

The Perennial Wisdom of Javidan Khirad



Abstract and train of thoughts¹

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¹ Frontispiece: Surge, by Cinnamon Cooney. A wild horse caught in crashing wild surf. What a romantic and beautiful painting! Illustration on page 4, Blind Man at the Mosque, by Arthur von Ferraris; on page 10, Gate of the Great Umayyad Mosque in Damascus (detail), by Gustav Bauernfeind, Munich 1890.

Introductory Notes by the Series Editor.

The Javidan Khirad is a didactic work on Moral Philosophy.

The *Javidan Khirad* was first translated into English in 1869 by Edward Henry Palmer,¹ Fellow of St. John's College, Cambridge, and was published in *The Student and Intellectual Observer of Science, Literature and Art* (1869), Vol. II pp. 168-80, under the title "The *Javidan Khirad*; or, the Proverbial Philosophy of Ancient Persia."

H.P. Blavatsky, in her article ZOROASTER IN "HISTORY" AND ZARATHUSHTRA IN THE SECRET RECORDS, published in 1882, speaks of the *Javidan Khirad* with approbation:

There exists among the Persian Parsees a volume older than the Zoroastrian present writings. The title is *Javidan Khirad*,² or Eternal Wisdom, a work on practical philosophy of magic with natural explanations Thos. Hyde speaks of it in his Preface to the *Historia Religionis Veterum Persarum*.³

In her *Theosophical Glossary*, under "Iranian Morals," Blavatsky refers to a . . .

. . . little work called Ancient Iranian and Zoroastrian Morals, compiled by Mr. Dhunjibhoy Jamsetjee Medhora, a Parsī Theosophist of Bombay, is an excellent treatise replete with the highest moral teachings, in English and Gujarati, and will acquaint the student better than many volumes with the ethics of the ancient Iranians.

The English version of the above is *verbatim* from Edward Palmer's translation.

¹ [Edward Henry Palmer, 1840–1882, English orientalist and explorer]

² [Note by Boris de Zirkoff:

In *The Theosophist*, Vol. III, April, 1882, pp. 180-81, there is an unsigned review of a work entitled *The Javidan Khirad*, or "Eternal Wisdom," a *Practical Manual of the Philosophy of Magic*, a book written in Persian and presented to the Theosophical Society by the Editor, a learned Parsee gentleman of Teheran, Mr. Manekje Limji Hooshang Haturia.

Tradition says that the *Javidan Khirad* was written by King Hū-shang, one of the Peshdadian Kings of Persia; that it was buried in the Palace of King Nashirvan in Baghdad, and was dug up at the request of the philosopher Zouban, who received the permission to do so from Ma'mūn al-Rashīd, the son of Hārūn al-Rashīd. Zouban allowed only a small portion of this work to be read and translated by one of the scholars of the time. This is the fragment which has descended to us under the name of *Javidan Khirad*. It was first translated into Arabic, with the addition of various teachings from other ancient philosophers. The book presented to the Theosophical Society is the Persian translation from this Arabic compilation.

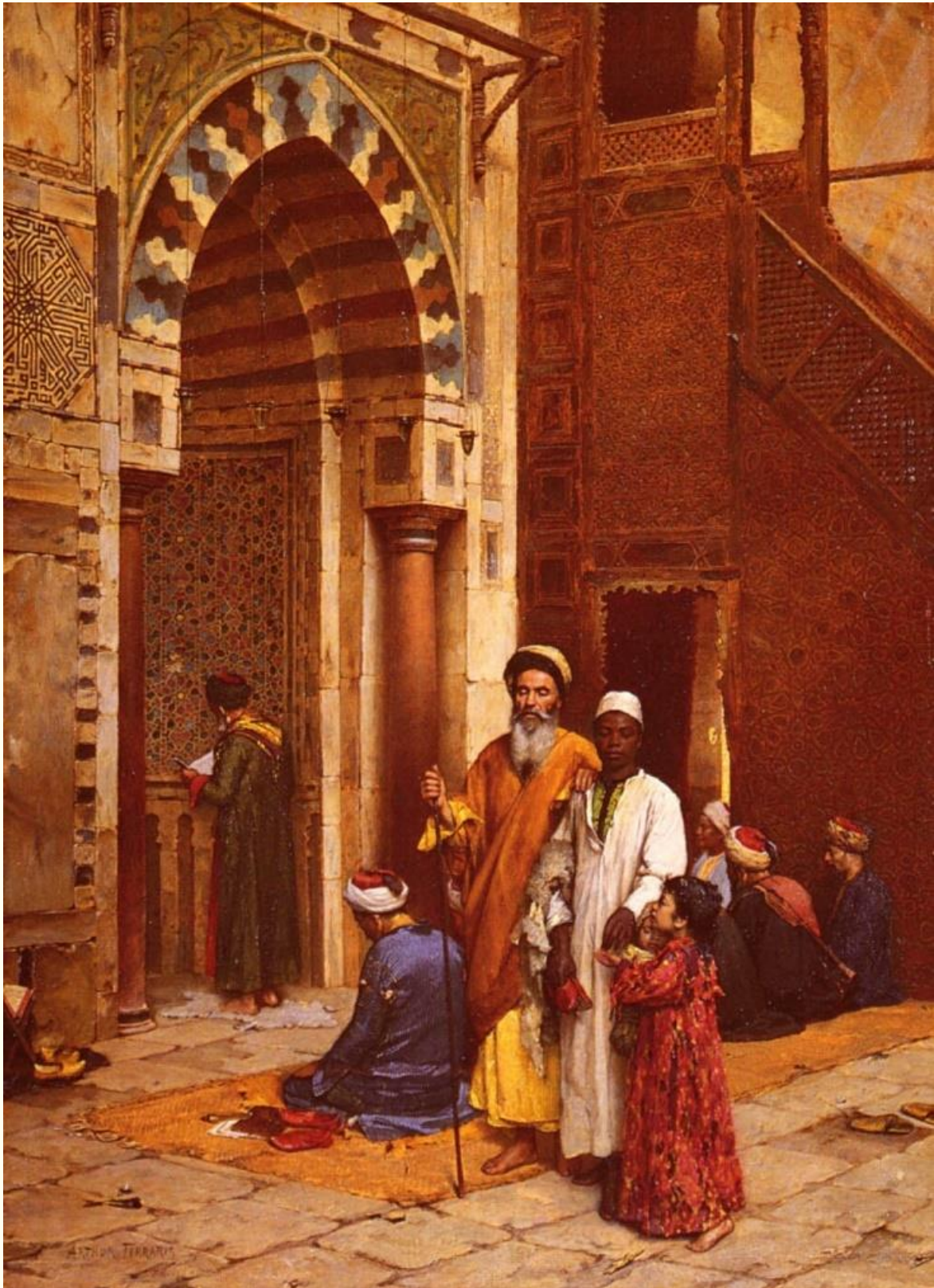
At the end of the review giving the historical background of this work, there is a note which, to judge by its style, may have been written by H.P. Blavatsky, although its authorship is not certain. To quote:

"As to the contents of this book, it would take a volume to comment even briefly upon them. In the first place, the hidden meaning of the original has been altogether neglected by the later translators. But even the outward meaning given to the words is full of precepts, moral and philosophical. In the whole compilation there is not a single sentence which can be pointed out as less important than the rest. If space would allow, we could quote passages after passages which may be read with benefit even by the most advanced moralists and theologians of the present day. This book alone is sufficient to show the learning and acquirements of the much-abused Ancients. If those, whom we are taught to look upon as primitive men in semibarbarity, could write such works on theology, morality, and even politics, as are hardly rivalled by any work of the present so-called age of Progress and Civilization, we must confess that we would like to follow in the steps of such semi-barbarous men, and leave the much vaunted civilization to its own deluded followers."

³ *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (ZOROASTER IN "HISTORY" AND ZARATHUSHTRA IN THE SECRET RECORDS) III, pp. 463-64. [Full text in our Atlantean Realities Series under the title "The Zend Avesta is to Zoroastrianism what the Veda is to Brahmanism." — ED. PHIL.]

In her *Gems from the East*, Blavatsky quotes extensively from *Javidan Khirad*. The entire collection of *Gems* can be found under the title “Blavatsky’s Gems from the East - A Birthday Book,” in our Blavatsky Speaks Series.

DICK SLUSSER



The Proverbial Philosophy of Ancient Persia.

From E.H. Palmer,¹ “The Javidan Khirad; or, the Proverbial Philosophy of Ancient Persia,” in: *The Student and Intellectual Observer of Science, Literature and Art* (1869), Vol. II pp. 168-80.

THE ANNALS OF BIBLIOGRAPHY often present features as romantic as those of Chivalry itself. From the finding of the manuscript of Aristotle’s *Politics* in the Temple of the Sun at Heliopolis, to the recent discovery of the *Codex Sinaiticus* by Tischendorf, the history of literature abounds in strange and stirring incidents. As might be expected, these Bibliographical romances are more frequently met with in the East than in the West, and there is scarcely a single work of any note or antiquity to which some legend relating either to its preservation or discovery does not attach. Of such a character is the history of the *Javidan Khirad*, or Eternal Wisdom, a book hitherto entirely unknown in Europe, and, for the majority of Eastern writers, possessing little more than a traditional existence.

The first notice of the *Javidan Khirad* in any Western writings, seems to have been given by Thomas Hyde in his *Historia Religionis Veterum Persarum*, etc., Præfatio, he says:

Apud Persas autem extat alius liber, Zoroastrianis Scriptis antiquior, cui titulus “Gjavedān Chrad,” seu æterna sapientia agens de Hikmat Amalī, sapientia practica, cui auctor fuit medorum Rex tantum non antiquissimus Hūshangh, occisus (ut aiunt) ictu lapidis, qui a nostrate quodam exponitur Hermes.

There exists amongst the Persians another book, more ancient than the Zoroastrian writings, which bears the title of “Gjavedān Chrad,” or Eternal Wisdom, and treats of “Hikmat i Amali,” or Practical Philosophy. Its author was Hosheng, nearly the first of the Median kings, who met his death, it is said, by a blow from a stone, and who has been identified by one of our countrymen with Hermes.

The *Desātīr*,² of which I have treated in a previous paper, mentions the *Javidan Khirad* as a divinely inspired work revealed to Hosheng, and all the histories of the earlier Persian dynasties when speaking of that monarch, assign to him the composition of a book bearing that name. But the first substantial account given of the book, is that of Abu Ali Maskuyeh, an Arab writer of the tenth century, who professes to relate the discovery of some fragments of the lost book containing the testamentary precepts of Hosheng to his son Tehmuras. This narrative must decidedly be taken *cum grano salis*, but as its veracity is not called in question by oriental writers, and the precepts which it introduces are universally accepted as the genuine legacy of Hosheng, it at least deserves our attention.

Before proceeding with Maskuyeh’s account of the *Javidan Khirad*, it will be well to narrate what is known of its reputed author. Mirkhond, the writer of the celebrated Persian History, entitled, the *Rauzat-us-safa*, says: →

¹ [Edward Henry Palmer, 1840–1882, English orientalist and explorer]

² [Look up “Desatir on the eye of the heart,” in our Mystic Verse and Insights Series. — ED. PHIL.]

. . . the most celebrated historians consider this prince to have been the grandson of Kaiomers,¹ while others maintain that he is identical with Mahaleel, and that Cainan is the same as his father Kaiomers. From his unparalleled justice he was styled Pesh-dad (Foremost injustice), and founded the dynasty of that name. Hosheng is the author of a book on moral philosophy, entitled, *Javidan Khirad*, a part of which was translated from the Syriac into Arabic by Hasan, brother of Fazil ibn Sahal, who was for a long time vizier to the Caliph Mamun al Rashid. Abu Ali Maskuyeh subsequently quoted Hasan's translation in his *Adab al Arab w'al Furs*, or "Literature of the Arabs and Persians."

The Persians claim for him the rank of a prophet.² It is said that some demons, having watched an opportunity when he was engaged in an act of devout adoration in a cave, overwhelmed him with stones and slew him. His son, Tehmuras, revenged the death of his father, and built a city upon the scene of his murder, which he called *Talkh* (Bitter), a name which, in later times, became corrupted into Balkh. He is related to have been the first person who introduced the arts of civilized life, and to have taught the uses of metals and the properties of precious stones. Some people even ascribe to him the formation of the Tigris canal, and the erection of Sus, Kufeh and Babel. He reigned forty years. This account is repeated with slight variations by nearly all the Persian historians. Tabarī,³ and some others, however, have extended the forty years of his reign to four hundred. The last mentioned writer adds, that the Magians claim Hosheng as a fire-worshipper, and that the Jews, on the other hand, declare that he was a follower of their religion. Firdausi, also, in his *Shahnama*⁴ (Book of Kings), assigns to Hosheng the discovery of the art of producing fire from a flint, and attributes to him the introduction of fire as a symbol of the Deity. These differences of opinion concerning the religion of Hosheng, accord well with the account elsewhere given, which makes him the founder of a new and mystical faith.

The book from which the following account of the *Javidan Khirad* was taken is a Persian version, or rather, paraphrase, of Abu Ali Maskuyeh's work of that name, and was written about the middle of the sixteenth century, by Ibn Hajji Shems ul Din Kilani Mohammed Husain, for the then governor of the province of Malwa in India. The volume forms part of a collection of Oriental Manuscripts, presented by Mr. Burzorjee Sohrabjee Ashburner, a Parsee gentleman of Bombay, to the Royal Society of Great Britain, and was at the donor's request placed in the hands of the writer for translation.

A brief extract from a letter received from Mr. Ashburner will explain how it came into his possession:

My oriental studies were conducted under a highly gifted Zoroastrian Persian, the late lamented Shiavaksh bin Hormuzdiar, who had travelled down to India on some literary business. Under him I studied the Persian edition of that unique work, the *Desātīr*, which relates to the history of the Mahabadi tribes. In this book I met with the name of the prophet Hasung, and that of the *Javidan*

¹ The first king of Persia, and according to the Magians, the first created human being.

² See Article on Desatir, STUDENT, etc., Vol. I, p. 413.

³ [Abū Ja'far Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī]

⁴ [Also known as *Shahnameh*.]

Khird, as the sacred work which he left to our forefathers. My curiosity was naturally excited to get this most ancient testament of ours, and my learned teacher, having met with a copy of it in Persia, sent it for it for my use. That copy is now in the possession of the Royal Society, and is the one which you have now received for translation.

I have compared the work throughout with the Arabic original, a copy of which was kindly lent me by the Warden and Fellows of St. Augustine's College at Canterbury — the two manuscripts which I have thus used being, I believe, the only two copies existing in Europe.

The following is a translation of Abu Ali Maskhueh's account of the *Javidan Khirad*. He says:

In the flower of my youth I was perusing the work by Abu Othman Jakhit, entitled the *Istitalat al Fahm* (the Extent of Understanding), in which he so warmly praises the *Javidan Khirad*, or Testamentary Advice of Hosheng, to his son. His enthusiasm induced me to search for a copy of the book; but it was not until after considerable trouble that I succeeded in procuring one from Persia. Now, although I found the book full of the most excellent and interesting sayings, yet I remembered parallel passages in the writings of many of the sages of Persia, Arabia, Greece, and India: for this reason I have compiled a work comprising the didactic remains of the sages of the four quarters of the globe, to the end that the learned may be reminded afresh of their maxims, that the young may be guided aright, and that I myself may obtain a reward hereafter.

With regard to the origin of the *Javidan Khirad* itself, Abu Othman Jahiz relates of Fazl ibn Sahal, who was vizier to Mamun, that when Mamun was proclaimed caliph in Khorassan,¹ the monarchs of all the surrounding countries sent ambassadors to offer him their congratulations, and convey to him some present, in token of their good will. Amongst these envoys was a sage sent by the ruler of Cabul, Zoban by name, who presented a letter from his royal master, couched in the following words: "I send you herewith a present, which for worth and importance has nothing to equal it in the world." Mamun's curiosity being aroused at this, he enquired of Zoban what it was he had brought. That sage replied, "Nothing, sire, better than the knowledge which I possess." On being further questioned as to the nature of that knowledge, he said, "It consists in foresight and discretion, and unerring judgment which invariably secures success." Mamun received him with the greatest reverence, and lodged him in the best apartments of his palace, giving strict orders to his retainers not to divulge the nature of his visitor's business. Sometime after, when, on the death of Harun al-Rashid, a dispute arose between Mamun and his brother, Mohammed Amin, which ultimately ended in hostilities; Mohammed Amin sent an army to invade Khorassan. One day the news reached Mamun that his brother's forces had proceeded as far as Iraq. He at once sought Zoban, and asked his advice concerning the advisability of despatching some troops to intercept the invaders

¹ [Abū Ja'far Abdullāh al-Ma'mūn ibn Hārūn al-Rashīd, المأمون عبد الله اب وجع فر, (786–833 AD), was the seventh Abbasid caliph, who reigned from 813 until his death. He succeeded his brother al-Amin after a civil war, and was also known for his role in the Mu'tazilism controversy, and the resumption of large-scale warfare with the Byzantine Empire.]

before they had actually set foot in his dominions. “The proposal,” said Zoban, “is a good one, and victory nearly certain.” Acting on this advice, he despatched his troops and gained a signal victory. This, however, was not the first occasion on which Zoban’s sagacity had stood Mamun in good stead, and he accordingly acknowledged his sense of gratitude by presenting the sage with a purse of a hundred thousand dinars. Zoban courteously but firmly declined the proffered gift, and said, “The King of Cabul did not send me here because I was in want. My reasons, however, for rejecting this sum is not that I fail to appreciate your munificence, or deem the amount too little, but because I hope to obtain from your majesty a greater and still more handsome recompense: I mean a book which lies buried beneath the palace of the Khosroes.”

When Mamun reached Baghdad, he requested Zoban to point out the spot in which he supposed the treasure to be concealed. This he did without hesitation, and the Caliph gave orders for the immediate excavation of the place. The workmen, digging under Zoban’s directions, presently came to a broad, flat stone, underneath which they found a chamber containing a small casket of black crystal, securely locked. This they removed and carried to Mamun, who asked Zoban if it were the treasure he was seeking. Zoban replied that it was, and the Caliph then said: “The box, you see, is sealed, and the seal remains intact; there can be no suspicion, then, of my having tampered with it.” Zoban assured him that he had never entertained the least suspicion of the purity of his majesty’s motives, and proceeded to open the casket in his presence. Inside it was a purse of gold brocade, which he took to Mamun, and turned upside down. From this fell out a few discoloured leaves of paper, which Zoban carefully gathered together, replaced in the purse, and secured about his own person. Then, giving the casket to Mamun, he bade him preserve it, as it would be “useful for holding *bijouterie*,” and took his leave.

“Now,” says Hasan ibn Sahal, “I said to Mamun, I wish you had asked Zoban the contents of those leaves.” “I, too, wish the same,” said the Caliph, “but I refrained from motives of delicacy.” When Zoban had left the presence,” continues the narrator, “I followed him home, and begged him to gratify my curiosity concerning the mysterious documents. He informed me that it was the book entitled *Javidan Khirad*, a treasure extracted by an ancient King of Iran from the sayings of the wise men of old, and handed me a leaf to peruse. On looking over it, I found that it was entirely in an unknown character; but, fancying it to be the ancient Persian, I sent for Khizr ibn Abdallah, who was well versed in Pehlevi writing, and who quickly read and interpreted it to me.

I copied it from his dictation into a book, and when I had finished that leaf I borrowed another from Zoban, until I had completed in all about thirty. I then went to him, and said, “Oh Zoban, is there anything in the world better than a science like this? He said, “If it were not a science to be guarded with the greatest care, containing as it does all that is needful for this world and the next, I would have given you the whole book to copy; but as it is, I cannot find it in my heart to give you more. You must, therefore, be contented with what you already have, for the remaining leaves contain some secrets which must not be divulged.

“One day,” continues Hasan ibn Sahal, “Mamun asked me what books in Arabic were most instructive. After enumerating some works on wars and travel, I was proceeding to mention some of the more celebrated commentaries upon the Coran, when the Caliph stopped me, and bade me not compare the Word of God to any other book. He next asked me what books in Persian were the best. I told him of the most important works in that language, and ultimately spoke of the *Javidan Khirad*. On hearing this name, Mamun called for the librarian and ordered him to bring the catalogue; when he could not find such a work there, he said, “How is it I cannot see the name of that book here?” I said, “That book, oh Emir, is one which I myself wrote from the leaves which Zoban took away with him.” At his request I sent someone to fetch it from my own house, and placed it in Mamun’s hand. When it arrived the Caliph had just finished his prayers; so he rose up, turned his face from the Kiblah, and began to read it. When he had finished one chapter, he exclaimed, with wonder and approbation, “There is no god but God!” and applied himself again to the perusal of the book. In this way the time for prayer came round again, and the Caliph was still intent upon the book, so that I had to remind him of the fact, and tell him that although the time of prayer was running away the book would not. “You are right,” said he; “but my mind is so taken up with that book, that unless I finish it first, I fear lest I may make some shortcomings in my prayers, a thing that I have never yet been guilty of.”¹ So he again applied himself to his task, and continued reading until he had finished all that was written. He then asked where the conclusion of the book was, and I told him that Zoban had refused to give it up to me. “If Zoban were not under my protection, and an ambassador,” said he, “I would assuredly have sent after him, and taken it from him by force.”

“You see,” says Abu Ali, “how excessively fond Mamun was of the book, and how reluctant Zoban was in giving permission for it to be copied. In truth, the book is, as I have said, the repository of the maxims of the great and the wise, and contains the embryo imaginings of the men of olden times. When you peruse the subjoined translation for yourself, the extreme beauty of its contents will be manifest to you. May God give you grace to read them aright.”

[In this edition, the Maxims of Hosheng begin on page 11.]

The rest of Abn Ali Maskuyeh’s book is made up of similar collections of wise saws and maxims attributed to other ancient Persian kings. These, again, are followed by the sayings of the Arab philosophers, and the book concludes with an epitome of the dialectics of the Greek philosophers, arranged according to the common Arabic order, commencing with Hermes Trismegistus and ending with Aristotle.

In order to make the work more complete, the Persian translator has added a selection from the sayings of Mohammed and the Caliph Ali, the *hadith*, or traditions on which the *sunnah*, or secondary law of the Mussulmans is based.

¹ The Oriental princes were often very devout in the performance of their religious duties. I remember H.H. Nawab Iqbal Ooddowlah telling me, in the course of conversation, that his father, the late king of Oude, had never missed one of the five daily prayers in the course of a life of more than sixty years.

The Pehlevi archetype of Hosheng's book, if it ever existed elsewhere than in the imagination of Mamun's minister, is now irrecoverably lost; but whatever may be our decision upon the authenticity of his Testament, there can be no doubt that it really contains much of the proverbial philosophy of antiquity in the East. In their Arab form, the maxims remind us forcibly of the divine utterances of the Hebrew prophet and sage, the prince of all didactic teachers, Sulaiman ibn Dawud himself. Nor will the moral philosopher fail to recognize in many of them doctrines, such as fatalism and asceticism, which are frequently considered as the peculiar consequence of Mohammedanism, but which are in reality the offspring of the innate tendencies of Oriental peoples. Asceticism in particular has ever been a prominent feature in the development of Eastern ethics; but, so far from being exclusively Mohammedan, the prophet emphatically declared himself adverse to it when he uttered the famous words, "there is no monkery in El Islam"; and yet, in spite of this edict, dervishes and recluses abound wherever the profession *La ilaha illa Allah*¹ is heard.



¹ [There is no god but God.]

The Precepts of King Hosheng to his Son.

Leaves from the Javidan Khirad, being the testamentary advice of Hosheng,¹ King of the Peshdadian dynasty,² to his son.

The origin of all things is in God, and unto Him is the return; all good grace cometh from Him, and He is worthy to be praised. Whoso, then, knoweth the Origin, it is incumbent on him to be thankful; and whoso knoweth the end, he should be sincere; and whoso knoweth what grace is, it is his duty to acknowledge his own weakness and insufficiency.

The path of virtue lies in the renunciation of arrogance and pride.

The best thing that hath been given to man in this world is wisdom; the most godly gift that can be given him in the next is pardon. The best disposition for him is that he should have a lively appreciation of the high and godlike character of his own nature, so that the thought may keep him from evil, or cause him to repent if he have done wrong.

The best possession of man is health; his best confession, that of the unity of God.

Theory is the basis of certainty; practice is the pillar of theory; and both are founded on Divine Laws, which can only be comprehended by reverent investigation.

Religion is like a fortress raised and supported by columns and towers; should one column be allowed to totter, the whole fabric will give way.

¹ [Hosheng is also spelled Hushang or Hōshang (هو شنگ), older Persian Hōsang. He was the second Shāh to rule the world according to Ferdowsi's *Shāhnāmeḥ*. Hosheng is based upon the legendary figure Haošyaṛha in the ancient Zoroastrian scripture of the *Avesta*.]

² [Also spelled Pishdādian, the first dynasty of Iranian people in the *Shāhnāmeḥ*, the "Book of Kings," an epic poem by Abu 'l-Qasim Ferdowsi Tusi, c. 977 and 1010 AD.]

Good works are of four kinds: Theory, Practice, Sincerity, and Continenence.

- 1 Theory is the endeavour to ascertain your duties;
 - 2 Practice is the performance of them;
 - 3 Sincerity is the renunciation of envy, hatred, and malice;
 - 4 Continenence is patience and the forsaking all worldly vanities.
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Four things also constitute the business of man: Knowledge, Charity, Chastity, and Justice.

- 1 Knowledge of what is good, to perform the same, and of what is evil to avoid it;
 - 2 Charity, to improve men's spiritual condition and alleviate their temporal wants;
 - 3 Chastity, to guard oneself in the temptations of desire, and to preserve one's reputation in the time of want;
 - 4 Justice, wherewith to temper success, that proper bounds may be set to one's wrath, so that it be not excessive in the time of power, or deficient when it is required.
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Knowledge consists in four things: to know the root of Truth, the branches of Truth, the limit of Truth, and the opposite of Truth.

Theory and practice are as closely conjoined as soul and body; neither can profit its possessor without the other.

Truth is of two kinds: one manifest and self-evident; the other requiring demonstration and proof; and vanity is like unto it in this respect.

There are four things which increase by use: Health, Wealth, Perfect Piety and Grace.

The way of salvation lies in three things: Divine Guidance, Perfect Piety, and a Godly Life.

- Theory is the root, practice the tree;
 - Theory is the father, practice is the son.
 - Practice may serve instead of theory;
 - But the latter can never take the place of the former.
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To enjoy the day of plenty you must be patient in the day of want.

The greatest wealth consists in three things: a prudent mind, a stalwart frame, and a contented spirit.

Expel avarice from your heart, so shall you loose the chains from off your neck.

He who does wrong knowingly will regret it, though men may applaud him; but he who is wronged, is safe from regret though the world may blame him.

The contented man is rich, hungry and naked though he may be; but the covetous man is a beggar, though he may possess the whole world.

- True bravery is to face the world with a frank and open heart;
 - True patience is in bearing up against disappointments;
 - True liberality is in rewarding merit, and bestowing wealth in the proper time and place;
 - True clemency is in foregoing revenge, when it is in one's power;
 - True caution is in taking advantage of opportunities.
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This world is the house of work; the next world is the house of reward.

The reins of health are in the hands of sickness; the head of safety is beneath the wing of danger; the door of security is veiled by the curtain of fear. Therefore, in sickness, danger, or fear, do not despair of the reverse.

Oh, man! thy doom is nigh, in other hands than thine; it watcheth like a thief by night and day, and when once thy time hath come small leisure shalt thou have for preparation. Strive, then, to prepare ere the evil day arrives, and comfort thyself with the thought that all the great and good have been companions in thy misfortune.

Oh, son of man! make not thyself a target for the arrows of misfortune, for time is the enemy of men, and it is the duty of the wise to be on their guard against their foes. If, then, thou thinkest well of thy soul and of its enemies, thou wilt stand in need of no preacher to advise thee how to act.

In prosperity dread misfortune, for unto it thou must return; when anticipation is fairest, then think on tardy fate, for though he be slow yet is he sure.

Excuse is better than disputation; delay is better than rashness; ignorance of strife in better than eagerness in seeking it.

To feel sure in war that it will end well is to lay up a store of woe; if then, ye must make war, be brave in action that ye may be victorious, and anticipate not victory lest you be overthrown.

The slightest provision against a quarrel is better than the stoutest persistence in carrying it on.

It is wrong to give the lie direct,¹ save in three cases.

- 1 When one speaks unwisely, and the consequences are likely to prove evil to him;
- 2 When one speaks ungratefully of a benefactor;
- 3 When he glozes over² an unlawful proposition.

There are three things which can in no wise be used for good: malice, envy, and folly; and there are three things that can by no means be employed for evil; humility, contentment, and liberality.

There are three things of which one can never tire, health, life, and wealth.

A misfortune that cometh from on high cannot be averted; caution is useless against the decrees of fate.

The best of medicines is death; the worst of maladies is vain anticipation.

Three things bring us joy in the world, and three things cause us grief:

The former are resignation, trust in God, and cheerful obedience to His commands;

The latter are avarice, importunity, and yearning after evil things.

¹ [To lie direct does not mean to be dishonest or deceitful, but to be contradictory in an offensive way.]

² [To explain away, to gloss over.]

Of worldly things,

- Four are good: home, a good wife, wealth, and wine;
 - Four are evil: a large family, a small income, a treacherous neighbour, and a bad wife;
 - Four are hard to bear: old age and solitude, sickness and exile, debt and poverty, and a sore foot and a long road.
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Three things cannot be got with three things:

- 1 Wealth, with wishing;
 - 2 Youth, with cosmetics;
 - 3 Health, with medicine.
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If a man lose all else, and four things still are left him, he can take no harm; Temperance, Cheerfulness, Truth, and Trust in God.

Six things temper the hardships of this life: good diet, a kind friend, a faithful wife, and obedient child, a prudent tongue, and a wise head.

An easy temper is a good counsellor, and a pleasant tongue is an excellent leader.

Foolish pride is an incurable malady;
A bad wife is a chronic disease; and
A wrathful disposition is a constant burden.

Three things seem fair in three cases: a gift to a hungry man, the truth from an angry man, and forgiveness from one who has power to take revenge.

The wise man is he who hopes not for what is wrong, who begs not for what he fears may be refused, and who undertakes not what he cannot perform.

There are three things which make a poor man rich; courtesy, consideration for others, and the avoidance of suspicion.

Eight things are proofs of folly: ill-timed wrath, misplaced bounty, ill-judged exertion, the confounding of friend with foe, confidence in those untried, reliance on the foolish, trust in the faithless, and garrulity.

A tyrant loses the dignity of his office, and grows like unto the meanest of his slaves.

When faith goes out misfortune comes in; when confidence dies revenge lives; and when treachery appears all blessings fly away.

Trifling ruins earnestness, lying is the enemy of truth, and oppression perverts justice; therefore, when a king passes his time in trifles, people lose all awe of him; when he associates with liars men despise him, and when he is tyrannical he weakens his authority.

Dominion is perfected only by good administration, and he who seeks it must be patient of losing it.

By bearing the loads of men dignity is reached; by virtue rank is honoured; by morality are deeds refined.

Good advice to one who will not accept it, arms in the hands of one who knows not how to use them, and gold in the possession of one who benefits not mankind, are things wasted and lost.

A king should have three habits: tardiness in punishing, alacrity in rewarding, and patience in accidents; for verily in delaying punishment is the possibility of pardon; by alacrity in granting rewards, the hearts of the people are won; and by patience in accidents the right course of action may be ascertained.

The man who is cautious in a doubtful matter is like unto him who, having lost a pearl, collects all the dust that is around the plane where it hath fallen and sifts it until his lost treasure comes to light. For thus doth the cautious man collect the opinions of all in a doubtful case, and sifts them one by one until that counsel cometh to light which is suited for the emergency.

Caution can never incur disgrace, and imbecility can never bring honour with it. Caution conducts to success; imbecility induces disappointment.

By four things are great men brought low:

- 1 By pride;
- 2 By taking counsel¹ with women;
- 3 By keeping the company of the young and foolish; and
- 4 By neglecting things that require their personal supervision.

A king deserves not the name until he eats from his own field, gathers from his own garden, rides his own horse, and marries from his own country.

Good administration is from good management, good management from good counsel, and good counsel is only to be found with wise and sincere advisers.

The reins of good administration can be held only by reverencing elders, being just to equals, and encouraging inferiors.

The duties which the wise man owes are these:

- To God, obedience and gratitude;
- To the king, sincere loyalty and counsel;
- To himself, earnestness for good and avoidance of evil;
- To his friends, liberality and faithfulness; and
- To mankind generally, courtesy and protection.

A man is perfected only by three things: by being great in the sight of others and little in his own esteem, by despising wealth for its own sake, and by being truthful under difficulties.

Perfection consists in religious knowledge, patience in affliction, and good fortune in worldly affairs. Perfect piety consists in trust in God, acquiescence in fate, and patience in loss.

Faith consists in four qualities: belief, self-sacrifice, sincerity, and obedience.

Whomsoever riches do not exalt, poverty will not abase, and calamity cannot cast down.

¹ [Discussing a problem.]

The perfect man is he who is proof against the vicissitudes of fortune, and who looks well what the end shall be.

There is no equivalent for religion, no compensation for time, and no substitute for one's own soul.

Since night and day are the steeds of man, they hurry him on, not he them.

Whoso combines liberality with moderation will make good out of evil and wrong.

Whose regards not complaint confesses his own meanness, and whoso makes a merit of his charity incurs reproach.

There are four things of which a little goes a long way: pain, poverty, error, and enmity.

The man who knows not his own worth will never appreciate the worth of others.

He who is ashamed of his own trade will be compelled to take up with that of someone else.

Whosoever is ashamed of his father and mother, is excluded from Divine guidance.

He who is not lowly in his own eyes will not be exalted in the eyes of others.

In every blessing think upon its decay, in every misfortune think upon its removal. For such remembrance doth preserve blessing, and keep us from the intoxication of pride, and bringeth more real pleasure with it.

If justice predominate not over injustice in a man he will speedily fall into ruin; for tyranny more than ought beside causes the decay of prosperity.

Vain hopes cut man off from every good; but the renunciation of avarice prevents every ill.

Patience leads to power, but lust leads to loss.

By asking counsel in a matter it shall end aright; by relying on God cometh increase day by day.

By the sincerity of his earnestness man earns rewards; by the sincerity of his profession he gains friends.

In proportion as we avoid evil we gain God's good grace; as we gain that we attain to earthly happiness.

By wisdom, is the gift of knowledge displayed; by knowledge are high things obtained.

By the descent of calamities are men's virtues proved, and by long absence are their friendships tested.

- In information is shown the wit of a man, and in travel are tempers tried.
 - In poverty is benevolence assayed, and in the moment of anger is a man's truthfulness displayed.
 - By its influence on a man's mind is shown the vigilance of his guardians, and by right discipline cometh the inspiration of knowledge.
 - By leaving sin one is freed from vice, and in retirement is wisdom made to stand.
 - By Divine grace are works kept aright, and by the results are purposes shown.
 - By a trusty comrade is a man supported in life, and by recompense are friendships increased.
 - In seclusion is brotherhood proved, and by faithfulness familiarity is increased.
 - By following wise counsel one attains to wisdom, and by a good intention is the companionship of the righteous secured.
 - By shaking hands with deceit one is tossed on the billows of toil.
 - Fear of judgment will deter from wrong, but trifling lends to destruction.
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Whoso cannot forgive wrong done to him can never know the work of good that is done unto him.

Separating yourself from the society of fools is the same as cleaving unto the wise.

He who bestows bounty on mankind accustoms them to be generous unto him.

The envious man is never great.

Intelligence is shown by good management.

Whoso clotheth himself in modesty will conceal his faults.

The best etiquette for a man is not to boast of his virtues, and not to show off his power to one weaker than himself.

Learning clears the wit.

He who takes advice is secure from falling; but whose is obstinate in his own opinion falleth into the pit of destruction.

The contentious man induces antagonism, for people cannot often repress their anger, especially when contending with fools.

Three [types of] men are never distressed by adversity or exposed to solitude and grief:

- 1 The brave man, of whose prowess all men stand in need;
- 2 The accomplished man, whose knowledge all men require;
- 3 The pleasant speaker, of whose eloquence all men are enamoured.



Suggested reading for students.



From our Higher Ethics and Devotion Series.

- A WORTHY LIFE IS A VIRTUOUS LIFE
- ANGELS WEEP AT THE SIGHT OF HUMAN SORROW
- CHELAS AND LAY CHELAS
- CHELASHIP RULES FROM THE KIU-TE
- COMMENTARY ON THE GAYATRI BY JUDGE
- DISCHARGING THE DUTY OF ANOTHER IS DANGEROUS
- DIVINE VS. WORLDLY LOVE
- EYE VS. HEART DOCTRINE
- HARMONY IS THE ONE LAW IN NATURE
- HEART DOCTRINE AND HIGHER ETHICS
- KRISHNA IN PARADISE
- LIGHT ON THE PATH
- LOVE IS THE HEALING POWER OF THE SUCCESSFUL PHYSICIAN
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- NARADA BHAKTI SUTRA
- PROCLUS ON THE TEACHER-DISCIPLE BOND OF LOVE
- PROTREPTICS TO DEVOTIONAL LOVE IN IN THE BHAGAVAD GITA
- REAL LIFE THRILLS IN THE SEVEN BRAINS OF THE HEART
- SEPTUAGINT'S SONG OF SONGS - TR. BRENTON
- STAND READY TO ABANDON ALL YOU HAVE LEARNED WITH THE HEAD
- THAT PURE DESIRE, OF WHOM LOVE IS BORN
- THE BHAGAVAD GITA - SEVEN ESSAYS BY JUDGE
- THE BHAGAVAD GITA - TR. JUDGE
- THE DEVOTIONAL SONGS OF KABIR SAHEB
- THE LEGEND OF THE BLUE LOTUS
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- THE TRANS-HIMALAYAN MAHATMAS ARE MEN LIVING ON EARTH
- THE VERY BEST OF ALL TALISMANS
- THE VOICE OF THE SILENCE - SEVEN MYSTIC SOUNDS
- THE VOICE OF THE SILENCE - TR. BLAVATSKY
- THEOLOGIA GERMANICA - TR. WINKWORTH
- THEOSOPHICAL JEWELS - THE AMARANTHINE DREAM
- TOWARD THE BROTHERHOOD OF MAN
- TRUE PRAYER IS MENTAL UTTERANCE IN SECRET
- WARNINGS TO WOULD-BE OCCULTISTS
- WHEN THE SUN MOVES NORTHWARD

