Omnisa m-bi, be ready.

Wôw, water. Dumâued, ‘arâk, spirit (so called, they say, because it distils “from the end of the pipe,” dum-i-ngep. Kilowel, wine (said to be onomatopoeic, from the noise it makes as it is poured out of the bottle). Wâki-i-kilowel dawarta, the time for wine has passed.

Gaff, talk; gaff zadani, to talk. Baw, a bee. Râzqadrat nyâk, good day.

Those who desire fuller information about this interesting dialect, which well deserves a more careful and systematic study than it has yet received, may consult General Houtum-Schindler’s admirable paper on the Zoroastrians of Persia (Die Parsen in Persien, ihre Sprache, etc.) in vol. xxxvi of the Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft (pp. 54–88); Ferdinand Justi’s article in vol. xxxv of the same periodical (pp. 327–414); Berênine’s Dialectes Persans (Kazan, 1833); and the articles of M. Huart in series viii of the Journal Asiatique (vol. vi, p. 502; vol. xi, p. 298; vol. xiv, p. 534).

In this connection I may also cite a verse written in the Kâshân dialect by a Kâshi who wished to “take off” the speech of his fellow-townsmen.

“Par-khôn u pizh-khôn kî par hâfr bíd
Shubba na-dârad kî zaneystihi rîstad.
Kis-i-subhôn bi-itî-salt nib;
Bîgh zâdana; mawat-i-hâmmin rîstad.”

“Now that the front-yard and back-yard are full of snow,
There is no doubt that winter has come.
Put the soap-bag in the bottom of the basket (?);
They are blowing the horn; the time for the bath has come.”

While I am on the subject of these linguistic curiosities, I may as well mention a method of secret communication sometimes employed in Persia, the nature and applications of which were explained to me by my Erivâni friend a few days before his departure for Mashhad. Such of my readers as have studied Arabic, Persian, Turkish, or Hindustâní will know that besides

1 The slang expression for “to take a person off” (in the sense of to make fun of or mimic him) is “tî-ji kâh-i-kâsi rufiš.” Kâh kurdan means to wind up a watch; applied to a person it means to rile, put in a passion. “I riled him and he got in a wax” is in Persian slang, “kâh-i-kâs kurdum u bi-azmân râfî,” “I wound him up, and he went up to the sky.”

the ordinary arrangement of the letters of the Arabic alphabet there is another arrangement called the “âbjad” (from the four letters alîf, bâd, jîm, dîl which begin it) representing a much older order. The order of the letters in the âbjad is expressed by the following series of meaningless words, consisting of groups of three or four letters each supplied with vowel-points to render them pronounceable—âbjad, bawâz, bêt, kalaman, safat, kura-shat, thakhabd (sakhabd) dûdâgâb (zâzâgâb). In this order each has a numerical value; alîf = 1, bâd = 2, jîm = 3, dîl = 4, and so on up to yd = 10; then come the other tens, kâf = 20, lâm = 30, and so on up to kaff = 100; then the other hundreds up to âghum = 1000. The manner in which, by means of this âbjad, words and sentences may be made to express dates is familiar to all students of these languages, and I will therefore only give as a specimen, for the benefit of the general reader, the rather ingenious chronogram for the death of the poet Jâmi’, premising that he was a native of the province of Khurásân; that “smoke” or “smoke of the heart” is a poetical term for sighs; and that to “come up from” in the case of a number means to be subtracted from.

This, then, is the chronogram: “Dâd âz Khurâsdân bar dmad,” “Smoke (sighs) arose from Khurâsdân,” or “dâd (dîl = 4, ydî = 6, dîl = 4; total 14) came up (i.e. was subtracted) from Khurâsdân” (kâf = 600, rd = 200, alîf = 1, sin = 60, alîf = 1, nin = 50; total 912). Taking 14 from 912 we get the date of Jâmi’s death, A.H. 898 (= A.D. 1492).

The method of secret communication above alluded to consists in indicating first the word of the âbjad in which the letter to be spelt out occurs, then its position in that word. In communicating by raps, a double rap knocks off each word of the âbjad, while on reaching the word in which the desired letter occurs its position in that word is indicated by the requisite number of single raps. An instance will make this clearer. It is desired to ask, “Nâm-i-tî chistî?” (“What is thy name?”): the
letters which spell out this message are—nṳn, ali̤f, mim, tā, wāw, jīm (for chīm), yā, sīn, tā. Nṳn is in the fourth word of the abjad, and is the fourth letter in that word (kalaman). It is therefore indicated by three double raps (removing or knocking off the three first words, abjad, bawəz, ḥuṣ; and thus bringing us to the next word, kalaman), followed by four single raps (showing that it is the fourth letter in this word). The remaining letters are expressed in similar fashion, so that if we represent double raps by dashes and single raps by dots, the whole message will run as follows: --- --- --- --- (nṳn); (ali̤f); --- --- --- (mim); --- --- --- --- (tā) --- --- (wāw); --- --- (chīm or jīm); --- --- --- --- --- --- (yā); --- --- --- --- --- (sīn); --- --- --- --- --- --- --- (tā).

Messages can be similarly communicated by a person smoking the kalayn or water-pipe to his accomplice or partner, without the knowledge of the uninitiated. In this case a long pull at the pipe is substituted for the double rap, and a short pull for the single rap. Pulling the moustache, or stroking the neck, face, or collar (right side for words, left side for letters), is also resorted to to convert the system from an auditory into a visual one. It is expressed in writing in a similar fashion, each letter being represented by an upright stroke, with ascending branches on the right for the words and on the left for the letters. This writing is called, from the appearance of the letters, khaṭ-i-sarvī (“cypress-writing”) or khaṭ-i-shajari (“tree-writing”). In this character (written, in the usual way, from right to left) the sentence which we took above (“nṳn-i-tā ewart”) will stand as follows:

The mention of enigmatical writings reminds me of a matter which I omitted to speak of in its proper place—I mean the Pahlavi and Zend manuscripts preserved in the fire-temples of Yezd. Although I knew that Yezd had long since been ransacked for such treasures, and that, even should any old manuscripts remain, it would be impossible to do more than examine them (a task which I, who knew no Pahlavi and only the merest rudiments of Zend, was but little qualified to undertake), I naturally did not omit to make enquiries on the subject of the Dastūr and Ardashir. As I expected, most of the manuscripts (especially the older and more valuable ones) had been sent to the Parses of Bombay, so as to be safe from the outbursts of Muhammadan fanaticism to which the Zoroastrians of Yezd are always liable; but in one of the fire-temples I was shown two manuscripts of the sacred books, the older of which was, by the kindness of the Dastūr, lent to me during the remainder of my stay at Yezd, so that I was enabled to examine it thoroughly.

This manuscript, a large volume of 294 leaves, contained, so far as I could make out, the whole of the Vendidād, with interspersed Pahlavi translation and commentary written in red, the headings of the chapters being also in red, and the Avesta text in black. On f. 158 was inscribed a Persian poem of fifty-nine couplets, wherein the transcriber, Bahram, the son of Marzabān, the son of Feridūn, the son of Bahrām, details the circumstances of his life and the considerations which led him to undertake the transcription of the sacred volume. From this it appeared that when the aforesaid Bahrām was thirteen years of age, his father, Marzabān-i-Feridūn, left his country (presumably Yezd), and, at the command of the reigning king, settled in Kāzvīn. After a while he went to Khurāsān, and thence to Kirmān, where he died at the age of fifty-seven. The death of his father turned Bahrām’s thoughts to his religion, which he began to study diligently with all such as could teach him anything about it. At the age of sixteen he seems to have transcribed the Yashts; and at the age of twenty he commenced the transcription of the Vendidād, of which he completed the first half (as stated in the verses cited on p. 413, supra), on the 14th day of the month of Amurdād, A.Y. 977. On the page facing that wherein this poem is written are inscribed the dates of the deaths of a number of Zoroastrians (belonging, probably,
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to the family of the transcriber), beginning with Bahrám's father Marzabán-i-Ferdús, who died on the day of Varahrám (Bahrám), in the month of Farvardín, A.Y. 970. The last date is A.Y. 1069. The writing of the manuscript is large, clear, and legible, and it bears throughout the signs of careful work. One side of f. 29 is occupied by a diagram indicating, I believe, the successive positions in which the officiating priest or mihdád must stand in relation to the fire-altar while performing some of the ceremonies connected with the hóma-sacrifice. This sacred plant (the hóma, or hóm, as it is now called) is found in the mountains about Yezd, but I could not succeed in obtaining or even in seeing a specimen while I was there. After my return to Cambridge, however, the Dastúr kindly sent me some of the seeds and stalks of it packed in a tin box. I gave some of the former to the Cambridge Botanical Gardens. Unfortunately they did not grow up, but they were identified by Mr Lynch, the curator, as a species of Epíbedra.

Near the end of the volume I found the following short prayer in Persian: "Shikast u zd bád Ahrimán-i-durvand-i-kaf, avd bád dín u dányn u jhádvan," "Defeated and smitten be Ahriman the outcast, the froward, with all the demons and fiends and warlocks." Some of the original leaves of the manuscript had been lost, and replaced by new ones written in a bad hand on common white paper.

It is time, however, to leave the Zoroastrians, and to say something of the Bábí of Yezd, with whom also I passed many pleasant and profitable hours. But this chapter has already grown so long that what I have to say on this and some other matters had better form the substance of another.

CHAPTER XIV

YEZD (continued)

"Chand, chand az hikmat-i-Yádmun
Hikmat-i-Imáníyán-ra ham bi-khñán!"

"How long, how long of the wisdom of the Greeks?
Study also the wisdom of the people of faith!"

"Án Gheyb-i-muntání, kí hamí-yáfti 'Lán tárú!'
Inak, tárú-qi bi-jhúd dáríkúd šud.
Káshf-i-bájúd hár: khápád-bá, bishdrát!'
Inak, yáhúr-i-a'jam-i-Povardigád šud!"

"That unapproachable Unseen, which was wont to say, 'Thou shalt not see Me,'
Lo, melodious with song, hath appeared in the world!
It hath lifted the veil: good tidings, O gods!
Lo, the Supreme Theophany hath come!"

In the last chapter I have spoken chiefly of the Zoroastrians; in this I propose to say something concerning my dealings with the Bábís of Yezd, of whom also I saw a good deal. And first of all a few words are necessary as to the relations subsisting between the votaries of these two religions, the oldest and the newest which Persia has produced. Their relations to one another are of a much more friendly character than are the relations of either of them towards the Muḥammadans, and this for several reasons. Both of them are liable to persecution at the hands of the Muḥammadans, and so have a certain fellow-feeling and sympathy. Both of them are more tolerant towards such as are not of their own faith than the Muḥammadans, the Zoroastrians, as already said, regarding "the virtuous of the seven climes" as their friends, and the Bábís being commanded by Behá to "associate with men of all religions with spirituality
and sweet savour,” and to regard no man as unclean by reason of his faith. Moreover the Bábís recognise Zoroaster as a prophet, though without much enthusiasm, and are at some pains to conciliate and win over his followers to their way of thinking, as instanced by the epistles addressed by Behá to certain of their number; while some few at least of the Zoroastrians are not indisposed to recognise in Behá their expected deliverer, Sháh Bahram, who, as Dástúr Tir-ándáz informed me, must appear soon if they were to be rescued from their abasement, and “the Good Religion” re-established. The Dastúr himself, indeed, would not admit that Behá could be this promised saviour, who, he said, must come before the next Nawriq if he were to come at all; but others of his co-religionists were less confident on this point, and in Kirmán I met at least one who was, so far as I could ascertain, actually a Bábí. The marked predilection towards the Bábís displayed by Mánakíl, the late Zoroastrian agent at Teherán, at whose instigation the Tárikh-i-Jadid, or “New History” of the Báb’s “Manifestation,” was written, must also have re-acted powerfully on his Zoroastrian brethren.

I may here mention a very absurd fiction, which I have more than once heard the Zoroastrians maintain in the presence of Musulmáns or Babís, namely, that Zoroaster was identical with Abraham. The chief argument whereby they seek to establish this thesis is as follows: “You recognise five ‘nabi-i-mursal’ (prophets sent with new revealed scriptures, as opposed to prophets merely sent to warn and preach repentance, who are called ‘nabi-i-mundhir’), say they, “to wit, Abraham with the

1 I have already remarked on the hatred with which the Zoroastrians regard the Arabs, and the fact that the Bábí movement was entirely Persian in origin no doubt inclines them to look favourably on it. One of them said as much to me; the Semitic peoples, he added, were comparable to ravenging beasts of prey, and the Aryan races to the peaceful and productive animals. An unmodified Semitic religion, he maintained, could never be really acceptable to Aryans.

Şuhuf (‘Leaves,’ ‘Tracts,’ or ‘Epistles’), Moses with the Tawrûd (Pentateuch), David with the Magdâmir (Psalms), Jesus with the Injîl (Gospel), and Muhammad with the Kârân; and you believe that the book of each of these five, and a remnant of his people, shall continue in the world so long as it lasts. Now of each of the last four the book and the people exist to our day, but where is the Şuhuf of Abraham, and where his followers? Does it not seem probable to you that the Şuhuf is our Avesta, that Abraham is but another name for Zoroaster, and that we are his people?” As further proof of this contention, Ardashir declared that mention was made of Barâhín, who was evidently the same as Ibrâhîm (Abraham), in the Shâb-nâmê; and I think he strove to connect this word with Brahman and Brahám, for he was capable of much in the way of etymology and comparative philology. I do not suppose that in their hearts many of the Zoroastrians really believe this nonsense, but it has always been a great object with them to get themselves included amongst the ahâl-i-kâtâb, or people to whom a revealed book recognised by the Muhahmadans has been vouchsafed, inasmuch as these enjoy many privileges denied to the pagan and idolater.

My first introduction to the Bábís of Yezd I have already described. The morning after I had taken up my quarters in Ardashir’s garden I received a message from Hâjí Seyyid M—— about 6 a.m., inviting me to take my early tea in a garden of his situated close at hand. Thither I at once repaired, and, after a while, found myself alone with the Bábí poet ‘Andâlláh.

“How was it,” he began, “that the Jews, although in expectation of their Messiah, failed to recognise him in the Lord Jesus?”

“Because,” I answered, “they looked only at the letter and not the spirit of their books, and had formed a false conception of the Messiah and his advent.”

“May not you Christians have done the same,” he continued, “with regard to Him whose advent you expect, the promised
‘Comforter’? May He not have come, while you continue heedless? Within a few miles of Acre is a monastery of Carmelite monks, who have taken up their abode there to await the return of Christ, because their books tell them that He will return there. He has returned there, almost at their very door, yet they recognise Him not, but continue gazing up to heaven, whence, as they vainly suppose, He will descend.”

“Consider the parable of the Lord of the vineyard,” he resumed after a while, “which is contained in your gospel. First, He sent servants to demand his rights from those wicked men to whom the vineyard was let; these were the prophets before Christ. Then He sent His own Son, whom they killed; this was Christ Himself, as you yourselves admit. And after that what shall the Lord of the vineyard do? ‘He will come and destroy the husbandmen, and will give the vineyard unto others.’”  

“Do you then regard Béhá as the Lord of the vineyard, that is to say, as God Himself?” I enquired in astonishment.

“What say your own books?” he replied. “Who is He who shall come after the Son?”

“Well, but what then say you of Muhammad?” I demanded, “for if you accept this parable and interpret it thus there is no place left for him, since he comes after the Son and before the Lord of the vineyard.”

“He was a messenger sent to announce the advent of the Lord of the vineyard,” replied ‘Andalíb.

“Then,” said I, “he was less than the Son?”

“Yes,” answered ‘Andalíb, “he was.” He then spoke of other matters; of the devotion of the youth Bádí’, who came on foot from Acre to Țeherán, there to meet a cruel death, with Béhá’s letter to Náṣíru’d-Dín Sháh; of the martyrs of Išfáhán, and the miserable end of their persecutors, Sheykh Bákír and the Imám-Jum’á; of the downfall of Napoleon III, foretold by Béhá in the epistle addressed to the French Emperor

1 Mark xii, 9.

when he was at the zenith of his power, and read by himself four years before the accomplishment of the prediction. Concerning Bádí’ he remarked, “Even Christ prayed that, if possible, this cup might pass from Him, while this lad joyfully hastened with unhalting and unswerving feet over many a weary mile of desert and mountain, bearing his own death-warrant in his hand, to quaff the draught of martyrdom.” As we were leaving the garden he took me by the hand and besought me to go to Acre and see Béhá for myself. “How noble a work might be yours,” he said, “if you could become assured of the truth of his claim, in spreading the good news through your country!”

Next day I received a visit from a sarbang, or colonel, who filled at that time a rather responsible post at Yezd, whence he has since been transferred to another important town in the south of Persia. He too proved to be a Bábí, and conversed very freely about the new Manifestation. “In accordance with the injunction ‘address men according to the measure of their understanding,’” said he, “it behoves every divine messenger to impart to his people only so much spiritual knowledge as they are capable of receiving; wherefore, as mankind advances in education, the old creeds necessarily lose their significance, and the old formula become obsolete. So, if a child were to ask what we meant by saying that knowledge was sweet, we might give it a sugar-plum and say, ‘It resembles this,’ so that the child, liking the sugar-plum, might desire knowledge; though, as a matter of fact, the two have nothing in common. To rough uncultivated men, such as the Arabs with whom Muhammad had to deal, the pleasures of Divine Love cannot be more clearly symbolised than as a material paradise of beautiful gardens and rivers of milk and wine and honey, where they shall be waited on by black-eyed maidens and fair boys. Now we have outgrown this coarse symbolism, and are fitted to receive a fuller measure of spiritual truth and wisdom from him who is the Fountain-head of wisdom and the wisest of all living men, Béhá.”
Two days later I was invited by Hájí Seyyid M—— to spend the day with him and his friends in one of his gardens situated outside the town, on the road to Taft. He kindly sent his servant with a horse to convey me thither, and I had lunch and tea there, returning home about sunset. There were a good many guests (all, so far as I could make out, being Bábis), including `Andalív and a very vivacious little merchant on whom, in consideration of the very humorous manner in which he impersonated, for our amusement, the venal conduct of a certain eminent mullá of Yezd on the judgment-seat, the title of "Sheykh" was bestowed. The garden, with its roses, mulberry-trees, pomegranates in full blossom, syringas (naftarján), cool marble tanks, and tiny streams, was like a dream of delight, and I have seldom spent a pleasanter day anywhere. I conversed chiefly with `Andalív, who read me some of his own poems, and also wrote down for me one of the beautiful odes attributed to the Bábi heroine and martyr Kurratul'Ayn. He talked a good deal about the identity of all the prophets, whom he regarded as successive Manifestations or Incarnations of the Divine Will or Universal Reason.

"If that is so," I urged, "how can you speak of one Manifestation as more perfect than another, or one prophet as superior to another?"

"From our human point of view," he replied, "we are entitled to speak thus, although from the standpoint of the Absolute it is incorrect. It is the same sun which rises every day to warm and light us, and no one for a moment doubts this; yet we say that the sun is hotter in summer than in winter, or warmer today than yesterday, or in a different sign of the zodiac now from that which it occupied a month ago. Speaking relatively to ourselves this is perfectly true, but when we consider the sun apart from accidents of time, place, environment, and the like, we perceive it to be ever one and the same, unchanged and unchangeable. So is it with the Sun of Truth, which rises from the horizon of the heart, and illuminates the Spiritual Firmament."

"Is it not strange, then," I asked, "that different prophets should advance different claims, one announcing himself as the 'Friend of God,' another as the 'Interlocutor of God,' another as the 'Apostle of God,' another as the 'Son of God,' and another as God Himself?"

"No," he answered, "and I will strive to make it clearer by means of a parable. A certain king holding sway over a vast empire desired to discover with his own eyes the causes of disorders which prevailed in one of his provinces, so that he might take effectual measures to remedy them. He determined, therefore, to go thither himself, and, laying aside his kingly state, to mix with the people on terms of intimacy. So he wrote a letter, declaring the bearer of it to be an officer of the king's household, sealed it with the royal seal, and, thus provided, went in disguise to the province in question, where he announced that he was an officer sent by the king to enquire into the disorders prevailing amongst the people, in proof of which he produced the royal warrant which he had himself written. After a while, when order had been in some degree restored, and men were more loyally disposed, he announced himself to be the king's own minister, producing another royal warrant in proof of this. Last of all he threw off all disguise and said, 'I am the king himself.' Now, all the time he was really the king, though men knew him not; yet was his state and majesty at first not as it was at last. So is it with the Divine Will or Universal Reason, which, becoming manifest from time to time for our guidance, declares Itself now as the Apostle of God, now as the Son of God, and at last as God Himself. We are not asked to acknowledge a higher status than It sees fit to claim at any particular time, but the royal signet is the sufficient proof of any claim which It may advance, including
that of the Supreme Majesty itself. But, as Mawláná Jalálu’d-Dín Rúmí says:—

'Dídî’s báyát ka báyát shab-tháns,
Tl shánsáda Sháh-rá dar bar líbát.'

'It needs an eye which is king-discerning
To recognise the King in whatever garb.'"

Later on I asked Hájí Seyyid M—— what he considered to be the difference between the Šáfi saint who had attained to the "Station of Annihilation in God," wherein, like Mansúr-i-Ḥalláj, he could cry, "I am the truth," and the prophet. "What, in short," I concluded, "is the difference between the 'I am God' of Mansúr, and the 'I am God' of Behá? For, as your own proverb has it, 'There is no colour beyond black.'"

"The difference," said he, "is as the difference between our sitting here and saying, 'See, this is a rose-garden,' and one saying, 'I am such-and-such a rose in that garden.' The one reaches a point where, losing sight and cognisance of self, he wanders at will through the World of Divinity ('Alam-i-Láhát); the other is the throne on which God sits, as He Himself saith, 'He set Himself upon the Throne' (istá’d al’l-arsh). One is a perfect reflection of the sun cast in a pure clear mirror; the other is the sun itself."

A few days later, after the month of Ramažán had begun, I paid another visit to Hájí Seyyid M——'s house, where three of my Zoroastrian friends presently joined me. 'Andalib, as usual, was the chief spokesman, and, amongst other things, laid down the dogma that faith and unbelief were the root or essence of the whole matter, and good or bad actions only branches or subsidies. This position I attacked with some warmth.

"Suppose a Jew and a Christian," said he, "the former merciful, charitable, benevolent, humane, pious, but rejecting and denying Christ; the latter cruel, selfish, vindictive, but accepting and reverencing Him. Of these two, which do you regard as the better man?"

1 Kurán vii, 32; x, 3 etc.

"Without doubt the Jew," I answered. "God forbid!" replied he. "Without doubt the Christian. God is merciful and forgiving, and can pardon sin."

"Can He not then pardon unbelief?" I demanded.

"No," he answered, "from those who do not believe is taken the spirit which once they had, to which the present wretchedness and abasement of the Jews bears witness."

As it did not appear to me that the nations professing the Christian religion had suffered much abasement on account of their rejection of Muḥammad, I said, thinking to get the better of the argument, "Do you consider that every people which rejects a new Manifestation must be similarly abused?"

He did not fall into my trap, however. "No," he answered, "not unless they have been guilty of some special act of hostility or cruelty towards the bearer of the new gospel."

"What, then," I demanded, "of the Muḥammadans? Can one conceive of greater hostility or cruelty than they showed towards the Báb and those who followed him? Shall they too be abused?"

"Yea, verily," he answered, "and grievous shall be their abasement! Look at these poor guebres" (pointing to my Zoroastrian friends), "how miserable is their condition! And why? Because of the sin of Khusrw Parviz, who tore up the letter which the Apostle of God sent to him, inviting him to embrace İslám. Yet had he some excuse; for he was a great king, belonging to a mighty dynasty which had ruled for many generations; while the letter was from an unknown member of a despised and subject race, and was, moreover, curt and uncereemonious in the extreme, beginning, 'This is a letter from Muḥammad, the Apostle of God, to Khusrw Parviz.' What shall we say of the king who not only tore up the letter, but slew with the most cruel torments the messenger of one greater than Muḥammad, the letter being, moreover, written in the most courteous and conciliatory tone? But the Christians never acted
thus towards Muhammad, and some, such as the Abyssinian
Najashi, did all in their power to succour and protect those
who, for their belief in him, had become wanderers and
exiles."

I tried to ascertain ‘Andalib’s beliefs as to the future life, a
subject on which I have always found the Babis singularly
reticent, and he told me that, according to their belief, the body,
the vegetable soul, and the animal soul—all the lower prin-
ciples, in fact—underwent disintegration and redistribution,
while the “luminous spirit” (rūḥ-i-nirūdā) survived to receive
rewards or punishments, whereof the nature was unrevealed
and unknown. He then turned upon the Zoroastrians and up-
brailed them for their indifference in matters of religion. “For
all these years,” he concluded, “you have been seeing and hearing
of Jews, Christians, and Muhammadans: have you ever taken
the trouble to ascertain the nature of their beliefs, or of the proofs
and arguments by which they support them? If for a single
week you had given half the attention which you devote to your
worldly business to a consideration of these matters, you would,
in all probability, have attained to certainty. What fault can be
greater than this indifference and neglect?”

A few days after this I returned the Sarbang’s visit. He received
me very kindly in his house, situated near the mosque of Mir
Chakmakh, and, though it was Ramazan, gave me tea, and
himself drank a little hot water. The conversation at once turned
on religion. He began by discussing the martyrdom of Imám
Huseyn, “the Chief of Martyrs,” and of ‘Abbás, ‘Alí Akbar,
and the rest of his relatives and companions, at Kerbelá, declaring
that it had not been for the wrongs suffered by these, Islám would
never have gained one-tenth of the strength it actually possesses.
From this topic he passed to the Babí insurrection, headed by
Áká Seyyid Jáníyá of Dáráb, which was put down with great
severity in the summer of 1850.

“Two of my relatives were in the army of the malignants,”

he began, “so I know a good deal about what took place, and
more especially how God punished them for their wickedness.
When orders came from Tehran to Shíráz to put down the
insurrection, my paternal grandfather, the Shajé-ul-Mulk,
received instructions to march against the Babís of Nífríz. He
was somewhat unwilling to go, and consulted two of the clergy,
who reassured him, telling him that it was a jihád, or holy war,
and that to take part in it would ensure him a great reward
in the future life. So he went, and what was done was done.
The malignants, after they had slain 750 men of the Babís, took
the women and children, stripped them nearly naked, mounted
them on camels, mules, and asses, and led them forth through
an avenue of trees heaved from those who had been their
husbands, brothers, fathers, and sons, towards Shíráz. When
they arrived there they were lodged in a ruined caravansary
just outside the Isfahán gate, opposite to an imámzámé, near to
which the soldiers encamped under some trees. There, exposed
to all manner of hardships, insults, and persecutions, they were
kept for a long while, during which many of them died. And now
hear how God took vengeance on some of those who were
prominent as persecutors of his saints.

“My grandfather, the Shajé-ul-Mulk, when stricken down
by his last illness, was dumb till the day of his death. Just
at the end, those who stood round him saw his lips move, and,
stooping down to hear what he was whispering, heard him
repeat the word ‘Babí’ three times. Immediately afterwards he
died back dead.

“My great-uncle, Mirzá Na’ím, who also took part in the
suppression of the Nífríz rising, fell into disgrace with the
Government, and was twice heavily mulcted—10,000 támúrd in
the first time, 15,000 támúrs the second. His punishment did
not stop here: he was made to stand bareheaded in the sun, with
syrup smeared over his face to attract the flies; his feet were
crushed in the Kájár boot; and his hands submitted to the el-ebak,
that is to say, pieces of wood were inserted between his fingers, round which whip-cord was tightly bound, and on the whip-cord cold water was poured to make it contract. Nor were these the worst or most degrading torments to which he was subjected. 1

“I will tell you another instance of Divine Vengeance. There was in Shiráz a certain Sheykh Ḥuseyn, who bore the honorific title of Nāṣiramād-i-‘Ulamā, but who was generally known, by reason of his injustice, as ‘Ẓalīm’ (‘Tyrant’). He was not only concerned in the events I have described, but manifested a specially malignant hatred towards the Báb. So far did this hatred carry him, that when the Báb had been before ʿAlī Shams-‘Alī Khan, the Governor of Fārs, he drew his penknife from his pen-case, and cried, ‘If you will not order his execution, I will kill him with this.’ Later on, when the Báb had gone to Iṣfahān, he followed him thither, declaring that he would not cease to dog his footsteps till he had enjoyed the satisfaction of carrying out the death sentence on him; till at last the Governor of Iṣfahān sent him back to Shiráz, telling him that whenever that time came the mir-ghezab, or executioner, would be ready to do his duty. Well, after his return to Shiráz, he became afflicted with a scrotal swelling, which attainted so enormous a size that he could hardly sit his horse, and had to be lifted into the saddle. Later on, before he died, his face turned black, save that one side was flecked with white spots; and thus he lay in his bed, loathsome alike to sight and smell, smearing his countenance with filth, and crying upon God to whiten his face on the Last Day, when the faces of others should be black. So he died.”

A few days after this I again paid a visit to Ḥājī Seyyid M.——’s house. ‘Andalib, of course, was there, and took tea with me, explaining that as his throat was sore he was not fasting that day. He had found the passages, occurring in Behā’s epistle to one of the Turkish ministers who had oppressed him, wherein the

1 Tawkhim-i-naṣrī hā-yi garm dar makhad-ash firād hārashān.
trial, and who was deeply attached to the words of Christ (especially as recorded in the Gospel of St Matthew), which would move him to tears. The "Madman," meanwhile, had taken up one of the volumes of Bábí Āhwād (Epistles) which the Sārang had brought out, and began to read from it in a very melodious voice. "If you could understand all the beauties of these words," he said, as he concluded his reading and laid down the book, "you would at once be firmly convinced of the truth of the New Manifestation."

I tried to put some questions on religious matters to them, but at first they would hardly listen to me, pouring forth torrents of rhapsody. At length, however, I succeeded in stating some of the matters on which I wished to hear their views, viz. the position accorded to Islam in the series of Theophanies, and the reasons for its lower standard of ethics and morality, lower ideal of future bliss, and greater harshness of rule and practice, as compared with Christianity. The answers which they returned made me realise once again how widely separated from each other were our respective points of view. They seemed to have no conception of Absolute Good or Absolute Truth: to them Good was merely what God chose to ordain, and Truth what He chose to reveal, so that they could not understand how anyone could attempt to test the truth of a religion by an abstract ethical or moral standard. God's Attributes, according to their belief, were twofold—"Attributes of Grace" (Ṣifát-i-Jemá' or Lajf), and "Attributes of Wrath" (Ṣifát-i-Jalá' or Ḥakah); both were equally divine, and in some dispensations (as the Christian and Bábí) the former, in some (as the Mosaic and the Muḥammadan) the latter predominated. A divine messenger or prophet, having once established the validity of his claim by suitable evidence, was to be obeyed in all things without criticism or questioning; and he had as much right to kill or compel, as a surgeon has to resort to amputation or the actual cautery, in cases where milder methods of treatment

would be likely to prove ineffectual. As for the Muḥammadan paradise, with its jewelled thrones, its rivers of milk and wine and honey, its delicious fruits, and its beautiful attendants, it fulfilled its purpose; for every person must be addressed in words suited to the measure of their intellectual capacity, and the people to whom the Prophet Muḥammad was sent could not have apprehended a higher ideal of future bliss. They could see nothing immoral or unsatisfactory in a man's renouncing pleasures forbidden in this life so as to enjoy them everlastingly in a future state.

Wishing to ascertain the views of the Sārang and his friend "Divine" on Ṣūfism and its saints, I briefly described to them certain phases of thought through which I myself had passed, and certain conclusions as to the relation and significance of different religions which its teachings had suggested to me. "In a well-known aphorism," I concluded, "it is said that 'the ways unto God are as the number of the souls of the children of men.' Every religion is surely an expression, more or less clear and complete, of some aspect of a great central Truth which itself transcends expression, even as Nizāmī says:

'Sīānah ẓabān az rāhībān-i-rāz
Ki tā rāz-i-Sulṭān na-gyand hāz.'

'He taketh the tongue from such as share the mystery,
So that they may not repeat the King's secret.'

Thus in Islam the Absolute Unity of God is above all insisted upon; in the Dualism of the Zoroastrians the eternal conflict between Good and Evil, Light and Darkness, Being and Nothing, the One and the Many, is symbolised; while the Christian Trinity, as I understand it, is the Trinity of the Sun, the Sunbeams which proceed from the Sun, and the Mirror, cleansed from every stain, wherein these falling produce (neither by Absorption of the Mirror into the Sun, nor by Incarnation of the Sun in the Mirror, but by Annihilation of the Mirror-hood of the Mirror in the Sun's effulgence) a perfect image of the Sun.
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Even Idolatry subsists only by virtue of a truth which it embodies, as Sheykh Maḥmūd Shabistari says:—

‘Mūslīmān gur bi-dānīstā kī but evist,
Bi-dānīstā kī din dar but-parastist.’

‘Did the Musulmān understand what the Idol is, He would know that there is religion even in idolatry.’

So in every religion there is Truth for those who faithfully and earnestly seek it; and hence we find amongst the followers of religions apparently most divergent, living in lands and times so widely separated as to preclude all possibility of intercommunication, men who, led by that Inner Light which lighteth every one who cometh into the world, have arrived at doctrines practically identical. Is not this identity a sign of their truth? Is it not, moreover, far more consistent with God’s universal mercy to reveal Himself thus inwardly to every pure soul than by a written scripture confided only to a comparatively small section of the human race? If salvation is only for the people of the Kur’ān, then how hard is the lot of my people, to most of whom no more than its name, if so much, is known! If, on the other hand, only the people of the Gospel are to be saved, what possible chance of eternal happiness has been given to the great bulk of your fellow-countrymen?”

From a Šūfi I should have confidently expected a cordial endorsement of these views, but not from a Bāb; and I was therefore surprised by the acclamations with which both of my companions received them, and still more so by the outburst of wild enthusiasm which they evoked in “Dīvānī,” who sprang from his seat, waving his arms and clapping his hands, with cries of “You have understood it! You have got it! God bless you! God bless you!”

“Well, then,” I continued, “what do you consider to be the difference between a prophet and a saint who by purification of the heart and renunciation of self has reached the degree of

‘Annihilation in God’? For, as your own proverb says, ‘There is no colour beyond black.’”

“The difference,” they replied, “is this. The saint who has reached this degree, and can, like Maḥṣūr the wool-carder, say, “I am the Truth,” has no charge laid on him to guide and direct others, and is therefore not bound to be cautious and guarded in his utterances, since the possible consequences of these concern himself alone, and he has passed beyond himself; while the prophet is bound to have regard to the dictates of expediency and the requirements of the time. Hence it is that, as a matter of fact, most of the great Šūfi saints were put to death, or subjected to grievous persecutions.”

I did not see “the Madman” again, but the Sarbang paid me a farewell visit on the morrow, and brought with him another officer, who, as I was informed, belonged to the ‘Allīlahi sect, and was, like many of that sect, very favourably disposed towards Bābism, concerning which the Sarbang spoke freely before him.

Meanwhile the time of my departure was drawing near, and it was in some degree hastened by the kindly-meant but somewhat irksome attentions of the Prince-Governor. He, as I have already mentioned, had set his heart on my visiting a certain waterfall in the mountains, without which, he declared, my journey to Yezd would be incomplete. As I had no particular desire to see this waterfall, and was anxious to avoid the trouble and expense in which the mounted escort which he wished to send with me would certainly have involved me, I determined to parry his proposals with those expressions of vague gratitude which I had already learned to regard as the most effectual means of defence in such cases, and meanwhile to complete my preparations for departure, and quietly slip away to Kirmān with a farewell letter of thanks and apologies, to be despatched at the last moment.

There was no particular difficulty about obtaining mules
for the journey, but it appeared to be impossible to hire a horse for myself to ride. Personally, I was quite indifferent as to whether I rode on a horse or a mule, but my friends, both Bábís and Zoroastrians, were horrified at the idea of my entering Kirmán on the humber quadruped: "it would be so undignified," they said, "so derogatory to my state, so incompatible with the idea of distinction!" At first I was disposed to deride these notions, pointing out that the well-known Arabic proverb, "Sharaful-makán bi'l-makín" ("the dignity of the dwelling is in the dweller") might fairly be paralleled by another, "Sharaful-markub bi'r-maxkub" ("the dignity of the mount is in the rider"); but they evidently felt so strongly on the subject that, seeing that I had received much kindness at their hands, and was the bearer of letters of recommendation to their friends at Kirmán, I finally gave way, and asked them what they advised.

"I advise you to give up the idea of going to Kirmán altogether," said 'Andalib; "you will get no good by it, and you see the difficulties that it involves. Go to Acre instead; that will be easily done on your homeward journey, and therefrom far greater blessings and advantages are likely to result."

"But," said I, "I am in some sort pledged to go to Kirmán, as I have written to Shíráz and also to my friends in England stating this to be my intention."

"You are quite right," said Ardashír, "and I for my part advise you to adhere to your plan, for to change one's plans without strong reason is to lay one's self open to a charge of indecision and lack of firm purpose."

"Well," I rejoined, "if I am not to go there on a mule, and cannot hire a horse, what am I to do? Shall I, for instance, walk, or would it be more 'dignified' to go on a camel?"

"Post," said one.

"Buy a horse," said another.

"As for posting," I said, "I have had enough of that. I never understood the force of the proverb, 'Es-safar saqár' ("travel is travail") till I posted from Shíráz to Dihbíd. But as for buying a horse, that is a more practicable idea, supposing that a suitable animal is forthcoming at a moderate price. A friend of mine at Teherán told me that he kept a horse so as to be able to enjoy the luxury of going on foot; because, so long as he had no horse, it was supposed that the cause of his walking was either parsimony or poverty; but when it was known that he had one, his pedestrian progress was ascribed to eccentricity. Now I do not wish to be regarded as poor, still less as parsimonious; but I have no objection to being credited with eccentricity, and I should greatly enjoy the liberty of being able to walk as much and as often as I please."

After my guests had gone I talked the matter over with Hájí Şafár, who was strongly in favour of my buying a horse. Although he continued to recur with some bitterness to the fact that he had entered Yezd riding on a donkey, he was good enough to make no difficulties about riding a mule to Kirmán.

Next day Bahman came bringing with him the muleteer who was to supply me with the two mules I needed for my journey. He also brought a horse belonging to a Zoroastrian miller, who was willing to sell it for eighteen tumdus (nearly £6). It was by no means an ill-looking animal, and both Hájí Şafár and myself, having mounted it and tried its paces, liked it well. However, with a view to forming a better idea of its capacities, I had it saddled again in the evening and went for a short ride outside the town, from which I returned delighted, with a full determination to buy it. Shortly after my return the owner came to the garden, and the bargain was soon concluded to the satisfaction of all concerned. Hájí Şafár was especially delighted.

1 Literally, "travel is hell-fire." Between Safar and Şafár there exists that species of word-play technically termed tajús-ī-khatì, or "linear pun": that is to say, the two words, as written in the Arabic character, are identical in outline, and differ only in diacritical points. This play is ingeniously preserved in Sir Richard Burton's translation or paraphrase of the proverb, which is here given in the text.
thing to show you.' 'And what may that be?' he asked. 'Come with me,' I said, 'and I will show you.' So he followed me into the room where our prisoners were waiting. 'A nice-looking boy, is he not?' said I, pointing to the younger of the two. 'Well, what have you brought him here for?' demanded my master. 'And nicely dressed too,' I continued, disregarding his question; 'look at the pretty Kurdish handkerchief he has wound round his kulâh,' and as I spoke I plucked it off, and the girl's hair, escaping from constraint, fell down over her shoulders. When the Hâji discovered that our prisoner was a girl dressed in man's clothes he was very angry, reviled her in unmeasured terms, and ordered her to be locked up in a cupboard, on which he set his seal, till the morning. In the morning she was taken out, placed in a sack, and beaten all over by the farrâshes, after which her head was shaved, and she was released.'

I had not yet bought my horse or completed my preparations for departure, when I was again sent for by the Prince-Governor. This time I had not to go on foot, for one of my Bâbi friends insisted on lending me a very beautiful white horse which belonged to him. I tried to refuse his kind offer, saying that the Dastûr was to accompany me to the Government House, and that as he could not ride I would rather go on foot also.

"In our country," I said, "we are taught to respect age and learning, and the Dastûr is old and learned, for which reason it appears to me most unseemly that I should ride and he walk beside me. He is a Zoroastrian, I am a Christian; both of us are regarded by the Musulmâns as infidels and unclean, and, if they could, they would subject me to the same disabilities which are imposed on him. Let me, therefore, walk beside him to show my contempt for those disabilities, and my respect for the Dastûr and his co-religionists.'"

"If you desire to better the Zoroastrians," replied my friend, "it is advisable for you to go to the Prince with as much state and circumstance as possible. The more honour paid to you,
the better for them." The Dastūr himself took exactly the same view, so there was nothing for it but to acquiesce.

Half an hour before sunset the horse and servant of my friend came to the garden, and immediately after them the usual band of Government jarrāšis with a large lantern. I had arrayed myself in a new suit of clothes, made by a Yeziši tailor, of white shawl-stuff, on the pattern of an English suit. These were cool, comfortable, and neat; and though they would probably have been regarded as somewhat eccentric in England, I reflected that no one at Yeziš or Kirmān would doubt that they were the ordinary summer attire of an English gentleman. Häji Shāfar, indeed, laughingly remarked that people would say I had turned Bābi (I suppose because the early Bābis were wont to wear white raiment), but otherwise expressed the fullest approval.

The first question addressed to me by the Prince on my entering his presence was, "When are you going?" On hearing that I proposed to start on the next day but one, he turned to the Dastūr and enquired whether he intended to accompany me. The Dastūr replied that he could not do so, as one of the Zoroastrian festivals, which necessitated his presence in Yeziš, was close at hand, and that as it lasted a week I could not postpone my departure till it was over. Hearing this, the Prince wished to rearrange my plans entirely. I must go on the morrow, he said, to visit the waterfall and the mountains, remain there five days, then return to the city to see the Zoroastrian festival, and after that accompany the Zoroastrians to some of their shrines and holy places. Protestations were vain, and I was soon reduced to a sullen silence, which was relieved by the otherwise unwelcome intrusion of a large tarantula, and its pursuit and slaughter. After conversing for a while on general topics, and receiving for translation into English the rough draft of a letter which the Prince wished to send to Bombay to order photographic apparatus for his son, Minūcīhīr Mirzā, I was suffered to depart.

I now determined to carry into effect my plan of taking French leave of the Prince; and accordingly, my preparations being completed, on the very morning of the day fixed for my departure I wrote him a polite letter, thanking him very heartily for the many attentions he had shown me; expressing regrets that the limited time at my disposal would not suffer me either to follow out the programme he had so kindly arranged for me or to pay him a farewell visit; and concluding with a prayer for the continuance of his kindly feeling towards myself, and of his just rule over the people of Yeziš. This letter I confided to the Dastūr, who happened to be going to the Government House, together with the English translation of the order which the Prince wished to send to the Bombay photographer.

I now flattered myself that I was well out of the difficulty, and returned with relief to my packing; but I had reckoned altogether without my host, for in less than an hour I was interrupted by the Prince's self-sufficient pisbkhīdmāt, who brought back the letter to the Bombay photographer with a request that I would write a literal translation of it in Persian. This involved unpacking my writing materials, and while I was engaged in this and the translation of the letter, one of the servants of my Bābi friends came with a horse to take me to their house. Towards this man the pisbkhīdmāt behaved with great insolence, asking him many impertinent and irrelevant questions, and finally turning him out of the room. At length I finished the translation, and, to my great relief, got rid of the pisbkhīdmāt, as I hoped, for good. I then proceeded to the house of my Bābi friends, bade them a most affectionate farewell, received from them the promised letters of recommendation for Kirmān, and the names of the principal Bābis at Nūk, Bahūm-Abbād, and Nīrīz, and returned about sunset to the garden. Here I found the Dastūr, Ardashīr, and Bahman awaiting me, and also, to my consternation, the irrepressible pisbkhīdmāt, who brought a written message from the Prince, expressing great regret at my departure,
and requesting me, if possible, to come and see him at once. As the hour of departure was now near at hand, and I was weary and eager for a little rest before setting out on the long night-march to Sar-i-Yezd, I would fain have excused myself; but, seeing that my Zoroastrian friends wished me to go, I ordered my horse to be saddled, and set out with the Pishkhidmat. We rode rapidly through the dark and narrow streets, but in crossing the waste ground in front of the Government House my horse stumbled in a hole and fell with me, luckily without doing much harm to himself or me. The Prince was greatly concerned on hearing of my fall, and would hardly be persuaded that it was of no consequence; indeed, I was rather afraid that he would declare it of evil augury for my journey, and insist on postponing my departure. However, this, my farewell interview, passed off as smoothly as could be wished, and I sat for about an hour smoking, drinking sherbet, and conversing. He paid me many undeserved compliments, declaring that the letter I had written to him was better than he could have believed it possible for a European to write, and that he intended to send it to the prime minister, the Amin-i-Sultan. In return, expressed the genuine admiration with which I regarded his just, liberal, and enlightened rule; prayed that God might prolong his shadow so long as the months repeated themselves and the days recurred; and finished up by putting in a good word for the Zoroastrians. So we parted, with mutual expressions of affection and esteem; but not till he had made me promise to accept the escort of a mounted tāfankhi or musket-man, and further placed in my hands a letter of recommendation to the Prince-Governor of Kirmān. Of this, which was given to me open and unsealed, I preserved a copy, which, as it may be of interest to the curious, I here translate, premising only that the terms in which Prince 'Imādūd-Dawla was kind enough to describe me, exaggerated as they appear in English, are but the commonplace of polite Persian.

"In the Abode of Security of Kirmān. May it be honoured by the august service of the desirable, most honourable, most illustrious, nobly-bom lord, the most mighty, most puissant prince, His Highness Najīrūd-Dawla (may his glory endure!), governor and ruler of the spacious domain of Kirmān.

"On the fourteenth of Ramāżān was it despatched. 24701.

"May I be thy sacrifice!

"Plead God [our] religious devotions are accepted, and the care of God’s servants, which is the best of service, on the part of the desirable, most honourable, most illustrious, most mighty and eminent prince (may his glory endure!) is approved in the divine audience-hall of God; for they have said—

‘By service and succour of men we win to the grace of the Lord: By this, not by royal, own, or prayer-mat, we earn our reward.’

"At all events, the bearer of this letter of longing and service is my respected and honoured friend, of such degree, companion of glory and dignity, Iṣṭārār Barām Şāib, the Englishman, who, having come to visit this country, and being now homeward bound, hath set his heart on Kirmān and the rapture of waiting upon the servants of the nobly-bom prince. Of the characteristics of this illustrious personage it is needless for me to make any representation. After meeting him you will be able to appreciate his good qualities, and the degree of his culture, and how truly sensible and well informed he is, for all his youth and fewness of years. The laudable traits which he possesses, indeed, are beyond what one can represent. Since he has mentioned that he is setting out for Kirmān, my very singular devotion impelled me to write these few words to the Blessed Presence. I trust that the sacred person of Your desirable, most illustrious, most mighty, and eminent Highness may be conjoined with health and good fortune. More were redundant."

(Sealed) 'Imādūd-Dawla.

It was two hours after sunset when I returned to the garden, and finally got rid of the Prince’s Pishkhidmat with a present of two or three ṭūmans. Háji Şafar said that he should have had a watch or some other gift of the kind rather than money, which, he feared, might be refused or taken amiss. However, I had no watch to spare; and I am bound to confess that he was condescending enough to accept the monetary equivalent with grace if not gratitude. The farrāshes having likewise been dismissed.

1 This mystic number, corresponding to the word Būdūh, is generally written under the address on a letter to ensure its safe arrival. Redhouse says it is the name of an angel who is supposed to watch over letters, but I never succeeded in obtaining a satisfactory explanation of it.
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with presents of money, I was left in peace with my Zoroastrian friends, who, after drinking a farewell cup with me, departed, with the exception of Bahman, Ardashir's confidential clerk, who remained behind to give me a statement of my finances, and to pay over to me the balance still to my credit. The amount for which I had brought a cheque from Shahriz was 147½ tumans (nearly £45), of which I found that I had drawn 45 tumans during my stay at Yezd. The balance of 102½ tumans I elected to receive in cash to the amount of 32½ tumans and a cheque on a Zoroastrian merchant of Kirmán for the remaining 70 tumans, both of which Bahman, who was as business-like, careful, and courteous as any English banker could have been, at once handed over to me, receiving in return a receipt for the whole sum with which I had been credited at Yezd.

Little now remained to be done but to eat my supper, put a few finishing touches to my packing, and distribute small presents of money to some of those who had rendered me service. They came up in turn, called by Háji Şafar; old Jamshid the gardener received 12 krans, his little son Khusrav 6 krans, another gardener named Khudá-dád 12 krans, and Háji Seyyid M——'s servant, 20 krans. The farewells were not yet finished, for just as I was about to drink a last cup of tea, two of my Bábí friends came, in spite of the lateness of the hour, to wish me God-speed. Then they too left me, and only Bahman was present to watch the final departure of our little caravan as it passed silently forth into the desert and the darkness.

CHAPTER XV

FROM YEZD TO KIRMÁN

"Rafīm u burdām dāgh-i-Tā dar dīl
Wādī bi-wādī, māničī bi-mānīčī."

"I journeyed on, bearing the brand of Thy grief in my heart,
From valley to valley, from stage to stage."

FIVE men and five beasts constituted the little company in which I quitted Yezd. Besides myself and my horse, there was Amír Khán, one of the “Arab” tribemen of Ardistán, whom the prince had sent as a mounted escort to see me safely to the marches of his territory; the muleteer with his three mules, two of which only were hired by me; my servant Háji Şafar; and a young Tabrizi named Mírzá Yúsuf, who had formerly been his fellow-servant, and to whom, at his request, and on the recommendation of my friend the Sarhang, I had given permission to accompany me to Kirmán (where he hoped to obtain employment from Prince Nasírul-Dawla) and to ride on one of the lightly-laden mules. Mírzá Yúsuf, a conceited and worthless youth, had, as I subsequently discovered, and as will be more fully set forth in its proper place, been passing himself off at Yezd as a Bábí, so as to obtain help and money from rich and charitable members of that sect; and it was by this means, no doubt, that he had induced the Sarhang to bespeak my favour for him. Were all his fellow-townsmen like him, no exaggeration would be chargeable against the satirist who wrote—

"Zi Tabrízí kí-jîk húj na-kíni:
Hamán bítár, ké Tabrízí na-kíni."

"From a Tabrizi thou wilt see naught but rascality:
Even this is best that thou shouldest not see any Tabrizi."
Outwardly, however, Mirza Yusuf was sufficiently well-favoured and civil-spoken, and it was only after my arrival in Kirmán that I detected in him any worse quality than complacent self-satisfaction and incurable idleness.

Amir Khan, being well mounted, soon wearied of the slow march of the caravan, and urged me to push on with him at a brisker pace. I did so, thinking, of course, that he knew the way; but this proved to be a rash assumption, for, after traversing the considerable village of Muhammad-abad, he lost the road and struck off into the open desert, where the soft sand proved very arduous to my horse, which began to lag behind. A halt which Amir Khan made (not to allow me to come up with him, but to say his prayers) brought us once more together, but the subsequent appearance of two gazelles at some distance to our left was too much for his self-control, and he set off after them at full gallop. I soon abandoned all idea of following him, and, having now realized his complete uselessness, both as a guide and a guard, continued to make my solitary way in the direction which I supposed to be correct. After some time, Amir Khan, having got a shot at the gazelles and missed them, returned in a more subdued frame of mind; and, after again losing the way several times, we finally reached the post-house of Sar-i-Yezd about sunrise. The remainder of the caravan being far behind, I had nothing to do, after seeing to the stabling of my horse, but to lie down on the mud floor with my head on the rolled-up greatcoat which I had strapped to the saddle at starting, and go to sleep.

I was awakened about three hours later by Hajji Safar for my morning tea, and passed the day in the post-house writing and making up my accounts. About sunset I received a visit from a Zoroastrian who was coming up to Yezd from Kirmán. He remained with me for about an hour, chatting and drinking tea, and informed me, amongst other things, that he had spent several years in Bombay and Calcutta; that the Governor of Kirmán, Prince Nasirudd-Dawla, was a most enlightened and popular ruler; that Kirmán was much cooler than Yezd, as proved by the fact that the mulberries were not yet ripe there, and that cucumbers were still scarcely to be obtained; that the poverty of the inhabitants, always great, had been increased by the depreciation in shawls, which fetched less than a third of their former price; but that, as against this, the crops, and especially the opium crop, had been remarkably good in the last year.

We left Sar-i-Yezd between three and four hours after sunset by the light of a nearly full moon, my Zoroastrian friend coming to bid me farewell and wish me God-speed. Amir Khan, who kept dozing off in his saddle, again led us astray; and, while we were wandering about amongst the sandhills, there reached our ears a faint cry, which, in that solitary and ghostly desert, caused us to start with surprise. Amir Khan, however, followed by myself, made for the spot whence it appeared to come, and there, huddled together between two sandhills, we presently discerned a group of about half a dozen persons (three men, three women, and, I think, one child at least) gathered round a diminutive donkey. As we approached, they again addressed us in tones of entreaty, but in a dialect which was to me quite unintelligible. Amir Khan, however, understood them. They were from the "City of Barbat" (Shahr-i-Barbar, which he explained, was near Sistan, on the eastern frontier of Persia), and were bound for Kerbelá, drawn thither by a longing desire to visit the place of martyrdom of the Imam Huseyn. They had lost their way in the desert and were sorely distressed by thirst, and the boon they craved was a draught of water. My heart was filled with pity for these poor people, and admiration for their faith and piety; and as I bade Hajji Safar give them to drink from the leather bottle he carried, there ran in my mind the words of Hafiz—

"Anche jân-i-‘āshikān az dast-i-bajrat mī-hāshad
Kas na-dīdē dar jihān, jāq tishmagān-i-Kerbelā."

"What the souls of thy lovers suffer at the hands of thy separation
None hath experienced in the world, save the thirsty ones of Kerbelá."
Thereat, and by the blessings and thanks which they poured forth as they gulped down the water, was my compassion still further moved, and I felt constrained to give them also a small piece of money. For this Amīr Khān warmly applauded me, as we rode off, telling the pilgrims that they were within a short distance of the village of Sar-i-Yezd. "Those who give," said he, "of that which God hath given them will never want, and those who will not give are not profited, even in this life, by their avarice. Only yesterday a beggar asked me for money. I replied that I had none, though I had three kyūns and a half in my pocket at that moment. But when I looked for these a little later, I found that they were gone, no doubt to punish me for my niggardly conduct."

After this incident the march continued in sleepy silence; but towards dawn Amīr Khān, who was riding beside me, suddenly woke up from his doze, and remarked, with complete irrelevance to anything that had gone before, "No sect are worse than the Bābīs."

"Why?" I enquired, wondering what had caused him to introduce spontaneously a subject generally avoided with the most scrupulous care by Persian Musulmāns.

"They worship as God," he replied, "a man called Mīrzā Husayn 'Alī, who lives at Adrianople. A friend of mine at Yezd once told me that he was going there. I asked why. 'To visit God' (bi-ziyarāt-i-Ḥākī), he answered. When he got there he was asked what was his occupation. 'None,' said he, 'save writing; for I am a scrivener by profession.' 'Then,' said they, 'there is no place for you here, and we do not want you.'

He was not allowed to see Mīrzā Husayn 'Alī at all, but was given a handkerchief which he had used, and invited to make an offering of three ṭūmāns. So he returned thoroughly disgusted, 'for,' said he, 'God does not take presents.'"

While I was considering how I should meet this sally, and whether Amīr Khān, knowing that I had had dealings with the Bābīs at Yezd, was anxious to warn me against them, he solved the difficulty by again dozing off into a fitful slumber, from which he awoke "between the wolf and the sheep" (meyān-i-yangūn-i-mīrī), as the Persians say—that is, at early dawn. As soon as he had collected his scattered wits, he cast his eyes round the horizon in hopes of being able to discern our next halting-place, Zeynu'd-Dīn, and, after some scrutiny, declared that we had passed it during his sleep, and that it was "over there" (pointing to a dark line on the plain behind us, some distance off the track which we were following). Luckily, warned by previous experience, I paid no heed to his opinion, and, supported by Hájí Şafar, insisted on continuing our advance, for which we were rewarded by finding ourselves in less than half an hour at Zeynu'd-Dīn, where there is nothing but a caravansaray and a very good post-house. I alighted at the latter, and, after a cup of tea, slept for about six hours.

Zeynu'd-Dīn is the last halting-place within the territories of Yezd, and consequently Amīr Khān had been instructed to accompany me only thus far on my journey, and to obtain for me another mounted guard belonging to the jurisdiction of the Governor of Kirmān. I had, however, no desire to avail myself of this unnecessary luxury, and hinted as much to Amīr Khān as I placed in his hand ten kyūns. He took the hint and the money with equal readiness, and we parted with mutual expressions of esteem. The evening was cloudy, with occasional gusts of wind, and every now and then a great pillar of sand or dust would sweep across the plain, after the fashion of the jinnīs in the Arabian Nights. The road presented little of interest, being ever the same wide ill-defined track, through a sandy plain enclosed between two parallel mountain chains, running from the north-west to the south-east. At one place I noticed a number of large caterpillars (larvae of Deilephila eucharis, I think), feeding on a kind of spurge which grew by the roadside. No trace of cultivation was visible till we came within a farsukh of
Kirmānshāhān, when we passed two or three villages at about the same distance to the east of the road. We reached Kirmānshāhān half an hour before sunset, and alighted at the post-house, which was the best I had seen in Persia. There are also two caravansarays, one old and one new. As no meat was obtainable, I made my supper of eggs fried in oil, and then went to sleep.

I woke about two hours before dawn to find the people of the post-house eating their morning meal preparatory to entering on the day’s fast. Hājī Šafar and the muleteer, however, were sleeping so peacefully that it seemed a shame to wake them, so I lay down again and slept for another two hours, when I was awakened by Hājī Šafar. It was quite light when we started, but this was of little advantage, as the scenery was precisely the same in character as on the previous day. The road, however, hugged the western range of mountains more closely, and indeed at one point we passed inside a few outlying hills. Kirmānshāhān was in sight for two hours and a quarter after we had left it, and we had no sooner crossed a slight rise which finally hid it from our view than we caught sight of the caravansaray of Shemsh, which, however, it took us nearly three hours more to reach.

A more dismal spot than Shemsh it would be hard to imagine. There is nothing but the aforesaid caravansaray and a post-house (singularly good, like all the post-houses between Yezd and Kirmān) standing side by side in the sandy, salt-strewn plain. As I rode up to the latter edifice, I saw a little stream, very clear and sparkling, carefully banked up between mud walls which conducted it into a small pond. Being overcome with thirst, I flung myself from my horse and dipped my face into it to get a long draught of what I supposed to be pure fresh water. To my disappointment it proved to be almost as salt as the sea. There was no other water to be had, and Hājī Šafar had thrown away what was left from Kirmānshāhān; nor did my hope that boiling might improve it, and that a decent cup of tea might at least be obtainable, prove well-founded. No one who has not tried it can imagine how nasty a beverage is tea made in a copper teapot with brackish water. Luckily my kind Zoroastrian friends had forced me to accept two bottles of beer from them as I was leaving Yezd, and these, in that thirsty wilderness, were as the very elixir of life. Even so the day was a horrible one, and seemed almost interminable. Swarms of flies, distant thunder, and a violent gusty wind increased my despondency; and the only discovery in which a visit to a neighbouring mud-ruin resulted was a large and very venomous-looking serpent. Altogether I was heartily glad to leave this detestable place about four and a half hours after sunset, by the light of a radiant moon.

The monotony of the march to the next stage, Anār, was only twice broken, first by meeting a string of twenty-five camels going up to Yezd, whose drivers greeted us with the usual “Firżat bāḥad!” (“May it be opportune!”); and secondly by the appearance of some wild beast which was prowling about by the road, but which, on our approach, shrank off into the desert. About dawn we arrived at Anār, a flourishing village containing a good many gardens, and surrounded by fields in which men were busy reaping the corn. Here we alighted at the post-house to rest and refresh ourselves before continuing our march to the next stage, Beyāz, which we reached without incident a little before sundown.

Beyāz is a small hamlet containing a few trees, and not devoid of signs of cultivation. Three or four camels were resting and taking their food in a field opposite the post-house, where I alighted in preference to the large but dilapidated caravansaray. Soon after our arrival, a party of mounted ghuláms rode up, and bivouacked outside under the trees. One of these, as Hājī Šafar informed me, was anxious to “challenge” my horse. This practice (called mawqéj bastan) I was surprised to find amongst the Persians, as I had hitherto only met with it in the pages of
Mr Sponge's Sporting Tour. For those not familiar with that entertaining work, I may explain how the transaction would have been conducted if I had given my consent (which, needless to say, I did not do). The ghulam who had “challenged” my horse suggested that the postmaster (nd ib-châpar) should act as umpire between the two animals, and to this Haji Safar (acting, as he chose to consider, as my representative) agreed. Haji Safar then informed the nd ib-châpar that I had bought my horse for thirty tâminas (as a matter of fact it had only cost me sixteen tâminas), but the latter valued it still higher, at thirty-five tâminas. However, he valued the ghulam’s horse at forty tâminas (it was probably worth twelve at the outside), so that the “award” was that my horse should “give” the ghulam’s horse five tâminas, or, in other words, that I should give the ghulam my horse and five tâminas in money for his horse.

We left Beyâz about four hours before sunset, and continued our south-easterly march along a track so ill-defined that I felt impelled to make a wide detour towards the telegraph-posts, which lay some distance to the east, in the expectation of finding something more like a high road. As dusk drew on the whole character of the country began to change: rivulets and streams intersected it in every direction; the air grew moist and damp, like that of a fen; and the night re-echoed with the shrill chirping of grasshoppers and the hoarse croaking of frogs. Once we lost our way amongst the ditches and cornfields, and floundered about for some time in the dark ere, rather by good luck than good management, we again struck the road. Flickering lights in the distance, probably will-o’-the-wisps, kept our hopes of speedy arrival alive; but it was only after repeated disappointments that the welcome outline of the post-house of Kushkûh loomed out, like some “moated grange,” through the darkness. We had to wake the postmaster ere we could gain admission, and no sooner was my bed spread in the porch of the bâld-khâni, or upper chamber, than I fell sound asleep, lulled by a chorus of frogs and grasshoppers, till supper-time, after which I again composed myself for slumber.

When Haji Safar brought me my tea next morning, he informed me that the muleteer, Ze nûl-i-Abidân, had decided to remain at Kushkûh, to rest his beasts after their forced marches of the last day or two, till sundown, so as to accomplish the seven long parasangs which separated us from the considerable town of Bahram-âbad (the capital of the district known as Rafsîn-jân) during the night. I was not sorry for the rest, and, though much pestered by flies, passed a tolerably comfortable day in the little post-house. We started by starlight about three hours after sunset, but in about an hour the moon rose up to light us on our way. The night was quite chilly and the march very tedious, and even when soon after dawn we sighted Bahram-âbad, a weary length of wilfully sinuous and serpentine road remained to be traversed ere we finally alighted at the post-house.

At Bahram-âbad I had a letter of introduction from Haji Seyyid M—— to the chief of the posts in that district, which, after lunch, I caused to be conveyed to him. He came to visit me without delay, and after sitting for a short time carried me off to his office in the caravansaray. While I was there several persons came to see him, amongst them a fine-looking young Khan of Rafsîn-jân, who had just returned from Sirjân by way of Pîrîz and Göd-i-âhmâr. He had with him the body of an enormous lizard (buz-majjî) which he had shot on the road. About three hours before sunset my host took me to his house and gave me tea, after which I was waited upon successively by deputations of Zoroastrians and Hindoos, both of which classes regard an Englishman as their natural friend and ally. The Zoroastrians were only three in number: one of them was Ardashîr Mihrabân’s agent, and of the other two one was an old man called Mihrabân, and the other a young man named Ardashîr. They told me that there were in all about twenty or twenty-five Zoroastrians in
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Bahrám-ábád; that their co-religionists in Kirmán were much less subject to insult and annoyance, and in all ways better off, than those in Yezd; and that the chief products of Rafsínján were, besides cereals, almonds and pistachio-nuts, which were exported to India.

After the departure of the Zoroastrians, the whole Hindoo community (save one, who was ill) waited upon me. There were fourteen of them, men and youths, all natives of Shikápúr, and they brought me as a present an enormous block of sugar-candy. One of them had recently been robbed of a large sum of money, and, as the Persian Governor could not succeed in capturing the thief, and would not make good the loss, he begged me to make a representation of the facts to the English Embassy at Téherán. I promised to come and inspect the scene of the outrage, if I had time, without further committing myself; and shortly afterwards the deputation withdrew. I remained to supper with the postmaster, who made me eat to repletion of his excellent pílad, washed down with a delicious sherbet, and strove to persuade me to stay the night with him; but I excused myself on the ground that the muleteer would probably wish to start. However, on arriving at the chdpár-khán, whither he insisted on accompanying me, I found that, as the morrow, 21st Ramažán, was the anniversary of the Imám ‘Alí’s death, and consequently an unlucky day, neither Háji Šáfí nor the muleteer wished to continue the march till the following evening.

I did not go out next day till about three hours before sunset, when the postmaster sent his servant to bring me to his house. I conversed with him for about two hours, and he enquired very particularly about the signs which should herald Christ’s coming, but did not make any further allusion to the beliefs of the Bábís, which, I believe, were his own. Our conversation was interrupted by the arrival of one of the Hindooos, who wished me to inspect the scene of the recent robbery, which I agreed to do. We found all the other Hindooos assembled in the caravan-saray where they lodged, and I was at once shown the inner room whence the safe (containing, as they declared, 400 támúds in cash, and 14,000 támúds in cheques and letters of credit) had been abstracted by the thieves, who, as it was supposed, had entered by the chimney. Ten or fifteen men had been arrested on suspicion by the Governor, Mízá Hidáyatulláh, but, as there was no sufficient evidence against any of them, they had been released. I took notes of these matters, and promised to bring them to the notice of some of my friends in the English Embassy if I got the chance; and we then conversed for a time, while I smoked a kalyán which they brought me. They questioned me closely as to the objects of my journey, and refused to credit my assertion that I was travelling for my own instruction and amusement, declaring that I must be an agent of the English Government.

“Why don’t you take Persia?” said one of them at length: “you could easily if you liked.”

“I suppose the thief who took your money put the same question to himself with regard to it,” I replied, “and yet you feel that you have a just ground of complaint against him. People have no right to take their neighbours’ property, even if they think they can do so with impunity, and states are no more entitled to steal than individuals.” The Hindooos appeared to be still unconvinced, and my sympathy for their loss was considerably abated.

I returned to the postmaster’s house for supper, after which he caused soft pillows and bolsters to be brought, and insisted on my resting for a couple of hours before starting. At the end of this time Háji Šáfí awoke me to tell me that the caravan was ready to start, and, after a final cup of tea and a hasty farewell to my kind host, I was once more on the road. We lost our way at the very start, and wandered about for some time in the starlight, until we came to one or two small houses. The nd-th-chdpár
of Bahrám-ábád, who had joined our party, hammered at the door of one of these till an old peasant, aroused from his sleep, came out, and directed us on our way. But this did not satisfy the šib-chápár, who compelled the poor old man to accompany us for a mile or so, which he rather unwillingly did; though two kyāns which I gave him as he was leaving us more than satisfied him for the trouble he had incurred.

About dawn, while still distant some two parasangs from our halting-place, Kabútar Khán, we passed a company of men, with a young girl enveloped in a white ch dádar, who were going down to Kirmán, and exchanged a few words with them. We reached the post-house of Kabútar Khán (which seemed to be entirely in the charge of a very quaint old woman) about an hour after sunrise, and remained there till about three hours after sunset, when we again set out for Bámín. The man who had been our companion on the previous stage again joined us, being now mounted on a very small donkey which he had hired for thirty šáháds (about twopence) to take him to Bámín. A little boy named 'Abbás accompanied the donkey, and several times the man dismounted to allow him to ride for a while, on which occasions he would break out into snatches of song in his sweet, childish voice.

Before we reached Bámín, the great broad plain running towards the south-east, which we had followed since leaving Yézd, began to close in, and mountains appeared in front of us, as well as on either hand. Soon after dawn we reached Bámín (which is a small village surrounded by a considerable extent of cultivated ground), and, as usual, put up at the post-house. Here we remained till four hours after sunset, when the mules were loaded up for the last time, for that night's march was to bring us to our journey's end. Our course now lay nearly due east, along a good level road; and when the dawn began to brighten over the hills before us, Kirmán, nestling, as it seemed, at the very foot of their black cliffs, and wrapped like one of her own daughters in a thin white mantle of mist and smoke, gladdened our straining eyes.

My original intention had been to alight in the first instance at the post-house, but as this proved to be situated at some distance outside the city walls, and as I was eager to be in the very centre of the town without further delay, I decided to take up my quarters instead at one of the caravansaries. It was fortunate that I did so; for events so shaped themselves that my sojourn at Kirmán, instead of lasting only ten days or a fortnight, as I then intended, was prolonged for more than two months; and, for reasons soon to be mentioned, it would probably have been difficult for me to have quitted the post-house if I had once taken up my abode there without offending my good friend the postmaster of Kirmán.

On entering the city we first made our way through the bazaars to the caravansary of the Vakil, which we were told was the best; but here there was no room to be had, so, after some delay, during which I was surrounded by a little crowd of sightseers, we proceeded to the caravansary of Háji 'Alí Áká, where I obtained a lodging. While the beasts were being unloaded I was accosted by two Zoroastrians, one of whom proved to be Ardashir Míhrábán's agent, Mullá Gushásp. (All the Zoroastrians in Kirmán are entitled "Mullá," even by the Muḥammas.) They came into my room and sat down for a while, and Gushásp told me that he had found a place for me to stay in during my sojourn at Kirmán in a garden outside the town. They soon left me, and, after a wash and a shave, I slept till nearly noon, when I was awakened by a farrásh from the telegraph-office, who was the bearer of a telegram from Cambridge, which had been sent on from Shíráz. The original, which, of course, was in English, arrived by post the same evening, and ran—"Please authorise name candidate for Persian readership, Neil." The Persian translation (made, I believe, at Káshán, where the wires from Shíráz and Kirmán to the capital
join) was as follows:—“Khwābīsh dadrūm idhīn bi-dīhid shumā’-rd bardyī mā’llimī-i-farsi takliīf kurn. Nil.” I was rather overwhelmed by the reflection that even here at Kirmān I was not beyond the reach of that irrepressible nuisance of this age of ours, electricity.

Hājī Ṣafār had already succeeded in discovering a relative in Kirmān (a cousin on his mother’s side, as I understood)—a sleek, wily-looking man of about fifty, generally known as “Nāʾīb Ḥasan”—whom he brought to see me. While he was with me, a Greek of Constantinople, who had turned Musulmān and settled in Kirmān, joined the party, and conversed with me a little in Turkish. Then came servants from the telegraph-office to enquire on the part of their master (a prince as well as a telegraphist, but then, as I have already remarked, princes are not rare in Persia) how I did, and when I would come and visit him (for I had an introduction to him from my friends at Yezd, who had also written to him about me); and hard on the heels of these came the son of the postmaster of Kirmān (to whom also I had letters of recommendation), so that I had hardly a moment’s leisure. This last visitor carried me off to see his father at the Central Post Office in the town. The postmaster, a kindly-looking man, past middle age, with a gray mustache and the rank of colonel (ṣurtīp), gave me a most friendly welcome, but reproached me for being a day later than he had been led to expect by the postmaster of Bahrām-ābād, who appeared to have sent him a message concerning me. “Although I am in poor health,” said he, “and am, as you see, lame in one foot, I rode out nearly three parasangs to meet you yesterday, for I wished to be the first to welcome you to Kirmān; and I also wanted to tell you that the chāpter-khānī, which is well built and comfortable, and is intended for a residence, is entirely at your disposal, and that I hope you will stay in it while you are here.”

I next proceeded to the telegraph-office to visit the prince, whom I found sitting at the instrument with his pretty little son opposite him. He in turn insisted that I should take up my abode at a new telegraph-office which had just been completed for him, and it was with great difficulty that I got him to acquiesce in the plan which I had formed of inspecting the three residences chosen for me in advance by my kind friends of Kirmān. Indeed I was somewhat embarrassed by their hospitality, for I was afraid that, whichever place I selected, I could hardly hope to avoid giving offence to the owners of the other two. As, however, it was clear that I could not live in all of them, I decided in my own mind that I would just choose the one I liked best; and accordingly, after I had conversed for a short while with the prince, I set off with the postmaster’s son to visit the chāpter-khānī to the north, and the Zoroastrian garden to the south, of the town.

The chāpter-khānī proved fully worthy of the praises bestowed on it by the postmaster, for the rooms in it were spacious, clean, and comfortable, and looked out on to a pleasant garden. We smoked a cigarette there, while horses were saddled to take us to the garden of the Zoroastrians. Thither we rode through the town, which we entered by the north gate (called Derwāzi-i-Sultānī) and quieted by the south gate (Derwāzi-i-Nāṣīrīyā). In the garden, which was just outside the latter, we found the two Zoroastrians who had first accosted me in the caravansaray, Ardashir’s agent, Guštāsp, and Feridūn, a man of about twenty-five years of age, with both of whom I afterwards became very intimate. After sitting for a while in the chaʿfāsī or summer-house, which stood in the middle of the garden, and partaking of the wine, ‘ārak, and young cucumbers which the Zoroastrians, according to their usual custom, had brought with them, we returned together to the caravansaray. Nāʾīb Hasan presently joined us, and outstayed all my other visitors. As he seemed inclined to take the part of confidential adviser, I informed him of the difficulty in which I was placed as to the selection of a lodging from the three proposed. After reflecting a moment,
he said, "Sāhib, you must of necessity run the risk of offending two out of three persons, and therefore, as you cannot avoid this, you need only consult your own inclination in the matter. If you accept the prince’s offer and take up your abode in the telegraph-office, you will be continually subjected to some degree of constraint, and will be always surrounded by inquisitive and meddlesome servants. If you go to the chāder-khana, you will be outside the city, and will only see the friends of the sartip of the post-office. In the guebres’ garden, on the other hand, you will be your own master, and will be free and unconstrained. My advice, therefore, is, that you should select the last, and make polite excuses to the prince and the sartip." As this counsel seemed good to me, I determined to act on it without delay; and it was arranged, at Nā’īb Hasan’s suggestion, that I should transfer myself and my possessions to the garden on the following morning, so that ere my apologies should reach the prince and the sartip the transfer might be an accomplished fact, admitting of no further discussion. Soon after this Nā’īb Hasan departed, and I was left at leisure to enjoy the welcome letters which that day’s post had brought me from home.

The move to the garden was duly effected on the following morning (Wednesday, 5th June, 25th Ramazán) with the help of Nā’īb Hasan, Feridún, and a Zoroastrian lad named Rustam, who was brother to my friend Bahman of Yezd. Of this garden, which was my residence for the next two months, I may as well give a brief description in this place. Its extent was several acres. It was entirely surrounded by a high but rather dilapidated mud wall. It was divided transversely (i.e. in a direction parallel to the main road leading to the Dervāz-i-Nāsirīyeh, or southern gate of the city, which bounded it to the west) by another mud wall (in which was a gap which served the purpose of a gate), and longitudinally by a stream—not one of the niggardly, three-hours-a-day streams of Yezd, but a deep, clear brook, in which I was often able to enjoy the luxury of a bathe. Besides the summer-house, or chār-fasî, of which I have already spoken, and which stood in the middle of the northern half of the garden, about half-way between the stream and the northern wall, there was a larger building, consisting of two rooms and a small courtyard, standing on the very edge of the stream. It was in this more spacious building that I established myself on my arrival, using the larger of the two rooms (which had windows to the east and south, the former looking out into the courtyard, the latter on to the stream) for myself, and leaving the smaller chamber at the back to Hājī Šafar and Mirzâ Yūsuf; but afterwards, when the heat waxed greater (though it was at no time severe), I lived for the most part in the little summer-house, which, being open to the air on all four sides, was cooler and pleasanter. From the larger building another wall ran westward towards the main road leading to the Dervāz-i-Nāsirīyeh, partially cutting off the south-west portion of the garden from that which I occupied. This south-west or outer part of the garden appeared to be in some measure public property, for often, as I passed through it to reach the gate, I saw groups of women washing their linen in the stream which traversed it. The garden had been originally planned and laid out by a former vizier of Kirmān (whose son, Mirzâ Jawād, a man of about fifty years of age, occupied a house in another garden not far distant from this), but he, ere his death (so, at least, I gathered), having fallen into disgrace and comparative poverty, it had been neglected and suffered to run wild, and was now let to some of the Zoroastrians, who used it chiefly for the cultivation of plants useful either as food or medicine. In truth it was rather a wilderness than a garden—albeit a fair and fragrant wilderness; and never a calm, clear summer night, sweet with the scent of the rose and melodious with the song of the nightingale, but I am again transported in the spirit to that enchanted ground. Is there one who dares to maintain that the East has lost its wonder, its charm, or its terror? Then he knows it not; or only knows that outer
crust of commonplace which, under the chill influence of Western utilitarianism and practical sense, has skimmed its surface.

CHAPTER XVI

KIRMĀN SOCIETY

"Har chand kā az rāyī karmān khojīthā,
Gham nist, kī pāwardā-i-in dh n gītān;
Dar rāyī zamān nist chā Kirmān jā't;
Kirmān dū-l-i-dīlam-ast, û mā abī-l-dīlān!"

Although we stand abashed in the presence of the noble,
It matters not, since we have drawn nourishment from this earth and water:
On the face of the earth there is no place like Kirmān;
Kirmān is the heart of the world, and we are men of heart.

In no town which I visited in Persia did I make so many friends and acquaintances of every grade of society, and every shade of piety and impiety, as at Kirmān. When I left I made a list of all the persons who had visited me, or whom I had visited, and found that the number of those whom I could remember fell but little short of a hundred. Amongst these almost every rank, from the Prince-Governor down to the mendicant dervish, was represented, as well as a respectable variety of creeds and nationalities—Belúchís, Híndooos, Zoroastrians, Shí‘ites and Sunnís, Sheykhís, Šábis, Bábís, both Behá‘í and Ezelí, dervishes, and Kálandars belonging to no order, fettered by no dogma, and trammeled by but few principles. Hitherto I had always been more or less dependent on the hospitality of friends, whose feelings I was obliged to consult in choosing my acquaintances; here in Kirmān the garden where I dwelt was open to all comers, and I was able without let or hindrance to pursue that object which, since my arrival in Persia, had been ever before me, namely, to familiarise myself with all, even the most eccentric and antinomian, developments.