

**THE DIALOGUE OF THE
GULSHAN-I-RAZ: OR,
MYSTICAL GARDEN OF ROSES
OF MAHMOUD SHABISTARI**

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Various

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VARIOUS

**THE DIALOGUE OF THE
GULSHAN-I-RAZ: OR,
MYSTICAL GARDEN OF ROSES
OF MAHMOUD SHABISTARI**

THE GULSHAN-I-RÂZ.

*to Francis Roe Esq with the
Translator's Compliments.*

THE DIALOGUE

OF

THE GULSHAN-I-RAZ

OR

MYSTICAL GARDEN OF ROSES OF
MAHMOUD SHABISTARI.

*Mahmūd ibn 'Abd al-Karīm, Shabistari
1250 (ca.) - 1320.*

WITH SELECTIONS FROM

THE RUBAIYAT OF OMAR KHAYAM.

*Translated from the Persian by
E. A. Johnson.*

LONDON:
TRÜBNER & CO., LUDGATE HILL.
1887.

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PREFACE.

THE following translation of the Dialogue of the Gulshan-i-Râz was begun in the year 1879, and was thrown aside on the appearance of Mr. Whinfield's prose translation of the entire work in the ensuing year. Subsequently the author of the present was induced to complete that portion which sets forth the principles of the Sufi philosophy, omitting the Prologue, Epilogue, and the concluding portions, which serve rather to excuse the use of the various sensual images employed by Sufis than to explain their principles.

The author has endeavoured, while adhering as closely to the text as circumstances would allow and retaining the meaning in its fullest sense, to produce such a translation as might interest those who have no time for the perusal of voluminous notes or commentaries, and who might possibly be repelled by the apparent dryness of a literal prose translation.

For those who have no knowledge of the original or of other translations, it is noted that the Gulshan-i-Râz

was composed by Mahmoud Shabistari of Azarbayan in the year 1319 A.D. (717 A.H.), in the form of answers to a series of questions propounded by Amir Sayid Hosaini, a Sufi of Herat.

The original from which the present translation was made is a special edition, setting forth at its conclusion that it was printed (lithographed) for H. H. Agha Khan in Bombay, A.H. 1280.

The text differs in many unimportant particulars from the originals employed by Mr. Whinfield, and the "Thoughts on the Heavens" and "Thoughts on Souls" are entirely omitted.

DIALOGUE

OF

ERRATA.

Page 40, line 5, for "face" read "grace."

Page 48, line 8 from bottom, for "And" read "One."

WHAT IS IT THAT IS *contemplation* TRUE ?

ANSWER.

Thou bids't me say what *contemplation*¹ is,
Whose hidden meaning fills thy soul with doubt :
It treads the narrow path from wrong to right ;
Within the atom doth a world perceive.
Sages, who on this point have held discourse,

¹ The word I have here translated *contemplation*, is Tafakkur.
The question asks its mystical meaning.

This definition clearly have announced :—
 Reflection's dawn within the mind of man
 Is to the learned *contemplation true*.
 When contemplation's bound in thought is passed,
Conviction by the wise is recognised.
 Reflection, when within the busy brain
 A plan is formed, is "contemplation" still.
 By disposition of apparent truths,
 Things erst concealed are full in view displayed.
 The parent thought from out the fruitful womb
 Of argument brings forth the child *result*.
 But *what*, and *why*, howe'er they be disposed,
 Must in their order symmetry maintain.
 Again, if aid divine should be refused,
 Thy thought is but a foolish phantasy.

.

 The road is long ! this distant journey shun !
 Like Moses, for a season cast aside
 Thy staff. In Aiman's¹ valley pause awhile.
 Hear "Truly I am God," and cease to doubt.
 He who of *unity* receiveth proof,
 The *light of being* first in all perceives.
 The soul which light and purity discerns
 Through wisdom, first in all sees *God*.
 In solitude reflection's worth is found,
 When bursts thereon the flash of aid divine.

¹ "Aiman's valley," where Moses saw the burning bush.

He from whose eyes God still the path conceals
 By key of logic may no door unclose.
 So the philosopher in thought perplexed,
 Of all created things, the *possible*¹
 Alone perceives, and would the *essential*¹ prove
 By possible existence ; so the essential seems
 Wrapped in confusion ; on the backward path
 He travels far ; sometimes fast fleeting thoughts
 In tangled sequence sore perplex his soul ;
 His wandering mind Existence contemplates,
 Till by the chain of doubt his feet are bound.
 All things in nature by comparison
 Are evident ; but what may God proclaim ?
 Like him or unlike what thou canst perceive ?
 I know not. How then canst thou him discern ?
 In the *essential* hath the *possible*
 No counterpart ; how then perceive it ? How ?
 Behold that fool who seeks the shining sun
 By the dim taper's light amid the waste !
 Were the bright sun no change of place to know,
 His light in kind would ever be the same.
 No man would know if this or any light
 Be his or other, kernel this, or shell.
 God's glory doth the universe fulfil.
 Within that light is God from view concealed ;

¹ The words I have rendered "the *essential*" and "the *possible*" are Wāgib and Imkān, whose opposition is one of the most prominent points in the system. Other translators have used "the necessary" and "the contingent."