

(*H 1^v, R 1^v*) Praised be God who by His words has determined what is right and who has endowed the just that perform justice with His character and with His qualities!

Blessed be His Prophet who has clarified the Truth through His most lucid speeches!

Blessed be His family that has avoided injustice and its tribulations and steered clear of strangers and their crimes!

Thereafter:

Men of understanding and wisdom, the owners of intelligence and sagacity, are cognizant and aware of the incontestable truth that the well-meaning great philosophers and eminent thinkers of penetrating mind have regarded justice and equity as coins of standard purity on the scales of popularity and prestige, and reliability and integrity as gold currency of high validity and value on the goldsmith's balance of the era. They have observed that the maxim "Justice means putting things in the places where they belong" fits [also] persons of rank, and especially that the sentence "Injustice is buried in the soul: weakness hides it, strength brings it out" applies to the vezirs of weighty opinion, to the powerful statesmen, and to most others of whom it is said (sura 20:75): "those who belong to the highest ranks".

(*R 2^r*) Indeed, the administrators in commanding positions, who rule over each and all individuals, (*H 2^r*) high and low, tower over those that are below them as over the vile world, and obediently show their deference to those of higher rank, again and again giving the chestnut-color horse of their concupiscence the reins and revealing themselves as opposed to the serenity of their souls by constantly promoting to the high offices the rabble that is in their service. They see no difference between the Lucifers that refused to honor the sons of Adam,¹ and the men of angelic faces and angellike character. Perhaps they even prefer them [i. e., the former] in many ways, considering their [i. e., the latter's] experience and alertness. Closing their eyes to the science of physiognomy, they regard those with detestable faces as more worthy of, and more qualified for, the high offices than the men of perfect wisdom and of engaging, of unequalled appearance.

[Verses] by the author:

In every country they are looking for the best.

In the Land of Rūm (i. e., the Ottoman Empire) they are looking for ignorants:

They are looking for brazen-faced low-class people

Who are able to extort money and to pay.

This is why at the end of time, during the last days [of the world], Imām Muḥammed the Mahdī will appear and will fill the spacious expanse of the world with strictness and justice, so that the ignoble ones may not like straw and chaff float on top of the ocean-hearted perfect ones, and the just may not suffer in his era like dregs as if they were unworthy traitors.

¹ According to the Koran, Iblīs, the fallen angel, was cursed and thrown out of Heaven because he refused to bow before Adam.

In particular, (*H 2^v*) through His noble words (sura 24:40) "some are over others" the Creator — may He be exalted and His glory made universal! — has determined the ranks and exposed the degrees with the purpose of always having justice prevail and (*R 2^v*) trust and piety carried to their extremes. It is His eternal wish to shun the triumph of the low over the high; it is His never-ending will that the ignorant shall not reach the sophistication of the educated. This Divine purpose is clearly attested by the noble words (approx. sura 41:46): "and He is not a tyrant to His slaves".

Without any doubt, it is in every respect the duty of the honorable sultans and majestic pillars [of the Faith] to march on the road of justice and to grant the [high] offices to those who qualify, so that the prominent and conspicuous persons excel over the low-bred persons. However, the King of the World, the sovereign of sublime rank, the chosen one among the rulers mighty as Destiny, the praised one of the House of Oṣmān, [namely] Sultan Murād,² the son of Sultan Selim — may God confirm his reign until the end of time! — (*R 3^r*) has recommended the investigation of the conditions of the people (*R 3^v*) and the examination of the events of months and years to his statesmen, as it had already been the practice with his great and noble ancestors, his eminent predecessors. Since it had become difficult for them themselves to mix with their soldiers, as numerous as drops in the ocean, and contrary to good practice personally to take care of the affairs of the people, the orientation toward the path of justice had become an indicator of righteousness only in respect to the vezirs. (*H 3^r*) [But] although the countless atrocities that are authored by the vezirs according to their own interpretation can be regarded as a felicitous confirmation of the noble words (sura 6:164) "nor does any laden bear another's load", in the matter of delegation a careful investigation is the sultan's duty required by justice. To appoint ignorants when there are wise men available, to choose those who excel in flattery and eulogy rather than those who are truthful and just, is not only equal to condoning the oppression of the people but also a shining example of the maxim: "He who delegates an act to a person betrays God and His Prophet and His community, the true believers". To condone the darkness of tyranny is equal to causing the eclipse of the sun of justice. To hand over the Treasure of the True Believers, that trust of the Creator of the Universe, to undeserving men is a terrible sin, (*R 4^r*) and it is also quite evident that to let it go to unqualified persons is a real disaster. In this matter ignorance is by no means an excuse; unawareness of the situation of the vezirs will not count as a valid defense on the Day of Judgment.

[Poem] by the author:

If the imams and caliphs before our time
 Had not kept an eye on the statesmen,
 Faith and fatherland might have foundered
 And today's sovereignty might not exist.
 [Then] everybody obeyed the same order
 And never neglected his duty.
 (*H 3^v*) The duty of the kings is justice,
 Fairness in dealing out the lots.
 If ranks and position are not given to qualified men,
 The army disperses like the smoke of a [burning]
 sigh.

² Murād III, 1574—1595.

When the statesmen refrain from taking bribes
 The educated will find access to the [high] jobs.
 He who is qualified neither distributes bribes
 Nor would he dare to accept bribes.
 But he who is not worthy of a position
 [To obtain it] offers bribes mornings and evenings.
 He displays gold, opening up like a rose,
 He sheds [money] like tears, scattering it [liberally].
 In the hope to make a thousand from each one,
 In the hope that with the backing he will be free to extort,
 To destroy his abode of peace in the Thereafter,
 To build his manor of pride [and] sin,
 To collect curses against him who had caused [his appointment],
 To spread the fire of subversion to a thousand dominions a day.

(*H 3^v marg.*) In short, it is most important for the grand vezir and most necessary for the fulfilment of his duties to have knowledge of the reputations of the administrators of the protected lands [of the Ottoman Empire] in general and to ensure the wellbeing of all the subjects. Just as the sultan favors them with his attention, with handsome fiefs (*xāṣṣ*), with special gifts summer and winter, and with the generous licence to give and take, in a corresponding way are they bound to protect the king's prestige, to take care of preventing the tyranny of the oppression-prone administrators, and in particular to make strong efforts for the improvement of the state of the poor. In this matter ignorance will not serve as an excuse nor will any prevarication or obfuscation be accepted.

Surely, there is no one among high and low that does not care for the needs of his house folk in summer and winter and that does not in time provide for the necessities of their sustenance. Should he, let us suppose, only slightly neglect this matter, should he be late in storing provisions for the winter, then the order in that house turns into disorder, on account of his mismanagement everybody's peace turns into trepidation. (*H 4^r marg.*) Well then, what can be expected from a vezir who does not in time provide for the life necessities of the country's population in general and of the inhabitants of the capital in particular so that when there comes about a shortage in one of the necessities all the people fight with each other, and because of the administrators' neglect in controlling commerce and the tradesmen's selling at whatever price they please the old legal price gradually increases, a host of shopkeepers in the Bazaars become rich, and the class of Muslim soldiers and of high-ranking personalities are thrown into bankruptcy? Now, the concern of the king is the wellbeing of the subjects and the prosperity of the victorious army. Their destitution and the leisured condition and sudden enrichment [by finding a secret treasure] of the tradesmen of the Bazaars are the consequences of statesmen's mismanagement.

To sum up, [I], this humble slave, watching carefully, have [always] seen the vezirs in pleasure and luxury, enjoying themselves no end in their palaces and gardens, and the other members of the Imperial council occupied with the acquisition of money and property, always going along with the vezirs, should they even order the abrogation of justice. Likewise have I found those that were closest to the king and occupied high offices, with the king's favors and bounties being showered upon them, to be silent vis-a-vis this problem. Aghast they would exclaim: "God forbid! The Creator's world needs no reform!"

Under these circumstances His Royalty the World-Conqueror has no helper nor assistant in managing the affairs of state. As he is isolated behind the curtain and respectable people

assert the contrary of what is happening, every disorder is — so I have become aware — a hidden secret kept away from his noble knowledge. (*H 3^v marg.*) However, on the Day of Judgment he himself will be asked to answer for it and it will become evident that his excuse that the vezirs had not told him will not be accepted. Then why does he not long for an upright servant time and again to discuss with him the affairs of the world, so as to be able to examine the order of things, viewing everything to its very depth? Provided, however, that this thus favored person be of an exquisite mind, a man of zeal and education, and that, when he goes in and out in the vezirs' offices, his testimony is not influenced by their wishes (he himself having certain wishes from them), in short, that he be a man of rectitude that has nothing to fear from anybody, loyal to the bread and salt of the king but not taking notice of anybody else.

Although the just are rare, there are in our time overly many that claim to be just. However to one with eyes nothing remains hidden. (*H 4^r marg.*) what has the sultan, God's shadow, ever wanted that did not materialize?

Such a person can be found among the educated, not among the common people. Someone who need not beware of anybody and does not fear for his position will undoubtedly find the [necessary] courage by relying on his [superior] knowledge. Such high-mindedness will never come forth from unqualified know-nothings.

(*R 4^v*) Indeed, this pure maxim is a complete lesson to any understanding person: "He who leads the way to a good deed is as commendable as he who carries it out". Just as definite as this is also [the conclusion] that to condone oppression is to agree to blatant tyranny and to sponsor it. Consequently, is it befitting for the just sovereigns, for the matchless bearers of crowns who are described as "God's shadow on the lands", being themselves cypresses in the garden of rulership, to cast their shadows on unfertile ground? Being themselves fruit-bearing trees [in the orchard] of caliphship, is it befitting for them to bring forth seeds of evil, which [moreover] they nourish with the blessed moisture lavished by the clouds of their bounteous care? (*H 4^r*) Each seed of evil is furthermore turned into several hundred thousand sparks that set on fire the homes of the innocent and burn them, and each heart-refreshing green leaf becomes a poisoned lancet that strikes the many that have been denied their rights and cause the oppressed to drown the fire on their hearth in a flood of bloody tears. As to the God-fearing sultans and self-restrained sovereigns of whom the noble words (sura 4:59) "Obey God and obey the Prophet and those of you who are in authority" are firmly known to speak, is it congruent with a perfect mind to assume that to obey their orders (*R 5^r*) should be equal to worship and to performing a religious duty, while the purport of their orders turns out to be — may God prevent it! — a veritable sin and [subject to] eternal punishment?

Story:

One of those near to God was asked and an answer solicited from the hidden wisdom vested in his nature: "Which group of sinners from among the true believers that will suffer when [their sins are] weighed [at the Last Judgment] and in the burning fires [of Hell], being punished for the acts they have committed in the world, do you pity most of all? For which category do you burn [in pity] when you think of their torments in Hell fire?" His apt reply was: „According to the maxim 'I pity the mighty one of the tribe of the abject' I pity most the sultans, and I am again and again painfully reminded of their trial and punishment. After having lived in the world (*H 4^v*) as rulers in glory and abundance they become a prey of the fires of Hell, after having enjoyed among the people a life of great

ease in happiness and success they experience the frightful tortures of the flames of Hell at the hands of the punishing demons. Truly, is this the glory of sovereignty that one gains the pleasures of the world and misses the opportunity to prepare provisions for the afterlife? (*R 5^v*) Lies therein the honor of the mighty that they are unable to protect their souls, those nightingales in the garden of Love, and their bodies, those petals in the rose garden of Paradise, from the fires of Hell?"

[Poem] by the author:

Is it befitting that the kings, the masters of power,
 Who have the authority to order and prohibit,
 Have their bodies consumed by fire,
 Turning into embers glowing like pomegrenades?
 Such shameful treatment is not worth the leadership,
 To be a sultan is not worth such torture!
 King should be the one that is king in both worlds,
 Whom [his] army never sees in humiliation,
 Who being the caliph is God's shadow
 And never trodden under foot in disgrace.

For, according to the Prophetic tradition, Muhammed's fine words, "The sultan is God's shadow, all oppressed take refuge with him", every oppressed one that is plagued by the burning attacks of injustice will doubtlessly find relief with the King of the World; every grief-stricken that suffers from the scathing heat of tyranny (*H 5^r*) will surely seek refuge near the cypress in the garden of the sultanate, the boxtree of justice and clemency, the supreme ruler of the highest station. Therefore (*R 6^r*) it has been said in some places: "People take refuge with the sultan, God's shadow, just as they seek refuge in the shade from the heat of the sun".

Now, in our time, the eminent sultan, the commander and initiator, is following the orientation of his ancestors by preferring isolation to mixing with the people and by putting the state of hiddenness before the personal management of affairs so as to remain an object of awe and veneration to the people, and it is his conviction that his vezirs suffice as a safeguard against oppression and that [the existence of] his statesmen and counsellors renders unnecessary that the people [personally] take recourse with him. However, if the high administrators of the state are themselves not righteous men and if they are not sufficiently aware of the character (lit., the qualities) of people (i. e., of the functionaries), then those who are seeking protection from the ardor of tyranny will be exposed to burning fire, and those who, plagued by the heat of oppression, yearn for a dip in the river of justice will be submerged in lethal poison. They begin by crying "Oppression!" and a few times (*R 6^v*) submit petitions to the royal stirrup,³ but as the medicine for their wounds is again in the hands of those [who had struck them] (*H 5^v*) and as again those are asked to investigate the correctness or falseness of their complaints their sufferings increase ever more and the flame of their complaints and accusations waxes dimmer and dimmer till they beat their breasts with the stone of repentance, ruefully striking their bodies, those trees dried up because of lack of water drops from the cloud of grace, and in the hope of attaining the fruit of justification producing thousands of green leaves, the innumerable bruises and bloody wounds.

³ When the Sultan mounted his horse, petitions were submitted "to the royal stirrup" (the expression may be taken literally or figuratively).

[Poem] by the author:

Woe onto him who seeks protection from tyranny with the statesmen
 Without the king's taking an interest in him!
 Since the subjects are a trust from God
 The king himself is worthier [to protect them] than the vezirs.
 It is the king that has been assigned this duty.
 What does the vezir, to whom no thanks are due, have to do with it?
 Since God has bestowed that much greatness on the king
 And has made him the treasurer of the Divine trust,
 Is it fair that he does not himself take care of it
 And leaves [this duty] to another one as his substitute?
 In return for all this exaltation
 Why should one not carry out this duty oneself?

(*H 5^v marg.*) The story is told that Sanjar Khan,⁴ a mighty king of inherited greatness, when he was a powerless captive of Sultan Ghāzān and downcast by the loss of his kingdom, was asked by some understanding person about the cause [of his downfall]. This was his apt reply: "I gave the high posts to low people and expected people of high status to accept low positions. Then the low people were unable to cope with the high offices, and the high-grade men found it dishonorable to accept posts that were below their rank. There can be no doubt that the absurdity of these two orders caused the collapse of [my] kingdom and empire and led to disaster, self-accusation, and remorse."

(*H 5^v cont'd*) From this follows that the decline of certain kingdoms was prompted by the vezirs' tendency towards tyranny, (*R 7^r*) and that the complete disruption of [the state of] the subjects can be the consequence of the disinterest of the caliphs.

As the noble words (sura 13:11) express it: "God does not change the condition of a people until they changes what is in their hearts", as long as the kings of the lands, the well-deserving sovereigns, do not show a change of heart in respect to the pursuit of the affairs [of state] and do not deny their warm interest to the investigation of the conditions of the people, (*H 6^r*) God — may He be exalted! — does not send decline to their kingships nor disturbances and disruption to their countries, and their illustrious dynasties will rule through months and years in regular sequences like nights and days, months and years, and will preserve God's trust, will protect subjects and soldiers from the tyranny of oppressors. And [God] will grant them the inheritance of the kingdom from generation to generation according to the noble words (sura 23:8, 10): "and those who are shepherds of their pledge and their covenant, these are the heirs", and He will ensure their aptitude and suitability for the caliphate generation after generation [in regular sequence] like the light of the sun, and the darkness of tyranny and oppression will be dispersed by the rays of their justice. For, the wise notion which God the Creator — may His glory be enhanced and exalted! — expressed in His noble book that must be listened to, namely (sura 16:61): "If God were to take mankind to task for their wrongdoing, He would not leave hereon (*R 7^v*) a living creature, but He reprieves them to an appointed term", is supported — and its mystery solved — by the fact that if army leaders and vezirs, administrators and statesmen were reprieved according to their misdoings and punished in proportion to the injustices they

⁴ Sanjar Khān, the last ruler of the Greater Seljuk Empire, 1118—1157, was defeated by rebels in 1153 and remained their captive until 1156. Of course, he was not the captive of the Mongol ilkhān Ghāzān Khān (1295—1304).

commit, there would not remain a single one of them on earth; they would all lie under the ground in retribution of their evil deeds. Or, if the word *dābbe* (creature, beast) is taken in its literal meaning, God — may He be exalted! — would not leave them any *dābbe*, that is, any animal to ride on or to carry loads: (*H 6^v*) all the animals whose meat is permitted to eat and whose usefulness to agriculture is unequalled would stop reproduction, the proud horsemen would have to walk on foot, the owners of tents and chattel would groan under their burdens, the farmers would be deprived of the crops that are their sustenance while the consumers would in vain look for their wine and roast meat and countless other dishes. For, man's sustenance is based on the utilization of animals. And the eminence of high persons over low ones is based on the mounts of many virtues. Thus being (*R 8^r*) the source of food and drink and the means of elevation of notables and officers, the many-purposed function of the *dābbe* has been chosen to interpret the Koranic verse and a wealth of deep meaning has been derived from one sacred word.⁵

In short, those familiar with the noble passage (sura 21:24) "but most of them do not know the truth and so they are averse", know very well that wise statesmen hold office in justice whereas ignorant vezirs commit countless iniquities. But those courtiers who are a striking illustration of the sacred verse (sura 21:27) "They do not speak until He has spoken, and they act by His command" are aware that the burden of guilt does not rest on the shoulders of the vezirs but, being utter crime, destroy the state [of redemption] of the one whose deputies they are.

If some questioners who look but at the outward appearance of things and regard the gift of speech as only a means of opportunism consider this unsolicited talk a sort of unnecessary exercise of zeal (*H 7^r*) and say: "The Ottoman dominions are full of erudite men and of learned persons of great understanding. Those are silent on this matter, keeping their mouths shut contrary to the maxim: Say the truth albeit bitter! Why do you then have the boldness to write about this like an expert, and why are you so eager to express your thoughts with harsh words that offend the heart?"

(*R 8^v*) Here is our apt reply: "Not only is this outpour [of opinion], this written formulation, in harmony with [the commands of] Divine destiny, this sin-laden slave has also been obeying the instructions of certain holy men that appeared to him in his dreams, (*H 7^r marg.*) and the repeated miracle-working guidances of, from among the host of spiritual teachers, Master Firdevsī⁶ of Tūs, the crowned Galen of the articulate, of Master Sa'dī⁷ of Shiraz, the mystery-invested sheikh of the eloquent, even more so of the unquestionable solver of mysteries Master Ḥāfīz⁸ of Shiraz, nicknamed the Tongue of the Other World, as well as of the most articulate one of recent times, the most erudite of all speakers, Master Nūrūddīn Jāmī⁹ — may God bless the secrets of [all] of them! — (*H 7^r cont'd*) by hurrying to express these thoughts [on paper], trusting the rule [that says:] "He who acts on orders is forgiven". In particular has this humble [author] of high authority repeatedly heard from the commentators' lofty pulpits the noble maxim: "The Truth is high and cannot be surpassed". I have also heard from the mouths of the great this advice worth minding: "It is the duty of all men to assist the ruler by [their] advice, to spur him on by [their] prayers,

⁵ The interpretations concerning the term *dābbe* in the Koranic verse seem like a relapse into scholastic pedantry.

⁶ The Persian poet Ferdosi (d. 1020), author of the *Shāh-nāma* ("Book of Kings").

⁷ The Persian poet (d. 1292).

⁸ The Persian poet (d. 1390).

⁹ The Persian poet (1414—1492).

and to be of service to him regarding all enterprises'. In other words, all creatures that possess speech are bound to help their kings by counsel and advice, in their prayers they should specifically name them in all sincerity, and when they see them in growing trouble because of disasters and catastrophes they should rush to their aid with word and deed, with [their] possessions and [good] intentions. That is, they should put aside fear and awe, should give up their life albeit [as sweet as] water of life, they should embolden themselves to offer [the king] counsel and advice, secretly and openly, (*H 7^v*) they should apply themselves to prayers for the continuation of his kingship, (*R 9^r*) and if — God forbid! — he is struck by some tragic event, they should come to his aid.

“They should be for him seeing eyes
and grasping hands
and a protecting shield
and speaking tongues
and uplifting wings
and carrying legs —
but, alas! what good do you expect from all that?!”

In other words, apart from helping him in countless ways through advice and prayer they should also, firstly, be the king's seeing eyes. They should enable him to see what is out of his sight. Always watching over his happiness, they should remove from his sight those possessed of the evil eye, and they should cause him to look with an eye of [severe] justice upon the state of the ignorant and of the malicious.

Secondly, being his holding hands, they should put on their feet again those poor down-trodden in the acts and measures taken by unscrupled assistants, and they should lend a helping hand to the weak whom they see in trouble at the hands of others.

Thirdly, like a shield saved for [the day of] the battle, a steel defense provided for the war, they should stand up against any danger that threatens the king, they should face his ill-intentioned enemies and grip their belts like swords.

Fourthly, they should always be the singing nightingales in the garden of his justice, birds of a thousand melodies in the branches of his equity, (*R 9^v*) and articulate like the grief-stricken nightingale about the anguish in its breast, they should not conceal from him the thorn that threatens the bud of his fine nature nor the matters that could cause affliction to the rose petals of his noble mind. (*H 8^r*) They should not say “Who knows, may be this will irritate his royal temperament and he will scatter in the winds the foliage of the Spring of my life”, but should speak out the truth without adding or abstracting [anything] rather than choose to remain silent like the mutes¹⁰ in the Imperial Palace. The words that befit [their obligations toward] God and the king they should pronounce as they have to be pronounced.

Fifthly, they should be wing and feather for the flight of that phoenix¹¹ that soars up to the zenith of happiness, feathers for the king — why [just] feathers? Steadily flying king pinions! — faithful servants of that Solomon-like one, resembling the God-guided hoopoe.¹² Like irresistible hawks in selfless dedication pointing their talons at the enemy's soul-bird, be it wherever it be, and even when thrown to the wasteland like an arrow, they would, while speeding toward the target, with their wings protect the falcon of his power. Even

¹⁰ A number of mutes served in the Royal household.

¹¹ The fabulous bird that symbolized royalty.

¹² In Islamic tradition the hoopoe is a semi-sacred bird.

when hurled at the wrathful talons of the eagle of Death they would rush at all times to serve [the king], without trying to preserve their lives.

Sixthly, they should be the king's walking feet, not hesitating for a moment to accompany him and to follow him or to set out for places where their duty calls them. (*R 10^r*) For instance, putting on shoes on their feet they should regard as a felicitous honor, and they should not excuse themselves with lameness, pointing to the wounds they have received from the [sharp] rocks of events.

All this leads to the realization of deep wisdom that king (*H 8^v*) and subjects, especially army leaders and statesmen, all constitute one organism, serving [the king] in various ways, at times as his seeing eyes, his grasping hands, as his battle-ready shield, at times as his wing and pinion ready to fly, at times as his speaking tongue or his walking foot, [but always] being bold enough to set aside fear and awe and to speak out the word of truth. Besides, the words at the end of the maxim: "but alas! what good do you expect from all that!" are clear to persons of sound judgment, to straight-thinking people, as clear as the meaning of "Good morning!" (lit., as the intent of the greetings of the people).

To sum up, in our time the vezirs are both those that build up the country and those that oppress the people. For, the mighty sultan has abandoned the principle of togetherness, that was sponsored by his great ancestors, and [thus] his intercourse and close contact with high and low as well as his personal interference to stop oppression are no more feasible. Furthermore, an orientation toward justice and a characterization with benignity and equity are no more possible among the vezirs because of their innate character and, especially, their acts and undertakings motivated by blind greed.

As long as personal qualification is not sought for, as long as educated men are not given employment and high standing under the excuse that they had not been trained in the Imperial Palace, (*R 10^v*) it will be necessary that the happiness-vested person that is the sultan be laden with sin (*vezir*), and that the awe-inspiring person, the "illustrious vezir" (by name only!), be the protector of the low-class people, the promotor of the scum.

Story:

Mevlānā Qirīmī¹³ whose great learning is noted in the *Shaqā'iq* (*H 9^r*) *Nu'māniye* and whose abilities and skills in many disciplines are talked about by the 'ulemā was one day sitting together with the late Sultan Mehmed¹⁴, — upon him be God's mercy and contentment! — the conqueror of the well-guarded city of Constantinople, the residence of the royal government, and they were talking about the predecessors and the works of honored [kings]. In the course of their conversation he was asked about the city of *Qirīm*¹⁵ (Crimea) which was the birthplace of this scholar and had been his home and headquarters for many years when he was studying the rational and traditional sciences: "What kind of a large town is that place that such renowned men of learning like your honor spring from it? What kind of climate does that prosperous region have that in this Paradise-like place, in the

¹³ Mevlānā Seyyid Aḥmed b. 'Abdullāh (d. 879/1474—75) was known as Mevlānā-yi Qirīmī ("the Crimean") (cf. Mehmed Tahir 1335, p. 8ff.). His biography is indeed given in Taşköprü-zāde's *Shaqā'iq Nu'māniya* (1269/1859, p. 101f.), where also the same anecdote is told. It is also related in the *Tezkire-i şu'arā* of 'Āli's contemporary Qınalı-zāde Ḥasan Chelebi (ms. Asım Bey no. 386, fol. 238^r). From there it entered Thomas von Chabert 1800, p. 232 (quoted by Hammer, see the following), Hammer 1827—35, vol. 2, p. 124, and Babinger 1953, p. 357 (source not indicated).

¹⁴ Mehmed II (1444—45, 1451—1481).

¹⁵ The Crimean peninsula is meant.

rosegarden of its charms, articulate nightingales like you, in its orchard of marvels an eloquent cypress of your stature come into being (*R 11^r*) and that your well-styled speech can be, as it were, characterized by the words "This is entirely an inspired revelation" (sura 53: 4) and your persuasively formulated logic, as it were, reaches the degree of "He does not speak out of his own fancy" (sura 53: 3)? There is no doubt that the lustre of your writings is a manifestation for the science of astronomy, and the fame of your books illuminates the science of formulations¹⁶ like the resplendent full moon of a dark night. Your inner world and outside appearance are dominated by the sciences of Divine statutes (*fiqh*) and traditions (*hadith*), and the skills of squaring and making triangular, taught in geometry, regulate your months and years like the days of the week. The poetry of your speech has become the secret [key to] the Larger Commentary¹⁷ and your gem-scattering prose has become the symbol of enlightening elucidation". (*H 9^v*) When he was asked this question and an answer was elicited from his fine-spoken tongue that scholar of high grades told the story of the foundation of the City of *Qrīm* (Crimea) and that before there were a thousand great scholars authorized to give *fatvās*, but that after a time all of them dispersed and, as he explained knowledgeable, the country thereupon went to ruins. He pointed out to the respected Sultan that the water of that blessed land had been flavored with the nectar of learning and that its desirable air had been permeated by the winds of knowledge and understanding. The wise sultan, sweeping like wind through the valleys of deep insight, (*R 11^v*) replied: "The points that that town was thriving with an abundance of scholars and that your high fame, being one of that happy group, reached this laudable land have been lined up in your narration like royal pearls and it has clearly emerged that those shining gems within a short time appeared to have scattered like contemptible potsherds. Now, what was the cause that all those roses of the rosegarden of learning within a short period were scattered in the winds like the petals of the tulip under the impact of autumn? What was the cause and origin of this tragedy by which the illustrious dynasty of learned men, the noble family of scholars became dispersed and extinct within a minimum of time?"

[Verses] by the author:

(*H 10^r*) What kind of wind has accused
 A thousand perfect candles to go out?
 What storm has scattered on the ground
 The grains of such a harvest heap of learning?

When the venerable scholar learned the secret of the august king's question he continued his commendable answer: "What happened was this devastating event: the cause of that dispersal were the oppressions of an ignorant vezir, (*R 12^r*) the background of these happenings were the schemes of a short-sighted statesman to abandon the road marks of justice and to take the direction of terror and tyranny." Thus he reported to the sultan, frankly and truthfully and without omitting anything and he made it quite clear to him that the disastrous domination of oppressors causes the ruin of the structure of the period.

Thereupon the victory-crowned monarch sent a servant to invite the grand vezir Maḥmūd Pasha¹⁸ and brought him at once to the noble assembly. [Then] he gave the vezir

¹⁶ The term *fenn-i rüsüm* 'the art of formulations' is somewhat obscure (cf. also fn. 175).

¹⁷ Reference is made to Fakhraddīn ar-Rāzī's Koran commentary *Mafātiḥ al-ghayb* (of 1204), because of its volume known as *at-Tafsīr al-kabīr* "the Large Commentary".

¹⁸ Maḥmūd Pasha was grand vezir in 1453—1466 and 1472—1473.

a vivid account of the main outlines of the event in the presence of the learned man. That man of praised qualities (i. e., the vezir), (*R 12^v*) well-organized through the perfection of his learning and eloquence and quick-witted owing to his good memory for the facts of history, owed the growth of his cypress-stature to the rivers of learning and the color and fragrance and upward trend of the rose of his mind to the rosebush in the garden of elegance and fluency of speech; therefore, when he gave his commendable answer each of his words was an exquisite poem to the chapters of learning, effective like a thousand books, and his convincing preamble was a confirmation of the Mother of the Book¹⁹: (*H 10^v*) "That a country should be ruined by the tyranny of a vezir and that because of the injustice of a statesman that many learned men and experts should be dispersed? Not at all! The destruction of the cultivated land as well as the cultivation of wasteland quite obviously are the work of the blessed hands of the illustrious kings. All the vezirs' efforts in this respect are vain and all the statesmen's diligence in this direction are an illusion. For, so long as the king shows no circumspection and alertness in the supervision of the vezirs, he implicitly authorizes the oppression of the Believers and by selecting the tyrannical vezir he approves of the destruction of his country." [Thus] he firmly absolved himself of his responsibility and made good use of the privileges contained in the register of his courage by saying the downfall of the land of Crimea was caused either by its king, or by its king's lack of vigilance concerning the oppressions of the tyrannical vezir. (*R 13^r*) Both Sultan Meḥmed and the wise scholar applauded the counsellor, accepted his commendable reply, praised him, saw how true the Koranic words "and make him a representative" (sura 73: 9) were, and they ascertained that where the foundation of government is based on learning and knowledge in that enlightened mind the darkness of tyranny has no place. God be praised, how happy was that laudable era, how lofty was the honor and virtue of that fortunate century when the glorious king of Rūm, Sultan Meḥmed, had a noble and learned man like Maḥmūd Pasha (*H 11^r*) as his matchless grand vezir and counsellor and the mollahs, like the Pleiades in the sky, enjoyed the highest reputation and expert scholars were admired like the constellation of the Dipper!

Likewise also in the Persian lands there was an empire-arranging Ardashīr²⁰ and a learned vezir of Āṣaf²¹-like statesmanship, namely, Sulṭān Ḥusayn Bāyqarā²² [and] Mīr 'Alī Shīr²³, and especially a most learned of learned men like Molla Jāmī²⁴ and a most perfect of scholars like Mollah Vā'iz Ḥusayn Kāshifī²⁵, also certainly eloquent writers like the unique Khōja-i Jihān²⁶ and 'Abdullāh the Pearl²⁷, (*R 13^v*) and learned bringers of news like Mīr Ḥusayn²⁸ the enigmatist and Mevlānā Binā'ī²⁹, and, in all, fifteen learned companions [of kings] and eloquent men of pure mettle who, when they sat in the order of their ranks appeared to form the strong wall of the edifice of knowledge and learning. When they sat

¹⁹ The pre-Creation prototype of the Koran.

²⁰ Legendary Persian king.

²¹ According to Islamic tradition, the vezir and confidant of king Süleymān (Solomon).

²² Timurid ruler in Khorāsān (capital: Herāt), 1469—1506.

²³ The statesman — as poet known as Navā'ī — lived 1441—1501.

²⁴ See fn. 9.

²⁵ Persian scholar and writer, died in 1505.

²⁶ It is not clear which one of the many writers and poets at the court of Herāt is understood by this epithet.

²⁷ Khōja 'Abdullāh Marvārīd, officer at Ḥüseyn Bayqarā's court, poet, and musician (cf. Beveridge 1922, p. 278 f., 291).

²⁸ Mīr Ḥusayn Mu'ammāyī: on him also Beveridge 1922, p. 288.

²⁹ Cf. Beveridge 1922, p. 286, where the name is transcribed as Banā'ī.

together arranged according to their dignity Mevlānā Binā'ī ("Builder") would happily sit in the lowest row, as it were, being the foot of the building of learning, that is, its lowest base that occupies the lowest rank in it, although the works of the architect of his genius consisted of several volumes and the pleasant products of the edifice of his mind are several commendable books. At that time the gates of correspondence (*R 14r*) opened with the keys of sincerity and the epistles that carried on the correspondence were characterized by their contents of virtues and propriety. There was great appreciation of the pearls of prose style and there was much enthusiasm for the gems of poetry.

(*H 11v*) Even more so: When [that] throne-adorning monarch, namely, Sulṭān Ḥusayn Bāyqarā, acceded to the throne and took the reins of government in his hands, he at once hurriedly sent messengers in all parts of the world, messengers who crossed the plains [fast] like the winds, and court sergeants speedy like a breeze, to announce his orders that Mīr 'Alī Shīr Navā'ī should by all means be found and hurriedly sent to the [Sultan's] residence. They found him in one of the cells of the *medreses* of Baghdad, according to some in a *medrese*-cell in Samarkand, and tearing him away from the study of the sciences they brought him to Herat, the royal residence. The monarch, generous like Khātem³⁰, at once began to lavish favors and kindnesses on him, and after giving him a reception with full honors he made Mīr 'Alī Shīr his Keeper of Seals and a few days later Treasurer (*defterdār*), and after that he made him his grand vezir and matchless counsellor. In the hours when he was free of the affairs of the subjects (lit., Muslims) and not occupied with the business of government (*R 14v*) he regarded the honor of conversing with him as a spring of new life and the blessing of friendly intercourse with him as a priceless opportunity. The years of his government passed under discussions of poetry and prose and conversations concerned with the methods of knowledge and learning, in particular, with stories on learned subjects told in the company of Mevlānā Jāmī and Ḥusayn Kāshifī, or with reports concerning important questions of government, equity, and justice. (*H 12r*) With his precious life extending for over seventy years and his high position and dignity lasting for thirty eight whole years, the affairs of his government were throughout resting on strong pillars. In the rosegarden of his reign of justice nobody moaned except perhaps the moaning nightingale, in his happy days nobody wept except perhaps the stream that waters the meadow. This is the reason why his proud name is famous all over the world until this day and why, thanks to his dignified eulogies in hundreds of books, he is remembered by the people of Isfahan and Iraq. Moreover, his noble name is also lauded in the prosperous lands of Rūm³¹ and in all circles where the histories of kings are told his fine person is known and praised. At the time of his reign [his] counsellor Mīr 'Alī-Shīr was so singularly powerful and well-received and appreciated by the sultan that he was able during the period of his government to found 370 pious foundations (*R 15r*) and to build many mosques, Friday mosques, *medreses*, and dervish convents, as it has been thoroughly described in the *Tuḥfe-i Sāmī*³².

But the remarkable thing is that this monarch of Darius's statesmanship, namely Sulṭān Ḥusayn Mīrzā, in terms of might and power, prestige and majesty was no more than of the status of a *beglerbegi* of our august Sultan, and the territory that was under his sway is estimated by knowledgeable men to have been of the size of the lands in the province of an illustrious *beglerbegi*. Why is it then that at present no wise vezir like him (i. e., Mīr 'Alī-Shīr) (*H 12v*) scurries along in the service of the royal stirrup? And that not several learned

³⁰ Pre-Islamic Arabian poet, model of liberality.

³¹ The Turkish parts of the Ottoman Empire.

³² Persian historical work by Sayyid Muḥaffar Kābulī (ends in 1498—99).

men of the stature of those wise and learned people enter their happy gatherings so that in this manner, too, their sublime power be increased?

[Verses] by the author:

When a kingdom has attained the full bloom of its power
 What shame if there should be a shortage of wise men!
 The prestige of royal rule requires
 That learned men are not debased by lack of funds or posts.
 The generous [prince] that showers gifts and favor on all classes [of the people]
 Should have but indignation for the learned? God forbid!
 (R 15^v) Kings tend to be generous by nature.
 [If they don't show it] their mean ministers are to blame who fail to submit
 a proposal.

Furthermore, the glorious and famous Sultān Maḥmūd³³ whose good name was immortalized by Mevlānā Firdausi's³⁴ Book of Kings and whose realm and happiness were warranted by so many immeasurable virtues and meaningful good acts, was in the end satirized by Firdausi, and the epilogue of the Book of Kings concluded with such infamy. However this unseemly situation was not caused by some unethical conduct of the august Sultān Maḥmūd but resulted solely from the niggardliness with which his ignoble vezir Hasan Meymendī was endowed and from another familiar's (*khass*) associating himself with him out of envy and jealousy against Firdausi who was affiliated with Ayās³⁵. When the sultan had commissioned the aforesaid learned man to compose the Book of Kings he had in an exemplary way engaged himself to pay him one *dīnār* for each couplet however many couplets there may be (H 13^r) and to undertake it to reward him beyond all expectations as well as to take care of the fulfilment of the wishes of all his house-folk and dependents. When the work reached its end the number of couplets of the Book of Kings attained 60,000; in all the world a good verse being known by its uniqueness and originality that book contained 60,000 good verses. (R 16^r) Especially, the philosopher of Tūs³⁶ who had always been used to the banquet of favor and kindness of that mighty king had taken a full thirty years to carry out this service with the pearls of poetry, had worked so hard on its laudable quality with jewels of eloquence and had attained its end and completion in a complete lifetime (*qarn*). In such a short period was a work completed the like of which cannot be composed in countless centuries and in many lifetimes and years, and [with it] its beauties and ornaments and rich embellishments. To this he pointed in his verse³⁷

I worked very hard in these thirty years.

Was I able by this to bring to life the Persian language?

and it testifies that he finished the Book of Kings within a complete lifetime (*qarn*). Certainly, the philosophers and sagacious thinkers of old times have established that while the pearls of fecundation and reproduction are connected with one another like the links of a chain never stopping to aggregate, generating and emerging day and night and filling the cask of

³³ The Ghaznavid sultan Maḥmūd, 970—1030.

³⁴ See fn. 6.

³⁵ Ayās, Sultan Maḥmūd's favorite slave.

³⁶ Ferdosi's birthplace.

³⁷ The verse is found in the Epilogue (verse no. 5353 in the Teheran edition of 1312/1934).

Creation as so many blossom-like gems, (*H 13^v*) and while the travellers on the road of eternity, the nomad tent-dwellers in the desert of existence and non-existence, those steady-paced wanderers along the routes of the world, crowd together and appear in a continuous flow like a multitude of drops of the sea, (*R 16^v*) the generation and formation of a perfect individual takes place only once in a lifetime (*qarn*), the lucky appearance of an accomplished person happens only once in thirty years. This is how they have realized the rareness of learned men and the nobility of the owners of intelligence.

Now, so many years and months have passed since the time of Adam, but no poem like the Book of King's pearls of ideas has ever found its way to the string of writing, and so many poets and narrators, orators and philosophers have since the creation of the world and the beginning of the children of Adam in the circle of existence become intoxicated by the wine of wisdom, have emptied the cup in the wilderness of perplexity and have completed the drunkenness of insight with the joyfulness of the cup of rhetoric and mirth³⁸ of spirit-elevating poetry and [thus] have found the wine of relaxation and the intoxication of penetrating vision. They were not able to attain the Paradise-like banquet that Firdausi attended, nor to pick unopened flower-buds like the images of the Book of Kings from the bloom of play of ideas and the blossoms on the branches of topics, and most of all, (*H 14^r*) they could not produce such a world-conquering work on the basis of their concepts and speech-embellishing poetry.

[Verses] by the author:

Its elegance is like a beauty of slender waist,
 Its fine points ambra-colored beauty-spots,
 (*R 7^r*) The pen enveloped the virgin of its message
 With a sky-colored robe spun of eloquence³⁹.
 If only such a Book of Kings like this king of books
 Were also sung in honor of the name of our King!

In short, when the book of such kind, this rare jewel, was completed in the name of King Maḥmūd and sent and presented to the residence of his happiness, the payment of the 60,000 dinars that he had undertaken to pay and the granting of the promised outstanding reward became due. When he gave the stringent order to his vezir, this ignorant who was neither well-spoken nor learned and whose heart was black like the pen-cases of half-il-literate persons did not regard that reward as justified and, as if there were rough drafts of calculation in his heart, the black envy boiled up in him, and saying "Such a sum is too much for a poet", (*H 14^v, R 17^v*) he did not take care of [the effectuation of] the payment. Although Maḥmūd had set out on the road of magnanimity and had instructed him to satisfy the man of Tūs, he insisted stubbornly on comforting the poet with a smaller reward. In the end he (i. e., Maḥmūd) approved of his vezir's idea with the words „Do as you wish” — the love of gold and silver lies in the nature of man! — without thinking of the saying "A noble person is one who keeps his promise and, if he disagrees, he is ruthlessness [in person]!"; instigated by the vezir, he delayed the payment of the reward which his magnanimity had pledged. Upon receiving this authorization the unwise vezir put 60,000 drachms into a purse and sent them instead of the 60,000 gold pieces. In his shortsightedness he imagined to have sent a plentiful reward and ample gift and to have shown manifold kindness and honor.

³⁸ The text has *niṣāne*, but that may be the copyist's mistake for *neṣāf*.

³⁹ After this 5 verses have been skipped in the translation.

[Verse] by the author:

Does an ignorant know the value of a jewel?

When a peasant finds ambergris he thinks it is dry clay.

When that "bountiful" present came to the poet it so happened through God's wisdom that he was just taking a bath in the bathhouse. They stayed until he came out of the bath, and waited until he had dressed in the dressing-room. (*R 18^r*) Then they handed the money over to him with the kind words of the vezir, and stringing into their speech a glass pearl from an ass's bridle, they apologized for the amount of the money. The poet, deeply hurt, opened the purse and divided the money (*H 15^r*) into two halves: one half of it he gave to the keeper of the bath as fee for the bath, and drinking a cup of raisin-water from the soft-drink-seller across the street from the bath-house, he deemed him worthy of the other half. Thereafter, broken-hearted and sorry for the great trouble he had taken [for his poem] he went away to his house of mourning.

The next day he left the country and went to another king, working on the satire at the end of the Book of Kings, describing in verse form the unappreciative Sultān Maḥmūd's evil traits. Of this he, without delay, made a clean copy and boldly sent it [to Maḥmūd]. When the satire reached the King he responded as if he had discovered a serpent in his purse. He bit his finger in utter perplexity and groaning like a lion wounded by the hunter's arrow, (*R 18^v*) the veins of wrath and ardor swollen, he sent someone to summon the cunning fox, the caracal-like⁴⁰ vezir. No sooner had he arrived when he was executed and the earth was made his abode. Thus [Maḥmūd] consoled himself, announcing: "This is the punishment of one who made me, who was praised (*maḥmūd*), censured and rejected; this is the fate of one who in one moment annihilated the good acts of thirty years and the praise expressed in 60,000 verses!"

[Verses] by the author:

He who does not know the value of the jewel that is praise

Deserves the asses' bead that is satire.

A worthless chap that denies gold —

(*H 15^v*) Right you are to call him "cheap penny"!

(*R 19^r*) Although he invited Firdausi courting him with letters, his return and his separation from the king in whose realm he resided was not possible. Finally he reached the end of his life, his soul traveled to the Garden of Paradise (*Firdaus*), his beautiful spirit, wandering from way station to way station, became a guest of the playground of *ghilmān*⁴¹ and *houris*. Under these circumstances, the remainder of his reward was offered to his daughter, his sole heiress, and the king's full attention was given to honoring her and to arranging her marriage with one of the ameers. But the high-minded maiden, looking upon the events of the world like a man, rejected the sum offered to her with the words: "I am not in need of that gold and silver that caused my late father to leave the country. Though I may appear poor I am rich owning an inexhaustible treasure in the name of my praised father who possessed hidden gems and glittering pearls of knowledge and skills." In her idealism the garb of poverty seemed to her fine linen of honor and she did not deign to look at the attire of glory and pomp.

⁴⁰ The caracal, a lynx-like animal, is supposed to live on what is left over from the lion's repast.

⁴¹ The pleasure boys of Paradise.

(*H 15^v marg.*) When they saw that his daughter did not accept [the money] they reported this to the Sultan. Then a building was constructed with this money over [her father's] illustrious grave. Thus the gifts destined for his person were devoted to his soul. (*H 15^v cont'd*) As a result, thanks to his ignorant vezir a sultan such as Maḥmūd still to this day lives in the satire on everybody's tongue, (*R 19^v*) his noble deeds are forgotten, his bad acts have annulled the good ones, his virtues of 60,000 verses being lost in oblivion. (*H 15^v marg.*) Today neither his majesty has remained nor his possessions, neither his rich treasure nor his family, but what is still on the tongues [of the people] is the description of him in the Book of Kings and the words of the satire for which his short-sighted vezir is responsible. This singular parable of praise and satire should serve all kings as a warning example.

Likewise, in our own time (*H 16^r*) the realm-arranging king and conquering monarch, our Sultan Murād — may his victories continue with God's aid! — in the year 986 [i. e., 1578—79] ordered the dispatch of a victorious army for the defeat of Iran and the eradication and destruction of the castles of Georgia. His noble plan (*murād*) was by a two-front attack to weaken the heretics appointing the most valiant vezir, the third vezir Lala Muṣṭafā Pasha⁴², [to attack] from the border at Erzurum, and the excellent statesman, the fourth vezir Sinān Pasha⁴³, from Baghdad and from Shahrizūr⁴⁴, as the [two] victorious field-m Marshals and to throw [the heretics] into perplexity and confusion by overwhelming cavalry attacks from both sides. Although this supreme design was certain to lead to success and there was the full intention of defeating [the enemy] the two generals, already before they even left the capital and entered the scenes of their activities, started to conceive all kinds of empty schemes and to fight each other with rancor and zeal. (*R 20^r*) None of them was animated by the zeal of religion or by the wish to fulfill his obligations vis-a-vis the king whom they owed bread and salt. Only interested in giving and taking they spent many days with quarrels, obstinacy, and all kinds of contention trying by all means to promote their scorpionlike⁴⁵ relatives. (*H 16^v*) Moreover, again and again with [their] memorandums they upset the noble mind of the pious monarch who is the shadow of the Creator and the pride of the victorious army, and repeatedly they poisoned the honey of his noble genius with the bitterness of their words. Not only that but Mehmed Pasha⁴⁶ who at that time was the grand vezir was ordered to have those two generals meet at his palace, to report their talks, and especially to work hard on silencing and persuading them. When they had come together and their endless contentions had been reported to the sultan, he dismissed Sinān Pasha from the post of a field-marshal and appointed Muṣṭafā Pasha as sole grand-marshal (*sipehsālār*).

In the first year the conquest of Tiflis and Shirvān⁴⁷, (*R 20^v*) and in the second year the rebuilding of the fortress of Kars were successfully accomplished under the felicitous sponsorship of the Sultan and thanks to his overwhelming power. During that time the said vezirs paid absolutely no attention to the sufferings and tribulations of the mountain-castle-

⁴² The general of Bosnian origin, Muṣṭafā Pasha (d. 1580), who for some time had been the responsible caretaker (*lala* 'tutor') of Selim II before he mounted the throne, had long been 'Ālī's protector.

⁴³ Sinān Pasha (d. 1596), of Albanian origin, was Lala Muṣṭafā Pasha's long-time enemy.

⁴⁴ Shar-i Zül, later Shehrizūr, Shahrzor, name of an area in northern Mesopotamia (cf. the article Shehrizūr by V. Minorsky in EI¹).

⁴⁵ Common metaphor caused by a pun.

⁴⁶ Sokollu Mehmed Pasha, of Bosnian origin, was grand vezir from 1565 to 1579.

⁴⁷ Name of an area in northern Azerbaidjan, at the eastern end of the Caucasus mountains.

conquering soldiers nor to the incessant expenditure and waste of endless treasures. (*H 17^r*) [Sinān Pasha] concentrated his energies exclusively on the daily use of cunning ruses for the purpose of destroying the field-marshal's services and of annihilating him through the Sultan's anger, claiming that the campaign had not reached its objectives, as well as on discrediting his reports which arrived at the Threshold of Happiness. Unfailingly false memoranda and concocted documents were submitted to the royal stirrup and thus he [i.e., Muṣṭafā Pasha] too was dismissed from the office of a field-marshal, and the appointment as head of the army (*ser-leşker*) of the previously dismissed Sinān Pasha was renewed like doubly-refined sugar⁴⁸. But when he left to travel to the border, resolved to conquer the entire lands of Iran, his first job was to repeal all land grants made by his predecessor, to make himself guilty of concealing all [his predecessor's] achievements, and to shatter with dismissal and investigation all those serving [his predecessor] that were deemed to be his followers. (*R 21^r*) Having his own ideas on the management of affairs, he began to handle his official business in a different way. He never bowed to Justice saying the army belongs to the king and the honor of Faith and country belongs to the high-positioned monarch.

Secondly, he completely neglected the ready cash of affability which is successful in the purchase of victory and conquest; it is the medicine by which the disease of an upset situation of the victory-marked army is cured. (*H 17^v*) On the contrary, he acted against it by inducing those who were ready to devote themselves to the sacred service of the Sultan to withdraw and retire. Consequently the campaigns undertaken in that auspicious year were not very successful and his dash to the hamlets of Georgia and along the road to Tifis and Shirvān did not lead to significant gains. Whenever at the time of the previous field-marshal certain difficult questions arose, Meḥmed Pasha, when he was still alive, would be silent; [but] his successor, the grand vezir Aḥmed Pasha⁴⁹ during the six months that he stayed in office would boil up in senseless rancor like the swelling seas under the impact of Noah's flood, (*R 21^v*) and Sinān Pasha would roar like a fierce lion that claims valor and provokes a fight, but never would they sincerely care for the honor of the empire, they would not view with compassion the hardships of the army that had been the basis of faith and glory in close to 300 years of struggle, they would not look with repentance at the depletion of the countless treasures that were senselessly squandered from year to year; in particular, they would not consider with loyal regret that the sultan's noble mind which is more delicate than the rose in the Garden of Paradise, (*H 18^r*) the royal genius compared with which clear nectar is but a muddy spring, is filled with anguish by such endless quarrels and made sad and restless by their ceaseless ambitions.

PICTURE OF FINE STATESMANSHIP FROM THE MATCHLESS
MIRROR OF SPECULATION

God, the Only One, knows and is aware that all the vezirs and statesmen either did not develop a plan along these lines, (*R 22^r*) or were unable to assert their skill-revealing counsel in the sense that as soon as the Sultan's intention of conquering the lands of Iran and his great haste and interest in the subjection of Georgia and Shirvān were expressed first of all an adequate amount of provisions and preservable grains like barley and millet should in the course of two years successively be stored in storehouses in the border regions of Erzurum, Van, and Baghdad, the home of the caliphs. Secondly, during the same two years royal

⁴⁸ Expression prompted by a pun.

⁴⁹ While his compatriot Meḥmed Pasha had favored him, the new grand vezir Aḥmed Pasha (the Fat, 1579—1580), of Albanian descent, favored his enemy Sinān Pasha.

letters should be sent with experienced, eloquent, smooth-tongued and well-spoken envoys to the Khan of the Uzbeks, the Khan of the Tatars⁵⁰, and other pious rulers beneighboring the heretical ilk, and each one of them should be properly courted.

(*H 16^v*) Thirdly, in the third year the incomparable, victory-boding Sultan should with glory and happiness, with splendor and pomp travel until Diyarbekir together with company after company of his victory-proud army. The two renowned generals, forming the two wings of the army, (*R 22^v*) should swiftly march into the enemy country from two sides with two huge, triumphant armies consisting of valiant and battle-experienced soldiers skilled in using the quivering lance, the destructive sword, and the fire-scattering rifle. Furthermore, the Khan of the Uzbeks and the Khan of the Tatars should start to attack from their own sides, their innumerable armies being invited at a certain moment to rush along the roads like winds and to be in perfect harmony with one another. [This operation should proceed] in such a way that no one stretches out his hand to plunder the subjects of the Iranian provinces and to destroy their property, on the contrary, most of the burdens that are imposed upon them should be eased, and of some they should be kindly released. [Thus] the poor people should be treated kindly. In particular, that winter one victory-favored general should spend the winter in Tabriz using the provisions stored in Van, and the other army-leader should rest in the region of Revan (Yerevan) and Azerbaijan with the provisions from Erzurum, likewise some of the provisions stored in the area of Baghdad should be sent to Kazwin allowing the Khan of the Tatars to spend the winter in the town of Kazwin itself, (*H 19^r*) at all times sending plundering troops into the mountains and hills where they smelled Redheads⁵¹, (*R 23^r*) while the population of those lands, motivated by the kind treatment by the Sultan, would be ready to kill the Redheads where ever they found them. If also generous rewards were granted to all those that came with a cut-off head and pensions were given to them, — God knows it, in two years the whole affair could be settled, the entire Persian lands would be added to the lands of His Highness the felicitous Sultan, and [all] the hardships of warfare would come to an end within a short time. However, the vezirs attacked each other, they took care of their personal ambitions, and did not care about the honor of the Empire.

[Verses] by the author:

I feel sorry for the King of the World
 Who is alone with his person, like the pearl in the ocean.
 His mentor (*khōja*), his sheikh, his vezir⁵²,
 They all are after their own gain day and night.
 By letting themselves be influenced to favor others
 They neglect their duties vis-a-vis the Divine commandments.
 Favoring a horde of unworthy ones
 They cause grief to the King of the World.
 The aghas of the Palace eunuchs are the only ones
 That still show loyalty, grateful for [the Sultan's] bread, O you wise one!

⁵⁰ The Uzbeki Shaibanids and the Tatar Khāns of the Crimea, being Sunnis, were the Ottomans' natural allies against the Shi'i Safavids.

⁵¹ Nickname of the Shi'is because of their red headgear.

⁵² The great influence of the Khōja (the historian Sa'deddin) and of the court preacher Sheikh Shūjā' on Murād III are well-known. The influential vezir was Sokollu Meḥmed Pasha (see fn. 46), the husband of his half-sister Ismikhān. Their influence is also mentioned in 'Alī's *Kūnhü l-akhbār* (ms. Istanbul Üniversitesi kütüphanesi no. 5959, fol. 507^r).

(*R 23^v*) If only those close to the King of the World
 Did not ever think of their own families!
 If only they were but architects of world-conquering plans
 And not slaves that build [their own] palaces!⁵³
 To build one pavillion is the cause of a thousand faults,
 One building is based on many offenses.
 A well-meaning servant is the one
 Whose main concern is the Sultan's peace of mind.
 A slave has to serve his king,
 No other worry befits him.
 When the sorrows of war disturb the King's mind
 What shame for his slave to think of his ease.
 To serve with [one's] tongue is easy
 But what counts are counsel and planning.

(*H 19^v*) By the great God and in deference to His noble Prophet, I, this sincere slave of His, who have continually served on military campaigns for four years⁵⁴ and have been closely acquainted with *beglerbegis* and with *sanjaq begis* (*mīr-i livā*), have never seen anybody serve the Sultan with sincere intentions and a loyal mind nor have I heard them say anything but words of rancor and enmity against each other. Some, because of their youthfulness, quickly become a prey of the blandishments of the world, others because of their old age assiduously and with the greatest greed attend to the accumulation of property. (*R 24^r*) Some *beglerbegis* apply themselves to commerce by selling pensions and fiefs (*tīmār*), and others instigate trouble and sedition and do everything they can to create disunion in the army, feeling no regret for all the enormous expenses incurred by the Sultan. They regard it as gain to enter a two-days distance into the country of the Shah that has gone astray, a country of a two-months extension, and to wander around there. In short, I have not seen anyone serving with complete dedication other than the expert late Muṣṭafā Pasha⁵⁵, whom the Lord may forgive, and the valiant counsellor 'Oṣmān Pasha⁵⁶, and I have never heard of anyone else to have used able spies for the exploration of the conditions of the enemy and [thus] to have spent goodly sums for the benefit of the throne.

[Verses] by the author:

If 'Oṣmān Pasha had not striven with all his might,
 He would a thousand times have betrayed the secret of the army.
 If that magnanimous one were not the hero of the battlefield,
 His person could not have become the center [of power] in those areas.
 He had fought on many frontiers⁵⁷, had performed great deeds,
 Had twisted the arm of many an aggressor.

⁵³ The compound *quṣūr-binā* is of most irregular formation. Sokollu Mehmed Pasha's sumptuous palace stood on the grounds of the later mosque of Sulṭān Aḥmed I.

⁵⁴ The Caucasus campaign is meant where 'Āli took part from 1578 to 1581.

⁵⁵ On Lala Muṣṭafā Pasha, see fn. 42.

⁵⁶ Özdemir-oghli 'Oṣmān Pasha (later grand vezir 1584—1585, died 1585) played a leading role in the war against the Safavids (see Kortepeter 1972, *passim*).

⁵⁷ His earlier exploits were in Yemen where already his father Özdemir Pasha had gained fame as the conqueror of Ṣan'a, and in Ethiopia.

(*H 19^v marg.*) Now the zeal of the King of the World is his guide.
 Why should not all Daghestan be conquered by him?
 Since our King is the Solomon of our Time,
 He has found an Āsaf⁵⁸ to make field-marshal in this war.

And in general [it can be said that] the noble honor of the felicitous monarch suffers in the first place from the stupidity of the vezirs. [A proof that] they are the causes of shame and disgrace is (*H 20^r*) Mehmed Pasha⁵⁹, the one assassinated when he was grand vezir, who in the days of the glorious and mighty father of our happy Sultan was a symbol of power and high-handedness, gave and took as he wished and was independent in his office after his heart's desire. But when he developed signs of senility he began to believe every word, rejecting the possibility of ascribing a report to truth or lie, and got used to rule with an opiniatedness that led to capriciousness. Consequently, he appointed the cursed Evren⁶⁰ inspector of injustices, authorized him to carry out penal jurisdiction without recourse to the magistrates, and thus sent him as a scourge to Rumeli, Evren, that greedy dragon and vindictive serpent whose only occupation was to torture (*R 24^v*) the people of the world with the fire of oppression, whose only ambition was to incite the notables of the province against each other with his intrigues, a person of disgusting appearance, injurious and raging like a viper, the executioner of ameurs, that abject rogue of the worst kind, a second Nimrod and Pharaoh, rejected by the inhabitants of both worlds. It was as if a sudden disaster had struck, as if a serpent of a new kind, a fire-throwing dragon *sui generis* had appeared, burning the people and scorching the land in those provinces.

Furthermore, he [i. e., Mehmed Pasha] appointed an unfriendly Infidel called "Knows-no-God"⁶¹, (*H 20^v*) in whose character there were clear signs of tyranny and stubbornness and in whose countenance the marks of vice and wickedness showed in every manner, to the office of prefect of police (*su-bashi*) of the sublime capital, the well-guarded Constantinople, thus letting the tears of the oppressed become a continual rain and the smoke of the sighs of the troubled ones an uninterrupted ladder to the sky. Within a short period he had caught a great many people in the net (*R 25^r*) of his deception; day after day putting forth new tricks and ruses, he caused countless people to run to his protector⁶². However, even though he might hang a hundred innocent men in one moment, the complaints against him were not listened to. If he ordered a thousand mutilations at one time, never would one take the trouble to prevent him from doing it. In this manner these two tyrants ruled unlimited in their mischief in the lands of torture and oppression; by the greed for fines they made him (i. e., the grand vezir) commit such crimes that it will not be possible to enumerate them summarily on the Day of Judgment in a thousand years of the earthly calendar. (*R 25^v*) These two evildoers involved that vezir in so much oppression and injustice that at the penal court of the other world because of their multitude the prompt interrogation of the atrocities of the polytheistic Infidels and of the acts of the tyrants of the world will perhaps not be possible for a long time.

⁵⁸ See fn. 21.

⁵⁹ On Sokollu Mehmed Pasha, see fn. 46.

⁶⁰ Evren ("the serpent") can at best be a nickname. The person's name is not revealed by the author.

⁶¹ Here again the author does not reveal the person's name. Calling him an Infidel does not necessarily imply that he was a convert; the expression is used as a term of vituperation and also with the connotation of cruelty.

⁶² I. e., the grand vezir.

[Verses] by the author:

Converting an Infidel⁶³ to the Islamic faith,
 Starting to lavish all kinds of favor on him,
 The Sultan makes his slave a vezir,
 That is, he makes him his assistant.
 (*H 21r*) As such he becomes, as it were, the symbol of a king,
 Being authorized to appoint and dismiss.
 But is it right that by his carelessness
 He favor a tyrant, giving him honor,
 And thus immerses the King in sin,
 The King that had shown him — that sinner — so much favor,
 Becoming himself a criminal
 And also proclaiming his master a tyrant?
 Why does he not favor able persons.
 Why does he avoid the intercourse with wise men?
 Himself both ignorant and opinionated!
 If he thinks he is a just ruler, God help him!
 (*R 26r*) Is this gratitude for God's blessings
 To torture the Believers with tyranny?
 O my God, may such a statesman
 Find no peace in this world and the other!

Now it has been understood that all good and evil events of this time and the questions concerning the evil innovation that the high persons are left out and low people are given priority spring entirely from the wickedness of the vezirs and from the unawareness of the land-conquering sultan, and it seems appropriate to describe succinctly the disgraceful transactions that are the causes of disintegration. And this work has been given the name "A counsel for Sultans" (*Nuṣḥatu s-Selāṭin*), consisting of four chapters, an Introduction in the beginning, and an Epilogue in the end.

INTRODUCTION concerning the perfect prosperity of the Kings of the House of 'Osmān, the complete royalty of rulers of the stature of Alexander the Great, especially, the perfection of the affairs of State (*H 21v*) and the procurement of the necessities of their glory and majesty.

The polisher of the shining word-gems, the expert of the precious pearls of stories and reports has brought the jewels of speech to perfection, has ordered and arranged the notebook of narration as follows:

The kings of old and previous monarchs (*R 26v*) some of whom ruled from east to west like Alexander the Great, some of whom like Solomon — Peace be upon him! — added the power of prophethood [to their kingship] and reigned over all men and genii, beasts and birds, demons and wild animals and especially employed the strong, changing winds⁶⁴ in their service, and some of whom gained their throne like Tamerlane through struggle and fight, through war, combat, and the drums of battle, have each one of them left a great

⁶³ Sokollu Mehmed Pasha had been pressed into the Sultan's service as a Christian boy in Bosnia.

⁶⁴ According to the Koranic tradition, King Süleymān (Solomon) possessed supernatural powers.

name and become conspicuous among the rulers by their glorious reigns. But the bountiful pious institutions which the sultans of the Ottoman house were able to leave behind — the Ottoman sultans who in power are pillars reminding of Alexander the Great, in majesty the Solomons of the time, and in violence and fierceness each one a Tamerlane, — the armies ready to conquer given to this happy dynasty, the holy war and campaigns inflicted by them upon the depraved Infidels, and the arms and weapons, the means and instruments at their disposal in matters of pomp and splendor, of glory and majesty had not been given to any one of the great lords of their time, (*H 22^r*) had not been awarded to a single one of the world-conquering sovereigns. (*R 27^r*) For, the Prophet Solomon had requested complete power and perfect kingship when he said: "O my Lord, grant me a kingdom as it shall be given to no one after me!" but in his multitudinous army were not seen such gilded uniforms and varied subdivisions, group after group, company after company, with their dazzling ornaments [as in the Ottoman army]. In short, God — may He be exalted! — has given to this matchless, august race such perfect luck and all-embracing happiness that the mind trying to imagine it tears its clothes into a hundred shreds [in despair] and excellent brains lose their mind and are stunned when they think of it. The depth of the sea of their majesty is beyond the reach of the diving thought and imagination, the expanse of the oceans of their power is barred to the swimmer of expertise and meditation. For, their august lineage is securely tied like the succession of the days and the regulation of the months and years in such a way that violence and aggression from outside or grief and injury from one another as in so many other noble houses can never easily succeed. Among others, the following gifts, of special Divine favor, have been made to this praise-worthy dynasty:

The first gift: (*R 27^v*) They reside all by themselves in a palace like unique jewels in the depth of the oyster-shell, and totally sever all relations with relatives and dependents. The slave girls and slave pages (*ghilmān*) that have access to their honored private quarters (*harem*), (*H 22^v*) who are evidently at least three to four thousand individuals, are all strangers and the person of the monarch is like a single gem in their midst. However they are so used to serving him and to carry out his noble orders in perfect obedience and are in their hearts so much attached to him with complete submission and affection that only the demons that served at Solomon's court — peace be upon him! — can have been command-obeying to that extent and only the men and genii, beasts and fowl, insects and birds that were subject to his happiness-boding seal could have been that zealous in serving him.

The second gift: Their religious convictions being immaculate and their character like a shining mirror, it has never happened that a single member of that noble family ever swerved from the road of orthodoxy or that one valiant sultan befriended himself with an unseemly doctrine.

The third gift: The Lord, the Creator and Protector, (*R 28^r*) has always hidden that great race under His protection and it has never been heard that the plague would have entered their flourishing palace or that an individual belonging to that blemishless progeny would have been struck by the horror of the pestilence and would have died of it.

The fourth gift: Whenever they conquered a province and, destroying and eradicating its castles and estates, were confronted with the necessity of appointing a magistrate and assigning a substantial force on their own authority they considered it a sign of weakness, like Alexander the Great, to appoint again one of the great (*ūmerā*) of that province (*H 23^r*) and to assign him certain revenues [of a *xāṣṣ*]; may [that province] be as far away as can be, they would opt to send one of the attendants of their Gate of Happiness [there] as *sanjaq*

begi (*mîr-i livā*), and to Yemen and Ethiopia and to very remote places like Algeria a *begler-begi* (*melikü l-ümerā*). No such absolute power was given to the earlier sovereigns.

The fifth gift: The various special troops in their victory-oriented army and the various tools of war and battle use that are given to them were not available to the brawny fists of anyone of the countless armies [of previous times]. (*R 28^v*) To their attacks going downward and going upward are the same, to their victory-imprinted military music low and high notes are of the same level and equal. In their eyes, as it were, the conquest of a castle is like destroying a spider's web, and in their God-assisted hands to beat the enemies is clearly like pulling out⁶⁵ a hair from the beard of a decrepit old man.

The sixth gift: The coherence of the figures in the registers of their revenues and the order of the recordings in the ledgers of their expenses are so strict that they and their salaried classes are free of worries. Consequently, their income exceeds their necessary expenses, their gain is larger than [the expenses for] the important affairs of state.

Now, for a noble family whose happiness is that much assured, whose political and religious enemies are declining ever more, (*H23^v*) whose needs are more than taken care of, whose luck is most favorable, whose army — numerous as the stars — is well-organized, and the inhabitants (*ra'āyā*) of whose country live in peace of mind and in orderly occupation, it is appropriate and suitable that they show utmost care and attention beyond words in the distribution of the public treasure (*beytü l-māl-i müslimîn*), in honoring and rewarding the worthy experts as they deserve, in denying the inappropriate rabble their patronage, (*R 29^r*) and especially, in conversing at all times with very alert men of knowledge, always lavishing rewards and favors on the class of men of learning. Likewise they should show kindness to the men of arms by granting them advancement, and show great friendliness and honor to those skilled ones, the men of the pen and of writing, always being generous to the poor, the weak, the pious, the devout, day after day. They should request the support and the prayers of saintly persons whose prayers are answered, and most of all, they should be alert and circumspect by night and by day concerning the wretched actions of the enemies. They should watch and worry day and night because of the heavy impositions enjoined on the tax-paying subjects. They should hurry to perform the five daily prayers in their private quarters punctually, and devote themselves to reading the Koran, to litanies and pious recitals at the time of early morning, supposedly the time when prayers are answered. They should pay attention to the restoration of the right of innocent persons that complain of having been wronged, should acquaint themselves with the teachings of history in their spare time, and occasionally for exhilaration (*H 24^r, R 29^v*) betake themselves to the hunting-ground. Such behavior, such acts are an unequalled daily prayer of thanks to the immortal Creator, and the foundations of their happiness will become stronger from day to day and the pillars of their felicity will become more solid and lasting. For, to have confidence in the vezir, to completely trust the statesmen is, as it were, an obstacle to justice and a cause of oppression and iniquity. To personally check on them is an act of grateful worship, but its postponement and neglect, entrusting others with it, is an act of disobedience vis-a-vis the Divine command. If they, while being truly the Lord's most favored servants, show neglect in their worship and become careless and neglectful by delegating [their duties] to the vezirs, why should not the statesmen who are — speaking symbolically — their slaves also show carelessness in their important services and ignore the rules which have been imposed on them?

⁶⁵ The word *gam'* in the text is erroneous for *gal'*.

[Verses] by the author:

If a king does not fear God
 And entrusts his vezir with his duties,
 How could it be that that vezir should fear the king
 And should tear himself away from the stupor of unconcern?
 (R 30^r) Just as the king had trusted him as honest
 Maybe he will rely on the steward's honesty.
 In this manner at the Last Judgement
 Many a man will be put to shame because of [the neglect of] his duty
 vis-a-vis God.

Although statesmen are a necessity and vezirs are important and indispensable, the most important thing is to employ wise ones and to strictly check on their irregular actions in order to assure their fear and awe of the king's anger (H 24^v) and their effort and attention to carry out the orders in conformity with the Divine Law, so that high and low and the subjects (*ra'āyā*) — numerous as the stars — behold the light of justice and obey [the king].

Now, these are the four chapters which are the commendable four pillars of the flourishing edifice of kingdom, which if minded strengthen the government of Faith and State and fortify the building of kingdom and caliphate, but if neglected and forgotten have always been found to lead to the destruction of the structure of equity and to the suppression of the foundations of justice:

First Chapter: On the matters necessary for kings.

Second Chapter: On the various [signs of] disruption [caused by] disregard of the rules (*qavānīn*).

Third Chapter: On the weakness of the community originating from certain illicit practices.

(R 30^v) *Fourth Chapter*: On the boundless injury incurred by the author of the book.

FIRST CHAPTER: On the matters necessary for kings.

May it not remain a secret that the kings of bygone days, the monarchs of the rank of Alexander the Great, — be they the noble fathers and mighty ancestors of our Sultan, the refuge of the world, or be they the venerable caliphs of ancient times, those God-fearing sovereigns and chaste princes — have tried their best with certain fine habits and pleasant inclinations to let the candle of their noble families shine brightly and in particular, to let the sun of their happiness rise up in the constellation of equity and justice through beneficial innovations and laudable rules (*qavānīn*). It is undoubtedly (*H 25^r*) most necessary and important for His Highness, the honored and felicitous Sultan, to keep to that commendable course with pleasing manners and to travel the roads of government and justice following the path of his predecessors so as not to evoke hate in the hearts of the subjects, indignation and wariness among the pillars of the state, (*R 31^r*) and, in particular, worry among the representatives of the educated class which are the guardians of the pure water of learning, and disturbance in the enlightened minds of the venerable men of religion who are the mirrors of the state of the people, by disconcerting acts of his own or ugly innovations introduced by his representatives. For, those acts and manners to which high and low of the subjects, God's trust [to the kings], are accustomed will, even though they may in themselves be onerous, not appear burdensome to them nor will they appear out of place and unbecoming to their descendants. But those unaccustomed acts that the inhabitants of the lands, the people of country and provinces, have never seen nor heard of, even though they may manifestly be of a light nature, will nevertheless arouse grudges, and because of such vexation [the people] will not fail to turn from the road of sincere devotion to the path of hate and fear.

In short, the *first* thing the reigning monarchs and kings of Alexander's majesty should mind is to gain the love of their subjects so that the weak, who have been committed to their charge by the Creator of all creatures, make them the beloved of their hearts. (*H 25^v*) Now, if the kings lead a pious life, if they take care of the people who are their subjects, (*R 31^v*) if they always mix and associate with philosophers and wise men and at all times avoid the company of blockheads, if they again and again study the teachings of history, that is, the life-stories of the kings of old, if they restrain as much as possible their own violence and aim at equity and justice, if fools and eunuchs and mutes and the courtiers, those kindlers of sedition and disintegration, do not take over the affairs of the State while there are perfect men available, men who are like coins of full weight, especially if they show great kindness and favor to the knowledgeable '*ulemā* and the learned men of penetrating judgement who are the pillars of the throne-hall of Faith and Kingship, the firmly rooted legs of the structure of empire and nation, if they do not permit an increase of the burdens of duty that are incumbent on the victorious soldiers, the felicitous, self-assured army that is instrumental in conquering and defeating, in destroying and eradicating, and if they always protect the weak and the poor under their rule from the fire of poverty and destitution by means of their liberality and limitless patronage, they will tie the hearts to themselves in affection and will motivate people after the five ritual prayers to pray for the continuation of their might (*R 32^r*) and glory.

The *second* requirement is an eloquent, educated companion of rare qualities in whose conduct there is similarity to the lives of the prophets and in whose conversations (*H 26^r*) there are interesting recollections from the histories of kings and saints. He should at all times be present in the felicitous private quarters of the Sultan, should always have the courage to report and narrate with clear words and unequivocal examples the events that