

what date the verses were composed, and whether in the reign of Sháh Ṭahmásp or of his father and predecessor Sháh Isma'íl, makes it harder to discover the answers to these questions, but it is interesting to learn how prevalent were the Sunní doctrines in Qazwín at the time when they were written. Of course in the case of the modern topical verses which abounded in the newspapers of the Revolutionary Period (A.D. 1906-1911 especially) the allusions can be much more easily understood.

(3) *Religious and Devotional Verse.*

Of the numerous poets of the Ṣafawí period who devoted their talents to the celebration of the virtues and sufferings of the Imáms, Muḥtasham of Káshán (died 996/1588) is the most eminent. In his youth he wrote erotic verse, but in later life he seems to have consecrated his genius almost entirely to the service of religion. Riḍá-qulí Khán in his *Majma'u'l-Fuṣahá* (vol. ii, pp. 36-8) gives specimens of both styles, of which we are here concerned only with the second. The author of the *Ta'rikh-i-'Álam-árá-yi-'Abbást*¹ in his account of the chief poets of Sháh Ṭahmásp's reign states that though in earlier life that king enjoyed and cultivated the society of poets, in his later years his increasing austerity and deference to the views of the theologians led him to regard them with disfavour as latitudinarians (*wast'u'l-mashrab*), so that when Muḥtasham, hoping for a suitable reward, sent him two eloquent panegyrics, one in his praise and the other in praise of the Princess Parí-Khán Khánúm, he received nothing, the Sháh remarking that poetry written in praise of kings and princes was sure to consist largely of lies and exaggerations, according to the

Religious poetry
of Muḥtasham
and his imitators.

Indifference of
the Ṣafawí kings
to panegyric.

¹ Ff. 138^a-139^b of my MS. marked H. 13. Unfortunately this very important history has never been published.

well-known Arabic saying, "The best poetry is that which contains most falsehoods," but that, since it was impossible to exaggerate the virtues of the Prophet and the Imáms, the poet could safely exert his talents to the full, and in addition would have the satisfaction of looking for a heavenly instead of an earthly reward. Thereupon Muḥtasham composed his celebrated *haft-band*, or poem of seven-verse strophes, in praise of the Imáms, and this time was duly and amply rewarded, whereupon many other poets followed his example, so that in a comparatively short time some fifty or sixty such *haft-bands* were produced. This poem is cited in most of the anthologies which include Muḥtasham, but most fully in the *Kharábat*¹ of Diyá (Ziyá) Pasha (vol. ii, pp. 197-200). In this fullest form it comprises twelve strophes each consisting of seven verses, and each concluding with an additional verse in a different rhyme, thus comprising in all ninety-six verses. The language is extraordinarily simple and direct, devoid of those rhetorical artifices and verbal conceits which many Europeans find so irritating, and shows true pathos and religious feeling. I wish that space were available to quote the whole poem, the prototype of so many others of a similar character, but I must content myself with citing three of the twelve strophes (the fourth, fifth and sixth).

Muḥtasham's
celebrated
Haft-band.

بر خوان غم چو عالمیان را صلا زدند
اول صلا بسلسله انبیا زدند
نوبت باولیا چو رسید آسمان طپید
ز آن ضربتی که بر سر شیر خدا زدند
پس آتشی ز اخگر الماس ریزها
افروختند و بر حسن مجتبی زدند

¹ This excellent anthology of Arabic, Persian and Turkish poetry was printed in three volumes in Constantinople in A.H. 1291-2 (A.D. 1874-5). See p. 164, n. 3 *supra*.

و آنکه سرادقیکه مَلَك محرمش نبود،
 کردند از مدینه و در کربلا زدند،
 وز تیشه ستیزه در آن دشت کوفیان،
 بس نخلها ز گلشن آل عبا زدند،
 بس ضربتی کزان جگرِ مصطفی درید،
 بر حلق تشنه خلف مرتضی زدند،
 اهلِ حرم دریده گریبان کشاده موی،
 فریاد بر درِ حرمِ کبریا زدند،
 روح الامین نهاده بزانو سرِ حجاب،
 تاریک شد ز دیدن او چشم آفتاب،
 چون خونِ حلقِ تشنه او بر زمین رسید،
 جوش از زمین بذروه عرش برین رسید،
 نزدیک شد که خانه ایمان شود خراب،
 از بس شکستها که بارکان دین رسید،
 نخلِ بلند او چو خسان بر زمین زدند،
 طوفان بر آسمان ز غبارِ زمین رسید،
 باد آن غبار را به مزارِ نبی رساند،
 گرد از مدینه بر فلک هفتمین رسید،
 یکباره جامه در خمِ گردون بنییل زد،
 چون این خبر بعیسی گردون نشین رسید،
 پر شد فلک ز غلغله چون نوبتِ خروش،
 از انبیا بحضرتِ روح الامین رسید،
 کرد این خیال وهمِ غلط کار کین غبار،
 تا دامنِ جلالِ جهان آفرین رسید،
 هست از ملالِ گرچه بری ذاتِ ذو الجلال،
 او در دلست و هیچ دلی نیست بیملال،

ترسم جزای قاتلِ او چون رقم زنند،
 یکباره بر جریده رحمت قلم زنند،
 ترسم کزین گناه شفیعانِ روزِ حشر،
 دارند شرم کز گنّه خلق دم زنند،
 دستِ عتابِ حق بدر آید ز آستین،
 چون اهلِ بیت دست بر اهلِ ستم زنند،
 آه از دمیکه با کفنِ خونچکان ز خاک،
 آل علی چو شعله آتش عالم زنند،
 فریاد از آن زمانکه جوانانِ اهلِ بیت،
 گلگون کفن بعرصه محشر بهر زنند،
 جمعی که زد بهر صفشان شورِ کربلا،
 در حشر صف زنان صفِ محشر بهر زنند،
 از صاحبِ حرم چه توقع کنند باز،
 آن نا کسان که تیغ بصیدِ حرم زنند،
 پس بر سنان کنند سریرا که جبرئیل،
 شوید غبارِ گیسویش از آبِ سلسبیل،

"When they summoned mankind to the table of sorrow, they first issued the summons to the hierarchy of the Prophets. When it came to the turn of the Saints, Heaven trembled at the blow which they smote on the head of the Lion of God¹. Then they kindled a fire from sparks of diamond-dust and cast it on Hasan² the Chosen one. Then they tore up from Madfna and pitched at Karbalá those pavilions to which even the angels were denied entrance.

¹ I.e. 'Alí ibn Abí Tálíb, the Prophet's cousin and son-in-law and the first of the Twelve Imáms.

² 'Alí's eldest son, the second Imám, said to have been poisoned at the instigation of Mu'áwiya.

Many tall palm-trees from the grove of the 'Family of the Cloak'¹
 did the people of Kúfa fell in that plain with the axe of malice.
 Many a blow whereby the heart of Muṣṭafá [Muḥammad] was rent
 did they inflict on the thirsty throat of Murtaḏá 'Alí's successor'²,
 While his women, with collars torn and hair unloosed, raised their
 laments to the Sanctuary of the Divine Majesty,
 And the Trusted Spirit [Gabriel] laid his head in shame on his knees,
 and the eye of the sun was darkened at the sight.

When the blood of his thirsty throat fell on the ground, turmoil arose
 from the earth to the summit of God's high Throne.

The Temple of Faith came nigh to ruin through the many fractures
 inflicted on the Pillars of Religion.

They cast to the ground his tall palm-tree³ even as the thorn-bush;
 a deluge arose from the dust of the earth to heaven.

The breeze carried that dust to the Prophet's Tomb: dust arose from
 Madína to the seventh heaven.

When tidings of this reached Jesus dwelling in the heavenly sphere,
 he forthwith plunged his garments in indigo⁴ in the vat of heaven.
 Heaven was filled with murmuring when the turn to cry out passed
 from the Prophets to the presence of the Trusted Spirit.

Mistaken imagination fancied that this dust⁵ had [even] reached
 the skirts of the Creator's glory,

For although the Essence of the All-glorious is exempt from vexation,
 He dwells in the heart, and no heart remains unvexed.

I am afraid that when they record the punishment of his murderer,
 they may forthwith strike the pen through the Book of Mercy.

I am afraid that the Intercessors on the Resurrection Day may be
 ashamed, by reason of this sin, to speak of the sins of mankind.

When the People of the House shall lay hands on the People of
 Tyranny, the hand of God's reproach shall come forth from its
 sleeve.

Alas for the moment when the House of 'Alí, with blood dripping
 from their winding-sheets, shall raise their standards from the
 dust like a flame of fire!

¹ The Prophet, his daughter Fátima and her husband 'Alí and their
 sons Ḥasan and Ḥusayn once sheltered under one cloak, whence these
 five most holy beings are often collectively called by this title.

² *I.e.* his younger son Ḥusayn, the third Imám and "Martyr of Kar-
 balá."

³ *I.e.* stature, as in the fifth verse.

⁴ The colour of mourning in Persia.

⁵ *I.e.* sorrow and vexation.

Alas for that time when the youths of that Holy House shall dash
 together their crimson shrouds on the Resurrection Plain!

That company, whose ranks were broken by the strife of Karbalá,
 at the Resurrection in serried ranks will break the ranks of the
 uprisen.

What hopes from the Lord of the Sanctuary¹ can those worthless
 ones entertain who wounded with their swords the quarry² of
 the Sanctuary?

Then [finally] they raise on a spear-point that Head³ from whose
 locks Gabriel washes the dust with the water of Salsabíl⁴.

Whether or no this be accounted good poetry (and of
 course it loses much of its beauty in a bald prose translation
 encumbered with notes on expressions familiar
 to every Persian though strange to a foreigner
 and a non-Muslim) it at least reveals some-
 thing of that deep emotion which the memory

of the unforgettable tragedy of Karbalá never fails to arouse
 in the breast of even the least devout and serious-minded
 Persian. It has, like the poetry of Násir-i-Khusraw, who
 lived nearly five centuries before Muḥtasham, the great
 merit of sincerity, and consequently has a claim to be
 regarded as genuine poetry which we seek in vain in the
 elaborately artificial and rhetorical compositions of many
 Persian poets who enjoy in their own country a far higher
 reputation.

One other *marthiya*, or elegy on the death of the Imám
 Ḥusayn, I cannot refrain from quoting, both on account of
 the originality of its form and the generally
 irreligious character of its author, the poet
 Qá'ání (died A.D. 1853), one of the greatest and
 the least moral of the modern poets of Persia.

Qá'ání's elegy
 on the death
 of the Imám
 Ḥusayn.

¹ God or His Prophet.

² No game or wild animal or bird may be slain within a certain
 radius of Mecca.

³ *I.e.* the head of the Imám Ḥusayn.

⁴ One of the rivers of Paradise.

The text is taken from a lithographed collection of such poems published, without title or indication of place or date, in Persia, containing 220 unnumbered pages, and comprising the work of six poets, namely Wiṣál, Wiqár, Muḥtasham, Qá'ání, Šabáhi and Bídil.

بارد چه؟ خون! که؟ دیده، چسان؟ روز و شب، چرا؟
 از غم، کدام غم؟ غم سلطان کربلا،
 نامش چه بود؟ حسین، ز نژادِ که؟ از علی،
 مامش که بود؟ فاطمه، جدش که؟ مصطفی،
 چون شد؟ شهید شد، بکجا؟ دشت ماریه،
 کی؟ عاشر محرم، پنهان؟ نه بر ملا،
 شب کشته شد؟ نه روز، چه هنگام؟ وقتِ ظهیر،
 شد از گلو بریده سرش؟ نی نی از قفا،
 سیراب کشته شد؟ نه، کس آبش نداد؟ داد،
 که؟ شمر، از چه چشمه؟ ز سرچشمه فنا،
 مظلوم شد شهید؟ بلی، جرم داشت؟ نه،
 کارش چه بُد؟ هدایه، و یارش که بُد؟ خدا،
 این ظلمرا که کرد؟ یزید، این یزید کیست؟
 ز اولادِ هند، از چه کس؟ از نطفه زنا،
 خود کرد این عمل؟ نه فرستاد نامه،
 نزد که؟ نزد زاده، مرجانه، دغا،
 ابن زیاد زاده، مرجانه بُد؟ نعم،
 از گفته، یزید تخلف نکرد؟ لا،
 این نابکار کُشت حسین را بدستِ خویش؟
 نه او روانه کرد سپه سوی کربلا،
 میر سپه که بُد؟ عمر سعد، او بُرید،
 خلقِ عزیزِ فاطمه؟ نه شهر بی حیا،

خنجر بُرید خنجر اورا نکرد شرم؟
 کرد، از چه پس برید؟ نپذیرفت ازو قضا،
 بهر چه؟ بهر آنکه شود خلق را شفیع،
 شرطِ شفاعتش چه بود؟ نوحه و بکا،
 کس کُشته شد هم از پسرانش؟ بلی دو تن
 دیگر که؟ به نراد، و دیگر که؟ اقربا،
 دیگر پسر نداشت؟ چرا داشت، آن که بود؟
 سجاد، چون بُد او؟ بغم و رنج مبتلا،
 ماند او بکربلای پدر؟ نی بشام رفت،
 با عز و احتشام؟ نه با ذلت و عنا،
 تنها؟ نه با زنانِ حرم، نامشان چه بود،
 زینب سکینه فاطمه کلثوم بی نوا،
 بر تن لباس داشت؟ بلی گردِ رهگذار،
 بر سر عمامه داشت؟ بلی چوب اشقیا،
 بیمار بُد؟ بلی! چه دوا داشت؟ اشك چشم،
 بعد از دوا غذایش چه بُد؟ خون ذل غذا،
 کس بود همزهش؟ بلی اطفالِ بی پدر،
 دیگر که بود؟ تب که نمی گشت ازو جدا،
 از زینتِ زنان چه بجا مانده بود؟ دو چیز،
 طوقِ ستم بگردن و خلخالِ غم بپا،
 گبر این ستم کند؟ نه، مجوس و یهود؟ نه،
 هندو؟ نه، بُت پرست؟ نه، فریاد ازین جفا،
 قآنی است قابلِ این شعرها؟ بلی،
 خواهد چه؟ رحمت، از که؟ ز حق، کی؟ صفِ جزا،

What rains down? Blood! Whose? The Eye! How? Day and night!
Why?

From grief! What grief? The grief of the Monarch of Karbalá!
What was his name? Ḥusayn! Of whose race? 'Alí's!
Who was his mother? Fátima! Who was his grandsire? Muṣṭafá!
How was it with him? He fell a martyr! Where? In the Plain of
Máriya!

When? On the tenth of Muḥarram! Secretly? No, in public!
Was he slain by night? No, by day! At what time? At noontide!
Was his head severed from the throat? No, from the nape of the
neck!

Was he slain unthirsting? No! Did none give him to drink? They
did!

Who? Shimir! From what source? From the source of Death!
Was he an innocent martyr? Yes! Had he committed any fault?
No!

What was his work? Guidance! Who was his friend? God!
Who wrought this wrong? Yazíd! Who is this Yazíd?
One of the children of Hind! By whom? By bastard origin!
Did he himself do this deed? No, he sent a letter!

To whom? To the false son of Marjána!

Was Ibn Ziyád the son of Marjána? Yes!

Did he not withstand the words of Yazíd? No!

Did this wretch slay Ḥusayn with his own hand?

No, he despatched an army to Karbalá!

Who was the chief of the army? 'Umar ibn Sa'd!

Did he cut down Fátima's dear folk? No, shameless Shimir!

Was not the dagger ashamed to cut his throat?

It was! Why then did it do so? Destiny would not excuse it!

Wherefore? In order that he might become an intercessor for man-
kind!

What is the condition of his intercession? Lamentation and weeping!

Were any of his sons also slain? Yes, two!

Who else? Nine brothers! Who else? Kinsmen!

Had he no other son? Yes, he had! Who was that?

Yazíd was the son of Mu'áwiya, the rival of 'Alí and the founder
of the Umayyad dynasty, who was the son of Abú Sufyán and Hind
"the liver-eater" (*Akilatu'l-akbád*). The term "bastard origin"
should refer to Ibn Ziyád, not to Yazíd. See the *Kitábul-Fakhrí*, ed.
Ahlwardt, pp. 133-5.

The Worshipper' (*Sajjada*)¹! How fared he? Overwhelmed with
grief and sorrow!

Did he remain at his father's Karbalá? No, he went to Syria!

In glory and honour? No, in abasement and distress!

Alone? No, with the women of the household! What were their
names?

Zaynab, Sakína, Fátima, and poor portionless Kulthúm!

Had he garments on his body? Yea, the dust of the road!

Had he a turban on his head? Yea, the staves of the wicked ones!

Was he sick? Yes! What medicine had he? The tears of his eyes!

What was his food after medicine? His food was heart's blood!

Did any bear him company? Yes, the fatherless children!

Who else was there? The fever which never left him!

What was left of the women's ornaments? Two things,

The collar of tyranny on their necks, and the anklet of grief on their
feet!

Would a pagan (*gabr*) practise such cruelty? No! A Magian or a
Jew? No!

A Hindoo? No! An idolater? No! Alas for this harshness!

Is Qá'ání capable of such verses? Yes!

What seeks he? Mercy! From whom? From God! When? In the
ranks of recompense!"

Besides these *maráthí* (singular *marthiya*), or threnodies
of the classical type, the contemplation of the sufferings
and misfortunes of the Imáms has inspired a
More popular religious poetry. copious literature, both in verse and prose, of
a more popular kind. The mourning proper to
the month of Muḥarram finds expression not only in the
actual dramatic representations of this cycle of tragedies, of
which there are at least forty (a few of which, however, are
connected with prophets and holy men antecedent to Islám),
but in recitations of these melancholy events known as
Rawḍa [*Rawza*]-*Khawánt*. These latter are said to derive
this name from one of the earliest and best-known books
of this kind, the *Rawḍatu* [*Rawzatu*]'sh-*Shuhadá* ("Garden

¹ 'Alí ibn Ḥusayn, commonly called *Zaynu'l-'Abidin* ("the Ornament
of the Worshippers"), who, on the death of his father at Karbalá,
succeeded him as the Fourth Imám.

of the Martyrs") of Ḥusayn Wá'iz-i-Káshif¹, so that these functions are called "Rawza-readings," whether the readings be taken from this or from some similar work, such as the *Túfánu'l-Buká* ("Deluge of Weeping") or the *Asrúru'sh-Shahádat* ("Mysteries of Martyrdom"). Such entertainments are commonly given in the month of Muḥarram by rich notables, nobles, statesmen or merchants, who provide an adequate number of professional rhapsodists or reciters of this class, called *Rawza-Khwáns*, and a more or less sumptuous supper to follow. I possess a copy of a curious little poem entitled *Kitábu's-Sufra fí dhammi-r-Riyá* ("the Book of the Table, censuring hypocrisy")² in which the ostentation of the host and the greed of the guests is satirized with some pungency. The following lines describe how the word is passed round as to whose entertainment is likely to prove most satisfactory to the guests:

كنون بشنو از من یکی داستان'
 كه رنگین ترست از لیل بوستان'
 كسانیکه گیرند عزای حسین'
 بمجلس نشینند با شور و شین'
 برای جگرگوشه فاطمه'
 سیه پوش گردند یکسر همه'
 نمایند بر پا عزای خانه‌ها'
 بگیرند عزای شه کربلا'
 بهر گوشه بزومی مهیا کنند'
 یکی مجلس نغز بر پا کنند'

¹ He died in 910/1504-5. See my *Persian Literature under Tartar Dominion*, pp. 441 and 503-4.

² The author's name is given as Turkí of Shíráz, and the little book (48 pp.) was lithographed at Bombay in 1309/1891-2.

مفرش نمایند صحن و اطاق'
 منقش نمایند طاق و رواق'
 همه گسترانند فرش لطیف'
 بچینند اسبابهای ظریف'
 گروهی ز مردان اشکم پرست'
 ز جام طمع جمله بیخویش و مست'
 بایشان طمع کرده ز آنسان اثر'
 كه ماننده سگه بر روی زر'
 پیشانی خویش بنهاده داغ'
 نمایند ازین گونه مجلس سراغ'
 یکی زآن میان گوید ای همرهان'
 پسندیده یاران كار آگهان'
 من و حاجی عباس رفتیم دوش'
 سوی بزم آن شخص سبزی فروش'
 نبود اندر آن مجلس مختصر'
 بجز چاهی و قهوه چیزی دگر'
 ندیدیم آنجا كس از مردمان'
 بجز بانى و يك دو تن روضه خوان'
 نشستن در آن بزم نبود روا'
 كه بى قند و چاهی ندارد صفا'
 خداوند از آن بنده خورسند نیست'
 كه در مجلس شربت قند نیست'
 و لیکن بروزی ده انس و جان'
 فلان جاست بزومی چو بزم شهان'
 عجب مجلس خوب و راحت فزاست'
 یقین دانم آن مجلس پیریاست'

در آن بزم چاهى بود آق پر¹،
 همش قنيد يزدى بجای شکر،
 ز نى پيچ قلميانهاى بساور،
 كه يابد دل از قلقلِ وى سرور،
 رود عطر تنباكويش چند ميل،
 درخشد بسر آتشش چو سهيل،
 نخواهد در آنجا شود آب صرف،
 بجز شربت قنيد و ليمو و برف،
 نموده است بانى عالى جناب،
 ز هر كشورى ذاكرى انتخاب،
 يك از ذاكِران ميرزا كاشى است،
 كه گویند او روضه خوان باشى است،
 دگر زان كسان ذاكِر رشتى است،
 كه دريای آواز را كشتى است،
 ز كرمه-ان و از يزد و كرمانشهان،
 ز شيراز و از شوشتر و اصفهان،
 همه موسقى دان و خوش صوت و نغز،
 بود ديگران قشر و ايشان چو مغز،
 حقيقت عجب مجلس بيرياست،
 بجان شما رفتن آنجا بجاست،
 چو ياران كنند اين سخن استماع،
 بدان بزم يكسر كنند اجتماع،

"Now hear from me a story which is more brightly coloured than a garden flower,
 Of those who make mourning for Ḥusayn and sit in assemblies in frenzied excitement.

All wear black for Fátima's darling¹,
 Establish houses of mourning and make lament for the King of Karbalá².
 In every corner they prepare a feast and arrange a pleasant assembly;
 They carpet court-yard and chamber, they bedeck with inscriptions arch and alcove;
 They spread fair carpets, they set out graceful furnishings;
 A host of gluttonous men, all beside themselves and intoxicated with the cup of greed,
 On whom greed has produced such an effect that, like the stamp on the gold³,
 It has set its mark on their foreheads, make enquiry about such assemblies.
 One of them says, 'O comrades, well-approved friends, versed in affairs,
 'I and Hájji 'Abbás went yesterday to the entertainment of that green-grocer fellow.
 'In that modest entertainment there was nothing but tea and coffee,
 'And we saw no one there except the host and one or two *rawza-khwáns*⁴.
 'To sit in such an assembly is not meet, for without sugar and tea it has no charm.
 'God is not pleased with that servant in whose entertainment is neither sherbet nor sugar.
 'But, by Him who gives men and *jinn* their daily bread, in such-and-such a place is an entertainment worthy of kings,
 'A wonderfully pleasant and comfortable entertainment, which, I am sure, is devoid of hypocrisy.
 'There is white tea and sugar-loaf of Yazd in place of sugar,
 'And crystal *qalyáns* with flexible tubes, at the gargle of which the heart rejoices.
 'The fragrance of their tobacco spreads for miles, and the fire gleams on their heads like [the star] Canopus.
 'No water will be drunk there, but draughts of lemon, sugar and snow.

¹ *I.e.* her son the Imám Ḥusayn. *Jigar-gúsha* (lit. "corner of the liver") is an expression very similar to the Irish *cuirte mo éiríde*.

² Again Ḥusayn, "the martyr of Karbalá."

³ *I.e.* its trace is ineffaceably stamped upon them.

⁴ The professional reciters or rhapsodists employed on these occasions.

'One of the reciters is Mírzá Káshí, who, they say, is the chief of *rawza-khwáns*.

'Another of them is the rhapsodist of Rasht, who is like a boat in the ocean of song.

'From Kirmán, Yazd and Kirmánsháh, from Shíráz, Shushtar and Işfahán,

'All are skilled musicians of melodious and charming voices : they are like the kernel and others like the shell.

'In truth it is a wonderful entertainment, devoid of hypocrisy : by your life it is right to attend it !'

When the friends hear this speech with one accord they assemble at that banquet."

On the whole, however, the emotion evoked by these Muḥarram mournings, whether dramatic representations

or recitations, is deep and genuine, and even foreigners and non-Muslims confess themselves affected by them. "If the success of a drama," says Sir Lewis Pelly in the Preface to his translation of thirty-seven scenes from the *Ta'ziyas*¹, "is to be measured by the effects which it produces upon the people for whom it is composed, or upon the audiences before whom it is represented, no play has ever surpassed the tragedy known in the Mussulman world as that of Hasan and Husain. Mr Matthew Arnold, in his 'Essays on Criticism,' elegantly sketches the story and effects of this 'Persian Passion Play,' while Macaulay's Essay on Lord Clive has encircled the 'Mystery' with a halo of immortality." Even the critical and sceptical Gibbon says²: "In a distant age and climate the tragic scene of the death of Hosein will awaken the sympathy of the coldest reader." *Sayyidu'sh-Shuhadá* ("the Chief of the Martyrs") the Persians call their favourite hero, who is, indeed, in their eyes more even than this, since his intercession will be accepted by God for his sinful followers even when the intercession of the

European testimony to the true pathos of the Muḥarram mournings.

¹ *The Miracle Play of Hasan and Husain* (2 vols., London, 1879).

² Professor J. B. Bury's edition of the *Decline and Fall* in seven volumes (London, 1898), vol. v, p. 391.

Prophet has failed. "Go thou," says the latter to him on the Resurrection Day, "and deliver from the flames every one who has in his life-time shed but a single tear for thee, every one who has in any way helped thee, every one who has performed a pilgrimage to thy shrine, or mourned for thee, and every one who has written tragic verse for thee Bear each and all with thee to Paradise!" To the Persian Shí'a, therefore, Husayn occupies the same position that Jesus Christ does to the devout Christian, notwithstanding the fact that the doctrine of the Atonement is utterly foreign to the original spirit of Islám. To us no Persian verse could well appear more exaggerated in its deification of a human being than this³:

مرد گویند خدائی و من اندر غضب آیم
پرده بر داشته میسند بخود ننگِ خدائی

"Men say Thou art God, and I am moved to anger : raise the veil, and submit no longer to the shame of Godhead !"

But I am not sure whether the following verse, ascribed to the Bábí poet Nabíl³, would not more greatly shock the Persian Shí'a :

شهادای طلعتِ نارِ من بدوید سوی دیارِ من
سر و جان کنید نثارِ من که منر شهنشہ کربلا

"O witnesses of my aspect of fire, haste ye towards my home ;
Make head and life my offering, for I am the Monarch of Karbalá !"

¹ Sir Lewis Pelly's *Miracle Play*, vol. ii, p. 347.

² By an Azalí controversialist it is said to have been written of Bahá'u'lláh by one of his followers, but I have been told that it, or a very similar verse, was really composed in honour of Husayn.

³ *Nabíl* is a Bábí substitute for *Muḥammad*, the numerical values of both names being equivalent to 92. The poet Nabíl at one time after the Báb's death advanced a claim on his own behalf, and the verse here cited appears to have been composed at this period. Later he became one of the most devoted adherents of Bahá'u'lláh, on whose death in 1892 he drowned himself at 'Akká.

It would be an interesting study, but beyond the capacity of this volume, to trace the growth of the Ḥusayn-Legend from its comparatively meagre historical basis, as given by Ṭabarī and the earlier Arab historians, to the elaborate romance into which it has finally developed in the *ta'ziyas* and *rawza-khwāns*. But the romantic element appears early, even in the narrative of Abú Mikhnaf Lúṭ ibn Yaḥyá, who flourished in the first half of the second century of the *hijra* (circa A.D. 750)¹, and it has even been suggested that Ḥusayn has been indued with the attributes of some far more ancient prototype like Adonis. At any rate no one at the present day can see anything more like the performances of the priests of Baal than the ghastly ceremonies of the 'Áshúrá or *Rúz-i-Qatl* which take place on the tenth of Muḥarram (the anniversary of Ḥusayn's death at Karbalá) wherever there is a considerable Persian colony, but especially, of course, in Persia itself.

Certain episodes in the Ḥusayn-Legend would almost seem to indicate an unconscious sense of solidarity with the Christians on the part of the Shí'a Persians arising from their participation in the doctrine of the Atonement. The best-known example of this is the conversion and martyrdom of the "Firangi ambassador" at the Court of Yazíd², a very favourite scene in the *ta'ziyas*, and considered especially appropriate when European visitors are included in the audience. Another instance occurs in the *Asrāru'sh-Shahādāt*, or "Mysteries of Martyrdom," of Isma'íl Khán "Sarbáz³," when Ibn Sa'd invites certain Christians to aid

¹ See Wüstenfeld's *Die Geschichtschreiber der Araber*, No. 19 (pp. 5-6), and his translation of this work under the title of *Der Tod des Husein ben 'Ali und die Rache: ein historischer Roman aus dem Arabischen* (Göttingen, 1883).

² See Pelly's *Miracle Play*, vol. ii, pp. 222-240.

³ Lithographed with crude illustrations at Ṭihrán in 1274/1857-58.

him in killing the Imám Ḥusayn, but when the eyes of their leader fell upon him—

كربلارا دید عرشِ كبریا،

عرش را تر دید از خونِ خدا،

نقش بست اندر دل از كلكِ خیال،

كین خدا باشد بدین فر و جلال،

گر خدا نبود یقین عیسی بود،

آفتابِ عرشِ دینِ ما بود،

"He saw Karbalá as the Throne of Divine Majesty, he saw that Throne wet with God's blood¹;

By the pen of imagination an impression grew in his heart, 'Surely this is God in such glory and splendour!

'If he be not God, then surely he is Jesus, the Sun of the Throne of our Faith.'"

Thereupon, being convinced of the truth of Islám and the sanctity of Ḥusayn—

خواست اذنِ جنگ با صد شور و شین،

رفت و جان بنمود قربانِ حسین،

"With a hundred frenzied enthusiasms he sought permission to engage in the battle, and departed to offer his life as a sacrifice for Ḥusayn."

Since, however, we also find stories of the conversion of an Indian king (presumably a pagan) and even of a lion, the object may be to emphasize the cruelty and hard-heartedness of the professing Muslims who compassed the death of Ḥusayn and his fellow-martyrs by depicting the sympathy evoked by their sufferings even in the hearts of unbelievers and savage animals.

The librettos giving the words actually spoken by the

¹ This expression in the mouth of a professing Muslim is extraordinary.

Libretto of the
"Passion-plays."

graphed copies exist, of which, by the kindness of my friend the late George Grahame, formerly Consul in different parts of Persia, I possess half a dozen. As an example of their style I shall here cite a passage from the "Martyrdom of Ḥurr ibn Yazíd ar-Riyáhl¹," wherein an Arab from Kúfa brings to the Imám Husayn the news of the execution of his cousin Muslim ibn 'Aqfl.

آمدن مرد عرب از کوفه و خبر آوردن از شهادت مسلم بن عقیل
(عرب) منکه بینی که بصد شور و نوا میآیم
هددم نزد سلیمان ز سبا میآیم
آیم از کوفه و دارم خبر از مسلم زار
چون نسیم سحری روح فنا میآیم
بر سرم شوق لقای پسر فاطمه است
که بدر دل مجروح دوا میآیم
(عباس) این دربرا که بود خاک سرایش کافور
سُرمه چشم ملک باشد و خدامش هور
هست این در بخدا قبله ارباب وفا
دردمندان بلارا بود این دار شفا
(عرب) سلام من بتو ای مقتدای عالمیان
ز کوفه میرسم ای پیشوای اهل جنان
خدایرا کجا میروی تو ای سرور
بیان نما تو بحق خدای جن و بشر
(امام) علیک من بتو ای قاصد نکو منظر
روم بکوفه من ایندم بحالت مضطر

¹ This constitutes a separate scene in Sir L. Pelly's *Miracle Plays*, vol. i, pp. 171-189.

فلک کشیده عنان بسوی مُلک عراق
بمن بگو تو ز مسلم اگر خبر داری
کسی بکوفه باو کرد از وفا یاری
(عرب) مهرس از حالت مسلم فدایت
بیآ آقا بموسم دست و پایت
مرو در کوفه ای سلطان ابرار
که میتوسم شوی محزون و بی یار
مرو در کوفه ای سرور امان است
بکن رحمی علی اکبر جوان است
مرو در کوفه زینب خوار گردد
اسیر کوچه و بازار گردد
(امام) عرب از حالت مسلم بیان کن
(عرب) برای مسلم محزون فغان کن
(امام) بگو در کوفه چون شد حال مسلم
(عرب) بدان برگشته شد اقبال مسلم
(امام) مگر کوفی تنش در خون کشیدند
(عرب) سر پاکش ز ملک تن بُردند
(امام) مگر کردند جسمش پاره پاره
(عرب) زدند جسم شریفش بر قناره
(امام) دگر بر گو چه کردند قوم اشرار
(عرب) کشیدندش میان شهر و بازار
(امام) بگو از حالت طفلان مسلم
(عرب) شدند اندر جنان مهمان مسلم
(امام) که بر آن کودکان ظلم و جفا کرد
(عرب) سر ایشان ز تن حارث جدا کرد

(امام) *فغان از دیده گویان مسلم*
 (عرب) *بود این جامه طفلان مسلم*
 ایوای که مسلم وفا دار
 کشته شده از جفای اشرار

"How the Arab comes from Kúfa bringing news of the martyrdom of Muslim ibn 'Aqil.

- (Arab) 'I whom thou seest coming with an hundred passionate strains
 Am the hoopoe coming from Sheba into the presence of Solomon.
 I come from Kúfa, having tidings of poor Muslim,
 I come enlarging the spirit like the morning breeze.
 In my head is a longing to meet the son of Fátima¹,
 I come as the remedy for the pain of a wounded heart.'
- ('Abbás) 'To this gate, of whose pavilion the dust is camphor
 And collyrium for the angels' eyes, and its servants the Húrís².
 By God, this gate is the *qibla*³ of all faithful folk,
 And a house of healing to those stricken with sorrow!'
- (Arab) 'My salutation to thee, O exemplar of mankind;
 I come from Kúfa, O leader of the people of Paradise!
 For God's sake whither goest thou, O my lord?
 Explain to me [I conjure thee] by the God of *finn* and men!'
- (The Imám) 'And on thee [be my salutation], O messenger of comely face!
 Even now I am going to Kúfa in an agitated condition.
 They have written to me letters of longing:
 Heaven draws my reins towards the land of 'Iráq.
 Tell me, therefore, if thou hast news of Muslim:
 Has any one in Kúfa loyally aided him?'

¹ *I.e.* the Imám Ḥusayn, son of 'Alí and Fátima the Prophet's daughter.

² The *Hírú'l-'Ayn*, or black-eyed damsels of Paradise.

³ The point to which the worshipper turns in prayer in order to face Mecca-wards.

(Arab) 'May I be thy sacrifice! Ask not of Muslim's case!
 Come, master, let me kiss thy hands and feet!
 Go not to Kúfa, O King of the righteous!
 For I fear that thou may'st become sorrowful and friendless.
 Go not to Kúfa, O Lord! It were a pity!
 Be merciful! 'Alí Akbar¹ is so young!
 Go not to Kúfa! Zaynab² will be humiliated,
 And will be led captive through the streets and markets!'

(Together)

- (Imám) 'O Arab, make known Muslim's condition!'
 (Arab) 'Lament for grief-stricken Muslim!'
 (Imám) 'Tell me, how fared it with Muslim in Kúfa?'
 (Arab) 'Know that Muslim's fortune failed.'
 (Imám) 'Did the Kúfans drag his body through blood?'
 (Arab) 'They severed his innocent head from the kingdom of his body.'
 (Imám) 'Did they cut his body in pieces?'
 (Arab) 'They stuck his noble body on the headsman's hook.'
 (Imám) 'Tell me, what further did these wicked people do?'
 (Arab) 'They dragged him through the city and market.'
 (Imám) 'Tell me, how fares it with Muslim's children?'
 (Arab) 'They have become the guests of Muslim in Paradise.'
 (Imám) 'Who wrought cruelty and wrong on those children?'
 (Arab) 'Hárith severed their heads from their bodies.'
 (Imám) 'Alas for Muslim's weeping eyes!'
 (Arab) 'These are the garments of Muslim's children.'
 (Both)³ 'Alas that faithful Muslim has been slain by the cruelty of wicked men!'

It has only been possible here to touch the fringe of this vast literature of what is commonly and not inappropriately termed the Persian Passion Play, and I have had to content myself with a few specimens of the main types in which it is manifested, namely the classical threnody or elegy (*marthiya*) of Muhtasham and his imitators; the more

¹ The eldest son of the Imám Ḥusayn. His death forms the subject of Scene xvii of Pelly's *Miracle Play* (vol. i, pp. 287-303).

² The daughter of 'Alí and sister of Ḥasan and Ḥusayn.

³ It is not clear from the text whether this verse is uttered by one or both of the speakers.

popular presentations of these legends in verse, prose, or mixed verse and prose, contained in innumerable and obscure lithographed books, of which I have chosen the *Asrdrú'sh-Shahádat* as a type, not because it enjoys any supreme excellence, but simply because it is one of those of which I happen to possess a copy; and lastly the actual librettos of the dramatized *ta'ziyas*, to be seen at their best at the Royal *Takya* of Tíhrán during the first ten days of the month of Muḥarram. Manuscript note-books for the use of *rawza-khwáns* on such occasions are commonly met with in collections of Persian books, and the full description of one such (Add. 423) will be found in my *Catalogue of the Persian MSS. in the Cambridge University Library*¹. Most of these pieces are anonymous, but amongst the poets named are Muqbil, Mukhlis, Mawzún, Nasím, Shaff'í and Lawhí, of none of whom can I find any biographical notice.

(4) *Bábí Poetry.*

One of my young Persian friends who, like so many of the rising generation, deploras the influence of the *mullás* and *rawza-khwáns* and the religious atmosphere created by them, especially in connection with the Muḥarram celebrations, admitted to me that at least the work has been done so thoroughly that even the most ignorant women and illiterate peasants are perfectly familiar with all the details of these legends of martyrdom, however little they may know of the authentic history of the events portrayed or the persons represented. Even the greatest *mujtahids*, like Mullá Muḥammad Báqiri-Majlisi, however little they might approve the exaggerations and even blasphemies which characterized the Passion Plays in their final popular developments, were at great pains to supply their compatriots with popular and easily

¹ No. LXVI, pp. 122-142. On this last page are given references to descriptions of other similar collections.

intelligible religious treatises in Persian, so that a knowledge of these matters might not be confined to Arabic scholars or professed theologians.

One effect of the *ta'ziyas* has been to create amongst the Persians a widely diffused enthusiasm for martyrdom, of which sufficient account is not taken by those who, misled by the one-sided portrait, or rather caricature, presented by Morier in his famous

Hajji Baba, deem them an essentially timid and even cowardly folk. The English missionaries in Persia, who in sympathy for and understanding of the people amongst whom they work seem to me greatly superior to those whose labours lie in other fields, know better, and no one has done fuller justice to the courage and steadfastness of

the Bábí and Bahá'í martyrs than the Reverend Napier Malcolm in his valuable book *Five Years in a Persian Town* (Yazd). Another told me an interesting story from his own experience in Isfahán. One of the chief *mujtahids* of that

city had condemned some Bábís to death as apostates, and my informant, who was on friendly terms with this ecclesiastic, ventured to intercede for them. The *mujtahid* was at first inclined to take his intervention very ill, but finally the missionary said to him, "Do you suppose that the extraordinary progress made by this sect is due to the superiority of their doctrines? Is it not simply due to the indomitable courage of those whom you and your colleagues condemn to die for their faith? But for the cruel persecutions to which the Bábís have from the first been subjected, and which they have endured with such unflinching courage, would they now be more numerous or important than a hundred obscure heresies in Persia of which no one takes any notice and which are devoid of all significance? It is you and such as you who have made the Bábís so numerous and so formidable, for in place of each one whom you kill a

The Persian passion for martyrdom.

The prestige of the Bábís and Bahá'ís is chiefly due to the courage of their numerous martyrs.

Immense influence of the Husayn-Legend on Persian mentality.

hundred converts arise." The *mujtahid* reflected for a while and then replied, "You are right, and I will spare the lives of these people¹."

Many of these martyrs died with verses of poetry on their lips. Sulaymán Khán, with wicks flaming in his mangled body, sang:

يك دست جامِ باده و يك دست زلف يار،
رقصی چنين ميانه ميدانم آرزوست

"In one hand the wine-cup, in the other the tresses of the Friend,
Such a dance in the midst of the market-place is my desire."

One of the "Seven Martyrs" exclaimed, when the headsmen's sword, missing its stroke, dashed his turban to the ground:

ای خوش آن عاشقِ سرمست که در پای حبيب،
سر و دستار نداند که کدام اندازد

"Happy that intoxicated lover who at the feet of the Friend
Knows not whether it be head or turban which he casts."

Of the ancient Arabs Wilfrid Blunt well says²: "Their courage was of a different quality, perhaps, from that admired among ourselves. It was the valour of a nervous, excitable people who required encouragement from onlookers and from their own voices to do their best..." and the same holds good to some extent of the Persians. Poetry is called "Lawful Magic" (*Sihr-i-Halál*) because, in the words of the author of the *Chahár Maqála*³, it is "that art whereby the poet... can make a little thing appear great and a great thing small, or cause good to appear in the garb of evil and evil in the form of good... in such a way that by his suggestion

¹ A good instance of that sense of justice (*insáf*) which my talented friend and former pupil Mr W. A. Smart of the Consular Service regards as one of the most admirable attributes of the Persians.

² *The Seven Golden Odes of Pagan Arabia* (London, 1903), p. xii.

³ E. J. W. Gibb Memorial Series, vol. xi, 1 (Text), p. 26; vol xi, 2 (Translation), p. 27.

men's temperaments become affected with depression or exaltation; whereby he conduces to the accomplishment of great things in the order of the world."

The Karbalá legend is a potent factor in producing in these martyrs the psychological state which makes them not only endure with fortitude but glory in their sufferings. In one of the two celebrated poems ascribed to the Bábí heroine Qurrat'u'l-'Ayn¹, who was one of the victims of the great persecution of August, 1852, occurs the verse²:

من و عشقِ آن مه خوبرو که چو شد صلاى بلا نبرو
بنشاط و قهقهه شد فرو که أنا الشہيد بکربلا

"For me the love of that fair-faced Moon who, when the call of affliction came to him,
Went down with exultation and laughter, crying, 'I am the Martyr at Karbalá!'"

In its original and primitive form Bábism was Shí'ism of the most exaggerated type, and the Báb himself the 'Gate' to the unseen Imám or Mahdí. Gradually he came to regard himself as actually the Imám; then he became the 'Point' (*Nuqta*), an actual Manifestation of the Supreme Being, and his chief disciples became re-incarnations, or rather "returns" or "recurrences" of the Imáms, and the whole tragedy of Karbalá was re-enacted "in a new horizon" at Shaykh Tabarsí in Mázandarán. The nineteen chapters constituting the first "Unity" (*Wáhid*) of the Persian *Bayán* (the most intelligible and systematic of the Báb's writings) are entirely devoted to the thesis that all the protagonists of the Islamic Cycle have returned³ in this cycle to the life of the world,

¹ Both are given in full, with versified translations, in my *Materials for the Study of the Bábí Religion*, pp. 347-51.

² Compare the initial verse of the poem cited on p. 173 *supra*.

³ Concerning this typical doctrine of "Return" (*Raj'at*) see my *Materials etc.*, pp. 330, 335 and 338, and my translation of the *New History*, pp. 334 *et seqq.*

and Hájji Mírzá Jání, the earliest Bábí historian and himself a victim of the persecution of 1852, gives a long comparison between Karbalá and Shaykh Ṭabarsí, greatly in favour of the latter¹.

In the eleventh and last section of my *Materials for the Study of the Bábí Religion* (pp. 341-58) I published a selection of Bábí and Bahá'í poems, and here I will only add to these a *qaṣída* comprising 133 verses composed in the spring of 1885 by Mírzá Na'ím² of Si-dih near Iṣfahán, an ardent Bahá'í, whose son, as I lately heard from a friend in the British Legation at Ṭihrán, is still resident there. Mírzá Na'ím sent me an autograph copy of this poem in the summer of 1902 through my late friend George Grahame, and in the concluding colophon he states that he was born at Si-dih in 1272/1855-6 and came to Ṭihrán in 1304/1886-7. The poem is so long that I originally intended only to give extracts from it, but, finding that this could not be done without injury to the sequence of ideas, I have decided to print it in full as a typical Bahá'í utterance having the authority of an autograph.

هو الله تعالى شانه،

مرا بود دل و چشمی ز گردشِ گردون،

یکی چو دجله، آب و یکی چو لجه، خون،

چرا ننالم سخت و چرا نگیریم زار،

که از مضیق جهان ره نمیرم بیرون،

درون دایره مقصود خود نمی یابم،

مرا نه پای برون باشد و نه جای درون،

¹ *Nuqtatu'l-Káf* (Gibb Series, vol. xv), pp. 204-5.

² He is referred to in my *Year amongst the Persians* (p. 519), where he is wrongly described as a native of Ábáda.

مرا چه فایده از جاه اگر شوم قارون،
 مرا چه عاید از مال اگر شوم قارون،
 چو می نهم چه ثمر میدهد ضیاع و عقار،
 چو بگذرم چه اثر میکند بنات و بنون،
 مرا چه فخر که نوشم عقار یا جلاب،
 مرا چه فضل که پوشم حریر یا اکسون،
 چو ملك و مال نماند چه محترمشم چه فقیر،
 چو روزگار نباید چه شاد و چه محزون،
 بعقل نازم و هر جانور از آن مملو،
 بروح بالم و هر جایگه از آن مشحون،
 مرا از این چه که گویم چه کرد اسکندر،
 مرا بدین چه که دانم که بود ناپلیون،
 ۱. مرا چه کار که مه شد هلال و بدر از آنك،
 بقدر تابش خور بر وی هست چهره نمون،
 چه فایده است کسوف و خسوف را دانم،
 که خور ز ماه و مه از ظل ارض نیلی گون،
 چه لازم است که گویم ثوابت و سیار،
 همه شمس و کراتند در خم گردون،
 مرا از این چه که دانم کرات گرد شمس،
 معلقند و روان وز دو جذبه اند زبون،
 مرا چه کار که باد آن هوا که موج زند،
 خفیف خشك بفق و ثقیل تر سوی دون،
 ۱۰. چه گویم آنکه قمر بر زمین زمین بر شمس،
 هر او بشمس دگر میچمد به پیرامون،
 چه گویم این رملِ سالر است یا محذوف،
 چه گویم این رجز مطوی است یا مخبون،

ز صرف و نحو و حروف و قرائت و تجوید،
 ز وقف کوفیّین و ز وصلِ بصریّون،
 ز اشتقاق و بدیع و معانی و انشاء،
 بیان و خط و عروض و قریض شعر و فنون،
 رجال و فقه و اصول و جدال و استنباط،
 حدیث و حجّت و تفسیر و سنت و قانون،
 ۲۰ ز رسم و هیأت و جبر و مناظر و تاریخ،
 حساب و هندسه جغرافی از جمیع شؤون،
 سیاستِ مدن و شرع و زرع و کان و لغات،
 حقوقِ ملّت و خرج و خراج و قرض و قشون،
 طب و علائم و تشریح و نبض و قاروره،
 خواصّ جمله ادویه مفرد و معجون،
 طلسم و دعوت و تعبیر و کیمیا و حیل،
 نجوم و طالع و اعداد و رمل و جفر و فسون،
 علومِ فلسفه و منطق از قدیم و جدید،
 تحاشیاتِ حواشی تَسْفُطَاتِ متون،
 ۲۰ بدین علوم هلا نقدِ عمر خویش مده،
 کزین معامله گشتند عالمی مغبون،
 از این علوم سوی علمِ دینِ حق بگرایی،
 که غیر معرفتِ حق همه فریب و فسون،
 فسونِ فلسفه مشنو که سر بسر سفه است،
 فنونِ دهری و کلبی تمام جهل و جنون،
 چرا ظنونِ طبیعی شمرده تو علوم،
 چرا علومِ الهی گرفته تو ظنون،
 مقالِ این حکما چیست جملهگی مشکوک،
 کلامِ این جهلا چیست سر بسر مظنون،

۳۰ علومشان پی دفع حیا و صدق و صفا،
 فنونشان پی فسق و فساد و مکرو مجون،
 همه اباحه ارض است و اشتراكِ حظوظ،
 همه اشاعه فسق است و امتلاءِ بطون،
 خیالشان همه کوتاه و چشمشان همه تنگ،
 فنونشان همه وهم و شؤونشان همه دون،
 نبود سدّ شریعت اگر بر این یاچوج،
 نبود هیچ کس از عرض و مال و جان مأمون،
 بحق حق سخن این گروه ظاهرین،
 بجسمِ ملّت و ملک است بدترین طاعون،
 ۳۰ شوی ز علمِ الهی سلاله کوفیّین،
 شوی ز حکمتِ کلبی نبیره میمون،
 هر آنچه گفت نبی این زمان ببین مشهود،
 هر آنچه گفت حکیم این زمان ببین مطعون،
 علومشان همه از انبیا ولی ناقص،
 فنونشان همه از اولیا ولی ملحون،
 و لیکن از در انصاف در جهان انسان،
 بعلم و دانش ممتاز باشد از ما دون،
 بعلم و حکمت ره میبرد بذاتِ قدیم،
 بعقل و فکر برد ره بحضرت بیچون،
 ۴۰ تعلّم است که فرموده افضل الاعمال،
 تفکر است کز او ساعتی به از سبعون،
 مقرّ ذاتِ قدیمش حکیمهای بزرگ،
 چو سقراط چو بقراط ارسطو و زینون،
 چو بو علی و چو اقلیدس و چو بطلمیوس،
 چو طالس و چو فلاطون چو هرمس و شیلون،

یقدسون له بالعشی و الاشراق'
 یسبحون اذا یُضبحون اذا یمسون'
 جهان سری که حکیم اندرو بجای خرد'
 زمان تنی که علوم اندر او بجای عیون'
 ۱۰ ولی تو نُست عنان توسن فنون سرکش'
 ولی تو خام ضعیف اُبرش علوم حرون'
 نخوانده سطری ریب آوری برّ قدیم'
 زهی مزاج که قبض آورد ز انتیمون'
 ز مهد تا بلحد علم جو و کو پالّصین'
 ز علم حق که بر آنست اعتماد و رکون'
 حقایق حکمش را حکیمها مبهوت'
 جوامع کلمش را ادیبها مرهون'
 طبایع اند چو اجسام در ظهور و بروز'
 حقایق اند چو ارواح در خفا و کمون'
 ۲۰ ز تنگ ظرفی درین فضای نا محدود'
 بود عوالم بیحد بیکدگر مدفون'
 امور عادیه را عام دید و خاصه خاص'
 بقدر خود و هو اعلمر بما یرصفون'
 بکنه پستترین صنع حادثش نرسد'
 چه جای ذات قدیمش هزار افلاطون'
 بحکم حق متحرک بود سپهر و نجوم'
 بلی ز جان متأثر بود عیون و جفون'
 ز امر نیست پس از کیست جنبش اجرام'
 ز آب نیست پس از چیست گردش طاحون'
 ۳۰ یکی بچشم تأمل ز روی عقل ببین'
 درین سراچه که ربّعی از آن بود مسکون'

بهر یکی ز جماد و نبات و از حیوان'
 هزار عالم نا دیده ظاهر و مکنون'
 و رای عقل تو عقل دگر بود غالب'
 درون جان تو جان دگر بود مکمون'
 بین بدانه که آن دانه با ازل همدوش'
 بین به بیضه که آن بیضه با ابد مقرون'
 نهان و ظاهر از این صد جهان طیور و فروخ'
 قدیم و حادث از آن صد چمن ثمار و غصون'
 ۱۰ کجا بکوی حقیقت گذر توانی کرد'
 تو کز سرای طبیعت نمیروی بیرون'
 چنانکه بینی فیض حیات از این عالم'
 بطغفل از مدد مام مییرسد ببطون'
 ز ما و رای طبیعت اگر مدد نرسد'
 بدین جهان بخدا این جهان شود وارون'
 ز ما و رای طبیعت در این مضیق جهان'
 عوالمی است خدارا ز حد و عد افزون'
 گروهی از عقلا بر خلاف عادت کَل'
 بطوع و طبع بین غوطه میزنند بخون'
 ۲۰ خلاف طبع گروهی بدرد و غم خوشنود'
 خلاف طبع فریقی ز جور کین ممنون'
 بمیل طبع بین جمعی از جهان بیزار'
 بطیب نفس نگر قومی از وطن سرگون'
 بین بشوق و شعف فرقه همه مقتول'
 بین بدوق و طرب زمره همه مسجون'
 بطوع سلسله در عذاب رنگارنگ'
 بطبع طائفه در بلای گوناگون'

بعهدِ حضرتِ ختمی مآب از اُمّتِ
 یکی بصدق ابو ذر یکی ابو شعیون
 بعهدِ حضرتِ اعلی دو تن وحید شدند
 یکی شجاع امین و یکی جبانِ خئون
 بعهدِ طلعتِ ابهی هم اینچنین باید
 یکیست ثابتِ عهد و یکیست ناقصِ دون
 بلعن لب نکشایم ولی خدا گوید
 هر آنکه میشکند عهد من بود ملعون
 ۱۲۰ ز حق بعهد مر این فرقه چشم میبوشند
 که حق ز باطل پیداست در جمیع شوون
 قسر بروی تو ای مقتدای کَلِ اُمَرُ
 قسر بموی تو ای پیشوای کَلِ قرون
 قسر باصلِ تو یعنی بحضرتِ مطلق
 قسر بحق تو یعنی حقیقت بیچون
 قسر بوجهِ تو یعنی بوجهِ المشرق
 قسر بسرِ تو یعنی بسرِ المخزون
 بخاکِ پایِ تو یعنی بکیمیای مراد
 بگردِ راهِ تو یعنی بتوتیای عیون
 ۱۲۰ بموطاً قدیم تو بموطنِ والتّین
 بسجده گاه خلیایق بزب و الزّیتون
 که بی ثنای توام مطمئن نگردد دل
 سر فراغِ بیالین نمی نهد مدیون
 ولی نعیم کجا مدح تو تواند کرد
 نیازموده نهاده است پای در جیحون
 مطیع امرِ تو از کیدِ نفس باد ایمن
 ۱۲۳ اسیر بندِ تو از شیدِ دهر باد مصون

"HE IS GOD, EXALTED IS HIS STATE !

"Through the revolution of the Sphere I have a heart and an eye,
 the one like the Tigris in flood, the other like a gulf of blood.
 Why should I not mourn heavily, and why should I not weep bitterly,
 since I cannot make my way out of the narrows of the world?
 Within the circle I find not my object; I have neither foot to fare
 forth nor place within.
 What profiteth me if I be as Qâren¹ in rank? What gain to me if I
 be as Qárún² in wealth?
 What fruit do farms and estates yield, since I must lay them aside?
 What effect have daughters and sons, since I must pass away? 5
 What pride have I in drinking wine or rose-water? What virtue have
 I in wearing silk or black brocade³?
 Since dominion and wealth remain not, what difference between
 wealthy and poor? Since time endureth not, what difference
 between the glad and the sorrowful?
 I take pride in my understanding while every animal is full of it;
 I glory in spirit when every place overflows with it.
 What is it to me that I should say what Alexander did? What is it
 to me that I should know who Napoleon was?
 What affair is it of mine that the moon becomes crescent or full
 because it shows its face in proportion to the shining of the sun
 upon it? 10
 What advantage is it that I should know about the eclipses of the
 sun and moon, or that the sun is darkened⁴ through the moon,
 and the moon through the shadow of the earth?
 What need is there for me to say that the fixed stars and planets are
 all suns and spheres in the vault of heaven?

¹ One of the seven great noble houses of ancient Persia. See Nöldeke's *Sasaniden*, especially pp. 437 *et seqq.* These seven families constituted the *Bar-bitán* of the Pahlawí inscriptions, the *Ahlul-Buyútt* of the Arab historians.

² See *Qur'an*, xxviii, 76 and commentary thereon in Sale's translation and elsewhere. He is identified with Korah of the Old Testament, and amongst the Muslims is proverbial for wealth as is Croesus with us.

³ A short note on *aksún*, "a black brocade worn by the rich for ostentation," will be found on p. 108 of my translation of the *Chahár Maqála* (Gibb Series, xi, 2).

⁴ Literally, made the colour of indigo.

revolving round suns, and are subject to two attractions?
 What affair is it of mine that the wind, that undulating air, is light
 and dry above, and dense and moist below?
 What have I to say to this, that the moon marches round the earth,
 the earth round the sun, and the sun in turn round another
 sun? 15
 What should I say as to this *ramal*-metre being 'sound' or 'apocopa-
 ted,' or this *rajas*-metre *mafwl* or *makhbún*¹?
 Or of accident, syntax, the letters, the correct and solemn intona-
 tion [of the Qur'án], or of the pauses of the Kúfans or the
 junctions of the Başra school²?
 Or of etymology, rhetoric, eloquence, style, expression, calligraphy,
 prosody or the varieties of poetical criticism?
 Or of biography³, jurisprudence, principles [of Law], controversy,
 deduction, tradition, proof, exegesis, the Code and the Law?
 Or of drawing, geometry, algebra, observations, chronology, arith-
 metical, mathematics and geography in all their aspects? 20
 Or of Politics, the Religious Law, agriculture, mining, philology,
 National Rights, expenditure, taxation, loans and armies?
 Or of medicine, symptoms, anatomy, the pulse and the stools, the
 properties of all the drugs, whether simple or compound?
 Or of talismans, incantations, interpretation of dreams, alchemy,
 mechanics, astrology, ascendants, [magic] numbers, geomancy,
 cyphers and spells?
 Or of the philosophical sciences, and logic, ancient and modern, or
 of cautionary glosses and the sophistries of texts?
 O waste not the coin of your life on such sciences, for a whole
 world of men have suffered disappointment through such trans-
 actions! 25
 Turn from these sciences to knowledge of the Religion of the Truth⁴,
 for, save knowledge of the Truth⁴, all is deceit and vanity.

¹ The full explanation of these terms will be found in Blochmann's *Persian Prosody*, or in any book treating of the metrical systems of the Arabs and Persians.

² The two great rival philological schools of early Islám.

³ *Ilmu'r-Rijál* ("the science of notable men") means particularly the biography and authority of the transmitters of religious traditions.

⁴ Or God, which is the usual meaning of *Haqq* amongst the Persians. Gibb (*Ottoman Poetry*, vol. i, p. 60, *ad calc.*) gives "the Fact" as a translation suggested by one of his Muslim friends.

INSIDING NOT TO THE SPELLS OF PHILOSOPHY, which from end to end is
 folly¹; the themes of the materialist and the cynic are all
 ignorance and madness.
 Why dost thou consider the fancies of the naturalist as sciences?
 Why dost thou assume the Divine sciences to be mere
 fancies?
 What is the talk of these philosophers? All doubtful! What is the
 speech of these ignorant men? All conjecture!
 Their sciences are [designed] to dispose of modesty, sincerity and
 purity; their arts are for [the promotion of] sin, mischief, guile
 and wantonness! 30
 Their whole [idea] is the socialization of the earth and the commun-
 izing² of property; their whole [aim] is the diffusion of sin and
 the filling of their bellies!
 Their ideas are all short-sighted and their outlook narrow; their
 arts are all phantasy, and their conditions vile!
 Had it not been for the barrier of the Holy Law against this
 Gog³, no one would have been secure of honour, property, or
 life.
 By God's Truth, the talk of this gang of materialists is the worst
 pestilence in the body of the Nation and the Kingdom!
 By the Divine Knowledge thou wilt become the choicest product of
 the two worlds; by the cynic's philosophy thou wilt become
 the grandchild of an ape⁴! 35
 Behold manifest today whatever the Prophet hath said, but what-
 ever the philosopher hath said behold at this time discredited!
 All their sciences are [derived] from the Prophets, but imperfectly;
 all their arts are from the Saints, but garbled.
 But, regarded fairly, man in this world is distinguished by science
 and knowledge from all beside.

¹ There is a word-play here, of the kind called *tajnis-i-zá'id*, between *falsafah* (philosophy) and *safah* (folly).

² The early Bábís were often accused of holding communistic views like the ancient Persian heresiarch Mazdak. Such views are here explicitly repudiated.

³ Alexander the Great is supposed to have built the Great Wall of China (hence called *Sadd-i-Sikandar*, "the Barrier of Alexander") to prevent the tribes of Gog and Magog (*Yájúj wa Májúj*) from over-running the world.

⁴ An evident allusion to the Darwinian theory.

By knowledge and learning he finds his way to the Eternal Essence;
by understanding and thought he attains to the Presence of the
Why-less¹.

It is Study of which He says 'It is the most excellent of actions';
it is Thought whereof an hour 'is better than seventy [years].'

The great sages, such as Socrates, Hippocrates, Aristotle and Zeno,
confess His Eternal Essence, 41

And so also Abú 'Alí [Avicenna], Euclid, Ptolemy, Thales, Plato,
Hermes and Solon².

These sanctify Him at dusk and at dawn; these glorify Him in the
morning and in the evening.

The world is a head wherein the sage is the intelligence; time is a
body wherein the sciences are in place of the eyes.

But thou ridest with a slack rein, and the steed of the arts is restive;
thou art weak and inexperienced, and the dappled charger of
the sciences is vicious. 45

Not having read a line thou hast doubts as to the Eternal Lord:
wonderful the constitution in which antimony produces consti-
pation!

'Seek learning from the cradle to the grave, even in China³,' from
the knowledge of God, whereon trust and reliance may be
placed.

Sages are dumbfounded at His wise aphorisms; men of letters are
indebted to His pregnant sayings.

Natural laws are like bodies in manifestation and emergence;
Divine Truths are like spirits in occultation and latency.

In this illimitable expanse for lack of space illimitable worlds are
buried in one another. 50

Common people see ordinary things, and distinguished people
special things, according to their own measure; and He 'knows
best what they describe⁴.'

A thousand Platos cannot fathom the essence of His humblest
temporal work; how much less His own Eternal Essence?

The sphere and the stars move by the command of God: yea, the
eyes and eyelids are affected by the soul.

¹ God is so called (*Bí-chún*) because none may question Him as to
the reason of His actions.

² Doubtful. The original has *Shllún*, an evident error.

³ A well-known tradition of the Prophet.

⁴ Cf. *Qur'án*, xxiii, 98.

Through whom, if not by His command, is the movement of bodies?
By what, if not by the water, does the mill revolve?

For once in the way of wisdom look with the eye of reflection on
this abode whereof but one quarter is habitable¹. 55

In each one of the mineral, vegetable and animal kingdoms are a
thousand unseen worlds, manifest and hidden.

Beyond thy intelligence is another over-ruling Intelligence; within
thy soul is another soul concealed.

Behold the grain, which stands shoulder to shoulder with past
Eternity: behold the egg, which is conjoined with Eternity to
come!

Hidden yet manifest in this latter are a hundred worlds of fowls and
chickens; eternal yet temporal in that former are a hundred
groves of fruit and branches.

How canst thou pass through the street of Truth, thou, who comest
not forth from the mansion of Nature? 60

Even as thou seest how the flow of life from this world reaches the
child's inward parts through its mother's aid,

So, if aid come not from the Supernatural to this world, by God,
this world will be ruined!

For within the narrow straits of this world God hath worlds from
the Supernatural beyond limit or computation.

Contrary to universal custom, behold a group of intelligent men
voluntarily and naturally plunging into blood²;

Contrary to nature, a company content with pain and grief; contrary
to nature, a party gladly enduring the cruelty of spite. 65

Behold a community renouncing the world by natural inclination;
see a people contentedly suffering exile from their native land!

Behold a party all slain eagerly and joyfully; behold a throng all
imprisoned with alacrity and delight;

A whole series [of victims] voluntarily enduring various torments;
a whole class by natural inclination [involved] in afflictions of
every kind;

All intoxicated and singing songs³, but not from wine; all self-
effaced and dissipated, but not from opium!

¹ *I.e.* the world, whereof but one quarter is supposed to be capable
of sustaining human life.

² This and the following verses refer to the readiness with which
the Bábís suffer martyrdom.

³ Like Sulaymán Khán, for instance. See p. 196 *supra*, and my
Year amongst the Persians, p. 102.

How hath Daniel given news of today! How hath the word of
Isaiah taken effect now¹! 70

How hath the promise of all the Scriptures been fulfilled, precisely
in conformity with the Qur'án, the Pentateuch, the Books of the
Prophets and the Gospels!

Now in the Abode of Peace [Baghdád], now in Jerusalem, now in
Mount Carmel, now in Edom, and now in Sion,

The Holy and Fortunate Land hath been determined, the Blessed
and Auspicious Day hath been fixed.

'How came the Truth [God] to us? Even as our Arabian Prophet
and our guides the Imáms indicated to us².

How according to promise did the Eternal Beauty³ reveal His
beauty, from whose Blessed Beauty the whole world augured
well? 75

How did God become apparent in the Valley of 'the Fig'? How
did He become visible in the Mount of 'the Olive'⁴?

How does He conquer without an army while all [others] are con-
quered? How does He triumph unaided while mankind are
helpless [before Him]?

Without the aid of learning He intones the sweetest verses⁵; with-
out the help of others He lays down the Best Law.

Why should we not see a hundred thousand souls His sacrifice?
Why should we not see a hundred thousand hearts bewitched
by Him?

By the movement of His Pen [men's] hearts and breasts are moved;
by the calmness of His Glance cometh Peace without and
within 80

¹ The fulfilment of these prophecies is especially discussed in a
Bábí work entitled *Istidláliyá* addressed to the Jews, and in English
by Ibráhím Khayru'lláh in *Bahá'u'lláh, the Splendour of God*. To
give only one instance, "a time and times and half a time" is explained
as three years and a half of 360 days each = 1260. Now A.H. 1260
(A.D. 1844) was the year of the Báb's "Manifestation."

² This verse is entirely in Arabic.

³ *I.e.* Bahá'u'lláh, who was most commonly entitled by his followers
Jamál-i-Mubárah, "the Blessed Beauty," or "Perfection."

⁴ The reference is to *Súra* xcv of the *Qur'án*, entitled "the
Fig."

⁵ Not, of course, verses of poetry (*abyát*), but the revealed "signs"
(*áyát*) which constitute His credentials.

The turbans of the doctors¹ did not extinguish His Torch; the
hosts of the captains did not overthrow His Standard.

Behold how His Word permeates the world as the soul the body;
behold how His Influence throbs in the spirit like the blood in
the veins!

The hostility of His foes does but [attempt to] crush water in a
mortar; the enmity of His rivals is but as wind in the desert.

The duration of His command in the heart keeps company with the
Spirit²; the continuance of His authority in the world is coeval
with the ages.

What a fire hath He kindled in [men's] hearts, such that no water
can quench this furnace! 85

His authority comprehendeth the terrestrial and the subterranean
regions; His fame hath passed beyond China, India and Japan.

With one glance He hath conquered two hundred countries and
districts; with one [stroke of His] Pen He hath taken a
hundred castles and fortresses.

How by His summons to the Faith hath He established a Church
against whom until the Resurrection no opponent shall prevail!

He sought help from none to found His Law; yea, God did not
raise up the heavens on pillars³.

When, when wilt thou admit His Grace and Mercy? How, how
canst thou deny His Knowledge and Power? 90

Thou, who canst not order the affairs of a single household, do not
contend with Him who orders all the ages!

Thou, who knowest not what is expedient in thine own affairs, do
not obstinately strive with the Lord of the Kingdom of 'Be and
it is'⁴!

Thou dost dispute with thy father about a farthing's damage;
these⁵ surrender life and wealth for His sake, and deem them-
selves favoured.

Alas a thousandfold that I have a thousand thoughts which I cannot
harmonize with these restricted rhymes!

Words have escaped my control, yet [the tale of] my heart's pain is
incomplete; now I return again to the same refrain. 95

¹ *I.e.* of Law and Religion. It is, I think, misleading to translate
'Ulamá as "clergy."

² *I.e.* lasts as long as life endures.

³ See *Qur'án*, xiii, 2 and xxxi, 9.

⁴ *Ibid.*, ii, 111; iii, 42, etc.

⁵ *I.e.* the followers of Bahá'u'lláh.

ALL THIS CHANGING-LIKE AGE I HAVE A HEART TOO ASTRAY BY AN KINDS OF trifles.

The time preens itself like a peacock in varied hues ; the sphere displays its blandishments like a chameleon in divers colours.

Sufficient is thy burning, O Sun, for my heart is roasted ! sufficient is thy turning, O Heaven, for my body is ground to powder !

I have a head, but what can it do with all this passion ? I have a heart, but what can it do with all this trickery ?

Where can the soul find endurance and steadfastness except in the Beloved ? Where can the heart find patience and rest save in the Heart's Desire ? 100

At one time I say to myself, 'Perfection is a disaster'²: at another I laugh to myself, 'Madness is of many kinds.'

At one time my fancy rushes through the plain like an engine ; at another my desire soars in the air like a balloon.

I have broken away from the body, but life will not leave the body ; I have abandoned life, yet the heart is not tranquil.

My heart is wearied of this ruined mansion of merit and talent : welcome the kingdoms of Love ! welcome the realms of Madness³ !

The hobble of understanding hath snapped on the leg of the dromedary of my luck⁴ : O God, where is my Laylá, for I have become Majnún (mad) ? 105

Save the Divine Will [exercised] through the channel of Omnipotence, who can drag me forth from this whirlpool ?

Behold, the Will of God is 'He whom God willeth⁵, with whose will the Will of God is conjoined ;

¹ *I.e.* ever changing, inconstant.

² Perfection exposes the owner to special risks, and the Evil Eye is called by the Arabs '*Aynu'l-Kamál*' because it especially menaces whatever is perfect of its kind. Cf. p. 117, n. 2 *supra*.

³ So Háfiz: "If the understanding knew how happy the heart is under the locks of the Beloved, the intelligent would go mad for the sake of our chains." (Ed. Rosenzweig-Schwannau, vol. i, p. 28, ll. 7-8.)

⁴ It is impossible to render the word-plays between '*aq̄l*' (understanding) and '*iq̄ál*' (hobble, tether, shackle fastened round a camel's knee to keep it from straying), and '*bakhtí*' (dromedary) and '*bakht*' (fortune). Even when treating of the most solemn themes few Persian poets can resist echolalia.

⁵ This is one of the titles given by the followers of Bahá'u'lláh to his

THE UNIQUE SERVANT OF BAHÁ' (ABDUL-BAHÁ), MADE SUCH BY THE WILL of God, Who 'When He willeth aught, saith "Be!" and it is'¹;

A King to whom God shows us the way ; a Moon who guides us towards God ;

'God's Secret,' the fortunate Pearl of the Ocean of Union, who is the Pearl concealed in the shell of God's Knowledge ; 110

Beside his excellence, excellence lacks its excellency ; beside his bounty Ma'n² is a withholder of benefits.

His enemy is a foe unto himself whom even his friends renounce ; he who obeys him is secure of himself and trusted by mankind.

In praise of the countenance of Him round whom the [Divine] Names revolve I would sing psalms, were I granted permission by Him.

I continued to utter in praise of His Essence what God [Himself] hath said, not the verse of 'the poets whom the erring follow'³.

O Vice-gerent [Khalífa] of the All-merciful, O Ark of Noah, be not grieved because the Truth hath been weakened by violation [of the Covenant]. 115

In the Dispensation of Adam, Qábíl [Cain] cruelly and spitefully shed his brother's blood without fault or sin [on his part].

In the Dispensation of Noah, when Canaan⁴ broke his father's Covenant, by the disgrace of a repudiated affiliation he was drowned in the Sea of Shame.

In the Dispensation of Jacob, Joseph the faithful was imprisoned in the bonds of servitude by the wiles of his brethren.

In the Dispensation of Moses from amongst the children of Israel one was such as Aaron and another such as Qárún⁵.

In the Dispensation of the Spirit of God [Jesus Christ] from amongst

son 'Abbás Efendí, also called *Sirri'lláh* ("God's Secret"), and after his father's death 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

¹ See the note on verse 92 above (p. 215, n. 4).

² Ma'n ibn Zá'ida is proverbial for his courage, virtue and generosity. For an account of him, see Zotenberg's *Chronique de Tabari* (1874), vol. iv, pp. 373 *et seqq.* This verse affords another instance of echolalia (*Ma'n, máni, má'ín*).

³ *Qur'án*, xxvi, 224, on account of which the whole *Súra* is entitled the "Chapter of the Poets."

⁴ According to Muhammadan tradition, he was a son or grandson of Noah, who, on account of his unbelief, was not saved in the Ark, but perished in the Flood. See *Qur'án*, xi, 42, and commentary thereon.

⁵ See the note on verse 4 of this poem (p. 209, n. 2 *supra*).

the Disciples one in cruelty like Judas [Iscaariot] and one in sincerity like Simon [Peter]. 120

In the Dispensation of His Holiness the Seal of the Prophets [Muhammad] one of his people was in faithfulness Abú Dharr and another Abú Sha'yún¹.

In the Dispensation of His Holiness the Supreme [the Báb] two persons were [entitled] Wahíd²; one was faithful and brave, the other a cowardly traitor.

In the Dispensation of the Most Splendid Countenance [Bahá'u'lláh] it must likewise needs be so, one faithful to the Covenant, the other a vile violator thereof³.

I will not open my lips to curse, but God says, 'Whosoever breaketh my Covenant is accursed.'

This people wilfully shut their eyes to the Truth, for the Truth is apparent from the False in all circumstances. 125

I swear by Thy Face, O Exemplar of all peoples! I swear by Thy Hair, O Leader of all the ages!

I swear by Thy Substance, to wit the Majesty of the Absolute! I swear by Thy Truth, to wit the Reality of the Why-less⁴!

I swear by Thy Countenance, to wit His [God's] dawning Countenance! I swear by thy Secret, to wit His Treasured Secret!

By the earth at Thy Feet, to wit the Alchemy of Desire! By the dust on Thy Road, to wit the tutty of [our] eyes!

¹ I can find no mention of such a person, and suspect that the reading is corrupt.

² The title *Wahíd* ("Unique") appears to have been taken by the early Bábís as numerically equivalent to *Yahyá*, but this equivalency can only be obtained by writing the letter *yá* (ی) in the latter name only twice instead of three times (یحییٰ for يحيى). Thus misspelt, it, like وحید, would yield the number 28. At any rate, as we learn from Mírzá Jání's *Nuqṭatu'l-Káf* (Gibb Series, vol. xv, pp. 243, 250, 257, 259) the title was first given to Sayyid Yahyá of Dáráb, the leader of the Nayríz rebellion, and on his death was transferred to Mírzá Yahyá *Ṣubḥ-i-Azal*, the half-brother and rival of Bahá'u'lláh, who is therefore called "the Second Wahíd" (وحید ثانی). It is, of course, to him that Na'ím applies the term "cowardly traitor."

³ The allusion here is to Bahá'u'lláh's sons (half-brothers) 'Abbás Efendí 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Muḥammad 'Alí, between whom arose the same dispute about succession as arose in the previous generation between their father and his half-brother *Ṣubḥ-i-Azal*.

⁴ See p. 212, n. 1 *supra*.

By the spot pressed by thy foot in the Land of 'the Fig'! By the place of adoration of mankind adorned by 'the Olive'! 130

[By all these I swear] that my heart cannot remain tranquil without praising Thee, for the debtor cannot lay his head tranquilly on the pillow.

Yet how can Na'ím utter Thy praises? [He is as one] unproved who steps into the Oxus.

May he who obeys Thy command be secure from the deceits of the Flesh! May he who is the captive of Thy thralls be protected from the delusions of the time!" 133

Some apology is needed for quoting and translating in full so long a poem by an author so modern, so little known outside the circle of his own coreligionists, and, as he himself admits (verse 94), so comparatively unskilful in the manipulation of rhyme and metre. On the other hand the Bábí and the subsequent and consequent Bahá'í movement constitutes one of the most important and typical manifestations of the Persian spirit in our own time; and this poem, wherein an ardent enthusiasm struggles with a somewhat uncouth terminology, does on the whole faithfully represent the Bahá'í *Weltanschauung*. The following brief analysis may help the reader better to understand the line of thought which it pursues.

Analysis of the above poem of Na'ím, and reasons for including it in this book.

Analysis of Na'ím's poem.

Dissatisfaction of the author with the ordinary pursuits of life, and recognition of the vanity of worldly wealth, pomp and learning (verses 1-25).

True religion celebrated as the only thing which can satisfy the human soul; and materialism, socialism and communism condemned (verses 26-37).

True wisdom and its seekers and expounders, including the ancient Greek philosophers, praised (verses 38-48).

¹ See p. 214, n. 4 *supra*.

The wonder of the Universe, which is permeated throughout by God's Spirit (verses 49-60).

Man's need of Divine Revelation, which is as the need of a little child for its mother's milk (verses 61-63).

Eagerness of the followers of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh for suffering and martyrdom (verses 64-69).

Fulfilment of former prophecies in this Dispensation (verses 70-74).

Proofs of the truth of Bahá'u'lláh's claim (verses 75-94).

The poet resumes his theme with a new *maṭla'*, or initial verse (95), and first speaks of himself and his own condition (verses 95-105). He next passes to the praise of Bahá'u'lláh's son 'Abbás Efendí, better known after his father's death (on May 28, 1892) as 'Abdu'l-Bahá (verses 106-114), and offers consolation for the antagonism of his half-brother and the *Náqizán*, or "Covenant-breakers," who supported him, by numerous analogies drawn from previous Dispensations (verses 115-125). The last eight verses (126-133) constitute the peroration. The understanding of the poem, of course, presupposes a fairly complete knowledge of the history, doctrines and spiritual outlook of the Bábís and Bahá'ís, and to render it intelligible I have had to annotate the translation to an extent which I regret. It is, so far as my knowledge goes, the most ambitious attempt to expound this doctrine and point of view in verse.

It might be expected that I should include in this section some account of the later mystical poetry of the Šúfís, but, though such poetry continues to be produced down to the present day, I have met with none which attains the level of Saná'í, 'Aṭṭár, Jalálu'd-Dín Rúmí, Maḥmúd Shabistari, Jámí, and the other great mystics discussed in the previous volumes of this work. There was, perhaps, little new to be said, and little that could be better expressed than it had been already, while

Little novelty or
advance in later
Šúfí poetry.

under the Şafawís at any rate circumstances were particularly unfavourable to the expression of this class of ideas. The beautiful *Tarjít-band* of Hátif of Işfahán, which will be given at the end of the next chapter, is the only masterpiece of Šúfí poetry produced in the eighteenth century with which I am acquainted.

(5) *The Taşníf or Ballad.*

This class of verse, ephemeral as our own topical and comic songs, leaves far fewer and slighter traces in literature than its actual importance would lead us to expect. A *taşníf* about the *Şáhib-Díván* beginning:

دلگشارا ساخت زیر سُرُسْرَكْ

دلگشارا ساخت با چوب و فلك

حيف دلگشا حيف دلگشا

("He made [the garden of] Dil-gushá under 'the Slide';
He made Dil-gushá with the sticks and the stocks:
Alas for Dil-gushá! Alas for Dil-gushá!")

was the most popular ballad when I was in Shíráz in the spring of 1888¹, but it is probably now as little remembered as an almost contemporary ribald English satire on a certain well-known Member of Parliament who "upset the milk in bringing it home from Chelsea." I have no doubt that the *taşníf* or ballad sung by the troubadour and wandering minstrel existed in Persia from very early—perhaps even from pre-Islamic—times. Bárbad and Sakísá may have sung such topical songs to Khusraw Parwíz the Sásánian thirteen hundred years ago, as Rúdagí almost certainly did four centuries later to the Sámánid prince who was his patron²; and a fragment of a

Probable an-
tiquity of the
taşníf.

¹ See my *Year amongst the Persians*, p. 283.

² Cf. vol. i of my *Lit. Hist. of Persia*, pp. 14-18.

typical *tašnif* (called by the curious name of *harāra*) sung in Iṣfahān on the occasion of the capture and execution of the heretic and assassin Aḥmad ibn 'Aṭṭāsh¹, is recorded in the history of the Saljūqs composed by Abū Bakr Najmu'd-Dīn Muḥammad ar-Rāwandī early in the thirteenth century of our era, under the title of *Rāḥatū's-Ṣudūr wa Ayatū's-Surūr*.

The authorship of these *tašnifs* is seldom known, and they are hardly ever committed to writing, though my friend the late George Grahame, when Consul at Shīrāz in 1905, very kindly caused a small selection of two score of those most popular at the time in that city and in Ṭīhrān, Iṣfahān, Rasht, Tabrīz, and elsewhere, to be written down for me; and a selection, adapted as far as possible to the

An English rendering of twelve *tašnifs*.

piano, was published in or about 1904 under the title of *Twelve Persian Folk-Songs collected and arranged for voice and pianoforte by Blair Fairchild: English version of the words by Alma Strettell* (Novello & Co., London and New York). In this excellent little book the songs are well set, well rendered into English, and intelligibly if not ideally transliterated, and the following sentence from the short prefatory note shows how sensible the compiler was to the indescribable charm of Persian minstrelsy:

"But one needs the setting of the Orient to realize what these songs are: the warm, clear Persian night; the lamps and lanterns shining on the glowing colours of native dresses; the surrounding darkness where dusky shadows hover; the strange sounds of music; voices, sometimes so beautiful, rising and falling in persistent monotony—all this is untranslatable, but the impression left on one is so vivid and so full of enchantment that one longs to preserve it in some form."

Most of these *tašnifs* are very simple love-songs, in which lines from Ḥāfiz and other popular poets are sometimes

¹ *Lit. Hist. of Persia*, vol. ii, pp. 313-16; and *Rāḥatū's-Ṣudūr* (E. J. W. Gibb Memorial, New Series, vol. ii), pp. 161 and 497-8 (note on *harāra*).

much smaller, though in some ways more interesting as well as more ephemeral. A parody or parallel of such a *tašnif* may be produced to accord with fresh circumstances, as happens nearer home with the Irish an t-rean bean boōo and the Welsh *mochyn du*. An instance of such an adaptation is afforded by the second poem cited in my *Press and Poetry of Modern Persia* (pp. 174-9). Of course in the *tašnif* the air is at least as important as the words, and a proper study of them would require a knowledge of Persian music, which, unhappily, I do not possess. Indeed I should think that few Europeans had mastered it both in practice and theory, or could even enumerate the twelve *maqāms* and their twenty-four derivatives (*shu'ba*)¹.

(6) *Modern political verse.*

Of this I have treated so fully in my *Press and Poetry of Modern Persia* (Cambridge, 1914) that it is unnecessary to enlarge further on it in this place. It is a product of the Revolution of 1905 and the succeeding years, and in my opinion shows real originality, merit and humour. Should space permit, I may perhaps add a few further specimens when I come to speak of the modern journalism with which it is so closely associated, and which, indeed, alone rendered it possible. The most notable authors of this class of verse include 'Arif and Dakhaw of Qazwīn, Ashraf of Gīlān, and Bahār of Mashhad, all of whom, so far as I know, are still living, while the two first named are comparatively young men. Portraits of all of them, and some particulars of their lives, will be found in my book above mentioned.

¹ One of the clearest and most concise treatises on this subject which I have seen is contained in a manuscript from the library of the late Sir A. Houtum-Schindler (now in my possession) entitled *Bahjatū'r-Rawdj*.

Majma'u'l-Fuṣahá ("the Concourse of the Eloquent")¹, comes to speak of his contemporaries, we constantly come across such expressions as

با منش ارتباطی خاص بود و مرا بجنابش اخلاص

"He had a special connection with me, and I a sincere regard for him"²; "I saw him in Shíráz"³; "I repeatedly called on him and he used to open the gates of conversation before my face"⁴; "I sometimes get a talk with him"⁵; "for a while he established himself in Fárs, where at that time the writer also was living; I used constantly to have the honour of conversing with him, for he used to open the gates of gladness before the faces of his friends"⁶; and so forth. How many of the 359 "contemporary poets" mentioned in this work⁷ were included on such personal grounds rather than on account of any conspicuous merit? I once went through the list with my excellent old friend Hájji Mírzá Yaḥyá Dawlatábádí, a man of wide culture and possessing a most extensive knowledge of Persian poetry, of which he must know by heart many thousands of verses, and asked him which of them he considered really notable. Out of the whole 359 he indicated five (Ṣabá of Káshán, Furúghí of Bisṭám, Qá'ání of Shíráz, Mijmar of Iṣfahán, and Nashát of Iṣfahán) as of the first class; two (Wiṣál of Shíráz, and the author himself, Hidáyat) as of the second; and two (Surúsh of Iṣfahán and Wiqár of Shíráz) as of the third;

¹ Composed in 1284/1867-8 and lithographed in 2 vols. at Ṭíhrán in 1295/1878.

² Vol. ii, p. 64, s.v. Ágah-i-Shírází.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 67, s.v. Ázád.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 68, s.v. Mírzá Abu'l-Qásim-i-Shírází.

⁵ *Ibid.*, s.v. Ummíd of Kirmánsháh.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 72, s.v. Ulfat of Káshán.

⁷ They occupy pp. 58-679 of vol. ii, but were not all strictly contemporary, a few being as early as the first half of the eighteenth century.

CHAPTER VI.

POETS OF THE CLASSICAL TRADITION. PRE-QÁJÁR PERIOD (A.D. 1500-1800).

Almost any educated Persian can compose tolerable verses, and the great majority do so, while the number of those who habitually indulge in this pastime on a considerable scale and have produced *diwáns* of poetry has been at all times fairly large.

Widespread
poetical talent
in Persia.

Moreover this poetry is as a rule so conventional, and the language in which it is written so unchanged during the period under discussion, that if a hundred *ghazals*, or odes, by a hundred different poets who flourished during the last four centuries were selected, avoiding those which contained any reference to current events, and omitting the concluding verse of each, wherein the poet generally inserts his *takhalluṣ*, or *nom de guerre*, it is extremely doubtful whether any critic could, from their style, arrange them even approximately in chronological order, or distinguish the work of a poet contemporary with Sháh Isma'íl the Ṣafawí from

Difficulty of
discrimination
between note-
worthy and
mediocre poets.

one who flourished in the reign of Násiru'd-Dín Sháh Qájár. Nor do the *tadhkiras*, or Memoirs of Poets, give us much help in making a selection, for when discussing contemporaries the

author is very apt to make mention of his personal friends, and to ignore those whom he dislikes or of whom he disapproves. Thus influential or amiable rhymsters of mediocre ability are often included, while heretics, satirists and persons distasteful or indifferent to the author, though of greater talent, are often omitted. When Riḍá-qulí Khán "Hidáyat," author of that great modern anthology entitled