

The Concept of *Jawānmardī* (manliness)

in Persian Literature and Society

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
Department of Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations of the  
University of Toronto

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# Abstract

## The Concept of *Jawānmardī* (manliness) in Persian Literature and Society

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This thesis explores the concept of *jawānmardī* as it is depicted in representative texts of Persian literature dating from the 11<sup>th</sup> century to the present and analyzes the different models of it that were developed. Through these models, the thesis will determine the ideals of *jawānmardī* and illustrate how those ideals have persisted in modern Iranian societies.

The three models of *jawānmardī* analyzed are: the heroic warrior, the spiritual champion, and the professional wrestler. The discussion about the heroic warrior is based on the Iranian national epic, the *Shāhnāma*, and the medieval popular romance, *Samak-i Ayyār*. This chapter demonstrates how the acquisition of a good reputation is the driving force for the heroic warrior as he plays out his role in society. Even though he must win, his quest for good reputation draws him into situations that challenge his heroism.

The discussion about the spiritual champion is based on medieval Persian treatises on religious *jawānmardī* and it focuses specifically on the early 16<sup>th</sup> century treatise, *Futuwwat Nāma-yi Sulṭānī* by the Persian writer and preacher, Ḥusain Wāʿiẓ al-Kāshifī (d. 910/1504-5). The chapter demonstrates how proper conduct, which is rooted in the Sufī ethic of self-denial, was regarded as all-important for spiritual *jawānmardī*. The initiation rites of religious *jawānmardī* and the professions in society reflected the dialectical relationship between outward conduct and inner spirituality.

The third model, that of the wrestler, is a fusion of the first two models. In what may appear paradoxical, the wrestler seeks to be both a physical and spiritual champion. This is illustrated through the culture of courtesy in the wrestling arena and specifically through the wrestler's stratagem of deferring to his opponent.

The final chapter demonstrates how 20<sup>th</sup> century Persian prose writers have treated the concept of *jawānmardī* through their protagonists who struggle to emulate the traditional ideals of *jawānmardī* in the context of modern-day complexities involving family life and individual identity.

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I want to express my thanks to the professors of the Persian Department of the National University of Modern Languages, Islamabad, especially Dr. Sughra Shagufita and Dr. Mehr Muḥammad, who have encouraged and advised me in my academic pursuit while I was living in Pakistan. Also thanks to the Iran – Pakistan Institute of Persian Studies, Islamabad, for making its library available to me.

Having lived in a Persian milieu for many of the past twenty years – albeit with Persians in exile – I recognize that the study of *jawānmardī* is much more than an academic pursuit for me; rather it has been, and continues to be a journey into another cultural world. I am very grateful to my many Iranian and Afghan colleagues who have provided me with invaluable insights into the concept of manliness in the Persian context.

A very special acknowledgement to the greatest hero in my life, my wife Janice, who has stood faithfully by me throughout the course of writing the dissertation.

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## Abbreviations

For full references, see Bibliography.

<i>AFM</i>	Muḥammad ‘Alī Sayyid Jamālzāda, “‘Ālam-i Futuwwat wa Mardānagī”
<i>BW</i>	Wāṣifī, <i>Badāyi‘ al-Waqāyi‘</i>
<i>CM</i>	Nizāmī al-‘Arūḍī Samarqandī, <i>Chahār Maqāla</i>
<i>DA</i>	Şādiq Hidāyat, “Dāsh Ākul”
<i>EI</i>	<i>Encyclopaedia of Islam</i> , new edition
<i>EIr</i>	<i>Encyclopaedia Iranica</i>
<i>FNN</i>	Nāṣirī, <i>Futuwwat Nāma-yi Nāṣirī</i>
<i>FNS</i>	Ḥusayn Kāshifī, <i>Futuwwat Nāma-yi Sulṭānī</i>
<i>Ḥālāt</i>	‘Alī Shīr Nawā‘ī, “Ḥālāt-i Pahlawān Muḥammad”
<i>LN</i>	Dihkhudā, <i>Lughat Nāma</i>
<i>MN</i>	‘Alī Shīr Nawā‘ī, <i>Majālis al-Nalā‘is</i>
<i>MDQ</i>	Akram ‘Uthmān, “Mardāra Qawl as[t]”
<i>MU</i>	Kamāl al-Dīn Ḥusayn Gāzurgāhī, <i>Majālis al-‘Ushshāq</i>
<i>NU</i>	Jāmī, <i>Nalāḥāt al-Uns</i>
<i>QN</i>	Kay Kā‘ūs, <i>Qābūs Nāma</i>
<i>RAH</i>	‘Alī (Şafī) Kāshifī, <i>Rashahāt ‘Ain al-Ḥayāt</i>
<i>RJ</i>	Murtadā Şarrāf, ed., <i>Rasā‘il-i Jawānmardān</i>
<i>RT</i>	Muḥammad Hāshim Aşaf, <i>Rustam al-Tawārīkh</i>



<i>SA</i>	Farāmarz, <i>Samak-i ‘Ayyār</i>
<i>SAK</i>	‘Alī Muḥammad Afghāni, <i>Shawhar-i Āhū Khānum</i>
<i>SM</i>	Nizām al-Mulk, <i>Siyar al-Mulūk</i>
<i>SN</i>	Firdawsī, <i>Shāhnāma</i> (Mohl edition)
<i>SN</i> (Bertel’s)	Firdawsī, <i>Shāhnāma</i> (Bertel’s edition)
<i>Ṭūmār</i>	<i>Ṭūmār-i Afsāna-yi Puryā-yi Walī</i> ,
<i>TW</i>	Ḥusayn Baydā’ī, <i>Tārīkh-i Warzish</i>

## Note on Transliteration

I have transliterated Persian and Arabic words – titles of books, personal names and place names and special terms – according to the chart give below. Well-known place names such as Tehran, and others, are written according to their common English spelling. Persian personal names and titles which are taken from English published translations are cited as they appear in the publications. In most cases, an English translation is provided for the first reference of Persian titles of non-primary sources.

ا - ' (not at beginning of word)	ذ - dh	ع - '	ی - y
ب - b	ر - r	غ - gh	final ا - a
ت - t	ز - z	ف - f	alif - ā
ث - th	ژ - zh	ک - k	waw - ū
پ - p	س - s	گ - g	ya' - ī
چ - j	ش - sh	ل - l	fāṭḥah a
ح - ḥ	ص - ṣ	م - m	kasrah i
خ - kh	ض - ḍ	ن - n	ḍammah - u
چ - ch	ط - ṭ	ه - h	diphthong with ی - ay
د - d	ظ - ḍ	و - w	diphthong with و - aw

## Chapter One

### Introduction to the Concept of *Jawānmardī*

*Jawānmardī is the best of traits; it is of the nature of the Prophet. Both worlds are assured to the jawānmard. Be a jawānmard and both worlds are yours.*<sup>1</sup>

Traditional Iranian society has always held a deep admiration for the courageous male hero. Distant images of heroic warriors who fought nobly for their patron kings on ancient battle fields, of historical and legendary medieval knights-errant who valiantly supported popular causes against oppressive regimes and performed sensational feats of bravery, and of robust wrestlers who exhibited their skills in the *zūr-khāna* (house of strength) and chanted the praises of their heroes of the past, have burned brightly in Iranian society throughout its history. A man who possessed the aggregate of all positive virtues of manhood – courage, integrity, honesty, hospitality and generosity – was called a *jawānmard* (lit: young man, pl. *jawānmardān*; abstract noun: *jawānmardī*), also variously *mardī*, *mardānagī*, *mardāna*.

## Introduction

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The terms *jawānmard* and *jawānmardī* are common Persian words in present-day Iran and Afghanistan and, as Fariba Adelkhah observes, “omnipresent in everyday language.”<sup>2</sup> These words have been used for a millennium, at least since the time of the Iranian national epic, *Shāhnāma*, written by Firdawsī (ca. 1010). With the spread of Islam across Iran, which gradually developed into the Perso-Islamic synthesis, the Qur’ānic ethic and the ethos of Sufism, added another dimension to the concept of *jawānmardī*. The concept, therefore, is by no means a simple one. In fact, it is precisely because of this long historical usage that it developed a kaleidoscope of meanings and applications throughout the medieval and modern periods. This makes the study of the concept of *jawānmardī* extremely broad and complex, touching on many areas of social, economic, religious and political life in medieval Iran, and both influencing and being influenced by them.

This thesis will explore the concept of *jawānmardī* as it is depicted in the Persian literary record, examine its various aspects, and analyze the complex and multi-faceted nature of the different models of *jawānmardī* that were developed, with a view to determining the ideals of manhood with which medieval man sought to identify himself. It will also illustrate the degree to which those ideals have persisted in modern Iranian societies. Based on the premise that literature reflects the society and culture in which it is produced,<sup>3</sup> this thesis will examine a range of texts dating from the 11<sup>th</sup> century to the present, that directly or indirectly deal with the concept of *jawānmardī*, and in so doing, demonstrate how ‘the spirit of *jawānmardī*,’ which was rooted in the past, continues to play a role in the contemporary crisis of continuity and change in the Perso-Islamic world.

At the outset a comment must be made regarding the terms, *jawānmardī* and *mardī* (also *mardānagī* and *mardāna*), both of which are used to denote the ideal of manliness.

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*Jawānmardī* is a historical phenomenon which developed among urban associations of young men from the early medieval period of Islam. Along with rites of initiation, these 'brotherhoods' corporately embodied the virtues of manliness so that, in a sense, the concept of *jawānmardī* was molded by its own etymology – the young courageous man (*jawānmard*).<sup>4</sup> Hence, the notion of *jawānmardī* is, on the one hand, linked to specific social groups of young men at a certain period of Islamic history, while at the same time, it also refers to an ideology of behavior practiced by these young men. As will be shown, it is used in this sense particularly in medieval Persian popular romances and Persian treatises on spiritual manliness. The words, *mardī*, *mardānagī* and *mardāna*, on the other hand, are rooted in pre-Islamic Sāsānid Iran and carry a much more general meaning, simply referring to that which pertains to the male gender, "being a man, male." However, as is probably typical of most patriarchal societies, by extension these terms can also mean "manly" and are used to describe the heroic deeds traditionally attributed to the male. Later on during the medieval Islamic period, *jawānmardī* and *mardī* began to be used interchangeably, though, as will be pointed out, in general, *mardī* embodies a lesser constellation of virtues than does *jawānmardī*.<sup>5</sup>

A word must be said about the literary genres – epics, medieval popular romances, hagiographies, mystical treatises on *jawānmardī*, literary histories, modern short stories and novels – which will be used in our analysis of the concept of *jawānmardī*. From the texts themselves, it is not always clear for whom they were written and whether they are a true reflection of reality or a presentation of a utopian ideal. Obviously, each work was written with a specific bias and was informed by the contemporary praxis of the day; hence, we must constantly bear in mind that the texts, notably those of the medieval period, tend to portray an

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ideal of *jawānmardī* which may, in fact, contrast sharply with the testimony of chroniclers and historians. In our study of *jawānmardī*, we will note the existence of a dialectical relationship between the heroic warrior's career of *jawānmardī* and his quest for reputation; between the spiritual *jawānmardī*'s pursuit of inner and external conduct; and between the wrestler's struggle to be a physical champion and to maintain an ethic of humility. In a similar sense, the medieval texts themselves reflect the dialectical relationship that existed between the real and the ideal. On the one hand, the real informed the ideal, and on the other hand, the ideal gave direction to the real.

To attempt a thorough thematic study of the concept of *jawānmardī* from the literary record in New Persian, which has a history of a thousand years, is certainly an ambitious task. Hence, in order to deal in-depth with the literature, this thesis will limit itself to a selection of texts that reflect the range of literature on the subject. These will be identified and discussed in the course of this introductory chapter.

### A. Aspects of the Concept of *Jawānmardī*

In the 5<sup>th</sup>/11<sup>th</sup> century, the prince of the Ziyārid dynasty of the South Caspian provinces, Kay Kā'ūs, wrote a book of advice to his son on personal morality, social relations and the professions. In the final chapter of this famous work, entitled *Qābūs Nāma*, the author changes his focus and advocates a fundamentally different perspective on life for his son: the career of *jawānmardī*, which the author sees as a profession as well as the constellation of virtues embodied by men associated with it. Kay Kā'ūs categorizes *jawānmardī*, into a quadruple hierarchical order: a) physical *jawānmardī*, which consists of three guilds - 'ayyārān (to be defined later), soldiers and artisans; b) religious lawyers and Sufis; c) saints and prophets; d) the spiritual Prophets.<sup>6</sup> The author sees the virtue of *jawānmardī* as

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common to each group, but he alludes to an enrichment of *jawānmardī* from one stage to the next. It would appear that the primary distinction in Kay Kā'ūs' text is between physical *jawānmardī* and spiritual *jawānmardī*, a distinction which we will develop in the course of this thesis. Given its complex and often paradoxical meanings, a survey of the numerous aspects that have influenced the concept of *jawānmardī* is necessary in order to establish a framework within which to analyze the concept and to draw conclusions.

### 1. The Cavalryman

The concept of *jawānmardī* has its roots in the pre-Islamic Sāsānid Persian nobility class who were called *āzādān*, which means freeborn (*āzāta*) and hence, full-fledged members of society, as opposed to slaves (*bandān*).<sup>7</sup> The New Persian notion of *āzādmardī* (high-mindedness, magnanimity) has developed from this Sāsānid class distinction. Those who were freeborn naturally held privileges and considered themselves noble and superior to the *bandān*. This then translated into the virtues of generosity, patronage and magnanimity as being characteristic of the freeborn.<sup>8</sup> The freeborn thus became the high-born.

The freeborn served the Sāsānid kings as a noble warrior class, and thereby formed a distinct cavalry force. Along with a self-conscious sense of superiority, they developed initiation rites and a code of honor which distinguished them from the rest of society. The early Arab chroniclers, who described the battles against the Sāsānids, called the Persian warrior, "one who excels in sitting firmly on the back of his horse," and "one who is skillful in shooting arrows."<sup>9</sup> Besides the high class nobility, who remained very distinct from the lower class slaves, there were also groups of knights who aligned themselves with the Mazdaean social uprising against the Sāsānid rulers and fought for the cause of the poor. According to the Pahlawi commentary to the Vendīdād (one of the Avesta scriptures), these

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warriors believed that stealing from the rich to give to the poor was a noble deed. Mansour Shaki considers these knights as the forerunners of Islamic *jawānmardān*. “The egalitarian principle of the *jawānmardān* or *‘ayyārān* of the Islamic period seems to have been a continuation of this aspect of Mazdakism.”<sup>10</sup> Both these noble cavalymen and the knights, who supposedly fought for the rights of the poor, prefigured the social phenomenon of *jawānmardī* in the early Islamic period.<sup>11</sup>

When the Sāsānid Empire crumbled, the ancient military needed to find new patrons in order to maintain their sense of worth and nobility. Hence, after the Arab conquests, these high-minded noblemen and knights joined with their invaders, becoming their clients (*mawālī*) and playing an important role as militia for the Arab rulers.<sup>12</sup> As illustrated by the Sāsānid soldiers, *jawānmardī* in the Islamic period was directly linked with patronage and status. Mohsen Zakeri states:

Nobles who have lost their privileges of the old regime find it most difficult to adjust to the new order. They either await the return of the old, or cooperate with the new in order to find prominence and status.<sup>13</sup>

Thus, the ancient Persian ideals of nobility and code of honor did not vanish following the Arab conquests and the spread of the new religion of Islam. They continued to be promoted by the *Shu‘ūbiyya* movement through translations of Pahlawi (Middle Persian) works into Arabic,<sup>14</sup> especially by men like the Persian nationalist, Ibn al-Muqallā‘ (d. ca. 139/756 or later),<sup>15</sup> and also through the New Persian renaissance at the courts of the Sāmānids (4<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> century) of Bukhārā and their successors. It was through the tradition of epic literature, notably the *Shāhnāma*, that the ancient Iranian ideals of heroism, kingship and nobility were kept alive. The modern day understanding of *jawānmardī* is closely linked with the heroic warrior of the *Shāhnāma*, which in turn was directly inspired by the Sāsānid noblemen.



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### 2. The Religious Warrior

Just as the notion of *jawānmardī* was envisioned by the world of the Sāsānid nobility, similarly, the Arabic term *fātan* (lit: young man; pl. *lityān*; abstract noun: *futuwwat*) was imbued with the positive virtues of manhood in the pre-Islamic Arab world.<sup>16</sup> A *fātan* was a generous and courageous man. The poets of the *Jahiliyya* (pre-Islamic period) praised their patrons as the greatest *lityān*, the most generous of the generous, the most courageous of the courageous.<sup>17</sup> In medieval Persian literature, the legendary pre-Islamic Ḥātim al-Ṭā'ī was extolled as a *jawānmard* because of his unbounded generosity.<sup>18</sup> Naturally, the two terms, *jawānmard* and *fātan*, coalesced, and in fact, the Persian militiamen who fought for their Arab patrons were interchangeably called *jawānmardān* and *lityān*.<sup>19</sup>

After the initial Islamic conquests, these warriors came to be identified with the *ghuzāt* (raiders, singular: *ghāzī*) who fought for the expansion of Islam on its frontiers, notably in Khurāsān (greater eastern Iran) and Transoxiana (Central Asia). Though initially soldiers of fortune, religious faith – or at least its outward profession – became a new factor in their battles, enhancing their zeal and loyalty. In Anatolia, the *ghāzī* movement flourished especially after the influx of Turkic Oghuz tribesmen from the 5<sup>th</sup>/11<sup>th</sup> century onwards. Under the banner of Islam, they were motivated both by the desire for plunder and the zeal for Holy War (*jihād*). Subsequent to the Mongol invasions, more tribes flooded the eastern Anatolian pasture lands, mixing shamanism, quasi-messianic ideals and a heroic spirituality which venerated and sought to emulate the military heroism of ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib (d. 40/661), the cousin and son-in-law of Prophet Muḥammad, the fourth ‘rightly-guided’ caliph, and first Shī‘ite imām. These warriors were more than ready to heed the battle cry, “Put on the white cap of the *ghazā*,”<sup>20</sup> and to fight for what they considered was a noble cause. Both the

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Ottoman and Şafawid movements trace their origins back to these ‘heroic’ but factious frontier raiders.

In his book of counsel for good government, *Siyar al-Mulūk*, Nizām al-Mulk (d. 485/1092),<sup>21</sup> the renowned *wazīr* (minister) of the Saljūq ruler, Mālik Shāh I (d. 485/1092),<sup>22</sup> frequently extols Sulṭān Maḥmūd of Ghazna (d.421/1030) both as an exemplar of the *ghāzī* ideal, who fought for the defense of the Sunni faith, and as a model of *jawānmardī*, because of his generosity: “As a king, he was God-fearing, just, a *jawānmard*, vigilant, a lover of knowledge, astute, pure in faith and a *ghāzī*.”<sup>23</sup>

### 3. The ‘Ayyār Phenomenon

The study and analysis of *jawānmardī* is further enhanced by the social phenomenon of the ‘*ayyārān* (singular: ‘*ayyār*, abstract noun: ‘*ayyārī*), “die wilden *futuwwa*-Bünde”<sup>24</sup> of the ‘Abbāsīd period, who are also referred to as *jawānmardān*.<sup>25</sup> Though similar in ideals to the *ghāzī* warrior, ‘*ayyār* also had the connotation of outlaw or bandit.<sup>26</sup> As already noted, the ‘*ayyār*s were characterized as “urban social organizations” and hence, as distinct from *ghāzīs* who waged battle on the frontiers of the Islamic state.<sup>27</sup> However, there are many examples of frontier warriors who were considered to be ‘*ayyār*s and who fought from the frontier regions against caliphal authority. Abū Muslim Khurāsānī (d. 137/755),<sup>28</sup> Iḥamza b. ‘Abd Allāh of Sīstān (d. ca. 213/828),<sup>29</sup> and Ya‘qūb b. Layth Şalfār (d. 262/876),<sup>30</sup> among others, have become legendary because of their apparent valiant feats of ‘*ayyārī*, and their readiness to defy any ‘foreign’ authority that stood in their path.

The medieval Persian sources extol Ya‘qūb b. Layth for his ‘*ayyār*-like qualities, notably *Tārīkh-i Sīstān*, an anonymous history of Sīstān from the early Arab conquests up to the Saljūq period of the mid 5<sup>th</sup> / 11<sup>th</sup> century. The author devotes several pages to summarizing

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what he considers were the distinguishing qualities of Ya‘qūb b. Lath: *jawānmardī*, liberality (*āzādagī*), chastity (*ḥifāz*), justice (‘*adl*), astute investigation (*ghāyat*, *tajassus*), sagacity (*dahā*).<sup>31</sup> He is said to have treated his enemies fairly (though many were treated to his sword), did not abuse women, and fought to keep Sīstān free from ‘Abbāsīd interference. In his collection of prose anecdotes, *Jawāmi‘ al-Ḥikāyāt*, the well-known Persian anthologist, ‘Awfī (d. early 7<sup>th</sup>/13<sup>th</sup> century),<sup>32</sup> relates an event where the Sīstānī ‘*ayyār* would not fight a caravan of armed Arabs because there were women among them, and so he simply asked for tribute. When they refused, Ya‘qūb created consternation in the enemy camp at night, which was typical of the behavior of the night-prowling ‘*ayyār*. The Arabs confirmed this aspect of the ‘*ayyār* in a saying: “It is as if the ‘*ayyārān* were awake all night.” An ‘*ayyār* was also known for his use of stratagem. In this case, Ya‘qūb approached the Arab camp, having covered himself with blood as a sign of submission, and thereby lured the enemy to drop its guard. The Sīstānī troops then attacked the unsuspecting Arabs and disarmed them. Ya‘qūb is depicted as the magnanimous ‘*ayyār* by his response to the enemy: “We were satisfied with a little from you, but you refused. Now you are trapped, but I will not treat you the way you treated me. Give us ten percent payment of your goods and then leave in peace.” The Arabs, grateful for not having been massacred, bestowed upon the Sīstānīs what Ya‘qūb asked for.<sup>33</sup>

In his *Chahār Maqāla* (written 550/1156), Nizāmī al-‘Arūḍī Samarqandī describes the poet Farrukhī of Sīstān (d. 429/1037) as an ‘*ayyār* for his agility in catching cattle on the branding grounds.<sup>34</sup>

In delineating the codes of conduct for the three different groups of physical *jawānmardī*, Kay Kā‘ūs first of all, presents the virtues that must be common to all categories of

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*jawānmardī*: “Do whatever you say, do not say that which is not true, and endure hardship.”<sup>35</sup>

The author then makes a differentiation between the *‘ayyār*, the soldier and the artisan, each maintaining a distinctive code of conduct.

The *jawānmardī* of *‘ayyārī* is characterized by certain qualities: bravery, manliness (*mardāna*) and patience in every aspect. [The *‘ayyār* | keeps his promise, is chaste, pure of heart and does not harm anyone to gain benefit for himself. He sacrifices himself for the sake of his friends, does not abuse prisoners, [rather] aids prisoners and the helpless and protects good people from the evil of evil men. He only hears and speaks the truth. He will judge himself first. He will do no harm where he has received hospitality and he will not return evil for good. He will keep himself from women. [Even] when disaster strikes, he remains content.<sup>36</sup>

The soldier must maintain the same virtues as that of the *‘ayyār*, but he is to excel in generosity, hospitality and be well-armed, and in contrast to the *‘ayyār*, the soldier must be in constant submission to his superior.<sup>37</sup> Kay Kā’ūs’ emphasis seems to be twofold: the *jawānmard* is obligated always to live for the welfare of others, and secondly, he must constantly guard his speech so that he says what he does, he does what he says and he does not say what he knows is not true. In other words, he will never be deceitful, even at the cost of his life.<sup>38</sup> The author alludes to the tension between deception and truth in the life of a *jawānmard* in a hypothetical story he relates about a *jawānmard* who was caught in this dilemma.<sup>39</sup>

As noted, *‘ayyārī* was considered to be a profession (*‘ayyār-pīsha*) which one could choose for oneself. This is epitomized by Samak-i *‘Ayyār*, an *‘ayyār* of a popular romance of the 13<sup>th</sup> or 14<sup>th</sup> century. He belonged to a group of urban *jawānmards* who lived together and kept guard of their homeland as vigilantes. At the same time, Samak-i *‘Ayyār* was also a ‘lone ranger’ who performed valiant exploits in the service of others. He defined his own profession as a man who used his personal skills of agility and prowess to serve anyone in need:

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Those people who are professional *‘ayyārs* must know the skills of *‘ayyārī*, and must be *jawānmarūs*. They must be active in night prowling (*shab-rawī*). An *‘ayyār* must be a master in stratagem (*hīlat*), and be able to scheme (*chāra*). He must be shrewd in speech ... Along with all this, he must not be weak in public combat (*maydān-dārī*) and when he is needed, he must be able to help. In all what I’ve said, if he does not lack in any of these qualities, then for certain he should be called an *‘ayyār* and be counted among the *jawānmarūs*.<sup>40</sup>

Medieval history also attests to the darker side of the *‘ayyār*. During Buyid rule in Baghdad (4<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup>/11<sup>th</sup> centuries), at the time of decline of the ‘Abbāsīd caliphate, there was a proliferation of *‘ayyārs* and *lītyān* who developed a culture of revelry, sexual license, and brawling which often resulted in anarchic street-fighting. To be sure, they may well have been “aspiring to a better life,”<sup>41</sup> but they were often nothing more than groups of hooligans who were a law unto themselves, and who ostensibly, in the name of courage, honor and group solidarity, generated more trouble than good. One such band of *‘ayyārs* killed the famous philosopher al-Fārābī (d. 339/950), whose discussions on the virtuous man had apparently come too late to make a difference.<sup>42</sup>

Stories abound of this reckless and often licentious form of *‘ayyārī*. A certain ‘Alī ibn Jahm of the 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century was released from prison for his banditry, and upon joining his associates, composed a poem celebrating the ritual carousals of *‘ayyārī*, which included women and handsome boys.<sup>43</sup> The Arab historian, Ibn al-Athīr (d. 628/1231),<sup>44</sup> relates an episode from the time when Baghdad was being threatened by Saljūq warriors. The Caliph al-Muqtāfī (d. 295/908) armed both the military and the common people and promised a reward of 5 dinars to anyone who sustained injuries. One of the commoners was wounded but did not receive a reward. He returned to battle the Saljūq army, and after receiving serious injury, approached the caliph’s *wazīr* and presented him with a piece of his own abdominal flesh and asked if this was satisfactory. The *wazīr* laughed and granted him

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double the reward. Ibn al-Athīr stated, "This kind of poverty, courage, bravery and wittiness is an example of the character and disposition of the *ʿayyārān* and their deeds and conduct."<sup>45</sup>

### 4. The Sufi

With the spread of Arabo-Islamic culture and the development of Sufism from an emphasis on individual asceticism to a communal ideal, a Sufi ethic came to be associated with the *ʿayyārān*. It is probable that the *malāmatiyya* trend (heedlessness to social reproach and disregard for appearance or behavior) in Sufism found ready acceptance among groups of *ʿayyārīs*.<sup>46</sup> And so, already by the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century, drawing on the definition of the *fātan* as the supremely generous man, the term *futuwwat* developed as an Islamic Sufi ideal, characterizing courageous 'young' men who abandoned everything for the welfare of their fellow men.<sup>47</sup>

Hence, simultaneously with the phenomenon of *ʿayyār* banditry, there developed a Sufi literature that was rooted in Qur'ānic ethics and identified *ʿayyārī* and *jawānmardī* with this ideal of spiritualized altruism. The Sufi shaykh, Ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Sulamī (d.412/1021) of Nīshāpūr, author of the well-known work, *Tabaqāt al-Ṣūfīyya*, devoted a separate treatise to the subject of *futuwwat*, entitled *Kitāb al-Futuwwat al-Ṣūfīyya*, the first known work on *futuwwat* in Arabic.<sup>48</sup> This treatise is a commentary on the need for an internal and external ethic for the *fātan*, and consists primarily of a collection of Islamic *ḥadīths* and anecdotes which illustrate the altruistic ideal of *futuwwat*: "*Futuwwah* is feeding people, giving to them, being pleasant and honorable to them, and not causing difficulties."<sup>49</sup> The text underscores the necessity of living according to a strict inner and outer code of conduct after the pattern of the Prophet. Sulamī's disciple, Imām ʿAbdul Karīm Qushayrī (d. 465/1072),<sup>50</sup>

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wrote a foundational treatise on Sufism, *Risāla-yi Qushayriyya* which included a section on *futuwwat*.<sup>51</sup>

The essence of Sufi-inspired *futuwwat* was that man had to be constantly occupied with affairs other than his own, considering others as more important than himself, passing over the errors and sins of others and sacrificing self for others. It was seen as the ultimate ethic of a human being where a man no longer lived for himself, but raised himself beyond himself and so found himself wholly in the 'other' person.<sup>52</sup> *Futuwwat* began with material generosity, but then ideally progressed to spiritual liberality, a complete altruism and self-abandonment for the benefit of others. *Jawānmardī*, then, was a spiritualized, Sufi version of Ḥātim al-Ṭā'ī's material generosity.

‘Uthmān Hujwīrī (d. ca. 465/1072), who is credited with the authorship of the first Persian treatise on Sufism, relates an episode about a *shaykh*, which illustrates that by the 11<sup>th</sup> century the various terms – *jawānmardī*, *futuwwat*, ‘*ayyārī*, and *taṣawwuf*’ (Sufism) had become interrelated:

On a certain day, as I was walking along the Hira stream in Nīshāpūr, I came across an ‘*ayyār* named Nūḥ, who was renowned for *futuwwat*, and all the ‘*ayyārān* of Nīshāpūr followed him. I met him along the way and asked him, “Oh Nūḥ, what is *jawānmardī*?” He responded, “Do you want my kind of *jawānmardī*, or yours?” I said, “Give me both.” He said, “My kind of *jawānmardī* is that I take off this garment (*qabā*) and don a worn-out cloak (*muraqqa*) and trade it in order to become a Sufī, and with these clothes (*jāma*) I will be afraid of people and so avoid sin, but your *jawānmardī* is that you take off the worn-out cloak (*muraqqa*), so that you will not deceive society and society won’t deceive you. My *jawānmardī* is keeping the law externally, while yours is guarding the truth in secrets.”<sup>53</sup>

In Sufī terms, the concept of *jawānmardī* and ‘*ayyārī* became an aspect of spirituality that indicated the mystic’s inner state. At the same time, there was a tension between the external expression of spirituality and the need to keep it hidden. Hence, another anecdote, where the *darwīsh* robe was identified with the clothes of a *jawānmard*, warned that one should not rely

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on the cloak as the mark of *jawānmaḍī*, because it led to a superficial and hypocritical form of *jawānmaḍī*.<sup>54</sup>

Up to the time of the ‘Abbāsīd caliph, al-Nāṣir li-Dīn Allāh (d. 622/1223), the concept of *jawānmaḍī* was a confusing paradox: the reckless *futuwwat* of the outlaws coexisted with a Sufī *futuwwat* of spiritual generosity.<sup>55</sup> At best, the *jawānmaḍs* were voluntary associations of men advocating an altruistic, selfless and religious spirit of generosity and courage, while at worst, they were self-seeking ‘toughs’ who understood ‘abandonment of self’ as giving oneself up to pleasure and license. It seems then, that despite the efforts to imbue the chivalrous *‘ayyārī* societies with religious and Sufī ideals, divisions and riotous behavior within these groups only increased.<sup>56</sup>

### 5. The Reforms of al-Nāṣir li-Dīn Allāh

It was these religiously oriented bands of *jawānmaḍān*, still very factious and often violent, that the ‘Abbāsīd caliph, al-Nāṣir, sought to curb and reform. In order to gain a more secure hold on the weakening caliphate and establish stronger, centralized rule, al-Nāṣir decided to enter into one of these popular bands himself. The caliph was astute in realizing that once he joined an association, these bands of *lītyān* would subsequently take their leadership from him.<sup>57</sup> Furthermore, not only was he able to control the factions among the various bands, but by introducing *jawānmaḍī* as a ‘principle of government’, which he combined with Ḥanbalite law, he used these associations of religious *jawānmaḍs* to control society and thereby fortify the rule of the ‘Abbāsīd caliphate.<sup>58</sup> Though the caliph’s efforts to bring inter-*futuwwat* conflicts to an end only had a gradual effect, he himself became an icon of *jawānmaḍī*. Soon after he was inducted into one of the popular associations by receiving the special garments of *futuwwat* (*libās al-futuwwa*), he assumed its leadership (*naqīb al-*



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*jamā'at*).<sup>59</sup> Besides his ethical and moral reforms, al-Nāṣir also became a patron of athletic activities, an avid crossbow hunter, and a collector of singing and messenger birds.<sup>60</sup>

Some years later, in 604/1207, in an effort to curb continuous in-fighting among the *lityān*, the caliph issued a royal mandate (*manshūr*) which leaders of *lityān* bands were required to read and sign.<sup>61</sup> The legal and political intent of the reforms of al-Nāṣir are clearly reflected in the mandate, as is the role of 'Alī:

Without a doubt, the Commander of the Faithful, 'Alī b. 'Alī Ṭālib is the origin of *futuwwat* and its inception. He is the source of its honorable virtues. All of the virtues and codes of conduct are transmitted from him. All the *lityān* groups (*qabā'il*) and associations (*ahzāb*) have their derivation from him and not from anyone else. The comradry within the *lityān* associations reflects the brotherly relationship 'Alī had with the Prophet. Being perfect in *futuwwa* and great in magnanimity, 'Alī fully observed the laws of Islam in every aspect of life. He applied punishment to different criminals, irrespective of their sect or the crime. No person ever heard anyone from the community (*umma*) blame or discredit 'Alī for any law he carried out. ... Indeed, [al-Nāṣir] to whom God has given this status [as caliph] and entrusted him with the laws of Islam and who belongs to 'Alī in his *futuwwa* and imitates 'Alī in his noble character and benevolent nature, must follow 'Alī in his deeds. [Because] the example of ['Alī] is clear, [al-Nāṣir] will not be blamed for what he does. ... No opposition will stand against him for the laws he enacts, either from *futuwwa* or the law. It is decreed that when those who, through *futuwwa*, have entered the companionship of the present, ... honorable caliph, al-Nāṣir li-Dīn Allāh, become aware of any comrade who kills someone whom God has forbidden to be killed and sheds blood that God has forbidden to be shed, that they should ban such a person from belonging to the group of *lityān* and throw him out of the circle of comrades because he has failed to abide by its code. Such a person will be counted among those about whom God has stated, "whoso slayeth a believer of set purpose, his reward is hell forever."<sup>62</sup> ... Any *fatan* who shelters a killer or hides him or helps in his affairs ... is committing a major sin and does not belong to the association.<sup>63</sup>

'Alī had already been an exemplar of *futuwwat* prior to the reforms. In the early 6<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup> century Sufī-inspired Qur'ānic commentary, *Kashf al-Asrār wa 'Uddat al-Abrār*, by Rashīd al-Dīn Maibudī, the author extols 'Alī as the greatest of all *jawānmardān*. According to Maibudī, the Prophet had addressed 'Alī as, "Oh 'Alī, the *jawānmard!*" He concludes his exegesis of the chapter *al-Kahf* (the Cave), in which the term *lityān* is used for the young

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men of the cave, with a lesson on *jawānmardī*, and cites the famous attestation, “*Lā fatān illā ‘Alī*” (There is no *jawānmard* but ‘Alī), i.e., he is the only real *jawānmard*.<sup>64</sup> However, it was during the reforms of al-Nāṣir that ‘Alī’s prominence as the chief of *futuwwat* associations became state dogma. The renowned Sufī preacher during al-Nāṣir’s caliphate, ‘Umar Suhrawardī (d. 632/1234), aggressively sought to give ‘Alī the prominence of prophethood: “Scholars have observed that if there had been a prophet after the chief of the Prophets, it would have been ‘Alī ... and although prophethood did not reach ‘Alī, for the reason that Muḥammad was the Seal of the Prophets, the heritage of *futuwwat* stayed with ‘Alī.”<sup>65</sup>

The ‘Abbāsīd-sponsored aristocratic *futuwwat* came to an abrupt end with the Mongol sack of Baghdad (656/1258), resulting in renewed internal strife among the bands of *futuwwat*. Nevertheless, since *futuwwat* had originally developed among the popular strata of society, it did not collapse, but continued within popular associations in this reformed fashion, with special initiation rites and high Sufī ethical ideals.<sup>66</sup> Taeschner concludes that it was as a result of al-Nāṣir’s reforms that *futuwwat* came completely under Sufī influence.<sup>67</sup>

### 6. The Artisan

Because the *futuwwat* associations were part of urban life, especially at the lower levels of society, the concept of *futuwwat* had long been a feature of the artisan and craft guilds.<sup>68</sup> We have already mentioned Kay Kā’ūs who classifies physical *jawānmardī* into three groups: ‘*ayyārān*, soldiers and artisans.<sup>69</sup> The merchants had their own ethical standards, to which the author devotes an entire chapter, and which may be summarized as fair, yet firm, treatment of customers.<sup>70</sup> Kay Kā’ūs’ primary concern is ethical advice, and he exhorts the *jawānmardān* to behave magnanimously and honestly. His brief chapter on the profession of agriculture, advising his son how to handle implements and livestock, as well as other chapters on

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different 'options of employment' indicate some standardization of the code of conduct among the various groups of artisans.

Already during the Buyid period there were associations that expressed solidarity among their members on the basis of their profession. The social identity of each profession was expressed through its distinct customs and mutual loyalty.<sup>71</sup> For example, butchers would close their shops in order to help a fellow butcher who was doing poorly.<sup>72</sup> In another instance, the bakers of 11<sup>th</sup> century Ghazna banded together to demand an increase in the price of bread.<sup>73</sup> On the other hand, there was the complaint of indifference among the guild of clerks, who apparently cared little for the needs of their colleagues.<sup>74</sup> It was through these associations, which advocated the ideals of *jawānmardī*, that artisans of the lower classes, who otherwise had little opportunity for self-advancement, were able to achieve a sense of identity and self-worth.<sup>75</sup>

A vigorous spirit of competition between different groups of artisans and guilds trying to outdo each other reflects this work-related solidarity. One could mention the guild of professional runners (*shāʿir*) who were also classified as *ʿayyārān*. Footmen, or couriers, were used for postal communication; hence, long-distance running was strongly encouraged and developed into competition matches, with prizes given out by the Buyid rulers. In order not to be outdone by runners from opposing factions, there was tremendous loyalty and mutual support among the members of an individual group.<sup>76</sup>

In his famous travelogue, Ibn Baṭṭūṭa (d. ca. 779/1377) describes scenarios of competition and flamboyant display among the different professions in Isfahān and Shīrāz in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. These young men formed associations and tried to outdo other groups in terms of their hospitality. Ibn Baṭṭūṭa relates an incident in Shīrāz, when the ruler, Abū Ishāq (d.

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758/1357), issued an order for a palace to be built similar to the great Sāsānid hall at Ctesiphon. In order to rival each other, members from different classes dressed up in ostentatious silk clothing, embroidered their hauling baskets with silk and dug ditches with silver axes.<sup>77</sup> The Persian historian, Ghiyāth al-Dīn Khwāndamīr (d. 942/1536), describes royal circumcision feasts during spring festivals in 15<sup>th</sup> century Khurāsān during which skilled men from every profession (*pīsha-war*, *ṭāyifā*) set up spectacular pavilions and displays of their wares based on their craft guilds.<sup>78</sup>

The Sufi-spirited, ritualistic *futuwwat* of the al-Nāṣir period came to be linked with the artisans and craftsmen in Anatolia, and the early development of specific initiation rites and esoteric interpretations among the professions was most noticeable here.<sup>79</sup> ‘Umar Suhrawardī, who was commissioned to Anatolia as the caliph’s ambassador, was the first to introduce this ritualistic form of *futuwwat* there. There is also an apocryphal story that Abū Muslim developed an association of craftsmen known as the *akhī*, whom he then led in revolt against the caliphate.<sup>80</sup> Since he became a national hero not only for the Persians, but later in Anatolia as well, the *akhī* brotherhoods, especially the Bektashis, traced their roots back to him.<sup>81</sup>

The author of the comprehensive *Futuwwat Nāma-yi Sulṭānī* of the late 15<sup>th</sup> - early 16<sup>th</sup> century assumes that all members of *futuwwat* associations were artisans and professionals. It therefore seems that during the late medieval and early modern periods, guild associations organized on the basis of *futuwwat* initiation rites with esoteric meanings given to each particular profession were a common phenomenon across the Muslim world. Many guilds had their own treatises (*risāla*) which contained the esoteric lore and moral code of behavior relating to them.<sup>82</sup>

In his *Rustam al-Tawārīkh*, which highlights the cultural and political life of the late Safawid and Qājār periods (1694-1835), Muḥammad Hāshim lists nearly 150 different guilds.<sup>83</sup> Each member of a guild was characterized with expertise in his own skills (*ḥard-i kāmil*) and showed little interest in other guilds. There is a tone of criticism as the author describes their dress to which Ibn Baṭṭūṭa had already drawn attention several centuries earlier. They all wore particular types of turbans, boots, breeches, and smoked Kirmānī pipes and rode expensive horses.<sup>84</sup> Ideally, each profession was supposed to be guided by a specific code of conduct that reflected a religious ethic, but as history testifies, this was not always the case.

### 7. *Jawānmardī* in Contemporary Iranian Societies

One of the central assumptions of this thesis is that the concept of *jawānmardī* continues to be a living ideal today. Despite Ja‘far Maḥjūb’s assertion that *jawānmardī* as a ritualized institution had become obsolete in the 20<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>85</sup> the terms, *mardī* and *jawānmardī*, are deeply rooted in the hearts and minds of the Iranian people. They are used to describe someone who serves others without expectation of reward, or who courageously stands up against oppression and protects the honor of the nation or the family. Conversely, one of the greatest insults is to call someone *nā-mard* (unmanly, coward), a term used for a pathetic weakling or calculating coward. Similarly, to say, “He did not act with *jawānmardī*” is a criticism of someone who fails to live up to the expected code of behavior. The terms, *jawānmardī* and *mardī*, have been used politically to rouse the Iranian nation against foreign oppression, and in a domestic context, to stir men to moral accountability in their own homes and to challenge boys to grow up. In short, they are a general call to shed one’s fears and be

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courageous. Early 20<sup>th</sup> century works used the ideal of manliness as a motivation to stir up Iranian patriotism, as in the following poem:

O unworthy sons of our fathers,  
 death is better than life without honor!  
 Real life means to have a good name,  
 and without it, such a life is forbidden.  
 Oh you, who have no anguish in your body,  
 you who have no courage for manliness (*mardānagī*) ...  
 Now is the time for sacrifice and manliness (*mardānagī*),  
 It is time to shed all mediocrity and carelessness.  
 He who is afraid during times of hardship and battle,  
 his name will be dishonored.  
 Let us fight like lions and warriors,  
 Let us adorn the age with a good name.  
 It is time for action! Take courage ...<sup>86</sup>

Many 20<sup>th</sup> century Persian studies on *jawānmardī*, *‘ayyārī* and *lūtuwwat* continue this highly romanticized and often uncritical approach to the concept:

The truth of the matter is that the *‘ayyār* and *jawānmard* are people whose intentions are pure and clear and whose deeds and actions are so perfect that, for the benefit of society, they constantly abandon their personal desires and wishes and, in support of the working class, they fight against tyranny.<sup>87</sup>

The fact that there are many popular studies and surveys on *jawānmardī* in modern Persian is an indication in itself that the concept is still very much an ideal in society, though more as a nostalgic memory of a bygone era. Just as Firdawsī “sang of the glory that was no more.”<sup>88</sup> numerous modern studies eulogize of the ideal of *jawānmardī* that they too lament has disappeared.<sup>89</sup>

Recent studies, however, have shown that the ethos of *jawānmardī* is not just a legacy of the past, but a dynamic “way of living” that adapts itself according to its environment. In her work, *Being Modern in Iran*, Fariba Adelkhah has provided an anthropological study on the modern concept of *jawānmardī*, focusing primarily on the post-revolutionary period of Iran’s history.<sup>90</sup> In the author’s view, *jawānmardī* represents the lifestyle of the benevolent and

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eminent individual who eschews his own interests for the benefit of others in society. Social activism and public deeds of altruism are defined within the framework of *jawānmardī* even by the present Islamic regime in Iran.<sup>91</sup> From another angle, the culture of “tough boys” among Iranian exiles in Los Angeles seeks to promote the ideals of the traditional *jawānmardī*: concern for personal justice, kindness to women, generosity to comrades, and so forth.<sup>92</sup> In a very different context, the ‘freedom fighter’ in northern Afghanistan calls himself a *pahlawān* (champion, wrestler) and believes that he is espousing the ethic of *jawānmardī*.<sup>93</sup> Thus, the ideals of *jawānmardī* continue to resonate among diverse classes of people in Iranian societies.

However, the romanticized notion and the demand to uphold the ideal of traditional manliness (or perhaps a distorted perception of it), have also clashed with other voices in modern society, resulting in sharp tensions and dilemmas, particularly in personal and family relationships. From a contemporary perspective, the expectation to live according to the social code of *jawānmardī* has often led to immoderate conduct, the suppression of natural human desires and the sacrifice of sincere love and family life. A specific example of this conflict is the liberalization of the role of the woman in modern Iranian societies, which has been interpreted as an attack on a man’s honor and worth. Farzaneh Milani observes, “Women became a real challenge to men’s sense of *Mardaneji* [manliness]. They called it into question, forced it constantly to prove itself, its bearing, its power, its control.”<sup>94</sup> Freedom for women meant the concomitant loss of manhood and reputation for men.

One may well question whether the approach in this thesis of criticizing the ancient and medieval ideals of manliness in light of the complex issues present in modern Iranian societies is not anachronistic. But it is precisely because the traditional ideal of *jawānmardī*

still persists in contemporary society, and because classical heroes continue to be considered worthy of emulation, that this study seeks to examine the concept of *jawānmardī* up to present-day social developments.

## B. Models of *Jawānmardī*

It is clear from the above survey that the concept of *jawānmardī* is a multi-faceted one. It is, however, possible to discern several distinct models that have developed, each of which encompass several of the often contradictory aspects that have been discussed above. These models, which were ideals that medieval man sought to emulate and which, to some extent, continue to the present day, are presented in summary form below and are discussed in detail in separate chapters devoted to each.

### 1. The Heroic Warrior (*pahlawān*)

The first model of *jawānmardī* to be examined is that of the heroic warrior or champion (*pahlawān*) who proved and defined his manhood on the battlefield. In contrast to the knaves and toughs who were merely troublemakers, the *pahlawān* is portrayed in a positive light in the literature. He is frequently identified with the great pre-Islamic heritage of Iran and is depicted as the supporter of the ancient Iranian kings.

Stereotypically, the heroic warrior is presented as compassionate to the people of his own nation, and as ruthless and punitive to those who were considered enemies of the ancient Iranian state. From a modern perspective, the life of the hero appears to be very straightforward. As Hanaway has stated, "The hero is born with certain qualities, and the story of his life is the description of how these are worked out. There is no question of development or change; there are no gradations of passions or ambiguities in individuals."<sup>95</sup> His primary concern is to guard his reputation at all cost, and he is destined to act only for



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this cause. The monologues of heroes confirm this sense of destiny. In a rare moment of self-revelation, Samak-i 'Ayyār, the hero of the lengthy romance, *Samak-i 'Ayyār*, affirmed this persistent quest of the *pahlawān* to maintain his good reputation:

I have no possessions, and am only an 'ayyār. If I find food, I eat, if not, I wander and serve 'ayyārān and jawānmardān. Any work I do, I do for the sake of a good name (*nām*), not for food. The work that I am doing now, is so that I will have a good reputation whether in distant lands or in my homeland.<sup>96</sup>

The medieval Persian literature on the heroic warrior is vast, and is represented by two genres: the heroic epic and the romance. Most enduring is the national epic which has a long history in Iran. Its oldest form was oral tradition, which gradually developed into court poetry, versified legends and myths of ancient kings and their battles. The epic embodied the values and ideals of ancient Iran and has functioned as a national voice for the people of Iran.

The greatest of these epics is the *Shāhnāma* of Firdawsī in which he immortalized the ancient kings and heroes of Iran. Though Firdawsī praises his pre-predecessor, the Sāmānid court poet, Daqīqī (d. ca. 320/932),<sup>97</sup> who had begun the task of glorifying heroes and kings in the New Persian language, it is Firdawsī's version that has preserved the pre-Islamic heritage of Iran.<sup>98</sup>

Many epics which appeared subsequent to the *Shāhnāma*, such as Asad Ṭūsī's *Garshāsp Nāma* (completed 1058),<sup>99</sup> tried to emulate the heroic values of the *Shāhnāma* and to continue the legacy of its greatest champion, Rustam.<sup>100</sup> *Barzū Nāma*, by Abū l-'Alā b. Ya'qūb of Ghazna, continues the line of Rustam through Barzū son of Suhrāb, and resembles the story of Rustam and Suhrāb, but without the tragic ending. *Shahriyār Nāma*, by Sirāj al-Dīn 'Uthmān b. Muḥammad Mukhtārī (12<sup>th</sup> century), also of the Ghaznawid court, records the feats of Rustam and his family down to the third generation. Another Ghaznawid epic, *Bīzhan Nāma*, glorifies the feats of Bīzhan, son of Gīw. *Sūsān Nāma* highlights a woman,

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Sūsan Rāmishgīr from Turān, and extols Rustam's rescue of champions captured in Tūrān. The age of the court epic began to decline with the relatively lengthy *Sām Nāma* (14<sup>th</sup> century), an epic extolling the feats of the Kart kings of Herat. The courtly romance, *Wīs wa Rāmīn*, by Fakhr al-Dīn As'ad (completed around 1054), is a study in itself of how the ideals of the ancient Iranian hero were woven into a love story.<sup>101</sup>

Though less courtly in style and not as widely known as the epic, the popular romances similarly depict heroic warriors and are permeated with the spirit of *jawānmardī*.<sup>102</sup> The stories consist of long series of adventures with two primary characteristics: the hero's public combat, normally for the sake of the king, and his chivalrous pursuit of the beloved. Rooted in the oral tradition of story-telling, these romances reflect the medieval popular attitudes of ideal manhood – preserving one's reputation, chastity, honor, generosity, hospitality, courage – which was embraced both by the nobility and the lower classes.<sup>103</sup> Five romances have come down from the pre-Şafawid period. *Iskandar Nāma* (The Book of Alexander), glorifies the life of Alexander the Great as he was understood in the Iranian context.<sup>104</sup> The *Qiṣṣa-yi Ḥamza* extols the heroic feats and exploits of an 'ayyār from Sīstān, Ḥamza b. 'Abd Allāh, who rebelled against the 'Abbāsīd caliphate.<sup>105</sup> In later texts, the paternal uncle of the Prophet, Ḥamza b. 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib, came to be identified with the Sīstānī Ḥamza and great feats were attributed to him.<sup>106</sup> The above-mentioned *Samak-i 'Ayyār* relates the heroic adventures of the popular *jawānmard*, Samak-i 'Ayyār, who was constantly in the service of others, especially the prince, Khurshīdshāh. As with most of the romances, *Samak-i 'Ayyār* was more than entertainment: the story-teller had a didactic purpose in mind which is demonstrated by his frequently interspersing the narrative with maxims and discourses on the nature of *jawānmardī*. The princely hero in *Firūz Shāh Nāma* resembles Khurshīdshāh of

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*Samak-i 'Ayyār* as he experiences countless adventures in the pursuit of his beloved.<sup>107</sup> The fifth of the pre-Şafawid romances, *Dārāb Nāma*, highlights fabulous adventures of Dārā(b) II, the last ruler of the legendary Kayānid dynasty.<sup>108</sup>

Numerous semi-historical treatises recount legends of warriors of the past, and although the accuracy of historical detail is in question, these texts provide valuable insights into what was considered to be an ideal warrior/*pahlawān*. The heroism of Abū Muslim Khurāsānī has provided the subject matter for numerous stories,<sup>109</sup> and *Tarīkh-i Sīstān* extols the exploits of Ya'qūb b. Layth. The Shī'ite romance, *Husayn-i Kurd*, glorifies the heroism of the quasi-spiritual warriors of the early Şafawid period. A 19<sup>th</sup> century romance, *Amīr Arsalān Rūmī*, by the chief story teller of Nāşir al-Dīn Shāh (d.1896) highlights the feats of Amīr Arslān, a prince of the king of Rūm and his love for a foreign princess.<sup>110</sup> A popular modern version of this genre in Afghan society is Khalīlullāh Khalīlī's (d.1988) *'Ayyārī az Khurāsān* [An *'ayyār* from Khurāsān] that resonates with a religiously-inspired heroism. The story sensationalizes as well as sanctifies the rebel movement against the Afghan monarchy, led by a Tajik villager, Ḥabīb Allāh Kalakānī (d.1929), popularly known as Bacheha Saqqā' (the water carrier's boy).<sup>111</sup>

For the analysis of the model of the heroic warrior, this study will concentrate on the best known of all texts: the *Shāhnāma* and its supreme hero, Rostam. Rostam is the embodiment of the model of the heroic warrior and has been admired and eulogized throughout the medieval period and, to a certain extent, in the modern period as well. Firdawsī's pride was Iran and the pride of Iran was Rostam of the *Shāhnāma*. Through an examination of this national champion, supplemented by examples from the folk hero, *Samak-i 'Ayyār*, chapter 2

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will discuss the salient features of the *jawānmardī* of the heroic warrior and explore how these ideals led to irreconcilable personal dilemmas.

### 2. The Spiritual Champion (*fātan*)

Rustam was not the sole embodiment of *jawānmardī*, however. The Islamic ethic of piety (*taqwā*) towards God and restraint (*ḥilm*) towards one's fellow man profoundly shaped the second model of *jawānmardī* in the Persian context.<sup>112</sup> Furthermore, as the concept of *jawānmardī* became fused with Sufism, 'Alī became the supreme model of the *jawānmard*. He was seen as the one and only *fātan*, the spiritual champion whom all other *jawānmardān* venerated and sought to emulate.<sup>113</sup> Like Rustam of old, or the Islamic *ghāzīs*, this spiritual *jawānmard* was primarily a warrior, and his field of duty was still the battleground. The writers of *futuwwat* treatises, however, present a different interpretation of the enemy; in fact, the enemy was a greater and more defiant one. The spiritual *jawānmard* turned inward: his battleground was his own carnal soul (*nafs*). A much-quoted tradition of the Prophet, "We have turned from the lesser *jihād* (Holy War) to the greater *jihād*,"<sup>114</sup> supported this reorientation. The author of *Futuwwat Nāma-yi Sulṭānī*, [Ḥusayn Wā'iz Kāshīrī (d. 910/1504-5), quotes the Persian mystical poet, Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī (d. 672/1273), who calls his reader to battle the deadlier enemy – that of the carnal soul.

Oh kings, we killed the external enemies,  
 [But] worse than that an enemy remains on the inside.  
 Killing this [enemy] is not just the work of mind and thought,  
 The lion of the inner [soul] is not an easy laughing matter.  
 We have withdrawn from the lesser *jihād*.  
 Now is the time for the greater *jihād*.<sup>115</sup>

As the poem indicates, this battle was not easily won by the spiritual *jawānmard*. A cardinal doctrine in this model of manhood was the indispensability of community, for no man could reach true manhood in isolation from others. Therefore, great importance was

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given to joining a brotherhood and being linked to the lineage (*nasab*) of spiritual warriors and saints. An initiate joined a *futuwwat* association by means of an intricate ceremony, which included the conferring of ritual garments, such as the trousers (*shalwar*) and the belt or sash (*shadd*). Furthermore, the struggle against and defeat of one's carnal soul could only be publicly evidenced through correct behavior (*adab*); hence, the demand for a scrupulous and all-encompassing code of conduct, which the initiated *jawānmard* demonstrated in his livelihood (*kasb*) or profession in society. Strict adherence to *adab* contrasted sharply with the reckless and anarchical social behavior of the *'ayyār*, and the physical abandon of the champions of the battlefield. This obsessive concern with proper etiquette and behavior became the characteristic feature of spiritual *jawānmardī* as described by writers on *futuwwat*. Already in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, Kay Kā'ūs had elucidated the need for perfect *adab* and concluded that *bī-adabī* (lack of proper behavior) was worse than ignorance,<sup>116</sup> and in the popular medieval romances, lack of *adab* (*tark-i adab*) was considered a terrible shame.<sup>117</sup> However, in spiritual *jawānmardī*, the significance of *adab* was given a mystical and neo-Platonic interpretation.

As with the literature on the heroic warrior, the literature on *futuwwat* is extensive.<sup>118</sup> Since spiritual *jawānmardī* of the medieval period was so closely related to the central tenet of Islam – man's obedience to God's commands – much of Islamic ethical teaching (*'ilm al-akhlāq*) had a direct bearing on the literature on *futuwwat*.<sup>119</sup> In fact, the different schools of Islamic ethical thought have affected the Persian notion of manliness in profound ways. Many of the basic injunctions from the Qur'ān and the Traditions of the Prophet and the Companions to enjoin goodness and prohibit evil became standard codes of behavior in *futuwwat*.<sup>120</sup> Furthermore, as will be shown, the philosophical theories on ethics, which were

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heavily influenced by the neo-Platonic view of the soul, played an important role in shaping the concept of spiritual *jawānmardī*.

Many religious and ethical texts from the pre-Mongol period, such as Qur'ānic commentaries (*tafsīr*) and *ḥadīth* works,<sup>121</sup> Sufi treatises such as Hujwīrī's *Kashf al-Maḥjūb* and hagiographical works such as Farīd al-Dīn 'Aṭṭār's (d. 627/1220) *Tadhkirat al-Awliyā'*, discuss *futuwwat* as an ideal Sufi ethic, as do later post-Mongol works, such as the hagiography, *Nafāḥāt al-Uns* by Jāmī (d. 899/1492). Keeping in mind that hagiographical works highly idealize and exaggerate the deeds of Sufi *shaykhs*, we can nevertheless appreciate the maxims and definitions of *jawānmardī* in these texts, which normally equate *jawānmardī* or *futuwwat* with the character traits of generosity and magnanimity.<sup>122</sup> The spiritual concept of *jawānmardī* went beyond the golden rule, as the Persian poet and mystic 'Aṭṭār writes, "Desire for others more than you desire for yourself."<sup>123</sup> Jāmī describes various Sufi *shaykhs* as being the greatest of the *jawānmardān* or the most unique among *jawānmardān*.<sup>124</sup> Along with the ethical treatises already mentioned - the Persian 'mirrors for princes', *Qābūs Nāma* and the *Siyar al-Mulūk* - the second section of *Naṣīḥat al-Mulūk*, attributed to al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111),<sup>125</sup> should be included, as well as the many Persian works of advice which followed, all of which present a highly idealized concept of moral behavior for the king. The popular works of ethical advice by Sa'dī (d. 691/1292), *Gulistān* and *Būstān*, or Jāmī's brief work of advice to his son, *Bahāristān*,<sup>126</sup> al-Ṭūsī Qānī's Persian version of the ancient book of fables, *Kalīla wa Dimna*.<sup>127</sup> and Shujā's *Anīs al-nās* (written ca. 830/1426-7), which appears to be a re-write of the *Qābūs Nāma*.<sup>128</sup> also laud the virtues of *futuwwat* and *jawānmardī*. Mention should also be made of the lengthy poem on *futuwwat* attributed to 'Aṭṭār, which lists 72 characteristics of *futuwwat*, all ethical in

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nature.<sup>129</sup> Jāmī included a 30-line poem in praise of *futuwwat* in his *mathnawī, Hali Awrang*.<sup>130</sup>

Several practical treatises on *futuwwat*, which became foundational for many later works on the subject, appeared at the time of the 12<sup>th</sup> century reforms introduced by the caliph, al-Nāṣir.<sup>131</sup> ‘Umar al-Suhrawardī wrote numerous works for the caliph, including several short Persian treatises on *futuwwat* which are considered to be the first Persian works on the subject.<sup>132</sup> He extols *futuwwat* as the choicest path, superior to the *sharī‘at* (Islamic law), *ṭarīqat* (mystical path) and *ḥaqīqat* (ultimate truth). According to him, *futuwwat* should override the demands of Islamic justice for the sake of an all-encompassing spirit of tolerance and forgiveness.<sup>133</sup>

Although the state-sponsored *futuwwat* of the ‘Abbāsīd caliphate did not continue for long, the spirit of *futuwwat* survived, and its literature, which explained the phenomenon in a mystical framework, continued to spread. A Persian versified text on *futuwwat*, *Futuwwat Nāma-yi Nāṣirī*.<sup>134</sup> was written some thirty years after the fall of Baghdad by a certain Mawlānā Nāṣirī of Sīwās, Anatolia. In approximately 800 lines, the treatise outlines the initiation ceremony which included three ritual items – the goblet, the *shalwar* and the *shadd* – which had already become institutionalized in the reforms of al-Nāṣir.

The first Persian treatise written after the demise of institutional *futuwwat* was the *Futuwwat Nāma*<sup>135</sup> of Najm al-Dīn Zarkūb Tabrīzī (d. approx. 712/1313) about whom very little is known except that he was a *shaykh* from Tabrīz and apparently was related to ‘Umar Suhrawardī.<sup>136</sup> Kāshifī mentions Najm al-Dīn Zarkūb in the chain of transmission (*sanad*) of the traditions of *futuwwat* (*akhbār-i futuwwat nāma*), which the late 15<sup>th</sup> century author traces all the way back to the early Islamic community.<sup>137</sup>

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*Tuḥfāt al-Ikhwān*, originally a full treatise in Arabic on *futuwwat*, was edited and translated into Persian by the author himself, ‘Abd al-Razzāq Kāshī (or Kāshānī) (d. ca. 730/1335).<sup>138</sup> He was a follower of Ibn ‘Arabī (d. 638/1240), who himself wrote on *futuwwat* in his *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya*. Kāshānī was also the author of *Tāwīlāt*, an esoterical commentary on the Qur’ān, as well as a commentary on Ibn ‘Arabī’s *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*.<sup>139</sup>

Very little information is available on Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Muḥammad Āmulī, who wrote a comprehensive encyclopedic work, *Nafāyis al-Funūn lī ‘Arāyis al-‘Uyūn* (written 742/1345), which includes a section on *futuwwat*,<sup>140</sup> that represents a Persian abridgment of Ibn Mi‘mār’s *Kitāb al-Futuwwa*.<sup>141</sup> Especially helpful is Āmulī’s list of the definitions of terms for the institution of *futuwwat*.<sup>142</sup>

All of the three above-mentioned 14<sup>th</sup> century works highlight the three-fold Nāṣirid initiation ceremony consisting of the belting (*shadd*) of the initiate, the drinking of the goblet of salt water, and the confirmation (*takmīl*) by donning the *shalwar*. The motif of conquering the carnal soul and acquiring a noble character are prominent in all of these works.

The *Risāla-yi Futuwwatiyya*<sup>143</sup> by the Kubrawī Sufī *shaykh*, Mīr Sayyid ‘Alī Hamadānī (d. 786/1384), who introduced the Kubrawī Sufī order in to Kashmir, is a discussion of the *futuwwat* ethic of self-denial and a brief commentary on the significance of certain *futuwwat* rituals.<sup>144</sup>

### The *Futuwwat Nāma-yi Sulṭānī*

The most comprehensive of all medieval Persian treatises on *futuwwat*, the *Futuwwat Nāma-yi Sulṭānī* (hereafter *FNS*), which goes beyond anything that had been written prior to it, is attributed to [I]usayn Wā‘iz Kāshifī (d. 910/1505), the prolific writer and preacher of the



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Timūrid court of Sulṭān Ḥusayn Bayqārā (d. 911/1506).<sup>145</sup> In this manifesto on *futuwwat*,

the author presents the purpose of his treatise:

This treatise explains the path of the followers of *futuwwat*, its regulations, the customs of the belting (*shadd*) and the pledge (*bay'at*), the wearing of the insignia and *darvīsh* cloak, the explanation of the codes of behavior and the customs of each guild (*liraqa*), the conditions of the *shaykh* and the initiate, the disciple and the master, and the requisites for perfection, instruction, teaching and training, which this humble, needy servant who is full of errors, Ḥusayn al-Kāshifī ... has taken from reliable texts and well-known treatises and put into writing.<sup>146</sup>

Numerous features make the *FNS* distinct from previous treatises on *futuwwat*. Living in an environment in which Sufism, notably that of the Naqshbandi order, gave great prominence to external behavior, Kāshifī's stress on scrupulous behavior for the *jawānmard* reflects the culture of eastern Khurāsān and Transoxiana during the late 15<sup>th</sup> and early 16<sup>th</sup> centuries. His detailed description of the ceremonial rituals of initiation into the circle of *futuwwat* are quite different from those described in 14<sup>th</sup> century works.<sup>147</sup> Furthermore, the two final chapters of the treatise represent a unique discussion about the relationship of *futuwwat* with the artisans and professional guilds.<sup>148</sup> Besides providing esoteric interpretations, moral exhortation and proper codes of conduct for every aspect of guild life, these chapters present an invaluable overview of professions and guilds of that period, and are a reflection of how far Sufism and the ethos of 'spiritual' *jawānmardī* seem to have pervaded every aspect of late medieval Iranian society.

Kāshifī's approach is compilative, and he lists many sources he used in writing his treatise. He acknowledges that much had already been written on *futuwwat*, lists eleven works on *futuwwat* and Sufism at the outset, and mentions numerous other texts throughout his treatise.<sup>149</sup> Notably, not only does Kāshifī refer to specific works on *futuwwat*, but also to general treatises on Sufism of various orders and schools of thought. The wide range of texts

to which he refers suggests that the *FNS* represents a codification of the institution of *futuwwat* and ‘spiritual’ *jawānmardī*, a characteristic feature of his other works on various subjects.<sup>150</sup>

Using the *Futuwwat Nāma-yi Sulṭānī* as the primary source, chapter 3 will analyze in detail the model of the spiritual champion (*fātan*), whom Kāshifī repeatedly describes as worthy (*shāyad, lāyiq*). It is clear that for Kāshifī, as well as for the authors of the treatises he cites, the institution of *futuwwat* was inextricably linked to Sufism. In fact, Kāshifī frequently makes no distinction between *futuwwat* and *taṣawwuf*. For Kāshifī, as well as the earlier writers on *futuwwat*, the mystical theories of Sufism provided an appropriate framework in which to explain the concept of *jawānmardī*. Hence, it is necessary to consider the Sufī content of the work, especially the Sufī doctrine of the Primordial Covenant, as well as the socio-religious milieu of late Tīmūrid Khurāsān and Transoxiana. Especially important are the doctrines of the Naqshbandi Sufī order by which the *FNS* appears to have been inspired. The analysis of the spiritual champion will consider the relationship of the carnal soul (*naʿs*) and the code of proper conduct (*adab*) to ideal manhood, and explore how the rituals and regalia of *futuwwat* as well as of the *fātan*’s profession are given esoteric interpretations.

### 3. The Wrestler (*kushtī-gīr*)

Two heroes continue to live on in the Iranian cultural milieu: Rostam, the heroic warrior, and ‘Alī, the saint-hero. Although these two models are analyzed separately in this thesis on the basis of different sets of sources, the separation is somewhat artificial. ‘Alī has always been considered the real warrior, and his courage in battle was very much part of the *jawānmard*’s ethic. On the other hand, Rostam at times becomes a kind of saint. In Rūmī’s

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famous poem, “*Insān-am Ārzūst*” (I long for a man), Rustam son of Dastān, is depicted as the mystical Perfect Man, alongside ‘Alī.<sup>151</sup>

Since both heroes are considered worthy of emulation, they sometimes become fused into one. It is the traditional wrestler, who has a long history in Iran and is still highly esteemed today, who came to embody this synthesis of the two models of the *pahlawān* and the *fātan*. More than any other group of *jawānmarks*, the wrestler continued to venerate both ‘Alī and Rustam, and through the fusion of the two heroes, a new champion, Puryā-yi Walī (d. 722/1324), was developed who became the embodiment of both models. Ideally, the wrestler combined the purity of the body and physical strength with the purity of the soul and perfect behavior. In other words, he was a champion in both the physical and spiritual sense. The place where he asserted his identity was neither the battlefield (*maydān*) nor the Sulī lodge (*khānaqāh*), but the *langar*, which though similar to the *khānaqāh*, was distinguished from it by a special room for exercise and wrestling. This gradually developed into the separate *zūr-khāna* (house of strength or gymnasium).<sup>152</sup>

This synthesis, however, created a dilemma for the wrestler. In his effort to be both a real champion and a man of *adab*, he became a living paradox. Wrestling can be interpreted as a metaphor for the individual’s battle against the carnal soul – as Kāshifī does – but in reality, the wrestler’s goal was to defeat a human opponent. Could the wrestler, who epitomized perfect *adab*, defeat his rival and at the same time remain true to the ideals of *adab*?

Although no separate medieval treatise on wrestling is extant, medieval histories and hagiographical works relate numerous anecdotes and discussions which provide insights into the social phenomenon of wrestling. In his treatise, Kāshifī provides a lengthy discussion of the esoteric aspects of the professional guild of wrestlers. Patronized by Sulṭān Ḥusayn

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Bayqārā and by his chief minister, ‘Alī Shīr Nawā’ī (d. 906/1501), wrestling was a popular activity in 15<sup>th</sup> century Tīmūrid Herat. ‘Alī Shīr Nawā’ī patronized the great wrestler, Pahlawān Muḥammad-i Abū Sa’īd, and mentions him in his literary history, *Majālis al-Nafā’is*.<sup>153</sup> He also wrote a separate treatise on him, entitled “Ḥalāt-i Pahlawān Muḥammad.”<sup>154</sup> In his *Badāyi’ al-Waqāyi’* (completed 1538/9), the poet and litterateur, Zayn al-Dīn Wāṣifī, who first spent time at the Herat court and later entered the service of the Uzbek rulers of Transoxiana, presents a graphic account of the social and cultural life of wrestlers in the chapter entitled, “On the Virtues and Perfections of Pahlawān Muḥammad-i Abū Sa’īd and Other Wrestlers (*kushtī-gīrān*) of the Court of Sulṭān Husayn Mīrzā.”<sup>155</sup> According to him, Pahlawān Muḥammad wrote a treatise on wrestling, which has apparently not survived.<sup>156</sup> Persian histories such as Khwāndamīr’s *Ḥabīb al-Siyar* and Rashīd al-Dīn’s (d. 718/1318) *Jāmi’ al-Tawārīkh*<sup>157</sup> also mention wrestlers in the various medieval courts they wrote about. Numerous medieval hagiographical works cite the renowned champion, Puryā-yi Walī,<sup>158</sup> while the apocryphal document, *Ṭūmār-i Aṣāna-yi Puryā-yi Walī*, gives a different perspective on this legendary hero.<sup>159</sup> In his nostalgic memoirs of early 20<sup>th</sup> century Iran, entitled *Sarūtah Yak Karbās*, Sayyid Jamālzāda (b. 1898) describes the culture of the *zūr-khāna* and whimsically remarks that the last residual of hope for society’s ills lies in the wrestling pit and the morally pure champion.<sup>160</sup>

However, this romanticized notion of the traditional *pahlawān* contrasts with other descriptions of the medieval wrestler. In his *Rustam al-Tawārīkh*, Muḥammad Hāshim’s depiction of the cavalier behavior of wrestlers of the late Ṣafāwīd and Qājār periods shows that the fusion of physical and spiritual ideals of *jawānmardī* was often far from being

achieved.<sup>161</sup> Chapter 4 will explore both medieval and modern texts about the wrestler and examine the way in which the two models could be synthesized in his person.

#### 4. The Struggle for *Jawānmardī* in Contemporary Iranian Societies

In the models of ideal manhood that have been outlined above, there is, first and foremost, the heroic warrior, whose requirement is to preserve his reputation at all costs. The second model, the spiritual champion, must adhere to an all-encompassing code of conduct. The model of the wrestler is the combination of both physical and spiritual championship. Certainly the study could be approached from other angles, and other models and aspects of *jawānmardī* could be considered, but the analysis of the concept of *jawānmardī* through the three above-mentioned models is an attempt to organize its many aspects into larger manageable categories. As we have already noted, the struggle to maintain the ethic of *jawānmardī* persists in modern society and can be traced in contemporary Iranian fiction. The traditional ideals of *jawānmardī* become the 'burden of the past,' so to speak, which weighs down on 20<sup>th</sup> century man, who is confronted with the challenges of modernity. Rather than creating another model of *jawānmardī*, the final chapter will draw upon a selection of modern Persian stories from the Pahlawī period (1925-1975) and demonstrate how the authors portray their protagonists who struggle with the traditional code of *jawānmardī* in light of the changing realities of contemporary life. As M.R. Ghanoonparvar has stated: "[Fiction should] not try to give direction to society but rather to order and explain life,"<sup>162</sup> hence, the modern Persian narrative becomes a fitting vehicle by which to better examine the culture, including contemporary perspectives on the concept of *jawānmardī*.

## Notes on Chapter One

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Nizām al-Mulk, *Siyar al-Mulūk*, ed. Hubert Darke (Tehran, 1340/1961), 164. See also Nizām al-Mulk, *The Book of Government or Rules for Kings*, tr. Hubert Darke (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1960). In his introduction to the *Futuwwat Nāma-yi Sultānī*, Mahjūb credits ‘Unṣūrī-yi Balkhī (d. 430/1039) for the first line. Muḥammad Ja‘far Mahjūb, introduction to *Futuwwat Nāma-yi Sultānī*, by Mawlānā Ḥusayn Wā‘iz Kāshifī (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Bunyād-i Farhang-i Iran, 1350/1971), 15. However, this line is not in Siyāqī’s edition of ‘Unṣūrī’s *Dīwān*. Abū al-Qāsim Ḥasan bin Aḥmad ‘Unṣūrī, *Dīwān-i ‘Unṣūrī-yi Balkhī*, ed. Muḥammad Dabīr Siyāqī (Tehran, 1342/1963). Muḥammad Qazwīnī concludes the source as unknown. See Nizām al-Mulk, *Siyāsat Nāma*, ed. Muḥammad Qazwīnī (Tehran, 1334/1955), 136 n. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Fariba Adelkhah, *Being Modern in Iran*, tr. Jonathan Derrick (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 46. In everyday conversation, Persians will say, “So and so looked like a *jawānmard* to me so I approached him for help,” or “Why don’t you do some *jawānmardī* and help me.” At the same time, others will lament, “There is no spirit of *jawānmardī* left in our land.”

<sup>3</sup> On the cross-disciplinary study of anthropology and literature, see Michael M. J. Fischer, “Towards a Third World Poetics,” in *Knowledge and Society: Studies in the Sociology of Culture Past and Present*, ed. Henrika Kuklick and Elizabeth Long (Greenwich, CT: JAI Press, 1984), 5:171-241. Fischer’s discussion of Iranian culture touches on the traditional code of *jawānmardī* as it is reflected in Persian fiction and cinema.

<sup>4</sup> Charles-Henri de Fouchécour, *Moralia: Les Notions morales dans la littérature persane* (Paris: Institut Français de Recherche en Iran, 1986), 211, 220.

<sup>5</sup> Mohsen Zakeri equates the term *jawānmardī* with *mardī* and numerous other Sāsānid terms which were used to describe virtues of ancient Persian nobility: “As abstract nouns, *āzādagī*, *rādī*, *jawānmardī*, *‘ayyārī*, and related concepts, *mardumdārī*, *mardānagī*, *mardumī*, or the simplified form *mardī* embody the highest social and ethical values of a noble warrior: altruism, prowess, loyalty, sustaining the poor, and defending the oppressed. To these jargons belong *mardumān* (nobles), *mardān-i mard* (champions, braves) or *shūr-mardī* (valiancy) all loaded with moral and social meaning.” Mohsen Zakeri, *Sāsānid Soldiers in Early Muslim Society: The Origins of ‘Ayyārān and Futuwwa* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1995), 318.

<sup>6</sup> Kay Kā‘ūs, *Qābūs Nāma*, ed. Ghulām Ḥusayn Yusūfī (Tehran, 1347/1968), 249-250. See also Kai-Kā‘ūs bin Iskandar, *A Mirror for Princes - The Qabūs Nāma*, tr. Reuben Levy (London: The Cresset Press, 1951).

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<sup>7</sup> Zakeri, *Sāsānid Soldiers*, 25-25, 54-56.

<sup>8</sup> Similarly, in pre-Islamic Arabia, the Arabic word *karīm* meant noble lineage, which developed into the concept of “noble virtues” such as generosity. See Toshihiko Izutsu, *God and Man in the Koran: Semantics of the Koranic Weltanschauung* (Tokyo: The Keio Institute of Cultural and Linguistic Studies, 1964), 43-45.

<sup>9</sup> Zakeri, *Sāsānid Soldiers*, 58, quoting al-Azharī, *Tahdhīb al-lughā*, 13:51.

<sup>10</sup> Mansour Shaki, “The Social Doctrine of Mazdak in the Light of Middle Persian Evidence,” in *Archiv Orientalni* 46 (1978): 305 n. 142. See also Mansour Shaki, “Class System III. In the Parthian and Sasanian Periods, *EIr*, 5:656-657.

<sup>11</sup> Shaki, “The Social Doctrine of Mazdak,” 305 n. 142 and Zakeri, *Sāsānid Soldiers*, 200-201, 316.

<sup>12</sup> On the role of Arab patrons of the early Islamic period who tried to incorporate Persian noblemen, some who had apparently “forgotten their genealogies,” see Patricia Crone, “Mawlā,” in *EI*, 6:874-880. Zakeri cites numerous examples of Arab generals who extolled the virtues of their Persian clients. For example, the Arab general, al-Mukhtār, responding to the criticism of fellow Arabs for enlisting Persian warriors in his revolt against the Umayyads, is known to have said: “These Persians are more obedient to me than you, and more faithful and swift in the performance of my desire.” Zakeri, *Sāsānid Soldiers*, 208, quoting from al-Dīnawarī, *Akhbār*, 299. See also Zakeri, *Sāsānid Soldiers*, 194, 200, 205-208.

<sup>13</sup> Zakeri, *Sāsānid Soldiers*, 101-102.

<sup>14</sup> For an overview of the *Shu‘ūbiyya* movement which sought to promote equality among non-Arabs during the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> centuries, see S. Enderwitz, “al-Shu‘ūbiyya,” *EI*, 9:513-516.

<sup>15</sup> On the life and work of Ibn al-Muqallā‘ and the controversy whether or not he was part of the *Shu‘ūbiyya* movement, see F. Gabrieli, “Ibn al-Muqallā‘,” *EI*, 3:882-885.

<sup>16</sup> Though *lātan* and *jawānmard* can both literally be translated as *youth* or *young man*, the concept in Arabic or Persian is very different than in English. *Youth* in English can mean immature, an adolescent, while *lātan* or *jawānmard* mean exactly the opposite. A *lātan* or *jawānmard* is no longer immature or an adolescent. He is not old; rather, he has reached his prime and has become mature. To say, “He’s become *jawān*,” means, “He’s become mature.”

<sup>17</sup> Mahjūb, introduction to *FNS*, 7-8.

<sup>18</sup> *SM*, 164 and Sa‘dī, *Kullīyāt-i Shaykh Sa‘dī*, ed. Muḥammad ‘Alī Furūghī (Tehran, 1365/1986), 280-284. See also C. van Arendonk, “Hātīm al-‘Ā‘ī,” *EI*, 3:274-275.

<sup>19</sup> Zakeri, *Sāsānid Soldiers*, 186, 200.

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<sup>20</sup> Irene Melikoff, "Ghāzī," *EI*, 2:1044.

<sup>21</sup> H. Bowen (C.E. Bosworth), "Nizām al-Mulk," *EI*, 7:69-73.

<sup>22</sup> C.E. Bosworth, "Mālik Shāh," *EI*, 6:273-276.

<sup>23</sup> *SM*, 62.

<sup>24</sup> Franz Taeschner, *Zünfte und Bruderschaften im Islam: Texte zur Geschichte der Futuwwa* (Munich: Artemis Verlag, 1979), 55. This posthumous work of Taeschner's includes most of his writings on *futuwwat*.

<sup>25</sup> In the popular romance, *Samak-i 'Ayyār*, the two words, *'ayyār* and *jawānmard* are frequently used interchangeably. Farāmarz bin Khudādād bin 'Abdullāh al-Kātib al-Arrjānī, *Samak-i 'Ayyār*, 6 vols., ed. Parwīz Nātil Khānlārī (Tehran: Mu'assa-yi Intishārāt-i Āgāh, 1362-64/1983-85), 1:317, 339. See also Faramarz Fils de Khodadad, *Samak-e Ayyar*, 2 vols., tr. Frédérique Razavi (Paris: G.P. Maisonneuve and Larose, 1972). For a comparison between the terms *mardī*, *jawānmardī* and *'ayyārī* in *Samak-i 'Ayyār*, see Marina Gaillard, *Le Livre de Samak-e 'Ayyār: Structure et idéologie du roman persan médiéval* (Paris: Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique et de l'Avancement des Études Iraniennes, 1987), 51-53.

For overviews of the *'ayyār* phenomenon, see C.L. Cahen, "'Ayyār I. General," *EIr*, 3:159-161; W.L. Hanaway, "'Ayyār II. in Persian sources," *EIr*, 3:161-163; C.L. Cahen, "Futuwwa," *EI*, 2:961-965 and Franz Taeschner, "Futuwwa: post-Mongol period," *EI*, 2:966-969.

<sup>26</sup> There is also the folk etymology proposed by Muḥammad Taqī Bahār and Parwīz Nātil Khānlārī who rejected the origin from the Arabic verb, "*'ayāra*" or "*'ara*", meaning to wander briskly, to be sharp and witty, and argued that "*'ayyār*" is derived from a Pahlawi form of "Oh friend" (*ay yār*). See Zakeri, *Sāsānid Soldiers*, 8.

<sup>27</sup> C.L. Cahen, "Ayyar," *EIr*, 3:160 and C.L. Cahen, "Futuwwa," *EI*, 2:963.

<sup>28</sup> G.H. Yusofī, "Abū Moslem Khorāsānī," *EIr*, 1:341-344.

<sup>29</sup> On the fusion of the legendary feats of the Persian hero, Ḥamza b. 'Abd Allāh of Sīstān, with Ḥamza b. 'Abd al-Muṭṭalīb, the paternal uncle of the Prophet, see G.M. Meredith-Owens, "Ḥamza b. 'Abd al-Muṭṭalīb," *EI*, 3:152-154.

<sup>30</sup> For a historical overview on the life of Ya'qūb b. Layth Ṣaflār, see C.E. Bosworth, "Ṣaflārīds," *EI*, 8:795-798.

<sup>31</sup> *Tārīkh-i Sīstān* (written between 445-725 AH), ed. Mālik al-Shu'arā Bahār (Tehran, 1314/1935), 263-268. See also *The Tārīkh-e Sīstān*, tr. Milton Gold (Rome: Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1976), 209-214.



<sup>32</sup> On the life and works of 'Awlī, see J. Matīnī, "'Awlī." *EIr.* 3:117-118.

<sup>33</sup> Kāzīm Kāzīmāyī, *Naqsh-i Pahlawānī wa Naḥdat-i 'Ayyārī dar Tārīkh-i Ijtimā'ī wa Ḥayāt-i Sīyāsī-yi Millat-i Iran* [The role of *pahlawānī* and the *'ayyār* phenomenon in the social history and political life of the nation of Iran] (Tehran, 1343/1964), 116-118, citing from Sadīd al-Dīn 'Awlī, *Jawāmi' al-Ḥikāyāt* 2:136-138. In general, Kāzīmāyī's work highly romanticizes the concept of *'ayyārī* and *jawānmardī*.

<sup>34</sup> Nizāmī al-'Arūḍī Samarqandī, *Chahār Maqāla*, ed. Mohammed ibn 'Abd al-Wahāb Qazwīnī (Berlin: Irānshahr, 1927), 45. See also Nizāmī-i 'Arūḍī of Samarqand, *Chahār Maqāla, The Four Discourses of Nizāmī-i 'Arūḍī-i Samarqandī*, tr. Edward G. Browne (1921; reprint, Cambridge, 1978). This work is the earliest extant New Persian source on the cultural and literary history of the early Perso-Islamic dynasties, though it must be stated that many of its historical details are not accurate. See H. Masse, "Nizāmī 'Arūḍī Samarqandī," *EI.* 8:76.

<sup>35</sup> *QN*, 250.

<sup>36</sup> *QN*, 250-151.

<sup>37</sup> *QN*, 252.

<sup>38</sup> de Fouchécour, *Moralia*, 215.

<sup>39</sup> *QN*, 251-252.

<sup>40</sup> *SA*, 1:317.

<sup>41</sup> CL. Cahen, "'Ayyār." *EIr.* 3:159.

<sup>42</sup> Mahjūb, introduction to *FNS*, 23.

<sup>43</sup> Muhammad Ja'far Mahjub, "Chivalry and Early Persian Sufism," in *Classical Persian Sufism: From its Origins to Rumi*, ed. Leonard Lewisohn (London: Khaniqahi Nimatullah Publications, 1993), 565-566. Mahjūb relates numerous episodes on 'wild' *jawānmardī* from works such as Abu'l Faraj Iṣlahānī's (d. 356/967) *Kitāb al-Aghānī* - a cultural and literary history of the Arabs, Ibn Mi'mār's *Kitāb al-Futuwwa* (see chapter 1, pp. 47-48 n. 132), and Ibn al-Athīr's universal history, *al-Kāmil li al-Ta'rīkh* (6th/13th century). Mahjūb, introduction to *FNS*, 12-78 and Mahjub, "Chivalry and Early Persian Sufism," 564-573. Note Ghulām Ḥaydar's discussion of what he considers to be pseudo-*jawānmardī*, in Ghulām Ḥaydar, *'Ayyārān wa Kāka-hā-yi Khurāsān Zamīn dar Gustara-yi Tārīkh* ['*Ayyārān* and *kākas* in Khurāsān throughout history] (Kabul, 1365/1986), pages a-j. C.E. Bosworth mentions the guild of beggars in the 4th/5th AH century who also followed their own code of *futuwwat* conduct. They were not to beg alone; elder beggars would gather young boys - the note is made that they were always clean-shaven - around themselves to carry out the duties of begging and

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with whom they would engage in sexual activities in their *dār al-lityān* (house of youth). C.E. Bosworth, *The Medieval Islamic Underworld: The Banū Sasan in Arabic Society and Literature* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1976), 92.

<sup>44</sup> See F. Rosenthal, "Ibn al-Athīr - 'Izz al-Dīn Abu 'l-Ḥasan 'Alī," *EI*, 3:724.

<sup>45</sup> Ibn Athīr, cited in Mahjūb, introduction to *FNS*, 42.

<sup>46</sup> C.L. Cahen, "Futuwwa," *EI*, 2:963. For a discussion of the relationship between *futuwwat* and *malāmatiyya*, see Muḥammad Riyād, *Aḥwāl wa Athār wa Ash'ār-i Mīr Sayyid 'Alī Hamadānī* [The life and works of Mīr Sayyid 'Alī Hamadānī] (Islamabad, 1991), 269-274.

<sup>47</sup> C.L. Cahen, "Futuwwa," *EI*, 2:961 and de Fouchécour, *Moralia*, 211.

<sup>48</sup> Ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Sulamī, *Kitāb al-Futuwwah* (*The Way of Sufi Chivalry*), tr. Tosun Bayrak al-Jerrahi (Vermont: Inner Traditions, 1983). On the life of al-Sulamī, see al-Jerrahi, introduction to *Kitāb al-Futuwwah*, 3-6 and G. Böwering, "al-Sulamī," *EI*, 9:811-812.

<sup>49</sup> al-Sulamī, *The Way of Sufi Chivalry*, 64-65.

<sup>50</sup> See H. Halm, "al-Kushayrī," *EI*, 5:326-327.

<sup>51</sup> *QN*, 254. The Arabic work of Qushayrī was translated into Persian near the time of Qushayrī's death. For a non-critical edition of al-Qushayrī's text in Persian, see Dhabīhullāh Safā, ed., *Ganjīnā-yi Sukhan: Pārsī-nawīsān-i Buzurg wa Muntakhab-i Āthār-i Anān*, (Tehran, 1348/1969), 2:16-18.

<sup>52</sup> de Fouchécour, *Moralia*, 211.

<sup>53</sup> 'Uthmān Hujwīrī, *Kashf al-Mahjūb*, ed. V. Zhukovskii (Tehran, 1957), 228. This episode is repeated almost word for word in Farīd al-Dīn 'Aṭṭār, *Tadhkirat al-Awliyā'*, ed. Muḥammad Istī'lāmī (Tehran, 1346/1967), 401-402.

<sup>54</sup> *Kashf al-Mahjūb*, 53.

<sup>55</sup> C.L. Cahen, "Futuwwa," *EI*, 2:963.

<sup>56</sup> Mahjub, "Chivalry and Early Persian Sufism," 573 and Taeschner, *Züntic*, 55.

<sup>57</sup> Mohsen Zakeri, "The *futuwwa*-'Houses' at the Time of Caliph al-Nāṣir," in *Erlesenes in Hallesche Beiträge zur Orientwissenschaft* 25, ed. Walter Beltz and Sebastian Günther (Halle [Saale]: University Press, 1998), 222. For a further discussion about the *futuwwat* reforms during the caliphate of al-Nāṣir, see also Mahjūb, introduction to *FNS*, 43-78.

<sup>58</sup> Angelika Hartmann, *an-Nāṣir li-Dīn Allāh (1180-1225): Politik, Religion, Kultur in der späten 'Abbāsidenzeit* (New York and Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1975), 104.

<sup>59</sup> Hartmann, *an-Nāṣir li-Dīn Allāh*, 95.

- <sup>60</sup> Maḥjūb, introduction to *FNS*, 63. For a discussion of the singing and messenger birds which the caliph collected, see Maḥjūb, introduction to *FNS*, 66-68 and Hartmann, *al-Nāṣir li-Dīn Allāh*, 96-98.
- <sup>61</sup> Maḥjūb, introduction to *FNS*, 56-57 and Zakeri, "The *futuwwa*-Houses'," 225.
- <sup>62</sup> Qur'ān 4:93. All citations from the Qur'ān are taken from the Pickthall translation, *The Glorious Koran*, ed. and tr. Marmaduke Pickthall (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1976).
- <sup>63</sup> Cited in Muṣṭafa Jawād, introduction to *Kitāb al-Futuwwa*, by Ibn Mi'mār Ḥanbalī (d. 642/1244), ed. Muṣṭafa Jawād (Baghdad, 1958), 64-65. According to Jawād, the text of the mandate was recorded in *al-Manāqib al-'Abbāsiyya wa al-Mustanṣiriyya* of 'Alī bin Abū al-Faraj Baṣrī. See also Hartmann, *an-Nāṣir li-Dīn Allāh*, 101 and Taeschner, *Züntie*, 73-78.
- <sup>64</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn Maybudī, *Kashf al-Aṣrār wa 'Uddat al-Abrār*, 8 vols., ed. 'Ibād 'Alī Aṣghar Ḥikmat (Tehran, 1339/1962), 5:668-669. The Qur'ānic story (Qur'ān 18:10-27) of the young men of the cave is normally identified with the Syriac Christian legend of the Seven Sleepers who took shelter in a cave in order to escape persecution. As the legend goes, they were subsequently preserved there in a sleep for a long period. See also R. Paret, "Aṣḥāb al-kaḥf," *FI*, I: 691.
- <sup>65</sup> 'Umar Suhrawardī, "Futuwwat Nāma az Shihāb al-Dīn 'Umar Suhrawardī," in *Rasā'il-i Jawānmardān: Mushtamil bar Haft Futuwwat Nāma* [Seven treatises on the *jawānmardān*], ed. Murtaḍā Ṣarrāf (Tehran, 1352/1973), 100.
- <sup>66</sup> Maḥjūb, introduction to *FNS*, 78 and C.L. Cahen, "Futuwwa," *FI*, 2:964.
- <sup>67</sup> Hartmann, *al-Nāṣir li-Dīn Allāh*, 95.
- <sup>68</sup> The question of whether or not the early artisans and craftsmen were organized in guilds does not concern us here. That argument is based on a specific economic definition of a guild. For a full discussion of the economic development of guilds in late medieval Iran, see Willem Floor, "Asnāf," *EI*, 2:772-778; *idem*, "Ṣinf," *EI*, 9:644-646; *idem*, "The Guilds in Iran – an Overview from the earliest Beginnings," in *Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenlaendischen Gesellschaft* 125 (1975): 99-103 and *idem*, "The Guilds and Futuwwat in Iran," in *Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenlaendischen Gesellschaft* 134 (1984): 106-114.
- <sup>69</sup> *QN*, 252.
- <sup>70</sup> *QN*, 157-165. See also *QN*, 243-249 where the author describes artisans in general.
- <sup>71</sup> Roy Mottahedeh, *Loyalty and Leadership in an Early Islamic Society* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 107.
- <sup>72</sup> Mottahedeh, *Loyalty and Leadership*, 116.

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<sup>73</sup> Unfortunately, the leader of the association was punished by the state by being trampled to death by elephants. Floor, "The Guilds in Iran," 101-102.

<sup>74</sup> Mottahedeh, *Loyalty and Leadership*, 116.

<sup>75</sup> Zakeri, *Sāsānid Soldiers*, 306.

<sup>76</sup> Maḥjūb, introduction to *FNS*, 17-18 and 48-49. In the medieval period, rulers patronized professional *shāṭirs* who became a statement of the ruler's legitimacy and prestige. These *shāṭir* guilds developed their own initiation rites, codes of behavior and hierarchical structures. For a discussion of the *shāṭir*s who become an important military feature during the Ṣafawid period, see Kāzimaynī, *Naqsh-i Pahlawānī*, 189-212.

<sup>77</sup> Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, *Ṣafār Nāma-yi Ibn Baṭṭūṭa* (Persian translation), tr. Muḥammad 'Alī Mawhid (Tehran, 1348/1969), 2:225. See also *The Travels of Ibn Battuta*, 2 vols., tr. H.A.R. Gibb (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962). Unlike the standard medieval genre of *riḥla* (travelogue) up to the 7<sup>th</sup> / 14<sup>th</sup> century which focused on details of the holy sites of Arabia, Ibn Baṭṭūṭa wrote about his personal travels experiences of the then-known world. See A. Miquel, "Ibn Baṭṭūṭa," *EI* 3:735-736.

<sup>78</sup> Ghiyāth al-Dīn Kh'āndamīr, *Ḥabīb al-Siyar*, 4 vols., ed. Muḥammad Dabīr Siyāqī (Tehran, 1982), 4:25, 178. For descriptions of the Tīmūrid-sponsored displays of craft-guilds, see Bernard O'Kane, "From Tents to Pavilions: Royal Mobility and Persian Palace Design," in *Proceedings of the Symposium on Pre-Modern Islamic Palaces*, *Ars Orientalis* 23 (1993): 253-254.

<sup>79</sup> Taeschner, "Futuwwa: post-Mongol period," *EI* 2:966.

<sup>80</sup> The term *akhī* has several interpretations. Though normally understood as the Arab word for "my brother," according to Taeschner, it seems to come from a Turkish root meaning generosity. Franz Taeschner, "Akhī," *EI* 1:321.

<sup>81</sup> Taeschner, "Futuwwa: post-Mongol period," *EI* 2:966 and G.H. Yusofī, "Abū Moslem Khorāsānī," *EIr*, 1:344. The Sufi shaykh, Mīr Sayyid 'Alī Hamadānī (d 786 / 1384), equates the men of *futuwwat* with *akhīs*. Mīr Sayyid 'Alī Hamadānī, "Risāla-yi Futuwwatiyya," in *Aḥwāl wa Athār wa Ash'ār-i Mīr Sayyid 'Alī Hamadānī*, ed. Muḥammad Riyād (Islamabad, 1991), 342-343.

<sup>82</sup> For an example, see the *Futuwwat Nāma-yi Chīl-sāzān* (makers of calico textiles) in *Rasā'il-i Jawānmardān: Mushtamil bar Ḥālī Futuwwat Nāma*, ed. Murtaḍā Ṣarrāf (Tehran, 1352/1973), 225-239. M. Gavrilov has published a collection of such Persian treatises in Russian translation. Guilds, such as soap-makers, blacksmiths, bakers, boot-makers, farmers, etc., would produce a treatise for their profession. M. Gavrilov, "O remeslennykh tsekhakh Srednei Azii i ikh statutakh-risolia" [On

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crafts guilds in Central Asia and their statutes/risala], in *Izvestiia Sredne-aziatskogo komiteta po delam muzeev i okhrany pamiatnikov stariny, iskusstva i prirody*, vyp. 3 (Tashkent, 1928), 223-41.

<sup>83</sup> Muḥammad Hāshim Aṣaf, *Rustam al-Tawārikh*, ed. Muḥammad Mushīrī (Tehran, 1348/1969), 100-101. See also Muḥammad Hāshim Aṣaf, *Persische Geschichte 1694-1835 erlebt, erinnert und erfunden*, 2 vols., tr. Birgitt Hoffman (Bamberg: Aku-Verlag, 1986).

<sup>84</sup> *RT*, 100-102.

<sup>85</sup> Mahjub, "Chivalry and Early Persian Sufism," 550-551.

<sup>86</sup> Zīnat Amīn, quoted by Badr al-Mulūk Bāmdād, *Zan-i Irani: az Inqilāb-i Mashrūṭiyat tā Inqilāb-i Salīd* (Tehran, 1348/1969), 2:16-17. See also Badr ol-Muluk Bāmdād, *From Darkness into Light: Women's Emancipation in Iran*, ed. and tr. F.R.C. Bagley (New York: Exposition Press, 1977), 36. The poem was written in 1911, when the Russian government forced the Iranian government to dissolve its parliament. During the same period, Iranian nationalists distributed leaflets appealing to their sense of manliness in order to protect the integrity and honor of Iran. See Janet Afary, *The Iranian Constitutional Revolution 1906-1911* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 180-181.

<sup>87</sup> Haydar, 'Ayyārān wa Kāka-hā, page b.

<sup>88</sup> Amin Banani, "Ferdowsi and the Art of the Tragic Epic," in *Persian Literature*, ed. Ihsan Yarshater (New York: Bibliotheca Persica, 1988), 115.

<sup>89</sup> See, for example, Riyād, *Mīr Sayyid 'Alī Hamadānī*, 245-340; Kāzīm Kāzīmāynī, *Dāstān-hā-yi Shigīft angīz az Tārīkh-i Pahlawānān-i Iran* [Amazing stories from the history of the *pahlawāns* of Iran] (n.p., 1346/1967); Kāzīm Kāzīmāynī, *Maqām-i Jahān-i Iran* [Iran's world status] (n.p., 1345/1966); Muḥammad 'Alī Islāmī Nadūshan, *Dāstān-i Dāstān-hā* [The story of stories] (Tehran, 1351/1972); *Zindagi wa Marg-i Pahlawānān dar Shāhnāma* [The life and death of the *pahlawāns* in the *Shāhnāmah*] (Tehran, 1348/1969); Murtaḍā Šarrāf, introduction to *Rasā'il-i Jawānmardān*; Wāsi Qurbān, *Āyīn-i Jawānmardī* [The customs of *jawānmardī*] (Kabul, 1368/1989); Sa'īd Nafīsī, *Sarchashma-yi Taṣawwuf dar Iran* [The source of mysticism in Iran] (Tehran, 1343/1964); 130-160; Ḥusayn Partaw Bayḍā'ī, *Tārīkh-i Warzish-i Bāstān-i Iran* [The history of ancient Iranian athletics] (Tehran, 1337/1958) and Khalīlullāh Khalīlī, *'Ayyārī az Khurāsān* (Peshawar, Pakistan, 1369/1990). The short story writer, Sayyid Muḥammad Jamālzāda, has given us whimsical reflections of the ideals of *jawānmardī* in his memoirs, *Sarūtah Yak Karbās*, vol. 2 (Tehran, n.d.). See also Sayyed Mohammad Ali Jamālzādeh, *Isfahan is the Half the World: Memories of a Persian Boyhood*, tr. W.L. Heston (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983).

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<sup>90</sup> Adelhah. *Being Modern in Iran*, 30-52.

<sup>91</sup> Adelhah. *Being Modern in Iran*, 46. Adelhah goes as far as to say that the present Islamic Republic of Iran could be called the Republic of the *Jawānmard*.

<sup>92</sup> Hamid Naficy, *The Meaning of Exile Cultures: Iranian Television in Los Angeles* (Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 1993), 182-187. Ironically, the quasi-*lūṭīs* of Los Angeles maintain that the present Islamic regime, which Adelhah calls the Republic of the *Jawānmard*, is seeking to destroy the *lūṭī* culture. Note chapter 4, pp. 265-266 where the *lūṭī* lifestyle is discussed briefly.

<sup>93</sup> It is noteworthy that most, if not all, of the self-acclaimed *amīrs* of northern Afghanistan after the fall of the Najībullāh government in Kabul (April, 1992) and prior to the Ṭālibān takeover of the area (1998), i.e., during the Junbish-i Millī period, carried the title, Pahlawān. Many were former wrestlers or sportsmen. A personal note from Dr. Jonathon Lee (March, 2000).

<sup>94</sup> Farzaneh Milani, *Veils and Words: The Emerging Voices of Iranian Women Writers* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1992), 131.

<sup>95</sup> William L. Hanaway, "Formal Elements in the Persian Popular Romances," *Review of National Literatures* 2.1 (1971):154.

<sup>96</sup> SA, 1:181.

<sup>97</sup> Djalal, Khaleghi-Motlaghi, "Daqīqī," *EIr*, 6:661-662.

<sup>98</sup> Olga Davidson, *Poet and Hero in the Persian Book of Kings* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), 33- 34.

<sup>99</sup> See Clément Huart, *Le Livre de Garshāsp: Poème persan d'Asadī de Ṭōūs*, in *Publication de L'Ecole Nationale des Langues Orientales Vivantes*, Vol. 2 (Paris: Geunther, 1926). Huart's French translation was later completed by Henri Massé based on Ḥabīb Yaghmā'ī's 1939 critical edition of *Garshāsp Nāma*. See William Hanaway, "The Iranian Epics," in *Heroic Epic and Saga*, ed. Felix J. Oinas (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978), 98.

<sup>100</sup> For an overview of Persian epic poetry subsequent to the *Shāhnāma*, see William L. Hanaway, "Epic Poetry," in *Persian Literature*, ed. Ehsan Yarshater (New York: Bibliotheca Persica, 1988), 105; *idem*, "The Iranian Epics," 89-93 and Ḥaydar, *'Ayyārān wa Kāka-hā*, 76-87.

<sup>101</sup> Fakhr al-Dīn As'ad Gurgānī, *Wīs wa Rāmīn*, ed. Iskāandar Gawākhāriyā (Tehran, 1349/1971). See also Zakeri, *Sāsānid Soldiers*, 317.

<sup>102</sup> For an overview of popular romances see Hanaway, "Formal Elements in the Persian Popular Romances," 139-160; *idem*, *Love and War: Adventures from the Fīrūz Shāh Nāma of Sheikh Bighami*, tr. W.L. Hanaway (New York: Scholars' Facsmiles and Reprints, 1974), 1-24 and *idem*,

“‘Ayyār.” *EI*, 2:161-163. Ghulām Ḥaydar lists numerous Persian and Pashtū stories that highlight the heroic warrior. Ḥaydar, ‘*Ayyārān wa Kāka-hā*, 76-86.

<sup>103</sup> Hanaway, *Love and War*, 11-12.

<sup>104</sup> *Iskandar Nāma*, ed. Iraj Afshār (Tehran, 1343/1964). See also *Iskandarnama: A Persian Medieval Alexander-Romance*, 2 vols., tr. Mino S. Southgate (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978). Iraj Afshār considers the work was written sometime in the 7th/13th or 8th/14th century. For a discussion of the Alexander romance in the Iranian context, see Hanaway, *Love and War*, 6-9.

<sup>105</sup> *Qiṣṣa-yi Ḥamza*, 2 vols. ed. Ja‘far Shi‘ār (Tehran, 1347/1968).

<sup>106</sup> G.M. Meredith Owens, “Ḥamza b. ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib,” *EI*, 3:152-154. In the early 16th century *Futuwwat Nāma-yi Sulṭānī*, ‘*ayyārī* feats such as wrestling (*FNS*, 307), raiding (*FNS*, 325) and archery (*FNS*, 360) are attributed to Ḥamza, the uncle of the Prophet.

<sup>107</sup> See Hanaway, “Persian Popular Romances,” 140-141 and *idem*, *Love and War*, 21-23.

<sup>108</sup> Muḥammad bin ‘Alī Ṭāhirī [Ṭāmirī] (or Muḥammad bin Aḥmad bin ‘Alī Bīghamī), *Dārāb Nāma*, 2 vols. ed. Dhabīhullāh Ṣafā (Tehran, 1339-41/1960-62). On the name of the author, or rather, the compiler, see Ṣafā, introduction to *Dārāb Nāma*, 12.

<sup>109</sup> On the heroic stories of Abū Muslim, see Muḥammad Ja‘far Maḥjūb, “Sar Gudhasht-i Ḥamāsī-yi Abū Muslim Khurāsānī” [Epic stories of Abū Muslim Khurāsānī], in *Iran Nāma: A Persian Journal of Iranian Studies* 4.2 (1986):194-224; Ḥusayn Ismā‘īlī, “Dar bāra-yi Abū Muslim Nāma” [On the stories of Abū Muslim], *Iran Nāma* 14.2 (1996):191-216; Kathryn Babayan, “Sufis, Dervishes and Mullas: the Controversy over Spiritual and Temporal Dominion in Seventeenth Century Iran,” in *Salavid Persia: The History and Politics of an Islamic Society*, ed. Charles Melville (New York: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd., 1996), 121-126 and G.H. Yusofī, “Abu Moslem Khorāsānī,” *EI*, 1:343-344.

<sup>110</sup> Naqīb al-Mamalek, *Liebe und abenteuer des Amir Arsalan* (German translation), tr. Rudolph Gelpke (Zürich: Manesse Verlag, 1965). For a literary discussion of the romance, see William L. Hanaway, “Amīr Arsalān and the Question of Genre,” *Iranian Studies* 24.1-4 (1991): 55-60.

<sup>111</sup> For a historical account of this uprising, which depicts Bāchcha Saqqā‘ as a notorious robber and murderer, see *Kabul Under Siege: Fayz Muhammad’s Account of the 1929 Uprising*, tr. Robert D. McChesney (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 1999), 1-34.

<sup>112</sup> For a contrast between the virtues of pre-Islamic Arabia and of the Qur‘ān, see Ignaz Goldziher, *Muslim Studies (Muhammedanische Studien)*, tr. C.R. Barber and S.M. Stern, ed. S. M. Stern (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1967), 1:11-44 and Izutsu, *God and Man in the Koran*, 198-229. Especially helpful is Izutsu’s comparison between the independent spirit of Arab *jahiliyya*, as he

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defines it, and the restraint of Qur'ānic *ḥilm* under the umbrella of submission to God. In some ways, this parallels the contrast between the Persian heroic warrior and the spiritual champion.

On the importance of piety (*taqwā*) in the Qur'ānic view of human behavior, see Fazlur Rahman, "Law and Ethics in Islam," in *Ethics in Islam*, ed. Richard G. Hovannisian (Malibu, California: Undena Publications, 1985), 7-8, and for a discussion of the Islamic meaning of self-control (*ḥilm*), see Frederick M. Denny, "Ethics and the Qur'ān: Community and World View," in *Ethics in Islam*, ed. Richard G. Hovannisian (Malibu, California: Undena Publications, 1985), 112-116 and Charles Pellat, "Ḥilm," *EI*, 3:390-392.

<sup>113</sup> Suhrawardī, in *RJ*, 100ff.

<sup>114</sup> *FNS*, 32.

<sup>115</sup> *FNS*, 32.

<sup>116</sup> *QN*, 201.

<sup>117</sup> *SA*, 1:35, 162.

<sup>118</sup> See bibliographies in C.L. Cahen, "Futuwwa," *EI*, 2:961-965 and Taeschner, "Futuwwa: post-Mongol period," *EI*, 2:966-969. Riyād lists 30 medieval works on *futuwwat*, some published and others in manuscript form, in Riyād, *Mīr Sayyid 'Alī Hamadānī*, 328-334. See also Mahjūb's discussion of *futuwwat* treatises as well as historical and religious texts which have discussed *futuwwat*. Mahjūb, introduction to *FNS*, 7-113. Mention already has been made of Taeschner's *Zūntie* which is a comprehensive collection of most of his work on the *futuwwat* phenomena and his translations of *futuwwat* treatises.

<sup>119</sup> The science of Islamic ethics (*'ilm al-akhlāq*) is a vast area of study and encompasses numerous schools of thought. Islamic medieval ethical thought can perhaps be best summarized in four general categories: 1) Scriptural morality, which limits itself to the commands of God from the Qur'ān and the Traditions; 2) theological theories, which include both the human voluntarism of the Mu'tazilite school and divine determinism of the Ash'arites; 3) the philosophical theories of the neo-Platonists, and 4) religious theories which tried to work out a synthesis between the moral pronouncements of the Qur'ān and the philosophical theories on human behavior. Majid Fakhry, *Ethical Theories in Islam* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1991). See also Fazlur Rahman, "Akhlāq," *EI*, 1:719-723, for a brief overview of the development of ethics in Iran. While it is tempting to explore how the various schools of Islamic ethics affected the notion of manliness, this thesis will confine itself to an analysis on how the Persian writers on *futuwwat* themselves understood the concept of *jawānmardī*.



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<sup>120</sup> Note, for example, a tradition attributed to ‘Ā’isha, wife of the Prophet – “truthful report, steadfastness in obeying God, almsgiving, rewarding good deeds, kindness to the kin, returning of trusts, kindness to the neighbor, consideration for friends, hospitality and modesty” – which resonates with the ethic of *futuwwat*. Fakhry, *Ethical Theories in Islam*, 152.

<sup>121</sup> Maḥjūb, introduction to *FNS*, 14-15.

<sup>122</sup> Jürgen Paul mentions numerous Sufi manuscripts of the 15th century which viewed the ethic of *jawānmardī* to be an important aspect of Sufi life. Jürgen Paul, *Die politische und soziale Bedeutung der Naqshbandiyya im Mittelasien im 15. Jahrhundert* (Berlin – New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1991), 34-36.

<sup>123</sup> ‘Aṭṭār, *Tadhkirat al-Awliyā’*, 634.

<sup>124</sup> Nūr al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Jāmī, *Nalāḥāt al-Uns*, ed. Muḥammad Du‘ābadī (Tehran, 1370/1991), 69, 159, 195, 230.

<sup>125</sup> al-Ghazālī, Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad. *Naṣīḥat al-Mulūk*, ed. Jalāl al-Dīn Humāyi (Tehran, 1351/1972). See also al-Ghazālī, *Counsel for Kings*, tr. F.R.C. Bagley (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964). For a discussion of the attribution of authorship of the second part of *Naṣīḥat al-Mulūk* to al-Ghazālī, see de Fouchécour, *Moralia*, 392.

<sup>126</sup> Nūr al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Jāmī, *Kitāb-i Bahāristān* (n.p., 1846). Note especially chapter four, where the author discusses liberality and generosity (*karāmat* and *jawānmardī*). See also *The Behāristān: Abode of Spring* (Benares, 1887), which is an English translation of this work.

<sup>127</sup> Maḥjūb, “Chivalry and Early Persian Sufism,” 556-557. On the poet, al-Ṭūsī Qānī’ī (d. 672/1273), see Muḥammad Ja‘far Maḥjūb, *Dar bāra-yi Kalīla wa Dimna* [On Kalīla and Dimna] (Tehran, 1349/1970), 149-154 and C. Brockelmann, “Kalīla wa-Dimna,” *EI*, 4:504.

<sup>128</sup> Shujā‘, *Anīs al-Nās*, ed. Iraj Afshār (Tehran, 1350/1971). See also Charles Henri de Fouchécour, “‘The Good Companion’ (Anīs al-Nās): A Manual for the Honest Man in Shiraz in the 9th/15th Century,” in *Iran and Iranian Studies: Essays in Honor of Iraj Afshār*, ed. Kambiz Eslami (Princeton: Zagros, 1998), 42-57.

<sup>129</sup> Farīd al-Dīn ‘Aṭṭār, *Dīwān-i ‘Aṭṭār*, ed. Sa‘īd Naḥsī (Tehran, 1339/1960), 92-95. For a discussion of authorship of the poem, see Riyād, *Mīr Sayyid ‘Alī Hamadānī*, 329-331.

<sup>130</sup> Nūr al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Jāmī, *Mathnawī-yi Haft Awrang*, ed. Āqā-yi Murtaḍā Muddaris Gīlānī (Tehran, 1337/1958), 530-531.

<sup>131</sup> The two most significant works in Arabic which were foundational for future treatises on *futuwwat* are Ibn Mi‘mār, *Kitāb al-Futuwwa* and Aḥmad b. Ilyās al-Khartabīrī, *Tuḥfat al-Wasāyā*

(written around 617/1220). The former was the most factual of the treatises and the author, being a Ḥanbalite scholar, sought to combine Islamic law with the customs of *futuwwat* in light of the excesses of contemporary *futuwwat*. Hence, Taeschner calls it “the law book of *futuwwat*.”

Taeschner, *Zünfte*, 79. For Taeschner’s translation of Ibn Mi‘mār’s text, see *Zünfte*, 89-187.

Khartabirī’s *Tuḥfāt al-Waṣāyā* was much more of a literary work. Both authors lament the decline and evils of *jawānmardī* and discuss rules and regulations of *futuwwat*. They also describe al-Nāṣir’s induction into a *futuwwat* association and present the ceremonial reforms that the caliph initiated.

See Mahjūb, introduction to *FNS*, 46-58; Zakeri, “The *futuwwa*-Houses”, 223-224; Hartmann, *an-Nāṣir li-Dīn Allāh*, 30-34 and Taeschner, *Zünfte*, 189-216.

<sup>132</sup> CL. Cahen, “Futuwwa,” *EI*, 2:964. Murtaḍā Ṣarrāf has published the two works of Suhrawardī in his collection of treatises, which are both simply entitled, *Futuwwat Nāma*. Suhrawardī, “Futuwwat Nāma,” in *RJ*, 89-166. Taeschner gives brief extracts from these treatises in *Zünfte*, 242-256. See also Franz Taeschner, “Eine Schrift des Shihābaddīn Suhrawardī über die Futūwa,” *Oriens* 15 (1962): 277-282 and Hartmann, “al-Nāṣir li-Din Allah,” in *EI*, 7:1000. According to Hartmann, the Aya Sofya manuscript contains three Persian treatises by Suhrawardī. Hartmann, *an-Nāṣir li-Din Allah*, 33.

<sup>133</sup> Suhrawardī, in *RJ*, 106.

<sup>134</sup> Nāṣirī, *Futuwwat Nāma-yi Mawlānā Nāṣirī (Der anatolische Dichter Nāṣirī [um 1300] und sein Futuwwetname)*, ed. Franz Taeschner (Leipzig: Kommissionsverlag FA Brockhaus, 1944). More recently it has also been edited by Sa‘īd Naḥsī and Aḥmad Gulchin Ma‘ani. Riyād, *Mīr Sayyid ‘Alī Ḥamadānī*, 331.

<sup>135</sup> Najm al-Dīn Zarkūb Tabrīzī, “Futuwwat Nāma,” in *Rasā‘il-i Jawānmardān: Mushtamil bar Ḥalī Futuwwat Nāma*, ed. Murtaḍā Ṣarrāf (Tehran, 1352/1973), 168-199. For a brief extract of Zarkūb’s work, see Taeschner, *Zünfte*, 257-262.

<sup>136</sup> Henri Corbin, “Traité des Compagnons-Chevaliers,” French introduction to *RJ*, 59.

<sup>137</sup> *FNS*, 126-127.

<sup>138</sup> ‘Abd al-Razzāq Kāshānī, “Tuḥfāt al-Ikhwān,” in *Rasā‘il-i Jawānmardān: Mushtamil bar Ḥalī Futuwwat Nāma*, ed. Murtaḍā Ṣarrāf (Tehran, 1352/1973), 1-57.

<sup>139</sup> Corbin, introduction to *RJ*, 13.

<sup>140</sup> Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad bin Muḥammad Āmulī, “Risāla-yi Futuwwatiyya az Naḥāyis al-Funūn li ‘Arāyis al-‘Uyūn,” in *Rasā‘il-i Jawānmardān: Mushtamil bar Ḥalī Futuwwat Nāma*, ed. Murtaḍā Ṣarrāf (Tehran, 1352/1973), 58-88.

<sup>141</sup> Taeschner, *Züntfe*, 83.

<sup>142</sup> Āmulī, in *RJ*, 75-78. Āmulī's definitions appear to be an abbreviated version of Ibn Mi'mār's lengthier discussion of terms. *Züntfe*, 127ff.

<sup>143</sup> Hamadānī, "Risāla-yi Futuwwatiyya," in *Mīr Sayyid 'Alī Hamadānī*, 341-366. For brief extract, see Taeschner, *Züntfe*, 262-273.

<sup>144</sup> Another Hamadānī shaykh from the district of Karkahr, Darwīsh 'Alī ibn Yūsuf Karkahrī, of whom we have next to no information, composed his "Zubdat al-Ṭarīq ilā Allāh" (written 805/1405), in which he included a brief section on *futuwwat*. Darwīsh 'Alī ibn Yūsuf Karkahrī, "Futuwwat Nāma," in *Rasā'il-i Jawānmardān: Mushtamil bar Haft Futuwwat Nāma*, ed. Murtaḍā Ṣarrāf (Tehran, 1352/1973), 219-224. A *Futuwwat-nāma* has been attributed to Najm al-Dīn Kubrā (d. 617/1220), the eponymous founder of Kubrawī Sufi order, and also to 'Alī bin Abī Ṭālib. See *Fihrist-i Nuskhahā-yi Khaṭṭī-yi Fārsī Kitābkhāna-hā-yi Turkiyya*, ed. H. Subḥānī (Tehran, 1373/1994), 141, 488.

<sup>145</sup> A note of caution regarding the authorship of *FNS* needs to be made. Although the author of *FNS* has universally been assumed to be the renowned Ṭīmūrid preacher, Ḥusayn Wā'iz Kāshifī, this assumption needs to be viewed with caution. Although the author identifies himself in the introduction as Ḥusayn al-Kāshifī, he does not dedicate his treatise to his Ṭīmūrid patrons, but rather to the administrators of the shrine (*khuddām-i mazār*) of Imām Ridā at Mashhad. This raises the problem of authorship and the possibility that the work may actually be from the early Ṣafāwid period and was only attributed to Ḥusayn Wā'iz Kāshifī. Furthermore, in his biographical note on Kāshifī, written 20 years after Kāshifī's death, Khāndamīr lists numerous works by him, but makes no mention of the *FNS* (Khāndamīr, *Ḥabīb al-Siyar*, 4:345-46). Hence, it may be speculated that it is an early Ṣafāwid work. It is known, however, that Ṭīmūrid officials frequently spent time in Mashhad, and Kāshifī himself also visited Mashhad (Gholam Hosein Yousofi, "Kāshifī," *EL*, 2:704). Furthermore, the author specifically names all 4 of the rightly-guided caliphs in the preface (although the preface to one of the manuscripts appears corrupted), which makes it unlikely that it was written during the Ṣafāwid period. In his study on the Ṭīmūrid preacher, Adam Jacobs has shown how the well-known and influential *Raudat al-Shuhadā'*, which we are certain was written by Kāshifī, has much in common with *FNS*. Although both works appear to reflect a Shī'ite thrust this does not preclude them from being pre-Ṣafāwid treatises, for we know that there was a notable Shī'ite population in Herat during the Ṭīmūrid period and the veneration of 'Alī and his family was common to Sunnis and Shī'ites alike prior to the Ṣafāwids, notably the Ṭīmūrids of Herat. Kāshifī himself was accused of heresy by both Sunnis and Shī'ites. According to Jacobs, the internal similarities of these

two works add evidence that Kāshifī was the author of *FNS*, and therefore allows us to assume that the *FNS* is a Khurāsānī work from the late 15<sup>th</sup> – early 16<sup>th</sup> century. See Adam Jacobs, “Sunnī and Shī‘ī Perceptions, Boundaries and Affiliations in Late Tīmūrid and Early Ṣafawid Persia: An Examination of Historical and Quasi-historical Narratives” (Ph.D. diss., University of London, 1999), 50-80.

<sup>146</sup> *FNS*, 3-4.

<sup>147</sup> Muḥammad Taqī Bahār commented, “Recently I have come across a book called, *Futuwwat Nāma-yi Sulṭānī*, on the path and customs of *futuwwat*. It is a very useful book and if we did not have it in hand, we would have lost a valuable source of information on the social history of medieval Iran which consists of the bands of *futuwwat* and *jawānmardī* or ‘*ayyārī*. ... The [*Futuwwat Nāma-yi Sulṭānī*] is the key to all [the books which have been written on *futuwwat* prior to this one].” Muḥammad Bahār, *Sabk Shināsī* (Tehran, 1349/1971), 3:197-198. Incidentally, it was through this comment by Bahār that Maḥjūb first became acquainted with Kāshifī’s work. Maḥjūb, introduction to *FNS*, 104-105.

<sup>148</sup> Maḥjūb, introduction to *FNS*, 96-97. In his introduction to the *Rasā’il-Jawānmardān*, Ṣarrāf suggests that these two final chapters are the most important of Kāshifī’s work, while the first four chapters are extracts from previously written treatises on *futuwwat*. Ṣarrāf, introduction to *RI*, 10.

<sup>149</sup> *FNS*, 4, 118, 147. Abdūlbāki Gölpinarli has attempted to identify some of the sources used by Kāshifī and also gives a brief summary of the *FNS*. Abdūlbāki Gölpinarli, “Fütüvvet Nāma-yi Sultānī ve Fütüvvet Hakkında Bâzi Notlar,” *Iktisat Fakültesi Mecmuası* 17-19.1-4 (1955-1958): 125-155. Gölpinarli concludes that Kāshifī must have seen the Ottoman work, *Miftāh-al Dakayik* also known as the *Great Fütüwwetnāma* – (dated 931/1524), by Sayyid Mehmed b. Sayyid ‘Alā’ al-Dīn al-Ḥüseynī al-Raḍawī. According to Gölpinarli, all the customs and rituals of *futuwwat* mentioned in *FNS* were already recorded in *Miftāh-al Dakayik* (Ibid., 132). For an overview of the *Miftāh-al Dakayik*, see Taeschner, “Futuwwa: Mongol period,” *EI*, 2:967.

<sup>150</sup> Kāshifī was a prolific writer, being credited with the authorship of 40 different works, many of which appear as “codifications” in their fields. See Yousofi, “Kāshifī,” *EI*, 4:704-705.

<sup>151</sup> Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī, *Kulliyāt-i Shams-i Tabrīzī*, ed. ‘Alī Dashfī (Tehran, 1363/1984), 197. For a discussion about mystical interpretations of the life of Rostam, see Shāhrukh Miskūb, “Bakht wa Kār-i Pahlawān dar Āzimūdan-i Haft Khān” [Fate and labor in hero’s initiation rites], *Iran Nāma* 10.1 (1991): 24-51 and Muḥammad ‘Alī Amīr Mu‘izzī, “Nukāt-i chand dar bāra-yi Ta‘ābir-i ‘Irfānī az Shāhnāma” [A religio-mystical interpretation of the Shāhnāma], *Iran Nāma* 10.1 (1991): 76-82.

<sup>152</sup> Mahjub, "Chivalry and Early Persian Sufism," 559 n. 22. For an overview of the ethic of *futuwwat* in the *zūr-khāna*, see Angelo Piemontese, "L'organizzazione della 'Zurxāne' e la 'Futuwwa'," *Annali: Istituto Universitario Orientale di Napoli* 14 (1964): 453-473.

<sup>153</sup> 'Alī Shīr Nawā'ī, *Majālis al-Natā'is* (Two 16<sup>th</sup> century Persian translations), ed. 'Alī Asghar Hikmat (Tehran, 1363/1984), 89-91, 264-265. *Majālis al-Natā'is* is the first literary history in the Turkish language and focuses primarily on poets of the Timūrid period. See M.E. Subtelny, "Mīr 'Alī Shīr Nawā'ī," *EL*, 7:91.

<sup>154</sup> 'Alī Shīr Nawā'ī, "Hālāt-i Pahlawān Muḥammad" (Zhizneopisanie Pakhlavana Mukhammad), Russian translation, Alisher Navoi, *Sochineniia v desiati tomakh*, vol. 9 (Tashkent, 1970), 203-216.

<sup>155</sup> Zayn al-Dīn Wāṣifī, *Badāyi' al-Waqāyi'*, ed. A.N. Boldyrev (Moscow, 1961), 1:643-682. For a discussion of the literary culture of the Timūrid court as depicted by Wāṣifī, see Maria E. Subtelny, "Scenes from the Literary Life of Timūrid Herat," in *Logos Islamikos: Studia Islamica in honorem Georgii Michaelis Wickens*, ed. Roger Savory and D.A. Agius (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1984), 137-155. See also Angelo Piemontese, "Il capitolo sui pahlawān delle Badāyi' al-Waqāyi' di Vāsefī," *Annali: Istituto Universitario Orientale di Napoli* 16-17 (1966-67): 207-220.

<sup>156</sup> *BW*, 1:648.

<sup>157</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn, *Jāmi' al-Tawārikh*, ed. Bahman Karīmī (Tehran, 1338).

<sup>158</sup> *TW*, 124. Note especially Kamāl al-Dīn Ḥusayn Gāzurgāhī, *Majālis al-'Ulshshāq* (late 15<sup>th</sup> century), ed. Ghulām Riḍā Ṭabāṭabāyī Mujidd (Tehran, 1375/1996).

<sup>159</sup> The treatise is an incomplete and partially destroyed transcription of a story-teller (*qiṣṣa-khwān*) which Baydā'ī claims was written during the Ṣafawid period. Baydā'ī mentions that the *Ṭūmār* was given to him by Mahdī Zarkashān Kāshānī who had it in his private library. Baydā'ī has published the entire text, *Ṭūmār-i Afsāna-yi Puryā-yi Walī*, in his *TW*, 349-364.

<sup>160</sup> Jamālzāda, "'Alam-i Futuwwat wa Mardānagī" [The world of *futuwwat* and manliness], in *Sarūtah Yak Karbās*, 2:57-97. See also Jamālzādeh, "The World of Chivalry and Manliness" in *Isfahan is Half the World*, 170-200. For a critical review of Jamālzāda's memoirs, see Ahmad Karimi-Hakkak, "Isfahan is Half the World: Memories of a Persian Boyhood," *Iranian Studies* 18.2-4 (1985): 423-427.

<sup>161</sup> *RT*, 104-120.

<sup>162</sup> M.R. Ghanoonparvar, "Hushang Golshiri and Post-Pahlavi Concerns of the Iranian Writer of Fiction," *Iranian Studies* 18.2-4 (1985): 368-69.

## Chapter Two

### The Heroic Warrior (*pahlawān*)

Every society has heroes who represent its ideals and aspirations and who instill a sense of greatness and identity in its people. In Iranian society, the hero has traditionally been the *pahlawān* (guardian, champion)<sup>1</sup> who is the main figure in epic and popular romance literature. He is invariably a man of action, occupied with battles, feasting and hunting, through which he establishes the image of his manhood. The legendary champion is rooted in ancient Indo-European mythology of warriors in the service of kings, and in the military tradition of the Aryans who migrated from the Central Asian steppe lands to the Iranian plateaus, as well as in the pious warrior of the Zoroastrian faith.<sup>2</sup>

The characteristic traits of the *pahlawān* were worthy of admiration and emulation, for he symbolized both the hopes and disappointments of medieval society.<sup>3</sup> Nadūshan has stated that “the epic *pahlawānān* best exemplify the struggles and efforts for a better life, towards

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progress and victory over evil, calamity and ugliness.”<sup>4</sup> This struggle, however, was not always clear cut. On a superficial level, the incessant battles between the Iranian warrior and his enemy reflect the cosmic conflict between good and evil of ancient Indo-Aryan deities. This battle for goodness, however, repeatedly became complicated as evil permeated that which was portrayed as the good character of the ancient kings and heroes.<sup>5</sup> It was this tension between good and evil within the heroic warrior which placed him in situations beyond his control and frequently challenged his heroism.

Both the epic poem and the popular romance encapsulated in literary form the aspirations and struggles of the *pahlawān*. Narrated by oral story-tellers (*naqqāl*), their contents were consistently didactic, inspiring the audience to the ideals embodied by the heroic warrior. Conventional and stereotypical in character, the *pahlawān* was an exemplar for society. Hanaway, however, makes a sharp distinction between the epic hero and the hero of the popular romance, alluding to the lesser significance of the latter in terms of social attitudes:

Our admiration for the romantic hero is based on our desire to escape from everyday life into a fabulous world of adventure and idealized love, a world where everything turns out well, a world where the passions of mortals are magnified, but where, in the process, the characters have lost their human vulnerability. The result is a hero once removed from those we can identify with as we do with an epic hero.<sup>6</sup>

While the romantic hero may not have enjoyed the popularity of the national hero, the characteristics of the *pahlawān* and the ethos of *jawānmardī* depicted in the popular romance, *Samak-i ‘Ayyār*, are very similar to the values and ideals of the *pahlawān* in the *Shāhnāma*. Although there was a difference between an *‘ayyār* like Samak, who normally worked in secret, and a public combatant, both were characterized as champions who embodied the ethos of *jawānmardī*, albeit from slightly different perspectives. Certainly, entertainment was an essential aspect of the romances, but the narrator had a point to make. Through the

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many maxims connected with the code of *jawānmardī* and a depiction of the *pahlawān*'s struggle to attain and maintain his noble reputation, the narrator sought to inspire his audience to appropriate such values.

The supreme *pahlawān* in classical Iranian literature is embodied by Rustam of the *Shāhnāma*, who stands head and shoulders above all other warriors of Iran. According to the *Tārīkh-i Sīstān*, Sulṭān Maḥmūd Ghaznawī derided the *Shāhnāma* as mere fables of Rustam, saying he had a 1000 warriors like Rustam in his army. Firdawsī responded, "I don't know how many warriors like Rustam are in his army, but this I know, that Almighty God created for himself no creature like Rustam."<sup>7</sup> The *Shāhnāma* leaves no doubt about Rustam's preeminence:

The wonder of this world is from Rustam alone,  
From him there is a story in every heart.  
The source of manliness (*mardī*) and battle (*jang*) is from him.  
Intelligence (*khiradmandī*), knowledge (*dānīsh*) and dignity (*sang*) are from him.<sup>8</sup>

Furthermore, the Persian-speaking world in general has celebrated Rustam as its national hero. Throughout the medieval period, wrestlers and champions continued to be compared to Rustam.<sup>9</sup> Even though Rustam was superseded by the saint-hero, 'Alī, during much of the medieval period when the Qur'ānic ethic and Sufism became interwoven with the notion of *jawānmardī*, the Rustam-ideal never disappeared. With the nationalization and secularization of Iran in the twentieth century, Rustam made a comeback. Young boys saw their uncles and fathers as being Rustam-like,<sup>10</sup> political activists such as the leader of the National Front, Muḥammad Muṣādiq (d. 1967), were compared to Rustam,<sup>11</sup> and the citizen was challenged to a Rustam-like patriotism to fight for the freedom of Iran.<sup>12</sup> Irrespective of possible failures in his character, Rustam has been the preeminent *jawānmard* for the Iranian nation. The following description reflects this perception:



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Rustam [is] the crystallization of all the desires of the Iranian people, representing the epitome of all human aspiration. [He is] a worshipper of God, patriot, powerful, *jawānmard*, just and overall, the great and respected warrior adorned with all the skills of battle.<sup>13</sup>

Others have romanticized Rustam even further, depicting him as the representative of mankind, the voice of the oppressed and the defender of universal freedom. They add that his heroic spirit lives on, inspiring others to be ‘Rustam-like’ micro-heroes and to battle for the freedom of their own worlds.<sup>14</sup> Hence, the popular relevance of *Shāhnāma* has generally been the first half of the epic, i.e., up to the death of Rustam and subsequent to that, the *Shāhnāma* begins to diminish as a vehicle of inspiration and instruction.<sup>15</sup>

The first question this study will explore is what qualities in a heroic warrior (specifically Rustam) make him a champion. What is it that makes Rustam preeminent so that even the avaricious Iranian king, Gushtāsp, described him as supreme: “His manliness (*mardī*) is exalted beyond the skies – He does not consider himself inferior (*kihtar*) to anyone”<sup>16</sup> This analysis, however, immediately leads to a related problem, because the champion’s preeminence was by no means a simplistic one. No hero is without flaws and weaknesses, and the demands placed on the *pahlawān* are at times so intense and complex, that he comes close to betraying his manliness in order to remain true to that very ideal. Rustam’s conflicts are a reflection of the struggle to remain true to the multi-faceted nature of *jawānmardī*.<sup>17</sup>

An example of Rustam’s conflicts, which will be analyzed in detail later, is the famous episode where Rustam came close to defeat at the hands of the young warrior, Suhrāb, whom he did not recognize as his own son. Having always flaunted his manhood, Rustam now began to doubt himself: “Today I’ve lost hope in my manliness (*mardī*).”<sup>18</sup> It was only by resorting to deception that he was able to defeat his enemy, though upon discovering that he had killed his son, for a moment he denied his own manliness.<sup>19</sup> Although Firdawsī seeks to

restore Rustam's manhood by blaming his error on fate, the poet has given a profound portrayal of the tragedy of heroism.

Two episodes in the life of Rustam will be discussed in detail to explore the nature of the *jawānmardī* of the champion: Rustam's encounter with Suhrāb, and his confrontation with the prince, Isfandiyār.<sup>20</sup> In addition, examples will also be drawn from other heroic warriors in the *Shāhnāma*, as well as from the adventures of *Samak-i 'Ayyār*.<sup>21</sup> The characteristics and struggles of the *pahlawān* cannot be fully understood without the traditional Iranian concept of "good name" (*nīk-nāmī* or *nām-i nīk*).<sup>22</sup> This chapter will show how the multi-faceted nature of *jawānmardī* of the heroic warrior, as well as his struggles and limitations, are developed within the framework of his primary goal in life: to gain and maintain a good reputation for himself.

## A. The Reputation of the Heroic Warrior

The world consists entirely of [possessing] a good name (*nām*) and honor (*nang*). There is nothing better than *jawānmardī*, and so the good name of *jawānmardī* will be ours forever.<sup>23</sup>

Rustam is the representation of a good name (*nām*). For him, all of existence is for the sake of a good name. Without this, life has no meaning and one must live to defend it, even at the greatest sacrifice.<sup>24</sup>

### I. A Good Name

The primary concern of the *pahlawān* in the epic and popular romance was his reputation. Rather than a "powerful secondary motivation," as Hanaway has suggested,<sup>25</sup> the warrior's pursuit to gain and maintain good reputation and renown was the driving force in his life.

This aspiration for good reputation was not unique to the heroic warrior. Rooted in the tradition of the Sāsānid royal court, greatness in kingship was inconceivable without the

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king's attaining a good name. Medieval Persian advice literature, which was influenced by the Sāsānid ethic of good government, urged kings to high standards of conduct, so that they could "achieve good reputation in this world and salvation in the next."<sup>26</sup> All mankind, especially kings, should plant seeds of virtue to ensure that their good name remained.<sup>27</sup> The author of *Qābūs Nāma* asserts that the purpose of writing his book of advice was to gain a good name in both worlds – this and the next.<sup>28</sup> The Persian writers of literary biography highlight the importance of the court poet who was able to immortalize the name of his monarch. Nizāmī al-‘Arūdī, the author of *Chahār Maqāla*, advises: "When a monarch must go the way of all mankind, nothing remains of his army, treasures and great feats. It is only his name that will remain eternal because of the poetry of the poets."<sup>29</sup>

This universal quest for good name, however, was supremely exemplified by the *pahlawān* whose obsession for honor and fame was an intensely personal struggle. The purpose of the *wazīr* and the poet was to impute a good name to the monarch and thereby immortalize him. They were primarily motivated by hope of monetary reward and physical survival. On the other hand, the heroic warrior is depicted as supporting the throne for the sake of the honor of the nation.<sup>30</sup> The *pahlawān* embodied the good reputation of the nation; in other words, if the *pahlawān* was a real champion, the nation was strong. Numerous titles of the *pahlawān*, such as *nām-jū*, *nām-war*, *nām-bardār*, *nām-dār*, *nām-āwar*, literally designate someone who sought for and/or possessed a good name, and carry the meaning of the "celebrated, renowned and eminent" man. In the case of Rustam, the fabulous bird, Sīmurgh, prophesied that he would be a seeker after good name (*nām-jū*).<sup>31</sup> Hence, his entire life was devoted to this cause. Samak stated that his entire life was for this one purpose: "Any work I do, I do for the sake of a good name (*nām*)."<sup>32</sup>

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Directly related to possessing a good name was the actual name of the *pahlawān*, which he treated as sacred. His name was his identity and linked him with the greatness of the past, thus legitimizing him in the present. No hero was a hero in isolation; rather, he was rooted in lineage (*nasab*), and it was his name which revealed this.

Even though prior to Rostam's birth, priests and kings had questioned the nobility of any offspring from the union of Zāl and Rudāba (because Rudāba's origin [*gawhar*] stemmed from the seed [*tukhma*] of the evil Zāḥḥāk),<sup>33</sup> Rostam considered himself a man of good reputation because his ancestors had noble birth and hence, they possessed good reputation. Their nobility and greatness was passed on to him. In *Samak-i 'Ayyār*, the prince from Ḥalab, Khurshīdshāh, was extolled for his good lineage (*nasab*) and manliness because of his noble character.<sup>34</sup> Good lineage resulted in noble character and noble character was proof of good lineage. According to the author of *Chahār Maqāla*, Firdawsī ridiculed the reputation of Sulṭān Maḥmūd of Ghazna because he did not possess noble lineage, and hence, he could not possess noble character nor even discern it in others:

The king has no perception of what is good  
If he had, he would have crowned me with honor.  
Since in his lineage (*tabār*) no greatness stands,  
How could he hear about the glory of nobles?<sup>35</sup>

Numerous Iranian revolutionaries and parvenus who rose up against the caliphal authority in Damascus and Baghdad, such as Abū Muslim, the semi-independent Ṭāhirid rulers of Khurāsān, the Buyids of Daylam, and the Sāmānid dynasty of Bukhārā sought to establish genealogical links with the heroic warriors of ancient Iran. By possessing these heroic roots, they considered themselves legitimate rulers. Therefore, the warrior's boast of his own name and lineage was a conventional strategy to reveal his greatness and instill dread in his

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opponent. Rustam never ceased to shout out, “I am Rustam, son of Dastān, son of Sām.”

The sound of his name was like an offensive weapon:

From [Rustam’s] shout the skies filled with cries ...  
Life vanished from the demon and consciousness from the elephants.<sup>46</sup>

Because they exuded such confidence in themselves, warriors would gamble the reputation of their good name and identity on their exploits. Frequently, when Samak was confronted with an extraordinary challenge, he staked the greatness of his name on carrying out the challenge: “If I don’t do this ... then I am not Samak.”<sup>47</sup>

In contrast to noble birth, which attached good reputation to the *pahlawān*, the enemy was always portrayed as ignoble (*lirū-māya*), of mean origin (*bad-gawhar*) and illegitimately born (*harām-zāda*). Such a man was considered of inferior quality because his birth was conceived in deceit and fraud; hence he epitomized deceit and dishonesty. Young heroes who aspired to greatness and desired to enter the service of Samak, avowed their legitimate birth and hence, their noble character and trustworthiness. One young *‘ayyār* affirmed his good character to his mother in the following way:

If you have betrayed my father and I was born illegitimately, then it is alright [to betray], for one born illegitimately only becomes an informer and a man of sedition. He invariably discovers his own shameful deed and testifies to his own illegitimacy. If not, I was born honorably and one born legitimately does not do evil ...<sup>48</sup>

Because lineage was so essential to gain and maintain reputation, one of the standard devices to defame an enemy warrior prior to public combat was to question his identity:

“What is your genealogy (*nasab*)? Tell me, if you are worthy of challenging me, very well, if not, I will go back.”<sup>49</sup> Rustam refused to fight without knowing the identity of his foe.<sup>40</sup>

Public ridicule was a ritual the combatant used to taunt his enemy’s ignoble birth in an effort to destroy his identity verbally.

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Just as one's name assigned honor to the individual, to be considered 'nameless' was great shame. Khurshīdshāh, responding to an insult from the antihero, Qizil Malik, son of Armānshāh, considered the questioning of his own identity as an insult. Since he was the world-renowned king of Chīn, to inquire after his identity was like asking where the sun was:

Oh, ignorant one, does anyone ask for the name or sign of the sun? Or can the spring of the sun (*khurshīd*) be hidden by a flower? He who is ashamed of his name is a coward (*nā-mard*). My name is Khurshīdshāh, son of Marzbānshāh, king of Ḥalab .... Warriors do not hide their names. If you're a warrior come and show what you have for all your meddling. You wanted to battle me, here I've come.<sup>41</sup>

### 2. A Public Name

Khurshīdshāh's anger at having his name questioned expresses one of the most fundamental aspects of good reputation. Public opinion of the warrior's renown and his distinction in the eyes of the world was the very essence of a good name. The desire to 'win public worship' is perhaps a universal instinct for self-legitimization, especially in community-oriented societies, where an individual has little sense of self-worth without societal affirmation.<sup>42</sup> Hence, every individual and certainly the hero – because of his very public life – staked his identity on society's public appraisal of him.<sup>43</sup>

One could be a great *pahlawān*, but if there was no social acknowledgement of it, he was, in fact, without significance. Without public knowledge, all exploits of the *pahlawān* became invalid. Warriors from the land of Mā Chīn who had heard of the exploits and renown of Shaghāl and Samak, compared it with their own obscurity. Hence, the Mā Chīn warriors considered themselves to be without good reputation, as reflected in their self-criticism:

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Do you see how [Shaghāl and Samak] have become world-renowned? Who are they that kings should talk about their reputation? Just because they have performed a few feats their reputation has spread across the world? What do they know that others do not? And how are they superior to us in manliness (*mardī*)? ... We don't publicize ourselves in our feats and so no one knows about it, though we are superior to them in skill and manliness a thousand times over."<sup>44</sup>

The warrior's good reputation meant that the world was impressed and affected by him.

Already at Rostam's birth, Sām spoke of him as a warrior superior to any child in the world.<sup>45</sup> His greatness meant that everyone was in awe of him, "the world will not rest because of Rostam," and "his name will not disappear."<sup>46</sup> Samak prided himself that the "warriors of the world do not sleep well out of fear of me."<sup>47</sup> Conversely, to be considered unknown (*majhūl*) was a flaw in a warrior. When Samak discovered that someone had never heard of him, he considered it an insult to his *jawānmardī*.<sup>48</sup> When the young Iranian hero Bīzhan, was captured by the Tūrānian enemy and death lay before him, his fear was to die unknown: "Alas, for my *jawānmardī* and my good name ... alas, for Iran has no news about me."<sup>49</sup>

One of the fundamental motivations for any exploit of the *pahlawān* was to hear praise (*ālīrīn guftan*) from the king, for whom he performed his feats. Public eulogy was the stamp of approval of one's manliness. After Rostam had trained the prince, Siyāwash, the son of the capricious Kayānid ruler, Kay Kā'ūs, and returned him to the Iranian court, the young prince demonstrated all the skills of *pahlawānī*. The entire court offered words of praise, indicating that Siyāwash had become world renowned.<sup>50</sup>

When a warrior was about to venture out on a dangerous exploit, his boast about what he would accomplish – "as long as the world stands, people will talk about it"<sup>51</sup> – further reflected his concern for public renown. The greatness of an exploit lay not in the feat itself, but in the response it elicited from the spectators. A private murder or torture was

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considered futile because no one had seen it, and therefore no one would talk about it.<sup>52</sup>

There was no reputation to be gained from a hidden act. And although the *ʿayyār* battled in private, it was always for public knowledge. When he threatened to torture or kill an opponent, the hero frequently used the term, *bi-ʿalāmat* (with a sign). By this he meant that his exploit would be carried out with visible distinction and thereby leave a permanent impression on the world and serve as an example (*ʿibrat*) for society.<sup>53</sup>

While the *pahlawān* strove for public praise, his greatest fear was gossip or public ridicule that could ruin his reputation. Fear of public shame was society's means of control and for the *pahlawān*, it was his motivation to live up to society's expectation of noble character. When Siyāwash was urged by his father, Kay Kā'ūs, to renege on the agreement he had made with Tūrān, the prince saw himself in a trap. How could he disobey his royal father? On the other hand, if he battled Tūrān, the entire world would malign him because he had recanted on an oath. Such gossip was a death-blow to his good name and worse than extermination, as he himself stated, "Would that my mother had not given birth to me, or that now I could make myself invisible."<sup>54</sup> No action was conceivable if it meant a loss of public praise.

When Rustam clashed with Kay Kā'ūs because of his delay in fighting Suhrāb, he was outraged at the king's insult and declared that he was through with supporting Iran.<sup>55</sup> The Iranian chiefs pleaded with Rustam to return because he was the protector of Iran and the only one able to oppose this new threat. Unable to convince him, the Iranian warrior, Gūdarz, then used the threat of public shame to persuade Rustam to return. If Rustam departed from Iran, the king and warriors would think that he was afraid to challenge this threat from Tūrān. Rustam was tarnishing his own name by retreating from battle, and in



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this way was bringing fear and shame upon the nation.<sup>56</sup> This was enough to convince Rustam to change his mind. Trapped by the fear of what others might think of him, the conflict was resolved because he feared the loss of his identity as a champion (*haythiyat-i pahlawānī*).<sup>57</sup> Death was better than to be considered a coward by others:

[Rustam] said to him, "If my heart is afraid,  
I would rather not remain alive, but die.  
You know that I don't flee from battle."<sup>58</sup>

Because a hero's fear of ill-repute and shame was so great, it could be used against his enemy. The aim was to inflict shame upon the opponent by bringing tears to his eyes, by 'yellowing' or 'blackening' his face or causing his head to hang in helplessness - all signs of weakness and failure, the antithesis of manhood. One of the interesting tests of manliness in the *Shāhnāma* was the hand-crushing duel.<sup>59</sup> The challenge was not only to outdo the opponent, but also to endure pain without any visible sign of failure. The face could never blush, i.e., never be 'yellowed,' or grimace in pain. Because shame could be more torturous than physical pain or death (because it besmirched one's manliness), the hero would endure any physical hardship rather than reveal a 'shamed' face.<sup>60</sup> A rival warrior, Kalāhūr, renowned for his valor, was commissioned by his king to bring Rustam to tears: "Do whatever it takes to fill his [Rustam's] face with shame / Bring forth warm tears from his eyes."<sup>61</sup> This would signal Rustam's defeat. However, Rustam crushed his foe and rather forced him to reveal pain and admit defeat. At the same time, he showed himself to be above pain, thus demonstrating his manliness:

From pain [Rustam's] hand turned all blue,  
[But] he didn't grimace and held anxiety far from him.  
His manliness (*mardī*) shone out as from the sun,  
He crushed hard the hand of Kalāhūr,  
His nails fell off like the leaves from a tree ...  
[Kalāhūr] could not keep his pain hidden.<sup>62</sup>

### 3. An Eternal Name

One of the persistent themes in the *Shāhnāma* is the tyranny of fate. Fate was the undefeatable force to which all mankind must bow, even the greatest of warriors. The pursuit of a noble name became so all-consuming because good repute meant that one's name continued beyond death. The medieval Persian biographer, 'Awfī, praises kings whose reputation continued even after their death: "It is years that their spirits are resting in the tomb of Paradise and their good names (*nām-i nīk*) have still not vanished from the pages of time."<sup>63</sup> The writer of *Chahār Maqāla* cites the following lines which show that exploits were futile if forgotten; the continual praise for a monarch after his death was the essence of good reputation:

Oh the many palaces that Maḥmūd built,  
Which from their great heights are all forgotten now.  
Today you do not see one brick upon another,  
But the praises of 'Unṣūrī still stand in place.<sup>64</sup>

The *pahlawān* feared the horror of extinction which fate brought upon him. The challenge of the warrior was to overcome the finality of fate by ensuring that his good name continued after his death. Rostam's ultimate struggle in his battle with the prince, Isfāndiyār, was not primarily whether or not he was able to kill the prince, but the horror at the thought that his own name would fall into disgrace and there would be no trace of it left in the world.<sup>65</sup>

Defeat in battle was, therefore, defeat of one's good reputation. It was a disgrace that a *pahlawān* could not tolerate, because it was a denial of the essence of *jawānmardī*. Defeat, then, meant the death of the *pahlawān*, because without the honor of a good name (which one gained in battle), the warrior had no life, as Nadūshan says: "The good name of a noble

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freeman (*mard-i āzād*) is the glass of life (*shīsha-yi 'umr*). If it falls to the ground, life is automatically over."<sup>66</sup>

The warrior's motivation in everything he did was that "as long as the world stands," people would speak of his deeds. In the rivalry between the *jawānmardī* of Samak-i 'Ayyār and the female warrior, Rūz Afzūn, which is discussed in detail below, Rūz Afzūn made her debut into the school of champions in what was considered an unconscionable act, but her motive was clear – to gain a permanent reputation: "Oh soul, I will act with *jawānmardī* so that as long as the world stands, they will talk about me and I will gain a good name (*nāmī*) from this, though it is wrong and not what warriors do (*kār-i mardān nīst*)."<sup>67</sup>

It is most noteworthy that in *Samak-i 'Ayyār*, numerous female warriors, such as Rūz Afzūn, battled on par with male warriors and were treated as equals.<sup>68</sup> They were accepted as co-warriors because they dressed and acted like men; however, as will be shown, when reputation was at stake, this notion of equality suddenly disappeared.

Good reputation, then, was the equivalent of overcoming death. Hence, although fate was able to defeat the greatest of warriors (because immortality was impossible), it was through the cultivation of a good name, which continued after his death, that the heroic warrior tried to overcome its finality.

#### 4. The Measure of Good and Evil

Because good reputation was all-important, it became the standard measure of good and evil. In other words, moral choices were made on the basis of public opinion. Any deed that resulted in a good name was a noble deed and a deed that resulted in shame was ignoble. One could act treacherously or vainly, but if it did not result in ill-repute, it was justified.

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According to the poet Saʿdī, the proverbial generosity of the *jawānmard*, Ḥātīm Ṭāʿī, was motivated by his desire to establish his good reputation. Upon hearing of a challenge to his generosity, Ḥātīm increased his liberality. He would not be outdone in generosity, “for my name must be known in the land.”<sup>69</sup> The issue for Ḥātīm was not altruistic benevolence towards other people, but rather to preserve his own renown for generosity.

As mentioned above, Samak was perpetually in the service of Khurshīdshāh. On one occasion, he returned to the court of his ruler after a long and arduous journey. Although he had not been able to free some of his co-warriors, he was extolled as the “*pahlawān* of the times” and the “*jawānmard* of the world.” Khurshīdshāh invited him to rest for a while, which Samak refused to do:

So would it be proper if I leave them [Surkward, Atshak and Niyāl] and return to the camp so that the warriors of the world beat the drum for me and say, “Samak claims to be an *ʿayyār* and he leaves his wife [Surkward] and two of his comrades in chains?” This is neither worthy of manliness (*mardī*) nor of *jawānmardī*. I do not like this.<sup>70</sup>

Clearly, to leave one’s comrades in chains and revel in the praise of one’s feats was irresponsible, but for Samak, his concern was for future public opinion. He could not entertain the thought that future warriors would taunt his claim to *jawānmardī*.

The pursuit of good reputation motivated the warrior to perform exploits which society considered noble, but it could end up in chaos and tragedy as well. As will be shown, it led the heroic warrior into frequent dilemmas, ceaseless rivalries and a “duality of attitudes” concerning good and evil.<sup>71</sup> Rustam tried to convince Isfāndiyār of the foolishness of his ambitions, and that good reputation was not gained on the battleground. Ironically, Rustam also fell prey to the need of guarding his good name when he entered the battleground to kill Isfāndiyār.

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Hence, while the heroic warrior is presented as the icon of ideal manliness and as being worthy of emulation, to the modern-day Western reader, he frequently appears much less than noble. Amin Banani has stated, “heroes are prey to the basest of human motives,”<sup>72</sup> and so it seems to be the law of life that in his quest to gain and guard his reputation, the warrior ends up marring his reputation. The irony of heroism is that the very pursuit of greatness eventually destroys the hero.

### B. Characteristics of the Heroic Warrior

The multi-faceted nature of the *pahlawān* – such as his combative spirit, preeminence, service, and truthfulness – was directly linked to his reputation. The warrior is characterized as a public combatant who was in constant service of his king and co-warriors. He carried an image of preeminence in every aspect of his life and was considered to be truthful in all that he did. Through each of his qualities as a champion, the warrior built up and maintained his good name in society.

#### 1. Man of Battle

That manhood is defined on the battlefield has been a universal principle. Here, it is said, men shed sweat and blood for the sake of their kings and nations. Self-sacrificing warriors have generally been depicted as models of noble character who bring out the best in life and motivate others to do the same. Though written in another context, the following description fits the Iranian heroic warrior:

[Warriors] were inspirational stereotypes, embodying self-sacrificing service, personifying national nobility, justifying the grandeur of imperialism, and they were model prototypes committed unto death, taking on forces, natural or human, that called forth the exercise of an indomitable will, superhuman physical stamina ... an almost miraculous courage.<sup>73</sup>

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This noble chivalry of the warrior is the central theme of both the epic and the popular romance. In challenging his army to battle, a king understood that the opportunity to authenticate one's manliness was the greatest motivation for his warriors. Battle was that which separated manliness (*mardānagī*) from madness (*dīwānagī*).<sup>74</sup> In order for the *pahlawān* to make a name for himself, he had to be ready to face danger and death on the battleground.

The *pahlawān* must battle outside himself, he must face the world and the people of the world, he must be willing to meet with death in order to attain to the status of a *pahlawān* and gain a name of renown.<sup>75</sup>

### a) Public combat (*maydān-dārī*)

In both the epic and popular romances, a regular event was the public combat where two opponents entered the battlefield (*maydān*) for a duel, prior to all-out war between their respective armies. Surrounded by the spectators, who were compared to stars in heaven, the contestants sensed that the entire world was watching. Here life itself was at stake. It was the testing ground of the warrior – whether he was a man (*mard*) or a coward (*nā-mard*).<sup>76</sup>

*Maydān-dārī* served a variety of purposes. On a day of festivities in *Samak-i Ayyār*, warriors displayed their skills in horsemanship and wrestled black slaves to establish who was worthy to marry the princess, Mahparī.<sup>77</sup> However, *maydān-dārī* consisted primarily of single combat between two warriors who either battled to the death or called for a truce at the end of the day. Though bloody and wild, the public combat had its own code of behavior. In his discussion on the literary devices of the popular romance, Hanaway lists seven elements of battle between two armies which were normally presented in the same order.<sup>78</sup>

While the conventional sequence varied from time to time, the most significant and descriptive aspect was the single combat. It was normally described in much more detail than the actual war between the two opposing armies. The formalities prior to the single combat and the fight itself served to highlight the seriousness of the test of manliness. The warrior's formal request to the king, the description of his battle armor and the rider, the public taunt and boast, the calling for an opponent, the shouting out of one's name, and the actual physical conflict, with its formal order of battle, until the final death blow—each of these steps functioned as a calculated and public strategy to authenticate one's manhood and thus attain public renown. The following example, as given in *Samak-i 'Ayyār*, typifies the rituals prior to the public combat:

Khurshīdshāh ordered that the drum of battle be sounded. The entire army lined up at the battleground (*maydān*). When Qizil Malik heard the battle drum, he set out for the battleground whether he was ready or not. From both sides, chiefs (*naqībān*) kept the armies in order. From the Halab army, a *pahlawān* by the name of Hurmuz Kīl entered the *maydān*, bowed before the king, and said, "Oh great king, grant the command today that your servant take the challenge of public combat (*maydān-dārī*)."

Khurshīdshāh said, "Oh *pahlawān*! I authorize you to lead the army." Hurmuz Kīl bowed before him, mounted his horse and faced the *maydān*. Both he and his horse were covered in armor. Crying out threats (*na'ra-zanān*) and raising forth fierce war whoops, he declared his readiness to battle. He faced Qizil Malik's army, thrust his spear into the ground and took off his helmet, laying it on his saddle. He cried out, "I am the least of this army, Hurmuz Kīl, a slave of Marzbānshāh and a servant of his son, Khurshīdshāh. Come, whoever is a greater warrior and let's fight it out."<sup>70</sup>

The warrior's formal request to the king to be commanded to enter the battleground was his acknowledgment of the authority of the king. In this way he expressed his patriotic purpose to protect and enhance the king's honor. The king's divine right to rule meant that to serve the king was to serve God. There was no nobler cause than this opportunity to do single combat in the name of the king. Furthermore, the request, often rivaled by fellow warriors, reflected the *pahlawān*'s constant readiness for battle.

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The hyperbolic descriptions of the armor of the warrior and his horse further emphasized the public aspect of combat. Armor was essential, not only for the actual battle, but because it established the warrior's identity. It defined who he was. The warrior and horse were "drowned in armor," indicating that the warrior's distinctiveness lay not in his individual personality, but primarily as a man of battle. From birth, Rustam was identified with his mace, which gave him his self-confidence and sense of invincibility:

In this desert if I myself were alone,  
With my mace (*gurz*) and Rakhsh and armor,  
I would not worry about Afrāsiyāb,  
And about that army and its speed.<sup>80</sup>

When the undefeated warrior, Dibūr, heard about the exploits of Samak, his first questions concerned Samak's weapon: "How much does his mace weigh? How does he wield the sword? What kind of spear does he have? How about his bow and arrow?"<sup>81</sup>

Consequently, to be stripped of one's weapons meant to lose one's distinctiveness. Prior to Farrukhrūz's death, Khurshīdshāh had dreamt an eagle had carried away his brother's helmet (*kulāh*).<sup>82</sup> It was an omen of death that came true.

The warrior's public boast and derision prior to the actual battle were verbal 'weapons' of offense and demonstrate that battle involved more than just the use of brute force.

Statements such as "I will bring his name (*nām*) to shame (*nang*),"<sup>83</sup> "What is your name and who will weep for your headless body?"<sup>84</sup> and "Your mother's heart is being torn apart, she is weeping for your shield and sword,"<sup>85</sup> illustrate this 'ritual of ridicule' among warriors.

The taunt against the opponent's name and lineage was a shaming technique geared to destroy publicly the enemy's good reputation.

In the midst of this mocking, one of the warriors would dare a warrior to come forth (*mard khwāstan*). A *pahlawān* from the opposing army had to rise immediately to the



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challenge. One of the conventional phrases in *Samak-i Ayyār* is the warrior's challenge to his opponent: "Come and show your manliness (*mardī*)."<sup>86</sup> Since public combat was the place where one proved one's manhood, to refuse to heed the challenge was a denial of it. The hero of the day often felled up to fifty warriors. Between each combat, the victor sent out more taunts of intimidation: "So this is your answer to such warriors? For once, send out a warrior to the battleground who can at least stand on his feet for a moment."<sup>87</sup> As always, the warrior had to prove his courage and valor, which defined him as a man.

The single combat had a well-defined order in the use of weapons. The battle began with spears (*nayza*) which were first hurled into the air or stuck into the ground as an act of intimidation. Next the combatants threw the spears at each other till they broke. Then came the sharp Indian swords (*tīgh*), which they smashed against each other's helmets until they broke in two. After that, they drew the bow (*kamān*) and shot arrows at each other. Then came the mace (*gurz*). If none of these weapons felled one of the warriors, they finally engaged in hand-to-hand combat. This was the climax of the battle. Here, without the assistance of armor, was the final test of brute force.<sup>88</sup>

The victor either killed his opponent in one of these stages or he heaved him off his saddle and dragged him before the victor's army to be killed. Death was nobler than the shame and taunts of the spectators. So, as a final act of disgrace, the victim would be put to death in an ignoble manner so as not to allow death to be the savior of his honor. For example, his beard was ripped off or his face slapped in order to destroy his reputation prior to his death.<sup>89</sup>

The heroic warriors maintained a clear code of conduct regarding when and how to battle. Khurshīdshāh's warrior, Hurmuz Kīl, had been sent to the Mā Chīn court to negotiate a

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further battle. The Mā Chīn prince, Qizil Malik, was invariably rash in his effort to vindicate himself. When offended in the court, he was ready to attack Hurmuz Kīl immediately with his bow. Qizil Malik's father restrained him and Hurmuz Kīl articulated the accepted code:

Warriors do not draw arrows in such a place. Come to the battleground to see how manliness should be exercised, and how to draw the sword. [This] is easy and is improper conduct (*bī-adab*).<sup>90</sup>

Such an act of rashness was considered a breach in the code of proper behavior for warriors. The wazīr, Mihrān, actually accused Hurmuz Kīl for trying to be killed by Qizil Malik and, in this way, ruin the reputation of Mā Chīn forever, because Mā Chīn would become infamous for improper conduct in its own court. The warriors agreed on a certain day for public combat. On the day of the combat, after Hurmuz Kīl felled numerous men and no one dared to challenge him further, he called for Qizil Malik:

Where is he who drew the sword in the palace court ... said that was the place for warriors? Tell him to come to the *maydān* and draw the sword and display manliness (*mardī*), for it is in the *maydān* that they draw the sword.<sup>91</sup>

While fair play was always a code of public combat, the surprise attack added to the drama of the battles. When two *pahlawāns* engaged in a battle to the death and it seemed that the hero was about to lose, frequently another champion would enter the battleground without warning or shoot an arrow at the enemy warrior to defend his co-warrior.<sup>92</sup> At one point, Afrāsiyāb requested Pūlādward, a ruler of Chīn, to assist Tūrān in the battle against Rustam. Pūlādward agreed to single combat with Rustam on the condition that no one from either side be allowed to enter the battleground.<sup>93</sup> Although the hero must win, victory was not always forthcoming. Spectator warriors, who could not endure watching defeat, would breach the agreement and mob the battleground. Such an act, which appears unfair to an

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outside observer, stressed the necessity of victory and also served to signal the time for all-out battle between the two armies.

### b) Revenge and magnanimity

Just as the public single combat served as a validation of manhood and thus the *pahlawān*'s good name, taking revenge was a similar means of building good reputation. The term *khūn-khwāh* meant to requite the blood of a co-warrior by killing an enemy.<sup>94</sup> Through this act of revenge, a sense of equity or justice was reestablished, as Paul Sprachman has observed, "Vengeance is a cry for justice in the *Shāhnāma*'s age of heroes."<sup>95</sup> However, a further fundamental issue at stake was the reputation of the warriors.

The great prince and warrior, Isfāndiyār, was praised for his deeds of revenge by which he proved his manliness. His father, Gushtāsp, had promised him the throne if he avenged the death of his grandfather, Shāh Luhrāsp:

[Gushtāsp] told me that when with manliness (*mardī*)  
 You take revenge on Shāh Arjasp, for Luhrāsp Shāh ...  
 If you make our name renowned throughout the world,  
 And clean the world of all evil, and seek to restore it afresh,  
 The entire kingship and army will be yours,  
 Indeed the throne with its treasure and crown.<sup>96</sup>

Rustam, who was often given the epithet *kīna-khwāh* or *khūn-khwāh*, gained an exalted name through his battles of revenge.<sup>97</sup> His natural response to any disgrace or defeat in the Iranian state of affairs was to avenge the loss of manhood (any kind of disgrace and defeat meant the loss of manhood) by seeking retaliation for the shame which had been inflicted on the nation. The only means to regain honor was to inflict even greater shame on the enemy, which simply meant defeating and killing the enemy.<sup>98</sup>

The episode of the betrayal of Siyāwash by Afrāsiyāb and of his treacherous death is described as an act of shame and *nā-jawānmardī*.<sup>99</sup> Subsequently, Rustam's desire to avenge

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the death of Siyāwash became his sole purpose in life. He had originally volunteered to nurture and train the young prince in the school of *pahlawānī*. Siyāwash's success had been his success, and now his perfidious death was treachery against Rustam's own good reputation. The only way Rustam could legitimize his life again was by requiting the blood of the one whose life had been extinguished:<sup>100</sup> “[Rustam] swore to the Just One of Heaven / That his body should never be severed from the amour of battle.”<sup>101</sup> And again he stated, “As long as I live, my heart and my head / are filled with revenge for the sake of Siyāwash.”<sup>102</sup>

The notion that revenge was an essential code of manliness gave the warrior courage in the face of possible defeat and death. The knowledge that he possessed an avenger was a powerful weapon when he entered battle: “I have a *khūn-khwāh* (avenger) who will take back my blood.”<sup>103</sup> With this challenge the warrior threatened his would-be killer and reassured himself that even if he was killed, his own name would be preserved through an act of retribution by his avenger. When Siyāwash knew an ignoble death was at hand, he prayed for a son who would demonstrate his manhood by avenging his father's blood.<sup>104</sup>

Sharwān, a warrior from the army of Khurshīdshāh, was captured by his enemies, and being aware that his appointed time had come, he spoke with confidence because he had an avenger:

No one should mourn for my life because death faces all. ... If *ajal* (the appointed time of death) has arrived for me, there is nothing I can do. I am not pleading for my life, for everyone must die. I know that you will not escape from this, nor anyone else. The reason I am talking so freely is because I have an avenger (*khūn-khwāh*). Blessings to Khurshīdshāh who will vindicate my blood.<sup>105</sup>

For warriors such as Siyāwash and Sharwān, vengeance was the one force that could overcome *ajal* and reassured the victim that the enemy was not supreme after all.

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In contrast to the heroic requirement of restoring the reputation of a warrior's defeat through revenge, stood a contradictory, but equally necessary code of *jawānmardī*: magnanimity. The renowned *jawānmard*, Ghawr Kūhī, who had provided refuge for Samak and several of his colleagues, had ordered one of the 'refugees,' Rūz Afzūn, to kill a young enemy of his. However, in a magnanimous response, she did not kill this young man who had pleaded for his life. This offended Ghawr, and he was ready to execute Rūz Afzūn had she and Samak not been under his protection. Samak pleaded for tolerance on her behalf. In his view, the act of *jawānmardī* was to pass over her 'sin,' even if her deed was a great blunder: "Let the world be destroyed through that mistake, but now the perfect deed of *jawānmardī* is to forgive her (*bibakhshī*)."<sup>106</sup>

Rustam was also confronted with the tension between magnanimity and revenge following Siyāwash's death. After Rustam swore to avenge the prince's death, Afrāsiyāb's son, Surkha, was captured and brought before Rustam. He ordered Surkha to be killed in the same ignoble fashion as Siyāwash - his blood was to be collected in a goblet and sent to Kay Kā'ūs. Surkha begged for his life, claiming complete innocence in the death of Siyāwash. The pleadings of Surkha had an effect on the hardened Iranian warrior, Ṭūs, so that he wanted to forgive (*bakhshāyash*) the young warrior.<sup>107</sup> Rustam, however, was determined to inflict revenge on Afrāsiyāb, and he again swore to carry it out. In this case, vengeance without tolerance was the manly deed for the heroic warrior.<sup>108</sup>

On the other hand, Rustam's magnanimity is seen in his response towards the elderly Iranian warrior, Gurgīn. Gurgīn had betrayed the younger warrior, Bīzhan by enticing him to enter the Tūrānian lands. Here Bīzhan fell in love with Manīzha and was soon captured. Upon his return to Iran without the young warrior, Gurgīn was suspected of treachery and

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thrown in prison. Gurgīn sent a message to Rustam begging for forgiveness on the basis of his reputation of magnanimity (*buzurgī*). Rustam was aware that Gurgīn had acted fraudulently, and indeed, because of his cowardly act, it was a disgrace even to mention his name before the king. However, now that Gurgīn had been rendered helpless, Rustam agreed to plead for his forgiveness (*gunāh khwāstan*) before the king.<sup>109</sup> Later, Rustam saved Bīzhan from the dungeon on the condition that the young warrior would forgo his desire to avenge Gurgīn's treachery.<sup>110</sup>

Which deed was more manly- to requite the blood of a co-warrior or to pass over evil and treachery? Nadūshan concludes that the criteria for magnanimity is "human weakness:"

*Jawānmardī* is to pass over sin. If a person sins because of human weakness and does not damage any of the essential human principles, Rustam forgives him ... but when there is the great pursuit for revenge, this *jawānmardī* of magnanimity cannot stand against the hardness and intolerance of the *pahlawān*.<sup>111</sup>

However, the choice to avenge or forgive the enemy was not simply based on how evil or treacherous the deed had been. Both vengeance and magnanimity were codes of conduct of manliness which increased the good reputation of the warrior.<sup>112</sup> The real issue was whether one act resulted in greater reputation for the warrior above another. A frequent point of discussion among warriors and men of the court was what they should do with an enemy who had been captured. Revenge was not always the best solution, because it could mean a loss of reputation.<sup>113</sup>

In a dramatic episode, Khurshīdshāh was confronted with this dilemma. His brother-prince, Farrukhrūz, who had been his protector throughout his life, had been killed. Khurshīdshāh was determined to avenge his brother's death by killing the renowned Mā Chīn warrior, Siyāh Abr. Armānshāh sent a messenger to Khurshīdshāh, to plead for Siyāh Abr's life, because he was no ordinary warrior. Should Siyāh Abr be executed, his avenger,

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Dibūr, would not rest till his blood had been requited. This threat, however, only heightened Khurshīdshāh's resolve. To avoid killing Siyāh Abr because of this threat would only be a sign to the public of his own unmanliness and cowardliness. If the messenger truly pleaded for the captive's life, he would save his life (an act of magnanimity), but since the enemy was trying to frighten him, he would kill Siyāh Abr to prove that he was no coward. It was public opinion that dictated Khurshīdshāh's decision to avenge his brother's death as he addressed Armānshāh's messenger:

If you are frightening me with Dibūr Dīw Gīr, your talk is nothing. If you are pleading for [Siyāh Abr's life] I will return him to you, but if I turn him over to you, they will say, "You're afraid of Dibūr Dīw Gīr." We did not come all the way from Hālab to be seen as cowards. Off with his neck!<sup>114</sup>

Tragically, the act of revenge never seemed to be a clean act of *jawānmardī*. It inevitably led to disgrace and shame, even for the avenger. The ignoble death of Siyāwash resulted in years of destruction in Tūrān and constant battles of revenge, led first by Rostam and then by Khusraw, Siyāwash's son. After Rostam killed Isfandiyār, the battles between the Iranian army and the Sīstān heroes led to the demise of both dynasties. The effort to requite a victim's blood and thereby restore the victim's name and also enhance the name of the avenger was never entirely successful. The warrior's duty to carry out revenge demonstrated the irresistible, but self-destructive power of restoring lost reputation:

[Revenge] is tragic because honor once besmirched cannot be completely restored, and because murder even in defense of honor destroys one's social world, one's legal standing, and one's religious purity. Nonetheless it is a moral and heroic obligation, which cannot be ignored on pain of losing all dignity for self and family.<sup>115</sup>

## 2. Man of Preeminence

In order for the heroic warrior to be renowned, he had to be supreme over others, (*dast bālā-yi dast*) which meant that he was preeminent in every aspect of life. For him, triumph

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and achievement were the norm, and he embodied successful struggle for victory in life. The nation constructed its greatness vicariously through the life of the *pahlawān* who provided an answer to the crisis of human defeat and failure. Justifying the ethic of the champion, Kāzīmāyī writes, “In the law of life, weakness is doomed to failure and defeat. One must be strong in order to exist.”<sup>116</sup> Since meaning and identity for the true warrior were established by his demonstration of victory and strength, any failure or weakness was a flaw that compromised his manhood. Firdawsī states, “It is through strength that a warrior (*marč*) attains truth / through weakness comes guile (*kazhī*) and decline.”<sup>117</sup>

Preeminence meant that the champion was invincible. Throughout the *Shāhnāma*, Rustam is depicted as the warrior who never saw defeat in battle. As a youth, he was compared to a cloud and in battle he cried out, “I am a cloud.”<sup>118</sup> The “cloud of *pahlawānī*” meant that nothing on earth was higher or superior to him.

The seven heroic tasks that Rustam had to overcome were all tests to prove his prowess, courage and strength in battle. Throughout these episodes, Rustam is presented as confident of his invincibility over any foe. This was not compromised by his dependence on divine assistance throughout his career. In fact, divine fortune and heroic victory went hand-in-hand: “Fortune from God, feats from the champion.”<sup>119</sup> The warrior’s exploits were proofs of superhuman ability, and divine aid served to confirm it. After felling the dragon in the third task, Rustam acknowledged that God made him invincible:

He spoke thus to God, “Oh Doer of Justice,  
 You gave me wisdom and power and charisma (*īarr*) ...  
 Whether the foe is great, whether he is small,  
 When wrath arouses within me, all foes are as one.”<sup>120</sup>

Another aspect of the warrior’s preeminence was the need to eliminate any rivals. A rival was an insult to the very identity of the *pahlawān* because it meant that he was no longer



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champion. Therefore two equal warriors could not co-exist, and even warriors from the same army sought to outmaneuver each other in their claims of heroism. One way to eliminate a rival was through verbal boasting and ridicule. Rustam's self-consciousness of his lineage from *mardān-i mard* (brave men of manliness) made him vaunt that image. In the passage describing the confrontation between Isfāndiyār and Rustam, both warriors repeatedly flaunted their manhood. Isfāndiyār at one point prepared a feast for Rustam, but instead of welcoming him to the meal, he went back on his word and merely drank to his own manhood.<sup>121</sup> Rustam was deeply offended by the way Isfāndiyār had disparaged his valor and intelligence:

You consider my manliness (*mardī*) most lightly,  
 You disdain my intelligence and knowledge,  
 Realize this that in this world, I am Rustam,  
 I rule the radiant throne of Narīmān.<sup>122</sup>

Indeed, boasting, insulting the opponent, and taking offense were very much part of the life of the heroic warrior. While the *pahlawān* appeared heedless of the intimidation of others, at the same time he revered his own identity as a hero, and therefore, any insult was an affront to his manhood. At the same time that the warrior lived to disdain the manliness of an opponent, he treated his own manhood as a sacred possession that could not be debased.<sup>123</sup>

In one public combat in *Samak-i Ayyār*, the enemy had shamed the spectators of Chīn who saw their co-warriors being put to flight. Atshak, a rather weak and fearful Chīn warrior, who had been a disciple of Samak for a long time, volunteered to enter the battleground. However, Rūz Afzūn urged him not to go, "You're no a match for him." Though he never had been a great warrior, this accusation was an insult for Atshak. In his

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view, Rūz Afzūn was merely trying to exhibit her own prominence. Atshak's words are insightful:

How long will you keep on praising yourself and try to show yourself superior to other warriors? Do you think that you are the only champion of battle born of a mother in this world? ... If I am not a match for him, I'll be killed. Ever since the world stands, there is the rule that a warrior may defeat a 100 warriors, but finally someone will come and defeat him. There is always a superior over a superior (*dast bālā-yi dast bāshad*).<sup>124</sup>

This confession – there is never an absolutely supreme warrior – was something which the greatest champions refused to concede. Yet, if true manliness and great reputation lay in preeminence, these ideals always remained elusive, because ultimately there was no permanent or definitive supreme warrior.

The preeminent warrior could not appear to be apprehensive or fearful. At one point, Alkūs of Tūrān, who was a courageous warrior similar to Rustam, attacked Zawāra, Rustam's brother, and was about to sever his head. When Rustam saw what was happening, he gave such a shout that Alkūs trembled and lost his sense of manliness: “[Alkūs] forgot all about his *mardī*.”<sup>125</sup> For the warrior, retreat from battle was inconceivable because it revealed fear. Bīzhan staked his identity on the ultimatum, “No man will see my back in flight.”<sup>126</sup> Similarly, withdrawing a tired warrior from the battleground was a sign of weakness that could demoralize the army, as Khurshīdshāh remarked at one point when his brother was wearying in combat: “If we call Farrukhrūz back, our army will be brokenhearted. It is a statement that we are afraid. But if we allow Farrukhrūz to battle, I am afraid he will be hurt.”<sup>127</sup> One of the basic codes of *jawānmardī* was the determination to fight to the end “Warriors do not run from battle.”<sup>128</sup> Already mentioned is the case when Rustam refused to join the Iranian army because of Kay Kā'ūs' insults. He was persuaded only to return

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because of his need to retain his image as a courageous warrior.<sup>129</sup> Fear was considered incompatible with manliness.

Manly courage meant being reckless and oblivious to any danger or evil. Nothing could be cause for hesitation or calculation. Religion and wisdom might counsel one to be cautious, but the *pahlawān* followed another path. In a lengthy passage, Firdawsī states that the warrior should throw caution to the wind and laugh at death and danger, as Rustam did. This section is introduced to justify an apparently pointless battle with the troops of Tūrān. Rustam and his warrior friends were nonchalantly entertaining themselves on Tūrānian soil and inevitably, the enemy challenged their defiant attitudes:

When you face death, effort will have no benefit for you,  
 Now you must listen to the ways of Rustam ...  
 That if you seek the reputation of manliness (*mardī*),  
 Your Hindi sword must always be wet with blood.  
 You must not seek to avoid evil,  
 When battle meets you in the way of life,  
 When time brings with it difficulty,  
 Evil will not be held back by caution.  
 When you do battle with wisdom (*khirad*),  
 Your bravery will not exude from the warriors.  
 Wisdom (*khirad*) and religion – they are another path.<sup>130</sup>

The image of the man who stood-up to apparent evils and injustices in society without fear or hesitation became an important characteristic of the concept of *jawānmardī* in twentieth century Iran. The ideal Iranian man had to be courageous like Rustam. Hence, Firdawsī's words, "You must listen to the ways of Rustam," continued to have contemporary relevance.

A related characteristic was the attitude of *gustākhī* (presumptuousness, arrogance) among warriors as they moved around in public or faced challenges.<sup>131</sup> This attitude reflected the warrior's sense of self-confidence in the face of danger.<sup>132</sup> This is strikingly evident in the seven tasks that Rustam undertook on his way to save Kay Kā'ūs from imprisonment.

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Constantly on the verge of danger and death, Rustam never allowed himself to succumb to any crisis. Instead, feasting and sleeping as if there were no concern, he always managed to emerge victorious. Untroubled in the face of danger, though never careless, the warrior not only ruled his own spirit, but the forces around him as well. Isfandiyār proved that he too was a man who could not be debilitated by worry. As his army left for Zābul to challenge Rustam, they came to a fork in the road. The leading camel refused to go any further, and so the command was given to behead the camel. Although Isfandiyār saw the event as a bad omen, he disdained it, refusing to worry: “Evil and good, both come from God / The lips of a man must be smiling.”<sup>133</sup>

Laughter was an expression of the warrior’s self-confidence, a public statement that he was not intimidated. In one of the episodes in the *Shāhnāma*, Rustam and the warriors of Iran were hunting in the fields of Tūrān. When Gurāza, the Iranian watchman, noticed the Tūrānian army approaching them, he immediately warned Rustam. Oblivious to any danger, Rustam laughed at it and merely continued his boasting:

[Gurāza] screamed and yelled out a roar ...  
 When Rustam heard this, he laughed heartily,  
 And told him, “The fortune of victory belongs to us,  
 What do you fear so from the monarch of the Turks?”<sup>134</sup>

Much later, when Isfandiyār sent his son, Bahman, to the mountains of Zābul to bring his message to Rustam, Rustam again used laughter to defy the enemy. Bahman noticed the mountain-like warrior was feasting on an onager. Bahman, fearing that his father, Isfandiyār, would be no match for this incomparable hero, decided to heave a rock at him and so kill him. Rustam refused to be intimidated, thus causing further consternation for Bahman:

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Rustam laughed and didn't lay down his onager,  
 With his heel he gave [the rock] a kick and heaved it away ...  
 The heart of Bahman became distressed from this,  
 When he saw the greatness and vision [of Rustam].<sup>135</sup>

All warriors considered wine (*sharāb*), feasting (*kabāb*) and music (*rabāb*)<sup>136</sup> as part of their noble life and a reflection of their well-being. Hence, next to public combat, the warrior was engaged in feasting and banqueting (*bazm*). Not only was Rustam undefeated in battle, but he had no rival in hospitality and feasting. At one point, he is said to have hosted the entire Iranian army for one month,<sup>137</sup> and in another case, he entertained Gushtāsp for two years.<sup>138</sup> During the rivalry between Isfandiyār and Rustam, the ostentatious display of hospitality and feasting, as well as the exact code of seating arrangement for guests, were calculated techniques to establish the warrior's supremacy and to control his opponent.<sup>139</sup>

Another characteristic of the preeminent champion was his circumspection which appears inconsistent with and even contradictory to his disregard for danger. On the surface, however, the passion for battle and the spirit of perception coexisted harmoniously in the ideal warrior. In fact, throughout the *Shāhnāma*, Rustam is depicted as a man of wisdom: "[Rustam] will be wise (*khiraḍ*), as the great Sām."<sup>140</sup> The warrior's choices were always right because of his foresight and his almost spiritual perception of reality. Hence, both Rustam and Isfandiyār selected the path of danger for their seven heroic tasks, because in addition to characterizing reckless abandon, the warriors were able to discern the tasks as being an essential test and validation of their manliness.<sup>141</sup>

All warriors were supposed to be constantly on the alert. To be caught off guard meant a flaw in manliness. Samak was depicted as an *'ayyār* whose intelligence (*'aql*), knowledge (*dānīsh*), insight (*ra'y*) and strategic skill (*tadbīr*) were beyond description.<sup>142</sup> The warrior could not perform deeds which he would regret later on, as this would be a sign of

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immaturity and a lack of wisdom. Regret and remorse for a deed implied failure, and failure meant defeat. Hence, patient and calculating strategy were essential for the warrior. Samak taught the code of prudence to his colleagues:

It is proper that every exploit be carried out with care, for imprudence leads to regret and whatever a warrior does, he must not become remorseful. A warrior must contemplate the outcome of a feat before he enters it, so that he will be able to completely carry it out.<sup>143</sup>

On the other hand, imprudence frequently led to indiscreet actions which were not compatible with the path of manhood.<sup>144</sup> Qizil Malik's murdering Farrukhrūz was not considered an act of manly revenge, but rather the result of the rashness of youth. As always, the dilemma between recklessness and caution was resolved on the basis of good reputation: "Any deed that is done, must be done for the sake of honor."<sup>145</sup>

In speech too, the warrior had to demonstrate complete circumspection. He should know when to speak and when not to speak, what to speak and what not to speak. He always had a right answer and was never at a loss for words:

The professional *'ayyār* must know the skills of *'ayyārī*, and must be a *jawānmard* ... He must be astute in speech, have ready answers, be gentle in speech, be able to answer everyone and never be speechless. He must ignore what he sees and not point out the faults of others and he must guard his tongue. He must be slow to speak. ... when he is needed, he must not be helpless. ... [Such a man] should be called an *'ayyār* and counted among the *jawānmardān*.<sup>146</sup>

Another important aspect of the champion's preeminence was his sense of personal freedom and rejection of any form of servitude. He is portrayed as a man who never fought as a mercenary nor did he allow the king, or anyone else for that matter, to dominate him. By saying "No!" the *pahlawān* showed that he was a free man (*mard-i āzād*).<sup>147</sup>

As will be demonstrated below, the warrior was duty-bound to serve the king; however, he did so on his own terms. Therefore, the warrior was his own king. "Although [the

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champion] is not a king, he is equal to the king. ... the hero's service to the one in power is never without condition and without calculation, and the reason is the hero's commitment to the common man."<sup>148</sup> Although the altruism of the hero may be questioned, he did not serve in order to seek mercenary favor from the king. The warrior disdained any hint of reward and considered bribes as disgraceful because they smacked of servitude.<sup>149</sup>

The challenge of the Tūrānian warrior, Suhrāb, and the Iranian king's request to Rūstam is an example of the hero's rejection of servitude. When he was informed by Gīw of the new threat to Iran, Rūstam's normal response of laughter was mingled with concern: he "laughed and remained amazed at the news."<sup>150</sup> However, being a free man, Rūstam not only remained self-confident in the face of danger, but willfully delayed his response in order to express this. He was free from the dictates of the king and the threat of a rival:

Even if there be no fortune in this case, the matter is not difficult ...  
 How can [the new warrior from Tūrān] be like Rūstam of Zāl?  
 [How can he be] the lord of the sword and mace? ...  
 There is no need to take this matter so seriously.<sup>151</sup>

After three days of festivity in defiance to the king, Gīw again urged Rūstam to make haste to Iran, because Kay Kā'ūs would be enraged by his delay. Rūstam agreed, though he gave another reassuring word to Gīw to emphasize that nothing could unsettle him: "Do not worry, because no one on earth disturbs us."<sup>152</sup> Though Rūstam rejected the notion of servitude to the king, as will be shown, this tension between service and freedom eventually led to the ultimate crisis of his life. On the whole, the warrior's self-conscious assumption of preeminence created irreconcilable dilemmas for him. How could the invincible warrior face a challenger greater than himself, and what was he to do when faced with inevitable defeat?

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### 3. Man of Mission

The ideal warrior was more than a preeminent warrior, however. Victorious battle in itself was not the sole criterion for manhood and personal identity. He had a definite purpose in doing battle, and it was this purpose which distinguished the warrior from the rest of society.

#### a) In service of kings

The *Shāhnāma* was written in the context of the ancient Iranian notion of the necessity for kingship and justice (i.e., a state of social equilibrium) in order for the nation to exist and to prosper. This is repeatedly expressed by the Perso-Islamic writers of advice literature.<sup>154</sup>

The king needed the army in order to keep himself in power; the army was maintained by taxation from the subjects; the subjects, in turn, needed security and justice in order for them to prosper. Security and justice was established by the king who was considered the shepherd of society. If the power and influence of the king waned, security would diminish and corruption increase. Such a nation could no longer flourish; hence, the indispensability of the army to continually support the king. Therefore, just as society depended on kingship, kingship, in turn depended on the army whose duty it was to maintain the king's power.

In the *Shāhnāma*, the king's army is represented by the heroic warrior, which finds its best expression in Rustam, as he himself stated, "I am Rustam ... On my own, I am an army of vengeance."<sup>154</sup> Consequently, Rustam had to exist for the king to prosper and hence, for the nation of Iran to flourish,

Rustam is therefore constantly portrayed as the defender of Iran's honor and the support (*pusht*) upon whom the heroes and the entire nation depended.<sup>155</sup> When Suhrāb threatened



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the Iranian defense, Kay Kā'ūs called his warriors together to plot a strategy. The answer to their plight was Rostam, the savior and protector of Iran:

None in Iran can endure the power of [Suhrāb];  
 Except you, who can darken his luster (*āb*)?  
 There is not a defender (*līryād-ras*) in this world beside you  
 You are the heart and support (*pusht*) of the warriors of Iran .....  
 In all straits, you are the refuge of Iran,  
 Through you the warriors are exalted.<sup>156</sup>

Rostam was given the epithet, “crown-bestower” (*tāj-bakhsh*), with the duty not only to support the king, but also to ensure he remained on the throne. As Olga Davidson states, “Always a king maker but never a king, Rostam has as his main task in life the continual protection of the current national king.”<sup>157</sup>

In a similar vein, after countless exploits by Samak for the sake of the prince-king, Khurshīdshāh officially instituted a name change for him. Samak had given prosperity to the throne; hence, Khurshīdshāh transferred his royal robe to Samak, and bestowed on him the title, ‘Alam Afrūz (World Illuminator).<sup>158</sup> At one point, Qizil Malik denounced Chīn’s greatness because the nation depended on their “husband,” Samak. Had it not been for him, they would not have been victorious. This, however, was no insult for the Chīn nation. One of its warriors explained the need for a national patron as normal: “This is the custom of the world, there is always a superior over a superior and people constantly trace their pedigree back to one [person], not to a thousand warriors or the king, so much the better that Samak is our support.”<sup>159</sup>

The heroic warrior, therefore, embodied society’s aspirations for a protector. Both kings and society were vulnerable, and the *pahlawān* fulfilled the nation’s need for a patron and protector.<sup>160</sup> Zakeri’s summary of Iranian patronage reflects this universal need:

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From ancient times, mutual responsibility of man against man [*sic*] had formed the base of Iranian social life. One could exercise influence in politics only when one had a reliable group of retainers. All Persian nobles were “patroni” with supporters among the lowest ranks of the city people “plebs”, and in the countryside of the empire.<sup>161</sup>

The warrior considered serving the king as a divine duty. Rustam, as a young man, knew he was destined to be a warrior and acknowledged that God had laid this obligation of battle upon him.<sup>162</sup> To be sure, feasting (*bazm*) was an essential aspect of the warrior’s life, indicating his freedom from the pressures of life. However, battle (*razm*) was what defined him. When Rustam’s father, Zāl, was called upon to advise the rash Kay Kā’ūs, he clearly saw his task as a responsibility before both God and the king of Iran. Irrespective of the foolishness or wisdom of the king’s decisions, the warrior had no choice but to be subservient:

If I make light of this task,  
 And let my heart slip from concern for the king,  
 Neither the Creator of the world will be pleased,  
 Nor the king or the warriors of Iran.  
 I will arise, tell [the king] whatever advice there is;  
 If he accepts my advice, it will mean gain;  
 If he becomes headstrong, the way is still open,  
 Tahamtan (i.e., Rustam) will also join with the army.<sup>163</sup>

Just as Zāl had been divinely destined for such a task, Rustam also had been born “for such a time as this” to save the king from disaster, and more importantly, to establish his own reputation through such service. Zāl’s commission to Rustam reflects this:

It is not well of us to drink, eat and make merry ...  
 For the king of the world is in the throes of dragons ...  
 Indeed it was for such a time as this,  
 That I raised you up by my side.  
 You are well-suited for this task ...  
 By this task your name will be exalted;  
 Save the Shāh from harm.<sup>164</sup>

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Throughout the *Shāhnāma*, Rustam was linked with the charisma of divine rule (*farr-i shāhanshāh*).<sup>165</sup> *Farr* was the “visible emblem of power, sovereignty, and authority,”<sup>166</sup> and hence confirmed the divine rule of a king. Similarly, the great heroes, Zāl and Rustam, had a charisma which confirmed their divine appointment to serve the kings of Iran.<sup>167</sup> The duty of the heroic warrior was not only to be the guardian of *farr* for the king, but when a king lost his *farr* because of an irresponsible act, the warrior was responsible for rescuing Iran from disaster and bestowing the *farr* upon another king. Because Rustam possessed this visible emblem, he maintained an aura of unique responsibility for the nation.

The belt (*kamar*) was the physical symbol of the warrior’s duty to serve.<sup>168</sup> Once his loins were girded (*kamar bastan*), the warrior sensed his indispensability to protect the king and society. Such a vision in life gave meaning to life and created an inner motivation and willingness to endure suffering, as reflected in Rustam’s avowal of devotion to the king:

Now I have girded myself and I am on my way,  
I ask no help but from God.  
I sacrifice my body and life for the Ruler ...  
I will bring [the Iranians] back, I have girded my loins.<sup>169</sup>

It was because of the symbolic significance of the girdle that a warrior tried to ‘de-girdle’ his opponent in battle. The aim was always to ‘de-man’ the enemy by seeking to destroy his name, accuse him of ignoble birth, rip off his beard, strip off his girdle and finally, kill him.

Although the heroic warrior appears to be unconditionally devoted to the king, the relationship between the two was not always an easy one. Normally, the warrior did not consider his freedom to conflict with his commitment to the king. Freedom lay in his opportunity to serve the king. When the warriors heard Khusraw’s oath to avenge his father’s death (Siyāwash) and his challenge to rouse them to battle, they responded: “We are slaves (*banda*), though we are free (*āzād*).<sup>170</sup> Nevertheless, the dilemma between the hero

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and king was real. While on the one hand, the warrior's identity lay in his own notion of freedom from all bondage, at the same time, his destiny was to serve the king.<sup>171</sup> Yet, how could he both rule and serve?

One of Samak's duties had been to restore the king's beloved, Mahparī, back to Khurshīdshāh. His life had one purpose, which was to serve the prince-king, Khurshīdshāh: "My dear life is for your sake." At one point, Khurshīdshāh expressed his discontent with Samak for his apparent tardiness in finding the captive princess. Samak could not tolerate such criticism of his manliness. He again asserted his commitment to the king: "A thousand of my lives I sacrifice for you, God created me for you." However, when Khurshīdshāh suspected that the *'ayyār* had been slothful, he was no longer considered worthy: "Samak is not the one and only warrior in the world."<sup>172</sup> Samak momentarily lost his prestige as a *jawānmard* because, according to the king, he had not fulfilled his divine duty to him.

It was precisely this sense of duty to serve the king that led Rostam to the ultimate dilemma of his life when he confronted Isfandiyār in battle. How could Rostam, as the supreme defender and support of Iran, challenge Isfandiyār, the prince? If Rostam lost the battle, Iran was lost, but if he fought and killed the prince, his own purpose in life was also lost since he would no longer be the warrior who had been destined to protect the throne of Iran.

### b) In service of humankind

Two of the fundamental traits of *jawānmardī*, as depicted in *Samak-i 'Ayyār*, were generosity and loyalty. Ideally, this meant that a *jawānmard* shared his means with a fellow-warrior and defended him at all costs, without any thought of himself. When Khurshīdshāh

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first met the association of *jawānmard*s of Chīn, he tested them to see if they understood *jawānmardī*.

Khurshīdshāh turned to Shaghāl and asked, “Oh *pahlawān*, how many rules (*ḥadd*) does *jawānmardī* have?” Shaghāl responded, “The rules of *jawānmardī* are countless, but there are seventy-two major rules. Of these, two rules have been selected as superior to all, namely, sharing one’s bread and keeping a secret (*rāz*).<sup>173</sup>”

Warriors served together in associations of mutual solidarity and maintained a tacit agreement to the code of *jawānmardī* among themselves. When Khurshīdshāh originally requested the *pahlawāns* of Chīn to assist him in rescuing his brother and finding the princess, they expressed their commitment unconditionally. When a warrior realized he was needed for service, he offered his assistance prior to specific requests: “I will be loyal to you [keep your secret] and sacrifice my life for you ... We sixty young men are your comrades and at [your] service.”<sup>174</sup> To make one’s service to others conditional was to limit the reckless abandon of *jawānmardī*, because it implied hesitation. If the warrior was unable to serve his fellow warrior under certain situations, he was no more a *pahlawān*.

Serving others meant always to give confidence to people. Samak knew that one of the constant duties in life was to give hope to someone in a hopeless state, and therefore he vowed to meet Khurshīdshāh’s desires. It was this code - not to break another’s heart which obligated him to constant service. Much later in the story, Samak pleaded for the life of a young man, Shāhān, whom the feared warrior of the mountains, Ghawr, wanted to kill. The plea was based on what Samak considered to be the greatest code of *jawānmardī*:

You are the head of the *jawānmard*s in this world, and both in the East and West your good name in *jawānmardī* has spread. The preeminent code of *jawānmardī* is to carry out the desires of people.<sup>175</sup>

Ideal manhood meant that the warrior was always indebted to a fellow human being. The *pahlawān* who was not stirred to compassion by a person’s plight was antiheroic: “Whoever

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is not troubled by what someone [requests], is not a man."<sup>176</sup> Such an obligation to serve fellow-warriors meant that the warrior was never really free from the requests of others.<sup>177</sup> On occasion, the champion complained of having constantly to endanger himself on account of the foolish mistakes of others,<sup>178</sup> but as de Fouchécour points out, "the paradox of why everyone has rights but me," is a question that neither the epic or the popular medieval romance deal with.<sup>179</sup> For the warrior, since he staked his reputation on the obligation to serve, he had no choice but to serve others.

A further aspect of service was self-sacrifice. Farrukhrūz, Khurshīdshāh's half brother, was perpetually serving his brother by protecting him and performing public combat in his place. Because Farrukhrūz willingly sacrificed his life by placing it "in the palms of his hands" for the sake of another, his *jawānmardī* was considered to be superior.<sup>180</sup> Acceptance of the risk of death for the sake of others designated a champion as preeminent, for even the greatest threat of all could not deter him. The code of self-sacrifice also meant that the *jawānmard* could never flee from danger and leave others behind. At one point, disaster lay before a group of warriors who had become trapped in a narrow valley. Khurshīdshāh suggested that the four key champions escape and plot a defense for the rest. Samak responded: "In *jawānmardī* it is improper to leave others in danger and we escape. Since they sacrificed their lives for us, we will remain with them as long as we live."<sup>181</sup>

Part of being a self-sacrificing warrior was that the desire for personal gain was considered shameful and a betrayal of one's manhood. Kay Kā'ūs, the embodiment of the self-willed man (*khud-kāma mard*),<sup>182</sup> ventured out on rash missions only to find himself in dire straits. When he was bent on invading Māzandarān, the warriors of Iran compared his ignoble character with the manliness of an earlier Iranian king, Manūchihr:

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If doing this evil is worth it,  
 [Then] Manūchihr would have set out on such a venture  
 With manliness (*mardī*) and good repute (*nām*), with treasures and skill,  
 But he did not lower his ambition (*himmat*) in this way.<sup>184</sup>

Though serving the needs of fellow warriors appeared altruistic, an element of self-serving is noticeable, because through service a warrior was able to express his superiority to a rival. Two warriors in Armānshāh's camp used to perpetually rival each other for championship in public combat. One of them had been captured by Khurshīdshāh's forces, and so his colleague volunteered for the rescue attempt:

We fought a lot to prove our manhood (*mardānagī*), and on New Year's day when champions rival each other, Qaṭrān and I fought against each other and none of us would win. We didn't get along with each other. In public he would say I was the champion, but behind my back he praised himself. Now that he's in chains, I will go and free him with valor (*mardī*), so that I will be superior to him (*dast-i man bālā-yi dast-i ū bāshad*).<sup>184</sup>

The warrior may not have been able to beat his opponent on the battleground, but in the 'maydān of service' he was able to show his superior strength and manliness.

At times, the heroic warrior served the enemy for the purpose of publicly shaming him. When Khurshīdshāh's forces freed Māhāna, the princess of Mā Chīn, from a bandit warrior and delivered her safely back to Armānshāh – a feat which the Mā Chīn warriors had been unable to accomplish – it was accompanied with pomp and ceremony as well as taunting Armānshāh:

What we promised, we have carried out. With valor we rescued Māhāna from ... the hands of Surkh Kāfir and sent her to you without any harm to her. Although you sent a *pahlawān* along with an army to rescue her, nothing can be expected from such warriors.<sup>185</sup>

By carrying out the enemy's desires, Khurshīdshāh and his men publicly declared that they had done what the enemy had been unable to do. It was a display of one's superiority to

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expose the inferiority of the opposing forces. The greatest offense was to 'heap coals of fire' on the enemy's head by actually serving him and outperforming him.

Public service was also a technique to build one's reputation. This is exemplified in the conduct of Ghawr Kūhī, the renowned warrior of Mā Chīn, who had established world reputation for providing refuge and protection:

Ghawr Kūhī is a *jawānmard*, whose reputation is spread throughout the world. He is famous in *jawānmardī* and for providing refuge. If someone would kill Ghawr's son and then the murderer returns for pardon, Ghawr would not avenge him. ... If someone approaches him for protection, he will sacrifice his life and he will not even tell his own family what he has done.<sup>186</sup>

When the king of Mā Chīn heard that Ghawr had provided protection for Samak, Mā Chīn's worst enemy, he was enraged and ordered Ghawr to hand over Samak. For Ghawr,

Armānshāh's request was non-negotiable because of his prestige and renown as a *jawānmard*. Yet he had a dilemma. On the one hand, Ghawr offered protection to anyone who took refuge with him, and hence, he could not betray such a person, for betrayal violated the essence of *jawānmardī*.<sup>187</sup> However, in this case, he had committed an act of treason by harboring the king's enemy. Nevertheless, irrespective of his life, wealth and position, Ghawr refused to submit to the king and allow his reputation to be soiled, even to the point that he was willing to replenish the losses that Samak had brought upon

Armānshāh's rule and kill Samak once he had completed his duty:

My reputation of offering protection must remain ... and the king obviously does not desire the loss of my reputation. Once I have performed my duty and safely transferred them back to [their home] ..., then I will be Samak's worst enemy for the sake of the king.<sup>188</sup>

Ghawr's attitude reflects the warrior's obsession with good reputation and the implicit assumption that this obsession was normal. Ghawr's service for others thus became self-serving, for his concern was not so much for the man he sheltered, but for his own good



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name. In effect, the refugee, even a rival or an enemy, was a means for the warrior to enhance his own reputation.

As mentioned above, “keeping the secret” of another warrior, that is loyalty to him, was one of the two fundamental codes of *jawānmardī*. As stated, a hero was never supposed to betray a fellow champion even when faced with the threat of torture and death. At one point Samak, was badly injured and went in hiding. When a doctor was located, Samak demanded the doctor to treat him without revealing his hiding place: “Oh Zarand, be a *jawānmard*, and keep my secret (*sirr*) as long as you’re alive ... this is supreme among the *jawānmardān*.”<sup>189</sup> The request to act with *jawānmardī* obligated a warrior, for if he did not perform accordingly, it implied he was a coward (*nā-jawānmard*), which was the greatest of insults. Hence, the ideal of *jawānmardī*-service was used as a manipulative tool to compel someone to offer assistance. In this case, Zarand obliged, and was rewarded with some gold that Samak had stolen. When Zarand was eventually caught, he refused to reveal anything, even under severe torture. He thus proved himself to be the upholder of the code of *jawānmardī*. He said to himself:

Be a man and keep yourself despite all this torture. Don’t reveal the secret (*rāz*) for that is unmanly (*nā-mardī*) ... It is better to die from torture, than to be a betrayer. Manliness (*mardī*) means to sacrifice one’s life, especially for the manliness of Samak.”<sup>190</sup>

Despite the fact that the code of loyalty was an important ethical value among warriors, the shifting of loyalties and allegiances was also common practice. Many young warriors of Mā Chīn, who heard of Samak and his great exploits, switched sides and became “followers” or “fans” (*shādī khurdagān*) of Samak, celebrating his championship.<sup>191</sup> Thus lesser heroes vicariously experienced the greatness to which they aspired.

#### 4. Man of Truth

The God of existence and the God of truth  
Does not accept guile (*kazhī*) and falsehood (*kāstī*) from you.<sup>192</sup>

One of the fundamental doctrines of the ancient Iranians was the dualistic battle between Truth and Falsehood. Zoroaster had taught that all who opposed God were “people of the lie,” hence, there was no compromise between the two principles. Though by the Sāsānid period, Zoroastrianism had evolved extensively, the enemy was still considered “the Lie,” and they had to be defeated.<sup>193</sup> The Avesta Scriptures considered truthfulness as the path to blessing and good reputation.<sup>194</sup> The heroic warrior who fought the enemy was therefore fighting against “the Lie” and he himself was on the side of Truth.

Hence, the ethic to maintain an image of truthfulness was a distinguishing code of *jawānmardī*. Mention has been made of Kay Kā’ūs’ threefold summary of *jawānmardī*: do as you say, tell the truth, and endure hardship.<sup>195</sup> In his analysis of *Qābūs Nāma*, de Fouchécour concludes, “One cannot be a *jawānmard* if one does not give what one has, and if one does not keep one’s word.”<sup>196</sup> Indeed, truth-telling, even at the risk of danger, was a standard characteristic of the heroic warriors: “Warriors (*pahlawānān*) do not lie.”<sup>197</sup> It was extolled as the best virtue, “There is nothing better than speaking the truth.”<sup>198</sup> Rustam’s advice to the Iranian chiefs was to abide by truthfulness and reject lying: “Manliness (*mardumī*) and truthfulness (*rāstī*) are our duty / Through guile (*kazhī*) comes decline (*kāstī*).”<sup>199</sup> The warrior, Gūdarz extolled Rustam as the warrior of battle and intelligence, and furthermore, for his truthfulness: “The crown and throne radiate as a result of you / No word you speak is ever a lie.”<sup>200</sup> This statement can be interpreted in two ways: Rustam always spoke the truth, or whatever he spoke was considered as truth. Rustam also demanded truthfulness from others. In the fifth task on his way to free Kay Kā’ūs, Rustam

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requested Ulād's assistance in further battles after he had subdued him. Rustam expected complete truthfulness from Ulād and promised him the throne of Māzandarān as a reward, but threatened him with dire consequences if he dealt deceptively:

Rustam told him, "If you tell the truth,  
And if I find no guile (*kazhī*) in you, from head to toe ...  
[But] if you use guile.  
A river of blood will flow from your brain through your eyes."<sup>201</sup>

After Ulād guided Rustam to this victory, he pleaded with Rustam to keep his word, since he had upheld his end of the bargain. Now Rustam was expected to do the same and he assured Ulād that regardless of what happened, he would not go back on his word.<sup>202</sup>

Samak was characterized as an *'ayyār* who never lied and who did not tolerate others lying to him.<sup>203</sup> Early in the romance, Samak and his colleagues had kidnapped the princess, Mahparī, much to the consternation of king of Chīn who reprimanded the *jawānmardān* because their dishonorable deed had ruined his name. Samak knew that truthfulness was an expression of courage and added to his good reputation. He stated, "Oh king, *jawānmardān* do not lie, even if their head is at stake. We did this act."<sup>204</sup>

The word of the warrior was seen as final: "The word of warriors is one, there is no need for a promise or covenant."<sup>205</sup> This was because his reputation was at stake by the words he uttered. Regardless of its importance, if a warrior had given his word, he had to fulfill it even if it meant forgoing a more serious request. The underlying concern was one's honor, as Samak stated, "I cannot let my word become a lie."<sup>206</sup>

Just as truthfulness was identified with good reputation, lying and guile were associated with ignoble character. One born illegitimately could do nothing but lie, because he had been conceived in deceit and shame.<sup>207</sup> Conversely, a *jawānmard* who considered himself to be of noble birth could not, and would not, lie: "Lying is improper for *jawānmardān*."<sup>208</sup>

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Speaking falsehood was also seen as cowardly, because it was a calculated response to a predicament. Furthermore, guile meant to use unfair and deceptive means to battle an enemy, and thus it compromised one's good name. Rustam expressed his disgust with the use of guile when Kay Kā'ūs had been taken captive by the king of Hāmāwarān. The enemy king had used the 'bait of hospitality' to lure Kay Kā'ūs to his domain and then, after a week of celebration, had captured him. Even the insidious Sūdāba (wife of Kay Kā'ūs and daughter of the king of Hāmāwarān), was outraged at the unmanly action of her father.<sup>209</sup> Rustam threatened the king because he had used unmanly means to capture Kay Kā'ūs. The noble combatant was a *jawānmard* who battled fairly and squarely, while a cowardly warrior used ambush and guile:

It is not manly (*mardī*) to scheme (*chāra justan*) in battle,  
This is not the custom of the brave warrior.  
In battle one never sets out an ambush,  
Even if one's heart is filled with revenge.<sup>210</sup>

It is remarkable how much warriors were concerned whether a feat was performed by manliness or by deceit. They considered face to face combat as manly and fair, while the schemes of *'ayyārī* were deceptive and therefore, despised. Hence, one way to overcome the shame of defeat was to accuse the victor of having used trickery in his tactics. An enemy warrior, Qatrān, had been captured by Samak through cunning. When Qatrān escaped, he challenged the Khurshīdshāh army to public combat because ...

it would have been manly (*mardī*) if you could have taken me in public combat, and not by scheming (*makr*) and trickery (*hīlat*) when I am drunk and asleep. Any helpless woman can chain a sleeping and drunk champion. Come and show who you are.<sup>211</sup>

Just as the warrior was concerned that he maintain an image of truthfulness, he also needed to maintain an image of fair battle. The Iranian warrior's assertion that his own exploits

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were valiant and manly and that the enemy's were fraudulent and deceptive highlights that guile was considered cowardly:

It is on the battleground that manliness is displayed and who is the warrior (*mard*) and who is the coward (*nā-mard*), who is the husband and who the woman... Talk of manliness (*mardī*) is one thing, talk of trickery (*hīlat*) and fraud (*dastān*) is another."<sup>212</sup>

However, it was precisely because trickery and fraud were considered cowardly that the distinction between guile and honesty became blurred. The 'honest' *pahlawān* still used deception when necessary, even though honesty was the accepted code of *jawānmardī*.<sup>213</sup> Cunning and trickery were essential elements of an *'ayyār*, and Samak was just such a man whose entire life was characterized by these elements, which were considered unmanly in other contexts. Yet, he was considered a heroic champion, even though he was not a man of physical strength or public combat. His heroism lay in the use of guile and ruse.<sup>214</sup>

In fact, warriors strongly defended the use of ruse and cunning. To be sure, deception was unmanly, but it was always the enemy who was depicted as using it, and any strategy of imposture or the use of guile on one's own side was honorable and fully justified. Whether public combatant or *'ayyār*, one had to be a schemer (*chāra-gar*) or trickster (*hīla-gar*) and be able to use cunning and deception (*nairang*). Rustam could be a man of fair battle, yet also full of tricks (*dil pur az kīmyā*).<sup>215</sup> As Nadūshan's defense of 'acceptable' deceit reveals, consistency was not a characteristic of *jawānmardī*.

As long as deceit (*nairang*) did not compromise the principles of battle and manliness (*mardānagī*), it was not a flaw in the *pahlawān* ... Not only are fraud (*alsūn*) and stratagem (*rang*) not shameful, but they are considered positive virtues. Lying in itself is no flaw in battle, for battle is to a certain extent mixed with political maneuvering.<sup>216</sup>

While the use of deception and dishonesty among warriors was theoretically associated with those of ignoble stock (*bad gawhar*), and truthfulness and uprightness were inherent characteristics of those of noble stock (*nīk gawhar*), in reality, deception and dishonesty were

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justifiable means to a nobler end. As such, the code of speaking the truth, “Warriors do not lie,” was undermined by advocating trickery and deception. Hence, one may conclude that the conventional code of honesty was considered too punctilious for the higher cause of winning. Winning for the sake of good reputation, then, not truth, was the critical virtue of *jawānmardī*. In order not to lose, the hero was able to justify anything:

The job of epic heroes is to win. He does not indulge in scruples, mainly because they are irrelevant here. This is not to say that he is amoral, but only that he is required by epic convention to win, and win by whatever means necessary.<sup>217</sup>

However, as seen in Samak’s offense at being dubbed a sorcerer by his patron-king because his exploits were so successful,<sup>218</sup> and Rustam’s avowal of his honesty, heroes did “indulge in scruples.” The tension between lying and truthfulness was real. Being considered a liar was an attack on the very essence of being a champion and besmirched his good reputation. The author of *Qābūs Nāma* portrays this tension in the anecdote where a *jawānmard* was caught between the principle of always telling the truth and the obligation of always having to serve someone in need – which Kay Kā’ūs considers to be the two essential characteristics of *jawānmardī*. In the anecdote, a group of *‘ayyārān* was approached by a messenger from a rival group. Rather than the challenge of public battle to prove who was superior, the contest was to answer a few questions: What is *jawānmardī*, what is *nā-jawānmardī*, and what is the solution to the following hypothetical situation:

An *‘ayyār* is sitting on the side of the road and a man runs by. Several minutes later another man with a sword runs by with the intent to kill the first man. He asks the seated *‘ayyār* whether a certain man has passed by. How should the *‘ayyār* answer? If he says, “No,” it means he would lie and if he says, “Yes,” it means he would betray someone. Neither answers are worthy of the profession of *‘ayyārī*.<sup>219</sup>

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To find a noble and honorable way out of this dilemma was not merely to indulge in scruples, even for the reckless warrior. Being truthful meant following the code of *jawānmardī*, as demonstrated by the answer given by one of the *'ayyārān*:

The answer of that *'ayyār* is this: He should get up from where he was sitting, move a few steps further down, sit down and say, "As long as I have been sitting here, I haven't seen anyone pass by." In this way he spoke the truth.<sup>220</sup>

This answer was considered the noble response to the dilemma, and it was indeed laudable to be able to reconcile the two principles – to tell the truth and to seek the welfare of the other.<sup>221</sup> As will be shown later, for Rustam, however, one of the crises toward the end of his long career was the accusation that he was a liar and a man who practiced guile (*kazhī*).

### C. The Defeat of the Heroic Warrior

While a *jawānmard* was confident of his supremacy, the various polarities of *jawānmardī* – battle and circumspection, service and freedom, magnanimity and revenge, honesty and deception – repeatedly created dilemmas for him. Should he fight or refrain from battle? How could he remain free and yet serve the king? Could a *jawānmard* use guile and yet retain his manliness? At what cost should he maintain his good name, and how could he live with defeat? These conflicts are played out in the rivalry between Samak and Rūz Afzūn, and most profoundly in Rustam's encounters with Suhrāb and Isfandiyār.

#### 1. Samak and Rūz Afzūn

Although the life of the *'ayyār* champion, as reflected in *Samak-i 'Ayyār*, did not entail the intense struggles and tragedy of the epic hero, nevertheless, his heroism was not without flaws. Samak and Rūz Afzūn became embroiled in claims and counter-claims which were common among warriors. Such status manipulation by a champion was an effort to establish

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his own superior rank. Thus, it was normal for warriors to mock the feats of co-warriors, and the only way to be free of such taunts was actually to take up a greater challenge. Ironically, the quest to win and maintain a good name led warriors to perform deeds that would be considered unmanly in other situations. On occasion, Samak himself appeared to act in an unmanly fashion, and certainly not all the exploits of his co-warrior and rival, Rūz Afzūn, were in the spirit of *jawānmardī*. Indeed, at times, these two *jawānmards* acted in strange and antiheroic ways.

Rūz Afzūn was the daughter of Kānūn, one of the prominent warriors of Mā Chīn. Kānūn was an arch rival of Samak's and sought to challenge his invincibility. Kānūn's two sons, Bihzād and Razmyār, also heroic warriors, were both captured when Samak posed as an attractive girl, thereby shattering their image of chastity, another important element of the code of *jawānmardī*.<sup>222</sup> The relationship between Samak and Rūz Afzūn began when Samak tried to free some of Khurshīdshāh's warriors who were being held captive in Kānūn's quarters. Samak entered Kānūn's house as a musician, but he was soon discovered. Kānūn planned to take him to Armānshāh, the ruler of Mā Chīn, and publicly torture him to death. Rūz Afzūn, who had been a longtime secret admirer of Samak, craftily freed Samak from her father and delivered him from what would have been his downfall.

Khurshīdshāh then challenged Samak to capture the wife and daughter of Armānshāh, which Samak did with his customary cunning. Unknown to Samak, Rūz Afzūn secretly assisted him in accomplishing this feat. When Kānūn found out that Armānshāh's wife and daughter were captured, he was terrified lest Armānshāh discover it. He knew he had to capture Samak immediately. Meanwhile Samak made his way back to Kānūn's quarters where Khurshīdshāh's men were still being held captive. Rūz Afzūn again observed



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Samak's secret mission in her own father's house and assisted him. She suddenly noticed her brother, Bihzād, and knew that he would discover Samak and kill him. Her zeal to win public acclaim as a *jawānmard* overcame all her other loyalties and codes of conduct:

Fearing Samak's death, she said to herself, "Oh soul, I will act with *jawānmardī* so that as long as the world stands, they will talk about me and I will gain a good name from this. Though it is wrong and not what warriors do (*kār-i mardān nīst*)."<sup>223</sup>

Having said this, she killed her brother on the spot. In so doing, she sacrificed what would normally have been considered manly and noble on the altar of her zeal for public acclaim and celebrity. Samak, who noticed Rūz Afzūn's feat (though he didn't know who she was at the time), admired her act of *jawānmardī*. Although she was afraid to reveal herself, lest she be accused of an unmanly act, Samak began to suspect that this mysterious person was the same one who had helped him in his previous escape. Her acts of *jawānmardī* eternally indebted Samak to her: "If I knew who this person was, I would gird my waist to serve 'him' as long as I live."<sup>224</sup>

When Rūz Afzūn was finally exposed, her explanation was simple: Samak was the unequalled warrior and hence, she had decided to throw her support to him. She was in pursuit of a perfect name (*nāmī-yi tamām*),<sup>225</sup> by which she rationalized her 'unmanly act of *jawānmardī*.' Samak accepted her as his sister and Kānūn was eventually captured and brought to Khurshīdshāh. Samak introduced Rūz Afzūn as the warrior who had performed heroic deeds of *jawānmardī* for their sake. The enemy warrior, Kānūn (her father), stood before Khurshīdshāh, when suddenly Rūz Afzūn, in the presence of all, attacked him and killed him. So, for the second time, she rejected social convention for what was apparently a 'nobler' cause of *jawānmardī*. This was her explanation:

Oh most magnanimous king, ... you did not order me to kill my father because you thought that I would become angry at you. I killed him to make it clear to all that I am

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a servant of [Khurshīdshāh]. In the same way, I will kill anyone who is an enemy of the king. [I did this] so that the king will not say that I did evil and that the warriors will not consider me of ignoble stock.<sup>226</sup>

While Armānshāh's men accused Rūz Afzūn for her disgraceful deed, she justified it because her father and brother had acted against the code of *jawānmardī*, and hence, it was lawful to kill them. Her code was to gain world renown: "It is better to gain reputation in the world than to have a bad name."<sup>227</sup> The public acclaim of Rūz Afzūn's extraordinary feats of *jawānmardī* by Khurshīdshāh's warriors did not satisfy her. Her addiction to further renown stimulated her to dare to capture Armānshāh's signet ring. For the first time, Samak became upset at her public assertion and boast of *'ayyārī*: "It is not proper to claim feats of *'ayyārī*. First do them and then speak of them."<sup>228</sup> Pretension to greatness and verbal boasting of *jawānmardī* were juxtaposed with actual deeds of greatness. The antihero made verbal claims of supremacy, while the true hero simply demonstrated his preeminence by performing deeds. In *jawānmardī* the accomplished deed was essential, not the spoken word; hence the true *jawānmard* was always supposed to act before he spoke.<sup>229</sup>

This was the beginning of the rivalry between Samak and Rūz Afzūn. As a rule, warriors could not tolerate any form of criticism, for any rebuke or public criticism implied failure, which was a blow to a warrior's sense of superiority. However, rather than take offense, Rūz Afzūn intensified her assertion of greatness. In fact, if it hadn't been for the fact that she, her brothers and father (whom she had just killed), had sworn never to harm the Mā Chīn king, she stated that she would go and get Armānshāh's head now.<sup>230</sup>

Nevertheless, using the methods of *'ayyārī*, she successfully stole her former king's signet ring and belt. Meanwhile Samak followed Rūz Afzūn, as he said, to ensure that she did not run into difficulties, though certainly he feared that she might outperform him. Even though

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he praised her every move, when she was asleep he took the ring and belt from her sack and replaced it with a sheep's head. Samak immediately returned to Khurshīdshāh's palace and related her feats to everyone, as well as his trick. Unaware of Samak's craftiness, she was encouraged to display her manly feat and so proudly opened her sack. When the sheep's head fell out, all the warriors laughed. Yet, rather than blame Samak, Rūz Afzūn was upset at her own negligence, because she had allowed someone to steal from her while she was asleep. It revealed a flaw in her skills of *'ayyārī* and demonstrated Samak's superiority. She could only acknowledge Samak as the one unrivaled hero in the world for, "he performed a feat that no one in the world has done."<sup>231</sup>

Shortly after, when Armānshāh and his forces challenged Khurshīdshāh's men to public combat, Rūz Afzūn requested that she be allowed to display her loot from Armānshāh, "so that they will know what I have done and that I could have killed him." In so doing she shamed Armānshāh and his army and boosted her own status. She then battled a total of 150 warriors until finally the great warrior, Dawand, challenged her. Khurshīdshāh was worried that she could not handle him, and urged Samak to call her back. When Rūz Afzūn heard this, she was severely offended by their questioning her might: "Oh champion, I will withdraw, but if you're a real warrior, you challenge him." Suddenly Samak found himself in a dilemma. As an *'ayyār* he had never performed public combat, but he was now forced to challenge Dawand. In reality, Rūz Afzūn had condemned him to death by daring him to a feat he could not perform. Though he didn't have experience with public combat, he realized that, "If I withdraw, my reputation will be ruined forever and I will have acted in an unmanly way (*nā-mardī*)."<sup>232</sup> For the sake of his reputation, Samak had no choice but to enter the battlefield.

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Samak's weak-looking body was an insult to the proud Dawand. However, Samak's strategy was to bypass all the rituals of armored battle and immediately challenge him with hand-to-hand combat, which was the ultimate test of strength. As they dismounted, Samak secretly drew his dagger from behind his girdle and killed Dawand. In order to defend his claim of preeminence, he resorted to deception on the battleground where 'fair-play' was the accepted code of conduct. Like Rustam, when faced with defeat, he rewrote the rules in order to win.

After many feats of *'ayyārī* by Samak and Rūz Afzūn, both were introduced to Marzbānshāh, the king of Ḥalab and the father of Khurshīdshāh. The aged king praised Samak for his exploits and sought advice on how to continue the battle against Armānshāh. Samak rejected the suggestion of any peace efforts and volunteered to penetrate Armānshāh's forces. Samak prided himself in his ability to scheme and trickery:

A day doesn't pass by when I do not make a scheme or plan some trick or make a hundred stratagems. Through constant planning and thinking, whatever I hear and see in others, I add that to my capital of tricks and schemes.<sup>233</sup>

After Samak's boast of his ability to scheme and plot tricks - which seems to contradict his earlier rebuke to Rūz Afzūn to act before speaking - Rūz Afzūn volunteered to join him. At this point, he suddenly turned against her, the female *pahlawān* who had valiantly saved his life on several occasions and whom he had protected numerous times. His pledge of allegiance and indebtedness to her had limitations when he feared she might rival him:

Samak roared at her, "Go and sit with the women. As soon as I plan some exploit, why do you say you'll come with me? Aren't all of these men *'ayyārān*? All of them, like you, want to go, but out of respect, they keep quiet, because they know that not everyone is able to do every kind of task. Do you know all the tasks that you should perform?"<sup>234</sup>

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There is a note of embarrassment in the text, as the narrator seeks to justify Samak's insult to Rūz Afzūn. Samak did this because of his own sense of grandeur before the king, Marzbānshāh. He did not want the king to think that he performed his feats in partnership, for that would mean he was not the unrivaled *'ayyār*. Samak disgraced her because she was a female *'ayyār*, and a threat to his prestigious position as the incomparable warrior.

In this rivalry, Rūz Afzūn appears to come out as the superior warrior. Though she had been publicly disgraced by Samak, she did not become embittered, but rather continued to serve him faithfully. Nor did she talk about his act of unmanliness to others, even though she was distressed by his treatment of her:

Was I not valiant in every task related to him? Even though he saved me several times from imprisonment, several times I saved him from death. Why this disgrace? ... Although he is a *pahlawān*, a world-renowned *'ayyār* and a man of skill, I am also somebody.<sup>235</sup>

Rūz Afzūn was in a state of inner turmoil, because the *'ayyār* whom she highly respected had treated her disgracefully, which was not worthy of a *jawānmard*. In response to his defamiation, she set out to perform another feat of *jawānmardī*. In the end, Samak acknowledged her greatness, praised her profusely and apologized for his unworthy deed:

Many praises to you. No other professional *'ayyār* is able to perform the exploits that you have performed. You have outstripped me in manliness (*mardī*). A 1000 *'ayyārān* like me should become your disciples. It is not proper to exhibit duplicity in the path of *jawānmardī* ... I knew that what I said was improper, but I know that you have outstripped me.<sup>236</sup>

Such confession of failure and inferiority by a champion was rare. Rūz Afzūn responded with magnanimity, acknowledging him as a master and elder brother. Whether Samak's public disgrace of his colleague was his only unworthy deed of *jawānmardī*, as some have said, is debatable.<sup>237</sup> However, Samak was not devoid of arrogance. His apology came only when he realized she had outstripped him. Similarly, Rūz Afzūn's 'heroic acts' – murdering

her brother to protect Samak and then publicly killing her father to demonstrate her loyalty to Khurshīdshāh – were hardly noble. In fact, she herself acknowledged that her acts were unmanly. The quest for greatness often went too far in the lives of warriors. When the urge to further one's reputation overtook a warrior, his circumspection became blurred and he invariably ended up with a damaged reputation.

## 2. Rustam and Suhrāb

In the *Shāhnāma*, two episodes in particular exemplify how the code of *jawānmardī* conflicted with other values. The first is the single combat of Rustam and Suhrāb during the reign of Kay Kā'ūs, and the second is the combat of Rustam and Isfandiyār during Gushtāsp's reign. In both, Rustam, the undefeated *jawānmard*, was confronted with defeat and forced to find a solution to the crisis lest he lose his manliness and reputation. Rustam committed two ignoble acts in order to avoid shame and defeat. In the first episode, he killed his son, the person who normally continues the name of the father after his death.<sup>238</sup> Rustam thus destroyed his own immortal reputation.

Throughout his career, Rustam is presented both as a man of battle and of circumspection. For the most part, these two qualities served him well. As a man of perception he was able to apprehend danger and also provide an analysis of the enemy's strength. Hence, intelligence made him a superior warrior. However, when he was confronted with the youthful *pahlawān*, Suhrāb, his awareness of possible defeat led him to consider withdrawal from the contest and eventually to resort to deception.

At the outset of this episode, it is Suhrāb who is portrayed as the reckless warrior, attacking the Iranian troops like a raging elephant and sending the Iranian army to flight.<sup>239</sup> Rustam, now the mature warrior, lamented the sorrows and burdens of battle.<sup>240</sup> The one

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whose life consisted of battle now found the demand of being the savior and patron of his nation a burden. This time it was the youthful warrior, Suhrāb, eager to enter the combat, who insulted Rustam. Suhrāb thus asserted his championship over the older, more celebrated warrior: "There is no place for you on the battleground / You are not more than a list for me."<sup>241</sup>

While Rustam articulated his self-confidence and superiority, there was a strange foreboding in his words. Here was one great warrior with whom Rustam did not relish doing battle, for he realized his opponent was unique in valor. For the first time, the renowned champion hesitated and tried to calm down his opponent:

He spoke to [Suhrāb], "Gentle, oh *jawānmard*, gentle ...  
 Many an army I have crushed on the earth ...  
 By manliness (*mardī*) the world is under my control ...  
 I do not want to take your life,  
 I do not know of a rival to you in Iran."<sup>242</sup>

After the first day of conflict, Rustam was wearied, while Suhrāb, filled with the taste of victory, was keen to continue the next day. Suhrāb's boast of exploits is contrasted with Rustam's dread of possible defeat. On the one hand, to withdraw from battle was unthinkable; on the other, to continue in battle meant the probable loss of his *jawānmardī* and reputation before two watching armies, which also was unthinkable:

Today I've lost hope in my manliness (*mardī*),  
 From the hand of one not experienced in battle,  
 Not a hero, not renowned among the great.  
 I am weary of the days of life,  
 Both armies are watching this battle.<sup>243</sup>

Rustam's self-confidence and fame of *pahlawānī* was waning and consequently, the purpose of his existence was put in question. Suffering public defeat from one less experienced was a curse which he, as the world champion (*jahān-pahlawān*), could not endure. His "glass of

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life” could break, and thus his reason for living would be over. Rustam had no alternative except to resort to an unmanly scheme.

Though Rustam always considered himself a truthful man, in his fight with Suhrāb, he committed several acts of deception.<sup>244</sup> Rustam’s refusal to reveal his identity to his opponent was a rejection of the standard code of combat among warriors. This is already envisioned in his nocturnal ambush on Zhinda Razm, a relative who was accompanying Suhrāb as one of his key warriors. When Zhinda Razm noticed a mighty warrior in the dark but couldn’t recognize him, he demanded his identity. Rustam refused to reveal himself and killed him with a single blow.<sup>245</sup> Earlier in the *Shāhnāma*, Rustam had condemned ambush as unmanly, and the Tūrānians were repeatedly represented as cowardly because of their deceptive night-attacks. Davidson remarks, “Strangely enough, throughout the [*Shāhnāma*] this type of military operation is avoided by the Iranians as unmanly and practiced by the Tūrānians, thus becoming an action to be censured.”<sup>246</sup> Why did Rustam, the epitome of *jawānmardī*, launch such an ambush on Zhinda Razm? Rustam adhered to the code of conduct of *jawānmardī*, which included ‘fair play’ in battle, yet at the same time he was a law unto himself. Whatever he did was right because he was Rustam.

The single combat between Suhrāb and Rustam turned out to be a battle of wits. Suhrāb, suspecting the opponent was his father, repeatedly demanded his identity. Rustam, however, lied and adamantly denied his name.<sup>247</sup> Why did he hide his identity from Suhrāb, while in previous combats with other opponents, he demanded their identity and shouted out his name with pride? Was Rustam’s refusal to reveal himself the result of a lack of courage, or was it a tactic of battle? Had either known the other’s identity, they would not have engaged in battle at all, and hence, there would have been no opportunity to demonstrate one’s



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superiority. Furthermore, Suhrāb's plan to set Rustam on the throne of Iran and to return to rule Tūrān himself, would mean the co-existence of two world champions, which as Davidson has said, "would have upset the entire order of things."<sup>248</sup> And, as already mentioned, Rustam was a slave to none; hence, he established the rules as he went along.

On the second day of battle, Suhrāb greeted Rustam with unusual friendliness and suggested they leave the battle and relax.<sup>249</sup> This time, Rustam considered Suhrāb's attempts at conciliation a deception, which he rejected. He emphasized his truthfulness: "I will not be deceived by listening to this ... I am not one for words of deception (*gultār-i zarq*) and feigning (*majāz*)."<sup>250</sup>

The battle on the second day led to hand-to-hand combat. Previously, Rustam had shamed and defeated many opponents with his powerful hands, but now, when he seized Suhrāb's waist, his opponent did not even flinch. On the other hand, Suhrāb delivered such a severe blow to Rustam, that he winced in pain. Now Suhrāb could laugh because the renowned warrior had grimaced.<sup>251</sup> Suhrāb soon gained the upper hand, seizing Rustam's belt and throwing him to the ground. When Suhrāb drew his sword for the kill, Rustam saw public death was imminent. In desperation, he declared that according to Iranian custom, a warrior could only kill his opponent after he had felled him twice. Though Rustam previously condemned the use of scheming (*chāra*) as cowardly and shameful, he had no hesitation to use deception himself. Since it was the only way to escape disgrace and death, it was acceptable for him to resort to guile. It seems Firdawsī was aware of the inherent inconsistency of Rustam's excuse, and so he provides an explanation: "Through this scheme (*chāra*) he tried to free himself / from being killed by the claw of that dragon."<sup>252</sup>

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On the basis of the code of magnanimity, Suhrāb accepted the words of the elder warrior and released him. The ethical pattern in the *Shāhnāma* thus takes shape: the younger, idealistic warrior sacrifices his life for the sake of the reputation of the older hero.

The young brave listened to the words of the elder [warrior],  
 Words which were acceptable to him because  
 First, he was brave, secondly, he respect [the elder warrior],  
 Thirdly, because of his *jawānmardī*, without a doubt.<sup>253</sup>

Hūmān, Suhrāb's advisor, severely rebuked him for falling victim to his pride and naive sense of *jawānmardī*. This poses a critical question: Who is the true *jawānmard*? The one who resorts to deception or the one who fights fairly? Suhrāb was a hero, but he lacked the necessary perception required of a *jawānmard*. This is seen as a 'flaw' which cost him his life. Rustam, meanwhile, escaped from the jaws of death and his supernatural strength was restored to him by the mythical Sīmurgh. The Sīmurgh was an enigmatic source of supernatural power, who appeared to save Rustam from death and bestow the *farr* on him to defeat his enemy when necessary.<sup>254</sup> Rustam was thus ready for the third day of battle. After felling Suhrāb, Rustam knew that his opponent would rise again, and so defying the same 'Iranian law' which he had used to deceive Suhrāb, he drew his sword and put an end to his opponent's life.

The battle of who was the true *jawānmard* ended in irony. Fair play in battle was a quality of *jawānmardī*, which Suhrāb demonstrated with magnanimity, thus proving he was a true champion. Yet, as he himself realized, he was defeated and died in disgrace before a watching crowd: "All those peers of mine will mock this [defeat] / that a neck like mine has hit the dust!"<sup>255</sup> On the other hand, Rustam, who boasted of fairness and truthfulness, proved himself to be the master of deception. Yet, he emerged as the victor. The "*pahlawān* beyond reproach"<sup>256</sup> saved himself from an unmanly death by resorting to an unmanly act of

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deception. Firdawsī's solution to this dilemma is to resort to fate. Rather than blaming his opponent for his unmanly act of deception (something which Isfāndiyār did later on), Suhrāb blamed himself for not being passionate enough and actually tried to comfort his father.

Then, in an attempt to accept his defeat, he blamed it on the tyranny of fate: "Such is decreed by the stars / that I be slain by the hands of my father."<sup>257</sup> Ironically, while the invincible warrior could scheme his way out of impending death at the hand of his enemy, there was no escaping fate. It was the 'ultimate warrior' to whom even the greatest warriors were forced to succumb.

As a consequence, the 'blame-game' began. No one would take responsibility for this unmanly act, in particular the killer himself. Assuming responsibility, at this point, implied admission of failure, which was impossible for the *pahlawān*. Rustam first accused Hūmān of Tūrān for concealing his identity to Suhrāb. Hūmān, in turn, blamed the Iranian Hujjīr, who had guarded the border against the invading Suhrāb and had been the first one to conceal Rustam's identity from Suhrāb. It was only by resorting to fate yet again, that the Iranian chiefs were able to control Rustam.<sup>258</sup>

Though fully aware of his own superiority, Rustam considered his manliness 'childishness' (*kūdakī*) in comparison to Suhrāb's *jawānmardī*. So disgusted was Rustam that he determined to cut off his own hands, which had been the emblem of manhood throughout his life. Now they were a mark of disgrace and shame:

Though in this world under heaven, there is none like me,  
 Before him [Suhrāb], my manliness (*mardī*) was childish (*kūdakī*);  
 Cutting off my two hands should be my reward,  
 God forbid that I do anything but mourn in the dust.<sup>259</sup>

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Suhrāb's *jawānmardī* became the cause of his own defeat. He had been trapped by a notion of manliness – fair play in battle – that the more experienced warrior exploited for his own gain. This irony is evident in Rustam's praise for the heroism of Suhrāb:

No more will this world see a cavalier like you,  
Such valor (*mardī*) and heroism at the time of battle;  
Alas for all your valor (*mardī*) and judgment (*ra'y*)!<sup>260</sup>

### 3. Rustam and Isfandiyār

Regarded as the greatest of Iranian stories, Rustam's conflict with Isfandiyār is the climax of the history of the Kayānid dynasty. With the death of Isfandiyār, the Kayānid kings slip into decline, and the greatest hero of the *Shāhnāma* begins his own demise. The battle between Rustam and Isfandiyār reflects many of the polarities of *jawānmardī*: the tension between revenge and magnanimity, service and freedom, truth and deception. Although Rustam defeats Isfandiyār, Rustam too is defeated, for his good name is ruined and thus his life must come to an end.

Isfandiyār's foolishness in seeking battle is juxtaposed against Rustam's desire to avoid battle. Although this episode has been interpreted by some as Rustam's struggle for peace and reconciliation,<sup>261</sup> the confrontation is not an example of Rustam's peace efforts, but rather, it is a battle between two heroic warriors and their respective definitions of manliness.

Isfandiyār was intent on gaining his father's throne, with whom he had been in conflict numerous times. His father, Gushtāsp, had promised him the throne on the basis of his heroic feats, and Isfandiyār had repeatedly proven his manliness through battle.<sup>262</sup> Yet there remained one last rival, Rustam, who had not submitted to Gushtāsp's rule.<sup>263</sup> The king gave his son one final condition before bestowing the throne on him: bring Rustam to Iran in chains.<sup>264</sup> Gushtāsp's demand was a declaration that the king was the sole ruler and thus, any

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notion of independence would not be tolerated. The conflict between king and hero, which had been latent throughout Rostam's life, finally came to a head. The two systems of rule could not co-exist.<sup>265</sup>

Isfandiyār realized that his father's order was actually a trap to bring about his own death, which depicts the conflict between the control of the elder king and the threat of the younger prince.<sup>266</sup> However, his ambition for the throne actually blinded him to the complexities of the conflict. He confused the divine duty to obey royalty (which Gushtāsp used against his son), with his own desire for the throne. As a consequence, he lost both the throne and good reputation.

Isfandiyār, by submitting to bonds [of his father], not only sacrifices his quality of *pahlawānī* for the sake of the duty of obedience, but in order to carry out this duty, he must also forgo the throne and crown of Iran.<sup>267</sup>

Isfandiyār first sent his young son, Bahman, to Rostam to see if he would voluntarily surrender. Rostam answered Isfandiyār with an appeal to his sense of manliness. He reminded Isfandiyār that in light of his reputation for valor and insight, such a vain request was counter-productive:

Anyone who has a heart of insight ...  
 When he has manliness (*mardī*), success and riches ...  
 Greatness, heroism and a good name ...  
 He must not have such wickedness in his head ...  
 In manliness (*mardī*), greatness (*īarhangī*) and insight (*ra'y*) and wisdom (*khirad*),  
 [Isfandiyār] is beyond all his ancestors.<sup>268</sup>

Rostam suggested to Isfandiyār that a man of nobility does not need to perform impossible feats to prove his greatness.<sup>269</sup> The discussions between Isfandiyār and Rostam were long and protracted, both arguing for the honor of manhood. Offering the hospitality of warriors, Rostam sought to restrain Isfandiyār from battle. He would 'overcome evil with good' and so bring Isfandiyār to his senses. At this point, he disdained battle (*razm*) and appealed for

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*bazm* (feasting).<sup>270</sup> In this case, Rustam used hospitality as a means of establishing his superiority and his control over his opponent. Isfāndiyār, however, considered accepting an offer of hospitality from Rustam as unmanly, worthy only of women and children. In Isfāndiyār's terms, warriors did not compromise.<sup>271</sup>

Isfāndiyār's counselor, Bishūtan, also urged him to refrain from battle with Rustam. Juxtaposing the two warriors – the man of *bazm* and the man of *razm* – Bishūtan saw that the man who sought *bazm* was the true warrior.<sup>272</sup> A battle between two supreme warriors would end only in defeat and loss of reputation for both.<sup>273</sup>

Just as Rustam was adamant about avoiding battle, so was Isfāndiyār resolute in challenging Rustam to prepare for battle if he refused to submit. Isfāndiyār saw Rustam's repeated arguments as merely a scheme to avoid a fight, which was not characteristic of a true warrior. For Isfāndiyār, manliness was a one-dimensional virtue, to be proven only on the battleground. Since the nation of Iran could not sustain two invincible warriors, it was the battleground that alone could determine the real champion.<sup>274</sup>

Previously, Rustam had not been able to walk away from the challenge of Suhrāb. Here he was compelled to take up the challenge yet again. In the conflict between the quest for battle and circumspection, for the time being, it was the thirst for battle that won the day.<sup>275</sup> Seeing that he could not persuade Isfāndiyār to refrain from battle, Rustam contemplated various options. He could surrender; he could withdraw from battle and escape; he could kill Isfāndiyār; or he could allow himself to be killed. But each of these options would mean irreparable damage to his manhood and consequently, his reputation as the greatest hero of Iran.

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For Rustam, the request to submit and be put in chains was the antithesis of his notion of independence and self-determination. Chains symbolized servitude and disgrace, which was tantamount to asking him to die. Rustam repeatedly suggested to Isfandiyār that he would submit to King Gushtāsp; but on his own terms, not the king's.<sup>276</sup> For the *jawānmard*, obedience was never blind or unconditional:

I will give my life in obedience to your word,  
 Whatever you want from me, command me.  
 But chains! Chains are a shame!  
 They are defeat and an act of disgrace;  
 No one will see me alive in chains,  
 Because my spirit is clear and that is final.<sup>277</sup>

Rustam reminded Isfandiyār that it was he (Rustam) who was the king-maker and the cause for the greatness and prosperity of the Iranian kings. How could the king-maker submit to the king? Rustam tried to bypass this dilemma by offering to set Isfandiyār on the throne.<sup>278</sup> In this way he would continue to be free and still be true to his duty as king-maker. Rustam's negotiations, therefore, were not offers of conciliation, but rather efforts to protect his reputation and to avoid forced servitude.<sup>279</sup> Rustam knew if he surrendered to chains, his own name would be ruined. As mentioned earlier, the essence of good reputation for the warrior was society's public approval of him. The shame of people talking about the warrior's defeat was equivalent to death:

Because of these chains my name will be ruined,  
 And because of Gushtāsp, my end will be evil.  
 There will be no end of disgracing me,  
 Throughout the world, everyone will say,  
 "Rustam did not escape from the hand of a youth ..."  
 My good name will fall into disgrace,  
 There will be no sign or trace of me in the world.<sup>280</sup>

The second option which lay before Rustam - to slay the prince - was just as shameful. Rustam had given his entire life to the defense of kingship, and as Davidson observes, "this

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killing of the king by the king-maker [was] ... a fundamentally unnatural act."<sup>281</sup> If he, the *tāj-bakhsh* of Iran, killed the next heir to the throne, not only would his name be 'yellowed,' but he would, in essence, defame the purpose of his own existence:

My face will be 'yellowed' before the kings,  
That he [Rustam] killed the young prince ...  
After death I will be damned,  
Indeed my name will that of an 'old infidel.'<sup>282</sup>

The end result would spell loss for both. Isfandiyār would be killed and Rustam would lose his reputation for having killed 'the Lord's anointed.'<sup>283</sup> To kill the prince was therefore suicidal for Rustam.

Another option was for Rustam to allow himself to be slain by Isfandiyār. In a sense, death was the best of all possibilities, because at least Rustam's good name would remain: society would speak well of him.<sup>284</sup> But Rustam could not die, for death also meant defeat. Throughout the *Shāhnāma*, death was never deemed a viable solution for the hero's dilemma.<sup>285</sup> Death might be preferred to public defeat or chains, but of all disgraces, the worst was to die an ignominious death (*marg-i patyāra*), for as Firdawsī states: "There is nothing darker than the death of ignominy (*patyāra*)."<sup>286</sup> The poet says elsewhere:

One to bed, another to battle,  
One to honor, another to shame,  
Everyone must go, there is no escape,  
The death of ignominy (*patyāra*) is the worst for me.<sup>287</sup>

A shameful death meant death at the hands of an enemy or an inferior or a younger warrior, before a watching crowd. Death for the warrior was also an admission that he was, after all, mortal. It meant that death was the stronger enemy, and hence, spelled the end of the warrior's pursuit of a good name. And so for Rustam, just as he tried to avoid disgrace, he also had to avoid death. Furthermore, Rustam could not die because he was the



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indispensable defender of the kings of Iran and, subsequently, the protector of the Iranian people.<sup>288</sup> But more importantly, Zābul, Rustam's homeland, would be left without good reputation and the names of its heroes would be smeared. As Rustam says, if he was killed, there would be no one to carry on the torch of freedom:

And if I am killed by his hand,  
 No sign or trace will be left of Zābulistān;  
 The name of Dastān-i Sām will be weakened,  
 Nor will anyone gain fame from Zābul.<sup>289</sup>

If Rustam was the exemplar of ideal manhood and the embodiment of man's aspirations, then, as Nadūshan states, his death represented the death of that ideal.<sup>290</sup> Ultimately, then, it was not only Rustam's good name that was at stake; rather the very survival of life. "If he is victorious, it is victory for all, and if he is defeated, the loss is for all."<sup>291</sup>

Zāl, who also was concerned for the good reputation of Zābul, counseled Rustam to flee the battleground.<sup>292</sup> The bottom line was that Rustam must not oppose the king, for in so doing, Rustam would deny the very reason he existed as a hero.<sup>293</sup> By escaping, he could avoid the disgrace of chains, the shame of killing a prince and worst of all, an ignominious death. Rustam, however, could not accept this advice, because for a champion, escape was as incompatible with his existence as was submission. Warriors did not withdraw from battle; escape was another form of death and loss of manliness:

Many years I have passed with manliness (*mardī*) ...  
 If I escape from Isfāndiyār,  
 [Zāl] will no longer have a palace and a garden in Sīstān.<sup>294</sup>

Rustam finally made his decision. He would not kill or harm Isfāndiyār; rather he would challenge Isfāndiyār to battle, bind him up and carry him back to Iran where he would set him upon the throne of Gushtāsp. Then he would voluntarily accept his duty as a servant of the king. Rustam would serve the king on his own terms, and thus once again establish his

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self-determination. However, when the battle finally began, Isfandiyār's attack severely wounded Rustam. Just as Suhrāb had done, Isfandiyār too mocked Rustam for hesitating in battle and insulted him for thinking of fleeing. When his strength waned, Rustam was no longer heroic.

When he saw Rustam, Isfandiyār, laughed,  
 And spoke to him, "Oh great renowned one! ...  
 Where has your mace gone? Where is your valor? (*mardī*)  
 Where is your charisma (*fārra*) and greatness in battle?"<sup>295</sup>

Badly wounded and unable to kill Isfandiyār, Rustam resorted to deception as he had in his conflict with Suhrāb. The dilemma between guile and integrity in the Isfandiyār Rustam combat was no small scruple. In fact, it was critical to the identity of the heroic warrior. At the outset of the confrontation, Rustam had affirmed his integrity in his effort to avoid battle with the prince: "I am not seeking grandeur (*fūrūgh*) in this speech / Nor am I am trying to throw up lies (*durūgh*)."<sup>296</sup> Similarly, Isfandiyār had endorsed the same ethic. It was self-understood that warriors sought greatness through fair combat, and that *durūgh* (lie, deceit) was incompatible with *jawānmardī*. In an ideal sense, the end did not justify the means in the code of *jawānmardī*, as Isfandiyār himself stated to Rustam during their oral confrontation: "You have always spoken the truth and not lied (*durūgh*) / Warriors (*mardān*) do no reach grandeur (*fūrūgh*) by guile (*kazhī*)."<sup>297</sup>

However, when Rustam saw defeat was imminent, he could only resort to scheming. He sent a message to Zāl to find a scheme (*chāra*) for him because the glory of Zābul was waning.<sup>298</sup> Rustam's response was reminiscent of the ruse he used with Suhrāb—he procrastinated. Pretending that it was too late in the day to continue fighting, he would return to his palace, refresh himself, and the next day come and surrender before Isfandiyār. Even though he had no intention of doing so, yet he gave his word.<sup>299</sup> Although Isfandiyār

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suspected Rustam of duplicity, he allowed him to go, with a final warning not to use deception:<sup>300</sup>

Oh you magnanimous (*pur-manish*), uncompromising man,  
 You, man of greatness and proven in strength,  
 You know many schemes (*chāra*), tricks (*nairang*) and have much insight (*ra'y*),  
 I have seen all your deception (*firīb*) ...  
 Tonight I will grant you your life,  
 When you reach the palace, do not plan guile (*kazhī*).<sup>301</sup>

Having been able to 'buy time,' as he had done with Suhrāb, Rustam again turned to the mythical Sīmurgh. Its advice to Rustam was strange: although she would empower him to kill Isfāndiyār, he must realize that whoever shed the blood of Isfāndiyār would face tragedy in this world and the next.<sup>302</sup> In the *Shāhnāma*'s scheme of things, shedding royal blood incurred a divine curse because the king and the prince possessed the divine right to rule.

Having been given the means to defeat Isfāndiyār, Rustam returned to the battleground and reiterated that the purpose was to fight for the honor of his name. Ironically, this fight would be to his shame and deal him a deathblow. Requesting that God not hold the sin of harming 'the Lord's anointed' against him (Rustam knew he was condemning himself), he felled the prince of Iran with the enchanted arrow of the Sīmurgh. Before his death, Isfāndiyār made a final speech about who the real warrior was. One thing he was certain about: Rustam had not killed him by his manliness, and so it was not a victory of one man's manliness over that of another. Rustam had committed the unmanly act of using guile:

The son of Dastān did not kill me by his manliness (*mardī*);  
 Look at this 'arrow' in my hand.  
 It is with this piece of wood that my time has come,  
 From the Sīmurgh and from Rustam, the schemer (*chāra-gar*).  
 It is deceit (*fūsūn*) and Zāl set this snare,  
 Because he knows cunning (*nairang*) and the world's traps.<sup>303</sup>

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Rustam could not deny the damning accusation. The warrior who had inflicted pain on many warriors throughout his career, was now contorted in shameful pain himself:

When Isfandiyār spoke these words,  
 Rustam grimaced and wept with pain ...  
 It was as [Isfandiyār] said, every word of his,  
 One does not lay the foundation of manliness (*marjī*) through guile (*kazhī*).<sup>404</sup>

For both *pahlawāns*, fate was the solution to this dilemma. As Isfandiyār lay dying, the prince realized that Rustam's fame had been soiled. In fact, both had suffered defeat. Like Suhrāb, only fate could explicate Isfandiyār's grief:

Now your [Rustam's] good reputation has turned to evil...  
 Sadness has come to my spirit because of this,  
 Such was the will of the Creator.<sup>405</sup>

As for Rustam, he argued that the situation had compelled him to use guile, because he had to remain the champion.<sup>406</sup> His justification went even further: Isfandiyār's appointed time had come. If he had not been meant to die, using guile would have been futile. The champions repeatedly solved their dilemmas, not by taking responsibility, but by consigning themselves to fate, as if they were pawns in the hands of heaven. Rustam's words betray a sense of helplessness for his deed:

I drew his end with the bow, when his time came I shot.  
 If it was meant that he should remain alive,  
 How would my work of guile (*kazhī*) have had effect?  
 We must all leave this dark earth,  
 Therefore, it is not worth to try to be cautious.<sup>407</sup>

When Isfandiyār finally died, Rustam mourned not only the death of a prince, but also the loss, indeed, the death of his own good reputation: "My name was renowned in this world / It was from Gushtāsp that my end turned evil."<sup>408</sup> This was the tragedy of which the Sīmurgh had warned him. Rustam's zeal for world renown and his refusal to tolerate any failure or

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defeat finally undid him. As with his battle with Suhrāb, in the end he was forced to resort to deceit, tarnishing his manliness forever.

So the question is, did Rustam win or lose the battle? Certainly he defeated Isfandiyār, but it was only at the expense of his good name. True, Rustam had retained one of the most fundamental qualities of the heroic warrior – his invincibility. However, he had to sacrifice everything, including his reputation, in order to remain preeminent. According to Nadūshan,

[Rustam] did not choose the disgrace of submission nor death, but he chose something more difficult than both: life without divine favor. For the rest of his life and the next world he would live under the malice of the heavens ....<sup>309</sup>

Though Rustam took up the duty to raise Bahman, Isfandiyār's son, with the hope of regaining his reputation again, the story of Rustam now ended. He had not been able to accept defeat, for in so doing he would have betrayed himself. However, in his refusal to accept defeat, he had been forced to fight against Iran, which was also an act of betrayal, and as we have stated, treachery violates the spirit of *jawānmardī*. The arrow of death had not only pierced Isfandiyār's eye, but also Rustam's life.<sup>310</sup> In his attempt to retain his image as a free man who could not be put in chains, Rustam eventually ended up forfeiting his duty as king-maker and became, instead, a prince-killer. His notions of freedom and duty ultimately could not be reconciled.

## The Triumph of Fate

It is often stated that the character of the *pahlawān* is stereotypical and his life is simply a depiction of how the qualities of *jawānmardī* are carried out. However, because his all-consuming quest is to build and maintain a good name, his life actually becomes filled with paradoxes. Though the heroic warrior strives to be preeminent in each of the virtues of *jawānmardī*, it is impossible to maintain the full aggregate of its virtues since, at times, they

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are inherently contradictory. He cannot be fully independent and, at the same time, renowned as the loyal servant of the king. Revenge and magnanimity – both virtues that enhance the *pahlawān*'s reputation – conflict with each other. Even though the champions condemn the use of duplicity and guile, they repeatedly resort to it. Rustam, depicted as the ideal heroic warrior, is forced to choose one virtue of manhood at the expense of another, and this dilemma ultimately defeats him. As the young warrior Atshak stated, “There always is a superior over a superior,” there is no *pahlawān* who is preeminent in every aspect of his life. And so the *pahlawān* is never able to be a perfect champion and thereby secure a permanent reputation for himself.

Death is the ultimate power that the champion cannot overcome. Though death is unavoidable, the manner of death is most significant for the warrior, because that is his final opportunity to demonstrate his greatness.<sup>311</sup> The question, however, which is never fully answered is: What is a noble death that would establish a warrior's greatness?

When Samak was captured and threatened with public torture, he wished rather to be killed on the spot. Kānūn responded, “Samak is seeking greatness in death.”<sup>312</sup> The unrivaled hero was not able to endure the publicity of an ignoble and painful death. In such a case, the enemies would flaunt their victory and destroy the victim's reputation before a watching world. Much better was a secret death in the service of a king, which would enhance one's good repute.

The deaths of the *pahlawāns* in *Shāhnāma* are never portrayed as noble. Siyāwash's death was described as an act of *nā-jawānmardī*. Bīzhan's fear of dying unknown was intolerable for him. Both Suhrāb's and Isfandiyār's deaths are depicted as appalling tragedies. Neither is the victor heroic nor is the death of the victim seen as noble, and so, in each case, both the

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victor and the victim mourn the tragedy of the other. Rostam's death in the deep pit into which his half-brother tricked him has no dignity in it. In *Samak-i Ayyār*, Farrukhrūz, the brother of Khurshīdshāh, was killed so dishonorably that even the enemy *wazīr* retired from public life.<sup>313</sup>

For the *pahlawān*, death is never noble because, rather than being a final victory, it becomes his ultimate defeat. It is a statement that he too is mortal. Therefore, the greatest limitation on the heroic warrior is his confrontation with his appointed time of death (*ajal*). Nadūshan states, "It is only death that he cannot conquer. Death is the end of the journey. In the life of the *pahlawānān*, death is the peak of life."<sup>314</sup> The warrior's sense of infinite freedom is countered by the power of the closed universe of fate. If *ajal* arrives, there is nothing any warrior can do against it.<sup>315</sup> In fact, *ajal* is not only the "appointed time of death," but it becomes the actual cause of death itself. Any untimely death was explained as "his *ajal* had arrived."<sup>316</sup> Ironically, it is not a warrior who acknowledges the finiteness of manliness, but rather one of the sinister astrologers of Gushtāsp's court who stated that no one could stand against the power of fate: "Who can pass by the heavens above? ... No one can escape, not even with knowledge (*dānish*) or valor (*mardī*)."<sup>317</sup>

Because fate is the final victor, the warrior must try to resolve his conflicts and dilemmas by resorting to it. For the warrior, then, the dictates of fate are no shame. If he dies in battle, it is not defeat at the hands of the enemy; rather fate has conquered him. If he kills someone in an ignoble manner, it is the rule of fate that was responsible. Though an act may appear to have been shameful, rather than admitting failure or defeat, the warrior blames fate as the cause of the deed.

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The heroic warrior, therefore, never can win completely. His limitations are the limitations of life itself. On the one hand, the warrior's 'greater-than-life' notion of himself and his quest to attain preeminence are experienced vicariously by humankind. However, through his limitations and struggles, and ultimately his defeat and death at the hands of fate, the *pahlawān* shares the same realities of life as ordinary men.



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### Notes on Chapter Two

<sup>1</sup> The term *pahlawān* derives from *pahlaw* which is equivalent to *parthana* (Parthian). The Parthians were an Iranian warrior tribe from northwest Iran whose dynasty (ca. 200 BC to 227 AD) was destroyed by the Sāsānids (*LN*, 4:5086). *Pahlawān* therefore means warrior but as the study will show, it is best translated as champion to convey the notion of supremacy. For a study on the word *pahlawān* and its relationship to Pahlawī, see Gilbert Lazard, "Pahlavi/Pahlavān dans le Šāhnāme," *Studia Iranica* 1 (1972): 26-41.

<sup>2</sup> Davidson, *Poet and Hero*, 93-96.

<sup>3</sup> Hanaway, *Love and War*, 10.

<sup>4</sup> Islāmī Nadūshan, *Zindagī wa Marg-i Pahlawānān*, 292.

<sup>5</sup> Banani, "Ferdowsi and the Art of the Tragic Epic," 111.

<sup>6</sup> Hanaway, "Epic Poetry," 105-106.

<sup>7</sup> *Tārīkh-i Sīstān*, 7.

<sup>8</sup> Abou'l Kasim Firdowsī, *Le Livre des Rois [Shāhnāma]*, 9 vols., tr. and ed. Jules Mohl (1838; reprint, Paris: Librairie d'Amérique et d'Orient, 1976), 3:6.115-116 (The citations from the *Shāhnāma* refer to volume, page and line; so vol. 3, page 6, lines 115-116).

<sup>9</sup> See, for example, *BW*, 1:634 and *RT*, 106, 109, 290.

<sup>10</sup> Jamālzāda, *Islāhan is Half the World*, 24, 29-30.

<sup>11</sup> Roy Mottahedeh, *The Mantle of the Prophet* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1985), 114, 133.

<sup>12</sup> Note chapter 1, p. 20.

<sup>13</sup> Pīrūz Alburz, *Shukūh-i Shāhnāma dar Āyīna-yi Farbiyat wa Akhlāq-i Pahlawānān* [The glory of the *Shāhnāmah* in the training and morals of the heroic warriors] (Tehran, 1369/1990), 129.

<sup>14</sup> Islāmī Nadūshan, *Dāstān-i Dāstān-hā* (Tehran, 1351), 197.

<sup>15</sup> Hanaway, "Epic Poetry," 101.

<sup>16</sup> *SN*, 4:570.2513.

<sup>17</sup> It should be noted that Firdawsī uses the term *mardī* rather than *jawānmardī* to characterize Rostam's manhood. *Mardī*, which reflects valor and courage in battle is an important component of the virtue of *jawānmardī*. As noted earlier, in Samak-i 'Ayyār, however, *mardī* and *jawānmardī* are used concurrently to describe the qualities of the *pahlawān*. See, for example, *SA*, 1:29, 48, 276, 317, 370-371.

<sup>18</sup> *SN*, 2:148.929.

<sup>19</sup> *SN*, 2:180.1297-1298.

<sup>20</sup> For an overview of the dynasties in the *Shāhnāma*, see Davidson, *Poet and Hero*, 11-14 and Hanaway, "The Iranian Epics," 80-86.

<sup>21</sup> An overview of the adventures of *Samak-i 'Ayyār* is in place at the outset of this chapter. The Iranian king, Marzbānshāh, had no son and so feared the loss of his name. A new marriage resulted in the birth of the noble prince, Khurshīdshāh, who was trained in all the skills of *pahlawānī*. While on a hunting expedition, Khurshīdshāh mysteriously encountered the princess, Mahparī, daughter of Faghfūr, the weak-willed king of Chīn. Khurshīdshāh's new love led him and his half-brother, Farrukhrūz, to Chīn to request her hand in marriage. The princess, however, was under the control of a wicked nurse who had already refused Mahparī to other suitors. A challenge of public combat was made and the victor would be rewarded with the princess. Farrukhrūz, who battled in place of Khurshīdshāh lest any harm come to the prince, won the combat, but the witch, realizing she was about to lose her influence, captured Farrukhrūz and hid the princess. Khurshīdshāh was left without his half-brother and the hope of marriage. Wandering through the streets of Chīn one day, he came across a group of *'ayyārs* and *jawānmard*s who ruled as guardians of the city. Khurshīdshāh requested that they assist him in his plight. Samak, a young *'ayyār* under the headship of Shaghāl Pīlzūr, vowed to fulfill the prince's desire. And so began the secret exploits of Samak-i 'Ayyār and public combats of other warriors. To add to the intrigue for the pursuit for Mahparī, the malicious *wazīr* of Chīn, Mihrān, who wanted the princess for his own son, betrayed his nation to the bordering nation of Mā Chīn, which was ruled by Armānshāh. Armānshāh's son, Qizil Malik, depicted as an avaricious prince, also desired the hand of Faghfūr's daughter. Chīn's *wazīr*, Mihrān, used this to lure Mā Chīn into battle against Chīn which led to endless rivalry and battle between the two nations. Samak was eventually successful in securing Mahparī for Khurshīdshāh, and Khurshīdshāh was crowned king of Chīn. The battles between the two nations, however, continued, and Samak found himself in numerous sub-plots as he served other warriors.

<sup>22</sup> Similarly, the concern for honor (*'ird*) was a fundamental driving force in pre-Islamic Arabia, which continued with the advent of Islam. Any failure or loss in battle meant great humiliation for the ancient Arab. See B. Farés, "Ird," *EI*, 4:77-78 and Denny, "Ethics and the Qur'ān," 113 n. 22.

<sup>23</sup> *SA*, 1:153.

<sup>24</sup> Nadūshan, *Dāstān-i Dāstān-hā*, 177.

<sup>25</sup> Hanaway, "Persian Popular Romances," 156.

<sup>26</sup> *SM*, 74-75.

<sup>27</sup> *Naṣīhat al-Mulūk*, pt. 2, 96.

<sup>28</sup> *QN*, 3-4.

<sup>29</sup> *CM*, 31

<sup>30</sup> *SN*, 1:548.734-735.

<sup>31</sup> *SN*, 1:350.1670.

<sup>32</sup> *SA*, 1:181.

<sup>33</sup> Davidson, *Poet and Hero*, 76-77.

<sup>34</sup> *SA*, 1:41.

<sup>35</sup> Cited in *CM*, 56. These lines are not found in the critical editions of the *Shāhnāma*.

<sup>36</sup> *SN*, 1:560.891-892. Note also the battle between Rustam and the dragon where he shouted, "I am Rustam" (*SN*, 1:518-520.400-402), between Rustam and Ulād, where he shouted, "My name is Cloud ... if you would hear my real name, your blood would freeze" (*SN*, 1:526.478-483), and his battle against Māzandarān (*SN*, 1:556.843-845).

<sup>37</sup> *SA*, 1:46. See also *SA*, 1:123, 199.

<sup>38</sup> *SA*, 1:150. See also *SA*, 1:247.

<sup>39</sup> *SA*, 1:94. See also *SA*, 1:214, 235.

<sup>40</sup> *SN*, 1:518.394-395.

<sup>41</sup> *SA*, 1:237-238.

<sup>42</sup> This is also expressed in an entirely different context. In Sir Thomas Mallory's *Morte d'Arthur* (ca. 1469), the quest for public praise is illustrated by the life of the legendary knight, Sir Lancelot of Arthur's Round Table. Like Samak-i 'Ayyār, Lancelot did everything for the sake of gaining a good name in society. C. S. Lewis and his colleague, Walter Hooper have expressed Lancelot's character succinctly. In the introduction to *The Weight of Glory*, a collection of some of C. S. Lewis' addresses, Walter Hooper writes, "We had been talking about one of our favorite books, Mallory's *Morte d'Arthur*, and I mentioned how disappointed I sometimes felt when, say, Sir Lancelot went out to deliver a helpless lady from some peril or other. Then, just at that point where you can't admire him enough for his selflessness, he explains to someone, as though it was the most natural thing in the world, that he is doing it to 'win worship' - that is, to increase his reputation. We recognized it as an inheritance from Paganism. Without intending any embarrassment, I asked Lewis if he was ever aware of the fact that, regardless of his intentions, he was 'winning worship' from his books. He said in a low, still voice, and with the deepest and most complete humility I've ever observed in anyone, 'One cannot be too careful *not* to think of it.' The house, the garden, the whole universe seemed

hushed for a moment, and then we began talking again.” C. S. Lewis. *The Weight of Glory and other Addresses*, ed. Walter Hooper (New York: Touchstone, 1996), 15.

<sup>43</sup> Anthropological studies define a man’s honor / good reputation as the opinions which both the individual and society confers on a person. J. Pitt-Rivers gives the following description of honor and public reputation: “Honour is the value of a person in his own eyes, but also in the eyes of his society. It is his estimation of his own worth, his *claim* to pride, but it is also the acknowledgment of that claim, his excellence recognized by society, his *right* to pride.” And again, “Public opinion forms therefore a tribunal court before which the claims to honour are brought, ‘the court of reputation’ as it has been called, and against its judgements there is no redress. For this reason it is said that public ridicule kills.” J. Pitt-Rivers, “Honour and Social Status,” in *Honour and Shame: The Values of Mediterranean Society*, ed. J.G. Peristiany (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), 21, 27.

<sup>44</sup> *SA*, 1:107.

<sup>45</sup> *SN*, 1:356,1750.

<sup>46</sup> *SN*, 1:546,715.

<sup>47</sup> *SA*, 1:295-296.

<sup>48</sup> *SA*, 1:354.

<sup>49</sup> Abū al-Qāsim Firdawsī, *Shāhnāma*, 5 vols., ed. Jalāl Khāliqi Muṭlaq (New York: Bunyād-i Mirāth-i Iran, 1366-75/1988-97), 3:328 n. 4.

<sup>50</sup> *SN*, 4:202-206.

<sup>51</sup> *SA*, 1:80. See also *SA*, 1:123, 204, 269, 372.

<sup>52</sup> In his study on Kabyle society (a Berber people of Algeria), the anthropologist Pierre Bourdieu points out that an act of revenge carried out anonymously is considered to be futile. Pierre Bourdieu, “The Sentiment of Honour in Kabyle Society,” tr. Philip Sherrard, in *Honour and Shame: The Values of a Mediterranean Society*, ed. J.G. Peristiany (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), 205.

<sup>53</sup> *SA*, 1: 332, 372.

<sup>54</sup> *SN*, 2:288,1097.

<sup>55</sup> *SN*, 2:116,542.

<sup>56</sup> *SN*, 2:122,602-605.

<sup>57</sup> Jalāl Khāliqi Muṭlaq, “Anāšir-i Darām dar barkhī az Dāstān-hā-yi Shāhnāma” [Dramatic elements in the Shāhnāma], *Iran Nāma* 10.1 (1991): 63.

<sup>58</sup> *SN*, 2:122,607-608.

<sup>59</sup> Somewhat akin to the modern-day arm wrestle, two warriors would grab each others' hands and squeeze (*lāshurdan*) them until one of them could not endure the pain anymore.

<sup>60</sup> Kāzīmāynī mentions the legendary heroism of Babak (9<sup>th</sup> century) who rose up against the Arabs. He was brought before the caliph, al-Mu'ṭaṣim (d. 227/842) who ordered that Babak be cut to pieces. When the executioner cut off his arm, Babak rubbed his face with the blood from the cut. The caliph was furious and asked, "What is the meaning of this?" Babak responded in defiance, "When all the blood flows from the body, the body becomes yellow. So that the enemy does not interpret my yellowed face as weakness, I have reddened my face." Kāzīmāynī, *Naqsh-i Pahlawānī*, 154.

<sup>61</sup> *SN*, 1:550.768.

<sup>62</sup> *SN*, 1:550.771-774. See also *SN*, 1:546.709 and 1:550.760-762 for similar descriptions.

Isfandiyār and Rostam also had a hand-crushing duel before their public combat. *SN*, 4:624.3147-3151.

<sup>63</sup> Sadīd-al-Dīn 'Awfī, *Lubāb al-Albāb*, ed. E.G. Browne (London: Luzac & Co. 1906), 1:14.

<sup>64</sup> *CM*, 33. 'Unsurī Balkhī was the chief panegyrist for the Ghaznavid court during the reign of Sulṭān Maḥmūd.

<sup>65</sup> *SN*, 4:628.3215.

<sup>66</sup> Nadūshan, *Dāstān-i Dāstān-hā*, 98. In legends of Iran, each demon (*dīv*) was in possession of a bottle or glass of life (*shīsha-yi 'umr*), its most precious asset. The only way to defeat or remove the demon was to break its glass. Similarly, if one's reputation is soiled, it is as if one's life has come to an end.

<sup>67</sup> *SA*, 1:269.

<sup>68</sup> At the outset of the romance, the narrator relates a conversation between a group of *jawānmard*s and a female warrior, Rūh Afzā (not to be confused with Rūz Afzūn). The warriors requested Rūh Afzā to help them free the princess Maḥparī, and in the course of the conversation, the narrator makes the point that women also follow the code of *jawānmardī*. Rūh Afzā stated, "If a woman does an act of *jawānmardī* she's a warrior (*mard*)."<sup>68</sup> She then explained that her strength in *jawānmardī* and *mardī* meant being faithful, trustworthy and providing protection. *SA*, 1:29. For a brief overview of female warriors in Persian literature, see Hasan Jawad, "Women in Persian Literature: An Exploratory Study," in *Women and the Family in Iran*, ed. A. Fathi (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1985), 37-38.

<sup>69</sup> *Kulliyāt-i Shaykh Sa'dī*, 281.

<sup>70</sup> *SA*, 1:218.

<sup>71</sup> The anthropologist Bourdieu observes that in a society ruled by the code of honour, the goodness or evil of a deed is based on who or what is worthy of honor. That is why moral responses differ depending on the circumstances. Bourdieu says, “[Such a society] is fundamentally opposed to a universal and formal morality which affirms the equality in dignity of all men and consequently the equality of their rights and duties ... It is the same code which lays down opposing modes of conduct according to the social sphere. ... This duality of attitudes proceeds logically from the fundamental principle, ... according to which the modes of conduct of honour apply only to those who are worthy of them.” Bourdieu, “The Sentiment of Honour in Kabyle Society,” 228.

<sup>72</sup> Banani, “Ferdowsi and the Art of the Tragic Epic,” 114.

<sup>73</sup> J.A. Mangan, “Duty unto Death: English Masculinity and Militarism in the Age of Imperialism,” in *Tribal Identities: Nationalism, Europe, Sport*, ed. J.A. Mangan (England: Antony Rowe, 1996), 19.

<sup>74</sup> *SN*, 1:544.704.

<sup>75</sup> Miskūb, “Bakht wa Kār-i Pahlawān.” 25.

<sup>76</sup> *SA*, 1:209.

<sup>77</sup> *SA*, 1:25.

<sup>78</sup> The seven elements are: The beating of the drums to inform the enemy of the battle, the description of the horse and the hero, the public boasting of the hero as he rides out to challenge his opponent, the single combat of two heroes, the all-out battle between the two armies, the calling of end of battle by drum of peace and the night patrol. Hanaway, “Persian Popular Romances,” 153-155.

<sup>79</sup> *SA*, 1:169.

<sup>80</sup> *SN*, 2:54.606-607.

<sup>81</sup> *SA*, 1:385.

<sup>82</sup> *SA*, 1:361.

<sup>83</sup> *SN*, 2:452.243

<sup>84</sup> Nadūshan, *Zindagī wa Marg-i Pahlawānān*, 333.

<sup>85</sup> *SN*, 1:556.844.

<sup>86</sup> “*biyār tā az mardī chi dārī?*” *SA*, 1: 142, 156, 214, 236, 303, etc.

<sup>87</sup> *SA*, 1:170.

<sup>88</sup> See chapter 4, pp. 239-241 for a discussion of the hand-to-hand battle (*kushtī-gīrī*).

<sup>89</sup> Prior to Siyāwash’s ignoble death, his beard was pulled out and his face slapped. *SN*, 2:406.2495-2496. See also *SA*, 1:151.

<sup>90</sup> SA, 1:210.

<sup>91</sup> SA, 1:214.

<sup>92</sup> SA, 1:170.

<sup>93</sup> SN, 3:254.1370-1375.

<sup>94</sup> For a discussion of the culture and literature (western) on revenge, see Susan Jacoby, *Wild Justice: The Evolution of Revenge* (New York: Harper and Row, 1983). For an anthropological study on the blood feud, see Joseph Ginat, *Blood Revenge: Family Honor, Mediation and Outcasting* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1987).

<sup>95</sup> Paul Sprachman, English abstract, "Akhlāq-i Pahlawānī" [The morals of *pahlawānī*] by Charles-Henri de Fouchécour, *Iran Nāma* 10.1 (1991): 1.

<sup>96</sup> SN, 4:562.2412-2414. See also 4:568.2504-2505.

<sup>97</sup> SN, 1:506-508.255-265 and 2:26.254.

<sup>98</sup> SN, 1:538.630-635.

<sup>99</sup> SN, 2:406.2495-2496.

<sup>100</sup> SN, 2:434-436.33-56 and 2:438.70-78. See also Nadūshan, *Zindagī wa Marg-i Pahlawānān*, 328.

<sup>101</sup> SN, 2:434.38.

<sup>102</sup> SN, 2:436.55.

<sup>103</sup> SA, 1:387.

<sup>104</sup> SN, 2:406.2498-2501.

<sup>105</sup> SA, 1:387.

<sup>106</sup> SA, 1:346.

<sup>107</sup> SN, 2:448.192.

<sup>108</sup> SN, 2:448.194-199.

<sup>109</sup> SN, 3:368.906. Both *kīna* (or *khūn*) *khwāstan* and *gunāh khwāstan* are part of the code of *jawānmardī*. The former means taking back the blood of the victim from the offender, i.e., killing the offender. The latter means taking back the offense from the offended on behalf of the offender, i.e., beseeching the offended party to pardon the offender (i.e., pass over his sin) rather than to kill him.

<sup>110</sup> SN, 3:390.1163-1169.

<sup>111</sup> Nadūshan, *Zindagī wa Marg-i Pahlawānān*, 314

<sup>112</sup> It is here, perhaps, that one can note a distinction between *mardī* and *jawānmardī*. *Mardī* denotes the *pahlawān*'s valor and courage for the sake of others, while *jawānmardī* reflects his selflessness and total devotion to others. As a *pahlawān*, the heroic warrior could not turn his back on battle; as a

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*jawānmard* he could not betray anyone, even at the cost of his life. Vengeance to an enemy and betraying a friend – both violated the ideal of *jawānmardī* (de Fouchécour, *Moralia*, 218). However, since the heroic warrior lived for his reputation, the virtues of *jawānmardī* and *mardī* did not necessarily contradict each other.

<sup>113</sup> SA, 1:208.

<sup>114</sup> SA, 1:381.

<sup>115</sup> Fischer, "Towards a Third World Poetics," 220-221

<sup>116</sup> Kāzīmāyī, *Naqsh-i Pahlawānī*, 22.

<sup>117</sup> Firdawsī, quoted in Kāzīmāyī, *Naqsh-i Pahlawānī*, 25 and Baydā'ī, *Tārīkh-i Warzish*, 5. In Bertel's edition of the *Shāhnāma*, the word *durūgh* (lying) instead of *kazhī* (guile) is used. SN (Bertel's) 8:118.1090.

<sup>118</sup> SN, 1:526.483.

<sup>119</sup> Miskūb, "Bakht wa Kār-i Pahlawān," 29. In the career of *jawānmardī*, divine determinism and human effort never seem to contradict each other. de Fouchécour, *Moralia*, 212.

<sup>120</sup> SN, 1:520.413-415.

<sup>121</sup> SN, 4:608.2961. It was common to issue two invitations for a banquet, the second invitation was the call that the feast was now prepared. Once an initial invitation had been given, it was offensive for either the guest or the host to withdraw.

<sup>122</sup> SN, 4:610.2983-2984.

<sup>123</sup> Note the Persian proverb, "*gardanam zīr-i tīgh mīrawad, walī zīr-i ḥarf na-mīrawad*" (I'll let my neck go under the sword, but never under words). In other words, a verbal insult is worse than death. Goldziher describes the Arab pagan who instructed his children that "there is nothing good in a man who, when he is insulted, does not return the insult." Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, 1:24.

<sup>124</sup> SA, 1:328.

<sup>125</sup> SN, 2:66.735.

<sup>126</sup> SN, 3:318.317.

<sup>127</sup> SA, 1:94.

<sup>128</sup> SA, 1:328.

<sup>129</sup> SN, 2:122.605-608.

<sup>130</sup> SN, 2:50.537-543.

<sup>131</sup> SA, 1:28, 239, 333.

<sup>132</sup> Davidson, *Poet and Hero*, 84.



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<sup>133</sup> *SN*, 4:578.2600.

<sup>134</sup> *SN*, 2:54.598-604.

<sup>135</sup> *SN*, 4:588.2729-2732.

<sup>136</sup> Jerome W. Clinton, *The Dīvān of Manūchihri Damāghānī: A Critical Study* (Minneapolis: Bibliotheca Islamica, 1972), 12, quoting Manūchihri Damāghānī (d. ca. 432/1031), who was a court poet of the Ghaznawids.

<sup>137</sup> *SN*, 2:6.25-26.

<sup>138</sup> *SN*, 4:442.1003.

<sup>139</sup> See, for example, how Rostam was insulted when Isfandiyār treated him dishonorably as a guest. *SN*, 4:612.3007-3015.

<sup>140</sup> *SN*, 1:350.1675.

<sup>141</sup> Miskūb, "Bakht wa Kār-i Pahlawān," 26-27.

<sup>142</sup> *SA*, 1:116.

<sup>143</sup> *SA*, 1:130.

<sup>144</sup> *SN*, 1:490.57-59.

<sup>145</sup> *SA* 1:366.

<sup>146</sup> *SA*, 1:317.

<sup>147</sup> Nadūshan, *Dāstān-i Dāstān-hā*, 97.

<sup>148</sup> Nadūshan, *Dāstān-i Dāstān-hā*, 190.

<sup>149</sup> *SN*, 1:552.800-801.

<sup>150</sup> *SN*, 2:110.453.

<sup>151</sup> *SN*, 2:112.479-484.

<sup>152</sup> *SN*, 2:114.497.

<sup>153</sup> The Persian medieval writers of ethical (*akhlāq*) and advice (*nasīhat*) literature incorporated the Sāsānid cycle of justice. The author of *Nasīhat al-Mulūk* writes, "Religion depends on kingship, kingship on the army, the army on wealth, wealth on prosperity and prosperity on justice." *Nasīhat al-Mulūk*, pt. 2, 100. According to F. Bagley, this statement is attributed to the founder of the Sāsānid empire, Ardashīr I (d. 242AD). Bagley, *Counsel for Kings*, 56 n.1. For a thorough discussion of the relationship of justice, kingship and morality as reflected in the Persian 'mirrors for princes,' see de Fouchécour, *Moralia*, 357-440.

<sup>154</sup> *SN*, 1:518-520.400-401.

<sup>155</sup> *SN*, 1:548.734-735 and 2:106.412-415.

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<sup>156</sup> *SN*, 2:108.422-429.

<sup>157</sup> Olga Davidson, "The Crown-Bestower in the Iranian Book of Kings," *Acta Iranica* 10 (1985): 63.

<sup>158</sup> *SA*, 2:266.

<sup>159</sup> *SA*, 1:209.

<sup>160</sup> *SN*, 3:60.664. See also Nadūshan, *Zindagī wa Marg-i Pahlawānān*, 229-330.

<sup>161</sup> Zakeri, *Sāsānid Soldiers*, 73.

<sup>162</sup> *SN*, 1:358.1771-1773.

<sup>163</sup> *SN*, 1:492.84-87.

<sup>164</sup> *SN*, 1:506.253-258.

<sup>165</sup> Davidson, *Poet and Hero*, 114-115.

<sup>166</sup> Davidson, *Poet and Hero*, 110.

<sup>167</sup> *SN*, 1:352.1704-1705; 1:358-360.1784-1786; 1:494.97; 1:520.513.

<sup>168</sup> See chapter 3, pp. 177-188 for a detailed discussion of the girdle.

<sup>169</sup> *SN*, 1:508.280-282. See also 1:510.292-293.

<sup>170</sup> *SN*, 2:570.144.

<sup>171</sup> Davidson, "Crown-Bestower," 80.

<sup>172</sup> *SA*, 1:93, 283, 289.

<sup>173</sup> *SA*, 1:26.

<sup>174</sup> *SA*, 1:27. The common expressions of courtesy, *khidmat-i shumā* (I am at your service) and *qurbān-i shumā* (I am your sacrifice), are likely rooted in the warrior's unconditional commitment to serve others and to sacrifice himself for their sake.

<sup>175</sup> *SA*, 1:351.

<sup>176</sup> *SA*, 1:346.

<sup>177</sup> *SA*, 1:377.

<sup>178</sup> *SA*, 1:248.

<sup>179</sup> de Fouchécour, *Moralia*, 219.

<sup>180</sup> *SA*, 1:27, 29.

<sup>181</sup> *SA*, 1:66.

<sup>182</sup> *SN*, 1:492.80.

<sup>183</sup> *SN*, 1:490.57-58.

<sup>184</sup> *SA*, 1:106-107.

<sup>185</sup> *SA*, 1:378.

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<sup>186</sup> SA, 1:296. Loyalty and self-sacrifice for the sake of others was an essential virtue in the pre-Islamic Arabic notion of *muruwwat* (chivalry). Goldziher cites an example of an Arab desert-dweller who is to have said: "If one in my care is harmed, I tremble because of this injustice, my bowels are moved and my dogs bark." 'Faithless' (*ghudar*) is the sum total of all that is loathsome to the pagan Arabs." Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, 1:22.

<sup>187</sup> de Fouchécour, *Moralia*, 218.

<sup>188</sup> SA, 1:301.

<sup>189</sup> SA, 1:52.

<sup>190</sup> SA, 1:54.

<sup>191</sup> SA, 1:246.

<sup>192</sup> SN, 3:4.2.

<sup>193</sup> R.C. Zaehner, *The Dawn and Twilight of Zoroastrianism* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1961), 34-37, 280-281. In Zoroastrianism, lying or breaking a promise is as serious a crime as murder. Zakeri, *Sāsānid Soldiers*, 317. *The History of Herodotus* provides the following description of the ancient Iranian people: "The most disgraceful thing in their estimation is to tell a lie, and next to this to owe money, this is for many reasons, but especially because it is necessary, they say, for him who owes money, also to sometimes lie." *The History of Herodotus*, tr. G.C. Macaullay (London: Macmillan & Co., 1890), 1:70. Islamic tradition clearly has prohibited lying as well; however, no reference is made to any Islamic injunctions in *Shāhnāma* and *Samak-i 'Ayyār*. In his voluminous collection of prose anecdotes, 'Awfī devotes an entire section on the evils of lying, basing it on the Qur'ānic injunction to abstain from lying. 'Awfī, *Jawāmi' al-Hikāyāt*, Vol. 1, pt. 3, ed. Bānū Muṣaffā' Karīmī (Tehran, 1352/1973), 161-194.

<sup>194</sup> Alburz, *Shukūh-i Shāhnāma*, 10.

<sup>195</sup> QN, 250

<sup>196</sup> de Fouchécour, *Moralia*, 220

<sup>197</sup> SA, 1:224, 247, 377.

<sup>198</sup> SA, 2:296.

<sup>199</sup> SN(Bertel's), 4:232.349.

<sup>200</sup> SN, 3:108.1230.

<sup>201</sup> SN, 1:528.498, 504.

<sup>202</sup> SN, 1:540.641-646.

<sup>203</sup> SA, 1:123, 350.

<sup>204</sup> SA, 1:48.

<sup>205</sup> SA, 1:143.

<sup>206</sup> SA, 1:123.

<sup>207</sup> SA, 1:247.

<sup>208</sup> SA, 1:324.

<sup>209</sup> SN, 2:20.183-184.

<sup>210</sup> SN, 2:24.233-234.

<sup>211</sup> SA, 1:143.

<sup>212</sup> SA, 1:209-210.

<sup>213</sup> Nadūshan, *Dāstān-i Dāstān-hā*, 194.

<sup>214</sup> SA, 1:334, 339, 356-359, 383.

<sup>215</sup> Nadūshan, *Zindagī wa Marg-i Pahlawānān*, 305.

<sup>216</sup> Nadūshan, *Zindagī wa Marg-i Pahlawānān*, 305-306.

<sup>217</sup> Hanaway, "Epic Poetry," 100. The question was not whether a heroic warrior was truthful, but whether he portrayed a public image of truthfulness. What was essential was that his intentions must be seen as noble. Pitt-Rivers' explanation in the modern context is helpful in this regard: "On the one hand honour demands keeping faith and to break one's word or to lie is the most dishonourable conduct, yet in fact a man is permitted to lie and deceive without forfeiting honour. ... While to lie in order to deceive is quite honourable, to be called liar in public is a grave affront. The explanation lies in the ambiguity as to whether the word given did in fact commit the honour of the liar, and this can only be established by a knowledge of his true intentions. ... To lie is to deny the truth to someone who has the right to be told it and this right only exists where respect is due. Children are taught to tell the truth to their elders who are under no reciprocal obligation, since it is they who decide what children should be told. The duty to tell the truth curtails the personal autonomy of the man who may otherwise feel himself entitled, on account of his social pre-eminence, to represent reality as he pleases and offers no justification. The moral commitment to tell the truth derives from the social commitment to persons to whom it is due." Pitt-Rivers, "Honour and Social Status," 32-33.

<sup>218</sup> SA, 1:377.

<sup>219</sup> QN, 251.

<sup>220</sup> QN, 252.

<sup>221</sup> de Fouchécour, *Moralía*, 215.

<sup>222</sup> SA, 1:136-137.

<sup>223</sup> SA, 1:269.

<sup>224</sup> SA, 1:269. Samak did not know that this mysterious person was a woman. Women warriors used the conventional clothing of warriors so no one could tell they were women. Much earlier in the romance, Samak married Surkward, an 'ayyār who had been in his service for some time, after Samak discovered she was a woman. SA, 1:149-188.

<sup>225</sup> SA, 1:277.

<sup>226</sup> SA, 1:278.

<sup>227</sup> SA, 1:318.

<sup>228</sup> SA, 1:279.

<sup>229</sup> de Fouchécour, *Moralia*, 215.

<sup>230</sup> SA, 1:279.

<sup>231</sup> SA, 1:281.

<sup>232</sup> SA, 1:282.

<sup>233</sup> SA, 2:290.

<sup>234</sup> SA, 2:290-291.

<sup>235</sup> SA, 2:295.

<sup>236</sup> SA, 2:316.

<sup>237</sup> Muhammad Sarwar Mawlā'ī, "Baḥthī dar bāra-yi Dāstān-i Samak-i 'Ayyār" [A discussion about the story Samak-i 'Ayyār], *Sukhan* 2 (1353/1974): 1249.

<sup>238</sup> The role of a firstborn son to continue the name of his father is another essential dimension to the notion of good reputation. The adventures of *Samak-i 'Ayyār* began with Marzbānshāh, the ruler of Ḥalab, concerned because his life would end without having a son: "Since I do not have a son, when my appointed time of death arrives and there is no son to keep the place of the father, a stranger will take my place and my name (*nām*) will remain hidden" (SA, 1:1). For Marzbānshāh, a woman had to be found who could be "the shell of that jewel" (SA, 1:2), and thereby bear him a son. The need to have a son is directly related with the purpose of marriage and the traditional role of the woman. On the traditional role of the woman to bear a son for the sake of the man's on-going reputation, see David and Vera Mace, *Marriage: East and West* (New York: Dolphin Books, 1960), 43.

<sup>239</sup> SN, 2:142-144.848-864.

<sup>240</sup> SN, 2:144.878-879.

<sup>241</sup> SN, 2:146.895.

<sup>242</sup> *SN*, 2:146.898-905.

<sup>243</sup> *SN*, 2:148-150.929-931.

<sup>244</sup> Nadūshan, *Zindagī wa Marg-i Pahlawānān*, 348.

<sup>245</sup> *SN*, 2:128.675-680.

<sup>246</sup> Davidson, *Poet and Hero*, 108-109. Note *SN*(Bertel's), 4:83.1155ff.; 5:134.860ff.; 5:329.1589.

Note, however, Rostam's early military exploit against Mount Sipand to avenge the blood of his ancestor, Narīmān, was also a well-planned ambush, advised by Zāl. *SN*, 1:364-372.

<sup>247</sup> *SN*, 2:146-148.906-911.

<sup>248</sup> Davidson, *Poet and Hero*, 132.

<sup>249</sup> *SN*, 2:160.1071.

<sup>250</sup> *SN*, 2:162.1079-1082.

<sup>251</sup> *SN*, 2:150.943-944.

<sup>252</sup> *SN*, 2:164.1105.

<sup>253</sup> *SN*, 2:164.1106-1107.

<sup>254</sup> In the Avesta, the national hero, who guarded the *farr* of kings and fought for the *farr* in the battle between the good and evil spirit, took on the shape of a bird. This bird-like spiritual hero, who knew the necessary medical treatments of the times, became the Persian *simurgh* whose magical feathers were able to ward off all calamity and bestow the charisma of *farr*. The greatest hero needed a further spiritual hero to ensure his supremacy. *LN*, 8:12,255-56 and Davidson, *Poet and Hero*, 115 n.12.

<sup>255</sup> *SN*, 2:168.1158.

<sup>256</sup> Nadūshan, *Zindagī wa Marg-i Pahlawānān*, 350.

<sup>257</sup> *SN*, 2:172.1211.

<sup>258</sup> *SN*, 2:174-176.1247-1259.

<sup>259</sup> *SN*, 2:180.1297-1298. Earlier Rostam had considered Suhrāb as childish. *SN*, 2:162.1080.

<sup>260</sup> *SN*, 2:180.1313-1314.

<sup>261</sup> Note for example, Pūhinyār Muḥammad Yūnis Ṭughiyān, *Āshtī dar Shāhnāma-yi Firdawsī* [Reconciliation in Firdawsī's Shāhnāma] (Kabul, 1369/1990), 28-39 and Alburz, *Shukūh-i Shāhnāma*, 147.

<sup>262</sup> *SN*, 4:568.2505.

<sup>263</sup> *SN*, 4:570.2511-2513.

<sup>264</sup> *SN*, 4:570.2518; 4:572.3538-3539.

<sup>265</sup> Nadūshan contends that the conflict between Isfāndiyār and Rustam not only represents the conflict between kingship and *pahlawānī*, but between religion and *pahlawānī*. Up until the reign of Gushtāsp, the two systems – kingship and *pahlawānī* – had supported each other for the security of the nation; however, with the establishment of the new religion, Zoroastrianism, which the *Shāhnāma* identifies as beginning with Gushtāsp, this equilibrium between kingship and *pahlawānī* was destroyed. The new order gave no room for the *pahlawān* (who represented freedom); rather it allowed only for the monarch and his subjects. Gushtāsp's command was to secure complete submission from every subject, including the unrivaled champion, Rustam. Hence, the Isfāndiyār Rustam conflict is seen as a conflict between the rule of religion and freedom. Nadūshan, *Dāstān-i Dāstān-hā*, 124-127, 130ff. However, since there is no anti-religious sentiment expressed by Rustam in his confrontation with Isfāndiyār, the argument seems somewhat contrived.

<sup>266</sup> The scenario of father opposing his son for fear of the son overpowering him is repeated throughout the *Shāhnāma*. Sām rejected Zāl at birth and left him in the desert to be rescued by the Sīmurgh. Rustam used deception to kill his son, whom he did not recognize, in order to maintain his good name. The king of peace, Luhrāsp, opposed his son, Gushtāsp, because of his violence, though eventually Gushtāsp took over his father's throne. Siyāwash was betrayed by his father, Kay Kā'ūs, and condemned to death by his father-in-law, Afrāsiyāb. The elder warrior, Giurgīn could not endure the possible loss of his reputation in light of the younger warrior, Bīzhan's, extraordinary feats, so he betrayed him to the enemy. Gushtāsp promised the throne to his son, Isfāndiyār, if he captured Rustam, fully aware that his son would be defeated and his throne would remain secure. In his quest to maintain the code of *jawānmardī*, the younger warrior sacrifices himself on the altar of the elder warrior's demand to remain preminent. The elder hero's fear of losing his reputation as champion compels him to stoop to deception and thus exploit the younger hero's idealistic pursuit for reputation. There is no room for both father and son, elder and youth to rule. Invariably the idealistic and young champion must bend to the mastery of the elder. See Reza Baraheni, *The Crowned Cannibals: Writings on Repression in Iran* (New York: Vintage Books, 1977), 66 and Davidson, *Poet and Hero*, 134-141.

<sup>267</sup> Muṭlaq, "Anāšir-i Darām dar barkhī az Dāstān-hā-yi Shāhnāma," 63.

<sup>268</sup> *SN*, 4:592.2775-2784.

<sup>269</sup> *SN*, 4:594.2803-2805 and 4:594.2809.

<sup>270</sup> *SN*, 4:594-596.2810-2820 and 4:602.2886-2888.

<sup>271</sup> *SN*, 4:598.2855-2857.

<sup>272</sup> *SN*, 4:606.2952-2953.

<sup>273</sup> *SN*, 4:636.3299.

<sup>274</sup> *SN*, 4:632.3256-3258. See also 4:632-634.3265-3268.

<sup>275</sup> *SN*, 4:646.3420-3424.

<sup>276</sup> *SN*, 4:596.2823-2824 and 4:604.2914-2916.

<sup>277</sup> *SN*, 4:604.2914-2916.

<sup>278</sup> *SN*, 4:626.3172.

<sup>279</sup> *SN*, 4:654.3518.

<sup>280</sup> *SN*, 4:628.3212-3215.

<sup>281</sup> Davidson, *Poet and Hero*, 13.

<sup>282</sup> *SN*, 4:630.3216-3218.

<sup>283</sup> *SN*, 4:630-632.3240-3241.

<sup>284</sup> *SN*, 4:630.3221-3222.

<sup>285</sup> Nadūshan, *Dāstān-i Dāstān-hā*, 99.

<sup>286</sup> Firdawsī, cited in *LN*, 4:4.721. In Pahlawi, “*patyāra*” also meant “opposition, enmity” and referred to the demons who tried to destroy creation. *LN*, 4:4.721. Nadūshan links the “death of *patyāra*” with the *pahlawān*’s realization that he cannot prevail over death. In the Babul epic, the greatest hero of Mesopotamia, Gūlgamash, desired only one thing in life: to overcome death. He sought every possible door, but the gods did not accept his request for eternal life: rather they gave him eternal repute and the title of world championship. His epic was the struggle to overcome death and the truth that even the greatest of heroes could not prevail over death. Hence, death always was an enemy and therefore, ignoble. Nadūshan, *Dāstān-i Dāstān-hā*, 99 n. 2.

<sup>287</sup> *SN* (Bertel’s), 4:186.1126-1127.

<sup>288</sup> Alburz, *Shukūh-i Shāhnāma*, 148.

<sup>289</sup> *SN*, 4:630.3219-3220; see also 4:658.3574-3575.

<sup>290</sup> Nadūshan, *Dāstān-i Dāstān-hā*, 100.

<sup>291</sup> Nadūshan, *Dāstān-i Dāstān-hā*, 178.

<sup>292</sup> *SN*, 4:640.3340-3342.

<sup>293</sup> *SN*, 4:642.3380.

<sup>294</sup> *SN*, 4:640.3353-3356. See also 4:642.3374-3375.

<sup>295</sup> *SN*, 4:656.3536-3538.

<sup>296</sup> *SN*, 4:600.2871.



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<sup>297</sup> *SN*, 4:604.2918.

<sup>298</sup> *SN*, 4:656.3545-3550.

<sup>299</sup> *SN*, 4:658.3565.

<sup>300</sup> Samak said at one point that duplicity is not worthy in the code of *jawānmardī*. *SA*, 2:316.

<sup>301</sup> *SN*, 4:658.3566-3569.

<sup>302</sup> *SN*, 4:668.3686-3688.

<sup>303</sup> *SN*, 4:680.3829-3831.

<sup>304</sup> *SN*, 4:680.3832-3834.

<sup>305</sup> *SN*, 4:684.3874-3875.

<sup>306</sup> *SN*, 4:680.3836-3838.

<sup>307</sup> *SN*, 4:682.3839-3841.

<sup>308</sup> *SN*, 4:686.3903.

<sup>309</sup> Nadūshan, *Dāstān-i Dāstān-hā*, 111-112.

<sup>310</sup> Nadūshan, *Dāstān-i Dāstān-hā*, 111.

<sup>311</sup> Nadūshan, *Zindagī wa Marg-i Pahlawānān*, 292.

<sup>312</sup> *SA*, 1:254.

<sup>313</sup> *SA*, 1:365-366.

<sup>314</sup> Nadūshan, *Zindagī wa Marg-i Pahlawānān*, 292.

<sup>315</sup> *SA*, 1:189.

<sup>316</sup> *SA*, 1:189.

<sup>317</sup> *SN*, 4:564.2460-2461.

## Chapter Three

### The Spiritual Champion (*fatan*)

*“Proper conduct (adab) is all important.”<sup>1</sup>*

The previous chapter showed how the heroic warrior sought to establish a good reputation for himself by following the code of *jawānmardī* as he understood it. The champion had to be preeminent in all aspects of his life and overcome every rival. Since he considered himself supreme, he established his own rules and therefore, rationalized his conduct. However, in his effort to achieve good reputation, the champion overstepped himself and thus soiled the very reputation he was striving to achieve. The claims and counter claims to greatness, and the fear of facing public defeat led the champion to ignoble conduct. This was demonstrated by the rivalry among *‘ayyārān* in *Samak-i ‘Ayyār* and in the Rostam-Suhrāb and Rostam-Isfandiyār conflicts. Because he had to present a public image of preeminence and freedom from any form of servitude, the *pahlawān* violated his own code and became a man ‘out of control’, often to his own ruin.

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The medieval writers of treatises on *futuwwat* present an entirely different perspective on *jawānmardī*. Their concern was to contain the autonomous *jawānmard* within firm social boundaries. In their view, the true *jawānmard* was a spiritual champion who controlled himself rather than controlling others. A distinction between different levels of *jawānmardī* is already portrayed in the 5<sup>th</sup>/11<sup>th</sup> century *Qābūs Nāma* where the author describes the ‘secular’ *jawānmardī* of the ‘*ayyār*, soldier and artisan as elementary *jawānmardī*, while the *jawānmardī* of Sufis and saints is considered to be a higher stage.<sup>2</sup> For the writers on *futuwwat*, however, the concept of *jawānmardī* was not a matter of degree, but it was a spiritual ethic rooted in the tenets of Islam and Sufi mystical thought with a view to prescribing proper conduct (*adab*) in every aspect of life. In contrast to the political theories of the medieval juridical writers and the politics of expediency advocated by the Persian ‘mirrors of the princes,’ the ethic of *futuwwat* was a practical and ‘down-to-earth’ means of social control for the artisan and craftsman.<sup>3</sup> At the beginning of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the ‘Abbāsīd caliph, al-Nāṣir, introduced Islamic reforms into the bandit-like *futuwwat* associations in order to control them, and thereby strengthen his caliphal rule. The emphasis in the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> century Persian treatises on *futuwwat* was essentially the same: a true *jawānmard* was a man whose behavior in every aspect of his life was perfect and beyond reproach by following the example of the Prophet and ‘Alī. The Sufi preacher, ‘Umar Suhrawardī, stressed that the *jawānmard* must adhere to the strict standards of conduct without any compromise: “Deficiency (*nuqsān*) is not worthy of *futuwwat*.”<sup>4</sup> Although the caliph’s control over the *futuwwat* associations did not continue for long, the ritual and strict codes of behavior he established persisted, as did the associations themselves.

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Like the earlier writers on *futuwwat*, Ḥusayn Wāʿiẓ Kāshifī, the author of a comprehensive treatise on *futuwwat* entitled *Futuwwat Nāma-yi Sulṭānī*, was concerned primarily with proper conduct among the artisans and craftsmen, who, we can conclude, were members of *futuwwat* associations.<sup>5</sup> In chapter one we briefly discussed the social life of artisans in the medieval period, their solidarity among themselves as well as their vigorous rivalry with other groups. Frequent in-fighting and violence seemed to characterize the *futuwwat* associations as well.<sup>6</sup> Ibn Baṭūṭṭa's account of the flamboyant dress and competition among craftsmen in Isfahān and Shīrāz during the 8<sup>th</sup>/14<sup>th</sup> century reflects a culture of showmanship among the associations.<sup>7</sup> The popular culture among the artisans of mid to late 15<sup>th</sup> century Tīmūrid Herat portrays a similar spirit. At a state-sponsored festival during the reign of Sulṭān Abū Saʿīd (d. 1469), different guilds set up spectacular displays of their arts and crafts:

The masters of various crafts caused wonders of marvelous power and discerning elegance to appear, with the utmost ingenuity and skill, in a suitable place to be viewed; artists from around the world were present and all showed strange things and wonders to their utmost effect ... every craftsman was engaged in his own special trade.<sup>8</sup>

Khāndamīr mentioned similar festivals in Tīmūrid Herat where displays set up by craft guilds were so spectacular that, according to the author, he was rendered helpless in describing them.<sup>9</sup>

Kāshifī must have had these ostentatious displays in mind when he expressed concern about the unrestrained behavior among those who called themselves *jawānmard*s. According to the author, who wrote his treatise during the high point of Tīmūrid culture in Khurāsān in the late 15<sup>th</sup> and early 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, joining a *futuwwat* brotherhood had become nothing more than an ostentatious custom. Kāshifī lamented that some *lityān* dressed in flamboyant

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clothing and others indulged in self-worship and cavalier behavior, which he considered to be unworthy of *futuwwat* behavior.<sup>10</sup> He says, “Those who are lost in the wilderness of indolence liken themselves to men of *futuwwat* and boast of the truth of this science merely by memorizing meaningless words and reciting baseless speech.”<sup>11</sup> In their unislamic conduct, the associations of *futuwwat* had drifted away from the moral constraints dictated by the Prophet. As will be shown, the writers on *futuwwat* stressed the importance of linking every aspect of *futuwwat* to the Prophet and ‘Alī. In this way, they could issue an authoritative summons for proper behavior. Hence, when reading the *futuwwat* literature, we must keep in mind that the texts appear to be more of an ideal portrayal of spiritual *jawānmardī* than a reflection of real life among the artisans.<sup>12</sup>

Building on what had previously been written on *futuwwat*, Kāshīrī continues this emphasis on defining *jawānmardī* as ideal, moral character (*akhlāq*) and proper behavior (*adab*). Since there was a specific code of conduct that defined *jawānmardī*, Kāshīrī deemed it necessary to explain the hidden secrets of what he called “this noble science.”<sup>13</sup> The heroic warrior acquired nobility through noble birth and great exploits, but in the *futuwwat* ideal, the spiritual champion achieved it through proper conduct. Kāshīrī quotes the well-known *ḥadīth*: “The noble man is one of virtue (*ʿādḥ*) and proper conduct (*adab*), not of lineage and relation,”<sup>14</sup> and also Imām Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq: “At all times – proper conduct (*adab*), in all circumstances – proper conduct (*adab*), and in all places – proper conduct (*adab*).”<sup>15</sup>

The *FNS* is written in the Socratic style of easy-to-answer questions. Of the hundreds of questions posed, these two are asked most frequently: The first is, “From whom does this [practice] originate?” (*az ki mānda ast*) The writer assumes that *futuwwat* originated with the prophets and hence, this question was meant to ensure and explain that every profession

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and ritual practiced in *futuwwat*, as well as its garments, regalia and implements had prophetic origin and thus, the sanction of religious authority. The second question is, “Who is entitled to do [or wear] this?” (*ki ĩnrā tawānad [pūshīd, etc.]*). Once it was established that an item or ritual of *futuwwat* had prophetic legitimacy, the writer emphasizes that only a worthy artisan or performer could wear the garment of *futuwwat* or handle a certain implement or step into the arena, etc. The worthy person was the one who adhered to the strict code of behavior of *futuwwat*, or in more spiritual terms, only the man who was able to control his carnal soul could enter the association of *futuwwat*. Hence, the *jawānmard* depicted in the *FNS* is a spiritual one. In this view, the *jawānmard* did not validate his manhood on the battleground; rather he established his worth and status through correct behavior.

### A. The Sufī Context of the *Futuwwat Nāma-yi Sulṭānī*

It may be instructive to examine the socio-religious milieu in which Kāshifī wrote his treatise in order to understand the framework of the essential aspects of the life of the spiritual champion. The spiritual warrior, as he is depicted in the *FNS*, cannot be interpreted without an appreciation for the dominant role played by Sufism in late medieval Iranian society. At the outset of the treatise, Kāshifī makes a distinction between *taṣawwuf* (Sufism) and *futuwwat*, explaining that *futuwwat* was a branch of Sufism.<sup>16</sup> Later he states that the master of *futuwwat* and his disciple had to meet all of the conditions of *taṣawwuf*.<sup>17</sup> He frequently uses the Sufī terms, *darwīsh* and *faqīr*, to designate the man who had been inducted into an association of *futuwwat*. The entire text is predicated on the inextricable link between *taṣawwuf* and *futuwwat*. In other words, a man could not enter an association of *futuwwat* without adhering to the doctrines of *taṣawwuf*. So when the author says,

“*Tasawwuf* means proper behavior in all things,”<sup>18</sup> and then provides an extended discussion of proper behavior for the *darwīsh*, he is speaking within the framework of *futuwwat* as he understood it.

### I. The Naqshbandi Sufi Order

Kāshifī wrote his treatise on *futuwwat* during the heyday of the Naqshbandiyya Sufi order, which had come to dominate the socio-religious and, to some extent, the political life of Tīmūrid Khurāsān and especially Transoxiana.<sup>19</sup> Introduced into eastern Iran in the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries by Sufi masters known as the Khwājagān, this particular brand of Sufism became crystallized as a formal movement through the life and teaching of Bahā al-Dīn Naqshband (d. 791/1389) of Bukhārā. He emphasized the eight cardinal principles of the Naqshbandiyya, which had originally been introduced by ‘Abd al-Khāliq Ghijduwānī (d. 617/1220).<sup>20</sup> Though Bahā al-Dīn added three further doctrines, his stress on outward sobriety and inner spirituality in Sufi practice gave further weight to Ghijduwānī’s principle of “*khalwat dar anjuman*” (solitude in society), which came to be the most distinct slogan of the Naqshbandiyya.

Through Bahā al-Dīn’s disciples, the movement expanded as a religious and socio-political force throughout Khurāsān, especially through the influence of Khwāja ‘Ubaidullāh Aḥrār (d. 896/1490) and Khwāja Sa’d al-Dīn Kāshgharī (d. 860/1456). Aḥrār’s leadership of the Naqshbandiyya during the late 15<sup>th</sup> century and his political connections with the Tīmūrids gave official sanction to the Naqshbandiyya order in Transoxiana. The same was true of Herat, the Tīmūrid capital of Khurāsān.<sup>21</sup> Kāshgharī initiated the great mystical poet and scholar, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Jāmī (d. 898/1492) into this order and through Jāmī, the renowned patron of art and culture, ‘Alī Shīr Nawā’ī (d. 906/1501) was also inducted. The

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latter's adherence to mysticism, which seems to resemble that of many of the men of his day, was "rather of the more worldly variety practiced by the order as a whole."<sup>22</sup> By the late 15<sup>th</sup> and early 16<sup>th</sup> centuries most prominent scholars and literati of Herat were identified with the order. The Tīmūrid ruler himself, Sulṭān Ḥusayn Bayqārā (ruled 873-911/1469-1506), also looked favorably upon Sufism. Kāshifī married a sister of Jāmī's, and Kāshifī's son, Fakhr al-Dīn 'Alī (d. 939/1534), married one of Jāmī's daughters. Fakhr al-Dīn 'Alī (also known as al-Ṣafī)<sup>23</sup> is the author of *Rashaḥāt-i 'Ain al-Ḥayāt* which is the first hagiographical work to focus primarily on the Naqshbandi shaykhs, notably the life of 'Ubaidullāh Ahrār. Ṣafī says he twice visited Ahrār, who, upon hearing that Mawlānā Ḥusayn was his father, commented, "I heard a lot about him. They say he is truly a man of much virtue and perfection and that his sermons are appreciated by all."<sup>24</sup>

It is obvious that Kāshifī and his family were steeped in the Naqshbandiyya ethos, and although direct references to Naqshbandi Sufism are notably absent in the *FNS*, its influence can be clearly detected. The Naqshbandi emphasis on *khalwat dar anjuman*, which Bahā al-Dīn defined as "outwardly with people and inwardly with God,"<sup>25</sup> is clearly echoed in Kāshifī's emphasis on proper conduct for the man of *futuwwat*: "The summary of all who have spoken on *futuwwat* is this: Be inwardly right with God and externally right with people."<sup>26</sup> According to the hagiographical accounts, Bahā al-Dīn advocated an inner spirituality in the midst of society, and furthermore, rejected any spiritual showmanship through the practice of vocal *dhikr* (ritual recitation of the names of God), physical detachment and dance. His concern was that such displays of spirituality led to ostentation and egotism. "Our path is one of association (*ṣuḥbat*)," he stated, "There is fame (*shuhrat*) in physical detachment (*khalwat*) and fame is disastrous. Blessing is being in society."<sup>27</sup> In



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direct contrast to other Sufi orders, such as the Kubrawīyya, which advocated physical detachment from society, the Naqshbandiyya rejected seclusion from society and emphasized instead involvement in it. Hamid Algar explains this concept in the following way:

The principle of *khalwat dar anjuman*, or “solitude within society” proceeds from the recognition that seclusion from society for the purpose of devotion leads paradoxically to an exaltation of the ego, which is far more effectively effaced through a certain mode of existence and activity within society, inspired by devotion to God. Insofar as the Naqshbandis regard their path as being that of the first generation of Muslims, they must also seek to emulate the combination of intense outward activity and inward devotion and tranquility ...<sup>28</sup>

On the surface there seems to be a paradox in the writings on *futuwwat*, especially the *FNS*. On the one hand, the *FNS* is permeated with the standard Sufi call for detachment from the world. At the same time, the treatise contains a strong call to live a moral life, as seen in its focus on the artisans and craftsmen who maintained their professions in society. The Naqshbandiyya resolved this tension by spiritualizing the notion of detachment. Ahrār, who strongly advocated economic activity and political involvement for his spiritual community, saw no contradiction between worldly activity and economic status on the one hand, and detachment from the world on the other. For him, asceticism was not literal poverty but a state of mind; hence inner solitude justified material wealth:

Having world engagements has no contradiction with being mentally disengaged from worldly goods. It is possible that the whole world be in the possession of someone, and that he bears no desire for worldly goods. However, the vice versa may not be true. A beggar might have more true love for his hat than I have for all my worldly goods.<sup>29</sup>

Hence for the Naqshbandi Sufi of the 15<sup>th</sup> and early 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, “materiality [was] subdued by spirituality,”<sup>30</sup> although it might appear from the descriptions of the artisans of the Timūrid period that ‘materiality’ often had the upper hand. Nevertheless, this paradox between detachment and engagement in the professions in Kāshifī’s treatise can be best

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explained in the context of the doctrine of *khalwat dar anjuman*. The framework of the Sulī ethic of abandonment, which Kāshifī develops in the *FNS*, was intended to explain to the *futuwwat* associations how to relate morally in society while, at the same time, be attached to God.

### 2. The Primordial Covenant

Throughout Kāshifī's treatise, there are numerous references to what mystics called the Primordial Covenant (*'ahd-i azaal*). Although this concept had existed long before Ibn 'Arabī, his doctrine of the Unity of Being (*wahdat al-wujūd*) placed it into the framework of existential monism. The teachings of Ibn 'Arabī had been introduced into the Naqshbandiyya by one of Bahā al-Dīn's disciples, Khwāja Muḥammad Pārsā (d. 822/1420).<sup>41</sup> Both Aḥrār and Jāmī were active proponents of his interpretation. Although earlier writers on *futuwwat*, notably Suhrawardī, opposed speculative theology, Ibn 'Arabī's influence is clearly noticeable in Kāshifī's treatise.

According to Ibn 'Arabī, there was only One Reality with two aspects, the essence (*ḥaqīq*) which was the unknowable One Being, and the world of phenomena (*khalq*), which had a multiplicity of appearances.<sup>42</sup> The two aspects have always existed, the phenomenal world being a mirror or shadow of the One Pure Being.<sup>43</sup> The question that theosophists like Ibn 'Arabī tried to clarify was how this ineffable Being relates or corresponds to the material world. Eternally existing with God was the desire to make Himself known, as stated in the *ḥadīth*: "I was a hidden treasure and I desired to be known, therefore I created the creatures in order that I might be known."<sup>44</sup> Hence, God brought forth creation as the manifestation of the divine names and attributes that had been hidden in his Pure Being.<sup>45</sup>

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Creation is explained in the context of the Primordial Covenant. According to this interpretation, there was no being able to take up the burden of manifesting the divine attributes.<sup>36</sup> God asked Adam, the eternal prototype of man, “Am I not your Lord?” and he answered, “Yea, verily we testify,”<sup>37</sup> and creation came into being. On that ‘day’ when God asked “Am I not” (*alastu*) – hence the shortened Persianized construct, *rūz-i alast* (the day of *alast*) – man became the bearer of the attributes of the Divine, or as the Persian poet Ḥāfīz (d. 792/1390) put it, the bearer of the “burden of trust” (*bār-i amānat*).<sup>38</sup> Although the 14<sup>th</sup> century Persian treatises on *futuwwat* mention the day of the Primordial Covenant,<sup>39</sup> Kāshifī directly connects it with the initiation rite of the *futuwwat* brotherhoods, which he interprets as a reenactment of that Covenant.<sup>40</sup>

In this theory of existence, creation was seen as a “theater of manifestation” of the hidden names and attributes of the Divine Being, and mankind was a mirror which needed polishing in order to become a worthy reflection of the Divine Being.<sup>41</sup> Ibn ‘Arabī described the *fātan* as the one who had become aware of this fundamental purpose of life, which was to manifest the Divine attributes. The *fātan* had finally comprehended that the Ultimate Reality was God, and that the phenomenal world was but a veil for the Divine Reality. This experience was an indescribable event that could only be expressed by means of symbols. Hence, the *fātan* was one “who only speaks in symbols.”<sup>42</sup>

One of the central themes of the *FNS* is how *futuwwat* is considered to be a manifestation of the Divine Reality. In this scheme of things, the entire material world was a metaphor (*majāz*) for spiritual reality (*ma‘nā*). Kāshifī says, “*Taṣawwuf* consists of the elegance of symbolism (*luṭf-i ishārat*) and the beauty of meaning (*ḥusn-i ‘ibārat*).”<sup>43</sup> The visible aspects of *futuwwat* were a veil that concealed (*niqāb-i khalā*) its esoteric meaning from the

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uninitiated who would ruin the beauty of this science if it were exposed.<sup>44</sup> It was a universal principle that the Sufi must not reveal the secret of his experience with God, and *futuwwat* upheld that principle. However, Kāshifī's goal was to inform the men of *futuwwat* about the deeper meanings of their rituals, activities and professions, and thereby call them to live according to that ultimate reality.

Throughout the *FNS* there exists a dialectical relationship between form (*ṣūrat*) and meaning (*ma'na*). On the one hand, the outward form of *futuwwat* veiled spiritual reality which had to remain veiled – but as Kāshifī states, the *fātan* must understand the “symbolism of [each] meaning” (*ishārat bi ma'na*) and the “spiritual essence” (*kunh*) of each outward form.<sup>45</sup> Hence, Kāshifī urges his reader not to be content with the outward form (*ṣūrat*) but to “fold back the leaves” of the phenomenal world and thereby unveil the spiritual meaning (*ma'na*).<sup>46</sup> Therefore, whether the *fātan* was being girded with the belt (*shadd*) of commitment as he entered the circle of *jawānmardī*, or was sitting in a *futuwwat* lodge (*takya*) and following a specific code of conduct, or was stepping into an arena for public performance, or simply laboring as a butcher, he was symbolically manifesting theological and moral truths. *Futuwwat* was thus essentially a veiled commentary on the spiritual meaning of one's daily activities in society. The purpose of the treatise, according to Kāshifī, was to show the *jawānmard* how to express that meaning through proper conduct (*adab*).

### B. The Principle of Proper Conduct (*adab*)

The concept of *adab* in the medieval Perso-Islamic world was complex and multi-dimensional. It had its roots in the pre-Islamic Arabic notion of tradition and normative conduct (hence, *sunna*) as practiced by one's ancestors who were considered exemplars of

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behavior. With the advent of Islam, the idealized moral teachings of the Prophet gradually replaced aspects of tribal morality so that *adab* came to mean the *sunna* of the Prophet.<sup>47</sup> From the Iranian perspective, *adab* was also rooted in the pre-Islamic Sāsānid concept of refined manners, moderation, and the golden rule,<sup>48</sup> which was incorporated into the Islamic milieu, first through the Arabic writings of Persians such as Ibn al-Muqaffāʿ, and secondly, by the authors of Persian epics, notably Firdawsī.<sup>49</sup> With the development of classical Arabo-Islamic culture during the ʿAbbāsīd period, *adab* also took on a literary notion, meaning the sum of classical knowledge about culture and the humanities.<sup>50</sup>

In the religio-moral structure of medieval Islam, *adab* came to be understood as the spiritual and external behavior of an individual who followed the example of the Prophet. Fazlur Rahman states that the “various important areas of this all-encompassing religious ethic [of the Qur’ān] were designated as *adab*.”<sup>51</sup> Sufīs considered *adab* as “a way of reaching toward greater completeness in Law by elaborating the *sunna* beyond what is legally required.”<sup>52</sup> To this day, the Naqshbandiyya say very much the same: “True Sufism is submission to God’s Book and imitation of the *sunna* (custom) of His Messenger: it is reliving, by inner state and outer deed, the auspicious age of the Messenger and his Companions.”<sup>53</sup> The goal of *adab* was to avoid evil and to perform good deeds, as commanded by God. Repeated throughout Kāshīrī’s treatise as an aspect of the code of conduct of *jawānmardī* was to “command the lawful (*amr-i maʿrūf*) and forbid the unlawful (*nahy-i munkar*).”<sup>54</sup> To practice good *adab* then, was to obey the law of God, but as mentioned, *adab* went beyond the strict requirements of the Law. Obedience had to be rooted in the spiritual life of the disciple, which meant that he had to relinquish his will to the will of God. *Adab* therefore became an outward expression of one’s relationship with

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God. The man of proper behavior, i.e., the one who followed the law of God as revealed in the Qur'ān and the practice of the Prophet, had to be connected to the Prophet, and through him to God. The disciple submitted to God by submitting to a master who himself had subsumed his will to that of his master and so on, all the way back to the Prophet. Barbara Metcalf states, "The goal of the training [in *adab*] is not merely unity with one's *shaykh*, but unity between God and theomorphic man."<sup>55</sup> Hence, as will be shown, the chain of authority played a crucial role in the pursuit of good prophet-like behavior.

It needs to be reiterated that the concept of the ideal spiritual champion was fundamentally different from that of the heroic warrior. Whereas the *pahlawān* followed the code of *jawānmardī* within the framework of maintaining a good reputation, the *lātan* was expected to live his life within the framework of Qur'ānic morality, which he expressed through proper behavior. The ethical teachings of the Qur'ān were foundational in how the *lātan* was to understand the ethos of *jawānmardī*.

Yet another influence clearly reflected in Kāshifī's discussions on *jawānmardī* and *adab* is the philosophical, neo-Platonic concept of the soul. Although al-Ghazālī emphasized the practical aspect of religion in his *Ihyā' al-'ulūm*, he evidenced a strong neo-Platonic understanding of ethics and the soul. When the soul, which was pure in its original nature (*līṭrat*), was joined with the material body at creation, the soul became corrupted by the physical body and lost its state of purity. This union produced "the profound dilemma that is the very essence of the human condition."<sup>56</sup> The soul was now occupied by the *nafs* (the carnal soul of desires and emotions) which had to be destroyed in order to return the soul to its pure nature.

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In the more speculative neo-Platonic version of ethics, reflected in the works of Ibn Miskawayh (d. 421/1030) and Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (d. 672/1274), a moral life and inner harmony were developed through the soul's conscious cultivation of the good and rejection of evil. According to Ibn 'Arabī, the illusion of selfhood and carnality had to be surrendered and submerged in the Unity of Being in order to come forth as a new self-realization which would reflect the character traits of God.<sup>57</sup> However, for al-Ghazālī, proper behavior was rooted in the subordination of the carnal soul, so that the soul could return to God in a pure state. Kāshifī's premise for noble character and proper conduct therefore is based on al-Ghazālī's theory of the destruction of the carnal soul and the cultivation of moral virtues according to the tenets of Islam. In the following section, we will explore the notion of *adab* from this perspective.

### 1. The Foundation of *Adab*

#### a) The restoration of the original nature

Kāshifī considers *futuwwat* a science (*ʿilm*). By that he means that *futuwwat* was a specific body of knowledge to be learned and practiced, the purpose of which was to destroy the carnal soul.<sup>58</sup> Kāshifī does not enter into a theoretical or philosophical definition of the soul, saying that is beyond the goal of his treatise.<sup>59</sup> Rather, he simply defines the *naʿs* as the desires of the carnal soul, by which he means egotism and the pursuit of self-worship. In contrast to the chroniclers' description of the artisans' showmanship and self-aggrandizement, for the writers on *futuwwat*, the first great duty of the spiritual champion was to break the power of this self-love: "The pivotal point of *futuwwat* is to break the (*naʿs*) and abandon self (*hastā*) and self-worship (*kh"ud-parastā*)."<sup>60</sup> Kāshifī basis this call to reject

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the *nafs* on the Qur'ānic verse: "And of mankind is he who would sell himself (*nafs*), seeking the pleasure of God."<sup>61</sup>

'Abd al-Razzāq Kāshānī, whom Kāshifī cites as one of his sources, devoted much of the Persian version of his Arabic treatise to this issue. For him, the *nafs* was the strongest of all physical powers and its claim of greed and desire on the would-be spiritual champion weakened his will so that he ruined his own reputation.<sup>62</sup> Therefore, only the man who had conquered the desires of his carnal soul was a true spiritual warrior.

The writers on *futuwwat* reflect the neo-Platonic Sufī view that human nature (*fītrat*) was originally endowed with the pure, divine light of primordial man. At creation, the pure soul became soiled and man became a prisoner of his carnal soul.<sup>63</sup> The goal of *futuwwat* was to repossess this divine light. According to Kāshānī:

[The goal] of human nature (*fītrat*) is to be freed from the power of sensual (*nafsānī*) attributes and the powerful tyranny of the body, and to return it to its original state. ... *Futuwwat* is the appearance of the light of human nature (*fītrat*) ... and its starting point is the cleansing of the *nafs* and the purification of the heart.<sup>64</sup>

The duty of the spiritual *fātan* was to enter the battleground of the soul and kill the sensual desires as the first step in restoring the soul to its state of purity and perfection. Kāshifī reiterates Kāshānī's views on *fītrat* and *nafs*:

*Futuwwat* is the light from the divine world and its rays of grace reveal divine qualities and heavenly characteristics in the heart of its master, and drive away evil character and animal-like traits.<sup>65</sup>

The logical progression after destroying the power of the carnal soul was to adorn one's life with worthy character and good deeds. The spiritual *jawānmard* was the man who had achieved the perfection of human virtues (*kamāl-i taḍā'il-i insānī*). The second goal of *futuwwat*, then, was to acquire noble character traits (*makārim-i akhlāq*) and praiseworthy virtues (*taḍā'il-i awṣāf*):<sup>66</sup>



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They have said that *taṣawwuf* is the height of sublime character and the renunciation of all base character, i.e., *taṣawwuf* is the adornment of praiseworthy morals (*akhlāq-i hamīda*) and pleasing characteristics and the abandonment of blameworthy features. As long as the devotee is not perfumed with compassionate morals nor endowed with luminous characteristics, and his own characteristics ... are not completely destroyed, and the permanent characteristics of the Eternal essence and the substance of Unity have not become his for certain, he cannot be described with the beauty of *taṣawwuf*.<sup>67</sup>

Ibn ‘Arabī repeatedly stated, “Assume the character traits of God.”<sup>68</sup> Though others criticized him on account of his doctrine of *waḥdat al-wujūd*, which they alleged opened the door to ignoring law and morality,<sup>69</sup> Ibn ‘Arabī argued that ethics was, in fact, the purpose of his thesis. He built his basis for *akhlāq* (morality) by linking *khulq* (character) with *khalq* (creation). “Character is rooted in creation,” he said, although noble character traits (*makārim al-akhlāq*) belonged to God alone.<sup>70</sup> But since man was the most noble creation (*khalq*) of God, he therefore potentially possessed all the divine traits of God. According to him, the *fātan* was the complete human who had acquired the traits of God’s attributes in a perfectly harmonious manner.

Kāshifī continues this connection between *khalq* and *khulq* in a slightly different fashion. For him, the man of *ṭutuwwat* had to acquire noble character (*khulq*), which consisted of “permanent characteristics of the Eternal essence and the substance of Unity,” for the sake of mankind (*khalq*).<sup>71</sup> He cites an anecdote which stresses the need for good character in society:

They asked the Commander of the Faithful, Ḥasan, to define *ṭutuwwat*. He said, “Practicing [proper] ethics (*khulq*) with creatures (*khalq*),” i.e., living with noble character (*khulq-i nīkū*) with all, for friendship of creatures (*khalq*) is gained through noble character.<sup>72</sup>

The noble character traits that Kāshifī lists in his treatise were primarily a reiteration of the corpus of *ṭutuwwat* and Sufī literature up to his time. Building on what Kāshānī had

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delineated, Kāshifī emphasizes in his treatise that it was only possible to attain noble character traits and proper outward behavior by overcoming the *naḥs*.<sup>74</sup>

### b) The warrior image

The metaphor frequently used to explain the struggle against the *naḥs* was that of battle. Just as a real *fātan* was one who made every effort to be physically fit, the goal of *lūtuwwat* was to be spiritually and ethically fit. Not only did the real *fātan* defeat his opponents, he did his utmost to possess physical perfection for the pleasure of his spectators. He was beautiful, and his body was a specimen of symmetry and harmony. Similarly, the spiritual *fātan* was the one who not only had overpowered his *naḥs*, but who demonstrated it through his noble character traits after he achieved self-realization, i.e., he perfectly understood the ultimate reality of life. Much earlier and in a less sophisticated fashion, Kay Kā'ūs called this the fourth stage of *jawānmardī*, the stage of spirituality and purity (*ṣalā*), which meant that the *jawānmard* had attained perfect knowledge.<sup>74</sup> For Kay Kā'ūs, this stage was only possible for the prophets, but the writers on *lūtuwwat* assume this perfection as a possibility for any tradesman, a far cry from the actual life of the craft guilds in the bazaar. Kāshifī explains why such an enlightened man was called a *fātan* or *jawānmard*:

Know that whoever manifests the quality of *lūtuwwat*, is called a *fātan* and *fātan* literally means youth ... Figuratively it refers to the one who has reached the perfection of human virtues. The figurative explanation is that the disciple (*sālik*) is like an immature child as long as he is in the bonds of sensual lusts and natural desires, [but] when he advances beyond the stage of the *naḥs* and reaches the stage of self-realization (*dil*),<sup>75</sup> he is at the stage of a mature youth and just as a youth possesses external power and bodily perfection, a *jawānmard* also possesses human perfection and spiritual power. In this stage, he is called *fātan*.<sup>76</sup>

This definition of the *fātan* was very similar to that given in earlier treatises on *lūtuwwat*.

Āmulī used the same metaphor to stress that the *fātan* was a perfect and victorious warrior on the battlefield of the heart:

Literally, *fātan* means young man, but spiritually, *fātan* is one who has reached the perfection of his nature and the final end of maturity. As long as one's nature (*ṭabī'at*) and affections have the upper hand, and the impurity of mankind is visible, one is but a lad (*ṣabīl*). However, when one leaves that state and his nature (*fīrat*) finds salvation from evils, such as the diseases of sensual desires, the base things of life, and devilish features, he is like a *fātan*, for the spiritual power of man has reached maturity in him and he has attained virtue. Just as a young man possesses physical strength and bodily perfection, a *jawānmard* has attained full spiritual awareness (*ṣāhib-i dīl*) because when one's human nature has reached perfection, [the *jawānmard*] has reached the stage of self-realization (*dīl*).<sup>77</sup>

According to the writers on *futuwwat*, the spiritual warrior who moved from the lesser battle of actual warfare (which was the task of the *pahlawān* and the *ghāzī*) to the greater battle for the soul, had reached a higher and nobler stage of manhood. In chapter 2 we mentioned how the pre-Islamic Arabic notion of chivalry (*muruwwat*) compared to some of the characteristics of the heroic warrior. The Persian writers on *futuwwat* considered *muruwwat* as a basic component of *futuwwat*, relating it directly to the warrior imagery of destroying one's sensual desires.<sup>78</sup> In contrast to the pre-Islamic Arabs' delight in material pleasures, which they considered an essential component of manliness,<sup>79</sup> spiritual *muruwwat* meant to actually forsake one's pleasures in order to reach the stage of a *fātan*.<sup>80</sup>

### c) The meaning of detachment

As has been mentioned, Kāshifī's treatise is permeated by an ethic of detachment from the material world. Terms such as *tajrīd* (literally: stripping away; metaphorically: detachment from worldly interests), *talrīd* (withdrawal from society, solitude, retirement), *fāqr* (need, lack, resigning oneself to a constant state of spiritual need), *fānā'* (annihilation of the ego) are frequently used. His thesis is clear: one could only become a true *fātan* or *jawānmard* through total detachment from worldly interests:

The man of resignation (*fāqr*) is one who has abandoned everything ... in order to reach his supreme goal, just as has been said, "He does not arrive at total security

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[unless] he is cut off from everything.” As long as a person does not cut himself off from everything, he will not be [spiritually] united with anything.<sup>81</sup>

The emphasis on detachment meant a rejection of the desires of the carnal soul, rather than a rejection of material possessions per se. The spiritual *jawānmard* had overcome his worst enemy – his own ego. In the previous chapter it was demonstrated that the heroic warrior of the battlefield could not tolerate a rival. Both Isfandiyār and Rostam could not counter another *pahlawān* who challenged their preeminence. The spiritual warrior also had to demonstrate his supremacy. Kāshifī says, “*Futuwwat* means that there is no enemy in this world or the next.”<sup>82</sup> In other words, the *fātan* had fully destroyed the *naš*.

The ancient Sāsānid nobles, who considered themselves *āzādmardān* and were called sons of the free (*abnā al-ahrār*) by the Arabs,<sup>83</sup> defined freedom as the rejection of servitude and need. The *fātan* completely internalized and spiritualized this notion. The spiritual *jawānmard* gained freedom (*hurriyat*) of the heart and greatness (*‘izzat*) through his rejection of the desires of the self and the allurements of the world. In this way, the *fātan* became a spiritual *āzādmard*.<sup>84</sup> Whether something was gold or dirt, the spiritual *jawānmard* was oblivious to it.<sup>85</sup> ‘Ubaidullāh Ahrār’s justification for his material wealth and extensive possessions was that they had no hold on him. He stated, “My possessions are for the poor. This is the specific nature of all these possessions.”<sup>86</sup>

Ahrār, however, was not alone in demonstrating this ostensibly detached attitude towards wealth. The prophet Abraham, often referred to in the treatises as the father of *futuwwat*, was a man of immense wealth, but he was not attached to it. The Angel Gabriel had questioned God about Abraham’s wealth, and God responded, “Though he has much wealth, his heart is towards Me and not towards his possessions. You can test him ...”<sup>87</sup> Abraham

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eventually gave Gabriel everything he owned. Detachment simply meant to have cut off the desires of the carnal soul and to live without any reference to it.

Hamid Algar has stated that the Naqshbandi Sufis consider their code of conduct to be a reliving of the first generation of Muslims. Similarly, the all-encompassing ethos of *futuwwat* – death of the carnal soul – was a reflection of the ethos of the Qur’ān itself controlling one’s passions. Toshihiko Izutsu contrasts the ethics of the Qur’ān with that of the virtues of pre-Islamic Arabia. The pagan Arab (*jāhilī*) was “lord of himself” who refused to submit to anyone and who defended his sense of honor often with blind passion. Ideally, Islam – submission to God – was supposed to deal a fatal blow to this independent spirit and make man a true servant of God, who was capable of controlling his passions.<sup>88</sup> Izutsu’s definition of the Qur’ānic virtue of *ḥilm* seems to resonate with this ethic of *futuwwat*:

*Ḥalīm* is a man who knows how to smother his feelings, to overcome his own blind passions and to remain tranquil and undisturbed whatever happens to him, however much he may be provoked... In a certain sense the Koran as a whole is dominated by the very spirit of *ḥilm*. The constant exhortation to kindness (*iḥsān*) in human relations, the emphasis laid on justice (*‘adl*), the forbidding of wrongful violence (*ẓulm*), the bidding of abstinence and control of passions, the criticism of groundless pride and arrogance – all are concrete manifestations of the spirit of *ḥilm*.<sup>89</sup>

Kāshifī’s standard Sufi exhortation to the *fātan* to exercise an attitude of meekness (*ḥilm*) in his conduct towards his fellow man, as evidence that he had indeed dealt a death blow to his *nafs*,<sup>90</sup> contrasts with the arrogance, anger and scorn that often characterized the Naqshbandi Sufi associations.<sup>91</sup>

## 2. The Display of *Adab*

It is precisely because of the emphasis on detachment and control of one’s passions that the Sufi masters of Kāshifī’s day became so preoccupied with the distinction between outward form (*ṣūrat*) and inward meaning (*bāṭin*), and the need to harmonize the two. This

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is reflected in Kāshifī's categorical statement: "*Taṣawwuf* means proper conduct (*adab*) in all things."<sup>92</sup> Inner detachment, which was the spiritual life of *taṣawwuf*/*futuwwat*, had to be veiled because that was the Sufī secret. At the same time, it had to be expressed by outward form. While his inner self was right with God, i.e., free from any material attachment, the spiritual champion had to maintain a commitment to society and be honorable with people, which meant doing good and behaving properly. There could therefore be no *jawānmardī* without proper external conduct.

### a) The proliferation of codes

Although in Kāshifī's time, all codes of conduct had assumed an Islamic form, many of them resembled the traditions of the ancient Sāsānid man of *adab*: a concern for proportion in all things, avoiding hurting another's feelings, always following the golden mean, being astute and discerning in every situation, etc.<sup>93</sup> Kāshifī advocates the Golden Rule: "The fundamental point ... is that one should treat another in the way in which one would wish to be treated."<sup>94</sup>

Because good behavior was both the evidence of one's inner spiritual detachment and also the means of achieving it, most of the treatises on *futuwwat* compiled lists of the correct codes of conduct. Kāshifī's twelve "pillars" (*arkān*) - six external "pillars" of 'closing' one's desires and six internal "pillars" - closely resembled Suhrwardī's list.<sup>95</sup> Kāshifī's gives seventy-one conditions for *futuwwat*, which reflect many of the seventy two conditions in 'Alṭār's versified treatise, *Futuwwat Nāma-yi Manzūm*.<sup>96</sup> A summary of *futuwwat* is contained in four maxims: "Forgiveness when in power; humility when successful; generosity when in poverty; and giving without expectation."<sup>97</sup> Kāshifī devotes sixteen chapters to how the spiritual champion was to "speak, walk, dress, drink, sit, rise up and

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other matters."<sup>98</sup> He tries to cover every aspect of the life of the *fātan*. Even so, this moral advice was not exhaustive, since each of the professions had its own code of conduct which, he says, was beyond his scope.<sup>99</sup> Suhrawardī, too, appears to have wearied of the lists:

For the man of *futuwwat*, there are a great number of regulations, codes of conduct, virtues and characteristics of *futuwwat*, to such an extent that they cannot be numbered. In reality, the [codes of conduct] are performing noble characteristics with the creatures of God, as the Prophet said, "Do noble deeds with the creatures of God." Each will be discussed in its place. The man of *futuwwat* is acceptable when he is aware of all codes of behavior and when he overflows with the art (*hunar*) [of good conduct]. There must be no deficiency in him."<sup>100</sup>

*Adab* was thus an exacting skill or precise art which had to be practiced constantly. Just as the *pahlawān* had to be always on guard in his actions lest he make a blunder and thus stain his reputation, the spiritual champion had to devote constant attention to his conduct, lest any flaw ruin the perception of its perfection and purity.

### b) Visible, controlled behavior

In his general chapter on *taṣawwuf*, Kāshifī emphasizes the importance of proper conduct,<sup>101</sup> and then, in chapter five, he begins, "The *darwīsh* life consists entirely of proper conduct (*adab*)."<sup>102</sup> Although the supreme battle of the man of *futuwwat* was against the ego, the reality of that internal battle could, in fact, only be expressed through *adab*, as Kāshifī states, "proper outward conduct is the mark of inner conduct."<sup>103</sup>

In their response to the sometimes excessive practices of vocal *dhikr*, dance and physical detachment by other Sufī orders, the Naqshbandiyya stressed the anonymity of spiritual expression, so that at times fellow Naqshbandi Sufis could not even recognize each other.<sup>104</sup> In *futuwwat* this spiritual anonymity seems to be ambivalent, for the true sign of *jawānmardī* consisted in proper behavior. Kāshifī says, "whoever maintains proper conduct reaches the stage of true warriors (*mardān*)."<sup>105</sup> The spiritual champion was indeed very perceptible and

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hence, the secret of spirituality became most noticeable. In fact, his behavior should be distinct from others, so that it was clear he was a *jawānmard*. “He should walk in such a way as to have people notice that he has been in the service of [spiritual] champions.”<sup>106</sup>

Because *adab* was the outward expression of the spiritual warrior’s battle against the *naʿs*, the master could discern whether or not an initiate was a true *fātan* by his behavior.

Suhrawardī maintained that a master should accept an initiate only after he demonstrated that he could adhere to the code of conduct of *futuwwat*. Not following the code was evidence that the initiate had not been freed from the desires of the carnal soul, and hence, should not be allowed to associate with other *jawānmardān*.<sup>107</sup>

Āmulī, who wrote his treatise a century after Suhrawardī, echoed much the same idea: “The observance of *adab* is necessary in all circumstances.”<sup>108</sup> This meant that the *jawānmard* could never diverge from an external display of disinterest in the material world. When he was hungry, he must never show it, for that would be a sign of greed, and therefore evidence that the carnal soul was still alive. If he desired cold water, he had to drink warm water instead.<sup>109</sup> *Adab* was complete control of the self and a calculated attitude of restraint in every aspect of daily life. In this way, the *fātan* evidenced inner detachment.

Kāshifī uses a variety of metaphors to illustrate the concept of ‘death to the *naʿs*’. In the act of entering a *futuwwat* lodge, the *fātan* had to exemplify this fundamental ethic of *futuwwat*. He did this by laying down his weapon in a fashion which demonstrated a deeper, spiritual meaning:

Showing respect in entering the lodge is expressed in the following way: If one has a spear on the head of a staff, he lays it on himself, not upon the [floor of the] lodge. It means that we have struck our sensual desires with the spear of holy battle.<sup>110</sup>



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Travel was another metaphor, for every physical step a *jawānmard* took was, in reality, a spiritual stamping upon his sensual desires and a step towards divine union.<sup>111</sup> So was sweeping, which had to be done in a specific way. In sweeping the floor of the lodge one also swept away the dust of worldly affection from the heart.<sup>112</sup> The broom, therefore, was an important symbol for the spiritual *jawānmard*, signifying both cleansing and servitude. The ‘humble’ *jawānmard* was expected to carry a ladle and a broom with him to demonstrate that he was a true servant who did not object to any form of service, including sweeping floors and cooking meals.<sup>113</sup> In fact, all the domestic duties of a *tātan* who served his fellow *tātans* – sweeping, cooking, washing clothes and pots and pans – symbolized spiritual truths.<sup>114</sup>

The Naqshbandi Sufīs scrupulously cultivated the idea that outward restraint was the way to express the death of inner desire. The hagiographical works on ‘Ubaidullah Ahrār extol him as a spiritual leader who was characterized with perfect *adab*, both in private and public life, and who observed all codes of external and spiritual conduct.<sup>115</sup> Though it may have been to counter the perception of Ahrār’s wealth,<sup>116</sup> ‘Alī Ṣālī, who was twice in the presence of the *shaykh*, gave the following appraisal of him: “I never saw him yawn or cough. He never blew his nose nor did saliva ever drool from his mouth.”<sup>117</sup> The proper way of sitting was a vital aspect in the brotherhoods, and Kāshilī devotes a full chapter to how a man must sit, insisting on a distinction between the posture of a *shaykh* and that of his disciple.<sup>118</sup> One of Ahrār’s disciples, who had been in his service for 35 years, claimed he had never witnessed one untoward or unacceptable movement of Ahrār’s body. At a night session with fellow Sufīs, Ahrār is said to have sat through the entire night in one perfect posture, not once adjusting or resting his legs.<sup>119</sup>

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*Adab* thus also revealed one's status in the hierarchy of an association. It defined the person's place in relation to others. *Adab* - as exemplified by Aḥrār's perfect sitting posture - built up a person's sense of self-worth and prestige in society. Kāshifī quotes a maxim: "It is the man who imparts nobility to a place, and not a place to the man."<sup>120</sup> Nobility was not inherited, as was the case with the heroic warrior; rather it was attributed to the spiritual *jawānmard* who demonstrated perfectly controlled behavior.

We have already mentioned that improper conduct (*bī-adabī*), on the other hand, was a cardinal sin, as Kay Kā'ūs had indicated already in the 11<sup>th</sup> century in the more secular setting of the court. Suhrawardī stated that a lack of *adab* meant deficiency in the person.<sup>121</sup> It was a sign that the *nafs* was not under control. Aḥrār's apparent self-control was contrasted sharply with his anger at disciples who behaved improperly. At one point he was entertaining guests and asked a disciple to bring him some water. The disciple was tardy and gave the excuse that he was sick. The *shaykh* was outraged, "If you cut your throat and your blood flowed over me, it would be better than the news you have just brought me."<sup>122</sup> Paradoxically, this venting of anger seemed to be another form of controlled behavior and an effort to define and establish one's status in society.

Wearing shabby clothes or drinking from a broken cup were forbidden, for these were considered to be signs of deficiency.<sup>123</sup> Even in such matters as personal hygiene, it was necessary to follow detailed codes of conduct in order to demonstrate complete self-control:

The ear pick is for the purpose of removing dirt from one's ear, for dirty ears are a sign of negligence and negligence is not proper for a man of *lūtuwwat*, and where negligence is allowed, there is deficiency and deficiency is not worthy of *lūtuwwat*.<sup>124</sup>

Here Suhrawardī gave the reason why scrupulous behavior is so important. A flaw in outward appearance meant there was a flaw in *lūtuwwat*. Just as the heroic warrior could not

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fail or show any weakness in his career of *pahlawānī*, the spiritual champion could not allow any slip in his conduct, for it was a sign that he had not defeated the *naʿs*.

### c) Altruism

*Adab* became the actual, visible mark of altruism, as expressed in a verse cited by Kāshifī. “*Adab* consists wholly of doing good deeds (*nīkū kāri*).”<sup>125</sup> The virtues which characterized the *jawānmard* – generosity, hospitality, courage, self-sacrifice – were epitomized by specific codes of behavior. According to ‘Alī Šāfi, Khwāja Ahrār reflected kindness and self-sacrifice by disregarding his own needs for the sake of others. On one occasion he is said to have stayed out in the rain all night so that others could rest in the one tent they had brought with them.<sup>126</sup> Although *jawānmardī* meant to act without reference to the self, conscious and calculated good deeds were considered necessary for controlling the *naʿs*.

An important characteristic of the spiritual champions and Sufīs of the medieval period was their practice of hospitality and the communal meal. *Adab* thus meant a generous and open table. The warriors in *Samak-i ‘Ayyār* maintained a tacit understanding that “the door of the *jawānmardān* is always open.”<sup>127</sup> However, the spiritual *jawānmards* took the meaning of hospitality still further. The fact that so many of the treatises on *lutuwat* have devoted lengthy sections to the etiquette of entertaining guests and to the preparation and eating of food, indicates how essential hospitality was in expressing spiritual reality. Kāshifī describes thirty-seven “pillars” of eating, eleven “pillars” of drinking water and fourteen “pillars” of hospitality.<sup>128</sup> It was at the table that a man could best express his power over his *naʿs* and thus demonstrate the *adab* of *jawānmardī*. As a host, he exemplified generosity by withholding nothing from his guests, and as a guest, a man exemplified self-control by partaking of food properly and with restraint.

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Treatises on *tutuwwat* extol Abraham as the patron-saint of hospitality. He was the exemplar of the host, which Kāshifī interprets as a sign of his having destroyed the *naṣ*.<sup>129</sup> Abraham also vowed never to eat alone,<sup>130</sup> for eating alone signified greed: “Eating alone is a sign of niggardliness, and niggardliness has no place in *tutuwwat*. ... Where there is a sign of niggardliness, deficiency has crept into *tutuwwat*.”<sup>131</sup> The Prophet had said, “The worst of mankind are those who eat alone.”<sup>132</sup> Eating together was also a sign of spiritual companionship (*ṣuḥbat*) and solidarity within a brotherhood. On the other hand, the hagiographical works also provide many accounts of lavish communal feasts, characterized by gluttonous consumption, thus indicating that the code of *adab* was, again, more ideal than real. Kāshifī’s spirit of reform is evident here as he urges his readers to practice self-control and moderation, neither to be too stingy, nor too extravagant at table.<sup>133</sup> Nevertheless, expectations for hospitality were high. A certain host had forgotten to serve sweets and was subsequently despised and forced to leave the brotherhood, because a meal without sweets was considered incomplete.<sup>134</sup> The open table, then, became an occasion for the host to display both his spiritual and social status, while improper hospitality, like all improper *adab*, meant loss of social standing.<sup>135</sup>

Just as the heroic warrior established his greatness through supremacy on the battleground, the spiritual hero gained honor and status through his public display of *adab*. The aim was the same – to come out on top as champions – but the spiritual warrior did so through control of his self rather than by controlling others. It would seem, then, that ideal spiritual *jawānmardī*, which was to rid oneself of oneself and consequently find oneself in the ‘other’ for the other person’s welfare,<sup>136</sup> was encumbered by the emphasis of deliberate, calculated conduct.

### C. The Significance of the Initiation Rite

Although *adab* was the visible criterion for *jawānmardī*, much more was involved in reaching spiritual championship than merely practicing proper behavior. An outstanding feature of the treatises on spiritual *jawānmardī* was the description of the initiation rituals for disciples entering the *futuwwat* association. The writers on *futuwwat* interpret the rite as a statement of spiritual reality and a public commitment by the initiate to live according to that reality through the code of proper conduct.

As has been demonstrated in studies of honor-shame cultures, where public opinion defines the social status of an individual, ritual plays a profound role in delineating the boundaries of honorable and shameful conduct. Ritual is the formal, public means of incorporating an individual into the circle of prescribed behavior.<sup>117</sup> Through the process of the initiation rite, the adept becomes a man of honor, which obligates him to act in a certain way. Ritual, therefore, gives status and worth to an individual and, at the same time, controls him by delineating the expected code of behavior.

The works on *futuwwat* present the initiation rite, first of all, as a covenant by which the initiate swore to be loyal and to practice perfect behavior, and secondly, as a public affirmation of the initiate's 'skill' in performing good conduct. The initiation ceremony was replete with symbolism that illustrated the spiritual meaning of manhood. Two specific items of clothing were transferred to the initiate: the trousers or under garment (*shalwār* or *zīr jāma*), and the sash, belt or girdle (*shadd* or *izār*) which was an outer garment. Both items had their origins in the initiation rites of the ancient Sāsānid nobility; however, by the medieval period, the significance of their symbolism had evolved considerably and taken on a moral and spiritual interpretation.

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### 1. Covering the Loins – a sign of chastity

Fundamental to the concept of manhood in traditional Persian cultures have been the loins or the waist of a man, which were considered the locus of manhood. The loins were seen as the embodiment of a man's physical strength, and therefore signified service. A warrior wore a belt around his waist on which he fastened his armor. Hence, a girded or belted waist was a symbolic statement of a man's readiness for service to his patron. Secondly, the loins were the locus of a man's procreative power. Man's sexual strength, however, has traditionally been understood to be uncontrollable.<sup>138</sup> Hence, the loins or the waist, had to be covered to maintain sexual control.

According to ancient Persian custom, the cavalymen wore trousers (*sirwāl*, pl.; *sarāwīl*, New Persian, *shalwār*) as part of their armor which carried a strong military association:<sup>139</sup>

The use of trousers belongs to cultures where horse-riding has a special place ... The application of *sarāwīl* in the initiation rituals of the *tūtūwwa* is a direct Persian borrowing, a remnant of the costume of the *ashārān*, the Sāsānid horse-riders and champions.<sup>140</sup>

For the writers on *tūtūwwat*, however, the *shalwār* was the symbol of chastity. They argue that strength over the *naʿs* and the attainment of virtue came through personal modesty (*ḥayāʾ*). In terms of *adab*, it meant that through complete modesty one was able to restrain the sensual desires and attain to proper behavior, as a *ḥadīth* states: "No blemish is visible in the person who is characterized with the quality of *ḥayāʾ*."<sup>141</sup> Chastity was the means by which a person was able to overpower and control the carnal soul, as well as evidence that he had done so.

The code of chastity was not unique to *tūtūwwat*. In *Samak-i Ayyār*, proper sexual conduct was considered to be an essential code of *jawānmardī*. When the prince, Khurshīdshāh, found Mahparī, whom he had wanted to marry for a long time, he did not

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touch her. Rather, he “guarded her chastity with *jawānmardī*.” When she discovered this, her response was, “He acted as a *jawānmard*. I was all alone and he didn’t look at me.”<sup>142</sup>

The key element for a warrior was never to touch a woman. When a *pahlawān* was about to rescue a woman and therefore had to carry her, he would first swear that she was his sister.<sup>143</sup>

According to the writers on *futuwwat*, since the virtue of sexual control was so important, the trousers became an essential feature of the dress of the spiritual champion: “There is no *jawānmardī* without the trousers (*shalwār*).”<sup>144</sup> The trousers had to cover the genitalia (*‘awrat*) from the navel down to the knees.<sup>145</sup>

The donning of the *shalwār* is the symbol (*ishārat*) of the virtue of chastity, for outwardly (*sūrat*) it is the covering of the genitalia (*‘awrat*) and spiritually it is the dissuading of one from the desires of lust. [The *shalwār*] is the door (*bāb*) to chastity.<sup>146</sup>

Just as the *khirqā* (patched garment), which signified spiritual detachment, was characteristic of *taṣawwuf*, the trousers were considered to be the distinguishing garment of *jawānmardī*.<sup>147</sup> The Prophet Abraham was again credited with introducing this aspect of *jawānmardī*: “The first one to wear the under garment (*zīr-jāma*) was Abraham.”<sup>148</sup> He was the one who designated the *shalwār* as the uniform of *futuwwat*. This choice however, was not an arbitrary one. Hamadānī relates how Abraham is said to have heard the celestial call to cover his nakedness; hence he began to wear the trousers.<sup>149</sup> Kāshifī traces the origins of the trousers back even further. Although the primary focus in his section on initiation rites was the girding of the loins, he gives a two-fold justification for the use of the belt (*shadd*), which he connects with the *shalwār*. When Adam’s clothes fell off his body after partaking of the forbidden fruit of Paradise, he is described as being overcome with shame because of his nakedness, and so the Angel Gabriel clothed him with a grape vine from Paradise.<sup>150</sup>

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Kāshifī calls this event “the girding of Adam,” which is depicted as the covering for Adam’s shame.<sup>151</sup>

The symbol of chastity was not just the *shalwār* itself, but the *shalwār* that was secured or closed: “Keep the *shalwār* secure so that it does not open for unlawful acts.”<sup>152</sup> Conversely, “a loose *shalwār*” (*shalwār-i shul*), is a common present-day expression signifying promiscuity and connoting unmanliness. The secured *shalwār* meant that the man of *futuwwat* had resisted his desires, and this confirmed what Kāshānī stated, “The *jawānmard* is the man who does not follow his desires (*shahwat*).”<sup>153</sup>

Withholding or constraint (*bastan*) was a corollary to the notion of chastity. Suhrawardī’s six external “pillars” of *futuwwat* were all “pillars” of constraint. The first was the closed trousers, because “when a brother makes the commitment of *futuwwat* he must be totally free from adultery, because for champions, adultery is a defect.”<sup>154</sup> The last of Kāshifī’s six external “pillars” of *futuwwat* was similar:

Constrain (*bastan*) the stomach from eating forbidden food and the private parts from committing adultery, because it is obvious that the covenant of *futuwwat* is not perfected by a good adulterer, and the contract of *futuwwat* is not righted by a good lawbreaker. “The chastity of one’s private parts is essential / So that your heart may be adorned with *futuwwat*.”<sup>155</sup>

The sources furthermore relate chastity, the covering and constraint, directly to the eyes of the *jawānmard*. The eyes were the gateway for corruption, and the man who controlled his eyes had tamed the rest of his body.<sup>156</sup> Therefore, in this respect, moral health and proper conduct of the *jawānmard* was rooted in his eyes. He who “lowered his eyes,” as stated in the Qur’ānic injunction, was a man of *adab* and therefore a *jawānmard*.<sup>157</sup> Kāshifī states that it was the immodest gaze that led a person to improper behavior:

Close the eye from things not to be seen, for as God, Almighty has stated, “Tell the believing men to lower their gaze.”<sup>158</sup> Oh Muḥammad, tell the believers to lower the



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eyes from the sleep of unlawfulness because beholding the forbidden (*mahram*) is the beginning and source of much corruption and calamity.<sup>159</sup>

Zarkūb relates an anecdote about a young initiate who ‘looked around’ and caught sight of a beautiful woman and expressed his desire to marry her. He was unaware that she was his master’s wife. The master is said to have ‘magnanimously’ divorced his wife so the initiate could marry her. When the initiate discovered that his new wife was his master’s ex-wife, he acknowledged his gross blunder and hence, his deficiency in *futuwwat*. As the story goes, the only way for him to restore his manhood was to pluck out his eyes.<sup>160</sup> The Prophet Joseph, on the other hand, was the exemplar of *jawānmardī* because he practiced restraint. Therefore, he who “keeps his eyes and hands from the unlawful act, is a *jawānmard*.”<sup>161</sup>

Both Abraham and Joseph are cited as ‘fathers’ of chastity. However, according to the earlier texts, the actual donning of the trousers was rooted in the tradition about ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib’s modesty, which, again, was directly linked to the modest gaze. ‘Alī was ordered to investigate a suspected immoral deed in a certain house. He entered the house with his eyes closed and felt his way around the room with his hands, finding no blameworthy person. The Prophet told ‘Alī, “You are the *jawānmard* of this community.” He then clothed ‘Alī with his under garment (*zīr-jāma*) and girded his loins, saying, “I have perfected (*takmil*) you.” The 14<sup>th</sup> century writers on *futuwwat* maintain that the origin of *futuwwat* and its rituals were rooted in this event.<sup>162</sup>

The conferring of the *shalwār* upon the initiate was interpreted as the public affirmation of his chaste behavior. At the initial stage, when the *fātan* had still not matured, he had to wear the outer-garment (*shadd, izār*). Then, when he developed proper *adab* and gained the confidence of his master, he would wear the under garment (*zīr-jāma, shalwār*).<sup>163</sup> Zarkūb gives a detailed description of the ceremony of the conferring of the *shalwār*.<sup>164</sup> It had to be

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conferred directly and immediately from the master to the initiate, in order to emphasize that the trousers were linked to ‘Alī who had received his trousers from the Prophet. This donning of the *shalwār* completed the probationary period of the initiate. While the belting of the waist signified the oath of commitment to the covenant, which in practical terms meant an unconditional promise to follow the code of conduct, the conferral of the trousers confirmed that the initiate had indeed been faithful to *adab*. The under garment therefore, was given an important symbolic interpretation of moral virtue and good behavior in medieval Islamic society. In contrast to the flamboyant clothing worn by different artisan groups, the *futuwwat* treatises indicate that he who wore the *shalwār* exemplified ideal manhood and was a true *jawānmard*.

Although Kāshifī makes much of covering and constraint, he does not discuss the *shalwār* as the physical symbol of this covering. It is possible that the importance of the *shalwār* ceremony had declined from the time of the reforms of al-Nāṣir. Although the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> century writers on *futuwwat* make a clear distinction between the under garment and the belt or outer garment,<sup>165</sup> it appears that by Kāshifī’s time, the two distinct rites – the donning of the trousers and the girding of the loins – had fused into the conferral of the *shadd*, which incorporated both rituals.

Kāshifī, however, devotes an entire section of his treatise to discussing the various cloaks and their colors, the different types of headgear and other attire worn by *jawānmardān*. Rather than censuring the apparel, some of which is described as quite luxurious and ornate fancy embroidered cloaks, silver and gold threaded cloaks, fluffed-up laced cloaks, for a total of fourteen different types<sup>166</sup> – Kāshifī provides ethical and mystical interpretations of

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each item of attire worn by *jawānmardān*, which correspond to the ethical intent of the entire treatise.<sup>167</sup>

### 2. Girding the Loins – a sign of commitment

Kāshifī's detailed discussion of the *shadd* is not found in any other Persian treatise on *futuwwat*. Prior to him, no one had built such a strong spiritual and theological premise on which to interpret the ceremony of investiture. By Kāshifī's time, the ceremony of the *shadd* was much more than a probationary ritual to test the initiate before he was inducted into a *futuwwat* association. The ceremony was a complex mixture of rituals: the public declaration of the initiate, the procedure of girding, the drinking of salt-water, the partaking of *ḥalwā*, and the lighting of the lamp, among others, each of which, according to the *FNS*, was loaded with spiritual significance.

#### a) The declaration of the covenant

Upon the request of an initiate "to enter the circle of *futuwwat*,"<sup>168</sup> four distinct and separate masters and several brothers, who served as witnesses, performed the ceremony. Fundamental to the ceremony was the candidate's public declaration of faithfulness to the covenant of *futuwwat*.

As noted earlier, this verbal pledge was rooted in the Sufī doctrine of the Primordial Covenant which God made with Adam at the time of his creation.<sup>169</sup> Throughout much of the medieval period, any oath made between two men was understood as a remembrance or a ratification of the archetypal oath made by Adam. Medieval Islamic society considered man's solemn covenant with God as the basis for all human responsibility. Since mankind was regarded as having sprung from the loins of Adam, all men bore witness to that covenant and every human being had a fundamental moral responsibility before God.<sup>170</sup> And so, when

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the *īatan* made his covenant with his master, he reaffirmed that original covenant and pledged that he too would follow the path of the prophets and saints and take on the “burden of trust” that they had carried. This burden to carry the attributes of God then became the “burden of *adab*.” Kāshifī highlights the importance of obedience and commitment in the following anecdote:

The commander of the faithful, Ḥusayn, has stated, “*Futuwwat* is to be faithful to the original covenant and to be resolute on the right road of religion ... The duty of *jawānmarks* is to be faithful to the covenant of the day of *mīlhāq* (agreement) and the contract on the day of *alast*. A flaw (*naqṣ*) in the obligation, and breaking the promise are a sign of flaws in the faith.”<sup>171</sup>

Once one entered the *futuwwat* association, there was no turning back – it was a lifetime commitment. According to Kāshifī, apostasy from the law was reversible, but apostasy from the path of *futuwwat* was irreversible, for any breach or violation of the pledge was nothing less than a violation of man’s covenant with God:

[The initiate] must begin with manliness (*markāna*), because not to begin is better than negligence or to turn back from the path, for an apostate of the path is worse than an apostate of the law because an apostate of the law is corrected by a word, but an apostate of the path cannot be corrected by anything.<sup>172</sup>

One of the characteristics of the heroic warrior was faithfulness to his word, and in fact, not even a handshake was needed to seal the word: “The word of warriors is one, there is no need for a promise or covenant.”<sup>173</sup> For the spiritual warrior, however, his pledge of faithfulness to God was more profound and was accompanied with much more symbolism, which highlighted its significance. A breach in this pledge resulted in much greater shame, and faithfulness to it, greater glory.<sup>174</sup> Perhaps akin to the heroic warrior’s pledge to serve the king (a pledge which Rustam had violated at his own expense), a violation of the pledge to God was considered intolerable because it was regarded as a rejection of the very purpose of man’s existence and called forth the curse of God against him.<sup>175</sup> It was precisely because

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of the seriousness of the pledge that Kāshifī so laboriously delineates the codes and conditions of the master, of the apprentice, and of the ceremony itself. The initiate was made fully aware of the Primordial Covenant before he made the public statement of his loyalty. The crucial point was that this was a moral pledge to submit to and obey the law of God and to follow the codes of *futuwwat*. Any deficiency in behavior was a flaw in faith, which confirms Suhrawardī's statement that, "Deficiency is not worthy of *futuwwat*."<sup>176</sup> The Persian writers on *futuwwat* were concerned that neither the master nor the initiate show any visible flaw (*'ayb*) or deficiency (*naqs*) in their character or conduct.<sup>177</sup> In this sense, the pledge was an oath simply to obey the law of Islam in every aspect of life:

If they ask how one is to be faithful to the covenant, say that it is by right belief and keeping the pillars of the law. If they ask what is the law of *futuwwat*, say it is to submit to the command and prohibition of the Lord of the law and to obey the *shaykh* of the mystical path and to voluntarily and willingly accept the master of the belt (*ustād-i shadd*) and the pledge, who will always be in agreement with the laws of *Sharī'at* (Islamic law).<sup>178</sup>

### b) The sash/belt (*shadd*) of commitment

Just as the *shalwār* was the symbol of chastity, the sash or belt (*shadd*) is described as the visible symbol of the public commitment to the Primordial Covenant. The custom of girding the waist, both literally and metaphorically, has been practiced for millennia in the Middle East.<sup>179</sup> In the Perso-Islamic world, the practice of girding had its roots in the ancient Iranian nobility. Zoroastrians wore the girdle (*kustīk*), which signified their devotion to follow the tenets of the Good Religion:

The relationship between the lord and his *bandag* [servant] was symbolized, above all, by a girdle, worn by all Persians, including the king, throughout the history of ancient Iran. The girdle (*kustīk*) worn by the initiated Zoroastrian is the symbol of his obedience as a faithful follower of the good religion.<sup>180</sup>

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An ancient Pahlawi text, *Cīm ī kustīk* (Symbolism of the Sacred Girdle), has survived which explains the symbolism of the girding of the waist. The girdle represented the warrior's submission to his master, and therefore was a statement of his commitment to serve him:

Also in the service of his master, a symbolic reference to his subordination is the girding (in order to prepare him for service) of something which resembles the *kustīk*. And so the one who has girded the *kustīk* wears a great symbol of subordination (to the greatest lord) in that.<sup>181</sup>

A New Persian term for this sacred cord was *kamar-i bandagī* (belt of servitude) which the warrior wore in the service of his master, along with his *gūshwār-i bandagī* (earing of servitude).<sup>182</sup> Both items came to represent manhood.<sup>183</sup> This ceremony of the girding of the waist continued throughout the medieval Islamic period as a symbol of readiness for battle. The sash or *kamar-band* developed as important items of a man's public dress.<sup>184</sup> Once a noble man was girded with the sacred cord, he no longer belonged to himself. He armed his girdle with the necessary weapons in order to battle for his master whom he now served.<sup>185</sup> Here was the paradox of the girded noble: he was an *āzādmard*, free and high-minded, yet at the same time, absolutely devoted to his master.<sup>186</sup>

For the Sāsānid nobility, the belt was a clear statement of loyalty to the king. It meant that the client submitted to his patron. A millennium later, Kāshifī makes the categorical statement that, "The *shadd* means submission."<sup>187</sup> However, in the context of *futuwwat*, this notion took on a clear religious meaning – submission to God, which was the most basic tenet of Islam.<sup>188</sup> Before discussing Kāshifī's interpretation of the *shadd*, it is helpful to note how previous writers understood this "girdle of manhood." Āmulī, whose work was a translation of Ibn Mi'mār's *Kitāb al-Futuwwa*, gave the following definition:

*Shadd*: The girding of the waist is for the purpose of testing. This is the beginning of the covenant and contract of *futuwwat* and the means of entering the circle of *futuwwat*. The belted one (*mashdūd*) is the person around whose waist something has

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been tied in order to test him and after that to complete (i.e., validate) him. The *shadd* can be anything, except it must not be like the Christian belt (*zunnār*).<sup>189</sup>

*Takmil*: (completion, validation) To confer the trousers or arms. This can be done before or after the *shadd*. It is done when the elder sees the initiate is worthy. The validated one is the person who has been given trousers or arms.<sup>190</sup>

Āmulī considered the *shadd* as a probationary test of the spiritual courage of the initiate, whether he was ready to throw his desires ‘to the wind’ in the exercise of *tutuwwat*.<sup>191</sup>

Kāshānī reflected very much the same meaning: “The girding of the waist is a sign (*ishārat*) of the virtue of courage and the expression (*ṣūrat*) of standing ready for service.”<sup>192</sup> Rustam had girded his loins in order to serve the king without any thought for himself. The *fatan* was girded in order to battle his *nat̄s* and submit himself to God and His law, also without any consideration for himself.

The late 13<sup>th</sup> century poet, Nāṣirī of Anatolia, who wrote a versified treatise on *tutuwwat* in Persian, gave three interpretations of the girding of the initiate. First, girding represented purification of the initiate, which reflected the symbolism of the *shahwār* and stressed the importance of sexual modesty; secondly, it was an indication of one’s rank (*jāh*) and status (*hashmat*), which designated the initiate as belonging to a specific guild, i.e., each guild of artisans had a distinctive belt; finally, it signified service to society:

Those who have strung these pearls,  
Have given three meanings to the girding of the waist.  
The first is that they tie the waist of an initiate  
In order to produce purity in him.  
They then undo the belt, so that the trainee enters the world.  
Secondly, they gird him for service and also for rank and status.  
The last point, however, is companionship (*suḥbat*),  
So that society will be at ease through him.<sup>193</sup>

Kāshifī presents a detailed description of the term *shadd* in which he lists five examples of how it was used. In each example, he derives the meaning from the Arabic verb “to

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strengthen (*SHDD*).<sup>194</sup> The single Qur'ānic reference to *shadd* is the story of how Aaron “strengthened” Moses for service, which derives from this same meaning.<sup>195</sup> The *shadd* of the champion was also defined as the cry of wrestlers, “*shadd kun*” (Shout!), which traditional wrestlers used as they exercised in the *zūr-khāna* (house of strength).<sup>196</sup> Hence, *shadd* meant to give energy to a thing or to empower a person. Kāshifī provides spiritual interpretations for each of his five examples of the term: 1) Just as *shadd* meant “to confirm, the conferral of the belt was a statement that the initiate was to be steadfast in his pledge. 2) *shadd* meant “to attack” and so, upon receiving the belt, the initiate was entering the arena of battle against the enemy of the soul. 3) *shadd* meant “to run,” and so when the disciple took on the belt, he was hastening towards this goal. 4) *shadd* meant “to strengthen.” Upon receipt of the belt, the initiate received spiritual power to traverse the world of temptation. 5) Finally, *shadd* meant “the rising of the sun.” In other words, the initiate grew to maturity so that his inner being became flooded with light.<sup>197</sup> The *shadd* thus became an outward symbol of the disciple’s inner strength and energy to battle the *nafs* and therefore, of his status as a spiritual *jawānmard*.

To highlight further the moral and ethical significance of the belt, Kāshifī gives numerous cognates of the term, which convey the notion of endurance: “*Shadd* comes from *shiddat*, and *shiddat* means hardness.”<sup>198</sup> Just as a young boy becomes mature through self-discipline, the girded initiate can only achieve maturity through relentless discipline against his carnal instincts. Self-discipline was the way to attain proper *adab*, and as will be demonstrated, was also reflected symbolically in the professions, in the implements of the artisan, and in the regalia of the *futuwwat* associations.



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In the context of the theology of the covenant, the transfer of the *shadd* to the *fātan* signified his relationship to the prophets and saints of the past. Kāshifī says, “Technically, *shadd* is to be faithful to the covenant of champions and to submit to the command of the elders.”<sup>199</sup> The *shadd* was the visible symbol of the initiate’s link in the chain of *futuwwat*, which went back to when the Prophet girded ‘Alī’s waist, and even further back to an event prior to the Primordial Covenant, when the Angel Gabriel himself was girded.<sup>200</sup> In other words, the *shadd* visibly and figuratively bound the initiate to this religious lineage, and thus circumscribed him to follow the specific code of behavior of the prophetic age.<sup>201</sup> Through the symbolism of the *shadd*, the initiate declared his faithfulness to the pledge and his submission to his elders, and through them to the Prophet and God. In short, the belt became the all-embracing symbol of the Primordial Covenant and the initiate’s relationship to God. By interpreting the *shadd* in this theological framework, Kāshifī gives a moral and spiritual explanation of the essential initiatory item of attire for the *jawānmardān* of his day.

From Āmulī’s statement that, “Any belt can be used, except the Christian *zunnār*,” it is apparent that there were a variety of belts or sashes used during this period. Kāshifī’s descriptions of ten different types confirms this. The different types of sashes reflected the different artisan guilds to which initiates belonged. The belt, therefore, was not only a distinguishing feature of the spiritual champions’ attire, but each sash designated a specific guild.<sup>202</sup> Zarkūb mentions three different *shadds* - one of wool, one of cotton and one of animal skin – which were placed around the cup of salt water in the initiation ceremony and then conferred upon the initiates, according to their particular guild.<sup>203</sup> Kāshifī then gives each belt, including its shape, an esoteric meaning. The different types of belts were linked to angels who were exemplars of virtue and self-sacrifice, to be emulated by the initiate.<sup>204</sup>

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The chief belt in Kāshifī's day was the belt associated with Gabriel, who was regarded as epitomizing the victory over the *nafs*. The realization that one's *shadd* bore his imprint was supposed to serve as an impetus to live according to the code of proper conduct.<sup>205</sup>

### c) The ceremony

Earlier writers on *futuwwat*, such as Kāshānī, had already noted the spiritual interpretations of the rituals: "Each of these [rituals] has a beautiful secret and symbolizes a noble meaning."<sup>206</sup> However, Kāshifī was meticulous in articulating every detail of the initiation ceremony and insisted on "clearly explain[ing] the meaning of each action,"<sup>207</sup> to which he devotes a separate chapter.<sup>208</sup> The specific rituals, the individuals present, the words spoken, the exact gestures made with the hands and feet, the use of the lamp, the cup of salt-water, and the way in which the belt was conferred, knotted and untied, all had spiritual meanings which the initiate was expected to comprehend. The assumption was that only when he understood the true meaning of *futuwwat* could he attain its ideals.

The *shadd* was handled as a sacred item. At the outset, it was placed on the master's shoulders. Before it was tied around the initiate's waist, it was carefully laid on the prayer carpet, then ceremoniously kissed and placed back onto the master's shoulders. From there, the *shadd* was transferred to the initiate's shoulders with both ends reaching down to his waist. It was removed from the initiate's shoulders three times while the master uttered benedictions. Only then was the *shadd* tied around the initiate's waist.<sup>209</sup> Zarkūb's detailed description of the transfer of the *shalwār* compares to Kāshifī's description of the transfer of the *shadd*. The essential point was the establishment of a physical link between the master and the initiate through a direct transfer, hence the *shadd* or *shalwār* always had to be in physical contact with the master as he conferred it upon the initiate.

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The three knots tied in the belt were of great significance. The tying of the belt carried the meaning of chastity and restraint: "The closing of the eyes from seeing the forbidden ... and the closing/tying of the belt of *futuwwat* (*band-i futuwwat*) to adultery and unlawful acts."<sup>210</sup> Here Kāshifī links the tying of the belt to chastity, which was symbolized by the *shalwār*. Nāṣirī also says that the belt must be tied tightly in order to guard against the temptation of lust.<sup>211</sup> A three-day waiting period before the belt could be untied indicated a probationary element. The untying of the belt symbolized the ethic of generosity and open-handedness.<sup>212</sup>

Numerous charges, sermons, and commands were delivered to the initiate during the course of the ceremony, all of which reflected the seriousness and solemnity of the pledge. The three knots of the belt, several charges of three words and the three steps away from and towards the prayer carpet before the *shadd* was transferred to the initiate, were all given meanings which were related to the battle against the carnal soul. For example:

The three steps which the master takes away from the tip of the *shadd* signifies the following: one step upon the head of the *naṭs* and desires; one step on the head of the cursed devil; and one step on the material world. As long as a person has not trampled upon these three, he cannot attain the belt.<sup>213</sup>

The elements of three acts in the *futuwwat* ceremony were strikingly similar to the ancient Zoroastrian ceremony in which the belt was tied around the waist three times, each knot symbolizing one of the three Zoroastrian truths - good religion, good speech, good thoughts.<sup>214</sup>

The special cup of salt water used in the initiation ceremony receives less attention in the *FNS* compared to the significance it was given during al-Nāṣir's period and in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Earlier writers emphasized that each of the three elements in the ritual ceremony the belt, the cup and the trousers - was rooted in the story of 'Alī's act of modesty when he

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refused to commit any sensual deed.<sup>215</sup> Before the Prophet transferred the *shalwār* to ‘Alī, he affirmed ‘Alī’s *jawānmardī* and shared the cup of salt water with him, which was then passed on to the other companions.<sup>216</sup> The shared cup in the *fituwwat* ceremony was regarded as a continuation of ‘Alī’s original act of *jawānmardī*.

The shared cup of wine had been a traditional custom of the ancient Persian nobility and indicated comradeship among nobles.<sup>217</sup> In the oath of allegiance to a master, a young warrior would swear to the wine cup of warriors (*qadaḥ-i mardān*) and to his ancestral origin (*ašf*). Through the cup, the warrior symbolically united with his ancestors and his co-warriors, declaring his loyalty to his leader and colleagues and vowing to maintain their honor.<sup>218</sup> The men of *fituwwat* continued this ceremony of brotherhood and solidarity. Until he drank from the cup, the initiate was not considered a member of a *fituwwat* association.<sup>219</sup> Similarly, the master’s repeated references to the elders and spiritual champions of the past reminded the *fātan* that he was joining their ranks and continuing the battle against the *naṣ* as they did. Āmulī said that those who drank from the same cup in the name of their master became equal brothers. They were like tributaries linked to the same stream.<sup>220</sup> Like the *shalwar* and the *shadd*, the drink (*shurb*) was directly related to the initiate’s establishing his link to his spiritual ancestors. Secondly, it established his comradeship with fellow members of his association:

*Shurb*: (drink) The drinking of the water and salt in the name of the elder (*kabīr*) so that the adept is linked to him and so that the recognition of the associations (*aḥzāb*) and relationships are made clear. Subsequently, it leads to friendship and solidarity among the brothers, for they have all drunk from the same cup.

*Muḥāḍira*: (solidarity) This is the agreement among *ḥiyān* through the drinking of the cup and socializing together in gatherings for the purpose of uniting their hearts.<sup>221</sup>

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The use of salt-water had numerous interpretations. Water represented cleansing, life, power and knowledge, while salt reflected preservation, wholeness and the notion of justice, which was understood to be the perfection of all virtue.<sup>222</sup> Although Kāshīrī's description of the salt water ritual is brief, nevertheless, his interpretation of its symbolism reflected the same idea of comradeship within the brotherhood:

The water and salt which are present at the session signify that the followers of the path are pure and have a clear heart like water and that they relate to each other with the duty of fidelity (*ḥaqq-i namak*), so that they will take [fidelity] everywhere like [they take] water and salt.<sup>223</sup>

Not only did the drinking from the cup signify comradeship, but salt (*namak*), which had taken the place of wine, symbolized life itself.<sup>224</sup> Once two brothers had shared salt with each other, they had shared life together and were henceforth obligated to be devoted and loyal to each other. In other words, to share salt meant to carry out the duty of fidelity (*ḥaqq-i namak*).<sup>225</sup> Kāshīrī expresses the *jawānmardī* spirit of solidarity and comradeship within a guild of artisans with the term *ṣalā-yi naẓar* (purity of spiritual insight).<sup>226</sup> Ideally, this meant that neither the master nor any of the members harbored any suspicion or mistrust of each other. The ideal was an absolute "water-like" transparency and trust in relationship between the brothers.

Following the girding of the waist, there was also the partaking of the communal meal of sweet *ḥalwā*, which was to be prepared in a ceremonial fashion. The preparation and sharing of *ḥalwā* commemorated the event of Ghadīr Khumm, when, according to *ṭutuwwat* mythology, the Prophet Muḥammad girded 'Alī's waist as the public declaration of his leadership of the Muslim community.<sup>227</sup> 'Alī, in turn, girded numerous companions, chief among whom was the Persian, Salmān Fārisī.<sup>228</sup> Upon completion of this original girding, the Prophet asked for some food. Some pieces of bread, fresh oil and moist dates were

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mixed together and served. Hence, according to Kāshifī, the *ḥalwā* banquet was part of the original *futuwwat* ceremony and therefore, had to be commemorated.<sup>229</sup>

The entire ceremony harkened back to the prophetic age, and therefore was seen as a ratification of Islamic religious history and represented a continuation of it. Kāshifī insists on articulating the prophetic significance of each aspect of the ritual, because, for him, the notion that it was a sacramental reliving of the earlier auspicious age of the Prophet validated the ceremony. Only then was it possible for the initiate to become a spiritual champion. As Kāshifī says, “Whoever does not recognize the Prophet and ‘Alī (Walī) will not reach maturity.”<sup>230</sup>

### D. The Role of Leadership

The leadership of a *futuwwat* association played a central role in the ceremony of initiation. In theory, the Prophet and his family were the leaders of *futuwwat*, but in daily practice the initiate had to be guided and directed to the right path.<sup>231</sup> Any notion of independence and individualism for the initiate was precluded by the practice of solidarity and comradeship among the brotherhood, as well as the necessity for hierarchical relationships and structural order within the association. The concept of absolute dependence on a spiritual master, which was standard Sufī doctrine, was fundamentally different from the secular *jawānmardī* of Rustam who gloried in his notion of independence and freedom.<sup>232</sup>

#### 1. The Need for Leadership

There were numerous reasons for the necessity for leadership. First of all, the understanding was that, on his own, man was essentially weak. The concept of the tarnished

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soul meant that, left to his own devices, man remained in darkness and would eventually self-destruct. In the Sufi scheme of things, which was strongly influenced by the neo-Platonic view of the necessity for a virtuous ruler (a philosopher king, leader, prophet) to command the Virtuous City, as described in the ethical writings of al-Fārābī, Ibn Miskawayh and al-Ṭūsī, it was impossible to conceive of a virtuous and noble individual in isolation. The Qur'ān itself bore witness to the prophets' need to follow a guide in order to achieve right conduct.<sup>231</sup> Kāshifī presents seven common everyday experiences that illustrate man's inherent weakness and inability to achieve his desired goal of virtue on his own.<sup>234</sup> It was this awareness, then, or as Algar has stated, "by affiliating oneself with a *silsila* (chain), that this essential confession of helplessness is made."<sup>235</sup>

Furthermore, unless he was part of a larger community, the individual lacked a sense of self-awareness and "true self-sufficiency."<sup>236</sup> The individual had no meaning or purpose outside the context of a hierarchically-structured community. Therefore, related to the issue of the individual's weakness was the importance of establishing an ancestry or lineage (*nasab*) for himself in order to gain a sense of self-worth. It was through one's connection to the past and belonging to a brotherhood that one gained approval and acceptance in society.

A case in point was the heroic warrior who had considered his noble birth as the basis for his status in society, to which reference has already been made. Subsequent to the Arab conquests, when the Persian noble man was cut off from his heritage, he was left without prominence and reputation. Hence, he joined himself to an Arab patron to find acceptance and gain legitimacy in the new Islamic community.<sup>237</sup> Proper *nasab*, whether genuine or fabricated, provided prestige and potential for leadership, and so a person's genealogy, as the

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means of confirming his relationship and status in society, played a major role in Perso-Islamic society.<sup>238</sup>

As already stated, ideally, in the Islamic community it was not the prestige of one's lineage, but personal virtue, acquired through one's own deeds and conduct, that gave man his sense of self-worth and that validated him.<sup>239</sup> Kāshifī quotes Imām Ja'far Ṣādiq: "The noble man is one of virtue and proper conduct, not of lineage and relation."<sup>240</sup> However, the ideal of a man amassing credit for himself through his own virtue was flawed, for man could not become virtuous on his own. The individual could only attain ideal manhood by linking himself with the "men of virtue", i.e., the Prophet and his family. As Algar has stated, "The *silsila* becomes then a means of tracing one's way back to the Prophet, of gaining access ... to that 'auspicious age' which it is the purpose of the Sufī to relive."<sup>241</sup>

### 2. The Lives of the Prophets

Kāshifī takes great pains to link every aspect of *futuwwat* with the prophets and saints of Islam who are presented as exemplars of *futuwwat* and *jawānmardī*. Kāshifī stresses the importance of this link with prophethood as the validation for contemporary *futuwwat*:

*Futuwwat* was never without .... prophethood or ... the saints. It is not fitting that *futuwwat* be built up as an edifice of honor which would lack these two stages, but rather everywhere [*futuwwat*] has appeared, it came through ... the Prophet and ... 'Alī.<sup>242</sup>

The writers on *futuwwat* invariably emphasized the necessity of being part of a chain which was linked to the Prophet. Hamadānī states, "Whoever cannot establish his link of *futuwwat* to the Prophet is like a body without a head."<sup>243</sup> Without this link, the medieval Muslim was deemed to have no value in society, and therefore could never attain the ideal of manhood:

In the Sufī path (*tarīqat*) and in *futuwwat*, if a person battles for a hundred years and is absolutely generous, he has no validity (*i'tibārī*) unless he has served a champion who



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is linked back to the Prophet both in the path and in *futuwwat*, and who is linked, from generation to generation, to the cloak of the path and *futuwwat* which the Prophet transferred to ‘Alī. The chain of lineage of *futuwwat* and the path must be correctly traced back to the Prophet.<sup>244</sup>

Consequently, to join the chain of *futuwwat* meant to follow in the line of the prophets and saints who had gone before and who exemplified the ability to overcome the *naʿs* and attain noble character. In his *Akhlāq-i Muḥsinī*, a work of ethical advice, Kāshifī states that real *adab* meant to follow the Prophet in every aspect of life, because he was the man of perfect conduct (*adīb-i kāmil*).<sup>245</sup>

The writers on *futuwwat* list numerous pre-Islamic prophets who played a role in the pantheon of spiritual *jawānmardī*.<sup>246</sup> As already stated, Abraham was credited as having begun the chain of *futuwwat*. His great feat of spirituality in the public arena was his readiness to sacrifice his own life, his possessions and finally, his own son.<sup>247</sup> Joseph evidenced his ethical supremacy through his chastity and his public forgiveness of his brothers. Joshua, another great spiritual warrior against the *naʿs*, possessed great knowledge and insight, which was only possible through rejection of his desires. Finally there were the Seven Sleepers of the Cave who exemplified the abandonment of self-interest for the sake of God.<sup>248</sup>

At one point, Kāshifī traces the origin of *futuwwat* to a pre-historical event when the Light of Muḥammad girded the Angel Gabriel’s loins after he stated his submission to God.<sup>249</sup> However, the fundamental figure of *futuwwat* and the paramount *jawānmard* was ‘Alī. As he was for many aspects of Persian Islam, ‘Alī became the link between the pre-Islamic, Iranian concept of *jawānmardī* and the *futuwwat* of the Muslim community.<sup>250</sup> He was the one who legitimized the institution of *futuwwat* because he was the embodiment of all that *futuwwat* represented. Consequently, all the ethical values, ceremonies and regalia of

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*jawānmardī*, were traced back to ‘Alī. Āmulī states that, “All *jawānmardān* are followers of ‘Alī, and whatever they attain, it all comes through their submission to him.”<sup>251</sup> Thus, although Abraham was considered the starting point of prophetic *futuwwat*, in terms of the historical Islamic community, all *futuwwat* developed from ‘Alī. Numerous events connected with ‘Alī were cited as the origin of *futuwwat*: ‘Alī’s nomination to succeed the Prophet at Ghadīr Khumm and his deed of modesty have already been mentioned. The most striking event however, was at the Battle of Uḥud, where ‘Alī was said to have proven his *jawānmardī* by his total disregard for his own life and his willingness to sacrifice all for the sake of Islam. Kāshīlī quotes from the *Maqṣad-i Aqṣā* by Iḥṣayn Khārazmī Kubrawī (d.835/1431):

In the Battle of Uḥud, when a group of enemies had noticed the Prophet, he said to ‘Alī, “Oh ‘Alī, rise up in defense against them!” The Amīr [‘Alī] attacked them and brought confusion upon the group. Another group, more numerous than the first group appeared, intending to battle against the Prophet. Receiving a signal from the Prophet, ‘Alī attacked them and avenged the despised enemy by the force of his attack. After he killed some, the rest fled. The Angel Gabriel was standing by, enjoying the scene. He said, “Oh Messenger of God, there is none equal to ‘Alī.” ... At that time, without doubt and suspicion, a voice from an invisible speaker reached the ears of everyone, “There is no *ḥatan* except ‘Alī and no sword except the Dhū’l-*liqār* [‘Alī’s two-edged sword].”<sup>252</sup>

The writers on *futuwwat* relate several other events which illustrate ‘Alī’s control over his carnal desires and his selfless generosity.<sup>253</sup> Suhrawardī cites numerous anecdotes about ‘Alī’s forbearance and self-abnegation, and his rejection of the law of retribution (*qiṣās*).<sup>254</sup> The model of the heroic warrior bravely battling for his reputation was replaced in the *futuwwat* ethic of *jawānmardī* by ‘Alī’s model of tolerance and forgiveness: “In *futuwwat*, if somebody sins seventy times, and asks for pardon, he should be pardoned.”<sup>255</sup> Ultimately, ‘Alī sacrificed his head to the enemy, which was considered the greatest act of a *jawānmard*.<sup>256</sup> As the “pivot of all poles of *futuwwat*” and the “prince of the

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brotherhood,"<sup>257</sup> 'Alī became the exemplar of spiritual heroism and perfect conduct. Hence, every would-be *jawānmard* had to relate to him.

This link with 'Alī was possible through the chain of masters and saints who traced their spiritual lineage back to him, and through him, to the Prophet. The master possessed a "portion of the spirit" of the prophets of the past,<sup>258</sup> and so embodied all the individual perfections of the elders and saints before him. He was considered to be the living representative of the prophetic age. This link not only legitimized the initiate as a true follower of the Prophet, but it provided a sense of motivation. As the heroic warrior sought to emulate the exploits of his ancestors, the duty of the spiritual champion was to live up to the tradition of his spiritual ancestors and continue the conduct and behavior of the prophetic past.<sup>259</sup> In this way, the common man, the man without nobility, who was helpless and deficient in himself, was able to find spiritual nobility and self-confidence. This link was supposed to give him an efficacious experience of spiritual purification, for he was now a friend of God by virtue of his link with the Friends of God. Through the chain, the *tātan* "bear[s] the supreme imprint"<sup>260</sup> of obedience not only to the Prophet, but also to the supreme *jawānmard*, 'Alī.

### 3. The Leaders of the Ceremony

Kāshifī describes the masters who had to be present at the initiation ceremony. While he uses *pīr* (elder) as a generic term for all of them, he mentions four specific individuals who bore the following titles: *shaykh*, *naqīb*, *padar-i 'ahd Allāh* (administrator of the pledge) and *ustād-i shadd* (the master of the belt).

The *shaykh* in Kāshifī's treatise could refer to the *shaykh* of the Naqshbandiyya path.<sup>261</sup> He had two basic characteristics. First, he had to have reached the state of perfection

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himself, which meant that there was no deficiency in his *adab*. Secondly, he had to be able to bring others to that same state of perfection. He had to be perfect in order to “bring change in the disciple ... deliver the disciple from obstacles” and “set the disciple free from all impurities.”<sup>262</sup> The *shaykh* represented the Divine Law which had been revealed through the Prophet:

The *shaykh* [is] in the place of the Judge ... When a *shaykh* is not present, the Qur’ān is laid on the prayer carpet because the *shaykh* sits on the carpet of the law in place of the Holy Messenger, as one of the traditions states: “The *shaykh* in his tribe is like the prophet among his people.” So if the *shaykh* is not present, the Word of God, which is the actual law, must be present so that the office of prophethood is not vacant.<sup>263</sup>

Since noble character and *adab* were the ultimate criteria for *jawānmardī*, the *shaykh*, as the representative of the Divine Law, became the symbol of past virtue and of *adab* which the initiate had to live up to.

The *naqīb* was a prominent office in *futuwwat* organizations. During his caliphal reforms, al-Nāṣir had assumed the title, *naqīb al-futuwwa*, to indicate that he was the head of all *futuwwat* brotherhoods.<sup>264</sup> As caliph, he gave direction and definition to *futuwwat*. Traditionally, the *naqīb* functioned as a ‘marshal’ of *sayyids*, with the duty to verify the genealogies of *sayyid* families, ensuring that they were not fabricated.<sup>265</sup> According to Kāshifī, the *naqīb* was a man of discernment, who possessed esoteric knowledge: “The one who inquires into the states and reaches into the affairs [of things] with deep reflection.”<sup>266</sup> Hence, one of his duties in the *futuwwat* associations was possibly to ensure that there was no fabricated chain of transmission. The writers on *futuwwat* were insistent that the chain had to be traced correctly back to ‘Alī and the Prophet,<sup>267</sup> for a break in the chain meant a loss of validity and status.<sup>268</sup> Secondly, since the *naqīb* possessed esoteric knowledge, and thus was able to separate truth from falsehood, he tested the devotee to confirm his

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candidacy as a disciple. The *naqīb* also called the ceremony and inaugurated the meeting, as well as delivering one of the sermons connected with the belting.<sup>269</sup>

The “father of God’s pledge” (*padar-i ‘ahd Allāh*) administered the pledge to the initiate. The candidate was confronted with numerous charges throughout the ceremony, but it was the administrator who presented the initial charge of commitment to the initiate.<sup>270</sup>

Prior to the actual pledge, the masters had to ensure that the initiate was an adherent of the Sufi path.<sup>271</sup> In this sense, the path of *futuwwat* went beyond the mystical path, for only after he had entered on the Sufi path and assumed its doctrines and ethics, was the initiate qualified to seek admission into the *futuwwat* association. Suhrawardī’s commendation of *futuwwat* as the focal point of all paths, and as being superior to the *sharī‘at* and *ṭarīqat* had been a political statement in support of al-Nāṣir’s reforms.<sup>272</sup> For Kāshifī, *futuwwat* was a higher ethic because the ‘death of desire’ and *adab* had to be reflected in the professional associations in society and the rituals of *futuwwat*, which he understood to be profoundly symbolic of that ethic.

The key figure in the ceremony of investiture was the master of the *shadd* (*ustād-i shadd*) who inducted the initiate by girding him with the belt or sash. Like the *naqīb*, he too possessed spiritual insight. The master was not supposed to belt an unworthy initiate who was incapable of following the path.<sup>273</sup> Again, the master could not be deficient in any aspect which, in fact, was the only grounds for a disciple to leave his master.<sup>274</sup>

Kāshifī is very exact in describing the chain of each of his own masters, the administrator of his pledge, his *shaykh*, and his master of the belt.<sup>275</sup> All of his masters traced their authority back to ‘Alī and the Prophet. What is most significant is that Kāshifī himself wrote as a member of a *futuwwat* association, having been girded by a certain Darwīsh Salmān

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Bābakā. He also traces the chain of the traditions of *futuwwat* (*sanad-i akhbār-i futuwwat nāma*), beginning with his contemporary source, Darwīsh Muḥammad ‘Alī Ṭabarsī, a great orator (*ghurrā-khwān*).<sup>276</sup> Shaykh Najm al-din Zarkūb, the author of one of the *futuwwat* treatises, was eight ‘chain-links’ removed from Kāshifī himself. As always, the chain was traced to ‘Alī, “so that it will be clear that this order (*tāyifā*) was not without authority.”<sup>277</sup> Kāshifī wanted to ensure that his treatise bore the stamp of prophetic and saintly authority.

### E. The Sanctity of Work

A fundamental feature of *futuwwat* in Kāshifī’s treatise is that it went beyond merely transforming the hero warrior into a spiritual one: the ideal of *jawānmardī* had to be reflected in a man’s profession. No treatise on *futuwwat* expresses this concept more clearly than the *FNS*. Furthermore, the spiritual *jawānmard* had to publicly display his work and, what was most important for Kāshifī, the *jawānmard* had to transcend the mere physical aspect of labor. In an ideal sense, the *fātan* was not simply a butcher, water-carrier or wrestler. He was to consider himself a craftsman whose work carried profound spiritual meaning, albeit veiled in symbolic form. Kāshifī’s aim was to explain what each profession really meant, for once the artisan knew who he was and what each and every aspect of his profession symbolized, he would naturally move towards the supreme goal of *futuwwat*, that is, proper conduct. In the brief treatise, *Futuwwat Nāma-yi Chīt-sāzān*, a 16<sup>th</sup> century text devoted specifically to the guild of calico makers, the premise for writing the text is much the same to explain the spiritual meaning of the craft in order to reform the craftsmen themselves.<sup>278</sup>

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### 1. The Need to Work

Earlier in this chapter, the Naqshbandi interpretation of disinterest and detachment from the world was discussed. Rather than a rejection of the material world, detachment was understood as an inner, spiritual state. It meant “being independent of all things, not simply not having them.”<sup>279</sup> Notable in the Naqshbandi tradition of a spiritualized ‘material’ abandonment, was a strong disdain for asceticism. Aḥrār despised the hermit lifestyle; rather, he considered asceticism to be a state of mind. He told a certain student who planned to give himself up to solitude, “Solitude with God is not found in the mountains.”<sup>280</sup> Bahā al-Dīn himself had warned against asceticism and seclusion, because it could lead to pride.

The Naqshbandiyya not only disdained physical separation from society, but also strongly endorsed the gainful professions, for that was the only way the Sufī could be outwardly right with people. The Naqshbandi theology of work, therefore, clearly distinguished the order from other Sufis, some of whom advocated the abandonment of all one’s belongings and even one’s profession in the community.<sup>281</sup> ‘Abdul Khāliq Ghijduwānī of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, who was considered one of the early founders of the Naqshbandiyya order, said that one should lift the burdens from the creatures of God. This was only possible through gainful occupation (*kasb*): “The hand at work and the heart with the Friend is the established method of the path of the Khwājagān.”<sup>282</sup> It was considered shameful among the Naqshbandiyya to ‘live off others.’ Only through an outward profession (*shughl-i zāhir*) could a man acquire noble character. The story is told of a certain Sufī initiate who approached a Naqshbandi *shaykh* and asked whether he could teach him the mystical path. When the *shaykh* discovered that the person did not have a profession, he told him, “Go and teach yourself cotton-embroidery, for there is no visible spirituality in this group (*tāyifā*) without an

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outward occupation."<sup>283</sup> Kāshifī's treatise would therefore have been incomplete without his discussion of the professions, which he does in two separate chapters.

Āmulī stated that the benefit of *futuwwat* was precisely in this – that the *jawānmarā* was occupied in the affairs of the world and religion, thus being an encouraging friend for God's creatures.<sup>284</sup> Suhrawardī advocated that the master of *futuwwat* work all week and spend his earnings on Friday, the Sabbath, on 'parties' for his associates.<sup>285</sup> This generosity distinguished the men of *futuwwat*, who supported their lodges (which according to Maḥjūb included an exercise room) through their professions.<sup>286</sup> The *jawānmarā*s were expected to maintain an open table and provide charitable service to society, which was only feasible if they had an income.<sup>287</sup> In contrast, 'professional' Sufīs were considered parasites who depended on endowments (*awqāf*) for their support.

Kāshifī provides the standard religious premise for the value of work. A profession was essential for the mystical path as a means to an end. The goal of man was to worship God, but worship was only possible when one's mind was at peace, and peace of mind was only possible when one's physical needs were met. This was only possible through a profession.<sup>288</sup> Kāshifī reiterates the strong Naqshbandi principle that a *darwīsh* should not be a burden to others, but rather, should be self-sufficient. The basic purpose of work was to meet one's material needs and to do good to others. Kāshifī's counsel to the *fātan* to engage in work is rooted in the basic Qur'ānic injunction to practice righteousness in society:

Man is by nature a social animal and whoever gains profit but does not pass on gain to others has not worked at all, according to what Almighty God has said, "Help ye one another unto righteousness and pious duty."<sup>289</sup> Therefore, any *darwīsh* who is not occupied with work, has become a burden to others and a cause of suffering for the world. This is not proper in the mystical path.<sup>290</sup>



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Jürgen Paul has provided an excellent survey of urban and rural professions in Khurāsān and Transoxiana during the 14<sup>th</sup> - 15<sup>th</sup> centuries: cotton farmers, bird hunters, fruit tree farmers, potters, cutters, shoe sellers, weavers of mats, cotton makers, pin smiths, druggists, perfume-traders, goldsmiths, etc. In Herat and Samarqand there was a depreciation of the rural professions, and an increase in the so-called noble professions such as bookbinding, paper-making, goldsmiths, bankers, etc.<sup>291</sup> However, during the 15<sup>th</sup> century there also developed an intellectual class in Herat who made their living as professional mystics. For the worldly-minded Sufīs in Bukhārā this was reprehensible. Aḥrār despised handouts and disdained such Sufīs who did not work for a living. In fact, work considered lowly was nobler than receiving gifts of questionable origin.<sup>292</sup> Aḥrār may have had a political motivation, for wherever the Khwājagān encouraged labor, whether urban or rural, they were able to influence deeply all levels of society. Professional Sufism, on the other hand, as well as ostentatious spirituality, resulted in an alienation from society. It may be for this reason that Kāshifī sought to interpret the professions as spiritual and moral metaphors. As Kāshifī witnessed the disdain for physical labor among the Sufī elite and, at the same time, was disturbed by the lack of *akhlāq* and *adab* among artisans, he wrote his treatise in order to reform the working class by spiritualizing their work and thereby challenging them to exhibit proper behavior. The purpose of the writer, who himself was a *lātan*, was that if the craftsman understood the spiritual nature of his profession and practiced his skills accordingly, he would live correctly in society.

Kāshifī gives the greatest prominence to the guild of eulogizers of the Prophet and his family (*maddāḥān*). He calls it a “most noble and profitable” association,<sup>293</sup> perhaps because he himself was a preacher (*wāʿiẓ*). However, he extolled every profession: The water-

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carriers were most respectable,<sup>294</sup> medicine-sellers were superior,<sup>295</sup> story-tellers were beneficial,<sup>296</sup> weight-lifters were men of purity,<sup>297</sup> plasterers did a lot of good in society,<sup>298</sup> archery was a most noble activity,<sup>299</sup> etc. Similarly, the calico makers saw their own work as superior: “Know that this work is the chief (*sarwar*) of all professions of the world.”<sup>300</sup> It would seem that a positive appraisal of one’s profession would provide a strong motivation for personal improvement and to strive to work in a way that was worthy of one’s craft.

Kāshifī describes over forty professions, organizing them into two categories: performance and tool professions.<sup>301</sup> The first group were entertainers, such as orators, wrestlers, jugglers, etc., who displayed their skills in the “public arena” (*ma’raka*), and the second were craftsmen who used hand-held implements to carry out their trades. Kāshifī admits that his classification is not definitive. The guild of water-carriers, listed under the men of rhetoric (*ahl-i sukhan*), deserve an appendix because they were also part-time orators and so actually belonged to two guilds.<sup>302</sup> Tight-rope walkers could just as easily be troupers (*ahl-i bāzī*); however he lists them under the guild of men of power (*ahl-i zūr*) because of their necessary qualifications of strength and courage.<sup>303</sup> Nevertheless, Kāshifī’s presentation of each guild and sub-division is systematic. After describing the moral or spiritual benefit(s) of each particular guild, he highlights their religious mandate to ensure that it was connected to the prophetic age. He explains the regalia and instruments of the guilds, their esoteric meanings, the code of conduct for performers, and often provides spiritual lessons based on the letters of the terms he has used.

### 2. The Display of Work

Traditionally, the field of battle (*ma’raka* or *maydān*) was the place where one proved oneself a champion. As was discussed in chapter two, the single combat between two

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warriors on the public battleground was an important leitmotif in both the epic and the popular romance. The warrior's standard cry to his opponent, "Come and show your manliness (*mardī*),"<sup>404</sup> signaled the start of the combat where two warriors set out to prove their manhood on the battleground.

In Tīmūrid Khurāsān, the *ma'raka* had become the general term used for a place of public entertainment. 'Alī Šāfi relates several instances when Ahrār and Kāshgharī watched wrestling matches at outdoor wrestling arenas (*ma'raka-yi kushī-gīrān*). In one incident, the market place was so crowded that the two *shaykhs* had to hold hands in order not to lose each other. They came across one wrestling match where a strong, fine-bodied wrestler was about to defeat his weak and ugly opponent. Using their telepathic powers, the two *shaykhs* empowered the underdog, who suddenly threw the stronger man to the ground. 'Alī Šāfi concludes: "A great roar arose from the crowd ... people were amazed, wondering how this was possible."<sup>405</sup>

By the early Šafawid period, all public performers, like orators, minstrels and story-tellers, as well as jugglers, snake-charmers or magicians were called *ma'raka-gīrān* (public performers).<sup>406</sup> While the performer hoped for some monetary reward, common folk gathered for entertainment.<sup>407</sup> The medieval tradition of the story-teller (*qiṣṣa-khwān*), which was one of the guilds that Kāshifī discusses, has continued into the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>408</sup>

The *ma'raka*, then, was an open arena, a place of performance, where the performer exhibited his skills and proved his worth (or the worth of the wares he was selling), and a place of entertainment for spectators. According to Kāshifī, the arena had a similar two-fold purpose for the members of the guilds - to exhibit one's skill and to entertain the audience.<sup>409</sup> In the religious legitimization for the guild of tight-rope walkers, Kāshifī stated

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that Muḥammad “was entertained by the rope-walking of a spider ...”<sup>10</sup> When ‘Alī displayed his courage on the real battleground at Uḥud, the Angel Gabriel enjoyed watching him and affirmed him in *futuwwat*.<sup>11</sup> By using his skill or art, the performer’s task was to “please the souls” of spectators when he stepped into the arena.<sup>12</sup> Public relations were essential for the performer. He had to ensure his audience was being entertained:

He should be cheerful and maintain a happy face, 2) He should be fit, ingenious and jovial, 3) He should not come to the arena late and he should observe the times of prayer, 4) He should set up the arena in a wide, spacious place or location, 5) If a person is standing or sitting in a wrong place he should speak gently and kindly with him, 6) He should try to attract support from those who are present.<sup>13</sup>

The performance should not only be pleasant, but also professionally competent. The primary condition for entering the arena was knowledge (*dānīsh*),<sup>14</sup> in other words, professional skill. If not, the wrestler, for example, was no more than an animal.<sup>15</sup> The code of conduct for the story-teller stresses the importance of being well prepared and avoiding excess:

If the person who relates the story is a beginner, he should have recited it to the master, and if he is mature, he should have reviewed the story so that he does not stumble ... He should speak with ingeniousness and elegance and not be crude or wearisome. ... He should have adorned prose with verse beforehand, in such a way that the performance is not wearisome, for sages have said that to recite poetry within stories is like salt in the pot. If it is too little, it is tasteless and if it is too much, it is over-salty. Therefore, one should keep a balance in this. Speeches should not be absurd or exaggerated, for they become shallow in the eyes of people. Speeches should not be ambiguous or metaphorical, for they are hard to understand. One should not beg in excess, nor be tight-listed with people. One should not be too brief, nor too drawn out; rather, observe balance.<sup>16</sup>

Entertainment, however, should be teleological, i.e., the performer should seek to bring others to submission to God. In fact, the religious legitimization for the arena – the Qur’ānic event where Adam proved his superiority and made the angels aware of their weakness when he gave names to the creatures of God – illustrated the essential purpose of the arena: “In a

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place where such a glorious arena was prepared, Adam arose and displayed his skill. ... Adam made all those in the arena submit to him by way of his knowledge."<sup>117</sup> By his feat of lifting a heavy beam of wood, Noah, the 'religious founder' of the guild of weight-lifters, proved his power and in this way, made unbelievers believe in him.<sup>118</sup> Just as the angels prostrated themselves before Adam, admitting their helplessness, in the same way, the performer was expected to spiritually influence his opponent and the spectators who were watching him. The essential feature of the initiation rite was the submission of the *lātan*. Now the performer was to bring others to that same spiritual state: "The goal of the arena is the winning of hearts, for if hearts are not won to the master of the arena, his work is not complete."<sup>119</sup>

Whereas Bahā al-Dīn had warned against the danger of pride in the practice of withdrawing from society, Kāshifī's concern is the pride of showmanship that came from the professions. According to him, some of the professions had become shallow. Some rock-crushers, who were a sub-guild of the guild of athletes (*zūr-garān*), were going to extremes and crushing rocks on their chests and backs to prove their manliness. According to Kāshifī, this was not based on prophetic practice, and therefore not sound.<sup>120</sup> Certain swordsmen were using their weapons only for ornamental purposes. The sword had merely become a means of self-promotion, which, according to Kāshifī, had no place in the guild of warriors.<sup>121</sup>

For the author, the answer to public showmanship and ostentatious conduct in the heyday of Tīmūrid popular culture, however, was not physical withdrawal from society nor the abandonment of the arena or one's profession. The solution was a veiled, yet visible spirituality in public life. True to his intent in the treatise, Kāshifī exhorts all *jawānmard*s,

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whether in the public arena or in the trades, to become champions against the carnal soul and consequently, to become men of *adab*. Never forgetting that “the object of *futuwwat* is the *naʿs*,” Kāshifī reminds athletes that their primary competition was against the ego:

The spiritual reality of athletes is that the enemy of *naʿs* must be trampled under foot. If not, the strength of animals and brutes is greater than that of man. So one must not boast in strength and one must abandon the desires of the carnal soul (*hawā-yi naʿs*) in order to become a champion in the arena of manhood (*mardī*).<sup>322</sup>

The heroic warrior had always prided himself on the power of his hands. His ultimate strength was demonstrated in the final stage of the single combat where warrior battled warrior without any weapon except their bare hands. Quoting Saʿdī, Kāshifī challenges that notion of greatness: “Do not imagine that manliness (*mardī*) comes by the strength of the hand and the shoulder / If you overcome your sensual desires, I know you are a real runner (*shāʿir*).”<sup>323</sup>

Hence, a self-effacing attitude and controlled, professional behavior was essential for performers and craftsmen. True, the *jawānmard* entered the arena to entertain spectators and to display his skill, but according to the spirit of *futuwwat*, his ultimate aim was neither to win, nor to make a profit. And although performance might be the *fātan*'s means of income, it should not be his focus. This was particularly true of the religious orator, who should not sell his religion.<sup>324</sup> Kāshifī's concern is that the arena not become desecrated through arrogance and self-promotion, which, as we have noted, appears to have become the norm during his day. The performer had to willingly defer to his opponent, because this exemplified the humility of a *fātan*. *Adab*, then, and not winning was supposed to be the aim of the spiritual champion. This contrasted sharply with the heroic warrior, who vaunted his superiority and staked his identity on winning. The following, according to Kāshifī, should be the standard code of conduct for performers in the arena:

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Despite [the performer's] need to make a living, if a holy or pious man arrives and desires to enter the arena, [the performer] should not refuse him. ... He should possess forbearance and if someone is inconsiderate to him, or if the spectators leave the arena, he should accept it and not become frustrated. ... He should ... not exaggerate excessively. ... He must be free from all malevolence and display no bigotry against the brother of faith who is in the arena. ... If in his vicinity a hundred arenas appear, he should not harbor jealousy and he should seek his daily sustenance from Almighty God. ... He should be free from self-interest or hypocrisy ... He should not harbor pride or arrogance, rather he should be humble and self-effacing. If he sees a worthy darwīsh, he should give him a token gift. If brothers of the Path are present [and] one has claimed victory [in the arena], he should maintain pure spiritual insight (*ṣalā-yi nazar*) with the brothers.<sup>125</sup>

The heroic warrior's passion for supremacy and his spirit of arrogance were brought under control in the conduct of the spiritual champion. Instead of the public boast and taunt, the spiritual champion was to maintain a self-effacing attitude toward his rival. Kāshīrī's lengthy expositions on the performers and craft guilds were intended primarily to emphasize the necessity for good character and proper behavior. Similarly, the anonymous writer of treatise of the *Chīt-sāzān* makes *adab* the criterion for training an apprentice.<sup>126</sup>

### 3. The Meaning of Work

#### a) Work as *dhikr*

One of the Naqshbandiyya's unique practices, which related directly to its negative attitude towards spiritual showmanship, was the silent *dhikr*.<sup>127</sup> According to the Sufi order, when a man who was in communion with God entered the bazaar and transacted business, he was to hear only the sound of *dhikr*. This was because the artisan was actually a lover whose heart was 'occupied' with divine love and so everything he observed and heard around him was a reminder of the names of God.<sup>128</sup> This meant that one could carry on any outward activity without losing contact with God. Because of this emphasis on the silent *dhikr*, the

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common folk of lesser means were able to “become fully valid members of the [Sufi] path without having to completely change their lifestyles.”<sup>129</sup>

The makers of calico considered themselves as being in a constant state of *dhikr* through each procedure of their work. Detailed procedures of work were much more than technical skills. Every movement was an act of liturgy and every instrument was a sacred vessel.<sup>130</sup> The fire under the pot, the pot itself, the worker’s stirring the pot, and the firewood were all constantly uttering benedictions of God.<sup>131</sup>

According to the Naqshbandi writers of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, this *dhikr* ‘on the job’ was imperceptible to the public eye. It was truly internalized spirituality or *khalwat*. Mystical experience and daily life were so intertwined that the non-initiated would not notice, and at times, even colleagues were unaware of such an individual’s affiliation. Jürgen Paul contends that by combining mystical practice with daily life, the Naqshbandiyya were able to survive in situations where the public appearance of Sufis might have been prohibited or discouraged.<sup>132</sup>

### b) Work as parable

The combination of one’s profession and preoccupation with God was perhaps the most sophisticated way for the *fātan* to remain in solitude and keep the secret of spirituality, and at the same time, to remain active in society. ‘Alī Ṣafī relates an incident that highlights how the *darwīsh* was expected to express his spirituality through his profession:

When I [*Shaykh Ādam*] first entered the service of [I]ḥadrat Īshān [‘Uбайдullāh Aḥrār], I was given some [mystical] training. I tried very hard and endured much hardship so that slowly the effects and results became noticeable. By the grace of [Aḥrār] this was strengthened day by day until after sometime ... I attained complete awareness. Suddenly [Aḥrār] ordered me to work at some worldly affair such as agriculture and so on. Because of this occupation with the affairs of the world and the weakness of my inner life, the ‘experience’ slowly faded. I was very distressed because of this. I told myself that I must share this with [Aḥrār] in private. When I found the opportunity,



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Aḥrār said, “In the path of the Khwājagān, *khalwat dar anjuman* is absolutely basic. Their work and duties are based on this. ... The jealousy (*ghayrat*) of love demands that the Beloved be veiled (*mastūr*). Is it ever proper for the jealous lover to have an unveiled Beloved (*maḥbūb-i bī-parda*)? It is not the custom of this order (*tāyifa*) to expose this experience. There is no alternative but to bring about this experience with an outward occupation.”<sup>333</sup>

This passage clearly illustrates the dialectic between the veiling and the unveiling of the mystical secret. Even though the experience of divine love must be hidden, it nevertheless must be revealed through one’s profession. In fact, it was through the practice of one’s profession that it could be achieved.

Kāshifī’s treatise confirms this notion, even though he never mentions the silent *dhikr* or equates the activities of the performers and craftsmen with *dhikr*. For him, work itself was *dhikr*. The profession did not conceal one’s solitary reflection on God, nor was a craftsman merely preoccupied with thoughts of God in his heart while at work, nor did the different sounds and movements on the job become *dhikr*. Rather, the profession itself and every action and tool of the profession acquired spiritual meaning. Spirituality was not to be concealed, rather, it was to be exhibited and experienced through the professions, rather than through dance or contemplation. Drawing from this neo-Platonic perception of reality, Kāshifī considers the public arena and the trades as theatres of manifestation of divine truth.

Just as the heroic warrior exhibited his supremacy and manhood in public combat, the spiritual *jawānmard* demonstrated his power over the ego and his acquisition of noble character through his particular skill or trade. This could be as entertaining and thrilling as wrestling and rope-dancing, or as mundane as water-carrying and brick-laying. Each of these skills or crafts became a metaphor for the ethical and spiritual nature of *tutuwwat*. The wrestler, for example, was not merely competing against an opponent, he was engaging in a

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battle between integrity and corruption, between divine unity (*tawḥīd*) and polytheism (*shirk*).<sup>334</sup>

To an outside observer it may appear highly idealistic, but for the Sufi-oriented writer, the professions were elegant symbols and commentaries on inner spirituality. The puppeteer, for example, was not merely entertaining. Kāshifī states, “No, it is serious business ... sport is a sign of the unity (*tawḥīd*) of actions.”<sup>335</sup> Man is like a puppet and the Perfect Master, from the invisible world, plays with the universe:

We are puppets and Heaven is the Divine Puppeteer  
This is the reality (*ḥaqīqī*), not the metaphor (*majāz*)  
We have come for two, three days and we are playing  
Again one, by one, we are going back to the chest (*ṣandūq*) of nothingness.<sup>336</sup>

Such an understanding of one’s profession should somehow stimulate the puppeteer to greater spirituality and ethical reality. Even as a puppeteer, he could experience self-realization.

The guild of porters lent itself exceptionally well to a similar spiritual metaphor, because the term “*ḥaml*” (to bear) reflected the Sufi notion of taking on the “burden of trust” (*bār-i amānat*) which man assumed on the Day of the Covenant:

It is clear that the outward form (*ṣūrat*) of hauling burdens is a symbol of bearing this burden of trust (*bār-i amānat*). Therefore the bearer of burdens must carry out the conditions of this task so that he illustrates both the visible and spiritual aspects of burden-bearing.<sup>337</sup>

For Kāshifī, the porters represented the spiritual evolution from carrying actual goods to bearing the spiritual burden of divine trust. So, while the porter was hauling goods, he was at the same time in a state of perpetual worship and growing in his spiritual refinement.<sup>338</sup> The more he became aware of the real meaning of his profession, the closer he reached perfection.

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Similarly, the tight-rope walker did much more than exhibit his physical skill. His art was a double metaphor. First, the rope represented (*namūdār*) the Bridge of *Ṣirāṭ* which all believers must cross on the Day of Judgment. The tight-rope walker symbolically enacted the crossing of this bridge when he performed his art, and so his entertaining skill immediately became an ethical sermon which motivated him and his audience to realize the true meaning of life:

So whenever he walks on a rope, although it is not as narrow as a hair, it is dangerous and dreadful. Therefore, he must realize that he is stepping onto the Bridge of *Ṣirāṭ* and from where it is passing. He must constantly be aware of performing actions so that he not will falter on the day when he is crossing the [real] Bridge of *Ṣirāṭ*.<sup>139</sup>

Tight-rope walking could not be performed without the necessary bodily balance, and so Kāshifī presents another moral application. By balancing himself with his hands, the tight-rope walker displayed a didactic discourse on the scales of good and bad deeds on which his life would be weighed and judged.<sup>140</sup>

Just as the performers in the arena were to be worthy of the spiritual meaning of their skill, the artisans and tradesmen were to be worthy of what their implements represented. Only the man who followed the necessary code of conduct was worthy of taking the handle (*qabḍa*) of the tools of his trade. Though it may simply be a literary device used by Kāshifī to distinguish between tradesmen and performers rather than an essential difference, it is noteworthy that the primary didactic import for the tradesman lay not in the trade itself, but rather in his tools. For example, the sword of the soldier, rather than the soldier himself, was imbued with religious symbolism.<sup>141</sup> The shields, of which there were four, were all metaphorical in nature – the ultimate shield being God Himself.<sup>142</sup>

Since Kāshifī considers each tool to be a metaphor articulating some moral or spiritual truth, the qualification to possess a tool was not based on the artisan's skill in handling the

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instrument, but rather on his personal conduct. The man who owned an implement (*ṣāhib-i ʿin qabḍa*) had to maintain a certain ethical standard:

The owner of the shield must be generous and a *jawānmard*.<sup>443</sup> The one who possesses the mace (*gurz*) must be tolerant and possess *jawānmardī*.<sup>444</sup> The one who possesses the [bow] must make himself pleasing in the service of lovers, and pass the time in piety and devotion and be sound in soul so he is allowed to handle the weapon.<sup>445</sup> Who is able to take the pestle in hand? The one who is adorned with the characteristics of manliness (*mardī*) and *jawānmardī*.<sup>446</sup>

Whereas the weapons for the heroic warrior, such as the size and weight of his mace (*gurz*), identified the warrior's power and prestige, for Kāshifī the implements carried ethical weight. He seeks to present his primary theme – death of the *nafs* through proper *adab* through every possible means. Butchers and skiners who handled a variety of implements the knife, the cattle blade and the hatchet – were worthy of taking the instruments in hand provided they had cut away all carnal desires.<sup>447</sup>

### c) Legitimization of work

It was stated earlier that an individual found worth and status, as well as motivation for proper conduct, when he joined the community which traced itself back to the Prophet and ʿAlī. Similarly, by ascribing religious authority and prophetic sanction to one's profession, Kāshifī tried to alert the craftsman to his divine purpose in life. In one way or another, each of the contemporary professions was linked to the prophets and saints of the past.<sup>448</sup> Most artisans traced their professions back to Adam, who was considered the father of all trades. Thus each trade had a religious origin. The calico makers boasted 1,903 masters from the time of Adam until Imām Jaʿfar Ṣādiq, which included the well-known prophets, 17 of whom were supreme guides (*murshid*).<sup>449</sup>

Seth, the son of Adam, played an interesting role in the professions. Adam told his ten sons that God had ordered mankind to eat lawful food and to be occupied with a lawful craft

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(*kasb-i ḥalāl*): “Let each of you choose a certain profession (*pīsha*).”<sup>450</sup> The texts point out that while nine of Adam’s sons chose a ‘secular’ trade, his son Seth decided to choose the profession of religion, and so withdrew and occupied himself with worship. Hence, Seth was considered to be the first Sufī. Seth was also a weaver and agriculturist, and so he received credit for being both a spiritual and material craftsman.<sup>451</sup> Kāshifī credits Seth with being the father of all custodians (*īarrāsh*), and he relates the story of how Seth, who had practiced solitary worship (*khalwat*), was drawn into the work of caretaking without leaving his life of solitude.<sup>452</sup> In this way, he was the perfect spiritual champion because he was occupied in physical work while worshipping God as well as serving people’s physical and spiritual needs.

Whether it was to justify the existing guilds, or to instill ethical qualities in their members, Kāshifī systematically provides a religious legitimization for every profession. Hence, the profession of hauling water, weight-lifting and weaving baskets were all established by a prophet or saint. The water-carrier, for example, was reminded of at least six stories from religious and early Islamic history which legitimized his guild. Once a water-carrier realized his spiritual ancestry and the prophetic validation of his profession, he would evidently continue the same noble trade as a “giver of life,” just as the Prophet and the saints had done in the early community.<sup>453</sup> Similar to the heroic warrior who considered his duty to battle as a divine mission, all athletes had to be aware of the divine authority of their profession, because power had originated with the prophets. Kāshifī states:

You should know that power belongs to prophets. ... Therefore whoever considers himself powerful and strong in each task or feat he performs, it must certainly lead back a prophet. We will cite to whom each of these feats leads back to.<sup>454</sup>

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By the same token, any entertainer who entered the arena had to be certain his skill was validated, and any craftsman who handled his implements had to be aware of the prophetic confirmation of his tools as well as of his craft as a whole. This not only gave the artisan and craftsman a sense of worth and status, but it was also a powerful means of control. Each profession was given a noble past, which therefore obligated the artisan to continue that past through noble conduct.

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The medieval texts clearly show that the focus of Sufi-oriented *fituwwat* was *adab*. Noble character and proper behavior, at all times and in all places, was the essence of spiritual *jawānmardī*. The path to that ideal was through the ‘death of desire’ or the ego. This high moral ethic and scrupulous behavior, however, could not be carried out in isolation. Islamic tradition considered the prophetic age of Muḥammad and ‘Alī to be the epitome of that ideal, and so the *jawānmard* had to link himself to that golden age. This was accomplished through an intricate initiation rite, which was a symbolic ratification of the Primordial Covenant between man and God. The “burden of trust” that the initiate took upon himself was an oath to continue to uphold that original Covenant. The visible proof of *jawānmardī* was a person’s scrupulous conduct and adherence to the code of *adab*, which defined his status in the community and also his relationship to God and the Prophet.

The dialectical relationship of the outward form of *fituwwat* and its inward, spiritual reality is a major theme of *fituwwat*. One of the basic codes of conduct in Sufism was to keep the secret, i.e., a Sufi must not reveal his state of union with the divine. Kāshifī repeatedly states this standard Sufi principle:

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*Taṣawwuf* is to abandon strife and to keep the meaning (*ma'nā*) hidden from people. As long as a man does not ...hide his own spirituality (*ma'nā*), he has no part in *taṣawwuf*.<sup>355</sup>

The profound meaning of spiritual championship lay precisely in this: that while a *jawānmard* always concealed his spiritual state, at the same time, he was displaying his spiritual status and exhibiting his *jawānmardī* by his every deed and his public performance in the arena, as well as by the tools of his trade and in his attire. He could never boast of his spirituality, as Rustam had of his heroic battles and by his shout, "I am Rustam, son of Dastān!" Rather, through the subtlety of symbols and metaphors - whether relating to behavior, in the ritual of the *shadd*, or most importantly, in his profession - the *fātan* was expected to display his *jawānmardī*. Therefore, *futuwwat* was both a veiling and an unveiling of the secret of mystical union. The outward forms of *futuwwat* hid the inner meanings of spiritual truths; however, at the same time, these outward forms also revealed spiritual reality.

From an outside perspective, this dialectic relationship between the inner and external worlds, however, seems to be self-defeating. The concept of *jawānmardī* - which ideally meant selfless service for others, even at the expense of one's own needs - had become fully cloaked in Sufi ideology which was to be expressed in perfect outward behavior. This emphasis on proper behavior in every aspect of one's life meant a constant calculated deliberation on how one should conduct oneself. The problem that the writers on *futuwwat* do not discuss is: How was the spiritual champion expected to remain 'selfless' while being scrupulously aware of the spiritual and moral implication of every detail of the *futuwwat* rituals, his attire and profession? It would seem that the importance of proper conduct tended to override the emphasis on the "death to desire," because one was able to maintain

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proper outward behavior without experiencing the inner code of conduct. In a slightly less sophisticated approach, Kay Kā'ūs anticipated this dissonance even though he did not see it as contradiction of the spirit of *jawānmardī*. After having established the Sufī basis of inner surrender and advocating the ideal of integrating one's external behavior with one's inner experience, he gives the following caveat: "If there is a *darvīsh* who does not have inner conduct or spiritual awareness, it is necessary that he practice outward conduct (*adab-i zāhir*), so that of the two [worlds], [at least] the outward (*ṣūrat*) is adorned."<sup>156</sup> And so, the ethic of *futuwwat* appears to have come full circle. In order to counter the unrestrained behavior of *futuwwat* members, the sources advocated an inner code of conduct which was made possible through and evidenced by proper outward conduct. This emphasis led the *fityān* to focus on externals, which could easily lead to outward showmanship, exactly what Kāshifī sought to curb. Hence, the focus on *adab* for the spiritual *jawānmard*, like the quest for reputation for the heroic warrior, tended to obstruct the attainment of *jawānmardī*.



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### Notes on Chapter Three

<sup>1</sup> *FNS*, 43, 207.

<sup>2</sup> *QN*, 252-253.

<sup>3</sup> Social control had always been an important principle of government in medieval Islamic states. Drawing upon examples from the Sāsānid dynasty as well as Islamic rulers, Nizām al-Mulk stressed that social control was necessary in order to establish a prosperous society and hence, a secure state for the king. *SM*, 13-16, 74-77. The juridical writers of the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> century ‘Abbāsīd caliphate emphasized the need for Islamic Law and the institution of the imamate in order to apprehend any form of civil strife and corruption. When sultanate dynasties encroached upon the authority of caliphate, the juridical writers justified them as well because they were concerned primarily to establish a secure society where Islamic Law could be enacted and carried out. See Ann Lambton, *State and Government in Medieval Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), 103-129 and Fauzi M. Najjar, “Siyasa in Islamic Political Philosophy,” in *Islamic Theology and Philosophy - Studies in Honor of George F. Hourani*, ed. Michael E. Marmura (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984), 92-110.

<sup>4</sup> Suhrawardī, “Futuwwat Nāma,” in *RJ*, 163.

<sup>5</sup> On the question of the authorship of *FNS* see chapter 1, p. 49 n. 145.

<sup>6</sup> Cahen, “Futuwwa,” *FI*, 2:963.

<sup>7</sup> Ibn Battūta, *Safar Nāma-yi Battūta*, 2:225. See chapter 1, p. 17-18.

<sup>8</sup> O’Kane, “From Tents to Pavilions,” 253-254, quoting ‘Abd al-Razzāq al-Samarqandī, *Matha’ al-Sa’dayn*, ed. Muhammad Safī’ (Lahore, 1941-49), 219.

<sup>9</sup> *Habīb al-Siyar* 4: 25, 83-84, 178, 185.

<sup>10</sup> *FNS*, 332, 352.

<sup>11</sup> *FNS*, 7.

<sup>12</sup> Cahen maintains that the Sulī-oriented *futuwwat* literature of the 7<sup>th</sup>/14<sup>th</sup> century presented such an ideal portrayal of *futuwwat* without making any reference to artisan life “that we might well wonder if we really are dealing with the same people.” Cahen, “Futuwwa,” *FI*, 2:963. In contrast, Kāshifī makes much more specific mention of the artisans, though he too, continues this ideal representation of *futuwwat*.

<sup>13</sup> *FNS*, 5-7.

<sup>14</sup> *FNS*, 207. For a discussion of this *ḥadīth* and its different versions, see Ahmad Ashraf and Ali Banuazizi, "Class System IV. Classes in Medieval Islamic Persia," *EIr*, 5:658.

<sup>15</sup> *FNS*, 207.

<sup>16</sup> *FNS*, 5-7.

<sup>17</sup> *FNS*, 101.

<sup>18</sup> *FNS*, 43.

<sup>19</sup> For general discussions of the Naqshbandiyya order, see Jürgen Paul, *Doctrine and Organization: The Khwājagān / Naqshbandiyya in the First Generation after Bahā al-Dīn* (Berlin: ANOR, 1998); Jürgen Paul, *Die politische und soziale Bedeutung der Naqshbandiyya im Mittelasien im 15. Jahrhundert* and Hamid Algar, "The Naqshbandiyya Order: A Preliminary Survey of its History and Significance," *Studia Islamica* 42 (1976): 123-152.

<sup>20</sup> Fakhr al-Dīn 'Alī bin Ḥusayn Wā'iz Kāshifī, *Rashaḥāt-i 'Ain al-Ḥayāt*, ed. 'Alī Aṣghar Mu'īniyān (Tehran, 1970), 1:38-47.

<sup>21</sup> Algar, "The Naqshbandiyya Order," 137-141.

<sup>22</sup> Subtelny, "'Alī Shīr Nawā'ī," *EI*, 3:92.

<sup>23</sup> William L. Hanaway, "Ṣafī," *EI*, 8:800.

<sup>24</sup> *RAI*, 2:491.

<sup>25</sup> "*khalwat dar anjuman bi-zāhir bā khalq, bi-bāṭin bā ḥaqq*," *NU*, 391. In an earlier text, another Naqshbandi shaykh, who had been in the circle with Bahā al-Dīn, quoted the same (Paul, *Doctrine and Organization*, 30). 'Alī Ṣafī also gives the same definition of "*khalwat dar anjuman*" (*RAI*, 1:42). In another passage the author stresses the importance of private and public behavior: "Always practice good behavior, in private and in public, ... outwardly and inwardly be right with God ... always adorn yourself with outward and inner *adab*." *RAI*, 1:213.

<sup>26</sup> "*bāṭin-rā bā ḥaqq rāst dārī wa zāhir-rā bā khalq rāst dārī*," *FNS*, 13. According to Kāshifī, this statement was Imām 'Alī Naqī's (the 10<sup>th</sup> Imām, d. 254/868) answer to al-Mutawakkil's (d.247/861) question: "Many sages have spoken about *futuwwat*. What do you say?"

<sup>27</sup> *NU*, 392.

<sup>28</sup> Algar, "The Naqshbandiyya Order," 133-134.

<sup>29</sup> Jalāl al-Dīn 'Abd al-Awwal, *Majālis-i 'Ubaydallāh Aḥrār* (India Office DP 800), fōl. 62a, quoted in Jo-Ann Gross in "The Economic Status of a Timurid Sufi Shaikh: A Matter of Conflict or Perception?" *Iranian Studies* 21.1-2 (1988): 90. See also Jo-Ann Gross, "Multiple Roles and Perceptions of a Sufi Shaikh: Symbolic Statements of Political and Religious Authority," in

*Naqshbandis: Historical Developments and Present Situation of a Muslim Mystical Order*, ed. Marc Gaborieau, Alexandre Popovic, and Thierry Zarcone (Istanbul - Paris: Institut Français d'Études Anatoliennes d'Istanbul, 1990), 109-121.

<sup>30</sup> Paul, *Doctrine and Organization*, 33.

<sup>31</sup> Paul, *Doctrine and Organization*, 48-51. On Khwāja Muḥammad Pārsā's background, see Maria Subtelny, "The Making of Bukhārā-yi Sharīf: Scholars, Books and Libraries in Medieval Bukhārā The Library of Khwāja Muḥammad Pārsā," in *Festschrift for Yuri Bregel* (forthcoming).

<sup>32</sup> A.E. Affifi, *The Mystical Philosophy of Muhyid Dīn Ibn al-'Arabī* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1939), 10-12.

<sup>33</sup> Affifi, *Mystical Philosophy*, 15-16.

<sup>34</sup> Quoted in William Chittick, *The Self-Disclosure of God* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1998), 5, 21-22, 70.

<sup>35</sup> Affifi, *Mystical Philosophy*, 47-52.

<sup>36</sup> *FNS*, 108. Kāshifī quotes the Qur'ānic verse, "We offered the trust unto the heavens and the earth." Qur'ān 33:72.

<sup>37</sup> Qur'ān 7:172.

<sup>38</sup> Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad Ḥālīz, *Dīwān-i Khwāja Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad Ḥālīz Shirāzī*, ed. Muḥammad Qazwīnī and Qāsim Ghanī (Tehran, 1983), 125. The verse from Ḥālīz: "The heavens could not bear the burden of trust - They threw the dice and it fell on me, the fool."

<sup>39</sup> Zarkūb, "Futuwwat Nāma," in *RJ*, 172.

<sup>40</sup> *FNS*, 11. Kāshifī refers to this primordial covenant in different terms: the covenant of Allah ('*ahd-i Allāh*), the covenant of creation ('*ahd-i fīṭrat*) (*FNS*, 23), the covenant of love ('*ahd-i muḥabbat*) (*FNS*, 44, 47), and *rūz-i alast* (*FNS*, 11, 34, 38, 115).

<sup>41</sup> Ibn 'Arabī, *The Bezels of Wisdom* (Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikām), tr. R.W.J. Austin (London: Society for Promoting of Christian Knowledge, 1980), 50.

<sup>42</sup> Tosun Bayrak al-Jerrahi, introduction to *The Way of Sufi Chivalry*, 21-23.

<sup>43</sup> *FNS*, 43.

<sup>44</sup> *FNS*, 7.

<sup>45</sup> *FNS*, 193.

<sup>46</sup> *FNS*, 178.

<sup>47</sup> F. Gabrieli, "Adab," *EL*, 1:175. See also R. Waltzer and H.A.R. Gibb, "Akhlaq," *EL*, 1:325.

<sup>48</sup> D.J. Khalegi-Motlagh, "Adab," *Elr*, 1:431-432. For a thorough analysis of pre-Islamic Iranian *adab* and its literature, see de Fouchécour, *Moralia*, 24-112.

<sup>49</sup> See, for example, Muḥammad 'Alawī Muqaddam, "Andīshah-hā-yi Akhlāqī dar Shāhnāma-i Firdawsī" [Ethical concepts in the Shāhnāma of Firdawsī], *Nashriyya-yi Dānishkadah-i Ilahiyāt wa Ma'ārif-i Islāmī-yi Mashhad* 24 (1978): 5-46 and Charles Henri de Fouchécour, "Akhlāq-i Pahlawānī wa Akhlāq-i Rasmī dar Shāhnāma-i Firdawsī [Classical and epic morality], *Iran Nāma* 10.1 (1991): 8-13.

<sup>50</sup> On *adab* as the system of classical Arabic knowledge which is understood as 'urbane', civilized culture as opposed to the pagan traditions of the ancient Arabs, see Ira M. Lapidus, "Knowledge, Virtue and Action," in *Moral Conduct: The Place of Adab in South Asian Islam*, ed. Barbara Metcalf (California: University of California Press, 1984), 38-40 and Gabrieli, "Adab," *Elr*, 1:175-176.

<sup>51</sup> Rahman, "Akhlāq," *Elr*, 1:720.

<sup>52</sup> Barbara Metcalf, *Moral Conduct: The Place of Adab in South Asian Islam*, ed. Barbara Metcalf (California: University of California Press, 1984), 9.

<sup>53</sup> Algar, "The Naqshbandiyya Order," 123.

<sup>54</sup> *FNS*, 26, 81, 95. This emphasis on proper *adab* is evidenced even today by the Ṭālibān government in Afghanistan who are said to follow the Deobandi school of Islamic thought. One of the key doctrines of the Deobandi sect is that any diversion from Islamic ritual is regarded as apostasy. The moral police force of the Ṭālibān government is called the Department of *Amr bi'l-Ma'rūf wa Nahy an al-Munkar* (The Department of the Promotion of Virtue and the Suppression of Vice). Their duty is to ensure that citizens observe all rituals. William Maley, "Interpreting the Taliban," in *Fundamentalism Reborn? Afghanistan and the Taliban*, ed. William Maley (New York: New York University Press, 1998), 15.

<sup>55</sup> Barbara Metcalf, *Moral Conduct: The Place of Adab in South Asian Islam*, ed. Barbara Metcalf (California: University of California Press, 1984), 12.

<sup>56</sup> Ira M. Lapidus, "Knowledge, Virtue and Action," in *Moral Conduct: The Place of Adab in South Asian Islam*, ed. Barbara Metcalf (California: University of California Press, 1984), 46-47.

<sup>57</sup> William C. Chittick, *Imaginal Worlds: Ibn al-'Arabī and the Problem of Religious Diversity* (Albany: State of University New York Press, 1994), 50.

<sup>58</sup> *FNS*, 8.

<sup>59</sup> *FNS*, 8.

<sup>61</sup> *FNS*, 12. The need to conquer the carnal soul was one of Muḥammad Iqbāl's (d.1938) major themes in his political philosophy of the true self (*kh<sup>w</sup>udī*). According to him, an important stage in maturing as an individual and then also collectively as a Muslim people was to control (*dabt*) the *nafs*: "Your *nafs* is like the self-glorifying camel / self-conceited, blinded and obstinate. Be a real man (*mard*) and take the reins [of the *nafs*] in your hands / so that you will become a pearl in this world." Muḥammad Iqbāl, *Kullīyāt-i Ash'ār-i Fārsī*, ed. Aḥmad Surūsh (Tehran, 1965), 30.

<sup>61</sup> Qur'ān 2:207, cited by Kāshifī as Qur'ān 2:203. *FNS*, 22.

<sup>62</sup> Kāshānī, in *RJ*, 18-20.

<sup>63</sup> *FNS*, 9-10, 17.

<sup>64</sup> Kāshānī, in *RJ*, 14-15. Āmulī began his treatise on a similar note: "The science of *futuwwat* consists of the inner knowledge (*ma'rifāt*) of the quality of the light of human nature (*līḥrat-i insānī*) and its power over the darkness of carnal desires (*nafsānī*) so that moral virtues (*fadā'il-i khalā'iq*) reign supreme and evil character is totally cut off." Āmulī, in *RJ*, 59.

<sup>65</sup> *FNS*, 10.

<sup>66</sup> *FNS*, 10, 12.

<sup>67</sup> *FNS*, 42.

<sup>68</sup> Quoted by C'hittick, *Imaginal Worlds*, 45.

<sup>69</sup> See Wael B. Hallaq, introduction to *Ibn Taymiyya Against the Greek Logicians*, tr. Wael B. Hallaq, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993). Ibn Taymiyya argued that Ibn 'Arabī's doctrine of self-realization of the unity of all things leads to a non-distinction between good and evil.

<sup>70</sup> C'hittick, *Imaginal Worlds*, 42-42.

<sup>71</sup> *FNS*, 10, 13, 33.

<sup>72</sup> *FNS*, 10-11.

<sup>73</sup> Kāshānī gives 8 distinct virtues which, he says, emerge once the *nafs* has been destroyed: repentance, generosity, humility, confidence, integrity, guidance, counsel and faithfulness. Kāshānī, in *RJ*, 18-41.

<sup>74</sup> *QN*, 265-266.

<sup>75</sup> "Dil" (literally: heart) is a technical term in Islamic mysticism referring to the organ of self-realization. Ibn 'Arabī stated that when one becomes aware that ultimate Reality is God and the phenomenal world is but a veil of the Divine Reality, he has reached self-realization and hence, is a *fātan*. It is a man's *dil* that comes to this awareness. The Persian writers on *futuwwat* use *dil* in this technical meaning.

<sup>76</sup> *FNS*, 17.

<sup>77</sup> *Āmulī*, in *RJ*, 60.

<sup>78</sup> *Kāshānī*, in *RJ*, 4 and *FNS*, 13, 29.

<sup>79</sup> Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, 1:27-30. Goldziher contrasts the Arab pagans' delight in wine and women with Muhammad's message of self-restraint and abstinence. For a brief overview on the differences between pre-Islamic and Islamic *muruwwat*, see B. Farés, "Murū'a," *IJ*, 7:638.

<sup>80</sup> *Kāshānī*, in *RJ*, 20, 48; *Āmulī*, in *RJ*, 70 and *FNS*, 14.

<sup>81</sup> *FNS*, 51.

<sup>82</sup> *FNS*, 10.

<sup>83</sup> Zakeri, *Sāsānid Soldiers*, 267, 313.

<sup>84</sup> *FNS*, 44; *Kāshānī*, in *RJ*, 20.

<sup>85</sup> *FNS*, 45.

<sup>86</sup> *RAH*, 2:405. See also Jo-Ann Gross, "The Economic Status of a Timurid Sufi Shaikh," 96.

<sup>87</sup> *Āmulī*, in *RJ*, 62.

<sup>88</sup> Izutsu, *God and Man in the Koran*, 201-205. See also Lapidus, "Knowledge, Virtue and Action," 40-43.

<sup>89</sup> Izutsu, *God and Man in the Koran*, 205-206.

<sup>90</sup> *FNS*, 26, 32, 46, 53.

<sup>91</sup> A certain *shaykh* is said to have rejected a scholar because he had the appearance of a fat, old woman; if a host did not provide proper hospitality he would be despised; small breaches of conduct were severely punished. Paul, *Die politische und soziale Bedeutung*, 32, 33, 35. Ahrār was known for his outbursts of anger, which he interpreted as his hidden kindness. *RAH*, 2:608.

<sup>92</sup> *FNS*, 43.

<sup>93</sup> Khaleghi-Motlagh, "Adab," *EIr*, 1:432-433.

<sup>94</sup> *FNS*, 217.

<sup>95</sup> *FNS*, 24-26; Suhrawardī, in *RJ*, 94-98.

<sup>96</sup> *FNS*, 26-27; *Dīwān-i 'Aṭṭār*, 92-95. As mentioned in chapter 2, the *Samak-i 'Ayyār* says there are seventy-two rules of *jawānmardī*. *SA*, 1:26.

<sup>97</sup> *Kāshānī*, in *RJ*, 17; *Āmulī*, in *RJ*, 67. Yūsuf Karkahrī presents six similar maxims: "Humility when successful, patience in time of trouble, generosity without expectation, forgiveness when in power, counsel in private, and faithfulness to one's promise." Karkahrī, "Futuwwat Nāma," in *RJ*, 221. The similarity of these maxims to 'Unṣūrī's maxims centuries earlier – "in time of power,

mercy; in time of error, forgiveness; in time of need, generosity and in time of promise, faithfulness” (‘Unṣūrī, *Dīwān-i ‘Unṣūrī Balkhī*, 2) – shows how conventional ethical codes of conduct were incorporated into *tutuwwat* teaching.

<sup>98</sup> *FNS*, 208.

<sup>99</sup> *FNS*, 261.

<sup>100</sup> Suhrawardī, in *RJ*, 120.

<sup>101</sup> *FNS*, 43.

<sup>102</sup> *FNS*, 207.

<sup>103</sup> *FNS*, 207.

<sup>104</sup> Paul, *Die politische und soziale Bedeutung*, 39.

<sup>105</sup> *FNS*, 207.

<sup>106</sup> *FNS*, 250.

<sup>107</sup> Suhrawardī, in *RJ*, 143-144.

<sup>108</sup> Āmulī, in *RJ*, 85.

<sup>109</sup> Kāshānī, in *RJ*, 49.

<sup>110</sup> *FNS*, 224.

<sup>111</sup> *FNS*, 245.

<sup>112</sup> *FNS*, 266.

<sup>113</sup> Haidar, *‘Ayyārān wa Kākā-hā-i Khurāsān*, 4.

<sup>114</sup> *FNS*, 263-268.

<sup>115</sup> *RAH*, 2:409.

<sup>116</sup> Jo-Ann Gross, “The Economic Status of a Timurid Sulī Shaykh,” 103.

<sup>117</sup> *RAH*, 2:409.

<sup>118</sup> *FNS*, 226-227.

<sup>119</sup> *RAH*, 2:409-411. ‘Alī Ṣafī stresses that whether one is alone at home or in public, one should never stretch out one’s legs. *RAH*, 1:213. Bahā al-Dīn, the father of the Khwājagān, apparently was so exact in his behavior that he even expressed politeness to the animals by asking leave of them. Paul, *Die politische und soziale Bedeutung*, 35.

<sup>120</sup> *FNS*, 227.

<sup>121</sup> Suhrawardī, in *RJ*, 120.

<sup>122</sup> *RAH*, 1:138.

<sup>123</sup> Suhrawardī, in *RJ*, 161.

<sup>124</sup> Suhrawardī, in *RJ*, 163.

<sup>125</sup> *FNS*, 217.

<sup>126</sup> *RAH*, 2:411.

<sup>127</sup> *SA*, 1:29.

<sup>128</sup> *FNS*, 231-236, 247-249.

<sup>129</sup> *FNS*, 20-21.

<sup>130</sup> Kāshānī, in *RJ*, 9.

<sup>131</sup> Suhrawardī, in *RJ*, 164.

<sup>132</sup> *FNS*, 233.

<sup>133</sup> *FNS*, 248-249.

<sup>134</sup> Paul, *Die politische und soziale Bedeutung*, 33.

<sup>135</sup> In traditional hospitality, both the guest and host were very much aware of the social dynamics of the table. Rustam, for example, was most offended when his host offered him the less-esteemed place. *SN*, 4:612.3007-31013.

<sup>136</sup> de Fouchécour, *Moralia*, 221.

<sup>137</sup> This is underscored in a study on ritual and honor and shame in biblical culture. "The primary importance and function of ritual is to draw the boundary lines that constitute status precisely as such, and precisely as publicly recognized. Ritual makes order; that is, it draws boundaries through and around natural and social spaces. It defines those spaces as ... good or bad, high or low, clean or polluted, sacred or profane. Rituals help create and maintain an ordered cosmos." Mark McVann, "Reading Mark Ritually: Honor-Shame and the Ritual of Baptism," *Semeia, The Society of Biblical Literature* (1994): 180.

<sup>138</sup> Shireen Mahdavi, "The Position of Women in Shi'a Iran: Views of the 'Ulama," in *Women and the Family in the Middle East*, ed. Elizabeth W. Fernea (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1985), 261-264.

<sup>139</sup> For a discussion of the etymology of the term *sirwāl* and *shalwar*, see W. Björkman, "Sirwāl," *IJL*, 9:676.

<sup>140</sup> Zakeri, *Sāsānid Soldiers*, 308-309.

<sup>141</sup> Kāshānī, in *RJ*, 16.

<sup>142</sup> *SA*, 1:35, 40.

<sup>143</sup> *SA*, 1:51, 131. At one point Samak dressed up as a woman to seduce Bihzād, an enemy warrior. Bihzād tried to lure Samak (who was disguised as a woman) to his quarters by appealing to 'her'



code of *jawānmardī*. Bihzād tried to assure ‘her’ that he considered her to be a modest woman. *SA*, 1:136-137

<sup>144</sup> Zarküb, in *RJ*, 196.

<sup>145</sup> Hamadānī, “Risāla-yi Futuwwatiyya,” in *Mīr Sayyid ‘Alī Hamadānī*, 344.

<sup>146</sup> Kāshānī, in *RJ*, 14.

<sup>147</sup> *FNS*, 7. See also Suhrawardī, in *RJ*, 94. Kāshifī also devotes a lengthy section to explaining the spiritual meaning of the Sufi robe (*khirqā*) and the code for wearing it. *FNS*, 151-171.

<sup>148</sup> Zarküb, in *RJ*, 196.

<sup>149</sup> Hamadānī, “Risāla-yi Futuwwatiyya,” in *Mīr Sayyid ‘Alī Hamadānī*, 344.

<sup>150</sup> *FNS*, 113. A similar story is related from the Ottoman tradition. See Mehmet Zeki Pakalin, *Osmanlı Tarih Deyimleri ve Terimleri Sözlüğü* (Istanbul, 1971), 3:314-315.

<sup>151</sup> *FNS*, 113, 114. In the versified *Futuwwat Nāma* of Nāṣirī, the angels of paradise prepared a shash (*dastārcha*) and a *shalwār* for Adam from the leaves of the heavenly garden after his disobedience and subsequent nakedness and shame. The *shalwār* continued through the line of prophets, until Muḥammad who girded ‘Alī, and from ‘Alī it was passed on to the companions and then from caliph to caliph. The sash, however, was taken back to paradise, and God will bind it around the waist of the *jawānmard* who is pure (*pāk-dāmān*) and generous while on earth. The sash then becomes an eschatological confirmation of the *jawānmard*’s good conduct on earth. *FNN*, 35-37, 487-553.

<sup>152</sup> Zarküb, in *RJ*, 196.

<sup>153</sup> Kāshānī, in *RJ*, 20.

<sup>154</sup> Suhrawardī, in *RJ*, 94.

<sup>155</sup> *FNS*, 25.

<sup>156</sup> Suhrawardī, in *RJ*, 155-156.

<sup>157</sup> There are popular stories of *jawānmards* who always “lowered their eyes.” A certain *jawānmard* visited his companion for many years and on one occasion the companion mentioned his sister. All these years, the visiting *jawānmard* had never “looked up” and so had been completely unaware and oblivious that his friend had a sister. This complete self-control was considered an ideal of *jawānmardī*.

<sup>158</sup> Qur’ān 24:30.

<sup>159</sup> *FNS*, 24.

<sup>160</sup> Zarküb, in *RJ*, 170-171.

<sup>161</sup> *FNS*, 21.

<sup>162</sup> Kāshānī, in *RJ*, 12-13; Āmulī, in *RJ*, 72-73 and Suhrawardī, in *RJ*, 108-109.

<sup>163</sup> Kāshānī, in *RJ*, 14-15.

<sup>164</sup> Zarkūb, in *RJ*, 195-196.

<sup>165</sup> The pre-Kāshifī texts use of the terms for the initial and final rite are quite consistent. In Nāsirī the girding was first and then the transfer of the *shalwār*, which was also called the *pāy-izār* (*FNS*, 27.347-350 and 32-33.443-461). Zarkūb interchanges the terms, *shadd* and *izār*, in the initial rite and uses the terms, *shalwār* and *zīr-jāma* for the rite of confirmation (Zarkūb, in *RJ*, 191-196). According to Kāshānī, the girding of the *izār* was a probationary rite, and once the initiate had proved himself, he donned the *shalwār* (Kāshānī, in *RJ*, 14-15). For Āmulī, the *shadd* was first and the *sirwāl* the confirmation (Āmulī, in *RJ*, 77).

<sup>166</sup> *FNS*, 172-181.

<sup>167</sup> *FNS*, 172-204.

<sup>168</sup> *FNS*, 97.

<sup>169</sup> *FNS*, 11, 34, 38, 115.

<sup>170</sup> Mottahedeh, *Loyalty and Leadership*, 42-43.

<sup>171</sup> *FNS*, 11. See also *FNS*, 23.

<sup>172</sup> *FNS*, 100-101.

<sup>173</sup> *SA*, 1:143.

<sup>174</sup> *FNS*, 164.

<sup>175</sup> The anthropologist Pitt-Rivers relates the importance of the oath to a person's honor. When he fails in his commitment he is publicly dishonored: "By invoking that which is sacred to him ... he activates an implicit curse against himself in the eventuality of his failure to implement his oath or, at least, he ensures that public opinion is entitled to judge him dishonoured." J. Pitt-Rivers, "Honour and Social Status," 34.

<sup>176</sup> Suhrawardī, in *RJ*, 163.

<sup>177</sup> Āmulī, in *RJ*, 70, 78; Suhrawardī, in *RJ*, 95, 158-163.

<sup>178</sup> *FNS*, 23.

<sup>179</sup> The command, "Gird up your loins," meaning to prepare oneself for work, was a common expression in ancient Israel. The phrase was also used figuratively to express the idea of strengthening and bestowing honor. Conversely, to "loosen someone's loins" meant to defeat a person. For example, the biblical prophet, Isaiah, addressed the Persian ruler, Cyrus, "Thus says the Lord to Cyrus, His anointed, whom I have taken by the right hand, to subdue nations before him and

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to loose the loins of kings ... I have given you a title of honor, though you have not known Me... I will gird you, though you have not known Me.” Isaiah 45:1-5 NASB.

<sup>180</sup> Zakeri, *Sāsānid Soldiers*, 74, 309.

<sup>181</sup> H.F. Junker, *Der wissbegierige Sohn: Ein mittelpersischer Text über das Kustik* (Leipzig: Harrassowitz, 1959), 55.

<sup>182</sup> Zakeri, *Sāsānid Soldiers*, 71, 94.

<sup>183</sup> Zakeri, *Sāsānid Soldiers*, 309.

<sup>184</sup> Rosalind O’Hanlon, “Manliness and Imperial Service in Mughal North India,” *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 42.1 (1992): 64.

<sup>185</sup> Zakeri, *Sāsānid Soldiers*, 76-78. Zakeri notes how the term ‘devoted’ (*jānapispār*) in Pahlawi changed to the modern, *jānsipār* (to give one’s life). Other related terms such as *jān-bāz* (daring man) and *sar-bāz* (soldier, one who ‘loses’ his head) all indicate the absolute dedication of these men to their master.

<sup>186</sup> See chapter 2, pp. 86-90 and 114-123 where this tension was discussed in detail.

<sup>187</sup> *FNS*, 102.

<sup>188</sup> For a discussion of the meaning of *islām* (submission) and ethical virtues related to it, see Izutsu, *God and Man in the Koran*, 198-229.

<sup>189</sup> Āmulī, in *RJ*, 77. Although the *zunnār* was the belt or cord worn by Eastern Christians and Jews, the early Arab historian al-Mas‘ūdī (d. 345/956) identified the Zoroastrian *shadd* as the same as the Christian *zunnār*. Zakeri, *Sāsānid Soldiers*, 309. It seems that by the 14<sup>th</sup> century there was a clear distinction between clothing worn by adherents of the different religions.

<sup>190</sup> Āmulī, in *RJ*, 77.

<sup>191</sup> Āmulī, in *RJ*, 73, 77.

<sup>192</sup> Kāshānī, in *RJ*, 15.

<sup>193</sup> *FNN*, 27.347-350.

<sup>194</sup> *FNS*, 102.

<sup>195</sup> “Aaron, my brother, confirm (*ashdud*) my strength with him.” Qur’ān 20:31-32. See also Hamid Algar, “Shadd,” *EI*, 9:167.

<sup>196</sup> Mīr Nijāt, (Mīr ‘Abdul ‘Āl), *Gul-Kushtī in Tārīkh-i Warzish-i Bāstān-i Iran*, ed. Husayn Partaw Baydā‘ī (Tehran, 1337/ 1958), 397. See also *LN*, 9:12,510.

<sup>197</sup> *FNS*, 103.

<sup>198</sup> *FNS*, 103.

<sup>199</sup> *FNS*, 102.

<sup>200</sup> *FNS*, 111-112.

<sup>201</sup> In the work *Purity and Danger*, the author observes that symbolic ritual speaks louder than words because it visibly binds the initiated one to the past: "Ritual focuses attention by framing ... [and] links the present with the relevant past." Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966), 64.

<sup>202</sup> *FNS*, 106-110.

<sup>203</sup> Zarkūb, in *RJ*, 191-192.

<sup>204</sup> Besides Kāshifī's, none of the other Persian *futuwwat* treatises, except the very brief treatise on the guild of textile makers, discusses the *fātan*'s linkage to angels. See "Futuwwat Nāma-yi Chīh-sāzān," in *RJ*, 225-239.

<sup>205</sup> Gabriel has played a crucial role in Islam. He was not only the bearer of revelation to the Prophet, but also the messenger par excellence, and by extension, the helper and inspiration for all in leadership. See J. Pedersen, "Djabra'il," in *EI*, 2: 364.

<sup>206</sup> Kāshānī, in *RJ*, 13.

<sup>207</sup> *FNS*, 99.

<sup>208</sup> *FNS*, 139-147.

<sup>209</sup> *FNS*, 136-137. For the Ottoman practice of girding initiates into guilds, see Pakalın, *Osmanlı Tarih Deyimleri ve Terimleri Sözlüğü*, 3:314. Pakalın describes the sash (*shed*) as a long scarf which is tied below the stomach. Its ends hang down low but during the ceremony they are lifted up over the chest of the disciple. The Sufi orders, Rifā'i, Sa'di and Bedevi all practiced the tying of the sash (*shed bağlamak*) with great ritual and celebration. Similarly, artisans and craftsmen would initiate new members by girding an apprentice with this sash. The sash was a mark of genuine membership and linked the craftsmen to the prophetic age. For further examples of girding, see the 15<sup>th</sup> century work on Aqqyunlu rule in Anatolia which mentions both a ceremonial girding and a ritual drink, Abū Bakr-i Tīhrānī, *Kitāb-i Diyārbakriyya: Ak-koyunlular Tarihi* (Ankara, 1993), 253-254 and John E. Woods, *The Aqqyunlu: Clan, Confederation, Empire - A Study in 15<sup>th</sup>/16<sup>th</sup> Century Turko-Iranian Politics* (Chicago: Bibliotheca Islamica, 1976), 95-95. In his work on 19<sup>th</sup> century Egypt, Lane describes how a young man was admitted into a guild of artisans. This is an indication of how universal the ceremonial process and, specifically, the sash, had become since the medieval period. The need for the *naqīb* and witness, the recital of the *shahāda*, binding the sash and the three knots with prayers all resemble Kāshifī's description. E.W. Lane, *An Account of the Manners and*

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*Customs of the Modern Egyptians: written in Egypt during the years 1833-1835* (New York: Ward, Lock and Co., 1890), 472-473.

<sup>210</sup> *FNS*, 142-143.

<sup>211</sup> *FNN*, 23.447-450.

<sup>212</sup> *FNS*, 143.

<sup>213</sup> *FNS*, 141.

<sup>214</sup> Zakeri, *Sāsānid Soldiers*, 309.

<sup>215</sup> Kāshānī, in *RJ*, 12-13 and Āmulī, in *RJ*, 72-73. See pp. 165-166, where 'Alī's deed is discussed.

<sup>216</sup> Kāshānī, in *RJ*, 13 and Āmulī, in *RJ*, 73. Nāsīrī mentions a drinking vessel (*siqāyat*) as one of the necessary items in the house of *lūtūwwat*. *FNN*, 40.582.

<sup>217</sup> Zakeri, *Sāsānid Soldiers*, 310-311.

<sup>218</sup> *SA*, 1:269.

<sup>219</sup> Note Zarkūb's explanation of when and how the cup of wine was changed in Muḥammad's time to a cup of salt-water. In one case it was changed to a cup of milk with some salt mixed in it.

Zarkūb, in *RJ*, 190-191.

<sup>220</sup> Āmulī, in *RJ*, 75-76.

<sup>221</sup> Āmulī, in *RJ*, 77.

<sup>222</sup> Maḥjūb, introduction to *FNS*, 48. Kāshānī discusses the drinking from the cup as a symbol of knowledge (*'ilm*) and character (*khulq*). Water, being a cleansing agent, is said to instill knowledge and wisdom. This special water must be received from one who is linked with the Prophet, who is the source of complete knowledge. Salt symbolizes justice, which is the perfection of all virtue. Just as bodily health is impossible without different foods, and no food is pleasant and proper without salt, so the spiritual health is dependent upon moral virtue. Kāshānī, in *RJ*, 13-14.

<sup>223</sup> *FNS*, 140.

<sup>224</sup> *LN*, 13:20,112.

<sup>225</sup> There is the popular story of Ya'qūb ibn Layth who ordered his men to loot an enemy's fort filled with treasures and bounty. The *'ayyār* tasted some white crystals from the loot and when he discovered it was salt, he ordered his warriors to leave all the bounty they had gathered. Since he had 'eaten the salt of the enemy,' he was obliged to be loyal to his enemy. Also cited in Kāzimaynī,

*Naqsh-i Pahlawānī*, 157.

<sup>226</sup> *FNS*, 85, 99, 133.

<sup>227</sup> *FNS*, 118-121. Kāshifī presents the traditional Shī'ite Muslim interpretation of the event of Ghadīr Khumm where Muḥammad is said to have publicly named 'Alī as his successor upon his return from his final pilgrimage. The tradition is based on the utterance, "He of whom I am the *mawlā* (patron), of him 'Alī is also the *mawlā*." Kāshifī incorporates the utterance into the original girding of 'Alī where he took on the mantle of *lūtūwwat* from the Prophet. See L. Veccia Vaglieri, "Ghadīr Khumm," in *FI*, 2:993-994 and L.K. Poonawala, "'Alī b. Abī Tālib (d. 40/661)," *FI*, 1:839.

<sup>228</sup> *FNS*, 121-123. According to Sufī lore, the Persian-born barber, Salmān Fārisī (d. 656 AD), became a member of Muḥammad's household during the Prophet's lifetime and thus was directly linked to him. For Sufism and *lūtūwwat*, Salmān's physical adoption into the family of the Prophet symbolized the adept's initiation ceremony and his spiritual relationship with the Prophet. By virtue of being connected to Salmān, a *lātan* was connected to the Prophet. Salmān was considered to be the patron-saint of artisans and craft guilds of the medieval period because he had held a trade himself. See Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975), 28.

<sup>229</sup> *FNS*, 128-130. I. Mélikoff discusses a 20<sup>th</sup> century *halwā* banquet which had the impression of sacred significance rooted in the traditions of medieval Turkey. Besides its connection with the event of Ghadīr Khumm, *halwā* was also a traditional serving of food for social gatherings during the winter months. Irene Mélikoff, "Le Rituel du Halwā," *Der Islam* 39 (1964): 180-191. *Halwa* still carries religious significance in many Middle Eastern cultures.

<sup>230</sup> *FNS*, 139.

<sup>231</sup> *FNS*, 61.

<sup>232</sup> Even Rustam was not an isolated individual. He was always Rustam, son of Dastān, or Rustam, son of Zāl, son of Sām. Furthermore, he was perpetually in the service of the king. However, Rustam remained independent of the state and official religion and was depicted as a lone outsider rather than belonging to the formal, organized army. See Davidson, *Poet and Hero*, 82-87.

<sup>233</sup> The prophet Moses confessed his commitment to follow a guide: "May I follow thee, to the end that thou mayst teach me right conduct of that which thou hast been taught?" Qur'ān 18:66.

<sup>234</sup> *FNS*, 62-63.

<sup>235</sup> Algar, "The Naqshbandiyya Order," 127.

<sup>236</sup> For a brief discussion of individuality and personality in Islam, see Subtelny, "Scenes from the Literary Life of Timūrid Herat," 138-139.

<sup>237</sup> Mottahedeh, *Loyalty and Leadership*, 99-100 and Zakeri, *Sāsānid Soldiers*, 101-102.

- <sup>238</sup> Franz Rosenthal, *A History of Muslim Historio-Biography* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1952), 88. See also chapter 2, p. 58 where mention was made of how parvenu rulers fabricated genealogies which 'proved' their noble ancestry and thus legitimized their rule.
- <sup>239</sup> Ahmad Ashraf and Ali Banuazizi, "Class System IV. Classes in Medieval Islamic Persia," *Ir*, 5:658-667. The article shows that in reality there were a number of theories about what constituted nobility and prestige in medieval Islam.
- <sup>240</sup> *FNS*, 207.
- <sup>241</sup> Algar, "The Naqshbandiyya Order," 127.
- <sup>242</sup> *FNS*, 18.
- <sup>243</sup> Hamadānī, "Risāla-yi Futuwwatiyya," in *Mīr Sayyid 'Alī Hamadānī*, 362.
- <sup>244</sup> Hamadānī, "Risāla-yi Futuwwatiyya," in *Mīr Sayyid 'Alī Hamadānī*, 344-345.
- <sup>245</sup> Ḥusayn al-Kāshifī, *Akhlāq-i Muḥsinī*, lithog ed. (Lucknow, 1957), 22.
- <sup>246</sup> Āmulī, in *RJ*, 62-63.
- <sup>247</sup> Kāshifī asks the difficult question: What is more demanding, Ismā'īl's willingness to sacrifice his own life, or Abraham's willing to sacrifice his son? *FNS*, 18.
- <sup>248</sup> *FNS*, 20-22. On the Seven Sleepers, see chapter 1, pp. 15-16 and p. 41 n. 64.
- <sup>249</sup> *FNS*, 111-112.
- <sup>250</sup> During the Perso-Islamic medieval period, many of the feats of ancient warriors were dressed up in religious garb and credited to 'Alī and thus many of the pre-Islamic traditions and legends were preserved. For example, 'Alī is said to have traveled with Rostam-like speed, fought demons and dragons and challenged armies entirely on his own. E. Kohlberg, "'Alī as seen by the community," *Er*, 1:843-848. See also Philip K. Hitti, *History of the Arabs* (London: Macmillan, 1961), 182-183.
- <sup>251</sup> Āmulī, in *RJ*, 64.
- <sup>252</sup> *FNS*, 20.
- <sup>253</sup> Kāshifī mentions how at one point, 'Alī gave away his food to those in need despite his own hunger, thereby exemplifying a total disregard for personal need. *FNS*, 22. In Ibn Mi'mār's version, guests arrived at the house of 'Alī after he had been fasting all day. Since there were only a few pieces of bread, 'Alī made sure that everyone ate in the dark so that the guests thought he was eating as well. In this way, 'Alī fasted throughout the night so that he could feed his guests. Riyād, *Mīr Sayyid 'Alī Hamadānī*, 259-260.

<sup>254</sup> Suhrawardī, in *RJ*, 107-108, 112-115. Suhrawardī's emphasis on 'Alī's rejection of the law of retribution appears to conflict with al-Nāṣir's mandate which advocated strict punishment based on 'Alī's practice of strict punishment. See Ibn Mi'mār, *Kitāb al-Futuwwa*, 64-65.

<sup>255</sup> Suhrawardī, in *RJ*, 133. Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī relates a lengthy tradition which highlights how 'Alī acted with forbearance towards an enemy. 'Alī was about to kill his opponent when the opponent spat on his face. 'Alī immediately withdrew his sword and did not kill him. The reason was that since his passions had been aroused, he had to withdraw from battle, because he could no longer battle selflessly. According to the poet, 'Alī admitted that he had disqualified himself: "I am a lion of God, not a lion of my passion (*hawā*)." Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Balkhī, *Mathnawī*, 6 vols., ed. Muḥammad Isti'lāmī (Tehran, 1360-70/1981-90), 1:178.3803. *Futuwwat* meant acting with no reference to one's self, which in this case 'Alī had forfeited because of his arousal to anger.

<sup>256</sup> *FNS*, 22.

<sup>257</sup> Kāshānī, in *RJ*, 39.

<sup>258</sup> *FNS*, 70-72.

<sup>259</sup> Mottahedeh quotes al-Mas'ūdī on how the nobility of an individual's ancestors obligated the individual to live up to that standard of nobility: "It is incumbent on a man of noble *nasab* and high glory that he not make this a stairway to relax from the performance of deeds appropriate to his *nasab*, and to rely on his fathers. Indeed, nobility (*sharaf*) of *nasab* spurs men to nobility in their actions .... For nobility calls forth nobility instead of impeding it, just as goodness calls forth goodness, and one is aroused [by it to seek further goodness]." Mottahedeh, "*Loyalty and Leadership*", 101, quoting al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūj adh-dhahab*, ed. Yūsuf A. Dāghir (Beirut, 1973), 2:28.

<sup>260</sup> Algar, "The Naqshbandiyya Order," 128. Algar takes issue with those who interpret the *silsila* as an anachronistic effort to legitimize the Sufi tradition. He argues that the actual spiritual experience by someone who is linked to the prophetic age is evidence that the *silsilas* are authentic. *Ibid.*, 126.

<sup>261</sup> Compare the 20 conditions that Kāshifī gave for a *shaykh* (*FNS*, 65-67) with the 20 conditions of a Naqshbandiyya shaykh mentioned in Paul, *Doctrine and Organization*, 54.

<sup>262</sup> *FNS*, 67-68.

<sup>263</sup> *FNS*, 139-140. Paul describes the Naqshbandi *shaykh* of the 15<sup>th</sup> century as a metaphor for the Prophet and the Law. By virtue of the initiate's connection to the shaykh, he is connected to the Prophet. Paul, *Doctrine and Organization*, 42-44.

<sup>264</sup> Hartmann, *an-Nāṣir li-Dīn Allāh*, 95.



- <sup>265</sup> Devin DeWeese, "The Descendants of Sayyid Ata and the Rank of Naqīb," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 115.4 (1995): 615. For a discussion of the various uses of the term *naqīb*, see *ibid.*, 615-618.
- <sup>266</sup> *FNS*, 90.
- <sup>267</sup> *FNS*, 127. Zarkūb, in *RJ*, 193.
- <sup>268</sup> Algar, "The Naqshbandiyya Order," 126.
- <sup>269</sup> *FNS*, 131-134. See also Zakeri, *Sāsānid Soldiers*, 223.
- <sup>270</sup> *FNS*, 94. The charge was: "Did I not charge you, O ye sons of Adam, that ye worship not the devil – Lo! He is your open foe! But that ye worship Me? That was the right path." Qur'ān 36:60-61.
- <sup>271</sup> *FNS*, 95.
- <sup>272</sup> Suhrawardī, in *RJ*, 109-114.
- <sup>273</sup> *FNS*, 98.
- <sup>274</sup> Zarkūb, in *RJ*, 198. For a discussion about when a disciple could or could not leave his master, see Paul, *Doctrine and Organization*, 58-60.
- <sup>275</sup> *FNS*, 123-127.
- <sup>276</sup> *FNS*, 127. During the Ṣafāwīd period, *ghurrā-khwān* and *maddāh*, among others, were terms used specifically for orators who praised the Shī'ite imāms and saints. See Jean Calmard, "Shī'i Rituals and Power," in *Ṣafāwīd Persia: The History and Politics of an Islamic Society*, ed. Charles Melville (New York: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd., 1996), 140.
- <sup>277</sup> *FNS*, 127.
- <sup>278</sup> "Futuwwat Nāma-yi Chīt-sāzān," in *RJ*, 226-239.
- <sup>279</sup> Paul, *Doctrine and Organization*, 47.
- <sup>280</sup> *RAH*, 2:622.
- <sup>281</sup> Paul, *Die politische und soziale Bedeutung*, 41.
- <sup>282</sup> *RAH*, 2:457.
- <sup>283</sup> *RAH*, 1:287. Paul summarizes three practical reasons why the Naqshbandiyya of the 15<sup>th</sup> century considered work such a strong pillar of their organizational structure: One should be self-supporting, not burden others, and have means to share with others. Paul, *Die politische und soziale Bedeutung*, 39-40.
- <sup>284</sup> Āmulī, in *RJ*, 66-67.
- <sup>285</sup> Suhrawardī, in *RJ*, 127.

- <sup>286</sup> Mahjub, "Chivalry and Early Persian Sufism," 559 n. 21.
- <sup>287</sup> Suhrawardī, in *RJ*, 125-126. See also Paul, *Die politische und soziale Bedeutung*, 40.
- <sup>288</sup> *FNS*, 260-261.
- <sup>289</sup> Qur'ān 5:2.
- <sup>290</sup> *FNS*, 261.
- <sup>291</sup> Paul, *Die politische und soziale Bedeutung*, 41-47. For a discussion of Tīmūrid artisans of the 16<sup>th</sup> century which included the guild of *chī*t makers, see R.G. Mukminova, "Craftsmen and Guild Life in Samarqand," in *Timurid Art and Culture*, ed. M. Subtelny and L. Golombek (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1992), 29-35. For a detailed inventory of guilds in medieval Turkey, see Robert Dankoff and Klaus Kreiser, *Materialien zu Evliya Çelebi, II. A Guide to the Seyāhat-nāme of Evliya Çelebi Bibliographie raisonnée* (Wiesbaden: Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 1992), 9-17.
- <sup>292</sup> Paul, *Die politische und soziale Bedeutung*, 46-47.
- <sup>293</sup> *FNS*, 280.
- <sup>294</sup> *FNS*, 292.
- <sup>295</sup> *FNS*, 297.
- <sup>296</sup> *FNS*, 302.
- <sup>297</sup> *FNS*, 310.
- <sup>298</sup> *FNS*, 314.
- <sup>299</sup> *FNS*, 360.
- <sup>300</sup> "Futuwwat Nāma-yi Chī-t-sāzān," in *RJ*, 239.
- <sup>301</sup> Kāshilī's section seven on the tool professions is incomplete (*FNS*, 345-393). In the introduction of the treatise (*FNS*, 4), the author states that his entire treatise contains twelve sections (*bāb*), and at the beginning of section seven, he states that this section contains five chapters (*lāsh*). In fact, there are only seven sections in the entire treatise and this seventh section has seven chapters, and ends unfinished. For a further discussion of Kāshilī's divisions of *bābs* and *lāshs*, see Mahjub, *FNS*, 345 n.1 and *FNS*, 393 n. 2. For an outline of all the performers and trades mentioned by Kāshilī, see R.M. Savory, "Communication," in *Der Islam* 38.1-2 (1962).
- <sup>302</sup> *FNS*, 292.
- <sup>303</sup> *FNS*, 325.
- <sup>304</sup> *SA*, I: 142, 156, 214, 236, 303.
- <sup>305</sup> *RAH*, 2:516-517.
- <sup>306</sup> Calmard, "Shi'ī Rituals and Power," 140.

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<sup>307</sup> *LN*, 13:18,675.

<sup>308</sup> For discussions of the social phenomenon of oral story-telling, see W. Beaston, "A Full Arena: The Development and Meaning of Popular Performance Traditions," in *Continuity and Change in Modern Iran*, ed. M.E. Bonine and Nikki R. Keddi (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1981), 285-306 and Hanaway, "Formal Elements in the Persian Popular Romances," 143-144.

<sup>309</sup> *FNS*, 275-276.

<sup>310</sup> *FNS*, 328.

<sup>311</sup> *FNS*, 20.

<sup>312</sup> *FNS*, 277. "This is very similar to the code among *jawānmards* and *'ayyār's* to please the public: "The preeminent code of *jawānmardī* is to carry out the desires of people." *SA*, 1:346.

<sup>313</sup> *FNS*, 277-278.

<sup>314</sup> *FNS*, 276.

<sup>315</sup> *FNS*, 308.

<sup>316</sup> *FNS*, 304-305. A 17<sup>th</sup> century treatise on story-telling, *Tarīz al-Akbar* by 'Abd al-Nabī Fakr al-Zamānī, stresses that the story-teller must be eloquent and extemporize and in doing so, he is superior to a poet. Typical of medieval treatises on craft guilds, *Tarīz al-Akbar* considers the story-teller a most beneficial profession, even though he must lie and be utterly serious in practicing deceit. The text also provides a code of conduct for the orator. Muḥammad Ja'far Maḥjūb, "Tahawwul-i Naqqālī wa Qiṣṣa-khwānī. Tarbiyyat-i Qiṣṣa-khwānān wa Tūmār-hā-yi Naqqālī" [The development of naqqālī and story-telling], *Iran Nāma* 9.2 (1991): 186-211.

<sup>317</sup> *FNS*, 276.

<sup>318</sup> *FNS*, 333.

<sup>319</sup> *FNS*, 276. See also *FNS*, 279.

<sup>320</sup> *FNS*, 332.

<sup>321</sup> *FNS*, 352.

<sup>322</sup> *FNS*, 335-336.

<sup>323</sup> *FNS*, 336. Though penned several centuries earlier, it is remarkable how in his poem, "On Advice and Counsel," Shaykh Sa'dī similarly considers controlling one's *naṣ* – which he says is an art / skill (*hunar*) – as the sign of genuine manliness:

Oh soul (*naṣ*), if you look with the eyes of truth,

Choose the path of the *darwīshī* life in place of wealth.

Do not imagine that manliness (*mardī*) comes by the strength of the hand and the shoulder,

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If you overcome your sensual desires, I know you are a true runner (*shāṭir*)  
 If you're a lion-like warrior, you can capture the devil dog who captured you.  
 Die, oh you who are without any skill (*hunar*) of behavior, for otherwise you are less than a cat.  
 True knowledge (*'ilm*) comes from humanitarian kindness (*ādamiyyat*), *jawānmarfī* and *adab*.  
 And if not, you're merely a wild animal with an outward shape (*ṣūrat*) of a human  
 Champions (*marḍān*) have reached their goal with pain and effort.  
 You, unskilled one (*hī-hunar*), where will you end up, you who just pursue the *nafs*?  
*Kulliyāt-i Sa'dī*, 476-478.

<sup>324</sup> *FNS*, 284.

<sup>325</sup> *FNS*, 278-279.

<sup>326</sup> "Futuwwat Nāma-yi C'hīt-sāzān," in *RJ*, 239.

<sup>327</sup> For a discussion of the controversy and development from the vocal to the silent *dhikr* among the Naqshbandiyya, see Paul, *Doctrine and Organization*, 18-30.

<sup>328</sup> *RAII*, 2:481-482.

<sup>329</sup> Paul, *Die politische und soziale Bedeutung*, 38.

<sup>330</sup> Corbin, introduction to *RJ*, 86.

<sup>331</sup> "Futuwwat Nāma-yi C'hīt-sāzān," in *RJ*, 237.

<sup>332</sup> Paul, *Die politische und soziale Bedeutung*, 39.

<sup>333</sup> *RAII*, 2:618-619.

<sup>334</sup> *FNS*, 307.

<sup>335</sup> *FNS*, 341.

<sup>336</sup> *FNS*, 341. The chest (*ṣandūq*) was the puppeteer's box from where he drew his puppets and to which he returned them. This notion that God is the Divine Puppeteer who creates the stage and puppets, and eventually puts all his puppets back into the chest of unity is an important theme in Farīd al-Dīn 'Aṭṭār's allegory, *Ushturnāma*. Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, 191, 278. See also H. Ritter, "'Aṭṭār," *EI*, 1:754.

<sup>337</sup> *FNS*, 322-323.

<sup>338</sup> *FNS*, 324.

<sup>339</sup> *FNS*, 326.

<sup>340</sup> *FNS*, 327.

<sup>341</sup> *FNS*, 350-352.

<sup>342</sup> *FNS*, 355.

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<sup>343</sup> *FNS*, 357.

<sup>344</sup> *FNS*, 359.

<sup>345</sup> *FNS*, 364.

<sup>346</sup> *FNS*, 368.

<sup>347</sup> *FNS*, 387-389.

<sup>348</sup> Çelebi's *Futuwwat-Nâme* lists the professions of the prophets. *Materialien zu Evliya Çelebi*, 9.

<sup>349</sup> "Futuwwat Nâma-yi Chît-sâzân," in *RJ*, 230.

<sup>350</sup> *FNS*, 41. See also *FNS*, 70. Suhrawardî relates the same story. Suhrawardî, in *RJ*, 91.

<sup>351</sup> To this day, some weavers in the Iranian world consider Seth the "father" of their profession.

<sup>352</sup> *FNS*, 372.

<sup>353</sup> *FNS*, 295.

<sup>354</sup> *FNS*, 331.

<sup>355</sup> *FNS*, 42. See also *FNS*, 48, 53, 78-79 (3x), 161, 200.

<sup>356</sup> *QN*, 258-259.

## Chapter Four

### The Wrestler (*kushtī-gīr*)

*“Love is for the beauty (jamāl) of the champion (pahlawān).”<sup>1</sup>*

The study of the heroic warrior showed how victory in single combat and the quest for reputation was fundamental to his notion of *jawānmardī*. The analysis of the ethic of *futuwwat*, which meant the internal battle against the carnal soul and proper external conduct, provided a new perspective on manliness. The recklessness of the warrior was controlled through the code of *adab*, considered to be both the means of destroying the carnal soul and the evidence of having destroyed it. The result was a controlled, spiritualized hero.

These two models of *jawānmardī* – the heroic warrior of noble reputation and the spiritual champion of proper conduct – did not necessarily contradict each other; in fact, they often fused. The best example of the fusion of the two models of *jawānmardī* was the traditional wrestler (*kushtī-gīr*).<sup>2</sup> The wrestler was considered an ideal model of *jawānmardī* because, better than any other professional, he embodied the multi-faceted characteristics of the

*jawānmard*. Kāshifī states that the wrestler had to be a well-rounded man - religiously devout, a keeper of the law, physically well-built, emotionally stable, intelligent and financially well-disposed.<sup>3</sup> In theory, the wrestler was an ideal blend of inner purity, bodily strength and perfect outward conduct.

Furthermore, more than any other association or profession, the traditional wrestler continued the rich symbolic blend of mysticism and ceremonial rites, along with the expected code of behavior which dominated Sufism and the artisan and trade guilds of the medieval period. The *zūr-khāna*, which has persisted into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, is evidence that the culture of the traditional Iranian wrestler is a living continuity from the past.<sup>4</sup>

In his study on the Indian wrestler, John Alter states succinctly that, "Wrestling is an attitude towards life."<sup>5</sup> So too, was the Iranian wrestler very self-conscious of his life as a physical champion, as well as of his commitment to moral and spiritual discipline. The wrestler has always been called a *pahlawān*, both during the medieval and modern periods, because he was truly an all-inclusive champion, both in the physical arena as well as in the spiritual. He combined the two ideals of the traditional heroes of Iran - Rostam and 'Alī who in turn represent both the pre-Islamic and Islamic heritage of the nation.<sup>6</sup> Both have been idealized as supreme warriors, and 'Alī was considered the master of all men of *tūtūwat*. The preeminent patron-saint of traditional wrestlers was the semi-legendary champion of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, Puryā-yi Walī (d.722/1325), tales of whose heroic acts of self-abnegation continue to be eulogized in the *zūr-khānas* in Iran today.

The fusion of the two models, however, was not always harmonious, and in fact, in his effort to embody the two ideals of physical victory and perfect conduct, the wrestler at times became a living paradox. The great challenge of the traditional wrestler was how to be an

all-around champion rather than merely a ‘tough guy.’ From the spiritual perspective, wrestling became a metaphor for battling the *naʿs*, and even more, a physical and visible demonstration of the “death of desire” through controlled behavior. Yet, the wrestler still had to defeat his opponent, for how else could he remain a champion? However, since *jawānmardī* meant proper behavior in all aspects of life, how could he heave his opponent to the ground so forcefully that his bones would be crushed? The two models – the winning champion and the self-controlled champion – appear to be in conflict with each other. In a study on character types of the ideal Iranian man, the authors of the article, “*Ṣafā-yi Bāṭin*” [Inner purity], contend that the two apparently conflicting traits – heroism and spirituality find a commonality in the virtue of inner purity (*ṣafā-yi bāṭin*).<sup>7</sup> This chapter will show how the traditional wrestler sought to embrace both models in himself.

### A. The Wrestler as a Physical Champion

In the pre-Islamic period, the traditional wrestler was an extension of the army and the battleground. All exercise (*warzish*) was for the purpose of training, so that a warrior could become a champion in battle, especially in single combat. Firdawsī describes how the legendary Iranian kings sent scouts across the nation to gather young men for the purpose of training in the skills of *pahlawānī*, which included horsemanship, the handling of the standard weapons of combat, and most certainly, the skills of wrestling.<sup>8</sup> Once these young men were trained, they enhanced the glory of the court by serving as loyal champions, ready to defend the honor of the king and the nation.



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### 1. The Meaning of *Kushtī-gīr*

The reason the wrestler was accorded such a position of honor was because, in the Iranian tradition, wrestling, rather than weapons of war, was the means by which superior strength was demonstrated. Wrestling was considered the climax of a public combat, in which the warrior best displayed the ideals of manliness. After a series of attacks against each other using a variety of weapons, the combatants finally resorted to fighting with their bare hands.<sup>9</sup> They seized each other's belts (*kamar-band*) in order to heave each other off their horses and engage in a wrestling match, a pattern which is demonstrated repeatedly in the *Shāhnāma* and in the adventures of *Samak-i Ayyār*. In a battle between Rustam and Pūlāwand, an ally of Afrāsiyāb, neither emerged victorious, so Pūlāwand called for a wrestling match:

It is through wrestling (*kushtī*) that a man shows he is a man!  
Both of us will gird our loins in order to wrestle.  
We will grab for each other's leather belt,  
In order to find out who is the loser,  
And who will return victorious from the battleground.<sup>10</sup>

In the detailed description of the conflict between Hūmān and Bīzhan, following the regular battle with weapons, the two warriors grabbed for each other's belt as the ultimate test of strength, because "whoever takes the belt is the stronger."<sup>11</sup> Bīzhan's blow with his hand was what ultimately felled Hūmān.

The wrestling match was therefore a test of skill and brute force. Ultimately, it was not the technology of weapons that gave the warrior and the nation its prestige and honor, but rather, the physical strength of the *pahlawān* himself. Wrestling, then, was a battle with the hands. According to Kāshifī, the tongue (*zabān*), i.e., sound of wrestling was the hands: by the slap of the hand (*fīrū kūltān*) the wrestlers announced the beginning of the duel (*dar-i kushtī*) and by it they also signaled a truce. While footwork was necessary in wrestling, the

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“mother of all wrestling holds” (*mādar-i kushtī-hā*) was to grab the back of the opponent’s hands, thereby rendering him helpless.<sup>12</sup> The aim of the match was literally to get the upper hand (*dast bālā-yī dast*), and when a wrestler did get the upper hand, he was truly superior (*zabar-dast*). Hence, the wrestler’s main asset was his hands. It was for this reason that ancient warriors dared each other with hand-crushing duels. When Rustam realized he had killed his son – even though he had used a weapon to do so – he expressed contempt for his manliness by disdaining his hands.<sup>13</sup>

As the warrior Pūlāwand described it, and as the Persian word *kushtī-gīrī* itself suggests, to wrestle meant literally to grab the opponent’s belt or girdle (*kushtī*). In fact, without the belt there could be no real wrestling.<sup>14</sup> *Kushtī/ kustī* is the New Persian form of *kustik* which was the Pahlawī term for the sacred girdle that symbolized obedience to the precepts of Zoroastrianism. In the ancient Iranian courts, warriors approached their royal patrons with the belt tied around their waist.<sup>15</sup> Poets of the early medieval period sometimes used the original Pahlawī term to describe wrestling scenes:

When the elephant-powered man began to wrestle (*kustī kardan*)  
He loosens the belt of his elephant-like opponent.<sup>16</sup>

To have one’s belt or girdle loosened, i.e. to be ‘un-girdled’ [or un-belted], indicated surrender or defeat. The poet Sūzanī (d.569/1174) of Samarqand described the conversion of a Zoroastrian priest to Islam as “the loosening of his belt”:

You loosened (*gusistī*) the belt (*kushtī*) from the waist and threw off the cap (*kulāh*)  
You completely turned away from the Mugh (i.e. Zoroastrian) religion to Islam.<sup>17</sup>

As has already been noted, the girdle – both in Zoroastrian traditions and in the ceremony of *futuwwat* – had great symbolic meaning. Whether the symbol of a man’s readiness to battle for his lord or the visible sign of the *fatan*’s commitment to the Primordial Covenant,

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the belt essentially connoted manliness. Conversely, the loosening or undoing (*gusistan*) of the belt was a sign of defeat, and signified that a man had lost his value and prestige. Hence, it was through *kushtī-gīrī* that a man was able to establish his manliness because by loosening the belt of his opponent, he rendered his opponent powerless and proved himself the winner.

### 2. The Challenge of the Wrestler

Just as for the heroic warrior, the notion of championship was fundamental to the life of the wrestler. Numerous idioms were used to describe a wrestler's championship and his ferocity. It was said of the renowned Tīmūrid champion Pahlawān Muḥammad-i Abū Saʿīd (d. 899/1493) that “no one had brought him to his knees,” while his opponents “helplessly crumble[d] to their knees.”<sup>18</sup> A champion who had never seen defeat was described as one whose shoulders or back had never touched the ground.<sup>19</sup> The wrestler's heroism was typically described in larger-than-life terms: he battled like a drunk elephant,<sup>20</sup> and by the blows of his hands he beat his opponent who was himself as tough as an iron mountain.<sup>21</sup> The wrestler would smash his opponent to the ground, crush his bones like flour, throw his rival like a polo ball, split open his head so blood spurted out like a fountain,<sup>22</sup> or he “engraved his opponent's body on the ground (*naqsh-i zamīn sākhtan*).”<sup>23</sup>

Saʿdī's well-known story of the young wrestler who rose to prominence illustrates how the obsession for championship in the modern-day world of sports was no less a fixation during the medieval period.<sup>24</sup> The trainee had learned all the wrestling techniques from his master and was ready to challenge him, or so he thought. This challenge was considered a breach of proper conduct (*tark-i adab*), a point which will be discussed later, but nevertheless the king ordered that the master wrestler fight his student. When the young wrestler was soundly

defeated, his response is reminiscent of Isfāndiyār's response when Rustam defeated him:

“Oh king, my master did not throw me to the ground by superior strength, but he kept a fine point of wrestling from me and today he used that to defeat me.”<sup>25</sup> The young wrestler's statement is indicative of how difficult it was for any wrestler to acknowledge defeat.

Secondly, it reflects the traditional custom that a master always kept one final wrestling technique to himself in order to ensure that he remained the champion.

The title of “world champion” (*jahān pahlawān*, *pahlawān-i ʿālam*) was a most prestigious and enviable title.<sup>26</sup> Just as the courts had a poet laureate (*mālik al-shuʿarāʾ*) who was responsible for determining the aptitude of potential court poets, the world champion was a special term for the head wrestler who organized the wrestlers at the court and supervised their training. The Tīmūrid champion, Pahlawān Muḥammad-i Abū Saʿīd, who was patronized by Sulṭān Ḥusayn and ʿAlī Shīr Nawāʾī, held this title. Nawāʾī eulogizes him as “the world champion of the champions in the world and the world champion of world champions.”<sup>27</sup> He is said to have demonstrated unique strength even in his youth, and when his uncle, Abū Saʿīd, who had been the wrestling champion of the Tīmūrid court, died, Pahlawān Muḥammad became his successor.<sup>28</sup>

Although Wāṣilī's account of wrestlers in his *Badāyiʿ al-Waqāyiʿ* is highly embellished and rhetorical, nevertheless, we are able to glean valuable information from it about the character of the wrestler in Tīmūrid Herat. In one account, Pahlawān Muḥammad was not content with merely possessing the title, *pahlawān-i ʿālam*, but wanted to be the supreme world champion. He did not consider himself worthy of the title until he fought Pahlawān Muḥammad Mālānī, who was famed for his brutality. The following story, translated in full,

of Pahlawān Muḥammad's aspiration for sole championship, illustrates the wrestler's refusal to tolerate any rival as well as the limitations of tolerance and magnanimity:<sup>29</sup>

On a certain day nobles, men of renown and great scholars were present in an audience with Sultān Ḥusayn Mīrzā. Pahlawān Muḥammad-i Abū Sa'īd expressed some frustration and vexation. The king decided to inquire of him concerning this. Muḥammad responded, "Honorable King, whose reign is eternal, this humble servant has been bestowed with the title, 'World Champion' (*pahlawān-i 'ālam*) and given the highest honor. I do not see myself as qualified for this title and it is not appropriate or proper, because there is a champion here in the capital, Pahlawān Muḥammad Mālānī, with whom I have not had a wrestling match, and I have not thrown him to the ground. So how can I be worthy of this title?" Both the Mīrzā (i.e., Sultān Ḥusayn) and 'Alī Shīr were shocked and said, "Oh World Champion, Mālānī is not a human. He's a demon with a human face. Do you think it is proper for you to challenge him?" While they were talking, Mālānī entered [the court]. The Mīrzā said, "This world champion desires to wrestle with you. What do you say?" [Mālānī] responded, "God forbid that I would dare to be so presumptuous with this honorable man. I cannot accept this challenge. I am the humble trainee of his [uncle]. They are my lord and the son of my lord..." All those present praised Mālānī. Muḥammad responded, "That has nothing to do with this. One of the conditions of wrestling is that you cannot refuse or excuse yourself from a challenge to a wrestling match." The Mīrzā ordered them to don the wrestlers' leather breeches and to challenge each other. Mālānī made up his mind not to allow himself to be thrown nor to throw his rival, but rather to bring the wrestling match to a truce. After the initial tussle, when the two had tangled together, Muḥammad caught his opponent off guard and held him in a groin lock. Mālānī fell to the ground on his side. Muḥammad immediately knelt before the king. The king said, "Oh Pahlawān! You know better than this! It doesn't count till you've pinned your rival's back to the ground." Muḥammad stated, "What's this you are saying? A minaret does not have a side or back!" When Mālānī got up, he looked like a drunk elephant. Muḥammad noticed that behind the Mīrzā there was a wall with a steel window. He grabbed the steel window and held himself tight. Mālānī wrapped one of his arms between Muḥammad's two feet and with the other he grabbed his neck. Mālānī pulled so hard that the window was ripped off and the entire edifice collapsed. He wanted to heave Muḥammad, who was still holding on to the window, to the floor. The king stood up and cried out, "For my sake, don't do it!" With that Mālānī quietly laid Muḥammad on the ground and removed his hands.<sup>30</sup>

To emphasize that not everyone could be a champion, Wāsilī then adds a two-line verse:

"God, who created both superiors (*bālā*) and inferiors (*past*) / By his hand, he created a superior power (*zabar-dast*) over every hand."<sup>31</sup>

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As will be seen later, while wrestlers were repeatedly praised for their magnanimity and courteous behavior, championship in the wrestling ring remained the paramount quest for all wrestlers. Since a basic code in wrestling was that one had to accept a challenge to a match, to refuse would be tantamount to a warrior's turning away from combat.<sup>32</sup> Once a challenge was accepted, the match was often deadly, and like the public combat, it was seen as a battle for honor. The author of *Rustam al-Tawārīkh* relates an anecdote about two champion wrestlers from the Ottoman court who challenged the Iranian Qājār court in Iṣfahān to battle.<sup>33</sup> When the first warrior was soundly defeated and the formalities of funeral prayers had been completed, the court sought to 'magnanimously' avoid any further battle. However, despite the Iranians' offer of hospitality for 'Uthmān Bahādur, the second of the two Ottoman champions, he was persistent about wrestling anyone in the court, for as he said, "For men of battle and valor, death on the battlefield is sweeter than dying on a bed of silk."<sup>34</sup> Hence, the wrestling match was organized very much like preparations for war: arranging the wrestling arena, donning the 'armor' of wrestling breeches, and drinking the ritual cup of wine. After the Ottoman rival felled six of the Iranian wrestlers, a Qājār prince who was concerned about the reputation of his court, declared himself ready to enter the ring. As the story goes, the prince's servant, Kalb 'Alī, requested the honor of wrestling 'Uthmān instead, which was seen as a valiant display of national pride similar to the ancient heroic warrior when he entered public combat. Without donning the standard wrestling attire, Kalb 'Alī entered the wrestling arena as the seventh combatant. The wrestling match is described as vicious and again demonstrates the importance of the hands in wrestling:

Kalb 'Alī was able to grab 'Uthmān's wrists in such a way that 'Uthmān could not free himself. Kalb was short in stature and as the hand-duel continued he suddenly let go and threw himself at 'Uthmān, like a partridge fighter. He smashed his forehead against 'Uthmān's head in such a way that 'Uthmān's head split like an almond and the

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walls of his nose ripped open like an exploding beehive and blood flowed like water. Kalb suddenly let go of ‘Uthmān. When ‘Uthmān rubbed his face to clean off the blood, Kalb attacked ‘Uthmān and threw him into the pool of water to the cheers of the spectators. Like a roaring dragon, ‘Uthmān leapt out of the water to attack Kalb. Kalb simply lifted him up like a polo ball and heaved him to the floor. ‘Uthmān died in defeat.<sup>35</sup>

The servant was subsequently richly reward with gifts. Since the bloody victory was performed in the name of the greatest hero, ‘Alī, it was religiously sanctified and worthy of reward. Kalb ‘Alī stated, “I am like the servant of the servant of ‘Alī / I perform feats of championship in the name of ‘Alī.”<sup>36</sup>

The stories above illustrate that from one perspective, championship simply meant to defeat one’s opponent. Like the heroic warrior, the wrestler perpetuated the qualities of courage and self-confidence in battle. He was primarily concerned with winning the match. If he did, he was heroic and honored, like Kalb ‘Alī; if he did not win, he was dishonored like the young wrestler in Sa’dī’s story. Wāṣifī has not told us whether or not Pahlawān Muḥammad continued to bear the title Pahlawān-i ‘Alam after he lost to Mālānī.

### 3. The Elephant-symbol of the Wrestler

During the classical and medieval periods, one of the conventional comparisons for a heroic warrior, and subsequently for the wrestler as well, was the elephant. Its enormous size and destructive force characterized the physical power of the champion. The Sāsānids used elephants in their battles against the Arabs. Arab historians who described the early Islamic conquests in the Iranian lands mention the impregnable elephants that the Arab conquerors had to face in their battles against the Iranian army.<sup>37</sup> The elephant was pictured as a moving fortress which could not be scaled and which symbolized destruction and death.<sup>38</sup>

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The warrior and wrestler are both pictured as fighting like “drunk”, i.e. raging, elephants. One of Rustam’s standard epithets was *pīl-tan* (the elephant-bodied one) which denoted the insurmountable warrior marching in the vanguard as the chief warrior: “The elephant-bodied one led the troops / The one who had never seen defeat in battle.”<sup>39</sup> A synonymous term, *taham-tan* (a body incomparable in physical size, courage and manliness), also denoted the idea of great size. Firdawsī defines *taham* thus: “In the Pahlawī language, *taham* is the one who is greater in manliness (*mardī*).”<sup>40</sup> Rustam’s initial combat was with the great white elephant of Zābul who went on a rampage in the city. The young Rustam courageously approached it and brought his mace down on its head, causing the elephant to die instantly.<sup>41</sup> Rustam defeated the symbol of invincible might and passed the test of manliness.<sup>42</sup>

In single combat, warriors frequently rode into the battleground on horses; however, in an effort to destroy the opponent, they occasionally threatened the enemy by riding an elephant. In the adventures of *Samak-i Ayyār*, this was a stage of battle beyond that of the horse. The elephant became an extension of the warrior, since its trunk was trained to hold a mace or functioned as a mace itself. The elephant-battle was an all-out and uncontrollable gamble because elephants could stampede blindly. If the leading elephant attacked, they would all attack, and if one of them was wounded and roared in pain, the entire herd of elephants fled. If an opponent could attack and fell the first elephant, he was thus able to rout the entire herd. In one such instance, Khurshīdshāh was threatened by Qizil Malik with a herd of 30 elephants and 60 warriors. However, he refused to be intimidated: “Khurshīdshāh is not of those *pahlawāns* who can easily be felled by an elephant. He is a warrior and a champion.” He faced the elephants with boldness (*gustākh-wār*) and struck the leading elephant’s mace-



like trunk. It let out such a roar that the rest panicked and stampeded back to their camp, killing several of their own warriors in the process.<sup>43</sup>

In rhetorical fashion, Muḥammad Hāshim describes the wrestlers during the reigns of Nādir Shāh Afshār (d. 1160/1747) and Karīm Khān Zand (d. 1193/1779) as Rustam-like men possessing superior strength. They treated the camel as if it were a baby goat and scorned the fierce Mangalūs elephant as if it were a little camel.<sup>44</sup> The Mangalūs elephant was the famous white elephant named after a district in India, and according to Wāsiḥī, was the most ferocious and formidable of all elephants.<sup>45</sup>

A peculiar anecdote about the wrestler Mālānī illustrates how the combatant elephant was given human qualities and portrays the wrestler as stronger than an elephant. As the Wāsiḥī story goes, the ruler of Delhi had given a Mangalūs elephant to the Tīmūrid ruler, Sultān Ḥusayn Bayqārā, who was amazed by the size of the beast: “God forbid that a human being be caught with such a creature. How could a man save his life?” Hāshim’s description of the wrestler’s derision of the Mangalūs elephant is reflected in Mālānī’s presumptuous response to the Sultān: “What kind of man would that be?” The wrestler’s boast was considered improper for court custom and so the plan was to teach him a lesson by having him fight the Mangalūs with his bare hands. As champions are bound to win, Mālānī felled the elephant before onlookers of the court, and thus proved himself superior even to the foremost symbol of strength.<sup>46</sup>

In sharp contrast, in the *lutuwwat* ethic of the “death of desire,” the elephant came to symbolize man’s arrogance, which had to be subdued. In the guild of athletes (*zūr-garān*), there was a sub-category of athletes called “elephant lifters” (*pīl-zūr kardān*), who may perhaps be compared to modern-day power lifters. According to Kāshifī, this guild was

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religiously sanctified by the biblical figure Samson who apparently easily lifted an elephant over his head and heaved it away.<sup>47</sup> As will be shown, the ideal wrestler would have to battle against the 'elephant of his carnal soul' by throwing away his inner pride. The following lines, which are attributed to the wrestler Puryā-yi Walī, denote the spiritual wrestler who is more powerful than the greatest elephant because he has defeated his carnal soul:

Our power is such that the elephant cannot survive,  
Our fortune reaches the skies.  
If an ant takes its place in our path,  
That ant becomes a lion from our courage.<sup>48</sup>

### 4. The Patronage of Wrestlers

One of the perpetual concerns of a new dynastic ruler in the medieval period was to establish legitimacy for his rule and win loyalty from his subjects. A ruler therefore needed to create an entourage around himself that would support his reign and upon which he could depend. By relating to his protégés as a parent-figure and granting them benefits and security, the ruler created a strong sense of loyalty and obligation from them.<sup>49</sup> Such patronage was a conventional custom of the rulers and their courts during the medieval Perso-Islamic period. A flourishing court of cultural patronage was therefore a primary means of legitimization because it established a sense of security and credibility for the king and furthermore, functioned as a center of publicity and a statement of greatness of a parvenu ruler.<sup>50</sup> In some cases, it became a competition to see which court could outdo the other in attracting the preeminent scholars and artists.<sup>51</sup>

One of the professions that a ruler sought to patronize was poetry, because the professional poet was able to immortalize the reputation of the king through the power of the word (*sukhan*). According to the 15th century literary biographer, Dawlatshāh (d. ca.

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900/1494), Sultān Maḥmūd of Ghazna had gathered for himself four hundred renowned poets who sang his praises and immortalized his name.<sup>52</sup> Just as poets were duty bound to write panegyrics on their patron, the patron was obligated to support and patronize poets. The author of *Chahār Maqāla* notes how the two – patron and poet – needed each other: “Just as the patron receives his fame from the wonderful poetry of a poet, so the poet becomes renowned by the rich rewards from the monarch, and these two are mutually dependent upon each other.”<sup>53</sup>

Like the poet, who was a distinguished professional in medieval court culture, the wrestler too occupied a position of prestige.<sup>54</sup> In fact, even more than the poet or the scholar, the wrestler was a public statement of political and military legitimacy because he represented both the power of the army and the prestige of cultural supremacy within the environment of the court. Alter says in this regard, “Kings have kept wrestlers because the physical strength of the wrestler symbolizes the political might of the king.”<sup>55</sup> The wrestler, however, was much more than a statement of military might. Power alone was like a king without justice, or merely descriptive of an animal, as Kāshifī describes in his explanation of wrestling. As a combination of strength and knowledge, wrestling was considered to be multi-dimensional:

The foundation of wrestling is the science (*ilm*) of this trade (*ṣanʿat*). Strength is of no value because animals have much strength, but since they have no knowledge (*dānish*), they have no honor. One may ask then how is knowledge (*ilm*) related to strength? It is in complete goodness (*nīkūʿī*), because as the sages have said, strength without knowledge is like a king without justice, and knowledge without strength is a just king without an army. When knowledge and strength are friends of each other, together they bring about the longed for goals. One may ask if wrestling is knowledge or action.... In this art (*ḥunar*), if there is no knowledge, there can be no action. Therefore, knowledge and action together characterize [the art of wrestling].<sup>56</sup>

The wrestler's body was therefore a statement of strength, order and knowledge. He embodied not only the strength of the army, but also the justice, intellectual astuteness and

skill of kingship, all which were necessary for rule. Hence, the wrestler became a very influential figure in medieval court life and served as an ideal performer for rulers. It has already been mentioned how the Tīmūrid rulers sponsored the displays of craft-guilds, which as O’Kane has stated, were means for the rulers to build their fame: “Another way of enhancing the ruler’s prestige was by having his subjects perform for him at festivals.”<sup>57</sup> One such performance which enhanced the king’s prestige was the wrestling match, as Kāshifī says, “Wrestling is an acceptable and pleasing art for kings and sultans.”<sup>58</sup>

Kings frequently ordered championship matches against wrestlers from other courts not only for entertainment, but also to promote their rule. One of the earlier records from the medieval period, which reflects this cultural patronage of wrestlers, comes from the Mongol court of Ögedei (d. 716/1316), who, according to the historian, Rashīd al-Dīn (d. 718/1318), sought to gather renowned wrestlers at his court. When Ögedei heard there were great wrestlers elsewhere, especially in Khurāsān, he brought the champion, Fīla, from Hamadān, along with 30 others to his court. The political rivalry between Ögedei and the Amīr of the Jalāyirids was played out in the wrestling arena, with each wagering gold on his own wrestlers. As the story goes, Fīla threw his opponent to the ground with such force that the entire court shook. Just as poets were rewarded for their panegyric verse, so here the wrestler and his entire retinue of servants were richly rewarded.<sup>59</sup>

In the *Ḥabīb al-Siyar*, Kh<sup>w</sup>āndamīr describes the court of the Mongol ruler Abū Sa‘īd (d. 736/1335), as a center where wrestling was patronized. A young wrestler, Abū Muslim, a champion in archery and wrestling, was in the service of the ruler. In order to strengthen his military and cultural supremacy, Abū Sa‘īd inquired whether there was anyone to challenge Abū Muslim. The ruler’s commander introduced his own brother, ‘Abd al-Razzāq (d.

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739/1338), who apparently was an undefeated *pahlawān* in Khurāsān. He was immediately sent for and shortly after his arrival at the capital, the Khurāsānī wrestler easily defeated Abū Muslim in an archery competition, much to the embarrassment of the former champion.<sup>60</sup>

Just as the poets feared dismissal from a discontented ruler due to some blunder, the wrestler also knew a loss in any athletic competition would cost him continued royal patronage.

Perhaps nowhere was the wrestler so patronized and eagerly supported as late 15<sup>th</sup> and early 16<sup>th</sup> century Tīmūrid Herat. Mention has already been made of the numerous open-area wrestling arenas in Herat. Both Sulṭān Ḥusayn Bayqārā and his chief minister, ‘Alī Shīr Nawāī, avidly sponsored fights and wrestling matches and entertained wrestlers at court. Although the embellished writing style of Wāṣiṭī, the author of *Badāyi’ al-Waqāyi’*, may be more a reflection of himself than of the court culture he was trying to describe, his colorful anecdotes about the champions and wrestlers during this period draw special attention to the political and cultural importance of the wrestler in the Tīmūrid period.<sup>61</sup>

Wāṣiṭī tells of the famous champion, Pahlawān Darwīsh Mufrīd who arrived in Herat from the Hijāz and laid out his challenge to anyone who considered himself a Rūstam or an Isfāndiyār.<sup>62</sup> Recognizing the potential value of this new fighter, Sulṭān Ḥusayn gave him a royal welcome, thus arousing the jealousy of the champions of Herat. Because their reputation as champions was at stake, they feared the loss of the king's patronage. Numerous matches were organized, all under the Sulṭān's supervision, and in each of the them, Mufrīd proved himself the champion, thus receiving special favors from the ruler.<sup>63</sup> Victory in the arena by a champion flattered the king, just as a poet's panegyric did, and boosted the ruler's sense of his royal sovereignty.

In another of Wāṣifī's anecdotes, a challenge had come from an undefeated wrestler from Iraq, Pahlawān 'Alī Rustāyī. The challenge had to be taken seriously, and so the chief wrestler of Herat, Pahlawān Muḥammad, withdrew his younger brother, Darwīsh Muḥammad, from his academic education (another crucial component in the life of the court-wrestler), and evidently took him through three years of intense athletic training to prepare him for the match.<sup>64</sup> Sultān Ḥusayn's concern about its outcome expresses the political ramifications of such sporting events:

Sultān Ḥusayn Mīrzā asked the World Champion, "So how have you planned to challenge this *pahlawān* ['Alī Rustāyī], and which *pahlawān* will wrestle with him?" Pahlawān Muḥammad answered, "There's a young champion (*yatīm*) who cleans our lodge. I've given this challenge over to him." Mīrzā asked, "Who is this?" Pahlawān Muḥammad said, "It's Darwīsh Muḥammad." Mīrzā was stunned and bit his fingers, "But he's just a kid. It will result in our shame (*bī-nāmūs*)!" The World Champion responded, "I am counting that it will bring us reputation (*āb-rū*) and honor (*nāmūs*)."<sup>65</sup>

When the contest finally took place, Darwīsh Muḥammad threw his opponent down in an instant, and was immediately rewarded with rich gifts from the king and his associates. The wrestler had honored the king and the dynasty through his victory.

Patronage however, did not come without conditions. The wrestler was expected to be completely devoted to his patron and to serve him at every beck and call. This is illustrated by a letter Sultān Ḥusayn sent to Darwīsh Muḥammad after Pahlawān Muḥammad died and Darwīsh assumed the position of chief wrestler in his place. Apparently Darwīsh had not taken his position seriously, and so was reprimanded for his lack of loyalty to the patron:

The most excellent and unique Darwīsh Muḥammad, prosperous through the endless kindness and royal favor [from the court], should know that before the beloved champion and confidant guardian, Pahlawān Muḥammad, faced death and heard the bell of migration from the Messenger of Death, he was constantly expressing his needs and requests at the footstool of the glorious throne. Now that ... this kind and gracious person [Darwīsh Muḥammad] has been appointed in his place, he should not let go of the customs of the former, for those customs will be his support (*dast-gīr*).<sup>66</sup>

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The text above illustrates the tension that existed between the patron and his client, or as seen in the relationship between the ancient Iranian kings and Rostam, the tension between the king and the warrior. As Alter has said, “patronage requires a degree of subjugation,”<sup>67</sup> but a wrestler who considered himself a champion did not always consider such an obligation as befitting his status. Nevertheless, it was the expected custom for the wrestler to be constantly available for the king’s service, and whenever he wanted to absent himself, it was necessary for him to request leave. Just as protégés were fearful of the loss of a patron’s support, a patron was paranoid about the potential loss of his protégés’ allegiance, for it could ultimately lead to treason and rebellion against his rule. Hence, in order for the ruler to be able to control the wrestler, the wrestler “should not step outside the circle of service,” because, after all, he and his entire household needed “the center of patronage” (*qibla-yi hājatmandān*).<sup>68</sup> Just as Nizāmī ‘Arūdī wrote about the poet and the patron, the wrestler and the patron also needed each other. Yet, at the same time, they also feared each other.

The custom of a chief *pahlawān* serving at the court of the ruler continued throughout the medieval period. Both the Ṣafāwīd and Qājār dynasties continued to patronize the chief wrestler (*pahlawān bāshī*) or the wrestler of the capital (*pahlawān-i pāytakht*), who played an influential role at the court, first as the head of the guild of wrestlers, and secondly, as a man of intellectual and spiritual prestige.<sup>69</sup> According to Muḥammad Hāshim, when the Ottoman court heard of political anarchy in Iran after the death of Nādir Shāh Afshār, they decided to take advantage of this by sending two champions to Iran, one a sword-fighter and the other an undefeated wrestler. The plan was for the champions to penetrate the Iṣfahān court as Iranian wrestlers and in this way upset Iranian rule. Again, wrestlers were used by the state to promote its agenda and to further its image. Typical of the multi-faceted personality of the

medieval champion, these two men entered Iranian society as normal Sufi *darwīshes* and displayed their exploits in public performances – sleight-of-hand, horsemanship, wrestling and intellectual debates – until they reached the Qājār court. When they were discovered to be Ottoman spies, the Iranian ruler called for a battle. The first battle, reminiscent of the descriptions of the conventional single combat in the epics and romances, was between the Qājār prince, Muḥammad Ḥasan Khān (d. 1172/1759), and the Ottoman cavalry man. The prince's aim was to battle for the honor of Iran, and when he defeated his opponent, albeit with the use of an illegal club, the opponent "died in shame and dishonor, while the prince's valor and honor spread over all of Iran."<sup>70</sup>

According to Baydā'ī, Pahlawān Akbar Khurāsānī (d. 1902), who served during the reign of Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh Qājār (d. 1896), was the last of the traditional chief wrestlers (*pahlawān-i pāytakht*) at the royal court.<sup>71</sup> One of his responsibilities was to supervise wrestling competitions at the palace, which were traditionally held during the New Year (*naw-rūz*) celebrations – a long tradition in Persian society.<sup>72</sup> After the death of Nāṣir al-Dīn Qājār, wrestling gradually lost its political importance because it was not supported by the state.<sup>73</sup> Royal patronage of wrestlers had run its course, although the present Islamic Republic of Iran has been trying again to promote wrestling as the national sport of Iran.<sup>74</sup>

## B. The Wrestler as a Professional

One of the most striking features of wrestling and the milieu of the *zūr-khāna* has been the continuity of its guild organization from the medieval period. The code of conduct among wrestlers, specific ceremonial customs and the spiritual symbolism which has pervaded the life of the wrestler and the atmosphere of the *zūr-khāna*, have their roots in the *futuwwat* ethic of the artisans and craft guilds of the medieval period. Furthermore, the strict



observance of hierarchy among wrestlers, from the novice through to the master champion, and at the same time, a strong emphasis on solidarity and community, reflect how the *futuwwat* regulations for the apprentice and the master were very much a part of the wrestling culture.

### 1. Hierarchy and Solidarity

When Kāshifī describes the code of conduct for the wrestler, he makes a clear distinction between the master (*ustād*) and the trainee (*shāgird*). However, the code for both ranks was primarily ethical and very similar to the code of Sufis in general, as well as to that of other professions.<sup>75</sup>

#### a) Master wrestler

According to Kāshifī, the professional master (*ustād-i kāmil*) had to be an expert in the different fields of science related to wrestling: medicine, astrology, geomancy (*'ilm-i raml*), physiognomics (*'ilm-i fīrāsāt*), as well as the science of wrestling itself.<sup>76</sup> Besides the standard skills of an athletic coach, his skill in geomancy and the techniques of prayers (*'ilm-i ja'wāt*) indicate that the master had to be an expert in the esoteric sciences.<sup>77</sup> Geomancy, considered to have been revealed to the prophet Daniel through the Angel Gabriel, was a science by which a diviner could extract secrets of the world through shapes and lines.<sup>78</sup> The master wrestler needed to possess mental sagacity and intuition so that he could determine the strengths and weaknesses of apprentices, and discern which of his students would be the victor. Pahlawān Muḥammad-i Abū Sa'īd's training of Darwīsh Muḥammad and his keen insight into the ability of his student reflects this skill of *fīrāsāt* which a master was expected to have.<sup>79</sup> Mention has been made of how the Naqshbandi *shaykh*, 'Ubaidullāh Ahrār, is said to have used his skill in telepathy to influence the outcome of a wrestling match in Herat.

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The master of *pahlawānī* in the *Tūmār-i Afsāna-yi Puryā-yi Walī* was also characterized with paranormal abilities whereby he could discern Puryā-yi Walī's uniqueness in the art of wrestling.<sup>80</sup>

Above all, the master had to know the techniques of wrestling itself. Kāshifī states there were a total of 300 different locks and holds, but together with the counter tactics there were over 1000 techniques.<sup>81</sup> In Sa'dī's story, quoted above, the master knew 360 techniques, all of which he taught his student, but one. 'Alī Shīr Nawā'ī says that Pahlawān Muḥammad had a unique knowledge of wrestling techniques and was able to develop new ones. He was especially adept at the techniques of heaving his opponent to the ground. Nawā'ī adds that Pahlawān Muḥammad's skill in wrestling techniques surpassed that of anyone of the past 1000 years.<sup>82</sup> In the treatise of Puryā-yi Walī, after the *pahlawān* had received the wrestling breeches, the master ordered him to wrestle the 40 wrestlers who had entered his service. He was to wrestle each one three times, and for each match he was to use a different technique for a total of 120 techniques. The text lists only 40 of these, and then adds that Puryā-yi Walī knew a total of 360 techniques, of which only 55 were still in use. It was against the practice of Puryā-yi Walī to record his techniques, and for this reason wrestlers have followed his regulation.<sup>83</sup> This may well be the reason why there are no medieval wrestling treatises extant, although, as already mentioned, Pahlawān Muḥammad is said to have written one.<sup>84</sup> However, because of the competitive and secret nature of the wrestlers' locks and holds, such manuals would probably not have been written anyway.

The chief of the wrestlers, called the *ustād-i kāmīl* by Kāshifī, was also given the title, *kuhna suwār* (ancient cavalier) during the Ṣafawid period. The term refers to a cavalryman experienced in battle and *pahlawānī*.<sup>85</sup> The initiation ceremony described in the treatise

about Puryā-yi Walī uses the term *kuhna suwār* for the master who inducted Puryā-yi Walī into the association of spiritual champions. The use of the Sufi title, *murshid-i kāmīl* (perfect guide), which in the *Tūmār* likely referred to the wrestler's leader on the mystical path, replaced the Persian term during the Ṣafawid period.<sup>86</sup> By the 20th century, the chief responsibility of the *murshid-i kāmīl* in the *zūr-khāna* was to act as director of exercises and wrestling by chanting poetry and playing the drum.<sup>87</sup>

During the Ṣafawid period, the term *pahlawān* became a very special title, of which not every wrestler was worthy. Only an undefeated wrestler, or one whom no one dared to challenge, could hold it.<sup>88</sup> As mentioned above, Pahlawān Muḥammad felt unworthy of the title "World Champion" because there was still a rival whom he had not defeated. After a wrestler had attained the level of champion, the prestigious leather breeches (*tunbān-i naṭī*) were conferred upon him.<sup>89</sup> At this point he was allowed to make a living by traveling from one city to another for wrestling meets. A tribunal was set up as a registry of professions, which included the guild of wrestlers. The tribunal issued certificates of *pahlawānī* on the basis of which the wrestler was allowed to travel and challenge other wrestlers.<sup>90</sup>

#### b) Stages of the wrestler

The wrestler's rank was absolutely crucial in the *zūr-khāna* because it was directly related to the ideals of manliness. Different praises and benedictions were given to the wrestler depending on his stage of development. Also, the wrestler needed to know his exact rank and place in the *zūr-khāna* with respect to the other wrestlers. The wrestlers frequently competed for subordinate positions lest they be considered presumptuous and arrogant by their colleagues. Deliberate and calculated courtesies in order to establish the correct ranks

among the wrestlers bespeaks more of pretension than real humility. This is described by Jamāl-zāda with evident amusement:

After another courteous deferral, "with the permission of Mawlānā," Pahlawān Faṭḥullāh finally took on the responsibility for the very difficult position of captain (*miyāndār*). After that, they began to tussle and argue who should take second position, which was designated for the chief *pahlawān*, who was subordinate to the *murshid*. He was expected to face the captain. Then they began to scuffle for the third and fourth positions and so forth. Finally, after endless courtesies and disputes and swearing to this and that, quoting Qur'ānic verses, and all kinds of pledges of devotion, "my life for your sake" and "I'll die for you," everyone found his place according to his rank, fame and experience.<sup>91</sup>

A greater show of humility normally was indicative of a wrestler's higher rank. This excessive and very deliberate display of etiquette highlights again the necessity for proper behavior as the mark of the spiritual champion.

The five or six specific stages that have remained customary in the traditional *zūr-khāna* are expressed by Persian terms which are indicative of their ancient, pre-Islamic roots. The stages of the wrestler are as follows:<sup>92</sup> The *nawcha* (trainee) was the novice apprentice who had to undergo intense instruction in the art of wrestling. The term, *naw-khāsta* (amateur), was given to the next stage, which originally referred to the Sāsānid warrior who had not yet become a champion. In the treatise on Pahlawān Muḥammad, the *naw-khāsta* began to participate in actual wrestling matches in the wrestling arena (*ma'raka*).<sup>93</sup> The *sākhta* (well-formed) was the one who had proven himself and therefore was worthy of the master's praises. Only after this stage could a wrestler earn the title of *pahlawān* or *pīsh-kiswat* (chief-robe). The chief master was called the *murshid-i kāmil* who, in the modern period, became the possessor of the drum (*ṣāhib-i ḍarb*). Also in the modern period, the captain (*miyāndār*), who has the responsibility to direct the exercises, is designated as such simply on the day wrestlers meet in the *zūr-khāna*.<sup>94</sup>

Training a novice was the responsibility of the master. Both Kāshifī and the author of the *Ṭūmār* emphasize the importance of the master's magnanimous attitude toward the trainee in order to prevent him from becoming disheartened. In fact, during the exercises and the wrestling matches, whenever the captain or *murshid* noticed that any of the novices were lagging behind or that the match was becoming too intense, all activity was called to a halt.<sup>95</sup> The master, who in theory had “kissed the earth and laid his back on the ground,” had no need to defeat a novice. Rather, he was to express his superiority, as well as his victory over his own pride, by deferring to the novice. Often, as the master tangled with the trainee and pointed out his strengths and weaknesses, he simply allowed the trainee to throw him to the ground. On the other hand, any arrogance or conceit had to be beaten out of a young wrestler so that he would truly become a *jawānmard*. Hence, training was as much ethical and spiritual as it was physical.<sup>96</sup> The *Ṭūmār* states:

When a young wrestler wants to join, and you consider yourself superior, you should treat him in such a way that he will be happy. If he wants to wrestle, give him a match and make sure he is not disappointed. If he remains stupid, and doesn't know how to show respect, he should be defeated. When you beat an amateur (*naw-khāsta*), you should encourage him at night and then take him to the *ma'raka* the next day and advise your colleagues. Wrestle with him gently and whatever donations are received during this time, give them to him and send him on his way.<sup>97</sup>

The *Ṭūmār* provides ten rules of moral conduct for the wrestler which reflect the same ethic as in the treatises on *tūtūwwat*.<sup>98</sup> Just as the *sālik* (traveler) on the mystical path had to cross numerous stages before he attained spiritual reality, the traditional athlete had to undergo intense training – both physical and spiritual – before he reached the stage of champion. Hence, not only did the novice have to learn the proper wrestling techniques in order to become a true champion, he had to learn to become humble through courtesy and proper *adab*.

c) Induction of the *pahlawān*

The symbolic value of the *shalwar* and *shadd* in the *futuwwat* guilds continued for the wrestlers, although often with different terms and shades of meaning. Kāshifī says the distinguishing marks of the wrestler were the wrestling breeches (*tunbān*) and an amulet (*muhra*) bound to his clothes. The wrestling breeches had the same religious mandate from Abraham as did the *shalwar*,<sup>99</sup> and as Baydāī says, their use during the late medieval and early modern period was rooted in the same ethic of *futuwwat*.

The donning of the leather breeches (*tunuka*) by the *pahlawān* is the same as the donning of the trousers (*izār*) of the *jawānmardān*, which symbolizes the virtue of chastity and the denial of the *nafs* from all sensual desires. The belt (*kamar-band*) signifies the girding of the loins, which symbolizes courage and being ready for service.<sup>100</sup>

The earlier writers on *futuwwat* emphasized that the *shalwar* was conferred on the adept as an act of confirmation that he was truly a spiritual champion. Similarly, only the wrestler who had proven himself as a champion in wrestling was worthy of wearing the leather breeches. In the modern period, however, the leather breeches (*tunuka-yi charmī*) have become the standard uniform for all wrestlers, masters and novices.<sup>101</sup>

Baydāī quotes two texts from the Ṣafawid period which describe the transfer of the leather breeches to a qualifying *pahlawān*. During the reign of Shāh Sulaimān (d. 1105/1694), a certain wrestler, Pahlawān Mīrzā Beg of Tabrīz, was given an official license to wear the leather breeches after becoming a champion.<sup>102</sup> Sufī masters, including the *shaykh* and *naqīb* and students of the path, gathered in the royal Sufī lodge (*takya*) to perform the necessary ceremonial rituals on the occasion. Several of the renowned champions of that period acted as the *shaykh* and master of the *tunbān* during the ceremony. Although the entire text uses technical wrestling terminology, the ethos is thoroughly Sufī. In fact, the

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wrestling champion who was now worthy to wear the breeches, had moved from the deceptive techniques used in real wrestling to become a champion of fighting the carnal soul:

In order to advance in the affairs of life, it is necessary for every individual to grasp the skirt of a spiritual guide (*murshid-i kāmil*). With his help, one is freed from deception, fraud, knavery and the tricks of carnal desires - all of which exist in wrestling. The use of unusual techniques in order to throw an opponent and pound him to the ground is [only] trickery and [physical] championship (*zabar-dastī*).<sup>103</sup>

The Sufi terminology indicates again how inextricably the professions were linked with mysticism during the medieval period. Ironically, although physical wrestling was seen as a 'worldly' activity, only the one who repeatedly beat other champions in real wrestling arenas was eligible to wear the special leather breeches. In other words, a wrestler could only become a spiritual champion after he had proven himself to be a physical champion.

The *Ṭūmār* gives a detailed description of how Puryā-yi Walī himself was dressed in leather breeches by the master wrestler (*kuhna suwār*). Though this account sounds legendary, there are a few similarities to Zarkūb's description of the transfer of the *shalwar* and to Kāshifī's detailed account of the ceremony of the *shadd*. These include the naming of great champions, the careful donning of the *tunbān* beginning with the right foot and then the left, and also the cup, although in this account, a cup of oil was used to anoint the candidate. In the text, the *tunbān* and *naṭī* are two separate items of attire. The *tunbān* belonged to the wrestler himself, which the master ceremonially transferred back to him. The *naṭī*, which was made from raw cow leather rubbed with oil, belonged to the master and was very carefully transferred to *pahlawān*. Subsequently, the master tied the belt (*band*) of *lutuwat*, which was made of camel wool, around Puryā-yi Walī. Once the ceremony was completed, the master ordered Puryā-yi Walī to wrestle with the 40 men who had participated in the

ceremony. It was here, as the legend goes, that Puryā-yi Walī experienced the highest stage of championship as he lay down in defeat.<sup>104</sup>

Numerous other items of attire had symbolic meanings for the wrestler. In the medieval period, athletes who became champions tied a bell around their arms to exhibit their superior strength. It was said of the man who lost his power or prestige, “They’ve silenced his bell.” Ḥusayn Kurd, the legendary religious warrior of the early Ṣafawid period, entered each new city with a “Ḥaydarī bell” (bell of ‘Alī) tied around his waist to announce his arrival as a champion.<sup>105</sup> Bayḍā’ī speculates that the wrestler’s arm band and the bell used in the *zūr-khāna* to stimulate the exercises may have evolved from the traditional bell of the *pahlawān*.<sup>106</sup> Another of the traditional insignias of wrestlers, and specifically of champions, was a small mirror which was attached to the wrestler’s knee band. According to Bayḍā’ī, it symbolized the champion’s undefeated career: as long as the mirror remained unbroken it was a sign that his knees had never touched the ground.<sup>107</sup>

But attire alone did not assure the wrestler his supremacy. Just as Rustam needed the assistance of the mythical bird, Sīmurgh, to maintain his status as champion, the wrestler who was battling evil in the spiritual sense also needed spiritual help and protection. According to Kāshifī, the amulet (*mulha*) worn by the wrestler served the purpose of warding off the evil eye (*ḍafʿ-i chashm-i bad*).<sup>108</sup> In short, the wrestler’s attire symbolically denoted his status as a wrestling champion, in the same way as the attire and regalia of any spiritual *lātan* was supposed to reflect that he was a spiritual champion. The saying “clothes make the man” had relevance also for the medieval *jawānmard*.



## 2. Community Service

While there were wrestlers who dedicated their entire lives to a career of wrestling,<sup>109</sup> as a rule, they maintained their own separate professions and gathered together in the *zūr-khāna* as a secret society with its own code of behavior and spirit of charity for the community. Whether one was a basket-weaver,<sup>110</sup> or a teapot mender,<sup>111</sup> was of no account.<sup>112</sup> Physical strength, accompanied by an ethic of morality and spirituality, gave the wrestlers a sense of self-confidence and the notion that their associations in the *zūr-khānas* were superior to anything else. As the following poem, which was frequently recited in the *zūr-khānas*, suggests, other kinds of associations were disdained:

For a while I followed after school and debate,  
 I saw it is a long road and it makes one lame.  
 For a while I went to the tavern,  
 I saw it simply stops with the vessel of wine.  
 For a while I went to the house of gambling,  
 All I saw there was just fighting for the dice.  
 I sat with a group of wandering Sufis (*qalandarān*),  
 And saw that they just talk of pot (*chars*) and smoking.  
 The elder of insight called out to me, saying,  
 "All of these gatherings are simply nonsense.  
 Arise and go to the *zūr-khāna*.  
 There is talk of the club (*mīl*) and the weights (*sang*),  
 There is the sound of the flute and the pleasure of the drum (*tanbūr*),  
 There is the bow (*kabāda*) and the exercise board (*takht-i shalang*).  
 There a man is as brave as a lion,  
 Another is like a sea monster doing his push-ups.  
 The tiger wanders around the elephant,  
 The lion roars with the leopard.  
 Beat the drum to the rhythm of verse, oh Sarbāz  
 Drummer, beat it, for it's the drum of battle."<sup>113</sup>

In the medieval period, the *zūr-khāna* was called *takya* or *langar* (lodge).<sup>114</sup> As is evident from 'Alī Shīr Nawā'ī's and Wāṣifī's descriptions of Pahlawān Muḥammad, his wrestling lodge, located in the Nī'amatābād district of Herat, was both an important center for professional training of wrestlers as well as a hub of social and cultural activity. Sponsored

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by the state treasury, the lodge accommodated about a 100 wrestlers, some of whom were only beginners and so they did not yet participate in official wrestling.<sup>115</sup> Training was intense as is apparent from the description of Pahlawān Muḥammad's training his younger brother for an up-coming match with the Iraqi rival. Ten of the younger wrestlers (*naw-khāsta*) had to assist with the training of Darwīsh Muḥammad who, after a lengthy and strenuous period of training, was able to throw four of them at one time.<sup>116</sup> Pahlawān Muḥammad's lodge had an atmosphere of comradeship and it extended generous hospitality to all who entered it, which fits well with Kāshifī's code of conduct for lodge keepers in his *FNS*.<sup>117</sup> Although the discipline in the lodge was strict, as a center of hospitality it was apparently open day and night for all classes of people. When the rival wrestler from Iraq arrived, Pahlawān Muḥammad sent his students ahead to welcome him and ordered them to treat him with honor and entertain him for 40 days while Darwīsh continued to train.<sup>118</sup> Even the Sultān would visit the lodge and when he did not, Pahlawān Muḥammad would send meals to him, which included wines, fruits and sweets. The host offered two or three meals a day to anyone present and would feed the guests' horses and donkeys and provide the travelers with provisions for their journeys.<sup>119</sup> As a result of his magnanimous attitude toward his guests, students and peers, Pahlawān Muḥammad was well-liked by all members of society.

Wrestlers maintained a strong sense of egalitarianism and esprit de corps among themselves. The wrestler had the notion that he was a continuation of the heroic warrior of the past and hence, was responsible to serve as a protector and patron of the weak in his community. He acted as a Robin Hood figure, frequently taking the law into his own hands, and because of his intimidating strength, he needed no higher authority than himself to

enforce what he considered to be morally correct. This resonates with the knights of the pre-Islamic Mazdaean uprising who stole from the rich to serve the poor. Ideally, he saw it as his responsibility to establish justice and equity in his community. Though devout and pious, the athlete refused to bow to fanaticism and religiosity, considering himself morally superior to *mullāhs* and *akhunds*. Jamālzāda relates the story of his father, Āqā Sayyid Jamāl, a liberal-minded clergyman, who was hassled by fanatical clergy. A champion wrestler, who was a disciple of Sayyid Jamāl's, defended him, and with the help of other thugs of the city, he rid the mosque of the ignominious clergy.<sup>120</sup> When a merchant or official of the state hoarded merchandise and then sold it at inflated prices to helpless subjects of the city, a champion wrestler of that area would take the law into his own hands and, with threats of retribution, force the oppressor to change his ways.<sup>121</sup>

In reality, however, the situation was often far from being as ideal. The *zūr-khāna* also entertained athletes, referred to as *lūfīs*, who were often nothing more than knaves and thieves and heirs of the earlier *'ayyārs* of Baghdad.<sup>122</sup> The darker side of *jawānmardī* – the cavalier hooligan who indulged his physical and sensual passions – has always paralleled the development of a more spiritual and ethical understanding of the phenomenon. While Floor's classification of terms seems rather confusing, his conclusion that there were only a few self-effacing *jawānmards* among the *lūfīgar* associations of the Qājār period, is in accordance with what Hāshim stated earlier in his *Rustam al-Tawārīkh* concerning the prevalence of vice among wrestlers during the reign of Shāh Sulṭān Ḥusayn Ṣafawī (d. 1135/1722):

Most of the men of that time were champions, wrestlers, night-prowlers, knaves, *'ayyārān*, rinds, imposters and reckless ruffians, and wherever they found a beautiful woman or girl or a lovely boy or horse or good camel, ... they would go there, indulge in their deeds, as much as they jolly-well pleased, then after some time, they would take their prey to their own homes.<sup>123</sup>

Many *lūṭīs* linked themselves with local or state politics for protection in their criminal activities.<sup>124</sup> Depending on their moods and dispositions, they either terrorized neighborhoods or, conversely, served as local vigilantes, valiantly protecting the poor and widows and guarding their local quarter (*maḥalla*) against thieves. Since the ideal wrestler embodied both physical strength and the *jawānmardī* code of service to the weak, on the one hand, he could bully the weak and, on the other hand, support their cause.<sup>125</sup> Frequently, the champion's rule over his neighborhood and service to his community were merely a cover for opportunism and a means to extend his power.<sup>126</sup>

The modern short story "Dāsh Ākul," by Ṣādiq Hūdāyat (d. 1951), which will be discussed in chapter 5, is built around the theme of the champion's moral responsibility for his own neighborhood (*maḥalla*) and his struggle to maintain the code of behavior of *jawānmardī*.<sup>127</sup> The story highlights the ideal champion, Dāsh Ākul, who sacrificed the desires of his heart for the sake of carrying out his duties as the local guardian. In contrast to Dāsh Ākul, the antagonist in the story is an arrogant fighter whose only goal was to build up his own circle of influence and so he fought with everyone.

### C. The Wrestler as a Symbol of Perfection

#### 1. The Need for Control

The wrestler perpetuated the model of the heroic warrior by enlisting the *jawānmardī* codes of courage, self-confidence and preeminence in the wrestling arena. Although he could only be considered a champion when he could claim that his "back had never touched the ground," this assertion easily led to extremes. Once the ideal of *jawānmardī* was reduced to mere physical power, the wrestler tended to become brutal. The satirist ʿUbaidullāh

Zākāni (d. ca. 772/1371) used stinging hyperbole to drive home the point of the extremes of the swaggering champion: “Beat defenseless old women with a suitably large club / so that you too can achieve the rank of a *ghāzī*.”<sup>128</sup> Anecdotes from the medieval period indicate that this cavalier attitude was considered a breach of proper conduct and consequently had to be controlled. However, since wrestling was essentially battle, it easily fell prey to battle-like behavior, where a wrestler treated an opponent with contempt and cruelty.

In Hāshim’s view, cavalier conduct among wrestlers and champions was a deterioration of the ideals of *jawānmardī*. Regardless of its accuracy, Hāshim’s anecdotal description of the *pahlawān*, Muḥammad ‘Alī Beg, is a portrayal of the kind of conduct that the ethic of *futuwwat* was supposed to control. ‘Alī Beg, characterized as being superior to Rustam, repeatedly and noisily raped a woman, and although he was rebuked for his conduct, he justified it because his wife was sick. This was brought to the attention of the king who held a hearing in the case. The *mulla* pleaded for his pardon because “there is no sin for the crazy.” A sage justified the champion’s deed on the grounds that if he could not release his sperm, he would suffer psychological damage.<sup>129</sup> An astrologist confirmed this on the grounds that fate had made the *pahlawān* a man of pleasure. A fourth advocate, a prime minister, exempted him because he was a valiant champion. Since all the nobles supported the wrestler, the king acquiesced and rewarded the *pahlawān* for his display of ‘manliness’ by girding him with a belt of jewels. Eventually the man was poisoned by a commoner whose daughter had been repeatedly abused by him.<sup>130</sup>

Another such swaggering champion was the chief wrestler of Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh Qājār’s court, Akbar Khurāsānī, who grew up as a street fighter in Herat. He refused to submit to soldiers of the Qājār regime and consequently fled to Tehran where he proved himself an

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undefeated fighter and wrestler. According to Baydā'ī, many who encountered him in a match ended up severely wounded or dead. He not only promoted wrestling, but himself as well, and forced poets to eulogize him under threat of physical harm. The following poem is an example of his self-eulogy:

Don't consider my thin body an excuse,  
 Don't wish for the *gawd* (pit) of the *zūr-khāna*,  
 It is not easy to become Pahlawān Akbar of Khurāsān.<sup>131</sup>

The epitaph on the tombstone of Khurāsānī, who as Chehabi states, "could not be further from the values of chivalry,"<sup>132</sup> is further evidence that a wrestler, irrespective of his personal lifestyle, was assumed to be a moral and spiritual champion:

Alas, Pahlawān Akbar!  
 With might he brought the names of Rustam and Isfandiyār back to life  
 He was a champion from whose wrestling strength,  
 All the champions of the world guarded themselves.  
 Alongside the men of the mystical path and with the pride of a wrestler,  
 Like Puryā, he was without hypocrisy and a man of humility.<sup>133</sup>

The cavalier wrestler, as reflected in the anecdotes above, stands in sharp contrast to the image of the self-abnegating wrestler and to the strict code of behavior to which he was expected to adhere. True, wrestling combined physical strength and knowledge of techniques, which the cavalier champions embodied. But wrestling needed more than knowledge and power, as Kāshifī states: "Whoever is occupied with this activity, the one who wrestles in purity (*pākī*) and correctness (*rāstī*) is the victor."<sup>134</sup> The wrestler was to become a blend of physical and mental power, technique and moral character, and correct etiquette in daily relationships. This concept of the wrestler as the epitome of physical beauty, mental perception and moral virtue as well as spiritual devotion is also reflected in the medieval texts, and it is precisely this image of the traditional wrestler that has been romanticized throughout much of the 20th century, as seen in Jamāl-zāda's monograph on the

*zūr-khāna*.<sup>135</sup> Just as the wrestler was a physical champion, he was expected to achieve perfection in every aspect of his life. As will be shown, the wrestler ultimately expressed his excellence in the seemingly paradoxical act of self-abnegation.

## 2. Physical Perfection

Kāshifī states at the outset of his exposition on the guild of wrestlers that kings and sultans have shown a unique interest in this skill.<sup>136</sup> Though patronage was one of the reasons for this, different texts indicate that the ruler's personal interest was in the sport itself. The Mongol ruler Ögedei expressed extreme delight at the muscular symmetry of Fīla Hamadānī's body.<sup>137</sup> When the champion, Mufrīd, arrived at Herat, the entire cadre of *pahlawāns* expressed their astonishment, "We have never seen a body with such beauty and symmetry as Mufrīd's."<sup>138</sup> In the account of the championship wrestling match between Darwīsh Muḥammad and the rival from Iraq, when the young Tīmūrid wrestler entered the arena, according to Wāṣifī, "it was as if it were an incarnated spirit, and Sultān Ḥusayn Mīrzā said there is no pleasure equal to observing the body of Darwīsh Muḥammad."<sup>139</sup> Centuries later, Jamālzāda expressed the same delight at watching a wrestler:

The kind of bodies I saw there that day, I had never seen in my life before. All of them were gathered around the wrestling pit, with thick-knotted arms, broad shield-like chests, rock-hard stomachs, bulging muscles, tight waists, drawn-out and solid thighs, slim cheeks – all which were signs of athletes. For certain, any person would be thrilled at watching such a sight.<sup>140</sup>

In his definition of *futuwwat*, Āmulī wrote that a real *fātan* "possessed physical strength and bodily perfection."<sup>141</sup> In this sense, the wrestler was a real *fātan*. In the atmosphere of the court where nobles and literati were constantly in the service of the king, the wrestler's perfect physical balance and rhythm became a living eulogy of the king. His championship

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and well-built body was a reflection of the ruler's political championship and order over his domain. Alter states much the same for the Indian wrestler:

It was precisely because wrestlers already “stood for” the ideological principles of a disciplined way of life – physical strength, moral virtue, honesty, respect, duty, and integrity – that they served so well as political emblems.<sup>142</sup>

The beauty and equilibrium of the body were outward expressions of the wrestler's inner beauty and equilibrium. In some of the modern sources, the wrestler is contrasted with the merchant, who is considered to be deceitful and consumed with self interest.<sup>143</sup> Kāzīmāyī makes the colorful comparison between the merchant, “who has to carry his swelling stomach from place to place,” and the wrestler, whose perfectly-built body speaks of his moral character.<sup>144</sup>

In some medieval texts, the beauty of the wrestler's body is compared to the beauty of the beloved. Classical Persian poetry in praise of the beloved consistently described her/him as both seductive and cruel. The beloved's beauty was portrayed as irresistible and her indifference to the lover as cruel. The lover who was enraptured with the beloved would express a masochistic delight in the way the beloved treated him. The athlete was like the beloved in each of these aspects. This is reflected in a 15<sup>th</sup> century work, *Ḍāya‘ al-Badāya*, by the Herati poet, Sayfī Bukhārī,<sup>145</sup> which describes state-sponsored shows of athletes (*zūr-garān*), who, though not specifically wrestlers, also displayed their physical championship in the public arena (*ma‘raka*).<sup>146</sup> Their practice was to beat the kettle-drum to invite spectators to watch them draw bows, lift weights or perform some other exciting skill. Sayfī's poetry reflects how the athlete's body and skills were depicted using the metaphor of the beloved:

I had no desire for the silver-hearted youth,  
By his strength (*zūr*), the athlete (*zūr-gar*) made me his lover.  
Although I was on the mountain of sadness because of the rocks of fate,  
Your waist (*kamar*) dragged me to you.



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I am your slave, if you so desire,  
On the day of the performance, you can twirl me around your head.<sup>147</sup>

The lengthy poem on the wrestler, *Gul-kushtī*, written at the end of Shāh Sulaimān's or possibly at the beginning of Shāh Sultān Ḥusayn Ṣafawī's reign, is an ode to the beauty of the wrestler and the joys of wrestling. The poet Mīr 'Abdul 'Āl, alias Mīr Nijāt, served as the court librarian and poet during the reign of Sultān Ḥusayn Ṣafawī.<sup>148</sup> This poem of 268 lines contains a lexicon of the technical terms and idioms of wrestling and athletics used in the Ṣafawid period, and scattered lines of this *mathnawī* were still cited in *zūr-khānas* in the 20th century.<sup>149</sup> Mīr Nijāt's familiarity with wrestling and Sulī terminology is indicative of how much wrestling was a part of the intellectual and mystical milieu of the later medieval period. Often using bizarre comparisons, rhetorical devices and intellectualized metaphors, common to the "Indian" style (*sabk-i hindī*) of Persian poetry of the 15th to 18th centuries,<sup>150</sup> Mīr Nijāt mingles mysticism, love and wrestling in one long panegyric on the young wrestler whose body and movements become a reflection of the beauty and character of the beloved. The following lines illustrate the poet's use of conventional descriptions of the beloved to describe the wrestler, not without homoerotic overtones:

This lion-like idol, the novice wrestler (*nawcha kushtī-gīri*)  
Has stolen my heart by his style of [wrestling] techniques.<sup>151</sup>

The tall, cypress-figure has arrived and entered the arena with such stimulation,  
I say it honestly, everyone cries out, "Oh my God."<sup>152</sup>

Whoever sees your bared chest during the time of wrestling,  
Will rip open his chest with his fingers, like an eagle.<sup>153</sup>

Your waist is narrow like the first curve of the letter *mīm*,  
Your mouth is curved like the curve of the *mīm*, but with two halves.<sup>154</sup>

Look at the movements of that sweet person when he's doing push-ups,  
It's a reflection of a delightful wave of the water of life.<sup>155</sup>

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The sound of your push-ups has such beauty,  
That Christians are summoning others to church early in the morning.<sup>156</sup>

In the ode, the deceptive movements of the wrestler are interpreted in the way the beloved entices the lover and lures him into the arena. At the same time, the powerful blows of the wrestler's hands and feet are described as "techniques of oppression" (*funūn-i sitam*) that render the lover powerless. Furthermore, the defeat of an opponent in the arena is a metaphor for the lover's groveling helplessness before his beloved:

Your skill is oppressive, powerful and violent,  
With cruelty, your two eyebrows are arched in the universe.

You are able to kill the whole universe with cruelty,  
Do whatever you can to me, you are capable.<sup>157</sup>

From Wāṣifī's anecdotes from the Tīmūrid period, it is apparent that the political patronage of the wrestler went beyond the need for legitimization and court entertainment, and led to an idolization of the wrestler's beauty and probably to homoerotic relationships. At one point Pahlawān Muḥammad aroused the chief minister's jealousy after the wrestler had dressed up as a member of Sultān Ḥusayn's guard (*paykāār*). In this way, he had attracted the attention of other possible patrons, including the Sultān himself who commented that he had never seen a guard in such splendor. 'Alī Shīr Nawā'ī was most offended at this public display of his favorite 'client': "Oh king, I have given a covenant of allegiance to Pahlawān and in no way will we be separated from each other."<sup>158</sup> In his treatise on Pahlawān Muḥammad, 'Alī Shīr Nawā'ī comments on their intimate relationship, "He and I had no secrets," and again, "He was my true companion for 40 years." At one point, when 'Alī Shīr Nawā'ī was ill in Mashhad, Pahlawān Muḥammad happened to be serving there and so he daily gave his patron massages, as was customary for medical treatment during that period.<sup>159</sup>

The high praise for wrestlers continued throughout the medieval period. After Muḥammad Hāshim had waxed eloquent about the strength of several 19th century wrestlers, he eulogized their ethics: “The eyes of the heavens have never seen the likes in this world of those two *pahlawāns* / In every aspect - good morals and proper behavior.”<sup>160</sup>

### 3. Intellectual Brilliance

The wrestler’s participation in court culture meant that he was also a part of the literary and intellectual life of the court. His entrance into this group, however, was not without opposition. Wāṣiṭī’s comments on some wrestlers’ backgrounds shed light on the social perception of the wrestler during the Tīmūrid period. According to Wāṣiṭī, most wrestlers did not possess the proper kind of family background: “In terms of lineage and pedigree, the community of wrestlers are scorned and are outside the circle of good stock; therefore, they are called [the Indian names of] Jats and Lūlīs.”<sup>161</sup> Hence, according to the standards of the time, the wrestler was not regarded as possessing the necessary prerequisites for ideal manhood because his assets were based simply on his physical strength and beauty.<sup>162</sup> The wrestler, therefore, had to distinguish himself in intellectual and literary feats as well. This is exemplified again by the Tīmūrid champion, Pahlawān Muḥammad, and later, by his brother. On one occasion, when officials of the state and literati gathered together to discuss cultural matters, Pahlawān Muḥammad’s name was mentioned, to which Wāṣiṭī replied in his typical embellished rhetorical style:

It is well-known that besides his expertise and excellence in the art of wrestling, Pahlawān Muḥammad-i Abū Saʿīd is unique and the only one of his time in all the sciences and arts and virtues. It would be appropriate if something of his virtues was mentioned. [I said], “Oh king, ever since the golden wheat-colored champion of the day faces the black-flagged wrestler of the night and conquers it in the blue-colored heavenly arena and every morning enters its territory and with the wrestling technique of *kala-yi zangī* heaves it away from the world of time and throws it on its back, no

wrestler has shown himself to be superior to [Pahlawān Muḥammad]. It is famed that no wrestler has brought him down to his knees and that as champion in all the sciences (*'ulūm*), virtues (*fādā'il*) and perfections (*kamālāt*) as well as the skills and common wrestling techniques of the day, he is incomparable."<sup>163</sup>

Pahlawān Muḥammad's ability to quote from religious commentaries and participate in intellectual debate with the scholars and nobility of the court reflects his wide-ranging expertise, as well as his eloquence of speech. During one such religious discussion, at which, incidentally Kāshifī was present as well, the wrestler settled a religious dispute by quoting a full page from a religious commentary. The entire court cheered, much to the chagrin of the Shaykh al-Islam who had lost the dispute. On another day, Pahlawān Muḥammad explained a particular legal point to the Sulṭān which the Shaykh al-Islam had not been able to do. This aroused the ire of the *shaykh*, for a wrestler had outdone him in his own area of expertise. The wrestler had breached the code of courtesy, according to the *shaykh*: "In such a royal meeting of religious scholars, what is the meaning of a wrestler having the final word (*mālik al-kalām*)?" The Sulṭān, who may well have been biased towards the wrestler, more readily understood his interpretation than the lengthy and tedious discussion from the *shaykh*. Without further investigation, the Sulṭān came to the wrestler's defense.<sup>164</sup>

To add further to Pahlawān Muḥammad's literary ability, he is credited with writing a treatise on the technique of wrestling (*fānn-i kushlī*), which has apparently not survived.<sup>165</sup> Though Wāṣifī's praise of the *pahlawān* is hyperbolic, one can appreciate the metaphors of wrestling used to describe Pahlawān Muḥammad's intellectual skill: "He writes with such wit and elegance that when scribes on the battleground of articulation and rhetoricians in the arena of eloquence see it, they crumble helplessly to their knees."<sup>166</sup> In his treatise on the wrestler, 'Alī Shīr Nawā'ī lauds Pahlawān Muḥammad as a multi-faceted character, gifted in most of the sciences and arts of the day: poetry, Qur'ānic recitation, riddles (*mu'amma*),

astrology, medicine, jurisprudence and especially music composition and performance in a variety of modes.<sup>167</sup> Pahlawān Muḥammad also trained his wrestling students to memorize and recite poetry.<sup>168</sup>

According to Wāṣifī, Pahlawān Muḥammad's younger brother, Darwīsh Muḥammad, was also endowed with a unique ability to write. Already as a seventeen year-old, his expertise in debate was so outstanding that his school master, Ḥusayn al-Kāshifī (the author of *FNS*), observed, "I have pity on anyone with whom Darwīsh Muḥammad tangles in debate. Until he has convincingly silenced an opponent, Darwīsh will not lift his hand from him."<sup>169</sup>

Puryā-yi Walī is credited with a *divan* of mystical and ethical verse, entitled *Kanz al-Haqā'iq*, though no more than some scattered poems have been found in different hagiographical works.<sup>170</sup> The Naqshbandi Shaykh, 'Ubaidullāh Aḥrār, said that he appreciated no poetry more than that written by Pahlawān Maḥmūd Puryār.<sup>171</sup> Another medieval wrestler, Pahlawān Maḍāqī Iraqī, who served at the court of Shāh Ṭahmasp (d. 984/1576), was renowned for his mystical poetry and is credited with a *ḍiwān* of poetry of nearly 4000 lines.<sup>172</sup>

Poetry, however, played a further role in the life of the wrestler, as exemplified by its extensive use in exercises and drills in the *zūr-khāna*. Each of the different genres of poetry – mystical, epic, ethical – reflected a different aspect of the multi-faceted nature of the wrestler. Lines from the *Shāhnāma* stimulated the wrestler to be a fighting champion like the warriors of old. Ethical poetry motivated him to maintain the all-important code of *adab* and proper morals, while mystical verse reminded him of the world of spirituality which he as a wrestler was supposed to portray. Furthermore, the order and rhythm of poetry itself resonated with the symmetry and rhythm of the athlete's exercises.

#### 4. Self-control

More important than physical beauty and intellectual proficiency was the wrestler's perfect self-control in every aspect of wrestling. Although the elephant-image correctly testified to the wrestler's recklessness in the arena, without self-control the wrestler became a mere hoodlum. One of the typical attitudes of the *'ayyār* was his insolence (*gustākhhī*); for the wrestler, however, such an attitude was considered a breach of conduct. In Sa'dī's anecdote, cited above, the novice's boast that he could defeat his master was improper (*tark-i adab*), and for this he was severely rebuked and defeated in the ring. When Sulṭān Ḥusayn Bayqārā commented on the intimidating threat of the Mangalūs elephant, Pahlawān Mālānī's presumptuous response was considered a sign of his conceit; therefore, he needed to be disciplined (*adabī kardān*).<sup>173</sup> One of the fears of a patron was the misconduct of his protégés. Lack of appropriate behavior was regarded as a potential sign of sedition, especially on the part of the wrestler, whose physical strength added force to any potential political threat. If the wrestler could not control himself, he had to be controlled lest he become dangerous to the throne.

Ideally, the wrestling arena was considered to be a gathering place for the pure as is reflected in the wrestler's slogan "*ṣalā-yi pahlawān*" (purity of the champion).<sup>174</sup> The slogan resonates with the notion of inner solidarity and integrity among the brothers of *lituwwat*, which Kāshifī expressed by the term, *ṣalā-yi naẓar* (purity of spiritual insight).<sup>175</sup> Ideally, the traditional *jawānmard* abhorred anything that had a taint of hypocrisy or ulterior motive, and so the wrestler in the *zūr-khāna* considered himself to be a champion of inner purity (*ṣalā-yi bātin*), i.e., of pure motive. This was understood as a harmony between the *jawānmard's* inner and outer worlds, or in other words, "a lack of hypocrisy, a consistency

between feelings and behavior, and a lack of ambivalence."<sup>176</sup> A few lines from Mīr Nijāt's ode to the wrestler, *Gul-kushtī*, affirm this notion of purity in the wrestling arena:

Despite the power of the heavens, our *zūr-khāna*,  
Is a domain that is purer than the eyes of angels.

Our *zūr-khāna* is a place of excitement [or for the lion-like] (*hawās-nākī*),  
It is a place of the pure, no place for the impure.<sup>177</sup>

An important aspect of the wrestler's self-control, combined with his notion of inner purity, was the standard code of chastity and an aversion to sexual misconduct. In *Samak-i 'Ayyār*, the ideal warrior demonstrated his chastity by refusing to touch a woman who was not his sister; the man of *tutuwwat* did so by wearing the *shalwar*. Through slogans and poetry, the wrestler simply claimed that the *zūr-khāna* was a center of virtue where no "impurity" was permitted. The prominent 20<sup>th</sup> century Iranian wrestling champion, Ghulām Ridā Takhtī (d. 1968), who was admired for practicing sexual restraint, became even more renowned when, at one point, it was rumored that he had 'cleaned' the *zūr-khāna* of sexual activities which violated the code of chastity.<sup>178</sup>

The self-controlled, chaste behavior of the wrestler is exemplified by the unique vow of celibacy made by the champion of the Mongol court, Fīla Hamadānī, who was presented with a young lady after a decisive victory. According to Rashīd al-Dīn's account, because Hamadānī practiced complete sexual abstinence, the young lady complained to the ruler that he paid no attention to her. When the Mongol ruler inquired of Hamadānī, he responded, "Since I have found fame in wrestling (*pahlawānī*) and so far no one has defeated me, if I become occupied with a woman, I will lose my power and fall from my position of championship."<sup>179</sup> Hamadānī emulated the belief common in Indian and Greek antiquity that an athlete must avoid all physical relations with a woman lest he lose his athletic prowess and

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strength.<sup>180</sup> Strength came through absolute self-control rather than self-abandon. Sexual intercourse meant the loss of control of one's body and thus led to a loss of strength. While the cavalier champion might recklessly shed blood, sweat and semen,<sup>181</sup> a wrestler like Hamadānī, fearing semen loss, repressed all sexual desire.<sup>182</sup> For him, sexual abstinence was directly linked to his championship in the ring.

The highest expression of the wrestler's self-control was through courtesy and proper etiquette, and therefore, the *zūr-khāna* has customarily been known for its culture of perfect *adab*. During the ritual of exercise, the endless courtesies and expressions of respect and sacrifice for the others became like mini-wrestling matches in themselves, where wrestlers sought to outdo each other in mutual respect. Courtesy and an air of humility became the inversion of the code of superiority and physical championship, as reflected in Jamālzāda's whimsical style:

The athletes performed wonders (*qiyāmat kardand*) in courtesies (*ta'āruf*) and mutual respect (*ihtirām*) for each other, especially towards the *sayyids* and those who had more experience or were older. No one was willing to accept the prestigious positions which were designated for the captain, veterans, *sayyids* and the experienced athletes. Everyone constantly pulled himself back from others, and with airs of apologies, obliged others to move ahead.<sup>183</sup>

It is this code of courtesy and deference that presents one of the greatest paradoxes of the wrestler's life and behavior. He always maintained an image of the all-powerful champion, eager to wrestle and willing to take on any challenge. However, the code of self-control, exhibited by extreme etiquette, led the wrestler to the contradictory characteristic of deference and self-abnegation. It may seem strange that the wrestler could exhibit at the same time, a defiant attitude to any challenge and deference to his challenger. Deference, however, in no way meant defeat; rather, in this way, the wrestler demonstrated that he had attained complete control over himself and was thus a perfect champion.



One of the ways in which a wrestler expressed deference was by his reluctance to take up the challenge of a combat, which is reflected in many of the accounts on wrestling. Rostam's unwillingness to battle with Suhrāb and then later with Isfāndiyār, has been interpreted as a reflection of Rostam's magnanimity and self-control, though as was demonstrated in chapter 2, it was rooted in his fear of losing his reputation. Mālānī hesitated to take Pahlawān Muḥammad's challenge, apparently out of respect for his uncle, Abū Sa'īd, who had been his master. However, when he was insulted, Mālānī's deference changed to anger, which indicates that there were limits to his *adab*. The undefeated Mufrīd, who had been ready to challenge any champion in Tīmūrid Herat, was most reluctant to battle the *sayyid* Amīr Khalīl, out of religious respect. In this case, deference only resulted in further arrogance and persistence from Khalīl, so that finally, Mufrīd felt he had no choice: "As much as was possible, I showed him complete honor and proper behavior (*adab*), and we have seen the outcome. Now there is nothing to stop us."<sup>184</sup> The match was organized and the 'most deferring' Mufrīd severely injured his challenger. Just as the excess of recklessness was discouraged because it led to violence and improper behavior, on certain occasions an excess in *adab* could be seen as a compromise of the champion's manliness. Wāṣilī states the following lines at the end of his account about Mufrīd:

Though forbearance (*taḥammul*) is praise-worthy (*maḥmūd*) and has unlimited benefit  
Do not forbear so much that you lose your manliness (*marḍī*).<sup>185</sup>

Another way to show deference was for the wrestler to express public benevolence to a rival. Kāshifī says that a true wrestler does not rejoice in the defeat of his rival.<sup>186</sup> In the championship wrestling match between the Herati champion, Darwīsh Muḥammad, and the rival from Iraq, Darwīsh felled his opponent in a moment and was richly rewarded with close to 100,000 dirhams. In an expression of magnanimity, Darwīsh bestowed the entire gift upon

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his defeated rival: "My reputation is enough for me. He came here with some hope and he should not leave empty-handed."<sup>187</sup> Though it may have been an act of magnanimity, it was also another way for Darwīsh to express his own superiority: he had been honored as the champion, and now he also was honored for his generosity, thereby defeating his rival twice over.

In the Afghan short story, "Kāka Awrang wa Kāka Badraw," the rivalry between the two champions was sparked by Kāka Badraw's merely clearing his throat in an insulting manner when Kāka Awrang passed by. Awrang challenged him to a match, and the entire city gathered for the occasion. The two wrestlers entered the arena with the conventional bows of humility and kisses of respect for the Sufi master who was supervising the match. The fight began with the standard battle of weapons, as described in the epic and medieval romance texts. When no one came out the winner, they stripped down to the wrestling *shalwār* and fought with their bare hands. Badraw finally felled Awrang, who had originally offered the challenge, but as the victor pulled out his dagger to kill his opponent, he suddenly heaved it away, saying, "Go, kid, I've done what I had to do (*ḥaqq-i marā adā kardam*)." The crowd cheered Badraw's magnanimous deed because he had done the manly act of 'forgiving' his enemy.<sup>188</sup> As a result, the rivals were reconciled, and Awrang became a lifelong follower of his former rival. Through his magnanimous act, Badraw confirmed his championship by making his rival submit to him for the rest of his life. From now on, he had living proof that he was indeed the champion, which for the *kāka* was a more potent sign of his reputation than if he had killed his rival. As for the defeated rival, his 'forced' submission was more shameful than death, a theme already discussed in the Rustam - Isfāndiyār episode.

These accounts of 'good behavior' reflect an ambivalence in the life of the wrestler. On the one hand there is an expression of magnanimity and also disinterest in winning a fight. There were offers of hospitality to a rival: Rustam and Isfāndiyār invited each other to a banquet; the Qājār court tried to dissuade the Ottoman wrestler from fighting by offering him a banquet; when the champion from Iraq arrived in Herat, the wrestlers entertained him for 40 days. Mālānī's courteously deferred when Pahlawān Muḥammad requested a championship bout, and Mufrid expressed reluctance to fight a *sayyid*. However, most of these demonstrations of benevolence in fact ended in fierce battles: Rustam killed Isfāndiyār; Kalb 'Alī completely bloodied the Ottoman wrestler; Darwīsh Muḥammad felled his Iraqi rival instantly; Mālānī wrecked the edifice in the king's court and intended to fell the undefeated Pahlawān Muḥammad; Mufrid crushed the *sayyid's* foot. Although they all tried to defer, in each case, their deference and tolerance had limits, and every one of them demonstrated his physical championship. Kāka Bādraw accepted the challenge, but did not carry through with the death blow, as was expected. And he too walked out of the arena as the champion.

Obviously, these paradoxes in the wrestlers' experiences have the makings of good stories. Nevertheless, these accounts do show that many dynamics were involved in accepting or refusing a challenge. An offer of hospitality sometimes was simply a technique to control the rival, and often had nothing to do with generosity. And although the wrestler was to exercise complete self-control through courtesy, to allow a rival to wreak verbal or physical havoc on him was an attack on his *jawānmardī*. And so, while reluctance to accept a challenge served to highlight the wrestler's own notion of magnanimity, it was also a justification for an all out bloody battle. In this sense, the wrestler simply followed the path

of the ancient heroic warrior in the wrestling ring. The benign and self-controlled wrestler frequently turned malignant and out of control.

*Adab*, then, whether a flurry of courtesies and verbal deferrals, or a reluctance to accept a challenge, or an act of clemency, was a calculated means to further the wrestler's reputation as a champion. As seen in the cavalier conduct of many of the wrestlers, even those who were eulogized for their humility, good behavior and integrity (*ṣafā-yi-bāṭin*) were often merely outward displays of altruism that the champion exhibited in public when necessary. Winning, which had to be achieved at all costs, could be attained in contradictory ways. Paradoxically, the emphasis on *adab* became a battle for championship through a display of humility and benevolence.

##### 5. The Example of Puryā-yi Walī

The code of behavior for wrestlers, as exemplified in the legends of Puryā-yi Walī, is distinctly different from the examples mentioned above. According to hagiographical works, Pahlawān Maḥmūd Puryā-yi Walī of Khwārazm, like many other medieval wrestlers, was not only skilled in wrestling, but also in poetry and the mystical sciences of his day.<sup>189</sup> He became famous for his display of the spirit of *jawānmardī* through self-abnegation.

The well-known story of his deferring to a young wrestler is recorded in the hagiographical work, *Majālis al-'Ushshāq*, by Kamāl al-Dīn Ḥusayn Gāzurgāhī, who dedicated the work to Sulṭān Ḥusayn Bayqārā and who was patronized by 'Alī Shīr Nawā'ī. According to one account of the legend, a young wrestler from India heard of the undefeated champion and decided to travel to Khwārazm in order to challenge him. Because he could not disregard a challenge, Puryā-yi Walī was forced to comply, but the night before the scheduled wrestling match, as he was praying he heard the sorrowful supplications of an old

woman, “Oh God, do not disgrace us tomorrow. Let my son throw *Pahlawān* Maḥmūd.”

The following day, Puryā-yi Walī first warmed up with several of his wrestling friends and easily felled each one of them. When he confronted the young wrestler from India, he was surprised at how weak his opponent’s arms and hands were. Remembering the old woman’s prayer the night before and his covenant to not break her heart, Puryā-yi Walī voluntarily allowed himself be thrown to the ground.<sup>190</sup>

A different version relates that a king of India sent a young wrestler from his land to Khwārazm to invite Puryā-yi Walī to India. Puryā sent an insulting poem in response, saying that traveling to India was beneath his dignity.<sup>191</sup> He soon recanted from his arrogant response and made his way to India where he was royally welcomed by the king. The story of his voluntary defeat is much the same as in the previous version. However, the day after, he demonstrated his physical strength in a hunting trip with the king. As the king’s horse was about to leap over a stream, Puryā jumped off his horse and held the king’s horse back with his two hands. The king recognized Puryā-yi Walī’s unique strength and wondered how he could have lost to the young upstart. As the legend goes, Puryā-yi Walī answered with one of his mystical poems about the annihilation of the ego, which sheds light on how his seeming ‘defeat’ was interpreted by the writers on Sufī masters.<sup>192</sup>

A third version of the legend indicates how difficult it was for the world champion to lose through self-abnegation.<sup>193</sup> Puryā-yi Walī and a team of 40 of his students were challenging the wrestlers of each province, and after Puryā-yi Walī had defeated every provincial champion, the team reached the capital. As in the other versions, Puryā-yi Walī noticed the mother of his rival praying for her son, and so he promised her that God would hear her prayers. When Puryā-yi Walī was thrown to the ground at the match the next day, his

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students were very upset. In order to prove that he was still a champion, they went out to the desert where he wrestled with each one of them and felled them all. The story goes on to say that he then disappeared; nevertheless, the legends of his 'heroic defeat' live on.

Regardless of whether or not the legends are true, Puryā-yi Walī embodied the virtue of humility which is perhaps the most difficult virtue for a champion to acquire. The following lines, attributed to Puryā-yi Walī, reflect what the poet considered to be a true champion: a champion is one who helps the fallen man rather than fells a man:

If you are a ruler over your own *nat̄s*, you're a [real] man (*mard*)  
 And if you don't seek fault in another, you're a [real] man (*mard*)  
 Manliness (*mardī*) does not consist of kicking someone who has fallen  
 When you take the hand of the fallen, you're a [real]man (*mard*)<sup>194</sup>

The 20<sup>th</sup> century Olympic wrestling champion of Iran, Ghulām Ridā Takhtī, is a modern example of the heroism of Puryā-yi Walī.<sup>195</sup> Although his involvement in politics, particularly his affiliation with the National Front movement led by Muḥammad Muṣādiq, and his avowed opposition to the Pahlawī regime, contributed to his popularity from early on, Takhtī was reputed to be a gentleman in athletic competition. His gracious character is reminiscent of the legends of the medieval wrestlers:

He sometimes apologized to his opponents after beating them, never attacked an adversary's injured limb during a bout, and often gave presents to his foreign opponents to remember him by.<sup>196</sup>

Takhtī embodied the ethic of *lutuwwat* through his self-effacing humility and moral virtue, as well as his stand against corruption. Many Iranians consider him a greater hero than the two traditional champions, Rostam and 'Alī.<sup>197</sup> As in the case of Puryā-yi Walī, Takhtī's death in 1968 is shrouded in mystery. The official version was that he committed suicide due to marital problems and severe depression; however, the street version fostered the idea that since his popularity did not decrease despite the government's efforts to humiliate him, he

was killed by the Iranian secret police, SAVAK.<sup>198</sup> And so, Takhtī, too has become a legendary champion.

#### D. The Wrestler as a Spiritual Champion

Throughout much of the later medieval period, wrestling was linked with the mystical experience in the same way that the other trades and professions were. In his chapters on the spiritual meanings of the trades and performers, Kāshifī explains that every profession was a metaphor for a spiritual reality, and the *fātan* who understood what his work really signified and what its source was, was able to perform his duties in the way in which they had originally been intended. According to Kāshifī, wrestling symbolized the cosmic struggle between virtue and evil in a very physical sense:

The spiritual meaning (*ma'nā*) of wrestling is that man changes his morals (*akhlāq*). The truth of this point is that wrestling is constantly going on between praiseworthy qualities (*ṣiṭāt-i ḥamīda*) and blameworthy morals (*akhlāq-i dhamīma*), in other words, each tries to eliminate the other. In fact, when one looks at the spiritual world, monotheism and polytheism, magnanimity and stinginess, piety and rebellion, certainty and doubt, integrity and corruption, beauty and ugliness, humility and pride, love and hatred, modesty and shamelessness, attention and negligence, mercy and hardness of heart, wisdom and blame and so on, are constantly battling with each other.<sup>199</sup>

We mentioned earlier that the emphasis on perfect *adab* in the *zūr-khāna*, which Jamālzāda describes in his monograph with typical embellishment, may be more spectacle than reality,<sup>200</sup> and some would add, is another example of insincerity in Iranian culture.<sup>201</sup> Regardless of one's judgment about the *zūr-khāna*, the rituals of wrestling, the spiritual atmosphere, and much of the poetry recited in the *zūr-khāna* are rooted in the medieval notion of the wrestler as a spiritual champion, symbolically enacting the battle between virtue and evil. Every move the wrestler made was to be a commentary on "spiritual reality." Therefore, the wrestler had to appear magnanimous and despise churlishness; he had to

evinced piety, confidence and integrity; he had always to be alert and modest; and so on. In short, he was a 'man of God' who was supposed to display his moral character and devotion to God in the wrestling ring.

### 1. The Battle against the Carnal Soul

Kāshifī and the other writers on *futuwwat* prior to him state that true *jawānmardī* could only be attained through the destruction of the *nafs* and the acquisition of noble character. The wrestling match, therefore, was seen as a parable of the battle against the carnal soul and the struggle to acquire a virtuous character. Kāshifī understood that wrestling not only symbolized the battle between good and evil morals, but that the physical activity of wrestling itself was the means to attain spirituality. He states, "Wrestling has these features [of battle between virtue and evil] embedded in it so that through physical discipline (*nīyādat*) one defeats evil characteristics in order to build up praiseworthy qualities."<sup>202</sup>

In this context, Puryā-yi Walī's self-abnegation takes on a more profound meaning than simply an act of magnanimity or humility. From one perspective, the legendary deed on its own account was heroic: the champion whose 'knees had never touched the ground' deferred to his young rival for the sake of the mother whose heart he did not want to break. However, the legend of the champion's voluntary defeat could not sustain itself, as seen in the story where his students became distressed that he had lost. Defeat was a kind of death for the champion, for as Baydā'ī has observed, "he experienced a terrible spiritual blow because of this compulsory defeat."<sup>203</sup> Hence, Puryā-yi Walī was 'rescued' from defeat by casting the entire episode into a spiritual light. The story goes that the morning after his voluntary defeat, the following poem of mystical content was found lying on his prayer carpet:

Because of the purity and uprightness of my heart,



This night, the Beloved, who has stolen my heart in the tavern [of love],  
Held the goblet in his hand and asked me to take and drink  
I said, "No, I won't drink." He said, "Do it, for the sake of love."<sup>204</sup>

His physical defeat was construed as a kind of spiritual death to his carnal soul and therefore, as the step toward mystical union. It is stated in one account that when the young wrestler from India sat on Puryā-yi Walī's chest, the heretofore undefeated world champion achieved a new perception of reality, or as the Sufis would say, the veil was lifted from the eyes of his heart and he experienced certainty.<sup>205</sup> His voluntary abnegation became the spiritual experience which incorporated him into sainthood; hence his title, *walī* (friend of God). The apocryphal *Ṭūmār* climaxes with the description of the wrestling match where Puryā-yi Walī fell down, kissed the earth and then laid his back on the ground. At this point the wrestler became a spiritual champion:

When Pahlawān laid his nose on the ground, he saw the earth, and when his back was on the ground, he saw the heavens. The saints of perfection should know that falling down (humility) is the highest of stages.<sup>206</sup>

This account implies that the wrestler's defeat was not an indication of a loss or downfall, for as Puryā-yi Walī is to have said after he stood up, "Champions are not defeated, bound or wearied."<sup>207</sup> Through his fall, he achieved a spiritual victory over his greatest enemy, his carnal soul. It is this aspect of the wrestler which lifted him into a new category of ideal manhood, for he now perfectly reflected the ethic of "death of desire" in *futuwwat*. Kamāl al-Dīn Ḥusayn states, "Ultimate annihilation comes through crushing the *nafs* through [voluntary defeat]."<sup>208</sup> When the wrestler laid his body on the ground, physically experiencing the pain of loss and defeat, he was, in effect, crushing his own sensual desires.<sup>209</sup>

The wrestler who voluntarily accepted defeat, therefore, embodied one of the highest ideals of *jawānmardī*: to act without reference to oneself. In the context of ‘Alī’s sacrificial deeds of *jawānmardī*, Kāshifī states that *futuwwat* was the abandonment of one’s life for the benefit of others: “[‘Alī] gave his head to his enemies and the greatest act of *jawānmardī* is that one sacrifices his life.”<sup>210</sup> Kāshifī adds, “The giving of one’s soul (*nafs*) is the ultimate extremity of generosity,” and he quotes Khusraw Dihlawī (d.1325): “A *jawānmard* may be worth a hundred thousand *dirhams*, but when someone willingly puts his life in danger, that is true life.”<sup>211</sup> This is the man who has rid himself of himself by throwing himself into the ‘other’ so that he becomes a “centripetal man” – wholly in the ‘other’, but true to himself.<sup>212</sup>

In sharp contrast to the warrior wrestler, who had to be supreme in physical might in order to display his manliness, the spiritual wrestler had to become supreme in weakness and submission, which was seen as the ultimate stage of *jawānmardī*.<sup>213</sup> In this context, Kāshifī says, “We elevate weakness and need, for without weakness and need, a person will never attain to any [stage].”<sup>214</sup> The answer to the problem of a wrestler’s arrogance and boasting was to see championship not in terms of physical strength, but in terms of the *futuwwat* ethic of defeating the *nafs*:

One should know for certain that the spirituality of athletes is to trample the enemy of the soul. ... So one must not boast of strength; rather one must abandon the desires of the soul in order to become a champion (*pahlawān*) in the arena of manliness (*ma’rakayī mardī*). ... Sa’dī states, “Do not imagine that manliness (*mardī*) comes by the strength of the hand and the shoulder; if you overcome your sensual desires, I know you are a real runner (*shāṭir*).”<sup>215</sup>

Akram ‘Uthmān, a contemporary short story writer from Afghanistan, relates the memoirs of a young boy who dreamed of becoming a peerless wrestler on the streets of Kabul, like the contemporary champion, Pahlawān Barāt. In his first wrestling encounter, the young lad was soundly defeated. Devastated that his dream had collapsed, the young boy set his heart on

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the wrestling arena where he soon came to realize that, “a man must fall and fall and fall again till he gets up and becomes a champion.”<sup>216</sup> On the surface, the story is simply an account of the importance of training and discipline for championship, and this may have been ‘Uthmān’s intent. However, in light of the myth of Puryā-yi Walī and the spiritual atmosphere of the wrestling arena, the need to fall and fall again depicts the necessity for the wrestler to break his own *naʿs* before he could attain real manhood, for as the Ṭūmār stated: “Falling down (humility) is the highest of stages.”<sup>217</sup>

In this light, the code of *adab* and etiquette in the wrestling arena take on deeper meaning. Since wrestling symbolized the defeat of the *naʿs*, the visible and non-violent expression of that defeat was a flood of courtesies and ritual deferrals. The verbal and bodily expressions of humility in the wrestling arena, such as the low entrance door, which forced every athlete to bow to the ground in order to enter the *zūr-khāna*, the kissing of the earth of the wrestling pit in remembrance of Puryā-yi Walī’s act of humility, the wrestlers’ mutual respect and deference to one another, were all outward expressions of the basic ethic of *lituwwat* – the death of the carnal soul.<sup>218</sup> The self-abnegating wrestler was a genuine man of resignation (*lāqr*) because he physically resigned himself in the wrestling pit. His back on the dirt floor symbolized his subservience to God, and his face to the dirt floor – the prostration of the worshipper of God. Thus the lowly wrestling pit became the focus of spiritual illumination.

The entire atmosphere of the *zūr-khāna* was therefore a perpetual and visible expression of the inner truth of the battle against the carnal soul. Any error or mistake during the exercise drills, such as an athlete’s dropping a club, implied a defilement of the *zūr-khāna*.<sup>219</sup> because outward deficiency was a reflection of spiritual deficiency. According to Kāzīmaynī, when a wrestler did not follow the proper code of conduct in the *zūr-khāna*, he was rebuked during

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the exercise rituals.<sup>220</sup> The wrestler had to be aware that the ultimate goal of his life was proper conduct.

### 2. The Expression of Divine Love

The *zūr-khāna* was understood to be the place of battle for the champion, the social center for wrestlers, the arena of courtesy and etiquette, the earthen pit where a man laid down his *naʿs* to attain moral virtue, and finally, it also was a sanctuary of divine worship. In one sense, the order of exercises – weight-lifting, push-ups, club-swinging and juggling, bow-stretching – all of which were done to the sound of the drum, was a benign reenactment of the armored battle of heroic warriors prior to their hand-to-hand combat. For example, as the wrestler juggled a set of wooden clubs, he was displaying the skill of the ancient warrior who swung his mace (*gurz*) to intimidate his opponent.<sup>221</sup> As lines of battle scenes from the *Shāhnāma* were recited, the atmosphere in the *zūr-khāna* was transformed into a battleground of warriors chanting slogans of intimidation against their enemies.<sup>222</sup>

However, as stated at the beginning of this chapter, the wrestler embodied both models of *jawānmardī* – the heroic warrior and the spiritual champion – and his exercises and wrestling itself became an act of worship. Such a spiritual interpretation of the wrestler and wrestling resonates with the mystical views expressed in *ʿitūwwat* where every outward aspect of a profession had an esoteric meaning (*maʿnā*). Therefore, for the men of *ʿitūwwat*, their professions, and every aspect of their work, became a form of *dhikr*. Similarly, the wrestler's exercises prior to the match itself were also an expression of *dhikr* and *samāʿ* (Sufi dance performed in order to attain ecstasy). Each of the different exercises was performed in rhythm to the drum and the chanting of mystical poetry which urged the wrestler to abandon the physical world and enter the ecstatic world of the Beloved. Defeat in the pit, then, was

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not only symbolic of the “death of desire,” but it reflected the wrestler’s love for God. As he placed his life into the ‘hands’ of the Beloved, he ‘lost the match’, but achieved the ecstasy of love:

Those who have chosen the path of love  
Are resting in the lane of martyrdom.  
Love (*‘ishq*) is the way for victory in the battleground (*ma’raka*) of both existences,  
Even though warriors of love have all become martyrs.<sup>223</sup>

In the medieval period, the experience of divine love was usually expressed through mystical poetry in which the lover of God sang his lament and praise to his Beloved.

Similarly, in a metaphorical sense, the *zūr-khāna* became a tavern of love where the recital of poetry, the rhythm of music and the ritual of exercises represented expressions of divine intoxicating love. This is reflected in Mīr Nijāt’s ode to wrestling:

Besides intoxication and *rindī* (libertine life) there is nothing else here,  
Besides shouting and crazed excitement, there is nothing else here.

In the goblet of unity, give everyone the wine of Manṣūr,<sup>224</sup>  
Call everyone to shout praise and stir everyone to excitement.<sup>225</sup>

Love for the Beloved was considered both a burden of pain and an experience of ecstasy. The wrestler expressed both. The intense exertion of energy in the exercises and the wrestling itself spoke of the pain of love, while the thrill and rhythm of push-ups, the excitement of the footwork, dancing and club-throwing moved the participant into a state of intoxicating rapture.<sup>226</sup>

Weight-lifting (*sang-gīrī*) was done to the rhythm of lyrical counting, each number symbolized an aspect of faith. For example: “The original and purest being, God is not two, the cause of every cause, the helper of the needy,<sup>227</sup> five members of the family of ‘Alī, six corners of the tomb of Ḥusayn ...”<sup>228</sup> As the athletes lifted the weights, the count kept them

in unison and focused them on the spiritual nature of their activity. The weight on his chest reminded the wrestler of the pain of divine love that he was experiencing:

When we begin the exercises,  
All of us have turned our hearts to Your countenance.  
[With] weights on our chests,  
We are lovers of the sight of Your presence.<sup>229</sup>

The push-ups (*shinā*) performed on the wooden boards were another symbol of the wrestler's worship of God. As he hit the ground, he was in fact prostrating himself in humility before God in and as he pushed himself up, his exertion of energy became an utterance of praise to God (*yā ḥaqq*) and 'Alī (*yā 'Alī*).<sup>230</sup> Like the weigh-lifting, the push-ups were performed to the rhythmic recital of religious formulas affirmed by the cry "yā 'Alī." The fervor of the music, the beat of the drums, the chanting of poetry, the uttering of praises to God and 'Alī, and the vigorous movement of bodies blended together to transform the *zūr-khāna* into a sanctuary of ecstasy for the lovers of God.<sup>231</sup>

The act of wrestling itself became a symbol of the lover's struggle to reach the Beloved. While wrestling was an entertaining sport, it was also a ceremonial "wrestling of love" (*kushtī-yi 'ishq*).<sup>232</sup> As the wrestler stripped down to his leather breeches, he abandoned all material attachment and fearlessly threw himself towards his opponent.<sup>233</sup> A further spiritual metaphor of wrestling was the champion's struggle with fate. Frequently fate was compared to the rival wrestler who used any form of deception to bring down the champion:

Do not let [the heavens] twist you around, because its techniques are deceptive,  
Hit back with this trick, because the technique of the heavens is threatening.<sup>234</sup>

As the wrestler became intensely involved with his rival, the outside world and even the *zūr-khāna* were forgotten. Notwithstanding the environment of courtesy and self-abnegation, the wrestler had one objective in mind: to gain the upper hand, so he sought for any trick he

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could use to fell his opponent.<sup>235</sup> If his opponent in the pit was a symbol of the tyranny and deception of fate, it was as if the wrestler were battling for life itself and his identity. From the mystical perspective, the champion's ultimate technique against fate was not through physical might or violence, but through the ethic of *futuwwat* – submission. According to the lines below, which were cited during matches in the *zūr-khāna*, the wrestler became a champion against fate through self-abnegation. As the wrestler deferred to the grasp of destiny, he learned to overcome it and achieve championship:

Who is the one who throws the back of the cruel heavens to the earth?  
 [Who] heaves this ancient wrestler to the ground with one blow?  
 Whoever has seen his image covered in the dust of lowliness,  
 He lays down on his weak side like Puryā-yi Walī.<sup>236</sup>

To be sure, physical championship was always the goal of every wrestler, and the slogan, “his back [or knees] have never touched the ground,” was the greatest thing that could be said about him. However, from the spiritual and ethical perspective, championship went beyond winning. In contrast to the symbol of the unbroken mirror, the wrestler who actually saw his image on the dirt floor – in other words, had laid down his own desires – was the one who could be called a true *pahlawān*. The humble wrestler was the real champion.

### 3. Religious Legitimacy

It will be recalled that the medieval writers on *futuwwat*, notably Kāshifī, sought to legitimize every profession by connecting it to a religious event in the past, so that each tradesman had a sense that he was continuing a profession that had originated with a prophet. In the same way, the ritual of exercise and the act of wrestling were considered to be experiences that had originated with the prophets and saints of the past. According to Kāshifī, wrestling was a legitimate activity because it had been practiced by the pre-Islamic

prophets, exemplified by the prophetic community, and continued by the community of saints throughout the Islamic period: “This science is linked to the prophets and saints, and though they may not have [wrestled] physically, but it is clear they [wrestled] spiritually.”<sup>237</sup>

During the ‘worship’ of exercising and wrestling, the veneration of ‘Alī was central because he was the exemplar of the spiritual ethic of *futuwwat* as well as of physical courage for battle. Suhrawardī relates numerous anecdotes of ‘Alī’s unprecedented magnanimity. Instead of *qisās* (the law of retaliation), he forgave a murderer and a thief, and instead of stoning a person accused of adultery, he pleaded that the accusers close their eyes. We have already noted how he “closed his eyes” himself when the Prophet asked him to inspect a suspicious deed in the house of one of the members of the early community. All of ‘Alī’s acts of forgiveness were examples of the code of magnanimity in *futuwwat*, which, as Suhrawardī argued, was superior to all other paths.<sup>238</sup> The wrestler was expected to follow ‘Alī on the path of magnanimity, and ʿĪsāyīn in his act of self-sacrifice at the battle of Karbalā’.

At the same time, ‘Alī was renowned as the great warrior, as exemplified in the battle of Uḥud. And although the battle ethos of the *Shāhnāma* was part of the *zūr-khāna*, the confession of the men of *futuwwat* that, “There is no *fātan* except ‘Alī and no sword except the Dhū’l-*fiqār*,” was also the standard confession of the wrestlers.<sup>239</sup> Because ‘Alī embodied both models, he was considered the founder of the guild of wrestlers, “the true master of the wrestling pit and founder of the path of *pahlawānī* and *futuwwat* and the patron saint of all athletes.”<sup>240</sup> In all the praises and epithets given to ‘Alī, he became the epitome of goodness and irrespective of anachronistic attributions, he was the source of all heroism and virtue.



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The veneration of past heroes was a conventional ritual in the *zūr-khāna*, for, as has been stated, “The most potent hero is the dead hero.”<sup>241</sup> Kāshifī repeatedly urged the men of *futuwwat* to remember the elders and champions of the past, which was the way the *lītyān* identified with the virtues of the prophets and saints. It is perhaps a common tradition of the human race to create icons of past heroes in order to compensate for the perceived loss of heroism in the present age. Hence, the ‘good old days’ becomes a reservoir of heroism and virtue for the man of the present so that he can overcome his sense of isolation and seeming corruption of the times.<sup>242</sup> The wrestling champion, however, goes beyond this. Like the *shaykh* in the *futuwwat* ceremony who represented the Divine Law of the prophetic age,<sup>243</sup> the wrestler becomes a living reflection of the heroes of the past, as is expressed in another slogan of the *zūr-khāna*: “We love the living champion (*pahlawān*)!”<sup>244</sup> In this way, the wrestler and the culture of the *zūr-khāna* fulfills the nostalgic longing for the heroism of antiquity.

Ideally then, the traditional wrestler of Iran sought to incorporate all aspects of *jawānmardī* because he was both a physical and spiritual champion, a man of strength and moral restraint. The champion’s ethic of *futuwwat* was expressed by a sense of disinterest in society, but at the same time, it was reflected by his altruistic deeds and even political activity within his community. Wrestling was a demonstration of battle and entertainment as well as an expression of humility and worship. The divine and the mundane were fused in the rituals of exercise and in the ceremony of wrestling itself. It is because of this fusion of material and spiritual life that the wrestler was seen as the exemplary champion for society. Indeed, he was the true physical and spiritual *jawānmard*.

However, as we have noted, this integration was more ideal than real. How could the wrestler sustain the two ideals of wrestling – physical championship and self-abnegation? In Jamālzāda’s memoirs, despite all the courtesies and mutual deferrals which reflected the *futuwwat* ethic of the defeat of the carnal soul, the wrestler “fought his opponent with a desperate desire to triumph over him.”<sup>245</sup> Is it possible for the champion to be both humble and supreme? Puryā-yi Walī is to have said, “Learn humility if you are seeking grace / Water never reaches ground that is high.”<sup>246</sup> But if “humility is the highest of stages,”<sup>247</sup> and physical defeat in the wrestling pit is the visible manifestation of this ideal, how can the champion maintain the boast that his knees have never touched the ground? Should he abhor the dirt of the pit or honor it? The legend of Puryā-yi Walī’s disappearance after his voluntary defeat is perhaps the most vivid illustration of this tension. Once Puryā-yi Walī’s back had touched the ground, he attained sainthood, but he could then no more be a champion wrestler in the pit.

Whether it was sincere or not, the wrestler sought to maintain an air of self-abnegation and humility through the rituals of courtesy. Furthermore, by venerating the spiritual and physical champions of the past, he could vicariously experience their integrity and heroism. And so the greatest champions, ‘Alī and Puryā-yi Walī, were always put at the forefront of the *zūr-khāna* because they embodied the ideals of *jawānmardī*. By re-enacting their heroism through praising ‘Alī’s deeds of *futuwwat* or kissing the pit in remembrance of Puryā-yi Walī, and performing other rituals of courtesy, the wrestler was continuing the ideals of their *jawānmardī*. The writers of the article “Şafā-yi Bāṭin” have said: “Courtesy allows the individual to approximate some of the virtues of the perfect man, Ḥadrat-i ‘Alī, without subjecting him to too great a strain.”<sup>248</sup> The ideals of *jawānmardī*, as exemplified by the

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traditional wrestler, have not disappeared; however, the achievement of ideal manhood through preeminence and self-abnegation continue to bedevil the traditional wrestler to this day.

## Notes on Chapter Four

<sup>1</sup> *jamāl-i pahlawān rā 'ishq ast. AFM, 59.*

<sup>2</sup> From the outset, a distinction should be made between traditional wrestling and modern freestyle wrestling in Iran. Some of the 20<sup>th</sup> century freestyle wrestling champions of Iran grew up in the traditional culture of the *zūr-khāna*. The primary difference, however, is not in wrestling techniques, but in the legendary, moral and spiritual framework of the traditional wrestler, who was much more than a mere sports hero. As will be shown, the traditional wrestler was a moral and spiritual champion who personified physical strength as well as moral and spiritual championship.

<sup>3</sup> *FNS, 308.*

<sup>4</sup> M.C Bateson et al., "Ṣalā-yi Bāṭin. A Study of the Interrelations of a Set of Iranian Ideal Character Types," in *Psychological Dimensions of Near Eastern Studies*, ed. L. Carl Brown and Norman Itzkowitz (New Jersey: The Darwin Press, 1977), 265.

<sup>5</sup> John Alter, *The Wrestler's Body* (Oxford: University of California Press, 1992), 3.

<sup>6</sup> H.E. Chehabi, "Sport and Politics in Iran: The Legend of Gholamreza Takhti," *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 12.3 (1995): 49.

<sup>7</sup> Bateson et al., "Ṣalā-yi Bāṭin," 268. In the study, "Ṣalā-yi Bāṭin," the terms *lūfī* and *darwīsh* are used for the two ideals.

<sup>8</sup> *SN*(Bertel's), 7:172-173.

<sup>9</sup> See chapter 2, p. 71 for a discussion on the order of weapons used.

<sup>10</sup> *SN, 3:254.1364-1367.* As the wrestling bout between the two warriors ensued, Afrāsiyāb noticed that Pūlāwand was losing. The Tūrānian king ordered him to use a dagger in the wrestling match, which was considered a breach in the code of wrestling. *SN, 3:256.1383-1401.*

<sup>11</sup> *kamar-band gīrad kirā zūr bīsh. SN, 3:478.793.*

<sup>12</sup> *FNS, 312.*

<sup>13</sup> *SN, 2:180.1313-1314.* On the first day of the fight between Rostam and Suhrāb, after the 'formalities' of the armored battle were over, the two warriors engaged in hand-to-hand combat. Rostam despaired when he grabbed Suhrāb's belt with his hands in order to heave him to the ground, because his opponent was unmovable. *SN, 2:150.936-944.*

<sup>14</sup> In an Afghan fable, a farmer threatened to fight with a lion. However, because his *kamar-band* was not tied around his waist, he could not wrestle with the lion. He first had to return home to get it before a legitimate wrestling match could take place. *Majmū'a-yi az Fulklūr-i Āmiyāna-yi Zabān-i Darī* [Collection of Darī oral folk-lore] (Kabul, n.d.), 203-209.

<sup>15</sup> *LN*, 11:16,165. Some have also speculated that *kushtī* comes from the word, *kulian*, meaning to hit. However, as Baydā'ī has argued, *kushtī* has never been used in the infinitive form. See *TW*, 73 and *LN*, 11:16,165.

<sup>16</sup> Ma'sūd Sa'd Salmān (d.1121), quoted in *LN*, 11:16,165.

<sup>17</sup> Shamsuddīn Muḥammad Sūzanī (d. ca. 569/1174), quoted in *LN*, 11:16,186. The English phrase, "to give up the girdle," means admitting defeat. Oxford English Dictionary, 2nd ed., s.v. "girdle."

<sup>18</sup> *BW*, 1:645, 648.

<sup>19</sup> *BW*, 1:645, 648 and *RT*, 290.

<sup>20</sup> *BW*, 1:656.

<sup>21</sup> *Kulliyāt-i Sa'dī*, 101.

<sup>22</sup> *RT*, 296-297.

<sup>23</sup> 'Abdul Ghafūr Brizhnā, *Kāka Awrang wa Kāka Badraw* (Kabul, 1353/1974), 87.

<sup>24</sup> *Kulliyāt-i Sa'dī*, 101. The miniature, "The two wrestlers," attributed to the Tīmūrid artist, Shāh Muẓaffar, is a representation of Sa'dī's story in the *Gulistān*. The painting depicts how the master throws the young wrestler before an audience in the court of the king. Noteworthy is the *shakh* which one of the watching wrestlers is wearing over his shoulders. Abolala Soudvar, *Art of the Persian Courts: Selections from the Art and History Trust Collection* (New York: Rizzoli, 1992), 104-105.

<sup>25</sup> *Kulliyāt-i Sa'dī*, 101.

<sup>26</sup> Rustam was given the title, *jahān pahlawān*, by Kay Kā'ūs after he had freed the king from Māzandarān. *SN*, 2:40,421.

<sup>27</sup> Alisher Navoi, *Asarlar. Un besh tomlik* (Uzbek Transcription of *Hālāt-i Pahlawān Muḥammad*) (Tashkent, 1967), 14:89.

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<sup>28</sup> *Hālāt*, 203-204.

<sup>29</sup> For clarity's sake I have used a shortened form for the two wrestlers' names. For Pahlawān Muḥammad-i Abū Sa'īd, who is also called Pahlawān-i 'Alam in the story, I have simply used his first name, Muḥammad. For Pahlawān Muḥammad Mālānī, I have used Mālānī.

<sup>30</sup> *BW*, 1:654-657.

<sup>31</sup> *BW*, 1:657. The two-line verse is very similar to what Atshak, the young heroic warrior in *Samak-i Ayyār* stated: "There is always a superior over a superior." *SA*, 1:329.

<sup>32</sup> One of the traditional means of offering a challenge to wrestle was to send a flower to an opponent as an invitation to a match. The scattering of flowers (*gul-rīzān*) at a championship wrestling match

likely had its source in this practice. *TW*, 90. In recent times, in the city of Mazār-i Sharīf, Afghanistan, the custom has been for an undefeated champion to present his challenge by leaving a bowl of sweets in the center of the wrestling ring. Anyone who takes the sweets is declaring that he has accepted the challenge to wrestle him. In one instance, the master wrestler Pahlawān Jabbār boasted he could have defeated the American boxing champion, Muḥammad ‘Alī (Cassius Clay) and anyone else in any style of wrestling. One day a young, inexperienced wrestler took the sweets from the center of the ring, which meant that he accepted the challenge to wrestle the Pahlawān Jabbār. The next day a large crowd showed up to witness the match. After the formalities, the young wrestler immediately threw Jabbār to the ground and so defeated him. All of Jabbār’s students begged the young wrestler to have a match with the new champion, but he refused. Jabbār subsequently lost his prestige. Related to me in March, 2000, by Ḥadrat Jāhid from his experiences in Mazār-i Sharīf in 1976.

<sup>33</sup> *RT*, 295-297.

<sup>34</sup> *RT*, 295.

<sup>35</sup> *RT*, 297.

<sup>36</sup> *RT*, 297.

<sup>37</sup> Zakeri, *Sāsānid Soldiers*, 65-66 and William Muir, *The Caliphate, Its Rise, Decline and Fall*, ed. T.H. Weir (1924; New York: AMS Press, 1975), 73-74, 102-106.

<sup>38</sup> Sultān Maḥmūd Ghaznawī’s military might included a herd of elephants. An anecdote in *QN* describes the Sultān’s threatening to attack Baghdad with 1000 elephants, trample the caliph’s palace and carry its rubble back to Ghazna if the caliph did not grant him Transoxiana. The caliph, however, responded in code which referred to the Qur’ānic verse, “Hast thou not seen how the [Lord dealt with the owners of the Elephant?” (This is an early Meccan verse [Qur’ān105:1] which alluded to the attempted Abyssinian campaign using elephants against Mecca at the time of Muḥammad’s birth. The campaign was frustrated when the elephants refused to advance further and large birds pelted the enemies with rocks.) The Sultān is said to have repented and sent an apology to the caliph. *QN*, 208-210.

<sup>39</sup> *SN*, 1:554.822.

<sup>40</sup> Firdawsī, quoted in *LN*, 5:6.289.

<sup>41</sup> *SN*, 1:362-364.1826-1833.

<sup>42</sup> *SN*, 1:364.1853-1854.

<sup>43</sup> *SA*, 1:238-239. See also *SA*, 3:48-51 which describes another elephant battle in detail.

<sup>44</sup> *RT*, 409.

<sup>45</sup> See *LN*, 13:19,174. Firdawsī's description of the white elephant killed by Rostam resembles the features of the Mangalūs elephant. *SN*, 1:362.1825.

<sup>46</sup> *BW*, 1:658-666. A peculiar element in the episode is how the elephant nursed a grudge against the champion because it had lost the battle. The only way that the elephant keeper was able to pacify the animal was through a feast where the elephant and the *pahlawān* were to feed each other. Hospitality, which is an important characteristic of *jawānmardī*, was the means of reconciliation between the elephant and Mālānī.

<sup>47</sup> *FNS*, 334-335.

<sup>48</sup> Attributed to Puryā-yi Walī, cited in *TW*, 116.

<sup>49</sup> In his work on the Buyid rulers in Baghdad, Mottahedeh's comments on patronage indicate how intimate the relationship was between patron and protégé: "To say, 'he is my *ṣani'a*' meant 'he is the person I have reared, educated and trained well,' and the obligation to such a patron was like the obligation to a parent." The term *ṣani'a* and other forms of the verb *ṣana'a* were medieval Arabic terms for patronage. Besides the primary meaning, *to make*, it also meant *to tend well*, and *to nourish*. Mottahedeh, *Loyalty and Leadership*, 82-83.

<sup>50</sup> M. Subtelny, "Art and Politics in Early 16th Century Central Asia," *Central Asiatic Journal* 27.1-2 (1983): 130.

<sup>51</sup> E. G. Browne, *A Literary History of Persia* (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1964), 2:100.

<sup>52</sup> Amīr Dawlatshāh, *Tadhkirat al-Shu'arā'*, ed. E.G. Browne (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1901), 44.

<sup>53</sup> *CM*, 53.

<sup>54</sup> See Alter's chapter, "Patron and Wrestler," in *The Wrestler's Body*, 70-89, where the author discusses the relationship of the wrestler to the king and visa versa, in the Indian context.

<sup>55</sup> Alter, *The Wrestler's Body*, 72.

<sup>56</sup> *FNS*, 308.

<sup>57</sup> O'Kane, "From Tents to Pavilions," 253.

<sup>58</sup> *FNS*, 306.

<sup>59</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn, *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh*, 3:498-499. See also *The Successors of Cienghis Khan*, tr. J.A. Boyle (New York: Columbia University Press, 1971), 89-90. See also 'Atā Mālik Jūvainī, *The History of the World-Conqueror*, tr. J.A. Boyle, (Manchester University Press, 1958), 227-8. For brief accounts about the wrestler and wrestling in medieval courts of Mughul India, see Zahiruddin Muhammad Babur Mirza, *Baburnama*, 3 vols., Turkish transcription, Persian edition and English

translation by W.M. Thackston, Jr., in *Sources of Oriental Languages & Literatures* 18, ed. Şinasi Tekin and Gönül Alpay Tekin (Harvard University: Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, 1993), 3:770-771, 774-775, 800; Abū al-Faḍl, *The Akbar Nāma of Abul Faḍl*, vol. 1, pt. 2, tr. H. Beveridge (Calcutta, 1907), 2:455-456 and Abū al-Faḍl 'Allāmī, *Ā'in-i Akbarī*, vol. 1, tr. H. Blochmann, ed. D.C. Phillott (Calcutta, 1927), 263.

<sup>60</sup> Kh'āndamīr, *Ḥabīb al-Siyar*, 3:356-358. 'Abd al-Razzāq was also renowned for his unscrupulous character, and according to Kh'āndamīr, when he did 'repent,' he had by then depleted the treasures he had received from the Mongol court. After the death of Abū Sa'īd, the wrestler, in search for more riches, returned to Khurāsān where he organized a rebellion against the local rulers, which led to the rise of the Sarbardār dynasty (1336-1381). Because of the wrestler's reckless looting he became more of a liability than an asset in the Sarbardār uprising and so was eventually disposed of by his brother. John Masson Smith Jr., *The History of the Sarbadār Dynasty: 1336-1381 AD and its Sources* (Paris: Mouton, 1970), 103-109.

<sup>61</sup> It is noteworthy that Wāṣifī's description of the multi-faceted personality, Pahlawān Muḥammad, in *Badāyi' al-Waqāyi'* is very similar to 'Alī Shīr Nawā'ī's treatise on the wrestler, *Ḥālāt*, as well as his brief biographical note on him in the *Majālis al-Natā'is*. See Nawā'ī, *Majālis al-Natā'is*, 89-91.

<sup>62</sup> *BW*, 1:634. One of the terms Wāṣifī uses to describe the champions of Herat is *yatīm*, which normally means orphan. But it was also used to denote the fearless '*ayyār*'. Dihkhudā says that '*ayyārs*, who also were known as *yatīms*, flourished during the reign of Shāh 'Abbās (d. 1016/1629). They were described as tough men, able to run up to 120 miles a day (40 *fārsakh*). *LN*, 16:20,991. From Wāṣifī's account it is clear that *yatīm* was also an alternative term for *pahlawān* during the Tīmūrid period in Herat.

<sup>63</sup> *BW*, 1:633-643.

<sup>64</sup> According to Wāṣifī, Darwīsh Muḥammad was Pahlawān Muḥammad-i Abū Sa'īd 's sister's son (*khwāhar-zāda*). *BW*, 1:666. However, 'Alī Shīr Nawā'ī clearly states that Darwīsh Muḥammad was a younger brother (*inī*) to Pahlawān Muḥammad. 'Alī Shīr Nawā'ī, *Majālis al-Natā'is* (Chaghatai text), ed. Suiima Ganieva (Tashkent, 1961), 163.

<sup>65</sup> *BW*, 1:669.

<sup>66</sup> *BW*, 1:672-673.

<sup>67</sup> Alter, *The Wrestler's Body*, 78.

<sup>68</sup> *BW*, 1:678.

<sup>69</sup> *TW*, 125-129.



<sup>70</sup> *RT*, 294. Champions would battle against each other with wooden clubs (*jarīd*). Prior to the match, the prince selected a second club, hollowed it out and filled it with molten lead. After his opponent had deflected the standard wooden club, the prince pulled out his “metal” weapon and easily felled his opponent. *RT*, 293-294.

<sup>71</sup> *TW*, 149.

<sup>72</sup> See, for example, *SA*, I.106. In Akram ‘Uthmān’s short story, “Mardāra Qawl as[t]” [A man of his word], the wrestling duels of the city of Kabul were also held during the New Year celebrations. Akram ‘Uthmān, “Mardāra Qawl as[t],” in *Mardāra Qawl as[t]* (Kabul, 1367/1988), 62.

<sup>73</sup> *TW*, 136.

<sup>74</sup> Chehabi, “Sport and Politics in Iran,” 57-58. The present government of Iran has sponsored a television series, *Pahlawānān hargiz na-mīmīrand* [Champions live forever], which seeks to promote the traditional ideals of *jawānmardī* of the heroic warrior. (I have been unable to obtain the videos for this series.)

<sup>75</sup> *FNS*, 308-309.

<sup>76</sup> *FNS*, 309.

<sup>77</sup> Prayers and curses were a very essential element in the wrestling pit, denoting the spiritual activity of wrestling. In the *zūr-khāna*, the praises of the *murshid* for the wrestler were constantly interwoven with prayers for his protection and curses against his enemies. *AFM*, 59, 71. In Brizhnā’s account of the battle between two champions of Kabul, the incense (*ispanā*) burners circled the open arena in order to spread the incense smoke over the crowd for protection. As they circled, they cried out, “May the burning wild rue keep away all evil.” Brizhnā, *Kāka Awrang wa Kāka Badraw*, 82-83.

<sup>78</sup> The author of *Nalāyis al-Funūn*, who wrote a chapter on *futuwwat*, relates that since Daniel had been unsuccessful in inviting people to God, he moved to another city where people did not know him. He took some red sand and spread it on a flat board and drew several lines from which he was able to divine knowledge of the past and the future. In this way he proved himself to be a prophet. Āmulī, *Nalāyis al-Funūn*, cited in *LN*, 7:10,783.

<sup>79</sup> *BW*, 1:667-669.

<sup>80</sup> *Tūmār*, in *TW*, 350-357.

<sup>81</sup> *FNS*, 309.

<sup>82</sup> *Hālāt*, 204.

<sup>83</sup> *Tūmār*, in *TW*, 358-361.

<sup>84</sup> *BW*, 1:648.

<sup>85</sup> *LN*, 11:16,588.

<sup>86</sup> *TW*, 18.

<sup>87</sup> See Jamālẓāda's description of the duties of the *murshid* in the *zūr-khāna* carried out by the wrestler, Murshid Yadullāh. *AFM*, 57-96.

<sup>88</sup> *TW*, 80-82.

<sup>89</sup> *TW*, 83, 88-90.

<sup>90</sup> *TW*, 82. According to Baydā'ī, we have no information about the conditions of these certificates of *pahlawānī*.

<sup>91</sup> *AFM*, 65.

<sup>92</sup> Kāzīmāynī, *Naqsh-i Pahlawānī*, 224-225 and *TW*, 41. See also A. Reza Arasteh, "The Social Role of the Zurkhana (House of Strength) in Iranian Urban Communities during the Nineteenth Century," *Der Islam* 37 (1961): 256-257.

<sup>93</sup> *Hālāt*, 215. In *Hālāt* the novice is called a *ṭalīb-kash* while the *ṭūmār* designates the young upstart as the *naw-khāsta*. *ṭūmār*, in *TW*, 382.

<sup>94</sup> *AFM*, 65.

<sup>95</sup> *AFM*, 69, 89.

<sup>96</sup> Similarly, one of the purposes of non-competitive wrestling for the Indian wrestler has been to teach the novice the principles of humility and courtesy: "If you are called upon to practice [wrestling] with a foolish or braggart wrestler, you should show him no mercy. He must be cut down to size immediately. Only in this way will he recognize that strength does not lay in conceit, but rather in the regulated practice of moves and countermoves... Conceit clouds the mind and a wrestler will never be able to succeed or benefit from the practice of wrestling if he is ignorant of its basic tenets." Alter, *The Wrestler's Body*, 108.

<sup>97</sup> *ṭūmār*, in *TW*, 362.

<sup>98</sup> *ṭūmār*, in *TW*, 362.

<sup>99</sup> *FNS*, 310.

<sup>100</sup> *TW*, 86. Note the different terms used in medieval and modern texts for the wrestling breeches: *izār*, *tunbān*, *tunuka*, *tunbān-i naṭ'ī*, *tunbān-i charmī*. According to Baydā'ī, the *tunuka* and *tunbān-i naṭ'ī* both refer to the leather breeches.

<sup>101</sup> *AFM*, 58.

- <sup>102</sup> Wahīd Dastgardī, “Šūrat-i Naṭī Pūshīdan-i Pahlawān Mīrzā Beg” [The method of donning breeches by Pahlawān Mīrzā Beg], *Armaghān* (n.d.), in Baydā’ī, *Tārīkh-i Warzish-i Isāstān-i Iran* (Tehran, 1337/1958), 88-90.
- <sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 89.
- <sup>104</sup> *Ḥūmār*, in *TW*, 355-357.
- <sup>105</sup> *TW*, 29. The Ḥaydarī bell was worn by *darwīshes* and symbolized the strength of ‘Alī. *IN*, 8:11,435.
- <sup>106</sup> *TW*, 29.
- <sup>107</sup> *TW*, 89.
- <sup>108</sup> *FNS*, 310-311.
- <sup>109</sup> Mahjūb, introduction to *FNS*, 80-82.
- <sup>110</sup> *BW*, 1:633.
- <sup>111</sup> *AFM*, 74.
- <sup>112</sup> See Arasteh for an analysis of 182 wrestlers from the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Over 70% of the 182 wrestlers were tradesmen such as carpenters, coppersmiths, masons, merchants, soldiers, clergy, farmers, water carriers, etc. Arasteh, “The Social Role of the Zurkhana,” 258-259.
- <sup>113</sup> *TW*, 92. The poem is attributed to a poet with the epithet Sarbāz (soldier) from the district of Burūjird, Iran. Selections of the poem are also cited in *AFM*, 62.
- <sup>114</sup> *Ḥālāt*, 210. Kāshīfī uses the term *takya* for the gathering place of men of *futuwwat* who would have received the *shadd*. He devotes a chapter to the proper conduct of a lodge keeper and another chapter to the conduct on entering a lodge, all of which is couched in the ethic of killing the *nafs*. *FNS*, 220-225.
- <sup>115</sup> *Ḥālāt*, 215.
- <sup>116</sup> *BW*, 1:667-669.
- <sup>117</sup> *FNS*, 221.
- <sup>118</sup> *BW*, 1:669.
- <sup>119</sup> *Ḥālāt*, 210, 215.
- <sup>120</sup> *AFM*, 75-76. For further examples of altruistic deeds of champions and their defense of the poor, widows and oppressed, see *AFM*, 73-77 and Bateson et al., “Ṣafā-yi Bāṭin,” 264-265.
- <sup>121</sup> *AFM*, 75.

<sup>122</sup> For studies on the *lūṭī* phenomena and their roots in the 'ayyār traditions, see Ann Lambton, *Islamic Society in Persia* (London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 1954), 18-19 and W.M. Floor, "The Lūṭīs: A Social Phenomenon in Qājār Persia," *Die Welt des Islams* 12 (1971): 103-120.

<sup>123</sup> *RT*, 103.

<sup>124</sup> W. Floor, "The Lūṭīs," 112, 119.

<sup>125</sup> Bateson et al., "Ṣafā-yi Bāṭin," 265.

<sup>126</sup> W. Floor, "The Lūṭīs," 109. The short story, *Kāka Awrang wa Kāka Badraw*, by the Afghan writer, 'Abdul Ghafūr Brizhnā (d. 1977) is considered to be one of the early classic short stories in Darī (Afghan Persian) of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It portrays the culture of local vigilantes of Kabul, Afghanistan in the early modern period who were called *kākas*. Like the *lūṭīs* of Iran, they jealously guarded their neighborhoods and maintained their own code of conduct. For a non-critical survey of renowned *kākas* in Afghanistan, see Ḥaydar, *'Ayyārān wa Kāka-hā*, 95-140.

<sup>127</sup> Ṣādiq Hidāyat, "Dāsh Ākul," in *Sih Qatra Khūn* (Tehran, 1337/1958), 42-61. See also "Dash Akol," tr. Richard Arndt and Mansur Ekhtiar, in *Sadeq Hedayat: An Anthology*, ed. Ehsan Yarshater (Colorado: Westview Press, 1979), 41-52.

<sup>128</sup> 'Ubaidullāh Zākānī, *Hundred Counsels*, quoted in Paul Sprachman, "Persian Satire, Parody and Burlesque," in *Persian Literature*, ed. Ehsan Yarshater (New York: Bibliotheca Persica, 1988), 233.

<sup>129</sup> On the notion that sexual abstinence is considered abnormal and harmful for the male, see Shahla Haeri, *Law of Desire: Temporary Marriage in Iran* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1989), 5, 170, 185.

<sup>130</sup> *RT*, 109-112. Although Muḥammad Hāshim implies that one of the purposes for writing his accounts was to expose what he considered to be a deterioration in conduct among wrestlers, his detailed and explicit descriptions of their cavalier behavior leads one to wonder whether he himself was familiar with their activities. For other descriptions of the wrestler's cavalier activities, see *RT*, 103-120.

<sup>131</sup> Cited in *TW*, 151.

<sup>132</sup> Chehabi, "Sport and Politics in Iran," 50.

<sup>133</sup> Sarā'i-yi Pūr Sa'dī, cited in *TW*, 151.

<sup>134</sup> *FNS*, 306.

<sup>135</sup> *AFM*, 58, 64, 66, 87, 89.

<sup>136</sup> *FNS*, 306.

<sup>137</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn, *Jāmi' al-Tawārikh*, 3:498.

<sup>138</sup> *BW*, 1:634.

<sup>139</sup> *BW*, 1:666.

<sup>140</sup> *AFM*, 64.

<sup>141</sup> *RJ*, 60. See the discussion of the definition of *lātan* in chapter 3, pp. 160-161.

<sup>142</sup> Alter, *The Wrestler's Body*, 75. In the *Naṣīhat al-Mulūk* Aristotle is quoted to have said that a ruler must have a pure body, while one of 16 qualities of the divine charisma (*lārr*) of Sāsānid kings was a perfect body (*ṣūrat-i tamām*). *Naṣīhat al-Mulūk*, 127. This is also reflected in Fārābī's list of qualifications for the imamate. Bagley, *Counsel for Kings*, 74, n. 2. It is because a physical flaw disqualified a potential ruler, kings would frequently blind or maim their male relatives, if not indulge in fratricide, in order to secure their own rule. It also may well be for this reason that the present Ṭālibān ruler, Mulla Muḥammad 'Umar, remains hidden, since he is said to be lame and blind in one eye, handicaps which he claims to have sustained in a battle against the Soviets. ??

<sup>143</sup> *AFM*, 64. See also Bateson et al., "Ṣafā-yi Bāṭin," 269 and Adelhah, *Being Modern in Iran*, 39.

<sup>144</sup> Kāzimaynī, *Naqsh-i Pahlawānī*, 23.

<sup>145</sup> *TW*, 103. According to Baydā'ī, this text is the oldest documented evidence of athletic shows in medieval Iran. The author, Sayfī Bukhārī, was a contemporary of Jāmī and is known for his work on Persian prosody. According to 'Alī Shīr Nawā'ī, he was an innovator in writing descriptive anecdotes for the *jawānmarks* who belonged to trades and craft guilds. *MIN*, 57, 230.

<sup>146</sup> In his description of the guild of athletes (*zūr-garān*) who perform in the public arena, Kāshilī lists a variety of their feats: man-lifting (*mard-gīrī*), rock-smashing (*sang-shikanī*), bone-crushing (*ustukhwān-shikanī*), wood-beam raising (*dār-bāzī*), rock-throwing (*sang-atkanī*), mill-stone lifting (*sang-i āsiyā bar-dāshdan*), power-lifting (*pīl-zūr kardan*), archery and foot-racing (*jahandagī*). *FNS*, 330-336.

<sup>147</sup> Sayfī Bukhārī, cited in *TW*, 104.

<sup>148</sup> The poem, *Gul-kushtī*, is published in Baydā'ī, *TW*, 389-419.

<sup>149</sup> See *AFM*, 61 and 82 where selections from this *mathnawī* are cited without reference to the author or title of the poem.

<sup>150</sup> For an overview of the "Hindī" or Indian style of Persian poetry, see W. Thackston, introduction to *A Millennium of Classical Persian Poetry* (Maryland: Iran Books, 1994), x-xi.

<sup>151</sup> *Gul-kushtī*, in *TW*, 384.

<sup>152</sup> *Gul-kushtī*, in *TW*, 384.

<sup>153</sup> *Gul-kushtī*, in *TW*, 388.

<sup>154</sup> *Gul-kushṭī*, in *TW*, 388.

<sup>155</sup> *Gul-kushṭī*, in *TW*, 389.

<sup>156</sup> *Gul-kushṭī*, in *TW*, 395. The sound of the push-up board (*takhta-yi shalang*) is compared to the traditional church bell (*zang-i nāqūs*).

<sup>157</sup> *Gul-kushṭī*, in *TW*, 394.

<sup>158</sup> *BW*, 1:654.

<sup>159</sup> *Hālāt*, 208, 211, 212.

<sup>160</sup> *RT*, 409-410.

<sup>161</sup> *BW*, 1:671. *Jats* were a desert-dwelling and despised race from India. *LN*, 5:6,602. *Lūlīs* were also desert-dwellers and it was an alternative term for gypsy. *LN*, 12:17,501.

<sup>162</sup> Wāsiḥī makes a special note that Pahlawān Darwīsh Muḥammad was of noble birth: "In terms of eminence in ancestry [Darwīsh Muḥammad] was exalted and most honorable in this guild (*tāyilā*) because from his father's side he was connected to the line of Khwāja 'Abdullāh Anṣārī and from his mother's side he tied the thread of his lineage to the robe of Sultān Abū Sa'īd b. Abū al-Khayr." *BW*, 1:671.

<sup>163</sup> *BW*, 1:644-645.

<sup>164</sup> *BW*, 1:646-648.

<sup>165</sup> *BW*, 1:648.

<sup>166</sup> *BW*, 1:648.

<sup>167</sup> *Hālāt*, 205-209. In *Majālis al-Nafā'is*, 'Alī Shīr Nawā'ī writes that, "Pahlawān Muḥammad was adorned with all the virtues and perfections, in science, modes and music and especially in all the techniques of wrestling." *MN*, 89.

<sup>168</sup> *Hālāt*, 215.

<sup>169</sup> *BW*, 1:666.

<sup>170</sup> See, for example, the Tīmūrid hagiography by Kamāl al-Dīn Ḥusayn Giāzurgāhī, *Majālis al-'Ushshāq*, 196-199. According to Bayḍā'ī, no manuscript of *Kanz al-Ḥaqā'iq* has been located. *TW*, 114-116.

<sup>171</sup> *RAH*, 2:505.

<sup>172</sup> *TW*, 125.

<sup>173</sup> *BW*, 1:658-659.

<sup>174</sup> *AFM*, 58.

<sup>175</sup> *FNS*, 85, 99, 133.

- <sup>176</sup> Bateson et al., “Ṣafā-yi Bātin,” 268.
- <sup>177</sup> *Gul-kushṭī*, in *TW*, 412-413.
- <sup>178</sup> Chehabi, “Sport and Politics in Iran,” 56.
- <sup>179</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn, *Jāmi‘ al-Tawārīkh*, 3:498.
- <sup>180</sup> Chehabi, “Sport and Politics in Iran,” 59 n. 7.
- <sup>181</sup> Mangan, “Duty unto Death,” 12.
- <sup>182</sup> Alter, *The Wrestler’s Body*, 93, 132-135.
- <sup>183</sup> *AFM*, 64.
- <sup>184</sup> *BW*, 1:641.
- <sup>185</sup> *BW*, 1:641.
- <sup>186</sup> *FNS*, 309.
- <sup>187</sup> *BW*, 1:671.
- <sup>188</sup> Brizhnā, *Kāka Awrang wa Kāka Badraw*, 87-88.
- <sup>189</sup> According to Kamāl al-Dīn Ḥusayn, Puryā-yi Walī was also called Pūkyār. See *MU*, 196 n. 2 and *TW*, 115. Kāshifī mentions Pahlawān Maḥmūd Pūkyār as one of the great medieval wrestlers. *FNS*, 307. Jāmī provides a brief reference on Pahlawān Maḥmūd Pūkyār. *NU*, 504. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, a shrine was built in honor of Pahlawān Maḥmūd on his burial site in Khiva, which is located in the Khorazm province of Uzbekistan. In 1810, a mausoleum was constructed on the site and to this day, it stands as a prominent religious edifice of the reconstructed and preserved medieval town. Pahlawān Maḥmūd was honored as the “guardian of Khiva,” and is remembered more as a poet, philosopher and saint than as a wrestler. See L. Mankovskaya, *Khiva* (Tashkent, 1982), 40-49, 163-169.
- <sup>190</sup> *MU*, 196.
- <sup>191</sup> *MU*, 197.
- <sup>192</sup> *MU*, 197-198.
- <sup>193</sup> According to Baydā‘ī, this version of the story is folk-lore and cannot be documented in any of the hagiographical works. *TW*, 115.
- <sup>194</sup> *MU*, 198.
- <sup>195</sup> On the life of Takhtī and the legends that have developed about him, see Chehabi, “Sport and Politics in Iran,” 51-58.
- <sup>196</sup> Chehabi, “Sport and Politics in Iran,” 52. A popular version of Takhtī’s heroism recounts a championship bout where it was learned that his counterpart had injured his right arm. Although

Takhtī's coach urged him to take advantage of his opponent's weak spot, the Iranian champion refused and subsequently lost the match. From personal conversations with Farīburz Khandanī and Jamshīd Izadī, Toronto, Canada, October, 1999.

<sup>197</sup> Chehabi, "Sport and Politics in Iran," 56.

<sup>198</sup> Chehabi, "Sport and Politics in Iran," 55-56.

<sup>199</sup> *FNS*, 307.

<sup>200</sup> Ahmad Karimi-Hakkak has strongly criticized Jamālzāda for a lack of creative quality and artistic merit in his writings. Bemoaning Jamālzāda's indulgence in the past, Hakkak says, "Jamalzadeh [has] become enmeshed in that degenerating process ... of the regurgitation of reminiscences, burying himself deeper and deeper in an unredeemable past..." Ahmad Karimi-Hakkak, "Isfahan is Half the World: Memories of a Persian Boyhood," 423. However, in terms of this thesis, Jamālzāda confirms the idea that, in order to understand the present one cannot deny the past. The culture of traditional wrestling in Iran, as well as the importance of courtesy throughout Iranian society, can be more fully appreciated in light of the medieval concept that the true *jawānmard* must fully imbibe the ethic of *futuwwat*.

<sup>201</sup> The notion of insincerity in the Persian psyche has captured the interest of numerous scholars of sociology as well literature. See Ali Banuazizi, "Iranian National Character," in *Psychological Dimensions of Near Eastern Studies*, ed. L. Carl Brown and Norman Itzkowitz (New Jersey: The Darwin Press, 1977), 210-239; William Beeman, "What is (IRANIAN) National Character? A Sociolinguistic Approach," *Iranian Studies* 9 (1976): 22-48 and William Beeman, "Status, Style and Strategy in Iranian Interaction," *Anthropological Linguistics* 18.7 (1976): 305-322. Though Banuazizi and Beeman question the methodologies and assumptions of studies done on Iranian personalities, Beeman's attempt to explain characteristics such as insincerity, cleverness (*zarangī*), ritual courtesy (*ta'āruf*) and mistrust, not as character traits, but as expected and assumed cultural responses to certain situations serves only to emphasize them as a cultural phenomenon.

<sup>202</sup> *FNS*, 307-308.

<sup>203</sup> *TW*, 115.

<sup>204</sup> Attributed to Puryā-yi Walī, quoted in *TW*, 115.

<sup>205</sup> *MU*, 198.

<sup>206</sup> *Tūmār*, in *TW*, 357-358.

<sup>207</sup> *Tūmār*, in *TW*, 358.

<sup>208</sup> *MU*, 198.



<sup>209</sup> An obscure anecdote about Puryā-yi Walī denotes that the notion of self-abnegation and forgoing one's own desires was often more imaginary than real. A young wrestler from Hamadān joined Puryā-yi Walī's team of wrestlers. After the novice had been trained in all the techniques of wrestling and his body was well-developed, Puryā-yi Walī, renowned for deferring his desires, fell sick with desire for the young boy. The following confession, attributed to the champion, indicates that the patron-saint of wrestling had not yet reached sainthood:

Oh Muslims, I am caught by the hand of a non-Muslim,  
 I have become crazy, drunk, rude and stupid.  
 His curls trap a friend, his smile burns all piety,  
 His eyebrows stir up passion, like the *nargis* flower, he arouses the world,  
 His stature is a disaster to religion, his forelocks grab the infidel.  
 I will not curse him, but this much I will say,  
 Oh God, may some day you become sick with separation, like me.  
 Oh Physician! don't worry so much about my weak blood,  
 Leave me, because I do not care for any cure. *MI*, 199

<sup>210</sup> *FNS*, 22.

<sup>211</sup> *FNS*, 22.

<sup>212</sup> de Fouchécour, *Moralia*, 218, 220-221.

<sup>213</sup> de Fouchécour, *Moralia*, 220.

<sup>214</sup> *FNS*, 335.

<sup>215</sup> *FNS*, 335-336.

<sup>216</sup> Akram 'Uthmān, "Man wa Pahlawān Barāt [I and Pahlawān Barāt]," in *Mardāra Qawlas* (Kabul, 1367), 148.

<sup>217</sup> *Tūmār*, in *TW*, 358.

<sup>218</sup> To this day, much is made of the dirt in the wrestling pit in Iran and Afghanistan. Most contemporary wrestling is performed on synthetic wrestling mats, but the traditional dirt pit remains a nostalgic memory of a long and meaningful tradition. From numerous conversations, including Dr. Tom Little, who lives in Kabul, Afghanistan (March, 2000). See also *TW*, 15-16.

<sup>219</sup> *AFM*, 73.

<sup>220</sup> Kāzimaynī, *Naqsh-i Pahlawānī*, 373.

<sup>221</sup> The English terms used to describe the exercises, weight-lifting, push-ups, etc., may be misleading. For explanations of these exercises, see Heston's translation of Jamāl-zāda's monograph, "The World of Chivalry and Manliness," in *Istāhan is Half the World*, 173-178, 189-190. See also Kāzimaynī's description of the order of exercises in *Naqsh-i Pahlawānī*, 316-354. The explanation in

the *Ṭūmār* of the different exercises in the *zūr-khāna* is remarkably similar to Jamāl-zāda's description. *Ṭūmār*, in *TW*, 363-364.

<sup>222</sup> In the story *Kāka Awrang wa Kāka Badraw*, the author frequently interludes his description of the battle scene with lines from the Rustam - Suhrāb battle in the *Shāhnāma* as if the two *kākas* were re-enacting the ancient battle. Brizhnā, *Kāka Awrang wa Kāka Badraw*, 84-87.

<sup>223</sup> Cited in *AFM*, 69.

<sup>224</sup> Refers to Ḥusayn Ibn Maṣṣūr al-Ḥallāj (d. 309/922) who was executed for his claim of having attained union with the Divine, "*ana al-Ḥaqq*" (I am God). Maṣṣūr also means victor, so the wine of Maṣṣūr was the intoxicating love of the divine which led the Sufi to ecstasy and hence, victory over one's carnal soul.

<sup>225</sup> *Gul-kushtī*, in *TW*, 399.

<sup>226</sup> Alter states that non-competitive wrestling and exercises in the Indian tradition resembles a kind of dance. Alter, *The Wrestler's Body*, 106.

<sup>227</sup> Many of the slogans use rhetorical devices common in classical Persian poetry. For example, in the phrase, "the cause of every cause" (*sabab-sāz-i kull-i sabab*), the first and last words begin with an *s*, sounding like the number three (*sih*). And for the number four, "the helper of the needy" (*chāra-sāz-i bīchāragān*), the initial syllable of the first word "helper (*chāra-sāz*)" is homonymous with the number four (*chār*) which is also hidden in the second word "helpless (*bīchāragān*). See Heston's comments in "The World of Chivalry," 176 n. 5.

<sup>228</sup> Kāzīmāynī, *Naqsh-i Pahlawānī*, 316-322 and *AFM*, 63.

<sup>229</sup> *Gul-kushtī*, in *TW*, 415. Also cited in *AFM*, 62.

<sup>230</sup> *AFM*, 67-68.

<sup>231</sup> *AFM*, 95.

<sup>232</sup> *Gul-kushtī*, in *TW*, 384.

<sup>233</sup> Kāzīmāynī, *Naqsh-i Pahlawānī*, 311. According to Kāzīmāynī, the stripping down to the loins was also an identification with the Prophet's uncle, Ḥamza, who stripped down to his loins in order to wrestle with unbelievers.

<sup>234</sup> *Gul-kushtī*, in *TW*, 410.

<sup>235</sup> *AFM*, 89.

<sup>236</sup> cited in *AFM*, 87.

<sup>237</sup> *FNS*, 307.

<sup>238</sup> Suhrawardī, in *RJ*, 112-115.

<sup>239</sup> *AFM*, 60.

<sup>240</sup> *AFM*, 68.

<sup>241</sup> Mangan, "Duty unto Death," 19.

<sup>242</sup> In his discussion of the *'ulamā'* (religious scholars) who resort to their heritage to establish their present authority, P. Brown says, "the past is plainly not a dead hand – it is a living reservoir ... the past is in the eyes of the beholder." Peter Brown, "Late Antiquity and Islam," in *Moral Conduct: The Place of Adab in South Asian Islam*, ed. Barbara Metcalf (California: University of California Press, 1984), 35-35.

<sup>243</sup> *FNS*, 139-140.

<sup>244</sup> *TW*, 45.

<sup>245</sup> *AFM*, 89.

<sup>246</sup> Attributed to Puryā-yi Walī, *TW*, 93.

<sup>247</sup> *Ṭūmār*, in *TW*, 358.

<sup>248</sup> Bateson et al., "Ṣalā-yi Bāṭin," 273.

## Chapter Five

### The Struggle for *Jawānmardī* in Contemporary Iranian Societies

The ideals of *jawānmardī* continue to be expressed in 20<sup>th</sup> century Iranian literature and in the society it portrays, though its characteristics begin to change. The medieval texts present a much less complicated picture of the *jawānmard*, and as Hanaway states: “The inner lives of characters are presented only through their actions and reactions, not through interior monologues or description.”<sup>1</sup> Twentieth century Persian fiction no longer depicts the heroic figure as a one-dimensional *pahlawān* who merely plays out his role in public combat before the watching crowds, or waits to hear the affirming “bravo” from the king. His rivalry for preeminence in life is not with his co-warriors. Neither is the ethic of *lutuwwat*, with its emphasis on scrupulous behavior, a primary feature of *jawānmardī*, though it is still in evidence among traditional wrestlers.

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The selected stories which are analyzed in this chapter portray the *jawānmard* in a more personal way, as one who struggles with what may seem to be lesser, everyday issues of life. The family, which is conspicuously absent in the medieval portrayal of the heroic warrior, as well as in that of the spiritual champion, plays a central role for the 20<sup>th</sup> century heroic figure. In some cases, the family becomes the arena (*maydān*) where the man demonstrates his *jawānmardī* or his lack thereof. The question that he must face is: what constitutes true manliness in the framework of the family? Other characters who relate to the *jawānmard* become aware of his limitations. In other cases, the writers become interested in the inner thoughts of the character and how he fares as an individual in the context of his social environment. The heroic figure becomes conscious of the demands of carrying out the traditional code of *jawānmardī* and the dilemmas that it creates. As he reflects on himself and his motives, modern literature begins to touch on the psychology of manliness and heroism. The quest for reputation continues to direct the actions of the heroic figure, but here too, the paradoxes of conflicting demands placed on him are more intense and personal than in the classical and medieval texts. In this regard, Fischer observes that the modern-day hero “is confronted with emotionally powerful and clear ties [to the past], which may be contradictory amongst themselves or only partially integrated in any holistic conception of self and purpose.”<sup>2</sup> Hence, writers begin to unmask the public image of the *jawānmard*.

This chapter will explore how the modern *jawānmard* is portrayed by selected Persian fiction writers and examine how he struggles to continue the multi-faceted nature of traditional *jawānmardī* in very different kinds of circumstances. An understanding of the traditional ideals of *jawānmardī* affords a framework for exploring the hero depicted in modern Persian fiction.<sup>3</sup> When analyzing 20<sup>th</sup> century literature, a distinction must be made

between the themes reflected in the literature and what is real in society. Although fiction does help in understanding culture, nevertheless, a literary piece of work primarily reflects the thoughts of the author. Hence, the stories analyzed should be seen as a 20<sup>th</sup> century 'take' on the concept of *jawānmardī*.

### A. The Struggle over Revenge

*Tangsīr* (1936), Šādiq Chūbak's first novel, or perhaps novella, is a story of what on the surface is simply a successful act of revenge.<sup>4</sup> The story takes place in the 1920s, when the British had infiltrated the region around Būshahr, located in the Tangsīrī tribal area in southern Iran. Local tribal people had risen up against the foreigners and were under the leadership of their hero, Ra'īs 'Alī Dilāwarī, who had subsequently been killed. The hero of the novel, Zār Muḥammad, had joined with Dilāwarī and killed 15 people himself, which he liked to boast about.<sup>5</sup> The plot itself is quite simple. Muḥammad had been swindled out of his life savings, and as a result, he became the laughing stock of his village. He determined to take revenge on the four men who had cheated him, which he did by killing each one of them in cold blood. In the process, he killed a fifth person and wounded a sixth, both of whom were women. The story details his sensational escape from government gendarmes and his return to his family and village where by now, he had become a legendary hero. Muḥammad does not stay in the village, however. The story ends as he and his family leave the village for some unknown destination. From all appearances, the *pahlawān*, Muḥammad, successfully avenges his loss.

When the novel was first published, it received negative reactions from literary critics. According to them, the story did not subscribe to the social message of the literature of commitment.<sup>6</sup> As they saw it, Zār Muḥammad was simply a Rostam-like figure whose

exploits resembled the epic hero, rather than reflecting modern realities.<sup>7</sup> Its poor reception as a novel, however, was redeemed by its broader reception as a movie.<sup>8</sup> Viewers saw in Muḥammad a man who reflected the ethos of the traditional *pahlawān*, fighting to regain his reputation and establish order on his own terms. That this story was criticized by the writers of *engagé* literature as being out of touch with reality, with the movie being well-received by Iranian society, is indicative of the divergence between the views of this particular class of writers and those of the masses. The ethos of *jawānmardī* was still very much a living ideal for the general public at the time.<sup>9</sup>

*Tangsīr* is the least complex story of Chūbak's works and on the surface, it is simply a portrayal of the heroic warrior of the past. The story confirms the traditional view that pursuing and maintaining a good reputation is the basic goal of the *pahlawān*. However, as the author reveals Muḥammad's personality, the hero becomes more human, and to a certain extent, a heroic figure to whom the reader can relate. His distress over losing his reputation and the need to avenge his wrongdoers are seen as personal crises in his life, rather than the instinctive reaction of the classical heroic warrior. Muḥammad reflects on what he has to do and why he will do it. Although he sees it as his 'responsibility' to kill his enemies in order to maintain his good name, from an outside perspective, there are allusions in the story that make him appear less heroic for his deed.

### 1. Reputation Gained

Chūbak places the protagonist of the story within the traditional models of the heroic warrior. Before launching out to avenge the wrong done to him, Muḥammad is already depicted as a *pahlawān* who had established a good reputation among the Tangsīrī people. The local shopkeepers admired Muḥammad as the preeminent *pahlawān* of the village.<sup>10</sup> His

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superior physical strength, courage and stature added to the perception in the village that he was the local *pahlawān*.<sup>11</sup>

[Sakīna] (a widow in the village) knew Muḥammad was a *pahlawān* and had a lot of guts. When Muḥammad saw Sakīna, he stood up. He was head and shoulders bigger than any of the other men.<sup>12</sup>

His ten year-old son, Suhrāb, was well aware of his father's status, and in a conversation with one of the gendarmes, the young boy reflects the conventional view of the villagers of what a *pahlawān* is – he is one who can beat someone bigger than himself. The gendarme, who was guarding Muḥammad's house after the murders, asked Suhrāb,

“Do you know that Suhrāb was the name of a *pahlawān*?”

“I'm one myself. I can beat kids bigger than me.”

“Did you hear your dad killed a man?”

“If he did, what's that to me!”

“Do you know how to shoot?”

“Of course, I've shot with my dad's gun. I can aim well. My dad's gun is good. Your gun is like a piece of firewood.”

“Would you like to try shooting with my gun?” The policeman laughed and showed his gun to Suhrāb.

“I'd like to shoot those gunmen with your gun. They've come to take my dad and kill him. I hate them.”

“But they are bigger than you. How're you going to kill them?”

“I can. They're no Tangsīrīs. Maybe they don't even know how to pull a trigger.”<sup>13</sup>

Like the traditional *jawānmard*, Muḥammad was a man of public service. Chūbak describes him as a sensitive and devout person who was well-known in his village and as one who cared for others in need. Even though the village had an official headman, Muḥammad was the real source of public security. Anyone with problems went to him, for it was second nature to assume that Muḥammad would help people.<sup>14</sup> He seemed to care especially for the helpless widows in society: Heading home to subdue a raging bull (to be discussed shortly), he noticed a woman weeping at her husband's burial site, and he magnanimously stopped to



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comfort her.<sup>15</sup> Even his frequent monologues on natural phenomenon he observed around him present him as a personable and likeable individual.

In modern Persian fiction, authors are frequently interested in how a male protagonist relates to his family. In contrast to the stereotypical portrayal of a tyrannical husband and father in the home (which is evident in many Persian short stories),<sup>16</sup> Chūbak describes Muḥammad's relationship with his wife, Shahrū, as traditional, but friendly. She was troubled that everyone was always asking Muḥammad for help. Without a second thought, he was always obligating himself to respond to other people's needs. Yet, when the crisis of the raging bull occurred, Shahrū expressed her admiration for him:

Poor, unfortunate man, now during the Fast. At this time of the day, he's come all this way to catch this mad bull. Everyone in the village who is doing nothing all day, not one of them could catch it. He's always voluntarily obligating himself to help people and if you talk to him about it, he gets upset.<sup>17</sup>

Shahrū described her husband as a self-effacing man who did not like public attention. When he was about to subdue the bull, its owner, Sakīna, worried about Muḥammad's safety; however, Muḥammad detested such personal attention.<sup>18</sup> This reflects the ideal characteristic of both the heroic and spiritual champion: to live without any consideration to one's own desires or interests. As a *jawānmard*, Muḥammad disliked public acclaim; nevertheless, as will be seen, he was also very concerned about it. In fact, it would be public opinion that would compel him to commit his deeds of revenge.

Chūbak devotes the first chapter to Muḥammad's battle with the bull. Though this event has no direct link to the rest of the story, it serves to confirm his status as a genuine *pahlawān*.<sup>19</sup> The bull, which belonged to the widow, Sakīna, was on a rampage in a nearby palm grove. Others who had tried to catch it had failed and some of the villagers been injured badly in the process. Just as the ancient Iranians always looked to Rostam to save

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them in time of trouble, now “everyone’s hope and eyes were on Muḥammad.”<sup>20</sup>

Interestingly, Muḥammad also took his time to respond to the crisis, and like Rustam, he was aware of his indispensability, for there was no one else who could help.<sup>21</sup>

In this test of *pahlawānī*, Muḥammad publicly proved himself as a combat warrior. This further enhanced him as a man of good reputation and served to justify his acts of revenge. The bull was his rival (*ḥarīf*) and the palm grove (*nakhlistān*) his arena of battle. The villagers thought the bull could not be subdued; however, like the heroic warrior of old, Muḥammad staked his identity on this challenge: “If I don’t smash his horns, I’ll change my name.”<sup>22</sup> He could easily have shot the bull, but there was no demonstration of skill (*hunar*) in such an act.<sup>23</sup> As he walked into the palm grove, the men and boys of the village were watching him as if he were entering the public arena.<sup>24</sup> Muḥammad was very self-conscious that his manliness and reputation were at stake in meeting this challenge.

His interaction with the bull resembled the public combatant’s ridicule and threats to his opponent: “You’re just trying to prove your valor (*marḍūnagī*) against poor Sakīna, the widow, who doesn’t have anyone.”<sup>25</sup> At the same time, Muḥammad admired the toughness of his rival. The bull was like a young wrestler whose arrogance had gotten the better of him and needed to be humbled. This was not a battle of revenge against an enemy, but Muḥammad’s vindication of his own manhood and furthermore, a restoration of order within the village. Like a wrestler, Muḥammad used his physical dexterity (*chābukī*, *chālākī*) and his powerful hands to fell the opponent.<sup>26</sup>

Once he had captured the bull, the *pahlawān* treated it magnanimously, comforting it by saying, “I know it hurts you, I feel sorry for you ... now we’ve become friends,” and the scene changes.<sup>27</sup> The medieval code for wrestlers stated that “A young arrogant novice

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should be soundly defeated in the wrestling pit and then taken home as a friend.”<sup>28</sup>

Muḥammad now gently led the bull back to the village to be his guest for the breaking of the Fast. The offer of hospitality to the defeated rival was his way of continuing to control the rebel bull.<sup>29</sup> It also highlights the high-minded attitude of a *jawānmard* who could never harbor malice or avarice. Once an opponent had been rendered helpless, it was a standard code to act magnanimously towards him. The cries of congratulations (*ālīrīn*) when he approached the village confirmed that Muḥammad was indeed a champion.<sup>30</sup>

However, his reputation was still far from being confirmed. Even though Muḥammad walked out of the palm grove with his head held high, as Shahrū said, “he had deep anguish in his heart.”<sup>31</sup> A man of good repute and victory always is able to hold his head up straight, but in fact, Muḥammad could not do so. Chūbak’s description of Muḥammad’s loss of reputation in the community and his subsequent emotional pain is poignant. For Muḥammad, the struggle to restore his reputation was directly related to his wife and children. In his view, the four men, including a *shaykh*, who had swindled him out of his life’s savings, had destroyed him and his family. Although 1000 tūmāns was a considerable amount of money for him, that was not the issue. He had lost face, which was worse than death: “Since I found out that they had gotten together to cheat me of my money, it was as if they had poured oil on my face and lit it. It’s as if they had beheaded my boys right in front of me.”<sup>32</sup> Loss of face meant that others had gained the upper hand over him by being able to deceive and thereby defeat him. In this regard, he was no longer an unrivaled hero in the village, and this made him and his family a laughingstock in the eyes of the swindlers and their friends. When Muḥammad tried one more time to reclaim his money, the *shaykh*’s public ridicule – reminiscent of the traditional warrior’s ridiculing in public combat – was,

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for Muḥammad, sufficient grounds for revenge. It was as if through public ridicule he and his family had been ‘killed socially,’ and so, he simply had no choice but to take action on its behalf. For him, restoring his reputation was an act of survival, even if it meant killing others. He tried to explain this to his father-in-law, ʿĪlāj Muḥammad:

Before the eyes of the people, I felt like cotton that somebody had pissed on. I can't lift my head up high before the people of the town. So this is what you call life? You think I can get my reputation (*āb-rū*) back with something besides the bullet of a gun?<sup>33</sup>

As was stated in the chapter on the heroic warrior, a good reputation is indeed very fragile described as the “glass of life.” Once it is broken, it is irretrievable. Just as Samak and Rustam lived for public honor, Muḥammad underscored the champion’s fundamental concern about what people would say:

In life there is nothing as important as a person’s honor (*haythiyat*) and dignity (*sharaf*), not even a man’s life, not even his wife or his children. True, they are looking to us and we must take care of them and raise them up under our wings. But not without my reputation (*bī-āb-rūyi*) Is this right that tomorrow when my kids have grown up, people will say to them, “Ha, your dad was a coward (*nā-mard*), he couldn’t make it.” Is this good ...? If you want to know, uncle, I am doing this for my sons, so that others will not be cruel to them.<sup>34</sup>

Even though both his wife and his father-in-law tried to dissuade Muḥammad from his plan to avenge the swindlers, they could not, because they too subscribed to the same code. For them, their fear was not in the horror of his killing four men; rather their fear lay in possible imprisonment or the loss of Muḥammad’s own physical life. However, for the *pahlawān*, the responsibility of purchasing back one’s honor was a duty greater than family responsibility or the fear of death. In fact, in Muḥammad’s eyes, revenge was the responsible thing to do for the family. As he said, “I am doing this for my sons.”<sup>35</sup> Muḥammad is portrayed as one who acted for the sake of his family’s reputation.

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As Muḥammad carried out his revenge, he publicly proved he was a *jawānmard* and an unrivaled champion in the eyes of the Tangsīrīs. In this way, he restored his ruined reputation.<sup>36</sup> Whereas before, everyone had been talking about the defeat he had to endure, now people began talking about him in a different vein. Just as the 'spectators' in the village had been able to understand his shame and relate to it,<sup>37</sup> they could also identify with his restored reputation. One of the government gendarmes posted at Muḥammad's house to capture him if he showed up, stated, "They're all praising him, they say he's a real *jawānmard*. They say he really has guts. I tell you he sure must have had guts to do what he did."<sup>38</sup> The following conversation among several Tangsīrī villagers after one of the murders reflects how Muḥammad was becoming a legendary hero:

Isn't this that Zār Muḥammad Tangsīr the barley shop-keeper?  
 Don't say Zār Muḥammad, say, Shīr (lion) Muḥammad.  
 You're right, Shīr Muḥammad.  
 Shīr Muḥammad.  
 Shīr Muḥammad.  
 Shīr Muḥammad, yeah, he got his money back with a bullet. What a man of nerve  
 (*ghayrat*) ...  
 This kind of *ghayrat* you'll find only among the Tangsīrīs ...  
 Now, here in this place, no one's going to swindle another's money.  
 From now on, no one's going to be cruel to anybody.<sup>39</sup>

The conversation above also reflects the view that Muḥammad's act of revenge was considered a good deed in the eyes of his society. He had restored a sense of social order and justice.<sup>40</sup> Muḥammad had regained his own reputation by defending the reputation of the Tangsīrī people. Therefore, his act was seen as socially responsible, for the villagers said, "from now on no one's going to be cruel to anyone."<sup>41</sup> Defending the Tangsīrī name in this way was what made Muḥammad a hero in the eyes of the public.<sup>42</sup>

## 2. Reputation Lost

As was mentioned in the chapter on the heroic warrior, the avenger who is compelled to regain lost reputation never seems to be completely successful. This is also seen in Chūbak's story. On the surface, Muḥammad demonstrated that he was a *pahlawān*. There are numerous allusions in the story, however, which indicate that he appeared less honorable after the acts of revenge than after he had defeated the raging bull in the palm grove. In his effort to restore his good reputation he actually tarnished it.

One indication that hints at this loss of reputation is Muḥammad's perpetual smile. In fact, laughter (smiling), an essential characteristic of the traditional warrior, is a leitmotif throughout the novella. Like Rustam, Muḥammad despised tears and always wore a smile on his face. By his "mask of laughter" Muḥammad demonstrated self-control and covered his inner feelings:

Even when he was angry, his smiling mask (*ṣūratak*) stayed on his face. He was born with this mask and Ḥāj Muḥammad always noticed it. Because of this, a person never knew if Muḥammad was happy or not. But when something bothered him, his typical smile became bitter and gray.<sup>43</sup>

In the medieval texts, the authors are not concerned with the hero's inner feelings, but this becomes an important issue in 20<sup>th</sup> century literature. Ostensibly, Muḥammad was a true traditional hero who never showed his feelings. However, his father-in-law became a close observer of the emotional make-up of his son-in-law, and through his eyes the reader is able to see how Muḥammad fared on the inside.

Muḥammad's laughter prior to the acts of revenge was a veil to cover his anger. When he made the cynical, self-effacing comment about himself in comparison to his enemies, "we're foxes, they're the lions,"<sup>44</sup> he resembles the beguiling wrestler who deferred to his opponent. For Muḥammad, this served to emphasize his eventual victory of revenge. His laughter was

also evident immediately before and after each of the murders. After having killed three of his enemies (as well as one woman and injuring another), Chūbak says, “a smile played on his face, still that same frightening smile, but looking at it, a man would get distressed.”<sup>45</sup> This persistent smile which stayed with him as he systematically ended the lives of the men who had figuratively ended his life, becomes an eerie comment on the flawed nature of the social responsibility of taking revenge in order to restore one’s reputation. When the quest for good reputation becomes an obsession, it becomes a pathological disorder that overrides all other considerations in life. The hero’s laughter highlights the horror of revenge for the sake of honor: to restore one’s life, i.e., one’s sense of dignity, one must destroy the lives of others without remorse.<sup>46</sup>

Muḥammad’s feelings changed subsequent to the murders. The emotions that now consumed the *pahlawān* were fear and mistrust.<sup>47</sup> Here, Chūbak departs from the stereotypical *pahlawān* who very rarely considers the outcome of his deeds. Though his escape after the murders is sensational, the author portrays him as a reflective and lonely man isolated from society. After the murders, Muḥammad hid in a small shop owned by an Armenian. Here he had a nightmare of being all alone in a ship out at sea, which reflects the situation of a *pahlawān* who was no more in full control of his own environment.<sup>48</sup> He began to reminisce about his life; he had never had a challenge that he couldn’t handle: “Whenever he wanted to do something he did it and when he didn’t feel like it, he left it ....” but now, he wondered at the possible excess of his deed: “He had never thought that things would go to this far, that ... for money he would have to kill somebody.”<sup>49</sup>

How Muḥammad handled the responsibility of his murders is a further indication of his loss of reputation. The villagers considered that Muḥammad had vindicated his manhood

and had restored the honor of the Tangsīrī name by avenging his loss. From this standpoint then, Muḥammad's act was a socially responsible deed, because he simply followed the tribal code of revenge. Revenge was characteristic of Rustam, and as was mentioned in chapter 2, the dilemma between passing over an evil and avenging it was solved on the basis of which of the two acts best restored lost reputation. For Muḥammad, there was no other way to regain his name, and the villagers affirmed this. However, viewed from the outside, killing four men over a loss of 1000 tūmāns is a socially irresponsible act.<sup>50</sup> In his article on rage and the epic hero in modern Iranian fiction, Shojai criticizes Chūbak's hero for not taking responsibility either for his dealings with the swindlers or for their deaths:

[Muḥammad] has absolutely no sense of his own culpability. Not only does he dispatch human lives with a callousness that is chilling, but he takes absolutely no responsibility for his own folly. What was he doing, turning over all his money to people with reputations for stealing?<sup>51</sup>

Prior to the murders, his father-in-law had alluded to Muḥammad's failure to be careful with whom he invested his money.<sup>52</sup> However, for a *pahlawān*, such a question of responsibility is irrelevant. As noted in the chapter on the heroic warrior, a champion does not take responsibility for failure, because admission of failure or a misdeed implies that he is weak, and therefore, no longer the preeminent warrior. Muḥammad's refusal to consider himself culpable for any of his deeds is seen in one of his conversations after the murders. While hiding in the Armenian's shop, Ismā'īl, the young boy who worked there, offered to help Muḥammad escape because he, too, admired Muḥammad's heroic act. Muḥammad flatly refused his offer because he did not trust him. He warned Ismā'īl that if anyone tried to kill him (Muḥammad), there would be further blood and it would be Ismā'īl's fault. His threat to Ismā'īl is a classic example of the hero casting responsibility for his deeds onto others:



If they want to catch me ... blood will flow and innocent people will be killed. Their blood will be on your neck. I killed those I wanted to. I have no more grudge against anyone. If anyone wants to bother me, whatever happens is his own fault. But if anyone is going to be killed, it'll be your fault.<sup>53</sup>

In other words, if Muḥammad killed anyone else, the young boy would be responsible for it. Muḥammad inadvertently implied that he was not the master of his own deeds and that someone else would be to blame for an ignoble act. It is as if he were Rustam all over again.

This refusal to accept culpability is seen more clearly in light of his third murder. As the story of Muḥammad's heroic deed of vengeance spread, so did the news that he had killed a woman. But the villagers also said, "But a person shouldn't lift his hand against a woman, a woman is weak."<sup>54</sup> Not attacking a woman was simply an accepted code of conduct among all warriors.<sup>55</sup> When Shahrū heard the rumor that her husband had killed a woman, she could only dismiss it as a lie, because, like the rest of the villagers, she knew that such a deed was not worthy of a *pahlawān* like her husband.<sup>56</sup> In this regard, the court of public opinion seemed to be turning against the champion. When Muḥammad was hiding in the shop, he himself overheard a customer mention that the avenger had killed a woman and cut off the arm of another. This public talk, which is what normally builds the good reputation of a warrior, did not confer honor on Muḥammad. For a moment, Muḥammad despised himself:

I could just break my hands. I wasn't going to hurt them. It was their own fault. What can I do about it now! I didn't want to touch a woman. Damn it! Well, it was her appointed time of death (*ajal*).<sup>57</sup>

His reaction is reminiscent of Rustam's disgust with himself and with his hands after he had killed his son, Suhrāb. Yet again, the champion is depicted as one who could take no personal responsibility for his action. The four murders were not his responsibility, rather it was their due (*sazā*),<sup>58</sup> and the death of the woman had not been his misdeed. Rather, it had been her appointed time to die.

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For this reason, Muḥammad's sense of remorse did not last long. When he saw that his reputation had been restored, everything was justified. To take revenge means to 'take back' the life of a victim. Since Muḥammad saw himself as the victim, he had restored his own life by killing his enemies. He said to himself, "Forty-five years of an honorable life (*zindagī-i āb-rūmand*) is better than a hundred years of shame (*nang*) and hanging one's head."<sup>59</sup> And later:

No, I had no choice. When a man has no resource, what's he supposed to do? My reputation (*āb-rū*) was gone. Why didn't they give me my due? So finally, I got my rights by killing them. Whatever happens, happens. A man lives but once, dies but once, and they mourn but once.<sup>60</sup>

Ultimately, Muḥammad's answer to the crisis of taking responsibility for a misdeed was the same as that of the conventional heroic warrior. Destiny compelled him to do what he did. In fact, already prior to the bloody ordeal, he had committed his plan to fate.<sup>61</sup> The night before he killed the swindlers, he imagined seeing the stars shaped like a sword which had been an affirmation for him that fate had destined him to take revenge.<sup>62</sup> Like the traditional *pahlawān*, he was propelled by forces outside of his control to ensure the reestablishment of his reputation in his domain. The fear that blood might be on his hands was washed away by living in a world of fate rather than of personal responsibility.

A further perspective on the loss of the *pahlawān*'s reputation is seen when he and his family leave the village at the end of the story. Chūbak's description of Muḥammad's escape from the Armenian shop, his sensational battle with the shark in the sea, and finally his break from the gendarmes who had surrounded his house, is reminiscent of the mythical exploits of the epic hero and the *'ayyār*. But the question that Chūbak does not answer is: why must Muḥammad leave the village? Although the straightforward answer is that he had defied the

civil law and was compelled to escape the gendarmes, his leaving is nevertheless remarkable because he actually had the support of the entire village.

In his critique of *Tangsīr*, Riḍā Barāhanī says, “If only Muḥammad would have died, then he would move from an epic hero to a tragic hero.”<sup>63</sup> Barāhanī’s conclusion is that Muḥammad was simply a hero who had performed a great feat. While that is true, it seems though that Muḥammad’s departure from the village represents a tragedy even though his acts of revenge were considered successful. Ironically, although Muḥammad had restored his reputation, he could not remain in his village and hold his head up high. Prior to his murders, in his battle with the raging bull, Muḥammad had compared himself to the bull. His ‘conversation’ with the bull was prophetic:

One day I will become a rebel (*yāghī*) like you and head off to the desert. But my situation is different. It’s not like yours. There’s no one who can be a rival to me. Death comes only once, and I’m ready for it. I’m going to pull my last penny from their throats.<sup>64</sup>

There was a difference between the rebel bull and the rebel *pahlawān*. Although the bull had been rendered submissive, the same could not be said of Muḥammad, who was too preeminent to be tamed. To stay in the village would be anti-climactic, for it would mean that he, as a champion who was destined to maintain the tribal code of revenge, would have to be controlled in the same way the bull had been. It seems then, that Muḥammad could not remain in the village for reasons similar to those of Rustam who never stayed permanently in Iran. In the *Shāhnāma*, though Rustam was the protector of Iran, he remained an outsider, always bounding in from his homeland in Sīstān whenever he was needed.<sup>65</sup> As the village *pahlawān*, Muḥammad was destined to restore order – albeit his own – but like Rustam, he himself became an outsider to that order. Ironically, in his attempt to establish order, the hero often becomes the agent of chaos and destruction. It is as if order and heroism could not

co-exist and so the hero had to be exiled.<sup>66</sup> Hence, although the traditional hero is bound by public opinion, he finds himself isolated from society and as the outsider, he must live in a world of his own.<sup>67</sup> Muḥammad succeeded in restoring his reputation, but since he could not remain in his village, his success was marred. His departure from the village indicates that it is impossible to sustain both demands at the same time - restoring lost reputation through revenge and living peacefully in a modern context.

## B. The Struggle between Duty and Love

Loyalty, group solidarity and self-sacrifice have always been essential codes of conduct for the traditional *jawānmard*. In *Samak-i 'Ayyār*, "keeping the secret," which meant remaining true and loyal to one's co-warriors, was one of two essential rules of the code of *jawānmardī*.<sup>68</sup> Because of this, a warrior was duty-bound to "keep his word" even at the cost of his life. In the ethic of *futuwwat*, mutual solidarity was expressed as *ṣalā-yi nazar* (purity of spiritual insight). This meant that the *lityān* should not harbor any suspicion toward each other, but rather accept each other at face value. Furthermore, because the spiritual champion had to destroy his carnal soul, he had to deny his desires and willingly sacrifice himself for the sake of others. In all models, the *jawānmard* staked his identity on his allegiance to his co-*jawānmards* which was expressed by his willingness to sacrifice himself for them. Loyalty and self-sacrifice defined the *jawānmard*; a *jawānmard* who was unfaithful to his word would profane the very essence of his manliness.

Several modern short stories from Iran and Afghanistan, which depict this code of loyalty and self-sacrifice, have become very popular in their respective societies. Although the circumstances in each story are different, they are treated together in this section because they reflect how the code of loyalty and self-sacrifice conflict with other loyalties in the life

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of a heroic figure. These stories present the heroic figure with many of the typical characteristics of traditional *jawānmard*. He is a champion of the *maydān*, a man of service to society, and foremost, a man true to his word when duty calls. However, the authors take the portrayal of the *jawānmard* further and give him multi-dimensional characteristics. He has other concerns besides his good reputation in society, but he cannot reconcile these with the code of *jawānmardī*. The traditional hero gave little thought to himself (ideal *jawānmardī* meant to live without any reference to self), and though he occasionally complained about always having to be in the service of others, he considered himself capable of handling any situation. In these short stories, the authors begin to reveal the internal struggles and emotional pain of the *jawānmard* as he is confronted with the demands of duty at the expense of personal interest.

Another aspect which is alluded to in these stories is how the code of loyalty is exploited by a villain for his personal ends. The *jawānmard* is forced to sacrifice that which is dearest to him in order to remain true to the expected code of conduct which the villain forces upon him. Thus, the *jawānmard* becomes a victim. This is reminiscent of the fate of Suhrāb, whose code of *jawānmardī* compelled him to give his opponent another chance. But, in fact, he was exploited by the 'villain' in the end.

#### *Dāsh Ākul*

The classic modern Iranian short story on *jawānmardī* is *Dāsh Ākul* (1932) by Šādiq Hidāyat. It has been called a "small masterpiece in its own right"<sup>69</sup> and "one of the most famous Persian stories ever."<sup>70</sup> The story resonates with the nostalgic ideals of the traditional hero who exercised complete self-control and sacrificed his personal desires for the sake of social duty.<sup>71</sup> Hidāyat's nihilistic philosophy, portrayed in much of his other work, must not

be ignored and hence, the death of the hero Dāsh Ākul is another example of the author articulating his own world-view. The story, however, may also be viewed as a description of the conventional hero who struggles with conflicting demands in his life and faces ultimate defeat.<sup>72</sup>

*Mardāra Qawl as[t]* [A man of his word]

Akram ‘Uthmān (b. 1937), a well-known short story writer of Afghanistan, has written a trilogy of short stories which reflect many of the similar struggles of the *jawānmard* “Mardāra Qawl as[t]” (1976), “Waqtīki Nay-hā Gul Mīkunand” [When the reeds bloom again] (1977), and “Mard wa Nā-Mard” [The hero and the coward] (1982).<sup>73</sup> The title of the story, “Mardāra Qawl as[t],” means in the local idiom of Kabul, Afghanistan, “a man keeps his word,” or “a man’s word is his bond.” This is a clear reflection of the traditional *‘ayyār* who boasted of being a man with “one word.” Although ‘Uthmān’s stories were written much later than “Dāsh Ākul,” the similarity between them is striking, especially with regard to how the code of loyalty creates inner conflicts. Of the three Afghan stories, “Mardāra Qawl as[t]” is perhaps most similar to “Dāsh Ākul,” because the protagonists in both stories are caught between the call of duty and the desire for love. At the end of each story, the hero gives a brief, but revealing speech on whether or not he lived up to the code of *jawānmardī*.

### 1. The Description of the Champion

Common to both narratives is the description of a protagonist who defeated his rival and thus established himself as a true champion. Dāsh Ākul was both a fighter, as attested by his scarred faced, and a man who liked to have a good time (*bazm*), as evidenced by his drinking binges with his associates.<sup>74</sup> Dāsh Ākul and his rival Kākā Rustam had mutual contempt for each other, which reflected the attitude of the typical *lūī*. Dāsh Ākul was the local champion

who ruled his domain (*mard-i maydān*) and no one dared to defy him.<sup>75</sup> His reputation as the preeminent champion is heightened by his mocking attitude towards Kākā Rustam, who was a womanizer and abused the weak for his own personal gain.<sup>76</sup> The two fought numerous times, and each time Dāsh Ākul proved himself the victor. Dāsh Ākul's latest failure to return Kākā Rustam's challenge at the tea-house can be seen as a ploy by Dāsh Ākul to maintain his own superiority. As illustrated in the challenges and ripostes of wrestlers in chapter four, one cannot ignore a rival's challenge. However, the medieval texts show us that there were many issues involved as to when and how to accept a challenge. For Dāsh Ākul, to respond to Kākā's challenge at this point, after defeating him several times, meant that he recognized Kākā's manliness as equal to his. As the anthropologist Bourdieu has stated, "One only accepts a challenge if one considers the challenger worthy of making it."<sup>77</sup> Dāsh Ākul did not need to issue a challenge or even accept one, for his status as the champion had already been established. Nevertheless, Dāsh Ākul made sure he remained supreme and tolerated no one taking the upper hand (*bālā-yi dast-i khudash*).<sup>78</sup>

Dāsh Ākul is also portrayed as a magnanimous hero in contrast to the hardened Kākā Rustam. Dāsh Ākul was renowned (*sar-shinās*) and well-liked in his area for his public service and altruism.<sup>79</sup> Even though he was the only son of a wealthy father and had inherited property, he showed no interest in it. Instead, he valued the traditional ideals of *jawānmardī*: freedom (*āzādī*), generosity (*bakhshish*) and magnanimity (*buzurg-manishī*), and rejected all forms of material attachment.<sup>80</sup> On the surface, in his abandonment of all material attachment, Dāsh Ākul reflected the ethic of the spiritual champion who was supposed to destroy his carnal soul. As will be argued, however, Dāsh Ākul could not conquer his deepest wishes. It is here that Hidāyat opens up the inner feelings and hidden

desires of the champion, which according to the ethic of medieval *lutuwat*, had to be denied and defeated.

In ‘Uthmān’s story, “Mardāra Qawl as[t],” the protagonist Shīr, is not the typical *lūī* hero like Dāsh Ākul. Rather, he is introduced as a 14 year-old teen-ager who was simply the unrivaled winner (*bī-jūra*) of kite-flying in his area of Kabul. Shīr had two rivals who challenged him. His kite-flying rival Fadlū was unmanly (*nā-mardāna*), who flirted with girls and notably, tried to seduce Ṭāhira, Shīr’s cousin.<sup>81</sup> Shīr loved his cousin, but here he faced his second challenge: Ṭāhira’s brothers were wrestlers and despised their simple kite-flying cousin. Shīr knew that he could never claim Ṭāhira until he proved to her older brother, Pahlawān Maḥmūd, that he too was a champion. In a street fight with Maḥmūd, Shīr was soundly defeated. This only made Shīr more determined, and so he joined a wrestling club (*har-kāra*)<sup>82</sup> in order to establish himself as a true champion. Within a year, he achieved his goal. The author’s description of Shīr resembles the description of the traditional wrestler:

After a year, his biceps swelled up like thick leather balls and his chest turned into a strong glistening shield. On days when the wrestlers would tussle with each, no one could bring Shīr’s back to the ground except the coach, Yāsīn, and that only with a hundred different techniques and tricks. Shīr became the leading champion (*sar-i sar-hā*) and his renown spread to all the wrestling arenas.<sup>83</sup>

It is interesting that, while in Hidāyat’s story, Dāsh Ākul never entered a *zūr-khāna*, he does so in the movie (1971) in order to prepare himself for his final showdown with Kākā Rustam.<sup>84</sup> The wrestling pit continued to be an important arena for the modern vindication of manliness, both for Shīr and Dāsh Ākul. The winner in the wrestling pit was indeed a champion.



After Shīr became a champion, he issued a challenge to Pahlawān Maḥmūd to wrestle him on *Naw-rūz* (New Year's Day), when wrestlers challenged each other in the public square of Kabul.<sup>85</sup> Shīr's fear of public defeat in the wrestling pit before a watching crowd is similar to that of the conventional warrior: "Maḥmūd was strong and fought like a wild lion, and most likely would easily throw Shīr to the ground and simply make him a laughing stock in front of the people." The actual bout – though only briefly described – is also reminiscent of the wrestling matches described in the medieval texts. In his final effort, Shīr threw his rival to the ground with such force that "daylight departed from Maḥmūd." With the magnanimity of the traditional wrestler, "Shīr graciously lifted Maḥmūd from the ground, kissed him and without a word, left the crowd of people."<sup>86</sup> Shīr, the winning kite-flyer, had now proved himself to be a true champion, and as far as he was concerned, he could now claim Ṭāhira.

## 2. The Call of Duty

It is because both heroes are established as champions that the call of duty becomes such a crisis for them. Dāsh Ākul's status as champion was clear to all in the tea-house when he publicly shamed his rival. Just as Kākā Rustam was leaving the tea-house, Dāsh Ākul was informed of the death of Ḥājī Ṣamad who had willed all responsibility for his affairs to him. The call of duty was something that no champion could reject, because his identity depended on carrying it out. Dāsh Ākul's ambivalent reaction to the request was not because the duty was too difficult, but because it meant a loss of freedom for him. This is the perpetual conflict for the heroic warrior – living as an *āzādmard*, which means that he is free from all attachments and responsibilities, while at the same time fulfilling his obligations to those who need him.<sup>87</sup> Dāsh Ākul told Ṣamad's wife, "I love my freedom more than anything else, but now that I am obligated to him, I swear by the rays of the sun, as long as I live, I'll show

these cabbage-heads."<sup>88</sup> The code of duty to serve unconditionally upon request, which was expressed by the *'ayyārs* in *Samak-i 'Ayyār*, placed a similar inescapable obligation on Dāsh Ākul.

Dāsh Ākul's duty as the executor of Šamad's estate weakened his position as champion among the *lūīš* because he was not able to guard his *maydān* anymore and hence, he lost their respect as the preeminent *lūī*. But there was even a greater challenge to his championship. From the first day he entered Šamad's home and his eyes met those of Marjān, Šamad's teen-aged daughter, he fell in love with her. He found himself in an irreconcilable dilemma: to love on the one hand and to fulfill a duty on the other. To allow himself to ask for her hand in marriage, something which Marjān's mother would have gladly accepted, was an unmanly act in Dāsh Ākul's view.

He didn't want to be tied down to a wife and kids. He wanted to be free, like he always was. Besides, he thought to himself, if a girl is entrusted to him for his responsibility, to take her for his wife would be to take advantage of his privilege (*namak bi ḥarām*). And worst of all, every night when he looked at his face in the mirror and noticed the knife scars and his disfigured eye, he sighed painfully and said out loud, "She probably doesn't love me. No, she's going to find a handsome young husband. ... No, it's not manly (*mardānagī*). She's 14 and I'm 40. But what can I do? This love is killing me. Marjān, your love is killing me. Who can I tell it to? Marjān, your love has killed me."<sup>89</sup>

The portrayal of Dāsh Ākul's inner feelings is a picture of a champion who is concerned with other matters besides fulfilling the code of *jawānmardī*. He is not merely playing out his role in public as did the epic hero, or in secret as did the *'ayyār*, but he is portrayed as a human being who struggles with inner conflict and sexual desire. It becomes apparent, however, that ultimately the champion cannot live with both the call of responsibility and the claim of love. A champion like Dāsh Ākul was known for his fidelity; in fact, that was why Hājī Šamad had requested that he be his executor. Hence, for Dāsh Ākul to take advantage

of his role as executor would be an act of treason and a desecration of his notion of manliness.

In the case of Shīr, once he established himself as a champion, his reign was short-lived. The day after Shīr defeated Maḥmūd, Maḥmūd went to Shīr's house and apologized for their ongoing rivalry: "Shīr, you really are a *shīr* (lion). I was wrong. Let's forget the past and from now on you and I are true brothers (*biyādar-i qur'ānī*)."<sup>90</sup> This statement, "let's be true brothers," was no simple request. The text describes Shīr as shuddering at this invitation because it actually meant defeat for him. First of all, Shīr could not reject a request like that. It was a request of solidarity and brotherhood, something which no champion could ignore. That was what *ṣafā-yi naẓar* meant – to fully trust and accept a brother at face value. Hence, with that statement, Shīr was duty-bound to relate to Maḥmūd as a true brother. Secondly, Shīr now became a member of his cousin's family, which meant that as a 'brother,' he related to Ṭāhira as his 'sister' and so he was trapped. In this way, Shīr fell victim to the manipulative ploy of Maḥmūd, who gained control over Shīr by embracing him as a brother instead of beating him. The author gives a brief, but revealing depiction of the champion's inner struggle:

Ṭāhira was Maḥmūd's sister and Maḥmūd was Shīr's true brother. Ṭāhira or Maḥmūd! Brotherly loyalty or love? [Shīr] said to himself, "A man keeps his word (*maidāra qawl as*), for me, love is forbidden (*ḥarām*). I will no longer go to their house, no longer talk about them, no longer think about them."<sup>91</sup>

Just like Dāsh Ākul, who could not take advantage of his position and had to forgo his love, Shīr had to choose between the call to be a true champion (which in his case, meant brotherly loyalty) and the desire for love.

The episode between Maḥmūd and Shīr shows that victory can be achieved not only in the wrestling pit, but also by a simple word or even by an act of deferral. In the second story of

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his trilogy on *jawānmardī*, “*Waqṭiki Nay-hā Gul Mīkunand*,” ‘Uthmān again depicts how the code of loyalty is manipulated for selfish ends. The protagonist of the story, Kāka Akbar, was a renowned *jawānmard* of the blacksmith bazaar.<sup>92</sup> Early in the story, he fought the villain prince, Bachcha Ḥākīm (a womanizer and carouser like Kākā Rustam in “*Dāsh Ākul*”), and easily defeated him.<sup>93</sup> Instead of ordering his retinue of youths to attack Kāka Akbar with their swords and kill him, the prince ostensibly submitted to the *jawānmard*. He kissed Kāka Akbar’s hand, and thereby became one of his followers. By yielding to the *jawānmard*, the villain was able to exploit the champion’s sense of honor for his own personal gain. Like Rustam of old who had to come to the king’s rescue (and was duty bound to do so), Kāka Akbar repeatedly had to fulfill the code of *jawānmardī* by rescuing the prince. Though he despised the prince, his obligation to remain true to the call of duty led to his own demise.<sup>94</sup>

In ‘Uthmān’s stories, the call to duty is exploited by the one who admits defeat and in so doing, he actually establishes his superiority even though he is a victim.<sup>95</sup> In this light, the self-abnegating milieu of the wrestler becomes more complicated. Humility is not only an ethic of *futuwwat* as the means and reflection of death to the carnal soul, nor is courtesy merely part of the code of proper conduct. Rather, humility and courtesy can be used exploitatively to control a rival. Furthermore, the champion who lives by the code of loyalty cannot ignore or reject his rival’s admission of defeat. Firdawsī states that Suhrāb, who was about to kill Rustam, yielded to the elder warrior’s request to grant him another chance out of a sense of *jawānmardī*.<sup>96</sup> And so, the winner becomes a victim of his commitment to remain true to the code of *jawānmardī*.

### 3. The Humanizing of the Champion

Both authors reveal the inner weakness of the champion in their stories, which is another departure from medieval epic literature. One of the strongest aspects of traditional *jawānmardī* is the public display of complete self-control. This means that, as with Rostam of old, the hero never reveals pain, never allows his face to be 'yellowed' nor sheds tears. However, Hidāyat's hero repeatedly wiped away his tears (four times), thus showing his pain.<sup>97</sup> In private, Dāsh Ākul could only admit defeat: "Marjān your love is killing me."<sup>98</sup> Dāsh Ākul said to himself regarding his conflict, "Who can I tell it to?" In fact, the only 'person' to whom Dāsh Ākul could express his inner wishes was his parrot, perhaps similar to Rostam confiding in his horse.<sup>99</sup> Hidāyat reveals a different Dāsh Ākul at night when all was quiet. Here were feelings that he could never reveal in public:

It was then that the true (*ḥaqīqī*) Dāsh Ākul, the real (*ṭabīʿī*) Dāsh Ākul with all his feelings and desires came out of the shell (*qishr*) of codes of conduct (*ādāb*) and customs (*rusūm*) which society had woven around him and the ways of thinking which he had learned since a child. Here [at night] he freely held Marjān close to his heart.<sup>100</sup>

Shīr, too, is depicted as weeping bitterly in private. His 'conversation' with the moon is revealing: "Oh moon ... you're the only one who sees me, a lion (*shīr*) who is crying."<sup>101</sup> In Shīr's view, a lion should not cry. He was a lion by name and a champion in the wrestling pit, but in private that image dissolved, and yet he could not reveal this sign of weakness to anyone. Both heroes sought to cover their pain: Shīr took refuge in the *khānaqāh* and Dāsh Ākul in liquor, but neither could alleviate it.<sup>102</sup>

Although the champion was esteemed by society, the 20<sup>th</sup> century writer presents him as one who lives a solitary life, beset with internal weaknesses. However, since the champion must maintain a public image, he finds it difficult to be intimate with anyone. Intimacy means becoming vulnerable, but a hero cannot reveal any fears or inner struggle to anyone

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lest he be seen as a failure. Hence, the authors' unmasking their heroes' hidden weaknesses exposes one of the greatest conflicts for the *jawānmard*: the 'real' *jawānmard* with personal struggles and pains becomes the hidden man known only to himself (if he is self-conscious enough to examine himself), while the 'external' *jawānmard* continues to present an image of victory and self-control.<sup>103</sup> And so, he lives in two very distinct worlds. In contrast to the classical epic and medieval romance, modern fiction reveals the inner world of the hero and, thereby humanizes him. No longer is he depicted as someone unscathed by the dangers around him and unaffected by human desires. As the champion indulges in self-reflection (even Muḥammad in *Tang̃sīr* is more reflective than the typical heroic warrior), he begins to share in the interests and struggles of everyday life, and thus becomes more human.

In the stories of Shīr and Dāsh Ākul, a further sign of the champion's inner struggle is seen in the description of weddings. Both Hidāyat and 'Uthmān depict wedding scenes where the champion was forced to witness his beloved's marriage to a repulsive man. In fact, Dāsh Ākul was responsible for preparing the wedding feast for Marjān. He did this with complete calm, and like Rustam of old, "no grimace appeared on his face."<sup>104</sup> 'Uthmān's description of Shīr reflects the same. At Ṭāhira's wedding he covered his pain and maintained his composure with relative detachment:

That night, Shīr chewed his fingernails till they became bloodied, but he made no slip nor was he caught off guard. No one knew what took place in his heart that night; however, while the musicians were singing the song, "Āhīsta Burū" (Walk slowly), Ṭāhira slowly walked away from Shīr ... to the house of the old and fat general whose stomach stuck out further than his nose.<sup>105</sup>

The authors, however, cannot leave their champions in a state of defeat. In both cases, the struggle for championship continued. One would think that since the hero had suffered the loss of his love, his struggle was over after the wedding. However, the hero must yet again

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prove his championship, to confirm that not all was lost and perhaps he could regain some of his past glory. When Dāsh Ākul left the wedding ceremony, he was freed from the responsibilities of his duty as executor, but was “broken hearted.”<sup>106</sup> Hidāyat humanizes the champion even further. Dāsh Ākul was a hero who had never known fear, but now he struggled with the thought of returning to his room. He had to face reality, something which he couldn’t do. When Rustam reminisced about his past, it was to boast of his great exploits. For Dāsh Ākul, his reminiscence of his loss of Marjān led him to wonder if his life had been a failure, which to him was unbearable.

Dāsh Ākul returned to his former *maydān* where he had always been the undisputed champion.<sup>107</sup> Here he met Kākā Rustam who had been waiting to avenge his defeat. The battle was to the death and the champion of the story was wounded and died the next day. When the parrot, who was the only being in the world who knew the heart of Dāsh Ākul, was taken to Šamad’s house, it unveiled the inner world of the hero: “Marjān, your love killed me.”<sup>108</sup> The champion, who had fulfilled the call of duty, had renounced his inner wishes and now lost his last fight. But it was not his final battle with Kākā Rustam that killed him; rather, it was his forgoing his own desires.

As for Shīr, when he left the Ṭāhira’s wedding, he too fell into melancholy reminiscing, and seemed to resign himself to live out the rest of his life without any further quests. Many years later, as fate would have it, his age-old rival Fadlū appeared at Shīr’s kite-shop. The two reenacted the conventional ridicule and though Shīr (like Dāsh Ākul) had lost the struggle for love, here was one final chance to prove himself. He laid out the challenge: “I’ll bet my life on this battle (*maydān*). If you’re a man, come tomorrow to the junction and throw up your kite.”<sup>109</sup> ‘Uthmān’s stories as a rule do not end with the pessimism of

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Hidāyat's, and so Shīr is vindicated in the final kite-battle against Faḍlū. Although Shīr's championship is reaffirmed, it is bittersweet, as Shīr reflected on his life:

“A man keeps his word (*mardāra qawl as*), I didn't turn back on my word,” and then with the tip of his turban, he wiped his eyes.<sup>110</sup>

Even though Shīr distinctly remembered Ṭāhira's words to him many years ago, “Dear Shīr ... I love you ... If you don't come for me, my blood is on your hands,”<sup>111</sup> he could not and would not admit that he had been defeated in the struggle for love. This contrasts sharply with Dāsh Ākul's final words as repeated by the parrot, “Marjān, your love killed me.” True, Shīr wiped away his tears (which in his view was a sign of weakness), but he defended his championship to the end: “I didn't turn back on my word.”<sup>112</sup> However, ‘Uthmān also portrays the tragedy of *jawānmardī*: Although Shīr had been able to hold his own in society, like Dāsh Ākul, his private tears betrayed his public image of victory. Both Shīr and Dāsh Ākul remained true to their call to duty and loyalty, but they lost their true loves. They won publicly, but because of this they could never win as individuals. Dāsh Ākul admitted his defeat; but Shīr, bound by convention, could not.

### C. The Struggle for Courage

The novel *Savūshūn* (1969),<sup>113</sup> by Sīmīn Dānishwar, takes place in the city of Shīrāz and the surrounding area during WWII, when the British forces occupied Iran from the south and the Soviets from the north, in order to preempt German activity in the area. *Savūshūn* is an abbreviation for “*sūg-i Siyāwash*” (the mourning for Siyāwash) and refers to the pre-Islamic custom of mourning the death of Siyāwash, the prince-hero in the *Shāhnāma*, who was treacherously killed by Iran's archenemy, Tūrān.<sup>114</sup> The title reflects the mood of the novel a mourning for the nation as it is being dragged to its demise by foreign powers, corrupt



military officials and politicians, religious hypocrites and self-seeking tribal leaders. The novel suggests that the only hope for the nation lies in men and women who will shed their cowardliness and stand up to outside pressures with courage and insight.<sup>115</sup>

Although the novel is set against the backdrop of the conflicts between the foreign-controlled government, social radicals and freedom-seeking tribes, most of the events in the story are centered on a middle-class landholding couple, Yūsuf and Zarī, their son, Khusraw, and Yūsuf's brother, Khān Kākā. Yūsuf is depicted as the ideal courageous man while his brother, Khān Kākā, is the caricature of the coward (*nā-mard*). Yūsuf's wife, Zarī, and their son, Khusraw, are presented as individuals learning how to become courageous. One of the key issues that Dānishwar raises is the question of what it means to be a "real man" (*mard-i ḥisābī*).<sup>116</sup> It becomes quite clear as the story develops that the courageous man in *Savūshūn* is different from the traditional *jawānmard*. Although there are frequent descriptions of the one-dimensional heroic warrior who threw caution to the wind and proved his manliness on the battlefield, the novel relates courage to issues of everyday life, such as deeds of charity, domestic duties, honesty and lying, intimacy in marriage and family responsibility. Thus, the question we will explore in the following section is: How do the notions of courage and cowardice in this 20<sup>th</sup> century novel compare with their traditional notions?

### 1. The Ideals of Courage

*Savūshūn* evokes the ethos of the Iranian national *jawānmard* - feeling morally responsible to serve one's nation. Throughout the novel, Yūsuf is depicted as a man engaged in serving the needs of his society. At times, he resembles Rostam, the traditional hero of Iran, who was regarded as the answer to the nation's problems. Just as Rostam was burdened with a mission in life to serve Iran, Yūsuf carried with him a sense of social responsibility to

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protect the nation from corruption. He lamented the plight of the nation that had buckled under foreign pressures without any resistance: “We didn’t even fight,” Yūsuf argued, “[If we had], we would have tasted defeat heroically and with honor.”<sup>117</sup>

In *Savūshūn*, taking responsibility is portrayed as the courageous and manly thing to do. But the question Dānishwar raises is: Is there a difference between social and domestic responsibility? Yūsuf was convinced that a person must be involved in social action and not simply with charitable activities and family concerns. Hence, he gradually became involved with the tribal resistance movement. This became a point of tension between him and Zarī, because she worried about the dangers her husband had to face, while she was burdened with family responsibilities and was pregnant as well. At one point when he came home from one of his trips to the tribes, he noticed Zarī was distressed. She had visited the insane asylum (Zarī was involved in charitable activities such as visiting the sick at the hospital, women’s prison and the insane asylum). The conversation between Yūsuf and Zarī reveals the dilemma of what it meant to be a responsible person:

Yūsuf said, “You’re not responsible for all this misery.”

She immediately retorted, “Neither are you. If you are, why are you always throwing yourself into such dangers?”

“Someone has to do something.”

“If I ask you not to be that person, will you accept it?”

“Listen, if you act so distressed, you are distracting me.”<sup>118</sup>

Yūsuf could not overcome his idealist view of social responsibility. Albeit in a modern setting, Yūsuf fits the portrayal of the traditional *jawānmard* who selflessly shouldered the responsibility to struggle for justice in society and oppose foreign domination.<sup>119</sup> For him, responsibility meant being involved in public service. The family doctor’s description of Yūsuf after his death portrays him almost as superhuman, like Rustam:

The world is like a dark room that they've sent us into with closed eyes. There may be one of us, who perhaps has his eyes open. Maybe some try to open their eyes. ... [Yūsuf] was one such rare person who had forgotten to close his eyes from the very beginning. His eyes and ears were completely alert ... He's a pure man (*mard-i nābī*). He's got real insight (*ma'rafāt*); he understands.<sup>120</sup>

Throughout much of the novel, the "real man" or "pure man" continues to be the man of the hour (as was Rustam) who possesses a sense of destiny and has a unique perception of himself as the savior of the nation.

Courage also means standing up to any pressure or tradition that people use to manipulate others and force them into submission. To submit to such pressures was cowardliness. Yūsuf was a man who always stood up to any form of tyranny or domination. In one of Zarī's descriptions of her husband, Dānishwar depicts the idealistic, and perhaps rather simplistic view, that such courage is the answer to all of life's problems:

If at least a thousand people would talk like Yūsuf, everybody would know what is going on. Men have to take a stand, and if the men have gone to the winter pastures ... their women [have to stand up] ... when they prove what they're worth, things will turn out right in due time.<sup>121</sup>

Although the traditional heroic warrior always considered himself to be an upright man who despised guile, he frequently compromised his principle of being truthful because he had to win. Yūsuf, on the other hand, despised any calculating scheme. In his efforts to support social justice, Yūsuf distributed wheat among the tribes outside Shīrāz. At the same time, he strongly criticized the tribesmen who merely wanted food so they could sell it for weapons in order to continue their tribal warfare. This, in his view, was a betrayal of bravery and manliness (*mardānagī*).<sup>122</sup> Furthermore, Yūsuf refused to let himself be manipulated by the traditional code of fidelity. Here, too, he stood up against outside pressures. He and Zarī had had a long time friendship with several tribal leaders, Mālik Rustam and his son, Suhrāb.<sup>123</sup> When he criticized their new tactics of selling wheat for weapons, one of them accused

Yūsuf of betraying the code of loyalty: “Don’t talk like this, we’ve been true brothers a long time.”<sup>124</sup> In the view of the tribesmen, once people “ate each other’s bread and salt,” they were duty-bound to support one another irrespective of whether one of them had done wrong. As the short stories discussed previously show, the code of loyalty could easily be manipulated for self-serving goals. Yūsuf, however, refused to be exploited and responded, “That’s the only way I know how to talk. You should know me by now. I don’t have any pretensions, not even with my closest friends.”<sup>125</sup>

Although Dānishwar presents a very ideal picture of the heroism of Yūsuf, she also alludes to numerous stock characteristics of manly courage. As in other texts on the heroic figure, in *Savūshūn*, tears are seen as a sign of weakness by some of the characters. The initial crises in the family occurred while Yūsuf was on one of his tribal missions. Zarī had ‘allowed’ the corrupt local governor to confiscate Khusraw’s horse, Sahār, for his own daughter. Khusraw tried to rescue the horse but was caught and, when his mother arrived at the governor’s estate, Khusraw was crying. Now the family was all together and they argued about who was responsible for what happened. Everyone, especially Khusraw, blamed Zarī for her cowardly submission to the whims of the governor. The young boy thought he now had a chance to prove to others that he was a real man by rescuing the horse from the governor on his own:

Now you’re going to see what I’ll do. I’m not my father’s son, if I don’t get my horse back. ... I must solve my own problems. ... I’ll try not to cry again. What ever happens, nobody is ever going to see my tears again! ... If it weren’t for women, boys would soon become men. Women are scared and they try to scare us men!<sup>126</sup>

With his bravado, Khusraw is portrayed as being little different from the traditional heroic warriors. Like them, he staked his identity on performing an exploit and despised tears or any notion of fear. Fear simply was not compatible with manhood. However, through

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Khusraw's naïve boast of manliness and his obsession to prove himself to others, Dānishwar begins to question this view of manly courage. Later, when Khusraw joined a group of political radicals, he pretended to come from a poor working-class family. It was considered noble to come from a poor family and thus to fight against poverty. Earlier, during the incident with the horse, when Zarī had lied to Khusraw to cover up where the horse was, he had vaunted his integrity and mocked his mother's cowardice for lying: "Women are such cowards and liars. They just know how to go to graves, bury [people] and then cry."<sup>127</sup> Now, when Zarī noticed that he made his clothes look ragged to show he was poor, she observed, "So you too have learned to lie?"<sup>128</sup> Like the traditional hero, Khusraw disdained the use of deception; however, when it was necessary to lie, he could compromise. The author exposes the conventional display of valor as superficial and hypocritical.

Another stock characteristic of manly courage is the notion of recklessness, as illustrated by the medieval *'ayyār* and the public combatant. At one point, Yūsuf and a few tribal leaders were discussing strategy to oppose the government. Zarī overheard their boasting, which in her eyes was mere pretension. Suhrāb, the younger of two leaders, was the epitome of Firdawsī's epic warrior and his boasts sounded as if they came from the *Shāhnāma* era: "I'm ready for whatever is necessary. I'll give my own blood ... I'm not afraid to die." And again:

I don't take danger into consideration. I know that there's just a short step between life and death. You say doing this is a kind of show. [That's what a] man is! I myself am ready to face death.<sup>129</sup>

In a very revealing statement, Zarī expressed how futile such *mardānagī* really was. The tribal leaders saw their armed resistance as a way to celebrate their ancient vow to avenge the blood of Siyāwash. Zarī saw all of this as leading only to further bloodshed:

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Oh God, what kind of people are these men anyway? They know all this is useless. But [they do all this] just so that they can prove to themselves that they exist and show off their manliness (*mardī*) and courage (*mardānagī*), so that afterwards their kids won't spit on their graves ...<sup>130</sup>

Dānishwar does not consider this notion of manliness as real courage. In the eyes of her protagonist (Zarī), the male's pose of courage was merely a cover for his arrogance and the destruction he caused. The male saw himself as a powerful savior and avenger (like Rostam), but he was, in fact, a symbol of chaos and war. We noticed how Muḥammad's recklessness in *Tangšīr* resulted in excessive bloodshed around him. Through Zarī's critical comments, Dānishwar lays bare the one-dimensional expressions of courage (both Khursraw's and Suhrāb's boasts) and shows that such manliness as portrayed in the medieval texts was problematic because it resulted in further immoderate and inconsiderate behavior. Rather, as will be demonstrated, becoming a really courageous person is a personal quest and a process that continues throughout life.

### 2. The Quest for Courage

What makes the novel interesting is Dānishwar's realism about courage. The protagonist, Zarī, is presented as a person who tried to become courageous, but is confronted with numerous challenges before she learns what this ideal means for her. At the outset, Zarī considered courage in classic heroic terms. If a woman was courageous, it meant she had to be brave like the stereotypical male hero. When the two tribal leaders, Rostam and Suhrāb, arrived at their home dressed in women's clothes, Zarī noticed their manly bodies and hands. They were disguised as women, because their activities with Yūsuf were considered to be subversive by the state. Zarī's comment about these "manly women" is descriptive of the

heroic woman, Rūz Afzūn in *Samak-i Ayyār*: “Maybe they were like the manly, courageous women (*zan-hā-yi mard wa mardāna*) who weren’t afraid of any man in the world.”<sup>131</sup>

On the other hand, Zarī considered herself to be a coward, for which Yūsuf frequently scolded her.<sup>132</sup> The public world of men defined her, and so the challenge for Zarī was to learn how to become courageous in a society that considered women incapable of being heroic.<sup>133</sup> The novel itself begins at a wedding, where against her better judgment, Zarī was compelled to loan her own emerald jewels to the bride. She soon realized that she would never receive them back. She cursed herself for being a coward and accepted her loss: “That’s what weak women like I deserve.”<sup>134</sup> During the incident with the horse, Zarī also blamed herself for having compromised with those who had plotted to let the governor take the horse:

If you take one step forward, you’ve got to take the next step as well. I am to blame for this cowardliness. But this time I am going to stand up to him.” Suddenly she felt that it was as if a star had lit up in her soul.<sup>135</sup>

Her vow not to be cowardly matched with the idealistic view of courage that Yūsuf had, i.e., to stand up to outside pressure. However, in reality, Zarī had lost her jewelry and the horse because of her cowardice. Cowardice had also forced her to lie and hide the truth. The novel shows that, eventually, this kind of cowardice in society would bring about the loss of Iran as a nation.

An important leitmotif in this novel is how the struggle for courage is played out in conjugal relationships.<sup>136</sup> We have made the point frequently that the traditional *jawānmard* needed to prove himself to be a true *jawānmard* by demonstrating the virtues of courage, *adab*, magnanimity and so on. All of this was done in the public arena, i.e., in the outside

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world where there was no reference to the family. However, in *Savūshūn*, the family becomes an important arena for the struggle to prove one's manliness.

The marriage relationship between Yūsuf and Zarī was a cordial, and to a certain extent, intimate one. In the novel, there are references to the double standard of men who expected chastity and modesty in their wives, but who never considered it binding for themselves. According to Dānishwar, such men were unmanly (*nā-mard*).<sup>137</sup> Dānishwar introduces these characters only briefly, and does so simply to contrast the stereotypical dysfunctional marriage with the ideal relationship between Yūsuf and Zarī. However, there was still tension between them, and Dānishwar relates it to the basic theme of manly courage. In fact, the key struggle for Zarī in her quest for courage was to live up to Yūsuf's idealistic expectations of courage and thereby be accepted by him.

In this context, Dānishwar portrays another side of traditional *jawānmardī*. The courageous warrior who lived without taking his interests into consideration tended to live without thought to those closest to him as well. Or from another perspective, the insightful hero was actually an insensitive individual who could not relate properly in the domestic sphere because he was too preoccupied with 'important' things in life. When Yūsuf was informed of the loss of Sahār, he accused Zarī of being a coward and slapped her.<sup>138</sup> He expected her to take a stand against the governor and when she did not, he reacted angrily. When the family argument concerning the horse ensued, Yūsuf wanted to call off the argument. Zarī refused to comply this time. Her question, "Do you want to hear the truth? Then listen!"<sup>139</sup> is very revealing. She had always wanted to tell Yūsuf about her personal fears, but because she feared a negative reaction from him, she felt she could not show her vulnerability. His idealistic courage was intimidating and intimidation produced caution in



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the conjugal relationship, and thereby killed honesty and the opportunity for intimacy. In order to maintain peace in the house, she simply had to 'put up with' Yūsuf, who was too idealistic for her. As Zarī said, "I didn't want to make it worse. It's always like that ... to keep peace in the family."<sup>140</sup> The hero's idealistic expectations of himself and of his wife made him a 'valiant' instructor. After all, he considered himself to be the epitome of courage and knew how to face the challenges of life. His words to Zarī after the incident with the horse reflect this:

Why don't you take courage and stand up to them and tell them these earrings are from your wedding .... Woman, just think a little, woman. When you become so weak, everyone pushes you around.<sup>141</sup>

Yūsuf had admired Zarī as a young girl when she had repeatedly demonstrated courage, for example, by joining a student riot against the government,<sup>142</sup> but now since they were married, his domineering attitude had thwarted her courage and her whole personality. The man who was heroic on the outside, public world, could not appreciate the vulnerability of a person's inner feelings; nor could he listen to her, which is an essential quality of the *jawānmard* who is obligated to serve others.<sup>143</sup> Zarī tried to point this out to him:

I've told you a hundred times. You are frightfully frank, and it is this frankness, which I know in the bottom of my heart is so dangerous. If you want me to stand up, first of all, I have to stand up to you, and then what a war of nerves will break out. So, do you want to hear the truth again? Then listen! It is you who has taken my courage away. I've put up with you so much that I've just become used to it.<sup>144</sup>

True to the traditional perception of the *jawānmard*, Yūsuf saw himself as a savior working for the oppressed. However, in the arena of the family, rather than being a listener, the ideal hero who has all the answers in life (as did the classical *ʿayyār*) actually becomes the oppressor. This begs the question: Does the 'manly courage' (as demonstrated by Yūsuf) hurt the marriage relationship or are the ideals of marriage (from a 20<sup>th</sup> century perspective)

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and the ideals of traditional *jawānmardī* contradictory? How does one reconcile social responsibility and manliness (which in traditional Persian culture was reflected by the *jawānmard*) with domestic demands?<sup>145</sup> As Zari reflected, marriage created dependency which made one a coward:

Just for a brief moment, she concluded that marriage was basically a wrong idea. Here one man is attached to one woman and a bunch of kids all his life. And on the other side, a woman becomes so dependent and tied down to one man and her kids, that she can't even breathe. Yet, [Zari] saw that all her joys in life came from these attachments.<sup>146</sup>

From this perspective, family duty was not seen as heroic, because it kept one from living courageously in society. Hence, a man or a woman could not really prove his or her courage in the arena of the family. For Zari though, if she had to choose between social action and being attached to the family, she would choose the latter even though it meant she would be considered a cowardice: "If it meant to choose between courage and [raising] children, she would obviously choose the children."<sup>147</sup>

Both the traditional heroic warrior and the spiritual champion emphasize the importance of sacrificing themselves for the sake of those whom they serve, while, at the same time, they also disdain any form of attachment. The question that is not raised is whether detachment from the world or throwing caution to the wind has any bearing on the family. And furthermore, if a hero sacrifices himself for a noble cause, does he also sacrifice his family?<sup>148</sup> Rather than passing judgment on medieval expressions of *jawānmardī*, Dānishwar raises the question whether such notions are relevant and practical in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In her view, courage is not merely an ideal that boosts the ego of a man; rather, courage must relate to the events of everyday life. Through the protagonist's struggles, we begin to appreciate

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that taking domestic responsibility is as courageous and noble as battling in the public square.

In the novel though, it was only when Zarī performed heroically outside the confines of her family that she finally saw herself as a courageous woman. She dared to stand up to the corrupt aristocratic woman, ‘Izzat al-Dawla, who had been caught smuggling arms (which she had done merely for personal gain and not for a political cause).<sup>149</sup> The woman’s maid was in prison because she had been caught in possession of the illegal arms. Zarī was asked to bring a message to her so that the aristocratic family would not be incriminated. If the maid talked too much, “our family would go to ruins, our reputation of many years will be gone.”<sup>150</sup> Should Zarī assist ‘Izzat al-Dawla so the guilty could go free? What was the heroic thing to do?<sup>151</sup> Despite the woman’s extravagant hospitality and ‘sincere’ pleas, Zarī refused to comply with her manipulative scheme, and she knew she had been courageous. She longed to share the experience with her husband because she knew that she had stood up to outside pressure and in so doing had lived up to Yūsuf’s expectations:

Zarī felt happy because once again she had stood up to outside pressure. If only Yūsuf would come home sooner. Never before did she have so much to tell him – the experiences in the prison, insane asylum – these were all interesting things to talk about, but not for Yūsuf. Usually he’d say to her, “Zarī, I’m upset, talk to me,” and how she would scratch her head to remember some happy or peaceful experience... She knew that of late, her stories were nothing new, and her husband was just happy to listen to her voice. But now Zarī had stood up again to outside pressure.<sup>152</sup>

Though both desired intimacy, there seemed to be an unwritten assumption that Zarī first had to prove herself to Yūsuf. Her delight that Yūsuf would now be able to relate to her indicates that their relationship was still based on achievement and meeting each other’s expectations. In other words, one must be heroic, i.e., be brave in public, in order to relate equally to a

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hero. Since a hero cannot tolerate cowardice and vulnerability, he cannot develop a relationship with a person who fails or is vulnerable.

Yūsuf's death while distributing wheat among the tribal people is portrayed as an act of self-sacrifice because he refused to submit to the government's orders to stop his work.<sup>153</sup>

Just as one warrior goaded another to perform heroic exploits in the medieval stories,

Yūsuf's social concern and refusal to submit to outside domination was Zarī's stimulus to enter 'public combat' by personal choice even if she still felt vulnerable. In the words of Zarī's and Yūsuf's family doctor, courage meant to take charge of one's own destiny:

In this world, everything is in the hands of the person himself, even love, madness or fear. The human being can move mountains if he wants to. He can part waters. He can control the heavens. The human being is a story. It can be any kind of story, a sweet story, a bitter or ugly story or a heroic story (*hikāyat-i pahlawānī*). The human body is vulnerable, but there is no power in this world like the power of a person's own spirit. The point is that the person must become self-aware and decide for himself.<sup>154</sup>

This view is a clear contrast with the view of the traditional heroic warrior who considered himself to be in the hands of destiny. Earlier in the novel, Dānishwar suggests that courage is a self-conscious and personal choice which she illustrates by the parable written by the foreign journalist, MacMahon, a friend of the family. In his story, the Celestial Master wanted to rebuild the human race so he made sure that every individual became the owner of his or her own star.<sup>155</sup> The point of the story was that instead of the stars directing the fortunes or the failures of the individual, the modern person of courage must learn to decide his own destiny. When Zarī realized this, she considered herself to be free from any kind of attachment. She was a woman in control of her own destiny. "Zarī was like a bird who had been freed from its cage. ... it wasn't only one star, but thousands of stars lightened up in her consciousness. Now she knew that she wouldn't be afraid of anyone or anything in the world."<sup>156</sup> The age-old heroic warrior considered himself merely playing out his role as

dictated by fate, and ultimately he had to bow to fate. According to Dānishwar, the modern heroic figure is a master of his or her fate, has a sense of consciousness and choice in the events of life and is aware that these events can be both heroic and vulnerable. Dānishwar's "real man" must take destiny into his own hands and so he becomes responsible for every aspect of his life.

In the final event of the story, during the funeral procession for Yūsuf, Zarī also affirms Khusraw's courage. Zarī noticed that Khusraw had been injured as a result of fighting the police. In her view, he was tough now, and like his father, did not complain or reveal his pain, but merely laughed it off. Zarī affirmed his manhood: "Now, you've become a real man (*mard-i ḥisābī*)."<sup>157</sup> In Zarī's quest to achieve courage, she ended up agreeing with Yūsuf's idealism. Dānishwar has taken the concept of courageous *jawānmard* and "de-gendered" it by appealing to both male and female to stand up against any form of domination.<sup>158</sup>

#### D. The Dilemma of Magnanimity

One significant characteristic of the *jawānmard* expressed in medieval literature is his magnanimity and benevolence towards the weak and the poor. The treatises on *futuwwat* emphasize that the man who has killed his own desires will constantly serve the desires of others. 'Aṭṭār stated, "Desire for others more than you desire for yourself."<sup>159</sup> Kāshifī also stresses this in his discussion on the implements of the trades, specifically, the spiritual meaning of shields used by soldiers. The shield was a metaphor for assistance and defense, and so only the *fātan* who supported the poor and protected the helpless was worthy of using it.<sup>160</sup> Suhrawardī highlights the magnanimity of 'Alī, who gave his last piece of bread to a very poor person. This practice apparently became customary for the family of 'Alī.<sup>161</sup> 'Amulī stresses that while the man of *futuwwat* had to be severe with the proud person, he

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should be compassionate and gentle with the weak and helpless.<sup>162</sup> Perhaps more than any other model of *jawānmardī*, the wrestler is characterized as the altruistic champion who served the needy in his community. Ideally, he embodied both the fighting spirit of the *pahlawān* and the self-denial of the spiritual champion. Hence, he fought against the oppressor and sacrificed himself for the benefit of the oppressed. Jamāl-zāda recounts the story of the wrestler who became like a Robin Hood, stealing from the wealthy to serve the poor. For this reason, he was called “Servant of the Helpless” (*miskīn nawāz*).<sup>163</sup>

Traditionally, Iranian society has always considered the woman to be the most vulnerable member of society and hence, it was the duty of every man to be her protector and provider. The Qur’ānic verse, “Men are in charge of women,” confirmed this notion.<sup>164</sup> In light of this, it is remarkable that the Persian works on *tutuwwat* pay very little attention to the code of conduct with respect to women, except for the standard call to modesty and the warning against adultery. Aside from these regular warnings, in the entire text of *FNS*, Kāshilī gives only two specific rules on how to behave toward women: The spiritual champion should not be found near the house of an unfamiliar woman,<sup>165</sup> and he should not greet a woman who is not from his own household.<sup>166</sup> Zarkūb is more explicit in expressing a misogynist view towards women, typical of much of medieval Persian literature.<sup>167</sup> According to him, the *fātan* was superior to a woman, both physically and spiritually, and therefore, he should not associate with women or listen to them. The greatest fear was that a *jawānmard* would be seduced by a woman: Indeed if that happened, such a man was inferior to that woman.<sup>168</sup>

#### 1. The Description of the *Jawānmard*

The novel *Shawhar-i Āhū Khānum* [Āhū Khānum’s [Husband] (1961) by ‘Alī Muḥammad Afghānī (b. 1925) is a significant work of Persian fiction because it highlights the destructive

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potential of a naïve notion of magnanimity.<sup>169</sup> The story, set in the mid 1930s, is about a middle-aged, prominent shopkeeper, Sayyid Mīrān, and his wife of 14 years, Āhū Khānum, and their four young children. Thanks to good fortune, hard work and ingenuity, Sayyid Mīrān became head of the bakers' guild in Kirmānshāh. One day while he was at his shop, a young woman, Humā, came to purchase bread. Though the first meeting was brief, her beauty overwhelmed him and he began to pay close attention to her. After another conversation at his shop when he learned of her vulnerable position as a divorced woman, he began to take her situation seriously. He found out that she was living at the house of Ḥusayn Khān, a well-known musician, where she was training to be a dancer, which was considered to be a profession of ill-repute. Sayyid Mīrān felt he had to rescue her by offering her a room in his own home. After Humā had spent a few weeks with the family, Sayyid Mīrān married her as his second wife, which resulted in constant domestic turmoil. Much of the novel is devoted to the conflict among Sayyid Mīrān, Āhū Khānum and Humā.<sup>170</sup>

In the context of the concept of *jawānmardī*, the novel portrays Sayyid Mīrān as being duped by his own sense of manliness and self-sacrifice. Initially, he thought he was doing the heroic thing by trying to help the vulnerable woman. Later, when he realized that he was infatuated with her, he still used the ethic of benevolence to rationalize his actions. It was noted earlier in this chapter that some authors have tried to show how the code of *jawānmardī* – specifically the call to duty and loyalty – can be manipulated by a villain or an enemy so that the hero becomes the victim. In *Shawhar-i Āhū Khānum*, however, the code of *jawānmardī* was used by the protagonist to justify him to commit deeds that he rationalized as virtuous. However, as a result of his 'noble' deeds, his family ended up the victims.

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Afghānī leaves no doubt in the early part of the novel that Sayyid Mīrān was considered an honorable and respectable man in the eyes of his family, neighbors and fellow guild members. Whereas a *pahlawān* proved his *jawānmardī* on the battlefield, and a wrestler in the wrestling pit, Sayyid Mīrān, who began his life as a common worker, proved it within the circle of his family and profession. The author's description of Sayyid Mīrān's characteristics and conduct reflect those of the traditional spiritual *jawānmard*. As Sayyid Mīrān saw it, proper behavior was rooted in his inner kindness and manliness, which he considered to be the "essence of his nature."<sup>171</sup> His inner goodness was visibly written on his face:

In his slightly narrow and drawn face ... one could read a sense of ingenuity, which more than being a sign of a shrewd tradesman, reflected his kindness and manly (*mardāna*) character.<sup>172</sup>

In terms of outward conduct, he performed properly, both in public life and in family relationships. The following is a description of Sayyid Mīrān as the *tātan* who had good character in society:

Besides being a man of faith and cheerful disposition, Sayyid Mīrān ... was both firm and gentle, as well as quiet and conservative. He treated his friends, co-workers, customers and employees with respect and genuine interest. He was an upright man. When he entered the family, his conduct was mixed with the flavor of traditional jokes and laughter, which showed him to be a happy, witty, kind and lighthearted man.<sup>173</sup>

As has been shown throughout this thesis, one of the standard characteristics of the *jawānmard* is his public renown. Afghānī describes his protagonist as being well-known (*sar-shinās*) in his society, and as succeeding in everything he did.<sup>174</sup> With the help of his wife, Āhū, he had built a successful business for himself and his family and eventually became the head of his guild (*ra'īs-i šinī*).<sup>175</sup> As a perceptive man, he had transferred his lease to a new shop at just the opportune moment so that he became the sole owner of his



shop, which had been a point of victory for him. As a tradesman (*mard-i kāsihī*) there was nothing more gratifying than being a shrewd businessman. So, for example, after the circumcision party which he had held for his sons, he somehow managed not to return the silk carpets he had rented, though he said later that he had paid for them.<sup>176</sup> Although he was resourceful, he made sure he was not seen as dishonest or sinister in his dealings with others.

He knew how to relate to all classes of people:

With gentleness and pleasant ease, without being a bother or a disturbance to anyone, he seized every opportunity. His personal and honest interactions with his superiors, colleagues and those under him, each according to his status, was such that he satisfied everyone. This characteristic was part of his moral make-up ...<sup>177</sup>

Furthermore, he was well-known for being a hospitable man. One event that stood out in his life was the celebration of the circumcision of his two sons. He hosted a large party and numerous influential men had attended. Several 'honorable' musicians and two attractive dancing girls had entertained the guests. The food, fruits and drinks and the well-lit garden, blanketed with silk cushions, were so spectacular that everyone kept on talking about how wonderful the party had been. When Sayyid Mīrān's elegantly dressed sons showed up, everyone clapped and cheered. The party was a success and through it Sayyid Mīrān knew that he had been able to enhance his reputation among his peers.<sup>178</sup>

Sayyid Mīrān was also a generous man who never worried about his money. Often, when returning home from work, he would buy something for the family, and "since he had an open heart and hand, he never regretted what he had bought, even if it was something useless."<sup>179</sup> Furthermore, he graciously helped the needy. He rented portions of his house to those less fortunate than he was, not in order to make money, but to help them, for which Āhū Khānum admired him. In her view, her husband was a man of worthy character because of his benevolence and magnanimity.<sup>180</sup>

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Above all, Sayyid Mīrān was a family man. His greatest pride and honor was his wife and she was well-respected by her neighbors because of her respectable husband.<sup>181</sup> As far as he was concerned, the real meaning of life was for a man to serve his wife and children.<sup>182</sup> He was so appreciated and honored in his neighborhood that people felt that, without him and his wife, their lives would be without “color or fragrance” (*rang wa bū*).<sup>183</sup> This makes him look like the traditional heroic figure, whose role was to protect and inspire the nation. However, for Sayyid Mīrān, it was primarily in the private arena of the family that he established his identity as an individual, rather than in the public battlefield, or even through his profession.

He held the traditional view that a woman must be covered, and that as a man, he should never associate with a strange woman. In fact, for seven years he had been an intimate friend of his colleague, Mīrzā Nabī, but he had never seen his wife.<sup>184</sup> The fact that he strictly enforced the veil further enhanced his reputation. When guests came, he made sure they did not see the women in his household. “This was also one of his manly characteristics. When he strictly enforced restrictions for women [in his household], his respect in the eyes of the public increased.”<sup>185</sup> In his view, Sayyid Mīrān himself had the utmost respect for a “woman.” It was not her veil, but her modesty that gave a woman dignity and for this, he highly honored her. At the same time, he despised any outward immodest behavior. He maintained the traditional view that a woman was indecisive and fragile: “A woman and glass are the same.”<sup>186</sup> Therefore, the one thing a woman needed most was a husband. After he met Humā, he expressed his concern that a woman without a husband was like a person without clothes:

My true joy comes in being able to seek your real and true clothes, because you know that the most important covering for a woman is a husband in order to protect her from the heat and cold of the world around her... You cannot live your life independent from a man.<sup>187</sup>

Typically, Sayyid Mīrān was constantly concerned about his reputation. His words are not very different from those of Samak when he said, “My reputation is more important than anything else.”<sup>188</sup> Sayyid Mīrān understood well the fragility of honor in society: “Renown (*shuhrat*) and reputation (*āb-rū*) were like household goods whose value was destroyed forever once they were damaged.”<sup>189</sup> At one point when he was trying to explain to Husayn Khān, the musician, why he wanted to help Humā, he stated that he had worked hard to gain his good reputation:

Do you think that I’ve gained my reputation for free, that I would just give it up for some futile sensual desires? As much as [Humā] is lovely and attractive, she is not more beautiful than my personal and social honor, nor is she superior to the blessings of my wife and children. I, who live off my reputation, know very well that I need society more than society needs me.<sup>190</sup>

Afghānī’s frequent references to the importance of reputation expand on what has been said earlier in this thesis. Reputation is like money that one earns from society: the more you have of it, the better one is able to function in society and without it, one cannot really live in society. People bestow reputation upon a person, and to lose it is the greatest personal tragedy. Hence, society has the power to “play with one’s reputation,” and for that reason, as Sayyid Mīrān said, “The life of an individual is like his clothes, which he has to wear for the sake of others more than for himself.”<sup>191</sup> In other words, a person who lives for the sake of his good name must always take into consideration what people will think of him. Furthermore, the statement, “I, who live off my reputation, know very well that I need society more than society needs me,” is a negation of altruism for it indicates that Sayyid Mīrān performed his good deeds in order to increase his reputation.

2. The Act of *Jawānmardī*

In Sayyid Mīrān's view, *jawānmardī* was an act of paternal care for an unprotected person. When Sayyid Mīrān learned that Humā was divorced from her husband, he saw her not only as young and beautiful, but a woman who was ignorant and vulnerable and therefore needed to be rescued.<sup>192</sup> Since he regarded Humā as he would his own daughter, he was ready to go to any lengths to advise and guide her.<sup>193</sup> It was his duty to either reconcile her to her husband, or as he would say later, find a fine, moral husband for her. Expressing this concern to Humā boosted his manly ego: "He felt he was establishing his manly (*mardāna*) and benevolent nature ... by relating to her as a father. This became a source of joy and a spiritual blessing for him."<sup>194</sup>

The author repeatedly depicts Sayyid Mīrān as a man who harbored no sinful motive. As far as Sayyid Mīrān was concerned, his desire to assist Humā was rooted in his sense of manliness, or as the author says, "a manly nature of goodness" (*nīk nihādī-yi mardāna*).<sup>195</sup> Initially, he thought it would be most proper to send his wife to find out more about Humā's situation.<sup>196</sup> Interestingly enough, he never told Āhū about Humā until he took her home. As he saw it, since Humā was a woman without a provider, he was actually sinning if he did not save her. At one point, when he mustered the courage to visit her at the musician's house, he told himself, "If she invites me into the house, certainly it is against the code of good behavior (*sharḥ-i adab*) to reject her invitation."<sup>197</sup>

A further expression of Sayyid Mīrān's sense of *jawānmardī* was his willingness to sacrifice himself for Humā's sake. Like the *jawānmard* who is willing to do without, he 'sacrificed' his own interests in order to try to meet her needs.<sup>198</sup> Sayyid Mīrān offered his help: "I am your servant, I trust in God who will solve all problems ... You can know for

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certain that I will set you free and restore your honor."<sup>199</sup> Similar to the medieval *‘ayyār*, Samak, who had said that one should never withhold hope from a needy person, Sayyid Mīrān realized that "it is wrong to close the doors of hope before her."<sup>200</sup>

Most significantly, Sayyid Mīrān considered his attempt to rescue Humā from her vulnerable situation as a test of his manliness. Whether a *pahlawān*, *‘ayyār*, *lātan* or *kushtī-gīr*, a constant concern for any *jawānmard* is proving his manliness in the public arena or by serving society. Strangely, for Sayyid Mīrān, the test initially was not public; in fact, he felt he did not need to share the situation with his wife, because in his view, a woman did not really understand a man's intentions.<sup>201</sup> He made sure his initial rendezvous with Humā remained secret lest they be misunderstood and hence, perceived as unmanly. Nevertheless, it was very clear to him that saving Humā was a real test of his own *jawānmardī*.

Like someone whose heart is full of good deeds, he didn't have the slightest fear or worry, that he should take the hand of this broken vessel, which she reached out to him for help. He should take this hand gently, but firmly and with manliness (*mardāna*) and lift her from the depth of the pit she was in. He felt strong and assured of his decision, because he was standing up for truth and honor (*sharālat*), the truth and honor for a vulnerable and helpless woman who was being crucified on a cross like Christ ... This path was a test for his resolution (*himmat*) and *jawānmardī*, a test which may come but once in life.<sup>202</sup>

A warrior always sees the battlefield as his opportunity to validate his manliness. The spiritual champion is supposed to demonstrate his *tūtuwwat* through his skills in the trade. For Sayyid Mīrān, Humā's situation itself was his opportunity to prove that he was manly. Whether or not she was a bad woman was not important; in fact, to take that into account would make serving people conditional and therefore, unmanly.<sup>203</sup> This specific situation was his test of identity and she was the one who would validate it:

Sayyid Mīrān felt a sense of pride in being able to assist this innocent and weak woman. As he could see it, the most beautiful woman in the city was validating his

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manliness (*mardānagī*). Humā was no more on the borderline between being good and bad.<sup>204</sup>

In chapter 2, the code of *jawānmardī*, or the simple phrase, “*jawānmardī kun*” (do an act of *jawānmardī*) was used by a warrior to induce another warrior to serve him. Some of the short stories discussed earlier in this chapter reflect this notion as well. Similarly, in order to attain her own end, Humā appealed to Sayyid Mīrān’s sense of manliness by expressing her desire to live with dignity in a family atmosphere. No man of noble character like Sayyid Mīrān could dismiss such an admirable desire.<sup>205</sup> Her strongest plea, however, was not to be reconciled with her husband, but to be reunited with her sons: “But will I really get what I want? Will you really act with *jawānmardī* and unite me with my sons? I’m afraid I won’t make it till that day comes.”<sup>206</sup>

As she knowingly dragged him further into her trap, Humā became bolder in her appeals. She eventually requested that he marry her, again appealing to his manliness.<sup>207</sup> Since he was so concerned about his good name and wanted to protect her honor, it was proper for him to marry her. Marriage was the only way to explain his association with a strange woman and thereby remove the problem of suspicion if he took her into his house.<sup>208</sup> We have discussed the importance for an individual to have a name and *nasab* for his identity and sense of belonging. Humā also used this need to try to convince Sayyid Mīrān to marry her. As a single woman, she was ‘nameless’ and didn’t belong to anyone, which made her completely vulnerable. By marrying her, he would perform the noble act of giving her a name. If she possessed a name – even better, the name of a man known for his magnanimity – she would be freed from the gossip of people, for as she said, “The wounds of the tongue are worse than the fire of hell.”<sup>209</sup>

### 3. The Unmasking of the *Jawānmard*

Afghānī's story is a serious reflection on family life as a battlefield (*ma'raka*) where a well-known individual in public comes under domestic scrutiny.<sup>210</sup> Although the reader soon becomes aware that the baker has duped himself because of his confused notion of manliness, the author leads the reader into the privacy of the family to see how Sayyid Mīrān fared in that setting. It is here, in the arena of the family and the neighborhood, that the author gradually strips Sayyid Mīrān of his cloak of *jawānmardī*. Whereas in the public battlefield, fellow warriors are the spectators, in this private battlefield, his wife, neighbors and children become active observers. Those individuals who had admired Sayyid Mīrān for his noble character begin to despise him.

This unmasking of the hero begins with the author's depiction of Sayyid Mīrān's inner struggle and vacillation about what he was planning to do. Normally, a *jawānmard*, who lived without reference to himself, was not supposed to hesitate. Though Sayyid Mīrān was confident that rescuing Humā was a virtuous deed, at the same time, he feared how this act would be perceived by others. On the night he decided to visit her at the musician's house (which was located in an area of ill-repute), he actually began to retrace his steps home. When he noticed a familiar man on the street who might recognize him, he realized that, although "being well-known (*sar-shinās*) had its benefits ... it also had its disadvantages."<sup>211</sup> He had to be more alert, not because he feared the rescue would fail, but ironically because he feared his 'act of *jawānmardī*' could result in the loss of his reputation. He could forgo his religion and faith, but he could not lose his honorable name.<sup>212</sup>

Sayyid Mīrān is depicted as being naïve when he began to admit he was in love with Humā. The problem, again, was his own misconception of his motives. He actually thought

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he was a magnanimous man, and so he did not want to risk causing pain to anyone. Yet, he realized that allowing himself to be charmed by this woman went against the code of *jawānmardī*. In fact, he began to see that it was unmanly:

[Sayyid Mīrān] was renowned to all outside the home for being a man of his word (*qawī*), loyal and a true friend. And so, the reason he didn't want to break Āhū's heart ... was because of his gentle character. Just as much as he felt the depths of passionate love for this woman who was now living in their house, he trembled at breaking his promise [to Āhū]. He feared what he had not yet done. In this passion, he saw something despicable, something which went against his conscience and the characteristic of manliness (*mardānagī*), even though it was not against custom or common practice.<sup>213</sup>

Here Sayyid Mīrān expressed the dilemma he was in – passionate love for one woman, loyalty and responsibility to another: “Oh God, I am helpless in what I'm doing. How can I get out of it?”<sup>214</sup> In the short stories that feature Dāsh Ākul and Shīr, both champions are also trapped by love; however, for the sake of public duty, they “killed their desires.” Sayyid Mīrān, on the other hand, allowed himself to pursue his desires, but even he realized that he was acting against the code of manliness. In all the stories discussed, he is the only man who consciously denies the code of manliness. Ironically, by duping himself into thinking that he was being heroic, Sayyid Mīrān created the crisis himself.

Sayyid Mīrān's character is further unmasked in the way he rationalizes his action to others. His explanation to his wife, Āhū, was simple: “[Humā's] one of the slaves of God, a woman without any refuge ...”<sup>215</sup> Furthermore, he had brought her home so that Āhū could have an opportunity to do some good deeds and gain reward from God.<sup>216</sup> And more noble yet, as he said, he had brought Humā home as a maid for Āhū.<sup>217</sup> Like the warriors about to enter public combat, Sayyid Mīrān flaunted his ‘virtue’ by defending what he had done and by mocking the ‘deeds’ of others. When the neighborhood began to gossip about his strange



action, Sayyid Mīrān contrasted himself to Humā's former husband. He saw himself as a victim of people's gossip:

A man can't even do a good deed in this world. If a cowardly (*bī-ghayrat*) and despicable husband leaves a young woman in the hands of God, people say that one should give her another kick, like a wounded dog, so she'll go and take refuge in some stinking water. ... people say nothing about a man who throws his wife out on the street, but a man who gives shelter to a helpless woman is blamed for everything.<sup>218</sup>

Sayyid Mīrān went to great lengths in an effort to rationalize his actions. First he claimed he had provided shelter for the woman as an act of kindness.<sup>219</sup> However, since this made people suspicious, he married her to stop their gossip. Marrying Humā was, in his view, a further sign of his virtue, for as he said, "With this act, I restored the reputation of this helpless and homeless woman."<sup>220</sup> Sayyid Mīrān continually used the virtues of benevolence and magnanimity to justify his own actions.

A further unmasking of Sayyid Mīrān's sense of *jawānmardī* is illustrated in his 'fall from grace' after his ostensibly benevolent acts. No more did he evoke awe and fear in his family as he had before, a characteristic which Āhū thought was necessary for the man of the house. Because of his manly pride, Sayyid Mīrān had never helped in household duties before.<sup>221</sup> However, when Humā entered the scene, he began to sweep the floor and do other errands. Although he had always been hospitable and enjoyed feasting, his new concern for an extravagant table spread and special foods "took on a completely different flavor."<sup>222</sup> Somehow his efforts to re-enforce his manliness rang hollow, and for Āhū this simple change was only cause for suspicion. According to her, Sayyid Mīrān was no longer heroic: He had failed as a husband and father in the arena of the home. The man renowned for keeping his word was now mistrusted and repeatedly called a deceiver and a promise-breaker.<sup>223</sup> He had always cared for his neighbors, but he now began to ignore their needs. When one of the

young neighbor boys needed some employment, Sayyid Mīrān merely responded, “Am I responsible for his life?”<sup>224</sup> He had been admired for his benevolence, never leaving a needy person in the street, yet as he ‘fell from grace’ he decided to throw out one of his renters because Humā begged him to do so.<sup>225</sup> Ironically, Sayyid Mīrān had originally thought saving Humā was a fatherly and manly duty, but later, when he ignored his first wife’s rights, spent less time with his children, and neglected the neighborhood, Āhū accused him of abdicating his manliness and fatherly responsibilities:<sup>226</sup> “Even if you’re not my husband anymore, have you resigned from manliness? Have you resigned from your fatherly duties to your children?”<sup>227</sup>

In the eyes of the women in the neighborhood, any man who had two or three wives was considered inhumane.<sup>228</sup> Āhū’s perspective on the so-called public life of men is very revealing:

But do men only look on the externals? If a man sees a good-looking woman outside the home, does this give him permission to just divorce one – like little kids who are tired of one toy – or worse than that, bring a second wife home?<sup>229</sup>

We have mentioned how the traditional hero and the medieval *fātan* gave little thought to proper conduct or ‘heroism’ at home. Although, Sayyid Mīrān had earlier considered his family to be the joy of his life, his loss of manliness is reflected in his comment about the role of the husband and father ‘in the olden days’:

A woman’s supposed to be patient. I shouldn’t have to give you this advice. In the olden days, a bride saw her husband the night they were married and then he left, sometimes for years, till some turn of events brought him back and she’d see him for another night. A son would grow up and become of age and would never have seen his father.<sup>230</sup>

One of the most significant changes in Sayyid Mīrān was his flawed perception of culpability for his actions. When Āhū finally woke up to the fact that her husband was

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infatuated with Humā, she actively began to oppose her.<sup>231</sup> When the two women argued, Sayyid Mīrān was concerned that his reputation in the neighborhood would be affected. He considered Āhū to be responsible for the argument and for shaming the family in front of the neighbors. Like Rostam in the *Shāhnāma* or Muḥammad in *Tangsir*, he did not take responsibility for his own action. Sayyid Mīrān, however, was much less cunning about shifting responsibility from himself. His angry accusation of Āhū reveals this:

The first thing in the morning, she makes all this racket ... and wants to throw the entire neighborhood at my face. I gained my good reputation at the cost of my life and she throws it to the wind in just one hour and that for nothing!<sup>232</sup>

Because of a man's concern with his own reputation, it is always something else – fate in most cases – that is responsible for damaging it. Afghānī, however, depicts Sayyid Mīrān's lack of culpability in a much more damning light. The man who had been the cause of the loss of the family's good name in the neighborhood not only considered himself innocent and, for that matter, magnanimous, but cast the blame on the most innocent person – his wife. When Sayyid Mīrān beat Āhū and showed no remorse for it, the author fully unmasked him as a *nā-mard*. Although in the neighborhood, spousal disputes were nothing unusual, this episode was different. In the eyes of Āhū, her children and the neighbors, whom the author calls, "spectators on the battlefield,"<sup>233</sup> Sayyid Mīrān now became a villain. His ostensible *jawānmard*-like act of kindness towards Humā led him to commit deeds of cruelty. The beating was simply a physical expression of the emotional cruelty he had already inflicted on Āhū and the family as a result of bringing Humā into the family home and marrying her.

For another six years, during which Sayyid Mīrān completely lost his good name in society, Humā continued to beguile him, enticing him to make unwise purchases for her, which gradually led to economic difficulties for the family. Finally, when he could not

endure the shame any longer, he and Humā decided to leave Kirmānshāh for Tehran secretly and to start life over again together. Afghānī uses the long note Sayyid Mīrān left for Āhū to portray what Sayyid Mīrān thought of himself as he reflected on his ruined life:

Perhaps it is fortune that is dragging me out of this city, or maybe it's my time to die. Whatever, recently the way fate has turned things out, I am leaving you for some time. Whether this period will disturb the children or whether they will remain unaffected is something that depends on how you, their mother, reacts and responds to what is going on. Now that I am leaving you for a brief period of time and going away, I admit that I have done nothing but bad to you. But, I swear that I never had any evil intentions. I could stay here in the city and try to continue life in whatever way possible. However, I am ashamed before you, your good-heartedness, pure love and affection, all of which I have not deserved in any way. This is bitter torture for me and the only possible way to free myself of it is somehow to kill myself, because for a man to leave his homeland where he has toiled for over 50 years, without money and any kind of support, is nothing but suicide. And so, it is still the desire to live that is pulling me away to go and die in a strange place. The reproach of people is one thing, but what can I do? I can't endure it anymore. Whether I stay in the city or not, is the same for you, but I hope you won't have to wait long. I hope that in the very near future I will come for you and the kids with full hands and a warm heart. Do not worry. God is always greater than our problems ... Besides handing over the shop, which I finished today, what other good news of victory do I have to tell you - the sale of the house, but this was one thing that you had already foreseen due to my debts. And so, I do not suspect that it will upset you all that much or that you didn't expect it. The man who bought it will not come till the end of this month. After that, he has also agreed to leave the room where you are staying at the present along with one of the basement rooms at your disposal as long as you wish, [albeit] for a small amount of rent. If you see Shīrīn Jān, tell her that she truly raised a good son. All this time I had suspicions about him, but you know that the *jawānmard* who brought flour to his workers two months ago when my shop was closed and then in secret they emptied it in my shop - it wasn't Mīrzā Nabī, but it was Ridā Khān. He was a man whom I treated as my enemy, [but] he broke my back under the weight of his kindness. I wonder if I will live long enough to compensate for his benevolence. Even in the next world I would be ashamed to face him. He was a person who only saw bad from me and responded with good deeds. ... If you notice that I have not written anything about what my plans are, it is because at this moment of departure, I myself don't really know where I'm going and where I'm staying. As soon as I get myself settled, rest assured, I will send you a note to Mīrzā Nabī's address. Again, with tears in my eyes and with a voice that trembles in anguish, I repeat, do not worry at all and do not upset the children. Your husband, despite his rotten and black heart, has no intention to just leave his home and family in the hands of God and go away. Before all your money is spent, you can be certain, I repeat, you can be certain, and again, you can be certain, that I will come and get you. My plan and intention at the present is this, to see what God wishes and will bring about, Your sinful and ashamed husband, Sayyid Mīrān Sarābī.<sup>234</sup>

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There is a clear admission in the note that his life has been a miserable failure, and that he was the one who had caused grief for the family. However, it is difficult to detect whether Sayyid Mīrān took responsibility for all that had happened. His admission of having hurt Āhū rang hollow: "I admit that I have done nothing but bad to you. But, I swear that I never had any evil intentions." Even though he saw he had done wrong, he did not take responsibility for his actions. True, to a certain extent, he did examine the 'arena' of his life and acknowledge defeat. However, to remain in the city and live with his family was unendurable for him because it meant gazing directly at the misery he himself had caused and having to respond to it. He would have to face reality and that was too difficult for him. The only way to escape the dilemma was to acknowledge that fate was the possible cause for it and secondly, actually to leave the arena of defeat. Even though leaving his homeland was like death for him, facing defeat and accepting responsibility were even worse. This seems to be one of the fundamental dilemmas for so many of the heroes we have studied – the inability to acknowledge and face defeat in their lives. Hence, rather than exonerating him, Sayyid Mīrān's note to Āhū, only serves to condemn him further.

However, there was one positive comment in the note. Despite his inability to take responsibility for his actions, he was able to recognize an act, what he considered to be 'true *jawānmardī*'. When he had been in dire financial straits and had to close his bakery shop, someone whom he had considered his enemy had helped him out financially, and yet this 'enemy' remained anonymous about his altruistic deed. Here was a man who had truly acted without concern for own reputation. This notion of *jawānmardī* is very different from what was discerned in *Samak-i 'Ayyār*, where an anonymous exploit was considered meaningless. However, in Sayyid Mīrān's view, this man had completely outstripped him. Perhaps Sayyid

Mīrān finally saw what true *jawānmardī* was meant to be – serving others without any expectation of reward, personal benefit or of enhancing one’s reputation as a result.<sup>235</sup>

Although at the very end of the novel, Sayyid Mīrān and Āhū Khānum are reconciled, it appears contrived. It was only possible after Humā left Sayyid Mīrān and Āhū publicly shamed him on the *ma’raka* of the street where pedestrians watched the final family battle.<sup>236</sup>

The story forces us to inquire again about the meaning of *jawānmardī*. Was Sayyid Mīrān self-deceived or are the codes of *jawānmardī* themselves problematic? From a modern perspective, can one be truly magnanimous without taking into account one’s motives or without considering the consequences to others, especially the family? For Sayyid Mīrān, his distorted notion of *jawānmardī* caused him to become unmanly and made him a tyrant in the home.<sup>237</sup> At one point, vacillating about whether he should save Humā from her plight, Sayyid Mīrān quoted the well-known verse: “Be benevolent (*nīkī mīkun*) and throw it in the river (i.e., do not expect or wait for some recompense) / For God will return it back to you in the desert.”<sup>238</sup> For Sayyid Mīrān, this was not the case. The deed which he had considered to be benevolent led to the eventual ruin of his family and himself.

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The struggle for *jawānmardī* as reflected in modern Persian prose literature could be explored in many other stories and from different angles. With the backdrop of the models of traditional *jawānmardī*, several observations can be made from the analysis of the protagonists of the modern stories selected for this study.

The *Jawānmard* and Failure

In general, modern Persian fiction has called into question the heroism of the champion and the qualities of manliness which compel the protagonist to carry out his deeds. One of the sharp distinctions between the medieval *jawānmard* and the modern portrayal, is that in the latter, the *jawānmard* begins to consider the possibility of his failure in life. This is illustrated in the way the modern heroic figure becomes contemplative. This is not to say that the epic hero does not reminisce about his life, but his retrospection is simply in order to boast publicly of his exploits. In *lutuwat*, although the perfect master is expected to reflect on his own faults,<sup>239</sup> he maintains his self-consciousness about external behavior to ensure that he does not slip up and become deficient in his life. In 20<sup>th</sup> century fiction, however, the *jawānmard* begins to reflect on how he has actually fared in life as an individual. One *jawānmard*, Dāsh Ākul, who was preeminent in public, admits defeat, at least in private. Shīr, on the other hand, cannot come to the point of acknowledging defeat, even in private. Sayyid Mīrān realizes that he has ruined his life, but to face this reality is suicidal, so he chooses to escape, an alternative which the classical warrior, Rostam, utterly rejects.

In many stories, tears become an important aspect of manliness, because traditionally they have been a sign of weakness and failure. In fact, Rostam proves his manliness by fighting back tears in hand-crushing duels. Neither is the man of *lutuwat* allowed to show any form of emotion, for it may indicate that he has not fully destroyed his *nafs*. In fact, on certain occasions, for example, when a *lātan* visits the sick, he is specifically forbidden to laugh or cry.<sup>240</sup> Muḥammad of *Tangšīr* and Kāka Akbar of “*Waqtīki Nai-hā Gul Mīkunand*” are described as a *pahlawān* and a *jawānmard* respectively. When these two men are compelled to venture out on their necessary journeys – one to exact revenge and the other to serve his

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villain-prince – both men rebuke their wives for crying because they consider crying to be childish and shameful.<sup>241</sup> In *Savūshūn*, the young boy, Khusraw, boasts that no man will see his tears again. On the other hand, Dāsh Ākul and Shīr frequently wipe away their tears. Does this mean they are less manly? Even though tears were traditionally regarded as a sign of weakness, in some of the modern stories they become a natural expression of a man's inner struggles.

The question of taking responsibility for one's actions is a regular theme in the stories, and relates directly to whether or not the heroic figure can acknowledge failure and weakness. Dānishwar makes a very insightful comment through Zarī, who was told by 'Izzat al-Dawla that since their smuggling was discovered, it needed to be covered up: "If a person sins and gets away with it, that [sin] is not considered a sin in his or other people's view, but if he doesn't get away with it, then it is a sin, and it must somehow be accounted for."<sup>242</sup> It seems that the *jawānmards* in the stories we have analyzed find it problematic to accept responsibility for their 'sins' or failures. It is evident that the traditional warrior can only blame fate, although we noted that, at one point, Samak acknowledges that he had acted against the code of *jawānmardī*. Even though Muḥammad of *Tangsīr* is considered a hero by the villagers, the fact that he has no sense of culpability for his deeds makes him resemble the traditional champion.

In this context, one can contrast Zarī with Sayyid Mīrān. Zarī moves from being considered a coward to being heroic, while Sayyid Mīrān begins by thinking he is a *jawānmard*, but in the end, calls himself a "sinful and ashamed husband." However, since he cannot accept full responsibility for his actions, he has to escape the consequences of his deeds. Zarī, on the other hand, frequently expresses her fears and vulnerability in life. She



admits that she does not have Yūsuf's idealistic courage and sees the pains and dilemmas that come with his idealism. It is as Zarī struggles to face reality – which protagonists like Dāsh Ākul (he feared returning to his empty room) and Sayyid Mīrān are afraid to do – and learns to take responsibility for her own life, that she becomes a courageous person. On the other hand, Sayyid Mīrān becomes an antihero rather than a *jawānmard*, because he does not allow the realization that he has been a hypocrite and a tyrant to lead him to change himself.

### The *Jawānmard* and Proper Conduct

What is remarkable in the modern Persian narrative is the paucity of a portrayal of the ethic of *futuwwat* as an ideal of *jawānmardī*, although this ideal is still expressed in the self-abnegating ethic of the wrestler. While the heroism of Rustam can be traced in a protagonist like Muḥammad of *Tangsīr*, the ideal portrayal of a model of perfect behavior (other than 'Alī) is scarce in modern Persian stories.

In general, writers of modern Persian prose portray the notions of inner self-denial and *adab* (the essential characteristics of the spiritual champion) primarily through the genre of satire. By creating paragons of pretension and insincerity, Iranian writers unmask the individual's careful attention to external behavior and his attempt to achieve noble character. Protagonists such as Šādiq Hīdāyat's Hājī Āghā and Jamālzāda's "Mard-i Akhlāqī"<sup>243</sup> are depicted as parodies of eminent men (*sar-shinās*) in society and are ostensibly experts on the ideals of noble character (*makāram-i akhlāqī*). Hājī Āghā even planned to write a book on ethics.<sup>244</sup> In contrast to the scrupulous and controlled behavior of the medieval *jawānmard*, Hājī Āghā's pretension is satirized not only through his lying and self-seeking schemes in business, which he rationalizes in order to survive in society, but also by his personal habits of drooling, coughing and blowing his nose. Although "in society [Hājī Āghā] put up a good

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show, paying careful attention to externals,"<sup>245</sup> he could not control his physical desires for food, women and money.<sup>246</sup> In Hidāyat's view, the medieval emphasis on trying to destroy one's personal desires does not lead to proper external behavior, but rather to pretension and insincerity.

Hidāyat demonstrates this even more succinctly in his short story, "Mardi ki *nafs*-ash-rā kusht" [The man who killed his *nafs*]. In contrast to Hājī Āghā, the protagonist in this short story, Mīrzā Ḥusayn 'Alī, is described as one who followed the external code of conduct perfectly. The literature he read reflected the themes of Kāshifī's *Futuwwat Nāma-yi Sulṭānī*:

Your battle is against your desires / He who kills the carnal soul (*nafs*) is a warrior (*ghāzī*) / ... Kill the carnal soul (*nafs*), this is real warfare / The height of perfection of the warrior (*mard*) is this.<sup>247</sup>

When Ḥusayn 'Alī discovered that his master was flawed, the would-be spiritual champion realized that the only way to "kill the *nafs*" was by physically killing himself. It seems that according to Hidāyat, the medieval ideal of spiritual *jawānmardī* is impossible. Anyone who imagines that he has conquered his desires simply lives in hypocrisy and self-deception.<sup>248</sup> Ironically, although the pretentious Hājī Āghā faces death at the end of the novel, he continues to live, while the sincere Ḥusayn 'Alī cannot face life and therefore, like Dāsh Ākul, he dies. Hidāyat's stories are a confession of the difficulty, if not impossibility, to live up to the ideal of the spiritual champion.

### The Continuity of the Ideal of *Jawānmardī*

This chapter has demonstrated that *jawānmardī* in its many manifestations continues to be an ideal in the literature and in the society which it reflects. Adelhah's study, *Being*

*Modern in Iran*, to which reference has frequently been made, illustrates how the ethic of *jawānmardī* remains important in post-revolutionary Iran.<sup>249</sup>

In modern Afghan Persian literature and society, the ideal of the heroic warrior remains firmly in place, although here, too, he has become less heroic. In “Rustam-hā and Suhrāb-hā” [Rustams and Suhrabs] (1983), the Afghan writer Ishpuzmai Zaryāb begins her story with a question very relevant to our thesis. The narrator was a high school teacher, and for the final examination in her literature class, she offered one question: “What is the most famous epic story in the *Shāhnāma*?”<sup>250</sup> To her dismay, not one of her students retold the story of Rustam and Suhrāb. As the teacher reflected on it at home, she decided to tell her young daughters the well-known tale of Rustam and Suhrāb. The older daughter, able to understand the plot, sat spellbound until the climax when the aged hero killed his son. She suddenly burst out, “You mean like those murderous killers?”<sup>251</sup> With this spontaneous comment from her daughter, the teacher lost her admiration for the *pahlawān*. She confessed that in her eyes, “Rustam had fallen.” But even as she observed her daughter’s anger, she still had to defend Rustam. In her view, not all the blame should rest on him. Rather, there was some hidden political power that had compelled the heroic warrior to act as he did. In other words, the Tūrānian king, Afrāsiyāb, who is portrayed in the *Shāhnāma* as a villainous king, was to blame:

As long as Afrasiyābs rule ... the murderous and innocent Rustams should continue to kill their Suhrābs, even if they recognize the armbands of their sons, ... and the virtuous Tahmīnas. (mothers), ... will have to continue to judge between the murderous Rustams and the murdered Suhrābs.<sup>252</sup>

Although the author’s conclusion reflects the contemporary political situation in Afghanistan, where ongoing civil strife is consistently blamed on outside forces, her effort to exonerate Rustam illustrates that, to a certain extent, the heroic warrior remains an ideal

figure in much of Iranian society. Furthermore, the story portrays the difficulty for the heroic warrior to accept his culpability. In this case, fate was no longer to blame for Rostam's deed; rather, from the author's perspective, a political system was to blame, which was symbolized by the ancient Iranian enemy, Afrāsiyāb.<sup>253</sup> Hence, both *pahlawāns*, Rostam the murderer, and Suhrāb the murdered, become victims. The author also includes Tahmīna (Rostam's wife – albeit only for one night – and Suhrāb's mother), a character who is often not mentioned in discussions about the Rostam – Suhrāb conflict. She is portrayed as the third victim who is caught between a 'villainous' but 'innocent' husband and her victimized son. Since the heroic figure does not take full responsibility for his actions, but is depicted as being propelled by outside forces, he becomes a victim rather than a victor in society.

Modern literary culture has propelled the classical *jawānmard* into the present age, and continues to interpret and re-invent the traditional ideal in the light of contemporary social contingencies.

## Notes on Chapter Five

<sup>1</sup> Hanaway, "Formal Elements in the Persian Popular Romances," 156. Milani states much the same about the stereotypical portrayal of the male in Persian literature: "The warrior, the sagacious wine seller, the carefree drinker, the fair youth, the Luti [an urban Robin Hood type] are all stock characters with feelings, ideas, and destinies predetermined by the genre." Milani, *Veils and Words*, 184-185.

<sup>2</sup> Fischer, "Towards a Third World Poetics," 187.

<sup>3</sup> Shojai has done this in his brief article comparing the angry modern hero in modern Persian fiction with the epic hero. He states, "The epic tradition provides a context for viewing action depicted in the modern literary setting." D. A. Shojai, "The Fatal Rage: Heroic Anger in Modern Iranian Fiction," *Iranian Studies* 8.4 (1975): 217.

<sup>4</sup> Šādiq Chūbak, *Tangsīr* (Tehran, 1346/1967). Riḍā Barāhanī considers it to be a drawn-out short story because of the simplicity of the plot. Riḍā Barāhanī, *Qiṣṣa-nawīsī* [Short-story writing] (Tehran, 1368/1989), 626.

<sup>5</sup> *Tangsīr*, 25.

<sup>6</sup> M.R. Ghanoonparvar, *Prophets of Doom: Literature as a Socio-Political Phenomenon in Modern Iran* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1984), 81-83, 113.

<sup>7</sup> According to J.A.F. Roberts, Chūbak's "*Tangsīr* cannot be considered a work of social realism; it is rather a classic story of justified revenge, comparable with other tales of oppression avenged, and replete with the archetypes of heroism." J.A.F. Roberts, "Šādiq Chūbak's World-View," in *Pembroke Papers: Persian and Islamic Studies in Honor of P. W. Avery*, ed. Charles Melville (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Centre of Middle Eastern Studies, 1990), 232.

<sup>8</sup> Ghanoonparvar, *Prophets of Doom*, 94.

<sup>9</sup> Ghanoonparvar contends that the movie was well-received because viewers saw it as a political statement against the establishment. M.R. Ghanoonparvar, introduction to *The Patient Stone*, by Šādiq Chūbak, tr. M.R. Ghanoonparvar (Costa Mesa: Mazda Publishers, 1989), xii. For discussions on the *engagé* literature of Iran, sometimes called "literature of commitment" (*adabiyāt-i ta'ahud*), and reasons for its failure, see Ghanoonparvar, *Prophets of Doom* and Michael Hillmann, "The Modernist Trend in Persian Literature and its Social Impact," *Iranian Studies* 25.1-4 (1984): 18-26.

<sup>10</sup> *Tangsīr*, 122.

<sup>11</sup> *Tangsīr* 26, 308.

<sup>12</sup> *Tangsīr*, 55.

<sup>13</sup> *Tangsīr*, 194-195.

<sup>14</sup> *Tangsīr*, 308.

<sup>15</sup> *Tangsīr*, 41-43. A traditional characteristic of the *jawānmard* has been his role as a guardian and protector of widows. See pp. 356 of this chapter.

<sup>16</sup> Minoo Southgate observes that in many Persian short stories, "tyrannical fathers and oppressed sons (and sometimes daughters) have become stock characters." She contends that the portrayal of a domineering father in modern Persian fiction is usually a reflection of childhood memories. Minoo Southgate, *Modern Persian Short Stories* (Washington, DC: Three Continents Press, 1980), x. Such stories include, for example, Jalal Al-i Ahmad's *Joyous Celebration* (1961) where the mulla father tyrannized his family and beat his son (*Modern Persian Short Stories*, tr. Minoo S. Southgate, 19-33) and Ghulam Husain Sa'idi's *The Game is Up* (1973) where the son met his death after he ran away from his brutal father (*ibid.*, 180-202). Mashid Amīrshāhī has written numerous stories and reflections on the domineering father, uncle and brother. See, for example, her story, "Bū-yi Pūst-i Līmū wa Bū-yi Shīr-i Tāza," where the father is portrayed as indifferent and heedless to his children. Mahshid Amīrshāhī, "Bū-yi Pūst-i Līmū wa Bū-yi Shīr-i Tāza," in *Sārā Bī Bī Khānum* (Tehran, 1347/1968), 217-247. See also Mahshid Amirshahi, "The Smell of Lemon Peel, the Smell of Fresh Milk," tr. Heshmat Moayyad, in *Stories from Iran - A Chicago Anthology*, ed. Heshmat Moayyad (Washington, DC: Mage Publishers, 1994), 433-445.

<sup>17</sup> *Tangsīr*, 49.

<sup>18</sup> *Tangsīr*, 55-56.

<sup>19</sup> It is notable how this episode is reminiscent of the account in the *Shāhnāma* where Bīzhan battles to rid the area of wild boars and thereby establish his manliness. SN, 3:298:89–304:145.

<sup>20</sup> *Tangsīr*, 15.

<sup>21</sup> *Tangsīr*, 50.

<sup>22</sup> *Tangsīr*, 53.

<sup>23</sup> *Tangsīr*, 54.

<sup>24</sup> *Tangsīr*, 56-57.

<sup>25</sup> *Tangsīr*, 60.

<sup>26</sup> *Tangsīr*, 65.

<sup>27</sup> *Tangsīr*, 68-69.

<sup>28</sup> *Tūmār*, 362

<sup>29</sup> Offering hospitality to an animal may seem strange, but Chūbak's description of how Muḥammad treated the bull is straightforward. It is perhaps reminiscent of Wāṣifī's story in *Badāyi' al-Waqāyi'* of the champion wrestler, Mālānī, who fought and beat the Indian elephant without any weapons. Because the elephant harbored a permanent grudge against the *pahlawān*, the only way it could be calmed down was to serve it food. *BW*, 1:666.

<sup>30</sup> *Tangsīr*, 72.

<sup>31</sup> *Tangsīr*, 51.

<sup>32</sup> *Tangsīr*, 87.

<sup>33</sup> *Tangsīr*, 91.

<sup>34</sup> *Tangsīr*, 92-93. The anthropologist Bourdieu comments on how the loss of reputation means the loss of life for the man who is well-known in society: "This is because the accomplished, the true man [This certainly was the case for Muḥammad], cannot be other than the man of honor ... In him, existence and honor are one. He who has lost his honor no longer exists. He ceases to exist for other people, and at the same time he ceases to exist for himself." Bourdieu, "The Sentiment of Honour in Kabyle Society," 212.

<sup>35</sup> Shojai's analysis that the hero lived only with his own code of morality in mind does not take into consideration that, in Muḥammad's world-view, his acts of revenge would help his sons in the future. Shojai writes, "[Muḥammad] has no scope or scale beyond those of his own actions. His values are his, and he lives up to them. It is a man's business to do just that. Otherwise he ends up half a man, which is to say, a moral coward." Shojai, "The Fatal Rage," 227.

<sup>36</sup> *Tangsīr*, 153, 207.

<sup>37</sup> Note Muḥammad's discussion with several shopkeepers on the dawn of his day of revenge. The shopkeepers agreed with him that the swindlers had indeed acted shamefully. *Tangsīr*, 122-130.

<sup>38</sup> *Tangsīr*, 200.

<sup>39</sup> *Tangsīr*, 154-155. The title *Zār* is an abbreviated form for *Zāyir*, which means someone who has visited a shrine. Someone who has visited Karbalā' (the site where Ḥusayn was murdered) is given the honorific title, *Kabalāyi* or *Kal*; one who has visited Mashhad (the tomb of Imām Ridā) is called *Mashdī* and the one who has travels to Mecca is *Ḥājī*. *Tangsīr*, 345. *Zār* is therefore an insignificant title, perhaps like the modern English title, Mr. As the villagers began to admire Muḥammad's act, they changed his title from *Zār* to *Shīr* (lion) because he truly had acted heroically.

<sup>40</sup> This theme of a hero who enters the scene to restore order and morality is reflected in other short stories as well, albeit in a much more benign fashion. See, for example, Jamālzāda's whimsical story,

“Bāj-i Sabīl” [Extortion], where an ugly colonel is caricatured as a bully who used his physical strength to extort money from shopkeepers. He was publicly humiliated by a small, but courageous clergyman, who is described as strong (*zūr*) and brave (*rashādat*). Jamālzāda, “Bāj-i Sabīl,” in *Sarūtah Yak Karbās*, 2:14. See also Jamālzādeh, “Extortion,” in *Islāhan is Half the World*, tr. W. I. Heston, 141.

<sup>41</sup> *Tangsīr*, 155.

<sup>42</sup> This quest to maintain the reputation of the tribe is the mechanism whereby the tribe ensures that everyone in the group struggles corporately for its survival. Anything that supports the kinship spirit of the tribe is honorable because such conduct enhances the cohesion and strength of the tribe. Conversely, anything that hurts it or threatens to destroy this cohesion is shameful and must be removed. In this way, the individual and the group are able to survive. The individual’s actions, therefore, are never his alone; whatever he does is seen as a collective action of the group to which he belongs. J. Peristiany says, “In this type of situation the behavior of the individual reflects that of the group to such an extent that, in his relations with other groups, the individual is forcibly cast in the role of his group’s protagonist.” J. Peristiany, introduction to *Honour and Shame: The Values of Mediterranean Society*, ed. J.G. Peristiany (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), 11.

<sup>43</sup> *Tangsīr*, 79, see also 81.

<sup>44</sup> *Tangsīr*, 126.

<sup>45</sup> *Tangsīr*, 159. See also 139, 157, 163.

<sup>46</sup> In this context, Muḥammad’s acts of revenge belong to the category of honor-killings, which are still prevalent in some traditional cultures of the Middle East.

<sup>47</sup> *Tangsīr*, 213, 223, 224.

<sup>48</sup> *Tangsīr*, 232-236.

<sup>49</sup> *Tangsīr*, 255.

<sup>50</sup> See, for example, Barāhanī, *Qiṣṣa-nawīsī*, 638.

<sup>51</sup> Shojai, “The Fatal Rage,” 228.

<sup>52</sup> *Tangsīr*, 87.

<sup>53</sup> *Tangsīr*, 247.

<sup>54</sup> *Tangsīr*, 154.

<sup>55</sup> The exception, as we have seen, are female warriors as depicted in *Samak-i Ayyār*. In the *Qābūs Nāma*, there is an account of Sultān Maḥmūd’s threatening to attack the Buyid governor of Rayy now that the throne was in the hands of a woman. The woman, who was the wife of the former ruler,



Fakhr al-Dawla, sent a letter to the Sultān saying that she was ready to fight. The Sultān should simply realize that if he won, there would be no glory in it, because he would have won an army led by a woman. If he lost, he would experience double the shame. *QN*, 134-135.

<sup>56</sup> *Tangsīr*, 190.

<sup>57</sup> *Tangsīr*, 217.

<sup>58</sup> *Tangsīr*, 151.

<sup>59</sup> *Tangsīr*, 252.

<sup>60</sup> *Tangsīr*, 255-256.

<sup>61</sup> *Tangsīr*, 84.

<sup>62</sup> *Tangsīr*, 98.

<sup>63</sup> Barāhanī, *Qiṣṣa-nawīsī*, 642.

<sup>64</sup> *Tangsīr*, 66.

<sup>65</sup> Davidson compares Rostam to the reckless young warriors of the ancient Greek civilization, who battled on the frontiers of their state. Although their duty was to maintain order, they represented chaos and disorder. According to Davidson, this is a key factor to why Rostam never stayed permanently in Iran. Davidson, *Poet and Hero*, 75-76, 104-109.

<sup>66</sup> In his study on blood revenge in Middle Eastern cultures, Joseph Ginat has concluded that, "It is the norm that the killer exiles himself to a place outside of the area where the co-liable group lives." Ginat, *Blood Revenge*, 25.

<sup>67</sup> In Shojai's discussion of heroes in four Persian novels, he notes that in each one the hero is physically locked in a room and portrayed as being mentally isolated from society. Shojai, "The Fatal Rage," 219.

<sup>68</sup> *SA*, 1.26. See also de Fouchécour, *Moralia*, 197-198, 218, 220.

<sup>69</sup> Homa Katouzian, *Sadeq Hedayat: The Life and Literature of an Iranian Writer* (New York: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd., 1991), 103.

<sup>70</sup> Hamid Nafici, "Iranian Writers, the Iranian Cinema, and the Case of Dash Akol," *Iranian Studies* 18.2-4 (1985): 243. Note Nafici's discussion on the historical elements in the short story and the movie based on it. *Ibid.*, 244.

<sup>71</sup> Bateson et al., "Ṣafā-yi Bāṭin," 267.

<sup>72</sup> Katouzian classifies Hidāyat's works into four categories: psycho-fiction, pure fiction, satirical works and nationalist romantic works. According to Katouzian, "Dāsh Ākul," is pure fiction, which at the same time, contains elements of psycho-fiction. Katouzian, *Sadeq Hedayat*, 62-66, 91.

<sup>73</sup> All three stories are published in a collection of ‘Uthmān’s short stories, Akram ‘Uthmān, *Mardāra Qawl as[ī]*, (Kabul, 1367/1988). Akram ‘Uthmān has been called the “father of folk literature” in Afghanistan and according to one literary critique, these three stories are considered to be among his best works. Husayn Gul-Kūhī, *Dāstān-hā wa Dīd-gāh-hā* (Peshawar, 1374/1996), 44. The first two stories, “Mardāra Qawl as[ī]” and “Waqtīki Nai-hā Gul Mīkunand,” continue to be very popular in the Afghan Persian community.

<sup>74</sup> *DA*, 50-51.

<sup>75</sup> *DA*, 44.

<sup>76</sup> *DA*, 45-46.

<sup>77</sup> Bourdieu, “The Sentiment of Honour in Kabyle Society,” 200. Bourdieu states elsewhere, “The challenge ... is a highlight in the life of the one who receives it ... [it] gives one the sense of existing fully as a man, which demonstrates one’s manliness to others and to oneself.” *Ibid.*, 199. In the movie version of Hidāyat’s story, Dāsh Ākul tried to defy Kākā Rustam’s challenge at the end of the story with the words, “I do not kill dogs.” Nafici, “Iranian Writers,” 241.

<sup>78</sup> *DA*, 45.

<sup>79</sup> *DA*, 44, 45.

<sup>80</sup> *DA*, 50-51.

<sup>81</sup> *MDQ*, 52.

<sup>82</sup> *Har-kāra* is the Darī (Afghan Persian) term for *zūr-khāna*.

<sup>83</sup> *MDQ*, 61-62.

<sup>84</sup> Nafici, “Iranian Writers,” 240.

<sup>85</sup> *MDQ*, 62.

<sup>86</sup> *MDQ*, 62.

<sup>87</sup> Note chapter 2, pp. 114-123 where the tension between the duty to serve and the freedom from obligation is illustrated in Rustam.

<sup>88</sup> *DA*, 48. “Cabbage heads” refers to the clergy who wore large turbans that looked like cabbages. In Iranian society, the clergy are normally responsible for handling the affairs of the deceased. Modern Persian fiction frequently depicts the clergy as expropriating large fortunes for themselves if the deceased was wealthy.

<sup>89</sup> *DA*, 53.

<sup>90</sup> *MDQ*, 62.

<sup>91</sup> *MDQ*, 63.

<sup>92</sup> “Waqtīki Nai-hā Gul Mīkunand,” 252.

<sup>93</sup> “Waqtīki Nai-hā Gul Mīkunand,” 253.

<sup>94</sup> “Waqtīki Nai-hā Gul Mīkunand,” 265. ‘Uthmān also alludes to this manipulative use of the code of loyalty and solidarity in his third story, “Mard wa Nā-Mard.” The story is a fictional account of a palace scene after King Amān Allāh (d. 1961), the ruler of Afghanistan, abdicated the throne due to Bachcha Saqqā’s rebellion against the regime. In the story, Dobbs, the British ambassador from India, was visiting the Kabul court and was talking with Ustād Qāsim, a renowned musician of Kabul. Ustād had graciously acknowledged Dobbs as a guest, to which the foreigner responded, “Thank-you, Ustād, we are closer to each other than [neighbors]. You and I are brothers from the same house.” The author describes Ustād Qāsim’s reaction: “Dobbs’ word pierced Ustād’s heart like a dagger, but he managed to keep his composure.” Ustād, who is depicted as a *jawānmard*, knew very well the implication of being called a brother. ‘Uthmān, “Mard wa Nā-Mard,” in *Mardāra Qawl as[ī]*, 117.

<sup>95</sup> In his anthropological discussion on *ta’aruf* (courtesy) in Iran, Beeman points out the advantages of taking an inferior position in social relationships. In so doing, one has the tactical upper-hand because the ‘superior’ person becomes obligated to grant favors and act magnanimously to the ‘underdog’. Beeman’s conclusion that, “most social relationships in Iran are conceived as exploitative,” reflects the manipulative tactic Maḥmūd used in the story, “Mardāra Qawl as[ī].” Beeman, “Status, Style and Strategy in Iranian Interaction,” 314. In *Shawhar-i Āhū Khānum*, the author describes the personality of Khālū Karam, a guest in the home of Sayyid Mīrān. The guest was a gentleman who knew exactly how to take the inferior position in a conversation. The author concludes that because of Khālū’s perfect courtesy and humility in his conversation with Sayyid Mīrān, “it seemed that he was the most powerful champion (*pahlawān*) in the *maydān* of ideas (*andīsha*).” ‘Alī Muḥammad Afghānī, *Shawhar-i Āhū Khānum* (Tehran, 1372/1993), 310.

<sup>96</sup> *SN*, 2:164.1106-1107.

<sup>97</sup> *DA*, 53, 55, 56 and 60.

<sup>98</sup> *DA*, 53.

<sup>99</sup> *DA*, 53. Milani mentions how the classical hero could only be intimate with an animal. Milani, *Veils and Words*, 201-202. In ‘Uthmān’s “Waqtīki Nai-hā Gul Mīkunand,” when Kāka Akbar was burdened with a final, but sinister call of duty for the unmanly prince, he was forced to abandon his family in order to complete the task. At this point, he could only share his inner struggles with the waves of the Kabul River. ‘Uthmān, “Waqtīki Nai-hā Gul Mīkunand,” 257-258.

<sup>100</sup> *DA*, 54.

<sup>101</sup> *MDQ*, 63.

<sup>102</sup> *MDQ*, 64 and *DA*, 56.

<sup>103</sup> There are further dilemmas in this practice of self-censorship. As the man keeps his personal life hidden, he begins to lose touch even with himself. Furthermore, in a society where self-censorship is essential in order to be accepted by others, true friendship and intimacy are rare. This also breeds mistrust and creates an obsession to try to decipher people's conversations. Milani's article on self-censorship is a penetrating analysis on the psychological ramifications of keeping one's inner world hidden. Farzaneh Milani, "Power, Prudence, and Print: Censorship and Simin Danashwar," *Iranian Studies* 18.2-4 (1985): 337-339. Milani says elsewhere that, "Iranian men have also shunned self-representation. ... Concerned with their Mardanegi [manliness], they seem to form a barrier as solid and as forbidding as a veil around their private selves." Milani, *Veils and Words*, 201. Milani discusses the "veil of manliness" extensively throughout her work (*Ibid.*, 23-24, 139-140, 187), especially in her chapter, "Disclosing the Self," (*Ibid.*, 201-227). She cites an Iranian proverb: "A man is he who keeps his mouth shut and flexes his muscles" (*Ibid.*, 139). The fear of self-exposure and the need for personal censorship is also expressed by Hidāyat in his surreal novel, *The Blind Owl*. He begins the novel with the fear of revealing the "inconceivable sufferings" of life. Šādiq Hidāyat, *The Blind Owl* (London: Thomas Nelson, 1957), 1.

<sup>104</sup> *DA*, 54-55.

<sup>105</sup> *MDQ*, 66-67. "Āhīsta Burū" is the standard song sung at all Persian Afghan weddings when the bride is presented to the groom.

<sup>106</sup> *DA*, 56.

<sup>107</sup> *DA*, 58.

<sup>108</sup> *DA*, 61.

<sup>109</sup> *MDQ*, 69.

<sup>110</sup> *MDQ*, 72.

<sup>111</sup> *MDQ*, 66, 72.

<sup>112</sup> All Afghans with whom I have discussed the story see Shīr as a hero because he remained true to his oath of brotherhood with Maḥmūd. He maintained the code of manliness by denying all the desires of his heart. They consider this to be true heroism.

<sup>113</sup> Sīmīn Dānishwar, *Savūshūn* (Tehran, 1969). See also Simin Daneshvar, *Savushun: A Novel about Modern Iran*, tr. M.R. Ghanoonparvar (Washington, DC.: Mage, 1990).

<sup>114</sup> In certain tribal traditions, mourning Siyāwash's death has been connected with the mourning of the death of Ḥusayn, who is celebrated for his heroic struggle in the desert of Karbalā'. For a detailed account of the ancient tradition of the mourning of the death of Siyāwash, see Jonathon Lee, "The New Year's Festivals and the shrine of 'Alī ibn 'Alī Ṭālib at Mazār-i Sharīf, Afghanistan" (Ph.D. diss., University of Leeds, 1998), 194-200, 214-222.

<sup>115</sup> Note how this resonates with Zīnat Amīn's poem written earlier in the 20<sup>th</sup> century at the time of the constitutional crisis when the Russian government had forced Iran to dissolve its parliament. Bāmdād, *Zan-i Irani*, 2:16-17. See chapter 1, p. 20. The threat of foreign interference was an impetus to call men to renew their courage and moral fortitude. In this sense, *Savūshūn* is very much a political novel, though it differs from the standard Iranian *engagé* literature of the Pahlawī period because rather than calling for a new socio-political system in Iran, Dānishwar wants to see the present system restored with integrity and truly courageous people. Ghanoonparvar, who translated *Savūshūn* into English, does not consider the novel to be a socio-political text, but one that deals primarily with domestic issues (Ghanoonparvar, *Prophets of Doom*, 121), while Kamran Talattof, in his discussion on the novel, considers Dānishwar an "emblem of commitment," i.e. an author who has devoted her writings for political and social reform. Kamran Talattof, *The Politics of Writing in Iran: History of Modern Persian Literature* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2000), 96-97.

<sup>116</sup> *Savūshūn*, 302.

<sup>117</sup> *Savūshūn*, 34.

<sup>118</sup> *Savūshūn*, 223.

<sup>119</sup> Adelpkhah says that, "the modern *jawānmard* has become a social being," because he is a socially responsible individual (Adelpkhah, *Being Modern in Iran*, 4). This, however, is not a recent phenomenon. The epic warrior, Rustam as well as many of the medieval *'ayyārs*, *lūtīs*, *kākās*, and traditional wrestlers of the early modern period, considered themselves "social beings" who served their communities. Adelpkhah contends that the difference between the traditional *jawānmard* and the modern socially-responsible *jawānmard* is that the former sought to establish "his own order" on his specific domain, while the latter is a social ideologue who considers his claims and principles to be universal (Ibid., 39). She discusses Gholamhossein Karbaschi, the mayor of Tehran during the 1990s, who presented himself as genuinely caring for the moral, spiritual and economic well-being of the citizens by building public gardens for the city. He thus earned the honorable title of *jawānmard* (ibid., 15-29).

<sup>120</sup> *Savūshūn*, 283-284.

<sup>121</sup> *Savūshūn*, 61.

<sup>122</sup> *Savūshūn*, 50, 53.

<sup>123</sup> It is clear in the novel that these two tribal leaders reflect the characteristics of the two greatest heroes in the *Shāhnāma*, Rostam and Suhrāb. Yūsuf and Zarī, on the other hand, are depicted as ‘modern’ individuals who are also concerned with personal and domestic interests. Their friendly but ambivalent relationship with these two unscrupulous tribal leaders reflects the struggle of how to relate the concerns of the modern world to the ideals of the past.

<sup>124</sup> *Savūshūn*, 47. The tribal leader literally said, “We’ve eaten bread and salt together.” It was shown in chapters 2 and 3 how salt symbolized solidarity and loyalty and, as the short stories in the section above reflected, the code of loyalty tended to be manipulated for self-serving purposes.

<sup>125</sup> *Savūshūn*, 47.

<sup>126</sup> *Savūshūn*, 128-129. See also *Savūshūn*, 126, where Khusraw said very much the same.

<sup>127</sup> *Savūshūn*, 122.

<sup>128</sup> *Savūshūn*, 151.

<sup>129</sup> *Savūshūn*, 192, 194.

<sup>130</sup> *Savūshūn*, 196.

<sup>131</sup> *Savūshūn*, 42.

<sup>132</sup> *Savūshūn*, 120, 128, 131, 223.

<sup>133</sup> In her discussion on the novel, Milani describes Zarī as one who had to learn to live her life “in response to masculine-centered values and definitions.” Milani, *Veils and Words*, 192.

<sup>134</sup> *Savūshūn*, 36.

<sup>135</sup> *Savūshūn*, 60.

<sup>136</sup> Dānishwar’s concern for domestic and family issues in light of the traditional values of *mardānagi* and *jawānmardī* is typical of many of her short stories. In an interview fifteen years after she wrote *Savūshūn*, Dānishwar expressed her perspective on domestic life in Iran much more explicitly: “Most marriages in our country are unsuccessful. Two individuals with two different backgrounds, education, and customs have to endure one another for a life-time. Well, this very tolerance creates hatred.” Milani, “Power, Prudence, and Print,” 340.

<sup>137</sup> *Savūshūn*, 89. Chapter 8 of *Savūshūn* reads like a gossip column of ghastly men who beat their wives and bring home younger women (Ibid., 87-93). One of the young men who was always staring at girls, said, “I am looking for something I myself don’t have,” in other words, dignity and honor (Ibid., 88).

<sup>138</sup> *Savūshūn*, 118.

<sup>139</sup> *Savūshūn*, 127.

<sup>140</sup> *Savūshūn*, 127. The theme of compromise in marriage because of a domineering husband is seen in several of Dānishwar's short stories. These stories illustrate how a man, who considers himself a heroic figure and even a 'savior' of society, fails in the family and conjugal relationships. In "Kaid al-Khā'inīn," the colonel, who is the protagonist of the story, had always devoted himself to public service, but in the home his relationship with his wife was distant and domineering. Her words reflect Zarī's frustrations: "You're taking your anger out on me, but I'm not going to argue with you now. I'm not your enemy. For better or worse, we've put up with each other for thirty years." Sīmīn Dānishwar, "Kaid al-Khā'inīn," in *Bi Kī Salām Kunam?* (Tehran, 1363/1984), 253. See also Sīmīn Daneshvar, "Traitor's Intrigue," in *Daneshvar's Playhouse, - A Collection of Stories*, tr. Maryam Mafi (Washington DC.: Mage Publishers, 1989), 98. In "Sar Gudhasht-yi Kūcha," the protagonist, Faṭāna had compromised most of her married life in order to achieve a peaceful relationship with her doctor-husband who was about to marry his second wife. Faṭāna used very similar expressions to describe her relationship with him: "For fifteen long years I've slaved in this man's house. My hair's turned white. I've put up with all his habits and, now for the past two years we're getting along." Sīmīn Dānishwar, "Sar Gudhasht-yi Kūcha," in *Shahri Chūn Bihisht* (Tehran, 1361/1982), 54. See also Sīmīn Daneshvar, "The Story of a Street," in *A Walnut Sapling on Masih's Grave and Other Stories by Iranian Women*, ed. John Green and Farzin Yazdanfar (Toronto: TSAR Publications, 1994), 76-77.

<sup>141</sup> *Savūshūn*, 128.

<sup>142</sup> *Savūshūn*, 129. On another occasion, she had stood up against the domineering demands of the British headmistress at her school who had tried to force the students to break the fast and wear white clothes during the time of religious mourning. *Ibid.*, 153-154.

<sup>143</sup> de Fouchécour, *Moralia*, 221.

<sup>144</sup> *Savūshūn*, 129.

<sup>145</sup> Family responsibility versus public responsibility is frequently discussed in Iranian feminist works. See, for example, Farzaneh Milani, "Conflicts between Traditional Roles and Poetry in the Work of Forugh Farrokhzad," in *Women and the Family in Iran*, ed. A. Fathi (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1985), 226-229. See also Milani, *Veils and Words*, 64-65, 70-7, 134. Some critics of Persian literature see the ethos of traditional *jawānmardī* as a negative concept which militates against female autonomy. According to Milani, the term *mard* (man) is by definition independent (which is what has

been shown in the study on the heroic warrior), while *zan* or *khānum* (woman) are dependent terms that cannot be understood outside of the woman's identity as a wife or mother. Milani, *Veils and Words*, 70-71. In his discussion on Dānishwar's short story, "To Whom Can I Say Hello?," the literary critic, Kamran Talattof, criticizes Dānishwar for her positive portrayal of manliness: "Although Danishwar creatively uses the concept of *mardānagī*, possession of manliness and masculine superiority, to criticize the son-in-law [who had been abusing his wife], it is portrayed as a normal and positive characteristic." Talattof assumes *mardānagī* means masculine superiority, and hence, it is itself a negative trait and the cause of family upheaval and women's oppression. On the other hand, according to Talattof, Dānishwar considers the domineering man who abuses his wife as the *nā-mard* (coward). Hence, for Dānishwar *jawānmardī* and *mardānagī* are positive traits that result in cordial family life. Kamran Talattof, "Iranian Women's Literature: From Pre-Revolutionary Social Discourse to Post-Revolutionary Feminism," in *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 29 (1997): 536; *idem*, *The Politics of Writing in Iran*, 97-98.

<sup>146</sup> *Savūshūn*, 131. See also *Savūshūn*, 192-193.

<sup>147</sup> *Savūshūn*, 176.

<sup>148</sup> The Prophet Abraham was considered a *jawānmard* because he was willing to sacrifice his son. *FNS*, 18. In *Samak-i 'Ayyār*, *jawānmardī* meant performing acts without reference to his family. When Samak and Rūz Afzūn sought protection at the headquarters of the renowned *jawānmard*, Ghawr, he said, "I will sacrifice my life, my possessions and my children for your sake." *SA*, 296.

<sup>149</sup> 'Izzat al-Dawla had been a long time friend of Zari's sister-in-law. 'Izzat al-Dawla never liked Zari and only tolerated her because she had married into her friend's family. Earlier in the novel, it had been 'Izzat al-Dawla who had secretly duped Zari into loaning her emerald earrings at the wedding. Now, 'Izzat al-Dawla used her relationship with the family to try to manipulate Zari into helping them get exonerated from their crime.

<sup>150</sup> *Savūshūn*, 171.

<sup>151</sup> *Savūshūn*, 172.

<sup>152</sup> *Savūshūn*, 179.

<sup>153</sup> *Savūshūn*, 249-251.

<sup>154</sup> *Savūshūn*, 284.

<sup>155</sup> *Savūshūn*, 226-234.

<sup>156</sup> *Savūshūn*, 285.

<sup>157</sup> *Savūshūn*, 302.



<sup>158</sup> As a religious social ideologue, Shariati (d. 1977) sought to ‘de-gender’ public courage through the valorization of Fāṭima, whom he glorified, not as Muḥammad’s daughter, or ‘Alī’s wife, or even Ḥasan and Ḥusayn’s mother, but as Fāṭima herself. He calls on the 20<sup>th</sup> century woman to follow her path as a warrior. See Zohreh T. Sullivan, “Eluding the Feminist, Overthrowing the Modern? Transformations in Twentieth Century Iran,” in *Remaking Women: Feminism and Modernity in the Middle East*, ed. Lila Abu-Lughod (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 218-219.

<sup>159</sup> ‘Attār, *Tadhkirat al-Awliyā*, 643.

<sup>160</sup> *FNS*, 356-357. Elsewhere Kāshifī says that one of the codes of conduct for the porter was to carry the burden of a weak *darwīsh*. *FNS*, 323.

<sup>161</sup> Suhrawardī, in *RJ*, 101.

<sup>162</sup> Āmulī, in *RJ*, 80.

<sup>163</sup> *AFM*, 78-80. For further examples of altruistic deeds by champions and their defense of widows and the oppressed, see Bateson et al., “*Ṣatā-yi Bātin*,” 264-266. Adelpkhah argues that benevolence as an expression of *jawānmardī* is a modern phenomenon in Iran. Charity is seen as willingly sacrificing one’s interests for the benefit of others. Interestingly, in her view, acts of *jawānmardī* normally benefit the immediate family as well, an aspect not reflected in the stories we have analyzed in this thesis. She states, “The expression commonly used, *az khod gozashtegi*, literally means that ‘you do without yourself’ or ‘efface yourself.’ The *jawānmard*’s purity of heart (*cheshm-o del pāk*), which is part of the *bāten* side of life, is shown in the externalized practice of giving which, being a material action, belongs to the *zāher* category, but is conceived as above all giving of oneself... he willingly ‘does without’ his wealth by letting others benefit by it. This includes members of his immediate family...” Adelpkhah, *Being Modern in Iran*, 45.

<sup>164</sup> Qur’ān 4:34. Many modern Iranian short stories feature the dilemma of the woman’s dependency on the man. This again is one of Dānishwar’s favorite themes. See for example, Sīmīn Dānishwar, “Mard-i ki bar-nagash” [The man who didn’t return], in *Shahri Chūn Bihisht*, 145-158 and “Bi kī Salām Kunam?” in Sīmīn Dānishwar, *Bi Kī Salām Kunam?*, 75-93. See also “To Whom Can I Say Hello?,” tr. Maryam Malī, in *Daneshvar’s Playhouse*, 113-129.

<sup>165</sup> *FNS*, 214.

<sup>166</sup> *FNS*, 254. In contrast to the literature on *futuwwat*, the Persian ethical and advice literature (‘mirrors for princes’) give much more advice to the man on how to relate to women. The authors of the 11<sup>th</sup> century texts, *Qābūs Nāma*, *Siyar al-Mulūk* and *Naṣīhat al-Mulūk* devote entire chapters to this, as do many of the later medieval Persian writers on ethics. A very specific and detailed outline

of the duties of a man towards his wife is given by the author of *Naṣīhat al-Mulūk*. Although the text was addressed to kings and its advice is archaic (written 900 years ago), it is remarkable how the protagonist, Sayyid Mīrān, in the novel, *Shawhar Āhū Khānum*, reflects the same attitude. The author of *Naṣīhat al-Mulūk* writes: "The author of this book declares that it is the duty of gentlemen to respect the rights of their wives and veiled ones and to show mercy, kindness and forbearance to them. A man who wishes to become merciful and affectionate towards his wife must [remember] ten things (which will help him ) to act fairly: 1) she cannot divorce you, while you can (divorce her whenever you wish). 2) she can take nothing from you, while you can take everything from her. 3) as long as she is in your net she can have no other husband, while you can have another wife. 4) without your permission she cannot go out of the house, while you can. 5) she is afraid of you, while you are not afraid of her. 7) she is content with a cheerful look and a kind word from you, while you are not content with any action of hers. 8) she is taken away from her mother, father and kinsfolk (for your sake), while you are not separated from any person unless you so wish. 9) you may buy concubines and prefer them to her, while she has to endure this. 10) she kills herself (with worry) when you are sick, while you do not worry when she dies. For all these reasons, intelligent men will be merciful towards their wives and will not treat them unjustly; because women are prisoners in the hands of men. The intelligent man will have forbearance for women; because they are deficient in intelligence." *Counsel for Kings*, tr. F.R.C. Bagley, 170-171.

<sup>167</sup> Much has been written on the traditional Middle Eastern male's perception of the woman. For a brief summary of what traditional Persian literature has said about women, see Hasan Javadi, "Women in Persian Literature: An Exploratory Study," in *Women and Family in Iran*, ed. A. Fathi (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1985), 37-59. On the notion of the deficiency and inferiority of the woman, see Adele K. Ferdows, "The Status and Rights of Women in Ithna 'Ashārī Shī'ite Islam," in *Women and the Family in Iran*, ed. A. Fathi (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1985), 15-20 and Shireen Mahdavi, "The Position of Women in Shi'a Iran: Views of the 'Uluma," 258-262.

<sup>168</sup> Zarkūb, in *RJ*, 170-171. Suhrawardī makes the point several times that a deficient *jawānmard*, i.e., one who has become flawed in proper conduct, must be punished by making him look like effeminate. Suhrawardī, in *RJ*, 123, 134.

<sup>169</sup> During the 1960s and 1970s this lengthy novel (the first printing was nearly 900 pages) was acclaimed by Iranian and non-Iranian literary critics as "one of the most significant works of fiction written in Persian." Ghanoonparvar, *Prophets of Doom*, 120. The author, 'Alī Muḥammad Afghānī (b. 1925), began his career in the Iranian military and spent seven years in prison because of leftist

affiliations. He published his novel a year after his release from prison (1960). For a summary of the story, see Paul Sprachman, "Āhū Khānum's Husband by 'Alī Muḥammad Afghānī: A Plot Summary," in *Literature East and West: Major Voices in Contemporary Persian Literature* 20, ed. Michael C. Hillman (1976), 162-166 and Hassan Kamshad, *Modern Persian Prose Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966), 131-134.

<sup>170</sup> Although the conversations and monologues in the novel are often unnaturally long, repetitive and even pedantic, the novel reflects many themes in Iranian society. The novel is written in straightforward, pose style in which the author describes many of the smallest details of family life with penetrating insight. Kamshad calls it a "social history" and suggests that Sayyid Mīrān is the typical Iranian man of the bazaar: "Sayyid Mīrān meets us in every street and bazaar." Kamshad, *Modern Persian Prose Literature*, 134.

<sup>171</sup> SAK, 91.

<sup>172</sup> SAK, 10.

<sup>173</sup> SAK, 21.

<sup>174</sup> SAK, 267. See also 64, 92, 110, 136 where Sayyid Mīrān is called *sar-shinās*. It may be recalled that Dāsh Ākul was a *sar-shinās* in his locality. Shīr's renown spread throughout Kabul, and Muḥammad of *Tangsīr* was well-known for being a *pahlawān*. In *Savūshūn*, Yūsuf was the social being who took a public stand against corruption and injustice. All of these were renowned in public for some heroic act they had performed. Adelpkhah calls the *jawānmard* an "individual of eminence" whose renown lies in his active service in society. Adelpkhah, *Being Modern in Iran*, 4, 45, 54-55.

<sup>175</sup> There are numerous insights into the cultural life of the guilds, such as the artisans' mutual loyalty and social network as guild members, as well as their competition with other guilds and conflict with government officials. In this regard, see also M.A. Djarnalzadeh, "Chahare Abou Khanom" (The Husband of Ahou Khanom) A recent Persian novel of outstanding quality," in *Yādnāme-ye Jan Rypka: Collection of Articles on Persian and Tajik Literature*, ed. Ahmed Yasa Ocak (Prague: Academia, 1967), 173-178.

<sup>176</sup> SAK, 67, 387.

<sup>177</sup> SAK, 63.

<sup>178</sup> SAK, 64-67.

<sup>179</sup> SAK, 67.

<sup>180</sup> SAK, 181. See SAK, 314.

<sup>181</sup> This resembles Zār Muḥammad of *Tangsīr* who was also depicted as a good man of the village. It was because of this that the women in Muḥammad's village were envious of his wife. *Tangsīr*, 308.

<sup>182</sup> *SAK*, 57.

<sup>183</sup> *SAK*, 68.

<sup>184</sup> *SAK*, 22.

<sup>185</sup> *SAK*, 186. See also *SAK*, 88, 307. In her study on male domination in Middle Eastern society, Memissi reflects the same idea: "The man's prestige is embodied in the seclusion of his female relatives. A man whose wife wanders around in the streets free is a man whose masculinity is in jeopardy." Fatima Memissi, *Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in a Modern Muslim Society* (Toronto: John Wiley and Sons, 1975), 90.

<sup>186</sup> *SAK*, 133.

<sup>187</sup> *SAK*, 148-149.

<sup>188</sup> *SAK*, 235. Note Samak's statement, "Any work I do, I do for the sake of a good name (*nām*), not for food. The work that I am doing now, is so that I will have a good reputation." *SA*, 1.181.

<sup>189</sup> *SAK*, 136.

<sup>190</sup> *SAK*, 120.

<sup>191</sup> *SAK*, 234, 235.

<sup>192</sup> *SAK*, 39, 88.

<sup>193</sup> In *Samak-i 'Ayyār*, warriors considered it a greater responsibility to help a woman than a man. At one point, two warriors were taken captive from the camp of the renowned *jawānmard*, Ghawr. One was his own brother and the other was the female warrior, Rūz Afzūn. Ghawr was not so upset that his brother, Kūhyār, had been taken captive, because it did not result in any loss of his reputation. However, the fact that Rūz Afzūn had been caught meant a loss of his reputation in several ways. Though the text does not state the reasons explicitly, they seem clear. First, Rūz Afzūn was a woman and second, she had taken refuge in Ghawr's camp. *SA*, 1.319.

<sup>194</sup> *SAK*, 148.

<sup>195</sup> *SAK*, 81. See also 21, 45-46, 82, 108, 180.

<sup>196</sup> *SAK*, 83.

<sup>197</sup> *SAK*, 135.

<sup>198</sup> *SAK*, 114. Note how this again resonates with Adelhah's definition of modern *jawānmardī*. Adelhah, *Being Modern in Iran*, 45.

<sup>199</sup> *SAK*, 108.

<sup>200</sup> SAK, 144.

<sup>201</sup> SAK, 110.

<sup>202</sup> SAK, 110.

<sup>203</sup> Note how the *jawānmards* and *'ayyār*s in *Samak-i 'Ayyār* offered their services to co-warriors without any conditions. See chapter 2, 90-92.

<sup>204</sup> SAK, 154.

<sup>205</sup> SAK, 130, 144, 148.

<sup>206</sup> SAK, 89. It is interesting that after Humā entered the Sayyid Mīrān family, her separation from her sons only came up in order to convince Āhū Khānum of her plight. Sayyid Mīrān never pursued the matter further, though eventually the sons did come to visit her on a regular basis (SAK, 383-384). At the end of the novel, however, Humā tore up the picture she had of her sons (SAK, 764).

<sup>207</sup> SAK, 153. This request was not unusual. Traditionally, one of the justifications for polygamy was to protect and provide shelter for a vulnerable widow whose husband had been killed in war. A. Ferdows, "The Status and Rights of Women in Ithna 'Ashārī Shī'ite Islam," 19-21. Adelhah relates the account of the Teyyib Haj Rezai (d. 1963) who was considered an influential *jawānmard* through his many political and social activities. Although he had a traditional family, for whom he apparently deeply cared, he also married a prostitute as his second wife to save her from an ignoble life. According to Adelhah, since the Iran-Iraq war, one of the admirable deeds of a man who is considered to be a *jawānmard* is to marry a widow in order to protect the family of the martyred. Most notable are the wives of such *jawānmards*, who magnanimously encourage their husbands to marry such widows. Adelhah calls them "*jawānzans*" (*zan*: woman). Adelhah, *Being Modern in Iran*, 41-44

Marrying a needy woman as an act of *jawānmardī* is also reflected in Jamālzāda's story, "Mard-i Akhlāqī" [The ethical man]. Mr. Ethics, as he was called because he constantly talked about good morals, had made his 15 year-old servant girl pregnant. In order to maintain his good name, which for him was his over-riding purpose in life, he requested his male servant Ghulām 'Alī to marry the maiden. The young man refused and ended up in prison. Later on when he was released, Ghulām 'Alī saw it as his religious duty to rescue the young girl from Mr. Ethics. His justification reflects the standard ethic of *jawānmardī*: "A man should think more of his fellow countryman than about himself." Jamālzāda's eulogy of Ghulām 'Alī's heroism is expressed by the narrator: "You have brightened the mirror of my heart which had become completely disgusted with the morals of this immoral man, called Mr. Ethics. Thank God that in this land, the seed of integrity and *jawānmardī* is

still not totally extinct ... You will become a hero in this city.” Muḥammad ‘Alī Jamāl-zāda, “Mard-i Akhlāqī” [The ethical man], in *Āsmān wa Rīsmān* (Tehran, 1343/1964), 199, 201.

<sup>208</sup> SAK, 153. Normally, the legal and religious justification for temporary or contractual marriage (*mut‘a* or *sīgha*) in Shī‘ite Islam is based on the notion of man’s uncontrollable sexual urge. S. Mahdavi, “The Position of Women in Shi‘a Iran,” 263-264 and A. Ferdows, “The Status and Rights of Women in Ithna ‘Ashārī Shī‘ite Islam,” 21-24. Shahla Haeri has provided a thorough analysis of the legal and religious arguments for temporary marriages in Shī‘ite Islam. Shahla Haeri, *Law of Desire: Temporary Marriage in Iran*, 49-72.

<sup>209</sup> SAK, 156. See also 245.

<sup>210</sup> SAK, 301.

<sup>211</sup> SAK, 136.

<sup>212</sup> SAK, 137.

<sup>213</sup> SAK, 188. See also SAK, 154

<sup>214</sup> SAK, 188.

<sup>215</sup> SAK, 175.

<sup>216</sup> SAK, 179.

<sup>217</sup> SAK, 270.

<sup>218</sup> SAK, 233. See also 234.

<sup>219</sup> SAK, 234, 243.

<sup>220</sup> SAK, 252. Another justification which Sayyid Mīrān used was the religious law of the land. His statement to Āhū, “Have I done anything unlawful?” is similar to what Dānishwar expresses in “Sar Gudhasht-yi Kūcha.” When Dr. Khān married his second wife, he explained to his first wife, “I am a Muslim ...” Dānishwar, “Sar Gudhasht-yi Kūcha,” in *Shahri Chūn Bihisht*, 55.

<sup>221</sup> SAK, 182.

<sup>222</sup> SAK, 207.

<sup>223</sup> SAK, 205, 213, 267, 304, 437.

<sup>224</sup> SAK, 267.

<sup>225</sup> SAK, 338.

<sup>226</sup> SAK, 445. After Sayyid Mīrān married Humā, he divided the week so that he spent 3 nights with Humā and 3 nights with Āhū. He was free to spend the 7<sup>th</sup> night with the wife of his choice. This ‘equal treatment’, however, did not last too long, for Humā soon had Sayyid Mīrān under her control. SAK, 270-271, 312. According to Islamic law, one of the requirements for polygamy is that the man

must treat his co-wives equally. This is based on Qurʾān 4:3: "And if ye fear that ye will not deal fairly by the orphans, marry of the women, who seem good to you, two or three or four, and if ye fear that ye cannot do justice (to so many), then (only) one or (the captives) that which your right hand possesses." For an interpretation of Qurʾān 4:3 in its historical context and an analysis of modernists' treatments of the verse (the Qurʾān enjoins equal treatment to co-wives and since this is impossible, the real intent of the verse is the abolishment of polygamy), see Fazlur Rahman, "Status of Women in the Qur'an," in *Women and Revolution in Iran*, ed. Giuity Nashat (Colorado: Westview Press, 1983), 45-48.

<sup>227</sup> SAK, 445.

<sup>228</sup> SAK, 283.

<sup>229</sup> SAK, 258.

<sup>230</sup> SAK, 447.

<sup>231</sup> SAK, 295-296. An interesting note is to follow the rivalry between Āhū and Humā. The author couches it in warrior terminology. For Āhū, Humā was a dangerous rival, but Āhū had to be ingenious as to how to defeat her. She saw two ways to destroy her. One way was to tear down Humā's reputation (*āb-rū-rīzī*) and scream at her (*ushtalam*), which was the standard method of the public combatant. In fact, in *Samak-i Ayyār*, the term *ushtalam* is frequently used to describe the warrior as he rode onto the battleground. The other way was to be patient and peaceful, the way of the deferential and self-abnegating, spiritual *jawānmard* (SAK, 230). At one point, when Āhū learned more about Humā's questionable background and conduct, she compared herself to Rustam and his battle with Isfāndiyār. She too had a enchanted arrow that she could use against Humā (SAK, 282). See also SAK, 314, 357, 379, 426, 432.

<sup>232</sup> SAK, 300.

<sup>233</sup> SAK, 301.

<sup>234</sup> SAK, 768-769.

<sup>235</sup> Sayyid Mīrān said elsewhere: "True love means acting sacrificially without expecting anything in return." SAK, 492.

<sup>236</sup> SAK, 772-778.

<sup>237</sup> That a man's notion of his *jawānmardī* often results in family misery is confirmed by Kamshad's comment on the novel: "Afghani ... has hit the nail right on the head. In his classic novel he exposes the slavery of the Iranian wife to her husband's caprices, the cruelty of the laws and customs imposed on women by men to bring about their submission, and the humiliations women have suffered in this

patriarchal society, as well as their amazing forbearance, throughout history, in the face of such injustices – all with great mastery and in a manner unequalled in modern Persian prose.” Kamshad, *Modern Persian Prose Literature*, 133.

<sup>238</sup> SAK, 136.

<sup>239</sup> FNS, 99.

<sup>240</sup> FNS, 256.

<sup>241</sup> *Tangsi*, 105 and ‘Uthmān, “Waqtīki Nai-hā Gul Mīkunand,” 259.

<sup>242</sup> *Savūshūn*, 182

<sup>243</sup> See chapter 5, p. 395 n. 207. On the satire of religious characters in Persian prose, see Girdhari L. Tikku, “Some Socio-Religious Themes in Modern Persian Fiction,” in *Islam and its Cultural Divergence: Studies in Honor of Gustave E. von Grunchebaum*, ed. Girdhari L. Tikku (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1971), 165-179.

<sup>244</sup> Šādiq Hidāyat, *Hājī Āghā* (Tehran, 1337/1957), 51, 64. See also Sādeq Hedāyat, *Hājī Āghā: Portrait of an Iranian Confidence Man*, tr. G. M. Wickens (Austin: University of Texas, 1979).

<sup>245</sup> Hidāyat, *Hājī Āghā*, 58.

<sup>246</sup> Hidāyat, *Hājī Āghā*, 55-56.

<sup>247</sup> Šādiq Hidāyat, “Mardi ki nafs-ash-rā kush” [The man who killed his *nafs*], in *Sih Qatra Khūn*, 133. For an analysis of the story, see Homa Katouzian, “Sadeq Hedayat’s ‘The Man Who Killed His Passionate Self’: A Critical Exposition,” *Iranian Studies* 10.3 (1977):196-206.

<sup>248</sup> Through the course of the thesis numerous references have been made to the virtue of truth-telling as a fundamental code of *jawānmardī*. Yet paradoxically, lying and deception also play an important role in the life of the *jawānmard*. This apparent dichotomy in the ethos of *jawānmardī* warrants further investigation. It should be stated from the outset that any critique of lying and deception in Middle Eastern societies must take into account the need for survival under despotic regimes. Furthermore, in Shī‘ite societies, there has also been the historical religious justification for dissimulation (*taqīya*) where a Shī‘ite could pretend he was a Sunni in order to avoid persecution. See Bateson et al., “Šafā-yi Bātin,” 269. Nevertheless, as a study on lying in tribal societies indicates, in order to successfully deceive others, one must first deceive oneself. Robert Edgerton states: “Lying successfully is no easy matter, especially in small societies where people know so much about one another, and being caught out in a lie can have unpleasant consequences. Thus, the best guarantee of successful deception might well be self-deception, that is, a lack of awareness that one is lying at all, because a person who did not realize he was lying would likely be more convincing than one who



knew he was distorting the truth.” Robert Edgerton, *Sick Societies* (Toronto: Maxwell Macmillan Int'l, 1992), 67.

<sup>249</sup> The concept of *jawānmardī* as it is reflected in Persian literature since the Islamic Revolution is a subject which deserves further study. An interesting approach would be to trace similarities and differences in the concept of *jawānmardī* between pre-revolutionary and post-revolutionary literature. Note, for example, Kamran Talattof's contrasting changes in themes, metaphors and characters in Iranian women's literature. He points out how post-revolutionary women's literature begins to analyze the notion of manliness in Persian society from a feminist perspective. According to Talattof, post-revolutionary women's literature ridicules the ideals of traditional manliness as being an imposition of patriarchal values on society. K. Talattof, "Iranian Women's Literature: From Pre-Revolutionary Social Discourse to Post-Revolutionary Feminism," 536-558. Note also the chapters, "Revolution and Literature: The Rise of the Islamic Literary Movement after the 1979 Revolution" and "Feminist Discourse in Postrevolutionary Iran" in Talattof's work, *The Politics of Writing in Iran*, 108-172.

<sup>250</sup> Ishpuzmai Zaryāb, "Rustam-hā wa Suhrāb-hā" [Rustams and Suhrabs] in *Kitābtūrūsh-i Dīwāna: Dāstān-hā-yi Imrūz-i Afghanistan*, ed. M. Haydariyān (Mashhad, 1376/1997), 48.

<sup>251</sup> Zaryāb, "Rustam-hā wa Suhrāb-hā," 58. Through this question from the young girl, the author obviously is referring to the conflict in Afghanistan due to the Soviet invasion in 1981.

<sup>252</sup> Zaryāb, "Rustam-hā wa Suhrāb-hā," 58-59.

<sup>253</sup> The proclivity to blame internal political developments and civil strife on foreign conspiracies is a common phenomenon in Iran as well. The paranoia of conspiracies is ridiculed in the farcical novel *Dā'ī Jān Napūliyān*, and leads to the ultimate demise of the self-acclaimed general *Dā'ī Jān*. Iraj Pizishkzād, *Dā'ī Jān Napūliyān* (Tehran, 1351/1972). See Dick Davis' comments on the phenomenon of conspiracy paranoia Iran in his introduction to *My Uncle Napoleon*, by Iraj Pezeshkzad, tr. Dick Davis (Washington: Mage Publishers, 1996), 11-12. For a full discussion on different conspiracy theories that have festered in Iran during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries and an attempt to explain this phenomenon within Persian culture, see Ahmad Ashraf, "Conspiracy Theories," *EIr*, 4:138-147.

## Conclusion

Building on the works of scholars such as Taeschner, Cahen, Nadūshan and Hanaway, as well as the recent contributions of Zakeri, de Fouchécour and Adelhah, this thesis has presented a comprehensive overview of the concept of *jawānmardī*, bringing the classical and medieval understanding of it up to the present. The two very distinct and even contradictory models of *jawānmardī*, and a third model developed in this thesis – which represents a fusion of the two demonstrate the multi-faceted and complex nature of the concept of *jawānmardī* as well as the dilemmas stemming from it.

The first model, that of the classical heroic warrior (*pahlawān*), who serves either as a public combatant or an *‘ayyār*, had a single purpose – to build and retain his good name in society through the code of manliness as he practiced it. He did this through heroic deeds such as sacrificing himself in battle in order to serve his king, serving his co-warriors without considering his own interests, and above all, ensuring that he remained preeminent as a champion. Although his character was one-dimensional – he merely played out his role as it was laid out for him – the heroic warrior was confronted with numerous dilemmas which challenged his heroism. Hence, the code of *jawānmardī* – whether to serve the king or to remain free, whether to practice guile or be a “man of his word,” or whether to forgive or avenge an enemy created polarities within him and he frequently ended up with a tarnished reputation because of the choices he made. The *pahlawān*, however, tried to absolve himself of responsibility by attributing the choices he made to fate.

The *pahlawān*’s primary fear that his “good name of a 100 years will go to the wind”<sup>1</sup> motivated him to carry out his deeds in such a way that society would speak well of him.

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Ironically, the *pahlawān*, most strikingly, Rostam – the national hero of Iran, who reveled in his sense of freedom – appeared actually to be trapped by what society thought of him, and this fear led him to perform ignoble deeds in order to remain a champion. And so, while a basic code of *jawānmardī* meant living without thought for one's personal interest, the *jawānmard*, in fact, had to pay very close attention to his deeds because the court of public opinion defined him. Sayyid Mirān's statement, "I, who live off my reputation, know very well that I need society more than society needs me," reflects how fundamental this concept was to Persian culture.

In the second model, that of the spiritual champion (*lātan*), we noted a crystallization of the definition of *jawānmardī*, which was distinctly different from that of the heroic warrior. The relevant chapter focused primarily on Kāshifī's comprehensive early 16<sup>th</sup> century treatise, the *Futuwwat Nāma-yi Sulṭānī*, which appears to be a codification of the Sufī ethic of *futuwwat*. The analysis of Kāshifī's work, which was supplemented by a number of 14<sup>th</sup> century treatises on *futuwwat*, demonstrated that calculated, social control – in contrast to the reckless abandon of the heroic warrior – had become all-important to the concept of manliness by the late medieval period. Rooted in the Qur'ānic ethic of submission to God and *hilm* to one's fellow-man, the concept of spiritual *jawānmardī* was developed from the mystical notion of the Primordial Covenant. Ideally, when the *lātan* entered an association of *futuwwat*, he pledged to destroy his carnal soul and to manifest the characteristics of God (God's names and attributes) through a code of proper conduct. The dialectical nature of the *jawānmard*'s veiling the Sufī ethic of *futuwwat*, while at the same time revealing it through symbols, attire and *adab* is a fascinating exposé of how the writers on *futuwwat* considered medieval *jawānmardī* to be a "theatre of manifestation" of spiritual reality. The esoteric meanings of the rituals of initiation and the

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regalia connected with the professions represented a spiritual and moral ideal to which the common man aspired, and thereby become a spiritual champion.

Ideally, the *fātan*'s purpose in life was to exhibit *adab* in every aspect of his life. However, since *adab* was considered to be both the cause of and conversely, the evidence of the destruction of the carnal soul,<sup>2</sup> the *fātan* tended to focus on the externals, which easily led to pretension and hypocrisy. Adelkhah's evaluation of modern *jawānmardī* confirms the understanding that the medieval notion of good behavior easily becomes a theatrical display of manliness rather than a manifestation of spiritual reality, and it illustrates that the quest for a good reputation was also important in the pursuit of good behavior:

The ethos of the *jawānmard* allows him to get on the stage and build his life doing exemplary deeds to win attention from others and also to acquire self-respect himself. There is a certain theatrical side, or an element of putting on good appearances, to his conception of life.<sup>3</sup>

We noted how modern prose literature has portrayed the spiritual *jawānmard* not as a hero, but as an antihero (*nā-mard*), whose behavior was far from exemplary. The theme of the modern *jawānmard* who sincerely tries to shape his life according to scriptural morality and to avoid any deficiency in his outward conduct, needs to be explored further. It would seem that the recent state-sponsored institutionalization of *jawānmardī* in Iran in an effort to encourage proper social praxis for the benefit of society will possibly result in literature which will reflect the struggle to achieve proper conduct.

The professional wrestler (*kushtī-gīr*) was a fusion of the two above-mentioned models. The wrestler had to win in order to be a physical champion, but at the same time, he had to maintain perfect conduct in order to show that he was a spiritual champion. He considered himself to be a multi-dimensional champion by verbally identifying himself with both the spiritual and physical heroes of the past. According to Kāshifī, wrestling was an ideal metaphor for the ethic of

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*fituwwat* – battling the carnal soul. Hence, self-abnegation, as exemplified in the legends of Puryā-yī Walī, became the supreme virtue in the community of the *zūr-khāna*, because it symbolized the death of one’s personal desires. Although this virtue appears to conflict with his quest to be a physical champion, the wrestler expressed self-abnegation and deference primarily through the code of courtesy and etiquette in the *zūr-khāna*. Hence, through calculated external display of humility, the wrestler was able to “contrast [himself] with the image of the constantly calculating, maneuvering and devious individual,” and thereby become a winner according to both the heroic and spiritual models.<sup>4</sup> The question then is: Was the traditional wrestler an embodiment of integrity and self-sacrifice through his heroic act of voluntarily deferring to his opponent, or was this external display of humility a manipulative ploy to remain a champion? Interestingly, Adelkhah’s study on *jawānmardī* mentions the ethic of humility only as if it were an ideal from the past.<sup>5</sup> It seems that the quest to remain a physical champion makes it difficult for the self-sacrificing ethic of *jawānmardī* to continue to exist.

The last chapter, which focused on 20<sup>th</sup> century Persian novels and short stories, illustrated that many themes of *jawānmardī* from the medieval period have persisted into the present. The protagonists in the stories were aware of the code of *jawānmardī* – for example, the need to exact revenge, the call of duty, the necessity to be courageous, and the virtue of magnanimity – and struggled to live up to that code in the face of other characters who became foils, as it were, forcing the protagonists to face reality. In this way, the legendary heroes of the classical and medieval periods are humanized in 20<sup>th</sup> century literature.

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The study of the concept of *jawānmardī* has not only been a study of how it is portrayed in Persian literature, but also how it was and is viewed in Persian society. In this sense, it is a study

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of human behavior and motivation. The need to have a “good name in society” is not only the quest of the traditional *pahlawān*, but it is basic to understanding fundamental aspects of Persian society today. The spiritual *jawānmard*'s concern with perfect conduct and his fear of being deficient in it casts light on why Persian society continues “paying careful attention to externals.” The culture of deference and etiquette in the *zūr-khāna* offers a framework for understanding the generalized culture of formality in Iran. Furthermore, the manipulative use of *jawānmardī* to gain the upper hand is a fascinating study of the psychology of the individual.

The ideal concept of *jawānmardī* also contains an element of tragedy which is reflected in both medieval and modern literature. On the one hand, the *jawānmard* is portrayed as a hero in society; however, whether one examines the classical heroic warrior in the *Shāhnāma*, the medieval wrestler, or the heroic figures of 20th century fiction, most of the protagonists have tragic endings – mysterious or ignoble deaths, disappearance, lack of personal fulfillment, or they become villains or are victimized by villains. It seems that the code of *jawānmardī* was too demanding to sustain itself in the context of a changing modern world.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> *SA*, 1:303. It is very interesting to trace this phrase in 20<sup>th</sup> century Persian prose where it is used satirically when a character seeks to justify his ignoble deeds or when he wants to castigate someone who has stepped out of cultural bounds. See, for example, Dānishwar, *Savūshūn*, 171; Hidāyat, *Ilājī Āghā*, 20, 57, and Iraj Pizishkzād, *Dā'ī Jān Napūliyān*, 134, 151, to name just a few.

<sup>2</sup> Metcalf, *Moral Conduct*, 10.

<sup>3</sup> Adelpkhah, *Being Modern in Iran*, 45. Adelpkhah also relates how charitable donations in post-revolutionary Iran serve to enhance an individual's image as a *jawānmard* in society. *Ibid.*, 54-55.

<sup>4</sup> Bateson et al., “Ṣafā-yi Bāṭin,” 267.

<sup>5</sup> Adelpkhah, *Being Modern in Iran*, 31.

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