

# Kamaluddin Abdul-Razzaq Samarqandi

## Mission to Calicut and Vijayanagar

In January 1442 Kamaluddin Abdul-Razzaq Samarqandi, a high court functionary, was sent as emissary by Shahrukh in response to a request for a representative from the king of Calicut (present-day Kozhikode in Kerala) on the Malibar coast of India. In his history, *Matla'-i sa'dayn* (Rising point of the two lucky stars<sup>1</sup>), a chronicle covering the years up to 1470, he describes his experiences in Calicut and in the much larger neighboring kingdom of Vijayanagar and his misadventures at sea on his return journey to Herat in January 1445.



God has said: "It is he who hath given you conveniences for traveling by land and by sea."<sup>2</sup> He whose eyes of insight are illuminated by the lights of reality, he the bird of whose soul flies in the air of knowledge realizes with certainty that both the revolution of the great bodies of the celestial spheres and the movement of the small particles of the earth proceed in accordance with the knowledge and will of the immaculate creator. He knows that the lights of all-encompassing power and the effects of perfect wisdom shine upon the atoms of the generations of the world and the movements of humankind, that the reins of earthlings are in the grasp of fate and the clutches of destiny, and that the necks of the obstinate of the world are subject to the command of God, who "doth that which he pleaseth."<sup>3</sup>

If the determination of worldlings is not by fate, why then do things happen contrary to  
[our] pleasure.

Yea, fate controls the reins of mankind for every good and ill for the reason that all machinations are erroneous.

The terrors of a sea voyage—"and it is not a sea that hath end or shore"—are the most obvious of the effects of fate and lights of wisdom. Hence in the miraculous words of the Omniscient King are found pearls of the benefits of sea voyages, and crossing the great sea is indescribable except by the empowerment of the Ever-Living, who renders every impossibility possible.

Through the command of fate and the order of divine destiny, to contemplate which is beyond human machination,  
I was assigned to India, but how can I describe clearly how perplexed I was in that dark region?

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<sup>1</sup>A reference to Timur's title, *Sahib-Qiran* (see glossary of terms and titles).

<sup>2</sup>Koran 10:22.

<sup>3</sup>Koran 3:40.

His Majesty the Felicitous *Khaqan* generously provided money, drafts for fodder and post horses, and I got my personal belongings together and set out on

the first of Ramadan [845 = January 13, 1442]. Proceeding on the Qohistan road through the Kerman desert, I came upon a city with a citadel and what were clearly four bazaars, but no one was there.

I passed by their halting places on the plains,  
but I found only traces and remains.

That desert in all its breadth, from the borders of Kerman and Sistan to the vicinity of Damghan, holds nothing but calamity and terror.

On the 18th of Ramadan [January 30] I entered Kerman, "a good country," and "fair dwellings,"<sup>4</sup> a delightful city and refreshing area. The *darugha*, Amir Hajji Muhammad Qanashirin, [767] was absent. Necessarily we stopped until the holiday, and His Excellency Amir Burhanuddin Sayyid-Khalilullah b. Amir Na'imuddin Sayyid-Ni'matullah, the most outstanding man of the city of Kerman—nay, of the entire world—had just then returned from India and extended much kindness.

On the 5th of Shawwal [February 16] we set out from Kerman. Along the way we encountered Amir Hajji Muhammad, who had returned from the farthest reaches of the province of Bampur. Headed toward Hormuz, we reached the shore and the port of Hormuz in the middle of the month. The *wali* of Hormuz, Malik Fakhruddin Turanshah, ordered a ship for us, and we disembarked safely in the city of Hormuz. Accommodations and provisions having been ordered, we were able to meet the padishah. [768] Hormuz, which they call Jarun,<sup>5</sup> is a port in the midst of the sea, "with no equal on the face of the earth." Merchants from the seven climes—Egypt, Syria, Anatolia, Azerbaijan, Arabian and Persian Iraq,

Fars, Khurasan, Transoxiana, Turkistan, the Qipchaq Steppe, the Qalmaq regions, and all the lands of the Orient, China, and Khan Baliq—all come to that port, and seafaring men, from Indo-China, Java, Bengal, Ceylon, the cities of Zirbad [Malaysia], Tennaserim, Sumatra, Siam, and the Maldiv Islands to the realm of Malibar, Abyssinia and Zanzibar, the ports of Vijayanagar, Gulbarga, Gujarat and Cambay, the coast of the Arabian peninsula to Aden, Jiddah and Yanbu' bring to that town precious and rare commodities which are made glittering by the sun, moon and clouds and which can be transported across the sea. Travelers from everywhere in the world come there, and everything they bring for exchange for what they want can be found without much search in that town. They deal both in cash and in barter, and the divanis take a tenth of everything except gold and silver. Adherents of various religions, even infidels, are many in that city, but they deal equitably with all. For this reason the town is called Dar al-Aman (abode of security), [769] and the people there have the glibness of Iraqis and the mysteriousness of Indians.

A stay of two months occurred there—rather, the rulers detained us on every pretext until the best time for sea voyage, which is the beginning and the middle of the monsoon, had passed. At the end of the monsoon, when the time of piracy was at hand, they gave us permission to depart. Claiming that our men and animals were too many to fit into one ship, they divided us into two parties, boarded us on ships and set sail. When the smell of the ship reached my nostrils and I experienced the terror of the sea, I lost consciousness to such an extent that for three days I was dead to the world, save for the rising and falling of my breath.

When I had partially come to, the merchants, who were loyal friends, together raised a ruckus, saying that the season for a sea voyage was past and anyone who

<sup>4</sup>Koran. 34:15, 26:58.

<sup>5</sup>Also known as Zarun. Abu'l-Fida (*Taqwim al-buldan*, p. 339) explains that Old Hormuz had been destroyed by the "Tatars," and the population had moved to the nearby island of Zarun.

made a voyage at this time was committing suicide. Altogether they gave up for lost their *nawl*, that is, the fare for the ship, canceled their plans and disembarked after some difficulty at the port of Muscat. From Muscat my comrades and I reached a town called Qurayyat, where we stopped.

When seafaring merchants have embarked upon a sea voyage and it proves impossible and they are stranded somewhere, [770] they called it *tabahi* (ruination). From the influence of the revolution of the hardhearted celestial sphere and the contrary motion of treacherous fate, I too became *tabahi*, with a heart shattered like broken crystal, a soul sick of life and situation of extreme ruin. During these days, from the tyranny of the evil-moving sphere and the cruelty of inauspicious destiny, the mirror of my luminous mind, which had shone like the splendor of the sun, turned rusty from the catastrophes hurled by blue heaven, and the bright lamp of my lighted mind, from which the moon borrowed light every night, was blown out by the swift wind of untoward events. My glowing nature, which created night-illuminating pearls of meanings, and my critical genius, which produced luminous pearls of words, was afflicted with the catastrophe of extinction. My mind turned dark and my brain was perplexed.

Finally one day I met a merchant who was coming from Hindustan. When I asked him his destination, he said,

There is no destination other than Herat.

When I heard the name of that fair land,

There was fear that consciousness would leave  
my head.

I begged the respected merchant to tarry a moment and I wrote down these verses—exudings of the water of life dripping through the courses of words and expressions—with the ambergris-scented,

musky pen upon the camphory white face of the page:

When the eve of the destitute falls and I begin to weep, I relate my tale after the manner of a stranger. [771] In memory of friends and homeland I weep so bitterly that I obliterate from the world all tracks of my passage. I am from the region of the beloved, not from a foreign realm. O Ever-Vigilant, return me to my comrades.

As I wrote in detail all that pertained to my miserable condition, so many drops of tears fell upon the sheets of my eyelashes that from the murky waters of my eyes a cyclone was stirred up in the sea.

The group of men and animals that had departed from Hormuz in the other ship were unaccounted for, but perhaps later

Their tale will be told by the tongue of the pen.

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#### A MENTION OF THE TIME SPENT INVOLUNTARILY ON THE DARYABAR COAST AND WHAT HAPPENED IN QURAYYAT AND QALHAT

While I was stranded on Qurayyat on the Daryabar coast, the new moon of Muharram 846 [May 12, 1442] appeared. Although it was springtime and the time of equal days and nights, the sun shone so hot that rubies would have burned in mines and marrow in the bone, and swords would have melted in their scabbards like wax.

The sun grew so hot from the air that a heart of stone would have burned in commiseration with the sun.

The horizons grew so hot from the sun that a heart of stone would have been softened like wax.

The bodies of fish in ponds burned like silk in fire.

Water and air were so hot that the fish took refuge in fire.

Hunting became easy in the desert, for the wilderness was filled with roasted gazelle.

[776] The heat told of deepest hell and the hot leaping flames of Hamim. The gates of the flames of Jahim were opened to the world, and since the air of that region is by nature opposed to the constitution of the men of our realm, our elder brother and learned master, Mawlana Afifuddin Abdul-Wahhab, our other companions and myself took to the bed of infirmity due to the severity of the heat and turned over the reins of will to the hand of divine favor.

Since the reins of will are not in our hands, we have left it to His kindness to do as He wills.

All our constitutions deviated from the path of equilibrium, and our indisposition and suffering increased. Agonizing fevers and grief increased daily, and the fire of fever raged within. For four months without cease we suffered this debilitating illness.

I became so weak that at any moment the zephyr could have carried me like the scent of a rose to every land.

I was convulsed as the revolution of the celestial sphere turned me over like a bucket on a waterwheel.

No one ever saw pain separated from my body, so closely linked were disease and diseased.

[777] At this juncture I heard that in the Qalhat region there was a place known as Sur, which had a favorable climate. Despite my weak constitution, I boarded a ship for Qalhat. When I arrived there my illness got worse: by day I burned with fever and by night the lamp of tribulation was lit by the sparks of outcries. The abundance of infection cast this earthly form into trembling, like the body of the earth convulsed by the domination of smoky vapors; and the hand of control of fever brought down with the wind of calamity the tent of bodily health, which was held aloft by the four stakes of the elements. Wracked by the pain of exile and wounded with the pain of separation, I closed my lips to speech by day like a

bloodied rosebud with heart constricted by cruel, faithless fate. By night my eyes, opened like newly blossomed flowers, told the tale of my grief to the waters of the green garden of heaven. The bird of my soul determined to separate itself from the nest of the body; and my body, weakened by the twin catastrophes of affliction and exile, submitted to bid farewell to the soul. The soul [778] lost hope of life and readied itself for death. The reins of submission were given over to the grasp of divine favor. My brother and master Mawlana Afifuddin Abdul-Wahhab—"blessed be they, and a happy resurrection"<sup>6</sup>—departed this life in accordance with the Koranic verse, "No soul knoweth in what land it shall die."<sup>7</sup> In accordance with the verse, "Wheresoever ye be, death will overtake you,"<sup>8</sup> he entrusted his soul to the seizer of spirits and was buried near a shrine of some of the great companions of the prophet. In the city of exile the poison of separation had such an effect that it cannot be described.

Alas, were the ascendant of beauty and youth life everlasting, it would be necessary to break with kith and kin, for thus is the heavenly command:

Eventually everyone is abandoned by his brother, by the life of your father, except the Farqadan.<sup>9</sup>

I too gave up all hope of life and determined to set forth in any ship bound for Hindustan. Several strong men lifted me [779] and put me in a ship, saying, "Embark thereon, in the name of God; while it moveth forward, and while it standeth still."<sup>10</sup>

<sup>6</sup>Koran 13:29.

<sup>7</sup>Koran 31:34.

<sup>8</sup>Koran 4:78.

<sup>9</sup>Identified by the editor as by the Arab poet 'Amr b. Ma'dikarb. The Farqadan are two stars in Ursa Minor.

<sup>10</sup>Koran 11:41.

In this bloodthirsty sea of fate make a ship of contentment. Board that ship saying, "Embark thereon, in the name of God."

And if my lords do not object, there is some resemblance between my situation and the story of Moses. When he was cast into the water in a chest, it was outwardly annihilation; but inwardly it meant his salvation. There is also a resemblance to the story of Moses and Khizr, when Khizr damaged the boat: outwardly it meant drowning the men but inwardly it meant escape from the expropriator.<sup>11</sup> Anyway, the sea air became favorable and gave hope of recovery. The dawn of health began to break on the horizon of desire, the wounds of agonizing arrows of illness healed, and the murky vessel of life once again became bright and clear. A favorable wind blew, and the ship skimmed across the surface of the water like a breeze.

Made by the wisdom of the experienced, a house moving around the world. A rarity of God's command, a moving house whose inhabitants stay put.

A bird that flies without feather or wing, a traveler who races on the course of an arrow without the help of feet. A charger that prances in water up to its chest, a fish that [780] crawls on its belly like a snake across the back of a wave, a crescent moon that never in a thousand years becomes full, an ingatherer of various souls that never becomes pregnant ..., a woman carrying many children but who is ever barren, itself in chains but a deliverer of others from the storm of calamity, itself chained yet having placed chains of ripples on the sea as does the wind, like those who have lost their hearts neither on land nor in the sky, traveling on the surface of the water like a worm, a mountain in majesty before resurrection in motion, a magnificent cloud like

waterfowl in flight, straight of mast but bowed like the ever-moving, spinning sphere, an arrow as stable as the pole.

Always stable in the midst of instability itself.

A bow facing the road like a traveler, with an arrow of a mast held firm and fixed. In height it rises as high as Sagitta, and in speed no arrow can match it. In rising and falling it leaves the wind two stations behind, and it can outrun the arrow of the mightiest bowman.

On windy days it goes before the wind, and it flies farther than an arrow fired.

For several days our companions took delight in the meaning of the words, "[Ships,] which sail with them, with a favourable wind."<sup>12</sup> And the words, "Dost thou not see that the ships run in the sea through the favour of God?"<sup>13</sup> opened the gates of enjoyment to the minds of our friends. After eighteen [781] days anchor was dropped in the port of Calicut, by the grace of God. A description of the wonders of that region and my travels there now follows.

#### ARRIVAL IN HINDUSTAN AND A DESCRIPTION OF ITS WONDERS AND MARVELS

Calicut is a safe port, equal to Hormuz in its mercantile population from every land and region and the availability of rarities of all sorts from Daryabar, especially the realm of Zirbad, Abyssinia and Zanzibar. From time to time ships come from God's House and other towns of the Hejaz and stop for a while in this port. It is a city of infidels and therefore is in the *dar al-harb*. However, there is a Muslim population resident, with two congregational mosques, and on Fridays they pray with peace of mind. They have

<sup>11</sup>See Koran 18:71 and 79.

<sup>12</sup>Koran 10:22.

<sup>13</sup>Koran 31:31.

a religiously observant *cadi*, and most of them are Shafi'i by sect. In that city security and justice are such that wealthy merchants who sail the seas bring many goods there from Daryabar. They unload them from the ships and store them in lanes and the bazaar as long as they wish without having to worry about guarding them. The *divan* watchmen keep guard and patrol them day and night. If they make a sale, one-fortieth is taken in alms; otherwise no duties are imposed on them. It is the custom of other ports to seize as a windfall and plunder [782] any ship headed for one port but driven by God's destiny to take refuge in another. However, in Calicut, no matter where a ship is from and where it is headed, if it docks there they treat it like any other ship and subject it to no more or no less duty.

In short, His Majesty the Felicitous *Khaqan* had sent for the *wali* of Calicut a horse, a pelisse, a gold-embroidered *dägälä* and a Jätä *nawrozi* hat. The reason for this was as follows.

A group of His Majesty's emissaries returning from the Bengal had been stranded in Calicut with emissaries from the Bengal, and they had described the wealth, prosperity and power of His Majesty's realm to the ruler. He had also heard from reliable people that the rulers of the inhabited quarter of the globe, east and west, land and sea, had sent emissaries and messages to [Shahrukh's] court, which they considered the solution to their every need and refuge of their every hope. Soon thereafter the king of the Bengal complained of aggression from Sultan Ibrahim of Jaunpur and sought assistance from the court at which sultans take refuge. His Majesty issued a decree and sent it via His Excellency Shaykh al-Islam Khwaja Karimuddin Abu'l-Makarim Jami to the *wali* of Jaunpur with a message not to encroach upon the realm of the Bengal. [783] Otherwise, whatever happened would be on his own head. When the king of Jaunpur was ap-

prised of the contents of this order, he ceased his aggression against the Bengal.

Now, the *wali* of Calicut, having heard of this, gathered all sorts of gifts and tribute and sent a messenger to say that in his port in the Friday prayer and the holiday prayer the *khutba* of Islam was recited, and if His Majesty would allow it, they would recite the *khutba* in his royal name.

The world was so delighted by the sound of his *khutba* that the infidels were inclined to it.

The emissaries and attendants coming from the Bengal arrived at the royal court, and the amirs presented the petition and tribute to the royal presence. The messenger was a Muslim who spoke [Persian]. During his speech he represented that if His Majesty favored [the *wali* of Calicut] by sending him a special emissary to invite him to accept Islam in accordance with the Koranic verse, "Invite men unto the way of thy Lord, by wisdom, and mild exhortation,"<sup>14</sup> the lock of darkness and error would be loosed from his dark heart and the brightness of the light of faith would enter through the window of his mind. This would certainly be the correct thing to do and would carry great heavenly reward. His Majesty granted his plea and ordered the amirs to outfit an emissary, and the lot fell to me. Some plotted against me, thinking that I might not return from this voyage, but after three years I did return safe and sound from this dangerous trip [to find] that those intriguers had taken the road to extinction. [784]

In short, when I disembarked in Calicut, I saw a people the likes of whom I had never imagined.

A strange nation, neither men nor demons, at meeting whom the mind would go mad.

Had I seen the likes of them in a dream, my heart would have been upset for years.

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<sup>14</sup>Koran 16:125.

I am comfortable with those whose faces are like the moon, not with every ill-proportioned black thing.

Naked blacks with loin cloths tied from their navels to their knees, in one hand an Indian *kattara* [glistening] like a drop of water, and in the other a leather shield as large as a cloud. Both king and beggar look like this, but the Muslims wear fine clothing in the Arab fashion and indulge in ceremony of all sorts.

Having met with a group of Muslims and a horde of infidels, I was assigned suitable quarters. After three days I was taken to see the king, whom I found to be as naked as other Hindus. There they call the king *samuri*. When he dies his sister's son takes his place, and [the kingship] is not given to son, brother or other relative. No one becomes king by force. The infidels are of many sorts, Brahmins, yogins, and others. Although they all share the same polytheism and idolatry, every tribe has a different system. There is one tribe whose women have multiple husbands, each of whom has a specific task to perform. [785] They divide the day and night, and each one goes to the [wife's] quarters at a specified time. So long as [one husband] is there, no other can go in. The *samuri* is of this tribe.

When I met the *samuri*, his assembly was adorned with two or three thousand Hindus. The chief of the Muslims was also present at that assembly. I was seated, His Majesty's document was read and the horse, pelisse, gold-embroidered *dägälä* and *nawrozi* hat were presented. The *samuri* did not pay full respect, and I returned to my quarters from the assembly.

The other group the king of Hormuz had put on the second ship with several horses had been seized at sea by pirates of Sangisar. All their possession were taken, but they escaped with their lives. We rejoined each other in Calicut and were happy to see our dear friends.

Thank God we did not die but saw our friends again and reached our destination.

From the end of Jumada II [November 1442] until the beginning of Dhu'l-Hijja [April 1, 1443] we were afflicted by having to stay in that infelicitous place. During this time one night that was as black as the condition of lovers and so long that it would undo the twisted locks of beauties, the victorious sultan of sleep ordered the deposition of the agents of the senses, [786] and the two gates to men's senses were as tightly closed as a rosebud's mouth, in accordance with the Koranic verse, "Have we not appointed your sleep for rest?"<sup>15</sup> I went to sleep on the couch of rest after various tribulations and saw His Majesty the Felicitous *Khaqan* walking in his kingly guise. He reached me and patted me with his blessed hand, saying, "Be not distressed." The next morning, after the dawn prayer, I remembered this dream and was happy. Although dreams are usually nothing but jumbles, and rarely do they come true in the light of day, occasionally something shown in a dream occurs during wakefulness, and these the great of the age have considered as inspirations. Joseph's dream and the dream of the ruler of Egypt are not unknown to the learned. I thought thus to myself, "Perhaps the dawn of happiness will break on the horizon of favor, and the night of sorrow and tribulation will come to an end." I told my dream to my companions and was asking for an interpretation when suddenly a person came bringing news that the king of Vijayanagar, who held a vast kingdom and magnificent realm, had sent a messenger to the *samuri* to say that His Majesty the Felicitous *Khaqan*'s emissary should be dispatched thither that very day. Although the *samuri* was not under his jurisdiction he was still in great awe of him, since they said that the king of Vijayanagar possessed three hundred

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<sup>15</sup>Koran 78:9.

ports, each as large as Calicut, and that it took [787] two or three months to traverse his realm by land.

From Calicut and the several ports adjacent to it as far as Qayil, located opposite Serendip, which is also called Ceylon, is all called Malibar. Ships from Calicut go to Mecca, mostly carrying pepper. The people of Calicut are brave seafarers and are known as *chinibachchas*.<sup>16</sup> Pirates do not bother ships from Calicut. Everything is to be found in the port, and the only crime is to kill cows and eat beef. If anyone kills a cow and it is found out, that person is immediately put to death. They venerate cows to such an extent that they rub the ashes of its dung on their foreheads (God's curses upon them).

I was permitted to depart and left Calicut. Passing by ship through the port of Panderani, which is in Malibar, I reached the port of [788] Mangalore, the border of the realm of Vijayanagar. After stopping there for two or three days, I set out by land. Within three leagues of Mangalore I saw an idol temple the likes of which is not to be found in all the world. It was a square, approximately ten yards (*gaz*) a side, five yards in height, all [covered] with cast bronze, with four porticos. In the entrance portico was a statue in the likeness of a human being, full stature, made of gold. It had two red rubies for eyes, so cunningly made that you would say it could see. What craft and artisanship!

As we proceeded, we passed by flourishing towns and villages every day until we came to a mountain whose slopes would cast a shadow over the sun and whose towering peak could be a scabbard hung around Mars' neck. Its slopes were studded with bezels of shooting stars

from Gemini, and its head shone with the constellation Corona as a crown.

The celestial sphere so rubbed against its slopes that its body was all as black and blue as a violet petal.

The foot of the mountain was so crowded with dense foliage and thorny shrubs that its blackness had never been lit by the rays of the world-illuminating candle or its dust touched by the nourishing hand of a cloud.

Passing by this mountain and jungle, we reached the village of Pednur, the buildings and beauties of which were like unto the houris and palaces of paradise. There is an idol temple in Pednur so tall that it can be seen from several leagues away. Without exaggeration it can be said that no description of that building could do it justice. [789] In summary, in the middle of the village is an open space of nearly ten *jaribs*. It is as pleasant as the Garden of Iram. Within the open space were flowers, as innumerable as the leaves on the trees; cypresses on the bank of a stream appearing as erect as the reflection of the beloved's stature in the water of a weeping lover's eyes; plane trees, their hands constantly held aloft in supplication so long as they enjoyed the branch of youth; and the old sphere, its whole body having turned to eyes in order to watch this spectacle, turning around the heads of the fresh-cheeked ones of the meadow: so perplexed was it by regarding the leaves of the herbs that its head was spinning; the entire earth of green and verdant, around it arches of dressed stone most elaborate.

In the midst of the space was a platform as tall as a man, made of beautifully dressed stone, the blocks so expertly and delicately set one on another that one might think it was of a single block—or a piece of the blue firmament having appeared upon the carpet of the inhabited quarter of the globe. In the middle of the platform was a building whose head was

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<sup>16</sup>Literally "China kids," if the reading is correct. Elliot speculates that it may be "a compliment to Chinese navigation" (Elliot, *History of India*, IV, 103, note 1).

raised to Capella, a conical dome of dark blue stone with various designs carved on three tiers of stone.

What can I say of that dome? In delicacy it was a copy of paradise sublime for the world. The curve of its high arc like a new moon, so tall it rubbed its side against the celestial sphere.

There were so many designs and so much depiction made with sharp stylus in that granite [790] that it was beyond description. From top to bottom of that structure there was not the space of a hand free of *firangi* and *khatai* designs. In shape the structure was a *chaharsuffa* hall, approximately thirty yards in length, twenty in width and fifty in height.

As it raised its head beyond the apex of heaven, the stoneless dome took stones from it.

Its stones rubbed against the sun so much that the gold of the sun appeared to be borrowed from it.

If the glass-blowing celestial sphere is not in his dotage, why is he juggling glass on that stone?

Aside from this structure, there were others, large and small, all decorated and full of pictures of extreme delicacy. In that place morning and evening, after their unacceptable worship, they play instruments and dance. All the men of the village have duties to perform there, and votive offerings are brought there from distant cities. In the belief of these infidels it is the Ka'ba of the guebres.

We stayed there for two or three days and then traversed the stages [791] until we reached the city of Vijayanagar at the end of Dhu'l-Hijja [April 30, 1443]. The king sent a group out to meet us, and they escorted us to good quarters.

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THE END OF THE JOURNEY TO  
HINDUSTAN AND A DESCRIPTION OF THE

#### CITY OF VIJAYANAGAR AND ITS SEVEN CONCENTRIC FORTIFICATION WALLS

From past narratives readers will have learned that the travelogue reached the point at which the writer of these pages, Abdul-Razzaq b. Ishaq, arrived in Vijayanagar. I saw that it was a city of enormous magnitude and population with a king of perfect rule and hegemony whose kingdom stretched from the borders of Serendip to the province of Gulbarga and from the borders of the Bengal to the region of Malibar, more than a thousand leagues. Most of his regions were flourishing, and he possessed around three hundred ports. He had more than a thousand elephants with bodies like mountains [797] and miens like demons, and eleven lacs of soldiers; and in all of Hindustan there was no *ray* (raja) more autocratic than he. The kings of those areas are called *ray*. In his presence the Brahmins have great status. The stories of the book *Kalila u Dimna*, than which no more eloquently expressed book has come into the Persian language, and which narrates of a *ray* and a Brahmin, are results of the wisdom of that kingdom's learned men.<sup>17</sup>

The city of Vijayanagar, whose inhabitants have no equals in the world, is situated such that the seven fortification walls and the city wall are concentric. All around the first wall, fifty yards in breadth, are stones the size of a man, half in the earth and half out, placed tightly next to one another so that neither rider nor footsoldier can easily approach the wall.

<sup>17</sup>*Kalila u Dimna*, the Panchatantra tales, were translated from Ibn al-Muqaffa's Arabic version into Persian by Abu'l-Ma'ali Nasrullah ca. A.D. 1140. Dedicated to the Ghaznavid Bahram Shah and known as *Kalila u Dimna-i Bahramshahi*, Nasrullah's translation remained the standard Persian version until it was revamped by Husayn Wa'iz Kashifi as *Anwar-i Suhayli* at the end of the fifteenth century.

If anyone wants to imagine the shape of the seven walls and city wall in comparison to the city of Herat, let him picture it thus: the first wall would stretch from Mount Mukhtar and Dara-i Du Bara[da]ran to the bank of the river and the Malan Bridge, [798] with the village of Ghizan the eastern side and the village of Saynan the western side. It is a circular fortification on top of a mountain and made of stone and mortar. It has strong gates, and the guards stand watch with the eye of caution for the slightest thing.

The second wall would reach from the Juy-i Naw Bridge [in Herat] to the Darqarah Bridge, [and] from the Rikina Bridge and Chakan Bridge in the east to the Bagh-i Zubayda and the village of Hasân in the west.

The third wall would reach from the shrine of Imam Fakhruddin Razi to the dome of Muhammad Sultanshah. The fourth would extent from the Injil Bridge to the Kard Bridge; the fifth from the gate of the Bagh-i Zaghan to the Ab-i Chakan Bridge; the sixth from the Malik Gate to the Firozabad Gate; and the seventh, the innermost, is ten times the size of the *charsu* in Herat, and that is the king's court. [799] From the gate to the first wall on the northern side to the first gate on the southern side is two statute leagues, and the same from east to west. Between the first, second and third walls are orchards, gardens and buildings. From the third through the seventh is very crowded, with shops and bazaars.

At the king's gate is [a structure] shaped like four bazaars situated opposite one another. The one on the northern side is the king's portico, that is, the *ray's* palace. Atop each bazaar a tall, lofty arch has been raised, but the king's portico is the tallest of all.

The bazaars are extremely broad and long. Flower sellers have tall platforms in front of the stalls, and on both sides they sell flowers. In that city there are aromatic flowers continually in bloom, and as nec-

essary as they deem food to be, they cannot bear [to be] without flowers. The practitioners of every craft have stalls adjacent to one another. The jewelers sell pearls, diamonds, rubies and emeralds openly in the bazaar....

[801] In that pleasant open space and royal court is much flowing water and nice streams made of evenly dressed stone.

To the right of the sultan's portico has been built a huge *diwankhana* (ministry) shaped like a *chihil sutun*; in front of it they have made a tall plinth, higher than a man, thirty yards long and six yards wide. The halls of records and scribes are there.

They have two types of writing, one on coconut fronds two yards long and two fingers wide on which they write with an iron stylus, without color (ink). This type of writing is impermanent. In the second type they dye white stock black. They have a soft stone they carve into a stylus with which they write. From this stone a white color comes off onto the black stock. It lasts a long time, and this type of record is of importance.

In the middle of the *chihil sutun* a eunuch called the *dhannâyak* sits on a platform in independent judgment. At the foot of the platform staffholders stand in rows. Anyone who has business comes among the staffholders, humbly presents a gift, places his head on the ground, stands up again and pleads his case. The *dhannâyak* makes a judgment according to the rules that pass for justice in that kingdom. No one else has an opportunity to speak. When the *dhannâyak* rises from the divan [802] they carry multicolored parasols before him and cry out, while on both sides eulogists utter benedictions. Before reaching the king there are gatekeepers stationed in seven places. As the *dhannâyak* processes one of the parasol-bearers stops at each gate, so the *dhannâyak* enters the seventh gate by himself and transacts his business. After a time he

comes out. The *dhannâyak* has quarters behind the king's court, to the right.

To the left of the king's court is the mint. They have three types of gold alloy. One is called *varaha*, nearly a *mithqal*, or ten Kepeki dinars. The second is called *partab*, half of the former. The third is called *fanam*, a tenth of the [*varaha*]. The coin most current is the *fanam*. They make a sixth of a *fanam* from pure silver and call it a *tar*. It too is much in currency. There is a third of a *tar* made of brass; it is called a *chital*. It is the custom in that realm for all the provinces to bring gold to the mint at an established time, and anyone who has a [voucher] for gold from the divan redeems it at the mint. The soldiers receive their salaries every four months, and no one writes them [drafts] against the provinces. As a consequence the kingdom is so flourishing that any description would take too long. [803] The king's treasury consists of chambers like ponds full of gold melted into a single block. All nobles and commoners of the region, even the craftsmen of the bazaar, wear pearls and jewels in their ears, around their necks and on their arms, wrists and fingers.

Opposite the mint is the elephantorium. Although the king has many elephants throughout the kingdom, they keep his great elephants at court. Within the first and second walls, on the northwestern side, the elephants breed and produce their young. The king has a huge, white elephant, with albino spots the size of lentils all over its body. This elephant is taken every morning into the *ray*'s presence, for the *ray* considers the sight of it a favorable omen. They give the court elephants kedgerree. As the kedgerree is cooked and dished out of the cauldron for the elephants, they pour on salt, sprinkle on white sugar, mix it up and dip hunks of it, two maunds each, in oil and put it in the elephant's mouth. If any of the [ingredients] is left out, the elephant will attack its keeper and the king will be angry.

They feed the elephants this sort of food twice a day. Every elephant has a separate stall. [804] The walls are very strong and high and covered with strong timbers. The chains that are fastened around an elephant's neck and back are firmly attached to the roof. If they were attached anywhere else, an elephant could easily break them. They also put chains around its legs.

Elephants are captured in the following manner. They dig a pit along a path leading to water, and the pit is lightly covered. When an elephant falls in, no one approaches it for two or three days. Thereafter someone comes and beats it several times with a stick. Suddenly another person comes and pushes the beater away, seizes the stick and throws it away. He throws some fodder to the elephant and goes away. For several days this is repeated: the first person beats the elephant and the second stops him so that the elephant forms a bond with the second person. Slowly he approaches the elephant, offers some fruit elephants like and scratches and rubs the elephant. By this regimen it is tamed and submits to captivity.

It is said that once an elephant broke its bonds and ran away into the wilderness and forest. The elephant keepers went after it and dug a pit in its path.

The elephant's heart fears those tricks like a gazelle escaped from a hunter's snare.

With the branch of a tree held in its trunk like a staff it proceeded cautiously and entered the water. The elephant keepers were unable to capture it, but the king was desirous of having it caught. An elephant keeper hid in a tree beneath which the elephant was [805] going to pass, and as it passed the keeper jumped down from the tree onto the elephant's back. The rope around the elephant's back and chest was still there. The keeper grabbed it tightly, and no matter how the elephant shook and flayed its trunk, it was to no

avail. It rolled on its side, but no matter which side it rolled on, the keeper leapt to the other side. In the meantime he got several grapples on the elephant's head so that the poor elephant had to give in and return to captivity. They took the elephant before the *ray*, who rewarded the keeper.

The kings of Hindustan hunt elephants, spending a month or more in the wilderness and jungles, and they boast of the elephants they have captured. Sometimes they cast criminals beneath an elephant's feet so they can be crushed by the elephant's legs, trunk and tusks. Elephant merchants take elephants from Ceylon to other regions. They measure them yard by yard and sell them.

Opposite the mint is the police station. They say twelve thousand patrolmen are stationed there. Their daily wage is twelve thousand *fanams*, which they receive from the revenue on brothels.

Any description of the elaborateness of their brothels or of the beauty, blandishments and attraction of their courtesans is beyond my ability to express. In short, "brevity will take the place of long-windedness." Behind the mint is a place shaped like a bazaar. Its length is more than three hundred yards, and its width more than twenty yards. Along both sides are chambers [806] and *suffas*. In front of the chambers, in place of plinths, are raised stone platforms, beautiful but small. Along both sides of the road are pictures of lions, leopards, tigers and other animals depicted with such movement and verisimilitude that one would think they were alive. In the evening chairs and seats are placed at the doors of the chambers, which are as clean as can be, and there the prostitutes sit. Each is arrayed with costly pearls and jewels and fine clothing, they are quite young and extremely beautiful, and with each stand one or two serving girls. Ready for pleasure, revelry and enjoyment, they are willing to dally with anyone who enters and anyone they wish. The brothel keep-

ers guard their customers' belongings, and if anything is lost they make it good. There are many similar brothels in these seven walls, and from the taxation on all the brothels, twelve thousand *fanams*, the wages of the patrolmen are paid.

It is the job of the patrolmen to look after affairs within these seven walls. If anything is lost or stolen, they find it. If they do not, they pay a compensation. Several slaves that my companions had bought ran away. When it was reported to the chief of police, he ordered the patrolmen of the quarter where the poor lived to find them or else to pay compensation. When the patrolmen ascertained the price, they paid compensation. [807]

#### A DESCRIPTION OF THE CITY OF VIJAYANAGAR AND ITS KING

The writer of these pages, Abdul-Razzaq, arrived in the city of Vijayanagar at the end of Dhu'l-Hijja [April 1443] and took up residence as assigned in extremely fine quarters, the equivalent of which in Herat would be located over the Malik Gate, the main thoroughfare. I rested for several days from the weariness of the journey. The new moon of Muharram appeared in that magnificent city, abode of error.

One day messengers from the king's court came, and the next day I went to court, taking five fine horses and two *toquzes* of damask silk and satin. The king was seated in a splendid *chihil sutun*. To his right and left he was surrounded by a throng. He wore a tunic of Zaytuni silk and a necklace of lustrous pearls, the worth of which the jeweler of the mind could scarcely appraise. He was dark of complexion, slender, on the tall side and quite young. [808] He had traces of down on his cheek but no beard. His face was pleasant. They brought me before him. I bowed. He turned his attention to me, seated me beside himself, took my imperial letter of credentials and turned it over [to another]. To the interpreter he

said, "We are pleased that the great padishah has sent us an emissary." Since I was perspiring profusely from the heat and all the clothes I was wearing, the king graciously gave me the Chinese fan he was holding. A platter was brought with a bunch of betel-leaf, a package of five hundred *fanams* and twenty *mithqals* of camphor balls. Having received permission to withdraw, I returned to my quarters. My daily allotment consisted of two sheep, four pairs of fowl, five maunds of rice, one maund of oil, one maund of sugar, and two gold *varahas*. These were brought to me every day. Twice a week at the end of the day [the king] summoned [me] and asked about His Majesty [Shahrukh]. Each time they brought a package of *fanams*, a bunch of betel-leaf and several *mithqals* of camphor. He would say to the interpreter, "Your kings invite emissaries to banquets, [but] since you and I do not eat the same food, let this package of gold be the emissary's banquet."

Betel is a leaf like orange leaf but longer. In Hindustan, most of the Arab countries and the kingdom of Hormuz this leaf is highly valued, [809] and in fact it is worthy of this esteem. It is taken in the following manner. A bit of betel-nut, which they also call *supari*, is crushed and placed in the mouth, and quick-lime about the size of a grain of millet is wet and smeared on a betel-leaf, which is wrapped up and put in the mouth. They do this with up to four leaves and put them in their mouths and chew them. Sometimes camphor is added, and from time to time they spit the reddened saliva from the mouth. The cheeks grow red, and a pleasant sensation, like that of wine, is produced. It assuages hunger and makes one who is already satiated desirous of food. It eliminates unpleasant odor of the mouth and makes the teeth strong. There is no need to describe its ability to strengthen and stimulate

health. The following lines confirm some of its mysteries:

A chew of betel-leaf bound into a hundred leaves came to hand like a hundred-petaled flower.

Rare leaf, like a flower in a garden, the most beautiful blessing of Hindustan.

Sharp like the ear of a swift-rearing stallion; sharp in both shape and taste.

Its sharpness an instrument for cutting roots: the Prophet's words have gone...

Full of veins, and in the veins no trace of blood, but from the veins its blood races out.

Wondrous plant, when placed in the mouth, its blood comes out of its body like a living thing.

To chew it reduces the odor of the mouth and strengthens weakness of teeth. [810]

Redness of face comes from its two servants: quick-lime and betel-nut produce the color.

As marvelous as it is with these two comrades, status and name belong to it alone.

Although it becomes pale from water, its honor is from its paleness.

See this amazing leaf that, broken from its fruit, after six months becomes fresher.

What greater honor could there be than that it is honored by both beggar and king.

Take it in the mouth and experience good health so that you may see its amazing work, and good-bye.

By relying upon this leaf and the strength this plant gives, the king has many wives. It is said that he has seven hundred ladies and concubines. There is not a single male child older than ten who is intimate with his wives, and no two women share living quarters. He keeps strict control over the affairs of each one. Throughout his realm wherever there is a beautiful girl, he persuades the girl's mother and father and has her brought with much celebration to his harem. Thereafter no one sees her, but she is kept in great honor and veneration. [811]

#### AN ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT ON THE KING OF VIJAYANAGAR

The writer was still in Calicut when a strange and remarkable thing happened in Vijayanagar, as follows.

The king's brother built new quarters and invited the king and his ministers. It is customary among the infidels not to eat in each other's presence. The guests were seated in a large divan, and [the brother] himself continually came in or sent someone else to announce to such-and-such a grandee to go partake of the banquet. While this was going on, all the drums, tympani and trumpets that had been gathered in the city were being beaten for all they were worth. As each guest arrived and entered the chamber assigned him, two treacherous murderers emerged from hiding behind them, stabbed them with *kattaras* and ripped them to shreds. As the limbs of one were taken away, another was summoned. Nothing more was heard of any who entered this place of massacre as travelers along the path to the next world, and the tongue of fate cried out to the murdered men, saying,

There is no return for you. When you have gone, you have gone.

Because of the racket made by the drums and the commotion, only a very few knew of this affair. Finally, all who held any position of authority [812] had been eliminated, so [the king's brother] left the assembly heated as it was and proceeded to the king's court. The guards stationed at the gates he charmed and invited to partake of the feast, dispatching them like the others, thus emptying the court of guards. Entering into the king's presence with a plate of betel-leaf in his hand and a *kattara* gleaming like lightning concealed beneath, he said to the king, "The assembly is ready and waiting for the royal advent." In accordance with the dictum, "Lords of state are inspired," the king said, "I am not feeling well. You go enjoy yourself. I'm not coming."

The hawk said to the duck, "The desert is pleasant." [The duck] said, "And a pleasant night to you. I like it where I am."

When the treacherous brother despaired of the king's coming, he drew the *kattara* and struck, making several deep wounds. As the king fell behind the throne, the traitor thought he was dead. Sending one of his henchmen to sever the king's head, he left and went onto the balcony of the portico and cried out, "I have killed the king, his brothers, the general, the minister and all the officers. Now I am king." When his henchman approached the throne to cut off the king's head, the king, who had fallen behind the throne, pushed the throne against the man's chest and knocked him off his feet. Then, with the help of a guard he found cowering in a corner, he put the miserable traitor to death and came out through the harem. [813] The brother was still in the portico exhorting the people to accept him as king, but the king cried out, "I am alive and well. Seize this bastard!" The subjects gathered, immediately pulled him down and put him to death. Then [the king] summoned his other brothers and all the officers, but they had all been killed—save the *dhannâyak*, the vizier who had gone to Ceylon before this happened. The king sent a messenger to summon him and acquaint him with the disaster. All suspected of having a hand in the affair were brought down. Many were killed, their skins stripped, their bodies burned, and their families reduced to desperation. Even the person who had brought the sour milk as invitation for the banquet was executed.<sup>18</sup> The *dhannâyak* returned and was astonished to learn of the affair. Prostrating himself before the throne, he offered thanks for the king's health and well-being and gave more significance than ever to the rituals of the *mahanavami* festival. [814]

A MENTION OF THE MAHANAVAMI  
FESTIVAL, WHICH IS OF GREAT  
IMPORTANCE TO THE INFIDELS

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<sup>18</sup>Apparently someone had been sent around with sour milk as an invitation to the banquet.

The infidels of those areas and regions, in their pride and puissance, celebrate once a year an imperial festival, a princely feast they call *mahanavami*. It was celebrated as follows.

The king of Vijayanagar ordered that from all his realms, which would take three or four months to cross, the leaders and chieftains should come to court. They brought a thousand elephants roaring and raging like mountains and thunderclouds, adorned with weaponry and embellished with howdahs, with acrobats and pyrotechnists, and on the elephants' heads, trunks and ears amazing pictures and strange designs painted in cinnabar and other [colors].

Elephant like a mountain without pillars  
(*besutun*), four pillars beneath a Mount  
Besutun.

Its golden covering in splendor cast a shadow  
over the mountains.

The earth was trod flat under those awesome  
feet.

Its cinnabar-stained head rubbed against the  
heavens: from it sunset derives its vermilion  
hue.

The twisting of its lasso-like trunk is a dragon  
fallen from a high mountain.

A serpent's place is in the heart of a cave, but  
with [the elephant] a cave is located in the  
heart of the serpent. [815]

A ship of ivory in motion, you would say: its  
ears sails on either side.

When the ear plays with the eye, it is a fan  
before a lamp.

When it charges in vengeance, the earth  
becomes pregnant with men.

It tosses them nimbly over its malevolent head  
with its tusks.

When its bell cries out in motion, the  
spinning dome [of heaven] echoes.

Its loud trumpet sounds with the thunder of  
the drum; high clouds kiss its feet.

If it cries out in a loud voice, it deafens  
heaven's ears.

When the commanders of the army, the heroes of every land, the wise Brahmins and demonic elephants were thronged at the appointed time, for three days continually during the full moon of Rajab [November 1443] the gate of the ruler of

the earth was as crowded with people and elephants as the throng of resurrection.

The elephants' bodies bent the earth and  
engendered earthquakes throughout the world.  
With all that monstrous ivory the face of the  
earth was like a chess board.

So many retainers and elephants that bodily  
resurrection and moving mountains were  
certain.

In that pleasant space there were raised pavilions (*chahartaq*) of three, four and five stories, completely covered from top to bottom with pictures, every picture that could be imagined, of humans, beasts, birds and all other animals, even flies and mosquitoes—all executed with precision and mastery. Some of the pavilions were made so that they revolved and every so often showed a different side, every moment a different beauty revealing her face from the belvederes and chambers. In the foreground of the field was a *chihil sutun* with nine arches decorated with perfect subtlety, and the king's throne was placed in the fifth arch. My place was in the seventh arch. [817] Aside from my companions, everyone else was expelled from the arch.

Between the *chihil sutun* and the *chahartaqs* singers and reciters were performing. Most of the singers were girls. A group of girls with cheeks like the moon and pages more beautiful than early spring, with beautiful garments and enchanting countenances like fresh roses, came behind a thin curtain up to the king. Suddenly they pulled aside the curtain, which they were holding on either end, and the girls began to dance in an astonishingly enchanting manner.

A hundred female singers, a crowd filled with  
moons and Jupiters.

When they removed the veil from the sun,  
with one wink they destroyed the world.  
With countenances shining like the sun, they  
scorched people's souls with their fire.

When the veil was dropped from their faces,  
the moon went veiled into a pit.

When they danced, their statures were musky

locks sweeping the ground.  
 When they struck the ground with their  
 dancing feet, they kicked Venus from the  
 competition.  
 The audience were all astonished by their  
 motion and movement.

The entertainers perform marvelous tricks. They place three boxes next to each other, [818] each one a yard in length, half a yard in width, three quarters [of a yard] high, and then they place two more boxes, about the same size, on top of the first two boxes. Then they place a somewhat smaller box on top of the second row, which is on top of the first, so that the first and second rows form steps up to the third, which is the highest of all. They have trained a huge elephant to go up the first and second boxes and stand on the third, the area on top of which is just slightly larger than the bottom of one of the elephant's feet. When the elephant has balanced itself on top of the box, they remove the other boxes and the elephant is left [perched] like a goat on top of the three boxes. Every rhythm the musicians play the elephant imitates with its trunk, raising and lowering its trunk in time

Another trick is as follows. They erect a pole about ten yards tall. Another long wooden piece like the balance rod on a scale is set through a hole in the first pole. To one end of the cross piece is attached a stone as heavy as an elephant, and on the other end is a platform about a yard wide. The platform end is pulled down with a rope, and an elephant goes onto it. The trainer slowly releases the rope [819] until both sides are ten yards in the air, like a balance rod, and the two sides, one with the elephant and the other with the stone, describe semicircles before the king. The elephant in that position,

So high that no sound can reach it,

moves rhythmically with the entertainers.

Every group that sings or performs before the king is rewarded with gold and garments during the assembly. For three

days straight, from the time the peacock of the sun stands in the midst of heaven until the raven of evening spreads its wings, the regal celebration is conducted. It would take too long to describe all the acrobatics, fireworks and different types of entertainment.

On the third day when the king arose, they took me to the throne. It was immense, of gold studded with precious gems, and minutely embellished with artifice. There is no place on the face of the earth where they do gem-studding better than there. In front of the throne was a pillow of Zaytuni silk with three rows of lustrous pearls sewed around the border. For three days the king had sat on the throne reclining on this pillow. [820]

When the *mahanavami* festival was concluded, the king summoned me after the evening prayer. When I reached the court I was taken into a *chaharsuffa* about ten yards square. The ceiling and walls were entirely studded with sheets of gold, each sheet as thick as the broad side of a sword, and fastened with golden nails. In the facing recess was set the king's magnificent golden throne, on which the king sat in all splendor. He asked about His Majesty the Felicitous *Khaqan*, the amirs, the army, the number of horses, and a description of the cities of the realm like Samarqand, Herat and Shiraz. He was extremely affable and said, "I am sending several elephants, two *toquzes* of eunuchs and other gifts in the company of a wise emissary."

During the assembly one of his intimates inquired through the interpreter concerning the delicacy of the gem-studded *chaharsuffa*, as if to say that in my country there could not be such a thing. I replied, "Perhaps in that country too such a thing could be made, but it is not our custom." The king applauded my answer and rewarded me with several sacks of *fanams*, betel-leaf and special fruit.

A group of Hormuzis who were in that country were greatly upset when they heard of the king's kindness and his intention to send an emissary to His Majesty's court. They plotted to undermine this plan and, in all vileness and wickedness, fabricated a rumor that I was not His Majesty's emissary. They caused this rumor to reach the hearing of amir and vizier—

What of amir and vizier? It reached the king!

[821] This will be dealt with later.

During these days the *dhannâyak*, the vizier who paid kind attention to me, decided to go to Gulbarga. The reason for this trip was as follows. The king of Gulbarga, Sultan Ala'uddin Ahmadshah, received news of the assassination attempt on Dev Ray and the murder of his ministers of state. He was delighted by the news and sent a messenger to say, "Pay seven lacs of *varahas* or I will send a conquering army to your country to eradicate your infidel rule."

The king of Vijayanagar, Dev Ray, flared up in anger and said, "So long as I am alive, what does it matter that a few servants have been killed?"

If a thousand servants die, what does it matter  
to me?

In a day or two one can make a hundred  
of them.

When the sun is shining, there is no end to  
dust motes.

And if he imagines that there is any  
weakness or despondency, it is not so.

Ascendant is strong, the lucky stars are in  
conjunction and fate is smiling.

Whatever he can take of my kingdom he  
will consider booty [822] and give to his  
sayyids and ulema, just as I will give  
whatever I can seize of his kingdom to  
the high castes and Brahmins."

The armies of the two sides were dispatched and wrought much havoc in each other's realms. The king left his country in the care of the *dhannâyak*'s deputy, a high-caste Hindu named Hamba Nurir,<sup>19</sup> who considered himself equal to a vizier. But he was a short-statured, evil man, a vile, penny-pinching wretch possessing all bad qualities and devoid of any redeeming features. When this wretch polluted the chair of the divan, he unjustifiably stopped my daily allotment. The Hormuzis, realizing the opportunity for vileness, showed the mischief that was ingrained in their nature, connived with Hamba Nurir and said that I was not the Felicitous *Khaqan*'s emissary but a merchant who had gotten hold of His Majesty's document and told lies to the infidels and wormed my way into the king's confidence. For some time I was reduced to misery in that abode of infidels. During my misery the king came across me several times on the street and drew his reins to inquire after my condition. Truly he was of exceptionally good character.

If he is all justice, it is enough.

The *dhannâyak* raided the borders of Gulbarga and returned with a few old women taken captive. [823] He chided Hamba Nurir for neglecting me and ordered a draft for seven thousand *fanams* written against the mint, and it was honored that very day.

Khwaja Mas'ud and Khwaja Muhammad, who were both of Khurasan and happened to be in that country, were appointed and sent as emissaries with a few gifts and goods. Fath Khan, a descendant of Sultan Firozshah the king of Delhi, sent a messenger, Khwaja Jamaluddin, with a petition and gifts.

<sup>19</sup>Reading the name from Elliot, *History of India*, IV, 122. The name is garbled in the text of *Matla'-i sa'dayn*.

On the day I was given leave to depart, the king said to me, "They say you were not sent by His Majesty Shahrukh. If we have not favored you overly much, when you come again to this realm and we know that you have really been sent by His Majesty, perhaps that which is appropriate to our sovereign dignity may be manifested." Appropriately he quoted:

I will go into exile no more in company of a  
king: from the wilderness of loving you I  
come home.

In the letter he wrote to His Majesty he included the vileness of the Hormuzis, saying, "It was [our] desire to forward to the caliphal court regal presents and gifts. However, some have claimed that Abdul-Razzaq is not among His Majesty's attendants. [824] It has been written to describe His Majesty the Felicitous *Khaqan* that kingly traits and imperial characteristics are mixed with the purity of the prophets and the character of saints."

A Noah as intimate with God as Abraham; a  
Khizr in station like Moses; an Ahmad as  
awesome as the divine throne; a Jesus in  
spiritual demeanor.

The inhabited quarter of the globe places a  
third [of its wealth] at your gate, and then you  
bring into your realm from this side of the  
equator.

Since that realm is claimed to be an equatorial land, the mention of the equator in the letter was appropriate.

I gathered my belongings, and we set out toward the coast.

#### MY RETURN FROM HINDUSTAN AND ADVENTURES IN THE STORMY SEA

The sun of favorability rose on the horizon of felicity, and the luminescence of good fortune rose in the orient of hopes, and through the dark night the lights of joy appeared, in accordance with the Koranic verse, "God is the patron of those who believe; he shall lead them out

of darkness into light."<sup>20</sup> The nights of tribulation and discomfort in that terrible place of infidelity and error approached the dawn of happiness and the splendor of the sun of fortune. The evening of grief was exchanged for the day of happiness and success. [825]

The length of night was greater than day, but that has changed: an increase has been added to the latter and a decrease to the former.<sup>21</sup>

If it were not enough that it was a city in the farthest reaches of Hindustan, and the entire realm an abode of infidels, the travel gear I possessed had been trampled by untoward events. "How can I describe a situation that cannot be spoken of?" Nonetheless, despite my miserable situation,

No hope from anywhere of provisions for the road save the words, "Despair not of the mercy of God."<sup>22</sup>

With strong heart and high hopes I set forth by God's grace and mercy. I began my journey on the 12th of Sha'ban [December 5, 1443] in the company of the emissaries from Vijayanagar. For eighteen days we traveled until we reached the seashore and the port of Bacanor on the first of Ramadan [December 23]. There I was honored to meet Amir Sayyid Ala'uddin Mashhadi. The sayyid was more than a hundred and twenty years old and had spent many years revered by the Muslim people and the infidels of that region. His words in that region [826] were as weighty as holy writ, and no one deviated from his command. One of the emissaries of Vijayanagar, Khwaja Mas'ud by name, poor thing, died there.

Who knows where in this spiteful monastery  
we shall lay down our heads?

<sup>20</sup>Koran 2:257.

<sup>21</sup>Line by Anwari, *Diwan*, p. 9, line 7.

<sup>22</sup>Koran 39:53.

We fasted [the month of Ramadan] in Bacanor. For the last leg of the journey a ship came to the port of Honavar, and I arranged for provisions for twenty persons for forty days. During those days, when I was expecting to travel by ship, one day I opened the [book of] presages by Imam Ja'far Sâdiq, which is comprised of Koranic verses, and received good news. This verse came up: "Fear not; thou hast escaped from unjust people."<sup>23</sup> I was astonished how well the presage fitted my situation, and the fear and dread I had of the sea was completely dispelled. Suddenly I had every expectation of deliverance and redemption.

On the 25th of Dhu'l-Qa'da [March 15, 1444] I boarded ship and set forth. I saw plainly manifestation of great power in the verse, "His also are the ships, carrying their sails aloft in the sea, like mountains."<sup>24</sup> From time to time I listened to strange tales and marvelous stories from those with me, [827] and these gave rest to my spirit.

The eye of untoward events and evils is asleep.  
Fate nods and all is well.

The ship, with thousands of shivers,  
reached the midst of the sea.

From the surface of the sea suddenly a wind  
arose. From every direction arose cries and  
shouts.

Night, a ship, wind and churning sea: all the  
elements ripe for calamity.

All of a sudden from adverse winds, like those who quaff the boat of wine, a change took place in the ship, and the planks, which had been joined together like the letters in *musalsal* script, flew apart like cut-out letters. The purpose of the words, "[the deep sea,] covered by waves riding on waves, above which are clouds,"<sup>25</sup> became clear. The ship's

helmsman, who knew how to travel through water like a fish, wanted to sink to the bottom of the sea like an anchor, and the captain, who had mastered the knowledge of traveling to the "confluence of the two seas," washed clean the ledger of his knowledge with the turbulent water of his eyes. The sail ripped like the collar of a lover impassioned by his beloved, and the mast bent under the impact of the wind like the bow of a beauty's eyebrow.

The winds blow with what ships desire not.

[828] The passengers who were resident in that moving house cast away much of their belongings into the sea and disencumbered themselves of possessions like Sufis. What worth have goods and property when one's precious life is in danger? I myself, seeing the state the sea was in, washed my hands of my life with the tears of my eyes and stood, dry of lip and wet of lash, transfixed in awe at the sea. I inscribed the words, "We submit to God's destiny," on the tablet of my mind. Sometimes the ship became like a water-wheel from the crashing mountain-like waves, and sometimes from the clashing of the violent winds it sank to the bottom of the water like a diver.

Sometimes lifted up so high that the horse-  
shoe of the new moon rubs against the  
mounts' legs.

Sometimes sunk so low that the riches of  
Corah rise above the steeds' stirrups.

The briny sea was so convulsed that the body melted like salt in water. The violence of the storm reduced to naught assisting patience and firm-footed intellect like ice under the heat of the mid-summer sun.

I have become distressed, my heart like a fish  
out of limpid water.

From the torrent of annihilation be the  
foundations of the sphere destroyed, for the  
water of catastrophe has been poured in waves  
over my head. [829]

<sup>23</sup>Koran 28:25.

<sup>24</sup>Koran 55:24.

<sup>25</sup>Koran 24:40.

I am no longer myself since the sphere has cast into the water the precious essence of patience, which was my adornment.

Time and again I said to myself, repeating this line of poetry:

Dark night, fear of waves, and whirlpool so frightening: how can those on the shore whose burdens are light know of our condition?<sup>26</sup>

The clear water of pleasure was sullied by the murkiness of the sea, and the bright mirror turned rusty from the wetness of the water and the turbidity of the air. Every moment the pupil of my eye gazed into that salty water, there appeared from extreme fright a glistening sword; and in fear of the violent sea winds, the arrow of the cry that came from my soul was a soul-piercing shaft. Since there was nothing I could do, and I saw the gate of hope closed in every direction, with eye full of tears and heart filled with fire I turned in prayer to the divine presence and recited the verse, "O Lord, do not make us to bear what we have not strength to bear."<sup>27</sup> From him who bestows without obligation I requested that he make green and verdant the sapling of my existence from the shoreless sea of his beneficence and that he wash clean with the water of favor the dust of unpleasantness from the face of my condition. During this I wondered what sort of ill luck this was that had happened to me from the revolution of the blue sphere and what sort of embarrassment this was that had dishonored me through the adversity of treacherous fate and mean destiny. Neither was I to escape with my life from the waves of destruction nor was I to emerge from the water with the pearl of my endeavors to bring to completion the small state business [830] on which I was engaged, for not for a second I would spare my life to repay my benefactor, and to execute the affairs of my patron I

counted my life as negligible. If I, a devotee of the padishah, were cast into the fire of untoward events, I should emerge like a ruby, not one iota of my nature changed but rather more purified than the purest gold.

I was immersed in these thoughts and exhibiting traces of fright and terror when suddenly—"who heareth the afflicted, when he calleth upon him, and taketh off the evil which distresses him?"<sup>28</sup>—"despair not of the mercy of God"<sup>29</sup>—the zephyr of infinite divine grace began to blow, and the morning of joy broke over the horizon of happiness, the bearer of glad tidings of auspicious luck whispered into my ear, "We divided the sea for you and delivered you."<sup>30</sup> The cold, adverse wind changed into a favorable breeze, and the tyranny of the storm ended. The sea turned as calm as the heart could have wished.

The people on the ship celebrated the Feast of the Sacrifice on board, and when Mount Qalhat was spotted at the end of Dhu'l-Hijja, they reached the mercy of dry land through the trial of the sea. During those days the new moon of Muharram [84]8 [April 20, 1444] appeared over the sea like a phantom of the beloved's eyebrow.

When the golden barque sank in the whirlpool of the indigo sea, they saw a ripple from it on the surface of the sea.

#### CONTINUATION OF THE STORY OF MY SEA VOYAGE AND MY ARRIVAL AT HORMUZ THROUGH DIVINE FAVOR

The story of my adventures at sea had reached the point at which the new moon of Muharram showed itself across [843] the water, and the ship continued on the water for several days more. Having arrived in Muscat we dropped anchor and

<sup>26</sup>Hafiz, *Diwan*, p. 3, line 5.

<sup>27</sup>Koran 2:286.

<sup>28</sup>Koran 27:62.

<sup>29</sup>Koran 12:87.

<sup>30</sup>Koran 2:50.

repaired the ship, which had suffered damage during the storm. Boarding the ship again, we set forth.

Bound with long, wavy chains, the flowing sea became a chain-maker by it.

It flies away without budging; there is in it nothing to make it fly.

A bird that flies on wooden wing—an unusual wing, yet it does not fly so much.

Like a crane, head held aloft in the air, with pelican's wings spread on both sides.

From Muscat we sailed to the port of Khurfughan, where we remained for a day or two. During that time it turned so hot one night that at dawn you would think the sky had kindled fire in the world. The air was so hot that birds flying swiftly in the sky and fish at the bottom of the sea burned. It was so hot that the morning itself gasped for breath, and fire caught in the world from the sparks of the sun. From the heat of the sun the world [844] could only dream of the cool of the evening, and the morning in fear of the heat of the day was searching for night with a lamp. Whatever birds were nested in the trees, doves, ravens, sparrows, etc., fell dead at the base of the trees, and in this there is no exaggeration.

From the fire of the heat, from which fruit became luscious, the nightingale and sparrow's brains were fried.

From the heat birds on every branch were cooked like soft halva.

So many lifeless birds fell around the trees that accountants were unable to number them.

From Khurfughan the ship set sail, and midmorning on the 12th of Safar [May 31, 1444] we reached Hormuz. From the port of Honavar to Hormuz it had taken seventy-five days.

On this very day a most amazing thing happened in Herat. At midmorning on that very Friday His Excellency ... Baha'uddin Shaykh Umar set out from the village of Jaghara, where he lived, for the city to perform the congregational

prayer. Along the way he chanced upon my brother Mawlana Sharifuddin Abdul-Qahhar and asked him [845] what news there was of the writer of these pages, Abdul-Razzaq. My brother stated that he had had no news of me for three years. His Excellency the shaykh said, "Apparently he has reached Hormuz."

My brother wrote this down, and I had kept a record of the day on which I passed through every city. When I met my brother, we found that the two dates coincided exactly.

By the truth of the prophet's religion, by the majesty of God, I believe everything told of the saints.

The various aids and assistances that I received from that guiding [saint] during my dangerous voyage are beyond description, and the details might possibly increase the incredulity of the incredulous. "Anyone who has not experienced this labor will remain incredulous."

In Hormuz news was received of His Majesty's indisposition, and all around the realms of Iraq, Fars and the Daryabar coast there was trembling in fear of this catastrophe. The merchants from the climes of the world who were great ones in that port necessarily ceased their activity, and consequently I was stuck involuntarily in the agonizing heat of Hormuz for seventy days until the news of the royal person's recovery was verified through the rulers of the province of Lar. I departed through the port of Awghan and reached the fortress of Tarzak with much difficulty because I was ill. [846] There I stayed until the messengers who had been dispatched to the capital returned bringing edicts, as requested, to say that the governors and taxcollectors of the provinces should disburse from the tax revenues against my signature fodder for the emissaries and the hire of ten pack animals and hand over fourteen post horses, ten for my own personal retinue and four for the emissaries.

From Tarzak I traveled through Mi-  
mand and Farghan in a litter because of  
my indisposition. Reaching the province  
of Sirjan, I was honored to visit [the  
grave of] His Excellency Shah Shuja'  
Kirmani, one of the great shaykhs of  
yore. I also toured the fortress at Sirjan,  
which has no equal in all the world. In the  
village of Mashiz I was honored to join  
the retinue of the great shaykh Mawlana  
Shamsuddin Muhammad Isfakhi, who  
had been in the Shaykh al-Islam Baha'-  
uddin Shaykh Umar's caravan to the He-  
jaz and gone from Mecca to Egypt and  
made a visitation to the prophets and  
come via the sea to Hormuz. In his com-  
pany I reached Herat. [847]

In short, I came to Kerman. The  
*darugha* there, Amir Hajji Muhammad,  
was ill-disposed toward me because  
when I set out for Hindustan I had sent a  
complaint of the conditions in Kerman  
and the amir's conduct, and [my com-  
plaint] had been influential upon His  
Majesty's royal mind. He had summoned  
the amir to Herat and subjected him to  
humiliation and disgrace.

When I met him in Kerman, he asked  
one day in the divan, "Mawlana, how  
much has been spent on your and the  
emissaries' going and coming?"

"About fifty thousand dinars," I an-  
swered.

"How much is what you are carrying  
worth?" he asked.

"Ten thousand dinars," I said.

"A nice business," he said. "He gives  
fifty thousand dinars, and you get ten  
thousand dinars."

"His Majesty is not a merchant," I said,  
"to reckon thus. Sometimes they bring a  
hawk, and His Majesty gives in return  
more than fifty thousand dinars. I am  
bringing coinage and *khutba* [in his  
name], and gifts and emissaries from the  
farthest reaches of Serendip, and this is  
more valuable in His Majesty's opinion  
than to have fifty thousand dinars in the  
treasury."

In short I returned to Qohistan through  
the Lut Desert, as I had gone. The middle  
of Ramadan [January 1445] I reached  
Herat and pronounced the words, "Praise  
be unto God, who hath taken away sor-  
row from us! verily our Lord is ready to  
forgive the sinners, and to reward the  
obedient, who hath caused us to take up  
our rest in a dwelling of stability through  
his bounty."<sup>31</sup> I make no complaint of  
separation from my friends and loved  
ones. [848]

It is better not to complain of the night of  
separation. Be thankful to him who takes away  
the veil on the day of union.

The next day I was honored to kiss the  
hand of the emperor at court. Although I  
stood with bent back in the presence of  
that majesty, I was asked to sit and told  
him of the rulers of those realms and my  
adventures on the sea and in the ship. The  
emissaries, Khwaja Muhammad and  
Khwaja Jamaluddin were escorted to the  
foot of the throne by the great amirs, and  
they attained the felicity of kissing the  
hand, an honor desired by the rulers of  
the face of the earth. They presented the  
gifts they had brought, three ruby rings  
and ten loads of Indian aromatics. This  
greatly pleased the royal mind, for within  
the last two or three hundred years it was  
not recorded that any emissaries had  
come from that country to this. The emis-  
saries were summoned to court twice a  
week and were allowed to sit in the royal  
assembly. His Majesty praised me several  
times, both in my presence and in my ab-  
sence, and during times that he was not  
occupied with weighty matters of state he  
asked me about those countries and the  
the novelties of the infidels' realm. I nar-  
rated in conformity with actuality.

The emissaries stayed in Herat until the  
end of the month of Dhu'l-Hijja [April  
1445], [849] when they were graciously  
given permission to return. Each one was

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<sup>31</sup>Koran 35:34-35.

given a horse, a pelisse, a *nawrozi dāgālā* and three thousand Kepeki dinars. Their ten servants were each given a cloak and four hundred dinars, and fodder and post horses were arranged as far as the port of Hormuz.

Fath Khan, the grandson of Sultan Firozshah of Delhi, who had dispatched Khwaja Jamaluddin, also sent a petition with the following contents: "When the victorious train of His Highness the Sahib-Qiran came to the land of Hindustan, there was none among our renowned sultans then alive to make obeisance and render fealty to him. In their ignorance Mallu and Sarang<sup>32</sup> created a disturbance and effaced the foundation of the dynasty. This humble one has suffered much misfortune in exile for a long time now but hopes that the servants of the royal threshold will summon me to court so that perhaps through His Majesty's good fortune I may be restored to my native land."

The exile's wandering heart is with his native country.

His Majesty then wrote to the king of Vijayanagar, saying, "It has reached our hearing that Fath Khan, one of the sons of Sultan Firozshah, has taken refuge at your court. [850] Now, if you can, restore him to the land of his fathers; otherwise, send him to our court that we may equip him with soldiers of the world and, God's destiny willing, return him to the land of his fathers and forefathers and seat him on the throne of the sultanate."

Shahrukh is such a prince that his slave is kingly in the world.

Mawlana Nasrullah Junabidhi was appointed as emissary, and he was outfitted with the necessary money, orders, fodder and post horses, as well as gifts and pre-

sents for the king of Vijayanagar. The mawlana set out as ordered.

Once His Majesty asked me about my stay in the province of Hormuz. I complained of the governors, and His Majesty was angered by the Hormuzis' vile-ness and ordered that the vizier of Hormuz, Khwaja Muhammad Baghdadi, be brought to court and that an investigation be made into the cause for the delay I experienced there. My messenger, Hajji Yusuf, went to Hormuz and read the edict to them. In the Hormuz divan he seized Khwaja Muhammad Baghdadi by the belt and said, "It is His Majesty's command that I bring you to court so that you may be questioned in the Supreme Divan [851] about your shortcomings and causing delay." The padishah and his amirs intervened and made a request, saying finally, "Be gracious enough to allow us to petition the throne. We will submit to whatever is commanded." To gain my good will they sent five Abyssinian slaves, seven bolts of *murabba'* and *sitta'ashar* wool and a hundred bolts of *gulshan* [cotton]. They gave the slaves, cloth and everything else to Hajji Yusuf and his comrades, and they brought them under seal to Herat. When Hajji Yusuf returned from Hormuz, I took him to His Majesty, and it was resolved to the royal satisfaction.

It is hoped that my noble readers will not regard the story of my voyage to Hindustan, long and tedious though it may be, with an overly critical eye and that they will give weight to the dictum, "He is excused who is carrying out orders," for the detail of my narrations and lengthy expressions.

It is not I who speak even if it is I who speak.

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<sup>32</sup>Mallu Khan and Sarang Khan were amirs of Sultan Firozshah Tughluq.

