAṭṭar used *nīm bismil*, "half-slaughtered," that is, "half-dead and quivering" (*Muṣībatnāma*, p. 22). Later the term became quite popular among poets; see, e.g., Jami (*Dīwān*, no. 64, p. 157):

> Although I wallow in blood—what does he care? For a little child
> regards the shivering of the slaughtered bird as a dance.

35. Ẓahir Faryabi (ʿAufi, *Lubāb*, 2:304). See also Suhrawardi, "The King's Peacock under the Basket," in *Treatises* (trans. Thackston), p. 83. ʿAṭṭar (*Manṭiq uṭ-ṭayr*, p. 52) praises the radiant bird, who boasts:

> When the painter of the Unseen produced my picture,
> the fingers of the Chinese were reduced to stumps.

That is, even the greatest painters could not compete with its beauty.

36. Farrukhi, *Dīwān*, qaṣīda no. 139. Khaqani alludes to the custom of keeping peacock feathers in Koran copies (*Dīwān*, p. 22); Goethe refers to this in *West-Östlicher Divan*, p. 112. Niẓami compares the sun to a peacock (*Iskandarnāma*, 2.1277), and in Rumi the bird is usually associated with spring and radiant gardens.

37. Saʿdi, *Gulistān*, chap. 2. Khaqani instead contrasted the peacock's beauty and its shrieking voice (*Dīwān*, p. 102):

> True poverty is like a peacock; it has a lovely color, although its voice is
> ugly.

Sanaʾi, before him, had thought that "wishes are like peacocks, with blessed wings but evil feet" (*Ḥadīqat al-ḥaqīqat*, p. 397). The most absurd-looking and yet in itself perfectly logical idea comes from Ghalib (*Urdu Dīwān*, p. 151):

> To draw a picture of the charming idol in the rival's embrace,
> Mani's brush would have to be a peacock's foot.

The view of the beloved—lovely and, as we may surmise, peacock-like as she is—in someone else's arms can be described only with the ugliest possible instrument.

38. Ghalib, *Kulliyāt-i fārsī*, 4: no. 174.

39. Qabus ibn Wushmgir (ʿAufi, *Lubāb*, 1:32). When pigeons are mentioned in Indo-Persian poetry, one should not forget that pigeon-flying was and still is a favorite pastime on the Subcontinent.

40. For the description of ecstasy see Rumi, *Dīwān*, no. 649/6770; cf. Schimmel, *The Triumphal Sun*, p. 117.

41. Jami, *Dīwān*, no. 481, p. 356. Poets might complain that though they wrote love letters with the blood of their eyes, the pigeon from the beloved's sanctuary did not come to carry them to the addressee (Amir Khusrau, *Dīwān*, no. 1075). Or else they thought that the pigeon's eyes are red because the carrier bird wept blood profusely when it learned of the lover's misery (Rückert/Pertsch, *Grammatik*, p. 299). Even worse, the Ottoman poet Meʾali feared that the heat of his love letter would roast the bird, "turning round and round"—that is, as if on a spit—and make it into *döner kebap* (rather like what Americans would know as "gyros") (Ambros, *Candid Penstrokes*, p. 137, ghazal no. 52, 3).

42. An image first used by Manuchihri (see Fouchécour, *La description de la nature*, chap. 4).

43. The title of Ibn Ḥazm's famous book on chaste love comes from this imagery (see my Bibliography). The dark feather ring around the bird's neck seems to indicate its fidelity, for it can never be separated from the plumage and shows that the bird is "bound" to someone. That is why Ibn ʿArabi, commenting on his own lyrical poetry, explains the ringdove as "the universal spirit, born of God and breathed into man. She is described as having a collar in reference to the covenant which He laid upon her" (*Tarjumān al-ashwāq*, ed. Nicholson, p. 73 [on 13.1]). The dove's fidelity is often alluded to. Cf. Sanaʾi, *Dīwān*, p. 846. Khaqani compares his heart to a pigeon that he wants to sacrifice to his friend at the Feast of Sacrifice (*Dīwān*, p. 350).

44. *Yunus Emre Divani*, p. 131. Contrasts with the crow or raven become more outspoken when their colors are taken into consideration. Farrukhi (*Dīwān*, qaṣīda no. 198) wishes his patron happiness

> as long as the white falcon does not mix with the black crow.

In a discussion "between the Pir-i [Maulana] Rumi and his Indian disciple" (*Bāl-i Jibrīl*, p. 186), Iqbal takes up Rumi's verse

> The falcon's wing brings you to the sultan,
> the raven's wing brings you to the graveyard,

which contains a subtle hint at the Koranic story (Sura 5:34–35) that the raven taught Cain how to bury his brother Abel after he had slain him. Combinations of the crow with "black" Hindustan appear in Indo-Persian poetry; see Qasim-i Kahi (Badaʾuni, *Muntakhab at-tawārīkh*, 3:173 [trans. p. 244]):

> Kahi, you are the nightingale which adorns the pleasure meadows of Kabul,
> not a crow or kite that you should come to Hindustan.

On the other hand the contrast between crow and nightingale figures in later poetry to point to utter misery. Saʿid Bilgrami sighs (Azad, *Khizāna-i ʿāmira*, p. 285):

> The nightingales lament in cages, while the crow utters the *gulbāng* on the
> rose twigs.

And Nauʿi (Aṣlaḥ, *Tadhkirat-i shuʿarā-i Kashmīr*, 3:1639) describes the degree of his misery:

I am a nightingale dwelling in ruins, so that in the season of the rose
I ask the grieved crow: "Where is the way to the garden?"

Comparisons of the crow with the Hindus occur several times in Niẓami, and also in Amir Khusrau (e.g., *Dīwān*, no. 933).

45. Rumi, *Mathnawī*, 1: line 1892.

46. Shah ʿAbdul Laṭif, *Risālō*, "Sur Pūrab," 1.12, and often in the Sassui circle. On the other hand Amir Khusrau offers the crow his whole body except the eyes, "which have seen the beloved" (*Dīwān*, no. 1125).

47. The story of Anushirwan and the owls from Niẓami's *Makhzan al-asrār* has often been illustrated. The miniature from the British Library is reproduced in Welch, *Wonders of the Age*, no. 50. One of the first instances of the poetical association of owls with ruins seems to be Shahid-i Balkhi's verse in which he sees "an owl in ruins instead of a peacock" (Lazard, *Les premiers poètes*, 2:38); that is, instead of gardens there are only ruins left. As ruins are usually thought to cover treasure, owls can also appear in connection with treasure, as in ʿAṭṭar's *Manṭiq uṭ-ṭayr*, p. 65.

48. See Hillmann, *Hedayat's "The Blind Owl" Forty Years After*.

49. Saʿdi, *Kulliyāt*, 3: no. 318. Meier, "Niẓami und die Mythologie des Hahnes," shows that legends about the cosmic white rooster, the bird of light, were known in ancient Iran. In Islam the rooster is loved by the pious because he dutifully calls to prayer. That is why Rumi even calls the rooster by the Greek word *angelos*, "angel" (*Dīwān*, no. 1207/12855–56). Niẓami makes the rooster call out "Patience is the key to happiness!" (*Khusrau Shīrīn*, line 1307). The rooster's positive aspect is also understood from Ẓahir Faryabi's *qaṣīda* whose *radīf* is *gauhar*, "jewel" (Daulatshah, *Tadhkirat ash-shuʿarā*, p. 125):

As long as the rooster Justice flaps his wings in the world,
the hen lays jewels instead of eggs.

That is, with justice, everything prospers. Masʿud ibn Saʿd, however, is critical of the rooster for sporting a *ṭaylasān*, a high headdress like that of scholars, and yet leading a rather immoral life amid all the hens (*Dīwān*, p. 633). At about the same time, Manuchihri called the rooster the "muezzin of the winebibbers" (*Dīwān*, p. 77, line 2233), as one used to drink in the early morning.

50. A well-known example is the miniature in the Museum für Islamische Kunst, Berlin. See Kühnel, *Indische Miniaturen*, plate 17.

51. Iqbal, *Payām-i Mashriq*, p. 245, after ʿAufi, *Lubāb*, 2:206.

52. Rumi, *Mathnawī*, 2: line 3767; see also Sanaʾi, *Ḥadīqat al-ḥaqīqat*, p. 154.

53. See Vogel, *The Goose in Indian Literature and Art*. An elaboration of this theme, the Kingly Gander, in the Indo-Tibetan tradition appears in "The Story of Mount Potala Delights" (in Longchenpa, *A Visionary Journey*). The *hāṁs* plays an important role in Indian folk poetry and folk tales, and in the Indo-Muslim tradition a Sufi master from Sri Lanka, Bawa Mohaiyyuddin, invented a calligraphy of the *basmala* in the form of a swan—not, as most calligraphers in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries did, as a stork or parrot. See Schimmel, *Calligraphy and Islamic Culture*, p. 112.

54. Jotwani, *Shah Abdul Karim*, no. 13; Shah ʿAbdul Laṭif, *Risālō*, "Sur Karāyil."

55. Sanaʾi, *Dīwān*, pp. 31ff.; Rumi, *Dīwān*, no. 741/7788; for more examples see Schimmel, *The Triumphal Sun*, p. 123. An early poet, Shaṭranji (ʿAufi, *Lubāb*, 2:199–200), composed a *qaṣīda* with *laklak*, "stork," as *radīf*.

56. In Turkish folk riddles they appear as pilgrims in spotless white robes, speaking only Arabic. An amusing example from classical Persian poetry is Manuchihri's comment (*Dīwān*, p. 223, line 2698):

The crane (*kurkī*) talks with the crane in Turkish (*turkī*);
the parrot speaks Indian words.

57. See Rumi, *Dīwān*, no. 2622/27767–71. Sanaʾi says of the ostrich that it is "for burden a bird, for eggs [or, testicles] a camel" (*Ḥadīqat al-ḥaqīqat*, p. 386).

58. Rumi, *Dīwān*, no. 2636/27954 and elsewhere; Sanaʾi, *Sayr ul-ʿibād ilāʾl-maʿād*, line 148, *Ḥadīqat al-ḥaqīqat*, p. 678. The idea, taken from Greek sources, is mentioned in Damiri (*Ḥayāt al-ḥayawān al-kubrā*, 2:326).

59. Naṣir ʿAli Sirhindi (Aṣlaḥ, *Tadhkirat-i shuʿarā-i Kashmīr*, 2:923). For the Huma in Indo-Persian poetry, especially with Ghalib, see Schimmel, *A Dance of Sparks*, pp. 42–44; in Ghalib's Dancing Poem (*Kulliyāt-i fārsī*, 4: no. 219) the owl and the Huma are juxtaposed. According to Fouchécour, *La description de la nature*, p. 150, the Huma first appears in Farrukhi's poetry.

60. Saʿdi, *Gulistān*, chap. 1.

61. Kalim, *Dīwān*, ghazal no. 371. Contentment is the most important condition for the Huma's high rank, as Sanaʾi says (*Ḥadīqat al-ḥaqīqat*, p. 92):

When contentment settles in a desolate place,
its wing is better than the Huma's glory.

ʿAṭṭar (*Manṭiq uṭ-ṭayr*, p. 59) has the Huma explain that he reached such a high rank by feeding his *nafs*, his lower soul, with bones. Thus Adhar says (Aṣlaḥ, *Tadhkirat-i shuʿarā-i Kashmīr*, 1:7):

If one can keep the heart from the way of sensuous lust,
one can get the bounty of the Huma from a fly's wing.

The Pashto poet ʿAbdul Ḥamid (Raverty, *Selections from the Poetry of the Afghans*, p. 137) offers similar sentiments:

Sovereignty and dominion shall follow thee, like a shadow,
if thou art content, like the Huma, upon dry bones to live.

The use of the word "shadow" is particularly elegant here.

62. Hadi Hasan, "The Unique *Dīwān* of Humayun," p. 236.

63. Farrukhi, *Dīwān*, qaṣīda no. 92, line 3765. Baki uses images from this sphere in his elegy on Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent. Saʿdi addresses the beloved (*Kulliyāt*, 3: no. 607):

You are a Huma, and I am an ailing, helpless beggar—
I'll become a king when you cast your shadow on me.

64. Jami, *Dīwān*, no. 7, p. 135; also in Garcin de Tassy, *Rhétorique et prosodie*, p. 123.

65. Kalim (Ikram, *Armaghān-i Pāk*, p. 232). Dard, on the other hand, praises true poverty, "when the Huma considers himself a crow" (*Urdu Dīwān*, p. 106).

66. Khaqani, *Dīwān*, p. 65.

67. Ghalib, *Kulliyāt-i fārsī*, 4: no. 100.

68. Ghalib, *Kulliyāt-i fārsī*, 4: no. 208.

69. Ghalib, *Kulliyāt-i fārsī*, 4: no. 161. Cf. no. 33, where the repeated arrival of the Huma's beak at his bones reminds him of the pain caused by the beloved's eyelashes.

70. ʿAṭṭar, *Manṭiq uṭ-ṭayr*, p. 47.

71. Suhrawardi, *Ṣafīr-i Sīmurgh*, in *Treatises* (trans. Thackston) and in [Sohrawardi], *Oeuvres en persan*, pp. 314–32.

72. Thus ʿAbdul Wasiʿ Jabali (mentioned in Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān*, p. 45n.); cf. also Sanaʾi, *Dīwān*, p. 48.

Chapter 14

1. ʿAufi, *Lubāb*, 1:320.

2. For lore on the *karkadann* see Ettinghausen, *The Unicorn*.

3. Farrukhi, *Dīwān*, esp. qaṣīdas nos. 17, 107, 156.

4. Rumi, *Dīwān*, no. 940/9688. See also ʿAṭṭar, *Muṣībatnāma*, p. 74.

5. *Kalīla wa Dimna* came from the Hitopadeśa and Pancatantra traditions of India and became widely known after they were taken into Arabic in the eighth century. At the court of Ḥusayn Bayqara of Herat, Ḥusayn Waʿiz-i Kashifi created a Persian version as *Anwār-i Suhaylī*, and about a century later Abuʾl-Faẓl at Akbar's court produced the even more high-flown version known as *ʿAyār-i Dānish*.

6. Schimmel, *Die orientalische Katze*, contains cat lore, poetry, and prose from all Islamic countries. Imami's cat poem is in Daulatshah, *Tadhkirat ash-shuʿarā*, pp. 187–88. After all, a *ḥadīth* states that *ḥubb al-hirra min al-īmān*, "love of cats is part of faith," and stories tell of the Prophet's love for his cat. Many Sufis were cat lovers, as the animal is clean and does not spoil one's ritual purity by its presence. For an elegy on a cat see Fariq, "An Abbasid Secretary Poet," p. 260.

7. ʿUbayd-i Zakani's story has been published in many editions, including a German translation by Herbert Duda and a witty new version (though rather far from the original wording) by Omar Pound.

8. Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān*, p. 97.

9. Rumi, *Mathnawī*, 3: line 3003, 4: line 1897. Rumi also has some pleasant cat anecdotes (e.g., *Mathnawī*, 5: lines 3409ff.). Shams-i Tabrizi talks in his *Maqālāt* of the *shaykhs*, alleged mystical leaders but in reality the "highway robbers of religion," as "mice in the house of faith": "But God has cats among his worthy servants who rid [the house of] mice."

10. The "scent of the muskdeer" became a term for the fragrance that leads the seeker to his goal. As musk is preserved in a gland and resembles coagulated blood, poets could imagine that the musk scent brought by the breeze made their hearts bleed. Musk is black; thus cross-relations with the beloved's fragrant black tresses are natural.

11. Haughty lions are usually interpreted as "courageous hearts," as in Ibn ʿArabi's *Tarjumān al-ashwāq*, p. 120 (on v. 34). They also refer to the saint and in general to every brave and active man; hence they occur often in panegyrics. Saʿdi says in an Arabic verse (*Kulliyāt*, 3: no. 568):

I met the lion in the forests, he could not hunt me;
but the gazelle in Shiraz pierces me with her eyelashes!

In poetry the real lion is often confronted either with the "lion of the sky" (the constellation Leo) or with a lion emblazoned on a flag or banner. For examples see the Appendix.

12. Sarkhush (d. A.H. 1126 [1714]) (Azad, *Khizāna-i ʿāmira*, p. 264).

13. For the cheetah see Schimmel, *The Triumphal Sun*, p. 106 and n. 159. It is mentioned earlier than Rumi, in Sanaʾi's work (*Dīwān*, pp. 286, 232; *Ḥadīqat al-ḥaqīqat*, p. 427) as well as in Saʿdi's *Būstān* (*Kulliyāt*, 2:30).

14. Here one may think of the American expression "to play 'possum." Beside the hare, which is never seen in a positive light, two animals whose fur was highly appreciated were *qāqum*, the ermine, and *sinjāb*, the squirrel. Both occur as images for the white day and the dark night. See, e.g., Khaqani, *Dīwān*, p. 762; Niẓami, *Makhzan al-asrār*, in *Kulliyāt-i Khamsa*, p. 41; Daulatshah, *Tadhkirat ash-shuʿarā*, p. 189.

15. Bedil, *Kulliyāt*, 1:114. The hare is considered despicable because it allegedly menstruates like a woman. That induced Khaqani to write a number of rather crude verses in which he contrasts the hare with "manly animals" such as the lion and the leopard (*Dīwān*, pp. 142, 198, 291). The combination "gazelle, lion, and hare's sleep" is found as early as Sanaʾi (*Dīwān*, p. 800).

16. ʿAṭṭar says (*Dīwān*, p. 326, qaṣīda):

Be in this valley like a camel and do not make mistakes;
walk softly, eat thorns, and carry the burden correctly.

17. The most dramatic description of the camel that is intoxicated by the driver's song occurs in Sarraj, *Kitāb al-luma'*, pp. 269–70.

18. Rumi loves the intoxicated camel (*Dīwān*, no. 302/3296); he makes jokes about it, comparing it to Love or to the lover, and also takes up Sana'i's saying (*Ḥadīqat al-ḥaqīqat*, p. 83):

The camel may look crooked, but it goes straight.

For examples see Schimmel, *The Triumphal Sun*, pp. 94–95. In modern times Iqbal translated the idea of the camel driver's song into his strongly rhythmical *Ḥudā* (*Payām-i Mashriq*, p. 125).

19. Rumi's treatment of the donkey as the embodiment of worldliness and sensuality is very outspoken; cf. Schimmel, *The Triumphal Sun*, pp. 102–4. The donkey had been known since classical antiquity for his unbridled sensuality, and in Abbasid times it was considered a gross insult to convey gifts to a lady via a male donkey (Qaḍi Rashid, *Kitāb adh-dhakhā'ir*, section 32). The miniature illustrating a related poem from Anwari's *Dīwān* highlights the point (see *Anvari's Divan: A Pocket Book for Akbar*, ed. Schimmel and Welch, plate XI).

20. For this theme see Schimmel, "Nur ein störrisches Pferd."

21. Al-Jauhari's poem is quoted in 'Aufi, *Lubāb*, 2:114ff. Cf. similar complaints by Salman-i Sawaji (Browne, *Literary History of Persia*, 3:268–70), Kalim (*Dīwān*, p. 64, muqaṭṭa'), Ṭalib-i Amuli (*Dīwān*, p. 128, qiṭ'a), Muḥsin Tattawi (*Dīwān*, p. 482), Faṣiḥi (Daulatshah, *Tadhkirat ash-shu'arā*, p. 80), and—the most famous example—Sauda's satire (trans. in Ahmad Ali, *The Golden Tradition*, pp. 122ff.; German trans. in Rothen-Dubs, *Allahs indischer Garten*, pp. 27–32). See also Mir Dard, *'Ilm ul-kitāb*, pp. 321–22. Positive poems about horses are rare, but see Mas'ud ibn Sa'd, *Dīwān*, pp. 194, 314, and Waṭwaṭ, *Dīwān*, p. 318.

22. Two examples are given in Schimmel, "Nur ein störrisches Pferd," but there are many, including a starved nag in marbleized paper (for which see Welch, *Indian Drawings and Painted Sketches*, no. 34, with further information).

23. Sana'i mentions that sinners may be transformed into dogs and pigs at Doomsday (*Dīwān*, p. 681; *Ḥadīqat al-ḥaqīqat*, p. 429). The same idea occurs in 'Aṭṭar (*Muṣībatnāma*, chap. 25/2. See Ritter, *Das Meer der Seele*, pp. 102–3. But Dr. Nurbakhsh's *Dogs: From a Sufi Point of View* collects a number of "positive" anecdotes, to which more examples could be added.

24. Goethe, *West-Östlicher Divan*, "Begünstigte Tiere," p. 129.

25. Rumi, *Dīwān*, no. 2102/22199.

26. Sana'i, *Dīwān*, p. 947. See also Jami, *Dīwān*, no. 62, p. 156. See also 'Aṭṭar (*Dīwān*, qaṣīda no. 18, p. 351):

I am the dust of the dogs in your street—no, even less.

He also wants to feed his beloved's dogs with his roasted heart (*Dīwān*, ghazal no. 437). Khaqani has an entire *ghazal* with the *radīf* "the dog of your street" (*Dīwān*, p. 575).

27. Jami, *Dīwān*, no. 41, p. 148. Lisani gave a different turn to this theme (Azad, *Khizāna-i 'āmira*, p. 398): he warns his cruel friend not to throw the shards of his—the lover's—broken heart to the ground, "for the paws of the dogs of your street might get hurt." Me'ali in Istanbul likewise felt sorry for the dogs in the friend's street (Ambros, *Candid Penstrokes*, p. 97, ghazal no. 165, 6):

I am very much ashamed about your dogs—
every night they get no sleep due to the tumult of my sighs!

(And it certainly meant much to make more noise than the street dogs in premodern Istanbul!)

28. *Mūr* and *mār* are a frequently used pair in panegyrics, of the form mentioned in Raduyani (*Kitab Tarcuman al-balâġa*, p. 36):

The adversaries were like ants (*mūr*) and became snakes (*mār*)—

or vice versa. Sana'i used a triple pun to emphasize that at Doomsday "ant (*mūr*), snake (*mār*), and prince (*mīr*)" are all equal (*Dīwān*, p. 288). The ant under the feet of the horse or elephant is again usually associated with *qaṣīdas*, and Sa'di warns his reader in the *Būstān* (*Kulliyāt*, 2:82):

Don't put the hand of oppression on the head of the weak,
for one day you may fall under his foot like an ant.

He also complains (*Kulliyāt*, 3: no. 452):

They have overlooked our being destroyed as much
as an ant's being killed under the horsemen's feet.

29. Allusions to the ants who brought a locust's leg before Sulayman are common when a poet wishes to excuse himself for offering an all too modest gift; see, e.g., Daulatshah's introduction to his *Tadhkirat ash-shu'arā*, p. 20. See also Jami, *Dīwān*, no. 752, p. 460.

30. Amir Khusrau, *Dīwān*, no. 1083.

31. Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān* (ed. Brockhaus), no. 247. In Rami (*Anīs*, p. 35) the down is compared to ants longing for the sugar field, that is, the sweet mouth.

32. Amir Khusrau, *Dīwān*, no. 1564. Jami compares himself in love to a fly drowned in rose syrup (*Dīwān*, no. 165, p. 196).

33. Rumi, *Mathnawī*, 5: line 2067.

34. Iqbal, *Payām-i Mashriq*, pp. 122, 136.

35. Necati (Gibb, *History of Ottoman Poetry*, 6:63); the same image appears in Me'ali (Ambros, *Candid Penstrokes*, p. 20, qiṭ'a no. 2).

36. Khaqani (ʿAufi, *Lubāb*, 2:223). Another comparison is in his *Dīwān*, p. 369.

37. Amir Khusrau, *Dīwān*, no. 1611; cf. also Saʿdi, *Kulliyāt*, 3: no. 204; Naẓiri, *Dīwān*, ghazal no. 513.

38. Ḥallaj, *Kitāb aṭ-ṭawāsīn*, "Ṭāsīn al-fahm." For the influence of the image on European thought see Schaeder, "Die persische Vorlage von Goethes 'Seliger Sehnsucht.'" Shams-i Tabrizi says, with a pun (*Maqālāt*, p. 181): "The moth went after the light (*nūr*) and fell in the fire (*nār*)."

39. Fani, *Dīwān*, p. 114.

40. Ghalib, *Kulliyāt-i fārsī*, 4: no. 167. But he can also point to his miserable state by describing himself as "the moth of the candle of his own tomb" (4: no. 12).

41. ʿUrfi, *Kulliyāt*, p. 357. See also Khaqani, *Dīwān*, p. 645. For love is innate—"nobody teaches the moth to immolate itself," as Mahir says (Azad, *Khizāna-i ʿāmira*, p. 416). Rarely, other insects appear: the spider, whose web is mentioned in the Koran (Sura 29:40) as the "weakest of all houses," can serve the pious as it served the Prophet during his emigration to Medina by weaving a "curtain without warp and weft" over the door of the cave (thus ʿAṭṭar, *Dīwān*, ghazal no. 169). The whole world can appear as a spiderweb (Niẓami, *Laylā Majnūn*, line 649), and the early poet Shahid-i Balkhi saw Love as a spider that weaves its web around the heart (Lazard, *Les premiers poètes*, 2:31). As for the silkworm, it weaves, as Khaqani says in an often-imitated image, "its shroud with its own hand" (*Dīwān*, p. 574).

42. Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān*, p. 77.

43. Hammer, *Geschichte der schönen Redekünste Persiens*, p. 26. ʿUrfi gives the theme an interesting twist (Aṣlaḥ, *Tadhkirat-i shuʿarā-i Kashmīr*, 2:814):

> The lover is ruined by Islam and infidelity—
> the moth does not know [the difference between] the candle of the sanctuary [Mecca] and that of the monastery!

44. On the salamander see Damiri, *Kitāb al-ḥayawān*, 1:515. Saʿdi asks in the *Būstān* (*Kulliyāt*, 2:109):

> How would the salamander know the pain of burning?

Poets liked to contrast the salamander with the fish, as Farrukhi describes his state (*Dīwān*, p. 381, qaṣīda no. 200):

> Sometimes swimming in the water of the eyes like a fish,
> sometimes in the fire of grief like a salamander.

45. Ghalib, *Urdu Dīwān*, p. 45. Salamanders swarm in his poems: see, e.g., *Kulliyāt-i fārsī*, 4: nos. 19, 213, 276; 5: qaṣīdas nos. 24, 60; and qaṣīda no. 32, where he describes a rose garden in full bloom:

> The nation of roses embraces in large groups the religion of the salamander.

Perhaps he is following Fani (*Dīwān*, p. 91):

> So much blooms the rose of fire from the water and soil of Hind
> that everyone who comes to Hindustan turns into a salamander.

See Schimmel, *A Dance of Sparks*, pp. 71, 72, n. 74.

46. Qaḍi Rashid tells that in the Fatimid treasury in Cairo there was a "napkin woven from the down of the salamander bird, which does not get burnt" (*Kitāb adh-dhakhā'ir*, section 401).

47. ʿUnṣuri (ʿAufi, *Lubāb*, 2:29). Cf. Farrukhi, *Dīwān*, qaṣīda no. 203. The comparison of elephants with clouds or mighty waves is well known from Indian poetics as well.

48. Farrukhi, *Dīwān*, qaṣīda no. 60; cf. no. 31, and often. Elephants were used in war by the Buyid ruler ʿAḍudaddaula in 977 as well as by the Ghaznawids. The Seljukid Tughrilbeg brought with him eight elephants when entering Baghdad in 1055; see Busse, *Chalif und Grosskönig*, p. 346.

49. Niẓami sees God's inexplicable power in the fact that he gave strength to the elephant's foot and weakness to the ant (*Iskandarnāma*, 1.839). Cf. Saʿdi, *Kulliyāt*, 3: no. 74. Khaqani speaks of the (terrifying) elephant of events (*Dīwān*, p. 767) and connects this with Abraha's elephants; the Kaʿba of faithfulness which was called Khorasan was now destroyed by the feet of the "elephant of events" (p. 157). And ʿAṭṭar speaks of "the elephant Separation" (*Dīwān*, ghazal no. 597) which, we may assume, will destroy his heart.

50. Sana'i, *Ḥadīqat al-ḥaqīqat*, p. 69; Rumi, *Mathnawī*, 3: lines 1259ff. For the development of the story see Meier, "Die Geschichte von den Blinden und dem Elefanten."

51. Suhrawardi, *Risālat aṭ-ṭufūla*, in [Sohrawardi], *Oeuvres en persan*, p. 264; also in *Treatises* (trans. Thackston), p. 59. Khaqani mentions that "the elephant came from Hindustan and brought countless parrots" (*Dīwān*, p. 380); for similar ideas see his *qaṣīda* that has *angīkhta* as its *radīf* (pp. 396ff.).

52. Ritter, *Über die Bildersprache Niẓāmīs*, p. 68, from *Khusrau Shīrīn*; also in *Iskandarnāma*, 1.1061. In *Iskandarnāma* 2.1284 it is the parrot that remembers India. Khaqani was fond of the expression, which was to become a well-known proverb; see his *Dīwān*, pp. 171, 174, 250, 255.

53. Rumi, *Dīwān*, rubāʿī no. 1421.

54. Khaqani mentions objects made of ivory and speaks of the elephant's teeth, which were taken out immediately after its death and chiseled by a deft hand into elephants and kings for chess (*Dīwān*, p. 15). An ivory elephant also appears in ʿAndalib, *Nāla-i ʿAndalīb*, 1:254.

55. See Abidi, "Life and Poetry of Qudsi Mashhadi."

Chapter 15

1. Mir Dard, *Urdu Dīwān*, p. 95.

2. Shahid-i Balkhi (Lazard, *Les premiers poètes*, 2:27). Farrukhi uses the contrast, and Rumi says, in a *ghazal* with the *radīf* "to smile" (*khandīdan*) (*Dīwān*, no. 1989/21017):

Although I am sinister-looking like a cloud, I laugh inside—
it is the lightning's custom to laugh at the time of rain.

A pleasant early verse about the cloud appears in Raduyani, *Kitab Tarcuman al-balaġa*, p. 69. Naṣir-i Khusrau asks why the cloud, black as Hell and fiery, can turn the meadows into Paradise (*Dīwān-i ashʿār*, p. 52).

3. Schimmel, "Der Regen als Symbol in der Religionsgeschichte." A very early poet, Khusrawi (Raduyani, *Kitab Tarcuman al-balâġa*, p. 75), was able to combine the rain-and-spring imagery with an allusion to pre-Islamic objects:

As the cloud became Christ and the nightingale sang the Gospel,
a *zunnār* appeared on the mountain.

Arabic poets of the Abbasid era compared the rain to a skillful weaver who clothes the gardens in colorful, flowery gowns; see Schoeler, *Arabische Naturdichtung*, pp. 84, 94.

4. Schimmel, *And Muhammad Is His Messenger*, pp. 81–83. Realistic description of clouds is not too frequent. The Arabic poet Ibn al-Muʿtazz has some fine short poems, and in earlier Persian poetry elephants appear as clouds (see chapter 14, note 47). Most beautiful is Farrukhi's description of a cloud (*Dīwān*, qaṣīda 1, line 4):

One would say that it is verdigris dust on a Chinese mirror,
one would say that it is the hair of a squirrel on turquoise-colored brocade.

5. See Ali Asani's analysis of this poem in Schimmel, Asani, and Abdel-Malek, *The Popular Muhammad*.

6. Ingalls, *Sanscrit Poetry from Vidyakara's "Treasury"*; Vaudeville, *Bārahmasa*. For one of the few Indo-Persian examples see Masʿud ibn Saʿd-i Salman, *Dīwān*, pp. 654–58, *Māhhā-yi fārsī*. He also wrote a pleasant poem on the rainy season in his hometown, Lahore (Ikram, *Armaghān-i Pāk*, p. 88) and devoted a strophic poem to the signs of the zodiac (*Dīwān*, p. 424). Allusions to the seasons can be found occasionally, as when Farrukhi (*Dīwān*, qaṣīda no. 202) wishes his patron happiness

as long as day and night come together in equal scales
when the sun takes its place in the sign of Aries,

that is, as long as the vernal and autumnal equinoxes exist. The word *mīzān*, "scales," contains a pun on the sign Libra.

7. Amir Khusrau, *Dīwān*, no. 1.

8. Schimmel, *A Dance of Sparks*, p. 32 and nn. 41–48. Two of Ghalib's *ghazals* (*Kulliyāt-i fārsī*, 4: nos. 61, 249) are particularly strong in this imagery. See also Kalim, *Dīwān*, nos. 228, 475. Khaqani sees life as a bridge and events as torrents that destroy the bridge and therefore admonishes his reader to hurry before the floodwaters reach him (*Dīwān*, p. 426). He apparently bases this verse on the *ḥadīth* "The world is a bridge; pass over it but don't build a house on it," which was ascribed to Jesus and is even written at the gate of Akbar's residence Fathpur Sikri.

9. Ghalib, *Urdu Dīwān*, p. 47. For more examples see Schimmel, *A Dance of Sparks*, p. 33 n. 49. Ghalib even asks (*Urdu Dīwān*, p. 46):

To whose house will the torrent of affliction come after my death?

10. *Yunus Emre Divani*, p. 124.

11. Goethe, *West-Östlicher Divan*, p. 77, in "Buch Suleika."

12. Rumi, *Mathnawī*, 1: line 21.

13. Jami, *Lawāʾiḥ*, p. 76, *Khātima*. Saʿdi teaches the necessity of constant weeping (*Kulliyāt*, 3: no. 191):

The mouth does not become full of radiant pearls like an oyster,
if our eyes do not become an ocean from longing.

Here, as in many other verses, he uses the pleasant-sounding expression *lūlū-i lālā*, "a fine, radiant pearl," which was very common in the early centuries but seems to have fallen out of fashion in the fifteenth century.

14. Shah ʿAbdul Laṭif, *Risālō*, "Sur Mārui," chap. 5. It shows how widespread the image of the rain and the pearl had become that this Sindhi story is located in the middle of the desert, where one would expect a different choice of comparisons and images. See also Iqbal, *Pas che bāyad kard*, p. 60:

From our April rain comes the pearl in a dry oyster.

15. For the religious aspects of this motif see Bausani, *Persia religiosa*, pp. 316ff.; and Corbin, *L'homme de lumière*, pp. 41ff., discussing *The Song of the Pearl* from the Acts of Saint Thomas. The most important aspect for the poets is the journey of the raindrop: as ʿAṭṭar says (*Dīwān*, ghazal no. 689):

Leave this ocean like rain and travel,
for without travel you will never become a pearl—

an idea often repeated by Rumi.

16. Mir Dard, *Dīwān-i fārsī*, p. 34.

17. Iqbal, *Asrār-i khudī*, line 235.

18. Waṭwaṭ, *Dīwān*.

19. Among the numerous Koranic references to the dangers of the sea I mention

here only Suras 6:63 and 17:69, where, as in many other instances, travelers are reminded that they call upon God in times of danger but forget Him once they have reached the shore. The ocean is often called *ʿummān*, that is, the Sea of Oman, which was closest to Persia.

20. Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān*, p. 1. The descriptions of the ocean are often very fanciful. It had become connected with fire by the time of Rumi's verse. ʿUrfi says:

> The face of the ocean is *salsabīl* [the heavenly fountain], and the bottom of the sea is fire,

a statement reversed by Ghalib (*Kulliyāt-i fārsī*, 4: no. 50):

> The bottom of the ocean is *salsabīl* and the face of the sea is fire.

21. One often finds "the palate of crocodiles," *nihang*—e.g., in Bu ʿAli Qalandar (Tafhimi, *Sharḥ-i aḥwāl-i . . . Abū ʿAlī Qalandar*, p. 388). A frequent word in poems with the difficult rhyme *jang*, *āhang*, etc., *nihang* can also mean a great, dangerous fish. Kalim says (*Dīwān*, ghazal no. 93):

> Life is an ocean whose "crocodiles" are the events,
> the body is the boat, and death means to reach the shore.

Ghalib combines this imagery with the motif of the pearl (*Urdu Dīwān*, p. 63):

> In the lasso of each wave are a hundred palates of crocodiles—
> look what the raindrop has to suffer before it becomes a pearl!

When speaking of the ocean, Persian and Urdu poets often used a pun: the word *āshnā* means both "acquainted with" and "swimming." Thus Ghalib (*Urdu Dīwān*, p. 173):

> The heart is an ocean of weeping, but the lip is accustomed (*āshnā*) to smiling.

22. Rumi, *Dīwān*, no. 649/6773. But he has also interpreted the longing of snow and ice, which hope to melt and be rescued from their cold, "material" fetters to be transformed into life-giving water (no. 1387/14680–83). For his use of this imagery see Schimmel, *The Triumphal Sun*, "Imagery of Water."

23. Rumi, *Dīwān*, no. 463.

24. Shah ʿAbdul Laṭif, *Risālō*, "Sur Sohnī."

25. *Yunus Emre Divani*, pp. 605, 606, and often.

26. Lal Shahbaz Qalandar (Sadarangani, *Persian Poets of Sind*, p. 9).

27. Rumi, *Mathnawī*, 1: line 16.

28. Iqbal, *Payām-i Mashriq*, p. 151. In *Jāvīdnāma*, p. 66, the poet is given by Rumi the name Zindarud, "Living Stream," to point to his relation with the prophetic, living power.

29. The topic of the Divine Being as reflected in every kind of water forms the theme of Morgan's *Reaching for the Moon*, whose dust jacket shows a Zen drawing of a monkey who tries to reach the moon's reflection in a pond. One may, however, object somewhat to the late distortion of this beautiful idea—that "by the reflection of the beloved's sunlike face the fishes in the ocean are roasted," as the Sindhi Hindu poet Balchand says (Qaniʿ, *Maqālāt ash-shuʿarā*, p. 111).

30. Rumi, *Dīwān*, no. 900/9436.

31. Kalim (*Dīwān*, ghazal no. 517, p. 294).

32. Nefʿi (Gibb, *History of Ottoman Poetry*, 6:196).

33. Rumi, *Mathnawī*, 5: lines 209–10.

34. Rumi, *Mathnawī*, 1: line 1741, translated into Sindhi in Shah ʿAbdul Laṭif, *Risālō*, "Sur Sassui Abrī," 1.8.

35. Mir Dard, *Urdu Dīwān*, p. 51. The predilection for the term "water bubble" can be explained by the emphasis many later Sufis placed on "watery" symbols: sea, water, river, brook, rain, snow, and ice are merely names indicating the one ocean. See, e.g., ʿIraqi, *Lamaʿāt* (*Kulliyāt*, p. 376); Jami, *Lawāʾiḥ*, section 35. A late Bengali Muslim writer, Maulana ʿUbaydi Suhrawardi (d. 1888), saw life as a set of water bubbles on the water's surface (Ikram, *Armaghān-i Pāk*, p. 331). Yet one must remember that in Bengal, because of the geographical situation, water imagery plays a much more important role than in classical Persian or Turkish verse.

36. Bedil, *Kulliyāt*, 1:173.

37. Nasikh (Schimmel, "Classical Urdu Literature," pp. 196–97). A seven-hundred-page handwritten thesis from the University of Lucknow, in Urdu, contains an extensive discussion of this and related images in Nasikh's poetry.

38. Baba Saudaʾi (Daulatshah, *Tadhkirat ash-shuʿarā*, p. 476).

39. Sanaʾi, *Dīwān*, pp. 34ff.

40. Rumi, *Mathnawī*, 1: line 141.

41. Schimmel, *The Triumphal Sun*, chap. 1. For actual descriptions of the sun see Horn, "Die Sonnenaufgänge im Schahnama." But the Kashmiri poet Qabil (Aṣlaḥ, *Tadhkirat-i shuʿarā-i Kashmīr*, 3:1225) warns his reader not to show his importance, for

> Whosoever shows his perfection like the sun,
> sees every day in this world his sinking.

42. See Schimmel, *The Triumphal Sun*, "The Imagery of Music and Dance," pp. 210, 222, esp. 218ff.

43. Suhrawardi, *Treatises* (trans. Thackston), p. 80.

44. Rumi, *Dīwān*, no. 866/9066:

> I asked the sky: "Have you ever seen such a moon?"
> He took an oath and said: "I don't remember that at all!"

45. Muʿizzi (Browne, *Literary History of Persia*, 2:37; Rückert/Pertsch, *Grammatik*, p. 289). Also in Niẓami ʿAruḍi, *Four Discourses*, p. 47, attributed to Burhani.

46. Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān*, p. 224. Amir Khusrau wonders whether he sees a crescent in the sky, or the letter *nūn* ں or *ʿayn* ع that came from the pen of Without-How. Ghani sees it as something written in golden ink out of longing for the beloved's eyebrow, which was then called "crescent" (Ikram ul-Ḥaqq, in *Shiʿr al-ʿajam fi'l-Hind az awākhir-i ʿahd-i shāh-jahānī tā asās-i Pākistān*, p. 82).

47. Sauda (Schimmel, "Classical Urdu Literature," pp. 174–78). See also Russell and Islam, *Three Mughal Poets*, chaps. 4–6.

48. Mir Dard, *Dīwān-i fārsī*, p. 139, rubāʿī. But he also says, correctly, that the "opening of the mouth of the fasting people depends upon the crescent of the ʿId" (p. 91, rubāʿī). Kalim (*Dīwān*, ghazal no. 121) thinks that he has become so thin owing to separation that people point at him with their fingers even more than they point at the crescent that announces the ʿId.

49. ʿAbdul Jalil Bilgrami (Azad, *Khizāna-i ʿāmira*, p. 284). Cf. also Mir Dard, *Urdu Dīwān*, p. 77, and Ṭalib-i Amuli (Aṣlaḥ, *Tadhkirat-i shuʿarā-i Kashmīr*, 2:686).

50. Nuṣrati, *Gulshan-i ʿishq*, line 217. I owe insight on this important Dakhni manuscript in the Philadelphia Museum of Art to my colleague Peter Gaeffke, who is working on a translation. Ghalib goes much farther and equates the crescent of the ʿId with the cut fingernail of the emperor Bahadur Shah Ẓafar (*Kulliyāt-i fārsī*, 5: no. 17).

51. Iqbal, *Asrār-i khudī*, line 450, and *Payām-i Mashriq*, p. 96. See Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing*, p. 109.

52. Nazir Ahmad, "Kitāb-i Nauras," p. 353.

53. Kalim, *Dīwān*, ghazal no. 3. Cf. Schimmel, *A Dance of Sparks*, pp. 68, 73–75.

54. Cf. Aslam Kashmiri (Khushgu, *Safīna*, 3:40):

> The result of my life was, so to speak, nothing:
> The lightning was the broom for my harvest.

But cf. Saʿdi, *Kulliyāt*, 3: no. 539:

> Saʿdi's complaining is probably like wind:
> he complains loudly, like the thunder; you laugh like the lightning.

55. Ghalib, *Urdu Dīwān*, p. 125; also p. 9. Cf. ʿUrfi, *Kulliyāt*, p. 277. For the whole set of images see Schimmel, *A Dance of Sparks*, pp. 66, 74. Ibn ʿArabi, *Tarjumān al-ashwāq*, p. 92, states that "the author of these poems always uses the term 'lightning' to denote a center of manifestation of the Divine Essence." One can compare the statement of Angelus Silesius, *Der Cherubinische Wandersmann*, 2: no. 146: "Gott ist ein lauter Blitz"—"God is a pure lightning." This "divine" aspect of the lightning may have contributed to the positive role which it assumes, despite its destructive force, in later Persian and Urdu poetry: it frees the element of fire that is hidden in the straw as in every created being.

56. Manuchihri, *Dīwān*, lines 1466–67.

57. Farrukhi, *Dīwān*, qaṣīda no. 161.

58. Khaqani, *Dīwān*, p. 136.

59. Aẓhar (Ikram ul-Ḥaqq, *Shiʿr al-ʿajam fi'l-Hind az awākhir-i ʿahd-i shāh-jahānī tā asās-i Pākistān*, p. 81).

60. Me'ali (Ambros, *Candid Penstrokes*, p. 116).

61. Many names of stars (e.g., Aldebaran, Vega) as well as technical terms (zenith, azimuth, nadir) are of Arabic origin and demonstrate the lasting influence of Arabic astronomy in medieval Europe. Poets in the Islamic world sometimes personified the stars in poetry. A prime example is the Dakhni epic poem by Ghawwaṣi, *Quṭb Mushtarī* (Polaris and Jupiter), which cleverly alludes to the Quṭbshahi dynasty of Golconda, for whom he composed the poem in 1609: all the heroes bear names of stars. See Schimmel, "Classical Urdu Literature," pp. 146–47.

62. Ghalib, *Kulliyāt-i fārsī*, 5: qaṣīda no. 9. For the necessity of knowing astrology see the "Third Discourse" in Niẓami ʿAruḍi's *Four Discourses* (trans. Browne).

63. The anecdote tells that Anwari predicted a major catastrophe, storm and earthquakes for a certain day, but the air was as calm as could be, and nothing happened. He was ridiculed, but later—according to ex post facto interpretation—it was discovered that that day saw the birth of Genghis Khan, whose rule indeed resembled a cataclysm for Muslims in the Middle East.

64. Khaqani, *Dīwān*, p. 615. Farrukhi has a long series of good wishes beginning with "as long as . . ." (*Dīwān*, qaṣīda no. 121), in which he combines numerous astronomical allusions. In a similar connection (qaṣīda no. 8) he also mentions the astrolabe. Saʿdi jokes (*Kulliyāt*, 3: no. 493):

> You have enemies like scorpions, and I am like Libra [or, scales] with you,
> o moon—for the sake of your own best fortune come from Scorpio into Libra!

For a similar effect see Anwari, *Dīwān* (ed. Nafisi), qaṣīda no. 210. The combination of moon and Scorpio appears through the centuries as an expression of negative events or misfortunes. Mrs. Meer Hassan Ali observed in 1825 that "the moon in Scorpio is unpropitious for any business of moment" (*Observations on the Mussulmauns of India*, 1:294). At about the same time Ghalib described his miserable state (*Kulliyāt-i fārsī*, 4: no. 213):

> The moon in Scorpio and Ghalib in Delhi:
> the salamander in the river, and the fish in the fire.

65. The term *ṣāḥibqirān* is applied, for instance, to Abu'l Maʿali Jibraʾil by Rashidi Samarqandi (ʿAufi, *Lubāb*, 2:177).

66. Gelpke, "Das astrologische Weltbild in Nizamis *Heft Peiker*."

67. In connection with his sunlike friend Rumi usually speaks of the sun moving

into Aries, that is, the vernal equinox and the Persian Nauruz. Anwari (*Dīwān*, ed. Nafisi, p. 184) speaks of the sun's movement from Pisces to Aries, which makes the blond (*ashhab*) day and the dark (*adham*) night *arjal*, "with one white foot"—a fine play on Arabic terms for colors.

68. Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān*, p. 10.

69. Khaqani (ʿAufi, *Lubāb*, 2:224). See also the charming verse by Amir Khusrau (*Dīwān*, no. 508):

I do not call you "moon,"
for the moon has not so many *mushtarī* [Jupiter; or, customers].

Poets often mention or allude to the conjunction of the two stars of good fortune, Jupiter and Venus (see Atish, chap. 4, in Abdullah, *Walī sē Iqbāl tak*, p. 180).

70. ʿImaduddin Ghaznawi (ʿAufi, *Lubāb*, 2:264).

71. Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān*, p. 4.

72. Me'ali (Ambros, *Candid Penstrokes*, pp. 35–36, murabbaʿ no. 11, verse 18).

73. Anwari (ʿAufi, *Lubāb*, 2:129). J. C. Bürgel has remarked to me that the term *falak*, "sky," can be used as a metaphor for the ruler or prince, which lends an additional dimension to astronomical expressions. Sometimes one also finds puns on *shiʿr*, "poem," and *shiʿrā*, "Sirius": thus Waṭwaṭ, *Dīwān*, p. 259.

74. Ibn-i Yamin (Browne, *Literary History of Persia*, 3:213). With the same idea—that the Pleiades are perfectly well arranged—Shafruh asks (Daulatshah, *Tadhkirat ash-shuʿarā*, p. 152):

Is the arrangement of the Pleiades lovelier, or your teeth?

But for Saʿdi (*Kulliyāt*, 3: no. 472) the Pleiades are scattered, for

after I have seen you, who carry a hyacinth [*sunbula* = Virgo] on a sun [that is, dark curls around the face],
the sky has become bewildered by my Pleiades-like tears.

75. Sana'i, *Ḥadīqat al-ḥaqīqat*, p. 658.

76. Ghalib, *Urdu Dīwān*, p. 90.

77. Thus Najmuddin Kubra (see Meier, *Die Fawā'iḥ al-ǧamāl*, sections 71–72, German text p. 135); Corbin, *L'homme de lumière*, p. 133. Ghalib (*Kulliyāt-i fārsī*, 5: qaṣīda no. 38) also thinks of the stars as script but claims that the blackness of the *laylat al-qadr* serves him as ink—which is paradoxical, as according to widespread belief the "Night of Might" is filled with light. Ġanizade, in his *Miʿrājiyya*, a poem on the Prophet's night journey, sees the stars as sand scattered over the heavenly script (as scribes did to dry their ink) (Köprülüzade, *Eski şairlerimiz*, pp. 353, 356). Muʿizzi (ʿAufi, *Lubāb*, 2:81) had seen the stars as tongues and the signs of the zodiac as mouths to praise his patron. Me'ali applied the writing motif to a love poem (Ambros, *Candid Penstrokes*, p. 118):

The Milky Way looks like an *alif* ا, the halo around the moon is a zero ٥—
languishing for your threshold, the firmament has written on its
breast: Ah! ٥ا

78. ʿAṭṭar, *Dīwān*, p. 238, qaṣīda 8.

79. Naṣir-i Khusrau, *Dīwān-i ashʿār*, p. 64, and several other times. He likes unusual comparisons with stars.

80. Anwari, *Dīwān* (ed. Nafisi), p. 112.

81. Like most comparisons, allusions to the stars could be reversed and ironically twisted. Ghani, for instance, says of old age (Aṣlaḥ, *Tadhkirat-i shuʿarā-i Kashmīr*, 2:983):

The hair turned white, the teeth fell out—
when the morning comes the stars disappear.

82. Besides the comparison of day and night to a white and a black horse one finds white and black mice that nibble at the roots of the Tree of Life, or white and black grapes—or else the heavens are simply called "striped," *ablaq*. Hence poets thought that as a result of the turning of this black-and-white wheel their black hair had turned white (ʿAṭṭar, *Dīwān*, p. 320, qaṣīda 2) or that their hair had become milk-white and their face tar-black (that is, disgraced) (Waṭwaṭ, *Dīwān*, p. 275).

83. Ġalib Dede, *Hüsn u aşk*, p. 65.

84. The comparison of the sky with a millstone occurs frequently (e.g., ʿAṭṭar, *Dīwān*, qaṣīda no. 2, p. 320) and is used time and again by poets to suggest that life crushes everything mercilessly.

85. Bedil, *Kulliyāt*, 1:786.

Chapter 16

1. For the topic as a whole see Schimmel, *Yusuf's Fragrant Shirt*. See also *Encyclopedia of Religion* (ed. Eliade), s.v. "garment"; Heiler, *Wesen und Erscheinungsformen der Religion*, pp. 118–21.

2. Rumi, *Dīwān*, no. 616/6455; Kalim (Aṣlaḥ, *Tadhkirat-i shuʿarā-i Kashmīr*, 2:986) sees the work of the Divine Tailor even in destruction:

If heaven destroys your work, don't move,
for the tailor cuts the material in order to sew it.

3. Goethe, *Faust*, 1.1, "Erdgeist."

4. Iqbal, *Bāl-i Jibrīl*, "Masjid-i Qurṭuba," p. 126.

5. Rumi, *Dīwān*, no. 1958/20670.

6. Rumi, *Dīwān*, no. 3029/32079. For another use of the theme "robe of honor" see Jami, *Dīwān*, no. 361, p. 311.

7. *Yunus Emre Divani*, p. 477.

8. Khaqani, *Dīwān*, p. 42. And (p. 346) "on the stature of the rose He put an *aṭlas* robe with gold embroidery around the hem."

9. Farrukhi, *Dīwān*, qaṣīda no. 169.

10. See Fouchécour, *La description de la nature*.

11. As *saudā*, "blackness," also means "passion, melancholia," lovers' garments are often thought to be black. Rumi (*Dīwān*, no. 216) has a dramatic description of the shop of the "tailor of the lovers," which the poet visits in a long black gown, to see how this craftsman cuts and stitches together the pieces (that is, hearts).

12. Amir Khusrau, *Dīwān*, no. 1443. Ḥafiẓ says that the "gown of coquetry on the cypress of the beloved was stitched in pre-eternity" (*Dīwān*, p. 133). ʿAṭṭar invented a fine image (*Dīwān*, ghazal no. 40):

Although the tailor Intellect pieced together many patches,
he never stitched a dress worthy of Love's stature.

13. Sanaʾi, *Sayr ul-ʿibād ilāʾl-maʿād*, line 122.

14. Jami, *Dīwān*, no. 192, p. 206.

15. Jami, *Dīwān*, no. 394, p. 323.

16. Shahidi (Azad, *Khizāna-i ʿāmira*, p. 265).

17. Jami, *Dīwān*, no. 742, p. 465. The Turkish poet Nedim expresses a similar idea (Kocatürk, *Divan şiiri antolojisi*, p. 92). But much earlier than both, one Humam had thought that the beloved—more tender than roses—needs an undershirt of tulip and jasmine petals (Rami, *Anīs*, p. 77).

18. Katibi Turshizi (Azad, *Khizāna-i ʿāmira*, p. 388).

19. Jami, *Dīwān*, no. 271, p. 275. The idea had already occured to ʿAli ibn ʿUmar-i Ghaznawi (ʿAufi, *Lubāb*, 2:405).

20. Rumi, *Dīwān*, no. 684/7115. Or else he weaves a silken rug from his heart's blood to spread beneath the beloved's feet (no. 133/1530).

21. Farrukhi, *Dīwān*, qaṣīda no. 169; see the analysis of the poem in Clinton, "Esthetics by Implication."

22. Khaqani, *Dīwān*, p. 287.

23. Jami, *Dīwān*, no.733, p. 453, an imitation of Farrukhi. At the end of this *ghazal* there is an interesting allusion to Malik at-tujjār, that is, Maḥmud Gawan, the leading minister of the Bahmani kingdom in Bidar, who was a great and skillful writer and the author of a handbook on epistolography, *Riyāḍ al-inshā*. Cf. also Kalim, *Dīwān*, qaṣīda no. 32; and Ṭalib-i Amuli, *Dīwān*, no. 114, p. 269:

I stitched the garment of description for the stature of your beauty—
Woe! the satin of my words is not a good material!

24. Sauda, quoted in Schimmel, "Classical Urdu Literature," p. 176. For life as a tricky tailor see the drastic description in Rumi, *Mathnawī*, 6: lines 1650ff.

25. Khaqani, *Dīwān*.

26. Ṭalib-i Amuli (Ikram, *Armaghān-i Pāk*, p. 208). Amir Khusrau thinks that for the martyr of love the shroud is the robe of honor (*Dīwān*, no. 1077), but Ṭalib's younger contemporary Qudsi likes the idea of tearing his shirt—"and when it is torn, there is still the shroud" (Ikram, p. 222).

27. Bedil, *Kulliyāt*, 1:7.

28. Ghani (Aṣlaḥ, *Tadhkirat-i shuʿarā-i Kashmīr*, 2:979); similarly, Kalim, *Dīwān*, ghazal no. 228.

29. Shah ʿAbdul Laṭif, *Risālō*, "Sur Kapaʾitī."

30. Rumi, *Dīwān*, nos. 1089/11461, 1215/12932, 1878/19793, and others. ʿUrfi too speaks in his *naʿt* of the *iksūn*-weaving evening (*Kulliyāt*, p. 57).

31. Khaqani, *Dīwān*, p. 491.

32. *Palās* is a coarse material worn by simple people and Sufis. Khaqani thinks that the lily is angry, not with the *palās*, but rather (out of envy) with fine silk (*Dīwān*, p. 66). Jami complains that Love has woven for him a robe "from the *palās* of adversity" (*Dīwān*, no. 506, p. 366).

33. In medieval India, Lahore and Gujarat were famous as centers of velvet production.

34. For this imagery in general see Schimmel, "Gedanken zu zwei Porträts."

35. I owe this information to Wheeler M. Thackston, Jr., of Harvard University.

36. Bedil also invents the crude image that "when the Khaja [here probably a bourgeois or well-to-do person] gets a share of the pleasure, the velvet's sleep experiences a nightly pollution" (*Kulliyāt*, 1:461). Kalim (*Dīwān*, ed. Thackston, mathnawī no. 17) thinks that the excited tone of the nightingale awakens the velvet.

37. Salim (Aṣlaḥ, *Tadhkirat-i shuʿarā-i Kashmīr*, 1:413).

38. Bedil, *Kulliyāt*, 1:468, 494, and often.

39. Cf. Bedil, *Kulliyāt*, 1:1173.

40. Azad Bilgrami (Qaniʿ, *Maqālāt ash-shuʿarā*, p. 47). Cf. Bedil, *Kulliyāt*, 1:422. He thinks that the *būryā* turned into a reedbed because of his sighs (Bedil, 1:409). For further references see Schimmel, "Gedanken zu zwei Porträts," p. 557 nn. 39, 40.

41. The "lion in the carpet" appears as frequently in later poetry as the "lion on the flag" in earlier times. Ghani (Aṣlaḥ, *Tadhkirat-i shuʿarā-i Kashmīr*, 2:999) thinks that it is not necessary to fly high: would the lion on the flag be able to perform the work of a real lion?

42. Rilke, *Sonette an Orpheus*, 2: no. 21.

43. Rumi, *Dīwān*, no. 922/9710–11 (trans. Schimmel, *Look! This Is Love!*, p. 103).

Chapter 17

1. Kalim, *Dīwān*, muqaṭṭaʿ, p. 71. See Schimmel in Welch et al., *The Emperors' Album*, pp. 42–44.

2. For the topic in general see Schimmel, *Calligraphy and Islamic Culture*; idem, "Poetry and Calligraphy," in *A Dance of Sparks*; idem, *The Triumphal Sun*, chap. "Divine Calligraphy"; idem, "Poetry and Calligraphy—Thoughts about Their Interrelation in Persian Culture"; Krenkow, "The Use of Writing for the Preservation of Ancient Arabic Poetry"; Rosenthal, "Abu Ḥayyan at-Tauḥidi on Penmanship."

3. Hammer, "Bericht über den zu Kairo im Jahre 1835 erschienenen türkischen Kommentar des Mesnewi Dschelaladdin Rumi's" (ed. Schimmel), p. 58.

4. Schimmel, *Calligraphy and Islamic Culture*, chap. 3, nn. 22–23. Mustaqimzade, *Tuḥfat al-khaṭṭāṭīn*, p. 10, quotes the saying in his "Forty *ḥadīth* on Writing" and (p. 343) tells how ʿImaduddin ibn ʿAfif (d. 1336) informed a friend in a dream after his death about the truth of this saying.

5. See Krenkow, "The Use of Writing for the Preservation of Ancient Arabic Poetry."

6. Ullmann, *Aufs Wasser schreiben*.

7. The Abbasid vizier Ibn Muqla (lit. "Son of the Eyeball") invented the construction of letters according to geometrical rules and dots. He was executed in 940, some time after both of his hands had been amputated—which, it is said, did not hinder him from continuing to write. His style was refined by Ibn al-Bawwab Ibn Hilal ("Son of the Doorkeeper Son of the Crescent"), who died in 1020. Yaqut ("Ruby"), a slave of the last Abbasid caliph, brought the cursive styles to perfection. Their names were thereafter used in numerous puns over the centuries. Rückert/Pertsch, *Grammatik*, p. 284, quotes a typical verse:

> The price of a single letter of your *khaṭṭ* [script; or, facial down] is a hundred ruby (*laʿl*) mines,
> whether Ibn Muqla be the buyer, or Yaqut [corundum].

But now and then these masters' real achievements are mentioned, as when Sana'i (*Ḥadīqat al-ḥaqīqat*, p. 667) describes something utterly incongruous and compares it to

> the nonsensical talk of Musaylima the Liar in the handwriting of Ibn Muqla and Bawwab.

8. In Hadi Hasan, "Qasim-i Kahi," pp. 186ff., a poem with a long chain of expressions with double meanings. *Nādi ʿAliyyan*, "Call ʿAli, the manifester of miracles," the most widely used Shia invocation, can be found in countless inscriptions, on weapons, amulets, etc. *Sīḥarfī* or Golden Alphabets are also found in Panjabi (Sulṭan Bahu), Pashto (see Raverty, *Selections from the Poetry of the Afghans*, pp. 61ff.), and in Malayalam, Swahili, and Turkish. For the Turkish tradition see Zajączkowski, *Poezje stroficzne ʿAšiq Paša*. The form was used in Sufi circles in Turkey, as in the Subcontinent; see the example by Vizeli Alaeddin in Gölpinarli, *Melâmiler ve Melâmilik*, p. 208.

9. Fuzuli, *Divan*, no. 30, line 6.

10. Fuzuli, *Divan*, no. 103.

11. Ghalib, *Urdu Dīwān*, p. 1; *Kulliyāt-i fārsī*, 5: qaṣīda no. 9. The term "paper shirt" occurs several times: e.g., Pa'izi (ʿAufi, *Lubāb*, 2:345); Khaqani, *Dīwān*, pp. 197, 258, 541, and 500: "The mountain has put on a paper shirt [the snow] to complain about winter's cruelty." ʿAṭṭar also uses the term (*Dīwān*, ghazal no. 490), and Ibn Junayd gives an example of wearing a paper shirt in medieval Egypt (*Shadd al-īzār*, p. 356).

12. Amir Khusrau, *Dīwān*, nos. 296, 902, 1152, 1762; *Tughluqnāma*, line 2100. The complaint that one's form as drawn by the hand of the Divine Master is unpleasant is also found in Amir Khusrau (*Dīwān*, no. 1080), but unlike Ghalib he thinks one cannot blame the artist.

13. Rumi gives a different interpretation of this famous *ḥadīth*, which was often understood as leading to absolute fatalism. To his mind the eternal decree is that good actions will be recompensed, and bad ones punished (*Mathnawī*, 5: lines 3151ff.). See Schimmel, *The Triumphal Sun*, pp. 259–62.

14. See Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing*, pp. 111–12.

15. For this *ḥadīth* see Furuzanfar, *Aḥādīth-i Mathnawī*, no. 3. Also Rumi, *Dīwān*, nos. 1521/16016, 1664/17442, 1915/20142, 2530/26824, and rubāʿiyyāt.

16. See also Fuzuli, *Divan*, no. 246. For the washing off of the ink see Schimmel, *Calligraphy and Islamic Culture*, p. 126. Dard (*Urdu Dīwān*, p. 17) speaks of weeping that washes away the ink, a common idea. See also his *Dīwān-i fārsī*, pp. 13, 108. Ṭalib-i Amuli (Aṣlaḥ, *Tadhkirat-i shuʿarā-i Kashmīr*, 1:691) thinks, on the other hand, that he need not worry: his book is so black that no one can read it anymore. (He alludes to the custom of *siyāh mashq*—writing a letter or verse over and over again so that it becomes a design that fills the whole page.)

17. Amir Khusrau, *Dīwān*, nos. 127, 1509.

18. For this widely known image see Ghalib, *Kulliyāt-i fārsī*, 5: qaṣīda no. 25:

> Your face is the white picture of your right hand;
> your hair is the one that writes the black book for my left hand.

19. Manuchihri (Daudpota, *The Influence of Arabic Poetry on Persian Poetry*, p. 40). The Ṣaḥib Ibn ʿAbbad was a littérateur as well as a great connoisseur of calligraphy; when he saw a piece of calligraphy by Prince Qabus ibn Wushmgir (d. 1013), he exclaimed: *A hādhā khaṭṭ Qābūs am janāḥ ṭaʾūs?*—"Is this the script of Qabus or a peacock's wing?" (Mustaqimzade, *Tuḥfat al-khaṭṭāṭīn*, p. 364, quoted from Adhar, *Atishkada*, p. 19).

20. Another traditional complaint of the poets is that their paper is burnt by their hot sighs or dissolved by their tears. See, e.g., Khaqani, *Dīwān*, pp. 402, 832, 1088. See also Schimmel, *Calligraphy and Islamic Culture*, chap. 4, nn. 76–83.

21. Ritter, *Über die Bildersprache Niẓāmīs*, p. 37, for *Laylā Majnūn*, line 453.

22. Ghalib, *Urdu Dīwān*, p. 41.

23. Ahmadi (Gibb, *History of Ottoman Poetry*, 6:56).

24. Shah ʿAbdul Laṭif, *Risālō*, "Sur Mārui," chap. 5. The same theme of correspondence appears in Sachal Sarmast, *Risālō Sindhī*, "Sur Malkōs," a somewhat surprising application of the motif in an area where scarcely any woman was literate during the eighteenth century.

25. Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān*, pp. 80–81. Cf. Amir Khusrau, *Dīwān*, no. 752:

> Everyone who sees this *musalsal khaṭṭ* [script/down]
> casts dust on the script of the secretaries.

Rumi mentions a letter in *musalsal*, "such that you cannot read it" (*Dīwān*, no. 1699/17789).

26. Rami, *Anīs*, pp. 42–48. Yet despite the clear description of the sprouting *khaṭṭ*, Huart always translates the beloved as feminine. For *khaṭṭ* see Schimmel, *Calligraphy and Islamic Culture*, pp. 129–33.

27. Jami, *Dīwān*, no. 147, p. 189.

28. Jami, *Dīwān*, no. 240, p. 225. Cf. Amir Khusrau, *Dīwān*, no. 596.

29. Jami, *Dīwān*, no. 15, p. 138. See Rami, *Anīs*, p. 44:

> I am afraid that the dust (*ghubār*) of the *khaṭṭ* on your lips was abolished (*naskh*)—
> suddenly this *naskh* turned into *thuluth* and *tauqīʿ*.

The latter are two large scripts. All this is to say—with five terms taken from calligraphy—that the dustlike blackish shadow on the boy's upper lip has turned into a veritable mustache.

30. Sarmad (Ikram, *Armaghān-i Pāk*, p. 239).

31. Khaqani, *Dīwān*, p. 35; Naẓiri, *Dīwān*, p. 458.

32. Sami (Köprülüzade, *Eski şairlerimiz*, p. 467).

33. See Ritter, *Über die Bildersprache Niẓāmīs*, p. 37.

34. See Daulatshah, *Tadhkirat ash-shuʿarā*, p. 476.

35. On the imagery of the pen see Schimmel, *Calligraphy and Islamic Culture*, pp. 116–21, and, for its mystical interpretation, pp. 79–80.

36. Rumi, *Mathnawī*, 1: line 114.

37. See Mustaqimzade, *Tuḥfat al-khaṭṭāṭīn*, p. 132.

38. Baba Sudaʾi (Daulatshah, *Tadhkirat ash-shuʿarā*, p. 476).

39. Fuzuli, *Divan*, no. 255, line 5.

40. Jami, *Dīwān*, no. 189, p. 205.

41. Qalqashandi, *Ṣubḥ al-Aʿshā*, 3:13. See also Schimmel, *Calligraphy and Islamic Culture*, pp. 128–29.

42. For *abrī* (Turkish *ebru*) see Schimmel, *Calligraphy and Islamic Culture*, pp. 122, 124. When one writes one's grief on *abrī* paper one may draw the beloved's attention to the lover's weeping eyes: see Danish (Azad, *Khizāna-i ʿāmira*, p. 221); and, similarly, Khaju-yi Kirmani (Azad, p. 216). Munir Lahori writes (Ikram, *Armaghān-i Pāk*, p. 202):

> The spring cloud makes its ruler from the thread of rain,
> when the air writes the description of the rose on cloud paper.

Kalim sees the river as a scroll of *abrī* paper (*Dīwān*, mathnawī, p. 405).

43. Other kinds of paper besides *abrī* are mentioned once in a while: Fuzuli speaks of red paper on which the red lines of his tears are invisible (*Divan*, no. 255), and Khaqani describes the rainbow as drawing a colorful *tughra* on *shāmī* paper (*Dīwān*, p. 136); *shāmī* means "Syrian," but also "associated with the evening." Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Indo-Persian poets were fond of mentioning "fire-struck paper," which gives off sparks due to the lover's burning heart or hot sighs. See Schimmel, *A Dance of Sparks*, pp. 121–22.

44. To see the garden as a book was common in Arabic poetry; see Hoenerbach, *Die dichterischen Vergleiche der Andalus-Araber*, p. 199. In such verses poets prefer to speak of *rīḥānī* script, a fine, elegant style used for Korans and other important works. They thus achieved a pun on *rayḥān*, "sweet basil" or, more generally, "odoriferous herbs." And Rashid says (Aṣlaḥ, *Tadhkirat-i shuʿarā-i Kashmīr*, A:97):

> Spring arranges a document from *rīḥānī* script—
> spring places a seal of dew on the page of the roses.

45. Rumi, *Mathnawī*, 4: line 3722. The idea is taken from Ghazzali, *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm ad-dīn*, "Bab at-tawakkul."

46. Baki (Köprülüzade, *Eski şairlerimiz*, p. 273).

47. Fuzuli, *Divan*, no. 148.

48. Schimmel, *Calligraphy and Islamic Culture*, chaps. 3–4; idem, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, appendix 1; idem, "The Primordial Dot."

49. *Yunus Emre Divani*, p. 308, no. 59. For the *alif* see Schimmel, *Calligraphy and Islamic Culture*, pp. 95–97, 134–36.

50. Baltacioğlu, *Türklerde yazi sanati*, esp. p. 51.

51. Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān*, p. 191. Ḥafiẓ's verse is, as it were, explicated by Jami (*Dīwān*, no. 693, p. 438):

> From the *alif* of your stature everyone goes toward *tauḥīd* [profession of God's Unity]
> who comprehends Reality from the metaphor.

Rarely *alif* appears as the nose between the two *ʿayn* (eyes, also the shape of the letter), or reaching from *nūn* (the eyebrow) to *mīm* (the mouth). See Rami, *Anīs*, p. 41; Jami, *Dīwān*, rubāʿī no. 183; Qaniʿ, *Maqālāt ash-shuʿarā*, p. 610.

52. See Öztelli, *Karacaoğlan*, no. 15.

53. Amir Khusrau, *Dīwān*, no. 1152. See also Rudaki (ʿAufi, *Lubāb*, 2:8).

54. Khaqani, *Dīwān*, p. 898:

I came to the leader like a Kufic *alif*,
I went like a *dāl*, my head sunk in shame.

He alludes here to the very high, slender *alif* in eastern Kufic style as it was used in his time, especially for Koran manuscripts.

55. Jami, *Dīwān*, no. 75, p. 161. Cf. Rami, *Anīs*, p. 26:

The letter that was pointing (*dāll*) to the leaf of your beauty
is enough (*kāfī*) [also the letter *kāf*], being a *nūn* of the eyebrow.

56. Baki (Köprülüzade, *Eski şairlerimiz*, p. 278).

57. Rami, *Anīs*, p. 65.

58. Rückert/Pertsch, *Grammatik*, p. 241; Jami, *Dīwān*, no. 357, p. 309.

59. Abu Bakr-i Sarakhsi (ʿAufi, *Lubāb*, 2:18). Fani composed an entire *qaṣīda-i zulf*, "on the tress" (see Aṣlaḥ, *Tadhkirat-i shuʿarā-i Kashmīr*, 3:1071).

60. Whereas *qāf* is often connected with Mount Qaf, which surrounds the world, and with *qurb*, "proximity," or *qanāʿat*, "contentment," *kāf* often stands in relation to *kufr*, "infidelity." *Lām* is the general term for long tresses. The wittiest use of the concept is Akbar Allahabadi's dialogue between a lover who (as a good Muslim) sports a beard, and a girl with long hair:

I showed her my beard: "See *Islām*!" (*Islām dēkhō!*)
She showed me her tress: "See this *lām*! (*Is lām dēkhō!*)

61. Ibn al-Muʿtazz, *Dīwān*, 3:84. For the religious use of *mīm* see Schimmel, *Calligraphy and Islamic Culture*, p. 138.

62. Rumi, *Dīwān*, no. 1461/15445, tarjīʿband, line 36015. On the other hand the letter *mīm* can be a well that contains the Water of Life—both because of its round shape and because it means "mouth." See, e.g., Bisaṭi (Daulatshah, *Tadhkirat ash-shuʿarā*, p. 393); Jami, *Dīwān*, no. 883, p. 511.

63. Amir Khusrau, *Dīwān*, no. 1152.

64. Jami, *Dīwān*, no. 601, p. 402.

65. See Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, s.v. *mīm*; idem, *And Muhammad Is His Messenger*, pp. 116–17, 200–201.

66. Rami, *Anīs*, p. 26 and often.

67. The description of *nūn* as an inkwell is derived from Sura 68:1, "*Nūn*, and by the Pen." Its shape lends itself to such an interpretation. See Mustaqimzade, *Tuḥfat al-khaṭṭāṭīn*, p. 7.

68. Asaf Halet Çelebi's *He* plays on this saying. The expression "two-eyed *h*" occurs as early as Sanaʾi (*Ḥadīqat al-ḥaqīqat*, p. 528) and is used in Urdu for the *h* that indicates aspirated consonants.

69. See Hoenerbach, *Die dichterischen Vergleiche der Andalus-Araber*, p. 169. In Ottoman decoration, mainly from the eighteenth century, *wāw* appears prominently, often doubled; see Schimmel, *Calligraphy and Islamic Culture*, pp. 100–101.

70. The expression "like a *lām–alif*" applied to people embracing, or to occurrences in quick succession, was well known in classical Arabic; see Krenkow, "The Use of Writing for the Preservation of Ancient Arabic Poetry"; Wagner, *Abū Nuwās*, p. 380. More than one poet would have agreed with the verse quoted by Mustaqimzade (*Tuḥfat al-khaṭṭāṭīn*, p. 636):

Verily I envied the *lām* in the lines of the paper,
when I saw how *lām* and *alif* embraced each other.

71. Jami, *Tuḥfat al-abrār*, chap. 20 (in *Kulliyāt*); see Hammer, *Geschichte der schönen Redekünste Persiens*, p. 322. For Asaf Halet Çelebi, in his volume of poetry entitled *Lām–alif*, the letter resembles hands lifted in prayer.

72. Azraqi (ʿAufi, *Lubāb*, 2:102).

73. ʿUtbi (ʿAufi, *Lubāb*, 2:291).

74. Baki (Köprülüzade, *Eski şairlerimiz*, p. 280).

75. See Schimmel, *Calligraphy and Islamic Culture*, pp. 141–42, for more combinations. Ghalib's heart is "in the ring of *mīm* and the broken tress of the *lām*," and both letters together form the word *mul*, "wine" (*Kulliyāt-i fārsī*, 5: qaṣīda no. 20).

76. Ẓahir-i Faryabi.

77. ʿAbdul Jalil Bilgrami (Zubaid Ahmad, *The Contribution of Indo-Pakistan to Arabic Literature*, p. 211).

78. There are also transformations of letters that yield an obscene meaning: see Sanaʾi, *Dīwān*, muqaṭṭaʿ, p. 1084; Rückert/Pertsch, *Grammatik*, p. 185 (but this is tending toward *taṣḥīf*, that is, changing the diacritical dots of the letters). Vincent M. Monteil mentioned to me in conversation that the famous *rubāʿī* by ʿOmar Khayyam (no. 11 in FitzGerald's translation) does not mention a book, *kitāb* كتاب, under the tree but rather *kabāb* كباب, "roast," which is certainly less romantic but fits better, as a medieval Persian poet would not have called a book of poetry *kitāb* but rather *dīwān* or *safīna*.

79. See Anwari-Alhosseyni, *Logaz und Moʿammā*, with numerous examples and a wide-ranging bibliography. Khaqani rebukes an ostentatious person: "You still read the alphabet of intellect and talk of the riddle (*muʿammā*) of Love!" (*Dīwān*, p. 679).

80. Muẓaffar Harawi (Daulatshah, *Tadhkirat ash-shuʿarā*, p. 264).

81. See Schimmel, *Calligraphy and Islamic Culture*, pp. 115–16.

82. Jami, *Dīwān*, no. 122, p. 180. It seems that comparisons with sacred objects were known in early times: Raduyani (*Kitab Tarcuman al-balâġa*, p. 76) mentions a verse by Yazdani:

As his little tresses became a cross and his lips Jesus,
his cheek became the Psalms (*zabūr*) of loveliness, and his belt a *zunnār*.

ʿAṭṭar speaks of the *muṣḥaf-i jamāl*, "the Koran copy of beauty" (*Dīwān*, ghazal no. 688). Fuzuli finds a good omen from the *muṣḥaf* of his friend's face (*Divan*, no. 265).

83. For the Ḥurufi interpretation see Schimmel, *Calligraphy and Islamic Culture*, pp. 106–10. The most renowned Turkish Ḥurufi poet, Nesimi (executed in 1405), wrote:

O you whose eyebrows and eyelashes and musk-colored hair
become the Koran and *imām* and leader for the monotheist!

(Gibb, *History of Ottoman Poetry*, 6:38). And (6:40):

O you, whose face is "Help from God"—
O you, whose hair is "near victory!"

Both quotations are from Sura 61:13, which was especially dear to the Shia.

84. Mukhlişay (Aşlaḥ, *Tadhkirat-i shuʿarā-i Kashmīr*, A:378). Cf. the line by Shayda (Aşlaḥ, 1:470):

As much as I looked into the Koran copy of your beauty,
no letter was doubtful but the dot of your mouth.

The frequent combination of *khaṭṭ* with the face as a flawless *muṣḥaf* could lead to strange and objectionable verses. The same Shayda wrote:

Your stature is in straightness just the word of the Prophet,
your *khaṭṭ* [facial down, script] is authentic [or, trustworthy] like the Divine Word.

This word induced Azad Bilgrami, who had included the passage in his *Khizāna-i ʿāmira* (p. 278), to claim: "He said the verse in deep error—may God forgive him!"

85. Fakhri Harawi, *Rauḍat as-salāṭīn wa Jawāhir al-ʿajāʾib*, p. 85. For Ismaʿil the Safavid see Gandjei, *Il canzoniere di Šāh Ismāʿīl Ḫaṭāʾī*; Minorsky, "The Poetry of Shah Ismaʿil I."

86. For the *ṭughrā*, the artistically drawn handsign of the ruler, see Kühnel, "Die osmanische Tughra."

87. Sanaʾi, *Ḥadīqat al-ḥaqīqat*, p. 666; Rumi, *Dīwān*, no. 2725/29259, and *Mathnawī*, 6: line 1650.

88. Bedil says, gracefully (*Kulliyāt*, 1:705):

Our dust writes letters toward the friend, but with *ghubār* script.

89. He also writes in *kirma* because he wishes "that his enemies be broken" (Köprülüzade, *Eski şairlerimiz*, p. 305).

90. Baki (Köprülüzade, *Eski şairlerimiz*, p. 275). The complicated and often nearly illegible chancellery script *musalsal* is mentioned by Rumi and Ḥafiẓ (see above, note 25 and related discussion).

91. ʿAli Shihab Tarsusi (Daulatshah, *Tadhkirat ash-shuʿarā*, p. 394).

92. Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān*, p. 288. See also Tughraʾi (Aşlaḥ, *Tadhkirat-i shuʿarā-i Kashmīr*, 2:378):

His life-bestowing lip is Jesus; the *rīḥān* of his *khaṭṭ* [down, or script] is a copy of the Koran.
Religion became doubled because he gave a Koran to Jesus.

93. Cafer Çelebi (Gibb, *History of Ottoman Poetry*, 6:99). Similarly Amir Khusrau, *Dīwān*, no. 1086, with *khaṭṭ* as its *radīf*. See also Mustaqimzade, *Tuḥfat al-khaṭṭāṭīn*, pp. 254–55.

94. Ṣaʾib (Aşlaḥ, *Tadhkirat-i shuʿarā-i Kashmīr*, 1:53).

95. Salim (Aşlaḥ, *Tadhkirat-i shuʿarā-i Kashmīr*, 1:397).

96. Kalim, *Dīwān*, no. 80, p. 119.

97. Saʿdi, *Kulliyāt*, 3: no. 553; see also no. 135 and especially no. 286:

When all the forms of the handsome people in this world are assembled,
your beautiful face will become the [highly decorated] first page (*dībacha*) of the pages.

98. See Grabar, "The Paintings of the Six Kings at Qusayr ʿAmra"; Grotzfeld, *Das Bad im arabisch-islamischen Mittelalter*. Sanaʾi says (*Dīwān*, p. 333):

The bathhouse is always filled with lovely pictures,
but the power of speech is necessary so that pictures can talk.

99. Wall paintings also appear in Saʿdi (*Kulliyāt*, 3: no. 564, and often) and in ʿAṭṭar (*Dīwān*, qaṣīda no. 16, p. 344). Khaqani more frequently mentions the "pictures in the *īwān*," the portico or open hall (see *Dīwān*, pp. 677, 680, 96). Ruzbihan Baqli compares prayer beads to "a lion in the bathhouse"—that is, they are decorative but lifeless (*Sharḥ-i shaṭḥiyāt*, p. 283, chap. 164, section 509). Cf. also Sanaʾi, *Ḥadīqat al-ḥaqīqat*, p. 427. Interesting comparisons of this sort occur especially in the "Indian style." Kalim sees himself "in fidelity like a painted bird; he always has his wings open but is bound to one garden" (*Dīwān*, ghazal no. 94).

100. Mir Dard, *Urdu Dīwān*, pp. 73, 80. "One cannot open a painted bud by breathing on it," says Fani (*Dīwān*, p. 7). Fani also thinks that people interested in

outward things do not know the value of those who strive for inner meaning: "A painted rose needs a painted nightingale" (p. 74).

101. Bedil, *Kulliyāt*, 1:35. He also speaks of a "painted candle" (p. 55).

102. Bedil, *Kulliyāt*, 1:219. Cf. also his line

My Bihzad made his brush from Majnun's hair.

His *Dīwān* contains numerous similar expressions. Nuṣrat (Aṣlaḥ, *Tadhkirat-i shuʿarā-i Kashmīr*, A:489) exaggerates even further: to draw the waist of the beloved (which, ideally, is always as thin as a hair), the hand of Imagination needs an ant's eyelashes. A compatriot of his, Dana (Aṣlaḥ, A:68), wants the nightingales' eyelashes to draw the picture of the rose!

103. Manuchihri, *Dīwān*, p. 3, lines 33ff. In the previous verses the leaves of the trees are full of pictures.

104. Jami, *Dīwān*, no. 345, p. 265. For an approach to painting in classical times see Soucek, "Niẓami on Painters and Painting."

Chapter 18

1. Muṭahhar Karah (Ikram, *Armaghān-i Pāk*, p. 42). Waqidi was one of the earliest Arabic historians (d. A.D. 822–23). The *Akhlāq-i Nāṣirī* was an ethical work by Naṣiruddin Ṭusi (d. 1274). The *ʿAwārif al-maʿārif* by Abu Ḥafṣ ʿUmar as-Suhrawardi (d. 1234) was a widely studied handbook of Sufism. The *Fuṣūs al-ḥikam* (Bezels of Wisdom) was by Ibn ʿArabi (d. 1240). Sari is probably Sari as-Saqaṭi (d. ca. 867), a Sufi of Baghdad; none of his works is extant.

2. *Miftāḥ al-ʿulūm* (The Key to Sciences) was an encyclopedic work by Sakkaki (d. 1228). The Koran commentary *Kashshāf* (The Opener) was by Zamakhshari (d. 1146). *Mawāqif* (The Standpoints) was a dogmatic standard work by ʿAḍududdin al-Iji (d. 1355). *Maqāṣid al-falāsifa* (The Goals of the Philosophers) was by al-Ghazzali (d. 1111). *Lawāʾiḥ* (Flashes) was Jami's own mystical work in mixed Persian poetry and prose.

3. Wali Deccani (Schimmel, "Classical Urdu Literature," p. 155).

4. Khaqani, *Dīwān*, p. 233. Farrukhi, fond of learned allusions, praises his patron, "the lord of the Arabs and non-Arabs (*ʿajam*), distinguished from [other] kings as Reality is from metaphor" (*Dīwān*, qaṣīda no. 102, line 4076).

5. Imru'lqays (sixth cent.) was the most famous pre-Islamic Arabic poet. His great *qaṣīda*, which begins with the words *Qifā nabki*, "Stop, my two [friends], and let us weep," was imitated by numerous poets.

6. Farrukhi, *Dīwān*, qaṣīda no. 213.

7. Al-Mutanabbi (d. 965) is regarded as the greatest classical Arabic poet. The *Kitāb al-ʿayn* was the first Arabic dictionary, arranged in an unusual sequence of

letters; it was composed by the grammarian al-Khalil (d. 786 or 791). Farrukhi (*Dīwān*, qaṣīdas nos. 91, 161) also alludes to the Ṣaḥib ibn ʿAbbad and (no. 161 again) to Sayf ibn Dhi Yazan, the Himyarit leader of pre-Islamic Yemen, around whom a popular romance developed. He is also mentioned by Sanaʾi (*Dīwān*, pp. 520, 530). The Barmakids, the leading Persian family under Harun al-Rashid, appear in his verse, as they do in the work of his contemporaries. Waṭwaṭ especially excelled in farfetched comparisons, which are generally part of his panegyrics. He mentions, e.g., Quss ibn Saʿida and Maʿn ibn Zaʾida (*Dīwān*, qaṣīdas, pp. 309, 334): the first of this nicely rhyming pair was a semilegendary character from pre-Islamic Arabia, regarded as the greatest orator among all the tribes; the second was a successful Omayyad governor (d. 770). These kinds of allusions diminish, however, over the course of time.

8. Anwari, *Dīwān* (ed. Nafisi), pp. 121–23. See *Anvari's Divan: A Pocket Book for Akbar* (ed. Schimmel and Welch), plate v. For the quotation in Rumi see *Dīwān*, no. 1142.

9. Sanaʾi, *Dīwān*, p. 1059, in Rumi, *Dīwān*, no. 1007.

10. Mir Taqi Mir (Dr. Syed Abdullah, *Naqd-i Mīr*).

11. I learned this in Hyderabad; the exact source escapes me.

12. Ḥazin (Ikram, *Armaghān-i Pāk*, p. 272); cf. Ikram, p. 266, lines by Bedil. Fani says in a pleasant verse (*Dīwān*, p. 85):

If the nightingale had not read the book *Gulistān*,
how would the story of the rose have reached his ear?

13. Jami, *Dīwān*. There are numerous allusions to Amir Khusrau.

14. For the *Ḥamzanāma* see chapter 5, note 27.

15. Ghalib, *Urdu Dīwān*, p. 21.

16. Fayż Ahmad Fayż, "Thoughts," in *Naqsh-i faryādī*.

17. See Browne, *Literary History of Persia*, 4:166–67.

18. Garcin de Tassy, *Les oeuvres de Wali*. Mashriqi (d. 1405) was a well-known Persian Sufi poet. The great panegyrist Anwari died ca. 1190. Jamali is probably the Indian poet Jamali Kanboh (d. 1535). Jami, the last classical master, died in Herat in 1492. Firdausi (d. 1020) was author of the *Shāhnāma*; Hilali (d. 1529 in Herat), of the epos *King and Beggar*. Shauqi is probably the Deccani poet Ḥasan Shauqi, of the first half of the seventeenth century. ʿAli Nimat Khan ʿĀli (d. 1709) was an official and poet under Aurangzeb. Khayali Bukhari is mentioned in Daulatshah, *Tadhkirat ash-shuʿarā*, p. 474. Only the allusion to Ma'il is unclear; the only Ma'il known to me, Ma'il Tattawi, died about a century after Wali himself.

19. Jami: not in the present standard edition of his *Dīwān*.

20. Bedil, *Kulliyāt*, 1:607. Cf. Ṭalib-i Amuli:

O my God, enhance the flame of my longing,
turn me into fire and cast me into the world!

Ghalib claims that his reed pen casts fire into the world (*Kulliyāt-i fārsī*, 5: qaṣīda no. 60).

21. Qasim-i Kahi (Qaniʿ, *Maqālāt ash-shuʿarā*, p. 677).

22. See Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing*, pp. 353ff. Iqbal inserted into his *Jāvīdnāma* (Sphere of Jupiter) not only a poem by Ghalib (*Kulliyāt-i fārsī*, 4: no. 265) but also the famous song of the Babi poetess Ṭahira Qurrat ul-ʿayn, who in turn had taken up the often-used formula *Khāna bi-khāna, kū bi-kū*, "House by house, street by street. . . ."

23. The *Fuṣūs al-ḥikam* (see also note 2 above) deals in each *faṣṣ*, "ring-stone," with one of the prophets mentioned in the Koran and his special gifts.

24. Jami, *Dīwān*, no. 778, p. 470. Jesus is famous for quickening the dead and healing the sick (see above, chapter 3); hence his relation with the beloved's lip.

25. Sanaʾi, *Ḥadīqat al-ḥaqīqat*, p. 278; see also his *Dīwān*, p. 147. On p. 239 Abu Ḥanifa is called "the leader of those who go to Paradise," and on p. 413 he is combined with Abu Hurayra, the "Kitten Father," who "put the hand of fidelity into his bag" (that is, the bag in which, according to legend, he used to carry his cat, who once saved the Prophet from a malevolent snake and was blessed by him). But Sanaʾi's best-known verse (*Dīwān*, p. 827) was taken up by Rumi (*Dīwān*, no. 498/5287):

Abu Ḥanifa did not teach love;
Shafiʿi has no traditions about it.

26. See, e.g., Shah ʿAbdul Laṭif, *Risālō*, "Sur Yaman Kalyān," 5.4: "The Sufi is *lā-kūfi*," that is, not bound by the legal rules given by the Kufi, i.e., Abu Ḥanifa. Gesudaraz (*Dīwān Anīs al-ʿushshāq*, p. 128) takes up Sanaʾi's and Rumi's idea and claims that "Love is beyond Nuʿman's [Abu Ḥanifa's] *ijtihād* [investigation of sources for legal purposes], and Shafiʿi has no idea about it."

27. See Ghalib, *Dastanbūy* (*Kulliyāt-i fārsī*, vol. 15), trans. Faruqi.

28. For the princess ʿIṣmatuddin see Khaqani, *Dīwān*, p. 272.

29. See Rypka, "Einiges zum Sprichwörterschatz in Nizamis *Haft Pajkar*"; idem, "La *qaṣīda* de Meali composée sur les proverbes turcs"; Turková, "Über ein türkisches Sprichwörtergedicht."

30. ʿOmar Khayyam, *Rubāʿīyyat*. "The voice of the drum under the rug" is also frequently mentioned by poets. See, e.g., Saʿdi, *Kulliyāt*, 3: no. 447; and no. 432:

The voice of the drum does not remain hidden
under the rug, nor love remain concealed.

Cf. ʿAufi, *Lubāb*, 2:277; Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān*, pp. 28, 251.

31. Sanaʾi, *Ḥadīqat al-ḥaqīqat*, p. 89.

32. Abu Shakur-i Balkhi, probably the first to use the saying in Persian poetry (see Lazard, *Les premiers poètes*, 2:116), ascribes this advice to the Hindus:

Do the good and throw it on the road—
don't expect any better guide on the road.

33. It similarly occurs in Ḥafiẓ (*Dīwān*, p. 135), where the editor cites a number of earlier poets who used it, such as Gurgani in *Wīs u Rāmīn*, Kamaluddin Ismaʿil, Abu'l-Faẓl Harawi, and Saʿdi.

34. See Hadi Hasan, "Qasim-i Kahi," p. 179.

35. Hadi Hasan, "Qasim-i Kahi," p. 179. It may be that the saying received its common form with Busḥaq, the poet of food (as quoted in Daulatshah, *Tadhkirat ash-shuʿarā*, p. 408):

You say "Honey," but the mouth does not become sweet.

The same saying is also used in a *rubāʿī* by Molla Shah, Dara Shikoh's mystical guide (Aṣlaḥ, *Tadhkirat-i shuʿarā-i Kashmīr*, 1:451).

36. Hadi Hasan, "Qasim-i Kahi," p. 179.

37. Rückert/Pertsch, *Grammatik*, pp. 223–68, offers a most extensive and delightful chapter on chronograms.

38. See Browne, *Literary History of Persia*, 4:243.

39. I am afraid the Dajjal has misplaced my reference.

40. Azad Bilgrami invented these chronograms in honor of his maternal grandfather ʿAbdul Jalil Bilgrami (see Qaniʿ, *Maqālāt ash-shuʿarā*, pp. 412–13). For the accession of Shah Jahan a chronogram was discovered that was based on his name: *Dar jahān bād tā jahān bāshad*, "May he remain in the world as long as the world exists" = A.H. 1037 (A.D. 1628) (Azad, *Khizāna-i ʿāmira*, p. 413).

41. Many of the chronograms mentioned in Rückert/Pertsch deal with members of the Prophet's family and the twelve imams of Shia Islam, as the court of Oudh, where Rückert's source was written and published, was Shia. See, e.g., p. 229, an intelligent chronogram on the death of ʿAli ibn Abi Ṭalib, the fourth caliph and first imam of the Shia, in A.H. 40 (A.D. 661):

From ʿAli the date of the death of the friend of God becomes evident,
whether you take *l* from *ʿayn* or add *l* to ī.

Whichever combination is chosen—*ʿayn* (70) minus *l* (30), or *l* (30) plus ī (10)—results in 40.

Ethé, "Neupersische Literatur," p. 309, mentions a Tahmaspquli Turk Wahmi who produced a *qaṣīda* for the wedding of the Mughal heir apparent Dara Shikoh in A.H. 1043 (A.D. 1632): all letters of each hemistich, all letters with diacritical marks in each verse, and, equally, all letters without diacritical marks in each verse result in 1043; the initial letters of all the verses form an acrostic, and the initial letters of the second hemistichs spell out a greeting for the young couple. Cf. also Rückert/Pertsch, *Grammatik*, p. 246. To learn this "spiderweb-like art," as Rückert calls it,

one composed special books; see, e.g., Sha'iq, *A'ina-i tawārīkh* (Mirror of Chronograms).

42. The story *Bāgh u bahār* (Garden and Spring, usually known as The Four Dervishes) was attributed to Amir Khusrau. It was used by the British at Fort William College in Calcutta as a simple, pleasant introduction to Urdu. Another good example of a chronogram-title is *Manẓūm-i aqdas* (The Most Sacred Poetry), by Shah ʿAlam II Aftab, collected in A.H. 1201 (A.D. 1786), one year before he was blinded.

Chapter 19

1. For the topic as a whole see Schimmel, *The Mystery of Numbers* (cf. Schimmel and Endress, *Das Mysterium der Zahl*), which gives numerous examples. Oriental poets liked to arrange their works in meaningful groups, but not everyone went so far as the Urdu poet Rangin, who had six volumes of lyrics—*Shish jihat* (The Six Sides)—as well as five *Panja* (Fists) and five *Khamsa* (Quintets) and a *Sabʿ sayyāra* (Seven Planets).

2. Often mentioned are "the three children of the universe" (the animal, vegetable, and mineral kingdoms), which are formed by the "four mothers" (the four elements). See Anwari, *Dīwān* (ed. Nafisi), qaṣīda, p. 120, to mention only one of numerous examples.

3. Khaqani, *Dīwān*, p. 326, admonishes his reader to speak four *takbīr* over the four elements and the four seasons—that is, over everything connected with the world of four directions.

4. Five, associated with Ishtar and Venus, also played a central role in Chinese and in Manichean cosmology and mythology. It is the central number of the magic square, whose vertical, horizontal, and diagonal lines always add up to 15.

5. Thus in certain areas even the word "five" could be neither spoken nor written directly.

6. See ʿAufi, *Lubāb*, 2:313. Naẓiri combines the six directions with the seven carpets, that is, the seven spheres (*Dīwān*, ghazal no. 499).

7. Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān*, p. 44.

8. Ghalib, *Urdu Dīwān*, p. 106 (a single verse).

9. Ghalib, *Urdu Dīwān*, p. 109.

10. Thus the *haft sīn* are a must in Persian Nauruz celebrations. There should be *sabza* (vegetables), *sīr* (garlic), *sirka* (vinegar), *sinjid* (a kind of berry), *samanū* (a meal made of shredded wheat), *sūmakh* (a condiment), and, if one found no other foodstuff, *sunbul* (hyacinth). Numerous uses of the seven are known in both Semitic and Indo-Aryan traditions, and Persian, where both traditions met, is therefore replete with allusions to this number. For the concept in general see Moʿin, *Taḥlīl-i Haft Paykar-i Niẓāmī* and "The Number Seven and Nizami's *Haft Paykar*." From there it was easy to form large "sacred" numbers such as the "seventy thousand veils of light and darkness."

11. Beyond the seven created spheres, eight points to eternity, which is reflected in medieval Christianity by the octagonal shape of the baptistery, through whose water the Christian would participate in the eternal life. In Islam the idea that there are seven Hells—"Hell eats with seven stomachs," as Khaqani says (*Dīwān*, p. 245) in a variation of a *ḥadīth* according to which the infidel eats with seven stomachs—and eight Paradises shows that God's mercy is greater than His wrath. The numerous works entitled *Hasht Bihisht* (Eight Paradises) belong under this concept.

12. So too is Jami's *Bahāristān*.

13. Khaqani, *Dīwān*, p. 201.

14. As presents had to be given in ninefold amounts or groups of nine items, the word *toquz*, "nine," came to mean simply "gift" among the Mughals; see Gulbadan, *Humāyūnnāma*, p. 131. Instead of "eighteen" one used to say "twice nine." Numerous Central Asian and Turkish concepts, such as the *nuh sipihr*, "nine spheres," are frequently used in literature.

15. See Önder, "Mevlevilikte 18." Like seven, eighteen can be enlarged:

> True lovers do not seek anything but God's presence in the eighteen
> thousand worlds,

says Jamal Hanswi (Ikram, *Armaghān-i Pāk*, p. 108), like many others.

16. See Syed Hasan "Dah Namehs in Persian"; Gandjei, "The Genesis and Definition of a Literary Composition: The *Dah Nāma* ('Ten Love Letters')." Shia circles know the *Dah Majlis*, "Ten Meetings," one for each day between 1 and 10 Muḥarram, at which stories about the suffering of Imam Ḥusayn and his family are recited. The best-known of these is Ḥusayn Waʿiẓ-i Kashifi's *Rauḍat ash-shuhadā*, which was reworked in Urdu by Faẓli as *Karbal Katha* in 1731.

17. Ibn ʿArabi, *The Tarjumān al-ashwāq*, pp. 124–25.

18. See Mélikoff, "Nombres symboliques dans la littérature épico-religieuse des Turcs d'Anatolie," which includes many examples for the use of seventeen.

19. See Karahan, *Islam Türk edebiyatinda Kirk hadis*, and his summary "Aperçu général sur les quarante *ḥadīth* dans la littérature islamique." See also Rescher, "Einiges über die Zahl 40"; Marzolph, *Die Vierzig Papageien*. It is easy to find references to forty almost everywhere; that Ghazzali arranged his great work *Iḥyā' ʿulūm ad-dīn* (The Revivification of the Sciences of Religion) in forty chapters is as relevant as ʿAṭṭar's exteriorization of the experiences of the Sufi's forty days' seclusion in his *Muṣībatnāma*.

20. Kayğusuz Abdal (Kocatürk, *Tekke şiiri antolojisi*, p. 149).

21. Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān*, p. 79; cf. p. 118.

22. Like a thousand and one, forty-one points to infinity: hence one says, in Turkey, *41 kere maşallah*, "forty-one times *maşallah*," to avert the evil eye.

23. Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān*, p. 77. Cf. Deny, "70–72 chez les turcs."

24. Rumi, *Mathnawī*, 5: lines 64ff. He often uses two hundred as a large round number.

25. Rückert/Pertsch, *Grammatik*, p. 312; also quoted in ʿAndalib, *Nāla-i ʿAndalīb*, 2:604. Similar descending sequences appear throughout Persian literature; see, e.g., Sanaʾi, *Dīwān*, p. 1167, rubāʿī. Khaqani leads from the eight Paradises down to the One God (*Dīwān*, pp. 3ff., qaṣīda no. 2). Masʿud ibn Saʿd (ʿAufi, *Lubāb*, 2:247) begins with seven planets, five senses, and four elements. More impressive than these generally known examples (which are reminiscent both of children's rhymes and also of the one-to-thirteen questions in the Jewish *Pesach Haggada*) is the achievement of Ghazzali Mashhadi, who (as Badaʾuni mentions, *Muntakhab at-tawārīkh*, 3:172 [trans. p. 242]) could put all the numerals from 1 to 100 in a single *qaṣīda*. He begins:

> By *one* word from thy *two* ruby lips the messiah obtained *three* favors:
> eternal life, and graceful speech, and power to give life. . . .

26. Jami, *Dīwān*, no. 727, p. 451. Amir Khusrau kisses the beloved's threshold one, two, three, four, five, six times: these numbers form the *radīf* of the entire *ghazal*.

27. Jami, *Dīwān*, no. 761, p. 464.

28. Jami, *Dīwān*, no. 512, p. 368.

29. Hadi Hasan, "Qasim-i Kahi," p. 218. In a touching variant of this somewhat frivolous verse the famous calligrapher Mir ʿAli Harawi, who served many years in Bukhara, complained:

> On my eye there are no spectacles for the sake of writing;
> rather, my two eyes have become four from constantly looking for two
> pieces of bread.

See Schimmel in Welch, *The Emperors' Album*, p. 36. For spectacles see below, chapter 23.

30. Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān*, p. 30. So too Niẓami, *Khusrau Shīrīn*, line 228, about Farhad's narrow head turning like compasses; and *Laylā Majnūn*, line 558. ʿAṭṭar, *Dīwān*, ghazal no. 279, says in an expression typical of "loving confusion":

> Those who walk in the reality of the mysteries,
> walk with turning head like compasses.

A similar expression appears in Amir Khusrau, *Dīwān*, no. 1626. The early poet Abuʾl Haytham Gurgani also uses this comparison (Lazard, *Les premiers poètes*, 2:60). See also ʿAsjadi (ʿAufi, *Lubāb*, 2:53).

31. Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān*, p. 70.

32. Salman-i Sawaji (Browne, *Literary History of Persia*, 3:268).

33. Shah Niʿmatullah (Browne, *Literary History of Persia*, 3:471). Cf. Rumi, *Dīwān*, no. 1379/14596. Cf. also Salik and Sarkhosh (Aṣlaḥ, *Tadhkirat-i shuʿarā-i Kashmīr*, 1:309, 324); Katibi (Azad, *Khizāna-i ʿāmira*, p. 388).

34. ʿAli Khan Niʿmat (Ikram, *Armaghān-i Pāk*, p. 259). Zero, *ṣifr*, occurs several times in connection with *alif*, whose numerical value is 1. See, e.g., Khaqani, *Dīwān*, p. 787:

> One has seen for my form, which is a worthless zero,
> [some use for] counting it along with *alif* [to equal ten].

He also prays (*Dīwān*, qaṣīda no. 10), with a fine *laff u nashr*:

> From every thing that is the decoration of the world
> and from every one of the people of the world,
> keep me empty like zero and lonely like *alif*.

The world, so it is implied, is round like a zero, whereas humans are generally compared to *alif*, which cannot be combined with letters that follow it. The poet does not want connections with either of them.

Chapter 20

1. The only major study, and that of a restricted topic, is Corbin, "Réalisme et symbolisme des couleurs en cosmologie shi'ite." A recent approach is Yousofi, "Colors in the Poetry of Hafiz." A survey of color symbolism will appear in Schimmel, *Yusuf's Fragrant Shirt*, chap. 4. To appreciate allusions to colors one must take into account common compounds like "red-faced," which means "honorable, honored" and is often associated with the blood of lovers; it is contrasted with "black-faced," which means "dishonored," just as the faces of sinners will be on Doomsday. The contrast "black and white" occurs as often as in Western literature but gains a special charm by juxtaposing the beloved's hair, which is black as tar, *qīr*, with his (or her) fair face, which is white as milk, *shīr* (thus Waṭwaṭ, *Dīwān*, p. 275). When his own black hair turns white, the poet, in mourning, dons a black dress of sighs (Kalim, *Dīwān*, ghazal no. 125).

A nice play on colors appears in Farrukhi's wish (*Dīwān*, qaṣīda no. 90) that his patron will be happy

> as long as the carnelian is always red like the red rose,
> as long as orpiment is always yellow like the yellow rose,
> as long as in the whole world snow is white,
> as long as in the entire world tar is black. . . .

Jami too plays with colors (*Dīwān*, no. 98, p. 170):

By my friend's green [fresh] down and his white face!
Only with the liver's blood can I become red-faced [honorable].

That is, looking at the young beloved, the lover grows pale and has to shed blood—probably as red tears—to become honored in the world.

2. Corbin, *L'homme de lumière*, p. 166 (the colors of the dervish's robe). Niẓami uses this idea in *Khusrau Shīrīn*, line 187. "There is no color beyond black" is implied in many comparisons; Mahir (Azad, *Khizāna-i ʿāmira*, p. 421) emphasizes the truth of this concept and thus wants a (black) Hindu as beloved. Black is also the color of the Abbasid caliphs, and hence Khaqani says, when describing the beloved's dark facial down (*Dīwān*, p. 607):

His cheek is the caliph of beauty;
for this reason it dons [a] black [robe].

Cf. also Rami, *Anīs*, p. 48.

3. See Schimmel, *And Muhammad Is His Messenger*, pp. 150–51.

4. Allusions to *sabzpūsh* are frequent in the high classical style and even more in popular poetry, as in *Yunus Emre Divani*.

5. Rumi, *Dīwān*, no. 666/6955 (lit. "a sheet," or a kind of diaper).

6. See Biesterfeld and Gutas, "The Malady of Love." One should pay attention in this context to the frequent rhyme *mard–dard*, "man" and "pain," which points to the idea that one cannot become a true "man of God" without experiencing pain, especially the pain of love.

7. Rumi, *Mathnawī*, 1: line 166; *Dīwān*, no. 3017/32076.

8. Saʿdi, *Kulliyāt*, 3: no. 518. He mentions dropsy quite frequently (e.g., 3: nos. 9, 16, 153, 319). In no. 58 he says:

Neither your beauty has an end, nor Saʿdi's word:
one afflicted with dropsy dies from thirst though the ocean is all around.

For a similar passage see Naẓiri, *Dīwān*, ghazal no. 237. ʿAṭṭar compares the droplet that wants to become an ocean to people afflicted with dropsy (*Muṣībatnāma*, p. 355). Dropsy is often associated with the exclamation *Hal min mazīd?* (Sura 50:29), the hungry cry of Hell; but it was also used by the Persian mystic Bayezid Bisṭami to express his endless thirst (see Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, p. 51) and continues thus through literature. Sana'i wants more, "even if it be poison" (*Dīwān*, p. 855). See also Khaqani, *Dīwān*, p. 54. ʿAṭṭar combines dropsy with consumption (*Muṣībatnāma*, p. 186), and Rumi compares the waxing and waning of the moon to a lover who suffers both dropsy, which makes him swell, and consumption, which makes him waste away (*Dīwān*, no. 1028/10832).

9. Farrukhi sees leanness and fatness as manifestations of soul and body (*Dīwān*, qaṣīda no. 44). There is only one way to bring color to the lover's cheeks: a visit from the beloved. But then the visitor may think—as Ghalib jokes (*Urdu Dīwān*, p. 142)—"Oh, he is feeling fine!" and go away. But even though lovers know that the beloved is the only physician that can heal them, they usually ask instead for a drink that increases the pain; see, e.g., ʿUrfi, *Kulliyāt*, p. 142.

10. Khaju-yi Kirmani (Azad, *Khizāna-i ʿāmira*, p. 217); Sana'i, *Dīwān*, p. 56; Rumi, *Dīwān*, nos. 2605/27615, 2921/31018, etc. See Schimmel, *The Triumphal Sun*, p. 54.

11. Sana'i sees *riḍā*, "perfect contentment," as the real *mufarriḥ* (*Ḥadīqat al-ḥaqīqat*, p. 341). Niẓami mentions gold as a medicine for melancholia, *saudā* (*Khusrau Shīrīn*, line 317). That may be a bit of medical advice, or perhaps a more general one, as gold heals many worries.

12. Rumi, *Dīwān*, no. 1134/11991.

13. ʿArifi (Browne, *Literary History of Persia*, 3:485). Rumi describes toothache and the pulling of teeth quite realistically (*Mathnawī*, 3: lines 1335–36).

14. Khaqani, *Dīwān*, qaṣīda no. 2.

15. Qasim (Azad, *Khizāna-i ʿāmira*, p. 391; also Qaniʿ, *Maqālāt ash-shuʿarā*, p. 684). A similar idea occurs in Khaqani's *Dīwān*, pp. 325, 61, as does its elaboration (which is probably more correct) that someone bitten by a rabid dog shuns water. Kalim uses this latter version (*Dīwān*, ghazal no. 463).

16. An early example is by ʿUnṣuri (Raduyani, *Kitab Tarcuman al-balâġa*, p. 56):

From wishing for the rose's face and the face of the friend,
my face turned golden, and so did the garden's face.

17. Niẓami explains the magnet's power: "If it were not a lover, how could it attract the iron with so much longing?" (*Khusrau Shīrīn*, line 144). The same is true for the amber that seeks the straw. But for Fayżi (Aṣlaḥ, *Tadhkirat-i shuʿarā-i Kashmīr*, 3:1178) the image points rather to the friend's cruelty, as he has a heart of iron or stone:

The hearts of the lovely ones in town turn to you—
your heart is probably a magnet stone!

18. The contrast between *kāh*, the minute straw, and *kūh*, the mighty mountain, offers many opportunities for playing with the *kahrubā* concept.

19. Gesudaraz says (*Dīwān Anīs al-ʿushshāq*, p. 43):

I want to make my eye into wine,
I want to turn my heart and liver into *kabāb*.

20. A little-known poet (see Aṣlaḥ, *Tadhkirat-i shuʿarā-i Kashmīr*, 1:82) compares himself to *kabāb* in a somewhat outré image:

My shrieking while burning in love is not a complaint:
when the *kabāb* makes a noise it sings the praises of the fire.

21. For this concept as a whole see Heine, *Kulinarische Studien*.

22. Amir Khusrau, *Dīwān*, no. 1034: the kettle makes noise, but (no. 1057) "the kettle Heart perhaps became quiet from cooking melancholia." Saʿdi once compared himself to a pot on fire (*Kulliyāt*, 3: no. 424). Sanaʾi (*Ḥadīqat al-ḥaqīqat*, p. 455) precedes Rumi in matter-of-fact images:

The company of stupid people is like an empty kettle:
inside empty and outside black.

23. The comparison of Ḥallaj's word "I am the Creative Truth" to a kettle rising to a boil before emitting silent steam was common, especially among the Indian Naqshbandis and Suhrawardis (e.g., Mir Janullah of Rohri).

24. For kitchen imagery in Rumi see Schimmel, *The Triumphal Sun*, pp. 138ff. Rumi's comparison of the beloved to a merchant who trades in livers, heads, and intestines (*Dīwān*, no. 1600/16746) is somewhat reminiscent of Khaqani's idea that the sky is, so to speak, a butcher's shop whence a large, blood-dripping knife (the first reddish sunrays) appears at dawn (*Dīwān*, p. 61).

25. Rumi, *Mathnawī*, 3: lines 4158ff.

26. Saʿdi also offers insights into daily life; see Philipp, "Speise und Getränke nach Saʿadi." In the preface of the *Būstān* (*Kulliyāt*, 2:8) he mentions Indian pepper, a rare commodity, and boasts of "bringing such sprightly pepper into the rose garden." The comparison of the sun to a round loaf of bread and the stars to crumbs is known from Turkish folk riddles but is also used by ʿAṭṭar (*Dīwān*, ghazal no. 339) and other classical poets; for a particularly powerful example see Khaqani, *Dīwān*, p. 186.

27. See Schimmel, *The Triumphal Sun*, p. 145. See also Sanaʾi, *Ḥadīqat al-ḥaqīqat*, p. 470; cf. Ami Khusrau, *Dīwān*, no. 346. Jamali Kanboh invents a fitting image (Azad, *Khizāna-i ʿāmira*, p. 178):

My heart-bird became roasted from the fire of your love—
I have salted it with the water of my weeping eyes.

Ghalib wants diamond dust instead of salt on his liver (*Kulliyāt-i fārsī*, 4: no. 200), and an earlier poet (see Aṣlaḥ, *Tadhkirat-i shuʿarā-i Kashmīr*, 4:1704) had thought that his beloved had a spoon, a sword, and a saltcellar in his belt, for "he drinks blood, cuts, and sprinkles salt." Salt was also used for the preservation of victuals, and from the days of ʿAṭṭar poets spoke of an unclean animal (e.g., a dog or a donkey) that had fallen into a salt mine, where it became completely purified by turning into salt. See Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, p. 145. But Adib Ṣabir (ʿAufi, *Lubāb*, 2:123) melts like salt, longing for the beloved's sugar lips.

28. Rumi, *Dīwān*, nos. 1593/16680, 2488/26320, etc. See Schimmel, *The Triumphal Sun*, pp. 142–43. It is natural that the beloved's lips are sweet like sugar, and even before the year 1000 Daqiqi was claiming to be melting "like sugar in water" when thinking of those lips (Lazard, *Les premiers poètes*, 2:152). Later, the Indian mystical poet Gesudaraz asked for two or three kisses so that he and his beloved might "become like sugar and *palūda*" (*Dīwān Anīs al-ʿushshāq*, p. 87)—that is, indistinguishable, for *palūda* is a sweet, pudding-like dish (which, as the poets like to remind us, has to be homemade; *palūda* from the bazaar is despicable). Before him, his compatriot Amir Khusrau had invented a clever *taẓādd* (*Dīwān*, no. 1020):

We have melted, from crying, like salt—
you are still a place where sugar grows, laughing.

29. Sanaʾi, *Dīwān*, p. 460. ʿUrfi speaks of a coquettish beloved who, instead of *kabāb* and wine, "feeds on angels' blood and the heart of the bird of the sanctuary" (*Kulliyāt*, p. 352).

30. Ghalib, *Urdu Dīwān*, p. 45.

31. See Browne, *Literary History of Persia*, 3:344–51.

32. Rumi, *Dīwān*, no. 105/1205.

33. Schimmel, *The Triumphal Sun*, "Daily Life," pp. 131–37. Love as teacher and the heart as a child are a commonplace in many *dīwāns*.

34. Khan-i Aʿẓam (Badaʾuni, *Muntakhab at-tawārīkh*, 3:223 [trans. p. 309]). See also Bedil, *Kulliyāt*, 1:570; Shayda (Azad, *Khizāna-i ʿāmira*, p. 275). Someone's tears run like happy children from "the school of the eyelashes" (Azad, p. 149). Ashraf's verse on this theme is unusual (Aṣlaḥ, *Tadhkirat-i shuʿarā-i Kashmīr*, 4:1734):

The ascetic pours tears of hypocrisy in the house of God;
the whore casts her illegitimate child into the mosque.

Chapter 21

1. See Macdonald, "Emotional Religion in Islam as Affected by Music and Singing." See also Sarraj, *Kitāb al-lumaʿ*, pp. 178ff. For the general topic see Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, pp. 178–86.

2. Hujwiri, *Kashf al-maḥjūb* (trans. Nicholson), pp. 416, 430.

3. Abuʾl Faraj al-Iṣfahani's *Kitāb al-aghānī* was a collection of all Arabic poetry that had been set to music, with anecdotes about musicians and famous singers. Even Rumi alludes to the *Aghānī* (*Dīwān*, no. 207/3206).

4. On his lute, legend says, al-Farabi used to play three tunes: one to make people laugh, one to make them weep, and one to put them to sleep. This lovely story was put into German verse by Rückert (*Werke*, 2:194).

5. The musical theories of the Ikhwan aṣ-ṣafa, the "Brethren of Purity," are contained in the first part of their *Rasā'il*; see *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, new ed., 3:1071–76.

6. See Schimmel, *The Triumphal Sun*, pp. 210–22.

7. Amir Khusrau is credited with the invention of the *sitar* and is regarded as the poet-musician who laid the foundations of north Indian, Hindustani music. His use of musical imagery is very skillful. It was probably his relations with the music-loving Chishti order that enabled him to blend the Persian-Arabic and the Indian musical traditions so successfully; to this day some of his *ghazals* are favorites with Indian and Pakistani *qawwāl* singers.

8. Rumi, *Mathnawī*, 1: line 11.

9. Rumi, *Dīwān*, no. 2395, is probably the most frequently quoted example.

10. Amir Khusrau, *Kulliyāt*, no. 1093.

11. Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān*, p. 138.

12. Jami, *Dīwān*, no. 815, p. 484.

13. The story of the reed flute in the introductory verses of Rumi's *Mathnawī* (1: lines 1–18) goes back to the story of King Midas of Gordion, who had donkey's ears and entrusted this terrible secret to his minister, who, after some time, could not keep it to himself any longer and confided it to a lake. A reed that was growing in the lake was cut and made into a flute which then divulged the secret to the whole world. This story was applied in Islamic lore to ʿAli, to whom the Prophet entrusted high spiritual mysteries, which ʿAli in turn whispered into a lake (an allusion to this story appears in Sanaʾi, *Ḥadīqat al-ḥaqīqat*, p. 848). According to Rumi, the reed flute tells of the longing of the soul that was cut off from its eternal home, just as the reed has been cut off from its reedbed. See Ritter, "Das Proömium des Maṯnawi-i Maulawi."

14. Amir Khusrau, *Dīwān*, no. 1178.

15. Fuzuli, *Divan*, no. 195:

Whenever I remember the banquet of union,
I complain like a flute as long as there is breath in my dry body.

16. See Massoudy, *Calligraphie arabe vivante*, p. 14, the quotation from Louis Aragon's *Le fou d'Elsa*: "Du roseau naissent la ligne musicale et la ligne écrite, le flute et le calame"—from the reed are born all things musical and all things written, i.e., the flute and the pen.

17. Rumi, *Dīwān*, no. 26/28146, and often. Particularly skillful is his *rubāʿī* no. 224:

I said: "Will you not give me a portion of this sugar?"
He said: "No!" (*Ney!*)—but he did not know that *ney* [reed, sugarcane] is sugar!

18. Iqbal, *Asrār-i khudī*, line 294.

19. Rumi, *Dīwān*, no. 302/3293.

20. Rumi, *Dīwān*, no. 441/4647. He often calls himself "the rebec of love." Similar comparisons are also common in Ottoman poetry.

21. For the twisting of the *barbat*'s ear see Saʿdi, *Kulliyāt*, 3: no. 593. The *barbat*, the large lute, is sometimes called "lazy"—hence it has to be reminded of its duty.

22. Ẓuhuri, *Sāqīnāma*, "Address to the Musician" (Ikram, *Armaghān-i Pāk*, p. 205).

23. Amir Khusrau, *Dīwān*, no. 620. Cf. Browne, *Literary History of Persia*, 2:352, for the empty drum.

24. Baki (Köprülüzade, *Eski şairlerimiz*, p. 284). Cf. Ghalib, *Urdu Dīwān*, p. 138.

25. See Schimmel, *The Triumphal Sun*, pp. 210–22; Meier, "Der Derwischtanz"; Molé, "La danse extatique en Islam."

26. Rumi, *Dīwān*, no. 1832.

27. Many of Rumi's spring poems have this imagery. See also above, chapter 15.

28. Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān*, p. 3. An even cruder expression is "the menstruation of the daughter of the grape." (Wine is always red.) Thus Khaqani (*Dīwān*, p. 198):

Drink the overflow of the water of the clouds like the oyster [so that it becomes pearls].
Leave the menstrual blood of the daughter of the grape.

Kalim (*Dīwān*, ghazal no. 478) describes his repentance in somewhat similar terms:

I have weaned the child Custom from the milk of the grape's daughter [i.e., wine].
On orders from the wet nurse Disposition I have got used to the blood Repentance.

Allusions to the Koranic prohibition of wine, especially Sura 4:46, "Don't approach prayer when you are drunk," are sometimes introduced to prove, rather, that one should *not* pray; Bektashi jokes in Turkey repeat this transformation. Ḥafiẓ (*Dīwān*, p. 9) uses the Arabic religious invocation *Ya mufattiḥ al-abwāb* to have the wine-house reopened:

The door of the tavern was closed again.
"Open, o Opener of the Doors!"

Ghalib, as usual, speaks against the ascetic; he claims to rely upon the Koranic admonitions "Don't approach prayer" and "Eat and drink" (Suras 52:19, 69:24, 77:43).

29. Wine as Yusuf: see Qudsi (Ikram, *Armaghān-i Pāk*, p. 223). Wine can also be a moon: "it went from the bottle like a new moon and turned, in the cup, into a moon of fourteen [days]," that is, a full moon (Abu Shakur, in Lazard, *Les premiers poètes*,

2:80). Wine as the rose: see chapter 12, esp. note 83 and related discussion. Wine as liquid ruby: see chapter 11, esp. notes 11 and 16 and related discussion; see also Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān*, p. 9. Wine as Jesus: see chapter 3, note 124; in circumambulation, *ṭawāf*, see chapter 4, note 5 (and note 38 below). Wine as Water of Life; the combination with blood, which offered itself on the basis of the wine's red color, is not rare: besides, both are ritually prohibited. See, e.g., Ta'thir (Aṣlaḥ, *Tadhkirat-i shuʿarā-i Kashmīr*, A:587):

Lover and beloved have the same color in that assembly—
where I drink blood [suffer terribly], he drinks wine.

Ṭalib-i Amuli (Aṣlaḥ, 2:691) sees wine as blood of the angels, which is *ḥalāl*, ritually permitted.

30. Kalim, *Dīwān*, ghazal no. 273. Salim says (Aṣlaḥ, *Tadhkirat-i shuʿarā-i Kashmīr*, 1:394):

Remembering me, o companions, drink some cups—
but not so much that you forget me!

Mir uses a combination of wine cup and eye, which was common in the "Indian style":

Last night within my dream
I saw her drunken eye.
When I awoke in the morning,
a wine cup was before me.

(trans. in Ahmad Ali, *The Golden Tradition*, p. 143). That the eye or, even more frequently, its substitute the narcissus, is "drunken" is a commonplace in Persian poetry; from this expression the comparison with the cup or glass readily offered itself. One of the earliest descriptions of a cheerful party is by Farrukhi (*Dīwān*, qaṣīda no. 212):

Your ear toward the *samāʿ* [music], your lip toward the wine,
your eye toward the cheeks of a Kashgari idol!

For the "practical aspects" of such parties see Jacob, "Das Weinhaus nebst Zubehör nach den Gazelen des Hafiz"; Heine, *Weinstudien*.

31. Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān*, p. 135. On the confusion between Plato and Diogenes see above, chapter 6.

32. Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān*, p. 12.

33. Azraqi (Fouchécour, *La description de la nature*, p. 198).

34. Aleppan glass appears in Saʿdi's *Gulistān*, book 3.

35. Jami, *Dīwān*, no. 392, p. 322:

Your [stone] heart does with the lovers' hearts
what even the hard stone has not done to the bottle.

He also admonishes someone (no. 332, p. 299):

Don't throw the stone of injury on the heart of the poor;
this glass can be broken easily, but it is difficult to repair.

36. Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān*, p. 36.

37. Azad Bilgrami (in Qaniʿ, *Maqālāt ash-shuʿarā*, p. 61).

38. On circumambulation of the bottle see also above, chapter 4, esp. note 5.

39. See Schimmel, *The Triumphal Sun*, pp. 137–38. Again Azraqi seems to be the first to have used the "genie in the bottle" in Persian poetry (see Fouchécour, *La description de la nature*, p. 200). Naẓiri (*Dīwān*, ghazal no. 510) fears that wine will produce madness as drunken people appear "like fairies out of the bottle." At about the same time, Salim wrote a verse (see Aṣlaḥ, *Tadhkirat-i shuʿarā-i Kashmīr*, 1:404) that was imitated by Ṣaʿib and Ghani:

Your beauty drives the hairdresser woman mad,
because the picture [of your beauty] turns the mirror into a house of fairies.

Fairies are supposed to afflict humans with madness. The verse also shows that the traditional polished steel mirrors, often mentioned in earlier poetry, have by this era given way to glass ones.

40. Cf. Mir Dard, *Dīwān-i fārsī*, p. 134, rubāʿī.

41. Cf. Mir Dard, *Dīwān-i fārsī*, p. 107, rubāʿī.

42. Manuchihri (ʿAufi, *Lubāb*, 2:54–55; trans. in Browne, *Literary History of Persia*, 2:154ff.).

43. Masʿud ibn Saʿd (Ikram, *Armaghān-i Pāk*, p. 92) learned three things from the candle: weeping, melting, and burning. See also Saʿdi, *Kulliyāt*, 3: no. 228:

The candle weeps, and the spectators laugh.

And Amir Khusrau, *Dīwān*, no. 1022:

You are the soul-illuminating candle of the world,
but we are burning and melting for your sake!

44. Ḥazin (Ikram, *Armaghān-i Pāk*, p. 275). Amir Khusrau "melts like a candle while the beloved sleeps happily" (*Dīwān*, no. 1036). But, as ʿUrfi thinks (*Kulliyāt*, p. 287), even if all lovers were to disappear the world would still go on:

A thousand candles were extinguished, and the assembly is still here.

45. Sauda apparently is imitating Khaqani (*Dīwān*, p. 645) or Sanaʾi (*Ḥadīqat al-ḥaqīqat*, p. 706). Cf. also Mir Dard, *Dīwān-i fārsī*, p. 63. The contrast between

external radiance and inner burning made the candle a favorite object in love poetry. Niẓami also speaks of the candle which burns its liver but seems to illuminate the world joyfully (*Iskandarnāma*, 1.992).

46. Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān*, p. 211. Cf. Ghani (Aṣlaḥ, *Tadhkirat-i shuʿarā-i Kashmīr*, 2:987). Ghani also (p. 986) thinks that nobody will weep at his grave, for during his lifetime he himself has wept like a candle about his own situation.

47. Jami, *Dīwān*, no. 635, p. 423. For Mir Dard in Delhi, the outward world, the form, cannot hide the light of inner meaning—it is like a screen (*Dīwān-i fārsī*, p. 43). His contemporary Azad Bilgrami, in the Deccan, used the Naqshbandi expression *khalwat dar anjuman*, "isolation in the crowd," in connection with the *fānūs*, a paper lantern (magic lantern) with pictures on it, softly lit from within by a candle (see Qaniʿ, *Maqālāt ash-shuʿarā*, p. 59):

Like the flame that burns in the lantern,
I always have perfect solitude amid the crowd.

48. See Schimmel, *A Dance of Sparks*, chap. 3, nn. 29–46. Kalim's tongue is silent like that of a killed (extinguished) candle (Ikram, *Armaghān-i Pāk*, p. 230), and Ghani shows by his (speaking) tongue that he is alive (Aṣlaḥ, *Tadhkirat-i shuʿarā-i Kashmīr*, 2:876). And Mir Dard (*Dīwān-i fārsī*, p. 33) thinks the silent, "tongueless" candle is dishonored (lit. "black-faced").

49. Ghani (Aṣlaḥ, *Tadhkirat-i shuʿarā-i Kashmīr*, 2:999). Ghalib speaks of "the *kabāb* of the flame of the voice" (*Kulliyāt-i fārsī*, 5: mathnawī no. 3)—whatever that may mean. For an even more absurd combination see Aṣlaḥ, 1:53.

50. Ṣa'ib (Browne, *Literary History of Persia*, 4:276).

51. Shah Afrin (Azad, *Khizāna-i ʿāmira*, p. 32).

52. Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān*.

53. It seems more logical when Mir Dard admonishes himself to be silent, for when the morning (of old age) comes, the tongue of the candle has to be silent. For more such images see Schimmel, *A Dance of Sparks*, pp. 80–83.

54. ʿAbdul Ḥayy has his heart as a candle on the tomb of strangers (*Gul-i raʿnā*, p. 144). Ghalib claims to be the candle of his own tomb (*Kulliyāt-i fārsī*, 4: no. 278); cf. no. 12, and his *Urdu Dīwān*, p. 9. He also compares the down on the friend's face to the smoke from an extinguished candle (*Urdu Dīwān*, p. 43)—that is, the candle-like beauty has disappeared, and only a bit of smoke is left.

55. Nasikh (Schimmel, "Classical Urdu Literature," p. 196).

56. For more examples see Schimmel, *A Dance of Sparks*, p. 71. Ghalib thinks that the black scar on his heart is "the seed of the firework cypress" (*Urdu Dīwān*, p. 9). Azad Bilgrami (Qaniʿ, *Maqālāt ash-shuʿarā*, p. 58) claims that the Evening of the Strangers, *shām-i gharībān*, has no other fireworks than the attack of the fiery hearts of the lovers on the beloved's disheveled curls (which are black like the evening). His grandfather ʿAbdul Jalil Bilgrami had composed a *mathnawī* about the actual

fireworks at the festivities of the Mughal emperor Farrukh Siyar (see Azad, *Khizāna-i ʿāmira*, p. 306).

57. ʿAṭṭar's *Ushturnāma*, the story of a shadow-play master, ends thus: "Whosoever discovered my secret became mad and lost his intellect at once" (p. 137). In his *Dīwān* (qaṣīda no. 8, p. 328) he sees the sky as a screen and the stars as puppets. The idea of God as the shadow player is also used by ʿOmar Khayyam. For the concept as a whole see Jacob, *Geschichte des Schattentheaters*.

58. Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, pp. 277–78.

59. See also ʿAndalib, *Nāla-i ʿAndalīb*, 2:23, 146.

60. Aloes-wood, ʿūd, was a highly priced commodity imported to the central Islamic world from India and the Malayan archipelago. The best quality was soft and somewhat damp. See Qaḍi ar-Rashid, *Kitāb adh-dhakhā'ir wa't-tuḥaf*, who gives frequent instances of the use of this fragrant material at the Abbasid court. And Ghalib complained, during his imprisonment (*Kulliyāt-i fārsī*, 6: tarkībband, p. 186):

Don't burn my aloes-wood in vain; and if it must be burnt,
let it burn in the king's brazier!

61. Anwari, *Dīwān* (ed. Nafisi), qaṣīda no. 21.

62. Shah Ṭahmasp (Browne, *Literary History of Persia*, 4:87). His "sincere repentance" led to the emigration of some of his best court painters—to India, where they became instrumental in forming the distinct Mughal school of painting.

Chapter 22

1. Goethe, *West-Östlicher Divan*, Noten und Abhandlungen, "Despotie," p. 50. For the history of polo see Diem, *Asiatische Reiterspiele*; also Horn's brief study "Ross und Reiter im *Šahnama*."

2. ʿUnṣuri (Raduyani, *Kitab Tarcuman al-balaġa*, p. 67). It is not surprising that Farrukhi devoted an entire *qaṣīda* (*Dīwān*, no. 11) to Sultan Maḥmud's polo game.

3. Muʿizzi (ʿAufi, *Lubāb*, 2:72). Cf. Farrukhi, *Dīwān*, qaṣīda no. 131; Shafruh (ʿAufi, 1:271); and especially ʿImad-i Faqih (Rami, *Anīs*, p. 94):

My heart ran after his tress and chin
like a child than runs after a mallet and a ball.

4. ʿUtbi (ʿAufi, *Lubāb*, 2:289).

5. See, e.g., Amir Khusrau, *Dīwān*, no. 1366:

I have a stature like a mallet and a head that turns like a ball.
Come, o Turk! and turn the mallet on the person with the turning head!

For a similar effect see Jami, *Dīwān*, no. 255, p. 230.

6. Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān*, p. 5. Before him, Waṭwaṭ wrote (*Dīwān*, muqaṭṭaʿ, p. 588):

Before the mallet of the events of the sky
I have become one whose head turns like the ball.

Cf. Jami, *Dīwān*, no. 724, p. 449.

7. See Rami, *Anīs*, p. 27.

8. *Yunus Emre Divani*, p. 607.

9. Baki (Köprülüzade, *Eski şairlerimiz*, p. 281). Niẓami addresses the Prophet in the fourth *naʿt* of his *Makhzan al-asrār* (*Kulliyāt-i Khamsa*):

The line (*khaṭṭ*) of the sky is the boundary (*khaṭṭa*) for your polo place;
the ball Earth is in the curve of your mallet.

10. See ʿArifi, *Gūy u chaugān* (ed. and trans. Greenshields). The manuscript copied by Shah Ṭahmasp, which was preserved in Ardabil, was brought to St. Petersburg during the Russian-Persian war in 1828. Sanaʾi once applied the image somewhat differently (*Ḥadīqat al-ḥaqīqat*, p. 438):

Be someone who belongs to God in this polo ground;
be now a ball and now a mallet.

11. Rumi, *Fīhi mā fīhi*, in Arberry, *Discourses of Rumi*, p. 146.

12. See Hanaway, "Hunting as a Theme in Persian Literature."

13. Farrukhi, *Dīwān*.

14. Amir Khusrau, *Dīwān*, no. 650.

15. Adib-i Ṣabir (Aṣlaḥ, *Tadhkirat-i shuʿarā-i Kashmīr*, 2:118–19). Cf. Kalim, *Dīwān*, ghazal no. 279:

Don't hunt flies; don't bind the heart of lustful people
with the snare of the tress which can bind angels!

16. Iqbal likes hunting imagery: see *Payām-i Mashriq*, p. 90; *Bāl-i Jibrīl*, p. 119; and in general Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing*, p. 204, about his ideal of "hunting angels." His frequent use of the falcon motif—see above, chapter 13, esp. note 23—belongs here.

17. Saʿdi, *Kulliyāt*, 3: no. 487.

18. Rumi, *Dīwān*, no. 900/1934, trans. Schimmel, *Look! This Is Love!*, p. 88.

19. See Rami, *Anīs*, p. 33. Waṭwaṭ (*Dīwān*, p. 134) wishes his patron good fortune

as long as the back of the lovers is like a bow,
as long as the tresses of the darlings are like lassoes. . . .

Tresses very often serve as lassoes, just as the eyelashes constitute veritable arrows. Yunus Emre sighs (*Divani*, p. 605):

I bent my stature and made it into a bow;
I pierced my breast and made it into a flute.

20. See Browne, *Literary History of Persia*, 2:127, who translates the whole poem.

21. The *qurʿa* or die of fate occurs not only in Ḥafiẓ's famous *ghazal* entitled *Dūsh dīdam* (*Dīwān*, p. 77) but in religious works of the early period, such as ʿAbdullah-i Anṣari's *tafsīr* (commentary on the Koran), p. 36.

22. The story of Azraqi's poem on backgammon is told in Niẓami ʿAruḍi, *Chahār Maqāla* (trans. Browne), pp. 71–72; also in Browne, *Literary History of Persia*, 2:39. Daulatshah (*Tadhkirat ash-shuʿarā*, p. 83) and, following him, Rückert/Pertsch (*Grammatik*, p. 367) speak of three ones, not two.

23. ʿAsjadi (ʿAufi, *Lubāb*, 2:51). See Burckhardt, "The Symbolism of Chess." Qasim-i Kahi uses this imagery in his *qaṣīda* in whose every verse the word *fīl*, "elephant" (in Western chess, the bishop), occurs, and closes the poem thus:

At the feet of the king's elephant Qasim-i Kahi laid his cheek—
this was his last move on the chessboard of life!

See Hadi Hasan, "Qasim-i Kahi," pp. 122ff. Such combinations abound in Persian poetry—one could cite the works of Farrukhi, Sanaʾi, Khaqani, ʿAṭṭar, and Rumi—and continue, though somewhat less frequently, into the "Indian style." Puns on *farzīn*, "queen," and *farzāna*, "intelligent," can be seen often.

24. See Schimmel, *The Triumphal Sun*, pp. 170–71.

25. ʿAṭṭar, *Dīwān*, ghazal no. 42.

26. Jami, *Dīwān*, no. 313, p. 292.

27. Sarmad (Ikram, *Armaghān-i Pāk*, p. 237). The two-colored world was also intended when Ghani said (Ikram, p. 74):

What a pity that those living close to each other,
like chess pieces, are not of the same color.

28. Mir Dard, *Dīwān-i fārsī*, p. 111, rubāʿī.

29. The image of chess for fighting was used by Niẓami (*Iskandarnāma*, line 903), where Iskandar's white soldiers are seen in battle against the black Zanjis:

Two armies beat the drum, like chess pieces, from ivory and ebony
respectively.

He also speaks of the night as an ebony backgammon board (*Khusrau Shīrīn*, line 161).

30. One needs to be well versed in backgammon to disentangle the numerous allusions to it in all of classical Persian poetry—allusions which, like so many others, cannot be properly understood by the nonpracticing outsider. See ʿAṭṭar,

Dīwān, p. 337, and also p. 321, qaṣīda no. 2, where the *shashdara* is contrasted with the *māt khāna*, the chess position where the king is checkmated.

31. In Ibn-i Yamin, *Ibn Jemins Bruchstücke* (trans. Schlechta-Wssehrd).

32. Jami says (*Dīwān*, no. 230, p. 224):

> The faithful one who played the backgammon of fidelity as a true lover
> has gambled away the cash of both worlds in one go, on the way to the friend. . . .

That is, he who is really faithful in his quest gives away everything created.

Chapter 23

1. Rumi, *Dīwān*, no. 1499/15800.

2. For the tales of the Arabian Nights see Husain Haddawy's translation, based on the new edition by Muhsin Mahdi.

3. Fani, *Dīwān*, p. 81. ʿAndalib (*Nāla-i ʿAndalīb*, 2:718) longs for the sleep of nonexistence, because the love stories are too long. It is only the "sleep of the velvet that needs no story" (Bedil, *Kulliyāt*, 1:182).

4. Mir Dard, *Dīwān-i fārsī*, p. 137, rubāʿī; see also Naẓiri, *Dīwān*, p. 193.

5. Amir Khusrau, *Dīwān*, no. 417.

6. Munir Lahori (Aṣlaḥ, *Tadhkirat-i shuʿarā-i Kashmīr*, 3:1469).

7. Ḥaydar Qalicha (Qaniʿ, *Maqālāt ash-shuʿarā*, p. 176).

8. Amir Khusrau, quoted in Badaʾuni, *Muntakhab at-tawārīkh*, 3:258 (trans. p. 358).

9. In some particularly delightful verses (Rumi, *Dīwān*, no. 1444) sleep just looks at the poor lover and then runs away; in other instances sleep has drunk the poison of separation and died (no. 779) or been beaten up by Love's fist (no. 500). See Schimmel, *The Triumphal Sun*, index, s.v. "sleep."

10. Sadiq, *History of Urdu Literature*, pp. 105–7; Dr. Syed Abdullah, "Khwāb u khayāl, ek ʿajīb mathnawī," in *Walī sē Iqbāl tak*, pp. 107ff.

11. Ṣaʿib (Browne, *Literary History of Persia*, 4:271).

12. Abu ʿAli Daqqaq (ʿAṭṭar, *Tadhkirat al-auliyā*, 2:193).

13. Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān*, p. 5.

14. Jami, *Dīwān*, no. 903, p. 479.

15. Jami, *Dīwān*, no. 46, p. 150.

16. Kamal-i Khujandi (Rückert/Pertsch, *Grammatik*, p. 304).

17. Muʿizzi (Saleman and Shukovsky, *Persische Grammatik*, p. 92). Cf. also Sanaʾi, *Dīwān*, p. 418. Niẓami uses the image when describing the moonlike Shirin (see Ritter, *Über die Bildersprache Niẓāmīs*, p. 34). Saʿdi then states (*Kulliyāt*, 3: no. 25):

> When the candle dies, what does the morning breeze worry?
> When the linen falls to pieces, why would the moonlight grieve?

Similar themes are also found in Pashto poetry. Jurjani (*Asrār al-balāgha*, p. 282) quotes an Arabic verse praising the moonlike friend: "Don't be amazed that his linen shirt is worn out, for he buttoned it upon the moon!"

18. Rypka, "Der böse Blick bei Niẓāmī." Sanaʾi admonishes the beloved to burn *sipand* when showing his radiant face; this *sipand*, however, is his (the lover's) existence (*Ḥadīqat al-ḥaqīqat*, p. 98). Farrukhi wants to turn his eyes into a brazier for *sipand* (*Dīwān*, qaṣīda no. 48); ʿAṭṭar uses his liver as *sipand* (*Dīwān*, ghazal no. 61) and Niẓami his heart (*Iskandarnāma*, 1.170). Khaqani (*Dīwān*, p. 644) apologizes for his involuntary shrieks: he has become *sipand* on the flame of his friend's face (burning rue produces a cracking sound). Jami even includes all of nature in his imagery (*Dīwān*, no. 358, p. 309):

> Every morning heaven makes a brazier from the sun disk and *sipand* from the planets and fixed stars, lest the evil eye hit you.

19. Ḥanzala al-Badghisi (ʿAufi, *Lubāb*, 2:3). Cf. Rami, *Anīs*, p. 49.

20. Ghalib, *Kulliyāt-i fārsī*, 4: no. 213. He also (no. 68) tells his friend to recite *wa in yakādu* for himself, as he has no *sipand* left.

21. On this imagery see Schimmel, "Gedanken zu zwei Porträts."

22. Kalim, *Dīwān* (ed. Thackston), mathnawī no. 19, line 124. Cf. also Nuṣrat (Aṣlaḥ, *Tadhkirat-i shuʿarā-i Kashmīr*, A:490):

> The mirror for this world and religion is an hourglass:
> when one begins to flourish, the other one is ruined.

23. Ghani (Aṣlaḥ, *Tadhkirat-i shuʿarā-i Kashmīr*, 2:974).

24. Mir Dard, *Dīwān-i fārsī*, p. 132, rubāʿī.

25. Bedil, *Kulliyāt*, 1:1138. Cf. also Ghani (Aṣlaḥ, *Tadhkirat-i shuʿarā-i Kashmīr*, 2:979):

> O heart, watch the hourglass,
> don't be heedless of the journey of the caravan of life!

Following him, ʿAndalib says (*Nāla-i ʿAndalīb*, 1:439):

> Be sober like the sand in the hourglass!
> Count the days of your life, and go!

26. Aurangzeb (Ikram, *Armaghān-i Pāk*, p. 318).

27. Bichitr's painting *Jahangir Preferring a Sufi to a King* is discussed in Ettinghausen, "The Emperor's Choice," and published in Ettinghausen's *Paintings of*

the Sultans and Emperors of India, plate 14, as well as in Welch's *Imperial Mughal Painting*, plate 22.

28. Me'ali (Ambros, *Candid Penstrokes*, pp. 18–19); see also above, chapter 19, note 29. Naẓiri mentions "spectacles of Aleppan glass" (*Dīwān*, p. 102). One of the first portraits showing a man with spectacles (the painter Mir Muṣawwir) was painted in 1565; see Welch, *Wonders of the Age*, no. 81.

29. Fani (Aṣlaḥ, *Tadhkirat-i shuʿarā-i Kashmīr*, 3:1057). Cf. Fani's *Dīwān*, p. 13.

30. Mir Dard mentions conflicting views on eyeglasses: they strengthen the sight (*Ah-i sard*, nos. 32, 231); but (in a negative turn) imitators look at reality as though through eyeglasses, and not directly (*Shamʿ-i maḥfil*, no. 123). The same idea was expressed by the Suhrawardi saint of Hala (Sind), Makhdum Nuḥ (d. 1591).

31. Kalim, *Dīwān* (ed. Thackston), qaṣīda no. 15, line 2.

32. Kalim, *Dīwān* (ed. Thackston), qaṣīda no. 24, line 2.

33. Kalim, *Dīwān* (ed. Thackston), mathnawī no. 20, line 3. Elsewhere he says that a glass dome serves the sky as spectacles, so that it can see the events on earth (mathnawī no. 1, line 4). He also states, in a more mystical mood, that the glass bowl of the sky is, so to speak, spectacles for someone's eye, so that he can see the secrets of the other side of the spheres (qaṣīda no. 22, line 3).

34. Danish (Azad, *Khizāna-i ʿāmira*, p. 220). Cf. Naẓiri, *Dīwān*, ghazal no. 102.

35. Thus ʿAqil (Azad, *Khizāna-i ʿāmira*, p. 351), who wrote this because he objected to Qasim-i Kahi's verse about "looking at young men" with the help of an eyeglass (see above, chapter 19, esp. note 29).

36. Nuṣrati, *Gulshan-i ʿishq*, line 3722 (I thank Peter Gaeffke of Philadelphia for bringing this to my attention).

37. Bedil, *Kulliyāt*.

38. Khaqani, *Dīwān*, p. 475.

39. Khaqani, *Dīwān*, p. 358, line 4.

40. Anwari, *Dīwān* (ed. Nafisi), p. 582.

41. Ghani (Aṣlaḥ, *Tadhkirat-i shuʿarā-i Kashmīr*, 2:998).

42. Bedil, *Kulliyāt*, 1:10. Later poets also thought that the beads of the rosary were given to the ascetics at the *rūz-i alast*, the primordial covenant, like blisters on their hands (see Ghalib, *Kulliyāt-i fārsī*, 5: qaṣīda no. 48).

43. ʿAṭṭar, *Muṣībatnāma*, p. 149 and often.

44. Bedil, *Kulliyāt*, 1:170. His elder contemporary Naṣir ʿAli Sirhindi explains the secret of breaking (see Aṣlaḥ, *Tadhkirat-i shuʿarā-i Kashmīr*, 2:936):

> My heart, overtaken by heedlessness, cannot be opened without pain:
> when a lock is full of rust, breaking becomes its key.

After all, the Sufis had always taught that treasures are found only in ruins and that destruction—or, if one prefers, *kenosis*—is necessary for the continuation of life. As Kalim says (*Dīwān*, ghazal no. 76):

> The falling of the old wall means that it will be renewed.

45. Ghalib, *Urdu Dīwān*, p. 57.

46. The leading poets of Delhi in the eighteenth century—among them two of the four "pillars of Urdu," Maẓhar Janjanan and Mir Dard—were connected with the Naqshbandi order.

47. Thus Ṣa'ib (Aṣlaḥ, *Tadhkirat-i shuʿarā-i Kashmīr*, 2:533):

> Those with radiant hearts travel constantly in their homeland—
> the candle is standing [still] and yet running fast.

48. Mir Dard, *Dīwān-i fārsī*, p. 111, rubāʿī; cf. p. 123, rubāʿī, and p. 54, ghazal. He sums up his ideas in the line:

> Being is journeying, not-being is homeland.

49. Ṭalib-i Amuli (Ikram, *Armaghān-i Pāk*, p. 207).

50. Mir Dard, *Urdu Dīwān*, p. 101. Cf. also his *Dīwān-i fārsī*, p. 21, where the footprints are compared to eyes that are all looking out (for the beloved). Similarly, see also Amin (Aṣlaḥ, *Tadhkirat-i shuʿarā-i Kashmīr*, 4:1751).

51. Mir Dard, *Urdu Dīwān*, p. 89.

52. Mir Dard, *Urdu Dīwān*, p. 89. For this expression in general see Ullmann, *Aufs Wasser schreiben*.

53. Bedil, *Kulliyāt*, 1:214. Umid says (Aṣlaḥ, *Tadhkirat-i shuʿarā-i Kashmīr*, A:579):

> For me, exhausted from weakness, it is—as for a footprint—
> very difficult to come to your street and also to go away.

54. Bedil, *Kulliyāt*, 1:367.

55. Kalim, *Dīwān*, ghazal no. 129.

56. ʿUrfi, *Kulliyāt*, p. 191; see also Ghalib's imitation in *Kulliyāt-i fārsī*, 4: no. 3.

57. Bedil, *Kulliyāt*, 1:32.

58. Bedil, *Kulliyāt*, 1:192. Naẓiri (*Dīwān*, ghazal no. 145) sees the morning's *khamyāza* when it opens to receive the sun.

59. ʿAṭṭar's entire *Muṣībatnāma* is a poetical expression of creatures' infinite thirst for God and their teaching *Quaere super nos*, "Seek above [higher than, beyond] us."

60. Bedil, *Kulliyāt*, 1:14.

61. Naṣir ʿAli Sirhindi (Aṣlaḥ, *Tadhkirat-i shuʿarā-i Kashmīr*, 2:935). Fayżi thinks that the *rēg-i rawān* consists of diamond dust (Ikram, *Armaghān-i Pāk*, p. 183).

62. Ṣa'ib speaks of the "caravan of quicksand" (Aṣlaḥ, *Tadhkirat-i shuʿarā-i Kashmīr*, 2:604). Yet Kalim considers this very quicksand his Khiżr, his guide. Farrukhi uses the term *rēg-i rawān* when referring to actual quicksand (*Dīwān*, qaṣīda no. 171).

63. Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān*, p. 1.

64. Ḥafiẓ, *Dīwān*, p. 111. Cf. Saʿdi, *Kulliyāt*, 3: no. 71:

My ear is the whole day upon the road because I wait for you, and my eye is on the threshold,
and when the call of the muezzin comes, I think it is the bell of the caravan.

65. See Schimmel, *A Dance of Sparks*, pp. 39–40. Fayżi, however, claims that his caravan makes no noise at all (Ikram, *Armaghān-i Pāk*, p. 194).

66. Jami gives the motif an interesting turn (*Dīwān*, no. 712, p. 445):

Intellect and patience and reason went away—o heart, don't stop complaining:
when the caravan is moving on, the bell must lament!

67. Kalim (Aṣlaḥ, *Tadhkirat-i shuʿarā-i Kashmīr*, 1:159).

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[See also Ḥafiẓ, Iqbal, Rumi.]

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[See also Ritter, Weischer.]

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Index of

Koranic Quotations

Sura **1** (*Fātiḥa*), 229, 314 (n. 52)
Sura **2:1**, 59; **2:2**, 56; **2:13**, 220; **2:31**, 60; **2:102**, 76
Sura **3:14**, 13; **3:32**, 346 (n. 94); **3:43**, 348 (n. 127)
Sura **4:46**, 437 (n. 28)
Sura **5**, 79; **5:34–35**, 397 (n. 44); **5:110**, 78, 348 (n. 127)
Sura **6:63**, 408 (n. 19), **6:98**, 62; **6:166**, 340 (n. 16)
Sura **7:11**, 340 (n. 25); **7:105**, 70; **7:143**, 68, **7:171**, 57. See also Index of Terms and Concepts, *alast*; *balā*
Sura **9:112**, 224
Sura **11:40**, 341 (n. 47)
Sura **12** (*Yūsuf*), 64, 342 (n. 53), 353 (n. 11); **12:18**, 77; **12:30–31**, 66; **12:53**, 66, 94, 256, 357 (n. 7)
Sura **15:29**, 60
Sura **16:68**, 197
Sura **17:69**, 408 (n. 19); **17:80**, 130
Sura **18:17ff.**, 195; **18:59–60**, 71; **18:82**, 362 (n. 30)
Sura **19:23–26**, 77
Sura **20:12**, 69; **20:66**, 345 (n. 84); **20:71**, 59; **20:79–80**, 377 (n. 7); **20:85**, 70; **20:92**, 345 (n. 81)
Sura **21:69**, 63, 174; **21:96**, 77; **21:107**, 202
Sura **23:27**, 341 (n. 37)
Sura **24:35**, 59 (the Light verse)
Sura **26:266**, 12
Sura **27**, 73, 74; **27:16**, 178, 179; **27:18**, 75
Sura **28:21**, 70; **28:76–77**, 345 (n. 89)
Sura **29:40**, 404 (n. 41)
Sura **31**, 73
Sura **33:72**, 58
Sura **34:10**, 73
Sura **39:39**, 345 (n. 89); **39:54**, 59, 353 (n. 6)
Sura **40:24**, 345 (n. 89)
Sura **41:53**, 202
Sura **50:29**, 432 (n. 8)
Sura **52:19**, 437 (n. 28)
Sura **54:1**, 60, 209, 210
Sura **56:78**, 310
Sura **61:13**, 422 (n. 83)
Sura **67:2**, 306
Sura **68:1**, 59, 230, 237, 340 (n. 18), 420 (n. 67); **68:52**, 59, 295, 445 (n. 20)
Sura **69:24**, 437 (n. 28)
Sura **72:9**, 340 (n. 27)
Sura **75:2**, 66, 256
Sura **77:43**, 437 (n. 28)
Sura **79:24**, 70
Sura **82:11**, 81
Sura **83:94**, 114
Sura **89:6**, 77; **89:27**, 66, 181, 256
Sura **92**, 100, 208
Sura **93:1**, 42, 100, 208
Sura **97:6**, 93
Sura **105**, 105, 199, 342 (n. 50)
Sura **111**, 162
Sura **112**, 339 (n. 5)

Index of

Authors and Works

Small capital letters indicate the language in which a poet usually wrote: Arabic (A), Dakhni Urdu (DU), Hindi (H), Indo-Persian (IP), Persian (P), Panjabi (PJ), Pashto (PT), Sindi (S), Turkish (T), or Urdu (U). Most Indo-Persian poets whose dates are not given lived in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Major works by some authors have their own listings by title; others are subsumed under author entries.

Ab-i ḥayāt (Azad), 335 (n. 6)
ʿAbd aṣ-Ṣabur, Ṣalaḥ (A, d. 1982), 127
ʿAbdul Aḥad Gul (IP, d. 1714), 331 (n. 16)
ʿAbdul Ghani an-Nabulusi (A, d. 1731), 372 (n. 4)
ʿAbdul Ḥamid (PT), 399 (n. 61)
ʿAbdul Ḥayy (IP), 440 (n. 54)
ʿAbdul Jalil Bilgrami (A, IP, d. 1730), xix, 239, 252, 410 (n. 49), 421 (n. 77), 427 (n. 40), 440 (n. 56)
ʿAbdullah-i Anṣari (P, d. 1089), xii, 89, 322, 443 (n. 21)
ʿAbdul Laṭif Bhitaʾi, Shah (S, d. 1752), viii, xix, 61, 162, 202, 204, 355 (n. 31), 380 (n. 29), 383 (n. 4), 398 (n. 46), 399 (n. 54), 407 (n. 14), 408 (n. 24), 415 (n. 29), 418 (n. 24)
ʿAbdul Qadir Khan (PT), 74, 347 (n. 109)
ʿAbdul Wasiʿ Jabali (P, d. 1160), 307, 337 (n. 31), 345 (n. 80), 347 (n. 118), 400 (n. 72)
ʿAbdun Nabi Qazwini (IP, 16th cent.), 334 (n. 39), 359 (n. 27)
ʿAbdur Raḥim, Khankhanan (P, T, H, d. 1627), xviii, 140, 249, 367 (n. 2), 374 (n. 16), 375 (n. 21)
ʿAbdur Razzaq-i Iṣfahani (P), 365 (n. 51)
Abr-i gauharbār (Ghalib), 202
Abu ʿAli-i Marwazi (P), 343 (n. 66), 356 (n. 44), 388 (n. 53)
Abu Bakr Sarakhsi (P, d. 1002), 236, 349 (n. 143), 420 (n. 59)
Abu Bakr al-Washi (P), 304
Abuʾl-Faraj al-Iṣfahani (A, d. 967), 272, 435 (n. 3)
Abuʾl-Faẓl (IP, d. 1602), 388 (n. 57), 400 (n. 5)
Abuʾl-Faẓl Harawi (P), 427 (n. 33)
Abuʾl-Ḥasan Sarakhsi (P, 12th cent.), 385 (n. 23), 389 (n. 60)
Abuʾl-Haytham Gurgani (P), 430 (n. 30)
Abuʾl-Muʾayyad Balkhi (P, late 10th cent.), 381 (n. 3)
Abu Nuwas (A, d. between 806 and 814), 381 (n. 1), 385 (n. 18)
Abu Shakur-i Balkhi (P, mid-10th cent.), 426 (n. 32), 437 (n. 29)
Abu Shihab Ṭarsusi (P), 423 (n. 91)
Abu Shuʿayb (P, 10th cent.), 364 (n. 51)
Abu Tammam (A, d. 845), 387 (n. 37)
Acts of St. Thomas, 407 (n. 15)
Adhar (IP), 399 (n. 61)
ʿAdi (A, 6th cent.), 381 (n. 1)
Adib Naṭanzi (P), 337 (n. 30)
Adib Ṣabir (P, d. between 1143 and 1148), xii, 286, 434 (n. 27)
Adonis, ʿAli Aḥmad Saʿid (A), 127
Afsar (IP), 318
Aftab, Shah ʿAlam II (U, d. 1806), 428 (n. 42)
Ahi (P), 371 (n. 31)
Aḥmad (DU, 17th cent.), 332 (n. 36)
Aḥmad Hanswi, Jamaluddin (IP, d. 1260), 384 (n. 10), 429 (n. 15)
Aḥmad Shah Abdali (PT, d. 1747), 374 (n. 18)
Aḥmadi (T, 14th cent.), 232, 418 (n. 23)
Ahmet Hamdi Tanpinar (T, d. 1962), 391 (n. 90)
Ahmet Hashim (T, d. 1933), 35, 391 (n. 90)
Ahmet Paşa (T, 15th cent.), 373 (n. 10), 387 (n. 38)

Aʾina-i tawārīkh (Shaʾiq), 428 (n. 41)
ʿAjāʾib al-makhlūqāt (Qazwini), 347 (n. 110)
Akbar Allahabadi (U, d. 1921), 351 (n. 158), 420 (n. 60)
Akhlāq-i Nāṣirī (Naṣiruddin Ṭusi), 246, 424 (n. 1)
Akif, Mehmet (T, d. 1936), xxi, 21, 330 (n. 5)
ʿAlawi (IP), 352 (n. 3)
Alexander Romance, 114, 115
Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves, 260
ʿAli ibn ʿUmar-i Ghaznawi (P, 11th cent.), 414 (n. 19)
ʿAli Ibrahim Khan (IP, d. after 1784), 341 (n. 42)
ʿAli Niʿmat Khan ʿĀli (IP, d. 1711), 249, 323, 346 (n. 101), 375 (n. 29), 425 (n. 18), 431 (n. 34)
ʿAli Quli Khan, Khan Zaman (IP), 305
Alifnāma (Qasim-i Kahi), 229
Amālī waʾl-majālis, al- (Ibn Babuya), 358 (n. 30)
Amʿaq Bukhari (P, d. 1148), xii
Amin (IP), 447 (n. 50)
Amir Khusrau of Delhi (P, d. 1325), xiv, 23, 30–32, 43, 49, 59, 64, 67, 81, 90, 96, 110, 117, 121, 131–34, 138, 140, 151, 166, 167, 170, 182, 183, 197, 199, 203, 230, 236, 237, 248, 258, 272, 273, 275, 284, 286, 293, 305, 317, 320, 333 (n. 32), 336 (n. 17), 337 (n. 37), 341 (n. 39), 342 (n. 51), 345 (n. 84), 346 (n. 94), 347 (n. 113), 348 (nn. 129, 130), 353 (nn. 7, 11), 357 (n. 7), 369 (n. 3), 371 (nn. 33, 34, 37), 373 (n. 5), 375 (nn. 18, 20, 21, 23), 386 (n. 32), 390 (n. 75), 392 (n. 103), 395 (n. 34), 396 (n. 41), 398 (nn. 44, 46), 403 (n. 30), 410 (n. 46), 412 (n. 69), 414 (n. 12), 415 (n. 26), 417 (nn. 12, 17), 418 (nn. 25, 28), 423 (n. 93), 425 (n. 13), 428 (n. 42), 430 (nn. 26, 30), 434 (nn. 22, 27), 435 (n. 28), 436 (nn. 7, 14), 439 (nn. 43, 44), 441 (n. 5), 444 (n. 8). See also *Khusrau Shīrīn*; *Laylā Majnūn*; *Nuh Sipihr*
ʿAndalib, Naṣir Muḥammad (IP, d. 1758), xx, 26, 314, 321, 352 (n. 5), 405 (n. 54), 430 (n. 25), 441 (n. 59), 444 (n. 3), 445 (n. 25)
Angelus Silesius (d. 1677), 169, 175, 410 (n. 55)
Anīs al-ʿushshāq (Rami), 6, 326 (n. 21), 329 (n. 1), 358 (n. 21)
Anisi Yolquli (IP, d. 1605), 141, 367 (n. 2), 375 (n. 21)
Anwār-i Suhaylī (Ḥusayn Waʿiẓ-i Kashifi), 400 (n. 5)
Anwari (P, d. ca. 1190), xiii, 24, 26–28, 38–41, 44, 73, 77, 78, 88, 111, 121, 125, 151, 163, 212, 214, 215, 247, 249, 281, 296, 308, 312, 320, 336 (n. 17), 342 (n. 50), 345 (n. 88), 348 (n. 122), 349 (n. 134), 350 (n. 148), 351 (n. 157), 354 (n. 17), 366 (n. 5), 373 (n. 10), 379 (n. 21), 381 (n. 8), 384 (n. 11), 411 (nn. 63, 64), 412 (n. 67), 425 (n. 18), 428 (n. 2); his *Dīwān*, 402 (n. 19)
ʿAqil Shahjahanabadi (IP, ca. 1700), 376 (n. 37), 446 (n. 35)
ʿAql-i surkh (Suhrawardi), 394 (n. 20)
Arabian Nights, 76, 292, 444 (n. 2)
Arda Virafnāma, 118
ʿArifi (P, d. 1449, xvi, 266, 285
Armaghān-i Ḥijāz (Iqbal), 380 (n. 56)
Artang (Arzhang), 120, 364 (n. 51); *Arzhang-i chīn* (Deviprasad), 364 (n. 52); *Arzang-i Shāʾiq*, 364 (n. 52)
Asaf Halet Çelebi (T, d. 1958), xxi, 421 (nn. 68, 71)
"Ash Wednesday" (T. S. Eliot), 102
Aʿsha (A, d. after 625), 381 (n. 1)
Ashki of Qum (P, 16th cent.), 41
Ashna (IP), 354 (n. 21)
Ashraf (IP, d. 1745), 339 (n. 8), 379 (n. 22), 435 (n. 34)
Ashraf Khan (PT), 337 (n. 37)
Aṣil (IP), 309
ʿAsjadi (P, d. 1040), xi, 288, 430 (n. 30)
Aslam Kashmiri (IP), 410 (n. 54)
Asrār-i khudī (Iqbal), 368 (n. 5)
Asrār-i maḥabbat (Maḥabbat Khan), 333 (n. 31)
ʿAṭa, Samiʿi (P, 20th cent.), 357 (n. 111)
Athar (IP), 339 (n. 8)
Athir Akhsikati (P, d. ca. 1174), 337, (n. 37)
Atish (U, d. 1847), 93, 172, 355 (n. 30)
Atkinson, James, 362 (n. 18)
ʿAṭṭar, Fariduddin (P, d. 1220), xii, 6, 30, 31, 119, 125, 179, 188, 259, 289, 297, 341 (n. 37), 348 (n. 130), 354 (n. 17), 359 (n. 24), 372 (n. 4), 375 (nn. 26, 28), 380 (n. 23), 387 (n. 42), 401 (n. 16), 402 (n. 26), 404 (n. 41), 405 (n. 49), 407 (n. 15), 412 (nn. 78, 82, 84), 414 (n. 12), 417 (n. 11), 422 (n. 82), 423 (n. 99), 430 (n. 30), 432 (n. 8), 434 (nn. 26, 27), 443 (nn. 23, 30), 445 (n. 18). See also *Ilāhīnāma*; *Manṭiq uṭ-ṭayr*; *Muṣībatnāma*; *Pandnāma*; *Ushturnāma*
ʿAufi (P, d. after 1236), xiii, 114, 156, 194
Auḥadi Kirmani (P, d. 1298), xiv

Auḥaduddin Maraghi (P, d. 1338), xv
ʿAwārif al-maʿārif (Suhrawardi), 246, 424 (n. 1)
ʿAyār-i dānish (Abuʾl-Faẓl), 400 (n. 5)
Āyina-i Iskandari (Amir Khusrau), 116
Ayman (IP), 380 (n. 30)
ʿAyyuqi (P, d. ca. 1140), xi, 134, 371 (n. 29)
Azad, Muḥammad Ḥusayn (U, d. 1910), 335 (n. 6). See also *Āb-i ḥayāt*
Azad Bilgrami (IP, d. 1786), xx, 133, 172, 225, 252, 277, 304, 335 (n. 6), 343 (n. 59), 346 (n. 97), 362 (n. 30), 365 (n. 58), 374 (n. 14), 422 (n. 84), 427 (n. 40), 440 (nn. 47, 56)
Azhar (IP), 211
ʿAzmi Baba (T, 16th cent.), 350 (n. 150)
Azraqi (P, d. before 1072), xii, 238, 277, 288, 390 (n. 71), 439 (nn. 33, 39)

Badaʾuni, ʿAbdul Qadir (IP, d. 1615), 430 (n. 25)
Bāgh u bahār, 243, 428 (n. 42)
Bahāristān (Jami), 362 (n. 23), 429 (n. 12)
Balchand (IP), 409 (n. 29)
Bāl-i Jibrīl (Iqbal), 349 (nn. 137, 140), 397 (n. 44)
Bāng-i darā (Iqbal), 300, 334 (n. 44)
Baqi (Baki) (T, d. 1600), xviii, 173, 235, 238, 241, 276, 285, 345 (n. 86), 387 (n. 39), 390 (nn. 72, 82), 400 (n. 63), 420 (n. 56)
Baqi of Kolab (P), 386 (n. 25)
Baqli, Ruzbihan (P, d. 1209), xiii, 56, 175, 309, 353 (n. 7), 373 (n. 5), 388 (n. 58), 423 (n. 99)
bārahmāsa, 203
Batu, Selahettin (T, d. 1979), 365 (n. 55)
Bayati, ʿAbdulwahhab al- (A), 127
Bayram Khan (T, P, d. 1561), xviii, 141, 374 (nn. 16, 28)
Bedil, Mirza ʿAbdul Qadir (IP, d. 1721), xix, xxi, 26, 115, 149, 194, 208, 215, 216, 224, 225, 235, 243, 250, 295–99, 315, 317, 349 (n. 146), 365 (n. 58), 379 (n. 23), 383 (n. 27), 385 (n. 15), 387 (n. 39), 389 (n. 65), 415 (nn. 36, 38, 39, 40), 423 (n. 88), 424 (nn. 101, 102), 425 (n. 12), 435 (n. 34)
Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu (T, d. 1975), 393 (n. 1)
Bekas (P), 26
Betab (P, d. 1925), 26
Bible, the, 220, 240. *See also* Gospel; Old Testament; Psalter
Bisaṭi Samarqandi (P, d. 1412), 420 (n. 62)
Blake, William (d. 1827), 221
Brentano, Clemens (d. 1842), vii
Brhadaranyaka Upanishad, 197
Bu ʿAli Qalandar (IP, d. 1324), 345 (n. 84), 360 (n. 30), 366 (n. 7), 408 (n. 21)
Būf-i kūr (Hedayat), 186
Buhturi, al- (A, d. 897), 385 (n. 19)
Bullhe Shah (PJ, d. 1754), xix
Burda (Buṣiri), 334 (n. 41)
Burhani (P), 410 (n. 45)
Bushaq-i aṭʿimma (Bu Isḥaq) (P, d. ca. 1460), xvi, 166, 269, 386 (n. 26), 427 (n. 35)
Buṣiri, al- (A, d. 1298), 334 (n. 41)
Būstān (Saʿdi), xiv, 31, 47, 349 (n. 138), 373 (n. 4), 381 (n. 31), 389 (n. 67), 401 (n. 13), 403 (n. 28), 404 (n. 44), 434 (n. 26)

Cafer (Jaʿfar) Çelebi (T, d. 1514), xvii, 11, 242
Chahār Magala (Four Discourses) (Niẓami ʿAruḍi), xii, 212
"Chessplayers" (Premchand), 289
Chihil Ṭūṭī, 395 (n. 26)
Chishti (IP), 315

Dagh, Nawwab Mirza Khan (U, d. 1905), xxi, 147, 378 (n. 14)
Dah Majlis, 429 (n. 16)
Dah Nāma, 259, 429 (n. 16)
Damiri (A, d. 1405), 399 (n. 58), 404 (n. 44)
Dana (IP), 424 (n. 102)
Danish (IP), 369 (n. 16), 393 (n. 6), 419 (n. 42), 446 (n. 34)
Dante Alighieri (d. 1321), 159, 169
Daqiqi (P, d. ca. 981), xi, 108, 112, 116, 117, 320, 358 (n. 20), 394 (n. 22), 435 (n. 28)
Daqqaq, Abu ʿAli ad- (A, d. 1015 or 1021), 444 (n. 12)
Dara Shikoh, Prince (IP, d. 1659), xvii, xix, 73, 252, 341 (n. 29), 427 (nn. 35, 41)
Dasamō Avatār, 182
Dastanbū (Ghalib), 251
Dastūr al-fuṣaḥā (ʿAbdun Nabi), 359 (n. 27)
Dastūr-i ʿushshāq (Fattaḥi), xvi
Daulatshah (P, d. ca. 1495), 367 (n. 2), 382 (n. 20), 389 (n. 65), 403 (n. 29), 418 (n. 34), 443 (n. 22)
Daya Razi, Najmuddin (P, d. 1256), 182, 395 (n. 28)
Deviprasad (19th cent.), 364 (n. 52)
Dhauq, Khaqani-yi Hind (U, d. 1854), 381 (n. 33)
Dhihni (IP, 18th cent.), 310, 319, 344 (n. 76), 373 (n. 11)
Dirafsh-i kāwiyānī (Ghalib), 110, 361 (n. 13)
Divine Comedy (Dante), 149

Dīwān-i kabīr (Rumi), xiv, 333 (n. 29), 382 (nn. 8, 19, 23)
Donne, John (d. 1631), 2, 197, 262, 348 (n. 130)

Eliot, T. S., 102, 169

Fakhri Harawi (P, d. 1539), 331 (n. 7)
Fakhruddin ʿAli Ṣafi (P d. 1532), 367 (n. 2)
Fālnāma, 212, 243, 244
Fani Kashmiri (IP, d. 1670), xix, 198, 292, 296, 311, 318, 342 (n. 55), 347 (n. 120), 365 (n. 1), 370 (n. 23), 374 (n. 13), 378 (n. 16), 387 (n. 45), 393 (n. 11), 395 (n. 25), 405 (n. 45), 420 (n. 59), 423 (n. 100), 425 (n. 12), 446 (n. 29)
Farda (IP, d. ca. 1705), 344 (n. 75)
Farigh (IP, mid-17th cent.), 379 (n. 18)
Farrukhi (P, d. 1037), xi, 26, 42, 44, 109, 113, 115, 124, 130, 134, 179, 184, 187, 192, 199, 211, 221, 223, 247, 286, 287, 311, 320, 330 (nn. 12, 13), 336 (nn. 19, 23, 24, 26); 339 (n. 5), 341 (n. 34), 355 (n. 36), 362 (n. 22), 363 (nn. 33, 39), 364 (n. 51), 365 (n. 56), 367 (n. 1), 378 (n. 15), 379 (n. 21), 380 (n. 30), 384 (n. 10), 391 (n. 83), 397 (n. 44), 399 (n. 59), 404 (n. 44), 405 (nn. 47, 48), 306 (nn. 2, 4, 6), 411 (n. 64), 414 (n. 23), 424 (n. 4), 425 (n. 7), 431 (n. 1), 432 (n. 9), 438 (n. 30), 441 (nn. 2, 3), 445 (n. 18), 447 (n. 62)
Faṣiḥi (P, 15th cent.), 402 (n. 21)
Fattaḥi, Yaḥya Sibak (P, d. 1448), xvi
Fayż Aḥmad Fayż (U, d. 1984), 249
Fayżi (IP, d. 1595), xviii, 80, 95, 252, 332 (n. 26), 344 (n. 76), 382 (n. 13), 433 (n. 17), 447 (n. 51), 448 (n. 64)
Fażli (T, d. 1563), xviii, 181
Fażli (U, fl. 1731), 429 (n. 16)
Fighān-i Delhi (Dagh), 378 (n. 14)
Fighani, Baba (P, d. 1519), xvii, 103, 312, 372 (n. 40), 379 (n. 21), 391 (n. 85)
Fīhi mā fīhi (Rumi), 285, 333 (n. 29), 442 (n. 11)
Firdausi (P, d. 1020), xi, 29, 30, 108, 111, 112, 114, 130, 188, 249, 288, 360 (nn. 2, 3), 425 (n. 18)
Firishta (IP, d. after 1624), 341 (n. 42)
Fitnat Hanim (T, d. 1780), 331 (n. 17)
Furughi (P), 307, 366 (n. 5)
Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam (Ibn ʿArabi), 246, 250, 424 (n. 1), 426 (n. 23)
Fuzuli (T, d. 1556), xvii, 75, 126, 131, 165, 171, 230, 235, 349 (n. 130), 361 (n. 11), 368 (n. 9), 385 (n. 17), 391 (n. 84), 393 (n. 13), 417 (n. 16), 418 (n. 39), 419 (n. 43), 422 (n. 82), 436 (n. 15)

Ġalib Dede (T, d. 1799), xx, 174, 215, 269 (n. 22), 391 (nn. 84, 90), 392 (n. 96)
Ġanizade (T, 17th cent.), 412 (n. 77)
Geschichte der schönen Redekünste Persiens (Hammer), 5, 6, 178, 198, 326 (n. 17), 392 (n. 1)
Gesudaraz, Sayyid Ḥusayni (IP, d. 1422), xv, 58, 96, 352 (n. 2), 378 (n. 16), 426 (n. 26), 433 (n. 19), 435 (n. 28)
Ghalib, Mirza Asadullah (U, P, d. 1869), vii, viii, xx, 23, 34, 60, 62, 63, 68, 72, 80, 83, 84, 95, 109, 110, 112, 114, 118, 119, 126, 133, 147, 151, 156, 158, 159, 165, 167, 168, 174, 183, 184, 188, 199, 202, 211, 212, 214, 230, 232, 233, 248, 251, 257, 264, 269, 280, 295, 297, 303, 310–13, 315, 316, 318, 323, 328 (n. 50), 330 (n. 14), 336 (n. 17), 338 (n. 4), 343 (nn. 60, 71), 340 (n. 19), 345 (n. 88), 346 (n. 100), 347 (n. 118), 348 (nn. 122, 129), 352 (nn. 1, 6), 354 (nn. 19, 20), 355 (nn. 33, 37), 356 (nn. 43, 45), 363 (n. 37), 366 (n. 5), 367 (n. 17), 368 (nn. 5, 19, 21), 371 (nn. 34, 37), 377 (n. 1), 381 (n. 33), 382 (n. 8), 384 (n. 7), 387 (nn. 39, 46), 388 (n. 53), 391 (n. 90), 392 (n. 91), 394 (n. 15), 395 (n. 33), 396 (n. 37), 399 (n. 59), 404 (nn. 40, 45), 407 (nn. 8, 9), 408 (nn. 20, 21), 410 (nn. 50, 55), 411 (n. 64), 412 (n. 77), 417 (nn. 12, 18), 421 (n. 75), 426 (nn. 20, 22), 433 (n. 9), 434 (n. 27), 437 (nn. 24, 28), 440 (nn. 49, 54, 56), 441 (n. 60), 445 (n. 20), 446 (n. 42), 447 (n. 56)
Ghani Khasmiri (IP, d. 1661), xviii, 224, 279, 295, 296, 320, 354 (n. 17), 383 (n. 27), 410 (n. 46), 413 (n. 81), 415 (n. 41), 439 (n. 29), 440 (nn. 46, 48), 443 (n. 27), 445 (n. 26)
Ghanimat Kunjahi (IP, d. 1695), 339 (n. 9)
Ghawwaṣi (DU, d. after 1650), xviii, 395 (n. 26), 411 (n. 61)
Ghazzali, Abu Ḥamid al- (A, d. 1111), 121, 178, 424 (n. 2), 429 (n. 19)
Ghazzali, Aḥmad (P, d. 1126), xii
Ghazzali Mashhadi (P), 420 (n. 25)
Ghina (IP), 374 (n. 11)
Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von (d. 1832), ix, xv, 1, 3, 5, 8, 9, 13, 22, 62, 71, 85, 115, 133, 134, 157, 169, 175, 184, 195, 198, 204, 206, 207, 221, 284, 326 (n. 14), 335 (n. 9), 396 (n. 36). See also *Mahomets Gesang*; *Selige Sehnsucht*; *West-Östlicher Divan*
Golden Alphabet (*sīḥarfī*), 229
Gospel, the, 406 (n. 3)
Gul. *See* ʿAbdul Aḥad
Gül u bülbül (Fażli), xviii, 181, 394 (n. 17)
Gulistān (Saʿdi), xiv, 23, 143, 184, 248, 258, 362 (n. 23), 425 (n. 12), 438 (n. 34)
Gülşehri (T, d. after 1317), 333 (n. 28)
Gülşen-i aşk (Izzet Molla), 392 (n. 97)
Gulshan, Saʿdullah (IP, d. 1728), 26
Gulshan-i Ibrāhīm (Ẓuhuri), 341 (n. 42)
Gulshan-i ʿishq (Nuṣrati), 296, 410 (n. 50)
Gulshan-i rāz (Shabistari), xiv, 392 (n. 97)
Gulzār-i Ibrāhīm (ʿAli Ibrahim Khan), 341 (n. 42)
Gurgani (P, d. after 1054), xi, 134, 370 (n. 28), 427 (n. 33). See also *Wamik und Asra*
Gūy u chaugān (ʿArifi), xvi, 285, 442 (n. 10)

Ḥadāʾiq as-siḥr (Waṭwaṭ), 337 (n. 32)
Ḥadīqat al-ḥaqīqa (Sanaʾi), xii, 30, 32, 359 (n. 28), 370 (n. 27), 380 (n. 28), 382 (n. 8), 395 (n. 31), 396 (n. 37), 398 (n. 52), 399 (nn. 57, 58, 61), 402 (n. 18), 405 (n. 50), 421 (n. 68), 422 (n. 87), 423 (n. 99), 426 (n. 31), 434 (nn. 22, 27), 426 (n. 13), 439 (n. 45), 442 (n. 10)
Hafeez Jhallandari (U), 332 (n. 25)
Ḥafiẓ, Muḥammad Shamsuddin (P, d. 1389), xv, xxiii, 3–9, 13–15, 20, 23, 25, 26, 38, 40, 47, 51, 52, 56, 58–61, 64, 65, 71–73, 82, 83, 90, 93, 94, 97, 106, 109, 115, 117, 118, 121, 132, 138, 142, 148, 151, 156, 157, 159, 164, 167, 168, 170, 172, 179, 180, 192, 197, 198, 205, 210, 213, 231, 232, 235, 241, 243, 251, 257, 260, 261, 273, 276, 280, 284, 318, 325 (nn. 9, 10, 11), 327 (n. 31), 336 (n. 17), 340 (n. 19), 343 (nn. 63, 72), 346 (nn. 98, 105), 351 (nn. 160, 162), 352 (nn. 2, 4), 354 (nn. 23, 24), 355 (n. 32), 356 (nn. 42, 47), 361 (nn. 8, 12), 362 (n. 27), 364 (n. 48), 368 (n. 4), 371 (n. 33), 375 (n. 30), 378 (n. 16), 386 (n. 33), 387 (nn. 39, 42), 388 (nn. 53, 55), 390 (n. 75), 391 (n. 84), 393 (n. 10), 395 (n. 30), 414 (n. 12), 423 (n. 90), 426 (n. 30), 427 (n. 33), 437 (n. 28), 438 (nn. 29, 31), 440 (n. 46), 443 (n. 21), 444 (n. 13). See also *dīwān*; ghazal
Haft Āsumān (Ahmad ʿAli), 32, 334 (n. 36)
Haft Aurang (Jami), 30, 215
Haft Paykar (Niẓami), 30, 32, 113, 140, 141, 199, 212, 258, 264
Haft Qulzum, 5
Haji Mir Abu Ṭalib (P), 367 (n. 2)
Ḥali, Alṭaf Ḥusain (U, d. 1914), xxi, 33
Ḥallaj, Ḥusayn ibn Manṣur (A, d. 922), xiii, 11, 88, 125–27, 198, 268, 280, 351 (n. 158), 367 (n. 17), 373 (n. 5), 404 (n. 38), 434 (n. 23)
Ḥamāsat-i hīzamshikan (Khalkhali), 332 (n. 25)
Hamdi (T, d. 1503), 333 (n. 30), 343 (n. 59), 368 (n. 9)
Hamlet (Shakespeare), 332 (n. 21)
Ḥamzanāma, 248, 249, 359 (n. 27), 425 (n. 14)
Ḥanzala al-Badghisi (P), 445 (n. 19)
Ḥasan Sijzi Dihlawi, Amir (IP, d. 1328), xiv, 43, 75, 248, 347 (n. 114), 353 (n. 7)
Hashim (DU, d. after 1687), 333 (n. 30)
Hashim (IP), 310, 322, 374 (n. 11)
Hasht Bihisht (Amir Khusrau), 258, 429 (n. 11)
Ḥassan ibn Thabit (A, d. ca. 659), 247
Hatif-i Iṣfahani (P, d. 1783), xx, 50
Hatifi (P), 371 (n. 34)
Hayāt al-ḥayawān (Damiri), 399 (n. 58), 404 (n. 44)
Ḥaydar Qalicha (IP, d. ca. 1570), 444 (n. 7)
Ḥaydari (U, d. 1823), 395 (n. 26)
Ḥazin, ʿAli (P, d. 1766), xx, 103, 139, 248, 279, 336 (n. 17), 342 (n. 54), 351 (n. 157), 358 (n. 17), 372 (n. 40), 425 (n. 12)
Hedayat, Sadiq (P, d. 1957), 186
Heine, Heinrich (d. 1856), 101
Heiseler, Bernt von, 365 (n. 55)
Helen Remains in Troy (Batu), 365 (n. 55)
Herder, J. G. (d. 1803), ix, 357 (n. 11)
Hesse, Hermann (d. 1962), 169, 392 (n. 93)
Ḥifẓ Allah Khan Ḥifẓi (U, 19th cent.), 26
Hilali, Badruddin (P, d. 1529), xvii, 131, 249, 368 (n. 7), 425 (n. 18)
Hildebrand und Hadubrand, 112
Hitopadeśa, 400 (n. 5)
Ḥujjat al-Hind (Miḥrabi), 182, 395 (n. 27)
Hujwiri, ʿAli ibn ʿUthman (P, d. ca. 1071), 272, 339 (n. 7), 435 (n. 2)
Humam (P), 414 (n. 17)
Humāy and Humāyūn (Khaju), xv
Ḥusayn Waʿiẓ-i Kashifi (P, d. 1505), 400 (n. 5), 429 (n. 16); his son, 367 (n. 2)
Hüsn u aşk (Ġalib Dede), xx, 215, 369 (n. 22)
Ḥusn u dil (Fattaḥi), xvi

Ibn ʿArabi, Muḥyi'ddin (A, d. 1240), xiii, 206, 250, 259, 281, 310, 397 (n. 43), 401 (n. 11), 410 (n. 55), 424 (n. 1)
Ibn Babuya (A, d. 991), 358 (n. 20)
Ibn al-Fariḍ, ʿOmar (A, d. 1235), 281, 328 (n. 42)
Ibn Ḥazm (A, d. 1064), 397 (n. 43)
Ibn Ḥusam (P, d. after 1470), 369 (n. 26)
Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ (A, d. 756), 108, 360 (n. 1)
Ibn al-Muʿtazz (A, d. 908), 237, 385 (n. 18), 387 (n. 46), 406 (n. 4)
Ibn Qaṣyi (A, d. 1151), 344 (n. 75)
Ibn ar-Rawandi (P, d. after 1199), 108
Ibn ar-Rumi (A, d. ca 896), 211, 383 (n. 25), 385 (n. 18), 389 (n. 61)
Ibn-i Yamin (P, d. 1368), xv, 214, 289
Ibrahim II ʿAdilshah of Bijapur (DU, r. 1580–1627), 210, 334 (n. 39), 341 (n. 42)
Idraki Beglari (IP, after 1620), 333 (n. 31)
I Dream of Jeannie (television series), 76
Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm ad-dīn (Ghazzali), 429 (n. 19)
Iji, ʿAḍududdin (A, d. 1355), 424 (n. 2)
Iksir, Mirza ʿAẓima (IP), 353 (n. 14)
Ilāhīnāma (ʿAṭṭar), 45, 337 (n. 29), 349 (n. 138), 373 (n. 5), 386 (n. 27)
ʿImad-i Faqih (P, d. 1371), xv, 40, 441 (n. 3)
ʿImaduddin Ghaznawi (P, 11th cent.), 348 (n. 121), 412 (n. 70)
Imami Harawi (P, d. 1277), 93, 400 (n. 6)
Immermann, Karl (d. 1840), 22
Imruʾlqays (A, 6th cent.), 247, 424 (n. 5)
Insha Allah Khan Insha (U, d. 1818), 25, 68, 343 (n. 69), 390 (n. 83)
Iphigeneia, 2, 127; Batu's *Iphigenia*, 365 (n. 55)
Iqbal, Muḥammad (P, U, d. 1938), vii, xxi, 13, 29, 32, 35, 40, 51, 58, 61, 63, 68–71, 80, 82, 84, 95, 105, 118–21, 124, 131, 135, 148, 159, 165, 169, 170, 174, 178, 180, 181, 186, 197, 205, 210, 221, 230, 250, 275, 286, 334 (n. 39), 340 (n. 20), 344 (n. 77), 345 (n. 92), 357 (n. 8), 360 (n. 29), 365 (n. 61), 366 (n. 2), 378 (n. 18), 402 (n. 18), 407 (n. 14), 410 (n. 51), 442 (n. 16). See also *Asrār-i khudī*; *Armaghān-i Ḥijāz*; *Bāl-i Jibrīl*; *Bāng-i darā*; *Lāla-i Ṭūr*; *Payām-i Mashriq*; *Shikwah, Jawāb-i Shikwah*; *Zabūr-i ʿajam*; *Żarb-i Kalīm*
ʿIraqi, Fakhruddin (P, d. 1289), xiv, 12, 248, 409 (n. 35)
Ishak Çelebi (T), 390 (n. 75)
Iskandarnāma (Niẓami), 30, 31, 115, 149, 332 (nn. 26, 28), 376 (n. 34), 380 (nn. 25, 28), 396 (n. 36), 405 (nn. 49, 52), 443 (n. 29); *Iskandarnāma* (general), 108, 363 (n. 31)
Ismaʿil Bakhshi (IP), 306
Ismaʿil the Safawid (T, r. 1501–24), xvi, 241, 422 (n. 85)
ʿIṣmat Bukhari (P, d. 1436), xv
Izzet Molla (T, 15th cent.), 382 (n. 97)

Jām-i Jam (Auḥaduddin Maraghi), xv
Jamali Kanboh (IP, d. 1535), 249, 344 (n. 76), 353 (n. 12), 395 (n. 25), 425 (n. 18), 434 (n. 27)
Jamal-i Khujandi (P, 12th cent.), 170, 389 (n. 62), 390 (n. 75)
Jami, ʿAbdur Raḥman (P, d. 1492), xvi, xix, 12, 23, 32, 48, 52, 65, 66, 110, 116, 132, 133, 165, 168, 169, 173, 180, 181, 187, 196, 204, 222, 223, 232–34, 236–38, 240, 244, 246, 248–50, 274, 279, 289, 294, 297, 304, 306, 308, 316, 317, 322, 333 (n. 30), 340 (n. 19), 343 (nn. 59, 67), 345–46 (n. 94), 347 (n. 117), 351 (n. 158), 352 (n. 1), 353 (n. 7), 354 (n. 24), 355 (n. 36), 360 (n. 3), 365 (n. 57), 369 (n. 16), 370 (n. 27), 371 (nn. 34, 36), 374 (n. 17), 376 (n. 31), 377 (nn. 3, 5), 382 (n. 30), 386 (n. 36), 391 (nn. 84, 85, 86), 393 (nn. 7, 12, 13), 396 (nn. 34, 41), 402 (n. 26), 403 (nn. 29, 32), 409 (n. 35), 413 (n. 6), 415 (n. 32), 418 (n. 50), 420 (nn. 58, 62), 424 (n. 2), 425 (nn. 18, 19), 430 (nn. 26, 27, 28), 432 (n. 1), 438 (n. 35), 441 (n. 5), 442 (nn. 6, 32), 445 (n. 18), 448 (n. 66). See also *Bahāristān*; *Haft Aurang*; *Khiradnāma*; *Tuḥfat al-aḥrār*; *Yūsuf Zulaykhā*
Jamil (A, d. 701), 134, 357 (n. 6), 370 (n. 26)
Jannati Biya (P, before 1200), 381 (n. 2)
Jauhari, Abuʾl-Maḥamid al- (P, early 12th cent.), 124, 194, 362 (n. 25), 402 (n. 21)
Jāvīdnāma (Iqbal), 70, 118, 207, 334 (n. 40), 345 (nn. 82, 87), 348 (n. 125), 352 (nn. 163, 166), 363 (n. 43), 408 (n. 28), 426 (n. 22)
Jurjani, ʿAbdul Qahir (d. 1078), 445 (n. 17)

Kakorawi, Muḥsin (U, d. 1905), 202
Kalami (DU, 15th cent.), 334 (n. 36)
Kalīla wa Dimna, 192, 360 (n. 1), 400 (n. 5)
Kalim, Abu Ṭalib (IP, d. 1651), 65, 69, 90–92, 96, 147, 159, 187, 188, 196, 211, 228, 242, 277, 295, 296, 299, 307, 315, 316, 319, 328 (n. 50), 346 (n. 99), 350 (n. 150), 354 (n. 24), 357 (n. 5), 370 (n. 23), 374 (n. 16), 375 (n. 20), 384 (n. 10), 388 (n. 50), 394 (n. 15), 402 (n. 21), 407 (n. 8), 408 (n. 21), 409 (n. 31), 410 (n. 48), 442 (n. 15), 446 (nn. 33, 44), 447 (n. 62), 448 (n. 67)
Kamal Khan Rustami (DU, d. 1649), 359 (n. 26)
Kamal-i Farisi (P), 43(?), 336 (n. 18)
Kamal-i Khujandi (P, d. ca. 1400), xv, 43 (?), 238, 294, 444 (n. 16)
Kamaluddin Ismaʿil (P), 345 (n. 85), 427 (n. 33)
Karbal kathā (Fażli), 429 (n. 16)
Kashf, 47, 246; *Kashf al-asrār* (Maybudi), 339 (n. 7); *Kashf al-maḥjūb*, 272, 339 (n. 7)
Kashshāf (Zamakhshari), 57, 246, 339 (n. 7), 424 (n. 2)
Katibi Iṣfahani (P), 139, 373 (n. 11)
Katibi Nishapuri Turshizi (P, d. 1434), 43, 222, 414 (n. 18), 431 (n. 33)
Kaukabi Marwazi (P, 12th cent.), 389 (n. 70)
Kayğusuz Abdal (T, 15th cent.), 249, 268
Khaju-yi Kirmani (P, d. between 1352 and 1361), xv, 130, 146, 306, 368 (n. 4), 377 (n. 4), 379 (n. 19), 388 (n. 55), 419 (n. 42), 433 (n. 10)
Khaki Khorasani (P, 15th cent.), 394 (n. 15)
Khalʿ an-naʿlayn (Ibn Qaṣyi), 344 (n. 75)
al-Khalidi (A, 10th cent.), 389 (n. 60)
Khalil, al- (A, d. between 786 and 790), 425 (n. 7)
Khalis (IP), 374 (n. 13)
Khamsa (Niẓami), xiii, 30, 31, 134, 248; imitations of, 332 (n. 26); by Idraki and Nami, 333 (n. 31); by Rangin, 428 (n. 1)
Khan-i Arzu (U, d. 1756), xix, 39, 335 (n. 6)
Khan-i Aʿẓam (IP, 16th cent.), 435 (n. 34)
Khaqani, Afḍaluddin (P, d. 1199), xiii, 7, 24, 38, 39, 45, 57, 64, 77, 80, 94, 112, 124, 146, 147, 149, 157, 174, 188, 197, 199, 211–13, 221, 223–25, 230, 233, 246, 247, 251, 258, 266, 296, 308, 314, 319, 321, 336 (n. 17), 337 (nn. 32, 37), 341 (n. 36), 346 (nn. 98, 104), 348 (n. 122), 351 (n. 160), 352 (nn. 5, 6), 355 (n. 26), 357 (n. 5), 365 (nn. 56, 60), 366 (nn. 4, 5), 370 (n. 27), 372 (n. 4), 375 (n. 18), 380 (n. 30), 381 (nn. 31, 33), 381 (n. 6), 386 (nn. 33, 34), 387 (n. 40), 388 (n. 58), 393 (n. 3), 394 (n. 15), 396 (nn. 36, 37), 397 (n. 43), 401 (nn. 14, 15), 403 (n. 26), 404 (nn. 36, 41), 405 (nn. 49, 51, 52, 54), 407 (n. 8), 414 (n. 8), 415 (n. 32), 417 (n. 11), 418 (n. 20), 419 (n. 43), 420 (n. 54), 421 (n. 79), 423 (n. 99), 428 (n. 3), 429 (n. 11), 430 (n. 25), 431 (n. 34), 432 (nn. 2, 8), 433 (n. 15), 434 (nn. 24, 26), 437 (n. 28), 439 (n. 45), 443 (n. 23), 445 (n. 18)
Khāwarnāma (Ibn Ḥusam), 359 (n. 26)
Khayali Bukhari (P), 249, 425 (n. 18)
Khiradnāma-i Iskandarī (Jami), 116
Khomeini, Ayatullah (P, d. 1989), 13, 35, 116
Khudāynāma, 360 (n. 1)
Khushḥal Khan Khattak (PT, d. 1689), xix, 139, 364 (n. 48), 374 (n. 18)
Khusrau Shīrīn (Niẓami), 10, 30, 32, 45, 134, 367 (n. 2), 370 (n. 28), 373 (n. 7), 405 (n. 52), 430 (n. 30), 432 (n. 2); (Amir Khusrau), 134, 248; (Jami), 248
Khusrawi (P), 406 (n. 3)
Khwāb u khayāl (Mir Athar), 293
Khwaja Muinuddin (U), 289
Kipling, Rudyard (d. 1936), 200
Kisaʾi (P, d. 1001), xi, 62, 78, 170, 341 (n. 36), 381 (n. 6), 384 (n. 9)
Kitāb al-aghānī (Abuʾl-Faraj), 435 (n. 3)
Kitāb al-ʿayn (Khalil), 247, 424 (n. 7)
Kitāb aṭ-ṭawāsīn (Ḥallaj), 198
Kitāb az-zahra (Muhd. ibn Daʾud), 357 (n. 6)
Kitāb-i Nauras (Ibrahim II ʿAdilshah), 210
Klopstock, Friedrich Gottlieb (d. 1803), 2
Kubra, Najmuddin (A, d. 1221), 412 (n. 77)
Kushajim (A, d. 961), 375 (n. 18)

Lal Shahbaz Qalandar (IP, d. after 1267), xii, 63, 206, 342 (n. 45), 408 (n. 26)
Lāla-i Ṭūr (Iqbal), 68, 169, 332 (n. 24), 344 (n. 74), 382 (n. 22), 388 (n. 56)
Laʿli (P, d. 1467), xvi, 158, 382 (n. 15)
Lalla Rookh (Moore), 366 (n. 5)
Lamiʿi (T, d. between 1530 and 1532), 371 (n. 28), 389 (n. 61)
Lawāʾiḥ (Jami), 246, 424 (n. 2)
Laylā Majnūn (Niẓami), 30, 32, 133, 367 (n. 2), 382 (n. 13), 404 (n. 41), 418 (n. 21), 430 (n. 30); (Mir Jumla) 332 (n. 26); (Aḥmad) 332 (n. 26)
Leyla Hanim (T, d. 1847), 331 (n. 17)
Līlā Chanēsar, 333 (n. 31)
Lisani (IP), 403 (n. 27)
Lubāb al-albāb (ʿAufi), 328 (n. 40)
Luṭfullah, Maulana (IP), 304

Madāʾin qaṣīda (Khaqani), 39, 45, 147, 199, 288, 296, 335 (n. 4)
Maghāzī an-nabī (Yaʿqub Ṣarfi), 332 (n. 26)
Maḥabbat Khan (PT, d. 1808), 333 (n. 31)
Mahābhārata, 249
Mahir (IP, d. 1678), 365 (n. 58), 389 (n. 67), 404 (n. 41), 432 (n. 2)

Maḥmud Khan Afshar (P), 112
Mahomets Gesang (Goethe), 206
Mahsati (P, early 12th cent.), 29, 331 (n. 17)
Ma'il (P), 249, 425 (n. 18)
Ma'il Thattawi (IP, 19th cent.), 360 (n. 29), 425 (n. 18)
Majmaʿ al-baḥrayn (Dara Shikoh), 73
Makhfi Zebunnisa (P, d. 1703), 26, 331 (n. 17)
Makhzan al-asrār (Niẓami), 30, 32, 248, 334 (n. 36), 394 (n. 18), 398 (n. 47), 401 (n. 14), 442 (n. 9)
Malik Khushnud ʿAdilshahi (DU, d. after 1640), 333 (n. 30)
Manāqib al-ḥaydariyya, al- (Shirwani), 358 (n. 19)
Manṭiq uṭ-ṭayr (ʿAṭṭar), 30, 75, 91, 178, 184, 189, 249, 258, 325 (n. 12), 333 (n. 28), 391 (n. 84), 396 (n. 35), 398 (n. 47), 399 (n. 61)
Manuchihri Damghani (P, d. ca. 1040), xi, 117, 164, 166, 182, 211, 231, 243, 278, 336 (n. 26), 337 (n. 29), 348 (n. 124), 352 (n. 5), 353 (n. 12), 362 (n. 19), 363 (n. 35), 379 (n. 21), 380 (n. 28), 386 (n. 31), 388 (n. 49), 390 (n. 83), 394 (n. 25), 397 (n. 42), 398 (n. 49), 399 (n. 56), 417 (n. 19), 424 (n. 42)
Manẓūm-i aqdas (Shah ʿAlam II Aftab), 428 (n. 42)
Maqālāt ash-shuʿarā (Qaniʿ), 328 (n. 40)
Maqālāt-i Shams-i Tabrīz, 367 (n. 13), 401 (n. 9), 404 (n. 38)
Maqāmāt al-Ḥarīrī, 337 (n. 32)
Mashriqi (P, 15th cent.), 249, 425 (n. 18)
Masʿud Bakk (IP, d. 1397), 383 (n. 3)
Masʿud ibn Saʿd-i Salman (IP, d. 1131), xii, 112, 120, 146, 225, 363 (n. 39), 377 (n. 1), 398 (n. 49), 402 (n. 21), 406 (n. 6), 430 (n. 25), 439 (n. 43)
Mathnawī (Rumi), xiv, 21, 30, 31, 48, 66, 67, 74, 78, 149, 175, 183, 194, 208, 233, 249, 258, 268, 273, 330 (n. 11), 333 (n. 29), 349 (n. 138), 352 (n. 165), 355 (n. 31), 357 (n. 7), 369 (n. 18), 380 (n. 25), 382 (nn. 10, 19), 392 (nn. 93, 94, 96), 394 (n. 18), 395 (n. 32), 398 (nn. 45, 52), 401 (n. 9), 405 (n. 50), 408 (n. 27), 409 (nn. 33, 34), 415 (n. 24), 419 (n. 45), 430 (n. 24), 432 (n. 7), 436 (n. 13)
Maṭlaʿ al-anwār (Amir Khusrau), 32
Mawāqif (Iji), 246, 424 (n. 2)
Maybudi (P, 12th cent.), 339 (n. 7)
Maykhāna (ʿAbdun Nabi), 334 (n. 39)
Maysari (P, ca. 1000), 365 (n. 56)
Maẓhar Janjanan (U, P, d. 1781), 447 (n. 46)
Maẓhar Kashmiri (IP), 388 (n. 57)
Meʿali (T, d. 1535), xvii, 100, 211, 213, 295, 356 (n. 2), 397 (n. 41), 403 (n. 27), 404 (n. 35), 412 (n. 77), 446 (n. 28)
Mesiḥi (T, d. 1512), xvii, 392 (n. 102)
Miftāḥ al-ʿulūm (Sakkaki), 246, 424 (n. 2)
Miḥrabi (IP, 17th cent.), 395 (n. 27)
Mihri Hatun (T, fl. 1500), 331 (n. 17)
Mir ʿAli Amin (DU, fl. 1697), 333 (n. 30)
Mir Athar (U, 18th cent.), 293
Mir Dard, Khwaja (U, P, d. 1785), viii, xx, 26, 63, 75, 90, 92, 101, 149, 172, 174, 176, 202, 205, 210, 289, 292, 295, 298, 310, 312, 341 (n. 41), 346 (n. 106), 351 (n. 162), 353 (nn. 12, 13, 14), 354 (n. 19), 357 (n. 4), 382 (n. 13), 383 (n. 27), 385 (n. 20), 386 (n. 27), 387 (n. 45), 392 (n. 102), 400 (n. 65), 402 (n. 21), 410 (nn. 48, 49), 417 (n. 16), 423 (n. 100), 439 (nn. 40, 41, 45), 440 (nn. 47, 48, 53), 446 (n. 30), 447 (nn. 46, 48, 50)
Mir Jumla Muḥammad Amin (DU, ca. 1600), 332 (n. 26)
Mir Taqi Mir (U, d. 1810), xx, 170, 175, 248, 329 (n. 59), 378 (n. 14), 389 (n. 66), 425 (n. 10), 438 (n. 30)
Miʿrājiyya (Ġanizada), 412 (n. 77)
Miʿrājnāma, 334 (n. 34)
Mirʾāt al-jamāl (Azad Bilgrami), 304
Mirror for Princes, 362 (n. 23)
Mirṣād al-ʿibād (Daya Razi), 182
Molla Shah Badakhshi (P, d. 1661), 427 (n. 35)
Momin Khan Momin (U, d. 1815), xx, 212
Moore, Thomas (d. 1852), 366 (n. 5)
Morgenlandfahrt (Hesse), 150
Muʿallaqāt, 304
Mughbacha, Mir Imami (IP), 306, 353 (n. 15)
Muḥammad Fayżi Azad (DU, ca. 1700), 359 (n. 25)
Muḥammad ibn Naṣir (P), 68
Muḥsin Thattawi (IP, d. 1750), 195, 402 (n. 21)
Muʿizzi, Amir (P, d. ca. 1125), xii, 119, 156, 158, 210, 284, 294, 308, 336 (n. 23), 363 (nn. 33, 45), 377 (n. 6), 378 (n. 15), 381 (n. 4), 382 (n. 13), 412 (n. 77), 444 (n. 17)
Muʿjam (Shams-i Qays Razi), 335 (n. 3)
Mukhliṣ, Anandram (IP), 305, 353 (n. 11)
Mukhliṣay (IP), 422 (n. 84)
Mukhtaṣar (Taftazani), 246
Mumtaz (IP), 373 (n. 11)

Munājāt (ʿAbdullah-i Anṣari), 89
Munir Lahori, Abu'l-Barakat (IP, d. 1645), 179, 393 (n. 15), 419 (n. 42), 444 (n. 6)
Muqaddima-i shiʿr u shāʿirī (Ḥali), 329 (n. 57), 357 (n. 8)
Musaddas (Ḥali), xxi, 33, 334 (n. 43)
Mūsh u gurba (ʿUbayd-i Zakani), xv, 192
Mushfiqi of Bukhara (P, d. 1587), 372 (n. 4)
Muṣībatnāma (ʿAṭṭar), 259, 299, 333 (n. 28), 370 (n. 23), 380 (n. 23), 382 (n. 23), 396 (n. 34), 400 (n. 3), 402 (n. 23), 429 (n. 19), 432 (n. 8), 446 (n. 43), 447 (n. 59)
Muṭahhar Karah (IP, d. 1389), 246, 424 (n. 1)
Mutanabbi, Abu Ṭayyib al- (A, d. 965), 247, 354 (n. 19), 424 (n. 7)
Muṭawwal (Taftazani), 246
Muẓaffar Harawi (P, 15th cent.), 239, 422 (n. 80)

Nabi (T, 17th cent.), 391 (n. 84)
Nādi ʿAliyyan, 229, 416 (n. 8)
Nafaḥāt al-uns (Jami), 249
Nakhshabi, Żiyaʾuddin (IP, d. 1350), xv, 168, 182, 387 (n. 45), 395 (n. 26)
Nakuk, Abu'l-ʿAla (P, d. 1098), 384 (n. 8)
Nāl Daman (Fayżi), 332 (n. 26)
Nami, Mir Maʿṣum (IP, d. 1608), 333 (n. 31)
Namik Kemal (T, d. 1888), 329 (n. 56)
Naqi (IP), 352 (n. 3)
Nasikh (U, d. 1838), xx, 135, 208, 280, 409 (n. 37)
Naṣir ʿAli Sirhindi (IP, d. 1697), xix, 149, 225, 354 (n. 21), 394 (n. 14), 399 (n. 59), 446 (n. 44), 447 (n. 61)
Naṣir-i Khusrau (P, d. after 1072), xii, 215, 373 (n. 5), 406 (n. 2), 413 (n. 79)
Nāṣirī, Akhlāq-i, 246, 424 (n. 1)
Naṣiruddin Ṭusi (A, d. 1274), 424 (n. 1)
Nauʿi (IP, d. 1610), 140, 375 (n. 20), 397 (n. 44)
Nawaʾi, Mir ʿAlishir (T, d. 1501), xvii, 116, 133, 274, 382 (n. 20)
Nāz u niyāz (Nami), 333 (n. 31)
Nazim Hikmet [Ran] (T, d. 1963), 136, 343 (n. 69), 372 (n. 39)
Naẓiri (IP, d. 1612), xviii, 3, 313, 320, 336 (n. 17), 347 (n. 117), 350 (n. 152), 355 (n. 39), 363 (n. 34), 374 (n. 17), 377 (n. 1), 404 (n. 37), 418 (n. 31), 428 (n. 6), 432 (n. 8), 439 (n. 39), 444 (n. 4), 446 (nn. 28, 34), 447 (n. 58)
Necati (Nejati) (T, d. 1509), xvii, 197, 387 (n. 38), 404 (n. 35)
Nedim (T, d. 1730), xix, 378 (n. 13), 390 (n. 75), 404 (n. 17)
Nefʿi (T, d. 1638), xviii, 207, 334 (n. 39), 390 (n. 75), 392 (nn. 92, 96)
Nesimi (T, d. 1405), xv, 422 (n. 83)
Nihawandi, ʿAbdul Baqi (IP, d. after 1618), 374 (n. 16)
Niʿmatullah Kirmani, Shah (P, d. 1430), xvi, 119, 261, 364 (n. 46), 431 (n. 33)
Niʿmatullah Kuhistani (P), 361 (n. 11)
Niẓami, Ilyas (P, d. 1203), xiii, 6, 7, 30–32, 38, 45, 48, 113–15, 132–34, 140, 141, 199, 212, 233, 323, 327 (nn. 25, 31), 332 (n. 26), 334 (n. 34), 366 (n. 5), 381 (n. 33), 398 (nn. 44, 49), 433 (nn. 11, 17), 440 (n. 45), 444 (n. 17), 445 (n. 18). See also *Haft Pāykar*; *Iskandarnāma*; *Khusrau Shīrīn*; *Laylā Majnūn*; *Makhzan al-asrār*
Niẓami ʿAruḍi (P, d. after 1157), xii, 38, 50, 212, 410 (n. 45), 411 (n. 62), 443 (n. 22)
Nuh sipihr (Amir Khusrau), 258, 429 (n. 14)
Nuṣrat (IP), 424 (n. 102), 445 (n. 22)
Nuṣrati (DU, d. 1684), 210, 296, 410 (n. 50), 446 (n. 36)

Old Testament, 70
ʿOmar Khayyam (P, d. 1122), xii, 6, 28, 110, 216, 251, 332 (n. 21), 361 (n. 10), 384 (n. 7), 421 (n. 78), 426 (n. 30), 441 (n. 57). See also *Rubāʿiyyāt*
Orhan Veli [Kanik] (T, d. 1950), 378 (n. 13)
Östliche Rosen (Rückert), 5, 173

Paʾizi (d. after 1210), 417 (n. 11)
Pançatantra, 400 (n. 5)
Pandnāma (ʿAṭṭar), 347 (n. 120)
Panja (Rangin), 428 (n. 1)
Payām-i Mashriq (Iqbal), 207, 334 (n. 39), 341 (n. 32), 345 (n. 82), 352 (n. 163), 356 (n. 1), 378 (n. 18), 398 (n. 51)
Physiologus, 192
Pīrahan-i Yūsufī, 67, 343 (n. 65)
Pirzada (PJ), 289
Platen, August Count (d. 1835), 5
Pound, Omar, 401 (n. 7)
Premchand, D. S. (d. 1936), 289
Psalter, Psalms, 73, 79, 346 (n. 103), 422 (n. 82); Psalm 104, 220; Psalm 119, 229
Pseudo-Kallisthenes, 115

Qaʾani (P, d. 1854), xx, 44, 389 (n. 70)
Qabil (IP, d. 1726), 310, 409 (n. 41)
Qabus ibn Wushmgir (P, d. 1013), 184, 396 (n. 39), 417 (n. 19)

Qābūsnāma, 362 (n. 23)
Qaḍi Qadan (S, d. 1551), xvii, 377 (n. 2), 385 (n. 13)
Qadi Rashid (A, 11th cent.), 405 (n. 46), 441 (n. 60)
Qalich Beg, Mirza (S, d. 1929), 332 (n. 21)
Qalqashandi, al- (A, d. 1415), 234
Qaniʿ, Mir ʿAlishir (IP, d. 1789), 142, 313, 420 (n. 51)
Qasim al-anwar (P, d. 1433), xv
Qasim-i Kahi (IP, d. 1580), xviii, 72, 164, 165, 168, 182, 229, 250, 251, 261, 267, 296, 337 (nn. 32, 38), 374 (n. 15), 395 (n. 31), 397 (n. 44), 443 (n. 23), 446 (n. 35)
Qaṭran (P, d. after 1072), xii, 49, 111, 148, 168, 361 (n. 15), 364 (n. 52), 378 (n. 16)
Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyāʾ, 340 (n. 23)
Qiṣṣa-i bēnaẓīr (Ṣanʿati), 359 (n. 26)
Qiṣṣakhwan Ḥamdani (IP, d. ca. 1630), 359 (n. 27)
Qiwami of Ganja (12th cent.), 38
Qudsi Mashhadi (IP, d. 1646), 68, 82, 200, 352 (n. 5), 368 (n. 3), 415 (n. 26), 437 (n. 29)
Quṭb Mushtarī (Ghawwaṣi), 411 (n. 61)

Raduyani (P, d. after 1114), xii, 79, 329 (n. 1), 403 (n. 28), 406 (n. 2), 422 (n. 82)
Rafiʿi Harawi (P), 315, 384 (n. 7)
Rāḥat aṣ-ṣudūr (Ibn ar-Rawandi), 108
Rahi (IP), 373 (n. 11)
Raʾij (IP), 317
Rami, Sharafuddin (P, 2nd half of 14th cent.), 6, 355 (n. 39), 360 (n. 2), 368 (n. 6), 385 (n. 14), 403 (n. 31), 418 (nn. 26, 29), 420 (nn. 51, 55, 57, 66), 432 (n. 2), 442 (nn. 7, 19), 445 (n. 19). See also *Anīs al-ʿushshāq*
Rangin, Saʿadat Yar Khan (U, d. 1835), 428 (n. 1)
Raqim (IP), 379 (n. 20)
Rashid (IP), 419 (n. 44)
Rashidi Samarqandi (P), 411 (n. 65)
Rasmi (IP, early 17th cent.), 249
Rauḍat as-salāṭīn u jawāhir al-ʿajāʾib (Fakhri Harawi), 331 (n. 17)
Rauḍat ash-shuhadā (Ḥusayn Waʿiẓ), 429 (n. 16)
Raunaqi (P, 12th cent.), 380 (n. 26)
Raushan (IP), 309, 374 (n. 11)
Razi, Shams-i Qays (P), 329 (n. 1)
Rilke, Rainer Maria (d. 1927), 1, 169, 172, 226, 325 (n. 1)
Risālat aṭ-ṭayr [Treatise of the Birds] (Avicenna, Ghazzali), 178, 394 (n. 20)
Risālō Sindhi (Shah ʿAbdul Laṭif), 202
Riyāḍ al-inshā (Maḥmud Gawan), 414 (n. 23)
Rubaiyyat of a Persian Kitten (Herford), 332 (n. 21)
Rückert, Friedrich (d. 1866), ix, 5, 6, 14, 22, 73, 173, 196, 239, 326 (n. 15), 333 (n. 30), 334 (n. 35), 362 (n. 18), 385 (n. 12), 427 (n. 41), 435 (n. 4), 443 (n. 22)
Rudaki (P, d. 940), xi, 43, 147, 236, 248, 377 (n. 8), 420 (n. 53)
Ruḥani, Abu Bakr (P, before 1200), 382 (n. 9)
Rumi, Maulana Jalaluddin (P, d. 1273), vii, xiv, xxiii, 5, 7, 9, 20–22, 30, 48, 51, 56, 58, 67, 74–76, 79, 80, 89, 101, 103, 121, 126, 141, 147, 151, 158, 159, 162, 169, 172, 175, 179–81, 183, 185, 192–95, 197, 200, 204, 206–8, 212, 221, 226, 228, 230, 247, 250, 265, 266, 269, 272–78, 285, 286, 288, 292, 293, 297, 299, 308, 314, 322, 327 (n. 29), 328 (n. 50), 330 (n. 11), 332 (n. 22), 339 (n. 9), 342 (n. 57), 343 (n. 63), 352 (n. 1), 358 (nn. 13, 20), 359 (n. 23), 366 (n. 7), 372 (n. 1), 376 (n. 31), 381 (n. 31), 382 (n. 8), 383 (n. 4), 384 (n. 8), 386 (nn. 27, 28, 30), 387 (n. 40), 389 (n. 68), 390 (nn. 77, 79, 83), 392 (n. 93), 394 (n. 24), 396 (nn. 36, 40), 397 (n. 44), 398 (n. 49), 399 (nn. 55, 57, 58), 401 (n. 13), 402 (nn. 18, 19), 406 (n. 2), 408 (nn. 15, 20, 22, 28), 409 (n. 30, 44), 411 (n. 67), 413 (nn. 5, 6, 11), 414 (n. 11), 415 (n. 30), 417 (nn. 13, 15), 418 (n. 25), 420 (n. 62), 422 (n. 87), 423 (n. 90), 425 (nn. 8, 9), 426 (n. 25), 431 (n. 33), 432 (nn. 7, 8), 433 (nn. 10, 13), 434 (nn. 22, 24), 435 (nn. 22, 28, 3), 436 (n. 17), 437 (nn. 20, 27), 443 (n. 23), 444 (n. 9). See also *Dīwān-i kabīr*; *Fīhi mā fīhi*; *Mathnawī*
Runi, Abuʾl-Faraj (IP, d. ca. 1091), xii, 117, 350 (n. 154), 362 (n. 24), 363 (n. 39)

Sabʿ sayyāra (Zulali), 367 (n. 2); (Rangin), 428 (n. 1)
Ṣaba (IP), 353 (n. 9)
Sabū-yi ʿishq (Khomeini), 329 (n. 54)
Sachal Sarmast (S, d. 1826), 418 (n. 24)
Sadd-i Iskandarī (Nawaʾi), 116
Saʿdi, Muṣliḥuddin (P, d. 1292), xiv, xxiii, 26, 31, 62, 71, 90, 96, 151, 162, 186, 187, 251, 265, 286, 309, 311, 334 (n. 35), 335 (n. 5), 343 (n. 67), 347 (n. 118), 350 (n. 147), 353 (nn. 7, 12), 354 (n. 24), 355 (n. 32), 372 (n. 3), 375 (n. 30), 376 (nn. 34, 36), 378 (n. 16), 380 (nn. 24, 25), 383 (nn. 26, 31), 389 (n. 61), 390 (n. 70), 400 (n. 63), 401 (n. 11), 404 (n. 37), 405 (n. 49), 407 (n. 13), 410 (n. 54), 411 (n. 64), 412 (n. 74), 423 (nn. 97, 99), 426 (n. 30), 427 (n. 33), 432 (n. 8), 434 (nn. 22, 24), 437 (n. 21), 439 (n. 43), 444 (n. 17), 448 (n. 64). See also *Būstān*; *Gulistān*
Ṣadruddin Khujandi (P), 352 (n. 5)
Ṣafi (T), 391 (n. 84)
Ṣafiuddin (P), 389 (n. 63)
Ṣaʾib (P, d. 1677), xix, 83, 279, 336 (n. 17), 350 (n. 155), 367 (n. 2), 369 (n. 17), 371 (n. 37), 374 (n. 15), 423 (n. 94), 439 (n. 39), 444 (n. 11), 447 (nn. 47, 62)
Saʿid Bilgrami (IP), 387 (n. 44)
Sakkaki (A, d. 1228), 246, 424 (n. 2)
Ṣalabat Khan (IP), 309, 373 (n. 11)
Salik (IP), 368 (n. 3), 431 (n. 33)
Salim (IP, 17th cent.), 242, 415 (n. 37), 423 (n. 95), 438 (n. 30), 439 (n. 39)
Salman-i Sawaji (P, d. 1371), xv, 92, 106, 261, 337 (n. 30), 343 (n. 70), 355 (n. 25), 360 (n. 30), 385 (n. 17), 402 (n. 21)
Sami (T, d. 1730), 233, 418 (n. 32)
Sammani, Ibrahim (P), 375 (n. 23)
Sanaʾi, Abuʾl-Majd Majdud (P, d. 1131), 30, 32, 58, 121, 124, 125, 139, 178, 195, 196, 208, 214, 222, 247, 248, 269, 305, 313, 314, 316, 322, 330 (n. 11), 332 (n. 27), 337 (n. 37), 338 (nn. 3, 4), 340 (nn. 25, 27), 341 (n. 44), 345 (n. 88), 349 (n. 132), 354 (n. 17), 358 (n. 13), 359 (n. 23), 360 (n. 30), 365 (nn. 58, 60, 61), 366 (n. 5), 367 (n. 13), 368 (n. 3), 377 (n. 5), 379 (n. 21), 380 (n. 30), 382 (n. 20), 393 (n. 1), 394 (n. 19), 395 (n. 32), 397 (n. 43), 399 (n. 55), 400 (n. 72), 401 (nn. 13, 15), 402 (n. 23), 403 (n. 28), 416 (n. 7), 421 (n. 78), 423 (n. 98), 425 (n. 7), 426 (nn. 25, 26), 429 (n. 25), 432 (n. 8), 433 (nn. 10, 11), 443 (n. 23), 444 (n. 17), 445 (n. 18). See also *Ḥadīqat al-ḥaqīqa*; *Sayr alʿibad*
Ṣanʿati (U, fl. 1544), 359 (n. 26)
Ṣanaubari, as- (A, d. 945), 386 (n. 31), 389 (n. 61)
Ṣandali (IP), 376 (n. 32)
Sari as-Saqaṭi (A, d. 867), 246, 424 (n. 1)
Sarkhush (IP, d. 1714), 401 (n. 12), 431 (n. 33)
Sarmad (IP, d. 1661), xix, 61, 233, 238, 340 (n. 29)
Sarraj, Abu Naṣr as- (A, d. 988), 377 (n. 2), 402 (n. 17), 435 (n. 1)
Sassui Punhun, 333 (n. 31)
Sauda, Mirza Rafiʿuddin (U, d. 1781), xx, 83, 195, 210, 223, 279, 331 (n. 19), 339 (n. 13), 402 (n. 21), 439 (n. 45)
Saudaʾi, Baba (d. 1451), 384 (n. 6), 409 (n. 38), 418 (n. 38)
Sayr al-ʿibad (Sanaʾi), 398 (n. 58)
Sayyid al-Ashraf (DU, d. after 1713), 369 (n. 25)
Selige Sehnsucht (Goethe), 198
Şeyhzade Yaḥya (T), 390 (n. 70)
Shabistari, Maḥmud (P, d. 1320), xiv, 392 (n. 97)
Shafiʿ (IP), 371 (n. 36)
Shafruh, Sharafuddin (d. 1208), 349 (n. 144), 373 (n. 8), 412 (n. 74), 441 (n. 3)
Shah Afrin (IP, d. 1741), 440 (n. 51)
Shāh u gadā (Hilali), xvii
Shahi Sabzawari, Amir (P, d. 1453), xvi, 162, 364 (n. 52), 383 (n. 2)
Shahid-i Balkhi (P, early 10th cent.), 372 (n. 4), 398 (n. 47), 404 (n. 41), 406 (n. 2)
Shahidi (IP), 414 (n. 16)
Shāhnāma (Daqiqi), xi, 116; (Firdausi), xi, 29–31, 108, 110–14, 130, 134, 178, 220, 288, 360 (nn. 2, 3, 5), 425 (n. 18); Houghton *Shāhnāma*, 109, 361 (n. 6); *Shāhnāma-i Islām* (Hafeez), 332 (n. 25)
Shaʾiq (IP, 19th cent.), 364 (n. 52), 428 (n. 41)
Shakibi, Molla (IP, early 17th cent.), 140, 374 (n. 16)
Shams-i Qays. *See* Razi
Shaṭranji (ca. 1100), 399 (n. 55)
Shaukat Bukhari (P, d. 1695), xix
Shauqi, Ḥasan (IP, 17th cent.), 249, 425 (n. 18)
Shayda (IP), 318, 422 (n. 84), 435 (n. 34)
Sheyhi (T, 16th cent.), 371 (n. 31)
Sheykhulislam Yaḥya (T, 16th cent.), 379 (n. 20)
Shihab Ṭarsusi, ʿAli (P), 423 (n. 91)
Shihabuddin Tirmidhi (P), 377 (n. 7)
Shikwah, Jawāb-i Shikwah (Iqbal), 33, 334 (n. 44)
Shish jihat (Rangin), 428 (n. 1)
Shirwani, Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ash- (A, d. 1846), 358 (n. 19)
Sīḥarfī, 416 (n. 8)
Sinnami, Fakhruddin (IP, d. 1281), 340 (n. 18)
Siraj Aurangabadi (U, d. 1763), xx, 133
Song of the Pearl, 205, 407 (n. 15)
Sonnets to Orpheus (Rilke), 1, 226

Soorab (Atkinson), 361 (n. 18)
Suhrawardi, Abu Ḥafṣ ʿOmar (A, d. 1234), 424 n. 1
Suhrawardi, shaykh al-ishraq (A, P, d. 1191), xiii, 118, 150, 181, 199, 209, 363 (n. 44), 360 (n. 27), 396 (n. 35), 400 (n. 71), 405 (n. 51)
Sukaśaptati, 395 (n. 26)
Sulṭan Bahu (PJ, d. 1692), xix, 384 (n. 5), 416 (n. 8)
Sur Sārang, 202
Sūz u gudāz (Nauʿi), 140, 375 (n. 30)
Suzani (P), 308

tadhkira (*tezkere*), 328 (n. 39)
Tadhkirat al-auliyā (ʿAṭṭar), 126
Tadhkirat ash-shuʿarā (Daulatshah), 328 (n. 40)
Tadhkirat-i shuʿarā-i Kashmīr (Aṣlaḥ), 328 (n. 40)
Tafsīr (ʿAbdullah-i Anṣari), 443 (n. 21)
Taftazani, Saʿduddin al- (A, d. 1389), 246
Tahāfut al-falāsifa (Ghazzali), 121
Ṭahira Qurrat ul-ʿAyn (P, d. 1852), 331 (n. 17), 426 (n. 22)
Tāʾiyyat al-kubrā, at- (Ibn al-Fariḍ), 328 (n. 42)
Ṭalib-i Amuli (IP, d. 1627), xviii, 140, 224, 298, 303, 355 (n. 13), 345 (n. 92), 374 (n. 15), 390 (n. 70), 402 (n. 21), 410 (n. 49), 414 (n. 23), 415 (n. 26), 417 (n. 16), 425 (n. 20), 438 (n. 29), 447 (n. 49)
Tarjumān al-ashwāq (Ibn ʿArabi), 401 (n. 11), 410 (n. 55)
Tasbīḥ aṭ-ṭuyūr (Sanaʾi), 178
Taʾthir (IP), 383 (n. 27), 438 (n. 29)
Taẓḥīk-i rūzgār (Sauda), 195
Torrents spirituels, Les (De la Motte-Guyon), 203
Tōtā Kahānī (Ḥaydari), 395 (n. 26)
Tughluqnāma (Amir Khusrau), 417 (n. 12)
Ṭughraʾi Mashhadi (P, d. before 1667), 378 (n. 18), 423 (n. 92)
Tuḥfat al-aḥrār (Jami), 32
Tuḥfat al-ʿIrāqayn (Khaqani), 146
Ṭūṭīnāma (Nakhshabi), xv, 182, 395 (n. 26)

ʿUbayd-i Zakani (P, d. ca. 1371), xv, 141, 192, 401 (n. 7)
Ubaydi Suhrawardi (IP, d. 1888), 409 (n. 35)
Umid (IP), 339 (n. 5), 391 (n. 85), 447 (n. 53)
Ümmi Sinan (T, d. 1568), 392 (n. 94)
ʿUnṣuri (P, d. 1039), xi, 45, 130, 134, 179, 284, 336 (nn. 23, 27), 364 (n. 51), 378 (n. 15), 405 (n. 47), 433 (n. 16), 441 (n. 2)
ʿUrfi Shirazi, Muḥammad (IP, d. 1591), xviii, 24–26, 59, 65, 69, 95, 105, 125, 151, 198, 299, 307, 319, 323, 336 (n. 17), 340 (n. 22), 341 (n. 37), 342 (n. 58), 344 (n. 76), 349 (n. 141), 350 (n. 154), 352 (n. 165), 356 (n. 41), 357 (n. 5), 358 (n. 22), 365 (n. 61), 366 (n. 12), 368 (n. 5), 369 (nn. 16, 23), 381 (n. 34), 387 (n. 45), 404 (nn. 41, 43), 408 (n. 20), 410 (n. 55), 415 (n. 30), 433 (n. 9), 435 (n. 29), 439 (n. 44)
Ushturnāma (ʿAṭṭar), 281, 441 (n. 57)
ʿUtbi (P, d. 1036), 238, 321, 421 (n. 73), 441 (n. 4)

"Valediction" (Donne), 262
Valéry, Paul (d. 1945), 77
Vecdi (Vejdi) (T), 378 (n. 13)
Vizeli Alaeddin (T, 18th cent.), 417 (n. 8)

Wahmi, Ṭahmaspquli Turk (P, 16th cent.), 427 (n. 41)
Wali Deccani (DU, d. 1707 or later), xix, 175, 246, 249, 355 (nn. 35, 39), 362 (n. 30), 425 (n. 18)
Walwaliji, Abu ʿAbdallah (P), 366 (n. 3)
Wamik und Asra [Wamiq and ʿAdhra] (Hammer-Purgstall), 134, 370 (n. 77)
Waqidi, al- (A, d. 822), 246, 424 (n. 1)
Warqa and Gulshāh (ʿAyyuqi), xi, 134
Waṭwaṭ, Rashid (P, d. ca. 1177), xiii, 78, 205, 322, 337 (n. 32), 345 (n. 81), 361 (n. 16), 370 (n. 27), 377 (n. 7), 379 (n. 21), 384 (n. 10), 387 (n. 40), 391 (n. 83), 402 (n. 21), 412 (n. 73), 413 (n. 82), 425 (n. 7), 431 (n. 1), 442 (nn. 6, 19). See also *Ḥadāʾiq as-siḥr*
Werfel, Franz (d. 1945), 330 (n. 6)
West-Östlicher Divan (Goethe), 5, 71, 85, 115, 133, 134, 195, 204, 325 (nn. 2, 8), 329 (n. 58), 330 (n. 9), 335 (n. 9), 392 (n. 100), 396 (n. 36), 441 (n. 1)
Wīs u Rāmīn (Gurgani), xi, 134, 370 (n. 28), 427 (n. 33)

Yaḥya (IP), 307
Yahya Kemal Beyatli (T, d. 1958), xxi, 35, 330 (n. 5), 378 (n. 13), 391 (n. 90)
Yaʿqub Ṣarfi Kashmiri (IP, d. 1591), 332 (n. 26)

Yazdani (P), 422 (n. 82)
Yeats, William Butler (d. 1939), 169
Yunus Emre (T, d. ca. 1321), 91, 162, 206, 235, 285, 347 (n. 121), 350 (n. 150), 352 (nn. 163, 2), 360 (n. 30), 392 (n. 96), 393 (n. 1), 394 (n. 15), 397 (n. 44), 407 (n. 10), 413 (n. 7), 432 (n. 4), 442 (n. 19)
Yūsuf Zulaykhā (Jami), 32, 66, 333 (n. 30), 342 (n. 53)

Zabur, 73, 346 (n. 103), 422 (n. 82). *See also* Psalter
Zabūr-i ʿajam (Iqbal), 364 (n. 48)
Ẓafar Hamadani (P, before 1200), 395 (n. 34)
Ẓahir Faryabi (P, d. 1201), xiii, 166, 167, 239, 331 (n. 19), 346 (n. 103), 358 (n. 16), 361 (n. 10), 387 (n. 37), 396 (n. 35), 398 (n. 49), 421 (n. 76)
Zamakhshari, az- (A, d. 1146), 339 (n. 7), 424 (n. 2)
Zand Avesta, 117; Zand and Pazand, 379 (n. 48)
Żarb-i Kalīm (Iqbal), 69, 344 (n. 74)
Zeb un-nisa. *See* Makhfi
Zeyneb Hatun (T, fl. 1500), 331 (n. 17)
Żiya Pasha (T, d. 1880), 50, 229 (n. 56)
Zubdat ar-rumūz (Qiṣṣakhwan Ḥamdani), 359 (n. 27)
Ẓuhuri (IP, d. 1615), xviii, 275, 334 (n. 39), 336 (n. 17), 341 (n. 42), 381 (n. 3), 390 (n. 72)
Zulali Khorasani (P, d. 1614), 367 (n. 2), 368 (n. 5)

Index of Technical Terms and Concepts

Although terms in original languages are frequently cross-referenced or to some extent overlap in pagination with their English equivalents, entries generally list only instances where the given term literally appears. Readers are thus encouraged to consult, e.g., both *gul* and "rose," both *bulbul* and "nightingale."

abābīl birds, 199
ābila (blister), 296; stars as, 296
ablaq (striped), 413 (n. 82)
ablution, 310; with blood, 88, 127; from fountain of Love, 352 (n. 41); with tears, 88, 352 (n. 2)
abrī, ebru (cloud paper [marbleized paper]), 234, 419 (nn. 42, 43)
adham (blackish), 412 (n. 67)
āfilīn, al- ("those that set"), 62
afsāna (story), 292
agate (*ʿaqīq*), 150, 156
aḥad (one), 100, 103, 237
āhar (starch for paper), 316
ahl-i dil (those with heart), 346 (n. 99)
ahl-i ḥaqq (people of the Truth), 393 (n. 1)
Aḥmad bilā mīm (*ḥadīth qudsī*), 103
ajraq (blue), 167, 265
akmah (blind-born), 78, 348 (n. 127)
ʿaks (reversal, palindrome), 46, 48, 337 (n. 37)
alastu (Sura 7:172), 57, 58, 206, 276
al-ḥamd ("Praise," Sura 1:1), 314
alif, 88, 235, 236, 238, 239, 317, 338 (n. 4), 413 (n. 77), 419 (nn. 49, 51), 426 (n. 54), 431 (n. 34); *alif-i ṣayqal*, 338 (n. 4); *alif-lām-mīm*, 59. See also *lām-alif*
alin yazisi (Turkish, "what is written on the forehead," fate), 230
Allāhu akbar ("God is greater [than anything]"), 89, 256
amāna ("trust," Sura 33:72), 58
amber (*kahrubā*), 267; and straw, 382 (n. 9), 433 (n. 67)
ambra (ambergris, black and fragrant), 285, 307; locks of, 336 (n. 19). *See also* tresses
anā'l-ḥaqq ("I am the Truth, I am God"), 125, 126, 268, 351 (n. 158)
anaphora, 45
ʿandalīb (nightingale), 391 (n. 84)
anemone, 387 (n. 46)
angels, 46, 58, 80, 81, 118, 197, 211, 264, 276; their blood, 435 (n. 29), 438 (n. 29); to hunt them, 80, 286, 442 (nn. 15, 16); prostrating before Adam, 60, 81, 82, 357 (n. 5); recording, 228; resemble Turks, 139; teacher of, 340 (n. 25)
ʿanqā bird, 187–88
ant (*mūr*), 307; beauty spot as, 75; and elephant, 199, 403 (n. 28), 409 (n. 49); facial down as, 75, 156, 403 (n. 31); and locust's leg, 403 (n. 29); and serpent, 196, 403 (n. 28); and Sulayman, 75
ʿaqīq (agate, carnelian), 150, 156, 160, 381 (n. 3). *See also* red; *General Index,* Yemen
arbaʿīn (forty days' retreat), 259
arghuwān (Judas tree), 162, 163, 265, 384 (n. 10)
Aries, 209, 406 (n. 6), 412 (n. 67)
arjal (with one white foot), 412 (n. 67)
arrow, 286, 287, 299. *See also* eyelashes
ʿarsh (Divine Throne), 48, 258
ʿarūḍ (metrical system in classical poetry), 20, 34, 35, 330 (n. 5)
ʿashara al-mubashshara, al- (the ten who were promised Paradise), 259, 260
ashhab (light-colored), 412 (n. 67)
āshnā (acquainted; swimming), 408 (n. 21)
ash house (*kulkhāna*), 394 (n. 15)
aṭlas (shining red satin), 224, 414 (n. 8)
āya(t) (sign, verse from the Koran), 57, 241
āyina-i Iskandarī (Alexander's mirror), 109

ʿ*ayn* (the letter; also essence, eye, individual), 92, 236, 239, 347 (n. 20), 420 (n. 51); ʿ*ayn-i thawāb* ("very meritorious"), 92; *bi-ʿaynihi* ("exactly the same"), 266
ʿ*aynak*. *See* spectacles
ʿ*azīz* of Egypt (the Mighty One of Egypt, Yusuf), 390 (n. 70)
ʿ*azm* (strong intention), 361 (n. 16)
azraq (blue), 167, 265

backgammon (*nard*), 288, 289, 443 (nn. 22, 29, 30), 444 (n. 32)
bād (wind), 383 (n. 3)
baḥr (ocean; meter), 331 (n. 14), 346 (n. 102), 377 (n. 7)
balā ("yes"), *balāʾ* (affliction), 57, 58, 104
balascio (ruby from Badakhshan), 159
banafsha (Turkish *benefşe*) (violet), 46, 167, 387 (n. 38)
bā-namak (salty, delightful), 268
banāt an-naʿsh (Ursa Major), 214, 215
band (connecting verse), 50
banyan tree, 164, 385 (n. 13)
baqāʾ (remaining [in God]), 68, 222, 264
baraka (blessing power), 156, 220
barbaṭ (big lute), 437 (n. 21)
barg-i bī-bargī (fruitful emptiness), 385 (n. 12)
barq (lightning), 195
basmala (formula "In the name of God"), 399 (n. 53)
bat, as enemy of the sun, 209
bathhouse, 423 (n. 98)
bayāż (clean copy), 232
bayt (verse), 20, 22, 29, 32, 33, 38, 39, 46, 48, 148, 249, 304, 336 (n. 26)
bāz (falcon), 181, 394 (n. 19 [*bāz-i ashhab*])
bazm (banquet, feast), 284, 361 (n. 15); *bazm u razm*, 316 (n. 16)
bee, 197
bell, 300, 301, 444 (nn. 64, 66)
betel leaves, 395 (n. 25)
bezel, 160, 310, 383 (n. 27)
bhāng (hemp), 281
bi-chashm ("with the eye"; with pleasure), 294
bird of the heart, of the soul, 61, 75, 95, 131, 178ff. 232, 287, 371 (n. 36), 393 (n. 1), 434 (n. 27). *See also different kinds of birds*
bismiʾ Llāhi ("In the name of God"), 32, 183, 228, 241, 395 (n. 34)
black, 142, 143, 168, 231, 236, 264, 285, 304, 309, 378 (n. 16), 431 (n. 1), 432 (n. 2); Abbasid color, 167, 432 (n. 2); black-faced, 431 (n. 1), 440 (n. 48); Hindu, India, 373 (n. 4); hyacinth, 215, 387 (n. 39); ink, 234; Kaʿba, veil of the, 94, 355 (n. 37); lovers' garment, 222, 414 (n. 11); Saturn, 213, 264; and white, 289, 320, 321, 413 (nn. 38, 1), 443 (n. 29). *See also* Hindu, Saturn, white
blackness (*saudā*), melancholia, 232, 414 (n. 11)
blister, 65, 207, 296, 354 (n. 17), 446 (n. 42)
blood, 211, 317; rose as, 312, 313; wine as, 438 (n. 29)
blue (dark), 163, 166, 167, 215, 264, 265, 321, 386 (n. 34); Indians, 373 (n. 4); silk, 207
book: of actions, of sins, 82, 83, 228, 231, 307, 343 (n. 141), 350 (n. 154), 417 (nn. 16, 18); garden as, 235, 391 (n. 84), 419 (n. 44); rose as, 391 (nn. 84, 85); world as, 242
bottle, 391 (n. 85); circumambulating, 89, 278, 352 (n. 5); fairy (genie) in, 278; heart as, 356 (n. 55). *See also* fairy
bow, 286, 287, 299, 308; back like a bow, 25, 442 (n. 19); eyebrows like, 336 (n. 19)
brahmin, 119, 323
breath of the Merciful (*nafas ar-raḥmān*), 150, 202, 360 (n. 30)
breeze, 202, 393 (n. 11); of Love, 383 (n. 4)
bride: meaning as, 52; speech as, 25, 26; spirit as, 223
bridge, world as, 407 (n. 8)
brocade, 406 (n. 4)
broom, 294
bud, 390 (n. 72); mouth as, 389 (n. 70); nightingale's heart as, 393 (n. 7), 396 (n. 70)
bulbul (nightingale), 173, 179, 390 (n. 83)
bulbula (flask), 173, 390 (n. 83)
Buraq, 195; Love as, 223. *See also General Index*, Buraq
būryā (reed mat), 225, 319, 415 (n. 40)
but (idol), 62, 119; *butān-i āzarī*, 63, 341 (n. 39)

call to prayer: by dove, 385 (n. 15); by nightingale, 390 (n. 83); by rooster, 398 (n. 49)
camel, 94, 194, 355 (n. 31), 402 (n. 16); intoxicated, 194, 402 (nn. 17, 18)
camphor (white and fragrant), 284, 385 (n. 19)
Cancer, 312
candle, 180, 198, 222, 278–81, 296–98, 322; in *fānūs*, 281, 440 (n. 47); laughs and weeps, 279, 439 (nn. 43, 44, 45), 440 (n. 46), 445 (n. 17); standing and running, 447 (n. 47); on the tomb, 280, 404 (nn. 40, 54); tongue, tongueless, 279, 440 (nn. 48, 53). *See also* moth
Canopus, 150. *See also* Suhayl
carnelian, 106, 150, 156, 157, 160, 309, 381 (n. 3), 382 (n. 20); lip as, 156, 388 (n. 49); rose as, 391 (n. 83), 431 (n. 1). See also ʿ*aqīq*
cat, 192, 195, 400 (n. 6), 401 (n. 9); Abu Hurayra's, 195; First Intellect as, 193; as hypocrite, 192, 193; Prophet's love of, 400 (n. 6)
chahār takbīr (four times *Allāhu akbar* = funeral prayer), 89
chang (harp), 275
chaupay (four-lined verse), 35
cheetah, 193, 401 (n. 13)
chess, 39, 287–89, 405 (n. 54), 443 (nn. 23, 27, 29); chessboard, 289
children, 307, 317, 396 (n. 34); heart as child, 435 (n. 33), 441 (n. 4); in school, reciting, 59, 92, 269, 314, 319, 342 (n. 53), 363 (n. 34), 365 (n. 61), 435 (n. 34); tears as, 269, 317, 318, 342 (n. 55), 435 (n. 34); throwing stones at Majnun, 133, 269, 369 (n. 21), 370 (n. 23)
chilla (forty days' seclusion), 259
chin: like an apple, 384 (n. 6); like moon of Nakhshab, 366 (n. 5); like polo ball, 284, 321, 441 (n. 3). *See also* dimple
chīn (twist; China), 148, 379 (n. 19)
chinār (plane tree): hands of, 163, 384 (n. 10)
Chinvat bridge, 118
chirāghān (fireworks), 280
chronogram, 252, 253, 427 (nn. 37–42)
chrysolith, 172
cloud, 199, 202, 203, 210, 406 (nn. 2, 3, 4), 419 (n. 42); cloud paper, 234, 317
compasses, 261, 320, 430 (n. 30)
coral, 314. *See also* rosary
cotton, destroyed by moonlight, 225
covenant, primordial, 57, 58, 206, 276, 322, 397 (n. 43), 446 (n. 42)
crescent moon, 209, 210, 285, 354 (n. 24), 356 (n. 45), 410 (nn. 48, 50); as cup, 92; as fingernail, 210, 410 (n. 50); as key to the wine house, 92; as letter ʿ*ayn* or *n*, 238, 410 (n. 46); as letter *d* or *r*, 236
cross, 119; as hairstyle, 116, 307, 422 (n. 82)
crow, 182, 185, 187, 313, 394 (n. 18), 397 (nn. 44, 46), 400 (n. 65); like Hindu, 398 (n. 44)
cup (of wine), 119; crescent as, 92; *jām-i Jam*, 109; rose as, 173. *See also* goblet; tulip
cypress, 163, 166, 308, 336 (nn. 15, 19), 344 (n. 72), 385 (n. 17); as candle, 164; and dove, 164, 385 (n. 15); free, 386 (n. 25); of fireworks, 440 (n. 56); as minaret, 49, 385 (n. 15), 390 (n. 83); near to watercourse, 39, 164; as stature, 43, 44, 162, 414 (n. 12)

dāgh (scar), 387 (n. 45)
dajjāl, 81, 252
dāl (the letter *d*), 229, 236, 238, 239, 316, 420 (n. 54); *dāll*, 229, 236, 420 (n. 55)
dām (trap), 238, 239
dance, 58, 213, 216, 272, 276; of *bismil*, 396 (n. 34); of *dharrāt*, 209; in or around fire, 63, 198, 374 (n. 17); in torrent, 302
dār (gallows), and *minbar* (pulpit), 126
dard (pain), 432 (n. 6)
daulat, 229, 240
dāwat, 240
dayr (monastery), 119; *dayr-i mughān*, 119
desert (of madness), 369 (n. 19), 370 (n. 23)
devekuşu (Turkish, "ostrich"), 186
dew, 24, 175, 176; pearls of, 387 (n. 40); as seal, 392 (n. 103), 419 (n. 44); spectacles of, 296; tears as, 42, 175, 180, 392 (n. 102)
dharra (dust mote, atom), 209
dhikr (recollection), 162, 193; as spinning, 224; of trees and plants, 91
Dhu'l-fiqar (ʿAli's sword), 56, 103
dhūʾr-ruʾyatayn (of two aspects), 49
diamond, 158, 159; dust, 382 (n. 13), 434 (n. 27), 447 (n. 61)
dībācha (first page of a book, foreword), 423 (n. 97)
dīdawar (one with seeing power), 165
die, dice, 257, 288, 290, 322, 443 (n. 21)
dil (heart), and *duldul*, 104, 195
dimple of the chin: as Babylonian well, 347 (n. 118); filled with Water of Life, 115; as Yusuf's well, 65, 342 (n. 55); as Zamzam, 356 (n. 39)
Divan edebiyati, 326 (n. 22), 329 (n. 56)
dīwān, 33, 34, 174, 268, 300, 387 (n. 45), 421 (n. 78), 435 (n. 33); of Amir Khusrau, 203; of Bedil, 297, 404 (n. 102); of Ghalib, xxi, 34, 230; of Ḥafiẓ, 4, 11, 23, 34, 205; of Jami, 196; of Laʿli, 158; of Makhfi, 331 (n. 17)
dīwāna (mad), 370 (n. 23)
djinn (genie), 76 (in bottle), 340 (nn. 25, 27), 347 (n. 110)
dog, 27, 195, 196, 252, 315, 316; of the beloved's street, 196, 403 (nn. 26, 27);

Layla's, 132, 195, 369 (n. 18); rabid, 267, 433 (n. 15); sinner transformed into, 195, 402 (n. 23)
dōhā, Indian poetical form, 34
donkey, 80, 194; its ear (Midas), 436 (n. 13); of Jesus, 78, 194; connected with material world, sensuality, 100, 402 (n. 19)
Doomsday, 25, 81, 100, 195, 224, 228, 352 (n. 6), 402 (n. 23), 403 (n. 28), 431 (n. 1). *See also* Judgment; resurrection
dot (in calligraphy), 235
dove, 164, 185; around cypress, 164, 185, 385 (n. 15); Holy Spirit as, 178; its necklace, 185, 397 (n. 43). *See also* pigeon; ring-dove
down, facial, 96, 212, 232, 233, 247, 261, 306, 313, 355 (n. 38), 432 (nn. 1, 2); as ants, 75, 156, 346 (nn. 94, 96); as emerald, 158; as Hindu, 372 (n. 4); as Khiżr, 72; as smoke, 440 (n. 54); as violet, 167. See also *khaṭṭ*; black; green
dragon, on treasure, 196
dream, 101, 292, 293, 416 (n. 4)
dropsy, 265, 432 (n. 8)
dū baytī, 29
duck, 186, 315
duhul (drum), 275
Duldul, 103, 195, 358 (n. 18)
dūsh (yesterday), 58, 325 (nn. 1, 12)

eagle, 185
ebony, 443 (n. 29)
eglantine (*nasrīn*), 231, 312
eight: heavens, 41, 429 (n. 11); paradises, 258, 260, 430 (n. 25)
eighteen, 429 (n. 15)
eighteen thousand, 429 (n. 15)
elephant, 39, 192, 199, 288, 358 (n. 19), 405 (nn. 48, 49); in chess, 39, 288, 405 (n. 54); cloud as, 199, 405 (n. 47), 406 (n. 4); ivory, 405 (n. 54); longs for India, 200, 405 (n. 51)
emerald, 156–60, 264, 285, 315; blinds serpent, 157, 382 (nn. 8, 9); facial down as, 158; Pir as, 157; pulverized (*bhāng*), 281; stem of a flower, carpet, 157, 165, 168, 172, 386 (n. 25), 390 (n. 75)
ermine (*qāqum*), 117, 308, 401 (n. 14)
evil eye, 59, 294, 295, 381 (n. 8)
eyes, 119, 157, 306, 404 (n. 44); casting arrows, 239; of gazelles, 193; of the *h*, 237, 317; as Harut and Marut, 76, 347 (n. 118); as Hindus, 372 (n. 4), 376 (n. 31); as magicians, 345 (n. 84); as onyx, 381 (n. 6); as Turks, 140, 142, 148, 308, 375 (nn. 22, 23); as the letter *ṣād*, 239; and wine cup, 438 (n. 30)
eyebrows, 306, 380 (n. 24), 422 (n. 83); as bow, 287, 339 (n. 19); as crescent, 210, 354 (n. 24), 410 (n. 45); as mallet, 285; as *miḥrāb*, 46, 90, 353 (n. 11), 386 (n. 3); as the letter *nūn*, 59, 237, 239, 420 (nn. 51, 55); as *ṭughrā*, 57, 241
eyeglasses, spectacles, 261, 295, 296, 299, 347 (n. 120), 446 (n. 35)
eyelashes, 59, 293, 306, 308, 323, 339 (n. 9); ant's or nightingale's, 424 (n. 102); as arrows or spears, 108, 141, 287, 360 (n. 2), 442 (n. 19); as bee's sting, 198; as broom, 294; as Hindu, 372 (n. 4); as Munkar and Nakir, 81; as pens, 233

face, white, 83, 142, 232, 417 (n. 18)
fairy (genie) in the bottle, 76, 278, 296, 346 (n. 104), 439 (n. 39)
fākhta (ring dove), 184
falak (sky), 412 (n. 73)
falcon (*bāz*, *shāhīn*), 181, 185, 192, 286, 307, 394 (nn. 22, 23), 442 (n. 16); symbol of love, ecstasy, 181; symbol of strong character, 181; white, 394 (n. 19), 397 (n. 44)
fanā (annihilation), 68, 222, 264, 305
fānūs (lantern), 440 (n. 47)
faqr (spiritual poverty), 159, 357 (n. 5)
farḍ-i ʿayn (individual duty), 96
fardā (tomorrow), 58
farzīn (the queen in chess) and *farzāna* (intelligent), 443 (n. 23)
faṣd (cupping), 266
Fattāḥ (The Opener, God), 246
fatwā (legal opinion), 88, 356 (n. 47)
fīl (elephant), as *luzūm*, 337 (n. 32), 443 (n. 23)
fingernail, crescent as, 210
firang ("Franks," Europeans), 376 (n. 36); *qayd-i firangī*, 376 (n. 37)
fire, 180, 198, 199, 211, 250, 295, 312, 351 (n. 157), 363 (n. 37), 374 (n. 17), 382 (n. 23); of the face, 267; of Ibrahim, 63, 64, 68; of Moses, 68, 344 (n. 72); and ocean, 206, 408 (n. 20); and reed, 426 (n. 20); Satan's origin, 61, 340 (n. 24); of wine, 279. *See also* rose; tulip
firefly, 124, 197
fire temple, 117, 141, 146, 377 (n. 6)
fireworks, 280, 440 (n. 56)
firmān, 337 (n. 30)
fīrūza (turquoise), 156

fish: mythical, 214; soul, heart as, 206, 261, 377 (n. 1), 404 (n. 44), 409 (n. 29)
five, 256, 428 (nn. 4, 5); senses, 260, 430 (n. 25)
flag, flowers as, 387 (n. 37). *See also* lion
flea, 197
flute, 273, 276, 436 (nn. 15, 16), 443 (n. 19). *See also* reed
fly, 188, 197, 394 (n. 15), 399 (n. 61), 442 (n. 22); in syrup, 197, 403 (n. 32)
footprint, 298, 447 (nn. 50, 53)
forty, 237, 259, 260, 429 (n. 19); Adam kneaded forty days, 48; forty days' seclusion, 259, 277, 429 (n. 19); forty *ḥadīth*, 416 (n. 4)
forty-one, 430 (n. 22)
four (*chahār*), 256, 260, 261, 359 (n. 24), 428 (nn. 2, 3), 430 (n. 25)
fourteen, 259
fox, 193
fragrance, scent, 67, 193, 390 (n. 70)
furūʿ (derivations, details), 96

gallows (*dār*), 126, 367 (n. 13); and rope, 367 (n. 12)
garden, as treasure house, 384 (n. 7)
garment, 220
gauhar (jewel), 156, 398 (n. 49)
gazelle, 131, 132, 193, 286, 369 (n. 17), 401 (nn. 11, 15)
ghafūr, al- (The Forgiving), 59
ghaliy (strong scent), 239
ghanī, al- (The Rich), 59
ghazal(s), 3, 5, 9, 11, 20, 22–25, 27, 28, 30, 31, 33–35, 43, 50, 52, 68, 89, 93, 149, 170, 213, 287, 330 (n. 8), 334 (n. 40), 342–43 (n. 59), 387 (n. 39), 389 (n. 65), 391 (n. 84), 406 (n. 2), 407 (n. 8); of Aḥmadi, 232; of Amir Khusrau, 49, 135, 183, 430 (n. 26), 436 (n. 7); of Anwari, 354 (n. 17); of Azad Bilgrami, 253; of Ghalib, 384 (n. 7); of Ḥafiẓ, 8, 58, 141, 192, 205, 213, 273, 343 (n. 72), 345 (n. 88), 393 (n. 10), 443 (n. 20); of Jami, 317, 333 (n. 30), 414 (n. 23); of Kalim, 346 (n. 99); of Khaqani, 403 (n. 26); of Rumi, 332 (n. 22), 343 (n. 63); of Sanaʾi, 247
ghāzī (fighter for the faith), 166
ghubār (dust), 241, 418 (n. 29), 423 (n. 88)
ghurāb al-bayn (the raven of separation), 185
ghurbat al-gharbiyya, al- (the Western exile), 150
ghusl (major ablution), 88
goblet, 362 (n. 27). *See also* cup
gold, 267, 433 (n. 16); in *muṣarriḥ*, 382 (n. 18), 433 (n. 11); of the narcissi, 384 (n. 7)
gōr (wild onager), 113
green, 264, 265, 311, 171; betel leaves, 395 (n. 25); facial down, 346 (n. 96); 432 (n. 1); of Paradise, 221, 264; parrot, 183; sky, 210, 321
gul (rose), 179, 325 (n. 12), 344 (n. 72), 389 (n. 12); as *kull* (the whole), 175
gul u bulbul (rose and nightingale), 178, 325 (n. 12)
gulbang (a loud cry), 179, 344 (n. 72), 397 (n. 44)
gulshan (rose garden), 180, 394 (n. 15)
gurīzgāh (transitional part of a *qaṣīda*), 24

h, *he* (the letter), 237, 317, 421 (n. 68)
ḥabash (Abyssinian), 376 (n. 34)
ḥabl matin (the "firm rope"), 101, 357 (n. 5)
ḥadīth, 71, 76, 101, 102, 189, 195, 230, 256, 313, 350 (n. 151), 351 (n. 162), 357 (n. 5), 360 (n. 30), 400 (n. 6), 407 (n. 8), 416 (n. 4), 417 (nn. 13, 15), 429 (n. 11); *ḥadīth qudsī*, 102, 103, 297
haft (seven), 258; *haft aurang*, 215; *haft khwān-i Rustam*, 111; *haft sīn*, 258, 428 (n. 10)
hair: like Daylamite's, 143; like Hindu, 372 (n. 4). *See also* tress
ḥalabī (Aleppan), 277, 378 (n. 16)
halak (destruction), 305
ḥalāl (ritually permitted), 438 (n. 29)
ḥamāma (dove), 185
ḥamd (praise, laud), 24
hamdam (of the same breath; companion), 275; *hamdam-i ʿIsa* (with the same healing breath as Jesus), 348 (n. 129)
hāns (swan, large gander), 186, 398 (n. 53)
ḥaqīqa (truth), 206, 256
ḥaqq (truth, reality), 90
ḥaram (sacred place), 94; tavern as, 352 (n. 5)
ḥarām (prohibited), 12, 13
hare, 194, 401 (n. 14); menstruates, 401 (n. 15); sleeps with one eye open, 194, 401 (n. 15)
harp, 275
ḥasb-i ḥāl (account), 105, 342 (n. 58)
hasht bihisht (eight Paradises), 258
hawk, 181, 184
ḥayrat (confusion, amazement), 80
hazaj (meter), 32
hazal (facetiae), 23

hazār (thousand; nightingale), 173, 391 (n. 84)
ḥazm (firm decision), 361 (n. 16)
Hell, 83, 84, 258, 340 (n. 13), 351 (nn. 157, 158), 432 (n. 8); black, 373 (n. 5), 406 (n. 2); hellfire, 103, 162, 350 (n. 151); India as, 139; seven Hells, 429 (n. 10)
hen, 186, 398 (n. 49)
heron, 395 (n. 31)
Ḥijaz (musical) mode, 273
ḥikmat (wisdom): *dar ḥikmat*, 27
hilāl (crescent): like the letter *nūn*, 237, 354 (n. 24). *See also* crescent
himmat (high ambition), 83
Hindu (and Turk). *See General Index*, Hindu; Turk
hoopoe (*hudhud*), 189, 305
horse, 194, 287; emaciated, 114, 194, 350 (n. 150); sky with horses, 413 (n. 82). *See also* Buraq; Duldul
hourglass, 295, 445 (nn. 22, 25)
houri, 170, 221, 251, 311, 331 (n. 19), 358 (n. 151), 389 (n. 63)
hū (He), 252
ḥubāb (water bubble), 207
ḥubb ʿudhrī (unfulfilled love), 101, 357 (n. 6)
hudā (right guidance), 348 (n. 122)
hudhud (hoopoe), 75, 179, 184, 393 (n. 4)
ḥulla (festive dress), 223
Huma (*humā*, mythological bird) 48, 187, 188, 192, 313, 316, 394 (n. 15), 399 (nn. 59, 61), 400 (nn. 63, 65, 69)
hunting, 286ff.
ḥūr u quṣūr (houris and castles), 84, 351 (n. 162)
Ḥusayni (musical) mode, 274
ḥusn-i maṭlaʿ (elegant introductory verse), 25
ḥusn-i taʿlīl (fantastic etiology), 41, 166, 198
huwiya (Divine Ipseity), 237
hyacinth (flower), 162, 167, 231, 235, 242, 384 (n. 6); letters like, 387 (n. 39). *See also* tresses
hyacinth (stone), 386 (n. 25)

ʿīd (feast), 356 (n. 45); as *luzūm*, 337 (n. 32); *ʿīd ul-aḍhā*, 95, 281, 304, 356 (n. 45), 397 (n. 43); *ʿīd ul-fiṭr* (feast of fastbreaking), 93, 285, 304, 410 (n. 48)
ʿidhār (cheek), 370 (n. 27)
idol temple, 35
īhām-i tanāsub, 40
iḥrām (pilgrim's dress), 95
iḥsān (to do well), 256, 337 (n. 30)
ijtihād, 426 (n. 26)
ikhlāṣ (sincerity), 339 (n. 5)
iksūn (black silk), 224, 415 (n. 30)
illā ("but," in the profession of faith), 88, 338 (n. 4)
imām (leader of prayer), 306, 422 (n. 83); Love as, 352 (n. 2); of the rosary, 91; Shia, 24, 103, 193, 229, 259, 351 (n. 157), 427 (n. 41)
īmān (faith), 256
"Indian style" (*sabk-i hindī*), 2, 23, 90, 149, 157, 172, 234, 279, 295, 296, 300, 375 (n. 25), 380 (n. 23), 383 (n. 27), 423 (n. 99), 438 (n. 30), 443 (n. 23)
infidel's girdle, 12. See also *zunnār*
ink, 188, 412 (n. 77); as Indian, 375; as Kauthar, 83; washing off of, 231, 417 (n. 16); as Water of Life, 72, 234
inkwell, 72, 420 (n. 67)
iqbāl (fortune), 48
iqtibās (quoting), 42
ʿIraq(i) (musical) mode, 248, 273
iris, 383 (n. 25)
irjiʿī ("Return"), 181
irsāl-i mithāl (introduction of a proverb), 42
ʿIsā-dam (with breath like Jesus'), 348 (n. 129)
ishtiqāq (derivation), 48, 49, 82, 88, 281; false, 88, 350 (n. 151), 370 (n. 27)
islām, 256, 420 (n. 60)
ivory, 443 (n. 29)
īwān (portico), 423 (n. 99)
īzad (god), 118

jām-i Jam (Jamshed's cup), 109
jamāl (beauty), 236
jān (soul), 236; *jān bi-lab* (on the point of dying), 79
jasmine, 162, 163, 215, 304; as pearls, stars, 163; as teeth, 162, 163, 414 (n. 17); as *yās-i man*, 163
jauhar-i fard (indivisible atom), 68
jazʿ (onyx), 157, 301 (n. 6)
jīm (the letter *j*), 236, 239
jināS (paronomasia), 46
jōhar (self-immolation), 376 (n. 37)
Judgment, Day of, 58, 82, 252. *See also* Doomsday; resurrection
Jupiter, 93, 212, 213, 412 (n. 67)

kabāb (roast meat), 167, 168, 267, 268, 275, 394 (n. 14), 421 (n. 78), 433 (nn. 19, 20), 435 (n. 29), 440 (n. 49)
kābūd, kābōd (dark blue), 265
kabūtār (dove), 184
kaf (foam; palm of the hand), 163, 205

kāf (the letter *k*), 420 (nn. 55, 60); *kāf-i kūfī*, 241
kāh (straw) and *kūh* (mountain), 433 (n. 18)
kahrubā (amber), 267, 433 (n. 18)
kajkulāh (with one's cap awry; charming youth), 89, 90, 353 (n. 7), 387 (n. 42)
kām (wish; palate), 252
kamāncha (small violin), 238
kamkhā (velvet), 225
kāng, kāngal (crow), 185
karb (grief), 104
karkadann (unicorn), 192, 400 (n. 2)
karrār (surname of ʿAli), 358 (n. 13)
kasra (the vowel sign *i*), 247
Kauthar (paradisiacal fountain), 83, 84, 139, 310, 351 (n. 157)
kettle, 268, 434 (nn. 22, 23)
khafīf (meter), 32
khāksārī (modesty), 385 (n. 15)
khalwat dar anjuman (solitude in the crowd), 440 (n. 47)
khamriyyāt (wine poetry), 23
khamyāza (yawning; infinite thirst), 299, 447 (n. 58)
khar (donkey), 194
kharābāt (ruins; tavern), 13, 277
khargūsh (hare), 194
khaṭā (error; Cathay), 138
khaṭṭ (script; facial down), 57, 232, 233, 235, 240, 242, 261, 318, 416 (n. 7), 418 (nn. 25, 26, 29), 422 (n. 84), 423 (nn. 92, 93), 442 (n. 9); green, 386 (n. 82); *khaṭṭ-i tarsā* (wrong script), 233; *khaṭṭ-i khaṭā* (erroneous script), 231
khayāl (dream image), 292
khwāb (sleep): *khwāb wa afsāna* (sleep and story), 292; *khwāb* and *khayāl*, 293; *khwāb-i khargūsh* (very light sleep, "hare's sleep"), 194
kibriyā (Divine Glory), 159
kīmīyā, al- (alchemy), 267
kirām kātibīn (the recording angels), 81
kirma, qīrma (Turkish chancellery script), 241, 423 (n. 89)
kiss, 88, 109, 119, 240, 260, 261, 265, 306, 390 (n. 70), 392 (n. 93); as exchange of souls, 348 (n. 130); as Jesus' breath, 79; as Water of Life, 72; rosebuds and kisses, 171; kissing the Black Stone, 94; kissing the Koran, 339 (n. 8)
kitāb (book), 228, 421 (n. 78)
kufic (calligraphic style), 241, 420 (n. 54)
kufr (infidelity), 420 (n. 60); *kufriyyāt* (poetry that claims to be infidel), 23
kū kū ("where? where?"), 185
kulāh (cap), 305, 387 (n. 41)
kulba-i aḥzān (the hut of sorrows), 67, 343 (n. 63)
kulkhān (ash house), 180, 394 (n. 15); *külhan-beyi* (Turkish: a destitute person who sleeps in the ashes), 350 (n. 150)
kurkī (crane), 399 (n. 56)
kursī (throne), 258; lower line in calligraphy, 318

lā ("no"; beginning of the profession of faith), 56, 88, 238, 338 (n. 4)
lā fatā illā ʿAlī ("no young hero but ʿAli"), 103
lā ilāha illā'Llāh ("no deity save God"), 56
lā-kūfī (not bound by the rite of Abu Ḥanifa), 250, 426 (n. 26)
lā taqnaṭū ("don't despair"), 59, 340 (n. 20)
laff u nashr (rhetorical device), 42, 44, 305, 307, 361 (n. 16), 431 (n. 34)
lājīward (lapis lazuli), 156, 160, 383 (n. 25)
laklak (stork), 186, 299 (n. 55 [as *radīf*])
laʿl (ruby), 46, 156, 158, 233
lāla (tulip), 167, 387 (n. 46), 388 (n. 53)
lâle devri (the Tulip Period in Turkey, ca. 1700–1730), 378 (n. 13)
lām (the letter *l*), 237, 238, 261, 420 (n. 60), 421 (nn. 70, 75)
lām-alif, 238, 369 (n. 22), 421 (nn. 70, 71, 75)
lan tarāni ("you will not see Me"), 68
landay (Pashto verse form), 35, 377 (n. 2)
lapis lazuli (*lājīward*), 156, 160, 383 (n. 25)
layl (night; connected with Layla), 133, 285
laylat al-qadr (the Night of Might, in which the first revelation took place), 93, 422 (n. 77)
Leo, 322, 401 (n. 11)
leopard, 193, 401 (n. 11)
Libra, 406 (n. 6), 411 (n. 64)
lightning, 40, 210, 211, 406 (n. 2), 410 (nn. 54, 55)
lily, 74, 166, 241, 386 (n. 30), 415 (n. 32); as *ghāzī*, 166; as tailor, 221, 386 (n. 29); with ten tongues, 166, 386 (n. 27); with White Hand, 70, 166
lion, 193, 194, 225, 286, 307, 401 (nn. 11, 15), 415 (n. 41); in the bath house, 242, 423 (n. 99); on the carpet, 194, 225, 322, 415 (n. 41); on the flag, 194, 226, 322, 401

(n. 11), 415 (n. 41); and lamb, 81, 349 (nn. 144, 145); of the sky (Leo), 196, 322, 401 (n. 11)
lisān ul-ḥāl (silent eloquence), 311
liver, 303
locust, 197; leg of, 196, 197, 403 (n. 29)
lotus flower, 163, 304, 389 (n. 61)
luʿbatān (dolls), 378 (n. 16)
lughz (riddle), 239
lūlū-i lālā (shining pearl), 407 (n. 13)
luzūm (recurrent use of a certain word), 46

madda (sign for lengthening vowels), 306
madrasa (theological college), 246, 356 (n. 47)
magnet, 267, 433 (n. 17)
magus, 318
māh (moon; month), 40, 240
maḥmal (litter), 309
majāz (metaphor), 38
majhūl (the vowels *ē*, *ō*), xxiii
majmaʿ al-baḥrayn (confluence of two oceans), 73; (of two meters), 346 (n. 102)
mājūs, 116
majnūn (demented), 131
maksūr (broken), 247
malakūt (world of the Kingdom), 373 (n. 5)
mallet, 284, 285, 321, 441 (nn. 3, 5), 442 (nn. 6, 9, 10)
mamdūḥ (the object of praise), 24, 28, 43, 45, 346 (n. 103), 349 (n. 144)
manāqib (legends, miracle stories), 24
manṭiq uṭ-ṭayr (language of the birds), 75; 393 (n. 3 [by Khaqani]). *See also Index of Authors and Works*, ʿAṭṭar, Khaqani
maqām (place, standing point), 274; *maqām maḥmūd* (praiseworthy place), 130
maqṭaʿ (last line of a poem), 25, 303
mār (serpent), 196, 403, (n. 28)
mard (man, "man of God"), 357 (n. 7), 432 (n. 6)
Mars, "Turk of the Sky," 141, 214
marthiya (threnody), 104
martyr, 102, 105; of love, 102, 126, 357 (n. 7), 415 (n. 26)
maʿrūf (the vowels ī, ū), xxiii
maşallah (exclamation of admiration), 430 (n. 22)
mashq (calligraphic practice), 317
maʿshūq (beloved), 62
mast (intoxicated), 58
mathnawī, xiv, xv, 29–33, 45, 132, 192, 202, 247, 331 (n. 18), 332 (n. 26), 334 (n. 36), 367 (n. 2), 440 (n. 56); of Amir Khusrau, xiv, 258; of ʿAṭṭar, xiii; of Iqbal, 363 (n. 43); of Jami, 215
mātkhāna (position in which the king is checkmated), 444 (n. 30)
maṭlaʿ (first line), 24, 303
mātra (unit in Indian metrics), 35
meena bird, 395 (n. 27)
melancholia (*saudā*), 265, 266
menstruation, 357 (n. 7); of the "daughter of the grape," i.e., wine, 437 (n. 28); of the hare, 401 (n. 15); of Hind, 366 (n. 4)
Mercury, 214
miḥrāb (prayer niche), 90, 353 (n. 11). *See also* eyebrows
mihrijān (autumnal feast), 96
Milky Way, 215, 413 (n. 77)
millstone, spheres as, 215, 216, 297, 413 (n. 84)
mīm (the letter *m*), 237–39, 316, 420 (n. 61), 421 (n. 75); mouth as, 237, 239, 317, 420 (nn. 51, 62, 65), numerical value (40), 237, 260; the Prophet's name, 237; water bubbles as, 238
minbar (pulpit), 360 (n. 29); and gallows, 126, 367 (n. 13)
miʿrāj (the Prophet's heavenly journey), 31, 76, 126, 320, 364 (n. 49)
mirʾāt al-jamāl (description of a person's beauty), 335 (n. 6)
mirror, 14, 150, 207, 293, 311, 318, 353 (n. 11), 378 (n. 16), 406 (n. 4); Alexander's, 115; of the knee, 293, 296; of Not Being, 208; for parrot, 182, 183, 257, 314, 395 (n. 30); universe as, 102; for Yusuf, 66, 293, 445 (n. 22)
mōbad (fire priest), 363 (n. 35)
miṣraʿ (hemistich), 20, 231
miswāk (toothbrush), 307
mole (*khāl*), 236, 237, 257, 261, 285, 306, 307, 313; Abyssinian, 142; as Bilal, 105, 360 (n. 29); black stone as, 94; Hindu, 139, 142, 309, 310, 372 (n. 4), 376 (n. 33); as seductive grain, 61, 287; as *sipand*, 295
moon (usually a metaphor for the lovely face), 24, 40, 41, 43, 44, 208–10, 232, 238, 240, 259, 284, 285, 303, 336 (n. 19), 342 (n. 51), 375 (n. 28), 409 (n. 44), 412 (n. 69), 432 (n. 8); destroys cotton and linen, 225, 294, 444 (n. 17); in Libra, 266; of Nakhshab, 125, 366 (n. 5); reflection of, 207, 409 (n. 29); in Scorpio, 212, 411 (n. 64); splitting of, 60, 209, 210, 340 (n. 22); wine as, 437 (n. 29). *See also* crescent

moth, 124, 164, 180, 198, 199, 278, 375 (n. 20), 404 (nn. 40, 41, 43). *See also* candle
mouth, lip, 313; and Jesus, 250; as *mīm*, 59, 237, 239, 317, 420 (n. 51); minute, 44, 68, 246, 305, 306; like rooster's eyes, 186; ruby, 43, 94, 139, 156; Solomon's seal, 74; sugar, sugarfield, 118, 197, 403 (n. 31). *See also* Jesus; ruby; carnelian
muʿammā (riddle), 239, 240, 421 (n. 79)
mubālagha (hyperbole), 41, 335 (n. 13)
mudawwar (of circular [annular] shape; referring to a poem written thus), 338 (n. 45)
mufarriḥ (tranquilizer), 266, 277, 382 (n. 18), 433 (n. 11)
muftī (jurist who gives legal opinion), 88; Love as, 88
mughannī (singer), 59
mughbacha (the young magus), 116, 119
mughīlān (thorns), 94, 355 (n. 32)
muḥaqqaq (decorative cursive calligraphic style), 242
Muḥarram (first month of the lunar year; month of mourning), 92, 210, 358 (nn. 19, 21), 429 (n. 16)
muhr (seal), 160, 383 (n. 26)
muḥtasib (market supervisor), 59
mukhammas (poem in five-lined strophes), 33
mukhannath (catamite), 357 (n. 7)
mukhmal (velvet), 225
mul (wine), 178, 421 (n. 75)
mulammaʿ (poem in mixed languages), 338 (n. 41)
munāẓara (dispute), 26, 331 (n. 18)
muqarnaṣ (stalactite work), 258
muqla (eyeball), 234, 239
mūr (ant) and *mār*, 196, 403 (n. 28)
muraʿʿāt-i naẓīr (combination of items from the same sphere), 38, 288, 304
murabbaʿ (poem in quadrangular shape), 338 (n. 41)
murgh (bird), 325 (n. 12); *murgh-i bismil* (ritually slaughtered bird), 183, 198, 396 (n. 34). *See also* Simurgh
muruwwa (manly virtue), 95
musaddas (poem in six-lined strophes), 33, 104
musalsal ("chainlike"): ghazal, 93, 355 (n. 30); script, 4, 232, 418 (n. 25), 423 (n. 90)
musammaṭ (poem with interior rhyme), xi, 20, 21, 34
muṣḥaf (copy of the Koran), 57, 240, 399 (n. 9), 422 (nn. 82, 84); *muṣḥaf-i jamāl*, 422 (n. 82)
mushāʿira (poets' contest), 51
mushtarī (Jupiter; buyer), 213, 412 (n. 69)
musk (black and fragrant), 284, 306, 354 (n. 19), 355 (n. 37), 378 (n. 15), 401 (n. 10), 422 (n. 83); musk deer, 148, 193, 200, 354 (n. 19), 355 (n. 37), 401 (n. 10). *See also* tresses
muswadda (rough, "black" copy), 232
mutaqārib (meter), 31, 334 (nn. 35, 39); lyrical, 355 (n. 30)
muwaḥḥid (monotheist, 252, 374 (n. 11)

nafas ar-raḥmān (the Breath of the Merciful), 106
nafs (soul), 194, 256, 399 (n. 61); *nafs ammāra*, 66, 94, 256, 357 (n. 7); *nafs lawwāma*, 66, 256; *nafs muṭmaʾinna*, 66, 256
nakhl-i mātam (high pole in Muḥarram processions), 358 (n. 21)
nāl (thread), 147
Names of God, 58, 59, 162, 224, 310, 311; Greatest Name, 76
nār (fire), 351 (n. 159)
narcissus, 164, 385 (n. 15); blind, 67, 165, 168, 385 (n. 20); its crown, 110; as eye, 42, 67, 118, 162, 165, 296, 385 (nn. 18, 19), 386 (n. 33), 388 (n. 61), 438 (n. 30); as fried egg with bread, 166; with gold and silver, 165, 166, 384 (n. 7), 386 (n. 25)
naskh (abolition; a common kind of cursive writing), 233, 242, 418 (n. 29)
naṣṣ (authoritative text), 239
nastaʿlīq ("hanging," cursive style used mainly for Persian), 52, 242
nāsu niyām, an- ("People are asleep . . ."), 101, 293
naʿt (eulogy for the Prophet), 24, 344 (n. 76), 415 (n. 30), 442 (n. 9)
naṭʿ (leather mat), 39
nathr (prose), 2
Nauruz (spring festival at the vernal equinox), 96, 159, 258, 412 (n. 67), 428 (n. 10)
nawāʾ (musical mode), 273, 274
nay, *ney* (reed flute), 274
nāz (coquetry), 12, 181
naẓīra (imitation of a classical model), 333 (n. 30)
naẓm (poetry), 2
needle, 244; of Jesus, 349 (n. 132)
Night of Might, 93, 94, 412 (n. 77)
nightingale, 36, 173, 175, 179, 180, 183, 185, 198, 215, 235, 276, 314, 406 (n. 3), 425 (n. 12); its blood (wine), 179; burning, burnt nest, 102, 174, 211, 268, 312, 394

(n. 14); its eyelashes, 424 (n. 102); recites *gulbāng*, or call to prayer, 179, 344 (n. 72); happy, 393 (n. 11); its heart, 390 (n. 70), 393 (n. 7); its lament, 171, 180, 389 (n. 61), 393 (nn. 10, 14), 415 (n. 35); as lover, 12; its tears, 178
nihang (crocodile, big fish), 408 (n. 21)
nīm bismil (half-slaughtered, in convulsions), 396 (n. 34)
nine, 258, 260, 429 (n. 14)
nithār (strewing of small coins, petals, etc.), 166
niyāz (yearning, petitioning), 12, 181
niẓām (order), 113, 248
nuh (nine): *nuh sipihr* (nine spheres), 429 (n. 14)
nūḥa (complaint), 61
nūn (the letter *n*), 237–39; crescent as, 237, 410 (n. 46); eyebrow as, 59, 237, 239, 420 (nn. 51, 55); inkwell as, 237, 420 (n. 67)
nūn (fish), 125, 237
Nūn, waʿl-qalam (Sura 68:1), 59
nūr (light), 351 (n. 159); *nūr ʿalā nūr* (light upon light, Sura 24:35), 59

ocean, sea, 65, 203–8, 214, 407 (nn. 15, 19, 21), 409 (n. 29), 432 (n. 8); of fire, 206, 407 (n. 20); of generosity, 10;
of God, 186, 204–7; life as, 408 (n. 21); of tears, 392, 407 (nn. 13, 15); of wine, 299
omphalos (navel, center), 355 (n. 37)
onyx (*jazʿ*), 381 (n. 6)
ostrich, 186, 187, 192, 307, 399 (n. 57)
owl, 181, 185, 187, 188, 398 (n. 47), 399 (n. 59)
oyster, produces pearls, 65, 204, 407 (nn. 13, 14), 437 (n. 28)

pākbāz (losing everything in gambling), 290
palās (coarse woolen material), 225, 415 (n. 32)
palūda (sweet pudding), 435 (n. 28)
paper: burnt, fire-struck, 418 (n. 20), 419 (n. 43); marbleized, 315, 402 (n. 22), 419 (n. 42); red, 317, 419 (n. 43); *shāmī*, 419 (n. 43)
paper shirt, 230, 417 (n. 11)
Paradise, 57, 72, 76, 77, 83, 84, 93, 162, 170, 183, 195, 196, 209, 228, 251, 252, 264, 313, 340 (n. 13), 347 (n. 121), 350 (n. 151), 351 (n. 158), 352 (n. 162), 358 (n. 13), 406 (n. 2), 426 (n. 25); eight paradises, 429 (n. 11); white face as, 139, 373 (n. 5)
parda (veil; musical mode), 273, 309
parīkhwānī (conjuring up a fairy or djinni), 278
parniyān (silk), 355 (n. 32)
parrot, 182–84, 199, 305, 315, 395 (nn. 25, 29, 31, 33), 399 (n. 53), 402 (nn. 51, 52); green, 183; speaks Hindi, 182, 399 (n. 56); merchant and, 183, 395 (n. 32); and mirror, 182, 257, 314, 395 (n. 30); sugar-selling, 182, 372 (n. 4); tulip as, 168
partridge, 181, 184, 185, 193, 307, 394 (n. 22)
parwīn (Pleiades), 214
parwāz (flight), 371 (n. 36)
peacock, 84, 183, 184, 199, 313, 314, 351 (n. 160), 396 (nn. 35, 36, 37), 398 (n. 47), 417 (n. 19); feather, 315; feather in the Koran, 396 (n. 36); foot, 184, 396 (n. 27)
pearl, 10, 65, 205, 386 (n. 25); dew as, 387 (n. 40); raindrops as, 204, 391 (n. 83), 407 (nn. 14, 15), 408 (n. 21); swan feeds on, 186; tears as, 205, 407 (n. 13); words, verse as, 1, 8, 335 (n. 5), 374 (n. 15)
pen, 233, 320, 340 (n. 18), 343 (n. 60), 418 (n. 35), 436 (n. 16); as adze, 135; as David, 346 (n. 103); eyelashes as, 233; fingers as, 233; as Faridun's flag, 361 (n. 13); heart as, 231; as Israfil's trumpet, 82; as juggling Hindu, 374 (n. 18); as Moses' wand, 69; as parrot, 395 (n. 25); Pen of Destiny, Divine, 229, 230, 306, 410 (n. 46); as *shihāb*, 340 (n. 27); steel, 371 (n. 37); as Water of Life, 346 (n. 98), 395 (n. 25). *See also* reed
peridot, 315
pepper, Indian, 434 (n. 26)
pig, 402 (n. 23)
pigeon, 184, 396 (nn. 39, 41); as messenger, 396 (n. 41); pigeon-flying, 396 (n. 39); of the sanctuary, 95, 185, 356 (n. 42), 396 (n. 42). *See also* dove; ringdove
pīr-i mughān (the master of the magi), 116, 277
Pisces, 412 (n. 67)
plane tree (*chinār*), 90, 163, 351 (n. 157), 384 (n. 10)
Pleiades, 2, 214, 362 (n. 19), 412 (n. 74); as dog collar, 196
polo, 141, 284–87, 373 (n. 5), 442 (n. 9)
pomegranate: as blood of Farhad, 371 (n. 36); corundum-like (ruby), 383 (n. 23); like fire, 39, 341 (n. 42)
porcelain, 277
poverty, spiritual (*faqr*), 206, 250, 319, 357

(n. 5), 400 (n. 65); as peacock, 396 (n. 37); as ruby, 382 (n. 19)
prayer, 88–90, 364 (n. 49), 390 (n. 83); five prayers, 89, 257, 359 (n. 24); morning, 186; ritual, 352 (n. 3), 353 (n. 12)
prayer beads, 12, 423 (n. 99). *See also* rosary; *tasbīḥ*
prayer niche, or direction, 46; goblet as, 352 (n. 5), 366 (n. 12)
prayer rug or mat, 12, 356 (n. 43); lawn as, 166; sky as, 306, 318, 354 (n. 17), 356 (n. 43)
prostration: flask in, 390 (n. 83); mark of, 352 (n. 6). *See also* violet
pūrab (East), 150
purdah (veil), 215

qabā (gown), 222, 305; and *baqā* (remaining), 222, 305
qāf (the letter *q*), 229, 237, 420 (n. 60)
qalandar (type of dervish), 12
qalb ("turning"), 48; false money, false heart, 49; *qalb-i ṣanaubarī* (the material heart), 163
qāmat (stature), 82, 353 (n. 7); *qad qāmat aṣ-ṣalāt* ("ritual prayer has begun"), 353 (n. 7)
qanāʿat (contentment), 420 (n. 60)
qāqum (ermine), as day, 401 (n. 14)
qand (sugar), 150, 376 (n. 33), 380 (n. 31)
qaṣīda, xi, xii, 10, 20, 21, 24–28, 31, 33, 34, 38, 43, 45, 51, 77, 89, 111, 125, 149, 167, 178, 236, 247, 304, 329 (n. 57), 331 (n. 18), 334 (n. 41), 336 (nn. 17, 23), 337 (n. 32), 346 (n. 113), 366 (n. 4), 387 (n. 38), 389 (nn. 65, 70), 390 (n. 83), 399 (n. 55), 403 (n. 28), 427 (n. 25); of Anwari, xiii, 40, 41, 343 (n. 5); of Fani, 420 (n. 59); of Farrukhi, 223, 287, 384 (n. 10), 441 (n. 2); of Ghalib, 212, 387 (n. 39); of Imruʾlqays, 424 (n. 5); of Khaqani, xiii, 251, 370 (n. 27), 393 (n. 3), 405 (n. 51); of Manuchihri, 278; of Muḥsin Kakorawi, 202; of Qasim-i Kahi, 443 (n. 23); of Saʿdi, xiv; of Sanaʾi, 208, 269; of ʿUrfi, xviii, 105, 299; of Waṭwaṭ, 205, 345 (n. 8); of Ẓahir Faryabi, 398 (n. 49). See also Index of Authors and Works, *Madāʾin qaṣīda* (Khaqani)
qaṣīda-i maṣnūʿ (artificial *qaṣīda*), 335 (n. 2)
qawwāl (singer of religious songs), 436 (n. 7)
qayd-i firangī (the "European prison"), 376 (n. 37)
qayṣar-i Rūm (Caesar, ruler of Byzantium), 149, 379 (n. 21)
qibla (prayer direction), 89, 353 (n. 7), 368 (n. 3); of Zarathustra, of the fire worshipers, 117, 211, 363 (n. 37)
qiblanumā (compass), 90, 353 (n. 14)
qifā nabki ("Let us stop and weep"; beginning of Imruʾlqays's *muʿallaqa*), 247, 424 (n. 5)
qīr (darkness; tar), 150, 380 (n. 28), 431 (n. 1). *See also General Index*, Qayruwān
qishlaq (winter abode), 375 (n. 27)
qiṭʿa (fragment; ghazal without the first two rhyming hemistichs), xv, 28, 34
qiyāmat (resurrection; riot), 82, 350 (n. 146)
qonuq gerek (Turkish, "one must stay as guest"), 308
qurb (proximity), 229, 420 (n. 60)
qurʿa (die; lot), 443 (n. 21)

rāʾ (the letter *r*), 236, 238
rabāb (rebec), 275
radd al-ʿujz ʿalāʾṣ-ṣadr (rhetorical form), 45
radīf (recurrent rhyme word), 21, 149, 156, 167, 317, 330 (n. 7), 343 (n. 63), 381 (n. 3), 387 (n. 38), 389 (n. 65), 398 (n. 49), 399 (n. 55), 403 (n. 26), 405 (n. 51), 406 (n. 2), 423 (n. 93), 430 (n. 26)
rain, 202, 203, 207, 211, 234, 406 (n. 2); April, 204, 407 (n. 14); raincloud, 202 (Muḥammad as), 419 (n. 42); raindrop as future pearl, 204, 205, 407 (nn. 13, 14, 15), 408 (n. 21); as weaver, 406 (n. 3)
rainbow, 211, 419 (n. 43)
rajaz (Arabic meter), 32
Ramaḍan (ninth lunar month; month of fasting), 88, 92, 93, 236, 238, 240
ramal musaddas (Arabo-Persian meter), 31
rang (color), 364 (n. 51)
raqṣ-i bismil (dance of the slaughtered bird), 183
rāst (musical mode), 273; *rāst kardan* (to correct), 353 (n. 7)
raven, 181, 185, 397 (n. 44)
razm (fight), 361 (n. 16)
rebec (*rabāb*), 275, 437 (n. 20)
red, 57, 142, 211, 265, 339 (n. 9), 387 (nn. 40, 46), 431 (n. 1), 384 (nn. 7, 10), 387 (n. 37); eyes, 266, 396 (n. 41); flowers, as flames, 64; paper, 234; red-faced (honored), 431 (n. 1); tears, 40, 234, 265, 309, 321. *See also* fire; rose; wine
reed, reedbed, reed mat, 225, 226, 273, 415 (n. 40); reed flute, 250, 273–75, 436 (nn. 13, 16); reed pen, 233, 274, 426 (n. 26); reed and sugar cane, 320

rēg-i rawān (quicksand), 300, 447 (nn. 61, 62)
resurrection, 81, 83, 84, 211, 350 (nn. 155, 165), 353 (n. 6); as *ṣarṣar*, 348 (n. 122). See also *qiyāmat*
riḍā (contentment), 433 (n. 11)
rīḥānī script, 242, 419 (n. 44), 423 (n. 92)
rind (carefree), 12; *rindī*, 222
ringdove, 162, 184, 192, 397 (n. 43)
riwāyat (report, tale), 96, 350 (n. 151)
rod of Moses, 78
rooster, 186, 398 (n. 49)
rosary, 12, 91, 92, 119, 307, 353 (n. 16), 354 (nn. 17, 21), 366 (n. 12), 423 (n. 99); like blisters, 446 (n. 42); tears like, 91, 92. *See also* prayer beads, *tasbīḥ*
rose, 36, 167, 169, 178, 179, 180, 185, 211, 215, 221, 235, 304, 312, 352 (n. 162), 384 (n. 6), 392 (nn. 96, 97, 98), 393 (n. 10), 394 (nn. 15, 18), 397 (n. 44), 414 (nn. 8, 17), 419 (n. 42), 424 (nn. 100, 102), 425 (n. 12), 431 (n. 1)
and blood, bleeding, 102, 174, 312, 386 (n. 24)
and thorn, 170, 172, 367 (n. 13), 373 (n. 8), 390 (n. 77)
as book, 173, 391 (nn. 84, 85), 419 (n. 44)
as bride, 166, 171, 172
as candle, 198, 385 (n. 17)
as carnelian, 431 (n. 1)
as Divine Glory, 175
as face, cheek, 162, 167, 170, 171, 179, 182, 313, 373 (n. 8), 384 (n. 6), 433 (n. 16)
as fire, fire of Moses, 68, 174, 180, 181, 312, 344 (n. 72), 369 (n. 21), 391 (n. 90), 393 (n. 14), 394 (n. 16), 405 (n. 45)
as goblet, 173, 384 (n. 10), 391 (n. 83)
as houri, 170, 389 (n. 63)
as Jesus, 170
as (or with) robe of honor, 221, 390 (n. 77)
as ruby bezel, 391 (n. 83)
as soul flower, 388 (n. 50)
as Sulayman or Jamshed, 73, 110, 172, 390 (n. 75)
as sultan, prince, 172, 385 (n. 17)
as Yusuf, 67, 202, 390 (n. 70)
bud as Mary, 78; as nightingale's heart, 180, 390 (n. 70), 393 (n. 7)
emerald throne, 157
flightiness, 170, 389 (n. 67)
fragrance, 95, 345 (n. 92) (as Khiḍr)
painted, 243
petal as letter, 393 (n. 11); as tongue, 393 (n. 13)
Prophet's perspiration, 169, 388 (n. 58); model of the *umma* (the Prophet's community), 174
smiling, laughing, 170–72, 176, 389 (n. 68)
torn shirt, 42, 162, 171, 297, 389 (n. 67), 393 (n. 13); with wet hem, 171
two-colored, 170
rose garden, 166, 312, 313; of Ibrahim, 63, 174, 392 (n. 92), 394 (n. 15), 404 (n. 45), 434 (n. 26)
rose oil, rose water, 174, 266, 313
rubāʿī, 28–30, 33, 34, 332 (n. 22), 427 (n. 35), 436 (n. 17); *Rubāʿiyyāt* of ʿOmar Khayyam, xii, 6, 28, 332 (n. 21), 361 (n. 10), 421 (n. 78)
ruby (*laʿl*, *yāqūt*), 106, 151, 158–60, 168, 169, 371 (n. 34), 374 (n. 15), 382 (nn. 19–23), 384 (n. 10), 416 (n. 7); bezel, 250, 391 (n. 83); liquid (wine), 157, 158, 281; mouth, lip, 43, 88, 135, 158, 233, 350 (n. 151), 430 (n. 25); in *mufarriḥ*, 158, 266, 277, 382 (n. 18). *See also* wine; rose; mouth
ruins: of Delhi (and the heart), 378 (n. 14); of Madaʾin (Seleukia-Ktesiphon), 39, 147; nightingale dwelling in, 398 (n. 44); with treasure (and owls), 185–86, 398 (nn. 44, 47), 196 (and snakes), 446 (n. 64)
rujūʿ ("return"; rhetorical form), 41
rukh (cheek; in chess, the bishop), 39, 289
ruler (for drawing lines), 234, 419 (n. 42)
rummāni (pomegranate-colored corundum), 383 (n. 23)
rūz-i alast (day of the primordial covenant), 446 (n. 42)

ṣabā (breeze) and *sabā* (Sheba), 74, 202
sabk-i hindī, 23, 325 (n. 6), 375 (n. 25). *See also* "Indian style"
sabzpūsh (wearing green [saints, angels]), 264, 432 (n. 4)
ṣād (the letter *ṣ*), 229, 236; compared to the eye, 239
ṣafā (purity), 95
safar dar waṭan (journey in one's homeland), 298
safīna (small poetry book), 34, 334 (n. 45), 421 (n. 78)
sag-i Laylā (Layla's dog), 132
ṣāḥibqirān, 212, 411 (n. 65)

salsabīl (heavenly fountain), 83, 351 (n. 157), 408 (n. 20)
salamander, 199, 404 (n. 44), 405 (nn. 45, 46), 411 (n. 64); as *kabāb*, 269
salt, 266, 268; melting like, 434 (n. 27); as preservative, 434 (n. 27); in wounds, 382 (n. 13), 434 (n. 27)
sam (pause in Indian music), 354 (n. 19)
samāʿ (hearing; mystical concert, dance), 376, 438 (n. 30)
samar (nighttime conversation), 381 (n. 31)
samm (poison), 237
ṣanam (idol), 62, 119
ṣanaubar (pine tree), 163
sangīn (stony, hard [meter]), 20
sāqī (cupbearer), 32, 273; *sāqī-yi kauthar* (ʿAli), 351 (n. 157); *sāqīnāma* (short *mathnawī*), xv, 32, 334 (n. 39)
sarāb (mirage, fata morgana), 374 (n. 16)
sarāpā (full description "from head to foot"), 335 (n. 6)
sarī (Arabo-Persian meter), 32
sarniwisht (fate), 230
ṣarṣar (destructive, icy wind), 77, 348 (n. 122)
sarw (cypress), 164; *sarw-i rawān* (walking cypress, the beloved), 164; *sarw-i āzād* (free), 164
satti (self-immolation of widows), 140
Saturn, 140, 141, 213, 373 (n. 7), 375 (n. 28). *See also* Hindu; black
saudā ("blackness," melancholia), 232, 414 (n. 11), 433 (n. 11)
saugandnāma (poem with a chain of oaths), 27
sayl (torrent, flash flood), 203
scar (*dāgh*), 387 (n. 45), 440 (n. 56)
Scorpio, 411 (n. 64); moon in, 212, 411 (n. 64)
seal (bezel), 310
serpent, viper, 196; Alexander's, 115; its eye blinded, 157–58, 382 (nn. 8, 9); in Paradise, 196; with treasure, 196; tress as, 84, 196. *See also* tress
seven, 113, 256–58, 260, 428 (nn. 6, 10), 429 (n. 11); planets, 430 (n. 25); valleys, 189
seventeen, 429 (n. 18)
seventy, seventy-two, 260, 429 (n. 10)
shab-i barāt (night of 14 Shaʿban), 280; *shab-i yaldā* (longest night, winter solstice), 95
shadow play, 281, 440 (n. 47), 441 (n. 57)
shāh u gadā (king and beggar), 131
shāhid ("witness"; charming young boy), 10, 97, 328 (n. 46), 372 (n. 1)
shāhīn (falcon), 394 (n. 23)
shahr (Arabic, "month"; Persian, "town"), 40, 46
shām-i gharībān ("evening of the poor strangers," eve of 10 Muḥarram), 104, 292, 379 (n. 19), 440 (n. 56)
shamʿ-i maḥfil ("candle of the assembly"), 51, 279
shāmī (Syrian: connected with evening, *shām*), 419 (n. 43)
shaqāʾiq (anemone), 387 (n. 46)
shaqq al-qamar (splitting of the moon, Sura 54:1), 60, 340 (n. 22)
sharʿ (religious law), 48
sharāb (wine), 167, 267, 275
sharīʿa (religious law), 183, 206, 244, 256
shashdara (hopeless position in backgammon), 257, 289, 444 (n. 30)
shaṣt (sixty; net), 261
shaṭḥ (theopathic utterance, paradox), 377 (n. 2)
shaykh (old man; leader), 266, 294, 307, 401 (n. 9)
shihāb (meteor, shooting star), 340 (n. 27)
shikast (broken), *shikasta* (calligraphic style in Iran and India), 241, 297
shiʿr (poem), 34, 48, 412 (n. 73)
Shiʿra (Sirius), 412 (n. 73)
shirk (associating something with God), 338 (n. 4)
shirt: bloodstained, of the tulip, 67, 168, 388 (n. 53); for the bride Spirit, 223; enameled (wineglass or bottle), 96; of fidelity (becomes a shroud), 224; Majnun's, 133; Mary's, 80; paper, 230; torn, 133, 276, 389 (n. 67), 393 (n. 13) (*see also* rose); Yusuf's (bloodstained) 67, (fragrant) 67–68, 171, 390 (n. 70), (torn) 220
shīsha-i ḥalabī (Aleppan glass), 453 (n. 11). *See also General Index*, Aleppo
shroud, 168, 224, 389 (n. 67), 404 (n. 41), 415 (n. 26)
shuturmurgh (ostrich), 186
sidrat al-muntahā (lote tree of the border), 80
ṣifr (zero), 262, 431 (n. 34)
silk, 207, 222, 224–26, 355 (n. 32); silkworm, 404 (n. 41)
silsila (chain of initiation), 232
Simurgh (mythical bird), 179, 184, 187–89, 192, 314; its feather, 112, 188, 325 (n. 12), 380 (n. 25); in the *Shāhnāma*, 111, 188
sīn (the letter *s*), 236, 239
sinjāb (squirrel), 401 (n. 14); as night, 406 (n. 4)

sipand (wild rue), 295, 445 (nn. 18, 20)
sīpāra (the thirty parts of the Koran), 339 (n. 9)
sīrāb (satiated), 374 (n. 16)
Ṣirāṭ Bridge, 350 (n. 150)
ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm, as- (the straight path), 229
Sirius, 312, 412 (n. 73). *See also* Shiʿra
sitār, 436 (n. 7)
six, 257, 260, 428 (n. 1); earths, 41
siyāh mashq, 417 (n. 16). See also *mashq*
sky, 210, 257, 277, 306, 307, 321, 412 (nn. 73, 74), 422 (n. 9); as butcher, 434 (n. 24); as glass, 278; as horse, 285, 446 (n. 33); as millstone, 216, 297, 413 (n. 84); as polo ground, 284; as screen, 441 (n. 57); as Sufi, 360 (n. 30); as wheel, 215
sleep, 292, 293, 444 (nn. 3, 9); and story, 292, 357 (n. 4)
spectacles, 430 (n. 29), 446 (nn. 28, 30, 33, 35). *See also* eyeglasses
spider, 226; and cave, 359 (n. 23), 404 (n. 41)
spinning, 224
stars: as breadcrumbs, 434 (n. 26); as puppets, 441 (n. 57); as sand, 412 (n. 77); as *sipand*, 445 (n. 18); as teeth, 413 (n. 31); as tongues, 412 (n. 77), 413 (n. 79)
stones: break glass, 370 (n. 23), 439 (n. 35); thrown by children (at Majnun), 133, 369 (n. 21). *See also General Index*, Farhad, Majnun
stork, 186, 399 (nn. 53, 55)
straw, 265, 267; and amber, 267, 382 (n. 9), 433 (nn. 17, 18); and lightning, 211, 410 (n. 55). See also *būryā*
suāl u jawāb (question and answer; rhetorical form), 44
subḥa, rosary, 91
subḥānī ("Glory be to me!"), 125
sugar (usually connected with lips), 197, 268, 309, 320, 359 (n. 23), 403 (n. 31), 434 (n. 27), 435 (n. 28), 436 (n. 17); sugarcane, 151, 274, 378 (n. 15), 281 (n. 31)
Suhayl (Canopus), 150, 156, 214
sun, 208, 209, 212, 213, 306, 409 (n. 41); as brazier, 445 (n. 18), as bread, 434 (n. 26); face as, 208, 409 (n. 29), 412 (n. 74)
sunbul (hyacinth = curls), 167
sunbula (Virgo), 412 (n. 74), 428 (n. 10)
suraqāt-i shiʿrī (poetical thefts), 42
surkhrū (red-faced, honored), 168
sūsan, sausan (lily), 166, 386 (n. 29)
sūzan (needle), 386 (n. 29)
sweeping, 294, 308
tadhkira, tezkere (biographies), 328 (n. 39)
tafsīr (commentary on the Koran), 443 (n. 21)
taghāful (feigned neglect), 375 (n. 25)
tailor, 221–22; God as, 413 (n. 2); Idris as, 77, 221; intellect as, 414 (n. 12); life as, 415 (n. 24); of the lovers, 414 (n. 11); tongue as, 224
tajāhul-i ʿārif (feigned ignorance; rhetorical form), 43
tajdīd-i maṭlaʿ (new introductory verse in a *qaṣīda*), 25
tajnīs (homonymy), 46, 56, 104, 111, 118, 187, 222, 229, 236, 275, 361 (n. 16), 383 (n. 4); *tajnīs-i khaṭṭī*, 46; *tajnīs-i murakkab*, 46; *tajnīs-i nāqis*, 46, 147, 180, 266
takbīr (the words *Allahu akbar*), *chahār takbīr*, 89, 352 (n. 4)
takhalluṣ (pen name), 25
takhmīs (rendering into five-lined strophes), 334 (n. 41)
talkhwash (somewhat bitter [wine]), 277
tanāsub (formal harmony), 38, 40, 238
tappa (two-lined Pashto poem), 35, 277 (n. 2)
taqsīm (dividing; rhetorical form), 45
tār (string), 275, 431 (n. 1)
tārīkh (chronogram), 28, 252, 253
ṭarīqa (the Sufi path, brotherhood), 206, 256
tarjīʿband (strophic poem), 33, 50
tarkībband (strophic poem), 33, 34, 50, 156, 381 (n. 2)
tars (reverse), 233
tarsā (Christian), 233
tarṣīʿ (studding with jewels; rhetorical form), 46
tasbīḥ (rosary), 91, 307; and *zunnār*, 354 (n. 17). *See also* rosary
taṣḥīf (changing the diacritical dots), 47, 305, 421 (n. 78)
tashbīb (erotic introduction of a *qaṣīda*), 24
tauḥīd (profession of God's being One; also poems about that topic), 24, 318, 342 (n. 50), 344 (n. 72), 347 (n. 120), 419 (n. 51)
ṭauq al-ḥamāma (the dove's neck ring), 185
tauqīʿ (heavy chancellery script), 418 (n. 29)
ṭāʾūs (peacock), *tāʾūsān-i bismil*, 184
tavern, 58, 92, 227, 294; as sanctuary, 352 (n. 5); of pre-eternity, 339 (n. 13)
ṭawāf (circumambulation), 94; of the goblet, 89, 438 (n. 29)
tayammum (ablution with sand), 88, 352 (n. 3)

ṭaylasān (high headgear of scholars), 398 (n. 49)
tāz (Arab), 376 (n. 31)
taẓādd (contrast; rhetorical form), 40, 435 (n. 28)
tears, 223, 267, 294, 298, 323, 418 (n. 20); as children, 269, 317, 318, 342 (n. 55), 435 (n. 34); coral beads, 91; ocean of, 293; red (carnelian, coral, ruby), 156, 265, 309, 321, 419 (n. 43); they wash away letters, 231, 232, 317; they water the cypress, 385 (n. 17)
tharā (dust), 214
thorns, 94, 221, 355 (n. 32), 390 (n. 77)
three, 256, 260, 428 (n. 2)
thuluth (large cursive script), 418 (n. 29)
thunder, 211, 410 (n. 54)
thurayyā (the Pleiades), 214
ṭibb yūnānī (Greek medical tradition), 266
tiryāq (antidote), 266
toquz (Turkish: nine), 429 (n. 14)
treasure: God as hidden, 102; in ruins (with serpents or owls), 185–86, 196, 297, 398 (n. 47), 446 (n. 44)
tree, 162; of Life, 162, 413 (n. 82); heart as, 384 (n. 4), 385 (n. 12). *See also different kinds of trees, and* Ṭuba tree
tresses, 48, 131, 236, 246, 257, 303–5
as Harut and Marut, 76
as *shām-i gharībān*, 104, 379 (n. 19), 440 (n. 56)
as snare, chain, 25, 132, 287, 442 (nn. 15, 19)
as Zanji or Hindu, 139–41, 309, 310, 372 (n. 4), 373 (nn. 7, 8, 11), 374 (nn. 14, 17), 375 (n. 23), 376 (n. 32)
as *zunnār*, 364 (n. 48)
associated with *chīn*, 148, 379 (nn. 19, 20)
black, fragrant, 118, 133, 231, 240, 364 (n. 48), 377 (n. 17), 401 (n. 10)
like book of sinners (black), 83
like cross, 79, 307, 422 (n. 82)
like *ḥabl matīn*, 101
like hyacinths, 167
like Khaybar, 103
like *lām*, 59, 237, 261, 420 (nn. 60, 75)
like mallet, 284, 441 (n. 3)
like the material world, 13
like night, 208, 292, 320
like a serpent, 70, 83, 158, 196, 313
of the Prophet, 100
Ṭuba tree, 77, 83, 221, 351 (nn. 157, 158)
ṭughrā, 57, 211, 241, 419 (n. 43) (rainbow), 422 (n. 86)
ṭūmār (large scroll; large script), 241, 242
tulip, 39, 167, 221, 414 (n. 17), 384 (n. 7), 387 (nn. 40, 42, 46), 388 (nn. 50, 55, 56)
as child, 388 (n. 49)
as fire, flame, 64, 68, 117, 167, 168, 169, 171, 265, 304, 388 (n. 57)
as Farhad, 169, 388 (n. 55)
as goblet, 167, 277
as parrot, 168
as young beau, 167
associated with Majnun, 369 (n. 16)
associated with martyrs, 168, 169, 388 (n. 53)
associated with scar, 168, 369 (n. 16), 387 (n. 45)
associated with Yusuf and his shirt, 67, 388 (n. 53)
bloodstained, 44, 104, 162, 168
of Sinai, 68, 169, 388 (n. 57)
two-faced, 168
turāb (dust), 103
Turk (and Hindu). *See General Index*, Hindu; Turk
turktāzī (attack), 376 (n. 31)
turquoise (*fīrūza*), 156, 160, 181; turquoise-colored, 221, 265, 406 (n. 4)
turtledove, 363 (n. 35)
ṭūṭī (parrot), 395 (n. 37); *ṭūṭī-yi bismil*, 183; *ṭūtī-yi Hind*, 151, 182. *See also* parrot
two hundred, 260

ʿūd, al- (lute), 272
ʿūd (aloes-wood, incense), 281, 441 (n. 60)
ʿudhr (excuse), 370 (n. 27)
ʿudhrī, 357 (n. 6). See also *ḥubb ʿudhrī*
umm al-khabāʾith ("mother of evil things," wine), 277
ʿummān (ocean), 407 (n. 19)
unicorn, 192
urjūza, 334 (n. 37)
Ursa Major, 214
ʿushshāq (musical mode), 273, 274, 309
uṣūl (roots, bases [in law]), 96

velvet, 225, 250, 415 (n. 36), 444 (n. 3)
Venus (Zuhra), 93, 212, 213, 256, 412 (n. 67), 428 (n. 4)
verdigris, 311, 406 (n. 4)
violet, 215, 293; as ascetic, 166, 265; as black banner, 167; as facial down, 167; as humiliated enemy, 166; in mourning, 166, 386 (nn. 31, 34); prostrating itself, 172, 386 (nn. 30, 32, 33); violet oil, 167, 266

wa in yakādu ("they nearly had . . .," Sura 68:57), 59, 295, 445 (n. 20)
wa lahu ayḍan ("and this is also by him," introduction of a new poem in an anthology), 34
waḥdat al-wujūd (Unity of Being), 127
waist: like a hair, 44, 243, 424 (n. 102); like a wasp, 197
wajh al-hirr (cat's face; initial form of the letter *h*), 237
wall paintings, 243, 423 (n. 99)
waqf (stop sign; pious foundation), 356 (n. 47)
water imagery, 409 (n. 35)
Water of Life (*āb-i ḥayāt*), 71, 115, 207, 345 (n. 94), 346 (nn. 98, 99), 420 (n. 62); Alexander deprived of, 71, 115, 362 (n. 30); in darkness, 140; eloquence as, 363 (n. 30); ink as, 72, 234, 395 (n. 25); kiss as, 72; wine as, 72, 438 (n. 29)
wāw (the letter *w* or *ū*), 237, 431 (n. 69)
well: Babylonian, 347 (n. 118); of the chin, 342 (n. 55); of the Water of Life, 420 (n. 62); of Yusuf, 64, 65
weaver, weaving, 221–26; rain as, 406 (n. 3); of poetry, 14, 52, 223–24
white, 83, 142, 143, 401 (n. 14), 431 (n. 1); book of actions, 231; as clean copy, 232; face, 231, 304, 432 (n. 1); white-eyed (blind), 165, 320
White Hand, the, 70, 345 (n. 88)
wine, 10, 13, 35, 150, 163, 179, 211, 216, 251, 257, 260, 268, 277, 278, 279, 303, 320, 346 (n. 104), 354 (n. 24), 356 (n. 47), 362 (n. 27), 433 (n. 19), 437 (n. 28), 438 (n. 30), 439 (n. 39)
as blood, 268, 269, 276, 438 (n. 29); angels' blood, 435 (n. 29), 438 (n. 29)
as Jesus, 277, 348 (n. 124), 438 (n. 29)
as Kauthar, 351 (n. 157)
as moon, 437 (n. 29)
as Plato, 121
as ruby, 157, 438 (n. 29)
as Yusuf, 67, 68, 277, 437 (n. 29)
daughter of the grape, 96, 277
menstruation, 437 (n. 28)
mother of evil things (*umm al-khabā'ith*), 277
of hypocrisy, 59;
of love, 58, 61, 79;
of *tauḥīd*, 318
wine house, 437 (n. 28); key to, 210
witr (odd number), 256
woman soul, 66
wuḍū' (ablution), 88
wuqūf (standing), 94

yād (recollection, memory), 383 (n. 4)
yaghmā (plunder), 141, 375 (n. 23)
yam (sea), 88, 352 (n. 3)
yāqūt (ruby, garnet), 156, 158, 233, 347 (n. 118)
yār-i ghār ("friend of the Cave," i.e., Abu Bakr), 105
yatīm (orphan), 72
yaylā (summer camp), 375 (n. 27)
yazata (ancient Persian deities), 118
yellow: cheeks, face, 40, 57, 234, 265, 309, 321, 387 (n. 37), 431 (n. 1); robes of the Jews, 120
yumn (felicity), 106
yūz (cheetah), 193

zakāt (alms tax), 88; on beauty, 352 (n. 1); *zakāt-i la'l* (on rubies), 88, 158
zamīn (ground; metrical form), 43
zamzama (murmuring), 117, 363 (n. 34)
zero, 262
zindarūd (living stream), 207, 408 (n. 28)
Zuhra (Venus), 213
zumurrud (emerald), 156, 157
zunnār (infidel's girdle), 79, 91, 92, 119, 120, 307, 354 (n. 17), 357 (n. 5), 364 (n. 48), 373 (n. 11), 406 (n. 3), 422 (n. 82)

General Index

Words like Arabic, India, Iran, and Persian have not been indexed. Names of Western persons and places have been omitted unless essential.

Aaron (Harun), 345 (n. 84)
ʿAbbas (shah of Iran, r. 1586–1625), 349 (n. 145)
Abbasids (750–1258), 79, 108, 125, 138, 146, 164, 167, 170, 247, 385 (n. 18), 386 (n. 25), 387 (nn. 37, 46), 402 (n. 19), 406 (n. 3), 416 (n. 7), 432 (n. 2), 441 (n. 60)
ʿAbdul Qadir Gilani (d. 1166), 394 (n. 19)
Abel, 397 (n. 44)
Abkhaz, 50
Abraha, 199, 405 (n. 49)
Abraham (Ibrahim), *khalīl Allāh*, 39, 62–64, 68, 80, 174, 175. *See also Index of Terms and Concepts*, fire; rose garden
Abu ʿAli. *See* Avicenna
Abu Bakr aṣ-ṣiddiq (r. 632–34), 105, 359 (n. 23)
Abu Ḥanifa Nuʿman (d. 767), 250, 426 (nn. 23, 24)
Abu Hurayra (d. 678), 195, 426 (n. 25)
Abu Jahl (d. 624), 366 (n. 4)
Abu Lahab (d. 624), 103
Abu'l-Maʿali (11th cent.), 364 (n. 51)
Abu'l-Maʿali Jibra'il, 411 (n. 65)
Abu'l-muʿjam, 359 (n. 26)
Abu Saʿid (Timurid ruler, d. 1469), 382 (n. 15)
Abu Sufyan (d. 652), 358 (n. 20)
Abu Turab, 103, 234. *See* ʿAli ibn Abi Ṭalib
Abyssinian, 142, 157
ʿAd, people of, 77, 348 (n. 122)
Adam, 58, 60, 80, 220, 274, 341 (n. 34), 353 (n. 7); and Eve, 61, 84, 196, 313
ʿAdhra, 134, 370 (n. 27)
ʿAḍudaddaula, Buyid (d. 983), 405 (n. 48)
Afghan, Afghanistan, ix, xviii, xix, xxiii, 9, 47, 51, 117, 130, 150, 156, 158, 167, 297
ʿAfra, 370 (n. 27)
Afrasiyab, 112
Africa. *See* Egypt; Negro; North Africa; Zanji; *and individual persons and cities*
Agra, 2
Ahl-i ḥaqq, 393 (n. 1)
Aḥmad (Muḥammad's heavenly name), 100, 237, 260, 359 (n. 23). *See also* Muḥammad the Prophet
Ahmad Khan, Sir Sayyid (d. 1898), 69, 344 (n. 76), 365 (n. 59)
Aḥnaf (d. 808), 366 (n. 4)
Ahriman, 118
Akbar (Mughal emperor, r. 1556–1605), xvii, xviii, 25, 105, 143, 148, 248, 252, 298, 318, 344 (n. 76), 359 (n. 27), 374 (nn. 11, 16), 400 (n. 5), 407 (n. 8)
Aleppo, xiii, xv, 353 (n. 11), 368 (n. 16); Aleppan (glass), 277, 278, 300, 353 (n. 11), 378 (n. 16), 438 (n. 34), 446 (n. 28)
Alevis, 104
Alexander the Great, 71, 110, 113, 116, 120, 121, 362 (n. 30), 376 (n. 34), 443 (n. 29); his mirror, 109, 115; his wall, 77, 114; and the Water of Life, 140, 362 (n. 30)
ʿAli ibn Abi Ṭalib (r. 656–61), 24, 31, 103–5, 111, 193, 195, 229, 358 (nn. 13, 14), 359 (n. 26), 427 (n. 41), 436 (n. 13); as *sāqī-yi kauthar*, 351 (n. 157); his son, 105; his surname *karrār*, 358 (n. 13); his sword Dhu'l-fiqar, 56, 103, 233, 234. *See also* Ḥaydar, Ghaḍanfar
Allahu Akbar Fountain, Shiraz, 346 (n. 95)
Amu Darya (Oxus), 146
Anahid, 213
Anatolia (Rum), xiv, 30, 121, 126, 162, 186, 203, 204, 206
Ankara, 294
Anushirwan, Khusrau (r. 579–90), 71, 108, 113, 185, 362 (nn. 22, 23), 385 (n. 18), 398 (n. 47). *See also* Khusrau Nushirwan

Anwari-Alhosseyni, Shams, 239
Aqqoyunlu Turcomans, 349 (n. 145)
Arabia, 103, 111, 357 (n. 5), 425 (n. 7); South Arabia, 125
Aragon, Louis, 436 (n. 16)
Ararat, Mount (Judi), 62
Arberry, A. J., 4, 325 (n. 11), 333 (n. 29), 334 (n. 44)
Ardabil, 442 (n. 10)
Arduwan, 361 (n. 10)
Aristotle (d. 322 B.C.), 116, 121, 122, 124, 158, 335 (n. 6), 365 (nn. 58, 61)
Armenia, Armenian, 50, 113, 134, 340 (n. 29)
Asad Allah, 103, 193. *See* ʿAli ibn Abi Ṭalib
Aṣaf ibn Barkhiya, 73, 75, 113, 275, 337 (n. 30), 366 (n. 4)
Ashkaniyan, 113
Asia, 77
Augustine, Saint (d. 430), 120
Aurangabad, xx
Aurangzeb (Mughal emperor, r. 1658–1707), xix, 243, 295, 341 (n. 29), 425 (n. 18); his daughter, 331 (n. 17)
Avicenna (d. 1037), 124, 178, 365 (n. 1)
Awadh (Oudh), 33
Ayaz, 130, 131, 138, 187, 367 (nn. 1, 2), 368 (n. 3)
Azar, 364 (n. 51); his idols, 62, 63, 341 (n. 39)
Azarbaijan, xii
ʿAzazil (= Satan), 61

Babel, Babylon, 76, 257, 347 (n. 118), 378 (n. 16)
Babi religion, 331 (n. 17), 426 (n. 22)
Babur (Mughal emperor, r. 1526–30), xvii, 349 (n. 145), 368 (n. 7), 374 (n. 16)
Badakhshan, xvi, 156, 158, 159, 382 (n. 20), 383 (n. 23), 384 (n. 10). *See also Index of Terms and Concepts*, ruby
Badshah of Kashmir (r. 1420–70), 374 (n. 11)
Baghdad, 118, 125, 146, 234, 272, 366 (n. 3), 405 (n. 48), 424 (n. 1)
Bahadur Shah Ẓafar (Mughal emperor, r. 1839–57, d. 1861), 41, 340 (n. 19), 343 (n. 71), 410 (n. 50)
Bahman, 110
Bahmanids of the Deccan (1347–ca. 1500), 414 (n. 23)
Bahram Gor (r. 420–38), 113, 140
Balkh, xiv, 30, 125, 304
Balochistan, 328 (n. 48)
Bangladesh, ix
Banu ʿUdhra, 101, 357 (n. 6), 370 (n. 26)
Barbad, 114
Barmakids, 366 (n. 4), 425 (n. 7)
Barzin, 117
Baṭḥa, al-, 355 (n. 36)
Bawa Mohaiyyuddin, 399 (n. 53)
Bayezid Bisṭami (d. 874), 125, 432 (n. 8)
Baysonghur (Timurid, d. 1433), 162
Beethoven, Ludwig van (d. 1827), 9
Bektashi order, 104, 350 (n. 150), 437 (n. 28)
Benares, xx, 68, 202
Bengali, 126, 409 (n. 35)
Berlin, 110, 360 (n. 5), 398 (n. 50)
Bhit Shah (Sind), xix
Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, 334 (n. 34), 354 (n. 18), 375 (n. 20)
Bichitr (painter), 445 (n. 27)
Bidar (Deccan), 414 (n. 23)
Bihzad (painter, d. ca. 1536), 243, 373 (n. 4), 424 (n. 102)
Bijapur (Deccan), xviii, 275, 334 (n. 39), 341 (n. 42)
Bilal (d. 641), 105, 360 (nn. 29, 30)
Bilqis, Queen of Sheba, 74, 75, 370 (n. 28)
Bisutun, 135, 136, 169, 371 (n. 34), 372 (n. 40)
Bizhan, 112, 361 (n. 16), 362 (nn. 19, 21)
British, 70, 119, 376 (n. 36), 391 (n. 83), 428 (n. 42)
British Library, London, 334 (n. 34), 369 (n. 19), 398 (n. 47)
Browne, E. G., 6, 49
Buddha, Buddhism, 125
Buhlul, 122, 365 (n. 61)
Bukhara, xi, 142, 147, 148, 430 (n. 29)
Bulghar, 308
Buraq, 100, 357 (n. 3). *See also Index of Terms and Concepts*, Buraq
Bürgel, J. C., 7, 325 (nn. 3, 10), 327 (nn. 31, 35), 363 (n. 31), 370 (n. 28), 395 (n. 26), 412 (n. 73)
Buthayna, 134
Buyids, Buwayhids, 231, 405 (n. 48)
Buzurjmihr, 76, 113, 362 (n. 23)
Byzantium, Byzantine, 142, 143, 149, 151, 352 (n. 5), 376 (nn. 32, 34)

Caesar (*qayṣar-i Rūm*), 149, 379 (n. 21)
Cain, 397 (n. 44)
Cairo, 373 (n. 4), 405 (n. 46)
Calcutta, 109
Canaan, 151, 342 (n. 51), 343 (n. 63)
Canton (Kuang-chou), 369 (n. 26)
Caspian Sea, 143
Cathay, 138, 200, 376 (n. 30), 379 (n. 20)

Cawnpore, 331 (n. 17)
Central Asia, xiii, 104, 110, 120, 138, 146, 148, 156, 193, 258, 284, 297, 366 (n. 7), 372 (n. 1), 429 (n. 14)
Chagatay Turkish, xvii, 116, 274
Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, 375 (n. 20), 380 (n. 25)
Chigil, 138, 148
China, 112, 120, 148, 149, 151, 189, 224, 242, 281, 366 (n. 7), 376 (n. 34), 380 (nn. 24, 25); connected with *chīn*, "twist," 148, 379 (nn. 19, 20); home of painting, 188, 364 (n. 52), 379 (n. 25). *See also* Canton; Cathay
Chinese: dolls, 148, 281; gazelle, 200; mirror, 406 (n. 4), 428 (n. 4); painters, painting, 149, 150, 192, 396 (n. 33); pictures, 243; porcelain, 277
Chishti order, xv, 58, 96, 272, 436 (n. 7)
Christ, 56, 81, 96, 406 (n. 3); miracle of, 118. *See also* Jesus
Christianity, Christian, 12, 56, 63, 77, 91, 116, 118–20, 178, 196, 220, 228, 233, 318, 376 (n. 38), 419 (n. 11); cupbearer, 79, 277
Chittick, W., iii, 325 (n. 12), 339 (n. 7)
Circassian, 141
Cleveland Museum, 395 (n. 26)
Coptic, 358 (n. 18)
Corbin, Henry, 264, 363 (n. 44), 380 (n. 27)
Cordova, 221

Ḍaḥḥak (Żahhak), 110, 361 (n. 14)
Dakhni Urdu, 332 (n. 26), 333 (n. 30), 334 (n. 36), 359 (nn. 25, 26), 395 (n. 26), 410 (n. 50), 411 (n. 61)
Damascus, xiii, xiv
Danyal, son of Akbar (d. 1604), 140, 375 (n. 20)
Dara, 113, 361 (n. 10), 362 (n. 27)
Darab, 113
Darwin, Charles (d. 1882), 351 (n. 158)
Dashti, Ali, 326 (n. 20)
Daulatabad, xiv
David (Da'ud), 73, 346 (nn. 103, 104); Davidian melodies, 172, 276
Daylamites' hair, 143
Deccan, Deccani, ix, xvi, xviii, xix, 210, 295, 332 (n. 26), 425 (n. 18), 440 (n. 47)
Delhi, vii, xiv, xvii, xix–xxi, 23, 26, 30, 39, 49, 59, 63, 109, 110, 114, 147, 159, 170, 174, 233, 246, 341 (n. 29), 342 (n. 51), 378 (n. 14), 381 (n. 33), 383 (n. 24), 411 (n. 64), 440 (n. 47), 447 (n. 46)
Dhu'l-fiqar, 56, 103, 233, 234
Dhu'l-qarnayn, 114, 362 (n. 30)
Dhu'n-Nun (d. 859), 125
Diogenes (d. 323 B.C.), 121, 277, 438 (n. 31)
Duldul, 104, 195, 358 (n. 18)

Eckhart, Meister (d. 1328), 221
Egypt, Egyptians, xvii, 65, 125, 150, 151, 156, 178, 234, 242, 259, 345 (n. 84), 417 (n. 11); and sugar cane, 151, 268, 296, 378 (n. 15), 381 (n. 31); women, 66
Elburs, 197
Ethé, Hermann (d. 1919), 6, 327 (n. 24)
Ethiopia, 105, 143, 376 (n. 34)
Euphrates, 146
Eve, 61, 84, 196, 313

Faghfur, 148, 149, 366 (n. 7), 379 (nn. 21, 23)
Farabi, al- (d. 950), 272, 435 (n. 4)
Farhad (Kuhkan), 169, 371 (nn. 34, 36), 372 (nn. 37, 40), 382 (n. 20), 430 (n. 30); and Shirin, 40, 134–36
Faridun, 108, 110, 114, 361 (n. 13)
Farrukh Siyar (Mughal emperor, r. 1713–19), 441 (n. 56)
Fars, 117, 118, 146, 392 (n. 1)
Fathpur Sikri, 407 (n. 8)
Fatima, 105; hand of, 257
Fatimids (969–1171), 405 (n. 46)
Firang (Europeans), 143
FitzGerald, Edward (d. 1883), 6, 28
Fort William, Calcutta, 428 (n. 42)
Fouchécour, C. H. de, 7–9
Fra Angelico, 276

Gabriel, 59, 78, 80, 118, 269, 286, 340 (n. 20), 364 (n. 49), 395 (n. 32); symbol of intellect, 80
Gaeffke, Peter, 410 (n. 50), 446 (n. 36)
Galata, xx
Galen (d. ca. 199), 121
Ganges, 46, 377 (n. 1)
Ganja, xiii, 38, 381 (n. 33)
Garcin de Tassy (d. 1878), 6
Gayumarth, 109, 114, 220, 361 (n. 6)
Genghis Khan (d. 1226), 275, 411 (n. 63)
George III (of England, r. 1760–1820), 390 (n. 83)
Ghaḍanfar, 103, 193. *See* ʿAli ibn Abi Ṭalib
Ghassanids, 39
Ghaziuddin Ḥaydar of Awadh (r. 1819–27), 5, 358 (n. 19)
Ghazna, xi, xii, 29, 30, 130, 178, 213, 364 (n. 51); Ghaznawids, 131, 405 (n. 48)

Gheber (Parsi), 117
Gibb, E. J. W., 6
Giv, 108
Gog and Magog (Yajuj and Majuj), 77, 114, 362 (n. 30)
Golconda, xviii, 395 (n. 26), 411 (n. 61)
Greece, 276; Greek(s), 79, 113, 138, 149, 150, 156, 199, 265, 399 (n. 58); language, 398 (n. 49); philosophers, philosophy, 120, 121, 124, 365 (n. 61)
Gujarat, 333 (n. 30), 415 (n. 33)
Gulbarga (Deccan), xv, 58, 96
Gushtasp, 112, 113
Guyon, Mme de la Motte (d. 1717), 203

Ḥabash, 143
Ḥajji Bayram (15th cent.), 294
Hala (Sind), 446 (n. 30)
Haman, 345 (n. 88)
Hammer(-Purgstall), Joseph von (d. 1856), 4–6, 10, 11, 17, 198, 228, 326 (nn. 14, 17), 328 (n. 47), 370 (n. 27), 372 (n. 4), 383 (n. 26), 386 (n. 27), 394 (n. 17)
Ḥamza, 105, 248
Harun (Aaron), 345 (nn. 81, 84)
Harun ar-Rashid (r. 786–809), 366 (n. 4), 425 (n. 7)
Harut and Marut, 76, 213, 347 (n. 118), 378 (n. 16)
Ḥasan ibn ʿAli (d. ca. 669), 358 (n. 20)
Ḥatim at.-Ṭa'i, 111, 124, 337 (n. 30), 359 (n. 26), 361 (n. 16), 366 (n. 4)
Ḥaydar, 103, 193, 361 (n. 16). *See* ʿAli ibn Abi Ṭalib
Hebrew, 50
Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich (d. 1831), 186
Herat, xii, xvi, xvii, 23, 30, 89, 116, 131, 243, 274, 304, 334 (n. 34), 368 (n. 7), 425 (n. 18)
Hijaz, 94
Himyarit, 425 (n. 7)
Hind (name), 124
Hind, wife of Abu Jahl, 366 (n. 4)
Hindi, xviii, 182, 202, 359 (n. 27), 374 (n. 16)
Hindu, 49, 116, 120, 131, 158, 182, 202, 280, 340 (n. 29), 353 (n. 11), 364 (n. 52), 372 (n. 1), 373 (nn. 5, 10, 11), 374 (nn. 14, 17, 18); 375 (nn. 20, 22), 380 (n. 29), 395 (n. 29), 409 (n. 29), 426 (n. 32)
  and fire, 68, 117, 140, 141, 250, 374 (n. 17)
  and Turk, 138–43. *See also* Turk
  as doorkeepers, 140, 213, 373 (n. 7)
  as slaves, 141, 309
  as thieves, 373 (n. 7)
  black, 138, 139, 289, 432 (n. 2)
  crow like, 398 (n. 44)
  devils like, 138
  eyes like, 372 (n. 29), 376 (n. 31)
  hair like, 372 (n. 4), 375 (n. 23), 376 (n. 32)
  insects like, 372 (n. 4)
  night as, 375 (n. 26)
  pen like, 374 (n. 18)
  of the sky (Saturn), 264
Hinduism, 73, 395 (n. 27)
Hindu Kush, 284
Hindustan, 139, 183, 199, 200, 395 (n. 25), 405 (nn. 45, 51); black, 139–41, 397 (n. 44); tresses as, 374 (n. 14)
Hindustani, 272, 436 (n. 7); music, 333 (n. 32), 436 (n. 7)
Hindwi, 49, 333 (n. 32)
Hinglaj, 380 (n. 29)
Hippocrates (Buqraṭ) (d. ca. 277 B.C.), 121, 365 (n. 58)
Ḥira', 381 (n. 1)
Huart, Clément (d. 1919), 6, 326 (n. 21), 329 (n. 1), 358 (n. 21), 372 (n. 4), 418 (n. 26)
Hud, 348 (n. 122)
Humayun (Mughal emperor, r. 1530–56), xvii, xviii, 158, 187, 374 (n. 16)
Ḥurufi, xv, 57, 240, 259, 422 (n. 83)
Ḥusayn Bayqara of Herat (d. 1506), xvii, 274, 297, 368 (n. 7), 400 (n. 5)
Ḥusayn ibn ʿAli (d. 680), 33, 104, 210, 358 (n. 20), 429 (n. 16)
Hushang, 109, 361 (n. 11)
Hyderabad (Deccan), xxi, 425 (n. 11)

Iblis (Satan), 60, 61, 80, 340 (nn. 20, 25), 370 (n. 28), 375 (n. 25)
Ibn ʿAbbad, the Ṣaḥib (d. 995), 231, 417 (n. 20), 425 (n. 7)
Ibn al-Bawwab Ibn Hilal (d. 1020), 229, 237, 416 (n. 7)
Ibn Junayd (d. after 1390), 417 (n. 11)
Ibn Muqla (d. 940), 229, 233–35, 237, 239, 416 (n. 7)
Ibrahim (Abraham): and fire, 39, 341 (n. 42). *See also* Abraham; *Index of Terms and Concepts*, fire; rose
Ibrahim ibn Adham (d. ca. 777), 125
Idris, 76, 221, 348 (n. 121)
Ikhwan aṣ-ṣafa, 272, 436 (n. 5)
Ilyas, 77

ʿImaduddin ibn ʿAfif (d. 1336), 415 (n. 4)
Indo-Aryan, 428 (n. 10)
Indo-Muslim, 7, 23, 61, 69, 81, 91, 112, 150, 163, 186, 203, 207, 211, 299, 398 (n. 53)
Indonesia, 91
Indo-Pakistan, viii, xxiii, 35, 51, 185, 195, 206, 220, 327 (n. 28), 342 (n. 48)
Indo-Persian, viii, xx, 5, 32, 101, 138, 143, 174, 183, 203, 225, 241, 248, 262, 278, 296, 297, 299, 328 (nn. 39, 40), 376 (n. 36), 396 (n. 39), 397 (n. 44), 399 (n. 59), 406 (n. 6), 419 (n. 32)
Indo-Tibetan, 398 (n. 53)
Indus, Indus Valley, 30, 63, 143, 146, 206, 224, 377 (n. 2). *See also* Sind
Iraj, 110, 114
Iram dhat al-ʿimad, 77
Iraq, 146, 151
ʿIsa al-masiḥ. *See* Jesus
Isfahan, 1
Isfandiyar, 113, 361 (n. 11)
Iskandar, 114, 115, 326 (n. 27 [mirror]), 380 (n. 28), 443 (n. 29). *See also* Alexander
Ismaʿil (Ishmael), 63, 80
Ismaili, xii, 182
ʿIṣmatuddin, Princess (late 12th cent.), 251, 426 (n. 28)
Israel, 259; Children of, 70, 147
Israfil, 81, 82
Istanbul, viii, xvii–xxi, 147, 378 (n. 13), 403 (n. 27)
Ithna ʿashari Shia, 104

Jacob (Yaʿqub), 66, 165, 342 (n. 55), 343 (n. 63)
Jaʿfar al-Barmaki (d. 803), 366 (n. 4)
Jaʿfar aṭ-ṭayyar (d. 629), 358 (n. 13)
Jahangir (Mughal emperor, r. 1605–27), xviii, 81, 92, 295, 334 (n. 39), 349 (n. 145), 354 (n. 24)
Jamshed, Jam, 75, 109, 110, 112, 361 (nn. 8, 10, 11); his cup, 115. *See also* Sulayman
Japan, Japanese, 35
Java, Javanese, 359 (n. 27)
Jayḥun (Oxus), 146
Jerusalem, 78
Jesus, 39, 77–81, 194, 213, 250, 252, 259, 265, 337 (n. 30), 346 (n. 96), 348 (nn. 125, 127), 349 (n. 134), 350 (n. 151), 407 (n. 8); and lip, 422 (n. 82), 423 (n. 92), 426 (n. 24), 430 (n. 25); and needle, 79, 349 (n. 132); rose as, 170; wine as, 348 (n. 124). *See also* Christ
Jews, Jewish, 120, 228, 340 (n. 29), 430 (n. 25)
Jhang (Punjab), xix
Job (Ayyub), 73, 76
Jonas (Yunus), 76
Jones, Sir William (d. 1794), 4
Judeo-Persian, 61, 120, 365 (n. 53)

Kaʿba, 12, 35, 36, 62, 89, 94, 95, 146, 184, 185, 278, 304, 309, 310, 355 (nn. 36, 37, 38), 356 (nn. 39, 41, 43), 405 (n. 49); as bride, 94; heart as, 373 (n. 11); of union, 194
Kabul, 148, 380 (n. 30), 397 (n. 44)
Kairouan, 150
Kalb ʿAli Khan, Nawwab of Rampur, 343 (n. 71)
Kalim Allah. *See* Moses, his hand; *also Index of Terms and Concepts*, White Hand
Karrar. *See* ʿAli ibn Abi Ṭalib
Kashgar, Kashgari, 308, 438 (n. 30)
Kashmir, xviii, 32, 91, 147, 148, 225, 293, 296, 308, 309, 315, 356 (n. 38), 374 (n. 11), 377 (nn. 2 [shawls], 15, 16, 18), 384 (n. 10); Kashmiri, 69, 211, 240, 354 (n. 17), 388 (n. 57), 409 (n. 41); Kashmiri beauties, dolls, 148, 378 (nn. 15, 16)
Kathiawar, 131
Kaveh, Kaviyani Press, 110
Kawah, 110
Kayanids, 112
Kayka'us, 112
Kaykhusrau, 110, 112
Kayqobad, 112, 361 (n. 10)
Kerbela (Iraq), 33, 104, 210, 358 (n. 20), 392 (n. 91); martyrs of, 34, 44, 92, 95, 168, 174
Khalid al-Barmaki, 366 (n. 4)
Khalil (name), 62
Khalil Allah (Abraham), 62, 63
Khaqan, 366 (n. 7)
Khaṭa (Cathay), 138, 148
Khaybar, 103
Khiḍr (Khiżr), 39, 71–73, 77, 109, 115, 207, 264, 345 (nn. 92, 94), 346 (nn. 95, 96, 99, 100), 350 (n. 151), 362 (n. 30), 447 (n. 62); facial down as, 72; water of, 395 (n. 25)
Khorasan, 125, 151, 405 (n. 49)
Khotan (= Central Asia), 148, 308, 372 (n. 1)
khulafā-i rāshidūn (632–61), 31, 359 (n. 24)
Khudabakhsh Library, Bankipore, 331 (n. 17)
Khusrau Anushirwan, 385 (n. 18). *See* Anushirwan

Khusrau Parwez (r. 590–628), 113, 134, 135, 147, 388 (n. 55)
Khwarizmshah, xiii
Kisra, 311, 337 (n. 30)
Kitchener, Lord (d. 1916), 70
Kizilbash, 390 (n. 75)
Kobadabad, 243
Konya, xiv, 30, 121, 192, 243, 268, 269
Koran, 12, 26, 42, 56–85 passim, 90, 93, 100, 114, 124, 150, 151, 171, 197, 205, 215, 220, 228, 252, 272, 289, 305, 314, 348 (n. 127), 355 (n. 36), 426 (n. 23), 437 (n. 28)
allusions to, viii, 89
face as, 56, 355 (n. 38), 374 (n. 11)
manuscript copies of (*muṣḥaf*), 56, 240, 234, 240–42, 306, 310, 318, 339 (nn. 8, 9), 419 (n. 44), 420 (n. 54), 422 (nn. 83, 84), 423 (n. 92)
in *nastaʿlīq*, 242
peacock feather in, 396 (n. 36)
prognostication from, 240
recitation of, 339 (n. 5), 379 (n. 18), 391 (n. 84)
verses of, 94. See also Index of Terms and Concepts, *āyat*
Ktesiphon. *See* Seleukia
Kufa, 62, 250
Kufi, al- (Abu Ḥanifa), 250
Kuhkan, 134, 135. *See* Farhad
Kulayni (d. 941), 206

Lahore, xii, xviii, xxi, 2, 29, 59, 112, 117, 120, 130, 197, 225, 334 (n. 44), 339 (n. 7), 406 (n. 6), 415 (n. 33)
Las Bela, 134, 371 (n. 30)
Latin, 4, 79, 169
Layla, 36, 131, 132, 134, 193, 195, 285, 300, 315, 355 (n. 31), 368 (n. 11), 369 (nn. 16, 22). *See also* Majnun
Lazarus, ʿAzar, 78
Lincoln, Abraham, 332 (n. 25)
Lucknow, xix, xx, 5, 33, 104, 208, 343 (n. 65), 358 (n. 19), 409 (n. 37)
Luhrasp, 112
Luqman, 73

Machin, 148. *See* China
Madaʾin, 147. *See also* Seleukia-Ktesiphon
Maghrib, 150
Mahdi, 81
Mahdi of the Sudan (d. 1885), 70
Maḥmud of Ghazna (r. 999–1030), xi, 108, 130, 131, 134, 187, 192, 199, 213, 284, 288, 360 (n. 3), 366 (n. 7), 367 (nn. 1, 2), 368 (nn. 3, 4), 441 (n. 1); and Ayaz, 40, 138
Majnun, 36, 122, 131–35, 193, 195, 285, 355 (n. 31), 368 (nn. 9, 11), 369 (nn. 16, 17, 19, 22), 370 (n. 23), 424 (n. 102). *See also* Layla
Makhdum Nuḥ of Hala (d. 1591), 446 (n. 30)
Makran (Pakistan), 134, 380 (n. 29)
Malay, 359 (nn. 25, 27)
Malayalam, 417 (n. 8)
Malayan archipelago, 441 (n. 60)
Malaysia, 105
Malik at-tujjar Maḥmud Gawan (d. 1481), 414 (n. 23)
Mamluks, xvii, 234, 258
Maʿn ibn Zaʾida, 425 (n. 7)
Manezha, 112, 362 (n. 19)
Mani (d. ca. 276), 120, 149, 242, 311, 364 (nn. 51, 52), 371 (n. 34), 396 (n. 37); Manichean, 120, 428 (n. 4)
Manṣur, 126. *See Index of Authors and Works*, Ḥallaj
Maria, the Prophet's slave girl, 358 (n. 18)
Marw, 62, 114, 151, 304
Marwa, 95, 355 (n. 39)
Mary, Virgin (Maryam), 77, 78, 80, 220, 346 (n. 94), 348 (n. 124), 376 (n. 38)
Maʿsud-i Ghaznawi (r. 1031–41), 353 (n. 12)
Mathura, 202
Mecca, 89, 95, 105, 117, 146, 184, 185, 194, 199, 273, 278, 300, 355 (n. 36), 356 (n. 42), 380 (n. 29), 404 (n. 43); pilgrimage to, 88, 94, 186; siege of, 199, 342 (n. 50)
Medina, 105, 178, 247, 404 (n. 41)
Meer Hasan Ali, Mrs., 358 (n. 19), 411 (n. 64)
Meier, Fritz, 29
Meisami, Julie S., 327 (n. 27)
Meistersingers, 2
Mélikoff, Irène, 168
Mevlevi dervishes, 209, 258, 276
Michelangelo Buonarroti (d. 1564), 4
Midas of Gordion, 436 (n. 13)
Mihana, 151
Mir ʿAli Harawi (calligrapher, d. before 1550), 430 (n. 29)
Mir Janullah of Rohri (d. 1754), 434 (n. 23)
Mir Muṣawwir (painter), 446 (n. 28)
Mir Sayyid ʿAli (painter), 133, 369 (n. 22)
Mongols, xiii, 146
Monteil, Vincent M., 421 (n. 78)
Moses, *Kalīm Allāh*, 68–71, 73, 79, 80, 147, 151, 246, 344 (nn. 74, 76), 345 (nn. 81, 84, 88); and fire, burning bush, 68, 169, 211, 341 (n. 36), 344 (n. 72), 394 (n. 16); his hand, 349 (n. 134); his rod, 69, 78; the Moses "of Perception," 345 (n. 92). *See also Index of Terms and Concepts*, fire
Mozart, Wolfgang Amadeus (d. 1791), 9
Muḍar, 387 (n. 37)
Mughal, Mughal India, xvii, xviii, xix, 2, 41, 59, 61, 140, 141, 143, 147–49, 158, 159, 187, 228, 243, 249, 258, 269, 341 (n. 29), 353 (n. 15), 364 (n. 52), 375 (n. 20), 377 (n. 1), 378 (n. 14), 381 (n. 33), 427 (n. 41), 429 (n. 14), 441 (nn. 56, 62); painting, 349 (n. 145)
Muḥammad the Prophet (d. 632), 25, 57, 60, 65, 76, 80, 100, 101, 105, 106, 174, 194, 196, 233, 240, 252, 260, 300, 344 (n. 76), 349 (n. 141), 358 (nn. 14, 18), 360 (n. 30), 366 (n. 4), 404 (n. 41), 426 (n. 25), 436 (n. 13)
Aḥmad with *m* (separated from Aḥad, the One), 237
and cats, 193, 400 (n. 5), 426 (n. 25)
and the rose, 169, 388 (n. 58)
as raincloud, 202
as river, 206, 207
his companions, 40, 259
his face, 42, 208
his family (grandson, uncle), 33, 44, 103–5, 358 (nn. 19, 20), 427 (n. 41), 429 (n. 16)
his *miʿrāj* (night journey), 90, 169, 195, 364 (n. 49), 365 (n. 61), 422 (n. 77)
his religion, 345 (n. 81)
his sayings (*ḥadīth*), 101, 120, 209, 293, 359 (n. 28), 372 (n. 3), 422 (n. 84)
his tresses, 208
poetry in his honor, xx, 24, 31, 210, 247, 335 (n. 6), 344 (n. 76), 359 (n. 24), 387 (n. 39), 442 (n. 9)
Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥanafiyya (d. 700), 105
Muḥammad ibn Daʾud aẓ-Ẓahiri (d. 909), 357 (n. 6)
Muḥammad-Quli Quṭbshah (r. 1580–1612), 332 (n. 26)
Muḥammad Quṭbshah (r. 1612–26), 359 (n. 27)
Muliyan, 147
Munkar and Nakir, 81
Muqannaʿ (d. 780), 125, 366 (n. 5)
Muqauqis, 358 (n. 18)
Musaylima (d. 633), 366 (n. 4), 417 (n. 7)
Muṣṭafa (name), 100
Mustaqimzade, Suleyman (d. 1789), 416 (n. 4), 418 (n. 37), 421 (nn. 67, 69), 423 (n. 93)
Muʾta, 358 (n. 13)
Muẓaffar Shah of Khwarizm (12th cent.), 205

Nadir Shah of Iran (r. 1736–1747), 383 (n. 24)
Nakhshab, 125; moon of, 125, 366 (n. 5)
Naqshbandi, 297, 298, 331 (n. 16), 434 (n. 23), 440 (n. 47), 447 (n. 46)
Naṭanz, 337 (n. 30)
Nay, fortress of, 112
Negro, 331 (n. 19), 376 (nn. 32, 33); hair, 143. *See also* Zanji
Nile, 147, 377 (n. 7)
Nimrod (Nimrud), 63; his fire, 64, 117, 174, 211, 265, 342 (n. 47); killed by a gnat, 64, 342 (n. 50)
Nishapur, 30, 304
Niẓam of Hyderabad, 248
Niẓamuddin Auliya (d. 1325), xv
Noah (Nuḥ), 41, 61, 62; his ark, 61, 62, 193; the flood, 341 (n. 36)
North Africa, 103
Nuʿman ibn Mundhir (r. 580–602), 39, 288; = Abu Ḥanifa, 426 (n. 26)
Nurbakhsh, Dr. Javad, 8, 329 (n. 55), 402 (n. 23)
Nurjahan (Mughal empress, d. 1645), 92, 354 (n. 24)
Nwyia, Paul, 56

Oedipus, 2
Olearius, Adam, 334 (n. 35)
Oman, 408 (n. 19)
ʿOmar ibn al-Khaṭṭab (r. 634–44), 105, 113, 362 (n. 22), 378 (n. 12)
Omayyads (661–749), 34, 243, 358 (n. 20), 366 (n. 4), 425 (n. 7)
Orpheus, 2, 127
Ottoman, xvii, xix, 50, 147, 234, 238, 272, 390 (n. 75), 421 (n. 69); poets, poetry, 1, 23, 100, 174, 197, 326 (n. 22), 327 (n. 25), 329 (n. 1), 343 (n. 59), 368 (n. 9), 390 (n. 75), 391 (n. 84), 392 (n. 92), 397 (n. 41), 437 (n. 20); Turkey, 331 (n. 17), 379 (n. 20)
Oudh (Awadh), 427, (n. 41)
Oxus, 142, 146
Oymak, 138

Pahlavi, Pehlevi, 178, 344 (n. 72), 360 (n. 1)
Pakistan, Pakistani, viii, ix, xxi, 3, 47, 51, 91, 130, 327 (n. 28), 333 (n. 32), 360 (n. 29), 436 (n. 7)

Panjabi, xix, 35, 104, 237, 289, 416 (n. 8)
Parnassians, 35
Parthians, 113
Parwez, 110, 371 (n. 36). *See also* Khusrau Parwez
Pashan, 108
Pashto, xix, 35, 74, 337 (n. 37), 360 (n. 29), 364 (nn. 48, 52), 377 (n. 2), 416 (n. 8), 445 (n. 17)
Pathan, xix, 139, 333 (n. 31)
People of the Elephant, 342 (n. 50)
Persis, 178, 392 (n. 1)
Pharaoh, 69, 70, 147, 345 (n. 85); his magicians, 69
Philadelphia Museum of Art, 410 (n. 50)
Pishdadiyan, 109
Plato (Aflaṭun) (d. 347 B.C.), 121, 122, 124, 319, 365 (nn. 59, 61); in the barrel, 121, 277, 365 (nn. 58, 59), 438 (n. 31); Platonic idea of the winged soul, 178
Portuguese, 143, 376 (n. 36)
Prophet. *See* Muḥammad the Prophet
Punjab, 30, 193, 224, 229, 232
Pythagoreans, 256

Qaḍi Rashid (11th cent.), 405 (n. 46)
Qaf, Mount, 179, 188, 229, 420 (n. 60)
Qandahar, 150, 376 (n. 32), 380 (n. 30)
Qannauj, 380 (n. 28)
Qanṣauh al-Ghuri (r. 1501–16), xvii
Qarun, 71, 73, 79, 165, 384 (n. 7)
Qaṣur (Punjab), xix
Qayruwan, 150, 380 (nn. 28, 30)
Qays, 131, 315. *See* Majnun
Qipchaqistan, 373 (n. 5)
Qiṭmir, 77, 195, 196
Qulzum, 380 (n. 28)
Quṣṣ ibn Sa'ida, 425 (n. 7)
Qutbshahis of Golconda (ca. 1500–1687), 395 (n. 26), 411 (n. 61)

Rabi'a of Basra (d. 801), 125
Raḍiyatuddin Maryam, 88, 352 (n. 3)
Rakhsh, 111, 194
Rayy, 151
Red Sea, 69, 70
Reinert, Benedikt, 7, 29
Revitzky (Rewiczky), Count (d. 1793), 4
Riḍwan, 84, 269
Ritter, Hellmut (d. 1972), 6, 7, 38, 41, 60, 327 (n. 25)
Rudaba, 111, 134
Rum (Byzantium), 30, 114, 142, 376 (nn. 32, 34)
Rustam, 104, 110–13, 124, 134, 192, 194, 199, 243, 361 (n. 16); his father, 188
Rypka, Jan (d. 1968), 7, 327 (n. 27), 328 (n. 45)

Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqaṣ (d. ca. 670), 369 (n. 26)
Sa'd ibn Zangi (d. 1231), 26
Ṣadra, Mulla (d. 1640), 340 (n. 29)
Ṣafa, 95, 355 (n. 39)
Safavids (1501–1724), 2, 241, 243, 358 (n. 21), 390 (n. 75)
Saḥban, 124, 366 (n. 4)
Salm, 110, 114
Salma (name), 124
Salman al-Farisi the barber (d. after 656), 40, 105, 359 (n. 28)
Samanids, xi
Samarqand, 142, 147, 148, 378 (n. 16), 381 (n. 31)
Samiri, 70, 71
Ṣan'an, Shaykh, 91
Sanjar (r. 1119–57), 125, 366 (n. 7)
Sanskrit, ix, 203
Sarosh, 118, 363 (n. 43)
Sassanids, 113, 311
Satyajiv Ray (d. 1992), 289
Sayf ibn Dhi Yazan, 124, 425 (n. 7)
Ṣayḥun, 146
Schaeder, Hans Heinrich (d. 1957), 2, 116, 325 (n. 4), 326 (n. 14)
Sehwan (Sind), xiii, xvii, 342 (n. 45)
Seleukia-Ktesiphon, 39, 147, 288, 378 (n. 12)
Selim Yavuz (r. 1512–20), xv, xvii
Seljukids, xii, xiii, 108, 125, 243, 405 (n. 48)
Seven Sleepers, the, 77, 195, 196
Shabdiz, 194
Shafi'i (d. 820), 426 (nn. 25, 26)
Shah Jahan (Mughal emperor, r. 1628–58), 212, 228, 379 (n. 18), 427 (n. 40)
Shahrazad (Scheherazade), 292
Shams-i Tabriz (d. 1248), 151, 159, 208, 213, 410 (n. 9), 404 (n. 38)
Sheba, 74, 150, 179, 184, 202, 370 (n. 28)
Shia, xvi, 24, 31, 33, 34, 57, 95, 103–5, 113, 174, 193, 206, 210, 240, 259, 351 (n. 157), 358 (nn. 14, 21), 388 (n. 53), 416 (n. 8), 422 (n. 83), 427 (n. 41), 429 (n. 16); an anti-Shia verse, 359 (n. 24)
Shibr, 358 (n. 20). *See also* Ḥasan; Ḥusayn ibn 'Ali
Shiraz, ix, xiii–xv, xvii, xviii, 1, 22, 23, 141, 142, 151, 273, 340 (nn. 22, 29), 346 (n. 95), 376 (n. 30), 381 (n. 31), 392 (n. 1), 401 (n. 11)

Shirin, 114, 134–36, 194, 233, 370 (n. 28), 371 (n. 34), 372 (n. 37), 388 (n. 55), 444 (n. 17). *See also* Farhad; Khusrau Parwez
Shirwan, xiii, 381 (n. 33)
Shu'ayb, 70
Shushtar, 224
Ṣiddiq, aṣ-. *See* Abu Bakr
Sinai, Mount, 69, 169, 265, 343 (n. 71), 344 (n. 74)
Sind, xiii, ix, xx, 61, 126, 142, 162, 167, 229, 232, 328 (n. 40), 342 (n. 45), 360 (n. 29), 374 (n. 18),380 (n. 29); Sindhi, xvii, xix, 35, 104, 126, 185, 202, 332 (n. 21), 333 (n. 31), 376 (n. 36), 377 (n. 2), 395 (n. 26), 407 (n. 14), 409 (nn. 29, 34)
Sir Darya, 146
Sirhindi, Ahmad (d. 1624), 331 (n. 16)
Sistan, 223
Siyawush son of Kayka'us, 112
Socrates (d. 399 B.C.), 365 (n. 58)
Sohni, 206
Solomon. *See* Sulayman
Somnath, 131, 250, 368 (n. 5)
Spain, 272
Sri Lanka, 399 (n. 53)
St. Louis (Missouri), 366 (n. 5)
St. Petersburg (Russia), 442 (n. 10)
Stolz, Karl, 325 (n. 4)
Stuttgart, 326 (n. 19)
Suha, 214
Suhrab, 112
Suhrawardiyya, 434 (n. 23), 446 (n. 30)
Sulayman (Solomon), 40, 52, 73, 74–77, 105, 113, 179, 184, 202, 275, 278, 306, 346 (nn. 104, 105, 106), 347 (nn. 110, 111, 113), 390 (n. 75); and the ant, 196, 347 (n. 113), 403 (n. 29); and Jamshed, 75, 109, 110; his seal, 74; his throne, 74, 172, 347 (n. 106)
Süleyman the Magnificent (r. 1520–66), 74, 390 (n. 75), 400 (n. 63)
Sultan Muḥammad (painter, 16th cent.), 334 (n. 34), 361 (n. 6)
Sunnites, 104, 105
Swahili, 417 (n. 8)
Syed Abdullah, Dr., 3
Syria, Syrian, 243, 277, 278, 419 (n. 3)

Tabriz, xiii, 151
Tahamtan, 111. *See* Rustam
Ṭahmasp, Shah (r. 1524–76), 187, 281, 285, 360 (n. 5), 441 (n. 60), 442 (n. 10)
Tahmina, 111, 112, 134
Tahmurath, 109, 114
Ṭa'if, fine leather from, 156, 378 (n. 15)
Tajik, xix, 7, 142, 376 (n. 31)
Tajikistan, xxiii, 147
Tamerlane (Timur) (d. 1405), 212
Tamil, 105, 159, 359 (n. 26)
Tamim ad-Dari (d. ca. 660), 105, 359 (n. 26)
Tamimites, 366 (n. 4)
Ṭaraz, 138, 308
Tayumanavar, 159
Tehran, xx, 151, 338 (n. 47)
Thamud, 77
Thatta, 143, 340 (n. 29)
Thiesen, Finn, 20
Tibet, 378 (n. 15)
Tigris, 39, 45, 118, 146, 147, 251, 296, 331 (n. 14), 377 (nn. 1, 6, 7)
Timurids, xvi, xvii, 131, 162, 243, 364 (n. 52), 382 (n. 15), 383 (n. 1)
Tolsai, H., 328 (n. 39)
Transoxania, 138
Tughrilbeg (Seljukid ruler, r. 1038–63), 405 (n. 48)
Tunisia, 150
Tur, 110, 114
Turan, 110, 112, 114
Turcoman, xviii, 141, 349 (n. 145)
Turk (and Hindu), 138–43; as beloved, 148, 308; drunken, 140, 141, 284; eye as, 375 (n. 22), 376 (nn. 31, 32); morning as, 375 (n. 26), 373 (n. 5); of the sky (Mars), 214; Shirazi Turk, 142, 375 (n. 30)
Turkestan, 141, 364 (n. 57)
Turkey, xvi, xviii, 34, 35, 77, 134, 198, 215, 234, 236, 326 (n. 22), 329 (n. 56), 345 (n. 92), 357 (n. 8), 380 (n. 23), 389 (n. 65), 417 (n. 8), 430 (n. 22), 437 (n. 28); Ottoman Turkey, viii, 49, 197
Turki, 241, 374 (n. 16), 399 (n. 56)
Turkish, ix, xv, 4, 11, 50, 104, 108, 109, 112, 130, 136, 138, 140, 148, 171, 178, 179, 182, 186–88, 224, 230, 233, 237, 241, 250, 258–61, 272, 390 (n. 75), 399 (n. 56), 419 (n. 42), 422 (n. 83), 429 (n. 14), 434 (n. 26); poetry, poets, viii, xiv, xvii, xviii, xxi, 7, 20, 21, 23, 29, 41, 46, 50, 64, 75, 82, 126, 127, 158, 165, 167, 171, 173, 181, 193, 207, 213, 221, 228, 229, 232, 264, 266, 274, 285, 296, 326 (n. 18), 327 (nn. 22, 29), 330 (n. 5), 331 (nn. 17, 18), 332 (n. 26), 333 (nn. 28, 30), 334 (n. 39), 343 (n. 69), 350 (n. 150), 359 (n. 27), 365 (n. 55), 368 (n. 9), 369 (n. 22), 371 (nn. 28, 31), 373 (n. 5), 376 (n. 34), 387 (n. 38), 388 (n. 53), 389 (n. 61), 391

(n. 90), 392 (n. 94), 393 (n. 1), 395 (n. 26), 399 (n. 56), 409 (n. 35), 414 (n. 17), 416 (n. 8)

Urdu, vii–ix, xix–xxi, 1, 3, 4, 7, 20, 21, 23, 29, 31, 33, 35, 40, 67, 79, 81, 84, 93, 102, 109, 112, 127, 133, 147, 170, 172, 174, 175, 194, 195, 202, 203, 208, 210, 214, 230, 246, 248, 249, 253, 264, 280, 293, 297, 298, 300, 303, 325 (n. 7), 326 (n. 18), 327 (nn. 25, 28), 328 (nn. 39, 40, 49), 331 (nn. 17, 18, 19), 332 (nn. 25, 26), 333 (n. 31), 334 (n. 35), 335 (n. 6), 339 (n. 13), 341 (n. 44), 344 (n. 77), 351 (n. 158), 356 (n. 45), 359 (n. 27), 384 (n. 7), 390 (n. 83), 395 (n. 26), 408 (n. 21), 409 (n. 36), 410 (n. 55), 421 (n. 68), 428 (nn. 42, 1), 429 (n. 16), 447 (n. 46)
ʿUrwa (and ʿAfra), 370 (n. 27)
Uways al-Qarani, 6, 106, 150, 360 (n. 30)
Uways-i Jalaʾiri (r. 1355–74), 106

Venice, 296
Victoria (of England, r. 1837–1901), 251
Volga, 308
V.P. [Veiled Prophet] Lodge (St. Louis, Missouri), 366 (n. 5)

Wadi Ayman, 70
Wamiq (and ʿAdhra), 134, 370 (n. 27)
Wis (and Ramin), 370 (n. 28)

Yaḥya al-Barmaki, 366 (n. 4)
Yaqut al-Mustaʿṣimi (d. 1298), 229, 233, 242, 416 (n. 7)
Yazdan, 118
Yazid (r. 680–83), 34, 70, 388 (n. 53)
Yemen, 106, 150, 151, 156, 157, 202, 214, 309, 360 (n. 30), 382 (n. 20), 425 (n. 7); Yemeni, 387 (n. 37)
Yunus, 347 (n. 120). *See also* Jonas
Yusuf (Joseph), 64–68, 80, 100, 151, 165; his dream, 342 (n. 51); and mirror, 66, 293; paragon of beauty, 349 (n. 134); rose as, 67, 171, 202, 342 (n. 53), 343 (nn. 63, 69), 390 (n. 70); his shirt, 67, 171, 220, 343 (n. 59), 388 (n. 53 [bloodstained tulip]); and Zulaykha, 134, 342 (n. 59)

Zacharias (Zakariya), 77, 188
Zahhak. *See* Ḍaḥḥak
Zal-i zar, 111, 112, 134, 188
Zamzam, 117, 351 (n. 157), 356 (n. 39)
Zanji, 143, 366 (n. 3), 376 (nn. 32, 34), 378 (n. 16), 443 (n. 29). *See also* Negro
Zanzibar, 376 (n. 32), 378 (n. 16)
Zarathustra, 64, 265; *qibla* of, 117, 211
Zoroastrianism, 12, 108, 115–20, 141, 196, 344 (n. 72)
Zulaykha, 65–67, 134, 171, 333 (n. 30), 343 (n. 59); her painted castle, 66, 343 (n. 60)
Zurvan, 120, 364 (n. 50)