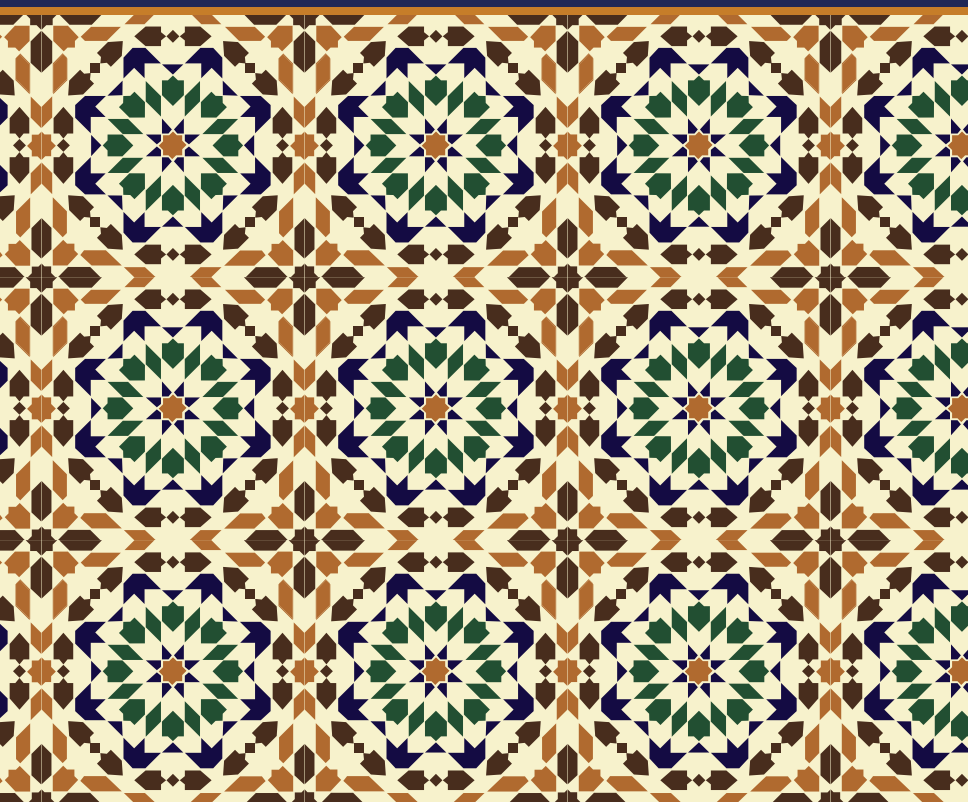


IMAM SHĀFI'Ī'S POETRY

A Poetic Translation

by

IBRAHIM KHAN & MOUSTAFA ELQABBANY



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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THE ROYAL ISLAMIC
STRATEGIC STUDIES CENTRE



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Finally, none of this work would have seen the light without the cooperation of the Royal Aal al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and Turath Publications, UK.

Introduction
IBRAHIM KHAN

Translating poetry is a difficult task. One has the dual challenge of conveying both the meaning and the beauty of the language. *Dīwān al-Shāfiʿī* is no different in that regard; however there is the additional challenge of making sure one does not offend the sensibilities of so many Muslims for whom the great Imam is a revered figure.

Therefore, our approach has been one of balancing functionality and meaning against elegance and beauty where the two are in conflict, and to reconcile between them as far as possible. As such this translation is ideal for a student of the Arabic language who will be able to engage at a basic level with the Arabic text and use the translation as a crutch to aid his understanding.

However, engaging with the translations is still worthwhile even for those who do not read or understand Arabic well, simply because of the great lessons and wisdom shared by Shāfiʿī in them.

What began as an exercise to improve my Arabic skills in Egypt eight years ago is today finally finished in partnership with the excellent Moustafa Elqabbany who has elevated this work significantly with his expertise and insight, and I pray that all its readers benefit from it and gain the same love for Arabic poetry that I have through engaging with al-Shāfiʿī's work.

I am also incredibly grateful to my wife Sumayyah Mian,

Moemen Metwally and Mays Abbass for proofreading this manuscript and providing comments and thoughts on the translation.

IBRAHIM KHAN

Introduction

MOUSTAFA ELQABBANY

Muḥammad ibn Idrīs al-Shāfiʿī (150–204 AH / 767–820 CE), Allah have mercy upon him, better known as Imam Shāfiʿī, is the titular founder of one of the four mainstream schools of Islamic law. Born in Gaza and buried in Egypt, he hailed from Quraysh, the same tribe as the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. Imam Shāfiʿī's focus on Qur'an, Hadith, the Arabic language, and few other essential principles, is what defines his legal methodology. He was the first imam to look beyond localized juristic differences, such as those in Mecca, Medina, Yemen, and Kufa, and formulate a methodology that depended purely on revealed sources (e.g., the Qur'an and Sunnah) and sound reasoning—something the Imam saw as an extension of the Arabic language itself. Imam Shāfiʿī lived at a time when Greek thought had begun to permeate Islamic scholarly discourse. There are a number of statements attributed to him in which he criticizes such approaches and emphasizes the need for a native understanding of the language of Revelation. It is no coincidence that the word for speech and reason are related in both Arabic and Greek: *manṭiq* and *logos*. Language and logic are inseparable, and the Imam made it his mission to champion an Arabic methodology. To the exclusion of all other imams of Islamic law, Imam Shāfiʿī was a quotable authority (*ḥujjah*) of the Arabic language.

This book is a collection and translation of some of his poetry. Such collections are all posthumous compilations of

his verse from various historical sources. Some attributions are questionable, as is the usual case with early poetry. However, most attributions are historically accurate. Finally, translating poetry into poetry is difficult, and while the intended meanings have been preserved in translation, a literal rendering into poetry is impossible.

MOUSTAFA ELQABBANY

*Director, The Royal Islamic Strategic Studies Centre
Amman, Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan*

26th September 2024



CHAPTER I
Good Character

Concealing a secret

If one divulges his own secrets but
Blames others for the same, then he's an idiot.
If in himself a man cannot confide,
Those he entrusts are straiter still inside.

Taking upon things that will benefit one's self

Guard your good name and oft-pursue its grace,
You'll be regarded good, free from disgrace.
Turn not to people, save in courtesy
Though fate be harsh or shunned by friends you be.
And if today's provisions prove too tight,
Persist one day: it might just end your blight.
There is no good in fickle friends who sway,
Who turn however winds direct their way.
And though your friends be many when in queue
When hardship strikes, you'll find they're but a few.

[البحر الطويل]

إِذَا الْمَرءُ أَفْشَى سِرَّهُ بِلِسَانِهِ وَلَا مَ عَلَيْهِ غَيْرُهُ فَهُوَ أَحْمَقُ
إِذَا ضَاقَ صَدْرُ الْمَرءِ عَن سِرِّ نَفْسِهِ فَصَدْرُ الَّذِي يُسْتَوْدَعُ السِّرَّ أَضْيَقُ

[البحر الطويل]

صُنِ النَّفْسَ وَاحْمِلْهَا عَلَى مَا يَزِينُهَا تَعِشْ سَالِمًا وَالْقَوْلُ فِيكَ جَمِيلُ
وَلَا تُرِينَ النَّاسَ إِلَّا تَجَمُّلاً نَبَا بِكَ دَهْرٌ أَوْ جَفَاكَ خَلِيلُ
وَإِنْ ضَاقَ رِزْقُ الْيَوْمِ فَاصْبِرْ إِلَى غَدٍ عَسَى نَكَبَاتُ الدَّهْرِ عَنكَ تَزُولُ
وَلَا خَيْرَ فِي وُدِّ امْرِئٍ مُتَلَوِّنٍ إِذَا الرِّيحُ مَالَتْ مَالَ حَيْثُ تَمِيلُ
وَمَا أَكْثَرَ الإِخْوَانَ حِينَ تُعْذُهُمْ وَلَكِنَّهُمْ فِي النَّائِبَاتِ قَلِيلُ

The definition of a jurist, a leader, and a rich man

A learned man shows learning in his acts,
Not learning limited to quoting facts.

A leader leads through kind nobility,
Not through his nation or his men, you see.

An independent man needs but himself,
Not independence through his reign or wealth.

Contentment

I hold contentment as man's richest state,
And so I stand in fealty by its gate.

No man thus finds me begging at his door.
I'm not engrossed with those who fools adore.

And so I'm rich though I don't own a thing:
I pass through crowds as though I were a king.

[البحر الكامل]

إِنَّ الْفَقِيهَ هُوَ الْفَقِيهُ بِفِعْلِهِ لَيْسَ الْفَقِيهُ بِنُطْقِهِ وَمَقَالِهِ
وَكَذَا الرَّئِيسُ هُوَ الرَّئِيسُ بِخُلُقِهِ لَيْسَ الرَّئِيسُ بِقَوْمِهِ وَرِجَالِهِ
وَكَذَا الْغَنِيِّ هُوَ الْغَنِيُّ بِحَالِهِ لَيْسَ الْغَنِيُّ بِمَلِكِهِ وَبِمَالِهِ

[البحر المتقارب]

رَأَيْتُ الْقِنَاعَةَ رَأَسَ الْغِنَى فَصِرْتُ بِأَذْيَالِهَا مُتَمَسِّكٌ
فَلَا ذَا يِرَانِي عَلَى بَابِهِ وَلَا ذَا يِرَانِي بِهِ مُنْهَمِكٌ
فَصِرْتُ غَنِيًّا بِلَا دِرْهَمٍ أَمُرُّ عَلَى النَّاسِ شِبْهَ الْمَلِكِ

The noblest of characters

When I forgave and led a grudge-free life,
I freed myself from enmity's grim strife.

I greet my enemy, when seen, with charm.
Through greeting him, I thus repel his harm,

Expressing joy when seeing those I hate,
As though my heart's been stuffed with love so great.

People are ill, and closeness is their cure,
While cutting them off breaks their hearts for sure.

Respect comes with contentment

Killing my covetousness brought me peace—
While covetous, man's paltriness can't cease.

I saved contentment after its demise.
Reviving it brings honour in men's eyes.

When covetousness takes the place of grace
One ails abased, subjected to disgrace.

[البحر البسيط]

لَمَّا عَفَوْتُ وَلَمْ أَحْقِدْ عَلَى أَحَدٍ أَرَحْتُ نَفْسِي مِنْ هَمِّ الْعَدَاوَاتِ
إِنِّي أَحْيِي عَدُوِّي عِنْدَ رُؤْيَيْهِ لِأَدْفَعِ الشَّرَّ عَنِّي بِالتَّحِيَّاتِ
وَأُظْهِرُ الْبِشْرَ لِلْإِنْسَانِ أَبْغِضُهُ كَمَا إِنْ قَدْ حَشَا قَلْبِي مَحَبَّاتِ
النَّاسُ دَاءٌ وَدَاءُ النَّاسِ قُرْبُهُمْ وَفِي اعْتِزَالِهِمْ قَطْعُ الْمَوَدَّاتِ

[البحر الوافر]

أَمْتُ مَطَامِعِي فَأَرَحْتُ نَفْسِي فَإِنَّ النَّفْسَ مَا طَمَعَتْ تَهُونُ
وَأَحْيَيْتُ الْقُنُوعَ وَكَانَ مَيْتًا فَفِي إِحْيَائِهِ عَرَضُ مَصُونُ
إِذَا طَمَعٌ يَحِلُّ بِقَلْبِ عَبْدٍ عَلَتْهُ مَهَانَةٌ وَعَلَاهُ هُونُ

Turning away from ignorance

I turn away from every foolish boor
For all he says is in himself, for sure.

No harm befalls the great Euphrates though
A group of dogs may plunge within its flow.

Dignity of man

One who reveres great men is thus revered,
Not so a man who scorns great men and sneers.

And one whose needs have been fulfilled by men
And then defies them is thereby condemned.

Pardoning and good character

When cursed by lowly men, my rank is raised;
No fault is mine unless I shout dispraise.

Had I no self-respect I'd let me loose
On every lowly man and take no truce.

Were I to seek my benefit, you'd find
Me most obsequious for needs in mind.

But, rather, when I strive, it's for my friend,
For shame on those well-fed with hungry friends.

[البحر البسيط]

أَعْرِضْ عَنِ الْجَاهِلِ السَّفِيهِ فَكُلُّ مَا قَالَ فَهُوَ فِيهِ
مَا ضَرَّ بَحَرَ الْفُرَاتِ يَوْمًا أَنْ خَاضَ بَعْضَ الْكِلَابِ فِيهِ

[البحر الوافر]

وَمَنْ هَابَ الرَّجَالَ تَهَيَّبُوهُ وَمَنْ حَقَرَ الرَّجَالَ فَلَنْ يُهَابَا
وَمَنْ قَضَتِ الرَّجَالَ لَهُ حَقُوقًا وَمَنْ يَعِصِ الرَّجَالَ فَمَا أَصَابَا

[البحر الطويل]

إِذَا سَبَّيْتَنِي نَذَلْتُ زَايِدَتُ رِفْعَةً وَمَا الْعَيْبُ إِلَّا أَنْ أَكُونَ أُسَابِيَهُ
وَلَوْ لَمْ تَكُنْ نَفْسِي عَلَيَّ عَزِيْزَةً لَمَكَّنْتُهَا مِنْ كُلِّ نَذَلٍ تُحَارِبُهُ
وَلَوْ أَنَّيَ أَسْعَى لِنَفْعِي وَجَدْتَنِي كَثِيرَ التَّوَانِي لِلذِّي أَنَا طَالِبُهُ
وَلَكِنِّي أَسْعَى لِإِنْفَعِ صَاحِبِي وَعَارُ عَلَى الشَّبْعَانِ إِنْ جَاعَ صَاحِبُهُ

Turning ugly speech into fragrance

A fool addresses me in ways unfond
And in my heart, I'd rather not respond.

He grows in foolishness; I grow more kind,
As burning makes sweet incense more refined.

Excellence

I've seen distinguished rookies of the world
Rise up above their peers and be well-heard.
But if, like me, they boast no noble feats,
They're ranked along with kids who play in streets.

[البحر الوافر]

يُخَاطِبُنِي السَّفِينَةُ بِكُلِّ قُبْحٍ فَأَكْرَهُ أَنْ أَكُونَ لَهُ مُجِيبًا
يَزِيدُ سَفَاهَةً فَأَزِيدُ حِلْمًا كَعُودٍ زَادَهُ الْإِحْرَاقُ طِيبًا

[البحر الطويل]

أَرَى الْغُرْفِي الدُّنْيَا إِذَا كَانَ فَاضِلًا تَرَقَّى عَلَى رُوسِ الرَّجَالِ وَيَخْطُبُ
وَإِنْ كَانَ مِثْلِي لَا فَضِيلَةَ عِنْدَهُ يُقَاسُ بِطِفْلِ فِي الشَّوَارِعِ يَلْعَبُ

Asceticism and the fate of the wrongdoers

When testing worldly men, all I can see
Are men who start their day most miserly.

Contentment's sword I thus unsheathed and smote
All hope in them 'til hope became remote,

'Til no man saw me standing in his way
Nor sitting at his door expecting pay –

An independence free of wealth accrued:
Be free of things, not free through them and rued.

When evil men condone their wanton ways
And shamelessly pursue whatever pays,

Then let them be, for passing nights inflict
Upon them changes they could not predict.

How many a rebellious, evil man
Proudly views stars below his stirrup's band!

But soon, and in his moments of least care,
A change of fate will occupy his lair –

Emerging with no wealth or rosy rank
And with a book of deeds in goodness blank;

Requited for the deeds he used to forge
As God unleashes on him His raw scourge.

بَلَوْتُ بَنِي الدُّنْيَا فَلَمْ أَرَ فِيهِمْ
 فَجَرَدْتُ مِنْ غَمْدِ القِنَاعَةِ صَارِمًا
 فلا ذا يراني واقفًا في طريقيه
 غَنِيٌّ بِمَا عَنِ النَّاسِ كُلِّهِمْ
 إِذَا مَا الظُّلُومُ اسْتَحْسَنَ الظُّلْمَ مَذْهَبًا
 فَكَلَهُ إِلَى صَرْفِ اللَّيَالِي فَإِنَّهَا
 فَكَمْ قَدْ رَأَيْنَا ظَالِمًا مُتَمَرِّدًا
 فَعَمَّا قَلِيلٍ وَهُوَ فِي غَفَلَاتِهِ
 فَأَصْبَحَ لَا مَالَ وَلَا جَاهَ يُرْتَجَى
 وَجُوزِي بِالْأَمْرِ الَّذِي كَانَ فَاعِلًا
 سوى من غدا والبخل ملء إهابه
 قطعْتُ رجائي منهمُ بذبابه
 وَلَا ذَا يراني قَاعِدًا عِنْدَ بَابِهِ
 وَلَيْسَ الْغِنَى إِلَّا عَنِ الشَّيْءِ لَا بِهِ
 وَلَجَّ عَتُورًا فِي قَبِيحِ اكْتِسَابِهِ
 سَتُبِدِي لَهُ مَا لَمْ يَكُنْ فِي حِسَابِهِ
 يَرَى النَّجْمَ تَيْهًا تَحْتَ ظِلِّ رِكَابِهِ
 أَنَاخَتْ صُرُوفُ الحَادِثَاتِ بِبَابِهِ
 وَلَا حَسَنَاتٌ تَلْتَقِي فِي كِتَابِهِ
 وَصَبَّ عَلَيْهِ اللهُ سَوْطَ عَذَابِهِ

Silence is well-being

They said: 'You were attacked with words but silent fell.'

I said: 'Retort's the key to words from Hell.'

Silence amongst all fools and dolts is grace:

It's better for one's standing ... to save face.

A lion's feared despite its silence, while

A dog will bark when pelted and defiled.

Silence is better than excess talk

No good is there in petty speech that's blunt

When you've been led to words most eloquent.

Silence is more befitting and sublime

Of noble men than chatter that's ill-timed.

Through character, a noble man's fine brow

Shines bright with great refinement, thus endowed.

[البحر البسيط]

قالوا سَكَتَ وَقَدْ خُوصِمْتَ قُلْتُ لَهُمْ
والصَّمْتُ عن جاهلٍ أو أحمقٍ شرفٌ
أما ترى الأُسْدَ تُخَشَى وهي صَامِتَةٌ
إنَّ الجوابَ لبابِ الشرِّ مفتاحٌ
وفيه أيضًا لِصَوْنِ العِرضِ إِصلاحٌ
والكلبُ يُخسى لَعَمري وهو نَبَّاحٌ

[البحر الكامل]

لا خَيْرَ في حشوِ الكَلا
والصمْتُ أَجْمَلُ بالفتى
وَعَلَى الفَتَى لِطِباعِهِ
مِ إذا اهتَدَيْتَ إِلى عِوَنِهِ
مِنَ مَنطِقٍ في غَيرِ حِينِهِ
سِمةٌ تَلوُحُ على جَبِينِهِ

The superiority of silence

My silence is a trade where I'm the boss –
If gains don't come, at least there isn't loss.

Silence in men is nothing but a trade.
There simply is no trade of higher grade.

And from what the Imam used to strike examples with often

Do not respond to fools when they speak out,
For silence trumps responding, out and out.

For when you speak to them, you grant relief,
But if ignored, they'll perish due to grief.

[البحر الطويل]

وَجَدْتُ سُكُوتِي مَتَجَرًّا فَلَزِمْتُهُ إِذَا لَمْ أَجِدْ رِبْحًا فَلَسْتُ بِخَاسِرٍ
وَمَا الصَّمْتُ إِلَّا فِي الرِّجَالِ مَتَاجِرٌ وَتَاجِرُهُ يَعْلُو عَلَى كُلِّ تَاجِرٍ

[البحر الوافر]

إِذَا نَطَقَ السَّفِيهُ فَلَا تُجِبُهُ فَخَيْرٌ مِنْ إِجَابَتِهِ السُّكُوتُ
فَإِنْ كَلَّمْتَهُ فَرَّجَتْ عَنْهُ وَإِنْ خَلَّيْتَهُ كَمَدًا يَمُوتُ

The image shows a decorative book cover with a central white area containing text. The cover is framed by a dark blue background with intricate floral and vine patterns in gold, red, and light blue. The central white area is also framed by a gold border with floral motifs. The text is centered in the white area.

CHAPTER II
Pride and Self-Respect

Self-respect

Nothing can scratch your skin like your own nails,
So take the reins of all of your affairs.

And when you seek some need for life on Earth,
Then seek from those who recognize your worth.

Fame

A man enjoys good favour and esteem
Until he's graced with deeds he did not glean.

You'll also find a wretch with faults imbued,
Wretched and blamed for crimes he didn't do.

Given preference to others and generosity

I'm open-handed, though I spend the night
In doubled-over hunger, sans respite!

I feign the means of plenty with my friends
Lest my impoverish'd state they apprehend.

But when I speak with God, I cry in need,
For He knows best the state from whence I plead.

[البحر الكامل]

ما حَكَ جِلْدَكَ مِثْلُ ظُفْرِكَ فَتَوَلَّى أَنْتَ جَمِيعَ أَمْرِكَ
وَإِذَا قَصَدْتَ لِحَاجَةٍ فَاقْصِدْ لِمُعْتَرِفٍ بِقُدْرِكَ

[البحر الكامل]

الْمَرْءُ يَحْظَى ثُمَّ يَغْلُو ذِكْرَهُ حَتَّى يُزَيِّنَ بِالَّذِي لَمْ يَفْعَلِ
وَتَرَى الشَّقِيَّ إِذَا تَكَامَلَ عَيْبُهُ يَشْقَى وَيُنْحَلُ كُلُّ مَا لَمْ يَعْمَلِ

[البحر الطويل]

أَجُودٌ بِمَوْجُودٍ وَلَوْ بَتُّ طَاوِيًا عَلَى الْجُوعِ كَشْحًا وَالْحَشَا يَتَأَلَّمُ
وَأُظْهِرُ أَسْبَابَ الْغِنَى بَيْنَ رِفْقَتَيْ لِيخْفَاهُمْ حَالِي وَإِنِّي لَمُعْدَمٌ
وَبَيْنِي وَبَيْنَ اللَّهِ أَشْكُوهُ فَاقْتَبِي حَقِيقًا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِالْحَالِ أَعْلَمُ

Sense of honour

To pull a molar, or be hit in jail,
To bring tomorrow back, or die and wail,
To die of cold, or by revenge be slain,
To tan a skin where sunlight holds no reign,
To eat a lizard, or to hunt a bear,
To scatter seeds in badlands that are bare,
To breathe out fire, or to bear disgrace,
To sell for coins one's home and special place,
To sell one's shoes, or be denied love's hope,
To bear a thousand lashes by strong rope,
Is all much easier for men of noble core
Than seeking favour at a wretch's door.

لَقَلْعُ ضِرْسٍ وَصَرْبُ حَبْسٍ وَنَزْعُ نَفْسٍ وَرَدُّ أَمْسٍ
وَقَرُّ بَرْدٍ وَقَوْدُ فَرْدٍ وَدَبْعُ جَلْدٍ بِغَيْرِ شَمْسٍ
وَأَكْلُ ضَبِّ وَصَيْدُ دَبِّ وَصَرْفُ حَبِّ بِأَرْضِ حَرْسٍ
وَنَفْخُ نَارٍ وَحَمْلُ عَارٍ وَيَبْعُ دَارٍ بِرَبْعِ فِلْسٍ
وَبَيْعُ خُفٍّ وَعَدْمُ إلفٍ وَضَرْبُ أَلْفٍ بِجَبَلِ قَلْسٍ
أَهْوَنُ مِنْ وَقْفَةِ الْحُرِّ يَرْجُو نَوَالًا بِبَابِ نَحْسٍ

Great determination

Rain down upon us pearls, O Adam's Peak,
And burst with gold, O wells of Tukulor!

In life, I won't miss out on bread men seek;
In death, I will not lack a grave, for sure!

My zeal is that of kings; my soul is free.
To be disgraced is unbelief to me.

Since I'm content with life's most basic needs,
Why entertain Joe Blow, like one who pleads?

أَمْطِرِي لَوْلَا جِبَالَ سَرَنْدِيدِ بَ وَفِيضِي آبَارَ تَكْرُورَ تَبْرَا
أَنَا إِنْ عَشْتُ لَسْتُ أَعْدَمُ قُوَّتَا وَإِذَا مِتُّ لَسْتُ أَعْدَمُ قَبْرَا
هِمَّتِي هَمَّةُ الْمَلُوكِ وَنَفْسِي نَفْسُ حُرِّ تَرَى الْمَذَلَّةَ كُفْرَا
وَإِذَا مَا قَنِعْتُ بِالْقَوْتِ عُمْرِي فَلِمَاذَا أَزُورُ زَيْدًا وَعَمْرَا

Strength

When problems occupy me, I disclose
Their facts to careful thinking, to expose.

My tongue's afoam like camel studs in heat,
Or like a sword from Yemen that defeats.

I'm not a spineless chap that asks around
Amongst my peers to see what they have found.

A spokesman for the heart and mind, my charm's
Attracting goodness and removing harm.

إِذَا الْمُشْكِلَاتُ تَصَدَّيْنَ لِي كَشَفْتُ حَقَائِقَهَا بِالنَّظَرِ
لِسَانٌ كَشَفَشَقَةَ الْأَرْحَبِيِّ يِ أَوْ كَالْحُسَامِ الْيَمَانِيِّ الذَّكْرِ
وَلَسْتُ بِإِمَّعَةٍ فِي الرِّجَا لِ أَسْأَلُ هَذَا وَذَا مَا الْخَبَرِ
وَلَكِنِّي مِدْرُهُ الْأَصْغَرِيُّ نِ جَلَابُ خَيْرٍ وَفَرَّاجُ شَرِّ

An eloquent poet

What will your guest apprise his family
When asked about your home: what did he see?

Will he say: 'The Euphrates I crossed. High'
'Were its waves, but unquenched in thirst was I.'

'I climbed steep steps, but mountain roads and trails'
'Tapered 'til travelling could not avail.'

My need will then betray my flattery,
Like glass reveals a lake's turbidity.

I hold the pearls and gems of poetry.
My crown's a laurel wreath of oratory

Whose bloomage on high hilltop gardens grows,
Whose silk brocade where good is gathered glows.

A worthy poet's a black asp that sheds:
His verse is venom that can knock foes dead.

Malice t'wards poets is a fateful ill
That bountiful men may mend when they will.

ماذا يُخَبِّرُ ضَيْفُ بَيْتِكَ أَهْلَهُ
 أَيْقُولُ جَاوَزْتُ الْفُرَاتَ وَلَمْ أَنْلِ
 وَرَقَيْتُ فِي دَرَجِ الْعُلَا فَتَضَايَقْتُ
 وَلْتُخَبِرَنَّ خِصَاصَتِي بِتَمَلُّقِي
 عِنْدِي يَوَاقِيْتُ الْقَرِيضِ وَدُرَّهُ
 تَرَبَّى عَلَى رَوْضِ الرُّبَا أَزْهَارُهُ
 وَالشَّاعِرُ الْمِنْطِيقُ أَسْوَدُ سَالِحٌ
 وَعَدَاوَةٌ الشَّعْرَاءِ دَاءٌ مُعْضَلٌ
 إِنَّ سَيْلَ كَيْفَ مَعَادُهُ وَمَعَاجِبُهُ
 رِيًّا لَدَيْهِ وَقَدْ طَغَتْ أَمْوَاجُهُ
 عَمَّا أُرِيدُ شِعَابَهُ وَفِجَاجُهُ
 وَالْمَاءُ يُخَبِّرُ عَنْ قَدَاهُ زُجَاجُهُ
 وَعَلَيَّ إِكْلِيلُ الْكَلَامِ وَتَاجُهُ
 وَيَرْفُ فِي نَادِي النَّدَى دِيَابِجُهُ
 وَالشَّعْرُ مِنْهُ لُعَابُهُ وَمُجَاجُهُ
 وَلَقَدْ يَهُونُ عَلَى الْكَرِيمِ عِلَاجُهُ

Generosity

If you give not, though your days come and go,
While you possess your fill and overflow,

Then what can you expect when you're deposed
And life's harsh bite attacks with fangs exposed,

And life reclaims the gifts you think you own,
For life is wont to oft-reclaim its loans.

إِذَا لَمْ تَجُودُوا وَالْأُمُورُ بِكُمْ تَمْضِي
وَقَدْ مَلَكَتْ أَيْدِيكُمْ الْبَسْطُ وَالْقَبْضُ
فَمَاذَا يُرَجَّى مِنْكُمْ إِنْ عَزَلْتُمْ
وَعَضَّتْكُمْ الدُّنْيَا بِأَنْيَابِهَا عَضًّا
وَتَسْتَرْجِعُ الْأَيَّامُ مَا وَهَبَتْكُمْ
وَمِنْ عَادَةِ الْأَيَّامِ تَسْتَرْجِعُ الْقَرْضَا

The rights of society

A man came to Shāfi‘ī and told him that his friend was ill. Shāfi‘ī replied: “By God, you have done me good, and awakened me to do a noble deed. And you’ve turned away from me the possibility of my giving an excuse that sounds like a lie.”¹ He asked for his moccasins and continued, “to walk barefoot, full of pain, upon hot sand in Dhū Ṭuwā, is easier than to give a friend an excuse that resembles a lie.” Then he recited:

I find great peace fulfilling people’s needs
It’s hard to bear the guilt neglect will breed.

It’s quite enough to say: ‘I didn’t know’
And be believed, despite its heavy blow.

Whoever cares for neighbours not-his-kin,
And friends, both near and far, in thick and thin,

Will live a leader, fondly talked about:
Were he to suffer harm, they’d bail him out.

¹ An excuse that sounds like a lie is for one to say to one’s friend: “I didn’t know you were ill.”

[البحر الطويل]

أَرَى رَاحَةً لِلْحَقِّ عِنْدَ قَضَائِهِ
وَحَسْبُكَ حَظًّا أَنْ تُرَى غَيْرَ كَاذِبٍ
وَمَنْ يَقْضِ حَقَّ الْجَارِ بَعْدَ ابْنِ عَمِّهِ
يَعِشَ سَيِّدًا يَسْتَعْذِبُ النَّاسُ ذِكْرَهُ
وَيَثْقُلُ يَوْمًا إِنْ تَرَكْتَ عَلَى عَمْدٍ
وَقَوْلِكَ لَمْ أَعْلَمْ وَذَلِكَ مِنَ الْجَهْدِ
وَصَاحِبِهِ الْأَدْنَى عَلَى الْقُرْبِ وَالْبُعْدِ
وَإِنْ نَابَهُ حَقُّ أَتَوْهُ عَلَى قَصْدٍ



CHAPTER III
The Diseases of the Soul

The bad characteristics of society

There's nothing left but flattery and tricks:
A flower to the eyes, when touched, that pricks.

When forced to live amongst mankind, be fire
Perhaps you'll burn the thorns 'til they expire.

The harvest of corruption in religion

People persisted 'til they introduced
Matters of faith no prophet had produced.

'Til most of them thought little of God's way,
Too busy with inventions in its stay.

Diseases are from three things

The great destroyers of mankind are three
That damn a healthy man to malady:

Copious alcohol and too much sex,
And eating when one's full, which tends to vex.

[البحر البسيط]

لَمْ يَبْقَ فِي النَّاسِ إِلَّا الْمَكْرُ وَالْمَلَقُ
شَوْكٌ إِذَا لَمَسُوا زَهْرًا إِذَا رَمَقُوا
فَإِنْ دَعَتَكَ ضَرُورَاتٌ لِعِشْرَتِهِمْ
فَكُنْ جَحِيمًا لَعَلَّ الشَّوْكَ يَحْتَرِقُ

[البحر البسيط]

لَمْ يَبْرَحِ النَّاسُ حَتَّى أَحْدَثُوا بَدْعًا
فِي الدِّينِ بِالرَّأْيِ لَمْ يُبْعَثْ بِهَا الرُّسُلُ
حَتَّى اسْتَخَفَّ بِحَقِّ اللّهِ أَكْثَرُهُمْ
وَفِي الَّذِي حَمَلُوا مِنْ حَقِّهِ شُغْلُ

[البحر الوافر]

ثَلَاثٌ هُنَّ مُهْلِكَةُ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ
وَدَاعِيَةُ الصَّحِيحِ إِلَى السَّقَامِ
دَوَامٌ مُدَامَةً وَدَوَامٌ وَطَاءٍ
وَادْخَالُ الطَّعَامِ عَلَى الطَّعَامِ

Being willing to please the envier

I've humoured people, but those envious
Have proven altogether humourless.

How can a man just humour those who hate
His blessings, nor are pleased, 'til they abate?

The bitterness of carrying a favour

Do not accept the favour of one who
Reminds you of his favours, old and new.

But on your own decide your gain and yield,
And have some patience: patience is a shield!

Men's favours, to a heart that isn't dead,
Hit harder than a piercing arrowhead.

To remind of favours

I've seen you brand me with your favour's rod
As though you were my origin or god.

So spare me favours, putrid like a sty:
A morsel will suffice me 'til I die.

[البحر الطويل]

وَدَارَيْتُ كُلَّ النَّاسِ لَكِنَّ حَاسِدِي مُدَارَاتُهُ عَزَّتْ وَعَزَّ مَنَالُهَا
وَكَيْفَ يُدَارِي الْمَرْءَ حَاسِدَ نِعْمَةٍ إِذَا كَانَ لَا يُرْضِيهِ إِلَّا زَوَالُهَا

[البحر الكامل]

لَا تَحْمَلَنَّ لِمَنْ يَمَنُّ — مِنْ الْأَنْامِ عَلَيْكَ مِنْهُ
وَاخْتَرِ لِنَفْسِكَ حَظَّهَا وَاصْبِرْ فَإِنَّ الصَّبْرَ جُنَّةٌ
مَنْ الرِّجَالِ عَلَى الْقُلُوبِ بِأَشَدِّ مِنْ وَقْعِ الْأَسِنَّةِ

[البحر الطويل]

رَأَيْتُكَ تَكْوِينِي بِمَيْسَمٍ مِنْتِ كَأَنَّكَ كُنْتَ الْأَصْلَ فِي يَوْمِ تَكْوِينِي
فَدَعْنِي مِنَ الْمَنْنِ الْوَحِيمِ فَلْقَمَةٌ مِنَ الْعَيْشِ تَكْفِينِي إِلَى يَوْمِ تَكْفِينِي

Miserliness of the souls

Money emboldened silent men to speak
Though earlier they had been shy and meek.

And of their surplus, no one had a share.
Men's merit they'd neglect without a care.

Disbelief in the astrologers

The two of you! Tell the astrologer
That I discount the fate that stars confer.

Knowing what now is, knowing what had been,
Is inescapably God's Will, Unseen.

[البحر الوافر]

وَأَنْطَقَتِ الدَّرَاهِمُ بَعْدَ صَمْتٍ أَنْاسًا بَعْدَ مَا كَانُوا سُكُوتًا
فَمَا عَظَفُوا عَلَى أَحَدٍ بِفَضْلِ وَلَا عَرَفُوا لِمَكْرَمَةٍ تُبُوتَا

[البحر الخفيف]

خَبَّرَا عَنِّي الْمُنْجَمَ أَنِّي كَافِرٌ بِالَّذِي قَضَتْهُ الْكَوَاكِبُ
عَالِمٌ أَنَّ مَا يَكُونُ وَمَا كَا نَ قِضَاءً مِنَ الْمُهَيِّمِينَ وَاجِبُ

The image shows a decorative book cover with a central white area containing text. The cover is framed by a dark blue background with intricate floral and vine patterns in gold, red, and light blue. The central white area is also framed by a gold border with floral motifs. The text is centered in the white area.

CHAPTER IV
Travel and its Benefits

The five benefits of travelling

Wander the lands to seek where greatness reigns!
And travel, for that brings five major gains:

Clear mind, a livelihood, and knowledge, taste;
And with the friendship of great men, be graced!

Spurring one on to travel from an ignominious land

Depart a land that treats you bad, for shame!
And when you leave those close, be not aflame.

Raw ambergris is filth in its home land,
But when estranged, it's prized as treasure, grand!

And kohl is but a rock that you might find
In its home land bestrewn on roads unkind;

But when estranged, no merit from it's hid:
It's borne between the pupil and its lid!

.

[البحر الطويل]

تَغْرَبُ عَنِ الْأَوْطَانِ فِي طَلَبِ الْعُلَى
وَسَافِرٌ فِي الْأَسْفَارِ خَمْسُ فَوَائِدِ
تَفْرُجُ هَمًّا وَآكْتِسَابُ مَعِيشَةٍ
وَعِلْمٌ وَأَدَابٌ وَصُحْبَةٌ مَا جِدِ

[البحر البسيط]

أَرْحَلُ بِنَفْسِكَ مِنْ أَرْضٍ تُضَامُ بِهَا
وَلَا تَكُنْ مِنْ فِرَاقِ الْأَهْلِ فِي حُرْقِ
فَالْعَنْبِرُ الْخَامُ رَوْتُ فِي مِوَاتِنِهِ
وَفِي التَّغْرُبِ مَحْمُولٌ عَلَى الْعُنُقِ
وَالْكُحْلُ نَوْعٌ مِنَ الْأَحْجَارِ تَنْظُرُهُ
فِي أَرْضِهِ وَهُوَ مَرْمِيٌّ عَلَى الطُّرُقِ
لَمَّا تَغْرَبَ حَازَ الْفَضْلَ أَجْمَعَهُ
فَصَارَ يُحْمَلُ بَيْنَ الْجَفْنِ وَالْحَدَقِ

The love of the family and the land

A stranger fears like one who steals. He'll mope,
Much like a servile debtor bound in rope.

But when remembering his family,
His heart beats like a flying bird with glee.

Encouragement to travel extensively

This residence, for men of mind and taste,
Offers no peace, so leave this home and place.

Travel – for those you'll part, you'll find new friends.
Work hard: hard work's the good life's means to ends.

When water stops its movement, it goes foul.
Refreshing when it moves; when still, afoul.

If lions never leave, no prey is caught,
And arrows at their bow don't hit the spot.

And if the sun stood still and did not move,
Not Arabs nor non-Arabs would approve.

Gold ore's bestrewn, where found, just like the sand,
And oud is merely timber in its land.

But when the latter is estranged, it's prized.
The former, when estranged, like gold's, appraised.

[البحر الكامل]

إِنَّ الْغَرِيبَ لَهُ مَخَافَةٌ سَارِقٍ وَخُضُوعٌ مَدْيُونٍ وَذِلَّةٌ مُوثِقِ
فَإِذَا تَذَكَّرَ أَهْلَهُ وَبِلَادَهُ فَفُؤَادُهُ كَجَنَاحِ طَيْرٍ خَافِقِ

[البحر البسيط]

مَا فِي الْمَقَامِ لِذِي عَقْلِ وَذِي أَدَبٍ مِنْ رَاحَةٍ فَدَعِ الْأَوْطَانَ وَاعْتَزِبِ
سَافِرٌ تَجِدُ عِوَضًا عَمَّنْ تُفَارِقُهُ وَأَنْصِبْ فَإِنَّ لَذِيذَ الْعَيْشِ فِي النَّصَبِ
إِنِّي رَأَيْتُ وَقُوفَ الْمَاءِ يُفْسِدُهُ إِنْ سَاحَ طَابَ وَإِنْ لَمْ يَجْرِ لَمْ يَطْبِ
وَالْأَسْدُ لَوْلَا فِرَاقُ الْأَرْضِ مَا فِتْرَسَتْ وَالسَّهْمُ لَوْلَا فِرَاقُ الْقَوْسِ لَمْ يَصِبِ
وَالشَّمْسُ لَوْ وَقَفَتْ فِي الْفُلْكِ دَائِمَةً لَمَلَّهَا النَّاسُ مِنْ عَجْمٍ وَمِنْ عَرَبِ
وَالتَّبْرُ كَالتُّرْبِ مُلْقَى فِي أَمَاكِنِهِ وَالْعُودُ فِي أَرْضِهِ نَوْعٌ مِنَ الْحَطَبِ
فَإِنْ تَغَرَّبَ هَذَا عَزَّ مَطْلَبُهُ وَإِنْ تَغَرَّبَ ذَلِكَ عَزَّ كَالذَّهَبِ

The image shows a highly decorative book cover. It features a central white rectangular area with a scalloped border, set against a dark blue background. The background is filled with intricate floral and vine patterns in gold, red, and light blue. The central white area contains the text 'CHAPTER V' in a serif font, with 'Fluctuations of States' below it in an italicized serif font. The entire design is framed by a thin, repeating geometric border.

CHAPTER V
Fluctuations of States

Luck

Believe it if you're told a lucky man
Came with a twig that fruited in his hand.

And check if told a luckless man sought drink,
But into earth the water then did sink.

Were wealth attained through stratagems, you'd find
Me hanging onto stars above that shine.

If gifted wit, a man won't riches see:
Two opposites as different as can be.

Ambitious men of little means are those
Most worthy of their grief of fate's hard blows.

As proof of fate and of its reign, I say:
Observe the happy fool and sage dismayed.

Whoever's given wealth but doesn't gain
Good deeds or praise, success he won't obtain.

For luck brings nigh all matters far away,
And luck will open shut doors all the way.

فَإِذَا سَمِعْتَ بِأَنَّ مَجْدُودًا حَوَى عُوْدًا فَأَنْمَرَ فِي يَدَيْهِ فَصَدَّقِ
 وَإِذَا سَمِعْتَ بِأَنَّ مَحْرُومًا أَتَى مَاءً لِيَشْرَبَهُ فَغَاصَ فَحَقِّقِ
 لَوْ كَانَ بِالْحَيْلِ الْغِنَى لَوَجَدْتَنِي بِنُجُومِ أَقْطَارِ السَّمَاءِ تَعَلَّقِي
 لَكِنَّ مَنْ رُزِقَ الْحِجَا حُرِمَ الْغِنَى ضِدَّانِ مُفْتَرِقَانِ أَيَّ تَفَرُّقِ
 وَأَحَقُّ خَلَقَ اللَّهُ بِالْهَمِّ امْرُؤٌ ذُو هَمَّةٍ يُبْلَى بِرِزْقِ ضَيِّقِ
 وَمِنَ الدَّلِيلِ عَلَى الْقَضَاءِ وَحُكْمِهِ بُؤْسُ اللَّبِيبِ وَطَيْبُ عَيْشِ الْأَحْمَقِ
 إِنَّ الَّذِي رُزِقَ الْيَسَارَ فَلَمْ يَنْلِ أَجْرًا وَلَا حَمْدًا لَغَيْرِ مُوَفَّقِ
 وَالْجَدُّ يُدْنِي كُلَّ أَمْرٍ شَاسِعٍ وَالْجَدُّ يَفْتَحُ كُلَّ بَابٍ مُغْلَقِ

*Time is a day in favour and a
day in opposition*

Time is two days: one's safe and one's for fear.
Life has two ways: limpid and unclear.

A carcass floats atop the waves, you see,
While pearls are buried deep within the sea.

While countless stars across the sky are strewn,
Nothing eclipses but the sun or moon.

To be awake and to watch out

Audacious was the asp, despite high stakes,
So tell it: 'Caution's best for cocky snakes.'

Good days have made you think life's on your side.
You have no fear of fate and what it hides.

And peaceful nights have made you feel secure,
But in the still of night descends the stir!

[البحر البسيط]

الدَّهْرُ يَوْمَانِ ذَا أَمْنٍ وَذَا خَطَرٍ وَالْعَيْشُ عَيْشَانِ ذَا صَفْوٍ وَذَا كَدْرٍ
أَمَّا تَرَى الْبَحْرَ تَعْلُو فَوْقَهُ جَيْفٌ وَتَسْتَقِرُّ بِأَقْصَى قَاعِهِ الدُّرُّ
وَفِي السَّمَاءِ نُجُومٌ لَا عِدَادَ لَهَا وَلَيْسَ يُكْسَفُ إِلَّا الشَّمْسُ وَالْقَمَرُ

[البحر البسيط]

تَاهَ الْأَعْيُوجُ وَاسْتَعْلَى بِهِ الْخَطَرُ فَقُلْ لَهُ خَيْرٌ مَا اسْتَعْمَلْتَهُ الْحَدْرُ
أَحْسَنْتَ ظَنَّاكَ بِالْأَيَّامِ إِذْ حَسَنْتَ وَلَمْ تَخَفْ سُوءَ مَا يَأْتِي بِهِ الْقَدْرُ
وَسَالَمْتَكَ اللَّيَالِي فَاغْتَرَّرْتَ بِهَا وَعِنْدَ صَفْوِ اللَّيَالِي يَحْدُثُ الْكَدْرُ

To be content with one's lot

I hadn't been content with what you see
Of life, but I'm content with destiny.

So if days prove unfaithful to their vows,
Though forced, contentment's all that I espouse.

Returning evil with good

A part of misery's that one adore
While the one one loves loves their own amour,

Or to want goodness for a person while
What they desire for you is truly vile.

Power isn't everything

Strong vultures eat the desert's carrion,
While little bees have all the honey won.

[البحر الطويل]

وَمَا كُنْتُ أَرْضَى مِنْ زَمَانِي بِمَا تَرَى وَلَكِنِّي رَاضٍ بِمَا حَكَمَ الدَّهْرُ
فَإِنْ كَانَتْ الأَيَّامُ خَانَتْ عُهُودَنَا فَإِنِّي بِهَا رَاضٍ وَلَكِنَّهَا قَهْرُ

[البحر الكامل]

وَمِنَ الشَّقَاوَةِ أَنْ تُحِبَّ بَ وَمَنْ تُحِبُّ يُحِبُّ غَيْرَكَ
أَوْ أَنْ تَرِيدَ الخَيْرَ لِلْ إِنْسَانِ وَهُوَ يُرِيدُ ضَيْرَكَ

[البحر الكامل]

أَكَلَ العُقَابُ بِقُوَّةٍ جِيفَ الفِلا وَجنى الدُّبَابُ الشُّهْدَ وَهُوَ ضَعِيفُ

Luck

Life's trials are so many, without end.
Its pleasures are like fetes that you attend.

It's ruled great men and taken them as slaves
While it itself's a slave to petty knaves.

Kingship over the lowly

Life's trials are so many, without end.
Its pleasures are like fetes that you attend.

It's ruled great men and taken them as slaves
While it itself's a slave to petty knaves.

[البحر الوافر]

تَمُوتُ الْأُسْدُ فِي الْغَابَاتِ جَوْعًا وَلَحْمُ الضَّانِ تَأْكُلُهُ الْكِلَابُ
وَعَبْدٌ قَدْ يَنَامُ عَلَى حَرِيرٍ وَذُو نَسَبٍ مَفَارِشُهُ التُّرَابُ

[البحر الكامل]

مِخْنُ الزَّمَانِ كَثِيرَةٌ لَا تَنْقِضِي وَسُرُورُهُ يَأْتِيكَ كَالْأَعْيَادِ
مَلِكُ الْأَكَابِرِ فَاسْتَرْقِ رِقَابَهُمْ وَتَرَاهُ رِقًّا فِي يَدِ الْأَوْغَادِ

The image shows a highly decorative book cover. It features a dark blue background with intricate floral and vine patterns in gold, red, and light blue. The central area is a large, white, scalloped-edged shape, resembling a stylized arch or a large letter 'A'. Inside this white shape, the text 'CHAPTER VI' is written in a simple, black, serif font. Below it, the title 'The Ideal Requitat' is written in a black, italicized serif font. The entire design is framed by a thin, repeating geometric border in gold, blue, and red.

CHAPTER VI
The Ideal Requitat

What you lend you will borrow

They took control, presumptuously so,
But soon they'll find that everything must go.

Had they been fair, fair's what they would've found
But wrong they did, so time brought wrong around.

And so life tells the tale of what became:
'It's tit-for-tat, and time is not to blame!'

Weigh with what you are weighed with

Weigh one who weighs you with what he's weighed you
And weigh his way of weighing, so it's true.

Whoever visits you, you visit too,
And turn away from those who're harsh with you.

Whoever thinks you're less than him, ignore
His fancy and ignore the petty boor.

And turn your gaze towards the Lord of slaves
For all that came to you in life, He gave.

[البحر البسيط]

تَحَكَّمُوا فَاسْتَطَالُوا فِي تَحَكُّمِهِمْ
لَوْ أَنْصَفُوا أَنْصَفُوا لَكِنْ بَغَوْا فَبَغَى
فَأَصْبَحُوا وَلِسَانِ الْحَالِ يُنْشِدُهُمْ
عَمَّا قَلِيلَ كَأَنَّ الْأَمْرَ لَمْ يَكُنْ
عَلَيْهِمُ الدَّهْرُ بِالْأَحْزَانِ وَالْمِحْنِ
هَذَا بِذَلِكَ وَلَا عَتَبٌ عَلَى الزَّمَنِ

[البحر الكامل]

زِنَ مَنْ وَزَنَكَ بِمَا وَزَنَ
مَنْ جَا إِلَيْكَ فَرِحَ إِلَيْ
مَنْ ظَنَّ أَنَّكَ دُونَهُ
وَارْجِعْ إِلَى رَبِّ الْعِبَادِ
كُ مَا وَزَنَكَ بِهِ فَرِنَهُ
وَمَنْ جَفَاكَ فَصَدَّ عَنْهُ
فَاتْرُكْ هَوَاهُ إِذَنْ وَهِنَهُ
دِ فَكُلُّ مَا يَأْتِيكَ مِنْهُ

The honouring of one's self

I am content with what life gives of gains,
And I've protected my own soul from shame,

For fear that people should then say or know
That So-and-so has favoured So-and-so.

A man from whom I gain no petty fee
Is no concern if he abandons me.

Whoever views me as a man complete,
To me, his judgment's with sound thought replete.

A pleased look

Fault-finding pains a glance through God content,
While bitter eyes on finding faults are bent.

I don't revere men who revere me not.
I grant the same rights that from them I'd got.

If you approach, my love approaches you,
But if you turn away, I'll do that too.

Our lives do not depend on one another,
And when death strikes, we're less in need of others.

[البحر البسيط]

قَنَعْتُ بِالْقَوْتِ مِنْ زَمَانِي وَصُنْتُ نَفْسِي عَنِ الْهَوَانِ
خَوْفًا مِنَ النَّاسِ أَنْ يَقُولُوا فَضْلُ فُلَانٍ عَلَى فُلَانٍ
مَنْ كُنْتُ عَنْ مَالِهِ غَنِيًّا فَلَا أَبَالِي إِذَا جَفَانِي
وَمَنْ رَأَنِي بَعِينَ تَمَّ رَأْيْتُهُ كَامِلَ الْمَعَانِي

[البحر الطويل]

وَعَيْنُ الرِّضَا عَنْ كُلِّ عَيْبٍ كَلِيلَةٌ وَلَكِنَّ عَيْنَ السُّخْطِ تُبْدِي الْمَسَاوِيَا
وَلَسْتُ بِهِيَابٍ لِمَنْ لَا يَهَابُنِي وَلَسْتُ أَرَى لِلْمَرْءِ مَا لَا يَرَى لِيَا
فَإِنْ تَدُنْ مِنِّي تَدُنْ مِنْكَ مَوَدَّتِي وَإِنْ تَنَأَ عَنِّي تَلَقَّنِي عَنْكَ نَائِيَا
كِلَانَا غَنِيٌّ عَنْ أَخِيهِ حَيَاتُهُ وَنَحْنُ إِذَا مِتْنَا أَشَدُّ تَغَانِيَا

The image shows a highly decorative book cover. It features a central white area with a scalloped, arched border. This border is filled with intricate floral and vine patterns in gold, red, and blue. The background of the cover is a deep navy blue, also adorned with these floral motifs. The entire design is framed by a thin, repeating geometric border in gold, blue, and white. In the center of the white area, the text 'CHAPTER VII' is written in a simple, black, serif font. Below it, the title 'Manners of Speech' is written in a more elegant, italicized serif font.

CHAPTER VII
Manners of Speech

Warn mankind

If you intend a life that's ruin-free,
That's full of faith with no ignominy,
With others' faults, ensure you're tongue's reserved.
For you're fault-filled, and people might observe.
And if you chance a glance at someone's stain,
Ignore it, lest their eyes see you the same.
Treat others well, forgive when they transgress,
And when defending, use the best redress.

The blood money for sins is excusing oneself

I was told: 'So-and-so has wronged your name.'
'No noble man accepts that he be shamed.'
I said: 'He has apologized to me.'
'Apology is guilt's indemnity.'

[البحر الطويل]

إِذَا رُمْتَ أَنْ تَحْيَا سَلِيمًا مِنَ الرَّدَى وَدِينِكَ مَوْفُورٌ وَعِرْضُكَ صَيِّبٌ
فَلَا يَنْطِقُنْ مِنْكَ اللِّسَانُ بِسَوَاءَةٍ فَكُلُّكَ سَوَاءٌ وَلِلنَّاسِ أَلْسُنٌ
وَعَيْنَاكَ إِنْ أَبَدْتَ إِلَيْكَ مَعَائِبًا فَدَعَهَا وَقُلْ يَا عَيْنُ لِلنَّاسِ أَعْيُنٌ
وَعَاشِرٌ بِمَعْرِوفٍ وَسَامِحٌ مَنِ اعْتَدَى وَدَافِعٌ وَلَكِنْ بِأَلَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ

[البحر الخفيف]

قِيلَ لِي قَدْ أَسَى عَلَيْكَ فُلَانٌ وَمُقَامُ الْفَتَى عَلَى الذُّلِّ عَارٌ
قُلْتُ قَدْ جَاءَنِي وَأَحْدَثَ عُذْرًا دِيَّةُ الذَّنْبِ عِنْدَنَا الْاِعْتِدَارُ

Requesting to be excused

Accept all those who bring apologies
If true or false, for God alone hearts sees.

Their outward grace means you're obeyed and feared.
Their inward slights are proof that you're revered.

It is from piety to busy yourself with your own defects

A man who's smart and battles all his whims
Is too engaged to notice his own sins,

Just like the ill are busied by their pain
From noticing the pain of others' bane.

The manners of giving advice

When counseling me, do so privately,
And don't attempt to counsel publicly.

For public counsel's censure, in a way,
And I'll refuse to hear all that you say.

And if you disagree and disobey
Then don't be vexed when I do not obey.

[البحر البسيط]

أَقْبَلَ مَعَاذِيرَ مَنْ يَأْتِيكَ مُعْتَذِرًا
إِنَّ بَرَّ عِنْدَكَ فِيمَا قَالَ أَوْ فَجَرًا
فَقَدْ أَطَاعَكَ مَنْ يُرْضِيكَ ظَاهِرُهُ
وَقَدْ أَجَلَّكَ مَنْ يَعِصِيكَ مُسْتَتِرًا

[البحر المنسرح]

الْمَرْءُ إِنْ كَانَ عَاقِلًا وَرِعًا
أَشْغَلَهُ عَنْ عُيُوبِهِ وَرَعُهُ
كَمَا الْعَلِيلُ السَّقِيمُ أَشْغَلَهُ
عَنْ وَجَعِ النَّاسِ كُلِّهِمْ وَجَعُهُ

[البحر الوافر]

تَعَمَّدَنِي بِنُصْحِكَ فِي انْفِرَادِي
وَجَنَّبَنِي النَّصِيحَةَ فِي الْجَمَاعَةِ
فَإِنَّ النَّصْحَ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ نَوْعٌ
مِنَ التَّوْبِيخِ لَا أَرْضَى اسْتِمَاعَهُ
وَإِنْ خَالَفْتَنِي وَعَصَيْتَ قَوْلِي
فَلَا تَجْزَعُ إِذَا لَمْ تُعْطَ طَاعَهُ

A warner of people

O you who warns of sin and then partakes!
O you whose life's a count of breaths he takes.

Protect white hair of yours from stains of sin:
Whiteness is quickly stained by dirt therein.

You're like a man who washes others' clothes,
While in some putrid filth he throws his clothes.

So walk towards salvation! Why just stand?
There's not a ship on earth that sails on land!

And when you ride upon a bier, most coarse,
You'll soon forget your riding mule and horse!

On Judgment Day, no child or wealth's in sight,
And graves make men forget their wedding nights!

يا واعظَ الناسِ عمّا أنتَ فاعِلُهُ
 احفظْ لِشَيْبِكَ مِنْ عَيْبٍ يُدْتَسُّهُ
 كَحَامِلِ لِثِيَابِ النَّاسِ يَغْسِلُهَا
 تَبْغِي النَّجَاةَ وَلَمْ تَسْلُكْ طَرِيقَتَهَا
 رُكُوبُكَ النَّعْشِ يُنْسِيكَ الرُّكُوبَ عَلَى
 يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ لَا مَالَ وَلَا وَلَدٌ
 يَا مَنْ يُعَدُّ عَلَيْهِ الْعُمْرُ بِالنَّفْسِ
 إِنَّ الْبَيَاضَ قَلِيلُ الْحَمَلِ لِلدَّنَسِ
 وَثَوْبُهُ غَارِقٌ فِي الرَّجْسِ وَالنَّجَسِ
 إِنَّ السَّفِينَةَ لَا تَجْرِي عَلَى الْيَبَسِ
 مَا كُنْتَ تَرْكَبُ مِنْ بَغْلٍ وَمِنْ فَرَسِ
 وَضَمَّه الْقَبْرُ تُنْسِي لَيْلَةَ الْعُرْسِ

Keeping one's promise

I

If you say 'yes' to something, follow through,
For 'yes' to noble men's a debt that's due!

If not, say 'no': relieve the both of you,
Lest you become a liar in men's view.

II

God burdens none with what they cannot bear,
And men but give from what they have to spare.

So, promise not unless you will fulfill.
Do not diverge once you have said: 'I will ...'

[البحر الطويل]

إِذَا قُلْتَ فِي شَيْءٍ نَعَمْ فَأَتَمَّهُ
وَإِلَّا فَقُلْ لَا تَسْتَرِحْ وَتُزِحْ بِهَا
فَإِنَّ نَعَمَ دَيْنٍ عَلَى الْحُرِّ وَاجِبٌ
لِّئَلَّا يَقُولَ النَّاسُ إِنَّكَ كَاذِبٌ

[البحر البسيط]

لَا كَلَّفَ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا فَوْقَ طَاقَتِهَا
فَلَا تَعِدْ عِدَّةً إِلَّا وَفَيْتَ بِهَا
وَلَا تَجُودُ يَدًا إِلَّا بِمَا تَجِدُ
وَاحْذَرْ خِلَافَ مَقَالٍ لِلَّذِي تَعِدُ

Guarding one's tongue

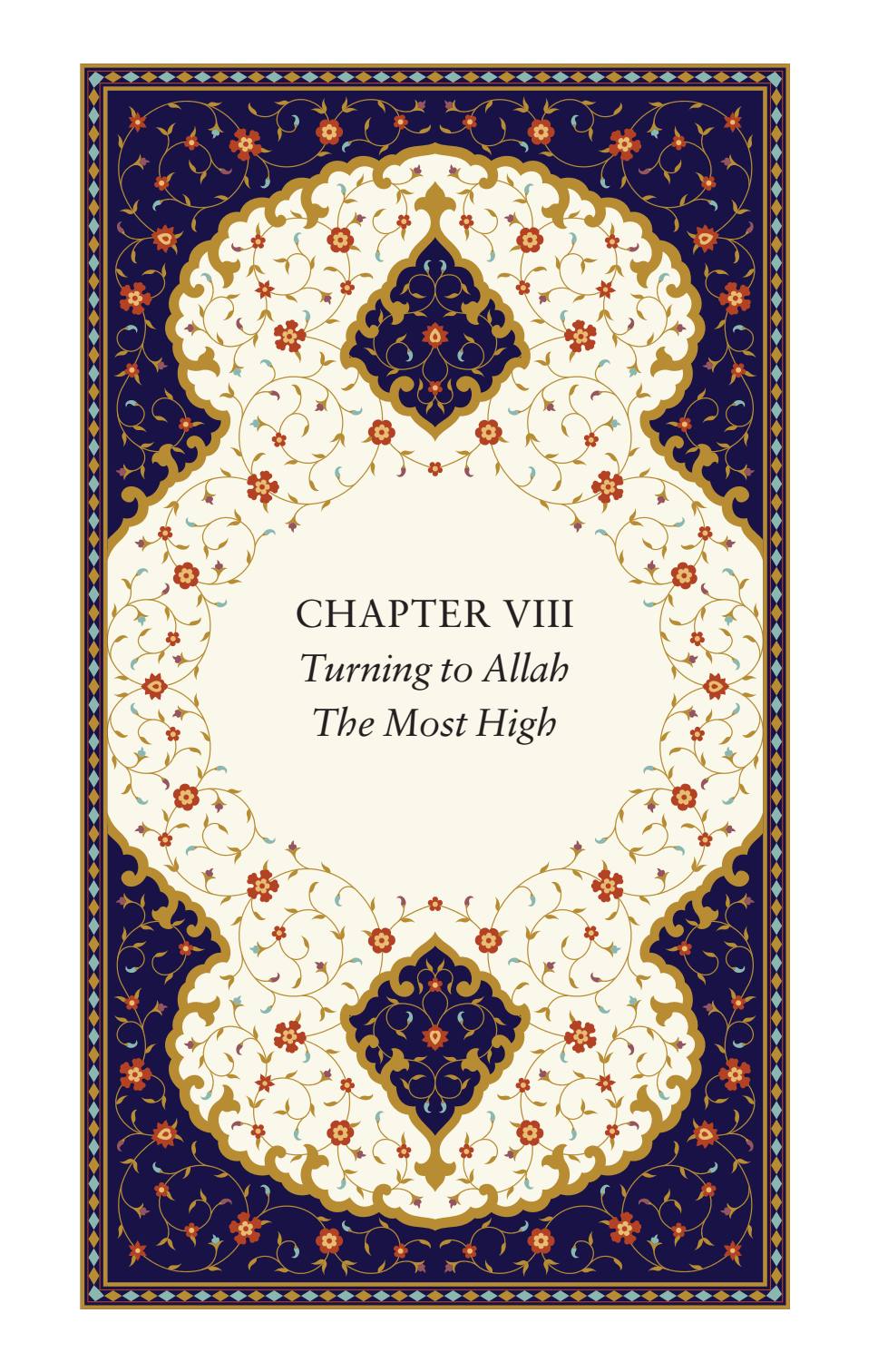
Shāfi'ī said to this companion, Rabī': "Rabī', don't speak on matters that don't concern you, because if you say a statement, it owns you and you don't own it." Some wise individuals have also said that the tongue is like a wild predator—if it is not tied up, it will chase you and its evil will reach you. And from what they narrate from Shāfi'ī on this topic includes:

So guard your tongue, dear man, and on it clasp!
Allow it not to bite you: it's an asp!

Graves oft hold men whose tongues had knocked
them dead,
Though while alive, they filled their peers with dread.

[البحر الكامل]

احْفَظْ لِسَانَكَ أَيُّهَا الْإِنْسَانُ لَا يَلْدَغَنَّكَ إِنَّهُ تُعْبَانُ
كَمْ فِي الْمَقَابِرِ مِنْ قَتِيلٍ لِسَانِهِ كَانَتْ تَهَابُ لِقَاءَهُ الْأَقْرَانُ

The image shows a decorative book cover with a central white area containing text. The cover is framed by a dark blue background with intricate floral and vine patterns in gold, red, and light blue. The central text is centered and reads: CHAPTER VIII
Turning to Allah
The Most High

CHAPTER VIII
Turning to Allah
The Most High

Honouring Allah and being humble in front of Him

Were learnèd men not marred by poetry,
I'd have outstripped Labīd in poesy,

Been braver than all lions in fierce war,
Muhallab's folk, Banī Yazīd, and more!

Had God, the Merciful, not humbled me,
I'd view all men my slaves, while I am free.

The special submission

If I wake up and find my daily bread,
Then free me, O delightful soul, of dread!

Don't plant tomorrow's worries in my mind
Tomorrow's new provisions are assigned.

If God demands of me, submit I will,
And leave what I have willed for what God wills.

[البحر الوافر]

وَلَوْلَا الشُّعْرُ بِالْعُلَمَاءِ يُزْرِي
وَأَشْجَعَ فِي الْوَعَى مِنْ كُلِّ لَيْثٍ
وَلَوْلَا خَشْيَةُ الرَّحْمَنِ رَبِّي
لَكُنْتُ الْيَوْمَ أَشْعَرَ مِنْ لَبِيدٍ
وَأَلٍ مُهَلَّبٍ وَبَنِي يَزِيدٍ
حَسِبْتُ النَّاسَ كُلَّهُمْ عَبِيدِي

[البحر الوافر]

إِذَا أَصْبَحْتُ عِنْدِي قَوْلُ يَوْمِي
وَلَا تُخْطِرُ هُمُومَ غَدٍ بِبَالِي
أُسَلِّمُ إِنْ أَرَادَ اللَّهُ أَمْرًا
فَخَلَّ الْهَمَّ عَنِّي يَا سَعِيدُ
فَإِنَّ غَدًا لَهُ رِزْقٌ جَدِيدُ
فَأَتْرُكُ مَا أُرِيدُ لِمَا يُرِيدُ

Do not despair of the mercy of Allah

If boldly you've been starting days in sin
But fear the day of God's just reckoning,

Then know that pardon from your Lord has come,
And lavished you the greatest blessing's sum.

Of God's great clemency, be not forlorn:
Inside your mother, and when you were born

He did not want that you should rot in Hell,
So in your heart He made His Oneness dwell.

Whoever feared God, returned

If it yields good, my learning's all I need,
For nothing takes man down but his own greed.

Whoever's watchful over God relents
And from the evil of his sins repents.

No bird ascends in flight to skies up top,
Except that as it rose, it must then drop.

[البحر الكامل]

إِنْ كُنْتَ تَغْدُو فِي الدُّنُوبِ جَلِيدًا وَتَخَافُ فِي يَوْمِ الْمَعَادِ وَعِيدًا
فَلَقَدْ أَتَاكَ مِنَ الْمُهَيِّمِينَ عَفْوُهُ وَأَفَاضَ مِنْ نِعَمٍ عَلَيْكَ مَزِيدًا
لَا تَيَأَسَنَّ مِنْ لُطْفِ رَبِّكَ فِي الْحَشَا فِي بَطْنِ أُمَّكَ مُضْغَةً وَوَلِيدًا
لَوْ شَاءَ أَنْ تَصَلِيَ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدًا مَا كَانَ أَلْهَمَ قَلْبِكَ التَّوْحِيدًا

[بحر الرجز]

حَسْبِي بَعْلِمِي إِنْ نَفَعَ مَا الذُّلُّ إِلَّا فِي الطَّمَعِ
مَنْ رَأَى اللَّهَ رَجَعَ عَنْ سُوءٍ مَا كَانَ صَنِعِ
مَا طَارَ طَيْرٌ وَارْتَفَعَ إِلَّا كَمَا طَارَ وَقَعَ

Asking forgiveness and repentance

O Lord, Your Mercy's eased my heart aright,
In secret, public, in the day, at night!

Reliance² in the seeking of sustenance

I've placed my trust in God for daily bread,
Without doubt, fully certain, 'til I'm dead.

And my provisions will not pass me by
Though at the ocean's bottom they might lie.

For God will bring them forth through His largesse,
Though my said needs, my tongue may not profess.

So how can things then hurt my heart inside
When for all things The Merciful provides?

Not everything is by intelligence

If smarts were means through which you got your needs,
You wouldn't find a thing on Earth that feeds.

God gave you wealth to live, though you know naught.
You're not the first fed madman on Earth's plot.

² On Allah.

[البحر البسيط]

قَلْبِي بِرَحْمَتِكَ اللَّهُمَّ ذُو أَنْسٍ فِي السِّرِّ وَالْجَهْرِ وَالْإِصْبَاحِ وَالْغَلَسِ

[البحر الطويل]

تَوَكَّلْتُ فِي رِزْقِي عَلَى اللَّهِ خَالِقِي وَمَا يَكُ مِنْ رِزْقِي فَلَيْسَ يَفُوتُنِي
وَأَيَقَنْتُ أَنَّ اللَّهَ لَا شَكَّ رَازِقِي وَسَيَأْتِي بِهِ اللَّهُ الْعَظِيمُ بِفَضْلِهِ
وَلَوْ كَانَتْ فِي قَاعِ الْبِحَارِ الْعَوَامِقِ وَفِي أَيِّ شَيْءٍ تَذَهَبُ النَّفْسُ حَسْرَةً
وَلَوْ لَمْ يَكُنْ مِنِّْي اللِّسَانُ بِنَاطِقٍ وَقَدْ قَسَمَ الرَّحْمَنُ رِزْقَ الْخَلَائِقِ

[البحر البسيط]

لَوْ كُنْتَ بِالْعَقْلِ تُعْطَى مَا تُرِيدُ إِذَنْ رُزِقْتَ مَا لَّا عَلَى جَهْلٍ فَعِشْتَ بِهِ
لَمَا ظَفِرْتَ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا بِمَرزُوقٍ فَلَسْتَ أَوَّلَ مَجْنُونٍ وَمَرزُوقٍ

Allah's will

And what You will is, though I willed not,
And what I will, unless You will, is naught.

For You created slaves, and You know why.
You know both young and old, for You are nigh.

Amongst Your slaves are saved and wretched folk,
And ugly men and those in beauty cloaked.

To some You gave, and others are have-nots.
And some You've helped, and others You have not.

Keeping away from the doors of kings

Kings are a scourge wherever they may be,
So cast no shadow at their doors and flee!

What good can you expect, for in their ire
They strike, and when you please them, they grow tired.

Avoid their doors, enriched by God's good grace.
By standing at their doors, you'll be disgraced.

[البحر المتقارب]

وَمَا شِئْتُ كَانَ وَإِنْ لَمْ أَشَأْ
خَلَقْتَ الْعِبَادَ لِمَا قَدْ عَلِمْتَ
وَمِنْهُمْ شَقِيٌّ وَمِنْهُمْ سَعِيدٌ
عَلَى ذَا مَنْنْتَ وَهَذَا خَذَلْتَ
وَمَا شِئْتُ إِنْ لَمْ تَشَأْ لَمْ يَكُنْ
فَفِي الْعِلْمِ يَجْرِي الْفَتَى وَالْمُسْنُ
وَمِنْهُمْ قَبِيحٌ وَمِنْهُمْ حَسَنٌ
وَذَاكَ أَعْنَتَ وَذَا لَمْ تُعِنُ

[البحر البسيط]

إِنَّ الْمُلُوكَ بَلَاءٌ حَيْثُمَا حَلُّوا
مَاذَا تَوَمَّلُ مِنْ قَوْمٍ إِذَا غَضِبُوا
فَاسْتَعْنِ بِاللَّهِ عَنِ أَبْوَابِهِمْ كَرَمًا
فَلَا يَكُنْ لَكَ فِي أَبْوَابِهِمْ ظُلٌّ
جَارُوا عَلَيْكَ وَإِنْ أَرْضَيْتَهُمْ مَلَّوْا
إِنَّ الْوُقُوفَ عَلَى أَبْوَابِهِمْ ذُلٌّ

Humiliation and to seek help

By my meek stance before Your Strength Divine,
By mysteries too subtle for my mind,

By my admitted lowness and bowed head,
By hands – that wish for mercy, gifts – outspread,

By Your Most Beauteous Names, that when described
In part, exhaust the prose and verse of scribes.

By the Old Vow of: ‘Am I not Your Lord?’
By Him Concealed Who’s by His Names adored,

Grant us a draught of closeness, for those nursed
By Your love’s drink will know no harm, nor thirst.

The desires of man

While man desires all wishes be fulfilled
Allah refuses all but what He’s willed.

A man will say: ‘My wealth and my great gains!’
While piety’s the best he can attain!

[البحر الطويل]

بِمَوْقِفِ ذُلِّي دُونَ عِزَّتِكَ الْعُظْمَى
بِإِطْرَاقِ رَأْسِي بِاعْتِرَافِي بِذِلَّتِي
بِأَسْمَائِكَ الْحُسْنَى الَّتِي بَعْضُ وَصْفِهَا
بِعَهْدِ قَدِيمٍ مِنْ أَلَسْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ
أَذِقْنَا شَرَابَ الْإِنْسِ يَا مَنْ إِذَا سَقَى
بِمَخْفِيِّ سِرِّ لَا أُحِيطُ بِهِ عِلْمًا
بِمَدِّ يَدِي أَسْتَمِطِرُ الْجُودَ وَالرُّحْمَى
لِعِزَّتِهَا يَسْتَعْرِقُ النَّشْرَ وَالنَّظْمَا
بِمَنْ كَانَ مَكْنُونًا فَعُرِّفَ بِالْأَسْمَا
مُحِبًّا شَرَابًا لَا يُضَامُ وَلَا يَظْمَا

[البحر الوافر]

يُرِيدُ الْمَرْءُ أَنْ يُعْطَى مِنْهُ
يَقُولُ الْمَرْءُ فَايَّدْتِي وَمَالِي
وَيَأْبَى اللَّهُ إِلَّا مَا أَرَادَا
وَتَقْوَى اللَّهُ أَفْضَلُ مَا اسْتَفَادَا

To deny the good (done to you)

You disobey the Lord, though love you feign –
A claim that's as unique as it's insane!

Had you been true in love, you'd have obeyed:
A loved one by his lover's not betrayed!

He starts your every day with grace from Him
While you forfeit thanks due and follow whims.

I don't care

You are enough for me. My heart and view
Find You enough, if views I have hold true.

As long as in Your love I am secure,
I'm not concerned with hardships I'll endure.

Whatever becomes hard to bear shall ease once more

Sometimes a blow of fate makes men distress
While through Allah alone is its redress.

It tightens, but as links refuse to yield –
A break, though I had thought my fate was sealed!

[البحر الكامل]

تَعْصِي الْإِلَهِ وَأَنْتَ تَظْهَرُ حُبَّهُ
لَوْ كَانَ حُبُّكَ صَادِقًا لَأَطَعْتَهُ
فِي كُلِّ يَوْمٍ يَبْتَدِيكَ بِنِعْمَةٍ
هَذَا مُحَالٌ فِي الْقِيَاسِ بَدِيعُ
إِنَّ الْمُحِبَّ لِمَنْ يُحِبُّ مُطِيعُ
مَنْهُ وَأَنْتَ لَشُكْرِ ذَاكَ مُضِيعُ

[البحر الخفيف]

أَنْتَ حَسْبِي وَفِيكَ لِلْقَلْبِ حَسْبُ
لَا أُبَالِي مَتَى وَدَاذُكَ لِي صَحْ
وَلِحَسْبِي إِنْ صَحَّ لِي فِيكَ حَسْبُ
سَحَ مِنَ الدَّهْرِ مَا تَعَرَّضَ خَطْبُ

[البحر الكامل]

وَلَرُبَّ نَازِلَةٍ يَضِيقُ لَهَا الْفَتَى
ضَاقَتْ فَلَمَّا اسْتَحْكَمَتْ حَلَقَاتُهَا
ذَرَعًا وَعِنْدَ اللَّهِ مِنْهَا الْمَخْرَجُ
فُرِجَتْ وَكُنْتُ أَظُنُّهَا لَا تُفْرَجُ

Happiness with what Allah has decreed

Leave time alone to do as it may scheme,
And be at peace when fate rules, all supreme.

And panic not when blows of fate descend,
For everything in life will come to end.

Be strong when forced to face anxieties:
A man of pardon and of loyalty.

And if your faults are many 'mongst your peers,
And secretly you'd wish they not appear,

Conceal your faults with generosity –
It's said: no faults appear when men give free.

And manifest no lowliness to foes,
For schadenfreude's of life's bitter blows.

Seek not the pardon of the miserly,
For no one drinks of fire thirstily.

Deliberateness will not your bread decrease,
And toiling does not bring about increase.

No grief nor happiness remain for life,
Nor ease nor wretchedness, however rife.

If with contentment, your great heart's been purled,
Then you're no less than those who own the world.

When death descends upon a person's court,
No land nor sky can its deep terrors thwart.

دَعِ الْأَيَّامَ تَفَعَّلْ مَا تَشَاءُ
 وَلَا تَجْزَعْ لِحَادِثَةِ اللَّيَالِي
 وَكُنْ رَجُلًا عَلَى الْأَهْوَالِ جَلْدًا
 وَإِنْ كَثُرَتْ عُيُوبُكَ فِي الْبَرَايَا
 تَسْتَرَّ بِالسَّخَاءِ فَكُلُّ عَيْبٍ
 وَلَا تُرِ لِلْأَعَادِي قَطُّ ذُلًّا
 وَلَا تَرْجُ السَّمَاخَةَ مِنْ بَخِيلٍ
 وَرِزْقُكَ لَيْسَ يُنْقِصُهُ التَّائِي
 وَلَا حُزْنٌ يَدُومٌ وَلَا سُرُورٌ
 إِذَا مَا كُنْتَ ذَا قَلْبٍ قَنُوعٍ
 وَمَنْ نَزَلَتْ بِسَاحَتِهِ الْمَنَايَا
 وَأَرْضُ اللَّهِ وَاسِعَةٌ وَلَكِنْ
 دَعِ الْأَيَّامَ تَغْدِرُ كُلَّ حِينٍ
 وَطِبَ نَفْسًا إِذَا حَكَمَ الْقَضَاءُ
 فَمَا لِحَوَادِثِ الدُّنْيَا بَقَاءُ
 وَشِيَمَتِكَ السَّمَاخَةُ وَالْوَفَاءُ
 وَسَرَكَ أَنْ يَكُونَ لَهَا غِطَاءُ
 يُعْطِيهِ كَمَا قِيلَ السَّخَاءُ
 فَإِنَّ شِمَاتَةَ الْأَعْدَاءِ بَلَاءُ
 فَمَا فِي النَّارِ لِلظَّمَانِ مَاءُ
 وَلَيْسَ يَزِيدُ فِي الرِّزْقِ الْعَنَاءُ
 وَلَا بُؤْسٌ عَلَيْكَ وَلَا رَخَاءُ
 فَأَنْتَ وَمَالِكَ الدُّنْيَا سَوَاءُ
 فَلَا أَرْضٌ تَقِيهِ وَلَا سَمَاءُ
 إِذَا نَزَلَ الْقَضَا ضَاقَ الْفَضَاءُ
 فَمَا يُغْنِي عَنِ الْمَوْتِ الدَّوَاءُ

God's Earth is vast. But when one's fate descends,
The vast expanse is narrowed as it ends.

Let time attack oftentimes in perfidy.
No remedy can treat death's malady.



CHAPTER IX
Supplication

Fear the supplication of the oppressed

How many tyrants' wars have I been spared,
As they fell hard – their fate had been declared!

To me, Islam's but worship that I yield,
And prayers that they cannot ward off with shields.

Suffice it that a tyrant turn while cowed
By arrows from the bows of those who bowed:

With lashes that observe the vigil fletched,
And arrowheads that in their tears are drenched.

The value of supplication

Of supplication, do you scoff, make light,
Whilst unaware of prayers and how they smite?

Night's arrows do not miss, but they transpire
When their appointed time has thus expired.

He clasps them as He wills, my Lord sublime,
Deploying them at their appointed time.

[البحر الطويل]

وَرَبَّ ظُلُومٍ قَدْ كُنِفَتْ بِحَرْبِهِ
فَمَا كَانَ لِيِ الْإِسْلَامُ إِلَّا تَعَبُّدًا
وَحَسْبُكَ أَنْ يَنْجُو الظُّلُومُ وَخَلْفَهُ
مُرِيَّسَةً بِالْهُدْبِ مِنْ كُلِّ سَاهِرٍ
فَأَوْقَعَهُ الْمُتَقَدُّورُ أَيَّ وُقُوعٍ
وَأَدْعِيَةً لَا تُتَّقَى بِدُرُوعٍ
سِهَامُ دُعَاءٍ مِنْ قِسِيِّ رُكُوعٍ
مُنْهَلَةً أَطْرَافُهَا بِدُمُوعٍ

[البحر الوافر]

أَتَهَزَأُ بِالِدُّعَاءِ وَتَزْدَرِيهِ
سِهَامُ اللَّيْلِ لَا تُحْطِي وَلَكِنْ
فِيْمِسْكُهَا إِذَا مَا شَاءَ رَبِّي
وَمَا تَدْرِي بِمَا صَنَعَ الدُّعَاءُ
لَهَا أَمْدٌ وَلِلْأَمْدِ انْقِضَاءُ
وَيُرْسِلُهَا إِذَا نَفَذَ الْقِضَاءُ



CHAPTER X
Knowledge

Debate

Far travels deemed me one expatriate,
'Til I confronted some strange man I'd met.

Men recognized my tit-for-tat retort:
Were they but wise, to wisdom I'd resort.

The adornments of man are piety and knowledge

Endure a teacher's bitter discipline,
For learning's hardships are when facts sink in.

When man, the bitter taste of learning shuns,
He'll drink his folly 'til his days are done.

Whoever skips on learning in his youth,
Is worthy of a funeral prayer in truth.

In piety and learning man is decked,
When they are absent, he gets no respect.

[البحر الطويل]

وَأَنْزَلَنِي طُولَ النَّوَى دَارَ غُرْبَةٍ
أَحَامِقُهُ حَتَّى تُقَالَ سَجِيَّةٌ
وَإِذَا شِئْتُ لَأَقِيْتُ أَمْرًا لَا أُشَاكِلُهُ
وَلَوْ كَانَ ذَا عَقْلٍ لَكُنْتُ أَعَاقِلُهُ

[البحر الطويل]

فَصَبْرًا عَلَى مُرِّ الْجَفَا مِنْ مُعَلِّمٍ
وَمَنْ لَمْ يَذُقْ مُرَّ التَّعَلُّمِ سَاعَةً
وَمَنْ فَاتَهُ التَّعْلِيمُ وَقَتَ شَبَابِهِ
وَذَاتُ الْفَتَى وَاللَّهُ بِالْعِلْمِ وَالتُّقَى
فَإِنَّ رُسُوبَ الْعِلْمِ فِي نَفَرَاتِهِ
تَجَرَّعَ ذُلَّ الْجَهْلِ طُولَ حَيَاتِهِ
فَكَبَّرَ عَلَيْهِ أَرْبَعًا لَوْفَاتِهِ
إِذَا لَمْ يَكُونَا لَا اعْتِبَارَ لِذَاتِهِ

By knowledge is built greatness

I've found that knowledge makes a noble man
Despite him being of a lowly clan,

Advancing as he may in rank and weight
Until our men of honour deem him great,

Following him in all his states and ways,
Like shepherds lead their flocks of beasts that graze.

If not for learning, joy could not have been,
Nor would we know what's lawful from what's sin.

Knowledge is that which is memorized

Learning's my helping friend – with me it walks.
I keep it in my head, not in a box.

When I'm at home, my learning's with me there,
And when at market, I bear learning's flare.

[البحر الوافر]

رَأَيْتُ الْعِلْمَ صَاحِبُهُ كَرِيمٌ وَكَوْ وَكَوْ وَكَوْ وَكَوْ وَكَوْ
وَلَيْسَ يَزَالُ يَرْفَعُهُ إِلَى أَنْ يُعْظَمُ أَمْرُهُ الْقَوْمَ الْكِرَامُ
وَيَتَّبِعُونَهُ فِي كُلِّ حَالٍ كِرَاعِي الضَّانِ تَتَّبَعُهُ السَّوَامُ
فَلَوْلَا الْعِلْمُ مَا سَعِدَتْ رِجَالٌ وَلَا عُرِفَ الْحَلَالُ وَلَا الْحَرَامُ

[البحر البسيط]

عِلْمِي مَعِي حَيْثُمَا يَمَّمْتُ يَنْفَعُنِي قَلْبِي وَعَاءٌ لَهُ لَا بَطْنُ صُنْدُوقِ
إِنْ كُنْتُ فِي الْبَيْتِ كَانَ الْعِلْمُ فِيهِ مَعِي أَوْ كُنْتُ فِي السُّوقِ كَانَ الْعِلْمُ فِي السُّوقِ

The etiquettes of debate

If merit and true learning you possess
And know what's old and new with great success,

Then argue with whomever, with repose,
Be gentle, do not curse, and don't oppose.

He'll gift you what's he's gained, without a gloat,
Of rarities and worthy points to note.

Steer clear of stubborn men and those who flaunt:
'I've won,' and braggarts whose poor souls are gaunt.

The man is by what he knows

Please learn, for none's a scholar by descent,
And those who know aren't like the ignorant.

A leader of his people who knows not
Will shrink when hordes then ask about his thoughts

While men who're deemed of little consequence,
Grow great in gatherings when speaking sense.

[البحر الوافر]

إِذَا مَا كُنْتَ ذَا فَضْلٍ وَعِلْمٍ بِمَا اخْتَلَفَ الْأَوَائِلُ وَالْأَوَاخِرُ
فَنَظَرُ مَنْ تُنَازِرُ فِي سُكُونٍ حَلِيمًا لَا تَلِيحُ وَلَا تُكَابِرُ
يُفِيدُكَ مَا اسْتَفَادَ بِلا امْتِنَانٍ مِنَ النُّكْتِ اللَّطِيفَةِ وَالنَّوَادِرِ
وَيَاكَ اللَّجُوجَ وَمَنْ يُرَائِي بَأَنِّي قَدْ غَلَبْتُ وَمَنْ يُفَاخِرُ
فَإِنَّ الشَّرَّ فِي جَنَابَاتِ هَذَا يُمْنِّي بِالتَّقَاطُعِ وَالتَّدَابِرِ

[البحر الطويل]

تَعَلَّمَ فَلَيْسَ الْمَرْءُ يُوَلَدُ عَالِمًا وَلَيْسَ أَخُو عِلْمٍ كَمَنْ هُوَ جَاهِلٌ
وَإِنَّ كَبِيرَ الْقَوْمِ لَا عِلْمَ عِنْدَهُ صَغِيرٌ إِذَا التَّفَّتْ عَلَيْهِ الْجَحَافِلُ
وَإِنَّ صَغِيرَ الْقَوْمِ إِنْ كَانَ عَالِمًا كَبِيرٌ إِذَا رُدَّتْ إِلَيْهِ الْمُحَافِلُ

The humility of the scholars

Whenever I am disciplined by Time
It shows me how deficient is my mind.

And when I learn of something new by chance,
I'm more aware of my own ignorance.

The Light of Allah does not light up except by the leaving of sin

I told Wakī^c my memory was bad,
So he advised: 'Eschew your sins, my lad.'

He then informed me that to know is light,
And sinners are not granted its delight.

The conditions of attaining knowledge are six

My brother, you won't learn until you have
Six qualities I'll list out as a salve:

Intelligence, avidity, and grit,
Your keep, a coach, and aeons to commit.

[بحر الرمل]

كُلَّمَا أَدَّبَنِي الدَّهْمُ — رُ أَرَانِي نَقَصَ عَقْلِي
وَإِذَا مَا ازْدَدْتُ عِلْمًا زَادَنِي عِلْمًا بِجَهْلِي

[البحر الوافر]

شَكَّوتُ إِلَى وَكَيْعِ سُوءِ حِفْظِي فَأَرْشَدَنِي إِلَى تَرْكِ الْمَعَاصِي
وَأَخْبَرَنِي بِأَنَّ الْعِلْمَ نُورٌ وَنُورُ اللَّهِ لَا يُهْدَى لِعَاصِي

[البحر الطويل]

أَخِي لَنْ تَنَالَ الْعِلْمَ إِلَّا بِسِتَّةٍ سَأُنْبِيكَ عَنْ تَفْصِيلِهَا بَيَانِ
ذِكَاؤٍ وَحِرْصٍ وَاجْتِهَادٍ وَبُلْغَةٍ وَصُحْبَةٍ أُسْتَاذٍ وَطُولِ زَمَانِ

The pride of a man is his knowledge

Yes, knowledge is the land where glory's sown.
Beware you miss the honour that's there grown.

And know that knowledge isn't meant for those
Whose main concerns are eating or their clothes.

It's but for students that pursue its zest
In both their states: when naked and when dressed.

So, with its many gems yourself endow,
Eschew sweet slumber's call and furl your brow.

Perhaps one day, a meeting you'll attend
And as its star and chairman, you'll ascend.

الْعِلْمُ مَغْرَسٌ كُلُّ فَخْرٍ فَافْتَخِرْ
 وَاعْلَمْ بِأَنَّ الْعِلْمَ لَيْسَ يِنَالُهُ
 إِلَّا أَخُو الْعِلْمِ الَّذِي يُعْنَى بِهِ
 فَاجْعَلْ لِنَفْسِكَ مِنْهُ حِطًّا وَافِرًا
 فَلَعَلَّ يَوْمًا إِنْ حَضَرْتَ بِمَجْلِسٍ
 وَاحْدَرِ يَفُوتُكَ فَخْرُ ذَلِكَ الْمَغْرَسِ
 مَنْ هَمُّهُ فِي مَطْعَمٍ أَوْ مَلْبَسٍ
 فِي حَالَتِيهِ عَارِيًّا أَوْ مُكْتَسِي
 وَاهْجُرْ لَهُ طِيبَ الرَّقَادِ وَعَبَسِ
 كُنْتَ الرَّئِيسَ وَفَخَرَ ذَلِكَ الْمَجْلِسِ

Striving in the quest for knowledge

The vigils that I keep with books retraced
Are better than a tryst or belle's embrace.

The scratching sound of pens that I endure
Is sweeter than perfumes and paramours.

And better than a maiden's tambourine
Is dusting off my books to rub them clean.

My rapture when resolving things obscure
Is more exquisite than fine wine's allure.

I spend the night awake while you're asleep,
Yet you still want to reach what I have reaped!

Knowledge comes from full occupation with it

None reaches wisdom when he spends his life
Pursuing interests of his house and wife.

And never will a student truly learn
Until he's free of thoughts and all concern.

For were Luqmān, the Sage, who men sought out
On horses for his merit, without doubt,

A family man in need – let's just presume –
He wouldn't know dry hay from fresh legumes.

[البحر الكامل]

سَهْرِي لِتَنْقِيحِ الْعُلُومِ أَلْذُّ لِي
وَصَرِيرُ أَقْلَامِي عَلَى صَفْحَاتِهَا
وَأَلْذُّ مِنْ نَقْرِ الْفَتَاةِ لِذُفِّهَا
وَتَمَايِلِي طَرَبًا لِحُلِّ عَوِيصَةٍ
وَأَبِيْتُ سَهْرَانَ الدُّجَى وَتَبِيئَتُهُ
مِنْ وَضَلِ غَانِيَةٍ وَطَيْبِ عِنَاقِ
أَحْلَى مِنْ الدَّوْكَاهِ وَالْعَشَاقِ
نَقْرِي لِأُلْقِي الرَّمْلَ عَنْ أَوْرَاقِي
فِي الدَّرْسِ أَشْهَى مِنْ مُدَامَةِ سَاقِ
نَوْمًا وَتَبْغِي بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ لِحَاقِي

[البحر السريع]

لَا يُدْرِكُ الْحِكْمَةَ مَنْ عُمُرُهُ
وَلَا يَنَالُ الْعِلْمَ إِلَّا فَتَى
لَوْ أَنَّ لُقْمَانَ الْحَكِيمِ الَّذِي
بُلِي بِفَقْرٍ وَعِيَالٍ لَمَا
يَكْدُحُ فِي مَصْلَحَةِ الْأَهْلِ
خَالٍ مِنَ الْأَفْكَارِ وَالشُّغْلِ
سَارَتْ بِهِ الرُّكْبَانُ بِالْفَضْلِ
فَرَّقَ بَيْنَ التَّبَنِ وَالْبَقْلِ

The people served knowledge

One merit knowledge has is when it's served,
Its servant's served by all men, as deserved.

He must protect it with his might and mane,
As it protects, 'mongst men, his blood and name.

If knowledge is conferred to those unfit
By learnèd, foolish men, they've cheated it.

Knowledge and its status

When Shāfi'ī came to Egypt he was met by the leading scholars of the land on his arrival. Soon the talk turned to fiqh and Shāfi'ī disagreed with them on a number of issues and said:

Does it befit these sheep to say wise words,
Or forge some verse for men who tend such herds?

No, on my life, if lost in land forlorn
I would not waste my gems on this here swarm.

If God Almighty, through His grace, supplies
Me with those worthy of my knowledge, wise,

I'll gain their friendship, then my gems reveal,
For otherwise, they're safe with me, concealed.

For teaching's wasted on a foolish throng,
And to deny those worthy of it's wrong.

[البحر المنسرح]

الْعِلْمُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ لِمَنْ خَدَمَهُ أَنْ يَجْعَلَ النَّاسَ كُلَّهُمْ خَدَمَهُ
فَوَاجِبٌ صَوْنُهُ عَلَيْهِ كَمَا يَصُونُونَ فِي النَّاسِ عِرْضَهُ وَدَمَهُ
فَمَنْ حَوَى الْعِلْمَ ثُمَّ أَوْدَعَهُ بِجَهْلِهِ غَيْرَ أَهْلِهِ ظَلَمَهُ

[البحر الطويل]

أَأَنْتُمْ ذُرًّا بَيْنَ سَارِحَةِ الْبَهْمِ وَأَنْظِمُ مَنْشُورًا لِرَاعِيَةِ الْغَنَمِ
لَعَمْرِي لَيْتَنَ ضِيَعْتُ فِي شَرِّ بَلَدَةٍ فَلَسْتُ مُضِيَعًا فِيهِمْ غُرَّرَ الْكَلِمِ
لَيْتَنَ سَهَّلَ اللَّهُ الْعَزِيزُ بِلَطْفِهِ وَصَادَفْتُ أَهْلًا لِلْعُلُومِ وَلِلْحِكَمِ
بَثَّتْ مُفِيدًا وَاسْتَفَدْتُ وَدَادَهُمْ وَإِلَّا فَمَكْنُونٌ لَدَيَّ وَمُكْتَمِ
وَمَنْ مَنَحَ الْجَهَّالَ عِلْمًا أَضَاعَهُ وَمَنْ مَنَعَ الْمُسْتَوْجِبِينَ فَقَدْ ظَلَمَ

The best of subjects

All studies, save Qur'an, at best, distract,
Except Hadith and laws on how to act.

For knowledge is what's been transmitted well.
The rest is fiendish whispers straight from Hell.

Islamic Jurisprudence and asceticism come together

Mere jurist or mere Sufi, neither be.
By God, take this advice to you from me!

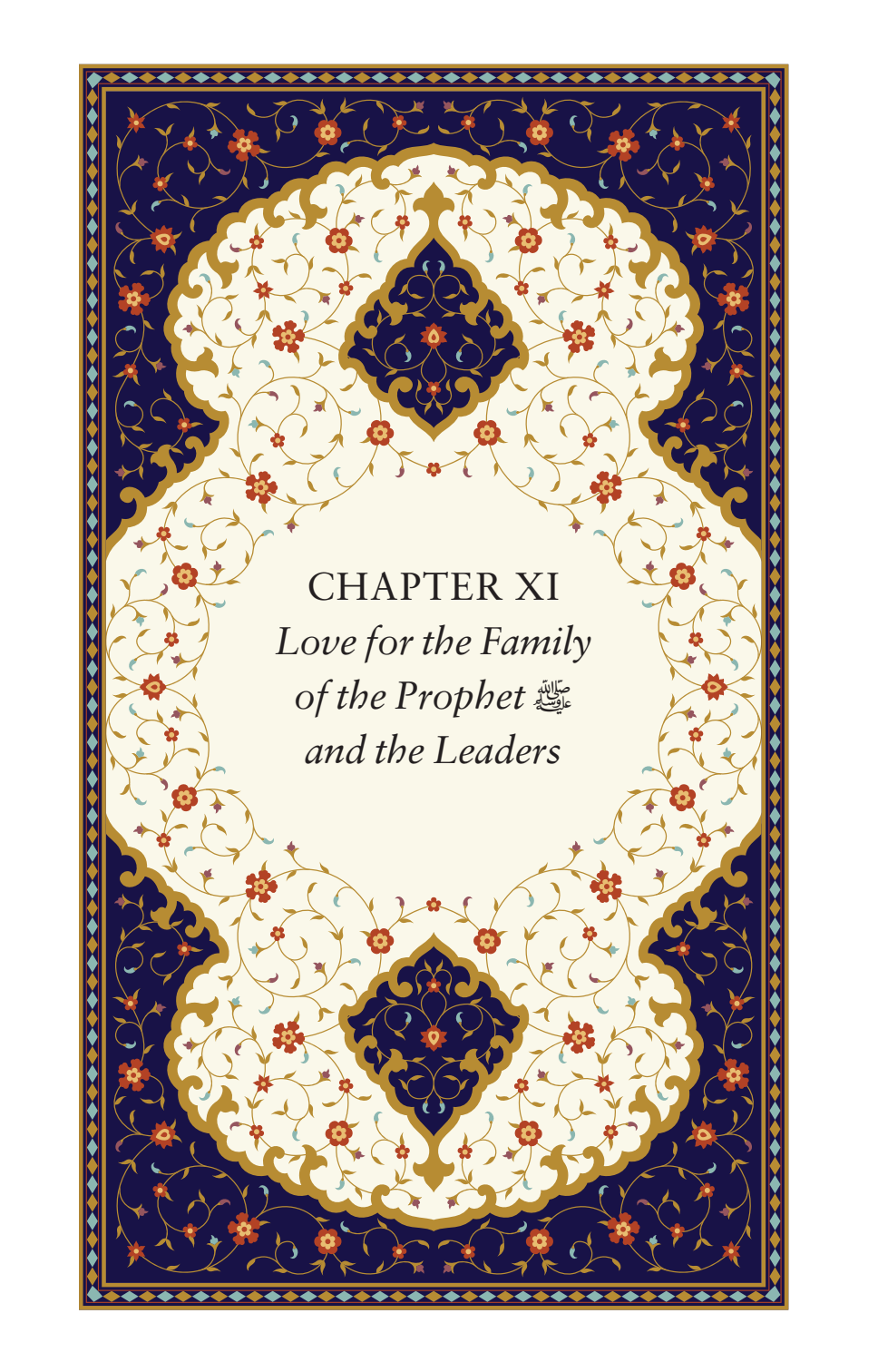
The former's heart lacks grace, and he is cruel.
The latter cannot thrive, for he's a fool.

[البحر البسيط]

كُلُّ الْعُلُومِ سِوَى الْقُرْآنِ مَشْغَلَةٌ
وَمَا سِوَى ذَلِكَ وَسْوَاسُ الشَّيَاطِينِ
إِلَّا الْحَدِيثَ وَعِلْمَ الْفِقْهِ فِي الدِّينِ

[البحر الطويل]

فَقِيهًا وَصُوفِيًّا فَكُنْ لَيْسَ وَاحِدًا
فَذَلِكَ قَاسٍ لَمْ يَذُقْ قَلْبُهُ تَقَى
وَهَذَا جَهْلٌ كَيْفَ ذُو الْجَهْلِ يَصْلُحُ؟
فَإِنِّي وَحَقَّ اللَّهُ إِيَّاكَ أَنْصَحُ



CHAPTER XI
*Love for the Family
of the Prophet ﷺ
and the Leaders*

His love for the family of the Prophet ﷺ

At Minā, by Muḥaṣṣab, stop your ride,
Implore those leaving Khayf and those inside –

At dawn, as pilgrims ‘towards dear Minā pour,
Like waves of the Euphrates crash and soar:

If love of Āl al-Bayt is Shiism,
Bear witness, sentient life, that I’m with them!

His love for the family of the Prophet ﷺ and the righteous Caliphs

If Ali we prefer, they deem us as
Shiites – such are these ignoramuses.

And when I mention Abu Bakr’s great rank,
I’m termed a Nāṣībī by those who’re rank.

Between these accusations, here I stand:
I’ll love them ‘til my head rests in the sand.

Loving the family of the Prophet ﷺ is an obligation ordained by Allah

O Prophet’s household, love for you is sealed:
God’s bond in His Qur’an as He revealed.

Your glory is so great and paramount,
That prayers where you’re not mentioned do not count!

[البحر الكامل]

يا رَاكِبًا قِفْ بِالْمُحَصَّبِ مِنْ مَنِيَّ
سَحْرًا إِذَا فَاضَ الْحَجِيجُ إِلَى مَنِيَّ
إِنْ كَانَ رَفْضًا حُبُّ آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ
وَاهْتَفِ بِقَاعِدِ حَيْفِهَا وَالنَاهِضِ
فَيْضًا كَمَلَّتِمْ الْفُرَاتِ الْفَائِضِ
فَلْيَشْهَدْ الثَّقَلَانِ أَنِّي رَافِضِي

[البحر الطويل]

إِذَا نَحْنُ فَضَّلْنَا عَلِيًّا فَإِنَّا
وَفَضَّلُ أَبِي بَكْرٍ إِذَا مَا ذَكَرْتُهُ
فَلَا زِلْتُ ذَا رَفْضٍ وَنَصْبٍ كِلَاهُمَا
رَوَافِضُ بِالْتَفْضِيلِ عِنْدَ ذَوِي الْجَهْلِ
رُمِيَتْ بِنَصْبٍ عِنْدَ ذِكْرِي لِلْفَضْلِ
بِحَبِيئِهِمَا حَتَّى أُوسِدَ فِي الرَّمْلِ

[البحر البسيط]

يَا آلَ بَيْتِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ حُبُّكُمْ
يَكْفِيكُمْ مِنْ عَظِيمِ الْفَخْرِ أَنْكُمْ
فَرَضَ مِنَ اللَّهِ فِي الْقُرْآنِ أَنْزَلَهُ
مَنْ لَمْ يُصَلِّ عَلَيْكُمْ لَا صَلَاةَ لَهُ

The love of Ali and the Sons and Fatimah

If Ali's praise in groups we chance to spur,
And his two sons, and Fatimah, the pure,

We're told: 'Good man, steer clear of such a course.'
'Such is the way that Shiite folk endorse.'

Before my Lord, I balk at claims of some –
That love for Fatimites is Shi'ism.

To become Raafidi

'You've turned Shiite,' they claim. I say: 'No way!'
In creed and practice, I reject their sway.

I take as leader, from deep-down inside,
The best of leaders and the best of guides.

To love The Leader isn't to defect!
But rather, it's such claims that I reject!

[البحر الوافر]

إِذَا فِي مَجْلِسٍ نَذُكُرُ عَلِيًّا وَسِبْطِيهِ وَفَاطِمَةَ الزَّكِيِّهِ
يُقَالُ تَجَاوَزُوا يَا قَوْمُ هَذَا فَهَذَا مِنْ حَدِيثِ الرَّافِضِيِّهِ
بَرَأْتُ إِلَى الْمُهَيِّمِينَ مِنْ أَنْاسِ يَرُونَ الرَّفْضَ حُبَّ الْفَاطِمِيِّهِ

[البحر البسيط]

قَالُوا تَرَفَّضْتَ قُلْتُ كَلَّا مَا الرَّفْضُ دِينِي وَلَا اعْتِقَادِي
لَكِنْ تَوَلَّيْتُ غَيْرَ شَيْءٍ خَيْرَ إِمَامٍ وَخَيْرَ هَادِي
إِنْ كَانَ حُبُّ الْوَلِيِّ رَفْضًا فَإِنَّ رَفْضِي إِلَى الْعِبَادِ

The righteous Caliphs

I testify no lord is there but God
And resurrection's true, in faith, sans fraud.

The bonds of faith, which grows and shrinks, are two:
Clear testimony, actions that are true.

And as God's viceroy, Abu Bakr prevailed,
And Umar strove for goodness unassailed.

My Lord's my witness: Uthman's merit stands.
And Ali's merit was distinct in brand.

Leaders of men, whose guidance filled the Earth –
God damn whoever dares defile their worth!

Abu Hanifah

Abu Hanifah graced the Muslim lands
And those upon them – their imam most grand –

With rulings and hadiths and sacred law,
Like Psalms on parchment radiating awe.

Not East nor West produced for him a peer
Nor Kufa, nor horizons, far or near!

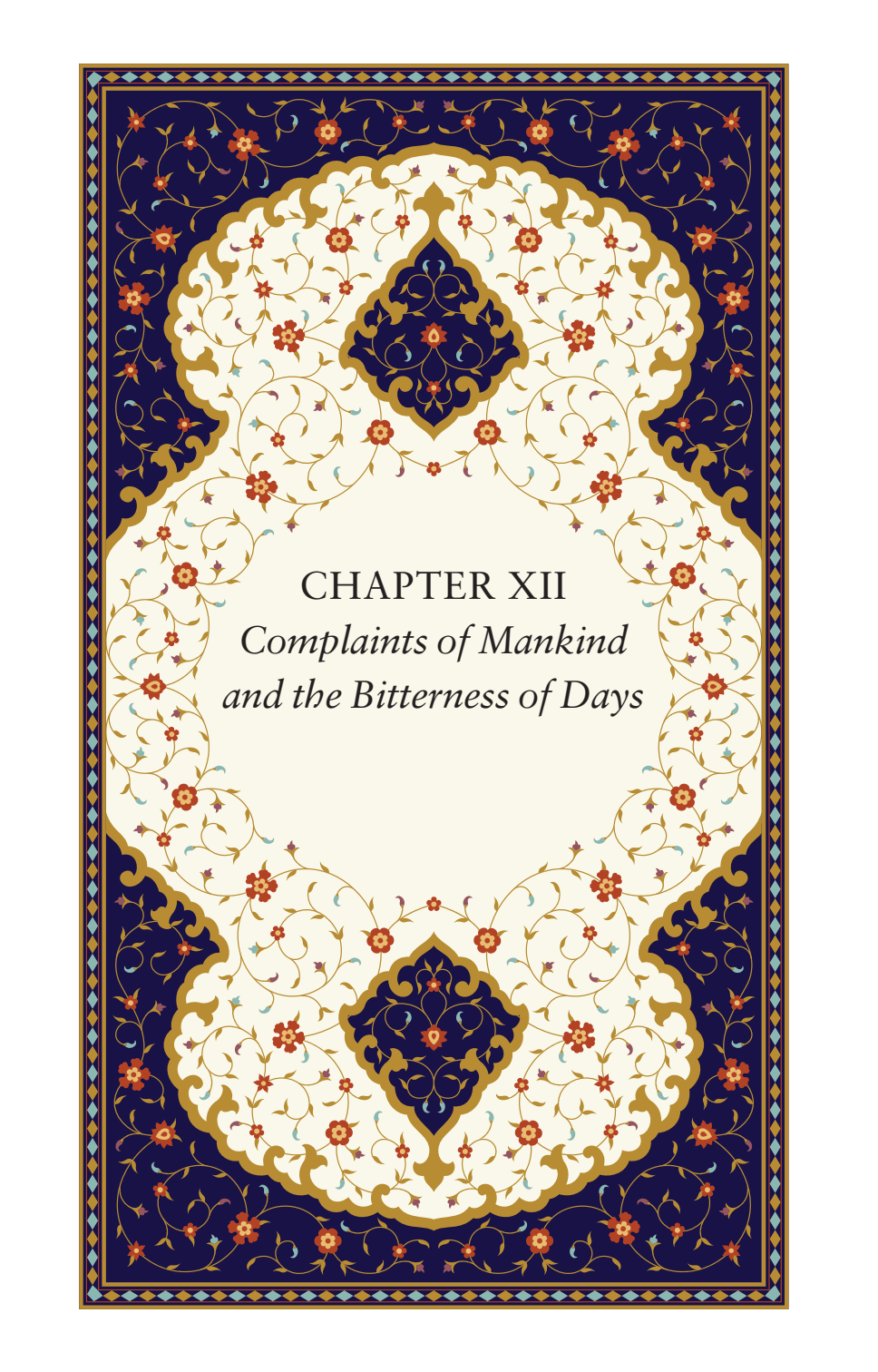
God's Mercy be upon him – this we plead –
As long as people learn and men thus read!

[البحر الطويل]

شَهِدْتُ بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ لَا رَبَّ غَيْرُهُ وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ الْبَعْثَ حَقٌّ وَأَخْلَصُ
وَأَنَّ عُرَى الْإِيمَانِ قَوْلٌ مُبَيَّنٌّ وَفِعْلٌ زَكِيٌّ قَدْ يَزِيدُ وَيَنْقُصُ
وَأَنَّ أَبَا بَكْرٍ خَلِيفَةُ رَبِّهِ وَكَانَ أَبُو حَفْصٍ عَلَى الْخَيْرِ يَحْرِصُ
وَأَشْهَدُ رَبِّي أَنَّ عُثْمَانَ فَاضِلٌ وَأَنَّ عَلِيًّا فَضْلُهُ مُتَخَصِّصٌ
أُمَّةٌ قَوْمٌ يُهْتَدَى بِهِدَاهُمُ لِحَى اللَّهِ مَنِ إِيَاهُمْ يَتَنَقَّصُ

[البحر الوافر]

لَقَدْ زَانَ الْبِلَادَ وَمَنْ عَلَيْهَا إِمَامُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ أَبُو حَنِيفَةَ
بِأَحْكَامٍ وَأَثَارٍ وَفِقْهِ كَأَيَاتِ الزُّبُورِ عَلَى الصَّحِيفَةِ
فَمَا بِالْمَشْرِقَيْنِ لَهُ نَظِيرٌ وَلَا بِالْمَغْرِبَيْنِ وَلَا بِكُوفَةَ
فَرَحْمَهُ رَبَّنَا أَبَدًا عَلَيْهِ مَدَى الْأَيَّامِ مَا قُرِئَتْ صَحِيفَةَ



CHAPTER XII
*Complaints of Mankind
and the Bitterness of Days*

The passing of great men

The men we'd emulate have since expired,
So too have men who'd chide acts undesired.

I'm with their brood, who pat each others' backs
Where lacking men teach others who too lack.

They pass through roads and by their buildings stay,
But from the major route, they've lost their way.

The life of a noble man and of a cursed one

Lo! Donkeys are fed fodder, and they graze,
As hungry, thirsty lions pass their days.

The nobles of a people have no bread
While manna and roast quails to rogues are fed.

The Great Creator's judgment thus arranged
And His decree no man can move or change.

So those who know life's fraud and its disdain
Will persevere through tests and not complain.

[البحر الكامل]

وَالْمُنْكَرُونَ لِكُلِّ أَمْرٍ مُنْكَرٍ ذَهَبَ الرَّجَالُ الْمُقْتَدَى بِفِعَالِهِمْ
بَعْضًا لِيَأْخُذَ مُعْوِرٌ عَنِ مُعْوِرٍ وَبَقِيَتْ فِي خَلْفٍ يَزِيْنُ بَعْضُهُمْ
مُتَنَكِّبِينَ عَنِ الطَّرِيقِ الْأَكْبَرِ سَلَكُوا بِنِيَّاتِ الطَّرِيقِ فَأَصْبَحُوا

[البحر الطويل]

وَأُسْدًا جِياعًا تَظْمَأُ الدَّهْرَ لَا تُرَوَى أَرَى حُمْرًا تَرَعَى وَتُعَلْفُ مَا تَهْوَى
وَقَوْمًا لِيَأْمَأُ تَأْكُلُ الْمَنَّ وَالسَّلْوَى وَأَشْرَافَ قَوْمٍ لَا يِنَالُونَ قُوْتَهُمْ
وَلَيْسَ عَلَى مَرِّ الْقِضَا أَحَدٌ يَقْوَى قِضَاءٌ لِدَيَّانِ الْخِلَائِقِ سَابِقُ
تَصَبَّرَ لِلْبَلْوَى وَلَمْ يُظْهِرِ الشَّكْوَى فَمَنْ عَرَفَ الدَّهْرَ الْحَوْوْنَ وَصَرَفَهُ

Mankind's love

Indeed I've known more men than I can count,
And once I thought I knew all men's accounts.

I tested them and found that everyone
Like life, would turn its back on me and shun.

The worst of them would curse me when away.
When sick, the best, a visit didn't pay.

In my good times, they had no joy for me.
When times were bad, they liked my misery.

The shortage of friends during hardship

When I approached men, seeking from their flocks,
A brother I could trust for life's hard knocks,

I faced times topsy-turvy, grief and ease,
And yelled amongst men: 'Someone help me, please!'

I only found men pleased when I was sad
And those who envied me when I was glad.

The inner worship

Leave those who feign devotion to your face
But lurk alone like wolves 'round sheep that pace.

[البحر البسيط]

إِنِّي صَحَبْتُ أَنَا مَا لَهُمْ عَدْدُ
وَكُنْتُ أَحْسَبُ أَنِّي قَدْ مَلَأْتُ يَدِي
لَمَّا بَلَوْتُ أَخِلَائِي وَجَدْتُهُمْ
كَالدَّهْرِ فِي الْغَدْرِ لَمْ يُبْقُوا عَلَى أَحَدٍ
إِنْ غَبْتُ عَنْهُمْ فَشَرُّ النَّاسِ يَشْتُمُنِي
وَإِنْ مَرَضْتُ فَخَيْرُ النَّاسِ لَمْ يَعِدْ
وَإِنْ رَأَوْنِي بِخَيْرٍ سَاءَهُمْ فَرَحِي
وَإِنْ رَأَوْنِي بِشَرٍّ سَرَّهُمْ نَكَدِي

[البحر الطويل]

وَلَمَّا أَتَيْتُ النَّاسَ أَطْلُبُ عِنْدَهُمْ
أَخَا ثِقَةٍ عِنْدَ ابْتِلَاءِ الشَّدَائِدِ
تَقَلَّبْتُ فِي دَهْرِي رَخَاءً وَشِدَّةً
وَنَادَيْتُ فِي الْأَحْيَاءِ هَلْ مِنْ مُسَاعِدِ
فَلَمْ أَرِ فِيمَا سَاءَ نِي غَيْرَ شَامِتِ
وَلَمْ أَرِ فِيمَا سَرَّنِي غَيْرَ حَاسِدِ

[البحر الكامل]

وَدَعَ الَّذِينَ إِذَا أَتَوْكَ تَنَسَّكُوا
وَإِذَا خَلَوْا فَهُمْ ذُنَابُ خِرَافِ

Troubles are from ourselves

We fault our age, while faults are ours alone
Other than us, our age's faults are none.

We mock our age despite its sinlessness,
But we'd be mocked were it to speak to us.

A wolf does not eat wolves with which it vies
But man eats man before our very eyes.

Causing harm accidentally

While he meant good, he harmed against his will,
For on occasion, piety brings ill.

Thinking the worst

Just think the worst, no matter what, of men
For ill opinion's man's great acumen.

No man's been left to starve his days and rot
Except 'twas due to his kind words and thoughts.

[البحر الوافر]

نَعِيبُ زَمَانِنَا وَالْعَيْبُ فِينَا وَمَا لِرِمَانِنَا عَيْبٌ سِوَانَا
وَنَهْجُو ذَا الزَّمَانِ بِغَيْرِ ذَنْبٍ وَلَوْ نَطَقَ الزَّمَانُ لَنَا هَجَانَا
وَلَيْسَ الذِّئْبُ يَأْكُلُ لَحْمَ ذِئْبٍ وَيَأْكُلُ بَعْضُنَا بَعْضًا عَيَانَا

[البحر الخفيف]

رَامَ نَفْعًا فَضَرَّ مِنْ غَيْرِ قَصْدٍ وَمِنْ الْبِرِّ مَا يَكُونُ عُقُوقًا

[بحر الرمل]

لَا يَكُنْ ظَنُّكَ إِلَّا سَيِّئًا إِنَّ سُوءَ الظَّنِّ مِنْ أَقْوَى الْفِطَنِ
مَا رَمَى الْإِنْسَانَ فِي مَحْمَصَةٍ غَيْرُ حُسْنِ الظَّنِّ وَالْقَوْلِ الْحَسَنِ

Ignoring one's concerns

Some stay awake, some sleep most peacefully,
Regarding that which may or may not be.

So clear your mind of grief and all its pain,
For fretting over grief is just insane.

For He Who had sufficed you yesterday
Will be enough for you in coming days.

Friends during times of hardship

A friend who helps you not in misery
Is not too different from an enemy,

For lifelong friends and brethren are but there
To help each other when they face despair.

I've searched for one on whom I could depend
For all my life, distracted to no end.

I have been shunned by lands and by their men
As though their people feel I'm not of them.

[البحر الخفيف]

سَهَرَتْ أَعْيُنٌ وَنَامَتْ عُيُونٌ فِي أُمُورٍ تَكُونُ أَوْ لَا تَكُونُ
فَادْرَأِ الْهَمَّ مَا اسْتَطَعْتَ عَنِ النَّفْسِ فَحِمْلَانِكَ الْهُمُومَ جُنُونُ
إِنَّ رَبًّا كَفَاكَ بِالْأَمْسِ مَا كَانَ سَيَكْفِيكَ فِي غَدٍ مَا يَكُونُ

[البحر الوافر]

صَدِيقٌ لَيْسَ يَنْفَعُ يَوْمَ بُؤْسٍ قَرِيبٌ مِنْ عَدُوٍّ فِي الْقِيَاسِ
وَمَا يَبْقَى الصَّدِيقُ بِكُلِّ عَصْرٍِ وَلَا الْإِخْوَانُ إِلَّا لِلتَّاسِي
عَمَرْتُ الدَّهْرَ مُلْتَمِسًا بِجَهْدِي أَخَا ثِقَةٍ فَالْهَانِي التِّمَاسِي
تَنَكَّرَتِ الْبِلَادُ وَمَنْ عَلَيْهَا كَانَ أَنْسَاهَا لَيْسُوا بِنَاسِي

The basis of friendship

If one must strain to show you that he cares,
Then let him go and grieve not for his airs.

Let go, find peace: of men, he's not the last.
Though far away, a heart in love stands fast.

Not everyone you love will love you too:
You'll open up to some who won't to you.

If purity of love is only feigned,
There is no good in lovers' love that's strained.

There is no good in friends who cross their friends,
Reciprocating kindness with offense,

Denying what they had and how it fared,
Disclosing secrets that they once had shared.

Goodbye, dear world, if you can't even spare
An honest friend who keeps his word, who's fair.

إِذَا الْمَرْءُ لَا يَرَعَاكَ إِلَّا تَكَلَّفَا فَدَعَهُ وَلَا تُكْثِرْ عَلَيْهِ التَّأْسُفَا
 فَفِي النَّاسِ أُبْدَالٌ وَفِي التَّرْكِ رَاحَةٌ وَفِي الْقَلْبِ صَبْرٌ لِلْحَبِيبِ وَلَوْ جَفَا
 فَمَا كُلُّ مَنْ تَهَوَّاهُ يَهْوَاكَ قَلْبُهُ وَلَا كُلُّ مَنْ صَافَيْتَهُ لَكَ قَدْ صَفَا
 إِذَا لَمْ يَكُنْ صَفْوُ الْوِدَادِ طَبِيعَةً فَلَا خَيْرَ فِي وُدِّ يَجِيءُ تَكَلُّفَا
 وَلَا خَيْرَ فِي حَلِّ يَخُونُ خَلِيلَهُ وَيَلْقَاهُ مِنْ بَعْدِ الْمَوَدَّةِ بِالْجَفَا
 وَيُنْكِرُ عَيْشًا قَدْ تَقَادَمَ عَهْدُهُ وَيُظْهِرُ سِرًّا كَانَ بِالْأَمْسِ قَدْ خَفَا
 سَلَامٌ عَلَى الدُّنْيَا إِذَا لَمْ يَكُنْ بِهَا صَدِيقٌ صَدُوقٌ صَادِقُ الْوَعْدِ مُنْصَفَا

The love of the righteous

I love the righteous, though I'm but their chaff,
Perhaps they'll intercede on my behalf.

And I hate men who buy and sell their sins,
Though evil wares may be what fill my bins.

The rareness of a true friend

Set out and travel with these times that flee.
Withdraw from people to your monastery.

And wash your hands of life and men, then shirk
Their love, you'll reap of life's tremendous perks.

I've looked around and found no friend of mine
To mingle with in this or other times.

I left the lowest of them due to harm
And left the best of them for lack of charm.

[البحر الوافر]

أَحِبُّ الصَّالِحِينَ وَكَسْتُ مِنْهُمْ لَعَلِّي أَنْ أُنَالَ بِهِمْ شَفَاعَةَ
وَأَكْرَهُ مَنْ تِجَارَتُهُ الْمَعَاصِي وَلَوْ كُنَّا سِوَاءَ فِي الْبِضَاعَةِ

[البحر الكامل]

كُنْ سَائِرًا فِي ذَا الزَّمَانِ بِسَيْرِهِ وَعَنِ الْوَرَى كُنْ رَاهِبًا فِي دَيْرِهِ
وَاغْسِلْ يَدَيْكَ مِنَ الزَّمَانِ وَأَهْلِهِ وَاحْذَرْ مَوَدَّتَهُمْ تَنْلُ مِنْ خَيْرِهِ
إِنِّي اطَّلَعْتُ فَلَمْ أَجِدْ لِي صَاحِبًا أَصْحَبُهُ فِي الدَّهْرِ وَلَا فِي غَيْرِهِ
فَتَرَكْتُ أَسْفَلَهُمْ لِكَثْرَةِ شَرِّهِ وَتَرَكْتُ أَعْلَاهُمْ لِقَلَّةِ خَيْرِهِ

Being alone is better than bad company

If pious friends aren't found, then solitude
Is finer than a friend misled and lewd.

To sit alone for worship while unmarred
Is better than a man who'll raise my guard.

The best of companions

I love my friends with whom I oft agree,
Who look away from flaws that they might see,

Agreeing on all matters that arise,
Protecting me in life and post-demise.

Where can I find one? Can he truly be?
I'd split all pious deeds 'tween him and me!

Despite my many friends, I've searched and fussed
And found but few of them that earned my trust.

[البحر الطويل]

إِذَا لَمْ أَجِدْ خِلاًّ تَقِيّاً فَوَحْدَتِي أَلذُّ وَأَشْهَى مِنْ غَوِيٍّ أَعَاشِرُهُ
وَأَجْلِسُ وَحْدِي لِلْعِبَادَةِ آمِنَا أَقَرُّ لِعَيْنِي مِنْ جَلِيسِ أَحَاذِرُهُ

[البحر الطويل]

أُحِبُّ مِنَ الْإِخْوَانِ كُلِّ مُوَاتِي وَكُلِّ غَضِيضِ الطَّرْفِ عَنْ عَثْرَاتِي
يُؤَافِقُنِي فِي كُلِّ أَمْرٍ أُرِيدُهُ وَيَحْفَظُنِي حَيًّا وَبَعْدَ مَمَاتِي
فَمَنْ لِي بِهِذَا لَيْتَ أَنِّي أَصَبْتُهُ لِقَاسَمَتِهِ مَا لِي مِنَ الْحَسَنَاتِ
تَصَفَّحْتُ إِخْوَانِي فَكَانَ أَقَلَّهُمْ عَلَى كَثْرَةِ الْإِخْوَانِ أَهْلُ ثِقَاتِي

The honourer of mankind

If only we'd have neighbours that were hounds!
If only we'd not see them in our bounds!

For hounds will find their way in their domain,
While men are lost! From harm they can't refrain!

So run away! Enjoy your solitude!
You will be happy when men you exclude!

The ranks of man

I find myself amongst a group that fails
A cultured man, that sells its heads for tails.

For men are gathered by their unity
But vary in their minds, grace, dignity.

For yellow metals capture in their fold
Dull brass, while great esteem belongs to gold.

And were it not for fine scent, agarwood
Would be identical to firewood.

[البحر البسيط]

لَيْتَ الْكِلَابَ لَنَا كَانَتْ مُجَاوِرَةً وَكَيْتَنَا لَا نَرَى مِمَّا نَرَى أَحَدًا
إِنَّ الْكِلَابَ لَتَهْدِي فِي مَوَاطِنِهَا وَالْخَلْقُ لَيْسَ بِهَادٍ شَرُّهُمْ أَبَدًا
فَأَهْرُبَ بِنَفْسِكَ وَاسْتَأْنِسْ بِوَحْدَتِهَا تَبْقَى سَعِيدًا إِذَا مَا كُنْتَ مُنْفَرِدًا

[البحر البسيط]

أَصْبَحَتْ مُطَّرَّحًا فِي مَعْشَرٍ جَهْلُوا حَقَّ الْأَدِيبِ فَبَاعُوا الرَّأْسَ بِالذَّنْبِ
وَالنَّاسُ يَجْمَعُهُمْ شَمْلٌ وَبَيْنَهُمْ فِي الْعَقْلِ فَرْقٌ وَفِي الْأَدَابِ وَالْحَسَبِ
كَمِثْلِ مَا الذَّهَبِ الْإِبْرِيذِ يَشْرِكُهُ فِي لَوْنِهِ الصُّفْرُ وَالتَّفْضِيلُ لِلذَّهَبِ
وَالْعُودُ لَوْ لَمْ تَطْبُ مِنْهُ رَوَائِحُهُ لَمْ يَفْرِقِ النَّاسُ بَيْنَ الْعُودِ وَالْحَطَبِ

The station of hope

If you seek golden deeds from men of gilt
Then seek men who a house of God have built.

For they are lions who protect their turf
And value friends alive and under earth.

[البحر الوافر]

إِذَا رُؤِمَتِ الْمَكَارِمُ مِنْ كَرِيمٍ فَيَمَّمُ مَنْ بَنَى لِلَّهِ بَيْتَا
فَذَاكَ اللَّيْثُ مَنْ يَحْمِي حِمَاهُ وَيُكْرِمُ ضَيْفَهُ حَيًّا وَمَيْتَا

The image shows a highly decorative book cover. It features a central white area with a scalloped, arched border. This central area is framed by a dark blue background filled with intricate floral and vine patterns in gold, red, and light blue. The patterns include stylized flowers and scrolling vines. At the top and bottom of the central white area, there are large, ornate, dark blue medallions with gold and red floral designs. The entire cover is enclosed in a thin, multi-layered border consisting of a repeating diamond pattern in blue and gold.

CHAPTER XIII
About Women

This is a day of supplication

A woman came to Shāfi'ī and said:

May God forgive all men who pray for those
Two lovebirds that had always been so close,

Until a slanderer spread sinful lies
Between them, thus ensuring love's demise.

*And Shāfi'ī wept. "Today is not a day for contemplation,"
he told his students, "Today is a day for du'ā'." And he con-
tinued weeping until his students left him.*

Humility

How can I reach Felicity when peaks
Of mounts before her lie, and graves that shriek?

I'm barefoot, lack a mount, and penniless.
All roads that lead to her are perilous.

[البحر الطويل]

عفا الله عن عبدٍ أَعَانَ بِدَعْوَةٍ خَلِيلَيْنِ كَانَا دَائِمَيْنِ عَلَى الْوُدِّ
إِلَى أَنْ مَشَى وَاشِيَّ الْهَوَى بِنَمِيمَةٍ إِلَى ذَاكَ مِنْ هَذَا فَزَالَا عَنِ الْعَهْدِ

[البحر الكامل]

كَيْفَ الْوُصُولُ إِلَى سُعَادَ وَدُونَهَا قُلُّ الْجِبَالِ وَدُونَهُنَّ حُتُوفُ
وَالرَّجُلُ حَافِيَةٌ وَلَا لِي مَرْكَبٌ وَالْكَفُّ صِفْرٌ وَالطَّرِيقُ مَخُوفٌ

Love

A man came to Shāfi‘ī and gave him a piece of paper on which was written:

Ask Mecca’s mufti, who from Hashim hails,
If love becomes too much, what then avails?

So Shāfi‘ī wrote underneath it:

He treats his passion, then conceals his love,
Bears all things patiently, fears God above.

So the man wrote underneath this:

How’s passion treated when it kills a bloke,
And in his throat’s a lump that makes him choke?

And Shāfi‘ī wrote back:

If he can’t bear the test from which he sighs,
He’ll never be relieved until he dies.

[البحر الطويل]

سَلِ الْمُنْفِي الْمَكِّيِّ مِنْ آلِ هَاشِمٍ إِذَا اشْتَدَّ وَجْدٌ بَامِرِيٍّ كَيْفَ يَصْنَعُ

[البحر الطويل]

يُدَاوِي هَوَاهُ ثُمَّ يَكْتُمُ وَجْدَهُ وَيَصْبِرُ فِي كُلِّ الْأُمُورِ وَيَخْضَعُ

[البحر الطويل]

فَكَيْفَ يُدَاوِي وَالْهَوَى قَاتِلُ الْفَتَى وَفِي كُلِّ يَوْمٍ غُصَّةٌ يَتَجَرَّعُ

[البحر الطويل]

فَإِنْ هَوَلَ لَمْ يَصْبِرْ عَلَى مَا أَصَابَهُ فَلَيْسَ لَهُ سِوَى الْمَوْتِ أَنْفَعُ

Kissing when fasting

A man came to Shāfi'ī and gave him a piece of paper. Shāfi'ī smiled and wrote something on the paper as a reply and the man returned. The students with Shāfi'ī wanted to know what was this matter of Islamic Jurisprudence that they had just missed out from learning about and chased after the man and took the letter from him. It said on it:

Ask Mecca's mufti if oft visiting
And gazes from a longing heart are sin.

And Shāfi'ī had written beneath this:

May God forbid that piety's impugned
By fusion of two livers and their wounds!

And Rabī' was shocked at the reply of Shāfi'ī, for he didn't expect such a religious scholar to be encouraging out-of-wedlock relationships and he asked him about this. Shāfi'ī told him that he had discerned that the man was someone who had been recently married, and indeed when Rabī' went and asked the man, he confirmed that he had been married only a month ago. Rabī' used to say he never saw a man with better insight than Shāfi'ī.

[البحر الطويل]

سَلِ الْمُنْفِي الْمَكِّيَّ هَلْ فِي تَزَاوُرٍ وَنَظْرَةٍ مُشْتَاكِ الْفؤَادِ جُنَاحُ

[البحر الطويل]

فَقَالَ مَعَاذَ اللَّهِ أَنْ يُذْهِبَ التُّقَى تَلَاصُقُ أَكْبَادٍ بِهِنَّ جِرَاحُ

Humour

It's trying when you love someone,
But he won't love you back.

He turns his face away from you,
But you don't cut him slack!

Remain pure and your women will remain pure too

Be chaste, and chaste will be your women too.
Avoid the acts a Muslim shouldn't do.

To fornicator's a loan to be repaid
To you among your folk, so be afraid!

O violator of men's sanctity,
Destroyer of pure love, live ignobly!

If you were pure and of good family
You wouldn't harm a Muslim's sanctity.

Smear and be smeared, perhaps within your walls!
You'd understand if you had sense at all!

[البحر الكامل]

وَمِنَ الْبَلِيَّةِ أَنْ تُحِبَّ بَّ وَلَا يُحِبُّكَ مَنْ تُحِبُّهُ
وَيَصُدُّ عَنْكَ بِوَجْهِهِ وَتُلِحُّ أَنْتَ فَلَا تُغْبِئْهُ

[البحر الكامل]

عُفُوا تَعْفُ نِسَاؤُكُمْ فِي الْمَحْرَمِ
إِنَّ الزَّانَا دِينَ فَإِنْ أَقْرَضْتَهُ
يَاهَاتِكَا حُرْمَ الرِّجَالِ وَقَاطِعَا
لَوْ كُنْتَ حُرًّا مِنْ سُلَالَةِ مَا جِدِ
مَنْ يَزْنِي يُزْنِ بِهِ وَلَوْ بِجِدَارِهِ
وَتَجَنَّبُوا مَا لَا يَلِيْقُ بِمُسْلِمٍ
كَانَ الْوَفَا مِنْ أَهْلِ بَيْتِكَ فَاعْلَمْ
سُبُلَ الْمَوَدَّةِ عِشْتَ غَيْرَ مُكْرَمٍ
مَا كُنْتَ هَتَاكَا لِحُرْمَةِ مُسْلِمٍ
إِنْ كُنْتَ يَا هَذَا لَبِيَّبًا فَافْهَمْ

The most difficult of hardships

Of women, much is said – here's what men speak:
That women's love is tribulation's peak.

A woman's love is not the problem, dear:
It's when you do not love those who are near!

[البحر الخفيف]

أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ فِي النَّسَاءِ وَقَالُوا
لَيْسَ حُبُّ النَّسَاءِ جَهْدًا وَلَكِنْ
إِنَّ حُبَّ النَّسَاءِ جَهْدُ الْبَلَاءِ
قُرْبُ مَنْ لَا تُحِبُّ جَهْدُ الْبَلَاءِ

The image shows a decorative book cover with a central text area. The background is a deep blue color, adorned with intricate floral and vine patterns in gold, red, and light blue. The central text is set within a white, scalloped-edged frame. The text reads "CHAPTER XIV" in a bold, black, serif font, and "Death and the Hereafter" in a black, italicized serif font below it. The entire design is enclosed in a thin, multi-colored border.

CHAPTER XIV
Death and the Hereafter

Preparing for the hereafter

O you who hug a world that will not last,
At morn, at eve, oft-travelling its vast.

If but you left a hug of this world's vice,
That you might maidens hug in Paradise.

If everlasting gardens you desire,
Then never feel immune from the Hellfire.

يا مَنْ يُعَانِقُ دُنْيَا لَا بَقَاءَ لَهَا يُمَسِّي وَيُصْبِحُ فِي دُنْيَاهُ سَفَّارَا
هَلَّا تَرَكَتَ لِذِي الدُّنْيَا مُعَانِقَةً حَتَّى تُعَانِقَ فِي الْفِرْدَوْسِ أَبْكَارَا
إِنْ كُنْتَ تَبْغِي جَنَّانَ الْخُلْدِ تَسْكُنُهَا فَيَنْبَغِي لَكَ أَنْ لَا تَأْمَنَ النَّارَا

Leaving the world and preparing for the hereafter

Shāfi'ī said on his deathbed:

O God of Man, to You I hoist my need –
Be Generous, though guilty I now plead!

But as my heart grows cold and exit strait,
I climb with hope to Your great pardon's gate.

My sins forewarn, but next to God's good grace,
I find my sins no longer have a place.

Through Your abiding pardon and largesse –
Out of benevolence – You pardon us.

Without You, saints would not defy Iblis,
For Adam he misled, on him be peace!

I wish I knew: will I to Heaven get
In bliss, or else, to blazes in regret?

With God are this believing, keen man's deeds,
Whose overflowing love ensures eyes bleed,

Who hosts his own sad funeral as night
Grows dark, and as he's overcome by fright,

Most eloquent when mentioning his Lord,
Ineloquent when men with him discourse,

Recalling youthful days of what had been,
And what had passed of ignorance and sin.

He partnered grief at length in daytime's light,
And spoke to God as men would sleep at night,

وَإِنْ كُنْتُ يَا ذَا الْمَنِّ وَالْجُودِ مُجْرِمًا
 جَعَلْتَ الرَّجَا مِنِّي لِعَفْوِكَ سُلَّمًا
 بِعَفْوِكَ رَبِّي كَانَ عَفْوُكَ أَعْظَمًا
 تَجُودٌ وَتَعْفُو مِنَّةٌ وَتَكْرُمًا
 فَكَيْفَ وَقَدْ أَغْوَى صَفِيكَ آدَمًا
 فَأَهْنَا وَأَمَّا لِلسَّعِيرِ فَأَنْدَمًا
 ظُلُومٌ غَشُومٌ لَا يُزَايِلُ مَأْثَمًا
 وَلَوْ أَدْخَلُوا نَفْسِي بِجُزْمِ جَهَنَّمَ
 تَفِيضُ لِفِرْطِ الْوَجْدِ أَجْفَانُهُ دَمًا
 عَلَى نَفْسِهِ مِنْ شِدَّةِ الْخَوْفِ مَا تَمَّا
 وَفِي مَا سِوَاهُ فِي الْوَرَى كَانَ أَعْجَمًا
 وَمَا كَانَ فِيهَا بِالْجَهَالَةِ أَجْرَمًا
 أَخَا الشُّهْدِ وَالنَّجْوَى إِذَا اللَّيْلُ أَظْلَمَا
 كَفَى بِكَ لِلرَّاجِحِينَ سُؤْلًا وَمَنْعَمًا
 وَلَا زِلْتَ مَنَانًا عَلَيَّ وَمُنْعَمًا
 وَيَسْتُرُ أَوْزَارِي وَمَا قَدْ تَقَدَّمَ

إِلَيْكَ إِلَهَ الْخَلْقِ أَرْفَعُ رَغْبَتِي
 وَلَمَّا قَسَا قَلْبِي وَضَاقَتْ مَذَاهِبِي
 تَعَاظَمَنِي ذَنْبِي فَلَمَّا قَرَنْتَهُ
 فَمَا زِلْتُ ذَا عَفْوٍ عَنِ الذَّنْبِ لَمْ تَزَلْ
 فَلَوْلَاكَ لَمْ يَصْمُدْ لِإِبْلِيسَ عَابِدٌ
 فَيَا لَيْتَ شِعْرِي هَلْ أَصِيرُ لِجَنَّةٍ
 فَإِنْ تَعَفُّ عَنِّي تَعَفُّ عَنِ مَتَمَرِدٍ
 وَإِنْ تَنْتَقِمُ مِنِّي فَلَسْتُ بِأَيْسٍ
 فَلَلَهُ دُرُّ الْعَارِفِ النَّدْبِ إِنَّهُ
 يُقِيمُ إِذَا مَا اللَّيْلُ مَدَّ ظِلَامَهُ
 فَصِيحًا إِذَا مَا كَانَ فِي ذِكْرِ رَبِّهِ
 وَيَذْكَرُ أَيَّامًا مَضَّتْ مِنْ شَبَابِهِ
 فَصَارَ قَرِينَ الْهَمِّ طُولَ نَهَارِهِ
 يَقُولُ حَبِيبِي أَنْتَ سُؤْلِي وَبُغْيَتِي
 أَلَسْتَ الَّذِي غَذَيْتَنِي وَهَدَيْتَنِي
 عَسَى مِنْ لَهُ الْإِحْسَانُ يُغْفِرُ زَلَّتِي

He said: 'O my Beloved, my wish, desire,'
'Naught greater than Your Grace have men acquired!'

Aren't You who nourished me and guided me,
'Til now providing blessings lavishly?

Perhaps the Generous shall clear my lapse,
Concealing faults of mine and sins of past!

Bereavement

A man became filled with despair upon the passing away of his son so much so that he stopped eating and drinking. Shāfi'ī advised him thus:

My consolation is an act for God,
Not that I know I'll stay above the sod.

The one consoling won't outlive his friend:
Live as they may, grim death's a mourner's end.

[البحر البسيط]

إِنِّي أُعْزِيكَ لَا أَنِّي عَلَى طَمَعٍ مِّنَ الْخُلُودِ وَلَكِن سُنَّةُ الدِّينِ
فَمَا الْمُعْزَى بِبَاقٍ بَعْدَ صَاحِبِهِ وَلَا الْمُعْزَى وَإِنْ عَاشَا إِلَى حِينِ

Preparing for death

So many men laugh as death's overhead
While had they known, of grief they'd all be dead.

Whoever doesn't know if he'll survive,
What good is food to men that aren't alive?

The ship of the believer

Amongst God's slaves, some who're astute have left
This world and trials that deem men bereft.

For after knowing this poor world erodes,
They knew it couldn't be life's true abode.

They deemed it but a sea with many waves,
And built their boats of deeds, and they were saved.

The death of loved ones

I'll bear my death when it approaches me
For it will come for sure eventually.

If I live on, my loved ones will then die
And words of sorrow, that pain will belie.

[البحر البسيط]

كَمْ ضَاحِكٍ وَالْمَنَايَا فَوْقَ هَامَتِهِ لَوْ كَانَ يَعْلَمُ غَيْبًا مَاتَ مِنْ كَمَدِ
مَنْ كَانَ لَمْ يُؤْتِ عِلْمًا فِي بَقَاءِ غَدِ مَاذَا تَفَكَّرُهُ فِي رِزْقِ بَعْدِ غَدِ

[بحر الرمل]

إِنَّ لِلَّهِ عِبَادًا فُطِنَا تَرَكَوْا الدُّنْيَا وَخَافُوا الْفِتْنَا
نَظَرُوا فِيهَا فَلَمَّا عَلِمُوا أَنَّهَا لَيْسَتْ لِحَيِّ وَطَنَا
جَعَلُوهَا لُجَّةً وَأَتَّخَذُوا صَالِحَ الْأَعْمَالِ فِيهَا سُفُنَا

[البحر الوافر]

سَأَصْبِرُ لِلْحِمَامِ وَقَدْ أَتَانِي وَإِلَّا فَهُوَ آتٍ بَعْدَ حِينِ
وَإِنْ أَسْلَمَ يَمُتْ قَبْلِي حَبِيبُ وَمَوْتُ أَحِبَّتِي قَبْلِي يَسُونِي

Death is the fate of everyone living

Some men have wished that I should die. I'll die
Like everyone: all men with death comply.

No harm befalls me when death deems men gone,
But can survivors deem that I live on?

Perhaps the man who prays for my demise
Will die reviled and right before my eyes.

تَمَنَّى رِجَالٌ أَنْ أَمُوتَ وَإِنْ أَمُتْ فَتِلْكَ سَبِيلُ لَسْتُ فِيهَا بِأَوْحِدِ
وَمَا مَوْتُ مَنْ قَدَمَاتِ قَبْلِي بِضَائِرِي وَلَا عَيْشُ مَنْ قَدَعَاشَ بَعْدِي بِمُخْلِدي
لَعَلَّ الَّذِي يَرْجُو فَنَائِي وَيَدَّعِي بِهِ قَبْلَ مَوْتِي أَنْ يَكُونَ هُوَ الرَّدِّي

Greyness showing up and the best of actions

The ash of my hair's parting cooled my blaze.
My night grew dark whence its star shone like day.

O owl that has perched above my head –
Despite myself – my head's old raven fled,

You found me in decline and visited,
For you seek out, on earth, all things agèd.

Should I enjoy my life when omens grey –
That dye won't hide – upon my cheeks will stay?

A man is in his prime before he greys,
And when his youth departs, his life is razed.

When skin turns pale and hair turns white, man's best
And most enjoyable of days must rest.

So leave alone indecent acts unfit,
That God does not allow us to commit.

And pay zakat on your prestige. Conclude,
That just like wealth, you have enough accrued.

Be good to noble men: with that you'll reign,
For winning them is truly your best gain.

Do not traverse the highlands with great pride,
For soon you'll be beneath them when you've died.

Whoever's tried this world, I've tried it too:
I've tried its sweet and bitter, each its due.

I've found it but a vain and sly barrage:
A shiny patch of sand: it's a mirage.

خَبَّتْ نَارُ نَفْسِي بِاشْتِعَالِ مَفَارِقِي
 أَيَا بُومَةٍ قَدْ عَشَّشَتْ فَوْقَ هَامَتِي
 رَأَيْتِ خَرَابَ الْعُمْرِ مِنِّي فَزُرْتِنِي
 أَأَنْعُمَ عَيْشًا بَعْدَ مَا حَلَّ عَارِضِي
 وَعِزَّةَ عُمَرِ الْمَرْءِ قَبْلَ مَشِيبِهِ
 إِذَا اصْفَرَّ لَوْنُ الْمَرْءِ وَأَبْيَضَ شَعْرُهُ
 فَدَعِ عَنْكَ سَوَاتِ الْأُمُورِ فَإِنَّهَا
 وَأَدَّ زَكَاةَ الْجَاهِ وَاعْلَمْ بِأَنَّهَا
 وَأَحْسِنُ إِلَى الْأَحْرَارِ تَمَلِّكْ رِقَابَهُمْ
 وَلَا تَمَشِينَ فِي مَنْكِبِ الْأَرْضِ فَاخِرًا
 وَمَنْ يَذُقِ الدُّنْيَا فَإِنِّي طَعَمْتُهَا
 فَلَمْ أَرَهَا إِلَّا غُرُورًا وَبَاطِلًا
 وَأَظْلَمَ لَيْلِي إِذْ أَضَاءَ شَهَابُهَا
 عَلَى الرَّغَمِ مِنِّي حِينَ طَارَ غُرَابُهَا
 وَمَأْوَاكِ مِنْ كُلِّ الدِّيَارِ خَرَابُهَا
 طَلَائِعُ شَيْبٍ لَيْسَ يُغْنِي خِضَابُهَا
 وَقَدْ فُنَيْتِ نَفْسٌ تَوَلَّى شَبَابُهَا
 تَنَغَّصَ مِنْ أَيَّامِهِ مُسْتَطَابُهَا
 حَرَامٌ عَلَى نَفْسِ التَّقِيِّ ارْتِكَابُهَا
 كَمِثْلِ زَكَاةِ الْمَالِ تَمَّ نِصَابُهَا
 فَخَيْرُ تِجَارَاتِ الْكِرَامِ اكْتِسَابُهَا
 فَعَمَّا قَلِيلٍ يَحْتَوِيكَ تُرَابُهَا
 وَسَيْقَ إِلَيْنَا عَذْبُهَا وَعَذَابُهَا
 كَمَا لَاحَ فِي ظَهْرِ الْفَلَاةِ سَرَابُهَا

Reviver of the 2nd Hijrī century, Imam Shāfiʿī is the titular founder of one of the schools of Sunni jurisprudence. But even before he was a scholar of Islam, Muḥammad ibn Idrīs was a noble of Quraysh and a quotable authority (*ḥujjah*) on the Arabic language.

For lovers of poetry, we have arranged a collection of the Imam's verse, with side-by-side English, as an introduction to the Imam in his role as poet and Arab noble.

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