Concept of humanism in the pre Sa'di Persian Literature
Concept of humanism in the pre Sa'di Persian Literature

Before dealing with Sa'di's humanism one comes to seek for his like in the Persian literature, one's efforts seem doomed to failure. The temperamental inclination of the Iranian race towards lyrical poetry and the social, political and economical necessities of singing the praise of some powerful and bounteous patron served as compulsive incentives for the writers and poets of those by gone ages to cultivate the ghazal, the romantic mathnawi and the qasida. Mysticism being another creative factor, it brought about the great mathnawi of Rumi and some scattered treatises on the subject. All of these dealt either with the emotional or the sordid side of human nature. None of them considered humanity in its fulness or aimed at helping it to achieve a nature and balanced growth. If some pious soul felt compassion for man's woeful plight he turned into a moralist or a sage and wrote کیمیای سعادت or a أخلاق ناصری.

But in reality, the prospect is not as barren as that. One has only to turn to that infinite repository of the Persian genius, the شاهنامه, and one will find in it such a plethora of humanism and such a host of humanists that one will gape in stupefied wonder. And, indeed, the thing is stupefying enough and wonderful enough. One sees the humanistic maxims of Gulistan followed centuries before Gulistan was ever written, and the ideals of kingship and nobility as propounded in Bustan realised a quarter of a millennium before Bustan was even conceived. And, wonder of wonders, these phenomena appear where one would least expect or suspect them to be. They are met with on
bloody battlefields and in global wars. Indeed, the fact is hard to swallow that the best epic of a
language is its next best composition on humanism also, and that the next-best epic writer of the world
is one of the greatest humanists as well. But the thing stands proof. Let us pause and consider.

The jingling resemblance between human and humane, and between humanitarianism
and humanism confuses the mind about the true significance of these words; Human is taken to be
synonymous with humane; humanism is regarded to be as one with humanitarianism. But, in fact, the
two sets of words have nothing in common save their commencing letters. Humanism is a natural and
spontaneous bloom while humanitarianism is a product of the ethical hot-house. To change the
metaphor, while humanitarianism is "the milk of human kindness" pure and unadulterated, humanism
is the same thing but with the customary aqueous dash of the milkman's bucket. Humanism does not
deal with ideal but with natural human beings. And, indeed, it is better that is so, for, while nature is all
around and with us in the world, the ideal is nowhere to be found except in the mind of the abstract
theorist. We meet human beings with the human weaknesses and strengths everywhere; but
immaculate supermen are no more than the phantoms of the philosophical fancy. It is not meant that
humanism denies or belittles virtue. It admits that it exists but that it is juxtaposed with evil which
serves as foil to set it off to advantage.

There is very strong philosophical basis for all this as well. Let us turn to the famous Triad of
language, the Being, the not Being, and the Determined Being. Our experience knows not of a thing per se (Being: Thesis), a thing corresponding to its ideal concept, i.e. a thing without the admixture of its opposite Thing (Not-Being; Anti Thesis). What we do find in nature is always a mixture of the two, i.e. an amalgam of two exactly opposite realities (Determined Being Synthesis). Light per, i.e. light covering the whole range of the spectrum, is never experienced in nature; what is met with is light having a certain wave-length. The measure of that wave-length ipso facto suggests that it is not the ideal and the supreme light; that there are wave-lengths greater and so with virtue. The ideal of this Thesis or its Anti-Thesis (Evil) is never experienced by us. What we meet in nature is always a mixture has infinite varieties with varying degree of the measure of each of its components in every particular and individual case. And from this very fact emanates the raison de tre both for Ethics and Humanism. As in a given amalgam the measure of virtue and evil is changeable and controllable, Ethical teaching gets its justification. And as these amalgams of virtue and evil DOEXIST, we enter the realistic and attractive field of Humanism.

The ideal Good toned down by Reality, Vice redeemed with virtue-this is the burden of Humanism, and of Firdawsi as well. There are neither angels nor devils in Shahnama, but a mixture of angelhood and devilry. At one end of this humanistic continous stands the devilish arch-angel Rustam, and at the other the cherubic devil Piran, with a host of celestial and hellish heirarchies thrown in-between. In spite of his Jahan-Pahlawani and the heroism which that august office
obligates, the strategems to which Rustam stoped in his fight with Suharb and Isfandyar are well known. And despite his soldierly and deep sense of loyalty for the Kayanian Dynasty, the same Jahan pahlawan's occasional bursts of rebellious anger against Kay-Kaus and Tus also need no reminder.

On the other hand, the solicitation of piran, the commander-in-chief of the evil forces of Afrasiyab, for Siyaush is also remembered with surreptitious approval by every reader of the Shahnama. The expansive, story telling style of Firdawsi makes him unsuitable for quotation in a small essay like the present one. The reader is recommended to read the relative passages in Shahnama itself.

To judge Firdawsi as a humanist it is best to ascertain his views on the basic tenets of humanism with which we are fairly well acquainted by now.

1. Religion - Religion in humanism is not strait-jacketed formalism. It is a pliable thing, serving to promote human good and adaptable to the exigencies of time and space. Its regulating principle is Reason. Let us see what Firdawsi has to offer us here. Two references will suffice.

First, we find in Shahnama the Praise of Reason put just after the Praise of God and before the praise of the Prophet. (And, believe and like it or not, even in this reverse order Firdawsi writes only one verse on the latter topic and then passes on.) This arrangement is contrary to that usually followed by other Persian poets of the classical tradition. In these latter, the praise of the Prophet immediately follows that of God. Firdawsi changes the order of precedence in order to stress conviction that for man's salvation on earth and in heaven Reason is the supreme guide, and that in
discovering God's will it comes first to any apostolic mission. The terms in which he glorifies Reason leave his sense in no doubt:

Then as to formal conformity: Firdawsi thinks it quite unnecessary. The thing which counts in the spirit of charity contained in religion, and not its superficialities:

(Can any critic distinguish here if the speaker is Firdawsi or the great humanist Sa'di?)

C.F. the Shaikh's famous lines:

1. Shahnama, ed, M. Ramadani, Tehran, V. I, P.2
2. Shahnama, V. I, P. 234.
2. Liberty - This is yet another important article of the humanists creed and directly follows from the preceding principle of Reason. If reason is supreme in the life of man, then he should be free to follow it in thought, speech and action. Fetters, whether religious, social or political, should not restrain him from following that Guiding Star and from reaching the ultimate goal of his spiritual fulfilment. This principle was so important in the eyes of Firdawsi that his whole great work is infused with it. Indeed, the best praise he can bestow on his dear country is to call it the Land of the Independent; and for him the Independent People par excellence are the People of Iran. This is very clearly borne out where he uses the phrase in contradistinction to the Turks. Giw brings the letter of Key-Kaus to Rustam reporting the incursion of Suhrab and dilating upon his heroic exploits. Rustam laughs and refuses to believe it.

Mark the third line which gives reason for Rustam's incredibility and uses the word as

5. Shahnama, V. I P.36.
Shahnama is the Book of kings, and kingship demands obedience and submission. But the independence of spirit of Firdawsi's आज़ादग़ान is such that ever and anon it bursts the barrage and outflows the dam. Two example will suffice. Strangely and significantly, both of them belong to the reign of Dnahhak, than whom no worst tyrant had ever ruled Persia.

I. One day the tyrant describes to the assembled mubads his dream about Faridun and asks them to explain it to him. They tremble and cower to tell the truth. But one brave soul steps forward and harangues the king in the following terms:

II. Dnahhak makes the mubads to sign the charter of Absolution. Suddenly Kawa appears on the scene, and after chiding the monarch in no week terms about his brutal excesses, demands that his son's life should be spared. Dnahhak concedes. Then he gives the Charter to Kawa and requests him to witness it. Now listen:

And then this insignificant and destitute iron-monger comes out in open rebellion and incites and unites the whole country against the foreign tyrant.

3. Personal Honour - This is intimately connected with Liberty and Freedom since it is their direct and natural product. Shahnama is replete with its examples and we repeatedly come across cases where any threat to its security brings about a violent and instantaneous reaction. Perhaps, one of the most grand examples is the following. Sarv Shah of Yemen seeks the counsel of his courtiers as to how he should reply to Faridun's proposal for the marriage of his sons with the Yemenite king's daughters. The fearless sons of the desert reply:

7. Shahnama, V. I, P. 40.
8. Ibid, V. I, P. 58
4. Contentment - This is yet another blossom which adorns humanists flower-bed. The two chief aspect of humanism are a peace and a peace without. This "peace within" can never be achieved without the calm and serenity of contentment. Siyawush living happily in Turan with his beloved Farangis is the happiest example of a peaceful and contented mind. Another tragic Kayanian prince, Iraj, the youngest son of Faridun, exposes his view on the subject to his brothers in this way:


5. Sincerity - Like Liberty, the spirit of Sincerity also infuses the whole Shahnama. Firdawsi's word for it is 

5. Sincerity - Like Liberty, the spirit of Sincerity also infuses the whole Shahnama. Firdawsi's word for it is راستی, which in Persian signifies sincerity as well as truthfulness. Indeed, this truthful sincerity so possesses the poet's mind that his verse also partakes of its quality. He has no art, for all art is untrue. Instead of the artist's colouring brush, he holds a plain mirror in his hand. And, of course, a plain mirror can neither colour nor embellish nor distort; it can only reflect. To illustrate the
difference, here is one extract each from Nizami and Firdawsi dealing with a common theme - the jewels of a king's regalia.

Nizami (in Sikandar-Nama):

10 علم بركش ای آفتات بلند
بنال ای دل رعد چون کوس شاه
پگیرای صدقف ذر کن آن آبرا
بتاج سر شاه کن جای خویش

Firdawsi (kay - Khisraw inspecting his army, Sh. V.I. II. P.94):

برآن تخت پیروزه برسان نیل
فروهشته از تاج دو گو شوار
زخوشاب وزر وزیر جد کمر

Neither of the masters employs a single simile for the pearls. But their difference of approach is apparent. To glorify the king, Nizami belittles the pearl (his peremptory orders implying that it is no better than a slave). But not so the truthful Firdawsi. He mentions it with honour for it is adorning the person of the king. Nizami in his zeal to be clever forgets that by disparaging the ornament he is detracting from the grace of the person ornamented. The pearl emerges from the ocean all right, but on its face is a blush, not a sparkle. It never pays to do violence to the truth. One point should be

whatever he is getting is the truth and nothing but the truth. In other words, it is not the portrayed images which fill us with pleasure, but the realization that their portrayal is natural and true.

6. Appreciation of Beauty - A humanist appreciates beauty in every shape. And so does Firdawsi. And not only does he enjoy beauty, but he also knows the proportions which go to make a graceful form. Viewed in this light, his whole Shahnama is an exquisite piece of the modeller's art. However, that the beauty of the usual and common sort may not go by default, here follow two illustrations from Shahnama:

I. The maids of Rudaba describe her to the page-bay of Zal:

II. Furud, the son of Suhrab, is encircled and wounded at kalat by the Iranians. He lies in the fort, and the fair maids of the boy's court commit suicide by leaping down from the parapet wall:

13. Ibid, V. I, P.120.
It is doubtful if a prettier simile or a daintier verse has ever been penned by any Persian poet.

7. Practical Wisdom - Practical wisdom, ruse, dissembling, diplomacy, or what you will; it has types and types. Firdawsi was too upright to stoop to the "سرمار بدست دشمن کوب" variety. (And, indeed, so was the Shaikh; but occasionally he could not resist the temptation of turning a pretty quip.) But in the respectable art of diplomacy he is perfect Suhrab is doing havoc in the Persian army. Kay-Kaus sends Giw to Sistan with urgent summons for Rustam. The Jahan-Pahlawan entertains his son-in-law for three days and then starts for court. On arrival he is harshly rebuked by the king for the delay. Rustam counters this downpour of the peevish monarch's wrath with contempt and leave in disdain for Sistan. The terror of Suhrab again seizes the court and some senior generals hurry to stop and pacify Rustam. Their apology takes the line usual on such occasions:


etc. But Rustum's wrath is not to be calmed down by such feeble excuses. He foames and fulminates and declares that he is fedup with the king and fears none but the pure God:
And now the crafty fox tackles the enraped lion. Gudarz, the oldest and the most prudent among the soliciting lot, strikes this sly note:

The storm subsides as if by magic and the Jahan-Pahlawan turns right about:

8. Conformity to Nature - In the present writer's humble opinion this is the gist and the spirit and the sine qua non of all humanism. According to the humanistic theory man is neither an angel nor a beast, and it is in his interest that he should remain so. Indeed, every effort to the contrary is doomed to failure since it aims at subverting the unsubvertable nature. It is just this hurdle against which

religion stumbles and falls in its bid to super humanise the human species. Attempts of the opposite type which wish to subgrade man to a worm or worse are latecomers in the field and no one is sure about their result as yet. Humanism scrupulously avoids both these pitfalls. It lends man remain at his appointed place and tries to make him worthy of it. There is no vertical rise or fall, only a lateral expansion and spread. In this way more fulness is achieved with better balance. Man as a frisky and foolish little animal is better suited to survive and thrive in this fatuous world than he would be as a Vice-Gerent of God on Earth. Firdawsi knows this full well and plans his characters accordingly. After Shakespeare, Shahnama is perhaps the greatest art gallery of humanism in the world literature Quotations would be invidious, but one has to quote. And, perhaps, the following pice taken almost at random is as good as any other.

Kay-Kaus has not yet nominated Kay-Khusraw as his heir; but most of the nobility desire and hope that he would do so. Tus, being himself a member of the royal family, wants otherwise. Gudarz gives a reception in honour of Kay-Khusraw which Tus does not attend. Now let Firdawsi take up the story.

دلمش پر زرگفتارهای درشت
که این راه تو باخرد نیست جفت
که بر ماهه خوبیست کردن فسوس
سرافراز لشکر منم رامجم
زتهم فریدون منم یاد گار
جهان را بنوکد خدا آورد
نشانیم بخت ابتدای یاد بخواب
سرافراز ترو بخت و کلاه
که خام آماده دانش و کیش اوی
نبايد که پیچی گه زخم کوش
زالبرز شاهی نبایست جست
که نه مغز بردت نه رای بهی
پدر تنبد تو و دیوانه آی
که رای و خرد نیست باطوس یفت
فریبرز را بر گزیدن همی
همی طوس کم باد اندر جهان
درشتت باپایست پاسخ بداد
کرازیبد وفرمو اور نگ و بخت

زیبیش پرپی گیبو بانمد پیشت
بیا مد بطور سهبد بگنت
چو بشینند پاسخ چندین داد طوس
در ایران پس از رستم یلتن
منم پور نودر جهان شهربار
همی بی من آنین ورای آفزید
جهاندار کر تخم افراصیاب
فریبرز فرزنده کاوس شاه
دزم گیبو برخاست از پیش اوان
بدو گفت کا یک نامور نیبو طوس
ترا گر بدلی فر و رازی درست
رافسره تو ازان شده تهی
تو نوعر تزاویده نه بیگانه ای
بگفتست سخنها از کشداد گفت
دو چشم تو گرو نبتدهمی
بر آشفت گور درز و گفت از مهان
بگیبو آگلگین گفت ای نیگراد
نمایم او را که گتیمن وتخت
But better counsels prevail, the Shah intervenes, and the momentary effervescence of these fiery old men passes away. The reader should judge if the great heroes of this great Iranian Epic behave like the wise Men of the East or like a bunch of unruly school-boys.

**Firdawsi and Sa'di Compared**

Now that we have become acquainted with Firdawsi as a humanist, let us how he compares with Sa'di in the same field. Both are realist, and not idealist except each of them deals with Reality in his own personal and particular way. (A discussion of these personal and particular ways of theirs will follow later on.) For example, to be chivalrous and nothing but chivalrous to an enemy is the ideal. But to cheek chivalry from becoming a hazard to self-preservation is practical prudence. But Sa'di and Firdawsi subscribe to this latter view. The Shaikh writes in his Gulistan:

\[
\text{20. Kulliyat - i - Sa'di, P. 199.}
\]

(Do not pity the weakness of a foe because when he gain strength he will not spare thee.)

And in Shahnama we find Suhrab meeting his untimely death just because he had disregarded this important principle. The positive converse of this negative rule is that even a foul is fair to circumvent...
a deadly enemy. Sa'di says in Bustan:

(Kiss the hand it is not meet to bite;
Deal with the victors by quite and self-ambesment!

Rustam by skilful management came to bondage
And Isfandiyar escaped not his noose

The foeman can be skinned as occasion serves:
Conciliate him, them, as though with a friend!)

In Firdawsi the encounter of Rustam and Isfandiyar carries this same burden. Realizing himself
match for the redoubtable Kayanian prince, the astute Jahan-Pahlawan plays foul. And in choosing
his particular brand of foul he despises not even چه‌دستی گشاد گزیدن بپوس
که اسفندیارش نجست از کسند
پس او را مدار چنان که نوست
عدو را بفرصت توان کند پوست

(Kulliyat-i-Sa'di, P. 199.
Shahnama, V. Ill, P. 359.)
It was said earlier that both Sa'di and Firdawsi subscribed to a common humanist ideal but that their modes of expression were different. Since Sa'di is not only a student of human nature but a thinker as well, we find in him both abstract principles and concrete illustrations from life. But in Firdawsi mental set-up the active and the practical dominate the meditative and the concept. So there is little of theory and abstraction in him; there is only application and realization. Which means that in Sa'di the exposition of his abstract views is direct while in Firdawsi it is indirect. Sa'di propounds his humanist principles as principles with plainness and cognency, while Firdawsi they are not expressed as principles at all but can only be inferred indirectly from the way in which he tells his story and the manner in which he makes his characters to act and to re-act. We may call the one a theoretical and the other a practical humanist. The following comparative extracts from the two will help to clarify as well as to illustrate the point.

1. The theme: A good king should cherish and reward soldiers.

Its expression as principle by Sa'di:

بیا مبّید بحکم باری، ته سعد فورت
که بار دُگر دل ندهد بهرَلاک

24. Kulliyat, P.264.
(When a courageous man one time shows hardihood,

His rank should be advanced:

A second time his heart he'll set on perishing,

And have no dread to fight with God!)

The Realization of this conception in Firdawsi (the conception itself being left out to be inferred by the reader). Kay-Khusraw ascends the throne:

بنزد سهبدار گیتی فروز
بچرخ برگی بر افتکنه بی
ابا شاد کامی بارنگ و بوی
چو آگاهی آمد بترزدیک شاه
پذیره شدن را بیا راستند
سرایند را رفته آباد مان
وزوینست پیداگیتی هنر
برنستند بانی سر گین و کوس
سر سکش ز مزگان برخ ببرحکید
تهمتن ببوسید روی زمین
همیشه بزوی شاد و روش روان

The conception of Sa'di:

Treat pleasantly your troops in days of ease,

That they may be of service in hard times :)

The Realization (Firdawsī, V. II, PP. 87-88)

27. Shahnama, V. II, PP. 87-88
And in this manner, Kay-Khusraw bestows prize after prize on his generals each of whom voluntarily
and with alacrity offers to undertake some dangerous task proposed by the king. The point to note
here is that the prizes are given before the performance of the assignment. It is doubtful if Sa'di's
precept of

\(\text{(Now is the time to kiss your warriors' hands -}
\)

\(\text{Not when the enemy's begun to beat his drums!})\)

could find a handsomer application. And mark the grace with which Firdawsi sublimates the whole
scene. A cynic may regard the matter as sordid business based on simple self-interest; a king
seeking the help of the brave generals to fight his enemies and a soldierly nobility desirous to add to
its worldly fortunes. But, in fact, it is not so even in Sa'di's verse: there is a
lot of difference between self-interest and Enlightened self interest. And what to say of Firdawsi?

28. Kulliyat-i Sa'di, P. 264
Benevolent generosity and chivalrous sacrifice are competing with each other in an out-bidding match. There is no "Self" here; and if there is any, it is that which carries the potent name of Self-Regarding Sentiment the spur of all that is good and noble and sublime in man. We should be in great error if we called it like the cynic a "sordid business". We should still be amiss if we confused it with Sa'di's simple humanism. The rather it is the Manly Humanism of a manful and stalwart genius.

It may be useful to devote a few words more to what has been called here, for want of better terms, the simple Humanism of Sa'di on the one hand and the Manly Humanism of Firdawsi on the other. Simple Humanism may be said to operate when a man behaves like a man, i.e. naturally, and realize that it is better for him to do so, and knows that he is doing so. Thus there is an adducing of reason and a consciousness of conformity. But Manly Humanism neither reasons nor wits; it simply acts as nature prompts it to do. Since it is not attributable to any apparent motive it is purer, and since it is not self-conscious it is more spontaneous, than Simple Humanism. Let us again turn to Sa'di and Firdawsi for illustrations:-

1. The theme is ۲۹. Penalty. The evil-doer deserves, not mercy, but punishment condign to his evil. Says Sa'di:

(To do good to wicked persons is like 
Doing evil to good men.)

۲۹. Kulliyat-i Sa'di, P.82.
Here is the perfect Didactic Doublet; the precept and its justification: Be unforgiving to, or destroy, the evil-doer, for its benefits are so and so. It is all human nature, and so it is all humanism. But so far it is only that which we have called Simple or Elementary Humanism. And now for its other variety, viz. Manly Humanism, let us turn to Firdawsi, the subject being still:

The love-and-hate complex of his step-mother, Sudaba, banishes Siyaush to Turn where he ultimately gets killed by the order of Afrasiyab. The murdered prince's god-father, Rustam, kills Sudaba in revenge. Now let us hear Firdawsi speaking:

30. Kulliyat, P.199
31. Ibid, P.
32. Shahnama, V. II, PP. 10-12.
که از شهر ایران بر آمد خروش
تهمتن چو بشنیبد زورفت هوش
بانگشت رخساره کند زال
پدرگاه کاوس بنهاد روى
چنان تابنژیک ایران رسید
که آمد تهمتن بمانند ابر
بزرگان پیاده پذیره شدند
همه زار و گریان و پر آب روى
چو رستم بدیدند ایشان زدور
چو آمد بر تخت کاوس کی
بدوگفت خوی بدای شهریار
تزامشک سودایه وبد خوی
کدنون آشکار ببینن همی
کس کوبود مهتر انجمن
سیاورش زفرمان زن شد بباد
نگه کرد کاوس در چهر اوى
نداد ایچ پاسخ مراوراز شرم
تهمتن برفت از بر تخت اوى
This is neither penalty nor punishment, but reaping retribution and dire doom. Firdawsi lets loose a ferocious Fury to burn down the criminal. Let others seek motives and justification in the ashes.

2. The theme—and as no one can outdo Sa'di in felicitous brevity, so let us quote him verbatim:

And why? Because

(Qedimun luxodra bivezai qadar
Khe harg Naziaid zhirorode qader
(Increase the standing of your intimates,
For perfidy will never come from one you've cherished.)

And in the same strain:

(Qhe 33 xudet gerriet kerd kehen
Jeq sallianaresh feresh mikan
(Whenever a servant of your grows old,
Forget not the claim of his years to support;)

These again are the twins raisoné of the didaction: the maxim and its rationable.

Now let us turn to Firdawsi. The Iranian army, under the leadership of Rustam, returns from a

highly successful campain against the Chinese Khaqan and the Turanian Afrasiyab:

چو آگاهی آمد زورتست بهش همی خوانند بِر کرگَر آفرین
بجنپید کیخساوی از چای خویش
جهانی سرسرسر بر یوز دید
بپرسراد خسرو زوید دراز

چنین تابو آمد زمانی درنگ
که بر ماز مهر آتش افشنندی
گرفته همه راه دشت بدستت
چو طوش و فریبرز و گور در زوکیو
پس شاه ایران همی رانندند
زره سوی ایوان شاه آمدند

نشست از بر تخت زور شیربار
فریبرز و گور در زور هام و گیو
سخن گفت کیخساوی از نیرگاه
چنین گفت گور در زکای شزیریار
پس آگاه از کار پرسی درست
که ناهار بوده همانا براه

دُل شاه شد چون بهشت برين
بفرمود تایپل بردن پيش
تهمتن چو تاجی سر افزار دید
فرود آمد و پرپیشش نمای

گفرشته به آمبوش در شاه تنگ
It is not like a king receiving his generals in audience, but like a family re-union. The most aged star of this galaxy is Gudraz, and so this old one's craving for food is the greatest. He cuts short royal queries and requests for refreshment. The amused indulgence shown by the Shah to the Doyen of his imperial court and the laughing rejoinder: گمه ناهار بودی همانا باره ِ are perhaps the sweetest part of this sweet scene which constitutes one of the manifestations of Firdawsi's humanism.

Examples like this may be multiplied from Shahnama. But the difficulty lies in their extent. They would mostly be descriptive scenes and, therefore, of necessity, lengthy and unsuitable to be reproduced in a brief discussion like the present one. Indeed, the best proof that Shahnama is one of the best studies in humanism is the Shahnama itself. As Rumi says: آفتان آمد دلیل آفتان

Notwithstanding all that has been affirmed earlier in this essays, Firdawsi also sometimes indulges in theoretical doctrinizing, and once he does so with such earnestness and poignancy that the great Shaikh incorporates it verbatim in his Bustan:

که رحمت بر آن تربت پاک باد
که جان دارد و جان شیرین خوش ادست
میازار مورمی که دانه کش است

(How will said Firdawsi (he of pure birth,

34. Kulliyat, P.278.)
On whose pure dust be mercy!)

'Afflict not the ant who drags grain along

For long life he has, and sweer life is pleasant).

The lines deserve to be made the motto of the U.N.'s union for Wild Life Preservation. But, on the whole, this mode of diction was not natural to the great epic writer. It needed a mastery of epigram which was denied to the garrulous old dihqan. The salons of Daru's-Salam and the gay boulevards of Shiraz were suited to cultivate that sophisticated wit than the rugged uplands of Tus. A glance at the counsels of Ardashir I to his son, Shahpur, and comparing them with Sa'di's similar utterances will prove the truth of this assertion.

Firdawsi

1. كجا کنچ دهقان بود گنج اوست
   اگر چند بر کوشه و رنج اوست

2. نگهبان بود شاه گنج و را
   بیار آورد شاک رنج و را

3. به بخشند گی یازودیان و خرد
   دروغ ایچ تابیر تو بیزند

4. بدان کوش تادور باشی رخشم
   بمروی بخواب از گنگار چشم

Sa'di

1. ماراعات دهقان کن از بهر خویش
   که مزدور خوشدل گند کار بیش

2. چودشمن خروستا رز پرد
   ملک باج وده یک چرامی خورد

3. دل دوستان جمع بهتر که گنج
   فزیته تهی به که مرم برزن

4. سر برگرور از تحمل تهی
   حرامش بود تاج شاهنشهی
The race is drawing to a close: the end of the course, as well as of this essay, is in sight. It has been an exciting heat and a close finish. Of course, the Shaikh is the winner, but does not Firdawsi deserve a consolation prize?