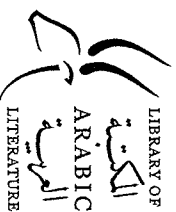


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The Epistle of Forgiveness

or

A Pardon to Enter the Garden

by

Abū l-'Alā' al-Ma'arrī

edited and translated by

GEERT JAN VAN GELDER

and

GREGOR SCHOELER

Volume One:

A Vision of Heaven and Hell

preceded by

Ibn al-Qāriḥ's Epistle



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*To our spouses, Sheila and Christa, asking their Forgiveness for
spending so many hours in al-Mā'arrī's company instead of theirs.*

The Sheikh's Story of his Resurrection, the Day of Judgement, and his Entry into Paradise

Then the Sheikh says (may God make him speak meritoriously when he says something, if his Lord will him to say something!):

I'll tell you my own story. After I got up and rose from my grave and had arrived at the Plane of Resurrection ("plane" being like "plain," with a different spelling),⁴⁹⁴ I thought of the Qur'anic verse, «To Him the angels and the Spirit ascend in a day the length of which is fifty thousand years. So be patient in a decent manner».⁴⁹⁵ It did seem a long time to me; I got parched and torrid (meaning "very hot, without a puff of wind"), as your friend al-Numayrī says:

The girls, in their wraps, are like ostrich eggs
exposed by drizzle and the heat of a sultry night.

I am easily desiccated (that is, "quick to thirst"), so I thought about my situation, which I found quite unbearable for someone like me. There came an angel to me, the one that had recorded all the good deeds I had performed. I found that my good deeds were few, as few as tussocks of grass in a year of destitution (a tussock being a tuft of vegetation, destitution being a drought). But my repentance at the end shone like a light, bright like a lamp for travelers at night.

When I had stood there for one or two months, fearing I would drown in my sweat, I persuaded myself that I should compose a few lines for Ridwān, Paradise's Porter Angel. I composed them on the meter and rhyme pattern of

Stop, you two, for the memory of a beloved, and the recognition...⁴⁹⁶

In them I incorporated the name of Ridwān. Then I jostled my way through the people until I stood where he could hear and see me, but he took no notice of me and I don't think he paid attention to what I said. I waited for a short while, perhaps ten days in earthly reckoning, and then I composed some lines on the pattern of

فَقُلْ، أَظْفَعَهُ اللهُ بِكُلِّ فَضْلٍ، إِنْ شَاءَ رَبُّهُ أَنْ يَقُولَ:

أَنَا أَقْصُ عَلَيْكَ قِصَّتِي: لَا نَهَضْتُ أَنْفَضُ مِنَ الرَّيَمِ، وَحَضَرْتُ حَرَصَاتِ الْقِيَامَةِ، وَالْمَرْصَاتِ مِثْلَ الْمَرْصَاتِ، أَبَدْتُ الْمَاءَ بِالْعَيْنِ، ذَكَرْتُ الْآيَةَ: ﴿تَمُوجُ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالرُّوحِ إِلَيْهِ فِي يَوْمٍ كَانَ مِقْدَارُهُ خَمْسِينَ أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ، فَأَصْبَحَ ضَرْبًا جَمِيلًا﴾ فَطَالَ عَلَيَّ الْأَمَدُ، وَاشْتَدَّ الظَّمَا وَالْوَمَدُ، وَالْوَمَدُ: شِدَّةُ الْحَرِّ وَسُكُوتُ الرِّيحِ، كَمَا قَالَ أَخُوكَ الْفَيْرِيُّ:

كَأَنَّ يَتَضُّعَايَ فِي مَلَا حَنْهَا جَلَاهُ طَلٌّ وَقَيْطٌ لِيْلِهِ وَبَمَدٌ

وَأَنَا رَجُلٌ مَهْيَافٌ، أَيْ سَيِّحُ الْعَطَشِ، فَافْتَكَرْتُ فَرَيْتَ أَمْرًا لَا تَوَامُ لِمِثْلِي بِهِ. وَلَقِيَنِي الْمَلَكُ الْخَفِيفُ بِمَا تُرِبُّ مِنْ فَعْلِ الْحَرِّ، فَوَجَدْتُ حَسَنَاتِي قَلِيلَةً كَالْثَنَاءِ فِي الْعَامِ الْأَوَّلِ، وَالثَّنَاءُ الرِّيَاضُ، وَالْأَوَّلُ قَلِيلُ الْمَطَرِ. إِلَّا أَنَّ التَّوْبَةَ فِي آخِرِهَا كَانَتْهَا مَصْبَاحُ أَيْلٍ، رَفَعَ لِسَالِكَ السَّبِيلِ.

فَلَمَّا أَقْبَسْتُ فِي الْمَوْقِفِ رُحَاءَ شَهْرٍ أَوْ شَهْرَيْنِ، وَخَفْتُ فِي الْمَرْقِ مِنَ الْعَرَقِ، نَبَيْتُ ١٨٢١١
لِي النَّفْسِ الْكَاذِبَةَ أَنَّ أَنْظِمَ أَيْيَاتًا فِي رِضْوَانِ، خَازِنِ الْجَنَانِ، عَمَلَتَهَا فِي وَرْزِنِ:

فَقَدْ تَبَاكَ مِنْ ذِكْرِي حَبِيبَ وَعِصْرَفَانِ

وَوَسَّيْتُهَا بِرِضْوَانِ. ثُمَّ ضَاكَتْ النَّاسُ حَتَّى وَقَفْتُ مِنْهُ بِحَيْثُ يَسْمَعُ وَيَرَى، فَمَا حَصَلَ بِي، وَلَا أَظُنُّهُ أَبَةً لَمْ أَقُولَ. فَغَبِرْتُ بُرْهَةً، نَحَرَ عَشْرَةَ أَيَّامٍ مِنْ أَيَّامِ الْغَنَاءِ، ثُمَّ عَمَلْتُ أَيْيَاتًا فِي وَرْزِنِ:

بأن الخليط ولو طُورِغِث ما بانا وتظلموا من جبال الوصل أقرانا

ورسيتها برضوان، ثم دونت منه ففعلت كلها الأولى، فكأنني أحرك شيرك، وألتبس من الغصير عيرك، والغصير: ثراب يشبه الجص، فلم أزل أتبع الأوزان التي يمكن أن يؤتم بها رضوان حتى أفيتها، وأنا لا أجد عنده مغرقة، ولا ظليته فجم ما أقول، فلما استقصيت الغرض فما أبحث، دعوت بأعلى صوتي: يا رضوان، يا أمين الجبار الأعظم على الفرائس، ألم تسمع ندائي بك واستغاثتي إليك؟

فقال: لقد سمعتك تذكر رضوان وما علمت ما مقصديك، فما الذي تطلب أيها المسكين؟ فأقول: أنا رجل لا صبر لي على الأبواب، أي العطش، وقد استطلت مذمة الحساب، ومعي صاك بالثوبة، وهي للذنوب كلها ماحية، وقد مدحتك بأشعار كثيرة ووسيتها باسمك.

فقال: وما الأشعار؟ فإني لم أسمع بهذه الكلمة قط إلا الساعة. فقلت: الأشعار جمع شعر، والشعر كلام موزون يتبعه الغرزة على شرائط، إن زاد أو نقص أباه الجس، وكان أهل العاجلة يتقربون به إلى الملوك والسادات، فجئت بشيء منه إليك لعلك تأذن لي بالدخول إلى الجنة في هذا الباب، فقد استطلت ما الناس فيه، وأنا ضعيف ممين؛ ولا ريب أنني ممن يرحو المغرقة، وتصح له بمشيئة الله تعالى. فقال: إنك لغيرين الرأي! أتأمل أن آذن لك بغير إذن من رب الرقة؟ هيئات هيئات! ﴿وَأَنى لِّهْمَدُ التَّائِبِشُ مِنْ مَكَانٍ يَعِيدُ﴾.

فتركه وانصرفت بأعني إلى خازن آخر يقال له رقر، فعلمت كلمة ووسيتها باسمه ٢٠١١ في وزن قول لبيد:

سَجَّ ابْنَيْ أَن يَعِيشَ أَبُوهُمَا وهل أنا إلا من برية أومض

ورثت منه فأنشدتها، فكأنني إنما أخاطب ركدًا صمًا، لاستنزل أبعادًا.

١ في كل النسخ (الغصير) وهو تصحيف.

The Sheikh's Story of his Resurrection, the Day of Judgement, and his Entry into Paradise

The gathered clans have parted. If I'd had my way,
they wouldn't have. They severed bonds of loving union.⁴⁰⁷

Again I mentioned Riqdān in it; I approached him and did as before. But he did not appear to hear: it was as if I tried to move Mount Thabir, or attempted to extract scent from cement ("cement" being a mixture of limestone and clay). Then I continued with all other metrical patterns that could accommodate "Riqdān" until I had exhausted them; but still he did not help me and I don't think he even understood what I said. When I had tried everything without success I cried out as loud as I could, "Riqdān, who are trusted by the Omnipotent Almighty, charged with guarding Paradise! Can't you hear me calling on you for help?"

He replied, "I heard you mention Riqdān, but I had no idea that you meant me. What do you want, poor wretch?" I said, "I am a man who cannot endure to be dehydrated (that is, 'thirsty'); it is for the Reckoning that I have waited and waited. I've got my Document of Repentance, which cancels all my sins. I have composed numerous poems in praise of you, mentioning you by name!"

Riqdān asked, "Poems, what's that? This is the first time I have heard that word." I replied: "Poems' is the plural of 'poem', which is speech that is metrical and, on certain conditions, sounds pleasant. If the meter is defective, either by an excess or a shortfall, one notices it. People in the Temporal World used to ingratiate themselves with kings and lords by means of poems. So I composed some for you, hoping that you might let me enter Paradise by this gate. I think people have waited long enough now. I am only a weak, feeble person. Surely I am someone who may hope for forgiveness, and rightly so, if God the Exalted wills." But Riqdān said, "Do you expect me to allow you to enter without permission from the Lord of Glory, you dimwit? Forget it! Forget it! «How could they attain it from a remote place?»"⁴⁰⁸

So I left him and, expectantly, turned to a guard who was called Zufar. For him I composed a poem, mentioning him by name, on the meter of Labid's line:

My two daughters hope their father will live;
but don't I belong to Rabī'ah or Muḍar?⁴⁰⁹

I approached him and recited the poem; but it was as if I was speaking to a mute and solid rock in the end, trying to get a wild ibex to descend.⁴¹⁰ I composed poems using the name Zufar in every possible meter and rhyme, but to no avail each time. I said, "God have mercy on you! In the Past World

ولم أترك ورثاً مقيماً ولا مظلماً يجوز أن يُرسم برفق إلا وسعته به، فما نجح ولا غير. فقلت: رحماك الله! كما في الدار الناهية تقترب إلى الرئيس والملك باليتين أو الثلاثة، فجد عنده ما نحب، وقد نظمتُ فيك ما لو جُمع لكان ديواناً، وكان ما سمعت لي رَجْمَةً، أي كلمة، فقال: لا أشمر بالذي حمست، أي قصدت، وأحسب هذا الذي تجبني به قرآن إبليس المارد، ولا يفتق على الملائكة، إنما هو للجان وعلموه ولد آدم، فما بُيتك؟ فذكرت له ما أريد، فقال: والله ما أقدر لك على نفع، ولا أملك لخلق من شفع، فمن أي الأم أنت؟ فقلت: من أمة محمد بن عبد الله بن عبد المطلب. فقال: صدقت، ذلك نبي العرب، ومن تلك الجهة أتيتي بالترض، لأن إبليس العين فتحة في إقليم العرب فغصمه نساء ورجال. وقد رجب علي صُحفك، فليك بصاحبك لعله يتوصل إلى ما ابتغيت.

فبست مما عنده، فجعلت أتخلل العالم، فإذا أنا برجل عليه نور يتلألأ، وحواليه رجال ٤١١ تألق منهم أنوار. فقلت: من هذا الرجل؟ قيل: هذا حمزة بن عبد المطلب صريح وحشي، وهو لاء الذين حوله من استشهد من المسلمين في أحد. فقلت لفسى الكذوب: الشعر عند هذا اتفق منه عند خازن الجنان، لأنه شاعر، وأخته سُمر، وكلاك أبوهم وجد، ولعل ليس بينه وبين معدن عدنان إلا من قد نظم شيئاً من موزون، فعمت ألياً على منتهج آيات كُتب بن مالك التي رثى بها حمزة، وأولها:

صِفَةٌ ثَوِيَّةٌ وَلَا تَجْكَرِي وَبَكِي النِّسَاءِ عَلَى حَفْزَةٍ

وجئت حتى وليت منه فناديت: يا سيد الشهداء، يا عم رسول الله صلى الله عليه، يا ابن عبد المطلب! فلما أقبل علي بوجهه أنشدته الأبيات. فقال: ويحك! أني مثل هذا الوطن تجبني بالمديح؟ أما سمعت الآية: ﴿كُلُّ امْرِئٍ مِثْهُ يَوْمَئِذٍ شَانٌ يُغْنِيهِ﴾ فقلت: بلى قد سمعتها، وسمعت ما بعدها: ﴿وَجُوهُ يَوْمَئِذٍ سِفَرٌ، ضَاحِكَةٌ مُسْتَبْشِرَةٌ، وَجُوهٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ غَافِرٌ، تَرْتَهِّطُهَا، أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْكَافِرَةُ الْغَافِرَةُ﴾. فقال: إني لا أقدر على ما تطلب. ولكي أُنفذ منك توك، أي رسولا، إلى ابن أخي علي

The Sheikh's Story of his Resurrection, the Day of Judgement, and his Entry into Paradise we would seek the favor of leaders and kings with two or three lines of verse and our wishes would be fulfilled; but for you I have composed enough to fill a tome of Collected Poems and still you don't seem to have heard one susurrus, i.e., a whisper!"

He replied, "I have no idea what you are expostulating (i.e., 'talking about'). I suppose all that jabbering of yours is the Qur'an of the Devil, that rebel! But the angels won't buy it! It belongs to the jinn, who have taught it to Adam's children. Now what do you want?"

I explained what I wanted. He said, "By God, I can't help you in what you need; for humans I cannot intercede. What community are you from?" "The community of Muhammad ibn 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib," I answered. "Ah, yes," he said, "the prophet of the Arabs. So that is why you have come to me with that poetry, because the accursed Devil spat it out in the lands of the Arabs, where women and children learned it. I'll give you some good advice: look for your friend and perhaps he will be able to let you have your way."

Thus I despaired of him. I worked my way through the multitude. Then I saw 11.4 a man bathed in a glimmering of light, surrounded by others who shone with bright light. I asked, "Who is that man?" They said, "That is Ḥanzah ibn 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib, the one who was killed by Waḥshi; those around him are those Muslims who died as martyrs at Uhud." Inspired with false hope I said to myself: poetry will work better with Ḥanzah than with the Porter of Paradise, because Ḥanzah is a poet, as were his brothers and his father and his grandfather. It could well be that each and every one of his forefathers from Ma'add ibn 'Adnan on have composed verses. So I composed some lines after the model of Ka'b ibn Malik's elegy⁴¹ on Ḥanzah, which opens with

Ṣafīyah, get up, don't be weak!

Let the women weep for Ḥanzah!

I approached him and called out: "Lord of martyrs, uncle of God's messenger! Son of 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib!" When he turned to me I recited the verses. But he said, "Shame upon you! Must you eulogize me here, of all places? Haven't you heard this Qur'anic verse: ⁴² «Every man of them that day will have enough to preoccupy him?»" "Yes," I said, "I've heard it, and I've also heard what follows: «Some faces that day will be bright, laughing and expecting delight; other faces that day will be glum, by gloom overcome: these are the unbelievers, the sinners»!" He replied, "I can't do what you ask, but I will

بن أبي طالب، لخطاب النبي، صلى الله عليه، في أمرك.

١٥٥١١ فبعث معي رجلاً، فلما قص قصتي على أمير المؤمنين، قال: أين يتشك؟ يعني صحيفة حساني. وكنت قد رأيت في الحشر شيئاً لما كان يدرس الفخر في الدار العاجلة، يُعرف بأبي علي الناصري، وقد امدتس به قوم يطالبونه، ويقولون: تأوَّلت علينا وظلمتاً. فلما رأني أشار إلي يده، فحنته فإذا عنده طيبه، معهم يزيد بن الحكم الكلبي، وهو يقول: يحك، أنشدت عني هذا البيت برفع الماء، يعني قوله:

فليت گهاگ كان شكرك كنه وخيزك عني ما ذرتي الماء مُرتوي

ولم اقل إلا الماء. وكذلك زعمت أني فحنت اليم في قولي:

بَدَل خيالِابي كسكانك سَكاه فاني خيالاً صالحاً بك مشغوي

وإنما قلت: مُشغوي بضم اليم.
وإذا هناك راجر يقول: تأوَّلت علي أني قلت:

يا إيلي ما ذنبه فتأنيبه؟ ماءً راء ونصبي حوليّه

فكرت الياء في تأنيبه والله ما فعلت ولا غيري من العرب وإذا رجل آخر يقول:
اذعيت علي أن الهاء راجعه علي الدّرس في قولي:

هذا سراقه للقرآن يدُرُسُهُ ولله عند الرّشا إن يلقيها ذيب

أفجحنُ أنا حتى أعتد ذاك؟

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send a nuncio (meaning a 'messenger') along with you to my nephew 'Alī ibn Abī Tālib, who can speak to the Prophet, God bless him, on your behalf."

He sent a man with me. When he had told my story to the Commander of the Believers,⁴¹³ the latter asked, "Where is your evidence?" He meant the document with my good deeds.⁴¹⁴

11.5.1

The conversation
with 'Alī ibn Abī
Tālib

At the assembling place I had seen an elderly man who used to teach us grammar in the Fleeing World. He was called Abū 'Alī al-Fārisī. Some people had thrown themselves upon him to call him to account, saying "You have misinterpreted us and wronged us!" When he saw me he beckoned me with his hand, so I went over to him. There was a whole group with him, including Yazīd ibn al-Ḥakam al-Kilābī, who was saying, "Shame on you, you recited the following verse by me on my authority, the word 'water' (*al-mā'*) in the nominative!"—He meant his verse

If only all your evil and your good deeds
were kept from me, for as long as a drinker drinks water to quench his
thirst

—"But I put 'water' in the accusative!"⁴¹⁵ Likewise, you asserted that I said *maḡṭawī* in my verse:

Take another friend instead of me, someone who looks like you,
for I shall get myself a good and decent friend in your place!

"for I said *maḡṭawī*, with *u*!"⁴¹⁶

There was a *rajjaz* poet,⁴¹⁷ who said, "You have foisted on me a wrong reading of my verse:

Camels of mine, what is his crime that you should scorn him?

There is fresh water and tender thistles around him!

"for you read *taḥayyāh*"⁴¹⁸ instead of *taḥayh* ('you scorn him'). By God, I have never said that, nor has any other Arab!"

There came another man, who said, "You have charged me with thinking that the pronoun 'it' refers to an implied 'studying' in my verse:

Here's this Surāḡah: the Qur'an, he studies it,

whereas the man, with bribes if he can get them, is a wolf.

"Would I be so mad as to believe that?"⁴¹⁹

وإذا جماعة من هذا الجنس كلهم يلومونه على تأويله. فقلت: يا قوم، إن هذه أمور هينة، فلا تعتبرها هذا الشيخ، فإنه يثبت في القرآن المعروف بكتاب الحق، وأنه ما سناك لكم دماً، ولا احتج عنكم مالا، ففترقوا عنه.

٢٠٥،١١ وسُئِلْتُ بِحُطابِهِم وَالنَّظَرُ فِي حَوِيرِهِمْ، فَسَقَطَ مِنِّي الْكَتَابُ الَّذِي فِيهِ ذَكَرُ الثَّوْبَةِ،

فَجَعَلْتُ أَطْلُبُهُ فَمَا وَجَدْتُهُ.

فأظهرت الولة والجرح، فقال أمير المؤمنين: لا عليك، ألك شاهد بالتوبة؟ فقلت: نعم، قاضي حلب وعدولها. فقال: بمن يعرف ذلك الرجل؟ فأقول: بعد النعم بن عبد الكريم قاضي حلب، حرسها الله، في أيام شبيل الدولة.

فأقام هاتفاً يهتف في الموقف: يا عبد النعم بن عبد الكريم قاضي حلب في زمان شبيل الدولة، هل معك علم من توبة علي بن منصور بن طالب الحلبي الأديب؟ فلم يجبه أحد. فأخذني الحاكم والقل، أي الزبدة، ثم هتف الثانية، فلم يجبه. فخرج بي عند ذلك، أي صرعت إلى الأرض، ثم نادى الثالثة، فأجابه قائلاً يقول: نعم، قد شهدت توبة علي بن منصور، وذلك بأجرة من الوقت، وحضرت منابه عندي جماعة من العدول، وأنا يومئذ قاضي حلب وأعمالها، والله المستعان. فعندها نهضت وقد أخذت الرثق، فذكرت لأمير المؤمنين، عليه السلام، ما أنتم، فأعرض عني وقال: إنك تآروم حداداً ممتنعاً، ولك أسوة بولد أليك آدم.

٢٠٦،١١ وهمت بالجوز، فكنت لا أصل إليه، ثم قُبِيتُ مِنْهُ نُقْبَاتٍ لَا ظُماً بَعْدَهَا: وَإِذَا الْكَلْبَةُ يَكُونُ أَنْفُسُهُمْ عَلَى الْوَرْدِ، فَتَدْرُسُمُ الرِّبَانِيَّةَ بِعَصِيٍّ تَضْطَرُّمُ نَارًا، فَيَرْجِعُ أَحَدُهُمْ وَقَدْ احْتَرَقَ وَجْهُهُ أَوْ يَدُهُ وَهُوَ يَدْعُو بَوَيْلَ وَيُورِدُ. فَطُفْتُ عَلَى الْعِدَّةِ الْمُنْتَجِبِينَ فَقُلْتُ: إِنِّي كُنْتُ فِي الدَّارِ الذَّاهِبَةِ إِذَا كُتِبَتْ كَكَا وَفُزِغَتْ مِنْهُ قُلْتُ فِي آخِرِهِ: وَصَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ خَاتَمِ النَّبِيِّينَ، وَعَلَى عِزَّتِهِ الْأَخْيَارِ الطَّيِّبِينَ.

١ رواية الأصل (جداً).

A throng of such people came, all of whom blamed him for his interpretations; but I said: "People, these are trivial things! Don't be so hard on this learned old man. At least he can boast of being the author of his book on the Qur'an, *The Proof*!"⁴²⁰ It is not as if he has shed your blood or stolen your money!"

Then they left him and went their various ways.

Now while I was busy addressing them and discussing their complaints, I had dropped the writing that mentioned my repentance. I went back to look for it but could not find it!

I displayed much confusion and distress. But the Commander of the Believers said, "Don't worry. Did anybody witness your repentance?"⁴²¹ "Yes," I replied, "the qadi of Aleppo and his notaries." "What's his name?" "Abd al-Mun'im ibn 'Abd al-Karim, the qadi of Aleppo (may God guard it!) in the days of Shibl al-Dawlah."

He got a crier to stand up and call out: "Abd al-Mun'im ibn 'Abd al-Karim, qadi of Aleppo in Shibl al-Dawlah's time! Have you any knowledge of the repentance of 'Ali ibn Mansur ibn Talib (ibn al-Qatir), the Aleppine man of letters?"

But no one answered. I was dismayed and began to tremulate, i.e., to tremble. The man cried out a second time, and again nobody answered. I fell into a swoon, i.e., I fainted. Then he cried a third time, and someone spoke up: "Yes, I have witnessed the repentance of 'Ali ibn Mansur, in the nick of time!"⁴²² And a number of notaries were present at my place when he repented. I was then the qadi of Aleppo and adjacent districts. It is God whom we ask for succor!"

At that I got up and was able to breathe again. I told the Commander of the Believers (peace be upon him) what I wanted, but he turned away, saying, "You want something impossible. Follow the example of the other children of your forefather Adam!"

١١.6.1 I wanted to get to the Basin⁴²³ but had real trouble getting there. I drank a

few gulps after which there would never be any thirst. The unbelievers also tried to reach the water, but the Angels of Hell drove them away with sticks that burned like fire, so that they retreated, with scorched faces or hands, wailing and squealing. I walked to the Chosen Progeny⁴²⁴ and said, "In the Past World I always wrote at the end of any book of mine: 'God bless our lord Muhammad, the Seal of Prophets, and his excellent and good descendants,'⁴²⁵ to show my respect and hoping for a favor." They said, "What can we do for you?" I replied, "Our lady Fatimah (peace be upon her) entered

The conversation with Fatimah, the Prophet's daughter

وهذه حُرمة لي ووسيلة، فقالوا إنما نضع بك؟ فقلت: إن مؤلثنا فاطمة، عليها السلام، قد دخلت الجنة مذمور، ولأنها تخرج في كل حين مقدار أربع وعشرون ساعة من الدنيا النافية قسماً على أبيها، وهو قائم لشهادة القضاء، ثم تعود إلى مستقرها من الجنان، فإذا هي خرجت كالعادة، فاسألوا في أمري بأجمعكم، فلمعلمها تسأل أباها في.

فإنما حان خروجها ونادي الهاتف أن عضواً أبصاركم يا أهل الموقف حتى تغير فاطمة بنت محمد، صلى الله عليه، اجتمع من آل أبي طالب خلق كثير من ذكرور وإنائي، من لم يشرب خمر، ولا عرف قط منكم. فلقوها في بعض السبيل، فلما رأتهن قالت: ما بال هذه الزرافة؟ ألكم حال تُذكر؟ فقالوا: نحن بخير، إننا نلذ بخبيب أهل الجنة، غير أننا مجبوسون للكلمة السابقة، ولا يزيد أن تشفع إلى الجنة من قبل المليات، إذ كنا آمينين ناعين بدليل قوله: ﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ سَبَقَتْ لَهُمْ مِنَّا الْحَسَنَةُ أُولَٰئِكَ عَتَا مَعْبُودُونَ. لَا يَسْمَعُونَ حَسِيسَةً وَهُوَ فِي أَشْوَاطٍ مُّقْتَصِدِينَ لَا يَخِرُّونَ مِنَ الرُّوحِ الْأَكْبَرِ، وَيَتَلَقَّوهُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ. هَٰذَا يُؤْمَرُ الَّذِي كَثُرَ عُدُونُ﴾

وكان فيهم علي بن الحسين وإياه محمد وزيد، وغيرهم من الأبرار الصالحين. ومع فاطمة، عليها السلام، امرأة أخرى تجري جراها في الشرف والجلالة، فقيل: من هذه؟ فقيل: خديجة ابنة خويلد بن أسد بن عبد المطلب.

ومعها شباب على أفراس من نور. فقيل: عبد الله والاسم والطيب والطاهر وإبراهيم؛ بنو محمد، صلى الله عليه. فقلت تارك الجماعة التي سألت: هذا وبي من أوليائنا، قد صحت توبته، ولا ريب أنه من أهل الجنة، وقد توسل بنا إليك، صلى الله عليك، في أن يراح من أهوال الموقف، ويصير إلى الجنة فيجعل الفرد.

فقلت لأخيها إبراهيم، صلى الله عليه، دوئك الرجل. فقال لي: تعلّق بركابي. وجعلت تارك الخيل تحال الناس وتكشف لها الأم والأجيال، فلما عظم الزحام

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Paradise ages ago. But from time to time she leaves it for twenty-four hours, by the reckoning of the Transitory World, to greet her father who is busy testifying for God's Judgement. Then she returns to her place in Paradise. Now when she appears as usual, please could you all ask her on my behalf? Perhaps she will ask her father to help me."

When the time had come for her to emerge a crier called out: "Lower your eyes, people that stand here, until Fāṭimah, the daughter of Muḥammad (God bless him) has passed." A large number of men and women of Abū Ṭālib's family gathered, people who had never drunk wine or done evil things, and they came to meet her on her way. When she saw them she asked, "What is this crowd? Is anything the matter?" They answered, "We are fine; we enjoy the presents from those that dwell in Paradise. But we are being kept here because of the «word that preceded»;⁴²⁶ we do not want to enter Paradise precipitously, before our time. We are safe and having a good time, on account of God's word:⁴²⁷ «Those who have already been given the finest thing that came from Us, they shall be kept far from it, nor shall they hear any sound of it but they shall forever be in what their souls desire, the greatest distress shall not grieve them and the angels shall receive them: this is your day, that you have been promised!»"

‘Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn and his two sons, Muḥammad and Zayd, were among them, with other pious and righteous persons. Next to Fāṭimah (peace be upon her) stood another woman, who resembled her in nobility and majesty. People asked, "Who is she?" The answer was: "That is Khadijah, daughter of Khuwaylid ibn Asad ibn ‘Abd al-‘Uzzā."

With her were some young men, riding horses of light. People asked, "Who are they?" They were told: "They are ‘Abd Allāh, al-Qāsim, al-Ṭayyib, al-Ṭāhir, and Ibrāhīm, the sons of Muḥammad (God bless him)."⁴²⁸ Then those whom I had asked said, "This man is one of our followers. His repentance is genuine and there can be no doubt that he will be among those in Paradise. He turns to you in supplication, God bless you, that he may be relieved from the terrors of this Place of Judgment, that he may enter Paradise and hasten to attain the triumph."

Thereupon Fāṭimah said to her brother Ibrāhīm (God bless him), "You look after this man!" He said to me, "Hold on to my stirrup." The horses then passed through the throng, whole nations and peoples making way for us. Where the

طارت في الهواء، وأنا متعلق بالركاب، ففقت عند محمّد، صلى الله عليه وسلم.

١٠٨١١ فقال: من هذا الأثاوي؟ أي الغريب، فقالت له: هذا رجل سأل فلان وفلان، وبنت جماعة من الأئمة الطاهرين، فقال: حتى يُنظر في عمله. فسأل عن عملي فوجد في الديوان الأعظم وقد ختم بالبوية، فشفع لي، فاذن لي في الدُخول. ولما انصرفت الزهراء، عليها السلام، تعلقت بركاب إبراهيم، صلى الله عليه.

١٠٨١١ فلما خلاصت من تلك الظموش، قيل لي: هذا الصراط فاعبر عليه. فوجدته خاليا لا غريب عنده فبرزت نفسي في العبور، فوجدني لا أستمسك. فقالت الزهراء، صلى الله عليها، لجارية من جوارها: يا فالانة اجيزيه. فجعلت تُمارسني وأنا أتساقط عن عيني وشمال، فقلت: يا هذه، إن أردت سلامتي فاستعجلي معي قول الثائل في المار الماحلة:

سيت إن أعياء أمري فاحمليني رقبوني

فقلت: وما رقبوني؟ قلت: أن يطرح الإنسان يديه على كفي الآخر، ويُسك الحامل يديه، ويكله ويطنه، إلى ظهوره، أما سمعت قول الجلول من أهل كهرطاب:

صلحت حالي إلى الخلف حتى صرّث أُمسي إلى الزرى رقبوني

فقلت: ما سمعت رقبوني، ولا الجلول، ولا كهرطاب، إلا الساعة. فتجني وتجوز كابرق الخاطف. فلما جرّث، قالت الزهراء، عليها السلام: قد وهبنا لك هذه الجارية فخذها كي تخدمك في الجنان.

١٠٨١١ فلما صرّث إلى باب الجنة، قال لي رضوان: هل معك من جواز؟ فقلت: لا. فقال لا سبيل لك إلى الدخول إلا به فيمك بالأمر، وعلى باب الجنة من داخل شجرة صنّصاف، فقلت: أعطني ورقة من هذه الصنّصافة حتى أرجع إلى الموقف

The Sheikh's Story of his Resurrection, the Day of Judgement, and his Entry into Paradise crowd was too dense they flew up in the air, while I was holding on to the stirrup. They halted at Muhammad (God bless him and give him peace).

The Prophet asked, "Who is this alien?" (meaning "stranger"). Fāṭimah replied, "This is a man for whom So-and-so and So-and-so have interceded." She named some of the Pure Imams.⁴²⁹ He said, "First one must look at his works." He inquired about them and they were found in the Grand Register, sealed with Repentance. Then he interceded for me and I was permitted entrance. When Fāṭimah, the Resplendent (peace be upon her), returned I grabbed the stirrup of Ibrāhīm (God bless him).

Having thus left the multitudes behind me I was told: "This is the Bridging Path, now cross it!"⁴³⁰ I noticed it was empty, not one soul on it. I braced myself to cross but I found that I could not control myself. Fāṭimah, the Resplendent (God bless her), said to a servant girl of hers, "Girl, help him cross!" The girl began to push and pull me while I was tottering to the right and the left. "Girl, I said, "If you want me to arrive safely, then do with me as the poet put it in the Temporary World:

Madam, if I'm tiring you,
then let me ride you piggyback."

"Piggyback," she asked, "what is that?" "That is when you put your hands on someone's shoulders, who holds your hands and carries you, belly-to-back. Haven't you heard the line by al-Jalālūl from Kafr Tāb,⁴³¹ when he says:

My scare improved backward
until I began to move piggybackward."⁴³²

She replied, "I've never heard of piggyback, or al-Jalālūl, or Kafr Tāb before!" She picked me up and crossed like a bolt of lightning. When I reached the other side Fāṭimah, the Resplendent (peace be upon her), said, "I am giving you this girl. Take her and she will serve you in Paradise."

When I arrived at the gate of Paradise, Ridwān asked, "Have you got your permit?" "No," I said. "Then you can't enter." I was desperate. I saw at the gate, just inside Paradise, a willow tree. I asked, "Can I have a leaf of that willow tree, so that I can go back to the Place of Judgement and get a permit, written on that leaf?" "I won't let anything leave Paradise without permission from the Most High, sanctified and blessed be He." I was at my wits' end

11.7
The Prophet's
intercession

11.8.1
The crossing of
the Bridging Path

11.8.2

The second
conversation
with Ridwān,
the entry into
Paradise

فأخذ عليها جوراً، فقال: لا أخرج شيئاً من الجنة إلا بأذني من العليّ الأعلى، تقدّس
وتبارك. فلما دجرت بالنازلة، قلت: إنا لله وإنا إليه راجعون! لو أن الأمير أبي المرحى
حازناً مثلك، ما وصلت أنا ولا غيري إلى قوقفي من خزانته. والقرقوف: الدرهم.
والنت إبراهيم، صلى الله عليه، فرآني وقد تخلفت عنه، فرجع إليّ فجذبني
جذباً حصّاني بها في الجنة. وكان مُتأني في الموقف مدة ستة أشهر من شهر
العاجلة، فلذلك بقي عليّ حفطي ما زنته الأهوال، ولا نهكته تدقيق الحساب.

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at this new blow and said, "We belong to God and to Him we shall return!
If Abū l-Murajā, the Emir, had had a treasurer like you we would never have
received a groat from his coffers." (A groat is a silver coin worth fourpence).

But then Ibrāhīm (God bless him) turned around! He saw me—I had
stayed behind. Now he came back and he dragged me along with him and
brought me into Paradise. I had spent six months, earthly reckoning, at the
Place of Judgment. That is why my memory is still intact: the horrors have
not depleted it, nor has the detailed Reckoning weakened it.

Between Paradise and Hell

١٥١٥ ويدو له أن يطلع إلى أهل النار فينظر إلى ما هم فيه ليحسب شكره على النعم، بديل قوله تعالى: ﴿قَالَ قَائِلٌ مِنْهُمْ: إِنِّي كَانَ لِي قَوْمٌ يَقُولُ إِنَّكَ لَبِئْسَ الْمُصَدِّقِينَ، إِذَا مِتْنَا وَكُنَّا بِأَعْيُنِنَا إِنَّا لِلَّهِ آمِدُونَ. قَالَ هَلْ تُؤَمُّونَ مَطْلُوعُونَ. فَأَخْلَعَ قَرَاهُ فِي سَوَاءٍ جَحِيمٍ، قَالَ: تَاللَّهِ إِن كُنْتُ لَأَشْرَقِينَ، وَلَوْ لَا نَفْثَةُ رَيْبٍ لَكُنْتُ مِنَ الْخَصِرِينَ﴾.

١٥٢١٥ فربك بعض دوايا الجنة ويسير، فإذا هو بمدائن ليست كمداين الجنة، ولا عليها النور السعشعائي، وهي ذات أدهال وغمايل. فيقول لبعض الملائكة: ما هذه يا عبد الله؟ فيقول: هذه جنة الغاريت الذين آمنوا بحمد، صلى الله عليه، وذكروا في الاحتفاف، وفي سورة البقرة، وهم عدد كثير. فيقول: لا تغدئ إلى هؤلاء فلن أضلوك لديهم من العجوبة. فيخرج عليهم، فإذا هو بشيخ جالس على باب مغارة، فيسلم عليه يحسن الرّد ويقول: ما جاء بك يا أنسي؟ إنك بخير لسمي، مالك من القوم بيبي. فيقول: سمعت أنكم جن مؤمنون فجئت ألتبس عندكم أخبار الجنان، وما لعله لديكم من أشعار الرّدة.

فيقول ذلك الشيخ: لقد أصبحت العالم بجمّة الأمر، ومن هو منه كالتمس من الهالة، أنا كالحاقن من الإهالة، فسل عما بدا لك. فيقول: ما أسعدك أيها الشيخ؟ فيقول: أنا الجعفور^٢ أحد بني الشّيباني، ولسنا من ولد إيليس ولكنّا من الجن الذين كانوا يسكنون الأرض قبل ولد آدم، صلى الله عليه.

١ رواية الأصل وكل الطبقات: الإهالة، وعل الصواب ما أثبتناه: راجع التعليق على الترجمة الإكثريّة.
٢ في كل النسخ والجيمون بالهاء والشعور والجيمورا كما في ب.

15.1 Then it occurs to him that he would like to see the people in Hell and how things are with them, that his gratitude for his blessings be magnified. For God says,⁴⁸⁷ «One of them said: I had a companion who would say, "Are you really one of those who believe that if we die and have turned to dust and bones we will be judged?" He said, "Won't you look down?" So he looked down and saw him in the midst of blazing Hell. He said, "By God, you had nearly let me perish; but for my Lord's blessing I would have been one of those brought there!"»

15.2.1 The Sheikh mounts one of the animals of Paradise and goes forth. He sees some towns unlike the towns of Paradise, without the glittering light; there are caves and dark, wooded valleys. He asks one of the angels, "What are they, servant of God?" He replies, "This is the Paradise of those demons"⁴⁸⁸ who believed in Muhammad (God bless him), those that are mentioned in the Surah of the Sand Dunes and the Surah of the Jinnees.⁴⁸⁹ There are lots of them. "I should like to pay them a visit," says the Sheikh, "I am bound to hear some wonderful stories from them!"

He turns toward them and sees an old person who is sitting at the mouth of a cave. He greets him and the other answers the greeting politely, asking, "What brings you to this place, human? You would deserve a better one; like you there is none!" The Sheikh replies, "I heard that you are the believing jinnees, so I've come to ask for some stories about the jinnees, and perhaps to hear some poems by the rebellious jinnees."⁴⁹⁰

The old jinn says, "You've hit the bull's eye; you've found me like the moon in its halo in the sky, like someone who waits before pouring away the hot fat:"⁴⁹¹ here am I! Ask whatever you like." The Sheikh asks, "What is your name, old man?" "I am al-Khayr al-Ur, one of the sons of al-Shayṣān."⁴⁹² We are not descended from the devil: we belong to the jinnees that lived on earth before the children of Adam (God bless him)."

فَيَقُولُ: أَخْبِرْنِي عَنْ أَشْعَارِ الْجَنَّةِ، فَقَدْ جُمِعَ مِنْهَا الْمَعْرُوفُ بِالْمَرْبِائِي قِطْعَةً صَالِحَةً. فَيَقُولُ ذَلِكَ الشَّيْخُ: إِنَّمَا ذَلِكَ هَذَانِ لَا مُعْتَدَّ عَلَيْهِ، وَهَلْ يَعْرِفُ الْبَشَرُ مِنَ الظُّلُمِ إِلَّا كَمَا تَعْرِفُ الْبَقَرُ مِنْ عِلْمِ الْهَيْئَةِ وَمِسَاحَةِ الْأَرْضِ؟ وَإِنَّمَا لَهُمْ خَمْسَةٌ عَشَرَ جَنَسًا مِنَ الْمَوْزُونِ قُلٌّ مَا يَعْدُوهَا الثَّلَاثُونَ، وَإِنَّ لَنَا أَلَاَافَ أَوْزَانٍ مَا سَمِعَ بِهَا الْإِنْسُ. وَإِنَّمَا كَانَتْ تَخْطُرُ بِهِمْ أُجْنِبَانُ مَتَا عَارَمُونَ فَقَبِثَ إِلَيْهِمْ مَقْدَارُ الضُّوَارَةِ مِنْ أَرَاكِ النَّعْمَانِ. وَلَقَدْ نَظَّمْتُ الرَّجَزَ وَالْقَصِيدَ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَخْلُقَ اللَّهُ آدَمَ بِكَوْرٍ أَوْ كَوْرَيْنِ. وَقَدْ بَلَغَنِي أَنْكَ مَعْتَصِرُ الْإِنْسِ تَلْهَجُونَ بِقَصِيدَةِ أَمْرِئِ الْقَيْسِ: قِفَا تَبَاكَ مِنْ ذِكْرِي حَبِيبِ وَمَبْزِلٍ، حَفِظُونَهَا الْخَارُورَةَ فِي الْمَكَاثِبِ، وَإِنْ شِئْتَ أَمِيتُكَ أَلْفَ كَلِمَةٍ عَلَى هَذَا الْوِزْنِ عَلَى مِثْلِ: مَبْزِلٌ وَخَوَعِلٌ، وَأَلْفَا عَلَى ذَلِكَ الثَّرِي يَجِي عَلَى مَبْزِلٍ وَخَوَعِلٌ، وَأَلْفَا عَلَى مَبْزِلٍ لَا وَخَوَعِلًا، وَأَلْفَا عَلَى مَبْزِلَةٍ وَخَوَعِلَةٍ، وَأَلْفَا عَلَى مَبْزِلَةٍ وَخَوَعِلَةٍ، وَأَلْفَا عَلَى مَبْزِلَةٍ وَخَوَعِلَةٍ. وَكُلُّ ذَلِكَ لَشَاعِرٍ مَتَا هَلْكَ وَهَوَاكَ، وَهُوَ الْآنَ يَشْتَعَلُ^١ فِي أَطْبَاقِ الْحَجِيمِ. فَيَقُولُ: وَصَلَّ اللَّهُ أَوْفَاةً بِالسَّعَادَةِ: أَيُّهَا الشَّيْخُ، لَقَدْ بَقِيَ عَلَيْكَ حِفْظُكَ! فَيَقُولُ: لَسْنَا مِنْكُمْ يَا بَنِي آدَمَ يَغْلِبُ عَلَيْنَا النِّسْيَانُ وَالرُّطُوبَةُ، لَأَنْكُمْ خُلِقْتُمْ مِنْ حَرٍّ حَامِسُونِ^٢، وَخُلِقْنَا مِنْ مَاءٍ مَرِيجٍ مِنْ بَارِدٍ^٣.

فَفَهْلَهُ الرِّغْبَةُ فِي الْأَدَبِ أَنْ يَقُولَ لِذَلِكَ الشَّيْخِ: أَقْبَلْ عَلَيَّ شَيْئًا مِنْ تِلْكَ الْأَشْعَارِ؟ فَيَقُولُ الشَّيْخُ: فَإِذَا شِئْتَ أَمْلِكْ مَا لَا يَسْبِقُهُ الرِّكَابُ، وَلَا تَسْمَعُهُ صُحُفٌ دُونَكَ. فَيُفْهِمُ الشَّيْخُ، لَا زَالَتْ هِفَّتُهُ عَالِيَةً، بَأَنْ يَكْتُبَ مِنْهُ، ثُمَّ يَقُولُ: لَقَدْ سَقَيْتُ فِي الدَّارِ الْعَالِجَةَ بِجَمْعِ الْأَدَبِ، وَلَمْ أَحْطَ مِنْهُ بِطَائِلٍ، وَإِنَّمَا كُنْتُ أَتَقَرَّبُ بِهِ إِلَى الرُّؤْسَاءِ، فَأُحْتَلَبُ مِنْهُمْ دَرَجَتِي وَأُجْهِدُ أَخْلَافَ مَصْمُورٍ، وَلَسْتُ بِوَفْقٍ. إِنْ تَرَكْتُ لَذَاتِ الْجَنَّةِ وَأَقْبَلْتُ أَنْتَفِخَ آدَابِ الْجَنَّةِ وَمَعِيَ مِنَ الْأَدَبِ مَا هُوَ كَانَ لَا سَبِيحًا وَقَدْ شَاعَ النَّسْيَانُ فِي أَهْلِ أَدَبِ الْجَنَّةِ، فَصُرْتُ مِنْ أَكْثَرِهِمْ رَوِيَّةً وَأَوْسَعَهُمْ حِفْظًا، وَلِلَّهِ الْحَمْدُ.

١ ب: (يشتعل) واختارنا رواية بيه والطبعات الأخرى.

The Sheikh says, "Tell me about the poems of the jinnee! Someone called al-Marzubānī has collected a fair number of them." The old man replies, "But that is all rubbish, wholly unreliable. Do humans know more about poetry than cattle know about astronomy and geodesy? They have fifteen different meters, and rarely transcend them;⁴⁹³ whereas we have thousands of meters that humans have never heard of. Some naughty toddlers of ours happened to pass by some humans and spat some poetry at them, a trifle like a splinter from an arak tree of al-Nā'mān."⁴⁹⁴ I myself have composed informal *rajiz* and formal *qasid* poetry an eon or two before God created Adam. I have heard that you, race of humans, are rapturous about Imrū' al-Qays's poem, 'Stop, let us weep for the remembrance of a loved one and a dwelling place,'⁴⁹⁵ and make your kids learn it by heart at school. But if you wish I could dictate to you a thousand poems with the same meter and the same rhyme, -ī, a thousand such poems rhyming in -īh, a thousand in -īā, a thousand in -īah, a thousand in -īuh, and a thousand in -īih, all composed by one of our poets, an unbeliever now burning in the depths of Hell."

The Sheikh (may God make him happy continually!) says, "You have got a good memory, old man!" The jinnee replies, "We are not like you, children of Adam, overcome by forgetfulness and moistness, for you have been created from «moulded mud»⁴⁹⁶ but we have been created from «a fiery flame»."⁴⁹⁷

The Sheikh is moved by a desire for erudition and literature to ask the old man, "Will you dictate some of these poems to me?" "If you like," says the jinnee, "I will dictate to you loads more than camels can carry and all the pages of your world can contain."

The Sheikh has a mind (may his mind ever be lofty!) to take some dictation from him. But then he says to himself: in the Transitory World I was always wretched when I collected literature; I never profited from it. I tried to curry the favor of leading persons but I was milking the udder of a bad milk camel and was exerting myself with the teats of a slow cow. I'll never be a success if I give up the pleasures of Paradise in order to copy the literature of the jinn. I've got enough erudition as it is, all the more so because forgetfulness is rife among the dwellers in Paradise, so that I have turned out to be one of those with the greatest erudition and the largest memory, thanks be to God!

٢٠٢١٥ ويقول لذلك الشيخ: ما كنتك لا تركك باتيكية؟ يقول: أبو هدرش، أولدت من الأولاد وما شاء الله، فهم قتال بعضهم في النار المؤبدة وبعضهم في الجنان. فيقول: يا أبا هدرش، مالي أراك أشتيت أهل الجنة شباب؟ فيقول: إن الإنسان أكرموا بذلك وأخبرناه، لأننا أغطينا الحور في الدار المادية، فكان أحدا إن شاء صار حورية رقصاء، وإن شاء صار عصفوراً، وإن شاء صار حمامة، فنعنا التصور في الدار الآخرة، ورؤكا على خلقنا لا تتغير، وعوض بنو آدم كونهم فيما حسن من الصور. وكان قتال الإنسان يقول في الدار الداهية: أعطينا الجنة، وأعطينا الجحيم الحرة.

٤٠٢١٥ ولقد لقيت من بني آدم شركاً، ولتوا مني كذلك، دخلت مرة دار أناس أريد أن أصرع فتاة لهم، فصورت في صورة عصي، أي جرت، فدعوا لي الصيوان، فلما أدهقني تحركت صلاً أزعج ودخلت في قفيل هناك، فلما علموا ذلك كسفتوه عني، فلما جئت للتل صرت يكا هذافاً ففقت بالزوافد وقضوا تلك الحشيب والأجذال فلم يرؤ شيئاً. فجمعوا يتكلمون ويقولون: ليس هاهنا مكان يمكن أن يستتر فيه. فينا هم يتذكرون ذلك عمدت لهما بهم في الكلة، فلما رأني أصابها الصرع، واجتمع أهلها من كل أوب، وجمعوا لها الرقة، وجأؤوا بالأطبة وبذلو المفنسات، فلما ترك راق رقية إلا عرضها علي وأنا لا أجب، وعبرت الأساة تسقيها الأشفية وأنا سيدك به لا أزل، فلما أصابها الحام طلبت لي سواها صاجبة، ثم كذلك حتى رزق الله الإناة وأثاب الجربل، فلا أفتأ له من الحامدين:

٥٠٢١٥ جددت من حط أوراري ومرقها عييت فأصبح ذنبي اليوم مغفوراً
وكنت ألفت من أثراب فطبة حوداً والصينين أخرى بنت يغوبراً
أزورمك وهذي غير مكثرت في ليلة قبل أن أستوضح النوراً
ولا أثمر بوختي ولا بشكر إلا وضادته ولها أن مذعوراً

He asks the old man, "How should I address you respectfully?"⁴⁹⁸ He 15.2.3

answers, "As Abū Hadrash. I have fathered God knows how many children, whole tribes of them, some in the burning Fire, others in Paradise." The Sheikh asks him, "Abū Hadrash, how come you are gray-haired? I thought those who dwell in Paradise would be young."⁴⁹⁹ He replies, "Humans have been given that privilege, but we have been denied it, because we could change shape in the Past World. Anyone of us could be a speckled snake if he so wished, or a sparrow if he wanted, or a pigeon. But in the Hereafter we are forbidden to change shape. We are left as we were created originally. The children of Adam have been given a beautiful appearance by way of compensation. As some human said in the World that Was: 'We have been given make-shift, and the jinn have been given shape-shift.'"

The jinn continues, "I have met evil at the hands of humans, but they 15.2.4

have met the like from me! Once I entered the house of some persons, wanting to strike a girl with fits."⁵⁰⁰ I took on the shape of a *Rattus rattus*, i.e. a rat; they called the cats, and when I was hard pressed by these I changed myself into a speckled viper and hid in a hollow tree trunk. When they found out they uncovered me. Afraid that they would kill me, I became a whizzing wind and clung to the rafters. They tore down the wooden beams but could not see anything. Then they were puzzled and said, 'There is no place here where it could be hiding!' While they were deliberating I went for the full-bodied maiden in her mosquito net. When she saw me she had a fit. Her family came from all sides; they gathered exorcists and brought doctors and spent large sums. Every exorcist left no spell untried on me, but I did not react. The physicians kept giving her potions but I stayed put and did not budge. When death overtook her I looked for another girl, and so on, until God granted me repentance and rewarded me richly! I shall always be one of those who praise Him!⁵⁰¹

I praise Him who took my sinful burdens and destroyed them 15.2.5
for me! My crime has been forgiven now.
I had a close affair once with a pretty girl
from Cordova; and then, in China, with the daughter of an emperor.
I visited now one and then another, unconcerned,
at night, before I could discern the light of dawn.
And any animal or human I encountered
I would leave distraught and terrified.

Hell

The Sheikh looks down and sees Satan⁵⁴⁰ (God curse him!), writhing in 17.1

fetters and chains, while Hell's angels have a go at him with iron cudgels. *The conversation with Satan*

The Sheikh says, "Thanks be to God, who has got the better of you, enemy of God and of His friends! How many generations of Adam's children you have destroyed innumerable, only God can count." The devil asks, "Who is this man?" "I am 'Alī ibn Manṣūr ibn al-Qarīḥ, from Aleppo," replies the Sheikh. "I was a man of letters by profession, by which I tried to win the favor of rulers." "A bad profession indeed!" says Satan. "You'll live on a minimum income, hardly enough to keep your family. It's a slippery business; many like you have gone to perdition because of it. Congratulations on being saved! «So beware, and again, beware!»⁵⁴¹ But I'd like you to do something for me. If you do I will be much obliged."

"I cannot possibly do anything to help you," replies the Sheikh, "for there is a Qur'anic verse already about those in Hell; I mean the words of the Exalted,⁵⁴² «Those in Hell will call to those in Paradise, 'Pour us some water or whatever God has given you!' They will reply, 'God has forbidden these things to the unbelievers!'"

"I am asking you none of that," says Satan. "I am asking you to tell me something: wine is forbidden to you in the Temporal World but permitted in the Hereafter; now, do the people in Paradise do with the immortal youths what the people of Sodom and Gomorra did?" The Sheikh exclaims, "Damn you, haven't you got enough to distract you? Haven't you heard what the Exalted says:⁵⁴³ «There they will have pure spouses and they will live there forever»?"

Satan says, "In Paradise there are many drinks apart from wine...⁵⁴⁴ But tell me, what happened to Bashshār ibn Burd? I owe him something that I do not owe any other son of Adam: he, unlike all other poets, preferred me to Adam, for he said:

Satan is better than your father, Adam;
you wicked people, understand this well!
His element is fire, and Adam is of mud:
mud will never rise as high as fire!

يُطَاعُ فُورَى إِبْلِيسَ، لِمَنهُ اللهُ، وَهُوَ يَضْطَرُّ فِي الْأَغْلَالِ وَالسَّلَاسِلِ وَمَقَامِ
الْحَبِيدِ تَأْخُذُهُ مِنْ أَيْدِي الرَّايَةِ. يَقُولُ: الْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ الَّذِي أَمَكَّنَ مَتَكَ يَا عَدُوَّ اللهِ وَعَدُوَّ
أَوْلِيَائِهِ لَعَلَّكَ أَهْلَكْتَ مِنْ بَنِي آدَمَ طَوَائِفَ لَا يَعْلَمُ عَدَدَهَا إِلَّا اللهُ. يَقُولُ: مَنْ الرَّجُلُ؟
أَنَا فَلَانُ بْنُ فَلَانٍ مِنْ أَهْلِ حَلَبَ، كَانَتْ صِنَاعَتِي الْأَدَبَ، أَتَقَرَّبُ بِهِ إِلَى
الْمَلِكِ. يَقُولُ: بَسَّ الصِّنَاعَةَ: إِنَّمَا تَهَبُ عُقَّةً مِنَ الْعَيْشِ، لَا يَسْمَعُ بِهَا الْعِيَالُ،
وَإِنَّمَا كَرَاهَةٌ بِالْقَدَمِ وَمَكَّ أَهْلَكْتَ مَتَكَ! فَهِنَبْنَاكَ إِذَا نَجَرْتَ، ﴿فَقَاوَنِي لَأَكْفُرَنَّ أَوَّلَى﴾!
وَإِنِّي إِلَيْكَ لِحَاجَةٌ، فَإِنَّ قَضِيَّتَهَا شَكَرُكَ يَدَ السُّنَنِ.

يقول: إني لا أقدر لك علي نفع، فإن الآية سبقت في أهل النار، أعني قوله تعالى: ﴿وَوَادَى الْأَصْحَابِ النَّارِ أَصْحَابَ النَّجْمَةِ إِنَّ أَفْئُسُنَا مِنَّا لِلْأَوْثِمَارِ﴾ فكلَّ الله، قَالُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَرَجَهُمَا عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿﴾.

فيقول: إني لا أسألك في شيء من ذلك، ولكن أسألك عن خير تخبرني: إن الخمر خُرِست عليكم في الدنيا وأُحلت لكم في الآخرة، فهل يفعل أهل الجنة بالولدان المخلفين فَعَلَ أَهْلُ الْقُرَيَاتِ؟ فيقول: عليك البُهْمَةُ! أَمَا سَعَاكَ مَا أَنْتَ فِيهِ؟ أَمَا سَمِعْتَ قَوْلَهُ تَعَالَى: ﴿وَلِهَذَا فَخَرْنَاكَ وَهَرَّاهُ فِيهِ خَالِدُونَ﴾؟

فيقول: وإن في الجنة لأشربة كثيرة غير الخمر. فما فعل بشار بن بُرد؟ فإن له عندي يدأ ليست لغيره من ولد آدم: كَانَ يَفْضِلُنِي دُونَ الشَّرَاءِ، وَهُوَ الْقَتَالُ:

إِبْلِيسُ أَفْضَلُ مِنْ أَيْكُم آدَمُ
فَتَبَيَّنُوا يَا مَعْشَرَ الْأَشْرَارِ
النَّارُ غَضْرُهُ وَأَدَمُ طِينُهُ
وَالظِّلِينُ لَا يَسْمُو سُمُو النَّارِ

لقد قال الحق، ولم يزل قائله من المموتين.

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فلا يسكت من كلامه إلا ورجل في أصناف العذاب يتعذب عذبه حتى لا ينظر إلى ما نزل به من العذاب، فيفتحهما الزانية بكلايب من نار، وإذا هو بشار بن برد قد أعطي عينين بعد الكه، لينظر إلى ما نزل به من العذاب.

فيقول له، أعل الله درجته: يا أبا معاذ، لقد أحسنت في معالك، وأسأت في معتقدك، ولقد كنت في الدار العاجلة أذكر بعض قولك فأترحم عليك، طمأن أن التوبة ستلتصقك، مثل قولك:

أزجج على سكاني تعيش به ذهب الزمان وأنت منفرد
تبرحو غنائم وفد كماله في الحي لا يدرون ما تألذ

وقولك:

وهاك الأسماء ابنة الأشكذ قامت تراءى إذ مررتني وحدي
كالشمس بين الزبرج النقيضت بجلي، وجأت عن خدي
ثم انشنت كالكفس المرتد وصاحب كالدمل المبيد
أرؤيت منه مثل حصى الورد حملته في رقعته من جلادي
الحمر يلقي والمصا للعبد وليس للخفيف مثل الرقة

١٧٢٨٧
الآن وقع منك الياأس! وفلت في هذه القصيدة: السبب، في بعض قوافيها، فإن كنت أردت جمع سبب، وهو طائر، فإن فعلا لا يجمع على ذلك؛ وإن كنت سكنت الباء فقد أسأت، لأن تسكين الفتحة غير معروف، ولا جهة لك في قول الأخط:

وماكل مغبون إذا سلف صفتة راجع ما قد فاتته برداد

"He spoke the truth; but those who speak the truth will always be hated!"

No sooner does Satan fall silent than a man appears, plagued with various kinds of torment. He closes his eyes so as not to have to see the punishment that has come upon him; but then the Angels of Hell open them again with pincers of fire. This is Bashshar ibn Burd, who has been given eyes after having been blind from birth, to make him see the chastisement that has come over him.

The Sheikh (may God raise his rank!) says to him, "Abū Mu'adh, you were excellent as a poet but bad in your beliefs! In the Fleeting World I would often think of some of your verses and ask God's mercy for you, assuming that repentance might still come to you. I mean, for instance, these verses:

Return to an abode where you can live in comfort;

The time has passed and now you are alone.

You hope for a tomorrow; but tomorrow is like a pregnant woman in the tribe: one does not know what she will bear.

"Or these:⁵⁴⁵

Woe for Asmā', the daughter of al-Ashadd!

She stood up to be seen and saw me, all alone.

She's like the sun that breaks through the thin clouds.

She was stingy with one cheek but revealed the other.

And then she turned away, just like a breath sighed inwardly.

—Many a 'friend' was like a suppurating boil,

(I feared his coming like a fit of fever),

A boil I had to carry on a patch of skin...

A free-born, noble man may be rebuked; sticks are for slaves.

There's nothing for the importune except rebut.

"But now your situation is desperate!—Actually, in one rhyme of this poem 17.2.2 you use the word *subd*.⁵⁴⁶ Now, if you meant the plural of *subad*, which is a kind of bird,⁵⁴⁷ you are mistaken because a word of this pattern cannot have such a plural. Or, if you simply left out the second vowel of *subad*, you have made a bad verse, because omitting the vowel *a* is not a recognized poetic license. You cannot use the argument that al-Akhaḥ said:

Not everyone who is duped, when he's concluded (*salḥa*, for *salagha*) a sale, can return to rescind and get back what he lost;

ولا في قول الآخر:

وقالوا لراي ففعلت صدقتم أبي من ثراب خلفه الله آدمًا
لأن هذه سواد، فأنا قول جميل:

وصاح بين من بينة والنوى جميع بذات الرضم صرٌّ محكَّل

فإن من أُنشدته بضم الصاد مخطئ، لأنه يذهب إلى أنه أراد الصرّ فسكّن الراء، وإنما هو صرٌّ، أي خالص، من قولهم: احبأك حبًّا صرًّا، أي خالصًا، يعني غرًّا أسود ليس فيه يأس، وقوله: محكَّل، أي مقيد، لأن حلقة القيد تُسمى حَكَلًا. قال عدوي بن زيد:

أعاذل قد لاقيت ما يزع الفتى وطابقت في الجلائن مسي القيد

والتراب يوصف بالقييد لقصر نساه، قال الشاعر:

وسقيتد بين الديار كأنه حكيبة داجنة يحتر يعتلي

فيقول بشار: يا هذا! دعني من أباطلك فأني لمشغول عنك.

ويسأل عن امرئ القيس بن حجر، فيقال: ها هو ذا بحيث يسمعك. فيقول: يا أبا
هذإن رُواة البغداديين يُشددون في قفائبك، هذه الأيات بزيادة الواو في أولها،
أعني قواك:

وكان ذرى رأس الخنجر عُذوة

وكذلك:

وكان مكايي الجراء

"nor that someone else said:

They said: 'You dusty one!' I said, 'You're right!
My father is from dust, since God created (*khalaqahu*, for *khalaqahu*)
him an Adam.'

"For these are irregular forms. As for the verse by Jamīl:

There cried of parting from Buthaynah—the aim is a gathered tribe
at Dhāt al-Raḍm—a pure black (*ṣard*, for *ṣard*), 'fettered' crow.⁵⁴⁸

"Those who recite it with *ṣard*, meaning *ṣard* ('shrike?')⁵⁴⁹ and then deleting the second vowel, are wrong, for correct is *ṣard*, i.e., 'pure,' as in the expression 'I love you with a *ṣard* (pure) love,' here meaning a black crow in which there is no white. The word *muhajjal* ('fettered') is derived from *hijl*, an ankle-ring used as a fetter. 'Adi ibn Zayd says:

You, woman, you who blame me: I've encountered what holds back a man
and I've been hopping with two ankle-rings, like a shackled man.

"A crow is described as being 'shackled' on account of the shortness of its
heel tendons.⁵⁵⁰ A poet says:

Many a 'shackled one' that hopped between the dwellings, like
an Ethiopian under a deep-black cloud, now falling, now rising.⁵⁵¹

But Bashshār replies, "Hey man, spare me your trivialities! I am busy with
other concerns and have no time for you!"

The Sheikh asks where he might find Imru' al-Qays ibn Hujr. "There he is, 17.3.1
within hearing distance!" is the answer. He says to him, "Abū Hind, the
transmitters in Baghdad recite, from your poem 'Stop, you two and let us
weep,'⁵⁵² a few of the lines with the addition of an extra-metrical 'and' at the
beginning. I mean these verses:⁵⁵³

And the peaks at al-Mujaymir's crest, the morning after,
[with debris from the flood, looked like a spindle's whorl.]

"Likewise:

And the songbirds of the valley, in the morning, [seemed
to have been made to drink a fine and spicy wine.]