

pillars of ebony wood, also attributed to him—may God hold him in His favour—although some attribute it to Harun al-Rashid³—may God have mercy on him.

Most of the inhabitants of this town and the surrounding desert and mountains are Sharifs, 'Alites, Hasanites, Husaynites, and Ja'farites—may God hold in His favour their noble ancestors.⁴ They lead a life so wretched as to break the hardest stone in compassion. They employ themselves in all manner of trades, such as hiring camels should they possess any, and selling milk or water and other things like dates which they might find, or wood they might collect. Sometimes their women, the Sharifahs themselves, share in this work. Glory to the Determiner in what He decrees. Beyond peradventure they are of a house to which God is pleased to give the life to come and not of this world; and He has made us amongst those who it is proper should love the family of the Prophet, from whom He has removed impurity, and whom He has cleansed.

Outside the city are ancient constructions which attest the antiquity of its foundation. It is said that it was a Persian city. It has cisterns hewn from the hard rock, connected with each other, and beyond count for their number. They are both within and without the town, and men say that there are three hundred and sixty outside the town, and the same within. We indeed saw a great number, such as could not be counted. But in truth the things of wonder are many. Glory to Him whose knowledge encompasses them all.

The greater number of the people of these Hejaz and other lands are sectaries and schismatics who have no religion, and who have separated into various doctrines. They treat the pilgrims in a manner in which they do not treat the Christians and Jews under tribute, seizing most of the provisions they have collected, robbing them, and finding cause to divest them of all they have. The pilgrim in their lands does not cease to pay dues and provide foods until God helps him to return to his native land. Indeed, but for what God has done to mend the affairs of Muslims in these parts by means of Saladin,⁵ they would suffer the most grievous oppression, with no remission of its rigours. For Saladin lifted from the pilgrim the customs duty, and in its stead provided money and victuals, with orders that they should be sent to Mukthir, Emir of Mecca. But when this consignment allotted to the pilgrims was somewhat delayed, this Emir returned to intimidating them and made show to imprison them for the dues.

In this regard, it happened that when we arrived at Jiddah the matter was under discussion with Mukthir, this Emir, and

³ The fifth Abbasid caliph, who ruled from 786 to 809. [Ed.]

⁴ These groups are branches of Mohammed's descendants through Ali and Fatimah, the first two being more general designations. [Ed.]

⁵ Salah al-Din, sultan of Egypt from 1171 to 1193. [Ed.]

IBN JUBAYR: A PILGRIMAGE TO MECCA

[from *Al-Rihlah*, Travels]

In repentance for having drunk wine, so we are told, Ibn Jubayr left his post in Valencia in 1183 and set out on a pilgrimage to Mecca. During his pilgrimage he kept a journal of his experiences, which was unusual not only in the abundance of its detail but also in the vividness of its descriptions. The pilgrimage also inspired him to write several poems, notably one in praise of Saladin, whom he came to hero-worship. But his literary renown, which has been surprisingly great, is due exclusively to this account of his journey, which he gave to copyists after his return to Spain in 1185.

On landing at Jiddah, happy in the safety which Great and Glorious God had granted us, we earnestly beseeched Him that our return should not be by this accursed sea, unless some necessity arose preventing our going by other ways. God in His power acts with beneficence in all that He decrees and disposes.

This Jiddah is a village on the coast we have mentioned.¹ Most of its houses are of reeds, but it has inns built of stone and mud, on the top of which are reed structures serving as upper chambers, and having roofs where at night rest can be had from the ravages of the heat. In this village are ancient remains which show that it is old. Traces of the walls that encompassed it remain to this day. In it is a place having an ancient and lofty dome, which is said to have been the lodging place of Eve, the mother of mankind—God's blessing upon her—when on her way to Mecca. This edifice was erected to illustrate its blessedness and excellence. God best knows concerning it. The city has a blessed mosque attributed to 'Umar ibn al-Khattab²—may God hold him in His favour—and another with two

¹ That is, the eastern coast of the Red Sea. [Ed.]

² The second caliph, who ruled from 634 to 644. [Ed.]

we had been arrested. His order came that the pilgrims should guarantee each other (for payment) and might then enter the Haram [Holy Mosque] of God. Should the money and victuals due for him from Saladin arrive it would be well; otherwise he would not forgo his dues from the pilgrims. Such was his speech, as if God's Haram were an heirloom in his hand and lawfully his to let to the pilgrims. Glory to God who alters and changes laws.

That which Saladin has substituted for the pilgrim's customs dues was two thousand dinars and two thousand and two *irdabb* of wheat, which is about eight hundred *qafiz* in our Seville measure, and this was exclusive of the land-rents granted to them by this ordinance in Upper Egypt and in the Yemen. And but for the absence of this just Sultan, Saladin, at the wars against the Franks in Syria, these actions of the Emir against the pilgrims would never have occurred.

The lands of God [i.e., Islamic lands] that most deserve to be purified by the sword and cleansed of their sins and impurities by blood shed in holy war, are these Hejaz lands, for what they are about in loosening the ties of Islam and dispossessing the pilgrims of their property and shedding their blood. Those of the Andalusian jurists who believe that the pilgrims should be absolved from this religious obligation believe rightly for that reason, and for the way, unpleasing to Great and Glorious God, in which the pilgrims are used. The traveller by this way faces danger and oppression. Far otherwise has God decreed the sharing in that place of His indulgence. How can it be that the House of God should now be in the hands of people who use it as an unlawful source of livelihood, making it a means of illicitly claiming and seizing property, and detaining the pilgrims on its account, thus bringing them to humbleness and abject poverty! May God soon correct and purify this place by relieving the Muslims of these destructive schismatics with the swords of the Almohades, the defenders of the Faith, God's confederates, possessing righteousness and truth, the protectors of the Haram of Great and Glorious God, the abstersers from what is unlawful, the zealous raisers of His name, the proclaimers of His message and the upholders of His creed.⁶ Truly He can do as He wishes. He is the best of Protectors, the best of Helpers.

Let it be absolutely certain and beyond doubt established that there is no Islam save in the Maghrib lands.⁷ There they follow the clear path that has no separations, and the like, such as there are in these eastern lands of sects and heretical groups

⁶ *Al-Muwahhidūn*, "the Unitarians," a reforming dynasty in northwestern Africa and southern Spain, which ruled from the mid-twelfth century to the mid-thirteenth. [Ed.]

⁷ That is, northwestern Africa. [Ed.]

and schisms, save those of them whom Great and Glorious God has preserved from these things. There is no justice, right, or religion in His sight except with the Almohades—may God render them powerful. They are the last just imams of this time; all the other Kings of the day follow another path, taking tithes from the Muslim merchants as if they were of the community of the *dhimmah*,⁸ seizing their goods by every trick and pretext, and following a course of oppression the like of which, oh my God, has never been heard of. All of them, that is, except this just Sultan, Saladin, whom we have mentioned for his conduct and virtues. If he but had a helper in the cause of righteousness . . .⁹ of what I desire. May Great and Glorious God mend the affairs of the Muslims with His beneficent attention and kind works.

The blessed Black Stone is encased in the corner [of the Ka-bah] facing east. The depth to which it penetrates it is not known, but it is said to extend two cubits into the wall. Its breadth is two-thirds of a span, its length one span and a finger joint. It has four pieces, joined together, and it is said that it was the Qarmata¹⁰—may God curse them—who broke it. Its edges have been braced with a sheet of silver whose white shines brightly against the black sheen and polished brilliance of the Stone, presenting the observer a striking spectacle which will hold his gaze. The Stone, when kissed, has a softness and moistness which so enchants the mouth that he who puts his lips to it would wish them never to be removed. This is one of the special favours of Divine Providence, and it is enough that the Prophet—may God bless and preserve him—declare it to be a covenant of God on earth. May God profit us by the kissing and touching of it. By His favour may all who yearn fervently for it be brought to it. In the sound piece of the stone, to the right of him who presents himself to kiss it, is a small white spot that shines and appears like a mole on the blessed surface. Concerning this white mole, there is a tradition that he who looks upon it clears his vision, and when kissing it one should direct one's lips as closely as one can to the place of the mole.

The sacred Mosque is encompassed by colonnades in three (horizontal) ranges on three rows of marble columns so arranged as to make it like a single colonnade. Its measurement in length is four hundred cubits, its width three hundred, and

⁸ The Christian and Jewish minorities, which were granted formal protection by the Islamic state, subject to certain conditions. [Ed.]

⁹ The Arabic text is defective at this point. [Ed.]

¹⁰ The Qarmata, or Carmathians, were a sect of Ismaili Shiites who dominated the Arabian peninsula during the first half of the tenth century, captured Mecca, and carried off the Black Stone to al-Bahrayn. It was restored in 951 by order of the Fatimid Caliph al-Mansur. [Ed.]

its area is exactly forty-eight *maraja'* [sing. *maraj'*, a measure of area amongst the western Arabs equaling fifty square cubits]. The area between the colonnades is great, but at the time of the Prophet—may God bless and preserve him—it was small and the dome of Zamzam was outside it. Facing the Syrian corner, wedged in the ground, is the capital of a column which at first was the limit of the Haram. Between this capital and the Syrian corner are twenty-two paces. The Ka'bah is in the center (of the Haram) and its four sides run directly to the east, south, north, and west. The number of the marble columns, which myself I counted, is four hundred and seventy-one, excluding the stuccoed column that is the Dar al-Nadwah (House of Counsel), which was added to the Haram. This is within the colonnade which runs from the west to the north and is faced by the Maqam and the Iraq corner. It has a large court and is entered from the colonnade. Against the whole length of this colonnade are benches under vaulted arches where sit the copyists, the readers of the Koran, and some who ply the tailor's trade.

The Haram enfolds rings of students, sitting around their teachers, and learned men. Along the wall of the colonnade facing it are also benches under arches in the same fashion. This is the colonnade which runs from the south to the east. In the other colonnades, the benches against the walls have no arches over them. The buildings now in the Haram are at the height of perfection.

The new moon of this month [the month of pilgrimage, Dhū al-Hijjah, in 1184] rose on the night of Thursday, corresponding with the 15th of March. In the watching for it the people were involved in a strange circumstance and a remarkable fabrication; and a false utterance almost provoked the stones, not to mention other things, to rebut and deny it. It happened in this wise. They were watching for the appearance of the new moon on the night of Thursday, the 30th of the month. On the horizon the air had thickened and the clouds had piled up, when, with the sunset, a faint glimmering of red appeared. Eagerly the people yearned for some break in the clouds that their eyes might catch a glimpse of the new moon. While they were about this, one of them cried, "God is Great," and the vast concourse followed him and cried, "God is Great," rising to behold what they could not see, and pointing at what they only imagined, such was their eagerness that the "standing" on Mount 'Arafat should fall on Friday. As if the pilgrimage must be tied to that precise day!

They therefore forged the false testimonies; and a party of Maghribis—may God prosper their affairs—together with some Egyptians and their chiefs, went to the Qadi and testified that they had seen it. He answered them most harshly, and peremptorily rejected their evidence; and in declaring their

statements spurious he put them to the greatest shame, saying "Wonder of wonders! Did one of you affirm that he had seen the sun under such thickly woven clouds I would not accept his affirmation. How then can I believe that you saw a new moon that is twenty-nine nights old?"¹¹ Amongst other things he said was: "The Maghribis are disordered. A hair from the eyebrow comes in sight, and with fancy's eye they deem it to be the new moon." This Qadi, Jamal al-Din, displayed in this matter of the false testimony firmness and prudence, so that the learned praised him and the wise thanked him. And well might they do so, for the rights of the pilgrimage are of great consequence to Muslims who come to them "from every remote path" [Koran 22.27]. If complaisance were shown, zeal would be impaired and unsound thought admitted. May God by His favour raise all obscurities and their evils.

On the night of this Friday the new moon appeared during a break in the clouds, clothed in the radiance of the thirtieth night. The crowds then raised tremendous shouts and proclaimed the "standing" (on Mount 'Arafat) would take place on Friday, crying, "Praise be to God who did not render vain our efforts, or bring to nought our proposals," as if it were a truth with them that if the "standing" did not fall upon a Friday it would not be acceptable to God, nor could God's mercy be hoped for or expected. But God is above that. On Friday they met before the Qadi and . . . [he] let them know that he had asked leave of the Emir Mukthir that the ascent to 'Arafat be made on the morning of Friday. They would stand on 'Arafat in the evening and on the morning of the following Saturday, and would pass the night at Muzdalifah. If the "standing" were done on Friday, there would be no objection to their delaying the passing of the night in Muzdalifah, this being permitted by Muslim imams. . . . All those present thanked the Qadi for his conduct of the enquiry and prayed for him, and the laity who were there revealed their approval and departed in peace. Praise be to God for that.

This blessed month is the third of the sacred months. The first ten days are those in which the people assemble. It is the great period of the pilgrimage, the month of cries [of *tabbayka*, "Here am I, O Lord"] and of the flowing of blood [sacrifice], and the time when from all lands and ways the deputations to God [pilgrims] do meet. It is the target of God's mercy and blessings, and (the month) in which occurs the solemn "standing" on 'Arafat. May God by His favour and bounty grant that we be of those who during it win benefits, and divest us of the raiment of sin and transgressions. For He is at once the All-Powerful and the Forgiving.

A manifest miracle is that this Safe City [Mecca], which lies

¹¹ The Arabs believed that each new moon's crescent took thirty nights to form before it appeared to sight. [Ed.]

in a valley bed that is a bow-shot or less in width, can contain this vast host; a host such that, were it brought into the greatest of cities, could not be contained. This venerated city, in what concerns it of manifest miracles, namely its expansion for multitudes beyond count, is described only by the true analogy of the *ulema* [learned doctors of divinity], that its enlargement for newcomers is that of a uterus for the fetus. So it is with 'Arafat and the other great shrines in this sacred land. May God with His grace and bounty increase its sanctity, and in it grant to us His mercy.

TRANSLATED BY R. J. C. BROADHURST

NIZAMI: STAR-CROSSED LOVERS

[from *Laylā u Majnūn*, Layla and Majnun]

Nizami is so incredibly ponderous a poet that one most likely does him an injustice by anthologizing him at all. The lone alternative of omitting him altogether, however, is so much more unjust that even he himself might agree that something of his work is better than nothing.

It happens that Nizami is remarkable in the respect that he treats his themes and his characters in a fashion that we think of as contemporary. He was born about 1140 in Ganja in the Caucasus. His genius is now acclaimed and venerated by many races; among other honors, he is regarded as a hero of the Soviet people. Soviet scholarship on his works, granted the essential caveats, is unquestionably the best. The fact of the matter is, however, that Nizami, though no Sufi and most certainly no mystic, was a devout Moslem and a poet securely planted in the Persian tradition. It is presumed that his life was uneventful, or, more precisely, that its major events were his poems.

His short poems are few and not especially interesting. His greatness was established by five long poems: *Makhzan al-Asrār*, The Treasury of Secrets; *Khusrāw u Shirīn*, Khosraw and Shirin; *Laylā u Majnūn*, Layla and Majnun; *Iskandar-nāmeḥ*, The Book of Alexander; and *Haft Paykar*, The Seven Beauties. All of these poems are difficult and original in style. One translator states: "Nizami is unconventionally obscure. He employs images and metaphors to which there is no key save in the possession of the poetic sense and of sound judgment." Most importantly, Nizami established the *masnavī* as a form for long and continuous narrative, thereby setting a pattern which was to be imitated well into the seventeenth century and never, save perhaps by Jami, equaled.