



by

Sheikh Muslih-uddin Sa'di Shirazi (1258)

Translated by

Sir Edwin Arnold (1899)



World Famous Persian Poet of 13th Century



Edited & Formatted

by

Lt Col (R) Muhammad Ashraf Javed

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Chapter 8



On Rules for Conduct in Life

Maxim 1

Property is for the comfort of life, not for the accumulation of wealth. A sage, having been asked who is lucky and who is not, replied:

'He is lucky who has eaten and sowed but he is unlucky who has died and not enjoyed.'

مکن نماز بر آن هیچ کس که هیچ نکرد

که عمر در سر تحصیل مال کرد و نخورد

Pray not for the nobody who has done nothing,

Who spent his life in accumulating property but has not enjoyed it.

Moses, upon whom be peace, thus advised Qarun:

'Do thou good as Allah has done unto thee.'

But he would not listen and thou hast heard of his end:

آنکس که دینار و درم خیر نیندوخت

سر عاقبت اندر سر دینار و درم کرد

خواهی که ممتع شوی از دین و عقبی

با خلق ، کرم کن چو خدا با تو کرم کرد

Who has not accumulated good with dirhams and dinars
Has staked his end upon his dirhams and dinars.
If thou desirest to profit by riches of the world
Be liberal to mankind as God has been liberal to thee.

The Arab says:

Be liberal without imposing obligations and verily the profit will return to thee.

درخت کرم هر کجا بیخ کرد
گذشت از فلک شاخ و بالای او
گر امیدواری کز او برخوردار
به منت منه اره بر پای او

Wherever the tree of beneficence has taken root
Its tallness and branches pass beyond the sky.
If thou art desirous to eat the fruit thereof
Do not put a saw to its foot by imposing obligations.

شکر خدای کن که موفق شدی به خیر
ز انعام و فضل او نه معطل گذاشتت

Thank God that thou hast been divinely aided
And not excluded from his gifts and bounty.

کنت منه که خدمت سلطان کنی همی
تتمنت شناس از او که به خدمت بداش

Think not thou conferrest an obligation on the sultan by serving him
But be obliged to him for having kept thee in his service.



Maxim 2

Two men took useless trouble and strove without any profit, when one of them accumulated property without enjoying it, and the other learnt without practicing what he had learnt.

علم چندان که بیشتر خواني
چون عمل در تو نيست ناداني
نه محق بود نه دانشمند
چارپايي بر او کتابي چند

However much science thou mayest acquire
Thou art ignorant when there is no practice in thee.
Neither deeply learned nor a scholar will be
A quadruped loaded with some books.

آن تهی مغز را چه علم و خبر
که بر او هیزم است یا دفتر

What information or knowledge does the silly beast possess
Whether it is carrying a load of wood or of books?



Maxim 3

Knowledge is for the cherishing of religion, not for amassing wealth.

هرکه پرهیز و علم و زهد فروخت
خرمני گرد کرد و پاک بسوخت

Who sold abstinence, knowledge and piety
Filled a granary but burnt it clean away.



Maxim 4

A learned man who is not abstinent resembles a torchbearer who guides others but does not guide himself.

Who has spent a profitless life
Bought nothing and threw away his gold.



Maxim 5

The country is adorned by intelligent and the religion by virtuous men. Padshahs stand more in need of the advice of intelligent men than intelligent men of the proximity of Padshahs.

If thou wilt listen to advice, Padshah,
There is none better in all books than this:
'Entrust a business to an intelligent man
Although it may not be his occupation.'



Maxim 6

Three things cannot subsist without three things:

مال بي تجارت و علم بي بحث و ملك بي سياست

- property without trade,
- science without controversy and
- a country without punishment.

Speak sometimes in a friendly, conciliatory, manly way

Perhaps thou wilt ensnare a heart with the lasso.

Sometimes speak in anger; for a hundred jars of sugar

Will on occasion not have the effect of one dose of colocynth.



Maxim 7

To have mercy upon the bad is to injure the good; to pardon tyrants is to do violence to dervishes.

خبث را چو تعهد کنی و بنوازی

به تولت تو گنه می کند به انبازی

If thou associatest and art friendly with a wretch

He will commit sin with thy wealth and make thee his partner.

Admonition 1

- The amity of princes and the sweet voice of children are not to be trusted, because the former is changed by fancy and the latter in the course of one night.

معشوق هزار دوست را دل ندهي

ور مي دهی آن به دل جدایی بدهی

Give not thy heart to a sweetheart of a thousand lovers,
And if thou givest it, thou givest that heart for separation.

Admonition 2

- Confide not to a friend every secret thou possessest. How knowest thou that he will not some time become thy foe?
- Inflict not every injury thou canst upon an enemy because it is possible that one day he may become thy friend.

Admonition 3

- Reveal not thy secret to any man although he may be trustworthy, because no one can keep thy secret better than thyself.

خامشي به كه ضمير دل خویش

با کسی گفتن و گفتن که مگوی

ای سلیم آب ز سرچشمه ببند

که چو پر شد نتوان بست به جوی

Silence is preferable than to tell thy mind
To anyone; saying what is to remain unsaid.
O simpleton, stop the source of the spring.
When it becomes full, the brook cannot be stopped.



Maxim 8

A weak foe, who professes submission and shows friendship, has no other object than to become a strong enemy. It has been said that:

as the friendship of friends is unreliable, what trust can be put in the flattery of enemies?

Admonition 4

- Who despises an insignificant enemy resembles him who is careless about fire.

Extinguish it today, while it may be quenched,
Because when fire is high, it burns the world.
Allow not the bow to be spanned
By a foe because an arrow may pierce.

Admonition 5

- Speak so between two enemies that thou mayest not be put to shame if they become friends.

میان دو کس جنگ چون آتش است
بخت هیزم کش است سخن چین بد
کنند این و آن خوش دگر باره دل
وی اندر میان کور بخت و خجل
میان دو تن آتش افروختن
نه عقل است و خود در میان سوختن

Between two men contention is like fire,
The ill-starred back-biter being the wood-carrier.
When both of them become friends again
He will among them be unhappy and ashamed.
To kindle fire between two men
Is not wise but is to burn oneself therein.

در سخن با دوستان آهسته باش
تا ندارد دشمن خونخوار گوش
پیش دیوار آنچه گویی هوش دار
تا نباشد در پس دیوار موش

Converse in whispers with thy friends
Lest thy sanguinary foe may hear thee.
Take care of what thou sayest in front of a wall
Because an ear may be behind the wall.

Admonition 6

- Whoever makes peace with the enemies of his friends greatly injures his friends.

Wash thy hands, O wise man, from a friend
Who is sitting together with thy foes.

Admonition 7

When thou art uncertain in transacting an affair, select that portion of it which will entail no danger to thee.

با مردم سهل خوي دشخوار مگوي
با آنکه در صلح زند جنگ مجوي

Speak not harshly to a man of gentle speech.
Seek not to fight with him who knocks at the door of peace.

Admonition 8

- As long as an affair can be arranged with gold, it is not proper to endanger life.

When the hand is foiled in every stratagem
It is licit to put the hand to the sword.

Admonition 9

- Do not pity the weakness of a foe because when he gains strength he will not spare thee.

Boast not of thy moustaches when thou seest thy foe is weak.
There is marrow in every bone, a man in every coat.



Maxim 9

Whoever slays a bad fellow saves mankind from a calamity and him from the wrath of God.

Condonation is laudable but nevertheless
Apply no salve to the wound of an oppressor of the people.
He who had mercy upon a serpent
Knew not that it was an injury to the sons of Adam.



Maxim 10

It is a mistake to accept advice from an enemy but permissible to hear it; and to act contrary to it is perfectly correct.

حذر کن ز آنچه دشمن گوید آن کن
که بر زانو و زنی دست تغابن
گرت راهی ماید راست چون تیر
ازو برگرد و راه دست چپ گیر

Be cautious of what a foe tells thee to do
Lest thou strike thy knee with the hand of pain.
If he points thy way to the right like an arrow
Deflect therefrom and take that to the left hand.

Admonition 10

Wrath beyond measure produces estrangement and untimely kindness destroys authority. Be neither so harsh as to disgust the people with thee nor so mild as to embolden them.

Severity and mildness together are best
Like a bleeder who is a surgeon and also applies a salve.
A wise man uses neither severity to excess
Nor mildness; for it lessens his authority.
He neither exalts himself too much
Nor exposes himself at once to contempt.

A youth said to his father: 'O wise man, give me for instruction one advice like an aged person.'

He said: 'Be kind but not to such a degree that a sharp-toothed wolf may become audacious.'



Maxim 11

بر سر ملك مباد آن ملك فرمانده
كه خدا را نبود بنده فرمانبردار

May that prince never govern a kingdom
Who is not an obedient slave to God.

Admonition 11

It is incumbent upon a Padshah to give way to anger towards his slaves only so far as to retain the confidence of his friends. The fire of anger first burns him who has given cause for it and afterwards the flame may or may not reach the foe.

نشاید بني آدم خاکزاد
که در سرکند کبر و تندي و باد
تو را با چنین گرمي و سرکشي
نپندارم از خاكي ، از آتشي

It is not proper for sons of Adam born of earth
To inflate their heads with pride, violence and wind.
Thou who displayest so much heat and obstinacy
Must be, I think, not of earth but of fire.

I visited a hermit in the country of Bilqan and requested him to purge me of ignorance by instruction.

He replied: 'Be patient like earth, O lawyer, or else, bury under the earth all thy learning.'



Maxim 12

An ill-humored man is captive in the hands of a foe, from the grasp of whose punishment he cannot be delivered wherever he may go.

اگر زدست بلا بر فلک رود بدخوي
زدست خوي بد خویش در بلا باشد

If from the hand of calamity an ill-natured man escapes into the sky
The evil disposition of his own nature retains him in calamity.

Admonition 12

- When thou perceivest that discord is in the army of the foe, be thou at ease; but if they are united, be apprehensive of thy own distress.

برو با دوستان آسوده بنشین
چو بینی در میان دشمنان جنگ
بینی که باهم یک زبان اند و گر
کمان رازہ کن و بر بارہ بر سنگ

Go and sit in repose with thy friends
When thou seest war among the enemies;
But if thou perceivest that they all agree
Span thy bow and carry stones upon the rampart.



Maxim 13

When all the artifices of an enemy have failed he shakes the chain of friendship, and thereon performs acts of friendship which no enemy is able to do.

Admonition 13

Strike the head of a serpent with the hand of a foe because one of two advantages will result.

If the enemy succeeds thou hast killed the snake and if the latter, thou hast been delivered from a foe.

Advice

- If thou art aware of news which will grieve a heart, remain silent that others may convey it.

بلبلا مژده بہار بیار
خبر بد بہ بوم باز گذار

Nightingale, bring tidings of spring.

Leave bad news to the owl.

Caution 1

Give not information to a Padshah (King) of the treachery of anyone, unless thou art sure he will accept it; else thou wilt only be preparing thy own destruction.

بسیچ سخن گفتن آنگاه کن

که دانی که در کار گیرد سخن

Prepare to speak only when
Thy words are likely to have effect.

Speech is a perfection in the soul of man
But do not ruin thyself by speaking.



Maxim 14

Whoever gives advice to a self-willed man stands himself in need of advice.

Admonition 14

Swallow not the deception of a foe. Purchase not conceit from a panegyrist. The one has laid out a snare for provisions and the other has opened the jaws of covetousness.



Maxim 15

A fool is pleased by flattery like the inflated heel of a corpse that has the appearance of fatness.

Take care not to listen to the voice of a flatterer
Who expects cheaply to derive profit from thee.
If one day thou failest to satisfy his wishes
He enumerates two hundred faults of thine.



Maxim 16

Unless an orator's defects are mentioned by someone, his good points will not be praised.

مشو غره بر حسن گفتار خویش
به تحسین نادان و پندار خویش

Be not proud of the beauty of thy speech,
Of the approbation of an ignoramus and of thy own opinion.



Maxim 17

Everyone thinks himself perfect in intellect and his child in beauty.

یکی یهود و مسلمان نزاع می کردند
چنانکه خنده گرفت از حدیث ایشانم
به طیره گفت مسلمان : گرین قباله من
درست نیست خدایا یهود میرانم
یهود گفت : به تورات می خورم سوگند
تو مسلمانم وگر خلاف کنم ، همچو

A Jew was debating with a Muslim
Till I shook with laughter at their dispute.
The Muslim said in anger: 'If this deed of mine
Is not correct, may God cause me to die a Jew.'
The Jew said: 'I swear by the Pentateuch (Torah)
That if my oath is false, I shall die a Muslim like thee.'

Should from the surface of the earth wisdom disappear
Still no one will acknowledge his own ignorance.



Maxim 18

Ten men eat at a table but two dogs will contend for one piece of carrion.

A greedy person will stir be hungry with the whole world, whilst a contented man will be satisfied with one bread.

Wise men have said that:

poverty with content is better than wealth and not abundance.

روده تنگ به يك نان تهی پر گردد
نعمت روی زمین پر نکند دیده تنگ

Narrow intestines may be filled with dry bread

But the wealth of the surface of the world will not fill a greedy eye.

پدر چون دور عمرش منقضي گشت
مرا این يك نصیحت كرد و بگذشت

When the term of my father's life had come to an end

He gave me this one advice and passed away:

که شهوت آتش است از وي بپرهیز
به خود بر ، آتش دوزخ مکن تیز
در آن آتش نداری طاقت سوز
به صبر آبی برین آتش زن امروز

Lust is fire, abstain therefrom,

Make not the fire of hell sharp for thee.

In that fire the burning thou wilt not be able to bear,

Quench this fire with water today.

Admonition 15

Whoever does no good in the time of ability will see distress in the time of inability.

بد اختر تر از مردم آزار نیست
که روز مصیبت کسش یار نیست

No one is more unlucky than an oppressor of men

Because in the day of calamity no one is his friend.



Maxim 19

Life is in the keeping of a single breath and the world is an existence between two annihilations.

Those who sell the religion for the world 'are asses', they sell Joseph but what do 'they buy'?

أَلَمْ أُعْهِدْ إِلَيْكُمْ يَا بَنِي آدَمَ أَنْ لَا تَعْبُدُوا الشَّيْطَانَ

"Did I not enjoin on you, O ye children of Adam, that ye should not worship Satan; **(Quran 36:60)**

On the word of a foe thou hast broken faith with a friend.

See from whom thou hast cut thyself off and to whom united.



Maxim 20

Satan cannot conquer the righteous and the Sultan the poor.

Lend nothing to a prayerless man
Although his mouth may gasp from penury;
Because he who neglects the commands of God
Will also not care for what he may be indebted to thee.



Maxim 21

Whatever takes place quickly is not permanent.

خاك مشرق شنیده ام كه كند
به چهل سال كاسه اي چيني
زي كند در مردشتصد به رو
لاجرم قيمتش همي بيني

I have heard that eastern loam is made
In forty days into a porcelain cup.
A hundred are daily made in Baghdad.
Hence thou seest also their price is vile.

مرغك از بيضه برون آيد و روزي طلبد
و تميز و آدمي بچه ندارد خبر و عقل
آنكه ناگاه كسي گشت به چيزي نرسيد
وين به تمكين و فضيلت بگذشت از همه چيز

A little fowl issues from the egg and seeks food
Whilst man's progeny has no knowledge, sense or discernment.
Nevertheless the former attains nothing when grown up
Whilst the latter surpasses all beings in dignity and excellence.

آبگينه همه جا يابي ، از آن قدرش نيست
لعل دشوار بدست آيد ، از آن است عزيز

Glass is everywhere, and therefore of no account,
But a ruby difficult to get, and therefore precious.



Maxim 22

Affairs succeed by patience and a hasty man fails.

به چشم خویش دیدم در بیابان
که آهسته سبق برد از شتابان
سمند بادپای از تک فرو ماند
شتریان همچنان آهسته می راند

I saw with my eyes in the desert
That a slow man overtook a fast one.
A galloping horse, fleet like the wind, fell back
Whilst the camel-man continued slowly his progress.



Maxim 23

Nothing is better for an ignorant man than silence, and if he were to consider it to be suitable, he would not be ignorant.

چون نداری کمال فضل آن به
که زبان در دهان نگه داری
خری را ابلهی تعلیم می داد
بر او بر صرف کرده سعی داریم

If thou possessest not the perfection of excellence
It is best to keep thy tongue within thy mouth.
Disgrace is brought on a man by his tongue.
A walnut, having no kernel, will be light.

A fool was trying to teach a donkey, spending all his time and efforts in the task.

حکیمی گفتش ای نادان چه کوشی

درین سودا بتر از لوم لایم

A sage observed: 'O ignorant man, what sayest thou?

Fear blame from the censorious in this vain attempt.

نیاموزد بهایم از تو گفتار

تو خاموشی بیاموز از بهایم

A brute cannot learn speech from thee.

Learn thou silence from a brute.'

هرکه تامل نکند در جواب

بیشتر آید سخنش ناصواب

Who does not reflect what he is to answer

Will mostly speak improperly.

یا سخن آرای چو مردم بهوش

یا بنشین چون حیوانان خموش

Come. Either arrange thy words like a wise man

Or remain sitting silent like a brute.

Admonition 16

Whenever a man disputes with one who is more learned than himself to make people know of his learning, they will know that he is ignorant.

چون درآید مه از تویی به سخن

گرچه به دانی اعتراض مکن

If one better than thyself begins to speak,

Although thou mayest know better, contradict him not.



Maxim 24

Whoever associates with bad people will see no good.

گر نشیند فرشته ای با دیو
وحشت آموزد و خیانت و ریو
از بدان نیکوی نیاموزی
نکند گرگ پوستین دوزی

If an angel associates with a demon
He will learn from him fear, fraud and hypocrisy.
Of the wicked thou canst learn only wickedness.
A wolf will not take to sewing jackets.

Admonition 17

Reveal not the secret faults of men because thou wilt put them to shame and wilt forfeit thy own confidence.



Maxim 25

Who acquires science and does not practice it, resembles him who possesses an ox but does not use him to plough or to sow seed.



Maxim 26

From a body without a heart obedience does not arise and a husk without a kernel is no stock in trade.

نه هر که در مجادله چست در معامله درست

Not everyone who is brisk in dispute is correct in business.

بس قامت خوش که زیر چادر باشد

چون باز کنی مادر مادر باشد

Many a stature concealed by a sheet

If revealed appears to be the mother of one's mother.



Maxim 27

If every night were to be the night of Qadr (Honor), the night of Qadr would be without Qadr.

گر سنگ همه لعل بدخشان بودی

پس قیمت لعل و سنگ یکسان بودی

If all stones were rubies of Badakhshan,

The price of rubies and of stones would be the same.



Maxim 28

Not everyone who is handsome in form possesses a good character; the qualities are inside not upon the skin.

توان شناخت به يك روز در شمایل مرد
كجاش رسیده است پایگاه علوم كه تا
ولي ز باطنش ایمن مباش و غره مشو
كه خبث نفس ننگردد به سالها معلوم

It is possible in one day to know from a man's qualities
What degree of science he has reached.
Be however not sure of his mind nor deceived.
A wicked spirit is not detected sometimes for years.

Caution 2

Who quarrels with great men sheds his own blood.

خویشتن را بزرگ پنداري
راست گفتند يك دوبیند لوج
زود بیني شكسته پیشاني
تو كه بازي كني بسر با غوچ

One who thinks that he is great
Is truly said to be squinting.
Thou wilt soon see thy forehead broken
If thou buttest it in play against a ram.



Maxim 29

To strike one's fist on a lion, and to grasp the sharp edge of a sword with the hand, is not the part of an intelligent man.

جنگ و زور آوري مکن با مست
پيش سرپنجه در بغل نه دست

Do not fight or try thy strength with a furious man.
Hide thy hands in thy arm-pits to avoid his finger-nail

Caution 3

A weak man trying to show his prowess off against a strong one only aids his foe to encompass his own destruction.

سايه پرورده را چه طاقت آن
که رود با مبارزان به قتال
سست بازو بجهل مي فکند
پنجه با مرد آهنين چنگال

What strength has one brought up in the shade
To go against champions in a fight?
A man with weak arms in his folly throws
His fist upon a man with iron claws.



Maxim 30

Whoever does not listen to advice will have occasion to hear reproof.

If admonition enters not thy ear
Be silent when I blame thee.

Elegant saying 1

Men void of accomplishments cannot behold those who possess some, without barking like the curs of the bazaar on seeing a hunting dog, but dare not come forward; that is to say, when a base fellow is unable to vie with an accomplished man he sets about slandering him according to his own wickedness.

The envious mean fellow will certainly slander,
Whose tongue of speech is dumb when face to face.



Maxim 31

گر جور شکم نیستی هیچ مرغ در دام صیاد نیوفتادی بلکه صیاد خود دام
ننهادی

If there were no craving of the stomach, no bird would enter the snare of the fowler; nay, he would not even set the snare.



Maxim 32

Sages eat slow, devotees half satisfy their appetite, recluses only eat to preserve life, youths until the dishes are removed, old men till they begin to

perspire, but qalandars (dauntless persons) till no room remains in the bowels for drawing breath and no food on the table for anybody.

اسير بند شکم را دو شب نگیرد خواب

شبی زمعدہ سنگی ، شبی زدلتنگی

A slave to constipation spends two sleepless nights,
One night from repletion and another from distress.



Maxim 33

To consult women brings on ruin and to be liberal to rebellious men crime.

خبیث را چو تعهد کنی و بنوازی

به دولت تو گنه می کند به انبازی

To have mercy on sharp-toothed tigers
Is to be tyrannical towards sheep.

Admonition 18

Who has power over his foe and does not slay him is his own enemy.

سنگ بر دست و مار سر بر سنگ

خیره رایبی بود قیاس و درنگ

With a stone in the hand and a snake on a stone
It is folly to consider and to delay.

Others, however, enounce a contrary opinion and say that it is preferable to respite captives because the option of killing or not killing remains; but if they be slain without delay, it is possible that some advantage may be lost, the like of which cannot be again obtained.

نيك سهل است زنده بي جان كرد
نده نتوان كردگشته را باز ز
شرط عقل است صبر تيرانداز
كه چو رفت از كمان نيابد باز

It is quite easy to deprive a man of life.
When he is slain he cannot be resuscitated again.
It is a condition of wisdom in the archer to be patient
Because when the arrow leaves the bow it returns no more.



Maxim 34

When a sage comes in contact with fools, he must not expect to be honored, and if an ignorant man overcomes a sage in an oratorical contest, it is no wonder, because even a stone breaks a jewel.

What wonder is there that the song
Of a nightingale ceases when imprisoned with a crow
Or that a virtuous man under the tyranny of vagabonds
Feels affliction in his heart and is irate.
Although a base stone may break a golden vase,
The price of the stone is not enhanced nor of the gold lost.



Maxim 35

Be not astonished when a wise man ceases to speak in company of vile persons, since the melody of a harp cannot overcome the noise of a drum and the perfume of ambergris must succumb to the stench of rotten garlic.

A blatant ignoramus proudly lifted his neck
Because he had overcome a scholar by his impudence.
Knowest thou not that the Hejazi musical tune
Succumbs to the roar of the drum of war?



Maxim 36

Even after falling into mud a jewel retains its costliness, and dust, although it may rise into the sky, is as contemptible as before.

Capacity without education is deplorable and education without capacity is thrown away.

Ashes are of high origin because the nature of fire is superior, but as they have no value of their own, they are similar to earth and the price of sugar arises not from the cane but from its own quality.

چو کنعان را طبیعت بی هنر بود
پیمبرزادگی قدش نیفزود
هنر بنمائی اگر داری نه گوهر
گل از خارست و ابرهیم از آزر

The land of Canaan having no natural excellence,
The birth of a prophet therein could not enhance its worth.
Display thy virtue if thou hast any, not thy origin.
The rose is the offspring of thorns and Abraham of Azer.



Maxim 37

Musk is known by its perfume and not by what the druggist says.

A scholar is silent like the perfumer's casket but displays accomplishments, whilst an ignoramus is loud-voiced and intrinsically empty like a war-drum.

عالم اندر میان جاهل را
مثلي گفته اند صدیقان
شاهدي در میان کوران است
مصحفي در سراي زندیقان

A learned man among blockheads
(So says the parable of our friends)
Is like a sweetheart among the blind
Or a Quran among unbelievers.



Maxim 38

A friend whom people have been cherishing during a lifetime they must not suddenly insult.

سنگي به چند سال شود لعل پاره اي
زهار تا به يك نفسش نشکني به سنگ

It takes a stone many a year to become a ruby.
Beware not to break it in a moment with a stone.



Maxim 39

Intellect may become captive to lust like a weak man in the hands of an artful woman.

Bid farewell to pleasure in a house
Where the shouting of a woman is loud.



Maxim 40

A design without strength to execute it is fraud and deception and application of strength without a design is ignorance and lunacy.

تميز بايد و تدبير و عقل وانگه ملك
كه ملك و دولت نادان سلاح جنگ خداست

Discernment is necessary. Arrangement and intellect, then a realm;
For realm and wealth with an ignorant man are weapons against himself.



Maxim 41

A liberal man who eats and bestows is better than a devote who fasts and hoards.



Maxim 42

Who has renounced appetites for the sake of approbation by men has fallen from licit into illicit appetites.

عابد که نه از بهر خدا گوشه نشیند

بیچاره در آئینه تاریک چه بیند؟

A devotee who sits in a corner not for God's sake
Is helpless. What can he see in a dark mirror?

Little by little becomes much and drop by drop will be a torrent; that is to say,
he who has no power gathers small stones that he may at the proper
opportunity annihilate the pride of his foe.

و قطر علی قطر اذا اتفقت نهر

ونهر علی نهر اذا اجتمعت بحر

Drop upon drop collected will make a river.
Rivers upon rivers collected will make a sea.

Little and little together will become much.
The granary is but grain upon grain.



Maxim 43

A scholar is not meekly to overlook the folly of a common person because thus both parties are injured; the dignity of the former being lessened, and the ignorance of the latter confirmed.

چو با سفله گویی بلف و خوشی
فزون گرددش کبر و گردنکشی

Speak gracefully and kindly to a low fellow,
His pride and obstinacy will augment.



Maxim 44

Transgression by whomsoever committed is blamable but more so in learned men, because learning is a weapon for combating Satan and, when the possessor of a weapon is made prisoner, his shame will be greater.

عام نادان پریشان روزگار
به ز دانشمند ناپرهیزگار
بی از راه افتادگان به نابینا
وین دوچشمش بود و در چاه افتاد

It is better to be an ignorant poor fellow
Than a learned man who is not abstemious;
Because the former loses the way by his blindness
While the latter falls into a well with both eyes open.



Maxim 45

Whose bread is not eaten by others while he is alive, he will not be remembered when he is dead.

A widow knows the delight of grapes and not the lord of fruits.

Joseph the just, salutation to him, never ate to satiety in the Egyptian dearth for fear he might forget the hungry people.

آنکه در راحت و تنعم زیست
او چه داند که حال گرسنه چیست
حال درماندگان کسی داند
که به احوال خویش درماند

How can he who lives in comfort and abundance
Know what the state of the famished is?
He is aware of the condition of the poor
Who has himself fallen into a state of distress.

ای که بر مرکب تازنده سواری ، هشدار
که خر خارکش مسکین در آب و گل است
آتش از خانه همسایه درویش مخواه
کانچه بر روزن او می گذرد دود دل است

O thou who art riding a fleet horse, consider
That the poor thorn-carrying ass is in water and mud.
Ask not for fire from thy poor neighbor's house
Because what passes out of his window is the smoke of his heart.

Admonition 19

Ask not a dervish in poor circumstances, and in the distress of a year of famine, how he feels, unless thou art ready to apply a salve to his wound or to provide him with a maintenance.

When thou seest an ass, fallen in mud with his load,
Have mercy in thy heart and step not on his head.
But when thou hast gone and asked him how he fell,
Gird thy loins and take hold of his tail like a man.



Maxim 46

Two things are contrary to reason:

- to enjoy more than is decreed and
- to die before the time appointed.

آه قضا دگر نشود ور هزار ناله و
بکفر یا بشکایت برآید از دهني
فرشته اي که وکیل است برخزاین باد
چه غم خورد که بمیرد چراغ پیرزني؟

Fate will not change by a thousand laments and sighs,
By thanks or complaints, issuing from the mouth.
The angel appointed over the treasures of wind
Cares not if the lamp of a widow dies.

Admonition 20

O thou asker of food, sit for thou wilt eat;
and O thou asked by death, run not for thou wilt not save thy life.

جهد رزق ارکني وگر نکني
برساند خدای عزوجل
ور روي در دهان شیر و پلنگ
نخوردت مگر به زور اجل

Whether thou strivest for a maintenance or not
God the most high and glorious will send it to thee;
And if thou rushest into the jaw of a lion or tiger
They will not devour thee unless on the day decreed.



Maxim 47

به نانهاده دست نرسد و نهاده هرکجا هست برسد

What is not placed cannot be reached by the hand and whatever is placed will be reached wherever it is.

شنیده ای که سکندر برفت تا ظلمات
به چند محنت و خورد آنکه خورد آب حیات

Hast thou heard that Alexander went into the darkness
And after all his efforts could not taste the water of immortality?



Maxim 48

A rich profligate is a lump of earth gilded and a pious dervish is a sweetheart besmeared with earth. The latter is the patched garment of Moses and the former is the bejeweled beard of Pharaoh. Nevertheless good men retain a cheerful countenance in adversity whilst the rich droop their heads even in prosperity.

Who possesses wealth and dignity but therewith
Succours not those whose minds are distressed,
Inform him that no kind of wealth and dignity
He will enjoy in the mansion of the next world.



Maxim 49

An envious man is avaricious with the wealth of God and hates the guiltless as foes.

مردكي خشك مغز را ديدم
رفته در پوستين صاحب جاه
گفتم اي خواجه گر تو بدبختي
مردم نيکبخت را چه گناه؟

I saw a crackbrained little man,
Reviling a possessor of dignity,
Who replied: 'O fellow, if thou art unlucky,
What guilt is there in lucky men?'

الاتا نخواهي بلا بر حسود
که آن بخت برگشته خود در بلاست

چه حاجت كه با او كني دشمني

كه او را چنين دشمني در قفاست

Forbear to wish evil to an envious man
Because the ill-starred fellow is an evil to himself.
What needest thou to show enmity to him
Who has such a foe on the nape of his neck?



Maxim 50

- A disciple without intention is a lover without money;
- a traveler without knowledge is a bird without wings;
- a scholar without practice is a tree without fruit, and
- a devotee without science is a house without a door.

The Quran was revealed for the acquisition of a good character, not for chanting written chapters.

- A pious unlettered man is like one who travels on foot, whilst a negligent scholar is like a sleeping rider.
- A sinner who lifts his hands in supplication is better than a devotee who keeps them proudly on his head.

سرهنگ لطيف خوي دلدار

بهتر ز فقيه مردم آزار

A good humored and pleasant military officer
Is superior to a theologian who injures men.

One being asked what a learned man without practice resembled, replied:

'A bee without honey.'

زنبور درشت بي مروت راگوي

باري چو عسل نمي دهني نيش مزن

Say to the rude and unkind bee,

'At least forbear to sting, if thou givest no honey.'



Maxim 51

A man without virility is a woman and an avaricious devote is a highway robber.

اي بناموس کرده جامه سپيد

بهر پندار خلق و نامه سياه

دست کوتاه بايد از دنيا

آستين خود دراز و خود کوتاه

O thou, who hast put on a white robe for a show,

To be approved of men, whilst the book of thy acts is black.

The hand is to be restrained from the world,

No matter whether the sleeve be short or long.



Maxim 52

Regret will not leave the hearts of two persons and their feet of contention will not emerge from the mire:

- a merchant with a wrecked ship and
- a youth sitting with qalandars (dauntless person).

ت مباح‌پیش درویشان بود خون
 گر نباشد در میان مالت سبیل
 یا مرو با یار ازرق پیرهن
 یا بکش بر خان و مان انگشت نیل

Dervishes will consider it licit to shed thy blood
 If they can have no access to thy property.
 Either associate not with a friend who dons the blue garb,
 Or bid farewell to all thy property.

دوستی با پیلبانان یا مکن
 یا طلب کن خانه‌ای درخورد پیل

Either make no friends with elephant-keepers
 Or build a house suitable for elephants.



Maxim 53

Although a sultan's garment of honor is dear yet one's own old robe is more dear;

and though the food of a great man may be delicious, the broken crumbs of one's own sack are more delicious.

سرکه از دسترنج خویش و تره
 ره‌بهرتر از نان دهخدا و ب

Vinegar by one's own labor and vegetables
Are better than bread received as alms, and veal.



Maxim 54

It is contrary to what is proper, and against the opinion of to partake of medicine by guess and to go after a caravan without seeing the road.

The Imam Murshid Muhammad Ghazali, upon whom be the mercy of Allah, having been asked in what manner he had attained such a degree of knowledge, replied:

ندانستم از پرسیدن آن ننگ نداشتم بدانکه هرچه

'By not being ashamed to ask about things I did not know.'

امید عافیت آنکه بود موافق عقل
که نبض را به طبیعت شناس بنمایی
بپرس از هر چه ندانی که دل پرسیدن
دلیل راه تو باشد به عز دانایی

The hope of recovery is according to reason,
That he should feel thy pulse who knows thy nature.
Ask what thou knowest not; for the trouble of asking
Will indicate to thee the way to the dignity of knowledge.

Admonition 21

Whatever thou perceivest will become known to thee in due course of time.
Make no haste in asking for it, else the awe of thy dignity will be lessened.

چو لقمان دید کاندرا دست داوود
همی آهن به معجز موم گردد
نپرسیدش چه می سازی که دانست
که بی پرسیدنش معلوم گردد

When Luqman saw that in the hands of David
All iron became by miracle soft like wax,
He asked not: 'What art thou doing?' Because
He knew he would learn it without asking.



Maxim 55

One of the requirements for society is to attend to the affairs of thy household and also at the house of God.

Tell thy tale according to thy hearer's temper,
If thou knowest him to be biased to thee.
Every wise man who sits with Majnun
Speaks of nothing but the story of Laila's love.



Maxim 56

Anyone associating with bad people, although their nature may not infect his own, is supposed to follow their ways to such a degree that if he goes to a tavern to say his prayers, he will be supposed to do so for drinking wine.

رقم بر خود به ناداني کشيدي

که نادان را به صحبت برگزيدي

Thou hast branded thyself with the mark of ignorance,
When thou hast selected an ignoramus for thy companion.

کي پندطلب کردم ز دانايي ي

مرا فرمود با نادان مپيوند

که گر داناي دهر ي خر بباشي

وگر ناداني ابله تر بباشي

I asked some scholars for a piece of advice.
They said: 'Connect thyself not with an ignorant man,
For if thou be learned, thou wilt be an ass in course of time
And if unlearned thou wilt become a greater fool.'



Maxim 57

The meekness of the camel is known to be such that if a child takes hold of its bridle and goes a hundred farsakhs, it will not refuse to follow, but if a dangerous portion occurs which may occasion death and the child ignorantly

desires to approach it, the camel tears the bridle from his hand, refusing any longer to obey because compliance in times of calamity is blamable.

It is also said that by complaisance an enemy will not become a friend but that his greed will only be augmented.

To him who is kind to thee, be dust at his feet
But if he opposes thee fill his two eyes with dust.
Speak not kindly or gently to an ill-humored fellow
Because a soft file cannot clean off inveterate rust.



Maxim 58

Who interrupts the conversation of others that they may know his excellence, they will become acquainted only with the degree of his folly.

An intelligent man will not give a reply
Unless he be asked a question.
Because though his words may be based on truth,
His claim to veracity may be deemed impossible.



Maxim 59

I had a wound under my robe and a sheikh asked me daily how, but not where

it is, and I learned that he refrained because it is not admissible to mention every member; and wise men have also said that:

whoever does not ponder his question will be grieved by the answer.

تا نيك نداني كه سخن عين صواب است
بايد كه به گفتن دهن از هم نكشايي
گر راست سخن گويي و در بند بماني
به زانكه دروغت دهد از بند رهايي

Until thou knowest thy words to be perfectly suitable
Thou must not open thy mouth in speech.
If thou speakest truth and remainest in captivity,
It is better than that thy mendacity deliver thee therefrom.



Maxim 60

Mendacity resembles a violent blow, the scar of which remains, though the wound may be healed. Seest thou not how the brothers of Joseph became noted for falsehood, and no trust in their veracity remained, as Allah the most high has said:

قَالَ بَلْ سَوَّلَتْ لَكُمْ أَنْفُسُكُمْ أَمْراً

"Nay, but ye have yourselves contrived a story (good enough) for you.
(Quran 12:83)

One habitually speaking the truth
Is pardoned when he once makes a slip
But if he becomes noted for lying,
People do not believe him even when speaking truth.



Maxim 61

The noblest of beings is evidently man, and the meanest a dog, but intelligent persons agree that:

a grateful dog is better than an ungrateful man.

A dog never forgets a morsel received
Though thou throwest a stone at him a hundred times.
But if thou cherishest a base fellow a lifetime,
He will for a trifle suddenly fight with thee.



Maxim 62

Who panders to his passions will not cultivate accomplishments and who possesses none is not suitable for a high position.

Have no mercy on a voracious ox
Who sleeps a great deal and eats much.
If thou wantest to have fatness like an ox,
Yield thy body to the tyranny of people like an ass.



Maxim 63

It is written in the Evangel:

'O son of Adam, if I give thee riches, thou wilt turn away from me with mundane cares, and if I make thee poor thou wilt sit down with a sad heart; then where wilt thou enjoy the sweetness of adoring me, and when wilt thou hasten to serve me?'

گه اندر نعمتي ، مغرور و غافل
گه اندر تنگدستي ، خسته و ريش
چو در سرا و ضرا حالت اين است
ندانم كي به حق پردازي از خویش

Sometimes thou art made haughty, and careless by wealth,
Sometimes art in distress from exhaustion and penury.
If thy state be such in joy and in distress,
I know not when thou wilt turn to God from thyself.



Maxim 64

The will of the Inscrutable brings down one from the royal throne, and protects the other in the belly of a fish.

Happy is the time of the man
Who spends it in adoring thee.



Maxim 65

When God draws the sword of wrath, prophets and saints draw in their heads,
but if he casts a look of grace, he converts wicked into virtuous men.

If at the resurrection he addresses us in anger
What chance of pardon will even prophets have?
Say: 'Remove the veil from the face of mercy
Because sinners entertain hopes of pardon.'



Maxim 66

Whoever does not betake himself to the path of rectitude in consequence of the
castigations of this world will fall under eternal punishment in the next.

Allah the most high has said:

وَلَنُذِيقَنَّهُمْ مِنَ الْعَذَابِ الْأَدْنَىٰ دُونَ الْعَذَابِ الْأَكْبَرِ

And indeed We will make them taste of the Penalty of this (life) prior to the supreme
Penalty, (Quran 32:21)

Admonition is the address of superiors and then fetters.
If they give advice and thou listenest not, they put thee in fetters.



Maxim 67

Fortunate men are admonished by the adventures and similes of those who have preceded them, before those who follow them can use the event as a proverb, like thieves who shorten their hands, lest their hands be cut off.

The bird does not go to the grain displayed
When it beholds another fowl in the trap.
Take advice by the misfortunes of others
That others may not take advice from thee.



Maxim 68

How can he hear whose organ of audition has been created dull, and how can he avoid progressing upon whom the noose of happiness has been flung?

To the friends of God a dark night
Shines like the brilliant day.
This felicity is not by strength of arm
Unless God the giver bestows it.

To whom shall I complain of thee? There is no other judge
And there is no other hand superior to thine.
Whom thou guidest -no one can lead astray.
Whom thou castest off no one can guide.



Maxim 69

The earth receives showers from heaven and gives to it only dust. Every vessel exudes what it contains.

گرت خوي من آمد ناسزاوار

تو خوي نيك خویش از دست مگذار

If my humor appears to thee unbecoming
Lose not thy own good humor.



Maxim 70

A mendicant with a good end is better than a Padshah with a bad end.

The grief thou sufferest before the joy
Is better than the grief endured after joy.



Maxim 71

The Most High sees a fault and conceals it, and a neighbor sees it not, but shouts.

نعوذ بالله اگر خلق غيب دان بودي

كسي به حال خود از دست كس نياسودي

Let us take refuge with Allah. if people knew our faults
No one could have rest from interference by others.



Maxim 72

Gold is obtained from a mine by digging it, but from a miser by digging the soul.

Vile men spend not, but preserve.
They say hope of spending is better than spending.
One day thou seest the wish of the foe fulfilled
The gold remaining and the vile man dead.



Maxim 73

Who has no mercy upon inferiors will suffer from the tyranny of superiors.

نه هر بازو که در وي قوتي هست
به مردي عاجزان را بشکند دست
ضعيفان را مکن بر دل گزندی
که درماني به جور زورمندی

Not every arm which contains strength
Breaks the hand of the weak for showing bravery.
Injure not the heart of the helpless
For thou wilt succumb to the force of a strong man.



Maxim 74

When a wise man encounters obstacles, he leaps away and casts anchor at the proper opportunity, for thus he will be in the former instance safe on shore, and in the latter he will enjoy himself.



Maxim 75

The gambler requires three sixes and only three aces turn up.

The pasture is a thousand times more pleasant than the racecourse
But the steed has not the bridle at its option.

Story 1

A dervish prayed thus:

'O Lord, have mercy upon the wicked, because thou hast already had mercy upon good men by creating them to be good.'



Maxim 76

The first sovereign who laid stress on costume and wore rings on his left hand was Jamshid; and being asked why he had adorned his left whereas excellence resides in the right hand, he replied:

'The right hand is fully ornamented by its own rectitude.'

Faridun ordered Chinese embroiderers

To write around the borders of his tent:

'Keep the wicked well, O intelligent man,

Because the good are in themselves great and fortunate.'

Story 2

A great man having been asked why he wore his seal-ring on his left hand, whereas the right possesses so much excellence, replied:

'Knowest thou not that the meritorious are always neglected?'

He who has created joy and distress

Apportions either excellence or luck.



Maxim 77

He may freely warn who neither fears to lose his life nor hopes for gold.

موحد چه در پای ریزد زرش

چه شمشیر هندی نهی بر سرش

امید و هراسش نباشد ز کس

بر این است بنیاد توحید و بس

Pour either gold at the feet of a monotheist
Or place an Indian sabre to his head.
He entertains no hope nor fear from anyone
And this is a sufficient basis of monotheism.



Maxim 78

The Padshah (King) is to remove oppressors; the police, murderers; and the Qazi to hear complaints about thieves; but two enemies willing to agree to what is right will not apply to him.

When thou seest that it must be given what is right
Pay it rather with grace than fighting and distressed.
If a man pays not his tax of his own accord
The officer's man will take it by force.



Maxim 79

The teeth of all men are blunted by sourness, but those of the Qazi by sweetness.

The Qazi whom thou bribest with five cucumbers
Will prove that ten melon-fields are due to thee.



Maxim 80

What can an old prostitute do but vow to become chaste, and a policeman not to commit oppression upon men?

A youth who sits in a corner is a hero in the path of God
Because an old man is unable to rise from his corner.

A youth must be strong minded to abstain from lust,
Because even the sexual tool of an old man, of sluggish desire, rises not.



Maxim 81

A sage was asked:

'Of so many notable, high and fertile trees which God the most high has created, not one is called free, except the cypress, which bears no fruit. What is the reason of this?'

He replied:

'Every tree has its appropriate season of fruit, so that it is sometimes flourishing therewith, and looks sometimes withered by its absence; with the cypress, however, neither is the case, it being fresh at all times, and this is the quality of those who are free.'

Place not thy heart on what passes away; for the Tigris
Will flow after the Caliphs have passed away in Baghdad.

If thou art able, be liberal like the date tree,
And if thy hand cannot afford it, be liberal like the cypress.



Maxim 82

Two men died, bearing away their grief One had possessed wealth and not
enjoyed it, the other knowledge and not practiced it.

No one sees an excellent but avaricious man
Without publishing his defect
But if a liberal man has a hundred faults
His generosity covers his imperfections.

Conclusion of the Book

The book of the Gulistan has been completed, and Allah had been invoked for aid! By the grace of the Almighty, may His name be honored, throughout the work the custom of authors to insert verses from ancient writers by way of loan, has not been followed.

کهن خرقه خویش پیراستن
به از جامه عاریت خواستن

To adorn oneself with one's own rag
Is better than to ask for the loan of a robe.

Most of the utterances of Sa'di being exhilarant and mixed with pleasantry, shortsighted persons have on this account lengthened the tongue of blame, alleging that it is not the part of intelligent men to spend in vain the kernel of their brain, and to eat without profit the smoke of the lamp;

it is, however, not concealed from enlightened men, who are able to discern the tendency of words, that pearls of curative admonition are strung upon the thread of explanation, and that the bitter medicine of advice is commingled with the honey of wit, in order that the reader's mind should not be fatigued, and thereby excluded from the benefit of acceptance; and praise be to the Lord of both worlds.

ما نصیحت به جای خود کردیم
روزگاری در این به سر بردیم
گر نیاید به گوش رغبت کس
بر رسولان پیام باشد و بس

We gave advice in its proper place
Spending a lifetime in the task.
If it should not touch anyone's ear of desire
The messenger told his tale; it is enough.

يا ناظرا فيه سل بالله مرحمته
علي المصنف واستغفر لصاحب
واطلب لنفسك من خير تريد بها
من بعد ذلك غفرانا لكاتبه

O thou who lookest into it, ask Allah to have mercy
On the author and to pardon the owner of it.
Ask for thyself whatever benefit thou mayest desire,
And after that pardon for the writer of it.

If I had on the day of resurrection an opportunity near the Compassionate one I
should say: 'O Lord,

I am the sinner and thou the beneficent master,
For all the ill I have done I crave for thy bounty.'

Gratitude is due from me to Allah that this book is ended Before my life has
reached its termination.

THE END



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Zahid Javed Rana, Abid Javed Rana
Lahore, Pakistan
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