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Literary Themes of the Poetry of Muḥammad ibn Dāwūd al-Iṣfahānī in *Kitāb al-Zahra*

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Literary Themes of the Poetry of Muḥammad ibn Dāwūd al-Iṣfahānī in *Kitāb al-Zahra*

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Muḥammad ibn Dāwūd al-Iṣfahānī (d. 297/909) was a judge of the Zāhirite *madhhab* of Islamic law, but his only surviving work is *Kitāb al-Zahra* (*The Book of the Flower*), an anthology of poetry, including some of Ibn Dāwūd's own poems. The biographical tradition names Ibn Dāwūd's motivation for writing *Kitāb al-Zahra* and his poetry therein as his unrequited love for a male friend, and this love story became much more famous than the poetry Ibn Dāwūd actually wrote. This dissertation argues that the subject of Ibn Dāwūd's poetry was not erotic love as is typically described in love poetry, but brotherhood (*ikhā'*), friendship among males of similar age and social status, which was frequently a topic of discussion in `Abbāsīd literature, although Ibn Dāwūd may be the only poet of the Arabic language to make it the central theme of his work. A survey of other early Arabic works that deal with brotherhood, including pre-Islamic poetry, treatises on courtly etiquette, and philosophical writings influenced by the Aristotelian tradition, will provide insight into the cultural construct of brotherhood to which Ibn Dāwūd's poetry constantly returns. Close readings of Ibn Dāwūd's poetry show how he employed various conventions of Arabic poetry, such as intertextuality and a level of diction more appropriate to the entertainments and debates of the *majlis* than to the ceremonial ode (*qaṣīda*), in order to convey his ideas about brotherhood.

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Introduction

Muḥammad ibn Dāwūd al-Iṣfahānī, Misunderstood

In the first years of this century, the Egyptian writer Alaa al-Aswany, author of the popular and controversial novel *The Yacoubian Building*, lamented the lack of appreciation audiences have for the distinction between literary artifice and historical fact. In the introduction to *Friendly Fire*, a collection of his short stories, he compared the public's reaction to his previous books to the way the audience reacted to the first cinema screening in Alexandria, Egypt, in 1896. According to al-Aswany, when images of a moving locomotive were projected on the screen, people in the audience panicked and ran out of the theater as though they were running out of the way of a real train. Al-Aswany expressed disappointment that readers too often paid attention only to the worst of the behavior depicted in his books and took offense as though, by writing about these actions of fictional characters, he was directing accusations at the readers themselves. Unfortunately, what al-Aswany experienced is something that happens too often to writers of imaginative literature, prose or poetry; the very fact that a writer describes a fictional scenario dealing with the complexity of human emotions and behavior leads readers to attack the character of the author himself.¹

Muḥammad ibn Dāwūd al-Iṣfahānī (d. 297/909), the judge and poet who compiled a poetic anthology called *Kitāb al-Zahra*, suffered such a fate at the hands of near-contemporary biographers. Exaggeration being the faithful companion of rumor, the story grew throughout the centuries so that the first impression that twentieth-century readers, whether in the Arab world or the West, gained of Ibn Dāwūd had little basis in his own

¹ Alaa al-Aswany, *Friendly Fire: Stories*, trans. Humphrey Davies (New York: Harper, 2009), xi-xxv.

writings. Several hundred lines of Ibn Dāwūd's poetry appear in *Kitāb al-Zahra* attributed to a pseudonymous "Man of our Times" (*ba`ḍ ahl hādhā al-`aṣr*), and almost all of his poems refer to a "Brother" at whose hands the Man of our Times has suffered rejection and ingratitude. These poems, as well as the introduction to *Kitāb al-Zahra*, in which Ibn Dāwūd describes the characteristics of the ideal friend and laments the elusiveness of such an ideal friendship, led readers to posit the existence of a male friend who did not reciprocate Ibn Dāwūd's affections, leading the heartbroken judge to compose hundreds of verses of poetry and publish them in *Kitāb al-Zahra*. The fact that Ibn Dāwūd described *Kitāb al-Zahra* as a commentary on love poetry (*ghazal*) was further evidence, in the popular imagination, that Ibn Dāwūd was passionately in love with the man for whom he wrote the poems, and eventually the story became so exaggerated that some biographical anecdotes have Ibn Dāwūd dying from love for his beloved. Later Arab authors, and eventually the first European authors to write about him, formed an opinion of him based as much on his supposed death from love as on any of his own writings.

The antidote to these rumors and exaggerations is a careful and sincere reading of the author's work. It would be naïve indeed to read Ibn Dāwūd's poetry as strictly autobiographical; to do so would be to ignore the complex mixture of fact and fiction proper to the genre in which Ibn Dāwūd wrote, namely, poetry. Classical Arabic poetry has gained the reputation of being almost impenetrable; its meanings are not obvious, even to those whose first language is Arabic, except after extensive study of its conventions. A popular saying says that poetry is the *dīwān* of the Arab people, that is, the record of the geography of their lands, the rarities of their language, and the deeds of their illustrious men. By this logic,

poetry began as a mnemonic for the Arabic language and culture itself, and for centuries, authors who wrote in the Arabic language, whether or not it was their first language, regarded this as an ideal, even as they adapted the medium of poetry to times, places, and concerns very different from those of the original proponents of Arabic poetry in pre-Islamic Arabia. Among the criteria by which audiences judged the merit of a poem was how well it followed the laws and precedents of poetic tradition, for if the poet deviated too far from these, his reputation as a master of the poetic craft would be compromised.

The result is that Arabic poetry operates through various, often multi-layered allusions. Intertextual references allowed poets to demonstrate their knowledge of the poetic canon, but allusions to the specific situation for which the poem was written can appear alongside these echoes of earlier poems. A study of how Ibn Dāwūd wielded poetic techniques, from motifs borrowed from heroic and Bacchic poetry to a level of diction that emulates prose to direct quotations from poems by earlier poets, that would have been familiar to his audience, will elucidate the fictional story he tells through his poems.

Perhaps the greatest distraction for Ibn Dāwūd's readers was that his poetry represented someone who was in love, which is easily the world's most enduring subject of gossip, for writers who dare to deal with matters relating to the sexes frequently find their personal feelings of love the target of speculation. Readers idealized and vilified, by turns, Ibn Dāwūd's love, and the fact that both the Man of our Times and the Brother in the poems are male only added to the controversy. An examination of the sources shows us that the diversity of commentators' attitudes toward Ibn Dāwūd corresponds to the diversity of their attitudes toward same-sex erotic love.

Never mind that friendship, the bond between two human beings that, while it may seem to arise from external circumstances, ultimately proves that it can transcend and outlast those circumstances, is among the oldest and most widespread themes in world literature. It is very difficult to delve deeply into discussion either of social etiquette or of moral philosophy without at least some discussion of friendship, and the `Abbāsīd period, during which Ibn Dāwūd lived, saw a flourishing of writing on these subjects. Arabic literature in Ibn Dāwūd's time used the word "brotherhood" (*ikhā*) to refer to friendship among males, and while no widely agreed-upon definition of brotherhood has come down to us, the sources tend to agree on some attributes of brotherhood, such as loyalty, reciprocity, and mutual desire for moral good, even if the sources portray this vision of brotherhood indirectly more often than they clearly prescribe its attributes. Brotherhood is rather so central to the literary culture in which Ibn Dāwūd wrote as to be taken for granted, appearing usually as an underlying assumption rather than a subject of discussion. Thus, the *Man of our Times* poems, which return again and again to the correct and incorrect practices of "brothers," are a valuable source of insight into the way intellectuals in the `Abbāsīd period regarded brotherhood. We may even consider Ibn Dāwūd the foremost poet of brotherhood in the Arabic language.

The aims of this dissertation are to introduce readers of the English language to the historical figure of Muḥammad ibn Dāwūd and his poetry and to advance the study of the cultural construct of brotherhood in Arab society in the first few centuries of the Islamic era. The first chapter contains a discussion of the biographical sources which contain anecdotes about Ibn Dāwūd, as well as the more theoretical works that rely on information contained in

them. The second chapter looks to sources as diverse as pre-Islamic poetry, treatises on social etiquette by Ibn al-Muqaffa` and al-Jāḥiẓ, and works on morality written in Arabic by philosophers faithful to the Aristotelian tradition, in order to sketch the cultural concept of brotherhood to which the Man of our Times poems constantly refer. The third and fourth chapters show the process of reading Ibn Dāwūd's poetry with awareness of the poetic conventions he emulated and those he deliberately avoided. Finally, the Man of our Times poems appear at the end of this dissertation, both in the original Arabic and in English translation.

Chapter One
Muḥammad Ibn Dāwūd and his Interlocutors: A Man of our Times and a Mystery for the
Ages

Muḥammad ibn Dāwūd ibn `Alī ibn Khalaf al-Iṣfahānī (254/868-296/909) was a jurist, poet, and scholar of Arabic poetry. The time and place in which he lived, Baghdād in the third Islamic century, appears in the Arab literary imagination as the site of a Golden Age and was, perhaps, second only to the Qur'an and *ḥadīth* as a subject of inquiry for Western scholars of Arabic in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Ibn Dāwūd's contemporaries and near predecessors collected, recorded, classified, and interpreted information from every corner of the known world, and third-century Baghdād came to be remembered, both in Arab folklore and in the estimation of the Orientalists, as a city of mathematicians, physicians, philosophers, grammarians, poets, and men of religion, a place for the exchange and evaluation of ideas. Literacy was widespread, and educated people gathered in the *majlis*² to hear wise men speak, to debate important questions, to match wits, and to entertain each other with stories, poetry, and music. It is in the *majlis* that Muḥammad ibn Dāwūd learned about the things for which he came to be remembered, namely, jurisprudence, poetry, and love.

Unfortunately, we can know for certain only a small portion of what Ibn Dāwūd learned or said in the *majlis*, since nothing remains of his juridical writings except brief quotations in later works. Although Ibn Dāwūd is said to have written somewhere between

² In contemporary usage, the word *majlis* means everything from, "parliament," to, "sitting room." In the Abbasid period, the *majlis* was a formal gathering of notables and experts, usually in the home of a ruler or other wealthy person.

seven³ and fourteen books, mostly treatises on jurisprudence and refutations of other jurists,⁴ the only one of his books that remains is *Kitāb al-Zahra* (*The Book of the Flower*), which contains much commentary on poetry and 104 of Ibn Dāwūd's own poems, consisting of 534 lines in total, which he attributed to a pseudonymous "Man of our Times" (*ba`ḍ ahl hādhā al-`asr*).

Centuries of scholarship, animosity, and literary artifice have made a fascinating character out of Muḥammad ibn Dāwūd, and most writers have conflated Ibn Dāwūd the author with the Man of our Times, his poetic persona, whom we must treat as a fictional character. In this dissertation, we will allow the Man of our Times verses to speak for themselves for the first time in modern scholarship. This chapter will seek to chart the development of the Ibn Dāwūd figure as ancient and modern authors have presented him. The second chapter will situate Ibn Dāwūd among other `Abbāsīd authors who wrote about "brotherhood," that is, friendship among males, which, as I shall argue, is the main theme of Ibn Dāwūd's poetry. Subsequent chapters will deal with thematic and stylistic features of the Man of our Times verses themselves. The third chapter will discuss the didactic purpose of *Kitāb al-Zahra*, with brotherhood as its central theme, as Ibn Dāwūd presents it in the introduction to that book and how the Man of our Times verses fulfill that purpose, including four famous poetic scenarios in which the Man of our Times lives out the lessons *Kitāb al-Zahra* has set out to teach. The fourth chapter will treat technical aspects of the Man of our Times poems, such as intertextuality and dramaturgic shifts of person, as well as reasons why

³ Ibn al-Nadīm includes the titles of all of Ibn Dāwūd's books that were known to him (Muḥammad ibn Abī Ya`qūb Ishāq Ibn al-Nadīm. *Kitāb al-Fihrist*, ed. Gustav Flügel [Beirut: Khayats, 1964], 217).

⁴ Khalīl ibn Ayybak Ṣafadī, *Kitāb al-Wāfi bi-'l-Wafayāt*, ed. Muḥammad Ḥujayrī, et al. (Leipzig: Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft, 1931) 24: 58.

Ibn Dāwūd might have employed those techniques. A full presentation of the Man of our Times verses, along with an English translation, will follow.

Muḥammad ibn Dāwūd grew up around learned people. His father Dāwūd ibn `Alī (d. 884), was the founding *qādī* of the now-defunct Zāhirite *madhhab* (school of jurisprudence) and a connoisseur of poetry. He surrounded himself with traditionists, grammarians, and poets, notably the grammarian Abū `Abdullāh Nifṭawayh, whose name would become attached to a famous anecdote about Ibn Dāwūd's death. Muḥammad ibn Dāwūd later assumed leadership of the *madhhab* and inherited his father's circle of learned companions, and it seems that he enjoyed the reputation of an expert on poetry as well as on jurisprudence.⁵

A book like *Kitāb al-Zahra* could only have originated in the *majlis* in an urban center in the classical period of Islamic civilization. It is one of the early works of *adab*, the genre which began in the early Abbasid period and dominated Arabic prose literature for much of the pre-modern period.⁶ Much as epic poetry is the art form of a society on the brink of literacy and the novel is the art form of an industrialized one so prosperous that people spend their copious leisure time alone and printing presses are so ubiquitous that novels do not need to lend themselves to memorization, *adab* belongs to a society in which new cultures, each with an ancient tradition of writing, are being encountered, but in which the Bedouin who knows thousands of proverbs and lines of poetry from memory is held as an

⁵ Abū Bakr Aḥmad ibn `Alī Al-Baghdādī, *Ta'rīkh Baghdād aw Madīnat al-Salām* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Khānjī, 1931), 5: 256.

⁶ For further discussion of the characteristics and development of *adab* as a literary genre, see F. Gabrieli, "Adab," *The Encyclopedia of Islam* (Leiden: Brill, 1978), 1: 175-176. For a detailed explanation of the evolution of the meanings of the word *adab*, see S.A. Bonebakker, "Adab and the concept of *belles-lettres*," in *The Cambridge History of Arabic Literature: Abbasid Belles-Lettres*, ed. Julia Ashtiany *et al.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 16-30.

ideal master of language. *Adab* might be described as a *majlis* on paper, a collection of anecdotes, excerpts of poetry, and one-line sayings all related to one or several themes, for the purpose of making the reader wiser and more virtuous in general or more adept in a certain discipline.⁷ The books reflect the cosmopolitan spirit of the *majālis* of Baghdād and other cities, containing not only quotations from Arab authors, but also from the Greek, Syriac, Persian, and Indian scholars whose works were translated into Arabic in the `Abbāsīd period.⁸ The population of the Islamic state, and therefore the audience of *adab*, was comprised of Muslims as well as Christians, Jews, and Zoroastrians, and many of the books are non-sectarian in that the compiler does not assume that the reader ascribes to one religion or another, only that the reader is intelligent.

Whatever Ibn Dāwūd actually intended by composing those verses of his which survive and by compiling *Kitāb al-Zahra*, the interest that others have taken in him and his work forms a story of love, rivalry, and introspection. In this chapter, I will explore the development of the Ibn Dāwūd character as he has emerged in the writings of medieval Arab biographers, belletrists, and mystics, as well as Western Orientalist scholars.

Beginning in the century after Ibn Dāwūd's death and continuing for the next four centuries, the boy *qāḍī* appears as a colorful character in biographical dictionaries, a prodigy of the Arabic language and a martyr of love. The identification of Ibn Dāwūd as the author

⁷ Bonebakker, "Adab and the concept of *belles-lettres*," 24-26.

⁸ *Kitāb al-Zahra* includes a quotation from the Greek physician Galen (Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn Abī Sulaimān al-Iṣfahānī Ibn Dāwūd, *Kitāb al-Zahrah*, ed. A.R. Nykl and Ibrāhīm Ṭūqān [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1932], 18) and a saying attributed to a Persian king (Ibn Dāwūd, *KZ* 337).

of the, Man of our Times verses goes back as far as al-Mas`ūdī⁹ (280/856-345/956)¹⁰ and al-Washshā' (246/860-325/936),¹¹ near-contemporaries of Ibn Dāwūd, and from there, the story only grew. Biographical dictionaries such as *Ta'rīkh Baghdād aw Madīnat al-Salām* by al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī (392/1002-463/1071)¹², *Wafayāt al-A`yān* by Ibn Khallikān (608/1211-681/1282)¹³, *al-Wāfī bi-l-Wafayāt* by Ṣalah al-Dīn al-Ṣafadī (d. 1296), and the *Irshād* of Yāqūt al-Rūmī (574-575/1179-626/1229)¹⁴ have Ibn Dāwūd memorizing the Qur'an at age seven and taking on the leadership of the *Zāhirī madhhab* at the age of sixteen, by which time he has already mostly completed his *magnum opus*, *Kitāb al-Zahra*. According to these sources, his reason for writing *Kitāb al-Zahra* was his unrequited love for Muḥammad ibn Jāmi`, or Wahb ibn Jāmi`, as Ṣafadī gives the beloved's name.¹⁵ In keeping with the moral standards befitting a *qādī*,¹⁶ Ibn Dāwūd did his best to conceal the secret of his love, but the biographies tell of secret trysts, licentious verses about Ibn Jāmi` which are nowhere to be found in *Kitāb al-Zahra*, and a dramatic deathbed scene in which Ibn Dāwūd confides in Niṭawayh the grammarian that unrequited love has brought about his untimely death, and even though Ibn Dāwūd never reveals his beloved's name, Niṭawayh is certain that it is Ibn

⁹ Abū al-Ḥasan ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn `Alī Al-Mas`ūdī, *Murūj al-Dhahab wa-Ma`ādin al-Jawhar*, trans. C. Barbier de Meynard, (Tehran: Mu'assasat Maṭba'ati Ismā'īlīn, 1970), 254.

¹⁰ Ch. Pellat, "Al-Mas`ūdī," *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, 6:784-785.

¹¹ Lois Anita Giffen, *Theory of Profane Love Among the Arabs: The Development of a Genre* (New York: New York University Press, 1971), 13.

¹² R. Sellheim, "Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī," *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, 4:1111-1112.

¹³ J. W. Fück, "Ibn Khallikān," *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, 3:832-833.

¹⁴ Cl. Gilliot, "Yāqūt al-Rūmī," *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, 11:264-266.

¹⁵ Ṣafadī, *al-Wāfī*, 24:59.

¹⁶ The conduct befitting a person of a certain social role, such as a scribe, doctor, or gentleman, was a popular subject for *adab*, and it is in connection with these career-specific attributes that the biographies often state or imply that, for example, Ibn Dāwūd was a gentleman (*ẓarīf*), and therefore he wrote love poetry, or Ibn Dāwūd was a pious Muslim, and therefore he remained chaste.

Jāmi`.¹⁷

While the modern reader might find a sympathetic character in a great intellectual laid low by unrequited love, the medieval biographers did not intend a flattering portrayal. Obsession with Ibn Jāmi` is only one of the unattractive qualities with which the biographical dictionaries paint Ibn Dāwūd. We see him taking his own wit more seriously than his duties as a Muslim judge, and he answers serious questions of jurisprudence with riddles, *double-entendres*, and sometimes outright dismissal.¹⁸ This, combined with his lifelong homoerotic infatuation with Ibn Jāmi`, makes him, at best, silly, and, at worse, a sociopath whose presence in a position of leadership is a danger to the Islamic polity.¹⁹ Of course, it would be unwise to accept uncritically this characterization of Ibn Dāwūd, as many of the compilers of these biographical dictionaries and the sources that informed them were inimical to Ibn Dāwūd or the Zāhirite ideas he represented. According to El-Rouayheb, “[B]iographical entries were written within a social setting marked by rivalries, enmity, and alliances, and thus were charged with ‘political’ significance.”²⁰ Thus we find in Ibn Khallikān’s biographical dictionary a clear bias in favor of Ibn Surayj the Shāfi`ite jurist, who wins one battle of words after another against the Zāhirite Ibn Dāwūd.²¹

Various versions of the story of Ibn Dāwūd’s love for Ibn Jāmi` are found in *adab*

¹⁷ Raven has provided an English translation of twenty-two biographical anecdotes about Ibn Dāwūd (Willem Raven, *Ibn Dāwūd al-Isbahānī and his Kitāb al-Zahra*, [Amsterdam, 1989], 36-50).

¹⁸ Al-Baghdādī, *TB*, 5:256-257.

¹⁹ Compare the fate of Abū Nuwās at the hands of the biographers. A brilliant, innovative poet with an irreverent sense of humor, Abū Nuwās is often depicted in later literature as a comic buffoon, and his wine poems and homoerotic verses have contributed to his loss of reputation over the centuries (Philip F. Kennedy, *Abū Nuwās: A Genius of Poetry*, [Oxford: Oneworld, 2005], 27-28).

²⁰ Khaled El-Rouayheb, *Before Homosexuality in the Arab-Islamic World, 1500-1800* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2005), 50.

²¹ Al-Qāḍī Ibn Khallikān, *Kitāb Wafayāt al-A`yān wa-Anbā’ Abnā’ al-Zamān* (Cairo: Būlāq, 1862), 21-22.

books on love that date from the late Middle Ages, with each author including Ibn Dāwūd in a different category or mentioning him for a different reason. Ibn Dāwūd's deathbed conversation with Nifṭawayh forms the first anecdote in the introduction of Mughulṭāī's (690/1291-762/1361)²² *Al-Wāḍiḥ al-Mubīn fī dhikr man Istashhada min al-Muḥibbīn* (usually called *The Biographical Dictionary of the Martyrs of Love* in English). The book contains a chapter for each letter of the Arabic alphabet, much like a *dīwān* of poetry, with each chapter containing numerous anecdotes about star-crossed lovers, but the story of Ibn Dāwūd's death appears in Mughulṭāī's prologue, where the author introduces the phenomenon of lovers dying from love.²³ Ibn Abī Ḥajala's (725/1325-776/1375)²⁴ *Dīwān al-Ṣabāba* (*Dīwān of Love*) contains sections on caliphs and princes, men who loved women, men who loved men, and lovers who remained chaste, and Ibn Dāwūd is counted among the chaste lovers. Some two hundred years after Mughulṭāī and Ibn Abī Ḥajala, Dāwūd al-Anṭākī (d. 1599)²⁵ devotes several pages of his *Tazyīn al-Aswāq* to Ibn Dāwūd. Ibn Dāwūd's story is part of the section about men who loved males, and among those, he is classified among those who died after being unable to attain the beloved.²⁶ It is worthy of note that these *adab* books say less about Ibn Dāwūd's juridical career or his rivalry with Ibn Surayj, which subjects receive equal attention or even take precedence over his love story in the

²² Giffen, *Profane Love*, 33.

²³ Al-Ḥāfiẓ Mughulṭāī, *Al-Wāḍiḥ al-Mubīn fī Dhikr man Ustushhida min al-Muḥibbīn*, (Beirut: al-Intishār al-`Arabī, 1997), 18-19.

²⁴ Giffen, *Profane Love*, 38.

²⁵ El-Rouayheb, *Before Homosexuality*, 19.

²⁶ Dāwūd ibn `Umar Al- Anṭākī, *Tazyīn al-Aswāq fī Akhbār al-`Ushshāq wa-bi-Ākhirihī Dīwān al-Ṣabāba* (Beirut: Dār Ḥamad wa-Maḥyū, 1972). *Tazyīn al-Aswāq*, written seven centuries after *Kitāb al-Zahra* is the first book to include Ibn Dāwūd's love story in a category specific to love stories about two males, but this aspect of the Ibn Dāwūd character would play a pivotal role in Massignon's estimation of him, which was the next time any author devoted more than a few lines to the discussion of Ibn Dāwūd.

biographical dictionaries, than they do about his love for Ibn Jāmi`. These books did not aim to be encyclopedias or to report everything that was known about the historical figures mentioned in them; love was at the center of every anecdote, and Ibn Dāwūd's role in them was that of a character in a love story.

The post-`Abbāsīd *adab* works on love quote more extensively from the biographical dictionaries than they do from *Kitāb al-Zahra* itself, but they include details that appeal to readers' taste for personal stories, beyond oblique references to events such as one might find in poetry. To capture the attention of the *adab* writers, Ibn Dāwūd would not even have to have written poetry; he would need only to have fallen in love. *Ta'rīkh Baghdād* has Ibn Dāwūd making an isolated comment that he had suffered from love, presumably unrequited, since childhood,²⁷ and another comment, elsewhere, that he wrote most of *Kitāb al-Zahra* while his father was still living,²⁸ that is, by the time he was sixteen years old. Elsewhere, he states that Ibn Jāmi` provided the impetus for the composition of *Kitāb al-Zahra*.²⁹ These, along with the story in which Ibn Dāwūd leaves the bath with his face veiled, later unveiling his face before Ibn Jāmi`,³⁰ and the story of Ibn Dāwūd's death, appear as unconnected anecdotes.³¹ Al-Anṭākī makes these into a single story, and says,

“This [beloved] is Muḥammad ibn Jāmi` al-Ṣaydalānī. [...] It is said that [Ibn Dāwūd] wrote [his] aforementioned book for no reason other than this love, and that there are allusions to it

²⁷ Al-Baghdādī, *TB*, 5:259.

²⁸ Al-Baghdādī, *TB*, 5:259.

²⁹ Al-Baghdādī, *TB*, 5:260.

³⁰ Al-Baghdādī, *TB*, 5:261.

³¹ Al-Baghdādī, *TB*, 5:262.

in the beginning of the book.”³²

Although gossip and polemic may have been the aim of the biographers, they left much to the reader’s imagination about Ibn Dāwūd’s relationship with Ibn Jāmi`; the anecdotes are, at least on the surface, simply anecdotes, each an individual *khavar*, an isolated report, meant to be recited as would be a proverb or a line of poetry. They refrain from making general statements, and the reader is left to draw his own conclusions. Likewise, Ibn Dāwūd ascribed to a style of love poetry in which the attributes of the beloved are rarely mentioned; his poems draw attention to love, not to the beloved. Al-Anṭākī reads into the verses and anecdotes and says, “Their relationship became known, and they did not deny it; it was in the open, and they did not conceal it.”³³

The biographical dictionaries and *adab* love stories allege that Ibn Dāwūd was a proponent of *al-naẓar al-mubāḥ* (“the permitted gaze”), meaning that it is *ḥalāl* (lawful) for a Muslim to gaze at a beautiful person, even though there is an implicit danger of falling in love with someone he cannot marry, but such a teaching appears nowhere in Ibn Dāwūd’s own writings. The allegation that Ibn Dāwūd espoused *al-naẓar al-mubāḥ* seems to go back only as far as the deathbed anecdote, attributed to the grammarian Niṭawayh (244/858-323/935),³⁴ which first appeared in *Ta’rikh Baghdād*.³⁵

³² Al-Anṭākī, *Tazyīn*, 333.

³³ Al-Anṭākī, *Tazyīn* 333.

³⁴ Raven, *MBD*, 30.

³⁵ A verse of Ibn Dāwūd’s in *Kitāb al-Zahra* has the beloved blushing when the lover looks at him (Ibn Dāwūd, *KZ*, 81), but this is hardly evidence that Ibn Dāwūd considered gazing at the beloved to be licit from a juridical perspective.

[Nifṭawayh] said: I visited Muḥammad ibn Dāwūd during the illness from which he died, and I said to him, “How are you?”

He said, “You know well whose love has brought me to this state.”

I said, “What prevents you from enjoying it while you are able?”

He said, “Enjoyment is of two kinds; one of them is the permitted gaze, and the other is the proscribed pleasure. As for the permitted gaze, it has caused in me what you see, and as for the forbidden pleasure, I was prevented from it by what my father recited[.] ... [T]he Prophet, peace be upon him, said, “He who loves and conceals [his love] and remains chaste and patient [until death], God forgives him and takes him to Heaven.”³⁶

In some versions of this anecdote, Ibn Dāwūd and Nifṭawayh go on to recite verses about gazing at the beloved.³⁷ *Ta’rīkh Baghdād* and other sources have him reciting verses not found in *Kitāb al-Zahra*, that allude to the doctrine of *al-naẓar al-mubāḥ*³⁸ or describe the beloved’s attractive physical attributes.³⁹ *Dīwān al-Ṣabāba* attributes to Ibn Dāwūd an even more incriminating statement, “The charity of the handsome face is that chaste people are allowed to look at it,”⁴⁰ as well as this anecdote, which explicitly depicts Ibn Dāwūd gazing at his beloved.

It is said that his beloved was Muḥammad, also called Wahb, ibn Jāmi` al-Ṣaydalānī. [Ibn Jāmi`] went to the Commander of the Faithful, and he was asked about Ibn Dāwūd, whether [Ibn Jāmi`] had ever seen him do anything despicable. He said, “No, O Commander of the Faithful, except that I spent the night with him, and he would uncover my face and say, ‘O

³⁶ Al-Baghdādī, *TB*, 5:262.

³⁷ Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad Ibn Abī Ḥajala, *Dīwān al-Ṣabāba* in al-Anṭākī, *Tazyīn*, 257.

³⁸ Al-Baghdādī. *TB*, 5:261.

³⁹ Al-Baghdādī. *TB*, 5:262.

⁴⁰ Ibn Abī Ḥajala, *Ṣabāba*, 255.

Lord, You know that I love him and how greatly You have cared for him.’’⁴¹

Ibn Abī Ḥajala and the *adab* love story writers, in contrast to the biographers, mean these stories to indicate Ibn Dāwūd’s virtue. Ibn Abī Ḥajala holds him up as an example, showing how he sought to win Ibn Jāmi’s love with his piety and chastity,⁴² whereas Mughultāi so much as makes him a martyr of love.

Among a certain group of people, Ibn Dāwūd became notorious for advocating the permitted gaze and even more notorious for reciting the controversial *ḥadīth al-`ishq* (*ḥadīth* of love),⁴³ which appears in many versions of the deathbed anecdote, going back as far as *Ta’rīkh Baghdād*.⁴⁴ These were the Ḥanbalite religious scholars, most notably Ibn al-Jawzī (510/1116-597-1200)⁴⁵, Ibn Taymiyya, and Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (691/1272-751/1350)⁴⁶. The twelfth and thirteenth centuries saw a flourishing of Ḥanbalite thought, in which scholars sought to separate the ideas and practices which were true to the essence of Islam from heresies and innovations which had also become established in the first five centuries of Islamic civilization. Books such as *Dhamm al-Hawā* (*The Censure of Love*) and *al-Muntaẓam fī Ta’rīkh al-Mulūk wa-’l-Umam* (*The Well-Ordered Chronicle of Kings and Nations*) by Ibn al-Jawzī and *Rawḍat al-Muḥibbīn* (*The Garden of Lovers*) have a similar format to works of *adab* from the same period, that is, large collections of brief anecdotes,

⁴¹ Ibn Abī Ḥajala, *Ṣabāba*, 255.

⁴² Ibn Abī Ḥajala, *Ṣabāba*, 255.

⁴³ The *ḥadīth al-`ishq* appears in *Kitāb al-Zahra*, with Ibn Dāwūd’s own name in the *isnād* (Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 66). This is sufficient to make those who rejected this *ḥadīth* view Ibn Dāwūd as an opponent, but he presents it as one of many things that have been said about the concepts and motifs to which the chapters of *Kitāb al-Zahra* are devoted; it is hardly a central theme of *Kitāb al-Zahra* or of the Man of our Times poems.

⁴⁴ Al-Baghdādī, *TB*, 5:262.

⁴⁵ Giffen, *Profane Love*, 27.

⁴⁶ Giffen, *Profane Love*, 34.

but these books are unambiguous in representing the Ḥanbalite ideology. Whereas a book like *Kitāb al-Zahra* demonstrates the author's moral virtue as well as his literary virtuosity, it appeals to the reader's sense of wit and aesthetics as much as it does to his piety, but when the Ḥanbalite jurists write about love and lovers (including Ibn Dāwūd), it is to warn the reader against an array of heresies and vices, and the tone is explicitly polemical, so much so that, according to Giffen, Ibn al-Jawzī seems to have written *Dhamm al-Hawā* in order to scare the reader out of falling in love by enumerating the calamitous consequences the lover will encounter in this world and the next.⁴⁷

Ibn Dāwūd is on the Ḥanbalites' list of enemies for a number of reasons, from being a Zāhirite to writing love poetry that keeps the reader's mind preoccupied with thoughts of illicit love, and these are only the charges of which Ibn Dāwūd was actually guilty. Equally often, the Ibn Dāwūd character whose reputation grew and became distorted over the centuries gets caught in the middle of Ibn al-Jawzī's polemic against the Ṣūfīs, and his name is mentioned either in connection with the permitted gaze⁴⁸ or the *ḥadīth al-`ishq*.

Because of his characterization as a well-read, sharp-witted urbanite in the biographical dictionaries, a martyr of love in the *adab* works on love, and a proponent of libertine and theologically suspect ideas in the Ḥanbalite religious treatises, Ibn Dāwūd gained the reputation, however unjustly, for placing a greater value on love and on fine speech than on worship of God. This was the Ibn Dāwūd character that the West came to know. Louis Massignon (1883-1962) was the Orientalist scholar responsible for introducing

⁴⁷ Giffen, *Profane Love*, 28-29.

⁴⁸ Bell mentions that, although Ibn al-Jawzī pillories Ibn Dāwūd on the issue of *naẓar*, he praises Ibn Dāwūd for advocating concealment of the secret of love (Bell, Joseph Norment, *Love Theory in Later Hanbalite Islam*, [Albany: State University of New York Press, 1979], 26).

Ibn Dāwūd to the West, although his interest in Ibn Dāwūd began for a different reason than that of any of the previously mentioned groups of writers. Massignon's treatment of Ibn Dāwūd is found in the first volume of the former's life's work, *The Passion of al-Ḥallāj*, which deals with the life, teachings, and legacy of the Ṣūfī mystic, as well as Massignon's own ideas on the implications of al-Ḥallāj's mysticism for Muslims and Christians.

Massignon's interest in Ibn Dāwūd was rooted in the fact that Ibn Dāwūd was one of the many judges who wrote *fatwās* (judgments) condemning al-Ḥallāj's activities, and it was Ibn Dāwūd's *fatwā* that ultimately decided the fate of al-Ḥallāj, although al-Ḥallāj's execution did not take place until twelve years after Ibn Dāwūd's death.⁴⁹ Massignon devotes approximately thirty pages to the discussion of Ibn Dāwūd and his writings, a far more extensive treatment than any previous writer had given him, and he contrasted Ibn Dāwūd's comments on love, as found in *Kitāb al-Zahra*, with the teachings of al-Ḥallāj and his followers on similar matters, including comparing the levels of love between two people, as specified in the second chapter of *Kitāb al-Zahra*,⁵⁰ to Platonic-influenced and Ṣūfī descriptions of levels of spiritual states and levels of love between a believer and God.⁵¹

According to Massignon, Ibn Dāwūd's condemnation of al-Ḥallāj was the result of a flawed understanding of Islam and of love. Al-Ḥallāj, like other Ṣūfīs, used words like *shaghaf* ("passion") and *ishq* ("erotic love") to describe the love that the believer feels for God. Massignon defended the Ṣūfī idea that the ultimate goal of love for another human being is love for God; thus, one cannot be called a martyr of love unless it is God for whose

⁴⁹ Louis Massignon, *The Passion of al-Ḥallāj: Mystic and Martyr of Islam*, trans. Herbert Mason (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), 1:33.

⁵⁰ Ibn Dāwūd, *KZ*, 18-21.

⁵¹ Massignon, *Passion*, 1:340-342.

love the lover is killed. The Ṣūfīs frequently used stories about lovers famous for their fidelity, chastity, and suffering, such as Qays (called Majnūn) and Laylā, Jamīl and Buthayna, and even Ibn Dāwūd and Ibn Jāmi`,⁵² as parables to illustrate how the servant of God feels and behaves toward his Lord, and mystical poetry imitates many of the motifs of erotic poetry. Whereas the Ḥanbalites criticized Ibn Dāwūd, albeit on questionable grounds, for having too much in common with the Ṣūfīs, Massignon criticized him for having too little in common with them.⁵³ Ibn Dāwūd's legalistic leanings, whether in jurisprudence or in *adab*, were antithetical to the pure faith of al-Ḥallāj.

Massignon's Ibn Dāwūd, by writing hundreds and compiling thousands of verses of love poetry without mentioning love for God and then by dying of love for a human beloved, missed the mark entirely. He failed to understand the truth of al-Ḥallāj's teachings because he failed to understand love. According to Massignon, Ibn Dāwūd followed his own personal feelings and predilections and then made a philosophical system out of them. The Arabic language pleased Ibn Dāwūd, and therefore he, like his father and his companions, declared the external meaning of a word (its *ẓāhir*) to be its truth. Ibn Jāmi`'s countenance pleased Ibn Dāwūd, and thus he declared it permissible to gaze at the beloved's face, even promising salvation for the lover who can devote himself to adoration of his beloved until the end of his life. Even worse than getting too caught up in the things of this world, like erotic

⁵² Hellmut Ritter, *The Ocean of the Soul: Man, the World, and God in the Stories of Farīd al-Dīn `Aṭṭār*, trans. John O'Kane (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 172.

The example of the story about Majnūn and Laylā which Ritter cites from the *Muṣibatnāmah* is but one of many Ṣūfī allegories mentioned in *The Ocean of the Soul*.

⁵³ *Kitāb al-Zahra* makes it seem as though the truth is somewhere in between. Ibn Dāwūd occasionally attributes one or another line of thinking to the Ṣūfīs, but he does not quote any poems by well-known Ṣūfīs. Raven even suggests that Ibn Dāwūd deliberately omitted the names of Ṣūfī poets from *Kitāb al-Zahra* (Raven, *MBD*, 21). The Ṣūfīs appear in *Kitāb al-Zahra* as one of many sources of which Ibn Dāwūd had little firsthand knowledge. He quote nameless Ṣūfīs the way he quotes nameless Persian kings.

infatuation or witty exchange, even worse than taking the *ḥadīth al-`ishq* at face value, Massignon's Ibn Dāwūd made a religion out of an intrinsically rebellious, hedonistic, and sinful love.

Ibn Dāwūd's first mistake, in Massignon's eyes, was the name of his *madhhab*, *Zāhirī*, named for the belief that the true meaning of a word or *āya* is what it appears to be, and therefore the meaning is obvious and can be agreed on by every intelligent person who knows the Arabic language. This was objectionable, according to Massignon, because it goes against the widely held *Ṣūfī* principle that Scripture (as well as some poetry), has both a *ẓāhir* (external) meaning, obvious to all readers, and a *bāṭin* (internal) meaning, comprehensible only to those spiritually advanced enough to understand it. While it is impossible to know, based on *Kitāb al-Zahra*, Ibn Dāwūd's opinions and those of his *Zāhiri* contemporaries toward *Ṣūfī*sm, Massignon seems ready to conflate Ibn Dāwūd's ideas with those of other, later writers, such as the aforementioned thirteenth-century *Ḥanbalites* and make him an enemy of al-Ḥallāj from the outset.

His second mistake was conceiving of no love greater than the highest level of love that one human being can feel for another, or at least, this is how Massignon interprets Ibn Dāwūd's presentation of the levels of love, anecdotes about lovers, and erotic poetry. In *Kitāb al-Zahra*, Majnūn and Laylā are only mortals who have unusually strong feelings toward each other; he fails to grasp that the value of their love story is as a this-worldly symbol of the greatest love that can exist, love for God. Ibn Dāwūd treats death from love as an end in itself and thereby misses the spiritual lesson. Massignon refers to this preoccupation with a love that begins in this world and ends in this world as, "Uranism," so

called because the Uranistic thinker looks heavenward and sees only the heavens but not Heaven, because he loves with a love that consumes the mind but misses the spirit. The term has been used in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries⁵⁴ with various shades of meaning, always with a strong connotation of homoeroticism.⁵⁵

In Massignon's time, the words "uranism," "inversion," and, "homosexuality," were synonyms, with the latter, a medical term originating in the then-nascent field of psychiatry, eventually displacing the others. Both in *The Passion of al-Ḥallāj*, in which Ibn Dāwūd serves as the prime example, and in his treatise *La Prière sur Sodome (The Prayer for Sodom)*,⁵⁶ Massignon presents male homosexual attraction and an intellectualized love for sensual pleasures as aspects of the same personality type. Massignon's audience would not have been surprised to see an *adīb* of such melancholy temperament as Ibn Dāwūd portrayed as a homosexual, or rather, as a caricature of one. Massignon's Ibn Dāwūd was far from being the only homosexual character in early twentieth-century literature to fancy himself a martyr of love. Anthony Heilbut describes this phenomenon in his biography of Thomas Mann.

Since Oscar Wilde (or, in German, the lyrics of Mann's favorite poet August von Platen), gay melancholia has fragilely balanced the grandiose, the campy, and the genuinely afflicted. Tricked and wounded by the philistines' assaults, seeing themselves as little Saint Sebastians (Mann's preferred saint), some youthful fops exhibit a form of aesthetic Catholicism, reveling in their misery. Hanno [a character in Mann's novel

⁵⁴ Karl-Heinrich Ulrichs used the term *Urning*, translated into English as, "Uranian," to describe a male who is sexually attracted to other males. A group of English poets in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, all of them educated in the Greco-Roman Classics, wrote what they called, "Uranian poetry," erotic verse, conservative in form and technique, directed toward adolescent boys and young men.

⁵⁵ Massignon uses the term with a clearly negative connotation, in contrast to the spiritual connotation it carries in Phaedrus' speech in Plato's *Symposium*.

⁵⁶ Louis Massignon, "La Prière sur Sodome," in *Les trois prières d'Abraham* (Paris: Cerf, 1997), 33-57.

Buddenbrooks] displays operatic excesses of self-pity unmitigated by humor, along with a precise sense of the life around him. It is a knowledge specifically predicated on his sexual nature.⁵⁷

Massignon describes Ibn Dāwūd's character vividly, drawing heavily on the stories of his love for Ibn Jāmi` as found in the biographical dictionaries and the encyclopedias of lovers. If the biographers wanted Ibn Dāwūd to be remembered as a sexual deviant who twisted the teachings of Islam to serve his own purposes, Massignon's book is the strongest indication that they succeeded. He refers to the bath-house story, among the most far-fetched of the biographical anecdotes, as, "an authentic anecdote from the life of Ibn Dāwūd."⁵⁸ Massignon refers to Ibn Dāwūd as, "a sensitive personality, frail and effeminate,"⁵⁹ even though none of the medieval sources explicitly describe him as such,⁶⁰ and he uses as evidence only three biographical anecdotes out of the twenty-two, excluding minor variations, that exist.⁶¹ He uses the anecdote about the young Ibn Dāwūd's distress over a nickname his playmates have given him as evidence that he was an emotionally sensitive, and therefore effeminate, child who would become an emotionally sensitive, and therefore effeminate, adult.⁶² His description of Ibn Dāwūd's death scene is even more vivid and detailed than the version that appears in *al-Wāḍiḥ al-Mubīn*.

⁵⁷ Anthony Heilbut, *Thomas Mann: Eros and Literature*, (London: Papermac, 1997), 103.

⁵⁸ Massignon, *Passion*, 1:362-363.

⁵⁹ Massignon, *Passion*, 1:358.

⁶⁰ They do not include the word *mukhannath*, which in the time the biographical dictionaries were written, referred to a man with effeminate mannerisms, or *ma'būn*, which referred to a man in the passive role in homosexual intercourse. It is not immediately clear which phrase in the anecdotes led Massignon to this description. He may be interpreting the description of Ibn Dāwūd as a gentlemen and writer of fine poetry, or perhaps Ṣafadī's explanation of the phrase *uṣfūr al-shawk* to mean that Ibn Dāwūd had a sallow complexion (Ṣafadī, *al-Wāḍiḥ*, 24:58), combined with the fact that the latter died at age forty-two.

⁶¹ Raven, *MBD*, 32. Raven presents the anecdotes in full.

⁶² Massignon, *Passion*, 1:358.

“We glimpse the precious, ordered setting of Ibn Dāwūd’s death [...] still young, lavished with attentions and weary regrets, between the light filtering in from the outside through the *shahnishin* grating and the empty space that the ‘tarma’ overlooks, before a cage that holds a blinded twittering nightingale. His last remarks show him turning back, restored to serenity, to the renunciation of forbidden pleasures in his past [...]; what was of concern to him was that he was allowed in this way to carry the mental conception of this forbidden pleasure intact, since it was unsatisfied, to the paradise of the uranians.”⁶³

Massignon’s reasons for vilifying Ibn Dāwūd are twofold; first, Ibn Dāwūd’s role in *The Passion of al-Ḥallāj* is that of a dramatic foil to al-Ḥallāj, legalistic instead of mystical, in love with a human being to the exclusion of God, and, second, the Ibn Dāwūd character in *The Passion of al-Ḥallāj* represents Massignon’s own demons. *Ta’rīkh Baghdād* and all subsequent accounts have it that Ibn Dāwūd fell in love with Ibn Jāmi` when the former (as well as, presumably, the latter) was in his teens, during which time, and as a direct result of which, he composed *Kitāb al-Zahra*.⁶⁴

Massignon’s belief that Ibn Dāwūd’s death from love, as the story had come down to him, was the worst possible response to his youthful passion was, in part, based on personal experience. In 1906, the twenty-three year old Massignon was living in Cairo, where he met and became friends with Luis de la Cuadra, a Spanish convert to Islam. Their relationship was passionate, even sexual, and Massignon wrote that de la Cuadra “taught him ‘in a

⁶³ Massignon, *Passion*, 1:361.

⁶⁴ Al-Baghdādī. *TB*, 5:259.

crooked way' how love is 'torn from our hearts for the beloved.'"⁶⁵ The following year, French Ministry of Education sent Massignon to Baghdad,⁶⁶ and from that time on, their lives took divergent paths. Massignon repented of his youthful "debauchery" with de la Cuadra and went on to marry, have children, become ordained as a Christian priest, and see in al-Ḥallāj a Muslim who understood faith and love, even whose teachings came very close to the Christian doctrine of vicarious atonement; de la Cuadra would commit suicide while imprisoned in Spain,⁶⁷ but Massignon continued to pray for his friend's salvation until the former's death in 1962.⁶⁸

Massignon's Ibn Dāwūd never outgrew his youthful folly, and he spent the remaining twenty-six years of his life suffering hopelessly from his unrequited love for Ibn Jāmi', mired in his earthbound interpretation of Islam, preferring enslavement to his own hedonistic desires over salvation. The Ibn Dāwūd character in *The Passion of al-Ḥallāj* is what Massignon might have become if he had not, with God's help, overcome the Uranistic love of his youth. In writing about him, Massignon is fighting his own demons.

The publication of *The Passion of al-Ḥallāj* introduced Ibn Dāwūd and *Kitāb al-Zahra* to the West, and subsequent studies have revolved around *Kitāb al-Zahra* rather than Ibn Dāwūd as a martyr of love. In 1932, Alois Nykl (1885-1958), in collaboration with Ibrāhīm Ṭūqān, published a printed edition of *Kitāb al-Zahra*, based on the only manuscript of it that was known, at that time, to survive. Nykl's purpose in making the edition was its

⁶⁵ Massignon, *Passion*, 1:xxiv.

⁶⁶ Jerry Ryan, "The mystical vision of Louis Massignon: Islam inspired scholar's gratitude, life work, and Christian faith," *National Catholic Reporter*, December 17, 2004.

⁶⁷ David Pryce-Jones, "The Mystique of Louis Massignon," *Covenant Global Jewish Magazine*, vol. 1, issue 2, April 2007.

⁶⁸ Massignon, *Passion*, 1: xxiv.

relationship to the slightly later *Ṭawq al-Ḥamāma* (*The Dove's Neck-Ring*) by the Andalusian Ibn Ḥazm (383/993-456/1064),⁶⁹ since both books deal with the theme of love, and both authors were *Zāhirites*.⁷⁰ Nykl originally intended to translate *Kitāb al-Zahra* into English, but he eventually decided that publishing his edition of the text in the original Arabic would be of more immediate benefit, and he postponed the translation.⁷¹ As of 2010, no English translation exists of *Kitāb al-Zahra* in its entirety.

Lois Giffen's *Theory of Profane Love Among the Arabs: The Development of a Genre*, recognized the originality of thought that went into the production of *Kitāb al-Zahra*, but it, like its predecessors, treated Ibn Dāwūd as though his only intention were to write about love. The first chapter is a summary of some twenty works of *adab* which were written over a span of eight centuries, on the theme of love, and she singles out these twenty because, in her estimation, their compilers seek to make a statement about the nature of love or the proper conduct of lovers, rather than simply presenting verses and anecdotes about love because they are entertaining. *Kitāb al-Zahra* is, according, to Giffen, the earliest book-length work in Arabic dealing primarily with the theory of love.⁷² In the summary of *Kitāb al-Zahra* and of its author's biography, she mentions Ibn Dāwūd's love for Ibn Jāmi` and offers no comment on the story's veracity or lack thereof. She, like Massignon, repeats the deathbed anecdote. In subsequent chapters, she explores the technical terms involved in the discourse on love and, finally, the major points of debate among medieval Arab thinkers about the nature of love.

⁶⁹ Giffen, *Profane Love*, 23.

⁷⁰ Nykl, introduction to *Kitāb al-Zahra* by Muḥammad ibn Dāwūd, 1.

⁷¹ Nykl, introduction to *KZ*, 2-3.

⁷² Giffen, *Profane Love*, 8-13.

Nearly a millennium after his death, Ibn Dāwūd finally became the primary subject of a scholarly work. Willem Raven defended his doctoral dissertation *Ibn Dāwūd al-Iṣbahānī and his Kitāb al-Zahra* in 1989. Raven is the first scholar to consider Ibn Dāwūd as an important thinker in his own right, rather than being content to compare him to others. He deals with aspects of Ibn Dāwūd's writing that went unnoticed or ignored for centuries in the East and the West alike. Raven's Ibn Dāwūd is primarily a literary critic, not a lover, and *Kitāb al-Zahra* is a book about love poetry, not about love⁷³ and that his simply compiling an *adab* work on love poetry, even if he had not written a single word of commentary, is an act of literary criticism.⁷⁴ He considers Ibn Dāwūd unique, or at least ahead of his time, in that he comments extensively on the content of the poems he quotes, assessing the purity of the poetic personae's feelings of love and sometimes criticizing them for displaying a selfish or fickle attitude, at a time when most commentaries on poetry concentrated on form and meter to the exclusion of content,⁷⁵ and herein lies some of Raven's highest praise for Ibn Dāwūd.

[Ibn Dāwūd] did more than just choose and paste together, as so many of his countrymen; his book displays a clear view on genres and motifs, and on the improperness of some of them.⁷⁶

Raven's exploration of Ibn Dāwūd and his writing is as broad as it is detailed, and among the subjects he discusses are an overview of the second half of *Kitāb al-Zahra*, which deals with poetry on subjects other than love, the cultural and literary *milieu* that shaped Ibn

⁷³ Raven, *MBD*, 1.

⁷⁴ Raven, *MBD*, 19.

⁷⁵ Raven, *MBD*, 20.

⁷⁶ Raven, *MBD*, 19.

Dāwūd, the possible influence on the contents of *Kitāb al-Zahra* of materials based on Greek wisdom literature, and a description of his vision of the Ibn Dāwūd literary character. He is highly skeptical of most of the content of the biographical anecdotes; he is the first person to question, in writing, that Ibn Dāwūd worked as a *qāḍī* at the age of sixteen (he raises the possibility that Nifṭawayh may have held the position after Dāwūd died and before his son Muḥammad came of age),⁷⁷ that he wrote *Kitāb al-Zahra* at such a young age, that Ibn Jāmi`, if he even existed, was the beloved to whom Ibn Dāwūd addressed his love poetry, and that their youthful falling-out precipitated the composition of *Kitāb al-Zahra*. In Raven's words, "In trying to reconstruct a life, being dull or incomplete is preferable than yielding to the flight of fancy."⁷⁸ He is also the first to assert that *al-naẓar al-mubāḥ* (the permitted gaze) is mentioned nowhere in *Kitāb al-Zahra*, thereby clearing Ibn Dāwūd's name of centuries of unfounded gossip.⁷⁹

Far from expressing an uncritical admiration for Ibn Dāwūd, Raven frequently makes dismissive remarks about him, such as, "our author had a capricious mind"⁸⁰ and, "[he] occasionally displays a tendency toward sophistry and witticism."⁸¹ He even disagrees with Ibn Dāwūd's statement of the purpose of *Kitāb al-Zahra*, saying, "the author's claim [that *Kitāb al-Zahra* is about love] is inaccurate and [...] in reality the first half of his book is about love poetry, not about love."⁸²

While Raven cautions his readers about interpreting anything in the biographical

⁷⁷ Raven, *MBD*, 4.

⁷⁸ Raven, *MBD*, 3.

⁷⁹ Raven, *MBD*, 17.

⁸⁰ Raven, *MBD*, 2.

⁸¹ Raven, *MBD*, 7.

⁸² Raven, *MBD*, 1.

anecdotes or in the text of *Kitāb al-Zahra* itself as though it refers literally to events in Ibn Dāwūd's life, he considers the story the biographers have spun too interesting not to repeat. The fact that the biographers are so unanimous in referring, in one way or another, to what Raven calls Ibn Dāwūd's, "homosexual inclinations,"⁸³ convinces him that Ibn Dāwūd's must have behaved in some way that would earn him that reputation. No compelling proof, however, of Ibn Dāwūd being what today would be called a homosexual man can be found in *Kitāb al-Zahra*.

A millennium of speculation, vitriol, and romantic fancy has made a flawed but sympathetic character out of Muḥammad ibn Dāwūd. Each writer who contributed to the development of the character was motivated by his own sense of what was right and wrong in love, literature, theology, and historiography. For the fourteenth-century *adab* writers Mughultāi and Ibn Abī Ḥajala, there is nothing unchaste or ribald about harboring feelings of unrequited love and attraction for one's entire life, so long as one abstains from illicit sexual acts. For Massignon, indulging one's emotions and personal desires, even in the absence of physical consummation, to the exclusion of what today would be called pursuing a relationship with God, is a matter of moral depravity, especially for a religious leader. Raven at once divests Ibn Dāwūd of his laurels and pardons him of slanderous accusations on the basis that one ought not to judge a person's character based on hearsay, all the more so if that person lived in the distant past. All of them lost sight of the fact that Muḥammad ibn Dāwūd, in his own poetic corpus, represented himself as a literary character, and while this character bears some resemblance to the one the biographers describe to us, they very infrequently cite

⁸³ Raven, *MBD*, 52.

as evidence those poems that can be attributed to him with the greatest degree of certainty (the ones that appear in *Kitāb al-Zahra* ascribed to “a man of our times”). They judged his historical significance to be in his role as a theologian or as a lover, but not as a poet.

We now turn our attention away from the development of the Ibn Dāwūd character, and toward the character of Ibn Dāwūd’s own device, the Man of our Times (*ba`ḍ ahl hādhā al-`aṣr*). The remainder of this dissertation will deal with a corpus of 534 lines of poetry, scattered throughout the first half of *Kitāb al-Zahra*, which bear the attribution “a man of our times.” Ibn Dāwūd states that he intended *Kitāb al-Zahra* to consist of one hundred chapters, each containing one hundred lines of poetry on a particular motif. We will consider only the Man of our Times verses that appear in the first half of *Kitāb al-Zahra*, for reasons to be discussed in the third chapter of this dissertation.

All the biographical sources since Mas`ūdī have held that Ibn Dāwūd was the author of the verses in *Kitāb al-Zahra* attributed to the Man of our Times, and Mas`ūdī even implies that Ibn Dāwūd used this pseudonym when reciting these verses in the *majlis*.⁸⁴ Upon examination of the Man of our Times poems and Ibn Dāwūd’s prose comments in *Kitāb al-Zahra*, especially the introduction, I find the identification of Ibn Dāwūd with the Man of our Times plausible. As we will discuss in the third chapter of this dissertation, and as the biographers noticed, the Man of our Times returns frequently to certain ideas about love Ibn Dāwūd espouses in the introduction to *Kitāb al-Zahra*. The pseudonymous Man of our Times is the only poet whose verses appear in every chapter of the first half of *Kitāb al-Zahra*, lending support to the argument that Ibn Dāwūd wrote verses specifically for each

⁸⁴ See Raven for further discussion of this argument and for the case for attributing some, but not all, of the Man of our Times verses to Ibn Dāwūd, (Raven, *MBD*, 20).

chapter, as Ibn Ḥazm would later do in *Ṭawq al-Ḥamāma*.⁸⁵

I interpret the choice of some of the words in the Man of our Times verses as a sort of self-referential wordplay, as though Ibn Dāwūd were subtly acknowledging that his audience knew that he was the Man of our Times, or perhaps to amuse those associates of his who were in on the secret. The only instance of a personal name in the Man of our Times poems is Ibn Dāwūd's own name Muḥammad.

2 تَجَرَّعْتُ كَأَسَا مِنْ صُدُودِ مُحَمَّدٍ فَقَدْ أَوْهَنْتُ عَظْمِي وَجَازَتْ عَلَى الْمُخَّ⁸⁶

I have drunk a cup
Of Muḥammad's rejection;
It has weakened my bones
And overwhelmed my brain

If Ibn Dāwūd was, in fact, alluding to his own name in this verse, he was far from being the only `Abbāsīd poet to engage in such a practice. It is a more subtle reference than the verse where Abū Nuwās says

لَوْ تَرَانِي ذَكَرْتَ لِلْحَسَنِ الْبَصْرِيِّ فِي حُسْنِ سِمْتٍ أَوْ قَتَادَةَ⁸⁷
If you saw me,
You would think I were Ḥasan of Baṣra
Or Qatāda,
So dignified is my conduct

He seems to refer to the famous ascetic Ḥasan of Baṣra (d. 110/728),⁸⁸ but is also alluding to

⁸⁵ Raven, *MBD*, 22.

⁸⁶ Ibn Dāwūd, *KZ*, 305. More discussion of this verse and the poem in which it occurs will occur in the third chapter.

⁸⁷ Abū Nuwās, *Dīwān*, ed. `Alī al-`Usaylī, (Beirut: Al-Alami Library, 1417/1997), 181.

⁸⁸ For more information on Ḥasan and his reputation for ascetic piety, see Michael Sells, *Early Islamic Mysticism: Sufi, Qur'an, Mi`raj, Poetic, and Theological Writings* (New York: Paulist Press, 1996), 17-20.

his own given name Ḥasan and the fact that he lived in Baṣra as a child.⁸⁹ A much more subtle example of this practice is this verse by Jahm ibn `Abd al-Raḥmān:

قَضَى اللَّهُ أَلَّا يَعْلَمَ الْغَيْبَ غَيْرُهُ فَفِي أَيِّ أَمْرِ اللَّهِ تَمْتَرِيَانِ⁹⁰

God has ordained that none but He
Have knowledge of the unseen,
So with which of God's commands
Do the two of you dispute?

The second half of this verse alludes to the *āyah* that occurs thirty-one times in the fifty-fifth *sūra* (*al-Raḥmān*) of the Qur'an,⁹¹ وَيَا أَيُّهَا رَبُّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ("And which of your Lord's favors do the two of you deny?"), even including the dual number for the verb. The wordplay lies in that the allusion is to the *sūra* of *al-Raḥmān*, and the poet's name is Ibn `Abd al-Raḥmān.

In addition to this one reference to the name Muḥammad, the Man of our Times poems are replete with juridical terminology, as if Ibn Dāwūd were punning on the fact that he was a judge. One can hardly read the Man of our Times poems without noticing their preoccupation with what is just or unjust in matters of brotherhood, as references to justice and rights abound. Raven says that Ibn Dāwūd displays "a jurist's mind throughout" *Kitāb al-Zahra*, using "legal terms for non-legal matters," and that, "[i]n poetry, the use of legal terms is sometimes playful, as for instance the rejection of *ra'y* and *qiyās*" and when the Man of our Times "confesses without witnesses being necessary."⁹² Words from the root ق ض ي,

⁸⁹ Kennedy, *Abū Nuwās*, 93.

⁹⁰ Ibn Dāwūd, *KZ*, 251. The dual number in this *bayt* is itself a *double-entendre*, as the preceding two lines refer to two slanderers.

⁹¹ Q 55:5, etc.

⁹² Raven, *MBD*, 19.

which gives us, among other meanings, the verb “to judge”⁹³ and the word *qāḍī* (“a judge”), occur seven times in the Man of our Times verses, and the word *ḥaqq* (“a legal right”), including its singular, plural, nominal, and adjectival forms, occurs twelve times. Some of these instances will be treated in more detail in subsequent chapters. Among the more subtle allusions to the word “judge” is this couplet, featuring the verb *inqaḍā*, which means “to pass by, to depart.”

1 مَتَى يَا شِفَاءَ السُّقْمِ سُقْمِي مُنْقَضِي إِذَا مَا دَوَاءٌ كَانَ لِلدَّاءِ مُمْرِضِي
2 فَهَيْهَاتَ مَا هَذَا عَلَى ذَا يَفْلَعُ أَجَلٌ لَا وَلَكِنْ مُدَّةَ الْعُمُرِ تَنْقُضِي⁹⁴

When Will my Sickness Go Away? [9]

1 O cure of my sickness,
When will my sickness *go away*?
Everything that treats my affliction
Only makes me sicker

2 Behold! The one
Does not drive off the other,
But rather, my whole life
Will *pass me by*

In English translation, this couplet has nothing to do with judges or jurisprudence, but Ibn Dāwūd’s original audience would have appreciated the reference. Suzanne Stetkevych notes that ‘Abbāsīd poets took delight in such root-based wordplay, as it allowed them to display their virtuosity in the sciences of grammar and etymology.⁹⁵ Who better than Ibn Dāwūd, the lifelong companion of grammarians, to try his hand at this? Likewise, this verse contains the

⁹³ This includes the meaning of “to judge,” as in, “to discern, to choose,” said of any rational being, “to make a legal decision,” said of a judge, and, “to ordain,” said of God. In modern usage, the word *qāḍiyya* has both the technical meaning of “a lawsuit” and the generic meaning of “an issue.”

⁹⁴ Ibn Dāwūd, *KZ*, 32. The number in brackets refers to the poem’s position in the full presentation of the Man of our Times poems below.

⁹⁵ Suzanne Pinckney Stetkevych, *Abū Tammām and the Poetics of the ‘Abbāsīd Age*, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1991), 27-29.

word *taqāḍī*, which can carry the technical meaning of “litigation.”⁹⁶

سَاجِرُ نَفْسِي عَنْ تَقَاضِيهِ رَاضِيًا إِلَى أَنْ أَرَاهُ سَاخِطًا بَعْدَ فِعْلِهِ⁹⁷

I shall gladly commission my soul
To *sue for its debt* from him,
Until I see him distraught
At what he has done

Whether or not Ibn Dāwūd wrote the Man of our Times verses himself, we shall demonstrate in subsequent chapters that he uses the Man of our Times persona as an *alter ego* to dramatize concepts he first lays out in the introduction and in the chapter headings. It is highly likely that, at the very least, the Man of our Times verses were produced in the same literary circle in which Ibn Dāwūd composed *Kitāb al-Zahra*. I believe that several of the pseudonyms attached to poems in *Kitāb al-Zahra* could be attached to Ibn Dāwūd’s personal associates, including “a gentleman” (*ba`ḍ al-ẓurafā`*),⁹⁸ “a scribe” (*ba`ḍ al-kuttāb*),⁹⁹ “a man of letters” (*ba`ḍ al-udabā`*),¹⁰⁰ and “one of our brothers” (*ba`ḍ ikhwāninā*),¹⁰¹ especially since, in terms of style, their poetry seems to belong to the domain of the scribe-poets of the *majlis* rather than the professional poets. In the fourth chapter of this dissertation, we will elaborate further on these two venues of poetry and the relationship of the Man of our Times verses to them.

For the remainder of this dissertation we will refer to Ibn Dāwūd as the author of the Man of our Times verses since, as we have demonstrated, he either wrote the verses himself

⁹⁶ See Raven, *MBD*, 19.

⁹⁷ Ibn Dāwūd, *KZ*, 143.

⁹⁸ Ibn Dāwūd, *KZ*, 7, 22.

⁹⁹ Ibn Dāwūd, *KZ*, 28.

¹⁰⁰ Ibn Dāwūd, *KZ*, 37.

¹⁰¹ Ibn Dāwūd, *KZ*, 54.

or compiled them and presented them as the work of the same fictitious “poet,” which would mean that Ibn Dāwūd created the Man of our Times much the way Arab culture would create the legendary figure of Majnūn Laylā.¹⁰² For the sake of ease, we will also refer to the persona himself as “*the* Man of our Times,” as it sounds more idiomatic in English, and because he is always the same persona, although “*a* Man of our Times” would be a more literal translation of the pseudonym itself. As for the character whose friendship with the Man of our Times forms the unifying theme of the 534 verses, we shall call him the Brother, although the Man of our Times only refers to him as such several times, usually only calling him “you” or “he.”

In the coming chapters, we will turn our attention toward glimmers of Ibn Dāwūd’s unique persona in the midst of the poetic framework, as well as the larger culture, in which he wrote. The biographies and the more theoretical works that use them as sources have made, by turns, a hero and a villain of Muḥammad ibn Dāwūd, but as we look to his poetry alone, we will here its ancient, steady rhythm above the din, and it will bear witness to a gentleman, a friend, an idealist, a scholar, a Man of our Times.

¹⁰² Jaroslav Stetkevych, *The Zephyrs of Najd: The Poetics of Nostalgia in the Classical Arabic Nasib*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1993), 115.

Chapter Two

The Twin of your Mind: Toward a Study of Brotherhood Literature in `Abbāsīd Society

In the centuries since his death, Muḥammad ibn Dāwūd's detractors have accused him of writing poetry deals with a type of love that is vain, shallow, and derivative, a love that distracts the soul from its true calling. We have proposed, in the preceding chapter, that the main theme of Ibn Dāwūd's verses is brotherhood (*ikhā'*), which is a very different relationship from the carnal, frivolous dalliances with which biographers, from Ibn al-Jawzī to Massignon, tried to associate him. Rather, Ibn Dāwūd enlisted his poetic *alter ego* the Man of our Times to instruct his audience in the ways of brotherhood, that is, to increase their wisdom and good judgment, their refinement and moral virtue, in a word, their *adab*, in their interactions with their friends and "brothers." This chapter will present an overview of some of the writings on brotherhood known to Ibn Dāwūd and his contemporaries and mention some of the maxims of brotherhood reflected in the Man of our Times verses. It will also include discussion of several works which, though written after Ibn Dāwūd's death, convey important insights about the concept of brotherhood according to classical Arab-Islamic civilization.

If there existed in Arabic an authoritative "book of brotherhood," which offered a systematic presentation of the emotions and behaviors of male friends, or even a single volume of *adab* which contained all the divergent opinions, even if it made no attempt to assess them, then this chapter would be brief indeed. No such volume exists, and thus we must look to diverse sources, from etiquette manuals to treatises on moral philosophy, to understand the relationship that Ibn Dāwūd posited between the Man of our Times and the wayward Brother. In the short term, this exercise will grant us a more thorough understanding of Ibn

Dāwūd's poetry, to be supplemented in subsequent chapters by discussion of other areas of the Arabic poetic corpus from which Ibn Dāwūd drew allusions, as we are so far removed, chronologically and culturally, from the original audience as to require extensive commentary in order to appreciate the rhetorical force, and sometimes even the intent, of the Man of our Times verses. The more general purpose of this chapter is to posit the existence of a genre of brotherhood literature, albeit one that tends to conceal itself within works that claim themes other than brotherhood as their primary subject matter.

I can only imagine that the reason that the *kuttāb*, the writers of poetic criticism, and the philosophers did not isolate brotherhood as the subject of a book is that they took it for granted. Brotherhood, friendship among men of similar age and usually similar social status, was an inextricable part of so many subjects that were frequently discussed in the *majlis*. Wisdom, generosity, and humility, to name only a few examples, can only be judged by how a person interacts with others. The denizens of the *majlis* were, in large part, males of sufficient means to pursue high levels of education, and brotherhood was with them in every *majlis*. This chapter will look to the poetic tradition, treatises of etiquette, ranging from the utilitarian to the theoretical, and works of moral philosophy, in order to gain a more thorough understanding of the cultural construct known as brotherhood, which was so important to Ibn Dāwūd. None of the works studied in this chapter are primarily about love; while a study of brotherhood in Arabic love literature would be a worthwhile undertaking, it falls outside the scope of this chapter.

The aim of this chapter is not to draw conclusions about Ibn Dāwūd's ideas about brotherhood, or about any other matter, based on the introduction to *Kitāb al-Zahra* or other

prose passages elsewhere in the book, as Massignon¹ and Raven² have conducted extensive analysis of the prose portions of Ibn Dāwūd's anthology, albeit reaching divergent conclusions, as we have discussed in the first chapter, namely that Massignon and Raven considered the main theme of *Kitāb al-Zahra* to be love and poetic criticism, respectively. Likewise, this is not a comprehensive summary of the sources of *Kitāb al-Zahra*; Raven has presented a thorough treatment of that subject, as well, tracing quoted verses and prose material in *Kitāb al-Zahra* to poetry anthologies, including al-Buḥturī's *Ḥamāsa*,³ which we will discuss in more detail later in this chapter, and books of Greek-influenced "wisdom literature."⁴ He has also provided some insight into the social mores of Ibn Dāwūd's audience by examining contemporary sources such as *Kitāb al-Washshā'*.⁵ It is, however, among my aims that this chapter will be a step toward a more comprehensive study on brotherhood in `Abbāsīd literature.

How is Brotherhood Different from Other Types of Love?

The richness of the Arabic language in terms of words referring to love and friendship was not lost on Ibn Dāwūd⁶ and his contemporaries,⁷ nor on later writers discussing the subject of love,⁸ and matters only become more complicated when rendering these nuances in

¹ Massignon, *Passion*, 1:340-341, 352, *inter alia*.

² Raven, *MBD*, 99-159.

³ Raven, *MBD*, 95-99.

⁴ Raven, *MBD*, 58-91.

⁵ Raven, *MBD*, 27-30. Raven has mainly discussed, on the authority of *Kitāb al-Washshā'*, the etiquette of courtship among Ibn Dāwūd's contemporaries. The courtship in question usually took place between a gentleman and a female slave. Raven has *Kitāb al-Washshā'* relevant to his discussion of the sources of *Kitāb al-Zahra* because some of the chapter titles in the latter are identical or similar to sayings found in the former, not because of any content related to brotherhood or to the Man of our Times verses themselves.

⁶ Ibn Dāwūd, *KZ*, 18-21.

⁷ See Massignon, *Passion*, 1:341.

⁸ Al-`Allāma Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Rawḍat al-Muḥibbīn wa-Nuzhat al-Mushtāqīn*, ed. Muḥammad al-Iskandarānī (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-`Arabī, 2005), 22 *inter alia*.

other languages. That which we call “brotherhood” in this chapter is what Ibn Dāwūd calls *ikhāʾ*, and when we say that the texts under consideration in this chapter deal with brotherhood, we mean that they deal with friendship between adult men of similar social status. The connotation of social equality implicit in the word “brother” is given evidence in Ibn al-Muqaffaʾ’s exhortation, “If you see the sultan treating you as a brother (*akh*), treat him as your father.”⁹ Another necessary quality of brotherhood seems to be that, at least as long as the brotherhood relationship is intact, it is reciprocal. One may feel attraction (*istiḥsān*)¹⁰ toward another person from a distance and desire to have him as a brother, but such feelings do not properly constitute brotherhood. The scenario to which the Man of our Times poems constantly return is the one in which he laments that his Brother has abandoned their brotherhood, and it is here that Ibn Dāwūd’s poetry is most poignant. In the following section of this chapter, we will discuss the long tradition in Arabic of using the word “brother” (*akh*) to mean “an associate,” with its implication that if A is associated with B, it follows that B is associated with A. The problems, and therefore the dramatic tension in the Man of our Times poems, arise when the emotions and behaviors involved in this mutual association do not conform to the ideal of equality that we see in their underlying principle.¹¹

⁹ ʿAbdullāh ibn al-Muqaffaʾ, *Al-Adab al-Ṣaghīr, waʾl-Adab al-Kabīr wa-Risālat al-Ṣaḥāba*, ed. Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Hawārī (Bayrūt: Dār wa-Maktabat al-Hilāl, 2009), 72.

¹⁰ Ibn Dāwūd, or his unnamed source, says that *istiḥsān* “is generated by seeing or hearing” the object of one’s attraction, and that when it grows strong, it passes into another stage called *mawadda* (Ibn Dāwūd, *KZ*, 19). All of the eight stages in this oft-discussed taxonomy of love are, in fact, one-sided, and brotherhood is not among them. One could pass through all eight stages, including the ones that are usually fatal, without reaching *ikhāʾ*.

¹¹ Neither *Kitāb al-Zahra* nor any of the other *adab* works treated in this chapter give a precise definition of *ikhāʾ* nor explicitly prescribe its reciprocity. For this, it may be helpful to consider the discussion, in the Greek writings, of reciprocity as a necessary component of *philia*, which is variously translated as “love” and “friendship” (Brian Carr, “Friendship in Plato’s *Lysis* in Oliver Leaman, ed., *Friendship East and West: Philosophical Perspectives* [Richmond: Curzon, 1996], 18). Carr offers his own thesis about the reciprocity of *philia* (Carr, “Friendship in Plato,” 15-16) as well as interpreting the issue as described in Plato’s *Lysis* (Carr, “Friendship in Plato,” 18-20) and Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics* (Carr, “Friendship in Plato,” 26-28).

I have chosen the texts under consideration in this chapter because they treat the friendship between men as a subject separate from love, at least as love is defined in the books treated in Giffen's study.¹² This is not to say that brotherhood is not love, since, as we shall demonstrate in the next chapter, it has enough in common with other types of love for Ibn Dāwūd to represent it effectively through the medium of *ghazal*; indeed, much of the `Abbāsid period literature on love gives the impression that the emotions of love between a man and a woman, between an adult man and a male youth, and between two adult men are of a kind, with verses and anecdotes about all these relationships appearing side by side in anthologies on love. Even *Kitāb al-Zahra* combines, in one chapter, an anecdote about a woman dying of love for a man¹³ with an elegy by Abū Tammām for a male friend, a "brother" who was related to him by intellectual affinity and not by blood,¹⁴ and in another, a couplet in which an anonymous poet addresses a woman called Sulmā¹⁵ and a letter from a man named Waḍḍāḥ al-Kūfī to his friend `Alī ibn Muḥammad, complaining of the latter's change of heart about their friendship, followed by `Alī's response.¹⁶ As we have discussed in the first chapter, anthologies that deal specifically with passionate, carnal love of females or of males, or that contain accounts of both but treat them in separate sections, only began to appear later.¹⁷

¹² Giffen, *Profane Love*, 5-50.

¹³ Ibn Dāwūd, *KZ*, 364.

¹⁴ Ibn Dāwūd, *KZ*, 361.

¹⁵ Ibn Dāwūd, *KZ*, 133.

¹⁶ Ibn Dāwūd, *KZ*, 130-131.

¹⁷ Ṣafadī's *Al-Ḥusn al-ṣarīḥ fī mi'at malīḥ* is a case in point (Everett K. Rowson, "Two Homoerotic Narratives from Mamlūk Literature," in Wright and Rowson, *Homoeroticism in Classical Arabic Literature* [New York: Columbia University Press], 161, 185).

Brotherhood, as envisioned in classical Arabic literature, warrants discussion apart from other types of love, even if for no other reason than that it is only once the carnal basis of social and emotional attachment has been ruled out that the discussion of other aspects of human relationships begins, and we find this discussion flourishing in the brotherhood literature which concerns us in this chapter. When audiences heard a story in which a man was in love with a woman, they would have assumed that physical attraction was the motivation for their love,¹⁸ such that the chastity of the lover and the beloved became a major theme in love poetry in the first centuries of Islam, with poets, especially those writing in the so-called *`udhrī* genre, going to great lengths to demonstrate that the lovers' intentions were noble, and their attraction, not purely physical.¹⁹ A similar suspicion could easily befall a story of love between a man and a youth, because, in the urban centers of the pre-modern Arab world, erotic attraction of adult males toward adolescent boys, while certainly not regarded as an admirable trait, was not considered exceptional, as is given evidence by the numerous references in juridical writings about whether it is licit for adult men and youths to interact in any of a number of situations which might lead to temptation.²⁰ The friendship of similarly aged men stands apart from these in that it stood a much better chance of being free of speculation that the "love" in question was merely a euphemism for sexual attraction.²¹ It was not impossible, to the medieval Arab mind, that two men who maintained a lifelong friendship might have been physically attracted to each other, or even engaged together in

¹⁸ See El-Rouayheb, *Before Homosexuality*, 87.

¹⁹ Robert Irwin, *Night & Horses & the Desert: An Anthology of Classical Arabic Literature* (New York: Anchor Books, 2002), 56-57.

²⁰ El-Rouayheb, *Before Homosexuality*, 116-117.

²¹ See El-Rouayheb, *Before Homosexuality*, 87.

acts of sexual intimacy, when they were young,²² but the texts which form the subject of this chapter leave the impression that physical attraction between the two friends, if it had even ever been present, does not form the basis of their friendship in the long term. In the first chapter, we have seen how centuries of commentators and scholars allowed what they perceived as physical attraction between Ibn Dāwūd and Ibn Jāmi` to influence their assessment of *Kitāb al-Zahra* and of Ibn Dāwūd's poetry.²³ Our exploration of the texts in this chapter will reveal that the love which is called "brotherhood" is based on an assumption of social, intellectual, and moral equality between the two parties; it is the fruit of *adab*.

Al-Jāḥiẓ makes the argument, in *al-Ma`āsh wa-'l-Ma`ād* (*This World and the Next*), that the awareness and use of reason (*`aql*) form the basis for trustworthiness (*thiqa*), which in turn forms the basis for friendship.²⁴ As we shall discuss further throughout this chapter, the Man of our Times poems and other writings on brotherhood rely on this assumption, although, as far as I have seen, al-Jāḥiẓ is the only one who explains it in detail. Nonetheless, powerful emotions also play a role in the relationship between "brothers;" if this were not so, then the tropes of *`udhrī* love poetry would not be nearly so effective in representing it. In the following chapter, we will present examples of emotionally charged brotherhood poetry, but the application of the "martyrs of love" literary theme can be found even in prose

²² See Rowson, "Two Homoerotic Narratives," 188.

²³ Some of these also seem to posit a significant age difference between Ibn Dāwūd and Ibn Jāmi`, as when al-Ṣafadī says that Ibn Jāmi` spent money on Ibn Dāwūd, even though it was Ibn Jāmi` who was the beloved, and Ibn Dāwūd, the lover (Ṣafadī, *Al-Wāfi*, 58). This carries the speculation even further. It is one thing to assume that, if Ibn Jāmi` was a youth, then Ibn Dāwūd's love for him must have been carnal; it is another to assume that, if Ibn Dāwūd wrote *ghazal*, then their love must have been carnal, and therefore Ibn Jāmi` must have been much younger than Ibn Dāwūd. Ibn al-Jawzī says that Ibn Dāwūd "was afflicted with the love of a boy (*ṣabiyy*) called Muḥammad ibn Jāmi`, known as Muḥammad ibn Zukhruf (Abū al-Faraj Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓam fī Tārīkh al-Mulūk wa-'l-Umam* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-`Ilmiyya, 1992) 12:99).

²⁴ Muḥammad Hārūn, *Rasā'il al-Jāḥiẓ: Al-Juz' al-Awwal* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Khānjī, 1964), 106.

writings on brotherhood. Kashājim's (d. 350/961)²⁵ *Adab al-Nadīm* contains this anecdote in which men die of brotherly love.

Al-Walīd ibn `Uqba remained as the *nadīm* of Abū Zubayd al-Ṭā'ī, treating him as a friend, even after he was dismissed because of a single lapse of good conduct which he could not have avoided, and he continued to honor [Abū Zubayd] and praise him, and he never preferred anyone else over him until Abū Zubayd's death. Then [al-Walīd] was overcome with great despair (*wajd*)²⁶ over him, until he became ill, and it is said that he was buried beside him. Ashja` ibn `Amr al-Salmī passed by their graves, and two friends of his, named Ḥamza and Sa`īd, were with him. He stopped at the two [graves] and said:

1 I passed by the bones
Of Abū Zubayd,
Captive
Beneath barren earth

2 A *nadīm* of al-Walīd,
He settled here and became
The neighbor of the grave
Of al-Walīd

3 I know not
To whom death will come first,
To Ashja`
Or to Ḥamza or Sa`īd

And they died in that order, one after the other.²⁷

This anecdote would not seem out of place in the final chapter of *Kitāb al-Zahra* or even in Mughultāi's anthology on the martyrs of love.

Beginnings

²⁵ Bonebakker, "Adab and the concept of *belles-lettres*," 25.

²⁶ This word has connotations of "love." Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya counts it among the sixty words for love and defines it as "the love that leads to sadness" (Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Rawḍa*, 29).

²⁷ Maḥmūd ibn al-Ḥusayn Kashājim, *Adab al-Nadīm*, ed. Nabīl al-`Aṭiyyah (Baghdād: Dār al-Shu'ūn al-Thaqāfiyya al-`Āmma, 1990), 76-77.

The figurative use of the word “brother” (*akh*) to mean “a close associate,” is so prevalent in classical Arabic as to be taken for granted. None of the authors under consideration in this chapter found it necessary to explain that, by the word “brothers” they meant “close friends;” they simply assumed that their audiences would understand this. Ibn al-Muqaffa`’s *Ādāb al-Kabīr* (*The Greater Book of Conduct*) uses the word “brother” interchangeably with the words “friend” (*ṣadīq*) and “companion” (*ṣāhib*). The verb *yu’ākhī* (“to consider [someone] a brother” or “to treat [someone] as a brother”) is attested in ancient poetry.²⁸ A man might even be described as the “brother” of a thing or characteristic, the way he might be called the “father” (*abū*) or “companion” (*ṣāhib*) of a characteristic.²⁹ Poems in the *Ḥamāsa* contain the phrases *ikhwān ṣidq*³⁰ (“honest men,” literally, “brothers of honesty”) and *akhū al-`ahd*³¹ (“one who is bound to a covenant,” literally, “brother of a covenant”), and Ibn al-Muqaffa` refers to *ikhwān thiqa*³² (“trustworthy men,” literally, “brothers of trust”), as well as *ikhwān al-dīn* (“men of religion”) and *ikhwān al-dunyā* (“men of the world”).³³

It was fairly common for *muḥdath* poets to play on the literal and figurative meanings of the word “brother,” and we will discuss, in the third chapter of this dissertation, several examples of this phenomenon among the poems of *Kitāb al-Zahra*. Verses that represent the bond between “brothers” bound by emotional affinity as even stronger than that between

²⁸ Al-Walīd ibn `Ubayd Buḥturī, *al-Ḥamāsa*, ed. L. Cheikho (Bayrūt: Dār al-Kitāb al-`Arabī, 1967), 58.

²⁹ Thus the famous *Ikhwān al-Ṣafā`* have been called both the Brethren of Purity and the Sincere Brethren in English; it would also make sense simply to call them the Sincere Ones.

³⁰ Buḥturī, *Ḥamāsa*, 68.

³¹ Buḥturī, *Ḥamāsa*, 66.

³² Ibn al-Muqaffa`, *AK*, 89.

³³ Ibn al-Muqaffa`, *AK*, 92.

biological brothers also appear in the poetry of the ancients, as in this line by al-Nābigha al-Ja`dī (d.680-684)³⁴, which is quoted in the *Ḥamāsa*.

أَخْبِرْكَ السِّرَّ لَا أَخْبِرُهُ النَّاسَ وَأَصْفِيكَ دُونَ ذِي الرَّحِمِ³⁵

I let you know secrets
That I do not reveal to other people,
And I esteem you
To the exclusion of the sons of my mother

Watt's article on "*Mu'ākhāt*," in the *Encyclopedia of Islam*, describes several practices among the early Muslims, related in the books of *sīra* and *ṭabaqāt*, by which unrelated men were called "brothers."³⁶ The word *mu'ākhāt* is, like *ikhā'*, a *maṣdar* ("verbal noun" or "gerund") of the verb *yu'ākhī*, which we have discussed above. Ibn Ḥabīb (d. 245/859) mentions fifty-nine pairs of men, each pair consisting of one Anṣārī and one Muhājir, bound by this relationship,³⁷ as well as nine pairs formed in Mecca before the Emigration to Medina.³⁸ According to Ibn Ḥabīb, *mu'ākhāt* relationships were a factor in Zayd ibn Ḥāritha's rivalry with `Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib and his brother Ja`far over a daughter of Ḥamza.³⁹ He says that the practice of *mu'ākhāt* ended after the battle of Badr.⁴⁰ Watt posits that the *mu'ākhāt* relationship may have included inheritance rights, but that the practice came to an end upon the revelation of one of several Qur'anic verses dealing with

³⁴ James E. Montgomery, *The Vagaries of the Qaṣīdah: The Tradition and Practice of Early Arabic Poetry* (Warminster: E.J.W. Gibb Memorial Trust, 1997), 216.

³⁵ Buḥturī, *Ḥamāsa*, 74.

³⁶ W. Montgomery Watt, "Mu'ākhāt," *The Encyclopedia of Islam* (Leiden: Brill, 1978), 6:253-254.

³⁷ Muḥammad Ibn Ḥabīb, *Kitāb al-Muḥabbar* (Hyderabad: Maṭba`at Jam`īyat Dā'irat al-Ma`ārif al-`Uthmāniyyah, 1942), 71-75.

³⁸ Ibn Ḥabīb, *Muḥabbar*, 70-71.

³⁹ Ibn Ḥabīb, *Muḥabbar*, 70-71.

⁴⁰ Ibn Ḥabīb, *Muḥabbar*, 75.

inheritance.⁴¹ While beliefs and practices of male friendship among the early Muslims are a subject most worthy of study, this subject falls outside the scope of this dissertation.

The Sources

The texts from which we have obtained information about the views on brotherhood among Ibn Dāwūd's contemporaries belong to three major categories: poetic anthologies, treatises on social etiquette, and philosophical treatises on morals. Whether in poetry or prose, we see that the society's ideas about brotherhood, as about so many other subjects, combine elements of the Arab, Hellenistic, and Persian traditions, and that the authors and compilers of these texts adapted and interpreted their source material to reflect the values of a cosmopolitan Islamic society.

Al-Buḥturī's *Ḥamāsa*: The Poetics of Brotherhood

Abū `Ubāda al-Walīd ibn `Ubayd al-Buḥturī (820-897)⁴² was among the most eminent panegyrists of the ninth century in addition to being a pioneer in the genre of descriptive poetry (*waṣf*).⁴³ Nykl claims that Ibn Dāwūd was a friend of al-Buḥturī,⁴⁴ despite the forty-nine year age difference between the two poets,⁴⁵ although, according to Raven, sufficient evidence exists only to verify that the two met face-to-face on at least one occasion, as Ibn Dāwūd makes statements in *Kitāb al-Zahra* that he heard al-Buḥturī's recitations first hand.⁴⁶ Raven has mentioned that the influence of al-Buḥturī's *Ḥamāsa* can be seen in *Kitāb al-Zahra* because the former book, like Abū Tammām's before it, is an

⁴¹ Watt, "Mu'ākhāt," 254.

⁴² M.C. Lyons, *Identification and Identity in Classical Poetry* (Warminster: The Gibb Memorial Trust, 1999), xvi.

⁴³ Irwin, *Night*, 139.

⁴⁴ Nykl, introduction to *KZ*, 7.

⁴⁵ Raven, *MBD*, 26.

⁴⁶ Raven, *MBD*, 26.

anthology of poetry in which verses are grouped by subject matter, whereas most poetic anthologies of that time classified poems by meter or end-rhyme⁴⁷ or by poet.⁴⁸

Al-Buḥturī's prominence as a panegyrist led his contemporaries to compare him to Abū Tammām, a famous poetic innovator and al-Buḥturī's one-time teacher, and entire books, such as al-Āmidī's *Muwāzana*, have been devoted to the relative merits of the two poets.⁴⁹ Abū Tammām and al-Buḥturī have at least two things in common as regards Ibn Dāwūd; first, they both compiled anthologies of poetry, both known as *al-Ḥamāsa*,⁵⁰ which Ibn Dāwūd used as sources for *Kitāb al-Zahra*. Second, *Kitāb al-Zahra* contains several poems by each of them that are unambiguously about brotherhood and cannot be interpreted as being about a female beloved.⁵¹ No poet other than the Man of our Times has as many poems in *Kitāb al-Zahra* which specifically represent brotherhood.

Twenty chapters in the *Ḥamāsa* treat various aspects of brotherhood.

The twenty-eighth chapter: on taking men of noble character as brothers, the praise thereof, and on treating virtuous men honorably and amiably⁵²

The twenty-ninth chapter: On avoiding taking stingy men as brothers, and the censure thereof⁵³

The thirtieth chapter: On putting men to the test before taking them as brothers⁵⁴

The thirty-first chapter: On him whose friendship is a matter of suspicion and whose brotherhood is untrustworthy⁵⁵

⁴⁷ Raven, *MBD*, 95-96.

⁴⁸ Ibn Sallām al-Jumāḥī's (d. 232/847) book *Ṭabaqāt fuḥūl al-shu'arā'* is an early example (K. Abu Deeb, "Literary Criticism," in *The Cambridge History of Arabic Literature: 'Abbasid Belles-Lettres*, 340-341).

⁴⁹ Abu Deeb, "Literary Criticism," 372-374.

⁵⁰ These anthologies take their name from the subject matter of the poems in their first chapter, which is *ḥamāsa* ("bravery").

⁵¹ Abū Tammām has five such fragments (Ibn Dāwūd, *KZ*, 60, 92, 192, 303, 366), and al-Buḥturī has four (Ibn Dāwūd, *KZ*, 62, 101, 108, 344). I have included in this category only poems that refer to the "beloved" by a masculine name or refer to both the persona and the beloved both as "brother" (أخ) or some similar term denoting a masculine social role. This count does not include poems which might be interpreted either as brotherhood or as heterosexual love.

⁵² Buḥturī, *Ḥamāsa*, 57.

⁵³ Buḥturī, *Ḥamāsa*, 58.

⁵⁴ Buḥturī, *Ḥamāsa*, 58.

The thirty-second chapter: On being utterly devoted to your friend and only being pleased with him having what you would be pleased to have for yourself⁵⁶

The thirty-third chapter: On the breaking of promises⁵⁷

The thirty-fourth chapter: On cutting ties with friends who are disagreeable in their friendship with you⁵⁸

The thirty-fifth chapter: On the well-being of friendship and the preservation of brotherhood⁵⁹

The thirty-sixth chapter: On the man who abandons his brothers when he no longer needs them but they are in need of him⁶⁰

The thirty-seventh chapter: On the whole-heartedness of friendship and its perpetuity⁶¹

The thirty-eighth chapter: On the loathsomeness of friendship with men who grow bored easily⁶²

The thirty-ninth chapter: On avoiding cutting ties with a brother you have known for a long time in favor of the novelty of a different one⁶³

The fortieth chapter: When a man draws near to his brothers in a time of prosperity, but he stays away from them in a time of need, his lack of reliance on them makes him even more honorable in the eyes of his brothers who are in need⁶⁴

The forty-first chapter: On avoiding blaming brothers for their mistakes, and preserving your brotherhood with them⁶⁵

The forty-second chapter: On preserving loyalty and avoiding betrayal⁶⁶

The forty-third chapter: On brothers and kinsmen on whom you wish good, though they wish ill on you⁶⁷

The forty-fourth chapter: On behaving politely toward those who avoid your company⁶⁸

The forty-fifth chapter: On avoiding malicious gossip among brothers⁶⁹

The forty-sixth chapter: On regret over worthless brothers⁷⁰

The forty-seventh chapter: On avoiding cutting ties with brothers and blaming them for their first offense, on helping them with what they wish, and on joining them in what they do⁷¹

⁵⁵ Buḥturī, *Ḥamāsa*, 59.

⁵⁶ Buḥturī, *Ḥamāsa*, 60.

⁵⁷ Buḥturī, *Ḥamāsa*, 61.

⁵⁸ Buḥturī, *Ḥamāsa*, 63.

⁵⁹ Buḥturī, *Ḥamāsa*, 65.

⁶⁰ Buḥturī, *Ḥamāsa*, 68.

⁶¹ Buḥturī, *Ḥamāsa*, 69.

⁶² Buḥturī, *Ḥamāsa*, 70.

⁶³ Buḥturī, *Ḥamāsa*, 71.

⁶⁴ Buḥturī, *Ḥamāsa*, 71.

⁶⁵ Buḥturī, *Ḥamāsa*, 72.

⁶⁶ Buḥturī, *Ḥamāsa*, 73.

⁶⁷ Buḥturī, *Ḥamāsa*, 74.

⁶⁸ Buḥturī, *Ḥamāsa*, 75.

⁶⁹ Buḥturī, *Ḥamāsa*, 76.

⁷⁰ Buḥturī, *Ḥamāsa*, 76.

⁷¹ Buḥturī, *Ḥamāsa*, 77.

The forty-eighth chapter: On the man who is cruel to his brothers and avoids them when he does not need them, and who draws near to them and treats them affectionately when he is in need⁷²

The poems in the *Ḥamāsa* praise many of the same traits of virtuous brothers that the Man of our Times holds in high esteem, most notably loyalty, that is to say, keeping the covenant (*`ahd*) of friendship, and the concealment of secrets told in confidence, and they warn against many of the same faults, such as fickleness and failure to reciprocate the brother's loyalty and devotion. Al-Buḥturī chose to include these poems not because they accord with his personal views, but because he considers them true representations of ancient Arabic poetry about brotherhood. Thus the poems reveal something about the way Bedouin Arab society in the centuries immediately before and after the rise of Islam viewed brotherhood, or at least the way it represented it in poetry. It stands out to the modern reader that the poetic personae in the *Ḥamāsa* never let on that they played a role in causing problems between themselves and their brothers; in fact, this self-aggrandizing tone is part of what makes Arabic poetry seem so inaccessible to readers unfamiliar with its conventions. Ibn Qutayba's famous description of the *qaṣīda* makes it sound as though poets only described their lost loves in order to play on the audience's emotions and to gain their sympathy for the rest of the poem.⁷³ Admitting one's own weaknesses and humbling oneself were simply not part of ancient Arabic poetry, and books like al-Buḥturī's *Ḥamāsa* demonstrate just how strictly early poets followed precedents for the established subject matter of poetry. Thus, in contrast to the Man of our Times, the poets in the *Ḥamāsa* never

⁷² Buḥturī, *Ḥamāsa*, 78.

⁷³ Al-ʿAllāma Abū Muḥammad ʿAbdullāh ibn Muslim ibn Qutayba al-Dīnawī, *Al-Shiʿr wa-al-Shuʿarāʾ*, ed. ʿUmar al-Ṭabbāʾ (Beirut: Sharikat Dār al-Arqam ibn Abī al-Arqam, 1997), 31.

even apologize or admit fault for their quarrels with their brothers, and there is little mention of humbling oneself before one's brother, as though saving face before the community were more important than repairing a friendship. When viewed in this context, the Man of our Times stands out for his humility, and as this dissertation continues, we will see how we might attribute this to the influence of a cultural shift toward a more urbane ethos, embodied by the so-called *ẓurafā'*, or to the genre conventions of `Abbāsīd *ghazal*, or even to Ibn Dāwūd's individual efforts to make the Man of our Times a uniquely compelling persona.

It is not only in language borrowed from the *nasīb* and from later developments in love poetry that the Man of our Times expresses his esteem for the emotional aspects of brotherhood; he returns to this theme even in aphoristic couplets like this one.

1 فَلَا تَهْجُرْ أَخَاكَ بِغَيْرِ ذَنْبٍ فَإِنَّ الْهَجَرَ مِفْتَاحُ السُّلُوءِ
2 إِذَا كَتَمَ الْخَلِيلُ أَخَاهُ سِرًّا فَمَا فَضْلُ الصَّدِيقِ عَلَى الْعَدُوِّ⁷⁴

Do Not Abandon your Brother [3]

1 Do not abandon your brother
When he has done nothing wrong
For abandonment is the key
To forgetting

2 If a friend conceals a secret
From his brother,
Then how is a friend
Better than an enemy?

He has not taken offense because the brother publicly violated his honor or behaved in a way that has caused others to disapprove, but rather that he has turned away from the intimacy and confidence he once shared with the Man of our Times, something others cannot measure. By contrast, this poem by al-`Arzamī clearly places the value of principles above that of

⁷⁴ Ibn Dāwūd, *KZ*, 19.

emotions, as it warns against befriending a small-minded man “even if he loves you,” as though the man’s general character, perhaps even his reputation, matters more than his feelings.

1 وَلَا تُصَافِ الدَّنِيَّ تَجْعَلُهُ أَخًا وَلَا صَاحِبًا وَإِنْ وَمَقًا
2 وَجَانِبُهُ فِي غَيْرِ نَائِرَةٍ لَا تَجْعَلِ الْوُدَّ فَاسِدًا رَنِقًا⁷⁵

1 Do not become devoted to a weak man
And make him a brother
Or a friend,
Even if he loves you

2 Simply avoid him
Without hatred;
Do not let friendship become
Adulterated and muddled

The attributes of brotherhood described in the ancient Arab poetic tradition only partially overlap with Ibn Dāwūd’s vision of brotherhood. As we shall discuss in more detail in the fourth chapter, Ibn Dāwūd, like many other `Abbāsīd poets, used his poetry to convey ideas that other authors discussed in prose, and we shall see how the development of Arabic prose influenced both the style and the content of Arabic poetry. We now turn our attention to those prose texts where we can find descriptions of the brotherhood the Man of our Times constantly seeks.

Ibn al-Muqaffa’s *Ādāb al-Kabīr*: The Etiquette of Brotherhood

`Abdullāh ibn al-Muqaffa`, best known today for his translations of Persian texts into Arabic, most notably *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, was one of the earliest of the master prose stylists in

⁷⁵ Buḥturī, *Ḥamāsa*, 58.

Arabic,⁷⁶ and his *Ādāb al-Kabīr* is an early classic of Arabic prose. His writing represents the perspective of the formative period of cosmopolitan Arab-Islamic society much as the poems in al-Buḥturī's *Ḥamāsa* represent the perspective of pre-Islamic and early Islamic Arabic poetry. Its influence on Ibn Dāwūd's world was undeniable, but it had existed for as long as anyone in Ibn Dāwūd's time could remember and was taken for granted as part of the culture.

Ādāb al-Kabīr, popularly known as *al-Adab al-Kabīr*,⁷⁷ is a handbook of conduct, with various sections addressed to various types of people in the upper echelons of society. It reflects Ibn al-Muqaffa's experiences with the Arab elite, such as the Umayyad patrons who employed him, and the Persian elite, from which Ibn al-Muqaffa himself was descended,⁷⁸ and he apparently considered the advice contained therein applicable to both Arab and Persian culture. Although Ibn al-Muqaffa acknowledges that he is indebted to "the ancients," by which he means the ancient Persians, for much of the wisdom contained in the treatise,⁷⁹ *Ādāb al-Kabīr* is an original Arabic composition and not a translation. This brief work contains advice for princes, advice for the associates of princes, such as ministers and courtiers, and, most importantly for the purposes of this chapter, advice for gentlemen of the secretarial class, as regards their interactions with their peers.⁸⁰

⁷⁶ Consider that he died only seven years after the establishment of `Abbāsīd rule and some twenty years before the birth of al-Jāḥiẓ (see C. Pellat, "Al-Jāḥiẓ," in *The Cambridge History of Arabic Literature: `Abbasid Belles-Lettres*, 78).

⁷⁷ For the preference of the title "*Ādāb al-Kabīr*," see J. D. Latham, "Ibn al-Muqaffa and Early `Abbasid Prose," in *The Cambridge History of Arabic Literature: `Abbasid Belles-Lettres*, 57.

⁷⁸ Latham, "Ibn al-Muqaffa," 48-49.

⁷⁹ Ibn al-Muqaffa, *AK*, 59-61.

⁸⁰ Latham, "Ibn al-Muqaffa," 57-60.

Ādāb al-Kabīr advises its readers in matters of behavior, not in the composition of poetry, and thus its astute social insights, which often deal with situations outside the conventional range of poetic subject matter, and its windows into the minutiae of polite conduct in eighth-century society still seem entertaining to today's reader. Ibn al-Muqaffa` gives advice on everything from the etiquette of listening to stories one has heard before⁸¹ to interacting with acquaintances one does not particularly like but whom one's brother regards highly,⁸² and from avoiding reviling people or nations with whom one's interlocutors might be associated⁸³ to eschewing repeated praise of things for which one's brothers do not share one's enthusiasm.⁸⁴ As for the subject of apologies and pardon (*`udhr, i`tidhār*), a major theme of the Man of our Times poems but one which falls by the wayside in the *Ḥamāsa* as the poets employ their verses as a means of saving face, Ibn al-Muqaffa` advises his readers, "Only apologize to someone whose forgiveness you want."⁸⁵ Like the Man of our Times, he emphasizes the importance of graciously accepting a brother's apology unless the relationship is beyond repair,⁸⁶ and he counts among the attributes of the virtuous man that he does not become angry with his brother before giving him a chance to apologize.⁸⁷ Ibn al-Muqaffa` would likely agree with the Man of our Times that the Brother's refusal to accept the former's apology constitutes injustice.

Ibn al-Muqaffa` seems to imply that a gentleman's main objective is to make others like him, and thus the self-aggrandizing, confrontational pose assumed by the poets of the

⁸¹ Ibn al-Muqaffa`, *AK*, 91.

⁸² Ibn al-Muqaffa`, *AK*, 110.

⁸³ Ibn al-Muqaffa`, *AK*, 114.

⁸⁴ Ibn al-Muqaffa`, *AK*, 106.

⁸⁵ Ibn al-Muqaffa`, *AK*, 95.

⁸⁶ Ibn al-Muqaffa`, *AK*, 95.

⁸⁷ Ibn al-Muqaffa`, *AK*, 115.

Ḥamāsa is largely absent from *Ādāb al-Kabīr*. *Ādāb al-Kabīr* makes no claim to be anything other than a guide to proper, that is, socially advantageous, conduct. It is, ultimately, a social code and not an ethical code. Its pragmatic worldview provides a window into actual events such as one does not find in either the *Ḥamāsa* or *Kitāb al-Zahra*. Whereas the *Ḥamāsa* tells us what it was acceptable for poets to say about brotherhood, *Ādāb al-Kabīr* describes, in considerable detail, behaviors that would have been favorably received in polite society. The Man of our Times poems reflect the social code described in *Ādāb al-Kabīr* more closely than that of the Bedouin poets quoted in the *Ḥamāsa*, as the former acknowledges an awareness of the desire to appear sophisticated, the reverence for the *adab*⁸⁸ of the *majlis*.

Despite the pragmatic orientation of some of the advice contained therein and the pervasive preoccupation with anticipating the reactions of others, *Ādāb al-Kabīr* does not simply amount to a guide to sycophancy and keeping up appearances, for Ibn al-Muqaffa` does remain true to his purpose of keeping alive the wisdom of the ancients. He instructs the reader on ideas and principles that should lead him to certain actions, even though others might never know what led him to behave in the way Ibn al-Muqaffa` advises. It is in these instances that delve most deeply into the reader's psyche that *Ādāb al-Kabīr* comes closest to depicting the inner struggle described in the Man of our Times poems. In this example, he appeals to the reader's sense of reason and justice.

If you see your friend with your enemy, do not let it
make you angry, for he can only be one of two types of men.
If he is a man you trust intimately, then it is most advantageous
to you that he be as close as possible to your enemy, so that he
may avert evil from you or shield you from trouble or disclose

⁸⁸ Beatrice Gruendler, *Medieval Arabic Praise Poetry: Ibn al-Rūmī and the Patron's Redemption* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), 5-6.

confidential information to you. [...] If he is not among your closest brothers, then what right do you have to keep him away from other people and to forbid him to associate with anyone except as it pleases you?⁸⁹

This piece of advice is an excellent example of the tone of gentlemanly sensibility that the Man of our Times frequently echoes in order to give his poems a sense of appeal to the audience's ideas of fairness and reason. Not only does Ibn Dāwūd acknowledge that his audience is part of this gentlemanly class, with its currency of measuring rights and discerning what is reasonable, gentlemen schooled in rhetoric, logic, and jurisprudence, but, as we shall see in the next chapter, Ibn Dāwūd also depicts the character of the Brother as an educated gentleman who understands the laws and ideals of the *majlis*.

Ibn al-Muqaffa` assumes that the gentleman wants to be taken seriously, that he possesses good judgment and values the use of reason, and that he desires to be recognized as such. To behave irrationally, for example, by failing to differentiate between edifying anecdotes and foolish ones, ought to be beneath his dignity. Thus he advises the reader, "If possible, do not pass on a piece of news unless you believe that it is true and unless you believe it based on compelling evidence."⁹⁰ Thus, when the Man of our Times urges his brother not to reject him on the basis of unfounded speculations, he is relying on the Brother's desire not to be a fool who cannot tell the difference between credible information and nonsense.

1 أَيَا أَمَلِي هَلْ فِي وَفَائِكَ مَطْمَعٌ فَأُطْلِبُهُ أَمْ قَدْ تَنَاهَتْ أَوَاخِرُهُ
2 فَإِنْ تَأْكُ مَا قَدْ خِفْتَ حَقًّا فَلَا تَعُدْ فَلَنْ يَسْتَوِيَ مَوْفِي الْفُؤَادِ وَغَادِرُهُ

⁸⁹ Ibn al-Muqaffa`, *AK*, 89.

⁹⁰ Ibn al-Muqaffa`, *AK*, 107.

3 وَإِلَّا فَلَا تَعْتَبْ عَلَيَّ فَإِنَّهُ إِذَا ظَنَّ قَلْبُ الْمَرْءِ سَاءَتْ خَوَاطِرُهُ⁹¹

Do Not Follow Baseless Suspicions [20]⁹²

- 1 O my hope,
Is your fidelity within reach,
So that I may seek it out,
Or is it beyond my grasp?
- 2 If that which you fear is really the case,
Then do not do it again,
For one whose heart is faithful
Is not equal to a treacherous one
- 3 If it is not,
Then do not chide me,
For if a man allows his heart to speculate,
Then he will think bad thoughts

Perhaps it is to these men of sound judgment, the ones in Ibn al-Muqaffa`'s audience, or at least, the ones that Ibn al-Muqaffa`'s readers aspire to be, that the Man of our Times refers in the first line of "Where is the Path to God's Country?" [97], in which he says that he has always loved "sound hearts." The Man of our Times is not alone in preferring gravitas over frivolity in his companions; *Ādāb al-Kabīr* operates on the assumption that all men of refinement share this preference and then offers advice on how to present oneself as a sound heart.

The Man of our Times, with his love of "sound hearts" and his preference for the companionship of "honest young men" values the things that, according to *Ādāb al-Kabīr*, a gentleman should value. Ibn al-Muqaffa` would have his reader be pleased if a brother were to love the qualities in him that the Man of our Times loves in his Brother.

⁹¹ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 82.

⁹² The number in brackets after the English title of a poem refers to its position in the appendix, which contains all Man of our Times poems contained in the *ghazal* volume of *Kitāb al-Zahra*. The poems appear in the appendix in the same order in which they appear in *Kitāb al-Zahra*.

Do not be impressed if someone praises you because of your prestige or power, for power is among the most ephemeral things in the world. Do not be impressed if someone praises you because of your wealth, for it, too, is most ephemeral, second only to power. [...] But if you are praised because of your religion or manly virtue (*murū'a*),⁹³ let that impress you, for manly virtue will never leave you in this life, and religion will never leave you in the Hereafter.⁹⁴

Ādāb al-Kabīr acknowledges that vanity and lack of forethought play a larger role than they ought to in the actions even of educated men, and even though it at times advises readers to manipulate this state of affairs to their advantage, there seems to be an underlying belief that the most valuable brother is the wisest one, the one who values virtue over appearances, and whose loyalty to his friends and commitment to justice are constant.⁹⁵

Ibn al-Muqaffa` briefly revisits the subject of the characteristics of desirable companions in another of his treatises, *Risālat al-Ṣaḥāba* (*Treatise on the Entourage*), written near the end of his life.⁹⁶ This work is an epistle to the caliph al-Manṣūr⁹⁷ containing advice, which, as history shows us, went unheeded,⁹⁸ on how the caliph ought to deal with all sorts of problems relating to governance,⁹⁹ from disloyalty and disorder in the military¹⁰⁰ and among the inhabitants of outlying regions of the caliphate¹⁰¹ to lack of education among the general public.¹⁰² The issue that concerns us here is that of the caliph's entourage. Ibn al-

⁹³ Gruendler translates this term as, "honor code" (Gruendler, *Praise Poetry*, 10), and Latham translates it as "moral perfection" and "manliness" (Latham, "Ibn al-Muqaffa`," 58).

⁹⁴ Ibn al-Muqaffa`, *AK*, 108.

⁹⁵ See Ibn al-Muqaffa`, *AK*, 87, 91-92.

⁹⁶ Latham, "Ibn al-Muqaffa`," 64.

⁹⁷ Latham, "Ibn al-Muqaffa`," 64.

⁹⁸ Latham, "Ibn al-Muqaffa`," 64.

⁹⁹ For a full list of these, see Latham, "Ibn al-Muqaffa`," 66.

¹⁰⁰ Ibn al-Muqaffa`, *Risālat al-Ṣaḥāba*, 122-129.

¹⁰¹ Ibn al-Muqaffa`, *RS*, 139-140.

¹⁰² Ibn al-Muqaffa`, *RS*, 140-142.

Muqaffa` admonishes the caliph for taking as companions men of little virtue and moral worth. He describes the qualities of men who are, in his opinion, worthy of the honor of being the caliph's companions; unsurprisingly, they have much the same attributes as the virtuous men described in *Ādāb al-Kabīr*, most especially justice and good judgment.¹⁰³

Risālat al-Ṣaḥāba does not, however, contain advice on how to make oneself worthy of the caliph's friendship, as it is addressed only to the caliph and not to those who aspire to be his companions. I mention it here because, even though it is a political treatise, with a purpose different from that of *Ādāb al-Kabīr*, Ibn al-Muqaffa` is consistent throughout both works in his depiction of the worthy companion.

Al-Jāḥiẓ's *Al-Ma`āsh wa-'l-Ma`ād*: The Logic of Brotherhood

Abū `Uthmān `Amr ibn Baḥr ibn Maḥbūb al-Kinānī al-Baṣrī, called al-Jāḥiẓ,¹⁰⁴ the famous polymath, had several things in common with Ibn Dāwūd that might have influenced how they wrote about brotherhood. Both men lived in Baghdad and interacted with poets and religious scholars; al-Jāḥiẓ died within a year of Ibn Dāwūd's birth. Both were versed in the Islamic religious sciences and, the former making his Mu`tazilite point of view evident in treatises on diverse subjects,¹⁰⁵ and the latter, a Zāhirite judge. They belonged to the generations of Baghdadi intellectuals who were familiar with the learning of the Greek and Persian civilizations, but only indirectly, having read Arabic texts based entirely or partially on Greek and Pahlavi originals.¹⁰⁶ Al-Jāḥiẓ might be mentioned in connection with *Kitāb al-*

¹⁰³ Ibn al-Muqaffa`, *RS*, 135-137.

¹⁰⁴ Pellat, "Al-Jāḥiẓ," 78.

¹⁰⁵ Pellat, "Al-Jāḥiẓ," 78.

¹⁰⁶ Pellat, "Al-Jāḥiẓ," 79. See Raven for further description of the "popularized version[s]" of Greek works current in `Abbāsīd literary circles (Raven, *MBD*, 72).

Zahra and the legends surrounding it in two regards; first, Giffen considered his *Risāla fi-ʿl-ʿIshq wa-ʿn-Nisāʾ* (*Treatise on Love and Women*) and *Risālat al-Qiyān* (*Treatise on Singing Girls*) forerunners to the genre of “love theory” of which she named *Kitāb al-Zahra* as an early influential work,¹⁰⁷ and second, al-Jāḥiẓ lampooned homosexual love and its proponents, among whom the biographers would count Ibn Dāwūd, in his treatises *Fī tafḍīl al-baṭn ʿalā al-ẓahr* (*The Superiority of the Belly to the Back*) and *Mufākharat al-Jawārī wa-ʿl-Ghilmān* (*Boasting Match Between Maidens and Swains*),¹⁰⁸ as well as one called *Dhamm al-Liwāṭ* (*The Condemnation of Sodomy*), which is now lost.¹⁰⁹

Although al-Jāḥiẓ displayed his keen powers of observation as regards human relationships in many of his works,¹¹⁰ his treatise on social etiquette, *Al-Maʿāsh wa-ʿl-Maʿād* (*This World and the Next*), also called *Al-Akhlāq al-Maḥmūda wa-ʿl-Madhmūma* (*Praiseworthy and Reprehensible Moral Traits*)¹¹¹ is of the greatest interest to us for the study of social attitudes toward brotherhood and writings on these.¹¹² *Al-Maʿāsh wa-ʿl-Maʿād* shares its primary subject matter with *Ādāb al-Kabīr*; that is, it is a treatise on the *adab* of human interactions, and it contains much advice on how to win men’s hearts.¹¹³ *Al-Maʿāsh wa-ʿl-Ma-ʿād* delves more deeply into psychological and even philosophical dimensions than *Ādāb al-Kabīr*, and al-Jāḥiẓ displays his Muʿtazilite sensibilities throughout.

¹⁰⁷ Giffen, *Profane Love*, 3-4.

¹⁰⁸ Charles Pellat, ed., *The Life and Works of Jāḥiẓ*, trans. D.M. Hawke (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), 27.

¹⁰⁹ Pellat, “Al-Jāḥiẓ,” 92.

¹¹⁰ See Pellat, *Life and Works*, 24-25.

¹¹¹ Hārūn, *Rasāʾil al-Jāḥiẓ*, 89.

¹¹² Pellat gives its full title as *Risālat al-maʿād wa-ʿl-maʿāsh fī al-adab wa-tadbīr al-nās wa-muʿāmalatihim* (“Letter for this world and the next on manners, conduct[,] and human relationships”) (Pellat, *Life and Works*, 24).

¹¹³ Hārūn, *Rasāʾil al-Jāḥiẓ*, 106, *inter alia*.

Muḥammad Hārūn believes that al-Jāḥiẓ addressed the treatise to Abū al-Walīd Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Abī Duʿād (d. 239/854),¹¹⁴ a judge in the service of the caliph al-Mutawakkil,¹¹⁵ although it has also been claimed that the *wazīr* Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Malik al-Zayyāt (d. 233/847)¹¹⁶ was the addressee.¹¹⁷ As is so often the case with works of *adab*, though, it was most likely intended for the edification of all who might read it, not only for its original recipient.

The treatise begins, as is consistent with convention, with praise of the recipient and a statement of the text’s purpose.¹¹⁸ Thus Al-Jāḥiẓ describes the treatise and its addressee.

“I have seen fit to compile for you a treatise, [in which] I combine much information about the hereafter and this world. I shall describe to you the causes of things and report to you their reasons and that upon which the great men of [all] nations agree. [...] That which led me to do it that I have seen what reason and understanding God has granted you, and how he has endowed you with a noble nature.”¹¹⁹

This is only the first of several times in *al-Maʿāsh wa-ʿl-Maʿād* in which al-Jāḥiẓ emphasizes the centrality of reason and understanding to the cultivation and endurance of friendship.

Elsewhere, he refers to an ideal brother as “the twin of your mind.”¹²⁰ In this he agrees with Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ and with the Man of our Times, who frequently appeals to the Brother’s sense of reason.

Al-Jāḥiẓ then proceeds to a discussion of the causes of things. Human motivations, he claims, are as they are because God, in His justice, has endowed His servants with

¹¹⁴ Pellat, “Al-Jāḥiẓ,” 80.

¹¹⁵ Hārūn, *Rasāʾil al-Jāḥiẓ*, 89.

¹¹⁶ Pellat, “Al-Jāḥiẓ,” 80.

¹¹⁷ Hārūn, *Rasāʾil al-Jāḥiẓ*, 89.

¹¹⁸ See Raven for an outline of the conventions of the prolegomena of *adab* treatises (Raven, *MBD*, 99-102).

¹¹⁹ Hārūn, *Rasāʾil al-Jāḥiẓ*, 95-96.

¹²⁰ Hārūn, *Rasāʾil al-Jāḥiẓ*, 122.

feelings of desire (*targhīb*) and aversion (*tarhīb*), in just measure. Thus, people hope to enter Heaven and fear the punishment of Hell. It is through the feelings of desire and aversion that people abide by God's commands (*amr*) and prohibitions (*nahy*); this is the moral code (*ta'dīb*).¹²¹ As for human relationships, "God knows that [men] only incline emotionally, and only become attached to one another, and are only motivated according to the moral code."¹²² He further connects human relationships to a religious imperative when he says, "he who does not show gratitude to men does not show gratitude to God."¹²³ Thus al-Jāḥiẓ, unlike Ibn al-Muqaffa', posits the same philosophical underpinning for human friendship and for devotion to God. That he intersperses this explanation with examples from the Qur'an and *hadīth*¹²⁴ only emphasizes the connection between religion and friendship. All of this is consistent with Mu'tazilite teachings and shows their influence.

Al-Jāḥiẓ's method of logical argument is most impressive in his theory of the cause of friendship. Although *muḥdath* poetry on brotherhood, including the Man of our Times verses, frequently praised the brothers' knowledge, as we shall see in the third chapter of this dissertation, they never explain why a learned man is a desirable friend; they rather take it for granted. Al-Jāḥiẓ, however, clearly explains the relationship between intelligence and friendship. According to al-Jāḥiẓ, knowledge (*ilm*) is the cause of credibility (*thiqa*), and credibility is the cause of friendship (*mawadda*).¹²⁵ In other words, friendship is rooted in trust, and the most learned men are the most trustworthy. Thus he advises his readers to

¹²¹ Hārūn, *Rasā'il al-Jāḥiẓ*, 104.

¹²² Hārūn, *Rasā'il al-Jāḥiẓ*, 104.

¹²³ Hārūn, *Rasā'il al-Jāḥiẓ*, 94.

¹²⁴ Hārūn, *Rasā'il al-Jāḥiẓ*, 105, *inter alia*.

¹²⁵ Hārūn, *Rasā'il al-Jāḥiẓ*, 106.

choose their friends based on the friends' knowledge, and not because of personal feelings of affection (*hawā*), for "choosing because of *hawā* causes anger [...] and effaces esteem."¹²⁶

Furthermore, relationships based purely on emotion do not endure.

"[Your friend] knows that you did not choose him because of merit but because of *hawā*, and he is on his guard lest your *hawā* move to someone else, and your choice [of friends] will go wherever your *hawā* inclines, and while his heart enters into friendship, he is not sure whether your [feelings] will change."¹²⁷

Like *Ādāb al-Kabīr*, *al-Ma`āsh wa-'l-Ma`ād* depicts the virtuous life as one in which *adab*, in all its meanings, triumphs over individual personal preference (*hawā*). It accords with Ibn al-Muqaffa's statement that, "Most of what is right is the opposite of what you like (*hawā*)."¹²⁸ Since the word *hawā* is also used very frequently in love poetry simply to mean "love," readers of the Man of our Times poems might have sensed a double meaning in the word *hawā* as Ibn Dāwūd employs it. In the next chapter we will see him place the Man of our Times in the midst of love poems, his heart overwhelmed with *hawā* yet striving to behave according to the justice and reason befitting the *adīb*.

Al-Ma`āsh wa-'l-Ma`ād contains a long list of "things that cause each other"¹²⁹ in the field of social conduct. The Man of our Times poems illustrate several of these particularly well. The poem "Do Not Abandon your Brother" [2] expresses Al-Jāhīz's principle of "the rebuffing of love causes exasperation"¹³⁰ as well as the principle that, "justice causes the

¹²⁶ Hārūn, *Rasā'il al-Jāhīz*, 106.

¹²⁷ Hārūn, *Rasā'il al-Jāhīz*, 106-107.

¹²⁸ Ibn al-Muqaffa, AK, 109.

¹²⁹ Hārūn, *Rasā'il al-Jāhīz*, 110.

¹³⁰ Hārūn, *Rasā'il al-Jāhīz*, 110.

unity of hearts and injustice causes their separation.”¹³¹ “My Heart is Humble” [13] plays on al- Jāḥiẓ’s axiom that “humility causes love (*miqa*).”¹³² It is when the Man of our Times’ feelings and actions deviate from these laws, as in, “I Have No Way to Forget You” [6], “Treat me Well or Badly” [31], and “The More he Reassures me, the More I Fear” [23], which directly contradicts the principle that “loyalty causes a feeling of security,”¹³³ that he leaves the domain of social etiquette and enters the realm of *ghazal* proper. The lack of references in al-Jāḥiẓ’s list to matters such as concealing the secret of love and intensity of feeling further lends support to the idea that the psychology of love was, in the minds of Ibn Dāwūd’s original audience, a subject to be treated separately from the psychology of social relationships. Thus, when the Man of our Times loses patience with the Brother, as he does in “I Regret Apologizing to You” [54], he is not acting as the archetypal *ʿudhrī* lover, whose love is not based on rational choice but rather on something beyond human understanding; he is rather acting in accordance with the causes of things and making clear his understanding thereof.

Al-Ma`āsh wa-’l-Ma`ād falls midway between being a collection of edifying sayings about social etiquette, on the order of *Ādāb al-Kabīr*, and a systematic presentation of moral philosophy, like the texts we will discuss later in this chapter. Before we enter the discussion of these, we will explore one more treatise which concerns itself entirely with social etiquette.

Kashājim’s *Adab al-Nadīm*: A Toast to Brotherhood

¹³¹ Hārūn, *Rasā’il al-Jāḥiẓ*, 110.

¹³² Hārūn, *Rasā’il al-Jāḥiẓ*, 110.

¹³³ Hārūn, *Rasā’il al-Jāḥiẓ*, 110.

Ādāb al-Kabīr and *al-Ma`āsh wa-'l-Ma`ād* are treatises on social etiquette and human relationships in general, both explicitly didactic, the latter more theoretical than the former. Both give us insights into the customs and values surrounding friendship between two gentlemen in `Abbāsīd society, but neither was written exclusively for that purpose. *Ādāb al-Kabīr* has obvious political underpinnings and draws heavily from the tradition of Persian wisdom literature in what may be an expression of Persian ethnic pride.¹³⁴ To say that *al-Ma`āsh wa-'l-Ma`ād* is merely a meditation on manners is to underestimate its psychological and epistemological insights. The next book we shall discuss, Kashājīm's *Adab al-Nadīm*, which was written several centuries after Ibn Dāwūd's death, provides a different perspective on friendships among educated men in the culture in which Ibn Dāwūd lived; through anecdotes and advice, it gives insights into the conduct of a particular type of man whose craft was to behave as the ideal friend, namely, the *nadīm*.

Unfortunately, little can be known for certain about the life of Abū al-Faṭḥ Maḥmūd ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn al-Sindī ibn Shāhik¹³⁵ (d. 360/971),¹³⁶ known as Kashājīm.¹³⁷ His pen name Kashājīm is an acronym in which the letter *kāf* stands for *kātib* ("scribe") or *kitāba* ("the scribe's craft"), the *shīn* for *shā'ir* ("poet") or *shi'r* ("poetry"), the *alif* for *adīb* ("man of letters") or *inshā'* ("chancery prose"),¹³⁸ the *jīm* for *munajjim* ("astrologer") or *judal*

¹³⁴ Ibn al-Muqaffa`'s high regard for Sasanian models of governance and etiquette can be observed in *Ādāb al-Kabīr* and many of his other works (Latham, "Ibn al-Muqaffa'," 50-52, 56-58).

¹³⁵ Maḥmūd ibn al-Ḥusayn Kushājīm, *Adab al-Nadīm*, 5.

¹³⁶ Kashājīm, *AN*, 9.

¹³⁷ He is popularly called "Kushājīm" with a *ḍamma* on the *kāf*. For "Kashājīm" as the preferred reading of the name, see Kashājīm, *AN*, 9.

¹³⁸ For an explanation of what separates *inshā'* from other types of prose, see A.F.L. Beeston, "Al-Hamadhānī, al-Ḥarīrī, and the *Maqāmāt* Genre," in *The Cambridge History of Arabic Literature: `Abbasid Belles-Lettres*, 126.

(“disputation”), and the *mīm* for *mughannin* (“singer”) or *manṭiq* (“logic”).¹³⁹ He was well traveled, but he likely spent some of his early life in al-Ramla in Palestine,¹⁴⁰ such that he came to be known by the *nisba* al-Ramlī, and he came to make his permanent home in Aleppo, where he was a court poet of the Ḥamdānīd prince Sayf al-Dawla¹⁴¹ (d.356/967).¹⁴² That he should write a book like *Adab al-Nadīm* hardly seems out of character, as the same courtly character pervades his *Kitāb al-maṣāyid wa’l-maṭārid* (*The Book of the Hunt and the Chase*), a book on hunting etiquette and hunting poetry, including some of Kashājīm’s own poems on the subject.¹⁴³ He is also said to have written books on other aspects of court culture, such as music and the culinary arts,¹⁴⁴ although these works no longer survive.¹⁴⁵

Adab al-Nadīm is a collection of verses, anecdotes, and sayings on a specific relationship between two men, that of the *nadīm*¹⁴⁶ and his patron. The word *nadīm* is not interchangeable with *akh*, for example, or any of the other words denoting friendship, as it refers to a particular social role; one might even call it a profession. The *nadīm* was a member of the entourage of a caliph or prince; his duty was to be a companion to his master

¹³⁹ Kashājīm, *AN*, 6.

¹⁴⁰ Kashājīm, *AN*, 6.

¹⁴¹ Kashājīm, *AN*, 8.

¹⁴² H.N. Kennedy, “The `Abbasid Caliphate: A Historical Introduction,” in *The Cambridge History of Arabic Literature: `Abbasid Belles-Lettres*, 11.

¹⁴³ G. Rex Smith, “Hunting Poetry (Ṭardiyyāt),” in *The Cambridge History of Arabic Literature: `Abbasid Belles-Lettres*, 184.

¹⁴⁴ The fact that *Kitāb al-Zahra* does not deal with these subjects and limits itself to the subject of love poetry is part of Raven’s argument for classifying it as a book of literary criticism and not a treatise manners, a book on love poetry and not on love (Raven, *MBD*, 30).

¹⁴⁵ Kashājīm, *AN*, 13.

¹⁴⁶ The word *nadīm* has traditionally been translated into English as “boon companion.” In my opinion, the English language does not contain a single word or concise phrase that encompasses the *nadīm*’s role as a financially compensated partner in recreational, and sometimes competitive, activities, so I will use the Arabic word in this dissertation.

(*ra'īs*)¹⁴⁷ and to accompany him in pleasurable activities such as chess, hunting, the taking of food and drink, and most importantly, conversation.¹⁴⁸ Given the popularity of poetry in courtly circles in this time, the recitation and even composition and extemporization of verses frequently entered into the relationship; consider that Abū Nuwās, the *nadīm* of the caliph al-Amīn, was, arguably, Arabic literature's foremost writer both of poetry about wine drinking and about hunting, both of which are closely connected to the office of the *nadīm*.

Kashājim's book attests to the prominent role of poetry in the life of the *nadīm*, as he quotes some verses composed by *nudamā'* and others addressed to them,¹⁴⁹ but it unfortunately does not contain a chapter on this subject. The chapters it does contain deal with both general principles of the *nadīm* relationship and the etiquette of specific activities in which the *nadīm* is expected to engage.

The first chapter: Praise of the *nadīm* and the enumeration of his virtues, and the censure of drinking wine in solitude

The second chapter: Character traits and attributes of the *nadīm*

The third chapter: Being called to be a *nadīm*

The fourth chapter: Drinking companions, many and few

The fifth chapter: Listening to music

The sixth chapter: Conversation

The seventh chapter: Washing hands

The eighth chapter: Passing around the cup

The ninth chapter: Excess and insufficiency

The tenth chapter: Requesting the cup when drinking wine

The eleventh chapter: The *nadīm*'s physical appearance and his obligations to his master

The twelfth chapter: The master's obligations to his *nadīm*

The thirteenth chapter: Chess etiquette¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁷ Kashājim, *AN*, 15.

¹⁴⁸ J. Sadan, "Nadīm," *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, 6:849.

¹⁴⁹ Kashājim, *AN*, 50-54 *inter alia*.

¹⁵⁰ Kashājim, *AN*, 15.

Adab al-nadīm is far from being the only literary work of this period to depict the courtly customs surrounding drinking and listening to music; these subjects receive copious mention, whether in poetry, anecdotes on love, or biographical dictionaries. What is significant for our purposes is that Kashājīm's decision to treat these subjects shows that he considers them important settings in which social interaction among men should be conducted in a certain way; they are venues for brotherhood, at least in its *munādama* (the relationship between a *nadīm* and a *ra'īs*) aspect. Although the activities for which *Adab al-nadīm* prescribes rules of etiquette, with the exception of chess, are not in themselves very intellectually demanding, most *nadīms* in the `Abbāsīd era were quite learned, having established themselves as poets, grammarians, and writers of *adab*,¹⁵¹ although *Adab al-nadīm* does not deal explicitly with how the *nadīm*'s learning should influence his conduct.

The *nadīm* relationship stands apart from other types of friendship in that there is no true social equality between the master and the *nadīm*.¹⁵² The very nature of the relationship precludes the sort of equality that might exist in the friendships the philosophers discuss or in the relationship, hypothetical as it is, between the Man of our Times and the Brother. Thus, Kashājīm makes “the *nadīm*'s obligations to his master” and “the master's obligations to his *nadīm*” separate chapters. The *nadīm* was obliged to observe the utmost decorum in his dealings with his master, because failure to do so could spell dismissal or worse.¹⁵³ He was required to accept blame for misdeeds he did not commit and “to be agreeable in the most

¹⁵¹ Sadan, “*Nadīm*,” 851.

¹⁵² Sadan, “*Nadīm*,” 850.

¹⁵³ According to Sadan, the *nadīm* must “combine opposing qualities and patterns of behaviour,” to be, by turns, serious and light-hearted, because the “drinking companion who is unable to decide, on the basis of the gestures and reactions on the part of his master during the *munādama*, which quality would be appropriate to a given situation, risks his life” (Sadan, “*Nadīm*,” 851).

disagreeable of situations.”¹⁵⁴ The *nadīm* was obligated to anticipate every turn of his master’s whims, to the point of following such contradictory advice as that “the *nadīm* should not wear brightly colored clothing,” in case the master is in the mood to lend him his own clothes, but yet it is appropriate for him to go to his master dressed “in clothing which can be known and be seen in the crowded *majlis*” as much as possible without transgressing the bounds of good taste.¹⁵⁵ The master, of course, was not similarly at the mercy of his *nadīm*. It was, at root, a relationship based on patronage; the *nadīm* was a professional friend. The activities in which the master and the *nadīm* participated together were the sort that might foster genuine feelings of friendship, and the truly successful *nadīm* was the one who could move his master’s heart to true friendship, as though the fruit of such a patronage relationship is a false sense of equality, the more convincing the better.¹⁵⁶ That is to say, the *nadīm* was obligated to behave in ways that created the outer impression of brotherhood.

The purpose of *Adab al-nadīm* is not simply to describe or give advice about brotherhood as such; it is rather to advise the reader, the prospective *nadīm*, on how to affect true friendship, and therefore the feelings and behaviors of “brothers” frequently enter the discussion. It is only natural that a book that devotes so much attention to the description of recreational pursuits should lean more toward the practical etiquette and entertainment aspects of *adab* than do the previous two works we have discussed, and less toward attempting to render into Arabic or to systematize the wisdom of the ancients. It is, in

¹⁵⁴ Kashājim, *AN*, 73.

¹⁵⁵ Kashājim, *AN*, 71.

¹⁵⁶ Case in point, Gruendler has demonstrated how the patrons of poets in the `Abbāsīd period engaged actively in the composition of verse together with their court poets, to the point that the patrons began to influence poetic tastes, and this “caused the boundaries between poet and patron to blur” (Gruendler, *Praise Poetry*, 9).

general, less systematic than either *Ādāb al-Kabīr* or *al-Ma`āsh wa-'l-Ma`ād*, and more of a miscellany of *nadīm* lore. Most of the men Kashājīm presents as examples of gentlemanly friendship were historical figures from the `Abbāsīd period; the caliph al-Ma'mūn¹⁵⁷ is the most frequently mentioned historical person, with numerous sayings attributed to him and many anecdotes about his relationships with his *nudamā'*. The poets Abū Tammām,¹⁵⁸ al-Buḥturī,¹⁵⁹ `Alī ibn al-Jahm¹⁶⁰ (d. 249/863),¹⁶¹ Abū Nuwās,¹⁶² Ibn al-Rūmī,¹⁶³ and al-Ḥusayn ibn al-Ḍaḥḥāk¹⁶⁴ (162/779-250/864), all quoted in *Kitāb al-Zahra*, appear in *Adab al-nadīm*, and this is fitting, considering they were all court poets.¹⁶⁵

Among the tales of carousing, the toast-worthy verses, and the advice for the image-conscious, we find glimpses of the sort of brotherhood Ibn Dāwūd envisioned for the Man of our Times and his wayward Brother. As we have seen in the other texts, both moral virtue (*muruwwa*) and eloquent speech (*faṣāḥa*) make for a desirable friend.¹⁶⁶ Kashājīm quotes letters, in verse, that he and his friends have exchanged.¹⁶⁷ As in *Kitāb al-Zahra*, some poems appear in *Adab al-Nadīm* attributed to “one of [our] brothers.”¹⁶⁸ The following playful verses by an anonymous poet in the first chapter show that drinking companions

¹⁵⁷ Kashājīm, *AN*, 42, 73 *inter alia*.

¹⁵⁸ Kashājīm, *AN*, 43.

¹⁵⁹ Kashājīm, *AN*, 53.

¹⁶⁰ Kashājīm, *AN*, 68.

¹⁶¹ Gruendler, *Praise Poetry*, 12.

¹⁶² Kashājīm, *AN*, 80.

¹⁶³ Kashājīm, *AN*, 53.

¹⁶⁴ Kashājīm, *AN*, 80.

¹⁶⁵ See Gruendler, *Praise Poetry*, 5.

¹⁶⁶ Kashājīm, *AN*, 41.

¹⁶⁷ Kashājīm, *AN*, 47-48.

¹⁶⁸ Kashājīm, *AN*, 44-45.

thought of themselves as “brothers,” and drinking together was the source of their brotherhood.

1 لَمْ يَكُنْ بَيْنَنَا رِضَاعٌ وَلَكِنْ وَلَدَتْ بَيْنَنَا الْمُدَامُ رِضَاعاً
 2 إِنْ يَكُنْ أَوَّلُ الْمُدَامِ رِضَاعاً أَوْ يَكُنْ آخِرُ الْمُدَامِ صُدَاعاً
 3 فَلَهَا بَيْنَ ذَا وَذَاكَ هَنَاتٌ وَصَفْهُمَا بِالسُّرُورِ لَنْ يُسْتَطَاعَ¹⁶⁹

- 1 We were not nursed
 By the same woman,
 But wine made us
 Nursery mates
- 2 If the first draught of wine
 Is mother's milk,
 And the last draught of wine
 Is a hangover,
- 3 Then between the two
 Are such pleasures!
 To describe them as happiness
 Would not suffice

Adab al-Nadīm depicts the intense emotions between male friends in a way that *Ādāb al-Kabīr* and *al-Ma`āsh wa'l-Ma`ād* do not. Kashājim, in the most famous passage from *Adab al-Nadīm*, quotes a gentleman as saying that conversation with a male friend is preferable even to listening to music or being alone with a woman,¹⁷⁰ and we have mentioned earlier in this chapter the anecdote about the three men who, upon visiting the graves of the master and his *nadīm*, are fatally overcome by emotion. `Abdullāh ibn Yazīd is referred to as the “beloved” (*ashīq*) of the poet Abū Tammām in the context of an anecdote;¹⁷¹ this is a

¹⁶⁹ Kashājim, *AN*, 32.

¹⁷⁰ Kashājim, *AN*, 58.

¹⁷¹ Kashājim, *AN*, 43. Kashājim quotes a single line from a poem by Abū Tammām, supposedly addressed to `Abdullāh and seeming to allude obliquely to his name, and then continues with the anecdote. The poem as it appears in his *dīwān* is classified in the *ghazal* section; it consists of four lines and refers to the beloved in the

very strong word, implying powerful emotions that can only be called love. In the next chapter we shall see how the emphasis on the intense emotions among brothers is pervasive in the Man of our Times poems.

What the Philosophers Said

Much scholarship in Western languages has already been devoted to the translation of the works of Greek philosophy into Arabic and their influence on Muslim philosophical and theological writings. The details of the complex process of how ideas which originated in ancient Greek texts found their way into the writings of someone like Ibn Dāwūd, through later Greek commentaries, early Syriac, Arabic, and possibly Persian translations of Greek works, and of course, the often inaccurate attributions in Arabic of particular texts and concepts to the Greek authors who first wrote them down,¹⁷² are beyond the scope of this dissertation.¹⁷³

As Raven has demonstrated, ninth-century *adab* works contain ideas that originated in works translated from Greek but circulated in the *majlis* in a “popularized” form that appealed to an audience that lacked specialized training in philosophy, but it would be a mistake to overestimate the direct influence of Greek philosophy on the Man of our Times poems or to read *Kitāb al-Zahra* as a philosophical work. Although *adab* was not among the disciplines most strongly influenced by the works of Greek authors, the indirect influence of

grammatical masculine but does not give any further indication of the beloved’s identity (Kamāl Abū Muṣliḥ, et al., *Abū Tammām: Hayātuhu wa-shi`ruhu*, [Beirut: al-Maktaba al-Ḥadītha lil-Ṭabā`a wan-Nashr, 1988], 288).

¹⁷² To take but one example, *Kitāb al-Zahra* contains a passage on the three types of friendship, which Ibn Dāwūd attributes to Ptolemy. Raven considers it an adaptation from both Ptolemy’s *Tetrabiblos* and Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*. Ḥunayn ibn Ishāq quotes the same passage in *Ādāb al-falāsifa* but attributes it to Plato (Raven, *MBD*, 63-64).

¹⁷³ For a brief overview of the history of the translation of Greek philosophical and scientific works into Arabic, see Majid Fakhry, *A History of Islamic Philosophy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 1-37.

Greek philosophy and medicine echoed in the *majlis*, as writers of *adab* made frequent reference to Greek scholars and reported their teachings, albeit through the lens of `Abbāsid cultural values. Learned as he was in jurisprudence, Arabic grammar, and poetry, it is highly unlikely that Ibn Dāwūd knew Greek,¹⁷⁴ and he was not educated in philosophy. The extent of his knowledge of Greek philosophy was that which was widely known among the educated classes, that which was part of the popular culture of the *majlis*. Ninth century works of *adab*, among them *Kitāb al-Zahra*, frequently include sayings attributed to Greek sages, often to the wrong Greek sage, which express a “popularized”¹⁷⁵ and “easily digestible”¹⁷⁶ version of the concept as it exists in the original Greek text. When it comes to the subject of human relationships, the Arabs of the *majlis* imposed sentimental overtones on Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics* or even Galen’s medical writings, to make ancient Greek views on friendship and love accord with those of the so-called *‘udhrī* poets,¹⁷⁷ never mind that much of the Bedouin poetry had received a similar idealizing treatment in the *majlis*.¹⁷⁸ We might compare the *majlis* version of Greek philosophy, expounded by amateur philosophers, to the *majlis* version of classical Arabic poetry, which we will treat in the fourth chapter, simplified and “[d]ramatized”¹⁷⁹ to appeal to the non-specialist and consistent with the tastes of the ninth-century *zuraḥā*.¹⁸⁰ For example, *Kitāb al-Zahra*

¹⁷⁴ Raven says that Ibn Dāwūd “had no training in Greek science” (Raven, *MBD*, 91).

¹⁷⁵ Raven, *MBD*, 60.

¹⁷⁶ Raven, *MBD*, 65.

¹⁷⁷ See Raven, *MBD*, 60.

¹⁷⁸ Hamori, “Love Poetry (*Ghazal*),” in *The Cambridge History of Arabic Literature: `Abbasid Belles-Lettres*, 205.

¹⁷⁹ Raven, *MBD*, 78.

¹⁸⁰ See Raven, *MBD*, 68. Sometimes the popularized Arabic versions include etymological explanations for natural phenomena; as these etymological relationships are specific to the Arabic language, it is not possible that they have been translated from Greek (Raven, *MBD*, 83).

contains a saying, attributed to Galen, that two rational people will love each other because they are alike in reason, but two foolish people will not necessarily love each other because they are both foolish.¹⁸¹ Raven has traced the origin of this saying to Plato's *Lysis* and Ptolemy's *Nomoi*, but not to any of Galen's writings,¹⁸² and he attributes the difference in content between the Arabic and Greek versions to the cultural attitudes of Ibn Dāwūd's contemporaries.

The quoted Platonic texts concentrate on the contrast good/bad. Good people resemble each other and tend to like each other, whereas bad people, although equally resembling each other, are usually each other's enemy. The Arabic text, however, points to the difference, in matters of love, between rational and stupid people and once more reflects the opinion that love is something for a refined elite.¹⁸³

As the philosophical training of *adab* compilers varied from one writer to another, so did the degree of accuracy with which their Greek-influenced material reflected the content of the original Greek texts. Thus we find everything from the philosophically astute description of the cause of friendship, not attributed to a Greek sage but clearly showing familiarity with the principles of syllogistic logic, in *al-Ma`āsh wa'l-Ma`ād* by the Mu`tazilite disputationist al-Jāḥiẓ, to an Arabic account in *Kitāb al-Zahra*, based loosely on the Aristophanes' speech in Plato's *Symposium* about each pair of lovers having originated a single entity which was then separated.¹⁸⁴ The version of Aristophanes' account as it appears in *Kitāb al-Zahra*, where it is attributed simply to *Plato*, either reveals an incomplete

¹⁸¹ Ibn Dāwūd, *KZ*, 16-17.

¹⁸² Raven, *MBD*, 67.

¹⁸³ Raven, *MBD*, 68.

¹⁸⁴ Raven doubts that Ibn Dāwūd himself included this passage in *Kitāb al-Zahra*, since it seems out of place in the context of the chapter in which it appears; he believes that a copyist inserted it later, because it would have been uncharacteristically uncritical of Ibn Dāwūd to have included a text that was so contradictory to his argument (Raven, *MBD*, 71).

understanding of Greek original or has been deliberately altered to accord with Islamic sensibilities. In the *Symposium*, Aristophanes describes the spherical creatures as corporeal beings, even describing the position of their faces, arms, and legs, and the halves, once separated, remain confounded despite the intervention of several divine interlocutors, including Apollo, Zeus, and Hephaestus.¹⁸⁵ Such a story, with its anthropomorphic deities, would have seemed either incomprehensible or absurd in Islamic society, and thus the Arabic version has it that spherical souls were divided in half, with each half placed in a different body, and the attraction of the two halves to each other is called “love.”¹⁸⁶

It is not only in these popular adaptations of Greek ideas that Arabic interpretations of Greek thought relate to Ibn Dāwūd’s views on brotherhood. The *Man of our Times* poems represent the idealization of certain moral traits, most importantly reason, fidelity, and justice. While the ancient Arab poetic tradition and the Persian-influenced court culture certainly acknowledged and appreciated these characteristics and exhorted those seeking virtue to cultivate them and to associate with those who possessed them, the most important texts devoted entirely to the subject of good and bad moral traits (*akhlāq*) were written after Ibn Dāwūd’s death, and their authors were scholars of Greek philosophy.

Yahyā ibn `Adī’s *Reformation of Morals: A Christian Aristotelian Perspective*

Yahyā ibn `Adī al-Takrītī (893-974),¹⁸⁷ a disciple of al-Fārābī, is most famous today for his contributions to the field of Christian apologetical writing in Arabic. He lived his life in cultural circumstances similar to those of Ibn Dāwūd, and thus it is fitting that he should

¹⁸⁵ Plato, *Symposium*, trans. B. Jowett (Project Gutenberg EBook #1600, 2008), 28.

¹⁸⁶ Ibn Dāwūd, *KZ*, 15.

¹⁸⁷ Yahyā ibn `Adī, *The Reformation of Morals*, trans. Sidney H. Griffith (Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 2002), xiii.

think of virtuous men similarly to how the Man of our Times describes them. Yaḥyā was a layman¹⁸⁸ who spent most of his life in urban centers, including Baghdad, with its *majālis* of discussion among people of various religions on topics religious and secular. Yaḥyā gained and applied his knowledge both within his own Syrian Orthodox (sometimes called “Jacobite”)¹⁸⁹ Christian community and in the religiously diverse society as a whole. He learned Aristotelian philosophy at the hands of the renowned Muslim philosopher al-Fārābī (d.950)¹⁹⁰ and taught it to Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī (d. 1023),¹⁹¹ who was also a Muslim.¹⁹² In his apologetical writings, he almost always bases his arguments on Aristotelian logic, in order to convince those who did not already believe as he did on doctrinal issues, yet he served his own church community as a *malpōnō*, a lay teacher of Christian doctrine and the Syriac language.¹⁹³ Thus he was, like Ibn Dāwūd, both a man of religion and a man of the *majlis*.

Yaḥyā’s *Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq* (*The Reformation of Morals*) is one of the earliest works in Arabic on “ethical philosophy.”¹⁹⁴ Its original title was most likely *Siyāsāt al-Nafs* (*The Governance of the Soul*), but it has come to be associated with the former title, perhaps because of association with a later work of the similar title by Miskawayh, to be discussed below.¹⁹⁵ For such a short treatise, approximately the same length as *Ādāb al-Kabīr*, it presents a remarkably comprehensive survey of human moral traits, both good and bad, as

¹⁸⁸ Ibn `Adī, *Reformation*, xv.

¹⁸⁹ Ibn `Adī, *Reformation*, xiii.

¹⁹⁰ Fakhry, *Islamic Philosophy*, 20.

¹⁹¹ Ibn `Adī, *Reformation*, xx.

¹⁹² For a chart representing the religious diversity of the Aristotelian philosophers who wrote in Arabic, see Ian Richard Netton, *Al-Fārābī and his School* (London: Routledge, 1992), 3.

¹⁹³ The word means “teacher” in Syriac (Ibn `Adī, *Reformation*, xv).

¹⁹⁴ Ibn `Adī, *Reformation*, xxix.

¹⁹⁵ Ibn `Adī, *Reformation*, xxx.

well as a prescription for ethical living. Griffith has observed that, although its frame of reference is primarily Hellenistic, Arab and Persian cultural influence is discernible in *Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq*,¹⁹⁶ that it is not merely an imitation of earlier Greek works. Thus, as we shall demonstrate, *Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq* and the *Man of our Times* poems attempt to reach the same audience; we might even say they vie for the affection of the same brothers.

Yahyā begins by laying the philosophical groundwork for a discussion of moral qualities. He first defines the word *khulq* (“moral quality,” the plural of which is *akhlāq*), as a “state (*ḥāl*) proper to the soul, in which a man performs his actions without deliberation or study,” following the definition given in a treatise by Galen, which now survives only in Arabic translation.¹⁹⁷ He then explains that every moral trait proceeds from one of the soul’s three faculties (*quwā*) which, following Plato,¹⁹⁸ he names “the appetitive soul” (*al-naḥs al-shahwāniyya*),¹⁹⁹ “the irascible soul” (*al-naḥs al-ghaḍabiyya*),²⁰⁰ and “the rational soul” (*al-naḥs al-nāṭiqā*).²⁰¹ Thus, every person is born with certain moral traits, and it is the duty of individuals to cultivate good moral qualities in themselves and suppress bad ones; this is the reformation of morals (*tahdhīb al-akhlāq*) and the governance of the soul. Since only people who already possess a certain degree of moral refinement are able to do this without external motivation, “there is a need in society for kings, laws, and systems of ethics.”²⁰² That he begins by explaining the philosophical basis for the rules of conduct, which is reminiscent of

¹⁹⁶ Ibn `Adī, *Reformation*, xxxi. Griffith hypothesizes that Ibn al-Muqaffa`’s works may even have been a source for the *Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq* (Ibn `Adī, *Reformation*, xli).

¹⁹⁷ Ibn `Adī, *Reformation*, xxxii.

¹⁹⁸ Ibn `Adī, *Reformation*, xxxiii.

¹⁹⁹ Ibn `Adī, *Reformation*, 14.

²⁰⁰ Ibn `Adī, *Reformation*, 18.

²⁰¹ Ibn `Adī, *Reformation*, 22.

²⁰² Ibn `Adī, *Reformation*, xxxiii.

the beginning of *al-Ma`āsh wa'l-Ma`ād*, although Yaḥyā approaches the rational explanation for his advice with far less flourish than al-Jāhiz.

Although Yaḥyā treats the three faculties of the soul and their relationship to character traits from a philosophical point of view, popularized versions of these concepts found their way to the *majlis* and even had some influence on Ibn Dāwūd. He alludes to this idea in the second line of “Love is a Natural Property of my Soul” [2].

حُبِّيهِ طَبْعٌ لِنَفْسِي لَا يُغَيِّرُهُ كَرُّ اللَّيَالِي وَلَا تَوْدِي بِهِ الْحَقَبُ²⁰³

My love for him
Is a natural property of my soul;
The turning of the nights does not change it,
Nor the vicissitudes take it away

In saying this, the Man of our Times is alleging that his love for the Brother is as much a part of his character as any of the moral characteristics we might find in Yaḥyā's treatise. As Raven has demonstrated, it was common in `Abbāsīd literary circles to apply Hellenistic maxims of morality to love.²⁰⁴ The term for “natural property” (*tab`*) in this poem is not the technical term that Yaḥyā uses; likewise, *Kitāb al-Zahra* includes a passage about the three “parts” (*masākin*) of the brain that is loosely based on Ḥunayn's description of the brain's three “faculties” (*quwā*).²⁰⁵ Ḥunayn, like Yaḥyā after him, uses the philosophical term “faculties.”

Yaḥyā then proceeds to a list of twenty virtues, twenty vices, and four moral traits which are neither virtues nor vices. It is here that echoes of the Arab and Persian influences

²⁰³ Ibn Dāwūd, *KZ*, 15.

²⁰⁴ Raven, *MBD*, 68.

²⁰⁵ Raven, *MBD*, 71.

are most strongly felt.²⁰⁶ Even the poets of the *Ḥamāsa* praise men's generosity and censure their malevolence. It is a testament to Yaḥyā's keen powers of psychological observation that he mentions that the same trait might be admirable for a person in one social role and undesirable for someone in another.²⁰⁷ His assessment of the desirable qualities for princes and leaders, especially, suggests that he was familiar with the Persian "mirrors for princes" genre.²⁰⁸ The virtues and vices all refer to social interactions, and if the treatise had ended here, we might include it in the same category as *al-Ma`āsh wa'l-Ma`ād*, a treatise on social conduct written by a philosophical adept.²⁰⁹ As for brotherhood, Griffith has noted that Yaḥyā refers almost exclusively to the social relationships of men, as though his audience took for granted that only males "have the potential for full humanity."²¹⁰

The conclusion of the treatise, however, which contains a "definite program [...] for the reformation of morals"²¹¹ and a description of "the complete man" (*al-insān al-tāmm*), that is, the one whose moral reformation is complete,²¹² takes us afield of the other texts described in this chapter. Here it becomes clear that association with one's fellows is not an end in itself; the ultimate goal is not to earn the favor of others, as it is in *Ādāb al-Kabīr* or especially in *Adab al-Nadīm*, nor is it to have a perfect relationship with one particular brother, as in the Man of our Times poems. The introduction to *Al-Ma`āsh wa'l-Ma`ād* implies that one should cultivate knowledge in order to attract friends. Conversely, Yaḥyā

²⁰⁶ Ibn `Adī, *Reformation*, xxxv.

²⁰⁷ Ibn `Adī, *Reformation*, xxxv.

²⁰⁸ Ibn `Adī, *Reformation*, xxxi.

²⁰⁹ *Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq* has even, on occasion, been incorrectly attributed to al-Jāḥiẓ (Ibn `Adī, *Reformation*, xxix).

²¹⁰ Ibn `Adī, *Reformation*, xii. Yaḥyā does mention, however, that certain moral traits are more praiseworthy in one sex or the other (Ibn `Adī, *Reformation*, xxxv).

²¹¹ Ibn `Adī, *Reformation*, xxxvii.

²¹² Ibn `Adī, *Reformation*, xxxviii-xxxix.

recommends that one conduct one's social life in a way that allows him to cultivate the sciences and that the virtue seeker "shall always frequent the sessions [*majālis*] of scholars and sages and continually associate with modest and abstinent people."²¹³ Thus, he exhorts his readers to aspire to something more enduring than the tastes of patrons, and he advises them in a way of thinking, not merely of outward behavior. Implicit in his high regard for scholarly pursuits which, by nature, require long periods of solitude, is the argument that the monastic life is a life of virtue, and thus, a rebuttal, on ethical grounds, to the Muslim disputationists who considered monasticism an evasion of social responsibility.²¹⁴ Nonetheless, *Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq* remains rooted in the social world, in human relationships and the quest for ethical perfection in this life, as opposed to spiritual perfection; it contains no mystical dimension.

Miskawayh's *Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq*: A Muslim Aristotelian Perspective

Abū `Alī Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ya`qūb Miskawayh²¹⁵ (320/932-421/1030) spent most of his career at the courts of the Buwayhid princes in Rayy and Baghdad.²¹⁶ Like many of his peers in this chapter, he was a polymath, but he is best remembered for his universal history *Tajārib al-Umam* (*The Experiences of the Nations*) and for his ethical writings, although he is said to have written on other subjects from mathematics to alchemy, and his poetry was popular in his time.²¹⁷ He was a rival of two other great writers among

²¹³ Ibn `Adī, *Reformation*, xxxix.

²¹⁴ See Constantine K. Zurayk, *The Refinement of Character: A translation from the Arabic of Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad Miskawayh's Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq* (Beirut: The American University of Beirut, 1968), 150.

²¹⁵ Some sources refer to him as Ibn Miskawayh, but this is incorrect, as the *laqab* Miskawayh belonged to Abu `Alī himself and not to his father (Zurayk, *Refinement*, xii).

²¹⁶ Zurayk, *Refinement*, xiv-xv.

²¹⁷ Zurayk, *Refinement*, xiii-xiv.

his contemporaries, both of whom also enjoyed the patronage of the Buwayhid court, Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī²¹⁸ and al-Ṣāhib ibn al-ʿAbbād²¹⁹ (d.995).²²⁰

The work of his that concerns us here is his *Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq*, written approximately fifty years after Yaḥyā ibn ʿAdī’s treatise of the same name,²²¹ but different from it in some significant ways which we shall discuss below. Although each of the *adab*-oriented works we have discussed in this chapter possesses its own internal logic and fulfils its unique purpose, Miskawayh’s *Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq* is, in Fakhry’s estimation, “one of the few systematic ethical treatises in Arabic.”²²² Miskawayh claims that the purpose of his book is “to acquire for ourselves a character that all our actions issuing therefrom may be good and, at the same time, may be performed by us easily, without any constraint or difficulty.”²²³ In contrast to the other works studied in this chapter, Miskawayh’s *Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq* consists mostly of definitions and classifications and contains little practical advice, which is appropriate, as he claims to have written the book in order to refine his own character instead of his audience’s, unless, of course, we interpret this statement as the beginning of a long conceit in which the author addresses his own soul. In any case, Miskawayh’s assertion that good actions proceed from a refined character stands in contrast to the assumption underlying *Ādāb al-Kabīr*, namely that one’s character is the sum of one’s actions, and therefore the virtuous man is the one whose outward actions are correct. Likewise, Miskawayh differs from Yaḥyā on several important points, namely the divisions of the soul and the value of the

²¹⁸ Zurayk, *Refinement*, xv.

²¹⁹ Zurayk, *Refinement*, xii.

²²⁰ C. Pellat, “Al-Ṣāhib Ibn ʿAbbād,” in *The Cambridge History of Arabic Literature: ʿAbbasid Belles-Lettres*, 96.

²²¹ Fakhry, *Islamic Philosophy*, 197.

²²² Fakhry, *Islamic Philosophy*, 192.

²²³ Zurayk, *Refinement*, 1.

solitary life. Miskawayh also describes a tripartite soul, but, following Platonic teachings, he divides it into the rational soul, the bestial soul, and the leonine soul.²²⁴ Yaḥyā's divisions of the soul are much more clearly related to virtues and vices and to human relationships.

While Yaḥyā sees solitude as a means of avoiding idleness and cultivating the study of philosophy, Miskawayh asserts that, since humans are, by nature "civic," the solitary life is the life of a savage.²²⁵

Miskawayh's *Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq* encompasses a wider range of subject matter than Yaḥyā's, and he is less concerned with individual character traits. His book consists of six discourses, "The Principles of Ethics," "Character and its Refinement," "The Good and its Divisions," "Justice," "Love and Friendship," and "The Health of the Soul."²²⁶ One notices immediately that Miskawayh's concerns are with matters far more abstract than the day-to-day workings of the *majlis*; the fifth discourse, however, contains some insights into a perspective on brotherhood of which echoes may be heard in the Man of our Times verses.

Miskawayh presents several systems for the classification of types of love, beginning with the one based on the criteria of how quickly it is formed and how quickly it is dissolved. According to this line of reasoning, there are four types of love:

1. love that forms quickly and dissolves quickly
2. love that forms quickly and dissolves slowly
3. love that forms slowly and dissolves quickly
4. love that forms slowly and dissolves slowly²²⁷

²²⁴ Fakhry, *Islamic Philosophy*, 193.

²²⁵ Zurayk, *Refinement*, 150. We may consider this assertion a subtle refutation of Yaḥyā's defense of solitude, which argument he makes to defend the Christian practices of monasticism and clerical celibacy on philosophical grounds.

²²⁶ Zurayk, *Refinement*, ix.

²²⁷ Zurayk, *Refinement*, 123.

He then relates these to the three “ends at which men aim in their desires and conducts.”²²⁸

He classifies these according to the Aristotelian division, namely pleasure, utility, and the good, but he adds a fourth goal for love, namely, a combination of the three.²²⁹ At various points throughout the treatise, he describes the love between a husband and a wife, a ruler’s love for his subjects, a father’s love for his child, a mother’s love for her child, a son or daughter’s love for his or her parents, a teacher’s love for a student, and a student’s love for a teacher.²³⁰ In general, the more effort the one who loves has exerted in ensuring the existence or well-being of the object of his love, the more intense his feelings of love. Thus maternal love is stronger than paternal love,²³¹ and both of these are stronger than filial love.²³²

What the Man of Times calls “brotherhood” (*ikhā*), Miskawayh calls “friendship” (*ṣadāqa*) and considers a subset of “love” (*maḥabba*).²³³ Miskawayh’s very avoidance of the figurative use of the word “brotherhood” shows us that he is writing outside the domain of literary *adab*. According to Miskawayh, two criteria of friendship are that it takes place between two people only and that it is not based on utility.²³⁴ Friendship is not virtuous in itself; rather, whether it is praiseworthy or blameworthy depends on whether its aim is pleasure or the good.²³⁵ This distinction is important in regards to our discussion of the Man of our Times poems, because later Arab authors’ negative estimation of Ibn Dāwūd, as well

²²⁸ Zurayk, *Refinement*, 123.

²²⁹ Zurayk, *Refinement*, 123.

²³⁰ Zurayk, *Refinement*, 129-135.

²³¹ Zurayk, *Refinement*, 138.

²³² Zurayk, *Refinement*, 132.

²³³ Oliver Leaman, “Secular Friendship and Religious Devotion,” in *Friendship East and West*, 251-262.

²³⁴ Zurayk, *Refinement*, 125.

²³⁵ Zurayk, *Refinement*, 125.

as Massignon's, seem to depend on their assumption that the friendship he describes in the Man of our Times poems is one based on pleasure. They might support their claim with the fact that the Man of our Times implies, on several occasions, that his friendship with the Brother began when they were young, since, according to Miskawayh, "Friendship among the young [...] is motivated by pleasure."²³⁶ If we allow for the possibility that the Man of our Times sought the good with the Brother, the poems appear in an entirely different light.

Earlier in this chapter, we discussed the difficulty of deciding whether to describe the state of emotional attachment between two men, as the Man of our Times poems depict it, as friendship or as chaste love; Miskawayh, however, does not allow the two concepts to overlap. Friendship according to Miskawayh is quite different from the love described in love poetry, and the latter is far inferior. He compares the love most often described in *ghazal* to the relationship between a singer and a listener, because one party seeks pleasure and the other seeks benefit. The lover "finds pleasure in beholding the beloved, while the [beloved] expects benefit."²³⁷ The discrepancy between the two parties' goals in the relationship is an inevitable source of conflict, and for this reason, "you see the lover complaining of his beloved and accusing him of unfairness."²³⁸ This view is an excellent example of the difference between a systematic treatment of ethical philosophy and philosophy-flavored sayings in the *majlis*.

As for the Man of our Times, the Brother's injustice toward him is one of his main complaints, but his accusations of injustice seem rooted in a sufficiently sophisticated

²³⁶ Zurayk, *Refinement*, 125.

²³⁷ Zurayk, *Refinement*, 130.

²³⁸ Zurayk, *Refinement*, 130.

understanding of justice to be more than simply an emotional outburst. The lovers' quarrels Miskawayh describes stem from an uncritical understanding of friendship and love; the Man of our Times, at least, seems to have faith that the Brother will be convinced by his appeals to justice, as can be seen in "I Have Misjudged Time" [85], which we will study more thoroughly in the next chapter. Even in poems such as "Treat Me Well or Badly" [31], in which he resolves to endure the Brother's ill treatment patiently, he acknowledges that the Brother has no moral obligation to reciprocate his affection, and that if it were within his power to free himself from his emotional attachment to the Brother, he would do so.

Conclusion

It would not be too far-fetched to say that ethics, rather than mere etiquette, is at the root of the Man of our Times' *adab*. Ibn Dāwūd expresses it, however, in terms closer to those of the Arab poetic tradition and to the aphorisms of Persian-influenced `Abbāsīd court culture rather than those of philosophy proper. Furthermore, he has chosen *ghazal* poetry as his vehicle, and he shows brotherhood in action more often than he makes dispassionate statements about it. Thus, he has achieved his aim of using love poetry to instruct the reader in the conduct of brotherhood. He was not an expert in Greek philosophy; what he knew of it he knew only secondhand, and even then, it was only a version of philosophy suited to non-specialists, only loosely based on Arabic translations of Greek texts. The Man of our Times poems make clear that the attraction the Man of our Times feels toward the Brother is based on the former's perception of virtue in the latter and that their esteem was once mutual; their relationship can genuinely be called friendship rather than an exercise in hedonistic frivolity. Ibn Dāwūd states in the introduction to *Kitāb al-Zahra* that his book is an ideal companion

which will edify the reader and enable him to carry on successful and wholesome relationships with his friends.

The texts we have studied in this chapter reflect aspects of the concept of brotherhood in the society in which Ibn Dāwūd lived and ideas which his original audience would have called to mind when they read the Man of our Times poems. As classical Arabic poetry relied heavily on allusions, not only to concepts as abstract as the ones we have examined in this chapter, but especially to other poems, we shall discover, in the next chapter, how Ibn Dāwūd used the Man of our Times character to demonstrate the way a virtuous man should feel and behave toward his friend and how he employed the mode of love poetry (*ghazal*) for that purpose.

Chapter Three

This Book is a Brother: *Kitāb al-Zahra* and its Poetic Hero, the Man of our Times

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1 رَعَى اللَّهُ دَهْرًا فَاتَ لَمْ أَقْضِ حَقَّهُ | وَقَدْ كُنْتُ طَبًّا بِالْأُمُورِ مُجَرَّبًا |
| 2 لَيْالِي مَا كَانَتْ رِياحُكَ شَمَالًا | عَلَيَّ وَلَا كَانَتْ بُرُوقُكَ خُلْبًا |
| 3 لَيْالِي وَقَبِيتُ الْهَوَى فَوْقَ حَقِّهِ | وَفَاءً وَظَرْفًا صَادِقًا وَتَأْدِبًا |
| 4 فَلَمْ أَرَ وُدًّا عَادَ ذَنْبًا وَقَدْ مَضَتْ | لَهُ حَقَبٌ يَتَسَجَّى بِذِكْرَاهُ مَنْ صَبَا |
| 5 وَلَمْ أَرَ سَهْمًا هَتَّكَ الدَّرْعَ وَانْتَهَى | إِلَى الْقَلْبِ قَدَمًا ثُمَّ قَصَّرَ أَوْ نَبَا |
| 6 وَلَا عُذْرَ لِلصَّمْصَامِ إِنْ بَلَغَ الْحَشَا | وَكَلَّ وَلَمْ يَنْلَمْ لَهُ الْعِظْمُ مَضْرِبًا |
| 7 وَلَا لِحَوَادٍ سَابِقَ الرِّيحِ سَالِمًا | وَقَامَ فَأَعْيَا بَلْ تَقَطَّرَ أَوْ كَبَا |
| 8 فَأَنْتَى بِعُذْرٍ فِي اطِّرَاحِي وَجَفَوْتِي | وَنَقَضَ عُهْدِي أَكْذَتَ زَمَنَ الصَّبَا |
| 9 إِذَا عَوِقَبَ الْجَانِي قَدْرَ جُرْمِهِ | فَتَعْنِيفُهُ بَعْدَ الْعِقَابِ مِنَ الرِّبَا ¹ |

I Have Misjudged Time [85]

- 1 May God preserve bygone times!
I misjudged their rights,
Though I was learned in such matters,
Experienced
- 2 Nights when the north wind
Did not bring me bad fortune,
On your behalf, and your promises were not empty,
Like lightning without rain
- 3 Nights when I gave to love
More than its fair share
Of fidelity and finesse,
Righteousness and refinement
- 4 I have never seen a friend
Respond like this to a lone fault,
Even after so much time has passed;
It pains a man in love to think of it
- 5 I have never seen an arrow pierce the breastplate,
Aiming straight for the heart,
Then fall short
And miss its mark
- 6 There is no pardon for a sword
If it reaches the bowels

¹ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 274-275.

And then goes dull,
When even bones could not deaden its blow

7 Nor for a steed that outruns the wind
Without growing tired,
Then when it goes to stands up,
It is too weak, and it collapses

8 Then where is your pardon,
For casting me aside, belittling me,
And breaking the covenants
That we certified in our youth

9 If a miscreant is punished accordingly,
Then to do violence to him
Beyond what his crime warrants
Is unlawful excess

My friend, why have you broken your promises and cast aside our friendship?

Twenty-first century readers of English are not in the least surprised to encounter this theme in a poem, and the simplicity and sincerity with which Ibn Dāwūd expresses it are remarkable, even by today's standards. He eschews clichés, rare words, and rare meanings of common words.² More generally, this poem is entirely free of the self-aggrandizement and idealizing exaggeration for which classical Arabic poetry is famous. It defies the stereotype that, in the words of Ibn Dāwūd's contemporary Ibn al-Rūmī (221/836-283/896),³ "God has reproached poets for saying what they do not do, but they are not guilty of this alone, for they [also] say what princes do not do."⁴ The persona is someone modern audiences would consider a sympathetic character; he is capable of failure, and his emotional

² We will discuss the implications of this type of diction in more detail in the next chapter.

³ Gruendler, *Praise Poetry*, 5.

⁴ Irwin, *Night*, 43.

Ibn al-Rūmī was himself a poet and is quoted in *Kitāb al-Zahra*, so one must assume an element of tongue-in-cheek humor in his statement, but it does contain truth about the insincerity of much poetry.

If being quoted in *Kitāb al-Zahra* does not connect him closely enough to Ibn Dāwūd, some biographers even claimed that Ibn al-Rūmī knew Ibn Dāwūd personally, to say nothing of the fact that Ibn al-Rūmī "wrote four poems on Ibn Jāmi'" (Raven, *MBD*, 31).

response is lifelike. This poem makes it easy to understand why Massignon and those before him believed that Ibn Dāwūd wrote *Kitāb al-Zahra* based on personal experience. Even Raven, in his valiant efforts to see the man behind the sensational story, admits that it is tempting for modern readers to see Ibn Dāwūd's own emotions reflected in some of his poems. In this chapter, I will demonstrate how Ibn Dāwūd draws from poetic tradition in order to create a tone of emotional intimacy in his poetry and that his doing this serves the purpose that he describes in the introduction to *Kitāb al-Zahra*.

In Ibn Dāwūd's time, it was accepted that the purpose of writing about love in the *qaṣīda*, held to be the highest form of poetry, was largely a rhetorical one. Ibn Dāwūd's contemporary Ibn Qutayba (257/871-276/889)⁵ says

[The poet] lamented of his intense passion, the pain of separation from his beloved, and his overwhelming longing, in order to incline people's hearts to him and to pique their interest, and to attract their attention, because poetry about young love is near to people's souls, and hearts are sympathetic to it, for God has made it His servants' nature to like erotic poetry and the companionship of women, for there is hardly a man among us who is not drawn to it.⁶

Ibn Qutayba was referring specifically to amorous verses composed in the *nasīb* so as to attract the audience's attention and sympathy for the duration of the *qaṣīda*, but his argument could also apply to *ghazal*, love poetry composed outside the context of the *qaṣīda*. The poet composed it the way he did in order to develop a rapport with the audience, whether he did so in service of a more persuasive *qaṣīda* which would earn him the favor of a patron and a lasting reputation among poets, or whether love poetry was an end in itself, and the only

⁵ Raven, *MBD*, 25.

⁶Ibn Qutayba, *Shi'r*, 31.

reward the poet sought his beloved's favor or the amusement of his companions or contemporaries.

One needs only to read the poem to know that Ibn Dāwūd did not write it for the sort of ceremonious occasion for which the classical *qaṣīda* was used in the `Abbāsīd era, and if he only meant to make his beloved forgive him, then expressing his bitterness so plainly may not have been the best strategy, especially if the beloved were accustomed to the sort of ostentatious flattery that led Ibn al-Rūmī to say what he said about the insincerity of poets. He intended to enlighten the reader in matters of love, and more specifically, of gentlemanly friendship, to guide the reader to be more conscientious in his relationships with others. If his only aim had been to give advice, however, he could have simply composed aphorisms in prose and in verse, as, in fact, he sometimes did, but how much more profound an impression does this poem make because its author understood so well the art and science of poetry? All this is to say, this poem and the other Man of our Times poems are meant as both poetry and *adab*, and Ibn Dāwūd succeeds on both counts. It is as though the Man of our Times leads us in a dance to an ancient rhythm toward a new and virtuous goal.

As we discussed in the first chapter of this dissertation, Willem Raven became, in the 1980s, the first modern scholar to do justice to Ibn Dāwūd; rather than simply reading *Kitāb al-Zahra* through the lens of the increasingly lurid stories that had grown up around Ibn Dāwūd, he allowed the maligned judge's writing to speak for itself. Before then, the story was repeated for no less than a millennium, without anyone challenging it. Perhaps the biographers' claim that Ibn Dāwūd wrote *Kitāb al-Zahra* and all the Man of our Times verses

in order to express his sadness over his rejection at the hands of a particular friend⁷ seems so plausible because *Kitāb al-Zahra* begins with a brief introduction, seven pages in Nykl's edition, on the subject of brotherhood, immediately followed by approximately five thousand lines, fifty chapters, of *ghazal*. The explanation for this that seemed most obvious to medieval readers of *Kitāb al-Zahra*, including the authors of the biographical dictionaries, was that Ibn Dāwūd compiled these amatory verses because they represented his feelings toward the unnamed male friend he addresses in the introduction, the "brother" to whom he dedicated the book. Raven makes a case for the dedicatee of the book being a "maecenas,"⁸ and lists among Ibn Dāwūd's criteria for including particular poems in *Kitāb al-Zahra* several literary and poetic considerations, as well as, "sheer caprice."⁹ He considers Ibn Dāwūd to be the first critic to devote a book entirely to the subject of love poetry, and he suggests that this might be because of, "the author's awareness that love is the predominant motif in literature."¹⁰ In my opinion, it is not possible to tell whether Ibn Dāwūd wrote *Kitāb al-Zahra* for a particular friend, much less to discern this friend's identity, but he must have intended his advice to apply to every *majlis*-going gentleman in Baghdad, or else he would not have fashioned it as a book of *adab*. Thus, love poetry is the logical choice of subject matter, for love, unlike battle, asceticism, or any of various other poetic themes, was central to the existence of his intended audience, the *ẓurafā'*.¹¹ It would also make sense that Ibn Dāwūd, being a *ẓarīf* himself, had more extensive knowledge *ghazal* than of poetry on other

⁷ "It is said that he wrote his aforementioned book for no reason other than this love" (Al-Anṭākī, *Tazyīn*, 333).

⁸ Raven, *MBD*, 100.

⁹ Raven, *MBD*, 94.

¹⁰ Raven, *MBD*, 96-97.

¹¹ Raven, *MBD*, 29. Gruendler also demonstrates how prominently *ghazal* was represented in the poetry of the *ẓurafā'*, the non-professional poets of the *majlis* (Gruendler, *Praise Poetry*, 5).

subjects, especially when he was young, and thus it dominates the first half of *Kitāb al-Zahra*, the part that, according to Raven, Ibn Dāwūd probably completed by the time he was thirty years old.¹²

I accept Raven's argument that love poetry, rather than love, is the main theme of *Kitāb al-Zahra*,¹³ and that Ibn Dāwūd selected most of the verses for inclusion because they contain certain motifs or express certain sentiments, but this does not answer the question about the brother in the introduction. It only makes sense for the poems in *Kitāb al-Zahra* to express a multiplicity of attitudes toward love, some of which contradict each other; this juxtaposition of diverse viewpoints, sometimes with little commentary from the anthologist himself, is an essential feature of *adab* itself. Certainly not every verse in *Kitāb al-Zahra* contains Ibn Dāwūd's instructions to his real or fictitious "brother," for this would be a confusing message indeed. Rather, his own verses, those attributed to the Man of our Times, continue his message about brotherhood and expand on its themes, just as they are consistent with the didactic and aphoristic tone of the introduction. Through the Man of our Times character, Ibn Dāwūd walks the reader through the vicissitudes of brotherhood toward the goal of harmonious and enlightened brotherly friendship, gentleman to gentleman, brother to brother, and he appeals repeatedly to the reader's sense of justice and of logical argument, meanwhile demonstrating his mastery of an array of poetic conventions. The Man of our Times poems address a gentleman, one who knows right from wrong and reason from nonsense; we shall call him the Brother. Perhaps love is the province of the *ẓarīf*, but Ibn

¹² Raven's assertions that the second half of *Kitāb al-Zahra* was written later than the first half and that the second half is less well organized leads me to believe that the second half was something of an afterthought, written for the sake of thoroughness in matters of *adab*, at least to the extent that the first half can stand alone as a book (Raven, *MBD*, 93).

¹³ Raven, *MBD*, 94.

Dāwūd's poetry comes across as so disarmingly sincere because he admits that there is more to the soul of the *adīb* than mere erotic infatuation.

The introduction to *Kitāb al-Zahra* has been quoted far more frequently than any of Ibn Dāwūd's poems, and its sense of raw emotion, the same unadorned bitterness we find in the above poem, sparked the imagination of readers and helped them accept at face value the biographical anecdotes, such as when Ibn Dāwūd says

Know that among the strangest things the days have brought and by which minds have been confounded is someone who behaves unjustly and claims that he is the victim of injustice, a deceiver who claims that he is remorseful, a tyrant who asks for help, and a conqueror who asks to be granted victory. [...] Do you deny that time changes things and that you are among those who change it? Do you deny being cruel to a brother when you yourself are a leader in such things? It is more appropriate for you to find a reason for it and apologize on behalf of those who do it than to blame and dishonor the victims of it.¹⁴

Just as the story of Ibn Dāwūd's love for Ibn Jāmi` distracted readers' attention from the contents of *Kitāb al-Zahra* itself, and the introduction distracted them from the poetry, so did the above paragraph, apparently an artless and heartfelt expression of indignation, overshadow the rest of the introduction, where the connections to the Man of our Times verses can be found. Even if read apart from the chapters on poetry, the introduction to *Kitāb al-Zahra* reads like a chapter of *adab*, like a *majlis* where learned men exchange wise and witty sayings on a theme. His meditations on love and his expressions of hurt are punctuated by aphorisms such as, "When someone's friendship is beautiful, it is grievous to make the friendship turn bad,"¹⁵ and, "He whose friendship is true must be obeyed," which would not

¹⁴ Ibn Dāwūd, *KZ*, 2.

¹⁵ Ibn Dāwūd, *KZ*, 1.

be out of place as chapter titles in *Kitāb al-Zahra*, as well as rhetorical questions such as, “How can someone devoid of virtue behave virtuously toward you, since the virtue is not reciprocated?”¹⁶ This rhetorical question, imbued with challenge and even cynicism, calls to mind some of Ibn Dāwūd’s verses, such as lines (6) through (8) above and

مَتَى يَصِلُ السَّقِيمُ إِلَى شِفَاءٍ إِذَا كَانَ الضَّنَى دَرَكَ الْمُعَافِي¹⁷
 When will the sick patient
 Arrive at a cure
 When the only one who can heal him
 Makes him even weaker?

Perhaps the most poignant example is this one.

فَلَسْتُ أَبَالِي بِالرَدَى بَعْدَ فَقْدِهِ وَهَلْ يَجْزَعُ الْمَذْبُوحُ مِنْ أَلَمِ السَّلْخِ¹⁸
 I do not fear what suffering may come,
 Since I have lost him;
 Does the victim, after being slaughtered,
 Fear the pain of being skinned?

We will see later on how these rhetorical questions function in the larger context of the poems in which they occur.

If we read between the pain and the wisdom, we see Ibn Dāwūd’s views on brotherhood clearly in the introduction. It is not unusual that the introduction to his book is replete with *du`ā*’ formulas,¹⁹ but it is worthwhile to examine them carefully in order to discern his individual concerns within the formulaic expressions. After wishing the dedicatee of the book long life, even offering his own life as a ransom for such, he says,

¹⁶ Ibn Dāwūd, *KZ*, 1.

¹⁷ Ibn Dāwūd, *KZ*, 128.

¹⁸ Ibn Dāwūd, *KZ*, 305.

¹⁹ Raven, *MBD*, 100. The word *du`ā*’, which Raven translates as “benediction,” is a prayer of intention, such as, “May God grant you long life,” or, “May I be your ransom.” In the introduction to *Kitāb al-Zahra* and books like it, the *du`ā* formulas invoke God’s blessings on the addressee, but it is also possible to say a *du`ā*’ against someone.

“May God grant you possession of everything you desire. May He make your friends act in your interest,”²⁰ implying that the thing that the dedicatee wants most is good friendship. Unlike the rest of *Kitāb al-Zahra*, where virtually every prose statement bears an attribution, whether to a named individual or simply, “a Persian king,” or, “a philosopher,” almost none of the aphorisms in the introduction do, the notable exception being the quotation from `Abd al-Malik ibn Marwān, saying, “I have attained all the pleasant things in life, except a brother who sets me free from the trouble of caution,”²¹ that is, one who allows him to let down his guard.

Early in the introduction, Ibn Dāwūd describes a problem that he perceives in society, namely that men do not treat their close friends (“brothers”) in a virtuous manner.

Know that those who are content with their brothers are few these days. The only ones who remain are those who do things half-heartedly and do not act justly. If you give preference to them, they hesitate to receive your preferential treatment. When you treat them with respect, they abandon you. As long as they have any hopes or fears about you, they stay away from you. If neither of these two conditions (their hopes or their fears) is present, they do not abide by your brotherhood or keep their promise of fidelity.²²

He then goes on to offer *Kitāb al-Zahra* as a solution to the problem. It represents an ideal companion, for it will be ever loyal, and it will suit the brother’s every mood.

I have decided, because of my overpowering longing for you, even as you have been inclined to inquire about the states of lovers, to send to you a companion (*nadīm*) that will show you the states of those who have come before you and bring you the news of those from the past. It will share your enthusiasm and run out of energy only when you do. It will be near to you when you permit it, and it will be far away when you exile it.

²⁰ Ibn Dāwūd, *KZ*, 1.

²¹ Ibn Dāwūd, *KZ*, 3.

²² Ibn Dāwūd, *KZ*, 3.

It will not regard you scornfully when you need it. It will not turn away from you when you turn away from it and mistreat it. It will not keep your secrets instead of revealing them; rather, it would never cross your companion's mind to reveal them. Your companion is not too proud to let you ask it questions, and it will not be angry with you when you are afraid or when it is tired.²³

Of all the words meaning, “friend,” *nadīm*, which is sometimes translated as “boon companion,” is, as we discussed in the previous chapter, the one that referred to a man hired to accompany his patron (*ra'īs*) in recreational activities, almost a professional friend, and it fits very well into the context of friendship among wealthy, educated gentlemen. The most famous *nadīm* relationship in Arabic literary tradition is that of the licentious poet Abū Nuwās and the libertine caliph al-Amīn (reigned 809-813).²⁴ Although all the qualities he attributes to the book, such as the keeping of secrets confided in it, being receptive to questions and tolerant of fickle moods, apply to the ideal brother the Man of our Times seeks throughout *Kitāb al-Zahra*, it is significant that, in this instance, he uses the word *nadīm*, since, unlike “brother,” it implies an unequal relationship, one based on pursuing the interests of the *ra'īs* but not those of the *nadīm*. He may have chosen this word in order to be consistent with the obsequious posturing typical of the dedications of books,²⁵ or perhaps it was because, *Kitāb al-Zahra*, much like a *nadīm*, will help the brother achieve his ends, namely

If you give it to any brother you like, you will never lose him from among your circle of friends (*dīwān*). If you devote yourself to it to the exclusion of your other friends, it will allow you to rise above your peers.²⁶

²³ Ibn Dāwūd, *KZ*, 3.

²⁴ Abū Nuwās, *Dīwān*, 9.

²⁵ Raven, *MBD*, 100.

²⁶ Ibn Dāwūd, *KZ*, 3-4.

If young statesmen received guidance from books of the “mirrors for princes” genre, then we may well consider *Kitāb al-Zahra* a “mirror for brothers.” Following the advice of *Kitāb al-Zahra* will make the reader an expert in the art of brotherhood, and he will be widely sought-after as a brother.

Ibn Dāwūd then goes on to tell us that brotherhood is not the only institution that is sorely in need of his guidance. In his opinion, a morally sound book of *adab* on the subject of love poetry remains a *desideratum*, since, “many who claim to be men of *adab* and who compose books with the same aim as this book are [...] far from correct.”²⁷ He then outlines the moral parameters of *Kitāb al-Zahra* and, implicitly, of *adab* in general. He expresses his intention to avoid mentioning the legendary lovers of ancient times in the same breath as the prophets of Islam, since he believes that, “it is unlawful for a Muslim to make such a claim about them, that they killed people whose blood it was forbidden to shed or that they did unseemly things,”²⁸ because, “the prophets, peace be upon them, and the righteous imams of the Muslims are of a station so high that the common people ought not speak of their affairs and deny them their proper status.”²⁹ The verses of poetry in *Kitāb al-Zahra* greatly outnumber the anecdotes, because the reader seeking to be a more virtuous brother has more to learn from them, “because people are already familiar with many anecdotes, and few people benefit from them.”³⁰ Thus, not only is *Kitāb al-Zahra* a mirror for brothers, but it is a particularly illuminating one, more morally edifying than other books of *adab*, because, as much as possible, it avoids gossip and anecdotes that speculate about the actions of believers.

²⁷ Ibn Dāwūd, *KZ*, 4.

²⁸ Ibn Dāwūd, *KZ*, 4.

²⁹ Ibn Dāwūd, *KZ*, 4.

³⁰ Ibn Dāwūd, *KZ*, 7.

The second aim, to write a book that enlightens the reader on the themes of *ghazal* while steering clear of hearsay and morally questionable subjects, is a rather simple one, and one can find evidence of Ibn Dāwūd's success in this regard on virtually any page of *Kitāb al-Zahra*. The first aim is more complicated. How do five thousand lines of love poetry transform the reader into a wiser gentleman whose friendship is more desirable?

To begin, "love poetry" is a very broad term. Ibn Dāwūd quotes poets with diverse worldviews and poems written for diverse rhetorical purposes. Some of the poems in *Kitāb al-Zahra* were not written in the genre of *ghazal* at all; rather, in certain instances, he chose from panegyrics brief excerpts that deal with love,³¹ and other selections seem to come from elegies.³² The poets he quotes run the gamut from anonymous Bedouins to compilers of poetry anthologies like Abū Tammām and al-Buḥturī,³³ from seekers of notoriety like `Umar ibn Abī Rabī'a³⁴ and Abū Nuwās³⁵ to so-called martyrs of love like Jamīl³⁶ and Kuthayyir. Together, they make for a lively and cacophonous *majlis*, and it would be unreasonable to expect them to present a consistent and straightforward message for the discerning brother. This, as we shall explore momentarily, is the duty of the Man of our Times.

The purposes extended beyond expressing one's feelings to the object of one's love. Scholars of poetry, from Ibn Qutayba to Ibn Rashīq admitted that poets wrote love poetry as much for the enjoyment of the audience of "lovers of poetry" as for the enjoyment of the

³¹ Raven, *MBD*, 120.

³² Ibn Dāwūd, *KZ*, 366.

³³ Raven, *MBD*, 97-98.

³⁴ Irwin, *Night*, 54-55.

³⁵ Kennedy, *Abū Nuwās*, 20.

³⁶ Irwin, *Night*, 57.

beloved.³⁷ Ibn Dāwūd's contemporaries among Baghdad gentlemen, the *ẓurafā'*, were famous for their enthusiasm for love poetry³⁸ and would have been likely to read a book about *ghazal*.

Other poets in *Kitāb al-Zahra* do make statements about brotherhood that accord with the views Ibn Dāwūd expresses in the introduction. Most of these come from Abū Tammām and al-Buḥturī, both of whom seem to have influenced Ibn Dāwūd as a poet and a literary critic, since they are two of the most extensively quoted poets in *Kitāb al-Zahra*,³⁹ and both of them wrote books, with which Ibn Dāwūd seems to have been familiar, on the motifs of Arabic poetry.⁴⁰ Abū Tammām, embracing the `Abbāsīd mania for defining the meanings of Arabic words, describes a "brother" in a way that agrees with the concept, loosely based on Aristophanes' speech in Plato's *Symposium*, that the souls of people who love each other were once parts of the same whole.⁴¹

وَقُلْتُ أَخِي قَالُوا أَخٌ مِنْ قَرَابَةٍ فَقُلْتُ نَعَمْ إِنَّ الشُّكُولَ أَقَارِبُ
نَسِيبِي فِي رَأْيٍ وَعَزَمٍ وَمَذْهَبٍ وَإِنْ بَاعَدْتَنَا فِي الْأَصُولِ الْمُنَاسِبُ⁴²

1 I said, "My brother."
They said, "A brother by blood?"
I said, "Yes,
Indeed those of like nature are kin.

2 He was my kinsman in thought,
Conviction, religion,

³⁷ Abdelfattah Kilito, *The Author and his Doubles*, trans. Michael Cooperson (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2001), 31.

³⁸ Raven, *MBD*, 29.

³⁹ Raven, *MBD*, 24, 26.

⁴⁰ Raven, *MBD*, 95-98.

⁴¹ "Some of the philosophers have claimed that God, may He be greatly praised, created souls in a spherical shape, like a ball, then He divided them and put each half in a different body. Whenever a body finds the body that contains the half that was split from its half, love arises between them because of their ancient affinity" (Ibn Dāwūd, *KZ*, 15).

⁴² Ibn Dāwūd, *KZ*, 366.

Even though our origins
Were not the same.”

Likewise, Al-Buḥturī says

أَخٌ لِي لَمْ تَتَّصِلْ نِسْبَتِي بِقُرْبَى أَبِيهِ وَلَا أُمِّهِ⁴³

A brother of mine,
My relationship to him
Is not through his father’s family,
Nor his mother’s

But it is Ibn Dāwūd, through the medium of the Man of our Times, who excels at the “brother from another mother” motif. Here he plays on the literal and figurative senses of the word “brother,” by using the phrase أَخٌ سَقِيقٌ (brother with both parents in common, as opposed to a half-brother).

لَقَدْ بَاعَدْتَ عَنْكَ أَخًا شَقِيقًا فَلَا يَغُرُّكَ حُسْنُ صَبْرِي
فَلَوْ جُمِعَ الْأَنَامُ لَكُنْتَ فَرْدًا أَحَبَّهُمْ إِلَيَّ بِكُلِّ سِعْرِ⁴⁴

1 You have cast aside
A full-blooded brother,
And do not be fooled
By my decorous patience.

2 If all mankind were gathered before me,
You alone
Would be the dearest of them to me
By all accounts.

On the virtues of brotherhood, al-Buḥturī says

وَأَخٌ لَيْسَتْ الْعِيشُ أَخْضَرَ نَاضِرًا بِكَرِيمِ عَشْرَتِهِ وَفَضْلِ إِخَائِهِ⁴⁵
A brother,
I have decked my life in the vibrant green
Of his noble companionship

⁴³ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 101.

⁴⁴ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 165.

⁴⁵ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 62.

And virtuous brotherhood.

Abū Tammām praises most eloquently and exuberantly the feelings an educated man of letters (*adīb*) can feel for one like himself. Although he gives credit to the philosophical concept of the affinity of souls, the reader may refer to concrete proof of this theory's veracity; two gentlemen who have sought and attained a profound understanding of love and virtue cannot but love each other.

بَّ أَدِيبٍ مُنَيِّمٍ بِأَدِيبٍ	1 أَيُّ شَيْءٍ يَكُونُ أَمْلَحَ مِنْ صَ
بَعْدَمَا جازَ حُكْمُهُ فِي الْقُلُوبِ	2 جازَ حُكْمِي فِي قَلْبِهِ وَهَوَاهُ
كِتَاباً هَذَا حَبِيبُ حَبِيبٍ	3 كَادَ أَنْ يَكْتُبَ الْهَوَى بَيْنَ عَيْنَيْهِ
⁴⁶ لَتَنَعَّصْتُ عَشَقَهَا بِالرَّقِيبِ	4 غَيْرَ أَنِّي لَوْ كُنْتُ أَعْشَقُ نَفْسِي

- 1 What in the world
Could be more beautiful
Than one man of letters passionately in love
With another?
- 2 I have gained dominion
Over his heart and his love
Since he first gained dominion
Over mine
- 3 He almost wrote our love
Between his eyes
With the words:
“This is the beloved of a beloved one,”
- 4 Except that, if I were in love
With my own soul,
I would fear lest a slanderer
Find out about my love for it

The man of letters (*adīb*) is characterized not only by his awareness of philosophy but also by his encyclopedic knowledge of the Arabic language, so it is fitting that these four lines of

⁴⁶ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 60.

poetry⁴⁷ include five different words meaning “love,” or, “a person in love.” If this display of lexical virtuosity were not enough to convince the audience of his love, he goes on to say that the only thing that has prevented his love from bursting through the floodgates is the law of poetic love, which requires that a lover guard the secret of his love from the snares of malicious gossip.

In these verses, as well, Abū Tammām expresses the exhilaration one feels at having a male friend who understands and accepts him, one who does precisely what Ibn Dāwūd has sent *Kitāb al-Zahra* for the purpose of doing,

1 أَزُورُ مُحَمَّدًا إِذَا التَّقَيْنَا تَكَلَّمَتِ الضَّمَائِرُ فِي الصُّدُورِ
2 فَأَرْجِعْ لَمْ أَلْمُهُ وَلَمْ يُلْمَنِي وَقَدْ فَهَمَ الضَّمِيرُ مِنَ الضَّمِيرِ⁴⁸

1 I visit Muḥammad,
And when we meet,
Our thoughts speak
Within our hearts

2 I return,
I have not blamed him, nor has he blamed me,
For one mind
Has understood the other

A case can be made for Abū Tammām’s sincerity here, especially since he takes a step back from his famous *modus operandi* of outlandish metaphors and dizzying paronomasia, but if we see ourselves in Abū Tammām, whose heart is about to burst from how well his friend

⁴⁷ The version of this poem that appears in Abū Tammām’s *dīwān* has an additional two lines preceding the four that Ibn Dāwūd quotes in *Kitāb al-Zahra*. The first praises the poet’s tears, as per the *nasīb*, and the second asserts that the beloved is a peerless beauty (Abū Muṣliḥ, *Abū Tammām*, 281). In my opinion, and perhaps also in Ibn Dāwūd’s, since he excluded them, these two verses detract from the theme of affinity and mutuality and from the tone of unrestrained happiness in the poem. If tears are beautiful, the beloved’s form is beautiful, and it is beautiful when like falls in love with like, then the poem’s exuberance comes across as mere bombastic hyperbole, rather than making way for the true inimitable radiance of loving one’s equal.

⁴⁸ Ibn Dāwūd, *KZ*, 92.

Muḥammad has understood the man behind the words, we shall see later how the Man of our Times lays us low with his compunction over a male friend also named Muḥammad.

We turn our attention now to how the Man of our Times of Ibn Dāwūd's verses longs for a love like this one, a love engendered in the virtuous minds of self-aware men, one in which both parties play identical roles, neither lover and beloved nor master and slave, but brother and brother. If Abū Tammām and al-Buḥturī occasionally acknowledge the worth and poignancy of *ikhā'* in their poetry, it is rather the central theme of the Man of our Times verses.

Let us consider the Man of our Times a fictional character in a series of poems connected to each other by association with the Man of our Times pseudonym. We may begin by thinking of him as the poetic persona of Muḥammad ibn Dāwūd, the way that nearly all poets wrote "in character," hence Ibn al-Rūmī's assertion that poets claim to do things that they do not do. Consider, for example, the poetic persona of Abū Nuwās the drunken hell-raiser or Abū al-ʿAtāhiya the ascetic. Even Abū Tammām's claim of descent from the tribe of Ṭayyi' was a matter of poetic artifice.⁴⁹ Perhaps Ibn Dāwūd was too convincing in creating a poetic persona, because readers interpreted his poems literally, as if they referred to his personal experience.⁵⁰ On the other end of spectrum from mere poetic bombast are the poems and actions attributed to Qays ibn al-Mulawwaḥ, called Majnūn Laylā, the most famous of the martyrs of love, who may not have been a historical person at all.⁵¹ We may consider the biographical anecdotes about Ibn Dāwūd, complete with their

⁴⁹ S. Stetkevych, *Abū Tammām*, xiii.

⁵⁰ For a timely discussion of the phenomenon of audiences' inability to distinguish between fact and fiction, see Alaa al-Aswany's introduction to his short story collection *Friendly Fire* (Al-Aswany, *Friendly Fire*, xi-xxv).

⁵¹ J. Stetkevych, *Zephyrs of Najd*, 115.

spurious verses, as something of a Majnūn Laylā story, complete with its later getting caught in the divide between Ṣūfīs and legalistic thinkers. When we remove this “apocryphal” material and only consider as “canonical” Ibn Dāwūd’s verses, those that appear in *Kitāb al-Zahra* with the Man of our Times attribution,⁵² we are still left with a set of episodes, held together by Ibn Dāwūd’s statements about brotherhood in the introduction.

Ibn Dāwūd states in the introduction that he is sending *Kitāb al-Zahra* to be a *nadīm* to the reader and help him win the friendship of any brother he chooses. He achieves this purpose by inserting the Man of our Times into various scenarios, at least one per chapter,⁵³ that will shed light on the art of *ikhā’*. Ibn Dāwūd is not the first *adīb* to suggest that “a book is the best companion;” this idea goes back at least as far as al-Jāhīz.⁵⁴ Nonetheless, it is because the Man of our Times is a flawed character in whom the reader can recognize his own humanity that Ibn Dāwūd is able to make *Kitāb al-Zahra* such an indispensable *nadīm*.

While Ibn Dāwūd is not the only poet in *Kitāb al-Zahra* to deal with the subject of brotherhood and gentlemanly friendship, he is certainly the foremost one. The Man of our Times poems include mention the word “*akh*” (“brother”), twelve times and *ikhā’* (“brotherhood”) seven times in 534 lines of poetry, the highest concentration of these words in the works of any poet in *Kitāb al-Zahra*. He refers to the “beloved” in his poems exclusively by the masculine pronoun, and the only time a female character appears in one of his poems, she is not a beloved but a detractor, deriding the Man of our Times for his old

⁵² See Raven for further discussion of this matter (Raven, *MBD*, 20-22).

⁵³ In the process, the Man of our Times encounters many different poetic motifs. I do not disagree with Raven’s that Ibn Dāwūd composed some of his poem specifically to fit into the themes of the chapter (Raven, *MBD*, 22), but even when he did, he never lost sight of the theme of brotherhood.

⁵⁴ Irwin, *Night*, 86-88.

age,⁵⁵ analogous to the woman in another poem who chides Kuthayyir for remaining faithful to `Azza.⁵⁶ While the masculine pronoun in `Abbāsīd love poetry did not necessarily denote a male beloved, the *dawāwīn* of most poets contain poems about loved ones of both grammatical genders, and we may consider Ibn Dāwūd's exclusive adherence to the masculine gender significant. Ibn Dāwūd has us view this brotherhood through the lens of many different styles of love poetry. His poems range from witty couplets to sophisticated poems of between eight and eleven lines that employ Ibn Dāwūd's unique interpretation of the *qaṣīda* structure, but whether the individual poem deals with kisses or admonition, wine in Baghdad or thirst in the desert, the Man of our Times, on behalf of the reader, is always seeking truth about brotherhood, always faithful to Ibn Dāwūd's promise in the introduction. Many of the poems take the form of the Man of our Times admonishing the wayward Brother, as Ibn Dāwūd does in the introduction; in others, he alludes to some aspect of the ideal brotherhood in a less direct and more artistic manner, and on one occasion, he presents both a poem that was written to the Man of our Times, by "a brother of his," "a man of letters," followed by the response of the Man of our Times.⁵⁷

In Search of Brotherhood: The Man of Our Times as Hero of the *Qaṣīda*

A more careful reading of the poem at the beginning of this chapter reveals it to be a *qaṣīda*, as it tells of the poet's quest to reach a particular destination, considering that the word "*qaṣīda*" is derived from the verb meaning, "to head toward a destination." Although Ibn Qutayba's definition of the sections of the *qaṣīda* has become standard, individual poets have interpreted the traditional sequence of motifs in many different ways, to differing

⁵⁵ Ibn Dāwūd, *KZ*, 341.

⁵⁶ Ibn Dāwūd, *KZ*, 55.

⁵⁷ Ibn Dāwūd, *KZ*, 43.

effects, depending on the circumstances surrounding the composition of the poem and the poets' individual styles.⁵⁸ In recent decades Jaroslav Stetkevych and Suzanne Pinckney Stetkevych have undertaken extensive structural studies of the *qaṣīda* and likened the progression of its three sections (the *nasīb*, the *raḥīl*, and the *madīḥ*), to everything from the sonata⁵⁹ to ancient Near Eastern sacrifice rituals.⁶⁰ For our purposes, it may be useful to think of the three sections of the *qaṣīda* as the starting point, the quest, and the destination.

If we consider "I Have Misjudged Time" to adhere to the *qaṣīda* structure, its sections are as follows:

Nasīb

- 1 May God preserve bygone times!
I misjudged their rights,
Though I was learned in such matters,
Experienced
- 2 Nights when the north wind
Did not bring me bad fortune,
On your behalf, and your promises were not empty,
Like lightning without rain
- 3 Nights when I gave to love
More than its fair share
Of fidelity and finesse,
Righteousness and refinement

Raḥīl

- 4 I have never seen a friend
Respond like this to a single fault,
Even after so much time has passed;
It pains a man in love to think of it
- 5 I have never seen an arrow pierce the breastplate,

⁵⁸ For an overview of formulations of the sections of the *qaṣīda* in pre-`Abbāsīd and `Abbāsīd poetry, see M.M. Badawi, "Abbasid Poetry and its Antecedents," in *The Cambridge History of Arabic Literature: `Abbasid Belles-Lettres*, 149-152.

⁵⁹ J. Stetkevych, *Zephyrs of Najd*, 16-24.

⁶⁰ S. Stetkevych, *Abū Tammām*, 109-111.

Aiming straight for the heart,
Then fall short
And miss its mark

6 There is no pardon for a sword
If it reaches the bowels
And then goes dull,
When even bones could not deaden its blow

7 Nor for a steed that outruns the wind
Without growing tired,
Then when it goes to stands up,
It is too weak, and it collapses

8 Then where is your pardon,
For casting me aside, belittling me,
And breaking the covenants
That we certified in our youth

Hikma

9 If a miscreant is punished accordingly,
Then to do violence to him
Beyond what his crime warrants
Is unlawful excess

The *nasīb* begins, much like any other *nasīb*: “May God preserve bygone times!”

Lamentation over *dahr*, which conveys the sense of both “time” and “fate,” is nothing out of the ordinary in the first line of the *nasīb*, and this poem is not even the only one in *Kitāb al-Zahra* to begin with benedictions for long-lost times and places.⁶¹ But the forlorn poet standing at the time-forsaken encampment is not a desert Bedouin in the ancient past; his features are familiar. He reveals, through a series of self-referential statements, that he is a Man of our Times, one who ascertains people’s rights, one with a good reputation for his learning as well as for his work; he alludes to details of his life that would remind his audience that this Man of our Times is the *alter ego* of Muḥammad ibn Dāwūd, the judge and

⁶¹ Ward al-Hilālī begins a poem by saying, “May God pour blessings for Najd” (Ibn Dāwūd, *KZ*, 269).

author of *adab* they know so well. In line (1), he says that he is learned and experienced in determining which rights are due to whom, and if that is not a clear enough description of the judicial profession, he uses the verb *قَضَى*, from which is derived *قَاضٍ*, the Arabic word for “judge” (*qāḍī*). The word *تَأَدَّبَ* (“refinement” or “polite behavior”) in line (3) shares its root with *أَدَبَ* (*adab*), the genus of books which includes *Kitāb al-Zahra*, and *ظَرَفَ* (“finesse, elegance,” *ẓarf*) is frequently associated with the literary and cultural circles to which Ibn Dāwūd belonged.⁶² Ibn al-Nadīm and others refer to Ibn Dāwūd as *adīb* and *ẓarīf*.⁶³ This is only what we can tell from the mere presence of these words in the poem; later we shall see which underlying ideas he conveyed by using them. This crestfallen judge is despondent not only because time waits for no one, but because even such an astute scholar as he has underestimated that to which mighty Time is entitled.

It is not caravans and elegantly arrayed ladies for which the Man of our Times is nostalgic, but for a brotherhood in which promises were made to be kept; the “bygone times” were the site of his meeting a faithful brother. The things that made the elusive nights of his youth so beautiful are not particular valleys and rivers in Najd but moral qualities, like fidelity (*wafāʾ*) and polite refinement (*ẓarf*). He uses the *nasīb* image of the lightning as a *double-entendre*, since *بروق خلّب* (“lightning without rain”) is a figurative expression, meaning “unfulfilled promises.”⁶⁴

⁶² Raven, *MBD*, 27.

⁶³ Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 217.

⁶⁴ Another poetic technique is also at work here. Since he says, “your lightning” (*بروقك*), he is attributing a quality (lightning) to something that does not naturally possess it (the beloved, a human being), a device known as *istiʿāra*, usually translated as “metaphor” (S. Stetkevych, *Abū Tammām*, 77). Other ʿAbbāsīd poets, such as Abū Tammām, wrote *istiʿāra* based on figurative expressions (S. Stetkevych, *Abū Tammām* 99).

I have classified line (4) as part of the *raḥīl* for reasons which will soon become apparent, but we may likewise consider it as a *takhalluṣ*, the transitional section in which the poet resigns himself to the fact that the past for which he longs is unattainable and sets out on his *raḥīl* toward his destination,⁶⁵ since, at the same time it looks towards the bittersweet memories of the *nasīb* and toward the quest that lies ahead of it. “I have never seen friendship repaid as if it were a fault” (لم أر ودا عاد ذنبا) accords perfectly with Ibn Dāwūd’s description of the crisis of brotherhood in the introduction, and thus the Man of our Times is lost in the wasteland, either a desert wasteland that ninth-century audiences were likely to imagine when they heard about bygone times, nights, winds, and lightning, or else a moral wasteland of faulty brotherhood, for the same reason that Ibn Dāwūd outlined in the dedication of *Kitāb al-Zahra*. He adds to the tone of longing for the past with the phrase “a man in love” (من صبا) in line (4), since the verb for “to love,” he uses here comes from the root ص ب و, from which derived words related to youth and childhood; his audience may have understood this phrase to mean, “a man who has been in love since his youth.” Among the recurring themes of the Man of our Times verses is a love that has endured in his heart since he was young,⁶⁶ and the saying attributed to Ibn Dāwūd in the anecdotes that he had, “not been free from love since grammar school,”⁶⁷ may be evidence of how believable the young love portrayed in the Man of our Times verses seemed to its original audience.

Just as Ibn Dāwūd’s *nasīb* mourns the loss of an affinity of minds, so his *raḥīl* consists of the arduous process of a series of logical steps, a journey of the rational mind. In this poem, he pays homage to several ancient images of the *raḥīl*, namely, the arrow, the

⁶⁵ Roger Allen, *An Introduction to Arabic Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 77.

⁶⁶ The poem about old age (Ibn Dāwūd, *KZ*, 341) is only one of several examples.

⁶⁷ Al-Baghdādī, *TB*, 5:258.

sword, and the horse. Whereas the pre-Islamic poets made the journey in order to return to their tribesmen, and most of the Islamic ones endeavored to reach the palaces of their patrons, the Man of our Times is on a quest to make logical sense of the situation, so he sets out to analyze things according to what, by the laws of nature, they can and cannot do,⁶⁸ using arguments that would not be out of place in a philosophical treatise. Consider, for example, Yaḥyā ibn `Adī's argument that begetting children does not, by itself, amount to virtue, for, if it did, then dogs would be superior to men, because a dog bears a litter of seven pups whereas, in most cases, a woman bears only one child at a time. As Yaḥyā bases his argument on statements about the nature of dogs and men, Ibn Dāwūd's argument rests on statements about the nature of arrows, swords, horses, and friendship.⁶⁹ Ibn Dāwūd's entry into such an argument shows a typically `Abbāsīd self-awareness in dealing with tropes from the poetic canon; by demonstrating his knowledge of the principles of logic through poetry, he is engaging in what Suzanne Stetkevych would call the "metapoetry" of the `Abbāsīd *qaṣīda*.⁷⁰

In line (4) he undertakes the task of proving that it is illogical and against the natural order for the beloved friend to behave as though the Man of our Times has done something wrong by loving him, and to break his promises when the Man of our Times has been so faithful to his. Lines (5) through (7) each contain an example of something that has reached

⁶⁸ Poets and critics of poetry in the `Abbāsīd era were concerned with whether innovative poetic images were credibly realistic, and representing a species of plant or animal, for example, as possessing a characteristic alien to it was considered an error (S. Stetkevych, *Abū Tammām*, 60). The idea that no poet or interlocutor should make us work too hard to suspend our disbelief is the impetus behind al-`Āmidī's long list of what are, in his estimation, inappropriate and absurd metaphors found in the poetry of Abū Tammām. Among the worst of the poet's offenses are metaphors in which, "the nights menstruate," and, "fate [has] epilepsy" (Stetkevych, *Abū Tammām*, 73-74).

⁶⁹ Vincent Mistrih, "Traité sur la continence de Yaḥyā ibn `Adī, édition critique," *Studia orientalia christiana, Collectanea* 16 (1981), 26.

⁷⁰ S. Stetkevych, *Abū Tammām*, 106.

a difficult goal to achieve but has been unable to achieve something far simpler. The arrow has pierced the armor and the flesh; it has only to continue on its path to reach the heart, but it misses its mark at the last moment. The sword has penetrated the muscles of the belly, but it is not bone but entrails that render it too dull to kill its victim. The horse can outpace the wind, but trying to stand up overwhelms it. Each of these scenarios is contrary to the logical order, and they call to mind the arguments one might use in a philosophical treatise when using examples from nature to demonstrate how something works. As for why Ibn Dāwūd has chosen these three images rather than any other images his audience might recognize as belonging to the *raḥīl*, it may be that he arranged them in descending order of acuteness of wounds. Death from exhaustion (line 7) happens gradually and affects the whole body, and, depending on how soon one acts, it may be possible to restore the exhausted horse to health. A stab wound to the belly (line 6) may cause a slow death; the mortally wounded soldier might at least have time to bid farewell to the companions who have carried him off the battlefield still alive. An arrow to the heart (line 5) kills its victim instantly, but all of these are less damaging than the “sharp stings” of unrequited love (line 4), the mention of which precedes them in the poem. It may also be significant that the martial images of the weapons and the cavalryman’s horse represent masculinity.⁷¹

Whatever the reason for these images, the Man of our Times has demonstrated that it is logically absurd for these things to behave in the way he described them. The rational gentleman has “never seen” friendship or an arrow come so close to reaching their goals and

⁷¹ For the sword and the horse as masculine symbols in Arabic poetry, see Monroe (James Monroe, “The Striptease that was blamed on Abū Bakr’s Naughty Son: Was Father Being Shamed, or Was the Poet Having Fun? (Ibn Quzmān’s *Zajal* No. 133)” in Wright and Rowson, *Homoeroticism*, 100, 122. Suzanne Stetkevych has also made a case for lightning and rainclouds being symbols of virility in the `Abbāsīd courtly *qaṣīda* (S. Stetkevych, *Abū Tammām*, 209).

then turn away from them. The dispassionate judge can find “no pardon” for a sharp sword and a swift horse that lose their potency for no apparent reason.

Accordance with nature is only the part of the argument; Ibn Dāwūd and his audience of gentlemen would be sympathetic to the idea of consciously seeking virtue, whether it was revealed scriptures or logical proofs, or a combination thereof, that convinced them of this. Ibn Dāwūd differentiates between that which cannot exist and that which cannot be pardoned. He does not say that an arrow that misses its mark is not an arrow, nor that a sword that falls short of delivering the death stroke is not a sword, nor that a horse that loses its strength is not a horse, nor even that a beloved friend who blames his lover unjustly is not beloved. Rather, these things have all fallen short of virtue, as has the brother to whom *Kitāb al-Zahra* is dedicated. The sword is still a sword, and the horse is still a horse, but they cannot be pardoned, because they have not remained true to their promises.

Line (8) forms the conclusion of the argument, the thesis that has been proven. At the end of the *raḥīl*, the weary traveler has arrived at his destination. Since there is no pardon for someone who does not fulfill his promise, then the beloved should not be pardoned for treating the lover harshly after he had promised to be a friend to him. He uses the word صَبَا (*ṣibā*, “love,” with association, by virtue of its root, with youth), at the end of the *raḥīl*, as he used its verbal equivalent صَبَا (*ṣabā*) at the beginning, in line (4). According to Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, “*ṣibā*” refers specifically to one lover’s inclination to the other, rather than mutual inclination,⁷² thus reiterating the reason for the Man of our Times to undertake the *raḥīl*.

⁷²Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Rawḍa*, 28.

Rather than the *qaṣīda* culminating with self-praise (*fakhr*) or praise of a patron (*madīḥ*), the final section, the destination after the journey, is a *ḥikma*, a wise saying. Ibn Qutayba counted *ḥikma* among the genres of poetry,⁷³ but to my knowledge, Ibn Dāwūd is the only poet to make the *ḥikma* the concluding section of a *qaṣīda*. Thus, the poem represents a journey toward right thought that informs right conduct.

This particular *ḥikma* sounds almost like a legal pronouncement, a verdict, a *fatwā*, not merely a logical judgment but a legal one.⁷⁴ He alludes to the system of what the Islamic legal tradition has deemed the requisite punishments for certain crimes. Every misdeed deserves a punishment, but the Man of our Times claims that to punish someone excessively after he has paid for his crime amounts to *ribā* (“usury” or “exploitation”). Of course, by composing this line, Ibn Dāwūd is weaving together his roles as a legal scholar and as a poet. This poem is not a *fatwā*; it is a poetic pastiche of one. The code of Islamic law contains no reference to a prescribed punishment for a person who is fickle toward the one who loves him. Breaking hearts is not a real crime, but *ribā* is. Ibn Dāwūd is not acting in his capacity as a judge in writing this poem; he simply wants us to remember that the Man of our Times is also a judge.

Only a judge would write a *qaṣīda* that culminates in a judgment, and only an *adīb* would write a *qaṣīda* the *mamdūḥ* of which is the wisdom (*ḥikma*) and truth cultivated in the *majlis*. Perhaps this also helps us to believe that Ibn Dāwūd is being sincere; this poem

⁷³ Allen, *Arabic Literature*, 77.

⁷⁴ This line of poetry may be one among the bases for Niṭawayh’s allegation, in some versions of the deathbed anecdote, that Ibn Dāwūd disapproved of *qiyās* (“analogy” or “syllogistic logic”) in jurisprudence but allowed it in poetry (Raven, *MBD*, 17).

flatters no one. He has reached this conclusion, this destination, out of honest intellectual endeavor, not because he or his patron has anything to gain from it.

Sober as a Judge: The Melancholy Wine Song

بِالْبَابِ وَأَفْنَدَةٍ صَبَاحٍ	1 يُعَاتِبُنِي أَنَسٌ فِي النَّصَابِي
بِكَاسَاتِ الرُّقَادِ إِلَى الصَّبَاحِ	2 إِذَا اخْتَلَطَ الظَّلَامُ وَهُمْ سُكَارَى
فَمَا أَدْرِي الْعُدُوَّ مِنَ الرِّوَا حِ	3 وَلِي سُكْرٌ يُجَنِّبُنِي رُقَادِي
يُؤَدِّينِي إِلَى سُبُلِ النَّجَاحِ	4 أَمَا لِي فِي بِلَادِ اللَّهِ بَابٌ
وَلَكِنْ قَدْ مُنِعْتُ مِنَ الْبَرَا حِ	5 بَلَى فِي الْأَرْضِ مُتَسَعٌ
75 إِذَا كَانَ الْعُقَابُ بِلا جَنَاحِ	6 مَا يُغْنِي الْعُقَابُ عَيَانُ صَيِّدٍ

Where is the Path to God's Country? [97]

- 1 People scorn me,
For ever since my youth,
I have been in love
With sound hearts
- 2 When the darkness has been mingled
And they are drunk
On cups of somnolence
Until the morrow
- 3 My intoxication
Is one that keeps me from sleep,
And I know not
Whether I am coming or going
- 4 Do I not have an entrance
To God's pleasant country,
One that will lead me
On the path to success?
- 5 Indeed, this earth
Has pleasant spaces
But I am forbidden
To venture toward them
- 6 What good can come to an eagle

⁷⁵ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 329-330.

With sharp eyes for hunting,
 If that eagle
 Has no wings?

This poem executes the all the maneuvers of the *qaṣīda* in even fewer lines than “I Have Misjudged Time.”

Nasīb

1 People scorn me,
 For ever since my youth,
 I have been in love
 With sound hearts

Takhalluṣ/Wine Song⁷⁶

2 When the darkness has been mingled
 And they are drunk
 On cups of somnolence
 Until the morrow

3 My intoxication
 Is one that robs me of sleep,
 And I know not
 Whether I am coming or going

Raḥīl

4 Will I find a way
 To God’s pleasant country,
 One that will lead me
 On the path to success?

5 Indeed, this earth
 Has wide open spaces
 But I am forbidden
 To venture toward them

Hikma

6 What good can come to an eagle
 With sharp eyes for hunting,
 If that eagle
 Has no wings?

⁷⁶ For a *qaṣīda* in which the *takhalluṣ* consists of a wine song, compare the *qaṣīda* attributed to al-Aṣma`ī that begins جَ قَلْبِي الثَّمَلِ صَوْتُ صَفِيرِ الْبُئْبُلِ هِيَ

One could hardly wish for a more succinct *qaṣīda*. In one short line, Ibn Dāwūd evokes a scene rich with *nasīb* nostalgia. The word *taṣābī*, like *ṣibā*, with which it shares a root, calls to mind a love that began during the poet's youth. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya defines *taṣābī* as wholehearted devotion to the person to whom one's love inclines; *taṣābī*, to the exclusions of other words from this root, carries the meaning of great devotion, whereas the others only signify amorous inclination.⁷⁷ This single line is sufficient for us to recognize the Man of our Times by his *modus operandi* in matters of love. Long ago, the Man of our Times fell in love with "sound hearts" (اللباب وأفئدة صحاح). We may take "sound hearts" as a metonymy for "brothers," such as the reader will have in abundance if he abides by the advice of *Kitāb al-Zahra*. His use of the grammatical plural *ṣiḥāḥ* to modify "hearts," as opposed to the feminine singular *ṣaḥīḥa*, as would be used in prose, only makes the youthful love sound more archaic and more appropriate to the *nasīb*.

By the end of line (3), we have established that the Man of our Times is lost, and in the course of his *raḥīl*, lines (4)-(5), he wanders aimlessly, and his situation only becomes more hopeless. The Man of Our Times reaches no destination but confoundment. If we only consider a place a destination if it is inhabited and only count as a *mamdūḥ* someone who is capable of bestowing a monetary reward, then this poem represents a journey to nowhere, but this poem, like "I Have Misjudged Time," culminates in a *ḥikma* in line (6). The Man of our Times has arrived at the conclusion that, even though, with his intellect, sharp as an eagle's eyesight, he can discern which upright heart is worthy of his love, he is as powerless to capture the love of a sound heart as a hunting bird with broken wings. To Western

⁷⁷ Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Rawḍa*, 28.

audiences, this may seem like a pessimistic moral, but it is perfectly in keeping with the pervasive sense in Arabic poetry that love is unattainable.

Lines (2)-(3) form the wine song, appropriately located between the *nasīb* and the *rahīl*. Perhaps “anti-wine song” would be a more fitting term, since it is not wine but love that leaves the Man of our Times sleepless and disoriented. Here, as in his love of fidelity, of promises kept, and of “sound hearts,” the Man of our Times takes the moral high road. While everyone is asleep drunk, something more potent, and less morally corrupting, has a hold on the Man of our Times. It is fidelity born of that pure love accessible only to rational people, and it excludes him from the company of the sleepers. Elsewhere in *Kitāb al-Zahra* Ibn Dāwūd quotes a saying, attributed to Galen, that, “love takes place between two rational people by virtue of the affinity of their reason, but it does not take place between two fools because of the affinity of their foolishness.”⁷⁸ Perhaps this is why the Man of our Times, unstrung though he may be over his hopeless situation, continues seeking out faithful friends with “sound hearts.”

Here and elsewhere in his pseudo-Bacchic verses, he draws in the minds of his readers the outlines of goblets of wine without actually saying the word *khamr* (“wine,” “alcoholic drink”). On one level, it only makes sense for the Man of our Times to turn away from his memories of the past and toward the quest at hand “when the *darkness* has been *mingled*,” since it is in accordance with poetic tradition for the *rahīl* to begin at night. On another, he is making us imagine wine being “mingled” (اختلط), especially since colors, especially dark colors, sometimes appear in poetry as a metonymy for wine.⁷⁹ That is a

⁷⁸ Ibn Dāwūd, *KZ*, 16.

⁷⁹ See Abū Nuwās, *Dīwān*, 7, 9.

subtle allusion compared to what he says next, that, “they are *drunk* on *cups* of somnolence,” with somnolence being one of the well-known effects of wine. It is possible that the sleepers have not been drinking at all, but as far as the lovesick Man of our Times is concerned, they might as well have been, for the fact that they are receptive to anything that might provide temporary relief from the pangs of love is sufficient to exclude them from his more perfect state of love. He then describes his own state by saying, “My *intoxication* is one that keeps me from sleep, and *I know not whether I am coming or going*.” Without mentioning wine directly, he has used the power of suggestion to create a wine song, and he has inserted it in its proper place in the *qaṣīda*.

In the following poem, the suggestion of wine, with all its erotic implications, is even more daring. As in the previous poem, the wine flashes in the reader’s mind like an afterimage of suffering that is beyond the soothing effects of wine.

1 أَهْيُمُ بِذِكْرِ الْكَرْخِ مِنِّي صَبَابَةٌ وَمَا بِي إِلَّا حُبٌّ مَنَ حَلَّ بِالْكَرْخِ
2 تَجَرَّعْتُ كَأْسًا مِنْ صُدُودِ مُحَمَّدٍ فَقَدْ أَوْهَنْتُ عَظْمِي وَجَارَتْ عَلَى الْمَخِ
3 فَلَسْتُ أَبَالِي بِالرَدَى بَعْدَ فَقْدِهِ وَهَلْ يَجْزَعُ الْمَذْبُوحُ مِنَ أَلَمِ السَّلَاحِ⁸⁰

Rejection from Muḥammad’s Hand is Like Wine [90]

1 I am passionately in love
With the memory of Karkh,
And I have no love
Except for the one who dwells in Karkh

2 I have drunk a cup
Of Muḥammad’s rejection;
It has weakened my bones
And overwhelmed my brain

3 I fear not what suffering may come
Since I have lost him;
Does the victim, after being slaughtered,

⁸⁰ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 305.

Fear the pain of being skinned?

As in “Where is the Path to God’s Country?”, we find the Man of our Times drunk on unrequited love, and its effects are unpleasant; the reader immediately assumes that it is that which (the Prophet) Muḥammad has forbidden Muslims to drink; because of the juxtaposition of the words, “cup” and “repulsion,” (صدود) and the name, “Muḥammad,” the reader can only think of wine. The corpus of Arabic poetry is rich with descriptions of delicious wine, pleasant gardens, rapturous music, amiable cup-companions, and comely cupbearers,⁸¹ but the Man of our Times mentions only the incapacitating effects of strong drink. To draw attention to the feeble bones and confused mind of the drunkard without mentioning any of the pleasant aspects of wine is more in keeping with a judge’s admonition than a reveler’s exhortation. The Man of our Times, like *Kitāb al-Zahra*, is a level-headed *nadīm*.

If we look more carefully into the drinking vessel we find that the substance that has impaired his body and mind is actually rejection at the hands of one “Muḥammad” who “dwells in Karkh.” It was widely accepted in ninth-century Arab culture and established early on in *Kitāb al-Zahra* that love is physically and mentally debilitating,⁸² but this is the only one of the Man of our Times poems to mention a person by name. The brevity of this poem, combined with the use of the personal name “Muḥammad”⁸³ and the place name “Karkh,” which in `Abbāsīd times was “the suburb to the south west” of Baghdād,⁸⁴ makes it seem that Ibn Dāwūd composed this poem for a personal acquaintance of his in order to

⁸¹ See Abū Nuwās, *Dīwān*, 233.

⁸² Ibn Dāwūd, *KZ*, 17.

⁸³ Biographers such as al-Baghdādī, who held that Ibn Dāwūd’s beloved was called Muḥammad ibn Jāmi` or Muḥammad ibn Zukhruf, may have looked to this poem as evidence of the beloved’s identity.

⁸⁴ Kennedy, *Abū Nuwās*, 13.

recite it in his presence or send it to him in a letter, as the exchange of verses was standard practice among the *zuraḥā*.⁸⁵ If he did not have a specific person in mind but composed this poem as a representative of that type of poetry,⁸⁶ he could hardly have chosen a more common name for a gentleman than “Muḥammad” or a place where they were more abundant than Karkh.

The first two lines, if taken by themselves, could be understood as a jesting admonition: Muḥammad from Karkh has rejected me, and it is making me as crazy and helpless as a drunk. The first line contains conventional *nasīb* imagery translated into a contemporary urban setting and simple, almost conversational syntax that could easily be extemporized in a *majlis*. It recalls the line by Abū Tammām in which his affinity for his friend Muḥammad is so great that their hearts cannot keep secrets from each other. It is only in the line (3) that the Man of our Times reveals his identity, with a devastating *ḥikma* that interprets the preceding lines in the most pessimistic of terms.

In the following poem, we find the Man of our Times setting an example for the reader about single-hearted fidelity, for his love deters him from distractions in which other disappointed lovers find comfort.

1	كَأَنَّ رَقِيباً مِنْكَ يَرَى خَوَاطِرِي	وَأَخِرُّ يَرَى نَاطِرِي وَلِسَانِي
2	فَمَا عَايَنْتُ عَيْنَايَ بَعْدَكَ مَنْظَرًا	يَسُوءُكَ إِلَّا قُلْتُ قَدْ رَمَقَانِي
3	وَلَا بَدَرْتُ مِنْ فَيِّ بَعْدَكَ مَرْحَةً	لِغَيْرِكَ إِلَّا قُلْتُ قَدْ سَمِعَانِي
4	وَلَا خَطَرْتُ مِنْ ذِكْرِ غَيْرِكَ خَطَرَةً	عَلَى الْقَلْبِ إِلَّا عَرَجَا بَعِثَانِي
5	إِذَا مَا تَسَلَّى الْغَايِرُونَ عَنِ الْهَوَى	بِشُرْبِ مُدَامٍ أَوْ سَمَاعِ قِيَانِي
6	وَجَدْتُ الَّذِي يُسَلِّي سِوَايَ يَشُوقُنِي	إِلَى قُرْبِكُمْ حَتَّى أَمَلَّ مَكَانِي
7	وَفَتَيَانِ صِدْقٍ قَدْ سَنِمْتُ لِقَاءَهُمْ	وَعَفِيتُ طَرْفِي عَنْهُمْ وَلِسَانِي

⁸⁵ Raven, *MBD*, 29-30.

⁸⁶ Raven, *MBD*, 22.

8 وما الزُّهْدُ أَسْلَى عَنْهُمْ غَيْرَ أَنَّنِي أَرَاكَ عَلَى كُلِّ الْجِهَاتِ تَرَانِي⁸⁷

Fidelity Keeps Watch over Me [50]

- 1 It is as though you have sent a spy
To watch over my thoughts,
And one to follow my gaze,
And to keep track of what I say
- 2 Since you left me,
Whenever I see anything
That would offend you,
I say, "The spies have seen me."
- 3 If ever a jesting remark
Escape my lips
Since you have gone,
I say, "The spies have heard me."
- 4 Every time a thought
Of someone else
Comes to my mind,
They pull on the reins.
- 5 Whereas ardent lovers divert themselves
From their love
By drinking wine
Or listening to singing maidens,
- 6 I find that things that would console someone else
Only increase my longing
To be near you,
And I grow restless of being where I am
- 7 Honest young men,
I have grown tired of their company;
I have chastely restrained my eyes from them
And my tongue
- 8 Whenever my continence
Offers me consolation,
Just then I see you
Everywhere I look

⁸⁷ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 146.

The part of this poem that deals with wine comes as a *takhalluṣ*, not after a *nasīb*, but after an assessment of the present that shows that Man of our Times as possessing a rare and valuable quality that would make him an ideal brother, namely self-reflection that manifests itself in self-restraint. His fidelity to the Brother keeps him from misdeeds even more effectively than a spying, scheming slanderer (*raqīb*) would do; his own conscience is worth two spies. Beyond being a fresh variation on the poetic trope of the *raqīb*, this is poem also a powerful statement about the refinement of morals, a subject more typical of *adab* than of *ghazal*. The ideal friend, the one whose role Ibn Dāwūd has sent *Kitāb al-Zahra* to model, the one whose *dīwān* will never be empty of brothers, is so far advanced in his fidelity toward his beloved friend that not only would he not want others to see him inclining toward someone else, but he would be loath even to see himself being unfaithful in thoughts, words, or deeds. This poem says nothing about the circumstances that led the Man of our Times to a situation that would require such fidelity; we do not even know if it is a matter of involuntary separation (*bayn* or *firāq*) or rejection of his overtures (*hajr*, among other terms). It does not mention an exalted past when the Man of our Times and his beloved were together; the thing to which his heart attaches (*nasīb* in its most basic meaning) is fidelity itself.

In lines (1) through (4), the Man of our Times seems to bear his predicament with resolve. It is only in the wine song, beginning in line (5) that he expresses his sorrow. The wine song is not a pleasurable memory of revelry, but a painful reminder of lost love, and the Man of our Times continues on the moral high road. The cheap thrills of carousing have no effect on him, for his is a fidelity born of that pure love accessible only to rational people, and it sets him apart from the sleepers, as *adab* sets the *adīb* apart from fools.

In this wine song in which he abstains from that which intoxicates others, the Man of our Times may be alluding to the reputation held by the real Muḥammad ibn Dāwūd, that is, a pious and God-fearing man who “took Islamic law seriously.”⁸⁸ In the midst of the wine song, he is sober as a judge (all puns intended). The likes of Mughulṭāī and Ibn Abi Ḥajala would have been wise to have Ibn Dāwūd recite verses like these on his deathbed, rather than the spurious verses about dark hair on white cheeks, if they had wanted to represent his chastity in a way that would satisfy those who claimed that it is unchaste to gaze at a beautiful person. He may have chosen to play up this attribute to connect him, in the mind of his audience, to his father Dāwūd ibn `Alī, the *imām* of the Zāhirite school of jurisprudence, who was known for his piety⁸⁹ or with the *ẓurafāʾ*, the fashionable gentlemen of Baghdād, whose conduct was characterized by both high morals and worldly sophistication,⁹⁰ who knew verses about wine, whether or not they drank it.

The most poignant line is line (6), since the Man of our Times who loves “sound hearts” cannot even be distracted from his love by the prospect of finding another sound heart to love. He never really cared for wine and music, with all their erotic potential. What he really loves is brotherhood, but his fidelity to the Brother addressed in this poem is so powerful that no other virtuous men, no matter how virtuous they may be, can replace him.

We may read lines (5) through (7) as taking the place of the *raḥīl*, as the Man of our Times takes grows tired of being near the mindless fun in which lesser lovers find consolation and becomes more desperate for something to assuage his suffering. Saying, “I grow restless of being where I am,” would suggest to the audience an impending journey,

⁸⁸ Raven, *MBD*, 53.

⁸⁹ Raven, *MBD*, 4. See also Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 216.

⁹⁰ Raven, *MBD*, 29-30.

especially since he has mentioned, in the previous line, that the spies “pull on the reins.”

In this poem as in the poem, “Rejection from Muḥammad’s Hand is Like Wine” [90], the *rahīl* does not lead him to relief, only, eventually, to a *ḥikma*. They likewise bear resemblance to the *rahīl* in the poem, “I Have Misjudged Time” [85], since Ibn Dāwūd fashions a *rahīl* out of steps in a logical argument. In this poem, he eliminates possible substitutes for his beloved, each resembling the beloved more closely than the last, until he establishes that there can be no substitute. Drinking wine has never appealed to the Man of our Times, and singing girls, even though they are human companions and their knowledge of poetry and witty sayings may be extensive, are associated with a more dissolute lifestyle than the one he seeks. The Man of our Times seeks a friendship based on the joint pursuit of virtue, rather than on fleeting pleasures, but his internal *raqīb* compels him to avoid even the brotherhood of other virtuous men, until he arrives at the conclusion that there can be no substitute for his beloved brother. As in the poem “Where is the Path to God’s Country?” [97], he does not arrive in a prosperous present, only confounded, in the throes of unfulfilled longing, but wiser. It is as though the *rahīl*/wine song tests the hypothesis he posits in the first four lines, and the *ḥikma* declares it proven.

Kiss from an *Adīb*: The Man of our Times Tastes the Wine of *Mujūn*

1 خَلِيلِي أَغْرَانِي مِنَ الشَّوْقِ وَالْهَوَىٰ وَأَخْلَطُ مِنْ مَاءِ الشَّارِبِينَ بِالْخَمْرِ
 2 فَصَدْرٌ عَلَى صَدْرٍ وَنَحْرٌ عَلَى نَحْرٍ وَخَدٌّ عَلَى خَدٍّ وَثَغْرٌ عَلَى ثَغْرِ
 3 يَظَلُّ حَسُودُ الْقَوْمِ فِينَا مُفَكِّرًا بِخَيْلٍ مِنَ الْمَعْشُوقِ مِنَّا وَلَا يَذْرِي⁹¹

Lovers Both, Beloved Both [14]

1 My two friends,
 He has made me cleave to him
 In longing and love

⁹¹ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 65.

And mix the water of the drinkers with wine

2 Chest to chest,
Clavicle to clavicle,
Cheek to cheek,
Mouth to mouth

3 The envious one lingers,
Thinking, speculating,
Which of us is the beloved,
But he knows not.

After the moralizing endeavors with which we have accompanied the Man of our Times thus far, it will be immediately obvious to the reader that this foray into the domain of ribaldry (*mujūn*)⁹² is a departure from the usual tone of austerity with which Ibn Dāwūd usually represents his poetic persona. In contrast to most of the other poets in *Kitāb al-Zahra*, Ibn Dāwūd eschews references to the beloved's physical beauty, as he would have us believe that his love is based entirely on a moral affinity with the beloved. This is, without question, the most ribald poem to which the pseudonym of the "Man of our Times" was ever attached, yet its purpose is consistent with his poems that we have previously examined. As bold as this poem seems in comparison to Ibn Dāwūd's other poems, this is *mujūn* for a noble purpose.

His intention is to draw our attention to the reciprocity of the lovers' relationship, and, significantly, it is appropriate here to call them both lovers. In line (1), as appropriate to contemporary *ghazal*, he runs through a crash course of *nasīb* motifs, the invocation of the two friends, the longing, and the wine song, but even here the wine (خمر) refers to the

⁹² Irwin defines *mujūn* as, "entertaining discourse about sexual matters in which vulgarity and refinement were mixed." (Irwin, *Night*, 172). Badawi considers it a form of satire; *mujūn* poetry was "convincing and moving" because it "generally carried a degree of awareness of the expense of spirit in a waste of shame" (Badawi, "Antecedents," 162).

intoxication of love; there are no drinking vessels, cupbearers, or musicians; our law-abiding Man of our Times is drunk on one who is his equal. Whereas in, “I Have Misjudged Time,” he weighed the rights of friends, in line (2) of this poem, the only time in all of *Kitāb al-Zahra* that the Man of our Times mentions touching the object of his love, he demonstrates their symmetry by representing them as matching up to each other physically, the *mujūn* way, and he leaves us with the impression that the two lovers are of equal height. Line (3) tells us that the sight of the two lovers is enough to confound a jealous spy, who cannot even tell who is the lover and who is the beloved. They are equal in their zeal for pursuit of each other,⁹³ and herein lies his reason for adopting the mode of *mujūn*. The audience would have expected the roles of the lover and the beloved to be clearly defined and related to concepts of social hierarchy, and nowhere are these defined roles more important than in *mujūn*, for they provide a context in which one can enjoy irreverent humor and play with taboos without breaking them entirely. In many of the bawdy lyrics of Abū Nuwās, the object of his affections, male or female, is often a slave⁹⁴ or part of a religious minority group,⁹⁵ someone of a less privileged social status than the poet and his audience. Thus, the trope in which the lover claims that love has made him a slave to his beloved represents a poignant subversion of social roles. While Ibn Dāwūd makes reference to this trope in one of his poems,⁹⁶ he subverts it in this one; each feels what the other feels.

⁹³ Ṣafadī says in one of the anecdotes that Ibn Dāwūd’s beloved Ibn Jāmi` used to spend money on Ibn Dāwūd, “and who has ever seen a beloved spend money on a lover?” (Ṣafadī, *Al-Wāfī*, 58). It is possible that that anecdote has its roots in this verse, since the sentiment is the same.

⁹⁴ See Abū Nuwās, *Dīwān*, 7-8.

⁹⁵ Abū Nuwās, *Dīwān*, 56.

⁹⁶ فَصَارَ يَحْسُدُنِي مِنْ كُنْتُ أَحْسُدُهُ وَصِرْتُ مَوْلَى الْوَرَى مُذْ صِرْتُ مَوْلَانِي (Ibn Dāwūd, *KZ*, 43). The poem in which Ibn Dāwūd employs this trope is one that he claims to have written in response to a letter from a “brother.”

Although we would not expect to hear such *mujūn* from the Man of our Times, we would expect to hear much, in the environment in which *Kitāb al-Zahra* came to be, about two gentlemen whose affection for each other is reciprocal. The scene Ibn Dāwūd illustrates is not so different from the saying in Plato's *Symposium* that, if the two halves of the primordial pairs could have anything they desired, they would wish to be fused back together as one.⁹⁷ Although another anecdote derived from the *Symposium* appears in *Kitāb al-Zahra*, it is not clear whether Ibn Dāwūd was familiar with this particular part of the *Symposium*. Line (2) calls to mind the reciprocity Abū Tammām describes when he takes his leave of his friend Muḥammad, saying, "I have not blamed him and he has not blamed me, for thoughts have understood thoughts," or when he praises, "one man of letters passionately in love with another."

As he often makes reference to the conventions of the *qaṣīda*, he is alluding here to the conventions of *mujūn*. The poem seems, at first glance, to echo, but, upon further examination, to stand in counterpoint to another one in the same chapter of *Kitāb al-Zahra*, a poem by al-Ḥasan ibn Hānī', better known as Abū Nuwās, perhaps the most famous writer of *mujūn* poetry in all of Arab civilization, in which the poet describes, in equally vivid detail, two lovers who spend the whole night kissing.

1 أَحْسَنُ مِنْ زَحْفِ قَبِيلَتَيْنِ	وَمِنْ تَلَاقِي كَتَيْبَتَيْنِ
2 وَمِنْ نِزَالِ بِمْرِهَفَاتِ	بَيْنَ مَغَاوِيرِ عَسْكَرَيْنِ
3 فَمَنْ قَدْ أَعْمَلَا رِضَاعاً	وَمَصُّ رِيْقٍ بِشَقْنَيْنِ
4 لَمْ يُطْعَمَا الْعَمَضَ مِنْ نَفَارِ	مُحَادَثَيْنِ مُلَازِمَيْنِ
5 حَتَّى إِذَا الصُّبْحُ لَاحَ قَامَا	عَلَى وُضوءٍ مُصَلِّيَيْنِ ⁹⁸

⁹⁷ Plato, *Symposium*, 28.

⁹⁸ Ibn Dāwūd, *KZ*, 70.

- 1 More beautiful
Than the slow progress of two tribes,
Or the confrontation
Between two warring armies
- 2 The heat of battle,
Nimble swords,
Each army plundering
The other's camp
- 3 Are two mouths
Made to suck on each other,
Slurping saliva
From each other's lips
- 4 They have not been made
To taste the darkness in solitude,
Conversing,
Cleaving to one another
- 5 And when the morning breaks,
They arise
To make ablutions
And perform the prayer

On the surface, these two poems have much in common. They are both built around a centrally-placed line about a long-lasting kiss on the mouth. They both precede the description of the kiss with conventional poetic allusions to nostalgia and follow it with a reference to the lovers' single-minded attachment to each other and by giving the reader a panoramic view of the outside world from which the lovers have retreated into their love. In Ibn Dāwūd's poem, a malicious onlooker lurks just outside the safety of the lovers' embrace; in the case of Abū Nuwās, the call to the dawn prayer lies in wait just beyond the lovers' beloved night.

The poem by the Man of our Times differs from the one by Abū Nuwās in intention and in degree of coarseness. Abū Nuwās intends to poke fun at idealized scenes, the parting

of chaste lovers as their tribes migrate, the bravery of warriors in battle, and the piety of the believers at the dawn prayer. With the earthy, reductionist description of the passionate kiss (two mouths kissing, rather than two lovers kissing on the mouth), Abū Nuwās challenges his audience to question the dearest images of its imagined past. How chaste were chaste lovers, really, how noble were the warriors, and how pious were the pious worshipers? At least for Abū Nuwās, the expected function of *mujūn* is to satirize individuals or, in this case, social mores. Ibn Dāwūd uses a similar setting to refer indirectly to that same ideal of love to which he alluded in the first poem in this chapter, a love in which both parties show equal dedication and fidelity to their love, where they have equal entitlements and equal obligations, a love where the nights are filled with sincere love and virtuous behavior.

While direct reference to embracing and kissing is uncharacteristic of the high-minded Man of our Times, his poem about the two equally passionate lovers is quite tame, as *mujūn* goes. If someone were to read the Man of our Times poems independently of the rest of *Kitāb al-Zahra*, this poem would stand out as remarkably profane, but it is less bold than the one by Abū Nuwās to which it alludes. The mention of saliva is not particularly vulgar in the context of classical Arabic poetry,⁹⁹ but “slurping saliva from one another’s lips” is. When Abū Nuwās mentions the migration of Bedouin tribes, the thrill of the fight and the spoils of war, these images are imbued with erotic meaning. He asserts that spending the night in conversation and kisses is “more beautiful” (أحسن)¹⁰⁰ than any of these familiar poetic tropes, he means that it is more pleasurable than any of these other erotic contexts; of all the pleasures at his disposal in the erotic smorgasbord of Arabic poetry, he chooses the

⁹⁹ Irwin, *Night*, ix.

¹⁰⁰ It also happens to be an allusion to the poet’s name Ḥasan.

all-night tryst.¹⁰¹ Ibn Dāwūd mentions the wine and the two companions, whose traditional function is to hear the poet's lament over his lost love, only to heighten the effect of the word "longing" (شوق).

The fact that Ibn Dāwūd, in the guise of the pseudonymous Man of our Times, wrote this poem does not make him less of a moralizing poet; it rather means that his vision of love is recognizable even when he works in a strange medium like *mujūn*.

If Ibn Dāwūd is able to transform the sensual kiss of *mujūn* poetry into a sign of the brotherhood of equals, then how much more does the Man of our Times find guidance for gentlemen in more conventionally chaste symbols?

Your Brother is Ever Faithful: The Man of our Times as `Udhrī Lover

It is worth examining Ibn Dāwūd's use of the tropes of so-called `udhrī poetry, if only because later biographers have singled him out for his chastity and even classified him among the martyrs of love, but the similarities go beyond that. If one were to represent the *adab* values expressed in the introduction to *Kitāb al-Zahra* through the medium of love poetry, the result would inevitably look something like `udhrī love, if only because the Man of our Times, like the martyrs of love, appears in many and various episodes, always pursuing the same beloved.

In this chapter I use the term `udhrī to refer to poetry attributed to the poets who gained the reputation for lifelong devotion to a single beloved, the so-called "martyrs of love," such as the genre's namesake Jamīl al-`Udhrī who loved Buthayna, Kuthayyir who loved `Azza, and Ghaylān who loved Mayy, and most famously the fictional Majnūn and Laylā. Chaste love, unconsummated, if not unrequited, as the subject of entire poems, even

¹⁰¹ For an argument for the chaste nature of the conduct described in this poem, see Raven (Raven, *MBD*, 114).

entire *dīwāns*, formed an important new genre of poetry in the Umayyad period, and Ibn Dāwūd was far from being the only *majlis* poet of `Abbāsīd period to imitate and allude to its themes, tone, and vocabulary,¹⁰² including the names of the ladies for whom these martyrs of love gave their lives. These stories pleased later generations of poets that spurious verses and anecdotes were attributed to the famous martyrs of love and compiled in some of the same anthologies that spun the tale of Ibn Dāwūd's love martyrdom, which we discussed in the first chapter. Modern scholars have argued that, while almost all the martyrs of love were actual historical figures and practicing poets,¹⁰³

`Udhri poetry is the product not of bedouin Arabia, but of Empire sophistication; that it is the romantic creation of the early `Abbasid age, projected backwards in history at a time when biographies of bedouin poet-lovers were a popular form of entertainment literature in Baghdad.¹⁰⁴

As we shall discuss further in the following chapter, it is an essential feature of *`udhrī* poetry that the lover suffer his trials in the desert.

The idea of lifelong fidelity to one's beloved, one of the identifying features of *`udhrī* love, is also one of the central tenets of Ibn Dāwūd's vision of *ikhā'*. Despite its author's strong preference for poetry over anecdotes, *Kitāb al-Zahra* does include some stories about Jamīl and Buthayna,¹⁰⁵ such as the story of Jamīl's death from love, in order to hold up their chastity and fidelity as a good example. Even more significantly, the Man of our Times poems contain an abundance of words that are featured prominently in *`udhrī* love poetry, and their original audience would have recognized this association. The word *wafā'*

¹⁰² See Gruendler, *Praise Poetry*, 5.

¹⁰³ G. Schoeler, "Bashshār ibn Burd, Abū al-`Atāhiya, and Abū Nuwās," in *The Cambridge History of Arabic Literature: `Abbasid Belles-Lettres*, 282.

¹⁰⁴ A. Hamori, "Love Poetry," 205.

¹⁰⁵ Ibn Dāwūd, *KZ*, 368.

(“fidelity”) appears twelve times, and *`ahd* (“covenant of love”) appears nineteen times.

The Man of our Times seems to have a predilection for words from the root ʾḏḥ, from which the word *`udhrī* is derived, as these words appear twenty-three times in his poetry. This is ostensibly because he intends to write about blamelessness, forgiveness, and asking for pardon, since these concepts have an important place in the conduct of the ideal brother, especially if he is a judge, but the fact that this root gives us the word *`udhrī* gives him an additional reason to use it, even though *`udhrī* love is named after the poet Jamīl ibn Ma`mar al-`Udhrī, so called because of his descent from the tribe of Banū `Udhra,¹⁰⁶ not because of his chaste, blameless conduct.

Much like the *qaṣīda*, *`udhrī* love is more easily identified by a feeling than by an indisputable set of criteria. Like the *qaṣīda*, the *`udhrī* school of love poetry began as an expression of the ethos of a particular time and place, but as its reputation grew, imitators and encyclopedists added their voices to the mournful song, until spurious verses were added to the canon,¹⁰⁷ anecdotes overshadowed the verses themselves, and the idea of dying from love became much more essential to the concept of *`udhrī* love than any aspect of the poetic craft. This is of interest to us, not least, because the stories of Muḥammad ibn Dāwūd that came to be remembered show heavy influence from the *`udhrī* phenomenon, but also because the real Muḥammad ibn Dāwūd occasionally cast the Man of our Times as an *`udhrī* lover.

In addition to the emphasis on chastity, fidelity, and concealing the secret of love, all of which find frequent expression in the Man of our Times poems, when Ibn Dāwūd, a self

¹⁰⁶ See Hamori, “Love Poetry,” 205.

¹⁰⁷ The poem in which Jamīl claims to have loved Buthayna before they were incarnate (Ibn Dāwūd, *KZ*, 15) is likely the work of a later poet, since it accords too well with the Platonic teaching about the primordial union of lovers’ souls, which was current in ninth-century Baghdad but would have been unknown to Jamīl.

consciously urban *adīb* of a poet, employs a desert setting, it is often in the *`udhrī* spirit.

This is to say, the desert does not represent nostalgia so much as the lover's lot to wander, inconsolable, until he meets his fate of death.¹⁰⁸

This poem uses the *`udhrī* trope of the forlorn wanderer to highlight the virtue of fidelity.

1 لَعَمْرُكَ مَا قُرْبُ الدِّيارِ بِنَافِعٍ إِذَا لَمْ يَصِلْ حَبْلَ الْحَبِيبِ حَبِيبُ
2 وَلَيْسَ غَرِيباً مَنْ تَنَاءَتْ دِيارُهُ وَلَكِنْ مَنْ يُجْفَى فِذَاكَ غَرِيبُ
3 وَمَنْ يَغْتَرِبُ وَالْإِلْفُ رَاغٍ لِعَهْدِهِ وَإِنْ جَاوَرَ السَّدَّيْنِ فَهُوَ قَرِيبُ¹⁰⁹

My Covenant is My Country [45]

- 1 By your life!
Being close to home
Does no good to a lover
Without the bond of love with the one he loves
- 2 He who is far from home
Is not a stranger;
Rather, he who is treated cruelly
Is a stranger
- 3 He who is far from home,
While his beloved is faithful to their covenant,
Even when he is at the ends of the earth,
Is nearby indeed

The motif of the traveler asking the abodes is older than the *`udhrī* school of poetry; indeed Ibn Qutayba mentions it among the characteristics of the pre-Islamic *nasīb*.¹¹⁰ Ibn Dāwūd does not even mention this trope directly in this poem; he rather casts the brief poem, which consists of three *ḥikam* such as might be found in combination with each other in a work of *adab*, against the backdrop of the lovelorn wayfarer arriving at the abodes. *`Udhrī* poetry

¹⁰⁸ Irwin describes the *`udhrī* poets as, "desert poets who devoted themselves to the intensely serious theme of chaste and doomed love" (Irwin, *Night*, 56.)

¹⁰⁹ Ibn Dāwūd, *KZ*, 142.

¹¹⁰ Ibn Qutayba, *Shi'r*, 31.

became famous as a series of anecdotes interspersed with verses, sometimes aphoristic,¹¹¹ and the readers can imagine, based on what else they have read about the exploits of the Man of our Times, how he has arrived at this conclusion.

The language of this poem is evocative of *`udhrī* poetry, beginning with the oath لعمرک (“By your life!”). *`Udhrī* lovers are sometimes depicted as expressing the intensity of their emotion by prefacing their statements with oaths, such as when Majnūn Laylā says فوالله ثم والله إنني لدائب أفكر (“By her father’s life! She is ungenerous indeed!”)¹¹² and ما ذنبني فوالله ثم والله إنني لدائب أفكر (“By God! And then, by God! I cannot stop wondering what I might have done wrong!”).¹¹³ The Man of our Times mentions the beloved “keeping the covenant” (راعٍ لعهدہ), which is what separates indelible *`udhrī* love from the daring amorous adventures of the likes of Waḍḍāḥ al-Yaman, who visited his beloved “after her husband had fallen asleep, his head pillowed on her hand,”¹¹⁴ and the jesting flirtation typically depicted in wine poetry.

What connects this poem to the larger quest of the Man of our Times in the second half of line (2), where he says, “he who is treated cruelly (يجفَى) is a stranger.” In other poems, such as “Where has our Brotherhood Gone?” [36], the Man of our Times complains of his brother’s cruelty (*jafā*’);¹¹⁵ he considers it, like breaking covenants, a violation of the code of brotherhood. Here he eschews his usual legalistic stance and says that cruelty on the part of the beloved would consign him to a fate like that of Majnūn Laylā.

In this poem, the desert provides a dramatic setting for the Man of our Times’ passion.

¹¹¹ Ibn Dāwūd, *KZ*, 119. This is an aphoristic couplet by Jamīl al-`Udhrī.

¹¹² Ibn Dāwūd, *KZ*, 47.

¹¹³ Ibn Dāwūd, *KZ*, 137.

¹¹⁴ Hamori, “Love Poetry,” 204.

¹¹⁵ Ibn Dāwūd, *KZ*, 125.

- 1 دَعَانِي الشَّوْقُ وَالرَّاكِبُونَ قَدْ هَجَدُوا وَالشَّمْسُ فِي آخِرِ الْجَوَازِ تَنْقِدُ
 2 وَالْقَيْطُ مُحْتَدِمٌ وَالرُّوحُ مُنْصَرِمٌ وَالرَّأْيُ مُخْتَلِفٌ وَالْحَنْفُ مُطَرَّدُ
 3 وَالْبَيْدُ مُغْبِرَةٌ الْأَرْجَاءِ مُقْفِرَةٌ كَأَنَّ أَعْلَامَهَا فِي الْآلِ تَرْتَعِدُ
 4 فَظَلْتُ طَوْعاً لِدَاعِي الشَّوْقِ أَوْقِظُهُمْ وَعَلَّ أَكْثَرُهُمْ سَاهُونَ مَا رَقَدُوا
 5 حَتَّى إِذَا قُلْتُ شَدُّوا قَالَ بَعْضُهُمْ قَدْ جُنَّ هَذَا فَخَلُّوا عَنْهُ وَابْتَعَدُوا
 6 يَذْرُونَ مَا وَجَدُوا مِنْ حَرٍّ يَوْمِهِمْ وَقَتَ النُّزُولِ وَلَا يَذْرُونَ مَا أَجِدُ
 7 حَرَّ الْفِرَاقِ إِذَا مَا الْهَجْرُ سَاعَدَهُ حَرُّ تَخَصُّ بِهِ الْأَحْشَاءِ وَالْكَبِدُ¹¹⁶

The Blazing Heat of Love [70]

- 1 Love called out to me,
 When the riders were sleeping,
 And the sun was blazing
 In the midsummer
- 2 The heat haze was blazing fiercely,
 The soul was about to depart,
 Opinion was dissenting,
 And death was resolute
- 3 The wilderness was dusty and desolate
 As far as the eye can see,
 As though its features
 Were trembling in the mirage
- 4 Obeying the command of love,
 I kept waking them up,
 Though most of them,
 Were half-awake, not asleep
- 5 Whenever I said, "Arise!"
 One of them would say,
 "This one has gone mad.
 Leave him alone; stay away from him."
- 6 They know what they felt
 On that hot day
 When they set off,
 But they do not know what I feel
- 7 The heat of separation,

¹¹⁶ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 208-209.

Compounded by rejection
Is a heat that burns
Only on the inside

The moment that the lovers separated is a standard station in the *qaṣīda*, but to devote an entire poem to that moment is the province of *ʿudhrī* poetry. The audience would have remembered scenes of lovers bidding each other farewell, weeping over their impending separation.¹¹⁷ Instead, the Man of our Times is in an even worse state than the lover who knows that his beloved will soon be far away but will abide by their *ʿahd*. Rejection (*hajr*) on the part of the one he loves, a problem that has plagued the Man of our Times from the outset,¹¹⁸ has driven him to distraction before the caravan has even set off. He cannot even sleep through the mid-day heat, and his companions think he has lost his mind. In this desert scene, far from the *majlis* in Baghdad, we recognize the Man of our Times because that which torments him is his frustrated search for brotherhood. As hot as the sun may be when it is in Gemini at the cusp of Cancer, that is, near the summer solstice, what is more grievous to him is that his beloved's feelings have abandoned the Man of our Times (الروح منصرم) because of a disagreement (الرأي مختلف). He gives his desire for affinity with the Brother a new urgency by comparing the physical hardships of the desert with the emotional pain of disagreeing with a friend.

ʿUdhrī love stories inevitably have a catastrophic ending, with the lover languishing and dying from love. Both Majnūn Laylā and Jamīl are said to have been exiled because of their love and to have died in exile,¹¹⁹ and al-Baghdādī and those who came after him told of a similar fate for Muḥammad ibn Dāwūd, except that the setting was Baghdad, and, rather

¹¹⁷ For example, Jamīl says *فَإِذَا حُسْنَهَا إِذْ يُغْسِلُ الدَّمْعَ كُحْلُهَا وَإِذْ تُذَرِّي الدَّمْعَ مِنْهَا الْأَنَامِلُ* (Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 33.)

¹¹⁸ See Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 93.

¹¹⁹ Irwin, *Night*, 57.

than being a deranged stranger, Ibn Dāwūd died in the company of his friend Niftawayh the grammarian, who gave the impression that he knew Ibn Dāwūd's beloved and was familiar with what had happened between them.¹²⁰ In this poem, the Man of our Times is fated with the madness and exile of the original martyrs of love, but he still manages to arrive at a *ḥikma*.

1 أَمُرُّ عَلَى الْمَنَازِلِ كَالْغَرِيبِ أُسْأَلُ مَنْ لَقِيتُ عَنِ الْحَبِيبِ
2 وَمَا يُغْنِي الْوُقُوفُ عَلَى الْأَثَافِي وَنُؤِي الدَّارَ عَنْ دَنَفِ كَنِيبِ
3 حَبَسْتُ بِهَا الْمَطْيَ فَلَمْ تُجِبْنِي وَلَمْ يَرْحَمْ بِلَا شَكِّ نَحِيبِي
4 فَقُلْتُ لَهَا سُكُوتُكَ ذَا عَجِيبٍ وَأَعْجَبُ مِنْ سُلُوتِكَ أَنْ تُجِيبِي
5 شَكُوتُ إِلَى الدِّيارِ فَمَا شَفَفْتَنِي بَلَى شَاقَتْ إِلَى وَجْهِ الْحَبِيبِ
6 فَمَنْ يُنْجِي الْعَلِيلَ مِنَ الْمَنَايَا إِذَا كَانَ الْبَلَاءُ مِنَ الطَّبِيبِ¹²¹

The Abodes Gave me no Consolation [74]

- 1 I pass among the abodes
Like a stranger,
Asking everyone I meet
About the one I love
- 2 It does no good
To stop at the empty cauldron
And the ruined campsite
When you are weak with sadness
- 3 I tied up my mount,
But the abodes did not answer me,
And they certainly did not
Console my weeping
- 4 I said to them,
“Your silence is wondrous indeed,
But it would be more wondrous
If you would answer me.”
- 5 I lamented to the abodes,
But they brought me no relief,

¹²⁰ Al-Baghdādī, *TB*, 5:262.

¹²¹ Ibn Dāwūd, *KZ*, 219-220.

Rather, they increased my longing
To see my beloved's face.

6 Who will rescue a man
From the brink of death,
When his affliction is the work
Of one who could heal him?

Even though the Man of our Times is “like a stranger” and addressing abodes as if he were a madman, he knows, at least by the end of the poem, that this is no satisfactory solution. He is not quite as mad as Majnūn who lived out his days wandering in the desert, addressing everything he saw as Laylā. Furthermore, he passes among the abodes “*like* a stranger;” he may not actually be in exile. Perhaps lamenting to the abodes is just another unsatisfactory distraction, like the ones he tried in the poem, “Fidelity Keeps Watch over Me” [50]. Just as carousing does not suit the Man of our Times, neither does going mad for Love. He is still faithful to his purpose, the purpose of *Kitāb al-Zahra*, to be a *nadīm* who instructs his friend in the ways of brotherhood. We might even read this poem as a continuation of, “Fidelity Keeps Watch over Me,”¹²² as the next station of the quest. Wine, music, and the companionship of another brother do not console the Man of our Times; he rather sees his beloved Brother everywhere he looks. Thus, he tries to console himself as the *`udhrī* lovers do, by lamenting to the abodes, but this does not help either. Inconsolable as he is, he knows what has brought him to this state and what can relieve him of it. He ends with a rhetorical question meant to admonish the Brother, not the abodes.

We have shown in this chapter how Ibn Dāwūd has used the Man of our Times poems to dramatize his views on friendship and brotherhood as he explained them in the

¹²² It is not actually possible that Ibn Dāwūd wrote this poem and “Fidelity Keeps Watch over Me” [50] as one poem, because they have different end rhymes, and the adherence to monorhyme in Arabic poetry was almost universal in Ibn Dāwūd's time.

introduction. Whether the tone of the poem is lighthearted, aphoristic, or melancholic, the Man of our Times operates in service of the same values of fidelity and justice, and often through the same medium of rational argument, toward truths that will lead the reader on the path to brotherhood. Godspeed you, Man of our Times. May your brothers never be absent from your *dīwān*.

Chapter Four

I shall not Exaggerate in Anything I Say: Some Stylistic Features of the Man of our Times Poems

Part of the beauty of Arabic poetry, as well as the challenge of understanding it, lies in its reliance on allusions, sometimes quite subtle, to other poems and to the intellectual issues of its times. In the previous chapter, we saw Ibn Dāwūd cast his pseudonymous *alter ego* the Man of our Times as various characters from the poetic tradition, a heroic desert traveler on a purely rhetorical quest, a joyless cup-companion, a ribald jester, an even a martyr of love. If we extend Gruendler's comparison of "poems to fitted garments,"¹ thereby indulging the infatuation the *ẓurafā'* felt for fine clothing,² then the focus of this chapter is not the characters the Man of our Times plays but the costumes he wears in order to portray them, that is to say, the stylistic techniques that allow the Man of our Times poems to achieve their rhetorical purpose.

In the course of this chapter, we shall discuss Ibn Dāwūd's use of simple, prosaic diction, place names, and grammatical shifts in the Man of our Times poems. In order to understand the effect of Ibn Dāwūd's use of these stylistic features, we must take into account the dynamic relationship among `Abbāsīd poets, poems, and audiences. Westerners may have heard that poetry in Baghdad at the turn of the tenth century, in the society which Ibn Dāwūd inhabited, played a role in everything from politics to entertainment to cultural identity and even an auxiliary role in the religious sciences; that is to say, it was as much a part of social life as, say, clothing, with all its associations of individual personal expression and of identification with groups. The tendency of individual lines of poetry to achieve fame apart from the poems in which they were originally composed, which phenomenon we will

¹ Gruendler, *Praise Poetry*, 19.

² Raven, *KZ*, 30.

discuss momentarily, combined with the tendency of Western scholars to pay attention only to the poets with the most towering reputations has led to the perpetuation of an inaccurate perception of the way in which poetry was composed and received in Ibn Dāwūd's time. Recently, Gruendler has called into question the way that Western scholars have traditionally viewed the social function of Arabic poetry and drawn attention to how the sophistication of audiences in the `Abbāsīd period affected the way poetry was composed and exchanged. It is worth considering the social functions of poetry in more detail in order to see where the Man of our Times poems fit in this intricate tapestry.

`Abbāsīd poets, no matter how daring their innovations, never lost sight of their relationship to the poets and poems that had preceded them, even to the extent of giving the impression that poetry referred to, "pre-existing poetry rather than reality."³ There was an unwritten rule that poets ought not stray too far from precedents of subject matter and diction, at the risk of sounding unpoetic,⁴ and the poet himself or a sympathetic scholar of poetry might defend his innovations by pointing to a precedent in the poetic canon and insist that his innovations were a matter of degree rather than of adding a truly new element to poetry.⁵ The poet and critic Ibn al-Mu`tazz (861-908)⁶ used this argument to defend the use of a whole host of rhetorical features, collectively known as *badī`* and including everything from paronomasia to metaphor, which were ubiquitous in `Abbāsīd poetry.⁷ Thus, although Abū Nuwās was the first poet to write long poems on the subject of hunting,⁸ even

³ Gruendler, *Praise Poetry*, 6.

⁴ See S. Stetkevych, *Abū Tammām*, 83.

⁵ Badawi, "Antecedents," 162.

⁶ Irwin, *Night*, 143.

⁷ K. Abu Deeb, "Literary Criticism," 346.

⁸ Smith, "Hunting Poetry," 168.

employing the more formal meters traditionally reserved for the *qaṣīda*, one could not claim that his doing so was alien to the poetic tradition, as references to the oryx hunt are found even in pre-Islamic poetry.⁹

In Ibn Dāwūd's time and the half century immediately preceding, we see Arabic poetry remaining connected to the traditional role from which it derived its prestige, meanwhile adapting to the realities of an urban, ethnically diverse society and its intellectual life. As Suzanne Stetkevych has demonstrated, the adaptation of Arabic poetry to an urban and, more importantly, literate society meant that less effort had to be reserved for memorization and the composition of easily memorized verse, and this in turn led to the rise of a "metapoetry,"¹⁰ in which poets showcased their knowledge of philology and made self-conscious use of intertextuality. Thus, the *qaṣīda* or formal ode remained the most highly regarded poetic form, and it retained its traditional sequence of themes, with some variation, as well as its role in connecting a poet to a patron, although by the `Abbāsīd period, the patrons of poets had come to comprise viziers and other wealthy notables in addition to the caliphs and princes who had received praise in poetry in earlier times. The ninth-century *qaṣīda*, like its pre-Islamic ancestor, was written to be read once on a ceremonious occasion, before a large audience, and the measure of its success was how well its intended audience, particularly the patron to whom it was addressed, received it,¹¹ not how frequently individual lines from it were quoted in someone else's *majlis* years in the future. These poems were long, sometimes more than three hundred lines, and the ones that survive, at least, are the work of professional poets who pursued no other vocation than writing poetry for formal

⁹ Smith, "Hunting Poetry," 167.

¹⁰ S. Stetkevych, *Abū Tammām*, 106.

¹¹ Kilito, *Author*, 25-28.

occasions.¹² Abū Tammām, in his *qaṣīda* on the siege of Amorium, compares the poem to a bride being presented to her bridegroom in a wedding procession.¹³ I prefer the comparison of poems to garments; the formal *qaṣīda* is like a socialite's wedding dress, prohibitively expensive, which takes months to fashion in all its detail, to be worn once on a once-in-a-lifetime occasion.

Even in poems written for less formal purposes, an archaic writing style similar to that of the pre-Islamic poets was still considered, in Ibn Dāwūd's time, a way of remaining true to the aesthetic of Arabic poetry. Most patrons in the ninth century regarded this style of writing, along with the use of rare words (*gharīb*)¹⁴ alien to everyday speech, as the appropriate level of diction for the formal *qaṣīda*.¹⁵ We shall discuss the reasons for choosing to employ elevated diction or a simpler register later in this chapter.

If we may contrast archaic language with the contemporary idiom, we may also contrast the language of the desert with the language of the cities. A major source of the vocabulary of early poetry, which Ibn Dāwūd's urban contemporaries came to regard as rare and obscure, was terms for the wildlife of the desert and the practices of the desert people, of which city dwellers would not ordinarily have had occasion to speak. Much of the work of the poets of `Abbāsīd Baghdad takes place in a fictional desert setting, and when urban poets evoked the hallmarks of desert poetry, the traces of abandoned campsites, the campfires in the distance, the camels and oryx and sand grouse and tamarisk trees, and especially the hills and valleys and deserts called by their individual proper names, they were asserting their

¹² Gruendler, *Praise Poetry*, 7.

¹³ S. Stetkevych, *Abū Tammām*, 100.

¹⁴ Badawi, "Antecedents," 156.

¹⁵ Badawi, "Antecedents," 155.

connection to the ancient poetic heritage. By casting himself in the role of the desert traveler, the urban poet is asserting that he is still, in essence, a poet, as the traveler was one of the pre-Islamic poet's roles.¹⁶ By contrast, explicitly setting a poem in the city was a bold, even intentionally hubristic celebration of the present. While many students, especially poets in training, spent time in the desert to learn the language of the Bedouins, which was considered more archaic as it was free of urban non-Arab influences, the desert in which most `Abbāsid poetry takes place is a fictional one.

We can go no farther without mentioning a major development that influenced `Abbāsid poetry, both by its physical presence and by the ideas that circulated there. This was the *majlis*, the gathering of learned men. The *majlis* was, among other things, a venue for poetry. As we shall discuss in more detail later on, all educated people in Arab-Islamic society in Ibn Dāwūd's time were educated, to varying degrees, in poetry. The *majlis* was a place of exchange of ideas, and there poetry was exchanged, not in the context of poetry contests or formal rivalries among poets, but purely in the spirit of conviviality. The poems quoted in the *majlis* were shorter than the formal *qaṣīda* and tended to be light-hearted and easily set to music,¹⁷ dealing with love or wine in their more entertaining aspects, or aphoristic, like poetic epitomes, sometimes improvised, of arguments under discussion in that night's *majlis*. The measure of their success was how often they were quoted in subsequent *majālis* and appeared in books of *adab* where poetry and prose mingled, like they did in the *majlis*. This was the poetry not of ceremonious occasions but of social gatherings, not of dazzling linguistic feats but of simple elegance, not of patronage but of companionship and,

¹⁶ Lyons, *Identification*, 4.

¹⁷ Gruendler, *Praise Poetry*, 8.

yes, brotherhood. If poems be garments, the *majlis* poems were less like a bridal gown at a fairy-tale wedding and more like our Sunday best.

While Gruendler refers to “dilettante poet-scribes”¹⁸ composing “mediocre poetry,”¹⁹ she recognizes the widely varied levels of skill among them and gives credit to the denizens of the *majlis* for creating another venue in which poetry could flourish, one with its own particular tastes and ideals. The amateur poets of the *majlis* were not bound to the whims of patrons; they rather wrote for their own enjoyment and to entertain their peers. Their less recondite writing style was shaped by the fact that many of them were, by profession, writers of prose.²⁰ We may include in this category our own Muḥammad ibn Dāwūd, the *qāḍī* of Baghdad, author of some fourteen treatises on jurisprudence,²¹ who never set foot in the deserts of Najd except when he traveled there for a short time to study poetry.²²

It is more useful to think of official poetry and *majlis* poetry than of official poets and *majlis* poets, as many poets do not fit easily into one or the other category. It was not a terribly rare occurrence for an amateur poet to write highly complex poetry or to try his hand at the genres typically associated with court poetry;²³ we have seen in the previous chapter how the Man of our Times poems demonstrate a high level of sophistication and a wide-ranging knowledge of poetics. Likewise, the *dīwān* of virtually any professional poet of the `Abbāsīd period will include informal, occasional poems, some as brief as a single line, especially when poets acted in the role of *nadīm* (“boon companion”) to rulers²⁴ and would

¹⁸ Gruendler, *Praise Poetry*, 7.

¹⁹ Gruendler, *Praise Poetry*, 8.

²⁰ Gruendler, *Praise Poetry*, 7.

²¹ Ṣafadī, *al-Wāḳfī*, 58.

²² Raven, *KZ*, 25.

²³ Gruendler, *Praise Poetry*, 7.

²⁴ Gruendler, *Praise Poetry*, 11.

have had occasion to sit with them in a *majlis* of friends, to converse and versify about drinking and love. The prosaic diction that was the *lingua franca* of the *majlis* is also found in the long and formal poems of professional poets from Bashshār ibn Burd (95/714-167/783)²⁵ to Abū al-ʿAtāhiya (130/748-210/845)²⁶ to Abū Nuwās.

ʿAbbāsīd poetry is, in general, the poetry of ideas, and we find as many species of ideas in the urban poetry of Ibn Dāwūd’s time as we find species of plants and animals in the poetry of the desert poets, for the poets’ mission was no longer simply to recall the names of the creatures and places of the natural world, but rather to make sense of abstract concepts. Thus Ibn al-Muʿtazz counted among the features of the *muḥdath* (“modern,” that is, ʿAbbāsīd) style *al-madḥhab al-kalāmī*, or imbuing poetry with “rational argumentation” and “dialectical mannerism.”²⁷ We may see this principle at work in “I Have Misjudged Time” [85], where the Man of our Times builds an argument for why he should not forgive the Brother, on the grounds that the brother’s behavior was contrary to the nature of brothers, by presenting hypothetical examples of things behaving in ways contrary to their nature. Likewise, in “Fidelity Keeps Watch over Me” [50], the Man of our Times effectively makes a case for referring to fidelity as a spy (*raqīb*) by demonstrating that it does all of the things that spies do, namely preventing the lover from deeds, words, and thoughts that would threaten his relationship with the Brother.

The mass migration of ideas from other disciplines into poetry only serves to underscore the vitality of these disciplines and their resident ideas in Ibn Dāwūd’s world. Logic was not the only science to leave its imprint on ʿAbbāsīd poetry. The development of

²⁵ G. Schoeler, “Bashshār ibn Burd,” 275.

²⁶ Schoeler, “Bashshār ibn Burd,” 275.

²⁷ Badawi, “Antecedents,” 161.

Arabic philology, and its logical extension, the systematic study of Arabic poetry, played a major role in shaping the tastes and predilections of the *muḥdath* poets. If the `Abbāsīd period saw the patronage of the so-called foreign sciences, it also witnessed the patronage of the scientific study of the Arabic language. In some instances the incentive to compile pre-Islamic poetry and interpret its rare words came from the `Abbāsīd caliphs themselves;²⁸ it was in fact in the `Abbāsīd period that most surviving pre-Islamic poetry was first committed to writing. Arabic philology was inseparable from the intellectual life of Ibn Dāwūd's time; it had to do with Muslims studying the Qur'an, with non-Arabs becoming proficient in Arabic, with court poets crafting dazzling verses and scribes composing felicitous prose. Perhaps the ancient poetic tradition loomed so large in the `Abbāsīd consciousness, precisely because it, like *ḥadīth* or logic or any of various other branches of knowledge, was a field in which educated Muslims were educated, because its debates were part of the collective intellectual and political frame of reference.

Philologists and scholars of poetry do not represent a discrete category, separate from professional poets or *majlis* poets; some belonged to each category, and some wrote no surviving poetry at all. Khalaf al-Aḥmar (733-796) is most famous for compiling pre-Islamic poetry, but the accusations that he forged some of it²⁹ speak to his skill as a poet in his own right. Both Abū Tammām and al-Buḥturī are more famous for their original poetic compositions than their anthologies of verses by earlier poets, but they both compiled such anthologies, both titled the *Ḥamāsa*.³⁰ Ibn Dāwūd's friend Nifṭawayh, famous as a grammarian, does not seem to have been much of a poet at all. If all we had before us were

²⁸ Badawī, "Antecedents," 155.

²⁹ Irwin, *Night*, 27.

³⁰ Raven, *MBD*, 95-97.

the Man of our Times verses, we would be left to guess about Ibn Dāwūd's familiarity with the science of poetry, but instead we have hundreds of pages of *Kitāb al-Zahra*, in which Ibn Dāwūd recorded the works of great poets, some of which he likely learned by reading the above-mentioned anthologies,³¹ in addition to numerous occasional verses he probably heard in the *majlis*. The verses in the latter category are often quoted anonymously, with attributions like, "someone else said,"³² "a man of letters said,"³³ or, "he did well who said."³⁴

Thus, by virtue of his studies, Ibn Dāwūd was an heir of the official poetry of former times and of his own, but life experience made him a son of the *majlis*. We turn our attention now to how Ibn Dāwūd's choices of diction and use of place names and the dramaturgy of grammatical shifts, by turns, transport the Man of our Times to the mythical deserts of the imagined past and keep him anchored in the here and now, sober as a judge in an all too familiar *majlis*.

The Language of Brothers: Prosaic Diction

Upon first reading, many of the Man of our Times verses sound less like poetry than like particularly well-written sentences of prose. As we have discussed above, it may be because Ibn Dāwūd was, by profession, a writer of prose. In the second chapter of this dissertation, we have discussed how Ibn Dāwūd, in composing the Man of our Times poems, has done in poetry what others have achieved in prose. Our concern here is the implications of prosaic diction when Ibn Dāwūd employs it in verse.

³¹ Raven, *MBD*, 95-97.

³² Ibn Dāwūd, *KZ*, 258, 267, 270, etc.

³³ Ibn Dāwūd, *KZ*, 261, etc.

³⁴ Ibn Dāwūd, *KZ*, 289, etc.

The language of the *majlis* in Baghdad and other urban centers in the Islamic world in Ibn Dāwūd's time was a particular form of *al-ʿarabiyya al-fuṣḥā*, theoretically the same Arabic language as that of the Qur'an and of the pre-Islamic Arabs, the same in grammatical structure, but different in its applications. It was distinct from the colloquial Arabic of Baghdad or anywhere in the Arab world, although, it was believed, closer to the language of the Bedouins than of the city folk. It was the language of the Arabic prose of the master prose stylists such as al-Jāḥiẓ (170/776-255/868-869)³⁵ and Ibn al-Muqaffa' (103/721-139/757)³⁶, as well as of the civil servants, called *kuttāb* ("scribes"), who populated the *majālis* where much of the less formal poetry flourished. The question of whether to speak of prosaic poetry or poetic prose becomes moot when we consider that some of the master poets of the ʿAbbāsīd period wrote most or all of their poetry in this idiom and that some sentences of Ibn al-Muqaffa's prose conform to the Arabic poetic meters.³⁷ It is speakable *fuṣḥā*, the eloquence of polite society within reach of educated men.

Another reason to adopt this simpler diction is to distance oneself from the vanity of the ruling elite and its boasting, archaizing poets, to trade showmanship for gravitas. The poet most associated with adopting the unadorned style is Abū al-ʿAtāhiya, known for his poems on asceticism (*zuhdiyyāt*). What better way to represent turning away from the world than to eschew the idiom of the pagan poets and the pretense of those who imitated him. Abū al-ʿAtāhiya himself said that his writing style did not suit the tastes of kings and *rāwīs*³⁸ (professional reciters of poetry).

³⁵ C. Pellat, "Al-Jāḥiẓ," 78, 81.

³⁶ Latham, "Ibn al-Muqaffa' ," 48.

³⁷ Latham, "Ibn al-Muqaffa' ," 72.

³⁸ Badawi, "Antecedents," 156.

Thus, the prosaic diction of most of the Man of our Times poems gives the Man of our Times a valuable asset for his mission to instruct the reader to be a more virtuous brother, namely, lack of pretense. He represents the true friend with whom secrets are safe, the one who tells unpleasant truths even as others continue to dispense flattery, the one who reveals his true counsel to the brother instead of trying to keep up appearances in front of him. Connecting to this lack of pretense is a certain verisimilitude in the Man of our Times poems; the Man of our Times seems more concerned with appealing to the Brother's sense of reason and justice and to the social conventions of educated gentlemen than to the literary conventions of poetry. Poems free of the hyperbole and self-aggrandizement so prevalent in classical Arabic poetry would have stood out to the audience as something taking place in the same world the audience inhabited, not the idealized world of the formal *qaṣīda*. For the Man of our Times, simplicity is the idiom of sincerity.

The message of fidelity to one's friends comes across even more clearly and even more faithfully to the statement of ethical purpose in the introduction to *Kitāb al-Zahra*, in poems employing simple diction and avoiding poetic tropes than it does when Ibn Dāwūd has the Man of our Times assume more stylized poetic poses. Consider "Do Not Abandon your Brother" [3], how concisely and directly it expresses its author's sentiment, and how it refers to Ibn Dāwūd's concern for the meanings of the words "brother" (*akh*) and "friend" (*khalīl*), both of which appear frequently in the Man of our Times verses.

"Do Not Abandon Your Brother" [3] bears the marks of the *majlis* in its brevity and its lack of references to characters or setting. It may be an occasional couplet, improvised in response to something someone else said in the *majlis*. It is an aphorism; it could be

dispensed as a piece of advice by itself or be used to punctuate a speech or a letter. To compose an aphoristic couplet that maintains its simplicity and frankness is no great feat, and *Kitāb al-Zahra* abounds with noteworthy remarks of similar length made in verse by nameless poets, but even the following poem, among the longest of the Man of our Times poems, contains hardly a single attribute of poetic artifice.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 يا مُتْ قَبْلَكَ طَالَ الْحُزْنُ وَالْأَسْفُ | وجاوزَ الشَّوْقُ بي حَدَّ الذي أَصِفُ |
| 2 قَلْبِي إِلَيْكَ مَعَ الْهَجْرَانِ مُنْعَطِفُ | وَأَنْتَ عَنِّي رَخِيُّ الْبَالِ مُنْحَرِفُ |
| 3 فَإِنْ تَكُنْ عَنْ إِخَائِي الْيَوْمَ مُنْصَرِفاً | فَاللَّهِ يَعْلَمُ مَا لِي عَنْكَ مُنْصَرِفُ |
| 4 هَبْنِي اعْتَرَفْتُ بِأَنِّي لَسْتُ ذَا شَغَفٍ | أَلَمْ يَكُنْ كَمَدِي أَنْ لَسْتُ أَنْتَصِفُ |
| 5 كَمْ قَدْ كَذَبْتُ عَلَى قَلْبِي فَكَذَّبَنِي | طَوَّلَ الْحَنِينَ وَعَيْنٌ دَمْعُهَا يَكْفُ |
| 6 إِنْ كُنْتُ يَوْمًا مُقْبِلِي زَلَّةً سَلَفْتُ | فَالآنَ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يُعْرِى بِي التَّلَفُ |
| 7 اللَّهُ اللَّهُ فِي نَفْسِي فَقَدْ عَطِبْتُ | وَلَيْسَ فِي قَلْبِي مِنْ شُكْرِهَا خَلْفُ |
| 8 قَدْ ذَلَّلَ الشَّوْقُ قَلْبِي وَهُوَ مُعْتَرِفُ | إِنَّ النَّذْلَ فِي حُكْمِ الْهَوَى شَرَفُ |
| 9 فَأَعْمَلْ بِرَأْيِكَ لَا أَدْعُوكَ مُعْتَدِيًا | وَلَا أَقُولُ لِشَيْءٍ قُلْتُهُ سَرَفُ ³⁹ |

My Heart is Humble [13]

- 1 May I die before you!
Long have sadness and grief lingered,
And my longing is greater
Than I can describe
- 2 My heart inclines to you,
Even though you have abandoned me,
But you hard-heartedly
Turn away
- 3 Even though today you turn away
From our brotherhood,
God knows,
I will never turn away from you
- 4 Suppose that I have confessed publicly

³⁹ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 58-59.

That I am not entirely delirious with passion,
 But is not the reason for my sadness
 That my love for you is not merely half-hearted?

5 How many times I have lied to my heart!
 But my lies were exposed
 By never-ending longing
 And eyes that incessantly shed tears

6 If you forgive me
 For wrongs I committed in the past
 Then do it now,
 Before death is drawn to me

7 By God! By God!
 My soul has become exhausted,
 And it has no more thanks
 Left to give

8 Longing has humbled my heart,
 And it confesses:
 To be humbled for the sake of love
 Is an honor

9 Do as you see fit;
 I shall not address you in enmity,
 And I shall not exaggerate
 In anything I say

This poem contains few stylistic flourishes, and the ones it does contain would not be out of place in prose writing. We might say that the Man of our Times fulfills the promise he makes in line (9), that he will not exaggerate in anything he says. As we shall discuss in further detail later, it does not move from one scene to another and address various interlocutors; instead, it presents the persona's ideas in the same sequence as if he were saying it to the Brother in private or writing them to him in a letter, as though the Brother himself were the real intended audience. The Man of our Times does not play on the audience's memories of their own lost loves by describing how beautiful his friendship with

the Brother once was, as he does in the *nasīb* sections of poems like, “I Have Misjudged Time” [85], but, instead, the pathos of the opening lines is rooted entirely in the present, as he complains of his suffering as a plea for forgiveness from the Brother who has turned away from their friendship, the same Brother, fictitious though the may be, whom Ibn Dāwūd addresses in the introduction to *Kitāb al-Zahra*. It begins with a *du`ā`* (“prayer” or “invocation of blessing”),⁴⁰ “May I die before you!” which is similar in word choice and identical in spirit to the *ad`iya* (plural of *du`ā`*) that begin the introduction to *Kitāb al-Zahra*, most notably, “May He offer me, in ransom for you, as a victim of the vicissitudes and send me to meet death before you, leaving you alive.”⁴¹ Such *ad`iya* are not the exclusive province of poetry, but rather, a standard way to begin a book of *adab*⁴² or a speech in the *majlis* of a patron.⁴³

Lines (2) and (8) contain instances of *ṭibāq*, the occurrence of a pair of antonyms in the same line;⁴⁴ line (2) contrasts “inclining toward” the brother (*mun`aṭif*) with “turning away” (*munḥarif*), and line (8) contrasts “being humbled” (*tadhallul*) with “honor” (*sharaf*) in a near approximation of *ṭibāq*, as these are lexical antonyms but not grammatically parallel. While *ṭibāq* is one of the most frequently occurring and immediately identifiable features of `Abbāsīd poetry, its application is likewise not limited to poetry. The examination of opposites was virtually ubiquitous in `Abbāsīd thought; the ninth century saw the rise of disputation (*munāẓara*) literature, in which authors discussed the relative merits of

⁴⁰ Gruendler, *Praise Poetry*, xv.

⁴¹ Ibn Dāwūd, *KZ*, 1.

⁴² Raven, *MBD*, 100.

⁴³ For example, “May God grant you long life for the sake of the people of learning, and may He grant long life, in you, to the things they seek” (Abū Ḥayyān a-Tawḥīdī, *Mukhtārāt min al-Imtā` wa-l-Mu`ānasa*, ed. Jawdat Fakhr al-Dīn [Beirut: Dār al-Manāhil, 1989], 45).

⁴⁴ Gruendler, *Praise Poetry*, xviii.

antithetical things,⁴⁵ whether the author asserts the superiority of one over the other or attempts to reconcile them. Hardly a work of `Abbāsīd literature, whether poetry or prose, is free of the awareness of antitheses, of the idea that every argument awaits a rebuttal, the desert or the city, Arabic or foreign languages, received truth or independent judgment, a primordial universe or a created one. Ibn Dāwūd's engagement with antitheses (Ibn Dāwūd refers to this concept as *ḍidd* or *muḍādda*)⁴⁶ goes beyond the instances of *ṭibāq* in this poem, as he examines opposing principles more extensively elsewhere in *Kitāb al-Zahra*. The fourth and fifth chapters of *Kitāb al-Zahra* present contrasting views on revealing one's love to the beloved.⁴⁷

The *Majlis* of Brotherhood and the Desert of Ideas: Places and Place Names

To one encountering classical Arabic poetry for the first time, the description of the desert is one of the most immediately striking features, and the frequent occurrence of proper names of places in the Arab lands is among the things that makes it difficult for readers, even native speakers of Arabic, to understand, unless they are sufficiently versed in the lore surrounding Arabic poetry. The proper names are not only of cities and large regions likely to be familiar to people from outside the Arabian Peninsula, although pre-Islamic poetry sometimes makes reference to such world-famous locations as Jerusalem and the river Euphrates,⁴⁸ but include the names of individual mountains and hills, sand dunes, valleys, water sources, and fertile plains, and among the endeavors of the ninth-century compilers of

⁴⁵ Irwin, *Night*, 84-85.

⁴⁶ Raven, *MBD*, 110.

⁴⁷ Raven, *MBD*, 110.

⁴⁸ Lyons, *Identification*, 5.

ancient poetry was identifying the locales mentioned in the works of the ancient poets.⁴⁹ To make matters more complicated, some place names, such as the “crested dune” Liwā and the river `Aqīq have never been identified with any degree of certainty with any physical location.⁵⁰

For the pre-Islamic poets, the topographic allusions served to call to mind places familiar to their audience, especially if we consider that most of the place-names in the *dīwān* of any given pre-Islamic poet refer to places within his tribal lands,⁵¹ places that would have been intimately familiar to his audience. It is not as if I, as we sit here in Washington, D.C., were to pretend that I had passed through Baghdad with my two companions, but rather, if I spoke of saying farewell to my beloved at Dupont Circle. The evocation of locations particular to one’s own tribe also added to the feeling of tribal pride which was so central to the poetic enterprise in pre-Islamic times,⁵² to say nothing of the more practical endeavor of a pre-literate society preserving knowledge of its natural environment.⁵³ Later poets were free from these more practical considerations,⁵⁴ especially after the early ninth century, at which point much pre-Islamic poetry was preserved in writing, and they evoked these same places in imitation of their poetic forebears, one of the effects was that it called to mind an idealized past of pride and heroism.

In the hands of Ibn Dāwūd’s contemporaries, the desert and its named locations took on new meaning. If references in pre-Islamic and early Islamic poetry to places where the

⁴⁹ Lyons, *Identification*, 6.

⁵⁰ J. Stetkevych, *Zephyrs of Najd*, 111-114.

⁵¹ Lyons, *Identification*, 6.

⁵² Lyons, *Identification*, 6.

⁵³ Irwin, *Night*, 2.

⁵⁴ S. Stetkevych, *Abū Tammām*, 106.

poet had alighted long ago, and of which the audience had personal memories, evoked nostalgia for a past that never was, then how much more so in *muḥdath* poetry, when that past is so obviously imaginary? Many `Abbāsīd poems were set in entirely fictional deserts, although that did not stop a critic from complaining about Abū Tammām's inaccurate descriptions of the plant and animal species of the desert.⁵⁵ To employ the desert setting was to conform to the standard set by the ancient poets and to claim their prestige for oneself, even if one did not imitate their archaic diction. If a reference to a place in an ancient poem made its audience imagine that place, then the mention of the same place in a *muḥdath* poem made its audience imagine that earlier poem. Through desert references, a poet could adopt the persona of the pre-Islamic heroes or lovesick *`udhrī* poets. We have seen the Man of our Times do this in "The Blazing Heat of Love" [70], where he borrows from the *`udhrī* poets not only their madness but also their heat haze and their dusty wilderness.

By contrast, a poet could cast the city as the site of a glorious present and even of a rejection of traditional values. The most famous example is the *qaṣīda* in which Abū Nuwās asserts that abandoned campsites hold no sentimental value for him and then goes on to describe the urban tavern to which his heart attaches,⁵⁶ but the specifically urban setting can be found in much `Abbāsīd poetry, especially in poetry suited to the *majlis*. In "Rejection from Muḥammad's Hand is Like Wine" [90], the line in which he says that "a cup of Muḥammad's rejection" made him drunk sketches an outline of wine, but the mention of Karkh suggests the entire genre of `Abbāsīd *khamriyyāt* (Bacchic poetry).

⁵⁵ S. Stetkevych, *Abū Tammām*, 60.

⁵⁶ Irwin, *Night*, 123.

It was possible for poets to give the impression of a desert or urban setting even by making only vague references to it. The middle section of “I Have Misjudged Time” [85], the *raḥīl* of ideas, is able to suggest a desert setting without directly mentioning the desert or anything that can be found there exclusively. The succession of scenarios followed by their dismissal as absurd only creates the impression that the Man of our Times is traveling across something, and the reader is left to fill in the gaps with the image of a desert. The sword, the arrow, and the horse are all associated with pre-Islamic poetry and the ancient poets’ boasts of valor in the *raḥīl*, enough to make the reader imagine a warrior-poet crossing the desert on horseback, but Ibn Dāwūd uses them to a different effect, one consistent with *al-madhhab al-kalāmī*. Lines (4)-(5) of “Where is the Path to God’s Country” [97] demonstrate that the Man of our Times is lost, but they do not specify where, and the reader assumes, by association with countless other poems, that he is lost in the desert, even though he does not describe any of its features.

The few Man of our Times poems that mention specific locations in the desert⁵⁷ are the exceptions that prove the rule that Ibn Dāwūd did not litter his poetry with topographic references for the sake of showcasing his mastery of the poetic canon.⁵⁸ For the most part, Ibn Dāwūd’s desert wilderness does not play a central role, as it did in the pre-Islamic *raḥīl* or in the *qaṣā’id* of professional poets who needed to demonstrate their mastery of poetry by demonstrating their mastery of desert description. The following poem has Ibn Dāwūd’s style coming as close as it ever does to the realm of official poetry, and yet it remains true to the purpose of poetry found in the *majālis* of less powerful men. It is among the most replete

⁵⁷ Ibn Dāwūd, *KZ*, 205, 271-272, 280.

⁵⁸ See Kennedy, *Abū Nuwās*, 32.

with poetic conventions, but even here Ibn Dāwūd makes the desert a vaguely sketched backdrop against which the Man of our Times acts out his morality play.

- 1 وَلَمَّا وَقَفْنَا لِلْوَدَاعِ وَبَيْنَنَا
أَحَادِيثُ يُغَيِّي الْحَاسِبِينَ عَدِيدُهَا
2 تَبَادَرَ دَمْعِي فَأَنْصَرَفْتُ تَهْضُنِي
إِلَى عِبْرَتِي بُقْيَا عَلَيْكَ أَذُودُهَا
3 فَمَا أَشْبَهْتُ عَيْنَايَ سَحَابَةً
دَنَا صَرَبُهَا وَاسْتَعْجَلَتْهَا رُعودُهَا
4 فَمَا زَالَ زَجْرُ الرَّعْدِ يَحْدُو سَحَابَهَا
فَتَبَدُّو وَأَرْوَاخُ الشَّمَالِ تُحِيدُهَا
5 فَمَا أَقْلَعْتُ حَتَّى بَكَتْ فَتَضَاكَتْ رِيَاضُ الرُّبَى فَأَخْضَرَ بِالْعُشْبِ عَوْدُهَا
6 وَهَلْ تَتَلَاوَى ذَاتُ عِقْدٍ جُمَانَهَا
إِذَا انْسَلَّ مِنْ سِلْكِ النِّظَامِ فَرِيدُهَا
7 فَقَالَ رَفِيقِي مَا لِلْوَنِكَ حَائِلًا
وَعَيْنَيْكَ مَا يَعْدُو جُفُونَكَ جَوْدُهَا
8 فَأَغْضَيْتُ عَنْ رَدِّ الْجَوَابِ تَبْلُدًا
وَخَيْرُ قُلُوبِ الْعَاشِقِينَ بَلِيدُهَا⁵⁹

Silent Tears [88]

- 1 When we stood together
To say goodbye,
We exchanged words
Too many to count
- 2 My tears flowed swiftly,
And I turned away,
To spare you the sight,
Lest you see that I was weeping
- 3 My eyes were like a cloud
About to burst
As its thunder
Trails it hastily
- 4 The roll of thunder
Kept urging the cloud on,
And the winds of the north
Seemed to blow it off course
- 5 It did not let up
Until it had wept enough
That the hillsides smiled at each other
And the branches became green with foliage

⁵⁹ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 297.

6 Does a lady string together
 The jewels of her necklace
 When its central stone
 Has fallen off and been lost?

7 My companion said:
 “Why are you so pale,
 And why are your eyes
 Pouring tears?”

8 I declined to give an answer
 And stayed silent,
 For silence is the best thing
 For the hearts of lovers

Line (1), if taken in isolation, could take place either in the desert or in the city, but the association of the day of separation with pre-Islamic poetry and, to an even greater extent, with *`udhrī* poetry, would make the reader more likely to imagine a wilderness setting. The comparison of the poet's eyes on the verge of tears to a raincloud in line (3) calls to mind the poets of *`udhrī* love, particularly Ghaylān ibn `Uqba (d. 117/735),⁶⁰ called Dhū al-Rumma, who heard all of nature lamenting with him for his ill-fated love;⁶¹ it is rather an extended simile, typical of the formal genres of *muḥdath* poetry, and continuing for four lines, fully half the length of the poem. If, in the case of Ghaylān, “it often seems that to describe nature is the chief object of his *qaṣīdahs*,”⁶² playing the *`udhrī* lover by sounding like Ghaylān is only a secondary aim of the Man of our Times in assigning the cloud such a prominent role in the poem. This is only the idea of a cloud; the heartbroken Man of our Times who can no longer hold back his tears once he parts from the Brother is like a dark cloud that can no longer hold back its rain once the thunder sounds, much as, when the Brother breaks

⁶⁰ J. Stetkevych, *Zephyrs of Najd*, 63.

⁶¹ Badawi, “Antecedents,” 152.

⁶² Badawi, “Antecedents,” 152.

promises in “I Have Misjudged Time” [85], he is behaving as illogically as a sword that can cut through bone but not through entrails. The Man of our Times does not say, or even imply, that the moment of separation in line (1) took place anywhere near the rain-refreshed hillsides in line (5).

The following poem is the most detailed of the Man of our Times poems as far as description of the desert and its perils, but even this is a story about the legendary past told in the unadorned language of the present, and thus the Man of our Times makes no pretense of trying to convince us that this desert is anything more than a rhetorical figure.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1 كَمْ دُونَ أَرْضِكَ مِنْ وَادٍ وَمِنْ عَلَمٍ | كَأَنَّ أَعْلَاهُ بِالْأَفْلاكِ مُنْتَسِجٌ |
| 2 وَمِنْ مَرْوَجٍ كَظْهِرِ الثُّرُسِ مُظْلِمَةٍ | كَأَنَّ حَصْبَاءَهَا تَحْتَ الدُّجَى سُبُجٌ |
| 3 حَتَّى إِذَا الشَّمْسُ لَاحَتْ فِي سَبَاسِيبِهَا | حَسِبْتَ أَعْلَامَهَا فِي الْآلِ تَخْتَلِجُ |
| 4 وَكَمْ فَلَاةٍ يَفُوتُ الظَّرْفَ آخِرُهَا | لِلْجَنِّ بِاللَّيْلِ فِي أَفْطَارِهَا وَهَجٌ |
| 5 يَهْمَاءُ غَبْرَاءُ لَا يَدْرِي الدَّلِيلُ بِهَا | فِي أَيِّ أَرْجَائِهَا يُرْجَى لَهُ الْفَرْجُ |
| 6 قَطَعْتُهَا بِأَبْنٍ حَرْفٍ ضَامِرٍ قَطْمٍ | صَلَبِ الْمَنَاسِمِ فِي إِرْقَالِهَا هَوَجٌ |
| 7 شَوْقاً إِلَيْكَ وَلَوْ لَا مَا أَكَابِدُهُ | لَكَانَ لِي فِي بِلَادِ اللَّهِ مُنْفَرِجٌ |
| 8 فَإِنْ تَجَدُّ لِي فَمَحْقُوقٌ بِذَلِكَ وَإِنْ | تَبْخُلُ فَلَا لَوْمَ وَلَا حَرَجٌ ⁶³ |

I Have Crossed Deserts to Find You [72]

- 1 How many valleys around your lands,
And how many banners so high
That the tops of them seemed
To be woven into the heavens
- 2 And how many meadows,
Dark as a solar eclipse,
Their pebbles like coal
In the darkness of night
- 3 So dark that, if the sun
Shone brightly on them,

⁶³ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 211.

You would think their features
Were trembling in the mirage

4 And how many deserts
Spanning as far as the eye can see,
Lands of the *jinn*,
Blazing hot

5 Wayless, dusty deserts
Where even guides know not
In which direction
To seek relief

6 I have crossed
On an emaciated, hungry camel
Strong of hooves,
Swift of gait

7 Longing for you,
And if not for what passion I am suffering,
God's country
Would have brought me relief

8 If you are generous with me,
It is your right to do so,
And if you are stingy with me,
I will not blame you or disgrace you

Lines (1)-(5) are devoted to characterizations of the attributes of the desert, its vast expanse, its darkness, its blinding sun, its heat, its dust storms, and its waylessness, for the purpose of describing a hopeless situation. If the desert is so vast and so inhospitable, and the Man of our Times is so hopelessly lost, how will he ever reach his destination safely? This extensive description adds dramatic weight to line (6), where the Man of our Times crosses these deserts in spite of their dangers and even more to line (7) in which his deliverance from them offers him no consolation. The harshness of the desert can cause great suffering, but the Man of our Times' love is even greater, and, as in "Where is the Path to God's Country?" [97], no

other comfort can bring him relief. The poetic description of the hardships of the desert would have been familiar to the audience, particularly from the *raḥīl* of the classical *qaṣīda*, but this is not any particular desert; it has no named landmarks. It is rather that the pain of love supersedes any trials nature can bring, in contrast to a poem we will discuss below, in which nature empathizes with the lovesick traveler.

The Man of our Times poems include the names of twelve geographical locations, including three regions, eight localities, and the Sea of China. In the case of most of these places, we have little indisputable evidence that Ibn Dāwūd visited them. It is likely that a lifelong resident of Baghdad would have visited Karkh at some time. He introduces some verses in *Kitāb al-Zahra* with the ascription, “a Bedouin in the land of Najd recited to me,”⁶⁴ indicated that he was present and heard the recitation first-hand, although, as Raven points out, “Najd” was a fairly general term for the desert dwelling places of the Bedouin Arabs.⁶⁵ In the poem, “Nothing is Worse than Waiting” [71], he uses the Sea of China to represent something vast, in order to create such a hyperbole as, “If the Sea of China were spread out around you, I would think it a mirage that would leave no trace.”⁶⁶ Likewise, “The Slave of Longing does not Fear” [69] mentions Najd and Dīma simply as places of longing;⁶⁷ the poem contains no details about events that took place there. The following poem uses the mention of Tihāma, the Red Sea coastal plain on the western coast of the Arabian Peninsula,⁶⁸ to give a short piece of *majlis* poetry the flavor of a more formal poem.

⁶⁴ Ibn Dāwūd, *KZ*, 48, 69, etc. See Raven, *MBD*, 25.

⁶⁵ Ferdinand Wüstenfeld, *Jacut's geographisches Wörterbuch* (Berlin: Die deutsche morgenländische Gesellschaft, 1867), 4:746.

⁶⁶ Ibn Dāwūd, *KZ*, 209.

⁶⁷ Ibn Dāwūd, *KZ*, 208.

⁶⁸ Wüstenfeld, *GW*, 1:902.

1 أَرَقْتُ لِبَرْقٍ مِنْ تِهَامَةٍ خَافِقٍ كَأَنَّ سَنَا إِيْمَاضِهِ قَلْبُ عَاشِقٍ
 2 يَلُوحُ فَازْدَادَ اشْتِيَاقاً وَمَا أَرَى يَشْوُقُنِي لَوْلَاكَ مِنْ ضَوْءِ بَارِقٍ
 3 مَتَى تَدُنْ لَا يَمْلِكُ لِي الشَّوْقُ لَوْعَةً وَإِنْ تَنَأَّ عَنِّي فَالْتَوَهُمْ شَائِقِي
 4 فَرَأَيْكَ فِي عَبْدٍ إِلَيْكَ مَفْرُءٌ لَتُنْعِشَهُ بِالْوَصْلِ قَبْلَ الْعَوَائِقِ⁶⁹

Lightning in Tihāma [76]

- 1 I lay awake,
 As lightning flashed in Tihāma,
 As though its luster
 Were a lover's heart
- 2 As it flashed,
 It increased my longing,
 And were it not for you,
 Lightning flashes would not fill me with longing
- 3 When you are near,
 My longing does not torment me like this,
 But when you are away,
 My every thought makes me miss you
- 4 Consider a servant
 Whose only refuge is you
 So that you might grant him the solace of your company
 While he is still able to benefit from it

What is most significant about the mention of Tihāma in this poem is that the Man of our Times mentions a place name at all. Lightning can be seen, at least occasionally, everywhere in the world, and if the Man of our Times had said that he saw lightning flashing in Najd or Yemen or even Karkh, the reader would not have questioned it. Tihāma is simply a faraway place, far enough to convey the feeling that reuniting with the Brother is an unattainable wish. Furthermore, the poem does not even specify that the lightning of Tihāma was visible from the place where the Man of our Times lay awake. It is as though the occurrence of

⁶⁹ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 229.

lightning anywhere, whether or not he could see it, could heighten his pangs of love, like Ghaylān's poems where nature laments with the lover, except that, this time, the very concept of lightning laments with the Man of our Times. "The Fires of Love" [78] only gives a slightly stronger indication that the sleepless Man of our Times actually saw the fire in Ṭulayḥa,⁷⁰ which may be the name of a dry riverbed in Yemen;⁷¹ perhaps its very existence kept him awake.

Like "Even the Doves Weep for their Love" [79],⁷² "Lightning in Tihāma" begins with a description of nature and then proceeds immediately to a psychological interpretation of that symbol from nature. Upon hearing the first line, the audience might expect a more detailed description of nature to follow in the subsequent lines, but the sudden turn to exploration of ideas serves to attract the reader's attention to the appeal for forgiveness in line (4). The transition from nature imagery to ideas is effectively a transition from a fictional desert to an actual *majlis*, and thus, an invitation to the Brother to reflect on the current situation. Poems like "Lightning in Tihāma" [76] and "The Slave of Longing does not Fear" [69] are aphoristic in purpose, the latter ending on a particularly pious note, but the topographic references lend them an air of poetic prestige; if poems be garments, these are wedding dresses for the brides of commoners.

Of all the Man of our Times poems, this one contains the greatest number of topographic references.

1 سَقَى اللهُ رَمْلَ الْقَاعِ فِي النِّخْلَاتِ فَذَاكَ الْكَثِيبَ الْفَرْدَ فِي السَّمَرَاتِ
2 فَقَبَّرَ الْعِبَادِيَّ الَّذِي دُونَ مُرْبِخٍ فَمُرْبِخٍ وَالْغُدْرَانَ فَالْهَضْبَاتِ

⁷⁰ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 239.

⁷¹ Wüstenfeld, GW, 4:543.

⁷² Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 245-246.

3 فَجَبَلِي زُرُودٍ فَالطُّلُوحَةَ فَاللَّوَى
 4 وَلَمْ يَبْقَ مِنْ لَدَاتِهَا غَيْرُ ذِكْرَةٍ
 5 لِقَصْرِ عَلَى وَادِي زُبَالَةَ مُشْرِفٍ
 6 أَحَبُّ إِلَى نَفْسِي وَأَشَقَى لِسَجْوِهَا
 7 عَسَى اللَّهُ لَا تَيَاسُ سَيَأْذُنُ عَاجِلًا
 8 وَتَرْضَى قُلُوبٌ قَدْ تَوَاتَرَ سَخَطُهَا

فَإِنَّ لَهَا عِنْدِي يَدًا وَهَنَاتٍ
 تَقَطَّعَ نَفْسِي عِنْدَهَا حَسَرَاتٍ
 أَكْفَكُفُ فِي أَكْنَفِهِ عِبْرَاتِي
 وَأُولَى بِهَا هَذِهِ الْقَرِيَّاتِ
 بِنَصْرَةٍ مَظْلُومٍ وَفَكِّ عُنَاةٍ
 عَلَيَّ فَعَادَتْنِي بِغَيْرِ تِرَاتٍ⁷³

Naught Remains but a Memory [84]

- 1 May God pour blessings for the sands of al-Qā`,
 Amidst the palm trees,
 And the lone sand dune
 Among the acacia trees
- 2 And Qabr al-`Ibādī
 Outside of Murbakh,
 And Murbakh, and the rivulets
 And the hills
- 3 The twin peaks of Zarūd, and Ṭulayḥa
 And the dunes of Liwā;
 It is at their hands
 That I have grown weak
- 4 Naught remains of their delights
 But a memory,
 On account of which
 My soul has been rent
- 5 A fortress
 Overlooking the valley of Zubāla;
 In its shade
 I have held back my tears
- 6 Most dear to my soul,
 And most grievous
 And most worthy in its estimation
 Are these villages
- 7 Do not despair!

⁷³ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 271-272.

Perhaps God will hasten
To help the victim of injustice
And release him from his suffering

8 And hearts will be content
That once were angry with me
And return to me
Without wrongful retaliation

Zubāla and Qabr al-`Ibādī are stations on the road from Kufa to Mecca.⁷⁴ Yāqūt specifically refers to the former as a “village,”⁷⁵ hence the “villages” which the Man of our Times holds in high esteem in line (6). Yāqūt describes Zarūd as a sandwaste, also on the road from Kufa to Mecca,⁷⁶ but elsewhere he mentions five peaks, among them “the twin peaks of Zarūd” and Murbakh, “which is the most perilous of them.”⁷⁷ As for Liwā, mentioned in poetry since the Mu`allaqa of Imru’ al-Qays,⁷⁸ the geographer is less certain or less specific about its identity, offering descriptions such as, “a sandy impasse,” “a dry riverbed in the territory of the Banū Sālim,” and, “a distant place often mentioned by poets.”⁷⁹ The mysterious Liwā is the only truly mythical place in this poem, the most direct connection to pre-Islamic lore. The rest of the place names underscore the poem’s pious orientation; all roads lead to Mecca. The nostalgia for places on the way, if not from Baghdad to Mecca, then at least from Iraq to Mecca leads to a hopeful prayer for divine intervention in line (7).

“Naught Remains but a Memory,” is not simply a *majlis* epigram arrayed with a topographic accessory, as “Lightning in Tihāma” [76] is. The catalogue of places, and the Man of our Times’ wistful expressions of love for them is extensive enough to be the *nasīb*

⁷⁴ Wüstenfeld, *GW*, 4:28.

⁷⁵ Wüstenfeld, *GW*, 2:912.

⁷⁶ Wüstenfeld, *GW*, 2:928.

⁷⁷ Wüstenfeld, *GW*, 2:928.

⁷⁸ J. Stetkevych, *Zephyrs of Najd*, 111.

⁷⁹ Wüstenfeld, *GW*, 4:366.

of a much longer poem; this poem is something of a *qiṭʿa* of longing for places.⁸⁰ Rather than simply acknowledging that both the Man of our Times and the Brother, being Baghdad gentlemen, both know about the custom of mentioning place names in poetry, Ibn Dāwūd allows the audience to feel what they would feel if hearing a catalogue of far-off, beloved places in an ancient poem; he is truly showing his mastery of his motif. If these verses as they appear in *Kitāb al-Zahra* were actually the beginning of a *qaṣīda* that conformed strictly to the sequence of themes outlined by Ibn Qutayba, then the poem would proceed from line (6), where the lamentation over places ends, to the love story proper,⁸¹ but instead it returns to the predicament of the Man of our Times with an appeal to justice and then with hope for forgiveness from the unjustly angry Brother. The effect is that the Man of our Times has gone to the lengths of either traveling to all these distant places or, at least, of versifying about them, to appeal for the Brother's forgiveness.

“My Soul Longs for Ḥijāz” [68] has several topographic references in common with “Naught Remains but a Memory,” namely Liwā, Zarūd, Murbakh, and Zubāla,⁸² and it evokes nostalgia for them in a similar way. The only place it mentions that is not mentioned in “Naught Remains but a Memory” [84] is Ḥijāz itself, the mountainous region in the western part of the Arabian Peninsula, between the highlands of Najd in the interior of the peninsula and the coastal lowlands of Tihāma. The significance of Ḥijāz, to Ibn Dāwūd's audience, is that it is the region that contains the holy cities of Mecca and Medina, and the

⁸⁰ Perhaps the one of the Man of our Times poems that most deserves the classification as a *qiṭʿa* of longing for places is “My Heart Cleaves to Zubāla” [86], since all of its five lines are devoted to longing for places (Ibn Dāwūd, *KZ*, 280), some of the same places mentioned in “Naught Remains but a Memory,” and it does not move on to other themes.

⁸¹ Ibn Qutayba, *Shiʿr*, 30-31.

⁸² Ibn Dāwūd, *KZ*, 205.

fact that al-Qā',⁸³ Zarūd, and Zubāla are stations on the way there only underscores its significance. Both poems end with the Man of our Times' desire for a reinstatement of right, and perhaps his longing for places that lead to the site of Muslim pilgrimage dramatizes this desire.

The Story Between the Lines: Shifts of Grammatical Person

The technique of *iltifāt* (literally, "turning one's attention toward" something) is part of what allows Arabic poets to create a detailed story in the minds of readers in relatively few words and within a complex formal structure, severely restrictive in comparison to the flexibility of prose narrative. In early Arabic poetry, it usually takes the form of a shift of grammatical person within the same verse.⁸⁴ By the `Abbāsīd period, the tendency had turned away from "single-line *iltifāt*" toward keeping the same grammatical person within the line but shifting persons from one line to the next, for example, from what could be an omniscient third-person narrator in one line to first-person narration to another, to direct address of fate in another, to address of the poet's own heart in another.⁸⁵ These shifts fill in the story between the lines, so to speak, by allowing various characters to interact with the poetic persona, while wasting none of the poem's already scarce syllables on introducing their entrance. If the poet begins in a line in the middle of a poem by saying, "O my two friends," the reader imagines that two companions were present with the poet during the events described in that line, and, perhaps, that they were not present for the previously described events. It also accounts for the poet speaking of his beloved in the second person and the third person, the masculine and feminine genders, or even the singular and plural

⁸³ Wüstenfeld, *GW*, 4:928.

⁸⁴ Gruendler, *Praise Poetry*, xvi.

⁸⁵ Gruendler, *Praise Poetry*, 33.

number, in the same poem. This, coupled with the infrequency of enjambment from one line to the next, and with the tendency of grammarians and anthologists to quote individual lines instead of whole poems, is part of what led earlier generations of scholars to claim that the individual line supersedes the entire poem in classical Arabic poetry.⁸⁶ It is my opinion, however, that shifts of grammatical person between lines, a sort of interlinear *iltifāt*, add to the narrative unity of the poem instead of taking away from it.

Gruendler has demonstrated how, in long odes, “the switch of grammatical person [...] constitutes an integral part of [...] dramaturgy.”⁸⁷ It allows the poet to play what Lyons calls the poet’s various “roles of hero, wise man, traveller, wine drinker, and poet,”⁸⁸ all in the same poem. Ibn Dāwūd is able to make the heroic landscape of the *qaṣīda* flash in the readers’ minds across a mere ten lines not only through the arrangement of themes of nostalgia, travel, and destination, but through strategically placed shifts of scene, which he signals through grammatical shifts.

It warrants mention that part of the prose-like directness of some of the Man of our Times poems, such as, “I Have Misjudged Time” [85] lies in the lack of a pageant of interlocutors. In, “I Have Misjudged Time” [85], the Man of our Times proceeds unceremoniously from the mention of things he has seen to the mention of things he has not seen (because they are logically absurd) to the conclusion to be drawn from all this, addressing the Brother all the while. Likewise, in “Fidelity Keeps Watch over Me” [50], the spies of the *nasīb* and the minor characters of the *raḥīl*, such as the carousers, the singing

⁸⁶ Gruendler, *Praise Poetry*, 14.

⁸⁷ Gruendler, *Praise Poetry*, 33.

⁸⁸ Lyons, *Identification*, 36.

girls, and the honest young men, are “absent figure[s],”⁸⁹ referred to in the third person in the Man of our Times’ continuous address of the Brother. Their presence in the margins in the *nasīb* and the rest of the poem underscores the Man of our Times’ unwavering fidelity and his single-minded search for the Brother, respectively, all the more so because the “you” always refers to the Brother and never to the audience.

The dramatic momentum of “Rejection from Muḥammad’s Hand is Like Wine” [90] lies in shifts of verb tense that propel the Man of our Times toward his destination of a lesson for the reader.

Present Problem

1 *I am passionately in love*
 With the memory of Karkh,
 And all my love
 Is for the one who dwells in Karkh

Flashback

2 *I have drunk* a cup
 Of Muḥammad’s rejection;
It has weakened my bones
 And *overwhelmed* my brain

Hikma

3 What other trials I may suffer
 Since I have lost him, are as one to me;
 Does the victim, after being slaughtered,
 Fear the pain of being skinned?

Line (1) sets the scene, using an imperfect tense (*muḍāri`*) verb for, “I am passionately in love” (أهيم), and, in the absence of any previous verbs to locate the scene in the past, the reader may assume that the action takes place in the present.⁹⁰ Line (2) is a flashback to the event that brought the Man of our Times to his unfortunate state, and its verbs are in the

⁸⁹ Gruendler, *Praise Poetry*, 33.

⁹⁰ For a discussion of the uses of the imperfect tense and the sequence of tenses in Arabic, see Wheeler M. Thackston, *An Introduction to Koranic and Classical Arabic* (Bethesda: Ibex Publishers, 2000), 71-73.

perfect (*māḍī*) tense. The first hemistich of line (3) returns to the present situation described in line (1), with a return to the imperfect tense.⁹¹ In the second hemistich (*`ajuz*), the *ḥikma*, the imperfect tense stands outside time as a general statement, a condition that always applies. Although the English translation makes it appear that this hemistich has several verbs, it has only one, “fear” (يجزع), and the others are temporally neutral; “slaughtered” (مذبوح) is a passive participle, and “butchered” (سلخ) is a verbal noun.

Line (1) of “The Abodes Gave Me No Consolation” [74] consists of first person narration in the imperfect tense. Line (2) employs the third person, as though it is a general conclusion to be drawn from the Man of our Times’ description of his predicament in line (1). Lines (3)-(4) continue the narration, albeit this time in the perfect tense, as though it were a flashback, and they include a rather one-sided conversation between the Man of our Times and the abandoned abodes. Line (5), still in the first person, summarizes the action in lines (3)-(4) and its consequences, and line (6) is a rhetorical question.

Lines (1)-(5) of “I Have Crossed Deserts to Find You” [72] contain no trace of the first and second persons except the reference to “your lands” in line (1). They simply introduce the scene, forbidding, wayless deserts that confound the traveler with their heat by day and their darkness by night. This is one of the longest descriptions of scenery in any of the Man of our Times poems. The reader is aware that there is a “you” somewhere in this story, but as the first five lines progress, we are taken farther afield of this person, until we are so lost that we almost forget that he even figures into the story. The narrator does not even announce his own presence until line (6), and we see the Man of our Times, not taking

⁹¹ A more literal rendering of this hemistich would be, “I do not [the verb *laysa*, which is understood to have an imperfect meaning, although its morphology mimics the perfect] care [imperfect] about misfortune after losing [verbal noun] him.”

us on yet another purely mental *raḥīl* but riding a camel across a desert, the appearance of which we have a clear image. He even mentions the camel's footsteps instead of the steps of a logical argument.

It is only in line (7) that we find out the reason for all the description that has transpired; we find out that Man of our Times has passed through all these places out of “longing for” the addressee. We only find this out as the Man of our Times reaches his destination, which is a mental destination, as it is in “Where is the Path to God's Country?” [97], and it is an equally disappointing one. In both poems, his travels have taken him nowhere except the realization that his efforts are futile.

In this poem, the Man of our Times alternates between referring to himself in the first and third persons, inviting the reader to envision himself in the role of the Brother.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 جُعِلْتُ فِدَاكَ قَدْ طَالَ انْعِطَافِي | إِلَيْكَ وَأَنْتَ قَاسِي الْقَلْبِ جَافِي |
| 2 وَلَيْسَ أَخَاكَ مَنْ يَرُوعَاكَ كُرْهًا | وَلَا الْبَادِي بِوَصْلِكَ كَالْمُكَافِي |
| 3 فَإِنْ تَرَعِ الْأَمَانَةَ لَا أُضِيعُهَا | وَأِنْ لَا تَرَعِ يُوَحِّشْكَ انْصِرَافِي |
| 4 يَطْوُلُ عَلَيْكَ أَنْ تُلْقَى خَلِيلًا | تَطْوُلُ عَلَيْهِ أَيَّامُ التَّصَافِي |
| 5 مَخَافَةً أَنْ يَمْلَكَ بِاجْتِمَاعٍ | فَيَرْضَى مِنْ نَوَالِكَ بِالْكَفَافِ |
| 6 فَإِنْ يَكُ ذَا الصُّدُودِ صُدُودَ عَتَبٍ | وَأَنْتَ عَلَى الْمَوَدَّةِ وَالتَّوَافِي |
| 7 إِذَنْ فَتَلَاَفْنِي مِنْ قَبْلِ يَأْسٍ | يُولِّدُ مَا يَجِلُّ عَنِ التَّلَافِي |
| 8 وَإِلَّا فَاطْرَحْ وَدِّي وَأَجْمِلْ | بِتَعْرِيزٍ مِنَ التَّصْرِيحِ كَافِي |
| 9 مَتَى يَصِلُ السَّقِيمُ إِلَى شِفَاءٍ | إِذَا كَانَ الضَّنَى دَرَكَ الْمُعَافِي ⁹² |

Restore our Friendship or Release Me [40]

First Person

1 May *I* be your ransom!
 Long have *I* been tenderly inclined to you,
 While you, with your cruel heart,
 Have treated *me* harshly

⁹² Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 128.

Third Person

2 *Your brother* does not
 Harbor hatred for you
 Nor does *he* make public the affection between you,
 As though it were generosity on *his* part

First Person

3 If you nurture the trust that is between *us*,
I will never let it go,
 But if you do not,
I will go away and leave you lonely

Third Person

4 It is not your right
 To have *a faithful friend*
Whose rights have been violated
 By the days of youthful happiness

5 *One* who so fears
 Lest you grow tired of *his* company
 That *he* is content to see you
 Only when *his* situation is dire

First Person

6 If you are avoiding *me*
 To teach *me* a lesson,
 But your friendship
 And fidelity to *me* remain

7 Then grant *me* some relief
 Before *my* despair becomes so great
 As to cause suffering
 That knows no relief

8 But if not,
 Then cast aside *my* friendship once and for all,
 And be kind enough
 To set *me* free

Third Person *Hikma*

9 When can the sick patient
 Be restored to health,
 When his weakness

Is the work of the one who can heal him?

It is as though the first person lines refer to a specific situation that is taking place between the Man of our Times and the Brother, and the third person lines are hypothetical situations (rather, a hypothetical situation within a hypothetical situation, if we consider the role of the Man of our Times poems as discussed in the previous chapter) in which Ibn Dāwūd calls on the reader to make his own judgment. *Brother*, I am faithful to you despite your cruelty. *Reader*, imagine that you have a friend who gives his friendship to you unconditionally and asks for nothing in return. *Brother*, I can no longer abide your abuse, and you must choose whether to keep me as a friend. *Reader*, bear in mind that this friend has endured harsh treatment at your hand and constantly endeavors to make you happy. *Brother*, if you consider me a friend, I beseech you to treat me like one. *Reader*, does such a situation make logical sense?

Of course, if Ibn Dāwūd had not intended the public to read the Man of our Times verses, he would not have published them in *Kitāb al-Zahra*. To some extent, every verse attributed to the Man of our Times appears for the purpose of guiding the reader to be a better brother, and they are all addressed to the same (possibly) hypothetical Brother. The third-person references to the Man of our Times in “Restore our Friendship or Release Me” [40] are rather like *ḥikam* addressed to an impersonal “you.” They are also in keeping with the polite, gentlemanly tone of the poem, as a polite challenge in a *majlis* ought to begin with “May I be your ransom,” and with the Man of our Times verses, as in the last line of “Where Has our Brotherhood Gone?” [36], where he declares that it would be rude to make direct mention of the brother’s obligations to him.

This poem shifts from addressing the Brother to addressing the poet's heart and then back to addressing the Brother. The alternating address of the Brother and of the poet's heart accord with the sections of the *qaṣīda*.

- 1 أَبَى لِي الْوَفَاءُ دَوَامَ الْجَفَا وَحَلَّ الْحَنِينُ عَدِيمَ الْعَزَا
 2 قَعَدْتُ إِلَى الْوَصْلِ مُسْتَعِظاً وَقَدْ كُنْتُ قَبْلُ شَدِيدَ الْإِبَا
 3 وَإِنِّي لَفِي طَوْلِ كَتَمِ الْهَوَى وَسَتْرِيهِ عَنْكَ بِفَرْطِ الْجَفَا
 4 كَمَنْ يَنْفُخُ الْبُوقَ مُسْتَخْفِياً وَيَضْرِبُ بِالطَّبْلِ تَحْتَ الْكَسَا
 5 فَيَا قَلْبُ وَيَحْكَ كُنْ حَازِماً إِذَا تَاهَ رَامَ سَبِيلَ النَّجَا
 6 وَلَا تَكُ ذَا عَزْمَةٍ جَاهِلاً إِذَا مَا اعْتَدَى لَجَّ فِي الْإِعْتِدَا
 7 فَسَلِّ الْحُقُودَ بِرَعِي الْعُهُودِ وَدَاوِ الْجَفَاءَ بِرَعِي الْوَفَا
 8 فَأَوْجِعْ مِنْ حَمَلِ عَثَبِ الصَّفَا زَوَالَ الصَّفَاءِ وَقَطْعُ الْإِخَا
 9 فَسَامِحْ هَوَاكَ وَكُنْ مُدْنِفاً أَحَبَّ الدَّوَاءِ لِحُبِّ الشِّفَا⁹³

Make Amends, O Heart [59]

Nasīb – addressed to Brother

- 1 My fidelity persists
 Despite your cruelty,
 And I am overcome with longing
 That knows no consolation

- 2 I am still nostalgic
 For the times you visited me,
 Although, in the past,
 I was obstinate and stubborn

- 3 I continue to conceal
 The secret of our love,
 But it would be most cruel of me
 To conceal it from you

Takhalluṣ- third person analogy

- 4 Like one who blows a trumpet
 And muffles the sound
 Or strikes a drum

⁹³ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 167.

Under a cloth

Raḥīl- addressed to persona's heart

5 Shame on you, O heart!
Be strong,
And when you lose your way,
Hope for a path to deliverance

6 Do not make a decision
In ignorance,
And if you offend someone,
Do not persist in your enmity

7 Console your anger
By keeping covenants
And salve your bitterness
By remaining faithful

Arrival after *Raḥīl*- third person

8 For more grievous
Than bearing reproach for your pure happiness
Is when pure happiness perishes
And bonds of brotherhood are severed

Ḥikma- addressed to Brother and audience

9 Surrender to your love
And be, in your weakened state,
The dearest remedy
For him who seeks a cure

Lines (1)-(3) address the Brother in a sort of *nasīb* that refers to the present time but is rooted in the Man of our Times' long-established love for the Brother, rather like the *nasīb* of "Fidelity Keeps Watch over Me" [50]. It is typical of the Man of our Times' *nasīb* sections, for example, that of "I Have Misjudged Time" [85], in that, rather than asking two companions to lament with him for the days of his youth that time has taken away from him and referring to his beloved in the third person, he laments to the Brother himself about the moral virtues of their relationship that have been corrupted through misdeeds on the part of

rational human actors. While lines (3)-(4) of “Make Amends, O Heart” [59] can accord together grammatically as one sentence, line (4) marks a shift of person, namely to the third person. Furthermore, it is an analogy for the lover who conceals his love and, as Gruendler has demonstrated, `Abbāsīd audiences may have understood analogies as representing a transition between sections, an interlude between scenes in which the poet is directly involved.⁹⁴ This analogy further has the feeling of a *takhalluṣ* because the mention of musical instruments is reminiscent of a wine song. The Man of our Times then turns to his heart in line (5) as if to invite it on a solitary *raḥīl*. This *raḥīl* consists of a series of exhortations to the heart, as the Man of our Times urges it on toward the destination, and line (8) marks the end of the journey and the conclusion, much like line (8) of “I Have Misjudged Time” [85]. Like line (4), the third-person, abstract transition between the *nasīb* and the *raḥīl*, line (8) is a third-person, abstract transition between the *raḥīl* and the *ḥikma*. It is as if these third-person statements, addressed to no one in particular, make way for another addressee, rather like smelling coffee beans after inhaling one perfume and before inhaling another; the *zuraḥā*’ love perfume, after all.⁹⁵ Line (9) is ostensibly addressed to the Brother, but it contains advice for anyone who aspires to virtuous conduct in matters of brotherhood.

This poem begins and ends with general truths, with first person narration between them.

فَمَا بَعْدَ الْفِرَاقِ مِنْ اجْتِمَاعِ	1 تَمَتَّعَ مِنْ حَبِيبِكَ بِالْوَدَاعِ
وَمِنْ حَالِ ارْتِفَاعِ وَاتِّضَاعِ	2 فَكَمْ جُرِّعْتَ مِنْ هَجَرٍ وَغَدْرِ
شَرِبْتُ فَلَمْ يَضِيقْ عَنْهَا ذِرَاعِي	3 وَكَمْ كَأْسٍ أَمَرَ مِنَ الْمَنَايَا
أَشَدَّ مِنْ الْفِرَاقِ بِلَا وَدَاعِ	4 فَلَمْ أَرَ فِي الَّذِي قَاسَيْتُ شَيْئاً

⁹⁴ Gruendler, *Praise Poetry*, 207, 210.

⁹⁵ Raven, *MBD*, 30.

5 تَعَالَى اللَّهُ كُلُّ مَوَاصِلَاتٍ وَإِنْ طَالَتْ تَوُولُ إِلَى انْقِطَاعٍ⁹⁶

Enjoy Bidding your Beloved Farewell [65]

General statement- addressed to impersonal “you”

- 1 Enjoy bidding your beloved
Farewell,
For after you part,
You shall not meet again

Appeal to personal experience- addressed to individual reader

- 2 For how much unkindness and betrayal
Have you been made to swallow,
How much loss
And deprivation?

Description of personal experience- first person

- 3 How many cups
More bitter than death
I have drunk,
And never did my hand recoil from them!
- 4 In all that I have endured,
I have never seen anything
More painful
Than separation without saying farewell

Hikma – third person

- 5 Exalted be God!
All relationships,
No matter how long they last
Lead to separation

Lines (1)-(2) address the audience directly as “you.” Line (1) is an exhortation to the addressee to appreciate his time with his beloved, but this line is rather like a proverb, addressed to an impersonal “you.” Line (2) appeals to the addressee’s personal experience, in order to convince him to follow the advice in line (1). We may consider it addressed either to the Brother himself or to the reader as an individual. Lines (3)-(4) are a first person

⁹⁶ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 185.

account of what has taught the Man of our Times the lesson in line (1). The mention of “cups” in line (3) makes it a suggestion of a wine song and therefore of a *takhalluṣ*. Of course, their contents are bitter; has the Man of our Times ever had a pleasant experience with wine? Line (4) is a more general testimonial of the Man of our Times’ misadventures, without even an implied “you,” and line (5) is an unambiguous *ḥikma*.

We may understand the “you” either as an impersonal “you” referring to the audience or as an address to the same Brother addressed in the rest of the Man of our Times poems. This poem could contribute to a future *majlis* discussion about fickle friends, and it would be effective as a letter written to an unkind friend, offering admonition without specific accusations of misbehavior. When we understand the “you” as referring to the Brother who has left the Man of our Times searching for a more perfect brotherhood throughout *Kitāb al-Zahra*, it is consistent with the rest of the Man of our Times story. Line (3) in particular has a familiar tone, as the Man of our Times bases his advice on personal experience.

This poem begins by addressing fate and ends in an address to the Brother.

1 أَيَّامَ الدَّهْرِ كَمْ تَنْعَفِينَ بِي كَأَنْ لَمْ تَرَى⁹⁷ قَبْلِي مُعَنَّى وَلَا بَعْدِي
2 نَوَالاً كَرَجِعِ الطَّرْفِ أَعْجَلَهُ الْقَدَى وَضَنْاً كَضَنَّ الْجَفْنِ بِالْأَعْيُنِ الرُّمْدِ
3 فَمَنْ يَكُ مُشْتَقاً إِلَى نَجْحِ مَوْعِدٍ فَهَا أَنَا مُشْتَقٌّ إِلَى خَلْفِ الْوَعْدِ
4 فَلَا خُلْفَ إِلَّا بَعْدَ تَوْكِيدِ مَوْعِدٍ وَلَا وَعْدَ إِلَّا عَنْ صَفَاءٍ مِنَ الْوُدِّ
5 وَقَدْ قَذَفْتَ نَفْسِي أَجَلَ حُظُوظِهَا لَدَيْكَ وَفَقَدَ الْحَظَّ جُزْءٌ مِنَ الْفَقْدِ⁹⁸

Shielding My Eyes from Broken Promises [28]

Second person- addressed to days

I O days,

How you do violence to me!

⁹⁷ It would make sense to me to read this phrase as لَمْ تَرَى. Raven has not included this among his emendations, as his deal only with the prose sections of *Kitāb al-Zahra* (Raven, *MBD*, 212).

⁹⁸ Ibn Dāwūd, *KZ*, 99.

As though you have never seen anyone so aggrieved,
Nor will again

Third person- analogy

2 Generous gifts like dust
Blowing into my eye,
And meanness that relents no more
Than closed eyelids trying to keep out the ashes

First person

3 Who longs
To see a promise fulfilled?
I am one who longs
For the fruits of promises

Third person-general statement

4 Broken promises only come
After promises are certified,
And promises are only made
Out of sincere friendship

Second person-addressed to Brother

5 My soul has aimed for
The best of luck with you,
But the loss of good fortune
Is only part of what it has lost

In line (1), the Man of our Times addresses “the days of time” (أَيَّامُ الدَّهْرِ), that is to say, the vicissitudes of fate. Line (2) is perfectly ambiguous; it could mean that the days’ generosity is like dust blowing into the eye, and that their meanness is as unrelenting as eyelids protecting the eye from ashes, or it could be describing the Brother’s extremes of generosity and meanness. Line (3) is not explicitly directed to a particular interlocutor, but it contains first person self-reference. Line (4) seeks to define the terms, “promise” and “broken promise,”⁹⁹ and it contains no trace of the first or second person. We know that line (5) addresses the Brother and not the days, because the days, being a group of nonhuman

⁹⁹ Defining terms was of interest to etymologically aware `Abbāsīd intellectuals in general (S. Stetkevych, *Abū Tammām*, 235) and to Ibn Dāwūd the Ṣāhirite companion of grammarians in particular.

entities, would be regarded as grammatically feminine and singular, as they were in line (1), whereas the addressee of line (5) is grammatically masculine. The fact that the “you” is treated as a consequence of luck and not the bearer of it (this role belongs to the days, according to the poetic tradition), while luck is a third person “absent figure,” further establishes that this line is addressed to the Brother and not to the days.

Ibn Dāwūd tells us that the Man of our Times wrote the following poem to a brother after that brother failed to grant him permission to thank him, as the Man of our Times had requested in a previous poem, which appears immediately before this one in *Kitāb al-Zahra*.¹⁰⁰ It is the only time in *Kitāb al-Zahra* in which Ibn Dāwūd provides any sort of anecdote explaining the circumstances surrounding the Man of our Times poems.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 أَفِي الْعَدْلِ أَنْ تَنْهَى أَخَاكَ عَنِ الشُّكْرِ | وَيُنْأَى فَلَا يُنْهَى عَنِ النَّأْيِ وَالْهَجْرِ |
| 2 أَجَلْ أَنْ ذَا عَدْلٌ عَلَى الصَّبِّ فِي الْهَوَى | إِذَا كَانَ لَا يُنْجِيهِ مِنْهُ سِوَى الْعُدْرِ |
| 3 أَيْجُمْلُ فِي حَقِّ الْجَوَارِ دَعِ الْهَوَى | أَنْ أَبْقَى عَلَى ظَهْرِ الْعِشَاءِ إِلَى الْفَجْرِ |
| 4 أُرَاعِي نُجُومًا لَمْ أُوكَلْ بِرَعِيهَا | وَأُذَكِّي هَوَى فِي الْقَلْبِ أَذْكَى مِنَ الْجَمْرِ |
| 5 وَأَنْتَ أَخٌ لِي قَادِرٌ أَنْ تُزِيلَ مَا | أُقَاسِيهِ لَا تَدْرِي بِمَا بِي أَوْ تَدْرِي |
| 6 تَبَيْتُ خَلِيَّ الْقَلْبِ مِمَّا أَجْنُهُ | كَمَا أَنَا خَلُوفِي فِي هَوَاكَ مِنَ الصَّبْرِ |
| 7 وَإِنِّي أَدْرِي أَنَّ فِي الصَّبْرِ رَاحَةً | وَلَكِنَّ إِنْفَاقِي عَلَى الصَّبْرِ مِنْ عُمْرِي |
| 8 أَرَانِي إِذَا وَاصَلْتُ سَاءَتْكَ عِشْرَتِي | وَإِنْ غَبْتُ لَمْ أَخْطُرْ بِبَالٍ وَلَا فِكْرٍ |
| 9 أَحِينَ تَنْهَى الْوُدَّ وَاتَّصَلَ الْهَوَى | وَصِرْتَ شَرِيكِي فِي السَّرِيرَةِ وَالْجَهْرِ |
| 10 مَلَأْتُ إِخَائِي وَاطَّرَحْتُ مَوَدَّتِي | وَأَقْضَيْتَنِي حَتَّى تَحَيَّرْتُ فِي أَمْرِي ¹⁰¹ |

I Keep Watch over the Stars [39]

Question

- 1 Is it within the bounds of justice
To forbid your brother to thank you
And to cast him aside, but not to forbid him

¹⁰⁰ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 127-128.

¹⁰¹ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 128.

From rejection and exile?

Answer to question

2 Yes, for a lover, it is just
And within the bounds of love,
When nothing can save him
Except to receive pardon

Question

3 Is it good, according to the laws
Of neighborliness, let alone love,
That I should be left to spend the night
From the night prayer until the pre-dawn prayer

Impersonation of al-Khansā'

4 Keeping watch over stars
Whose pastures have not been entrusted to me,
While love is aflame in my heart,
Hotter than burning coals?

Question- return to present situation

5 You are a brother to me;
You have the power to alleviate my sorrow,
But do you, or do you not,
Know what I am enduring?

Answer to question

6 At night your heart is devoid
Of the likes of my ordeal,
Just as I, on account of your love,
Am devoid of patience

Assessment of present situation

7 I know that in patience
Lies solace,
But I have already spent
My life's savings of patience

8 Behold! When I am with you,
You find my company loathsome,
And when I am away,
No thought of me crosses your mind

Flashback

9 Behold! When friendship increased
 Until it became love,
 And you became my companion
 In private and public

10 You tired of my brotherhood
 And cast aside my friendship
 And dismissed me,
 Until I became confounded

We may consider this poem as one in which Ibn Dāwūd depicts the Man of our Times as a gentleman writing a letter in verse to a friend. Compared to the poetic characters whose roles the Man of our Times assumes in other poems, this is rather like Ibn Dāwūd attending a costume party dressed as himself. We might also consider it to be one that reveals much of Ibn Dāwūd's own personality, the ideas that went into the compilation of *Kitāb al-Zahra*, although it is impossible to know for certain what Ibn Dāwūd thought while writing this poem. He poses questions as to whether various actions qualify as justice (1), neighborliness (2), and love (2). In line (7) he recalls a saying about patience as if to remind himself to be patient; he, like the reader, is an *adīb* seeking moral refinement. Line (8) about the boundary between friendship (*wudd*) and love (*hawā*) is reminiscent of the taxonomy of love in the first chapter of *Kitāb al-Zahra*, but it does not agree with it perfectly, since according to that taxonomy, the stage of love immediately preceding *hawā* is *khulla* ("intimate friendship").¹⁰² No line in the poem keeps up a general truth devoid of personal pronouns for an entire line. Every line makes reference to the narrator, as someone in such a distraught state as he describes cannot but return frequently to speaking of his situation, and the Man of our Times truly sounds as though he has no patience left. Every time he mentions the word "brother" or

¹⁰² The word *wudd* does not appear at all in the taxonomy. The word *mawadda*, from the same root as *wudd*, does appear, but it is separated from *hawā* by two intervening states, *maḥabba* and *khulla* (Ibn Dāwūd, *KZ*, 19).

“brotherhood,” he mentions his own sorrow in the same line, as though the very mention of brothers reminds him of the Brother who broke his heart.

Regardless of whether this poem expresses Ibn Dāwūd’s own feelings or only those of the fictional Man of our Times, it does sound like a real letter written by a judge to a friend of his. Rejection of gratitude is more specific than the usual meanness in granting love, of which lovers often complain, and therefore less likely to be a purely artificial subject for a poem. The mention of neighborliness (*jiwār*) in line (3) and “company” (*‘ishra*)¹⁰³ in line (8) further serve to make the setting of the poem sound more like real life in the *majlis* and less like the idealized world of love poetry. The poem does not conform to anything resembling the *qaṣīda*. It begins in the *majlis* with the Man of our Times, the judge, weighing evidence about the definitions of terms. In line (3) he alludes to his reputation as the austere pious one among the *ẓurafā’*, spending the night not in entertainments, but sincerely trying to sleep after night prayer, but troubled by the questions raised thus far in the poem.

Line (4) marks a sudden change of scene, like a cut-away to a dream sequence in a movie. Instead of the city-dwelling judge puzzling over semantics, we see the Man of our Times in a scene from pre-Islamic poetry in the role of “pastor of the stars,” as poetic tradition held that it was the fate of lovers to keep watch over the stars at night the way shepherds keep watch over their flocks.¹⁰⁴ This trope goes back as far as al-Khansā’ (575-645),¹⁰⁵ and the first hemistich of Ibn Dāwūd’s line is almost identical to one of hers.¹⁰⁶ This

¹⁰³ This word refers to a human “relationship” in the most general sense of the term, as neighbors, colleagues, members of the same tribe, or any two people who know each other for a long period of time and have shared experiences.

¹⁰⁴ J. Stetkevych, *Zephyrs of Najd*, 148-151.

¹⁰⁵ Irwin, *Night*, 25.

¹⁰⁶ وَتَارَةً أَتَغَشَّى فُضُلَ أَطْمَارِي أُرْغَى النُّجُومَ وَمَا كُفِّتُ رَغِيَّتَهَا (J. Stetkevych, *Zephyrs of Najd*, 222).

line transports the Man of our Times into the role of wayfaring poet,¹⁰⁷ even if he only remains there for one line, before returning to his appeals to reason. The Man of our Times answers the questions in lines (1) and (5) with statements based on observation and reason, but he answers the question in line (3) by paraphrasing a famous line by al-Khansā'. This does not detract from the poem's realism, since, in the *majlis*, it would be appropriate to answer a question with a quotation from a poem.

The following poem uses second person narrative to build dramatic tension and then compounds it by quoting an earlier poem.

- | | |
|--|---|
| أَجَلُ كُلِّ مَا يَلْقَاهُ ذُو الشَّوْقِ رَائِعُ | 1 أَرَاكَ بَرَقَ فِي دُجَى اللَّيْلِ لَامِعُ |
| فَكَيْفَ إِذَا مَا لَاحَ وَالْإِلْفُ شَاسِعُ | 2 أَلَا أَنْ تَخْشَى الْبَرَقَ وَالْإِلْفَ حَاضِرُ |
| وَبَاكَرَتِ الْإِيكَ الْحَمَامُ السَّوَاغِعُ | 3 وَهَاجَتِ رِيَّاحُ زِدْنِ ذَا الشَّوْقِ صَبُوءُ |
| خَلِيلِكَ فَاسْتَعْصَتْ عَلَيْكَ الْمَدَامِعُ | 4 وَعَاشَرَتِ أَقْوَاماً فَلَمْ تَلْقَ فِيهِمْ |
| هَوَاكَ وَبَاتَ الشَّعْرُ لِلنَّاسِ وَاسِعُ | 5 وَأَصْبَحْتَ لَا تَرَوِي مِنَ الشَّعْرِ إِذْ نَأَى |
| هَلِ الْأَزْمُنُ اللَّاتِي مَضَيْنَ رَوَاغِعُ | 6 سِوَى قَوْلِ غَيْلَانَ بْنِ عُقْبَةَ نَادِمًا |
| وَأَنَّكَ لَمْ تَرْحَلْ وَالْفُكَّ رَابِعُ | 7 هُنَاكَ تَمْنَى أَنْ عَيْنَكَ لَمْ تَكُنْ |
| وَكُلُّ الَّذِي تَلْقَى إِذَا بَانَ فَاجِعُ | 8 فَكُلُّ الَّذِي تَلْقَى يَسْوُوكَ إِنْ دَنَا |
| ¹⁰⁸ هُوَ الْمَوْتُ فَاحْذَرُ غِبَّ مَا أَنْتَ صَانِعُ | 9 فَيَا وَبَيْكَ لَا تُسْرِعْ إِلَى الْبَيْنِ إِنَّهُ |

What Ghaylān ibn `Uqba Said [77]

Second person- Man of our Times addressing himself

1 Does lightning glistening
In the middle of the night frighten you?
Yes, everything that happens to a lover
Frightens him

2 Do you fear the lightning even now,
While your beloved is near?
What, then, if it flashes

¹⁰⁷ See Lyons, *Identification*, 36.

¹⁰⁸ Ibn Dāwūd, *KZ*, 232-233.

When the beloved is away?

Third person

3 Winds blew,
Increasing the lover's passion,
And the rhapsodizing doves
Hastened to the thickets

Second person- Man of our Times addressing himself

4 And you kept the company of people,
But you did not find your friend among them,
And your tears fell
In spite of you

5 You ceased to recite poetry
When your beloved was away,
Even though poetry
Is widespread among the people,

Third person-quotation from Ghaylān

6 Except what Ghaylān ibn `Uqba said,
Remorseful,
"Will the days that have gone by
Ever return?"

Second person- Man of our Times addressing himself

7 He would wish
That you were not there,
That you had not traveled,
While your beloved stayed behind

8 Everything bothers you,
Even when your beloved is near,
And when he is away,
Everything makes you miserable

Second person- addressed to the Brother

9 Woe to you!
Do not be so quick to leave your beloved,
For it equals death,
So think of the consequences of what you are doing

This poem is unique among the Man of our Times poems in that it consists almost entirely, except for line (3), which shifts to the third person, and line (6), which is the quotation from Ghaylān ibn `Uqba, of the Man of our Times addressing himself in the second person. This, even more than the first person narration which had been the norm in Arabic poetry since pre-Islamic times,¹⁰⁹ challenges the reader to empathize with the Man of our Times. After reading so many poems in which the audience hears the Man of our Times lamenting of his situation, it is as if Ibn Dāwūd hands the Man of our Times costume to the reader while he himself assumes the role of an omniscient narrator.

In lines (1), the Man of our Times directs a question to himself in the second person and then answers it in the third person, on behalf of all lovers. In line (2) he poses two more questions but does not answer them. Line (3) consists of third person narrative about “the lover” (ذا الشوق, “he of desire”), again identifying the Man of our Times with all lovers and giving the audience a panoramic view of the scene. This line foreshadows the mention of Ghaylān with its depiction of the doves as empathizing with the lover, as they and he are both frightened by the impending storm; the audience would have associated this motif with Ghaylān. Lines (4)-(5) return to the second person narrative in which the Man of our Times addresses himself with an account of past events. Line (6) could be read as a continuation of the sentence that begins in line (5), but line (6) itself contains no second person pronouns. The second hemistich of line (6) is a direct quotation (*taḍmīn*)¹¹⁰ of a hemistich by Ghaylān ibn `Uqba, and the first hemistich is little more than its attribution. Lines (7)-(8) return to the Man of our Times’ self-directed soliloquy, with line (7) speculating over what Ghaylān, the

¹⁰⁹ Lyons, *Identification*, 38.

¹¹⁰ Gruendler, *Praise Poetry*, 4.

third-person absent character, would think if he were in the Man of our Times' situation.

This is the only one of the Man of our Times poems that explicitly mentions the name of another poet, but the practice was fairly widespread in `Abbāsīd poetry, and Ghaylān was a frequently named poet. For example, Abū Tammām's famous ode on the conquest of Amorium mentions Ghaylān in the context of his love for Mayy.¹¹¹ Line (9) of "What Ghaylān ibn `Uqba Said" also employs the second person, but it is addressed to the Brother, admonishing him that all the suffering described thus far in the poem could happen as a consequence of his actions.

If poems be garments, the Man of our Times poems are garments of simple elegance, employing the flourishes of more festive costumes only sparingly. It is my hope that this chapter has provided some insight into the social context in which the Man of our Times poems were originally presented and into the subtle cues that Ibn Dāwūd sent to his audience by means of grammatical shifts and intertextual references. They may follow the fashions of the *majlis* or the desert, of dandies or ascetics, but the materials from which they are made, justice and discernment, fidelity and brotherhood, are always in style.

It is my hope that this dissertation will convince its readers of Muḥammad ibn Dāwūd's importance as a poet of the Arabic language and as a participant in the intellectual life of his times. I have also aimed to make a valuable contribution to the discussion of friendship among males in medieval Arab-Islamic society by studying a controversial figure whose name has been associated, both justly and unjustly, with diverse and contradictory views on the subject. Finally, I have presented the first ever English translations of all the poems in the first half of *Kitāb al-Zahra* that bear the "Man of our Times" attribution, in

¹¹¹ Badawi, "Antecedents," 160.

order to lend English-speaking audiences an appreciation of one of the many talented Arab authors whose work remains insufficiently appreciated in the Arab world and almost entirely unknown outside of it.

[1]
1 يَنْسَى الْهَوَى وَصَفَهُ مَنْ حَلَّ ذُرْوَتَهُ كَالْأَرْضِ يُشْغَلُ عَنْهَا مَنْ تَوَى فِيهَا¹

Indescribable Love

- 1 He who has fallen in love to the utmost
Cannot describe it,
As one who is in the midst of a country
Does not think about its features

[2]
1 مَنْ كَانَ يَشْجَى بِحُبٍّ مَا لَهُ سَبَبٌ فَإِنَّ عِنْدِي لِمَا أَشْجَى بِهِ سَبَبٌ
2 حُبِّيهِ طَبَعَ لِنَفْسِي لَا يُغَيِّرُهُ كَرُّ اللَّيَالِي وَلَا تُوْدِي بِهِ الْحَقَبُ
3 إِنْ كَانَ لَا بُدَّ لِلْعُشَّاقِ مِنْ عَطَبٍ فَفِي هَوَى مِثْلِهِ يُسْتَعْنَمُ الْعَطَبُ²

Love is a Natural Property of my Soul

- 1 He who is sad about love
Has no reason to do so,
But I have reason to be sad
About my situation
- 2 My love for him
Is a natural property of my soul;
The turning of the nights does not change it,
Nor the vicissitudes take it away
- 3 If a lover
Must inevitably perish,
Then let his perishing be nourished
In the love of one who is his like

[3]
1 فَلَا تَهْجُرْ أَخَاكَ بِغَيْرِ ذَنْبٍ فَإِنَّ الْهَجَرَ مِفْتَاحُ السُّلُوفِ
2 إِذَا كُنْتُمْ الْخَلِيلُ أَخَاهُ سِرًّا فَمَا فَضْلُ الصَّدِيقِ عَلَى الْعُدُوِّ³

¹ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 2.

² Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 15. For discussion of this poem, see page 74 above.

³ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 19. For discussion of this poem, see page 48, 60, 145-146 above.

Do Not Abandon your Brother

- 1 Do not abandon your brother
When he has done nothing wrong
For abandonment is the key
To forgetting
- 2 If a friend conceals a secret
From his brother,
Then how is a friend
Better than an enemy?

[4]

1 أيا زاعماً أَنِّي لَهُ غَيْرُ خَالِصٍ وَأَنِّي مَوْقُوفٌ عَلَى كُلِّ قَانِصٍ
2 كَمَا أَنَّكَ فَانْظُرْ فِي وَفَائِكَ خَالِصاً تَرَاهُ لِمَنْ يَهْوَاكَ أَمْ غَيْرَ خَالِصٍ
3 فَحِينَئِذٍ فَارْجِعْ بِمَا تَسْتَحِقُّهُ عَلَيَّ وَطَالِبِنِي إِذَا بِالنَّقَائِصِ
4 سَاعَرَضُ نَفْسِي يُمْنَةً وَشَأْمَةً عَلَى كُلِّ ثَاوٍ فِي الْبِلَادِ شَاخِصٍ
5 إِلَى أَنْ أَرَى شَكْلاً يَصُونُ مَوَدَّتِي فَحِينَئِذٍ أَغْلُو عَلَى كُلِّ غَائِصٍ
6 أُمِثْلِي يَخُونُ الْعَهْدَ عَنْ غَيْرِ حَادِثٍ رَمَانِي إِذَا رَبِّي بِحَتْفٍ مُعَافِصٍ⁴

Which One of us is Sincere?

- 1 You claim that I
Am not sincere with you,
That I am distracted
By every heart
- 2 Look seriously
At your fidelity,
And you will see whether you are sincere
With the one who loves you
- 3 And then return to me,
With the debt that you owe me,
And then ask me
For that which I owe you
- 4 I shall offer my soul,
Come good or ill,
To every wayfarer
Traveling through the land

- 5 Until I see one

⁴ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 21. See Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 383 for Nykl's emendation.

That safeguards my friendship,
And then I shall show him
The utmost fidelity

- 6 Would the likes of me break a covenant
Without just cause?
My Lord has afflicted me
With a terrible fate!

[5]
1 وَقَدْ كَانَ يَسْبِي الْقَلْبَ فِي كُلِّ لَيْلَةٍ
2 يَهِيمُ بِهَذَا ثُمَّ يَعْشَقُ غَيْرَهُ
3 وَكَانَ فُؤَادِي صَاحِباً قَبْلَ حُبِّكُمْ
4 فَلَمَّا دَعَا هَوَاكَ قَلْبِي أَجَابَهُ
5 رُمِيتُ بِهَجْرٍ مِنْكَ إِنْ كُنْتُ كَاذِباً
6 وَإِنْ كَانَ شَيْءٌ فِي الْبِلَادِ بِأَسْرِهَا
7 فَإِنْ شِئْتَ وَاصِلْنِي وَإِنْ شِئْتَ لَأَمْ تَصِلَ فَلَسْتُ أَرَى قَلْبِي لِعَيْرِكَ يَصْلُحُ⁵
ثَمَانُونَ بَلْ تَسْعُونَ نَبْساً وَأَرْجَحُ
وَيَسْلَاهُمْ مِنْ فَوْرِهِ حِينَ يُصْبِحُ
وَكَانَ بِحُبِّ الْخَلْقِ يَلْهُو وَيَمْرَحُ
فَلَسْتُ أَرَاهُ عَنْ وَدَادِكَ يَبْرَحُ
وَإِنْ كُنْتُ فِي الدُّنْيَا بِغَيْرِكَ أَفْرَحُ
إِذَا غَبَتَ عَنْ عَيْنِي عِنْدِي يَمْلُحُ

When Your Love Called Me

- 1 The heart is held captive
Every night,
By eighty sighs, no, ninety,
Or even more
- 2 It is ardent for one,
Then it is in love with another
And it forgets them forthwith
Come morning
- 3 My heart was carefree
Before it loved you;
In the love of all creation,
It sported and jested
- 4 When your loved called me,
My heart answered it,
And I could never imagine it
Abandoning your friendship

⁵ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 22.

5 May you reject me
If I am lying,
And if I have ever derived such joy
From anyone else

6 And if anything
In all the land,
Were beautiful to me
In your absence!

7 Visit me if you wish,
And if you prefer, do not visit me,
But I do not see my heart
Being faithful to anyone but you

[6]
1 إِذَا كَانَ اللَّقَاءُ يَزِيدُ شَوْقًا وَكَانَ فِرَاقُ مَنْ أَهْوَى يَشوقُ
2 فَلَيْسَ إِلَى السُّلُوِّ وَإِنْ تَمَادَى عِتَابُكَ فِي الْهَوَى أَبَدًا طَرِيقُ
3 وَمَنْ يَكُ ذَا سَقَامٍ إِنْ تَدَاوَى تَزَايَدَ سُقْمُهُ فَمَتَى يُفِيقُ⁶

I Have No Way to Forget You

1 If visiting the beloved
Increases a lover's ardor
Then separation from the one I love
Also increases mine

2 I have no way
To forget you,
No matter how much
You chide me for loving you

3 If, when the patient is treated,
His sickness grows worse,
Then when will he ever
Be cured?

[7]
1 إِذَا زَارَ الْحَبِيبُ أَثَارَ شَوْقًا تَفَقَّتْ مِنْ حَرَارَتِهِ الْعِظَامُ
2 وَرَوَانِي بِعَيْنَيْهِ مُدَامًا تَدِينُ بِسُكْرِ شَارِبِهَا الْمُدَامُ

⁶ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 32. For discussion of this poem, see page 60.

3 فَوَصِّلْ يَكْسِبُ الْمُشْتَقَّ سُقْمًا وَنَأْيٌ لَا يَقُومُ قِوَامُ
4 فَهَلْ يَصِلُ السَّقِيمُ إِلَى شِفَاءٍ إِذَا كَانَ الدَّوَاءُ هُوَ السَّقَامُ⁷

His Treatment Makes me Weak

- 1 When the beloved visits me,
He awakens longing
So intense that
Bones crumble from its heat
- 2 With his eyes,
He pours me wine
That lends drunkenness
To all who drink it
- 3 His visits
Bring sickness to an ardent heart,
And when he goes to leave,
I am too weak to stand and stop him
- 4 Can the sick patient
Be cured
If his remedy and his affliction
Are one and the same?

[8]
1 أَغْرَيْتَنِي بِحَيَاتِي إِذْ غَرَيْتَ بِهَا فَصَارَ طَوْلُ بَقَائِي بَعْضَ أَغْدَائِي
2 فَكَيْفَ يُنْعَشُ مَنْ أَرَادَهُ نَاعِشُهُ وَمَنْ بَرَى جِسْمَهُ رَأَى الْأَطِبَّاءَ
3 أَمْ كَيْفَ يَبْرَأَ قَلْبِي مِنْ صَبَابَتِهِ بِطِبِّكُمْ وَدَوَائِي عِنْدَكُمْ دَائِي⁸

You Gave Me Zeal for Life

- 1 You gave me zeal for life
When you became attached to me,
But the length of my life
Has since become one of my enemies
- 2 How can someone find relief
If the one who could grant it puts him through misery,
Or if he has exhausted his body,
According to the doctors,

⁷ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 32.

⁸ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 32.

- 3 How will my heart
Be free of its love for your treatment,
When the way you treat me
Is my sickness?

[9]

1 مَتَى يَا شِفَاءَ السُّقْمِ سُقْمِي مُنْقَضِي إِذَا مَا دَوَاءٌ كَانَ لِلدَّاءِ مُمْرِضِي
2 فَهَيْهَاتَ مَا هَذَا عَلَى ذَا يَقْلَعُ أَجَلٌ لَا وَلَكِنْ مُدَّةُ الْعُمَرِ تَنْقُضِي⁹

When will my Sickness Go away?

- 1 O cure of my sickness,
When will my sickness go away?
Every treatment I try
Only makes me sicker
- 2 Behold! The one
Does not drive off the other,
But rather, my whole life
Will pass me by

[10]

1 بِحُرْمَةِ هَذَا الشَّهْرِ لِمَا نَعَشْتَنِي بِعَفْوِكَ إِنِّي قَدْ عَجِزْتُ عَنِ الْعَذْرِ
2 فَلَوْ كُنْتَ تَدْرِي مَا أَلَاقي مِنَ الْهَوَى لَسَاءَكَ مَا أَلْقَى فَلَيْتَكَ لَا تَدْرِي
3 لِأَشْفَى بِمَا أَلْقَى وَتَبَقَى مُنَعَمًا خَلِيًّا وَنَارُ الشَّوْقِ تُسَعِّرُ فِي صَدْرِي¹⁰

May You Remain Innocent of my Love

- 1 By the sacredness of this month!
Why have you granted me relief
With your forgiveness?
I have behaved unforgivably!
- 2 If you knew
What love I am suffering,

⁹ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 32. For discussion of this poem, see page 31 above.

¹⁰ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 39. This poem is attributed in Nykl's edition to بعض أهل هذا الزمان, but I consider it to be Ibn Dāwūd's composition, as the chapter in which it appears contains no other poems attributed to the Man of our Times.

My suffering would hurt you;
Would that you did not know!

- 3 That I may suffer with my ordeal,
And you may remain in your comfort, carefree
While the fire of passion
Runs wild in my heart

[11]
1 مَنْ لِي بِعَظْفٍ أَخٍ خَلَّى الْإِخَاءَ وَرَا
2 حَتَّى يُصَيِّرَهَا إِنْ خَيْرَتْ نَلْفًا
3 أَغْرَيْتَ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَ الدَّهْرِ فَاحْتَشَدْتُ
4 حَتَّى إِذَا أَنَسْتُ نَفْسِي بِأَنَّكَ لِي
5 أَمَكْنَتْ مِنِّي اللَّيَالِي فَانْتَصَفَنَ وَمَنْ
6 يَا قَلْبُ وَصْفُكَ يُغْرِي مَنْ كَلَفْتَ بِهِ
7 إِنْ كُنْتَ لَمْ تَشْجَ بِالْكُثْمَانِ فَاشْجَ بِهِ
8 قُلْ لِلَّيَالِي مَلَكْتَ الْحُكْمَ فَاحْتَكِمِي
ظَهَرَ وَمِنْ تَمَّ مَارَى الرُّوحَ فِي اللَّطْفِ
وَفُرْقَةٍ مِنْهُ لَمْ تَخْتَرْ سِوَى النَّلْفِ
بِالْخُطُوبِ احْتِشَادَ الْمَحْنَقِ الْأَسْفِ
وَاسْتَعَذَّبْتُ طَيْبَ ذَاكَ الْمَشْرَبِ الْأَنْفِ
يُظْلَمُ وَيُمْكِنُ مِنَ الْإِنْصَافِ يَنْتَصِفُ
فَاكْمِدْ بِكُثْمَانٍ مَا تَلْقَى وَلَا تَصِفِ
أَوْ كُنْتَ لَمْ تَعْتَرِفْ بِالصَّرْمِ فَاعْتَرِفِ
وَالْمَصَائِبِ قَدْ مَكَّنْتَ فَانْتَصِفِي¹¹

Make Peace with Fate

- 1 The one I regarded tenderly as a brother,
Who left our brotherhood behind
And then doubted
My soul's kindness
- 2 Until, if it was given the choice
Between its own destruction
Or being separated from you,
It would certainly choose destruction
- 3 You have caused me to take time as a rival,
So that misfortunes
Now flock to me
Stirring up anguish and regret
- 4 Until my soul became attached
To having you for myself
And it found sweet
The fragrance of that drink

¹¹ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 49.

- 5 You allowed me to make amends with the nights
And they righted their wrongs,
And if a victim of injustice is given the chance,
Let him make amends
- 6 O heart, when you speak of it
It only increases your longing for the one you love,
So bear the sorrow of being silent
About your ordeal, and speak not of it
- 7 If you are not sad about concealing the secret,
Then be sad,
And if you have not confessed
That the one you love has abandoned you, then confess
- 8 Say to the nights: "The power to judge is yours,
So be judicious,"
And to the calamities of fate:
"You have the power, so make things right."

[12]

1 يَا مُنِيَّةَ الْقَلْبِ لَوْ آمَالُهُ انْفَسَحَتْ	وَحَظَّ نَفْسِي مِنْ دِينِي وَدُنْيَايَ
2 قُلْ لِي تَنَاسَيْتَ أَمْ أُنْسَيْتَ أَلْفَتْنَا	أَيَّامَ رَأَيْكَ فِينَا غَيْرُ ذَا الرَّائِي
3 كَانَتْ لِقَلْبِي أَهْوَاءٌ مُفَرِّقَةٌ	فَاسْتَجْمَعَتْ مُذْ رَأَتْكَ الْعَيْنُ أَهْوَائِي
4 فَصَارَ يَحْسُدُنِي مَنْ كُنْتُ أَحْسَدُهُ	وَصِرْتُ مَوْلَى الْوَرَى مُذْ صِرْتُ مَوْلَايَ
5 حَتَّى إِذَا اسْتَيْأَسَ الْحُسَادُ مِنْ دَرْكِي	وَقَلَّ أَعْدَائِي مُذْ قَلَلْتُ أَكْفَائِي
6 حَمَيْتَ طَعْمَ الْكَرَى عَيْنِي فَاهْتَجَرَا	فَصَارَ طَيْبُ الْكَرَى مِنْ بَعْضِ أَعْدَائِي
7 مَنْ خَانَ هَانَ وَقَلْبِي رَانْدٌ أَبَدًا	مَيْلًا إِلَيْكَ عَلَى هَجْرِي وَإِقْصَائِي
8 لَا بُدَّ لِي مِنْكَ فَاصْنَعْ مَا بَدَا لَكَ بِي	فَقَدْ قَدِرْتَ عَلَى قَتْلِي وَإِحْيَائِي ¹²

My Heart's Wish

- 1 My heart wishes for you,
If I may have such great hopes,
You are my soul's good fortune,
In this world and the next
- 2 Tell me, are you pretending to forget,

¹² Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 50.

Or have you really forgotten,
The days when your opinion of me
Was not formed judiciously?

3 My heart's desires
Were scattered,
But my desires were gathered into one
As soon as I saw you

4 The ones I had once envied
Came to envy me,
And I became a master of men
As soon as you became my master

5 When the envious ones despair
That they will ever catch me,
And my enemies are few,
Since you have considered few to be my equals

6 You have safeguarded my eyes against sleep,
And it has eluded me,
And the sweetness of sleep
Has become one of my enemies

7 To betray is to be disgraced,
And my heart forever persists
In its inclination to you,
Though you avoid me and reject me

8 I cannot stay away from you,
So treat me as you see fit,
For yours is the power
To kill me or keep me alive

وَجَاوَزَ الشَّوْقُ بِي حَدَّ الَّذِي أَصِفُ
وَأَنْتَ عَنِّي رَخِيُّ الْبَالِ مُنْخَرِفُ
فَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا لِي عَنْكَ مُنْصَرِفُ
أَلَمْ يَكُنْ كَمَدِي أَنْ لَسْتُ أَنْتَصِفُ
طَوْلُ الْحَنِينِ وَعَيْنُ دَمْعِهَا يَكْفُ
فَالآنَ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يُغْرَى بِي التَّلَفُ

[13]
1 يَا مَتَّ قَبْلَكَ طَالَ الْحُزْنَ وَالْأَسْفُ
2 قَلْبِي إِلَيْكَ مَعَ الْهَجْرَانِ مُنْعَطِفُ
3 فَإِنْ تَكُنْ عَنْ إِخَائِي الْيَوْمَ مُنْصَرِفاً
4 هَبْنِي اعْتَرَفْتُ بِأَنِّي لَسْتُ ذَا شَغَفٍ
5 كَمْ قَدْ كَذَبْتُ عَلَى قَلْبِي فَكَذَّبَنِي
6 إِنْ كُنْتَ يَوْمًا مُقِيلِي زَلَّةً سَلَفْتُ

وَلَيْسَ فِي قَلِيلِهَا مِنْ شُكْرِهَا خَلْفٌ
إِنَّ النَّدْلَ فِي حُكْمِ الْهَوَى شَرَفٌ
وَلَا أَقُولُ لَشَيْءٍ قُلْتُهُ سَرَفٌ¹³

7 اللَّهُ اللَّهُ فِي نَفْسِي فَقَدْ عَطِبْتُ
8 قَدْ ذَلَّلَ الشَّوْقُ قَلْبِي وَهُوَ مُعْتَرِفٌ
9 فَأَعْمَلُ بِرَأْيِكَ لَا أَدْعُوكَ مُعْتَدِيًا

My Heart is Humble

- 1 May I die before you!
Long have I remained in sadness and grief,
And my longing is greater
Than I can describe
- 2 My heart inclines to you,
Even though you have abandoned me,
But you hard-heartedly
Turn away
- 3 If today you turn away
From our brotherhood,
God knows,
I will never turn away from you
- 4 Suppose I were to claim
That I am not entirely delirious with passion.
Is not the reason for my sadness
That my love for you is not merely half-hearted?
- 5 How many times I have lied to my heart!
But my lies were exposed
By never-ending longing
And eyes that incessantly shed tears
- 6 If you forgive me
For wrongs I committed in the past
Then do it now,
Before death is drawn to me
- 7 By God! By God!
My soul has become exhausted,
And it has no more thanks
Left to give
- 8 Longing has humbled my heart,
And it confesses:

¹³ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 58-59. For discussion of this poem, see pages 60, 146-148 of this dissertation.

To be humbled for the sake of love
Is an honor

- 9 Do as you see fit;
I shall not address you in enmity,
And I shall not exaggerate
In anything I say

[14]
1 خَلِيلِي أَغْرَانِي مِنَ الشَّوْقِ وَالْهَوَىٰ وَأَخْلَطُ مِنْ مَاءِ الشُّرْبِ بِالْخَمْرِ
2 فَصَدْرٌ عَلَى صَدْرٍ وَنَحْرٌ عَلَى نَحْرٍ وَخَدٌّ عَلَى خَدٍّ وَتَغْرٌ عَلَى تَغْرٍ
3 يَظِلُّ حَسَوْدُ الْقَوْمِ فِينَا مُفَكِّراً بِخَيْلٍ مِنَ الْمَعْشُوقِ مِنَّا وَلَا يَدْرِي¹⁴

Lovers Both, Beloved Both

- 1 My two friends,
He has made me cleave to him
In longing and love
And mix the water I drink with wine
- 2 Chest to chest,
Clavicle to clavicle,
Cheek to cheek,
Mouth to mouth
- 3 An envious one lingers,
Thinking, speculating,
Which of us is the beloved,
But he knows not.

[15]
1 أَمْوَلَايَ لَمْ تَبْعُدْ عَلَيْكَ مَطَالِبِي وَلَمْ تَخْشَ إِنْ فَكَّرْتَ فِي فَوَاتِي
2 أَمْوَلَايَ لَا أَيْنَ الْمَقَرُّ مِنَ الْهَوَىٰ فَقُلْ لِي لِمَا بَادَرْتَ بِالنِّقَمَاتِ
3 أَلَنْسَيْتَ عَهْدَيْنَا بِوَادٍ مُعْظَمٍ وَلَيْسَ بِذِي زَرْعٍ سِوَى الْحَسَنَاتِ
4 وَأَنْتَ حَرَامٌ حُرْمَةُ الْحَجِّ وَالْهَوَىٰ عَلَى الْعَيْنِ إِلَّا هَفْوَةَ اللَّحْظَاتِ
5 أَخُنْتُكَ كَانَ الْعَفْوُ أَوْلَىٰ بِذِي الْهَوَىٰ أَمْ ابْلِغْتَ زوراً لِمَ شَفِيتَ وَشَاتِي¹⁵

Forgiveness is Most Becoming

- 1 My lord, have I not refrained

¹⁴ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 65. For discussion of this poem, see pages 120-125 above.

¹⁵ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 67.

From making demands of you,
And when you think about me,
Do you not fear lest I die?

2 My lord, where is my refuge
From love?
Tell me,
Why are you so quick to spite me?

3 Have you forgotten the promises we made,
In a magnificent valley,
Where only good things
Are cultivated,

4 And are you off-limits
Like the sacred pilgrimage,
As love is only allowed
Stolen glances?

5 Have I betrayed you?
Forgiveness is most becoming of one in love
Or have you told lies?
Why have you given strength to my detractors?

[16]

1 لا تُلْزِمَنِي فِي رَعِي الْهَوَى سَرَفًا	وَمَا أُوقِيهِ إِلَّا دُونَ مَا يَجِبُ
2 لَوْ كُنْتُ شَاهِدَنَا وَالِدَارُ جَامِعَةً	وَالشَّمْلُ مُلْتَنِمٌ وَالْوُدُّ مُقْتَرِبٌ
3 لَا بَلَّ مُسَاوَاةٍ وَدِّي وَدَّهَ بِهِوًى	كَأَنَّهُ نَسَبَ بَلَّ دُونَهُ نَسَبٌ
4 مُسْتَأْنِسِينَ بِمَا تُخْفِي ضَمَائِرُنَا	عَلَى الْعَفَافِ وَرَعِي الْوُدَّ نَصْطَحِبُ
5 فَإِنْ مَحَا الشَّوْقُ فَرَطُ الْأَنْسِ أَوْ حَشَّنَا أَنْسُ الْعَوَازِلِ إِنْ جَدَّوَا وَإِنْ لَعِبُوا	أَنْ لَا يَزُولَ هَوَانَا مُشْفِقٌ حَدِبُ
6 فَمَا نُدَافِعُ بِالْهَجْرَانِ فَهَوَ عَلَى	وَرُتْبَةٍ قَصَّرَتْ عَنْ شَأْوِهَا الرُّتْبُ
7 عَايَنْتَ مَنَزِلَةً فِي الظَّرْفِ عَالِيَةً	سَوْءُ الظُّنُونِ وَأَنْ تَغْتَالَهَا الرِّيبُ ¹⁶
8 فِي عِفَّةٍ نَتَحَامَى أَنْ يُلَمَّ بِهَا	

Chastely We Guard our Love

1 Do not cause me
To safeguard my love excessively,
For I will only give it more
Than what it warrants

¹⁶ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 71.

- 2 If you had seen us
 Together in the encampment,
 Zealously guarding our togetherness,
 Our friendship close at hand
- 3 His friendship and love
 Were equal to mine,
 As though we were two kinsmen
 Surrounded by our kin
- 4 We took as fellows
 The secrets of our hearts,
 Remaining chaste and cultivating friendship
 When we were together
- 5 Lest too much togetherness
 Extinguish our longing,
 Or lest we be kept apart by those who would scorn us
 Seriously or in jest
- 6 We guard against separation;
 Nevertheless,
 Our love could not be obliterated
 By well-meaning interlopers
- 7 You have seen a high level
 Of refinement,
 A level
 Of which all others fall short
- 8 In our chastity,
 We guard lest
 Speculations gather around it
 And suspicions destroy it

[17]

1 يَا مُتُّ قَبْلَكَ قَدْ وَاللَّهِ بَرَّحَ بِي شَوْقِي إِلَيْكَ فَهَلْ لِي فِيكَ مِنْ حَظٍّ

2 قَلْبِي يَغَارُ عَلَى عَيْنِي إِذَا نَظَرْتُ بُقْيَا عَلَيْكَ فَمَا¹⁷ أُرَوِّى مِنَ اللَّحَظِ¹⁸

¹⁷See Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 387 for Nykl's emendation.

¹⁸Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 72.

My Heart is Jealous of my Eye

1 May I die before you!
By God! I am suffering
From longing for you,
And will I have any luck with you?

2 My heart is jealous of my eye
When it looks at you
For a long time,
And I am refreshed by your glances

[18]
1 جُعِلْتُ فِدَاكَ إِن صَلَّحْتُ فِدَاءَ لِنَفْسِكَ نَفْسٌ مِثْلِي أَوْ وَفَاءَ
2 وَكَيْفَ يَجُوزُ أَنْ تُفْدِيكَ نَفْسِي وَلَيْسَ مَحَلُّ نَفْسَيْنَا سَوَاءً¹⁹

How Can I be your Ransom?

1 May I be your ransom,
If the likes of my soul is a sufficient ransom
For your soul,
Or my fidelity!

2 How can my soul
Possibly be your ransom,
If the stations of my soul and yours
Are not the same?

[19]
1 نَظَرْتُ إِلَيْهِ نَظْرَةَ مُسْتَهَامٍ فَأَثَّرَ نَاضِرِي فِي وَجْنَتَيْهِ
2 فَلَا حَظَّنِي وَقَدْ أَثْبَتُ وَجْدًا فَأَثَّرَ فِي الْفُؤَادِ بِمُقْلَتَيْهِ²⁰

I Beheld him Ardently

1 I beheld him
With the ardor of a lover,
And my gaze left an impression
On his cheeks

2 He noticed me,
And I was certain of my passion,

¹⁹ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 72.

²⁰ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 81.

And he left an impression on my heart
With his eyes

- [20]
- 1 أَيْأَ أَمَلِي هَلْ فِي وَفَائِكَ مَطْمَعٌ فَأُطْلِبُهُ أَمْ قَدْ تَنَاهَتْ أَوَاخِرُهُ
2 فَإِنْ تَأْكُ مَا قَدْ خِفْتَ حَقًّا فَلَا تَعُدْ فَلَنْ يَسْتَوِيَ مَوْفِي الْفُؤَادِ وَغَادِرُهُ²¹
3 وَإِلَّا فَلَا تَعْتَبْ عَلَيَّ فَإِنَّهُ إِذَا ظَنَّ قَلْبُ الْمَرْءِ سَاءَتْ خَوَاطِرُهُ²²

Do Not Follow Baseless Suspicion

- 1 O my hope,
Is your fidelity within reach,
So that I may seek it out,
Or is it beyond my grasp?
- 2 If that which you fear is really the case,
Then do not do it again,
For one whose heart is faithful
Is not equal to a treacherous one
- 3 If it is not,
Then do not chide me,
For if a man allows his heart to speculate,
Then he will think bad thoughts

- [21]
- 1 قَسَمْتُ عَلَيْكَ الدَّهْرَ نِصْفًا نَعْتُبَا لِفِعْلِكَ فِي الْمَاضِي وَنِصْفًا تَرْقُبَا
2 إِذَا اسْتَيْقَنْتَ نَفْسِي بِأَنْ لَسْتُ عَادِرًا لِي الظَّنَّ وَالْإِشْفَاقَ إِلَّا تَرَيُّبَا
3 فَقَدْ وَاللَّذِي لَوْ شَاءَ غَلَبَ وَاحِدًا فَرَوَّحَ قَلْبًا آمِنًا مُتَهَيِّبَا
4 شَكَّكَتُ فَلَا أَدْرِي لِفَرْطِ مَوَدَّتِي يَبْرِيكَ أَمْرَضَنِي يُرِينِيكَ مُذْنِبَا
5 وَلَوْ كَانَ قَصْدِي مِنْكَ وَصَلًا أَنَالُهُ لَقَدْ كُنْتُ لِي أُنْدَى جَنَابًا وَأَخْصَبَا
6 لَوْ أَدْنُو لَأَقْلَلْتُ الْعِتَابَ وَلَمْ أَرِدْ عَلَى أَنْ تَرَانِي فِي امْتِدَاحِكَ مُطْنِبَا
7 وَلَكِنْ بِي ظَنًّا أَبَى أَنْ يُقِيمَنِي لَدَيْكَ بِمَا لَا أَرْضِيهِ مُصَوَّبَا²³

I have Divided Time

- 1 I have divided time in two halves,
One for chiding you

²¹ Nykl's edition has عاذره ("one who grants pardon"), but غادر ("a traitor") is preferable, even though it is not listed among the emendations.

²² Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 82. For discussion of this poem, see page 53 above.

²³ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 82-83.

About what you have done,
And one for anticipation

2 If my soul is certain
That you will not forgive me
For speculating about you
And being wary and reluctant

3 By the One who, if He so wished
Could grant victory to anyone,
And could lend comfort
To a sound, reverent heart

4 I have come to doubt, and I do not know,
Because my love is so great;
When you run out of ways to cause me to suffer,
Will it still seem to you that I am at fault?

5 Even if all I wanted with you
Was to gain your affection,
You would be most generous in my eyes,
Whether you avoid me or keep me company

6 If I were near you,
I would chide you only a little, not more,
Nonetheless, you will see me
Praising you exceedingly

7 But I have speculations,
And I only hope that things about you
With which I would not be content
Are not substantiated

[22]
1 لَقَدْ جَمَعْتَ أَهْوَايَ بَعْدَ شَتَاتِهَا صِفَاتُكَ فَانْقَادَ الْهَوَى لَكَ أَجْمَعُ
2 سِوَى خِصْلَةٍ ذِكْرِي رَهِينٌ بِذِكْرِهَا فَقَلْبِي مِنْهَا مَا حَيِيْتُ مُرَوَّعُ
3 وَحَاشَاكَ مِنْهَا غَيْرَ أَنَّ أَخَا الْهَوَى بِذِكْرِ الَّذِي يَخْشَى مِنَ الْعَدْرِ مَوْلَعٌ²⁴

All My Love was Led to You

1 Your qualities have gathered my wishes together
After they had been scattered,

²⁴ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 83.

And my love was led to you,
Whole

- 2 Except one quality
Which holds my mind captive
And my heart remains in fear of it,
As long as I live
- 3 May you stay away from it,
Except that a man in love
Feels passion for the very thought of the one
Whose betrayal he fears

[23]
1 إِذَا ازْدَادَ رَعِيًّا لِلْهَوَى زِدْتُهُ هَوًى وَضَنْيَ بِهِ مِقْدَارَ هَذَيْنِ يَضْعُفُ
2 قَفْوَهُ أَمْنِي زَائِدٌ فِي تَخَوُّفِي وَلَا حَظَّ لِي فِي أَنْ يَزُولَ التَّخَوُّفُ
3 فَلَا يَنْشَاغِلُ عَادِلٌ بِنَصِيحَتِي فَمَنْ لِي عَلَى إِرْشَادِهِ لَا يُوقِفُ
4 وَلَا يَرِثُ لِي فِي ذِلَّتِي وَتَوَاضُعِي فَإِنِّي بِهَذَا الذِّلِّ أَرْهَى وَأَشْرَفُ²⁵

The More he Reassures Me, the More I Fear

- 1 The more faithful he is to our love,
The more I love him,
And I keep him to myself
Twice as much as both of these
- 2 The more he reassures me,
The more I fear,
And I have no such luck
That my fear should abate
- 3 May no detractor trouble himself
By giving me advice,
For the likes of me
Would pay no heed to his advice
- 4 Let him mourn not for me
In my lowliness and humility,
For in this lowly state,
I am the more noble and illustrious

²⁵ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 86. For discussion of this poem, see page 60 above.

[24]

1 بَدَأْتَ بِمَوْعِدٍ وَرَجَعْتَ عَنْهُ	وَكُنْتُ أَعْدُ وَعَدَاكَ مِنْ عَطَائِكَ
2 وَلَمْ تَزَلِ الْخَوَاطِرُ عَنْكَ تُنْبِي	بِأَنَّكَ لَا تَدُومُ عَلَى وَفَائِكَ
3 فَلَوْ كَانَتْ عُهُودُكَ لَمْ تُغَيَّرْ	وَلَمْ يَبْدُ التَّكَدُّرُ فِي صَفَائِكَ
4 وَفَيْتَ بِمَا ابْتَدَأْتَ بِهِ وَلَكِنْ	أَظُنُّكَ قَدْ نَدِمْتَ عَلَى ابْتِدَائِكَ
5 فَإِنْ تَكُ قَدْ نَدِمْتَ عَلَى اصْطِفَائِي	فَإِنِّي مَا نَدِمْتُ عَلَى اصْطِفَائِكَ
6 وَإِنْ تَكُ لَمْ تَخُنْ فَلَايَ شَيْءٍ	تَغَيَّرَ مَا عَهِدْنَا مِنْ إِخَائِكَ ²⁶

I Will Never Regret Choosing You

- 1 You started out with a promise,
But you turned your back on it,
And I used you consider your promises
A gift from you

- 2 My thoughts tell me
Even now
That you do not remain true
To your promises

- 3 If your covenants
Had not been altered
And weariness did not appear
Amidst your pure friendship

- 4 You would have stayed faithful
To what you established in the beginning,
But I suspect
That you regret your previous actions

- 5 If you have come to regret
Choosing me,
I have never regretted
Choosing you

- 6 If you have not betrayed me,
Then why
Have you turned away from
The brotherhood we promised?

²⁶ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 88.

[25]

- 1 أَمِنْتُ عَلَيْكَ صَرْفَ الدَّهْرِ حَتَّى أَنَاخَ بِغَدْرِهِ مَا لَمْ أَحَازِرْ
 2 وَجَسَّرَنِي وَفَاؤُكَ لِي إِلَى أَنْ أَذَاقَنِي الرَّدَى غِبُّ التَّجَاسُرْ
 3 فَجِئْتُكَ شَاكِرًا وَأَقْلُ حَقِّي إِذَا أَحْسَنْتَ أَنْ أَلْقَاكَ عَازِرْ
 4 وَحَسْبُكَ رُتْبَةُ لَكَ مِنْ صَدِيقٍ أَتَاكَ بِعَاتِبٍ فِي زِيٍّ شَاكِرٍ²⁷

Chastisement Disguised as Gratitude

- 1 I entrusted the fickleness of time
 With you,
 But it brought betrayal
 Beyond my worst fears
- 2 Your fidelity gave me strength;
 But nevertheless,
 The consequences of my boldness
 Made me taste misery
- 3 I came to you graciously,
 And the least of my rights,
 If you behave uprightly,
 Is to receive your forgiveness
- 4 It is sufficient for you
 That a friend should come to you
 With chastisement
 Disguised as gratitude

[26]

- 1 عَلَامٌ قَدْ أَذَبْتَ الْقَلْبَ شَوْقًا تَصُدُّ وَقَدْ عَزَمْتَ عَلَى ارْتِحَالِ
 2 وَلَمْ أَكُ قَبْلَ ذَلِكَ أَتَيْتُ ذَنْبًا سِوَى أَنِّي نَهَيْتُكَ عَنْ خِصَالِ
 3 أَرَدْتُ بِذَلِكَ أَنْ تُدْعَى رَشِيدًا إِذَا افْتَضَحَ الْمَعَارِفُ بِالْمَقَالِ
 4 وَالْأَلَا تُبْتَكَلِي بِدَنِيءِ قَوْمٍ فَيَكْثُرَ فِيكَ مِنْ قِيلٍ وَقَالَ
 5 فَيَسْمَعَهُ الْمُصَادِقُ وَالْمُعَادِي فَتَنْدَمَ عِنْدَ مُفْتَخِرِ الرِّجَالِ
 6 وَمَا كُلُّ يُصَدِّقُ فِيكَ قَوْلِي فَكُنْتَ تَكُونُ فَوْقَ ذُرَى الْمَعَالِي
 7 فَصُنْ نَفْسًا عَلَيَّ أَعَزَّ مِنِّي وَقَاكَ السُّوءَ أَهْلِي ثُمَّ مَالِي
 8 وَأَيُّقِنُ أَنَّنِي لَمْ أَتِ ذَنْبًا وَدُونَكَ مَا هُوَ مِنْ الْفَعَالِ
 9 تَجِدُنِي رَاضِيًا بِهَوَاكَ طَوْعًا لِأَمْرِكَ فِي الْحَرَامِ وَالْحَلَالِ

²⁷ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 88.

10 فَوَاللَّهِ الْعَظِيمِ لَوْ أَنَّ قَلْبِي
عَصَاكَ هَمَمْتُ عَنْهُ بِإِنْتِقَالِ
11 أَقْلُنِي تَذَخَّرُ فِي الْحَشْرِ أَجْرًا
إِذَا احتَاجَ الْمُقِيلُ إِلَى الْمُقَالِ²⁸

I Only Meant to Give you Advice

- 1 Why, since you have made
My heart melt with desire,
Do you stay away,
And why have you decided to leave?
- 2 Before that time,
I had done nothing wrong,
Except that I forbade you
From rejecting me
- 3 I only wanted you
To be led by good guidance,
When wisdom reached you
Through my words
- 4 I did not want you to be vexed
By ignoble men,
Lest rumors and hearsay about you
Proliferate
- 5 Lest friend and foe
Hear them,
And you feel regret
In the presence of illustrious men
- 6 Not everyone believes
What I say about you,
That you ought to enjoy
The highest reputation
- 7 So safeguard a soul
Dearer to me than my own;
For the sake of sparing you from harm,
I offer my wealth and my family
- 8 And be certain
That I have done nothing wrong
And I have loved no one

²⁸ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 89.

Besides you

9 And you shall find me
Content with your love
Obedient to your command
To do lawful or unlawful things

10 By God Almighty!
If my heart
Disobeyed you,
I would want to distance myself from it

11 Forgive me;
And on the Day of Resurrection you will receive blessing,
When a person in need of rest
Finds a resting place

[27]
1 لَيْسَ كَانَ الرَّقِيبُ بَلَاءَ قَوْمٍ فَمَا عِنْدِي أَجَلٌ مِنْ رَقِيبٍ
2 حِجَابُ الْإِلْفِ أَيْسَرُ مِنْ نَوَاهُ وَهَجْرُ الْخَلِّ خَيْرٌ لِلْأَدِيبِ
3 وَلَا وَأَبْيَكُ مَا عَانَيْتُ شَيْئاً أَشَدَّ مِنَ الْفِرَاقِ عَلَى الْقُلُوبِ²⁹

Worse Than a Spy

1 If a spy
Is the scourge of men,
I have something
Worse than a spy

2 The concealment of the beloved
Is easier to bear than abandonment on his part,
And staying away from a dear friend
Is best for a man of letters

3 By your father!
I have never seen anything
More grievous to hearts
Than separation

[28]

²⁹ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 93.

1 أَلَيَّامِ الدَّهْرِ كَمْ تَتَعَفِينَ بِي كَأَنَّ لَمْ تَرَى³⁰ قَبْلِي مُعَنِّي وَلَا بَعْدِي
2 نَوَالاً كَرَجَعِ الطَّرْفِ أَعْجَلُهُ الْقَدَى وَضَنْناً كَضَنْ الْجَفْنِ بِالْأَعْيُنِ الرُّمْدِ
3 فَمَنْ يَكُ مُشْتَقِاً إِلَى نَجْحِ مَوْعِدٍ فَهِيَ أَنَا مُشْتَقِةٌ إِلَى خَلْفِ الْوَعْدِ
4 فَلَا خُلْفَ إِلَّا بَعْدَ تَوْكِيدِ مَوْعِدٍ وَلَا وَعْدَ إِلَّا عَنْ صَفَاءِ مِنَ الْوُدِّ
5 وَقَدْ قَذَفْتُ نَفْسِي أَجَلَ حُظُوظِهَا لَدَيْكَ وَفَقَدْتُ الْحِظَّ جُزْءً مِنَ الْفَقْدِ³¹

Shielding My Eyes from Broken Promises

- 1 O days,
How you do violence to me!
As though you have never before seen anyone so aggrieved,
Nor will again
- 2 Generous gifts like dust
Blowing into my eye,
And meanness that relents no more
Than closed eyelids trying to keep out the ashes
- 3 Who longs
To see a promise fulfilled?
Here I am, longing
For the fruits of promises
- 4 Broken promises only come
After promises are certified,
And promises are only made
Out of sincere friendship
- 5 My soul has aimed for
The best of luck with you,
But the loss of good fortune
Is only part of what it has lost

[29]
1 فَإِنْ تَكُنِ الْقُلُوبُ إِذَنْ تُجَازَى وَأَسْلُكَ فِي الْهَوَى سَنَناً سَوِيّاً
2 فَمَا لِي أَهْوَى الثَّقَلَيْنِ جَمْعاً عَلَيْكَ وَأَنْتَ أَكْرَمُهُمْ عَلَيَّ
3 عَمَرْتُ سِنِينَ أَسْتَحْفِي التَّصَافِي وَلَا أَرْضَى مِنَ الْوَصْلِ الرِّضْيَا
4 فَلَمْ تُقْلِعْ صُرُوفُ الدَّهْرِ حَتَّى حُبِسْتُ عَنْ أَنْ أَجِي أَوْ أَنْ أُحْيَا

³⁰ See Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 388 for Nykl's emendation.

³¹ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 99. For discussion of this poem, see pages 174-175 above.

فَأَنْتَ أَحَبُّ مَخْلُوقٍ إِلَيَّ³²

5 تَبَغَّضَ مَا اسْتَطَعْتَ وَعِشْ سَلِيمًا

The Noblest of Men

- 1 If hearts
Are rewarded,
And I follow an even course
In love,
- 2 Then why am I
The most inconsequential of all men and jinn
In your sight,
But you are the noblest of them to me?
- 3 I have spent years
Pleading for pure love,
And I have not been granted the satisfaction
Of visiting you
- 4 But the vicissitudes of time
Have not relented
Until I can no longer come to you
Now receive your greetings
- 5 Hate me as much as you can,
But be well,
For you are the dearest to me
Of all creatures

[30]
1 أَمَرْتُ إِلَّا أَنْتَ كَيْ هَوَى
2 فَلَسْتُ أَعْدُو حَدَّ مَا قُلْتَهُ
وَفِعَلُ مَا تَهْوَاهُ مَفْرُوضُ
حَسْبِي مِنَ التَّصْرِيحِ تَعْرِيزُ³³

I Shall Obey You

- 1 You have commanded me
Not to complain of love,
And it is imperative
That I do as you like
- 2 But I will not go beyond the bounds
Of what you have said;

³² Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 102.

³³ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 103.

Making my obedience apparent
Is enough of a declaration

- [31]
- | | | |
|----|---|--|
| 1 | أَلَا تَكُنْ فِي الْهَوَىٰ أَرَوَيْتَ مِنْ ظَمَأٍ | وَلَا فَكَكَّتْ مِنَ الْأَغْلَالِ مَأْسُورًا |
| 2 | لَقَدْ ذَلَّلْتُ عَلَىٰ مَحْضِ الْهَوَىٰ لَكَ لَا | لِأَجْلِ مَا كَانَ مَرْجُوءًا وَمَذْخُورًا |
| 3 | فَحَسَبُ نَفْسِي عَنَّا عِلْمِي بِمَوْضِعِهَا مِنْ | الْهَوَىٰ وَحَسَبُ أَنْ كُنْتُ مَعْدُورًا |
| 4 | فَأَيْنَ أَذْهَبُ وَمَاذَا أُرِيدُ مِنْ أَل | أَيَّامٍ أُرَوِّي عَلَيْهَا الْإِفْكَ وَالزُّورَا |
| 5 | وَأَنْتَ ذَاكَ وَقَلْبِي ذَا الَّذِي مَلَكَتْ | هَوَاهُ نَفْسُكَ إِكْرَاهًا وَتَخْيِيرًا ³⁴ |
| 6 | لَمْ يَهْوِكَ الْقَلْبُ إِنْ أَظْهَرْتَ أَنْتَ لَهُ | بِرًّا فَيَسْلَاكَ إِذْ أَظْهَرْتَ تَقْصِيرَا |
| 7 | وَلَمْ يَكُنْ بِاخْتِيَارٍ لِي فَأَتْرَكَهُ | وَلَا اضْطِرَارٍ أَتَاهُ الْقَلْبُ مَقْهُورَا |
| 8 | لَكِنَّهُ مِنْ أُمُورِ اللَّهِ مُمْتَنِعٌ | فِي الْوَصْفِ قَدَرَهُ الرَّحْمَانُ تَقْدِيرَا |
| 9 | لَنْ يَضْبُطَ الْعَقْلُ إِلَّا مَا يُدَبِّرُهُ | وَلَنْ تَرَىٰ فِي الْهَوَىٰ بِالْعَقْلِ تَدْبِيرَا |
| 10 | كُنْ مُحْسِنًا أَوْ مُسِيئًا وَابْقَ لِي أَبَدًا | تَكُنْ لَدَيَّ عَلَى الْحَالَيْنِ مَشْكُورًا ³⁵ |

Treat Me Well or Badly

- 1 You have not quenched my thirst
For your love
Nor released this captive
From his fetters
- 2 I have become humbled
On account of my love for you
Not for the sake of attaining
That for which I secretly hope
- 3 It is painful enough for my soul
That I know I am in love with you,
And this is reason enough
For you to be pardoned
- 4 So where do I go,
And what do I want
From the vicissitudes of time?
I tell them falsehoods and lies
- 5 You are the one

³⁴ See Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 389 for emendations.

³⁵ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 103-104. For discussion of this poem, see pages 60, 80 above.

Whose soul possesses
My heart's love,
Whether or not this pleases it

6 My heart does not love you,
Simply because you show it kindness,
So that it may forget you
If you slight it

7 It was not a choice
That I may abandon,
Nor was it a matter of compulsion
To which my heart was brought in chains

8 Rather, it is one of God's commands,
Indescribable,
Which the Merciful One
Has ordained

9 Nothing is compelling to the rational mind
But that which it can comprehend,
And you will never see reason
Comprehending love

10 Treat me well or badly,
But always remain mine,
And I will be grateful to you
In either case

[32]
1 بِعَيْنَيْكَ مَا أَلْقَى إِذَا كُنْتَ حَاضِرًا
2 فَفِيمَ أَرَى نَفْسِي لَقَى بِفَنَائِكُمْ
3 أَتَحْجُبُنِي أَنْ قُلْتَ تَحْسُدُ مَنْ بَغَى
4 أَجَلْ إِنَّ مَنْ يَبْغِي هَوَاكَ مُحْسَدٌ
5 إِذَا لَمْ أَنْفَسْ فِي هَوَاكَ وَلَمْ أَغْرُ
6 فَلَا تَحْتَقِرْ نَفْسِي وَأَنْتَ حَبِيبُهَا
وَأِنْ غَبْتَ فَالدُّنْيَا عَلَيَّ مَحَابِسُ
وَلَا مَنْ يُدَانِينِي لَدَيْكُمْ مُوَانِسُ
هَوَايَ وَمَنْ أَحَقَّ بِهِ وَأَوَانِسُ
عَلَيْكَ وَمَنْ يَهْوَى هَوَاهُ مُنَافِسُ
عَلَيْكَ فَفِيمَنْ لَيْتَ شِعْرِي أَنْفَسُ
فَكُلُّ أَمْرٍ يَصْبُو إِلَى مَنْ يُجَانِسُ³⁶

He Whose Love is Ardent is Wont to Contend

1 By your life! What an ordeal I endure
When you are with me!

³⁶ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 108.

And when you are far away,
All the world is as a prison to me

2 Why do I see myself
Meeting ruin at your hands,
And not drawing near to you
As a companion?

3 Did you mean to reject me when you said:
“May you envy him who wishes for my love,
The one I take as my intimate,
Whose company I keep”?

4 Indeed, the one who desires your love
Can be moved to envy over you,
And the one whose love is ardent
Contends for your love

5 If I do not vie for your love,
And I am not jealous over you,
Then – would that I knew! –
For whom would I vie?

6 Do not disdain my soul
When you are its beloved,
For every man falls in love
With one who is his like

[33]

وَصَاقَتْ بِهِ بَعْدَ الْوُرُودِ مَصَادِرُهُ	1 أَلَا مَنْ لِقَلْبٍ قَدْ دَعَاهُ تَجَاسُرُهُ
فَلَمَّا أَضَاعَ الْحَزَمَ كَرَّتْ عَسَاكِرُهُ	2 تَغَافَلَ عَنْهُ الدَّهْرُ فَاعْتَرَّ بِالْمُنَى
عَلَيْهِ وَذَلَّتْ بَعْدَ عِزِّ عَشَائِرُهُ	3 فَأَصْبَحَ كَالْمَأْسُورِ طَالَتْ عُدَائُهُ
بِكُلِّ الرَّدَى غَيْرَ الْجِمَامِ تُبَادِرُهُ	4 تَجَرَّتْ عَلَيْهِ النَّائِبَاتُ فَأَصْبَحَتْ
إِذَا جَالَ فِي بَحْرِ مِنَ الْفِكْرِ خَاطِرُهُ ³⁷	5 وَقَدْ كَانَ صَرْفُ الدَّهْرِ يُقْبِلُ نَحْوَهُ

The Vicissitudes Have Laid Low a Bold Heart

1 Alas for a heart moved
By a daring spirit,
One whose springs have dried up
After they had run abundantly

³⁷ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 109.

2 Time has forgotten about him,
And he is deceived by his own wishes,
And when he lost his resolve,
He became daring again

3 He has become like a captive
Who has endured many trials,
And whose once-great kinsmen
Have been humiliated

4 The vicissitudes have punished him,
And they have inflicted him
With every misfortune
Short of death

5 The vicissitudes of time
Have advanced toward him
Every time has wandered
In the ocean of thinking

[34]

1 أَتَذْكُرُ الْيَوْمَ مَا لَا قَبِيْثُ مِنْ كَمَدٍ أَمْ قَدْ كَفَاكَ رَسُوْلِيْ بِالَّذِي ذَكَرَا
2 هَذَا مَقَامُ فِتْيٍ أَقْصَاهُ مَا لَكَهُ فَحَاوَلَ الصَّبْرَ حِيْنَآ ثُمَّ مَا صَبِرَا
3 بَيْنَا يُعَدِّدُ أَحْقَادًا وَيُضْمِرُهَا إِذْ قَادَهُ الشَّوْقُ حَتَّى جَاءَ مُعْتَذِرَا
4 لَمْ يَجْنِ ذَنْبًا فَيَذَرِي مَا يُمَحِّصُهُ وَلَا يَرَى أَجَلَ لِلصَّفْحِ مُنْتَظِرَا
5 وَاللّٰهُ وَاللّٰهُ لَا تُشْمِتُ أَعَادِيَهُ فَالصَّفْحُ أَجْمَلُ بِالْمَوْلَى إِذَا قَدِرَا³⁸

Forgiveness is More Becoming

1 Do you recall what sorrow
I felt on that day,
Or is it enough
That I sent a messenger to tell you?

2 Such is the state of a man
Whose master has alienated him;
He tries to be patient for a while,
But then he cannot be so patient

3 His resentment increases,

³⁸ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 117.

But he conceals it,
Since his love compels him
To apologize

4 He has done nothing wrong,
And he knows what slights he has forgiven,
But he cannot see a time
When he will receive forgiveness

5 By God! By God!
Do not gloat over his misfortune,
For forgiveness is more becoming of the master,
If he is able

[35]
1 لَيْسَ رَقَدَ الْوَاشِي سُوراً بِمَا رَأَى وَهَانَ عَلَيْهِ أَنْ يَقِرَّ وَأَنْصَبَا
2 لَقَدْ أَشْهَرَ الْعَيْنَيْنِ مِنِّي صَبَابَةً وَغَادَرَ قَلْبِي مُسْتَهَاماً مُعَذِّبَا
3 عَدِمْتُ الْهَوَى إِنْ كُنْتُ عَاشِرْتُ وَافِياً سِوَاكَ وَقَدْ طَوَّقْتُ شَرْقاً وَمَغْرِبَا
4 فَإِنْ لَمْ تَدَعْ مَا لَا أُحِبُّ تَنْظُرُفَا وَلَا رَاعِياً عَهْدِي فَدَعُهُ تَحُوبَا³⁹

While the Slanderer Sleeps

- 1 Whereas the slanderer sleeps,
Content with what he has witnessed,
And it is easy for him
To be the cause of comfort or distress
- 2 He has left me sleepless
In my passionate love,
And he has left my heart infatuated,
Tormented
- 3 May I be deprived of love
If I have been a faithful companion
To anyone but you,
Even as I have traversed the east and the west
- 4 If you abstain from doing things I do not like
Out of a sense of propriety,
Or keep your covenant with me,
Then do it as a gesture of good will

³⁹ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 122.

[36]

1 يا أَخِي كَمْ يَكُونُ هَذَا الْجَفَاءُ	كَمْ تَشَقَّى بِهَجْرِكَ الْأَعْدَاءُ
2 صَارَ ذَا الْهَجْرِ لِي غِذَاءً وَلَكِنْ	رُبَّمَا أَتْلَفَ السَّقِيمَ الْغِذَاءُ
3 سَيِّدِي أَنْتَ أَئِنَّ ذَاكَ الصَّفَاءُ	أَيُّنَ ذَاكَ الْهَوَى وَذَاكَ الْوَفَاءُ
4 أَنْتَ ذَاكَ الْأَخُ الْقَدِيمُ وَلَكِنْ	لَيْسَ هَذَا الْإِخَاءُ ذَاكَ الْإِخَاءُ
5 لِي ذُنُوبٌ وَلَسْتُ أَنْكَرُ فَاغْفِرْ	فَالْتَجَنِّي عَلَى الْمُقَرِّ اعْتِدَاءُ
6 لِي حُقُوقٌ أَيْضاً عَلَيْكَ وَلَكِنْ	ذِكْرُ مِثْلِي لِمِثْلِ هَذَا جَفَاءُ ⁴⁰

Where Has our Brotherhood Gone?

- 1 My brother,
How rudely you have treated me!
How your estrangement from me
Has fortified my enemies!
- 2 Your estrangement has become
Like nourishing food to me, but
That food might be fatal
To this patient
- 3 You are my master!
Where is the pure friendship?
Where is the love
And the fidelity?
- 4 You are that same brother
You were long ago, but
This brotherhood is not
That same brotherhood
- 5 I have done wrong; I do not deny this
So forgive me,
For unjust treatment of one who seeks to make amends
Is an act of enmity
- 6 I have rights
You are obligated to fulfill, but
For someone like me to mention such a thing
Would be rude indeed

⁴⁰ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 125. For discussion of this poem, see pages 130, 169 above.

[37]

- | | | |
|----|---|---|
| 1 | إِذَا اشْتَدَّ مَا أَلْقَاهُ هَوْنٌ عَلَّيْ | رِضَايَ بِأَنْ تَحْيِيَ سَلِيمًا وَأَسْقِمَا |
| 2 | فَيَا مَنْ يُزِيلُ الْخَوْفَ عَنِّي وَفَاؤُهُ | بِعَهْدِي وَمَنْ لَوْلَاهُ لَمْ أُمْسِ مُغْرَمًا |
| 3 | أَكَانَ جَمِيلًا أَنْ تَرَانِي مُهْمَلًا | وَتَسْكُتَ عَنْ أَمْرِي وَتَهْيِي تَبْرُمًا |
| 4 | سَارَ عَاكَ إِنْ أَكْرَمْتَنِي أَوْ أَهَنْتَنِي | وَحَسْبُكَ نُبْلًا أَنْ تُهَيِّنَ وَتُكْرِمَا |
| 5 | وَإِنِّي لَأَسْتَحْيِي مِنَ اللَّهِ أَنْ أَرَى | ظُلُومًا لِأَلْفِي أَوْ أَرَى مَتَّظِلًّا |
| 6 | سَاخِذٌ مِنْ نَفْسِي لِنَفْسِكَ حَقَّهَا | وَأَصْفَحْ إِنْ لَمْ تَرْعَ عَهْدِي تَكْرُمًا |
| 7 | وَمَا بِي نَفْسِي وَحَدَّهَا غَيْرَ أَنَّنِي | أُصَوِّنُ خَلِيلِي أَنْ يَجُورَ وَيَظْلِمَا |
| 8 | وَلَوْ قِيلَ لِي اخْتَرْتُ نَيْلَهُ أَوْ صِلَاخَهُ | لَأَثَرْتُ أَنْ يُعْصَى هَوَايَ وَيَسْلِمَا |
| 9 | وَقَدْ كُنْتُ أَوْلَى بِي مِنَ الشَّوْقِ وَالْهَوَى | وَقَدْ كُنْتُ أَمْضَى فِي الضَّمِيرِ مُتَمَّمَا |
| 10 | فَمَا لِي قَدْ أَبْعَدْتُ حَتَّى كَانَنِي | عَدُوًّا وَقَدْ كُنْتُ الْحَبِيبَ الْمُقَدَّمَا ⁴¹ |

May You Be Well, Even as I Suffer

- 1 When my predicament becomes difficult to endure,
It lessens my pain that I am content
For you to be well,
Even while I am suffering
- 2 My fear is dispelled
By your fidelity to our covenant;
If not for you,
I would not have fallen in love
- 3 Is it good
That you have all but forgotten me,
Been silent about my ordeal and my sleeplessness,
Cast me aside?
- 4 I will be faithful to you,
Whether you honor me or disgrace me,
For you are worthy
To bestow grace and honor
- 5 I would be ashamed before God
To behave unjustly
Toward my beloved,
Or to complain of injustices I have suffered

⁴¹ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 126.

6 I will take away my soul's right
And give it to your soul,
And I shall graciously forgive you,
Even if you do not keep our covenant

7 Even though my soul is alone,
I shall protect my friend
Even though he is
Tyrannical and unjust

8 If it is said: "Choose between
Being with him and his well-being,"
I would prefer to see my love disobeyed
And see you well

9 You have more right
To my longing and love,
And in my mind,
You are the pinnacle of virtue

10 Why have I been rejected
As if I were an enemy,
When I was once the beloved friend,
And the most highly esteemed?

[38]
1 أَتَأْذَنُ لِي يَا مُتُّ فَبَلِّكَ فِي الشُّكْرِ فَاشْكُرْ أَمْ تَنْهَى فَأُغْضِي عَلَى صُغْرِ
2 وَإِنِّي لَمُحْتَاجٌ إِنْ أَنْتَ أَذِنْتَ لِي إِلَى الْعُذْرِ أَيْضاً مِنْ مُجَاوِزَتِي قَدْرِي
3 فَمَا حَقُّ مِثْلِي أَنْ يُرَى لَكَ شَاكِراً وَلَا مِثْلُ مَا أَوْلَيْتُ يُشْكُرُ فِي الشَّعْرِ
4 فَرَأَيْكَ فَيَمُنُّ لَا يَرَى نَفْسَهُ إِذَا عَتَبْتَ عَلَيْهَا أَهْلَ شُكْرِ وَلَا عُذْرَ⁴²

Will You Allow Me to Thank You?

1 May I die before you!
Will you allow me to thank you? If so, I will thank you.
Or will you forbid me?
If so, I will bear the slight patiently

2 I am ever in need,
If you will grant it to me,
Of pardon

⁴² Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 127.

For transgressing my bounds

3 What right do I have

To been seen as grateful to you,
And what right have my virtues
To be thanked in verse?

4 What do you think

About one who does not see himself,
If you chide him,
As worthy of thanks or pardon?

[39]

1 أَفِي الْعَدْلِ أَنْ تَنْهَى أَخَاكَ عَنِ الشُّكْرِ وَيُنْأَى فَلَا يُنْهَى عَنِ النَّأْيِ وَالْهَجْرِ
2 أَجَلُ أَنْ ذَا عَدْلٍ عَلَى الصَّبِّ فِي الْهَوَى إِذَا كَانَ لَا يُنْجِيهِ مِنْهُ سِوَى الْعُدْرِ
3 أَيْجُمَلُ فِي حَقِّ الْجَوَارِ دَعِ الْهَوَى أَنْ أَبْقَى عَلَى ظَهْرِ الْعِشَاءِ إِلَى الْفَجْرِ
4 أَرَاعِي نُجُومًا لَمْ أَوْكَلْ بِرَعِيهَا وَأُذْكَيْ هَوَى فِي الْقَلْبِ أَذْكَى مِنَ الْجَمْرِ
5 وَأَنْتَ أَخٌ لِي قَادِرٌ أَنْ تُزِيلَ مَا أَقَاسِيهِ لَا تَدْرِي بِمَا بِي أَوْ تَدْرِي
6 تَبَيُّتُ خَلِّي الْقَلْبِ مِمَّا أَجْنُهُ كَمَا أَنَا خِلُوفِي هَوَاكَ مِنَ الصَّبْرِ
7 وَإِنِّي أَدْرِي أَنَّ فِي الصَّبْرِ رَاحَةً وَلَكِنَّ إِنْفَاقِي عَلَى الصَّبْرِ مِنْ عُمْرِي
8 أَرَانِي إِذَا وَاصَلْتُ سَاءَتْكَ عِشْرَتِي وَإِنْ غَبْتُ لَمْ أَخْطُرْ بِبَالٍ وَلَا فِكْرٍ
9 أَحِينَ تَنْهَى الْوُدَّ وَاتَّصَلَ الْهَوَى وَصِرْتُ شَرِيكِي فِي السَّرِيرَةِ وَالْجَهْرِ
10 مَلَأْتُ إِخَائِي وَاطْرَحْتُ مَوَدَّتِي وَأَفْضَيْتَنِي حَتَّى تَحَيَّرْتُ فِي أَمْرِي⁴³

I Keep Watch over the Stars

1 Is it within the bounds of justice

To forbid your brother to thank you
And to cast him aside, but not to forbid him
From rejection and exile?

2 Yes, for a lover, it is just

And within the bounds of love,
When nothing can save him
Except to receive pardon

3 Is it proper, according to the laws

Of neighborliness, let alone love,
That I should be left to spend the night

⁴³ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 128. For discussion of this poem, see pages 175-179 above.

From the night prayer until the pre-dawn prayer

4 Keeping watch over stars
Whose pasture has not been entrusted to me,
And love is aflame in my heart,
Hotter than burning coals?

5 You are a brother to me;
You have the power to alleviate my sorrow,
But do you, or do you not,
Know what I am enduring?

6 At night your heart is devoid
Of the likes of my ordeal,
Just as I, on account of your love,
Am devoid of patience

7 I know that in patience
Lies solace,
But being so patient
Has shortened my life

8 Behold! When I am with you,
You find my company loathsome,
And when I am away,
Not a single thought of me crosses your mind

9 Behold! When friendship increased
Until it became love,
And you became my companion
In private and public

10 You tired of my brotherhood
And cast aside my friendship
And dismissed me,
Until I became confounded

إِلَيْكَ وَأَنْتَ قَاسِي الْقَلْبِ جَافِي
وَلَا الْبَادِي بِوَصْلِكَ كَالْمُكَافِي
وَأِنْ لَا تَرْعَ يَوْحِشُكَ أَنْصِرَافِي
تَطُولُ عَلَيْهِ أَيَّامُ التَّصَافِي

[40]
1 جُعِلْتُ فِدَاكَ قَدْ طَالَ انْعِطَافِي
2 وَلَيْسَ أَخَاكَ مَنْ يَرْعَاكَ كُرْهَا
3 فَإِنْ تَرْعَ الْأَمَانَةَ لَا أُضِيعُهَا
4 يَطُولُ عَلَيْكَ أَنْ تُلْقَى خَلِيلًا

5 مَخَافَةٌ أَنْ يَمْلَكَ بِاجْتِمَاعِ
 6 فَإِنْ يَكُ ذَا الصُّدُودِ صُدُودَ عَثْبٍ
 7 إِذَنْ فَتَلَفَنِي مِنْ قَبْلِ يَأْسٍ
 8 وَإِلَّا فَاطْرَحْ وَدِّي وَأَجْمِلْ
 9 مَتَى يَصِلُ السَّقِيمُ إِلَى شِفَاءٍ
 فَيَرْضَى مِنْ نَوَالِكَ بِالْكَفَافِ
 وَأَنْتَ عَلَى الْمَوَدَّةِ وَالتَّوَافِي
 يُؤَلِّدُ مَا يَجِلُّ عَنِ التَّلَافِي
 بِتَغْرِيزٍ مِنَ التَّصْرِيحِ كَافِي
 إِذَا كَانَ الْأَضْنَى دَرَكَ الْمُعَافِي⁴⁴

Restore our Friendship or Release Me

- 1 May I be your ransom!
Long have I been tenderly inclined to you,
While you, with your cruel heart,
Have treated me harshly
- 2 Your brother does not
Remain loyal to you against his will
Nor does he show affection toward you,
In hopes of a reward
- 3 If you nurture the trust that is between us,
I will never let it go,
But if you do not,
I will go away and leave you lonely
- 4 It will be difficult for you
To have a faithful friend
Who has had to wait so long
For your friendship
- 5 One who so fears
Lest you grow tired of his company
That he is content to receive from you
Only a paltry reward
- 6 If you are avoiding me
To teach me a lesson,
But your friendship
And fidelity to me remain
- 7 Then grant me some relief
Before my despair becomes so great
As to cause suffering
That knows no relief

⁴⁴ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 128. For discussion of this poem, see pages 90, 167-169 above.

8 But if not,
Then cast aside my friendship once and for all,
And be kind enough
To set me free

9 When can the sick patient
Be restored to health,
When his weakness
Is the work of the one who can heal him?

[41]

1 نَصَحْتُ لَكُمْ حَذَارًا أَنْ تُعَابُوا	فَعَادَ عَلَيَّ نَصْحُكُمْ وَبَالًا
2 فَإِنْ تَكُ قَدْ مَلَلْتَ فَلَا تُخَنِّي	وَقُلْ لِي أَنْ أَجَنِّبَكَ الْوَصَالَا
3 فَمَنْ يَطْلُبُ لِصَاحِبِهِ اخْتِلَالًا	لِيَنْقُضَ عَهْدَهُ يُدْرِكُ مَقَالَا
4 وَيَمْنَعُنِي الْوَفَاءَ لَكُمْ بِعَهْدِي	وَحُسْنُ الظَّنِّ أَنْ أَجِدَ اخْتِلَالَا
5 فَتَزْدَادُونَ عِنْدِي كُلَّ وَقْتٍ	وَأَنْقُصُ عِنْدَكُمْ حَالًا فَحَالَا
6 سَأَصْبِرُ إِنْ أَطَقْتُ الصَّبْرَ حَتَّى تَمَلَّ الْهَجْرَ أَوْ تَهْوَى الْوَصَالَا ⁴⁵	

Tell Me if You Have Grown Tired of Me

- 1 I advised you to be cautious,
Lest you be accused,
But my advice was thrown back at me,
And my counsel
- 2 If you have grown tired of me,
Do not betray me,
But tell me so,
So that I may avoid vexing you with my visits
- 3 He who avoids his friend
On account of some fault
And who breaks their covenant,
Understands that he has rescinded his promise
- 4 I am prevented,
On account of my fidelity to our covenant
And thinking well of your intentions,
From finding fault with you

⁴⁵ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 132.

5 You become greater and greater
 In my estimation,
 And I become less and less
 In yours

6 I will be patient
 As much as I am able,
 Until you grow tired of avoiding me
 And wish to see me again

[42]

1 بِذِكْرِي وَأَنْتِي عَنْ وَصَالِكَ مُضْرِبُ 2 لِتَعْلَمَ مَنْ مَنَا الشَّقِيَّ الْمُعَذَّبُ 3 عَلَى إِلْفِهِ أَمْ مَنْ يَقْرُ وَيُعْتَبُ 4 غَضِبْتَ وَلَكِنِّي مِنَ الْهَجْرِ أَهْرَبُ 5 وَلَوْ لَا الْهَوَى مَا ضَاقَ عَنِّي مَهْرَبُ 6 أَصَدَّقُ مَنْ صِدَّقِي لَدَيْهِ مُكَذَّبُ 7 عَلَيَّ سِوَى أَنْ لَيْسَ لِي عَنْكَ مَذْهَبُ 8 عَلَيْكَ وَمَا لِي غَيْرُ عَفْوِكَ مَطْلَبُ 9 إِلَيْكَ سِوَى أَنِّي بِحُبِّكَ مُتَعَبُ 10 وَإِنْ تَكُنِ الْآخَرَى فَعَبْدُكَ مُذْنِبُ 11 فَقَدْ حَلَّتِ الْبُلْوَى وَطَابَ التَّجَنُّبُ ⁴⁶	1 زَعَمْتَ بِنَفْسِي أَنْتَ أَنَّكَ مُغْرَمٌ 2 أَعِدْ نَظْرًا فِيمَا ادَّعَيْتَ وَلَا تَحِدْ 3 أَمِنْ يَتَجَنَّبُنِي ثُمَّ يُنْكِرُ مَا جَنَى 4 وَلَوْ كُنْتُ تُجْزَى بِالَّذِي تَسْتَحِقُّهُ 5 فَأَغْضِي عَلَى جَمْرِ الْعَصَا خَشْيَةَ الْقَلِ 6 فَحَتَّامٌ لَا أَنْفَكَ شَوْقًا إِلَى الرِّضَا 7 وَمَا لِي مِنْ ذَنْبٍ إِلَيْكَ تَعُدُّهُ 8 وَمَا غَرَضِي فِي أَنْ أُتَبِّتَ حُجَّةً 9 إِلَيْكَ مَفْرِي مِنْكَ لَا عَنْ وَسِيلَةٍ 10 فَإِنْ تَأْتِ مَا أَهْوَى فَعَبْدٌ نَعَشْتُهُ 11 فَرَأَيْكَ فِيمَنْ أَنْتَ مَا لِكَ رِقَّةٍ
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I Endure the Embers of the Tamarisk

1 By my soul! You have claimed
 That you are enamored
 With the very thought of me
 And that I avoid visiting you

2 Look again honestly
 At what you have claimed,
 That you might know which of us
 Is suffering and tormented

3 Is it the one who acts wrongfully
 And then denies what he has done
 To his beloved
 Or the one who confesses but meets with chastisement?

⁴⁶ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 133-134.

- 4 If you received the punishment
You deserve,
You would be angry,
But I flee from the thought of leaving you
- 5 I endure the embers of tamarisk wood,
Fearing lest I be burned;
Were it not for love,
It would be so difficult for me to leave
- 6 How long until I, longing for relief,
Am released from my chains,
Trusting the one who calls
My truthfulness with him a lie
- 7 What have I done wrong
That you may count against me,
Except that I have no way
Of leaving you?
- 8 I do not wish
To make a case against you,
And your forgiveness
Is all I seek
- 9 If I flee from you,
I can only flee toward you,
And my only means of reaching you
Is that I am exhausted from loving you
- 10 If you do what pleases me,
You will have granted relief to your servant,
But if you do not,
Then only your servant is to blame
- 11 What is your opinion
Of the one you own as a slave,
Now that hardships have visited him,
And your avoidance of him is pleasant?

1 يا عالماً بالذي ألقى من الكربِ أَرْفَقَ⁴⁷ بِعَيْنِكَ لَا تُعْطِبْ فِدَاكَ أَبِي
 2 لَا تَعْنَتِمْ صَفْحَ مَطْوِيٍّ عَلَى كَبِدٍ حَرَّى وَقَلْبٍ بِنَارِ الشَّوْقِ مُلْتَهَبِ
 3 لَوْ كُنْتُ مِثْلِي لَمْ تَصْبِرْ عَلَى كَمَدِي أَوْ كُنْتُ مِثْلَكَ لَمْ أَفْعَلْ كَفْعِكَ بِي
 4 إِنْ كَانَ ذَا الْهَجْرِ تَأْدِيباً فَحَسْبُكَ مَا قَدَّمْتُ مِنْهُ فَقَدْ بِالْغَتِ فِي أَدْبِي⁴⁸

I Would Never Treat You This Way

- 1 You know what sorrow I am enduring,
 So be gentle with your eyes
 And do not destroy me;
 May my father be your ransom!
- 2 Do not withhold the forgiveness
 Of one doubled over in pain,
 With his liver hot
 And his heart on fire with the flames of longing
- 3 If you were in my situation,
 You could not bear this suffering,
 And if I were in your situation,
 I would not do what you have done to me
- 4 If you rejected me
 In order to teach me a lesson,
 Then you have already done enough;
 You have already been excessive in edifying me

[44]
 1 مَا لِي أُلْفَتُ وَجْهًا غَيْرَ مُلْتَفِتٍ نَحْوِي وَأَعْطِفُ قَلْبًا غَيْرَ مُنْعَطِفِ
 2 يُغَرِّى بِهِجْرِي كَمَا أُغَرِّى بِالْأَفْتِهِ هَذَا لَعَمْرِي وَدَادُ جِدِّ مُخْتَلِفِ
 3 حَجَبْتُ عَيْنِي عَنِ الدُّنْيَا وَنَضَرْتُهَا شَوْقًا وَأَبْرَزْتُهَا لِلْحُزْنِ وَالْأَسْفِ
 4 إِلَّا تَكُنْ تَلَفْتُ نَفْسِي عَلَيْكَ فَقَدْ أَصْبَحْتُ وَاللَّهِ مُشْتَاقًا إِلَى التَّلَفِ⁴⁹

One-Sided Friendship

- 1 Why do I try to turn
 A face that will not turn toward me,
 And soften a heart
 That is not tender?

⁴⁷ See Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 390. This reading is preferable, although it does not appear among the emendations.

⁴⁸ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 135. This poem is attributed to بعض أهل هذا الزمان.

⁴⁹ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 137.

2 He is enamored of avoiding me,
As I am enamored of loving him;
By my life!
This is a very different definition of friendship!

3 I have shielded my eyes
From the world and its beauty,
Because of my love,
And I have set it aside for sadness and remorse

4 If my soul does not,
Perish for your sake,
By God! I have even come to wish
That I might perish

[45]
1 لَعَمْرُكَ مَا قُرْبُ الدِّيارِ بِنَافِعٍ إِذَا لَمْ يَصِلْ حَبْلَ الْحَبِيبِ حَبِيبُ
2 وَلَيْسَ غَرِيباً مَنْ تَنَاءَتْ دِيارُهُ وَلَكِنَّ مَنْ يُجْفَى فَذَلِكَ غَرِيبُ
3 وَمَنْ يَغْتَرِبُ وَالْإِلْفُ رَاغٍ لِعَهْدِهِ وَإِنْ جَاوَرَ السَّدَّيْنِ فَهُوَ قَرِيبُ⁵⁰

My Covenant is My Country

1 By your life!
Being close to home
Does no good to a lover
Without the bond of friendship with the one he loves

2 He who is far from home
Is not a stranger;
Rather, he who is treated cruelly
Is a stranger

3 He who is far from home,
While his beloved is faithful to their covenant,
Even when he is at the ends of the earth,
Is at home indeed.

[46]
1 أَنْتَ ابْتَدَأْتَ بِمِيعَادِي فَأَوْفِ بِهِ وَلَا تَرَبَّصْ بِهِ صِرْفَ الْمَقَادِيرِ

⁵⁰ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 142. For discussion of this poem, see pages 128-130 above.

2 وَلَا تَكِلْنِي إِلَى عُدْرٍ تُزَخِرُهُ فَالذَّنْبُ أَحْسَنُ مِنْ بَعْضِ الْمَعَاذِيرِ⁵¹

Do Not Make Elegant Excuses

1 You began with a promise,
So be faithful to it,
And do not let it fall victim
To the vicissitudes of time

2 Do not measure out for me
An elegantly worded excuse,
For admitting guilt is better
Than some excuses

[47]

1 إِلَى اللَّهِ أَشْكُو مَنْ بَدَانِي بِوَصْلِهِ فَلَمَّا حَوَى قَلْبِي بَرَاهُ بِبُخْلِهِ
2 سَاجِرُ نَفْسِي عَنْ تَقَاضِيهِ رَاضِيًا إِلَيَّ أَنْ أَرَاهُ سَاخِطًا بَعْدَ فِعْلِهِ
3 وَآخِذٌ مِنْهُ الْعَفْوَ مَا دَامَ بِاخِلًا وَأَنْهَى لِسَانِي أَنْ يَعُودَ لِعَذْلِهِ
4 قَرُبَّ اعْتِدَارٍ قَدْ تَمَنَّيْتُ أَنَّي خَرِسْتُ وَأَنْي لَمْ أَخَاطِبْ بِمِثْلِهِ⁵²

I Will Demand his Forgiveness

1 I lament to God,
Of one who made a display of visiting me,
And when my heart embraced him,
He ungenerously dismissed it

2 I shall gladly commission my soul
To sue for its debt from him,
Until I see him distraught
At what he has done

3 I will demand his forgiveness,
As long as he is so ungenerous,
And I shall restrain my tongue
From responding in kind to his disapproval

4 Sometimes I wish,
That instead of apologizing,
I had kept my silence,
And not said such things

⁵¹ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 143.

⁵² Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 143. For discussion of this poem, see page 32 above.

[48]

1 لَجْرَمِي عِقَابٌ وَالتَّجَاوُزُ مُمَكِّنٌ
وَأَوَّلَاهُمَا إِسْعَافُ مَنْ صَحَّ صِدْقُهُ
2 فَإِنْ لَمْ تُجَاوِزْ حَسَبَ مَا تُسْتَحِقُّهُ
فَلَا تَتَجَاوِزْ حَسَبَ مَا أُسْتَحِقُّهُ⁵³

My Crime Warrants a Punishment

1 My crime warrants a punishment,
But it is possible to overlook it,
And the more worthy thing,
Is to have mercy on him who is truthful

2 If you do not overlook
Your rights,
Then do not overlook
My rights

[49]

1 الْعُذْرُ يُلْحِقُهُ التَّحْرِيفُ وَالْكَذِبُ وَلَيْسَ فِي غَيْرِ مَا يُرْضِيكَ لِي أَرْبُ
2 وَقَدْ أَسَأْتُ فَبِالنُّعْمَى الَّتِي سَلَفَتْ
لَمَّا مَنَنْتَ بِعَفْوٍ مَا لَهُ سَبَبُ⁵⁴

My Apology is Met with Distortions and Lies

1 My apology is met
With distortions and lies,
And I wish for nothing
Except what pleases you

2 I have acted badly,
And by the beauty of bygone times,
If you forgive me,
It will not be without reason

[50]

1 كَانَ رَقِيباً مِنْكَ يَرَى خَوَاطِرِي وَآخِرُ يَرَى نَاطِرِي وَلِسَانِي
2 فَمَا عَايَنْتُ عَيْنَايَ بَعْدَكَ مَنْظَرًا يَسُوءُكَ إِلَّا قُلْتُ قَدْ رَمَقَانِي
3 وَلَا بَدَرْتُ مِنْ فِي بَعْدَكَ مَرْحَةً لِعَيْرِكَ إِلَّا قُلْتُ قَدْ سَمِعَانِي
4 وَلَا خَطَرْتُ مِنْ ذِكْرِ غَيْرِكَ خَطَرَةً عَلَى الْقَلْبِ إِلَّا عَرَجَا بِعِنَانِ

⁵³ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 144.

⁵⁴ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 144.

5 إِذَا مَا تَسَلَّى الْغَايِرُونَ عَنِ الْهَوَى
6 وَجَدْتُ الَّذِي يُسَلِّي سِوَايَ يَشُوقُنِي
7 وَفَتَيَانِ صِدْقٌ قَدْ سَمِمْتُ لِقَاءَهُمْ
8 وَمَا الزُّهْدُ أَسْلَى عَنْهُمْ غَيْرَ أَنَّنِي
بِشُرْبِ مُدَامٍ أَوْ سَمَاعِ قِيَانٍ
إِلَى قُرْبِكُمْ حَتَّى أَمَلَّ مَكَانِي
وَعَفَفْتُ طَرْفِي عَنْهُمْ وَلِسَانِي
أَرَاكَ عَلَى كُلِّ الْجِهَاتِ تَرَانِي⁵⁵

Fidelity Keeps Watch over Me

- 1 It is as though you have sent a spy
 To watch over my thoughts,
 One to watch where I look,
 And one to keep track of what I say
- 2 Since you left me,
 Whenever I see anything
 That would offend you,
 I say, "The spies have seen me."
- 3 Since that time,
 If ever a jesting remark escapes my lips
 When you are not present,
 I say, "The spies have heard me."
- 4 Every time a thought
 Of someone else
 Comes to my mind,
 They pull on the reins.
- 5 Whereas ardent lovers divert themselves
 From their love
 By drinking wine
 Or listening to singing maidens,
- 6 That which would distract someone else
 Only increases my longing
 To be near you,
 And I grow restless of being where I am
- 7 Honest young men,
 I have grown tired of their company;
 I have chastely restrained my eyes from them
 And my tongue

⁵⁵ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 146. For discussion of this poem, see pages 116-120, 133-134 141, 164, 171 above.

8 Whenever my continence
Offers me consolation,
Just then I see you
Everywhere I look

[51]

<p>يَتَوَبُّ إِلَيْكَ الْيَوْمَ مِمَّا تَقَدَّمَ وَلَمْ تَكُ مُشْتَاقًا فَصَلِّهُ تَكْرُّمًا تَتَدَمَّ لَوْ أَرْضَاكَ أَنْ يَتَنَدَّمَ مَلَالًا وَلَا كَانَ الْجَفَاءُ تَبَرُّمًا وَأَظْهَرَ إِعْرَاضًا وَأَبْدَى تَجَهُمًا تَأَخَّرَ لَمَّا لَمْ يَجِدْ مُتَقَدِّمًا⁵⁶</p>	<p>1 أَخُوكَ الَّذِي أَمْسَى بِذِكْرِكَ مُغْرَمًا 2 فَإِنْ لَمْ تَصِلْهُ رُغْبَةً فِي وَصَالِهِ 3 فَقَدْ وَالَّذِي عَافَاكَ مِمَّا ابْتَلَى بِهِ 4 وَبِاللَّهِ مَا كَانَ الصُّدُودُ الَّذِي مَضَى 5 فَلَا تَحْرِبَنَّ بِالْغَدْرِ مَنْ صَدَّ مُكْرَهَا 6 فَلَمْ يُلْهِهِ عَنْكَ السُّلُوءُ وَإِنَّمَا</p>
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Your Brother Did not Mean to Shun You

- 1 Your brother, who has become infatuated
With the very thought of you
Turns to you today in repentance
For what came before
- 2 If you do not visit him
Out of sheer desire to visit him
Or because you miss him,
Then do it out of graciousness
- 3 Indeed the brother who wishes to spare you
What he has suffered,
Regrets what he has done,
If it would please you for him to regret
- 4 By God! When he avoided you,
It was not because he was tired of you,
And when he spoke sharply to you,
It was not merely to make you suffer
- 5 Do not be so angry as to betray
The one who has only avoided you against his will,
Who only pretended to oppose you
And to express anger toward you
- 6 For nothing has consoled him

⁵⁶ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 147-148.

Or distracted him from the thought of you;
 He has only been delayed
 In visiting you as soon as he wished

[52]

1 أَتُوبُ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ نَقْضِ الْعُهُودِ	لِنُؤْمِنَ مُقْلَتِي مِنَ السُّهُودِ
2 أَسَأْتُ فَلَا تُعْنَى بِالِدَعَاوَى	فَهَاءَ نَذَا أَقْرُبُ بِلَا شُهُودِ
3 وَقَدْ كَانَ الْجُحُودُ عَلَيَّ سَهْلًا	وَلَكِنِّي أَنْفَتُ مِنَ الْجُحُودِ
4 وَقُلْ لِي لَا عِدْمَتُكَ مِنْ مُسِيءٍ	بِمَا اسْتَحَلَلْتُ نَقْضَ عُرَى الْعُهُودِ
5 أَلَا يَا نَفْسُ قَدْ أَخْطَأْتَ فِيمَا	أَتَيْتَ فَإِنْ نَجَوْتَ فَلَا تَعُودِي
6 فَكَمْ جَانٍ تَجَافَى غَيْرَ جَهْلٍ	فَعَادَ فَلَمْ يَذُقْ طَعْمَ الْهُجُودِ ⁵⁷

I Confess Without Witnesses

- 1 I turn to you, seeking forgiveness
 For breaking a covenant of friendship,
 So that you might safeguard
 My eyes from sleeplessness

- 2 I have done wrong,
 But my pleas have no effect on you,
 So here I stand,
 Confessing without witnesses

- 3 Your refusal
 Was easy on me,
 But I refuse to listen
 To your refusal

- 4 Tell me –
 May I no longer treat you badly! –
 Do you consider it permissible
 To violate the conditions of a covenant?

- 5 O soul,
 What you did was wrong,
 So even if you are granted salvation,
 Do not repeat your misdeed

- 6 How many people have acted cruelly,
 Intentionally,

⁵⁷ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 148. For discussion of this poem, see page 31 above.

Repeatedly,
And never tasted the sleeplessness of regret?

[53]
1 يَا قَلْبُ قَدْ خَانَ مَنْ كَلَفْتَ بِهِ فَخَلَّ عَنْكَ الْبُكَاءُ فِي أَثَرِهِ
2 شُغْلُكَ بِالْفِكْرِ فِي تَغْيِيرِهِ أَعْظَمُ مِمَّا لَقِيتَ مِنْ غَيْرِهِ
3 فَارْحَلْ فَمَنْ لَا يَحِلُّ مَوْرَدَهُ يُفْضِ بِهِ صَفْوَهُ إِلَى كَدَرِهِ
4 وَارْجِعْ إِلَى اللَّهِ فِي الْأُمُورِ فَلَنْ تَقْدِرَ أَنْ تَسْتَجِيرَ مِنْ قَدَرِهِ⁵⁸

O Heart, Your Beloved has Betrayed You

- 1 O heart, the one you have loved
Has betrayed you,
So do not weep for him
Anymore
- 2 Your preoccupation with thinking
About how he has changed
Is even greater than
Than what you have felt with others
- 3 So go, and if someone
Does not arrive at the place where he began,
His pure happiness
Gives way to sorrow
- 4 So return to God
In all things,
For you will never be able
To overcome His power

[54]
1 تَخَيَّرَ مِنَ الْإِخْوَانِ مَنْ شِئْتَ وَاتَّخَذَ خَلِيلًا فَإِنِّي مَا أُرِيدُ خَلِيلًا
2 أَتُوبُ إِلَيْكَ الْيَوْمَ مِنْ كُلِّ تَوْبَةٍ فَقَدْ هُنْتُ فِي عَيْنِي وَكُنْتُ جَلِيلًا
3 إِذَا لَمْ يَجِدْ إِلْفِي عَنِ الْعَدْرِ مَذْهَبًا وَجَدْتُ إِلَى حُسْنِ الْعَزَاءِ سَبِيلًا
4 فَوَاللَّهِ لَا أَرْضِيْتُ دَاعِيَةَ الْهَوَىٰ إِلَيْكَ وَلَا أَغْضَبْتُ فَيْكَ عَذُولًا⁵⁹

I Regret Apologizing to You

- 1 Choose which brother you will

⁵⁸ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 149.

⁵⁹ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 151-152. For discussion of this poem, see page 60 above.

And take him as a bosom friend,
For I do not want
A bosom friend

2 Today I repent
Of all my previous repentance;
You have become little in my eyes,
Though you once were great

3 If my beloved does not find a way
Not to betray me,
I will find a way
To be assuage my love of him

4 By God! I have neither satisfied
The urge to love you,
Nor moved anyone
To slander you

[55]
1 قَصَرْتُ عَلَيْكَ النَّفْسَ حَتَّى تَوَهَّمْتُ بَلْ اسْتَيْقَنْتُ أَنْ لَيْسَ غَيْرُكَ مَطْلَبًا
2 فَرَامْتُ بَدِيلًا مِنْكَ لَمَّا جَفَوْتَهَا فَحَارَتْ كَأَنَّ لَمْ يَخْلُقِ اللَّهُ مُنْجِبًا
3 فَإِنْ تَتَفَكَّرْ فِي أَنْصِرَافِي خَائِبًا وَغَدْرِكَ تَعْلَمُ أَيُّنَا عَادَ أَخِيًّا
4 كَسَبْتُ مَلَامًا وَاکْتَسَبْتُ بَصِيرَةً بِأَمْرِكَ فَأَنْظُرُ أَيُّنَا عَادَ مُكْسِبًا
5 سَأَشْكُرُ ذَنْبَ الدَّهْرِ فِيكَ وَلَمْ أَكُنْ عَلَى غَيْرِ الْأَيَّامِ أَشْكُرُ مُذْنِبًا⁶⁰

Which of us has Profited?

1 I limited my soul to you
Until it imagined,
Even, was certain,
That it should seek no one except you

2 It wished for a replacement for you
When you treated it cruelly,
But it was confounded,
As though God had created no one else

3 If you consider
How I went away disappointed
And how you betrayed me,

⁶⁰ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 154.

You will know which of us suffered the greater disappointment

4 You have earned blame,
And I have gained insight
Into your character,
So see which of us has profited

5 I shall thank the days
For the harm they have done on account of you,
But I shall not be thankful for the wrongdoing
Of anyone except the days

[56]
1 مَا زِلْتُ أَكْذِبُ فِيكَ إِرْجَافَ الْعِدَى وَالْعَدْرُ فِي عَطْفِكَ لَيْسَ بِخَافٍ
2 حَتَّى حَسَرْتَ لِنَاطِرِي عَنْ سَوْءٍ أَغْنَتْ أَعَادِيكُمْ عَنِ الْإِرْجَافِ
3 فَظَلَلْتُ حِينَ خَبَرْتُكُمْ مُتَعَرِّضاً عَنْكُمْ بِأَوْسَطِ سُورَةِ الْأَعْرَافِ
4 فَاْمُضُوا عَلَيْكُمْ لَعْنَةُ اللَّهِ ارْتَعُوا فِي صُحْبَةِ الْأَوْغَادِ وَالْأَجْلَافِ⁶¹

Your Heart's Treachery Cannot Be Concealed

- 1 I still lie about you
To confound our enemies,
But your heart's treachery
Cannot be concealed
- 2 Until I am satisfied that you are sad
For mistreating me
And giving our enemies
Rumors to spread
- 3 When I told you,
I remained vulnerable
Before you
In the midst of the Sura of the Heights
- 4 May God curse you!
Go and find safety
In the company of fools
And the lowly!

⁶¹ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 154-155.

[57]

1 عَلَى كَيْدِي مِنْ خِيفَةِ الْبَيْنِ لَوْعَةٌ يَكَادُ لَهَا قَلْبِي أَسَى يَتَصَدَّعُ
2 يَخَافُ وَقُوعَ الْبَيْنِ وَالشَّمْلُ جَامِعٌ فَيَبْكِي بَعَيْنٍ دَمْعُهَا مُتَسَرِّعُ
3 فَلَوْ كَانَ مَسْرُوراً بِمَا هُوَ وَاقِعٌ كَمَا هُوَ مَسْرُورٌ بِمَا يَتَوَقَّعُ
4 لَكَانَ سَوَاءً بَرُؤُهُ وَسَقَامُهُ وَلَكِنَّ وَشْكَ الْبَيْنِ أَذْهَى وَأَوْجَعُ⁶²

Anticipation

- 1 In fear of separation
My body⁶³ suffers such torments
That my heart almost bursts
From the pain
- 2 It fears the moment of separation
Even when we are together,
And it weeps
With swiftly flowing tears
- 3 If it were as content
With the present situation
As it is
With what it expects
- 4 Sickness or health
Would be as one to it,
But the anticipation of separation
Is more grievous and more painful

[58]

1 لَقَدْ بَاعَدْتَ عَنْكَ أَخاً شَقِيقاً عَلَيْكَ فَلَا تَعْرُكَ حُسْنُ صَبْرِي
2 فَلَوْ جُمِعَ الْأَنَامُ لَكُنْتَ فَرِداً أَحَبُّهُمْ إِلَيَّ بِكُلِّ سِعْرِ
3 فَلَا تَحْسِبْ رَعَاكَ اللَّهُ أَنِّي غَدَرْتُ وَلَا هَمَمْتُ لَكُمْ بِغَدْرِي
4 فَوَاللَّهِ الْعَظِيمِ لَوْ أَنَّ قَلْبِي أَحَبَّ سِوَاكَ لَمْ أُسْكِنُهُ صَدْرِي
5 وَأَعْظَمُ مَا أَلَا قِي مِنْكَ أَنِّي أَدُومُ عَلَى الْوَفَاءِ وَلَسْتُ تَنْدُرِي⁶⁴

You Have Cast Aside a Brother

- 1 You have cast aside
A full-blooded brother,

⁶² Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 160-161.

⁶³ Literally, "liver."

⁶⁴ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 165. For discussion of this poem, see page 96 above.

But do not be fooled
By my decorous patience

2 If all mankind were gathered together,
You alone
Would be the dearest to me
By all accounts

3 May God preserve you!
Do not think
That I have betrayed you
Or even thought to betray you

4 By God Almighty!
If my heart loved anyone else,
I would not suffer it
To reside in my breast

5 The greatest thing
I have suffered at your hand,
Is that I remain faithful to you,
But you know not

[59]
1 أَبَى لِي الْوَفَاءُ دَوَامَ الْجَفَا وَحَلَّ الْحَنِينُ عَدِيمَ الْعَزَا
2 قَعَدْتُ إِلَى الْوَصْلِ مُسْتَعْطِفًا وَقَدْ كُنْتُ قَبْلُ شَدِيدَ الْإِبَا
3 وَإِنِّي لَفِي طَوْلِ كَثْمِ الْهَوَى وَسَثْرِيهِ عَنْكَ بِفَرْطِ الْجَفَا
4 كَمَنْ يَنْفُخُ الْبُوقَ مُسْتَخْفِيًا وَيَضْرِبُ بِالطَّبْلِ تَحْتَ الْكَسَا
5 فَيَا قَلْبُ وَيَحَاكُ كُنْ حَازِمًا إِذَا تَاهَ رَامَ سَبِيلَ النِّجَا
6 وَلَا تَكُ ذَا عَزْمَةٍ جَاهِلًا إِذَا مَا اعْتَدَى لَحْجٌ فِي الْأَعْدَا
7 فَسَلِّ الْحُقُودَ بِرَعِي الْعُهُودِ وَدَاوِ الْجَفَاءَ بِرَعِي الْوَفَا
8 فَأَوْجِعْ مِنْ حَمْلِ عَثَبِ الصَّفَا زَوَالُ الصَّفَاءِ وَقَطْعُ الْإِخَا
9 فَسَامِحْ هَوَاكَ وَكُنْ مُدْنِفًا أَحَبَّ الدَّوَاءِ لِحُبِّ الشِّفَا⁶⁵

Make Amends, O Heart

1 My fidelity persists
Despite your cruelty,
And I am overcome with longing
That knows no consolation

⁶⁵ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 167. For discussion of this poem, see pages 169-172 above.

- 2 I have waited
 Longing for your visit,
 Although, in the past,
 I was obstinate and stubborn
- 3 I continue to conceal
 The secret of our love,
 But it would be most cruel of me
 To conceal it from you
- 4 Like one who blows a trumpet
 And muffles the sound
 Or strikes a drum
 Under a cloth
- 5 Shame on you, O heart!
 Be strong,
 And when you lose your way,
 Hope for a path to deliverance
- 6 Do not make a decision
 In ignorance,
 And if you offend someone,
 Do not persist in your enmity
- 7 Console your anger
 By keeping covenants
 And salve your bitterness
 By remaining faithful
- 8 For more grievous
 Than bearing reproach for your pure happiness
 Is when pure happiness perishes
 And bonds of brotherhood are severed
- 9 Surrender to your love
 And remain in your weakened state,
 This is the dearest remedy
 For him who seeks a cure

عَلَيْكَ وَأَنْي لَسْتُ مِمَّا عَهْدَتْنِي

[60]
 1 وَتَزْعُمُ لِلْوَاشِينَ أَنِّي فَاسِدٌ

2 وَمَا فَسَدْتُ لِي يَشْهَدُ اللَّهُ نِيَّةً
 3 غَدَرْتُ بَعْدِي عَامِداً وَأَخَفْتَنِي
 4 إِلَى اللَّهِ أَشْكُو لَا إِلَيْكَ فَطَالَمَا
 وَلَكِنَّمَا اسْتَفْسَدْتَنِي فَأَتَّهِمْتَنِي
 فَخَفْتُ وَلَوْ أَمَنْتَنِي لَأَتَّمَنْتَنِي
 شَكَوْتُ الَّذِي أَلْقَى إِلَيْكَ فَرَدْتَنِي⁶⁶

I Lament to God, Not to You

- 1 You tell the calumniators
 That I have behaved shamefully toward you
 And that I have not kept
 The covenant we made
- 2 I have intended no harm –
 May God be my witness! –
 But you have cast shame on me
 With your accusations
- 3 You have intentionally betrayed our covenant
 And caused me to fear, and I have feared,
 And if you reassured me,
 I would be assured
- 4 I lament to God, not to you,
 For whenever I lament
 To you of my suffering,
 You make me suffer even more

[61]
 1 أَفَوَضُ أَسْبَابِي إِلَى اللَّهِ كُلِّهَا
 2 وَأَسْمَحُ بِالتَّفْوِيزِ حَتَّى إِذَا انْتَهَى ضَمِيرِي إِلَى مَا بَيْنَنَا لَمْ أَفَوَضِ
 3 وَبِاللَّهِ لَوْ خَيْرْتُ بَيْنَكَ غَادِراً
 4 رَضِيْتُكَ حَظّاً مِنْهُمَا غَيْرَ أَنَّنِي بِهَذَا الَّذِي تَرْضَاهُ لِي غَيْرُ مُرْتَضٍ⁶⁷

I Shall be Content with what God Has Ordained

- 1 I shall consign
 All my troubles to God,
 And be satisfied with what He has ordained
 And content
- 2 I shall do this until

⁶⁶ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 172.

⁶⁷ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 172-173.

I reach the thought
Of that which was between us,
Which I cannot offer up

3 By God, if I had to choose
Between you, though you betray me,
And between all that is in Heaven and Earth,
Once and for all

4 I would consider you
To be my good fortune,
Except that I am not content
With that which pleases you

[62]

1 أَبْتُ غَلَبَاتُ الشَّوْقِ إِلَّا تَقَرُّبًا	إِلَيْكَ وَنَائِي الْعَدْلُ إِلَّا تَجَنُّبًا
2 عَلَيَّ رَقِيبٌ مِنْكَ خَالٍ بِمُهْجَتِي	إِذَا أَنَا سَهَلْتُ اطِّرَاحُكَ صَعَبًا
3 فَهَاءَ نَذَا وَقَفْتُ عَلَيْكَ مُجَرَّبٌ	إِذَا مَا نَبَا بِي مَرْكَبًا رُمْتُ مَرْكَبًا
4 وَمَا كَانَ صَدِّي عَنْكَ صَدًّا مَلَالَةً	وَلَا كَانَ إِقْبَالِي عَلَيْكَ تَطَرُّبًا
5 وَلَا كَانَ ذَاكَ الْعَدْلُ إِلَّا نَصِيحَةً	وَلَا ذَاكَ إِلَّا غَضَاءٌ إِلَّا تَهَيُّبًا
6 وَلَا الْهَجْرُ إِلَّا فَرَطٌ مِّنْ وَلَا الرِّضَى	بِلَا سَبَبٍ إِلَّا اسْتِنْيَاقًا مُّعَذِّبًا
7 وَمَنْ يُمْنِعُ الْعَذْبَ الزُّلَالَ وَيَمْتَنِعُ مَنِ	الشَّرْبِ مِنْ سُورِ الْكِلَابِ تَغَضُّبًا
8 خَلِيقٌ إِذَا لَمْ يَسْتَطِعْ شَرْبَ غَيْرِهِ	وَخَافَ الْمَنَايَا أَنْ يَذِلَّ فَيَشْرَبَا
9 إِذَا الْمَرْءُ لَمْ يُقَدَّرْ لَهُ مَا يُرِيدُهُ	أَرَادَ الَّذِي يُقْضَى لَهُ شَاءَ أَمْ أَبِي ⁶⁸

Between Thirst and Vicious Dogs

1 Because of my overwhelming longing,
I cannot but be near you,
But you avoid me and revile me,
So I can only stay away

2 You have sent a spy
To be my heart's fellow;
Whenever I think your rejection easy to bear,
He makes it difficult

3 Here I stand before you,
Laid low by trials;
Whenever your caravan is far from me,

⁶⁸ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 173.

I wish for it to be near

4 It is not out of exasperation
That I have avoided you,
Nor is it for sport
That I have kept your company

5 When I scolded you,
I only meant to give you advice,
And when I left you alone,
It was only out of respect

6 You leaving me,
Is like taking back a gift;
I will be content with anything from you,
Because it is so painful to miss you

7 If a man is forbidden to drink
From fresh, cool streams,
Kept away by angry dogs
Baring their teeth

8 If he has nothing else to drink,
And he fears lest death
Humiliate him,
He drinks

9 If what a man wills
What has not been destined for him,
Then he wills what has been ordained,
Whether he likes it or not

[63]

1 أَصُولُ بِهِ تِيهًا عَلَيْهِ فَمَنْ رَأَى
2 إِذَا خَفْتُ مِنْهُ الْغَدْرَ أَبَدَى تَوَافِيًا

مِنْ النَّاسِ قَبْلِي عَاشِقًا يَتَصَلَّفُ
يَزُولُ بِهِ خَوْفِي وَيَبْقَى التَّخَوُّفُ⁶⁹

Sincerity is Elusive

1 I visit a barrage
Of compliments upon him,
And who has ever seen a lover
Dispense flattery?

⁶⁹ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 178.

- 2 When I fear lest he betray me,
He affects fidelity,
And my fear abates,
But my apprehension remains

[64]

1	أَلَا يَا لِقَوْمِي لِلْهَوَى الْمُتَزَايِدِ	وَطَوَّلِ اشْتِيَاقِي الرَّاحِلِ الْمُتَبَاعِدِ
2	رَحَلْتُ لِكَيْ أَحْظَى إِذَا أَبْتُ قَادِمًا فَأُورِدَنِي التَّرْحَالُ سَوْءَ الْمَوَارِدِ	
3	كَأَنِّي لَدَيْغٍ حَارٍ عَنْ كُنْهِ دَائِهِ	طَبِيبٌ فِدَاوَاهُ بِسُمِّ الْأَسْلَوِدِ
4	فَمَالَ مَعَ الدَّاءِ الْقَدِيمِ دَوَاؤُهُ	فَيَا لَكَ مِنْ دَاءٍ طَرِيفٍ وَتَالِدٍ ⁷⁰

The Snakebite

- 1 Alas, O people,
For the ever-increasing love
And the never-ending homesickness
Of the traveler when he is far from home
- 2 I set out seeking my good fortune;
If I return,
Then leaving again
Will bring me great misfortune
- 3 I am like one who has been bitten,
And the doctor knows not the nature of his sickness,
So he treats him
With the venom of snakes
- 4 The treatment has the same effect
As the sickness already present,
What a strange and deadly
Sickness you are!

[65]

1	تَمَتَّعَ مِنْ حَبِيبِكَ بِالْوَدَاعِ	فَمَا بَعْدَ الْفِرَاقِ مِنْ اجْتِمَاعِ
2	فَكَمْ جُرِّعْتَ مِنْ هَجْرٍ وَغَدْرِ	وَمِنْ حَالِ ارْتِفَاعٍ وَانْتِضَاعِ
3	وَكَمْ كَأْسٍ أَمَرَ مِنَ الْمَنَايَا	شَرِبْتُ فَلَمْ يَضِقْ عَنْهَا ذِرَاعِي
4	فَلَمْ أَرَ فِي الَّذِي قَاسَيْتُ شَيْئًا	أَشَدَّ مِنَ الْفِرَاقِ بِلَا وَدَاعِ

⁷⁰ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 178.

5 تَعَالَى اللَّهُ كُلُّ مُوَاصَلَاتٍ وَإِنْ طَالَتْ تَوَلُّوْهُ إِلَى انْقِطَاعٍ⁷¹

Enjoy Bidding Your Beloved Farewell

- 1 Enjoy bidding your beloved
Farewell,
For after you part,
You shall not meet again
- 2 For how much abandonment and betrayal
Have you been made to swallow,
How much loss
And deprivation?
- 3 How many cups
More bitter than death
I have drunk,
And never did my hand recoil from them!
- 4 In all that I have endured,
I have never seen anything
More painful
Than separation without saying farewell
- 5 Exalted be God!
All relationships,
No matter how long they last
Lead to separation

[66]
1 وَكُنْتُ أَرَى أَنْ قَدْ تَنَاهَى بِي الْهَوَى إِلَى غَايَةِ مَا بَعْدَهَا لِي مَذْهَبُ
2 فَلَمَّا تَفَرَّقْنَا تَذَكَّرْتُ مَا مَضَى فَأَيَقَنْتُ أَنِّي إِنَّمَا كُنْتُ أَلْعَبُ
3 فَقَدْ وَالَّذِي لَوْ شَاءَ لَمْ يَخْلُقِ النَّوَى عُرِضْتُ فَمَا أَدْرِي إِلَى أَيْنَ أَذْهَبُ⁷²

My Love has Reached the Highest Level

- 1 I have seen that my love
Has reached such a level
That I cannot
Go beyond

⁷¹ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 185. For discussion of this poem, see pages 172-175 above.

⁷² Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 197.

- 2 When we parted, I remembered
What had happened before,
And I was certain
That I had only been jesting
- 3 By the One who, if He had so willed,
Might not have created separation,
I am afflicted,
And I know not where to go

[67]

1 كَفَى حَزْناً أَلَّا أَعَايِنَ بُقْعَةً مِنْ الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا زِدْتُ شَوْقاً إِلَيْكُمْ
2 وَإِنِّي مَتَى مَا طَابَ لِي خَفُضُ عَيْشَةٍ تَذَكَّرْتُ أَيَّاماً مَضَتْ لِي لَدَيْكُمْ
3 فَتَغَصَّ تَذْكَارِي لَهَا طِيبَ عَيْشَتِي فَقُلْتُ سَيَفْنِي ذَا فَيَأْسَى عَلَيْكُمْ⁷³

Memories Mingle Life's Sweetness with Sadness

- 1 Enough sadness!
Every time I see that land
My longing for you
Increases
- 2 Whenever I begin to enjoy
Life's diversions,
I remember the bygone days
I spent with you
- 3 These memories
Have tainted my life's sweetness;
I say, "This sweetness will pass;
How sad I am over you!"

[68]

1 إِلَى اللَّهِ أَشْكُو عَبْرَةً قَدْ أَظَلَّتْ وَنَفْساً إِذَا مَا عَزَّهَا الشَّوْقُ ذَلَّتْ
2 تَحِنُّ إِلَى أَرْضِ الْحِجَازِ وَدُونِهَا تَنَائِفُ لَوْ تَسْرِي بِهَا الرِّيحُ ضَلَّتْ
3 وَإِنِّي بِهَا لَوْ لَا أَمَانِي تَعْرِهَا وَقَدْ أَرْجَفْتُ هَوْجَ الْمَطَايَا وَكَلَّتْ
4 أَلْأَمْنُ مِنْ وَادِي زُبَالَةَ شَرِبَةً وَقَدْ نَهَلْتُ مِنْهُ الْكِلَابُ وَعَلَّتْ
5 سَقَى اللَّهُ رَمْلَ الْقَاعِ وَالْقَاعَ فَالِلْوَى فَقَدْ عَطَفْتُ نَفْسِي إِلَيْهِ وَحَنَّتْ
6 وَأَسْقَى لَوَى جَبَلِي زُرُودَ وَمُرْبَخاً سَحَابُ لَا يَلْقَى الظُّلَمَا مَا أَظَلَّتْ

⁷³ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 203.

7 هَمَمْتُ وَلَمْ أَرْبِعْ عَلَى الْفِكْرِ لَحْظَةً
وَقَدْ كَانَ حَظُّ النَّفْسِ أَنْ لَوْ تَأَنَّتِ
8 وَأَصْبَحْتُ لَهْفَانًا عَلَى مَا أَضَعْتُه
كَذَاكَ يَكُونُ الرَّأْيُ مَا لَمْ يُنَبِّتِ⁷⁴

My Soul Longs For Ḥijāz

- 1 I lament to God
Of tears that cast a shade
And a soul that, whenever its longing became strong,
Was humbled
- 2 It pines for the land of Ḥijāz
And its surrounding deserts,
Where the winds pass through
And dissipate
- 3 There I am,
Unless my soul is deceived by its wishes,
For I have heard the riders urging on their mounts
In the distance
- 4 Do I refrain from drinking
From the valley of Zubāla?
The dogs have drunk from it
And fallen ill
- 5 May God pour blessings on al-Qā`
And its sands, and Liwā!
My soul is tenderly inclined to it
And longs for it
- 6 May He make Liwā
Water the twin peaks of Zarūd and Murbakh!
May they know no thirst,
As long as the clouds cast their shade!
- 7 I began, but I did not remain
Lost in thought even for a moment,
For it is my soul's lot
To be delayed in going there
- 8 I have become heartbroken
Over what I have lost;
Such is one's opinion

⁷⁴ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 205. For discussion of this poem, see page 162 above.

When it is unsubstantiated

[69]

- 1 سَقَى اللهُ رَمْلَ الْقَاعِ وَبِلَاءَ وَدِيمَةً لَتَحْيَى بِهِ تِلْكَ الرُّسُومُ الدَّوَارِسُ
2 أَشَوْقًا إِلَى نَجْدٍ وَدُونَ لِقَائِهَا أَهَؤُلَاءِ يُخَشَى قَطْعُهَا وَبَسَائِسُ
3 عَلَى أَنَّ عَبْدَ الشَّوْقِ لَيْسَتْ تَهْوُلُهُ حُزُونُ الْفِيَّافِي وَاللَّيَالِي الدَّوَامِسُ
4 بِمَا حَبَلَتْ فَلَتَأْتِنِي مِنْ بَلَائِهَا فَلَيْسَ لِمَا يَقْضِي بِهِ اللهُ حَابِسُ⁷⁵

The Slave of Longing does not Fear

- 1 May God water the sands of al-Qā`
With torrents, and Dīma
That the effaced traces
May spring to life
- 2 I long for Najd,
But all around it
Are things that I fear will keep me away
And obstacles
- 3 But he who is a slave to longing
Does not fear
The sadness of the deserts
And the blazing hot nights
- 4 Whatever they may bring,
So be it,
For that which God decrees
Cannot be prevented

[70]

- 1 دَعَانِي الشَّوْقُ وَالرَّاكِبُونَ قَدْ هَجَدُوا وَالشَّمْسُ فِي آخِرِ الْجَوَازِ تَتَقَدُّ
2 وَالْقَيْظُ مُحْتَدِمٌ وَالرَّوْحُ مُنْصَرِمٌ وَالرَّأْيُ مُخْتَلِفٌ وَالْحَنْفُ مُطْرَدٌ
3 وَالْبَيْدُ مُغْبِرَةٌ الْأَرْجَاءِ مُفْقِرَةٌ كَأَنَّ أَعْلَامَهَا فِي الْآلِ تَرْتَعِدُ
4 فَظَلْتُ طَوْعًا لِدَاعِي الشَّوْقِ أَوْ قِظُهُمْ وَعَلَّ أَكْثَرُهُمْ سَاهُونَ مَا رَقَدُوا
5 حَتَّى إِذَا قُلْتُ سُدُّوا قَالَ بَعْضُهُمْ قَدْ جُنَّ هَذَا فَخَلُّوا عَنْهُ وَابْتَعِدُوا
6 يَذْرُونَ مَا وَجَدُوا مِنْ حَرِّ يَوْمِهِمْ وَقَتَ النُّزُولِ وَلَا يَذْرُونَ مَا أَجْدُ
7 حَرَّ الْفِرَاقِ إِذَا مَا الْهَجْرُ سَاعَدَهُ حَرٌّ تَخَصُّ بِهِ الْأَحْشَاءُ وَالْكَبِدُ⁷⁶

⁷⁵ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 208. For discussion of this poem, see page 157 above.

The Blazing Heat of Love

- 1 Love called out to me,
When the riders were sleeping,
And the sun was blazing
In the midsummer
- 2 The heat haze was blazing fiercely,
The soul was about to depart,
Opinions were going their separate ways,
And death was resolute
- 3 The wilderness was dusty and desolate
As far as the eye can see,
As though its features
Were trembling in the mirage
- 4 Obeying the command of love,
I woke them up,
Though most of them,
Were half-awake, not asleep
- 5 When I say, "Arise!"
One of them said,
"This one has gone mad.
Leave him alone; stay away from him."
- 6 They know what they felt
On that hot day
When they set off,
But they do not know what I feel
- 7 The heat of separation,
When combined with rejection
Is a heat that burns
Only on the inside

[71]

1 يَا مَنْ تَجَاوَزَ حَدَّ السَّمْعِ وَالْبَصَرِ	وَمَنْ يَفُوقُ ضِيَاءَ الشَّمْسِ وَالْقَمَرِ
2 لَوْ كُنْتَ تَعْلَمُ مَا أَلْقَى مِنَ السَّهَرِ	وَمَا أَقَاسِي مِنَ الْأَشْجَانِ وَالْفَكْرِ
3 وَمَا تَضَمَّنَ قَلْبِي مِنْ هَوَاكَ إِذَا	لَمَّا رَثَيْتَ لِحِسْمِي مِنْ أَدَى الْمَطَرِ

⁷⁶ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 208-209. For discussion of this poem, please see pages 130-132, 151 above.

4 أَنَّى يَضُرُّ نَدَى الْأَمْطَارِ ذَا كَبِدٍ حَرَّى وَقَلْبٍ بِنَارِ الشَّوْقِ مُسْتَعْرِ
 5 لَوْ كَانَ دُونَكَ بَحْرُ الصِّينِ مُتَعَرِّضاً لَجِلْتُ ذَاكَ سَرَاباً دَارِسَ الْأَثَرِ
 6 وَلَوْ أَذِنْتَ وَفِيمَا بَيْنَنَا سَقَرٌ لَهَوَّنَ الشَّوْقُ خَوْضَ النَّارِ فِي سَقَرِ
 7 لَا تَكْذِبَنَّ فَمَا حَالٌ تَضَمَّنَهَا قَلْبُ الْمَشُوقِ تُوَازِي حَالِ مُنْتَظَرٍ⁷⁷

Nothing is Worse than Waiting

- 1 Your beauty is more
Than that of visage and voice,
And you are more radiant
Than the sun and the moon
- 2 If you but knew
What sleeplessness I have suffered,
And what sadness I feel
Thinking about you
- 3 And what love for you
I hold in my heart,
Then you would not mourn
For what the rain has done to my body
- 4 How can the rain
Harm one
Whose liver is aflame
And whose heart burns with love?
- 5 If the Sea of China
Were spread out around you,
I would think it
A mirage that would leave no trace
- 6 If you allowed it,
Though scorching heat might be between us,
Then my desire would make even the fires of Hell
Seem little by comparison
- 7 Do not lie,
For nothing is more painful
To one who longs for his beloved
Than the pain of waiting

⁷⁷ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 209. For discussion of this poem, see page 157 above.

[72]

1	كَمْ دُونَ أَرْضِكَ مِنْ وَادٍ وَمِنْ عَلَمٍ	1	كَأَنَّ أَعْلَاهُ بِالْأَفْلَاقِ مُنْتَسِجٌ
2	وَمِنْ مَرْوَجٍ كَظْهَرِ الثَّرَسِ مُظْلِمَةٍ	2	كَأَنَّ حَصْبَاءَهَا تَحْتَ الدُّجَى سُبُجٌ
3	حَتَّى إِذَا الشَّمْسُ لَاحَتْ فِي سَبَاسِيبِهَا	3	حَسِبْتُ أَعْلَامَهَا فِي الْآلِ تَخْتَلِجُ
4	وَكَمْ فَلَاةٍ يَفُوتُ الظَّرْفَ آخِرُهَا	4	لِلْجَنِّ بِاللَّيْلِ فِي أَفْطَارِهَا وَهَجٌ
5	يَهْمَاءُ غَبْرَاءُ لَا يَدْرِي الدَّلِيلُ بِهَا	5	فِي أَيِّ أَرْجَائِهَا يُرْجَى لَهُ الْفَرْجُ
6	قَطَعْتُهَا بِابْنِ حَرْفٍ ضَامِرٍ قَطْمٍ	6	صَلَبِ الْمَنَاسِمِ فِي إِرْقَالِهَا هَوَجٌ
7	شَوْفًا إِلَيْكَ وَلَوْلَا مَا أَكَابِدُهُ	7	لَكَانَ لِي فِي بِلَادِ اللَّهِ مُنْفَرِجٌ
8	فَإِنْ تَجِدْ لِي فَمَحْقُوقٌ بِذَلِكَ وَإِنْ	8	تَبْخُلْ فَلَا لَوْمَ وَلَا حَرَجٌ ⁷⁸

I Have Crossed Deserts to Find You

1 How many valleys around your lands,
And how many banners so high
That the tops of them seemed
To be woven into the heavens

2 And how many meadows,
Dark as a solar eclipse,
Their pebbles like coal
In the darkness of night

3 So dark that, if the sun
Shone brightly on them,
You would think their banners
Were trembling in the mirage

4 And how many deserts
Spanning as far as the eye can see,
Lands of the *jinn*,
Blazing hot

5 Wayless, dusty deserts
Where even guides know not
In which direction
To seek relief

6 I have crossed
On an emaciated, hungry camel
Strong of hooves,

⁷⁸ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 211. For discussion of this poem, see pages 155-156, 166-167 above.

Swift of gait

- 7 Longing for you,
And if not for what passion I am suffering,
God's country
Would have brought me relief

- 8 If you are generous with me,
It is your right to do so,
And if you are stingy with me,
I will not blame you or embarrass you

[73]

1 أَتَهْجُرُ مَنْ تُحِبُّ وَأَنْتَ جَارُ	وَتَطْلُبُهُمْ وَقَدْ بَعْدَ الْمَزَارُ
2 وَتَسْكُنُ بَعْدَ نَائِيهِمْ اِشْتِيَاقًا	وَتَسْأَلُ فِي الْمَنَازِلِ أَيْنَ سَارُوا
3 تَرَكْتَ سُؤْلَهُمْ وَهُمْ جَمِيعُ	وَتَرْجُو أَنْ تُخَبِّرَكَ الدِّيارُ
4 فَأَنْتَ كَمُشْتَرِي أَثَرٍ بَعِينِ	فَقَلْبُكَ بِالصَّبَابَةِ مُسْتَطَارُ
5 فَنَفْسُكَ لَمْ وَلَا تَلِمِ الْمَطَايَا	وَمُتْ أَسْفًا فَقَدْ حَقَّ الْحِذَارُ
6 سَمِعْتَ بِنَائِيهِمْ وَظَلَلْتَ حَيًّا	فَقَدْتُكَ كَيْفَ يُهْنِيكَ الْقَرَارُ
7 إِذَا مَا الصَّبُّ أَسْلَمَهُ صُدُودُ	إِلَى بَيْنِ فَمُهْجَنُهُ جُبَارُ
8 تَبَاعَدَ مَنْ هَوَيْتَ وَأَنْتَ دَانٍ	فَلَا تَتَعَبْ فَلَيْسَ لَكَ اعْتِدَارُ
9 إِذَا مَا بَانَ مَنْ تَهَوَّى فَوَلَّى	وَلَجَّ بِكَ الْهَوَى فَالْصَبْرُ عَارُ ⁷⁹

You Have Only Yourself to Blame

- 1 Do you avoid the ones you love
When they are close at hand
And seek them out
When they are far away?
- 2 Do you miss them
After they have gone away,
And do you ask the encampments
Where they have gone?
- 3 You did not ask about them
When they were nearby,
And now you beseech
The abodes for an answer

⁷⁹ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 219.

- 4 You are like one who buys
Effaced ruins,
Your heart about to take flight
With passion
- 5 Blame yourself;
Do not blame the mounts,
And die of grief;
For it is right to be cautious
- 6 You heard that they were leaving,
But you remained at home,
And I have lost you;
How could you make such a decision?
- 7 When rejection
Hands a lover over
To separation,
His heart is forced to obey
- 8 The one you have loved is far away,
Though you are nearby;
Do not tire yourself,
For you have no valid excuse
- 9 When the one you love
Turns away from you and leaves,
Your love is stubborn,
And your patience is disgraced

[74]

1 أَمْرٌ عَلَى الْمَنَازِلِ كَالْغَرِيبِ أَسْأَلُ مَنْ لَقِيتُ عَنِ الْحَبِيبِ
2 وَمَا يُغْنِي الْوُقُوفُ عَلَى الْأَتَافِي وَنُؤِي الدَّارِ عَنْ دَنَفٍ كَنِيبِ
3 حَبَسْتُ بِهَا الْمَطِيَّ فَلَمْ تُجِبْنِي وَلَمْ يَرْحَمْ بِلَا شَكٍّ نَحِيبِي
4 فَقُلْتُ لَهَا سُكُوتُكَ ذَا عَجِيبٍ وَأَعْجَبُ مِنْ سُكْرَتِكَ أَنْ تُجِيبِي
5 شَكُوتُ إِلَى الدِّيارِ فَمَا شَفَعْنِي بَلَى شَاقَتْ إِلَى وَجْهِ الْحَبِيبِ
6 فَمَنْ يُنْجِي الْعَلِيلَ مِنَ الْمَنَايَا إِذَا كَانَ الْبَلَاءُ مِنَ الطَّبِيبِ⁸⁰

The Abodes Gave me no Consolation

1 I pass among the abodes

⁸⁰ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 219-220. For discussion of this poem, see pages 132-134, 166 above.

Like a stranger,
Asking everyone I meet
About the one I love

2 Indeed, being far from home
Does not help
One who is already
Desperate and despondent

3 I tied up my mount,
But the abodes did not answer me,
And they certainly did not
Console my weeping

4 I said to them,
“Your silence is wondrous indeed,
But it would be more wondrous
If you would answer me.”

5 I lamented to the abodes,
But they brought me no relief,
Rather, they increased my longing
To see my beloved's face.

6 Who will rescue a man
From the brink of death,
When the one who caused his affliction
Is the only one who can heal him?

[75]

1 مُبَاشِرَةُ النَّسِيمِ لِشَخْصٍ إِفْي	أَشَدُّ عَلَيَّ مِنْ فَقْدِ الْحَبِيبِ
2 نَأَى عَنِّي الْحَبِيبُ فَصَارَ قَلْبِي	يَغَارُ عَلَى الصَّبَا وَعَلَى الْجَنُوبِ
3 وَلَوْ يَسْطِيعُ مَا دَرَجَتْ دُبُورُ	إِذْنُ وَنَهَى الشَّمَالَ عَنِ الْجَنُوبِ
4 خَلِيلِي مِنْ نَوَاكٍ أَخَذْتُ حَظِّي	فَهَلْ لِي فِي نَوَالِكَ مِنْ نَصِيبِ
5 نُفَيْتُ مِنَ الْهَوَى إِنْ كَانَ قَلْبِي	دَعَى وَدًّا كَوَدِّكَ فِي الْمَغِيبِ ⁸¹

When the Breeze Hastens

1 When the breeze hastens
Toward the one I love,
It is more grievous to me

⁸¹ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 224.

Even than being separated from my beloved

2 My beloved went far away
And my heart became jealous
Of the East wind
And the South

3 If the West wind
Could determine what comes to pass,
It would forbid the North wind
From leaving me

4 My friend, from your departure
I have derived my fate;
Is it my destiny
To meet you again?

5 May I be denied love
If my heart ever called out
For a far-away friend
Besides you!

[76]
1 أَرَقْتُ لِزَرْقٍ مِنْ تِهَامَةٍ خَافِقٍ كَأَنَّ سَنَا إِيْمَاضِهِ قَلْبُ عَاشِقٍ
2 يَلُوحُ فَازْدَادَ اشْتِيَاقًا وَمَا أَرَى يَشُوقُنِي لَوْلَاكَ مِنْ ضَوْءٍ بَارِقٍ
3 مَتَى تَذُنُ لَا يَمْلِكُ لِي الشَّوْقُ لَوْعَةً وَإِنْ تَنَأَّ عَنِّي فَالْتَوَهُمْ شَائِقِي
4 فَرَأَيْكَ فِي عَبْدٍ إِلَيْكَ مَفْرُهُ لِنُتْعِشَهُ بِالْوَصْلِ قَبْلَ الْعَوَاقِبِ⁸²

Lightning in Tihāma

1 I lay awake,
As lightning flashed in Tihāma,
As though its luster
Were a lover's heart

2 As it flashed,
It increased my longing,
And were it not for you,
Lightning flashes would not fill me with longing

3 When you are near,

⁸² Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 229. For further discussion of this poem, see pages 157-159 of this dissertation.

My longing does not torment me like this,
But when you are away,
My every thought makes me miss you

4 Consider a servant

Whose only refuge is you
So that you might grant him the solace of your company
While he is still able to benefit from it

[77]
1 أَرَاكَ بَرْقٌ فِي دُجَى اللَّيْلِ لَامِعٌ
2 أَلَا أَنْ تَخْشَى الْبَرْقَ وَالْإِلْفُ حَاضِرُ
3 وَهَاجَتْ رِيَاخُ زِدَنْ ذَا الشَّوْقِ صَبْوَةً
4 وَعَاشَرْتَ أَقْوَاماً فَلَمْ تَلْقَ فِيهِمْ
5 وَأَصْبَحْتَ لَا تَرَوِي مِنَ الشَّعْرِ إِذْ نَأَى
6 سِوَى قَوْلِ غَيْلَانَ بْنِ عُقْبَةَ نَادِماً
7 هُنَاكَ تَمَنَّى أَنْ عَيْنَكَ لَمْ تَكُنْ
8 فَكُلُّ الَّذِي تَلْقَى يَسْوُوكَ إِنْ دَنَا
9 فَيَا وََيْكَ لَا تُسْرِعْ إِلَى الْبَيْنِ إِنَّهُ
أَجَلُ كُلِّ مَا يَلْقَاهُ ذُو الشَّوْقِ رَائِعُ
فَكَيْفَ إِذَا مَا لَاحَ وَالْإِلْفُ شَاسِعُ
وَبَاكَرْتَ الْأَيْكَ الْحِمَامُ السَّوَاغِعُ
خَلِيلَكَ فَاسْتَعَصَتْ عَلَيْكَ الْمَدَامِعُ
هَوَاكَ وَبَاتَ الشَّعْرُ لِلنَّاسِ وَاسِعُ
هَلِ الْأَرْضُ مِنَ اللَّاتِي مَضِيَّ رَوَاغِعُ
وَأَنْتَ لَمْ تَرَحَلْ وَالْفُكَّ رَابِعُ
وَكُلُّ الَّذِي تَلْقَى إِذَا بَانَ فَاجِعُ
هُوَ الْمَوْتُ فَاحْذَرْ غَيْبَ مَا أَنْتَ صَانِعُ⁸³

What Ghaylān ibn `Uqba Said

1 Does lightning glistening

In the middle of the night frighten you?
Yes, everything that happens to a lover
Frightens him

2 Do you fear the lightning even now,

While your beloved is near?
What, then, if it flashes
When the beloved is away?

3 Winds blew,

Increasing the lover's passion,
And the rhapsodizing doves
Hastened to the thickets

4 And you kept the company of people,

But you did not find your friend among them,
And your tears

⁸³ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 232-233. For discussion of this poem, see pages 179-182 above.

Rebelled against you

- 5 You ceased to recite poetry
When your beloved was away,
Even though poetry remained
Widespread among the people,
- 6 Except what Ghaylān ibn `Uqba said,
Remorseful,
“Will the days that have gone by
Ever return?”
- 7 He wished
That you were not there,
That you had not traveled,
While your beloved stayed behind
- 8 Everything bothers you,
Even when your beloved is near,
And when he is away,
Everything makes you miserable
- 9 Woe to you!
Do not be so quick to leave your beloved,
For it equals death,
So think of the consequences of what you are doing

[78]

1 أَرَقْتُ لِنَارِ بِالطُّلَيْحَةِ أَوْقَدْتُ	تَرَاءَتْ لِلْحَظِ الْعَيْنِ ثُمَّ تَسْتَرَّتْ
2 عَلْتُ وَخَبْتُ ثُمَّ انْجَلْتُ وَتَطَاوَلْتُ عَلَى	هَضَبَاتِ الرَّمْلِ ثُمَّ تَخَفَّضْتُ
3 فَلَمْ يَخْبُ شَوْقِي إِذْ خَبْتُ بَلْ تَلَهَّبْتُ	صَبَابَةُ قَلْبِي بِالْهَوَى إِذْ تَلَهَّبْتُ
4 وَمَا رَدَّ عَنْهَا الطَّرْفَ بَعْدُ مَكَانِهَا	وَلَكِنْ دُمُوعُ الْعَيْنِ لَمَّا تَهَلَّلْتُ
5 ذَكَرْتُ بِهَا الدَّهْرَ الَّذِي لَيْسَ عَائِداً	وَمَا نُسِيتُ أَيَّامَهُ بَلْ نُسِيتُ
6 فَمَا أَنْصَفْتُ أَذْكَتْ هَوَى حِينَ أَذْكَيتُ وَلَمْ تُطْفِئْ نِيرَانُ الْهَوَى حِينَ أُطْفِئْتُ ⁸⁴	

The Fires of Love

- 1 I have lost sleep over a campfire in Ṭulayḥa;
It was kindled
And remained long enough to be seen,
Then it veiled itself

⁸⁴ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 239. For discussion of this poem, see page 158 above.

- 2 It flared up and died down,
Then it appeared again
And rose high above the sand dunes
And then diminished
- 3 But my love did not die down
As the flames died down,
But my heart's passion was aflame
With a blazing fire
- 4 It was too far away
To meet my gaze,
But when it glistened,
So did my tears glisten
- 5 I recalled the times
That will not return,
Those days have not been forgotten,
And I cannot pretend to forget them
- 6 As soon as the flames diminished,
They sharpened my love pangs as they were kindled again,
And the fires of love were not extinguished
When the flames were extinguished

[79]

وَفِي نَوْحِ الْحَمَامِ لِي عَزَاءٌ	1 أَرَى نَوْحَ الْحَمَامِ يَشُوقُ قَوْمًا
وَأَزَّ عَجَبُهَا التَّفَرُّقُ وَالْجَفَاءُ	2 إِذَا بَكَتِ الْحَمَائِمُ وَهِيَ وَحْشٌ
إِذَا امْتَنَعَ التَّرَاوُرُ وَاللِّقَاءُ ⁸⁵	3 فَمَا جَزَعُ الْأُنَيْسِ مِنَ التَّصَابِي

Even the Doves Weep for their Love

- 1 Behold! The mourning of the doves
Stirs longing in the hearts of me,
But for me, the mourning of the doves
Is a consolation
- 2 If doves weep,
And they are only beasts,
But they are disturbed
By separation from their loved ones, and abandonment

⁸⁵ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 245-246. For discussion of this poem, see page 159 above.

- 3 Then what dread does a friend feel,
When he has loved since his youth,
If he can no longer visit his friend
Or be near him?

[80]

1 أَيْهَا الْقَلْبُ لَا تَجْزَعُ مِنَ الْبَيْنِ وَاصْطَبِرْ فَلَسْتَ لِمَا يُقْضَى عَلَيْكَ بِدَافِعٍ
2 تَوَكَّلْ عَلَى الرَّحْمَنِ إِنْ كُنْتَ مُؤْمِنًا يُجِرْكَ وَدَعْنِي مِنْ نُحُوسِ الطَّوَالِعِ
3 فَكُلُّ الَّذِي قَدْ قَدَّرَ اللَّهُ وَاقِعٌ وَمَا لَمْ يُقَدَّرْهُ فَلَيْسَ بِوَاقِعٍ⁸⁶

Trust in the Merciful One

- 1 O heart, do not fear being far
From your beloved, and be patient,
For you cannot avert
What has been decreed
- 2 Trust in the Merciful One
If you are a believer,
And He will keep you safe.
Spare me from the vicissitudes of fate!
- 3 Everything God ordains
Will come to pass,
And what He does not ordain
Will not come to pass

[81]

1 وَلَمَّا أَتَوْنَا بِالْمَطَايَا وَقَرَّبُوا
2 تَبَيَّنَتْكُمْ عَمْدًا لِأَحْظَى بِالْحِظَةِ
3 فَلَمْ أَنْسَ إِذْ قَنَيْتَ رَحْلَ مَطِيَّتِي
4 كَأَنَّكَ لَمْ تَعْلَمْ بِأَنَّ رَبَّ لَحْظَةٍ
5 فَلَوْ لَمْ تَكُنْ تَهْوَى الْفِرَاقَ نَحَرْتَهَا
6 فَيَا عَجَبًا مِنِّي وَمِنْ صَبْرِي مُهْجَتِي
7 أَضِنُ بِهَا عَمَّنْ يَرَى الْمُلْكَ دُونَهَا

مَحَامِلَ لَمْ تُشَدِّدْ عَلَيْهَا قُبُودُهَا
لَعَلِّي إِنْ فَارَقْتُكُمْ لَا أُعِيدُهَا
وَقُلْتُ لِحَادِي الدَّوْدِلِمِ لَا تَقُودُهَا
تَفَوُّتُكَ لَا تَدْرِي مَتَى تَسْتَفِيدُهَا
وَلَمْ تَلْتَمِسْ عَمْدًا لَهَا مَنْ يَقُودُهَا
عَلَيَّ وَقَدْ أُعْيِتَ عَلَى مَنْ يَكِيدُهَا
وَأَبْذَلُهَا طَوْعًا لِمَنْ يُرِيدُهَا⁸⁷

⁸⁶ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 251.

⁸⁷ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 258.

Lead My Camel, O Caravan Leader

- 1 When we came to our mounts
And brought the saddles,
And we had not even yet
Tied them on
- 2 I went directly to you
To delay you for a moment,
Because if I left you,
I might not see you again
- 3 I have not forgotten
Since you fastened my camel's saddle,
And I said to the caravan leader,
"Why do you not lead her?"
- 4 It is as though you do not know
That some moments pass you by
And you never know
When it might benefit you to have seized them"
- 5 "If you did not want to be separated from your beloved
You would have slaughtered her;
You would not have sought out
Someone to lead her"
- 6 How wondrous of me,
And how patient my heart's core has been with me,
Though I am powerless against the one
Who deceives it
- 7 I guard it zealously against the one
Who owns all that surrounds it,
And I will willingly surrender it
To one who wants it

[82]

حُضُورُ الْبَيْنِ إِلَّا مَذْ لِيَالِي	1 جُعِلْتُ فِدَاكَ لَمْ يَخْطُرْ بِيَالِي
عَلَى شَوْقِي نَوَاكَ وَأَنْتَ قَالِي	2 فَقَدْ وَهَوَاكَ زَادَنِي اشْتِيَاقًا
سَهَرْتُ فَلَمْ يَزُرْ طَيْفُ الْخِيَالِ	3 وَأَكَّدَ ذَلِكَ أَنِّي مَذْ لِيَالِ
يُقَلِّبُهُ هَوَاكَ عَلَى الْمَقَالِي	4 فَنَبْتُ عَلَى الْفِرَاشِ كَأَنَّ قَلْبِي
وَكَانَ الطَّيْفُ يَكْشِفُ بَعْضَ مَا بِي	5 وَلَسْتُ تَرَاهُ يَطْرُقُنِي بِحَالِ

6 فَقُلْ لِي بِالَّذِي أَصْنَفَاكَ وَدِّي أَنْتَ نَهَيْتَ طَيْفَكَ عَنْ وَصَالِي
7 أَمِ السَّهَرُ الَّذِي أَلْزَمْتَنِيهِ نَفَى عَنِّي الْخِيَالَ فَلَا أُبَالِي⁸⁸

Why Does the Vision of You not Visit Me?

- 1 May I be your ransom!
The thought of our impending separation
Has only entered my mind
In the past few nights
- 2 By your love!
Your absence has caused me
Desire upon desire,
Though you despise me
- 3 It has made certain that,
These last few nights,
I have lain awake,
And the imaginary vision of you has not visited me
- 4 As I lay on my bed,
It was as though your love
Was turning my heart over
Above a cooking fire
- 5 The phantom vision
Has discovered what I feel,
But you do not see him visiting me
In this state
- 6 Tell me,
By the One who chose you to be my friend,
Have you forbidden the vision of you
From visiting me?
- 7 Or is it the sleeplessness,
Which you have caused,
That keeps the phantom vision away?
It matters not to me

[83]
1 وَقَدْ كُنْتُ لَا أَرْضَى مِنَ النَّيْلِ بِالرِّضَا وَأَقْبَلُ مَا فَوْقَ الرِّضَى⁸⁹ مُتَلَوِّمًا

⁸⁸ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 260-261.

فَنِعْتُ بِطَيْفٍ مِنْكَ يَأْتِي مُسَلِّمًا
فَزَارَ وَحْيًا ثُمَّ قَامَ وَسَلِّمًا
فَدَاوَى سَقَامِي ثُمَّ بَانَ وَأَسْقَمًا
وَلَمْ أَدْرِإِذْ وَلَّى إِلَى أَيْنَ يَمَّمَا
وَإِنْ ذَرَفَتْ عَيْنِي لِفُرْقَتِهِ دَمًا⁹⁰

2 فَلَمَّا تَفَرَّقْنَا وَشَطَّتْ بِنَا النَّوَى
3 فَسَاعَفَنِي وَهْنًا خِيَالُكَ فِي الْكَرَى
4 بِنَفْسِي وَأَهْلِي مِنْ خِيَالِ أَلَمِّ بِي
5 فَوَاحَسَرَتَا لَمْ أَدْرِ أَنِّي أَهْتَدَى لَنَا
6 رَعَاهُ ضَمَانُ اللَّهِ فِي كُلِّ حَالَةٍ

Godspeed You, Phantom Vision

- 1 In the past, I was not content with
The happiness of being with you,
Nor did I remain
In such great joy
- 2 When we parted
And distance set in between us,
I was content when a phantom vision of you
Came to visit me
- 3 It assuaged my weakness
To see you in my dreams;
Your vision entered and greeted me,
Then rose up and bade farewell
- 4 By my soul and my family!
A phantom vision came near to me
And cured my sickness
And then went away and made me sicker
- 5 Alas! I know not
Whence he came to me,
And I know not, since he left,
Where he has gone
- 6 May God protect him,
Come what may,
Though I, on account of his departure,
Shed tears of blood

[84]

1 سَقَى اللَّهُ رَمْلَ الْقَاعِ فِي النَّخْلَاتِ فَذَاكَ الْكَثِيبَ الْفَرْدَ فِي السَّمُرَاتِ

⁸⁹ Nykl's edition reads الرضَى.

⁹⁰ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 265.

2 فَفَقِّرَ الْعِبَادِيَّ الَّذِي دُونَ مُرْبَخٍ
 3 فَجَبَلِي زُرُودٍ فَالطَّلِيحَةَ فَالْلَوَى
 4 وَلَمْ يَبْقَ مِنْ لَذَاتِهَا غَيْرُ ذِكْرَةٍ
 5 لِقَصْرِ عَلَى وَادِي زُبَالَةٍ مُشْرِفٍ
 6 أَحَبُّ إِلَيَّ نَفْسِي وَأَشَقِّي لِشَجْوِهَا
 7 عَسَى اللَّهُ لَا تَبَاسٌ سَيَأْذُنُ عَاجِلًا
 8 وَتَرْضَى قُلُوبٌ قَدْ تَوَاتَرَ سَخَطُهَا

فَمُرْبَخَ وَالْغُدْرَانَ فَالْهَضْبَاتِ
 فَإِنَّ لَهَا عِنْدِي يَدًا وَهَنَاتِ
 تَقَطُّعُ نَفْسِي عِنْدَهَا حَسَرَاتِ
 أَكْفَكُفُ فِي أَكْنَافِهِ عِبْرَاتِي
 وَأُولَى بِهَا هَذِهِ الْقَرِيَّاتِ
 بِنَصْرَةٍ مَظْلُومٍ وَفَكِّ عُنَاةٍ
 عَلَيَّ فَعَادَنْتَنِي بِغَيْرِ تِرَاتٍ⁹¹

Naught Remains but a Memory

1 May God pour blessings for the sands of al-Qā',
 Amidst the palm trees,
 And the lone sand dune
 Among the acacia trees

2 The tomb of al-`Ibādī
 Outside of Murbakh,
 And Murbakh and the rivulets
 And the hills

3 The twin peaks of Zarūd, and Ṭulayḥa
 And the dunes of Liwā;
 It is at their hands
 That I have grown weak

4 Naught remains of their delights
 But a memory,
 On account of which
 My soul has been rent

5 A fortress
 Overlooking the valley of Zubāla;
 In its shade
 I have held back my tears

6 Most dear to soul,
 And most grievous
 And most worthy in its estimation
 Are these villages

7 Do not despair!

⁹¹ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 271-272. For discussion of this poem, see pages 159-162 above.

Perhaps God will hasten
To help the oppressed
And release them from their suffering

8 And hearts will be content
That once were angry with me
And return to me
Without their anger having been assuaged

وَقَدْ كُنْتُ طَبَّاً بِالْأُمُورِ مُجَرَّباً
عَلَيَّ وَلَا كَانَتْ بُرُوقُكَ خُلْباً
وَفَاءً وَظُرْفاً صَادِقاً وَتَادِباً
لَهُ حَقْبٌ يَشْجَى بِذِكْرِهِ مَنْ صَبَا
إِلَى الْقَلْبِ قَدْماً ثُمَّ قَصَّرَ أَوْ نَبَا
وَكَلَّ وَلَمْ يَثْلَمْ لَهُ الْعِظْمُ مَضْرَباً
وَقَامَ فَأَعْيَا بَلَّ تَقَطَّرَ أَوْ كَبَا
وَنَقُضَ عُهْدٌ أَكَّدْتَ زَمَنَ الصِّبَا
فَتَغْنِيهِ بَعْدَ الْعِقَابِ مِنَ الرَّبَا⁹²

[85]
1 رَعَى اللَّهُ دَهْرًا فَاتَ لَمْ أَقْضِ حَقَّهُ
2 لِيَالِي مَا كَانَتْ رِيَا حُكَّ شَمَالاً
3 لِيَالِي وَفَيْتُ الْهَوَى فَوْقَ حَقِّهِ
4 فَلَمْ أَرَ وُدّاً عَادَ ذَنْباً وَقَدْ مَضَتْ
5 وَلَمْ أَرَ سَهْماً هَتَّكَ الدِّرْعَ وَانْتَهَى
6 وَلَا عُذْرَ لِلصَّمَامِ إِنْ بَلَغَ الْحَشَا
7 وَلَا لِحَوَادٍ سَابِقَ الرِّيحِ سَالِماً
8 فَأَنْتَى بِعُذْرٍ فِي اطِّرَاحِي وَجَفَوْتِي
9 إِذَا عَوِقَبَ الْجَانِي قَدَرَ جُرْمِهِ

I Have Misjudged Time

- 1 May God preserve bygone times!
I misjudged their rights,
Though I was learned in such matters,
Experienced
- 2 Nights when the north wind
Did not bring me bad fortune,
On your behalf, and your promises were not empty,
Like lightning without rain
- 3 Nights when I gave to love
More than its fair share
Of fidelity and finesse,
Righteousness and refinement
- 4 I have never seen friendship repaid as a fault,
Even after such a long time has gone by

⁹² Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 274-275. For discussion of this poem, see pages 80, 83-85, 102-110, 112, 119, 121, 141, 148, 151-152, 154, 164, 171-172 above.

It pains a man in love
To think of it

5 I have never seen an arrow pierce the breastplate,
Aiming straight for the heart,
Then fall short
And miss its mark

6 There is no pardon for a sword
If it reaches the bowels
And then goes dull,
When even bones could not deaden its blow

7 Nor for a steed that outruns the wind
Without growing tired,
Then when it goes to stands up,
It is too weak, and it collapses

8 Then where is your pardon,
For casting me aside, belittling me,
And breaking the covenants
That we certified in our youth

9 If a miscreant is punished accordingly,
Then to do violence to him
Beyond what his crime warrants
Is unlawful excess

[86]
1 زُبَالَةُ لَا هُمْ اسْقِيهَا ثُمَّ رَوَّهَا وَقَلَّتْ لَهَا أَضْعَافُ ذِي الدَّعَوَاتِ
2 أَلَا هَلْ إِلَى نَجْدٍ وَمَاءٍ بِقَاعِهَا سَبِيلٌ وَأَرْوَاحُ بِهَا عَطْرَاتِ
3 وَهَلْ لِي إِلَى تِلْكَ الطَّلِيحَةِ عَوْدَةٌ عَلَى مِثْلِ تِلْكَ الْحَالِ قَبْلَ وَفَاتِي
4 فَأَشْرَبَ مِنْ مَاءِ السَّمَاءِ فَأَرْتَوِي فَأَرْعَى مَعَ الْغَزْلَانِ فِي الْفَلَوَاتِ
5 وَالْأَصِقَ أَحْسَائِي بِرَمْلِ زُبَالَةٍ وَأَنْسَ بِالظُّلْمَانِ وَالظَّبْيَاتِ⁹³

My Heart Cleaves to Zubāla

1 God bless Zubāla
And grant it water,
And many times more
Than these prayers!

⁹³ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 280.

2 Is there a way back to Najd
And the water of its valley
And the sweet-smelling
Breezes there?

3 Will I return
To Ṭulayḥa
In my present state
Before I die?

4 That I may drink
From the water of its skies
And be refreshed
And pasture with the gazelles in the wilderness

5 That my heart may cleave
To the sands of Zubāla
And be the companion
Of its ostriches and antelopes

[87]

1 يا مانِعاً مُقْلَتِي مِنْ لَذَّةِ الْوَسَنِ	روحي ثَقِيلَكَ مِنَ الْأَسْوَى وَالْحَزَنِ
2 والله لا سَكَنْتُ رَوْحِي إِلَى سَكَنِ	إِلَّا إِلَيْكَ وَلَا حَنْتُ إِلَى وَطَنِ
3 وَلَنْ أَقُولَ وَلَوْ أَضْنَى الْهَوَى كِبْدِي	رَدّاً لِقَوْلِكَ لِي قَدْ خُنْتُ لَمْ أَخُنْ
4 هَبْنِي غَرِيباً أَلَامُ الْيَوْمِ فِيكَ أَلَمْ	أَكُنْ حَقِيقاً بَأَنْ أَعْدَى عَلَى الزَّمَنِ
5 فَلَا تَدْعُ رَعِي مَا قَدْ كُنْتَ تَعْلَمُهُ	مَنْ يَقِيناً وَتَهْجُرُنِي عَلَى الظَّنِّ
6 فَلَمْ تَزَلْ مُدَّ عَرَفْتُ الْحُبَّ فِي كِبْدِي	أَحَبَّ وَاللَّهِ مِنْ رَوْحِي إِلَى بَدَنِي ⁹⁴

Dearer than my Soul

1 You who have denied my eyes
The pleasure of sleep,
My soul safeguards you
Against indignation and sadness

2 By God! My soul has found rest
Nowhere except in you,
And it has longed
For no country

⁹⁴ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 288-289.

3 I will not answer in kind,
Even if love weakens my body,
To what you have said to me.
You have betrayed me; I have not betrayed you

4 Consider me a stranger,
Blamed on account of you;
Do I not say truthfully
That time has treated me unjustly?

5 Do not cease to abide
By that which you know
For certain about me
To abandon me over mere rumors

6 For since I first came to know love
In my heart, you have been
Dearer to me, by God,
Than my soul is to my body

[88]

1 وَلَمَّا وَقَفْنَا لِلْوَدَاعِ وَبَيْنَنَا	أَحَادِيثُ يُعْيِي الْحَاسِبِينَ عَدِيدُهَا
2 تَبَادَرَ دَمْعِي فَأَنْصَرَفْتُ تَهْضُنِي	إِلَى عَبْرَتِي بُقْيَا عَلَيْكَ أَذُودُهَا
3 فَمَا أَشْبَهَتْ عَيْنَايَ سَحَابَةً	دَنَا صَرْبُهَا وَاسْتَعْجَلَتْهَا رُعودُهَا
4 فَمَا زَالَ زَجَرُ الرَّعْدِ يَحْدُو سَحَابَهَا	فَتَبَدُّو وَأَرْوَاحُ الشَّمَالِ تُحِيدُهَا
5 فَمَا أَفْلَعْتُ حَتَّى بَكَتْ فَتَضَاحَكْتُ رِياضُ الرَّبَى فَخَضِرَ بِالْعُشْبِ عَوْدُهَا	إِذَا أَنْسَلَ مِنْ سِلْكِ النِّظَامِ فَرِيدُهَا
6 وَهَلْ تَتَلَفَى ذَاتُ عَفْدٍ جُمَانَهَا	وَعَيْنُكَ مَا يَعْدُو جُفُونَكَ جُودُهَا
7 فَقَالَ رَفِيقِي مَا لِلْوَنَكِ حَائِلًا	وَخَيْرُ قُلُوبِ الْعَاشِقِينَ بَلِيدُهَا ⁹⁵
8 فَأَغْضَيْتُ عَنْ رَدِّ الْجَوَابِ تَبْلُدًا	

Silent Tears

1 When we stood together
To say goodbye,
We exchanged words
Too many to count

2 My tears flowed swiftly,
And I turned away,
To spare you the sight

⁹⁵ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 297. For discussion of this poem, see pages 153-154 above.

Lest you see that I was weeping

3 My eyes were like a cloud
About to burst
As its thunder
Trails it hastily

4 The roll of thunder
Keeps urging the cloud on,
And the winds of the north
Seemed to blow it off course

5 It did not let up
Until it had wept enough
That the hillsides smiled at each other
And the branches became green with foliage

6 Does a lady string together
The jewels of her necklace
When its central stone
Has fallen off and been lost?

7 My companion said:
“Why are you so pale?”
And your eyes
Are pouring tears!”

8 I declined to give an answer
And stayed silent,
For silence is the best thing
For the hearts of lovers

[89]
1 يَا مَنْ إِذَا صَدَّ لَمْ أَظْهَرْ لَهُ جَزَعاً
2 مَا يَمْنَعُ الدَّمْعَ أَنْ تَجْرِيَ غَوَارِبُهُ
3 فَيُضُّ الدُّمُوعَ وَإِنْ تَمَّتْ بَوَادِرُهَا
لَا تَحْسِبْنِي عَلَى الْهَجْرَانِ ذَا جَلَدٍ
إِلَّا شِمَائِلُهُ مَنْ قَدْ كَانَ ذَا حَسَدٍ
أَشْفَى لِمَنْ عَالَجَ الْبَلَوَى مِنَ الْكَمَدِ⁹⁶

May My Tears Console Only Me

1 If you reject me,
I will not let you see my distress,
But do not think

⁹⁶ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 302.

That I can stand it if you leave

- 2 The only thing that stops
My tears from flowing
Is my fear lest someone who envies me
Take pleasure in my suffering

- 3 The flood of tears,
Even after they have ceased to flow,
Is a great comfort
To one wracked by sorrow

[90]
1 أَهْيُمُ بِذِكْرِ الْكَرْخِ مِنِّي صَبَابَةٌ وَمَا بِي إِلَّا حُبٌّ مِّنْ حَلٍّ بِالْكَرْخِ
2 تَجَرَّعْتُ كَأْسًا مِّنْ صُدُودِ مُحَمَّدٍ فَقَدْ أَوْهَنْتُ عَظْمِي وَجَارَتْ عَلَى الْمُنْخِ
3 فَلَسْتُ أَبَالِي بِالرَّدَى بَعْدَ فَقْدِهِ وَهَلْ يَجْزَعُ الْمَذْبُوحُ مِنْ أَلَمِ السَّلْخِ⁹⁷

Rejection from Muḥammad's Hand is Like Wine

- 1 I am passionately in love
With the memory of Karkh,
And all my love
Is for the one who dwells in Karkh
- 2 I have drunk a cup
Of Muḥammad's rejection;
It has weakened my bones
And overwhelmed my brain
- 3 I fear not what suffering may come
Since I have lost him;
Does the victim, after being slaughtered,
Fear the pain of being skinned?

[91]
1 وَإِنِّي وَإِنْ شَاعَتْ لَدَيْكَ سَرَائِرِي فَإِنَّ الَّذِي اسْتَوْدَعْتَنِي غَيْرُ شَائِعٍ
2 أَبِي اللَّهِ إِلَّا الْوَفَاءَ لِكُلِّ مَنْ رَعَى لِي عَهْدِي أَوْ أَضَاعَ وَدَائِعِي
3 فَكُنْ أَمِنًا مِّنْ أَنْ أُذْبِعَ بِسِرِّكُمْ فَمَا سِرُّ أَعْدَائِي لَدَيَّ بِذَائِعٍ
4 وَمَا أَنَا مَمْدُوحًا بِحِفْظِ وَدِيعَةٍ أَقْلُ حُقُوقِ النَّاسِ حِفْظُ الْوَدَائِعِ⁹⁸

⁹⁷ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 305. For further discussion of this poem, see pages 29, 90, 114-116, 151, 165 above.

⁹⁸ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 309.

I Always Keep Promises

- 1 Even if rumors
About my personal matters reach you,
The things you have confided in me
Will never be spread as rumors
- 2 May God guarantee
That I be faithful
To one who keeps his covenants with me
Or one who allows our alliances to lapse
- 3 Be certain
That I will never disclose your secrets
For I would never disclose
Even my enemies' secrets
- 4 I am not to be praised
For keeping covenants,
For the least of men's rights
Is to have promises kept

[92]

1 وَكَمْ لَيْلَةٍ قَدْ بَتُّ أَرْقُتُ صُبْحَهَا وَأَنْجُمُهَا فِي الْجَوِّ مَا تَنْزَحْزَحُ
2 وَيُمْنَايَ فَوْقَ الْقَلْبِ تُبْرِدُ حَرَّةً وَيُسْرَايَ تَحْتَ الْخَدِّ وَالْعَيْنُ تَسْفَحُ
3 فَأَصْبَحْتُ مَجْهُوداً عَمِيداً مِنَ الْهَوَى وَقَدْ كَادَ قَلْبِي بِالصَّبَابَةِ يَطْفَحُ
4 وَمَا عَلِمَ الْوَاشُونَ فَضْلاً عَنِ الْعَدَى بَسِيراً وَمَا مِثْلِي بِسِرِّكَ يُفْصِحُ
5 فَإِنْ كَانَ هَذَا الْقَوْلُ عُذْراً قَبِلْتَهُ وَإِنْ كَانَ تَعْذِيراً فَمِنْكَ يَصْفَحُ⁹⁹

Sleepless Nights

- 1 How many nights
Have I lain awake until morning,
With the stars in the sky
Inching by ever so slowly
- 2 My right hand on my heart,
Cooling its heat,
My left hand under my cheek,
My eyes shedding tears

⁹⁹ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 314.

- 3 I have become determined
To be steadfast in love until I am exhausted,
But my heart is about to overflow
With passion
- 4 Calumniators do not know,
To say nothing of enemies,
About my secret,
For I am not the sort to reveal secrets about you
- 5 If what I am saying is a valid excuse,
Then may you accept it,
But if it is only an apology,
Then may you be forgiving

[93]

1 أَرَى كُلَّ مُرْتَابٍ يَخَافُ خَيَالَهُ	كَأَنَّ عُيُونَ الْعَالَمِينَ تُرَاقِبُهُ
2 يَكَادُ لِفَرْطِ الْخَوْفِ يُبْدِي ضَمِيرَهُ لِكُلِّ أَمْرٍ تُخْشَى عَلَيْهِ عَوَاقِبُهُ	
3 عَلَيَّ بَوَادٍ مَضْنٌ يُخَافُ اغْتِيَابُهُ	تُبَيِّنُ لَدَيْهَا فِي الْأَنَامِ مَنَاقِبُهُ
4 فَايَاكُمَا يَا صَاحِبَيَّ وَمَشْهُدًا	تُنَسِّيْكُمَا مَا سَرَّ مِنْهُ عَوَاقِبُهُ
5 وَإِيَاكُمَا وَالذَّنْبَ تَرْتَكِبَانِهِ	وَإِنْ كَانَ فِي الْأَحْيَانِ يُعْذَرُ رَاكِبُهُ
6 فَمَا كُلُّ مَعْذُورٍ حَقِيقًا بِعُذْرِهِ	وَلَا كُلُّ مَعْذُولٍ تَعِيبٌ مَعَايِبُهُ ¹⁰⁰

Anxiety

- 1 He who is in doubt
Fears his own shadow
As if the eyes of all the world
Were watching him
- 2 His fear is so great
That he nearly reveals his counsel
To everyone
At whose hands he fears punishment
- 3 I am in the presence of Bedouins;
If someone is feared lost,
They praise his virtues
Among men
- 4 Beware, my two friends,

¹⁰⁰ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 316-317.

Of a scene so gruesome
Its horrors make you forget
How beautiful it can be

5 Beware, my two friends
Of the crime you are committing,
Even though, in some cases,
The criminal might be forgiven

6 Not everyone who is pardoned
Deserves his pardon,
Nor does everyone who is blamed
Deserve his blame

[94]

1 لَا خَيْرَ لِعَاشِقٍ يُخْفِي صَبَابَتَهُ بِالْقَوْلِ وَالشَّوْقِ مِنْ زَفَرَاتِهِ بَادِي
2 يُخْفِي هَوَاهُ وَمَا يُخْفِي عَلَى أَحَدٍ حَتَّى عَلَى الْعَيْسِ وَالرُّكْبَانِ وَالْحَادِي¹⁰¹

He Cannot Conceal his Love

1 It does no good for a lover
To conceal his passion
In words, when his longing
Is evident in his sighs

2 He conceals his love
But it is not concealed from anyone,
Not even the roan camels
And the riders and the caravan leader

[95]

1 هَبُونِي أَخْفَيْتُ الَّذِي بِي مِنَ الْهَوَى أَلَمْ يَكُ عَنْ مَا بِي ضَمِيرٌ مُتَرَجِّمًا
2 وَمَا زِلْتُ أَسْتَحْيِي مِنَ النَّاسِ أَنْ أَرَى ظُلُومًا أَوْ أَرَى مُتَظَلِّمًا
3 وَبِاللَّهِ مَا حُلْتُ الْغَدَاةَ عَنِ الَّذِي عَهَدْتُ وَلَكِنْ كُنْتُ إِذْ ذَاكَ مُنْعَمًا
4 وَقَدْ ذَابَ قَلْبِي الْيَوْمَ شَوْقًا وَصَبُوءًا إِلَيْكَ وَمَا تَرَّثِي لِقَلْبِي مِنْهُمَا
5 فَلَا تَتَعَجَّبْ إِنْ تَظَلَّمْتُ مُحَوَّجًا فَقَدْ حَانَ لِلْمَظْلُومِ أَنْ يَتَظَلَّمَ¹⁰²

I am Forced to Complain of Injustice

¹⁰¹ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 321.

¹⁰² Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 321.

1 Suppose that I have concealed
The love I feel;
Have my thoughts not conveyed
The torments I am suffering?

2 I am still loath
For people to see me
As guilty of injustice
Or complaining of injustice done to me

3 By God!
I have never turned away
From our covenant;
I have rather regarded it as a blessing

4 Today my heart melts
With desire and passion for you,
But you do not mourn
For my heart

5 Do not be surprised
If I have no choice but to complain of injustice,
For the time has come
For the victim of injustice to speak out

[96]

1 أَرَيْتَنِي النَّجْمَ يَجْرِي فِي النَّهَارِ فَلَا فَرْقاً أَرَى بَيْنَ إِصْبَاحِي وَإِمْسَائِي
2 أَخْفَيْتُ حُبَّكَ حَتَّى قَدْ ضُنَيْتُ بِهِ فَصَارَ يُظْهِرُ مَا أَخْفَى إِخْفَائِي¹⁰³

Stars in the Daytime

1 You have shown me the stars
Coursing through the daytime sky,
And I see no difference
Between morning and evening

2 I concealed my love for you
Until I became too weak,
And my concealment came to reveal
What I conceal

¹⁰³ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 322.

[97]

1 بِأَلْبَابٍ وَأَفْئِدَةٍ صِحَاحٍ 2 بِكَاسَاتِ الرُّقَادِ إِلَى الصَّبَاحِ 3 فَمَا أَدْرِي الْغُدُوَّ مِنَ الرِّوَاكِ 4 يُؤَدِّينِي إِلَى سُبُلِ النَّجَاحِ 5 وَلَكِنْ قَدْ مُنِعْتُ مِنَ الْبَرَاكِ 6 إِذَا كَانَ الْعُقَابُ عَيَانُ صَيْدٍ	1 يُعَاتِبُنِي أَنَسٌ فِي التَّصَابِي 2 إِذَا اخْتَلَطَ الظَّلَامُ وَهُمْ سُكَارَى 3 وَلِي سُكْرٌ يُجَنِّبُنِي رُقَادِي 4 أَمَا لِي فِي بِلَادِ اللَّهِ بَابٌ 5 بَلَى فِي الْأَرْضِ مُتَّسِعٌ 6 مَا يُغْنِي الْعُقَابُ عَيَانُ صَيْدٍ
--	--

Where is the Path to God's Country?

- 1 People scorn me,
For, ever since my youth,
I have been in love
With sound hearts
- 2 When the darkness has been mingled
And they are drunk
On cups of somnolence
Until the morrow
- 3 My intoxication
Is one that robs me of sleep,
And I know not
Whether I am coming or going
- 4 Will I find a way
To God's pleasant country,
One that will lead me
On the path to success?
- 5 Indeed, this earth
Has vast, pleasant lands
But I am forbidden
To venture toward them
- 6 What good can come to an eagle
With sharp eyes for hunting,
If that eagle
Has no wings?

[98]

¹⁰⁴ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 329-330. For discussion of this poem, see pages 53, 109-114, 120, 152, 157, 167 above.

- 1 وَقَائِلَةٌ قَدْ كَانَ عَذْرُكَ وَاسِعًا لِيَالِي كَانَ الشَّعْرُ فِي الرَّأْسِ أَسْوَدًا
 2 فَقُلْتُ لَهَا وَالذَّمُّ جَارٌ كَأَنَّهُ نِظَامٌ تَعْدَى سِلْكُهُ مُتَبَدِّدًا
 3 لَئِنْ كَانَ هَذَا الشَّيْبُ غَرَّكَ فَاعْلَمِي بَأَنِّي صَحِبْتُ الشَّيْبَ مُذْ كُنْتُ أَمْرَدًا
 4 أَبَالشَّيْبِ يُنْهَى عَنِ مُسَاعَدَةِ الْهَوَى وَلَوْلَا الْهَوَى مَا كُنْتُ لِلشَّيْبِ مُسْعَدًا¹⁰⁵

The Black-Haired Shaykh

- 1 She said: "It would have been easy
 To pardon you
 In the days when your hair
 Grew black on your head"
 2 I said to her,
 With tears running down
 Like a necklace unstrung,
 Its beads scattering
 3 "If this white hair
 Has fooled you, then know
 That I have taken old age as my fellow
 Since I was a beardless youth
 4 Is it on account of white hair
 That the consolation of love is withheld?
 Were it not for love,
 I would not take solace in white hair!"

- [99]
 1 سَأَكْفِيكَ نَفْسِي لَا كِفَايَةَ غَايِرٍ وَلَا سَامِعًا عَذْلًا وَلَا مُتَعَتِّبًا
 2 وَلَكِنَّ يَأْسًا لَمْ يَرَ النَّاسُ مِثْلَهُ وَصَبْرًا عَلَى مُرِّ الْمَقَادِيرِ مُنْصَبًا
 3 وَفِي دُونِ مَا بُلَّغْتُهُ بَلَّ رَأْيْتُهُ بَلَاغٌ وَلَكِنْ لَا أَرَى عَنْكَ مَذْهَبًا¹⁰⁶

I Give you my Soul

- 1 I shall give you my soul
 And never betray you
 Nor listen to anyone
 Blame or chastise you
 2 Despair the likes of which

¹⁰⁵ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 341.

¹⁰⁶ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 347.

No man has seen,
And patience that resists
The vicissitudes of fate

- 3 Beyond anything I have been told
And anything I have seen,
But I can see no way
To leave you

[100]
1 حَاوَلْتُ أَمْرًا فَلَمْ يَجْرِ الْقَضَاءُ بِهِ وَلَا أَرَى أَحَدًا يُعَدِّي عَلَى الْقَدَرِ
2 فَقَدْ صَبَرْتُ لِأَمْرِ اللَّهِ مُحْتَسِبًا وَالْيَأْسُ مِنْ أَشْبَهِ الْأَشْيَاءِ بِالظَّفَرِ
3 فَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ شُكْرًا لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ مَا أَوْلَعَ الدَّهْرَ وَالْأَيَّامَ بِالْغَيْرِ¹⁰⁷

No One can Override God's Power

- 1 I tried to decree something,
But it had not been ordained,
And I have not seen anyone
Able to override what has been ordained
- 2 I have been patient with God's decrees,
Judicious,
But despair is so very similar
To victory
- 3 Praise and thanks be to God!
There is none like unto Him!
How passionately zealous
Are the vicissitudes of time!

[101]
1 يَقُولُ أَبْعَدَ الْيَأْسِ تَبْكِي صَبَابَةً فَقُلْتُ وَهَلْ قَبْلَ الْإِيَّاسِ بُكَاءُ
2 أَبْكِي عَلَى مَنْ لَسْتُ أَرْجُو ارْتِجَاعُهُ وَأَبْكِي عَلَى أَنْ يَكُونَ رَجَاءُ¹⁰⁸

Tears of Despair

- 1 He says: "Is it on account of despair
That you weep for love?"
I said: "Does one weep

¹⁰⁷ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 347.

¹⁰⁸ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 349.

Before he reaches the point of despair?

2 I weep for him

For whose return I no longer hope,

And weep

Because I have no more hope”

[102]

1 أَمِنْتُ عَلَيْكَ الدَّهْرَ وَالدَّهْرُ غَادِرٌ وَسَكَنْتُ قَلْبِي عَنْكَ وَالْقَلْبُ نَافِرٌ
2 وَمَا ذَاكَ عَنْ إِلْفٍ تَخَيَّرْتُ وَصَلَّهُ عَلَيْكَ وَلَا أَنِّي بَعْدَكَ غَادِرٌ
3 وَلَكِنَّ صَرْفَ الدَّهْرِ قَدْ عَجَّلَ الرَّدَى وَأَيَّاسَنِي مِنْ أَنْ تَدُورَ الدَّوَائِرُ
4 فَلَسْتُ أَرْجِيهِ وَلَسْتُ أَخَافُهُ وَهَلْ يَرْتَجِي ذُو اللَّبِّ مَا لَا يُحَازِرُ
5 إِذَا بَلَغَ الْمَكْرُوهُ بِي غَايَةَ الْمَدَى فَأَهْوَنُ مَا تَجْرِي إِلَيْهِ الْمَقَادِرُ
6 تَنَاسَيْتُ أَيَّامَ الصَّفَاءِ الَّتِي مَضَتْ لَدَيْكَ عَلَى أَنِّي لَهَا الدَّهْرَ ذَاكِرُ
7 أَثْبَتْتُ قَلْبِي عَنْكَ وَالْوُدُّ ثَابِتٌ وَهَلْ تَصْبِرُ الْأَحْشَاءُ وَالْحُزْنُ صَابِرُ
8 إِلَى اللَّهِ أَشْكُو لَا إِلَيْكَ فَإِنَّهُ عَلَى رَدِّ أَيَّامِ الصَّفَاءِ لِقَادِرٌ¹⁰⁹

I Will Never Forget the Days of Pure Happiness

1 Because of you I was safe from the vicissitudes of time,

But time is treacherous,

And I consoled my heart about you,

But the heart is wary

2 This is not because of some other friend

Whose company I have chosen

Instead of yours,

And that I have never betrayed our covenant of friendship

3 But the vicissitudes of time

Have hastened to bring calamities

And made me despair

That my fortune would ever turn for the better

4 I do not hope for it,

Nor do I fear it,

For does a rational man hope

For what he cannot avert?

5 When loathsome things

¹⁰⁹ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 350.

Hasten to me,
And the greatest disgraces
That fate can bring

6 You forget the days of pure happiness
That you have spent,
But I shall remember them
For all time

7 I assure my heart about you
When our friendship is certain,
But can the heart be patient,
When sadness is also patient?

8 I lament to God,
Not to you,
For it is He who can bring back
The days of pure happiness

[103]

هَتَكْتُ بِالْهَجْرِ بَيْنَ الصَّبْرِ وَالْجَلْدِ	1 يَا غَارِسَ الْحُبِّ بَيْنَ الْقَلْبِ وَالْكَبِدِ
حُسْنُ الرَّجَاءِ فَلَمْ يَصْدُرْ وَلَمْ يَرِدْ	2 إِذَا دَعَا الْيَأْسُ قَلْبِي عَنْكَ قَالَ لَهُ
وَمَنْ يَحِلُّ مَحَلَّ الرُّوحِ مِنْ جَسَدِي	3 يَا مَنْ تَقَوْمُ مَقَامَ الْمَوْتِ فُرْقَتُهُ
فَإِنْ طَلَبْتُ مَزِيداً مِنْهُ لَمْ أَجِدْ	4 قَدْ جَاوَزَ الشَّوْقُ بِي أَقْصَى مَرَاتِبِهِ
فَرَّقْتُ بِالْهَجْرِ بَيْنَ الرُّوحِ وَالْجَسَدِ	5 وَاللَّهِ لَا أَلْفَتُ نَفْسِي سِوَاكَ وَلَوْ
وَإِنْ تَعَزَّيْتُ لَمْ أُرْكِنْ إِلَى أَحَدٍ ¹¹⁰	6 إِنْ تَوَفَّ لِي لَا أُرِدُّ مَا دُمْتُ لِي بَدَلًا

It Is Best to Hope

1 You, who have sown love
Between my heart and my liver.
By leaving me,
You have rent patience from steadfastness

2 When despair beckons my heart away from you,
My heart answers,
“It is best to hope,”
And it neither leaves nor enters

3 Separation from you
Is tantamount to death,

¹¹⁰ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 359-360.

And you occupy the same position in my body
As my spirit

4 My love has reached
The highest level;
I have sought a greater love,
I would not find it

5 By God! My soul would cleave
To no one but you,
Even if you were to separate
My spirit from my body

6 As long as you are faithful to me,
I shall never seek a replacement,
And if I ever find solace,
I shall not become attached to anyone

[104]
1 أَمِثْلُ الَّذِي أَلْقَى يُقَاوِمُهُ صَبْرُ
2 لَنْ كُنْتُ غَرًّا بِالَّذِي قَدْ لَقِيتُهُ
3 تَقَضَّتْ صَبَابَتِي إِلَيْهِ وَقَصَّرَتْ
4 وَكَفَّ رَجَائِي فَاطْمَأْنَنْتُ مَخَافَتِي
5 فَمَا لِي رَجَاءٌ غَيْرَ قُرْبِ مَنْيَّتِي وَلَا خَوْفَ إِلَّا أَنْ يَطُولَ لِي الْعُمُرُ
6 وَلَوْ لَمْ يَحُلْ أَسْرُ الْمَنِيَّةِ بَيْنَهُ
7 فَلَيْتَ الْمَنَايَا وَحْدَهَا سَمَحَتْ بِهِ
فَأَصْبِرَ أَمْ مِثْلِي يُنْهِنُهُ الزَّجَرُ
لَفِي فَقْدٍ تَمَيِّزِي يَحِقُّ لِي الْأَجْرُ
ظُنُونِي بِهِ بَلْ لَيْسَ ظَنٌّ وَلَا ذِكْرُ
فَلَمْ يَبْقَ لِي إِلَّا التَّأْسُفُ وَالْفِكْرُ
وَبَيْنِي لَمْ أَحْفَلْ بِمَا صَنَعَ الدَّهْرُ
وَنَارَ عَنِيهِ الْبَيْنُ وَالْهَجْرُ وَالْغَدْرُ¹¹¹

Despair

1 Can patience withstand
What has happened to me,
So that I might be patient,
Or will adversity destroy my resolve?

2 If I let my experiences
Deceive me,
I might as well
Lose my ability to reason

3 My passion for him

¹¹¹ Ibn Dāwūd, KZ, 368.

Has ceased,
And I no longer imagine him
Nor remember him

4 My hopes have abated,
And my fears have been quelled,
And nothing remains
But sorrow and regret

5 My only hope
Is to be near to death,
And my only fear
Is long life

6 For if the snare of death
Separates me from him,
It matters not to me
What time has done to me

7 Would that death itself
Let it be so,
For separation has pitted me against him,
And abandonment and betrayal

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